

**PROPOSAL 307**

**5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area, 5 AAC 55.055. Prince William Sound Noncommercial Shrimp Fishery Management Plan.**

Align the season start time of the Prince William Sound noncommercial and commercial shrimp fisheries, as follows:

Open all pot shrimp fisheries in Prince William Sound at the same time by regulation.

**5 AAC 55.022(b)(5)(A)** may be taken from April 15 **at 8:00AM through** [-] September 15;

**5 AAC 55.055(a)(3)(A)** only from April 15 **at 8:00AM** through September 15;

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** All shrimp fishing in Prince William Sound starts on the same regulatory day, but only the start time for the commercial fishery is specified in regulation;

5 AAC 31.223 - Lawful shrimp pot gear for Registration Area E

(e)(3) shrimp pot gear may be deployed or retrieved only from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. each day;

This has led to a situation where enforcement of the regulatory commercial start time is difficult due to sport gear in the water ahead of the season opener for commercial shrimp gear. Safety concerns related to the derby start time for the commercial season and interaction with recreational vessels operating in the designated commercial area could be mitigated. This has also led to gear conflicts between non-commercial and commercial operators on opening day. These conflicts are avoidable by coordinating the PWS shrimp season start time for all stakeholders.

Failure to implement these changes will result in continued gear conflict, inability to enforce opening times, and general confusion with gear in the water. There will continue to be challenges to safety, enforcement, and regulatory compliance without a standard time for all participants in the season openings.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.** This proposal was developed at length and with considerable input by fishery participants, The Valdez Advisory Committee, The Whittier Advisory Committee, the staff of the Department of Fish and Game, and ShrimpPros Association.

**PROPOSED BY:** PWS/Valdez and Whittier Advisory Committee

(HQ-F24-049)

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