

**Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force
Bering Sea & Gulf of Alaska
Crab Committee**



***Report
October 12, 2022***

Bering Sea & Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee

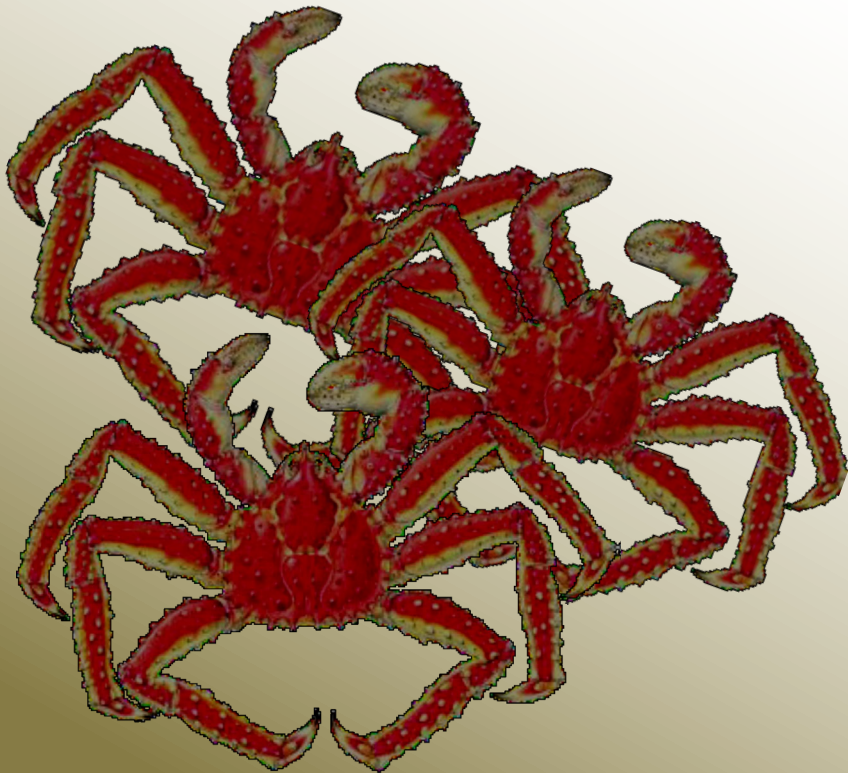
Committee Members

Linda Kozak, Chair

Kevin Delaney

Stephanie Madsen

Erik Velsko



Meeting Information

*Eight meetings between April 4th and September 6th
15 agency/organization and industry presentations*

Gulf of Alaska Crab Presentations

- ADF&G Tanner Crab Update: *Stock Status and Management in the Kodiak, Chignik and South Peninsula Districts*
- ADF&G Bycatch Update: *Tanner Crab Bycatch and Groundfish Catch in the Central Gulf of Alaska*
- Four presentations by the trawl and fixed gear industries providing research priority and management recommendations





Bering Sea Crab Presentations

- Researcher Dr. Craig Rose: *Impacts of Modified Non-pelagic Trawl Sweep Gear on Crab Bycatch and Bycatch Mortality*
- ADF&G: *Comprehensive BSAI Crab Overview*
- Dr. Brad Harris: *Seascape-scale Modeling of Benthic Habitat Disturbance From Commercial Fishing Activities (Fishing Effects Model)*
- Dr. Diana Stram and Sam Cunningham: *North Pacific Fishery Management Council Review*
- Multiple industry presentations, including representatives of the crab directed fishery, pot cod fishery and trawl groundfish fisheries

Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Industry Groups Providing Recommendations

Fixed Gear

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers
Alaska Marine Conservation Council
Bering Sea Pot Cod Association
Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation
Kodiak Crab Alliance

Trawl Gear

Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
Alaska Seafood Cooperative
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association
Groundfish Forum



State Engagement Recommendation

- **Establish a way to better communicate bycatch information to the public, including website development, outreach and possible forums**

State Engagement Issues for Full Task Force Review

- ✓ Create a bycatch policy advisor position in the governor's office or as a part of ADF&G
- ✓ Use the Task Force as a template to create a permanent bycatch advisory body
- ✓ Develop a State of Alaska bycatch policy

Management Recommendations

Gulf of Alaska

- **Consider Gulf of Alaska trawl rationalization as a tool to manage bycatch**
- **Review and consider revising open and closed areas for bottom trawl in the Gulf of Alaska.**
- **Require 100% observer coverage on all Gulf of Alaska non-pelagic trawl catcher vessels.**
- **Following gear modification research, consider regulations for the directed crab fishery and pot cod fishery to reduce incidental take and discard mortality.**
- **Address lack of monitoring in the directed Tanner crab and state waters pot cod fisheries.**

Management Recommendations Bering Sea – Fixed Gear

- **Recommend a rationalization program for the > 60' pot cod vessels as a way to manage bycatch and examine prohibited species caps as part of a rationalization program.**
- **Evaluate observer coverage and monitoring for the directed crab and pot cod fisheries.**
- **Evaluate possible seasonal closures in hot spot areas to pot gear both inside and outside of state managed waters.**

Management Recommendations Bering Sea – Trawl Gear

- **Review effectiveness of fixed open and closed areas for trawling and continue to examine methods to develop flexible spatial management.**
- **Examine impacts of counting prohibited species caps for the entire Bering Sea area.**

Management Recommendations Bering Sea Issues Without Consensus

- **Consider revising the pelagic gear definition to limit bottom contact.**
- **Examine the impact of retaining all legal crab and counting toward IFQ.**