

***Noncommercial (3 proposals)***

**PROPOSAL 305**

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

Prohibit noncommercial shrimp participants from carrying additional shrimp gear, as follows:

Modify 5 AAC 55.055 section (a) (3) as follows:

(3) shrimp may be taken with pots as follows:

(A) only from April 15 through September 15;

(B) no bag, possession, or size limit;

(C) no more than five pots per vessel may be used to take shrimp.

**(D) no more than the regulatory number of pots allowed to be used per person and per vessel may be aboard a vessel while participating in the noncommercial shrimp fishery.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The noncommercial shrimp pot fishery is managed in part by a pot limit per vessel set at the beginning of each season based on the GHL. However, shrimpers are allowed to carry "spare pots" in excess of the pot limit aboard their vessel. This allowance for spare pots makes enforcement of the pot limit extremely difficult: a trooper cannot simply board a vessel and count how many pots are aboard when they depart or return to port. Shrimp fishermen in PWS have started exploiting this "spare pot" loophole in order to drastically increase the number of pots fished per vessel. Now vessels are regularly heading out with multiple permit holders aboard and multiple limits of shrimp pots which they call "spares". Once the vessel sets one permit holder's limit worth of shrimp pots, they simply add marked buoys to their "spare pots" for the next permit holder on board and go set those. In this way they are capable of fishing far more gear per boat than was ever intended by the regulations.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU) (EF-F24-138)

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**PROPOSAL 306**

**5 AAC 31.245. Reporting requirements for Registration Area E.**

Modify the Prince William Sound shrimp pot reporting requirements, as follows:

Add additional section (f) to 5 AAC 31.245

5 AAC 31.245. Reporting requirements for Registration Area E:

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**(f) An owner or operator of a vessel registered to fish in the commercial Shrimp pot fishery must report each day to the department as specified on registration:**

**(1) the number of pot lifts;**

**(2) the round weight of all shrimp taken by species and statistical area for the 24-hour fishing period preceding the report;**

**(3) any other information that the commissioner determines is necessary for the conservation and management of the fishery**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The lack of inseason reporting requirements in the PWS spot shrimp fishery forces the department to have long closures in the middle of season to get harvest information. Long closures in the middle of a season are not commonplace in fisheries unless there is a biological concern, as they add to the expenses incurred by commercial fishermen in fuel, insurance, crew and opportunity cost. Daily reporting requirements are no longer a burden on fishermen. Cell phone coverage is available almost everywhere in the Sound. Satellite texting devices such as inreaches are affordable options. We used the inseason reporting regulatory language already in place for Tanner Crab in Prince William sound to draft the proposed regulation.

It is our hope that with this change in regulation the department can manage this fishery like it does almost every other pot fishery in the state, including the Southeast shrimp pot fishery, and manage with a single open period. This will reduce the cost to participate in the fishery because participants will not have to retrieve their pots and return to port mid-season.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU) (EF-F24-145)

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**PROPOSAL 307**

**5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area, 5 AAC 55.055. Prince William Sound Noncommercial Shrimp Fishery Management Plan.**

Align the season start time of the Prince William Sound noncommercial and commercial shrimp fisheries, as follows:

Open all pot shrimp fisheries in Prince William Sound at the same time by regulation.

**5 AAC 55.022(b)(5)(A)** may be taken from April 15 **at 8:00AM through** [-] September 15;

**5 AAC 55.055(a)(3)(A)** only from April 15 **at 8:00AM** through September 15;

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** All shrimp fishing in Prince William Sound starts on the same regulatory day, but only the start time for the commercial fishery is specified in regulation;

5 AAC 31.223 - Lawful shrimp pot gear for Registration Area E

(e)(3) shrimp pot gear may be deployed or retrieved only from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. each day;

This has led to a situation where enforcement of the regulatory commercial start time is difficult due to sport gear in the water ahead of the season opener for commercial shrimp gear. Safety concerns related to the derby start time for the commercial season and interaction with recreational vessels operating in the designated commercial area could be mitigated. This has also led to gear conflicts between non-commercial and commercial operators on opening day. These conflicts are avoidable by coordinating the PWS shrimp season start time for all stakeholders.

Failure to implement these changes will result in continued gear conflict, inability to enforce opening times, and general confusion with gear in the water. There will continue to be challenges to safety, enforcement, and regulatory compliance without a standard time for all participants in the season openings.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.** This proposal was developed at length and with considerable input by fishery participants, The Valdez Advisory Committee, The Whittier Advisory Committee, the staff of the Department of Fish and Game, and ShrimpPros Association.

**PROPOSED BY:** PWS/Valdez and Whittier Advisory Committee (HQ-F24-049)

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