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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release:

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Contact:

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2023/24 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 2023/24 Bristol Bay red king crab, Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab, Western Bering Sea Tanner crab, and Bering Sea snow crab fisheries begins August 18, 2023. Preseason vessel registration is necessary to determine the number of observers needed to meet fishery coverage goals and does not imply a fishery will open during the 2023/24 season. Total allowable catches (TAC) will be announced by subsequent Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) advisory announcements in early October.

Completed preseason registration forms should be submitted to ADF&G offices in Dutch Harbor or Kodiak via email, fax, or in person. Registrations must be received no later than September 24, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Only one preseason registration form is needed for each vessel. A Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit card is not required to preseason register. The preseason vessel registration form and lists of vessels preseason registered for each fishery may be accessed online: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/cfregion4/dynamic/shellfish/management/vesreg/index>.

For the 2023/24 crab season, ADF&G has modified the vessel selection plan for the Bristol Bay red king crab, Bering Sea snow, Eastern and Western Bairdi Tanner crab fisheries. To ensure observer coverage goals are met, all vessels pre-season registered for these fisheries will be selected for observer coverage. It is the responsibility of the vessel captain to contact Saltwater, Inc. at (907)539-2548 to arrange for observer coverage, to include if you choose not to participate in 2023/24 fisheries. Failure to provide a minimum of 10 days advance notice prior to vessel departure may delay fishing operations or result in enforcement action. Observer coverage waivers will not be issued if an observer is not available due to lack of sufficient notice.

Although all vessels will be selected to carry an observer, observer coverage waivers will be issued based on observer availability and the percentage of active vessels already covered when individual vessel fishing plans are declared with Saltwater, Inc. Full selection will ensure an adequate number of vessels will be available to carry an observer should fleet consolidation occur. ADF&G expects to deploy observers in 2023/24 at rates consistent with past years: 20 percent vessel coverage for Bristol Bay red king crab, 30 percent vessel coverage for snow crab, and 30-100 percent vessel coverage for Tanner crab. If selected, catcher vessels will be required to carry an observer during 100 percent of their fishing operations. Catcher vessel observer coverage for these fisheries is contracted and paid for by ADF&G.

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.

Prior to departing with an observer onboard, 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, noteworthy regulatory requirements also 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 ADF&G in Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239.

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