

Gulf of Alaska
 Tanner Crust Seasons

| Area | spanning date | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|--|--|--|
| * Kaktak | Jan. 15 | | | |
| * Chignik/S. Penn. | Jan. 15 | | | |
| Cook Inlet | | | | |
| Penne Williams Sound | | | | |
| * Southeast/ Yakutat | Jan. 15 | | | |

Westward Seasons

King Crab

* Tanner Crab

| Area | opening | close | | | opening | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|
| ✓ Kodiak | Sept. 20 | | | | Jan. 15 | | | |
| Alaska Peninsula ✓ Chignik | Oct. 1 | | | | Jan. 15 | | | |
| Eastern Aleutians ✓ Dutch Harbor | Nov. 10 | | | | Jan. 15 | | | |
| Western Aleutians ✓ Adak | Nov. 10 | | | | Nov. 10 | concur. w/ KC by a <u>line</u> incident to KC | | |
| ✓ Bristol Bay | Oct. 1 | | | | Jan. 15 | | | |
| ✓ Pribilofs | Oct. 1 | | | | Jan. 15 | | | |
| ✓ St. Matthew | Sept. 1 | | | | Jan. 15 | | | |
| ✓ Norton Sound | Aug. 1 | | | | Jan. 15 | | | |

Board Action - Tanner Crab

A. SOUTHEASTERN - YAKUTAT

I. Seasons

The Board kept the existing season dates (Feb. 10-May 1) rather than change to Jan. 15 openings due to ice conditions.

II. Harvest Guidelines

The guideline harvest level was reduced to 200,000-1,000,000 lbs for Yakutat. A plan amendment is necessary to reduce the low end of the ABC range from 500,000 to 200,000 lbs.

III. Gear

- a. Action on pot limits was deferred until the September meeting.
- b. No action was taken on pot escape rings and mesh size.
- c. Vessels were prohibited from fishing or storing pots in the water 10 days before the Tanner opening.

IV. Closed Waters - no action

V. Registration

Action on exclusive registration was deferred until the September meeting.

B. PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

I. Registration

Vessels are now required to pre-register prior to the season opening date. This does not conflict with federal regulations.

C. COOK INLET - no action

D. WESTWARD

I. Seasons

All areas now open on January 15.

II. Pot Limits

Action on pot limits was deferred until the September meeting.

III. Registration

IV. Miscellaneous

The proposal to allow vessels to make up lost fishing time for aiding vessels in distress was rejected.

E. STATEWIDE

- I. The proposal to allow a bait-up period with tank inspections beginning 120 hours after the season opening was rejected.

- II. New regulations will allow seven days for removal of Tanner gear following the close of an area.
- III. Registered Tanner crab vessels are now prohibited from registering for more than one Tanner crab fishery at a time and from concurrently registering for a crab fishery in another area. Requires plan amendment.

REPORT TO THE ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

An Overview of King and Tanner Crab Management March, 1984

Introduction

In the last five years, the Alaska king crab fishery has experienced both record high and record low harvests. The Tanner crab fishery has suffered a similar though less dramatic fate. Last fall, former major king crab production areas, such as Kodiak and Bristol Bay were not opened to commercial fishing because of extremely low stock levels. The resultant effect of reduced crab harvests has had a major impact on all sectors of the industry and upon the communities which rely heavily on successful crab fisheries. Large fleets and increased effort in the few remaining crab fisheries have put additional pressure on the target fishery and increased the management risks of conducting fisheries at stocks at low levels.

In the past year, the division began an indepth review of the existing management and research programs as well as board policy guidance to the staff. Numerous regional reviews culminated in a division level king and Tanner crab workshop held during January, 1984. The division is in the process of finalizing a public report of this meeting. A major component of this review, analysis of the division's research programs, is still ongoing and will be reported at a later date. This report presents an overview of the discussions and concerns for management of king and Tanner crab under severely reduced population levels.

Certain management and board policy changes are recommended to clarify what minimum biological requirements are needed to provide for the conservation and management of these valuable resources. The report is intended as an overview of the statewide fishery and does not present detailed information. Specific detail is available in the individual area management reports.

The Fishery Status

The king and Tanner crab fishery is generally in very poor condition statewide. The decline in harvest has been precipitous. As recently as the 1980-81 season, king crab harvests peaked a 193 million pounds; Tanner crab peaked at 131 million pounds the preceding year. During the 1983 fishery, the king crab harvest declined to 26 million pounds, and the Tanner crab fishery to 61 million pounds. The low harvests have been the result of reduced population levels which, generally, have experienced successive years

of poor to failed recruitment. In the near term, further declines in harvest are expected. Harvests over the long term are uncertain.

The king crab stocks have been particularly hard hit. In most crab fisheries, successive poor or failed recruitment have led to historically low abundance levels. Record low stock levels in former major production areas have necessitated preseason management closures in order to protect stocks from further declines.

Staff concerns over the reproductive integrity of the stocks forced these closures. Minimum spawning population requirements are being defined for the Bristol Bay and Kodiak areas, and this information is being extrapolated to other fisheries where spawning population requirements are poorly defined. Such definition is necessary to prevent fisheries from driving the stocks below levels which will impede stock rebuilding.

Statewide Tanner crab stocks are significantly reduced, but generally the stocks do not have the dire problems of the king crab resource. Low stock levels and poor recruitment appear to be the rule in most areas; however, there are several bright spots. Tanner crab production in the Kodiak area is at moderate levels. Moderate abundance levels are also indicated for Cook Inlet, Southeastern, and the Bering Sea opilio Tanner crab stocks.

The reasons for the crab stock declines are not well understood. In recent years, environmental conditions have changed, including documented increases in ocean temperatures. The observed temperature changes are within the known temperature regime in which king crab live. Predator populations have increased and several diseases have been identified in both king and Tanner crab. It is unknown whether the diseases have always been present in the population, or whether the disease incidence is more prevalent at low stock levels. The present data is simply not complete enough to quantify any of the above factors, and may never be without dramatic increases in research over a significant time period. If the funds are committed for these types of basic research programs, then it may be possible to better anticipate population changes. Advance warning may allow for better management and industrial planning to respond to these impacts.

On a more promising note, management may be able to respond to still other causative factors, which are assumed to contribute to stock decline. Establishing minimum spawning population requirements and limiting incidental harvests of crab in other fisheries, will likely improve stock rebuilding potential. Many of these factors are likewise poorly understood and will require additional research. It

is known, for instance, that female stock levels in several fisheries, where abundance estimates are made for females, have shown dramatic declines which parallel declines observed in the male portion of the stock. Commercial fishing undoubtedly has had an effect on reducing the legal male portion of the stock, but what is less understood are the effects of other factors, such as handling, on other components of the stocks. The evidence is circumstantial, but these effects may be great. We know that in the Bering Sea crab fishery, 1.6 king crab are also captured and subsequently discarded for every legal male Tanner crab captured. We also know that large numbers of king and Tanner crab of various sizes and both sexes are being routinely harvested in the demersal groundfish fisheries. These fisheries undoubtedly have some effect, however the data necessary to quantify these effects is poor or non-existent in the domestic groundfish fisheries. Information for the joint venture and foreign groundfish fisheries are more complete and rates of observer coverage are improving.

Management Strategies

The current king and Tanner crab management policies recognize the need to maintain the reproductive integrity of the population. These policies also establish an economic goal of reducing the fishery dependence upon recruitment by harvesting only a portion of the available surplus in any given year, in order to minimize harvest fluctuations due to variable recruitment. There is a recognized loss of potential yield with this strategy. The maximum physical yield will not be achieved, because a portion of the surplus which goes unharvested dies through natural mortality before it can be harvested in subsequent fishing years. There are benefits of such a strategy, as we have recently seen. If the entire surplus of king crab, for instance, had been harvested when available, and not carried over to subsequent fishing seasons, the recent fishery would have declined at even a more dramatic rate. However, with successive recruitment failures, no management strategy will allow a continued harvest. In hindsight, the current multiple age class king crab management strategy probably delayed the inevitable crash by a couple of seasons.

Board policies for crab fishery management incorporate both conservation and socioeconomic goals. While management measures such as pot limits and exclusive registration areas have been used primarily for economic allocation, other management measures like minimum size limits and fishing seasons address both biological and economic factors. In still other management measures, the regulatory effect may change based on the population size. For example, restricting harvest to males only can be justified as a biological requirement at low or moderate population levels in order to satisfy minimum female spawning population

requirements. However, at high population levels, female crab may also be surplus to reproductive requirements and therefore available for commercial harvest if a market exists for commercial harvest.

Obviously, management options are greater at higher population levels. At current low population levels, the major management concern is to maintain adequate spawning population levels, in an attempt to rebuild in future seasons. The rebuilding process is likely to be a long term goal as crab are fairly long-lived animals. The second major concern deals with management's ability to safely conduct a fishery when a limited surplus is identified. Currently, the size and efficiency of the crab fleet increases the potential for overharvest when targeted on relatively small surpluses. Additional management measures, such as vessel or gear limitations, may be necessary in order to conduct an orderly fishery which does not run the risk of over harvest.

Management Response at Low Population Levels

The current board management directives to the staff provide for a variable exploitation rate, which is applied to the surplus male component of the population. This strategy has been incorporated into the state's fishing regulations (see 5 AAC 34.080) and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King Crab FMP. Because this policy guidance was formulated when stocks were at higher levels, it is necessary to further define management intent at low stock levels in order to adequately protect the spawning population. It is prudent to define a threshold population level below which commercial exploitation must be avoided. This can be done by establishing a minimum female spawning population required to maximize recruitment.

The spawner-recruitment relationship is the relationship between the number of spawners and future recruitment to the fishery. The description of this relationship is a product of an ongoing analysis which builds on the use of additional data as each resource assessment survey is completed. The major difficulty in establishing a spawner-recruitment relationship is that a long time series of data are required. Only in the Bristol Bay area do we have enough data to describe the minimum number of spawners necessary to produce the maximum recruitment. A relatively long series of survey data for Bristol Bay currently indicates the threshold to be in the region of 30-35 million females. Actual abundance of mature full clutch females in 1983 was 10 million, much below the desired level. Because of these low levels of spawners, which could be reduced further by handling mortality, no fisheries took place in 1983. Recovery of the spawning population to threshold levels should be required for reopening these fisheries.

In other crab fisheries, data are insufficient to establish minimum threshold stock levels. Therefore, as a first approximation of establishing such levels, we propose a level of 20 percent of Maximum Sustained Yield (MSY). This level is the minimum necessary to allow a directed commercial harvest. As additional data are collected, the threshold levels will be modified through appropriate spawner-recruitment analysis. The discussion of minimum threshold requirements can be found in the area management reports.

The immediate management concern is then to establish minimum threshold population levels for individual stocks. In many of the historical fisheries, we expect the stocks to remain below these thresholds. However, once these thresholds have been surpassed, then a surplus is available for commercial exploitation. At that time, the board may wish to re-evaluate its current harvesting strategy. Certainly, economic and social goals became much more important in the allocation of this identified surplus.

The area management reports raise other issues which will be addressed. For example, in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, the basic data collection necessary to manage these fisheries is becoming difficult to obtain. The former land based processing industry has moved offshore, with less than 20 percent of the catch being delivered to Dutch Harbor. Placing adequate personnel aboard individual floating processors and catcher/processors has been difficult because of inadequate funding levels. The department is considering legislation to address this difficult problem.

CHIGNIK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This is a list of the Game and Shellfish Proposals that the Chignik Advisory Committee discussed in a meeting held on March 23, 1984 at Sea-Alaska Messhall, Chignik, Alaska.

GAME PROPOSALS

Proposal 117 - This was read aloud and discussed. Glenn Suydam moved that the committee support this proposal. Al Anderson seconded it. A vote was taken. 11 were in favor, 0 were against. Motion passed.

Proposal 118 - This was read aloud and discussed. Glenn Suydam moved that the committee support this proposal. Ernie Carlson seconded it. A vote was taken. 10 were in favor, 1 was against. Motion passed.

SHELLFISH PROPOSALS

Proposal 19 - This was read aloud and discussed. Glenn Suydam moved that the committee oppose Section II of Proposal 19. Al Anderson seconded it. A vote was taken. 11 were in favor, 0 were against. Motion passed.

Proposal 21 - This was read aloud and discussed. Al Anderson moved that the committee oppose Proposal 21 with the exclusion of Section IB that the committee will support. Glenn Suydam seconded it. A vote was taken. 11 were in favor, 0 were against. Motion passed.

Proposal 24 - This was read aloud and discussed. Glenn Suydam moved that the committee oppose Proposal 24, Section I. Al Anderson seconded it. A vote was taken. 11 were in favor, 0 were against. Motion passed.

Proposal 23 - This was read aloud and discussed. Ernie Carlson moved that the committee support Proposal 23 with a condition that the months be changed to just February, March and April. Glenn Suydam seconded it. A vote was taken. 8 were for, 3 were against. Motion passed.

Proposal 22 - This was read aloud and discussed. Glenn Suydam moved that the committee support Proposal 22, Section II. Afonie Takak seconded it. A vote was taken. 11 were in favor, 0 were against.

Proposal 18 - This was read aloud and discussed. Glenn Suydam moved that the committee oppose Proposal 18, Section II. Ernie Carlson seconded it. A vote was taken. 11 were in favor, 0 were against. Motion passed.

These are the proposals that the Chignik Advisory Committee wishes to support and oppose.

Glenn Suydam
CHAIRMAN

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, Board, SSC and AP Members
FROM: Jim H. Branson
Executive Director
DATE: March 19, 1984
SUBJECT: Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan

ACTION REQUIRED

Review and discuss regulatory proposals before the Council and Board. Give direction to Plan Maintenance Team on preparation of a plan amendment if necessary.

Background

In response to a request for proposals, the Alaska Board of Fisheries has been presented with numerous regulatory proposals for the 1984-85 Tanner crab fisheries. The staff has reviewed the proposal package and identified those of mutual Council/Board concern. A summary of those proposals and a copy of the proposals themselves are provided as items D-2-II (a) and D-2-II (b). Proposed regulation changes that should be of particular interest to the Council focus on 3-S management, size limit, exclusive registration areas and pot limits.

For the first time in a joint shellfish meeting, the Board plans to take final action on proposals while in the presence of the Council. This step will allow the Board and Council to hear the same public testimony and staff reports, provide a forum for both bodies to jointly discuss specific proposals, and inform the Council as to the final Board action prior to the May Council meeting.

This time-saving step is one of many improvements to the joint management process discussed at the Board/Council staff workgroup meeting held in Seattle on March 9, 1984. Participating in that meeting were Council members Jim Campbell, Keith Specking, Don Collinsworth, Bob McVey, Jeff Stephan, John Harville, Rudy Petersen and Gene Didonato, Board members John Garner and Jeri Museth, and Barry Collier, NPFVOA, Marty Eaton, ADF&G, and Bill Robinson, NMFS. Other improvements include a streamlined agenda, summarized staff reports, management proposal summaries, and identification of proposals which if approved by the Board will require a similar amendment to the Tanner crab plan if consistent regulations are desired.

Amendment 9 to the Tanner Crab FMP, which established a framework procedure for setting fishing seasons and updates MSY and ABC values, was submitted for Secretarial review on December 22, 1983. In January we learned from the Central Office of NMFS that there were concerns and questions over the regulatory economic analysis that was prepared for the amendment. At the February meeting the staff met with Pete Jensen and discussed the problems with the analysis. Following that meeting, the staff has been revising the analysis and it should be ready for resubmission soon. I am hopeful that with this submission, the Central Office will begin their review and eventually approve this important amendment.

COUNCIL STAFF REVIEW OF TANNER CRAB
PROPOSALS OF MUTUAL BOARD/COUNCIL CONCERN

Preface: This review assumes TC-9 (Amendment 9) is in place. If TC-9 is not implemented, a plan amendment may be required for the following season proposals.

SOUTHEASTERN - YAKUTAT

Amendment
Required

?

I. Seasons

- A. Allow the incidental harvest of Tanner crab during the red king crab season. (i.e., have two Tanner seasons; (1) during king crab season Nov. 15-Jan. 24 and during Tanner crab season Feb. 10-May 1).

By providing an incidental fishery, are we not allowing a targeted fishery to be conducted?

What do we do about OY? Assuming OY remains the same, if OY is reached in first season, will there be no second season?

What is the history of this fishery? Isn't there a possibility that if the TC season opened Nov. 15, and the area remained non-exclusive, that there could be an increase in effort coming into the area, which two years ago was deemed undesirable by the Board?

Y

II. Harvest Guidelines

- A. Reduce guideline harvest level for Yakutat to 200,000 - 1,000,000 lbs. Currently it is 750,000 - 2.5 million by State regs. TC-9 has it as 500,000 - 1 million.

If adopted, a plan amendment would be required to reduce the lower end of the ABC range from 500,000 to 200,000 lbs.

III. Gear

N

- A. Repeal the pot limit. Not applicable. Used in selected state waters only.

Y

- B. Eliminate escape rings in Tanner pots; require a minimum of 5" mesh and a maximum of 8" mesh panel on one side of the pot. Current State regs require escape rings in SE Tanner pots beginning January 1, 1985. Federal regs do not have this requirement.

Why not implement both the mesh requirement and the escape rings? Is it because no S.E. pots currently have escape rings?

N

- C. Prohibit Tanner crab vessels from fishing or storing pots in the water 10 days before the Tanner opening.

Current state regulations prohibit placing any Tanner gear in the water until the season opening in Area A. Federal regulations allow in-water storage only in depths of 25 fathoms or less.

N IV. Closed Waters

- A. Prohibit crabbing in waters less than 15f deep.

Not applicable since this proposal is designed to keep anchorages to vessels open and eliminate gear conflict between vessels attempting to take shelter and crab gear. This proposal applies to State waters (anchorages) only.

- N B. a nd C. To extend areas currently closed to commercial Tanner crab fishing in order to increase the area for subsistence and recreational fishing.

Not applicable to FCZ or FMP.

N V. Registration

- A. Repeal State's designation of S.E. Yakutat as an exclusive registration area. (Federal regs have area as non-exclusive; State has temporarily repealed this reg.)

COUNCIL STAFF REVIEW OF TANNER CRAB
PROPOSALS OF MUTUAL BOARD/COUNCIL CONCERN

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

Amendment
Required

N I. Registration

- A. Require that vessels pre-register prior to season opening date.

The justification doesn't make sense. What is the unfair advantage given to large boats over small boats? This area is an exclusive area (i.e., superexclusive). Large boats choosing to fish PWS will be there regardless of when they register.

Federal regulations state that if crab vessels fishing in FCZ are not registered under State law, they must apply for a federal permit at least 30 days prior to the opening of the season.

Current State regulations state that for all area except Cook Inlet, vessels must register prior to fishing. In Cook Inlet, vessels intending to fish must register prior the scheduled opening date. This is what the proposers want.

*If the state should adopt or reject this proposal, there is no conflict with federal regulations.

COUNCIL STAFF REVIEW OF TANNER CRAB
PROPOSALS OF MUTUAL BOARD/COUNCIL CONCERN

COOK INLET

Amendment
Required

Y I. Seasons

- A. and B. Do not allow closures before scheduled calendar closures for other than extreme population depletion or substantial incidence of poor health of crab stocks, i.e., No FO or EO's allowed.

Essentially this is a proposal for 3-S management in Cook Inlet.

Y II. Size Limit

- A. Raise the size limit from 5.5" to 6" for Southern District and institute a 5.5" or 6" registration system.

State and Federal regulations provide for a 5.5" size limit statewide for C. bairdi except in PWS (5.3").

Won't you be increasing handling mortality on 6" crab in the Southern district?

E.O. 12291 requires that the benefits of a regulation must outweigh the costs.

Y III. Gear

- A. Require that one side of a Tanner pot be covered with minimum 7" mesh.

This would require an amendment to FMP and Federal and State regs if adopted. The purpose is to provide easier escape mechanisms for female and sublegal crab.

There will be some increased costs in the industry converting their pots to the mesh requirements. Will the benefits of reduced handling mortality outweigh the costs?

COUNCIL STAFF REVIEW OF TANNER CRAB
PROPOSALS OF MUTUAL BOARD/COUNCIL CONCERN

WESTWARD

Amendment
Required

N I. Seasons

- A. Manage the Tanner crab fishery by 3S (sex, size and season) regulations. Retain current size limits (C. bairdi-5,5", C. opilio-3.1") and males only with the following seasons:

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------|---|----------------|
| St. Matthew | proposed | Jan 15 | - | Aug. 1 |
| | current state/federal | Feb. 15 | - | Aug. 1 |
| Pribilofs | proposed | Jan. 15 | - | Aug. 1 |
| | current state/federal | Feb. 15 | - | Aug. 1 |
| Bristol Bay | proposed | Jan 15 | - | Aug. 1 |
| | current state/federal | Feb. 15 | - | Aug. 1 |
| Dutch Harbor | proposed | Oct. 1 | - | Aug. 1 |
| | current state/federal | Feb. 15 | - | June 15 |
| Adak | proposed | Jan 15 | - | Apr. 15 |
| | current state/federal | Nov. 10 | - | June 15 |
| AK Peninsula | proposed | Jan. 15 | - | Apr. 15 |
| | current state/federal | Feb. 10 | - | May 15 |
| Kodiak | proposed | Jan. 15 | - | Apr. 15 |
| | current state/federal | Feb. 10 | - | Apr. 30/May 15 |

There is significant overlap with this 3-S proposal and seasons with the KC 3-S proposal. KC and TC seasons will overlap in all areas.

- N B. Open all Area J districts concurrently and close on May 15.

No justification was given.

(Note: Assuming TC-9 is implemented, no amendment required if this proposal is approved.)

- N C. Open the Kodiak district on January 15.

The objective is to reduce gear conflicts with joint venture trawlers.

(Note: Assuming TC-9 is implemented, no amendment is required if this proposal is approved.)

N II. Pot Limits

A. Repeal the State's 200-pot limit in Kodiak.

State regulations which set a 200-pot limit have been temporarily repealed.

Federal regulations do not state a pot limit.

N III. Registration

A. Repeal exclusive registration from Chignik and South Peninsula.

State regulations designating these areas as exclusive registration areas have been temporarily repealed.

Federal regulations designate these areas as non-exclusive.

Y IV. Miscellaneous

A. Allow a vessel that aids another vessel in distress to make up lost fishing time.

This proposal, if approved, would require an amendment to the FMP and federal regulations.

COUNCIL STAFF REVIEW OF TANNER CRAB
PROPOSALS OF MUTUAL BOARD/COUNCIL CONCERN

STATEWIDE

Amendment
Required

- Y I. Allow a bait-up period with tank inspections starting 120 hours after the season opening.

Federal regs require that within 24 hours prior to fishing, vessel holding tanks must be inspected.

What is being changed?

- N II. Allow seven days for removal of Tanner gear following close of an area.

If approved, FMP amendment not necessary, just a regulatory amendment or rule-related notice. FMP currently possesses a frameworked measure for gear placement regulations.

- Y III. Prohibit a registered Tanner crab vessel from registering for more than one Tanner crab fishery at a time and from concurrently registering for a crab fishery in another area.

FMP amendment required.

Is this legal? Can we place a restriction on Dungeness or other crab fishery through our Tanner crab plan?

SOUTHEASTERN - YAKUTAT
TANNER CRAB

- I. Seasons.
 - A. Allow the incidental harvest of Tanners during the red king crab season.
- II. Harvest Limits.
 - A. Reduce the guideline harvest level for the Yakutat portion of the area to 200,000 to 1,000,000 pounds.
- III. Gear.
 - A. Repeal the pot limit.
 - B. Eliminate the escape rings for Tanner pots and require a minimum five inch and maximum eight inch mesh panel on one side of the pot.
 - C. Prohibit validly registered Tanner crab vessels from fishing any pot gear and from storing any pot gear in the water 10 days before the Tanner opening.
- IV. Closed Waters.
 - A. Prohibit crabbing in waters less than 15 fathoms deep.
 - B. Extend the Subdistrict 11-A closure to include waters south of Benjamin Island and east of a line from the northernmost tip of Outer Point through Portland Island to Benjamin Island.
 - C. Extend the Subdistrict 11-A closure to include waters east of a line from the northernmost tip of Outer Point through Portland Island to the southernmost tip of Point Louisa.
- V. Registration.
 - A. Repeal the super exclusive registration for the area.

JUSTIFICATIONS:

I.A. Tanner crab are taken aboard and released in some cases several times, as a consequence of our red king crab fishery. The resultant handling mortality is high. An incidental catch during the red crab fishery will accomplish several things. Provide a market for a resource that may be lost to handling mortality. Provide for a small amount of Tanner to be taken in the fall. It may displace some of the effort on the red crab stock.

Proposed by: Petersburg Vessel Owners Association (278)

II.A. Commercial harvestings of Tanner crab began in the early 1970's in the Yakutat area. Seasonal harvests as large as 2.5 million pounds have been reported in that fishery. The Yakutat area Tanner crab stocks have declined drastically since the 1979/80 fishing season. With little hope for improved stock conditions in the immediate future the established guideline harvest level should be lowered to reflect current resource availability.

Proposed by: Department of Fish and Game

III.A. It has been shown that there is no scientific data proving that pot limits in these areas are positive conservation management tools. Striking the pot limits in Kodiak, S.E. Alaska and Yakutat would set State regulations with Federal regulations.

Proposed by: Alaska Marketing Association and North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners Association (253)

III.B. Handling mortalities of sublegal males and all females can be minimized with proper mesh sizes. Additionally this proposal would allow distinction between Tanner crab and other shellfish pot gear which would facilitate enforcement of season openings, closures, and pot limits. The preferred mesh size could vary pending comments from the fishing community.

Proposed by: Department of Fish and Game

III.C. Enforcement cannot control early fishing in the red king crab and Tanner crab fisheries. This might be an alternative to trying to have pot definitions. This proposal, if enacted, would require king crab and Tanner crab registration at least 10 days prior to those seasons.

Proposed by: Sitka Advisory Committee (273)

IV.A. To protect breeding stocks. To give subsistence users a few crab. To cut back on the taking of soft shell crab. To prevent the blockage of known anchorages to other vessels, causing them to become unsafe to other vessels using the area. Crab pots cause problems to: boats coming in and out of known anchorages at night, boats drifting into pots during blows, and anchorage marked on charts are unusable due to the entire bay being full of pots. Vessels not knowing the area do not know where else to go.

Proposed by: Richard Rathbone (176-177)

IV.B. This area gets high use by subsistence fishermen, which should have a chance to catch Tanner crab close to the Juneau road system.

Proposed by: Bruce Wright (173)

IV.C. These sheltered waters provide local residents the only safe opportunity to recreationally harvest crab from small boats. Prior to the seasons closure on December 15, 1982, ninety-seven commercial pots were counted east and southeast of Coghlan Island. Such intense fishing in a small one and a half square mile area spoiled the crabbing for recreational fishermen.

Proposed by: Malcom Hursh (187)

V.A. Comply with Federal registration regulations in regards to conflicting State and Federal super exclusive areas.

Proposed by: Alaska Marketing Association and North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association (254)

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND
TANNER CRAB

Require that Tanner crab vessels be registered before the season opening date.

JUSTIFICATION:

This regulation was changed against an unanimous vote of the Prince William Sound Advisory Committee and crab fishermen attending the meeting. Cook Inlet was able to keep this regulation in Area "H". Like the Cook Inlet, the Prince William Sound Tanner crab season starts prior to the general opening on February 10th. This allows unfair advantage to the large mobile crab fleet over small local boats.

Proposed by: Lynn Mallory (169)

COOK INLET
TANNER CRAB

I. Seasons.

- A. Do not allow closures before scheduled calendar closures for other than extreme population depletion or substantial incidence of poor health as evidenced by in depth on-the-grounds surveys conducted before and during the season and a review of past season commercial catch comparisons.
- B. Change the management from "optimum yield" to "3S" with the present season and sex limits with no closures allowed except for soft shell crab or severely depressed stocks.

II. Size Limit.

- A. Raise the size limit from 5½ inches to 6 inches for the Southern District and adopt a registration system to separate vessels fishing in the 5½ inch and 6 inch fisheries.

III. Gear.

- A. Require that one side of Tanner pots be covered with a minimum seven inch mesh material.

JUSTIFICATIONS:

I.A. There has never been an emergency closure prior to scheduled calendar closure in either the Outer, Eastern or Kamishak/Barran Islands districts. They have, in essence, been managed and regulated only by the six, size, and season concept. ADF&G, Cook Inlet commercial Tanner crab harvest records since 1968/69 reveal a continuity of healthy population reoccurrence in all districts. We feel all districts of Cook Inlet should be brought under the same uncomplicated and effective management plan.

Proposed by: Seldovia Advisory Committee (224-225)

I.B. Economic considerations: Get away from short "halibut period" openings. Allow small boats (which are the bulk of the local fleet) a chance to harvest crab without having to invest heavily in extra gear, lights, etc. Keep local processors, merchants, and workers employed.

Proposed by: John DeSylva (234)

II.A. This would allow the crab to have another year to breed. Also it would cut the catch rate in half and allow more fishing time. Provide Department a clear idea of who is fishing where in the area for enforcement of size limit.

Proposed by: John DeSylva (231-232)

III.A. This would allow small crab, especially females, to escape and result in less handling and mortality on deck.

Proposed by: John DeSylva (233)

WESTWARD
TANNER CRAB

I. Seasons.

- A. Manage the Tanner crab fishery by sex, size, and season regulations. Retain current size limits and males only with the following seasons:

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Saint Matthews | January 15 to August 1 |
| Pribilof Islands | January 15 to August 1 |
| Bristol Bay | January 15 to August 1 |
| Dutch Harbor | October 1 to August 1 |
| Adak | January 15 to April 15 |
| Chignik - South Peninsula | January 15 to April 15 |
| Kodiak | January 15 to April 15 |

- B. Open all Area "J" Districts concurrently and close at 12:00 noon May 15.

- C. Open the Kodiak District on January 15.

II. Pot Limits.

- A. Repeal the pot limit for the Kodiak District.

III. Registration.

- A. Repeal the super exclusive registration for the Chignik and South Peninsula districts.

IV. Miscellaneous.

- A. Allow a vessel that aids another vessel in distress to make up lost fishing time.

JUSTIFICATIONS:

I.A. Managing the Tanner crab resource with sex, size and season regulations would safely provide the fishermen with the best biologically sound quotas and season structures. When creating this sex, size and season management regime we suggest that the State of Alaska, as they have done in past, adopt a posture of abiding by the sound biological information. The proposed opening would maintain a continuous supply of raw material, sustain a constant employment level, and avoid major shut-down and start-up costs for both harvester and processors. Coordinated statewide openings would spread the fishing fleet out, thus reducing high fishing pressure in specific areas and allow for simultaneous harvesting of both king and Tanner crab in a given area.

Not only does this disbursement of the fleet benefit the resource, this regime would allow vessels to individually coordinate openings so as to achieve a

high level of safety, thus the small boat operator would benefit from this regulatory package. Small vessel operators with their relatively low overhead costs could keep working on a stock of fish, when in comparison these vessels with high overheads would not be economically able to harvest crab. The biological safe guard would be management by a specific size.

Proposed by: Alaska Marketing Association and North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association (261-263)

I.B. None given.

Proposed by: Sand Point Advisory Committee (179)

I.C. Gear conflicts with joint venture trawlers would be less in January than in February. Fewer female Tanner crab will be handled if the season opens earlier. Processors felt that the recovery and quality of the crab would be the same for January and February. An earlier opening date will not effect the distribution of the Alaska Tanner crab fleet.

Proposed by: Kodiak Advisory Committee (151)

II.A. It has been shown that there is no scientific data proving that pot limits in these areas are positive conservation management tools. Striking the pot limits in Kodiak, S.E. Alaska and Yakutat would set State regulations with Federal regulations.

Proposed by: Alaska Marketing Association and North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association (253)

III.A. Comply with Federal registration regulations in regards to conflicting State and Federal super exclusive areas.

Proposed by: Alaska Marketing Association and North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association (254)

IV.A. In the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands areas, there is virtually no Coast Guard search and rescue capability. Consequently, a fisherman must rely on another fisherman should his vessel become disabled. If a fisherman hesitates to render assistance because of losing fishing time, then the safety of a crew and vessel could be in jeopardy. This procedure would reward the fishermen who gives help and should eliminate any reasons for indecision.

Proposed by: Alaska Marketing Association and North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association (255-256)

STATEWIDE
TANNER CRAB

- I. Allow a "bait up period" in all areas with tank inspections starting 120 hours after the season opening.
- II. Amend 5 AAC 35.050(c)(3)(B) to allow seven days for removal of gear from the grounds after any closure of part of or an entire registration area.
- III. Prohibit a validly registered Tanner crab vessel from registering for more than one Tanner crab fishery at a time and for concurrently registering for a crab fishery in another area.

JUSTIFICATIONS:

I. For safety (vessel and crew) reasons this five day bait up period would allow smaller vessels to make more trips to and from the grounds, thus lowering the potential of overloading a vessel. The problem of vessel overloading is becoming apparent as the resource levels decline. This proposal would make the regulation uniform for all species of crab.

Proposed by: Alaska Marketing Association and North Pacific Fishing Vessels Owners Association (249)

II. Vessels have had to remove gear in too short a time period, often times in bad weather and has resulted in lost vessels and crews.

Proposed by: Alaska Marketing Association and North Pacific Fishing Vessels Owners Association (250)

III. The intent of the regulation as it now stands was to prevent conflicts between king and Dungeness crab registration areas. We now have conflicts with Dungeness and Tanner crab registration areas. The proposed regulation will eliminate those conflicts by prohibiting concurrent registrations. It will not prevent fishermen from voiding out his registration, if allowed by regulation, and moving to another fishery in another area.

Proposed by: Department Fish and Game