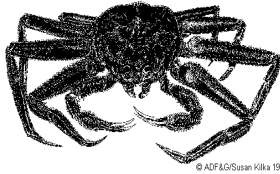


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**  
**COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**  
**NEWS RELEASE**



*McKie Campbell, Commissioner*

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**2005/06 BERING SEA TANNER CRAB SEASON AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have completed analysis of NMFS trawl survey data for the Bering Sea Tanner crab stock. Abundance and biomass estimates were made using survey data.

The Bering Sea Tanner crab stock is above the minimum mature female biomass threshold of 21.0 million pounds. Mature female biomass increased 140% from the 2004 estimate to 31.7 million pounds. In addition to the mature female biomass threshold, the harvest strategy includes a 4.0 million pound minimum TAC for that portion of the Bering Sea District east of 166° W long. The calculated 2005/06 TAC for the area east of 166° W long. is 1.02 million pounds, which is below the minimum TAC. Hence the fishery east of 166° W long. may not be opened under current regulations.

The minimum 4.0 million pound TAC for the area east of 166° W long. was originally established to provide for inseason management. The concerns for inseason management of the Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery remain for the 2005/06 season. Current federal regulations provide for a single Bering Sea Tanner crab individual fishing quota (IFQ) rather than two separate IFQs split east and west of 166° W long. Given this single IFQ, the department would be required to conduct concurrent fisheries for Tanner crab east and west of 166° W long. using inseason management to stay within the TAC in each subarea. Given that the Tanner crab stock is considered overfished and is still rebuilding, and anticipating inseason management with a Tanner crab fleet size of approximately 100 vessels, the department would only open the fishery east of 166° W long. if the TAC exceeded 4.0 million pounds.

In the Bering Sea District west of 166° W long. there is no minimum TAC and the 2005/06 TAC is summarized as follows:

IFQ	1,458,000 pounds
CDQ	162,000 pounds
Total	1,620,000 pounds

In the area west of 166° W long., ADF&G statistical area 695700 which lies between 169° W long. and 170° W long. and 57° 30' N lat. and 57° N lat. will be closed to commercial fishing for Tanner crab to

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protect the Pribilof blue king crab stock. All juvenile and the majority of mature blue king crabs captured during the 2005 survey were found in this area. Approximately 27% of the exploitable legal male Tanner crabs west of 166° W long. were found in this statistical area and the Tanner crab TAC was set using abundance estimates that did not include the closed area.

The 2005/06 Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery will open west of 166° W long. at 12:00 NOON on October 15 and will remain open through March 31, 2006. The pot limit for this fishery is 450 pots per vessel. Buoy tags are currently available for sale at the Dutch Harbor and Kodiak ADF&G offices. Vessel operators may harvest Tanner crab and snow crab concurrently. Each vessel operator is restricted to a single species allocation of crab pot gear (450 pots) and must designate at the time of registration the quantity of pot gear registered and the quantity of pot gear configured for each species. Concurrent fishing for Bering Sea Tanner crab and Bristol Bay red king crab between 166° W long. and 168° W long. is not permitted.

New regulations require proof of a current valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Commercial Fisheries Safety Decal before a vessel registration is issued. Participating vessels must also have an activated vessel monitoring system approved by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The operator of a vessel participating in IFQ, or CDQ crab fisheries must notify the USCG at least 24-hours prior to departing port when carrying crab pot gear. USCG can be contacted at: Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, (907) 581-6738, and Kodiak, (907) 654-5588.

Preseason gear inspections will be available in Dutch Harbor beginning on October 10, 2005 and in Akutan, King Cove and False Pass beginning on October 11, 2005. Vessel registration will begin at 12:00 NOON October 14, 2005. An individual holding a current Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bering Sea Tanner crab interim use permit card (T91Q or T09Q) must be aboard the vessel when it is registered. Vessels may fish concurrently for IFQ and CDQ crab, but a separate registration and CFEC permit card is required for each fishery. At the time of registration, all pots onboard the vessel or in wet storage must be in compliance with current Bering Sea commercial Tanner crab fishing regulations.

Vessels participating in IFQ and CDQ fisheries may form gear operation cooperatives. Each vessel must register those vessels authorized to operate the vessel's gear at the time of registration. When a vessel transports crab pot gear to the fishing grounds for another vessel, the vessel owning the crab pot gear must be active within seven days in the registration area where the crab pot gear is deployed.

Vessel operators shall notify the department within 72-hours of completing fishing operations in a registration area or when departing the registration area with gear in long-term storage. The Board of Fisheries established a 14-day period when unbaited gear may be stored outside of designated storage areas after fishing is completed. Pots must be removed from the water or placed in long-term storage if left unattended in a registration area for more than a 14-day period. Additionally, a vessel's registration will be invalidated after 14-days of inactivity in a registration area.

For questions regarding issuance of quota share and IFQ/IPQ, contact NOAA Fisheries RAM Division at 1-800-304-4846 (option #2). For questions regarding federal Crab Rationalization Program regulations, contact NOAA Fisheries Sustainable Fisheries Division at (907) 586-7228 or the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement in Kodiak at (907) 486-3298 or Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-2061. For further information on state management contact the Alaska Department of Fish & Game in Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239 or in Kodiak, at (907) 486-1840.