

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members
FROM: Chris Oliver 
Executive Director
DATE: March 23, 2011
SUBJECT: BSAI Crab Management

ESTIMATED TIME 8 HOURS (ALL C-4 ITEMS)
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ACTION REQUIRED

Final action on the Pribilof Island blue king crab rebuilding plan.

BACKGROUND

At this meeting the Council will take final action on the Pribilof Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan EA/RIR/IRFA. The executive summary of the EA is attached as Item C-4(c)(1). The EA/RIR/IRFA was mailed to you on March 11th. The Council took initial review of this analysis in December 2010. The Council's motion is attached as Item C-4(c)(2).

The new analysis evaluates proposed alternative rebuilding measures for the Pribilof Islands blue king crab (*Paralithodes platypus*) stock. The Pribilof Islands blue king crab stock remains overfished and the current rebuilding plan has not achieved adequate progress towards rebuilding the stock by 2014. This revised rebuilding plan considers five alternatives. Four of the alternatives are different non-triggered closure configurations to restrict groundfish fisheries which have contributed to bycatch of this stock above a specified threshold in the areas of the stock distribution. The fifth alternative considers trigger caps and associated area closures in these groundfish fisheries. The impacts of these alternatives on rebuilding the Pribilof Island blue king crab stock as well as the environmental and social/economic impacts of these measures are considered in this analysis. Analysis of the impacts of these closure configurations on the rebuilding potential for the PIBKC stock shows limited effect on rebuilding between the ranges of alternative closures.

The analysis has been revised per Council and SSC modifications to the extent possible noting that an additional closure per Council motion was not included. The Council's motion requested that staff "*Add an additional closure configuration to Alternative 4C and Alternative 5e based on considerations of both recent bycatch as well as survey distribution.*" The public review draft contains a discussion of, and a series of maps showing the relative distributions of survey and bycatch of the stock over a range of time periods. However, as explained in section 2.9 of the EA, the analysts did not identify an additional closure due to the lack of temporal clarity and patterns in the bycatch of the stock at this time. Should the Council wish to delineate an additional closure based on this information at final action it could do so and analysts would indicate where within the existing analysis the likely impacts of that closure could be interpolated.

At this meeting the Council will take final action to identify a preferred alternative for the rebuilding plan.