

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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HIGHLIGHTS

Tenth Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Sept. 22-24, 1977
Anchorage, Alaska

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Advisory Panel (AP) met concurrently from Sept. 22-24 in the State Court Building, Anchorage, Alaska. Both the SSC and AP held meetings prior to the Council meeting dates. A public hearing session was held by the Council during its meeting Sept. 22. A closed session was held Sept. 23.

* Council approved the Tanner Crab Management Plan for the fishery off Alaska with the following specifications:

° Size limits for C. bairdi were set at 5.5 inches (140mm) for the Bering Sea and remainder of Alaska except for Prince William Sound where a size limit of 5.3 inches (135mm) will continue. The Bering Sea area south of 58° N. lat., and east of 164° W. long., was closed to foreign crab fishing.

° The domestic annual harvest for the Bering Sea south of 58° N/east of 164° W will not exceed the allowable biological catch currently estimated at 78 million lbs.

° Adopted as recommended federal regulations the present state regulations setting Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound as exclusive registration areas and setting pot limits now in effect in Southeastern Alaska areas.

° Recommended an FAC north of 58° N latitude of 15,000 MT.

° Specified procedures so the Regional Director, NMFS, can open and close seasons based on specified parameters.

* Approval was given to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Plan with the following specifications:

° A management regime was selected which allows protection of the halibut resource and re-building of stocks.

° The domestic groundfishery is encouraged to develop as rapidly as possible consistent with halibut protection.

° A method of monitoring the domestic groundfish fishery has been developed whereby observers will determine if halibut comprise more than one percent of the catch in a month in any given statistical area. Should the catch of halibut exceed one percent in any area, that area will be closed to fishing.

° The question of trawl mesh size was deferred for one year.

° Joint-venture activity was disapproved until July 1, 1978, at which time there will be a re-evaluation of joint-venture proposals and the state of development of the domestic groundfish fishery effort.

° Optimum yield for blackcod was set at 10,000 metric tons.

° The area east of 141° W. long., was closed to foreign long-lining.

° Foreign longlining will be allowed west of 157° W. inshore of the 500 meter isobath for true cod.

° Groundfish catches are to be apportioned by statistical areas in the Gulf of Alaska for both the U.S. and foreign fisheries.

* The Council recommended that a 30 percent reserve of the OY be withheld for all species; the reserve to be re-apportioned in mid-year.

* The Council directed that there be no foreign trawling in three sanctuary areas off the coast of Southeastern Alaska.

* A report of the Halibut Working Group was accepted as an official Council document. A committee of five members was named to develop an official Council position on halibut. Lokken and Jensen will co-chair the committee. Other members named were Skoog, Tillion and Rietze.

* The Council formally received the Draft Fishery Management Plan for the Commercial Troll Fisheries off the Coast of Alaska and ordered it forwarded for public comment and review. A series of public hearings is tentatively scheduled in December for Ketchikan, Sitka and Juneau, with the possibility of an additional hearing in Petersburg.

* The Council heard a report on clam fishing in the Bering Sea and determined a controlled fishery is feasible. A production fishery based on previous experimental work may develop in 1978.

* The Council's staff was directed to review foreign applications for permits to fish in the Fisheries Conservation Zone per guidelines to be developed by a Council sub-committee.

* The Council approved the appointments of Don Rawlinson and John Jacobson as new members of the AP. A letter was directed to Hank Eaton and James Brooks commending them for service on the Council.

* Harold Lokken (Seattle) was elected chairman for the coming year effective Oct. 6, replacing Chairman Elmer Rasmuson who declined the nomination. Clem Tillion (Alaska) was elected vice-chairman.

* The next meeting of the Council will be a combined November-December meeting to be held Dec. 1-2 in the State Court Bldg., 3rd and K Streets, Anchorage.

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