

Fishery Management Report No. 12-41

**Fishery Management Plan for the Commercial Tanner
Crab Fishery in the Kodiak District, 2013**

by

Mark Stichert

December 2012

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries



Symbols and Abbreviations

The following symbols and abbreviations, and others approved for the Système International d'Unités (SI), are used without definition in the following reports by the Divisions of Sport Fish and of Commercial Fisheries: Fishery Manuscripts, Fishery Data Series Reports, Fishery Management Reports, and Special Publications. All others, including deviations from definitions listed below, are noted in the text at first mention, as well as in the titles or footnotes of tables, and in figure or figure captions.

Weights and measures (metric)		General		Mathematics, statistics	
centimeter	cm	Alaska Administrative		<i>all standard mathematical</i>	
deciliter	dL	Code	AAC	<i>signs, symbols and</i>	
gram	g	all commonly accepted		<i>abbreviations</i>	
hectare	ha	abbreviations	e.g., Mr., Mrs.,	alternate hypothesis	H _A
kilogram	kg		AM, PM, etc.	base of natural logarithm	e
kilometer	km	all commonly accepted		catch per unit effort	CPUE
liter	L	professional titles	e.g., Dr., Ph.D.,	coefficient of variation	CV
meter	m		R.N., etc.	common test statistics	(F, t, χ^2 , etc.)
milliliter	mL	at	@	confidence interval	CI
millimeter	mm	compass directions:		correlation coefficient	
		east	E	(multiple)	R
		north	N	correlation coefficient	
Weights and measures (English)		south	S	(simple)	r
cubic feet per second	ft ³ /s	west	W	covariance	cov
foot	ft	copyright	©	degree (angular)	°
gallon	gal	corporate suffixes:		degrees of freedom	df
inch	in	Company	Co.	expected value	E
mile	mi	Corporation	Corp.	greater than	>
nautical mile	nmi	Incorporated	Inc.	greater than or equal to	≥
ounce	oz	Limited	Ltd.	harvest per unit effort	HPUE
pound	lb	District of Columbia	D.C.	less than	<
quart	qt	et alii (and others)	et al.	less than or equal to	≤
yard	yd	et cetera (and so forth)	etc.	logarithm (natural)	ln
		exempli gratia		logarithm (base 10)	log
Time and temperature		(for example)	e.g.	logarithm (specify base)	log ₂ , etc.
day	d	Federal Information		minute (angular)	'
degrees Celsius	°C	Code	FIC	not significant	NS
degrees Fahrenheit	°F	id est (that is)	i.e.	null hypothesis	H ₀
degrees kelvin	K	latitude or longitude	lat. or long.	percent	%
hour	h	monetary symbols		probability	P
minute	min	(U.S.)	\$, ¢	probability of a type I error	
second	s	months (tables and		(rejection of the null	
		figures): first three		hypothesis when true)	α
Physics and chemistry		letters	Jan, ..., Dec	probability of a type II error	
all atomic symbols		registered trademark	®	(acceptance of the null	
alternating current	AC	trademark	™	hypothesis when false)	β
ampere	A	United States		second (angular)	"
calorie	cal	(adjective)	U.S.	standard deviation	SD
direct current	DC	United States of		standard error	SE
hertz	Hz	America (noun)	USA	variance	
horsepower	hp	U.S.C.	United States	population	Var
hydrogen ion activity	pH		Code	sample	var
(negative log of)		U.S. state			
parts per million	ppm		use two-letter		
parts per thousand	ppt,		abbreviations		
	‰		(e.g., AK, WA)		
volts	V				
watts	W				

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TANNER CRAB FISHERY IN THE KODIAK DISTRICT, 2013**

by

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ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview of the Kodiak District Tanner crab harvest strategy and summarizes regulations governing gear specifications, pot storage, landing requirements, fishing hours, tank inspection, and inseason reporting. The Eastside and Southeast sections of the Kodiak District will open for a commercial Tanner crab *Chionoecetes bairdi* fishery on January 15, 2013, unless delayed by weather. The total Kodiak District guideline harvest level (GHL) is 660,000 pounds with 520,000 pounds available in the Eastside Section and 140,000 pounds available in the Southeast Section. Based on the GHL, the pot limit will be 20 pots per vessel. In the Eastside Section, Ugak Bay and inner Kiliuda Bay will remain closed to commercial Tanner crab fishing. Harvest within bays or localized areas may be managed proportional to annual trawl survey results. The Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery is a limited entry fishery with permits regulated by Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

Key words: Tanner crab, *Chionoecetes bairdi*, Kodiak District, Area J, harvest strategy, regulations.

INTRODUCTION

AREA DESCRIPTION

The Kodiak District for Tanner crab *Chionoecetes bairdi* includes waters of Registration Area J south of the latitude of Cape Douglas, west of the longitude of Cape Fairfield and east of the longitude of Cape Kumlik. The district is subdivided into eight sections: Northeast, Eastside, Southeast, Southwest, Semidi Island Overlap, Westside, North Mainland, and South Mainland. Sections (Figure 1) are described in 5 AAC 35.505 (a) *Description of Registration Area J Districts*. Only the Eastside and Southeast sections will open for a commercial fishery in 2013.

In the Eastside Section, Ugak Bay inside a line from Gull Point (57°23.00' N lat and 152°36.10' W long) to Pasagshak Point (57°25.40' N lat and 152°29.40' W long) and inner Kiliuda Bay inside a line west of 153°00.00' W long will remain closed to commercial fishing for the 2013 season (Figure 1).

OVERVIEW

In the late 1980s, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) began a trawl survey to obtain relative abundance estimates and predict future recruitment trends of Tanner crab around Kodiak. Prior to this time, pot surveys were used for stock assessment (Urban et al. 1999).

Declines in harvestable surplus of Tanner crab in the Kodiak District through the 1980s led to decreased quotas and closures of some sections to commercial fishing. By 1995, commercial Tanner crab fisheries were closed in all Kodiak sections due to low stock abundance. Closures continued through the 1990s, even though increases in stock size occurred late in the decade (Spalinger 2011).

The Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a comprehensive harvest strategy in 1999 for management of Kodiak District Tanner crab. Under this harvest strategy, a commercial Tanner crab fishery may occur when 1) preseason trawl survey abundance estimates meet or exceed established Tanner crab abundance thresholds; 2) two or more sections, excluding South Mainland and Semidi Island Overlap sections, are opened; 3) the guideline harvest level (GHL) in an open section is at least 100,000 pounds; and 4) abundance is sufficient to provide a total district harvest of at least 400,000 pounds (Urban et al. 1999).

RECENT FISHERIES

2012 Fishery

The Eastside, Southeast, and Southwest sections met the required criteria for a commercial Tanner crab opening in 2012. The total district GHL was 950,000 pounds with 550,000 pounds in Eastside Section, 300,000 pounds in the Southeast Section, and 100,000 pounds in the Southwest Section. Total harvest from the 2012 Kodiak District fishery, including harvest from the Semidi Island Overlap Section was 1,078,106 pounds of Tanner crab from 92 landings made by 63 unique vessels. The fishery opened at noon on January 16, 2012 after a 24 hour weather delay. The majority of harvest occurred within the first five days of the season. The Eastside Section closed at 6:00 p.m. January 20. Inside waters of the Southeast Section closed at 11:00 a.m. January 21. The Southwest Section closed at 12:00 p.m. on January 23. Outside waters of the Southeast Section closed at 6:00 p.m. on February 16. Inside waters of the Semidi Island Overlap Section closed February 25 while the outside waters remained open until the regulatory closure on March 31.

2013 GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVELS

Each section in the Kodiak District is managed separately under 5 AAC 35.507 *Kodiak, Chignik, and South Peninsula Districts C. bairdi Tanner Crab, Harvest Strategies*. Based on the 2012 ADF&G trawl assessment survey, the Eastside and Southeast sections met the regulatory requirements for a 2013 commercial Tanner crab fishery. The total 2013 Kodiak District Tanner crab GHL is 660,000 pounds; the Eastside Section GHL is 520,000 pounds and the Southeast Section GHL is 140,000 pounds.

REGULATIONS

OVERVIEW

State of Alaska Tanner crab regulations begin on page 125 of the 2012–2014 Commercial King and Tanner crab regulation booklet. Specific regulations pertaining to Tanner crab fisheries in Registration Area J begin on page 147. The harvest strategy, 5 AAC 35.507 *Kodiak, Chignik, and South Peninsula Districts, C. bairdi Tanner Crab, Harvest Strategies* is located on pages 150–152. Following is a summary of 2013 Tanner crab fishing regulations in the Kodiak District. For additional information, contact the ADF&G office in Kodiak or refer to the ADF&G website at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercial.main>

SEASON OPENING WEATHER DELAY

The 2013 Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab season opens by regulation at 12:00 noon, January 15, 2013, unless delayed by weather. The entire Kodiak District fishery will be delayed for 24 hours if the January 14, **4:00 a.m.** National Weather Service (NWS) marine forecast for the current day and night plus the following day and night in **Area 132** contains gale warnings. If after the initial weather delay, the 4:00 a.m. NWS marine forecast for the current day and night plus the following day and night again contains gale force wind warnings, the season opening will be delayed an additional 24 hours. Season opening delays may continue on a rolling 24-hour basis until 12:00 noon on January 25, when the season will open regardless of marine weather forecasts.

REGISTRATION, TANK INSPECTIONS, VESSEL SIZE RESTRICTIONS, AND TENDERS

All vessels must be registered with ADF&G prior to fishing. Vessel operators must have a 2013 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit card (TB9BK or TB9AK) for the Kodiak District and a current 2013 commercial vessel license prior to registration. The Kodiak District fishery is a limited entry fishery and vessels that do not qualify for a CFEC limited entry permit may not participate. Information on permits and vessel licenses can be obtained from ADF&G in Kodiak or CFEC in Juneau (Appendix A).

CFEC adopted two vessel length categories for the issuance of Kodiak District limited entry Tanner crab permits; vessels with an overall length of less than 60 feet and vessels from 60 to 120 feet in overall length. Persons receiving a permit for a vessel from 60 to 120 feet may use their permit on vessels smaller than 60 feet. A large vessel permit card cannot be used on a vessel greater than 120 feet in overall length. Persons receiving a permit for vessels less than 60 feet in overall length may not make landings on a vessel 60 feet or longer in overall length.

The Kodiak District is a superexclusive registration district for Tanner crab, 5 AAC 35.506 *Area J Registration (a)*. A vessel validly registered for a superexclusive registration area may not be used to take Tanner crab in any other registration district during the same registration year, 5 AAC 35.005 (c). When a tank inspection is required, a vessel is considered validly registered for the Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery upon completion of an ADF&G tank inspection, 5 AAC 35.020 (e) and (f). A valid registration does not require fishery participation or landing. A vessel operator that registers for the 2013 Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery may not operate any other Tanner crab vessel registered for any other superexclusive registration area within the same registration year, 5 AAC 35.020 (h). The Tanner crab registration year is August 1–July 31, 5 AAC 35.020 (c).

Vessel operators must register to fish in a single section of the Kodiak District. A vessel may not be registered for, or fish in, multiple sections simultaneously. After a section closure, vessel operators may change section registration by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak (Appendix A). Registration, pot storage, and delivery requirements for vessels that change section registrations are outlined in the Summary of Closure Scenarios section later in this document.

Tank inspections are required for vessels with a circulating sea water system to confirm crab are not onboard the vessel prior to the season opening. Circulating sea water systems include on-deck containers with water circulated by pumps, hoses, or other means. Gear will also be inspected at the time of tank inspection to ensure compliance with gear regulations. Tank inspections will begin at noon on January 14 unless the fishery is delayed due to weather. Arrangements will be made to accommodate tank inspections in Old Harbor. Upon successful completion of tank inspection a final 2013 shellfish registration will be issued to the vessel. A copy of the vessel registration must remain onboard the vessel while fishing. The registration becomes invalid 24 hours after closure of the fishery.

All tender vessels must register with ADF&G prior to tendering. Tender vessels may not have a pot-hauling block or other Tanner crab gear onboard and may not be used to harvest Tanner crab.

FISHING PERIODS AND POT LIMITS

Fishing gear may only be operated for 10 hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:59 p.m. each day. Baited gear may be left in the water for 14 hours each night from 6:00 p.m. to 7:59 a.m., 5 AAC 35.510 *Fishing Seasons for Registration Area J (a)(1)*.

Based on the department's assessment of effort, manageability, and harvest rate, daily fishing periods may be increased when effort is low and it appears the GHL will not be fully harvested by the end of the regulatory season (March 31).

Based on the GHL, the pot limit for 2013 Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery will be **20 pots per vessel**, 5 AAC 35.525 *Lawful Gear for Registration Area J (c)(1)(A)*.

GEAR AND BUOY TAGS

Commercial Tanner crab pots may not be more than 10 feet long by 10 feet wide by 42 inches high with rigid tunnel eye openings that are less than five inches (13 cm) in height. Individual tunnel eye openings must be more than 36 inches in perimeter. Ring nets are not legal gear in the Kodiak District for commercial harvest of Tanner crab. Specific regulations regarding legal pot dimensions can be found under 5 AAC 35.050 *Lawful Gear for Tanner Crab* on page 129 of the crab regulations.

To ensure compliance with pot limit regulations, the main or trailer buoy on each pot must display one fishery-specific identification tag (buoy tag) issued by ADF&G for the current year. Buoy tags may be purchased at a cost of \$1.50 per tag at the ADF&G office in Kodiak. After purchase, buoy tags may be also be mailed through the U.S. Postal Service. Tags will not be mailed via U.S. Postal Service after December 31, 2012. A valid 2013 Tanner crab CFEC permit card (TB9AK or TB9BK) is required to receive tags. More information on buoy tags can be found in 5 AAC 35.526 *Tanner Crab Pot Marking Requirements for Registration Area J* or by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak at 907-486-1840.

Should buoy tags be lost during the fishery, replacement tags may be obtained by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak. The vessel owner, operator, or agent must provide the unique number(s) of each lost tag and complete an affidavit form describing how the tags were lost.

Pots with lost tags may be left on the fishing grounds but must be secured open with bait removed until replacement tags are affixed to the pot. Vessel operators must contact Department of Public Safety Division of Wildlife Troopers to report the location of untagged pots (see Appendix A for contact information).

BUOY MARKING REQUIREMENTS

Buoys attached to pots must comply with 5 AAC 35.051 *Tanner Crab Gear Marking Requirements* listed on page 129 and 5 AAC 35.526 *Tanner Crab Pot Marking Requirements for Registration Area J* on page 160 of the crab regulations. The buoy marked with the five-digit ADF&G number may not be marked with additional numbers; however, symbols and letters are acceptable on this buoy. Trailer or other buoys may be marked with any desired numbers, symbols, or letters to mark ownership or string sequence.

ESCAPE MECHANISMS

Escape mesh or rings are required on all Tanner crab pots. Each pot must contain at least one third of one vertical surface of the pot composed of not less than 7¼ inch stretched mesh webbing or have no less than four circular escape rings which have an inside diameter of at least five inches. Escape rings must be installed on the vertical plane of the pot to allow for escapement of undersized crab. Escape rings are not required to be placed within a certain distance from the bottom of the pot; however, ADF&G recommends placing rings within one mesh from the bottom of the pot to optimize escapement of undersized or female crab. Specific regulations on escape device requirements are located in 5 AAC 35.525 *Lawful Gear for Registration Area J* on pages 159–160 of the crab regulations.

In addition to escape mesh or rings, pots must be equipped with a biodegradable escape mechanism as described in 5 AAC 39.145 *Escape Mechanism for Shellfish and Bottomfish Pots* on page 58-59 of the crab regulations. All pots must contain an opening 18 inches or greater in length placed within six inches of the bottom of the pot laced, sewn, or secured together by a single length of untreated, 100 percent cotton twine no larger than 30 thread.

OPERATION OF OTHER POT GEAR, POT STORAGE, AND LANDING REQUIREMENTS

A person or vessel that operates pot gear (e.g., cod pots, subsistence pots) within the Kodiak District at any time during the 14 days immediately before the start of the 2013 Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery may not participate in the 2013 commercial Tanner crab fishery, 5 AAC 35.053 *Operation of Other Pot Gear*. While the Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery is open, vessels registered for the commercial Tanner crab fishery may not operate groundfish pots, including pots to catch Pacific cod for bait, 5 AAC 35.050 *Lawful Gear For Tanner Crab*. Pacific cod caught as bycatch in Tanner crab pots may not be sold; however, Pacific cod bycatch may be retained for bait and reported on fish tickets at the time of landing.

Up to 20 cone or pyramid pots may be stored for up to 30 days before and after the season in waters 25 fathoms or less with all bait and bait containers removed and doors not secured closed. Rectangular pots may be stored longer than 30 days before and after the season in waters 25 fathoms or less if bait and bait containers are removed and doors are secured open, 5 AAC 35.527 *Tanner Crab Pot Storage Requirements for Registration Area J* (5) and 5 AAC 35.052 *Tanner Crab Gear Storage Requirements*. Legal Tanner crab pots with buoy tags attached may be placed into shallow water storage during the 14-day stand down period. Once placed into storage, vessel operators may not retrieve pots to attach buoy tags during the 14-day stand down period. In addition, vessel operators may not retrieve gear from storage during the 24-hour period between tank inspection and the fishery opening. At the time of tank inspection, all gear onboard the vessel and in the water must have buoy tags attached.

No vessel may have more than the specified pot limit onboard or in wet storage in the Kodiak District while the vessel is validly registered for Tanner crab. Converted pots used as “storage boxes” to store crab in the water is not permitted unless the crab storage devices are attached to the vessel at all times.

Vessel operators delivering Tanner crab to ports outside the Kodiak District are required to contact the ADF&G office in Kodiak prior to leaving the district. Vessels delivering outside the district must provide the estimated number of crab onboard the vessel at the time of the closure,

delivery location and processing facility, and estimated time of arrival. Additional requirements exist for catcher-processors and vessels mechanically disabled. Vessels legitimately delayed due to circumstances of weather will be addressed on a case by case basis (5 AAC 35.031 *Tanner Crab Landing Requirements* (c)(2)).

After the closure of the Tanner crab season, vessels intending to participate in the Pacific cod fishery must deliver all crab and either remove all Tanner crab pots from the water or place pots into shallow-water storage before registering with ADF&G for the Pacific cod fishery. Additional provisions on the operation of other pot gear are located in 5 AAC 35.053 *Operation of Other Pot Gear* on page 130 of the crab regulations.

TANNER CRAB SIZE LIMIT

The legal minimum retainable size of Tanner crab in the Kodiak District is 5.5 inches (140 mm) carapace width, 5 AAC 35.060 *Size Limit for Tanner Crab*. Only legal-size male crab can be retained; all other crabs incidentally captured must be immediately returned to the water unharmed. King crab may not be legally retained for subsistence or personal use during the commercial Tanner crab fishery (5 AAC 02.021).

SUMMARY OF CLOSURE SCENARIOS

Delivery requirements and post-closure pot storage requirements vary depending on the type of closure (entire or partial section) and the amount of advance notice given for the closure. Following is a summary of closure scenarios, pot storage options, delivery requirements, and re-registration requirements contained in 5 AAC 35.030, 5 AAC 35.031, 5 AAC 35.052, 5 AAC 35.527, and 5 AAC 35.556.

Changing section registration prior to a section closure

- Vessel operators may change section registration prior to a section closure by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak; however, all crab harvested from the initial section must be delivered prior to targeting Tanner crab in a different open section.
- Vessel operators may place baited gear in the other open section prior to delivery, but may not retrieve that gear until all crab from the initial section has been delivered.

Closure of the entire section with six or more hours advance notice

- All pots must be open and unbaited at the time of the closure.
- Vessel operators are required to deliver all catch within 24 hours of the closure.
- Open and unbaited pots may be stored at any depth up to 72 hours after the section closure. After 72 hours, all gear remaining in the closed section must be removed from the water or placed in shallow water storage (25 fathoms or less).
- After a section closure, vessel operators may contact ADF&G from the fishing grounds and register for a different open section. Once registered, vessel operators may place baited gear in the other open section prior to delivery, but may not retrieve that gear until all crab from the initial section has been delivered.

Closure of the entire section with less than six hours advance notice

- Vessel operators are required to proceed directly to port at the time of the closure and deliver catch within 24 hours.

- After the closure vessel operators may not place gear in storage or retrieve pots from storage until all catch has been delivered.
- Vessel operators are required to return to the fishing grounds within 72 hours after delivery to rail dump all crab from any baited gear left on the grounds.
- If baited gear remains in the closed section after the initial delivery, a tank inspection will be required before vessels can register and resume fishing in a different open section.
- Vessel operators may register for a different open section only after completing delivery and legally storing gear in the closure area.

Partial closure of the section with six or more hours advance notice

This situation occurs when bays or other specific areas close prior to closure of the entire section.

- Pot gear in the closure area must be open and unbaited at the time of the closure.
- Vessel operators fishing within the closure area may be required to deliver all catch within 24 hours of the closure. Any changes to the delivery requirement will be provided by news release at the time of the closure announcement.
- Vessel operators may store open and unbaited pots in waters deeper than 25 fathoms for 72 hours in the closure area.
- Vessel operators may place baited gear in other areas of the section that remain open to fishing.
- Within the partial closure area, vessel operators may only operate gear during the daily fishing period (8:00 a.m. and 5:59 p.m.), even when retrieving unbaited gear after the closure.

Partial closure of the section with less than six hours advance notice

This scenario is unlikely. Should this type of closure occur, landing, pot storage, and registration requirements will be defined by news release at the time of the closure announcement.

INSEASON FISHERY MANAGEMENT

ADF&G will manage nearshore and offshore areas independently within the Kodiak District based on the distribution of crab observed during the 2012 trawl assessment survey. The distribution and abundance of legal-sized crab varies by location. Individual areas within each section may close to prevent overharvest of localized crab populations while other locations within the same section remain open.

Fishery performance as measured by catch per pot of legal crab will be closely monitored as will reports of undersized and/or female crab bycatch. Closures may occur before the total GHM is achieved if catch per pot indicates the number of legal-sized males has substantially declined or if excessive sorting of sublegal and female crabs is occurring. ADF&G will make every effort to allow sufficient time for vessels to configure gear for storage before a closure; however, the potential exists for short advance notice closures. The regulatory season closure date is March 31, 2013.

INSEASON CATCH REPORTING

ADF&G will manage the Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab fishery using inseason catch reports provided by permit holders. Inseason management allows for real-time fishery decisions and the flexibility to consider changes in crab abundance, effort, fleet behavior, and weather.

Catch reports will be taken using satellite dispatch, e-mail (mark.stichert@alaska.gov), or phone (907-486-1853). **The Kodiak ADF&G shellfish management office dispatch number is 7894.** Vessel operators will be issued a reporting worksheet during registration.

Reports will be initially taken at 6:00 p.m. daily. ADF&G may change the reporting schedule if effort declines. Encryption codes will be provided to vessel operators during registration. Vessel operators are not required to encrypt daily harvest reports, but codes may be used at any time to transmit or relay confidential catch information.

Closure announcements will be communicated to the fleet by dispatch, distributed via the ADF&G news release email subscription service (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>), placed on the ADF&G recorded information phone (907-486-4559, option 2), and relayed through participating processors and NWS marine weather VHF forecasts when available.

REFERENCES CITED

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FIGURES

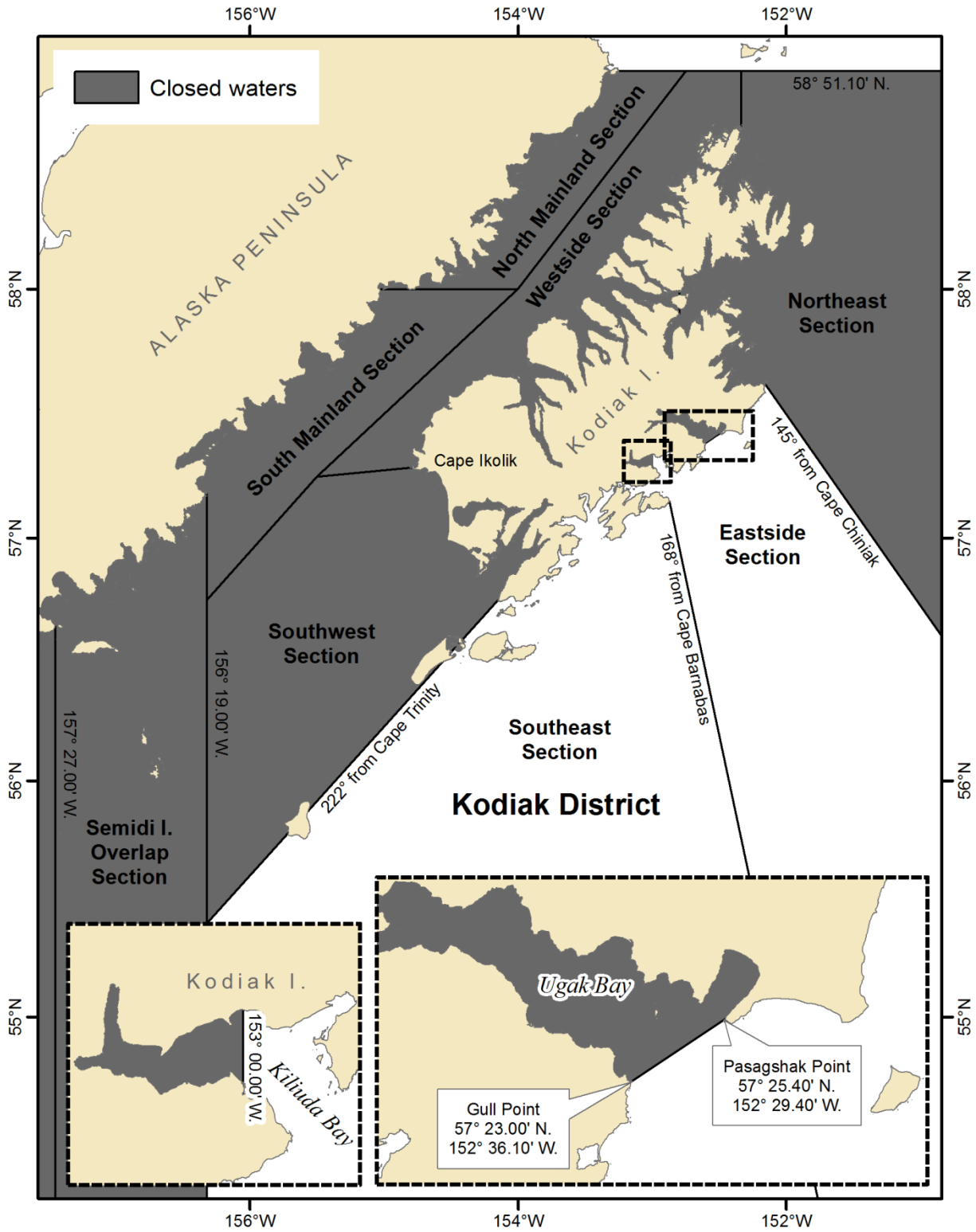


Figure 1.—Kodiak Tanner crab District and Sections, 2012/2013.

**APPENDIX A. CONTACT PERSONS, AGENCIES,
AND PHONE NUMBERS**

Appendix A1.–List of fishery contacts, by agency and location.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.southwest>

Kodiak Office

Mail Address: 211 Mission Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

Physical Address: 211 Mission Road
2nd floor, Kodiak, Alaska

Phone: (907) 486-1840
Record-A-Phone: (907) 486-4559
FAX: (907) 486-1824
Satellite Dispatch: 7894

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