

# Council Snow Crab Rebuilding Alternatives

- ▶ During June 2022 Council meeting – Council will select snow crab rebuilding alternatives for analysis
  - ▶ Draft Alt 1 - no action; state harvest strategy with no rebuilding plan – violation of MSA to take no action to establish a rebuilding plan
  - ▶ Draft Alt 2 – Set target rebuilding time from for the number of years necessary to rebuild the stock of  $B_{msy}$  at a probability  $\geq 50\%$ 
    - ▶ Rebuilding would ideally be achieved in less than 10 years ( $T_{MAX} = 10$  years). Fastest rebuilding time ( $T_{min}$ ), is calculated based on  $F=0$  (no fishing mortality of any kind)



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- ▶ The SSC will review EBS snow crab rebuilding projections from May 2022 CPT meeting to provide recommendations and guidance to Council
- ▶ CPT supported a rebuilding plan based on snow crab stock assessment using GMACS
- ▶ CPT noted projections that resulted in a  $T_{\min}$  of less than 10 years were likely more representative of snow crab over the next 20 years
  - ▶ So, if SSC concurs with CPT, the  $T_{\max}$  for rebuilding would be 10 years
- ▶ If difference between  $T_{\min}$  and  $T_{\max}$  is sufficient to accommodate of level of fishing mortality above 0 and still not exceed  $T_{\max}$  Council could allow EBS snow crab fishing mortality under rebuilding
  - ▶ Based on the Council's analytical range in the St. Matthew blue king crab rebuilding plan in 2020, Council might consider:
    - ▶ Draft Option 1: No directed fishing until stock is rebuilt
    - ▶ Draft Option 2: Allow directed snow crab fishing to open based on state harvest strategy while stock is rebuilding



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- ▶ Council may have discretion to allow bycatch of EBS snow crab associated directed groundfish and Tanner and BBRKC fisheries
  - ▶ CPT indicate the sensitivity of EBS snow crab bycatch on  $T_{\min}$  would not affect the rebuilding timeframe
  - ▶ If Council select a rebuilding option that disallows any snow crab removals including bycatch ( $F=0$ ) this would likely close some groundfish and crab fisheries
- ▶ The Council could also consider other measures in the rebuilding plan to reduce snow crab mortality in the groundfish fisheries
  - ▶ Any changes to bycatch measures would require an amendment to the groundfish FMP and would need to be implemented in regulation
  - ▶ Council should weigh the additional analytical complexity and required time for Council deliberation of these measures in the rebuilding plan against the conservation benefits to snow crab stock and the risk of not meeting the MSA requirements to implement a rebuilding plan within two years



# Council Snow Crab Rebuilding Timeline

- ▶ Summer 2022 – Staff will analyze the impacts of each of the alternatives including status quo for an initial review of the snow crab rebuilding plan
- ▶ October 2022 Council meeting – initial review of the snow crab rebuilding plan and potentially selected a preliminary preferred alternative
- ▶ December 2022 Council meeting – Council will take final action and select a preferred alternative to recommend to the Secretary of Commerce
  - ▶ Following selection of preferred alternative, NMFS prepares proposed FMP amendment text, draft notice of availability, draft Environmental Assessment, and, if required, a draft regulatory package

