

Advisory Panel Report

January 26, 1978

The Advisory Panel of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met on January 25, 1978, at the Hill Building, Anchorage, Alaska. They had a morning session and reconvened in the afternoon for a joint session with the Scientific and Statistical Committee. They reconvened in the evening at the Council headquarters to finish up their business.

The motion was made and passed that the Advisory Panel recommend to the Council that the herring of the Bering Sea be a separate management plan from the Bering Sea Groundfish Fishery Plan.

Agenda Item Number 9, The Funding of RFP's, was discussed. The Advisory Panel recommended that funding be given for these RFP's but wanted to emphasize that the smolt tagging study, Item number 4, be made a priority. The motion passed.

Agenda Item Number 10: The MIT unsolicited proposals. The Panel felt that money was needed much more in fisheries research than for this proposal. They also felt it was too early in the FCMA experience for this type of proposal and available money could be allocated for much better and more pressing needs.

Agenda Item Number 11: They discussed the data collections meeting. They felt that data needs should be identified in the management plans. They thought this was a very important area. They also would like to state that the schedule that was presented to the Council was absurd, it was too short a time for the Council to be able to support it. A subcommittee of Mrs. Jaeger, Mr. Lewis and Ms. Welfelt was appointed to assist Mr. Collinworth on the study of the data needs. Ms. Welfelt reemphasized her motion from the last meeting that consumer data needs must be identified in management plans.

The Panel then listened to testimony by Mr. Furia of the New England Fish Company and his legal counsel Mr. Larry Brodie. There was some discussion of Mr. Davenny's proposal and the following motion was made and passed:

That the Council had made the decision that joint venture permits would not be reviewed until July 1, 1978, and the Advisory Panel felt that it was inappropriate to even discuss this at this time.

Motion passed.

The Advisory Panel also asked the Council to tell the Secretary of Commerce that the proposed guidelines for regulations on joint ventures be published now to be consistent with the national public hearings. This motion carried.

Mr. Tom Casey then testified on the Tanner Crab Plan. He stated the issue currently as "Had the Council acted within the law when it set the harvest at 15,000 MT? He also stated he had some data on shipments of crab from Japan to the United States. He urged the Panel to advise the Council to keep the 58^o line in the Bering Sea and the 15,000 MT foreign allocation north of that line.

The second session of the Advisory Panel was a joint meeting with the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Mr. Alverson reported that the SSC had recommended that there be a separate management plan for herring in the Bering Sea and that the Alaska Department of Fish & Game be the lead agency. Mr. Specking stated that the Advisory Panel had made the same recommendation.

Agenda Item Number 23: The Marine Mammal Commission's letter has been discussed. The SSC gave their recommendations and they felt there should be studies with ADF&G and NMFS. There was no comment from the Advisory Panel. Mr. Wilde of the Advisory Panel then gave a report of his visit to 15 villages in the AYK area and recommended to the Panel and the SSC that there be a separate management plan to cover herring in the Bering Sea.

A discussion followed with Mr. Alverson on the Tanner crab and Gulf of Groundfish plans with Mr. Larkin giving data and a handout on an analysis of the blackcod catch. Mr. Alverson said the SSC had recommended the salmon troll observer RFP and the RFP on the socio-economic on the AYK herring study be approved as is.

The letter from Mr. Richard Frank on "Economic Allied Data Needs" was then discussed and a draft reply by Dr. Miles was presented.

The Advisory Panel reconvened as a single body. The first item was the Tanner crab plan. The following motion was made and passed:

That the Tanner Crab Plan as previously adopted by the Council stay as submitted with no changes.

Crab pot storage was the next item. Mr. Casey recommended crab pots should move off the shrimp grounds as the Alaska Department of Fish & Game recommends. The motion was then made and adopted that the Council refer to the State Board of Fisheries the crab pot storage problem for settlement.

Mr. Harry Wilde then gave the following report:

"High Seas Salmon: 1.

We propose that the existing Preliminary Management Plan for High Seas Salmon be moved to the next agenda of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to insure that the time period required for the plan to be accepted by the Department of Commerce shall be instituted. The current negotiations with the Japanese have resulted in a deadlock, and the issue at hand is the state of western Alaska salmon. We have been insured (sic) (assured) by both the staff of Senator Stevens and Congressman Young that the sooner the high seas salmon management plan is accepted by the Department of Commerce, the more impact this document will have on the negotiating position of the Department of the State. The High Seas Salmon Plan simply states that there is no surplus of salmon of American origin, specifically western Alaskan stock that are currently being intercepted in the central Bering Sea.

Crab Fishery in Norton Sound: 2.

- " We wish to bring up to the attention of the Council that the current exploratory tanner crab fishery in North Sound is a very dangerous fishery, and one that will expand without control unless the Management Plan Drafting Team takes a hard look at the impact of the fishery. We have learned from both State and Federal sources that the king crab fishery in Norton Sound had a 50% mortality, that one half of all the crabs taken were dead before being retrieved. We have been told that the reason for this death rate was the fresh water flowing into Norton Sound. The king crab in Norton Sound have been used for many years as a winter subsistence food by the Norton Sound people, and we hope that the Council will examine also the implications of this commercial fishery on our subsistence peoples of the Sound.
- 1) A second major problem of this fishery is that the food for the king crab pots may very well be herring. We have learned from State people that a commercial operation scheduled for Norton Sound wishes to harvest upwards to 40,000 metric tons of eastern Bering Sea herring to sell to the Norton Sound king crab fishing fleet. Although this amount seems very high, we expect that the goal of selling herring will expand the herring fishery fast. There is already a glut of commercial operations scheduled for Bristol Bay next year, and the Alaska Board of Fisheries wisely chose to follow the recommendation of the coastal villages of the Bering Sea that the harvest be kept below 10,000 metric tons. In following our recommendation, the Board of Fisheries declared that it was too unsure of the proper harvest level for eastern Bering Sea herring. The Board limited the harvest north of Bristol Bay where the greatest impact on subsistence harvest of herring for our villages could occur. If this pressure to sell herring to an immature and dangerous king crab fishery in Norton Sound were to expand, the herring harvest going northwards would increase in the next several years, and those are the years our villages have demanded be spent in research to determine the size of the stocks, and their migration pattern. The Council has been very faithful to our villages on this issue, and we again hope that the Council will carefully investigate this fishery.

" Again, we ask the Council to show specific attention to the issue of herring, and to separate out the herring management plan from the Bering Sea Groundfish management plan. We feel that the subject of herring, for both its subsistence and commercial values, deserves special and specific attention by the Council. To this end, we would also suggest that the Council establish central villages on the Bering Sea coast to conduct its public testimony on the herring management plan. First, we would recommend Togiak for the northern portion of Bristol Bay, and the villages of Platinum, Goodnews Bay, and Quinhagak, in addition, the northern Bay communities could attend that hearing. Second, we would recommend Kipnuq as the site of a second hearing for the villages of the Lower Kuskokwim Bay; third, Toksook Bay for the Nelson Island and Nunivak Island villages, and fourth, Hooper Bay to service the public hearing of the Cape Romanzof villages. We will help the Council in planning and convening these hearings. We urge the Council to set up the hearings in either late May or early August in order to insure that the findings of the Council will be early enough to allow for the time period to have the Final Management Plan for eastern Bering Sea Herring established as law by the Department of Commerce by January 1, 1979.

" Herring:

In a third issue on herring, we petition the Council to restrict all trawl fisheries on herring. We have been informed by industry representatives that an American trawl fishery could develop as early as this fall when the herring begin their migration back to their wintering grounds. We have worked very closely with the Council to limit the effect of the Russian and Japanese trawl fisheries on the eastern Bering Sea herring; it is simply an unmanageable and wasteful fishery. We western Alaskan villages want all trawl fishing of these herring stocks to stop. We do not want the foreign trawl fishery replaced with a highly destructive American trawl fishery.

" Fourth, we ask that the Council continue to press for the entire fishery to take place within three miles of the coast, within the management regime of the State of Alaska. In this way, particularly during the time when the research to determine stock sizes and migration patterns, interception fisheries will be limited.

" Fifth, we would like to petition the Council to place western Alaskans on the Herring Draft Planning Team to insure local input on the solution of this critical fishery to western Alaskans.

" Joint Ventures: 4.

" We would like to bring to the attention of the Council the fact that several village observers, and it appears State officials observing the operation of the Bristol Bay commercial herring operations in 1977, witnessed some

sidestepping of the "American processing" operation in which the herring were supposedly processed for transportation by foreign refrigerator ships. We understand that by merely salting the fish, the American processors took the entire processing burden off themselves, and allowed the foreign freezer ships to do most of the processing, including the chilling and freezing. The massive cooling operations were necessitated by the fact that very little salt was added to the herring, and that the foreign ships received in reality unsalted herring. We also understand that the State planned some enforcement action, but because of the speed of the operation, with everything happening so fast, that the violation of the U.S. Custom Law and joint processing was successfully sidestepped by one processor. We hope that the Council will initiate an investigation into this issue, and examine the law to determine if salting alone warrants American "processing," and conflicts with joint ventures.

High Seas Observers: 5.

¹/We would like to request that the Council establish an American observer system on the Japanese mothership fishery if that fishery takes place again in 1978. From our review of the reports within our 200-mile zones by American observers, the figure reported by the foreign fisheries are much smaller than their reported harvests. We expect an unobserved high seas fishery to be just as suspect as the near shore fishery, and believe that American observers are warranted to protect American salmon fishing interests.

Clam Preliminary Management Plan: 6.

¹¹The villages of our coastline are quite concerned about the experimental clam fishery in the Bering Sea. The fishery depends on scrapping the bottom destroying its sea life, and creating areas that are dead biologically. The eastern Bering Sea is a rich nursery area for all forms of fin and shellfish, and this type of fishery is not constructive to our region. We would like to request that a western Alaskan be placed on this Management Review Team."

Mr. Walt Jones of the National Marine Fisheries Service then reported on the fishery development proposals, the 2½ million dollar (Saltonstall-Kennedy) SK money. He stated the copy of the proposal that he gave the Council was not refined and will be finished next week. The Advisory Panel made no recommendation as it needs to see the final draft.

The Advisory Panel reconvened in the evening with the following: the first item was groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska with additional data from Mr. Otness of blackcod numbers (see attached). There was a discussion of the new table on blackcod that Mr. H.A.Larkin had presented at the combined SSC and AP meeting.

The following motion was made and passed unanimously: in the past, the Advisory Panel has used guidance and information from the SSC to focus what we wanted for the allocation on this groundfish fishery. We see no new data to warrant a change in the allocation. Therefore, we recommend to the Council that we not change our allocation over the last recommendation we made for this groundfish plan.

Discussion followed on the king crab plan with testimony that the State system for regulating the fishery would be adopted into the management plan.

The Advisory Panel then had new team member recommendations. For the Bering Sea Groundfish, Mr. Burch and Mr. Jaeger were appointed. Should the herring be a separate management plan, as recommended by the Advisory Panel and the SSC, Mr. Otness and Mr. O'Hara have been appointed. On the eastern Bering Sea Clam Plan, Mr. Wilde was appointed. On the Troll Salmon Plan, Mr. Cotant as an advisor with Mr. Boddy and Mr. Johnson on this plan.

Discussion on the Chairmen's Meeting in South Carolina, the end of March, for recommendations for agenda items, the Panel will delay their recommendations until the February meeting.

Ed Furlong		Need total landings				
1972	2 trips	Chatham Strait				
90 Sept.	11,900 fish	71,400	79,365	hooks	Wf 6.7	
82 Oct.	11,639	69,834	85,100	hooks	7.3	
1973						
0.63 Sept.	9,921	59,526	94,700		9.5	
0.56 Oct.	7,337	44,022	79,180		8.0	
1977						
0.25 Oct.	2,216	13,296	54,020		20.6	

John DeBoer

1976	17 fish/225 hooks	6.5 av. size
1977	8-10 fish/225 hooks	7.1 av. size

26,000# (10 10 6) Chatham Strait

good average in past 34 fish/skate.

Harold Medalen

9-19 10-6

1977 Upper Chatham Strait

36#/hook
27.4#/skate (75 hooks)

Andy Howarth Cross Sound

78-80 fish 300 hooks/skate
not valuable
