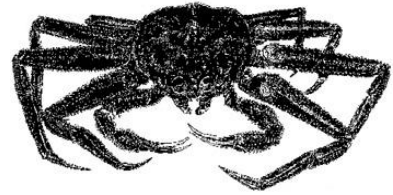


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**BERING SEA SNOW CRAB FISHERY OPENS OCTOBER 15
TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH ANNOUNCED**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have completed analysis of NMFS trawl survey data for the Bering Sea snow crab stock. The 2010/2011 total allowable catch (TAC) is based on abundance and biomass estimates from the NMFS stock assessment model and trawl survey.

The 2010/2011 model-estimated survey total mature biomass (TMB) for Bering Sea snow crabs is 478.3-million pounds which is above the harvest strategy minimum threshold of 230.4-million pounds that must be met prior to opening the fishery. The TAC for 2010/2011 Bering Sea District snow crab fishery is 54.281-million pounds and is apportioned as follows:

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)	48,852,900 pounds
Community Development Quota (CDQ)	5,428,100 pounds
Total	54,281,000 pounds

The 2010/11 Bering Sea snow crab fishery will open at 12:00 noon October 15, 2010 and will remain open through May 15, 2011 in the Eastern Subdistrict and through May 31, 2011 in the Western Subdistrict. The snow crab fishery will not open in waters enclosed by 168° W longitude to 170° W longitude and 57° N latitude to 58° N latitude (ADF&G statistical areas 685700, 685730, 695700, and 695730) to protect the Pribilof blue king crab stock. The majority of blue king crabs captured during the 2010 survey were found in this area.

There is no pot limit or buoy tag requirement for the Bering Sea snow crab fishery and registered fishermen may carry up to 20 groundfish pots onboard their vessel.

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 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: Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, (907) 581-6738, and Kodiak, (907) 654-5588.

Preseason gear inspections will be available in Dutch Harbor, Akutan and King Cove beginning on October 11, 2010. Vessel registration will begin at 12:00 noon on October 13, 2010. An individual holding a current Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bering Sea Tanner crab interim use permit card (T91Q or T09Q) must be onboard the vessel when it is registered. Vessel operators 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 Bering Sea commercial snow crab fishing regulations.

Fishermen participating in IFQ or CDQ fisheries may form gear operation cooperatives with other registered vessels. Each vessel operator must specifically list those vessels authorized to operate the vessel's gear at the time of vessel registration. A vessel operator may transport crab pot gear to the fishing grounds for another vessel operator, however, the registered vessel operator of the crab pot gear has seven days to be active in the registration area where the gear was deployed. A vessel operator may make a one-time transfer of all registered pot gear to another vessel operator at the completion of fishing operations.

Vessel operators must 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. Unbaited gear may be stored outside of designated storage areas after fishing is completed for up to 14-days. 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 operator'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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