

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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FISHERY UPDATE

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

TANNER CRAB TEST FISHERY BID PACKET AVAILABLE

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) announced today that the Prince William Sound (PWS) Tanner crab test fishery bid packets will be available in Cordova and Homer offices. The test fishery will assess the abundance of Tanner crab in areas of PWS that have not been recently surveyed. Details of the test fishery, including a work summary and minimum qualifications, follow. **Test fishery bid packets are due in the Cordova or Homer office by 12:00 noon, Friday, October 14, 2016.** The contract will be awarded by October 17, 2016 by 4:30 p.m. to the best qualified bidder.

Bids will be accepted for two individual lots of 300 pot pulls each, with all legal male crab from these pots sold. The bidder must demonstrate that there is a market for the legal male Tanner crab that are caught and retained during the test fishery. The department will require a letter of intent from the processor from the winning bidders. The minimum bid price is 10 percent of the proceeds from the sale of all Tanner crab paid to the State of Alaska. The remaining proceeds will be paid to the successful bidders. Contracts for each lot will be awarded to the highest bidder within three decimal places. In the event of a bidding tie, the contract will be awarded via a drawing. All costs associated with the test fishery are assumed by the successful bidder.

Background

Landings in the Prince William Sound Tanner crab commercial fishery declined from a peak of 13.9 million pounds in the 1971/72 season to approximately 474,092 pounds in the 1988 season. The fishery was last prosecuted in 1988 and has been closed through the current year. This long closure period has been due to low abundance demonstrated in earlier pot surveys and the current biennial trawl survey.

Objectives

- 1) To determine the distribution of Tanner crab outside the current trawl survey area and at historical survey and commercial fishery locations.
- 2) To measure catch per pot and begin development of an index (CPUE) of abundance for male Tanner crab recruit categories (pre-recruits, recruits, post recruits) and females.
- 3) To collect biological information on Tanner crab (size, sex, maturity status, etc.).

Work Summary

This test fishery will be conducted between October 20 and December 15 by up to 2 vessels. The vessel skipper will be required to have previous experience in commercial fishing. The timing of the test fishery is to ensure that crab are active, hard-shelled and catchable. Fishing will be conducted within the Prince William Sound Management Area and defined before the test fishery. During the test fishery period, two lots of 300 pots per lot will be hauled. Approximately 30 pots will be set and hauled each day per lot. Crab from 300 pots per lot will be sold. There will be an option for setting up to an additional 300 pots per winning bid as determined in consultation with winning bidder; no crab may be retained from additional pots. Biological information from crabs will be collected from all pots. Soak times should be between 18 and 24 hours. Logbooks will be required and will need to be filled out for each day of fishing. Information required is, but not limited to: date, time, depth, statistical area, latitude and longitude of each pot set; date and time of each pot haul; catch per pot of legal male, sublegal male, and female crab; and enumerating bycatch by species. A department observer will be required to be onboard the vessel during all trips during the test fishery. Participating vessel(s) will be expected to communicate with the observer with ample notice regarding deployment logistics and provide appropriate accommodations.

Minimum Qualifications

The vessel and crew must be capable of setting and retrieving at least 30 commercial Tanner crab pots per day. Vessel must be equipped with a sheltered marine head and shower. Built in bunk space for at least 4 persons (one biologist, captain, and two crew) is required.

The captain of the vessel must have previous experience as a captain participating in a commercial fishery. The successful bidder must be able to document this experience through fish tickets or other qualifying documentation. At least two crewmembers must be provided in addition to the vessel captain. Crew members should be capable of all duties normally required in Tanner crab pot fishing operations. This includes overhauling the gear after each set, baiting with fresh bait daily, setting and retrieving the required amount of gear each day, and preparing and serving meals for the crew and department staff. The winning bidder may be required to make the vessel and pots available for inspection sometime before they leave on the test fishery.

The vessel is required to have undergone and passed a courtesy U.S. Coast Guard Commercial Vessel Safety inspection with the past twelve months and all noted deficiencies must have been corrected. Additional safety requirements listed in the bid packet.

Data Application

Data collected during this survey will be used to evaluate Prince William Sound Tanner crab abundance in currently unsurveyed parts of the Sound.

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