

ACR 5

Reclassify European green crab from a class A to a class B banned invasive species (5 AAC 41.075).

CITE THE REGULATION THAT WILL BE CHANGED IF THIS ACR IS HEARD.

5 AAC 41.075 Classification of banned invasive species.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS? STATE IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM.

European green crabs are classified as a Class A banned invasive species under 5 AAC 41.075. The status quo policy related to European green crabs requires people to acquire an aquatic resource permit to trap them and allows those without licenses to only note the location and share information about the encounter with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Although this might be a sufficient policy for other invasive species relegated to a specific, isolated location, the status quo is insufficient for preventing the spread of European green crab, which travel great distances of their own accord on oceanic tides when in their larval state. This makes it difficult to know when and where they will establish populations. Alaska's shoreline is approximately 47,300 miles long and is very sparsely populated according to State of Alaska estimates. With this reality in mind, local community involvement will be essential in overseeing and managing this problem as it evolves. The current categorization of European green crab as a Class A: Banned invasive species inhibits the public's ability to address the problem, of which many are interested in solving.

WHAT SOLUTION DO YOU PREFER?

We propose reclassifying the European Green crab from Class A: Banned Invasive Species to Class B: Banned Invasive Species under ADF&G regulation 5 AAC 41.075. This change would allow people to kill them when they come across European Green Crabs and harvest them. There would be no need to reword the existing regulation, the only change would be moving European green crab from Class A: Banned Invasive Species to Class B: Banned Invasive Species.

STATE IN DETAIL HOW THIS ACR MEETS THE CRITERIA STATED BELOW.

for a fishery conservation purpose or reason:

Regarding item a, in the 2002 Alaska Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan, ADF&G acknowledged the threat EGC posed to Alaskan fisheries (Fay, 2002). "Because king, Tanner and Dungeness crab all use shorelines as nursery areas, a green crab invasion has the potential to significantly impact recruitment needed to maintain Alaska's valuable crab and halibut fisheries" (Fay, 2002, p. 6). As these environments become more compromised through erosion and degradation of key plants like eelgrass, native fisheries like salmon, herring, and Dungeness crab are unable to maintain a consistent population yield and replenish their stocks year after year (Drinkwin et al, 2019; Weingartner, 2026). McDonald (2001) found that EGC consistently outcompeted Dungeness crab for shelter one-on-one due to the former's superior pincer strength and aggressive behavior (McDonald et al, 2001). This causes Dungeness crabs to retreat to parts of the coast that leave them more exposed to predating fish and birds (McDonald et al, 2001).

Furthermore, EGC threatens Southeast Alaska subsistence and personal use clam fisheries as they have significantly depleted populations in Maine in the 1950s from 8.5 million pounds to just 0.6

million pounds over the course of eight years due to European green crabs consuming young clams before they could reach harvestable size (Drinkwin et al, 2019; Weingartner, 2026). Similarly, Lindsey (2026) found that Oregon oyster growers found 5% to 20% of their oysters are rendered unmarketable due to green crab predation on juvenile oysters (Lindsey, 2026).

This ACR would help protect against the damage caused by these invasive crabs for native crabs and salmon.

to correct an error in regulation:

This ACR does not apply to item b.

to correct an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted:

Should this ACR be accepted, it would allow the regulation to reflect the reality that European green crab can spread on their own in their larval state on oceanic tides regardless of human activity.

Regarding item c: the rapid expansion of the EGC was not foreseen at the time of its original listing, as they had not yet been observed in Alaska. Given the immense coastline, sparse population, and limited department resources to address this expansion, allowing the public to assist in the direct removal of EGC will help take steps to aid in addressing this problem. Making this change would allow for people living in coastal Alaska to utilize European green crabs for food-related uses while simultaneously removing these invasive crabs from the marine environment.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THIS PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED PRIOR TO THE REGULAR CYCLE?

If this problem is not addressed before 2028, when Southeast shellfish is scheduled for the Board of Fisheries, the issue will continue to worsen and will be both more expensive and difficult to mitigate. Although, according to current knowledge, the establishment of European green crab populations in Alaska is primarily localized to the communities of Metlakatla and Ketchikan, this certainly won't remain the case. There have already been European green crab carapaces found in other coastal communities, including Kasaan and have been noted as far north as Etolin Island. EGC were first discovered in Alaska in 2022 on Annette Island by the Metlakatla Indian Community, who have since launched a local campaign to remove EGC from sensitive habitat around Metlakatla. Just in the few years since, the numbers have increased significantly. Between 2024 and 2025, the annual recorded number of crabs trapped in Metlakatla went from 1,460 to 41,000. As of August 26th, 2026, Metlakatla Indian Community has caught 30,500 European Green Crab on Annette Island this year alone and tribal and other volunteer trappers on Ketchikan's Revillagigedo Island have trapped just over 4000 live EGC. These numbers do not include areas where European green crabs are living without being detected, which makes prompt, state-wide intervention a major priority.

STATE WHY YOUR ACR IS NOT PREDOMINANTLY ALLOCATIVE.

This ACR is meant to reduce regulatory burden on subsistence, sport, and commercial fishers interested in helping mitigate the spread in European green crab. This action would not privilege one group above another, instead it would lower the barrier for people to consume the crabs and

utilize them as a resource which is currently illegal under the current classification of European green crab as a Class A: Banned Invasive Species.

IF THIS REQUEST IS ALLOCATIVE, STATE THE NEW INFORMATION THAT COMPELS THE BOARD TO CONSIDER AN ALLOCATIVE PROPOSAL OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR CYCLE.

This request is not allocative.

STATE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE FISHERY THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ACR.

I am a Petersburg local, subsistence user, and personal use Dungeness crabber.

STATE WHETHER THIS ACR HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE, EITHER AS A PROPOSAL OR AS AN ACR, AND IF SO, DURING WHICH BOARD OF FISHERIES

This proposal has not been considered by the Board of Fisheries. There was a request for emergency action filed by the Ketchikan Indian Community on March 18, 2026; a response and denial was sent to KIC by Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang on May 19, 2026.

SUBMITTED BY: Bergen Kludt-Painter