

Subsistence Tanner Crab (3 proposals)

PROPOSAL 246

5 AAC 02.311. Customary and traditional subsistence uses of shellfish stocks and amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence.

Adopt amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence for crab in the Cook Inlet Area, outside the Anchorage-Matsu-Kenai Nonsubsistence Area, as follows:

(a) The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) finds that the shellfish stocks in that portion of the Cook Inlet Area outside the nonsubsistence area described in 5 AAC 99.015(a) (3) are customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence.

(b) The board finds that

(1) 850–1,275 gallons or 6,800–10,200 pounds (round weight) of hardshell clams are reasonably necessary for subsistence uses in that portion of the Cook Inlet Area described in (a) of this section from the easternmost point of Jakolof Bay to Point Pogibshi;

(2) 350–525 gallons or 2,800–4,200 pounds (round weight) of hardshell clams are reasonably necessary for subsistence uses in the remainder of that portion of the Cook Inlet Area described in (a) of this section that is not included in the area described in (1) of this subsection;

(3) 4,500–6,500 pounds of usable weight of shellfish, other than hardshell clams, crab, and shrimp, are reasonably necessary for subsistence uses in that portion of the Cook Inlet Area described in (a) of this section.

(4) The board finds that XXXX crab are reasonably necessary for subsistence uses in the Cook Inlet Area.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal provides an opportunity for the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) and public to consider adopting an ANS for subsistence findings for crab stocks in the Cook Inlet Area [outside the Anchorage-Matsu-Kenai Nonsubsistence Area described at 5 AAC 99.015(a)(3)]. There are ANS amounts for the other shellfish stocks that the board has found there are customary and traditional subsistence uses, but not for the crab stocks.

The language above suggests individual numbers of crab, all species combined, but the public and the board could also consider separate ANS findings by crab species, as well as pounds edible weight, as has been done for the other resources with a positive customary and traditional use finding. Please see the Community Subsistence Information System for a source of harvest and use data.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F19-137)

PROPOSAL 247

5 AAC 02.325. Subsistence Tanner crab fishery.

Adjust the opening date of the subsistence Tanner crab fishery east of Kachemak Bay in the Cook Inlet Area, as follows:

5 AAC 02.325 is amended to read:

(a) In that portion of the Cook Inlet Area outside the nonsubsistence area described in 5 AAC 99.015(a)(3), in the subsistence taking of Tanner crab,

(1) male Tanner crab may be taken only from **September 1** [JULY 15] through March 15, [EXCEPT THAT

(A) IN KACHEMAK BAY, EAST OF A LINE FROM POINT POGIBSHI TO ANCHOR POINT, MALE TANNER CRAB MAY BE TAKEN ONLY FROM SEPTEMBER 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31 AND FROM JANUARY 15 OR THE BEGINNING OF THE COMMERCIAL TANNER CRAB SEASON, WHICHEVER IS LATER, THROUGH MARCH 15; AND

(B) WHEN THE SUBSISTENCE TANNER CRAB FISHERY IS CLOSED IN THE KAMISHAK OR BARREN ISLANDS DISTRICTS, THE SUBSISTENCE TANNER CRAB FISHERY IS ALSO CLOSED IN THE EASTERN, OUTER, AND CENTRAL DISTRICTS AS SPECIFIED IN 5 AAC 35.410(C);]

(3) the daily bag and possession limit is five male Tanner crab[;] **and the seasonal limit is forty male Tanner crab;**

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of 5 AAC 02.307 and (a) of this section, if the provisions of 5 AAC 35.408(~~e~~[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 Tanner crab; **seasonal bag limit of twenty male Tanner crab;** no more than one pot per person with a maximum of one pot per vessel may be used to take Tanner crab.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 2017, the board changed the opening date for the subsistence Tanner crab fishery in the Cook Inlet Area to September 1 in Kachemak Bay, east of a line from Point Pogibshi to Anchor Point. However, the season opening date was not changed in the other areas in the Cook Inlet Area. This proposal would align the seasons for the entire management area and eliminate the closure period of January 1-15 in Kachemak Bay.

The Kamishak Bay trawl survey has not been conducted since 2012 due to budget constraints and extremely low abundance of legal Tanner crab so abundance estimates cannot be generated. Because noncommercial (sport and subsistence) fishing effort is so low in the remainder of the Cook Inlet Area outside of Kachemak Bay, managing the noncommercial fisheries in the entire Cook Inlet Area based on the Kachemak Bay survey would provide consistency between management approaches and simplify regulations. The reference to 5 AAC 35.408 in 5 AAC 02.325(b), Registration Area H Tanner crab harvest strategy, was amended to (e) due to proposed changes to that regulation for this same board cycle.

In 2017, the board adopted a department proposal to allow a noncommercial fishery with restricted season, gear, and bag limits in the absence of trawl survey data or when abundance estimates were below the thresholds required for the primary noncommercial fishery; those restrictions were in place

for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons. The preliminary harvest from the 2017-18 noncommercial fishery was 8,645 Tanner crab, which is higher than the department had anticipated. Approximately 90% of the participants harvested less 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 these fisheries annual seasonal limit would effectively restrict the harvest while providing an equal harvest opportunity among users.

The department is submitting a corresponding proposal to align season dates and implement the same seasonal limits for the Tanner crab sport fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-164)

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)
