
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Phone: (907) 772-5238	(907) 465-4853	Date: June 21, 2017
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SOUTHEAST ALASKA PERSONAL USE RED AND BLUE KING CRAB FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Petersburg...The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) announced the following information regarding the opening of the 2017/2018 Southeast Alaska personal use red and blue king crab fishery outside of Section 11-A:

- **Seymour Canal, Gambier Bay, Pybus Bay, Peril Strait, Excursion Inlet, and Lynn Sisters will remain closed to personal use fishing.**
- **Beginning at 12:01 a.m., July 1, 2017, all areas open to personal use red and blue king crab fishing outside of Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C will continue to have a reduced daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab as prescribed in regulation when the regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is below 200,000 pounds [5 AAC 77.664(a)(1)].**
- **Beginning at 12:01 a.m., July 1, 2017, all areas open to personal use red and blue king crab fishing in Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C will continue to have a daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab as prescribed in regulation when the regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is below 200,000 pounds [5 AAC 77.664(b)].**

Survey and Fishery Information

Because the 2017 Southeast Alaska red king crab stock assessment survey is not complete, the department used 2016 stock assessment survey results to set bag and possession limits and determine open areas for the red and blue king crab personal use fishery outside of Section 11-A. Survey results from 2016 indicate the following:

- Regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is well below 200,000 lb.
- Regionally, the adjusted biomass estimates for legal and mature red king crab increased 11% and 19% respectively in 2016, but both remain below long-term averages.
- Of the seven survey areas, five had increases in legal biomass and five had increases in mature biomass, while biomass in the other areas decreased or remained constant since last season.
- Stock health in Lynn Sisters and Pybus Bay has declined this year and these two areas will remain closed to fishing. Both areas exhibited declines in recruit and post-recruit catch per unit

effort (CPUE), and mature female, pre-recruit, recruit, and post-recruit CPUEs remain below long-term averages. For Lynn Sisters, legal male abundance is at the lowest level in the survey time series.

- Stock health in Peril Strait, Excursion Inlet, and Gambier Bay has remained unchanged. Mature female and pre-recruit CPUEs are significantly below the long-term averages in these areas and low clutch fullness in mature females is a concern. These areas will remain closed to fishing until significant improvements in legal biomass are seen.
- Stock health in Seymour Canal has improved slightly, but stock health remains a concern. Legal biomass increased slightly in 2016 and CPUEs of all size/sex classes of crab, with the exception of pre-recruits, are significantly below their long-term averages. This area will remain closed to fishing.
- Port Frederick and Holkham Bay were dropped as survey areas in 2015 for budgetary reasons. For the purposes of the personal use fishery, both areas will be managed as non-surveyed areas.
- Non-surveyed areas can likely continue to withstand a low level of harvest in the near term, so will be kept open with a minimal bag and possession limit.

Closed Area Descriptions

- Seymour Canal: Section 11-D, Seymour Canal (waters of Seymour Canal north of 57°37.00' N. latitude).
- Peril Strait: Section 13-C, Peril Strait (all waters of Peril Strait including Hoonah Sound, Ushk Bay, Rodman Bay, Saook Bay, Hanus Bay, Sitkoh Bay, and contiguous waters west of a line from Point Hayes to Point Thatcher, and north of a line from Pogibshi Point due west to the Chichagof shoreline).
- Lynn Sisters: Waters north of a line from a point at 58°27.00' N. latitude, 135°06.50' W. longitude, due east to a point at 58°27.00' N. latitude, 135°03.00' W. longitude, and west of a line from a point at 58°27.00' N. latitude, 135°03.00' W. longitude to Point Whidbey including St. James Bay.
- Excursion Inlet: Waters east of a line from a point at 58°22.57' N. latitude, 135°30.08' W. longitude, south to a point at 58°19.28' N. latitude, 135°30.06' W. longitude, and north of a line from a point at 58°19.28' N. latitude, 135°30.06' W. longitude to a point at 58°16.13' N. latitude, 135°20.61' W. longitude including Excursion Inlet.
- Gambier Bay: Gambier Bay waters north and west of a line between Point Gambier and 57°24.90' N. latitude, 133°53.00' W. longitude.
- Pybus Bay: Pybus Bay waters north and west of a line from Point Pybus to the easternmost tip of San Juan Island and from there to a point at 57°14.60' N. latitude, 134°07.30' W. longitude.

Refer to Figure 1 for a map showing open and closed waters for personal use red and blue king crab fishing.

Juneau Area: Section 11-A

Status of the red and blue king crab personal use fishery within Section 11-A is addressed in a separate news release. For more information on the red and blue king crab personal use fishery within Section 11-A please contact Dave Harris at (907) 465-4250.

Recent Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) action on the Southeast Alaska personal use red and blue king crab fishery:

The BOF met in January 2015 to discuss proposals for Southeast and Yakutat shellfish fisheries. The BOF adopted a department proposal to increase the legal size limit for blue king crab in subsistence, personal use, and commercial fisheries in Registration Areas A and D. Fishermen are reminded that male red **and blue** king crab must be seven inches or greater in width of shell to be retained [5 AAC 77.664(3)]. Male king crab less than the minimum legal size and female king crab must be immediately returned to the water unharmed.

Other information

No more than 4 pots or 10 ring nets per vessel may be used in the personal use king crab fishery [5 AAC 77.664(f)]. A pot used to take king crab must have at least two escape rings on opposing vertical or sloping sides of the pot that are not less than six and one-quarter inches inside diameter. Each fisherman shall plainly and legibly inscribe the fisherman's first initial, last name, and home address on a keg or buoy attached to a pot or ring net. A keg or buoy attached to the pot or ring net must also be inscribed with the vessel name or the division of motor vehicles registration number (AK number) of the vessel used to operate the pot or ring net [5 ACC 77.010 and 5 AAC 77.664(f)].

Please refer to 5 AAC 77.664 in the 2016-2017 Subsistence and Personal Use Statewide Fisheries Regulations booklet for additional regulations regarding personal use red and blue king crab fishing, or view the regulations online at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishregulations.commercial>

Analysis of 2017 Southeast Alaska red king crab stock assessment survey results will be completed by mid-September. Any changes to the 2017/2018 Southeast Alaska personal use red and blue king crab fishery outside of Section 11-A will be announced at that time.

The Emergency Order corresponding with this announcement is EO 1C1217.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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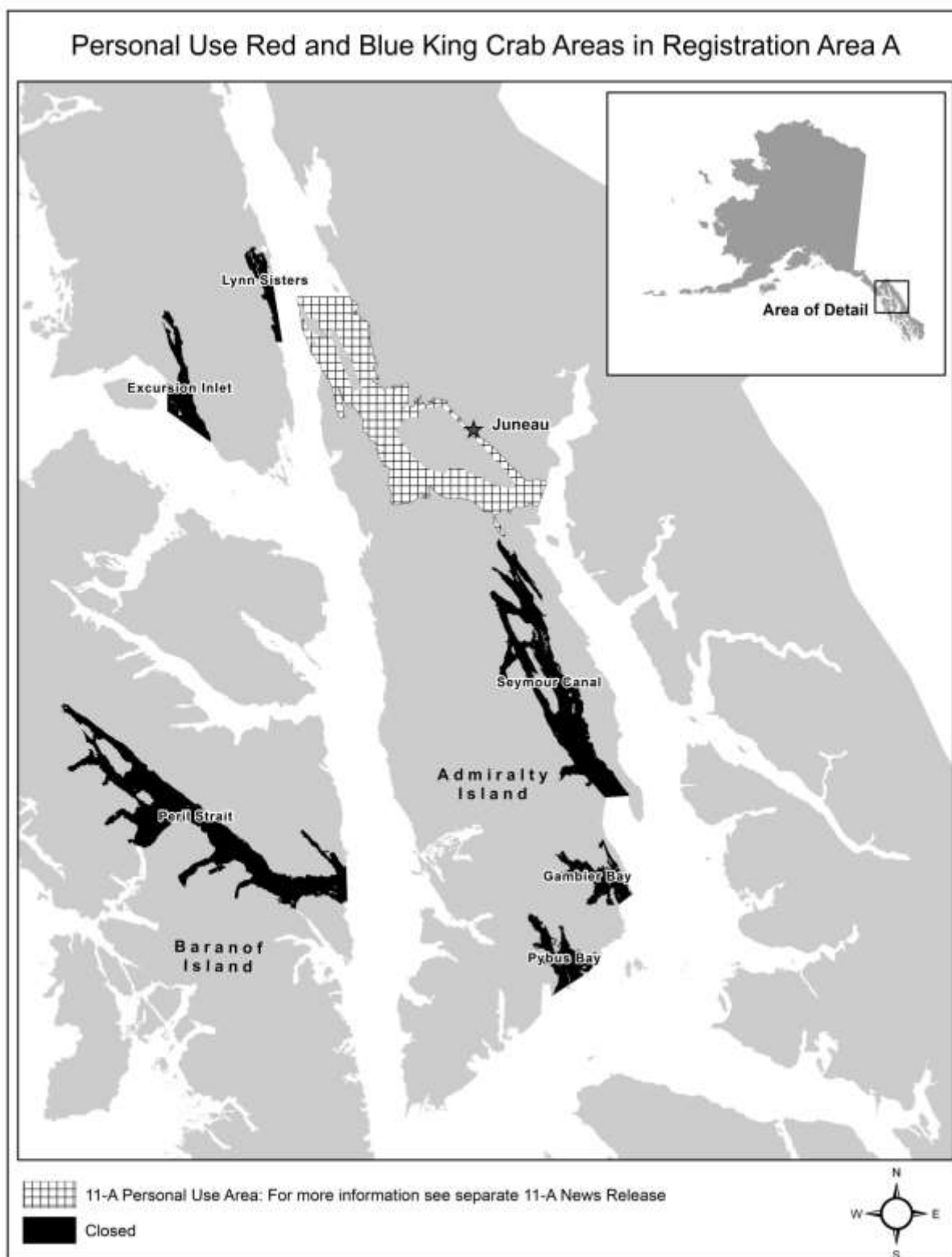


Figure 1. This map shows closed areas for the 2017/2018 red and blue king crab personal use fishery and is for reference purposes only. Please refer to text in this news release for legal descriptions of management area boundaries and other details.