

Snow Crab Fishery Disaster Research**FY2002 Request: \$1,000,000****Reference No: 34000****AP/AL:** Appropriation**Project Type:** Planning**Category:** Natural Resources**Location:** Kodiak**Contact:** Doug Mecum**House District:** Kodiak (HD 6)**Contact Phone:** (907)465-6100**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2001 - 06/30/2006**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

These funds will assist the Department of Fish and Game to collect much-needed biological information on the Bering Sea snow crab stock that declined sharply in the past few years. Results will be integrated both into modeling studies to understand stock fluctuations and into new management plans to foster stock rebuilding and reduced chances of future collapses.

Funding:	<u>FY2002</u>	<u>FY2003</u>	<u>FY2004</u>	<u>FY2005</u>	<u>FY2006</u>	<u>FY2007</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fed Rcpts	\$1,000,000						\$1,000,000
Total:	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**Project Description/Justification:**

For Federal Fiscal Year 2002, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$1 million to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that is earmarked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) for urgently-needed fisheries research on the recent precipitous decline of snow crabs in the eastern Bering Sea. Once the largest crab fishery in the world, stock abundance has barely cleared the minimum threshold for a fishery in the past two years. ADF&G will develop a three-year spending plan for these CIP funds in close coordination with other scientists, the crab fishing industry, and affected coastal communities. Likely components of the research program include: (1) a cross-shelf pot survey to estimate the relative contributions of migration and mortality to the rapid decline of large male crabs from the NMFS trawl survey, (2) surveys using remote operated vehicles or small mesh trawls in the northeast Bering Sea to estimate juvenile abundance and their habitat requirements, (3) a mark-recapture study to estimate growth, mortality and migration rates, (4) studies to unravel vagaries in reproductive biology, (5) studies on handling mortality to determine the fate of discarded female and sublegal male crabs, and (6) studies of commercial crab pot gear to improve escapement of females and sublegal males. Findings will be incorporated into ongoing modeling studies of snow crab population dynamics in relation to the effects of human activities and climate change. At the end of the three-year CIP project, new management plans will be developed to foster stock rebuilding and to reduce chances of future collapses.