

**ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES**  
**Teleconference on Saint Matthew Island Section Blue King Crab Fisheries**  
**September 28, 2009**

**Summary of Action**

The Alaska Board of Fisheries met by teleconference Monday, September 28, 2009. Seven of seven board members were present and public listen-only sites were available at Department of Fish and Game offices in Kodiak and Juneau. The purpose of the teleconference was to consider a petition submitted by the Department of Fish and Game requesting an amendment to the Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab harvest strategy (5 AAC 34.917). Specifically, the department requested the removal of the minimum total allowable catch (TAC) threshold which is set in regulation at 2.5 million pounds.

The Department of Fish and Game provided background information on the Saint Matthew Island blue king crab stock and the need for removing the TAC threshold in order to open a commercial season. The department explained the stock was recently declared rebuilt by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The board was reassured that a season opening would not put the stock at risk. Board members discussed various concerns with the department including natural mortality and recruitment of the stock; the amount necessary for subsistence harvest, the biomass of the stock, by-catch mortality, and methods of the harvesting.

The board adopted a finding of emergency based on a resource situation where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action, consistent with 5 AAC 96.625, and delegated authority to the commissioner to make the specific regulatory change to 5 AAC 34.917 to open a blue king crab commercial fishery season. The board requested a board generated proposal on this topic for consideration at the statewide finfish Board of Fisheries meeting in 2010.