



Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRTF) February 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

The ABRTF is established for the purpose of exploring the issue of bycatch and providing recommendations to policy makers with the goal of improving the health and sustainability of Alaska's fisheries and protecting Alaska's record as a leader of fisheries' conservation and sustainability.

1. Call to order

Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRTF) meeting called to order at 9 AM by Chairman Jensen.

2. Roll call: acknowledge Task Force participants

Task Force Members present: John Jensen (Chair), Tommy Sheridan (Vice Chair), Ragnar Alstrom, Kevin Delaney, Duncan Fields, Mike Flores, Brian Gabriel, Linda Kozak, Stephanie Madsen, Raymond May, Erik Velsko, Senator Peter Micciche (joined later), Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, Representative Bryce Edgmon,

Other attendees: Karla Bush Department of Fish and Game, Jim Anderson Delegate for Commissioner Sande Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Maddison Goldman for senator Micciche, Kari Winkel Department of Fish and Game

3. Approve Agenda: Feb 11, 2022, Approved

4. Approve minutes: Jan 28, 2022, Approved

5. Old Business

a) Review draft work plan

- Chairmen Jensen suggests a work plan/steering committee. Members: John Jensen (chair), Sheridan (vice chair), Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, Stephanie Madsen, Linda Kozak, Duncan Fields, Senator Peter Micciche.
 - All Task Force members are welcome to these meetings.
- Work plan/Steering committee goals.
 1. Develop work plan and possible problem/mission statements
 2. Form subcommittees for the group at large
- Discussion of GOV AO order was had to try and provide direction to planning committee.

b) Establishment of subcommittees

Discussion between jurisdiction vs high value species as set out in the GOV AO was the main issue of setting the subcommittees. After much discussion regarding Jurisdiction, High value species, community input, and breaking things down further into jurisdiction/gear type/species. It was decided after a suggestion by Vice Chair Sheridan that the work plan/steering committee would also form the subcommittees.

c) Establish Task Force meeting Schedule

- Schedule a meeting every 3rd Tuesday or Thursday
 - April 19
 - May 17- Possibly in person

6. New Business: Q&A is between Task Force members and presenters only

- Request for dedicated web page for the Task force so that information can be posted there. Commissioner Vincent-Lang will have staff investigate this.
- a.) NPFMC presentation and staff Q&A (with Task Force members)**
 - Provided by Dave Witherell: Overview of bycatch management in North Pacific Groundfish fisheries (most high value in the state), Federal fisheries, and how the council is involved in these issues a copy can be provided upon request.
- b.) NOAA presentation and staff Q&A (with Task Force members)**
 - Provided by Glenn Merrill: Alaska Bycatch Review including value and volume of Alaska fisheries, an overview of what bycatch, and how stocks are defined by genetics copy can be provided upon request.
- c.) ADF&G presentation and staff Q&A (with Task Force members)**
 - Provided by Karla Bush: Overview of bycatch management in State Fisheries was provided by ADF&G a copy of that presentation can be provided upon request.

7. Public Comment

- 1) **Julie Kavanaugh, Kodiak resident Participates in Fed and SOA fisheries both SUB and CF:** Serves on the council and board advisory committees. Interested in serving on subcommittee, approves of sub committees by species wants sub committees to be available to the public to listen to and comment on.
- 2) **Brent Paine, Executive Director of United Catcher Boats:** UCB wants to be involved as a resource for bycatch information. Promotes incentive-based programs for decrease in bycatch and providing tools for fleets to use to reduce bycatch. Recommends catch share programs as well to minimize bycatch. Wants to promote work on salmon excluder devices to reduce bycatch, a long discussion of different bycatch reduction devices/ practices was had. Provided several instances of how UCB reduces bycatch, offered to provide presentation regarding bycatch reducers attempted by UCB.
- 3) **Robert Alverson, represents fishing vessel association out of Seattle:** Allow industry to go directly to observer companies to get coverage as this will reduce the cost vs. going through NMFS and make the Current NMFS operated partial observer program more robust. With observer coverage rates up more information could be provided to managers regarding bycatch.
- 4) **Ron Kavanaugh, Kodiak resident operates commercial fishing boats:** Follow up on previous comments made by Mr. Alverson. Central and western gulf observer data needed gaps there, more clarity on DMR for crab in pot fisheries. Thinks more data is required to make policy changes.
- 5) **Chris Woodley, Executive Director of Groundfish Forum:** Interested in being a resource to the committee regarding ground fish. Willing to participate on an industry-based subcommittee or groundfish based subcommittee.
- 6) **Karen Pletnikoff, Environment and Safety program admin for the Aleutian and Pribilof islands association:** Wants to offer input to subcommittees on directed subsistence fisheries, personal use, and sport fisheries. Feels that it is important to have the input from all user groups in the room at the same time Appreciates the ability for public input on bycatch.
- 7) **Cory Lescher, Alaska Bering sea crabbers' association:** Interested in being a resource to the committee regarding crab fisheries. Noted working on reducing bycatch in crab fisheries and willing to provide that data. Interested in handling practices on crab caught by other fisheries.

- 8) **Rebecca Skinner, Alaska whitefish trawlers association, Kodiak based:** Agrees with need to have Task Force create a focused problem statement. Thinks it is important that other issues not just bycatch do contribute to fisheries issues, while not the focus it is important to acknowledge these things happen. Subcommittee structure and composition important, looking forward to continuing opportunities to engage and comment. Identified rationalization program as a priority.
- 9) **Patrick O'Donnell, Alaska whitefish trawlers association, Kodiak based:** Excluder use is curtailed due to fish size getting smaller. Wants the hatcheries impacts on wild stock in relation to bycatch considered.
- 10) **Serena Fitka, Executive Director for Yukon River drainage fisheries association:** Wants the task force to discuss preventative measures to bycatch not just what happens after bycatch occurs. Offered self and the association as a resource for the Task Force. Provided information on Yukon salmon meetings every Tuesday at 1pm. June-July-August.

8. Task Force Comments

Interested in information regarding bycatch by foreign fleets, Commissioner offered to speak with the coast guard regarding getting some information.

Task Force members thankful for State and Federal participation as well as public comment and look forward to future meetings resulting in policy decisions that can be provided to the Governor.

9. Next Meeting Date March 9, 2022

10. Adjournment by 3:21 pm