

# Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force

## Bering Sea & Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee

Date: August 30, 2022  
To: Science, Technology and Innovation Committee  
From: Crab Committee  
Subject: Research Priorities

### General Bycatch Research Goals

- Develop state bycatch research priorities to share with funding entities that would help identify and acquire research funds.

*Example: ADF&G could create a process where industry, communities and tribes could participate in developing bycatch research priorities from the state's perspective*

- Implement strategies to encourage and facilitate industry/agency cooperative research to reduce bycatch and associated mortality.

*Example: Encourage a more streamlined industry cost recovery process for proposed industry/agency projects*

- Create methods for collaboration with other research entities to better track proposed or funded bycatch research, along with developing opportunities for cooperative projects and combined reporting of findings.

*Example: Host an annual workshop between agencies, research entities and industry to better collaborate on proposed bycatch research projects*

**Gulf of Alaska:** A research recommendation for Gulf of Alaska Tanner crab bycatch was highlighted as requiring management measures and experimental fishery permit requirement considerations:

- Full retention of Tanner crab in all GOA trawl fisheries for a period of two years to better quantify removals

Following are bycatch research recommendations specific to crab in all regions of the state.

- **Address observed and unobserved mortality caused by gear interactions**
  - Study the impacts of repeated capture/discarding of females and sublegals
  - Assumed discard mortality rates should be studied and updated for all gear groups
  - Address data gaps regarding uncertainties in the directed crab fishery and unobserved state pot cod fishery
  - Research habitat disturbance utilizing tools such as the fishing effects model
  - Study effects of bottom contact gear on mating and molting crab

- **Continued research on critical crab habitat to better inform on open and closed areas for commercial fishing activity**
  - Conduct tagging studies and other research to determine seasonal crab movement and distribution
  - Work to improve understanding of preferred habitat at various life stages, including mating and molting time and areas
  - Examine VMS use in developing Essential Fish Habitat models and ways to improve this data
  
- **Studies to help reduce/avoid incidental interactions and associated mortality**
  - Fund and support gear modification research for all gear types
  - Use technology to encourage hot spot reporting