

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



*Denby S. Lloyd, Commissioner
John Hilsinger, Director*



Contact:

Forrest R. Bowers, BSAI Area Management Biologist
Barbi Failor-Rounds, BSAI Assistant Area Shellfish Biologist
Phone: (907) 581-1239
Fax: (907) 581-1572

Dutch Harbor Area Office
P.O. Box 920587
Dutch Harbor, Alaska 99692
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**BRISTOL BAY RED KING CRAB FISHERY OPENS OCTOBER 15, TOTAL
ALLOWABLE CATCH ANNOUNCED**

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have completed analysis of NMFS trawl survey data for Bristol Bay red king crab. Abundance and biomass estimates were computed using survey data and length-based analysis model output.

The Bristol Bay red king crab stock is estimated to be above the mature female abundance threshold. The Effective Spawning Biomass (ESB) of the Bristol Bay red king crab stock is estimated to be 72.8 million pounds. Based on the 2007 data, ESB increased 7.2% between 2006 and 2007. Mature male abundance increased 10.7% over the 2006 estimate and legal male abundance increased 15.4%. Since the ESB estimate is greater than 55.0 million pounds, a 15 percent exploitation rate was applied to the estimated mature male abundance to derive total allowable catch (TAC) for the 2007/08 season as follows:

IFQ	18,344,700 pounds
CDQ	2,038,300 pounds
Total	20,383,000 pounds

The 2007/08 TAC was calculated using an average live weight of 6.49 pounds per legal male crab.

The 2007/08 Bristol Bay red king crab fishery will open at 12:00 noon on October 15 and will remain open through January 15, 2008. The pot limit for this fishery is 450 pots per vessel. Buoy tags are currently available for sale at the Dutch Harbor and Kodiak ADF&G offices.

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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 National Marine Fisheries Service (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: 1-800-478-5555.

Preseason gear inspections will be available beginning on October 10, 2007 in Dutch Harbor, Akutan and King Cove. Vessel registration will begin on the morning of October 14, 2007. An individual holding a 2007 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bristol Bay red king crab interim use permit card (K91T or K09T) must be aboard the vessel when it is registered. Vessels 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 Bristol Bay commercial red king crab fishing regulations.

Vessels participating in IFQ or CDQ fisheries may form gear operation cooperatives. Each vessel must register those vessels authorized to operate the vessel's gear at the time of registration. When a vessel transports crab pot gear to the fishing grounds for another vessel, the vessel owning the crab pot gear must be active within seven days in the registration area where the crab pot gear is deployed.

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'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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