

Commissioner Brooks' Declaration

JUNEAU — In an extraordinary declaration Commissioner James W. Brooks of the Department of Fish and Game announced that the state would indefinitely delay the opening of crab fishing season in the Bering Sea area which was scheduled to open on July, 1974.

His action was prompted by confirming observations that American crab vessels are indeed fishing contrary to state regulations.

In telegrams to nonresident fisherman and processors who had said they do not recognize the regulations or jurisdiction of the State of Alaska and will operate under their own so-called regulations, Brooks said that "This flagrant challenge of auth-

ority neither justifies nor obscures the demonstrated intention of the parties involved to engage in unbridled exploitation of the king crab resources.

"The State of Alaska will not tolerate anarchy in this fishery or any other, and every possible legal action will be directed toward preserving our fishery resources against such piracy."

Brooks further informed fishermen and processors that he would not open the crab fishing season in Alaska until the illegal fishing in the Bering Sea is stopped and the pots are removed to legal storage locations in less than 25 fathoms of water,

"Anyone found in possession of king crabs prior to a declared open season will be dealt with by

the fullest expression of the Alaska system of law enforcement and justice," Brooks said.

The issues in this case are clear-cut and involve a direct challenge to state authority with potentially disastrous consequences to the crab resources of Alaska.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he was speaking for Governor Egan when he said that Alaska will not sit on the sidelines while a resource of enormous value is decimated for short-term profit by a group of nonresident fishermen and processors.

The interests and rights of all American fishermen whether resident or non-resident are at stake in this matter and all will be protected equally.