

Draft board proposal:

Re-examine the Tanner crab harvest strategy, including the following elements, for review and action at a Board of Fisheries meeting in early June. Elements of the strategy under #1 below are the highest priority for action prior to the 2017/2018 season. The review should also include a discussion of the appropriateness of a female threshold in light of other female conservation measures (e.g., male only fishery, no fishing during mating/molting), and as compared to other Tanner crab fisheries. The review should also include a description of all of the additional conservation measures currently in place.

1. Female threshold computation
 - a. Evaluate the designation of female maturity determination for existing calculation
 - b. Evaluate the inclusion of crab west of 173° and/or other areas not currently included in the biomass estimate but for which survey data are consistently available
 - c. Evaluate using the same reference years as in the federal stock assessment
 - d. Penalty clause – re-evaluate the utility of the TAC penalty the following year
 - e. Consider alternatives to a single open/close threshold (i.e., alternatives to the on/off switch to facilitate flexibility)
 - f. Male threshold – consider upper male threshold to determine harvestable surplus

The Board supports continued assessment of the following issues, recognizing that these are part of a longer-term effort and would likely not be included in the evaluation provided to the Board this summer.

2. Consider using selectivity data from the stock assessment
3. Consider using stock assessment model outputs as the basis for the harvest strategy
4. Evaluate existing additional conservation buffers (new shell/old shell selectivity)
5. Evaluate alternative measures for the female abundance threshold (e.g., fertilization rate; egg production index; effective spawning biomass; total mature biomass)

The Board encourages the Department to update the Crab Plan Team at its May meeting and present the draft results of the potential harvest strategy revisions.

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