

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
FISHERIES REPORT

## TROLL SALMON

The winter troll salmon season opened October 1, 1985 and closed April 14, 1986. The 1985/86 winter troll harvest, preliminary estimate, is 23,000-25,000 chinook salmon. The 1984/85 winter troll catch was 23,000 chinook salmon. The general summer troll season is scheduled to open June 20, 1986. An estimated 187,000 chinook salmon, not including Alaskan hatchery contributions, will be available for harvest under the current troll management plan.

## SOUTHEAST SABLEFISH

The southern Southeast sablefish opened June 15 for a 7-day season. The harvest is expected to be approximately 200 metric tons. This fishery comes under Alaska's limited entry program this season. A total of 25 permits have been issued this year.

## HERRING

A detailed report on the 1986 Alaska sac roe herring fishery will be available for the September council meeting. Following are preliminary 1986 catches by region with comparisons to the 1984 and 1985 seasons.

	<u>1984 (Catch)</u>	<u>1985 (Catch)</u>	<u>1986 (Projections)</u>	<u>Preliminary Catch</u>
Southeast Region				
Kah Shakes	2,182 s.t.	2,161 s.t.	1,080 s.t.	1,537 s.t.
Sitka Sound	5,711 s.t.	7,475 s.t.	5,000 s.t.	5,350 s.t.
Seymour Canal	518 s.t.	---	300 s.t.	338 s.t.
Central Region				
P.W.S.	6,180 s.t.	7,493 s.t.	5,250 s.t.	10,448 s.t.
Cook Inlet				
UCI	250 s.t.	268 s.t.	200 s.t.	305 s.t.
LCI	---	1,365 s.t.	1,400 s.t.	1,995*
Westward Region				
Kodiak	2,163 s.t.	1,968 s.t.	1,400-1,700 s.t.	1,470*
Chignik	31 s.t.	26 s.t.	50 s.t.	8*
South Peninsula	211 s.t.	345 s.t.	200-300 s.t.	---*
North Peninsula	431 s.t.	716 s.t.	900-1,100 s.t.	800 s.t.
Eastern Bering Sea				
Bristol Bay	19,470 s.t.	25,866 s.t.	17,300 s.t.	15,438 s.t.
Security Cove	325 s.t.	733 s.t.	550 s.t.	750 s.t.
Good News Bay	717 s.t.	724 s.t.	450 s.t.	535 s.t.
Cape Romanzof	1,185 s.t.	1,299 s.t.	1,000 s.t.	1,800 s.t.
Norton Sound	3,662 s.t.	3,548 s.t.	3,000 s.t.	5,600 s.t.
Nunivak Island	---	358 s.t.	460 s.t.	535 s.t.
Nelson Island	---	977 s.t.	730 s.t.	858 s.t.
Statewide	43,035 s.t.	55,322 s.t.	39,870 s.t. <sup>1/</sup>	47,767 s.t. <sup>2/</sup>

<sup>1/</sup> Varying exploitation rates

<sup>2/</sup> Some areas still open to fishing.

STATUS REPORT OF  
THE 1985-1986 TANNER CRAB FISHERY  
IN THE WESTWARD REGION  
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INTRODUCTION

The 1985-1986 Tanner season opened on November 1 in the Western Aleutian District of Registration Area J (Figure 1). The district closed June 15 with a preliminary harvest of 125,000 pounds compared to 158,000 pounds harvested in 1984-1985. The remainder of the districts of Area J opened on January 15. The preliminary Tanner crab harvest for the registration area through June 15 is 86,552,000 pounds compared to 69,586,000 harvested in 1984 (Table 1). This report will document the 1985-1986 fisheries which occurred in the Kodiak and Bering Sea Districts.

Kodiak District

1985-1986 Fishery

The fishery opened on January 15, 1986, with a preseason guideline of 7.5-7.65 million pounds. A fleet of approximately 235 vessels harvested 8,920,000 pounds worth approximately \$16,500,000 to the fishermen. The large fishing effort and small guidelines on some of the sections stressed the

state-federal management system and nearly caused a complete breakdown--worse, the resource could and may have been jeopardized while lawyers and biologists argued over regulation interpretations.

State management biologists were forced to announce the closure in the Eastside and Northeast sections sooner than needed in order to comply with federal requirements of a minimum of four days (variable, depending on who you ask) to process the closure. The result of this closure was a harvest of 4,115,000 pounds in the Eastside, 2,000,000 pounds over the projected catch, and 830,000 pounds in the Northeast section, or 170,000 pounds under the projected harvest.

The time required to implement an Emergency Order/Field Order (EO/FO) was not the only problem which occurred in 1986, but an interpretation by a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) attorney would not allow a closure based on a preseason guideline harvest published in News Releases and Reports to the Industry concerning the harvest of crab.

There was unnecessary confusion caused by NMFS hesitancy in implementing state recommended closures. This confusion led to the possible overharvest of the Tanner crab resource, and certainly led to a disorderly conducted fishery. This inept management situation cannot be allowed to happen again in the 1987 fishery. Federal regulations must either be suspended as the council recommended to NMFS, or the regulations must be modified to allow orderly management of the fishery in 1987.

## BERING SEA DISTRICT

### 1985-1986 Fishery

The 1985-1986 fishery officially began in October 1985, when EO/FO number 4-S-17-85 reopened the C. opilio fishery in the waters west of 164° West longitude in the Southeastern Subdistrict and in the Pribilof and Northern Subdistricts, from October 9 to December 31 (Figure 2). On December 20, EO/FO 4-S-20-85 was issued extending the C. opilio fishery and closing the C. bairdi fishery. The C. opilio fishery was extended in all subdistricts until the scheduled opening date of January 15.

On April 11, a federal News Release was issued by the Regional Director allowing an incidental harvest of C. bairdi north of 58° North latitude and west of 164° West longitude. The C. opilio fishery was closed in the Southeast Subdistrict on April 21 (EO/FO 4-S-10-86) after a harvest of 13,600,000 pounds were landed, or 4.6 million pounds over the upper end of the guideline.

The Pribilof Subdistrict was closed by issuing EO/FO 4-S-11-86 on June 1, after 55,148,023 pounds were landed, which was 29 million pounds over the guideline. Both the projected guidelines were ignored in these subdistricts because CPUE remained at high levels (150 crab per pot) when the upper end of the guideline was reached.

The C. opilio fishery is still currently open in the Northern Subdistrict with a harvest of 4.6 million through June 15. As of June 15, approximately 85 vessels have harvested 73.4 million pounds of C. opilio, valued at \$35,000,000. The department is projecting that the fleet effort will remain at 25 to 30 vessels in the Northern Subdistrict until the regulatory closure date

of August 1. At that time we are projecting a harvest of 15 to 20 million pounds from the Northern District.

The industry has unofficially requested that the fishery be extended again this year past the regulatory August 1 closure date. Our recommendations at this time would be not to extend the season. Our primary objection to the extension is that we have exceeded preseason guidelines in both Southeastern and Pribilof Subdistricts based on fishery performances. The evaluation of this strategy and the results will not be available until September 1, after the trawling survey estimates are calculated. We believe at this time that population estimates may be low enough to reduce the 1987-1988 harvest significantly. The secondary reason for not extending is that these stocks have continuously been fished (except for very short closures from August 1 until October 8, 1985) since January 1985 until the present.

Another major problem developed between the state and federal management agencies this year. The NMFS allowed the incidental catch of C. bairdi during the C. opilio fishery after closing the C. bairdi fishery. The state opposed allowing any incidentally caught C. bairdi, since they could be returned to the sea unharmed. By providing for an incidental harvest, NMFS was inviting vessels to target on C. bairdi, which at the time was selling for \$2.00 per pound while C. opilio was at \$.50. Fortunately, by the time NMFS was able to implement this ruling, the Southeast Subdistrict closed to all Tanner crab fishing on April 21. This was the area which had the highest concentration of C. bairdi as of this writing. The catch of incidental C. bairdi was 512 pounds in April, and 84 pounds in May.

In conjunction with the allowable C. bairdi incidental harvest, according to federal Tanner crab regulations, 1985/86, page 6, section 671.21 (b), an incidental catch was allowed of C. bairdi north of 58° North latitude.

This regulation was never intended to pertain to the U.S. fleet, but was in effect during the days when a Japanese fishery occurred north of 58° for C. opilio. It suddenly appears in the domestic fishing regulations and is used to set a precedent to retain incidentally caught C. bairdi south of 58°. It appears that this regulation was written without the benefit of review by the council or the Board of Fish. This must not continue to occur if federal regulations are to gain any credibility from the fishing fleet.

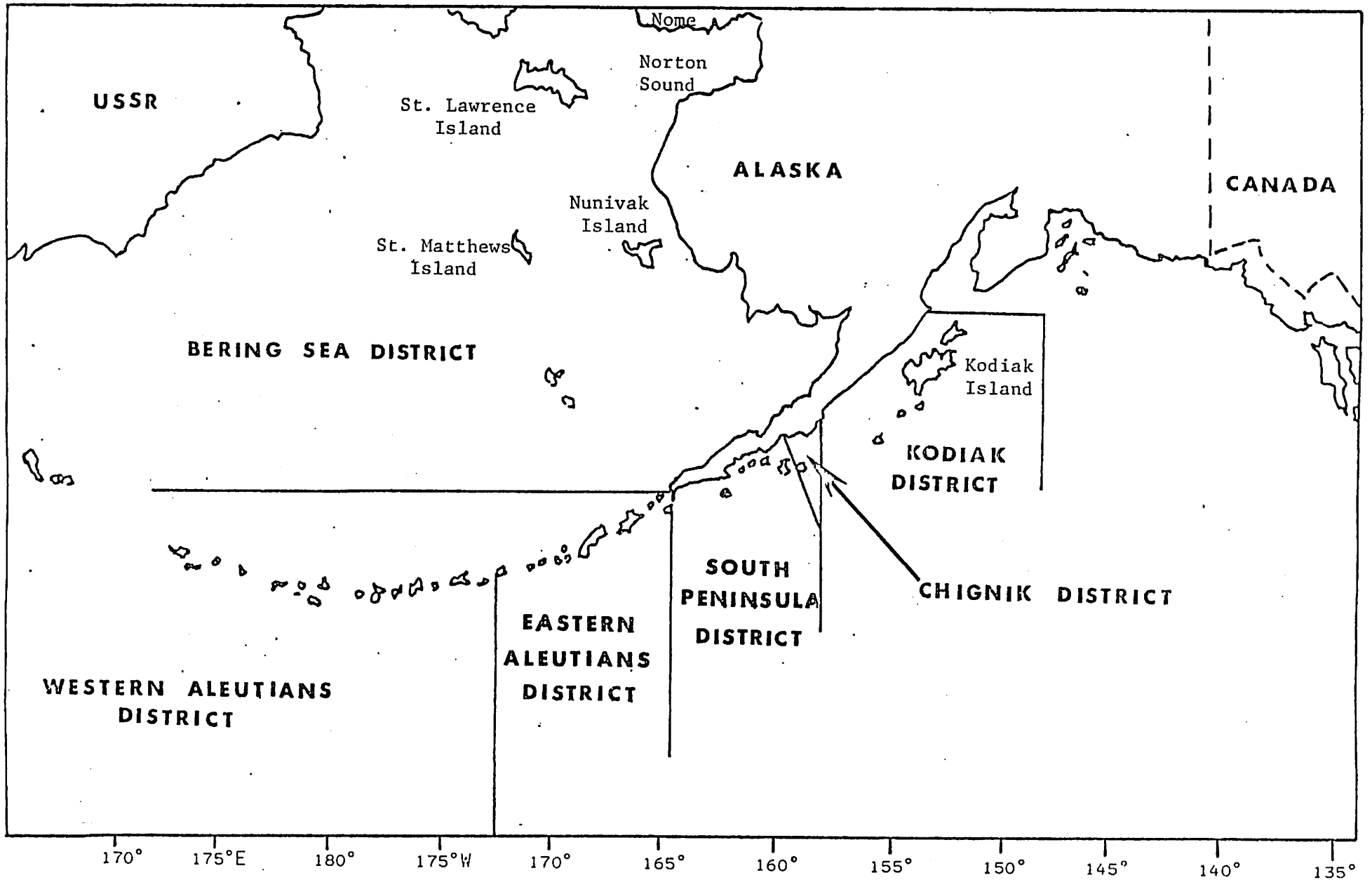


Figure 1. Westward Region (statistical Area "J") Tanner crab districts, 1985.

Table 1. Historical Tanner crab C. bairdi and C. opilio catch (in pounds) for Alaska' Westward Region, 1965-1986.

Year <sup>1</sup>	Kodiak	Chignik <sup>2</sup>	S. Peninsula	Eastern Aleutians	Western Aleutians	Bering Sea		Total U.S. Harvest	Total Foreign Harvest
						<u>C. opilio</u>	<u>C. bairdi</u>		
1965	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,936,000
1966	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,290,000
1967	110,961	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	115,961	24,000,000
1968	2,560,687	0	131,700	0	0	0	17,900	2,710,287	30,940,000
1969	6,796,477	0	644,400	0	0	0	1,008,900	8,449,777	47,668,000
1970	7,749,859	0	2,022,427	0	0	0	1,487,161	11,259,447	47,828,000
1971	7,436,414	152,256	2,140,755	0	0	0	166,100	9,875,888	39,886,000
1972	11,898,054	23,343	3,618,883	0	0	0	119,200	15,662,354	31,186,000
1973	31,113,459	747,788	5,615,563	62,128	168,354	0	301,348	38,008,640	27,886,000
1974	25,479,717	4,202,671	9,503,366	498,836	71,887	0	5,044,197	43,409,968	27,912,000
1975	17,535,844	3,649,444	5,195,800	77,164	3,350	0	7,028,378	33,225,873	18,456,000
1976	23,446,245	6,926,161	11,201,941	534,295	62,180	0	22,341,475	64,818,920	19,286,000
1977	20,720,079	5,672,919	6,773,838	1,301,654	0	0	51,876,235	86,405,326	21,520,173
1978	33,271,472	4,693,830	7,446,270	2,624,016	237,512	1,715,636	66,115,621	116,014,238	33,057,796
1979	29,173,807	2,536,105	8,684,408	1,092,311	197,244	32,187,039	43,518,226	116,411,771	32,914,536
1980	18,623,875	3,517,920	3,961,251	879,807	337,297	39,572,668	36,614,315	103,507,133	15,636,125
1981	11,748,629	3,653,723	3,294,106	654,514	220,716	52,753,034	29,732,086	102,056,808	NF
1982	13,756,159	3,240,526	4,589,042	739,694	838,627	29,371,474	11,006,779	63,542,301	NF
1983	18,927,061	3,497,370	2,863,798	547,830	448,399	26,128,410	5,273,881	57,686,749	NF
1984	14,789,903	659,043	1,789,883	239,395	191,954	26,812,824	1,208,223	45,691,225	NF
1985 <sup>3</sup>	12,024,553	385,838	2,561,868	165,529	66,549	64,520,596	3,175,564	82,900,497	NF
1986 <sup>3</sup>	8,929,067	158,838	3,781,950	127,634	125,686	73,428,914	CLOSED	86,552,089	NF
TOTAL	316,092,322	43,717,775	85,826,249	9,544,807	2,969,755	346,490,595	286,035,589	1,088,305,252	429,402,630
AVERAGE	15,804,616	2,732,360	4,291,312	681,771	228,442	38,498,955	15,890,866	54,415,262	26,837,664

SOURCE: Westward Regional Shellfish Management Office (6/23/86).

<sup>1</sup> Calendar year.

<sup>2</sup> Chignik and South Peninsula catches combined 1967 through 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Preliminary through June 15, 1986.



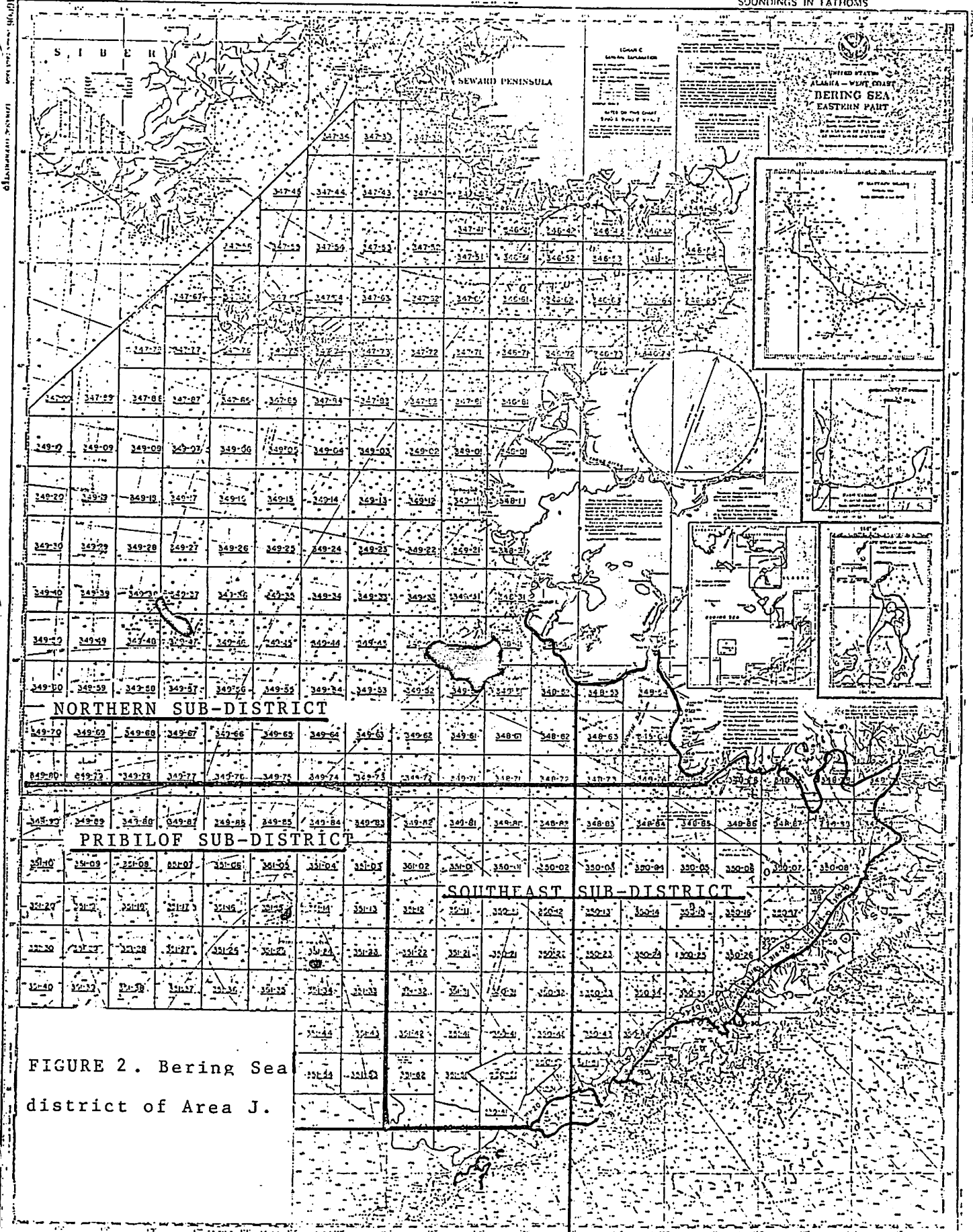


FIGURE 2. Bering Sea district of Area J.

58°