

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Statewide King and Tanner Crab, and Supplemental Issues
March 7 – 13, 2005
Anchorage, Alaska

This summary of actions is for information purposes only and is not intended to detail, reflect or fully interpret the reasons for the Board's actions.

STATEWIDE

PROPOSAL NO. 390

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Allow onboard observers access to vessel coordinates while onboard vessels fishing with pot gear.

DISCUSSION: The board supported the department's efforts to all onboard observers to have access to coordinates where observer data is collect.

PROPOSAL NO. 391

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Change the regulatory definition of brown king crab to golden king crab.

DISCUSSION: The board considered this change in regulatory language a housekeeping measure.

SOUTHEAST

King Crab

PROPOSAL NO. 392

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Clarify red king crab closed waters.

DISCUSSION: The board considered this change in regulatory language a housekeeping measure.

PROPOSAL NO. 393

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Define escape ring placement for king crab pots in Registration Area A.

AMENDMENTS: Effective November 1, 2006, king crab pots must have either at least the bottom one-third of one vertical surface of a square pot, or sloping sidewall surface of a conical or pyramid pot composed of not less that nine-inch stretch mesh webbing, or at least four circular escape rings...the lowest edge of each escape ring must be within eight inches of the top of the bottom web bar on the pot. One ring must be installed in each quadrant of the pot.

DISCUSSION: The amended language clarifies how escape rings are to be optimally located to escape nonlegal size and female crabs.

PROPOSAL NO. 394

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Remove 72-hour king crab pot storage limitation.

AMENDMENTS: Allow five-day gear storage after the closure of a portion of the registration area.

DISCUSSION: The board discussed safety issues for fishermen when trying to comply with the original 72-hour pot storage limitation. The board also discussed the potential for "ghost fishing" for gear that is left in the water too long after a closure. After consulting with the Dept. of Public Safety, the board supported a five-day window to allow gear retrieval while still protecting the king crab resource.

PROPOSAL NO. 395

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Allow use of subsistence and personal use shrimp and Dungeness crab pots before commercial king and Tanner fisheries.

DISCUSSION: The board heard concerns about regulatory loophole for fishers to fish extra pots during a commercial opening. The board also noted that separation between the personal use and commercial fisheries has been a longstanding practice.

PROPOSAL NO. 396

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Repeal eight-inch red king crab season in Registration Area A.

DISCUSSION: The department stated that this regulation to allow a fishery for eight-inch male red king crab has never been in use and the department does not support an opening. The board agreed and saw this as primarily a housekeeping measure.

PROPOSAL NO. 397

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Reduce GHL for red/blue king crab in Registration Area D.

DISCUSSION: The board noted that harvest in the Yakutat area has never reached the current 40,000 threshold. Setting a GHR of 0 to 20,000 pounds takes into account the historical average catch and includes the high end of the harvest.

PROPOSAL NO. 398

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Remove sunset clause to Southeast red king crab 200,000 pound threshold.

DISCUSSION: The department has shown it can accurately target a GHL of 200,000 for this fishery. The board received information about the mandatory call-in provision, which aided in management of the fishery. When the board originally adopted this regulation in 2002, the sunset clause was added in order to review the accuracy of management. The board also heard support from the Southeast king and Tanner task force.

PROPOSAL NO. 399

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify descriptions of golden king crab fishing areas in Registration Area A.

AMENDMENTS: Change descriptions and number of management areas as follows: Icy Straits Area is split into two areas: Northern Area with Sections 11-A, 12, 13-A, 13-C, and 15, and Icy Straits Area with District 14; North Stephens Passage Area consists of Sections 11-B and 11-C; East Central Area consists of Sections 6-A and 11-D, District 10, portions of districts 5, 8 and 9; Mid-Chatham Strait Area consists of a portion of District 9; Lower Chatham Strait Area consists of a portion of districts 9 and 13-B; and the Southern Area consists of districts 1 and 2, a portion of District 6 and a portion of District 7.

DISCUSSION: This proposal puts into practice the current management practices using seven areas instead of the original five areas. The purpose of using these areas is to spread the fleet out to distribute the harvest. The board noted that the Southeast king and Tanner task force generally supported the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 400

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify descriptions and GHRs of golden king crab fishing areas.

AMENDMENTS: Set GHRs as follows: Northern Area: 0 – 145,000; Icy Straits area: 0 – 55,000; Northern Stephens Passage Area: 0 – 25,000; East Central Area: 0 – 225,000; Mid-Chatham Strait Area: 0 – 150,000; Lower Chatham Strait Area: 0 – 50,000; Southern Area: 0 – 25,000 pounds.

DISCUSSION: This companion proposal to proposal 399 sets the GHRs for golden king crab in the newly established management areas.

PROPOSAL NO. 401

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Repeal 6 ½ inch golden king crab season in Cape Ommaney and Clarence Strait Areas.

DISCUSSION: The board honored the proposer's request to withdraw the proposal.

Tanner Crab

PROPOSAL NO. 402

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Create guideline harvest range for commercial Tanner crab fishery in Registration Area A.

DISCUSSION: The board honored the proposer's request to withdraw the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 403

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Define commercial core Tanner crab fishing areas in Registration Area A.

DISCUSSION: The board honored the proposer's request to withdraw the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 404

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Create Southeast Alaska Tanner Crab Management Plan.

DISCUSSION: The board honored the proposer's request to withdraw the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 405

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify season starting date for commercial Tanner crab fishery in Registration Area A.

AMENDMENTS: Start the fishing season for Area A on the date with the smallest Juneau tidal range within a timeframe window of February 10 – 17, and continuing through May 1 for both golden king and Tanner crab fisheries.

DISCUSSION: The board discussed whether there are allocative implications to the start date due to participants busy with other fisheries (specifically, herring). The board also heard testimony about effects of tides on gear and benefits of starting on small tides. The board supported efforts to maintain the concurrent nature of the openings of these two fisheries.

PROPOSAL NO. 406

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Extend holding time for Tanner crab following partial closure of commercial fishing in Registration Area A.

DISCUSSION: The board supported the department's position that imposing landing requirements on this fishery does not aid in the management or conservation of the resource.

PROPOSAL NO. 407

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Define escape ring placement for non-square commercial Tanner crab pots in Registration Area A.

AMENDMENTS: Allow crab to be taken with pots or ring nets, but not both by the same fisherman; clarify the distance of escape rings from the bottom web bar as eight inches

DISCUSSION: The board considered this change primarily a housekeeping measure.

PROPOSAL NO. 408

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Require escape rings for commercial Tanner crab pots in Registration Area D.

AMENDMENTS: Beginning January 15, 2006, a pot must have either at least one-third of the vertical surface of a square pot, or sloping sidewall surface of a conical or pyramid pot, composed of not less than seven-inch stretched mesh webbing, placed on the bottom one-third of the vertical or sloping sidewall surface of the pot; or no less than four circular escape rings of 4 ¾ inch minimum inside diameter. Each sidewall surface of a pot using escape rings must contain at least one escape ring of 4 ¾ inch minimum inside diameter; the lowest edge of each escape ring must

be within eight inches of the top of the bottom web bar on the pot. One ring must be installed in each quadrant of the pot.

DISCUSSION: Although this fishery is currently closed, the board implemented the escape ring requirements to reduce handling of the crab if the fishery opens in the future.

PROPOSAL NO. 409

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Repeal descriptions of escape mechanisms for shellfish pot gear used in Southeast Alaska sport fisheries.

DISCUSSION: The board repealed the description of escape mechanisms in the sport fishing regulations in order to require all users to comply with the statewide regulation, for consistency in gear.

Personal use/Subsistence

PROPOSAL NO. 410

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Require escape rings for subsistence king crab pots in Southeast Alaska and Yakutat.

DISCUSSION: By requiring escape mechanisms in subsistence king crab pots, a reduction in unnecessary handling of nonlegal king crab will occur, therefore benefiting the resource in reduced mortality.

PROPOSAL NO. 411

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify red king crab bag limit for personal use fishery in Section 15-B; require escape ring in placement in personal use pots in Registration Area A.

DISCUSSION: The board adopted this proposal to make the bag limit of three crab consistent with surrounding areas.

PROPOSAL NO. 412

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Require escape rings placement for personal use red king crab pots in Registration Area D.

DISCUSSION: By requiring escape mechanisms in personal use king crab pots, a reduction in unnecessary handling of nonlegal king crab will occur, therefore benefiting the resource in reduced mortality.

PROPOSAL NO. 413

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Define escape mechanism for personal use and subsistence king and Tanner crab pots with rigid mesh.

DISCUSSION: The board deferred action on this proposal and requested the department to submit a proposal for spring 2006 to address all shellfish, including Dungeness crab.

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND AND LOWER COOK INLET

Commercial

PROPOSAL NO. 414

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Establish a commercial Tanner crab fishery in Prince William Sound.

DISCUSSION: In 1999, the board closed all Tanner crab fisheries in PWS due to low abundance. Abundance estimates in 2003 are the fourth lowest since 1991, and the board was reluctant to reestablish a commercial fishery at this point in time. The department will continue to perform stock assessments in PWS.

PROPOSAL NO. 415

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Establish a commercial king crab fishery in Prince William Sound.

DISCUSSION: In 1999, the board closed all king crab fisheries in PWS due to low abundance, limited information on harvest, and limited stock assessment information. For many of the same reasons as in proposal 414, the board was reluctant to reestablish a commercial fishery at this point in time. In addition, the board noted that when the stocks begin to recover the department will prepare a management plan for the board and public's consideration.

PROPOSAL NO. 416

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Prohibit dragging in Cook Inlet and Kachemak Bay.

DISCUSSION: The board lacks authority to direct the department on how to carry out its responsibilities.

Personal use/Subsistence

PROPOSAL NO. 417

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Provide an opportunity to harvest king crab for personal use.

DISCUSSION: The board referred to its discussion in proposal 415.

PROPOSAL NO. 418

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Provide an opportunity to harvest Tanner crab for personal use.

DISCUSSION: The board referred to its discussion in proposal 414.

PROPOSAL NO. 419

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Open sport/personal use Tanner fishery in Kachemak Bay during November and December.

AMENDMENTS: Establish reference to the Registration Area H Tanner Crab Harvest Strategy in regulation, and close noncommercial fisheries in Kamishak, Barren Island, Eastern and Outer Districts when the Southern District is closed.

DISCUSSION: The Tanner crab harvest strategy for Area H describes criteria for closure of a fishery, whether commercial or noncommercial. This amended proposal provides clarity for closures.

BERING SEA-ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

CDQs

PROPOSAL NO. 420

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Require a CDQ group to have quota available prior to taking crab onboard a CDQ vessel.

DISCUSSION: The board stated that it is not yet timely to address this issue. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council must proceed further in its process in order for the board to address this CDQ topic.

Rationalization

PROPOSAL NO. 421

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Address Category 2 and 3 management measures for BS/AI crab rationalization.

AMENDMENTS: The board established pot limits, seasons, boundary changes, TACs and other provisions for king and Tanner crab fisheries in the Aleutian islands, Bristol Bay, Pribilof District, St. Matthews area, and Bering Sea. The specific language of the final proposal is available from the Boards Support Section upon request.

DISCUSSION: In April 2004, the board formed a task force to receive recommendations for new regulations for rationalization of the BS/AI king and Tanner crab fisheries. The final report submitted to the board in February 2005 outlined options for pot limits, seasons, boundary changes, TACs, operation of gear, VMS and observer requirements, and landing requirements. The task force was able to find consensus on many of the options. The board discussed the pros and cons of pot limits in the various fishing areas, the importance of VMS, how to alter observer requirements, and criteria for operation of gear by authorized cooperatives.

PROPOSAL NO. 422

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Modify existing pot limits for rationalized Bering Sea crab fisheries.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 421.

PROPOSAL NO. 423

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Implement pot limits in the Aleutian Islands brown king crab fishery.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 421.

PROPOSAL NO. 424

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Eliminate pot limits for rationalized crab fisheries.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 421.

PROPOSAL NO. 425

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Extend fishing season closing date for Bristol Bay red king crab to March 1.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 421.

PROPOSAL NO. 426

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Allow vessels operating in a cooperative to share pot gear.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 421.

General Commercial

PROPOSAL NO. 427

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Require permit holder to only fish on one vessel in Norton Sound.

DISCUSSION: The board noted that some testimony indicated concern that fishermen were fishing on more than one boat which gives an advantage of having more pots to pick. However, this proposal may be unenforceable, and likely does not address the concerns expressed.

PROPOSAL NO. 428

ACTION: Tabled

DESCRIPTION: Expand Norton Sound Section waters farther west.

DISCUSSION: The board referred this proposal to its Joint Protocol Committee for further analysis.

PROPOSAL NO. 429

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Change landing requirements in Norton Sound Section.

DISCUSSION: The board lacks authority to limit the state fishery to only those holding federal licenses.

PROPOSAL NO. 430

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify king crab season dates in St. Lawrence Section.

AMENDMENTS: Notwithstanding 5 AAC 34.910(f), waters north of 66 N. lat. (Kotzebue Section), male red and blue king crab may be taken only from 12 noon June 15 through August 1.

DISCUSSION: The department expressed concerns about delivery in the Norton Sound Section, and the amendment of limiting this opportunity to the Kotzebue Section alleviated this concern. The board also discussed the CDQ fishery dates and areas. The proposal may provide access to higher percentage of male red king crab during better weather conditions.

Personal Use

PROPOSAL NO. 431

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Repeal personal use king and Tanner regulations in Norton Sound.

AMENDMENTS: Repeal 5 AAC 77.114, Personal use king crab fishery, and 5 AAC 77.116, Personal use Tanner crab fishery.

DISCUSSION: Adoption of this proposal assists in enforcement of regulations. Participants in the subsistence use fisheries are required to obtain a permit, which aids the department in assessing harvest, stock information, etc.

Note: proposal 432 was addressed at the January 2005 Kodiak Finfish meeting.

KODIAK

PROPOSAL NO. 433

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: In areas closed to commercial fishing for 14 days, allow a vessel operator who participated in the commercial Tanner crab fishery to participate in the subsistence Tanner crab fishery.

AMENDMENTS: In the Kodiak District, a person or vessel that participated....

DISCUSSION: The board modified the post-fishery stand down provisions to allow vessels that unregistered to subsistence fish in a section that has been closed for at least 14 days.

PROPOSAL NO. 434

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Increase the subsistence king crab annual limit.

DISCUSSION: The board noted that the stocks have not yet rebuilt in the area, and expressed possible conservation concerns if this were adopted.

PROPOSAL NO. 435

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Define how lodge owner/operators and charter vessel operators may provide assistance to clients during subsistence harvest.

DISCUSSION: The board adopted this proposal in order to prohibit the furnishing of subsistence-taken shellfish to a guest or client of a lodge, charter vessel, or enterprise that furnishes services.

PROPOSAL NO. 436

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: In the Kodiak and Alaska Peninsula Management Areas, open the red and blue king crab season by EO on Sept. 25, and eliminate the 7 ½ inch red king crab season.

DISCUSSION: This action closes seasons unless opened by emergency order. The board saw this as generally a housekeeping provision.

PROPOSAL NO. 437

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Allow the department to adjust daily Tanner crab fishing periods by EO.

AMENDMENTS: Based on the department's assessment of effort, manageability, and harvest rate, the department may, by emergency order, increase the daily fishing period in a section when effort in the district declines and substantial GHL remains.

DISCUSSION: The board provided the department this authority in order to make available more opportunity to harvest the allowable GHL. The board heard concerns about "over sorting" of crab, but supported longer openings when there is lower effort in the area.

PROPOSAL NO. 438 **ACTION: No action**
DESCRIPTION: Modify Tanner crab daily fishing periods.
DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 437.

PROPOSAL NO. 439 **ACTION: No action**
DESCRIPTION: Eliminate Tanner crab daily fishing periods.
DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 437.

PROPOSAL NO. 440 **ACTION: No action**
DESCRIPTION: Eliminate Tanner crab daily fishing periods.
DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 437.

PROPOSAL NO. 441 **ACTION: Failed**
DESCRIPTION: Implement pot limits based on vessel size.
DISCUSSION: The board heard information that this has been historically a small boat fishery, with a smaller GHL. Providing larger pot limits for larger vessels favors those larger vessels, and may have unintended allocative effects.

PROPOSAL NO. 442 **ACTION: No action**
DESCRIPTION: Modify Tanner crab pot limits.
DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 441.

PROPOSAL NO. 443 **ACTION: No action**
DESCRIPTION: Modify the Tanner crab pot limit in offshore portions of the management area.
DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 444.

PROPOSAL NO. 444 **ACTION: Carried as amended**
DESCRIPTION: Modify the Tanner crab pot limit in offshore portions of the management area.
AMENDMENTS: In the Semidi Island Overlap Section, the fishery will open when either the Southwest Section of the Kodiak District or the Chignik District is opened. Vessels must register with the department prior to fishing and may not simultaneously be registered to fish in other sections of the Kodiak or Chignik districts. The Semidi Island Section pot limit is 70 per vessel. Vessel operators must either provide daily reports via radio of catch, catch location, and effort or maintain daily logbooks.
DISCUSSION: The board narrowed the area where 70 pots will be allowed. The board noted that consistency in regulations aids enforcement and supports more uniform pot limits where prudent.

PROPOSAL NO. 445 **ACTION: No action**
DESCRIPTION: Allow pot limits to increase through permit stacking.
DISCUSSION: The board currently lacks authority to allow permit stacking.

PROPOSAL NO. 446 **ACTION: Failed**
DESCRIPTION: Require two pot tags per pot on Tanner crab gear.
DISCUSSION: The board agreed with the department's assessment that this provision would be too burdensome for the fishermen. Tag quality has improved over the past years.

PROPOSAL NO. 447 **ACTION: No action**
DESCRIPTION: Modify opening criteria for the Semidi Island Section.
DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to action taken on proposal 444.

PROPOSAL NO. 448**ACTION: Carried as amended**

DESCRIPTION: Clarify format of NWS marine forecasts as applied to weather-related opening criteria in the Tanner crab fishery.

AMENDMENTS: The inspection requirements and the season opening shall be delayed for 24 hours if the January 14, 4 a.m. National Weather Service forecast for the current day and night plus the following day and night for any section of the Kodiak District, except the Semidi and Southwest sections, contains gale force warnings (35 knots or higher)....

DISCUSSION: The board has heard a large amount of testimony about dangerous conditions and weather-related openings for crab seasons. This amendment clarifies for the department and for the participants how the weather-related openings will work.

CHIGNIK**PROPOSAL NO. 449****ACTION: Carried as amended**

DESCRIPTION: Modify Tanner crab pot limit.

AMENDMENTS: For the Chignik District *C. bairdi* Tanner crab fishery, when the GHL exceeds 600,000 pounds, the registration deadline is 5 p.m. on December 24. In addition, when the GHL exceeds 600,000 pounds, the total number of pots allowed in the fishery is 1,000; the department will establish the individual vessel pot limit by dividing the 1,000 limit by the number of vessels that register before the season opens; no more than 75 pots per vessel will be allowed.

DISCUSSION: The board intends to provide an increased pot limit during times when the GHL is large.

PROPOSAL NO. 450**ACTION: Carried**

DESCRIPTION: Eliminate requirement linking a Chignik District opening to the opening of the South Peninsula District.

DISCUSSION: The board recognized that these are separate stocks of crab that can be managed independently.

SOUTH PENINSULA**PROPOSAL NO. 451****ACTION: Carried as amended**

DESCRIPTION: Revise the application of the minimum GHL threshold for opening the Tanner crab fishery; implement two districts for Tanner crab management.

AMENDMENTS: Divide the South Peninsula District into two sections: Eastern (all waters east of 162 W. long.) and Western (all waters west of 162 W. long.). Assign minimum thresholds for opening each section: Eastern: 2,015,000 and Western: 1,250,000.

DISCUSSION: The board supported this department proposal to create two sections within the South Peninsula District. The department will have more management tools to address areas where stocks distribution and biological conditions may not warrant harvest. The sections will open independently of each other.

SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES**PROPOSAL NO. 455****ACTION: Tabled to October 2005**

DESCRIPTION: Revise the walleye pollock closures for Steller sea lion protection in a portion of state waters of the Aleutian Islands, Western Gulf and Cook Inlet.

AMENDMENTS: Provide emergency order authority for the commission to open areas to trawl fishing for pollock in state waters surrounding Steller sea haulouts as follows: Aleutians Islands, from 174 to 178 W. long. except waters within ten miles of rookeries, to vessels 58 feet or less; Western Gulf of Alaska, state waters within 20 miles but outside of a ten-mile radius of Jude Island, to vessels 58 feet or less with a daily delivery of no more than 300,000 pounds and

retention onboard of no more than 600,000 pounds; Central Gulf of Alaska, from 149 to 159 W. long. beyond a three-mile radius of haulouts under provisions of a commissioner's permit.

DISCUSSION: The board generated this proposal as a result of an initial request by the Aleut Corporation for opportunity in state waters to provide a small boat fishery in that area. Additionally, department staff requested the board consider areas within the Gulf of Alaska. The board put all three areas into one proposal in order to bring it to the attention of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), due to implications of fishing in areas previously closed for Steller sea lion protection. The board's Joint Protocol Committee will meet with NPFMC representatives over the summer to receive detailed information from NMFS and to be prepared to provide a recommendation to the full board in October 2005 for regulatory action.

PROPOSAL NO. 456

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Allow a set gillnet fishery in the Alagnak River to harvest surplus sockeye.

AMENDMENTS: The area will consist of the waters of the Alagnak River 1.5 miles upstream of the confluence of the Kvichak River as marked by ADF&G upstream to an ADF&G marker downstream of south slough. Set gillnets may not exceed 25 fathoms in length, may not be set or operated within 150 of another set gillnet, and must be operated in a substantially straight line perpendicular to the nearest bank of the river. A person may not place any part of a set gillnet or other device more than 200 feet from the terrestrial vegetation line of a bank on the river and must remove all gear after each fishing period. A vessel may not have onboard more than 50 fathoms of gear per permit holder. These provisions sunset after December 31, 2005.

DISCUSSION: The board's goal is to harvest surplus Alagnak River sockeye inside the river when the Kvichak District is close due to poor Kvichak returns. The area will be for set gillnet gear only, with the intent to harvest surplus sockeye in excess of the escapement goal. In its discussion, the board considered setting an optimal escapement goal (OEG) for the Kvichak River of 1.5 million. The board declined to set an OEG at this time due to the status Kvichak sockeye as a stock of concern under the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy.

PROPOSAL NO. 457

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Establish commercial and sport king salmon fisheries in the terminal harvest areas of the Taku and Stikine rivers.

AMENDMENTS: The amended language details the areas, gear, fishing periods, seasons and bag limits for the commercial and sport fisheries. The language is available from the Boards Support Section upon request.

DISCUSSION: Under the Pacific Salmon Treaty, the recovery of the Taku and Stikine rivers salmon stocks has enabled the board to create an opportunity for commercial and noncommercial users to harvest a portion of a projected large king salmon return. Directed fisheries for Taku and Stikine rivers king salmon were closed in the late 1970s for conservation reasons. King salmon stocks have increased in both rivers, and the department projects a large harvestable surplus in 2005. The board noted that the Southeast finfish fisheries will be reviewed under its normal meeting cycle in 2006. Data from these fisheries will enable the board and public to further refine management plans for these rivers.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Petition: Sockeye Salmon in Orzinski Lake, Southeastern District

The department requested and the board granted it authority to allow purse seine gear into Orzinski Bay as early as July 1 in order to control the escapement levels. The board found the petition met the emergency criteria of "unforeseen, unexpected event where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action..." The board

department committed to submitting a proposal during the regular meeting cycle so that the board and public can review this fishery.

Petition: Use of Aircraft in Cook Inlet

The board found a petition received requesting it revisit the decision recently made to allow the use of spotter pilots in Cook Inlet did not meet its emergency petition criteria and denied the request.

Petition: Placement of regulatory marker at Packers Creek

The board found a petition received requesting it reconsider or change the decision recently made on placement of a regulatory marker for a commercial fishery in Packers Creek in the Cook Inlet area did not meet its emergency petition criteria and denied the request.

Emergency Regulation: Geoduck Harvest in Southeast Alaska

In response to a recent court opinion, the board promulgated an emergency regulation stating that the commissioner may open, by emergency order, a commercial geoduck fishery on geoduck aquatic farm sites in Southeast Alaska to allow a harvest of wild geoducks on those sites.

Crab Observer Oversight Task Force

The board continued the charge of the oversight committee originally established in 1999. The term of the committee membership was set at three years, at which time the board will review the purpose and membership and elect continuation or elimination of the committee.