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To: Erin Reinders, Mayor Tutikoff, and Council Members

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: December Fishery Activities

This week I have attended two meetings meeting online this week so far. On Monday I attended the Alaska Fishing Communities group meeting some of the topics addressed included and overview on the issues addressed in was last week's North Pacific Council meeting. Many of the members of this group testified individually on their continuing concerns on bycatch of Halibut, Sablefish, Crab, and Herring in the trawl fisheries and the lack action by NOAA in enforcement when bycatch limits have been met. We also discussed 2021 fishing season allocations, the concern on the continued Pacific cod allocation reductions, and continued impacts to communities that process cod. The bycatch rates for FY 21 in various species and fishing sectors was discussed, once again the concern on the need for further reductions discussed and a strategy for the February North Pacific Council meeting. We had some sub- committee reports the main one of interest was the Climate committee group and the support that we can give to this committee in addressing an important issue that affects all fisheries and communities. We received and update on the development of the Alaska Communities website here is them link to check it out [www.https://alaskafishingcommunities.org](http://www.https://alaskafishingcommunities.org) and a few other issues were discussed. The group will meet again in mid -January.

Thursday morning of this week the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF) Board of Directors met. I will provide a quick overview of the major issues discussed. Financially the BSFRF is doing well even with reduced assessments from the crab fleet we still have \$1.3 million in reserves and the annual operating budget is close 700K. The was update on antitrust issues and changes that should be included in the bylaws update. The executive director gave us and update on the virtual Opilio Snow crab workshop top be held virtually on January 21-22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 it is coming together and a few more presenters need to confirm.

We were provided and update on the NOAA summer survey plans for FY21 the Alaska Fisheries Science Center director his about 80% certain that the NOAA vessels will be able to do the crab survey work. If we do not have 100% percent commitment from the agency by March 1<sup>st</sup> the BSFRF will move ahead and charter two trawlers like we have in the past years doing side by side survey working with the NOAA vessels. This work in the summer of 2021 would be done with NOAA and ADFG personal on board the

BSFRF chartered vessels. The BSFRF board felt we cannot afford and another year with no crab survey information it would cost the fleet and processors millions of dollars. We then moved on to the Red King Crab tagging study we had 50 live Red King crab delivered to the Kodiak NOAA Lab for study work. We have also signed a contract with the Saildrone group to come back up to Alaska this summer and search for the 300 Red King that were tagged with acoustic sonar tags to get the data on the movement of those crab during the past year. We hope that the tags are still functional. On another smaller research project, the foundation is doing work on various crab pot modifications to crab pots used for cod pots fishing to keep crab out of the pots to reduce crab mortality we are outfitting some pots with cameras to see hoe the modifications are working. Lastly, we had and update on the transition from the ASMI crab certification program to the new Certified Seafood Collaboration, we are awaiting the cost estimate on surveillance measures and the formula for cost sharing between the various crab harvesters and processors groups.

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. NOAA Survey Report
2. ADFG 2020 Fisheries Report
3. Fishery news article of the past week