

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Resolution #2000-198-FB

A Resolution to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service Regarding Observer Data Gathering Protocol Aboard Trawl Vessels in the Gulf of Alaska

WHEREAS, The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) has delegated responsibility for conservation and management of Gulf of Alaska king and Tanner crab stocks to the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, king crab stocks in the Gulf of Alaska have been below harvestable thresholds for the past 17 years and the stock continues to decline; and

WHEREAS, Tanner crab stocks in the Gulf of Alaska have been below harvestable thresholds for the past six years; and

WHEREAS, non-pelagic (hard on bottom) trawling is known to have a bycatch component of king and Tanner crab; and

WHEREAS, king and Tanner crab migrate throughout the federal and state marine waters of the Gulf of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the NPFMC through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has instituted an onboard observe program to monitor trawl fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, current observer data does not provide enough information to accurately determine the trawl-related impacts on king and Tanner crab stocks in the Gulf of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the current observer program for vessels between 60 and 125 feet in length allows the vessel skipper to choose when the observer is aboard for the required one-third observer coverage.

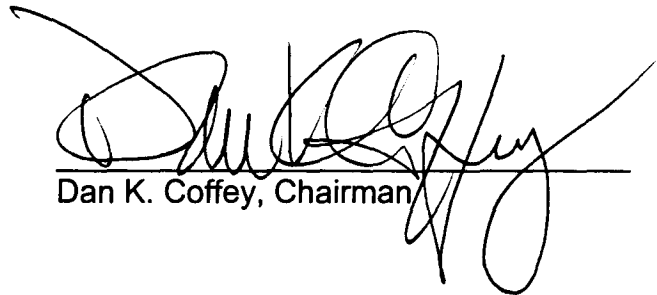
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Board of Fisheries in its concern about the crab stocks in the Gulf of Alaska does hereby make a priority recommendation to the NPFMC and NMFS to take appropriate action to revise the observer protocol for trawl vessels in the Gulf of Alaska as follows:

- Observers are randomly placed on trawl vessels.
- Observers recording of trawl activity (a tow) is located and documented by state statistical area, in both state and federal waters, as well as latitude and longitude.
- Observers to record the trawl speed throughout each tow and the time the trawl is in the water on each tow.
- Observer bycatch data will include estimation of percent of trip observed, by weight and time. Annual reports will contain a cumulative estimate of percent of fishery observed by weight and time.

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- Observed data will be tallied and published monthly for each state statistical area. Monthly reports will include information about corrections or revisions to prior reports. Annual reports will reflect cumulative totals for each state statistical area.

DATED: January 25, 2000
Juneau, Alaska



Dan K. Coffey, Chairman