



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DECEMBER 1999
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

Fisheries managed under delegated authority of the State of Alaska since the last council meeting includes crab, salmon, Southeast demersal shelf rockfish, and state waters Pacific cod.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES:

The Aleutian Islands golden crab fishery opened on September 1, 1999. A total of 15 vessels registered and participated. The GHL is 3.0 million pounds in the area east of 174° W. long. and 2.7 million west of that area. The eastern area closed on October 25, harvest was 3.0 million pounds. The western area remains open, harvest to date is less than a million pounds. Exvessel price at this time is \$3.60/pound.

The Bristol Bay red king crab fishery opened at 4:00 p.m. on October 15. This is a new season opening date passed by the Board of Fisheries (BOF) in March of 1999. They also passed all interim measures to improve fishery manageability at low GHLs originally implemented in the fall of 1997. The BOF also passed 30 day anti-prospecting regulations for pot and trawl gear. A total of 257 vessels participated in the 1999 fishery. GHL was 10.1 million pounds; a total of 11.1 was actually harvested in a 5.2 day fishery which closed at 9:00 p.m. on October 20. Exvessel price was \$6.25/pound, highest on record for the fishery. Total fishery value was \$69 million.

The Bering Sea Korean hair crab fishery opened, by special Commissioners permit opened on October 30, 10 days following the closure of the red king crab fishery in Bristol Bay. A total of 8 moratorium qualified vessels participated. GHL in that fishery is 283,000 pounds. To date all but one vessel has quit fishing and the total harvest to date is just over 218,000 pounds. Most recent exvessel price for hair crabs is \$4.00/pound.

SALMON TROLL FISHERY: Southeast Alaska winter troll fishery opened on October 11, 1999, and continues until April 14, 2000, or until 45,000 chinook salmon are harvested. The catch to date is 16,000 fish, harvested by 143 permits on 600 landings. To date, the Alaska hatchery contribution of this catch is about 7%.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH AND OTHER GROUND FISH

FISHERIES: Alaska Groundfish Fisheries: Between October 1 and November 30, 1999, the total number of pounds (round weight) landed by directed fishery in the Southeast District was 913 pounds of lingcod, 77,110 pounds of DSR, 1,235,908 pounds of sablefish in the Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) longline fishery and 21,277 pounds of sablefish in the Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) pot gear fishery. The directed fishery for lingcod closed in state waters on November 30, 1999. The directed DSR fall fishery opened November 16, 1999. The NSEI longline and the SSEI pot fisheries ended November 15, 1999.

STATE WATERS PACIFIC COD FISHERY: The following is an update through November 30, 1999.

Prince William Sound The GHL is 0.930 million pounds which is 25% of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska total allowable harvest of cod. The state waters fishery opened at noon March 21 and harvest by both pot and jig gear through November 30, was 327,673 pounds from 6 vessels in 23 landings. The parallel federal fishery reopened to pot and jig gear on September 1 and closed October 5. At that time the state waters fishery reopened. Both gear types will remain open until approximately 602,327 pounds is taken or December 31, whichever occurs first. With a decrease in participation in the pot and jig fisheries it appears that the GHL will not be achieved.

Cook Inlet The GHL is 2.6 million pounds which is equal to 2.25% of the Central Gulf of Alaska total allowable harvest of Pacific cod. The guideline is split equally between pot and jig gear. The state waters fishery was opened throughout the course of the summer. Total harvest by both gear types through November 30, was 1.4 million pounds from 38 vessels in 306 landings. The state waters fishery reopened on October 5, at the completion of the parallel federal fishery which began on September 1. Both gear types will remain open until approximately 1.2 million pounds is taken or December 31, whichever occurs first. If weekly catch rates continue to remain low it appears that the fishery will remain at 2.25% of the Central Gulf ABC for the 2000 season.

Kodiak The GHL is 11.7 million pounds which is 10% of the Central Gulf of Alaska total allowable harvest of cod. The guideline is split equally between pot and jig gear. The harvest through November 29, is 9.3 million pounds. Seventy nine pot vessels harvested 7.0 million pounds. One hundred thirty jig vessels harvested 2.3 million pounds. The fishery is expected to remain open throughout the calendar year. To achieve step-up provisions, from 10% to 12.5%, the fishery must achieve 90% of the guideline harvest level or an additional 1.2 million pounds. At the current weekly harvest rate it appears that the fishery will not step-up to 12.5% of the Central Gulf for the 2000 season. However, previous fisheries have shown an increase in effort during December which could increase the harvest rate enough to achieve the step up level of production.

Chignik The GHL is 8.2 million pounds which is 7% of the Central Gulf of Alaska total allowable harvest of cod. The guideline is allocated 85 percent to pot gear and 15 percent to jig gear. The harvest through November 29, is 6.4 million pounds. Thirty seven pot vessels have harvested 6.2 million pounds. Fourteen jig vessels have taken 0.2 million pounds. The fishery is expected to remain open throughout the calendar year. To achieve step-up provisions, from 7% to 8.75%, the fishery must achieve 90% of the guideline harvest level or an additional 950,000 pounds. At the current weekly harvest rate it appears that the fishery will remain at 7% of the Central Gulf ABC for the 2000 season.

South Alaska Peninsula The GHL is 13.0 million pounds which is 20% of the Western Gulf of Alaska total allowable harvest of cod. The guideline is allocated 85 percent pot gear and 15 percent jig gear. Fifty eight pot vessels harvested 11.0 million pounds. Twenty two jig vessels have taken 0.72 million pounds. The fishery is expected to remain open throughout the calendar year. To enact step-up harvest provisions, from 20% to 25%, the fishery must achieve 90% of the guideline harvest level. The fishery has reached that level and the South Alaska Peninsula fishery will step-up to 25% of the Western Gulf ABC for the 2000 season.