

PROPOSAL 179

5 AAC 31.136. Closed waters in Registration Area A.

Expand waters closed to commercial pot shrimp fishery in Twelve-Mile Arm, as follows:

5 AAC 31.136(4) Shrimp may not be taken: in the waters of Twelve-mile Arm south and west of a line that stretches from the northern most tip of Outer Point located at 55°31.233'N lat, 132°31.442'W long, to point located on Prince of Wales Island located at 55°31.937'N lat, 132°32.969'W, including all waters of Twelve-mile Arm;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The 2013 October commercial shrimp season for District 2 has left the personal use shrimpers with low shrimp biomass. District 2 is a large area; however the commercial fishing fleet focused their efforts in the waters of Kasaan Bay and Twelve-mile Arm in 2013 which are adjacent to the communities of Hollis and Kasaan. Both areas were hard to navigate during the fishery from the large amount of commercial gear. After the 2013 commercial season, personal use fishermen had a hard time locating shrimp in the waters of Kasaan Bay and Twelve-mile Arm. When shrimp was harvested, the numbers of them caught, and continue today in the single digits and small in size. The area used to receive moderate personal use fishing pressure through-out the year from residents of Prince of Wales Island as well as Ketchikan. Prince of Wales has a large population of subsistence / personal use users who rely on the land and ocean to feed their families. The island has a high cost of living with a financially depressed economy. ADF&G held a 2014 commercial shrimp season; however they closed Kasaan Bay and Twelve-mile Arm after a period where the commercial fishermen were catching very low numbers for the effort they put in to the fishery. Kasaan Bay and Twelve-mile Arm remained closed for the 2015, 2016, and 2017 commercial shrimp seasons by emergency order due to a low biomass. ADF&G reopened Kasaan Bay and the start of Twelve-mile Arm during the 2018 and 2019 seasons. During the 2019 season the commercial shrimp fishermen caught 42,500 pounds of shrimp when the GHL was set at 30,000 pounds. Currently the shrimp biomass is harvested commercially in October while the female shrimp contain eggs and is marketed to an overseas market. This small commercial closure of a small section of Twelve-mile Arm to shrimping will have very little impact of the commercial fishery. The large commercial vessels can fish the surrounding open areas to commercial shrimping and away from the community of Hollis who its members rely on a subsistence lifestyle to exist.

A regulation closure of the area to commercial shrimping would protect a relatively small percentage of District 2 to allow personal use fishermen to utilize the resource. The area selected for the closure is in directly adjacent to the community of Hollis.

PROPOSED BY: East Prince of Wales Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F20-078)
