

Division of Commercial Fisheries
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Advisory Announcement

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Norton Sound 2021 Winter Commercial Crab Fishery Opens February 1

The winter commercial crab fishery will open by regulation on Monday, February 1. At present there are no buyers for the commercial crab season. Because there are no buyers, any participating commercial crab permit holders will need to have their own market and outlet for their catch through other legal means like a catcher-seller permit or other direct marketing program. All crabbers must contact the Nome Fish & Game office to register their catcher-seller or other direct marketing permits before they can sell crab to the public.

Catcher-seller and direct marketer application forms can be picked at the Nome Fish & Game office or can be obtained online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.main

Commercial crab permit holders must register at the Fish & Game office in Nome and receive crab pot tags before crabbing. Village residents can call 1-800-560-2271 to register and crab pot tags will be sent via local airlines.

Those assisting in the commercial fishery must be in possession of a 2021 commercial crewmember license or a 2021 State of Alaska commercial fishery permit for any fishery can substitute. Crewmember licenses are available at the Nome Fish & Game office or can be bought online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/Store/

The preliminary estimate of the legal male biomass (LMB) by the Crab Planning Team (CPT) is over 3 million pounds. Once the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) finalizes the LMB, and the overfishing limit (OFL) and allowable biological catch (ABC) the department will set the guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2021 summer and winter commercial crab season.

By regulation, the GHL for the winter commercial red king crab fishery is 8% of the total commercial GHL.

Crab pots in the winter commercial crab fishery must be set through the ice and regulations require those intending to participate in the commercial crab fishery to stop subsistence crabbing 7 days before the season start date. Therefore, anyone intending to participate in the winter commercial fishery as a permit holder or crewmember must stop subsistence crabbing before January 25.

The warmer weather this year has resulted in thinner ice and as always caution is advised.

Good Luck, Good Crabbing and Be Safe Out There.