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Advisory Announcement
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Kotzebue Sound 2026 Summer Commercial Crab Fishery Opens June 15

The Kotzebue summer commercial red king crab fishery will open 12:00 noon Monday, June 15, 2024, under authority of **5 AAC 34.910 (f)(1)(A)(i) Fishing seasons for Registration Area Q**. The Guideline Harvest Level for the 2026 season is 10,000 pounds of red king crab and is not expected to have an impact on subsistence. This opening is for state waters only. Federal waters, those waters outside of three miles from shore, are closed to commercial fishing. Any gear set must be wholly inside of state waters to be legally fished. Pots are limited to 50 pots for vessels more than 125 feet in length and 40 pots for vessels under 125 feet or less in length (**5 AAC 34.925 Lawful gear for Registration Area Q**).

At present, no buyers have registered for the summer commercial crab season in the Kotzebue District. Participating commercial crab permit holders will need their own market (i.e. a catcher-seller permit or other direct marketing program). All crabbers intending to commercially fish for red king crab must contact the Kotzebue or 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 also be picked up at the Kotzebue or Nome Fish & Game offices 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 Kotzebue or Nome to receive crab pot tags before fishing.

Those assisting in the commercial fishery must be in possession of a 2026 commercial crewmember license or a 2026 State of Alaska commercial fishery permit for any fishery can substitute. Crewmember licenses are available at the Kotzebue or Nome Fish & Game office or can be bought online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/Store/

Fishermen intending to participate in the commercial crab fishery must stop subsistence or commercial pot fishing 14 days before the season start date. Therefore, anyone intending to participate in the commercial crab fishery as a permit holder or crewmember must stop any other pot fishing by June 1, 2026, and remove those pots from the water.