

D1 Snow Crab Bycatch
Council Motion – February 6, 2016

Purpose and Need Statement

Management measures in the Bering Sea-Aleutian Island groundfish FMP intended to protect Bering Sea snow crab (*C. opilio*) and their habitat have not been reviewed since they were specified in 1997. Since that time, our ability to model snow crab population dynamics and estimate incidental catch in the groundfish fisheries has improved. Management of the groundfish trawl fisheries has also changed; there is no longer a race-for-fish for some of the sectors that are subject to snow crab PSC limits. Therefore, it is appropriate due to these changes to review and analyze the limits in place and if changes are needed.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: No action

Alternative 2: Revise *C. opilio* PSC limits to be based on the stock assessment model estimate. Remove the minimum and maximum *C. opilio* PSC limit for trawl vessels in the COBLZ, and reduce the *C. opilio* PSC limit to (Option 1: 0.10 %; Option 2: 0.075%, or Option 3: 0.05 %) of the total abundance of *C. opilio*.

Alternative 3: Revise *C. opilio* PSC limits to be based on the stock assessment model estimate. Reduce the maximum and/or minimum *C. opilio* PSC limit for trawl vessels in the COBLZ by (Option 1: 10%; Option 2: 15%; or Option 3: 50%).

The Council initiated a discussion paper to outline the steps and information needed to consider the appropriateness of revising or implementing PSC limits or other management measures to minimize Bristol Bay Red King Crab PSC in directed groundfish fisheries.