

PROPOSAL 170

5 AAC 32.020. Dungeness crab area registration. 5 AAC 32.425. Lawful gear for Registration Area J.

Establish vessel and overall fishery pot limit for the North Peninsula District Dungeness fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 32.020(b) is amended to read:

(b) The Dungeness crab registration year is January 1 through December 31, **except that in the North Peninsula District, the registration deadline for the registration year is April 1.**

5 AAC 32.425(b) is amended to read:

(b) The following Dungeness crab pot limits are in effect for Registration Area J:

...

(2) in the Alaska Peninsula District, an aggregate of no more than 500 pots may be operated from a validly registered Dungeness crab vessel;[.]

(3) in the North Peninsula District, an aggregate of no more than 500 pots may be operated from a validly registered Dungeness crab vessel and no more than 10,000 pots may be operated in the fishery during a registration year. If more than 20 vessels register for the Dungeness crab fishery in the North Peninsula District, the 10,000-pot cap would be divided by the total number of vessels registered by the registration deadline which would result in a pot limit less than 500 pots per vessel.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Vessel participation and gear effort in the North Peninsula District Dungeness commercial crab fishery has historically been low. The North Peninsula District is typically among the smallest commercial Dungeness crab fisheries in the state. Beginning in 2021, effort increased substantially, and 2022 participation, effort, and harvest are highest on record. During 2022, 17 vessels registered 8,512 pots and harvested 2.8 million pounds, making it the second largest Dungeness crab fishery in Alaska. Lack of a pot limit likely contributed to record gear use and harvest during the 2022 fishery. It is unknown if the current harvest is sustainable or presents a conservation concern and the large influx of new boats has disproportionately impacted harvest opportunity for historical participants.

PROPOSED BY: Diego Castillo

PROPOSAL 171 (formerly ACR 8) – 5 AAC 28.230. Lawful gear for Prince William Sound Area. Allow groundfish pots to be longlined in the Prince William Sound Area, as follows:

5 AAC 28.230(c) is amended to read:

(c) A groundfish pot may [NOT] be attached to a line connected to another groundfish pot, **including in** the Prince William Sound sablefish fishery. [,] **Groundfish** [GROUNDFISH] pots may be connected if each end of the buoy line is marked as specified in (d) of this section.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, longlining of ground fish pots is prohibited, except in the Prince William Sound (PWS) sablefish fishery. With the advent of the “slinky” pot, this regulation is now outdated. There currently is a 15% allocation of the PWS Pacific cod quota that goes unharvested due to lack of interest in traditional single pot fishing. The use of longlined slinky pots would allow existing and new entrants to participate in harvesting the pot allocation.

Halibut and rockfish bycatch in the Pacific cod fishery could be reduced if the use of longlined slinky pots is authorized.

PROPOSED BY: Kenneth Jones

PROPOSAL 172 (formerly ACR 9) – 5 AAC 28.230. Lawful gear for Prince William Sound Area. Adopt gear marking requirements for longlined pot gear in the Prince William Sound Area, as follows:

5 AAC 28.230(d) is amended to read:

(d) At least one buoy on each groundfish pot must be legibly marked with the permanent ADF&G vessel license plate number of the vessel operating the gear. The buoy may bear only a single number - that of the vessel operating the gear. The number must be placed on the top one-third of the buoy in numerals at least four inches high, one-half inch wide, and in a color that contrasts with the color of the buoy. The buoy markings must be visible on the buoy above the water surface when the buoy is attached to the groundfish pot. **Each end of a set of longline pot gear must have attached a cluster of four or more marker buoys, a flag mounted on a pole, and a radar reflector. One hard buoy in the buoy cluster must be marked with the capital letters “LP” in addition to the Alaska Department of Fish & Game vessel registration number.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations do not include marking requirements specifically for longlined pots. This can lead to participant confusion on the grounds if longlined pots are not marked differently from traditional single pot, or from hook and line longline gear. Smaller vessels cannot always haul a larger, heavier pot string, and proper marking can help participants avoid setting too close and tangling with longlined pot strings.

PROPOSED BY: Kenneth Jones