

**PROPOSAL 271**

**5 AAC 35.525. Lawful gear for Registration Area J.**

Reduce size of stretched mesh escape webbing for *C. bairdi* Tanner crab pot gear in Registration Area J except in the Bering Sea District, as follows:

I suggest the board lower the legal escape web size to 6.75” for registration area J, except for the Bering Sea district, which would remain unchanged. The following change would be made to the language of the regulation:

5 AAC 35.525 Lawful gear for Registration Area J (b) (1) (A) Registration Area J, except the Bering Sea District, must have at least one-third of one vertical surface of the pot composed of not less than six and three-quarter inch stretched mesh webbing or have no less than four circular escape rings of no less than five inches inside diameter installed on the vertical surface of the pot;

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The legal escape web size for the Kodiak bairdi tanner crab fishery is too large. Presently Kodiak tanner pots are required to have either 1/3 of one vertical panel consist of 7.25” web, or 4 rings with inside diameter of no less than 5”. This size of escape web is not effective for harvesting 5.5” tanner crab; too many legal size crab escape (20-30% in my experience). Because of this, almost all fishers use the escape ring option, which results in increased handling and mortality of undersized crab.

**PROPOSED BY:** Patrick Pikus

(EF-F20-041)

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