



C3 St. Matthew Island Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan Final Action

June 2020

Action Memo

Council Staff: Jim Armstrong

Action Required: 1. Review the public review draft of the EA.
2. Recommend preferred alternative, as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

The Council is considering action to implement a rebuilding plan for the St. Matthew Island blue king crab (SMBKC) stock by amending the BSAI King and Tanner Crab FMP. On October 22, 2018, the NMFS Alaska Region notified the Council that the SMBKC stock was overfished and a rebuilding plan must be implemented within two years. Based on the best available scientific information on the biology of the St. Matthew Island blue king crab stock and environmental conditions, the time period to rebuild the stock will exceed 10 years, as considered under section 304(e)(4)(A)(ii) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Options for a rebuilding plan were identified by the Council in June 2019 and include a prohibition on directed harvest throughout rebuilding (Alternative 2 / Option 1) or allowing direct harvest during rebuilding under the State of Alaska's harvest strategy (Alternative 2 / Option 2). In contrast, Alternative 1, (no action) would not implement a rebuilding plan.

At this meeting, the Council will conduct its final review and selection of a preferred alternative in order for implementation of the rebuilding plan to occur by October 22, 2020.

Following initial review of the rebuilding plan at the December 2019 meeting, the Council identified Alternative 2/Option 2 as its preliminary preferred alternative. Also at that meeting, the SSC accepted the analysis of the rebuilding plan alternatives and tentatively recommended Alternative 2/Option 2 as well as some specific revisions to be incorporated in the final review draft of the incorporate analysis.

The Executive Summary in the attached public review draft Environmental Assessment identifies revisions made to the original document, which include those responsive to SSC recommendations and additional clarifications and improvements.