

Submitted by Member Jensen

Management measures shall be based on guidelines from "POLICY ON KING AND TANNER CRAB RESOURCE MANAGEMENT" (#90-04-FB, March 23, 1990) "The following management measures are available as tools to be used in order to carry out the policies on king and Tanner crab management. Individual measures should be applied as necessary in areas and fisheries depending on available information and fishery characteristics"

Size Limits "To provide for protection against over harvest on stocks where harvest rates are unknown or difficult to regulate, size limits are set to increase the probability of mating prior to harvest."

Sex Restrictions. "Harvest of king and Tanner crabs is limited to males only in an attempt to provide full fertilization of females and increase the chances of reproductive success"

Fishing Seasons. "Biological seasons should be set to minimize the harvest of king and Tanner crabs during times surrounding the annual mating, molting, and egg hatching periods and for a sufficient time after molting to allow safe handling and acceptable product quality"

Guideline Harvest Levels (GHL) "A preseason estimate of the level of allowable king and Tanner crab harvest is established for each fishery. For those fisheries without surveys or historical catch information adequate for estimating the population size, the GHL will be set based on historical fishery performance, catch, and population trend.

Inseason Adjustments "Inseason 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 king or Tanner crabs; (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"

Other Measures. "To meet the goal and policies for management of these fisheries, it may be necessary for the Board to adopt additional regulations ... gear limitations, and other measures."

Gear Types. "Fishing for king and Tanner crabs is limited to pots, ring nets, or diving gear depending on area"

Current Seasons:

See - 5 AAC 35.510. Fishing seasons for Registration Area J "In the Western Aleutian District, pots may be operated to take Tanner crab only during a season opened by emergency order from 12:00 noon November 1 through 12:00 noon March 31"

See - 5 AAC 34.610. Fishing seasons for Registration Area O "The commissioner may open and close, by emergency order, a season for male red king crab in the Adak District under 5 AAC 34.616, beginning 12:00 noon August 1 and ending no later than 11:59 p.m. February 15"

Option A: (Preferred) Remove from the FMP the twelve state-managed stocks for which NMFS and the Council find that the State of Alaska has a legitimate interest in the conservation and management and for which there is either no directed fishery, a limited incidental or exploratory fishery, or the majority of catch occurs in State waters.

“In addition, the stocks listed below are under consideration for removal from the Federal FMP under Option A. These stocks have no directed fishery or are limited to an exploratory fishery or incidental harvest. As noted above, Option A would remove specific stocks from the Federal FMP for which there is no directed fishery, a limited exploratory fishery, or the majority of catch occurs in State waters. Many of the stocks have not had a directed fishery. Some stocks have had sporadic historical fisheries that were predominantly prosecuted in State waters. Any future exploratory fishery would be operated by commissioner’s permit, which means the State determines if and when these fisheries occur, who may participate, observer requirements, and how much is harvested. Based on this information, the economic and social effects would be minimal.

- *EAI Tanner crab*
- *WAI Tanner crab*
- *WAI grooved Tanner crab*
- *EAI grooved Tanner crab*
- *EAI triangle Tanner crab*
- *AI scarlet king crab*
- *BS triangle Tanner crab*
- *EBS scarlet king crab*
- *St. Matthew golden king crab*
- *St. Lawrence Islands blue king crab*
- *EBS grooved Tanner crab*
- *Dutch Harbor red king crab*

POLICY ON KING AND TANNER CRAB RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (#90-04-FB, March 23, 1990)
Adopted: March 23, 1990
Bud Hodson, Chairman
Alaska Board of Fisheries

GOAL AND BENEFITS

It is the goal of the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage king and Tanner crab stocks in a manner that will protect, maintain, improve, and extend these resources for the greatest overall benefit to Alaska and the nation. Achievement of this goal is necessarily constrained by the requirement to minimize: (1) risks of irreversible adverse effects on reproductive potential; (2) harvest during biologically sensitive periods of the life cycle; (3) adverse fishery impacts on non-targeted portions of stocks; and (4) adverse interactions with other fish and shellfish stocks and fisheries.

MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The following management measures are available as tools to be used in order to carry out the policies on king and Tanner crab management. Individual measures should be applied as necessary in areas and fisheries depending on available information and fishery characteristics.

1. Harvest Rates Harvestable surpluses available from king and Tanner crab stocks depend on the size and condition of the individual stock. Harvest rates represent the percentage of the legal stock that may be harvested during the biological season in accordance with the goal and policies of the Board .

Exact harvest rates in each situation are chosen based on abundance of prerecruit males and females as well as legal males, the established minimum size or the actual size of crab landed, percentage of females bearing eggs, and the ratio of recruit to postrecruit males. When the acceptable annual harvest rate has been reached in an area, that area must be closed to fishing...

2. Size Limits Size limits have a dual role in management. They provide some protection against over harvest and also provide for improved product quality. To provide for protection against over harvest on stocks where harvest rates are unknown or difficult to regulate, size limits are set to increase the probability of mating prior to harvest...Smaller size limits may be established where stock size is accurately known and harvest rates are precisely controlled since harvest rates will have to be lowered to prevent over fishing. Larger size limits may be established to insure better marketability of the crab or provide increased long term yield by limiting harvest of animals below a suboptimal size...

3. Sex Restrictions. Harvest of king and Tanner crabs is limited to males only in an attempt to provide full fertilization of females and increase the chances of reproductive success...

4. Fishing Seasons. Biological seasons should be set to minimize the harvest of king and Tanner crabs during times surrounding the annual mating, molting, and egg hatching periods and for a sufficient time after molting to allow safe handling and acceptable product quality. Within the acceptable biological fishing season, actual fishing times may be further modified for economic reasons, such as to ensure high meat content of legal males and to reduce dead loss in the landings.

5. Guideline Harvest Levels (GHL) . A preseason estimate of the level of allowable king and Tanner crab harvest is established for each fishery. In those fisheries with accurate population estimates the appropriate harvest rate is applied to the best point estimate to determine the GHL. For those fisheries without surveys or historical catch information adequate for estimating the population size, the GHL will be set based on historical fishery performance, catch, and population trend.

6. Closed Areas. To minimize the handling and unnecessary mortality of non-legal and/or molting crabs, or to prevent conflicts with other fisheries or stocks, it may be necessary to close portions of management areas.

7. Gear Types. Fishing for king and Tanner crabs is limited to pots, ring nets, or diving gear depending on area...

8. Inseason Adjustments. Inseason 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 king or Tanner crabs; (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;...

9. Other Measures. To meet the goal and policies for management of these fisheries, it may

be necessary for the Board to adopt additional regulations ... gear limitations, and other measures including regulation of other shellfish and finfish fisheries may be necessary in order to promote the protection and best overall usage of the king and Tanner crab resource toward the stated goal.

5 AAC 35.080. Harvest strategy

The department shall establish an annual harvest strategy for each Tanner crab stock that is consistent with the board's *Policy on King and Tanner Crab Resource Management* (90-04-FB, March 23, 1990), adopted by this reference. If adequate data are available, the department shall establish a threshold level of abundance for each stock and may not allow fishing on any stock that is below its threshold level of abundance. Data used to determine guideline harvest levels and, if appropriate, exploitation rates, may include estimates of exploitable biomass, estimates of recruitment, estimates of threshold level of abundance, estimates of acceptable biological catch, historical fishery performance data, estimates of reproductive potential, and market or other economic considerations. Except for those closures authorized by 5 AAC 35.035, the department may not change established harvest strategies unless the board has reviewed the change.

5 AAC 35.509. Eastern Aleutian District Tanner crab harvest strategy

- (a) In the Eastern Aleutian District, a commercial Tanner crab fishery may open only if analysis of preseason survey data indicates that the subject population meets or exceeds the threshold level of mature male abundance specified in (b) of this section, which is one-half the long-term average of mature male abundance, and the fishery is in a section of the Eastern Aleutian District that is sufficient to provide a guideline harvest level of 35,000 pounds or more as calculated under (d) of this section

...(f) Nothing in this section prohibits the department from opening a commercial fishery for Tanner crab in the General Section of the Eastern Aleutian District if preseason survey results indicate that a harvestable surplus of Tanner crab is available and the harvest rate would not exceed 20 percent of the molting mature male abundance or 30 percent of the legal male abundance.

- ...
- (e) In the Western Aleutian District, pots may be operated to take Tanner crab only during a season opened by emergency order from 12:00 noon November 1 through 12:00 noon March 31.
-

Existing Aleutian RKC regulations are found in 5 AAC 34.600>

- (a) The commissioner may open and close, by emergency order, a season for male red king crab in the

(1) Adak District under 5 AAC beginning 12:00 noon August 1 and ending no later than 11:59 p.m. February 15; ...

- (d) During a fishing season opened under (a) of this section in the waters of Alaska in the Adak District, only a vessel that is 60 feet or less in overall length may be used to fish for red king crab.

(a) In the Adak District, based on the best scientific information available, if the department determines that there is a harvestable surplus of

(1) red king crab available in the waters of Alaska in the Adak District, the commissioner may open, by emergency order, a commercial red king crab fishery only in the waters of Alaska in the Adak District under 5 AAC (1);

(2) at least 250,000 pounds of red king crab in the Adak District, the commissioner may open, by emergency order, a commercial red king crab fishery in the entire Adak District under 5 AAC (1).

(b) In the Adak District, during a season opened under 5 AAC (1), the operator of a validly registered king crab fishing vessel shall

(1) report each day to the department

(A) the number of pot lifts;

(B) the number of crab retained for the 24-hour fishing period preceding the report; and

(C) any other information the commissioner determines is necessary for the management and conservation of the fishery, as specified in the vessel registration certificate issued under 5 AAC and

(2) complete and submit a logbook as prescribed and provided by the department.

History: Eff. 6/27/2014, Register 210

The districts for the commercial red king crab fishery in Registration Area O are as follows:

(1) Dutch Harbor District: all waters of Registration Area O between the longitude of Scotch Cap Light (164° 44.72' W. long.) and 171° W. long.;

(2) Adak District: all waters of Registration Area O between 171° W. long. and 179° W. long.;

(3) Petrel District: all waters of Registration Area O west of 179° W. long.