

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
February 7-10, 2023 - Seattle, WA

C1 Snow Crab Rebuilding

The Advisory Panel (AP) recommends that the Council select Alternative 2 Option 2 as the preferred alternative for final action for rebuilding Bering Sea snow crab.

Motion passed 18/0

Rationale in Favor of Motion:

- The analysis shows that the maximum time to rebuild the snow crab stock is 10 years and that fishing impacts from both directed and bycatch fisheries do not significantly change the timeline to rebuild between the options. The action alternatives and options in the rebuilding plan will all have severe social and economic impacts on the crab industry and the associated fishing communities. In order to minimize economic impacts while rebuilding and to provide opportunity for a directed fishery which supports harvesters, processors, and communities, the AP recommends the Council adopt Alternative 2 Option 2, as the preferred alternative for final action. The opportunity for a small directed snow crab fishery is especially important for a community like St. Paul where the continuation of subsistence opportunities is tied to the commercial fishery.
- The preferred alternative retains existing conservation measures within the ADF&G harvest strategy that closes the directed fishery at low levels of abundance. The preferred alternative best complies with the Magnuson-Stevens Act requirement to rebuild the stock as quickly as possible while taking into account the needs of fishing communities.
- The rebuilding plan is primarily focused on timeline requirements to comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Act as a result of the overfished determination from October 2021.
- The current suite of rebuilding alternatives and options do not include conservation or monitoring measures but there is potential for additional precautionary approaches through adoption of additional management measures. The AP encourages the Council to consider these for a trailing action. Inclusion of such measures may benefit conservation and provide the snow crab rebuilding plan a higher likelihood of success within Tmax. The AP noted this was important, particularly given increasing uncertainties around climate impacts, continued fishing, and habitat impacts. For guidance on what may be considered, the AP noted that the Crab Plan Team recognized positive benefits to several conservation and monitoring measures in their January 2023 meeting minutes under C2, with particular focus on reducing prohibited species catch limits, removing floors, and aligning management/monitoring boundaries.
- All sectors have the opportunity to reduce their fishing and habitat impacts on snow crab and can take voluntary actions to do so to help rebuild snow crab.

- This motion is responsive to the 10 National Standards. Particularly #s 2, 4, 6, and 8:
 - National Standard 2: The best available science is that Alternative 2 Option 2 is not expected to extend the rebuilding timeline over Alternative 2, Option 1.
 - National Standard 4: This action seeks to be fair and equitable to both directed and non-directed users.
 - National Standard 6: This action and future periodic reviews required by the MSA will allow for variation and contingencies.
 - National Standard 8: This action considers the needs of fishing communities and provides for sustained participation as well as minimization of adverse economic impacts.