

*Proposal 218 was modified to reflect the proposer's intent to apply to non-commercial fishery.*

**PROPOSAL 218**

**5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area., 5 AAC 55.055. Prince William Sound noncommercial shrimp fishery management plan., and 5 AAC 02.210. Subsistence shrimp fishery.**

Modify the start date for the Prince William Sound Area noncommercial shrimp pot fishing season, as follows:

5 AAC 02.210

(5) a person may take shrimp only from **May 1** [APRIL 15] through September 15;

5 AAC 55.022

(b)(5) shrimp may be taken as follows:

(A) may be taken from **May 1** [APRIL 15] – September 15; no bag, possession, or size limits;

5 AAC 55.055

(a)(3) shrimp may be taken with pots as follows:

(A) only from **May 1** [APRIL 15] through September 15;

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This proposal would be biologically beneficial to shrimp stocks and increase productivity in at least two ways. Firstly, on average April, August and September shrimp pots have a larger percentage of egg bearing females per pot than do shrimp caught in May, June and July. This amendment would allow more females to release their larvae to provide for shrimp production. Secondly, in April fishermen face a larger risk of gear loss which can lead to ghost fishing harming shrimp stocks. The greater risk of gear loss is due to fishing near ice sheets that unpredictably break up and move out of bays. Fishermen have lost large amounts of gear due to ice and that gear will ghostfish for a short while harming shrimp stocks. Gear loss is financially damaging to participants in the fishery and should be addressed if possible. Moving the season back a few weeks could give ice sheets in Prince William Sound such as those in Unakwik, Blackstone Bay, Columbia Bay, Valdez Arm, Port Wells, Port Nellie Juan and Icy Bay more time to break up before fishing commences.

**PROPOSED BY:** Whittier Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(EF-F17-096)

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