

Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force

Bering Sea & Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee

DRAFT Gulf of Alaska Tanner Crab Summary Presentations, Research Ideas and Bycatch Management Suggestions

Administrative Order Tasks

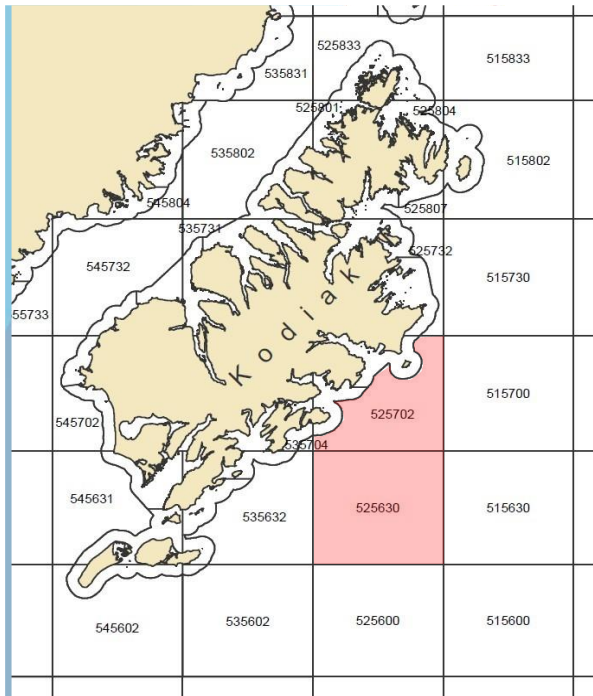
Study what impacts bycatch has on fisheries.

1. Evaluate and recommend policies informed by a better understanding of the issue of bycatch of high-value Alaska fishery resources.
2. Ensure state agencies are leveraging available resources to better understand the issue of bycatch.
3. Utilize the best available science to inform policy makers and the public about these issues.

Presentations on April 4th, April 26th and May 31st

- ADF&G - Tanner crab stock status and management in Kodiak, Chignik and South Peninsula districts
- Dr. Craig Rose – Impacts of modified non-pelagic trawl sweep gear on crab bycatch and bycatch Mortality
- Karla Bush – Two presentations
 1. Tanner crab bycatch in the GOA groundfish fisheries and bycatch mitigation measures in place
 2. Catch of groundfish by non-pelagic trawl and fixed gear in Central Gulf areas with high Tanner crab abundance
- Economic information was provided from the State of Alaska COAR reports via email to committee members
- Fixed and trawl gear industry presentations were given on April 4th and May 31st regarding issues to address, research recommendations and additional bycatch management measures to consider.

Information below is slide 25 from the ADF&G presentation to the Crab Committee on April 4th. The full presentation is under the April 4th meeting information on the Task Force website.



525702 and 525630 combined

Tanner trawl survey abundance (2017-2021)

34.1% of Tanner abundance estimate
 #1 and #3 stat areas for Tanner abundance

Tanner harvest (2018-2022)

23.9% of Tanner harvest
 #3 and #6 stat areas for Tanner harvest

Non-pelagic trawl (NPT) harvest (2017-2021)

26.4% of NPT harvest
 #1 and #3 stat area for NPT harvest

Pacific cod pot gear harvest (2017-2021)

7.3% of the Pacific cod pot gear harvest
 #7 and #17 stat area for NPT harvest

Gulf of Alaska Tanner Crab Bycatch Research Recommendations

Alaska Department of Fish & Game:

- Need better estimates of total fishery mortality in the groundfish and directed crab fisheries
- Improve understanding of preferred habitat at various life stages and identify critical crab habitat
- Seasonal movement and habitat use relative to groundfish seasons
- Trawl fishing effects/habitat modification (EFH considerations)
- Improved understanding of recruitment limitations and natural mortality estimates (groundfish diet/predation)

Fixed Gear (Provided by Theresa Peterson):

- Support ADF&G research priorities
- Study and update discard mortality rates in directed and non-directed trawl and fixed gear fisheries

Gulf of Alaska Tanner Crab Bycatch Research Recommendations Continued...

Trawl Gear (Provided by Chris Woodley and Rebecca Skinner):

- Improve data gaps regarding uncertainty of bycatch/discards in the directed Tanner crab fishery and state pot cod fishery
- Study and update discard mortality rates in trawl fisheries
- Additional research needed on unobserved mortality for pelagic gear and modified trawl sweep gear
- Research closed areas to trawling which may contribute to groundfish predation on Tanner crab

Recommendations for GOA Tanner Crab Bycatch Management

Trawl Gear:

- Consider revising current closed areas to trawling in the Central Gulf
- Implement observer coverage on directed Tanner crab and state pot cod fishery vessels to better quantify removals
- Possible consideration of Gulf of Alaska trawl rationalization program

Fixed Gear – Written and Oral Presentations:

- Require full retention of Tanner crab in all GOA trawl fisheries for a period of two years and electronic monitoring to ensure compliance
- Require 100% observer coverage for a period of three years for non-pelagic trawl fisheries in areas 525702 and 525630
- Trawl vessels should declare before leaving port if they will be on a pelagic or non-pelagic trip
- Review and consider revising current closed areas to trawling in the Central Gulf
- Directed crab fisheries adopt best handling practices
- Consider gear modifications to reduce crab discard mortality such as escape ring regulation changes, increase web size, longer soak times, and temperature sensitivity issues

Areas of Agreement between Trawl and Fixed Gear:

- Additional and updated research is needed on assumed discard mortality rates for the directed fishery and non-directed fixed and trawl gear fisheries
- Some agreement on reviewing closed areas to trawling in the Central Gulf