

AGENDA B-2
APRIL 1995**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME****REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL****April 19, 1995**

Fisheries managed under delegated authority of the State of Alaska since the last council meeting include crab, salmon and demersal rockfish.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES:

The Bering Sea *C. opilio* Tanner crab fishery opened on January 15, 1995 with a pre-season guideline harvest level (GHL) of 55.7 million pounds (25 million from the Eastern subdistrict, and 30.7 million from the Western subdistrict), approximately half of the 1994 GHL. A total of 255 vessels including 19 catcher processors registered to fish in the 1995 fishery.

Although plagued with freezing temperatures and ice, the fishery lasted only 34 days and produced a total catch of over 73 million pounds with an exvessel value at over \$180.

During their meeting of March 17 and 18, the Alaska Board of Fisheries (Board) passed new regulations requiring observers be placed onboard all catcher vessels participating in the Dutch Harbor brown and the Adak red and brown king crab fisheries. These new requirements are in addition to the observers on all processing vessels in the king and Tanner crab fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) crab fisheries. This action was prompted by the early closure of the 1994/95 Adak red king crab fishery for poor performance. The staff convinced the Board that additional observer information was necessary for the department to manage these remote and declining king crab fisheries, and additional observer coverage was the only means to provide the department with inseason fishery data on these stocks. There are no stock abundance surveys in these areas, and the data collected

during the fisheries would also be used to provide stock assessment.

The Board also adopted changes to their petition policy that allows petitions requesting reconsideration of recent Board action to be accepted or rejected based solely on the merits of the petition, and if accepted, allows review, by the Board of their action. Under the old petition policy, the problem outlined in the petition must justify an emergency. In past petitions of category 2 measures, the Board had not been able to justify emergencies. Rather than evaluate the merits of the petition, the Board rejected the petition request based on the petition criteria. The appeal was then transferred to the Crab Interim Action Committee for consideration and action.

The Board also clarified that the existing pot limits for king and Tanner crab in the BSAI did not pertain to the C. Tanneri and L. cousei fisheries. With this clarification, development of these new fisheries may presently continue without pot limits, but may be imposed at a later time.

SALMON TROLL FISHERY:

Approximately 13,000 Chinook have been harvested during the 1994/95 winter troll fishery. This seasons fishing effort is the lowest in recent years and has decreased harvest. The Biological Assessment for the Southeast Alaska Chinook Salmon fisheries is currently being drafted for the 1995 Section 7 consultation, and should be submitted by April 14, 1995.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH FISHERY:

On March 15, the directed Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR) was closed in the Southeast district due to management concerns caused by overlapping IFQ and directed DSR fishing. The directed fishery will remain closed until November 15 and may reopen depending on the amount of bycatch taken in the IFQ fishery and the remaining TAC.

On April 5, the department closed state waters (0-3 miles) in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) to sablefish when it was presumed that the recent average years harvest had been taken. State waters in the Bering Sea and Aleutians will remain open until the recent average years harvest has been taken.

During March, the Board adopted regulations allowing the department to modify inseason, individual, group or species bycatch levels by emergency order. To invoke this regulation, one of three conditions must be met; 1) a need for consistency between state and federal bycatch regulations in areas of overlapping jurisdiction; 2) a resource conservation concern; or 3) prevent waste of an unavoidable bycatch. The season would close, then immediately reopen under the bycatch rules. The Board also adopted regulations defining a landing, directed fishing, bycatch and other terms that will help establish state and federal regulatory consistency.