

**PROPOSAL 291**

**5 AAC 35.535. Closed waters in Registration Area J.**

Formalize the closure of Bristol Bay waters east of 163°W. long. to directed Tanner crab fishing, as follows:

**5 AAC 35.535 is amended by adding a new subsection (b) as follows:**

**(a) The waters of Alaska surrounding St. Matthew Island, Hall Island, and Pinnacle Island are closed to the taking of Tanner crab.**

**(b) The waters of the Bering Sea District east of 163° W long., are closed to the taking of Tanner crab, except as incidental harvest in the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery as specified in 5 AAC 35.506(i)(2).**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The eastern boundary of the Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery (EBT) east of 166° W. long. is not currently defined in regulation. Current and historical Tanner crab management in the Bering Sea precludes a directed fishery for Tanner crab east of 163° W. long. due to high bycatch of female red king crab; incidental retention of Tanner crab east of 163° W. long. is allowed during the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery. The proposed regulatory changes would formalize the boundaries of the directed EBT fishery as the Bering Sea waters between 163° W. long. and 166° W. long. to reflect current management practices. Closed waters are a Category 2 management measure under the federal Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs. Changes to Category 2 management measures occur at the discretion of the board but should be consistent with the criteria set out in the FMP and the Magnuson – Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act National Standards.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F24-160)

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