Council motion – April 2010
D-3(a) GOA Tanner crab bycatch

The Council requests staff modify the analysis to include the below revisions (relative to the March 2010 initial review draft), expand the analysis to address enforcement and SSC comments, and release for public review.

Purpose and Need

Tanner crab are a prohibited species bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries. Directed fisheries for Tanner crab in the GOA are fully allocated under the current limited entry system. No specific conservation measures exist in the GOA to address significant adverse interactions with Tanner crab by trawl and fixed gear sectors targeting groundfish and low observer coverage in GOA groundfish fisheries limits confidence in the assessment of Tanner crab bycatch in those fisheries, and a greater level of observer coverage in the appropriate areas may provide the Council with a higher level of confidence in the assessment of any bycatch occurring in the designated areas as a basis for future management actions as necessary. Tanner crab stocks have been rebuilding since peak fisheries occurred in the late 1970s. Specific protection measures should be advanced to facilitate stock rebuilding.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: Status Quo – No action
Alternative 2: Close the areas specified below to pot and trawl all groundfish (trawl, pot, and longline) fisheries

Component 1: Area definition
ADF&G Northeast Section
Option 1: Statistical Area 525807 and the area east of Statistical Area 525807 north of 58 degrees latitude, south of 58 degrees 15 min. latitude and west of 151 degrees 30 min. longitude.
Option 2: Chiniak Gully (Four corners at 152°19’34” W x 57°49’24” N by 57°29’ N x 151°20’W by 57°20’ N x 151°20’W by 57° x 152°9’20” W), excluding state waters
ADF&G Eastside Section
Option 3: Statistical Area 525702
ADF&G Southeast Section
Option 4: Statistical Area 525630

Component 2: Closure timing
Option 1: Year round
Suboption 1: trawl gear
Suboption 2: pot gear
Suboption 3: longline gear
Suboption 4: Vessels using approved, modified gear would be exempt from closures (e.g., trawl sweep modifications or pot escape mechanisms)
Suboption 5: Vessels using pelagic trawl gear would be exempt from closures
Suboption 6: Vessels using pelagic trawl gear to directed fish for pollock would be exempt from closures
Option 2: Seasonally (January 1 – July 31)
  Suboption 1: trawl gear
  Suboption 2: pot gear
  Suboption 3: longline gear
  Suboption 4: Vessels using approved, modified gear would be exempt from closures (e.g., trawl sweep modifications or pot escape mechanisms)
  Suboption 5: Vessels using pelagic trawl gear to directed fish for pollock would be exempt from closures

Alternative 3: In order to fish in these areas specified below, require 100% observer coverage on all trawl groundfish (trawl, pot, and longline) vessels and 30% observer coverage on all pot groundfish vessels less than 125 feet.

Note: Fishing days and observer coverage in these areas would be separate from and not count towards meeting a vessel’s overall 30% groundfish observer coverage requirement.

Area definition
  ADF&G Northeast Section
    Option 1: Statistical Area 525807 and the area east of Statistical Area 525807 north of 58 degrees latitude, south of 58 degrees 15 min. latitude and west of 151 degrees 30 min. longitude.
    Option 2: Chiniak Gully (Four corners at 152°19'34" W x 57°49'24" N by 57°29' N x 151°20'W by 57° x 152°9'20" W), excluding state waters
  ADF&G Eastside Section
    Option 3: Statistical Area 525702
  ADF&G Southeast Section
    Option 4: Statistical Area 525630

Note: A combination of alternatives, options, and suboptions may be selected.