



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



For more information on the
BSAI Crab Rationalization
Program:

http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/crab/crfaq.htm

Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Crab (King & Tanner) Rationalization Program

Vital Stats

First year: 2005

Type of Catch Share Program: Quota Share & IFQ; Harvester Cooperatives; Processor Quota Share & IPQ; CDQ.

Available Trend Data

Season length, Bristol Bay Red King Crab (BBR):

Before Program (2004): ~ 3 Days;

After Program (2007-8): ~ 93 Days

Season length, Bering Sea Snow Crab (BSS):

Before Program (2004): ~ 5 Days

After Program (2007-8): ~ 230 Days

Ex-vessel value:

Before Program (2004): ~ \$125M

After Program (2007-8): ~ \$202M (worth \$177 M in 2004 dollars)

Consolidation:

Red King Crab: (2004): 251 vessels; *(2007-8):* 74 vessels (71% reduction)

Snow Crab: (2004): 189 vessels; *(2007-8):* 78 vessels (59% reduction)

Between the year before Program and first fishing year, vessel registration declined by two-thirds for the red king crab fishery and by one-half for the snow crab fishery (~15% of decline for the BBR fishery came from vessel buybacks).

Stock status:

Of the 8 crab stocks managed under the Program, none have experienced overfishing. The following 4 stocks have been overfished:

Snow crab: overfished in 1999; currently rebuilding.

Tanner crab: overfished in 1999; rebuilt 2008; approaching overfished condition.

St. Matthew blue king crab: overfished in 1999; rebuilt in 2009.

Pribilof Islands blue king crab: overfished in 2002; currently overfished.

Management

Identified Costs: 2007-8 ~ \$ 2.1M in management and enforcement costs

Cost recovery: In 2007-8 was 3% of ex-vessel value. (The calculated fee percentage for crab to recover all costs was 4.38%, but cost recovery fees are capped in MSA at 3%).

Monitoring: VMS is required on all catcher vessels and catcher/processors that participate in the Program, including IFQ, CDQ, and Adak fisheries. VMS is used to determine vessel position and activity. Mandatory electronic landings reporting for all Program fisheries (CDQ, Adak, and Quota) supports real-time account management and compliance monitoring.

Accumulation: Individuals may not hold/use more than 1%-10% of shares (varies by fishery). Processors may not process more than 30% of processor shares for each fishery.

Performance Reviews

The Council has extensively reviewed this program including 18 month and 3 year reviews. A comprehensive 5-year review of the Program is scheduled for 2010. Additional reviews will be ongoing every 5 years. These reviews are intended to objectively measure the success of the Program in achieving the goals and objectives specified in the Council's Problem Statement and the MSA, including the effects on vessel owners, captains, crew, processors, and communities, and include an assessment of options to mitigate negative effects.



Safety: Search and Rescue (SAR) cases

The U.S. Coast Guard reports that crab related Search-And-Rescue (SAR) cases have remained at historic lows during the rationalized crab years (post-2005).

Before Program: 8 deaths (2001-early 2005)

After Program: 1 death (mid 2005-2009)

Summary

The Crab Rationalization Program allocates Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) crab resources among harvesters, processors, and coastal communities. The program was developed at a time that overcapacity in BSAI crab fisheries had resulted in a frenzied race for crab. Harvesting and processing capacity had expanded to accommodate highly abbreviated seasons, and significant portions of that capacity operated in an economically inefficient manner or were idle between seasons.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) developed the rationalization program over a 6-year period to accommodate the specific dynamics and needs of the BSAI crab fisheries. The Program addresses derby fishing, high bycatch and associated discard mortality, safety, economic efficiency and product quality issues. It also includes an economic data collection component to assist managers as they review the Program's implementation.

The Program is a complex limited access system designed to balance the interests of several groups who depend on crab fisheries —vessel owners, processors, captains, crew, and communities. Several types of shares are allocated, including catcher vessel shares, catcher/processor shares, and crew share. Each year these shares yield an exclusive harvest privilege to the quota holders. Quota holder can choose to harvest these annual privileges individually, or as part of a fishery cooperative. The program also allocates processing quota shares. Congress provided specific authority to NMFS to allocate processing quota shares. Each year a portion of the annual harvest privilege issued to catcher vessel owners must be delivered to processors with matching shares. An arbitration system administered by an independent third party ensures that equitable price and delivery terms are maintained between harvesters and processors.

Community interests are considered in Community Development Quota (CDQ) allocations and regional landing and processing requirements, as well as an opportunity for communities to exercise a right to purchase processor shares prior to their sale for use outside of a community. Over time the Council has adopted modifications to improve the operation of the arbitration system, expanded the ability for processors to consolidate operations in remote facilities to improve operational efficiencies, and modified the allocations of crew quota shares.

For additional Catch Share Spotlights in this series go to:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/catchshares>

Questions, comments or need more information? Contact us via email at:

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