

Norton Sound Commercial King Crab (4 proposals)

PROPOSAL 273

5 AAC 34.910. Fishing seasons for Registration Area Q.

Amend the season dates for king crab in the Northern District Norton Sound Section, as follows:

(d)(2) through the ice only, during a fishing season established by emergency order to open on or after February 1 and close April 30, unless extended by emergency order (winter season).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Pot Loss in the winter is excessive. With warming winter temperatures shore-fast ice is less stable than in prior years. These dates would eliminate the portion of the season when ice is prone to move.

Handling mortality of females and undersized crab would be reduced by handling crab late in the season when temperatures are less extreme.

PROPOSED BY: Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee (EF-F19-011)

PROPOSAL 274

5 AAC 34.925. Lawful gear for Registration Area Q.

Limit the number of pot tags per permit per season in the Norton Sound Section commercial king crab fishery, as follows:

(e)(2)(C) a permit holder will be limited to operating no more than 20 pots during the winter season described in (d) of this section during the winter through-the-ice commercial king crab season described in 5 AAC 34.910.(d)(2); **Only 20 pot tags will be issued to any one permit holder for the season.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Norton Sound winter commercial crab fishery has excessive pot loss, up to 50% on some years. This is contrary to the State policy to maximize beneficial human uses and sustained yield. Our stock is declining and the mortality of the older-age classes far exceeds that for the younger age classes. This difference in mortality rate between young and older crab is unique to the Norton Sound red king crab. Ghost fishing likely affects the older-age classes more because of the mandatory escape rings and cumulative mortality effects.

Pots in the commercial fishery are currently considered a consumable supply and are replaced if lost. When pots were more expensive in comparison to the catch in times of lower price, fishers were more cautious in pot placement and the tending of pots, so pot loss was much less.

PROPOSED BY: Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee (EF-F19-014)

PROPOSAL 275

5 AAC 34.XXX. New section.

Allow a person or vessel to participate in the Norton Sound red king crab fishery after operating commercial Pacific cod pots in the Norton Sound Section within 14 days prior to the opening of the Norton Sound red king crab fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 34.xxx a person or vessel may participate in the Norton Sound red king crab fishery after operating commercial Pacific cod pots in the Norton Sound Section within 14 days prior to the opening of the Norton Sound red king crab fishery.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Norton Sound red king crab fishermen are working to diversify their fishing operations. Fishing for Pacific cod using pots is one new opportunity. However, regulation 34.053 limits fishermen from pot fishing within Norton Sound for 14 days prior to the Norton Sound red king crab fishery. The primary time frame for fisherman to target Pacific cod is from June to September. The 14 day closure before the Norton Sound red king crab fishery is a significant amount of the available fishing time. Additionally the primary area to target Pacific cod is west of the area that most of the Norton Sound red king crab fishery occurs.

PROPOSED BY: Wes Jones (HQ-F19-134)

PROPOSAL 276

5 AAC 34.XXX. New section.

Allow a person or vessel to operate commercial Pacific cod pots in the Norton Sound Section within 14 days of the closure of the Norton Sound red king crab fishery after participating in the Norton Sound red king crab fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 34.xxx a person or vessel may operate commercial Pacific cod pots in the Norton Sound Section within 14 days of the closure of the Norton Sound red king crab fishery after participating in the Norton Sound red king crab fishery.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Norton Sound red king crab fishermen are working to diversify their fishing operations. Fishing for Pacific cod using pots is one new opportunity. However, regulation 34.053 limits fishermen from pot fishing within Norton Sound for 14 days after to the Norton Sound red king crab fishery. The primary time frame for fisherman to target Pacific cod is from June to September. The 14 day closure after the Norton Sound red king crab fishery is a significant amount of the available fishing time. Additionally the primary area to target Pacific cod is west of the area that most of the Norton Sound red king crab fishery occurs.

PROPOSED BY: Wes Jones (HQ-F19-135)
