

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



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner  
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### **NORTON SOUND KING CRAB COMMERCIAL FISHERY TO OPEN**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will open the Norton Sound king crab summer commercial open access and CDQ fisheries on Wednesday June 25, at 12:00 noon.

The department estimates a legal male red king crab biomass of 3.19 million pounds in Norton Sound. By Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) regulation an exploitation rate not to exceed 15% is allowed when the legal male biomass exceeds 3.0 million pounds. The department has set the exploitation rate at 12% for the 2014 summer season. Therefore, the summer commercial fishery king crab quota will be 382,800 pounds. Of this amount, 7.5 percent (28,710 pounds) is allocated for the CDQ fishery, with 354,090 pounds set for the open access portion of the fishery.

A proposal adopted by the BOF at their March meeting now allows male *Paralithodes brevipes*, known commonly as Hanasaki or "spiny" king crab, four and three-quarter inches or greater in shell width, to be retained in the commercial catch along with blue king crab (five inches or greater in shell width) and red king crab. It is anticipated that adoption of this proposal will facilitate collection of data regarding relative abundance, distribution and life history for this species by the department and industry and initiate development of markets. These data in turn will eventually be used to develop a management plan for Hanasaki crab.

As in the past two years, onboard observers will be available to collect valuable fishery data at sea. The department greatly appreciates those fishermen willing to take an onboard observer. Starting July 1, if you are interested in taking an onboard observer, who can also help out as a crewmember, please contact our research department at 443-8184 or 443-8185.

Crabbers (including catcher-sellers) are strongly advised to make sure they have a buyer before setting their pots, so as to avoid deadloss and wastage. All deadloss and crabs kept for personal use must be recorded on fish tickets in addition to sold crab.

King crab permit holders will need to register for the fishery in which they are participating and receive pot tags. Crab pot tags must be on the main buoy or trailer buoy if there is more than one buoy per pot. All commercial crab pots must have four escapement rings, with a minimum inside diameter of four and one-half inches, within one mesh measurement from the bottom of the pot. An exception to the escapement ring requirement is if at least one half of one vertical surface of a square pot, or sloping side-wall surface of a conical or pyramid pot, is composed of not less than six and one-half inch stretched mesh. The escapement

mechanism regulation requires crab pots to have an opening 18 inches or greater in length. This opening must be within six inches of the bottom of the pot and must be parallel with it. The opening must be laced, sewn, or secured together by a single length of untreated, 100 percent cotton twine, no larger than 30 thread.

Crabbers are reminded to have their commercial permit and picture ID on hand when fishing. Commercial crab boats must have a Fish & Game vessel license and 2014 Fish & Game triangle on the boat. All helpers on commercial fishing boats are required to have a crewmember license, or a 2014 State of Alaska commercial fishing permit can substitute for a crewmember license.

For any questions regarding fishing please call Fish & Game in Nome at 443-5167 or 1-800-560-2271.

Good Luck and Good Crabbing.