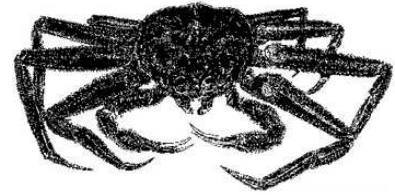


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**BERING SEA TANNER CRAB FISHERY OPENS OCTOBER 15
TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH ANNOUNCED**

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. The Bering Sea Tanner crab stock is above the minimum mature female biomass threshold of 21.0 million pounds.

The Bering Sea District Tanner crab stock is managed east and west of 166° W longitude, with a separate total allowable catch (TAC) for each area. There is no minimum TAC for Bering Sea District Tanner crab. The department calculated the TAC east of 166° W long. using a 10% harvest rate applied to the molting mature male abundance. West of 166° W long., the TAC was calculated using a 50% harvest rate applied to the exploitable legal-male abundance estimate. The calculated TACs were reduced to comply with recently implemented federal overfishing levels. The 2008/09 Bering Sea District Tanner crab TACs are apportioned as follows:

IFQ - East	2,486,700 pounds
CDQ - East	276,300 pounds
Total - East	2,763,000 pounds

IFQ - West	1,383,300 pounds
CDQ - West	153,700 pounds
Total - West	1,537,000 pounds

In the area west of 166° W long., waters enclosed by 168° W long. to 170° W long. and 57° N lat. to 58° N lat. (ADF&G statistical areas 685700, 685730, 695700, and 695730) will be closed to commercial fishing for Tanner crab to protect the Pribilof blue king crab stock. The majority of blue king crabs captured during the 2008 survey were found in this area.

The 2008/09 Bering Sea District Tanner crab fishery will open at 12:00 noon on October 15, 2008 and will remain open through March 31, 2009. In addition to the directed Tanner crab fisheries, vessel operators registered for the Bering Sea snow crab fishery who also have Tanner crab IFQ or CDQ quota may incidentally harvest Tanner crab west TAC at up to 5% of the weight of the snow crab onboard the vessel. Vessel operators registered for the western Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery who also have snow crab IFQ or CDQ quota may incidentally harvest snow crab at up to 5% of the weight of the Tanner crab onboard the vessel. East of 166° W long., Tanner crab TAC may also be harvested at up to 5% of the weight of the red king crab onboard the vessel by vessel operators who are registered for the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery and who have Tanner crab IFQ or CDQ quota. A vessel operator registered for the directed Tanner crab fishery east of 166° W long., may only fish between 163° W long. and 166° W long.

In March 2008 the Alaska Board of Fisheries repealed the pot limit and buoy tag marking requirement for this fishery.

A valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Commercial Fisheries Safety Decal is required before a vessel registration is issued. Participating vessels must also have an activated vessel monitoring system approved by 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, Akutan and King Cove beginning on October 10, 2008. Vessel registration will begin at 12:00 noon on October 13, 2008. 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. Vessel operators 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 snow crab fishing regulations.

Vessel operators participating in IFQ or CDQ fisheries may form gear operation cooperatives with other registered vessels. Each vessel operator must specifically list those vessels authorized to operate the vessel's gear at the time of vessel registration. A vessel operator may transport crab pot gear to the fishing grounds for another vessel operator, however, the registered vessel operator of the crab pot gear has seven days to be active in the registration area where the gear was deployed. A vessel operator may make a one time transfer of all registered pot gear to another vessel operator at the completion of fishing operations.

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 operator'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.

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