

Priority Research Items Identified by Caucus Groups
PIC September 14-16, 2005 Crab and Halibut Meeting

Pribilof Islands Caucus Research Priorities:

Biological

1. Where is critical habitat for juvenile Blue King Crab? Need multibeam mapping around Pribilofs, also a video survey for visual documentation of critical habitat.
Are BKC larvae being transported to that habitat? If females have moved NE, are their larvae being transported AWAY from preferred habitat? (Need drift studies esp. around the Pribilofs.)
Does hatching coincide with plankton blooms – food? (Need plankton studies around the Islands in late winter, in cold years and warm, and how applies to all species.)
Can BKC populations be supplemented by moving crabs, using artificial habitat?
2. Studies on egg mortality
3. Do king crab series of production and distribution to see if links between Bristol Bay and Pribilof Red King Crabstocks: is the Pribilof stock dependent on Bristol Bay productivity or is it independent?
4. Ecological factors that drive geographic shifts/ what are the costs?

Management

1. Reduce bycatch before setting quotas
2. Look at what Canadians have done to reduce bycatch
3. Spread bycatch effort over larger geographic area
4. Need NMFS to work with communities to collect better population data/ work collaboratively
5. Expand Bristol Bay protection area (consider this recommendation only after evaluating new research and analysis, particularly of ADFG)

Industry Caucus Research Priorities:

1. Supplemental surveys/ better indices for monitoring crab abundance by stock, including sample design review and revision
2. Continue looking at northward movement of snow crab centroids, including effects of cod predation (Armstrong/ Pengily paper)
3. Continue research on declines due to combination of factors including high fishing mortality and recruitment variability. Review studies of correlation of trawl intensity and crab CPUE (Dew/ McConahy paper)
4. Individual vessel bycatch responsibility in head and gut trawl and longline fisheries/ review effect of rationalization on bycatch reduction as demonstrated by Bering Sea multi-species CDQ fishery and British Columbia groundfish fishery

CDQ Caucus Research Priorities:

For both the biological and management draft recommendations we feel they naturally (most of them) fit into the following categories. We identify these categories as our priorities:

Biological

1. Habitat
2. Climate change
3. Bycatch ramifications
4. Impact of predation

Management

1. Issues associated with rationalization of non-pollock and non-crab fisheries, from both a groundfish and PSC perspective.
2. Economic and biological impacts of crab rationalization

Environmental Caucus Research Priorities:

1. Determine habitat and ecological factors that drive crab geographic abundance
2. patterns
3. Determine which observer data exist to begin to answer basic ecological questions
3. Answer question: is the Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Area, or any other crab savings area, functional in the preservation of crab stocks?
4. Determine impacts to crab habitat from current fishing activities
5. Reduce bycatch