

On-Time Advisory Committee Comment List

Bering Sea Tanner Crab Harvest Strategy | May 17-18, 2017

From Kodiak Finfish Meeting, January 10-13, 2017

Unalaska Fish & Game Advisory Committee (Minutes and Letter November 30, 2016).....AC01



P.O. BOX 162 UNALASKA, AK 99685

December 26, 2016

John Jensen, Chairman
Alaska Board of Fisheries
Alaska Department of
Fish and Game Board Support
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Subject: Comments from the Unalaska/Dutch Harbor Advisory Committee from a meeting held on November 30, 2016 in Unalaska, AK on Board of Fisheries Proposal 278 -5AAC 35.508 Bering Sea District *C. bairdi* Tanner Crab Harvest Strategy. To be heard at the State of Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting in Kodiak, Alaska January 10th, 2017.

Proposal #278 was put forward by the State of Alaska Board of Fisheries at their October 2016 work session, and is in response to a request by the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers that petitioned the Board of Fisheries to consider revisions to the *C. bairdi* tanner harvest strategy. This petition shows they are actively concerned with the future access to the important crab resource upon which they depend. Support for this action came from Alaska Bering Sea Crab Harvesters, Cities of Unalaska, St. Paul, and the Central Bering Sea CDQ group. We should keep in mind that this is not permanent change to the Bering Sea Tanner Crab harvest strategy; this is basically going to be a stop gap measure that would be in effect for 120 days; the Tanner Crab season in the Western District closes by regulation on March 31st of 2017. We would hope that the Board of Fisheries and ADFG would address permanent changes to the *C. bairdi* Tanner harvest strategy at its March Board of Fisheries Statewide Crab meeting.

Discussion: This proposal doesn't cause a conservation concern, as only legal male crab are going to be harvested and legal males in the Western District had been increasing the past 3 years but this past years the survey numbers were down slightly on mature males in the Western District, and decreased greatly for mature females in the entire district. This crisis was caused due to the female crab threshold level not being met, which is calculated much differently in the Opilio Snow Crab and Bristol Bay Red King Crab fisheries where the threshold



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levels are calculated with the mature males and mature females included if that would have been in place for the Tanner fishery we most likely would have had a fishing season. At the Unalaska AC meeting ADFG staff at the meeting stated, that 166* line doesn't really represent a real stock boundary for the Tanner Crab fishery, but the fishery has separate IFQ allocations by district, we have different legal male crab size limits by districts, so why aren't the threshold levels calculated by districts. It was pointed out that the water temperatures in the Bering Sea were once again at all time high levels for the third year in a row, and that crab stocks may have been outside the traditional survey area.

Lastly the economic impacts of a total closure of this fishery were brought forward this is Tanner crab fishery is a \$50M ex-vessels value fishery, and a much larger loss on the first wholesale value of the product. It also represents at least a \$2M reduction in tax revenues to Unalaska. We should remember that the Crab industry is facing major allocation reductions this year, in almost all crab fisheries; Opilio Tanner 60% decrease for 52 million pound to 21 million pounds, Bering Sea Tanner crab totally closed due to female threshold levels not being met, and Bristol Bay Red King crab a 16% decrease from 10 million pounds to 8.4 million pounds. The declines have cause economic hardships for all sectors in the crab industry including the City of Unalaska.

Motion to support Proposal 278: made by Holman, seconded by Gregory, roll call vote, Motion passes 6-4

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Kelty", written over a horizontal line.

Frank Kelty

Unalaska/Dutch Harbor AC Chairman

CC: Glenn Haight, ADFG Board Support



UNALASKA FISH & GAME LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

30 November, 2016

CALL TO ORDER:

6:01 pm, by Chairman Frank Kelty

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank Kelty

Steve Gregory

Jennifer Shockley

Shari Coleman

Dustan Dickerson

Melissa Good

Mike Holman

Jeff Hancock

Tim Mahoney

ABSENT:

Roger Rowland

Augie Kochuten

Don Goodfellow

GUESTS PRESENT:

Mark Stichert, ADF&G, Regional Shellfish Coordinator – telephonically; Ethan Nichols, ADF&G; Colton LKU, ADF&G, SW/AI Commercial Salmon - telephonically.

Media: Jim Paulin, Report Alaska; Laura Kraegel, KUCB.

Additional guests: Taryn O'Connor-Brito - telephonically, Hal Lewis, Laresa Syverson

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:



Shockley & Dickerson: add Removal of Committee Member for Cause to New Business; can be done in open session.

APPROVE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve minutes for August 16, 2016 made by Good, seconded by Dickerson.

Minutes approved with no comments.

ADF&G UPDATE:

Nichols:

- Eastern & Western Golden King open: three boats operating each fishery data confidential. 47% taken in Western fishery.
- Bristol Bay Red King 100% taken
- Eastern AI Tanner below threshold for mature males; no quota for upcoming season
- AI Dungeness no harvest to date
- AI Rockfish no harvest to date

Discussion by committee members: Good, Dickerson, Nichols and Stichert re. local tanner crab survey. Due to State budget cuts, it's likely that this survey will not occur in our area every year, but could occur every other year.

Discussion among Stichert, Nichols and committee member Kelty, on how the Bristol Bay Red King season compared to last. Nichols reports that CPUE is up considerably from last year.

Discussion among committee members Kelty, Lewis and ADFG Stichert on how surveys are conducted. Surveys are not just to determine crab but also for cod and other finfish quotas. Survey is likely to expand both north and west next year to address movement of crab out of current survey area.

OLD BUSINESS

Update from 10/18-10/20/16 Board of Fisheries Work Session in Soldotna (Kelty):

- ACR-2 (250-yard set-back at Summer Bay) failed 1-6



- ACR-3 (limit Sockeye taken from Front Beach) passed 7-0, amidst concern about lack of data for this fishery.
- ACR-5 (Bait herring opening date) failed 2-5
- ACR-8 (AI Golden King closure date) failed 0-7

OLD BUSINESS

Proposal 280 (limit Sockeye taken from Front Beach):

Discussion: Per Colton, staff ADF&G commercial salmon. ADFG has no comments; proposal looks good. Kelty plans to ask City Council to support weir for Iliuliuk River. Comments by Gregory on how data will be used and how useful it will be without a habitat study to determine what Iliuliuk Lake can actually support. No public comments.

Motion to support made by Good, seconded by Holman. Voice vote, motion passes 10-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Review of Statewide King & Tanner Crab Proposals for 03/20-03/24/17 meeting:

- Prop 242: Housekeeping so that language reflects actual practice. No comments from AC or public.
- Prop 243: Housekeeping to standardize sport and commercial size limits for Tanner in the AP and AI areas. Discussion among Good and on whether subsistence size limits will also change. Stichert recommends that AC make proposal for same. Discussion among Dickerson, Lewis and Stichert on reducing the size limit for the local Tanner crab fishery and whether lowered size limits would increase likelihood of the local commercial Tanner crab fishery opening. Stichert explains that not all areas of a fishery are alike so size limits can't be applied across the board.
- Prop 248: Artifact from derby fishing days when prospecting was a problem, now basically a redundant regulation. Discussion between Holman and Stichert about whether this is even being enforced anymore (not likely).
- Prop 250: Bycatch retention of *opilio* in *bairdi* fishery. Discussion among Good, Kelty, Nichols and Stichert about decreasing handling mortality by retaining rather than discarding; at what point can/will processors change production lines to run bycatch and what happens if bycatch isn't processed. Stichert comments on how changes in gear/size/bycatch regulations might change genetics of a given population by changing which individuals escape.



- Prop 251: Adds two weeks to western *bairdi* fishery. Discussion among Kelty, Good, Lewis and Stichert on impact on later molting season of western crabs. Mating/molting is mostly dependent on water temperature so mating/molting is likely to occur earlier with warmer waters conditions. Any possibility of in-season research projects? Lewis wants to know if crab fisheries are going to disappear because of global warming. Stichert agrees that acidification and warming of the ocean are concerning and believes he'd be quite popular if he were able to answer Lewis' question.
- Prop 252/253: Increases efficiency and safety of crabbers by not forcing them to return to port between fisheries. Discussion among Good, Lewis and Stichert about increased safety by not running with full pot loads; use of cameras to ensure that crabbers are meeting requirements? Stichert says this possibility already under discussion at federal level and may be possible to collect more data this way.
- Prop 254: Identification/determination of hybrid Tanner crab in targeted Tanner crab fishery. Discussion among Stichert and Dickerson on what observer data shows about increase/decrease in hybrid numbers. Hybrids are increasing per data but not known if this is because population is increasing, or whether recognition is simply better. Returning hybrids to ocean could increase hybrid population since they do reproduce.
- Prop 255: Gives more flexibility to crabbers on *opilio* bycatch retention in eastern *bairdi* fishery.
- Prop 256: Allows retention of *bairdi* in Red King fishery.
- Prop 257/258: 166° line is somewhat arbitrary and doesn't necessarily reflect limits of currently identified stocks in Bering Sea Tanner fisheries.
- Prop 258: 163° line is somewhat arbitrary and doesn't necessarily reflect limits of currently identified stocks in Bering Sea Tanner fisheries.
- Prop 259: Housekeeping to clarify gear regulations.
- Prop 260: Accept ADF&G guide to identify *bairdi* and *opilio* crab.
- Prop 261: ADF&G proposal in response to other bycatch retention proposals restricts percentage of bycatch retention.
- Prop 262: Adak area is hoping to develop local, small-boat Tanner crab fishery. This language mimics that for other localized, small-boat fisheries but, per Stichert, survey data is needed before trying to implement something like this.
- Prop 263: Decreases observer coverage in Golden King fishery. Discussion among Good and Stichert that there's no survey to help with management - ALL data in this fishery comes from observer data. Reduced observer coverage would be financially beneficial to participants.



- Prop 264: Derby fishing artifact, no longer necessary in current system.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposal 278 - Bering Sea Tanner Crab

- Discussion: Proposal changes the calculation for determining threshold in eastern but not western Tanner fishery. 166° line doesn't represent any real stock boundary - stocks moves back and forth across this line and fishing on one side of this line can impact stocks on the other side. Kelty questions use of new boats for surveys. Stichert: The boats, crew, gear and methodology have been the same for several years now and nobody questioned their data when quotas were increased a few years ago. Kelty: this is a \$50M fishery, represents \$2M to Unalaska. Stichert: female abundance declines before male and this decline likely to be more significant next year. Never had a season with stocks this low. Very few small crabs are being seen; this is a low productivity cycle for all crab and now is the time to conserve. Good: concerned about tossing data out that we have already collected and are currently using.
- Motion to support made by Holman, seconded by Gregory. Roll call vote, motion passes 6-4.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman travel to Kodiak in January 2017 approved by State

NEW BUSINESS

Removal of committee member for cause

- Discussion: Shockley explains concern about lack of participation by Kochuten who missed five meetings in a row during the last 18 months. Would like to see her position held by a community member who has interest in participating in AC process and representing our community. Bylaws specify that member who has missed three meetings in a row can be removed. Holman: any absences excused? Unknown, not recorded. Gregory: How is excused absence defined? Hancock: Members can still participate telephonically even if not in town for meeting. Gregory concerned about "Pandora's box" regarding how to define excused absences.
- Motion to address removal of Kochuten for unexcused absences totaling more than three made by Holman, seconded by Good.



- Hancock reviews bylaws from AC manual. Discussion on Kochuten's own characterization of her level of interest in the AC as low. Dickerson proposes allowing her opportunity to resign so other community member can take her place. Good: Can Frank send her a letter asking her to resign? Gregory supports this idea as well. Kelty agrees to contact Kochuten and question her willingness/interest to continue serving. O'Connor-Brito recommends looking at 060 Uniform Rules of Operation, Membership regarding procedure to fill vacancies and reasons for which vacancies might be announced.
- Motion to table issue until Kochuten has been informed of issue by Kelty, made by Holman, seconded by Gregory. Roll call vote, motion passes 9-1.

NEXT MEETING:

- Next meeting tentatively set for early February 2017. Discussion on best day/time for meetings. General support for weekday evenings.
- Discussion: O'Connor-Brito: Minutes of this meeting need to be approved, signed before January 10th, 2017 Kodiak meeting. Forbidden to approve minutes by email; can only be approved by regular meeting, teleconference or motion to allow Chair to approve minutes.
- Motion: Motion for Kelty to approve 11/26/16 meeting minutes made by Good, seconded by Shockley. Voice vote, motion passes.

PUBLIC COMMENT


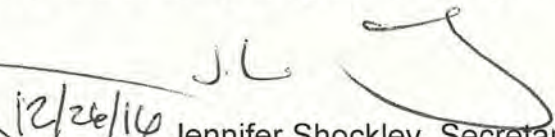
Laresa Syverson would be interested in serving on AC.

VOICE OF THE MEMBERSHIP

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn made by Good, seconded by Gregory. Motion passed by voice vote. Meeting adjourned 8:27 pm.

  JL
Frank Kelty, Chairman Date 12/26/16 Jennifer Shockley, Secretary Date 12/26/16