

**Date: February 20,2017**

**To: North Pacific Fishery Management Council**

**From: Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC)**

**Re: Annual Meeting and Recommendations to Board of Fisheries Proposal 250-261**

Committee Members: Lance Farr (Chair), Kevin Kaldestad (Tom Suryan proxy); Steve Minor, Dale Schwarzmiller, Brett Reasoner, Dean Fasnacht, Jake Jacobsen, Stefanie Moreland

### Selection of Officers

Officers serve a two-year term. Steve Minor nominated Lance Farr to continue as President with Dale Schwarzmiller second, moved without objection.

Vice chair Jake Jacobsen nominated Steve Minor and Stefanie Mooreland second, Moved without objection.

### Board of Fisheries Proposals

#### 250 Allow full retention of all legal C.opilio taken incidentally during targeted WBT fishery

There was discussion back and forth with processors insisting the deliveries would have to be separated in different tanks no mixed loads. Also, there is time of year where opilio might not be ready to harvest. Harvesters think this would be a good tool to be available to reduce bycatch mortality hence increase the TAC and improve efficiency. Having the ability to retain opilio does not mean we have to, allowing retention would still be in the hands of the processors. Supported without objection.

#### 256 allow full retention of all legal male EBT taken incidentally during target BBRKC fishery

Fishing in the area east of 163W for EBT hasn't been allowed for directed fishery in years, being able to retain the incidental caught EBT would spread out the fishery. There has been delivery of mixed loads in the past but processors didn't want anymore. This proposal causes more inefficiencies than 250 for processors, different cook times and the time lost from switching processing. Thought it would be a good tool but would be up to individual processors. Ice might be able to coordinate deliveries from multi boats to make it more efficient for processors. The economics of switching over for a small amount of crab is not economically viable. Supported with some comments that we understand retention is not mandatory and there are concerns from the processing side.

#### Proposal 251 change season date for WBT from March 31 to April 15

There is observer data that shows there is very few if any soft-shell crab shows up in pots. This would be beneficial to be able to get all the bairdi harvested if fishing later, particularly in heavy ice years. Supported without objection.

#### Proposal 252 and 253 Deploiment of gear and shellfish observer program

Improves vessel efficiency and crew safety. This proposal makes too much sense not to support. Supported without objection.

#### Proposal 254 for purpose of catch accounting allow all hybrid Tanner crab to be identified as the target Tanner crab speices (C. opilio or C. bairdi) depending upon fishery registered for

Concern with this proposal because of separating bairdi as a species in the marketplace and is not just on size alone, could devalue the bairdi product by mixing hybrid in with bairdi. Hybrid's do not taste like

a true bairdi. PNCIAC would like to see crab plan team account for hybrids as opilio in the harvest strategy. Motion to harvest hybrids as opilio and to have the crab plan team account for hybrids in stock harvest strategies. Supported new proposal not supporting proposal 254 as written.

Proposal 255 allow full retention of all legal male C. opilio taken incidentally during targeted EBT (166W to 163 W long) fishery

This is similar to proposal 250, separating in the tanks, slightly different cook times. Not requiring retention but allowing it.

Proposal 257 Extend the eastern boundary line for C. opilio from 166W long to 165 W long

Have reservations with this proposal it would overlap the boundary lines of eastern bairdi and opilio crab fisheries. Also the need to protect king crab. PNCIAC did not take an official position on this proposal.

Proposal 258 Extend the eastern boundary line for EBT from 163 W to 162 W

Not a good idea too many king crab potentially caught as bycatch, need to protect king crab. PNCIAC not supporting.

Proposal 259 Specification of escape rings and mesh for St. Mathew Island Blue King Crab

PNCIAC believes sorting on the bottom is good stewardship of the resource. Supports this proposal.

Proposal 260 Adopt the Departments Quick Reference Guide for C. opilio and C. Baridi crab

Believe the guide needs to be refined. Supports without objection.

Proposal 261 Allow up to 5% retention limit of C opilio when targeting EBT

PNCIAC supports this proposal but believe 255 is a better way to address the issue's.

PNCIAC supports the Board of Fish having a special meeting to address the bairdi crab harvest strategy. PNCIAC fully supports a meeting to occur in June so that an updated harvest strategy would be ready for next year's TAC setting.