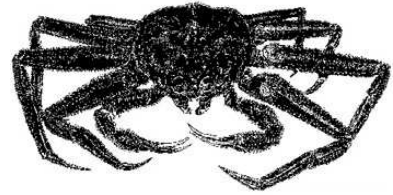


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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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. Abundance and biomass estimates were made using area-swept and assessment model techniques.

The total mature biomass (TMB) of male and female snow crabs in the Bering Sea is estimated to be above the harvest strategy minimum threshold for a fishery opening. The 2007/08 snow crab total allowable catch (TAC) is summarized as follows:

| | |
|-------|-------------------|
| IFQ | 56,730,600 pounds |
| CDQ | 6,303,400 pounds |
| Total | 63,034,000 pounds |

The 2007/08 snow crab TAC was calculated using an exploitation rate of 16.68% applied to the mature male biomass of 377.9 million pounds.

The 2007/08 Bering Sea snow crab fishery will open at 12:00 noon October 15, 2007 and will remain open through May 15, 2008 in the Eastern Subdistrict and through May 31, 2008 in the Western Subdistrict. The snow crab fishery is open in waters of the Bering Sea District west of 166° W long., except for waters enclosed by 168° W long. to 170° W long. and 57° N lat. to 58° N lat. (ADF&G statistical areas 685700, 685730, 695700, and 695730) will be closed to commercial fishing for Tanner and snow crabs to protect the Pribilof blue king crab stock. The majority of blue king crabs captured during the 2007 survey were found in this area.

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.

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: 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 10, 2007. Vessel registration will begin at 12:00 noon on October 13, 2007. An individual holding a current Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bering Sea Tanner crab interim use permit card (T91Q or T09Q) 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 Bering Sea commercial snow 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 may harvest Tanner crab west TAC and snow crab concurrently. Each vessel operator is restricted to a single species allocation of crab pot gear (450 pots) and must designate at the time of registration the quantity of pot gear registered and the quantity of pot gear configured for each species.

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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