

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



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**BRISTOL BAY RED KING CRAB
SEASON OPENS OCTOBER 15
TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH ANNOUNCED**

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have completed analysis of NMFS trawl survey data for Bristol Bay red king crab. The 2012/2013 total allowable catch (TAC) is based on abundance and biomass estimates from the ADF&G length-based analysis model.

The Bristol Bay red king crab mature female abundance is over the threshold of 8.4 million crab and the effective spawning biomass (ESB) is over the threshold of 14.5 million pounds. The 2012 Bristol Bay red king crab ESB is estimated to be 44.2 million pounds.

The ESB estimate is less than 55.0 million pounds but greater than 34.75 million pounds, therefore a 12.5 percent exploitation rate is applied to the estimated mature male abundance of 9.6 million crab. The TAC for the 2012/2013 season is 7.853 million pounds and is apportioned as follows:

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)	7,067,700 pounds
Community Development Quota (CDQ)	785,300 pounds
Total	7,853,000 pounds

The 2012/2013 Bristol Bay red king crab fishery will open on October 15, 2012 at 12:00 noon and will remain open through January 15, 2013.

The Bristol Bay red king crab fishery will not open in waters enclosed by 167° W longitude to 168° W longitude and 57°30' N latitude to 58°30' N latitude (ADF&G statistical areas 675730 and 675800) to protect Pribilof blue king crab. Blue king crab were captured during the 2012 survey in this area.

A valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Commercial Fisheries Vessel Safety Decal is required before a vessel registration is 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. 1 or (907) 359-1575 (after hours).

Preseason gear inspections will be available beginning Thursday, October 11, 2012 in Dutch Harbor, Akutan and King Cove. Vessel registration will begin on the morning of October 14, 2012. An individual holding a 2012 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bristol Bay red 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. At the time of registration, all pots onboard the vessel and in wet storage must be in compliance with current Bristol Bay commercial red king crab fishing regulations.

There is no pot limit or buoy tag requirement for the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery. Vessel operators may register up to 10 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.

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.

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 in Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239 or in Kodiak at (907) 486-1840.

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