

**Board of Fisheries proposals for September 2013 Crab Plan Team review.** A description of all proposals for the 2013/14 cycle can be found at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.main>

<b>Mgmt Area</b>	<b>Proposal number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>FMP category</b>
Norton Sound	346	Adjust harvest rates and trigger points to NS red king crab harvest strategy	2 - TAC/GHL
	348	Increase AI golden king TAC by 15%	2 - TAC/GHL
	349	Change AI golden king season dates	2 - Fishing Seasons
	350	Establish "Adak" and "Petrel" Districts for AI red king	2 - Districts/ Subdistricts/Sections
	351	Mgmt measures for Adak District red king (fishing hours, logbooks, reporting)	3 - Gear placement, Reporting
	352	Close federal waters when Adak red king GHL is <250,000	2 - Closed waters
	Aleutian Islands	353	Registration deadline for Adak red king
354		Change AI red king season dates (open July 1 by EO rather than Oct. 15)	2 - Fishing Seasons
355		Exempt persons and vessels participating in Adak red king from participation in other fisheries	3 - Other
356		Add Adak to registration Area O tank inspection points - allow Enforcement Officer to conduct inspection	3 - Vessel Tank Inspections
357		Amend description of Area O	2 - Districts/ Subdistricts/Sections
Bering Sea	358	Revise St. Matthew blue king harvest strategy	2 - TAC/GHL
	359	Allow groundfish pots during St. Matthew blue king fishery	3 - Other
	360	Eliminate king crab pot marking requirements in Area Q	2- Pot Limits
	361	Gear marking requirements for longline pots in Area Q	3 - Gear modifications
	362	Specify vertical placement of escape rings for BS Tanner and snow crab	3 - Gear modifications
	363	Clarify vessel check-out provisions for rationalized crab fisheries	3 - Reporting

**ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES  
MARCH 17–21, 2014  
STATEWIDE KING AND TANNER CRAB AND SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES**

**PROPOSAL 346 - 5 AAC 34.915. Norton Sound Section red king crab harvest strategy.** Adjust harvest rates and trigger points based on changes in abundance model, as follows:

If the abundance model is changed by the Crab Plan Team in 2013, we would like the board to adjust harvest rates and trigger points to continue current practices.

**ISSUE:** This proposal is a place holder to allow changes to be made to the Norton Sound Red King Crab harvest strategy if necessary. The Norton Sound Red King Crab model is currently under review by the NPFMC Crab Plan team and significant changes to the model may be made. The model review will take place April 30 to May 3, 2013 and may also be included in generic model workshop in September 2013. Results of the modeling workshops should be finalized in time for harvest strategy changes to be acted on at the March 2014 meeting. There is the concern that the same type of models change that took place in 2011 may take place again. An ACR was submitted in 2011 to adjust the harvest rates.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** If the model is changed, no action may result in a significant reduction in commercial harvest.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** The proposal seeks to provide a sustained yield and to reduce unwarranted changes in harvest rate which destabilize the commercial fishery. The Norton Sound Fishery is arguably the most stable king crab fishery in the state. Harvest has tended slightly upward over a 25 year period. This trend could not be sustained for this period if the harvest rate were excessive. Stability in the fishery is important in keeping the region's most valuable commercial fishery healthy.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Commercial fisherman will be allowed to continue at levels that have been sustainable in the past.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** N/A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (HQ-F13-124)  
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**PROPOSAL 348 - 5 AAC 34.612. Harvest levels for golden king crab in Registration O.** Increase harvest limit for Aleutian Islands golden king crab, as follows:

5 AAC 34.612. Harvest levels for golden king crab in Registration Area O.

(a) [UNTIL THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GOLDEN KING CRAB STOCK ASSESSMENT MODEL IS ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND A HARVEST STRATEGY IS ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF FISHERES,] The harvest levels for the Registration Area O golden king crab fishery are as follows:

(1) east of 174 degrees W. long.: 3.81 [3.31]million pounds;

and

(2) west of 174 degrees W. long.: 3.43 [2.98]million pounds.

(b) In implementing these harvest levels, the department shall use the best scientific information available and consider the reliability of estimates and performance measures, sources of uncertainty as necessary to avoid overfishing, and other factors necessary to be consistent with sustained yield principles.

**ISSUE:** The Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery is underutilized and has been for many years. The loss to harvesters, processors and over 60 Alaskan communities has been estimated to be over \$70 million in the past six years. This fishery is classified as Category 5 by the National Marine Fisheries Service and there is no stock assessment model or harvest strategy currently being utilized. A model has been under development by the department for years, but has not been finalized or approved. In 2012 the board adopted a 5% increase for this fishery with the expectation that a model and harvest strategy would be in place in a relatively short period of time. There is uncertainty about whether a model will ever be acceptable as a stock assessment tool. The golden king crab harvesters are requesting a conservative harvest limit increase of 10-15%.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** It is clear from fishery performance and research project results that this crab fishery is in a robust condition and is underutilized. The financial loss to harvesters, processors and communities has been significant for years. This will continue without action by the board to increase the harvest levels.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** While the quality of the resource being harvested would not change, it is likely that new markets and product forms would be developed under an increased harvest limit. This would give the harvesters and processors flexibility in developing new markets and allow for increased opportunities to work with live crab shipments and other innovative ways to provide the public with buying options.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** All crab harvesters, processors and communities for the Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery would benefit. The department would also benefit by having more flexibility when designing and implementing research projects.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one will suffer. Due to the small increase in actual pounds harvested, as well as the near 100% domestic marketing for this product, no other crab fishery markets would be impacted.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** There is no other solution. The Aleutian Islands golden king crab assessment model has not been adopted after years of development and it is unlikely that it will be implemented soon. Even if it were, the development and approval of a

harvest strategy could take several more years. The responsibility for setting harvest limits for this fishery is under the jurisdiction of the board.

**PROPOSED BY:** Golden King Crab Coalition (HQ-F13-059)

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**PROPOSAL 349 - 5 AAC 34.610. Fishing seasons for Registration Area O.** Modify Aleutian Islands golden king crab season, as follows:

5 AAC 34.610(b). Fishing Seasons for Registration Area O.

(b) Male golden king crab may be taken only from 12:00 noon **May 15** [AUGUST 15] through 11:59 p.m. **February 15** [MAY 15]

**ISSUE:**

a. The season opening date for golden king crab in Registration Area O is too late in the year to enable the harvesters to execute the harvest when the weather conditions are optimal for safety and efficiency.

b. The Registration Area Processors, Alyeska Seafoods, Westward Seafoods, Icicle Seafoods, and Unisea Seafoods were all closed for maintenance by the first or second week of November 2012. The processors listed were unavailable to receive deliveries until the first week of January 2013. This situation greatly reduces the delivery options for catcher vessels whom have not completely harvested their golden king crab quota by the early part of November.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** The harvesters will be unable to fish in the summer months when the safest weather conditions exist. Some harvesters will continue to struggle with limited options for offloading deliveries to processors late in the year.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR THE PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** Yes. Crab handling is improved in the mild weather conditions that are present in the summer months. Mortality rates are lower for the juvenile and female crabs that are returned to the sea when mild sea and weather conditions exist.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Fishermen and processors will both benefit from this proposal. The working conditions will be safer for the fishermen working on the decks of the vessels engaged in this fishery. For the processors, the market timing for the majority of the harvest will be improved because it will be available for the distribution earlier in the year, when very little king crab is available. They would also be able to close for annual maintenance earlier, before Thanksgiving, to let their crews off for the holidays.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** None that I am aware of.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** Season opening date of February 15 and closing date of November 15. These dates are a solution to the issue of lack of options for deliveries made late in the year. These season dates do not encourage harvesters to make the majority of their deliveries when weather conditions are the safest, because February is a winter fishing month, and the weather doesn't calm down until around the month of May.

**PROPOSED BY:** Chad Hoefler

(HQ-F13-016)

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**PROPOSAL 350 - 5 AAC 34.60X. Description of districts.** Establish districts for western Aleutian Islands red king crab, as follows:

Amend the repealed provision “5 AAC 34.605. Description of districts” and add the following language:

“The portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude shall be defined as the “Adak District” and the portion of Area O west of 179 degrees west longitude shall be defined as the “Petrel District”.

**ISSUE:** The portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude needs to be managed as a defined district independently of the portion west of 179 degrees which is managed under the federal crab rationalization program.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** The regulations targeted as a state managed small boat RKC fishery between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude need to be applied to a defined district.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** It is neutral.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Vessels 60’ or less who participate in a RKC fishery in the portion of area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** None.

**PROPOSED BY:** Adak Community Development Corporation

(HQ-F13-245)

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**PROPOSAL 351 - 5 AAC 34.6XX. Adak District Red King Crab Management Plan.** Establish management measures for Adak red king crab fishery, as follows:

In “5 AAC 34.6XX add provisions stating: “In the Adak District (between 171 to 179 degrees west longitude):

A – pots may be operated to take Red King crab only from 8:00 a.m. to 5:59 p.m., with a soak time of 14 hours, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:59 a.m., during the season”

B – during the red king crab season, an operator of a vessel registered to fish in the commercial red king crab fishery shall complete logbooks provided by the department.

C – during the red king crab season, an operator of a vessel registered to fish in the commercial red king crab fishery must report each day to the department (1) the number of pot lifts; (2) the number of crab retained for the 24 hour fishing period preceding the report; (3) any other

information the commissioner determines is necessary for the management and conservation of the fishery as specified in 5 AAC 34.606.”

**ISSUE:** Small GHL crab fisheries require careful management, but observer coverage is costly. In other small GHL fisheries the department has used a combination of logbooks, daily reporting and ‘daylight’ fishing restriction.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** Without daily reporting requirements a small GHL fishery is difficult to manage.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** It is neutral.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Vessels 60’ and under who participate in a RKC fishery in the portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** Full observer coverage could be required, but it would be prohibitively expensive.

**PROPOSED BY:** Adak Community Development Corporation (HQ-F13-250)

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**PROPOSAL 352 - 5 AAC 34.6XX. Closed waters.** Close federal waters between 171° W. long. and 179° W. long. to fishing when red king crab guideline harvest level (GHL) in state-waters is less than 250,000 pounds, as follows:

Add a “close waters” provision “5 AAC 34.6XX” with the following language:

**“When the GHL for red king crab in the Adak district (between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude) is less than 250,000 lbs., all waters between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude outside state waters shall be closed to fishing for red king crab.”**

**ISSUE:** The vessel size limits and pot limits only apply in state waters in the portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** The ability to manage a small GHL RKC fishery between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude will be constrained with no limits outside state waters.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** It is neutral.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Vessels 60’ and under who participate in a RKC fishery in the portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** Extend the vessel size limits and pot limits to the portion of the Adak district outside state waters.

**PROPOSED BY:** Adak Community Development Corporation (HQ-F13-251)  
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**PROPOSAL 353 - 5 AAC 34.606. Area O registration.** Establish registration deadline for Adak red king crab, as follows:

In 5 AAC 34.606(b) at the end of the first sentence after the clause "...21 days before that vessel begins fishing operations" add a provision stating:

**Except that in the Adak District (between 171 to 179 degrees west longitude) for the red king crab fishery, the deadline is seven days before that vessel begins fishing operations.**

**ISSUE:** 5 AAC 34.606. requires 21 days advance registration in all Area O king crab fisheries.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** The long lead time reduces flexibility for vessels 60' or less to move in and out of cod or IFQ fisheries.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** It is neutral.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Vessels 60' or less who participate in a RKC fishery in the portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** A vessel 60' or less could be allowed to be registered for Adak district RKC while also registered for AI state water cod, but this could complicate monitoring pot limits.

**PROPOSED BY:** Adak Community Development Corporation (HQ-F13-246)  
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**PROPOSAL 354 - 5 AAC 34.610. Fishing seasons for Registration Area O.** Open Adak red king crab fishery by emergency order July 1, as follows:

Amend the provision "5 AAC 34.610(a)" with the following additional language:

**Except that at the commissioner's discretion, in the Adak district (between 171 and 179 west longitude) the commissioner may open and close, by emergency order, a season for male red king crab beginning 12:00 noon, July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending no later than 11:59 p.m. February 15.**

**ISSUE:** The current season opening date for Area O is October 15<sup>th</sup>. That date forces fishing into a time of year that is unsafe for vessels 60’ or less in portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** Small boats in RKC fishery between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude will be forced to fish in bad weather and their product will enter the market at the same time as the large scale Bristol Bay fishery.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** Yes. An earlier opening date creates the opportunity to serve a live crab market at a different time of year than the large scale Bristol Bay RKC fishery.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Vessels 60’ and under who participate in a RKC fishery in the portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** None.

**PROPOSED BY:** Adak Community Development Corporation (HQ-F13-247)  
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**PROPOSAL 355 - 5 AAC 34.628. Operation of other gear in Registration Area O.** Exempt persons and vessels participating in Adak District red king crab fishery from participation in certain other fisheries, as follows:

Add a paragraph (b) to “5 AAC 34.628” with the following additional language:

**Persons and vessels participating in the Adak district (between 171 and 179 west longitude) red king crab fisheries are exempt from the requirements of 5 AAC 34.053(1), 5 AAC 35.053(1) and 5 AAC 34.628(a), but vessels registered for the fishery are prohibited from the use of other pot, trawl, or longline gear seven days prior to the scheduled opening of the fishery.**

**ISSUE:** Existing regulations for all of Area O prohibit the use of other pot, trawl, or longline gear 30 days prior to the scheduled opening of the fishery. However the federal fishery west of 179 degrees west longitude is exempted from the restriction on the use of other gear under 5 AAC 39.685.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** Small boats in the RKC fishery between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude would be unable to participate in other fisheries, such as Aleutian state water Pacific cod, for a month prior to the opening of the RKC fishery, making it un-economical for local vessels.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** It is neutral.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Vessels under 60’ who participate in a RKC fishery in the portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** None.

**PROPOSED BY:** Adak Community Development Corporation (HQ-F13-248)  
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**PROPOSAL 356 - 5 AAC 34.640. Registration Area O inspections and inspection points.**

Add Adak as tank inspection location for red king crab, as follows:

In paragraph (b) to “5 AAC 34.640.” the phrase: “inspected by a local representative of the department at Dutch Harbor, Akutan, or King Cove” add the following language:

**“or in Adak by a Law Enforcement Officer certified by the Alaska Police Standards Council”**

**ISSUE:** Existing regulations for Area O require tank inspections by “local representation of the department”. There are generally no ADF&G personnel in Adak, and the nearest port with ADF&G staff in Dutch Harbor, which is 400 miles away.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** Small boats based in Adak would have to undertake an 800 mile roundtrip to be able to fish RKC in the Adak district (between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude), which is unduly burdensome.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** It is neutral.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Vessels under 60’ who participate in a RKC fishery in the portion of Area O between 171 and 179 degrees west longitude.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** The commissioner could be given discretion to waive tank inspections in Adak if a department representative was not available.

**PROPOSED BY:** Adak Community Development Corporation (HQ-F13-249)  
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**PROPOSAL 357 - 5 AAC 34.600. Description of Registration Area O.** Amend description of Aleutian Islands king crab registration area, as follows:

5 AAC 34.600. Description of Registration Area O. Registration Area O has as its eastern boundary the longitude of Scotch Cap Light (**164° 44.72' W. long.**) [(164° 44' W. LONG.)], its western boundary the Maritime Boundary Agreement Line as that line is described in the text of

and depicted in the annex to the Maritime Boundary Agreement between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics signed in Washington, June 1, 1990, and as that Maritime Boundary Agreement Line is depicted on *NOAA Chart #513* (6th Edition, February 23, 1991) and *NOAA Chart #514* (6th Edition, February 16, 1991), adopted by reference, and its northern boundary a line from the latitude of Cape Sarichef (54° 36' N. lat.) to 171° W. long., north to 55° 30' N. lat., and west to the Maritime Boundary Agreement Line.

**ISSUE:** As commercial shellfish regulations developed, demarcation lines within and between management areas sometimes changed independently of each other. The intent of this proposal is to standardize demarcation lines across commercial fisheries, as well as update specific demarcation coordinates to reflect the best precision afforded by current technology.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** There will be continued use of ambiguous demarcation lines.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BY IMPROVED?** No.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Commercial fishermen, fishery managers, and law enforcement will benefit from clear and consistent regulations.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** None.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F13-189)  
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**PROPOSAL 358 - 5 AAC 34.917. Saint Matthew Island Section Blue King Crab Harvest Strategy.** Revise the St. Matthew Island blue king crab fishery harvest strategy, as follows:

Change the regulatory threshold for opening the Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab fishery from a threshold based on biomass of mature males (currently 2.9 million pounds) to a threshold of 1.609 million mature-sized males at the time of survey. The new threshold is one-half of the average of the estimated survey-equivalent number of mature-sized males present at the time of survey during 1978–2012 (3.217 million mature-sized males).

Change the fishery harvest rate on the number of mature-sized males estimated at the time of survey to vary linearly from 5 percent when the estimated survey-equivalent number of mature-sized males at the time of survey is at threshold (1.609 million mature-sized males) to a maximum of 10 percent when the estimated survey-equivalent number of mature-sized males at the time of survey is equal to or greater than two times the threshold (3.217 million mature-sized males), with the restriction that no more than 25 percent of legal males estimated at the time of survey will be harvested.

The current harvest rate on the number of mature-sized males estimated at the time of survey varies linearly from 10 percent when the estimated abundance of mature-sized males at the time

of survey is at threshold (2.9 million pounds) to a maximum of 20 percent when the estimated biomass of mature-sized males at the time of survey is four times the threshold (11.6 million pounds) or greater, with the restriction that no more than 40 percent of legal males estimated to be present at the time of survey will be harvested.

**ISSUE:** The existing regulatory harvest strategy is not compatible with federal overfishing levels. When setting the annual total allowable catch (TAC) during the last three Saint Matthew Island blue king crab fisheries, the TAC was lowered from the value calculated from the existing harvest strategy to comply with federal overfishing limits.

The existing regulatory harvest strategy allows high mature male and legal harvest rates when compared to the Pribilof blue king crab stock.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** The Saint Matthew Island blue king crab harvest strategy will not reflect actual TAC-setting process.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** No.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Participants in the Saint Matthew Island blue king crab fishery.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** Unknown.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** None.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F13-179)  
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**PROPOSAL 359 - 5 AAC 34.925. Lawful gear for Registration Area Q.** Allow groundfish pots in St. Matthew Island blue king crab fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 34.925 (2)(a). In Registration Area Q, the operator of a vessel that is registered for the blue king crab fishery may have on board no more than 10 groundfish pots as defined in 5AAC 28.050(e). Notwithstanding 5AAC 34.050(1), blue king crab taken from these pots may be legally retained.

**ISSUE:** The crab fleet in St. Matthew's blue king crab fishery wants to be able to use cod pots during the crab fishery.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** We catch more crab if we have fresh cod available to use as bait. That means the fishery will be over faster, if we can use hanging bait. Which means the gear will get off the grounds faster. We become more efficient with less impact.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** No, not really, except for the fact that we will get pots off the grounds sooner. That is better for the resource.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Fishermen will benefit because they will catch quota sooner. Resource will benefit because the gear will get off grounds sooner.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** No one.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?**

**PROPOSED BY:** Peter Uske (HQ-F13-024)  
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**PROPOSAL 360 - 5 AAC 34.051. King crab gear marking requirements and 5 AAC 34.926. King crab pot marking requirements for Registration Area Q.** Eliminate king crab pot marking for Registration Area Q (Bering Sea), as follows:

5 AAC 34.05. King crab gear marking requirements. (b)(1) except in Area Q where the pot limit will remain in effect, but pot tags will not be required.

**ISSUE:** The logistical problem of tagging pots in storage 380 miles away from Dutch Harbor. Many boats store gear in northern pot storage area before St. Matthew's blue king crab season. In 2012 we didn't get tags until three or four days before fishery, making it almost impossible to store the gear and get back in time for gear inspection.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** All of those who want to store gear in Northern District will not be able to execute a safe and orderly start to the season.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** No.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** No/None. All Area Q fishermen who choose to store pots in northern pot storage area.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** All Area Q fishermen who want to store gear in Northern District.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?**

**PROPOSED BY:** Peter Liske (HQ-F13-025)  
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**PROPOSAL 361 - 5 AAC 34.925. Lawful gear for Registration Area Q.** Modify gear marking requirements for longline pots in the Bering Sea golden king crab fishery, as follows:

(f) In Registration Area Q, pots used to take golden king crab may be longlined. Notwithstanding 5 AAC 34.051, a buoy is not required for each pot, but each end of the longline must be marked by a cluster of four buoys [, AS WELL AS A POLE AND A FLAG]. One buoy in the cluster must be marked in accordance with the specifications of **5 AAC 34.051 and have the initials "SL" to identify that the pots are on a shellfish longline. For the purposes of this subsection, "shellfish longline" is a stationary, buoyed, and anchored line with more than one shellfish pot attached** [5 AAC 34.051(a)].

**ISSUE:** Portions of the gear-marking requirements for longlined pots in Registration Area Q (Bering Sea) are not used by fishermen. Golden king crab fishermen in the Bering Sea use marking requirements described for Registration Area O (Aleutian Islands; 5 AAC 34.625). This proposed modification of gear marking requirements would align regulations for Area Q with Area O, thereby reducing confusion among fishermen, fishery managers, and enforcement.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** The regulation will not reflect current practices.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** No.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Fishermen, fishery managers, and enforcement personnel.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** Unknown.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** None.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F13-184)  
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**PROPOSAL 362 - 5 AAC 35.525.** Lawful gear for Registration Area J. Specify vertical placement of escape rings and update definition of escape ring placement in Bering Seas Tanner and snow crab fisheries, as follows:

(b) The following Tanner crab pot requirements are in effect in Registration Area J:

(1) **to permit escapement of undersize *C. bairdi* Tanner crab,** pots used to take *Chionoecetes bairdi* Tanner crab must have at least one-third of one vertical surface of the pot composed of not less than **seven and one-quarter** [7 ¼] inch stretched mesh webbing or have no less than four circular escape rings of no less than five inches inside diameter installed on the vertical **surface of the pot. The escape rings shall be placed so the bottom of a ring is no higher on the vertical surface than the first full mesh from the bottom of the pot** [PLANE TO PERMIT ESCAPEMENT OF UNDERSIZE C. BAIRDI TANNER CRAB]; and

(2) **to permit escapement of undersize *C. opilio* Tanner crab,** pots used to take *Chionoecetes opilio* Tanner crab must have at least eight escape rings with an inside diameter measure of no less than four inches **installed on the vertical surface of the pot so the bottom of a ring is no higher on the vertical surface than the first full mesh from the bottom of the pot** [PLACED WITHIN ONE MESH MEASUREMENT FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE

POT], with four escape rings on each of two sides of a four-sided pot, or if the pot has no escape rings as specified in this paragraph, one-half of one side of a four-sided pot must have a side panel composed of not less than five and one-quarter inch stretched mesh webbing [TO PERMIT ESCAPEMENT OF UNDERSIZE *C. OPILIO* TANNER CRAB].

**ISSUE:** Regulations for lawful gear in Registration Area J do not specify where escape rings must be vertically located on pots targeting *Chionoecetes bairdi* Tanner crab. Escape rings are ineffective at reducing bycatch of female and sublegal crab when not placed near the bottom of a pot. Regulations for *C. opilio* Tanner crab in Registration Area J require escape rings to be located within one mesh measurement from the bottom of the pot (5 AAC 35.525(b)(2)). This proposal would require the same vertical placement of escape rings on *C. bairdi* Tanner crab pots, and update the description of ring placement for *C. opilio* pots.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** Regulations would continue to allow Tanner crab pots in Registration Area J to be configured in a manner that does not best facilitate escapement of sublegal and female crab.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** No.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** The crab fishing industry.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** Unknown.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** None.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F13-185)  
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**PROPOSAL 363 - 5 AAC 39.670. Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Crab Fisheries Management Plan.** Clarify vessel check-out provisions in rationalized crab fisheries, as follows:

(c) The following provisions apply to the fisheries specified in this section.

...

(3) ...

**(G) a vessel operator who is registered for one of the fisheries listed in (b) of this section must check out with the department in Dutch Harbor or Kodiak by telephone, facsimile transmission, or electronic mail within 72 hours of operating the vessel's last pot in the registration area.**

**ISSUE:** This additional regulatory language would require a vessel to check out within 72 hours after operating its last pot in the registration area, signaling the completion of fishing operations. Short-term gear storage is permitted on the fishing grounds for up to 14 days after completing fishing operations.

Vessel check-out regulations for individual fishing quota crab fisheries have been modified over time and, with these changes, the intent of the regulation is no longer reflected in regulatory language. Fishermen may participate in a rationalized fishery at any time during the regulatory season, and commonly do not participate throughout the entire season; check-out provisions enable fishery managers to track participation during the entire season.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE?** Fishery managers, enforcement agencies, and the U. S. Coast Guard will continue to have inaccurate records of fishery participants.

**WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?** No.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?** Fishery managers and enforcement.

**WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?** Unknown.

**OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?** None.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F13-186)  
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