
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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P.O. Box 667
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PERSONAL USE RED AND BLUE KING CRAB FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

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

- All areas currently open (see news release dated June 21, 2017) to personal use red and blue king crab fishing (non-surveyed areas) will remain open, and the daily bag and possession limit of one red and blue king crab in combination will remain in effect through October 31, 2017.
- All areas currently closed (see news release dated June 21, 2017) to personal use red and blue king crab fishing (non-surveyed areas) will remain closed through October 31, 2017.
- Pybus Bay, Gambier Bay, Excursion Inlet, and Seymour Canal will reopen to personal use red and blue king crab fishing on November 1, 2017.
- Peril Strait and Lynn Sisters will remain closed.
- Beginning November 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 have a daily bag and possession limit of six king crab per day as prescribed in regulation [5 AAC 77.664(a)(1)].
- Beginning November 1, 2017, Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C will have a daily bag and possession limit of three king crab per day as prescribed in regulation [5 AAC 77.664(b)].

2017 Survey Information and Fishery Recommendations

All red and blue king crab fisheries are closed in all areas of Southeast Alaska by regulation from April 1 through June 30 each year. From July 1 through March 31 open fishing periods for the personal use fisheries may be adjusted by emergency order. The department conducts annual red king crab surveys in seven areas throughout Southeast Alaska. Those areas include: 1) the Juneau Area in Section 11-A, 2) Lynn Sisters, 3) Excursion Inlet, 4) Pybus Bay, 5) Gambier Bay, 6) Seymour Canal, and 7) Peril Strait. The surveys generally begin approximately in mid-June and conclude near the end of July. Data from the most recent surveys are used to manage commercial and personal use red king crab fisheries. Because the department has detailed information for each of the surveyed areas it is possible to manage those areas as distinct fishery units. The remaining waters of Southeast Alaska outside the areas surveyed are referred to as "non-surveyed" areas. In general, management decisions in the non-surveyed areas are made based on trends observed in the surveyed areas.

Because the 2017 red king crab stock assessment survey was not finished on July 1, 2017, decisions regarding the July 1, 2017 opening of the personal use red and blue king crab fisheries were based on

2016 red king crab stock assessment survey results. Currently the non-surveyed areas are open to red and blue king crab personal use fishing for a daily bag and possession limit of one red and blue king crab in combination (EO 1C1217). Now that the 2017 survey is complete and the department has finalized the analysis of 2017 red king crab stock assessment survey results, new information is available to manage the fisheries. Some highlights of the recent survey include:

- Regionwide the harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab exceeds 200,000 lbs.
- Stock health in Peril Strait remains poor.
- Stocks in Lynn Sisters are moderate, but a low percentage of the mature biomass is legal sized crab.
- All other survey areas and non-survey areas appear to have stocks that can withstand some level of harvest.

Peril Strait and Lynn Sisters cannot withstand the level of personal use harvest prescribed in regulation [5 AAC 77.664(a)(1)] and will be kept closed until further information becomes available to the department to assess available harvest opportunities. Refer to Figure 1 for a map showing open and closed waters for personal use red and blue king crab fishing effective November 1, 2017.

Closed Area Descriptions (effective November 1, 2017)

- 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.

Juneau Area: Section 11-A

Details of the summer red and blue king crab personal use fishery within Section 11-A were previously released in a separate news release dated July 21, 2017. A winter personal use fishery will occur in Section 11-A per the red and blue king crab management and allocation plan outlined in 5 AAC 34.111. Details of the winter personal use king crab fishery in the Juneau Area will be announced in a separate news release that will be issued later in the year. 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.

Other information

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.

For the areas open to personal use crab fishing outside of Section 11-A, 5 pots are allowed per person with a maximum of 10 pots per vessel, **except that no more than 4 pots per vessel may be used for king and Tanner crab**. 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. A keg or buoy attached to the pot 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 [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.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folioproxy.asp?url=http://www.jnu01.legis.state.ak.us/cgi-bin/folioisa.dll/aac/query=\[JUMP:%275+aac+77!2E664%27\]/doc/{@1}?firsthit](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folioproxy.asp?url=http://www.jnu01.legis.state.ak.us/cgi-bin/folioisa.dll/aac/query=[JUMP:%275+aac+77!2E664%27]/doc/{@1}?firsthit)

The Emergency Order corresponding with this announcement is EO 1C1817.

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

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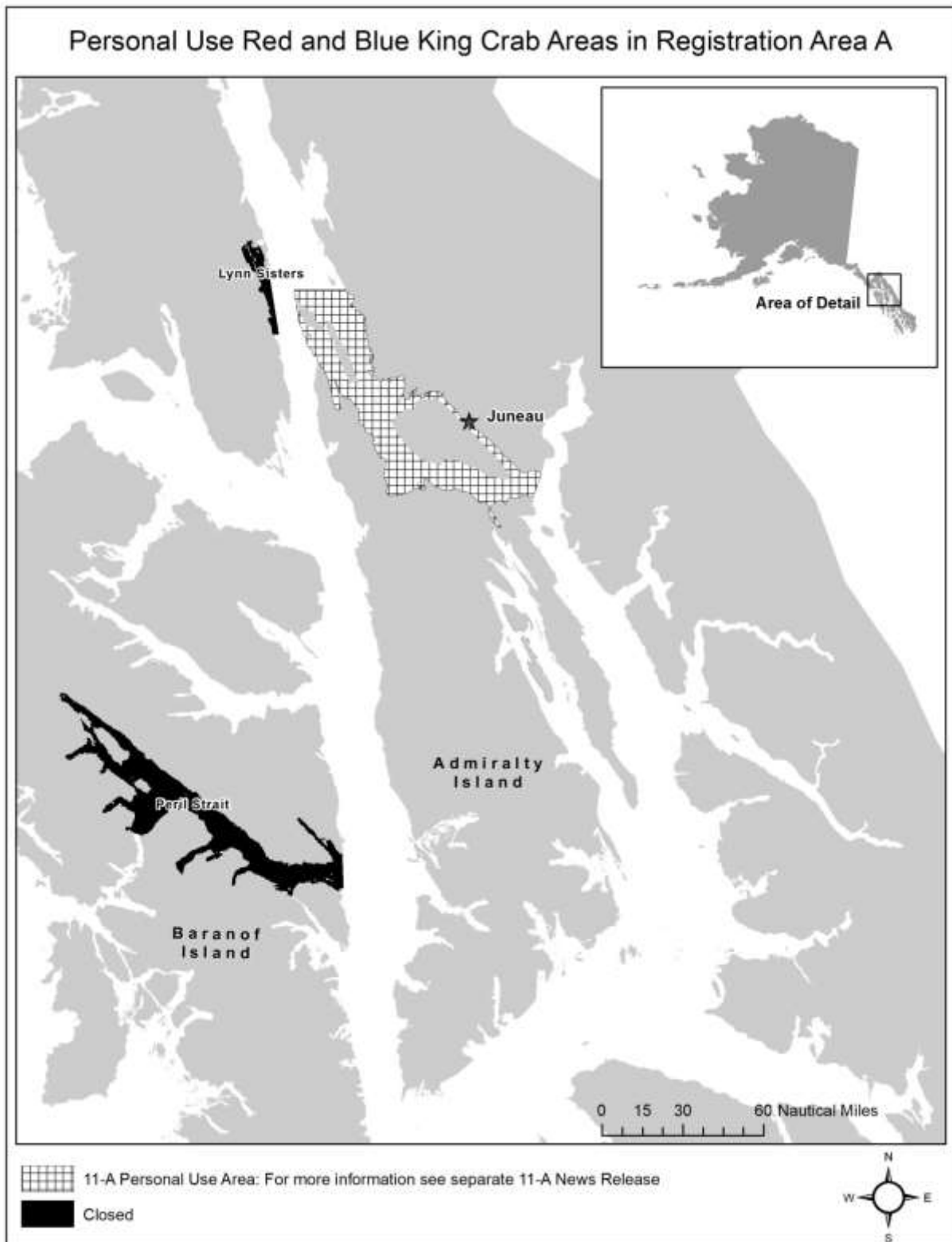


Figure 1. This map only reflects changes to the 2017/2018 red and blue king crab personal use fishery **which go into effect November 1, 2017**, and is for reference purposes only. Please refer to text in this news release for legal descriptions of management area boundaries and other details.