

PROPOSAL 65

5 AAC 34.107. Description of golden king crab fishing areas within Registration Area A.

Expand fishing area for the Southeastern Alaska Area commercial golden king crab fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 34.114 **Southeast Alaska Golden King Crab Management Plan**, (b) To the extent possible, golden king crab shall be managed as a separate stock in each defined fishing area.

Deciding which fishing area these new areas are added in to, and therefore managed in conjunction with, is a somewhat complex matter. The following outline is more to show the intent of adding the areas rather than a guideline of how they should be added.

5 AAC 34.107. Description of golden king crab fishing areas within Registration Area A. –

(a) Northern area: all waters of section 11-A, **District 13, north of the latitude of Point Gardner at 57.01.00 N. lat.** and all waters of Districts 12 and 15.

(b) Icy Straight Area: all waters of **Districts 14 and 16.**

(c) Northern Stephens Passage Area: all waters of Sections 11-B and 11-C.

(d) East Central Area: all waters of Section 11-D, District 10, and District 9 east of a line from Kingsmill Point at 56.50.00 N. lat., 134.25.17 W. long. to Point Gardner at 57.01.00 N. lat., 134.37.00 W. long., **and all waters of District 8.**

(e) Mid-Chatham Straight Area: all waters of District 9 north of the latitude of Point Ellis at 56.33.67 N. lat., and west of a line from Kingsmill point to Point Gardner, **and all waters of District 13, south of the latitude of Point Gardner and North of the latitude of Point Ellis.**

(f) Lower Chatham Straight Area: all waters of **Districts 9 and 13, south of the latitude of Point Ellis.**

(g) Southern Area: all waters of **Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.**

(h) Outside Area: all waters of Registration Area A not described in a-g.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current regulatory description of Golden King crab fishing areas within Registration Area A does not include all waters of Registration Area A. Not included in the description are all of : Districts 3, 16, and (the as of yet undefined) Southeast Outside waters; portions of Districts 5, 7, 8, and 13. Because these areas are not in the description of Golden King Crab fishing areas, they are described in the Southeast Golden King Crab Fishery Announcements as “not open”. They are essentially closed to fishing for no other reason than the fact that they are not described as fishing areas.

PROPOSAL 66

5 AAC 34.110. Fishing seasons for Registration Area A.

Implement weather-related fishery closure delays for the Southeastern Alaska Area commercial golden king crab fishery, as follows:

(g) An area closure may be delayed if the National Weather Service forecast for the area contains gale force wind warnings of 35 knots and higher on the 4:00 a.m. forecast for the 2 days preceding and the day of an area closure in which case the area closure will be delayed 24 hours. If after the initial delay gale warnings continue the area closure may be delayed an additional 24 hours. An area closure delay may continue until weather improves. Managers shall take into account tidal conditions when selecting final closure day after a weather delay. For the purpose of this subsection, the corresponding National Weather Service Forecast shall be consulted for each area.

(1) Southern Lynn Canal;

(2) Northern Chatham Straits;

(3) Southern Chatham Straits;

(4) Stephens Passage;

(5) Frederick Sound;

(6) Clarence Strait;

(7) Southeast Outside Waters.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unsafe weather conditions at time of closure of golden king crab areas in Registration Area A.

Currently in regulation there is language to delay the start of the golden king crab fishery for safety reasons due to weather. Yet there is nothing in regulation to delay the closure of areas based on the same criteria.

When asked for a delay of closure of an area because of unsafe conditions I was told that the department was unable to do that after a closure announcement had been made.

Other solution would have been for department to create an emergency order delaying season. While capable of doing this department refused to use this tool. I think putting criteria in regulation takes the burden off of managers shoulders.

PROPOSED BY: Yancey Nilsen

(EF-F17-066)

PROPOSAL 67

5 AAC 34.110. Fishing seasons for Registration Area A.

Establish a regulatory closure date for the Southeastern Alaska Area commercial golden king crab fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 34.110(b) is amended to read:

(b) Male golden king crab may be taken only from 12:00 noon on the date with the smallest Juneau tidal range between February 10 and February 17, as announced by emergency order **through November 15.** [;UNTIL THE SEASON IS CLOSED BY EMERGENCY ORDER]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The purpose of this proposal is to provide maximum fishing opportunity while allowing the department adequate time to assess fishery data after the season closes. The proposed season end date provides a three-month closure for processing and analysis of fishery data; similar to what is provided for the Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery. Setting a fixed season end date also allows fishery participants to better plan their annual fishing operations. An end date in regulation would not supersede current management practices of targeting GHGs by fishery area and closing fishery areas by emergency order when GHGs are met, or closing areas short of GHGs due to conservation concerns.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F17-106)

PROPOSAL 68

5 AAC 34.114. Southeast Alaska Golden King Crab Management Plan.

Define methods used to set guideline harvest levels in the Southeastern Alaska Area commercial golden king crab fishery, as follows:

(d) The Policy on King and Tanner Crab Resource Management (90-04-FB, March 23,1990) states that a Guideline Harvest Level is a preseason estimate of the level of allowable king and Tanner crab harvest. In those fisheries with accurate population estimates the appropriate harvest rate is applied to the best point estimate to determine the GHG. For those fisheries without surveys or historical catch information adequate for estimating the population size, the GHG will be set based on historical fishery performance, catch, and population trend. Due to the lack of formal assessments and only data being available from the fishery, each Golden King crab area shall open for a set of tides to a pre-season guideline harvest level that is a minimum of 10% of the upper range of the guideline harvest range set for the area. After one set of tides, the GHG can be re-assessed and the fishery will be managed in-season accordingly.

(e) In-season adjustments may be made to the guideline harvest level and length of the fishing season. Information upon which such adjustments are based may include: 1.) overall fishing effort; 2.) catch per unit of effort and rate of harvest; 3.) relative abundance of Golden King

crab; 4.) achievement of guideline harvest level (GHL); 5.) proportion of soft-shelled crabs and rate of dead loss; 6.) general information on stock condition including adequacy of reproductive stock; 7.) timeliness and accuracy of catch reporting; 8.) adequacy of subsistence harvests; 9.) the impact of severe or unexpected environmental conditions on the handling and trapping morality of crab; and 10.) other factors that affect ability to meet objectives of the policy. When this information shows that continued fishing effort would jeopardize the reproductive viability of king crab stocks within a registration area, or continued fishing would be counter to the goal and policies established by the Board, the registration area or a portion of the registration area will be closed by Emergency Order.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Amend the *Southeast Alaska Golden King Crab Management Plan* to further clarify for fishermen the expectations of how the fishery will be managed.

PROPOSED BY: Petersburg Vessel Owner’s Association and Southeast Alaska Fishermen’s Alliance (HQ-F17-058)

PROPOSAL 69

5 AAC 34.115. Guideline harvest ranges for Registration Area A.

Reduce Southeastern Alaska Area commercial golden king crab fishery guideline harvest ranges, as follows:

5 AAC 34.115(b) is amended to read:

(b) In Registration Area A, the guideline harvest ranges for the taking of golden king crab in the following areas are:

- (1) Northern Area: 0 – **145,000** [175,000] pounds;
- (2) Icy Strait Area: 0 – **55,000** [75,000] pounds;
- (3) North Stephens Passage Area: 0 – 25,000 pounds;
- (4) East Central Area: 0 – **225,000** [300,000] pounds;
- (5) Mid-Chatham Strait Area: 0 – 150,000 pounds;
- (6) Lower Chatham Strait Area: 0 – 50,000 pounds;
- (7) Southern Area: 0 – 25,000 pounds;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 2009, the Alaska Board of Fisheries increased the upper end of guideline harvest ranges (GHRs) in three of seven golden king crab fishery areas (Northern, Icy Strait, and East Central). The golden king crab fishery in Southeast Alaska has declined considerably since the 2012/2013 season, similar to stock declines during the 1990s after intense fishing pressure in the 1980s. This proposal would lower the upper end of the GHR ranges for the Northern, Icy Strait, and East Central fishery areas to their previous levels which are more representative of the long-term range of harvest levels comprising maximum sustained yield for these stocks than are the status quo GHRs.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F17-107)

PROPOSAL 70

5 AAC 34.125. Lawful gear for Registration Area A.

Reduce the Southeastern Alaska Area commercial golden king crab fishery pot limit from 100 pots per vessel to 80 pots per vessel, as follows:

5 AAC 34.125(b)(2) is amended to read:

(b)(2) when the commercial golden king crab season is open in Registration Area A, and the commercial red king crab or Tanner crab season is closed, no more than **80** [100] king crab pots may be operated from a vessel registered to fishing for king crab;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A golden king crab pot reduction to 80 pots would mirror the pot allowance currently in regulation for the Tanner crab fishery, which has the same start date as the golden king crab fishery. Reducing the number of pots in the fishery will help to ease fishing pressure on the Southeast Alaskan golden king crab stock and improve management precision in targeting fishery area guideline harvest levels.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F17-108)
