

Division of Commercial Fisheries
Sam Rabung, Director

Region I, Petersburg Area Office
PO Box 667
Petersburg, AK 99833



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: May 15, 2020

CONTACT: Joe Stratman
Region I Fishery Biologist
joseph.stratman@alaska.gov
(907) 772-5238

SOUTHEAST ALASKA 2020/2021 COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Petersburg... The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) announced today that the 2020/2021 commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska) will open according to 5 AAC 32.110 at **8:00 a.m. on Monday, June 15, 2020**. Permit holders are advised to review 5 AAC 32.110 to note which areas open on June 15, 2020.

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 11, 12, and 17 commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.

Registration, Buoy Tags, and Pot Storage:

Dungeness crab fishermen must register their vessels and gear with the department. As announced in a previous advisory announcement issued on April 22, 2020, Dungeness crab permit holders will be required to call ahead and make an appointment with department staff prior to registering for the 2020/2021 Dungeness crab season. Due to safety measures put in place by State of Alaska Health Mandates, the department recommends permit holders bring a check or exact cash for payment of buoy tags, a pen to sign the vessel registration form, and to wear a face covering.

Permit holders are recommended to verify that their Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit card and vessel license are valid for the 2020 Dungeness crab season prior to making an appointment to register for the fishery. Questions about specific area office registration procedures or the cost of buoy tags should be directed to your local area office or Tessa Bergmann at (907) 518-4421. The holder of a valid 2020 CFEC permit for the Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery must be onboard the vessel during fishing operations and the permit holder's name must be listed on the vessel registration.

Buoy tags must be purchased prior to fishing [5 AAC 32.126]. The price for crab buoy tags is \$1.25 each. **Buoy tags purchased for the 2020/2021 season will also be valid for the 2021/2022 season.** All purchased buoy tags are nonrefundable. Buoy tags may be replaced when pots or buoy tags are lost. To obtain replacement tags, fishermen must report the unique number of the lost tag on a 'Dungeness Tag Replacement Affidavit'. These forms are available at all area offices along with replacement buoy tags. Please refer to 5 AAC 32.126(a) for proper tag placement on the buoy assembly. Tenders must also register [5 AAC 32.033] with the department prior to taking Dungeness crab onboard and may not have any Dungeness crab gear onboard or be used to fish for Dungeness crab.

After the season is closed, all Dungeness crab pots must be removed from the water except that pots may be stored on the grounds with all pot doors secured fully open and all bait and bait containers removed for no more than seven days after the Dungeness crab fishery regionwide closure in Registration Area A, or for no more than 72 hours after a partial area closure [5 AAC 32.052(b)(1) & (2)]. **Reporting of lost pots, or pots left in a closed area in fishing condition, should be directed to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) offices in Juneau or Ketchikan** (contact numbers are listed on bottom of pg. 3).

Fishery Management:

The department will use catch and effort information from the first seven days of fishing to predict total harvest for the season, which will be compared to regulatory thresholds described in the Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Management Plan [5 AAC 32.146] to determine season length. Fishermen should expect a news release by June 29, 2020, informing the fleet of the regionwide season length. The department will be conducting dockside sampling in all major ports and aerial surveys on the grounds to determine fleet distribution.

Permit holders intending to fish in District 16 are asked to contact Joe Stratman at 772-5238 or Adam Messmer at 465-4853 at the start of fishing operations.

Closed Waters:

Regulatory closed waters are listed in 5 AAC 32.150 (see map for reference). Action taken at the most recent Southeast and Yakutat shellfish fisheries Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting in January 2018 enlarged an existing closed area around Hollis Anchorage. Registration Area D (Yakutat) Dungeness crab fishery will remain closed. Waters of Glacier Bay are closed by federal regulation to commercial Dungeness crab fishing. Fishermen may contact the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve at (907) 697-2230 for more information. Closed waters within 3,000 feet of the Annette Island Reserve will be addressed in a separate news release issued in September prior to the start of the fall/winter fishing season.

Other Regulations:

A person may not participate in a commercial Dungeness crab fishery in a Dungeness crab registration area if the person operated commercial, subsistence, sport, or personal use pots of any type during the 14-day period immediately before the opening of a commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.053(b)(1)]; or operates a vessel that was used or operated by the person or by another person operating pots of any type in a commercial, subsistence, sport, or personal use fishery during the 14-day period immediately before the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.053(b)(2)]; except that a person or vessel that operates commercial king crab pots in waters deeper than 100 fathoms during the 14-day period immediately before the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A, may participate in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.128(a)]. A vessel owner, or the owner's agent, may not register a vessel for the commercial Dungeness crab fishery and the commercial beam trawl shrimp fishery at the same time [5 AAC 32.128(b)].

Other Permits Required:

A catcher/seller permit is required to sell raw unprocessed fish or shellfish (other than bivalve mollusks) to unlicensed buyers. Examples would be selling or attempting to sell to the general public dockside for noncommercial purposes, or to a restaurant, grocery store, or established fish market that has a processing waiver from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC). The catcher/seller permit application can be found at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.sellers>.

Catcher–sellers are required to complete a fish ticket indicating the estimated number and weight of crab harvested before any crab are removed from their vessel [5 AAC 32.143]. A catcher–processor permit is required for fishermen who receive, prepare, process, or transport seafood or fishery product to sell for human consumption or a person who custom processes a seafood or fishery product. Processing is any activity that modifies the physical condition of a seafood or fishery resource. This permit is included in the Alaska Seafood Processor and Exporter License and Permit Application Intent to Operate found on the department website at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.buyers>.

Bait harvest:

Holders of a Dungeness crab CFEC permit are not required to purchase a miscellaneous finfish permit card to harvest groundfish for bait used in the Dungeness crab fishery unless a person intends to sell the groundfish. Fishermen are required to account for all groundfish bait on their crab fish tickets at the time of landing the crab for which the bait was taken. Prohibited species for use as bait include sablefish, lingcod, thornyhead, shortraker, roughey, and yelloweye rockfish. Refer to 5 AAC 28.190 in the 2019-2020 Statewide Commercial Groundfish Fishing Regulations booklet (available in area offices or online) for more information on harvest of bait by commercial permit holders.

Other information:

Handling of soft-shell crabs results in increased discard mortality. **Fishermen are asked to consult with their buyers on shell hardness criteria before harvesting crab.** Fishermen are also reminded to review the 2019–2021 Statewide Commercial Fishing Regulations Shrimp, Dungeness Crab and Miscellaneous Shellfish booklet prior to the fishery.

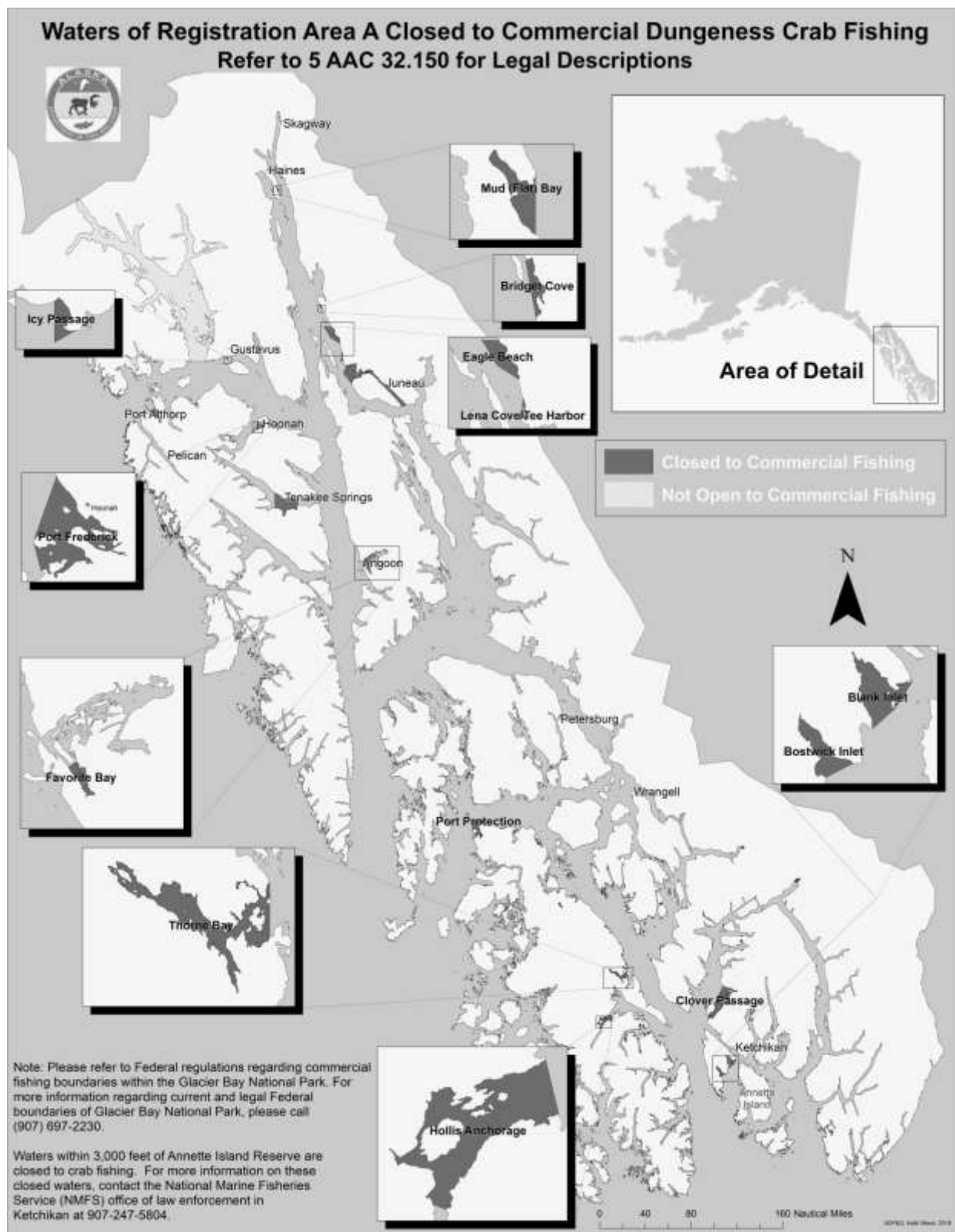


Figure 1: Closed areas for the 2020/2021 commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A. This map is intended for general reference only. Please refer to 5 AAC 32.150 for legal descriptions of closed areas.

Advisory Announcement web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

Office	Ketchikan	Petersburg	Wrangell	Sitka	Juneau	Haines	Yakutat
ADF&G	225-5195	772-3801	874-3822	747-6688	465-4250	766-2830	784-3255
AWT	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220