

PROPOSAL 296

5 AAC 32.440 Registration Area J inspection points.

Amend Registration Area J Dungeness crab vessel inspection requirements, as follows:

Repeal and readopt 5 AAC 32.440 as follows:

(a) Unless required under (b) of this section, a vessel fishing for Dungeness crab in Registration Area J is not required to undergo a vessel inspection, as specified in 5 AAC 32.030.

(b) The commissioner, by announcement, may require that vessels fishing for Dungeness crab in Registration Area J be inspected as specified in 5 AAC 32.030.

(c) If the commissioner requires a vessel inspection under (b) of this section, the inspection points for Registration Area J are at Kodiak, Sand Point, and Dutch Harbor, and at other locations that may be specified by the commissioner.

[THE INITIAL INSPECTION POINTS AND REINSPECTION POINTS FOR REGISTRATION AREA J ARE AT KODIAK, SAND POINT, AND DUTCH HARBOR, AND AT OTHER LOCATIONS THAT MAY BE SPECIFIED BY THE COMMISSIONER.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Preseason vessel inspections, commonly referred to as “tank checks,” were historically used to verify that vessels did not have crab onboard prior to the opening of a commercial crab season. Advancements in at-sea communication, vessel location monitoring, and inseason harvest tracking have substantially reduced the likelihood of a vessel fishing prior to the season opening without being detected. Thus, the department has been waiving vessel inspections annually for Area J commercial Dungeness crab fisheries for the last 15 years. This proposal aims to align regulation with current management practice by clarifying that inspections are not required for Area J Dungeness crab vessels; however, if the department deems it necessary, vessel inspections may still be required by emergency order.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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