

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE



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2005/06 BRISTOL BAY RED KING CRAB SEASON OPENING AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH

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 67.9 million pounds. Based on the 2005 data, ESB increased 14.6% between 2004 and 2005. Mature male abundance increased 19.6% over the 2004 estimate and legal male abundance increased 5.8%. 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 2005/06 season as follows:

IFQ	16,496,100 pounds
CDQ	1,832,900 pounds
Total	18,329,000 pounds

The 2005/06 Bristol Bay red king crab fishery will open at 12:00 NOON on October 15 and will remain open through January 15, 2006. 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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New regulations require proof of a current valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Commercial Fisheries Safety Decal 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: Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, (907) 581-6738, and Kodiak, (907) 654-5588.

Preseason gear inspections will be available in Dutch Harbor beginning on October 10, 2005 and in Akutan, King Cove and False Pass beginning on October 11, 2005. Vessel registration will begin on the morning of October 14, 2005. An individual holding a current 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 and 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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