

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
June 4; 7-9, 2024 - Kodiak, AK

D1 UFMWG

Motion

The AP appreciates the work by the UFMWG and review bodies for the report. The AP concludes that the UFMWG report is comprehensive and responsive to SSC and Council defined objectives and end products, and acts as a step towards exploring and addressing the potential impacts of unobserved fishing mortality (UFM) on crab.

The AP recommends that the Council pause the working group until further research products are completed to inform a framework for addressing UFM and task staff with tracking and reporting on the progress of the ongoing research projects related to unobserved fishing mortality.

In the interim, the AP recommends the description of the Research Priority (RP) ID number 809, and others as necessary, be updated to include language that identifies that it addresses the “high priority” research needs as identified by the working group: information for all gear types on bottom contact and footprint of gears along with mortality rates or the quantification of the lethality of each gear type on crab, with a focus on periods of crab molt cycles.

Motion Passed 20/0

Rationale in Favor of Motion:

- *The AP took agenda item D5 (Research Priorities) ahead of item D1 due to time and scheduling. AP members considered that a likely place to suggest prioritization of unobserved fishing mortality was in Agenda item D5 and thus included looking at unobserved fishing mortality in the D5 motion. Therefore, many AP members felt it was not necessary to elaborate further in a motion on D1.*
- *The UFMWG report and following presentation provided a detailed summary of the working group’s discussion surrounding the Council-approved objectives, research priorities and proposed end products, as requested by the Council in June of 2023. These efforts are appreciated and the timeliness is important when considering the current state of Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands crab stocks.*
- *The Working Group identified substantial data deficiencies that preclude any meaningful estimation of UFM and therefore included a comprehensive table outlining the data needed and potential approaches to carry out research. These data gaps and research priorities are an important first step towards tackling the potential impact that unobserved fishing mortality may have on crab. Importantly, a focus on estimating mortality from gear interactions should be prioritized with further attention drawn to molting periods for crab.*

- *The UFM working group was made up, in part, with several SSC members but AP members believed a full SSC review of the report could have provided additional recommendations to the Council within the research priority cycle.*
- *In considering next steps for the working group, the Council could consider whether a public-facing workshop would benefit the informing of UFM estimates prior to or following the acquisition of additional data needs to inform stock assessments and management, but due to the time-sensitive need to fill these data gaps for stock assessments and management, the AP recognizes the time and resources required to conduct such a public workshop has the potential to slow down important field research. Therefore the AP encourages the Council to support the ongoing research and research priorities that have already been identified by the working group and to request periodic progress reports from the UMFVG.*