

PROPOSAL 248

5 AAC 58.022. Waters; season; bag, possession, annual and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet- Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area.

Establish an annual limit for Tanner crab sport fisheries, as follows:

5 AAC 58.022 is amended to read:

(a)(11) Tanner crab may only be taken as follows:

(A) only from **September 1** [JULY 15]

March 15, except as specified under 5 AAC 35.410(c); bag and possession limit of five male crab; **annual limit of 40**; minimum size is four and one-half inches across the widest part of the shell, including spines; and shellfish harvest recording form is required as specified in 5 AAC 58.026;

(B) notwithstanding the provisions of (a)(11)(A) of this section, if the provisions of 5 AAC 35.408(d) apply then male Tanner crab may be taken only from October 1 through the last day of February; bag and possession limit of three male crab; **annual limit of 20**; minimum size is four and one-half inches across the widest part of the shell, including spines; no more than one pot per person with a maximum of one pot per vessel; a shellfish harvest recording form is required as specified in 5 AAC 58.026

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 2017, the board adopted a department proposal to allow a reduced season sport fishery in the absence of trawl survey data or when abundance estimates were below the threshold required for the regular sport fishery season. This new fishery was structured to have a shorter season, reduced gear and limits, and was assumed to result in a sustainable harvest level. The preliminary harvest from the 2017-2018 sport fishery was 8,263 Tanner crab, which is sustainable but higher than the department had anticipated. Approximately 90% of the participants harvested fewer than 20 crabs for the season. The remaining 10% of the participants harvested 49% of the total crab harvested. To stabilize the Tanner crab harvest in this fishery, an annual limit would effectively restrict the harvest to a modest level while providing an equal harvest opportunity among users.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F19-155)
