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To: Bil Homka, Marjorie Veeder, Michelle Price, Mayor, and City Council Members

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: Fishery Activities Memo, and Fishery Articles for the week.

On Tuesday May 23rd I attended the State of Alaska Bycatch Council meeting via zoom for two hours. This 6-member panel takes direction from the Commissioner of ADFG and will meet 4-5 times a year. This was the Bycatch Council third meeting; they started the meeting with a quick review of the groups mission statement no changes were made. They then moved into a Bycatch Resource Presentations from staff of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The bycatch council was advised of the resources available from each agency on bycatch information on their web pages, tracking and bycatch data the resources and responsibilities each organization has on enforcement and monitoring.

The Council then moved on to a discussion on ideas and feasibility on State engagement issues 1-2. The engagement issues are stated below.

1. The State of Alaska should establish a process for providing bycatch-related information and resources for Alaskans in a format that is understandable and easily accessible. Website development with bycatch-related links, as well as bycatch informational forums and other forms of outreach are recommended.

2. State of Alaska federal fisheries staff should continue to offer the public an opportunity to provide input on NPFMC issues before each NPFMC meeting. Consideration should be given to additional methods to seek input from stakeholders, tribal entities, and communities on bycatch issues.

The bycatch councilmembers discussed a whole host of ideas, such as the ADFG Commission Vincent -Lange doing an opinion piece to all the main Alaska and West Coast fishery magazines on the work of the Bycatch Council and what current issues are in play as it pertains to bycatch issues. Come up with a definition for bycatch and what its true meaning is. Look into a few members traveling to various fishing communities to speak about various events. A public comment from a Kodiak harvester stated that Tanners Crab bycatch issues in the Gulf of Alaska needed attention by the bycatch council. It was also discussed. They also discussed the development of a calendar or roadmap that could be used for when various fisheries open and close and what fisheries are under state and federal jurisdiction. The Council still needs to further

develop their priorities in the fall. They had various members that were given assignments on developing outlines on various fisheries on what has been developed to reduce bycatch, in both federal and state fisheries and what other ideas are under development to further reduce bycatch that will be shared with the public. The Council will meet again in mid-September.

Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF) Board of Directors meeting on Friday May 26th, 2023. I attended via zoom, after the minutes were approved we moved into a discussion on the financials Executive Director Scott Goodman, was pleased to announce that we received the federal and state funds in the amount of \$766K which was used to replenish the BSFRF reserves funds that was used to pay for the expenses for the two crab boats we had under charter for the March crab survey and tagging work for 30 days. The BSFRF is doing fine even with the lack of funding from the crab fleet due to closure of the two main fisheries Snow Crab and Red King Crab, we have close to \$1.3 million in reserves, and we expect to see \$2.7 million in federal research funding arriving soon.

Scott updates us on the BSFRF Open House Research Sharing Open House held in Ballard where they discussed the March crab survey and tagging work. They also held a planning session on future crab research projects and asked for input from harvesters and processors. The Open house wasn't well attended and 25 people showed up for the afternoon event.

We moved on and received an update on the NPFMC Crab Plan meeting and an update from Scott on his trip to Kodiak to meet with ADFG and NMFS staff. The Crab Plan team met in Juneau at NMFS headquarters. It allowed Scott time for good meetings with NMFS management on the upcoming work being planned for by the BSFRF and for the foundation to get input from NMFS. The Plan team meeting was uneventful the team made recommendations to the NPFMC on the OFL and ABC amounts on Aleutian Island Golden King Crab, Pribilof Island Golden King Crab, and on Western Aleutian Island Red King Crab which hasn't opened in almost 30 years. They also reviewed and worked on various crab models. The Kodiak trip was to touch bases with NMFS and ADFG on the next steps on crab research projects by the foundation and to get input by Kodiak NMFS and ADFG staff that are heavily involved in research, survey tagging studies, and what areas they think should be prioritized.

The BSFRF in house science team met last week they discussed Commerce Dept research funding applications, and research framework ideas for the \$2.75 research funding options in progress to revise. Scott is also working on Opilio (Snow Crab) Tanner Crab Road map, the strategy summary on preferred size reduction to 3.75 inches, from 4 inches. He is looking at exploration rates and comparisons on various sizes, the preferred size in Eastern Canada on snow crab is 3.75 inches. He stated that the BSFRF is still working on bycatch research with the North Pacific Council and

Trident Seafoods. We also received a Bairdi Tanner crab research update and funding that is coming from the 2019 Tanner Crab Disaster federal dollars \$2.75 million, and the foundation is stay involved in the large crab disaster funding request of \$191 million dollars that is still at least a year out and is hopeful of a large amount for research. The meeting adjourned at noon on Friday.

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. Fishery Activity Memo
2. NMFS Bycatch Information Resource
3. Fishery Articles for the week.