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Advisory Announcement

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2020/21 Preseason Vessel Registration for Bristol Bay Red King Crab, Eastern and Western Bering Sea Tanner Crab, and Bering Sea Snow Crab Fisheries

Preseason vessel registration for the 2020/21 Bristol Bay red king crab, Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab, Western Bering Sea Tanner crab, and Bering Sea snow crab fisheries begins August 17, 2020. Total allowable catches (TAC) will be announced in subsequent news releases in early October. Announcement of preseason vessel registration does not imply a fishery will open during the 2020/21 season.

One preseason vessel registration form will be filled out for all fisheries a vessel will participate in. Registration port signifies the location of the vessel at the time of registration for a fishery, not at the time the preseason registration form is filled out. Primary delivery location is the processor and port where most of the vessel's deliveries for a fishery will occur. The completed form should be submitted to the Dutch Harbor office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) via email (dfg.dutchharbor@alaska.gov), fax (907-581-1572), or in person. It must be received no later than September 24, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. A Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit card is not required to preseason register.

The preseason vessel registration form and lists of vessels that have preseason registered for each fishery may be accessed online: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/cfregion4/dynamic/shellfish/management/vesreg/index>.

Vessels preseason registered for Bristol Bay red king crab, Eastern and Western Bering Sea Tanner, and Bering Sea snow crab fisheries will be listed in a random-ordered roster by fishery. These vessels will be chosen from the top of the roster for observer coverage to achieve target level of coverage in each fishery. Vessels selected to carry observers will be announced via news release in late September. Catcher vessel observer coverage for these fisheries is contracted and paid for by ADF&G.

Selected catcher vessels will be required to carry an observer during 100 percent of fishing operations. In addition to the list of catcher vessels selected to carry an observer, ADF&G will generate a list of alternate catcher vessels for observer coverage for each fishery. If the alternate list is exhausted during a fishery, all vessels that are actively fishing may be considered. **For the 2020/21 crab seasons, ADF&G has modified observer deployment plans to reduce COVID-19 exposure risks while still attempting to meet minimum stock assessment data needs. To accommodate revised deployment strategies, all vessels initially placed on the alternate selection list should be advised they have a higher likelihood of being selected to carry an observer. Additional details on final observer deployment plans will be provided at the time vessel selection lists are published.**

Observers for catcher vessels will be provided by the state-contracted observer company, Saltwater Inc. Vessel captains of selected catcher vessels are responsible for contacting Saltwater Inc. to provide their vessel fishing plans and coordinate observer coverage. Saltwater Inc. may be contacted at (907) 539-2548. **Failure to provide a minimum of 10 days prior notice may delay fishing operations.**

Each crab processing vessel is required to carry a crab observer during 100 percent of the vessel's crab processing operations. Bering Sea crab processing vessels must arrange and pay for their observer coverage. However, catcher-processor vessels may receive reimbursement from ADF&G for 20 percent of their observer cost for Bristol Bay red king crab, and 30 percent of observer costs for Bering Sea snow and Tanner crab fisheries.

All vessels must provide proof of compliance with United States Coast Guard (USCG) vessel safety requirements. USCG dockside examinations are available in Seattle, Kodiak, and Dutch Harbor.

For vessels that carry observers, some of the regulatory requirements for the vessel operator include:

- Provide adequate food and accommodations for the observer equal to those provided for the vessel's crew;
- Provide to the observer daily catch information for each string of fishing gear including areas fished, number of crab retained, pot locations, number of pots pulled, and other information specified by ADF&G;
- Provide a safe work area and necessary gear, including five totes for the observer to use at all times for sampling;
- Assure observer access to single side band (SSB) radio, email, or telephone.

For further information, please contact the ADF&G office in Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239 for questions regarding vessel registration, or Bo Whiteside (907) 486-1854 for questions regarding observer coverage.

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>

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