

## Bering Sea fishermen set up system to retrieve lost crab pots from last year's ice movement

SEAFOOD.COM NEWS by John Sackton Oct 12, 2012

Last year's record ice cover over the fishing grounds during the snow crab fishery resulted in a lot of lost gear. Now reports from catcher-processors show many lost crab pots are being seen west of St. Paul around the Pinnacle. However these vessels don't have a picker to take the buoys and pots out of the water.

Oystein Lone, who operates the C/P Pacific Sounder that does cod, sablefish and crab, thought that a reporting system giving the tag number and location of the pots might help recover a lot of gear - which at \$1500 a piece, is worth it to other crabbers.

He has set up a **special email address:** [lostcrabpots@gmail.com](mailto:lostcrabpots@gmail.com) for vessels to report the ADF&G tag number and position of lost crab pots they come across.

Oystein says that way, other crab boats can pick up the pots as they pass through the area; or the owners know where they are and can retrieve them. Lists of pot sightings and locations will be posted at the ADF&G office in Dutch Harbor, if there is interest in doing this.

Boats are being told to report the ADF&G tag number and the position of the pot via email. Sometimes the boat name is on the buoy as well.

This provides an alternative for catcher processors and longliners other than simply retrieving and cutting the buoy, and may help recover more gear.

All fishermen are concerned about lost gear - not just the cost, but also fouling the grounds. We have been asked to publicize this to the fleet, and are happy to do so.



Photo: Setting crab pots in Bering Sea (photo from US Coast Guard)