

**C-3 Eastern Bering Sea Snow crab rebuilding
Council Motion
June 10, 2022**

The Council adopts the following purpose and need statement and alternatives for analysis.

Purpose and Need

The Eastern Bering Sea snow crab stock was determined to be overfished on October 19, 2021, because the estimated mature male biomass is below the minimum stock size threshold specified in the crab FMP. To comply with provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), a rebuilding plan must be implemented prior to the start of the 2023/2024 fishing season. This action is necessary to facilitate compliance with MSA requirements to rebuild overfished stocks and achieve optimum yield.

Alternative 1: No Action

Alternative 2: Adopt a rebuilding plan and specify a target rebuilding time not to exceed T_{MAX} , as recommended by the SSC. The stock will be considered “rebuilt” once it reaches B_{MSY} .

Option 1: No directed fishing until the stock is rebuilt, allow bycatch removals only

Option 2: Allow bycatch removals and a directed snow crab fishery under the current State of Alaska harvest strategy

The Council requests additional information to help determine whether the following bycatch management measures would affect the rebuilding timeline:

- Remove the snow crab PSC floor
- Count all trawl PSC throughout the full range of the stock toward the PSC limit
- Limit on fixed gear PSC

The Council requests public comment at the October 2022 meeting on ways to reduce fishing related mortality of Eastern Bering Sea (EBS) snow crab. Information from fishery participants is critical to that effort and, therefore, the Council is seeking public input in the following areas:

1. Voluntary measures for implementation in 2023 and beyond to avoid EBS snow crab and reduce crab mortality in the non-directed fisheries.
2. Measures in the directed crab fishery to reduce discard mortality of EBS snow crab.
3. Description of research that would inform development of more flexible and effective spatial management measures, gear modifications to reduce impacts on the EBS snow crab stock, or to evaluate unobserved mortality in the trawl sector.