

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Fishery Report

Only two state regulated fisheries of concern have occurred since the last Council meeting . The Bering Sea/Aleutian Island Tanner crab fisheries and the southeast Alaska winter troll chinook salmon fishery.

The Bering Sea Tanner crab fisheries for C. bairdi and C. opilio opened January 15, 1990. The C. bairdi fishery is slated to close April 24, 1990, with an expected harvest of 23 million pounds. Areas east of 165°W. Longitude had closed April 9th due to the incidental catch of soft shelled king crab.

A preseason harvest projection for the bairdi fishery had been set at 29.5 million pounds. Over 170 vessels, similar to the 1989 fishing effort, were active during the season. Catch rates were difficult to monitor since many vessels were targeting mixed Tanner species catch. Substantial problems with enforcement of the C. bairdi size limit have occurred, and retention of sublegal C. bairdi were apparently biasing CPUE trends. Difficulties with the enforcement of size limits and uncertainties in fishery performance warranted a closure.

The Eastern Subdistrict closed to C. opilio fishing on April 24th with an expected attainment of its harvest guideline of 88 million pounds.

The Western Subdistrict remains open with a preseason harvest guideline of 52 million pounds. Current harvest is less than 5 million pounds landed. A strong winter ice edge still covers much of the Western Subdistrict. This fishery will remain open until closed by emergency order.

The winter troll fishery opened October 1, 1989 and closed April 14, 1990. A harvest of 28,000-30,000 chinook are projected to have been taken during this portion of the fishery. It is believed that the early black cod opening, starting April 1, drew off much of the troll fishing effort which normally occurs during the last three weeks of the winter fishery. The reduced effort level aided in keeping winter chinook catches near the average harvest level experienced over the past few seasons.

Alaska hatchery contributions taken during the first half of the winter season, a time period which normally encompasses about 2/3 to 3/4 of the total winter catch, were about 18 percent of the catch. This percent composition is an increase of approximately 4 percent over last winter.

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME



STATE OF ALASKA

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 5, 1990

ATTENTION WESTWARD SHELLFISH FISHERMEN

The Board of Fisheries has completed its meeting on shellfish proposals. The following changes were made which effect Westward shellfish fisheries:

SEASONS:

-The Bristol Bay red king crab fishery will open November 1, which is a change from the current September 25 opening.

-The *C. bairdi* fishery in the Bering Sea east of 166°W. longitude will open seven days after the closure of the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery or on November 7, if there is no king crab fishery.

-The *C. bairdi* fishery in the Eastern Aleutians, Western Aleutians and Eastern Subdistrict of the Bering Sea will close March 31. The *C. opilio* fishery will also close March 31 in the Eastern Subdistrict.

GEAR:

-In the Bristol Bay king crab area, gear may be stored for ten days after the season in water deeper than 25 fathoms.

-In the Bering Sea east of 166°W. longitude, Tanner crab gear may be stored for seven days in water deeper than 25 fathoms prior to the announced opening.

-An eight inch minimum mesh size for one third of one vertical surface of all pots used in Bristol Bay king crab fishery.

-Pot limit for Kodiak Tanner crab

1. When the guideline harvest level exceeds seven million pounds, no more than 150 pots may be operated.

2. When the guideline harvest level is between three and seven million pounds, no more than 100 pots may be operated.

3. When the guideline harvest level is less than three million pounds, no more than 75 pots may be operated. NOTE: Identification stickers will be required on pots.

DELIVERIES:

-Increase time to 60 hours for delivery of king crab from St. Matthew to Dutch Harbor, Akutan and King Cove.

SCALLOP CLOSED WATERS:

-In addition to areas previously closed to scallop fishing, additions were made to include areas already closed to bottom trawling.

OBSERVERS:

-The Board made minor changes to the observer manual and also included the changes below.

1. Require Bachelor Degree or Department approval for all observers.

2. Developed conflict of interest standards to clear up confusion on who can and cannot be a contractor.

3. Require certification of contractors.

4. Reduce time an observer can spend on one vessel to 90 days in 12 consecutive months.

5. Allow observers limited access to loran coordinates of vessel they are assigned.

6. Require observers on all floating processors and catcher/processors that process *C. opilio*.

SPORT FISH:

-Provide for sport fishing of shellfish in Region.

-Bag limits for Personal Use and Sport Fish reduced from those of Subsistence for king and Tanner crab.

STATEWIDE GEAR:

-Provide escape panel as follows:

A sidewall, which may include the tunnel, of all shellfish and groundfish pots must contain an opening equal to or exceeding 18 inches in length, except that in shrimp pots the opening may be a minimum of 6 inches in length. The opening must be laced, sewn or secured together by a single length of untreated 100 percent cotton twine no larger than 30 thread. The biodegradable twine may be knotted at each end only. The opening must be within six inches of the bottom of the pot and parallel to it. The biodegradable twine cannot be tied or looped around the web bars. Dungeness crab pots may have the pot lid tie-down straps secured to the pot at one end by a single loop of untreated cotton twine no larger than 30 thread as a substitute for the above requirement. A Dungeness crab pot lid must be secured such that when the twine degrades, the lid will no longer be securely closed.

-Allow longlining of shrimp pots.

-Restrict the use of pot gear for 14 days prior to and 14 days after the king and Tanner seasons by vessels fishing the king and Tanner season.

These regulation changes will become law in late June or early July. The exact date will not be determined until regulations are signed by the Lieutenant Governor at which time they will become laws in 30 days.