Important Areas (IAs) were identified for Tanner crabs in 2006 through interviewing experts and considering relevant literature during the process of establishing Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in PNCIMA.[1,2]

Tanner crabs, *Chionoecetes tanneri* (grooved Tanner) and *Chionoecetes bairdi* (inshore Tanner), are two species of crab targeted in exploratory commercial fisheries in PNCIMA.[3] In BC *C. bairdi* are commonly found in coastal inlets and fjords at depths between ten and 475 m,[3] although they have also been found offshore as bycatch in the domestic groundfish trawl fishery.[4] *C. tanneri* are distributed along the continental shelf at depths between 400 and 1,944 m.[3]

Exploratory commercial fisheries in PNCIMA target Tanner crabs

The identification of IAs for *C. tanneri* within PNCIMA was generally based on research surveys done on the continental shelf break.[1,2] A narrow strip along the entire shelf break region was identified as an IA for *C. tanneri*. This area may be modified following future research.[4]

Based on *C. bairdi* habitat preferences, nearshore areas along the north coast of PNCIMA, including inlets off Chatham Sound and Douglas Channel, were identified as IAs for that species.[1,2]

An experimental *C. tanneri* and *C. bairdi* fishery took place to determine if a new fishery could be supported for these species. Trap surveys completed along PNCIMA's continental shelf between 1999 and 2000 indicated that, in general, relative abundance of *C. tanneri* is greater in the northern portion of the west coast of Vancouver Island than off the west coast of Haida Gwaii.[5] Trap and trawl surveys between 2004 and 2005 on *C. bairdi* in Rivers Inlet on the central coast suggested that the population of marketable size crabs may not be sufficient to sustain an economically viable fishery for that species.[3]

Material presented is drawn from the following literature reviews, which include primary references:
1 Clarke, C.L. and Jamieson, G.S. 2006. Identification of ecologically and biologically significant areas in the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area: Phase I – identification of important areas. Can. Tech. Rep. Fish. Aquat. Sci. 2678: vi + 89 p.
2 Clarke, C.L. and Jamieson, G.S. 2006. Identification of ecologically and biologically significant areas in the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area: Phase II – final report. Can. Tech. Rep. Fish. Aquat. Sci. 2686: v + 25 p.
3 Fong, K.H. and Dunham, J.S. 2007. Inshore Tanner crab (*Chionoecetes bairdi*) biology in a central coast inlet, British Columbia, Canada. J. Shell. Res. 26(2): 581-595.
4 Krause G.G., Workman, G. and Phillips, A.C. 2001. A phase '0' review of the biology and fisheries of the Tanner crab (*Chionoecetes bairdi*). Research Document 2001/160. CSAS.
5 Gillispie, G.E., Fong, K.H., Phillips, A.C., Meyer, G.R. and Boutillier, J.A. 2004. Development of a new fishery for Tanner crab (*Chionoecetes tanner* Rathbum, 1893) off British Columbia: 2003 Status Report. Research Report 2004/132. CSAS.

Tanner crab. *Photo: Bridget Ennevor*

25 Tanner Crab Important Areas