

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



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**2008/09 SAINT MATTHEW ISLAND SECTION AND PRIBILOF DISTRICT
KING CRAB SEASONS**

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have completed analysis of 2008 NMFS trawl survey results for the Saint Matthew Island Section and Pribilof District king crab seasons. King crab population and biomass estimates for these areas are based on area-swept survey data and the catch-survey analysis model. Based on survey results, the Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab and the Pribilof District red and blue king crab fisheries will remain closed for the 2008/09 season.

Saint Matthew Island Section blue king crab: ADF&G 2008 model estimates for the Saint Matthew blue king crabs indicate an increased abundance of mature male crabs from the 2007 model estimate. However, the calculated total allowable catch (TAC) is 2.42 million pounds, 12% below the harvest strategy minimum TAC. The minimum TAC plays an important role in promoting stock rebuilding and is an important determinant in the rebuilding schedule for this stock.

Pribilof District red and blue king crab: Survey results of Pribilof District blue king crabs indicate continued very-low abundance. The minimum threshold for a fishery opening is a total mature biomass (TMB) estimate of at least 13.2 million pounds of blue king crabs for two consecutive years. The 2008 estimate of TMB is 1.6 million pounds of mature blue king crabs, or approximately 12% of the threshold value and the second lowest on record. The Pribilof blue king crab stock has not achieved the minimum threshold for opening and will remain closed.

Estimates of mature male abundance for Pribilof red king crab decreased nearly 13% from the 2007 level and the 2008 mature male abundance estimate is the lowest since 1990. Precision of the estimate for mature male abundance is poor, with a 95% confidence interval of $\pm 61\%$ of the model point estimate. Due to the continued decline in the blue king crab stock and concern for blue king crab bycatch, the high degree of uncertainty surrounding the estimates of red king crab abundance, the red king crab fishery in the Pribilof District will remain closed for the 2008/2009 season.

For further information contact the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game in Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239 or in Kodiak, at (907) 486-1840.