

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

Date: April 29, 2021

To: Erin Reinders, Mayor Tutikoff, and Council Members

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: April Fishery Activities

I have attended two fishery group meetings the past week and half.

Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF) met on April 16th some of the topic covered included the following.

- Financials the BSFRF is still in a strong position financially the non-profit has assets of \$1.6 million, revenues from crab landings for March was 67K from Opilio, Tanner Crab and Golden King Crab landing and expenses of 40K. The Board treasurer reported that he is now rolling over the CD every 3 months instead of every 6 months due to low interest rates.
- Draft FY 22 Budget review, I will touch on some of the main items included in the budget. Rather than going over the Budget line by line again, Executive Director Goodman provided an update on our large-scale projects and contingency planning that were under development at March meeting. These include the Sairdrone survey and fall tagging charter. He stated with the Sairdrone project included in the Tag development Research line item 35 of \$132K. This includes \$90K for current contract with Sairdrone plus \$12K for R&D funds plus \$30K for acoustic or satellite (pop-up) tags. Along with this item, we have a total of \$190K for items which includes the fall tag release vessel charter for \$137K plus another \$53K in cruise support items.

This charter will be staffed with BSFRF (NRC), NOAA and possibly ADFG personnel. Our significant contingency here is whether we relocate any of our acoustic tagged crab on the current Sairdrone survey. If we are unsuccessful in detecting tagged crab, then we would reconsider switching the fall tagging charter from acoustic tags to satellite tags. This contingency is a wait and see issue that depends on the results of the current saildrone survey. With the second drone out of commission the one remaining drone has been extended from 43 days to 86 days so we can cover the entire proposed survey track. The combine cost of \$322K for these 2 research efforts are about as good as we can

project given the uncertainties. Another related component of using acoustics tags to detect and relocate of tagged crab other than by drones is to develop an alternative method to detect acoustic tagged crab using towed acoustic receiver system from a fishing vessel. We have included \$12K in the budget, but we will need flexibility in funding such an effort using some of reserve funds if necessary. Currently, we have no way of developing a more accurate estimate. If we decide that we need to pursue this route, then we will come back to the Board for approval of a new plan and proposal to fund and proceed. The motion to adopt the budget was passed unanimously.

- **Opilio Research:** The current opilio research issue that BSFRF is working on is related to our second opilio workshop. Our first workshop held in January was a success. We are planning to have final summary report out in early May. Goodman has been asked by The Crab Plan Team (CPT) to provide an update on the workshop and next steps at the May CPT meeting. The Second Workshop will follow the May CPT meeting. In the first workshop we were aligned with the biology of opilio and a little bit on management. The second workshop will focus some on management points in the areas of evaluating the best way to characterize metrics to assess the status of the stock, primarily mature male biomass (MMB). Maybe we could get a couple of skippers to participate in the workshop and potentially give a presentation. One from our BSFRF board would be great. Goodman would be available to help prepare the presentation. The Canadians have said they would appreciate hearing from our crab fishermen. Goodman and Stauffer are also thinking about tying in some of the elements of ABSC's skipper survey. Goodman wants to hold the workshop after the CPT meeting. It will be a virtual meeting scheduled hopefully for 2 days starting on May 26 or 27 2021.
- **ASMI RFM Program Transition:** Goodman updates the Board on the costs for continuing to be the Bering Sea Crab Client Group owner under the Certified Seafood Collaborative (CSC) for the Alaska RFM program. Currently we have two competing 3rd party Certification Bodies to contract with to conduct 4th annual surveillance and the fifth year Recertification for Bering Sea crab stocks. The year 2021 will be our Recertification year. Goodman has bid proposals from both Certification bodies, Global Trust Certification and DNV Business Assurance. CSC is planning to reimburse the Client Groups for a portion of these costs. Goodman expects this reimbursement will be about \$40K making our cost about \$30K which is the amount in our budget line item. Doug Wells asked for a motion to approve Goodman to sign a contract with Global Trust it was moved and adopted.
- **Opilio Tanner Spring Growth Charter Completed:** Goodman shared 9 photos from Heller-Shiple and Fedewa taken on the charter vessel and in the Kodiak lab. Two photos show a crab in the molting process taken from the trawl as it was brought up on deck. The photos show the old, cracked carapace shell sitting on top of a much larger soft carapace. It appears that the new soft shell may be 1 to

1.5 inches wider than the old shell which would represent a growth increment of about 25 mm or more. Board members were surprised by how much larger the new shell was. How the crab is held in onion bags in insulated totes on deck. The crab is grouped on board in the bags by size, sex, species, and shell condition. The crab in the lab tank in the top picture on page 76 are a variety of sizes with most being small crab. One last item is we need to decide whether the BSFRF is willing to pay the costs of 2 industry people to fill two open crab technical positions on the 2021 NMFS summer trawl survey in the Bering Sea. Goodman understands that the Board has been supportive. He has purposely not included this cost in our budget. In an email he sent to the Board, he had a cost not to exceed amount of \$40K for two industry people to fill these 2 open positions for one leg each. The board of directors approved this expenditure. The board meeting adjourned at 1200 noon.

The next meeting, I attended was the Alaska Fishing Community (AFC) meeting on Friday April 23, 2021 via Zoom.

- The Group went through a debrief of the last North Pacific Council meeting that concluded on April 16th. I will touch on the main items covered by the AFC group Halibut ABM they were happy that the State of Alaska provide the motion on ABM and included some additional option for analysis on the 4 Alternatives. The group was somewhat disappointed that the Council did not choose a Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA). The Council by a vote of 8-3 approved the document sending in out for public comment and final action in October.
- The AFC discussed the IFQ entry level issue that would have allocated up to 2% of the Halibut and Sablefish for entry level harvesters. This did not any traction at the Council with a large amount of testimony by current IFQ holders that took loans or mortgage their homes to buy their quota and were adamantly opposed for this type of program the Council heard them and took no action on this issue.
- The next item was changing that the Council made on Public Comment procedures, including comments are consistent with Dept of Commerce policy. They will sort out comments with vulgar language, personal attacks and will reject comments that are off topic. They will also delay posting of comments until meeting material are posted online and close commenting earlier to allow staff to review comments.
- Salmon Genetics, the Council requests an update on progress to process more recent Chinook salmon scales and to update the age length key used in the BSAI Chinook salmon AEQ model.
- Economic Data Reports and Social Science Planning Team EDR/SSPT Reports. The Council approves and recommends changes to the Alternatives and Options for the Alternatives 2 and 3. Alt 2 Option 1. Revise requirements for the aggregated of data across submitters and blind formatting in all EDR programs. Option 2. Revise authorizations for third party data verifications audits under existing programs and reduce burdens with this process. Option 3 Revised EDR collection period to every option 2 years, 3 years, 5 years. Alt 3. Removed EDR

requirements for the following GOA Trawl, Crab, BSAI Amendment 80 and Amendment 91.

- The AFC encourage members to try and get on the Community Engagement Committee, to provide information on impacts to fishery dependent communities and impacts to residents and native Alaskans.

The AFC then heard reports from various sub committees.

- Bycatch Committee will be meeting next week they will be looking to addressing Crab bycatch issues especially of Red King by looking at habitat issues for red crab that could be protected. They will also continue to monitor bycatch issues on Halibut, Sablefish and Herring.
- Climate Committee continues to monitor on going issues and have sent a letter to the Alaska Delegation on climate concerns and will be looking at working with the NGOs on Climate issues.
- MSA this committee has not met recently but is monitoring and movement on the reauthorization of MSA in Washington DC.
- Communications committee continues to on the AFC website and has made some recommendations for supporting membership for Sea Alaska Corporation in Juneau and the Lake and Peninsula Borough.
- Historical Participation Group Introductions, during our first meeting we had a broad discussion on how we view the 10,000-year dependence for coastal Alaska and touched on the following topics. Identify what the coast wide 10,000-year cultural and economic dependence on fishery resources means. provided a draft of exhibit narrative describing the dependence and utilization of fish in the Kodiak Archipelago.

Regards

Frank

Attachments:

1. Fishery Articles
2. BSFRF Draft Meeting Minutes of April 15,2021 meeting.

