Work Plan for the Russian Far East Crab Fishery Improvement Project
Draft for SFP's review, January 2021

This document presents a work plan for 2021 and reports on fishery progress 2018-2020.
The Russia Far East Crab Catchers Association (CCA) and Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) began a Fishery Improvement Project for Russia Far East Crab in 2011. Today, a Supply Chain Roundtable of US crab buyers also supports the project, including Orca Bay Foods, Seattle Fish Company, Aquastar, Direct Source Seafood, and Keyport LLC.

Progress 2018-2020 is reported below. On its basis, a 2021 **Work Plan** has been prepared by the Sustainability Incubator, Inc., contact person: Katrina Nakamura, and acting as temporary FIP Secretariat at the request of Orca Bay Seafoods, contact person: Julianne Schindewolf.
Based on a review of the fishery and its progress, the fishery appears to be ready to enter the MSC program in 2021. The MSC has certified Russian crab from the Barents Sea (2018). In the Far East, the fishery's management system is now centralized and quotas have been allocated. CCA is also acting as a client for independent MSC assessment of Barents Sea crab fishery in favor of Antey Sever company, member of CCA.
For reference, the previous work plan is provided in Appendix A. Materials showing fishery progress can be found in Appendix B.

Notes:

1: The status of the fishery was assessed relative to the standard of the Marine Stewardship Council in 2016. This was followed up by a work plan through 2018 to improve the fishery to meet the standard. The SFP identified weaknesses in the fishery in 2019.

2: Some links in this report are to Google sites with an English translation of VNRO pages. If they do not work for you, please visit the VNRO homepage (http://tinro.vniro.ru/en/) and select Google's English translation function at the top of the screen. Then search crab documents, where 110 are currently available.

Progress in the Russian Far East Crab Fishery 2018-2020

1. Three of the weaknesses in the fishery appear to have been addressed by recent progress. Specifically, collaboration and legal amendments are eliminating IUU fishing, improving monitoring and enforcement, and resulting in better tracking of stock abundance and removals. Evidence to support a Stage 4 or 5 result includes:

- In July 2020, it was reported that the fishery has been included in the Digital Catch Journal (DCJ) (OSM in Russian) program to "make sure the industry's statistics are collected in a transparent, timely, and complete way". The system will significantly increase state oversight of the national catch. The program combines monitoring for aquatic biological resources with monitoring and control over the activities of fishing vessels. You can see the RFE vessel tracks at MKI OSM, which is a subsystem of OSM and is used to display on the map the positions of vessels and their tracks, depth maps, maps of ice conditions, fishing and exclusion zones (select blue, for example to see RFE vessel tracking). In 2020, a regional expansion of the program for electronic data exchange was tested with Norway.
- In 2019, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Traceability Pilot for Russian King Crab, by Orca Bay Seafoods "demonstrates what can be done to reduce the risks of IUU" by an industry partner which "engages its supply chain partners" (page 2). In the report, the WWF cites numerous examples of the Russian government "moving ahead with Monitoring/Control/Surveillance and trade controls to eliminate IUU fishing, as well as labeling and traceability requirements which appear to address the underlying problems" (page 30).
- Citing a need to end IUU fishing, Russia revised access to the crab fishery through a quota allocation. Most crab quotas have now been sold in Russia (November 9, 2020).
- An inter-agency collaboration for better enforcement began in December 2019 based on the Federal Law No. 330-FZ amending Criminal Code of the Russian Federation in relation to illegal fisheries (catch) of aquatic biological resources (2016).
- In December 2020, Russia has ratified the Agreement on Port State Measures of Nov 22 2009. Russia has signed the agreement in 2010. Ratification was followed by adopting of the Federal law №387-FL of 08.12.20. The agreement The Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) is the first binding international agreement to specifically target illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Its objective is to

prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing by preventing vessels engaged in IUU fishing from using ports and landing their catches. In this way, the PSMA reduces the incentive of such vessels to continue to operate while it also blocks fishery products derived from IUU fishing from reaching national and international markets. The effective implementation of the PSMA ultimately contributes to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems. The provisions of the PSMA apply to fishing vessels seeking entry into a designated port of a State which is different to their flag State.

2. Another weakness in the fishery was the need for a harvest strategy where fishery catches are set on the basis of biological reference points. This preference is found in the MSC standard, indicator 1.2.1.
Per Russian law (2015), the TAC determination in Russia is based solely on a scientific assessment of the biological state of the resource (see the 2018 MSC Public Certification Report for Barents Sea crab). However, public reporting on biological reference points for the commercial crab species in Russia's Far East crab fishery was summarized and combined with snow crab in Russia's Far East crab fishery through 2019. As a result, biological references points may not have been considered in the 2016 pre-assessment.

- Recommendations for the fishery and substantiation of forecasts of allowable catches for the most popular and valuable crabs, Kamchatka, blue and hairy crabs are developed annually by scientists. These will be published in the 2020 "fishery forecast" expected in late November in 2020. When the crab fishery forecast for Russia's Far East specifies all types of commercial crabs, a higher score on MSC 1.2.1 will likely be achievable.
- For clarification, input data is collected annually to estimate the status of crab stocks and to set biological reference points. The input data includes annual commercial catch based on daily vessel reports, stock estimates based on fishery statistics, research surveys data, and analytical models (these details can be found in the 2018 MSC Public Certification Report for Barents Sea crab).
- For clarification, Biological reference points and a total allowable catch are set for Russia's Far East Crab fishery on the basis of scientific results from comprehensive crab research at sea. This has been the case since February 2015 when Russia's federal fisheries agency issued an Executive Order to specify that biological reference points and harvest control rules will be developed for priority species including crab (MSC Public Certification Report, Barents Sea Red King Crab).

3. Bycatch management was also identified by the SFP as a weakness in the fishery.

- Based on VNIRO reporting and the academic literature for this fishery, bycatch of non-target animals caught inside crab traps is low.
- Input to the environmental assessment for the fishery is also being sought from all stakeholders and the public in the region. On May 26, 2020, VNRO published an announcement of public hearings in Vladivostok.
- Research by Lowry et al in 2018 looked into the risk of entanglements of crab gear rope with grey whales (focused on drift gill net and longline and other gears). Increased entanglements of whales with crab rope along the US Westcoast have been linked to shifting feeding areas due to climate change.
- For clarification, bycatch management in the fishery includes the preparation of habitat maps showing the distribution of sediment and dominant benthic organisms, and VMS tracking data is available to show where the fleets operate.
- For clarification, bycatch is estimated on the annual research cruise. On April 1, 2020 the research vessel VNIRO "Zodiac" left the port of Vladivostok to conduct comprehensive research in the Sea of Japan and the Tatar Strait. On board was a scientific team of specialists from the Pacific branch of VNIRO and their purpose was to determine the peculiarities of crab distribution, conduct a count of juveniles and analyze trends in population dynamics, including bycatch research. The obtained materials are used to predict the amount of allowable catch in 2022. Related synoptic and oceanological information are published in the Fishery Forecast report.
- By-catch information is also collected by scientific observers from fishery research institutes like VNIRO, KamchatNIRO, TINRO, MagadanNIRO who work on commercial vessels. The CCA has

provided administrative and financial support to the institutes in observers deployment on crab catching vessels.

Work Plan for 2021

No major gaps for passing scores are apparent making this fishery a good candidate for MSC certification. With support from the SR, VNIRO and the CCA, this fishery could enter MSC full certification in 2021. By January 2020, the CCA has reached an agreement with the CAB, agreed assessment team members, commissioned necessary scientific information from the fishery research institute. And based on that information CCA is working on submission materials to be sent to the CAB.

Notes:
The work plan provided utilizes a fishery improvement project template provided by the SFP for basic FIPs and requiring "time bound objectives for addressing a specific set of the fishery's environmental challenges to improve its performance against the MSC standard. Basic FIPs complete a needs assessment to understand the challenges in the fishery."

The FIP's unit of assessment is defined in the previous workplan on the CCA website:

The 1st set of certification units includes following fisheries:

Fishing zones/species:	Red king crab	Blue king crab	Tanner (Bairdi) snow crab
West Kamchatka	✓	✓	
Kamchatka-Kurils	✓		✓

2021 WORK PLAN FOR THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST CRAB FISHERY				
2021 Actions and their tasks:	Estimated Cost:	Completion Date:	Responsible Parties:	MSC Indix
ACTION 1: PREPARE TO ENTER THE MSC CERTIFICATION PROGRAM				
Task 1: Refresh the dialogue with the CCA.	$5k	1/21	SR + FIP Secretariat	N/A
Task 2: With CCA, establish a target date to enter the MSC program.	Included in $5k above	2/21	SR + CCA + FIP Secretariat	All
Task 3: Establish rapport with VNRO and regional officials to support MSC full certification. *Also determine how they are looking into bycatch from entanglement with crab trap rope.*	$5k	3/21	SR + FIP Secretariat	All
Task 4: Collect the materials prepared toward MSC certification to date from the CCA. Use the Barents Sea crab Public Certification Report as a guide.	Included in $5k above	4/21	CCA + FIP Secretariat	All
Task 5: Update the MSC pre-assessment to prepare and organize the materials for full certification.	$20k	12/2021	FIP Secretariat	All

Confirm biological reference points are now published for all crab species and that a higher score is achievable for 1.2.1.				
ACTION 2: *If the CCA is not ready to enter full certification in 2021, s*et new improvement targets for late 2022 and write a new work plan. Use the Barents Sea crab Public Certification Report as a guide.	$15k	10/2021	SR + CCA + FIP Secretariat	Likely P1

Appendix A: Previous Work Plan for the Russian Far East Crab FIP

Source: the FIP page on the CCA website.

Work plan for the 1st set of certification units (passed pre-certification in May 2016)*

Task	Resources	Deadline	Implementation
I. General			
Analysis of pre-certification results, including issues identified as requiring further work for meeting in full the certification requirements.	CCA Fisheries institutes	May 2017	Completed
Preparation of all materials required for full certification and entering full certification.	CCA Fisheries institutes Regulatory bodies	Sep-Oct 2018**	Ongoing
II. Stock status and harvest control rules - **Preparation of additional certification materials:**			
• Crab stock assessment and TAC evaluation methodologies, and associated harvest control rules.	CCA Fisheries institutes Regulatory bodies	Jan-Mar 2018	Ongoing
• Crab mortalities as related both to target crab fishing and by-catches in fisheries for other species	CCA Fisheries institutes	Jan-Mar 2018	Ongoing
III. Fisheries environmental impact - **Preparation of additional certification materials:**			
• General state of habitat and benthic communities, and their current trends.	CCA Fisheries institutes	Jan-Mar 2018	Ongoing
• Plan continued systematic collection and analysis of fishery impact data reported by scientific observes from on-board CCA fishing vessels.	CCA Fisheries institutes	Jan 2018	Completed
• Fishery environmental direct and indirect impact on various types of by-catches, including ETP species, and potential VME ecosystems.	CCA Fisheries institutes	Jan-Mar 2018	Ongoing
IV. Monitoring, Control and Surveillance mechanisms in place to ensure effective governance and management of crab fisheries - **Preparation of additional certification materials:**			
• Identification sources responsible for remaining small but persistent level of IUU crab fishing and trade.	CCA Regulatory bodies	Dec 2017	Ongoing
• Preparation, in cooperation with state fishery regulatory bodies, of well-documented and up-to-date evaluation of IUU crab fishing and trade.	CCA Regulatory bodies	Sep-Oct 2018	Ongoing

* The 1st set of certification units includes following fisheries:

Fishing zones/species:	Red king crab	Blue king crab	Tanner (Bairdi) snow crab
West Kamchatka	✓	✓	
Kamchatka-Kurils	✓		✓

**According to recent practice in Russia, CCA commissioned KamchatNIRO fisheries institute for the preparation of documentation for full certification. A timeline for entering full certification thus depends on the institute resources to accomplish it in addition to institute's regular State-defined research plan.

Appendix B: Background materials in support of the fishery's progress
1. Fishery Governance and Capacity for Managing the Resource

VNIRO All-Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography, Pacific branch, formerly TINRO.

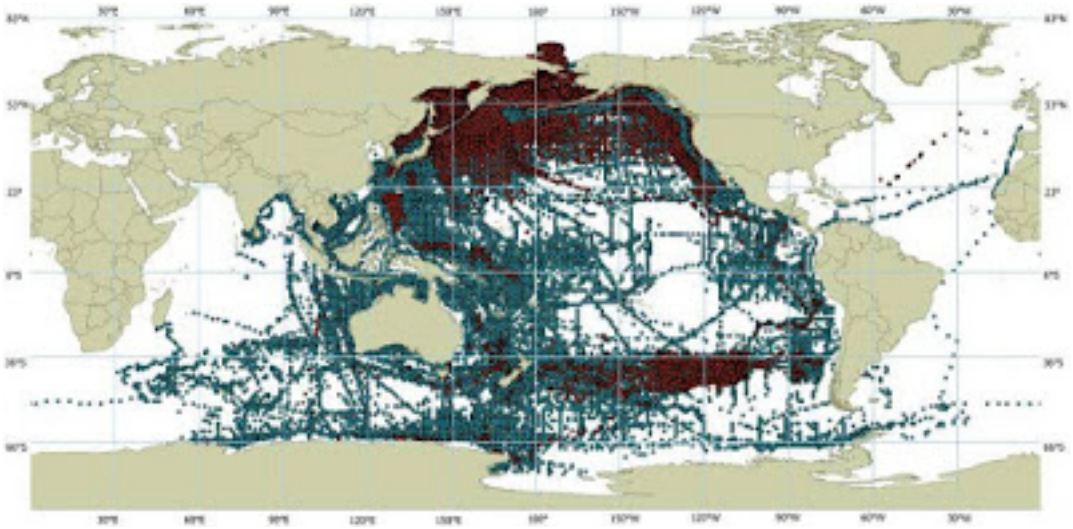
24 March 2020

TINRO structure, together with the Vladivostok group of scientific units, includes the Khabarovsk and Chukotka branches and the Research Fleet Base. Highly qualified personnel (20 doctors and 150 candidates of sciences) are concentrated here. The total number of employees today is 1,125. The amount of taxes and fees charged to the budget and extra-budgetary funds is more than 250 million rubles. in year.

TINRO-Center conducts comprehensive fisheries research on 10 federal-owned specialized vessels.

Annually, TINRO-Center carries out up to 30 research trips, with a total duration of more than 1500 ship days / year. The expeditions annually carry out about 2,000 plankton stations, 1,000 pelagic trawls, 1,700 bottom trawls, 500 trawling, 3,000 hydrological stations, 5,000 diving stations.

Up to 30 research voyages are carried out annually in the course of comprehensive research of the biological resources of the Far Eastern seas and the adjacent waters of the Pacific Ocean.



The research extends to all major fishing areas in the Pacific Basin and the eastern Arctic.

In 2018, TINRO and 27 other fisheries institutes entered the unified state research center, created on the basis of the All-Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography, becoming its Pacific branch.

2. Increasing enforcement to reduce IUU fishing

Joint work in the protection of aquatic biological resources

26 December 2019

Representatives of the leadership of the Primorsky border department of the FSB of Russia held a meeting with representatives of the Pacific branch of the FSBSI "VNIRO", during which the results of cooperation between border guards and science in 2019 were summed up.
According to Andrey Filimonov, Deputy Head of the Primorsky Border Directorate of the FSB, thanks to the comprehensive assistance of scientists, it was possible to achieve significant success in the protection of marine biological resources - to ensure proper control over fishing and to respond in a timely manner to threats to national interests and state security.

TINRO specialists provided comprehensive assistance to the border department in assessing the damage caused by illegal fishing of Pacific salmon on the main rivers of the region, cephalopods and crabs in the coastal waters and the exclusive economic zone of Russia. Also, scientists on an ongoing basis exchanged operational fishery information with border guards, information on the current state of stocks and catch of FBG, transmitted short-term and long-term (Putin's and annual) forecasts and provided any advice.

Scientific support did not go unnoticed - representatives of the Primorsky Border Administration expressed great gratitude to the scientists of TINRO and awarded a number of employees with diplomas, letters of thanks and mementos for their joint work.

The participants in the meeting agreed that the cooperation that has reached a new qualitative level in protecting the national interests of the two state organizations will only develop and strengthen in the future.

TAC increases for snow and king crab in the Russian Federation

November 29, 2017

In the Russian Federation, landings of crab in the Kamchatka peninsula were up 22 percent by the end of August, with 13 700 tonnes landed. The catch consisted of bairdi snow crab and opilio crab. The king crab fishery in the region started only on 1 September, and the quota has been increased to 11 500 tonnes (+29.2 percent). The total TAC for the Russian Federation's Far East crab fisheries are up by 7 000 tonnes to 73 500 tonnes for 2017.

Russian Federation authorities have been cracking down on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) crab fishing and illegal exports of crabs, yet poachers continue to find new ways to operate. Many crab poachers have started using transport ships to send their IUU cargo from the Russian Federation to Japanese and Republic of Korean ports. Poachers are also using ships under flags of convenience, as these ships are not strictly controlled.

Federal Law No. 330-FZ amending Criminal Code of the Russian Federation in relation to illegal fisheries (catch) of aquatic biological resources. 2016

This Federal Law increases penalties, including administrative fines and imprisonment, for illegal fisheries (catch) of aquatic biological resources and marine mammals, in particular in protected areas, open sea and prohibited fishing areas. It envisages such aggravating circumstances as of motor boats, explosives, chemicals, electric current and prohibited fishing gear and fishing methods.

Full text

Russian

3. The scientific basis for managing the crab resource in Russia's Far East

A new scientific expedition began in the Far East
April 1 2020

On April 1, the research vessel VNIRO "Zodiac" left the port of Vladivostok to conduct comprehensive research in the Sea of Japan and the Tatar Strait. On board is a scientific team of specialists from the Pacific branch of VNIRO.

The main purpose of the expedition will be trap shooting of crabs in the Peter the Great Bay and the Tatar Strait. Scientists will also assess the state of populations of commercial crabs and craboids, determine the peculiarities of their distribution, conduct a count of juveniles and analyze trends in population dynamics. The obtained materials will be used to predict the amount of allowable catch in 2022 and in subsequent years.
According to the director of VNIRO Kirill Kolonchin, fisheries science continues to fulfill the state plan of expeditionary research in full.

Recall that another VNIRO research vessel, the R / V Professor Kaganovsky, has already started complex pelagic surveys in the Sea of Okhotsk. 26 march 2020
R / V Professor Kaganovsky opened the season of marine expeditionary operations in the Far East

Science explored the stocks of crabs in the Okhotsk and Bering seas
Posted Nov 28. 2019 20:23 by TINRO

The cruise report of the R / V Zodiac, which surveyed commercial crabs in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Seas in the summer and autumn of this year, was presented at the Scientific Council of the Pacific Branch of VNIRO.

According to the head of the voyage, TINRO researcher Oleg Borilko, in June-July, a trap survey was carried out on the shelf and the upper horizons of the slope in the northeastern part of the Sea of Okhotsk. In total, more than 15 thousand km² were surveyed with depths ranging from 50 to 350 meters.

According to the results of the trap survey, the opilio snow crab is the most abundant species on the shelf of the northeastern part of the Sea of Okhotsk. The basis of all catches was made by commercial males, the maximum catches of large-sized males fell on the central part of the study area with a depth of 150-250 meters. According to scientists, the stock is kept at a stable level.

In late summer and early autumn, the vessel operated in the northwestern part of the Bering Sea. Surveys of deep sea crabs were not carried out for a long time due to the complexity of work in this area due to the bottom topography, therefore this expedition was of great importance for understanding the state of the crab stocks.

The results of studies on the tannery snow crab showed a relatively high number and density of settlements in the southwestern region of the research work - the Shirshov Ridge. The bulk of the commercial males was concentrated in the northern parts of the Shirshov Ridge (areas adjacent to Cape Olyutorsky from the south).

Commercial males of the Snowflake Angulatus were observed almost everywhere. The main aggregations of commercial animals fell on the areas adjacent to Cape Navarin from the southeast. In general, we can talk about a high fishing potential in the western part of the Bering Sea for deep-sea snow crab tannery and angulatus, which are currently almost never mastered by fishermen.

Scientists continue to explore deep sea resources

August 9, 2018

the purpose of the program is to survey the reserves of underutilized deep-water and mesopelagic objects and develop recommendations for their rational development . Starting from this year, during sea expeditions, specialists have been studying the state of meso- and bathybenthal biological resources at depths from 200 to 3000 meters. The objects of trawl and longline surveys are grenadiers, halibuts, thorn-cheeks, sea bass, lemonema, wild boar, sea monk, berix, as well as deep-sea crabs - isthorn, Cowesa, Verrilla, many-thorn, Angulatus, Tanner. Also, scientists have begun to update the methods of forecasting little-studied objects.
In May-June, the R / V TINRO performed work in the deep-water part of the Sea of Okhotsk. Scientists have obtained data on the status of stocks, distribution and age structure of black halibut, grenadier, licods, rays and other fish. The collected materials will be used to prepare a forecast of the permissible removal of objects in 2020.
In June-July, trap surveys in the Sea of Okhotsk were carried out on the Zodiac vessel on the shelf and at depths of over 1000 meters. The stocks of game crabs - isthorn and angulatus snow crab are in stable condition. Also, preliminary data were obtained on promising commercial objects - deep-sea crabs Cowes, Verrill, multiship.

Where will snow crab be caught?

January 30, 2019 TINRO

The forecast for Snow Crabs 2019 was presented at an expanded meeting of the Academic Council of TINRO, which was attended by representatives of the Primorye administration, the fishing industry, the Primorsky Territorial Administration and other departments.

According to Aleksey Slizkin, a leading researcher at the laboratory of commercial crustaceans of the Far Eastern seas, in 2019 it is recommended to develop about 50.4 thousand tons of snow crabs, including 31.9 thousand tons - opilio, 9.7 thousand tons - angulatus , 8.2 thousand tons - red, 1.3 thousand tons - Byrd. The total allowable catch of snow crabs remains at the level of the previous year, with a slight decrease by 1.5 thousand tons.
Last year, the share of TAC development for all snow crabs was 74.4%. The most popular is the opilio snow crab (97.1%), the smallest share of development is in the angulatus (66%).

Crab Fishery Forecast UPDATE
January 30, 2019

Scientists expressed their gratitude to the Association of Crab Hunters and the Vostok-1 Republic of Kazakhstan for the cooperation and placement of scientific observers on crab fishing vessels.
Next year, it is assumed that the fishery forecast will be made for all types of commercial crabs, and not just for snow crab. Recommendations for the fishery and substantiation of forecasts of allowable catches for the most popular and valuable crabs, Kamchatka, blue and hairy crabs are also developed annually by scientists, but it is advisable to present a single forecast, experts noted.
The fishery forecast also contains information on the estimated synoptic and oceanological conditions in the fishing areas, the legal framework for regulating the fishing, customs statistics on the import and export of crabs.
Also, during the Academic Council, a draft amendment to the Fishing Rules for the Far Eastern Fisheries Basin was discussed, one of the issues considered was paragraph 21.7, which, due to a technical error, threatened the conduct of crab fishing in two important industrial areas. In the wording proposed by scientists, bottom traps in Kamchatka-Kuril and West Kamchatka are prohibited to be used in fishing for fish, and not for aquatic biological resources in general. Those present unanimously supported this amendment.

FISHING SITUATION, DISTRIBUTION, POSSIBLE HYDROBIONT REMOVAL IN THE FAR EASTERN FISHING POOL NOVEMBER 2020

Comprehensive fishery research in the Far East basin
18 November 2019

Traditional objects of long-term fishing include pollock, herring, Pacific salmon, cod, navaga, commander squid, halibuts, shelf crabs, northern shrimp, trumpeters, greens, and flounders. Currently, they form the basis of the fishery's raw material base and the absolute predominant part of the annual catch. Basically, their resources are fully utilized (it seems possible to speak about the underdevelopment of resources only for flounders, cod and greenpipes), and with regard to the king crab, a significant overfishing is evident. The most numerous herds of this group of aquatic biological resources are monitored regularly, i.e. fishery science is still largely able to track their population dynamics. For the next five years, it is extremely important to continue regular monitoring of the state of the populations of this group of commercial objects, the results of which will make it possible to actually react annually to the dynamics of stocks of objects by increasing or decreasing catch quotas. In general, this group of fishing objects will form the basis of the catch in the Far East in the coming five years.

Fisheries management in Russia's Far East basis is undergoing an evolution from a single-species to an ecosystem approach in the study and forecasting of biological resources. A striking confirmation of this is the cycle of these complex programs, according to which research has been planned for the next 20 years. At the same time, fisheries management is still of a single-species nature. It is already necessary to develop new principles of the ecosystem approach to the management of aquatic biological resources, based on an understanding of the functioning of communities and ecosystems in general and accurate forecasts of their dynamics.

4. Transparency and stakeholder involvement in Russia's Far East Crab Fishery

Announcement of public hearings in Vladivostok on May 26, 2020 (questionnaires)
Posted Apr 19. 2020 6:08 pm by Tin Tinro

The Federal Agency for Fisheries, the Federal State Budgetary Scientific Institution "All-Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography" (Pacific Branch) (hereinafter - FGBNU "VNIRO" (Pacific Branch)), with the participation of the Vladivostok City Administration, notifies of public discussions on the object state ecological examination of documentation "materials substantiating CHANGES TO PREVIOUSLY APPROVED total allowable catch in the mining areas (catch) of aquatic biological resources in the inland waters of the Russian Federation, in the territorial sea of the Russian Federation, on the continental shelf of the Russian Federation, in the exclusive economic zone of the Russian FEDERATION AND THE CASPIAN SEA for 2020 (with an environmental impact assessment) ".

The purpose and place of the planned activity is the catch (catch) of the hairy quadrangular crab in the Primorye subzone (Far Eastern fishery basin), taking into account the ecological aspects of the impact on the environment.

The organizer of the discussions and the customer's representative is the Primorskoe Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fishery, Vladivostok, st. Peter the Great, 2, tel .: 8 (423) 226-88-60.

Contractor - FGBNU "VNIRO" (Pacific Branch), Vladivostok, per. Shevchenko, 4, tel. 8 (423) 2400-921.

The authorized body carrying out activities aimed at implementing the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of environmental protection is the Department of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management, Vladivostok, st. Muravyov-Amursky, 11/13, Vladivostok, tel. 8 (423) 2614-260.

The deadline for the environmental impact assessment is from the moment this announcement is published within 30 days until the end of public discussions. Public discussion form - hearings, polls.

The form for submitting comments is written.

You can familiarize yourself with the specified documentation, as well as print the questionnaire, using the links below. Completed and signed questionnaires, as well as comments, proposals on the environmental aspects of the planned activities, can be sent in writing from the date of publication of this announcement, within 30 days before the end of public discussions and within 30 days after the end of public discussions, to the address: 690091, FGBNU "VNIRO" (Pacific Branch), Vladivostok, per. Shevchenko, 4., or in electronic form to the email address: tinro@tinro-center.ru .

Public hearings on the specified documentation will take place on May 26, 2020 at 11-00 o'clock in the building in the building of the Pacific branch of the FGBNU "VNIRO" at the address: Vladivostok, per. Shevchenko, 4 (assembly hall).

Questionnaire on justification materials (pdf format)

5. Changes to allocations and the resulting challenges in the fishery today

RFC proposes radical changes to Russia's fishery policies, prompting pushback

September 15, 2020

RFC has called for additional investment auctions and investment quotas, including in the crab fishery, where 50 percent of the quotas are distributed through auctions and the remainder through historic principle.

Gleb Frank, RFC's owner, may carry enough political weight to get buy-in from Russia's leadership, and that RFC's argument that its proposal will result in additional revenues to government coffers, might create enough of an opening to result in the proposal being implemented in full or in part.

RFC was allegedly behind the idea of the investment auctions for crab quotas (though RFC denied its involvement in a direct comment to SeafoodSource), which ended up partly realized. As a result, Frank's crab-fishing companies won nearly one-third of the crab quotas sold through the auctions.

The Ministry of Agriculture, of which Russia's Federal Agency for Fisheries is a part, has filed an official report voicing its opposition to the initiative, arguing it would create unequal competition. It said the load rate of 50 percent granted via the investment quotas is enough for the profitable operation of vessels. And it said companies that didn't take part in the program might have if its conditions had been full-quota allocation from the start. The ministry said the expansion of the investment quota system to additional species might be considered in the future, but only upon the completion of the vessels currently under construction as part of the program. Such a consideration should also be based on the needs of the Far Eastern Fishery basin for new ships, as the current program will renew the Northern basin's fleet by 80 percent, but the Far Eastern basin's by 40 just percent, according to the ministry.

Maxim Kozlov, chairman of the Association of Sakhalin Region Fisheries, said at a press conference that the RFC's initiative is an attempt to redistribute quotas in favor of the company. Kozlov said his organization opposes the move, as it had already suffered due to introduction of the crab auctions earlier this year. The sale of 50 percent of crab quotas resulted in the loss of 10,000 MT of quota which had been used by local fisheries, he said. Should the RFC's vision be approved, the Sakhalin region will lose another 300,000 MT of quota for other species, and nearly 5,000 jobs will be eliminated, Kozlov claimed.

Stand-off mounts in Russia between crab sector and government

February 21, 2019

Both stations asserted the only way to bring the industry under control was to move to an auction system. The close timing of the two reports and the overlap in the information they provided, not to mention the fact that such reports on the Russia station typically require tacit approval from the Kremlin prior to broadcast, was interpreted

by the crab industry as a clear message that the top ranks of the Russian leadership would brook no dissent in their decision to move to auctions.

In January at a meeting of Russia's Public Council of the Russian Federal Agency for Fisheries. The council moved to request a supervisory body check on the performance of government bodies in tackling the problem of IUU, and Public Council Chairman German Zverev called on the Border Service and the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation, the largest governmental watchdog – accountable to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation – to revise and analyze the efficiency of its anti-IUU policies.

Russian Federal Agency for Fisheries Head Ilya Shestakov dismissed the claims of IUU made in the two television reports, citing the fact that all Russian vessels fishing crabs and other species are equipped with electronic monitoring systems overseen by Russian supervisory bodies, and that special bilateral agreements signed by Russia with South Korea, Japan, and other countries are supposed to prevent sale of illegally fished Russian seafood in ports of these countries.

Three days after the council's session, the Russian government officially introduced a draft of a law to restart auctions for quotas.

After quota auctions in Russia, new "crab king" emerges

December 19 2020

Gleb Frank is now being referred to as "The Crab King" by Russian media outlets after his company, Russian Fishery Company (RFC), won more than one-third of the quotas up for auction in October. The auctions, which collectively handed out 15-year fishing rights to around 50 percent of Russia's total allowable catch for crab, or around 46,000 metric tons (MT).

According to the Russian Federal Agency for Fisheries, 41 lots were offered, with 31 one of them covering fishing in the Russian Far East – primarily in the Sea of Okhotsk – and the remaining 10 for the Northern Fishery Basin, the Barents Sea. Of the total, 36 lots were sold, with the other five – all for deep-sea fishing – were considered too risky regarding their commercial attractiveness. Out of 23 bidders in the auction, 18 won some share of the quotas on offer.
The cumulative starting price was RUB 120.9 billion (USD 1.89 billion, EUR 1.7 billion), with the outcome netting RUB 142.4 billion (USD 2.22 billion, EUR 2.01 billion) in total for the Russian government. That's lower than the RUB 160 billion (USD 2.5 billion, EUR 2.26 billion) the government was discussing back in 2017 when weighing in the prospect of the auctions. Of the total, RUB 99.5 billion (USD 1.56 billion, EUR 1.4 billion) was paid for Far Eastern quotas, and RUB 42.8 billion (USD 669.64 million, EUR 600.44 million) was paid for the northern ones.
The winners of quota in the Far East crab fishery are Merlion, Pacific Crab, Ostrovnoy Crab, Sever, TRK, Mag-Sea International, Voskhod, Aqua-Invest, Kamchatka Crab, Antey, Atlantic Crab, and Dalnevostochnoe Poberezhie; in the Northern basin – Antey Sever, Eta-Trade, Froster, Karapax, and Alfa-Trade. Some of the bigger winners included the Antey Group, which has a long history in the crab market in Russia. The company successfully bid on five lots in the Barents Sea, agreeing to pay RUB 18.2 billion (USD 284.74 million, EUR 257 million). The North Western Fishery Consortium also won bids on five lots for a combined RUB 24.6 billion (USD 384.87 million, EUR 347.4 million).
But Frank appears to have benefitted the most from the auctions. Three of the companies winning bids – Pacific Crab, Kamchatka Crab, and Atlantic Crab – are reportedly owned by Russian Crab Group, which itself is owned by RFC and Gleb Frank. These companies won 10 lots overall, paying RUB 38.3 billion (USD 599.2 million, EUR 540.8 million), and making Frank one of biggest crab quota owners in the industry. With quotas for catching 10,000 to 12,000 MT of crab, Frank now owns around 15 percent of Russia's entire crab quota

6. Current trade in the product and impacts of Covid-19

Update on crab (Canadian snow crab season delayed), Globefish

September 9, 2020

China was hardest hit, with imports falling by over 40 percent to 11 653 tonnes. US imports, on the other hand, fell just very slightly by 1.1 percent to 16 685 tonnes, but there were some major changes among the suppliers. Russian shipments declined by 7.9 percent to 5 601 tonnes

here was a major drop in Russian crab exports during the first quarter of the year, from 10 685 tonnes in 2019 to just 6 724 tonnes in 2020 (-37.1 percent). The major markets, the Republic of Korea and China, both experienced strong declines: by 31.4 and 44.2 percent, respectively. China's crab exports fell by 22 percent during the first quarter of 2020, to 12 035 tonnes. All major markets suffered declines in imports from China.

Russian supplies, on the other hand, look good, even though crab shipments from the Russian Federation to the main markets (China, Republic of Korea and the United States of America) have been lower than last year.

Crab fishing season devastated by COVID-19
July 8, 2020

COVID-19 has negatively affected Russian crab exports to China. Previously, the total TAC in the Russian Federation was around 100 000 tonnes, with China absorbing 17-19 percent. In February, shipments dropped to almost nothing.
The United States of America's market, which in 2019 absorbed about 35 000 tonnes of Russian caught red king crab and opilio snow crab, would probably not be able to replace the Chinese market. Russian exports of live crab to China stopped at the end of January 2020. At that time, some 450 tonnes of live blue king crab and 236 tonnes of live snow crab were on their way to China, but exporters diverted these shipments to the Republic of Korea and other Asian nations. As a consequence of the increased amount being shipped to the Korean market, prices dropped. Other alternative markets such as the United States of America did not appear promising, as the market for live king crab there is rather limited.

Prices for Russian crab have dropped significantly since the outbreak of COVID-19. Demand in China declined sharply, and Russian crab prices dropped from USD 15 – 18 per kg last year to about USD 7 per kg in March 2020. Crab meat prices in the United States of America have been declining since early 2018 but were flat at the beginning of 2020, before the COVID-19 outbreak.

King crab prices were expected to remain high at the start of the year, but the long term outlook is uncertain due to COVID-19. However, supplies of king crab will be tighter this year. Alaska, which is the largest supplier to the US domestic market, had its quota reduced to just 1 450 tonnes in 2020, the lowest quota since 1982. A decade ago, the Alaska quota for king crab was 9 070 tonnes. Most recently, China has been buying more of this resource, both from the Russian Federation and the United States of America, and this is putting pressure on prices.
Chinese and Russian exports have shifted direction, with the Republic of Korea taking larger amounts compared to the United States of America and China. Supplies of king crab will be tighter in 2020, regardless of the COVID-19 crisis. But this does not automatically mean that prices for king crab will go up. The global trade situation is extremely confused at the moment.

Tighter supplies of red king crab

March 30, 2020

Russian supplies, on the other hand, look good, even though crab shipments from the Russian Federation to the main markets (China, Republic of Korea and the United States of America) have been lower than last year. Russian crab exporters seem focused on live crab in early 2020. There is increasing demand for live crab in the Chinese market, especially in connection with the Chinese New Year.

Russia ratifies Port State Measures Agreement

December 10, 2020

Russia President Vladimir Putin signed into law the ratification of the Port State Measures Agreement on 8 December, 2020, thus making Russia a party to the law-binding document intended to help combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) catch. A few amendments to the national legislation will follow to bring Russia's laws in line with the agreement.

Originally adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2009, the PSMA stipulates authorities at ports of entry for seafood can conduct dockside inspections, block entry to vessels known to be involved in IUU, and share information with other parties to the PSMA regarding vessels known or believed to contain IUU product.

The agreement was designed to strengthen the efforts by governments across the globe to prevent IUU fishing and close access to illegal seafood in markets, with an underlying goal of making these efforts holistic and well-structured. It also aims to increase informational exchange between the parties to expose vessels engaged in illegal activities.

The agreement gives national officials the right to deny any vessel access to domestic ports on the suspicion of wrongdoing, and to refuse services to vessels credibly accused of having participated in IUU fishing. It sets a minimum requirement for documents from a vessel to confirm the legitimacy of its activities, including papers for cargo on board and permissions for fishing. The agreement details the process of vessel inspections.

Russian Federal Agency for Fisheries Head Ilya Shestakov told the Federation Council – the upper chamber of the Russian Parliament – that legislative work remains so that captains of Russian ports can use their authority effectively within the agreement. Amendments must be made to the Code of Merchant Shipping to reflect new competences of the captains, and to the law on merchant seaports to give the fishing regulator the authority to establish a list of vessels detected performing IUU activities, and that it can serve as a center for information exchange with other countries.

Over recent years, Russia has been active in cracking down on poachers who catch salmon for salmon roe. It is currently dealing with a swarm of North Korean vessels that have been illegally fishing in Russian waters.