

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke  
Executive Director



DATE: June 16, 1992

SUBJECT: Crab Management

**ACTION REQUIRED**

Consider need for adjustments to the BSAI King and Tanner Crab FMP.

**BACKGROUND**

At the April 1992 meeting the Council asked the crab plan team and the State of Alaska to provide an opinion on the need to adjust the optimum yield (OY) for *C. opilio* in the FMP. Currently, the FMP sets the OY for *C. opilio* at 333 million pounds in any one registration year. In addition, the FMP limits the upper level of the guideline harvest level (GHL) to the OY. The *C. opilio* OY in the crab FMP was based on results of a 1975 survey.

On May 4, 1992 the crab plan team held a teleconference to discuss the Council's request and recommended that the OY be reevaluated for *C. opilio*, considering two alternatives: 1) status quo, and 2) eliminate reference to any poundage of *C. opilio* (i.e., 333 million pounds) in the definition of OY in the FMP. Thus the OY for the FMP under alternative 2 would be defined as the amount of crab that may be legally landed under the requirements of the FMP and under the laws of the State of Alaska. Essentially this sets the OY equal to all male crab greater than 3.1 inches.

If the Council directs the Plan Team to commence analysis of the *C. opilio* OY at this meeting, a public review document will be available for initial Council review in September, and a final decision due in December. With this schedule, a change in the FMP could be final before the end of the *C. opilio* season, according to NOAA General Counsel.

Note that at their January 29, 1992 meeting, the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee unanimously recommended that the Council assess the 333 million pound OY limit on *C. opilio* relative to the most recent scientific information.

If the Council would like to have analysis begin on this issue, it needs to provide the plan team direction at this meeting.