



## Kodiak Fish and Game Advisory Committee

January 10th, 2022 5:30 pm @ ADF&G

**Call to order** 5:32 pm by Chair Chervenak

### Roll Call:

|                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Paul Chervenak, Chair | Theresa Peterson, Secretary |
| Alexus Kwachka        | Rolan Ruoss                 |
| Brandon Bartleson     | Melissa Berns               |
| Andrew Finke          | Ronald Kavanaugh            |
| Wallace Fields        | Duncan Fields               |
| Garmin Squartsoff     | Patrick O'Donnell           |
| Oliver Holm           |                             |

13 members present for a quorum

Absent: Julie Kavanaugh, Tyler Schmeil, Nate Rose, Jon McElwain

**Approve agenda** - Unanimous

**Correspondence** - None

**Chair announcements:** [taryn.oconnor-brito@alaska.gov](mailto:taryn.oconnor-brito@alaska.gov) - During elections email Taryn to vote if not physically present in the room

**Old business:** Approve minutes of 2/26/2020 meeting - Table until future AC meeting

**New Business:**

### Nominations:

- 1) Elections for expired/vacant seats: Kodiak, Processor Kodiak, Big Game Guide/Outfitter Kodiak, West Side Salmon Gillnet Alternates
  - a. Move to approve nominations Oliver 2<sup>nd</sup> Ron, Duncan Fields nominates the following list which was approved unanimously
    - i. Paul Chervenak, Big Game Guide/Outfitter
    - ii. Wallace Fields, West Side Salmon Gillnet
    - iii. Nate Rose and Alexis Kwachka, Alternates
- 2) Elections for AC officers – Move to approve by Ron Kavanaugh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Oliver Holm
  - a. Paul Chervenak as Chair, Julie Kavanaugh as Vice Chair and Nate Rose as Secretary. Approved 13/0
- 3) ADF&G Division of Subsistence - Presentation (Jackie Keating)
  - The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is conducting research this winter to document the importance of subsistence resources to Kodiak residents. The mission of the Division of Subsistence is to scientifically gather, quantify, evaluate, and



report information about customary and traditional uses of Alaska's fish and wildlife resources.

- AC members and meeting participants are encouraged to help get the word out about the survey.

#### **4) Discussion of Kodiak/Westward Commercial Shellfish proposals**

**Proposal 261-** Allow use of ropeless system with submerged buoy for Dungeness fishing.

Move to adopt: Duncan Fields, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ron Kavanaugh

- May be important to provide this opportunity as marine mammal entanglements on going issue.
- Dept. thinks best to be done under exploratory permit, maybe challenges with enforcement, dept. will oppose.
- Lobster fishermen on east coast having challenges finding lost gear.
- If outside 3 miles trawl fleet concerned. Dunge gear does extent out to 200-mile limit but all gear and activity inside 3 miles.
- Seine representatives expressed concern with entanglement.
- Ropeless system not appropriate for Alaska.
- Nothing precludes opportunity for exploratory permits and this would be the best approach if fishermen are interested in pursuing

**Vote: 0/13 oppose**

**Proposal 263** – Amend Registration Area J commercial shrimp fishery management regulations and allow for department permit authority

Move to adopt: Oliver Holms, 2<sup>nd</sup> Roland Ruoss

- Current area J shrimp stocks likely able to sustain a moderate level of harvest but the outdated management structure prevents access to the resource in most areas.
- Current management structure around a fishery from the 1970's that doesn't exist anymore.
- Small, exploratory fishery would be good and could provide ability to gather data with permit authority and ability to fish with no survey data.
- Repeal most of current regs as no longer appropriate, no longer have surveys.
- Numerous areas closed due to abundance thresholds which will never be met, also no longer survey so wouldn't know.
- Replace small sectional opportunity through a commissioner permits, allows some commercial removals, don't expect to effect current participants but may offer up increased opportunity.



- May explore more areas that are currently closed such as marmot. Currently only Shelikof open.
- Commissioner permits very easy to get, require little time and are free in the Kodiak office.
- Includes beam trawls and pots

**Vote: 13/0 passes**

**Proposal 264** – Amend regulation requiring operation of Dungeness crab pot gear once within a 14- day period

Move to adopt: Rolan Ruoss, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wallace Fields

- Proposal seeks to change gear tending requirement for Dungeness crab gear from 14 to 30 days, providing the ability to leave baited gear on the grounds untended for up to 30 days.
- The original proposal to require tending gear every 14 days came from the department of Fish and Game due to concerns with lost gear and gear interactions.
- Last year over 17,000 pots registered.
- Department may support 21 days.
- Fishermen may struggle getting back to gear every 14 days when involved in other fisheries and weather issues.
- Supporting comments - Fishing Dungeness crab for nearly 50 years and has not supported 14 day tending requirement since implemented, does not believe it helps to support lost gear, doesn't stop from leaving gear in the water. Important to note everybody in the fishery fishes different fisheries and the regulation is almost impossible to comply with.
- Very little difference between 14 to 21 to 30 days, folks are not crazy about any limit but looking for something they can work with. hen fishing full length of the island cannot get to gear every 14 days.
- Opposing comments:
  - Tending rule because when crab soft need to be released from pots, don't get out, need to run gear more often.
  - There has been a lot of soft crab the last few years. Crab in pots can't get out and don't get hard. If stuck in sand will die. Short picking better for health of the crab stocks
  - Concern with young king crab bycatch and increased mortality.
  - All restrictions difficult to enforce, doesn't mean they go away

**Vote 0/13 oppose**



**Proposal 265-** Repeal regulation requiring operation of Dungeness crab pot gear once within a 14- day period

- Proposal seeks no limits on tendering gear requirement for Dungeness gear.
- Setnet fishermen noted challenge with increased pots in bays where setnetting occurs. Crab pots were tangled in setnets and tender had trouble navigating through buoys to pick up salmon from sites.
- Tanner and King crab can get stuck in untended gear.

**Take no action and cite additional rationale from proposal 264 discussion**

**Proposal 266** –Establish Kodiak District Dungeness crab pot limits and restrict concurrent targeting of Dungeness crab and any other commercially harvested species.

- The AC discussed this proposal in two parts, beginning with establishing Kodiak district pots limits, including a range of pot limits.
- Dept. neutral - allocative between user groups and no biological concerns. Large pot limits require buoy tags which can be expensive, also enforcement concerns. fishery managed by size/sex, no quota.
- All other areas have pot limits – Southeast has limited entry and 4 tiers 75 to 300, based on type of limited entry permit. West Coast is similar and vessels cap out around 500 pots
- Proposal reflects changing nature of fishery, pots so thick can't run a boat through them. Hear of 1500 to 1800 and preemption of grounds. When seeing this type of increase important to limit. Inners bays seeing saturation of crab gear.
- Important to have a CPUE graph with increase or decrease with increased pots, generally low, 2-3 crabs per pot, sometimes up to 6-9 crabs. Now with increased harvests CPUE back down and appears through effort.
- Pot limit may make the fishery unviable with 2 crab CPUE if have 500 pot limit.
- Around Kodiak average is 630 pots, some have up to 1,200.
- If stabilize pots will it influence pulses? Not sure, may be able to drag out a few years. If limit gear on vessels still not limiting amount of gear in the water through more vessels.
- Have 29 vessels fishing now but may drop.
- Kodiak to Mexico has limits because regulates itself. West Coast boats have come up for years when worth it. Pot limits will not impact cycles.
- Public comment supported 266 and limits, will allow more individuals to fish, reduce impacts in bays and impacts on subsistence

**Motion to amend Duncan Field, Roland Ruoss 2<sup>nd</sup>. Vessels 50 feet and less 500 pots and vessels 50 feet and up 750 pots in the Kodiak district**

- May be too late for last years but could benefit in years ahead.
- May help to do local pot limits around villages.



- Pot limit may prevent folks from coming to Kodiak district from down south.
- May also reallocate gear among fleet as those who have more will sell and others will buy gear up to limit.
- May have negative impacts we cannot foresee.
- Not sure what limit is but should allow for opportunity for community discussion if want pot limits.
- Limiting pots tends to be a conservation measure.
- Limiting pots may reduce gear and vessel entanglements.
- May also consider a 60-foot split.
- Concern with a vessel size limit on pot, important to create a limit that tracks current fleet profile.
- Pot limit needs to be with limited entry - pot limit may trigger limited entry chase.

**Substitute motion for 700 pot limit by Alexis Kwachka, 2<sup>nd</sup> Roland Ruoss**

**Vote 8/4/1 passes**

2nd part of proposal 266, concurrent fishing with salmon:

- Prohibit or disincentivize participating in multiple fisheries concurrently.
- Long time dungie fishermen see increase in participation when stocks up.
- Concern with impacts on local fleet that already participate in both salmon and dungie fishery.
- Does not impact west coast fleet, only local fleet.

**Amendment by Duncan Fields, 2<sup>nd</sup> Roland Ruoss** -motion which changes pot limit will serve as proposal, delete all other language leave only pot limit, strike 2nd part of proposal

**Amendment passes 13/0**

**Proposal 266 as amended**

**Vote: passes 9/3/1 abstention**

**Proposal 267** – Establish South Peninsula District Dungeness crab pot limit

- South Peninsula pot limit of 500 pots

**Take no action**

**Proposal 268** – Department generated proposal to amend regulatory thresholds and establish new management measures for Kodiak District Tanner crab

Move to adopt Oliver Holm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rolan Ruoss



- New Tanner crab management plan – provides additional targeting for smaller harvest and more reflective of stock status. Update from 1999 with crab biologist Nat Nichols two analytical informing publications.
- Biological considerations:
  - update long-term abundance thresholds used to open the fishery
  - increase mature male abundance threshold in sections with declining or stable abundance
  - implement a ramped harvest control rule that incorporates both mature male and mature female abundance when determining maximum legal male exploitation rates
  - eliminate GHL doubling requirement needed to reopen a section after a closure the previous year
- Management considerations:
  - eliminates the 400,000-pound district minimum GHL
  - eliminates the requirement that at least 2 sections be open for a fishery to occur
  - changes the regulatory season closure date for the Semidi Island Overlap Section from March 31 to February 15
  - eliminate daylight only fishing hours in the Semidi Island Overlap Section
- Over all mostly updating biological components, including time series, plan to regularly update time series, perhaps every 6 years.
- Comparison of updated plan vs current (in Gray) - 50% requirement changing to allow for harvest with an average of thresholds of areas to 50% -100%
- Exploitation rate on legal mature males - reduce harvest rate to 20% which is more consistent with rate, never go to 30%. Question about reducing harvest rate and benefits to crab fishermen - the new strategy has a harvest control rule that reduces exploitation rate in response to crab abundance, provides more structure, no loss to fishermen as never go to 30% anyway, new rule offers guidance. Harvest rate increases based on average of male abundance, have to be above average to reach 20% harvest rate. When have set higher, 25%, fleet did not catch it, at 30% asking the fleet to catch one in 3 of available harvest. Generally, the higher the harvest rate the lower the CPUE.
- New control rate incrementally reduces harvest rate with reduced female average, the dimmer switch, females will never turn the fishery off but can reduce to 5% if do not find females.
- New strategy tailored to exploitation rates in the past which has resulted in a successful fishery over the last 20 years.
- A more conservative approach and inclusion of females does not result in lost opportunities.
- Survey not a census, more of a tracking mechanism of areas where they know crab are, tracking on estimates so very difficult to exceed a 20% harvest rate.
- Little change to Kodiak in the management area except GHL thresholds.



- Managers believe they could manage a single section with 100,000 lbs. because of increased fleet communications and ability to manage small amounts.
- How responsive to interannual variability? New plan very responsive, will allow harvest at top of ramp and fishing pressure when abundance high, can go with 20% and take one out of 3 years.
- With timing for Semidis, and recognizing that no one starts there, it may effectively do away with the fishery. AC may want to weigh in on timing. Currently inconsistent with all other tanner harvest. What is the CPUE which then leads to closure? When CPUE drops to 6 crab probably best not to fish on the stocks

**Move to amend** Semidis from 1/15 to 2/28 Duncan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Roland Ruoss  
Vote 12/0/ 1 abstain - passes

**Move to amend** to harvest rate from 20% to 30% Duncan Fields, 2<sup>nd</sup> Alexis Kwachka

- Concern with mortality if go with a higher exploitation rate, concern with impacts on crab stocks.
- Concerns about loss of opportunity without a 30% rate crab die off anyway. Don't have the chance to capture opportunity.
- Average over last 20 years 12%, would be great to get to 20%

**Vote on Amendment 1/12 oppose**

Note: AC minutes to reflect uniqueness of Semidi area and not meant to set precedence of limits on fishing times, other areas should remain the same.

**Main motion 13/0 Passes**

**Proposal 269** – Amend regulatory threshold and establish new Tanner crab management measures.

Move to adopt Duncan Fields, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wallace Fields

- Dept supports components consistent with proposal 268 but opposes 10,000 lb. GHL as too small to manage.
- Proposal seeks management tool to provide a fishery for small harvest, whatever minimal number can manage.
- Concern with impacts on small threshold of crab.
- Will provide a window of harvest opportunity before reaching 100,000 lbs. threshold. If there is a 50 or 75,000 lb. abundance then 100,000 lb. threshold prevents fishing there.



- Important to factor in accuracy of surveys and confidence in survey, may not have precision necessary to manage small amounts. 100,000 pounds provides a level of confidence.

**Motion to amend to 25,000 lbs.** Duncan Fields, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wallace Fields

**Vote: 10/3 passes**

**Main motion vote 1/12 Fails**

**Proposal 270** – Amend pot limits for Kodiak District Tanner crab

Move to adopt: Duncan Fields, 2<sup>nd</sup> Oliver Holm

- Maintain 20 pot limit up to 2,500,000 pounds and
- Increase by 10 if harvest hits 5,000,000.
- Currently 179 Tanner permits, 40 boats participated last year open, anticipate about 100 vessels this year.
- Dept. - for the last 20 years would have changed pot limit once
- Interest to maintain a small pot limit.
- Looking to mitigate concerns with expansion, looking for assurance.
- Looking to maintain a fishery for years ahead, can catch crab well with 20 pot limits.

**Vote 13/0 passes**

**Proposal 271** – Reduce size of stretched mesh escape webbing for *C. bairdi* Tanner crab pot gear in Registration Area J except in the Bering Sea District.

Move to adopt: Oliver Holms, 2<sup>nd</sup> Roland Ruoss

- Escape rings and mesh used to release crab.
- Kodiak larger than other regions.
- Mesh size now 7" and want 6 3/4".
- 5 inch ring is about same size as 7 inch mesh and would align mesh with escape rings.
- Smaller mesh catches more females, larger mesh means less females.
- Mesh size better than rings to realize small crab, less handling, support doing a panel or the whole pot.
- Proposal a superior way to release crab.
- Have it be optional, not mandatory.
- Why can't rings be legal requirement and fish any size mesh you want, can have larger mesh and rings.

**Proposal 273** – Golder King crab permit for data with poorly understood fishery





Move to adopt: Ron Kavanaugh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Alexis Kwachka

- Longline GKC in Kodiak area.
- Will help provide data for Golder King crab permit for data with poorly understood fishery.
- Very little effort, harvest information confidential, could be way to gather information.
- Crab do congregate at times and concern with impacts on dense aggregation with longline pot gear.
- Commissioner permit allows exploratory opportunity but department opposed to proposal a not supportive of efficiencies and potential impacts on crab aggregations.
- If longlining pots allowed, commissioner permit would most likely need to allow use as follow regulations.
- Commissioner permits have allowed to explore grounds with 75 single pots.

**Vote 0/13 oppose**

Proposal 275 Observer program minimum requirements

- Department submitted proposal looking to recruit crab observers into the weather vane scallop fishery

**AC takes no position**

5. Committee Comments:

- Next meeting to talk about transporters for deer
- Recommendation for future AC meetings: send reminders day before meeting and attach proposals we are discussing to emails

6) Set meeting date for discussion of Statewide BOG proposals (2/18 deadline)

- Next meeting date - 2nd week of February, Chair will send poll around

ADJOURN 9:57 pm

Minutes Recorded By: Theresa Peterson

Minutes Approved By: Paul Chervenak

Date: February 15, 2022