

PROPOSAL 266

5 AAC 32.425. Lawful gear for Registration Area J.

Establish Kodiak District Dungeness crab pot limits and restrict concurrent targeting of Dungeness crab and any other commercially harvested species, as follows:

5 AAC 32.415 Operation of pot gear for Registration Area J

a. The following pot limits are in effect in Registration Area J:

1. For vessels equal to or less than 50 feet, no more than 300 – 750 pots may be operated from a validly registered Dungeness crab vessel;
2. For vessels above 50 feet, no more than 500 -750 pots may be operated from a validly registered Dungeness crab vessel.

Note: The Board may choose a single pot limit for all size vessels.

Regarding fishing both Dungeness crab and salmon at the same time, the Board could choose one of two approaches:

a. Any validly registered Dungeness crab vessel for Area J cannot make a commercial delivery of Dungeness crab caught in area J to a registered processor within 7-14 days of a commercial delivery of another commercially harvested species to any registered processor. Conversely, any validly registered Dungeness crab vessel making a delivery of a commercially harvested species that is not Dungeness crab cannot make a delivery of Dungeness crab caught in Area J within 7-14 days of that delivery.

b. (alternative choice) Any validly registered Dungeness crab vessel for Area J cannot have Dungeness crab pots in the water in Area J AND have a salmon seine fishing or deployed from the same vessel.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Kodiak's Dungeness Crab fishery has ebbed and flowed over the past several decades. Recently, the fishery has enjoyed biomass increases and is experiencing a substantial increase in participation. These changes illustrate the need to revisit and, perhaps, increase Kodiak's Dungeness Crab fishery regulations.

A. Without pot limits, the total number of pots deployed in the fishery is increasing exponentially. Smaller operators may be preempted from fishing grounds, larger vessels employing large amounts of pots are likely to dominate what has been primarily a small boat fishery and increased gear conflicts with "homestead fishermen" other gear types are likely to occur. In short, the Kodiak Dungeness Crab fishery cannot sustain an unlimited number of pots being fished from an undefined set of vessels. Remember, this is not a fishery that is limited to entry. Pot limits are an effective tool for limiting fishery effort and maintaining a small boat fleet.

B. The fishing pattern of engaging simultaneously in the Dungeness Crab fishery and another commercial fishery should be reconsidered, especially as the fleet increases in size. Currently, some vessels are primarily salmon fishing during the summer months but pick their Dungeness pots every 14 days, or so, for a "crab trip". (Often with the seine on deck or in the back hold.) Fishing two or more fisheries at the same time disadvantages Kodiak Dungeness crab fishermen

that are primarily focused on the Dungeness crab fishery --- both by grounds pre-emption and resource depletion. Changing this rule would increase equity in the fishery.

On the other hand, fishermen frequently need to engage in several fisheries throughout the summer and the issue isn't so much to only participate in one fishery as it is to only be involved in one fishery at the same time. Perhaps the solution is a provision that fishermen engaged in the Kodiak Dungeness crab fishery must observe a delivery window between fisheries or remove gear from one fishery before using the vessel for another fishery. Using a delivery window of 7-14 days or a rule that only one gear type can be in the water at the same time would enable a fisherman to complete a salmon trip, take off their salmon gear, deploy or bait their Dungeness crab pots and continue fishing or remove Dungeness crab pots from the water and then go salmon fishing. In other words, the wait time between fisheries or complete gear removal encourages a single fishery focus and inhibits "double dipping" without eliminating the opportunity to fish in more than one fishery throughout the summer.

PROPOSED BY: Old Harbor Fisheries Committee/Duncan Fields (HQ-F20-068)
