

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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September Council Meeting in Sitka

The Council's 124th plenary session, held September 16-22 in Sitka, Alaska, was highlighted by Council approval of an Improved Retention & Utilization program for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries. Under the first phase of this program, vessels will be prohibited from discarding any pollock or Pacific cod. Details on this and other actions are inside. The next meeting is scheduled for the week of December 9 in Anchorage.

Council Holds Elections

By unanimous consent, Council members re-elected **Rick Lauber** and **Wally Pereyra** to serve as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, for another one-year term. First elected chairman in 1991, Mr. Lauber has been a member of the Council "family" since its inception in 1976, serving as an Advisory Panel member until his appointment to the Council in 1991. Mr. Lauber lives in Juneau and represents the Pacific Seafood Processors Association. This is the third term for Dr. Pereyra of ProFish International in Seattle who has been a Council member since 1990.

Reappointed Council Members Take Oath of Office

In August, the Secretary of Commerce announced the reappointments of **Robin Samuelsen** to his second three-year term and **Wally Pereyra** to his third three-year term as voting members of the NPFMC. Both members were given the oath of office by NMFS Regional Director, Steve Pennoyer. Mr. Samuelsen fishes commercially for salmon and

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herring and is active in fisheries issues in his community of Dillingham, Alaska. He also serves on the Council's Ecosystems Committee and the Council/Board of Fisheries Consultation Committee.

Nominations Due for Advisory Panel, Scientific and Statistical Committee

One-year terms of the Council's Advisory Panel (AP) and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) members expire in December. The SSC advises the Council on scientific and other technical matters relating to Council functions and the AP is composed of representatives of the major segments of the fishing industry. Members of these panels are expected to attend up to six meetings, three to four days in length, per year.

Resumes for persons who wish to be considered for these committees should be sent to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501, to arrive no later than 5:00 p.m., November 22, 1996. Appointments will be announced at the Council's December meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, and will become effective in January 1997. For more information, contact the Council office.

New Plan Team Member Appointed

Mr. Dave Jackson, ADF&G Kodiak and Alaskan Peninsula Area Shellfish and Groundfish Biologist, has been appointed to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team. Mr. Jackson has participated in the state's crab and groundfish surveys in the Kodiak and Alaskan Peninsula areas for nearly 20 years.

Improved Retention and Utilization Program

The Council got a jump start on pending waste and discard reduction provisions of the Magnuson Act by approving a retention and utilization (IR/IU) program for Bering Sea and Aleutian Island groundfish fisheries. Following nearly two years of analyses, Council discussions, and industry participation, the Council voted unanimously to require 100% retention of pollock and Pacific cod in all BSAI fisheries. Rock sole and yellowfin sole retention requirements will follow, but will be delayed for a period of five years - the delay for these two species, which are not yet fully utilized species, is to allow for development of markets and gear technological responses by the vessels engaged in these fisheries. The Council addressed the utilization side of the program by not mandating specific product forms, but by allowing individual operations the flexibility to process pollock and Pacific cod into whatever product forms they wish, subject to a minimum required product recovery rate of 15%.

The Council's target date for implementation of this program is January 1, 1998. It is also expected that a similar program for Gulf of Alaska fisheries will be developed and implemented on a parallel track. State regulations to extend these requirements to onshore processing plants will also be developed on a parallel schedule. The Council approved a relatively simple, straightforward program for the BSAI fisheries, with the expectation for future fine-tuning, including the continued involvement of the industry IR/IU Committee. The Council's action included specific provisions for monitoring and assessing the program's goals and objectives. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

Bering Sea Ecosystem Study Report

Dr. Bob Francis, chairman of the National Research Council's Committee on the Bering Sea Ecosystem, summarized the Committee's findings. The Committee was tasked by the State Department to study the population dynamics and changes in marine mammals, seabirds, and commercially important species in the

ecosystem and the probable causes of the changes. They also set out to identify gaps in knowledge and identify alternative management strategies. The committee concluded that changes in the Bering Sea ecosystem over the past 50 years are due to a combination of environmental change and human impacts. Their "cascade hypothesis" is based on changes in the physical environment acting in concert with human exploitation of long lived predators (such as whales) to create an environment in which pollock thrive. Hence, some changes that have occurred are likely irreversible in human time frames. They recommend that the Council utilize active adaptive management as a research tool, and that management adopt an ecosystem perspective. In consideration of declines in marine mammal and bird populations, the Committee suggests that fishing effort for pollock be broadly distributed over space and time. A copy of the full report, entitled "The Bering Sea Ecosystem," is available from the National Academy Press.

Ecosystems Committee

The first meeting of the Council's Ecosystem Committee was attended by an enthusiastic group including committee members Dave Fluharty (Chairman), Linda Behnken, Robin Samuelsen, Chris Blackburn, Kristen Stahl-Johnson, and about 25 others interested in ecosystem based management. Discussion focused on the role, goals, and objectives of the committee. Most attendees agreed that the committee could serve as an educational forum and that the committee could interact with the groundfish plan teams as well as provide advice to the Council. The committee could also provide direction and feedback for specific ecosystem related research projects. The committee will meet again this fall to review current and historical information on the Bering Sea ecosystem and approaches to ecosystem based management.

Observations from Coastal Communities Wanted!

The NPFMC, as part of its ongoing initiative to make ecosystem concerns a strong part of the fisheries management process, is soliciting comments from fishermen and residents of coastal communities on their observations. Observations of particular interest include:

- observed changes in the local ecosystem;
- observed changes in the local marine environment;
- abnormal or unusual phenomena;
- patterns or seasonal changes felt to be important to the local ecosystem; and
- traditional knowledge which explains patterns or relationships in the local ecosystem.

Please submit your comments to David Witherell at the Council office. A summary of these important observations will be part of the Council's annual Ecosystem Chapter, which is a permanent record available to the Council, scientists, and public. Thank you for your assistance.

Groundfish Proposals and IFQ Program Proposals

At this meeting, the Council took an initial look at 45 proposals received in this year's groundfish proposal cycle, but deferred any final decisions on these proposals until the December meeting. Though the proposals covered a broad spectrum of potential plan and regulatory amendments, many of the proposals received had to do with pollock and cod fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. Between now and the December Council meeting, staff will develop a "scoping" document which more fully describes the various GOA groundfish proposals, assesses a potential time schedule for analyses and action, and generally attempts to combine these proposals in a more comprehensive, single package for Council consideration. Other proposals and Council priorities will also be discussed at the December meeting.

The Council also received six proposals specific to potential changes in the sablefish and halibut IFQ program. These will be forwarded to, and examined by, the Council's IFQ Implementation Team, tentatively scheduled to meet on October 17-18 in Anchorage. Their agenda will also include reviewing the IFQ reports described below, the regulatory amendment analysis to standardize ice and slime deductions for halibut and sablefish, and proposed changes to the 6-hour prior notice of landings requirement, overages/underages, definition of "ownership" for hiring skippers, and fishing conflicts with the sablefish longline survey. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

IFQ Research Plan Team Reports

In consideration of intense public interest in the short and long-term effects of the Pacific halibut and sablefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program, and in response to specific requests from Governor Knowles and Council members, an inter-agency, inter-governmental team of professionals was assembled in the summer of 1995 to research the performance of the program. The ten reports presented by the IFQ Research Planning Team examined distributional issues, resource conservation, impacts on QS holders and registered buyers, program implementation, enforcement and costs, and vessel safety for the first year (1995) of the halibut and sablefish IFQ programs.

The Executive Summaries are available from the Council office. Final reports will be available by October 15. We are encouraging interested persons to request the summaries to determine which individual reports may be of interest, since the complete set of final reports total over 1,500 pages. A description of the reports is provided in the table below. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Report Element	Topics (Extract)	Agency
Distributional Issues (2 Major Reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected v. actual distribution of QS • Initial distribution • Changes from transfers • Changes in landings 	State/CFEC
"Gap" Analysis (1 Major Report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1991 - 1994 participants 	
Conservation Issues (1 Major Report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gear loss • By-catch/discards • Under reporting and "high-grading" • Gear conflicts 	NMFS/AFSC and Halibut Commission
Impacts on QS Holders and Registered Buyers (3 Major Survey Reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in fishing practices/crew • Ex-vessel prices • Processing impacts • Wholesale prices 	UAA/Anchorage/ISER
Implementation & Costs (Memorandum Report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of IFQ program, including agency changes, start-up activities, and costs 	NMFS/RAM Division
Enforcement & Costs (Memorandum Report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of IFQ Enforcement regime, including staffing, 1st year activities, and associated costs 	NMFS/Alaska Enforcement Division
Safety (Memorandum Report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coast Guard search & rescue (SAR) activities; earlier years v. 1995 	US Coast Guard

Observer Program

The Council received a status report on development of the modified pay-as-you-go observer program which was initiated late last year with the repeal of the North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan (fee plan). The new program structure would utilize a third party contractor as an interface between fishing/processing operations and the private observer contracting companies. The Council was advised by NMFS that provisions of the Services Contract Act (SCA) would apply to this program structure (as well as a fee plan structure), and that determination of a minimum wage schedule for observers is expected from the Department of Labor, hopefully in the next few weeks. NMFS and Council staff will then bring back to the Council a more detailed cost analysis of the third party program for review in December.

The Council's discussions included a request to NMFS to more specifically outline observer duties (compliance related versus data gathering for fisheries management), and to separate the costs associated with each. Related to this is a current NMFS initiative to more accurately determine necessary observer coverage levels to accomplish specific program objectives by each of the major groundfish fisheries. This information is expected to help the Council and industry develop more appropriate coverage levels for each fishery, and to define the costs associated with that coverage. Some of this information may be available for Council review in December as well. A meeting of the Council's Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) will be held later this fall to review the revised analyses of the modified pay-as-you-go program, and other available information, prior to Council consideration in December. The meeting date has not yet been set. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

Directed Fishing Standards

The Council approved a regulatory amendment that would implement changes to Directed Fishing Standards (DFS) in the Gulf of Alaska for the 1997 fishing season to: (1) allow the use of GOA arrowtooth flounder as a basis species for Pacific cod and pollock retention at 5%; and (2) reduce the Maximum Retainable Bycatch (MRB) percentage for GOA sablefish from 15% to 7%. The allowable MRBs are detailed below:

<u>BASIS SPECIES</u>	<u>BYCATCH SPECIES</u>		
	<u>Pacific cod</u>	<u>pollock</u>	<u>sablefish</u>
Arrowtooth flounder	5%	5%	
Deep water flatfish			7%
Rex sole			7%
Flathead sole			7%
Pacific Ocean Perch			7%
Shortraker/rougheye			7%
Other rockfish			7%
Pelagic rockfish			7%
DSR - Southeast outside			7%
Thornyhead			7%

The Council scheduled final action for changes to DFS for GOA rockfish and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish for December 1996. Proposed changes would: (1) prohibit the use of GOA northern rockfish as a basis for retention of shortraker/rougheye rockfish; (2) reduce the MRB established for BSAI Greenland Turbot. The EA/RIR will be available from the Council office by October 11. The Council also recommended that NMFS initiate an analysis to framework future DFS changes. Proposed MRBs are detailed below. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

GOA BASIS SPECIES

Northern rockfish

BYCATCH SPECIES

shortraker/rougheye

0%

BS/AI BASIS SPECIES

Flathead sole

Sablefish

Other rockfish

Other red rock fish -BS

Pacific ocean perch

Sharpchin/Northern - AI

Shortraker/Rougheye - AI

BYCATCH SPECIES

Greenland turbot

1%

10%

10%

10%

10%

10%

10%

Halibut and Sablefish IFQs/Slime & Ice Deduction

The Council approved sending to public review a regulatory amendment to create standard deductions for ice and slime for halibut and sablefish to prevent inaccurate accounting of harvests. The proposed standard deduction for halibut is based on industry standards of 0% (washed) or 2% (for ice and slime). A deduction of 0% is proposed for sablefish. The IFQ regulations currently require that the initial accurate scale weight at the time of landing should be reported. Numerous reports from the fishing industry have pointed to widespread violations of this provision, primarily under the guise of deductions for ice and slime. Deductions varying between 0 - 9% have been reported. The EA/RIR will be available from the Council office by October 11. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Initial Groundfish Specifications

The Council adopted for public review the preliminary Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document for the 1997 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) fisheries. This document contains information on the current status of stocks for each groundfish species, including biomass estimates and recommended Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) levels. Based on this information, and input from its advisory bodies and the public, the Council recommended preliminary levels of ABC and Total Allowable Catch (TAC). These recommendations are presented in Table 1. Twenty-five percent of the initial specifications will go forward as interim specifications for management of the 1997 groundfish fisheries until superseded by publication of final specifications. Because current stock assessments do not include information from this past summer's trawl and hydroacoustic surveys, biomass estimates and subsequent catch specifications are subject to revision when the 1996 survey data are incorporated. These assessments will be finalized by the groundfish plan team in November. On the basis of comments and new information, the Council will adopt final recommendations for the 1997 fishing year at its December meeting.

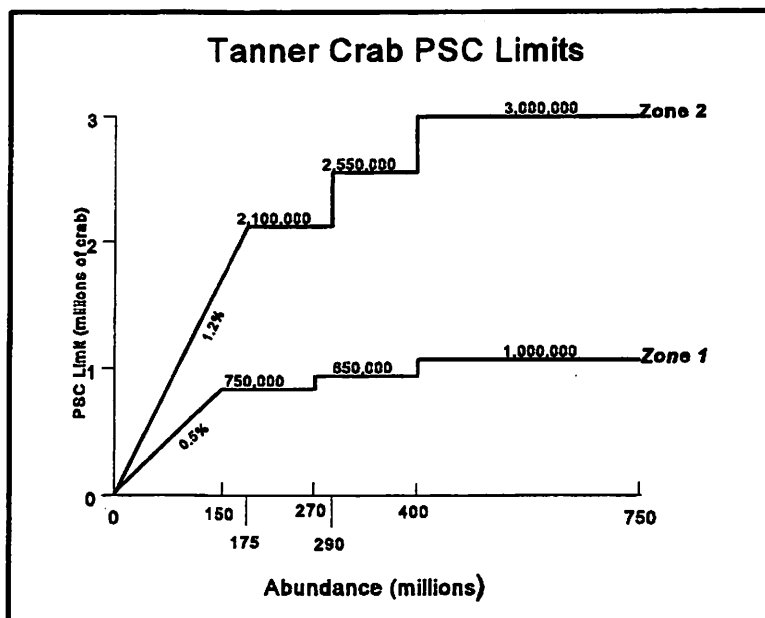
ABCs were reduced for many species due to the adoption of a new overfishing definition under Amendment 44, which provides a buffer between ABC and the overfishing level (OFL) and reflects current scientific knowledge about conservative fishing levels. Although this amendment imposes increasingly conservative rules for specifying ABC for less understood populations, even these conservative ABCs are above the 1996 TACs for most species.

Regarding apportionment of PSCs in the BSAI groundfish fisheries, the Council recommended the same bycatch allowances for Pacific halibut, herring, red king crab, and Tanner crab as for 1996 (Tables 2 and 3). These apportionments will only be in place until the final recommendations of the Council in December are adopted by the Secretary of Commerce. Note that the Council has adopted reduced PSC limits for bairdi Tanner crab, which

will become effective early in 1997 (see crab news article). Lastly, the Council recommended that standards for the Vessel Incentive Program (VIP) for the first two quarters of the 1997 Gulf and BSAI trawl fisheries be the same as last year's standards. Staff contact is David Witherell.

Tanner Crab Bycatch Limits

The Council approved the agreement negotiated by affected industry groups regarding PSC limits for *C. bairdi* Tanner crab taken in BSAI trawl fisheries. Under the agreement, PSC limits for *bairdi* in Zones 1 and 2 will be based on total abundance of *bairdi* crab as indicated by the NMFS trawl survey. Based on 1996 abundance (185 million crabs), the PSC limit for *C. bairdi* in 1997 will be 750,000 crabs in Zone 1 and 2,100,000 crab in Zone 2. Crab bycatch accrued from January 1 until publication of the final rule (expected by April 1997) will be applied to revised bycatch limits established for specified fisheries.



Amendment 41 PSC limits adopted for *bairdi* Tanner crab.

Zone	Abundance	PSC Limit
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
Zone 2	0-175 million crabs	0.5% of abundance
	175-290 million crabs	2,100,000
	290-400 million crabs	2,550,000
	over 400 million crabs	3,000,000

At its first meeting, the committee was unable to reach an agreement on a snow crab (*C. opilio*) PSC limit. The Council has requested that the committee meet again and attempt to negotiate an agreement for *opilio*. The Council is scheduled to take final action on *opilio* PSC limits in December. Staff contact is David Witherell.

Gulf of Alaska Initial Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved interim 1997 Gulf of Alaska groundfish quota specifications, including Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs), Total Allowable Catches (TACs), and Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits (Table 4). The specifications are based on the current stock assessments contained in the preliminary 1997 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE), as well as recommendations by the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team, Advisory Panel, and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). One fourth of the interim 1997 TACs will be released for the first quarter of the 1997 fishing year until the final TACs are determined in December 1996.

The triennial Gulf of Alaska trawl survey was conducted in 1996, but these results were not yet incorporated into the preliminary stock assessments for all species/complexes. As a result, the interim 1997 quotas remain unchanged for deepwater flatfish, flathead sole, shallow water flatfish, arrowtooth flounder, northern rockfish,

pelagic shelf rockfish (PSR), demersal shelf rockfish (DSR), other slope rockfish, and Atka mackerel. Survey results will be incorporated into the recommended ABCs in the Final SAFE in December and will likely result in changes to all species except DSR and sablefish (which do not rely on the survey).

The 1997 interim TACs increased for three GOA species. The pollock TAC increased to 78,100 mt from the 1996 level of 54,810 mt based on a revised stock assessment which incorporates evidence of a strong 1994 year class. The 1997 interim TAC for Pacific ocean perch increased from 6,959 mt to 8,130 mt and is calculated from the Council's rebuilding plan. The TAC for thornyheads increased from 1,248 mt to 1,560 mt because the Council did not include a 20% reduction of the interim TAC as was done for 1996.

The interim 1997 quotas decreased for four species. The TAC for Pacific cod decreased to 52,000 mt from the 1996 level of 65,000 mt to give industry notice of a continued trend in the decline of this stock. This interim TAC is believed to be a minimum estimate and will be revised for the December 1996 meeting with incorporation of the 1996 trawl survey results. ABCs and TACs were reduced for rex sole and shortraker rougheye, as a result of the revised ABC and overfishing definitions recently approved by the Council (Amendment 44).

The interim 1997 sablefish TAC was reduced to 11,620 mt, from 17,080 mt in 1996, for two reasons. A change to a scientifically stronger stock assessment model that projects continued declines in the stock accounted for part of the reduction, while the revised ABC and overfishing definitions account for most of the ABC and TAC reduction.

Industry expressed concern to the SSC and Council over the possibility of the sablefish longline survey results being affected by fishing operations just prior to and during station sampling and the disparity in survey results to the industry's experience on the fishing grounds. Because of the importance of the survey index in determining ABC and understanding the dynamics of the sablefish stock, the sablefish longline fleet was asked to avoid the survey areas for a few days before the area was to be sampled. For the most part, cooperation was good in 1995, and it improved in 1996. The longline survey schedule was modified in 1996 to provide more opportunity for fishing activity that could avoid the survey. The survey started earlier and was halfway through the central Gulf before the July trawl opening, providing more area that had already been surveyed prior to fishing activities. Little interaction occurred in the Central Gulf. It was hoped that by the time the survey reached the West Yakutat area, the area would have been closed and allowed to rest after a short rockfish opening, or fishing activity would be avoided directly prior to the survey. However, the rockfish fishery did not close until the end of July and trawlers topping off on sablefish were observed in the survey area shortly before sampling. The survey scientists will examine observer reports of fishing in the area to determine if a valid adjustment of survey results can be obtained.

The survey covers most of the prime habitat along the slope and deep gulleys, but only partially covers marginal habitat and could be underestimating the rate of total stock decline if concentrations in marginal habitat decline at a greater rate. The greater rate of decline in the GOA gulleys and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands slope, compared to the GOA slope, indicate this could be happening. The fishery, which targets effort in prime habitat, may also continue to experience high catch rates as the stock contracts from marginal areas. The survey may confirm the pessimistic trend in the population, and confirm a need for a lower ABC. If the survey indicates a stable population and problems with misreported catch data are reconciled, the reduction in the ABC may be lessened. The stock assessment will be revised to address recommendations by the Plan Team and SSC for the December meeting; it is expected that the ABC recommendation could be higher than the 11,620 mt approved by the Council at this meeting.

The Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for halibut in the GOA are set by gear type and may be apportioned seasonally over the fishing year. For 1997, the Council recommended PSC apportionments shown below for the GOA groundfish fisheries. Pot gear and the sablefish fixed gear IFQ fishery continue to be exempt from the halibut PSC limits.

	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

The trawl gear PSC cap is further apportioned between "shallow" and "deep" water species complexes as follows:

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Shallow water Complex</u>	<u>Deep water Complex</u>	<u>Total</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

Species in the shallow water complex are pollock, Pacific cod, shallow water flatfish, Atka mackerel, and other species while the deep water complex includes deep water flatfish, rockfish, flathead sole, sablefish and arrowtooth flounder.

The Council also reviewed a plan amendment to modify the GOA pelagic shelf rockfish (PSR) complex. Amendment 46 proposes to separate the PSR complex into nearshore (black and blue rockfishes) and offshore (dusky, widow, and yellowtail rockfishes) components and possibly transfer management authority for nearshore species to the State of Alaska. The Council may choose between: (1) retaining authority for defining ABCs, TACs, and overfishing levels and transferring in-season management to the State as was done under GOA Amendments 14 and 21; and (2) withdrawing black and blue rockfishes from the GOA FMP and turning their management over to the State for management in both State and Federal waters, dependent upon approval of the Magnuson Act reauthorization that would address extension of State authority into Federal waters in absence of Federal management. The public review draft will be available on October 11. The Council will make a final decision at the December meeting. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Electronic Reporting

The Council delayed final action until December on a regulatory amendment to require groundfish processors in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska to utilize an electronic recordkeeping and reporting system for NMFS-required documents. The delay until December would allow NMFS staff to work further with industry members to address continued concerns raised by industry on the recommended hardware and software requirements. Nick Hindman at the NMFS/Regional Office (907-586-7228) is the staff contact for the industry meetings.

The proposed changes would replace conventional logbooks and associated NMFS reports with electronic versions. At-sea processors would be required to transmit in-season NMFS reports using Inmarsat satellite equipment and shore-based processors would be required to use modems and phone systems. All processors using the electronic reporting system would be required to have a computer-operated printer to make paper copies of electronic logbook pages and transmitted reports at the processing site.

The NMFS electronic reporting system would be implemented in two stages. Phase 1 would consist of electronic versions of the daily production, weekly production, and check-in/check-out reports and would be distributed to the groundfish processing industry for voluntary use in early 1997. Legal implementation of Phase 1 would take place on January 1, 1998. Phase 2 would consist of electronic logbooks, vessel activity reports, and product

transfer reports. These will be developed in 1997 and 1998 with full legal implementation in 1999. Council staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Steller Sea Lions

Biologists from the NMFS Marine Mammal Lab summarized recent information on the status of Steller sea lions. Survey data indicate a continuing population decline of Stellers in much of Alaska. For adults and juveniles, a 7.5% decline was observed in overall (haul-out and rookery) trend site numbers from 1994 to 1996. Declines were observed in Southeast Alaska and in the Gulf of Alaska, but not in the Aleutian Islands as a whole. A 6.1% decline in pup numbers was also observed at selected rookeries.

In October 1995, NMFS published a proposed rule to list the western population of Steller sea lions as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and to retain the threatened status for the eastern population. A final rule is scheduled to be issued in October or November of 1996. As part of the evaluation of Steller sea lion status, NMFS will be reviewing all management actions enacted to conserve the U.S. population. A list of proposed actions that could be taken will be presented to the Council at its April 1997 meeting. Staff contact is David Witherell.

Halibut Charter Boat Management

The Council received a report from staff on the proposed management alternatives for the guided sport fishery for halibut off Alaska. In August, the Council contracted with the University of Alaska's Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) to conduct much of the data gathering and analyses for that study. Council staff will also be devoting much of this fall to that study with a draft analysis expected for Council review in February of next year. A final decision could be made as early as the April 1997 meeting in Anchorage. Staff contact person(s) are Marcus Hartley or Chris Oliver.

**North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Tentative Meeting Schedules - 1996-99***

	February Week of/ Location	April Week of/ Location	June Week of/ Location	September Week of/ Location	December Week of/ Location
1996					9/Anchorage
1997	3/Anchorage	14/Anchorage	16/Kodiak	22/Seattle	8/Anchorage
1998	2/Anchorage	20/Anchorage	15/TBA	21/Seattle	7/Anchorage
1999	1/Anchorage	19/Anchorage	14/Kodiak	20/Seattle	6/Anchorage

* Meeting dates are subject to change depending on availability of meeting space. Any changes will be published in the Council's newsletter.

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<http://wwwfak.afsc.noaa.gov/npfmc/npfmc.htm>
 or you can find us linked to the NMFS Alaska Region's home page!

Table 1

Draft

**Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Groundfish
Recommended Initial 1997 Catch Specifications (mt)**

1996 Specifications

Species	Area	1997 Biomass	1997 OFL	1997 ABC	1997 TAC
Pollock	EBS	7,360,000	1,460,000	1,190,000	1,190,000
	"A" season				45%
	"B" season				55%
	AI	87,200	47,000	39,900	35,600
	Bogoslof	680,000	121,000	51,000	1,000
Pacific cod	BS/AI	1,600,000	347,000	255,000	255,000
Yellowfin sole	BS/AI	2,850,000	342,000	235,000	200,000
Greenland turbot	BS/AI	135,000	25,100	13,700	7,000
	BS				67%
	AI				33%
Arrowtooth	BS/AI	576,000	162,000	105,000	9,000
Rock sole	BS/AI	2,360,000	433,000	296,000	70,000
Flathead sole	BS/AI	593,000	140,000	97,100	30,000
Other flatfish	BS/AI	590,000	120,000	84,000	35,000
Sablefish	EBS	14,400	1,170	790	790
	AI	12,000	1,320	890	890
POP complex					
True POP	EBS	48,400	2,380	1,550	1,550
Other POP	EBS	29,700	1,400	1,050	1,050
True POP	AI	332,000	27,300	12,200	12,100
	Western			6,100	6,050
	Central			3,050	3,025
	Eastern			3,050	3,025
Sharp/Northern	AI	96,800	5,810	4,360	4,360
Short/Rougheye	AI	45,600	1,250	938	938
Other rockfish	EBS	7,100	497	373	373
	AI	13,600	952	714	714
Atka mackerel	AI	578,000	81,600	66,700	66,700
			to 109,300	to 90,600	
	Western				32,000
	Central				19,500
	Eastern				15,000
Squid	BS/AI	n/a	2,620	1,970	1,000
Other species	BS/AI	687,000	137,000	25,800	20,125
BS/AI TOTAL		18,695,800	3,460,399	2,484,035	1,943,190

1996 ABC	1996 TAC	1996 Catch*
1,190,000	1,190,000	496,632
		45%
		55%
35,600	35,600	26,300
121,000	1,000	387
305,000	270,000	199,000
278,000	200,000	100,220
10,300	7,000	5,928
67%	67%	4,349
33%	33%	1,579
129,000	9,000	10,052
361,000	70,000	44,144
116,000	30,000	12,434
102,000	35,000	15,119
1,200	1,100	595
1,300	1,200	612
1,800	1,800	155
1,400	1,260	164
12,100	12,100	12,700
6,050	6,050	
3,025	3,025	
3,025	3,025	
5,810	5,229	6,626
1,250	1,125	929
497	447	117
952	857	258
116,000	106,157	101,800
55,700	45,857	41,505
33,600	33,600	33,600
26,700	26,700	26,700
3,000	1,000	543
27,600	20,125	16,924
2,820,809	2,000,000	1,051,639

EBS = eastern Bering Sea
BS/AI = Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands
BS = Bering Sea
AI = Aleutian Islands

OFL = overfishing level
ABC = acceptable biological catch
TAC = total allowable catch

* = catch as of 8/31/96.

Table 2

**Preliminary 1997 BSAI Trawl Fisheries PSC
Advisory Panel Recommended Apportionments**

Fishery Group	Halibut Mortality Cap (mt)	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab (animals) Zone1	C. bairdi Zone1	C. bairdi Zone2
Yellowfin sole	820	287	50,000	250,000	1,530,000
Rocksole/other flatfish	730		110,000	425,000	510,000
Turbot/sablefish/ Arrowtooth	0				0
Rockfish	110	7			10,000
Pacific cod	1,685	22	10,000	250,000	260,000
Pollockmackerel/o.species Pelagic Trawl Pollock	430	154 1,227	30,000	75,000	690,000
TOTAL	3,775	1,697	200,000	1,000,000	3,000,000

Note: unused PSC allowances may be rolled into the following seasonal apportionment.
Amendment 37, if approved, would reduce red king crab cap to 100,000 crab for 1997.
C. bairdi PSC caps may also be reduced in 1997 under Amendment 41, if adopted and approved.

Table 3

**Preliminary 1997 BSAI Non-Trawl Fisheries PSC Bycatch Allowances
and fixed gear Pacific cod seasonal apportionments**

Fishery Group	Halibut Mortality (mt)	Seasonal Apportion of cod ITAC (mt)
Pacific Cod	800	
Jan 1 - April 30		80%
May 1 - August 31		18%
Sept. 1 - Dec. 31		2%
Other Non-Trawl*	100	
Groundfish Pot	Exempt	
TOTAL	900 mt	100%

Note: unused PSC halibut from first trimester will be rolled into 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.

Table 4

GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH ABCs and TACs						
Interim 1997 North Pacific Fishery Management Council Specifications (mt)						
Species	Area	1996			1997	
		ABC	TAC	Catch*	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (61)	25,480	25,480	15,065	36,300	36,300
	C (62)	12,840	12,840	5,641	18,300	18,300
	C (63)	13,680	13,680	11,800	19,500	19,500
	E	2,810	2,810	621	4,010	4,010
	Total	54,810	54,810	33,127	78,110	78,110
Pacific Cod	W	18,850	18,850	19,654	15,080	15,080
	C	42,900	42,900	46,475	34,320	34,320
	E	3,250	3,250	881	2,600	2,600
	Total	65,000	65,000	67,010	52,000	52,000
Flatfish, Deep Water	W	670	460	19	1,020	460
	C	8,150	7,500	1,817	12,380	7,500
	E	5,770	3,120	129	8,760	3,120
	Total	14,590	11,080	1,965	22,160	11,080
Rex Sole	W	1,350	800	479	1,080	1,080
	C	7,050	7,050	4,618	5,640	5,640
	E	2,810	1,840	72	2,250	2,250
	Total	11,210	9,690	5,169	8,970	8,970
Flathead Sole	W	8,880	2,000	660	9,790	2,000
	C	17,170	5,000	1,611	18,940	5,000
	E	2,740	2,740	41	3,020	2,740
	Total	28,790	9,740	2,312	31,750	9,740
Flatfish, Shallow Water	W	26,280	4,500	262	31,590	4,500
	C	23,140	12,950	6,749	25,980	12,950
	E	2,850	1,180	25	3,160	1,180
	Total	52,270	18,630	7,036	60,730	18,630
Arrowtooth	W	28,400	5,000	1,773	35,390	5,000
	C	141,290	25,000	15,619	175,250	25,000
	E	28,440	5,000	592	35,150	5,000
	Total	198,130	35,000	17,984	245,790	35,000
Sablefish	W	2,200	2,200	1,486	1,500	1,500
	C	6,900	6,900	6,323	4,690	4,690
	W. Yakutat	3,040	3,040	2,588	2,060	2,060
	E. Yak./SEO	4,940	4,940	3,894	3,370	3,370
	Total	17,080	17,080	14,291	11,620	11,620
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	1,460	1,260	892	2,130	1,470
	C	3,860	3,333	5,139	5,640	3,900
	E	2,740	2,366	2,241	4,010	2,760
	Total	8,060	6,959	8,272	11,780	8,130
Shortraker/Rougheye	W	170	170	120	160	160
	C	1,210	1,210	942	1,100	1,100
	E	530	530	501	480	480
	Total	1,910	1,910	1,563	1,740	1,740
Rockfish, Other Slope	W	180	100	10	150	100
	C	1,170	1,170	605	960	1,170
	E	5,760	750	232	4,750	750
	Total	7,110	2,020	847	5,860	2,020
Rockfish, Northern	W	640	640	113	640	640
	C	4,610	4,610	3,193	4,610	4,610
	E	20	20	24	20	20
	Total	5,270	5,270	3,330	5,270	5,270
Rockfish, Pelagic Shelf	W	910	910	103	910	910
	C	3,200	3,200	1,782	3,200	3,200
	E	1,080	1,080	252	1,080	1,080
	Total	5,190	5,190	2,137	5,190	5,190
Rockfish, Demersal Shelf	SEO	950	950	355	950	950
Thornyhead	Gulfwide	1,560	1,248	957	1,560	1,560
Atka Mackerel	W		2,310	1,343	2,310	2,310
	C		925	9	925	925
	E		5	0	5	5
	Total	3,240	3,240	1,352	3,240	3,240
Other Species	Gulfwide	NA	12,390	3,391	NA	14,690
GULF OF ALASKA	TOTAL	475,170	260,207	171,098	546,720	267,940

* Catch through September 7, 1996

9/24/96

NPFMC: Four-Meeting Outlook*

ATTACHMENT I

Dec '96 9/Anchorage	Feb '97 3/Anchorage	Apr '97 14/Anchorage	June '97 16/Kodiak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP/SSC Memberships • IFQ: RAM Season Wrap-up Report • IFQ: Implementation Team Report • IFQ Proposals: Task Staff • Report on Rockfish Bycatch , • Ecosystem Committee Report • Halibut Sport Charter Management: Status Report • Observer Program: <i>Initial Review</i> of Modified Pay-as-you-go Program • Electronic Reporting: <i>Final Action</i> • GOA/BSAI SAFEs & Groundfish Specs: <i>Final Action</i> • Opilio Crab PSC caps: <i>Final Action</i> • Slime and Ice Accounting: <i>Final Action</i> • Forage Fish Prohibition: <i>Initial Review</i> • DFS Changes: <i>Final Action</i> • Pelagic Shelf Rockfish: <i>Final Action</i> • Research Priorities: <i>Initial Review</i> • DSR License Limitation: <i>Initial Review</i> • Review Groundfish Proposals: task staff • Review BOF Initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halibut Sport Charter Management: <i>Initial Review</i> of analyses • Observer Program: <i>Final Action</i> • GOA Crab Bycatch Report • Ban on Night Trawling: Report • Marine Mammal/Sea Life Ctr Report • Research Priorities: <i>Final Action</i> • DSR License Limitation: <i>Final Action</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFQ Amendments: <i>Initial Review</i> • Marine Mammal Report • Halibut Sport Charter Management: <i>Final Action</i> • VBAs^{1/}: <i>Initial Review</i> • GOA IR/IU: <i>Initial Review</i> • Limited Processing for Catcher Vessels: <i>Initial Review</i> • Streamline Groundfish TAC Specification & GOA/BSAI Groundfish & Crab FMP Updates: <i>Initial Action</i> • Groundfish Amendments: <i>Initial Review</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFQ Amendments: <i>Final Action</i> • VBAs^{1/}: <i>Final Action</i> • GOA IR/IU: <i>Final Action</i> • Limited Processing for Catcher Vessels: <i>Final Action</i> • Streamline Groundfish TAC Specification & GOA/BSAI Groundfish & Crab FMP Updates: <i>Final Action</i> • Groundfish Amendments: <i>Final Action</i>
20th Anniversary Celebration	Joint Meeting w/BOF on Crab Issues	IPHC/Council Joint Meeting	

^{1/} Depends on Magnuson Act amendments as do the following: further work on groundfish/crab ITQs, central lien registry, 3% fee on CDQs and IFQs, loan guarantee program for small boat and entry level halibut/sablefish fishermen.

* Note: This tentative timeline will be updated periodically, particularly after each Council meeting, as the Council works through its decision process.