



# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Simon Kinneen, Chair | David Witherell, Executive Director  
1007 W. 3rd Avenue, Suite 400, Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone 907-271-2809 | [www.npfmc.org](http://www.npfmc.org)

## Meeting Summary

263rd Plenary Session  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
February 6-13, 2023  
Hybrid – Seattle, WA Renaissance Hotel and Zoom Webinar

## CONTENTS

A1	Call Meeting to Order .....	4
B	Reports.....	4
C1	Snow Crab Rebuilding Analysis - Final Action.....	4
C2	BSAI Crab – Norton Sound Red King Crab Specifications, CPT Report.....	5
C3	Area 4 Vessel Use Cap Interim Measures.....	5
C4	EFH 5-year review Summary Report .....	6
C5	BSAI Pot CP Monitoring Adjustments .....	7
D1	AIGKC Facility Use Caps Discussion Paper .....	8
D2	PSEIS Discussion Paper, Ecosystem Committee Report .....	9
D3	Groundfish Stock Prioritization Proposal, Joint Groundfish Plan Team Report.....	10
D4	Trawl EM Committee Report .....	10
D5	Universal Data Collection Discussion Paper on crew, lease cost collection .....	11
E1	Staff Tasking.....	12

## Attachments

1) Time Log

2) Newsletter

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met February 6-13, 2023 at the Renaissance Hotel, Seattle, Washington. The following Council members, Council staff, SSC, and AP members attended the meetings either in person or virtually.

*The time log is included as a reference attachment for names, dates and times of each agenda item, and the newsletter is included to provide details of the agenda items and the meeting as a whole. All documents and information related to the meeting are accessible online at: <https://meetings.npfmc.org>*

## Council Members

Rachel Baker/Karla Bush (for Doug Vincent-Lang) <i>Alaska Department Fish and Game</i>	Simon Kinneen, <b>Chair</b> <i>Appointed</i>
Kenny Down <i>Appointed</i>	Jon Kurland <i>National Marine Fisheries Service</i>
Angel Drobica <i>Appointed</i>	Andy Mezirow <i>Appointed</i>
Peter Fasbender (for Sara Boario) <i>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</i>	RADM Nathan Moore <i>United States Coast Guard</i>
Dave Hanson <i>Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission</i>	Bill Tweit (for Kelly Susewind), <b>Vice Chair</b> <i>Washington Department Fish &amp; Wildlife</i>
John Jensen <i>Appointed</i>	Anne Vanderhoeven <i>Appointed</i>
Nicole Kimball <i>Appointed</i>	Steve Williams (for Curt Melcher) <i>Oregon Department Fish &amp; Wildlife</i>

## Council Staff

Cleaver, Sara	Haapala, Kate	Rheinsmith, Sarah
Cunningham, Sam	Henry, Anna	Schmidt, Nicole
Davis, Maria	Hillary, Kaylah (contractor)	Stram, Diana
Evans, Diana (DD)	Marrinan, Sarah	Watson, Nicole
Fey, Mike (PSMFC)	McCracken, Jon	Witherell, Dave (ED)
Gleason, Shannon	McKean, Clay (Sea Grant)	

## Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met February 6-7, at the Renaissance Hotel, Seattle. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings.

Sherri Dressel, Co-Chair <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i>	Franz Mueter, Co-Chair <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>	Alison Whitman, Vice Chair <i>Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i>
Chris Anderson <i>University of Washington</i>	Amy Bishop <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>	Curry Cunningham <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>
Mike Downs <i>Wislow Research</i>	Robert Foy <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>	Jason Gasper <i>NOAA Fisheries—Alaska Regional Office</i>
Dana Hanselman <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>	Brad Harris <i>Alaska Pacific University</i>	George Hunt <i>University of Washington</i>
Kailin Kroetz <i>Arizona State University</i>	Kathryn Meyer <i>Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i>	Andrew Munro <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i>
Chris Siddon <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i>	Ian Stewart <i>Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission</i>	Patrick Sullivan <i>Cornell University</i>

## Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel met February 7-10, at the Renaissance Hotel, Seattle WA. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent members are ~~stricken~~):

Briggie, Tamara	Kavanaugh, Julie	Price, Landry
Edson, Jesse	Laitinen, Rick	Radell, Chelsae
Gudmundsson, Gretar	Mann, Heather	Ritchie, Brian (Chair)
Heuker, Tim	Mitchell, Lauren (Co-VC)	Upton, Matt
Johnson, Jim	O'Donnell, Paddy	Wilkins, Paul
Johnson, Mellisa	O'Neil, Megan	Zagorski, Suzie

## A1 Call Meeting to Order

The Council approved the agenda without objection.

## B Reports

The following reports were provided in writing and discussed.

**B1 Executive Director's Report** – David Witherell

**B2 NMFS Management Report**

- B2 NMFS Management Report – Gretchen Harrington
- B2 Status of Amendments Feb 2023
- B2 Pot CP Monitoring Letter
- B2 ABSC Emergency petition - decision letter
- B2 Amend 52 KTC approval-to-council
- B2 IFQ Omnibus Amendment BSAI 124 GOA 112
- B2 Cost Recovery Reports

**B3 NOAA GC Report** – Molly Watson

**B4 AFSC Report** – Postponed until April

**B5 ADFG Report** – Karla Bush

**B6 USCG Report** – Written Report only

**B7 USFWS Report** – Written Report only

**B8 IPHC Report** – Dr. Ian Stewart, Dr. Basia Hutniczak

**B10 SSC Report** – Dr. Sherri Dressel (SSC Co-Chair)

**B11 AP Report** – Paul Wilkins and Brian Ritchie (AP Co-Vice Chair and Chair, respectively)

Public comment was taken.

## C1 Snow Crab Rebuilding Analysis - Final Action

**Council Staff:** Jon McCracken & Sarah Rheinsmith

**Action Required:**

1. Final Action review of the rebuilding plan analysis
2. Selection of a preferred alternative for rebuilding snow crab
3. Approval of housekeeping update to Crab FMP

**Summary:** *The Council was notified in Oct 2021 that snow crab in Eastern Bering Sea is overfished. They must create a rebuilding plan within 2 years, with a maximum 10-year rebuilding time. In Dec 2022, they selected a preferred alternative to allow a directed fishery while the stock rebuilds.*

After staff presentations, the AP report, and public comment, Ms. Baker made the following motion, which Mr. Down seconded:

The Council recommends Alternative 2, Option 2 as the preferred alternative for final action as indicated below. Changes from the December motion are indicated in strikethrough and underline.

Alternative 2: Adopt a rebuilding plan and set a target rebuilding time frame of six years for the number of years necessary to rebuild the stock to the  $B_{MSY}$  level at a probability of  $\geq 50\%$ . The stock will be considered "rebuilt" once it reaches  $B_{MSY}$ .

Option 2: Allow bycatch removals and the directed fishery to open based on the state harvest strategy while the stock is rebuilding.

The Council recommends removing from the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Fishery Management Plan for King and Tanner Crabs rebuilding programs that have since been rebuilt or replaced. These include BS Tanner crab (declared overfished March 3, 1999), BS snow crab (declared overfished September 24, 1999), and St. Matthew blue king crab (declared overfished September 24, 1999).

**VOTE ON MOTION 1:** The motion passed without objection.

## **C2 BSAI Crab – Norton Sound Red King Crab Specifications, CPT Report (including conservation priorities)**

**Council Staff:** Sarah Rheinsmith  
**Other Presenters** Katie Palof (AFSC), Dr. Mike Litzow (AFSC)  
**Action Required:** 1. Norton Sound Red King Crab - Specify OFL/ABC for 2023  
 2. Review Crab Plan Team Report; update on Crab Modeling Workshop  
 3. Review Plan Team feedback on prioritizing crab conservation actions

**Summary:** *A team of technical experts (the Crab Plan Team) met in January to discuss the status and appropriate harvest level for Norton Sound red king crab as well as to review scientific information on Alaska crab stocks. The Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Council reviewed the report and recommendations of the Plan Team and set harvest limits based on that information. The team also prioritized among management actions that may affect crab conservation, at the Council’s request.*

After staff presentations and the AP and SSC report, Ms. Baker made the motion below. It was seconded by Mr. Jensen. There was no public comment on this agenda item.

**MOTION:** The Council accepts the Norton Sound red king crab SAFE report and adopts the SSC’s recommended total catch OFL of 0.31 thousand metric tons (0.68 million pounds) and ABC of 0.22 thousand metric tons (0.48 million pounds) for Norton Sound red king crab.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** The motion passed without objection.

## **C3 Area 4 Vessel Use Cap Interim Measures**

**Council Staff:** Anna Henry  
**Action Required:** 1. Review Initial/Final regulatory impact review analysis  
 2. Select preferred alternative

**Summary:** *The Council considered removing limitations on the amount of halibut that can be caught on a single fishing vessel in Areas 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D for the next five years. The change is an interim measure while the Council thinks about a long-term solution to the issue.*

After staff presentations, the AP report, and public comment, Ms. Drobica made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:

**MOTION:** The Council selects Alternative 2 as its preferred Alternative for final action as indicated below. Changes from the October motion are indicated in ~~strikethrough~~ and underline.

Alternative 2: Remove vessel cap limitations specified at 50 CFR Section 679.42(h)(1) for IFQ halibut harvested in Areas 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D through the 2025 fishing season. If the Council takes subsequent action to ~~permanently~~ modify vessel cap limits in area 4, such action will supersede ~~if taken~~ implemented before 2025.

**AMENDMENT:** Mr. Tweit moved and Mr. Williams seconded, to change 2025 to 2027. The amendment passed 7-4, with Ms. Baker, Ms. Drobica, Mr. Mezirow, and Mr. Kinneen voting in opposition.

**VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:** The amended motion passed 11-0.

## **C4 EFH 5-year review Summary Report – Ecosystem Committee Report, NOAA Coral/Sponge Research Program Update**

**Council Staff:** Sarah Rheinsmith

**Other Presenters:** Dr. Tom Hourigan - corals (Council only) REMOTE, Dr. Jodi Pirtle – EFH, Molly Zaleski- EFH, Nicole Watson - Ecosystem Cmte

**Action Required:**

1. Receive NOAA Coral Research update- informational only
2. Review the 2023 EFH 5-year review summary report
3. Consider whether FMP amendments are required to revise EFH or reevaluate EFH management measurements
4. Consider whether to identify HAPC priorities and initiate a call for proposals

**Summary:** *The Council will heard two reports; first about research on deep sea coral, and second a review of the essential fish habitat (EFH). The review is done every 5 years to see if any changes are needed in how fishing affects the fish habitat. Based on new research, the Council decided to address the following changes to update the location of habitat that is essential.*

Staff presentations were given and the AP and SSC gave their reports, and public comment was taken. Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Ms. Vanderhoeven:

**MOTION:** The Council initiates an analysis to incorporate the advancements in Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) from the 2023 5-year Review in the fishery management plans (FMPs). The Council adopts the following purpose and need statement and alternatives for analysis.

**Purpose and Need:**

The purpose of the proposed action is to comply with the Final Rule implementing the EFH provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) (50 CFR Part 600, Subpart J). The EFH Final Rule states that a review of the EFH components of the Council’s FMPs should be completed at least every five years and the EFH provisions should be revised or amended, as warranted, based on the best available science contributing new information. Based on the 2023 EFH 5-year Review, substantial new information is available to revise many of the EFH components of five FMPs (BSAI Groundfish, GOA Groundfish, BSAI King and Tanner Crab, Arctic, and Salmon) to incorporate this new information.

**Alternatives:**

Alternative 1: No action/*status quo*. Do not amend the EFH sections of the FMPs with new EFH information identified in the 2023 5-year Review.

Alternative 2. Amend the Council's FMPs to incorporate the updated EFH information based on the new and best available science information identified in the 2023 EFH 5-year Review.

- **EFH component 1 (descriptions and identification)**, Amend 4 FMPs to update EFH descriptions and maps, including up to EFH Level 3 information on habitat-related vital rates. Add or revise the EFH text description and add or replace the maps for—
  - 41 species or complexes in the BSAI FMP,
  - 46 species or complexes in the GOA FMP,
  - all five species in the Crab FMP, and
  - all three species in the Arctic FMP.

For all five species in the Salmon FMP, amend the Salmon FMP by replacing the distribution maps with the EFH maps.

- **EFH component 2 (fishing effects)**. Update the fishing effects (FE) information in the BSAI, GOA, and Crab FMPs to reflect updates to the FE model, analysis, and evaluation for the 2023 EFH 5-year Review.
- **EFH component 4 (non-fishing effects)**. Revise the EFH appendices in the BSAI, GOA, Crab, Arctic, and Salmon FMPs where conservation recommendations for non-fishing activities are described.
- **EFH component 7 (prey of EFH species)**. Revise text or habitat description table information for two species of BSAI sharks, BSAI pollock, GOA Pacific cod, and BSAI red king crab in the BSAI, GOA, and Crab FMPs.
- **EFH component 9 (research and information needs)**. Revise the EFH appendices with updated research and information needs in the BSAI, GOA, Crab, Arctic, and Salmon FMPs.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** The motion passed without objection.

## C5 BSAI Pot CP Monitoring Adjustments

**Council Staff:** Sam Cunningham

**Other Presenters:** Alicia Miller (NMFS) & Mason Smith (NMFS)

**Action Required:** 1. Review Initial/Final regulatory impact review analysis  
2. Select preferred alternative

**Summary:** *In 2022, the Council discussed plans to reduce the risk of losing data collected by observers in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries. The plans include having participants carry an observer and follow pre-meeting notifications, as well as using monitoring options like observer sampling stations or extra observers. At this meeting, the Council reviewed updated plans and made recommendations to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.*

Staff gave presentations, the AP gave its report, and public comment was given. Mr. Down made the motion below which was seconded by Mr. Kurland.

**MOTION:** The Council selects Alternative 2 as its preferred alternative:

Alternative 2: Implement additional monitoring requirements for Pot CPs participating in BSAI groundfish fisheries.

Element 1: Require a minimum of one Level 2 Observer on board at all times.

Element 2: Require vessel operators comply with pre-cruise notifications when requested by NMFS.

Element 3: Additional voluntary monitoring options:

Option 1: Allow a certified observer sampling station with motion-compensated platform (MCP) scale for the observer's use.

Option 2: Allow a motion-compensated, NMFS-Certified Scale to measure total catch of Pacific cod, in conjunction with an MCP scale for testing, electronic logbook, and video monitoring.

Option 3: Allow vessels to carry additional onboard observers.

**AMENDMENT:**

Mr. Tweit made the following amendment which was seconded by Ms. Vanderhoeven:

The Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c). The Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** The amendment passed unanimously.

**VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION:** Motion passed 11/0.

## D1 AIGKC Facility Use Caps Discussion Paper

**Council Staff:** Sarah Marrinan & Clay McKean

**Action Required:** 1. Review discussion paper  
2. Review EAG Facility Use Caps and take action as needed

**Summary:** *Currently, a regulation limits the amount of Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab that can be received at one processing plant. The Council is discussing removing these restrictions to provide more market opportunity.*

After staff presentations, the AP report, and public comment, Ms. Baker, seconded by Mr. Mezirow, made the following motion:

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

*Since implementation of the crab rationalization program in 2005, a significant percentage of crab processor shares have been acquired by participants that do not own processing facilities and are dependent on custom processing markets. Although custom processing was exempted from facility use caps for most BSAI crab fisheries in 2006, facility use caps were implemented for the Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab (EAG) fishery and the Western Aleutian Island red king fishery (WAI) fishery when processed east of 174° W longitude. The Council is considering eliminating the EAG and WAI processing facility use caps, to potentially increase the availability of custom processing services and the development of new product forms and markets.*

*In addition, recent declines in Bristol Bay red king crab (BBRKC) and Eastern Bering Sea (EBS) snow crab abundance have resulted in closures of commercial fishing seasons and increase the likelihood*



*of low total allowable catch (TAC) limits in the near future. These changes have caused significant disruption to participants, including high costs and inefficiencies in the harvesting and processing of these crab species at low TAC levels. Custom processing of crab is exempt from IPQ use caps with the exception of BBRKC, EBS snow crab with a South region designation, and Western Aleutian Island golden king crab (WAG) processed east of 174° W longitude. The Council is considering adding these fisheries to the custom processing exemption, to allow participants to increase efficiency and continue to derive benefits from the fisheries.*

*The Council is considering these changes while preserving overall ownership and entity use caps in the crab program to continue to limit consolidation.*

**Alternative 1.** No action.

**Alternative 2.** Remove the EAG and WAI processing facility use caps at 50 CFR 680.7(a)(9).

**Alternative 3.** Exempt custom processing of EBS snow crab IPQ with a South region designation, BBRKC IPQ, and WAG IPQ processed east of 174° W longitude from the PQS/IPQ and processing facility use caps under the program (add to list of exempted fisheries at 50 CFR 680.42(b)(7)(ii)(A)). Regionalization would still apply.

Alternatives 2 and 3 are not mutually exclusive and both may be selected for Council action.

The Council requests the analysts examine the potential for consolidation of PQS and IPQ associated with the options for changing the facility use caps for processing Aleutian Islands golden king crab.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** The motion passed without objection.

## **D2 PSEIS Discussion Paper, Ecosystem Committee Report**

**Council Staff:** Sara Cleaver, Nicole Watson

**Action Required:**

1. Review discussion paper
2. Review Ecosystem Committee Report
3. Provide direction on purpose and next steps

**Summary:** *The Council is looking to reevaluate the Programmatic Groundfish Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (PSEIS) to better address the impact of climate change on marine ecosystems and people who rely on them. The original PSEIS was created in 2004 and was last evaluated in 2015, but due to increased ecological changes in the North Pacific, stakeholders and the Council's Ecosystem Committee believe it is time to reevaluate the analysis.*

After staff presentations, the AP report, and public comment, Mr. Tweit made the motion below which was seconded by Mr. Down.

**MOTION:** The Council initiates the process of considering a Programmatic EIS with the purpose of providing a comprehensive analysis of the cumulative impacts of Federal groundfish fisheries on the human environment given both ecosystem and management changes that have occurred since the last review. Adoption of a final alternative would include updating the Council's current suite of 45 management policy objectives. As guidance:

- The Ecosystem Committee is tasked with reviewing the guidance above and developing recommendations to the Council on a purpose and need statement and alternatives.
- Ongoing Council efforts specifically tasked to create more climate-resilient federal fisheries (e.g., ACLIM 2.0, Climate Change Task Force, pending SSC workgroup on groundfish harvest control rules accounting for ecosystem change) should be incorporated as applicable.
- The process should include opportunity for meaningful engagement of Alaska Native Tribes and stakeholders, through informal scoping, formal scoping as part of the NEPA process, and Tribal consultations conducted by NMFS.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** The motion passed without objection.

## D3 Groundfish Stock Prioritization Proposal, Joint Groundfish Plan Team Report

**Council Staff:** Sara Cleaver

**Other Presenters:** Chris Lunsford (AFSC), Melissa Haltuch (AFSC)

**Action Required:**

1. Review NMFS recommendations on stock prioritization
2. Review Groundfish Plan Team meeting report
3. Provide recommendations as necessary

**Summary:** *The Council reviewed recommendations from AFSC to continue improving the efficiency of the stock assessment process while maintaining its quality. Thirteen groundfish stocks are being considered for reduced stock assessment frequency along with new guidelines and definitions.*

After staff reports, Ms. Vanderhoeven made the motion below, which was seconded by Mr. Jensen. There was no public comment on this agenda item.

**MOTION:** The Council supports the SSC recommendations under the D3 Stock Prioritization agenda item. Specifically, the Council recommends the stock assessment frequency proposed by the SSC which includes: maintaining BSAI yellowfin sole, BSAI northern rock sole and AI Pacific cod on the current schedule (annual, 2 year, and annual, respectively), and accepting the proposed reduced frequency of all other stocks recommended by AFSC.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** The motion passed without objection.

## D4 Trawl EM Committee Report

**Council Staff:** Anna Henry

**Action Required:**

1. Review Committee Report

**Summary:** *A group of industry experts and stakeholders met to discuss the trawl Electronic Monitoring (EM) program, and the status of current and potential future EM projects. Their recommendations were presented to the Council at this meeting.*

After staff presentations, the AP report, and public comment, Mr. Tweit moved, and Ms Vanderhoeven seconded, the following:

**MOTION:** The Council recommends the FMAC membership be updated to include the following representation to provide expertise on EM programs: shoreside processing, full coverage EM, WGOA EM fisheries. The May FMAC meeting agenda should include a discussion of how EM issues are addressed at FMAC meetings.

The Council recommends that a specific EM subcommittee be identified by the FMAC as needed when specific EM projects arise that require more involved Council engagement.

The current Trawl EM Committee should convene only if necessary to provide feedback on the Trawl EM proposed rule or implementation issues that warrant Council involvement as identified by Council or agency staff and at the discretion of the Chair. The Trawl EM Committee will dissolve when final regulations are published implementing the Trawl EM program.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** The motion passed without objection.

## **D5 Universal Data Collection Discussion Paper on crew, lease cost collection**

**Council Staff:** Sarah Marrinan

**Other Presenters:** Mike Fey (PSMFC/ AKFIN)

**Action Required:**

1. Review the discussion paper
2. Take action as necessary

***Summary:** The Council tasked staff to evaluate the implementation of a program to collect crew license data, crew compensation, crew positions, and quota lease costs across all Alaska fisheries. The paper evaluates the scale of data to be collected, the collection mechanism, cost/burden, and analytical value.*

The Council reviewed this paper and heard staff presentations and the AP report. They took the following action after staff presentations and public comment.

**MOTION:** Ms. Kimball moved and Mr. Mezirow seconded the following:

The Council is considering collecting a limited amount of data from vessels in federal fisheries relative to crew licenses/residency, crew compensation, and number of crew positions to support economic and community impact analyses required for Council actions and program reviews. The proposed collection mechanism is intended to remain simple and provide useable data by fishery across all commercial sectors, while minimizing reporting burden and costs to fisheries participants and NMFS. The Council requests the SSC review the staff discussion paper on this issue and provide input to the Council on the proposed mechanism, value of the crew data to be collected, and any additional recommendations that would aid in a simple data collection process.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** The motion passed without objection.

## E1 Staff Tasking

**Council Staff:** David Witherell

**Action Required:**

1. Review Committees and Plan Teams
2. Provide direction on tasking priorities and scheduling

***Summary:** The Council listened to public testimony about existing and new management measures that the public may be interested in and provided feedback to staff and the Council Chair about how to prioritize staff work on existing and new projects. The Council also considered whether to cancel a previous request for staff to evaluate changing how halibut catch is divided between the charter and commercial halibut sectors. The Council also reviewed its committee membership and identified agendas for any upcoming committee meetings.*

The Council listened to staff presentations, and public comment was heard.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mezirow moved the Council rescind the February 2022 D1 Halibut CSP Review Motion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jensen.

**VOTE MOTION:** The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Tweit announced the call for FMAC nominations and thanked those who attended the SSC workshop. Mr. Kinneen announced the appointment of Mr. Shawaan Jackson-Gamble to the AP Tribal Seat and Scott McKelvey's appointment to the Halibut Charter Committee.

**The Council adjourned Sunday, February 12, 2023, at 12:00 P.M.**



# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Simon Kinneen, Chair | David Witherell, Executive Director  
1007 W. 3rd Avenue, Suite 400, Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone 907-271-2809 | www.npfmc.org

## TIME LOG

### NPFMC February Council Meeting – 263rd Plenary Session Meeting held at the Renaissance Seattle and virtually via Zoom Webinar February 8 – 13, 2023

#### Thursday, February 9, 2023

02/09/2023 08:00 AM Call to Order

#### **B REPORTS**

02/09/2023 08:09 AM **B1 Executive Director Report** – NPFMC ED, David Witherell  
02/09/2023 08:17 AM BSFRF presentation, Scott Goodman, Kyle Antonelis, Jamie Goen  
02/09/2023 08:48 AM **B2 NMFS Management Report** – Alicia Miller (NMFS)  
02/09/2023 09:17 AM **B3 NOAA General Counsel Report** – Molly Watson (NOAA GC)  
02/09/2023 09:25 AM **B5 ADF&G Report** – Karla Bush (ADFG)  
02/09/2023 09:50 AM Break  
02/09/2023 10:18 AM **B6 USCG Report** – Capt Brennell answer questions on written report  
02/09/2023 10:25 AM **B8 IPHC Report** - Ian Stewart, Basia Hutniczak (IPHC)  
02/09/2023 11:00 AM **B Public Testimony**  
02/09/2023 11:00 AM Duncan Fields  
02/09/2023 11:43 AM David Bane  
02/09/2023 11:48 AM Chad See  
02/09/2023 12:00 PM Lunch Break  
02/09/2023 01:01 PM Rudy Tsukada  
02/09/2023 01:10 PM Frank Kelty  
02/09/2023 01:16 PM Linda Behnken, Jeff Farvour  
02/09/2023 01:23 PM Deborah Giles  
02/09/2023 01:34 PM Verner Wilson  
02/09/2023 01:43 PM Scott Goodman

#### **C1 Snow Crab Rebuilding**

02/09/2023 01:55 PM **C1 Presentation** – Jon McCracken and Sarah Rheinsmith (NPFMC)  
02/09/2023 02:35 PM **C1 AP Report** – Brian Richie and Paul Wilkins (AP Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively)  
02/09/2023 02:38 PM **C1 Public Testimony**  
02/09/2023 02:38 PM Frank Kelty  
02/09/2023 02:39 PM Jamie Goen  
02/09/2023 02:40 PM Mateo Paz Soldan  
02/09/2023 02:46 PM Break  
02/09/2023 03:14 PM **C1 Motion** – Rachel Baker

#### **C2 BSAI Crab - Norton Sound Red King Crab specifications, Crab PT report**

02/09/2023 03:32 PM **C2 Presentation** – Katie Palof (ADF&G), Mike Litzow (AFSC), Sarah Rheinsmith (NPFMC)

## February 2023 Time Log

02/09/2023 04:14 PM **C2 AP Report** – Brian Richie, Paul Wilkins (AP Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively)

02/09/2023 04:15 PM **C2 SSC Report** – Sherri Dressel (SSC Chair)  
There was no public comment on this agenda item

02/09/2023 04:35 PM **C2 Motion** – Rachel Baker

02/09/2023 04:40 PM Kenny Down

02/09/2023 04:47 PM Recess for the day

### **Friday, February 10, 2023**

#### **D1 Eastern Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab Facility Use Caps**

02/10/2023 08:02 AM **D1 Presentation** – Sarah Marrinan and Clay McKean (NPFMC)

02/10/2023 08:31 AM **D1 AP Report** – Brian Ritchie (AP Chair)

02/10/2023 08:35 AM **D1 Public Testimony**

02/10/2023 08:35 AM Steve Minor

02/10/2023 08:40 AM Frank Kelty

02/10/2023 08:44 AM John Iani

02/10/2023 09:09 AM **D1 Motion** – Rachel Baker

#### **C3 Area 4 Vessel Use Cap Interim Measures**

02/10/2023 09:22 AM **C3 Presentation** – Anna Henry (NPFMC)

02/10/2023 09:51 AM **C3 AP Report** – Brian Ritchie (AP Chair)

02/10/2023 10:04 AM Break

02/10/2023 10:22 AM **C3 Public Testimony**

02/10/2023 10:22 AM John Moller and Bernie Burkholder

02/10/2023 10:32 AM Layton Lockett

02/10/2023 10:40 AM Heather McCarty

02/10/2023 10:51 AM Maeto Paz Soldan

02/10/2023 10:57 AM Brett Roth

02/10/2023 11:05 AM **C3 Motion** – Angel Drobnicca

02/10/2023 11:13 AM **Amendment** – Bill Tweit

#### **C4 EFH 5-year Review Summary Report**

02/10/2023 11:36 AM **C4 Deep Sea Coral Presentation** – Tom Hourigan (Deep Sea Corals)

02/10/2023 12:00 PM Lunch Break

02/10/2023 01:05 PM **Balance of SSC Report** – Sherri Dressel, Franz Mueter (SSC Co-Chairs)

02/10/2023 02:47 PM Break

02/10/2023 03:05 PM **C4 EFH 5-year Review Presentation** – Sarah Rheinsmith (NPFMC), Dr. Jodi Pirtle (NMFS Habitat Conservation Division)

02/10/2023 03:50 PM **C4 Ecosystem Committee Report** – Nicole Watson (NPFMC)

02/10/2023 04:02 PM **C4 AP Report** – Brian Ritchie and Paul Wilkins (AP Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively)

02/10/2023 04:08 PM **C4 Public Testimony**

02/10/2023 04:08 PM Heather Mann

02/10/2023 04:15 PM John Warrenchuk

02/10/2023 04:30 PM Recess for the day

**Saturday, February 11, 2023**

02/11/2023 08:03 AM	<b>C4 Public Testimony Continued</b>
02/11/2023 08:03 AM	Marissa Wilson
02/11/2023 08:09 AM	Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian
02/11/2023 08:17 AM	John Gauvin
02/11/2023 08:23 AM	Cory Lescher
02/11/2023 08:47 AM	Hannah Heimbuch
02/11/2023 08:58 AM	Stephanie Madsen
02/11/2023 09:03 AM	Megan Williams and Verner Wilson
02/11/2023 09:13 AM	Linda Behnken
02/11/2023 09:19 AM	Julie Bonney
02/11/2023 09:25 AM	Harley Lever
02/11/2023 09:30 AM	Break
02/11/2023 09:50 AM	<b>C4 Motion</b> – Bill Tweit

**C5 Monitoring Requirements for BSAI Pot CPs**

02/11/2023 10:51 AM	<b>C5 Staff Presentation</b> – Sam Cunningham (NPFMC), Alicia Miller (NMFS), and Mason Smith (NMFS)
02/11/2023 11:06 AM	<b>C5 AP Report</b> – Brian Ritchie (AP Chair)
02/11/2023 11:11 AM	<b>C5 Public Testimony</b> – Chad See
02/11/2023 11:14 AM	<b>C5 Motion</b> – Kenny Down
02/11/2023 11:19 AM	<b>C5 Deeming Motion</b> – Bill Tweit

**D2 PSEIS Discussion Paper**

02/11/2023 11:28 AM	<b>D2 Staff Presentation</b> – Sara Cleaver, Nicole Watson(NPFMC)
02/11/2023 11:58 AM	Rob Sanderson, Public Comment on D2 out of order
02/11/2023 12:08 PM	Lunch Break
02/11/2023 01:25 PM	<b>Continue D2 Staff Presentation</b>
02/11/2023 01:37 PM	<b>D2 AP Report</b> – Brian Ritchie and Paul Wilkins (AP Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively)
02/11/2023 01:54 PM	<b>D2 Public Testimony</b>
02/11/2023 01:54 PM	Paul Olson
02/11/2023 01:58 PM	Verner Wilson
02/11/2023 02:05 PM	Shannon Erhart
02/11/2023 02:10 PM	Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian
02/11/2023 02:19 PM	Stephanie Madsen
02/11/2023 02:25 PM	Terese Schomogyi
02/11/2023 02:29 PM	Becca Robbins Gisclair
02/11/2023 02:35 PM	Steve Marx
02/11/2023 02:41 PM	Vivian Korthuis
02/11/2023 03:08 PM	<b>D2 Motion</b> – Bill Tweit

**D3 Groundfish Stock Prioritization**

02/11/2023 03:35 PM	<b>D3 Staff Presentation</b> – Sara Cleaver (NPFMC), Chris Lunsford (AFSC), & Melissa Haltuch (AFSC)
---------------------	--

## February 2023 Time Log

There was no public comment on this agenda item

02/11/2023 04:14 PM **D3 Motion** – Anne Vanderhoeven

### **D4 Trawl EM Committee Report**

02/11/2023 04:27 PM **D4 Staff Presentation** – Anna Henry (NPFMC)

02/11/2023 04:45 PM **D4 AP Report** – Brian Ritchie and Paul Wilkins (AP Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively)

02/11/2023 04:48 PM **D4 Public Testimony** – Verner Wilson

02/11/2023 04:51 PM **D4 Motion** – Bill Tweit

### **D5 Universal Data Collection**

02/11/2023 05:03 PM **D5 Staff Presentation** – Michael Fey

02/11/2023 05:24 PM Recess for the day

### **Sunday, February 12, 2023**

02/12/2023 08:00 AM **D5 Staff Presentation Continued**

02/12/2023 08:05 AM **D5 Public Testimony** – Rebecca Skinner

02/12/2023 08:22 AM **D5 Motion** – Nicole Kimball

### **E Staff Tasking**

02/12/2023 08:31 AM **Oral Report** – David Witherell (NPFMC ED)

02/12/2023 09:12 AM **E AP Report** – Brian Ritchie and Paul Wilkins

02/12/2023 09:18 AM **E Public Testimony**

02/12/2023 09:18 AM Jackie Boyer

02/12/2023 09:25 AM Duncan Fields

02/12/2023 09:34 AM Linda Behnken

02/12/2023 09:39 AM Craig Lowenberg

02/12/2023 09:42 AM Steve Minor

02/12/2023 09:46 AM Chelsae Radell

02/12/2023 09:53 AM Wayne Walter

02/12/2023 10:24 AM Rob Sanderson

02/12/2023 10:35 AM Ed Poulsen

02/12/2023 10:45 AM Heather McCarty, John Moller, and Mateo Paz Soldan

02/12/2023 10:53 AM Brian Ritchie

02/12/2023 10:56 AM John Iani

02/12/2023 10:58 AM Verner Wilson

02/12/2023 11:04 AM Neil Rodriguez

02/12/2023 11:28 AM Bill Tweit – FMAC nominations, SSC Workshop

02/12/2023 11:40 AM **E Motion** – Andy Mezirow

02/12/2023 11:59 PM Simon Kinneen – Announcements

02/12/2023 12:00 PM **Meeting Adjourned**





**NORTH PACIFIC**  
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

(<https://www.npfmc.org/>)

# FEBRUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER



[Appointments](#) | [Call for Nominations](#) | [SSC Workshop](#) | [Snow Crab Rebuilding](#) | [BSAI Crab, Vessel Use Cap](#) | [EFH 5-Year Review](#) | [BSAI Pot CP](#) | [AIGKC Use Caps](#) | [PSEIS](#) | [Groundfish Stock Prioritization](#) | [Trawl EM Committee](#) | [Universal Data Collection](#) | [CCTF Resiliency](#) | [Staff Tasking](#)

# APPOINTMENTS

## Advisory Panel

The Council appointed Shawaan Jackson-Gamble to the Advisory Panel to fill the new, designated Alaska Native Tribal seat. The Council wants to acknowledge all the well-qualified nominees put forward by Tribes and Tribal Consortia from across the state for the designated Alaska Native Tribal seat. The Council also really appreciated the many letters of support submitted for the various candidates. The Council considered all the materials when making its decision. Shawaan Gamble-Jackson has been appointed to serve a three-year term that is pro-rated to begin at the Council's April 2023 Council meeting.

## Committees

Scott McKelvey was appointed as an Area 2C representative on the Charter Halibut Management Committee.

# CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Council is soliciting nominations for the following representation to provide expertise on Electronic Monitoring (EM) programs on the Fisheries Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC): shoreside processing, full coverage EM, and Western Gulf of Alaska EM fisheries. The FMAC convenes industry members, agency representatives, and observer providers to advise the Council on issues related to monitoring in the North Pacific halibut and groundfish fisheries. With expanded representation, the FMAC can provide oversight on all regulated monitoring programs including both observer and EM as well as provide formal recommendations regarding prioritization of future EM projects.

The FMAC typically meets once per year, though additional meetings may occur as needed. The next meeting will be in May 2023 (exact dates and location are still being determined but will be posted on the Council calendar as soon as possible). The FMAC agenda will include a discussion of how EM issues are addressed at FMAC meetings. The Council also recommended that a specific EM subcommittee be identified by the FMAC, as needed, when specific EM projects arise that require more involved Council engagement.

Please submit a letter of interest describing how your experience and background relates to one or more of the above to Sara Cleaver (Council staff) by close of business on March 31. ([sara.cleaver@noaa.gov](mailto:sara.cleaver@noaa.gov) (<mailto:sara.cleaver@noaa.gov>); 907-271-2809).

# SSC WORKSHOP

The SSC hosted a workshop at the February meeting on “Rapid change in the northern Bering and southern Chukchi Seas: Identifying ecosystem responses and effects on the management of Federal fisheries.” The goal was to begin identifying what work is needed to develop the scientific basis for managing Bering Sea fish stocks in a time of unprecedented changes and given the expanding footprint of Bering Sea fish populations. The workshop allowed open discussions among SSC members and expert presenters, and also provided opportunities for a wide variety public input and dialogue on the challenges the Council faces.

Presentations given at the workshop are available on the [eAgenda](https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2967) (<https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2967>). The workshop was organized around three sessions: assessing our current understanding of the major changes occurring in the northern Bering Sea that affect all components of the ecosystem (Session 1), identifying some of the critical gaps, and research and monitoring needs, to adequately assess ecosystem status and trends (Session 2), and finally assessing whether the tools and approaches that are currently used to manage Bering Sea fish and crab stocks, including assessment models, the tier system and current harvest control rules, are adequate to deal with the management challenges that arise under increased uncertainty, or whether we need to consider novel approaches to deal with a rapidly changing, and increasingly non-stationary environment (Session 3).

The SSC workshop is intended as the beginning of an emerging dialogue among the SSC, the Council, scientists and other knowledge holders working and living in the northern Bering Sea, and other interested persons. The SSC is preparing a report for Council review. **The SSC is accepting additional public comments through the end of February, which will be incorporated into the workshop report for the Council.** Public comment can be provided through a link on the [eAgenda](https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2967) (<https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2967>).

## SNOW CRAB REBUILDING

At this meeting, the Council took final action on an analysis for an amendment to the BSAI Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to rebuild the Eastern Bering Sea (EBS) snow crab stock in compliance with section 304(e)(3) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The impacts of the alternatives on EBS snow crab, fishery participants, habitat, and other components of the human environment are described in the environmental assessment.

After reviewing the final review draft analysis, the Council selected the following as their preferred alternative (in bold):

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 recommends removing from the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Fishery Management Plan for King and Tanner Crabs rebuilding programs that have since been rebuilt or replaced. These include BS Tanner crab (declared overfished March 3, 1999), BS snow crab (declared overfished September 24, 1999), and St. Matthew blue king crab (declared overfished September 24, 1999).**

As noted by the Council, the EBS snow crab stock has rapidly declined and is now considered overfished by the NMFS. This has led the Council to develop a rebuilding plan in accordance with the MSA and national standard guidelines. The preferred alternative proposed by the Council is Alternative 2/option 2, which sets a target time ( $T_{target}$ ) for rebuilding the EBS snow crab stock at 6 years. This target is consistent with the range set in accordance with the National Standard 1 guidelines, of a minimum rebuilding time ( $T_{min}$ ) of 6 years and maximum time ( $T_{max}$ ) of 10 years. The stock will be considered rebuilt when it reaches the  $B_{MSY}$  in one year. The preferred alternative allows for a directed snow crab fishery under the state harvest strategy, which is important for fishing communities and which received public support. Finally, the proposed rebuilding plan is consistent with the National Standard guidelines for rebuilding stocks and minimizing bycatch.

As part of final action on the amendment, the Council also reviewed a housekeeping change to language in the BSAI King and Tanner crab FMP, to remove reference to three outdated/inapplicable crab rebuilding plans (see section 3.8 of the rebuilding plan analysis). These outdated/inapplicable rebuilding plans include the BS Tanner crab that was declared overfished on March 3, 1999, Bering Sea snow crab that was declared overfished on September 24, 1999, and St. Matthew blue king crab that was declared overfished on September 24, 1999. All these crab rebuilding plans are no longer needed in the crab FMP since these species are either rebuilt (i.e., Bering Sea Tanner crab), are being replaced with a new rebuilding plan (i.e., EBS snow crab) or have already been superseded by a new rebuilding plan (i.e., St. Matthew blue king crab).

Staff contacts are Jon McCracken and Sarah Rheinsmith.

# BSAI CRAB

The Council received an overview of the 2023 stock assessment for Norton Sound red king crab (NSRKC) and set specifications. The Council adopted SSC recommendations of a total catch OFL with an ABC buffer of 30%. The Council specified 2023 NSRKC OFL at 0.31 thousand t (0.68 million lb.) and an ABC of 0.22 thousand metric tons (0.48 million pounds) for NSRKC.

The updated BSAI Crab SAFE chapter for NSRKC indicates that the 2022 mature male biomass (MMB) crab is 2.40 thousand metric tons, which is above  $B_{MSY}$  (1.90 thousand metric tons) but above the minimum stock size threshold (MSST) (0.95 thousand metric tons), and, therefore, the stock not overfished. Additionally, because the 2022 total catch mortality (0.16 thousand t) was less than the OFL (0.30 thousand t), overfishing did not occur.

Other topics covered at the January BSAI Crab Plan Team meeting and reviewed by the SSC, AP, and Council included modeling scenarios for the May 2023 stock assessment for Aleutian Islands golden king crab and Pribilof Island golden king crab, survey planning and data collection, the 2022 crab economic SAFE, a Crab Plan Team workshop on the GMACS modeling framework, snow crab rebuilding final action report, and crab conservation prioritization as recommended by the Council in December 2022 (<https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=911b9fd8-5032-4c36-84cb-14c66b2bffcc.pdf&fileName=D2%20Council%20Motion.pdf>).

Following Council review of Crab Plan Team input on crab conservation prioritization, no action was taken. However, it was noted that the continued exploration of management alternatives in which to mitigate crab stock decline will continue by the Council.

Staff contact is Sarah Rheinsmith.

## AREA 4 VESSEL USE CAP INTERIM MEASURES

The Council took final action to remove vessel cap limitations for IFQ halibut harvested in Areas 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D through the 2027 fishing season. If the Council takes subsequent action to permanently modify vessel cap limits in area 4, such action will supersede this removal if implemented before 2027. The affected vessel caps were included in the development of the IFQ program to prevent large amounts of IFQ from being fished on only a few vessels and are specified in Federal Regulations: “No vessel may be used, during any fishing year, to harvest more IFQ halibut than one-half percent of the combined total catch limits of halibut for IFQ regulatory areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E” and “No vessel may be used, during any fishing year, to harvest more than 50,000 lb (22.7 mt) of IFQ halibut derived from QS held by a CQE” (50 CFR § 679.42(h)(1)).

The Council was in agreement that vessel caps be removed temporarily to provide relief for areas that have experienced reduced harvesting and processing capacity in recent years; while the Council works on a longer term solution to adjust vessel caps in area 4 initiated in June 2022. The Council agreed that vessel cap limitations are a central component of the IFQ program and that extending the exemption through 2027 did not signal that the longer term solution was less of a priority, but rather to provide a longer buffer in the event of unexpected delays in the Council or implementation process.

Staff contact is Anna Henry.

## EFH 5-YEAR REVIEW

The Council reviewed the summary report of a 5-year review of essential fish habitat (EFH) components of the Council's Fishery Management Plans (FMPs), initiated an analysis at this meeting to update the Council's BSAI Groundfish, GOA Groundfish, BSAI King and Tanner Crab, Salmon, and Arctic FMPs' descriptions and maps of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The proposed alternatives are detailed below:

### Alternatives:

Alternative 1: No action/*status quo*. Do not amend the EFH sections of the FMPs with new EFH information identified in the 2023 5-year Review.

Alternative 2. Amend the Council's FMPs to incorporate the updated EFH information based on the new and best available science information identified in the 2023 EFH 5-year Review.

- **EFH component 1 (descriptions and identification)**, Amend 4 FMPs to update EFH descriptions and maps, including up to EFH Level 3 information on habitat-related vital rates. Add or revise the EFH text description and add or replace the maps for—
  - 41 species or complexes in the BSAI FMP,
  - 46 species or complexes in the GOA FMP,
  - all five species in the Crab FMP, and
  - all three species in the Arctic FMP.

For all five species in the Salmon FMP, amend the Salmon FMP by replacing the distribution maps with the EFH maps.

- **EFH component 2 (fishing effects)**. Update the fishing effects (FE) information in the BSAI, GOA, and Crab FMPs to reflect updates to the FE model, analysis, and evaluation for the 2023 EFH 5-year Review.

- **EFH component 4 (non-fishing effects).** Revise the EFH appendices in the BSAI, GOA, Crab, Arctic, and Salmon FMPs where conservation recommendations for non-fishing activities are described.
- **EFH component 7 (prey of EFH species).** Revise text or habitat description table information for two species of BSAI sharks, BSAI pollock, GOA Pacific cod, and BSAI red king crab in the BSAI, GOA, and Crab FMPs.
- **EFH component 9 (research and information needs).** Revise the EFH appendices with updated research and information needs in the BSAI, GOA, Crab, Arctic, and Salmon FMPs.

In response to public testimony, the Council discussed whether to initiate any additional EFH or HAPC processes at this time. The Council's discussion highlighted ongoing actions in the Council process that may also inform habitat conservation and enhancement, such as the PSEIS, crab bycatch analyses, and taskforce work through the Bering Sea FEP on climate and other ways of knowing. While the Council elected not to initiate additional habitat-specific processes at this time, they did highlight for the public that specific fishery management proposals, including those focused on habitat, may always be submitted to the Council for consideration under the staff tasking agenda item.

In addition to the EFH report, the Council also received an informational presentation from Dr. Tom Hourigan, NOAA Deep Sea Coral Research & Technology Program's Chief Scientist, on collaborative research led by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, and results of Deep Sea Coral surveys in the Alaska region.

Staff contact in Sarah Rheinsmith.

## BSAI POT CP MONITORING ADJUSTMENTS

The Council took final action to recommend additional monitoring requirements for catcher/processor (CP) vessels using pot gear while targeting groundfish in the BSAI. The impetus for the action, and the example used throughout the analysis, was the non-CDQ Pacific cod fishery which has a small number of active vessels and short seasons during which errors in data collection and the resulting data deletions have impacted catch estimates. The recommended monitoring requirements would apply to all current BSAI pot CPs. Improved catch estimation is expected to enhance inseason and overall management quality.

Affected BSAI pot CP vessels would be required to carry at least one Level 2 observer at all times and comply with pre-cruise meeting notifications when requested by NMFS. In addition, the action would set regulations for three voluntary monitoring options that vessels may choose: (1) allow a certified observer sampling station with a motion-compensated platform (MCP) scale for the observer's use; (2) allow a motion-compensated, NMFS-Approved Scale to measure total catch in conjunction with an MCP scale for testing, electronic logbook, and video monitoring; and (3) allow vessels to carry additional onboard observers. While voluntary, defining regulations for these options would ensure data quality for management purposes when the options are utilized.

In addition to the action alternative described above, NMFS notified the Council that it intends to consolidate monitoring regulations for the pot CP sector, “freezer longliners” (hook-and-line CPs), and trawl deck-sorting into a subpart (Subpart I) of monitoring regulations for ease of public access and understanding.

Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

## AIGKC FACILITY USE CAPS

The Council reviewed a staff discussion paper on facility use caps in the Eastern Aleutian Island golden king crab fishery, stemming from public comment at the June 2021 meeting.

At this meeting, the Council established a purpose and need statement and set of alternatives to consider removing the facility use for the Eastern Aleutian Island golden king crab and Western Aleutian Islands red king crab, which currently limit a processing facility from using more than 60% of the Individual Processing Quota (IPQ) in these fisheries. The Council also included a separate alternative to exempt custom processing arrangement of the IPQ of Bristol Bay red king crab, South designated Bering Sea snow crab, and Western Aleutian Islands golden king crab processed east of 174 W longitude from counting towards the Processor Quota Share (PQS)/ IPQ use caps. If adopted, this would align the PQS/ IPQ use caps for these fisheries with regulations for other Crab Rationalization Program fisheries. These options would not be mutually exclusive. These proposed alternatives would not change application of the 30% PQS/ IPQ use caps for affiliated PQS/ IPQ and it would not alter regulations around regionalization of quota share.

Staff contacts are Clay McKean and Sarah Marrinan.

## PROGRAMMATIC SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Council [initiated the process \(https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=109ccadf-6cba-4f37-a22d-22a5abccfd5b.pdf&fileName=DRAFT%20MOTION%20D2.pdf\)](https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=109ccadf-6cba-4f37-a22d-22a5abccfd5b.pdf&fileName=DRAFT%20MOTION%20D2.pdf) of considering a Programmatic EIS (PEIS) with the purpose of providing a comprehensive analysis of the cumulative impacts of Alaska’s Federal groundfish fisheries on the human environment given both ecosystem and management changes that have occurred since the last review. The Council indicated that adoption of a final alternative would include updating the Council’s current suite of 45 management policy objectives, noting that it may not be necessary to update every objective. The process of considering a PEIS is intended to incorporate ongoing Council efforts specifically tasked to create more climate-resilient federal fisheries, as applicable. Furthermore, the Council reiterated that the process should include opportunity for meaningful engagement of Alaska Native Tribes and stakeholders.



The Council tasked the Ecosystem Committee with developing a draft purpose and need statement and alternatives to recommend to the Council. The Ecosystem Committee's April 4th meeting will provide opportunity for members of the public to provide input into the development of these recommendations.

The PEIS will not be an agenda topic for the April Council meeting. Instead, the draft purpose and need statement and alternatives coming out of the April Ecosystem Committee meeting will be posted to the Ecosystem Committee's eAgenda after the meeting. This will allow stakeholders time to review and provide comments on the draft over the months following the meeting. The Committee plans to meet again over the summer (date TBD) to incorporate feedback it receives from stakeholders. A schedule providing details on opportunities for comment will be posted to the Committee's April meeting eAgenda in early March.

Additional scoping meetings, intended to provide for further public and Tribal engagement, will be held after the Council formally adopts a purpose and need and alternatives. The purpose and need and alternatives can be refined throughout this iterative process.

Staff contact is [Sara Cleaver](https://www.npfmc.org/contact-council-staff/?sMember=sara-cleaver) (<https://www.npfmc.org/contact-council-staff/?sMember=sara-cleaver>).

Staff contact for the Ecosystem Committee is [Nicole Watson](https://www.npfmc.org/contact-council-staff/?sMember=nicole-watson) (<https://www.npfmc.org/contact-council-staff/?sMember=nicole-watson>).

## GROUND FISH STOCK PRIORITIZATION NEWSLETTER

The Council received a presentation from NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) staff with recommendations for how to prioritize groundfish stock assessments. Of the 13 groundfish stocks proposed for reduced stock assessment frequency (additional years occurring between full assessments) by the AFSC, [the Council supported recommendations](https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=dad824ac-33be-417d-b26a-e4ede04278c4.pdf&fileName=DRAFT%20MOTION%20D3.pdf) (<https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=dad824ac-33be-417d-b26a-e4ede04278c4.pdf&fileName=DRAFT%20MOTION%20D3.pdf>) for 10 of those stocks based on Plan Team and SSC recommendations. The Council's recommendation differed from the AFSC on three stocks, where the Council supported the SSC's recommendations to maintain BSAI yellowfin sole and AI Pacific cod on the current annual stock assessment cycles and maintain BSAI northern rock sole on the current 2-year schedule.

The recommendations put forward by AFSC reflect a balance between continuing to improve efficiency while maintaining the ability to meet the need for timely and high-quality stock assessments. The purposes of stock prioritization include but are not limited to: 1) reducing review burden on the stock assessment review bodies,

including the Council, 2) reduce redundancy by streamlining assessments with limited model changes between years, 3) increasing capacity at the AFSC to respond to the unexpected, and 4) increasing time to complete research targeted at improving our assessments.

The AFSC is also refining definitions and guidelines for various types of stock assessment products, based on Plan Team, SSC, and Council feedback. An update will be provided to the Groundfish Plan Teams in September and the Council in October.

Staff contact is Sara Cleaver.

## TRAWL EM COMMITTEE REPORT

The Council passed a motion recommending the Fisheries Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC) membership be updated to include the following representation to provide expertise on EM programs: shoreside processing, full coverage EM, WGOA EM fisheries. During staff tasking the Council officially solicited nominations for these positions. The May FMAC meeting agenda should include a discussion of how EM issues are addressed at FMAC meetings. These recommendations reflect the Trawl EM Committee recommendations that with expanded representation the FMAC can provide oversight on all regulated monitoring programs including both observer and EM as well as provide formal recommendations regarding prioritization of future EM projects.

The Council also recommended that a specific EM subcommittee be identified by the FMAC as needed when specific EM projects arise that require more involved Council engagement. The Council recognized the success of the Trawl EM Committee and suggested this subcommittee would provide a similar approach to provide a forum for continuous updates to the public and the Council and ensure effective communication among participants for future EM projects.

The current Trawl EM Committee should convene only if necessary to provide feedback on the Trawl EM proposed rule or implementation issues that warrant Council involvement as identified by Council or agency staff and at the discretion of the Chair. The Trawl EM Committee will dissolve when final regulations are published implementing the Trawl EM program. The Council thanked members for their collaborative approach, hard work and commitment to the program.

Staff contact is Anna Henry.

# UNIVERSAL DATA COLLECTION

At this meeting, the Council reviewed an expanded discussion paper about a Universal Data Collection program that could collect a limited amount of data from vessels in all federal fisheries relative to crew licenses/residency, crew compensation, and number of crew positions to support economic and community impact analyses required for Council actions and program reviews. The proposed collection mechanism is intended to remain simple and provide useable data by fishery across all commercial sectors, while minimizing reporting burden and costs to fisheries participants and NMFS.

After reviewing the paper and listening to public testimony, the Council requested the SSC review the staff discussion paper on this issue and provide input to the Council on the proposed mechanism, value of the crew data to be collected, and any additional recommendations that would aid in a simple data collection process.

Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

## CLIMATE CHANGE TASKFORCE RESILIENCY SYNTHESIS

The SSC reviewed and provided suggestions on the draft climate readiness synthesis (CRS) compiled by the Climate Change Task Force (CCTF). This report represents a starting point for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) in ascertaining how “climate ready” the current management system is overall and to assist in augmenting existing management for improved climate resilience. This synthesis is an assessment of the current state of “climate readiness”, meaning whether management tools, assessments, and information on-ramps are presently designed to address and consider long-term climate change and the unprecedented conditions and unique challenges that it presents (in contrast to addressing natural *climate variability*). Importantly, this synthesis does not evaluate management effectiveness or the potential for current ‘climate naïve’ tools and polices to be useful under climate change, as synthesis of information towards that evaluation is underway for the upcoming the climate impacts and adaptation report.

The SSC provided a number of suggestions both for the current draft CRS as well as suggestions for the final report and recommendations to the Council at the conclusion of the Task Force’s work (in 2024). The CCTF will revise the CRS to incorporate SSC comments as possible and present to the Council for their consideration and adoption at a subsequent meeting. The SSC was also supportive of the CCTF’s planned climate scenario planning workshop to address scenario planning and provide recommendations for additional management measures (or augmentation of current measures) to improve climate readiness of the North Pacific fisheries. The CCTF will hold a meeting March 1-2, 2023 to develop goals, objectives and an agenda for this workshop tentatively planned for Fall 2023.

Staff contact is Diana Stram.

# STAFF TASKING

The Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously-tasked projects, and identified new tasking. The revised [3 meeting outlook](mailto:https://www.npfmc.org/3meeting/) reflects this guidance.

Following review of the **Council advisory groups**, the Council took the following actions:

- Appointed Shawaan Jackson-Gamble to the **Advisory Panel's** Alaska Native Tribal Representative seat (see also [appointments newsletter](#)).
- Appointed Scott McKelvey to the **Charter Halibut Management Committee**.
- Called for nominations for new EM representatives on the **Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee** (see also [call for nominations](#) and [Trawl EM](#) newsletters).

The Council took the following **actions**, and provided **direction and guidance**:

- Rescinded a February 2022 Council motion that would have initiated analysis of alternative **allocations for the Area 2C and 3A charter and commercial halibut fisheries**.
- Requested that NMFS schedule the public comment period on the revised **Northern Fur Seal Conservation Plan** to provide an opportunity for the Council to comment.
- Supported initial **outcomes of the SSC workshop** that called for improved communication between the SSC and the Council with respect to fishery management responses to rapid environmental change, and tasked staff and Council members to think about how to structure next steps prior to Council review of the SSC's workshop report.
- Discussed **general guidelines for when the Council might take expedited action** (e.g., initial and final action at a single meeting), and tasked staff with making that guidance available to the public.
- With respect to **observer issues**, noted that the FMAC will discuss issues of observer retention and availability at their May 2023 meeting, and that the agency will take into account the PCFMAC's March 2023 recommendations on cost efficiency work as it develops.

Staff contact is Diana Evans.

# PCFMAC

The Council received an overview of the PCFMAC's recent meeting during staff tasking. The overview included an update on the Partial Observer Coverage Cost Efficiencies Analysis. While not an agenda item at this meeting, the report from the PCFMAC's most recent meeting is included on the e-agenda. The Council recognized the efforts of the PCFMAC to review the cost efficiencies analysis while it is in progress.

As indicated in the PCFMAC report, the next observer-related meeting is the annual FMAC meeting in May (date TBD). At that meeting, the FMAC is intended to receive evaluation of each sampling design, and to provide recommendations on the final suite of monitoring designs. The report from that meeting will be presented to the Council in June with other observer related items including an abbreviated Observer Annual Report. The draft 2024 ADP (the mechanism for the cost efficiencies analysis to be implemented) with draft coverage rates will be available for the PCFMAC at its September 2023 meeting and for the Council in October. The final design will be recommended for implementation at those meetings, and the final ADP will be available prior to the December Council meeting.

## Area 2C and 3A Halibut Catch Share Plan Revised Allocations Motion

At this meeting the Council chose to rescind a [motion](https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=ad22b134-7862-44d6-873e-d38d6b22231d.pdf&fileName=E%20Council%20motion%20CSP%20allocations_Feb%202022.pdf)

([https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=ad22b134-7862-44d6-873e-d38d6b22231d.pdf&fileName=E%20Council%20motion%20CSP%20allocations\\_Feb%202022.pdf](https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=ad22b134-7862-44d6-873e-d38d6b22231d.pdf&fileName=E%20Council%20motion%20CSP%20allocations_Feb%202022.pdf)) made in February 2022 which would have considered alternative allocations for the Area 2C and 3A charter and commercial halibut fisheries. The Council had initiated an analysis of this proposed action in February 2022 based on concerns about the impacts of the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and associated management measures on the charter sector, particularly at times of lower abundance. The alternative allocations would have shifted more halibut allocation to the charter sector in times of lower abundance and more halibut allocation to the commercial sector in times of higher abundance.

However, in initiating this analysis, the Council's February 2022 motion also stated its preferred mechanism for dealing with reallocations in this Catch Sharing Plan is compensated reallocation via the Recreational Quota Entity (RQE). The Council stated through its motion that should the RQE fee funding mechanism become law and the Council take final action on the RQE funding mechanism, the Council intends to table or refine this action. The Council took final action on an RQE funding mechanism in April 2022 and on December 29, President Biden signed the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law No: 117-328; H.R. 2617 of the 117th Congress). The law (pages 802-803) includes language authorizing the RQE funding mechanism. Based on these actions, the Council chose to rescind the previous motion.

In the next steps, NMFS will be working with the RQE, Charter Halibut Management Committee and charter stakeholders to begin an implementation plan for the charter halibut stamp fee collection mechanism to fund the purchase of halibut quota share.

Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

## Thank You, Seattle

The seafood industry hosted a reception at the Renaissance Marriott Hotel in downtown Seattle following the first day of the Council meeting. The Council would like to thank the the many thanks to the businesses and groups involved in hosting the event. Special thanks to Alaska Scallop Association (Smoked Scallops), Alaskan Leader Fisheries (Alaska Longline Cod), North Pacific Seafoods (Sockeye Salmon) for the seafood donations. A good time was had by all.

## Upcoming Meetings

The following Committee and Plan Team meetings are currently anticipated:

- **BS FEP Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF)** – March 1-2, 2023, hybrid/AFSC, Seattle, WA [AGENDA \(https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2979\)](https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2979).
- **BS FEP Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce (LKTKS)** – March 2-3, 2023, hybrid/NPFMC office, Anchorage, AK [AGENDA \(https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2977\)](https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2977).
- **Scallop Plan Team meeting** – March 6, 2023, Kodiak, AK [AGENDA \(https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2981\)](https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2981).
- **Salmon Bycatch Committee** – March 20-21, hybrid/Anchorage, AK [AGENDA \(https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2980\)](https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2980).
- **Ecosystem Committee** – April 4, 2023, hybrid/Anchorage, AK [AGENDA \(https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2984\)](https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2984).
- **Enforcement Committee** – April 4, 2023, hybrid/NPFMC office, Anchorage, AK [AGENDA \(https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2985\)](https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2985).
- **BSAI Crab Plan Team meeting** – May 15-19, 2023, hybrid/location TBD
- **Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC)** – May 2023 (dates/location TBD)

Other meetings of potential interest:

- The AFSC is hosting a **Center for Independent Experts (CIE) review of the Ecosystem Status Reports (ESRs) from Feb 28 – Mar 2 at the AFSC in Seattle WA/online**, which is open to the public. Contact [stephani.zador@noaa.gov \(mailto:stephani.zador@noaa.gov\)](mailto:stephani.zador@noaa.gov) at least two days prior for AFSC access if you

are attending in person; see [agenda \(https://apps-afsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/Plan\\_Team/2023\\_ESR\\_CIE/\)](https://apps-afsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/Plan_Team/2023_ESR_CIE/) and information online. The AFSC produces three ESRs annually to provide ecosystem information for the Council, tailored toward supporting the Council's annual process to set groundfish harvest specifications. The development and application of the ESRs has evolved over time, thus, the Center for Independent Experts will conduct a review of the goals of the ESR effort and how best to achieve them.

- NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and NMFS are hosting a **public roundtable on sanctuary nominations in the Pribilof Islands**, including Alaġum Kanuuġ, to provide information and answer questions on the designation process. The meeting will take place on April 6, from 5.30-7.30 pm, in hybrid format. The in-person meeting will be in the Denali Room at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK. A zoom link will be available from the Council calendar.

*We respectfully acknowledge that the Council regularly meets, and its staff office resides, in Anchorage on Dena'ina homelands. The Council wants to honor the Dena'ina, the Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded this land across generations and continue to do so. We are glad to be part of this community, and to honor the culture, resilience, and tradition of the Dena'ina people.*

## NPFMC

---

1007 West Third Ave., Suite 400

L92 Building, 4th floor

Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

[View Map \(https://goo.gl/maps/QRYsY29ioCHu6YvJ7\)](https://goo.gl/maps/QRYsY29ioCHu6YvJ7)

## NEWSLETTER

---

Subscribe Now

([https://us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?  
u=8a7c4f3b2748e2edd4bc7dc5f&id=68f6ae1965](https://us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=8a7c4f3b2748e2edd4bc7dc5f&id=68f6ae1965))

View Newsletters

(<https://www.npfmc.org/newsletters/>)


## CONTACT US

---

Phone: 907-271-2809 (tel:1-907-271-2809)

Staff Directory (<https://www.npfmc.org/about-the-council/council-staff/>)

Admin Email (<https://www.npfmc.org/contact/>)

Copyright © 2023 North Pacific Fishery Management Council (<https://www.npfmc.org>) • All Rights Reserved •  
Privacy Policy (<https://www.npfmc.org/privacy-policy/>) • Website by  Sundog Media, LLC  
(<https://sundogmedia.com>).