

Snow crab fishing is to be regulated

The Ministry has sent a proposal for consultation regarding a general prohibition on harvesting snow crab in the entire Norwegian jurisdictional area, including the Fishery Protection Zone around Svalbard.

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The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries will prepare a management plan for snow crab, and will not issue acquisition licences based solely on snow crab fishing.

The Ministry has sent a proposal for consultation regarding a general prohibition on harvesting snow crab in the entire Norwegian jurisdictional area, including the Fishery Protection Zone around Svalbard, writes fiskebat.no.

The prohibition also applies to Norwegian vessels in international waters. The consultation deadline is set for 10 December 2014.

The Ministry proposes that exemption from the prohibition be granted on conditions laid down by the Directorate of Fisheries. The intention is not to exclude vessels that have already established themselves in the snow crab fishery, nor new actors that have an acquisition licence.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries has further decided that vessels over 15 metres in length without any other basis for operations will not receive an acquisition licence to fish for snow crab. This instruction will apply to applications that are submitted after Friday 24 October.

The management of snow crab is likely to be a topic at the annual meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission NEAFC in 14 days' time.

According to Russian researchers, the snow crab population in the Barents Sea is ten times larger than the red king crab population. It is most widespread at Goose Bank on the Russian side of the maritime delimitation line, but is being increasingly recorded in the Norwegian part of the Barents Sea, and the Ministry is reporting increasing interest in harvesting snow crab from Norwegian and foreign actors. At the same time, the Ministry is receiving reports on area and fishing gear conflicts between crab fishing and other fishing activities.