

**PROPOSAL 222**

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

Modify the fishing area rotation system in the Prince William Sound Area commercial shrimp pot fishery, as follows:

Prosecute the fishery on an advancing administrative area basis, starting in any one area, then moving to the next and so on until the assessed GHL is obtained.

A solution to leveling out the production during open seasons and lowering the impact to habitat is to limit the duration of targeting the entire GHL in any one area. Annually, Area 1 could be open for a duration of 6 weeks, Area 2 could be fished for a duration of 5 weeks and Area 3 could be fished for a duration of 4 weeks. Each area would be advanced through until the annual GHL is achieved. The starting area in any one year would continue to rotate on a tri-annual basis as it is today. Each succeeding year would start in the next regular area then progress through successive areas during the season as necessary to achieve the GHL as determined by the current management survey from all three areas combined.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Current regulations require moving commercial pot shrimp fishing effort between three administrative areas within Prince William Sound on a tri-annual basis. However, GHL is determined by annual surveys conducted across all three areas in total. This total amount allowed for sustainable harvest is not equally distributed across administrative areas. Based on historical CPUE figures from the commercial fishery and current administrative boundaries, the three defined fishing areas have abundance in descending order. Area 1 CPUE averages 2.52 lb/pot, Area 2 averages 1.78 lb/pot, and Area 3 averages 1.10 lb/pot. Area 3 represents the lowest catch rates and abundance within the entire PWS spot shrimp survey area. Yet the current management strategy places undue pressure on stocks in Area 3 every third year, suggesting the entire GHL is available there.

**PROPOSED BY:** Brett Wilbanks

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