

CHANGES TO THE FMP FOR THE GULF OF ALASKA  
GROUNDFISH FISHERY

1. On Pages 4-13 and 4-14, Section 4.3.1.2.3, under "Central Area", the part "Time/area closures and gear restrictions to control king crab bycatch" is amended by revising the first and fourth paragraphs to read as follows:

A time/area closure scheme has been developed to help protect and rebuild the Kodiak king crab resource. The number of red king crab in the waters around Kodiak Island are at historically low levels. Most of these crab are old and sexually mature. There has been no sign of significant recruitment since 1979. As a result, the Kodiak king crab fishery has been closed since 1983 in an attempt to rebuild the stocks. During this same period a developing domestic groundfish fishery using a variety of gear has displaced all foreign fisheries. While the cause for the decline of king crab is not known, most researchers believe that the decline can be attributed to a variety of environmental factors which independently or in combination led to the depressed condition of the resource. The extent to which the king crab decline is due to commercial fishing, either directed or incidental, is unknown.

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Three area designations have been established for purposes of protecting king crab stocks and are described in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.3.

On Page 4-16, Table 4.3 is amended by revising discussion of the length of continuance of recruitment event closures to read as follows:

For purposes of implementing a Type III area, a "recruitment event" is defined as the appearance of female crab in substantially increased numbers. A substantially increased number is defined as occurring when the total number of females estimated for a given district equals the number of females established as a threshold criteria for opening that district to commercial crab fishing. In any given year a recruitment event may occur in one or more of the Kodiak management districts as indicated by the standardized Kodiak crab survey conducted the the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. A Type III area recruitment event closure will continue until either (1) a commercial crab fishery opens for that district, or (2) the number of crabs drops below the threshold level established for that district. Implementation of the Type III area closures would be accomplished by regulatory amendment.