



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

Fisheries managed by the State of Alaska since the last Council report includes those for crab and Pacific cod.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab. During the 2016/17 season, fisheries opened for Aleutian Islands golden king crab, Bristol Bay red king crab and Eastern Bering Sea snow (*opilio*) crab. Since the February 2017 Council meeting, fisheries for Aleutian Islands golden King crab and Eastern Bering Sea snow crab have been ongoing.

Bering Sea snow crab

The Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened on October 15, 2016 and will remain open through May 15, 2017 in the Eastern Subdistrict (between 166° W long. and 173° W long.) and through May 31, 2017 in the Western Subdistrict (west of 173° W long.). The 2016/17 snow crab TAC is 21.57 mlbs. Sixty-three vessels have harvested a total of 21.01 mlbs (97% of TAC). Catch rates have steadily declined throughout the season; the cumulative CPUE is 132 crabs per pot.

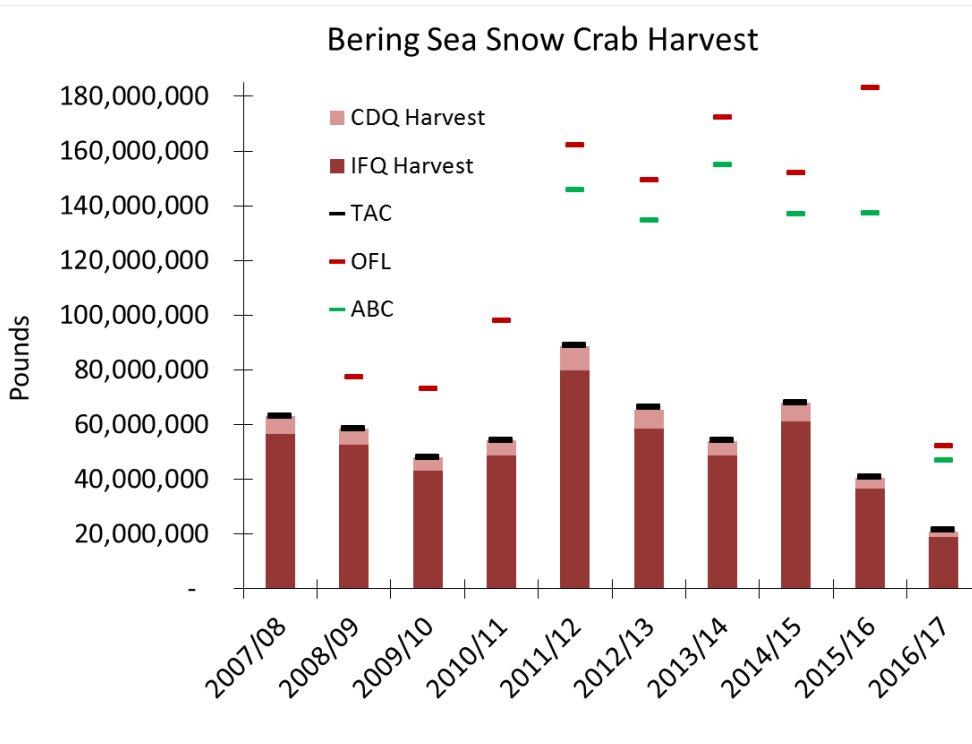


Figure 1. Bering Sea snow crab harvest, TAC, OFL, and ABC; 2007/08 – 2016/17 seasons.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab

The 2016/17 Area 0 (Aleutian Islands) golden king crab fishery opened August 1, 2016. The TAC was set at 5.545 million pounds and is apportioned east and west of 174° W long; the eastern TAC is 3.31 million pounds and the western TAC is 2.235 million pounds. Fishing in the western area is ongoing. In the east area, three vessels have harvested 3.28 million pounds, or about 99% of the TAC. In the west area, three vessels have harvested 2.13 million pounds, or about 90% of the TAC. Catch rates have been higher in the east area, at 31 crabs per pot compared to 14 crabs per pot in the west area.

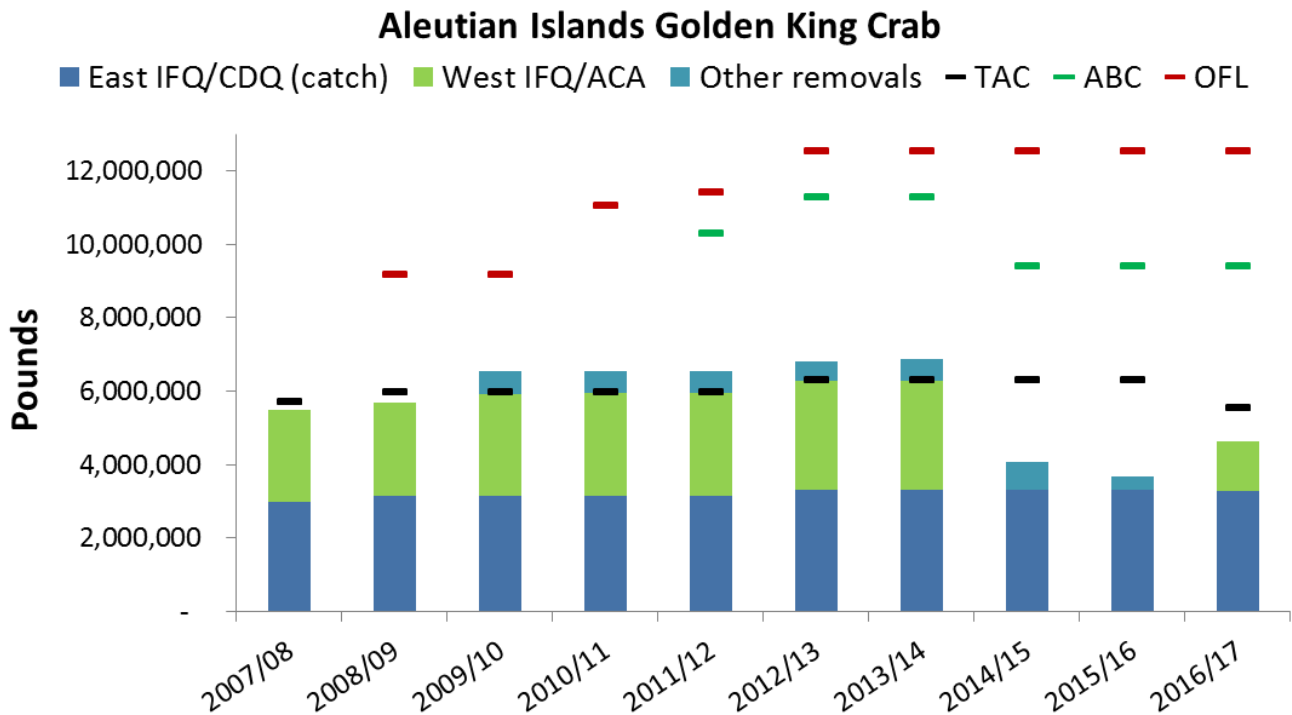


Figure 2. Aleutian Islands golden king crab harvest, TAC, OFL, and ABC; 2007/08 – 2016/17 seasons.

Pacific Cod. State-water Pacific cod fisheries are established in the Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Chignik, South Alaska Peninsula, and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Management Areas. Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) are calculated as a percentage of area ABCs as follows:

State Management Area	Pacific cod ABC	GHL as % of ABC		2017 GHL (mt)
Prince William Sound	EGOA	25%		1,968
Chignik	CGOA	25%	8.75%	3,866
Kodiak			12.5%	5,523
Cook Inlet			3.75%	1,657
South Alaska Peninsula	WGOA	30%		10,887
Dutch Harbor Subdistrict	BS	6.4%		15,296
Aleutian Islands District	AI	27%		5,805

Central Region Pacific Cod

Prince William Sound: The state-waters pot season opened on February 24, 2017, 24-hours after the closure of the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery, and remains open. No vessels have registered to fish with pot gear. The state-waters longline season is scheduled to open seven days after closure of the federal less than 50 foot hook and line sector. The state-waters jig season will open 24 hours after the initial federal jig season closes.

Cook Inlet: The state-waters pot season opened at noon on February 24, 24-hours after the closure of the CGOA A-season pot fishery. A total of 13 vessels have harvested 1.5 million pounds (42% of the GHL) and the season remains open. The state-waters jig season in Cook Inlet will open 24 hours after the initial federal jig season closes.

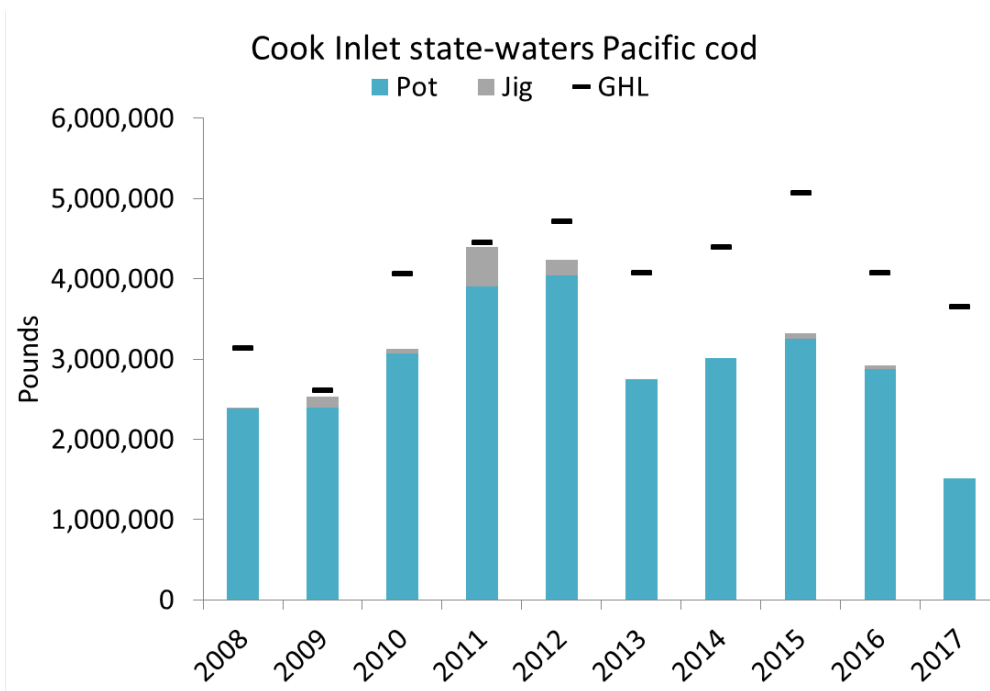


Figure 5. Cook Inlet state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2008 – 2017.

Westward Region Pacific Cod

Kodiak: The 2017 state-waters GHL for the Kodiak Area is allocated 50 percent to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50 percent to pot gear, or 6.09 mlbs each. The state-waters pot fishery opened on March 2, 2017, seven days after the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery closure. Total harvest by 26 vessels is 2.66 mlbs (44% of the GHL). The state-waters jig fishery opened on March 15, 2017 by regulation. To date, a total of 16 vessels have harvested 0.06 mlbs.

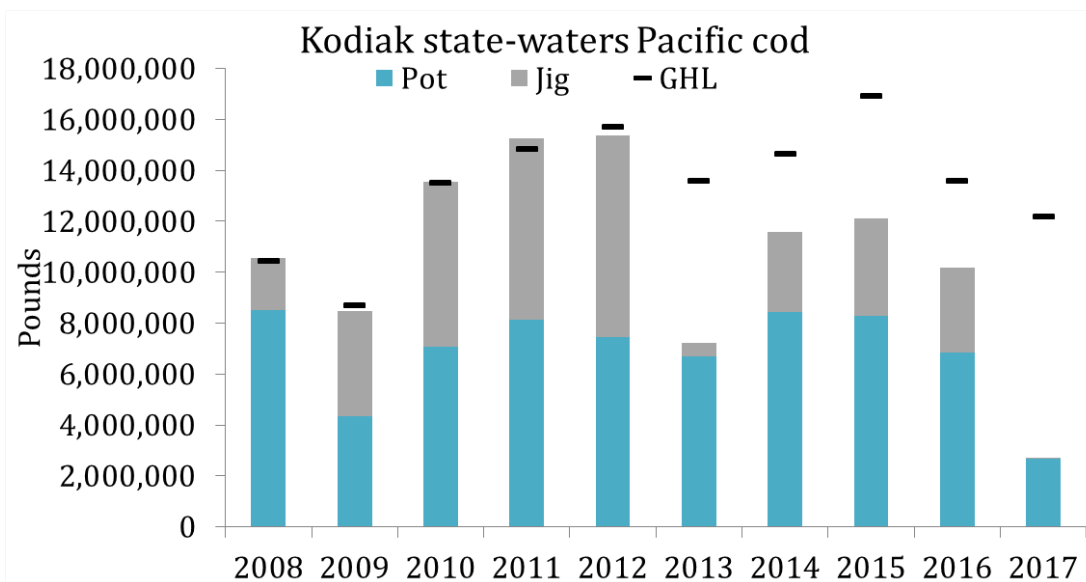


Figure 6. Kodiak state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2008 – 2017.

Chignik: The state-waters pot season opened by regulation on March 2, 2017. Total harvest by ten vessels is 1.9 mlbs (25% of the GHL). Vessels participating in the Chignik Area may not exceed 58 feet in overall length. The state-waters jig fishery opened by regulation on March 15; however, no vessels have participated in the fishery.

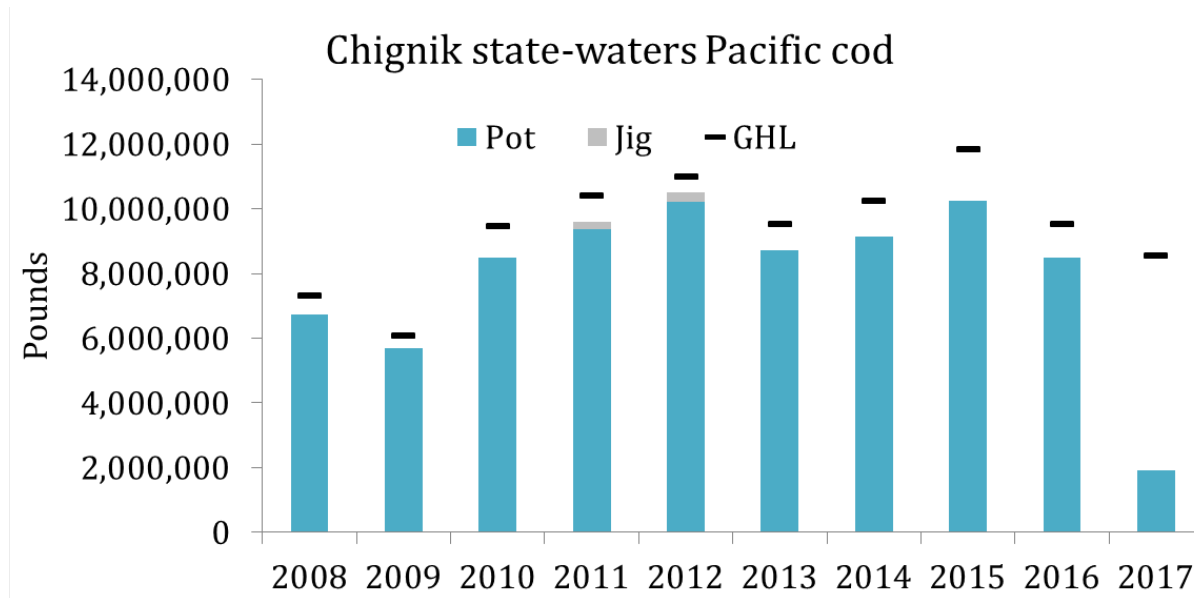


Figure 7. Chignik state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2008 – 2017.

South Alaska Peninsula: Eighty-five percent of the GHL in the South Alaska Peninsula (SAP) Area is targeted by pot gear and vessels may not exceed 58 feet in overall length. The state-waters pot season opened by regulation on March 7, 2017 and 42 vessels have harvested a total of 16.1 mlbs (79% of the GHL). The SAP state-waters jig fishery opened by regulation on March 17, 2017. Total jig harvest is confidential due to less than three vessels participating.

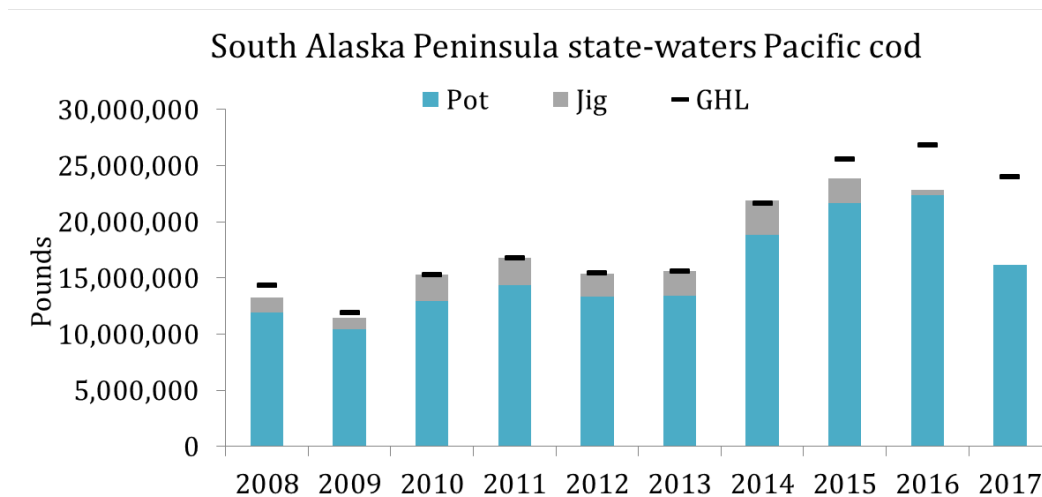


Figure 8. South Alaska Peninsula state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2008 – 2017.

Dutch Harbor Subdistrict: The Dutch Harbor Subdistrict opened on February 9, 2017, seven days after the initial federal Pacific cod season for the BSAI <60' hook-and-line and pot catcher vessel sector fishery closed. The fishery is only open to vessels ≤58' using pot gear (60 pot limit). Total harvest by 24 vessels is 27.76 mlbs (82% of the GHL).

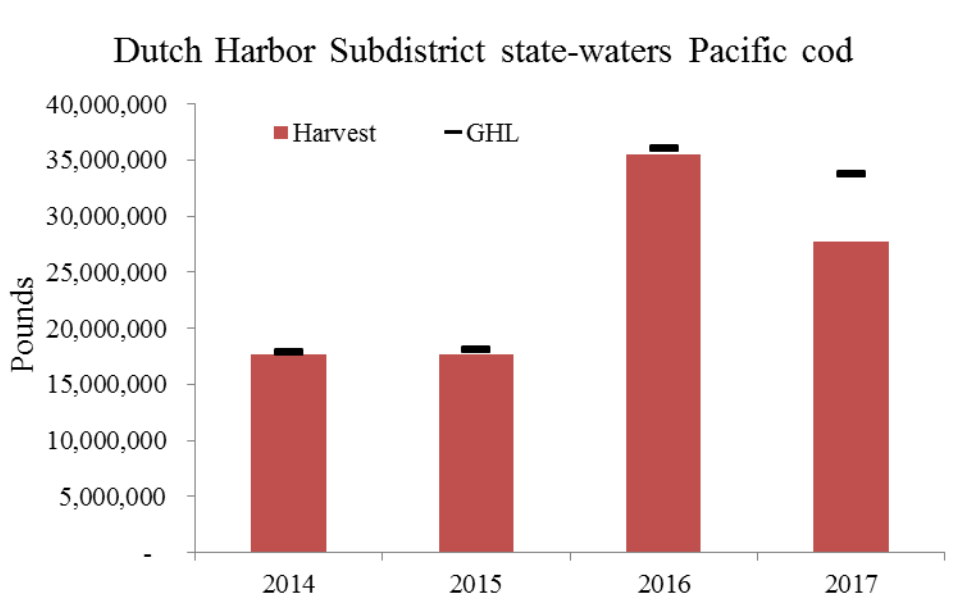


Figure 9. Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2014 – 2017.

Aleutian Islands: The 2017 Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod season initially opened January 1, 2017 in the Adak Section (between 175° W long. and 178° W long.) to vessels 60 feet overall length (OAL) or less using pot, jig, and non-pelagic trawl gear and vessels 58 feet OAL or less using longline gear. Beginning noon February 27, 2017, the state-waters season was expanded to include all state waters west of 170° W long. and opened to vessels 125 feet or less OAL using pot gear, vessels 100 feet OAL or less using trawl gear, and vessels 58 feet or less OAL using longline and jig gear. Three vessels have participated in the fishery and harvest remains confidential given the number of processors. The 2017 Aleutian Islands District GHL is 12.79 mlbs.

Alaska Board of Fisheries

STATEWIDE KING AND TANNER CRAB AND SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES MEETING

March 20–24, 2017

BSAI King and Tanner Crab

- 242 ***(Passed 7-0)*** Correct an error in regulation to accurately specify the percentage of mature male blue king crab used in setting total allowable catch.
- 250 ***(Passed 7-0 – As amended by language in RC 39 limiting retention to 35%)*** Allow full retention of legal male *C. opilio* crab incidentally harvested by vessels targeting *C. bairdi* crab in the Bering Sea District west of 166° W. long.

- 251 **(Failed 1-6)** Change season closure date from March 31 to April 15 for *C. bairdi* Tanner crab in waters west of 166° W long.
- 252 **(Passed 7-0 - As amended by language in RC 26)** Allow a vessel carrying an onboard observer to rig, bait, and set gear for a new crab fishery before fully exiting the crab fishery for which the observer was briefed.
- 253 **(Passed 7-0 – See language in RC 27)** Allow a vessel participating in a rationalized crab fishery to rig, bait, and set pot gear for a new crab fishery prior to fully exiting the crab fishery for which the vessel is validly registered.
- 254 **(No Action - Based on the proposer's request in RC 15 to withdraw the proposal)** Amend the description of a hybrid Tanner crab so that hybrid designation is dependent upon the target Tanner crab fishery for which the vessel is validly registered.
- 255 **(No Action - Based on action taken on Proposal 250)** All full retention of incidentally taken legal male *C. opilio* Tanner crab when a vessel is participating in the *C. bairdi* Tanner crab fishery east of 166° W. long.
- 256 **(Failed 0-7)** Allow full retention of legal male *C. bairdi* Tanner crab incidentally harvested by vessels targeting Bristol Bay red king crab.
- 257 **(Passed 7-0 – As amended by language in RC 40)** Extend the Bering Sea District eastern boundary for retention of *C. opilio* crab from 166° W. long. to 165° W. long.
- 258 **(No Action - Based on the proposer's request in RC 14 to withdraw the proposal)** Extend the Bering Sea District eastern boundary for retention of *C. bairdi* crab from 163° W. long. to 162° W. long.
- 259 **(Passed 7-0)** Specify that escape rings and mesh are placed on a vertical plane or side of the pot in the Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab fishery.
- 260 **(Passed 7-0)** Adopt by reference the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Chionoecetes Crab Quick Reference Guide for *C. bairdi* and *C. opilio* Tanner crab.
- 261 **(No Action - Based on action taken on Proposal 250)** Allow *C. opilio* Tanner crab bycatch retention up to five percent in the Bering Sea District *C. bairdi* Tanner crab fishery, east of 166° W. long.
- 262 **(No Action – Based on proposers request in PC1 to withdraw proposal)** Develop a management plan for the Western Aleutian District commercial Tanner crab fishery.
- 263 **(No Action – Based on proposers request in PC3 to withdraw proposal)** Reduce onboard observer coverage rates and change observer deployment periods for the Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery.
- 264 **(Passed 7-0)** Repeal provisions allowing concurrent harvest of red and golden king crab in Registration Area O.

Chignik Pacific cod

274 **(Passed 7-0)** Reduce waters closed for the protection of Steller sea lions during the parallel Pacific cod fishery in the Chignik Area.

Board Generated Proposal

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) developed a proposal to provide an opportunity to consider changes to the Bering Sea District *C. bairdi* Tanner Crab Harvest Strategy. The board will address this proposal May 17-18 in Anchorage (location to be determined), and will receive analysis of potential amendments to the following four harvest strategy elements:

- (a) Criteria used to determine mature female Tanner crab (female size-at-maturity);
- (b) Area used to estimate biomass expanded to consider west of 173° W. long. and other surveyed areas where biomass estimates are consistently available and areas closed to commercial crab fishing;
- (c) Years used to estimate long-term average mature female Tanner crab biomass;
- (d) Provision that TAC is reduced 50% in any year succeeding a year in which the mature female Tanner crab biomass falls below 40% of its long-term average.