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To: Chris Hladick, City Manager, Marjorie Veeder, Clay Darnell, Michelle Price

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Subject: Fishery Activities and Fishery Articles for 8-12-2022

More unwelcome news this week as it pertains to the Bering Sea Crab Fisheries, on Thursday I attended Ad-Hoc Crab Committee meeting with harvesters, processors, communities with ADFG and NMFS personal in attendance. We received an update on the preliminary Snow Crab Survey results it appears that survey results are pretty much the same as last year, declines in most areas except for a few stations in the Northwest of St Matthew Island near the Russian /US boundary. The very small Snow crab one year old crab showed 30% increase, the preferred size crab 4" inch Snow crab had a slight increase. Prerecruitment crab and females show continued declines a big concern was females showed a 20% decline from last year's survey. We may have more information late next week on the Snow Crab at the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation meeting. We still don't have any preliminary information on Tanner Crab survey results in both the East and Western districts.

We then moved on to a review of the June NPFMC meeting and the Council request for information to be brought forward at the October 2022 meeting on ways to reduce fishing-related mortality of snow crab. Comments from fishery participants and the public on the following issues would be particularly useful:

1. Voluntary measures for implementation in 2023 and beyond to avoid EBS snow crab and Bristol Bay Red King Crab on how reduce crab mortality in the non-directed fisheries.
2. Measures in the directed crab fishery to reduce discard mortality of EBS snow crab and Bristol Bay Red Crab.
3. Description of research that would inform the development of more flexible and effective spatial management measures, gear modifications to reduce impacts on the EBS snow crab stock, or to evaluate unobserved mortality in the trawl sector.

At today meeting not a lot of new ideas came forward, harvesters are allowed to keep 30% of legal-size Snow crab when fishing Tanner crab and vice versa if vessels were able to do that it would reduce directed fishing discards. The bycatch allowance for the Bristol Bay Red King Crab fishery is only 5% when fishing Tanner Crab so not a lot of help for harvesters on that fishery. The problem with that idea is the Snow Crab stocks of any large quantity are way to the NW of St. Matthew Island and there isn't Tanner

Crab in that area. The main Tanner crab grounds by the Pribilof Islands there is a very limited amount of Snow Crab now days. Gear modifications were discussed larger mesh size so smaller crab will be able to escape. The group discussed the problems of mixed species deliveries for the processors crab tanks with two species will take longer to unload, possibly increasing dead loss, mixed loads also slow the processing plant's production by having to switch back and forth on different species. Other issues that were discussed briefly were time and area closures for areas 508-512, soak time of crab gear, and expansion of the Bristol Bay area for protection of Red King Crab stock. The group will meet again in two weeks to further discuss addition options and ideas.

On Friday morning August 12th, 2022, I attended a Zoom meeting of the State of Alaska Bycatch Task Force Subcommittee meeting on Western Alaska Salmon. Co—Chaired by Stephanie Madsen and George Guy. The Salmon Sub-Committee is getting close to submitting their final recommendations to the full Bycatch Task Force this is important to Unalaska for any recommended restrictions that the State of Alaska would recommend to National Marine Fisheries Service that could impact the Eastern Bering Sea Pollock and Pacific Cod fisheries.

Research General Recommendations from the Western Salmon Subcommittee

1. Develop state bycatch research priorities, possibly across departments, to share with funding entities that would help identify and acquire research funds.
2. Implement strategies to encourage and facilitate industry/agency cooperation research to reduce bycatch and associated mortality.
3. Create methods, such as annual workshops to collaborate with other research entities to better track bycatch research proposed or funded, along with collaboration opportunities and findings of funded research.

The committee reviewed various extensive research recommendations comments from various State of Alaska, North Pacific Council, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, and the Bering Sea Fishermen's Associations. I will attach their research comments with this memo. The final recommendations from this Subcommittee to the full Bycatch Task Force are due by September 23,2022. The Subcommittee will meet again on August 26th, 2022.

Regards

Frank

Attachments

1. Ad-Hoc-Crab Committee Agenda
2. State of Alaska Bycatch Task Force Subcommittee meeting on Western Alaska Salmon Research Priorities.
3. Fishery News Articles