

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

**Date:** September 16 ,2020

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

**Subject:** September Fishery Activities

I have been attending the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Crab Plan team meetings via Zoom the meeting this week started on Monday this is three half day meeting. are a four-day meeting. The Crab Plan team will be covering all major crab species that open on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The Crab Plan recommendations will go to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) for approval at the October NPFMC meeting. The Total Allowable Catch TAC is set by the North Pacific Council based on the recommendations they receive from the SSC.

The plan team on Monday morning heard updates on wide range of topics such as the lack of summer trawl survey issues and impacts on stock assessments. The Plan Team was presented Ecosystem Status report (ESR), Ecosystem Socioeconomic Profiles (ESP) on Bristol Bay Red King Crab (BBRKC) and St. Matthew Blue King Crab stocks.

During the afternoon session the Plan Team worked all afternoon on the Bristol Bay Red King Crab 2020 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE). The Plan Team reviewed the 2019 assessment and review a host of various models to set the Overfishing Level (OFL) and Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendations for the SSC for their review in October. As we all know the BBRKC stock is in tough shape and has been depressed for many years in 2019 the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) was set at 3.5 million pounds, the Plan Team for 2020 reduced the OFL and ABC amounts possibly due to wanting to be conservative without a 2020 summer crab survey the recommend OFL is recommended at 2.14MT(4.7 million pounds) the ABC amount is set at 1.7 MT with a 20% buffer = (2.6million pounds) with means the TAC amount may be in the 2.2 -2.4 million pounds for 2020 season. Which is an exceedingly small allocation.

Tuesday the morning most of the morning was spent on the Opilio Snow Crab this species along with Aleutian Island Golden King Crab are the only bright spots on the BSAI crab fisheries. There has been a huge amount of biomass that

is has moved into the Snow Crab stock that biomass was seen in the 2019 survey last year. Without a survey this year that has caused much uncertainty for the plan team. The plan team went with model 20.2 with and OFL of 184.91MT (413 million pounds) With the uncertainty without a survey, they discussed increasing the buffer from 25% to 50% so with a 50% the ABC would come in at 92.4MT putting the ABC in pounds at (206million pounds) the TAC amount that the Council would choose will depend on if the SSC does with these big numbers in October.

Later on Tuesday afternoon the Plan Team took a look at St Matthew Blue King Crab which is in a rebuilding plan the stock is in poor shape with a projected OFL at 0.112MT (250lbs.) and the ABC at 0.08 (178 lbs.) this fishery will not open in 2020. Next up was Pribilof Island Blue King Crab this fishery is in a rebuilding plan and will not open in 2020 the OFL amount is 1.16MT (2,519lbs) ABC 0.87MT (1,943lbs.) Pribilof Red King will also not open to protect Blue King Crab stocks the 2020 OFL is set at 864MT(1.9million pounds) ABC 648MT(1.4 million pounds). The Western Aleutian Red King Crab is another fishery that has been closed for many years due low stock abundance. The plan teams recommended the OFL at 56MT (125,000lbs.) ABC 14MT (31,000lbs). The Pribilof Island Golden King Crab is a small fish that 1-2 vessels participate in the TAC amount the last few years has been around 125,000lbs. The plan team set the OFL for this fishery at 93MT (207,000lbs) the ABC at 70MT (172,000lbs) for the 2021 season. The last stock of the day was the Aleutian Island Golden King Crab that fishery in both the Eastern and Western Districts the Plan Team set the OFL at 4.881MT(10.9 million pounds) the ABC amount at (8.1million pounds) the TAC amount for both districts the past few years has been in the 6.0 to 6.8 million pound range.

Wednesday morning the plan team worked the Bering Sea Tanner Crab fishery all morning this is a stock that has not performed well; the total fishery was closed in 2019 and had small allocations in previous years as well. The Plan team had to look at the two districts East of 166 W longitude and West of 166 W longitude and has a new harvest strategy provided by co -managers ADFG. The Plan team used model 20.07 MLE for the OFL and ABC amounts. The OFL for both districts came in at 21.3MT (47million pounds) with a 20% buffer the ABC is 16.90MT in pounds (37 million pounds). Later, Wednesday the Plan team will be discussing Crab Prohibited Species Catch and Norton Sound Red King Crab.

On Thursday, the Plan team will be going over the OFL and ABC amounts one more time to see if they will be changing any of the OFL or ABC amounts or increasing or reducing any of the crab buffer percentages. I will relay to the Erin, Mayor and Council if the Plan team makes any major changes.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Alaska Fisheries Coalition Bycatch Committee met for about 45 minutes to discuss the Halibut Abundance Based Management

(ABM) bycatch reduction issue. A PSC bycatch reduction will impact only Amendment 80 bottom fleet at the NPFMC meeting in October via Zoom. The Halibut ABM measures are being looked at to assist the Bering Sea directed Halibut harvesters especially in Areas 4 C-D near the Pribilof Islands who have seen their fishery face major reductions for many years. This fishery is of major importance to the Halibut harvesters out of St Paul Island.

Regards

Frank Kelty