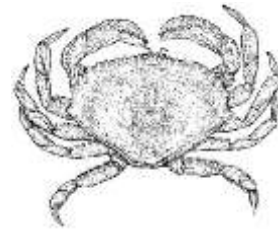

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director



Contact:
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Petersburg Area Office
P.O. Box 667
Petersburg, Alaska 99833
Date: May 25, 2018
Time: 4:00 p.m.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

Petersburg... The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) announced today that the 2018/2019 commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A (Southeastern Alaska) will open according to 5 AAC 32.110 at **8:00 a.m.** on Friday, June 15, 2018.

Recent Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) action on Southeastern Alaska Dungeness crab:

The BOF met in January 2018 to discuss proposals for Southeast and Yakutat shellfish fisheries. Changes to the Dungeness commercial fishery adopted in 2018 by the BOF are as follows:

- Extended the area closed to commercial Dungeness crab fishing around Hollis Anchorage.

Buoy Tags, Registration, and Pot Storage:

Dungeness crab fishermen must register their vessels and gear with the department. The holder of a valid 2018 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit for Southeastern Alaska Dungeness crab must be onboard the vessel during fishing operations and the permit holder's name must be listed on the vessel registration. Buoy tags must be purchased prior to fishing [5 AAC 32.126]. The price for crab buoy tags is \$1.25 each. **Buoy tags purchased for the 2018/2019 season will be valid for the 2019/2020 season.** All purchased buoy tags are non-refundable. Buoy tags may be replaced when pots or buoy tags are lost. To obtain replacement tags, fishermen must report the unique number of the lost tag on a 'Tag Replacement Affidavit'. These forms are available at all area offices along with replacement buoy tags. Please refer to 5 AAC 32.126(a) for proper tag placement on the buoy assembly. Tenders must also register [5 AAC 32.033] with the department prior to taking Dungeness crab onboard and may not have any Dungeness crab gear onboard or be used to fish for Dungeness crab. After the season is closed, all Dungeness crab pots must be removed from the water except that pots may be stored on the grounds with all pot doors secured fully open and all bait and bait containers removed for no more than seven days after the Dungeness crab fishery regionwide closure in Registration Area A, or for no more than 72 hours after a partial area closure [5 AAC 32.052(b)(1) & (2)]. **Reporting of lost pots, or pots left in a closed area in fishing condition, should be directed to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) offices in Juneau or Ketchikan** (contact numbers are listed on bottom of pg. 3).

Fishery Management:

The department will use catch and effort information from the first week of fishing to predict total season harvest and will compare that prediction to regulatory thresholds described in the Southeastern Alaska Dungeness Crab Management Plan [5 AAC 32.146] to determine season length. Fishermen should expect a news release by June 29, 2018, informing the fleet of the regionwide season length. The department will be conducting dockside sampling in all major ports and aerial surveys on the grounds to determine fleet distribution.

Closed Waters:

Regulatory closed waters are listed in 5 AAC 32.150 (see map for reference). Action taken at the most recent Southeast and Yakutat shellfish fisheries BOF meeting in January 2018 enlarged an existing closed area around Hollis Anchorage. Fishermen are also reminded that this is the fourth season with closed areas in Port Frederick near Hoonah and Favorite Bay near Angoon [5 AAC 32.150(17) & (18)]. District 16 will be open to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab during the 2018/2019 fishing season. Permit holders intending to fish in District 16 are asked to contact Joe Stratman at 772-5238 or Adam Messmer at 465-4853 at the start of fishing operations. The Yakutat Area Dungeness crab fishery will remain closed. Waters of Glacier Bay are closed by federal regulation to commercial Dungeness crab fishing. Fishermen may contact the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve at (907) 697-2230 for more information. Closed waters within 3,000 feet of the Annette Island Reserve will be addressed in a separate news release issued in September prior to the start of the fall/winter fishing season.

Other Regulations:

A person may not participate in a commercial Dungeness crab fishery in a Dungeness crab registration area if the person operated commercial, subsistence, sport, or personal use pots of any type during the 14-day period immediately before the opening of a commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.053(b)(1)]; or operates a vessel that was used or operated by the person or by another person operating pots of any type in a commercial, subsistence, sport, or personal use fishery during the 14-day period immediately before the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.053(b)(2)]; except that a person or vessel that operates commercial king crab pots in waters deeper than 100 fathoms during the 14-day period immediately before the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A, may participate in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.128(a)]. A vessel owner, or the owner's agent, may not register a vessel for the commercial Dungeness crab fishery and the commercial beam trawl shrimp fishery at the same time [5 AAC 32.128(b)].

Other Permits Required:

A catcher/seller permit is required to sell raw unprocessed fish and/or shellfish (other than bivalve mollusks) to unlicensed buyers. Examples would be selling or attempting to sell to the general public dockside for non-commercial purposes, or to a restaurant, grocery store, or established fish market that has a processing waiver from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC). The catcher/seller permit application can be found at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.sellers>

Catcher/sellers are required to complete a fish ticket indicating the estimated number and weight of crab harvested before any crab are removed from their vessel [5 AAC 32.143]. A catcher/processor permit is required for fishermen who receive, prepare, process, or transport seafood or fishery product to sell for human consumption or a person who custom processes a seafood or fishery product. Processing is any activity that modifies the physical condition of a seafood or fishery resource. This permit is included in the Alaska Seafood Processor and Exporter License and Permit Application Intent to Operate found on the department website at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.buyers>

Bait harvest:

Holders of a Dungeness crab CFEC permit are not required to purchase a miscellaneous finfish permit card to harvest groundfish for bait used in the Dungeness crab fishery unless a person intends to sell the groundfish. Fishermen are required to account for all groundfish bait on their crab fish tickets at the time of landing the crab for which the bait was taken. Prohibited species for use as bait include sablefish, lingcod, thornyhead, shortraker, roughey, and yelloweye rockfish. Refer to 5 AAC 28.190 in the 2017-2018 Statewide Commercial Groundfish Fishing Regulations booklet (available in area offices or online) for more information on harvest of bait by commercial permit holders.

Other information:

Handling of soft-shell crabs results in increased discard mortality. **Fishermen are asked to consult with their buyers on shell hardness criteria before harvesting crab.** Fishermen are also reminded to review the 2015–2018 Commercial Fishing Regulations Shrimp, Dungeness crab, and Miscellaneous Shellfish booklet prior to the fishery.

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

<i>Office</i>	<i>Ketchikan</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	<i>Wrangell</i>	<i>Sitka</i>	<i>Juneau</i>	<i>Haines</i>	<i>Yakutat</i>
<i>ADF&G</i>	<i>225-5195</i>	<i>772-3801</i>	<i>874-3822</i>	<i>747-6688</i>	<i>465-4250</i>	<i>766-2830</i>	<i>784-3255</i>
<i>AWT</i>	<i>225-5111</i>	<i>772-3983</i>	<i>874-3215</i>	<i>747-3254</i>	<i>465-4000</i>	<i>766-2533</i>	<i>784-3220</i>

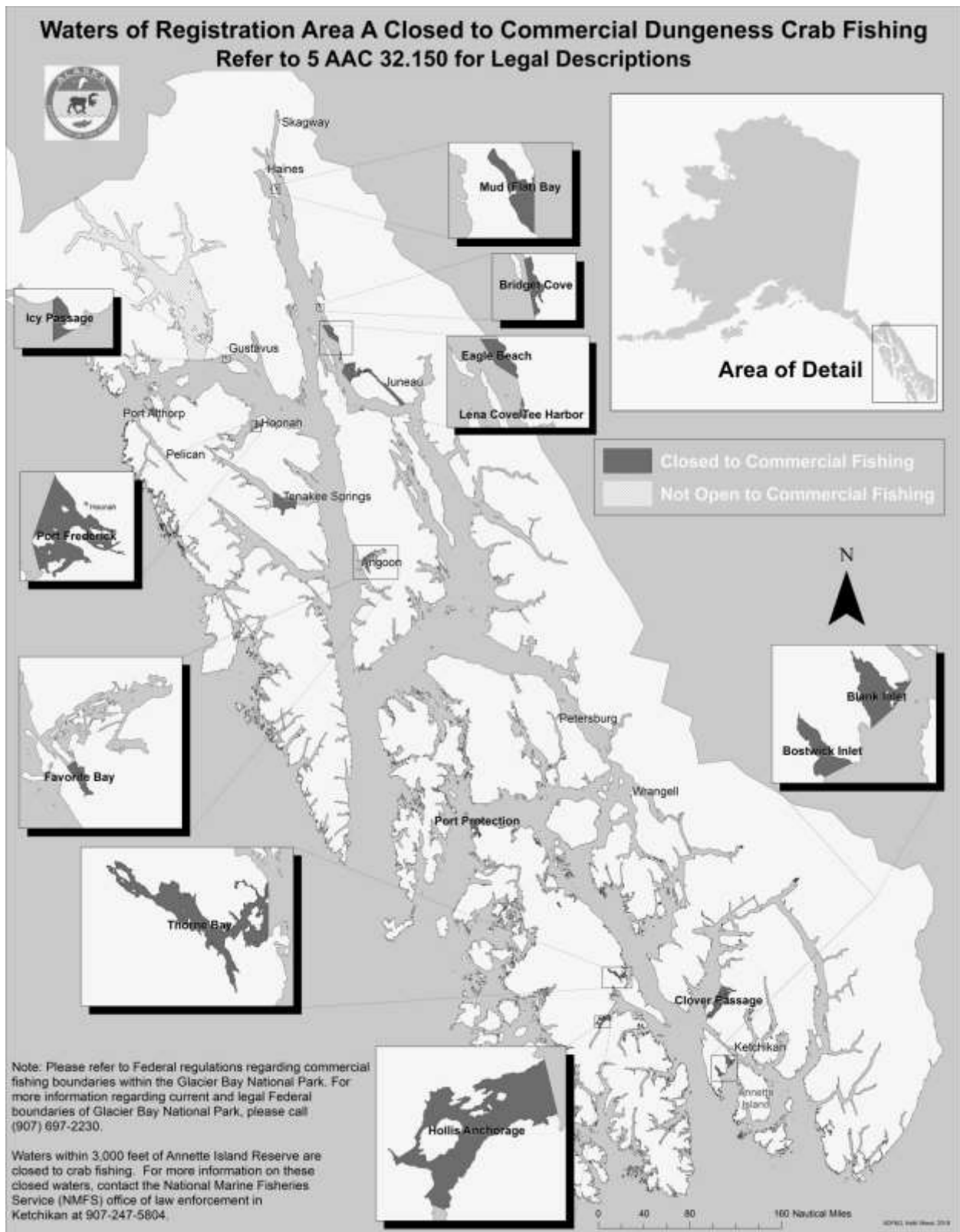


Figure 1: Closed areas for the 2018/2019 commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A. This map is intended for general reference only. Please refer to 5 AAC 32.150 for legal descriptions of closed areas.