

Public Testimony
Jay Hastings

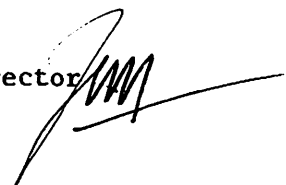
presented report
from Japan ^{Tanner} Crab Industry
on ~~current~~ ^{status} of Bering Sea Tanner
Crab fishery.

Agenda Item G-2
April, 1980

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 19, 1980

TO: Council Members, Scientific & Statistical Committee
and Advisory Panel

FROM: Jim H. Branson, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Tanner Crab Amendments

ACTION REQUIRED

To accept or reject (or modify) eight (8) proposed changes to the Tanner crab regulations.

BACKGROUND

The Alaska Board of Fisheries, at their December, 1979 and March, 1980 meetings, adopted several proposals which apply to the Tanner Crab fishery in the Fishery Conservation Zone off Alaska. At the Council's December/January meeting we adopted those proposals which were adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries at their December meeting. The proposals adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries at their March (1980) meeting must be considered by the Council at this meeting.

We have not submitted the amendments approved in January (1980) in order to combine them with the ones to be adopted at this meeting. It seems to place great strains on the system to submit amendments on top of amendments not already approved. Our earlier amendment #5 is still in the final comment period as proposed rulemaking and is not expected to be implemented before mid-summer.

The proposals to be considered at this time are relatively minor regulatory changes; but do include a pot limit in the Kodiak district and changes the opening dates for the Bering Sea districts from November 1 to January 15. The complete list of proposals is Attachment 1.

Attachment

MIH

PROPOSED TANNER CRAB AMENDMENTS

1. *Establish new fishing section descriptions for Tanner crab within the Kodiak Management District: as follows:*

DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICTS. (a) Kodiak district: All Pacific Ocean waters of Statistical Area J south of the latitude of Cape Douglas, west of Cape Fairchild 148°50' W. longitude and each of the longitude of Cape Kumlik.

(1) NORTHEAST Section: All waters of the district northeast of a line extending 145° southeast from Cape Chiniak, and east of a line extending north from the northern tip of Shuyak Island at 152°20' W. long., and the waters east of a line from Inner Point to Afognak Point in Whale Passage and Afognak Strait, and the waters east of 152°30' W. long., in Shuyak Strait.

(2) EASTSIDE Section: All waters of the district southwest of a line extending 145° southeast from Cape Chiniak, northeast of a line extending 68° southeast from Cape Barnabus, and east of Old Harbor Narrows at 153°16' W. long.

(3) SOUTHEAST Section: All waters of the district southwest of a line extending 168° southeast from Cape Barnabus and east of a line extending 122° southwest from Cape Trinity.

(4) SOUTHWEST Section: All waters of the district west of a line extending 222° southwest of Cape Trinity, south of a line from Cape Ikolik on Kodiak Island to Cape Kilokak on the Alaska Peninsula at 57°11'15" N. lat., 156°19' W. long., and east of the longitude of Cape Kilokak at 156°19' W. long.

(5) SEMIDI ISLAND Section: All waters of the district west of the longitude of Cape Kilokak at 156°19' W. long. and east of the longitude of Cape Kumlik at 157°27' W. long.

(6) WESTSIDE Section: All waters of the district north of a line from Cape Ikolik on Kodiak Island to a point at 57°15' N. lat., 155°30' W. long., east of a line from 57°15' N. lat., 155°30' W. long. to 58° N. lat., 154° W. long., to 58°52' N. lat., 152°45' W. long., and west of a line extending north from the northern tip of Shuyak Island at 152°20' W. long., west of 152°30' W. long. in Shuyak Strait, and west of a line from Inner Point to Afognak Point in Whale Passage and Afognak Strait,

(7) NORTH MAINLAND Section: All waters of the district north of 58° N. lat. and west of a line from a point at 58°52' N. lat., 152°45' W. long. to a point at 58° N. lat., 154° W. long.

(8) SOUTH MAINLAND Section: All waters of the district south of 58° N. lat., west of a line from a point at 58° N. lat., 154° W. long. to a point at 57°15' N. lat., 155°30' W. long. and north of a line from Cape Kilokak on the Alaskan Peninsula to 57°15' N. lat., 155°30' W. long.

JUSTIFICATION

This amendment was proposed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. They believe that the fishing sections within the Kodiak District should be described to assist in managing individual stocks of Tanner crab. It was adopted six to zero by the Alaska Board of Fisheries and was non-controversial.

2. *Change the Tanner crab season opening dates for all districts in Statistical Area J, as follows:*

FISHING SEASONS: The Tanner crab open season dates in Registration Area J are as follows:

		<u>Old Dates</u>
Kodiak District -	January 22	January 5
Chignik District -	November 1	New Area
South Peninsula District -	December 1	November 1
Eastern Aleutians -	January 15	November 1
Western Aleutians -	January 15	November 1
Bering Sea -	January 15	November 1

JUSTIFICATIONS

Various proposals were submitted by fishermen and processors; include the following: Frank Tennison, Pacific Pearl Seafoods, Oscar Dyson, Sand Point Advisory Committee, Charlie Johnson and Dave Herrnsteen. Most favored later opening dates due to improved quality of the crab.

Some felt a later opening date would "smooth out" starts in the Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery and the overlapping King Crab/Tanner Crab seasons. The new opening dates were adopted unanimously by the Board of Fisheries.

3. *Establish a 250 Pot Limit for the Kodiak District of Statistical Area J for the Tanner crab fishery. The proposed regulation reads: "During any Tanner crab season an aggregate of not more than 250 Tanner crab pots may be fished in the Kodiak District by any registered Tanner crab vessel.*

JUSTIFICATION

Three fishermen, Thomas McDonald, Gary Cobban and Burt Parker, suggested the previously proposed 100 pot limit on Tanner crab was economically not feasible. They suggested a 250 pot limit would make an acceptable level for larger vessels. The proposal was adopted unanimously by the Alaska Fisheries.

4. *Tank inspections will be given 24 hours prior to the season opening dates in each district of Statistical Area J.*

JUSTIFICATION

The proposal was submitted to the Board of Fisheries by Oscar Dyson. Tank inspections required 24 hours before the opening of any area in Statistical Area J would prevent a vessel from fishing Tanner crab prior to that opening in an area with different opening dates in the districts of Area J. A tank inspection can now be obtained up to five months prior to the District opening which does not prevent covert fishing in unopened areas. The proposal was adopted unanimously the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

5. *Establish a district registration system in Statistical Area J as follows:*

- (a) Vessels and gear registered for the statistical area J must also be registered for a district within area J prior to fishing. Vessels and gear may not be registered for more than one district at a time. The registration district must be indicated on the inspection certificate.
- (b) Vessel or gear district registration may be changed by the vessel operator in person or by completing a form provided by a local representative of the department, or by radio contact made by the vessel operator with the department at Kodiak, Sand Point, or Dutch Harbor. Radio transfer must be made by contacting the area shellfish management biologist within the district for which the vessel is registered at the time of the transfer request. District transfer authorized by radio contact is limited to one district change per vessel trip and the pounds of Tanner crab on board must be reported at the time of the transfer.
- (c) No vessel licensed as a commercial fishing vessel may have any unprocessed Tanner crab on board within any district in registration area J unless the vessel is registered for that district, or is transporting Tanner crab through or into a district as provided for in secs. 30 and 33 of this chapter.
- (d) A vessel may be used for the taking of Tanner crab within a district only if it is currently registered for the district and is validly registered for area J.
- (e) The commissioner may suspend and reinstate any of the requirements of this section if he finds that to do so would be in the public interest.

JUSTIFICATION

The proposal was introduced to the Alaska Board of Fisheries by Dave Herrnsteen who felt the district registration was necessary in order to have tank inspection for the Kodiak area at the season opening. The proposal was unanimously adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

6. *All Tanner crab vessels must be registered by the owner or his authorized agent prior to the scheduled season opening date in Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound. All other area vessels must be registered prior to fishing.*

JUSTIFICATION

This proposal was submitted to the Board of Fisheries by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to clear up some misunderstandings on the variability of registration deadlines for Tanner crab. It will also establish a more uniform format for registration deadlines in exclusive registration areas. It was not controversial and was unanimously adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

7. *Provides for a single statewide definition of a Tanner crab pot approximately as follows:*

A Tanner crab pot is a pot with rigid tunnel eye openings which individually are a maximum of five inches in one dimension, and tunnel eye opening perimeters which individually are larger than 30 inches or a pot which tapers inward from its base to a top with one horizontal opening.

Justification

This proposal was submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to provide for a better definition for a Tanner crab pot for each section of regulations. The proposal was not controversial and was unanimously adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

8. *To require floating processors to report their intended processing location to local biologists within the area of intended operation as follows:*

Operators of floating fish processing vessels, shall report in person, by radio or by telephone to the local representative of the department located within the area of intended operation prior to the commencement of processing operations. The report must include the initial processing location, by district, subdistrict and the exact latitude and longitude of the location and the date of the intended operation. Before moving the operation and upon arriving at a new location, the operator shall notify the local department representative in person, by radio or by telephone of the new location of operation by district, subdistrict and exact location and longitude. The local representative may waive all or part of the above description requirements if in his discretion it is not necessary for the conservation or management of the fishery in that area.

JUSTIFICATION

This proposal was submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to allow local management biologists to know when and where a floating processor will be commencing processing operations prior to the opening of any season. It was unanimously adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

COMMENT ON THE CURRENT STATUS
OF THE
JAPANESE TANNER CRAB FISHERY

Received 4-24-80
From Jay Hastings

AP
and
SSC got copies.

submitted by the
Japanese Tanner Crab Industry

Anchorage, Alaska
April 24, 1980

The purpose of our statement today is to keep the Council informed of the current fishing operations by six land-based vessels and one mothership operation with four catcher vessels in the eastern Bering Sea.

FISHING CONDITIONS

Persistent strong northeasterly winds since the second half of March have again caused ice floes to move south onto the fishing grounds. Consequently, even when a favorable fishing ground has been detected, the vessels have not been able to operate freely because of the necessity to avoid the ice floes. These ice conditions are imposing limitations on the fleets' operations and making the pursuit of large concentrations of crab quite difficult. In addition, persistent strong winds are further aggravating the already difficult situation.

Because of the current weather and sea conditions, the C.P.U.E. has registered a gradual decline. However, since the C.P.U.E. is about at the same level as last year, we perceive no particular problem in this respect.

COMMENT

This year, which marks the third year of full-scale operations in the waters north of 58° N latitude, is manifesting entirely different sea conditions. Unlike the preceding two years, which saw warmer than usual weather, ice floes are moving to the south. Since we are experiencing such conditions for the first time, it would be difficult to make any predictions for future fishing conditions until normal fishing conditions are restored.

Table 1

<u>Mothership Fishery</u>				
YEAR	FISHING PERIOD	NO. OF POTS LIFTED	CATCH (CRABS)	C.P.U.E. (CRAB/POT)
1980	2/25 - 4/10	104,960	1,660,339	15.8
1979	2/25 - 4/10	282,675	4,157,387	14.7

Table 2

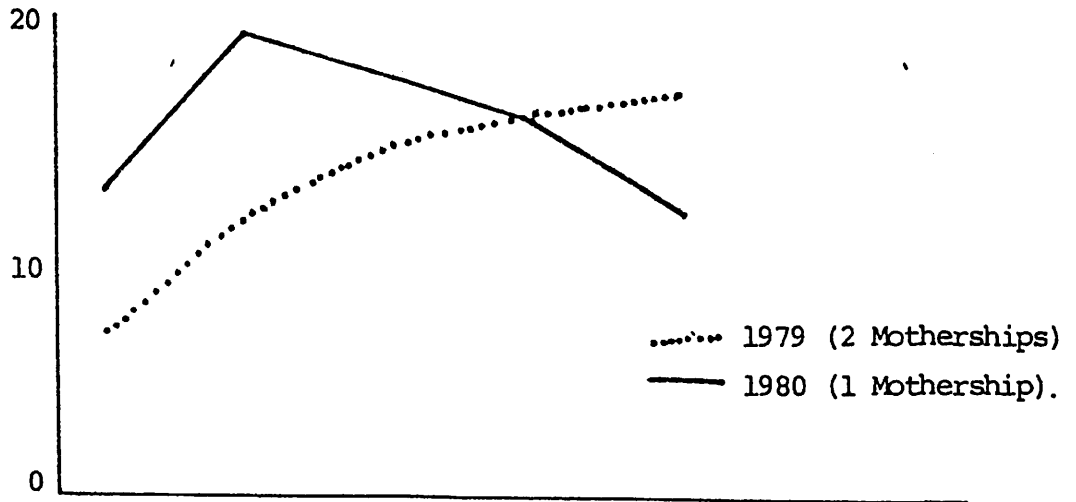
<u>Land-Based Fishery</u>				
YEAR	FISHING PERIOD	NO. OF POTS LIFTED	CATCH (CRABS)	C.P.U.E. (CRAB/POT)
1980	3/9 - 4/12	81,723	499,913	6.1
1979	—	—	—	—

Note: Because fishery operations were commenced from April 30th in 1979, we do not have comparable data.

Figure 1

C.P.U.E. FOR MOTHERSHIP FLEET

C.P.U.E. (CRAB/POT)

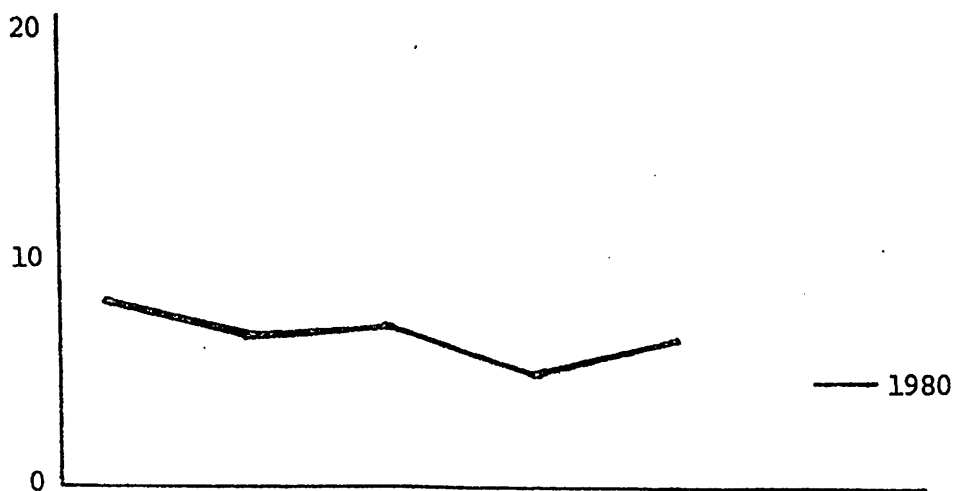


FEB		MAR			APR
25		1	11	21	1
28		20	20	31	10

Figure 2

C.P.U.E. FOR LAND-BASED VESSELS

C.P.U.E. (CRAB/POT)



MAR				APR
9	16	23	30	6