

Council motion C2
BBRKC closure areas
February 10, 2024

1. At this time, the Council takes no further action on the analysis of alternatives for BSAI groundfish fishery area closures due to negative impacts on Chinook salmon, chum salmon, halibut, and other PSC species.

The Council intends to use inseason information and results from several ongoing research projects (winter pot surveys, crab tagging studies, pelagic and pot gear research) to develop framework agreements for dynamic closures and crab avoidance measures for the BSAI trawl, pot, and hook-and-line sectors to respond to changes in crab abundance and distribution with measurable objectives to evaluate performance.

The Council continues to place a high priority on these research projects and encourages funding entities to also prioritize them highly.

The Council requests regular updates on ongoing collaborative research.

2. The Council tasks staff with a discussion paper to inform options for incentivizing pelagic trawl gear innovation with the following objectives:

- minimizing bycatch to the extent practicable
- minimizing the impacts of pelagic trawl gear on sensitive benthic habitat and unobserved mortality of stocks that rely on such habitat
- improving or maintaining fishing efficiency
- flexibility for trawl gear innovation within the constraints of other objectives (e.g., adapting to new technologies)

The discussion paper should detail:

- the current limitations to gear innovation and modification (e.g., technological or enforcement constraints)
- the process for such gear revisions (e.g., EFP)
- examples of how past changes to gear definitions have been moved through the Council process (e.g., elevated sweeps on nonpelagic trawl gear)
- management tools that could be used to inform metrics to achieve these objectives (e.g., EFH and Fishing Effects model)
- downstream impacts to the management objectives of the various regulatory provisions that use the current definition of pelagic trawl gear and have been built upon the previous actions (if applicable)
- potential displacement and spillover impacts from any potential changes (e.g., PSC or target species catch)

The Council will review options for changes to the performance standard following this work.