

Frank V Kelty  
fvkelty@gmail.com  
907-268-8718

**Date:** July 22, 2020

**To:** Erin Reinders, City Manager, JR Pierson, Asst. Manager, Mayor  
Tutikoff, & Unalaska City Council Members

**From:** Frank Kelty,

**Subject:** July Activities for the week ending on 7-21-2020.

Last Thursday I attended the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation monthly meeting. The first major item on the agenda was and update on the just concluded Crab tagging project that the Foundation sponsored it wrapped up last week and the FV Provider returned to Kodiak with all the scientists on board they had great weather for the two week tagging project. They tagged just over 2,000 Bristol Bay Red King Crab in the Bering Sea with three types of tags the most important were have 300 sonar tags that we hope they will last until next year they have extra strength batteries installed that are supposed to last. We expect to get the sail drones back in the Bering Sea next year to locate them if they have not been picked up by fishing fleet. As I mention a couple of weeks ago NMFS cut in front of us to use the sail drones to do acoustic work on the Bering Sea Pollock stocks since they have no research vessels in the Bering Sea. This year's tagging project has a complete scientific group this summer they included 2 ADFG Biologists, 2 NOAA Crab Biologists, and 1 Bering Sea Research Foundation scientist. I have included some pictures of the work being done by the scientists on the FV Provider.

The next agenda item was a discussion on the ongoing planning for a Research Foundation sponsored Opilio Tanner Crab Research workshop for this fall in either Anchorage or in Seattle for the seafood industry, and NMFS and ADFG. This item has to do with the impacts of reducing the Opilio Tanner Crab (Snow Crab) harvest size limit which is 4.0 inches currently to a lower limit such as 3.8 inches or 3.75 inches. This is a controversial issue between the harvesters, processors and ADFG. The legal-size limit for mature male Opilio Tanner Crab is 3.1 inches. I have attached a one pager that lists some of the issues that would be discussed at an industry funded workshop later this year.

The last agenda item of the meeting was and update from Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) on the Certified Seafood Collaborative (CSC) of which the Research Foundation is a member of for the Bering Sea Crab Fisheries. We were update on the Certified Seafood Collaborative group as they are breaking away from ASMI and plan on going out on their own with more of an International client group for certification of seafoods products sold overseas we will see what develops with this and how it will impact the Alaska Crab fisheries.

On Tuesday afternoon I attended the Alaska Fishing Communities Coalition sub-committee on bycatch issue mostly focused on Halibut and Crab We had a good discussion on the bycatch issues we went over the issues addressed by the North Pacific Council meeting in June. The Halibut group members from St Paul and in Southeast are gearing up for the October NPFMC meeting and will be lobbying the ADFG, NMFS and North Pacific Council members and will be trying to get a meeting with the Governor Dunlevy as well. The Halibut Abundance Based Management (ABM) issue is moving forward to reducing Halibut bycatch in the Bering Sea trawl fisheries especially by the Amendment 80 trawl fleet for the benefit of the direct Halibut Harvesters. The Crab harvesters they also had bycatch reduction they wanted to be addressed by the Council, but they were pushed all the way back until February 2021 they were not happy about that but continue to do outreach to ADFG, NMFS and North Pacific Council members on their concerns. We have scheduled the monthly main group of the Alaska Fishing Communities Coalition on Friday July 24, 2020.

Regards

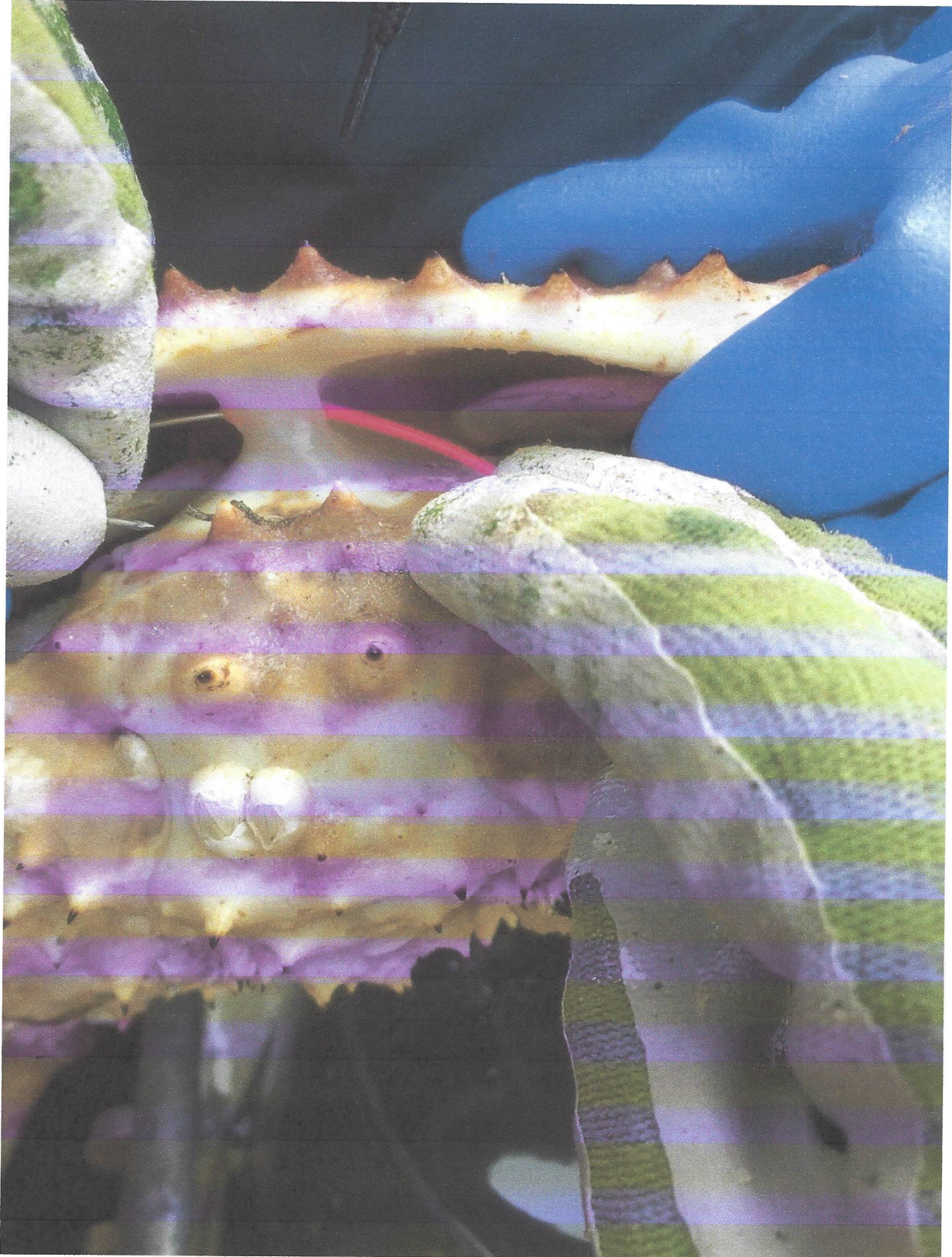


Frank Kelty

## BBRKC TAGGING PROJECT UPDATE:

- Emails and Pictures coming in from Madi and Leah
- Possibly calling into meeting – boat arrived in Kodiak WED 07/15 at 0130 hrs















BSFRF Draft Working Statement for Opilio Research – for Board Review [07/16/20]

The BSFRF Board of Directors has identified opilio size at maturity research as one of our top research priorities for 2021 and beyond (BSFRF Priority #30\*). BSFRF understands there are policy implications but is committed to stay focused on the science. Recent trends in male opilio abundance from survey and fishery data are reflecting stock dynamics that have not been seen before. There may be fundamental changes occurring in the biology of Bering Sea opilio stock that require attention. There are a number of possible *hypotheses* that could be influencing this.

- (1) Opilio male crab are reaching maturity in fewer molts because of the warming trend and decline of the cold pool
- (2) The 30 or so years of fishing large male crab has reduced their gene pool so that the population of smaller maturing males dominate the male breeding population
- (3) The fishery focus on large males has reduced the cannibalism on small males, so more of the smaller crab are reaching maturity at a smaller size
- (4) The fishery focus on large males has increased competitive mating advantage for smaller sized males which influences smaller males sizes at maturity
- (5) Larger male opilio have moved more into the northern Bering Sea because of the warming trend leaving fewer large crab in the usual fishing and breeding grounds
- (6) An extremely large recruitment is currently entering the mature population and the reduced size of maturity is normal during a very large recruitment

These areas will be the focus as BSFRF defines further steps in opilio size at maturity research progress through Board approved strategies including steering committee work, workshops, and more completely defined projects.

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\*BSFRF references this high priority as Proj. #30 in its annual Research Priority Project List (updated January 2020).