

**PROPOSAL 247**

**5 AAC 31.223. Lawful shrimp pot gear for Registration Area E.**

Establish a minimum pot limit to increase pace of the commercial pot shrimp fishery, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 31.223 to read:

Lawful shrimp pot gear for Registration Area E (e) (1)

(e) Shrimp pots may only be operated as follows:

(1) the department will announce annually, before the opening of the commercial shrimp pot fishery season, the number of shrimp pots that may be operated from a vessel in the commercial shrimp pot fishery for that season, **a minimum of 50 pots and** not to exceed 100 shrimp pots per vessel; in determining the annual pot limit, the department will consider the

(A) total number of registered vessels;

(B) estimated catch per unit of effort; and

(C) magnitude of the guideline harvest level; and

**(d) harvesting the majority of the guideline harvest level in 2 weeks**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Current PWS Spot Prawn fishery management utilizes pot limits as the primary management tool, rather than time. This has resulted in a long drawn out fishery with a very small number of pots that is very difficult to make profitable.

As more participants have come in, the department has reduced the pot limit from the 50 it was at in 2012 to 25 in 2019. Most vessels who participate do not have freezer systems so they must return to port to deliver every three days so having opener lengths longer than 3 days is of little value.

For example: In 2019 the fishery had three openers; April 15th-April 23rd, April 29th- May 7th and May 14th-May 29th. Taking 45 days to harvest 68,100 lbs. by 99 vessels is by no stretch of the imagination a profitable commercial fishery, when the same GHLL could be harvested in a shorter time frame with more pots per vessel. This fishery should be managed by reducing time instead of pots with the goal of harvesting the majority of the GHLL in two weeks.

**PROPOSED BY:** Cordova District Fishermen United

(HQ-F20-024)

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