

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Sam Cotten, Commissioner

Scott Kelley, Director



Contact:

Ethan Nichols, BSAI Asst. Area Management Biologist
 Miranda Westphal, BSAI Area Management Biologist
 Phone: (907) 581-1239
 Fax: (907) 581-1572

Dutch Harbor Office
 P.O. Box 920587
 Dutch Harbor, AK 99692

Date Issued: 10/5/2017

BERING SEA TANNER CRAB SEASON OPENS OCTOBER 15 TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH ANNOUNCED

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have completed analysis of 2017 NMFS trawl survey results for Bering Sea Tanner crab. Based on survey estimates, Bering Sea District Tanner crab abundance is within the range required for fishery opening west of 166° W long. The 2017/18 Western Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery (WBT), west of 166° W long, will open 12:00 noon October 15, 2017 and close 11:59 pm March 31, 2018 with a TAC of 2,500,200 pounds.

Tanner crab IFQ or CDQ may also be retained up to five percent of the weight of snow crab onboard a vessel registered for the Bering Sea snow crab fishery in waters west of 166° W long. During the directed WBT fishery, snow crab IFQ or CDQ may be retained up to thirty-five percent of the weight of Tanner crab onboard a vessel. Fishermen may not concurrently register for multiple Bering Sea crab fisheries.

Mature male biomass east of 166° W long is below the threshold for a fishery opening. Therefore, Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery, between 166° W long and 163° W long will remain closed for the 2017/18 season. Retention of incidentally caught Tanner crab is prohibited onboard a vessel registered for the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery in waters east of 166° W long or onboard a vessel registered to fish Bering Sea snow crab in waters east of 166° W long.

The Bering Sea District Tanner crab TAC is apportioned as follows:

	West of 166° W long (WBT)	East of 166° W long (EBT)
Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)	2,250,180 pounds	-
Community Development Quota (CDQ)	250,020 pounds	-
Total	2,500,200 pounds	CLOSED

-continued-

To protect the Pribilof blue king crab stock, the WBT fishery will not open in waters enclosed by connecting the following coordinates: 56°30' N, 170° W; 57° N, 171° W; 58° N, 171° W; 58° N, 168° W; 57° N, 168° W; 56°30' N, 169° W; 56°30' N, 170° W. The associated closed ADF&G statistical areas are: 685730, 695730, 705730, 705701, 705703, 695701, 695700, 685700, 695631, 695632, the northeast half of 705630, and the northwest half of 685630. A map of the closed area will be provided at the time of registration.

A valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Commercial Fisheries Vessel Safety Decal is required before vessel registration. Vessels must also have an activated vessel monitoring system (VMS) 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: (907) 581-3466 or (907) 359-1575 (after hours).

At the time of vessel registration, all pots onboard the vessel and in wet storage must be in compliance with Bering Sea District Tanner crab fishing regulations. There is no crab pot limit or buoy tag requirement for Bering Sea Tanner crab fisheries. Vessel operators may register up to 20 groundfish pots.

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 is deployed. Vessel operators may register gear operation cooperatives, and a vessel operator may make a one-time transfer of all pot gear to another vessel operator at the completion of fishing operations.

Preseason gear inspections will be available beginning October 9, 2017 in Dutch Harbor and October 12, 2017 in King Cove and Akutan. Vessel registration will begin 9:00 am October 14, 2017. An individual holding a current Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bering Sea Tanner crab interim use permit card (T91Q or T09Q) must be present during registration. Vessel operators may participate concurrently in IFQ and CDQ fisheries, but a separate registration and CFEC permit card are required for each fishery.

Vessel operators must notify ADF&G within 72 hours of completing fishing operations in a registration area or when departing the registration area with gear in long-term storage or transferred to another vessel. Unbaited gear with doors open may be stored for up to 14 days 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 14 days. 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 contact ADF&G Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239, or ADF&G Kodiak at (907) 486-1840.