

Frank Kelty

43915 Via Granada
Palm Desert, CA 92211
fvkelty@gmail.com

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To: Erin Reinders, JR Pearson, Michelle Price, Mayor Tutikoff and City Council

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: Fishery Activities and Fishery Articles for the week ending 10-3-21

I been attending the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) on Thursday and Friday as they made their recommendation on the Overfishing Limit (OFL) and the Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) for the BSAI crab fisheries. The full NPFMC on Wednesday October 6th will vote to approve the OFL and ABC amount and then the State of Alaska ADFG will set Total Allowable Catch (TAC) amount probably will be announced next Thursday or Friday. On Thursday morning the SSC took the ecosystem report which covered various issues in the Bering Sea such as water temperatures, the size of the ice pack and cold pool size. They also review the Climate action plans for the Bering Sea, Arctic, and the Gulf of Alaska.

After lunch they took the full Crab Plan Team report on all the crab species they reviewed and made recommendations on the OFL, and ABC amounts they reviewed the analysis of the stock assessment fishery evaluation (SAFE) information, and they reviewed the various models used for the assessments. They also discussed the summer survey data and if it compared with the survey done in 2019 and the assessment was that it was done close the previous survey the problem with that is stocks of crab have moved further to the north and northwest out of the NOAA survey area so crab outside of the designated areas are not included in the assessment models which must be corrected. This information was brought up many times in public testimony by vessel captains and boat owners. Late on Thursday afternoon they had the presentation on some snow crab stock assessment and after the presentation they adjourned for the day and would resume of Friday morning.

Friday morning SSC they heard testimony from about 8 people on the impacts on the large reduction to the Snow Crab fishery. The Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers testified to the fact that the harvesters and crew members are facing 200 million in lost revenue. The asked the SSC for support in doing additional research in areas out of the traditional survey areas and in deeper water in the northern area for snow crab closer to the Russian boundary snow crab and possibly get permission to do survey work on the

Russian side of the Northern Bering Sea. They asked that an evaluation of the Crab saving areas be adjusted to provide additional protection for female red king crab which is the reason we didn't have a Red King Crab fishery. That bycatch percentages need to be looked especially when you have crab fishery closures and reduced allocations. The fact amount of the female crab did not meet the threshold level to allow a fishery or legal male red king crab which were above the threshold level that would have allowed a fishery. Communities commented on their revenue impacts to Fishery, Sales Taxes, Employment, and Impacts to Support Sector businesses. These reductions have major impact to all sectors of a community. It is frustrating to me that they are making these drastic reductions based on only 2021 summer survey the 2019 survey did not show this type of collapse I believe the snow crab population may be in the deep where the trawl nets can't find them, or they may be on the Russian side of the boundary and will move back into our waters later in the winter. I just don't think that hundreds of million snow crab animals disappeared in one year. That's why it is so important to have a snow crab fishery this winter, so we will receive information from harvesters on the grounds with current catch data, and areas they are working. The SSC adjourned for the weekend and will go back into session on Monday.

Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) Recommended Crab OFL, ABC amounts; the TAC amounts will be set next week by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Crab Species	OFL	ABC	TAC Projected
Snow Crab (Opilio)	16.1 million pounds	12.3 million pounds	10 million pounds
BB Red King Crab	4.91 million pounds	3.9 million pounds	No Season
AIGKC	10.7 million pounds	7.43 million pounds	5.9 million pounds
St. Mat Blue King	112,000 pounds	80,000 pounds	No Season
Pribilof Red King	1.9 million pounds	1.4 million pounds	No Season
Pribilof Blue King	2,600lbs.	1,900lbs	No Season
WAI Red King Crab	93,000 pounds	31,000 pounds	No Season
EBS Tanner Crab	16.5 million pounds	12.35 million pounds	2-3 million pounds

I also attended an Alaska Fishery Communities meeting a week ago. This group discussed the upcoming North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting. Some of the issues talked about included the Pacific Cod Trawl Lapp Program up for final action under this topic the group discussed increased bycatch reductions of Halibut, Sablefish and Crab. The leasing of cod trawl quota to be allowed to the pot cod sector harvesters. We heard comments from the Aleut Development Corporation and City of Adak residents of for the need of a set allocation to the Aleutian Islands to support shore-based plant operations in Adak and Atka.

There was also a good discussion Ecosystem changes, species issues, and fishery management responses at the NPFMC level to the changes being seen in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska. At the upcoming Council meeting under B

report NOAA will give testimony on climate Change and ecosystem issues. Jami Goen Executive Director of the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers gave a report on what they are working with the State of Alaska and NOAA on the crisis the Crab Harvesters are facing they are looking at losses of 200 million dollars to boat owners', captains, and crew members. They will be asking the Council to ask NOAA to do additional research in areas outside of the traditional survey areas, and in deeper water in the northern area for snow crab closer to the Russian boundary snow crab and possibly get permission to do survey work on the Russian side of the Northern Bering Sea. They asked that and evaluation of the Crab saving areas be adjusted to provide additional protection for female red king crab which is the reason we didn't have a Red King Crab fishery. That bycatch percentages and gear modifications need to be looked at. It was also mentioned that processors and communities will be facing lost revenues, employment and impacts to support sectors businesses. Processors are also concerns on lost markets for crab sales to Canada and Russia.

It was also brought up the if group that written comments to NOAA is open until the end of October on Halibut Based Management Draft EIS the Council will address this issue in December. Lastly it was brought up the importance to continued to work with the Alaska tribal and conservations groups in Alaska that share some of the same concerns.

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. Fishery Articles