

RC 6, 5/17/17

The ad-hoc crab industry group recommends the following with regard to the Tanner crab harvest strategy:

- a. Industry supports the ADFG recommendation to define mature female Tanner crab based on the morphology of the abdominal flap (observed maturity).
- b. Industry supports the ADFG recommendation to include female Tanner crab west of 173° W. longitude to estimate female biomass.
- c. Industry supports the ADFG recommendation to revise the years used to estimate long-term average female Tanner crab biomass to 1982 – 2016 (this average is used to define the female threshold).
- d. Industry supports reconsideration and removal of the 50% TAC penalty following years in which the mature female Tanner crab biomass falls below the threshold, given that a fishery should be allowed at the full TAC if the female threshold is met in the current year. However, if the Board believes the TAC penalty has utility until a more comprehensive alternative to the female threshold is developed, industry supports waiving the TAC penalty for the 2017/2018 fishing year if the female threshold would have been met in 2016/2017 had the above changes (a – c) been in place.
- e. Industry supports the ADFG approach as presented to incorporate variance of the survey area-swept point estimates as an interim flexibility measure. This would allow for consideration of survey error when gauging the current year's estimate to be above or below the threshold (an alternative to the single open/close female threshold). The application of an error band around the current year's (2017) survey estimate of mature female biomass is an appropriate interim measure and a critical piece of updating the current strategy for the 2017/2018 fishing year. Absent the flexibility provided by an error band approach, even with updated female maturity indices, there could be inherent risk of forgoing a harvestable surplus of males.

Both an error band approach or a sliding control rule approach would improve on the status quo where the threshold to open the fishery is an on/off switch that does not consider any uncertainty around a survey point estimate. However, time constraints prevent full review of a sliding control rule approach for adoption at this meeting.

Industry would also support continued effort to address other fundamental issues which could replace the interim measure and further improve the harvest strategy, for potential review at the March 2018 Board of Fisheries meeting. These issues include: 1) updated evaluation of the scarcity of mature female Tanner crab as a controlling factor (threshold that opens the fishery) in the harvest strategy; 2) consideration of use of the stock assessment model with the harvest strategy (what model output is available and how is it used); and 3) implications of a single stock being managed separately in the east/west areas.



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