

Summary of Public Testimony
53rd Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
March 29-April 1, 1983
Anchorage, Alaska

AGENDA D-1

Donald W. Bevan. Dr. Bevan said that while almost all who are concerned agree that there is little future for salmon without a working relationship between the United States and Canada, not as many would agree with his estimate that present levels of runs cannot be maintained with the current system. Dr. Bevan cautioned that possible consequences of a no-treaty situation should be explored. Plans for enhancement plans which could provide over 3 million additional chinooks to the catch coastwide would more than likely be set aside. Given the present budget climate, it would seem impossible to sell increased enhancement without a program for rational ocean management. And, without a treaty the tribal fishermen on the Columbia River will receive no benefits from coastwide management since the Courts have not decided if the catches by Washington residents, or U.S. citizens in Alaska, count within the 50 percent treaty allocation. The Canadians have stated that they will not continue the present sockeye treaty after 1984. Alaska streams produce only a quarter or a third of the Alaskan catch of chinook salmon, and even if rebuilt to optimum levels cannot support the present catches without Canadian and Columbia River contributions. Dr. Bevan said he is convinced that the present draft is better than the status quo, that the status quo cannot be maintained, and that chaos in management without a treaty is a risk that must be seriously considered by those who seek something better.

Tim Wapato, Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission. Mr. Wapato was accompanied by Mr. Harold Culpis, Nathan Jim, Wilbur Johnson, and Kathryn Brigham. Mr. Culpis reaffirmed his conviction that it is important to conserve the resources for future generations.

Mr. Wapato requested that his written testimony, along with the attachments, be included in the record. The testimony is included as Appendix II.

Dennis Watson, troller, Craig. Agrees that it is important to get some fish back into the rivers. But, Alaskans shouldn't have to take the brunt of the conservation efforts. This problem with chinooks has been coming on for years and years; dams are part of the problem. He feels there are enforcement problems--why can Canadian process fish in our waters and not be involved in our closures, etc. Mr. Watson would question changing the accounting year because they would put the cut-off date at a time of year when they are fishing.

James A. Guilmet, Seafood Producers Co-op, Kodiak. Would promote reopening areas which have been closed for years. Trollers are continually being shut down. Mr. Guilmet is totally against the treaty until there is some equality--Alaskans shouldn't have to take the brunt of the conservation efforts. He doesn't feel the enforcement/monitoring program proposed by the Canadians could be effective with the amount of money they have committed.

Dennis Montgomery, troller, Elfin Cove. Concerned that using a quota as a management tool on mixed stock fisheries is creating increased effort on specific stocks that need relief. Until these stocks can be confidently identified--when and where they show up in the fishery, Mr. Montgomery feels that an even distribution of closed periods is needed to best accomplish the goal of conservation. If there is to be a single-species fishery in the future, he would suggest closing the areas where historical king salmon drags exist. In reference to Proposal #126, which asks the Board to abandon the directive to restore historical inside catches of coho salmon in the Icy Straits and inside waters, Mr. Montgomery feels that the six-day closures in Icy Straits during July and August are effectively keeping the fleet fishing outside. Against allocations favoring outside boats at the expense of fishermen who prefer to fish inside.

Maurice Ingman, Ketchikan Advisory Board. Request reopening of the troll fishery in West Cape Suckling area. Stocks appear to have regenerated during that ten-year period. But, in that same ten-year period, the net fleet in the Prince William Sound was allowed to increase at an unrestricted rate and claims to be totally utilizing the fishery. To allow one fishery to expand at the expense of the other is a gross injustice. Mr. Ingman feels the proposed U.S./Canada salmon treaty is unfair to Alaskan fishermen and should be rejected. On Proposal #120, Mr. Ingman feels that Option 3 should have read, "plus the estimated hatchery production," which Ketchikan Advisory Board favored. On Proposal #125, the Advisory Board favored Option 2.

William Hammer, Seafood Producers Co-op. Would like fishing grounds in the Gulf of Alaska back, west of Cape Suckling.

Tom Jacobson, Sumner Strait Advisory Committee. In reference to Proposal #120, recommends that the Board stop using harvest ceiling for management and set a season using the same fishing periods as last year. Doing this would maintain the status quo in terms of numbers of days fished, avoid the single-species fishery, relieve the increasing pressure in the winter fishery, avoid the problem of changing accounting periods and accounting for seine-caught kings, provide 60 days of summer closures to provide needed escapement for Canadian rivers and the Columbia River and our own systems, would allow trollers to harvest relative to the abundance of the fish and not a set level, and may provide a fresh basis for treaty negotiations.

Jim Wild, Elfin Cove Advisory Committee. Mr. Wild, speaking for himself, said that the people of the United States and Canada will have to have trust and faith in working out the treaty to conserve the resource for future generations. The Elfin Cove Advisory Committee recommends an OY of 320,000, which is a number which will allow fishermen to live with dignity and provide for a future. The Advisory Committee wants to retain the winter fishery; it is very important to their economy. In reference to the change of the catch accounting period--concerned that the small boat would lose out in the end under this plan. If the fish were concentrated on the fair weather grounds in July, the small boat in the inside waters and along the beach would lose out if the fishery remained offshore during July and into August and may miss them altogether if there is a 10-day August closure.

Burt Finley, Gastineau Advisory Council. Against treaty as written. Alaskan troller will come out "short." If Canada had been taking the same percentage cuts as Alaska, then there might be some rationale for more cuts now.

Proposal #120--the Gastineau Advisory Council supports Option 6, ATA's proposal. The Council does not want to see any change in the statistical accounting dates. Also support the reopening of the Westward area.

Gary Slaven, Petersburg. The implications of recent events are disturbing--Alaskans are the only ones conserving. Under the treaty, Alaskans will never be able to benefit from their own enhancement.

Dave Peters, Port Angeles, Washington, Seafood Producers Assn. Wanted to know if a future "buy back" program is being considered for the processor and cold storage facility for Alaska--because with further cuts they will not be able to make it.

Al Richardson, member, ATA, Seafood Producers Co-op, Sitka. Closures for reallocation are not acceptable. Hopes management will take a more flexible approach to regulation of the troll fishery. Appears that the Alaska stocks are responding well to the 15-year rebuilding program which is ahead of schedule. Hopefully, Washington will be able to address their loss of spawning habitat caused by dams, eliminate poaching on the Columbia River, and rebuild their stocks.

Walt Pasternak, Sitka. Mr. Pasternak read a letter from Mr. Richard Klosky, a power troller from Sitka the record. Asks Board to come to aid of trollers who have participated in conservation of the resource and not penalize them for these efforts. Asked for raise in OY, reopening of the Westward fishery, and a fairer allotment of aquaculture fish.

Mr. Pasternak commented on manipulation of Alaska's fisheries by out-of-state agencies and the constant threat of the Washington Indians to sue the State of Alaska. It's time to stop giving away Alaskan fish. Washington/Oregon/Canada should work out their problems before asking Alaska for more.

Quoted from a British Columbia pamphlet, Catch Escapement and Stock Recruitment for British Columbia Chinook Salmon Since 1951, published July 1982 by M.C. Haley (Report #1107) which indicated a seine catch of small chinook are often marketed as other species of possibly as high as 300-400,000 fish. Supports ATA proposal for fishing season based on specific time of days set by ADF&G on availability, not set numbers. Would like fishing season date set up for May 15 this year and totally against shifting accounting dates. Against mandatory coho closure in August. Mr. Pasternak also said he takes exception to the number of out-of-state members on the Council, AP, SSC, and PDT.

Eric Jordan, Sitka. Feels a "fish war" with Canada is imminent, with or without a treaty. He is also afraid the livelihood of trollers will be sacrificed in the name of conservation. Reducing harvest may actually be endangering the resource. Mr. Jordan cited historical records for Southeast Alaska chinook harvests and recent study documents. A summary of his statement has been included in the record of this meeting.

Sue Sturm, Troll Pac, Sitka. On the present OY system: They find it hard to understand fixed numerical management of a season. Were against it at its inception and after last season, are totally opposed to the idea. Troll Pac feels a seasonal management system is more effective and puts the regulatory decisions in the hands of the biologists, fish and game people, who are more suited to make these changes. Concerned about the large foreign incidental catch of chinook; some effort should be taken for the conservation of the species. Troll Pac is appalled at the context of the proposed treaty; not enough Alaskan representation. Feel Alaskan conservation efforts have allowed Canadians to enjoy more fishing rights.

Jeri Museth, Elfin Cove, Juneau Troll PAC. Re: Proposal #120. Juneau Troll PAC supports Option 6. Would like to see a single-species fishery continued. Support Westward reallocation and the winter fishery.

Ed Wojeck, Executive Director, ATA. Submitted written management options for 1983 which are included in the record of this meeting. Option #1 is ATA's preferred option. In reference to the treaty, Alaska has stabilized the chinook fishery over the past twenty years and decreased that fishery in the past two years to show good faith, looking for a Canadian response. The response is an unacceptable treaty and a increase in their catch last year of approximately 500,000 fish. Doesn't see movement of the troll fishery to the Westward as a cure-all to the trollers' problems. Suggest both Council and Board should seriously consider a "buy-back" program in this depressed fishery. Looking to the Westward, a limited fishery in that area would help alleviate the problems. This year would like to see, at a minimum, trolling at historical levels west of Cape Suckling and some type of system with vessels checking in and out at Yakutat that would allow a minimum of 15 or 20 permits to fish outside of Southeastern. In this manner a controlled plan to reestablish trolling would prevent any impact feared by those outside Southeastern while satisfying the desires of our fleet.

Gordon Williams, Southeast Regional Council; Angoon Advisory Committee. The Southeast Regional Council has come to no agreement on any specific management plan. Their common ground of agreement is the fact that the socioeconomic impacts of the management of the troll fishery in Southeast Alaska over the past few years have been unacceptable. Ask that they be provided with a more equitable share of the chinook. The Southeast Regional Council wrote to Governor Sheffield in reference to the proposed U.S./Canada treaty requesting that the current draft of the treaty not be submitted to Congress for ratification.

The Angoon Advisory Council is concerned about the proposed change of accounting periods--don't know what effect it would have on the Winter/ Spring fisheries. Opposed to Proposal 126. Support Proposal 120, in principle.

Gordon Peterson, Hoonah Advisory Committee. Support Option 6 of Proposal 120. Opposed to Proposal 121 because it is not longer needed. The Hoonah Advisory Committee recommends repeal of this proposal. Proposal 126 is also not necessary due to the numerous restrictions placed upon the inside troll fishery since 1978. Support Proposal 125, Option 2; Hoonah Advisory Committee would like to go on record in support of this option. Hoonah Advisory Committee also supports statewide trolling.

Hank Ostrosky, Naknek. The President's proclamation of the EEZ and the question of sovereignty has not been adequately addressed by the Council. It would appear that the Council would not be under the Dept. of Interior.

Paul Johnson, Elfin Cove. Feels that the fish which has gone to Washington has been wasted and not utilized. Thinks Washington and Oregon should "clean up their act" and let some fish get up the creeks.

Gary McMaster, Chairman, Pelican Advisory Board. Pelican's livelihood depends on salmon to a great extent. Against U.S./Canada treaty. Supports Proposal 120. Concerned about changing the account period--afraid this will effectively eliminate a winter troll fishery. Support Proposal 179 and 180 which would open trolling west of Cape Suckling. Would like to see boats and permits spread out.

Public testimony on this agenda item was completed.

AGENDA ITEMS D-3 and D-4

Richard Goldsmith/Egil Ellingsen, North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners Assn. Testified on various proposals before the Board:

#16-HARVEST STRATEGY. Would not question an alternative strategy, particularly if the number of females needed is not there, but would question some of the methodology used to derive the different exploitation rates.

#17-DISTINGUISHING OPILIO FROM BAIRDI. Would suggest that one way to solve the problem would be to send out identifying sketches with the interim-use permits.

#23-MAKE ALASKA PENINSULA SUPER-EXCLUSIVE REGISTRATION AREA FOR KING CRAB. Opposed establishment of any exclusive or super-exclusive area. He felt that there is no conservation rationale behind these area designations and that they don't promote investment in vessels in those areas and are not economically efficient. He was concerned that it would put effort in one area and not enough effort into other areas which would affect employment and processing areawide. Vessels will go where the biggest quotas are. Also feels it violates the national standards of the MFCMA.

#26-CHANGING DUTCH HARBOR KING CRAB SEASON. Co-makers of this proposal and support it. Would like an opening date of Nov. 10, with tank inspections on the 15th. This is the first time that the majority of harvestors and major processors have gotten together on opening dates.

#27-REDUCING SIZE LIMIT FOR BROWN KING CRAB IN DUTCH HARBOR AREA. Because of the importance of this crab fishery in the future, would propose that surveys and studies be done this summer.

#28-SETTING LIMITS ON KING CRAB POTS IN DUTCH HARBOR. Would oppose this on the same basis as their opposition of exclusive registration area.

#32-CHANGE THE OPENING OF THE ADAK KING CRAB SEASON TO NOV. 10. Co-makers of this proposal along with the processors and support it. Believe that a better quality crab might be put on the market because of higher recovery rates.

Proposed seasons are as follows: Opening 8/15 for St. Matthews and Norton Sound; 10/1 for Pribilofs and Bristol Bay; 11/10 for Adak and Dutch Harbor. This would facilitate a continuity of supply coming into the processors; coordinated deliveries, constant employment among harvestors and processors and would avoid major shut-down and start-up expenses.

#33-REDUCE SIZE LIMIT FOR BROWN KING CRAB IN ADAK. Urge that studies be done because of the importance of this developing fishery.

#34-CHANGE OPENING IN BRISTOL BAY FROM 9/10 TO 10/1. Support: continuity of seasons and supplies; cutting down on costs for harvestors and processors.

#35-REDUCING SIZE LIMIT FOR BROWN KING CRAB IN BRISTOL BAY. See comments under Proposal #33.

#36-CHANGE TANK INSPECTION REQUIREMENT FOR ST. MATTHEW KING CRAB FISHERY. Would propose tank inspection 116 hours after the season opens. Believe it would be more efficient and eliminate illegal fishing problems.

#38-CHANGING SEASON DATES. Proposed the 8/15 opening date for the St. Matthews fishery assuming that the tank inspection proposal was adopted. If there is no change in tank inspection, would want the fishery to open on 8/20.

#39-CLOSE NORTON SOUND SECTION SUMMER SEASON. Oppose; no justification.

#40-SET BROWN KING CRAB SEASON FOR NORTHERN & PRIBILOF DISTRICTS. Oppose setting season. Would like to see seasons opened and close by Emergency Order so fishery managers can assess the fishery as it evolves.

\$41&42-FISHING SEASONS & SIZE LIMITS FOR BROWN KING CRAB IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT. Oppose setting a season. Support a reduction in size for the Northern District.

#43-CHANGE GEAR STORAGE AREA. Support. This will reduce costs for fishermen.

#44-CHANGE CLOSED WATERS NEAR ST. LAWRENCE, KING AND LITTLE DIOMEDE ISLANDS. Oppose; no justification provided.

#45-GEAR FOR BROWN KING CRAB. Sponsored this proposal for longlining of brown king crab pots. Brown king crab are deep and traditional methods are not working.

#46/49-REGISTRATION AREAS. Oppose any exclusive or super-exclusive registration areas.

#50-TANK INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS. Support this proposal. Would recommend that it be extended throughout Area J.

#52-FISHING SEASONS/TANNER AREA IN ALEUTIANS. Made this proposal. Consistent with the proposed opening dates for Adak.

#53-SET LIMIT FOR TANNER CRAB POTS IN EASTERN ALEUTIANS. Would oppose this proposal.

#54-SIZE LIMITS FOR TANNER CRAB IN BERING SEA. Support. Would like to see size of 5.5" to 5" throughout the Bering Sea.

#55,57,58,59. GEAR CHANGES. Would oppose all of these proposed changes.

#60-ESTABLISH POT STORAGE AREAS IN DUTCH HARBOR. Submitted this proposal. Support.

#61-VESSEL SIZE LIMIT FOR DUTCH HARBOR KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES. Oppose.

#62-ESTABLISH NEW POT STORAGE AREA IN BRISTOL BAY. Submitted this proposal, but are dropping this in favor of Proposal #43.

#63-EXTRA FISHING TIME. Submitted this proposal to compensate vessel operators who give up fishing time to aid vessels in distress by extending their fishing time.

#164-EXCLUSIVE REGISTRATION AREA FOR SOUTHEAST ALASKA. Oppose.

#187-ALLOW LONGLINING GEAR FOR BROWN KING CRAB POTS, STATEWIDE. Would support this proposal but would like to see a limit of 15 pots to a string.

#189-REDUCE BROWN KING CRAB SIZE LIMIT, STATEWIDE. Support this proposal in a limited capacity, in terms of the Bering Sea right now. Would like to see a reduction from 6.5" to 5.5".

#194-ELIMINATE MAJOR DAMAGE AS A REASON FOR VESSEL TO GO OUT AFTER KING CRAB FISHERY ENDS. Feels that something like this is needed, but would suggest defining "major damage" as "damage which requires a vessel to be towed to port for repairs."

#195-ALLOWING LONGLINING OF KING AND TANNER CRAB POTS IN AREAS WITHOUT POT LIMITS. Would support for brown king crab only, with a limit of 15 pots per string.

#196-PLACING FISH & WILDLIFE AGENT ABOARD CATCHER-PROCESSOR. Support this proposal.

#199-ESTABLISHMENT OF 24-HOUR TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NO. BY ADF&G TO PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR FISHERMEN. Thinks this is a good idea. Would enhance communication between fishery managers and fishermen. Mr. Goldsmith also brought up the problem of gear conflicts with foreign vessels resulting in loss of gear last year in the amount of approximately \$83,000, plus loss of fishing time. Would like to suggest that NMFS issue weekly advisories to foreign fleets giving information on where the crab season is open and when and request that they proceed with caution. Also, there have been some complaints of gear loss in the storage area in the Bristol Bay area. Would like Coast Guard to include information on storage areas in their notice to mariners in order to avoid unnecessary transit through the area.

Mr. Goldsmith discussed management problems last season. The St. Matthews fishery was closed after about 8.8 million pounds of king crab had been taken. According to recent NMFS surveys, they could have harvested another 2.5-to-4 million pounds. The trawl survey focused on Bristol Bay and the St.

Matthews fishery material was not analyzed until after the fishery was over. Also, in the Pribilofs, 4.1 million pounds was taken and another 2.1 million pounds could have been harvested. Current method of reporting from the grounds to ADF&G is not a very accurate system. Trying to work with industry and ADF&G to improve the accuracy of those reports so the fishery can be as fully utilized as possible. A third problem was with the opilio fishery which closed August 1. Apparently, the fishery could have taken another 6 million pounds. Mr. Goldsmith also said he would like to recommend that the king crab observer program continue, that studies be done on brown king crab, and to stress the importance of continuing the annual Seattle public hearing.

Mr. Ellingsen also urged the Board to consider placing observers in the developing brown king crab fishery.

Richard White, Universal Seafoods. In discussing season opening proposals submitted by Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. White stressed that the reasoning was to establish an orderly flow of the complete fishery to cut down on transportation costs, more efficient use of storage areas, and to also take into consideration that because of evident reduction in stocks, prices being paid would necessitate the best quality product possible. Later openings would help in improving this situation.

Mr. White does not feel that super-exclusive registration areas do what they are designed to do. They promote a greater concentration of gear and boats in a particular area and overcapitalization of a fleet. Does not support the two proposals concerning catcher-processors. Thinks placement of Fish and Game personnel on board would solve the problems presented here. Also, he feels that pot limit regulations proposed would be difficult to enforce. Mr. White does not feel there is enough data to support the proposals to reduce size limits. In reference to Proposal #53, Mr. White does not feel this is viable from an economic standpoint because the domestic market does not accept the opilio product.

Bob Alverson, Alaska Marketing Association. Supports season opening proposals from FVOA and processors. Sequential openings will allow more economical operation.

Henry Porter, Yaktat Kwaan, Inc.; and Walter Johnson, Yakutat Advisory Board. Opposed to Proposal #172, allowing use of side-loading Tanner crab pots in portions of Yakutat Bay which seeks to do away with their requested ban on sidelading pots. Does not feel this proposal would accomplish the same purposes.

Bill Alward, F/V BUCCANEER, Kodiak. Does not feel the proposed 100-pot limit is justified; cuts should be made by percentages, not numbers of pots. Also, Mr. Alward feels that if catcher-processors are allowed in the Kodiak area, there should be an observer on every one to limit taking of smaller crab. As far as limiting the number of pots in the Tanner crab fishery, he feels there is no way to enforce such a regulation.

Ted Painter, Jr., F/V ALASKA TROJAN, Kodiak. Opposed to any change in the pot limit for king or Tanner for Kodiak unless it is made proportional to the size of boat. Three years ago he was on a committee which was asked to propose pot limits to the Board. That committee came up with 150 pots for

king crab and 250 for Tanner crab. The committee was comprised of representatives of all sized boats and was able to agree on this solution. Feels that this proposal caters to special interests. Also opposed to any additional super-exclusive registration areas since they are pointed directly at the larger boats which are more capable of moving from area to area.

End of public testimony.