

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES  
RESOLUTION #81-89-FB

POLICY ON KING CRAB RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

*See also  
#76-11-FB*

The policy of the Board of Fisheries is to manage the Alaska king crab fishery in a manner that establishes stability and eliminates, as much as possible, extreme fluctuations in annual harvest that have at times characterized this fishery. The Board recognizes that this policy will not maximize physical yield because maximum physical yield will not necessarily produce the long-term optimum economic yield.

Achievement of such management depends on the maintenance of crab stocks that are comprised of various age classes of legal-size crab rather than creating an industrial dependency upon annual recruitment. Maintaining controlled fishing on several year classes will reduce fluctuations associated with variable recruitment.

The resource should be monitored annually to provide information reflecting abundance of prerecruits, recruits and post-recruits. As the population abundance and structure change, the harvest rates on the legal portion should also change so as to insure that an appropriate portion of crab are carried over to subsequent years' fisheries. The Board may permit the harvest of additional older crab nearing the end of their life span, when such crab are considered surplus to the breeding requirements of the stocks.

The resource should be managed conservatively when there is insufficient information about the stocks.

The benefits of maintaining several year classes in the fishery are most apparent when weak recruitment enters the fishery. When year classes have been partially protected by controlling harvest rates, there will be enough older crab to reduce the decline in catch and maintain adequate brood stock.

Sustained levels of king crab production also require the protection of stocks from harvest during critical periods of their life cycle. Closure of the fishing season is necessary during annual migrations into shallow water at which time king crab become soft through molting, school and subsequently mate. It is further recognized that following periods of peak molting, king crab are unacceptable for commercial utilization until they have sufficiently reestablished an acceptable meat to body weight ratio, the shells have hardened adequately, and can be handled with minimal mortality or damage. The Board will establish fishing seasons based on the best biological information within each area.

ADOPTED: April 1, 1981  
Anchorage, Alaska

VOTE: 6-0

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Nick Szabo, Chairman  
Board of Fisheries