

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



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner  
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**NORTON SOUND RED KING CRAB FISHERY AMENDED UPDATE**

The Crab Planning Team (CPT) recently made recommendations for 2018 Norton Sound red king crab allowable biological catch (ABC) and over fishing limit (OFL) levels, as well as a legal male biomass (LMB) forecast.

The guideline harvest level (GHL) for commercial harvest is set by the department based on the LMB forecast and sources of fishery-related mortality (subsistence harvests, commercial harvests, and discard mortality) must be kept below the ABC.

If the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) accepts the ABC and OFL recommended by the CPT, the department will allow a commercial harvest rate of 9.0% of the LMB yielding a total commercial GHL of 319,400 pounds. This GHL is tentative, pending decisions by the NPFMC at its February meeting. This level of commercial harvest allows a buffer of approximately 30,000 pounds, from the ABC of 350,000 pounds, to account for non-commercial harvests and incidental mortality of non-target crab discards. Total estimated harvest, including the anticipated combined winter and summer subsistence harvest (10,000–20,000 pounds), is expected to be between 3–6% below the ABC. This management approach is consistent with the 2017 season when overall combined harvest (winter commercial + summer commercial + subsistence) was approximately 6% below the ABC.

By regulation 8% of the GHL is allocated to the winter commercial fishery resulting in a potential 25,553 pound harvest. The Community Development Quota (CDQ) fishery is allocated 7.5% by regulation resulting in a potential 23,956 pound harvest. The remainder of the GHL goes to the summer open-access commercial crab fishery.

The department plans to open the winter commercial crab fishery during the first or second week of March. Anyone planning to commercial crab this winter is reminded that they cannot participate in subsistence crab fishing two weeks prior to the start of the winter commercial crab season or any time during the winter commercial crab season. In mid-February the department will announce a start date for the commercial crab fishery and commercial permit holders can then register for the fishery and receive their crab pot tags at the Fish & Game office in Nome or village residents can call 1-800-560-2271 to register and have their crab pot tags sent to them.