



## Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 09:00 am (AST)

### Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87302390949?pwd=Q0o0VTMvNGtaQWNTSUUvUks2MDIzUT09>

833 548 0282 US Toll-free

877 853 5257 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 873 0239 0949

Passcode: 062122

**Task Force members:** John Jensen (Chair), Tommy Sheridan (Vice Chair), Ragnar Alstrom, Director Jim Anderson, Kevin Delaney, Representative Bryce Edgmon, Duncan Fields, Mike Flores, Brian Gabriel, George Guy, Linda Kozak, Stephanie Madsen, Raymond May, Senator Peter Micciche, Karma Ulvi, Erik Velsko, Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang

1. Call to order at 9:00 am AST
2. Roll call: introduction of committee and ABRT members. Members present: John Jensen (chair), Tommy Sheridan (vice-chair), Rep. Bryce Edgmon, Senator Peter Micciche, Ragnar Alstrom, Kevin Delaney, Brian Gabriel, Linda Kozak, Stephanie Madsen, Karma Ulvi
3. Approve agenda: Motion to approve by S Madsen. Seconded by B Gabriel.
4. Approve minutes: May 17, 2022. Motion to approve by L Kozak. Seconded by K Delaney.
5. Old business: Updates from committees
  - a.) Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska crab committee: Linda Kozak provided a summary report of topics and presentations discussed thus far. Focus during first three meetings was on GOA Tanner crab. Last meeting, they started discussing Bristol Bay red king crab and Bering Sea Tanner and snow crab. That topic continues next meeting. Plan to finalize recommendations in August.
  - b.) Western Alaska salmon committee: Stephanie Madsen provided overview of topics covered and subcommittee status.
  - c.) Gulf of Alaska halibut and salmon committee: Brian Gabriel provided overview of topics covered and subcommittee status.
  - d.) Science, Technology, and Innovation committee: Tommy Sheridan provided overview of first organizational meeting. Will work with other committees going forward to fill gaps/needs with other committees.

6. New business: Presentations

a). Partial coverage Observer Program, NMFS – Phil Ganz. Presentation covered a brief history of the program, effort in full and partial coverage categories, and detailed information about how the partial coverage program works. Randomly selected fishing trips are monitored under the partial coverage program and data from monitored trips are used to estimate prohibited species catch and discards that occur on unmonitored trips. Random sampling improves the accuracy and increasing the number of sampled trips improves the precision of the estimates. Once a baseline level of partial coverage is afforded, additional observer days are allocated towards gear types that have more variable Chinook PSC, halibut PSC, and discards such as trawl and hook-and-line fishing trips. The annual Observer report evaluates the performance of the program relative to its objectives and examines whether expected coverage rates were obtained; evidence of spatial and/or temporal bias; if areas fished, days fished, and species landed were similar across monitored trips and unmonitored trips; and the precision of the estimates for different species. Information from the partial coverage program is used by inseason management to close fisheries if a total allowable catch limit or PSC limit is reached.

Questions from Committee:

S Madsen: Slide 5 – Effort in full and partial coverage: There are a lot of vessels in the partial coverage program in the GOA. Do you know what percentage is fixed vs. trawl vessels?

Answer: Mostly fixed gear vessels.

K Ulvi: How do you keep track of how many trips a sector, for example the trawl fleet, are taking? Answer: Every vessel participating in partial observer coverage program must log their fishing trips before they are taken so that trips can be randomly selected for observer coverage. Fish tickets are used to account for all trips taken.

When they log their trips, do they list where they intend to fish? Answer: No, only the port they leave from; they do not report destination or species targeted, but that information is reported on the fish ticket. One exception to this is pelagic trawl trips for pollock covered under electronic monitoring, that fishery target is known ahead of time.

S Madsen.: Is there a complete count of all salmon caught? Answer: No, there is a full census for observed vessels and those data are used to estimate salmon PSC on unmonitored trips.

S Madsen.: Other than the observer program for Bering Sea crab is there observer coverage in other state fisheries? Clarity provided by Karla Bush: In state water Pacific cod and Tanner crab fisheries in the GOA there is no observer coverage.

K Delany: How do we know that observer coverage and bycatch monitoring are adequate in the GOA to determine if the level of bycatch is not a major problem? Answer: Bycatch is sampled in GOA. Bycatch is not unknown. Estimates are known and updated as new data becomes available.

B Gabriel: Are there any information gaps or funding gaps? What recommendations would you advocate for? Answer: Many times, discussions lead to advocating for 100% monitoring.

Important to keep in mind that increases in coverage, for example from 70 – 100%, may not generate significantly better data for estimation and the costs of doing so can be prohibitively expensive. With many fisheries, below 100% observer monitoring yields sufficient data, is logistically simpler, and less expensive to fund.

S Madsen: trawling often has smaller, more concentrated, footprint. How does that relate to observer coverage? Answer: Logistically, the trawl fishery is easier to monitor because the trips are shorter, and they tend to fish in fewer areas.

7. Public comment: three-minute (3) limit to individual comments

Julie Bonney: Thanks to Phil Ganz for explaining coverage percentages. Partial coverage is difficult for the public to understand. Difficult to explain to the public and stakeholders why partial coverage in some fisheries yields adequate data for analysis of PSC bycatch and bycatch mortality.

8. Committee comments:

L Kozak: regarding Council's salmon motion to review recommendations of the ABRT, add a discussion of that to the next meeting agenda.

Also need to get some direction from leadership as to when committee reports and recommendations should be finalized and how to present them, so they are provided consistently. Some specific direction on what is being sought and how to prepare would be helpful.

S Madsen: support format/template recommendations. The western Alaska salmon committee will likely be working on recommendations in September.

Committee agrees to have a group discussion about formatting, how to present, when to get everything ready. Will discuss at next meeting.

9. Next Meeting Date: July 19, 2022, at 9 am.

10. Adjournment at 10:35 am.