

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
STATEWIDE (EXCEPT SOUTHEAST AND YAKUTAT) KING AND TANNER CRAB
AND SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES
MARCH 20–24, 2017

PROPOSAL 242 - 5 AAC 34.917. Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab harvest strategy. Correct an error in regulation to accurately specify the percentage of mature male blue king crab used in setting total allowable catch, as follows:

5 AAC 34.917 is amended to read:

5 AAC 34.917. Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab harvest strategy. (a) In the Saint Matthew Island Section, the commissioner may, by emergency order, open the blue king crab fishery only if the department's **preseason survey estimate of the number of mature male** [ANALYSIS OF PRESEASON SURVEY DATA INDICATES THAT THE POPULATION OF] blue king crab **equals** [CONTAINS] at least **50 percent of the 1978–2012 average survey estimate of** [1.609 MILLION] mature males.

(b) If the commercial blue king crab fishery is open under (a) of this section, and the **preseason survey estimate of the** [ESTIMATED POPULATION] number of mature males [{"M"}] is

(1) at least **50 percent of the 1978–2012 average survey estimate of** [1.609 MILLION] mature males, but less than **the 1978–2012 average survey estimate of** [3.217 MILLION] mature males, the number of legal males available for harvest will be no more than **$0.1 \times M \times (M/M_{1978-2012})$** , where **M = the current year preseason survey estimate of mature males and $M_{1978-2012}$ = the 1978–2012 average survey estimate of mature males** [A PERCENTAGE OF THE ESTIMATED POPULATION NUMBER OF MATURE MALES EQUAL TO A NUMBER DERIVED FROM THE EQUATION [(M/3.217) X 100 PERCENT]] or 25 percent of the **preseason survey estimate of the** [ESTIMATED POPULATION] number of legal males, whichever is less;

(2) **equal to or greater than the 1978–2012 average survey estimate of** [3.217 MILLION OR MORE] mature males, the number of legal males available for harvest will be no more than 10 percent of the estimated population number of mature males or 25 percent of the **preseason survey estimate of the** [ESTIMATED POPULATION] number of legal males, whichever is less.

...

(d) For the purposes of this section,

(1) **“preseason survey estimate”** [“ESTIMATED POPULATION NUMBER”] means the

...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Correct an error in the Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab regulatory harvest strategy that was inadvertently introduced when the regulation was adopted. The number of legal males available for harvest is currently specified as 100 percent of the current mature male abundance estimate multiplied by the fraction of the current mature male abundance estimate relative to the average of historic mature male abundance estimates; however, the number of legal males available for harvest was meant to be specified as 10 percent of the current mature male abundance estimate multiplied by that fraction. Proposed changes in text also clarify the regulation by replacing “estimated population number” with “preseason survey estimate of the number.” In addition, the department proposes to replace the mature male abundance

threshold for opening the fishery as well as for determining harvest rate with a formula for deriving the threshold and harvest rate calculation based on the most current estimate of the 1978–2012 average survey estimate of mature males, rather than a prescribed value based on the estimate from that time series that was available when the harvest strategy was first adopted. This change will allow the harvest strategy to stay current with respect to corrections and improvements subsequently made to survey estimates of mature males.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-162)

PROPOSAL 243 – 5 AAC 65.020. Bag limits, possession limits, annual limits, and size limits for Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area. Reduce the sport fishery minimum legal size limit for Tanner crab in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Island Area from 5.5 inches carapace width to 4.8 inches carapace width, as follows:

5 AAC 65.020(a)(12) is amended to read:

(12) Tanner crab, 6 per day, 6 in possession, male crab only; 5.5 inches minimum carapace width, **except that in the Bering Sea waters north of 54° 36' N. lat., the minimum carapace width is 4.8 inches** [INCLUDING SPINES].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 2011, Tanner crab size limits for the Bering Sea District of commercial Tanner crab Registration Area J (5 AAC 35.520) were reduced from 5.5 inches minimum carapace width to 4.8 inches (and to 4.4 inches west of 166° W. longitude) as a result of an updated geographic analysis by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game of male Tanner crab size-at-maturity and associated population productivity. Lowering the Tanner crab size limit from 5.5 to 4.8 inches carapace width for Bering Sea waters within the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Regulatory Area for sport fishing will allow anglers to benefit from any increased Tanner crab harvest opportunity resulting from the updated biological knowledge of this shellfish species.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-156)

PROPOSAL 244 – 5 AAC 69.110. Seasons and bag, possession, and size limits for the North Slope Area; 5 AAC 69.135. Methods, means, and general provisions – Shellfish; 5 AAC 71.010. Seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the Kuskokwim – Goodnews Area; 5 AAC 71.035. Methods, means, and general provisions – Shellfish; and 5 AAC 73.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Yukon River Area. Align sport crab fishery regulations and repeal methods and means and general provisions for shellfish for the North Slope, Kuskokwim–Goodnews, and Yukon areas, as follows:

5 AAC 69.110(b)(10) and (11) are repealed:

(10) **repealed** / **2017** [BLUE AND RED KING CRAB: THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT IS SIX MALE CRAB; THE SIZE LIMIT FOR BLUE KING CRAB IS 5.5 INCHES MINIMUM CARAPACE WIDTH; THE SIZE LIMIT FOR RED KING CRAB IS 4.75 INCHES MINIMUM CARAPACE WIDTH];

(11) **repealed** / / **2017** [TANNER CRAB: THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR *C. BARIDI* AND *C. OPILIO* TANNER CRAB, IN COMBINATION, IS 12 MALE CRAB; THE SIZE LIMIT FOR *C. BAIRDI* TANNER CRAB IS 5.5 INCHES MINIMUM CARAPACE WIDTH; THE SIZE LIMIT FOR *C. OPILIO* TANNER CRAB IS 3.1 INCHES MINIMUM CARAPACE WIDTH];

5 AAC 69.135 is repealed:

5 AAC 69.135. Methods, means, and general provisions – Shellfish. Repealed / / **2017**. [(a) UNLESS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN THIS CHAPTER OR BY AN EMERGENCY ORDER ISSUED UNDER AS 16.05.060, THE PROVISIONS IN THIS SECTION APPLY TO SHELLFISH SPORT FISHING IN THE NORTH SLOPE AREA.

(b) THE OPERATOR OF A COMMERCIALY LICENSED AND REGISTERED SHRIMP FISHING VESSEL WHO IS USING THE VESSEL IN THE SPORT-FISH TAKING OF SHRIMP DURING A CLOSED COMMERCIAL SHRIMP SEASON OR WITHIN A CLOSED COMMERCIAL SHRIMP DISTRICT OR SECTION MAY NOT POSSESS MORE THAN 500 POUNDS OF SHRIMP ON BOARD THE VESSEL.

(c) ONLY MALE CRAB MAY BE TAKEN.

(d) UNTIL A CRAB IS BEING PROCESSED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION, NO PERSON MAY MUTILATE OR OTHERWISE DISFIGURE THE CRAB IN A MANNER THAT WOULD PREVENT THE DETERMINATION OF THE MINIMUM SIZE RESTRICTION.

(e) A PERSON MAY NOT TAKE OR POSSESS SHELLFISH THAT IS SMALLER THAN THE APPLICABLE MINIMUM LEGAL SIZE LIMIT SET OUT IN 5 AAC 69.110.

(f) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMITS FOR SPORT-HARVESTED SHELLFISH ARE NOT IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALLOWED UNDER SUBSISTENCE OR PERSONAL USE FISHING REGULATIONS.]

5 AAC 71.010(b)(10) is repealed:

(10) **repealed** / / **2017** [KING CRAB: MAY BE TAKEN IN THE WATERS SOUTH OF 60° N. LAT. ONLY FROM JUNE 1 THROUGH JANUARY 1; THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT IS SIX MALE CRAB; THE SIZE LIMIT FOR BLUE KING CRAB IS 5.5 INCHES MINIMUM CARAPACE WIDTH; THE SIZE LIMIT FOR RED KING CRAB IS 4.75 INCHES MINIMUM CARAPACE WIDTH];

5 AAC 71.035 is repealed:

5 AAC 71.035. Methods, means, and general provisions – Shellfish. Repealed / / **2017**. [(a) UNLESS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN THIS CHAPTER OR BY AN EMERGENCY ORDER ISSUED UNDER AS 16.05.060, THE PROVISIONS IN THIS SECTION APPLY TO SHELLFISH SPORT FISHING IN THE KUSKOKWIM — GOODNEWS AREA.

(b) THE OPERATOR OF A COMMERCIALY LICENSED AND REGISTERED SHRIMP FISHING VESSEL WHO IS USING THE VESSEL IN THE SPORT-FISH TAKING OF SHRIMP DURING A CLOSED COMMERCIAL SHRIMP SEASON OR WITHIN A CLOSED

COMMERCIAL SHRIMP DISTRICT OR SECTION MAY NOT POSSESS MORE THAN 500 POUNDS OF SHRIMP ON BOARD THE VESSEL.

(c) ONLY MALE CRAB MAY BE TAKEN.

(d) UNTIL A CRAB IS BEING PROCESSED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION, A PERSON MAY NOT MUTILATE OR OTHERWISE DISFIGURE THE CRAB IN A MANNER THAT WOULD PREVENT THE DETERMINATION OF THE MINIMUM SIZE RESTRICTION.

(e) A PERSON MAY NOT TAKE OR POSSESS SHELLFISH THAT IS SMALLER THAN THE APPLICABLE MINIMUM LEGAL SIZE LIMIT SET OUT IN 5 AAC 71.010.

(f) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMITS FOR SPORT-HARVESTED SHELLFISH ARE NOT IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALLOWED UNDER SUBSISTENCE OR PERSONAL USE FISHING REGULATIONS.]

5 AAC 73.010(b)(10) is amended to read:

(10) finfish **and shellfish** species that are not specified in this section: there are no bag, possession, or size limits;

5 AAC 73.010(b)(11) is repealed:

(11) **repealed** / /2017 [SHELLFISH; MAY NOT BE TAKEN OR POSSESSED].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, fishing for king and Tanner crab under sport regulations only occurs in the Northwestern Area of the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) Region. There is minimal suitable habitat for these crab species in the nearshore marine waters of the Kuskokwim–Goodnews, Yukon, or North Slope areas, and limited or no sport fisheries occurs for these species. There has been no record of any of these crab species harvested under sport regulations from either of these areas in the Statewide Harvest Survey since 1996. These changes would simplify regulations and provide consistency in those areas of the AYK Region. If adopted, methods and means for shellfish in these areas will fall under the statewide provisions in 5 AAC 75.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F16-160)
