

Public Testimony

Agenda C-3: Crab/Halibut Interceptions in Bristol Bay and
Agenda D-2: King and Tanner Crab FMPs

Bert Larkins, Marine Resources Company Int'l, referred to Mr. McVey's letter regarding a trawl closure for bairdi in the Eastern Bering Sea. Mr. Larkins said he didn't understand how this problem could have arisen so suddenly. Most of the boats who fish for MRCI are small and couldn't necessarily move farther out if they were forced out of the current areas. He said the trawl groups have been trying to come up with a satisfactory solution to the interception of crab, but that crab fishermen haven't participated very much. The exvessel value of the yellowfin sole and flounder fishery in the Bering Sea to the U.S. is in excess of \$150 million. MRCI supports the consolidated trawler proposal.

Walt Pasternak, Sitka. He supports a proposal which would eliminate "hard-on-bottom" trawling in the critical nursery areas. He also supports the FVOA proposal and thinks a cap of 25,000 halibut is too high without observer coverage.

Ted Painter, Oregon, supports a closure of the area north of 58°N and west of 164°W for conservation reasons. If there is going to be a king crab fishery in the future, action must be taken now. Supports the consolidated trawlers' proposal and also supports the AP position on the Kodiak emergency order.

Bill Jacobson, Kodiak, feels the crab areas may be the most fragile in the U.S. and thinks the Council needs to proceed cautiously to avoid destruction of any resource. Supports crab coalition's proposal.

Kevin Kaldestad, Seattle, said the area bounded by 58°N and 164°W should be closed to trawling.

Morris Hansen, F/V ALASKAN MONARCH, Seattle, said his main concern is that the crab are not improving. He supports the proposal by the Coalition of Concerned Crab Fishermen.

Vern Hall, Kodiak, said his main concern is that of the critical status of king crab stocks and this should take priority over yellowfin sole CPUEs. He would support a cod fishery within 25 fathoms with observers aboard.

Arni Thomson, Seattle, is concerned that king crab stocks will not rebound if they are caught in large numbers as bycatch. He supports a closure bounded by 58°N and 164°W and the IPHC's recommendation on halibut caps.

Robert Haerling, Sitka, said he would like to see joint ventures out of the Pot Sanctuary in April and May when crab are most vulnerable. He supports the proposal by the Coalition of Concerned Crab Fishermen.

Kris Poulsen, Seattle, said the Council should look at the complex as a whole and develop a comprehensive plan, not just manage from one year to the next. He supports the original proposal by the Coalition of Concerned Crab Fishermen. Trawlers have the option of fishing elsewhere, but this area is the only place red king crab fishermen can make a living.

Fred Yeck, Consolidated Trawlers, said they have worked hard to come up with a satisfactory proposal while the crab fishermen have not tried to compromise.

Ted Evans, Alaska Factory Trawlers, support the Consolidated Trawler proposal. They have tried to find other places to fish, but these areas are the ones where the best concentrations of fish are. The trawler proposal allows for the protection of the most sensitive crab area for a year.

Dave Harville, Alaska Dragger Assn, said he doesn't feel there is a need for a closure because the predator-prey relationships need to be looked into before such a decision is made. He would support the Consolidated Trawlers proposal.

Hugh Reilly, Westward Trawlers, supports the Consolidated Trawler proposal.

Dave Fraser, fishes with the yellowfin/sole fleet. They recognize there is a problem and they support some sort of moratorium. In the coming year they feel it is imperative to do underwater research with submersibles; more study on the predator-prey relationship, and a more indepth analysis of the economic impact of the various options.

Fred File, Petersburg Vessel Owners Assn., support the proposal by the Coalition of Concerned Crab fishermen.

Gary Loverich, NET Systems, said new gear should lessen the trawl impact on crab.

Gary Embree, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union, supports Proposal IB; crabs and halibut need to be protected for conservation reasons.

Tom Casey, Coalition of Concerned Crab Fishermen, said that crab predators should be removed to protect the crab, but at OY levels and outside the Pot Sanctuary area. Supports closing the area bounded by 58°N & 164°W.

Richard Draves, Northern Deep Sea Fisheries. His company actively supports the Consolidated Trawler proposal.

Ron Peterson, Coalition of Concerned Crab Fishermen, disputed the earlier testimony that crab fishermen have not tried to come to a satisfactory compromise with the trawlers. He said they have tried to become involved and that the trawlers are not giving up anything. The trawlers should not be allowed to fish the area during the molting periods.

Eric Olsen, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union, is concerned with protecting crab and halibut stocks.

Don McCaughran, IPHC, said that halibut stocks in the Bering Sea are not healthy and haven't been for several years. They would like to see a cap on the total halibut bycatch allowed in the Bering Sea. Dr. McCaughran mentioned that the 1980 halibut year class seems to be missing from their surveys and they feel it is the fault of the trawl fishery.

Dr. Lee Alverson, Natural Resource Consultants, spoke on predator/prey relationships, noting that available data, though not extensive, indicate that the removal of groundfish predators in the Bering Sea may be beneficial to the crab stocks.