

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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12/2/88

DRAFT AGENDA

84th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

December 5-9, 1988
Anchorage Sheraton Hotel
Anchorage, Alaska

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will convene at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, December 5, 1988, at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, and continue as necessary through Friday, December 9. Other meetings to be held during the week are:

<u>Committee/Panel</u>	<u>Beginning</u>
Herring Bycatch Workgroup	10:30 a.m., Sunday, December 4
Advisory Panel	10:30 a.m., Sunday, December 4
Scientific and Statistical Committee	1:00 p.m., Sunday, December 4
AP Nominating Committee*	2:30 p.m., Sunday, December 4
Permit Review Committee	7:00 p.m., Sunday, December 4
MFCMA Reauthorization Committee	7:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 6
Finance Committee	7:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 7

Other meetings may be held on short notice. The Council will meet in executive session at noon, Wednesday, December 7, to review nominations to the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, and plan teams. All other meetings are open to the public with the exception of the AP Nominating Committee. All meetings will be held at the Sheraton Hotel unless otherwise noted.

*Meetings dealing with personnel are closed to the public.

MAIN ISSUES

Of the items requiring Council attention in December the following are expected to involve the most discussion and public comment.

Halibut Management (C-3)

The Council will consider final approval of allocative measures in the halibut fishery for IPHC Regulatory Areas 4B (Aleutian Islands) and 4C (Pribilof Islands). These measures include designating fishing periods and limiting the amount of fish landed per trip. The Council will make its decisions based on public testimony and an analysis of the allocative impacts of the proposed measures.

Sablefish Management (C-4)

In September the Council postponed its decision on sablefish management to allow for additional public review of the management alternatives. Five alternative approaches are being considered: continued open access management, multispecies longline fishery, individual fishing quotas, license limitation, and combination systems.

Groundfish Harvest Levels and Apportionments for 1989: (C-5/6/7, D-1/2)

The Council will determine the acceptable biological catches for 1989 for each of the groundfish species and species groups in the management areas of the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and set preliminary total allowable catches (TAC) based on biological and socioeconomic considerations. The Council will take public testimony on domestic processor (DAP) and joint venture (JVP) needs for 1989 and set initial apportionments to start the new fishing year, January 1 for most species. Prohibited species catch (PSC) limits will also be set for selected fully-utilized species of groundfish.

Other Groundfish Agenda Subjects

The Council will also consider taking emergency action to reduce the retention limit used in the sablefish directed fishing definition in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, and to establish a Shelikof Strait district in the Gulf of Alaska for purposes of pollock management. They will also review the crab and halibut bycatch plan for 1989 for the Bering Sea and Aleutians and may revise the bycatch limits proposed in September.

INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WISHING TO TESTIFY AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Those wishing to testify at Council meetings on a specific agenda item must fill out and deposit a registration card in the box on the registration table before public comment begins on an agenda item. Additional cards generally are not accepted after testimony has begun. A general comment period (Agenda Item F) is scheduled toward the end of each meeting for comment on matters not on the current agenda.

EXPERT TESTIMONY

The Council encourages technical experts testifying on the status of groundfish stocks to initially present their testimony before the Scientific and Statistical Committee.

12/2/88

DRAFT AGENDA

84th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Anchorage, Alaska

- A. CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
- B. SPECIAL REPORTS
 - B-1 Executive Director's Report
 - B-2 NMFS Management Report
 - B-3 Domestic Fisheries Report by ADF&G
 - B-4 Enforcement and Surveillance Report by U.S. Coast Guard
- C. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS
 - C-1 AP, SSC and Plan Team Memberships
Council approval of memberships
 - C-2 Central Bering Sea Fisheries
Report on U.S.-Soviet negotiations, final report on Sitka symposium,
Leningrad bilaterals, INPFC, PICES
 - C-3 Halibut Management
Final decision on allocative measures
 - C-4 Sablefish Management
Review public comment and choose preferred management alternative
for Secretarial Review
 - C-5 Review DAP for 1989
Determine total DAP needs by species and area
 - C-6 Review JVP for 1989
 - (a) Report on joint ventures in 1988
 - (b) Country joint venture requests and Permit Review
Committee recommendations
 - (c) Determine total JVP needs by species and area
 - (d) Vessel Permits
 - C-7 Review Foreign Fisheries for 1989
Review any requests for foreign allocations
 - C-8 Other Business

D. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS*

D-1 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

- (a) Review status of stocks and set ABCs
- (b) Set Halibut PSCs
- (c) Set TAC, DAP, JVP, TALFF, and groundfish PSCs for 1989
- (d) Consider taking emergency action to establish a Shelikof District for managing pollock.
- (e) Report of Bycatch Committee

D-2 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

- (a) Review status of stocks and set ABCs.
- (b) Set TAC, DAP, JVP, TALFF, and groundfish PSCs for 1989.
- (c) Review bycatch limits proposed for 1989 (Amendment 12a).
- (d) Review analysis of the proposed sablefish directed fishing definition and set retention limit for 1989 by emergency rule and regulatory amendment.

E. CONTRACTS, PROPOSALS AND FINANCIAL REPORT

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

G. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

*Abbreviations used:

- ABC - Acceptable Biological Catch is an annual harvest level for each species based only on biological considerations.
- DAP - Domestic Annual Processed catch by U.S. vessels delivering to U.S. processors and by U.S. catcher/processors.
- JVP - Joint Venture Processed catch by U.S. fishing vessels delivering to foreign processing vessels.
- OY - A range within which summed TACs must fall.
- PSC - Prohibited Species Catch is a harvest limit usually placed on halibut, salmon and crabs or other species which must be discarded in the groundfish fisheries (except for halibut by U.S. hook and line vessels during halibut openings). Also applicable to selected species of fully-utilized groundfish.
- TAC - Total Allowable Catches are annual harvest levels based on biological, economic and social factors.
- TALFF - Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Shelton Hotel
Anchorage, Alaska

Dec.	SUNDAY 4	MONDAY 5	TUESDAY 6	WEDNESDAY 7	THURSDAY 8	FRIDAY 9
AM		8:00 <u>SSC/AP</u> <u>BALLROOM C</u> D-2(c) Bycatch Model Description	9:00 <u>Council</u> C-5 DAP Review C-6 JVP Review D-2 BSAI Grfsh (a) Status of Stocks/ABCs (b) Prelim. TAC & Apport. (c) Review Bycatch Limits	7:00 <u>Finance Comm.</u> 9:00 <u>Council</u> D-1 GOA Grfsh (a) Status of Stocks/ABCs (b) Hal. PSC (c) Prelim. TAC & Apportion.	9:00 <u>Council</u> B-4 USCG Rpt D-2 BSAI Grfsh (b) Final TACs, DAP, JVP, TALFF (c) Final By- catch recom- mendations (d) Sablefish definition	9:00 <u>Council</u> C-3 Halibut Mgmt C-7 Fgn Alloc. C-1 Committee Memberships E Finances
	10:30 <u>AP</u> KUSKOKWIM ROOM C-4 Sablefish D-1 GOA Grfsh	9:00 <u>SSC YUKON ROOM</u> D-2 BSAI Grfsh (cont'd)				
	10:30 <u>Herring Bycatch</u> <u>Workgroup</u> YUKON ROOM	9:00 <u>AP BALLROOM C</u> D-2 BSAI Grfsh				
		10:30 <u>Council</u> KUSKOKWIM ROOM A Aprv Agenda B-1 ED Report B-2 NMFS Rpt D-2(c) Bycatch Model Description				
PM		12:00 Lunch	12:00 Lunch	12:00 Lunch Council Executive Session	12:00 Lunch	Continue as necessary
	1:00 <u>SSC YUKON ROOM</u> D-2 BSAI Grfsh C-1 PT Mbrshp	1:30 <u>Council</u> C-4 Sablefish B-3 ADF&G Rpt C-2 Donut Fisheries	1:30 <u>Council</u> D-2 BSAI Grfsh (cont'd)	1:30 <u>Council</u> D-1 GOA Grfsh (cont'd)	1:30 <u>Council</u> D-1 GOA Grfsh (c) Final TACs, DAP, JVP, TALFF, PSCs (d) Pollock Mgmt/ Shelikof (e) Bycatch Report	
	1:00 <u>AP</u> D-1 GOA Grfsh (cont'd)					
	2:30 <u>AP Nominating</u> <u>Committee</u>	1:30 <u>SSC</u> D-1 GOA Grfsh C-3 Halibut Mgmt				
		1:30 <u>AP</u> D-2 BSAI Grfsh cont'd C-3 Halibut Mgmt				
				6:00 <u>Women's Fishery</u> <u>Network</u> Business mtg followed by social function		
	7:00 <u>Permit Review</u> <u>Committee</u> KUSKOKWIM ROOM		7:00 <u>MFCMA Reauth.</u> <u>Committee</u>			

NOTE: The above agenda items may not be taken in the order in which they appear and are subject to change as necessary; other items may be added. With the exception of Council Executive Sessions and the AP Nominating Committee meeting, all meetings are open to the public.

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Date: 12/1/88

MINUTES

Scientific and Statistical Committee
September 25-27, 1988
Anchorage, AK

The Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met September 25, 26 and 27 at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. Members present were:

Richard Marasco, Chairman
Don Rosenberg
Larry Hreha
Don Bevan
Dana Schmidt

Doug Eggers, Vice Chairman
Bill Clark
Terry Quinn
John Burns
Bill Aron

C-2 Halibut Management

The SSC members on the Halibut RAAG briefly reviewed recommendations on the 21 regulatory proposals received.

C-3 Sablefish Management

The SSC reviewed the EA/RIR/IRFA for Sablefish Management in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. We find that the document does not adequately describe the seven identified problems. The SSC feels that the document should be improved before it is forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation. We have provided the staff with specific comments in this regard.

The SSC found that the document provides information on how effective the various alternatives address the identified problems, possible impacts of each alternative, and the mechanics of implementation and operation.

Results of the staff's analysis are summarized in Section 8. A table containing a summary of this information was provided to the SSC. The SSC notes that of the alternatives considered, the one that addresses all of the identified problems is an IFQ management system.

The SSC recommends that after the Council's final selection of the preferred alternative the document be carefully reviewed and improved to insure that the

selected management program is fully described. For example, the IFQ alternative does not contain at this time a statement on the restriction required to meet the National Standard regarding excessive rights. Further, there is a need to develop information that allows examination of the potential benefits and costs associated with each alternative.

C-5 Domestic Observer Program

In the past the SSC has expressed concern regarding the erosion of the scientific data base resulting from the Americanization of the fleet. This loss of information, which in the past has been provided by the foreign observer program, will lead to ineffective management and possible concern for some of the resources managed by the Council.

Bycatch management proposals that impose the least restriction on the target fisheries while insuring minimum bycatch are impossible without data on bycatch amounts and rates. Likewise, discard amounts are unknown and therefore the analysis of impacts on the resource not determined. Even our ability to project the status of the resource is becoming impaired.

The SSC sees erosion of this data base to be one of the most serious management problems facing the Council. Without information on bycatch, discards, catch per unit of effort, age structure of the harvest, and so forth, effective management will become impossible. This will lead to the Council either becoming very conservative in its management strategies or in possible damage to the resource.

The SSC believes action must be taken to correct this problem within the next few years and therefore has developed a proposed plan amendment for consideration during the coming annual amendment cycle. This proposed amendment has been provided by the SSC to the Council in accordance with the call for proposals.

C-7 Habitat Policy

The SSC endorses development and acceptance of a habitat policy by the NPFMC. The proposed habitat policy, though not entirely appropriate for marine and coastal habitats adjacent to Alaska, provides a useful framework from which a Council policy can be crafted.

The proposed policy, as written, is predicated on the reality of severe habitat degradation and loss from anthropogenic sources within the jurisdictions of several Councils. Therefore, it encourages and promotes intervention to "develop" habitats (see policy), and to "create and develop productive habitats where increased fishery productivity will benefit society" (see objective #3). Though such a policy and objective may be desirable in circumstances where significant habitat losses have already occurred, such manipulation in more-or-less pristine habitats is not desirable and should be discouraged.

The guiding principle of "no net habitat loss" (see objective #1) should be tempered to focus on losses caused by man. Additionally, that principle should be tempered on the basis of some threshold level of significant loss as well as the costs and benefits of remedial actions. Alaska is in the most

active geologic zone in North America. Encouragement of an objective that fosters corrective action to alter or reverse natural change is not necessarily desirable. Every significant adverse habitat alteration by man should not be paired with one engineered to create and develop habitat equal to that lost. Such compounded manipulation may not be desirable.

Several editorial changes are suggested to focus more directly on maintenance rather than creation and development of habitats, on responses to anthropogenic rather than natural habitat alteration and loss, and on protection of natural systems that support fishes rather than the more narrow protection of favored species that are taken for commercial and recreational purposes.

Recommended editorial changes are as follows:

- Page 1, - paragraph 6, change the word "develop" to the word "maintain."
- Page 2, - paragraph 2, change the word "develop" to the word "maintain."
 - policy objective #3
 - change the phrase "create and develop" to the word "maintain." Also, insert the word "natural" between the words "productive habitats."
- Page 6, - all sections, substitute the word "activities" for the word "projects."
 - add, "(5) Activities that result in releases of any toxic wastes."

Subject to these changes we recommend that the Council adopt the policy.

C-9 Other Business

1. Arctic Research Commission

The SSC received a presentation by Mayor Fuhs on the actions of the Arctic Research Commission and the proposed interdisciplinary research program entitled, "The Bering Sea as a System". Over the past years members of the SSC have participated in the development of this proposed program. The SSC strongly supports funding and implementation of this program and requests that the Council continue to be involved in the program development.

2. Team Membership

The SSC reviewed resumes for two individuals, Gregg Williams and David W. Carlile, who have been recommended for membership on the Council's two groundfish teams. We recommend that their appointments be approved.

In light of the fact that composition of the plan teams has not been reviewed for a couple of years, the SSC has decided to place this item on its December 1988 agenda. The staff has been asked to contact each of the involved agencies requesting that they review their participation and submit their new nominations to the Council prior to the December meeting.

D-2 Crab FMP

The SSC has reviewed the public comments and has nothing further to offer on this FMP at this time.

D-3 GOA Groundfish FMP

1. Amendment 17a - Sablefish Seasons

The SSC reviewed the EA/RIR/IRFA for the proposed amendment to split the sablefish season. Although data are lacking for determining precise benefits, the analysis prepared suggests that two primary benefits could occur with apportionment to a fall fishery. The first benefit is a reduction in halibut bycatch in the sablefish fishery due to lower estimated bycatch in the fall than in the spring. The second benefit would accrue from harvesting sablefish in the fall when prices historically have been high. To illustrate the potential gains, the SSC summarized information presented in the EA/RIR/IRFA. This information is presented below for the three options considered.

Gain From Split Sablefish Seasons*
(in millions of dollars)

Benefits	<u>Spring/Fall Split</u>		
	75/25	50/50	25/75
Value of halibut savings**	0.9	6.5	7.6
Increased value sablefish caught	2.8	5.6	8.4
Total	3.7	12.1	16.0

* It is noted that the bycatch data for domestic fisheries are limited.

** Does not account for the possibility of fishermen shifting to other fisheries with high halibut bycatch.

Other analyses suggested possible improvements in fish quality and vessel safety depending on the area (in the Central and Western Regulatory Areas, the most favorable weather occurs during June through September). Clearly, the analyses favors a split season with an apportionment of 25/75 between spring/fall. The Council may also consider better coordination with IPHC so that the sablefish season can occur simultaneously with the open halibut periods to avoid bycatch altogether in those periods.

2. Initial Acceptable Biological Catch Recommendations

The SSC reviewed the RAD and made several suggestions regarding clarity of presentation and additional analyses which should be performed, and incorporated into the final RAD. These changes could result in different values for ABC at the December Council meeting.

Pollock

The SSC heard the team presentation, received two reports from Peter Craig of ADF&G, and heard testimony from the public. The SSC is concerned about pollock population levels in the Gulf. The spring 1988 hydroacoustic survey resulted in a biomass estimate of 330,000 mt in Shelikof Strait, which is not in accord with previous estimates of biomass from the 1987 bottom trawl survey and analysis of commercial catch-at-age data. The decline in maturity-at-age and length-at-age of pollock in the presence of a declining population is also of concern. Finally, there has been no indication of strong year classes appearing in the fishery in recent years.

Currently, it is hypothesized that the spawning component of pollock returns to Shelikof Strait in the spring of each year. This hypothesis has direct management implications. If true, pollock in the Gulf should be managed as a single unit and concern for pollock in Shelikof Strait translates into concern for pollock Gulfwide. The team suggested that this hypothesis may need to be reevaluated. The SSC has received reports which indicate that spawning occurs in other parts of the Gulf.

It is not clear what an appropriate threshold level for pollock should be. The RAD suggests that a threshold level for pollock may be 585,000 mt to 768,000 mt based on analyses of spawners and recruits. Theoretical population dynamics studies suggest that a threshold at 10% to 25% of unfished biomass may be reasonable. Using the highest observed biomass of 3 million mt (assumed to be an estimate of the unfished biomass), this results in a range of 300,000 mt to 750,000 mt. Some SSC members believe that a threshold level for pollock is not appropriate due to the variable recruitment observed in the population. Further, even if a threshold were established, it is not clear whether the threshold applies only to Shelikof Strait or Gulfwide.

If current pollock biomass is below the threshold, then ABC is zero. Some SSC members believe that ABC should be set to zero in light of the uncertainties involved. Others believe that ABC could be set to some low level based on a conservative fishing rate and biomass estimate. Others believe that ABC for Shelikof Strait is zero but that ABC outside Shelikof Strait cannot be determined on the basis of available information. A majority of the SSC recommends setting the ABC at zero to indicate concern about this population. Results from further analyses and data should be available in the final RAD.

The SSC believes the hypothesis that the spawning component of pollock return to Shelikof Strait in the spring of each year must be carefully examined. To accomplish this the SSC recommends establishing a TAC of 50,000 mt applicable to the fishery between January 15 and April 15. No more than 5,000 mt of this TAC may be taken in Shelikof Strait during this time period. In light of current population estimates, a removal of this amount of fish is probably not excessive and would provide useful information.

Between April 16 and August 31, no directed pollock fishery should be allowed in the Gulf of Alaska.

After evaluation of data from fisheries inside and outside Shelikof and the 1989 spring hydroacoustic survey, the Council could then recommend at its June meeting whether a fall fishery should take place. In any case, observers

should be used to collect information from both inside and outside fisheries. The SSC recommends that remaining funds in the Council's Domestic Observer Program be used for this purpose.

Pacific Cod

The SSC concurred with the team's choice for ABC of 99,000 mt apportioned among management areas as suggested. The SSC has requested that the team do additional analyses that would allow calculation of the FO.1 exploitation rate prior to the December meeting.

Sablefish

The SSC recommended the mid-point of the range of the team ABCs, or 35,000 mt, with this total apportioned among management areas as suggested.

Flounders

The flounder complex is currently characterized by high abundance and relatively low catches. Arrowtooth flounder, a low value species, comprises 54% of the estimated biomass for the complex. If catches become large, the Council may wish to separate arrowtooth flounder from the flounder complex to prevent adverse impacts on individual species.

The SSC concurs with the team that the natural mortality rates used in the analysis are unrealistically high. The SSC calculated revised ABCs using natural mortality estimates from the Bering Sea of 0.12 for yellowfin sole and 0.2 for other flounder species. Using exploitation rates equivalent to these natural mortality values, the revised ABC for flounders is 345,000 mt. The team's method for apportioning this total among the three management areas was used to disaggregate this total.

Slope Rockfish

The plan team recommended a Gulfwide ABC of 14,100 mt for this rockfish assemblage. The ABC is based on stock reduction analysis using biological parameters from POP and biomass estimates from areas deeper than 100 meters sampled in the 1987 Gulf of Alaska trawl survey. The plan team calculated the ABC by multiplying the estimates of exploitable biomass by $F_{msy} = 0.02$. The plan team believed that this approach would permit rebuilding of the stocks. They also suggested that the Council might wish to consider separate ABCs for shortraker and roughey rockfish to prevent overexploitation by a fishery targeting on these species. Such a separation would result in an ABC of 12,100 mt for the shallow slope rockfish and 2,000 mt for the shortraker and roughey.

The SSC believed that a better estimate of ABC would be based on selecting $F = 0.04$. This would give an ABC of 24,200 mt for shallow slope rockfish and 4,000 mt for the deep slope species. The SSC wishes to note that the absence of an observer program makes enforcement of separate ABCs impossible and therefore recommends a combined ABC of 28,200 mt. The SSC agrees with the plan team that an allowed catch of 14,100 mt would permit some rebuilding of these stocks and lessen the problem associated with a fishery targeting on individual species.

Pelagic Shelf Rockfish

The SSC recommends the same procedure be used to calculate ABC for this group as was used for slope rockfish, applying a fishing mortality rate of 0.04 to the trawl survey estimate of biomass. This produces an ABC of 6,600 mt, or twice the value recommended by the team. We believe the higher ABC to be conservative because biomass is almost certainly underestimated by trawling.

Demersal Shelf Rockfish

The SSC agrees with the plan team that very little is known about this species assemblage and that it is impossible at this time to estimate an ABC. CPUEs have been declining and if management wishes to prevent the continuation of this decline, current harvest levels must be reduced. This group of rockfish is managed under the FMP by ADF&G.

Thornyheads

The SSC accepts the plan team recommendation that the ABC be set equal to the MSY level of 3,750 mt, which is unchanged from 1988, noting that the catches continue to increase and that the 1988 catch was the highest on record.

D-4 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

1. Amendment 12A - Bycatch Controls

The SSC continues to express concern about the lack of observer coverage necessary to insure accounting of bycatch or the establishment of bycatch rates to be used in the future.

The halibut fixed mortality limit may present future problems if the biomass of the halibut stock fluctuates causing a higher or lower percentage removal from the stock. The team explained that the lack of a biomass estimate for the juvenile part of the halibut stock, and out-migration limited the options available.

A bycatch of 1% or less of the surveyed crab numbers cannot be detected by changes in the resource base by use of survey or catch statistics. The SSC believes that accounting of bycatch mortality and subsequent controls are necessary for conservation purposes. Although we cannot measure the impact of removals of 1%, we believe a limit of removals at this level can assure that bycatch has no measurable negative impact upon the reproductive potential of the crab population.

2. Initial Allowable Biological Catch Recommendations

The SSC wishes to note that during the 1988 eastern Bering Sea trawl survey it was determined that the opening of the net was 2 meters less than assumed. This means that the area swept was less than expected and changes indicated in biomass from 1987 to 1988 might not reflect true increases or decreases in abundance. Therefore, care is warranted in comparing 1988 biomass estimates with those developed for previous years. The SSC recommends that historical biomass estimates be adjusted to reflect this new information.

Pollock

The SSC gave long and careful consideration to stock divisions in the Bering Sea and the possible effect of Donut Hole catches on productivity. There appears to be two major stock components in the U.S., EEZ--a shelf group in the eastern Bering Sea and a basin group to the west, but they are probably not distinct stocks.

The SSC believes that the cohort analysis and survey estimates provide an adequate assessment of the shelf pollock in the eastern Bering Sea, even if there is some dispersion of fish from this group into the basin group. We therefore support the team's recommendation of an ABC of 1.34 million mt for the eastern Bering Sea shelf component.

For the basin area, there is insufficient information to estimate biomass and knowledge of stock divisions to estimate the rate of exploitation. Since the fish in Area 515 (Bogoslof Island) are tentatively regarded as being part of the basin group and since data are not available to estimate ABC for the Basin, we do not support the team's recommendation that an ABC be calculated for Area 515 and added to the ABC of shelf pollock in the eastern Bering Sea.

The SSC recommends that until additional information is available, the ABC for the Aleutian Islands management area be calculated as in the past. Therefore, the SSC's ABC for 1989 is 160,000 mt.

The SSC advises caution in allowing any increase in catch from the basin group of fish. However, a plan amendment would be required to control the harvest of basin and shelf groups of fish separately.

Pacific Cod

The SSC reviewed the assessment model that has been developed and refined to estimate stock size and forecast production. The SSC supports the ABC recommendation based on the model results (370,600 mt).

Yellowfin Sole

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 241,000 mt.

Greenland Turbot

The SSC recommends the ABC remain at 14,100 mt as a preliminary number until the team reexamines the analysis contained in the RAD. The SSC had questions concerning how the results of the SRA were used to arrive at the team's ABC recommendations.

Arrowtooth Flounder

The SSC accepted the team's procedure for calculating the current exploitable biomass for arrowtooth flounders, but later noted that a four-year averaging process was adopted to estimate biomass for other flatfish species. The SSC suggests that the team evaluate whether or not the same averaging process would improve the estimate of current biomass.

Regarding the exploitation rate, the SSC noted that the Fmax rate used by the team to derive ABC may not be sustainable. Therefore, a more conservative F0.1 rate is recommended. This results in an ABC estimate of 82,900 mt.

Rock Sole

To calculate an ABC, the team used the exploitable biomass of 1,071,000 mt, obtained by averaging the 1984, 1986 and 1987 biomass, multiplied by the Fmsy exploitation rate developed from a biomass based production model. This model gives an exploitation rate of 0.13. The natural mortality for rock sole is estimated to be 0.2. Therefore, the SSC feels that the exploitation rate used by the team is low. We believe a more appropriate rate is the F0.1 derived from a yield-per-recruit analysis. That rate is 0.18.

The SSC believes that the exploitable biomass is better represented by including the 1988 survey results in the calculation. By including data from 1988 we start to make an adjustment for the area swept calculation. This results in an exploitable biomass of 1,277,900 mt.

Therefore, the SSC recommends that ABC for the eastern Bering Sea be 230,000 mt (1,277,900 x 0.18). In order to account for the Aleutian Islands ABC, the SSC used the team procedure, resulting in a final ABC of 236,900 mt.

Other Flatfish

As in the case of rock sole, the SSC recommends that the four-year averaging technique to estimate the current exploitable biomass and the F0.1 exploitation rate derived from the yield-per-recruit analysis. This results in a new estimate of 222,600 mt.

Sablefish

The SSC notes that the relative abundance index (RPW) for the eastern Bering Sea declined by about 60%. The size of the reduction from 1986 to 1987 is considered uncharacteristic for this species. It was indicated in the RAD that killer whales could have had some effect on the survey. Nevertheless, the decline suggests that caution is warranted in the development of ABC for this species. In the case of the Aleutian Islands, the same index has remained relatively stable for the last four years.

The biomass estimates (16,900 mt and 96,800 mt for the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, respectively) provided in the RAD are considered the best available information for use in developing ABCs. Given the magnitude of the RPW decline and uncertainty associated with its interpretation, the SSC recommends that the ABC for the eastern Bering Sea be based on a F = 0.10 (exploitation rate of 9.1%). Applying this rate to the projected biomass gives an ABC of 1,538 mt for the eastern Bering Sea. It is recommended that the ABC for the Aleutian Islands be held constant at the 1988 level (5,800 mt).

Pacific Ocean Perch

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 6,000 mt and 16,600 mt for the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, respectively.

Other Rockfish

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 400 mt and 1,100 mt for the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, respectively.

Atka Mackerel

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 21,000 mt.

Squid

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 10,000 mt.

Other Species

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 59,000 mt.

3. Sablefish Targeting Proposal

The proposal to amend the sablefish regulatory regime focuses on several possible alternatives to define "targeting". The SSC believes that this does not properly reflect the real decision before the Council on allocation among gear groups. The Council may define targeting but the definition may not control discards. If the targeting definition is set too high, it will result in a de facto allocation to trawls of the sablefish. If the definition of targeting is set too low, it will result in additional discards which will not be measured. Even with an observer program, it is the SSC's view that any definition of targeting will, in some cases, not meet legitimate bycatch requirements, and may constrain a directed fishery. Conversely, in other cases, the bycatch allocation may exceed that required by the directed fishery. Without a means to measure discards it is impossible to enforce an allocation of the bycatch of these discards.

SSC GULF OF ALASKA ABC RECOMMENDATIONS 1989

SPECIES		ABC (mt)	TAC (mt)	
Pollock	Western	0	50,000	
	Central			
	Jan 15 - April 15	---		50,000 (no more than 5,000 may be taken in Shelikof Strait)
	April 16 - Aug 31	No directed fishing		
	Sept 1 - Dec 31	To be determined		
	Eastern	3,375		
Pacific cod	Western	18,810		
	Central	73,260		
	Eastern	6,930		
	Total	<u>99,000</u>		
Flounders	Western	69,000		
	Central	239,000		
	Eastern	37,000		
	Total	<u>345,000</u>		
Sablefish	Western	5,075		
	Central	15,500		
	Eastern	14,425		
	Total	<u>35,000</u>		
Slope rockfish	Western	6,800		
	Central	12,200		
	Eastern	9,200		
	Total	<u>28,200</u>		
Pelagic Shelf	Western	1,100		
	Central	4,700		
	Eastern	800		
	Total	<u>6,600</u>		
Demersal Shelf		---		
Thornyhead rockfish		3,750		
Other Species		---		

SSC BERING SEA AND ALEUTIAN ABC RECOMMENDATIONS 1989

SPECIES		ABC (mt)	TAC (mt)
Pollock	EBS	1,340,000	
	515	---	
	Aleutians	160,000	
Pacific Cod		370,600	
Yellowfin Sole		241,000	
Greenland Turbot		14,100	
Arrowtooth Flounder		83,000	
Rock Sole		236,900	
Other Flatfish		222,600	
Sablefish	EBS	1,538	
	Aleutians	5,800	
POP	EBS	6,000	
	Aleutians	16,000	
Other Rockfish	EBS	400	
	Aleutians	1,100	
Atka Mackerel		21,000	
Squid		10,000	
Other Species		59,000	

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

John G. Peterson, Chairman
Clarence G. Pautzke, Executive Director

605 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 103136
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 271-2809
FAX (907) 271-2817

Certified: _____

Date: _____

ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

Anchorage, Alaska
September 26-28, 1988

The Advisory Panel of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met on September 26-28, 1988 in the Anchorage Sheraton Hotel. The following members were present:

Nancy Munro, Chair
Arne Aadland
Terry Baker
Al Burch
John Crowley
Mark Earnest

Edwin Fuglvog
Pete Granger
Ron Hegge
Pete Isleib
Rick Lauber
Dan O'Hara

Ron Peterson
Jon Rowley
Richard White
Dave Woodruff
John Woodruff
Fred Zharoff

Members not present were Lamar Cotten and Barry Fisher.

The minutes of the June 20-22, 1988 Advisory Panel meeting were approved as read.

The AP voted unanimously to elect John Woodruff as Vice Chair.

John Crowley was introduced to the Advisory Panel. Mr. Crowley was appointed by the Council as an interim AP member for the September and December 1988 meetings to replace Bob Alverson who was appointed to the Council in June.

C-2 Halibut Management

The AP heard a presentation on the management team and Halibut RAAG's review of halibut allocation proposals. The AP concurred with the grouping of those proposals into five categories and made the following recommendations:

1. Limited access - The AP voted to follow the Halibut RAAG recommendations. The majority of the AP acknowledges an urgency in the current management of the fishery and recommends that the Council begin gathering information from the industry (via questionnaires and/or workshops) on their interests and ideas on limited access. **The motion carried 7 to 5.** A minority report is included as Attachment 1.

2. Gear limitation - The AP voted to accept the Halibut RAAG recommendation that the Council refer these proposals to the IPHC. The motion carried unanimously.
3. Landing restrictions - The AP is very concerned about the quality of halibut being delivered from the derby openings and recommends that the Council do "as much as possible" to have landing laws established. The AP recommends that the Council pursue this issue with the State of Alaska (ADEC, Legislature, etc.). The motion carried unanimously.
4. Short openings in Area 4B - Contrary to the Halibut RAAG, the AP recognizes this as an allocative proposal, given that existing regulations require vessel clearances and hold inspections for boats not landing their entire annual catch in Area 4B. The AP recommends that the Council forward this proposal for analysis and public review during the current cycle. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Trip limits in Area 4C - The AP voted to accept the Halibut RAAG recommendation that the Council forward this proposal for analysis and public review. The motion carried unanimously.

C-3 Sablefish Management

The AP heard the staff report and extensive public testimony about different management systems for sablefish.

The AP voted on two motions:

1. To recommend that the Council adopt a license limitation system. That motion failed 7 to 11.
2. To recommend that the Council continue with open access. That motion tied 9 to 9.

The AP then conducted an informal tally with each member choosing their first, second, and third alternatives. If a member could support only one alternative, they would state that sole alternative. The purpose of this tally was to see if we would reach consensus around any one alternative. The tally indicated that 7 of 18 AP members consider open access their first and only choice. Nine members chose one of the other options as their first choice. IQs and license systems were more popular than the multi-species longline system.

D-3 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

Amendment 17a - Sablefish Season Dates

The AP recommends the Council maintain a single season for the sablefish fishery. The motion carried 14 to 1.

The AP heard public testimony and discussed several points in reaching this decision.

1. **Bycatch of halibut** - The original idea behind the split season was to reduce bycatch of halibut during the spring. Although the staff analysis indicates that the bycatch of halibut declines between the spring and fall, the staff described the data as inconclusive since it is based largely on the foreign fishery which is difficult to calibrate to the current domestic fishery. Furthermore, if the sablefish season was split, it appears some fishermen would target on Pacific cod in the spring and thereby increase halibut bycatch.
2. **Quality** - The AP heard conflicting testimony from industry on the relative quality of sablefish in the spring versus the fall. Some observers reported that flesh quality, or the amount of meat per fish frame, was better in the fall, others disagreed.
3. **Safety** - Industry testimony confirmed the staff analysis that weather is worse in the fall and many fishermen expressed their concern about safety with a fall fishery.

Due to the lack of data on this issue, the AP encourages the Council to either conduct a new survey or adapt the current longline survey to provide time-sensitive data on halibut bycatch in the sablefish fishery and on sablefish quality and yield. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Resource Assessment Document

The AP recommends that the Council send the Plan Team's recommendations for 1989 ABCs out for public review. The AP declined to recommend preliminary TACs since the underlying ABCs are subject to change between now and the December meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.**

D-4 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

Amendment 12a - Bycatch Controls

The AP examined the four options for bycatch controls outlined in the EA/RIR and found each of them unacceptable. After industry testimony and much discussion the AP agreed on the framework of a solution for the 1989 and possibly 1990 seasons. The main points of the framework (see Attachment 2) are:

1. Establish a framework procedure for setting bycatch.
2. Aggregate the trawl fisheries into DAP and JVP trawl for 1989.
3. Direct NMFS to design a bycatch system which could account for more specific target fisheries and report to the Council at the June 1989 meeting.

4. Keep the crab and halibut protection zone closed (160° to 162° W., south of 58° N.), except for the Port Moller 25 fathom exemption for DAP Pacific cod trawling.
5. Divide the bycatch limit of halibut or crab between DAP and JVP based on their apportionment of TAC.
6. (a) Close Zones 1 and 2 when the bycatch limit of C. bairdi is caught.
(b) Close Zone 1 when the bycatch limit of red king crab is caught.
7. Direct the Regional Director to use discretionary authority to allow specific "clean" trawl fisheries to continue fishing in closed areas, except for the crab and halibut protection zone.

The motion carried unanimously.

The AP then voted on specific levels of bycatch for the following crab species:

<u>C. bairdi</u>	456,000 animals in Zone 1 1,858,000 animals in Zone 2
Red king crab	135,000 animals

These numbers were calculated by comparing the crab population estimates for 1985 and 1988 and applying the factor of population change to the bycatch limits agreed on in Amendment 10. **The motion carried 11-5.**

The AP voted separately on the following halibut bycatch limit:

Halibut	3,500 mt
When 50% of the halibut bycatch limit is reached in any one area, that area will be closed.	

The halibut bycatch limit was set by comparing the historic bycatch up to 1986 which was reported at 2,600 mt, the preliminary estimate of 1987 bycatch which is 3,000 mt, and the Bycatch Committee negotiated amount of 3,900 mt. The closure decision is based on the even distribution of halibut through the zones and conservation. **The motion carried 9 to 6.**

Minority Report on Amendment 12a - Bycatch Controls. The AP majority generated its recommendations for crab bycatch numbers by comparing the estimates of crab populations in 1985 and 1988. A factor which represents the change in crab population was then applied to the Amendment 10 bycatch limits. We think that is a mistake since the Amendment 10 bycatch numbers were based solely on the needs of the joint venture yellowfin sole and "other flatfish" fisheries. In 1988 many other DAP fisheries may require crab bycatch and it seems pointless to base these numbers on ancient joint venture only needs.

We agree with the concept promoted by the Bycatch Committee that bycatch limits should fluctuate as a percentage of the bycatch species biomass. Although we do not recommend any particular percentage, we note that the scientists have labeled the 1% figure as biologically insignificant and impossible to measure.

Finally, we would like to register our concerns with the micro management bycatch system advocated by the Ad Hoc Bycatch Committee. We believe that the implementation of this system will require time, talent, and money to be dedicated to tracking "paper fish". As a result of this experience, will we increase our understanding of the resource? No. Will we reduce waste? We doubt it. Will we increase efficiency? No. All we really accomplish is setting up an elaborate accounting system which, without observers, will be based on numerous untestable assumptions. Frankly, we believe the money should be spent on research which would improve our understanding of the fisheries.

Signed by: Nancy Munro, Al Burch, Pete Grange, and Arne Aadland.

Resource Assessment Document

The AP recommends that the Plan Team's recommendations for ABCs be sent out for public review. The AP declined to recommend TACs at this time recognizing that the data in the RAD may change between now and the December meeting. The AP also recommends that the Council send out the PSC limits in the RAD for public review, but expressed concern over the small numbers, particularly for sablefish and POP. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Emergency Request to Address Sablefish Bycatch Issues

The AP recommends that the Council take emergency action to change the definition of "directed fishing" for sablefish in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands from 20% to 4%. The AP believes the Council should take emergency action due to the conservation concern indicated by the reduced ABC. **The motion carried 11 to 2.**

Major points of the discussion included:

Pro:

1. The directed fishery closed early in 1988 due to anticipated bycatch needs in the Bering Sea.
2. Other target fisheries do not require 20% bycatch of sablefish.
3. Even at 4%, the bycatch of sablefish in other groundfish fisheries may severely limit the target fishery for sablefish.

Con:

1. The small amount of sablefish available in the Bering Sea should not be expected to support a target fishery, but is needed to prosecute other groundfish fisheries.

2. Some fisheries (e.g., for greenland turbot) may require more than 4% sablefish bycatch.

The AP recommends that the Council not take emergency action on the allocation portion of this request. The AP recommends that the proposed allocation of the directed fishery by gear type be reviewed in the regular amendment cycle. **The motion carried 10 to 2.**

MINORITY REPORT
ADVISORY PANEL - NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Agenda C-2 - Halibut Management
Category 1 - Limited Access

If implemented, the Advisory Panel's recommendation that preliminary or exploratory consideration be given to limited entry in the halibut fishery will squander needless amounts of time and energy to try to address problems that could better be solved by other means.

When halibut limited entry was first discussed, approximately 1,000 licenses had been issued in the fishery. There are now approximately 4,000. The level of participation has grown to the point that a limited entry scheme would serve no purpose in controlling participation and would be almost impossible to implement.

We feel continued formal discussion of halibut limited entry will only waste the time and funds of the industry, the management council, and the council's staff. This time and expense could be spent much more wisely addressing the other important issues that confront our industry.

The problems of halibut quality and conservation -- which are used as a justification for continued consideration of limited entry -- could better be solved by regulations pertaining to landing restrictions and gear limitation.

We remind the council that sablefish limited entry has been in the process for over two years, and it is not over yet. We urge the council to drop this matter before time and money is committed to an issue that has been and will remain very controversial and emotional. We reiterate that time, money and energy should only be spent on confronting the other issues pertaining to the EEZ.

Carl F. Schmitt
Donald M. Woodruff
Ronald K. Peterson
Mark P. Earnest

AP Consensus Framework

The AP recommends to the Council that they establish a framework procedure for setting bycatch in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. For 1989 the target fisheries affected by this bycatch framework will be aggregated as DAP and JVP trawl. The AP recommends that the Council direct NMFS to design a bycatch system during 1989 which could account for more specific target fisheries as in the Ad Hoc Bycatch Committee proposal. The AP requests that NMFS report to the Council on their progress with this system at the June 1989 Council meeting so that the Council can approve action for 1990 and beyond.

During 1989 bycatch limits will be specified in the regulations:

_____ for C. bairdi

_____ for red king crab

_____ for halibut

The bycatch limit for C. bairdi will be apportioned to the JVP and DAP trawl fisheries in proportion to their division of TAC. If a fishery reaches the bycatch limit, Zones 1 and 2 will be closed.

The bycatch limit for red king crab will be apportioned to the JVP and DAP trawl fisheries in proportion to their division of TAC. If a fishery reaches the bycatch limit, Zone 1 will be closed.

The bycatch limit for halibut will be apportioned to the JVP and DAP trawl fisheries in proportion to their division of TAC. If a fishery reaches the bycatch limit, _____ will be closed.

The crab and halibut protection zone (160° to 162° W., south of 58° N.) will remain closed, except for the Port Moller 25 fathom exemption for DAP Pacific cod trawling.

The AP recommends that the Council direct the NMFS Regional Director to exercise discretionary authority to allow specific trawl fisheries (such as directed fishing for mid-water pollock or POP) which have not encountered significant bycatch to continue fishing in a closed area, except for the crab and halibut protection zone.

DRAFT MINUTES

83rd Plenary Session
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
September 28-October 1, 1988
Sheraton Hotel
Anchorage, Alaska

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met September 28-October 1, 1988 at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. The Scientific and Statistical Committee began meeting on Sunday, September 25, and the Advisory Panel began on Monday, September 26. Members of the Council, Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory, staff and general public in attendance are listed below.

Council

John Peterson, Chairman
Bob Alverson
Joe Blum
Jim Brooks
Don Collinsworth
Larry Cotter
Oscar Dyson
Bob Mace for
Randy Fisher

John Winther, Vice Chairman
Bob Ford
Tony Knowles
Henry Mitchell
Capt. George White for
RADM Edw. Nelson
Jon Nelson for
Walter Stieglitz
Guy Thornburgh

NPFMC Staff

Clarence Pautzke, Executive Director
Steve Davis, Deputy Director
Judy Willoughby
Denby Lloyd
Ron Miller

Terry Smith
Dick Tremaine
Helen Allen
Peggy Kircher

Support Staff

Dale Evans, NMFS-AKR
Craig Hammond, NMFS-AKR
Ray Baglin, NMFS-AKR
Craig O'Connor, NOAA-GC
Jay Ginter, NMFS-AKR
Barry Bracken, ADF&G-Petersburg

Ron Berg, NMFS-AKR
Pat Peacock, NMFS-AKR
Loh-Lee Low, NMFS-NWAFC
Jim Balsiger, NMFS-NWAFC
Bob Otto, NMFS-Kodiak
Steve Hoag, IPHC

Scientific and Statistical Committee

Richard Marasco, Chairman
Don Rosenberg
Larry Hreha
Don Bevan
Dana Schmidt

Doug Eggers, Vice Chairman
Bill Clark
Terry Quinn
John Burns
Bill Aron

Advisory Panel

Nancy Munro, Chair
Arne Aadland
Terry Baker
Al Burch
John Crowley
Mark Earnest
Edwin Fuglvog
Pete Granger
Ron Hegge

Pete Isleib
Rick Lauber
Dan O'Hara
Ron Peterson
Jon Rowley
Richard White
Dave Woodruff
John Woodruff
Fred Zharoff

General Public

An estimated 125 people attended the Council meeting. Names of those who registered are listed below.

Mark E. Springer, City of Hooper Bay
Jim Russell, Key Fisheries
Steve Grabacki, Graystar
Jack E. Crowley, Seattle
Mark Walatka, North Start Maritime
Bill Atkinson, NRC
Mike Atterberry, Anacortes
Naomi Manabe, Anchorage
Dave Smover, CFEC
Bernt Bodal, Seattle
Chris Jones, China Pacific Ventures
Perfenia Pletnikoff, Jr., Central BSFA
Donald W. Johnson, Kodiak
Ron Schmell, NPTF
Rod Swope, Juneau
Bill Orr, Golden Age Fisheries
Jim & Rhonda Hubbard, Seward
Stephen Greene, Clearwater Fine Foods
David Fraser, Cape Flattery Fisheries
Woody Knebel, Wards Cove Packing Co.
E. H. Zeaser, Mrs. Paul's Kitchens, Inc.
T. Yamomoto, ITABASU, Tokyo
Arni Thomson, Alaska Crab Coalition
Jay Stinson, Alaskan Ventures
John Sevier, Alaska Pacific Seaffods
Joe Plesha, Trident Seafoods
Don Johnson, Anchorage
Steve DRage, F/V Coho
Jeff Stephan, UFMA
Robbie Shaw, Nat'l Seafood Products
Vic Horgan, Jr.
Li Shanxun, China Fisheries
William Nicholson, Dillingham
Douglas Gordon, New Zealand
Rona Sorensen, Rep. Herrmann's office
Kay Wallis, Juneau

Kay Brown, ODF&W, Oregon
Peter Block, Seattle
Paul Clampitt, F/V Majestic
Paul MacGregor, Mundt-MacGregor
Jonathan Heifetz, Auke Bay Lab
O. Bendiksen, Seattle
Micahel J. Mayo, Sitka
Henry Swasand, Aleutian Spray
R.K. Dearborn, Sea Grant
Oliver Holm, Kodiak
Kate Wynne, U/A, Sea Grant
Rick Krueger, Talbot Co.
Madelyn Walker, Seard
Dean Paddock, BBDA
Barry Collier, PSPA
Alexander Galanin, St. Paul
John Boyce, Fairbanks
Kevin Kaldestad, Seattle
Stephen B. Johnson, Seattle
John Levy, SWAMC
Paul Kelly, Anchorage
Charlene Millimen
Hugh Reilly, Westward Tralwers
Mike McCune, Alaskan Fisheries
Winn Aukman, Dagnet Fisheries
Bill Sharrow, Rep. Don Young
Mel Monsen, AFDF
George Jacko, Pedro Bay
Mark SNigaroff, AFA, Atka
Chip Dennerlein, Anchorage
Anton Bowers, Sitka
Alan Otness, Petersburg
Mary Brennan, Homer
Sandra Henry, Anchorage
Fate Putman, Anchorage
Chuck Kekoni, Eagle River

MINUTES
COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 1988

DeeDee Jonrowe, Willow
Rep. Adelheid Herrmann
John Bruce, DSFU
Phil Chitwood, Arctic Alaska Fisheries
Steve Hughes, Seattle
John Henderschedt, MRC
Ted West, Key Fisheries
Diane Woodruff, Kodiak Seafood Processors
Kent Ruffa, Ker Seas Co.
Roy Jones, John Cabot Co.
Karl Ohls, Alaska Legislature/Sen. Zharoff
Lyle Yeck, Raven Fisheries
Chris Blackburn, Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
Steve Rieger, Alaska Legislature
Dennis Hicks, ALFA
T. Janikawa, Tokyo
Mark Pedersen, WDF
Kate Graham, UFA
Gordon Jensen, Petersburg VOA

Kathy Grimres, Unalaska
Laurie Grimres, Palmer
David Harville, Kodiak
Rhonda Hubbard, Seward
Jesse Foster, ABOF
Phil Wedel, Jubilee Fisheries
Wm. Gilbert, PSPA
Daniel Oliver, NETS
David Little, Clipper Seafoods
Bob Richmond
Geo. Herrfurth, NOAA/NMFS-DC
Steve Freese, NOAA/NMFS-DC
Linda Kozak, KLVOA
Rob. Conrad, ADF&G-Anchorage
Loren Leman, Anchorage
John C. Cleveland, SeaLand
Dan Zantek, Anchorage
Dean Adams, FVOA
Cliff Davidson, Legislator

A. CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Interim Chairman John Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. on Wednesday, September 28, 1988. Bob Mace moved to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion was seconded by Bob Alverson and carried with no objection.

Bob Mace moved to approve the minutes of the June 1988 Council meeting. The motion was seconded by John Winther and carried with Bob Alverson and Tony Knowles abstaining because they were not in attendance at the June meeting.

A-1 Election of Officers

Henry Mitchell moved to delegate the Executive Director to conduct the election of officers, and that the election be held by roll call vote. The motion was seconded by Larry Cotter and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

Joe Blum nominated John Peterson for Chairman. (No second required on nominations.)

DRAFT MINUTES
COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 1988

Larry Cotter nominated Don Collinsworth for Chairman.

John Peterson was elected chairman by a vote of 6 to 5.

Henry Mitchell nominated Don Collinsworth for Vice Chairman.

Oscar Dyson nominated John Winther for Vice Chairman.

John Winther was elected Vice Chairman by a vote of 7 to 4.

B. SPECIAL REPORTS

B-1 Executive Director's Report

Clarence Pautzke briefly updated Council members on the budget. Reduced costs of some committees and postponing the hiring of a new staff member have provided some budgetary relief.

John Peterson asked the Council to approve his interim appointment of John Crowley to replace Bob Alverson on the Advisory Panel. Clarence noted that in December the Council will need to consider appointments to the SSC and AP. John Crowley's appointment to the Advisory Panel through December 1988 was unanimously approved.

Dr. Pautzke reported that the next Chairmen's meeting will probably be held in early January in South Carolina. Magnuson Act amendments will be the main agenda item. Some Council members were concerned that our Council is no longer taking the lead on coordinating the Magnuson Act amendment process for all eight Councils. Joe Blum moved that at the next Chairmen's meeting the North Pacific Council's Chairman and Vice Chairman seek a leadership role in the MFCMA reauthorization process and other national legislative processes affecting the regional fishery management councils. The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

B-2 Domestic Fisheries Report by ADF&G

The Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game reports that the exvessel value of Alaska's commercial fisheries in 1987 was \$1.1 billion, the first time it has exceeded the one billion dollar mark. This escalation of value is attributed to continued healthy finfish stocks, increased prices paid to fishermen, and continued development of the domestic groundfish fishery.

The 1988 commercial salmon catch, valued at \$705 million, is estimated to have produced a harvest of 94.6 million fish weighing a total of over 500 million pounds. The exvessel value surpasses last year's record of \$473 million.

For the crab fisheries in southeast Alaska, ADF&G reports that 643,073 pounds of brown king crab were harvested at an estimated value of \$2.3 million. They anticipate an additional harvest of about 200,000 pounds by the end of the season. The Tanner crab fishery opened January 15 and closed February 18, the second shortest season on record. Approximately 1.306 million pounds were taken, valued at \$3 million. Approximately 3.3 million pounds of dungeness crab were landed during the two-segment 1987/88 season with an estimated value of about \$3.68 million.

Following are the seasons, 1988-89 projected harvests, and the 1987/88 harvests for the various crab species and areas in the Westward Region and Western Alaska:

<u>AREA</u>	<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>SEASON</u>	1988-89	1987-88
			<u>PROJECTION</u> (millions of pounds)	<u>HARVEST</u>
Kodiak	Red	Closed	0	0
	Brown	Permit	0.07	-
AK Peninsula	Red	Closed	0	0
Dutch Harbor	Red	Closed	0	0
	Brown	Sept. 1	1.0	1.4
Adak	Red	Nov. 1-Feb. 15	1.0	1.2
	Brown	Nov. 1-Aug. 15	-	7.2
Bristol Bay	Red	Sept. 25	7.5	12.3

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Bering Sea				
Pribilof	Blue	Closed	0	0.7
St. Matthew	Blue	Sept. 1	1.1	1.1
St. Matthew	Brown	Permit	-	1.1
Norton Sound	Red	Aug. 1	0.2	0.33

B-3 NMFS Management Report

By September 17, the U.S. industry had harvested and processed 505,151 mt of groundfish off Alaska. The catch in the Gulf of Alaska was 101,806 mt including 20,968 mt pollock, 25,872 mt Pacific cod, 28,046 mt sablefish, 15,152 mt rockfish, and lesser amounts of other species. The catch in the Bering Sea and Aleutians was 403,345 mt including 301,394 mt pollock, 4,984 mt yellowfin sole, 31,586 mt other flatfishes, 54,220 mt Pacific cod, 6,272 mt sablefish, and lesser amounts of other species. These figures do not include joint venture harvests by U.S. trawlers delivering to foreign processing vessels in over-the-side sales off Alaska.

The Alaska Region is continuing to work with the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game on the redesign of groundfish fish tickets to make the species and species group outline on the ticket more closely reflect the specifications notice.

Dale Evans reported that as a result of the August industry survey they have reapportioned 70,000 mt from DAP and 12,000 mt from reserves in the Bering Sea to JVP for the pollock fishery. There were also some amounts of Pacific cod, yellowfin sole and other flatfish reapportioned to JVP.

Craig Hammond submitted a summary of foreign fishing vessel transshipment data for the second quarter of 1988.

Ted Evans, Alaska Factory Trawlers, brought up the recent closure of the domestic Atka mackerel because JV overran their quota by almost 2,000 mt and the 21,000 mt TAC was reached. In this case, TAC equals the ABC. He asked that the Council recommend an additional 1,000 mt be allocated to DAP.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Larry Cotter asked if transshipment data show how many of the vessels which come into the U.S. EEZ to pick up or offload product have also picked up product in the Donut Hole. Craig Hammond said the information they receive does not show whether the product aboard the vessel is from the Donut Hole or not. Mr. Cotter asked whether the reports can require that type of information be reported. Craig Hammond responded that he doesn't know of any reason why they could not, but that he would look into it and if appropriate they would do it.

On the Atka mackerel issue, Dale Evans said that the TAC has been exceeded by about 600 mt, and that ABC can be exceeded as long as there is no evidence of overfishing. Council members were reluctant to set a precedent for future decisions by recommending that the Atka mackerel ABC be exceeded. Jim Brooks pointed out that development of the ABC includes some conservative factors and can be expressed as a range at any given confidence level. The scientists may tell them that there is no, or minimal, risk of taking another 1,000 mt of Atka mackerel. He would talk to the Center and if there was assurance there would be no risk to the stock he would be willing to consider the request.

Larry Cotter moved to take no action - to not exceed the ABC for Atka Mackerel. The motion was seconded by John Winther and carried with Jim Brooks and Henry Mitchell objecting.

B-4 Enforcement and Surveillance Report by U.S. Coast Guard

Between June 1 and September 15, seven cutters spent 161 days on Alaska patrol and four patrol boats and five buoy tenders spent 92 days conducting fisheries enforcement operations off Alaska. A total of 683 hours were spent on fisheries enforcement patrols by Coast Guard aircraft and helicopters during the same period. There were 425 foreign fishing/support vessel sightings and 3,296 domestic fishing vessel sightings; 11 foreign fishing vessels and 169 domestic fishing vessels were boarded and inspected for compliance with Magnuson Act, International Pacific Halibut Commission, and International

DRAFT MINUTES
COUNCIL MEETING
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North Pacific Fishery Commission regulations. Three warnings were issued for logbook and reporting infractions, five notices of violation were issued for prohibited species infractions, one for possession of marine mammals, and two for unsafe boarding ladders. All of the incidents involved domestic vessels. The Coast Guard also seized 6,500 pounds of sablefish harvested illegally by the U.S. longliner NANCY K, and issued four reports of violation to the U.S. catcher/processor ALASKA I for an unsafe boarding ladder, possession of prohibited species, improperly reporting catch, and impeding inspection of the catch.

B-5 Joint Venture Operations

The joint venture report was submitted in written form with no oral presentation before the Council.

Larry Cotter asked that Council staff prepare an outline, for use by the Permit Review Committee and Council during their December review of joint venture requests, suggesting how to accomplish "favorable attention" to joint ventures making use of shoreside services.

B-6 1988 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Crab Survey Results

Bob Otto, NMFS-Kodiak, presented an overview of the 1988 status of stocks report for crab in the eastern Bering Sea. The full report was included in the meeting notebooks.

C. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS

C-1 Legislative Update

Ron Miller reviewed current legislative matters of interest to the Council.

C-2 Halibut Management

Denby Lloyd reported that the Council received 21 halibut management

proposals. The Halibut Management Team and the Halibut Regulatory Amendment Advisory Group reviewed the proposals prior to the Council meeting.

Report of the Halibut Management Team

The Team categorized the proposals into five main groups: (1) Limited access proposals; (2) gear limitation; (3) landing restrictions; (4) a proposal for a series of short openings in Area 4B (Aleutian Islands); and (5) a proposal advocating a trip limit of 10,000 pounds be enforced in Area 4C (Pribilof Islands) until 80% of that area's catch limit is taken. The Team determined that only proposals for short early openings in Area 4B and trip limits in 4C are amenable to analysis during the current amendment cycle. Proposals for limited access were recognized as important, but should be analyzed and reviewed over a longer period of time. Proposals for gear limitation should be deferred to the IPHC and the proposal on halibut quality (landing restrictions) should be deferred to another agency with authority over seafood quality.

Report of the Halibut Regulatory Amendment Advisory Group

The Halibut RAAG concurred with the Management Team's recommendations with one exception. They recommended the proposal for short season openings in Area 4B should be referred to the IPHC without connotation of allocative intent or effect.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP concurred with the Management Team's recommendations, including analyzing the proposal for Area 4B and sending it out for public review. They also strongly urged the Council to do everything possible to initiate some measures that would promote better halibut quality.

Public Testimony on this agenda item is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Bob Alverson moved to approve the recommendations of the Halibut RAAG with regard to limited access proposals:

Preliminary, or exploratory, consideration be given to limited access in the halibut fishery, similar to exercises that the Council and other interest groups performed for sablefish. These would include questionnaires to fishermen and processors on appropriate limited access systems and potential workshops to assess industry interest. If sufficient interest is expressed, then halibut limited access could be put on an extended amendment cycle.

The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell. It was suggested that any questionnaire on this subject should include a question asking whether or not the respondent wanted limited access.

The motion carried with Oscar Dyson and Bob Mace objecting. Both felt that this issue will be dealt with as a result of the Future of Groundfish Committee's work and that the issue should be delayed until January when the new FOG committee is appointed.

John Winther moved to adopt the recommendations of the Halibut RAAG with respect to gear limitation proposals. the motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

Henry Mitchell moved that the Council endorse the Halibut RAAG recommendation with respect to the landing restriction proposals:

That the Council express concern for the quality of halibut landed and direct staff to correspond with appropriate agencies of the State of Alaska to encourage their pursuit of landing laws or regulations to require that fishermen take appropriate care (i.e., dress and ice) of halibut prior to delivery to processors.

The motion was seconded by John Winther and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

With respect to the Area 4B proposal, Henry Mitchell moved that the Council endorse the AP's recommendation to analyze the proposal submitted by Atka Fishermen's Association and send it out for public review. The motion was seconded by Don Collinsworth and carried, 7 to 4, with Alverson, Blum, Mace and Peterson voting against.

With respect to the Area 4C proposal, Henry Mitchell moved that the Council endorse the AP's recommendation to analyze the proposal submitted by the Central Being Sea Fishermen's Association and send it out for public review. The motion was seconded by Don Collinsworth and carried, 6 to 5, with Alverson, Blum, Mace, Peterson and Winther voting against.

Council discussion on these last two items centered around the issue of how to determine what is allocative and what isn't. Also, some Council members felt that, particularly in the case of the Area 4C, last year's Council action already accomplished the goal of giving local residents an opportunity to develop their industry so they would not be at a disadvantage when competing against the larger vessels from outside the area.

Joe Blum suggested that the Council should explore the possibility of addressing halibut management proposals on a two-year cycle, rather than every year. Council staff was asked to prepare a response on the subject for the December meeting.

C-3 Sablefish Management

The Council was scheduled to review public comments on the EA/RIR for sablefish management options and choose a preferred alternative for Secretarial review.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

Upon review of the EA/RIR the SSC felt that the document did not adequately describe the seven identified problems and recommended that it should be improved before forwarding it to the Secretary for implementation. They recommended that after the Council's final selection of a preferred alternative the document be carefully reviewed and improved to ensure that the selected management program is fully described. The SSC noted that of all the alternatives considered, the IFQ management system is the one that best addresses all of the identified problems.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP did not have a majority in favor of any one particular system. After considerable discussion, each member was asked to state their first, second and third choice of alternatives. No consensus was reached, however it was noted that seven of the 18 members present considered open access their first and only choice, and nine members chose one of the other options as their first choice. IQs and license systems were more popular than the multi-species longline system.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Because of the lengthy agenda, Council members felt that there was not enough time to address this subject in the depth required. A delay will also provide for more public comment from those who will be affected by any decision the Council may make.

Bob Alverson moved to delay the sablefish agenda item until the December Council meeting, when it should be placed first on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Don Collinsworth and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

C-4 Future of Groundfish Management

Council members felt that because of the heavy workload between now and December that a discussion of the future FOG committee and its work should be

postponed until January when it can be addressed in more detail. Chairman Peterson will contact Council members after the meeting to discuss the formation of a new FOG committee.

Public Testimony

Mark Springer, City of Hooper Bay. Because of the importance of fisheries to their community they would like representation on any revised Future of Groundfish Management Committee.

Ted Evans, AFTA. Mr. Evans submitted written testimony from Wally Pereyra, ProFish International. Mr. Pereyra urged continuation of the Future of Groundfish Management Committee. As a member of the committee he felt that good progress has been made in identifying problems and mapping out alternatives but that much more work needs to be done.

C-5 Domestic Observer Program

Ron Dearborn, Alaska Sea Grant College Program provided Council members with a brief summary of his written report on the pilot domestic observer program to date. Since the report to the Council in June, a total of 47 days has been spent on rockfish vessels in the Gulf of Alaska. One male and two female observers were trained for the fishery. Although initial contacts with factory trawl vessels looked promising, only two volunteered to participate, and both required a male observer. However, the schedules of the two vessels did allow the one male observer to cover both.

Total observer employment since September 1987 has been 21.5 man-months, about 59% of the total 36 man-months anticipated by the pilot program. Total costs to date are \$124,868, or 63% of the contract funds. The program will focus on the Pacific cod longline fishery in the Gulf of Alaska this fall, but ADF&G will take the lead in covering this fishery. The Council's remaining 13 man-months in the program will be reserved for Bering Sea fisheries in the spring.

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In their report on Gulf of Alaska pollock, the SSC recommended that the remaining funds in the Council's domestic observer program be used to collect information from both the inside and outside Shelikof pollock fisheries.

C-6 Central Bering Sea Fisheries: "Donut Hole"

Dr. Marasco reported on the Scientific Symposium held in Sitka in July. Representatives from the U.S., U.S.S.R., Japan, South Korea, Poland, China, and Canada participated. A report of the results of the meeting should be published soon.

Public Testimony on this agenda item is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Henry Mitchell moved to endorse the letter to Ambassador Wolfe concerning management of the resources in the international waters of the Bering Sea and for the Council to prepare and send a similar one. The motion was seconded by Joe Blum and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

Don Collinsworth suggested the Council correspond with the State Department at the highest level as well as with Ambassador Wolfe to encourage some progress on this issue. The State of Alaska believes it is in the best interest of U.S. fishermen to call for a cessation of all fishing in the international waters of the Bering Sea.

The Council discussed the ten actions suggested in the industry proposal submitted by Ted Evans and agreed to incorporate their intent into the Council's letter to Ambassador Wolfe and possibly send letters to other appropriate agencies, i.e., Depts. of Justice, Transportation, etc. They also discussed possible legislation but determined that it is probably too late for this particular legislative session. It was also suggested that the Council should form a "donut" committee to track these issues.

C-7 Habitat Policy

The Council sent out a draft Habitat Policy for public review following the June meeting. The two comments received were provided to Council members.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC endorsed development and acceptance of a habitat policy by the Council. The proposed habitat policy, though not entirely appropriate for marine and coastal habitats adjacent to Alaska, provides a useful framework from which a Council policy can be crafted. The SSC suggested several editorial changes. See complete text in SSC minutes, Appendix II to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Jim Brooks moved to adopt the habitat policy with the SSC's editorial comments incorporated in the final document. The motion was seconded by Don Collinsworth and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

The Council discussed the formation of a Habitat Committee but decided that the Council would act as a Committee of the Whole and assign ad hoc committees for specific habitat issues as they arise.

C-8 Foreign Allocations

The Japanese North Pacific Longline Association requested the Council consider allocating Pacific cod to TALFF for their association based on their cooperation in Western Alaska projects and fishery research.

Public Testimony on this agenda item is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Jim Brooks said that NMFS has determined that there is approximately 12,000 mt surplus cod in the Gulf of Alaska.

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Several Council members were concerned about the market implications of allocating excess cod to foreign directed fishing. Oscar Dyson said although there is an excess at this time, there are reasons for that - one being the bycatch of halibut which closed down the joint venture fishery. Also, because of the poor status of pollock in the Gulf, domestic fishing operations will probably be moving into the cod fishery. Bob Alverson said that he has identified at least 20 freezer longliners that will be in operation this fall and into next year and they are capable of harvesting the excess cod. Larry Cotter pointed out that denying the 12,000 mt cod to the Japanese longliners is not the way to punish the Japanese for illegal fishing activities since they are not the segment of the fleet that has participated in illegal fishing activities in the U.S. EEZ. NPL has demonstrated good support of the Western Alaska communities over the year and should not be punished.

Don Collinsworth moved that the Council recommend to NMFS that any cod in the Western Gulf of Alaska that is determined to be surplus to DAP and JVP, be transferred to TALFF and released to the Japanese longliners. The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell and carried, 6 to 5, with Alverson, Blum, Dyson, Peterson and Winther voting against.

D. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS

D-1 Salmon FMP

The draft FMP is not yet available for Council review.

D-2 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Crab FMP

Report of the Crab Management Committee

The Committee met to resolve concerns expressed by the State of Alaska over some portions of the draft plan. Most of those concerns were addressed and can be resolved through minor editorial changes. However, NOAA-GC advised that some of the changes will constitute a significant change from the FMP that was sent out to public review; therefore, any revisions should be sent

out for another public review period. The Crab Management Committee made the following recommendations:

1. That the editorial and clarification changes identified by the Committee and passed to the plan team be incorporated into the final draft FMP,
2. that the recommended changes to sex restrictions and bycatch outlined by the State be incorporated, and that observers, minimum size limits, and inseason adjustments remain in their current categories,
3. that for purposes of public review, a final draft FMP and EA/RIR be prepared that contains as alternatives, the original management category for pot limits, registration areas, and closed waters (the two sections to be combined into Category 1), and the recommended categories of the State. The public review draft would contain management measures as outlined in Table 3,
4. that the revised FMP package be sent out for public review this fall with final Council action scheduled for January. This schedule would allow for Secretarial review and plan implementation prior to the fall 1989 king crab season,
5. that the Council request NOAA-GC, in cooperation with the Crab Interim Action Committee, conduct an analysis of current state crab regulations and statutes for determination of consistency with the FMP, MFCMA, and federal law,
6. and, if necessary, that the Committee offers to meet with the State Board of Fisheries in December to review the final draft.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Henry Mitchell moved to accept the recommendations of the Crab Management Committee. The motion was seconded by Larry Cotter and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

D-3 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

- (a) Final approval of Amendment 17a (sablefish seasons).

In June the Council reviewed Amendment 17 to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP which included several alternatives for changes in the longline sablefish season. Based on public comments and recommendations of the Advisory Panel in

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June, the Council rejected those alternatives and directed the plan team to analyze a new split season alternative as Amendment 17a to the FMP.

Amendment 17a presents two alternatives:

1. Maintain a single season beginning April 1;
2. Implement a split season, with openings on April 1 and September 1, with 25%, 50%, and 75% of the directed longline sablefish quota being apportioned to the fall season.

The plan team prepared a new amendment package, including an EA/RIR/IRFA which was available for public review between August 1 and September 5. Council members were provided with comments received.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC reviewed the plan team's analyses of the alternatives and prepared a summary of benefits for each alternative. They concluded that the analyses favored an apportionment of 25/75 between spring/fall seasons. They also suggested the Council consider better coordination with IPHC so that the sablefish season can occur simultaneously with halibut openings to avoid bycatch altogether in those periods.

Report of the Advisory Panel

Based on public testimony and a discussion of several aspects of this amendment, the AP recommended the Council maintain the status quo. Because of lack of data on this issue, the AP encouraged the Council to either conduct a new survey or adapt the current longline survey to provide time-sensitive data on halibut bycatch in the sablefish fishery and on sablefish quality and yield.

Public Testimony on this agenda item is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Council members felt reluctant to support a split season approach without general industry support. However, they did express the need for collecting data on the fishery.

John Winther moved to maintain the status quo with the opening date of April 1. The motion was seconded by Bob Alverson and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

(b/c) Resource Assessment Document/Initial Apportionments for 1989

The plan team summarized the status of Gulf of Alaska groundfish stocks as follows: Pacific cod, flounders, sablefish, and slope rockfish remain in good condition. The biomass of pollock and demersal shelf rockfish appear to be at low levels. The sum of the preliminary 1989 ABCs is 926,775 mt and the sum of the TACs (260,936 mt for 1988) is equal to the OY for the entire groundfish complex.

The plan team's recommended ABCs for 1989 are:

Pollock	W/C	0
	E	3,375
Pacific cod	W	18,810
	C	73,260
	E	6,930
Flounders	W	152,800
	C	531,400
	E	83,500
Sablefish		30,000-40,000
Slope rockfish	W	3,400
	C	6,100
	E	4,550
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W	550
	C	2,350
	E	400

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Demersal shelf rockfish (SE Outside District)	< 600
Thornyhead	3,750 (Gulfwide)
Other species	N/A

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC reviewed the RAD and made several suggestions to the plan team regarding clarity of presentation and additional analyses which should be performed and incorporated into the final document. These changes could result in different values for ABC at the December Council meeting. Following are the SSC recommendations for 1989 ABCs. More detailed suggestions are found in the SSC Minutes, Appendix II to these minutes.

		<u>ABC</u>	<u>TAC</u>
Pollock	Western	0	50,000*
	Central		
	1/15-4/15	---	
	Eastern	3,375	

*See SSC minutes for clarification.

Pacific cod	Western	18,810
	Central	73,260
	Eastern	6,930
Flounders	Western	69,000
	Central	239,000
	Eastern	37,000
Sablefish	Western	5,075
	Central	15,500
	Eastern	14,425
Slope rockfish	Western	6,800
	Central	12,200
	Eastern	9,200
Pelagic shelf	Western	1,100
	Central	4,700
	Eastern	800
Demersal shelf Thornyhead rockfish		---
Other Species		3,750

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended that the plan team's recommendations of ABC be sent out for public review. The AP declined to recommend preliminary TACs since the ABCs are subject to change between now and the December meeting.

Public Testimony for this agenda item is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Bob Alverson asked that the plan team develop some other alternative fishing strategies for black cod, subject to time and workload constraints.

Jim Brooks asked for Council discussion on whether or not to release approximately 30,000 mt of pollock to JVP in the Gulf since it has become apparent that DAP will not utilize it. Because of the recent survey information he questioned whether releasing it this late in the year might have an impact on the 1989 domestic pollock fishery. During Council discussion it was suggested that perhaps it would not be wise to release it at this time because of the uncertainties surrounding the biomass estimates for next year. Mr. Brooks said that based on Council discussion it would be his intention to reduce the TAC for pollock in the Gulf by the 30,000 mt.

Pollock

Henry Mitchell moved to set the ABC for Gulf of Alaska pollock in a range of 0 - 80,000 mt. The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson. It was clarified that the 80,000 mt would be split, 77,000 mt for the Western and Central Gulf and 3,000 mt for the Eastern. The motion subsequently failed, 7 to 4, with Brooks, Dyson, Mitchell and Winther voting in favor.

Mr. Mitchell said that this range would get the optimum response and generate public comment and may generate some ideas and information for consideration by the Council in December.

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Bob Alverson pointed out that both the plan team and SSC have recommended an ABC of zero and unless there is information to suggest a greater amount, he would go along with the scientists' recommendations. Other Council members were also concerned about sending out a number that is not realistic.

Craig O'Connor said that the Council should present a figure to the public that represents the best available scientific information. Anything beyond that would be a misdirection to the public as to what the evidence is at this point.

Don Collinsworth moved to set the ABC for pollock in the Western and Central Gulf at a range of 0-50,000 and the Eastern Gulf at 3,375 mt. Mr. Collinsworth also suggested that the range be footnoted in the public review document explaining the reason for the range and the fact that there will be a resetting of the ABC to a specific number at the December Council meeting. Bob Mace seconded the motion and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

Bob Mace moved to adopt the ABCs for the remaining Gulf of Alaska species as a range using the numbers suggested by the both the plan team and SSC as the lower and upper numbers in the range. The motion was seconded by Joe Blum and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

TACs

Bob Alverson moved to send out for public review the TACs as adopted for 1988 with the exception of pollock, which would be a range of 0-50,000 mt for the Western and Central Gulf and 3,375 mt for the Eastern Gulf. The motion was seconded by Larry Cotter and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

DAP/JVP

Larry Cotter moved to allocate DAP for each species at 100% of TAC. The motion was seconded by Don Collinsworth and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

Bycatch Rates

Steve Davis pointed out that the Council does not need to set initial bycatch limits at this meeting. The initial TAC and DAP, and the currently assumed bycatch rates, will be sent out for public review and the Council will determine the limits in December. The Advisory Panel suggested that the halibut mortality goal of 2,000 mt be continued next year.

Bob Alverson moved to adopt the recommendation of the AP to maintain the 2,000 mt halibut mortality goal. The motion was seconded by Joe Blum and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

A table of apportionments as adopted for public review is found in Appendix III to these minutes.

D-4 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands FMP

(a) Amendment 12a (Bycatch Controls)

The Bycatch Committee's proposal for control of bycatch of C. bairdi, red king crab, and Pacific halibut had been referred back to the committee and Council staff after the June meeting to address concerns of NMFS and Council staff. A revised EA/RIR was prepared and sent to Council members prior to the September meeting. Larry Cotter briefed Council members on the revised proposal.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC expressed continued concern about the lack of observer coverage necessary to ensure accounting of bycatch or the establishment of bycatch rates to be used in the future. The SSC also pointed out that the fixed mortality limit for halibut may present future problems if the biomass of the halibut stock fluctuates causing a higher or lower percentage removal from the stock, dependent upon these fluctuations. They also stated that they believe that limiting removals to 1% of the crab biomass for either C. bairdi or red king crab can assure that the bycatch has no measurable negative impact upon the reproductive potential of the crab population although they believe the

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accounting of bycatch mortality and subsequent controls are necessary for conservation purposes.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP found the four options for bycatch control outlined in the EA/RIR to be unacceptable. They developed a framework of a solution for the 1989, and possibly 1990, seasons. The main points of the framework were:

1. Establish a framework procedure for setting bycatch limits in the future.
2. Direct NMFS to design a bycatch system which could account for more specific target fisheries and report to the Council at the June 1989 meeting.
3. Aggregate the trawl fisheries into DAP and JVP trawl for 1989.
4. Keep the crab and halibut protection zone closed (160° and 162°W, south of 58°N), except for the Port Moller 25-fathom exemption for DAP Pacific cod trawling.
5. Divide the bycatch limit of halibut or crab between DAP and JVP based on their apportionment of TAC.
6. (a) Close Zones 1 and 2 when the bycatch limit of C. bairdi is reached.
(b) Close Zone 1 when the bycatch limit of red king crab is reached.
7. Direct the Regional Director to use discretionary authority to allow specific "clean" trawl fisheries to continue fishing in closed areas, except for the crab and halibut protection zone.

The AP also suggested the following specific levels of bycatch:

<u>C. bairdi</u>	456,000 animals in Zone 1
	1,858,000 animals in Zone 2
Red king crab	135,000 animals

These numbers were calculated by comparing the crab population estimates for 1985 and 1988 and applying the factor of population change to the bycatch limits agreed to for Amendment 10.

For halibut bycatch, the AP recommended a limit of 3,500 mt and that when 50% of the bycatch limit is reached in any one area, that area should be closed.

Public Testimony on this agenda item is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The Council discussion on this item was extensive and many motions and amendments made. The following is mainly a report of the final products. A complete transcript (82 pages in length) of the discussion and action is available to Council members from the Council office.

Jim Brooks pointed out several areas of concern in the Bycatch Committee's revised plan. He said that between the Advisory Panel's suggestions and those of an industry group during public testimony (Steve Hughes, et al) a workable plan could be devised for the 1989 season and then they might have a better idea of where to go from there.

The Council discussed the need for specific goals in order to devise a long-term bycatch regime. It was decided to discuss the longer-term solution first, then deal with the 1989 season.

Larry Cotter moved to adopt the Bycatch Committee's "ad hoc" proposal with an effective date of January 1, 1990, with Council reconsideration at the June 1989 meeting. At that time NMFS and the plan team could report to the Council on any technical problems with the program. Bob Mace seconded the motion, which subsequently failed 9 to 2, with Cotter and Mace voting in favor. Council concerns were based on Jim Brooks' statement that the proposed plan could not be functional at that time and difficult to enforce.

Don Collinsworth moved that the Council direct NMFS to design a bycatch system during 1989 which could account for more specific target fisheries as in the ad hoc bycatch committee proposal and that NMFS use resources that may be available to them in the industry and other management agencies in the process of designing that system. The motion was seconded by Joe Blum and subsequently carried, after amendment, 7 to 3, with Cotter, Mace and Mitchell

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voting against and Brooks abstaining. The amendment, by Larry Cotter, was to have the NMFS report received in time to implement the program for the 1990 fishing year. The amendment carried with Jim Brooks objecting.

The Council then began discussion on a bycatch regime for the 1989 fishing year.

Bob Alverson moved to:

Adopt that part of the Advisory Panel recommendations, that are found in the RAD as well, that continue the closure in INPFC Area 512 with a northern boundary of 58° latitude, to establish Zone 1 as recommended by the AP and as outlined in the RAD, to establish a Zone 2 which would be modified to reflect the recommendations of Jim Brooks to the Bycatch Committee in August, essentially that area would be smaller than the existing Zone 2, the northern boundary being 58°, the eastern boundary 165°, and the western boundary being 170°. Also include those target species that would be counted, the ones proposed in item 4 of the proposal from Hughes et al, to be JVP flounder, DAP flounder, JVP bottom trawl and DAP other bottom trawl. Also, establish caps for C. bairdi, red king crab and halibut as proposed by the AP. Motion seconded by Don Collinworth (for discussion).

The actual caps were to be discussed after the main motion was debated.

After some discussion of the various aspects of the motion, it was decided to substitute the actual Advisory Panel "Consensus Framework" document as the basis for discussion and development of a final plan.

The portion of the framework being used for the basis of the motion follows; the paragraphs were numbered for easier reference.

#1 During 1989 bycatch limits will be specified in the regulations:

_____ for C. bairdi
_____ for red king crab
_____ for halibut

- #2 The bycatch limit for C. bairdi will be apportioned to the JVP and DAP trawl fisheries in proportion to their division of TAC. If a fishery reaches the bycatch limit, Zones 1 and 2 will be closed.
- #3 The bycatch limit for red king crab will be apportioned to the JVP and DAP trawl fisheries in proportion to their division of TAC. If a fishery reaches the bycatch limit, Zone 1 will be closed.
- #4 The bycatch limit for halibut will be apportioned to the JVP and DAP trawl fisheries in proportion to their division of TAC. If a fishery reaches the bycatch limit, _____ will be closed.
- #5 The crab and halibut protection zone (160° to 162° W., south of 58°N.) will remain closed, except for the Port Moller 25 fathom exemption for DAP Pacific cod trawling.
- #6 The AP recommends that the Council direct the NMFS Regional Director to exercise discretionary authority to allow specific trawl fisheries (such as directed fishing for mid-water pollock or POP) which have not encountered significant bycatch to continue fishing in a closed area, except for the crab and halibut protection zone.

Through a series of motions, the following document was unanimously approved:

Bycatch Framework

The Council recommends that NMFS design a bycatch system during 1989 which will account for more specific target fisheries as in the Ad Hoc Bycatch Committee proposal using all technical expertise and resources available. The Council intends to take final action on the NMFS plan at their June or September 1989 meeting such that the plan will be implemented for the 1990 fishery. [This portion was adopted in a previous motion.]

1. During 1989 prohibited species catch (PSC) limits will be specified in the regulations:

For C. bairdi: 846,500 crabs in Zone 1
1,988,500 crabs in Zone 2
For red king crab: 135,000 crabs in Zone 1
For halibut: 3,300 mt catch Bering Sea/Aleutians-wide.

2. The PSC limit for C. bairdi will be apportioned to the following in proportion to their anticipated bycatch:
 1. JVP flatfish (yellowfin sole, other flatfish, rock sole);
 2. Other JVP fisheries;
 3. DAP flatfish (yellowfin sole, other flatfish, rock sole);
 4. Other DAP fisheries.

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If a DAP or JVP flatfish fishery reaches its Zone 1 bycatch apportionment, Zone 1 will be closed to that fishery. If other JVP or DAP fisheries reach their Zone 1 bycatch apportionments, Zone 1 will be closed to JVP or DAP directed bottom trawl fishing for pollock and cod.

If a JVP or DAP flatfish fishery reaches its Zone 2 bycatch apportionment, Zone 2 will be closed to that fishery. If other JVP or DAP fisheries reach their Zone 2 bycatch apportionments, Zone 2 will be closed to JVP or DAP directed bottom trawl fishing for pollock and cod. Zone 2 for C. bairdi is the same as adopted with Amendment 10.

3. The PSC limit for red king crab will be apportioned to the following in proportion to their anticipated bycatch:
 1. JVP flatfish (yellowfin sole, other flatfish, rock sole);
 2. Other JVP fisheries;
 3. DAP flatfish (yellowfin sole, other flatfish, rock sole);
 4. Other DAP fisheries.

If a DAP or JVP flatfish fishery reaches its Zone 1 bycatch apportionment, Zone 1 will be closed to that fishery. If other JVP or other DAP fisheries reach their Zone 1 bycatch apportionments, Zone 1 will be closed to JVP or DAP directed bottom trawl fishing for pollock and cod.

4. The PSC limit for halibut will be apportioned to the following in proportion to their anticipated bycatch:
 1. JVP flatfish (yellowfin sole, other flatfish, rock sole);
 2. Other JVP fisheries;
 3. DAP flatfish (yellowfin sole, other flatfish, rock sole);
 4. Other DAP fisheries.

If a DAP or JVP flatfish fishery reaches its bycatch apportionment, Zones 1 and 2H (Areas 513 and 515) will be closed to that fishery. If other JVP or DAP fisheries reach their bycatch apportionments, Zones 1 and 2H will be closed to JVP or DAP directed bottom trawl fishing for pollock and cod.

5. The Crab and Halibut Protection Zone (160 to 162°W, south of 58°N) will remain closed, except for the Port Moller 25 fathom exemption for DAP Pacific cod trawling. The same provisions adopted with Amendment 10 (50 CFR 675,22 a-d) also apply for 1989.

(b-c) Resource Assessment Document/Initial Apportionments for 1989

The plan team summarized the status of stocks as follows:

Pollock: Although abundance has declined slightly, this stock has been exploited lightly in the past. Based on current exploitation rates for Asiatic stocks and model projections, it appears the pollock resource can be exploited at higher rates without loss in productivity.

Pacific cod: The current biomass has remained very high and is projected to be so in 1989 and later.

Yellowfin sole: Exploitable biomass has been projected to increase from 1.4 million mt in 1988 to 1.53 million mt in 1989.

Greenland turbot: The exploitable biomass of Greenland turbot is probably below average and declining.

Arrowtooth flounder: The resource continues to be in excellent condition and biomass continues to be high and stable, if not increasing.

Rock sole: For the first time, rock sole is separated out from the "other flatfish" category for management purposes. Trawl surveys confirm that the biomass of rock sole is high and continuing to increase.

Other flatfishes: Biomass for this category of flatfishes is high and increasing.

Sablefish: Although the sablefish stocks appear to be in relatively good condition, particularly in the Aleutian region, a sudden decrease in biomass in the Eastern Bering Sea introduces more uncertainty about the stock's ability to produce catches at MSY levels.

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Pacific ocean perch: In general, POP stocks continue to remain low but relatively stable compared to biomass levels of the early 1960s. No new data are available, nor is any expected, to change the 1989 ABC levels from the estimates for 1988.

Other rockfishes: Maintenance of ABCs at 1988 levels continues to reflect the relative stability of the stocks.

Atka mackerel: The status of stocks for Atka mackerel is difficult to assess because surveys that cover its range in the Aleutian region are conducted once every three years. The 1986 survey indicated that biomass decreased 74% from 1983 and was even lower than the estimate from 1980. The absolute level of biomass however, cannot be accurately estimated. Since no new information is available to reanalyze data used last year, the 1989 ABC is recommended to be the same as in 1988.

Squid: There is insufficient information to determine abundance and appropriate exploitation rates for squid stocks. The plan team's conservative estimate of ABC is based on historical catches.

Other species: The biomass has essentially remained relatively high. The change in ABC from 1988 to 1989 reflects the change in biomass determined from trawl surveys.

The plan team's recommended ABCs for 1989 are:

Pollock	
EBS	1,340,000 mt
Area 515	230,000
AI	160,000
Pacific cod	370,600
Yellowfin sole	241,000
Greenland turbot	12,600
Arrowtooth flounder	171,300
Rock sole	143,400

Other flatfishes	184,300
Sablefish	
EBS	1,900
AI	5,800
Pacific ocean perch	
EBS	6,000
AI	16,600
Other rockfish	
EBS	400
AI	1,100
Atka mackerel	21,000
Squid	10,000
Other species	59,000

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC noted that during the 1988 eastern Bering Sea trawl survey it was determined that the opening of the net was 2 meters less than assumed. This means that the area swept was less than expected and changes indicated in biomass from 1987 to 1988 might not reflect true increases or decreases in abundance. Therefore, the SSC cautioned that care is warranted in comparing 1988 biomass estimates with those developed for previous years. They recommended that historical biomass estimates be adjusted to reflect this new information. The SSC's recommended 1989 ABCs follow; more specific comments are found in the SSC minutes, Appendix II to these minutes.

Pollock	
EBS	1,340,000 mt
AI	160,000
Pacific cod	370,600
Yellowfin sole	241,000
Greenland turbot	14,100
Arrowtooth flounder	83,000
Rock sole	236,900
Other flatfish	222,600

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Sablefish		
	EBS	1,538
	AI	5,800
Pacific ocean perch		
	EBS	6,000
	AI	16,000
Other rockfish		
	EBS	400
	AI	1,100
Atka mackerel		21,000
Squid		10,000
Other species		59,000

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended that the plan team's recommendations for ABCs be sent out for public review. The AP declined to recommend TACs at this time recognizing that the data in the RAD may change between now and the December meeting. The AP also recommended that the Council send out the PSC limits in the RAD for public review, but expressed concern over the small numbers, particularly for sablefish and Pacific ocean perch.

Public Testimony on this agenda item is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

ABCs

Don Collinsworth moved to adopt for public review ABCs for each Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish species using the lowest number suggested by the plan team or SSC. The motion was seconded by Bob Alverson and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

TACs

Bob Mace moved to approve for public review the same TACs as were used for 1988 with the following exceptions: yellowfin sole - 241,000 mt; rock sole - 70,000 mt; other flatfish - 76,569 mt; sablefish in the eastern Bering Sea - 1,200 mt. The motion was seconded by Joe Blum and, there being no objection, it was so ordered. On Saturday, in discussion of the final figures for public review, the sablefish TAC in the eastern Bering Sea was amended to 1,500 mt.

JVP/DAP

Using the TACs adopted by the Council, staff calculated the apportionments for JVP and DAP and presented it to the Council for final approval.

Henry Mitchell moved to approve the final table reflecting 1989 ABCs, TACs, JVP and DAP for public review. The motion was seconded by Joe Blum and, there being no objection, it was so ordered. The table of apportionments as adopted for public review is found in Appendix III to these minutes.

In response to public testimony and a request from the joint venture industry, Joe Blum moved to request the Secretary of Commerce to take emergency action for 1989 to combine the A & B joint venture pollock fisheries in the Bering Sea, to begin on January 15. The motion was seconded by Larry Cotter and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

As rationale for this request for emergency action the Council discussed the substantial costs which would be placed on the JV pollock fishery and on the JVP yellowfin sole and rock sole fisheries if this action is not taken. Also, most of the justification for originally splitting the season is no longer valid since 40% of last year's initial JV quota for the first half of the season was in the range of what the Council is discussing for the entire season for 1989.

(d) Sablefish in the Bering Sea

The Kodiak Longline Vessel Owners' Assn. submitted a proposal requesting emergency action, followed by plan amendment, to reduce retainable sablefish

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bycatch in the Bering Sea and Aleutians to 4% and allocate the directed sablefish quota between fixed and trawl gear (70/30 in the Bering Sea and 90/10 in the Aleutian Islands).

The BS/AI plan team noted that a preliminary review showed that bycatches of sablefish required by the affected fisheries were substantially below 4%.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC believes that the proposed alternatives to define "targeting" as a resolution to this problem properly reflect the real issue - allocation among gear groups. If the targeting definition is set too high, it will result in a de facto allocation to trawls of sablefish; if the definition of targeting is set too low, it will result in additional discards which will not be measured. Even with an observer program, it is the SSC's view that any definition of targeting will, in some cases, not meet legitimate bycatch requirements, and may constrain a directed fishery. Without a means to measure discards it is impossible to enforce an allocation of the bycatch of these discards.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended that the Council take emergency action to change the definition of "directed fishing" for sablefish in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands from 20% to 4%. They recommended that the Council not address the explicit allocation portion of the proposal as an emergency action but place it in the regular amendment cycle.

Public Testimony on this agenda item is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Don Collinsworth said that this could be considered an emergency because a large segment of the fleet may be disenfranchised unless some action is taken. Craig O'Connor pointed out that a regulatory amendment to change the definition of directed fishing is already in process and that the Council might amend it if they wish. There would still be opportunity for public

comment and more analysis. Don Collinsworth said that in view of the SSC's comments and concerns of others that making a decision at this time may not be advisable. He suggested more analysis be done and that the Council re-address it in December, by emergency regulation if necessary.

Council members discussed whether it is necessary to declare an emergency now so the Secretary would have advance notice that the Council plans to take action in December after seeking additional advice and alternatives from industry and staff.

Craig O'Connor said this course would be acceptable but reminded Council members that some more permanent regulatory action must be prepared because the emergency regulation will only be in place approximately one-half of the year.

Larry Cotter moved to declare an emergency exists in the sablefish fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. The motion was seconded by Bob Alverson and carried, 7 to 4, with Blum, Brooks, Mace and Peterson voting against.

Mr. Cotter asked that staff and industry provide assistance to the Council in order for them to act on the matter in December with the best information available.

E. CONTRACTS, PROPOSALS AND FINANCIAL REPORT

No reports.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Morimoto, Japan Fisheries Agency, reported on the results of investigations by his government into recent illegal fishing activities of the Hokuten trawlers. Based on their investigations, two vessels were confined to port: the DAIAN MARU NO. 128 for 100 days, and the EIKYU MARU No. 86 for 200 days. To prevent further violations by Japanese trawl vessels operating in the high seas area of the Bering Sea the Japanese Fisheries Agency has instituted the following: (1) Requested owners, captains and fishing masters

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of Hokuten trawlers to come to its office before every fishing trip and receive strict instruction on the elimination of illegal fishing operations; (2) requested that all Japanese North Pacific trawl fleets notify the agency of their scheduled return to home port so that random inspections of catches can be made; and (3) required all of the Japanese North Pacific trawl fleet to retain and submit complete and precise records.

G. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

Chairman John Peterson adjourned the meeting at 1:16 p.m. on Saturday, October 1.

Public Testimony
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
September 28-October 1, 1988
Anchorage, Alaska

Halibut Management (Agenda C-2)

Anton Bowers, Sitka Independent Fishermen. In favor of some type of limited access for halibut.

Perfenia Pletnikoff, Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Assn. Spoke in favor of the proposal for trip limits in Area 4C and asked the Council to send it out for public review.

Dean Adams, Fishing Vessel Owners Assn. Doesn't agree with the Atka proposal - last year they already had more fishing days than other areas in the Aleutians.

IPHC (through Denby Lloyd). They agree with the report of the Halibut Regulatory Amendment Advisory Group. They believe the Area 4B proposal is not overtly allocative and falls within the type of regulations dealt with by the IPHC. They suggest the Council could endorse the proposal and forward it to the IPHC.

Central Bering Sea Fisheries: Donut Hole (Agenda C-6)

Ted Evans, AFTA. Mr. Evans said they are convinced that there is widespread illegal fishing in U.S. waters adjacent to the "donut hole" of the Bering Sea. He submitted an industry-drafted document outlining suggested actions by the Departments of State, Justice, Transportation and NOAA to assure the integrity of Bering Sea fisheries management.

Barry Collier, PSPA. Mr. Collier submitted a draft letter from PSPA to Ambassador Ed Wolfe concerning management of the fisheries in the donut, and Jim Brennan, Asst. Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, expressing concern over reports of large quantities of Pacific salmon being taken in the high seas squid fishery. The Council was asked to endorse the letter to Ambassador Wolfe and to send one of their own expressing concern.

Harold Sparck, Western Alaska fisheries. Mr. Sparck presented a proposal that would separate the fisheries conservation issue from military concerns of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. in the international waters of the Bering Sea. If this could be accomplished progress could be made on fisheries management of the resources in the donut.

Mr. Morimoto, Japan Fisheries Agency. A multinational approach is required to deal with the fisheries in the donut, not just the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Japan has suggested a multinational organization be formed to deal with fisheries management and conservation issues for the international waters of the Bering Sea and asked the Council to use their influence to promote the suggestion.

Ted West, Key Fisheries. Illegal fishing in U.S. waters is damaging foreign markets for U.S. fishermen. Coast Guard budgets should be enhanced and a moratorium on fishing in the donut should be initiated.

Foreign Allocations (Agenda C-8)

Ted West, Key Fisheries. Now that there is no TALFF cod markets are opening up for American fishermen. If TALFF is allocated it will negatively affect U.S. markets for cod.

Mark Springer, City of Hooper Bay. In favor of the request by NPL because of the support they've given Western Alaska communities.

Jay Hastings, Japan Fisheries Assn. Favors NPL request. The longliners involved are from small fishing companies and are not trading companies. The fish will mostly be used locally in markets not currently being supplied by U.S. fishermen.

John Jemewouk, Fred Bradley, KEG Fisheries. Favor an allocation to NPL for their cooperation with Western Alaska communities.

Mark Snigaroff, Atka Fishermen's Assn. They have been working with NPL since 1985 and have been able to develop their industry through the help of the Japanese. In favor of an allocation of cod to NPL.

Wm. Nicholson, Bristol Bay Herring Co-op. Last year their herring fishery became fully Americanized. This is because of the assistance they have received over the years from NPL. Favors an allocation of cod to NPL.

Mr. Takaoka, Chairman of the Japanese North Pacific Longline Assn. Reviewed the various projects they have supported in Western Alaska and requested the Council recommend an allocation to them.

Paul Kelly, NPL. NPL has participated in projects with Western Alaska communities this year even though no TALFF has been available.

Harold Sparck, Western Alaska fisheries. They have been working since 1985 with NPL and support an allocation to them.

Dave Woodruff, Kodiak Seafoods Processors. Opposes any cod allocation from the Gulf of Alaska. If there are 12,000 tons of cod available in the Gulf, then U.S. fishermen have the ability to catch and process it.

Gulf of Alaska Amendment 17a (D-3(a))

Paul Clampitt, F/V MAJESTIC, Washington. Against a split season; same reasons that the AP report summarized. As far as halibut bycatch, it's not clear that there will be any savings.

Jack Crowley, FVOA. He doesn't see any advantage of splitting the season. Maintain the status quo for safety and economic reasons.

Jeff Stephan, UFMA, Kodiak. Within UFMA there is virtually no support for a 50/50 or 25/75 split. They could come to no consensus on the status quo or a 75/25 split.

Anton Bowers, Sitka Independent Fishermen. There is no reason to split the season; the Bering Sea is remains open for those who still want to fish. For safety reasons, status quo should be maintained.

Mike McCune, ALASKA I. Opposed to a split season for safety reasons. Favors status quo.

John Bruce, DSFU. Supports AP's recommendation; maintain the status quo for safety reasons.

Jon Rowley, FishWorks!. The split season approach was his idea to address quality problems. He really would prefer some type of IFQ system. Suggested that maybe a partial split season could be implemented in order to gather more data.

Gulf of Alaska Apportionments/Stocks - D-3(b-c))

Bill Aron told the Council that the Center has met with Kodiak fishermen about the Shelikof Strait pollock stocks. Because of their concern, Kodiak fishermen have volunteered to provide assistance in gathering data needed to make management decisions. The Center plans to repeat the hydroacoustic survey in 1989 and will also be meeting with the Soviets in October and hope to be able to get support for additional trawl surveys in the Gulf to help determine if substantial spawning stocks of pollock exist outside of Shelikof Strait. In December they will meet with fishermen in Kodiak and Seattle to lay out detailed research plans the Center has developed and also to provide information on research they would like to do but do not have resources to accomplish at this time.

Anton Bowers, Sitka Independent Fishermen. Would like to see pollock stocks stay in good condition and thinks fishermen should not be allowed to target on spawning pollock as is done in Shelikof. He thinks the ABC for sablefish is too high; 20,000 mt would be more conservative.

Paul Fuhs, Dutch Harbor, Alaska. The bycatch problem will not improve until there is some kind of share quota system where people can buy it so valuable resources will not be wasted. Also briefed the Council on a proposal he and Senator Sturgulewski made to the Arctic Research Commission for a comprehensive interdisciplinary international study of the Bering Sea. He requested the Council write a letter in support of the proposal and possibly offer to participate in the design of the project. Mr. Fuhs also said that Dutch Harbor is in the process of creating a Bering Sea Marine Science Institute.

Dave Woodruff, Kodiak Seafood Processors. Over \$50 million has been invested by Kodiak seafood processors and they anticipate a need for 69,000 mt of pollock next year. Pollock roe is an integral part of their operations and feel that they need well in excess of 10,000 mt from Shelikof. Because of the current stock status they would like to see 100% utilization of the stock - no roe stripping and discarding carcasses; observers on vessels to collect biological data, particularly on any factory trawler in Shelikof during the roe period; and suggest that the Council investigate mesh sizes as a means of allowing smaller fish escape. They also feel that the surveys are flawed and there is a larger pollock biomass in the Gulf than the survey show.

Chris Blackburn, Alaska Groundfish Data Bank. Presented data supporting her contention that there are more pollock available than the hydroacoustic survey estimates and recommended the Council use the 1987 bottom trawl survey as a base and allocate 80%, approximately 80,000 mt.

Jeff Stephan, UFMA. If there has to be a low harvest of pollock in the Gulf, he would like the Council to consider the needs of his members, which include the need for a fall fishery and a pollock bycatch in the fall cod fishery. Their association has discussed ways to share information so the needed data can be gathered for management of the resource. They also see a need for more port sampling, better information sharing programs, possibly a voluntary logbook program, and some of their members are also volunteering to take observers aboard during the season. He also pointed out that the fishery was late this year and that the hydroacoustic survey vessel may have left the area before the spawning biomass showed up and this may have some effect on the results.

Amendment 12a - Bering Sea/Aleutians (D-4(a))

Steve Hughes, Dave Fraser, Chris Blackburn, Bill Orr. They presented their own bycatch plan. Dave Fraser explained that they used the model developed by Council staff but substituted numbers they derived through their own research. Bill Orr pointed out that it is not a new plan but a way of implementing the original bycatch agreement.

Paul Clampitt, F/V MAJESTIC, Everett, Washington. He favors extending Amendment 10, making the halibut bycatch cap as low as possible, and allowing only 50% of each cap to be taken in any one particular zone.

Jack Crowley, FVOA. He agrees with Mr. Clampitt's suggestions. They are concerned about high halibut bycatch rates and urge the Council to protect the halibut nursery areas.

John Henderschedt, MRCI. Joint venture fishermen have been successful in reducing crab bycatch in the yellowfin sole and other flatfish fisheries at great cost to themselves. In 1988 the industry joint venture bycatch steering committee monitored bycatches and were successful in this effort. MRCI supports phased implementation of Alternative 3 as described by the Steve Hughes group.

Lyle Yeck, F/V RAVEN. Supports the industry proposal (Hughes, et al). Industry can control bycatch within itself and supports the phase-in approach as described by the Hughes group.

Steve Hoag, IPHC. IPHC sees this proposal as an allocation issue. They will evaluate this amendment from the standpoint of the ABC. Any halibut bycatch allowance will be deducted from the directed fishery allocations. He pointed out that this will not only affect the Bering Sea, but all areas because of the migration pattern of halibut. They do support a system that puts a cap on halibut bycatch.

Phil Chitwood, Arctic Alaska Fisheries Corp. Supports the Ad hoc Bycatch Committee proposal, but in order for concerns of NMFS to be addressed, suggest extending Amendment for one year with an increase in the bairdi cap because of the biomass increase.

Wally Pereyra, ProFish Int'l. He is still concerned about the whole bycatch issue. Scientists have said that the bycatch amounts are not harmful to the resource. Urged the Council to carefully consider regulations that might result in shutting down a DAP fishery prematurely. At this time the bycatch plan we could support would be the extension of Amendment 10.

Pete Granger, AHSFA. Supports the proposal by Steve Hughes' group.

Linda Kozak, Kodiak Longline Vessel Owners' Assn. Caps are important but they would like to see a lower halibut cap; 2,500 - 3,000 mt is more than sufficient. They recognize that the area is an important nursery ground, but with the stocks in a predicted decline they feel that 3,500 or 3,900 mt is way too high. The cap is allocative in nature and the directed fishery could lose as much as 15% to 17% at 3,900 mt. They recommend that the Council consider a 2,500 mt, or at the very most, 3,000 mt halibut cap.

Tom Casey, Seattle. The group he represents, 12 king crab fishing vessels operating in the Bering Sea, sponsored Alternative 4 which recommends giving Zone 1 special treatment because it is a breeding ground for crab and halibut.

Oliver Holm, Kodiak Longliners Assn. Even though the halibut bycatch is taken in the Bering Sea, the whole halibut industry will lose quota as a result. All crab bycatch caps are based on the biomass and rely on the hope that the crab going under the trawls are going to live. Until the real mortality rates are determined there is no assurance of how the resource is being affected. Observer coverage is needed to determine bycatch.

Arni Thomson, Alaska Crab Coalition. Mr. Thomson submitted a written proposal which supports the AP recommendation for the fixed caps on king and bairdi crab and halibut for 1989 and 1990 with an accompanying "shadow" program designed around the Alternative 3 proposal of the EA/RIR.

Ted Evans, Alaska Factory Trawlers. Supports the proposal of the ad hoc Bycatch Committee's proposal. The implementation of a framework is difficult at this time; there are a lot of details to be worked out and it will take compromise within the industry and management agencies until the system is perfected.

John Bruce, DSFU. Concerned with the halibut bycatch cap. Any bycatch set will be deducted from the directed fishery and will have a direct economic impact on halibut fishermen. The average size of halibut is decreasing and that will increase the number caught when halibut abundance is decreasing. Recommends extending Amendment 10, but keeping the halibut bycatch at 2,000 mt.

Arne Aadland, Ken Larson, NPFVOA. They support the Steve Hughes group proposal presented earlier in the meeting.

John Crowley, FVOA. Agrees with John Bruce's testimony.

Harold Sparck, Kokechik Fishermen's Assn. Any bycatch regime will have an impact on the small Western Alaska fisheries and they will be limited in their ability to expand. They have had no representation on the Bycatch Committee.

Resource Assessment Document and Apportionments (Agenda D-4(b-c))

Dean Adams, FVOA. Concerned about sablefish stocks in the Aleutian Islands. In just one year there has been a dramatic drop in CPUE and the situation should be reviewed by the scientists. Do not support any attempt to raise the sablefish quota in the Aleutians.

Dave Fraser, MTC. Difficult to comment on PSCs because they were established by Amendment 12 and the implementing regulations were just released. Suggest the Council reads them and consider making comments to NMFS during the comment period to be sure they reflect the policy intent of the Council's actions.

Anton Bowers, Sitka Independent Fishermen. Disagrees with the recommended ABC for sablefish in the eastern Bering Sea; the exploitation rate is too high.

Pete Granger, AHSFA. Submitted written proposal requesting the Council combine the A & B joint venture pollock seasons in the Bering Sea and Aleutians for 1989.

Sablefish Bycatch in the Bering Sea (Agenda D-4(d))

Paul Clampitt, FVOA. Supports the proposal by Kodiak Longline Vessel Owners' Assn to reduce bycatch allowance of sablefish in the Bering Sea to 4%. Also would like to see a meaningful observer program in place.

Ted West, Key Fisheries. Favors 1% sablefish bycatch and an allocation by fixed gear for the directed fishery.

David Little, Clipper Seafoods. In favor of 4% bycatch for sablefish in the Bering Sea along with a directed fishery allocated by gear type.

Linda Kozak, KLVOA. Would like Council to move quickly on the directed fishery proposal too because it is a conservation issue as well as allocative. Supports the AP proposal of 4%.

Paul MacGregor, AFTA. Most bycatch in that area is only around 4% which shows that most fishermen can prosecute the fishery with a smaller amount than what is now allowed.

Phil Chitwood, Arctic Alaska Fisheries. The average bycatch is around 4% but some longliners are taking more. He feels 10% would be reasonable and would force trawlers to be more careful and allow longliners to fish too.

Dean Adams, FVOA. Inexperienced companies may be responsible for the larger amounts of bycatch. FVOA agrees with the points made by Ted West and David Little.

Anton Bowers, Sitka Independent Fishermen. He feels they could get along with a 1% bycatch.

Bill Orr, Golden Age Fisheries. There is no need for a new regulation. The Regional Director has all the authority he needs to handle this problem. The directed fishing definition is applied on a vessel-by-vessel basis. If they (trawlers) are forced out of these fisheries, there is no where else for their vessels to go.

Arni Thomson, ACC. Support KLVOA proposal for emergency rule to reduce sablefish bycatch in the Bering Sea to 4%. Also support the KLVOA proposal for an amendment to allocate by gear types.

DRAFT MINUTES

Scientific and Statistical Committee
September 25-27, 1988
Anchorage, AK

The Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met September 25, 26 and 27 at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. Members present were:

Richard Marasco, Chairman	Doug Eggers, Vice Chairman
Don Rosenberg	Bill Clark
Larry Hreha	Terry Quinn
Don Bevan	John Burns
Dana Schmidt	Bill Aron

C-2 Halibut Management

The SSC members on the Halibut RAAG briefly reviewed recommendations on the 21 regulatory proposals received.

C-3 Sablefish Management

The SSC reviewed the EA/RIR/IRFA for Sablefish Management in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. We find that the document does not adequately describe the seven identified problems. The SSC feels that the document should be improved before it is forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation. We have provided the staff with specific comments in this regard.

The SSC found that the document provides information on how effective the various alternatives address the identified problems, possible impacts of each alternative, and the mechanics of implementation and operation.

Results of the staff's analysis are summarized in Section 8. A table containing a summary of this information was provided to the SSC. The SSC notes that of the alternatives considered, the one that addresses all of the identified problems is an IFQ management system.

The SSC recommends that after the Council's final selection of the preferred alternative the document be carefully reviewed and improved to insure that the selected management program is fully described. For example, the IFQ alternative does not contain at this time a statement on the restriction required to meet the National Standard regarding excessive rights. Further, there is a need to develop information that allows examination of the potential benefits and costs associated with each alternative.

C-5 Domestic Observer Program

In the past the SSC has expressed concern regarding the erosion of the scientific data base resulting from the Americanization of the fleet. This loss of information, which in the past has been provided by the foreign observer program, will lead to ineffective management and possible concern for some of the resources managed by the Council.

Bycatch management proposals that impose the least restriction on the target fisheries while insuring minimum bycatch are impossible without data on bycatch amounts and rates. Likewise, discard amounts are unknown and therefore the analysis of impacts on the resource not determined. Even our ability to project the status of the resource is becoming impaired.

The SSC sees this erosion of this data base to be one of the most serious management problems facing the Council. Without this vital information on bycatch, discards, catch per unit of effort, age structure of the harvest, and so forth, effective management will become impossible. This will lead to the Council either becoming very conservative in its management strategies or in possible damage to the resource.

The SSC believes action must be taken to correct this problem within the next few years and therefore has developed a proposed plan amendment for consideration during the coming annual amendment cycle. This proposed amendment has been provided by the SSC to the Council in accordance with the call for proposals.

C-7 Habitat Policy

The SSC endorses development and acceptance of a habitat policy by the NPFMC. The proposed habitat policy, though not entirely appropriate for marine and coastal habitats adjacent to Alaska, provides a useful framework from which a Council policy can be crafted.

The proposed policy, as written, is predicated on the reality of severe habitat degradation and loss from anthropogenic sources within the jurisdictions of several Councils. Therefore, it encourages and promotes intervention to "develop" habitats (see policy), and to "create and develop productive habitats where increased fishery productivity will benefit society" (see objective #3). Though such a policy and objective may be desirable in circumstances where significant habitat losses have already occurred, such manipulation in more-or-less pristine habitats is not desirable and should be discouraged.

The guiding principle of "no net habitat loss" (see objective #1) should be tempered to focus on losses caused by man. Additionally, that principle should be tempered on the basis of some threshold level of significant loss as well as the costs and benefits of remedial actions. Alaska is in the most active geologic zone in North America. Encouragement of an objective that fosters corrective action to alter or reverse natural change is not necessarily desirable. Every significant adverse habitat alteration by man should not be paired with one engineered to create and develop habitat equal to that lost. Such compounded manipulation may not be desirable.

Several editorial changes are suggested to focus more directly on maintenance rather than creation and development of habitats, on responses to anthropogenic rather than natural habitat alteration and loss, and on protection of natural systems that support fishes rather than the more narrow protection of favored species that are taken for commercial and recreational purposes.

Recommended editorial changes are as follows:

- Page 1, - paragraph 6, change the word "develop" to the word "maintain."
- Page 2, - paragraph 2, change the word "develop" to the word "maintain."
 - policy objective #3
 - change the phrase "create and develop" to the word "maintain." Also, insert the word "natural" between the words "productive habitats."
- Page 6, - all sections, substitute the word "activities" for the word "projects."
 - add, "(5) Activities that result in releases of any toxic wastes."

Subject to these changes we recommend that the Council adopt the policy.

C-9 Other Business

1. Arctic Research Commission

The SSC received a presentation by Mayor Fuhs on the actions of the Arctic Research Commission and the proposed interdisciplinary research program entitled, "The Bering Sea as a System". Over the past years members of the SSC have participated in the development of this proposed program. The SSC strongly supports funding and implementation of this program and requests that the Council continue to be involved in the program development.

2. Team Membership

The SSC reviewed resumes for two individuals, Gregg Williams and David W. Carlile, who have been recommended for membership on the Council's two groundfish teams. We recommend that their appointments be approved.

In light of the fact that composition of the plan teams has not been reviewed for a couple of years, the SSC has decided to place this item on its December 1988 agenda. The staff has been asked to contact each of the involved agencies requesting that they review their participation and submit their new nominations to the Council prior to the December meeting.

D-2 Crab FMP

The SSC has reviewed the public comments and has nothing further to offer on this FMP at this time.

D-3 GOA Groundfish FMP

1. Amendment 17a - Sablefish Seasons

The SSC reviewed the EA/RIR/IRFA for the proposed amendment to split the sablefish season. Although data are lacking for determining precise benefits, the analysis prepared suggests that two primary benefits could occur with apportionment to a fall fishery. The first benefit is a reduction in halibut bycatch in the sablefish fishery due to lower estimated bycatch in the fall

than in the spring. The second benefit would accrue from harvesting sablefish in fall when historically prices have been high. To illustrate the potential gains, the SSC summarized information presented in the EA/RIR/IRFA. This information is presented below for the three options considered.

Gain From Split Sablefish Seasons*
(in millions of dollars)

Benefits	Spring/Fall Split		
	75/25	50/50	25/75
Value of halibut savings**	0.9	6.5	7.6
increased value sablefish caught	2.8	5.6	8.4
Total	3.7	12.1	16.0

* It is noted that the bycatch data for domestic fisheries are limited.

** Does not account for the possibility of fishermen shifting to other fisheries with high halibut bycatch.

Other team analyses suggested possible improvements in fish quality and vessel safety depending on the area (in the Central and Western Regulatory Areas, the most favorable weather occurs during June through September). Clearly, the analyses favors a split season with an apportionment of 25/75 between spring/fall. The Council may also consider better coordination with IPHC so that the sablefish season can occur simultaneously with the open halibut periods to avoid bycatch altogether in those periods.

2. Initial Acceptable Biological Catch Recommendations

The SSC reviewed the RAD and made several suggestions regarding clarity of presentation and additional analyses which should be performed and incorporated into the final RAD. These changes could result in different values for ABC at the December Council meeting.

Pollock

The SSC heard the team presentation, received two reports from Peter Craig of ADF&G, and heard testimony from the public. The SSC is concerned about pollock population levels in the Gulf. The spring 1988 hydroacoustic survey resulted in a biomass estimate of 330,000 mt in Shelikof Strait, which is not in accord with previous estimates of biomass from the 1987 bottom trawl survey and analysis of commercial catch-at-age data. The decline in maturity-at-age and length-at-age of pollock in the presence of a declining population is also of concern. Finally, there has been no indication of strong year classes appearing in the fishery in recent years.

Currently, it is hypothesized that the spawning component of pollock returns to Shelikof Strait in the spring of each year. This hypothesis has direct management implications for pollock. If true, pollock in the Gulf should be

managed as a single unit and concern for pollock in Shelikof Strait translates into concern for pollock Gulfwide. The team suggested that this hypothesis may need to be reevaluated. The SSC has received reports which indicate that spawning occurs in other parts of the Gulf.

It is not clear what an appropriate threshold level for pollock should be. The RAD suggests that a threshold level for pollock may be 585,000 mt to 768,000 mt based on analyses of spawners and recruits. Theoretical population dynamics studies suggest that a threshold at 10% to 25% of unfished biomass may be reasonable. Using the highest observed biomass of 3 million mt (assumed to be an estimate of the unfished biomass), this results in a range of 300,000 mt to 750,000 mt. Some SSC members believe that a threshold level for pollock is not appropriate due to the variable recruitment observed in the population. Further, even if a threshold were established, it is not clear whether the threshold applies only to Shelikof Strait or Gulfwide.

If current pollock biomass is below the threshold, then ABC is zero. Some SSC members believe that ABC should be set to zero in light of the uncertainties involved. Others believe that ABC could be set to some low level based on a conservative fishing rate and biomass estimate. Others believe that ABC for Shelikof Strait is zero but that ABC outside Shelikof Strait cannot be determined on the basis of available information. A majority of the SSC recommends setting the ABC at zero to indicate concern about this population. Results from further analyses and data should be available in the final RAD.

The SSC believes the hypothesis that the spawning component of pollock return to Shelikof Strait in the spring of each year must be carefully examined. To accomplish this the SSC recommends establishing a TAC of 50,000 mt applicable to the fishery between January 15 and April 15. No more than 5,000 mt of this TAC may be taken in Shelikof Strait during this time period. In light of current population estimates, a removal of this amount of fish is probably not excessive and would provide useful information.

Between April 16 and August 31, no directed pollock fishery should be allowed in the Gulf of Alaska.

After evaluation of data from fisheries inside and outside Shelikof and the 1989 spring hydroacoustic survey, the Council could then recommend at its June meeting whether a fall fishery should take place. In any case, observers should be used to collect information from both inside and outside fisheries. The SSC recommends that remaining funds in the Council's Domestic Observer Program be used for this purpose.

Pacific Cod

The SSC concurred with the team's choice for ABC of 99,000 mt apportioned among management areas as suggested. The SSC has requested that the team do additional analyses that would allow calculation of the $F_{0.1}$ exploitation rate prior to the December meeting.

Sablefish

The SSC recommended the mid-point of the range of the team ABCs, or 35,000 mt, with this total apportioned among management areas as suggested.

Flounders

The flounder complex is currently characterized by high abundance and relatively low catches. The arrowtooth flounder, a low value species, comprises 54% of the estimated biomass for the complex. If catches become large, the Council may wish to separate arrowtooth flounder from the flounder complex to prevent adverse impacts on individual species.

The SSC concurs with the team that the natural mortality rates used in the analysis are unrealistically high. The SSC calculated revised ABCs using natural mortality estimates from the Bering Sea of 0.12 for yellowfin sole and 0.2 for other flounder species. Using exploitation rates equivalent to these natural mortality values, the revised ABC for flounders is 345,000 mt. The team's method for apportioning this total among the three management areas was used to disaggregate this total.

Slope Rockfish

The plan team recommended a Gulfwide ABC of 14,100 mt for this rockfish assemblage. The ABC is based on stock reduction analysis using biological parameters from POP and biomass estimates from areas deeper than 100 meters sampled in the 1987 Gulf of Alaska trawl survey. The plan team calculated the ABC by multiplying $F_{msy} = 0.02$ by estimates of exploitable biomass. The plan team believed that this approach would permit rebuilding of the stocks. They also suggested that the Council might wish to consider that the shortraker and roughey rockfish be allocated separate ABCs to prevent overexploitation by the fishery targeting on these species. Such a separation would result in an ABC of 12,100 mt for the shallow slope rockfish and 2,000 mt for the shortraker and roughey.

The SSC believed that a better estimate of ABC would be based on selecting $F = 0.04$. This would give an ABC of 24,200 mt for shallow slope rockfish and 4,000 mt for the deep slope species. The SSC wishes to note that the absence of an observer program makes enforcement of separate ABCs impossible and therefore recommends a combined ABC of 28,200 mt. The SSC agrees with the plan team that an allowed catch of 14,100 mt would permit some rebuilding of these stocks and lessen the problem associated with the fishery targeting on individual species.

Pelagic Shelf Rockfish

The SSC recommends the same procedure be used to calculate ABC for this group as was used for slope rockfish, applying a fishing mortality rate of 0.04 to the trawl survey estimate of biomass. This produces an ABC of 6,600 mt, or twice the value recommended by the team. We believe the higher ABC to be conservative because biomass is almost certainly underestimated by trawling.

Demersal Shelf Rockfish

The SSC agrees with the plan team that very little is known about this species assemblage and that it is impossible at this time to estimate an ABC. CPUEs have been declining and if management wishes to prevent the continuation of this decline, current harvest levels must be reduced. This group of rockfish is managed under the FMP by ADF&G.

Thornyheads

The SSC accepts the plan team recommendation that the ABC be set equal to the MSY level of 3,750 mt, which is unchanged from 1988, noting that the catches continue to increase and that the 1988 catch was the highest on record.

D-4 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

1. Amendment 12A - Bycatch Controls

The SSC continues to express concern about the lack of observer coverage necessary to insure accounting of bycatch or the establishment of bycatch rates to be used in the future.

The halibut fixed mortality limit may present future problems if the biomass of the halibut stock fluctuates causing a higher or lower percentage removal from the stock, dependent upon these fluctuations. The team explained that the lack of a biomass estimate for the juvenile part of the halibut stock, and out-migration limited the options available.

A bycatch of 1% or less of the surveyed crab numbers cannot be detected by changes in the resource base by use of survey or catch statistics. The SSC believes that accounting of bycatch mortality and subsequent controls are necessary for conservation purposes. Although we cannot measure the impact of removals of 1%, we believe a limit of removals at this level can assure that bycatch has no measurable negative impact upon the reproductive potential of the crab population.

2. Initial Allowable Biological Catch Recommendations

The SSC wishes to note that during the 1988 eastern Bering Sea trawl survey it was determined that the opening of the net was 2 meters less than assumed. This means that the area swept was less than expected and changes indicated in biomass from 1987 to 1988 might not reflect true increases or decreases in abundance. Therefore, care is warranted in comparing 1988 biomass estimates with those developed for previous years. The SSC recommends that historical biomass estimates be adjusted to reflect this new information.

Pollock

The SSC gave long and careful consideration to stock divisions in the Bering Sea and the possible effect of Donut Hole catches on productivity. There appears to be two major stock components in the U.S., EEZ--a shelf group in the eastern Bering Sea and a basin group to the west, but they are probably not distinct stocks.

The SSC believes that the cohort analysis and survey estimates provide an adequate assessment of the shelf pollock in the eastern Bering Sea, even if there is some dispersion of fish from this group into the basin group. We therefore support the team's recommendation of an ABC of 1.34 million mt in the eastern Bering Sea shelf component.

For the basin area, there is insufficient information to estimate biomass and knowledge of stock divisions to estimate the rate of exploitation. Since the fish in Area 515 (Bogoslof Island) are tentatively regarded as being part of the basin group and since data are not available to estimate ABC for the Basin, we do not support the team's recommendation that an ABC be calculated for Area 515 and added to the ABC of shelf pollock in the eastern Bering Sea.

The SSC recommends that until additional information is available, the ABC for the Aleutian Islands management area be calculated as in the past. Therefore, the SSC's ABC for 1989 is 160,000 mt.

The SSC advises caution in allowing any increase in catch from the basin group of fish. However, a plan amendment would be required to control the harvest of basin and shelf groups of fish separately.

Pacific Cod

The SSC reviewed the assessment model that has been developed and refined to estimate stock size and forecast production. The SSC supports the ABC recommendation based on the model results (370,600 mt).

Yellowfin Sole

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 241,000 mt.

Greenland Turbot

The SSC recommends the ABC remain at 14,100 mt as a preliminary number until the team reexamines the analysis contained in the RAD. The SSC had questions concerning how the results of the SRA were used to arrive at the team's ABC recommendations.

Arrowtooth Flounder

The SSC accepted the team's procedure for calculating the current exploitable biomass for arrowtooth flounders, but later noted that a four-year averaging process was adopted to estimate biomass for other flatfish species. The SSC suggests that the team evaluate whether or not the same averaging process would improve the estimate of current biomass.

Regarding the exploitation rate, the SSC noted that the F_{max} rate used by the team to derive ABC may not be sustainable. Therefore, a more conservative $F_{0.1}$ rate is recommended. This results in an ABC estimate of 82,900 mt.

Rock Sole

To calculate an ABC, the team used the exploitable biomass of 1,071,000 mt, obtained by averaging the 1984, 1986 and 1987 biomass, multiplied by the F_{msy} exploitation rate developed from a biomass based production model. This model gives an exploitation rate of 0.13. The natural mortality for rock sole is estimated to be 0.2. Therefore, the SSC feels that the exploitation rate used by the team is low. We believe a more appropriate rate is the $F_{0.1}$ derived from a yield-per-recruit analysis. That rate is 0.18.

The SSC believes that the exploitable biomass is better represented by including the 1988 survey results in the calculation. By including data from 1988 we start to make an adjustment for the area swept calculation. This results in an exploitable biomass of 1,277,900 mt.

Therefore, the SSC recommends that ABC for the eastern Bering Sea be 230,000 mt ($1,277,900 \times 0.18$). In order to account for the Aleutian Islands ABC, the SSC used the team procedure, resulting in a final ABC of 236,900 mt.

Other Flatfish

As in the case of rock sole, the SSC recommends that the four-year averaging technique of estimating the current exploitable biomass and the F_{0.1} exploitation rate derived from the yield-per-recruit analysis. This results in a new estimate of 222,600 mt.

Sablefish

The SSC notes that the relative abundance index (RPW) for the eastern Bering Sea declined by about 60%. The size of the reduction from 1986 to 1987 is considered uncharacteristic for this species. It was indicated in the RAD that killer whales could have had some effect on the survey. Nevertheless, the decline suggests that caution is warranted in the development of ABC for this species. In the case of the Aleutian Islands, the same index has remained relatively stable for the last four years.

The biomass estimates (16,900 mt and 96,800 mt for the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, respectively) provided in the RAD are considered the best available information for use in developing ABCs. Given the magnitude of the RPW decline and uncertainty associated with its interpretation, the SSC recommends that the ABC for the eastern Bering Sea be based on a $F = 0.10$ (exploitation rate of 9.1%). Applying this rate to the projected biomass gives an ABC of 1,538 mt for the eastern Bering Sea. It is recommended that the ABC for the Aleutian Islands be held constant at the 1988 level (5,800 mt).

Pacific Ocean Perch

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 6,000 mt and 16,600 mt for the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, respectively.

Other Rockfish

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 400 mt and 1,100 mt for the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, respectively.

Atka Mackerel

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 21,000 mt.

Squid

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 10,000 mt.

Other Species

The SSC recommends approval of the team's recommendation of 59,000 mt.

3. Sablefish Targeting Proposal

The proposal to amend the sablefish regulatory regime focuses on several possible alternatives to define "targeting". The SSC believes that this does not properly reflect the real decision before the Council on allocation among gear groups. The Council may define targeting but the definition may not control discards. If the targeting definition is set too high, it will result in a de facto allocation to trawls of the sablefish. If the definition of targeting is set too low, it will result in additional discards which will not be measured. Even with an observer program, it is the SSC's view that any definition of targeting will, in some cases, not meet legitimate bycatch requirements, and may constrain a directed fishery. Conversely, in other cases, the bycatch allocation may exceed that required by the directed fishery. Without a means to measure discards it is impossible to enforce an allocation of the bycatch of these discards.

SSC GULF OF ALASKA ABC RECOMMENDATIONS 1989

SPECIES		ABC (mt)	TAC (mt)	
Pollock	Western	0	50,000	
	Central			
	Jan 15 - April 15	---		50,000 (no more than 5,000 may be taken in Shelikof Strait)
	April 16 - Aug 31	No directed fishing		
	Sept 1 - Dec 31	To be determined		
	Eastern	3,375		
Pacific cod	Western	18,810		
	Central	73,260		
	Eastern	6,930		
	Total	99,000		
Flounders	Western	69,000		
	Central	239,000		
	Eastern	37,000		
	Total	345,000		
Sablefish	Western	5,075		
	Central	15,500		
	Eastern	14,425		
	Total	35,000		
Slope rockfish	Western	6,800		
	Central	12,200		
	Eastern	9,200		
	Total	28,200		
Pelagic Shelf	Western	1,100		
	Central	4,700		
	Eastern	800		
	Total	6,600		
Demersal Shelf		---		
Thornyhead rockfish		3,750		
Other Species		---		

SSC BERING SEA AND ALEUTIAN ABC RECOMMENDATIONS 1989

SPECIES		ABC (mt)	TAC (mt)
Pollock	EBS	1,340,000	
	515	---	
	Aleutians	160,000	
Pacific Cod		370,600	
Yellowfin Sole		241,000	
Greenland Turbot		14,100	
Arrowtooth Flounder		83,000	
Rock Sole		236,900	
Other Flatfish		222,600	
Sablefish	EBS	1,538	
	Aleutians	5,800	
POP	EBS	6,000	
	Aleutians	16,000	
Other Rockfish	EBS	400	
	Aleutians	1,100	
Atka Mackerel		21,000	
Squid		10,000	
Other Species		59,000	

TABLE 1

GULF OF ALASKA GROUNDFISH: PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1989 GROUNDFISH ABC, TAC, DAP, JVP, TALFF, AND PSC ADJUSTED TO REFLECT RESERVES (IN METRIC TONS).

Species	Area	ABC 1/	TAC	RESERVES 2/ 20% TAC	DAP	JVP	TALFF
Pollock	W/C	0-50,000 3/	0-50,000	0-10,000	0-50,000	0	0
	E	3,375	3,375	0	3,375	0	0
	Total	0-53,375	0-53,375	0-10,000	0-53,375	0	0
Pacific Cod	W	19,000	19,000	3,800	15,200	0	0
	C	73,000	60,800	12,160	48,640	0	0
	E	7,000	200	0	200	0	0
	Total	99,000	80,000	15,960	64,040	0	0
Flounders	W	69,000-142,650	1,600	320	1,280	0	0
	C	239,000-538,280	21,300	4,260	17,040	0	0
	E	37,000-86,770	100	0	100	0	0
	Total	345,000-767,700	23,000	4,580	18,420	0	0
Sablefish	W	5,075	4,060	-	4,060	0	0
	C	15,680	12,540	-	12,540	0	0
	W. Yakutat	6,125	4,900	-	4,900	0	0
	E. Yak./S.E. Out.	8,120	6,500	-	6,500	0	0
	Total	35,000	28,000	-	28,000	0	0
Rockfish (Slope)	W	3,400-6,800	4,850	-	4,850	0	0
	C	6,100-12,200	7,100	-	7,100	0	0
	E	4,550-9,200	4,850	-	4,850	0	0
	Total	14,050-28,200	16,800	-	16,800	0	0
Rockfish (Pelagic Shelf)	W	550-1,100	550	-	550	0	0
	C	2,350-4,700	2,350	-	2,350	0	0
	E	400-800	400	-	400	0	0
	Total	3,300-6,600	3,300	-	3,300	0	0
Rockfish (Demersal Shelf)	S.E. Out.	n/a	660	-	660	0	0
Thornyhead	GW	3,750	3,750	-	3,750	0	0
Other Species	GW	n/a	7,776-10,444	1,555-2,089	6,221-8,355	0	0
GULF OF ALASKA TOTAL		500,100-993,625	163,286-219,329	22,095-32,629	141,191-196,700	0	0

Initial Halibut Mortality Goal for 1989 = 2,000 mt.

1/ Initial ABC as recommended by the SSC and Plan Team. Ranges are presented where recommendations differ.

2/ Reserves are only used in managing the pollock, Pacific cod, flounder, and other species categories in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas. Releases from reserves can be made as DAP or JVP needs arise.

3/ Pollock ABC is presented as a range due to uncertainty over biomass estimates inside and outside of Shelikof Strait.

Table 2

BERING SEA / ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GROUND FISH: Preliminary Recommendations for 1989 Groundfish ABC, TAC, DAP, JVP, and Reserves (all in metric tons).

Species	Area	1988		Council Recommendations for 1989				
		ABC	TAC	ABC	TAC	Reserves ^{1/}	DAP	JVP
Pollock	BS	1,500,000	1,300,000	1,340,000	1,300,000	195,000	900,000	205,000
	AI	160,000	45,000	160,000	45,000	6,750	4,160	34,090
Pacific cod		385,300	200,000	370,600	200,000	30,000	87,416	82,584
Yellowfin sole		254,000	254,000	241,000	241,000	36,150	60,000	144,850
Greenland turbot		14,100	11,200	12,600	11,200	1,680	9,520	0
Arrowtooth flounder		99,500	5,531	83,000	5,531	830	3,808	893
Rock sole		(Previously in other flatfish)		143,400	70,000	10,500	50,000	9,500
Other flatfish		331,900	131,369	184,300	76,269	11,440	50,000	14,829
Sablefish	BS	3,400	3,400	1,538	1,500	225	1,275	0
	AI	5,800	5,000	5,800	5,000	750	4,250	0
Pacific ocean perch	BS	6,000	5,000	6,000	5,000	750	4,250	0
	AI	16,600	6,000	16,600	6,000	900	5,100	0
Other rockfish	BS	400	400	400	400	60	340	0
	AI	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	165	935	0
Atka mackerel		21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000	3,150	3,000	14,850
Squid		10,000	1,000	10,000	1,000	150	850	0
Other species		54,000	10,000	59,000	10,000	1,500	2,000	6,500
BS/AI TOTAL		2,863,100	2,000,000	2,656,338	2,000,000	300,000	1,186,904	513,096

^{1/} Each species TAC is reduced by 15% to provide for 300,000 tons of nonspecific reserves.

(October 1, 1988)