

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



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner*

*Forrest Bowers, Acting Director*



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**Contact:**

Miranda Westphal, BSAI Asst. Area Management Biologist  
Heather Fitch, BSAI Area Management Biologist  
Phone: (907) 581-1239  
Fax: (907) 581-1572

Dutch Harbor Office  
P.O. Box 920587  
Dutch Harbor, AK. 99692

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**BRISTOL BAY RED KING 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 2015 NMFS trawl survey results for Bristol Bay red king crab. The 2015/16 Bristol Bay red king crab total allowable catch (TAC) is 9.974 million pounds and the fishing season will open October 15, 2015 at 12:00 noon and remain open through January 15, 2016. The 2015/16 TAC is apportioned as follows:

|                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)    | 8,976,600 pounds |
| Community Development Quota (CDQ) | 997,400 pounds   |
| Total                             | 9,974,000 pounds |

Abundance estimates are from the ADF&G length-based assessment model. The Bristol Bay red king crab mature female abundance is over the harvest strategy threshold of 8.4 million crab and the 2015 effective spawning biomass (ESB) of 46.5 million pounds is over the threshold of 14.5 million pounds. The 2015 ESB estimate is less than 55.0 million pounds but greater than 34.75 million pounds; therefore, a 12.5% exploitation rate is applied to the estimated mature male abundance of 12.4 million crab. The 2015/16 TAC includes a deduction based on estimated handling mortality rate of 3.2% due to at-sea discarding of legal-sized male red king crab during the 2014/15 season.

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 or (907) 359-1575 (after hours).

At the time of vessel registration, all pots onboard the vessel and in wet storage must be in compliance with current Bristol Bay red king crab fishing regulations. There is no crab pot limit or buoy tag requirement for the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery; however, vessel operators may register no more than 10 groundfish pots for bait.

A vessel operator may transport crab pot gear to the fishing grounds for another vessel operator. The registered vessel operator of the crab pot gear has seven days to be active in the registration area where the gear is deployed. Vessel operators may register for gear operation cooperatives, and, 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 October 9, 2015 in Dutch Harbor and October 10 in King Cove and Akutan. Vessel registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. October 14, 2015. An individual holding a current Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bristol Bay king crab interim use permit card (K91T or K09T) 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 and CDQ group.

Vessel operators must notify ADF&G within 72 hours of completing fishing operations in the registration area or when departing the registration area with gear in long-term storage or transferred to another vessel. Unbaited gear with doors open may be stored for up to 14 days outside of designated storage areas after fishing is completed. 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.

For questions regarding issuance of quota share and IFQ/IPQ, contact NOAA Fisheries RAM Division at 1-800-304-4846 (option #2). For questions regarding federal Crab Rationalization Program regulations, contact NOAA Fisheries Sustainable Fisheries Division at (907) 586-7228 or the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement in Kodiak at (907) 486-3298 or Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-2061.

For further information contact ADF&G Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239, or ADF&G Kodiak at (907) 486-1840.

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