

**PROPOSAL 216**

**5 AAC 55.055. Prince William Sound noncommercial shrimp fishery management plan.**

Require participants in the Prince William Sound Area noncommercial shrimp fishery to register with the department prior to May 1, as follows:

Participants in the Prince William Sound non-commercial Spot Prawn Fishery must register prior to May 1.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Prince William Sound noncommercial spot prawn fishery often exceeds its yearly GHL. Currently there is no tool to give fishery managers the ability to manage to harvest effort in-season. While in-season harvest reporting is the best way to manage this fishery, at this time, adfg staff do not consider it a viable option. I propose a registration deadline of May 1 for participants in this fishery. This would at least give staff a hard number for participants which could be compared to past harvests and CPUE. GHL could then be managed to by season length.

**PROPOSED BY:** Richard Person (EF-F17-078)

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**PROPOSAL 217**

**5 AAC 55.055. Prince William Sound non-commercial shrimp fishery management plan.**

Allow for harvest of octopus with additional gear while participating in the Prince William Sound noncommercial shrimp fishery, as follows:

(d) allow for the addition of octopus specific gear on the same line in addition to shrimp pots.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** To allow for the addition of octopus specific gear on the same line in addition to shrimp pots.

So as to minimize both environmental and financial impacts.

**PROPOSED BY:** Greg Trent (EF-F17-095)

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*This proposal was modified from the version printed in the proposal book in order to reflect the proposer's intent to apply to the non-commercial fishery.*

**PROPOSAL 218**

**5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.**

Modify the start date for the Prince William Sound Area sport shrimp pot fishing season, as follows:

(b)(5) shrimp may be taken as follows:

(A) may be taken from May 1 [APRIL 15] – September 15; no bag, possession, or size limits;

**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 fishermen 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. Fishermen 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, Blackstone Bay, Columbia Bay, Valdez Arm, 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-F17-096)

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**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)  
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**PROPOSAL 220**

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

Modify the Prince William Sound Area commercial shrimp pot fishing seasons to separate commercial and noncommercial seasons, as follows:

(a) Shrimp may be taken from October 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Separate personal use fishery from commercial fishery. This would allow for a winter fishery and not conflict with summer fisheries in PWS. Would coincide with SE commercial shrimp fishery.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kory Blake (HQ-F17-006)  
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**PROPOSAL 221**

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

Amend statistical areas included in the three areas fished triennially on a rotating basis in the Prince William Sound Area commercial shrimp pot fishery, as follows:

I recommend that the current rotating area system in regulation be changed to a system which allows fishermen each year (if we retain the rotation concept) to have a more or less equal chance of catching the allotted GHL.

An example of how this could be done is as follows: This could be regulated by having certain groups of stat areas open each year of the rotation. These stat areas would not have to be contiguous, and should be grouped together (by catch history and other factors) such that each year's group would provide a more or less equal chance of harvesting the GHL.

This would make for a more stable supply of shrimp available for the abundance of people who can not access the fishery resources otherwise, and rely on the commercial fishery as to get their shrimp.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Currently, the 3 rotating area system makes it hard to reliably catch an economic number of shrimp in one of the 3 areas. That has curtailed the effort and the catch, such that the GHL has not been utilized or even approached one out every three years. It makes so that fishermen are not likely to be successful and so that the people who rely on commercially caught shrimp are not very likely to be able to get the amount they need, if any.

This current system also increases fishing pressure on an area that has relatively depressed populations of shrimp, thereby slowing the timeline of it becoming more productive.

**PROPOSED BY:** Gordon Scott (EF-F17-121)

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**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 (EF-F17-124)

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**PROPOSAL 223**

**5 AAC 31.214. Shrimp pot guideline harvest level for Registration Area E.**

Remove the total allowable harvest threshold for the Prince William Sound Area commercial shrimp pot fishery, as follows:

We recommend removing the language of this threshold requirement for a commercial fishery. (Remove the whole first sentence of section 5 AAC 31.214)

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The existence of the TAH threshold for a commercial fishery to take place has no biological purpose at all for management of a healthy and sustainable resource. It unfairly penalizes commercial fishermen and the populous that depend on commercial fishermen for access to PWS Shrimp. The commercial fishery is managed in order to be able to catch and not overharvest the allotted GHL. This threshold is simply an allocative issue, punishing the commercial fishery and its beneficiaries unfairly.

An alternative way to solve this allocative penalty on the commercial fishery and its beneficiaries would be to increase the 40% commercial allocation in order to balance the negative effects of the threshold on the fishery.

**PROPOSED BY:** Whittier Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F17-094)  
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**PROPOSAL 224**

**5 AAC 31.214. Shrimp pot guideline harvest level for Registration Area E.**

Modify the guideline harvest threshold for the Prince William Sound Area commercial shrimp pot fishery, as follows:

**Option A:**

Allow the fishery to continue to be managed for the 60/40 split at lower Total Allowable harvest levels. Thus evenly sharing the burden of conservation between groups. This is my preferred solution. If needed, a smaller number (for example 80,000lbs) could be a trigger point for closure of both fisheries. This is my preferred solution.

**Option B:**

Close the fishery entirely for both recreational and commercial fisheries when Total Allowable Harvest is below 110,000 lbs in order to facilitate recovery of the fishery and a return to full fishing for both user groups.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Shrimp harvest in Prince William Sound is allocated by the department determining a Total Allowable Harvest and then apportioning on a 60/40 split between the Recreation/Commercial fisheries. However in the case where the TAH is estimated to be less than 110,000 pounds than there is no commercial fishery at all and the entire fishery is allocated to the recreational sector. This is an issue in several ways.

1) This is not an equitable sharing of the burden of conservation. In fact it is not a sharing at all. One user group bears the entirety of it. Furthermore the burden of conservation is supposed between allocative groups in proportion to the groups impact on the resource and in this case the group that has at MOST 40% (in fact lower) of the total harvest is bearing 100% of the burden. In fact in times of conservation this effectively RAISES the allowable harvest for one user group while eliminating all opportunity for the other.

2) This denies access to the resource in years of lower abundance to thousands of Alaskans. This is not a staple food source "fill your freezer" sort of personal use fishery. It is a fairly exclusive, expensive to participate recreational fishery. The vast majority of the commercial harvest is sold

in state largely through small direct market operations, and the commercial fishery is the only access most of the population has to this amazing product.

3) In years of low abundance it denies crucial population data to the department. In contrast to the recreational fishery which has significant issues with post-season reporting and a lack of direct management, the commercial fishery is strictly regulated with extensive in-season reporting and logbook requirements. There is not issues with going over harvest quotas in the commercial fishery and it provides a very good indice as to the health of the resource.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that this has not come in to effect in the 7 years the fishery has operated since its re-opening, but it was almost an issue in 2016 and seems appropriate to address it before it actual occurs since the impact on the small, fragile, commercial fishery would be disastrous.

**PROPOSED BY:** Joseph Person (EF-F17-119)  
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**PROPOSAL 225**

**5 AAC 31.214. Shrimp pot guideline harvest level for Registration Area E.**

Increase the commercial allocation of the total allowable harvest in the Prince William Sound Area shrimp pot fishery, as follows:

Change the currently unbalanced allocation which favors a small minority of resource users. Regulation language would read,

"The guideline harvest level for the commercial pot gear fishery in the waters described in 5 AAC 31.210(a) is **60** percent of the total allowable harvest for the area."

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** 5 AAC 31.214 Shrimp pot guideline harvest level for Registration Area E

The guideline harvest level for the commercial pot gear fishery in the waters described in 5 AAC 31.210(a) is 40 percent of the total allowable harvest for the area [Prince William Sound].

This regulation allocates 60% of the TAH to sport fishing interests, which represents 1% of the users of this resource. Commercial fishermen supply this resource to other consumers, which represent the other 99% of the individual Alaskans who want to enjoy the shrimp, but do not own a boat nor catch for themselves.

**PROPOSED BY:** Brett Wilbanks (EF-F17-125)  
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**PROPOSAL 226**

**5 AAC 31.235. Closed waters in Registration Area E.**

Reduce closed waters in the Prince William Sound Area commercial shrimp trawl fishery, as follows:

Remove Number 1 from the list of closed waters in Registration Area E, to the taking of shrimp with trawl gear.

[(1) WATERS ENCLOSED BY A LINE FROM POINT WHITSHED TO POINT BENTINCK, A LINE FROM CAPE HINCHINBROOK LIGHT TO SEAL ROCKS LIGHT TO ZAIKOF POINT AT 60\_ 18.48' N. LAT., 146\_ 55.10' W. LONG., AND BY A LINE FROM A POINT AT 60\_ 11.00' N. LAT., 147\_ 20.00' W. LONG. ON THE NORTHWEST SIDE OF MONTAGUE ISLAND, NORTH TO A POINT AT 60\_ 30.00' N. LAT., 147\_ 20.00' W. LONG., THEN EAST TO A POINT AT 60\_ 30.00' N. LAT., 147\_ 00.00' W. LONG., THEN NORTHEAST TO KNOWLES HEAD AT 60\_ 41.00' N. LAT., 146\_ 37.50' W. LONG.;]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This proposal addresses current closed area waters for taking of trawl shrimp. Removal of this closed water area will update and address concerns regarding an unnecessary closure for shrimp trawling. By opening the area noted in 5 AAC 31.235 (1), an improved understanding of the trawl shrimp population stocks will be understood. This area does not have population concentrations of Tanner crab that could be affected by the opening.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jon Van Hyning (HQ-F17-082)  
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**PROPOSAL 227**

**5 AAC 31.211. Shrimp trawl fishing seasons for Registration Area E.**

Repeal Prince William Sound Area commercial winter shrimp trawl fishery fishing season provisions allowing a fall/winter fishery, as follows:

In Registration Area E, shrimp may be taken with trawls only from April 15 through August 15 [AND FROM OCTOBER 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Change in regulation is needed to protect egged female shrimp that have not released into the water column until approximately April 1. This change in shrimp trawling season will help to maintain recruitment for the species.

**PROPOSED BY:** Whittier Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F17-091)  
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