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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: February 17, 2023

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Norton Sound Commercial Red King Crab Fishery Guideline Harvest Level Set

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) met February 9, 2023, and adopted overfishing limit (OFL) and allowable biological catch (ABC) for Norton Sound red king crab.

The total catch OFL was set at 680,000 pounds with an ABC of 480,000 pounds. The OFL and ABC include both retained and discarded catch. The retained portion of the ABC is 450,000 pounds. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates legal male biomass (LMB) to be 4.36 million pounds.

The guideline harvest level (GHL) is set as a percentage of the LMB and must be set so that total removals remain below the ABC.

The department has set the harvest at 9% of the LMB yielding a total commercial GHL for red king crab of 392,500 pounds. This level of retained commercial harvest allows for a buffer of over 57,000 pounds before the retained ABC is exceeded.

By regulation, the GHL for the winter commercial red king crab fishery is 8% of the total commercial GHL and will be 31,400 pounds. Additionally, 29,438 pounds of red king crab commercial GHL (7.5% of the GHL) is allocated to the Community Development Quota fishery.

At present there are 5 permit holders registered for the winter commercial crab fishery. Currently no buyer is registered in Norton Sound for the winter commercial crab fishery. Permit holders can sell crab with a catcher-seller code plate or as a direct marketer.

Commercial crab permit holders must register at the Fish & Game office in Nome to 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.

Catcher-seller 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

Those assisting a commercial permit holder must be in possession of a 2023 commercial crewmember license or a 2023 State of Alaska commercial fishing 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/

Good Luck and Be Safe Out There.