North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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MINUTES

Scientific and Statistical Committee
June 23-24, 1986
Kodiak, Alaska

The Scientific and Statistical Committee met in Kodiak, Alaska on June 23-24, 1986. Members present were:

Donald Rosenberg, Chairman
Richard Marasco, Vice Chairman
Bill Aron
Don Bevan
John Burns
Bud Burgner
Doug Eggers
Larry Hreha
Phil Mundy
Tom Northup
Terry Quinn

C-5 Research Needs

The SSC received a request from staff for the SSC to develop a 5-year projection of fisheries research needs for the FCZ off Alaska. To accomplish this task a subgroup of the SSC will be getting together with plan team members and Council staff to develop a draft document. That draft will be sent to agencies and academic groups for comment. The final document should be available by the March 1987 Council meeting.

D-4 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish

Two documents were the focal point of the SSC's discussion: the Draft Environmental Assessment and the Draft Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, both dated June 13, 1986. Comments on this report will be restricted to management measures contained in the amendment. Editorial comments have been submitted directly to the Team. Further, comments on the Management Goals and Objectives section of the amendment have been given to the Council's Gulf of Alaska Goals and Objectives Committee.

INABILITY TO EFFICIENTLY ADJUST HARVEST GUIDELINES

With respect to alternatives 1 and 2 the SSC was concerned over how the OY range was developed. It was the opinion of the SSC that a more scientifically defensible approach should be adopted to determine the upper end of the range. The SSC recommends that where estimates are available on the biomass that produces MSY, yield be calculated by applying the MSY exploitation rate. The

upper end of the OY range would then be determined by summing these values across species and adjusting the total to account for the species where data are not sufficient to allow calculation of MSY. The SSC felt that using historical total catches to determine the lower end of the range was a reasonable approach.

INADEQUATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Given the objective of this portion of the amendment package, that of insuring that adequate data are available upon which to manage fisheries inseason, the SSC recommends that Alternative 2 be deleted. This alternative would provide for the collection of price data. These data are not needed for inseason management. Further, a system is already in place that allows for the collection of these data, except for the situation where a vessel's catch is sold and transferred at sea. The SSC recommends that the requirement to fill out a fish ticket be amended to include those vessels.

KING CRAB BYCATCH IN KODIAK BOTTOM TRAWL GROUNDFISH FISHERIES

The SSC received the report of the industry workgroup and the proposed areas and catch restrictions. In light of their report the SSC recommends that the description provided in Alternate 1 be changed to match the recommendations of the workgroup. The description of Alternate 1 should read: "Establish time/ area closures for bottom trawling as shown in Figure 5.1 and described in Table 5.1 for the period of three years from the year of implementation to help rebuild the Kodiak king crab resource."

Table 5.1 needs to be modified to match the recommendations of the workgroup. Additionally, the SSC recommends dropping Area type III from the table as it has no meaning in the Gulfwide plan and may be potentially in conflict with other or future king crab closures. This alternate also needs to note the workgroup's recommendations that a shrimp fishery not be prohibited.

INADEQUATE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

After reviewing this section of the amendment package, the SSC decided to reaffirm its position that this authority should be granted only to allow action to be taken when a conservation problem surfaces or an error in data or an estimate of time needed to reach a quota needs to corrected.

Subject to modification and the editorial changes given the staff, the SSC recommends that these documents be released for public review.

D-5 Bering Sea Groundfish FMP

A. Amendment 10

The SSC reviewed the report of the plan team (dated June 17, 1986) and the public comments received by the Council on the draft EA/RIR/IRFA. The SSC concurs with the staff recommendation that new drafts of these documents are needed.

The SSC received the proposed changes that the team has presented in their report. Our recommendations are as follows:

BYCATCH MEASURES

The SSC concurs with the team recommendation that the proposed amendment be limited to only crab and halibut. The SSC reviewed the four alternatives to be considered. After discussion and with the time frame available, the SSC recommends that Option 1 and Option 3 not be included in the development of the amendment package. Option 1, which is an overall framework does not contain a detailed description of the types of actions that would be triggered by specific events. The SSC feels that in the time available it would be impossible to make the appropriate modifications.

With regard to Option 3, the SSC felt that it does not insure that adequate protection would be provided the crab resources.

Option 2 puts into place the emergency rule as adopted by the Council. The SSC recommends that in the rewrite this option be structure in such a manner that the individual species restrictions are clearly separated (in Section 3, page 11 of the Plan Team Report). Additionally, as currently proposed these restrictions would remain in effect until amended by the Council. Since many of these restrictions were developed to address conservation and rebuilding of the crab stocks, this option could include a termination date which would require positive action on the part of the Council if these restrictions are required for a longer period of time.

The SSC discussed changes in the proposed Option 4. The SSC recommended in the section on Annual Adjustments of PSC Limits (section 5, page 17 of the Plan Team Report) that steps 1 and 2 be deleted and that a statement requiring an annual review be inserted. The SSC feels that the circumstances listed in step 1 will trigger a review in most years. The SSC also recommends that Alternatives A and B in step 3 be deleted and that the team concentrate on Alternative C.

FIELD ORDER AUTHORITY

The SSC has no specific comments and recommends this item be included in the amendment package.

REALLOCATION WITHIN DAH

The SSC has no specific comments and recommends this item be included in the amendment package.

PRIORITY ACCESS FOR DAP FISHERMAN

The SSC concurs with the team recommendation that this proposal not be included in this amendment. Industry representatives expressed concern over dropping this proposal and stated that they would provide the Council with information and data. When that information is available, the SSC recommends that the team develop an amendment for Council review. If the information is provided in sufficient time a review could be undertaken at the September meeting.

REPORTING

The SSC received a presentation by the NMFS staff outlining the problems being encountered in the current reporting system. The SSC suggests the recommendation that amendments to the FMP to correct these problems be included in Amendment 10 if possible.

The SSC believes that NMFS, ADF&G and the Council should carefully review the status of groundfish data collection system to resolve the several technical problems which seen to prevent efficient, timely and complete compilation of the data needed for fishery management.

REVIEW TIMING

If the Council wishes to proceed with a schedule that would release the proposed amendment before the September Council meeting and if the Council wishes the SSC to review those draft documents, the SSC has agreed to a teleconference meeting in the afternoon of July 30. We would need to have the final draft documents by July 25.

B. Bering Sea Sablefish Catch Level

The SSC reviewed the recommendation that we made to the Council in March. It was brought to the attention of the SSC that during the recent U.S./Japanese bilateral meetings information was provided indicating that between 1984 and 1985 the biomass increased by about 25%. These new data led the SSC to reaffirm its position that the total catch could be allowed to approach 4,500 mt.

C. OTHER

Finally, the SSC suggests that the Bering Sea and Gulf plan teams jointly review the present amendments to their respective plans to make sure that the process will eventually result in Gulf and Bering Sea plans that are similar in their major features.