

King and Tanner Task Force Meeting

September 28, 2023



Meeting Ground Rules

Everyone is encouraged to participate.

No one or two individuals should dominate a discussion.

This is a public discussion, not a debate.

Listen to and respect other points of view.

Do your best to understand the pros and cons of every option.

Meeting Objectives / Agenda

- A. GKC harvest strategy
- B. Management approach for the 2024 commercial GKC fishery
- C. Potential regulatory changes to the GKC fishery
- D. Collaborative approaches to GKC stock assessment
- E. RKC management plan proposal
- F. Next KTTF meeting date

Harvest strategy and updated data online here:

https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/fishing/PDFs/commercial/southeast/meetings/shellfish/042623_gck_harvest_strategy.pdf

Purpose of the GKC Harvest Strategy

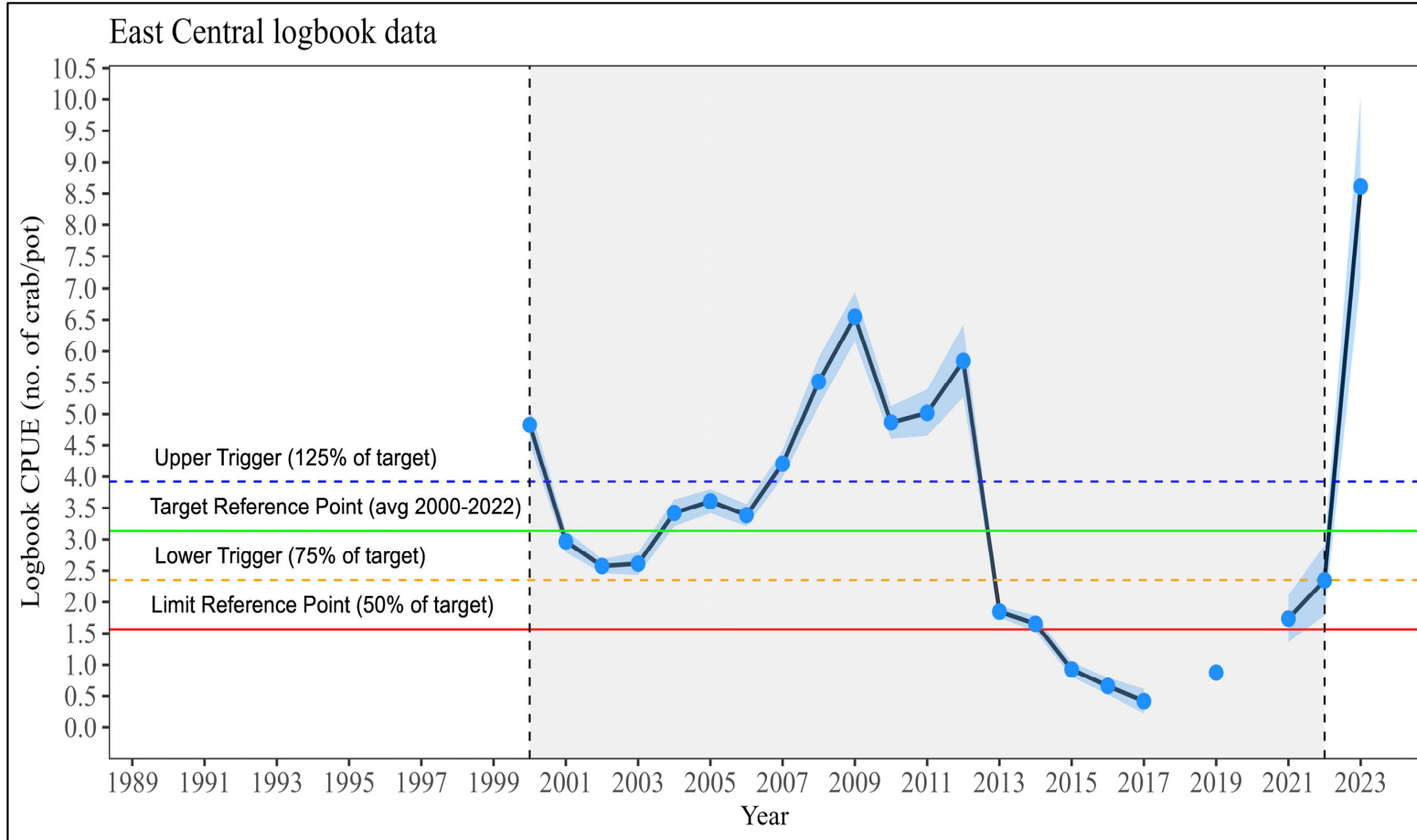
- Transparent and consistent approach in setting GHs each season
- Guidelines for closing a fishery
- Maintain healthy size and age compositions for long-term reproductive viability
- Stabilize fishery performance
 - ❑ Not trying to eliminate cycles of low and high abundance, only lessen the extremes
 - ❑ Longer sustainable harvest
 - ❑ Reduce the risk of overexploitation at low abundance when king crab are vulnerable to overharvest

GKC Harvest Strategy

- Working document that requires ongoing revision to account for unforeseen conditions
- We recognize that the current harvest strategy does not adequately account for what happened in last season's fishery in some management areas

East Central - 2023

- Highest logbook CPUE since data began in 2000
- Biggest single-year increase in CPUE
- GHL = 13,255 pounds; harvest = 78,921 pounds
- GHR = 225,000 pounds



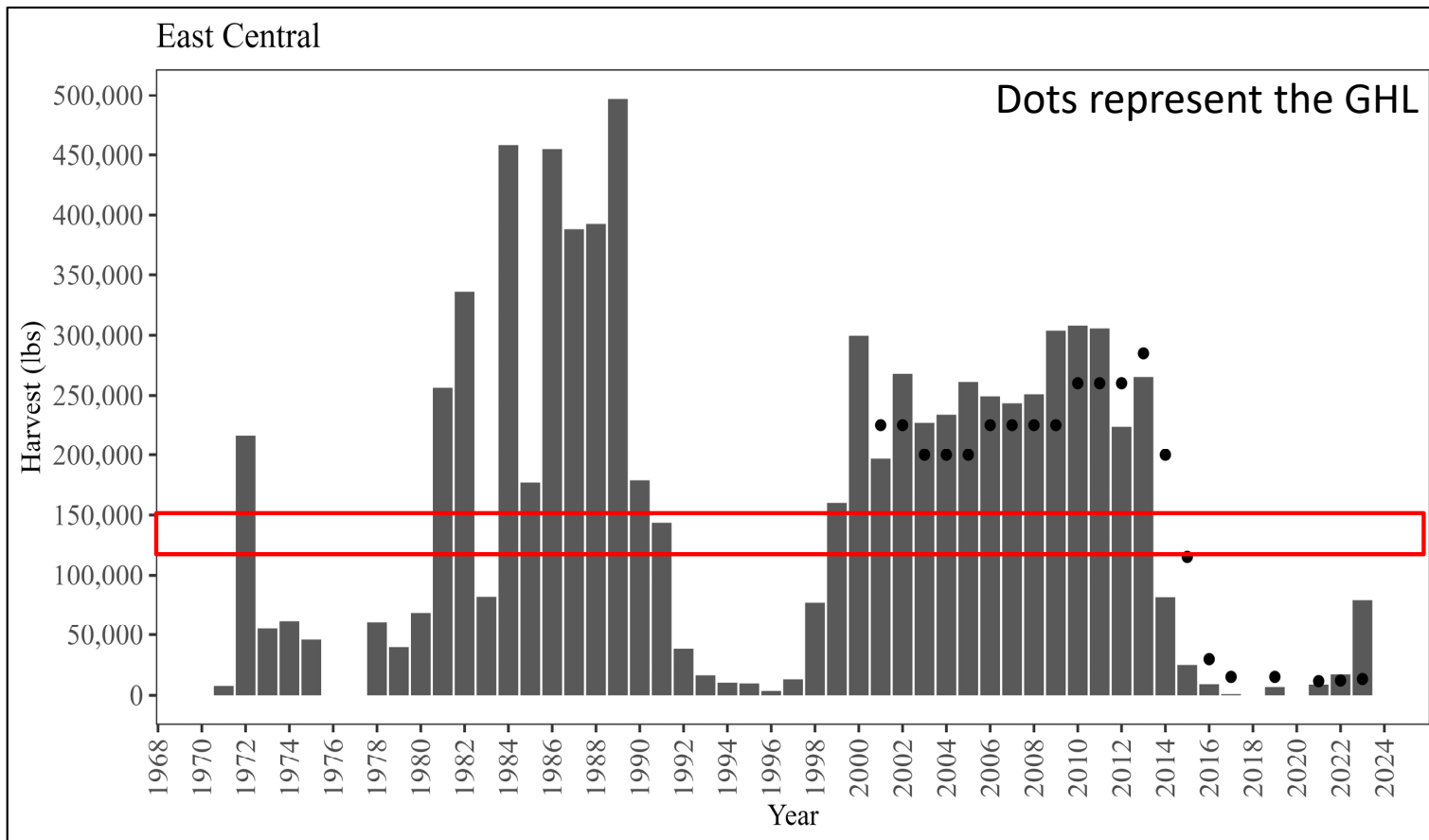
East Central - 2024

Harvest strategy (HS) does adequately address these situations

- Max 2024 GHL per the HS is 17,900 pounds

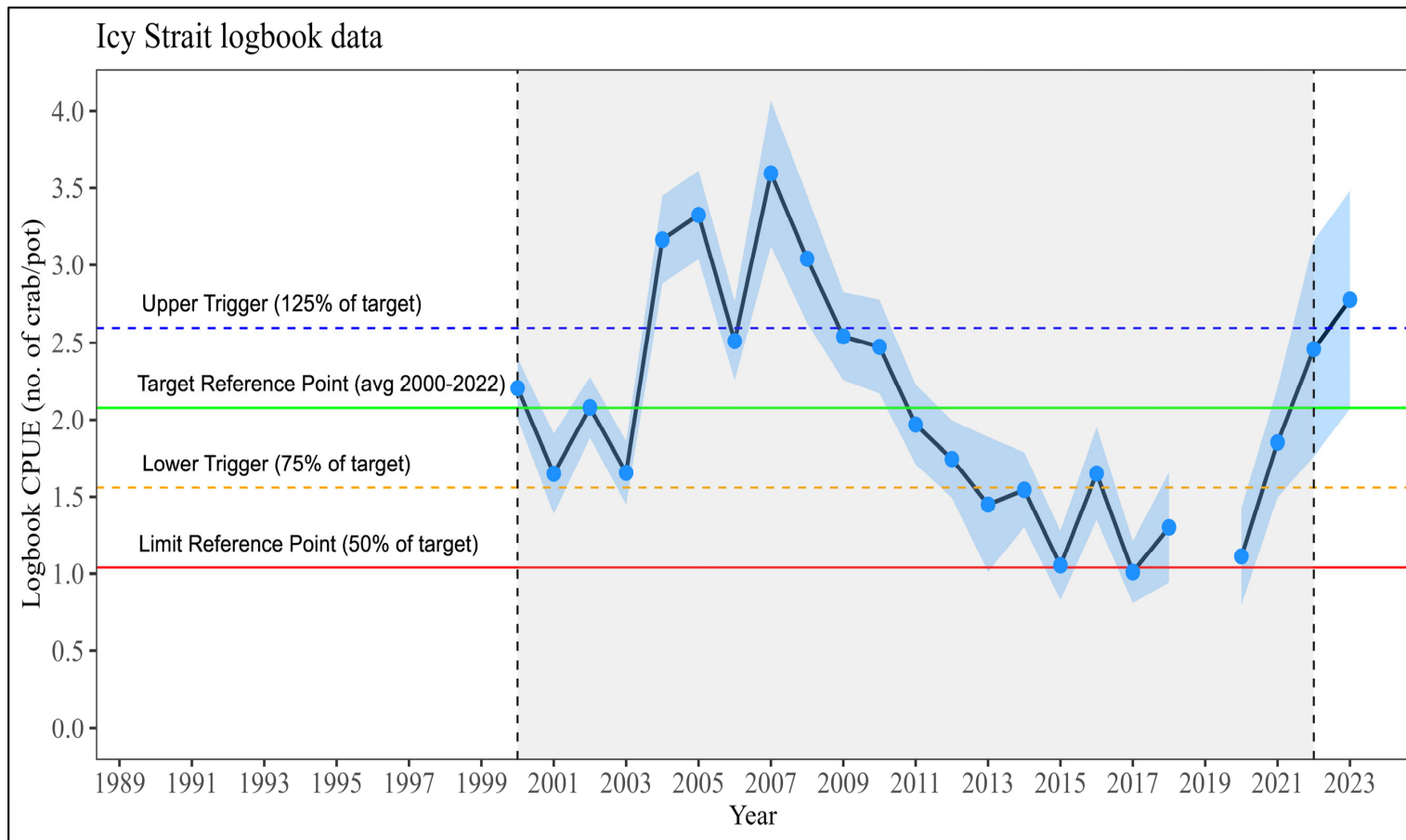
Stepping away from the HS for the 2024 season

- GHL in the range of **110,000 to 150,000 pounds**



Icy Strait - 2023

- Highest logbook CPUE since 2008
- Third year of steady increase
- GHL = 11,138 pounds; harvest = 27,569 pounds
- GHR = 55,000 pounds



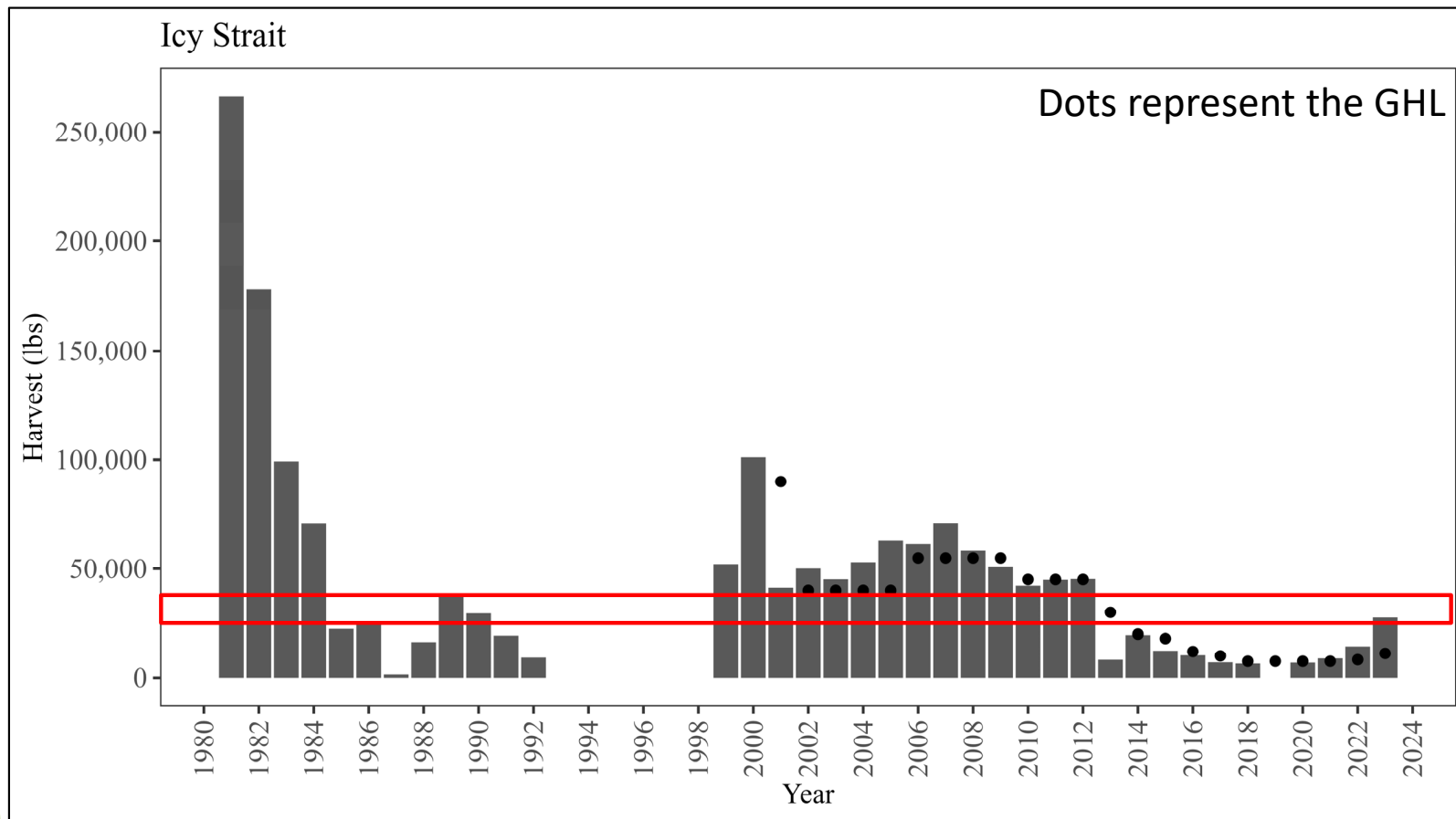
Icy Strait - 2024

Harvest strategy (HS) does adequately address these situations

- Max 2024 GHL per the HS is 15,036 pounds (~12K less than 2023 harvest)

Stepping away from the HS for the 2024 season

- GHL in the range of **25,000 to 35,000 pounds**



Other Management Area GHGs

- Will apply the HS or take the same approach as East Central and Icy Strait, depending on 2023 performance
- Will present tentative GHGs at the next KTTF meeting in November or December

MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH IDEAS

- ▶ Ideas A through K provided in posted summary of the May 12, 2023, KTTF meeting
- ▶ Revisit later: Items A, B, and C that reflect changes to harvest strategy
- ▶ Lack of support: Drop items D, E, and F that reduce # of pots, implement hauling hours, and separate Tanner and GKC seasons
- ▶ Discuss items G through K

G. Adjust season opening date to reflect when the tidal range between February 10 and 17 starts to decrease instead of at the smallest value.

- ▶ Pros: Industry and department support. Allows for better fishing conditions at the start of the season.
- ▶ Cons: Changes to regulations and potential impact on registration deadlines.
- ▶ Management Challenges: None.
- ▶ * Will this be an industry proposal?

H. Integrate fishermen's knowledge survey at the end of each fishing season to capture permit holders' observations during current season compared to previous seasons and integrate into management.

- ▶ Pros: Provides additional information for management decisions and involves stakeholders.
- ▶ Cons: Lack of participation and potential for inaccurate reporting.
- ▶ Management Challenges: Ensuring accurate reporting and fishermen participation.

SE Alaska Golden King Crab Post-Season Skipper Survey

Q1: Based on your observations this year, did the amount of crab encountered you during the fishery suggest a change in the overall abundance of the stock compared to the last three years?

- ▶ Increased, decreased, or about the same.
- ▶ Did you fish in relatively the same management areas as the previous three seasons?

Q2: The abundance of young males/pre-recruits compared to the last three years was:

- ▶ Below average, average, or above average?

Q3: The abundance of females compared to the last three years was:

- ▶ Below average, average, or above average?

Q4: What percentage of legal male golden king crab were softshell?

Q5: Did you encounter any leatherback golden king crab? If so, what percentage (or number) of legal male golden king crab were leatherback?

I. Adopt an effort-based approach where a preseason GHL is set and average season length for a given area is used as a baseline and number of days within a season are increased or decreased based on inseason CPUE.

- ▶ Pros: Allows for increased effort and participation. Utilizes increased abundance of crab when GHGs are quickly reached.
- ▶ Cons: Lack of control over harvest in specific areas. Potential for overfishing and delayed response to declining fishery performance.
- ▶ Management Challenges: Consideration of tides and accurate call-ins. Setting guidelines for increasing or decreasing the number of days.

J. Collect information on juvenile and prerecruit crab through a partial observer program. After an area closes a permit holder may set 5-10 pots with an onboard observer to collect biological information.

- ▶ Pros: Provide information that could be highly beneficial over a longer time period. Establishing a baseline over a few years would allow tracking of trends in juvenile crab populations and help identify recruitment patterns.
- ▶ Cons: Several years of data collection would be required before integrating into an assessment. Funding the project and getting fishermen participation could be challenging. Fishermen may oppose using this data to reduce GHGs.
- ▶ Management Challenges: Determining whether the same juvenile grounds should be chosen every year or different areas each year. Balancing the need for immediate impact on current GHGs with potential resistance from fishermen if the fishery is reduced based on the data. Incorporating the data into setting GHGs would require careful consideration.

K. When fishermen register require them to state where they plan to start fishing and which species they plan to target. This would not restrict them to only that area or fishery but would help gauge effort and fleet distribution pre-season. Require them to state their fishing plans when they call in, e.g., staying in the same area, switching target species, moving areas.

- ▶ Pro: Better understanding of effort distribution in specific areas. If reliable, it could eliminate the need for aerial surveys to monitor fishing activity.
- ▶ Con: Stakeholders may not have a fixed plan when they register, as their decision could be influenced by economics and other factors.
- ▶ Management Challenges: Ensuring fishermen accurately report their fishing plans when they call in. Expecting them to be in the area they initially registered to start in. Like any fishery-dependent data, accuracy and timelines would be crucial considerations for effective management.

RKC Management Plan Proposal

- ▶ ADF&G will submit a RKC MP proposal for next board meeting
- ▶ Starting point will be RC 10 and RC 97 that provided substitute language for Proposal 190 at March 2022 meeting
- ▶ It will not include underage language as before
- ▶ It will include overage language and mandatory registrations
- ▶ Advantages for the proposal passing next time
 - ▶ An ADF&G staff presentation to the board will provide better clarity and understanding with questions and answers
 - ▶ Clarify the intent of equal quota share
- ▶ Will provide draft language at the next KTTF meeting

Next KTTF Meeting

Proposed dates

- ▶ November 27 (1 day prior to the gillnet salmon TF meeting)
- ▶ or December 13 (after the NPFMC meeting)