Regional Information Report No. 4K21-10

Fishery Management Plan for the Chignik District Commercial Tanner Crab Fishery, 2022

by

Cassandra Whiteside

and

Kayla Bevaart

November 2021

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries

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Weights and measures (metric)

centimeter	cm
deciliter	dL
gram	g
hectare	ha
kilogram	kg
kilometer	km
liter	L
meter	m
milliliter	mL
millimeter	mm

Weights and measures (English)

cubic feet per second	ft^3/s
foot	ft
gallon	gal
inch	in
mile	mi
nautical mile	nmi
ounce	oz
pound	lb
quart	qt
yard	yd

Time and temperature

day	d
degrees Celsius	°C
degrees Fahrenheit	°F
degrees kelvin	K
hour	h
minute	min
second	s

Physics and chemistry

all atomic symbols	
alternating current	AC
ampere	A
calorie	cal
direct current	DC
hertz	Hz
horsepower	hp
hydrogen ion activity (negative log of)	pH
parts per million	ppm
parts per thousand	ppt, ‰
volts	V
watts	W

General

Alaska Administrative Code	AAC
all commonly accepted abbreviations	e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc.
all commonly accepted professional titles	e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc.
at	@
compass directions:	
east	E
north	N
south	S
west	W
copyright	©
corporate suffixes:	
Company	Co.
Corporation	Corp.
Incorporated	Inc.
Limited	Ltd.
District of Columbia	D.C.
et alii (and others)	et al.
et cetera (and so forth)	etc.
exempli gratia (for example)	e.g.
Federal Information Code	FIC
id est (that is)	i.e.
latitude or longitude	lat or long
monetary symbols (U.S.)	$, ¢
months (tables and figures): first three letters	Jan,...,Dec
registered trademark	®
trademark	™
United States (adjective)	U.S.
United States of America (noun)	USA
U.S.C.	United States Code
U.S. state	use two-letter abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA)

Mathematics, statistics

all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations	
alternate hypothesis	H_A
base of natural logarithm	*e*
catch per unit effort	CPUE
coefficient of variation	CV
common test statistics	(F, t, χ^2, etc.)
confidence interval	CI
correlation coefficient (multiple)	R
correlation coefficient (simple)	r
covariance	cov
degree (angular)	°
degrees of freedom	df
expected value	*E*
greater than	>
greater than or equal to	≥
harvest per unit effort	HPUE
less than	<
less than or equal to	≤
logarithm (natural)	ln
logarithm (base 10)	log
logarithm (specify base)	log_2, etc.
minute (angular)	'
not significant	NS
null hypothesis	H_O
percent	%
probability	P
probability of a type I error (rejection of the null hypothesis when true)	α
probability of a type II error (acceptance of the null hypothesis when false)	β
second (angular)	″
standard deviation	SD
standard error	SE
variance	
population	Var
sample	var

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ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview of regulations governing the Chignik 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. This document also provides information on the commercial Tanner crab fishery that occurs in the Semidi Island Overlap Section of the Kodiak District. The Chignik District will open for a commercial Tanner crab *Chionoecetes bairdi* fishery at 12:00 noon January 15, 2022, unless delayed by weather. The Semidi Island Overlap Section of the Kodiak District will also open to vessels validly registered for the Chignik District fishery. The Chignik District guideline harvest level (GHL) is 200,000 pounds, and the gear limit is 30 pots per vessel. The gear limit in the Semidi Island Overlap Section is 70 pots per vessel; no GHL is established for the Semidi Island Overlap Section. District and section closures may occur before GHLs are fully harvested based on fishery performance, harvest distribution, or bycatch of nontarget crab. Participants should note that delivery requirements and postclosure pot storage requirements vary depending on the type of closure and the amount of advance notice given.

Due to health concerns related to COVID-19, vessel operators are encouraged to complete registration forms by contacting the Kodiak Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office by phone, mail, email, or fax; however, all fishery related documents are also available in-person at the ADF&G office in Kodiak.

Key words: Tanner crab, *Chionoecetes bairdi*, Chignik District, Semidi Island Overlap Section, Area J, regulations, commercial fishery

INTRODUCTION

AREA DESCRIPTION

The Chignik District of Registration Area J for Tanner crab *Chionoecetes bairdi* includes all Pacific Ocean waters east of a line from the southernmost tip of Kupreanof Point to the eastern most point of Castle Rock, then extending to a point offshore (lat 54°6.07′N, long 157°27.00′W), and west of the longitude of Cape Kumlik (5 AAC 35.505(f); Figure 1). Chignik District permit holders may also target Tanner crab in the Semidi Island Overlap Section of the Kodiak District. The Semidi Island Overlap Section includes all waters west of the longitude near Kilokak Rocks (long 156°20.22'W) and east of the longitude of Cape Kumlik (5 AAC 35.505(a)(5); Figure 1).

HARVEST STRATEGY

Regulatory abundance and management thresholds must be met for a fishery to open. A mature male abundance threshold computed at 50% of the long-term average (1974–1998) abundance is established for the Chignik District (5 AAC 35.507(b)(2)) and must be met or exceeded. Additionally, abundance must be sufficient to provide for a guideline harvest level (GHL) of at least 200,000 pounds in the Chignik District (5 AAC 35.507(a)(2)).

The Semidi Island Overlap Section of the Kodiak District does not have a mature male abundance threshold and is opened concurrently with adjacent sections that have met biological and management thresholds (5 AAC 35.507(c)(3)).

COVID-19 MITIGATION

Due to health concerns related to COVID-19, and to minimize contact between vessel operators, processor staff, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) staff, ADF&G will implement the following changes for the 2022 commercial Tanner crab fishery:

- Buoy tags can be mailed directly to vessel operators upon request.

- The vessel registration process has been streamlined and can be completed digitally. Vessel operators are encouraged to register by contacting the Kodiak ADF&G office by phone, mail, email, or fax. Contact information is provided in Appendix A1.
- Completing and submitting reporting worksheets to ADF&G is strongly encouraged in lieu of dockside interviews to minimize contact between vessel operators and ADF&G dockside sampling staff (Appendix B1).

2022 GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVEL

Based on results from the 2021 ADF&G trawl survey, the Chignik District met regulatory requirements for a 2022 commercial Tanner crab fishery. The 2022 Chignik District Tanner crab GHL is 200,000 pounds (Figure 1).

By regulation, the Semidi Island Overlap Section opens when either the Southwest Section of the Kodiak District or the Chignik District are opened; therefore, the Semidi Island Overlap Section will open in 2022 to both Kodiak District and Chignik District permit holders (Figure 1).

REGULATIONS

OVERVIEW

Commercial Tanner crab regulations begin on page 58 of the current *2020–2021 Statewide King and Tanner Crab Commercial Fishing Regulations* booklet.[1] Specific regulations pertaining to Tanner crab fisheries in Registration Area J begin on page 91. The 2020–2021 regulation booklet is valid for the 2022 Tanner crab fishery; the statewide shellfish Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting scheduled for 2021 was postponed to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following is a summary of 2022 Tanner crab fishing regulations in the Chignik District.

SEASON OPENING AND FISHING PERIODS

The 2022 commercial Tanner crab season opens by regulation at 12:00 noon January 15, 2022, unless delayed by weather (5 AAC 35.510(b)(2)). In the Chignik District, the season will be delayed for 24 hours if the National Weather Service (NWS) marine forecast for Castle Cape to Cape Sarichef (PKZ155) issued at 4:00 a.m. January 14 contains a gale warning. If after the initial weather delay, the 4:00 a.m. January 15 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. In the Semidi Island Overlap Section, the season opening will be delayed if there is a weather delay for the Kodiak District fishery (5 AAC 35.510(a)(2)). It is possible that the seasons in the Chignik District and the Semidi Island Overlap Section will open on different dates based on the weather delay criteria for each area.

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(b)(1)).

Based on ADF&G'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).

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[1] https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/2020_2021_cf_king_tanner_crab.pdf (accessed 11/18/2021).

PERMITS AND REGISTRATION

Vessel operators must have a 2022 permit card for Chignik District Tanner crab (T09L) and a current 2022 commercial vessel license prior to registering with ADF&G. Permit cards and vessel licenses can be obtained from the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) in Juneau (Appendix A1). Tanner crab may not be taken in the Chignik District by vessels greater than 58 feet in overall length (5 AAC 35.590(b)).

All vessels must be validly registered with ADF&G prior to fishing. The Chignik District is a superexclusive registration district for Tanner crab (5 AAC 35.506(a)). A registration is validated upon being signed by an ADF&G representative, regardless of fishery participation or landings. A vessel registered for the Chignik 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 vessel operator that registers for the 2022 Chignik 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 to July 31 (5 AAC 35.020(c)).

Registrations will be validated starting 24 hours before the fishery opens (5 AAC 35.506(k)(1)). Vessel tank and gear inspections are not required. The ADF&G office in Kodiak will be open on Friday 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 12:00 noon (Appendix A1). The Chignik City Clerk's office (907-749-2280) in Chignik Bay will be available to facilitate fishery registration by scanning or faxing registrations to ADF&G Kodiak and printing finalized copies for registered vessels. 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 Chignik District or the Semidi Island Overlap Section; a vessel may not be registered for, or fish in, both 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 (5 AAC 35.033). Catcher vessels participating in the Tanner crab fishery cannot transport crab for other registered catcher vessels.

GEAR LIMITS AND CONFIGURATION

Gear limits in the Chignik District are determined by the size of the GHL. The 2022 GHL is less than 2,000,000 pounds; therefore, the regulatory gear limit in the Chignik District is 30 pots per vessel (5 AAC 35.525(c)(2)). The Semidi Island Overlap Section pot limit is 70 pots per vessel (5 AAC 35.507(c)(3)(C)).

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 Chignik 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 7¼ 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)). Separate buoy tags are required for gear operated in the Semidi Island Overlap Section. 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 2022 Tanner crab CFEC permit card (T09L) is required to receive tags.

Should buoy tags be lost during the fishery, replacement tags may be obtained by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak (Appendix A1). 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 buoy.

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., commercial Pacific cod or subsistence pots) within the Chignik District at any time during the 14 days immediately prior to the start of the 2022 commercial Tanner crab fishery may not participate in the 2022 commercial Tanner crab fishery (5 AAC 35.053(a)(1)). While the Tanner crab fishery is open, registered vessels may not operate groundfish pots, including pots to catch Pacific cod for bait (5 AAC 35.053(b)).

Prior to the season opening, up to 30 pots may be stored in waters 25 fathoms or less in the Chignik District 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 24-hour period between registration validation and the fishery opening (5 AAC 35.053(a)(1)).

Vessels may not have more than 30 pots onboard or in wet storage while the vessel is validly registered for Tanner crab in the Chignik District; pots in excess of the 30-pot limit may not be placed into wet storage in the Semidi Island Overlap Section unless the vessel is validly registered to fish in the Semidi Island Overlap Section. 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 Chignik 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; 5 AAC 35.053(b)).

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 the Chignik 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 seven 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 (7894), phone (907-486-1840), text/inReach (907-512-5841), or email (nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov). Vessel operators will be issued a reporting worksheet during registration (Appendix B1). ADF&G will initially call vessels for reports starting at 9:00 a.m. daily, but the reporting schedule may change if effort declines.

Completion of reporting worksheets is strongly encouraged (Appendix B1). Report vessel name, area fished, number of pots lifted, and number of crab retained, and fill in each day's catch individually. For each date fished, draw the location of the pot string(s) on the map provided. To ensure confidentiality, completed reports can be returned to ADF&G dockside staff or the ADF&G Kodiak office upon each delivery; reports may also be emailed (nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov) or texted (907-512-5841). Vessel operators who do not turn in a

reporting worksheet for each delivery may be contacted by dockside staff to complete a confidential interview.

The fishery will be closely monitored, and a full or partial district closure may occur before the GHL is fully harvested based on fishery performance (measured by catch of legal crab per pot), harvest distribution, or bycatch of nontarget crab. 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.

Because there is no established GHL for the Semidi Island Overlap Section, inseason management actions will be based solely on fishery performance. If catch per pot of legal males is low or if bycatch of nontarget crab is high, full or partial section closures may occur before the regulatory season closure on March 31.

Closure announcements will be communicated to the fleet by dispatch, distributed via the ADF&G advisory announcement e-mail subscription service (http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main), and relayed through participating processors.

SUMMARY OF CLOSURE SCENARIOS

Delivery requirements and pot storage requirements vary depending on the type of closure (entire or partial district) 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 district 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 seven days after the Chignik District closure. After seven days, all gear remaining in the closed district must be removed from the water or placed in shallow water storage (25 fathoms or less).
- After the Chignik District closure, vessel operators may contact ADF&G from the fishing grounds and register for the Semidi Island Overlap Section. Once registered, vessel operators may place baited gear in the Semidi Island Overlap Section prior to delivery, but that gear may not be retrieved until all crab from the Chignik District has been delivered. Vessel operators may only operate gear during the daily fishing period (8:00 a.m. to 5:59 p.m.) even when retrieving unbaited gear after the closure or placing baited pots in the Semidi Island Overlap Section prior to delivery.

Closure of the entire district 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 Chignik District after the initial delivery, a tank inspection will be required before vessels can register and resume fishing in the Semidi Island Overlap Section.
- Vessel operators may register for the Semidi Island Overlap Section only after completing delivery and legally storing gear in the closure area.

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

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

- 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 seven days in the closure area.
- Vessel operators may place baited gear in other areas of the district 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. to 5:59 p.m.), even when retrieving unbaited gear after the closure.

Partial closure of the district 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 advisory announcement at the time of the closure announcement.

FIGURES

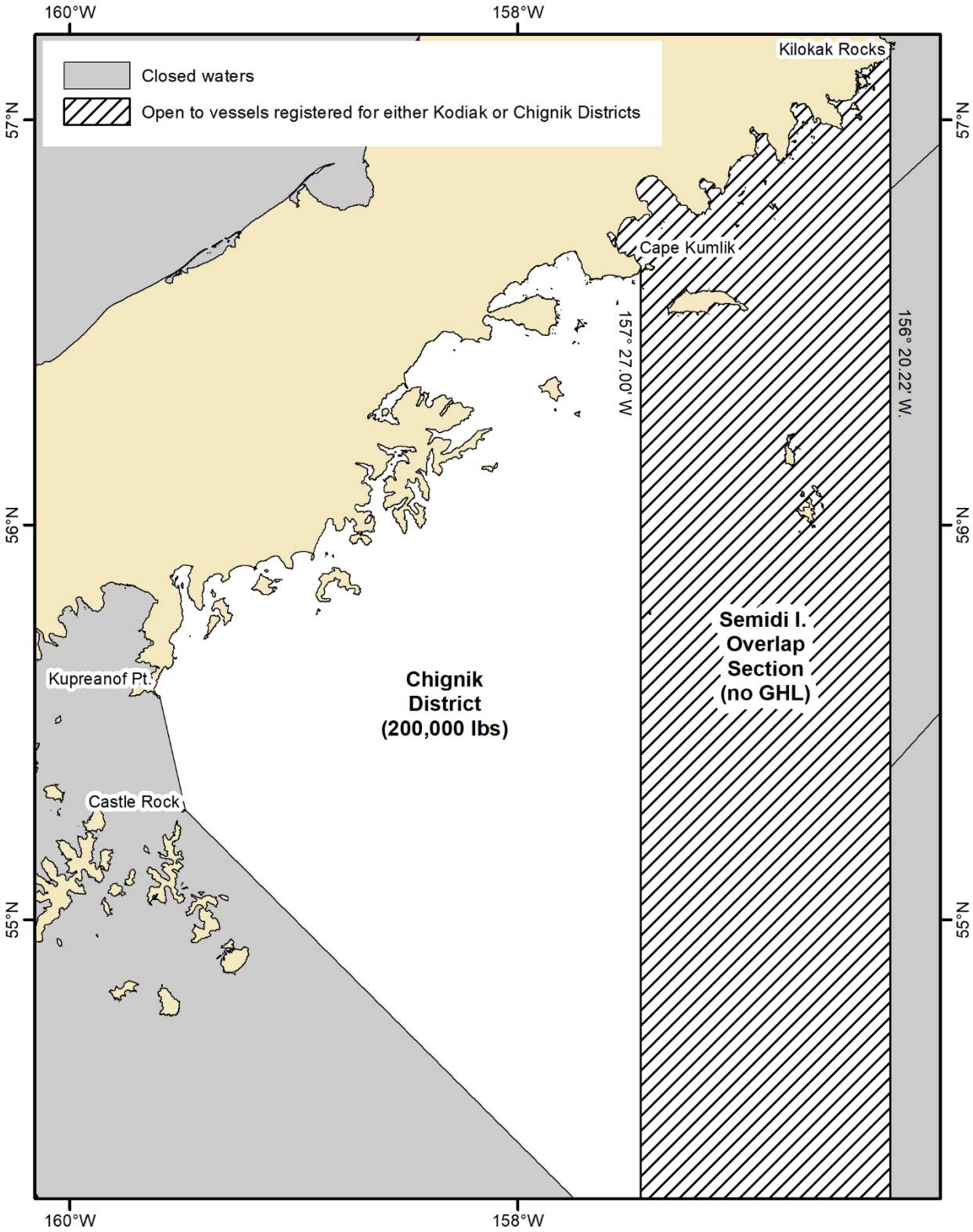


Figure 1.–District and section boundaries and guideline harvest level (GHL) for the Chignik District commercial Tanner crab fishery, 2022.

APPENDIX A: CONTACT PERSONS, AGENCIES, AND PHONE NUMBERS

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

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME website: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.southwest

Kodiak Office

Mailing address:	351 Research Court Kodiak, Alaska 99615	Physical address:	351 Research Court 2nd floor, Kodiak, Alaska	Phone: (907) 486-1840 Satellite Dispatch: 0715 or 7894 Text/inReach: (907) 512-5841 Dockside cell: (907) 539-5954 Fax: (907) 486-1824
Nathaniel Nichols	Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Area Shellfish/Groundfish Manager			nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov
Cassandra Whiteside	Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Assistant Area Shellfish/Groundfish Manager			cassandra.whiteside@alaska.gov
Kally Spalinger	Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Shellfish/Groundfish Biologist			kally.spalinger@alaska.gov
Mark Stichert	Westward Region Shellfish/Groundfish Management Coordinator			mark.stichert@alaska.gov

DIVISION OF ALASKA WILDLIFE TROOPERS website: http://www.dps.state.ak.us/AWT/

Kodiak Office

Mailing address:	2921 A Mill Bay Road Kodiak, Alaska 99615	Physical address:	2921 A Mill Bay Road Kodiak, Alaska	Phone: (907) 486-4762 Fax: (907) 486-5480
Shane Nicholson	Sergeant			larry.nicholson@alaska.gov

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES ENTRY COMMISSION website: http://www.cfec.state.ak.us/

Juneau Office

Mailing address:	P.O. Box 110302 Juneau, Alaska 99811-0302	Physical address:	8800 Glacier Highway #109 Juneau, Alaska	Phone: (907) 789-6150 Fax: (907) 789-6170

APPENDIX B: REPORTING WORKSHEET

Appendix B1.–Daily reporting worksheet for the Chignik Tanner crab fishery, 2022.

2022 Chignik District Tanner Crab Fishery Inseason Reporting Worksheet

Vessel Name Date	Item 1 Area fished (mark map on back)	Item 2 Number of pots lifted	Item 3 Number of crab retained
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

Instructions:

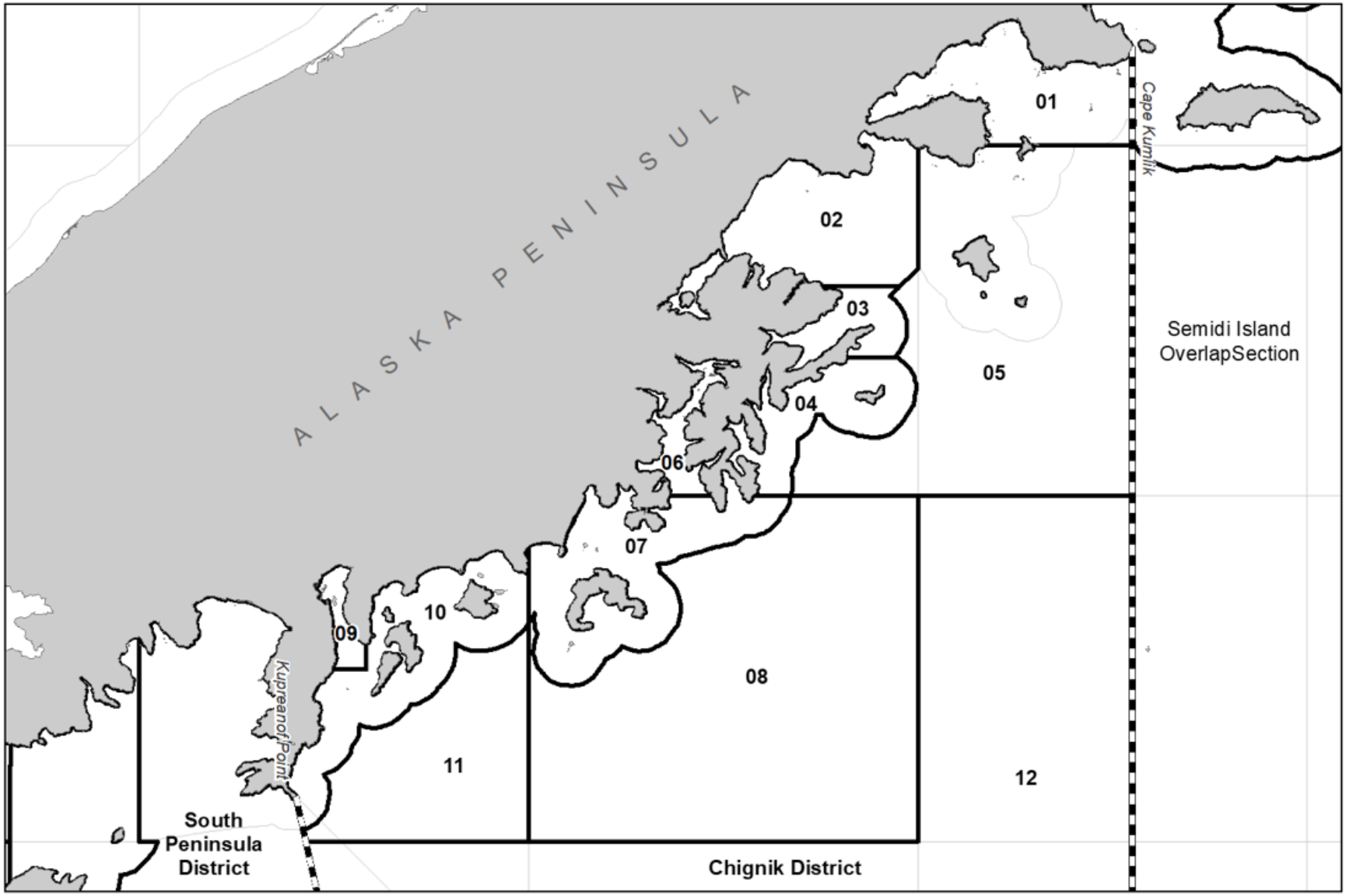
Report **DAILY** between 9:00 and 10:00 AM to ADF&G Kodiak by any of the following methods:

- Matrix dispatch **7894**
- Phone to ADF&G office (907) 486-1840
- Text/InReach to (907) 512-5841
- E-mail to *nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov*

Report **area fished, number of pots lifted, and number of crab retained** separately for each day and area fished (see map on back).

Do not combine daily reports. If one or more reporting calls are missed, communicate each day's catch individually during the next reporting call.

**Return this worksheet and map with fishing locations to ADF&G dockside sampler or shellfish management office.*

(**Do not** leave form at processor office or drop box.)

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