

Air Station Jayhawk Crew Heading for Cold Bay

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

An Air Station Kodiak helicopter crew and support personnel are scheduled to head off for Cold Bay on Saturday, in preparation for the Opilio crabbing season. It's a move the Coast Guard does seasonally to respond to maritime emergencies quicker.

It's a return trip for the Jayhawk crews, who spent most of October and November in Cold Bay during the red king crab fishery.

An MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and crew from Air Station Kodiak is also being deployed on the Coast Guard Cutter Morgenthau, which is homeported in Honolulu, but is currently patrolling the Bering Sea.

Lieutenant Commander Doug Watson, of the Coast Guard 17th District response management department, says forward-locating helicopters in Cold Bay cuts two hours or more off response time in event of a mayday call.

The Opilio crab season opened October 15th, but processors are scheduled to begin accepting Opilio crab deliveries Saturday. Fishermen have a quota of just less than 54-million pounds.