

King Crab Fishing In All Areas Off Except Bering Sea

In accord with a policy adopted by the Board of Fish and Game during its regulatory meeting at Anchorage in December, 1968, the Department of Fish and Game announced today that king crab fishing in all regulatory areas of Alaska, except in the Bering Sea waters of the Alaska Peninsula area, will close on February 15, 1969.

The Bering Sea waters of the Alaska Peninsula area will remain open to king crab fishing on a year-around basis.

At present, the minimum size for king crabs in the Bering Sea is 7 inches in width of shell. This size limit will remain in effect through February 28, 1969, after which date the minimum size will revert to 5 3/4 inches.

According to a regulatory proposal tentatively adopted by the Board, king crab fishing will reopen on August 1, 1969 in the Prince William Sound, Copper River-Bering River and Cook Inlet-Resurrection Bay areas; on August 15, 1969 from the Kodiak area westward; and on September 1, 1969 in the Yakutat and Southeastern Alaska areas.

In the Cook Inlet area, king crab fishing inside an area encompassed by a line due south from Anchor Point to a Department of Fish and Game marker buoy in Kachemak Bay and thence to due east to the tip of Homer Spit will close on January 15, 1969, or 30 days earlier than the general statewide clos-

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ure on February 15.

This special closure is to provide added protection to king crabs on a known breeding area.

In announcing the closure of king crab fishing on February 15, 1969, for the Board, Ed Huizer, Director of the Division of Commercial Fisheries stated that the closure was considered necessary for the conservation of the king crab stocks.

"The cessation of king crab fishing on February 15, 1969 will eliminate handling of crabs during the molting and mating periods in the late winter and spring when crabs are especially vulnerable to injury. During the molting season, meat recovery and quality also decline."

"These factors hold true not only for the westward areas, where king crabs have been intensively fished, but also for areas such as Prince William Sound and Southeastern Alaska where the intensity of the fishery and production has been low," Huizer added.