



BERING SEA FISHERIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

620 6TH ST. SOUTH KIRKLAND, WA. 98033

NRC TEL: 206/285-3480 FAX: 206/282-1414 -- GARY PAINTER TEL: 541/574-0256 FAX: 541/574-0380

B S F R F

FORGING COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS IN THE BERING SEA

October, 2006

To: The Crab Industry
From: BSFRF

The Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation is seeking your support to help finance our research agenda. Included with this letter, you will find a copy of our brochure from 2005, a copy of our research plan for the summer of 2007, and our recent letter to NMFS/ADFG.

Our Board of Directors has a long term commitment to our research agenda for Bering Sea crab stocks. At our past Board meetings, we agreed that we need to have a deeper understanding of the crab management models. Jack Tagart represented the Foundation at recent Crab Plan Team meetings. Jack understands the science behind the models, the overfishing definition, the biological reference points, Bmsy, MSST, and the rest of the alphabet soup. Gary Stauffer (Formerly of NMFS at Sand Point in Seattle.) is a consultant and advisor to BSFRF and was instrumental in encouraging us to establish the Foundation and setting up our cooperative relationship with NMFS. Before his recent retirement from NMFS, he was responsible for the NMFS crab and groundfish trawl surveys.

We are currently investigating the potential for drafting a research proposal to the North Pacific Research Board to conduct an experimental study to measure handling mortality for opilio crab during the winter fishery and have invited Bob Otto to advise us on this effort.

Dr. Gerard Conan is working with BSFRF in developing a new dedicated crab survey to target red king crab and opilio crab. He brings his survey and trawl net design that he developed to survey opilio crab in eastern Canada. The net is fully instrumented, utilizes a tickler chain and is constructed of small mesh. This net is proven to catch and retain a high percentage of the juvenile and mature crab on the bottom. This will improve both the accuracy and precision of the biomass estimates of female and male components of the crab stocks. The results from our survey should provide biomass estimates with survey selectivity estimates closer to 1.0 for a wider range of sizes which will provide better data for the existing and future models. The Foundation is purchasing all the survey equipment and supplies, Dr. Conan is training our people to run the survey and analyze the data using geostatistical methodology.

Steve Hughes and Scott Goodman from NRC continue to coordinate and direct all aspects of BSFRF's research agenda.

We will need help from these and other scientists to increase our knowledge of the crab species and the mathematics and biology behind the modeling so that we can help improve the science of crab. All of this is important to the future of the industry

Several co-ops have pledged 0.33% of gross to BSFRF. This amount will be matched by the canneries who receive deliveries from the members. For those co-ops which have not yet pledged, please consider supporting BSFRF at your co-op level. Your support is vital for BSFRF to do its job.

Sincerely,

Gary Painter, for the Board of Directors.

To: Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation

From: _____
(Your name or your entity's name.)

I own or represent _____ pounds of Bristol Bay Red King Crab.
(pounds of BBRKC)

I agree to contribute .33% of the X-vessel price of delivered king crab.

_____ I would like BSFRF to make arrangements with my processor.

My boat: _____

Processor(s) _____

_____ I will make my own arrangements.

(Representative)

(Date signed)

Please make a copy of this form for your records, and send it or the original to:

Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation
620 6th St. South
Kirkland, WA 98033

Please have all funds sent to the above address.

THANK YOU very much for your support.



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October 5, 2006

Doug DeMaster – Science & Research Director

Via email & USPS

Alaska Fisheries Science Center

National Marine Fisheries Service

7600 Sand Point Way N.E. Building 4

Seattle, WA 98115

Dear Doug:

We, in the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF), would like to express our concern and disappointment about the lack of full disclosure by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) regarding the data, information, models and rationale used in the Bering Sea crab TAC setting process for this year. The Alaska Fisheries Science Center as in the past shared the survey data as soon as the data verification process was completed and the data were transferred to ADFG but did not share the NMFS abundance estimates with BSFRF until after the TACs were announced by ADFG. This is a change from the previous two survey/fishery seasons which we regard as a backward step in efforts to shape a transparent process. We have worked cooperatively with NMFS and, to a large extent with ADFG, on our joint projects for the past several years. Our findings have been an open book to both agencies. We have neither delayed the release of our information, nor held back any portion of our findings.

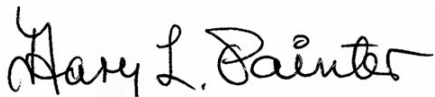
Now that the TACs are set, ADFG says that there are no options. In an open process the options would have been on the table for all to review and express their opinions prior to setting the annual TACs as intended by the MSFCMA. BSFRF was disappointed, because at a minimum the expected TACs could have been discussed more openly so they were better understood by industry. The TACs are lower than we had expected based on the limited

information provided by NMFS and ADFG. The industry needs timely, accurate information to use in its planning. Failure to provide that timely information seriously disadvantages industry and is costly for all involved in harvesting and processing this resource.

Lastly, the analysis of 2006 NMFS survey data commissioned by the BSFRF led us to different abundance estimates from those that were apparently used in determining the TACs. In an effort to understand how the managers came up with this year's quotas and to open up this process for the future, we respectfully request that you provide to the industry including BSFRF all the data, information, model results, rationale, and explanations that were used by NMFS and ADFG in the formation of the 2006/7 TACs announced by ADF&G.

We are eager to maintain and continue our cooperative partnership. We simply ask that we be considered full partners and that the crab management process be open to all for review and comment as required by MSFCMA.

Respectfully,



Gary Painter, President, BERING SEA FISHERIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

cc: Doug Mecum, Russ Nelson, Bill Hogarth, Stephanie Madsen, McKie Campbell, Denby Lloyd