Fishery Management Plan for the Kodiak District Commercial Tanner Crab Fishery, 2020

by Natura Richardson

December 2019

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		all standard mathematical	
deciliter	dL	Code	AAC	signs, symbols and	
gram	g	all commonly accepted		abbreviations	
hectare	ha	abbreviations e.g., Mr., Mrs		alternate hypothesis	H _A
kilogram	kg		AM, PM, etc.	base of natural logarithm	е
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	<i>(a)</i>	confidence interval	CI
millimeter	mm	compass directions:		correlation coefficient	
		east	Е	(multiple)	R
Weights and measures (English)		north	Ν	correlation coefficient	
cubic feet per second	ft ³ /s	south	S	(simple)	r
foot	ft	west	W	covariance	cov
gallon	gal	copyright	©	degree (angular)	0
inch	in	corporate suffixes:		degrees of freedom	df
mile	mi	Company	Co.	expected value	Ε
nautical mile	nmi	Corporation	Corp.	greater than	>
ounce	oz	Incorporated	Inc.	greater than or equal to	\geq
pound	lb	Limited	Ltd.	harvest per unit effort	HPUE
quart	qt	District of Columbia	D.C.	less than	<
yard	yd	et alii (and others)	et al.	less than or equal to	\leq
-	-	et cetera (and so forth)	etc.	logarithm (natural)	ln
Time and temperature		exempli gratia		logarithm (base 10)	log
day	d	(for example)	e.g.	logarithm (specify base)	log ₂ , etc.
degrees Celsius	°C	Federal Information		minute (angular)	,
degrees Fahrenheit	°F	Code	FIC	not significant	NS
degrees kelvin	K	id est (that is)	i.e.	null hypothesis	Ho
hour	h	latitude or longitude	lat or long	percent	%
minute	min	monetary symbols		probability	Р
second	s	(U.S.)	\$,¢	probability of a type I error	
		months (tables and		(rejection of the null	
Physics and chemistry		figures): first three		hypothesis when true)	α
all atomic symbols		letters	Jan,,Dec	probability of a type II error	
alternating current	AC	registered trademark	®	(acceptance of the null	
ampere	А	trademark	тм	hypothesis when false)	β
calorie	cal	United States		second (angular)	"
direct current	DC	(adjective)	U.S.	standard deviation	SD
hertz	Hz	United States of		standard error	SE
horsepower	hp	America (noun)	USA	variance	
hydrogen ion activity (negative log of)	pН	U.S.C.	United States Code	population sample	Var var
parts per million	ppm	U.S. state	use two-letter		
parts per thousand	ppt, ‰		abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA)		
volts	700 V				
watts	w W				
watto	vv				

FISHERY MANAGEMENT REPORT NO. 19-26

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE KODIAK DISTRICT COMMERCIAL TANNER CRAB FISHERY, 2020

by

Natura Richardson Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Kodiak

> Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Sport Fish, Research and Technical Services 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, Alaska, 99518-1565

> > December 2019

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Natura Richardson Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries 351 Research Court, Kodiak, AK 99615, USA

This document should be cited as follows:

Richardson, N. 2019. Fishery management plan for the Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab fishery, 2020. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fishery Management Report No. 19-26, Anchorage.

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ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview of regulations governing the Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab *Chionoecetes bairdi* fishery including vessel registrations, gear specifications, operation of pot gear, pot storage, landing requirements, fishing hours, and inseason reporting. The Eastside and Southeast sections open to commercial Tanner crab fishing at 12:00 noon January 15, 2020, unless delayed by weather. The total Kodiak District guideline harvest level (GHL) is 400,000 pounds with 300,000 pounds available in the Eastside Section and 100,000 pounds available in the Southeast Section. The gear limit is 20 pots per vessel. ADF&G will manage the Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab fishery using inseason catch reports. Section and subsection closures may occur before GHLs are fully harvested based on fishery performance, harvest distribution, or bycatch of non-target crab. Participants should note that delivery requirements and post-closure pot storage requirements vary depending on the type of closure and the amount of advance notice given.

Key words: Tanner crab, Chionoecetes bairdi, Kodiak District, Area J, regulations, commercial fishery

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 (5 AAC 35.505). The district is subdivided into eight sections: Northeast, Eastside, Southeast, Southwest, Westside, North Mainland, South Mainland, and Semidi Island Overlap (Figure 1).

HARVEST STRATEGY

Abundance and management thresholds must be met for a fishery to open. Mature male abundance thresholds computed at 50% of the long-term average (1973–1998) abundance are established for six sections (5 AAC 35.507(b)(1)(A–F)) and must be met or exceeded. A minimum of two sections must meet or exceed thresholds before a commercial fishery may open in the district (5 AAC 35.507(c)(1)). Additionally, in sections that meet or exceed thresholds, abundance must be sufficient to provide for a guideline harvest level (GHL) of at least 100,000 pounds per section and 400,000 pounds for the entire district (5 AAC 35.507(a)(3 and 4)).

The South Mainland and Semidi Island Overlap sections do not have mature male abundance thresholds and open concurrently with adjacent sections that have met biological and management thresholds (5 AAC 35.507(c)(2 and 3).

2020 GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVELS

Based on the 2019 Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) trawl survey, Eastside and Southeast sections met regulatory requirements for a 2020 commercial Tanner crab fishery. The total 2020 Kodiak District Tanner crab GHL is 400,000 pounds; the Eastside Section GHL is 300,000 pounds and the Southeast Section GHL is 100,000 pounds. The Northeast, Southwest, Westside, North Mainland, South Mainland, and Semidi Island Overlap sections did not meet regulatory requirements for a fishery to open and will remain closed for the 2020 season (Figure 1).

REGULATIONS

OVERVIEW

State of Alaska Tanner crab regulations begin on page 44 of the current (2017–2019) Commercial King and Tanner crab regulation booklet. Specific regulations pertaining to Tanner crab fisheries

in Registration Area J begin on page 68. Following is a summary of 2020 Tanner crab fishing regulations in the Kodiak District.

SEASON OPENING AND FISHING PERIODS

The 2020 commercial Tanner crab season opens by regulation at 12:00 noon, January 15, 2020, unless delayed by weather (5 AAC 35.510(a)(2)). The season will be delayed for 24 hours if the January 14, 4:00 a.m. National Weather Service (NWS) marine forecast for area PKZ132 (Eastside and Southeast sections) contains a gale warning for the current day and night (January 14), or the following day and night (January 15). If after the initial weather delay, the January 15, 4:00 a.m. NWS marine forecast again contains a gale warning, 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 January 25, when the season will open regardless of the marine forecast.

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

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

PERMITS AND REGISTRATION

The Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab fishery is a limited entry fishery with two Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits: one for vessels under 60 feet (TB9BK) and one for vessels up to 120 feet (TB9AK). Holders of a permit for vessels under 60 feet may not make landings on a vessel 60 feet or greater. Holders of a permit for vessels up to 120 feet may use their permit on any vessel 120 feet or less. Vessel operators must have a valid CFEC permit card and commercial vessel license prior to registering with ADF&G. Additional information on permits and vessel licenses can be obtained from CFEC in Juneau (Appendix A1).

All vessels must be validly registered with ADF&G prior to fishing. The Kodiak District is a superexclusive registration district for Tanner crab (5 AAC 35.506(a)). A <u>vessel</u> registered for the Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery may not be used to take Tanner crab in any other registration district during the same registration year (5 AAC 35.005(c)). A registration is validated upon being signed by an ADF&G representative, regardless of fishery participation or landings. A <u>vessel</u> <u>operator</u> that registers for the 2020 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)).

Registrations will be validated starting 26 hours before the fishery opens (5 AAC 35.506(k)(2)). Vessel tank and gear inspections are not required. The ADF&G office in Kodiak will be open on Tuesday, January 14 from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Registrations may be validated in person or via fax or e-mail beginning at 10:00 a.m. (nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov; Appendix A1). Registrations can also be validated by a designated representative of the department in Old Harbor at the Old Harbor Native Corporation Office from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. ADF&G staff will also be validating registrations in Kodiak at St. Paul (downtown) and St. Herman (Dog Bay) harbors; to locate staff, contact the dockside sampling cell phone (907-539-5954). If the fishery is delayed due to weather, the registration validation period will also be delayed. A copy of the vessel

registration must remain onboard the vessel while fishing. Registrations are automatically invalidated 24 hours after closure of the fishery.

Vessel operators must register to fish in either the Eastside or Southeast section. A vessel may not be registered for, or fish in, both sections at the same time. Vessel operators may change section registration before or after a section closure; however, they must notify ADF&G of their intent to change sections and deliver all crab onboard the vessel. Any gear in the original section must be open and unbaited prior to delivery. Vessel operators may place baited gear in the new section prior to delivery but may not retrieve that gear until all crab from the original section has been delivered.

All tender vessels must be registered 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.

GEAR LIMITS AND CONFIGURATION

Gear limits are based on the size of the GHL. The 2020 GHL is less than 2,000,000 pounds; therefore, the regulatory gear limit is 20 pots per vessel (5AAC 35.525(c)(1)(a)).

Commercial Tanner crab pots may not be more than 10 feet long by 10 feet wide by 42 inches high. Rigid tunnel eye openings must be less than five inches high and have a perimeter greater than 36 inches (5 AAC 35.050). Ring nets are not legal gear in the Kodiak District for commercial harvest of Tanner crab (5 AAC 35.525(a)).

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 7¹/₄ inch stretched mesh webbing or have at least four circular escape rings which have an inside diameter of at least five inches (5 AAC 35.525(b)(1)(A)). 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.

All pots must also contain a biodegradable escape mechanism consisting of an opening 18 inches or greater in length placed parallel to and within six inches of the bottom of the pot, and laced, sewn, or secured together by a single length of untreated, 100 percent cotton twine no larger than 30 thread and knotted at each end only (5 AAC 39.145).

BUOY TAGS AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS

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 (5 AAC 35.526(a)). Buoy tags can be purchased at a cost of \$1.50 per tag at the ADF&G office in Kodiak or via phone, e-mail, or fax (Appendix A1). After purchase, buoy tags may be mailed through the U.S. Postal Service. A valid 2020 Tanner crab CFEC permit card (TB9AK or TB9BK) is required to receive tags.

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 (5 AAC 35.526(b)). Pots with lost tags may be left on the fishing grounds but must be secured fully open with all bait and bait containers removed until replacement tags are affixed to the pot.

At least one buoy must be marked with the ADF&G vessel number and may not be marked with additional numbers (5 AAC 35.051); 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.

OPERATION OF OTHER POT GEAR AND POT STORAGE

A person or vessel that operates pot gear (e.g., cod or subsistence pots) within the Kodiak District at any time during the 14 days immediately before the start of the 2020 commercial Tanner crab fishery may not participate in the 2020 commercial Tanner crab fishery (5 AAC 35.053(1)). While the fishery is open, registered vessels may not operate groundfish pots, including pots to catch Pacific cod for bait (5 AAC 35.053(2)).

Prior to the season opening, up to 20 pots may be stored in waters 25 fathoms or less with all bait and bait containers removed; rectangular pots must have doors secured fully open, and cone and pyramid pots must have doors not secured closed (5 AAC 35.052(a)). Legal Tanner crab pots with buoy tags attached may be placed into shallow water storage during the 14 days prior to the fishery start. However, once placed into storage, vessel operators may not retrieve those pots prior to the start of the fishery, including the 26-hour period between registration validation and the fishery opening (5 AAC 35.053(1)).

Vessels may not have more than 20 pots 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 are not permitted unless the crab storage devices are attached to the vessel at all times.

TANNER CRAB SIZE LIMIT

The legal minimum retainable size of Tanner crab in Kodiak District is 5.5 inches carapace width (5 AAC 35.060). Only legal male Tanner crab may be retained; all other crabs incidentally captured must be immediately returned to the water unharmed (5 AAC 35.065). King crab may not be retained for subsistence or personal use during the commercial Tanner crab fishery (5 AAC 02.420; 35.053(2)).

LANDING REQUIREMENTS

Vessel operators are required to deliver all catch within 24 hours of the closure (5 AAC 35.031(c)). Vessels delayed due to weather or mechanical issues will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Vessel operators delivering Tanner crab to ports outside Kodiak District are required to contact the ADF&G office in Kodiak prior to leaving the district (5 AAC 35.031(b)). At the time of the closure, vessels delivering outside the district must provide the estimated number of crab onboard the vessel, delivery port, processing facility, and estimated time of arrival. All catcher-seller vessels must have a valid catcher-seller permit for the current year to sell live Tanner crab and must submit a fish ticket to the ADF&G Kodiak office within 7 days after delivery (5 AAC 39.130(c)).

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 targeting Pacific cod.

INSEASON CATCH REPORTING AND MANAGEMENT

ADF&G will manage the fishery using inseason catch reports provided by vessel operators. Catch reports will be taken using satellite dispatch, e-mail (nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov), or phone (907-486-1840). The Kodiak ADF&G shellfish management office dispatch numbers are 0715 and 7894. Vessel operators will be issued a reporting worksheet during registration. ADF&G will initially call vessels for reports starting at 6:00 p.m. daily. ADF&G may change the reporting schedule if effort declines.

The fishery will be closely monitored, and section or subsection closures may occur before GHLs are fully harvested based on fishery performance (measured by catch of legal crab per pot), harvest distribution, or bycatch of non-target crab. Specifically, in the Eastside Section an inseason subsection closure of nearshore waters may be required during the 2020 fishery. ADF&G will make every effort to communicate potential closures with as much notice as possible to allow sufficient time for vessels to configure gear for storage before a closure; however, the potential exists for short advance notice closures.

Closure announcements will be communicated to the fleet by dispatch, distributed via the ADF&G news release e-mail subscription service (<u>http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main</u>), and relayed through participating processors and NWS marine weather VHF forecasts when available.

SUMMARY OF CLOSURE SCENARIOS

Delivery requirements and 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.

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 open section prior to delivery, but that gear may not be retrieved until all crab from the initial section has been delivered. 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 or placing baited pots in the other open section prior to delivery.

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.

- All pot gear in the closure area must be open and unbaited at the time of the closure.
- 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 and communicated to the fleet by dispatch and distributed by news release at the time of the closure announcement.

FIGURES

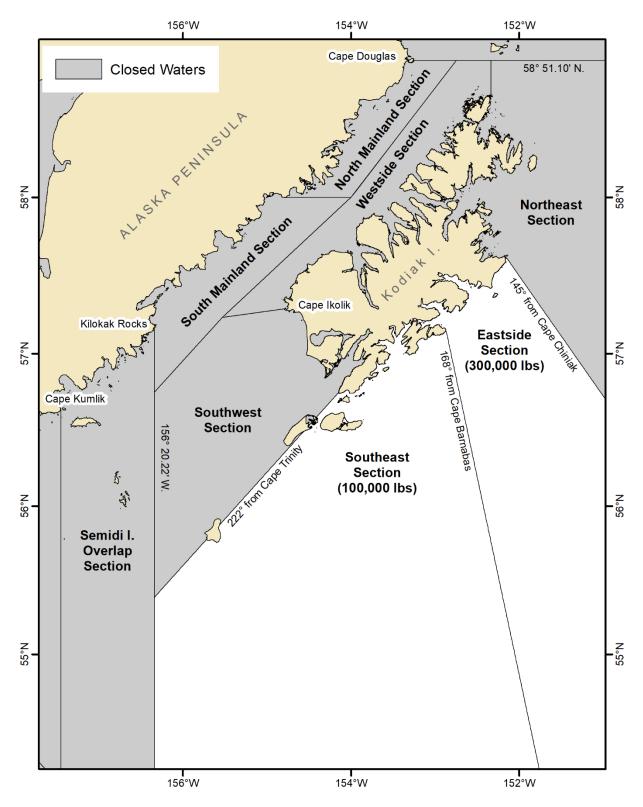


Figure 1.-Kodiak Tanner crab district and sections, 2020.

APPENDIX A. CONTACT PERSONS, AGENCIES, AND PHONE NUMBERS

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

ALASKA DEPARTM <u>Kodiak Office</u>	ENT OF FISH AND GAN	ME website: <u>htt</u>	tp://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adi	fg=fishingCommercialByArea.southwest
Mailing address: 351 Research Court Physical address:			351 Research Court	Phone: (907) 486-1840
Kodiak, Alaska 99615		2nd floor, Kodiak, Alaska	Satellite Dispatch: 0715 or 7894	
				Dockside cell: (907) 539-5954
				Fax: (907) 486-1824
Nathaniel Nichols	Kodiak, Chignik, Alask	a Peninsula Area She	llfish/Groundfish Manager	nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov
Natura Richardson	Natura Richardson Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Assistant Area Shellfish/Groundfish Man		Area Shellfish/Groundfish Manager	natura.richardson@alaska.gov
Kally Spalinger	Kally Spalinger Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Shellfish/		Groundfish Biologist	kally.spalinger@alaska.gov
Mark Stichert	Westward Region Shell	fish/Groundfish Mana	agement Coordinator	mark.stichert@alaska.gov
DIVISION OF ALASKA WILDLIFE TROOPERS		website: <u>http://www.dp</u>	os.state.ak.us/AWT/	
Kodiak Office				
Mailing address: 2921	≇A Mill Bay Road	Physical address:	2921 #A Mill Bay Road	Phone: (907) 486-4762
Kodia	k, Alaska 99615		Kodiak, Alaska	Fax: (907) 486-5480
Shane Nicholson	Sergeant			<u>larry.nicholson@alaska.gov</u>
COMMERCIAL FISHERIES ENTRY COMMISSION		website: <u>http://www.cfec.state.ak.us/</u>		
Juneau Office				
Mailing address: P.O. I	Box 110302	Physical address:	8800 Glacier Highway #109	Phone: (907) 789-6150
Junea	ı, Alaska 99811-0302		Juneau, Alaska	Fax: (907) 789-6170