

GROUND FISH
 GULF OF ALASKA
 1979 CUMULATIVE DOMESTIC LANDINGS

Reporting Period: Dec. 1978 - Oct. 1979
 Landings Thru October 31, 1979

| <u>Species</u> | <u>DAH</u> | <u>Landings</u> | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | <u>Metric Tons</u> | <u>Pounds</u> |
| Pollock | (14,200 mt) | 2,057.0 | 4,534,000 |
| Flounder | (7,200 mt) | 747.0 | 1,646,000 |
| Cod | (15,500 mt) | 1,031.0 | 2,272,000 |
| Pacific Ocean Perch Rockfish | (3,100 mt) | 296.5 | 653,000 |
| Sablefish | (4,00 mt) | 2,313.1 (1) | 5,098,000 (1) |
| Rattail | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Atka Mackerel | 0 | 7.9 | 17,500 |
| Squid | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | (500 mt) | 89.0 | 196,000 |
| Unspecified | | 288.0 | 635,000 |
| TOTAL | | 6,829.5 | 15,052,000 |

(1) Dressed Weight

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 Division of Commercial Fisheries
 Juneau, Alaska 99801
 30 January 1980

GROUND FISH
BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
1979 CUMULATIVE DOMESTIC LANDINGS

Reporting Period: Feb. 1979 - Dec. 1979
Landings Thru December 31, 1979

| <u>Species</u> | <u>Pounds</u> | <u>Landings</u> | <u>Metric Tons</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Pacific Cod | 1,294,000 | | 587.2 |
| Yellowfin Sole | 0 | | 0 |
| Other Flounders | 0 | | 0 |
| Pollock | 0 | | 0 |
| Pacific Ocean Perch | 0 | | 0 |
| Sablefish | 0 | | 0 |
| Other | 0 | | 0 |
| Unspecified | 60,000 | | 27.4 |
| Total | 1,354,000 | | 614.6 |

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries
Juneau, Alaska 99801
30 January 1980

GROUND FISH
GULF OF ALASKA
1980 CUMULATIVE DOMESTIC LANDINGS

Reporting Period: Nov. 1979 - Oct. 1980
Landings Thru December 31, 1979

| <u>Species</u> | <u>DAH</u> | <u>Landings</u> | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | | <u>Metric Tons</u> | <u>Pounds</u> |
| Pollock | (21,310 mt) | 13.6 | 30,000 |
| Flounder | (3,180 mt) | 101.7 | 224,000 |
| Cod | (10,000 mt) | 10.8 | 24,000 |
| Pacific Ocean Perch Rockfish | (3,815 mt) | 9.3 | 20,000 |
| Sablefish | (6,480 mt) | 33.8 | 74,000 (1) |
| Rattail | (1,332 mt) | 0 | 0 |
| Atka Mackerel | (1,440 mt) | 0 | 0 |
| Squid | (150 mt) | 0 | 0 |
| Idiot Rockfish | (6 mt) | 0 | 0 |
| Other | (1,560 mt) | 16.3 | 36,000 |
| Unspecified | | 57.0 | 126,000 |
| TOTAL | | 242.5 | 534,000 |

(1) Dressed Weight

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries
Juneau, Alaska 99801
30 January 1980

GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH - ALL AREAS
 DOMESTIC LANDINGS - NOV. 1979 thru OCT. 1980
 Metric Tons

| | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Catch ^{1/} To Date |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------|
| Pollock DAH= 21,310 | 10.4 | 3.2 | | | | | | | | | | | 13.6 |
| Cod DAH= 10,000 | 7.7 | 3.1 | | | | | | | | | | | 10.8 |
| Flounder DAH= 3,180 | 47.3 | 54.4 | | | | | | | | | | | 101.7 |
| Pacific Ocean Perch DAH= 2,915 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Rockfish DAH= 900 | 6.5 | 2.8 | | | | | | | | | | | 9.3 |
| Sablefish DAH= 6,480 | 26.5 | 7.3 | | | | | | | | | | | 33.8 |
| Atka Mackerel DAH= 1,440 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Squid DAH= 150 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Rattails DAH= 1,332 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Idiot Rockfish DAH= 6 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Other DAH= 1,560 | 5.3 | 11.0 | | | | | | | | | | | 16.3 |
| Unspecified | 26.1 | 30.9 | | | | | | | | | | | 57.0 |
| Total | 129.8 | 112.7 | | | | | | | | | | | 242.5 |

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 30 January 1980

GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH - EASTERN
DOMESTIC LANDINGS - Nov. 1978 thru OCT. 1980
METRIC TONS

| | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Catch To Date |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|
| Pollock DAH= 2,215 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Cod DAH= 2,070 | 1.6 | 0.6 | | | | | | | | | | | 2.2 |
| Flounder DAH= 1,360 | 44.8 | 49.3 | | | | | | | | | | | 94.1 |
| Pacific Ocean Perch DAH= 1,315 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Rockfish DAH= 575 | 6.5 | 2.8 | | | | | | | | | | | 9.3 |
| Sablefish DAH= 4,990 | 26.5 | 7.1 | | | | | | | | | | | 33.6 |
| Atka Mackerel DAH=70 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Squid DAH= 60 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Rattails DAH= 1,266 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Other DAH= 540 | 0.4 | 0.5 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.9 |
| Unspecified | 25.4 | 30.9 | | | | | | | | | | | 56.3 |
| Total | 105.2 | 91.2 | | | | | | | | | | | 136.1 |

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
30 January 1980

GULF OF ALASKA ROCKFISH - CENTRAL
 DOMESTIC LANDINGS - NOV. 1979 thru OCT. 1980
 METRIC TONS

| | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Catch To Date |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|
| Pollock DAH= 13,320 | 10.4 | 3.2 | | | | | | | | | | | 13.6 |
| Cod DAH= 6,050 | 6.1 | 2.5 | | | | | | | | | | | 8.6 |
| Flounder DAH= 1,120 | 2.5 | 5.1 | | | | | | | | | | | 7.6 |
| Pacific Ocean Perch DAH= 1,225 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Rockfish DAH= 250 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Sablefish DAH= 1,220 | 0 | 0.2 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.2 |
| Atka Mackerel DAH= 1,080 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Squid DAH= 60 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Rattails DAH= 33 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Other DAH= 620 | 4.9 | 10.5 | | | | | | | | | | | 15.4 |
| Unspecified | 0.7 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.7 |
| Total | 24.6 | 21.5 | | | | | | | | | | | 46.1 |

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 30 January 1980

GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH - WESTERN
 DOMESTIC LANDINGS - NOV 1979 thru OCT. 1980
 METRIC TONS

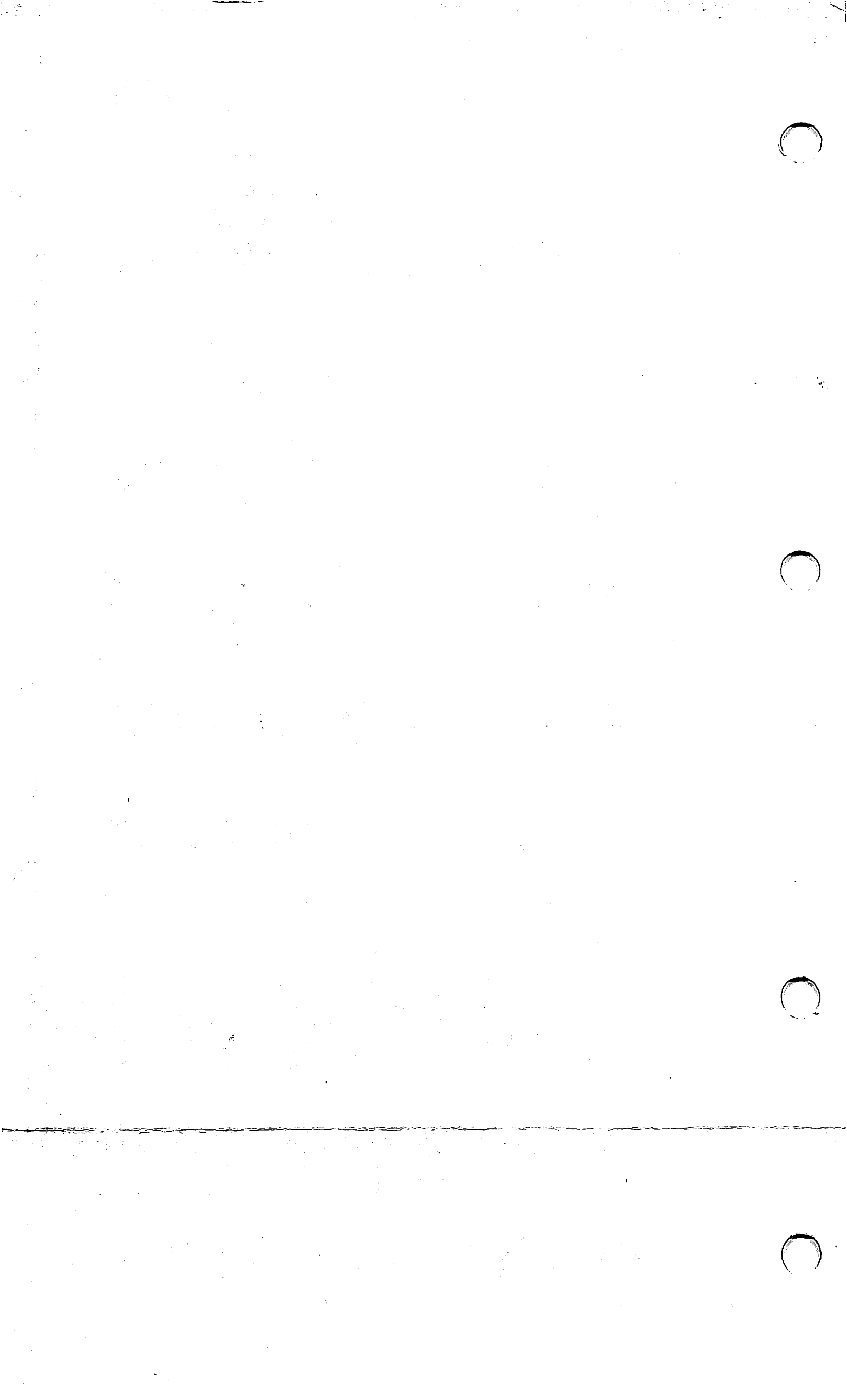
| | Nov | Dec | Jan. | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Catch To Date |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|
| Pollock DAH= 5,775 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Cod DAH= 1,880 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Flounder DAH= 700 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Pacific Ocean Perch DAH= 345 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Rockfish DAH= 75 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Sablefish DAH= 270 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Atka Mackerel DAH= 290 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Squid DAH= 30 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Rattails DAH= 33 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Other DAH= 400 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Unspecified | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 30 January 1980

| PERIOD | NATION | AREA | SPECIES | FOR. CATCH | FOR. TOTAL BLEND | CATCH BLEND TOTAL | QUOTA TONS | REMAINDER | CMPL DATE | |
|--------|--------|------------|--------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | SQUID | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 5570.0 | 5562.6 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | YELLOWFIN SO | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 63700.0 | 63700.0 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | FLOUN WD YFS | 260.2 | 260.2 | 260.2 | 260.2 | 33400.0 | 33139.9 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | POLLOCK | 3214.4 | 3214.4 | 3214.4 | 3214.4 | 734489.0 | 731274.6 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | PACIFIC COD | 112.6 | 112.6 | 112.6 | 112.6 | 22000.0 | 21887.5 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | SABLEFISH | 0. | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 1500.0 | 1499.4 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | ATKAMACKEREL | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1900.0 | 1900.0 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | POP | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1008.0 | 1008.0 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | HERRING | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3550.0 | 3550.0 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | OTHER FISH | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 50700.0 | 50698.3 | |
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | TURBOTS | 6.3 | 6.3 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 49700.0 | 49693.8 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | SQUID | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1650.0 | 1650.0 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | YELLOWFIN SO | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 41800.0 | 41800.0 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | FLOUN WD YFS | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 21900.0 | 21900.0 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | POLLOCK | 402.4 | 402.4 | 402.5 | 402.5 | 58734.0 | 58331.7 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | PACIFIC COD | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3000.0 | 3000.0 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | SABLEFISH | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 370.0 | 370.0 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | ATKAMACKEREL | 154.2 | 154.2 | 154.3 | 154.3 | 10400.0 | 10245.9 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | POP | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 150.0 | 150.0 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | HERRING | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 1900.0 | 1895.6 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | OTHER FISH | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 10800.0 | 10800.0 | |
| 1 | USSR | BERING SEA | TURBOTS | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 32600.0 | 32600.0 | |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | SQUID | 84.9 | 84.9 | 126.0 | 126.0 | 1650.0 | 1524.1 | 80/ 7/ 2 |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | YELLOWFIN SO | 5.7 | 5.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2600.0 | 2600.0 | |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | FLOUN WD YFS | 16.9 | 16.9 | 124.0 | 124.0 | 1100.0 | 976.1 | 80/ 5/ 4 |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | POLLOCK | 1392.3 | 1392.3 | 1898.5 | 1898.5 | 82825.0 | 80926.6 | 81/ 9/ 1 |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | PACIFIC COD | 35.9 | 35.9 | 62.8 | 62.8 | 4000.0 | 3937.3 | |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | SABLEFISH | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 370.0 | 370.0 | |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | ATKAMACKEREL | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1670.0 | 1670.0 | |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | POP | 2.2 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 300.0 | 297.0 | |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | HERRING | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | .0 | 400.0 | 400.0 | |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | OTHER FISH | 36.8 | 36.8 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 5140.0 | 5125.1 | |
| 1 | KOREA | BERING SEA | TURBOTS | 22.5 | 22.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1600.0 | 1600.0 | |

FISHERIES WITH NO ACTIVITY THIS PERIOD

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|--------|
| 1 | JAPAN | BERING SEA | RKFISH WOPOP | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3883.0 | 3883.0 |
|---|-------|------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|--------|



JAPANESE - GULF OF ALASKA

BEST BLEND CATCH THROUGH 1/19/80
(METRIC TONS)

| SPECIES | WESTERN | | CENTRAL | | EASTERN | |
|----------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | CATCH | ALLOC. | CATCH | ALLOC. | CATCH | ALLOC. |
| SQUID | 0.7 | 11 | 6.0 | 550 | 1.6 | 495 |
| FLORANDE | 26.0 | 410 | 276.0 | 7960 | 357.4 | 4830 |
| POLLOCK | 13.1 | 100 | 1942.7 | 21974 | 10.1 | 4085 |
| P. COD | 1144.1 | 7300 | 3268.1 | 17170 | 68.0 | 2400 |
| SABLEFIN | 36.0 | 700 | 375.4 | 1120 | 217.8 | 570 |
| SIKA MAC | 0.6 | 50 | 13.8 | 1115 | - | - |
| POP | 3.4 | 40 | 47.3 | 1900 | 209.9 | 8000 |
| ROCKFISH | 0.6 | 20 | 9.9 | 145 | 7.3 | 2190 |
| OTHER | 24.6 | 200 | 69.0 | 2824 | 10.9 | 1220 |
| BOTTAL | 4.6 | 2289 | 169.9 | 5437 | 175.4 | 750 |
| SEABASS | 4.9 | ① | 23.7 | ① | 19.0 | ① |

① GULF wide allocation of 1825

Received at
N.P.M.C
2-6-80

SOVIET - GULF OF ALASKA
 BEST BLEND CATCH THROUGH 1/19/80
 (METRIC TONS)

| SPECIES | WESTERN | | CENTRAL | | EASTERN | |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | CATCH | ALLOC. | CATCH | ALLOC. | CATCH | ALLOC. |
| SQUID | - | 330 | 0.8 | 660 | - | - |
| FLounder | - | 2960 | 32.2 | 1000 | - | - |
| POLLOCK | - | 16025 | 3542.8 | 24197 | - | - |
| P. COD | - | 1198 | 69.6 | 1882 | - | - |
| SABLEFISH | - | 240 | 51.5 | 400 | - | - |
| ATKA MAC | - | 2882 | 532.7 | 13848 | - | - |
| PAP | - | 1020 | 19.3 | 1600 | - | - |
| ROCKFISH | - | 50 | 0.8 | 150 | - | - |
| OTHER | - | 1329 | 2.4 | 2246 | - | - |
| BATTAL | - | 30 | 1.9 | 70 | - | - |
| SEABAS/SHAW | - | ① | 0.2 | ① | - | - |
| ① GULF WIDE ALLOCATION OF 500 | | | | | | |

POLAND-GULF OF ALASKA
 BEST BLEND CATCH THROUGH 1/19/60
 (METRIC TONS)

| SPECIES | WESTERN CATCH ALLOC. | CENTRAL CATCH ALLOC. | EASTERN CATCH ALLOC. |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| SQUID | - | 0.4 | 550 |
| FLUNDER | - | 1.8 | 395 |
| POLLOCK | 337.5 | 1200.4 | 1127 |
| R. COD | 0.4 | 119.3 | 930 |
| SABLEFIN | - | - | 70 |
| ATKA MAC | - | - | 200 |
| POP | 1.4 | 2.5 | 490 |
| KUMBLE | - | 3.6 | 50 |
| OTHER | - | 10.5 | 880 |
| BOTTOM | - | - | 70 |
| SEABASS | - | - | ① |

① Gulf Wide Allocation of 90

SOUTH KOREA - GULF OF ALASKA
 BEST BLEND CATCH THROUGH 11/9/80
 (METRIC TONS)

Allocation

Catch

583

134

SQUID

3225

127.5

FLUNDER

19334

21557

BOLACK

14020

1743

P COD

450

14.0

SABLEFISH

640

27.4

ATKA MAD

1670

34.0

POA

735

1.7

ROCKFISH

1491

47.4

OTHER

454

-

KATTAI

350

-

SEARBITOPUS



Marine Resources Co., Inc.

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FEB 6 1980

January 31, 1980

Mr. Bert Larkins
Director
Resource Ecology and Fishery Management Division
Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center
2725 Montlake Blvd. East
Seattle, WA 98112

Dear Bert:

I feel it might be useful for the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Teams to have the benefit of some recent observations we have made in our fishery. Accordingly I would like to pass the following thoughts and attachments along for your consideration.

1) Experimental Yellowfin sole fishery. This summer-fall we and several American fishermen are planning to launch an experimental yellowfin sole fishery in the Central Bering Sea. This fishery, which will be in the 5,000-10,000 MT range, is explained in a recent letter to Harry Rietze (attachment 1) and a telegram from Dennis Grotting (attachment 2).

2) Atka mackerel. One of the interesting results of our Bering Sea groundfish fishery has been the higher than expected catches of Atka mackerel. This event has prompted us to request a release of Reserve to DAH to insure that the domestic fishery won't be shut off (see letter to Harry Rietze, attachment 3). We do not know whether these higher-than-expected Atka mackerel catches are due to increased availability, type of trawls used by the American fishermen or the fact that we are operating in an area which in recent years has been closed to foreign fishing.

The present mechanism for release of Reserve to DAH is very cumbersome and slow, and will at some time present a situation where the domestic fishery will be interrupted. We would suggest that the release mechanism be streamlined along the lines outlined in the attached letter to Harry Rietze on the Atka mackerel situation.

3) Incidental halibut catches. As expected, we are observing that the incidental catch of halibut differs substantially by area and gear type, and probably time. This issue will

Bert Larkins
January 31, 1980
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obviously have to be addressed in the near future so that the dual objectives of protection and rebuilding of the halibut stocks and development of the domestic groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea can be met. The Team should address this issue to make certain that a data base will be generated to allow the promulgation of balanced winter regulations in the S.E. Bering Sea.

4) Sablefish. The permits for our leased processing vessels presently have a 1½ percent sablefish incidental catch limitation on them because domestic processors have said they were going to buy all the sablefish caught by domestic fishermen, including those delivering to our processors. We do not agree with this limitation on the market we can provide to domestic fishermen because:

- a) There presently is a TALFF for sablefish in both the Gulf and Bering Sea;
- b) Our fishermen deliver by detachable codend and thus cannot sort out sablefish;
- c) Since sablefish is not a target species, catches are small. This together with fact that boats do not usually carry ice makes it highly unlikely that they would bring these small amounts into port even if some processor were interested in this by-catch;
- d) Most of our fishing does and will continue to take place in the Bering Sea, western Gulf and Aleutians -- areas with very limited sablefish markets for domestic fishermen;
- e) Domestic processors have put domestic fishermen on sablefish limits (see attached article and market orders, attachment 4) which clearly demonstrates that they will not purchase all the sablefish domestic fishermen will catch even if they could sort them and bring them to shore. We have recently had calls from domestic sablefish fishermen asking us for markets which supports our contention that markets are in fact weak.

In light of the above I think this issue should be addressed by the Team as it has a bearing on the development of domestic fisheries on species such as sablefish which are not fully utilized at this time by domestic fishermen. Of course, once the sablefish TALFF is eliminated then we have a different situation. But, until that time, there is no justification for limitation of market opportunities to domestic fishermen for non-conservation reasons.

Bert Larkins
January 31, 1980
Page 3.

5) Area closures. At some time the issue of area closures as they relate to the recent amendment to the FCMA to enact the "three-tiered" allocation system will have to be addressed by the Team. We believe the PDT's and the SSC have a very important role in providing the technical analysis to determine the suitability of such closures. Such an analysis was certainly lacking in the Council's recommendation for Akutan and Akun closures this month. We would hope the PDT's could agree on some specific criteria to be considered prior to establishment of closed areas, and that these criteria be consistent in a legal sense with the purposes and policies of the FCMA, and more particularly with the National Standards.

Please contact me if there is any additional information needed by the Team.

Sincerely,



Walter T. Pereyra
Vice President and General Manager
for U. S. Operations

WTP:kb

Attachments

cc: Jim Branson
Harry Rietze
William Gordon

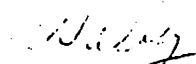
Harry Rietze
January 25, 1980
Page 2.

We note with concern that the present PMP only provides for a yellowfin sole DAH of 2,050 MT with a JVP portion of 850 MT. Moreover there is only 5,850 MT in reserve. Considering the potential harvest from our operation plus that which may be taken by other domestic fishermen (Stewart Investment Group, for example) it seems to us that the amount presently available for domestic fishermen is not sufficient. For this reason we strongly urge that after consulting with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council the following non-actions or actions be taken:

- 1) No allocation of Reserves of yellowfin sole, turbot or other flounders to TALFF
- 2) Allocation of the entire yellowfin sole Reserve of 5,850 MT to the JVP portion of DAH (This will increase DAH to 7,900 MT and JVP to 6,700 MT.)
- 3) Re-allocation by PMP amendment of 7,500 MT of yellowfin sole TALFF which as yet has not been allocated to any foreign nation to reserve.

The above actions will insure that the developing domestic fisheries in the Bering Sea will not be impeded while at the same time not disrupting any foreign fisheries. Since the foreign sole fishery has traditionally taken place in the last half of the year, there will be ample time to re-allocate from DAH and Reserve to TALFF if for some reason the domestic fishery doesn't reach the level anticipated.

Sincerely,


Walter T. Pereyra
Vice President and General Manager
for U. S. Operations

WTP:kb
cc: Jim Branson
Terry Leitzel
Bob Alverson
Dr. Frank Fukuhara



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January 25, 1980

Mr. Harry Rietze
Regional Director
National Marine Fisheries Service
P. O. Box 1668
Juneau, AK 99802

Dear Harry:

Re: 1980 Yellowfin Sole fishery

In our response dated 10 August 1979 to your request for 1980 joint venture intentions we indicated that we expected to purchase around 4000 MT yellowfin sole plus various quantities of other flatfish in 1980. This response was based upon our intention to develop a domestic yellowfin sole fishery if we could put together the markets, processing capacity and fishermen. It now appears that this goal can be achieved in 1980. Accordingly by this letter we want to formally notify you of this intention so that the interests of ourselves and the domestic fishermen who will fish for us can be taken into consideration in your early deliberations on allocations of Reserves and unallocated TALFF.

Specifically this fishery, which will be in addition to our present operation with the Sulak and various replacement processors, will involve 4-5 American trawlers and two Soviet processing vessels (Novaya Era and Soyuz-5). We plan to operate from June - October in that portion of the central Bering Sea normally fished by the foreign flounder fleets. Our processing capacity will be about 90 metric tons per day which over a five month period could theoretically mean a take of 13,500 metric tons. We feel though that this amount is unrealistic considering that 1) it will be a new fishery for American fishermen; 2) processors will be unavailable during periods of unloading, re-supply, freezer defrosting, etc.; and 3) bad weather will disrupt fishing and delivery operations from time to time. Accordingly, we feel a more realistic maximum catch would be 7500 - 10,000 MT for a five month fishery.

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WU INFOMASTER

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ZCZC 2643 SEATTLE WA JANUARY 24
ZIP

H RIETZE
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
P O BOX 1668
JUNEAU AK 99802

BT

SEVERAL MEMBERS OF OUR ASSOCIATION INTERESTED IN A JOINT VENTURE FISHERY WITH MARINE RESOURCES FOR YELLOWFIN SOLE IN EASTERN BERING SEA IN 1980. PLEASE REFRAIN FROM ALLOCATING SOLE RESERVE TO TALFF UNTIL PLANS CRYSTALLIZE. MOREOVER IT SEEMS TO US THAT GIVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF OTHER U.S. FISHERIES (E.G. STEWART INVESTMENT GROUP) ENTERING THIS SOLE FISHERY THAT SOME OF THE NON-ALLOCATED TALFF SHOULD BE PUT IN RESERVE OR DAW TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM OPPORTUNITY FOR DOMESTIC FISHERMEN.

OUR TRADITIONAL MARKETS ARE WORSENING ON PACIFIC COAST. INTENT OF FCMA TO HAVE AMERICANS HARVEST UNDER-UTILIZED RESOURCES WILL BE WEAKENED IF SOLE RESERVE IS IMMEDIATELY RELEASED TO TALFF SINCE OTHER FOREIGN NATIONS WHO WILL RECEIVE RE-ALLOCATIONS WILL HAVE EVEN LESS NEED OF AMERICAN PRODUCT.

JOINT VENTURE ON SOLE WILL HELP COASTAL AMERICAN VESSELS AND MARKETS ON TRADITIONAL SPECIES BY REMOVING CATCHING EFFORT FROM THOSE MARKETS TO HELP STABILIZE MARKETS

DENNIS GROTTING, MANAGER
FISHERMEN'S MARKETING ASSOC

MNN
(FISHERMEN'S MARKETING ASSOC
#2 COMMERCIAL WHARF
EUREKA CA 95501).

ACCEPTED
02643

1-PC



Marine Resources Co., Inc.

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January 25, 1980

Harry Rietze
Regional Director
Alaska Region
National Marine Fisheries Service
P. O. Box 1668
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Harry:

Marine Resources Company would like to comment on the decision whether to release any of the reserves established in the Bering Sea Groundfish PMP scheduled for February 2, 1980. With our fishing operation in the Bering Sea just getting underway, the uncertainties of the elements, available fish, and regulatory constraints cause us to be reluctant to recommend the release of any of the reserves to TALFF for species sought by Marine Resources at this time.

Our claim to the reserves is highlighted by the circumstances which we have recently encountered concerning Atka mackerel. Although we projected only small Atka mackerel harvests and therefore requested only 100 tons of fish, we now find that our fishermen are catching this species in significant quantities. As the catch approaches the 100 MT JVP for Atka mackerel, we are very concerned that the permit condition on the Soviet processing vessels limits the amount of fish that may be received to the amount of JVP.

Because of this permit condition, U.S. fishermen will have to wastefully return to the sea Atka mackerel in excess of 100 tons unless the restriction is lifted. More importantly, they will have to sort the catches before transfer, which will cause serious delays and increase costs, to insure that we don't shut down all J.V. operations (both Soviet and ROK). This would occur if the 100 MT limit were reached before any corrective actions were taken with respect to the JVP amounts in the PMP.

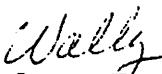
Harry Rietze
January 25, 1980
Page 2.

This type of permit condition may be appropriate for certain species in certain instances. However, as it is applied across the board to all JVP's, the result is a limitation on U.S. fishermen where none is needed, nor intended. We believe that this permit condition should be changed immediately to allow joint ventures to proceed as planned and approved.

The other regulatory constraint which affects our operation is the procedure specified in 50 CFR Section 611.93 for re-assigning reserve amounts to DAH. While such a process is clearly necessary to reallocate reserves to TALFF, it seems less logical to require the same procedures to be followed before the reserve amount may be made available to domestic fishermen. We suggest that the reserve ought to be automatically available to domestic fishermen who need it, rather than requiring U.S. fishermen to go through a lengthy procedure which may take as long as two months before having access to fish that are rightfully theirs under the principles spelled out in the FMP and the FCMA. This could be achieved by including the reserve as a subset of DAH along with DAP, JVP and NP. The reserve would be available to domestic fishermen on demand unless reallocated to TALFF through the reserve release procedure.

In summary, we request that you immediately make available the Atka mackerel from the reserve to meet the demand of U.S. fishermen for this highly underutilized species or to alter the permit restrictions to allow our processing vessels to retain Atka mackerel beyond the specified JVP amount. We also request that the DAH/reserve/TALFF system be reviewed to consider the above concerns. Your prompt attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,


Walter T. Pereyra
Vice President and General Manager
for U. S. Operations

WTP:kb

Whither Blackcod

Continued from page 26

than it was six or eight months ago," he said the Japanese market is always low during the winter months and predicted prices would stabilize by spring and "should be encouraging by summer."

"Blackcod is a fairly romantacized fishery and a fairly lucrative one," he said. "Now we're starting to see some overcapacity just as we have in some other fisheries. Once things settle down, I think we'll see a healthy development of the fishery."

Part of the problem, said Gilbert, is that there has been so much buying and selling, particularly by independent dealers like Beals, that "no one really knows how much product is available."

"That's one reason why it is not uncommon, particularly in a new fishery, for the price to get out of whack and for people to stop buying and selling, particularly by independent dealers like Beals, that "no one really knows how much product is available.

Part of the problem, said Gilbert, is that there has been so much buying and selling, particularly by independent dealers like Beals, that "no one really knows how much product is available."

"That's one reason why it is not uncommon, particularly in a new fishery, for the price to get out of whack and for people to stop buying it," he said. Gilbert described the current situation this way:

"For awhile there was more blackcod around than anybody knew what to do with," he said. "Then about nine or ten months ago, the Japanese

came in and started buying and it all got cleaned up. With the boom in U.S. production at high levels of value, the market got filled up again. I think we'll see some relief of that situation in the near future."

While Gilbert agreed with Beals that U.S. processors should work toward developing new markets, he indicated that current markets — particularly Japan — could pick up any time.

"The Japanese market is so changeable," he said. "They often seem to buy or not buy because they see other companies buying or not buying, rather than because of a particular need. All that would have to happen is for one or two Japanese companies to start buying and the rest would fall in behind."

While that may be less than comfortable news to fishermen whose livelihoods depend to a large part on the market, Gilbert took a pragmatic view.

"I'm not a fisherman, but I do know if a guy's got a boat he has to use it," he said. "I think there's going to be a good market for blackcod, and I know we're going to continue to buy and hopefully sell it."

Bob Alverson, manager of the Vessel Owner's

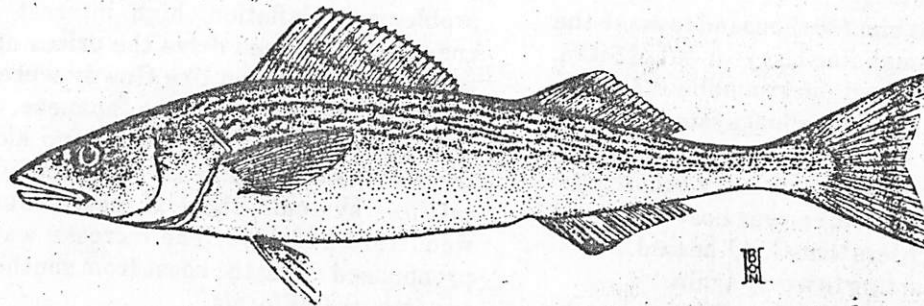
Association, was also optimistic that the market would pick up by this spring or summer, but stressed the need for the development of new markets. Noting that consumption is still 15-20 million metric tons below 1976 levels, Alverson said there is a strong potential for increased development of the U.S. fishery once we solve some of the problems that brought about the current situation.

"It's one thing to throw the foreign boats out," he said, "but another to develop the fishery to its full potential. Blackcod should be a good fishery for someone who has a boat and is looking for a way to use it, but in terms of developing the fishery we still have a long way to go."

In that sense, the U.S. blackcod fishery might be seen in terms of Gowdy himself, who plans to head back up to Sitka this year to give it another try.

"I'm at least planning to stay in it until I can learn whether I can ever be any good at it and be a competitor," he said. "At this stage, I'm certainly not."

Next Issue: New Markets, Gear Conflicts and Quality Control



Anoplopoma fimbria (Pallas 1811)

Fort Bragg

Continued from page 9

and invited Ron upriver to see the cove's small marina. After refreshments at Jones' trailer

Shape Up

Whither Blackcod

By Craig Bartlett

When Lloyd Gowdy geared up for blackcod last season, things were looking up. The Japanese just had their offshore allocation cut from 22,000 to six metric tons, and definitely seemed in the mood to buy. The eastern United States sablefish market was also looking bullish, and the dock price of large dressed fish had soared to near \$1.15 per pound.

All of which was good enough for Gowdy. A salmon troller for 16 years, the Seattle fisherman said he was tired of fighting season closures and worrying all winter how to make ends meet. Blackcod seemed to be the answer.

"It seemed like the best thing going at the time," said Gowdy, owner of the 56-foot *Beloit II*, built in 1927. "Two other guys and I scratched our heads over it for a long time, decided to do it, changed our minds, then held each other by the hand and jumped off the dock together."

Gowdy said it cost him \$40 thousand to make the *Beloit II* ready for longlining last year out of Sitka. About \$20 thousand went for groundlines and the installation of the Huff (longline) system, and he spent another \$20 thousand for a new steering system and other improvements to the boat itself.

"You'd have to have a lot newer boat than mine to get away for much less than that," he said.

Now Gowdy is starting to worry again.

It is not just that he had a slow first season; he expected that, noting that longlining is a "terribly

hard, slow process to learn." What does concern Gowdy — along with most other black cod fishermen — is the very thing that brought him to the fishery in the first place: the market.

Those large dressed fish that were going to \$1.10 to \$1.15 last summer were bringing 75 to 85 cents of Jan. 1 and may drop even further. Smaller fish have dropped even more in value, and some processors — particularly in Oregon and Northern California — have put fairly stringent limits on the amount of sablefish they will take.

"We're definitely in a soft market situation," said Jim Beals, an independent dealer who runs The Fish Merchant in Ballard. "Simply put, there is more of the product around than there are people to buy it."

What caused such a dramatic reversal of market conditions within a period of only a few months? The huge Kokkaido chum salmon run and the sinking value of the yen to the U.S. dollar are two reasons most often cited.

As Beals explained it, the situation was "identical to what happened to the king crab and some other bottomfish markets." The standard problems of inflation, high interest rates and energy costs helped drive the prices up early on, while U.S. fishermen like Gowdy were just starting to fill the void left by the Japanese.

Encouraged by rising prices and aided by the tremendous development of the Mustad and other catching systems, the U.S. nearly doubled, between 1978 and 1979. The increase was the most pronounced along the coast from southern Oregon to northern California.

"The eventual result was that the smokers on

the east coast as well as the buyers in Japan were jammed to the rafters with high priced fish," Beals said. "As soon as everybody realized what was going on, the market just died."

The decline on the yen against the U.S. dollar throughout that period made the problems with the Japanese market even more acute, said Beals. Noting that Japan makes up well over 50 percent of the market for U.S.-caught blackcod, Beals quoted figures showing the yen had dropped in value from 170 per dollar last year to a high of 250.

"That's when the whole thing just fell apart," said Beals. "They just quit buying, and relied on their own catch (5,000-6,000 metric tons) or last year's surplus of salmon to make up the difference."

Where does that leave U.S. fishermen?

"You figure it out," said Beals, who added that he does not expect the market to pick up until some time in 1981.

"Our fishermen may be able to get by until then," he said, "but we won't really get out of this trap until we start developing new markets, both domestic and abroad." Beals blamed domestic processors for their "passive" approach to developing new markets, and said it could take "at least a year or more" before such efforts can begin to turn the tide of low markets.

If that sounds like a bleak prediction, not everyone is so pessimistic.

Bill Gilbert, marketing vice president for the Washington Fish Company, said he does not see the market in terms of a "crisis," as does Beals. Although he admits his market is "definitely lower

Continued on page 27

Table 1. Sablefish landings in metric tons by nation in the U.S. controlled waters of the Bering Sea and Aleutians and the northeastern Pacific Ocean, 1958-78.

| Year | Northeastern Pacific Ocean ^{1/} | | | | | Subtotal | Bering Sea and Aleutians | | | Grand Total |
|------|--|--------------------|-------|------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------|------|----------|-------------|
| | United States | Canada | Japan | USSR | Republic of Korea | | Japan | USSR | Subtotal | |
| 1958 | 2,586 | N.A. ^{2/} | | | | 2,586 | 32 | | 32 | 2,618 |
| 1959 | 3,989 | N.A. | | | | 3,989 | 393 | | 393 | 4,382 |
| 1960 | 5,136 | N.A. | | | | 5,136 | 1,861 | | 1,861 | 6,997 |
| 1961 | 3,040 | N.A. | | | | 3,040 | 26,182 | | 26,182 | 29,222 |
| | | | | | | 3,040 | 28,521 | | 28,521 | 32,538 |



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A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CORPORATION

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February 1, 1980

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(202) 833-8922

Mr. Clement Tillion
Chairman, North Pacific
Fishery Management Council
P.O. Box 3136DT
Anchorage, AK 99510

Please reply to Seattle office

Re: Proposed Bering-Chukchi Sea Herring
Fishery Management Plan

Dear Mr. Tillion:

We are attorneys for the Japan Deep Sea Trawlers Association and the Hokuten Trawlers Association and are writing to you in that capacity. The purpose of this letter is to express the concerns of these two Japanese trawler groups with regard to certain aspects of the proposed Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Bering-Chukchi Sea.

The principal interest of these trawler groups is to avoid regulatory measures which are unnecessary for the protection of herring stocks but which would seriously curtail the central Bering Sea groundfish fishery. The comments presented here conclude that the size of the eastern Bering Sea herring biomass is easily large enough to permit the expected incidental catch of herring associated with normal trawl operations for groundfish without negative conservation impact on herring stocks. Consequently, we believe that trawl operations should be allocated an adequate incidental catch of herring to permit continued operation and that drastic time/area closures on the principal groundfish grounds in the central Bering Sea are unnecessary. The discussion which follows supports these conclusions.

Summary of Issues Raised

Our primary criticisms of the proposed herring plan are summarized as follows:

1. The optimum yield (OY) proposed for the fishing year beginning April 1, 1980 is unreasonably low.

2. Provisions for partial allocation of surplus to TALFF are unrelated to any valid conservation purpose and are unlawful.
3. Any formula for determining the allowable incidental catch (AIC) of herring in trawl operations should be modified to reflect changes in a nation's allocation and the rapidly increasing herring biomass.
4. Proposals for time/area closures in the central Bering Sea are unsupported by any conservation need.
1. Optimum Yield for 1980 is Unreasonably low.

As outlined in the proposed herring FMP, the calculation of OY depends primarily upon the estimation of biomass and the choice of an exploitation rate. We believe that the conservative methodology of the proposed herring FMP compounds at each of these steps to produce an OY which is unreasonably low. The biomass estimate currently proposed by the plan development team (224,874 mt) is unreasonably low because it assumes that (1) all herring in the biomass are seen and counted in aerial surveys; (2) all herring in the biomass are seen and counted on the day of peak abundance (determined by survey district for Togiak/Bristol Bay but by index area for all other regions); (3) aerial survey results should be reduced by 25% to account for survey error; (4) density (tonnage conversion) factors should be discounted from observed results of density tests; (5) only the low end of the range of biomass estimates should be employed; and (6) the 1980 biomass of Nelson Island and Cape Romanzof stocks is lower than in 1979. The 20% exploitation rate proposed is probably also unreasonably low, since realistic biomass figures indicate that Biomass₁₉₈₀ exceeds Biomass_{MSY}. The following discussion supports these points.

A. Biomass Estimate is Unreasonably Low.

Techniques available for estimating the size of the herring biomass in the eastern Bering Sea are generally considered to be among the more accurate techniques employed in estimating biomass for fish stocks within the jurisdiction of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. However, despite the relatively high reliability of the biomass data available, the herring plan development team (PDT) has consistently chosen extreme assumptions in analyzing the available data which in each instance tend to understate the size and strength of the herring biomass. Further, where application of appropriate assessment techniques have resulted in a range of biomass estimates, the proposed herring

FMP consistently uses the lower end of the range. The compound effect of all of these extremely conservative choices is to produce an estimate of biomass which is substantially below the best available scientific estimate of biomass.

The figure currently being proposed as the biomass estimate (224,874 mt) is not the best or most probable biomass figure. This point was made very clearly by one PDT member at the January advisory panel meeting when he described the PDT biomass estimate as "a rock bottom minimum; anything less would be ludicrous." Consequently, we believe that the biomass estimate proposed by the PDT is unreasonably low and is not, in fact, the "best available" estimate of biomass.

The principal technique used by the PDT for estimating current herring biomass was the aerial survey of spawning herring stocks conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in 1978 and 1979. Data gathered and biomass estimates derived from these aerial surveys have been presented to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) preliminarily in a draft contract completion report entitled "Assessment of Spawning Herring Stocks at Selected Coastal Areas in the Eastern Bering Sea," November 1979, NPFMC Contract 78-5. The unreasonably low biomass estimates contained in the proposed herring FMP and modified recently by the herring PDT are derived from inappropriately conservative assumptions and methods employed by the ADF&G in this report.

(1) Limitation of Biomass Estimates to Spawning Herring Counted During Aerial Surveys Underestimates Actual Biomass.

The initial assumption made by ADF&G (and subsequently accepted by the PDT) which insures a conservative biomass estimate is the assumption that the eastern Bering Sea herring biomass is limited to those mature herring actually counted by the ADF&G aerial survey teams on the spawning grounds. However, this assumption seems clearly wrong. At pages 12-13 of the draft ADF&G report, data is presented which indicates that substantial numbers (42% in the Bristol Bay spawning grounds) of age 2 herring are sexually immature and that 100% of age 1 herring are immature. Likewise, it seems highly unlikely that all eastern Bering Sea herring (even those in the spawning areas) were actually seen and counted by the surveyors. Plainly, then, the limitation of biomass estimates to spawning herring actually seen and counted during aerial surveys must result (absent appropriate adjustment) in an underestimate of actual herring biomass.

(2) Peak Abundance Methodology Employed In
Estimating Biomass for the Togiak/Bristol
Bay District Drastically Underestimates
the Actual Biomass.

Another critical choice made by ADF&G which insured a radically conservative biomass estimate was a decision to base that estimate on peak abundance recorded on a single day. Although this methodology understates biomass for other districts as well, its application to the Togiak/Bristol Bay district is particularly significant because an estimated 97% of the eastern Bering Sea herring population spawns in that district. See draft ADF&G report at page 38. Thus, for example, the biomass estimate for the Togiak/Bristol Bay district employed by ADF&G and subsequently by the herring PDT -- 196,640 (low end of range reduced by 25%) to 601,157 mt (high end of range without 25% reduction) -- was the estimate of the herring seen by the surveyors on May 10, 1979. The decision was made to ignore the estimated 328,659 to 910,238 mt of herring observed on aerial surveys in the Togiak/Bristol Bay district between April 30, 1979 and May 9, 1979 and the estimated 20,902 to 56,329 mt observed thereafter.

The purpose stated in the ADF&G report for the use of peak abundance on a single day is to prevent double counting of herring which remain in the survey area for more than one day, and this concern is undoubtedly reasonable. However, this methodology insures that the biomass estimate thus derived will understate true biomass to the extent that herring departed from the Togiak/Bristol Bay district prior to May 10, or arrived thereafter. In fact, the ADF&G report indicates that there were approximately 20,000 to 40,000 mt more herring in the Togiak index area on May 7, 1979 than on May 10. Likewise, there were approximately 88,000 to 176,000 mt more herring in the Kulukak index area on May 5 than on May 10. Peak spawning at the Nunavachak and Ungalikthluk index areas occurred on May 2, rather than May 10. In fact, the only index area in the Togiak/Bristol Bay district which saw peak spawning on May 10 was the Nushagak index area where a biomass range of 115,175 to 383,915 mt was observed. Approximately 89,057 to 236,482 mt of herring were observed in the Kulukak, Nunavachak, Ungalikthluk, Togiak and Matogak index areas on the days of peak abundance for each of those index areas prior to May 10 which were not seen in those areas on May 10. Unless all of these herring migrated to the Nushagak index area to be counted on May 10, substantial underestimation of biomass for the Togiak/Bristol Bay district results from use of the May 10 peak abundance figure. However, the data presented in Tables 15 and 16 of the ADF&G report does not suggest any such

Mr. Clement Tillion
February 1, 1980
Page 5

mass migration from the other areas to Nushagak. In fact, Table 16 clearly shows that the 35,217-93,912 mt of herring observed at the Togiak index area on May 10 and the 46,170-123,120 mt observed at Kulukak did not migrate to Nushagak or any other index area. Thus, there seems to be very little reason to believe that the 89,057 to 236,482 mt of herring which had left the other index areas of the Togiak/Bristol Bay district by May 10 actually migrated to Nushagak. It seems probable, therefore, that the use of the peak abundance figures for May 10, 1979 to estimate biomass for the entire Togiak/Bristol Bay district results in a drastic understatement of the herring biomass for that district by as much as 89,057 to 236,482 mt (the understatement if none of the herring observed in the other index areas prior to May 10--and not seen in those areas on May 10--migrated to Nushagak to be counted there on May 10, 1979).

The methodology employed by ADF&G for the Togiak/Bristol Bay district is much more conservative than that employed in the more northern districts. In contrast to the methodology employed in the Togiak/Bristol Bay district (where peak abundance was assessed on the day of peak abundance for the entire district), biomass estimates for stocks north of Cape Newenham were based upon the sum of the peaks for each separate survey index area. If this method had been employed for the Togiak/Bristol Bay district, the lowest biomass estimate (employing ADF&G methodology with the 25% reduction for survey error) would have been 285,765 mt. This is about 90,000 mt more than the low estimate actually employed by ADF&G (196,540 mt).

In the Norton Sound area, the ADF&G report assumed that biomass estimates separated by 10 to 15 days from the peak in each index area were different fish. If this methodology were applied to the Togiak/Bristol Bay district, an increased biomass of between 2,262 and 6,516 mt would be obtained. This is another example of the extremely conservative consequences of the decision by ADF&G to count only those herring observed on May 10, 1979 in assessing to Togiak/Bristol Bay herring biomass.

On the basis of the points discussed above, it seems evident that the particular peak abundance methodology employed by ADF&G for estimating herring biomass for the Togiak/Bristol Bay district underestimates actual biomass by amounts up to 90,000 to 240,000 mt.

(3) The Across-the-Board 25% Reduction of Biomass Estimates is Unjustified.

The biomass data presented in Table 17 of the draft ADF&G report reflects only the low end of the range of biomass estimates obtained through the application of the methodology described in the report. However, in addition to employing the low end of the range of possible biomass figures, Table 17 also reflects a systematic reduction of biomass by 25%. At page 31 of the draft report this adjustment is explained as a device to account for the inclusion of non-herring species of schooling fish which might have been counted during aerial surveys. However, at page 9 of the draft report, it is stated that "more than 90% of the recorded schools in 1979 in the southern portion of the study area south of the Yukon River were [estimated to be] herring." The draft report indicates further that capelin schools were sometimes excluded from survey counts,

"particularly . . . in the Togiak, Security Cove and Goodnews Bay districts where commercial spotting air traffic was most intense. Schools excluded were only those known to be capelin; schools occurring in very narrow bands (less than 3m in width) occupying immediate surf zones along sand and gravel beaches."

Since the draft report indicates that more than 90% of herring schools observed in the Togiak/Bristol Bay district were herring, it would appear to be inappropriate to reduce the Togiak/Bristol Bay biomass estimate by 25%. If the low end of the 1979 biomass range is instead reduced by 10%, an adjusted estimate of 235,968 mt is obtained. This estimate would thus result in an addition of approximately 65,000 mt to the low end estimate of biomass for the Togiak/Bristol Bay district. Further, since capelin schools were frequently excluded in the Togiak, Security Cove and Goodnews Bay districts, the subsequent reduction of biomass estimates for these districts by an additional 25% would seem to result in a double exclusion of non-herring fishes. Use of test gillnet catches as a basis for estimating survey error assumes that the ADF&G surveyors were as indiscriminating as the gillnets (which the draft report clearly indicates was not the case). It therefore appears that the application of the "25% error factor" to reduce biomass estimates results in a minimum understatement of biomass of approximately 65,000 mt in the Togiak/Bristol Bay district alone.

(4) Density Factors are Reduced From Observed Test Results.

Density factors employed by ADF&G to convert surface area of herring schools observed by aerial surveyors into tonnage estimates of biomass have been uniformly reduced from densities obtained from sampling tests. Thus, for example, the lowest density figure obtained from test seines was 2.4 mt per 50m² of surface area. See draft ADF&G report at page 10. However, the average density factor employed for the Togiak/Bristol Bay district for calculating the biomass figures shown at Table 17 was 1.445 mt per 50m². If instead an average density factor of 2.4 mt is used, the Togiak/Bristol Bay biomass estimate would be increased by a minimum of 48,290 mt to a total biomass of 244,930 mt (including the ADF&G's 25% reduction). No explanation is given for departing from actual, observed density test results. We think this discounting of actual test results drastically reduces biomass estimates obtainable from the best available scientific data.

(5) Failure to Display Biomass Estimates as A Range Results in Misrepresentation of Biomass Data.

Although the biomass estimates for the Togiak/Bristol Bay district are carefully stated in terms of a range from low to high in Tables 15 and 16 of the draft ADF&G report, the table which summarizes biomass data for all districts (Table 17) fails to follow through with this method of displaying the data. The biomass data presented in Table 17 reflects only the low end of the range based upon the minimum "factor" for converting surface area into tonnage. If the maximum conversion factor is employed, an estimate of at least double the low end of the range is obtained. Thus, the statement of total biomass in Table 17 as 220,359 mt is misleading. The actual biomass estimate derivable from the ADF&G methodology is a range of from 220,359 mt to 495,513 mt (with the 25% downward adjustment) or 262,187 to 660,684 mt (without the 25% adjustment).

Given this range of biomass estimates, it would seem that actual biomass is substantially in excess of the low end of the range, i.e., significantly greater than 220,359 mt. No explanation is provided either in the draft ADF&G report or in the proposed herring FMP which would justify managing the eastern Bering Sea herring stock on the basis of a minimum biomass estimate which almost certainly underestimates significantly the strength of the herring stock.

(6) Nelson Island/Cape Romanzof Biomass Figures
Are Also Unreasonably Low.

ADF&G biomass estimates for the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta area also contain significant underestimates. Table 17 of the ADF&G report appears to seriously underestimate the biomass of Nelson Island and Cape Romanzof stocks. Table 17 shows that Nelson Island and Cape Romanzof stocks were estimated at a biomass of not less than 3,165 mt in 1978. In 1979, the low end of the biomass range was only 233 mt, based upon aerial surveys carried on in poor weather conditions. However, the ADF&G at page 32 describes shore based studies which indicate a six-fold increase in herring abundance at Cape Romanzof and a significantly increased CPUE for herring test gillnets at Nelson Island. Thus, it seems quite clear that the actual 1979 biomass for Nelson Island and Cape Romanzof stocks is not lower than the 1978 biomass estimate, but in fact substantially higher. It would therefore appear that the 1979 biomass estimate found at Table 17 for Nelson Island and Cape Romanzof underestimates the actual abundance by more than 3,000 mt.

B. Exploitation Rate is Unreasonably Low.

Information presented in the proposed herring FMP indicates that a 20% exploitation rate is at or below conservative herring exploitation rates used in British Columbia (20 to 30%) and Washington (20%) and substantially below the exploitation rate employed for Atlantic stocks (39%). See proposed herring FMP at pages 91-92. The proposed FMP also indicates that an exploitation rate of 20% is employed in southeastern Alaska (where stocks are known to be depleted) if strong incoming year classes are present. Since all of the available scientific data indicates a markedly increasing herring biomass with strong recruitment in the eastern Bering Sea (see, e.g., draft ADF&G report at pages 25-27, 32-35), it would seem that the lowest defensible exploitation rate for eastern Bering Sea herring would be 20% where $Biomass_t = Biomass_{MSY}$.

However, based upon the discussion above related to the understatement of biomass, it appears that current biomass substantially exceeds biomass MSY (set at 248,000 mt at page 94 of the proposed herring FMP). In this circumstance, the appropriate exploitation rate should be higher than 20 percent, as provided in the formula presented at page 94 of the proposed herring FMP.

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In all events, it is plain that the conservative exploitation rate recommended in the proposed herring plan compounds the radically conservative biomass estimates discussed above to produce an unreasonably low OY.

2. Provisions for Partial Allocation of Surplus to TALFF Are Unrelated to Any Valid Conservation Purpose and Are Unlawful.

The provision in the proposed FMP for partial allocation of surplus to TALFF (see pages 112-113) does not serve any valid conservation purpose. The formula described would produce a low allocation to TALFF when recruitment is strong and the stock is increasing, but would provide a higher allocation when recruitment is weak and stock is in serious danger of depletion. Thus, the proposed formula would be detrimental to conservation of the herring resource.

It is a fundamental principle of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (FCMA) that U.S. management of fishery resources within the 200 mile limit includes the obligation to allocate fish stocks in excess of domestic harvesting capacity to foreign harvesters. The mechanism described at pages 112-113 of the proposed herring plan for partial allocations of surplus to TALFF appears to be a device primarily designed to avoid this obligation. The use of a "semi-scientific" formula to accomplish this result is an example of obfuscation which we believe is inappropriate in a scientifically based management plan. According to the PDT, the partial allocation formula discussed in the proposed plan would allocate an average of 30 to 50% of the available surplus to TALFF. Since the conditions described for the employment of this partial allocation mechanism will probably always be present, it appears that this device would regularly preclude the allocation to TALFF of from 50 to 70% of the available herring surplus. In our view, this would constitute a violation of the FCMA.

3. Allowable Incidental Catch Must Reflect Changes in A Nation's Allocation and the Rapidly Increasing Herring Biomass.

The formula for determining allowable incidental catch (AIC), as set forth at page 109 of the proposed herring plan, should be modified to account for changes in a foreign nation's allocation and projected increases in the herring biomass. As presently written, the formula appears to fix allowable incidental catch solely in relation to the foreign nation's total fish

catch in the prior year and the incidental catch rate in that year, without adjustment for changes in the size or species composition of allocations in the current year or expectable increases in incidental catch rates attributable to increases in the herring biomass.

4. Proposed Time/Area Closures in the Central Bering Sea Are Unsupported by Any Conservation Need.

As proposed in the herring FMP, a substantial time/area closure in the central Bering Sea would be imposed "when TALFF does not exceed an allowable incidental catch" Proposed Herring FMP at pages 118, ix. By its terms, this language seems to indicate that one of the time/area closure options specified at page 119 of the proposed plan would be imposed even though there was sufficient surplus herring to provide for an adequate incidental catch for the foreign trawl fishery. Since it is estimated in the proposed FMP that "the true incidental catch level would approximate 5,300 mt for [Bering Sea area II]" and approximately 6,500 mt for the entire eastern Bering Sea (page 98), it follows that such closures would be imposed if surplus allocable to TALFF is less than or equal to 6,500 mt. On the basis of any fair assessment of the herring biomass, there is little or no possibility that this situation would arise in the near future. However, given the extreme and radically conservative methodology employed in estimating biomass and OY for the proposed herring FMP, there is a real possibility that an artificial, paper shortage of herring for incidental catch purposes could result. Weighing the extremely negative impact of any of the time/area closure options proposed against the possible savings of less than 6,000 mt of herring in the context of strong and increasing herring stocks, the proposed closure options would all appear completely unjustified. This conclusion is supported by the comment in the proposed herring FMP at page 99 that "At normal levels of abundance incidental catches would have little or no biological impact on the resources" Since actual 1980 biomass appears to be at or above Biomass_{MSY}, it seems plain that this is the present situation.

Further, the proposed use of both time/area closures and incidental catch quotas would appear to be redundant. As presently proposed in the plan, a nation which reaches its incidental catch quota would be required to cease fishing throughout the Bering Sea. Since incidental catch estimates would be based upon observer data, it is unlikely that the quota could be avoided by non-reporting. However, if the observer data is reliable and an incidental catch quota is employed, the addition of a time/area

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closure would seem to provide no extra protection for herring while seriously disrupting the groundfish fishery.

Certainly, where surplus available for TALFF is equal to the expected incidental catch of the ground fish fishery, it would be highly unreasonable to close a major area of that fishery.

5. Conclusion.

The best available scientific data indicates that the herring biomass is large and dramatically increasing. All evidence shows good recruitment of incoming year classes. Subsistence fishermen are able to harvest their requirements easily. In these circumstances it would be highly unreasonable to impose drastic restrictions on the operation of the groundfish fishery for the protection of herring. Systematic underestimates of the herring biomass or other manipulations which reduce the amount of herring available to TALFF for incidental catch purposes should be rejected.

Very truly yours,

HOUGER, GARVEY, SCHUBERT, ADAMS & BARER

By

Stephen B. Johnson

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cc: Mr. Harry L. Rietze