

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## NEWSLETTER

### Halibut Limited Entry Study Circulated for Bid

A request for proposals to study limited entry systems for the Alaska hook and line halibut fishery has been circulated for bid. The proposed study requires a general evaluation of alternative limited entry systems and a detailed analysis of the individual fisherman's share-type system as approved by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council at its March meeting. The study request was developed over the past three years by a workgroup representing various agencies and industry representatives from Kodiak to Petersburg and Seattle.

Bids will be opened on May 17th and a contractor chosen at the Council meeting, May 19th and 20th. The study when completed in December of this year, will provide a general comparison of alternative limited entry systems and a detailed design for a share-type approach including projected administration and enforcement requirements. Among the questions it is expected to answer are: How will the composition of the halibut fleet change under a share system? What poundage should each share be? What is the best basis for determining an initial interest in the fishery? Will a share-type system eliminate the need for restrictive seasons and area management measures? When and how should shares be leased or sold? What are the maximum number of shares that can be allowed per individual to prevent someone gaining excessive control of the fishery? What will be the benefits and costs to the harvesting, processing and marketing sectors? How will local communities and lifestyles be impacted? How will market demand respond to increased availability of high quality fresh and frozen halibut during a longer period of the year?

In January 1983 the Council and the contractor will hold public hearings to explain the study and receive comments. These comments will be available to the Council when it meets, probably in March 1983, to give initial consideration to a particular halibut limited entry approach. More public hearings will be held before the Council takes final action. Should limited entry prove desirable, a system could be in place for 1984.

Those individuals interested in the status of the above limited entry study or the moratorium discussed below should request their names be added to a special mailing list on these subjects. Simply send a post card indicating your interest with name and address to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, P.O. Box 3136DT, Anchorage, Alaska 99510.

### Halibut Licensing Could be Subject to Moratorium

In March the Council recommended to the Secretary of Commerce that participation in the 1982 halibut hook and line fishery off Alaska be limited to only those fishermen who had fished in 1981 or before. This action responds to increasing halibut fishing effort and commensurate decline in season length despite an increasing total catch quota. For example, in International Pacific Halibut Commission Area 3 the fishing season decreased from 128 days in 1975 to 20 days in 1980. In 1981 the 13 million pound quota for Area 3 was exceeded by 700,000 pounds in a season of only 13 days, June 7-June 20. If fishing effort increases again this year in response to increased quotas and in reaction to the North Pacific Council's study on limited entry, the season may be even shorter.

Authorization for the Secretary of Commerce to implement the Council's recommended moratorium is included in an amendment to the North Pacific Halibut Act currently undergoing Congressional review. Hearings are scheduled before Congressman John Breaux's House Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment in Washington, D.C. the last week of April. If the amendment is approved, the Secretary of Commerce will publish a final rule prohibiting further new entrants to the halibut fishery.

There seems little chance that a moratorium can be in place before the season opens in May. The Council intends to limit participation in any future limited entry system to those who fished in 1981 or before, however, so new entrants in 1982 may not gain any qualification for entry.

### May Council Meeting

The next meeting of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, May 19-20, 1982, beginning at 9 a.m. in the Trattoria at the Westward Hilton Hotel. The Scientific and Statistical Committee will convene at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, May 17, and continue on Tuesday, May 18, in the Council's headquarters conference room. The Advisory Panel will meet from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18, in the Kenai Room at the Westward Hilton.

At the May meeting the Council is scheduled to conclude its action on Amendment #11 to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP and review changes to Amendment #1 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan. The Council will discuss the State of Alaska position on the need for the Bering/Chukchi Sea Herring FMP and the State's request to withdraw the Plan from Secretarial review or begin the amendment process. Other agenda items include a review of the Board's 1982 king crab regulations for compliance with the Joint Statement of Principles for King Crab Management and the framework FMP; Council consideration of the "Fishery Development Zone" concept to prohibit foreign fishing in designated areas of heavy fish populations traditionally favored by U.S. trawl and pot fishermen; and an amendment to the Bering Sea Groundfish Plan to lower the prohibited species catch for chinook salmon according to schedule. The Council will review proposals for a Study of Halibut Hook and Line Limited Entry and may award the contract at the May meeting.

Executive Director to Testify at Senate Hearing

Council Executive Director Jim Branson will testify before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation on Friday, April 30, in Washington, D.C. The Committee is accepting testimony on amendments and reauthorization for the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

1982 Joint Venture Pollock Catch In the Gulf of Alaska Up by 340%

As of March 27, 1982 U.S. fishermen had landed over 57,000 mt of Alaska pollock in joint venture fisheries in the central Gulf of Alaska. This represents a 340% increase over last year's joint venture harvest in the central Gulf of 16,836 mt. The fishery is expected to take at least another 10,000 mt before the schools of pollock in Shelikof Strait disperse and fishing activities cease.

The Council had allocated only 7,940 mt of pollock for 1982 joint ventures in the Gulf of Alaska, with 19,040 mt in reserve for unanticipated domestic catches and about 40,000 mt of pollock designated for foreign fisheries which have not yet been released. To ensure that sufficient quantities of pollock are available for domestic fishermen, the Council has requested that the State Department withhold further allocations of pollock to foreign fisheries in the central Gulf of Alaska. If the State Department concurs with the Council's request, 40,490 mt of pollock could be allocated to the current domestic fishing effort. At the May meeting the Council will consider an amendment to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Management Plan to increase the amount of pollock available to the domestic fishery.

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