



Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska crab committee Tuesday August 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83772677692?pwd=UT12Z0NZVWE3UlliMWQ5SG9xdzhhUT09>

Committee members: Linda Kozak (Chair), Erik Velsko, Stephanie Madsen, Kevin Delaney

1. Call to order
Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska crab committee meeting called to order at 9:01 AM by Chair Linda Kozak
2. Roll call: of committee and ABRT members
Committee members present: Linda Kozak (Chair), Stephanie Madsen, Eric Velsko, Kevin Delaney joined 9:06
ABRT members present: Chair John Jensen joined later
3. Approve agenda: August 9, 2022, approved switched which research priority to be discussed first
4. Approve Minutes: June 17, 2022 (approved), and July 26, 2022 (approved)
5. Old Business
 - Chair Kozak noted this was a place holder for industry to make any further information presentations or provide additional information. There have been no such requests so we will be moving on to New Business.
6. New business:
 - a) Review and discuss Bering Sea crab research recommendations
 - i. Chair Kozak put together a reference document of research topics to discuss in no particular order. Requested that John Gauvin and Scott Goodman provide recommendations of priorities to best help the subcommittee move forward. Mentioned that categories were created to provide a grouping for the research recommendations. Seeking guidance on how to structure the priorities. Noted that the pot cod gear group mentioned knowing where crab are in the winter due to fishing and asked if either Scott or John spoke to the person claiming this knowledge. Request committee members for input on how research priorities should be structured.
 - ii. Member Madsen requested that John G. and Scott G. provide some further insight into what bins these recommendations may fall under. Believes that there is a need to weed out the research options a bit and combine some similar asks. There should also be a

way to determine if some of these projects have already been started but possibly not completed? Agrees that there are themes and instances where research priorities can be combined. Requests some more context around the prioritizations and reasons why this is important.

- iii. Scott Goodman promotes filling gaps in the information which is why the tagging gap is high priority given how much data it could mean. A survey of crab prior to tagging possibly in the winter/seasonal surveys to help tie movement and distribution together. Agrees there is overlap on several of the research areas/topics. Feels there is more information needed in regard to mating and molting so that there can be a more refined data set for this cycle of the crabs life. Want to get cameras tied in with parts of projects where it makes the most sense. Movement and recruitment (mating/molting) should be highest research priorities. Values the prioritization of research and a group like this to guide what research should be considered most important.
 - iv. John Gauvin first reiterates that mating and molting timing research is very important to better manage the fisheries so as to avoid these critical times in the life cycle. Not sure that a winter survey with pots would be useful. The real question is when they are molting are they attracted to bait? Will they go into the pot? If not than a winter survey might be useless as it would only capture a small portion of the population. Having a pot survey and a trawl survey overlapping might provide really good info on the different types of surveys and what these types of surveys tell us.
 - v. Member Delaney Considered looking forward to this meeting the different bins of research. First would be looking at the biology of crab, there are critical life phases and distribution that we just have a gap of knowledge about. Second confidence in estimates of bycatch such as accuracy and preciseness of observer assessments. Third reducing bycatch should reduce dead loss that occurs from gear and deck practices. Fourth tie things into technology for communication of best practices, hotspot management, etc.
 - vi. Member Velsko sought to confirm that there is no regular pot survey was confirmed that they are not annual and due to this nonstandard survey method leaves gaps in knowledge. Likes how the document has already been structured if you streamline too much than you might leave out priorities that other groups deem important.
- b) Review and discuss Gulf of Alaska Tanner crab research recommendations Stopped at 55:15
- i. Chair Kozak Requested that Rebecca Skinner and/or Julie Bonney help to prioritize these research requests much as John and Scott did for the Bering Sea. Also commented that in looking at the list there are some similar research priorities that could be combined. Notes that it is challenging to acquire funds and staff to do these research projects and feels that the state would be a good entity to spearhead this activity and help to promote a way for different entities to work together. Interested in updating some of the groundfish fisheries studies done decades ago. Chair Kozak will be looking for common things and creating summary paragraphs for both the Bering Sea and Gulf research recommendations. Thanked the department for presentations and research recommendations.
 - ii. Rebecca Skinner Appreciates the collection of data by Chair Kozak, supports better understanding of dead loss on crab during fisheries interaction. Feels this is the most important information to understand bycatch in this fishery. Also wants further studies on predation by groundfish on crab. Feels there is less concern with static closed areas in the Gulf, it is important to note concern with managing bycatch with static areas that don't move with the changes in the crab and their location. Stated that anything static is unhelpful since these types of management tools cannot properly respond to conditions as they occur.

- iii. Julie Bonney There are three main points that need to be researched discard mortality in the fisheries, closed areas that are static as management needs to be updated, and the things that the department has highlighted resonate with what the trawl and pot fisheries have suggested. Commented back to Member Velsko that regarding questions about surveys regarding static closed areas. Hard Caps for crabs and the co-op tool with rolling hotspots. Supports a rationalization of the GOA crab program so as to avoid the race for fishing and allow for further bycatch reduction through quotas and a fair distribution.
- iv. Member Velsko noted in the Gulf that there are 2 static areas that come into question. Supposes they will not really be moving they have been there for forty years. Also speaks to if you don't have a closed area what are the other options? What are the more advanced ways to manage? No one has suggested anything that really would work. Chair Kozak notes that this is more of a management issue.
- v. Member Madsen noted that if there is any research related to the closed areas and how that could be data used to further better management would be something to discuss with this group. Possibly recommend specific entities to come together and have a discussion followed by a more robust working relationship and coordinated effort moving forward.

c) General Research Recommendations

- i. Chari Kozak presented this section as reoccurring themes in research so as to encourage things that will help facilitate research down the road.
- ii. Member Madsen supports encouraging these 3 bullet points of general recommendations.
- iii. Member Delaney Also agrees with the list of general research needs does not think they might be as helpful as Chair and other members feel they might be. Mentions that Hatcheries do need to be discussed and recommendations should be made.
- iv. Member Velsko likes the recommendations and agrees to work with Science and Tech committee to wordsmith them a bit more. Would be good to get State involved in identifying priorities.

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

- John Gauvin: Is worried that Trawl surveys would not capture crab in a meaningful way using fishery data to determine where the crab are does not work well. Seasonal surveys are really what is needed.
- Craig Lowenberg: Appreciates discussions and recommendations and mentioned for committee to please put forth rationalization. Chair Kozak notes this is a management recommendation
- Laine Welch: No discussion on NPFMC paper in April regarding pelagic gear and how often it contacts the bottom. Any research planned on pelagic gear on the bottom? Any discussion on new regulations for pelagic gear in light of the council paper findings. Chair Kozak note this is a management discussion not research.
- Karen Pletnikoff: Commented that Ms. Welch's comment was on research on pelagic gear on bottom not just a management action.

8. Crab committee and ABRT comments

- Members Velsko and Delaney thanked Chair Kozak for what was put together and a meaningful discussion.
- ABRT Chair Jensen appreciated the meeting and a copy of the paper had for discussion
- Chair Kozak noted that the draft of the summary is to be posted to the ABRT site for the public and other ABRT members to view.

9. Next Meeting Date: August 30, 2022, 9am
10. Adjournment by 10:49 am