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Date: July 21, 2023

To: Bil Homka, Marjorie Veeder, Clay Darnell, Michelle Price,

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

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

The Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF) met on Thursday July 21 which was the regular monthly Board of Directors meeting. After approval of the minutes from the June meeting we reviewed the June 30th financials we are in decent shape \$1.13 million in reserves no big expenses scheduled soon. We expect to receive \$2.7 million in research funding for the foundation soon from the 2019 Tanner Crab disaster funding from NOAA, which will be used for the next two years for research work on King Crab, Snow Crab, and Tanner Crab in the Bering Sea area.

We were expecting an update on the first and second legs of the Snow Crab survey work but that did not happen because of a lack of NOAA staff. We have been told the next chance for a Snow update will be at the end of July. The Board also did not receive any recent updates on Bristol Bay Red King Crab NOAA trawl survey, that work that has been completed. We were told ADFG needed more time to review the Red King Crab survey data and we should get some news in August.

The BSFRF Board approved funding Global Trust RFM crab certification program that keeps all BSAI Crab finished product with a certification on quality of product at \$17,900 for the year. And we can also fund two quarters of membership at \$21,000 to the Certified Seafood Collaborative group, which is based out of Juneau, this group took over from ASMI as a non-profit foundation led by a diverse board of seafood and sustainability industry experts, which became the owner of the Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification program. They are a third-party sustainable seafood certification program for wild capture fisheries that all of Alaska Seafood processors fund, the BSFRF funds this program for the Alaska Crab Industry.

The board was also updated on planning for research, especially the \$2.75 tanner crab disaster funding the board science team is working on recommendation on the next projects. We were also updated on bycatch research work with the trawl sectors. Scott and one other staff member may take a trip on one of Pollock trawl catcher vessels in August to learn firsthand the trawl industry catcher vessels interaction with crab bycatch in the Pollock fishery the board will approve this trip when we get cost breakdown for the trip to Unalaska or Akutan for the weeklong trip.

The BSFRF is also hoping to receive funding in the larger \$191 million Opilio and Bristol Bay Red King Crab Disaster Plan. We reviewed Scott Goodman letter to ADFG requesting funding if available, but the BSFRF did not request a set amount or percentage for the foundation.

The BSFRF then reviewed so information from a British Company that sells underwater sensors as well as cameras that would be attached to crab pots that would work at depths of eighty meters the equipment is expensive, the sensors come in at \$6,500 each, the cameras start at \$11,000 with recording devices of up to 100 hours. The interest is in how the crab gear operates with crab and Pacific Cod species. If we had this type of gear, we could make various gear changes attach the cameras and see if they reduce bycatch and how it affects the retention of the target species. This company also recommends backups on the sensors cameras to be purchased as well. We asked for more information and sample footage and in what fisheries it has been used in.

Lastly Executive Director Goodman updated the board on the ongoing work by the science committee that is working on an all-encompassing Crab Research Roadmap Strategy for Snow Crab, Tanner crab, and Red King Crab, this would include looking at exploitation comparisons of various rates, and size limits especially on Snow Crab. At Thursday meeting we discussed bringing back on are next survey and tagging work in 2024 a trawl vessel to work side by side work with the NOAA trawl vessels using the smaller netrops trawl nets that the foundation purchased from Canadian net supplier a few years ago our experience with the smaller nets they caught higher percentage of Snow, Tanner, and King Crab in the Bering Sea than does the larger NOAA nets working side by side. This smaller trawl net is used in survey work in Eastern Canada Snow crab fisheries. This would be in addition to the pot survey and tagging work which we started in 2023 which will continue. I have also include document that the BSFRF reviewed that would have to be addressed with the State of Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) if any proposed change in the preferred harvest size of Snow crab or change to the exploitation rates for the harvest would have to be addressed and approved by the BOF and supported by ADFG staff to make a change in their Snow Crab Harvest Strategy. I have included with this memo the Crab Road Map information the BSFRF board reviewed for your information.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30AM on Thursday. The BSFR board of directors will meet again in the third week of August.

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. Fishery Activity Memo
2. Crab Road Map Research Information
3. Fishery Articles for the week.