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

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: Fishery Activities for the week ending 1-28-2022.

The past two weeks have been slow for Fishery activities which is usual for this time of year. This past week The Pollock A season opened on the January 20<sup>th</sup> we have only a couple day of reporting by NMFS reports nineteen million pounds of Pollock harvested in two days of fishing, with the largest percentage by the catcher vessel sector, which delivers shoreside. I will include that information on Monday reports. On the crab side we are seeing the first substantial Snow Crab landings about 1.0 million pounds landed as of January 30<sup>th</sup> and Western District Bairdi Tanner is slow with less than 200,000lbs landed, and the Golden King Crab fishery has harvested 4.8 million of their 5.9 million allocations with 1.1 million left to harvest is all in the Western Aleutian Islands District. On Pacific Cod both federal water pot cod allocations are now closed. The sixty' foot over pot cod vessels harvested 6,104MT in 2.5 weeks they went 394MT over there A season allocation the sixty' foot under pot cod vessels harvested 3,200MT they also went over their allocation fishing was incredibly good at the start of the season. The hook and line CPs also had good fishing and have harvested 2,100MT through January 22<sup>nd</sup> the trawl fleet has only fished two days and is just getting started have harvested 120MT the same is true for the Amendment 80 bottom trawl fleet they are just getting started.

### **Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF)**

During the past two weeks I have attended two with Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF) budget committee met via zoom on January 21<sup>st</sup> the focus of those meetings was to work on the upcoming

BSFRF upcoming budget and fundraising efforts as you know research foundation revenue is based on assessments from the crab harvesters, processors, and communities. With the complete collapse of the major Bering Sea Crab fisheries the BSFRF is looking at almost 90% reduction in revenues from harvester, processor, and community assessments. The foundation does we have strong reserves, and with some revenue coming in we should weather the storm for 4 years and hopefully and increase in Snow Crab fishery, and the Red King Crab season going again in October of 2022. In the interim we will be looking at 45% budget reductions for the next few years. The committee also discussed fund raising and cooperative research funding with other state and federal agencies to lower the BSFRF research obligations' during this time of low revenues, and budget reductions.

The full BSFRF Board of Directors met on Thursday January 27<sup>th</sup> via zoom. The board reviewed the current financials which at this time look strong but that will change soon with the lack of the Red King Crab fishery and only 5.5-million-pound Snow Crab allocation. The BSFRF is \$250K under budget for FY 22 with reserves of \$1.8 million on hand, with revenues projected to drop from \$800,000 to \$150,000 per year will we be drawing down the reserves probably at least \$350,000 per year with reduced budgets. The board too a first look at a draft budget going line item by line item categorizing areas that were safe such as staffing levels, areas that will not be funded and areas that will be funded at reduced levels. Major survey work and vessel charters will be cut due to excessive costs, tagging crab work will be funded at reduced levels and hopefully we can use NOAA or ADFG vessels charters to do the work at sea and the BSFRF can assist with tag purchases. We then discussed fund raising issues possibly sending out a fundraising letter to vendors that that do business with the crab fleet and processing sector asking for donations to assist with research analysis and science work, no funding would be used for general fund operations. Lastly, we were update by the Executive Director on his work with the North Pacific Research Board on leveraging crab research project funding from federal dollars that they receive he will continue to actively be in contact with this group.

Executive Director updated the board on the Crab Plan Team Meeting from two weeks ago. I reported on that to the City Manager and City Council two weeks ago, but I have some additional items from the Crab Plan Team meeting for your review.

The Board then was update Bairdi Tanner research work the BSFRF, has been looking into the option of doing additional research on lower the Western District Tanner size limit from five” inches to the legal-size limit of 4.4” inches for this specie. This action would have to action by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) to change the state regulation that is stated in regulation that the preferred size is five” inches. By doing this and getting it approved by the BOF it could increase the allocation on Tanner by 20% it would also reduce handling mortality of small Tanner Crab caught in a directed fishery, but also Tanner Crab caught in the Snow crab directed fishery. I believe there would be strong benefits in doing this. The cycle for crab issues is coming up in March so it is to late in the game to get it taken up by the BOF this meeting cycle so the harvesters would have to bring this up as an emergency issue which might be a stretch. The harvesters also must get the processors on board with a change like this; so I will continue to monitor this issue and see if it gets any traction.

The last agenda item of the day was and update on the crab bycatch work groups that are working to reduce the bycatch of crab species. The BSFRF participates in this on the science and research end of this issues working with all the various groups. We understand that draft report on the work accomplished will be issued during the February North Pacific Council meeting I will share a copy of the report as soon as I get a copy.

I will attach with this memo various documents on pot gear modification work, to reduce the bycatch of crab in Cod and Halibut fisheries. A table of the allocations of all major rationalized Bering Sea Crab species. United Fishermen of Alaska information on seafood legislation coming before the House and Senate during the upcoming session. I have also attached the minutes of the Crab Plan Team report.

### **State of Alaska Bycatch Taskforce**

On Friday January 27, I attend the first meeting of Bycatch Task Force appointed by the Governor, the meeting lasted just an hour and was mostly informational with the thirteen members of the task force giving their bio’s. They will be meeting every third Thursday of the month for at least 8 hours the meetings are open to the public and will be streamed on Zoom. I do not know if they will be taking public comment or not. They did ask the ADFG to request from NOAA to make some presentation that they made to the

Alaska legislature last session they also wanted some presentations from ADFG on fisheries under there management and joint management with NOAA.

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. A table of the allocations of all major rationalized Bering Sea Crab species.
2. Pot gear modification work, to reduce the bycatch of crab in Cod and Halibut fisheries.
3. Crab Plan Team Report
4. United Fishermen of Alaska information on seafood legislation during this year's session.
5. Information on State of Alaska Bycatch Taskforce