

**North Pacific Fishery Management Council**  
**D2 BBRKC Expanded discussion paper**  
**October 10, 2022**

The Council acknowledges the current low stock status for several key BSAI crab species and the impact it is having on harvesters, processors, and communities dependent on commercial crab fisheries. Science indicates changes in the ecosystem and temperature as the primary driver of poor crab recruitment and low abundance, which furthers the need for a comprehensive ecosystem-based approach in crab assessments, research and management.

The Council identifies the Bristol Bay red king crab and snow crab stocks as a priority conservation concern and takes the following actions at this time.

1. The Council will review an analysis of the emergency rule request to prohibit pelagic trawl, pot and hook-and-line fisheries in the Red King Crab Savings Area and Subarea at the December 2022 meeting. This analysis could be used as a basis to initiate a regulatory amendment in December through the normal rule making process to close the savings area and subarea to some or all gear types.
2. The Council appreciates industry responses to requests for information on voluntary measures for implementation in 2023 and beyond to avoid BBRKC and EBS snow crab and reduce crab mortality in the non-directed fisheries and to reduce discard mortality in the directed fishery. The Council encourages all sectors to implement these voluntary measures in the 2023 season and provide a status report on the efficacy of these measures in December 2023.
3. The Council encourages continued research and testing on:
  - pot gear modifications, soak times and handling practices that reduce unintended mortality of crab PSC
  - evaluating the interactions of pelagic trawl gear with the sea floor and crab to inform gear modifications to reduce unintended mortality of crab PSC and impacts on benthic habitat
  - methods to gather data on interannual and seasonal distribution of crab, such as additional surveys and tagging studies