

PROPOSAL 73

5 AAC 35.3XX. New section.

Establish closed waters for commercial Tanner crab fishing in the Prince William Sound Area, Registration Area E, as follows:

Add a new section.

5 AAC 35.335. Closed waters in Registration Area E. The following waters are closed to the taking of Tanner crab:

(1) Port Valdez: north of the latitude of 61° 01.00' N. lat.;

(2) Galena Bay: east of a line from 60° 57.63' N. lat., 146° 45.17' W. long., to 60° 58.41' N. lat., 146° 43.34' W. long.;

(3) Port Fidalgo: north of a line from Porcupine Point at 60° 44.62' N. lat., 146° 42.08' W. long., to Bidarka Point at 60° 49.14' N. lat., 146° 38.45' W. long.;

(4) Port Gravina: north of a line from Gravina Point at 60° 37.37' N. lat., 146° 15.22' W. long., to Red Head at 60° 40.25' N. lat., 146° 30.22' W. long.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Commercial Tanner crab regulations allowing a commissioner’s permit fishery in the Eastern and Western districts of the Prince William Sound Area (PWS; Registration Area E; 5 AAC 35.311) and also providing for a harvest strategy for the entire PWS (5 AAC 35.308) were adopted by the board in March 2017. The commissioner’s permit Tanner crab fishery has been prosecuted for the past three seasons (2017-2019); however, the districts where the fishery is allowed are outside of these proposed closed areas. As defined by the harvest strategy, conditions have not been met to allow a PWS-wide fishery, which would include the Northern District that encompasses the proposed closed areas. In 2020, a Tanner crab test fishery was prosecuted in the Northern and Hinchinbrook districts, and these closed areas were defined for the test fishery. These same areas are already defined in regulation as closed waters for the subsistence Tanner crab fishery and were adopted as a conservation measure to provide a refuge for Tanner crab and protect potential nursery grounds. Adopting this proposal would provide consistency between commercial and subsistence Tanner crab regulations in the same area and ensure these closed waters are in effect if a commercial fishery was allowed in the Northern District, thereby providing protection for this important and vulnerable resource.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F20-137)
