

### **Executive Summary**

The king and Tanner crab fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (3 to 200 miles offshore) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) off Alaska are managed under the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs (FMP). The FMP establishes a State/Federal cooperative management regime that defers crab fisheries management to the State of Alaska (State) with Federal oversight. State regulations are subject to the provisions of the FMP including its goals and objectives, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable Federal laws.

This proposed action is a revised rebuilding plan for the Pribilof Islands blue king crab (PIBKC) stock. The PIBKC stock remains overfished. The purpose of this proposed action is to reduce the risk of overfishing the PIBKC stock by developing an amended rebuilding plan for this stock in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the national standard guidelines.

Five alternatives are considered in this analysis. Four of the alternatives consider time and area closures to better protect the PIBKC stock. The fifth alternative considers trigger caps and associated time and area closures in groundfish fisheries which have contributed historically to bycatch of this stock. Alternatives 2-5 retain all of the current protection measures in place for the PIBKC stock and apply additional measures as described in the specific alternatives and options.

Alternative 1 retains the current Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Zone (PIHCZ) trawl closure around the Pribilof Islands. Alternative 2 applies the PIHCZ closure additionally to those groundfish fisheries contributing to PIBKC bycatch above a threshold criteria (Option 2a) or to fishing for Pacific cod (*Gadus macrocephalus*) with pot gear (Option 2b). Alternative 3 proposes to apply the existing State of Alaska (State) crab closure areas to those groundfish fisheries contributing to PIBKC bycatch above a threshold criteria (Option 3a) or to fishing for Pacific cod with pot gear (Option 3b). Alternative 4 proposes two closure configurations to cover the distribution of the PIBKC stock. These closures are then proposed to apply to either those groundfish fisheries contributing to PIBKC bycatch above a threshold criteria (Option 4a) or to fishing for Pacific cod with pot gear (Option 4b). Alternative 5 proposes a trigger cap on those groundfish fisheries contributing to PIBKC bycatch above a threshold criteria that, if reached, would close that area to fishing (Options 5a-5d). For each of Alternatives 2-5, there is the option of increasing observer coverage, either to all fisheries to which a cap or closure applies (Option 1), or to specific fisheries (Option 2).

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. Final action is scheduled for April 2011.

Draft December 2010 Council motion on C-2(d) Pribilof Blue King Crab rebuilding plan initial review:

The Council moves the document forward for public review following staff addressing the SSC comments as well as the following items:

1. Add additional closure configuration to Alternative 4C and Alternative 5e based on considerations of both recent bycatch as well as survey distribution.
2. Add additional cap options of 75% of ABC and 90% of ABC
3. Exempt fisheries from any closures which have less than the following amount of annual bycatch between 2003-2010
  - a. < 5% of the ABC
  - b. < 10% of the ABC
4. Express cap in numbers of crab as well as weight
5. Express tables of bycatch in numbers of crab as well as weight

## Fisheries over the 180lb threshold

Trip_Target_Code	FMP_Gear	PSC_lbs	360lb Flag	Year
Yellowfin Sole - BSAI	TRW	730.61	Y	2003
Pacific Cod	HAL	329.70	N	2003
Pacific Cod	HAL	664.14	Y	2004
Pacific Cod	HAL	338.92	N	2005
Pacific Cod	POT	1,517.07	Y	2005
Pacific Cod	HAL	713.95	Y	2006
Rock Sole - BSAI	TRW	931.03	Y	2006
Yellowfin Sole - BSAI	TRW	1,954.53	Y	2006
Pacific Cod	HAL	216.31	N	2007
Pacific Cod	POT	16,266.84	Y	2007
Yellowfin Sole - BSAI	TRW	708.30	Y	2008
Pacific Cod	HAL	190.37	N	2008
Pacific Cod	HAL	430.53	Y	2009
Yellowfin Sole - BSAI	TRW	847.57	Y	2009
Pacific Cod	POT	553.10	Y	2010

Source: Akfin Comprehensive\_PSC

\*Confidential data excluded from table

\*\*PSC converted to LBS, yearly avg lbs per crab

2003-2010 Average PSC in Reporting Area 513

Trip_Target_Name	Avg_PSC_lbs	FMP_Gear
Flathead Sole	199.00	TRW
Pacific Cod	372.08	HAL
Pacific Cod	3,125.67	POT
Pacific Cod	*	TRW
Rock Sole - BSAI	465.71	TRW
Yellowfin Sole - BSAI	659.57	TRW

Source: Akfin Comprehensive\_PSC

\*Confidential data

\*\*PSC converted to LBS, yearly avg lbs per crab

Rate Precedence Count in 513 BKCR PSC by Target 2003-2010

Target	Gear	50	40	25
Flathead Sole	NPT	82	8	
Pacific Cod	HAL	274	17	385
	NPT			10
	POT	2	31	130
Rock Sole - BSAI	NPT	18		2
Yellowfin Sole - BSAI	NPT	260	8	6
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>636</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>533</b>

Source: Akfin Comprehensive\_PSC

Standard Deviation by Precedence

Year	50	40	25
2010	0.03		2.42
2009	0.26		0.36
2008	0.08	*	0.10
2007	0.44	0.04	8.59
2006	0.36	0.01	0.02
2005	0.09	0.13	0.01
2004	0.33	*	0.01
2003	0.15	0.00	0.02
Average	0.22	0.03	1.44

Source: Akfin Comprehensive\_PSC

\*Confidential Data

Rate Precedence Count in 513 BKCR PSC by Year

Year	50	40	25
2010	31		64
2009	65		97
2008	112	1	130
2007	53	15	32
2006	151	16	41
2005	74	28	33
2004	81	1	42
2003	69	3	57
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>496</b>

Source: Akfin Comprehensive\_PSC