

Terms of Reference for the BSAI Crab Plan Team

(October 2014)

1. **Establishment.** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) shall establish a Plan Team for the king and Tanner crab fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) area. The Plan Team will provide the Council with advice in the areas of regulatory management, natural and social science, mathematics, and statistics as they relate to the king and Tanner crab fisheries of the BSAI area.
2. **Membership.** Plan Team members will be appointed from government agencies, academic institutions, and organizations having expertise relating to the crab fisheries of the BSAI. Normally, the Plan Team will consist of at least one member from the Council staff, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the University of Alaska, and other universities and institutions. Alternate members may be assigned to participate in case a member cannot attend a meeting. With the consent of the sponsoring agency or institution, nominations may be made by the Council, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), the Advisory Panel (AP), or the Plan Team. All nominations will be subject to approval by the SSC, with the Council retaining final appointment authority. Appointments should reflect the Plan Teams' responsibility to evaluate and make recommendations on management, biological, economic and social conditions of the fisheries.
3. **Organization.** The Plan Team will be directed by a chairperson, and may divide some of its responsibilities among work groups organized according to subject matter. A work group may also include members from the BSAI groundfish Plan Team. Each work group will be directed by a work group leader.
 - (a) Rules of order. In general, rules of order will be informal. Plan Team decisions will be reached by consensus, whenever possible. If a decision is required and consensus cannot be reached, the opinion of the majority will prevail. In representing the Plan Team publicly, the spokesperson will take care to relate Plan Team opinions accurately, noting points of concern where consensus cannot be reached.
 - (b) Meetings. A minimum of two Plan Team meetings will be held annually in so far as practicable to discuss guideline harvest levels, status and management of the BSAI crab stocks. The timing and scope of meetings, in so far as practicable, will be as follows; a spring meeting will be held with the intention of reviewing the previous year's fishery catch data, the methodology for stock assessment modeling, preliminary stock assessment and any additional issues pertinent to the summer research schedule. A following summer/fall meeting will be held with the intention to discuss the status of stocks. This meeting would be intended to occur prior to the TAC determinations by the state. The fall meeting shall be held at a time that ensures availability of TAC specifications for the allocation of crab resources under crab rationalization. It is understood that this status of stocks meeting does not preclude additional Inter-agency meetings prior to TAC setting. The Plan Team chairperson may call other meetings as necessary. The Crab Plan Team may meet separately or jointly with the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team to discuss areas of joint concern. A draft agenda will be prepared in advance of each meeting by the Council staff in consultation with the chairperson, and may be revised by the Plan Team during the meeting. Minutes of each meeting will be prepared by the Council staff, distributed to Plan Team members, and revised as necessary at or before the subsequent Plan Team meeting. The Chairperson (or designee) will report the Team's finding to the Council.

(c) Selection of officers. Officers (Plan Team Chair, Vice Chair and workgroup leaders) will be selected at the meeting preceding the annual Plan Team meeting or as vacancies arise. The Plan Team Chairperson and Vice Chair will be selected at the annual meeting for two-year terms. It is the intent of the Team that after two years the Vice Chair will succeed as Chair and the following election will be for the position of Vice Chair. This process will continue on a two-year cycle. Work group leaders will be selected for one-year terms. There will be no limit on the number of consecutive terms that officers may serve.

4. **Functions.** The Plan Teams' primary function is to provide the Council with the best available scientific information, including scientifically based recommendations regarding appropriate measures for the conservation and management of the BSAI king and Tanner crab fisheries. All recommendations must be designed to prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield (National Standard 1). All recommendations must also be scientifically based (National Standard 2), drawing upon the Plan Teams' expertise in the areas of regulatory management, natural and social science, mathematics, and statistics. Finally, uncertainty must be taken into account wherever possible (National Standard 6).

(a) SAFE report. The Plan Team compiles a SAFE report for the BSAI king and Tanner crab fisheries on an annual basis. The SAFE report provides the Council with a summary of the most recent biological condition of the crab stocks and the social and economic condition of the fishing and processing industries. The SAFE report summarizes the best available scientific information concerning the past, present, and possible future condition of the crab stocks and fisheries, along with ecosystem concerns.

(b) Plan amendments. At the direction of the Council, the Plan Team may also play a role in the development and evaluation of amendments to the BSAI king and Tanner crab fishery management plan, as well as evaluate amendments to the groundfish fishery management plan that may affect the conservation and management of BSAI crab resources.