

Division of Commercial Fisheries
Sam Rabung, Director

Headquarters Office
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: February 7, 2020

CONTACT: Jim Menard
Norton Sound Area Manager
(907) 443-5167 (800) 560-2271

Update On Norton Sound Winter Commercial Crab Fishery

At present there is no buyer for the Norton Sound winter commercial crab fishery. Therefore, the department will wait to open the winter commercial crab season pending buyer interest or interest from crab permit holders intending to be catcher-sellers.

Crab permit holders can contact the Fish and Game office in Nome at 443-5167 or 1-800-560-2271 for information on becoming a catcher-seller and to express their interest in commercial crabbing this winter.

Commercial permit holders need to be in possession of a catcher-seller permit and registered as a catcher-seller at the Nome Fish & Game office before they can sell crab to the public.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) recently set the 2020 Norton Sound red king crab legal male biomass (LMB) estimate, allowable biological catch (ABC) and overfishing limit (OFL) level. Guideline harvest levels (GHL) are set based on LMB and must be kept sufficiently below the ABC to accommodate all other sources of fishery-related mortality.

The department has set a preliminary harvest rate of 7% of the LMB of 2.43 million pounds red king crab fishery yielding a total commercial GHL of 170,100 pounds. This level of commercial harvest allows a buffer of approximately 31,000 pounds, from the ABC of 201,000 pounds, to account for subsistence harvests and incidental mortality of non-target crab discards.

The GHL for the winter commercial red king crab fishery is 8% of the total commercial GHL and is 13,608 pounds. Crab pots in the winter commercial crab fishery must be set through the ice.

The department will announce more than two weeks in advance the season start date to allow commercial permit holders to remove any subsistence crab pots that are fishing. Regulations require those intending to participate in the commercial crab fishery to stop subsistence crabbing two weeks before the season start date.

Subsistence crabbers are reminded a Norton Sound subsistence crab permit is required to subsistence crab from the southern boundary of Cape Romanzof to northern boundary at 66 degrees N latitude near Shishmaref. Permits can be obtained at the Nome Fish and Game office or mailed out to village residents.