

D1 Norton Sound Red King Crab Participation Recency

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Overview

- Description of the Stock
- Description and History of the Fishery
- Participation
- Community connections
- LLP License Recency
- Next Steps
- Potential Implications



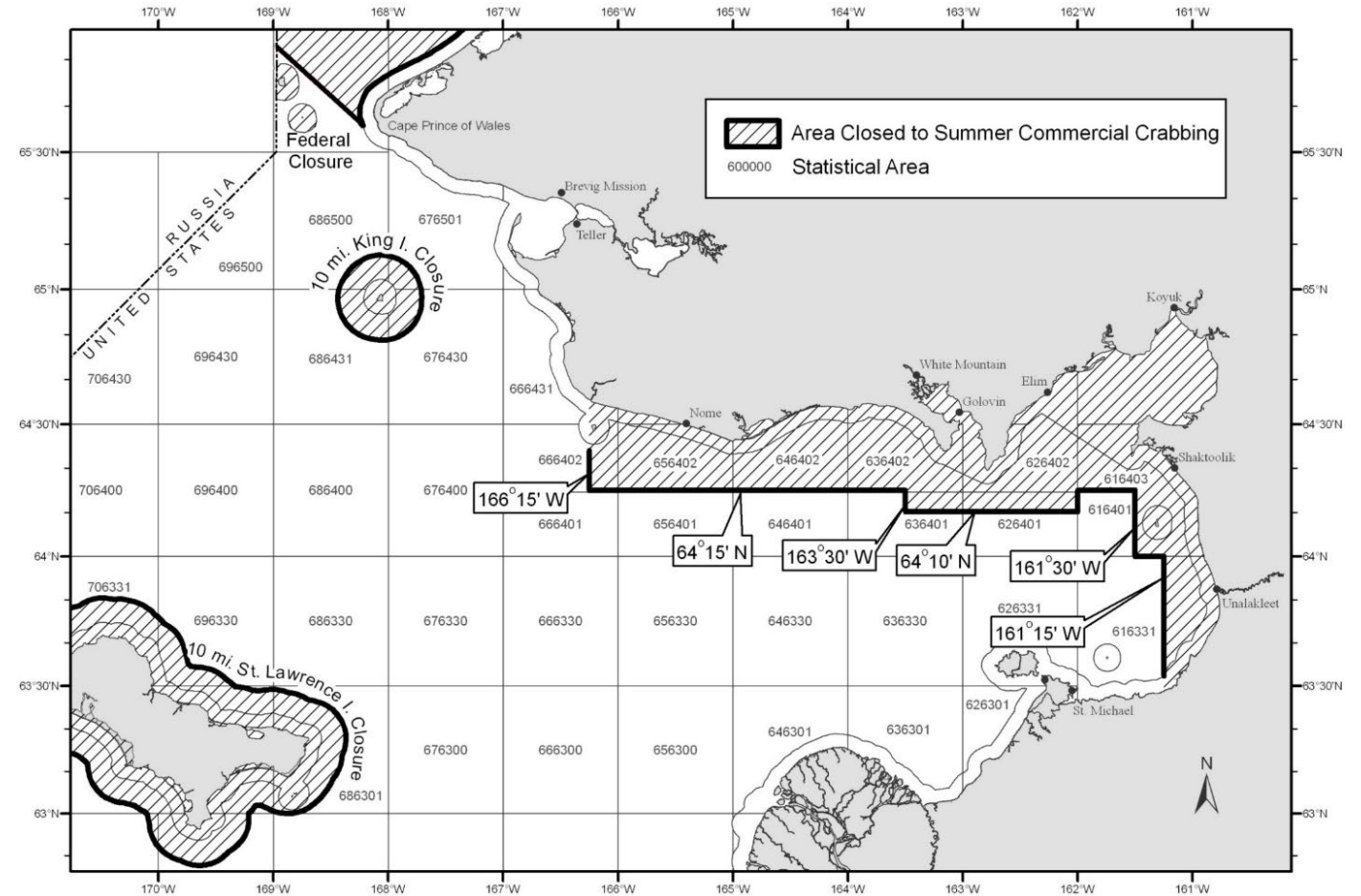
Description of the Stock

- Northernmost commercial red king crab fishery in Alaska.
- Distributed throughout Norton Sound at depths above 30 meters.
- Male and female red king crab in Norton Sound mature at smaller sizes.
- Norton Sound red king crab migrate from offshore to nearshore waters in winter/spring then move back offshore in summer.



Description of the Fishery

- Winter nearshore fishery through the ice and summer offshore fishery in EEZ.
- Nearshore areas closed to summer commercial fishery.
- Fishery is not limited by the CFEC.
- Designated as 'super exclusive' in both State and Federal regulations.
- 40 pots per vessel, <125' LOA.



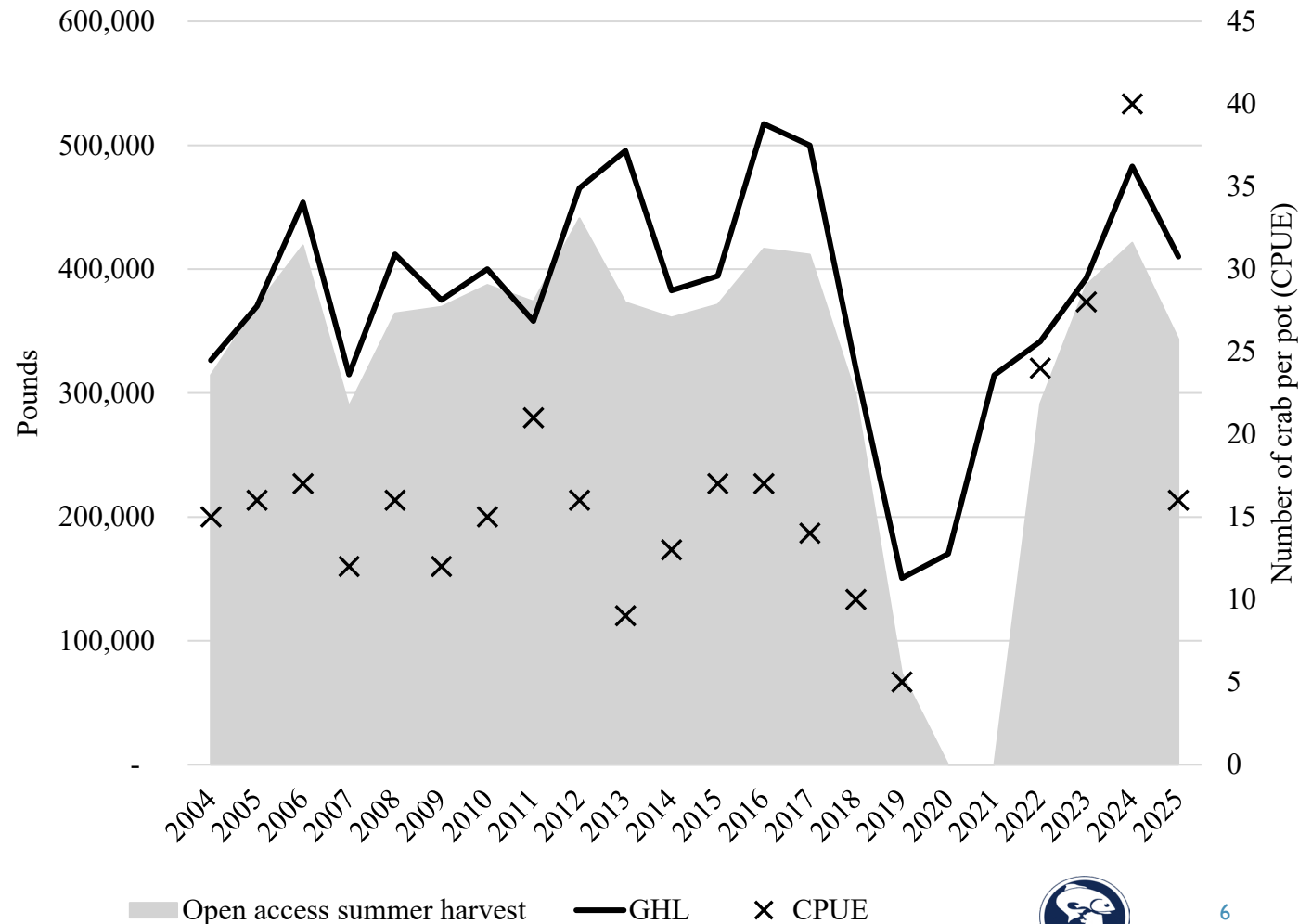
Description of the Fishery

- Fishery is managed under the BSAI crab FMP and is not part of the Crab Rationalization Program.
- Federal License Limitation Program (LLP) implemented in 2000.
- LLP is required for all vessels >32 feet LOA.
- 62 LLPs endorsed for Norton Sound king crab.
- 7 LLPs have MLOA \leq 32 feet.

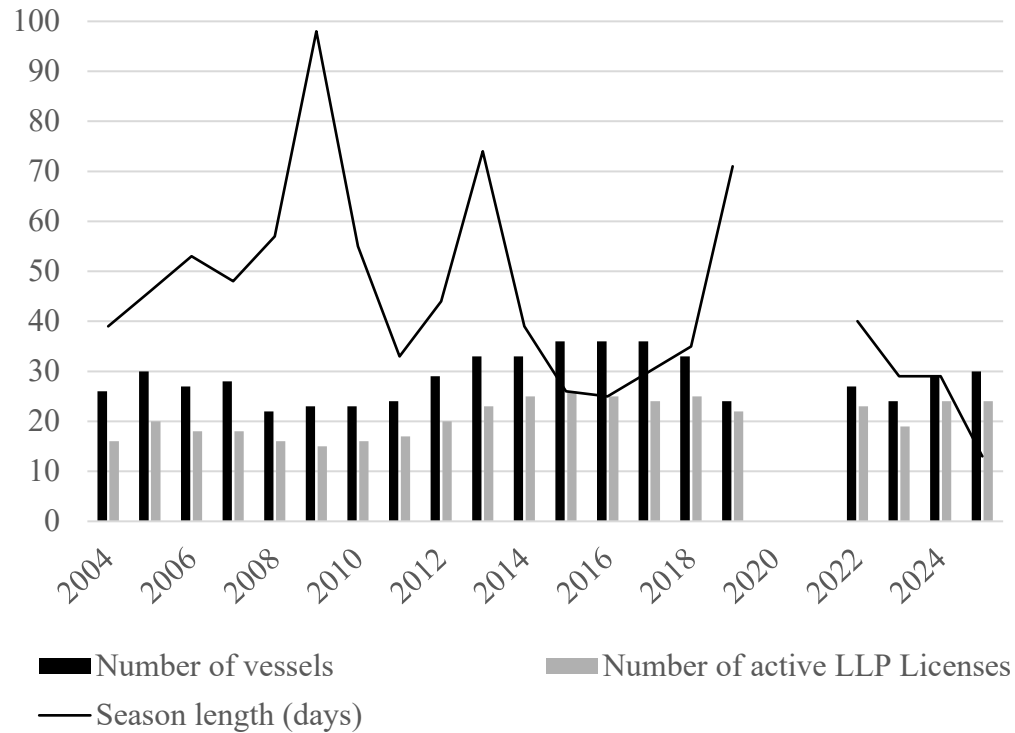


Description of the Fishery

- 7.5% of GHL is allocated to CDQ, remaining GHL is apportioned 8% to winter and 92% summer.
- Typically, over 95% of the non-CDQ allocation is taken in the summer fishery.
- Secretary of Commerce determined fishery resource disasters occurred in 2019, 2020, and 2021.
- Record prices and high CPUEs since 2022.
- A second commercial buyer registered for the fishery starting in 2024.



Participation



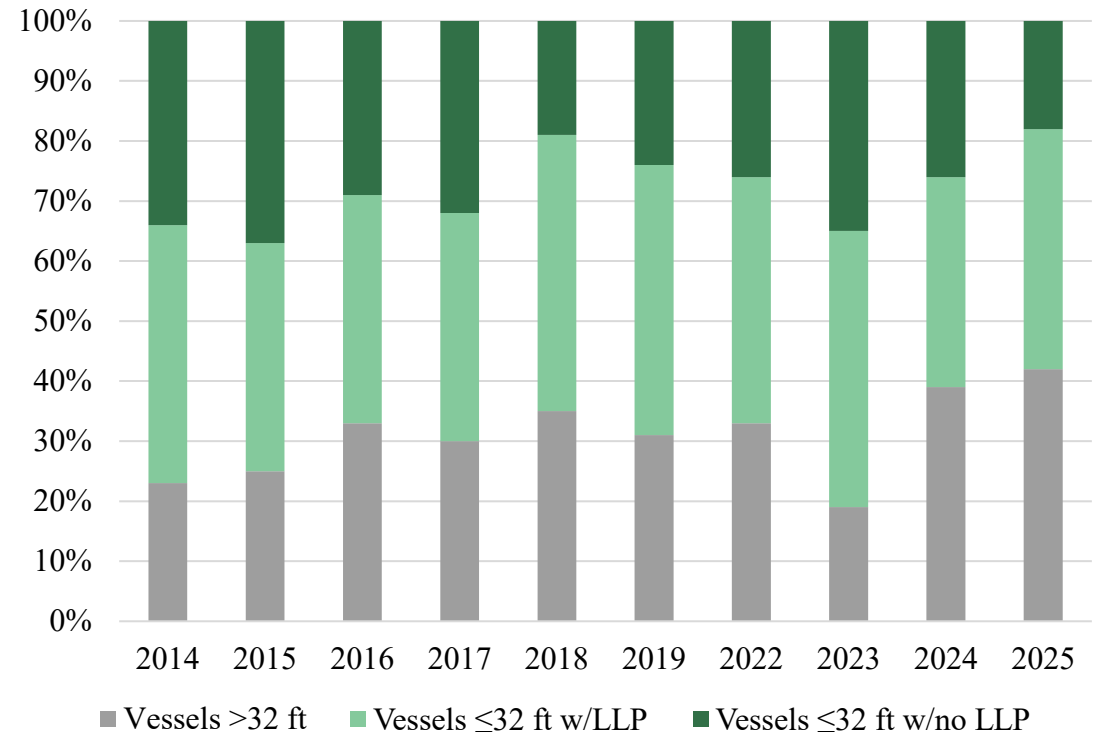
- Since 2004, 22 to 36 vessels participate annually, average 29 vessels.
- Since 2014, 59% to 80% of vessels are assigned to an LLP, including 53% to 78% of vessels ≤ 32 ft.
- Season length has varied; the recent five-year average of 29 days is ~ 1 week shorter than the ten-year average of 35 days; 2025 was the shortest season on record.



Participation

- Most vessels are 30-32 ft.
- Smaller vessels (≤ 32 ft) have harvested as much as 81% of the total catch and as little as 58% of the total catch.
- Larger vessels (> 32 ft) harvested 42% of the total catch in 2025.
- Recent increases in the number of vessels > 32 ft have raised concerns from long-term fishery participants that increased participation by larger vessels may continue to increase.

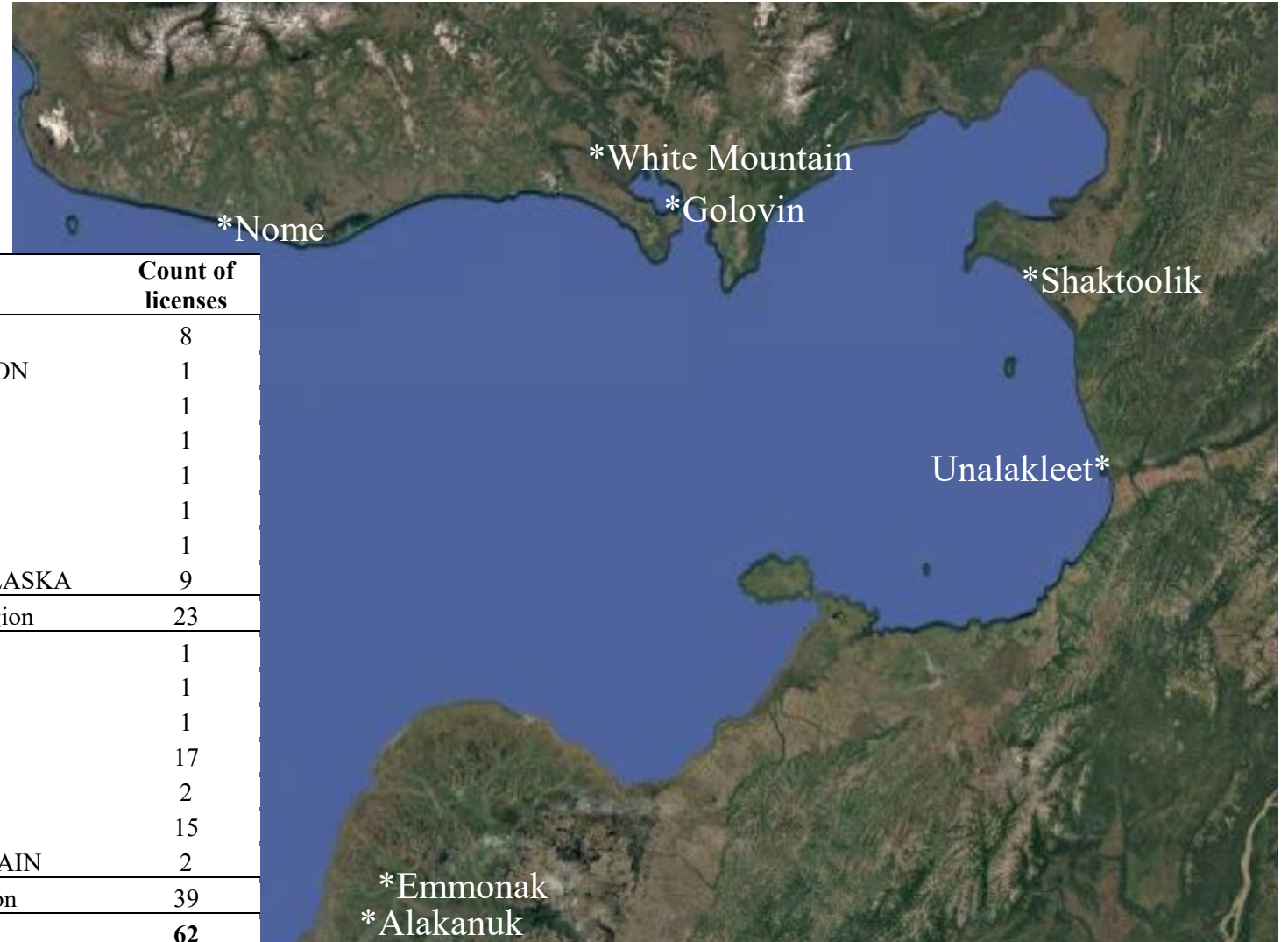
Proportion of total harvest by vessel size and LLP status



Community connections

- 63% of the 62 LLP holders are from the Norton Sound region.
- Almost all fishery participants are from the Norton Sound region.
- Average length of participation in the fishery is five years; median is three years.

Registered City	Count of licenses
ANCHORAGE	8
DELTA JUNCTION	1
HOMER	1
JUNEAU	1
KODIAK	1
NAKNEK	1
WASILLA	1
OUTSIDE OF ALASKA	9
Total Outside Region	23
ALAKANUK	1
EMMONAK	1
GOLOVIN	1
NOME	17
SHAKTOOLIK	2
UNALAKLEET	15
WHITE MOUNTAIN	2
Total Inside Region	39
Grand Total	62



LLP License Recency

	2019-2025	2012-2025	2009-2026	2004-2025
Active LLPs	29	32	34	35
Latent LLPs	33	30	28	27
Source: ADF&G fish tickets and NOAA Fisheries Restricted Access Management				

- Since 2004, 35 LLPs were assigned to a vessel that had at least one landing.
- A total of 29 LLPs were active in the most recent five seasons (since 2019).
- Since 2014, two to three vessels have had stacked LLPs.
- Appendix 1 shows LLP license activity.



Participation in other fisheries



- Since 2013, 84% of participants received 100% of their revenue from the NSRKC fishery.
- Of the 27 LLP holders that have not been active in the Norton Sound red king crab fishery, 2 are currently active in other fisheries and 24 have not participated in any other fisheries.



Next Steps



**No further
action**



**Request further
information in
another discussion
paper**



**Initiate analysis-
define purpose
and need,
alternatives**



Next Steps

Examples of provisions in purpose and need statements from previous recency actions

- Fishery is fully utilized.
- Current participants have long term investments and dependence on the fishery.
- Potential reentry of a latent license to the fishery could disrupt stability, harm investments, and interfere with expectations.
- The possible future entry of latent effort and disproportionate vessel efficiency would have detrimental effects on LLP holders that have exhibited participation in, and dependence on, the fishery.
- Increased competition due to increased market value, declining TAC, increased participation by harvesters displaced from other fisheries.
- Introduction of capital that has been accrued from participation in rationalized fisheries.
- To prevent the future entry or re-entry of latent fishing capacity that has not been utilized in recent years, and to preserve the traditional vessel operational efficiencies within the fisheries.



Next Steps

Define Purpose and Need

- Determines the scope of the analysis
- Delineates the range of alternatives necessary to address the problem
 - Latent capacity- remove LLP licenses that have not been used to make a landing since at least 2004
 - Recency- specify criteria to retain LLP license based on years of participation, or number of landings
 - Overcapacity-other management tools to limit capacity such as pot limits, trip limits, vessel caps



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Category 1 (Fixed in FMP)	Category 2 (Frameworked in FMP)	Category 3 (Discretion of State)
Legal Gear	Minimum Size Limits	Reporting Requirements
Permit Requirements	Guideline Harvest Levels	Gear Placement and Removal
Federal Observer Requirements	In-season Adjustments	Gear Storage
Limited Access	Districts, Subdistricts and Sections	Vessel Tank Inspections
Norton Sound Superexclusive Registration	Fishing Seasons	Gear Modifications
Essential Fish Habitat	Sex Restrictions	Bycatch Limits (in crab fisheries)
Habitat Areas of Particular Concern	Pot Limits	State Observer Requirements
	Registration Areas	Other
	Closed Waters	



Potential Implications

Likelihood of new entry into the fishery from unutilized LLP licenses is unpredictable

- Circumstances that may increase the appeal of entry into the fishery:
 - Increase in NSRKC catch limits or prices in the future
 - Decrease in alternative economic opportunities (i.e., an individual's opportunity cost associated with participating in the NSRKC fishery)
- Speculative entry from otherwise latent licenses that may be concerned about potential management actions limiting future access to a fishery
 - Often managed by setting a control date
 - Informs interested parties that the Council is considering a future action that may affect or limit the number of participants in a fishery
 - Participation after the control date may not receive continued access to the fishery under a future management action



Potential Implications

- Effort in the NSRKC fishery could increase even without new or increased activity from latent or recently unused licenses
 - Vessels ≤ 32 ft LOA are exempt from the LLP requirement
 - New exempt entrants could add capacity to the fleet.
 - Since 2014, 12 to 18 vessels fall under this exemption but currently operate with an LLP, collectively accounting for over 35% of the annual harvest
 - Many active LLPs are used on vessels less than the maximum LOA
 - On average 22 active LLPs could be used on vessels roughly 20 feet longer than those currently using them
- LLP recency action would reduce the number of eligible LLPs but may not alter competitive dynamics of the fishery



Next Steps

- No further action
- Further information in another discussion paper
- Initiate analysis- Define Purpose and Need
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