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Advisory Announcement
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Norton Sound Commercial Red King Crab Fishery Guideline Harvest Level Set

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) met in December 2025 and adopted an overfishing level (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) for Norton Sound red king crab.

The total catch OFL was set at 426,000 pounds with an ABC of 298,000 pounds. The OFL and ABC include both retained and discarded catch. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates legal male biomass (LMB) to be 3.18 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 8.4% of the LMB yielding a total commercial GHL for red king crab of 268,000 pounds, a reduction of 65% from 2025.

By regulation, the GHL for the winter commercial red king crab fishery is 8% of the total commercial GHL and will be 21,440 pounds. Additionally, 7.5% of the commercial GHL is allocated to the Community Development Quota fishery and will be set at 20,100 pounds of red king crab.

Participation in this fishery requires a 2026 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit for king crab in Norton Sound. Participants must register at the ADF&G office in Nome to receive pot tags prior to starting crabbing operations. Village residents can call 1-800-560-2271 to register and crab pot tags will be sent via local airlines.

At present there are no permit holders, or buyers, registered for the winter commercial crab fishery. If no buyer registers for the fishery, permit holders must utilize one of the State of Alaska self-marketing programs to sell crab (i.e. registered catcher-seller, direct marketer, etc.). The Norton Sound Section of the Northern District will open to commercial red king crab fishing through the ice at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, February 1, by regulation. Fishermen wanting to participate in the commercial fishery must deregister as a subsistence fisherman and have all their gear removed from the water by Sunday, January 18.

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 2026 commercial crewmember license or a 2026 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/.