

King Crab (4 proposals)

PROPOSAL 39

5 AAC 34.210 Fishing seasons for Registration Area E.

Establish season dates for a commercial golden king crab fishery in Prince William Sound, as follows:

Reinstate the historic season dates for Golden King Crab in PWS and instate gear limits.

5 AAC 34.210 Fishing seasons for Registration Area E.

(a) The commercial taking of **red king crab and blue king crab** in Registration Area E is closed until the king crab stocks have recovered enough for a harvest strategy to be developed by the department and adopted by the Board of Fisheries.

(b) **Golden King Crab may be taken from 12:00 Noon November 1 to December 20th and from 12:00 noon January 15 through March 31 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m**

5 AAC 34.225. Lawful gear for Registration Area E

(a) King crab may be taken only with king crab pots. **Except that Golden King Crab taken in Tanner Crab pots as described in 5 AAC 35.125(f) may be retained if the CFEC permit holder fishing for Tanner Crab is also registered to fish for Golden King Crab and both crab fisheries are open at the same time.** King crab taken by other means must be returned to the water without further harm.

(c) **The following king crab pot limits are in effect in Registration Area E:**

(1) when the commercial Golden King Crab season is open in Registration Area E, and the commercial Tanner Crab season is closed, no more than 30 king crab pots may be operated from a vessel registered to fish for king crab; (2) when the commercial Golden King Crab and Tanner Crab seasons are open in Registration Area E at the same time, an aggregate of no more than 75 king and Tanner crab pots may be operated from a vessel registered to fish for both king crab and Tanner Crab

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? End the continued closure of the Golden King Crab (GKC) fishery in Prince William Sound. The GKC fishery has been closed since the 1994–1995 season, despite evidence of a small but healthy stock. ADFG has little ability to assess GKC populations as they live on cliffs in deep water, which makes targeting them difficult - even to experienced fishermen. Widespread evidence of GKC throughout western Prince William Sound was seen in the recent Tanner Crab commercial and test fisheries, as well as ADFG's own pot survey in 2005-2007 and the recent 2020 test fishery.

The GKC fisheries in the state of Alaska that remain open are in Southeast Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. Management in those areas relies heavily on commercial fisherman's catch rates and knowledge of the stock to inform the GHL. A management strategy such as the one outlined for Southeast Alaska by Andrew Olson and Katie Palof in 2023, "Recommended Harvest Strategy for Southeast Alaska Golden King Crab", is the only path forward for a fishery in Prince William Sound. This is because it uses commercial fishermen's CPUE to develop GHLs and collect data on stock health. ADFG in Southeast also partners with commercial fishermen to take size and sex data on undersize GKC to assist management. This kind of collaborative management is possible in PWS, but it requires the ability to open the fishery to be changed in regulation.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.

PROPOSAL 40

5 AAC 34.215. Guideline harvest levels

Adopt a harvest strategy for golden king crab in Prince William Sound, as follows:

5 AAC 34.215. Guideline harvest levels

[REPEALED 6/30/83]

(a) Fishery performance based on logbook and inseason reported CPUE of legal male crab will be used to manage the fishery area in season and postseason to set GHL. The following reference points will be used to make these management decisions

Target CPUE of 2 legal male Golden King Crab

Trigger CPUE of 1.5 legal male Golden King Crab

Limit CPUE of 1 legal male Golden King Crab

(b) In Registration Area E, the GHL will be set at 10,000lbs but will be adjusted based on fishery performance determined from commercial fishermen logbook CPUE of legal male crab as follows:

The GHL will be increased for the following season for any of the following reasons:

If the most recent season CPUE is > than the most recent previous season and is > Target CPUE the GHL will increase by 20% the following season.

If the most recent logbook CPUE is > than the most recent previous season and \leq Target CPUE legal male crab and > Trigger the GHL will increase by 10% the following season.

If the most recent logbook CPUE is > than the most recent previous season and is \leq Trigger and > Limit the GHL may increase up to a maximum of 5% the following season

The GHL will be decreased for the following season for any of the following reasons:

If CPUE is < than the most recent previous season and is > Limit CPUE and \leq Trigger CPUE GHL may be reduced up to a maximum of 40% the following season

If CPUE is < than the most recent previous season and is > Trigger Cpue and \leq Target CPUE the GHL may be reduced up to a maximum of 20% the following season

(c) Fishery performance by statistical area will be assessed inseason with a minimum requirement of 200 pot lifts per statistical area before taking management action under the following guidelines:

If logbook CPUE is \geq Target manage to GHL.

If logbook CPUE is \geq Trigger but < Target manage to GHL and monitor closely

If logbook CPUE is \geq Limit and < Trigger close statistical area for remainder of season.

If logbook CPUE is <Limit close fishery statistical area remainder of season and subsequent closure of statistical area of 1 year for commercial fisheries the following season, depending upon a postseason review.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Establish a GHL and Harvest strategy for Golden King Crab in PWS that uses commercial CPUE to trigger closures much like the strategy proposed for Southeast GKC by Andrew Olson and Katie Palof in 2023 "Recommended Harvest Strategy for Southeast Alaska Golden King Crab".

We set CPUE target levels based on input from crab fishermen with experience targeting Golden King Crab in PWS. These reference points compare well those in the Southeast fishery, which sets

target CPUE at 1.6 - 4.1 legal males depending on the area. The Trigger and limit levels were set at 75% and 50% of the target. These CPUE ranges correspond well with what limited information we have about the CPUE in PWS in the 1980s and the recent test fishery for Golden King Crab.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.

PROPOSED BY: Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU) (EF-F24-129)

PROPOSAL 41

5 AAC 34.XXX. New Section and 5 AAC 35.308. Registration Area E Tanner crab harvest strategy.

Adopt new Prince William Sound king and Tanner crab harvest strategies, as follows:

Establish harvest strategy for king and tanner consistent w/B.O.F. policy. See supporting document.

[A note from Boards Support: nine additional pages accompanied this faxed proposal and this was deemed too much to include in the proposal book. The authors of this proposal are encouraged to submit that as written comments for the Prince William Sound and Upper Copper/Upper Susitna finfish and shellfish meeting.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? ADF&G King & Tanner Crab harvest strategies are wildly inconsistent w/established policy.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. Since 1988 have tried to reestablish fisheries.

PROPOSED BY: Robert A Smith and Warren Chappell (HQ-F24-137)

PROPOSAL 42

5 AAC 77.557. Personal use king crab fishery, 5 AAC 77. 558. Personal use Tanner crab fishery, and 5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

Open a sport king crab fishery and liberalize the personal use king and Tanner crab fisheries in Prince William Sound, as follows:

A person may fish for Tanner and Golden King Crab from April 15-September 15. People opting to fish during this season are ineligible to fish during the season from October 1-March 31. During this season, from April 15-September 15 a vessel may only have two pots of any kind on board. These can be two shrimp pots, two crab pots, or one crab and one shrimp pot. A crab pot can not be placed on the same long line as a shrimp pot. Additionally, only one permit can be fished from a vessel at a given time.

There will be an annual limit of:
50 male Tanner Crab

2 male Golden King Crab

And a daily limit of 10 male Tanner Crab.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Open an additional sport/personal use fishery for tanner and golden king crab in Prince William Sound from April 15-September 15. Currently a season is open from October 1-March 31 during the stormiest and coldest portion of the year. This severely limits the opportunity to participate in the fishery. Having an additional season corresponding to the sport/personal use shrimp fishery would provide more people the opportunity to fish for crab. If a season as proposed below is adopted it would have the effect of reducing the effort in the shrimp fishery with limited to no effect on the health of the crab populations. There has been a commercial fishery for Tanner crab in the Prince William Sound for a number of years now. There is no reason a more viable sport/personal use fishery can not be implemented.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Discussed with friends who boat in Prince William Sound.

PROPOSED BY: Brian West

(HQ-F24-056)
