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Advisory Announcement

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Prince William Sound Area Tanner Crab Fishery Northeastern District Emergency Order # 2-SF-E-01-22

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) announces the opening of a Tanner crab commercial fishery in the Northeastern District of the Prince William Sound Area (PWS; Registration Area E) on March 1, 2022. New district definitions and a new harvest strategy (5 AAC 35.305) were adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) in December 2021. This harvest strategy contains minimum stock thresholds of mature male Tanner crab to open a fishery; mature male crab estimates are generated from the ADF&G trawl survey. This threshold was exceeded in the Northeastern District. The guideline harvest level (GHL) is based on mature male crab with stair-step harvest rates and includes a harvest cap of 20% of legal Tanner crab. The 2022 GHL for the Northeastern District is 61,800 lb of legal male Tanner crab (5.0 inches or greater in carapace width).

A valid 2022 CFEC interim-use permit card for PWS Tanner crab (T09E or T91E) is required to participate. In addition, fishers must obtain a PWS Tanner crab commercial season registration from ADF&G prior to fishing. Registrations may be completed by fax or e-mail by contacting the Homer office. Registrations are also available in ADF&G offices in Homer, Cordova, Anchorage, Soldotna, and Kodiak if registration must be completed in person. BOF also adopted a registration deadline of 15 days prior to the opening of the fishery (5 AAC 35.306). The registration deadline is February 14 at 5:00 p.m.; registrations will not be issued after that date.

The PWS Tanner crab season will open 12:01 a.m. March 1 and close 11:59 p.m. March 31, unless closed earlier by emergency order (EO). In addition, for safety and a fair start, the BOF also adopted a weather delay provision. If the National Weather Service (NWS) issues a 48-hour marine weather forecast for Prince William Sound (PKZ125) at 4:00 a.m. February 28 that contains a gale warning, the PWS Tanner crab season opening will be delayed for 24 hours; if delayed, the 4:00 a.m. NWS marine weather forecast for PWS will be checked each subsequent day until no gale warning is issued for the upcoming 48-hour period, or until 12:01 a.m. March 8, when the season will open regardless of the forecast.

During the fishery, a maximum of 25 Tanner crab pots may be operated by each vessel with required identification (pot) tags; tags will be issued at no charge with registration. Log sheets must be completed for each pot set and a daily call-in report is required. Permit holders must contact ADF&G Homer staff prior to fishing to arrange a gear inspection. Participants must check in prior to each fishing trip and accommodate an ADF&G onboard observer upon request. Depending on fishery performance, statistical area closures may occur by EO prior to the season closure. The fishery will be monitored closely with mandatory daily call-in reports. If fishers do not adhere to daily call-in requirements, management will be conservative and enforcement action will be taken.

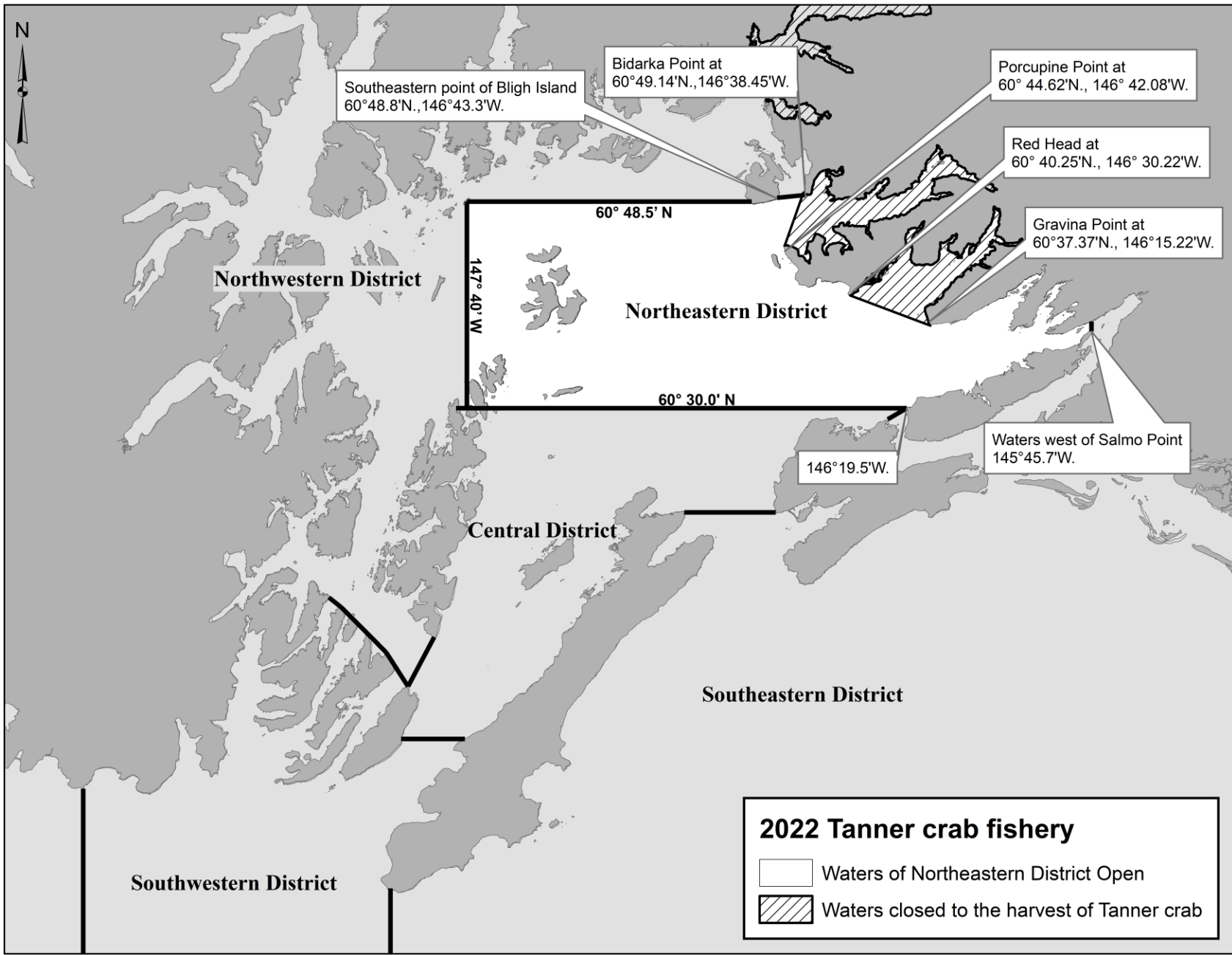


Figure 1.— PWS Northeastern District will open to commercial Tanner crab fishing on March 1.