

2021/2022 Board of Fisheries King and Tanner Proposals

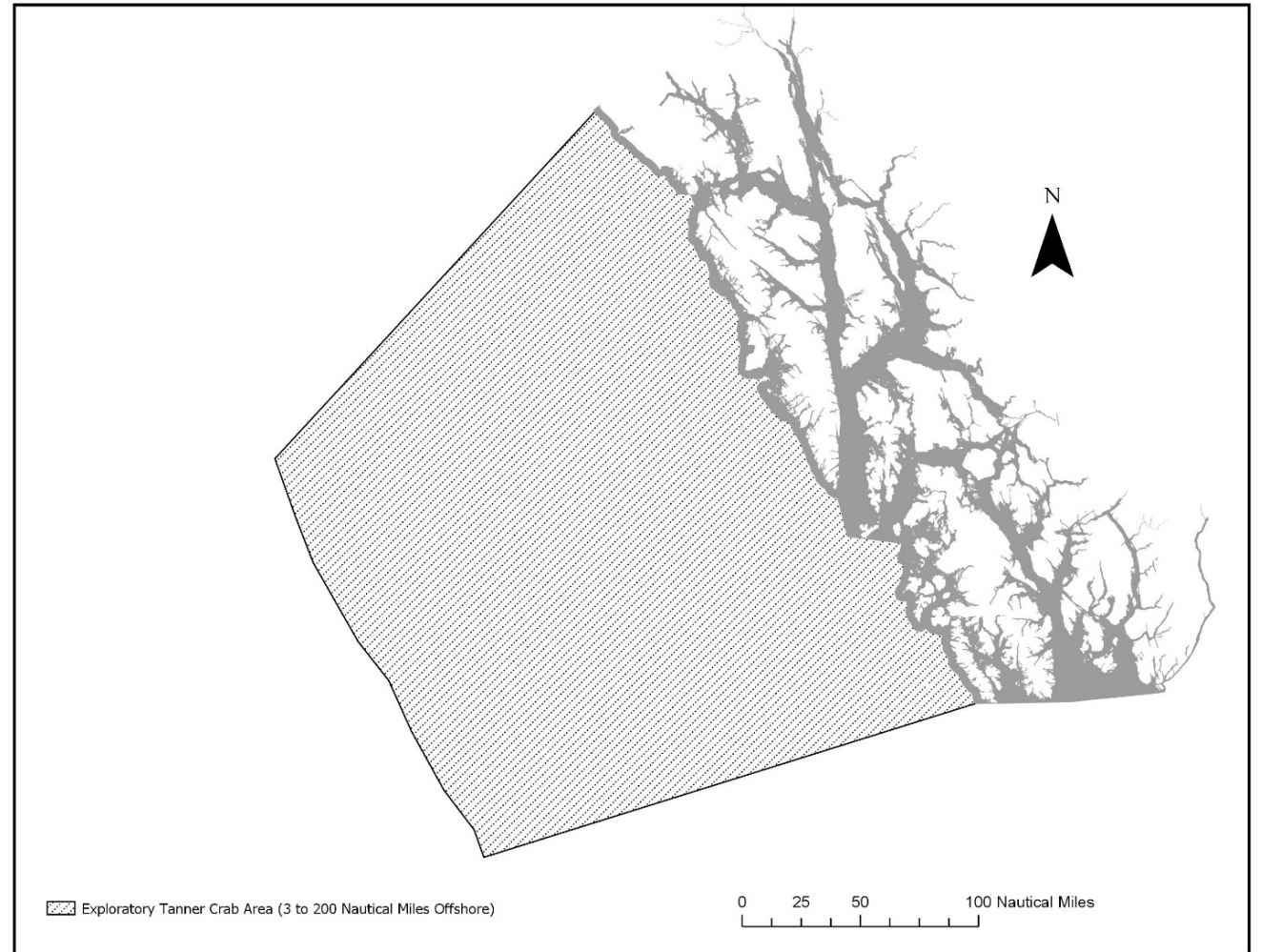
Andrew Olson

King and Tanner Task
Force Meeting

December 3rd, 2021

Tanner Crab Proposal 195

- 5 AAC 35.113. Registration Area A Tanner Crab Harvest Strategy
- What would the proposal do?
 - Extend fishing time for the commercial Tanner crab fishery in exploratory areas from 14 to 28 days after closure of noncore areas.

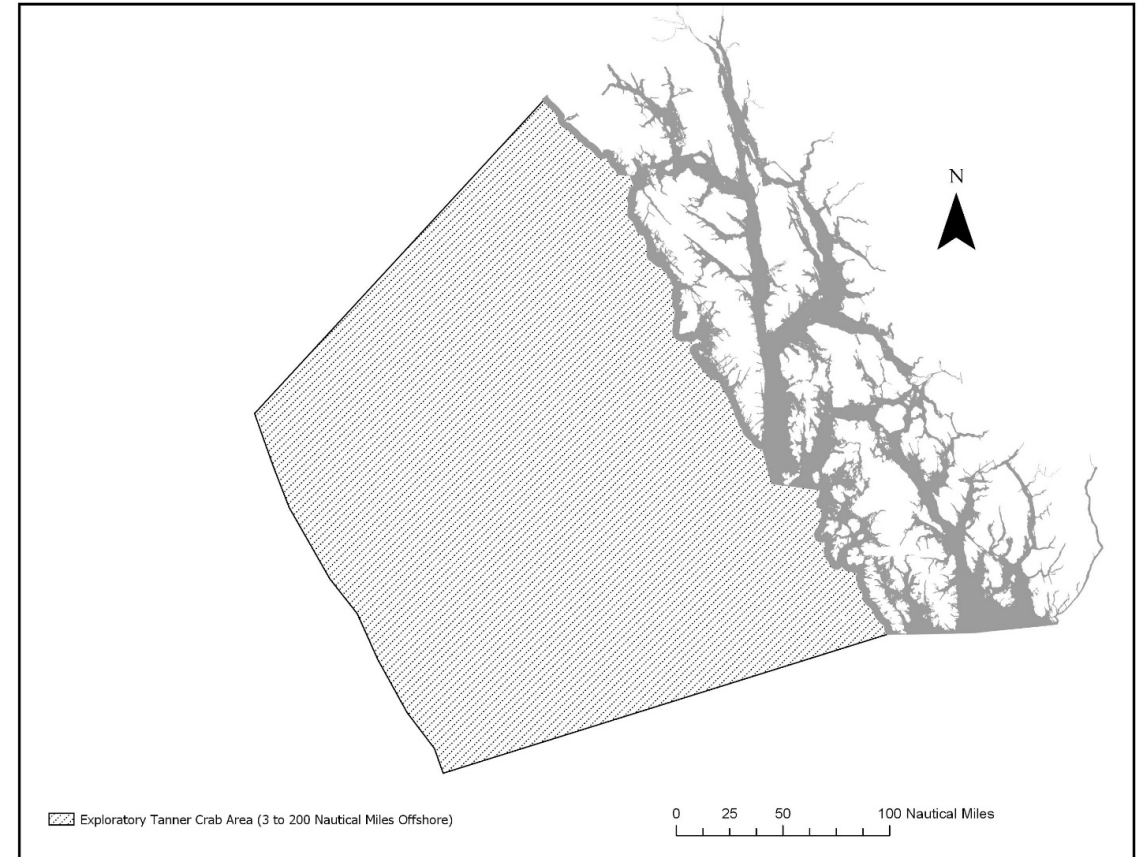


Tanner Crab Proposal 195

The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

Proposal 198 should be considered in relation to this proposal. If both Proposals 195 and 198 are adopted, the Tanner crab season in exploratory areas could extend into early April.

The department is **OPPOSED** to allowing commercial Tanner crab fishing during the molting/mating period in Southeast Alaska, occurring April through June.



Tanner Crab Proposal 197

- 5 AAC 35.113. Registration Area A
Tanner Crab Harvest Strategy
- What would the proposal do?
 - Modify definitions for noncore and exploratory areas. Areas defined as noncore areas that have had no Tanner crab effort in past 3 seasons would be redefined as exploratory

Tanner Crab

Proposal 197

The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative aspects of this proposal and **OPPOSED** to the proposed changes to the harvest strategy.

This proposal would greatly increase commercial Tanner crab fishing time in the inside waters of Southeast by annually redefining statistical areas currently defined as noncore and exploratory. Noncore areas are currently open for a total of ten to fifteen days depending on the length of the initial period. Some of these areas currently categorized as noncore would become exploratory and gain an additional fourteen days of season length.

Areas currently categorized as noncore are areas that the department has less information about the status of Tanner crab stocks because they are not part of the annual stock assessment survey. On the inside waters of Southeast, movement of adult male Tanner crabs between core and noncore areas is poorly understood. Adoption of this proposal would lead to a less orderly fishery with a patchwork of core, noncore, and exploratory areas all with different season lengths that would be challenging to describe, explain, and enforce.

Proposal 198 should be considered in relation to this proposal. If both Proposals 197 and 198 are adopted, the Tanner crab season in exploratory areas could extend into early April. The department is **OPPOSED** to allowing commercial Tanner crab fishing during the molting/mating period in Southeast Alaska, occurring April through June.

Tanner /Golden King Crab Proposal 198

- 5 AAC 34.110 and 35.110. Fishing seasons for Registration Area A
- What would the proposal do?
 - Adopt a fixed start date of February 20th for both commercial Tanner and golden king crab fisheries in Southeast Alaska

Tanner/Golden King Crab

Proposal 198

The department **OPPOSES** setting a fixed season opening date for the commercial Tanner and golden king crab fisheries. The current regulations provide the department flexibility in setting a season opening on the most favorable tides between February 10 and 17 which reduces potential for gear loss and improves fishing efficiency for permit holders.

This proposal should be considered in relation to Proposals 195 and 197. If either Proposals 195 or 197 and 198 are adopted, the Tanner crab season in exploratory areas could extend into early April. The department is **OPPOSED** to allowing commercial Tanner crab fishing during the molting/mating period in Southeast Alaska, occurring April through June.

Golden King Crab Proposal 192

- 5 AAC 34.114. Southeast Alaska Golden King Crab Management Plan.
- What would the proposal do?
 - Add language from board's *Policy on King and Tanner Crab Resource Management*;
 - Open management areas for a set of tides to a preseason GHL that is a minimum of 10% to the upper range of that area's GHR. After one set of tides the GHL would be reassessed.

Golden King Crab

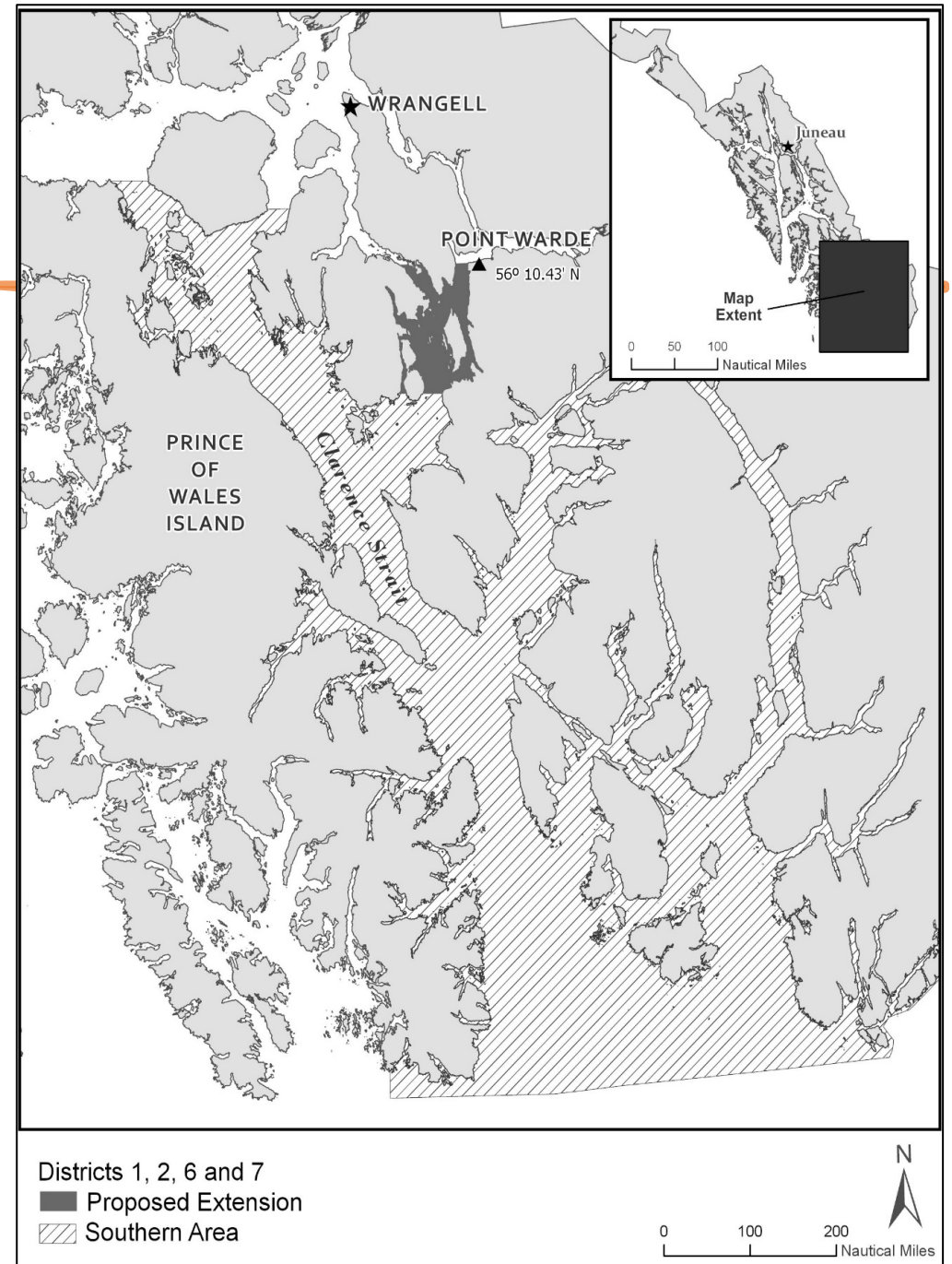
Proposal 192

The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. There are no significant benefits to the management approach put forth in this proposal. The proposal seeks to limit the department's ability to manage this fishery using best available information on stock health and fishery performance. If required to manage inseason and potentially adjust GHs upwards or downwards based on catch rates and a host of other factors, the department would need to develop a standard for comparison, along with well-defined decision rules, to avoid the need to make highly subjective decisions under the pressure of the ongoing fishery. Catch rates would be compared to the standard and the season would be adjusted as necessary. Instead of using several years of data that have been carefully reviewed before making decisions, the department would be required to make rapid decisions based on a small amount of data with minimal opportunity for analysis. The risk of making the incorrect decision would increase under this approach. It is also likely that the department would not be able to provide as much advance notice for area closures, which has historically been a major concern of the fleet.

The Southeast Alaska *Golden King Crab Management Plan* states the fishery is to be managed according to the *Policy on King and Tanner Crab Resource Management*, managing by fishery area to the extent possible, closing areas if abundance of male crabs is inadequate to provide for sustainable harvest, using fishery performance and population structure information, and managing conservatively when information is lacking. To this end, with the golden king crab fishery in some areas in decline in recent years, the department has reviewed data inseason and has closed fishery areas short of GHs due to conservation concerns in order to protect the long-term reproductive potential of the stock. This proposal undermines the department's ability to manage conservatively by mandating the department consider adjusting GHs inseason when no conservation concerns exist and does not allow the department to consider the seasonal closure of a specific fishery area by mandating the GH be at least 10% of the upper end of the GHR.

Golden King Crab Proposal 193

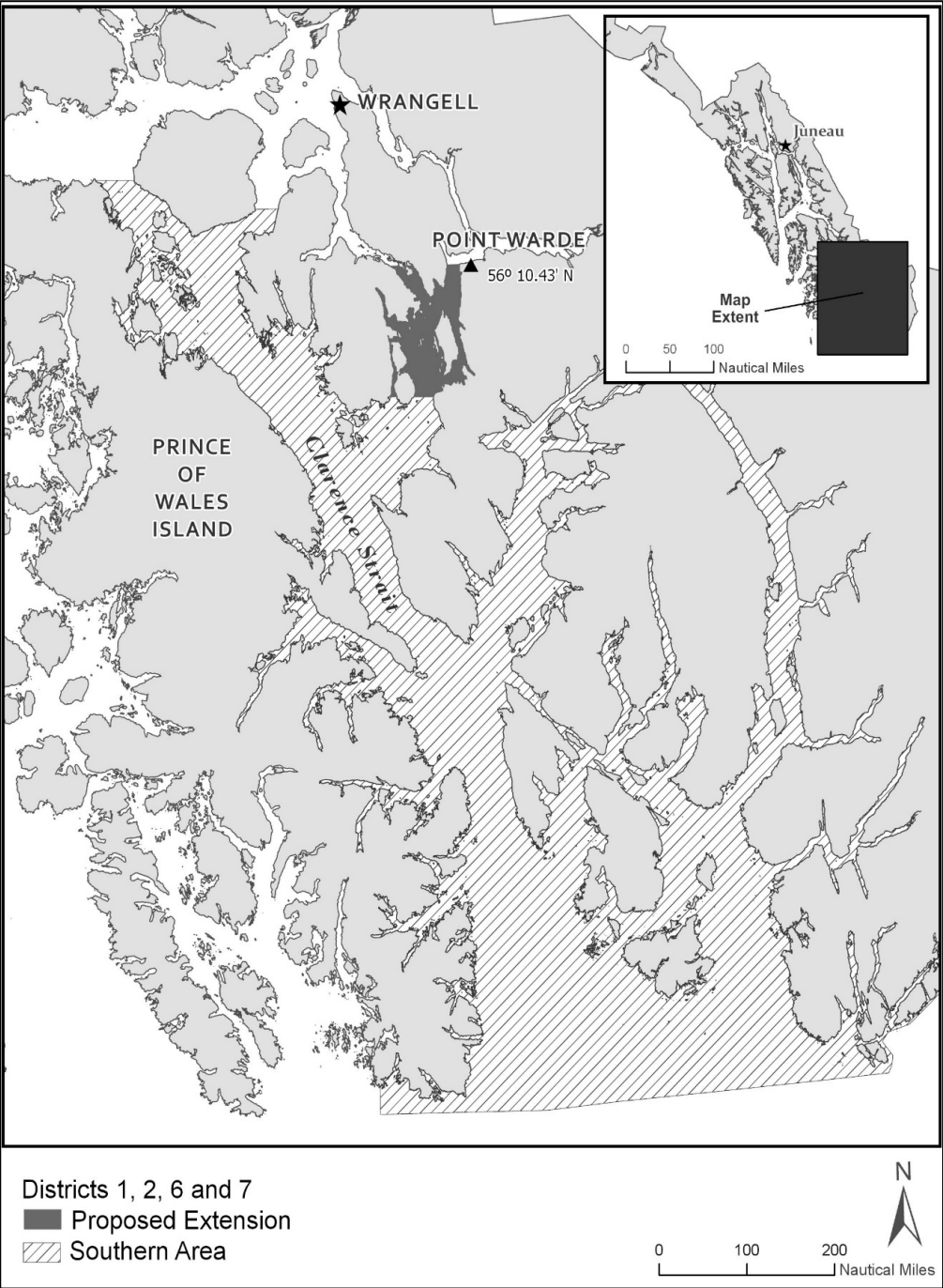
- 5 AAC 34.107. Description of golden king crab fishing areas within Registration Area A.
- What would the proposal do?
 - Increase the size of the Southern management area for golden king crab.



Golden King Crab

Proposal 193

The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal.



Golden King Crab Proposal 196

- 5 AAC 34.125. Lawful gear for Registration Area A.
- What would the proposal do?
 - Reduce the pot limit for the golden king crab fishery in Southeast Alaska from 100 pots to 80 pots.

Golden King Crab

Proposal 196

The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

The current limit of 100 pots in the golden king crab fishery makes it difficult to set closures to target GHGs, while allowing adequate time for gear to be moved or stored in consideration of tides and weather. Currently a five to eight-day advanced notice is typically given prior to area closures. A reduction to 80 pots would allow managers to manage more closely to fishery area GHGs before making closure announcements since less advanced notice would need to be given prior to closures due to less time required for fishermen to work deployed pots.

Overall, management accuracy in targeting fishery area GHGs would improve with a lower pot limit, especially in the larger areas that typically see more effort.

Red King Crab Proposal 190

- 5 AAC 34.113. Southeast Alaska Red King Crab Management Plan & 34.125 Lawful gear for Registration Area A
- What would the proposal do?
 - Create a tiered approach to the RKC management plan when GHL is greater than 88,500 lbs and less than 200,000 lbs;
 - Introduces equal quota share and trip-limits to management plan

Red King Crab

Proposal 190

The department is **OPPOSED** to repealing the current GHL and replacing it with lower GHL ranges if biological thresholds are not incorporated into the management plan.

The board has eliminated minimum GHLs for some king and Tanner crab fisheries where inseason management concerns have been alleviated through other regulatory action, however management plans for those fisheries contain biological or abundance-based thresholds that serve as buffers in protecting stock reproductive potential. Similar buffers are not incorporated into the management plan for red king crab in Southeast Alaska.

Without abundance or biological-based thresholds, including a minimum GHL, explicitly defined in regulation, the department would use professional judgment in evaluating the best available information to establish a sustainable GHL. Before opening the Southeast Alaska red king crab fishery with a GHL of less than 200,000 pounds, a red king crab harvest strategy with an abundance or biological-based fishery threshold should be developed and adopted by the board. If adopted, the board should consider whether the department should continue to consider reducing the personal use bag and possession limit at mature biomass levels less than 200,000 pounds.

Some of the tools in this proposal, such as trip limits and mandatory reporting would be useful in managing this fishery.

The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative elements of this proposal.

Red King Crab Proposal 191

- 5 AAC 34.113. Southeast Alaska Red King Crab Management Plan
- What would the proposal do?
 - Base harvestable surplus on historical fishery performance when surveys are not available;
 - Except Section 11-A a RKC fishery will open on even years for a min. of 3 days and max. of 7 days;
 - Sunset clause of 2027

Red King Crab

Proposal 191

The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal. Without abundance or biological-based thresholds, including a minimum GHL, explicitly defined in regulation, the department would use professional judgment in evaluating the best available information to establish a sustainable GHL.

Before opening the Southeast Alaska red king crab fishery with a GHL of less than 200,000 pounds, a red king crab harvest strategy with an abundance or biological-based fishery threshold should be developed and adopted by the board. If adopted, the board should consider whether the department should continue to consider reducing the personal use bag and possession limit at mature biomass levels less than 200,000 pounds.

The department is **NEUTRAL** on all allocative aspects of this proposal.

Blue King Crab Proposal 194

- 5 AAC 34.108. Description of blue king crab fishing areas within Registration Area A
- What would the proposal do?
 - Align state and federal regulations concerning commercial blue king crab within Glacier Bay.
 - Since 1999 commercial king crab fishing has been prohibited in Glacier Bay

Blue King Crab Proposal 194

The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

Federal regulations prohibit commercial king crab fishing in Glacier Bay. Removing the reference to Glacier Bay as a blue king crab fishing area will make state regulations consistent with federal regulations for the commercial blue king crab fishery in Glacier Bay.

Other Pot Gear

Proposal 199

- 5 AAC 34.128. Operation of other pot gear in Registration Area A
- What would the proposal do?
 - Allow commercial Tanner and king crab fishermen to operate subsistence, personal use, or sport shrimp or Dungeness crab pots prior to and during an open Tanner crab or king crab fishery.

Other Pot Gear

Proposal 199

The department **OPPOSES** allowing subsistence, personal use, or sport Dungeness crab fishing prior to or during a Tanner crab or king crab fishery by commercial Tanner crab and king crab fishermen.

There is no definition in regulation defining the size of a subsistence, personal use, or sport Dungeness crab pot. Without this definition Dungeness crab can currently be fished with pots large enough to catch both king and Tanner crab.