

**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 2013/14 total allowable catch (TAC) is based on model-predicted survey values for biomass and abundance from the 2013 NMFS stock assessment model. The 2013/14 Bering Sea snow crab fishery will open in Bering Sea District waters west of 166° W longitude at 12:00 (noon) October 15, 2013 and will remain open through May 15, 2014 in the Eastern Subdistrict and through May 31, 2014 in the Western Subdistrict.

Due to shutdown of the federal government, NMFS has announced that issuance of individual fishing and processing quotas (IFQ and IPQ) may be delayed. Community development quota (CDQ) permits are issued by ADF&G and will therefore not be delayed.

The TAC for 2013/14 Bering Sea District snow crab fishery is 53.983 million pounds and is allocated as follows:

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)	48,584,700 pounds
Community Development Quota (CDQ)	5,398,300 pounds
Total	53,983,000 pounds

Tanner crab IFQ or CDQ may be retained up to five percent of the weight of snow crab onboard a vessel registered for the Bering Sea snow crab fishery. In the directed Tanner crab fishery west of 166° W long, snow crab IFQ or CDQ may be retained up to five percent of the weight of Tanner crab onboard a vessel registered for the Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery.

To protect the Pribilof blue king crab stock, the Bering Sea 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.

A second closed area is added for the 2013/14 season to also protect the Pribilof blue king crab stock. The Bering Sea snow crab fishery will not open in waters enclosed by connecting the following coordinates: 58°39' N lat, 173° W long; 58°39' N lat, 175° W long; 58°30' N lat, 175° W long; 58°30' N lat, 173° 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, the northwest half of 685630, and the portions of 735830 and 745830 that are south of 58°39' N lat.

A valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Commercial Fisheries Vessel Safety Decal is required before a vessel registration may be 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. 2205 or (907) 359-1575 (after hours).

At the time of registration, all pots onboard the vessel and in wet storage must be in compliance with current Bering Sea commercial snow crab fishing regulations. There are no pot limits or buoy tag requirements 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.

Preseason gear inspections will be available beginning Thursday, October 10, 2013 in Dutch Harbor and Akutan and beginning Friday, October 11, 2013 in King Cove. Vessel registration will begin at 12:00 (noon) on Monday, October 13, 2013. 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.

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.

When NOAA Fisheries RAM Division operations resume, IFQ/IPQ inquiries should be directed to NOAA Fisheries RAM Division at 1-800-304-4846 (option #2). NOAA Office of Law Enforcement in Kodiak is operational during the federal government shutdown and may be contacted regarding federal Crab Rationalization Program regulations at (907) 486-3298.

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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