

**PROPOSAL 219**

**5 AAC 31.210. Shrimp pot fishing seasons for Registration Area E.**

Modify the Prince William Sound Area commercial shrimp pot fishing season, as follows:

(a) In the waters of the Inside District west of a line from Middle Point at 60° 20.00' N. lat., 147° W. long., north to a point at 60° 40.00' N. lat., 147° W. long., then northeast to the Coast Guard marker light on Goose Island at 60° 42.78' N. lat., 146° 43.63' W. long., to a point on Knowles Head at 60° 41.00' N. lat., 146° 37.50' W. long., shrimp may be taken from **May 1st through August 15th** [APRIL 15TH THROUGH SEPTEMBER 15TH], as established by emergency order.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This proposal would be biologically beneficial to shrimp stocks and increase productivity in at least two ways. Firstly, on average April, August and September shrimp pots have a larger percentage of egg bearing females per pot than do shrimp caught in May, June and July. This amendment would allow more females to release their larvae to provide for shrimp production. Secondly, in April fisherman face a larger risk of gear loss which can lead to ghost fishing harming shrimp stocks. The greater risk of gear loss is due to fishing near ice sheets that unpredictably break up and move out of bays. Fisherman have lost large amounts of gear due to ice and that gear will ghostfish for a short while harming shrimp stocks. Gear loss is financially damaging to participants in the fishery and should be addressed if possible. Moving the season back a few weeks could give ice sheets in Prince William Sound such as those in Unakwik, Port Wells, Port Nellie Juan and Icy Bay more time to break up before fishing commences.

**PROPOSED BY:** Whittier Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(EF-F17-071)

\*\*\*\*\*