

## Executive Director's Report

### New Staff Economist

Welcome aboard to Sarah Marrinan who joined the Council staff on September 16. Sarah holds a BA in Economics and Communication from Lake Forest College, and an MS in Resource Economics and Policy from the University of Maine. She spent the last year as a research fellow at the EPA's National Center for Environmental Economics in Washington, D.C.

### CCC and related issues

A number of issues continue to percolate following our last Council Coordination Committee (CCC) meeting, held in conjunction with MONF3 in Washington, D.C. and hosted by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. The CCC established subcommittees to further develop CCC input on the following:

NEPA, and the policy directive issued by NMFS in February of this year – I am a member of this subcommittee and we have met with HQ staff several times via teleconference over the summer and have negotiated a final draft of the policy directive, with the intent of resolving the various concerns expressed by the eight Councils. That 'final' draft is being reviewed by the attorneys and others up the NMFS HQ chain and we are awaiting word on their reaction to this latest draft.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report on the fisheries rulemaking process, from 2012 - Chairman Olson is a member of the subcommittee working with NMFS HQ on revised financial disclosure forms and the process for submitting those forms. General comments on this process are due by October 7 (see Item B-1(a)), and the current and DRAFT revised forms are included under Item B-1(b). If Council members would like to provide input they can do so through the normal comment period, or through Chairman Olson, noting that the October 7 deadline is only relative to general process, and that the CCC subcommittee will be providing further input to NMFS prior to finalizing the revised forms and submittal process. The intent is to have the revised forms/process finalized by the end of this year.

Also stemming from the OIG report, NMFS is in the process of revising the operational guidelines (related to development, review, and implementation of FMPs) and a CCC subcommittee has been established to work with NMFS HQ on that process. This will be a very important work product as it will 'overarch' everything we do – A DRAFT summary of objectives for this process is included as Item B-1(c). David Witherell is on that subcommittee, along with Kitty Simonds and Bob Mahood.

Also stemming from the OIG report, NMFS intends for each Council/Region to develop a regional operating agreement (ROA), in order to provide a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and obligations between Councils and their respective NMFS Regional Offices. The desire is to have such an ROA finalized by the end of this year. Item B-1(d) provides a summary of the OIG recommendation and NMFS's action plan to implement this recommendation. I will be working with our Regional Office to draft such an agreement, with further input from the Council prior to finalizing anything. Item B-1(e) is an example of an ROA as developed by the Mid-Atlantic Council and the New England Regional Office. This is something we were already working on, as part of a process we initiated last year at the Council/NMFS/ADFG staff level to identify and solidify 'best practices' of our working relationships (also closely related to revising the operational guidelines noted above). Our staff will be meeting in Juneau with NMFS Regional Office staff in early November to continue that process.

Related to the OIG report, in July I was interviewed by the OIG relative to these various initiatives, and relative to the separate OIG initiative to review the process of developing (specifically) catch share programs in our Nation's fisheries.

CCC subcommittee to develop recommendations to improve Council participation in ESA related processes – Cora Campbell is a member of this subcommittee, which has met several times via teleconference, with NMFS HQ representatives, and produced a draft 'Memorandum' specifying how Councils would/could be more directly and effectively involved in the ESA Section 7 consultation process. The subcommittee general charge, and the DRAFT memorandum (underlined section still being discussed), are included under Item B-1(f). This subcommittee will be meeting again in the very near future to finalize this memorandum.

CCC subcommittee on electronic monitoring (EM) – as NMFS HQ continues to develop its national EM policy (myself, Diana Evans, and Dan Hull met with George Lapointe in August to provide a North Pacific perspective to that effort), this CCC subcommittee is intended to interact with that process, taking into account each region's own specific EM initiatives. Dan Hull is a member of that subcommittee, and is also on the steering committee for an upcoming national EM workshop (initiated by Dorothy Lowman of the PFMC), to be held in January in Seattle, WA.

Upcoming CCC webinar – on October 23-24 an interim meeting of the CCC, hosted by the Pacific Fishery Management Council, will be held by webinar. The DRAFT agenda is included as Item B-1(g), and the meeting will focus on review of the MONF3 proceedings and Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization. Further details on tuning into that meeting will be forthcoming.

Related to MSA reauthorization, I have been receiving, and expect to continue receiving on an increasing basis, inquiries from Congressional staff relative to Council positions on MSA reauthorization (our specific Council positions as well as collective positions of all eight regional Councils). While our Council has not officially developed such positions, we may need to consider initiating a process to do so, perhaps utilizing our Council's Executive Committee as a starting point. Recall that at the MONF3 conference this past May I did provide some basic Council positions, based upon general Council discussions and based upon the testimony I provided to the House Subcommittee in December 2011. Those are reflected in the ppt presentation included here as Item B-1(h).

For your reference, Item B-1(i) is the recent testimony of Rick Robbins, Chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Council, who was asked to testify on behalf of regional Council interests on September 11 before the House Committee on Natural Resources. Also for your reference, Item B-1(j) is the September 24 testimony of Stefanie Moreland, who was asked to testify before the Senate Subcommittee on Fisheries, specifically on the issue of seafood certification.

#### ICC update

During September 11-13, the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the U.S./Russia bilateral Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on Fisheries (ICC) was held in Girdwood, Alaska. Gail and I worked with NOAA and the U.S. State Department to organize the logistics for this meeting, which I attended along with several members of the Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body (BSFAB). The 'Protocol', or meeting summary, is included as Item B-1(k). On page 5 of the Protocol you will notice reference to Arctic fisheries issues of mutual interest, including our efforts to engage Russian interest in development of an international agreement relative to fishing activities in Arctic high seas waters. Pursuant to those efforts, and recognizing the need for a strong scientific base for such a potential agreement, there will be an international delegation of scientists meeting in Tromso, Norway later this month, October 27-31. The Terms of Reference for that meeting are included under Item B-1(l). Along with a number of NOAA

scientists, Dr. Franz Mueter has been invited to participate as part of the U.S. delegation at this meeting, in recognition of his Arctic science expertise and his strong affiliation with the Alaska fisheries management process. A related meeting will occur November 19-21 in Nuuk, Greenland, consisting of official delegations to discuss policy aspects of a potential international Arctic agreement. David Benton from Juneau, Alaska has been invited to participate in the U.S. delegation to that meeting, to represent Alaska fishery interests. A 'Chairman's Statement' (from Ambassador David Balton) from earlier this year summarizes the scope of this meeting (see Item B-1(m)).

#### IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board

Earlier this year the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) initiated a Management Strategy Evaluation, including the formation of a Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB) – see Item B-1(n) for details. Dan Hull represents the Council as a member of the MSAB, which met June 13-14 of this year and developed a DRAFT meeting report with objectives and metrics (Item B-1(o)). The MSAB meets again later this month, and the IPHC envisions a 'bottom-up' approach to solicit public input to this process through the MSAB members. I understand they are setting up a process whereby MSAB members can receive such input through an IPHC email address - additionally MSAB members may receive such input directly from constituents.

#### Scallop Fishery letter

Item B-1(p) is a letter from the law offices of Bruce Weyhrauch to the Chairman of the Alaska Board of Fisheries relating to the Board's potential scheduling of Agenda Change Requests (proposals) relating to scallop fisheries managed in State waters (recalling that the State Legislature failed to extend the scallop moratorium to state waters beginning in 2014). The Council may wish to provide comment to the Board of Fish relative to the scheduling of these proposals, including the potential for the Council (and its Scallop Plan Team) to provide specific comment on the proposals prior to potential Board action. Additional detail on this letter, and the Board's scheduling of these proposals, may be provided under the B-3 ADF&G report, but I wanted to make sure the Council was aware of it.

#### Cooperative Research RFP

Item B-1(q) is an announcement of the process for development of internal NMFS proposals for cooperative research. The deadline is October 24, and this solicitation details the process for development of proposals in cooperation with industry partners.

#### NPRB 2014 RFP

Item B-1(r) is the 2014 request for proposals from the North Pacific Research Board. Proposals under this RFP are due by December 5, 2013. On a related note, congratulations to Denby Lloyd who was recently named as the NPRB's new Executive Director!

#### Update on revisions to NS1 guidelines

You will recall that earlier this year NMFS issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking relative to their intent to revise the guidelines for compliance with National Standard 1, particularly annual catch limits and stock rebuilding timelines. Item B-1(s) is a copy of a ppt presentation recently provided to the CCC, reflecting how that process will unfold over the next year, and reflecting the agency's intent to issue a proposed rule in the fall of 2014. We expect the CCC to have further input into this process, noting that it overlaps to some degree with potential MSA reauthorization amendments.

## Revisions to NS2 guidelines

Item B-1(t) is the final rule amending the guidelines for National Standard 2 (use of best scientific information available). For your reference, Item B-1(u) is the comment letter on the proposed rule that we submitted in March of 2010. Based on review of the final rule by our staff, many of our comments were addressed, and the final rule as written does not pose any significant concerns to our process.

## Bering Sea Canyons Workshop

Item B-1(v) is the DRAFT agenda for the Bering Sea Canyons workshop, organized by Council staff per the direction from the Council's June 2013 motion. The workshop is scheduled for October 15-16 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. If the Council wishes to provide further direction relative to this workshop, you may do so at this meeting (either today or under Staff Tasking at the end of the week).

## Aleutian Islands Risk Assessment – PSSA Designation

On August 29, 2013, staff attended the Aleutian Islands Risk Assessment (AIRA) Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) Workgroup Meeting in Anchorage (agenda attached as Item B-1(w)). As reported at the February Council meeting, the AIRA is currently in its second phase, implementing risk reduction options for the Aleutians. One of these options is to consider designating some portion of the Aleutian Islands as a PSSA under the authority of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Only through the IMO can a management measure be put in place to regulate vessels on innocent passage (vessels that are not departing from or arriving at a US port). The workgroup is considering mitigation measures, for example to keep shipping traffic vessels a given distance offshore, and intends to write a proposal for implementing routing measures and/or a PSSA designation which could be submitted to NOAA as early as spring of 2014, for internal review before being presented at the IMO. While at this stage it is the intent of a PSSA that it would not impact fishing or fishing industry activities, the Council may be interested in tracking this proposal as it develops, in order to ascertain that no unintended consequence of rerouting shipping vessels affects fisheries. A FAQ sheet on PSSAs, which was prepared for this project, is attached as Item B-1(x).

## Salmon summit in Unalakleet

On August 16 a 'Salmon summit' was organized in Unalakleet, and the Council was invited to participate and provide information to the participants on our activities related to salmon bycatch. Dr. Diana Stram attended the summit, along with Council member Duncan Fields. A DRAFT meeting report is attached as Item B-1(y).

## Other informational items

Item B-1(z) is a set of talking points on the halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) compiled by staff in response to numerous press inquiries occurring over the summer. Item B-1(aa) is a flyer summarizing recent bycatch reduction measures implemented, or initiated, by the Council, also prepared in response to numerous press inquiries related to bycatch. Item B-1(bb) is a flyer announcing the 2014 Lowell Wakefield Symposium to be held in Anchorage May 13-16, 2014. The title of the 2014 symposium is "Fisheries Bycatch – Global Issues and Creative Solutions". Dr. Gordon Kruse is Chair of the Steering Committee and Jane DiCosimo is a member of the Steering Committee.

Executive Session this week

The Council will meet in Executive Session on Friday of this week to discuss recent vacancies on the AP and the SSC, as well as some potential Committee vacancies. The Council will also receive a report from KPMG, the accounting firm who recently completed our required, biennial financial audit.

Events this week

On Saturday October 5 Mr. John Gauvin will provide lunchtime entertainment with a presentation on their work under the halibut excluder EFP. On Sunday evening, October 6, representatives from the pollock fishing industry will provide a public presentation on their efforts to address salmon bycatch pursuant to Amendment 91, including information about the costs associated with Chinook salmon IPAs and salmon savings incentives, and the effects of Amendment 91 on the Pollock fleet's behavior. That will occur beginning around 5:30 pm, after the Council adjourns for the day and will last until approximately 7 pm.