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# STAFF PAPER

REFLECTIONS ON THE COUNCIL PROCESS  
AND TIMING OF CRAB SPECIFICATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2022

UPDATE FOR CRAB PLAN TEAM



# 2022 ITERATIVE STAFF PAPERS

- Council requested an evaluation of potential ideas for improving the Council process, including:
  - Council meeting schedule timing
  - Harvest specifications timing
  - Council agenda/reports
  - SSC workload
  - Role of advisory bodies

## Of most relevance to CPT:

- Reevaluate the timing of the crab harvest specifications, in light of fishery needs and stock prioritization
- Reduce the number of annual Council meetings from 5 to 4, and drop the February meeting



# SEPTEMBER 2022 UPDATE

## Take home message:

- No critical decisions or changes to CPT/ crab assessment timing being made by Council in October 2022
  - The October Council meeting falls earlier in 2022, 2023, 2024 than in some recent years so timing concerns are less acute this year
  - Council has now committed to holding a February meeting in 2023 and 2024
- Gives us a little more time to think through implications of potential changes and options
- Instead, recommendations for small improvements, and ongoing consideration of timing changes



# ISSUE 1: ADJUST THE OCTOBER TIMING FOR CRAB SPECS / FISHERY START DATE

## ■ Why was this raised?

- Timing is incredibly tight to open crab fisheries on time for October 15<sup>th</sup>. Council is only part of a series of activities which must happen in sequence.



- Timing crunch exacerbates a potential tradeoff between incorporating the newest data and the quality/ thoroughness of assessment and review

## ■ How does this affect the CPT?

- Any change in timing will also affect the CPT meeting cycle, and the information that is available for incorporating in assessments and recommending specs.
- In May, staff proposed various possible solutions, including delaying the October fishery start date, delaying to December the review of all crab stocks except BBRKC, and standardizing crab specs cycles to align with groundfish

# ISSUE 2: DROP THE FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING

- **Why was this raised?**
  - December to February is shortest time for staff to work between meetings; as a result, the February meeting is often light
- **How does this affect the CPT?**
  - The January CPT meeting is currently reported to the SSC/Council in February
    - Includes reporting on the January modeling workshop
  - ABC/OFL for Norton Sounds RKC are adopted in February
  - Proposed model runs for AIGKC are endorsed in February



# EFFICIENCIES TO PILOT WITHIN EXISTING TIMING/PROCESS

1. SSC and PT leadership are meeting before after CPT meeting and before every CPT presentation to SSC, to streamline what the SSC does/does not need to review in detail
  - Minimize reporting on informational items
2. CPT to ask the author for only 2 models for the assessment (with discretion to author to bring forward other options if needed)
  - 1) last year's assessment model updated with new data, and 2) the preferred model for the upcoming assessment
  - Streamlines author's work in short time between receiving survey data and presenting assessment to the CPT; also streamlines CPT/SSC review
3. SSC to prioritize recommendations in minutes, to identify which are critical and which are for the longer-term
  - SSC Chairs can provide feedback in-between meetings if authors are unsure

# NEW IDEAS FOR POTENTIAL TIMING CHANGES

*BASED ON CRAB PLAN TEAM AND INDUSTRY FEEDBACK IN MAY*

## October Council meeting

- BBRKC, Tanner crab, SMBKC specs

## December Council meeting

- Snow crab, NSRKC specs

## June Council meeting

(or later?)

- AIGKC specs

*(need to consider timing of other stocks also)*

- CPT feedback
  - Dec could provide better opportunity to incorporate NBS survey data if it can be available
  - Keeping BBRKC and Tanner fisheries open together avoids bycatch
  - Concern about diluting quality review of crab assessments if too much overlap w groundfish specs at December meeting
  - AIGKC assessment timing is currently challenged because fishery does not close until April 30th
  - Need to manage any timing transition carefully
- Industry feedback
  - BBRKC, Tanner important to open on Oct 15<sup>th</sup> or earlier, due to markets and processing availability
  - Concern about snow crab in Dec as short turnaround to Jan fishery
- ADFG feedback
  - TAC-setting workload easier if spread out in time

# JANUARY MODELING WORKSHOP

- **CPT feedback in May**
  - Should continue to occur – important as stocks transition to GMACs
  - Should occur in-person if at all possible, and hosted by Council (\$)
  - Does not necessarily need to be linked to CPT meeting
- **Questions for CPT**
  1. what SSC review is needed for January workshop output?
    - E.g., can SSC provide feedback at a March or April meeting and still have it be informative for CPT in May?
  2. does everyone from CPT need to be at the modeling workshop?
    - Could we do a virtual/hybrid CPT meeting in January 2023, combined with an in-person modeling workshop?





# NEXT STEPS

- Looking for Crab PT feedback on these or other changes or improvements
- Will continue to dialogue with CPT and public before any major decisions reached

