

# North Pacific Fishery

# Management Council

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## NEWSLETTER

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### NORTH PACIFIC COUNCIL SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION SUMMARY:

Highlights of the North Pacific Council's last meeting in Anchorage May 26, 27 include the following:

- Council received for review first drafts of the "Fishery Management Plan for Alaska Tanner Crab" and "Fishery Management Plan for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery During 1978." See third page for a summary of the Gulf trawl plan; a summary of the tanner crab plan will be included in the July newsletter. Both plans are about 300 pages long.

A series of public hearings on both of these plans will be held during August. Suggestions on which communities to hold hearings in, and which date between August 1 and 25 would be most appropriate would be helpful. Contact the Executive Director by mail or phone if you have suggestions.

- A core management plan study team was designated for the eastern Bering Sea clam fishery. Designated were John Burns and Bob Nelson of ADF&G, and Steven Hughes of NMFS. Actual plan development depends on analysis of a clam research project to be conducted this summer in the Bering Sea.
- Selection of Karleen M. Welfelt of Anchorage to replace Advisory Panel member Judith Ayres who resigned last month.
- Council authorization of Clem Tillion to serve as the Council's representative to the Marine Fishery Advisory Council (MAFAC). Mr. Tillion currently is a member of MAFAC.
- Unanimous Council adoption of a motion which probably will result in an amendment to the preliminary management plan governing the eastern Bering Sea herring fishery. The motion reads, "It is now a certainty that the U.S. harvest of herring in the Bering Sea will far exceed the 1,000 tons estimated in the preliminary management plan. Should the foreign allocation be harvested, it will exceed the TAC. At the

Council meeting summary (continued)

present time, 9,000 tons of this foreign allocation remain to be taken, but no further catch effort is expected before November. Therefore, the Council feels it essential that all or part of the unfilled foreign allocation be cancelled. Specific recommendations relative to such action will be developed at the regular June Council meeting based on the performance of the U.S. fishery at that time."

- NMFS announcement that approval of independent Japanese tanner crab boats fishing in the Triangle Area of the northwestern Bering Sea had been reduced from 31 to 11 vessels.
- NMFS report on foreign fishing activity off Alaska. The report noted that a total of 217 foreign fishing and support vessels engaged in fisheries off Alaska during May. That was an increase of 110 from April and a decrease of 513 from May 1976.
- An update on the number of foreign permits off Alaska. NMFS reported that a total of 612 permits had been issued by May 4, 1977.

Breakdown:

Japan	372 fishing vessels	70 support vessels
Poland	6	2
South Korea	27	0
Tiawan	4	0
USSR	74	56

- An update by the U.S. Coast Guard on enforcement activities. No major enforcement action reported. The Coast Guard noted that South Korean herring transport vessels in Bristol Bay had been sighted and that those vessels boarded satisfied U.S. Customs requirements.
- The Council reviewed 34 foreign permit applications and unanimously recommended approval of 32. Two Russian patrol vessels requesting permits were not acted upon by the Council as it determined that patrol vessels probably do not require permits. Council approval of the remaining 32 permits was recommended with the stipulation that each permit issued state specifically the type of fishing activity permitted, e.g., transport, research, processing, patrol, fishing for snails only, etc. Approval was recommended for the following vessels:

Japan: Ise Maru #8 to fish snails (replaces Ryoyoshi Maru #18)  
Kuroshio Maru #27 to fish independently in the Bering  
Sea and Aleutian Islands for tanner crab and snails.  
Specific stipulation requested is that the vessel will  
not fish for crab and snails at the same time.  
21 support vessels

South Korea: 0 Yang Ho #70 as transport vessel only

USSR: 6 stern trawlers  
2 research vessels

## SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT FINAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH FISHERY:

The Gulf of Alaska groundfish management plan was prepared by the North Pacific Council's groundfish management plan development team. The team is comprised of scientists and professionals from NMFS's Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center and Alaska Regional Office; Alaska Department of Fish and Game; Alaska Commercial Fishery Entry Commission; University of Washington, and the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

The draft final management plan contains thorough descriptions of the history of the fishery, the condition of stocks, the expected harvest in 1978 by American fishermen, optimum yield evaluations for each species or species group, the amount of catch expected to be available to foreign fishermen in 1978, and a proposed management regime to cover both the foreign and the domestic groundfish fisheries.

Of a total optimum yield of about 337,000 metric tons, pollock accounts for about half - 169,000 metric tons. Current projections for 1978 show a domestic total catch of some 50,000 metric tons for delivery to shore-based processors; a proposed venture in which U.S. fishermen would catch pollock and deliver them directly to foreign processing vessels at sea could lead to an additional 130,000 metric tons of domestic groundfish catch.

In addition to catch limitations (optimum yield), the draft final management plan contains several time-area closures which apply to foreign fishermen that are designed to provide sanctuaries for domestic fishery development or protect a severely depressed halibut population from incidental catch mortalities. Whether or not the halibut-savings closures should apply to the infant domestic trawl fishery will depend on the Council's choice of options pertaining to the priority of certain management objectives.

Another set of options deals with the domestic-foreign allocation of catch - should that allocation be firmly set prior to the season or should mid-season adjustments be considered?

In order to prevent disproportionate exploitation levels on localized stocks or concentrations the draft final management plan proposes that the foreign catch of each species be apportioned to individual sub-areas. Whether this measure should apply to the domestic catch is the subject of the third set of options for Council consideration.

. summary by Bert Larkins, Groundfish Management Plan Team leader, Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center, Seattle

NOTES: Copies of the draft final management plans for tanner crab and the Gulf of Alaska trawl fishery will be distributed following the June Council meeting. Anyone interested in reading the plans prior to that time may peruse copies available at the North Pacific Council office, NMFS and ADF&G offices in Juneau, and the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center in Seattle.

In the May newsletter, NMFS members of the shellfish teams were inadvertently omitted: Jerry Reeves, Jim Olsen, and Dr. Murray Hayes of the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center in Seattle serve on the North Pacific Council tanner and king crab teams.

MEETING DATES:

The next North Pacific Council meeting will be June 23, 24 in Anchorage in the Hill Building, 6th Avenue and F Street, room 809. The Council will meet there for its July 28, 29 meeting as well. Early deliberations by the SSC and the Advisory Panel are scheduled to begin in Anchorage one day prior to both sessions.

In August the Council will conduct business in Kodiak. August 24th is set for public hearings on the tanner crab and Gulf of Alaska trawl fishery management plans, and the 25th, 26th for the Council's 10th plenary session. It is suggested that anyone planning to attend these sessions make early travel arrangements as it is sometimes difficult to obtain flight reservations into Kodiak in August.

A full meeting of the SSC is planned June 15-17 in the Juneau Hilton Hotel, Juneau, to review first drafts of the Gulf of Alaska trawl and tanner crab management plans. Some members of both drafting teams are expected to attend. The meeting will be open to the public, but public input will be limited until scheduled public hearings begin in August.

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If you have news, comments, or opinions on fishery matters you would like to express, please send them to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, P.O. Box 3136 DT, Anchorage 99510 for inclusion in next month's newsletter.

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