



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

*National Marine Fisheries Service*

**P.O. Box 2 1668**

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

April 1, 2002

Ms. **Ann** G. Rappoport  
Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Anchorage Field Office  
605 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room G-62  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Ms. Rappoport:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Region, seeks your concurrence with our determination that the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs (FMP) in its entirety is not likely to adversely affect seabird species currently listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. If you concur, no further consultation under section 7 of the ESA is required.

The following endangered species of seabirds occur in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands: short-tailed albatross (Phoebastria albatrus), spectacled eider (Somateria fishcheri), and Steller's eider (Polysticta stelleri). Critical habitat has been designated for the spectacled eider and Steller's eider.

The attached Biological Assessment (BA) provides the best available scientific information on the action under consideration, the FMP and the fisheries authorized under the FMP, and the effects this action on the listed species of seabirds and their critical habitat. The BA reviews the current status of the endangered and threatened species of seabirds, the designated critical habitat, the environmental baseline for the action area, and the effects of the crab fisheries prosecuted under the FMP.

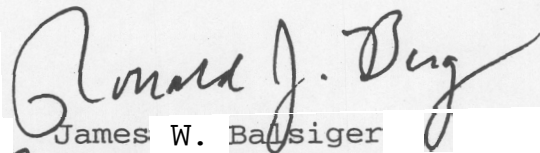
Commercial harvest for the following species is regulated under the FMP: red king crab (Paralithodes camtschatica), blue king crab (P. platypus), golden king crab (Lithodes aequispina), scarlet king crab (L. couesi), Tanner crab (Chionoecetes bairdi), snow crab (C. opilio), grooved Tanner crab (C. tanneri), and triangle Tanner crab (C. angulatus). The management area is defined as those waters of the U.S. EEZ that lie south of Point Hope, east of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. convention line of 1867, and



extend south of the Aleutian Islands for 200 miles between the convention line and Scotch Cap Light. Crabs are taken in pots and catch is processed both onshore and at sea. Crab fishing seasons occur in the fall, winter, and early spring, depending on the fishery.

Based on the information in the BA, NMFS determines that the actions considered in this Biological Assessment are not likely to (1) adversely affect seabird species currently listed under the ESA, or (2) destroy or adversely modify their critical habitat. Therefore, we believe no further consultation under section 7 of the ESA is required. We request your concurrence with our determination. Please sign below to indicate your concurrence or nonconcurrence and return this memorandum to NMFS Sustainable Fisheries, Alaska Region. Please call Gretchen Harrington at (907) 586-7445 if you have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger  
Administrator, Alaska Region

For  
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I concur. \_\_\_\_\_ Date

I do not concur. \_\_\_\_\_ Date

cc: Lisa Lindeman, NOAA General Counsel  
Kim Rivera, NMFS National Seabird Coordinator

Attachment