

PROPOSAL 274

5 AAC 34.925. Lawful gear for Registration Area Q.

Limit the number of pot tags per permit per season in the Norton Sound Section commercial king crab fishery, as follows:

(e)(2)(C) a permit holder will be limited to operating no more than 20 pots during the winter season described in (d) of this section during the winter through-the-ice commercial king crab season described in 5 AAC 34.910.(d)(2); **Only 20 pot tags will be issued to any one permit holder for the season.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Norton Sound winter commercial crab fishery has excessive pot loss, up to 50% on some years. This is contrary to the State policy to maximize beneficial human uses and sustained yield. Our stock is declining and the mortality of the older-age classes far exceeds that for the younger age classes. This difference in mortality rate between young and older crab is unique to the Norton Sound red king crab. Ghost fishing likely affects the older-age classes more because of the mandatory escape rings and cumulative mortality effects.

Pots in the commercial fishery are currently considered a consumable supply and are replaced if lost. When pots were more expensive in comparison to the catch in times of lower price, fishers were more cautious in pot placement and the tending of pots, so pot loss was much less.

PROPOSED BY: Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee (EF-F19-014)
