C rab catches dominate Alaska's fish news in early October as boats gear up for mid-month openers in the Bering Sea.

As expected, crappers will see increased catches for snow crab after the annual survey showed a 60 percent boost in market size compared to last year, and nearly the same for females (only male crabs can be retained for sale). Managers announced this week a catch of 275 million pounds of snow crab, up 47 percent from last season. Even better, bidders got at least one of the largest numbers of small snow crab poised to enter the fishery they've ever seen.

Also as expected, the news is bad for baird Tanners, the larger cousins of snow crab. A take of just 2.4 million pounds, down 2 percent, will be allowed from the western fishing district of the Bering Sea, with the eastern district closed for the season.

Crappers breathed a sigh of relief to learn there will be a red king crab fishery at Nikolai this fall with a catch of 4.3 million pounds, a 36 percent drop. Those stocks have been on a downward spiral for several years and talk on the docks was that there would likely not be a fishery this year.

"It helps sustain king crab markets that might be lost if the season were closed," reacted Jake Jacobsen, director of the Inter-Cooperative Exchange, which represents the majority of Alaska's Bering Sea crabbers.

There again will be no king crab openers at the Pribilofs and St. Matthew Island due to low stock numbers. Similarly, a king crab fishery was canceled at Southeast Alaska when crappers tried not to get too excited because the fishery occurred last fall for the first time in six years.

Looking good for Gulf crab

The official word won't be out until November, but signs are pointing to another Kodiak Tanner crab opener in January 2019. Last winter saw the first season after a four-year closure, with a 400,000 pound harvest.

"It looks positive because we had a big group of crab last year that were just sublegal, and we thought we might get two years of fishing on that group," said Nat Nichols, manager of a fishery observer program at Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Kodiak.

A big pulse of crab in 2013 was the largest biologists had ever seen since travel surveys began, Nichols said.

"At that time, we estimated 200 million in the water. They were 1- to 2-year-olds, the size of a nickel," he said. "They don't survive well because everything likes to eat a small Tanner crab, and about 90 percent drop out of the population before they reach legal size. But even 10 percent still turn into a lot of crab."

Nichols said Tanner numbers also are looking up at Chignik and the South Peninsula, but those regions are likely to remain closed.

"We try not to get too excited because we've seen these drop off between the first year we see them and five years later when they become legal. But it's good to see we're still producing big cohorts of crab," Nichols added. 'We're sort of along for the ride, is how we put it."

The abundance of tiny Tanners could be a benefitting from the crash of the cod stocks in the Gulf of Alaska, he said.

"If you've got 80 percent fewer mouths to feed, I don't think it can hurt."

Tanners too at PWS

Crappers at Prince William Sound could also drop pots for Tanners again in March.

"We're getting all our information together so we can see where we're at," said Jan Rumble, area manager for Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet shellfish and groundfish at ADFG in Homer.

A one-month fishery in March 2018 was the first Tanner crab opener in PWS since 1998. It was allowed under a Commissioner's Permit that is issued in special circumstances and was limited to two regions.

It was a sort of test fishing mission, Rumble said, that was prompted by increasing numbers of crab coming up in subsistence pots and a lack of survey data. Fifteen permit holders participated in the fishery and pulled up 82,000 pounds of crab.

Rumble said based on last year's harvest, managers are "pretty confident" there will be another special permit fishery next March.

"Hopefully, processors will come into Cordova and set up for that fishery again. We also had buyers in Whittier and Seward and they will appreciate the opportunity to buy Tanner crab again," Rumble said.

Pacific Marine Expo is one of the industry's oldest (52 years) and most popular trade shows and organizers were scrambling a few months ago when its traditional November dates were spiked by a football game at Seattle's CenturyLink center where the event is held.

That pushed Expo into Thanksgiving week amid worries that it would cut into the show's draw. The Nov. 18-20 date change hasn't worked for some exhibitors, said Expo Director Danielle Christensen, but for others, it's provided more motivation to come to the show.

"Some folks are already traveling at Thanksgiving time, so this is actually a good schedule for them. No down time – you can go right from Expo to family and your turkey dinner," Christensen said, adding that early registrations are ahead of last year.

Dominating the Expo floor again is an even bigger Alaska Hall, which will house 52 Alaska companies and the show's main stage. Christensen said over one-third of the visitors at Expo in 2018 said they were "specifically looking for products from Alaska."

A new focus this year is a Young Fishermen's Track for those just starting out.

"We realized that was a group that was being overlooked. We know they need help and we hope we can be a bigger part of that for them," Christensen said.

Also in the Expo lineup: a public hearing on the Pebble Mine.

"Pebble Mine comes up every year and it is such an important topic to have in our educational program," she said.

Murkowski says it was Kavanaugh’s temperament that swayed her vote

Senator says decision was not based on Alaska Native issues or abortion

BY KYLE HOPKINS
Anchorage Daily News

It wasn’t that he might overturn Roe v. Wade or allow insurance companies to avoid covering pre-existing medical conditions, and he’d be in a bind for threat to Native Alaska rights and institutions.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said during a floor speech late Friday that she’s voting against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh because of his temperament. Even when placed in the hot seat, Murkowski said she must act in all a manner that promotes public confidence.

Kavanaugh drew criticism for some: times sharp exchanges with questioners last week as he denied accusations of sexual misconduct. Even when placed in the hot seat, Murkowski said she must act in all a manner that promotes public confidence.

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A copy of the Draft Bristol Bay Housing Authority (BBHA) 2019 Indian Housing Plan is available for review at the 28 tribal offices in the Bristol Bay region that have given their tribal designation to receive services through BBHA. In addition, copies are available for review at the BBHA main office, the BBHA’s administrative office, and BBNA office in Dillingham, Alaska, and the Bristol Bay Native Corporation office in Anchorage, Alaska. Comments need to be received no later than 3PM on Wednesday, October 11th, 2018, to be considered. Comments can be mailed to BBHA, P.O. Box 50, Dillingham, AK 99576, ATTN: Brenda Akelkok, or faxed to (907)842-2784, or by email to bakelkok@bbha.org.
after that the post-bankruptcy debts have a “That will get paid first of all,” Markham explained. “Those will get paid first off the top. Then secured debts,” explained Markham. “So we’ll get close to paying the post-bankruptcy creditors. But it’s likely that we’ll get close to paying the post-bankruptcy creditors in full.”

Debra Reinwand, said no decisions have been made as to whether the company will continue to operate under that name and separate management team is just beginning to look at the new operation and what, if any changes, could be studied.”

RVN From Page 1 and Pribilof Island communities. In a statement, PenAir CEO Danny Seybert called the deal “a win-win for our employee group, and our friends and customers throughout rural Alaska.”

He said, “Both my father, founder of PenAir, Orin Seybert, and I are pleased with the decision of the court today. Dave Pflieger, president and CEO of Ravn Air Group also called the purchase a “win-win-win for all parties.”

“We are all very excited about our collective future and working together toward a shared goal of providing the very best in safety, operational excellence, customer service, and employee pride throughout Alaska,” said Pflieger.

The cash from the sale will be put toward paying PenAir’s debts. However, it is unlikely that all creditors will be paid.

“Those will get paid first off the top. Then after that the post-bankruptcy debts have a higher priority than the pre-bankruptcy debts. So the balance of the money will likely be exhausted paying post-bankruptcy debts, but we don’t have a definitive accounting of all those, so I don’t want to completely foreclose any chance of money making it to the pre-bankruptcy creditors. But it’s likely that we’ll get close to paying the post-bankruptcy creditors in full.”

Markham estimated that PenAir owes a little more that $5 million in secured debts, but we don’t have a definitive accounting of all those, so I don’t want to completely foreclose any chance of money making it to the pre-bankruptcy creditors. But it’s likely that we’ll get close to paying the post-bankruptcy creditors in full.”

It’s the fourth year that Katmai National Park has pitted the animals against one another in a bracket.

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It’s the fourth year that Katmai National Park has pitted the animals against one another in a March Madness style bracket. “But there’s no fat shaming here,” the park said. Brown bears need fat stores in order to survive winter. During hibernation — which can last six months — a bear can shed one-third of its body mass, the park says. Lots of body fat means the animal is in good health.

“The first matchup? “Whooping 151 Walker and bulging behemoth 409 Beadnose,” the park said on its Facebook page. In order to vote, go to Katmai’s Facebook Page.

The brown bears at Katmai National Park and Preserve have been feasting on salmon all summer in anticipation of the long winter ahead.

Now it’s your turn to decide which one reigns supreme during “Fat Bear Week.” For the next week, the park will be releasing before and after photos of individual bears, and you can vote to determine which “gluttonous giant” takes the No. 1 spot. Up for vote is “409 Beadnose.”

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