

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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#### **Gear Sharing and Gear Storage for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Rationalized Crab Fisheries**

Regulations 5 AAC 39.670 and 5 AAC 39.675 allow gear sharing and gear storage for rationalized crab fisheries in the Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands (BSAI). A registered and active BSAI crab fishing vessel is permitted to operate and transport crab pot gear of another registered and active BSAI crab fishing vessel if a gear sharing form, available from ADF&G, is completed by the fisherman registering pot gear.

After completing fishing operations in a registration area, regulations allow gear to be stored at-depth with doors secured open and bait and bait containers removed for up to 14 days. Regulations do not allow continued use of pot gear by gear-sharing vessel(s) after the fisherman who originally registered the gear has completed fishing operations in a registration area. A fisherman completes fishing operations in a registration area by any of the following: 1) contacting the department to check out of the fishery within 72-hours of operating the last pot in the registration area, 2) by removing gear from the water, 3) placing gear in long-term storage, or 4) transferring pot gear to another vessel. A vessel's registration is automatically invalidated after 14-days of inactivity in a registration area.

A vessel may not be registered in two fisheries simultaneously. When a vessel is not registered its gear may not be deployed in a fishing condition, and vessels that were sharing gear are not legally able to operate gear that is no longer registered. Gear sharing and gear storage regulations have been inconsistently implemented. With rationalized crab fisheries ongoing, and inconsistent implementation of gear sharing and gear storage regulations during the 14-day period after completion of fishing operations in prior seasons, gear sharing during the 14-day gear storage period will be allowed for the remainder of the 2015-16 fishing seasons. Beginning with the 2016-17 rationalized crab fishing season all gear storage regulatory provisions will be enforced and gear sharing during the 14 day gear storage period will not be allowed. A vessel registered for a fishery may transfer all of the registered gear to another vessel, registered in the same fishery, by relinquishing gear operation rights and responsibilities on a gear operation transfer form, available from ADF&G, within the 14-day gear storage period.

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