

PROPOSAL 259 - 5 AAC 34.925. Lawful gear for Registration Area Q. Specify that escape rings and mesh are placed on a vertical plane or side of the pot in the Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 34.925(b)(2) is amended to read:

(2) in the Saint Matthew Island Section, each king crab pot must have eight escape rings with an inside diameter measure of 5.8 inches placed **on a vertical plane** within one mesh measurement from the bottom of the pot, with four escape rings on two sides of a four-sided pot, or if the pot has no escape rings as specified in this paragraph, then one-half of one **vertical** side of a four-sided pot must have a side panel composed of not less than eight-inch stretched mesh webbing;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Placement of escape mechanisms for undersize and female crab is specified on a vertical surface in other Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands king crab fisheries, but not in the Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab fishery. This could result in escape mechanisms placed in suboptimal locations causing small male and female crab to be retained and brought to the surface in crab pots. This proposed change will bring the Saint Matthew Island Section pot gear escape mechanism regulation in alignment with other king crab pot gear regulations for the Bering Sea.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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