

PROPOSAL 198

5 AAC 35.110. Fishing seasons for Registration Area A.

Establish fixed start date for the Registration Area A commercial Tanner crab fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 35.110. Fishing seasons for Registration Area A. (a) Male Tanner Crab may be taken only from 12:00 noon February 20, as announced by emergency order, through May 1.

(b) Leave as currently Written

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the board to address the issue of a floating start date for the tanner/golden crab fishery. Industry asked for board to adopt current regulation when the golden crab stocks were robust to help with gear being "up" from the tides for hauling and reducing gear tangles. I have 2 main reasons for wanting this regulation changed,

1: Insurance on vessel. The insurance pool our boat is in allows for hull & crew to be insured in 2 week installments with the monthly split on the 15th. With a later fixed start date we and those with similar policies could reduce operating cost when profit margins are getting tighter and tighter.

2: Conflicts between meetings, family travel, and prospect fishing. For those of us that like to go prospect fishing the current regulation makes it difficult to do so if the "start" date falls in the earlier part of the time line allowed. This board meeting is a prime example of such conflict, go "look" around or attend meeting to convey this time conflict. With a spouse and children in the public school system their year usually starts on 2nd Monday so if returning from family trip and helping them get back in the "groove" I'm unable to prospect.

When getting feedback from other permit holders and the Dept. on proposing such a change there were a few issues that could arise. Under current regulation of starting at smallest tide set makes chances of a weather associated with bigger tides a possibility. I don't want the board to change or omit section (b) of current regulation, this is a great tool for dept. to use in helping conduct a safe fishery. The dept. had a concern if fishery started to late and stocks rebounded to warrant longer fishing seasons we might start getting close to spring crab breeding cycle. Industry also brought forth a concern where if too late a start date might make it difficult to switch over to herring or halibut/sablefish in a timely matter. Smaller vessels can't carry their whole string and have to shuttle gear out for wet storage before season. Depending on weather I feel 5 days after vessel comes off lay up insurance should give a window for allowing for this. I would like to see the board adopt a change in regulation to a start date of the 20th of February.

PROPOSED BY: Joe Willis

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