

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MINUTES

141st Plenary Session NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL December 8-13, 1999

A. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)	3
B. REPORTS	4
C. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS	5
C-1 American Fisheries Act	5
C-2 Essential Fish Habitat	14
C-3 Halibut Charter GHL	15
C-4 Steller Sea Lions	19
C-5 Pacific Cod LLP Endorsements	20
C-6 Groundfish SEIS	23
C-7 Halibut Subsistence	24
C-8 Alaska Board of Fisheries	27
D. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS	29
D-1 Final Groundfish Specifications for 2000	29
D-1(a,b) Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands	29
D-1(c-e) Gulf of Alaska	34
E. ADJOURNMENT	38

APPENDICES

- I Public Comments
- II Council Action on American Fisheries Act Issues
- III Minutes of the Scientific and Statistical Committee
- IV Council Action on Halibut GHL Issue
- V Minutes of the Advisory Panel
- VI Council Action on Groundfish Specifications for 2000

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
Clarence G. Pautzke, Executive Director



605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone: (907) 271-2809

Fax: (907) 271-2817

Certified Richard B. Lauber
Richard B. Lauber, Chairman

Date 2/14/00

MINUTES

**141st Plenary Session
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
December 8-13, 1999
Hilton Hotel
Anchorage, Alaska**

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met December 8-13, 1999 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. The Scientific and Statistical Committee met December 6-8 and the Advisory Panel met December 6-9, also at the Hilton Hotel. The following members of the Council, staff, SSC and AP attended the meetings.

Council

Richard Lauber, Chairman
Dennis Austin for Jeff Koenings
CAPT V. O'Shea for RADM Barrett
Linda Behnken
Dave Benton for Frank Rue
David Fluharty
John Bundy

Bob Mace for J. Greer
Dave Hanson
Joe Kyle
Kevin O'Leary
Steve Pennoyer
H. Robin Samuelsen, Jr.

NPFMC Staff

Clarence Pautzke, Executive Director
Darrell Brannan
Cathy Coon
Jane DiCosimo
Elaine Dinneford
Chuck Hamel

Chris Oliver, Deputy Director
Nicole Kimball
David Witherell
Helen Allen
Gail Bendixen
Maria Shawback

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

Support Staff

Lisa Lindeman, NOAA-GCAK
Lauren Smoker, NOAA-GCAK
Earl Krygier, ADFG
Sue Salveson, NMFS-AKR
Jay Ginter, NMFS-AKR
Steve Meyer, NMFS Enforcement
Kent Lind, NMFS-AKR

Tim Ragen, NMFS-AKR
Mike Payne, NMFS-AKR
Steve Davis, NMFS-AKR
Loh-lee Low, AFSC
Sandra Lowe, AFSC
Cindy Hartmann, NMFS-AKR
Jon Kurland, NMFS-DC

Scientific and Statistical Committee

Rich Marasco, Chair
Jack Tagart, Vice Chair
Keith Criddle
Doug Eggers
Steve Hare
Sue Hills

Dan Kimura for Jim Balsiger
Doug Larson
Seth Macinko
Terry Quinn
Al Tyler
Hal Weeks

Advisory Panel

John Bruce, Chair
Erica Acuna
Ragnar Alstrom
Dave Benson
Tim Blott
Al Burch
Craig Cross
Dan Falvey

Stephanie Madsen, Vice Chair
Kris Fanning
Dave Fraser
Arne Fuglvog
Steve Ganey
Justine Gundersen
Spike Jones
Melody Jordan

Teressa Kandianis
Hazel Nelson
Doug Ogden
Jeff Stephan
Robert Ward
Lyle Yeck

Other Attendees

The following people signed the attendance register:

Michael Spokas
Mike Wahl
Lance Carpenter
Gary Gailbreath
Doug Hoedel
Bert Ashley
Jim McManus
Steve Toomey
Ronald Painter
maria Painter
Ron Briggs
Jonathan Spool

Simeon Swetzof, Jr.
Joe Plesha
Glenn Reed
Garry Loncon
Fred Yeck
Suzanne King
Paula Brodgen
Dwin Foster, Sr.
Rick Kose
Greg Baker
Grace Abromaitis
Amy Browning

Sehanie Harelack
Justin Crawford
Steve Hughes
Dan Hull
Joe Hockema
Brenda Holladay
Sonah Blue
Heather McCarty
John Young
Gary Johnson
Tom Suryan
Mya Renken

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

Gary Mason	Paul Holmberg	Leslie Pemberton
Linda Kozak	Jon Kurland	Donna Parker
Russell Sinnott	Kent Helligso	Robert Candopoulos
Rick Willis	Vern Hall	Charlie Steele
Joe Sullivan	C. Lowenberg	Don Braun
Maggie Castellini	Dick Curran	Gary Mason
Shirley Marquardt	Janet Smoker	Darren Anderson
Shari Gross	Neal Forde	Jamie James
Chris Peterson	Bill Atkinson	Jim Preston
Phillip Lestenkof	Kris Norosz	Brad Faulkner
David Jentry	Beth Stewart	Lonnie Chesnut
Mark Buckley	Kenneth Simpson	Jean Franquelin
Ken Roemhildt	Linda Brannian	John Henderschedt
Brent Paine	Sinclair Wilt	Ernest Johnson
Taru Bourdukofsky	Marcia Lynn	Matt Kookesh
Ed Glotfelty	Bill Oliver	Thomas Gemmell
Len Fleming	Joe Gillas	Bruce Gabrys
Patience Mercurief	Clifford Young	David Jentry
Frank Kelty	George Hiller	Frank Lane
Walt Christensen	Roger Aulabaugh	Sara Blue
Dan Oliver	Steve Vanek	David Dicks
Pam Seiser	Jerry Mathews	Steve Babinec
Marcus Hartley	Rick Koso	Neal Forde
Chuck Meacham	Patricia Phillips	Patience Mercurief
Deborah Swenson	Steve Zernia	Gilbert Fred
John Iani	Tom Abel	Lianna Jack
Arni Thomson	Charlie Edwardson	Margie Bauman

A list of those who gave public comment during the meeting is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

A. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

Chairman Lauber called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 a.m., Wednesday, December 8, 1999.

Agenda. The agenda was approved as drafted.

Minutes. There were no minutes available for approval at this meeting.

Committee Appointments. At the end of the meeting, the following committee appointments were announced:

<u>PNCIAC:</u>	Dave Benson	Rob Rogers
	Phil Hanson	Clyde Sterling
	Larry Hendricks	Gary Stewart
	Kevin Kaldestad	Lance Farr
	Garry Loncon	Arni Thomson
	Gary Painter	

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

SSC:

Jim Balsiger	Seth Macinko
Keith Criddle	Rich Marasco
Doug Eggers	Terry Quinn
Steve Hare	Jack Tagart
Jeff Hartman	Albert Tyler
Susan Hills	Hal Weeks
Doug Larson	

Advisory Panel:

Ragnar Alstrom	Justine Gundersen
Dave Benson	Spike Jones
Dave Boisseau	Melody Jordan
John Bruce	Teressa Kandianis
Al Burch	Stephanie Madsen
Craig Cross	Hazel Nelson
Dan Falvey	Doug Ogden
Kris Fanning	Jeff Steele
David Fraser	Jeff Stephan
Arne Fuglvog	Robert Ward
Steve Ganey	Lyle Yeck

Observer Advisory Committee:

Joe Kyle (Chair)	Kathy Robinson
Chris Blackburn	Jeff Stephan
Paula Cullenberg	Bob Mikol
John Gauvin	Arni Thomson
John Iani	Kimberly Dietrich (Alt: Mandy Merklein)
Trevor McCabe	

B. REPORTS

The Executive Director's report (B-1), reports on the status of the fisheries by ADF&G (B-2), NMFS (B-3), and enforcement reports by NMFS and the Coast Guard (B-4), were submitted in written form.

Discussions Resulting From Reports

Executive Director's Report: Joe Kyle asked that the Executive Director track the marine stewardship program and keep the Council informed.

The Council approved the appointment of Kristin Mabry (ADF&G) to the BSAI groundfish plan team and Dr. Shareef Siddeek (ADF&G) to the Crab Plan Team.

ADF&G Report: Council members requested that ADF&G provide at the February meeting, to the extent possible, the number of vessels taking the stand-down prior to the red king crab fishery and what the catch of the AFA-qualified vessels were in the red king crab fishery. Mr. Krygier indicated that to his

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

knowledge, no vessels took the stand-down, but opted instead to take the additional observer in order to fish. He indicated it would be difficult to determine which ones did or did not participate in the fishery without contacting each individual vessel operator. Mr. Kyle said it would be helpful to have more information by the joint Council/Board meeting in February to determine how the stand-down worked, how many took observers, and what their crab bycatch was in order to have an indication of the effects of the stand-down and observer requirements.

NMFS Management Report: The Council received a letter from Steve Pennoyer advising the Council that NMFS has decided not to implement the allocation of fixed gear Pacific cod in the Bering Sea by emergency rule as had been requested by the Council. Sue Salvesson advised the Council, however, that it is a priority. The draft rulemaking is in regional review but it is not clear when it will leave the Region. Normal timing would put implementation about mid-year 2000. Until mid-year implementation, NMFS will try to manage in a manner that holds the harvest by different fixed gear sectors as close to the Council's intent for total annual fixed gear allocations. Catch would be accounted from January 1 and when the amendment takes effect they will look at each sector's allocation. If the allocation had been reached for that sector, the remainder of the season would be closed. If a sector harvested more, the overage would be proportioned among remaining sectors, reducing them so the overall allocation is not exceeded.

Linda Behnken asked for an update on the implementation of the Cape Edgecombe Pinnacles closure. Ms. Salvesson advised that initial staff work has been completed in the Region, but because of other priorities she cannot say when the amendment might complete full review. She indicated a possible implementation sometime this summer.

IPHC: Gregg Williams advised the Council that staff recommendations for the 2000 halibut season probably will not be finalized until the following week.

FORMAT FOR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:

Each agenda item requiring Council action will begin with a copy of the original "**Action Memo**" from the Council meeting notebook. This will provide a "historical" background leading up to the current action. This section will be set in a different type than the actual minutes. Any attachments referred to in the Action Memo (e.g., C-1(a), etc.) will not be attached to the minutes, but will be part of the meeting record and available from the Council office on request. Following the Action Memo will be the **reports** of the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, and any other relevant committee or workgroup on the subject. And, last will be a section describing Council **Discussion and Action**, if any.

C. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS

C-1 American Fisheries Act

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) **Review co-op performance reports and agreements.**
- (b) **Comment on proposed rule for 2000, particularly with regard to GOA vessel exemptions.**
- (c) **Update on analysis of excessive shares/groundfish processing sideboards.**

MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999

BACKGROUND

Co-op performance reports and agreements

Performance reports

Regarding co-op performance reports, the Council approved a motion in October to require certain specific information from the co-ops regarding their internal allocations and actual catch of pollock, bycatch, and sideboard species. The Council's motion overlaps, but exceeds in some areas, the requirements specified in Section 210(a)(1) of the AFA. The Council's motion also overlaps to some degree with a request to NMFS, from the February 1999 meeting, which asked for an agency co-op performance report. A summary of these various co-op performance requests is contained under Item C-1(a)(1).

Following the October meeting we sent a letter to the representatives of the existing co-ops summarizing what we felt the Council wanted from the co-ops, based on the collective motions and requests to date (Item C-1(a)(2)). The points in that letter cover the existing requirements specified by the AFA and the points raised in the Council's October motion, as well as some of the issues raised in the earlier request to NMFS. We felt that many of the items in the request to NMFS were things that the co-ops were examining already, and that if they could be included in the performance report to be submitted by the co-ops this would avoid potential redundancy and unnecessary work by the agency. Because these are initial co-op performance reports, with final reports due in February, the Council may wish to provide feedback to both the co-ops and to the agency in terms of expectations for both, recognizing there may be a desire for some of this information to be verified by agency records.

The reports as submitted to the Council are included in your Supplemental Folder.

Co-op agreements

The Council has requested that all co-op agreements be submitted by December 1 so that they can review the agreements prior to the start of the fishing season. As with the Council's request for co-op performance reports by December 1, this deadline is not in regulation, so co-op agreements are technically due 30 days prior to the start of fishing (or December 20). The agreements for the offshore sectors were submitted last year and, we understand, have not changed to any material degree, though they will still need to be submitted to the agency by December 20. For the onshore sector co-ops, the agreements have been developing but have been hampered by uncertainty in a couple of areas, most notably the pending Department of Justice legal opinion regarding participation in co-ops by processor owned catcher vessels. With an opinion expected by November 30, there has simply not been time for the agreements to be finalized and submitted by December 1. In our conversations with representatives working on these co-ops, we indicated that they should at least be prepared to inform the Council as to their progress at this meeting along with any details currently available. If the agreements are not finalized in time for Council review at this time, they could expect to follow up by way of written submittal (by December 20) to the Council, through our offices, for distribution to the Council later this month. In that way we could treat it much as we did with the offshore co-ops last year, and convene the Council by teleconference if necessary to further discuss details of the final agreements.

Comment on proposed rule and GOA sideboard exemptions

At the time of the October meeting it was expected that a proposed rule would be published prior to the December meeting, which would allow the Council to comment on its own proposed rule. Specifically the Council noticed that it would be considering changes to the previously adopted sideboard exemptions for vessels fishing in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), and provided a list of options for staff to analyze. It is now clear that the AFA will have to be implemented by an Emergency Rulemaking (ER) to be published shortly after this meeting (by mid to late December). We believe that this will still allow the Council to consider the proposed changes to the GOA sideboard exemptions, and if changes are made at this meeting they could be incorporated in the ER. The ER would be followed by a normal proposed and final rulemaking in early 2000. Item C-1(b)(1) is a discussion paper which contains the information requested by the Council with regard to the GOA exemptions.

There are still a couple of outstanding issues with regard to management and accounting for sideboards, relative to exempted vessels. These will be covered in the discussion paper. NMFS staff will update you on other aspects of the draft AFA rulemaking.

Excessive share/groundfish processing sideboards

In October you took action regarding crab processing sideboards, as mandated by the AFA. Council action with regard to groundfish processing sideboards was postponed, to be combined with an analysis of excessive share caps for BSAI pollock processing (pollock harvest caps, at the entity level, are already mandated by the AFA). The Council's specific motion, with alternatives for pollock processing caps, is shown below:

The Council approved a motion that the subject of groundfish processing sideboards be combined with the pollock processing excessive share cap issue. That the Council move forward with an analysis of the following options and suboptions:

- A. Excessive share caps of 10, 20, and 30%
Suboptions:
 - 1. Include grandfather provisions
 - 2. Exclude CDQ pollock
 - 3. Apply "limited 10% rule"
 - 4. Apply at the Company level

and include impacts on competitive markets for catcher vessels to the extent possible, and bring both the groundfish recommendations of the AP (as modified) and the pollock excessive share cap analysis and alternatives to the February meeting for initial review and final action in April.

The Alternatives identified (by the AP in October 1999) for groundfish processing sideboards are:

1. Adopt a single aggregate processing cap that would apply to all processing facilities owned by inshore or mothership sector AFA entities.
 - A. NMFS will determine which processing facilities are owned by inshore or mothership AFA entities using the "limited 10% rule"
 - B. Owners of inshore or mothership AFA pollock facilities that process fish under the Council's jurisdiction would be required to identify to NMFS as part of their processing permit requirements any inshore or mothership AFA eligible processing facilities in which the owner has more than 10% interest using the limited 10% rule.

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

2. A processing facility is any plant or US documented vessel that processes fish under the jurisdiction of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.
3. The limited 10% rule will be used in determining AFA entities for purposes of the historic processing cap.
4. AFA catcher processors would not be subject to additional processing sideboards, except as noted in 5C below.
5. The historic processing cap would be determined annually based on the average of the 1995-1997 processing history of US documented processing vessels and processing plants owned by inshore and mothership AFA entity at the start of the fishing year.
 - A. If an inshore or mothership AFA entity sells a non-pollock processing facility to a non-AFA entity, or if a processing vessel is no longer US documented, the 1995-1997 average processing history of that plant or vessel is removed from the historic processing cap. Likewise, if an inshore or mothership AFA entity buys a non-AFA processing plant or US documented vessel, then the 1995-1997 average processing history of that plant or vessel is added to the historic processing cap.
 - B. For fully utilized species, the historic processing cap would be determined based on the percentage of the TAC processed by inshore or mothership AFA entities.
 - C. A processing cap for flatfish in the Bering sea would be based on each sector's aggregate landings from 1995-1997.
 - D. The processing cap would apply to all facilities of AFA entities regardless of whether or not the AFA entity receive pollock from a cooperative.
 - E. The cap would apply year around.
6. NMFS would establish a phased-in cap to allow AFA entities to process bycatch after the directed fishing cap is reached. This phased approach should not allow the AFA entities to exceed the aggregate cap.

Additionally, exempt CDQ organizations and their non-pollock and crab investments from the AFA entity rule where the only ownership link is the CDQ organization between an AFA facility, company, or entity and other investments by the CDQ organization.

Council staff, with assistance from Northern Economics, will be completing this analysis for review by the Council in February, with final action scheduled for April 2000. Our interpretation of your October action is that, although the AP motion was specifically identified, the entire suite of alternatives and options for groundfish processing sideboards will be available for the Council. We intend to bring back the original Chapter 8 from the AFA analysis (modified as appropriate but including all of the original alternatives and options) along with the additional information we had at the October meeting, for Council review in February. A separate part of that revised document will include analysis of the specific alternatives identified by the Council for BSAI pollock processing caps. With regard to groundfish processing sideboards, the fundamental decision points remain:

- (c) Whether limits would be applied to individual plants, companies, or entities vs aggregated across all processors (or across sectors).
- (d) If applied at the individual level, whether the limits would apply at a facility level, company level, or entity level. Implicit is whether the sideboards would apply to all facilities owned by AFA companies/entities, or just to their pollock facilities.
- (e) Whether and how to apply the 10% ownership rule in defining entities.
- (f) Which base years to use for processing history.
- (g) Whether AFA catcher processors would be subject to the processing sideboards in addition to existing sideboards for that sector.

Other

A meeting of crab industry participants, facilitated by Dave Fluharty and Kevin O'Leary, was held in Ballard on November 22 to discuss potential development of cooperatives in the BSAI crab fisheries. Minutes from that meeting are included here as Item C-1 Supplemental.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee did not address this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

With regard to the first emergency rule ("Emergency Rule #1"), the AP recommended that the Council request that NMFS modify the language regarding the single geographic location in the rule to allow shoreside floating processors the opportunity to change locations once each year. The intent would be to mirror the inshore/offshore rule on single geographic location.

With regard to the second emergency rule ("Emergency Rule #2"), the AP had the following recommendations:

1700 MT Exemption

The Advisory Panel ultimately voted to recommend to the Council that there be no exemptions for either Bering Sea Cod or in the Gulf of Alaska, as approved in June, or any alternatives for exemptions presented at this meeting.

679.61 Inshore Pollock Co-operatives

The Advisory Panel recommended the Council substitute the following language:

“(4) provisions that require co-operative members to comply with the ‘traditional harvest level’ restrictions of Section 211 (c) (1) (a) of the Act, as the same may be implemented by the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service from time to time.”

In addition, the text above would substituted for the relevant operative language of Section 679.6 (c)(4), mothership and catcher/processor cooperatives.

The Advisory Panel also requested the Council or NMFS to provide a supplemental analysis between now and February to examine implementing sideboards based on retained catch or total catch for all sectors with particular reference to how it would impact the amount of sideboards available for directed fisheries, and impacts on regulatory discards. The AP requested this information in order for the Council to comment with full information on the AFA proposed rule at the February meeting.

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Linda Behnken moved to express Council support to the move the first rule ahead as an emergency because it addresses AFA permit application requirements for AFA-eligible catcher processor vessels, catcher vessels, motherships, shoreside processors, stationary floating processors, and inshore cooperatives which will be necessary so inshore co-ops and sideboards can be in place for 2000. The motion was seconded and carried with Sue Salveson objecting. In discussing the need for implementation by emergency rule, it was pointed out that the AFA deadline is not the critical issue, but the need to get co-ops and other protections in place to spatially and temporally distribute the fisheries for Steller sea lion protection measures. Additionally, the AFA mandates that measures are fair and equitable among and between the sectors and this will ensure that the inshore sector has the same co-op opportunities as the offshore sector.

Joe Kyle moved to approve the second Emergency Rule with the following revisions:

- AFA-eligible shorebased floating processors would be restricted to a single geographic location in Alaska state waters during a fishing year, as they are under the inshore-offshore regulations. This action under the emergency rule would also constitute Council preference to the Secretary in the Proposed Rule on this particular issue.
- There would be no exemptions in the Gulf of Alaska to the sideboards.
- Under 679.61, Inshore Pollock Cooperatives, add the following language: “(4) provisions that require cooperative members to comply with the traditional harvest level restrictions of Section 211(c)(1)(a) of the Act, as the same may be implemented by the Council and NMFS from time to time.” In addition, that text would be substituted for the relevant operative language of Section 679.6(c)(4), Mothership and Catcher Processor Cooperatives.

Sue Salveson asked that the Council state their intent for this change so that NMFS can fashion the regulatory language to achieve Council intent, although the language may not exactly mirror Mr. Kyle’s motion. She indicated that NMFS believes the intent of the Council would be to ensure that the Council and the Agency’s expectations for compliance with sideboard limits will comport with the specified provisions upon which those limits are based. In other words, if sideboards in the future are based on total catch versus landed catch, co-ops and individuals would be expected to comply. Council members agreed with this concept.

Mr. Kyle referenced public comments in supporting the single location issue and pointed out that this would restore status quo with regard to floating processors as under the inshore-offshore regime and without this action AFA operations would inadvertently be penalized. With regard to the exemption issue, it has become clear that the Council’s earlier action would have unintended consequences, as pointed out in extensive public comment. After co-ops have operated for a time, it may be necessary to grant exemptions but at this time the Council doesn’t have enough information.

The motion was seconded by John Bundy.

Bob Mace moved to substitute the 1700 mt exemption clause provided by industry:

- (a) **Bering Sea cod. For an AFA catcher vessel to be eligible for the 1700 mt exemption, it would have to meet the following additional prerequisites:**
 - (1) **Be less than 125 feet in length.**
 - (2) **The CV had a minimum of 30 cod landings in the directed fishery for Bering Sea cod over the period of 1995, 1996 and 1997.**

- (b) **Gulf of Alaska. For an AFA catcher vessel to be eligible for the 1700 ton exemption, it would have to meet the following additional prerequisites:**
 - (1) **Be less than 125 feet in length.**
 - (2) **The CV had a minimum of 40 groundfish landings in the Gulf of Alaska over the period of 1995, 1996 and 1997.**

- (c) **Catcher vessels that meet the requirements of being an exempt vessel shall be treated by NMFS, in those fisheries to which the exemption applies, as a non-AFA vessel. The catch history of the exempt vessel (in the fishery to which the exemption applies) will not be included within the AFA cap for that fishery and the harvest of the exempt vessel will not be counted against the AFA cap.**

The amendment was seconded by Robin Samuelsen and carried 7 to 4, with Behnken, Kyle, O'Leary and Lauber voting against.

There was some discussion of whether or not the Bering Sea portion of Mr. Mace's motion was covered by analysis or public notice for this meeting. Ms. Lindeman, NOAA GC, pointed out that this is being proposed as part of an emergency action which suspends the normal procedures, however there should be a clear record of the need for the action as well as an analysis before the rule is implemented.

With regard to accounting of crab sideboards, a suggestion by Dave Benton to revise language in the emergency rule, under the first sentence in item (d)–Conversion of Crab Processing Sideboard Percentages and Notification of Crab Processing Sideboard Poundage Caps (page 35), as follows, was accepted as a friendly amendment: “. . .or as may be adjusted based on GHJ or total catch, whichever is higher.”

The intent would be to allow for an adjustment based on a total catch, as appropriate. The details would have to be worked out to ensure there are no inconsistencies in how the fishery is managed.

The overall motion carried, 10 to 1, with O'Leary voting against.

Linda Behnken moved to initiate an analysis, as follows:

For AFA catcher vessels which meet the Council's qualifying criteria for exemptions under the 1700 mt rule in the Bering Sea cod and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries:

- 1. **Bering Sea cod:**
 - A. **Vessels less than 125 feet in length, and**

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

- B. The catcher vessel had a minimum of 30 landings in the directed Bering Sea cod fishery over the period of 1995, 1996 and 1997;**
- 2. Gulf of Alaska Groundfish:**
 - A. Vessels less than 125 feet in length, and**
 - B. The catcher vessel had a minimum of 40 groundfish landings in the Gulf of Alaska over the period of 1995, 1996 and 1997,**

Establish a separate sideboard pool in each area that is based on the aggregate catch history (95-97) of those vessels that qualify for the exemption.

OPTION:

Require vessels that participate in these pools to fish their own Bering Sea pollock catch history, i.e., no leasing.

The motion was seconded by Kevin O'Leary.

Ms. Behnken stated that her intent would be that this could be implemented by 2001.

Dave Benton suggested that both 1700 and 1200 mt should be explored as options. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

The motion carried without objection.

Dave Benton moved that the following items be considered in the Proposed Rule and final rulemaking:

- 1. Ensure that dates in proposed rule and final rule for co-op agreements summittal would be such that the Council will be able to review at December meeting;**
- 2. Require re-submittal of co-op agreements for Council review if modified and ressubmit w/schedule such that revised co-op agreements would be reviewed by the Council at its next regular meeting.**
- 3. Requirement for co-ops to provide economic data, including price data, recognizing confidentiality limitations, as part of their co-op report;**
- 4. Establish an application period for application to become an AFA-qualified vessel, which would close 12/1/00.**

The motion was seconded by Joe Kyle and carried without objection.

Kent Lind advised the Council that item 1 is already in the draft rule. Item 2 would fall under the category of clarification of intent and should be within the range of a comment on the proposed rule. However, item 3, economic data, would probably need more discussion and analysis of what would be required and how it would be reported. With regard to the application deadline, it can be done, but NMFS will have to discuss

how it can be done procedurally and whether it can be done within the range of the current rulemaking, or whether it will require a separate rulemaking.

There was some concern on the part of NOAA General Counsel that the Council was commenting on a proposed rule that was not yet published. Mr. Benton clarified that these items are intended to give NMFS advance notice of the Council's intent to comment on the proposed rule in February and that those items that cannot be accommodated within this rule will be pursued by separate rulemaking. Mr. Pennoyer suggested that items 3 and 4 will probably require separate rulemaking and suggested they be listed separately on the February agenda.

Dennis Austin moved to approve the AP recommendation, as follows;

That the Council or NMFS provide a supplemental analysis between now and February to examine implementing sideboards based on retained catch or total catch for all sectors with particular reference to how it would impact the amount of sideboard available for directed fisheries and impacts on regulatory discards. This information is necessary in order for the Council to comment with full information on the AFA proposed rule

The motion was seconded by Dave Benton and failed, 7 to 4, with Austin, Bundy, Fluharty and Mace voting in favor.

In discussing the motion, it became clear that this information could not be incorporated in the current analysis and incorporated into the proposed rule.

Dave Benton moved to notice the public that the Council will be reviewing the proposed rule at the February meeting for comment, and that that Council will be commenting on the entire proposed rule including, but not limited to, the total versus retained catch issue. Staff will provide for the public and the Council the analysis that has already been prepared for the proposed rule and, if possible, supplemental tables showing the difference between total and retained catch.

The motion was seconded by John Bundy and carried 7 to 4, with Behnken, Kyle, Salveson and Lauber voting against.

Mr. Benton stressed that the supplemental information would be provided only to the extent possible.

Linda Behnken moved to add an option "C" under Alternative 1 for the groundfish processing sideboards analysis:

- C. For Bering flatfish species, a processing cap for AFA qualified processors would apply in the aggregate to the at-sea, mothership and shoreside processors. The cap would be based on the total of each sector's average processing history of Bering Sea flatfish species for 1995-97.**

The motion was seconded and carried without objection.

Later in the meeting, Dave Benton moved to reconsider action taken with regard to Emergency Rule #2. The motion to reconsider was seconded and carried with Austin and Mace objecting.

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

Dave Benton moved to amend previous Council action on Emergency Rule #2, as follows: To the catcher vessel sideboard exemptions in the Gulf of Alaska, include a provision that would prevent leasing of any vessel's Bering Sea pollock quota share if that vessel wishes to use the exemption. The motion was seconded by Linda Behnken.

Kent Lind explained some concerns with implementing this type of provision because co-ops are allocated a share, but not individual vessels. There are confidentiality issues with catch histories and, practically, there would be no way to identify an amount of quota that might be leased. In addition to other tasks involved in finalizing the rule, Mr. Lind was concerned that this issue would require more time and analysis than is available. Steve Pennoyer stressed that there is no guarantee this can be included in the rule.

The motion was tabled in order to consider possible alternatives.

When the motion was removed from the table the next morning, Mr. Benton clarified that such a prohibition on leasing is the Council's intent and that some representatives of industry have indicated that they would make every effort to include such a prohibition in their co-op agreements for this year while the Council and NMFS look into a longer-term regulatory mechanism. He stressed that he would like this included in the emergency rule if possible; if not, that NMFS proceed with the emergency without the leasing prohibition but that it be understood that this is a matter of great concern to the Council and that they will be looking at the co-op agreements and watching fishery performance during the year while preparing the regulations for the proposed and final rules for the years 2000 and beyond.

The amendment carried without objection, and the main motion carried, as amended, with Pennoyer objecting (emergency rule).

After the Council received a written copy of action on this agenda item, the following clarification was made:

- That the application deadline of December 1, 2000 to become an AFA-qualified vessel is a one-time only application period, and that only vessels applying during that period would be determined to be AFA-qualified (providing they meet other AFA criteria).

A recap of Council action on this agenda item is Appendix II to these minutes.

C-2 Essential Fish Habitat

ACTION REQUIRED

Comment on interim final rule.

BACKGROUND

The interim final rule to implement the essential fish habitat (EFH) provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act was published in the *Federal Register* on December 19, 1997 (Item C-2a).

On November 8, 1999, NMFS announced that it was reopening a public comment period to assist in developing final regulations for implementing essential fish habitat measures (FR announcement attached as Item C-2b). Comments on four specific issues (improving regulatory guidance regarding

description and identification of EFH, providing guidance on how Regional Councils might document efforts to minimize the effects of fishing on EFH, evaluating environmental review procedures and EFH consultation, and modifying the EFH assessment requirement) will be accepted through December 23, 1999.

At this meeting, the Council may provide comments on the final rule.

Neither the SSC nor the AP addressed this agenda item.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Linda Behnken moved to make the following comments on the interim final rule:

The existing interim final rule (IFR) provides effective and reasonable direction for habitat conservation. The IFR is working in the North Pacific and should not be weakened. The NPFMC has identified essential fish habitat for all North Pacific fish species under its jurisdiction and is currently developing a process for identifying habitat areas of particular concern and providing appropriate conservation measures. The EFH process is working. The Council urges the agency to move ahead with the Final Rule without making changes to the IFR.

The motion was seconded by Dave Fluharty and carried without objection.

C-3 Halibut Charter GHL

ACTION REQUIRED

Review analysis and release it for public review.

BACKGROUND

In September 1997, the Council adopted GHLs for the halibut charter fishery for IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A. The GHLs were based on the charter sector receiving 125% of their 1995 harvest (12.76% of the combined commercial/charter halibut quota in Area 2C, and 15.61% in Area 3A). The Council stated its intent that the GHLs would not close the fishery, but instead would trigger other management measures in years following attainment of the GHL. If end-of-season harvest data indicated that the charter sector likely would reach or exceed its area-specific GHL in the following season, NMFS would implement pre-approved measures to slow down charter halibut harvest. Given the one-year lag between the end of the fishing season and availability of that year's catch data, it was anticipated that it would take up to two years for management measures to be implemented.

In December 1997, NMFS Regional Administrator Steve Pennoyer informed the Council that the GHL would not be published as a regulation. Further, since the Council had not recommended specific management measures to be implemented by NMFS if the GHL were reached, no formal decision by the Secretary was required for the GHL. Therefore, the analysis was not forwarded for Secretarial review.

The Council responded by initiating a public process to identify GHL management measures. It formed a GHL Committee in 1998 to recommend management measures for analysis that would constrain charter harvests under the GHL. It met three times in 1998 and 1999. The Council discussed

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

and approved the recommendations with modifications of the committee and Advisory Panel in 1998. It modified those alternatives based on staff, committee, and AP recommendations in early 1999 (a compilation of those recommendations are available from staff).

In April 1999, the Council identified for analysis: (1) a suite of GHL management measure alternatives; (2) alternatives that would change the GHL as approved in 1997; and (3) area-wide and LAMP moratorium options under all alternatives. Recognizing that (1) reliable in-season catch monitoring is not available for the halibut charter fishery; (2) in-season adjustments cannot be made to the commercial longline individual fishing quotas (IFQs); and (3) the Council's stated intent is to not shorten the current charter fishing season, the Council designed the alternatives to be measures that would be triggered in subsequent fishing years. The alternatives are not mutually exclusive and may be combined when the Council makes its final decision in February 2000. The analysis was emailed to you on December 1 and the executive summary is attached as Item C-3(a).

To facilitate analysis, the preparers have provided restructured alternatives, mainly in response to concerns raised by the SSC. It maintains all the options and suboptions of the motion approved by the Council in April 1999. The restructured alternatives are attached as Item C-3(b).

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC did not recommend for or against releasing the document for public review because of limited time to thoroughly review the document. They did, however, provide staff with several comments and suggestions for the next iteration (see SSC Minutes, Appendix III to these minutes). The SSC did indicate a significant improvement in the analysis of economic effects of allocation decisions. The SSC also pointed out that the preponderance of evidence from fisheries in the North Pacific and other regions suggests that allocations between user groups are unlikely to be definitively settled by any single allocation decision, and reiterated previous comments that IFQs are a mechanism that would shift the reallocation burden into the marketplace.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the guideline harvest level (GHL) analysis be released for public review with the following changes:

Chapter 1

1. Add to list of management measures:
 - a. A prohibition on charter skippers and crew-fishing and retention;
 - b. Possession limits reduction;
 - c. Prohibitions on using downriggers.
2. Add a provision to manage the GHL based on a 3-5 year weighted and regular rolling average.
3. Eliminate the option of closing the charter fishery in-season once the GHL is reached.
4. Tie the GHL as an allocation and the sportfish banking reserve together as an option.

Chapter 2

- Add information on rod hours to catch a halibut for charter and non-charter anglers for past 6 years.

Chapter 3

1. Review in more depth existing information from 1997 GHL analysis, the Glacier Bay analysis, and other sources of baseline data for area 2C.
2. Add to figure 3.20 area 2C and 3A specific halibut harvests by sector, rather than by state-wide.

3. Reference preliminary data on 1999 charter harvest by area and commercial ex-vessel price information.
4. Add description of taxes each sector pays and the effect of these taxes on social structures in communities.
5. Provide a summary table which clarifies how the economic components presented are being used and what comparable components are for the other sector. For example:

Component, figure or table	Data Source	Caveats	Relevance in evaluating economic impacts (economic activity, impact, or net benefit)	Relevance in evaluating social impacts	Relevance in evaluating alternatives	Comparable data in analysis for other sectors (longline, charter, clients, consumers)

6. add current IPHC staff recommendations to update the biomass projections and the 2000 quota recommendations.

Chapter 4

1. Add comparable economic multipliers for commercial sector.
2. Expand QS net benefit discussion to include estimates of rents and impacts of status quo on value of QS.
3. Either refine the participation rate model to differentiate between catch and catch and release fish or eliminate from analysis.

Chapter 6

1. Expand alternative 1 to reflect the impact of status quo on new entrants ability to meet existing loans.
2. Consider the effect of status quo on the process of developing LAMPs, moratoriums, and other efforts to address the problem statement.
3. Add discussion on the effect of setting GHJ as a fixed number of fish given the current high abundance and age composition of halibut stocks.
4. Reconcile estimates of participation impacts associated with bag limit reductions with current catch and release behavior.
5. Review effects of bag limit management in other fisheries including catch and release fisheries.
6. Provide information on the SE AK king salmon and ling cod sport fishery which shows:
 - a. Frequency and lead time associated with bag limit changes,
 - b. ADF&G's expected effectiveness of bag limit changes at reducing harvest,
 - c. # of clients using charter over past 6 years, and in season changes pre and post bag limit changes.
7. Summarize in a table the management measures identified and their relative ability to constrain harvests to the GHJ and to address issues identified in the problem statement.
8. Include a discussion about the ability of the charter industry to harvest the GHJ in times of reduced biomass.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

The Council received comments from Ed Dersham, representing the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Mr. Dersham updated the Council on Board activities, including the appointment of a task force to assist in the development of Local Area Management Plans (LAMPs). The task force will report its progress to the

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

Board in March. Once the Council has chosen a preferred alternative on the halibut charter issue, the task force will then begin to finalize individual LAMP proposals.

Bob Mace moved to approve the recommendations of the Advisory Panel with respect to the Halibut Charter GHL analysis. The motion was seconded by Joe Kyle.

It was clarified that the analysis would be based on the restructured alternatives as outlined in the Council action memo for this meeting. With regard to the issue of possession limits, the analysis should include the current law and changes needed to implement any Council alternative chosen. It was also clarified that the analysis will include the recommendations of the SSC and AP as time and data allow before the document must be released for public comment.

Steve Pennoyer pointed out that implementation costs will need to be addressed and suggested that NMFS, ADF&G, Council and Coast Guard staffs work together on that issue. Implementation issues would be addressed in a separate document, supplemental to the main GHL analysis.

Joe Kyle moved to amend the motion with regard to Chapter 1, as follows:

- **Add an alternative to apply the GHL percentage to the overall halibut CEY by area before reductions for bycatch, deadloss, etc.** The motion was seconded by Dave Benton and carried, 8 to 3, with Behnken, O'Leary and Samuelsen voting against. It was clarified that that the intent would be to take subsistence and unguided allocations off the top, then the charter percentage would be taken from what's left before the commercial deductions for bycatch and deadloss.
- **By friendly amendment, the Advisory Panel's recommendation under Chapter 1 was amended as follows: Delete the alternatives for prohibitions on downriggers and to tie the GHL as an allocation and the sportfish banking reserve together as an option.**
- **By friendly amendment, the Advisory Panel's recommendation under Chapter 2 (Add information on rod hours to catch a halibut for charter and non-charter anglers for past 6 years) was deleted from the main motion.**

Dave Benton moved, with regard to the Advisory Panel's recommendations under Chapter 3, to delete all recommendations, with the exception of the following two:

- **Review in more depth existing information from 1997 GHL analysis, the Glacier Bay analysis, and other resources of baseline data fro area 2C.**
- **Provide a summary table which clarifies how the economic components presented as being used and what comparable components are for the other sector.**

With regard to the deleted option to use 1999 data, it was clarified that current data would be included to the extent possible. The current IPHC staff update on biomass projections for 2000 and quota recommendations will be incorporated at the February meeting.

The motion was seconded by Joe Kyle and carried without objection.

Linda Behnken moved to add a suboption under Alternative 3 (Convert the guideline harvest level to an allocation range), Option A, Suboption 2, as follows:

(d) by an amount proportionate to reduction in abundance (indicated by CEY).

The amendment was seconded by Robin Samuelsen and carried 9 to 2, with Mace and Lauber voting against.

Linda Behnken moved to amend the list of possible management measures under Alternative 2, Issue 2, to include a suboption of midseason or preseason announcements of reduction in bag limits. The motion was seconded and failed, 6 to 5, with Behnken, Fluharty, O'Leary, Samuelsen and Lauber voting in favor.

Linda Behnken moved, with regard to the provision to manage the GHL based on a 3-5 year weighted and regular rolling average, to amend it to base it only on a 3-year rolling average. The motion was seconded by Robin Samuelsen and carried, 6 to 5, with Benton, Bundy, Kyle, Mace and Pennoyer voting against.

The main motion carried, 10 to 1, with Samuelsen voting against.

Kevin O'Leary moved to request a discussion paper regarding the purchase of IFQs by the charter fleet. The motion was seconded, but after discussion, it was determined that the subject should be brought up at the February meeting during the halibut GHL agenda item, and that it is premature to request a discussion paper at this time. Final action on this issue is found under Appendix IV to these minutes.

C-4 Steller Sea Lions

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Receive status report on litigation.**
- (b) Comment on Proposed Rule for 2000 (or on pending emergency rule).**
- (c) Discuss adaptive management strategies and results of evening workshop.**

BACKGROUND

In October the Council reviewed NMFS's modified RPAs which resulted from a revised Biological Opinion and the judicial remand by Judge Zilly on August 6. At that time you expressed an intent to review the status of the litigation in December, and possibly provide comment on an anticipated proposed rule to implement the revised RPAs. These measures will have to be implemented by an Emergency Rule (ER) following this Council meeting, to be followed by a formal proposed and final rulemaking. NMFS apparently will be looking to the Council to formally request such emergency action. While the Council will be reviewing RPAs at this meeting, and perhaps providing input to NMFS regarding those RPAs, it is not likely that any significant changes to those RPAs can be accommodated in the emergency rulemaking. NMFS staff will be reporting on the status of the litigation and the proposed RPAs, including a comparison of the original RPAs from last fall, the June 1999 RPAs approved by the Council, and those brought forward by NMFS in October 1999.

An evening workshop is scheduled for Thursday, December 9 of this week to discuss the issue of adaptive management strategies relative to sea lions. NMFS staff will also report on the results of this workshop and how they are approaching this aspect of the sea lion issue.

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

The **Scientific and Statistical Committee** did not address this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the Council request NMFS to provide a public presentation on the ongoing and planned research projects involving Steller sea lions. They also request that NMFS be asked to provide a status report on the process for Section 7 consultation efforts with federally recognized tribes.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Tim Ragen provided the Council with a review of the revised final reasonable and prudent alternatives for Steller sea lion protection for the year 2000. Some of the alternatives differed from those recommended by the Council because NMFS felt that Council alternatives did not totally achieve the spatial and temporal dispersion of the fisheries desired. The Council also received a report on a workshop held by NMFS on adaptive management. Planned experiments that should facilitate the understanding of fishery effects on pollock distribution and abundance may require at least four years' of work.

Sue Salveson advised that at the February meeting NMFS will be providing a regulatory amendment to close a gully area off Chiniak to use as an adaptive management tool. The Council will be asked to comment in February before the amendment is forwarded to Secretarial review.

Linda Behnken moved to recommend the Proposed Rule for the revised final reasonable and prudent alternatives be enacted as an emergency rule to ensure its implementation for the year 2000 fisheries. The motion was seconded and carried with Salveson objecting.

Dave Benton moved to request that NMFS closely track pollock fisheries performance by sector in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and provide a status report to the Council in June on how the RPAs have affected the fleets involved, particularly the small boat fleet during the "A" season. The motion was seconded by Joe Kyle and carried without objection. Mr. Benton advised that it would be his intent to comment to the Secretary of Commerce if there is an unwarranted effect on the fleets.

Linda Behnken moved to approve the recommendation of the AP to request NMFS to provide a public presentation on the ongoing and planned research projects involving Steller sea lions. As a friendly amendment, a second AP recommendation was added to the motion to request that NMFS provide a status report on the process for Section 7 consultation efforts with federally recognized tribes. The motion was seconded by Joe Kyle and carried without objection.

C-5 Pacific Cod LLP Endorsements

ACTION REQUIRED

Review discussion paper on potential grandfather provision (see below).

Introduction

The Council requested that a discussion paper of the grandfather provision proposed for the Pacific cod fixed gear LLP program be developed for the December 1999 Council meeting. This paper is the result of that request. The paper will briefly present the elements of the grandfather provision. A summary of the information available on the number of vessels that might fall under the provision will then be provided.

Council's Grandfather Motion

Exempt from the cod species/gear participation and landing requirements catcher/processor vessels that (i) met the original License Limitation Program general qualifying period and area endorsement period requirements for BSAI groundfish non-trawl endorsement; (ii) were purchased between July 1, 1997 and December 31, 1998 with the express purchaser intent of being employed in the fixed gear cod fishery, as evidenced by documented processing equipment and/or vessel modification or improvement investments of not less than \$100,000 that are specific to groundfish (gear purchases would not count for purposes of the \$100,000 threshold), and (iii) were employed in the fixed gear fishery during 1999. Owners of grandfathered vessels would have a one-time election to choose either a longline or pot endorsement, but not both.

Fixed Gear Catcher/Processors Targeting Cod in 1999

A total of 49 catcher/processers targeted Pacific cod using fixed gear (Longlines or Pots) during 1999. The language in point 3 of the grandfather provision, states that the vessel must have been employed in the fixed gear fishery (it was not specific to cod). Our interpretation of that language is that the vessel must have fished in the BSAI fixed gear cod fishery. That interpretation seems appropriate given that point 2 states the vessel must have been purchased with the intent of being used in the fixed gear cod fishery.

LLP Qualified for a Fixed Gear Endorsement?

The RAM list of LLP qualified vessels was matched against the list of 49 catcher/processers that targeted BSAI Pacific cod with fixed gear during 1999. The results showed that 33 of the 49 vessels would be expected to qualify for a fixed gear endorsement. It is important to note that the qualification list is not final. Some of the 16 vessels that do not appear to be qualified for a fixed gear endorsement may have purchased licenses that would qualify them to use fixed gear in the future, or they may appeal because the data base did not accurately portray their catch history. In any case, the RAM data set is the best information currently available on the number of vessels that would be LLP qualified.

Was the Vessel Purchased Between July 1, 1997 and December 31, 1998?

The US Coast Guard was asked to provide an "Abstract of Title" for the 49 vessels that fished during 1999. Data contained in the "Abstract of Title" would indicate if the vessels had been sold between July 1, 1997 and December 31, 1998. Using the transfer information, we will break out the vessels by whether we think they are LLP qualified and whether they were purchased during the July 1, 1997 through December 31, 1998 time window (Table 1). The results of that filter will yield a list of vessels that would need to be checked to determine if they had made a minimum of \$100,000 worth of processing equipment purchases and/or vessel modification and improvements specific to the groundfish fishery. Checks to verify that a vessel met the investment criteria is not possible given the existing data available to the analysts. That information would only be found in private contracts, so no attempt will be made to determine if the vessel owners spent the \$100,000 to modify the vessel or purchase groundfish processing equipment. Vessel owners would need to submit

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

information to NMFS in order to verify their eligibility for the grandfather provision, should the Council decide to implement the program.

The bolded numbers in Table 1, represent the maximum number of vessels that would fall under the grandfather provision, given the best information at our disposal. It is uncertain if the three vessels currently listed as not holding a fixed gear LLP endorsement actually do or not. Therefore, it is likely that as many as nine vessels would eligible for this grandfather provision. Six of these vessels do appear to be LLP qualified for a fixed gear endorsement (as the program was approved by the Council, that portion of the LLP program has not yet been approved by the US Secretary of Commerce).

Table 1: Number of catcher/processors that participated in the 1999 fixed gear cod fishery.

LLP Qualified for a BSAI Fixed Gear Endorsement	Vessel Purchased between 7/1/97 and 12/31/98		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	6	28	34
No	3	12	15
Total	9	40	49

If all nine of the vessels that were purchased during the July 1, 1997 through December 31, 1998 time window do hold a fixed gear endorsement, then an important question is how many of these vessels would qualify for the LLP anyway, based on the recency requirements. Without checking all of the alternatives and options, we can identify the universe by checking against the most restrictive qualification criteria. Examination of the catch data indicates that two of the freezer longline vessels would need the grandfather clause to

Table 2: Number of Freezer Longline Vessels that are Projected to Qualify Based on Their Maximum Catch in any Year 1996-98

Length	> 0 mt	> 100 mt	> 200 mt	> 300 mt
0-59'	1	-	-	-
60-124'	19	14	13	11
125'+	33	29	29	28

qualify under the most restrictive criteria, and one of the two vessels would need the grandfather clause to qualify under any scenario. These numbers would add to those listed in Table 2, that was presented at the last Council meeting. Two more vessels only used pot gear between 1995-98, but given the language of the grandfather clause would be allowed to elect to be freezer longliners. In summary, seven of the nine qualify anyway, but two of those seven could switch to the FLL category, so the maximum number of new FLL is four. Therefore, it is estimated that the grandfather clause might increase the pool of qualified freezer longline vessels by four, and only two if you exclude the two that are already qualified under pot gear.

As stated earlier two of the vessels only employed pot gear from 1995-98. Both of the vessels would qualify under any pot qualification criteria included in the Council list. Therefore, new pot vessels would be added to the fleet only if a freezer longline boat elected to make the one time switch to pot gear. It is unlikely that any vessels would elect to make that switch.

Other Issues

Should the Council move forward with the grandfather provision outlined in this discussion paper, it will likely be necessary to provide justification for the rulemaking package when the Council makes a final decision. Questions which were raised in public comment, or by NOAA GC, include:

- Why must a vessel have been purchased, as opposed to the existing owner making an investment to fish cod?
- Why was the July 1, 1997 - December 31, 1998 time period for vessel purchases selected?
- What documentation will be required to prove that at least \$100,000 worth of investments were made?
- Why is \$100,000 the appropriate minimum level of investment?
- Why should these vessels be grandfathered in, when other vessels that have been fishing cod in recent years may get excluded from the fishery, depending on the minimum landing requirements selected?

The Scientific and Statistical Committee did not address this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the Council include potential grandfather provisions in the LLP analysis to be considered in February. Additionally, the AP recommended that the option separating out the Pacific pot catcher/processors from pot cod catcher vessels be separated from the current analysis and pursued in a subsequent amendment.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Bob Mace moved to approved the recommendations of the Advisory Panel. The motion was seconded by Kevin O'Leary.

Linda Behnken moved to delete the grandfather provision from the analysis. The motion was seconded by Dave Benton and carried, 6 to 5, with Austin, Bundy, Fluharty, Salvesson, Lauber voting against.

Dave Benton moved to add a separate category for the LLP analysis for pot cod catcher processors using same qualifications criteria as in the current analysis for pot catcher vessels. The motion was accepted as a friendly amendment to the main motion.

The main motion, as amended, carried with Lauber objecting. The analysis would be provided for initial Council review at the February meeting.

Dave Benton moved that the grandfather clause issue be discussed at the February meeting for possible consideration of subsequent analysis. The motion was seconded by Joe Kyle and carried without objection.

C-6 Groundfish SEIS

ACTION REQUIRED

Receive status report and comment on Notice of Intent.

**MINUTES
NPFMC
DECEMBER 1999**

BACKGROUND

NMFS prepared and issued a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the groundfish fisheries authorized under the groundfish plans for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands areas in December 1998. U.S. District Court ruled in Greenpeace v. NMFS that the 1998 SEIS was legally inadequate, and remanded the document to NMFS for further action consistent with the requirements of NEPA (Item C-6(a)). NMFS published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a programmatic SEIS on Federal groundfish fishery management in the EEZ waters off Alaska in the *Federal Register* October 1, 1999 (Item C-6(b)). The scope of the analysis is to include all activities addressing the conduct of groundfish fisheries authorized and managed under both FMPs. As promised in the NOI, NMFS published a supplementary notice on November 3, 1999 (Item C-6(c)) that presents a number of thematic alternatives for purposes of scoping and to stimulate public comment. This notice also announced NMFS's response to the Council's October request to extend the public scoping period; which was extended an additional 30-days, or until December 15, 1999.

Since the last Council meeting, NMFS has developed a proposed work schedule and held a series of scoping meetings during the week of November 8-12, 1999, in Juneau, Anchorage, Kodiak, Alaska, and in Seattle, Washington. A copy of the schedule is provided as Item C-6 (d). NMFS staff will present a summary of scoping comments received by the agency (to date) and be available to answer any questions concerning preparation of the programmatic Alaska Groundfish Fisheries SEIS Project. The Council may wish to provide comment on the issues, scope, schedule, and conceptual framework of the SEIS.

Neither the Scientific and Statistical Committee nor the Advisory Panel addressed this agenda item.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

The Council received an update from Steve Davis on the scoping process for the Groundfish SEIS.

Linda Behnken moved to express Council support for the current scoping process and support in particular for a final chapter that synthesizes experience gained from 27 years of managing the fisheries and makes recommendations for future management. The Council also recommends that an effort be made to characterize the North Pacific Council's efforts in the context of other U.S. fishery management regimes. The motion was seconded Dave Fluharty and carried without objection.

Although Council members understood the timeframe for completion of the SEIS has been guided by various factors, they support a thorough, well-researched and useful document and would prefer that be the major consideration in the timing of the project, not artificially imposed deadlines.

C-7 Halibut Subsistence

ACTION REQUIRED

Review alternatives and analysis and give direction to staff.

BACKGROUND

Management measures for halibut subsistence were first developed in September 1996 because of a conflict between the IFQ/CDQ regulations and customary and traditional practices of Alaska Natives in IPHC regulatory Area 4E, whereby halibut CDQ fishermen were retaining undersized halibut for personal use. The Council formed a Halibut Subsistence Committee, initiated a regulatory amendment, and in June 1997, took action on the part of the proposed action which allowed Area 4E CDQ fishermen to retain undersized halibut while commercial fishing. That measure took effect June 4, 1998, and sunsets December 31, 1999. The Council did not include a sunset, but IPHC wanted to collect and review halibut mortality data resulting from such retention. Meeting jointly with IPHC in October 1998, the Council requested an extension of the program. IPHC considered the request at its 1999 annual meeting, and responded on March 3, 1999, as follows:

“In 1998, the Commission approved the retention of halibut less than legal size for the CDQ fisheries in Area 4E, for a two-year period. The Commission recognizes that the evaluation of this program at the end of 1999 will require information and also received a request from NMFS for specific regulations concerning reporting of undersized halibut retention. The Commission has therefore approved a regulation for 1999 requiring the manager of any CDQ organization that authorizes halibut harvest in Area 4E to provide accounting of the number and weight of undersized halibut taken and retained in these fisheries. The report must also include details of the methodology used for collection of such data.”

Meeting jointly with IPHC this October, it was noted that the Commission will review a possible extension at its January 2000 meeting. The Council may want to send a second letter of encouragement to the Commissioners concerning the extension, possibly suggesting that there be no sunset date this time around.

The broader issue of subsistence has not yet been addressed by the Council. NMFS requested by letter on July 7, 1999, that the Council reactivate its consideration of the issue. The federal takeover of subsistence management occurred on October 1, 1999. Then at the October 1999 meeting, the Council wanted to review its previous list of alternatives and the analysis from 1997 at this December meeting.

The list of alternatives is under C-7(a). The staff needs direction on next steps to move forward on this issue. The Council will need to identify the alternatives it still wants to consider, and then we will revise the analysis accordingly, taking into account new NMFS directives on the preparation of EA/RIR/IRFAs. It could be scheduled to come back for initial review in April, and final action in June 2000.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee did not address this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended moving forward with the subsistence halibut analysis as outlined with the following changes:

1. Change option 4 to read as follows:

Option 4: Customary and traditional trade of subsistence halibut

Sub-option 1: Customary and traditional trade through monetary exchange shall be limited to an annual maximum of:

- a. \$0
- b. \$200

- c. \$400
- d. \$600

Sub-option 2: Customary and traditional trade through non-monetary exchange is allowed with

- a. Other Alaska Tribes
 - b. Any Alaska rural resident
 - c. Any Alaska resident
 - d. Anyone
2. Add to option 5 a sub-option of no daily bag limit
 3. Update and revise existing analysis to discuss recent changes in subsistence management , federal policy, relevant court cases, and the roll of other public subsistence management boards.
 4. A discussion of existing co-management arrangements and the applicability of these models to data gathering, LAMPs, catch, monitoring, and enforcement of halibut subsistence.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Robin Samuelsen moved to approve the recommendations of the Advisory Panel. In addition, Alternative 3 would be removed from consideration. The motion was seconded by Joe Kyle.

Mr. Samuelsen felt that Alternative 3 is not relevant to subsistence use .

Mr. Kyle offered the following amendment:

Include an additional suboption for analysis under Alternative 2, Option 3 (Definition of Legal Gear), as follows:

Suboption D. Use of Commercial Gear – allow retention of subsistence halibut when landing commercially caught halibut.

This was accepted as a friendly amendment to the main motion which carried with Lauber objecting. Mr. Lauber objected to the deletion of Alternative 3 prior to releasing the analysis for public comment.

Ms. Behnken pointed out that there may be different applications of a subsistence definition in different areas and asked that the analysis be broad enough to give Council members that option. The draft analysis will be available for initial Council review at the April meeting, with final action in June.

Ms. Behnken asked NOAA General Counsel to research the legalities of co-management with native tribes.

With regard to retention of undersized halibut in the Area 4E CDQ fisheries, Bob Mace moved to comment to the IPHC encouraging them to extend this provision, and to consider making it a permanent regulation with no sunset date. The motion was seconded by Linda Behnken and carried without objection.

C-8 Alaska Board of Fisheries

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Review Board's October work session.
- (b) Review Board proposals of mutual concern.

BACKGROUND

October work session

The Board met in Fairbanks in late October for a Work Session to address a variety of issues, some of which relate to Council/Board interactions (agenda for that meeting is Item C-8(a)). Council and NMFS staff attended portions of the session and reported on actions from our October meeting. That report, in addition to relating our actions for bairdi rebuilding, included the process necessary to develop the rebuilding plans for opilio and blue king crab. The Board approved placing the issue of harvest strategy for these stocks on their March 2000 agenda, which will be a necessary component of the rebuilding plans to be reviewed by the Council in April. Other issues of note include:

- * The Board reviewed, approved, and signed (Chairman Coffey) the addendum to our joint protocol which was approved by the Council at our October meeting.
- * The Board discussed management of the AFA catcher vessel sideboard limit for the red king crab fisheries (approved by the Council in June 1999), and will continue to work next spring through the Board process to develop management options which need to be finalized in time for the fall fishery.
- * Council staff and the Board discussed the issue of the stand-down regulations (pre-season gear restrictions) in the crab fisheries which were intended to deter prospecting, with the Board approving ACR#2 to consider alternatives on their March agenda if necessary. This would be an issue on the joint Council/Board agenda in February for discussion - following that meeting either body could pursue separate measures as deemed necessary and appropriate.
- * Staff informed the Board of the Council's motion to review the crab FMP to determine whether clarifying amendments were warranted. The Board acknowledged that this would be an issue for both the joint committee and the full Council/Board.
- * The Board requested an opportunity to address the Council in December on the issues of halibut GHL and halibut subsistence.
- * the Board received a report from U.S. Fish and Wildlife representatives, and had lengthy discussion, on the issue of the federal subsistence takeover. One question raised was, if the Council deferred halibut subsistence to the BOF, would then the Federal Subsistence Board have pre-emptive authority over the State, or would halibut still be considered as being under the authority of the Halibut Act?
- * Council staff reported generally on Council actions related to American Fisheries Act and management measures related to BSAI Pacific cod.
- * The Board heard a report from Council staff on the status of groundfish management proposals, recognizing that we would not be addressing these until the February meeting. The issue of Council and Board proposals of mutual concern would be an additional agenda item

for the joint meeting in February. The joint committee is now schedule to meet Friday, January 28 at the Regal Alaskan Hotel in Anchorage. The full Council/Board will meet on Tuesday, February 8 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage.

Board Proposals of Mutual Concern

Per our joint protocol the staff of the Board has identified proposals received by the Board which may be of interest to the Council. Our protocol calls for us to review those in December so that we can comment to the Board at our joint meeting in February. That packet of proposals, in order of proposal number, is under Item C-8(b) - the subset identified by Council staff as being of most interest include the following:

#12 - Alter crab season opening dates (Area T/Area J) to allow for concurrent species harvest. Proposed by Alaska Crab Coalition.

#23 - Establish a Prince William Sound (PWS) pollock management plan (to address sea lion related issues). Proposed by North Pacific Processors.

#31 - Re-open commercial shark fishery in PWS. Proposed by Patrick Sterling.

#35 and 36 - develop halibut LAMP (sport catcher vessel only areas) for PWS. Proposed by Valdez Advisory Committee and David Pinguoch.

#37, 38, and 39 - develop halibut LAMPs, season changes, or superexclusive registration areas in PWS. Proposed by Valdez/Seward Charterboat Associations and the Valdez Advisory Committee.

#41 - Cook Inlet LAMP. Proposed by Alaska Sportfishing Association.

#43 - Moratorium on PWS charterboats. Proposed by Valdez/Seward Charterboat Associations and the Valdez Advisory Committee.

#129 - Halibut LAMP for the Yakutat area. Proposed by Yakutat Advisory Committee.

#195 - Require full retention of rockfish in Southeast. Proposed by ADF&G.

#197 and 198 - Establish a separate Yakutat management area (relative to IPHC Area 3A). Proposed by Yakutat Advisory Committee and several individuals.

#200 - Establish a directed fishery for skates in the Eastern Gulf. Proposed by Yakutat Advisory Committee.

#202 - Differentiate pelagic and bottom longline gear definitions. Proposed by Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association.

#381 - Allow for exploratory permits for new scallop beds in (previously) closed areas. Proposed by Teresa Kandianis.

#417 - Establish a jig or experimental fishery for Kodiak area pollock. Proposed by Mike Clark.

#418 - Prohibit trawling for cod in State waters. Proposed by the Aleut Corporation.

#420 - Establish a State water pollock fishery in Cook Inlet/Kodiak/Chignik Areas. Proposed by the Sand Point Advisory Committee.

#424 - Moratorium on new halibut charter/guide services in Cook Inlet. Proposed by Homer Charter Association.

#425 - Develop separate halibut management area for Kodiak (LAMP). Proposed by Kodiak Advisory Committee.

#426 - Develop six sub-area LAMPs (halibut) within Kodiak area. Proposed by Kodiak Native Tourism Association.

ACR#3 - Require permits for taking miscellaneous groundfish in PWS. Proposed by ADF&G.

ACR - Change regulations limiting larger pot boats to 25% of State water cod harvest. Proposed by Kevin Bundy and Mark Alwert.

Neither the **Scientific and Statistical Committee** nor the **Advisory Panel** addressed this agenda item.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Council members received a summary of the Board's October worksession and briefly discussed proposals before the Board that are of mutual concern. In particular, the Council will need to provide comments on those proposals to the Board during the joint Council/Board meeting in early February. Council members were encouraged to contact staff or committee members Austin, O'Leary, or Samuelsen with their comments on the proposals for discussion at the joint committee meeting in late January.

D. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS

D-1 Final Groundfish Specifications for 2000

D-1(a,b) Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Review 2000 BSAI EA and Final Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report.
- (b) Approve final BSAI groundfish specifications for 2000:
 - 1. Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), and annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC);
 - 2. Seasonal apportionment of the fixed gear Pacific cod TAC; and
 - 3. Bycatch allowances, and seasonal apportionments of Pacific halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, opilio crab, and herring to target fishery (PSC) categories.

BACKGROUND

At this meeting, the Council makes final recommendations on groundfish and bycatch specifications as listed above. These final specifications will be used for management of the 2000 groundfish fisheries.

(a) BSAI SAFE Document

The groundfish Plan Teams met in Seattle during the week of November 15-19, to prepare the final SAFE documents provided at this meeting. This SAFE forms the basis for groundfish specifications for the 2000 fishing year. Note that there are three sections to the SAFE report: a stock assessment section, a fishery evaluation section ("economic SAFE"), and an ecosystems considerations section. These three sections, together with the GOA SAFE, are incorporated into the Environmental Assessment for the 2000 groundfish total allowable catch specifications.

(b) ABCs, TACs, and Apportionments

At this meeting, the Council will establish final catch specifications for the 2000 fisheries. During the week of this Council meeting the SSC and AP recommendations will be provided to the Council. Attached as Item D-1(b)(1) are Tables 4 - 6 from the SAFE summary chapter indicating ABCs and biomass levels. The Plan Team's sum of recommended ABCs for 2000 is 2,265,553 mt. Overall, the status of the stocks continues to appear relatively favorable, although in some cases biomass has declined due to below average recruitment.

Other final specifications include making the seasonal apportionment of the fixed gear Pacific cod TAC, and establishing bycatch allowances and seasonal apportionments of Pacific halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, opilio crab, and herring to target fishery (PSC) categories.

Adopt Seasonal Apportionments of the Pacific Cod TAC Allocated to Fixed Gear

Amendment 24 regulations allow seasonal apportionment of the Pacific cod TAC allocated to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear. Seasonal apportionments will be divided among trimesters and established through the annual specifications process. In recommending seasonal apportionments, regulations require the Council to base its decision on factors listed in the adjacent box.

Seasonal apportionments can be based on the following information:

1. Seasonal distribution of Pacific cod relative to PSC distribution;
2. Expected variations in PSC bycatch rates in the Pacific cod fishery throughout the fishing year; and
3. Economic effects of any seasonal apportionment of Pacific cod on the hook-and-line and pot gear fisheries.

Under Amendment 46, two percent of the TAC is reserved for jig gear, 51 percent for fixed gear, and 47 percent for trawl gear. The trawl apportionment will be split between catcher vessels and catcher processors 50/50. Any unused TAC from the jig gear quota will become available to fixed gear on September 15.

For the 1999 fisheries, the Council recommended that 60,000 mt of the fixed gear's allocation be released during the first trimester (January 1 - April 30), 8,500 mt be released for the second trimester (May 1 - September 14), and 15,000 mt for the third trimester.

Adopt bycatch allowances of Pacific halibut, crab, and herring

Halibut

For the Trawl Fisheries: Amendment 21 established a 3,775 mt limit on halibut mortality for trawl gear. This limit can be apportioned to the trawl fishery categories as shown in the

Categories used for prohibited species catch (PSC) apportionment in trawl fisheries.

1. Greenland turbot, arrowtooth flounder and sablefish;
2. rock sole and "other flatfish;"
3. yellowfin sole;
4. rockfish;
5. Pacific cod; and,
6. pollock, Atka mackerel and "other species."

adjacent box. Note that the recently adopted ban on bottom trawl gear for BSAI pollock fisheries will reduce PSC limits by 100 mt of halibut mortality. Also note that under Amendment 46, the trawl halibut PSC mortality cap for Pacific cod will be no greater than 1,600 mt.

For Fixed Gear Fisheries: A 900 mt non-trawl gear halibut mortality can be apportioned to the fishery categories listed in the adjacent box. Note that under Amendment 46, the hook-and-line halibut PSC mortality cap for Pacific cod will be no greater than 900 mt. Item D-1(b)(2) is a table indicating this past year's PSC allocations and seasonal apportionments for the trawl and non-trawl fisheries. Item D-1(b)(3) is a current summary of PSC bycatch accounting for BSAI fisheries.

Categories used for PSC apportionment in non-trawl fisheries.
1. Pacific cod;
2. Other non-trawl (longline sablefish and rockfish, and jig gear)
3. Groundfish pot (exempt in recent years)

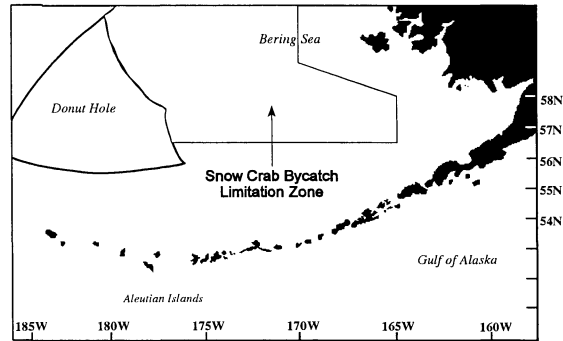
Crab

Prescribed bottom trawl fisheries in specific areas are closed when prohibited species catch (PSC) limits of C. bairdi Tanner crab, C. opilio crab, and red king crab are taken. Amendment 37 established a **stairstep procedure** for determining PSC limits for red king crab taken in Zone 1 trawl fisheries. PSC limits are based on abundance of Bristol Bay red king crab as shown in the adjacent table. Given NMFS and ADF&G's 1999 abundance estimate for Bristol Bay red king crab, a Zone 1 PSC limit will be established at 100,000 red king crabs for 2000. This will be further reduced by 3,000 crabs with adoption of Amendment 57, so the total red king crab PSC limit in 2000 will be 97,000 crabs. The regulations also specify that up to 30% of the PSC apportioned to the rock sole fishery can be used in the 56^o - 56^o10' strip of the Red King Crab Savings Area..

PSC limits for red king crab and <u>C. bairdi</u> Tanner crab.			
Species	Zone	Crab Abundance	PSC Limit
Red King Crab	Zone 1	Below threshold or 14.5 million lbs of effective spawning biomass (ESB)	35,000
		Above threshold, but below 55 million lbs of ESB	100,000
		Above 55 million lbs of ESB	200,000
Tanner Crab	Zone 1	0-150 million crabs	0.5% of abundance
		150-270 million crabs	750,000
		270-400 million crabs	850,000
		over 400 million crabs	1,000,000
Tanner Crab	Zone 2	0-175 million crabs	1.2% of abundance
		175-290 million crabs	2,100,000
		290-400 million crabs	2,550,000
		over 400 million crabs	3,000,000

Amendment 41 established stairstep PSC limits for Tanner crab. Given 1999 survey abundance of 349 million Tanner crab, and the 50,000 crab reduction as part of Amendment 57, the 2000 C. bairdi PSC limits will be established at 830,000 Tanner crabs in Zone 1 and 2,520,000 Tanner crabs in Zone 2.

Under Amendment 40, PSC limits for snow crab (*C. opilio*) are based on total abundance of *opilio* crab as indicated by the NMFS standard trawl survey. The snow crab PSC cap is set at 0.1133% of the Bering Sea snow crab abundance index, with a minimum PSC of 4.5 million snow crab and a maximum of 13 million snow crab. Amendment 57 included a provision to reduce the PSC limit for snow crab by an additional 150,000 crabs. Snow crab taken within the "C. Opilio Bycatch Limitation Zone" accrue towards the PSC limits established for individual trawl fisheries. The 1999 survey indicated a total population of 1.4 billion crabs. Therefore, the 2000 snow crab PSC limit will be established at 4,350,000 crabs.



Location of the *C. opilio* bycatch limitation zone.

Herring

Amendment 16a established an overall herring PSC bycatch cap of 1 percent of the EBS biomass of herring. This cap is to be apportioned to the same six PSC fishery categories listed above, plus a seventh group, mid-water pollock. Last year, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game forecasted the 1999 herring biomass at 168,512 mt. The 1999 PSC limit was set at 1 percent of the biomass in metric tons, or 1,685 mt. Item D-1(b)(4) is ADF&G's summary report on the 1999 fisheries and assessments.

Seasonal Apportionment of bycatch limits

The Council may also seasonally apportion the bycatch allowances. Regulations require that seasonal apportionments of bycatch allowances be based on the following types of information listed in the adjacent box. Additional information on PSC limits and apportionments is presented in a BSAI SAFE Appendix.

Staff will present a worksheet with SSC and AP recommendations for ABCs, TACs, PSC and seasonal apportionments when the Council addresses this action item.

Factors to be considered for seasonal apportionment of bycatch allowances.

1. Seasonal distribution of prohibited species;
2. Seasonal distribution of target groundfish species relative to prohibited species distribution;
3. Expected prohibited species bycatch needs on a seasonal basis relevant to change in prohibited species biomass and expected catches of target groundfish species;
4. Expected variations in bycatch rates throughout the fishing year;
5. Expected changes in directed groundfish fishing seasons;
6. Expected start of fishing efforts; and
7. Economic effects of establishing seasonal prohibited species apportionments on segments of the target groundfish industry.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC had several general comments on the SAFE documents (please see SSC Minutes, Appendix III to these minutes for details). With regard to the ABCs for Bering Sea groundfish, the SSC agreed with the recommendations of the Plan Team with the exception of Eastern Bering Sea and Bogoslof pollock, and the "other species" complex. With regard to EBS and Bogoslof pollock, the SSC recommended more conservative ABCs of 1,139,000 mt and 22,300 mt, respectively. With regard to the other species complex, the SSC recommended an ABC of 31,360 mt, following their 10-year staircase strategy begun last year. For comments on each of the species and more explanation of the SSC's recommendations, please see their minutes.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel recommended the Council approve the Groundfish environmental assessment and BSAI SAFE documents for the year 2000 fisheries, and suggested adoption of the ABCs as recommended by the SSC.

The AP recommended that the BSAI groundfish TACs for 2000 be set equal to the ABCs, with the following exceptions:

Aleutian Islands pollock	- set TAC at 2,000 mt
Bogoslof pollock	- set TAC at 1,000 mt
Yellowfin sole	- set TAC at 134,760 mt
Flathead sole	- set TAC at 52,652 mt
Other flatfish	- set TAC at 83,813 mt

The AP recommended the Council adopt the following seasonal apportionments of the fixed gear Pacific cod TAC:

January 1 - April 30	65,000 mt
May 1 - August 31	0 mt
September 1 - December 31	26,048 mt

The AP recommended the Council adopt the following halibut PSC limits for fixed gear Pacific cod: 810 mt apportioned: 495 mt to first trimester; 0 mt to second trimester, and 315 mt to third trimester.

For other non-trawl fisheries, the halibut PSC limit would be 90 mt. Groundfish pot fisheries would be exempted.

Please see the AP Minutes (Appendix V to these minutes) for their recommendations for PSC catch limits for the trawl fisheries and halibut discard mortality rates for all BSAI groundfish fisheries for 2000.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Bob Mace moved to approve the recommendations of the Advisory Panel with regard to the environmental assessment, SAFE, ABCs, TACs and apportionments for the BSAI groundfish fisheries for 2000. The motion was seconded by Robin Samuelsen.

Linda Behnken moved to amend the motion: for the year 2000, to adopt the methodology developed by the Plan Team for incorporating fishery data into the sablefish apportionment process, and for the year 2000 to set the ABC and TAC for the Eastern Bering Sea sablefish at 1,470 mt, and at 2,430 mt for the Aleutian Islands. The motion was seconded by Robin Samuelsen and carried without objection.

The main motion, as amended, carried without objection.

Sue Salveson pointed out that current regulations will not allow implementation of the AP recommendation to roll over unused halibut PSC apportionment in the yellowfin sole fishery from the second quarter to the fourth quarter (footnote 7 for the table, "2000 BSAI Trawl Fisheries PSC" appended to AP Minutes). **By friendly amendment, this recommendation was deleted from the motion.**

NOAA General Counsel requested Council reasoning for the seasonal apportionment of the fixed gear Pacific cod TAC. Mr. Kyle pointed out that industry has indicated that seasonal apportionments will help to control bycatch.

Robin Samuelsen asked that staff make a notation on the specification table released to the public to indicate that a different data set was used this year by the Plan Team to develop the ABC and OFL recommendations for 2000, and by the Council in setting the TAC. Mr. Samuelsen felt that this information will help in the future when comparing TACs from one year to another.

Final Council action on the BSAI groundfish specifications for 2000 are found in Appendix VI to these minutes.

D-1(c-e) Gulf of Alaska

ACTION REQUIRED

- (c) Review 2000 GOA EA and Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document.**
- (d) Approve final GOA groundfish and bycatch specifications for 2000.**
- (e) Approve halibut discard mortality rates.**

BACKGROUND

At this meeting, the Council sets final recommendations for groundfish and bycatch specifications. The final SAFE report, groundfish OFLs, ABCs and TACs, bycatch apportionments, and halibut discard mortality rates need to be approved. These final specifications will be used for managing the 2000 groundfish fisheries and will supercede the Council's preliminary specifications upon implementation.

(c) GOA SAFE Document

The groundfish Plan Teams met in Seattle during the week of November 15-19 to prepare the final SAFE documents provided at this meeting. This SAFE report forms the basis for final groundfish specifications for the 2000 fishing year. The final GOA SAFE contains the Plan Team's estimates of biomass, OFLs, and ABCs for all groundfish species covered under the FMP and information concerning PSC bycatch to provide guidance to the Council in establishing PSC apportionments. The attached tables from the SAFE report lists the Plan Team's

recommended 2000 ABCs and corresponding OFLs for each species or species complex. Item D-1(c)(1) contains the minutes of the GOA Plan Team meeting.

(d) Final ABCs and TACs

At this meeting the SSC and AP will provide recommendations on ABCs and TACs to the Council and the Council will establish final catch specifications for the 2000 fisheries. Tables 1-4 from the SAFE summary chapter listing groundfish OFLs and ABCs are attached as Item D-1(d)(1). The Plan Team's sum of recommended ABCs for 2000 is 451,000 mt, a decrease of approximately 81,500 mt from the total ABCs of 532,590 mt in 1999.

Overall, the status of the stocks in the Gulf of Alaska continues to be relatively favorable, although some stocks remain below target stock size. The Plan Team recommended the same ABC for pollock (103,020 mt) in 2000 as was recommended in 1999. It recommended a lower ABC of 76,400 mt for Pacific cod, compared to 84,400 mt in 1999. ABC recommendations for flatfish decreased slightly, with the exception of rex sole and flathead sole, which increased slightly. Slope rockfish recommendations were also adjusted only slightly. Both PSR and thornyhead rockfish recommendations increased from 4,880 mt and 1,990 mt in 1999 to 5,980 mt and 2,360 mt in 2000, respectively. The DSR ABC recommendation decreased from 560 mt in 1999 to 340 mt in 2000. The sablefish recommended ABC increased to 13,400 mt. Arrowtooth flounder decreased by about 7% from 217,100 mt in 1999 to 145,360 mt in 2000. Catches totaled approximately 74% of the 1999 TAC, as of December 2, 1999.

TAC considerations for State waters Pacific cod fishery

Beginning in 1997, the Council has reduced the GOA Pacific cod TAC to account for removals from the State P. cod fisheries. In December 1998, the Council allowed for the automatic increase in the Kodiak and Chignik subareas and reduced the Central area TAC accordingly. The Council also allowed for the automatic increase in the South Alaska Peninsula and consequently reduced the Western area TAC.

1999 Gulf Pacific cod ABC, TAC and State guideline harvest level (mt).

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	29,540	53,170	1,690	84,400
BOF GHl	5,910	10,235	420	16,565
(%)	20	19.25	25	19.6
TAC	23,630	42,935	1,270	67,835
Cook Inlet	1,196	2.25%		
Kodiak	5,317	10.00%		
<u>Chignik</u>	<u>3,722</u>	<u>7.00%</u>		
Central	10,235	19.25%		

According to ADF&G, the South Alaska Peninsula likely will take its full allocation in 1999, and will automatically ramp up in 2000 to 25% of the Federal ABC for the Western area (Item D-1(d)(2)). Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Chignik, and Prince William Sound are predicted to not attain their GHLS in 1999. Using the projected increase in the state water GHL for the Western area and the Plan Team's recommended ABC for 2000, the federal TAC for P. cod would be adjusted as listed at right.

2000 Gulf Pacific cod ABC, TAC and State guideline harvest level (mt).

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	27,500	43,550	5,350	76,400
BOF GHL	6,875	8,384	1,338	16,597
(%)	25	19.25	25	21.7
TAC	20,625	35,166	4,012	59,803
	Cook Inlet	980	2.25%	
	Kodiak	4,355	10.00%	
	<u>Chignik</u>	<u>3,049</u>	<u>7.00%</u>	
	Central	8,384	19.25%	

PSC Limits for Halibut

Trawl gear			Hook and Line		
1st quarter	600 mt	(30%)	1st trimester	250 mt	(86%)
2nd quarter	400 mt	(20%)	2nd trimester	15 mt	(5%)
3rd quarter	600 mt	(30%)	3rd trimester	25 mt	(9%)
4th quarter	400 mt	(20%)	DSR	10 mt	
2,000 mt			300 mt		

Quarter	Trawl apportionments		Total
	Shallow water <u>Complex</u>	Deep water <u>Complex</u>	
1	500 mt	100 mt	600 mt
2	100 mt	300 mt	400 mt
3	200 mt	400 mt	600 mt
4	No apportionment		400 mt

(e) Halibut Discard Mortality Rates

The GOA and BSAI SAFE reports contain recommendations by IPHC staff for managing halibut bycatch in 1999. Item D-1(e)(1) lists the IPHC recommendations for setting discard mortality rates for the 2000 fishery in the BSAI and GOA. Gregg Williams, IPHC, will present this report.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC agreed with the Plan Team's recommendations for Gulf of Alaska groundfish ABCs for 2000, with the exception of pollock. The SSC preferred to use current stock assessments rather than rolling over the 1999 ABC. Based on their calculations, the SSC recommended an ABC of 100,000 mt for GOA pollock. See the SSC Minutes (Appendix III to these minutes) for more detailed comments.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel recommended the Council approve the EA and SAFE documents for the 2000 GOA groundfish fisheries, and the SSC's recommendations for ABCs. The AP recommended setting the TACs equal to the ABC for all GOA groundfish species except for Pacific cod and the flatfish complex. For Pacific cod, the AP recommended a TAC of 59,800 mt; for shallow water flatfish, 19,400 mt; for flathead sole, 9,060, and for arrowtooth flounder, 35,000 mt.

The AP also recommended the Council adopt the PSC limits for halibut as shown in the chart in Attachment 4 to the AP Minutes (Appendix V to these minutes), and halibut discard mortality rates as recommended by the IPHC.

Additionally, AP recommended:

1. The Plan team and SSC standardize their procedures for setting ABCs lower than tier levels would indicate.
2. Request NMFS continue to incorporate sablefish fishery catch rates in the assessment. The AP additionally requests the Council recommend to the plan team and SSC work with NMFS to address their concerns about using sablefish fishery catch rate data, including catch rate bias and catchability differences.
3. Adopt the Plan team's recommendation to consider placing the "other species" assemblage on bycatch status until an FMP amendment is in place.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Bob Mace moved to approve the recommendations of the Advisory Panel with respect to the GOA EA, SAFE documents, and groundfish specifications for 2000, including setting the "other species" category on a bycatch-only status. The motion was seconded by Robin Samuelsen.

Linda Behnken moved to amend to change the allocation of ABCs and TACs among districts for sablefish to reflect the apportionment from the blend of fishery and survey data, as follows: Western Gulf-1,840 mt; Central Gulf-5,730 mt; West Yakutat area-2,207; East Yakutat/SEO-3,553. The motion was seconded by Robin Samuelsen and carried without objection.

Ms. Behnken pointed out that the total ABC will not change and that this will make the entire 5% sablefish trawl allocation available in the West Yakutat area.

The main motion, as amended, carried without objection.

Linda Behnken moved, with regard to sablefish, to endorse the methodology of using the proposal offered by the Plan Team to use a blend of survey fishery information, weighting the survey at 2/3, and the fishery at 1/3. The Plan Team and the Council would review the information annually to ensure that the health of the stocks is not compromised or that inappropriate bias is introduced. The motion was seconded by Kevin O'Leary and carried without objection.

E. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Lauber adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:30 a.m. on Monday, December 13, 1999.

Persons Giving Public Comment

C-1 American Fisheries Act

Fred Yeck, Midwater Trawlers Cooperative
Ben Hogoval, F/V Cape Kiwanda
Joe Sullivan, UniSea Fleet Co-op/Mothership Co-op
Donna Parker/Dan Hanson, Arctic Storm
Kent Ashley, F/V Gold Rush
Mike Martin, F/V Walter N.
Stoian Iankov, Gulf Coalition
Joe Hockema, C/V Pacific Ram
Doug Hodel, F/V Peggy Jo
Jonathan Spool, Alaska Marine Corp.
Trevor McCabe, At-sea Processors Assn.
Jack Stern, Trustees for Alaska/Jerry Leap, Greenpeace
Doug Forsyth, Mothership Cooperative
Joe Plesha, Trident Seafoods
Mark Chandler, F/V Topaz
Brent Paine/Vern Hall, United Catcher Boats
Bill Oliver, F/V Elizabeth F.
John Gauvin, Groundfish Forum
Beth Stewart, Aleutians East Borough
Dorothy Childers, Alaska Marine Conservation Council

C-2 Essential Fish Habitat

Dorothy Childers, AMCC

C-3 Halibut GHL

Joe Malatesta
Joe Svymbersky, Homer Charter Assn.
Dan Falvey, ALFA/Paul Barnes
Bonnie Millard
David Whitmore
Peggy McNeese, Alaska Visitors Assn.
Rion Vanek
Brad Faulkner, Alaska Custom Seafoods
Patrick Cashman
Tammy Shrader
Ken Schoming, Homer Charter Assn.
Arne Fuglvog, PVOA
Gayle Vick, Rural Communities
Roger Aulabaugh, Kodiak Assoc. of Charter Operators

Mike Bethers/Jim Preston/Jay Lloyd, Alaska Sportsfish Council
Bob Alverson/Jack Knudsen/Tim Hinkle, Fishing Vessel Owners Assn.
Shari Gross, Halibut Assn of North America
George Hiller/Tim Evers/Mark Smith/Dan Martin, Industry Group
Steve Vanek, Ninilchik
Gerry Merrigan, PVOA
Dave Martin
Otto Florschutz
Joe Macinko, Kodiak
Tom Gemmel, Halibut Coalition
Tom Ohaus, Sitka Charter Assoc.
Bruce Gabrys, Eagle River
Bob Ward, Alaska Charterboats
Ernie Johnson, Eagle River

C-4 Steller Sea Lions

Doug Forsyth, Pacific Mothership Assn
Glenn Merrill, AEB
Chris Blackburn, Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
Brent Paine, UCB

C-5 Pacific Cod LLP

Joe Sullivan, Mundt/MacGregor
Paul aBrogdan/David Gentry, Kodiak
Mike Wahl, F/V Vixen
John Winther/Gerry Merrigan, PVOA
Kurt Vedoy, F/V Blue Fin
Ed Poulsen, F/V Arctic Sea
Ron Painter, F/V Kortrina-Em
Rick Shelford, F/V Aleutian Lady
Dave Fraser, F/V Muir Milach

C-7 Halibut Subsistence

Matt Kookesh, T & H
Carl Jack, Kipnuk
Gilbert Fred, Angoon
Larry Merculieff, Bering Sea Coalition
Dorothy Childers, AMCC
Simeon Swetsoff, St. Paul Islands

C-8 Alaska Board of Fisheries Issues

Brent Paine, UCB
David Jentry, Kodiak
Glenn Merrill, AEB

D-1 Groundfish Specifications for 2000

Glenn Merrill, AEB

Pat McBride, F/V Judi B

Arne Fuglvog, PVOA

Wally Pereyra, Arctic Storm

John Henderschedt/Trevor McCabe/Brent Paine (Industry group)

Thorn Smith, North Pacific Longline Assn.

Steve Hughes, United Catcher Boats

Ed Richardson, APA

Paula Brogdan/David Jentry, Kodiak

Ron Painter, F/V Katrina Em

Chris Blackburn, AGDB

Gerry Merrigan, PVOA

DECEMBER Amercian Fisheries Act (AFA) Actions

EMERGENCY RULES

- Express support to NMFS for the first emergency rule to ensure inshore co-ops and sideboards can be in place for 2000.
- Request NMFS to move forward with the 2nd Emergency Rule, with the following revisions:
 - With regard to the single geographic location (SGL) issue, use same regulations as under Inshore-Offshore; i.e., vessels that process pollock at a SGL in State waters during a fishing year (can change between years).
 - Under Section 679.61(4), the Council expressed the intent to allow NMFS to use the appropriate regulatory text to reflect the specific calculation of sideboards as approved by the Council.
 - For AFA catcher vessels which meet the Council's qualifying criteria for exemptions under the 1700 mt rule in the Bering Sea cod and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries:
 1. Bering Sea cod:
 - A. Vessels less than 125 feet in length, and
 - B. The catcher vessel had a minimum of 30 landings in the directed Bering Sea cod fishery over the period of 1995, 1996 and 1997;
 2. Gulf of Alaska Groundfish:
 - A. Vessels less than 125 feet in length, and
 - B. The catcher vessel had a minimum of 40 groundfish landings in the Gulf of Alaska over the period of 1995, 1996 and 1997,

Vessels qualifying for the GOA exemption cannot lease their pollock quota.

3. Catcher vessels that meet the requirements of being an exempt vessel shall be treated by NMFS, in those fisheries to which the exemption applies, as a non-AFA vessel. The catch history of the exempt vessel (in the fishery to which the exemption applies) will not be included within the AFA cap for that fishery and the harvest of the exempt vessel will not be counted against the AFA cap.
- With regard to accounting of crab sideboards, add language under (d) (p 35) of the 2nd Emergency Rule, to read: “. . .or as may be adjusted based on total catch, whichever is higher.”

The proposed rule will also be published with the above provisions.

OTHER ACTIONS

1. Initiate an analysis for separate sideboard caps for AFA catcher vessels which meet the Council's qualifying criteria for exemptions in the Bering Sea cod and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries, as follows:

Options:

 1. 1700 mt
 2. 1200 mt

Bering Sea cod:

- A. Vessels less than 125 feet in length, and
- B. The catcher vessel had a minimum of 30 landings in the directed Bering Sea cod fishery over the period of 1995, 1996 and 1997;

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish:

- A. Vessels less than 125 feet in length, and
- B. The catcher vessel had a minimum of 40 groundfish landings in the Gulf of Alaska over the period of 1995, 1996 and 1997,

Establish a separate sideboard pool in each area that is based on the aggregate catch history (95-97) of those vessels that qualify for the exemption.

Option: Require vessels that participate in these pools to fish their Bering Sea pollock, i.e., no leasing.

2. Notice the public that the Council will be reviewing all aspects of the Proposed Rule in February, and may be addressing the following items, either as comment to the Proposed Rule or to initiate separate rulemaking.
 - A. Ensure that the dates in the Proposed Rule and Final Rule for co-op agreement submittal will ensure review by the Council at the December meeting.
 - B. Require re-submittal of co-op agreements for Council review if modified, with re-submittal scheduled such that revised co-op agreements would be reviewed by the Council at its next regular meeting.
 - C. Establish requirements for co-ops to submit economic information, including price data, in their performance reports.
 - D. Establish an application deadline of December 1, 2000 to become an AFA-qualified vessel.
3. The Council in February will also be reviewing the issue of using total vs retained catch for calculating sideboards. Staff will provide to the public and the Council any existing analyses relevant to this issue, and to the extent possible, supplemental tables showing the difference between retained and total catch in the appropriate categories.
4. Add to current analysis of groundfish processing sideboards, the following option: For Bering Sea flatfish species, a processing cap for AFA qualified processors would apply in the aggregate to the at-sea, mothership and shoreside processors overall. The cap would be based on the total of each sector's average processing history of BS flatfish species for 1995-1997. (The intent is that the Council would have the option to apply such a cap either overall or by sector.)

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
Clarence G. Pautzke, Executive Director



605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone: (907) 271-2809

Fax: (907) 271-2817

Certified: Kare Bendixen
Date: 2/3/00

MINUTES Scientific Statistical Committee December 6-8, 1999

The Scientific Statistical Committee met December 6-8, 1999 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. All members were present :

Richard Marasco, Chair	Jack Tagart, Vice Chair	Keith Criddle
Steve Hare	Sue Hills	Dan Kimura
Doug Larson	Seth Macinko	Terry Quinn
Doug Eggers	Al Tyler	Hal Weeks

C-3 HALIBUT CHARTER GHL ANALYSIS

The Council staff provided an overview of the draft EA/RIR/IRFA for a halibut charter GHL. Dr. Mark Herrmann (University of Alaska Fairbanks) and ADF&G staff provided insight into information and analyses that Council staff used in the preparation of the draft EA/RIR/IRFA. Public testimony was received from Gerry Merrigan (Petersburg Vessel Owners Association), Bruce Gabrys, Gale Vic (Kodiak Native Tourism Association and several other entities), Jim Preston (Juneau Charter Boat Owners Association), Mike Bethers (Alaska Sportfish Council), Tomm Gemmell (Halibut Coalition), John Burns, and Tim Henkle (Deep Sea Fishermen's Union).

The SSC cannot recommend for or against releasing the document for public review because of the limited time it had to review the document. However, the SSC can offer the following comments based on an abbreviated review of the document.

1. The document does not provide definitive evidence on the net benefits of different options for halibut charterboat management. While it does provide some new information on the levels of net economic benefits, it does not provide a comprehensive look at the changes in net economic benefits with different policies. The document would benefit from a brief discussion of the analytical framework that is appropriate for consideration of the allocation decision that is before the Council. However, it is important that all participants in the Council process understand that even if a comprehensive set of studies were available, such models have limited ability to predict the consequences of major changes in the regulatory structure or management strategy. It will inevitably fall to the Council to decide who should gain at whose expense.

2. It is fortuitous that Council staff was able to draw on preliminary reports of research projects funded by Alaska Sea Grant, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and the Coastal Marine Institute (University of Alaska/Minerals Management Service). These projects provided information that helped to characterize the commercial fishery (a model of the exvessel demand for halibut), and the halibut sport fishery (angler expenditures, angler effort, marine sport fishing participation rate model, compensating variation to anglers, and a sport fishing economic impact model). The sport fishing studies address marine fisheries off the Kenai Peninsula. Differences in clientele, travel-related costs, and purpose of visit limit, to some degree, the appropriateness of using these studies to characterize angler characteristics and behaviors in other regions within Area 3A and Area 2C. Nevertheless, because estimates of compensating variation are a product of the demand for charter fishing services, it does not seem unreasonable that the demand function, and hence compensating variation and expenditure estimates for the rest of area 3A and area 2C would closely resemble those in the Kenai Peninsula. The SSC encourages the authors to examine the Jones and Stokes reports for Southeast and South-Central sport fishing in the mid-1980s to see if the estimates of marine sport fisheries values are comparable.
3. In any allocation decision, the action will serve to advantage one sector relative to another. Consequently, it is incumbent on the EA/RIR/IRFA authors to provide as balanced a treatment as possible of the impacts on each party. The Executive Summary should be reviewed to ensure a more balanced tone. For example, the first paragraph of Section 1, p. xix of the Executive Summary, fails to be balanced because it mentions only the costs to the commercial sector of recreational growth, without mentioning the benefits of recreational growth. Overall, the analysis does not provide as comprehensive an evaluation of the commercial sector. It would have been helpful to have current information on the cost structure and expenditure patterns of commercial halibut harvesters and processors. In addition to facilitating the estimation of net benefits to halibut consumers, halibut processors, and quota share-holders, this information could have contributed to the development of a regional model of the economic impact of commercial fishing. Where it is not possible to quantify these impacts, it is critical that the authors provide a thorough qualitative discussion of the probable impacts.
4. The EA/RIR/IRFA makes a generally persuasive case that most of the management measures under consideration for implementing the GHL will not be effective in constraining and reducing sport halibut harvest. The possible exception is a reduction in the daily bag limit of halibut from 2 fish to 1. The EA/RIR/IRFA makes an interesting attempt to link the bag limit reduction to changes in participation and expenditures, but it is unclear exactly what the magnitude of these effects will be. The SSC has some skepticism about the model's prediction of large reductions in participation. In particular, the results reported in Table 6.9 are difficult to reconcile with demand elasticity information provided in Table 4.9. The discussion on the expected economic consequences of a bag-limit restriction needs to be reviewed and clarified. Because bag limits have been identified as the primary tool for constraining sport catches, it is critical to understand the likely effect that bag limit changes would have on angler participation and total retained catch.
5. The evaluation of Issue 1, Option 2 (GHL as a fixed range of numbers of fish) could benefit from a greater elaboration of the potential allocative effects. The SSC encourages staff to more fully address the potential effects of applying a GHL determined during a period of high abundance and relatively small fish to a future halibut stock that might be comprised of a substantially smaller number of larger fish. For example, a 12% GHL expressed in numbers of fish and based on the current size-

at-age structure of the halibut stock could be a much larger share of the halibut biomass if the biomass dropped 25% and halibut size-at-age increased by 25%.

6. The SSC is doubtful about the assertions in item (9) in the Conclusions on p. 148, and recommends these be deleted.
7. In Table 6.11, p. 163, the authors should also calculate and include changes in recreational consumer's surplus.
8. Tables 6.8 and 6.9, p. 161, are confusing. It should be clarified that "Halibut Total" in 6.8 is the average catch (kept plus released) and the specific changes in catch should be listed for each of the cases in 6.9.
9. In Table 6.1, p. 154, the column labeling should be edited to make it clear that both fish ranges and pounds ranges from 100-125% are being presented.
10. We note that although the problem statement identifies a suite of social and economic issues, the analysis provides very limited discussion of social impacts.
11. The SSC does not believe that in-season management of the halibut charter fishery should be summarily dismissed. While we acknowledge that in-season management requires close monitoring of catches, we note that in-season management has proven feasible and effective in numerous sport fisheries, e.g. the Southeast Alaska chinook salmon marine sport fishery. In-season management minimizes carryover type problems that could have undesirable effects on stock assessment and management.

In several respects, the EA/RIR/IRFA represents a significant improvement in the analysis of economic effects of allocation decisions. For example, a serious effort is made to examine the recreational demand for charter halibut trips and the associated consumer's surplus. Similarly, attempts are made to consider the producer's surplus, quota rents, and consumer's surplus associated with commercial fishing.

Finally, the SSC would be negligent if it failed to warn the Council that the preponderance of evidence from fisheries in the North Pacific and other regions suggests that allocations between user groups are unlikely to be definitively settled by any single allocation decision. Instead, these allocation battles are reopened whenever a set of stakeholders believes that their negotiating position has improved. As noted in our previous minutes, IFQs are a mechanism that would shift this burdensome reallocation battle out of the Council chambers and into the marketplace. While development of an IFQ is no simple matter, there are ways that it could be simplified: create new QS equivalent to the proposed GHLS; select a minimum QS size (1,000 lbs?) and allocate the QS by lottery or some similar mechanism; and, let the recipients buy and sell to each other and any other would be charter operators, and let them buy and sell in the commercial IFQ market.

C-2 ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT

The SSC received a report from Jon Kurland (NMFS-AKRO) on NMFS request for additional public comment to assist in developing final regulations for implementing essential fish habitat measures.

D-1 GROUND FISH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The SAFE documents are being incorporated into Environmental Assessment documents as appendices to improve NEPA compliance on the specifications setting process. The SSC received a report from Tom Pearson (NMFS-AKRO) on this topic, but we did not have adequate time to thoroughly review and critique the document.

GENERAL SAFE CONSIDERATIONS

1. Modeling considerations—The difficulty in modeling populations is that while fishing removals are observable, environmental factors are measurable, and biomass and age(size)-structure can be sampled, the mechanisms of growth, predation, natural mortality, and recruitment can only be indirectly measured. Moreover, the role of environmental factors in determination of these unobserved processes is also unknown. There are two approaches to formally treat these latent processes: they can be specified as known functions of observable variables (structural modeling), or they can be modeled using procedures based on the stationarity of the primary series (time series analysis). Structural models require prior specification of causal relationships and dynamic linkages. Time series models provide forecasts that are conditional on the assumed stationarity of the forecasted time series but do not require prior specification of the form of dynamic linkages. When causal relationships are uncertain and dynamic linkages are important, time series procedures often provide superior forecasts. Mixed models share the advantages and disadvantages of both modeling approaches.

For structural models, the problem of forecasting changes in biomass 10-12 years out is that such forecasts are conditioned on the quality of forecasts of the input data series. For time series models, the problem is that the dynamics evident in the state variables attenuate for stationary time series. The selection of a model for long-range forecasts should consider the length of dynamics in the series to be modeled, and the reliability of forecasts of the input data series. It is unlikely that one modeling approach, no matter how well suited to one species, will be the best modeling approach for all species. If a species is characterized by important long-period dynamics, those dynamics will be conserved over a relatively long forecast horizon and it will be important to base the forecasts on a time series that is at least twice as long as the longest significant lagged effect. In contrast, less information is lost when the forecasts of biomass for a species with relatively short dynamics are based on a short time series. Other factors related to biological processes are also likely to be important in determining optimal time series length. For example, the decision to base the NEPA compliance forecasts on post-1976 recruitments requires the assumption that the environment underwent a state shift in 1976 and that it will not revert or move to a new state over the forecast horizon.

Representing recruitment as a sequence of independent random draws from an inverse Gaussian distribution, implies that there is no confidence in estimated stock-recruit relationships, and dampens the dynamic variation of biomass that is driven by such stock-recruitment processes. Suppressing these lagged effects will result in a model that may over- or understate changes in stock biomass. While this approach may be appropriate for a stock that lacks a significant spawner-recruit relationship and is characterized by short period dynamics, it is clearly inappropriate for species with pronounced spawner-recruit relationships and long-period dynamics. Therefore, the SSC requests that analysts also consider alternate models for forecasting that consider density dependence and autocorrelation.

2. Data truncation considerations—While there are many rules of thumb for the rejection of outlying observations, researchers are generally reluctant to discard unusual observations unless it is known that the

observation was improperly generated or recorded. The decision to truncate a data series should be based on a similar criterion: discard the data if and only if a suspect process generated it. If it is believed that the dynamics of a particular stock have undergone a fundamental shift through time, then it would be best to incorporate a variable (or an instrument or proxy) that caused (or is closely correlated with) the shift in productivity. To truncate the data series is tantamount to arguing that there is no information in the omitted observations. It is addressing the symptoms rather than the problem. The problem is that the model was misspecified, that one or more significant explanatory variables was omitted, and as a consequence, the estimated coefficients will be biased, inconsistent, and inefficient. It is generally better to weight observations according to estimates of their reliability (using a measure of variability or a prior) than to discard them.

Consistency in ABC recommendations

As we noted last year, the Teams and SSC have recommended ABCs that are lower than the maximum permissible for a variety of stocks. The SSC continues to be interested in the topic of whether these downward adjustments are made in a consistent manner. In examining where these adjustments are made, the SSC notes some of the situations that could trigger the adjustment: (1) low stock size relative to the historical record or a long decline in biomass over time, (2) a persistently decreasing recruitment trend, (3) uncertainty in recent data (such as high variability in the most recent survey biomass estimate), (4) lack of essential data in the stock assessment (e.g., the lack of a valid biomass estimate for GOA Atka mackerel), and (5) ecosystem concerns, such as sufficient long-term availability of food for sea lions or birds. For any particular stock, one or more of these situations might be operative. The SSC notes that the Teams and SSC are fairly consistent in making reductions when these situations occur, but that the magnitude of the reduction tends to vary. This is not necessarily a concern because each stock's condition is unique and the rationale for the reduction is usually different. Nevertheless, the SSC recommends that when adjustments are made, that the rationale for the reduction be carefully explained (and it usually is). Furthermore, the SSC will work with the Plan Teams in the next year to craft a new overfishing definition amendment that hopefully will strive for additional consistency in formulating ABC and OFL recommendations.

One interesting situation this year occurred with the sablefish stock assessment. A reduction from the maximum permissible was not made, despite a low stock size and a long period of low recruitment. In this case, the new assessment provided new information that suggested that while the stock was low, it was stable rather than declining. In addition, a decision analysis suggested that there was a low probability (20%) that biomass would decline in the next 5 years with a harvest at this maximum permissible level (about 17,000 mt). Therefore, the Plan Team decided and the SSC concurred that there was no need to make a downward adjustment.

Using Fishery CPUE

Statistically designed surveys have advantages over fishery CPUE for inferring the behavior of fish populations because they are synoptic in time, and provide uniform area coverage. Generally CPUE is to be used in lieu of survey data, gear must be standardized for all relevant factors, and the CPUE data analyzed to compensate for non-uniformity in time and area sampling. If the CPUE data are not adjusted for these factors, the potential for bias exists. Also, if CPUE data is to be combined with survey data, it should be clearly demonstrated statistically or otherwise, that real gains will be made.

Survey Randomization

Currently bottom trawl surveys are designed using a random stratified approach, where stations are randomly selected within depths along selected transects. However, once selected the survey stations have been fixed over time. Fixing stations provides logistical efficiencies for subsequent surveys, known untrawlable stations having been identified; however there is a question of whether the repeated surveys meet the independence assumption for samples within strata. Re-numbering the survey annually would assure independence of samples, and over time provide more detailed information regarding spatial variability in species population density. The SSC recommends that the Plan Team request a statistical review of survey strategies to thoroughly evaluate the pros and cons of annually re-randomizing survey stations.

Averaging

The problem of averaging survey biomass to arrive at area distribution of biomass which could be used to allocate ABC to EBS and GOA subareas was notable in this year's SAFE. In general, recent years of survey data can be combined using unweighted averages, weighting by inverse variance, or exponential weighting described in the sablefish and POP SAFE documents in the GOA SAFE. The averaging method (and weighting by inverse variance) essentially assume measurement error only, and are most appropriate when it can be assumed that measurement error predominates. The exponential weighting can be viewed as coming from the state space model where the true state or process can be viewed as evolving with a certain variance structures and sampled with an additive component of measurement error.

In cases where the exponential model is appropriate, the rate of exponential decay needs to be determined. The SSC suggests that analysis be performed through the direct analysis of data, or simulation, which would estimate or provide clear principles on which the decay coefficient can be determined.

Status Determination Criteria

The SSC reiterates its discomfort with these criteria, which purport to define when overfishing is occurring and which stock stocks are overfished. As mentioned elsewhere in the minutes, the values of the various biomass reference points (MSST, B35%) that trigger decision points about overfished condition are highly dependent on the length of the recruitment series used and assumptions about the joint recruitment distribution. Furthermore, the projections into the future are based on fishing at the overfishing level, which is substantially higher than ABC and TAC. A credible determination should be based on these lower values, but are apparently not allowed by NMFS rules.

One positive feature resulting from the status determination process is that 10-year projections are now done for all Tier 1, 2, and 3 stocks in a consistent manner.

D-1 (b) BERING SEA ALEUTIAN ISLAND SAFE

WALLEYE POLLOCK

Eastern Bering Sea (EBS) stock

The EBS stock assessment is based on an age-structured model that assimilates the suite of data sets that provide information about this stock. It is a state-of-the-art assessment and properly accounts for uncertainties in the data sets and in the population dynamics. The SSC focused its review on Models 2 and 5 in the stock assessment. The only difference between them is that Model 2 estimates a Ricker spawner-recruit relationship using data after 1976, while Model 5 uses data from the entire series dating back to 1964.

Both models provide similar estimates of most population parameters with Model 5 providing slightly higher estimates of recent biomass. Thus, Model 2 provides more conservative estimates of biomass (Year 2000 age 3+ $B = 7.7$ million mt; 2000 female spawning biomass $B_{sp} = 2.2$ million mt; $B_{MSY} = 1.8$ million t; $B_{40\%} = 2.3$ million mt; $MSY = 1.5$ million mt). The major difference between the two models is in the estimates of spawner-recruit parameters: Model 5 gives a more dome-shaped relationship between recruits and spawners than does Model 2. Surprisingly, Model 2 with the shorter data series gives a more similar spawner-recruit relationship to that obtained in last year's assessment (which used the entire data series) than does Model 5.

The choice of the better model depends on understanding of both biological processes affecting recruitment and statistical processes affecting estimation of parameters. Our current understanding of pollock recruitment is that there are two major factors: (1) interannual variability, which is related to the environment and (2) density-dependence, which is related to cannibalism and possibly other mechanisms. While there has been a "regime shift" in environmental conditions after 1976, this does not seem to have directly affected pollock recruitment. There have never been two strong year-classes in a row, suggesting potential interactions in these processes. Furthermore, there is interannual variability in environmental conditions in the Bering Sea (witness the extremely high water temperatures in 1998 related to El Nino versus the extremely cold water temperatures in 1999 related to La Nina). Consequently, the SSC suggests that use of the entire data series to determine the pollock spawner-recruit relationship would normally be desirable in order to increase sample size in determining the spawner-recruit relationship, unless it is shown that there has been a shift in the relationship or its variance.

There are two major mitigating factors that alter our advice with respect to the current assessment. The first is that data quality and availability are poorer in the earlier period. There is no survey information from the period before 1977 and the age-structured information is derived from length frequencies and an old age-length key. The SSC suggests that the analyst consider the use of Japan CPUE data as auxiliary information to stabilize parameter estimates for the earlier period, because overparameterization may be an issue. Secondly, the remarkable change in the spawner-recruit relationship from the 1998 to 1999 assessments is indicative of potential estimation problems in the model that must be resolved before Model 5 can be used with confidence. Problems with Model 5 include: (1) Model 5 suggests that current biomass is well above B_{MSY} contrary to previous information, (2) B_{MSY} in Model 5 is lower than has been consistently obtained in the past by a variety of authors, (3) Model 5 results suggest that extremely high fishing mortalities can be tolerated on the stock without affecting long-term yield or population sustainability, and (4) the productivity of the stock is substantially higher at low population sizes than previously thought. Therefore, the SSC is unwilling to accept Model 5 at this point, pending resolution of the issues of parameter estimability and plausibility of the model results. Consequently, the SSC agreed with the Plan Team to use Model 2 as the basis of its ABC determination.

The results from Model 2 suggest that the 1996 year-class is fairly strong and will lead to an increase of biomass in year 2000 and shortly thereafter. In last year's assessment, the population was slightly below the B_{MSY} level and this year's assessment suggests that current biomass has increased slightly beyond it. The MSY and its related parameters are estimated in accord with previous assessments, and so the SSC recommends keeping pollock in Tier 1, wherein a valid probability distribution for fishing mortality F_{MSY} is thought to be available. The maximum ABC under the overfishing definition is determined from the harmonic mean of the distribution, giving an F_{MSY} of 0.50 and maximum ABC of 1.2 million tons. In the past, the Plan Team and SSC have recommended the use of a lower fishing mortality $F_{40\%}$ to account for uncertainties in recruitment and other information and because there is not a broad range of age-classes supporting the fishery. The SSC recommends that $F_{40\%} = 0.48$ be used this year for the same reasons, which gives an ABC of 1.139 million tons. The Plan Team recommends a further reduction tied to the ratio of the current population to the target biomass level associated with $F_{40\%}$. The SSC does not support this further reduction, because the current population is above the B_{MSY} level, which is a more appropriate target under Tier 1 than $B_{40\%}$ (which is appropriate when a spawner-recruit relationship has not been determined). The SSC agrees with the Team's recommended OFL of 1.680 million mt from the arithmetic mean value of F_{MSY} under Tier 1a ($F_{OFL} = 0.8$).

Aleutian Islands

There is no new information for this area. The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendations for ABC (23,800 mt) and OFL (31,700 mt), obtained as the product of 1997 trawl survey biomass and the recommended F under Tier 5 (0.75M for ABC and M for OFL, where $M = 0.3$).

Bogoslof

The SSC agrees with the Team that Bogoslof more appropriately belongs in Tier 5 than in Tier 3, because the only real information for this stock includes a natural mortality value and biomass estimates from hydroacoustic surveys. Previously, the Team and SSC had used surrogates for $B_{40\%}$ and $F_{40\%}$, but under Amendment 56, it is important to be precise in the use of definitions, because of the importance of overfishing concerns. The SSC agrees that the maximum permissible ABC under Tier 5 is 71,300 mt (biomass of 475,000 mt \times 0.75M) and the OFL is 95,000 mt (biomass of 475,000 mt \times M), where $M = 0.2$. In concurring with the Plan Team, the SSC is accepting two changes over past practice: (1) current biomass is set equal to the most recent survey biomass estimate rather than decaying it for natural mortality (to be consistent with what is done for other stocks) and (2) using the entire hydroacoustic biomass estimate rather than that contained only in area 518 (because the entire estimate is a better estimate of this stock and pollock outside area 518 have the ability to readily move inside 518).

The SSC has had a long history of recommending lower ABCs based on consideration of the entire Aleutian Basin stock; see Appendix 1 (thanks to Grant Thompson for compiling this history). While the names of the reference points have changed over time, the SSC has been remarkably consistent in reducing fishing mortality based on the ratio of current biomass to a target biomass of about 2 million mt. This target is based on consideration of a reasonable target level (a surrogate for B_{MSY} , $B_{40\%}$, etc.) for a stock that is estimated to have been as large as 5 million mt or greater before the heavy exploitation of the 1980s. The SSC recommends that the same procedure be used to reduce ABC this year. This results in an ABC of 22,300 mt, based on an F of 0.053, a corresponding exploitation rate of 0.047, and a current biomass of 475,000 mt.

The SAFE contains an interesting age-structured model for this stock using only data from the Bogoslof surveys. If we were willing to ignore the connection of Bogoslof pollock to the Aleutian Basin, then this

model could provide a basis for determining ABC. However, we continue to believe that Bogoslof pollock are related to the Aleutian Basin stock, and therefore, ignoring data from the entire stock does not constitute use of best available information for this stock.

PACIFIC COD

Biological Reference Points

B spawning = $B_{ABC} = 357,000$

$B_{3+} = 1,300,000$

Catch ABC = 193,000

Catch OFL = 240,000

$F_{abc} = F_{40} = 0.26$

$F_{oil} = F_{35} = 0.33$

The SSC endorses the recommendation of the Plan Team to set the ABC of Pacific cod in the BS/AI region at 193,000 mt and the OFL at 240,000. The level is based on a risk-averse optimization procedure that adjusts for uncertainty in the selectivity coefficients and natural mortality rate in the computation of ABC. The SSC notes that the estimated spawning biomass has declined gradually during the decade of the 1990s. Still, biomass is much higher than it was in the 1970s.

The SSC commends the analyst for expanding his examination of the statistics of the sampling program and providing several tables showing the intensity of sampling across the many sectors of the fishery. The Committee recommends that these analyses continue in the direction described in the October 1999 SSC minutes, and cited in the Plan Team's SAFE document for November 1999.

YELLOWFIN SOLE

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommendation for ABC (191,000 mt; $F_{40\%} = 0.11$; Tier 3a) and OFL (226,000 mt; $F_{35\%} = 0.13$). The modeling approach is the same as used last year. There was a 44% decrease in the EBS bottom trawl survey estimate of biomass, a result the authors tentatively attribute to record cold bottom temperatures at the time of the survey. The stock assessment showed a more modest decrease in age 2+ biomass (11%) and the recommended ABC mirrors that decrease.

GREENLAND TURBOT

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommendation for ABC (9,300 mt; $.25 \times F_{40\%} = 0.065$; Tier 3a) and OFL (42,000 mt; $F_{35\%} = 0.32$). The situation for Greenland turbot does not appear to have substantially improved the past several years. The shelf trawl survey continues to show low biomass estimates; there is no indication of incoming strong recruitment, and the model estimates of age 1+ biomass continue their 25 year downward trend. One change from last year is that the ratio of spawning biomass to $B_{40\%}$ increased substantially. This change derives from the use this year of only post 1977 year class recruits to estimate $B_{40\%}$. The max F_{ABC} ($F_{40\%} = 0.26$) leads to an ABC of 34,700. Both the assessment authors and the Plan Team recommend a conservative ABC based on 25% of max F_{ABC} . The SSC supports this recommendation recognizing that the ABC recommendation is based on a harvest rate – as opposed to a constant catch – and therefore fluctuates with the biomass. Finally, there are other reasons to wait until next year before suggesting a more aggressive ABC. In 2000, the slope survey which covers the adult grounds will be conducted for the first time since 1991. Secondly, there is a possibility that a method for accurately aging turbot otoliths will be found. The present model uses a length-age transition matrix.

ARROWTOOTH FLOUNDER

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommendation for ABC (131,000 mt; $F_{40\%} = 0.22$; Tier 3A) and OFL (160,000 mt; $F_{35\%} = 0.27$.) The 1999 EBS bottom trawl survey showed a 29% decrease in biomass relative to 1998, the second consecutive year of sharp decline. This assessment was conducted using stock synthesis and the authors noted limitations in the software to modeling an unequal sex ratio. The SSC urges development of an assessment in AD Model Builder to permit calculations with an unequal sex ratio..

ROCK SOLE

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommendation for ABC (230,000 mt; $F_{40\%} = 0.15$; Tier 3a) and OFL (273,000 mt; $F_{35\%} = 0.19$). The 1999 EBS bottom trawl survey showed a 22% decline in biomass, the second consecutive year of sharp decline. The modeling approach is unchanged for this species. The assessment authors note a change in research trawls in 1982 and, therefore, do not use CPUE and biomass estimates from the 1975-81 surveys. The SSC suggests this issue be revisited – these earlier surveys could be used by either incorporating a “break” in the catchability coefficient or using the time series as a separate relative index of biomass.

FLATHEAD SOLE

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommendation for ABC (73,500 mt; $F_{40\%} = 0.28$; Tier 3a) and OFL (90,000 mt; $F_{35\%} = 0.35$). The model used for this species is the same as last year. The 1999 EBS bottom trawl survey showed a 43% decline in biomass relative to 1998.

OTHER FLATFISH

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommendation for ABC (117,000 mt; $F_{40\%} = 0.28$; Tier 3a) and OFL (141,000 mt; $F_{35\%} = 0.35$.) Alaska plaice, which forms the bulk of the Other Flatfish category, was the only flatfish that showed an increase in biomass in the 1999 EBS bottom trawl survey. A new AD Model Builder stock assessment model was presented for Alaska plaice. The SSC recommends that Alaska plaice be taken out of the Other Flatfish category, and assessed in the same manner as the other major flatfish species.

General Comments - Bering Sea Flatfish

1. The SSC supports the increasingly consistent modeling approach and presentation of results for the flatfish assessments. Four of the six assessed species (yellowfin sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, Alaska plaice) are now modeled using AD model builder. The SSC encourages development of AD models for arrowtooth flounder and flathead sole.
2. The BSAI flatfish appear to share a number of similar characteristics, including sustained high biomass levels since the mid-1980s (except for Greenland turbot which has had a sustained low biomass in that time period). This is at least partly due to the fact that among BSAI groundfish, flatfish show the strongest recruitment response to the 1976-77 climate shift.
 - a. The estimated 1999 biomass in the trawl survey decreased sharply. The yellowfin sole authors advance a hypothesis that abnormally cold bottom temperatures at the time of the survey may have shifted the distribution out of the survey area resulting in the low biomass estimate. This hypothesis is feasible for the other flatfish species as well. The SSC

encourages the flatfish assessment authors to pursue this line of inquiry as a means of incorporating environmental data into the assessment models. One suggestion is to link catchability to a water temperature index.

- b. Several of the age-structured models (Greenland turbot, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole) make use of a length-age transition matrix. As currently used, these matrices are static in time and assume therefore that size-at-age is constant. This assumption can have serious consequences on the assessment as was demonstrated with Pacific halibut. The SSC recommends that the assumption of constant size-at-age be tested with data from time periods at least a decade apart. Because of the number of age-classes in flatfish stocks, it would be useful to explore the level of error introduced in the assessments by using age-length keys. The alternative, of course, is the development of direct age determinations from ageing structures.
 - c. Many of the flatfish species have stock recruitment data of 30-40 years duration, longer in some cases than walleye pollock. Further, the stock recruitment plots are quite similar and indicate a density dependent response at high biomass levels. While the stock assessment authors have indicated that they don't believe a stock recruitment relationship is evident from the data, the SSC finds them at least as convincing as walleye pollock, which is currently the only Tier 1 managed stock. We recommend that, for those assessments with lengthy stock recruitment time series, management under Tier 1 status be explored.
3. Survey biomass estimates and stock recruitment plots are provided for each analysis and constitute some of the most important information about the stock. The SSC suggests these plots be standardized and include the following features
 - a. Plot survey biomass estimates with their 95% C. I.s
 - b. Plot stock recruitment data showing the year class (rather than points) which would allow one to visually assess the temporal distribution of these data in stock-recruitment space.
 4. The authors were instructed to conduct a set of standard harvest scenarios that encouraged them to use recruitment data for the post 1976 purpose of determining harvest guidelines. If they elected to use the whole recruitment time series or truncated the series in an alternative manner, then they were asked to justify the usage. The SSC urges the analysts to conduct these other projections and explicitly illustrate the impact of selectively truncating the recruitment time series.

SABLEFISH

Biological Reference Points

Sub-tier 3a Max $F_{ABC} = F_{40\% \text{ adjusted}} = 0.109$

EBS

Exploitable 2000 biomass = 18,000 t

$F_{ABC} = 0.109$

ABC = ,410 t

$F_{OFL} = F_{35\% \text{ adjusted}} = 0.136$

OFS = 1,750 t

Aleutian Islands

Exploitable 2000 biomass = 33,000 t

$F_{ABC} = 0.109$

ABC = 2,490 t

$F_{OFL} = F_{35\% \text{ adjusted}} = 0.136$

OFS = 3,090 t

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommended ABC and OFL for this species.

EBS/AI PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH COMPLEX

General Rockfish Comments

As the POP complex assessment moves from Stock Synthesis to AD Model Builder an opportunity exists to re-examine the best way to model the EBS/AI POP populations. The difficulty in estimating an EBS survey time series for POP suggests that the best modeling method might be to combine the two areas into a single model.

The SSC supports recommendations 1-3 (p23) made by the Plan Team for next year's POP complex stock assessment. However, the SSC questions whether recommendation 4, tallying catch and survey biomass for the other red rockfish species will provide meaningful harvest rates. This difficulty is due to problems in surveying rockfish and the small numbers involved in both the survey and catch estimates.

True Pacific Ocean Perch

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC's and OFL's for the EBS/AI Pacific Ocean Perch. The current assessment updates last years assessment with new catch information. F_{ABC} was calculated using an adjusted $F_{40\%}$ strategy and F_{OFL} was calculated using an adjusted $F_{35\%}$ strategy. For the EBS an adjusted $F_{40\%} = 0.054$ gives an ABC = 2,600 mt, and an adjusted $F_{35\%} = 0.065$ gives an OFL of 3,100 mt. For the Aleutian Islands the adjusted $F_{40\%} = 0.070$ gives an ABC = 12,300 mt, an adjusted $F_{35\%} = 0.083$ gives an OFL = 14,400 mt. The AI ABC is apportioned among AI subareas based on surveys as Western AI = 46.1%, Central AI = 28.5% and Eastern AI = 25.4%.

EBS - Other Red Rockfish (Northern/Sharpchin/Shortraker/Rougheye)

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC's and OFL's for other red rockfish in the EBS. The present assessment differs from last years in that only domestic trawl surveys (1988-1997) are used. The ABC's were set using Tier 5 with $F_{abc} = 0.75M$ and $F_{OFL} = M$. The M values used were rougheye (0.025), shortraker (0.030), and northern (0.060), results were then summed over species.

AI - Other Red Rockfish (Northern/Sharpchin)

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC (5,150 mt) and OFL (6,870 mt) for Northern/Sharpchin in the AI. Tier 5 calculations were used as described for the EBS.

AI - Other Red Rockfish (Shortraker/Rougheye)

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC (885 mt) and OFL (1,180 mt) for Shortraker/Rougheye in the AI. Tier 5 calculations were used as described for the EBS.

OTHER ROCKFISH COMPLEX

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC and OFL for other rockfish in the EBS (369 and 492) and the AI (685 and 913). Tier 5 was used with $F_{abc} = 0.75M$ and $F_{OFL} = M$, where $M = 0.07$.

ATKA MACKEREL

Biological Reference Points

Sub-tier 3a Max $F_{ABC} = F_{40\%} = 0.35$

Age 3+ 2000 biomass = 536,000 t

$F_{ABC} = 0.23$

ABC = 70,800 t

$F_{OFL} = 0.42$

OFS = 119,000 t

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommended ABC and OFL for this species. The Team set the 2000 ABC fishing rate to that of last year. This fishing rate was set substantially less than the maximum because of the continuous decline in abundance since 1991, the low abundance in the 1997 survey, and the uncertainty in survey abundance estimates due to the difficulty in sampling with standard trawl survey gear.

The SSC also concurs with the Team's subarea-specific ABCs

Eastern (541) = 16,400 mt

Central (542) = 24,700 mt

Western (532) = 29,700 mt

SQUID AND OTHER SPECIES

Squid and other species includes a group of otherwise unrelated species receiving little directed fishing effort in the BSAI region at this time. The SSC concurs with the Plan Team recommendation for the squid ABC. There is no population information for squid other than catch history. ABC follows a Tier 6 strategy in which OFL (2,620 mt) is equal to mean catch from 1978 to 1995. The ABC is set at 75% of OFL. The recommended year 2000 ABC is 1,970 mt and is unchanged from the 1999 level.

The SSC disagrees with the Plan Team on the ABC for other species. The Plan Team chose an ABC equal to mean catch since 1977, or 26,800 mt. In 1999 the SSC set a constant value for M, recommended following a Tier 5 ABC determination process and stepping up to the new ABC over 10 years. This year the Plan Team revised the SSC recommendation for other species M, providing species specific mortality rates for the main components of the complex (Sculpins, $M = .15$; Skates, $M = .10$; Sharks, $M = .09$; and Octopus, $M = .30$). The result and maximum permissible ABC for the total complex was 53,600 mt, and OFL is 71,500 mt. OFL is $M * \text{biomass}$, and maximum permissible ABC is $.75 M * \text{Biomass}$. Using the revised maximum permissible ABC and following the SSC's 10 year stair step strategy begun in 1999, the SSC's recommended

year 2000 other species ABC is 31,360 mt [(Year 2000 max ABC - 1999 ABC) * 2/10 + 1999 ABC] or $(((53,600 - 25,800) * 2/10 + 25,800) = 31,360)$.

D-1(d) GULF OF ALASKA SAFE

WALLEYE POLLOCK

Gulf of Alaska pollock are divided into two populations, one west of 140° W long., the other east. The extension of the western population to 140° W is a new feature of the assessment, and responds to a comment provided by the SSC in previous assessment cycle.

Population abundance for the eastern population is derived from trawl survey biomass and estimate of natural mortality. The western population abundance is estimated from a statistical age structured model. Assessment authors present two models for consideration, a base case which incorporates ADFG trawl survey data from 1989 to 1999, and an alternative configuration which excludes the ADFG trawl survey data. The stock assessment authors, Plan Team and SSC all agree that the base case model including ADFG trawl survey data is the preferred model configuration.

The recommended ABC for the eastern Gulf is 6,460 mt based on a trawl survey biomass of 28,709 mt and a natural mortality rate of 0.30 ($ABC = 0.75 * 0.30 * 28,709$). The corresponding overfishing level is 8,613 mt ($OFL = 0.30 * 28,709$). **The SSC concurs with the recommended ABC and OFL for the eastern Gulf.**

Stock assessment authors recommended a western Gulf ABC of 113,306 mt based on an adjusted F40% harvest strategy (Tier 3b) and a projected year 2000 exploitable biomass of 588,000 mt. This represents a 28% increase in the projected year 2000 catch from the previous assessment due to an overall increase in the historical estimates of abundance. The Plan Team expressed several concerns regarding stock condition, noting in particular that: 1) stock biomass continues its downward trend, 2) projected year 2000 biomass will be at an all time low, and 3) high variability about the 1999 trawl survey abundance estimate. The Plan Team recommended reducing the ABC from the maximum permissible level to an amount equivalent to the recommended 1999 ABC of 94,560 t. The Plan Team's rationale in part is based on the notion that because of the depressed condition of the stock the year 2000 ABC should not exceed current ABC.

While the SSC agrees with the Plan Team's recommendation in principal, we disagree with the roll-over of the previous year's ABC. The SSC prefers that year 2000 ABC be conditional on the current stock assessment explicitly. Therefore, **the SSC recommends setting the year 2000 ABC for the western population using an adjusted F45% exploitation strategy ($F_{ABC} = 0.28$). This results in an ABC of 94,962 t.** Overfishing level is estimated from the adjusted F35% fishing mortality rate ($F_{OFL} = 0.40$) and is 130,758 t.

The SSC concurs with the regional apportionment schedule recommended by the Plan Team: W(61)=41%, W(62)=24.4%, C(63)=32.1% and WYAK=2.5%. Before the apportionment can be calculated it is necessary to subtract the Prince William Sound GHL from the total ABC for the western population. ADFG has recommended a year 2000 PWS pollock GHL of 1420 t. The resultant regional distribution of ABC is as follows:

Total ABC		94,962
PWS		1,420
ABC-PWS		93,542
W(61)	41.0%	38,352
W(62)	24.4%	22,824
C(63)	32.1%	30,027
WYAK	2.5%	2,339

PACIFIC COD

Biological Reference points

B spawning = $B_{ABC} = 111,000$

$B_{35\%} = 86,000$ mt

$B_{3+} = 567,000$

Catch ABC = 76,400

Catch OFL = 102,000

$F_{ABC} = F_{40} = 0.33$

$F_{OFL} = F_{35} = 0.46$

The SSC recommends acceptance of the ABC level endorsed by the Plan Team (76,400 mt). Again this year the analyst has conducted a Bayesian analysis to formally account for risk, which makes the calculated ABC more conservative, lowers the recommended fishing rate, and lowers the ABC from last year. Unless changes in productivity occur in the next two years, the ABC should stop the decline in the spawning stock size.

The SSC has concerns about this stock because the spawning biomass has been decreasing since the late 1980s despite adherence to conservative management. This consistent downward slide is somewhat surprising, because recruitment during the 1990s has experienced only a small reduction from recruitment of the previous decade. Also, there does not seem to be a trend in recruitment during the 1990s. Yet the spawning biomass is now at its historic low, last seen in 1978. The stock should be watched carefully. While the biomass has not yet gone so low that it is between the high risk levels $B_{35\%}$ and $\frac{1}{2} B_{30\%}$, it is getting close to this zone (within 24,600 mt). ($B_{35\%}$ is a proxy for B_{MSY} for projections of whether the stock is approaching an overfished condition of F_{OFL}).

The management action from the assessment work of the past few years has apparently not been sufficient to stop the decline, though the assessment model is one of the best that the Plan Team has among its assessments. It is possible that the source of the mis-match between ABC and stock decline comes from biases in the available data and from the sampling program. The Plan Team and the analyst have begun a comprehensive look at the sampling program, as stated in the SAFE and as requested by the SSC during the past two years.

FLATFISH

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommendations for ABC and OFL levels for deepwater, rex sole, shallow water and flathead sole groups.

<u>Species Group</u>	<u>ABC</u>	<u>F_{ABC}</u>	<u>OFL</u>	<u>F_{OFL}</u>	<u>Tier</u>
Deep water	5,300	0.075	6,980	0.10	5,6
Rex sole	9,440	0.15	12,300	0.20	5
Shallow water	37,860	0.15-0.17	45,320	0.209-0.25	4,5
Flathead sole	<u>26,270</u>	0.15	34,210	0.20	5
TOTAL	78,870				

The regulatory area apportionments of ABC are based only on biomass distributions from the 1999 triennial survey, unlike most other species for which a weighted combination of the past several surveys is used. The SSC agrees with this apportionment method.

<u>Species Group</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>WYAK</u>	<u>EYAK/SEO</u>	<u>Total</u>
Deep water	280	2,710	1,240	1,070	5,300
Rex sole	1,230	5,660	1,540	1,010	9,440
Shallow water	19,510	16,400	790	1,160	37,860
Flathead sole	<u>8,490</u>	<u>15,720</u>	<u>1,440</u>	<u>620</u>	<u>26,270</u>
TOTAL	29,510	40,490	5,010	3,860	78,870

ARROWTOOTH FLOUNDER

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommendation for ABC (145,360 mt; $F_{40\%} = 0.134$; Tier 3a) and OFL (173,910 mt; $F_{35\%} = 0.159$.) This year – for the first time – arrowtooth flounder biomass estimates were based on an AD Model Builder stock assessment model. The 2000 estimate of exploitable biomass represents a 30% decrease from the 1999 estimate. While it is unstated how much of this decrease is due to the switch in models, most is likely due to a change in how the higher proportion of females at larger size intervals is modeled. In the stock synthesis model, unequal sex ratio was accomplished through lower selectivities for males. In the new assessment, differential natural mortality rates were used: 0.2 for females, 0.35 for males. These rates were determined through some modeling work such that survey selectivity reached 1.0 for both sexes. There is, of course confounding between selectivity and natural mortality; the BS/AI arrowtooth model continues to use differential selectivities to achieve the unequal sex ratio. No biological rationale was offered for the higher natural mortality rates for males and it is certainly feasible that older males may be hidden from the gear. The analysts have explored a range of M values for males between 0.2 and 0.35. The SSC suggests that a Bayesian exploration of male natural mortality rate be conducted. A prior distribution could be constructed on the basis of independent estimates of natural mortality (Hoenig's method, Pauly's method, etc.).

The ABC apportionment is distributed among regulatory areas in proportion to biomass distributions in the 1999 survey:

<u>Species Group</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>WYAK</u>	<u>EYAK/SEO</u>	<u>Total</u>
Arrowtooth	16,160	97,710	23,770	7,720	145,360

SABLEFISH

Biological Reference Points

Sub-tier 3a Max $F_{ABC} = F_{40\% \text{ adjusted}} = 0.109$

Exploitable 2000 biomass = 169,000 t

$F_{ABC} = 0.109$

ABC = 13,400 t

$F_{OFL} = F_{35\% \text{ adjusted}} = 0.136$

OFS = 16,700 t

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommended ABC and OFL for this species. The SSC notes that the current stock assessment for sablefish is much improved. The current assessment includes the 1960 – 1978 fishery data, improved ageing data, and 1990 – 1998 longline fishery CPUE from logbook data. The current assessment has better estimates of recruitment, a greatly extended time series of biomass estimates, generally consistent trends in fishery and survey indicators of abundance. The abundance of sablefish is low and stable, with a stable or increasing recruitment trend.

The SSC also concurs with the Team's method of computing area apportionment for sablefish. The Team examined different methods for area apportionment, including combining survey and fishery data. The area apportionments based on fishery data are more variable, and potentially biased due to changing fishery catchability and non-random distribution of fishing effort. Because of the potential bias the team used the area apportionments based on 5-year weighted average of longline survey relative abundance.

Western	1,960 t
Central	6,030 t
West Yakutat	1,920 t
E. Yakutat/SE	3,490 t

SLOPE ROCKFISH COMPLEX

General Rockfish Comments

For the next cycle it is expected the Pacific ocean perch assessment model will move from Stock Synthesis to AD Model Builder. If this occurs, the SSC requests that detailed information be given comparing modeling results from the two models. Also, it is expected that a northern rockfish age-structured model will be available for next year.

Pacific Ocean Perch (POP)

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC and OFL for GOA POP. The current assessment was updated to include 1999 size composition and survey biomass, and 1999 fishery catches. The trawl survey biomass was greatly influenced by one haul (nearly 16 mt) which is the largest ever. Tier 3b was used estimate ABC and OFL.

Adjusted $F_{40\%} = 0.065$ and adjusted $F_{35\%} = 0.078$ giving an ABC = 13,020 mt and an OFL = 15,390 mt. ABC and OFL are apportioned into GOA subareas using an exponential weighting and the 1993, 1996 and 1999 surveys. The ABC and OFL in the Eastern area was further partitioned into WYAK and EYAK/SEO to account for Amendment 41 which prohibits trawling east of 140°W longitude.

Shortraker/Rougheye

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC and OFL for shortraker/rougheye. The average exploitable biomass from the 1993, 1996 and 1999 surveys were used in the calculations. Shortraker are in Tier 5 with $F_{ABC} = 0.75M$ and Rougheye are in Tier 4 which allows an $F_{ABC} = M$. For shortraker $F_{ABC} = 0.023$ and for rougheye $F_{ABC} = 0.025$. These result in an ABC = 1,730 mt for this subgroup. The method used for POP was also applied to shortraker/rougheye to apportion ABC to GOA subareas. $F_{OFL} = M = 0.03$ and $F_{OFL} = F_{35\%} = 0.038$ for rougheye. This results in an OFL of 2,510 mt for this subgroup.

Northern Rockfish

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC and OFL for northern rockfish. The average exploitable biomass for the 1993, 1996 and 1999 surveys were used in the calculations. The 1999 survey for northern rockfish was also influenced by one very large haul. Northern rockfish are in Tier 4 allowing an $F_{ABC} = M = 0.06$ and an $F_{ABC} = F_{35\%} = 0.088$. These values result in an ABC = 5,120 mt and an OFL = 7,510 mt. ABC was apportioned to GOA subareas using the method applied to POP.

Other Slope Rockfish

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC and OFL for other slope rockfish. The average exploitable biomasses for the 1993, 1996, and 1999 surveys were used in the calculations. Sharpchin falls in Tier 4 which allows $F_{ABC} = M = 0.05$, and for other species $F_{ABC} = 0.75 M$. Total ABC = 4,900 mt for this subgroup. For sharpchin $F_{OFL} = F_{35\%} = 0.064$ and $F_{OFL} = M$ for the other species. Total OFL = 6,390 mt for this subgroup. ABC was apportioned to GOA subareas using the method applied to POP.

PELAGIC SHELF ROCKFISH (PSR)

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC and OFL for pelagic shelf rockfish. The average exploitable biomass for the 1993, 1996 and 1999 surveys were used in the calculations. The PSR assemblage consists of dusky, widow, and yellowtail rockfishes, but nearly all of the biomass is dusky rockfish. Dusky falls in Tier 4 which allows $F_{ABC} = M = 0.09$ and $F_{OFL} = F_{35\%} = 0.136$. Total ABC = 5,980 mt and total OFL = 9,036 mt. ABC was apportioned to GOA subareas using the method applied to POP.

DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH (DSR)

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC and OFL for demersal shelf rockfish. New estimates of available rockfish habitat were 46% lower than previous estimates. Under Tier 4, $F_{ABC} = M = 0.02$ and $F_{OFL} = F_{35\%} = 0.0279$. Resulting ABC = 340 mt and OFL = 420 mt are significantly lower than previous estimates.

THORNYHEAD ROCKFISH

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's ABC and OFL for thornyhead rockfish. The age-structured model was updated with a new catch data and 1999 survey estimates. Under Tier 3a, $F_{ABC} = F_{40\%} = 0.077$, and $F_{OFL} = F_{35\%} = 0.092$, resulting in ABC = 2,360 mt and OFL = 2,830 mt.

ATKA MACKEREL

Biological Reference Points

Tier 6 OFL = 1978-1995 average catch = 6,200 t

ABC = 600 mt (bycatch only)

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommended ABC and OFL for this species.

OTHER SPECIES

There is no ABC at the present time for the Other Species category, because TAC is set at 5% of the sum of TAC for the main species. With the hope that a better biological basis can be found, the SSC supports the Plan Team's recommendation to initiate a plan amendment to attempt to define ABC's by individual species in this group.

HALIBUT DISCARD MORTALITY RATES

The SSC received a report from Gregg Williams (IPHC) on this topic. We suggest the IPHC investigate how it might evaluate methodology to determine when changes in recommended DMRs are warranted.

ECOSYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS

Dave Witherell presented this chapter which represents a new phase in the Council's documentation of ecosystem oriented research and understandings. This document was previously prepared by the Plan Teams as summary of information and specific concerns for the specifications setting process. It is now evolving into an AFSC document as a means to document trends and indicators of ecosystem health.

The SSC appreciates the evolving and progressive nature of this effort. It is important that the Plan Team remain involved in this effort. For example formal Plan Team comments on this chapter should be included as they are for the rest of the SAFE. It is essential that the Council and the public know when and how broader concerns are addressed in the specification process. Some sections, for example the multispecies modeling efforts could be incorporated into the species chapters after a more complete review of the methods.

MISCELLANEOUS

Team Appointments: The SSC recommends that appointment of Ms. Kristin Mabry (ADF&G) to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan Team and Dr. Shareef Siddeck (ADF&G) to the Crab Plan Team.

APPENDIX 1

Excerpts From SSC Minutes Pertaining to
Relative Abundance of Walleye Pollock in the Bogoslof District, 1991-1997
(Compiled by SSC historian Grant Thompson)

9/91: “The estimate of Bogoslof biomass in February 1991 from the hydroacoustic surveys was 600,000 mt. To obtain a preliminary 1992 estimate, the 1991 estimate should be adjusted to account for natural mortality. This results in a biomass estimate of 445,000 mt.... To determine an upper limit for ABC the SSC applied the $F_{0.1}$ rate used in the EBS to the projected 1992 biomass. This results in an ABC of 102,000 mt. There are many reasons why this ABC may be too high.... There has been a three-to-five-fold decrease in catch levels from 1989-1991. Over the same period, survey biomass in the Bogoslof district has declined from 2.1 mmt in 1989 to 0.6 mmt in 1991.... Modeling studies of EBS pollock suggest that thresholds in the range of 20% to 40% of unfished biomass are desirable to maintain high sustainable catches with low variability, and would be desirable to rebuild the stock if it were depleted. The Basin pollock stock is most likely below these threshold levels, which would suggest an ABC of zero.”

12/91: “The SAFE indicates that the current Basin biomass as predicted by the preliminary Aleutian Basin stock cohort analysis is only about 10% of the largest observed biomass and well below B_{msy} . A precise estimate of the ratio B/B_{msy} is impossible, but it is probably on the order of 1/4. Given the low level of abundance, the SSC believes that under the Council’s overfishing definition an exploitation rate of 1/4 of the natural mortality ($F = 1/4 * 0.20$) is appropriate. In developing its estimate of ABC, the SSC applied this rate ($M/4$) to the 1992 biomass (491 thousand tons) estimated based on the Team’s method of projecting the 1991 Bogoslof survey but used the revised rate of natural mortality.”

9/92: “Assuming that little or no recruitment has occurred recently, the best estimate of 1993 biomass is obtained from the 1992 survey decayed by natural mortality, which is 655,000 mt. The SAFE indicates that the current Basin biomass as predicted by the preliminary Aleutian Basin stock cohort analysis is only about 10% of the largest observed biomass and well below B_{msy} . A precise estimate of the ratio B/B_{msy} is impossible, but it is probably on the order of 1/4. Given the low level of abundance, the SSC believes that under the Council’s overfishing definition an exploitation rate of 1/4 of the natural mortality ($F = 1/4 * 0.20$) is appropriate.”

12/92: “Assuming that little or no recruitment has occurred recently, the best estimate of 1993 biomass is obtained from the 1992 survey decayed by natural mortality, which is 650,000 mt. The SAFE indicated that the current Basin biomass as predicted by the preliminary Aleutian Basin stock cohort analysis is only about 10% of the largest observed biomass and well below B_{MSY} . A precise estimate of the ratio B/B_{msy} is impossible, but it is probably on the order of 1/4. Given the low level of abundance, the SSC believes that under the Council’s overfishing definition an exploitation rate of 1/4 of $F_{35\%}$ is appropriate.”

9/93: “The projected biomass in 1994 using $M = 0.2$ is then 491,000 mt. As it has done in the past, the SSC then calculated the $F_{35\%}$ exploitation rate of 0.26 and adjusted this rate downward by the factor 1/4 to reflect the ratio of current biomass to optimal biomass.”

12/93: "The SSC agrees with the Team that the best estimate of biomass in 1994 is 0.49 million mt.... As is has done in the past, the SSC recommends dividing the exploitation rate by 4 to adjust for the current level of the population in relation to that which would produce MSY."

9/94: "The SSC believes that the best estimate of 1995 biomass is 400 thousand mt... As done in the past, the SSC recommends that the ABC be calculated by applying the natural mortality exploitation rate ($M = 0.2$) divided by 4 to the projected 1995 biomass. The factor 1/4 is the OFL adjustment, equal to the ratio of the current population biomass in relation to that which would produce MSY."

12/94: "The value is based on an estimated stock abundance of 442,000 mt... Following principles to reduce exploitation rates in proportion to the ratio of current stock size to B_{msy} , the SSC has previously advised using an exploitation rate of $M/4$ (0.05) which results in an ABC of 22,100 mt. We continue to support this more conservative ABC."

9/95: "Estimated biomass is 1,020,000 mt. The new biomass estimate represents a doubling in biomass over the 1994 estimate.... The SSC recommends setting an ABC for the Bogoslof area based on $M/2$ exploitation rate. The SSC's 1995 ABC recommendation was based on an $M/4$ exploitation rate.... Because the stock has doubled, the OFL adjustment is now $1/2$."

12/95: "The SSC recommends setting an ABC for the Bogoslof area = 121,000 mt and is based on an $F_{40\%/2}$ exploitation rate (0.11) applied to the current biomass (1.1 million mt).... The adjustment applied to the $F_{40\%}$ rate to calculate the ABC was consistent with the adjustment used in 1995 and based on the ratio of the current biomass to the appropriate level which we believe produces MSY (about $1/2$)."

9/96: "The 1996 Bogoslof survey estimates a biomass of 680,000 mt contrasted with the 1995 estimate of 1.1 million mt.... The SSC believes the Bogoslof ABC should be reduced by the ratio of current biomass to target biomass, where target biomass is assumed to be 2 million mt."

12/96: "The Plan Team has recommended an ABC of 115,000 mt based on $F_{40\%}$ applied to a projected 1997 biomass of 558,000 mt. The SSC believes the Bogoslof ABC should be reduced by the ratio of current biomass (B_{97}) to target biomass, where target biomass is assumed to be 2 million mt."

9/97: "Specifically, the ABC should be reduced by the ratio of current biomass to target biomass, where target biomass is taken to be the biomass required to open a directed fishery. Based on that adjustment, the SSC recommends an ABC of 8,400 mt ($F_{40\%} = 0.27$, $M = 0.20$, $\mu = 0.2154$, $B_{98} = 280,000$ mt, $B_{target} = 2,000,000$ mt, $ABC = \mu \times B_{98} \times (B_{98}/B_{target})$."

12/97: "The 1998 biomass was projected using a natural mortality rate of 0.2 applied to current year biomass (324,000 mt) based on the Bogoslof area hydroacoustic survey. Since estimates of B (current biomass), $B_{40\%}$ (2,000,000 mt), $F_{40\%}$ (0.27), and $F_{30\%}$ (0.37) exist and $\alpha < B/B_{40\%} < 1$, F_{ABC} was computed under tier 3b."

**History of SSC Determinations Regarding the Relative Abundance
of Walleye Pollock in the Bogoslof District, 1991-1997**

Year	Month	Projected Stock Size	Reference Stock Size	Referenc e Name	Ratio
1991	September	445,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
1991	December	491,000	1,964,000	B _{msy}	0.25
1992	September	655,000	2,620,000	B _{msy}	0.25
1992	December	650,000	2,600,000	B _{msy}	0.25
1993	September	491,000	1,964,000	B _{msy}	0.25
1993	December	490,000	1,960,000	B _{msy}	0.25
1994	September	400,000	1,600,000	B _{msy}	0.25
1994	December	442,000	1,768,000	B _{msy}	0.25
1995	September	1,020,000	2,040,000	B _{msy}	0.50
1995	December	1,100,000	2,200,000	B _{msy}	0.50
1996	September	680,000	2,000,000	B _{target}	0.34
1996	December	558,000	2,000,000	B _{target}	0.28
1997	September	280,000	2,000,000	B _{target}	0.14
1997	December	324,000	2,000,000	B _{40%}	0.16

Halibut Charterboat GHL Alternatives for final action in February 2000

Alternative 1: Status quo. Do not develop implementing regulations.

Alternative 2: Approve management measures to implement the halibut charter guideline harvest level

ISSUE 1: Apply GHLS to Areas 2C and/or 3A to trigger management measures as:

Option 1: Fixed percentage annually expressed in pounds.

Based on 1995: GHL equal to 12.76% in 2C, 15.61% in 3A.

Based on 1998: GHL equal to 18.01% in 2C, 13.85% in 3A.

Option 2: Fixed range in numbers of fish.

Based on 1995: GHL range equals 50 - 62 thousand fish in 2C; 138 - 172 thousand fish in 3A

Based on 1998: GHL range equals 61 - 76 thousand fish in 2C; 155 - 193 thousand fish in 3A

Option 3: Manage GHL as a 3 year rolling average

Option 4: Apply the GHL as a percentage to the CEY by area after non-guided sport and personal use deductions are made, but prior to deductions for commercial bycatch and wastage.

ISSUE 2: Implement management measures. None to all of the following management measures would be implemented up to 2 years after attainment of the GHL (1 year if data is available), but prior to January 1 for industry stability. Restrictions would be tightened or liberalized as appropriate to achieve a charter harvest below the GHL if a fixed percentage or within the GHL range if a range.

• line limits	• super-exclusive registration
• boat limits	• sport catcher vessel only area
• annual angler limit	• sportfish reserve
• vessel trip limit	• rod permit
• bag limits	• possession limits

ISSUE 3: Under varying halibut abundance.

Option 1: Status quo. The GHL fixed percentage varies on an annual basis with area halibut abundance.

Option 2: Reduce area-specific GHL ranges during years of significant stock decline. The following suboptions may be instituted in a stepwise fashion, and/or used in combination.

Suboption 1: Reduce to 75-100% of base year amount when the charter allocation is predicted to exceed a specified percentage (options: 15, 20, or 25%) of the combined commercial and charter TAC.

Suboption 2: Reduce area-specific GHL by a set percentage (options: 10, 15 or 20%). The trigger for implementing the reduction would be based on total harvests and would be IPHC area-specific:

<u>Area 2C Options</u>	<u>Area 3A Options</u>
4 million lb	10 million lb
6 million lb	15 million lb
8 million lb	20 million lb

ISSUE 4: GHL or allocation

Option 1: Under a GHL and the current IPHC setline quota formula, halibut not harvested by the charter fleet in one year are rolled into the commercial setline quota the following year.

Option 2: Unharvested halibut would remain unharvested under a direct allocation to the charter sector.
Suboption: unharvested halibut banked in a sportfish reserve

ISSUE 5: Establish a moratorium for the halibut charter industry.

Option 1: Establish an area-wide moratorium

Option 2: Establish a local moratorium

Suboption: Prohibit new charter licenses upon attainment of the GHL.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
Clarence G. Pautzke, Executive Director



605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone: (907) 271-2809

Fax: (907) 271-2817

Approved

John Bruce

Date 02 08 00

ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

December 6-9, 1999

Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK

Advisory Panel members in attendance:

Alstrom, Ragnar

Benson, Dave

Blott, Tim

Bruce, John (Chair)

Burch, Alvin

Cross, Craig

Falvey, Dan

Fanning, Kris

Fuglvog, Arne

Fraser, Dave

Ganey, Steve

Gundersen, Justine

Jones, Spike

Jordan, Melody

Kandianis, Teresa

Madsen, Stephanie (Vice-Chair)

Nelson, Hazel

Ogden, Doug

Stephan, Jeff

Ward, Robert

Yeck, Lyle

C-1 American Fisheries Act

Emergency Rule #1: Single Geographic Location Requirement

The Advisory Panel recommends the Council request that National Marine Fisheries Service modify the language regarding the single geographic location in the AFA Emergency Rule to allow shoreside floating processors the opportunity to change locations once each year. The intent would be to mirror the inshore/offshore rule on single geographic location. This rule mandates that a floating processor must remain in the same location where it begins processing at the start of each year.

Motion passed 18-0.

Emergency Rule #2: Calculation of Groundfish and Prohibited Species Catch Sideboards

1700 MT Exemption

The Advisory Panel ultimately voted to recommend to the Council that there be no exemptions for either Bering Sea Cod or in the Gulf of Alaska, as approved in June or any alternatives presented at this meeting.

Motion passed 12-7-1.

In keeping with Council policy, below are listed the motions that failed by a close margin:

1. *Bering Sea Cod. For an AFA catcher vessel to be eligible for the 1700mt exemption, it would have to meet the following additional prerequisites:*
 - a. *Be less than 125 feet in length*
 - b. *The catcher vessel had a minimum of 30 cod landings in the directed fishery for Bering Sea cod over the period of 1995, 1996, and 1997*

2. *Gulf of Alaska. For an AFA catcher vessel to be eligible for the 1700 mt exemption, it would have to meet the following additional prerequisites:*
 - a. *Be less than 125 feet in length*
 - b. *The catcher vessel had a minimum of 40 groundfish landings in the Gulf of Alaska over the period of 1995, 1996, and 1997*

3. *Catcher vessels that meet the requirements of being an exempt vessel shall be treated by NMFS, in those fisheries to which the exemption applies, as a non-AFA vessel. The catch history of the exempt vessel (in the fishery to which the exemption applies) will not be included within the AFA cap for that fishery and the harvest of the exempt vessel will not be counted against the AFA cap. The AP further requests the opportunity to review this action in one year.*

A motion to amend the above motion to delete exemptions in the Gulf of Alaska failed 9/10. The original motion failed 8/11.

Two attempts were made to reduce the Gulf of Alaska threshold:

- *1200 mt (failed 3/15)*
- *750 mt (failed 5/14)*

679.61 Inshore Pollock Co-operatives

The Advisory Panel recommends the Council substitute the following language:

“(4) provisions that require co-operative members to comply with the ‘traditional harvest level’ restrictions of Section 211 (c) (1) (a) of the Act, as the same may be implemented by the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service from time to time.”

In addition, the text above would substituted for the relevant operative language of Section 679.6 (c)(4), mothership and catcher/processor cooperatives.

Motion passed 18-0.

The Advisory Panel also requests the Council or NMFS provide a supplemental analysis between now and February to examine implementing sideboards based on retained catch or total catch for all sectors with particular reference to how it would impact the amount of sideboard available for directed fisheries and impacts on regulatory discards. The AP requests this information in order for the Council to comment with full information on the AFA proposed rule at the February meeting.

Motion passed 12/2/4.

C-2 Essential Fish Habitat

The AP recommends the Council request an extended comment period on the EFA interim final rule. Motion passed 20/0.

C-3 Halibut Charterboat Management

The AP recommends the Guideline harvest level (GHL) analysis be released for public review with the following changes:

Chapter 1

- Add to list of management measures
 - A prohibition on charter skippers and crew-fishing and retention;
 - Possession limits reduction
 - Prohibitions on using downriggers
- Add a provision to manage the GHL based on a 3-5 year weighted and regular rolling average
- Eliminate the option of closing the charter fishery in-season once the GHL is reached
- Tie the GHL as an allocation and the sportfish banking reserve together as an option

Chapter 2

- Add information on rod hours to catch a halibut for charter and non-charter anglers for past 6 years

Chapter 3

- Review in more depth existing information from 1997 GHL analysis, the Glacier Bay analysis, and other sources of baseline data for area 2C
- Add to figure 3.20 area 2C and 3A specific halibut harvests by sector, rather than by state-wide
- Reference preliminary data on 1999 charter harvest by area and commercial ex-vessel price information
- Add description of taxes each sector pays and the effect of these taxes on social structures in communities
- Provide a summary table which clarifies how the economic components presented are being used and what comparable components are for the other sector. For example:

Component, figure or table	Data Source	Caveats	Relevance in evaluating economic impacts (economic activity, impact, or net benefit)	Relevance in evaluating social impacts	Relevance in evaluating alternatives	Comparable data in analysis for other sectors (longline, charter, clients, consumers)

- add current IPHC staff recommendations to update the biomass projections and the 2000 quota recommendations

Chapter 4

- Add comparable economic multipliers for commercial sector
- Expand QS net benefit discussion to include estimates of rents and impacts of status quo on value of QS
- Either refine the participation rate model to differentiate between catch and catch and release fish or eliminate from analysis

Chapter 6

- Expand alternative 1 to reflect the impact of status quo on new entrants ability to meet existing loans
- Consider the effect of status quo on the process of developing LAMPs, moratoriums, and other efforts to address the problem statement
- Add discussion on the effect of setting GHL as a fixed number of fish given the current high abundance and age composition of halibut stocks
- Reconcile estimates of participation impacts associated with bag limit reductions with current catch and release behavior
- Review effects of bag limit management in other fisheries including catch and release fisheries
- Provide information on the SE AK king salmon and ling cod sport fishery which shows:
 - Frequency and lead time associated with bag limit changes
 - ADF&G's expected effectiveness of bag limit changes at reducing harvest
 - # of clients using charter over past 6 years, and in season changes pre and post bag limit changes
- Summarize in a table the management measures identified and their relative ability to constrain harvests to the GHL and to address issues identified in the problem statement
- Include a discussion about the ability of the charter industry to harvest the GHL in times of reduced biomass

Motion passed 18/0

C-4 Steller Sea Lions

The AP recommends the Council request NMFS to provide a public presentation on the ongoing and planned research projects.

Additionally, the AP requests NMFS provide a status report on the process for Section 7 consultation efforts with federally recognized tribes.

Motion passed 14/0.

C-5 Pacific Cod LLP

The Advisory Panel recommends the Council not proceed with an additional option separating out the P.cod pot catcher/processors from pot cod catcher vessels to its cod species/ gear endorsement analysis. Motion passed 9/8.

Additionally, the AP recommends the Council initiate a trailing analysis separating P.cod pot catcher processors from pot cod catcher vessels on a separate track from LLP.

Motion passed 13/3/1.

Grandfather Provisions:

The AP recommends the Council incorporate potential grandfather provisions in the LLP analysis to be brought back in February.

Motion passed 16/0/1.

C-7 Halibut Subsistence

The AP recommends moving forward with the subsistence halibut analysis as outlined with the following changes:

1. Change option 4 to read as follows:

Option 4: Customary and traditional trade of subsistence halibut

Sub-option 1: Customary and traditional trade through monetary exchange shall be limited to an annual maximum of:

1. \$0
2. \$200
3. \$400
4. \$600

Sub-option 2: Customary and traditional trade through non-monetary exchange is allowed with

1. Other Alaska Tribes
2. Any Alaska rural resident
3. Any Alaska resident
4. Anyone

2. Add to option 5 a sub-option of no daily bag limit

3. Update and revise existing analysis to discuss recent changes in subsistence management , federal policy, relevant court cases, and the roll of other public subsistence management boards.

4. A discussion of existing co-management arrangements and the applicability of these models to data gathering, LAMPs, catch, monitoring, and enforcement of halibut subsistence.

Motion passed 18-0.

D-1 (a, b) Bering Sea Groundfish Specifications 2000

Final BSAI Groundfish Specifications for 2000

a. The AP recommends the Council approve the 2000 BSAI EA and Final Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report.

Motion passed 18-0.

Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC's) and Total Allowable Catch (TAC's)

b. The AP recommends the Council adopt the SSC's ABC's listed in Attachment 1.

Motion passed 18-0.

The AP recommends the Council adopt the SSC's 2000 ABC's as the 2000 TAC's: except for the Aleutian Islands and Bogoslof pollock; yellowfin sole; rocksole; flathead sole; and other flatfish (see attachment 1).

b.2. Seasonal apportionment of the fixed gear Pacific cod TAC

The AP recommends the Council adopt the following TAC apportionment (see attachment 2).

January 1 - April 30	65,000 mt
May 1 - August 31	0 mt (passed 11/9)
September 1 - December 31	26,048 mt

Motion passed 10/6.

A motion failed 8/11 which would amend the above motion to set apportionments at

<i>60,000 mt</i>	<i>1st trimester</i>
<i>0mt</i>	<i>2nd trimester</i>
<i>31,048</i>	<i>3rd trimester</i>

The AP recommends the Council adopt the halibut mortality for fixed gear P.cod listed in attachment 2.
Motion passed 19/0.

b.3. The AP recommends the Council adopt the 2000 BSAI trawl fisheries Prohibited Species Catch as listed in attachment 2.
Motion passed 19/0

D-1 (c, d, e) Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Specifications for 2000

c. The AP recommends the Council adopt the 2000 GOA EA and Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document.
Motion passed 19-0.

d. ABC's and TAC's for GOA

The AP recommends the Council adopt the SSC's 2000 ABC's for the GOA. (see attachment 3)
Motion passed 19/0.

The AP recommends the Council adopt the ABC's as TAC's with adjustments noted on attachment 3 for the flatfish complex, pollock, and Pacific cod.
Motion passed 17-1.

PSC's

The AP recommends the Council adopt the PSC limits for halibut as listed in attached chart for trawl gear and hook and line. Additionally, the AP recommends the Council adopt the trawl apportionments as listed in attachment 4.
Motion passed 19/0.

e. Halibut discard mortality rates

The AP recommends the Council adopt halibut discard mortality rates for BSAI as listed in table 13 and for the Gulf of Alaska as listed in table 14.
Motion passed 19-0.

Further, the AP recommends the to the Council:

1. The Plan team and SSC standardize their procedures for setting ABC's lower than tier levels would indicate.

Motion passed 19/0.

2. Request NMFS continue to incorporate sablefish fishery catch rates in the assessment. The AP additionally requests the Council recommend to the plan team and SSC work with NMFS to address their concerns about using sablefish fishery catch rate data, including catch rate bias and catchability differences.

Motion passed 19/0.

3. Adopt the Plan team's recommendation to consider placing the "other species" assemblage on bycatch status until an FMP amendment is in place.

Motion passed 8-5.

The AP approved the minutes from the October 1999 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Gulf of Alaska 2000 Specifications

TABLE 1

Species	1999			2000			
	Area	ABC	TAC	Catch ¹	Area	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (61)	23,120	23,120	23,387	W (61)	38,350	38,350
	C (62)	38,840	38,840	38,135	C (62)	22,820	22,820
	C (63)	30,520	30,520	30,095	C (63)	30,030	30,030
	WYAK	8,440	2,110	1,759	WYAK	2,340	2,340
	EYAK/SEO	0	6,330	4	EYAK/SEO	6,460	6,460
	Total	100,920	100,920	93,380	Total ²	100,000	100,000
Pacific Cod	W	29,540	23,630	23,154	W	27,500	20,625
	C	53,170	42,935	44,559	C	43,550	35,165
	E	1,690	1,270	857	E	5,350	4,010
	Total	84,400	67,835	68,570	Total	76,400	59,800
Flatfish, Deep Water	W	240	240	22	W	280	280
	C	2,740	2,740	1,865	C	2,710	2,710
	WYAK	1,720	1,720	389	WYAK	1,240	1,240
	EYAK/SEO	1,350	1,350	9	EYAK/SEO	1,070	1,070
	Total	6,050	6,050	2,285	Total	5,300	5,300
Rex Sole	W	1,190	1,190	603	W	1,230	1,230
	C	5,490	5,490	2,391	C	5,660	5,660
	WYAK	850	850	41	WYAK	1,540	1,540
	EYAK/SEO	1,620	1,620	22	EYAK/SEO	1,010	1,010
	Total	9,150	9,150	3,057	Total	9,440	9,440
Shallow water flatfish	W	22,570	4,500	252	W	19,510	4,500
	C	19,260	12,950	2,282	C	16,400	12,950
	WYAK	250	250	6	WYAK	790	790
	EYAK/SEO	1,070	1,070	5	EYAK/SEO	1,160	1,160
	Total	43,150	18,770	2,545	Total	37,860	19,400
Flathead Sole	W	8,440	2,000	184	W	8,490	2,000
	C	15,630	5,000	680	C	15,720	5,000
	WYAK	1,270	1,270	16	WYAK	1,440	1,440
	EYAK/SEO	770	770	11	EYAK/SEO	620	620
	Total	26,110	9,040	891	Total	26,270	9,060
Arrowtooth	W	34,400	5,000	3,656	W	16,160	5,000
	C	155,930	25,000	11,787	C	97,710	25,000
	WAYK	13,260	2,500	383	WAYK	23,770	2,500
	EYAK/SEO	13,520	2,500	236	EYAK/SEO	7,720	2,500
	Total	217,110	35,000	16,062	Total	145,360	35,000
Sablefish ³	W	1,820	1,820	1,487	W	1,840	1,840
	C	5,590	5,590	5,828	C	5,730	5,730
	WYAK	5,290	2,090	1,704	WYAK	5,760	2,207
	EYAK/SEO		3,200	3,080	EYAK/SEO		3,553
	Total	12,700	12,700	12,099	Total	13,330	13,330
Other slope rockfish	W	20	20	40	W	20	20
	C	650	650	615	C	740	740
	WYAK	470	470	122	WYAK	250	250
	EYAK/SEO	4,130	4,130	12	EYAK/SEO	3,890	3,890
	Total	5,270	5,270	789	Total	4,900	4,900
Northern rockfish	W	840	840	573	W	630	630
	C	4,150	4,150	4,825	C	4,490	4,490
	E	0	0	0	E	0	0
	Total	4,990	4,990	5,398	Total	5,120	5,120
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	1,850	1,850	1,935	W	1,240	1,240
	C	6,760	6,760	7,914	C	9,240	9,240
	WYAK	1,350	820	627	WYAK	840	840
	EYAK/SEO	3,160	3,160	0	EYAK/SEO	1,700	1,700
	Total	13,120	12,590	10,476	Total	13,020	13,020

Table 1 cont.		1999			2000		
Species	Area	ABC	TAC	Catch	Area	ABC	ABC
Shortraker/Rougheye	W	160	160	194	W	210	210
	C	970	970	577	C	930	930
	E	460	460	531	E	590	590
	Total	1,590	1,590	1,302	Total	1,730	1,730
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W	530	530	130	W	550	550
	C	3,370	3,370	3,835	C	4,080	4,080
	WYAK	740	740	672	WYAK	580	580
	EYAK/SEO	240	240	20	EYAK/SEO	770	770
	Total	4,880	4,880	4,657	Total	5,980	5,980
Demersal shelf rockfish		560	560	262		340	340
	Gulfwide	600	600	262	Gulfwide	600	600
Atka Mackerel	W	260	260	282	W	430	430
	C	700	700	582	C	990	990
	E	1,030	1,030	410	E	940	940
	Total	1,990	1,990	1,274	Total	2,360	2,360
Thornyhead	Gulfwide		14,600	3,735	Gulfwide		14,270
Other Species							
GULF OF ALASKA	TOTAL	532,590	306,535	227,044	TOTAL	431,410	299,650

1/ Catch through November 6, 1999

2/ pollock W/C/WY ABCs & TACs adjusted downwards by 1,420 mt for Prince William Sound State fishery GHL

3/ includes 5% transfer from EY/SEO TAC to WY TAC

OFL = Overfish level, ABC = Acceptable biological catch, TAC = Total allowable catch, WYAK = Western Yakutat, EYAK = Eastern Yakutat Southeast outside.

PSC Limits for Halibut

	Trawl		Hook and Line		
1st quarter	600 mt	30%	1st trimester	250 mt	86%
2nd quarter	400 mt	20%	2nd trimester	15 mt	5%
3rd quarter	600 mt	30%	3rd trimester	25 mt	9%
4th quarter	400 mt	20%	DSR	10 mt	
	<u>2,000 mt</u>			<u>300</u>	

Trawl apportionments

Quarter	Shallow water	Deep water	Total
	Complex	Complex	
1	500 mt	100 mt	600 mt
2	100 mt	300 mt	400 mt
3	200 mt	400 mt	600 mt
4	No apportionment		400 mt

Table 2. Summary of halibut discard mortality rates (DMRs) in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish fisheries during 1990-1998 and recommendations for Preseason Assumed DMRs in monitoring halibut bycatch mortality in 2000.

Gear and Target	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Trend?	2-Year Mean	Used in 1999	Recommendations for 2000
<i>Trawl</i>													
Atka mackerel	66	77	71	69	73	73	83	85	77	No	81	85	81
Bottom pollock	68	74	78	78	80	73	79	72	80	No	76	76	76
Pacific cod	68	64	69	67	64	71	70	67	66	Yes/dn	67	69	66
Other Flatfish	80	75	76	69	61	68	67	71	78	No	75	69	75
Rockfish	65	67	69	69	75	68	72	71	56	No	64	72	64
Flathead sole	-	-	-	-	67	62	66	57	70	No	64	62	64
Other species	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69	66
Pelagic pollock	85	82	85	85	80	79	83	87	86	No	87	85	87
Rock sole	64	79	78	76	76	73	74	77	79	Yes/up	78	76	79
Sablefish	46	66	-	26	20	-	-	-	-	No	23	23	23
Turbot	69	55	-	-	58	75	70	75	86	No	81	73	81
Yellowfin sole	83	88	83	80	81	77	76	80	82	No	81	78	81
<i>Pot</i>													
Pacific cod	12	4	12	4	10	10	7	4	13	No	9	4	9
Other species	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	9
<i>Longline</i>													
Pacific cod	19	23	21	17	15	14	12	11	11	No	11	11	11
Rockfish	17	55	-	6	23	-	20	4	52	No	28	12	28
Other species	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	11
Sablefish	14	32	14	13	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Turbot	15	30	11	10	14	9	15	22	18	No	20	19	20
<i>CDQ Trawl</i>													
Bottom pollock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90	-	-	76	90
Pelagic pollock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90	-	-	81	90
<i>CDQ Longline</i>													
Pacific cod	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	11	10

Table 3. Summary of halibut discard mortality rates (DMRs) in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries during 1990-1998 and recommendations for Preseason Assumed DMRs in monitoring halibut bycatch mortality in 2000.

Gear and Target	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Trend?	2-Year Mean	Used in 1999	2000 Recommendation
	<i>Trawl</i>												
Atka mackerel	67	89	81	67	53	-	60	-	-	No	57	57	57
Bottom pollock	51	62	66	57	48	66	79	66	55	No	61	73	61
Pacific cod	60	62	66	59	53	64	70	62	64	No	63	66	63
Deep wtr flats	61	58	70	59	60	56	71	61	51	No	56	66	56
Shallow wtr flats	66	71	69	65	62	70	71	71	67	No	69	71	69
Rockfish	65	75	79	75	58	71	65	63	68	No	66	64	66
Flathead sole	-	-	-	-	54	64	67	74	39	No	57	**	57
Other species	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66	66
Pelagic pollock	71	82	72	63	61	51	81	70	80	No	75	76	75
Sablefish	70	60	68	59	67	58	80	61	-	No	71	71	71
Arrowtooth flldr	-	-	-	-	-	-	66	48	62	No	55	57	55
Rex sole	-	-	-	-	56	76	63	47	58	No	53	55	53
<i>Pot</i>													
Pacific cod	12	7	16	24	17	21	7	11	16	No	14	6	14
Other species	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	14
<i>Longline</i>													
Pacific cod	15	18	13	7	11	13	11	22	11	No	17	16	17
Rockfish	6	-	-	7	-	4	13	-	9	No	11	9	11
Other species	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	17
Sablefish	17	27	28	30	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Catcher vessel fleet = 58%; Catcher/Processor fleet = 74%.

Table 4. Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
Council Recommended 2000 Catch Specifications (mt)

Species	Area	2000	2000	2000	2000	1999	1999	1999
		Biomass	OFL	ABC	TAC	ABC	TAC	Catch
Pollock	EBS	7,700,000	1,680,000	1,139,000	1,139,000	992,000	992,000	884,133
	AI	106,000	31,700	23,800	2,000	23,800	2,000	1,003
	Bogoslof	475,000	30,400	22,300	1,000	15,300	1,000	21
Pacific cod	BS/AI	1,300,000	240,000	193,000	193,000	177,000	177,000	160,084
Yellowfin sole	BS/AI	2,820,000	226,000	191,000	123,262	212,000	207,980	67,392
Greenland turbot	BS/AI	233,000	42,000	9,300	9,300	14,200	9,000	
	BS			67%	67%	67%	67%	5,315
	AI			33%	33%	33%	33%	461
Arrowtooth	BS/AI	785,000	160,000	131,000	131,000	140,000	134,354	10,679
Rock sole	BS/AI	2,070,000	273,000	230,000	134,760	309,000	120,000	40,362
Flathead sole	BS/AI	611,000	90,000	73,500	52,652	77,300	77,300	17,777
Other flatfish	BS/AI	829,000	141,000	117,000	83,813	154,000	154,000	15,184
Sablefish	EBS	18,000	1,750	1,470	1,470	1,340	1,340	628
	AI	33,000	3,090	2,430	2,430	1,860	1,380	529
POP complex								
True POP	EBS	47,700	3,100	2,600	2,600	1,900	1,400	376
Other POP	EBS	8,200	259	194	194	267	267	217
True POP	AI	192,000	14,400	12,300	12,300	13,500	13,500	
	<i>Eastern</i>			3,120	3,120	3,430	3,430	2,416
	<i>Central</i>			3,510	3,510	3,850	3,850	2,815
	<i>Western</i>			5,670	5,670	6,220	6,220	6,545
Sharp/Northern	AI	115,000	6,870	5,150	5,150	4,230	4,230	5,181
Short/Rougheye	AI	41,500	1,180	885	885	965	965	474
Other rockfish	EBS	7,030	492	369	369	369	369	137
	AI	13,000	913	685	685	685	685	632
Atka mackerel	AI	565,000	119,000	70,800	70,800	73,300	66,400	
	<i>Eastern</i>			16,400	16,400	17,000	17,000	15,893
	<i>Central</i>			24,700	24,700	25,600	22,400	21,443
	<i>Western</i>			29,700	29,700	30,700	27,000	15,626
Squid	BS/AI	n/a	2,620	1,970	1,970	1,970	1,970	413
Other species	BS/AI	611,000	71,500	31,360	31,360	32,860	32,860	18,396
BS/AI TOTAL		18,580,430	3,139,274	2,260,113	2,000,000	2,247,846	2,000,000	1,223,618

EBS = eastern Bering Sea

BS/AI = Bering Sea & Aleutians

BS = Bering Sea

AI = Aleutian Islands

OFL = overfishing level

ABC = acceptable biological catch

TAC = total allowable catch

1999 catch as of 10/30/99
(CDQ catch not included)

Footnote: The pollock assessment model used post-1978 recruitment data.

TABLE 5. 2000 BSAI Trawl Fisheries PSC Council Recommended Apportionments and Seasonal Allowances

Fishery Group	Halibut Mortality Cap (mt)	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab (animals) Zone1	C. bairdi Zone1	C. bairdi Zone2	C. opilio COBLZ
Yellowfin sole	26.06% 958	9.14% 169	12.99% 12,600	37.61% 312,163	64.98% 1,637,448	71.49% 3,109,815
January 20 - March 31	29.63%					
April 1 - May 20*	22.00%					
May 21 - July 3	5.45%					
July 4 - Dec 31	42.82%					
Rocksole/other flatfish	22.91% 842	1.31% 24	72.17% 70,005	40.29% 334,407	21.66% 545,832	21.62% 940,470
January 20 - March 31	57.62%					
April 1 - July 3	20.95%					
July 4 - December 31	21.31%					
Turbot/sablefish/ Arrowtooth		0.59% 11				1.02% 44,370
Rockfish	2.03% 75	0.47% 9			0.42% 10,884	1.02% 44,370
July 4 - Dec 31						
Pacific cod	42.18% 1,550	1.31% 24	12.99% 12,600	20.17% 167,411	11.83% 298,116	3.07% 133,545
Pollock/mackerel/o.species	6.82% 250	87.18% 1,616	1.85% 1,795	1.93% 16,019	1.10% 27,720	1.78% 77,430
TOTAL	3,675	1,853	97,000	830,000	2,520,000	4,350,000

- 1) Includes 7.5% CDQ allocation.
- 2) Unused PSC allowances may be rolled into the following seasonal apportionment.
- 3) 35% of the red king crab PSC for the rock sole fishery is apportioned to the 56 - 56o10' RKCSA strip.
- 4) Accounts for the reductions in halibut and crab PSCs due to ban on pollock bottom trawling (halibut: -100 mt; RKC: -3,000; Z1 bairdi: -20,000; Z2 bairdi: -30,000; opilio: -150,000 crab)
- 5) Accounts for adjustments due to changes in biomass for herring, red king crab, Z2 bairdi, and opilio.
- 6) For herring PSC in pollock/makerel/o.species category, 1,558 mt for midwater pollock fishery.

Table 6. 2000 BSAI Non-Trawl Fisheries PSC Bycatch Allowances and fixed gear Pacific cod seasonal apportionments

Fishery Group	Halibut Mortality (mt)	Seasonal Apportion of cod TAC (mt)
Pacific Cod	810	
Jan 1 - April 30	495	65,000 first tr.
May 1 - August 31	0	0 second tr.
Sept. 1 - Dec. 31	315	26,048 third tr.
Other Non-Trawl*	90	
May 1 - December 31	90	
Groundfish Pot	Exempt	
TOTAL	900 mt	91,048

Note: unused halibut PSC or P. cod TAC from first trimester will be rolled into the third trimester.

Any halibut PSC removed from the CDQ fisheries will be replaced from PSC apportioned from the third trimester.

* Includes hook & line fisheries for rockfish and Greenland turbot.

Sablefish hook & line fisheries will be exempted from the halibut mortality cap.

Jig gear will also be exempted from the halibut mortality cap.

Finance Committee

December 12, 1999

The Finance Committee met December 12, 1999 at the Hilton Anchorage Hotel. Members present were Rick Lauber, Earl Krygier, Jim Balsiger, Dave Benton, Dennis Austin, Dave Hanson, Clarence Pautzke, Chris Oliver and Gail Bendixen.

The Committee reviewed the year 2000 Administrative budget submitted to the NOAA Grants Office. They took a closer look at the Research money available for the year 2000. In the 2000 Administrative budget, \$37,000 is budgeted for Research Contracts. Other amounts include \$220,000 (issued in 1999 for American Fisheries Act (AFA) which can be carried over to 2000) and \$500,000 (AFA) and 250,000 (SEIS) which is expected in 2000. AFA money already obligated: Salary/benefits for a staff member (\$52,000), Inshore Coop Structure Analysis (U.W. - \$40,000) and Excessive Share/Processing Sideboard Analysis (Northern Economics - \$20,000)

Other issues discussed included the use of anticipated AFA money. No commitments were made on the money, though several potential projects were identified, including a comprehensive compilation of baseline socio-economic data, which could dovetail with the mandatory AFA report to Congress. Council staff will coordinate with AKFIN before proceeding with the comprehensive socio-economic data initiative, as there is potential overlap with planned AKFIN initiatives. These and other possible projects will be reviewed by the Committee in February.