

## **PROPOSAL 269**

### **5 AAC 35.507. Kodiak, Chignik, and South Peninsula Districts C. bairdi Tanner crab harvest strategies.**

Amend regulatory thresholds and establish new management measures for Kodiak District Tanner crab, as follows:

Revise: 5 AAC 35.507(a)(3) “in the Kodiak District, is sufficient to provide a guideline harvest level of [400,000] **100,000** pounds or more as calculated under (d) of this section; or”

Revise: 5 AAC 35.507(a)(4) “[A SECTION OF ]the Kodiak District, **cumulative by section**, is sufficient to provide a guideline harvest level of 100,000 pounds or more as calculated under (d) of this section.

New Section: 5 AAC 35.507(c)(4) In the Kodiak District,

[ (1) AT LEAST TWO SECTIONS OF THE KODIAK DISTRICT MUST MEET OR EXCEED THE THRESHOLD LEVEL REQUIREMENTS IN (A) OF THIS SECTION BEFORE A FISHERY MAY BE OPENED IN THE DISTRICT:

(2) IN THE SOUTH MAINLAND SECTION, THE FISHERY WILL BE OPEN IF AT LEAST TWO ADJACENT SECTIONS ARE OPEN AND WILL CLOSE WHEN BOTH OF THE ADJACENT SECTIONS ARE CLOSED:]

**(1) each management section within the Kodiak Management District that has a surveyed or estimated tanner crab mature male abundance sufficient to provide a guideline harvest level of 10,000 pounds or more as calculated under (d) of this section may open but only if the cumulative District guideline harvest level, as outlined in (4) above, exceeds 100,000 pounds,**

**(2) Once the threshold amount outlined in (4) above is established, the Department shall identify as “exclusive registration sections” those sections within the District for which the estimated tanner crab mature male abundance is sufficient to provide a guideline harvest level of more than 10,000 pounds but less than 100,000 pounds, and**

**(3) Fishermen wishing to fish within a Kodiak District exclusive registration section must identify the exclusive registration section when registering the vessel to fish in accordance with the registration requirements of 5 AAC 35.506 (f) above; a vessel that is registered for the Tanner crab fishery in an exclusive registration section of the Kodiak District may not be registered for the Tanner crab fishery in any other section of the Kodiak District during that registration year,**

**(4) Pot limits will be imposed for all exclusive registration sections of the Kodiak district as follows:**

**a. at least 10,00 pounds but less than 40,000 pounds, an aggregate of no more than 10 pots may be operated from a validly registered Tanner crab vessel.**

**b. at least 40,000 pounds but less than 80,000 pounds, an aggregate of no more than 15 pots may be operated from a validly registered Tanner crab vessel.**

**c. At least 80,000 pounds, an aggregate of no more than 20 pots may be operated from a validly registered Tanner crab vessel.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The regulatory structure for the Kodiak Area (Area J) tanner fishery was developed in about 1998 to restart the fishery after it has been closed for a number of years. We now have an additional 20 years of participation statistics, harvest information and biological data. Consequently, it's time to make structural changes to the fishery.

1. The long-term average mature male abundance of tanner crab, (5 AAC 35.507(4)(g), should be revised based on better and more recent survey and biological information. The Department will need to provide data through the 2020 season. Revised mature male abundance determinations will also adjust the threshold levels (5 AAC 35.507(4)(b)).
2. The current fishery thresholds were established because of concern about the Department's ability to manage the fishery within harvest limits. However, when the fishery was reconfigured in about several innovative regulations helped to limit harvest. First was a pot limit of 20 pots and second was the "daytime only" fishery which reduced pot pulls. Also, the past 20 years has shown that the fleet is self-regulating in size based on the available quota and has developed excellent real time reporting of catches with the Department. Consequently, the 100,000 pound threshold in two sections before the fishery opens is no longer needed. Moreover, over the past 20 years we have observed that several sections of the Kodiak District have consistently surveyed at harvest levels above 10,000 pounds but don't reach the 100,000 pound threshold. These pockets of crab, if unharvested, are lost to the fishery. With the revisions regarding section thresholds, (new language below) the Kodiak District's opening threshold would be adjusted to 100,000 pounds cumulatively for all sections and the section threshold to 10,000 pounds. Exclusive section registration would be required for small quota sections and a reduce pot limit established.
3. Conservation of the resource remains the primary focus and concern. However, with lower pot limits and better biological data, the new proposed regulations continue the fishery's existing conservative management – harvest amounts will still be controlled by the same exploitation rate. The proposed regulatory changes simply permit each section within the Kodiak management area with a harvestable surplus of more than 10,000 pounds to be managed as a small part of the District's overall commercial fishery. Conservation is not at risk within each section with the small pot limits and exclusive registration requirements. In other words, the vessels that commits to fish in a section with a quota under 10,000 pounds is willing to fish with fewer pots in recognition of needed conservation and to forego possible larger catches elsewhere.

**PROPOSED BY:** Old Harbor Fisheries Committee/Duncan Fields

(HQ-F20-069)

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