



C4 BSAI Crab Specifications

October 2019

Action Memo

- Council Staff: Jim Armstrong
- Other Presenters: Dr. Martin Dorn (Co-Chair, AFSC Seattle), Katie Palof, (Co-Chair, ADF&G Juneau), Dr. Buck Stockhausen (AFSC Seattle), Dr. Cody Szuwalski (AFSC Seattle), Dr. Jon Richar (AFSC Kodiak)
- Action Required:
1. Review/approve 2018 BSAI Crab SAFE Report
 2. Review Crab Plan Team Report
 3. Recommend final 2019/2020 OFL/ABC specifications for 5 stocks
 4. Review/recommend projection scenario for SMBKC rebuilding plan

BACKGROUND

The Crab Plan Team (CPT) met from September 16-20, 2019 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle, WA to review final 2019 stock assessments and other issues, develop recommendations as necessary, and update information provided in the BSAI Crab Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report (attached). A joint meeting of the CPT and Groundfish Plan Teams was held on Sept 16 of the meeting week and is addressed under a separate agenda item. The CPT received updates on survey catches, fishery performance, rebuilding analysis for Saint Matthew blue king crab, and crab research. An overview of all of the issues covered at the meeting is provided in the CPT meeting report from the meeting which is also attached.

SAFE/Stock Status Update

The CPT reviews final stock assessments at three different meetings (Jan, May, Sept) during the year to accommodate the timing of crab fishery seasons and surveys. The attached final 2019 Crab SAFE report is considered current and complete for all ten BSAI crab stocks managed through the BSAI Crab FMP, including SAFE chapters reviewed earlier this year and those updated in previous years that are on a biennial and triennial review schedule.

The five stocks for which final 2019/20 specifications will be determined at this meeting are:

- EBS snow crab
- Bristol Bay red king crab
- EBS Tanner crab
- Pribilof Is. red king crab
- St. Matthew blue king crab

Currently, Aleutian Islands golden king crab, EBS snow crab, and Pribilof Island red king crab are estimated to be above B_{MSY} for 2019/20 while EBS Tanner crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, and Norton Sound red king crab are estimated to be below B_{MSY} . Saint Matthew blue king crab was declared to be overfished in October 2018. Pribilof Islands blue king crab stock remains overfished and is estimated to be well below its MSST. Overfishing is not occurring for any crab stocks.

Crab Stock Assessments

The CPT has general recommendations for all assessments and specific comments related to individual assessments. The team recommends four stocks be placed in Tier 3 (EBS snow crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, EBS Tanner crab and Aleutian Island golden king crab), four stocks in Tier 4 (St. Matthew blue king crab, Pribilof Islands blue king crab, Pribilof Islands red king crab, and Norton Sound red king crab) and two stocks in Tier 5 (Pribilof Islands golden king crab, and Western Aleutian Islands red king crab).

The CPT developed general recommendations for all assessments and specific comments related to individual assessments. All of the CPT recommendations are intended for consideration in developing the next scheduled assessment update. Comments related to individual assessments are contained within the attached Crab Plan Team Report.

St Matthew Rebuilding

St Matthew blue king crab was declared overfished in October 2018, so a rebuilding plan is in need of development and review and implementation needs to be timed so that the plan can be effective by October 2020. At the September 2019 meeting, the CPT reviewed information related to identifying an appropriate B_{MSY} rebuilding target as well as recruitment scenarios that affect the timing of rebuilding. The SSC will need to recommend both a rebuilding target (B_{MSY}) and timeframe so that analysis accompanying the forthcoming rebuilding plan can focus on an accepted rebuilding scenario.