

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



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**BERING SEA SNOW CRAB
SEASON 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 2012/2013 total allowable catch (TAC) is based on abundance and biomass estimates from the NMFS stock assessment model.

The 2012/2013 model population estimate of total mature biomass for Bering Sea snow crab is 1,134 million pounds. The TAC for 2012/2013 Bering Sea District snow crab fishery is 66.350 million pounds and is apportioned as follows:

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)	59,715,000 pounds
Community Development Quota (CDQ)	6,635,000 pounds
Total	66,350,000 pounds

The 2012/2013 Bering Sea snow crab fishery will open in Bering Sea District waters west of 166° W longitude at 12:00 noon October 15, 2012 and will remain open through May 15, 2013 in the Eastern Subdistrict and through May 31, 2013 in the Western Subdistrict.

To protect the Pribilof blue king crab stock, the snow crab fishery will not open in waters enclosed by connecting the following coordinates: 56°30' N lat, 170° W long; 56°30', 169° W long; 57° N lat, 168° W long; 57°30' N lat, 168° W long; 57°30' N lat, 167° W long; 58°30' N lat, 167° W long; 58°30' N lat, 168° W long; 58° N lat, 168° W long; 58° N lat, 170° W long; 57°30' N lat, 170° W long; 57°30' N lat, 171° W long; 57° N lat, 171° W long; 56°30' N lat, 170° W long.

The associated closed ADF&G statistical areas are: 675730, 675800, 685730, 695730, 685700, 695700, 695701, 705701, 705703, 695631, 695632, the northeast half of 705630, and the northwest half of 685630.

A valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Commercial Fisheries Vessel Safety Decal is required before a vessel registration is issued. Vessels must also have an activated vessel monitoring system (VMS) 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: (907) 581-3466 ext. 1 or (907) 359-1575 (after hours).

Preseason gear inspections will be available beginning Thursday, October 11, 2012 in Dutch Harbor, Akutan and King Cove. Vessel registration will begin on the morning of October 14, 2012. An individual holding a current Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bering Sea Tanner crab interim use permit card (T91Q or T09Q) must be present during registration. Vessel operators may participate concurrently in IFQ and CDQ fisheries, but a separate registration and CFEC permit card are required for each fishery. At the time of registration, all pots onboard the vessel and in wet storage must be in compliance with current Bering Sea commercial Tanner crab fishing regulations.

There is no pot limit or buoy tag requirement for the Bering Sea snow crab fishery. Vessel operators may register up to 20 groundfish pots. Vessel operators may register gear operation cooperatives with other registered vessels. 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 is deployed. A vessel operator may make a one-time transfer of all pot gear to another vessel operator at the completion of fishing operations.

Vessel operators must notify ADF&G within 72 hours of completing fishing operations in a registration area or when departing the registration area with gear in long-term storage or transferred to another vessel. 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 14 days. 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 contact the ADF&G in Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239 or in Kodiak at (907) 486-1840.

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