

NOAA Fisheries Service

Alaska Fisheries Science Center

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The Alaska Fisheries Science Center is a scientific research organization responsible for the development and implementation of NOAA's scientific research on marine resources in Alaska waters. Our research focuses on more than 250 fish and 42 marine mammal stocks off the coasts of the Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska and Aleutian Islands.



U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service

Understanding Active Participation, Crew Compensation, and Lease Rates in the BSAI Crab Rationalization Program: A Prospectus for a Study

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has expressed concern about active participation, crew compensation, and lease rates in the BSAI crab fisheries. The National Marine Fisheries Service's Alaska Fisheries Science Center is developing a study to look at the incentives of and barriers to addressing these issues. The Council previously considered developing regulatory measures that would limit the acquisition of new quota shares to "active participants" (those with some vessel ownership or captain/crew time in the Bering Sea crab fisheries), but given difficulties with regulatory solutions, has chosen to give the crab cooperatives the opportunity to annually demonstrate how new voluntary measures are working instead. In an effort to inform the Council on stakeholder preferences for policy options, we would like to expand on the initial information it received on the cooperatives' voluntary measures, in order to advance Council understanding with respect to how it might best address issues with active participation, crew compensation, and lease rates in the least burdensome, costly, and most flexible manner. From February through April, we will be conducting individual interviews with stakeholders in the fisheries to get their feedback on the following:

- 1) The challenges and incentives present that can complicate policies designed to affect active participation, crew compensation, and lease rates.
- 2) The efficacy of current cooperative-developed measures to address these issues.
- 3) The access to owner QS and the functioning of this market.
- 4) The future of the fishery as a reflection of the above three discussion topics.

In order to ensure that all affected parties are represented in our study, we are seeking the participation of cooperative representatives, QS holders, vessel owners, captains, and crewmembers. We will be interviewing these participants at the Council meetings, industry gatherings, representative offices, dockside, as well as other convenient locations. In targeting the boat owners, captains, and crew we will utilize a snowball sampling approach, wherein we will ask for other potential interviewee prospects during the course of an interview. This approach is likely to be effective because the crab fishing industry is comprised of a network of participants, access to which is facilitated through other participants. We understand and will seek to address any potential biases associated with this sampling approach. Furthermore, we will randomly select potential respondents from the lists of crew (or "C") shareowners to target for initial interviews.

We will conduct content analysis of the qualitative information that results from these interviews to identify any trends in participants' or groups' replies to the discussion topics. The aim of this type of analysis, and this study, is to inform the Council on participants' perspectives on the utility of voluntary and mandatory active participation measures, access and workings of QS markets, and the future of the BSAI crab fisheries.

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