



Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation, and Biology Program

The Need

- Gulf of Alaska **red king crab** stocks have **not** rebounded in the absence of fishing pressure since the 1980s.
- Pribilof Islands **blue king crab** stocks are the only stocks in the North Pacific that are federally designated as overfished. Management affects regional bycatch of all commercial fish and crab stocks.
- Coastal Alaska communities would benefit from enhanced crab stocks.
- Culturing tools for crab have proven successful!
- **Is crab rehabilitation feasible in Alaska?**

The Organization

AKCRRAB formed in 2006, a coalition of crab industry and coastal community groups, NOAA, University of Alaska and Alaska Sea Grant. A steering committee represents the partners. The Alaska crab industry is fully supportive of AKCRRAB.

Funding and in-kind contributions have come from all the supporters listed below. National and international interest is growing, and crab culture is under way in Europe, Asia, and South America.

AKCRRAB to date has shown king crab culture in hatcheries to be viable, has contributed to the biological and genetic understanding of crab life cycles, and trained five MS and PhD graduate students.

Near-Term Science Objectives

1. **Production:**
   - Can we collect broodstock and raise crab in a laboratory?
   - What is the right number?
   - What do they eat?
2. **Pre-release studies:**
   - Will they survive in the wild?
   - What habitat do they like?
   - Will they affect the ecosystem?
3. **Outstocking Experiments:**
   - What time of year do we put them in the wild?
   - How many can we put out at a time?
   - Will they survive in the wild?

Moving Forward

- Broodstock is needed annually from target crab stocks—20 animals each from Pribilof Islands and Kodiak areas.
- Small-scale experimental releases are needed for each target crab stock, in appropriate locations, with subsequent observations.
- Habitat research needs to be done to identify potential release locations.
- Larger-scale releases of target crab stocks are the next step, with follow-up observations and study.

ADF&G Participation

ADF&G is integral to the success of AKCRRAB in many ways:

- Permitting: Going very smoothly—Thank you!
- Broodstock collection to support hatchery and out-stocking experiments:
  - Are there conservation concerns?
  - Is it necessary to have a full population assessment?
- ADF&G participant on science committee: we would like to include active participation from ADF&G crab scientists.
- ADF&G policy level point of contact: we would like to have a "go to" person to regularly discuss annual issues with broodstock collection and future project development.
- Strategic Plan revision: we are working on adding Phase III to our Strategic Plan, and would like to include active ADF&G participation, as in the development of the initial Strategic Plan.
- Two meetings in fall 2014: (1) science planning for next three years, and (2) Strategic Plan revision, policy and science.
- Long-term discussion: how do we go beyond a "research only" program and produce more crab?

Participants and Contributors

Industry and Community
Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers
Alaskan Shellfish Growers Association
Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association
Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery
Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation
Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
Chugach Regional Resources Commission
Groundfish Forum
Gulf of Alaska Coastal Communities Coalition
Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation
Santa Monica Seafoods
United Fishermen's Marketing Association

Government/University
Alaska Sea Grant
Alaska State Legislature
NOAA Aquaculture Program
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences
University of Alaska Southeast