

# 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

VOLUME #98-2

## NEWSLETTER

5/1/98

Visit our web site on the Internet! <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/npfmc.htm>

### April Council Meeting - 132nd Plenary Session

The Council met April 22-27 in Anchorage and reviewed an analysis of inshore/offshore pollock allocations for release to public review and a number of proposed plan amendments to comply with the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996. Summaries of the issues considered are inside.

The June Council meeting will be held in Dutch Harbor the week of June 8 at the Grand Aleutian Hotel. Although the hotel is totally booked, their Hospitality Director, Chris Hamil, has been tasked to handle all room arrangements for anyone attending the meeting in Dutch Harbor. Chris can be reached at (907) 581-3844.

### Advisory Panel Holds Election of Officers

John Bruce and Stephanie Madsen were unanimously re-elected Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. John is the Personnel Director for Jubilee Fisheries in Seattle, Washington and has been a member of the AP since 1991. Stephanie, an 18-year resident of Unalaska, is the Executive Director of Aleutian Seafood Processor's Association in Dutch Harbor, Alaska and has been a member of the AP since 1993.

### Essential Fish Habitat

The Magnuson-Stevens Act amendments emphasized the importance of habitat protection to healthy fisheries and strengthening the ability of NMFS and the Councils to protect and conserve habitat of finfish, mollusks, and crustaceans. This habitat is termed essential fish habitat (EFH), and is broadly defined to include "those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity." The Councils are required to amend their fishery management plans by October 1998 to:

#### IN THIS NEWSLETTER

APRIL COUNCIL MEETING .....	1
AP HOLDS ELECTION OF OFFICERS .....	1
ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) .....	1
HALIBUT & SABLEFISH IFQ PROGRAM .....	2
HALIBUT CHARTERBOAT MANAGEMENT .....	3
STREAMLINE TAC SETTING PROCESS .....	4
CHINOOK SALMON BYCATCH .....	5
POLLOCK BOTTOM TRAWL GEAR PROHIBITION .....	5
OVERFISHING DEFINITIONS .....	5
ATKA MACKEREL APPORTIONMENT .....	6
CDQ PROGRAM ISSUES .....	6
W/JC GULF MANAGEMENT .....	7
IMPROVED RETENTION/IMPROVED UTILIZATION .....	8
VESSEL MORATORIUM EXTENSION .....	8
INSHORE/OFFSHORE 3 .....	9
OBSERVER PROGRAM .....	9
SOCIAL & ECONOMIC DATA COMMITTEE .....	10
GOA UPDATE (CORRECTIONS) .....	10
UPCOMING MEETINGS .....	10
DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC .....	11
SPECIAL AIRLINE FARE FOR DUTCH HARBOR .....	12
TENTATIVE MEETING SCHEDULE .....	12
THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK .....	(Attachment 1)

- identify and describe EFH for species managed under a fishery management plan;
- describe adverse impacts to that habitat from fishing activities;
- describe adverse impacts to that habitat from non-fishing activities; and
- recommend conservation and enhancement measures necessary to help minimize impacts, protect, and restore that habitat.
- include conservation and enhancement measures to minimize adverse impacts from fishing.

At the April meeting, the Council reviewed the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Analysis for amending the FMPs (groundfish, salmon, crab, and scallops) to incorporate EFH provisions. The Council recommended several modifications to improve the document and those revisions will be included in the public review draft, which will be available by mid-May. To minimize the impacts of fishing gear on habitat areas of particular concern, a 4-mile by 4-mile pinnacle area off Sitka has been proposed as a no fishing area to protect habitat important for juvenile rockfish and ling cod. An option of allowing salmon fishing in the pinnacle area was added for analysis. Final action on the EFH amendments is scheduled for June.

Preliminary recommendations on EFH were made by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). At this time, NMFS has recommended adoption of Alternative 2, which designates EFH as described by the general distribution of a species or species complex. Copies of the preliminary NMFS recommendations and EFH assessment reports are available from the Council office.

A discussion paper will be prepared for the June meeting to assist the public with identifying habitat areas of particular concern and provide some guidance on possible management measures that could be taken to prevent, mitigate, or minimize any adverse effects from fishing, to the extent practicable, on EFH. It is hoped that such a document will assist the public in putting forward plan amendment proposals this summer. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

### Halibut and Sablefish IFQ Program

In December 1997, the Council approved development of four IFQ proposals recommended for analysis by the IFQ Industry Implementation Team from the 1997 call for IFQ proposals. The Council approved the analysis of Plan Amendments 54/54 for public review. The draft analysis will be available to the public on August 1. Final action is scheduled for October 1998. The alternatives included in the analysis are:

- (1) Revise plan language to authorize indirect vessel ownership for hired skipper provisions.

Alternative 1: Status quo: require that the QS holder wishing to hire a skipper be the named owner of the vessel on USCG vessel documentation.

Alternative 2: Revise FMP language to allow QS holders wishing to hire skippers to establish indirect vessel ownership through corporate ties.

- (2) Include "dissolution of the corporation or partnership" in the definition of "a change in the corporation or partnership."

Alternative 1: Status quo: "a change in the corporation or partnership" will continue to be defined as the addition of a shareholder or partner.

Alternative 2: Redefine "a change in the corporation or partnership" to include "a dissolution of the corporation or partnership."

(3) Proposal to express sablefish use limits as a specific number of QS units.

- Alternative 1. Status quo: sablefish use limits will remain expressed as a percentage of the QS pool.
- Alternative 2. Revise the methodology of calculating use caps for fixed gear sablefish from percent to QS units based on 1996 QS units.

A fourth alternative to renew the IFQ leasing provision was dropped by the Council. The Council, however, initiated a regulatory amendment to extend the survivorship privileges to heirs of deceased QS holders. The proposed alternative would allow a QS holder to designate an individual to whom NMFS might grant emergency transfer privileges in the event of the QS holder's death and in the absence of a spouse. This designation could be filed with Restricted Access Management (RAM). This amendment would address a problem identified by the Council in 1996. A previous regulatory amendment was disapproved by the Secretary after it was determined that the Council's preferred action conflicted with other provisions in the FMPs. This analysis may come before the Council for action at the October 1998 meeting.

The Council also received progress reports from NMFS staff on the Quota Share (QS) Loan Program and Fee Collections Program. The IFQ fee collection program, which is the source of funding for the loan program, will not be implemented until 1999 according to NMFS. However, Congress directed \$100,000 to the loan fund for 1998 and loans have been committed from these funds. A discussion paper on the fee program (cost recovery program) consists of an outline of the elements of the program, and is followed by a full description and brief qualitative analysis of the proposed elements. Some of the key elements include: (1) program objectives, (2) process to establish annual fees, (3) deposits to and disbursements from the Limited Access System Administration Fund, (4) deductions for additional CDQ observer and monitoring costs, and (5) cost recovery program implementation date. The Council will schedule a committee or workshop-style meeting with NMFS staff to discuss elements of the proposed recovery program. The CDQ Implementation meeting will also discuss this topic during its May 1 meeting. NMFS is planning for a January 1999 publication of the final rule on the cost recovery program and is soliciting comments from the Council and public on its proposal. For more information, contact Jane DiCosimo on the IFQ and CDQ programs and Chris Oliver on the QS loan and cost recovery programs.

### Halibut Charterboat Management

At the December 1997 Council meeting, NMFS notified the Council that, without accompanying regulations, the halibut charterboat guideline harvest level (GHL) could not be submitted to the Secretary for formal review and publication. Instead, NMFS published the Council's intent of the GHL as a notice of inquiry in the Federal Register on March 10, 1998. The Council formed a Halibut GHL Committee to recommend possible management measures that would keep the halibut charter fleet under the GHL.

In April, the Council received a report from its GHL Committee on possible management measures to keep the halibut charterboat fleet under the GHL. The Council approved the list of short-term and long-term measures for analysis. The Council also requested that the analysis include a discussion on a rod permit program and further detail on a proposed banking program. The Council further set a control date of April 27, 1998 (or date of publication in the Federal Register) for participation in the halibut charterboat fleet for a possible moratorium on new entry into the fleet. The Council has previously set control dates of September 23, 1993, and April 17, 1997. The Council may choose from among these dates, or may choose the date of final action (April 1999) for a possible moratorium cut-off. The 1998 logbook program will generate additional information regarding participation in this fishery.

The Council will receive a staff report on the analysis of the proposed management measures at the October meeting in Seattle. Initial review and final action are tentatively scheduled for February and April 1999, respectively. Proposed management measures for analysis are listed below.

Alternative 1. Drop the GHL.

- Develop local area management plans as quickly as possible for areas with documented problems, through facilitation, etc., if possible.
- Employ the following six tools within a local area management plan (LAMP) to curtail catch rates of guided sport anglers: (1) line limits on boats, (2) annual angler limits, (3) vessel trip limits, (4) super-exclusive registration of charter vessels, (5) moratorium, and (6) sport catcher vessel only area (SCVOA) to address gear conflicts. These tools could be employed, as well as others not listed, within a LAMP framework to curtail guided sport catch rates.

Alternative 2. Under a GHL,

- Retain GHL at specified levels and convert the GHL to an allocation.
- Manage the guided sport fishery under status quo or according to LAMPs approved by the Council.
- Consider moratorium in the LAMPs.
- Bank uncaught halibut for sport fishery to be provided to sport fishery during years of low TAC to provide stability to guided sport fishery.

Alternative 3. Under a GHL,

- Manage guided sport fishery status quo.
- Apply range of management measures listed above to curtail catch rates of guided anglers once GHL is attained.
- Apply management measures up to 2 years after attainment of GHL (1 year if data is available, but at the beginning of a year for industry stability).
- Employ combination of management measures (e.g., line, boat, annual and/or trip limits) depending on the level of catch reduction required.
- Include a moratorium under this alternative.

The next GHL Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, June 19, 1998 in the Council offices. An agenda will be available from the Council or its web site by late May. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

### Streamline TAC Setting Process

The Council approved Plan Amendments 48/48 to revise the annual specification process. The approved action proposes to eliminate publication of proposed and interim specifications for BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries. The previous year's specifications would also remain effective until superseded. References to foreign and joint venture fisheries would be deleted from the FMP. In-season closure authority would be revised. The preliminary Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report would also be modified and

no preliminary ABC recommendations would be made by the Plan Teams or Council. If approved by the Secretary, this action may be in effect for setting 1999 specifications this fall. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

### **Chinook Salmon Bycatch**

The Council reviewed analysis of a proposal to lower the chinook salmon bycatch limit for trawl vessels fishing in the Bering Sea. The current bycatch limit of 48,000 chinook salmon, if attained, triggers a closure of the Chinook Salmon Savings Areas to all trawling anytime prior to April 15. This proposal, submitted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, would include chinook salmon taken as bycatch after April 15 toward a closure for the remainder of a year, or would reduce the overall bycatch limit to 36,000 salmon.

The Council requested that the analysis be revised to include additional alternatives, including hotspot area closures at the start of the fishing year and an option that the closure would apply only to the pollock fishery. Further, the Council requested that the analysis discuss several issues, including a requirement for 100% observer coverage on vessels over 60' when fishing in the hotspot area, use of vessel monitoring systems on vessels fishing for pollock, accuracy of basket sampling for salmon, measures to ensure accurate enumeration of catch, and possible gear interactions resulting from a hotspot closure. A revised analysis will be prepared for initial review in October. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

### **Pollock Bottom Trawl Gear Prohibition**

The Council reviewed analysis of a proposal to ban trawling with non-pelagic trawl gear for vessels targeting pollock in the BSAI. The objective of this proposal, submitted by the Alaska Marine Conservation Council, was to reduce bycatch of halibut and other marine life. Although this action could be taken annually as part of the BSAI TAC specification process, the proposed plan amendment would make this prohibition permanent. Total bycatch limits for halibut, king crab, and Tanner crab would be reduced to reflect this gear prohibition.

The Council released the analysis for public review with several modifications. It was recommended that calculations of bycatch savings should include halibut and crab taken in excess of the 20 crab per haul performance standard. An option to split out pollock from the pollock/mackerel/other species category will be examined. Other additional items will be added to the analysis to provide more information on the costs and benefits associated with the alternatives. A revised analysis will be ready for public distribution in mid-May. Final action is scheduled for June, with possible implementation beginning in 1999. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

### **Overfishing Definitions**

National Standard 1 states that conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry. The Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA), which amended the Magnuson-Stevens Act in 1996, contained several provisions that affected National Standard 1, though the standard itself was not changed. The SFA added a definition of "overfishing" and "overfished," changed the definition of "optimum," required that each fishery management plan specify objective and measurable criteria for identifying when a fishery is overfished and added a section on identifying and rebuilding overfished fisheries.

Last August, NMFS published proposed national standard guidelines in the Federal Register to assist the Councils with amending FMPs to conform with new provisions of the Act. The comment period was reopened in December for further comment (the guidelines were finalized on May 1, 1998). All Councils are moving ahead with changing their overfishing definitions and establishing rebuilding plans as appropriate.

To bring our groundfish, crab, scallop, and salmon plans into compliance with the new provisions of the Act, several analyses were prepared by staff to examine alternative definitions of maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield (OY), and overfishing. Based on these draft analyses, Bogoslof pollock and Bering Sea Bairdi Tanner crab may be below minimum stock size threshold, and hence be declared 'overfished' based on criteria identified in the proposed rule. The Council reviewed these analyses and released them for public review. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

### Atka Mackerel Apportionment

In 1990, the Steller sea lion was designated as threatened under the ESA. Critical habitat was designated in 1993 and includes marine areas within 20 nautical miles (nm) of all rookeries and major haulouts west of 144°W. In 1997, the species was split into two separate management populations on the basis of genetics information. The listing status of the western population (i.e., west of 144°W longitude) was changed to endangered while the status of the eastern population remained as threatened. The western population of Steller sea lions (i.e., west of Cape Suckling or 144°W longitude) has declined by 80% or more since the mid 1960s.

Since most of the recent fishery removals of Atka mackerel occur within Steller sea lion critical habitat, preliminary analyses have suggested that the fishery is capable of creating localized depletions of an important Steller sea lion prey where sea lions are likely to forage. The purposes of this proposed action are to reduce the probability of fishery-induced localized depletions of Atka mackerel and reduce the probability of adverse modification of Steller sea lion critical habitat as required by the ESA. Several alternatives were examined, including additional geographical and seasonal allocation of the Atka mackerel TAC, geographic rotation of Atka mackerel harvests, and allocation of the TAC to subareas inside and outside sea lion critical habitat in the Aleutian Islands.

The Council reviewed the analysis and released it for public review with several revisions. A problem statement was drafted, and reads as follows:

*There are concerns relating to the potential effects on Steller sea lions arising from removals of Atka mackerel from waters within Steller sea lion critical habitat areas. The Council and NMFS may need additional measures in place to address these concerns. Therefore, the Council seeks to institute management measures, if warranted, to address concerns regarding potential depletion of Atka mackerel in Steller sea lion critical habitat in the BSAI management areas 541, 542, and 543.*

The analysis will be revised and ready for final action in June. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

### CDQ Program Issues

At its April meeting, the Council approved the draft analysis that would allow for the continuation of the pollock CDQ program at 7.5 percent of the total allowable catch. Without this action, the pollock CDQ program would expire on December 31, 1998. Approval of an extension in June would permanently extend the pollock CDQ program, and merge it with the multi-species (MS) CDQ program anticipated to begin in October 1998. The analysis will be available to the public on May 8.

On January 21, 1998, Amendment 40 to the BSAI FMP set opilio crab as a prohibited species for trawl gear. In April, the Council approved the State of Alaska recommendations for the 1998-2000 opilio allocations. This action adds opilio to the rest of the groundfish species and prohibited species quota (PSQ) previously set aside for the multi-species CDQ program. These percentages are weighted averages derived from opilio bycatch in various trawl fisheries over the past four years.

Opilio PSQ	APICDA 26%	BBEDC 23%	CBSFA 9%	CVRF 8%	NSEDC 8%	YDFDA 26%
------------	---------------	--------------	-------------	------------	-------------	--------------

The Council also received a report from the CDQ Implementation Committee, which met on March 23, 1998. The Council referred the issue of a January 1 start date for the CDQ fisheries and the impacts on chinook salmon and marine mammals back for further committee discussion. The committee also identified a number of implementation issues that the Council may wish to address after implementation of the MS-CDQ program. The committee is scheduled to meet again on May 1 to continue discussing these other issues and may also schedule a meeting after publication of the final rule for the MS-CDQ program. Meeting minutes and the pollock CDQ analysis are available by contacting Jane DiCosimo.

### Western/Central Gulf of Alaska Management

The Council received a report from the Western/Central Gulf Committee. The Council accepted the committee's problem statement and approved the committee's recommendation to initiate analyses on two at-risk fisheries issues. The first management issue for analysis, to review trimester allocations and reapportion pollock into 'A' and 'B' seasons, as occurs in the Bering Sea, was referred to the NMFS Steller Sea Lion Fisheries Interaction Working Group for further development. The second analysis was to examine a fair start opening on January 20 in Areas 610-640 in the GOA for the longline and trawl fisheries. The next meeting of the Western/Central Gulf Committee is tentatively scheduled for late September 1998. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

### Western/Central Gulf Committee Problem Statement

*In recent years, several BSAI and GOA fisheries have been at risk of exceeding their specified total allowable catch (TAC) or prohibited species catch (PSC) limits. The fisheries that are at risk are characterized as:*

- (a) *Fisheries that are short in duration, usually less than two weeks, with TACs that are small relative to the fishing effort.*
- (b) *Longer fisheries that are subject to sudden increase and unpredicted effort from other catcher fleets.*
- (c) *Fisheries in which some gear types get earlier start dates than others.*

*The effects of the pending License Limitation Program are expected to have a great impact, potentially doubling the fleet in these fisheries. Unknown, but perceived, negative effects are anticipated by adding additional effort in these fisheries.*

*The GOA fleets in local communities face huge competition in these short (24 hours to two weeks long) fisheries, and preemption by other fleets needs to be addressed.*

*The harvesting effort must be contained in order to preserve the balance in these fisheries, and significant measures are justifiably required.*

### Improved Retention/Improved Utilization

The Council accepted the recommendations in the report from the Improved Retention/Improved Utilization Implementation Committee. The Council endorsed the following committee recommendations for analysis and NMFS review: (1) increase the percent of roe that can be retained against round-weight equivalent of pollock catch in the Aleutian Islands from 7 to 8%; (2) the roe-stripping regulations should be combined with the IR/TU regulations into a uniform set of regulations to eliminate redundancy; and, (3) allow discards of adulterated fish. NMFS staff will prepare a draft analysis for discussion by the IR/TU Implementation Committee in September 1998 and initial review by the Council in October 1998.

The Council also adopted recommendations for NMFS consideration in improving the effectiveness of the IR/TU program:

- Add a product recovery rate (PRR) code to the NMFS primary and ancillary product list for pollock kirimi (e.g., tail-cut, mid-cut) and other new product forms being developed. The committee, or a subcommittee, should review the NMFS product codes for recommendations on other revisions where appropriate.
- Track and routinely report regulatory discards of IR/TU species which are separate from IR/TU fish that are not retained because they are: adulterated fish, research fish, discarded for safety reasons, consumed onboard or used as bait. NMFS should also routinely report on the amount of retained product (formerly discarded) going into meal as a primary product and create a reporting category to track the amount of fish going into meal, if the data are available at year-end, to determine the amounts of bycatch being avoided or ground into meal.
- Define a product code(s) for fish that are adulterated and allow such fish to be discarded from trawl and fixed gear to distinguish them from regulatory and economic discards.
- Do not count catch used as bait or consumed by the crew as "discards."
- Examine the 'blend' methodology used to determine whether the observer or weekly product reports (WPR) catch estimate will be used by NMFS to calculate removals. A return to random sampling for estimating catch composition by observers may solve this problem.
- Examine whether retention of excess fish could be done under these circumstances without subjecting these catcher vessels to observer coverage requirements.

Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

### Vessel Moratorium Extension

Because the license limitation program (LLP) will not be implemented until 2000, the Council's vessel moratorium needs to be extended beyond 1998 to cover 1999. At this meeting the Council reviewed a draft amendment to extend the vessel moratorium, and released that document for public review with only two alternatives: (1) allow the moratorium to expire, and (2) extend the moratorium for one year, through December 31, 1999. Additionally the Council included options for the new moratorium to be limited to current holders of permits, or limited to those that have applied by the end of the current moratorium period (by December 31, 1998). Final action is scheduled for the June meeting in Dutch Harbor. The analysis will be available from the Council office after May 8. Council staff contact for this issue is Chris Oliver.



### Inshore/Offshore Pollock Allocations

The Council reviewed the draft analysis for the inshore/offshore pollock allocations (I/O3), which consisted of three main parts: (1) the EA/RIR prepared by Council, NMFS, and other agency staff; (2) a Community/Social impact analysis prepared under contract by Impact Assessment, Inc.; and, (3) a CDQ Program impact analysis prepared by McDowell Consultants. With the endorsement of the SSC and AP, the Council voted unanimously to release the document for a public review period, with additions and adjustments as recommended by the SSC and AP. Changes and additions to the draft documents are primarily minor in nature and a revised draft will be available from the Council offices after May 8.

The Council's action at this meeting did include the addition of a new basic alternative which would allocate pollock to certain size categories of catcher vessels, which could deliver pollock to any processing sector they choose, with the remaining quota reserved for delivery to onshore and offshore processing sectors. The amount to be reserved for catcher vessels less than 125' (there is an option to reserve this amount for catcher vessels less than 155') would be based on a combination of: 40-65% of the inshore quota, plus 9-15% of the offshore quota, plus 100% of the true mothership quota. Under this alternative, a range of possible percentage set asides results, with the remainder being guaranteed for delivery to the onshore and offshore sectors (there would be no guarantee for a separate true mothership quota).

As an example, and given the mid-point of the ranges specified above, the result would be a set aside for 'small catcher vessels' of 34% of the BSAI pollock quota - these fish could be delivered to any processing sector. Under this example, 49% would be guaranteed for delivery to the offshore processing sector and 17% would be guaranteed for delivery to the onshore plants. The revised analysis will address this new alternative to the extent possible by May 8. A final decision on this issue is scheduled for the June meeting in Dutch Harbor.

The Council also wishes to encourage written public comment from those persons who will be unable to attend the Dutch Harbor meeting in June, or from persons who wish to identify issues which may not be directly addressed in the existing analyses. For example, public testimony in April pointed out potential business-related impacts to non-pollock processors who may be competing with pollock processors in other fisheries. The Council invites written comments between now and June 2 on this or other inshore/offshore-related issues. Staff contacts are Chris Oliver or Darrell Brannan.

### Observer Program

Though not on the Council's agenda for this meeting, we did receive an update from NMFS and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) regarding progress on the third-party, joint partnership agreement (JPA) program structure. In summary, NMFS and PSMFC are working to resolve the basic legal and administrative structure which will define the relationship between NMFS and the PSMFC. Until these are resolved further work on other program details (including issues raised by industry and observer contracting companies) cannot be completed. As such, it is now apparent that the JPA structure will not be in place by the beginning of 1999. Rather, it may be mid-year 1999 or the year 2000, and the existing program structure will have to be extended for another year. The Council will need to take action in June to make that extension. The Council's Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) will not meet until sometime after the June meeting, when we will have further guidance from the agency on the JPA program. Council staff contact is Chris Oliver.

## Social and Economic Data Committee

The Council received a report from Mr. Dennis Austin (Chairman of the committee) on the results of the first meeting. Mr. Austin announced that it is still too early in the process to begin development of a plan amendment which would mandate the collection of social and economic data. Members of the committee felt that more progress needed to be made on the development of models and the data that those models would require, before decisions could be made regarding how to best collect the necessary information. As a first step, the Alaska Fisheries Science Center will develop specific indexes of fleet performance and present them at the next committee meeting, which is scheduled during the Council meeting in Dutch Harbor. The industry members of the committee will then take the information back to their constituents to ground truth the Center's findings.

A list of the committee members is available from the Council office. Staff Contact is Darrell Brannan.

### Gulf of Alaska Update (corrections to previous newsletter)

At its February 1998 meeting, the Alaska Board of Fisheries decided **not** to increase the State water Pacific cod GHs for 1998. This resulted in a respecification of the federal TAC for P. cod in the Western and Central Gulf areas.

1998 Gulf of Alaska TAC changes (mt)				
	<u>Pacific cod</u>	Pelagic Shelf <u>Rockfish</u>	<u>Other Species</u>	<u>All Species</u>
Western	23,170	620		
Central	41,720	3,260		
Eastern	1,170	1,000		
Total	66,060	4,880	15,570	327,046

Also, Amendment 46 to the GOA FMP to remove black and blue rockfishes from the Pelagic Shelf Rockfish (PSR) complex was approved by the Secretary on February 3, 1998. The TACs for the PSR complex were therefore reduced to reflect the removal of these species from the FMP, as shown in the above table. The TACs for other species and the grand total also changed as a result of these TAC adjustments.

Also, a correction to the February 1998 newsletter relating to the action taken by the Council to manage at risk fisheries in the Western Central GOA is necessary. The Council approved the following stand-down periods:

- 72 hours between the BS and Area 610 in the GOA, in each direction;
- 72 hours from the BS to Areas 620 and 630 in the GOA and 48 hours from Areas 620 and 630 to the BS.

Regulations are currently being developed to have this implemented in time for the BSAI pollock 'B' season. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

### Upcoming Meetings

(As other committee meetings are scheduled, they will be posted on the NPFMC web site.)

**VBA Committee** is scheduled to meet Wednesday, May 13, 1998. The meeting will be held in the Nordby Conference Center, Suite A, Fishermen's Terminal, 1711 West Nickerson, Seattle, WA, beginning at 8:00 a.m. and continuing through 5:00 p.m. The VBA Committee will consider the Halibut Mortality Avoidance Program (HMAP) and Individual Vessel Checklist Program (IVCP) on May 14-15.

**Halibut GHL Committee** has tentatively scheduled a meeting for Friday, June 19, 1998, to be held in the Old Federal Building (Council office), 605 West 4th Avenue, Room 229, Anchorage, Alaska. An agenda will be available from the Council office (or its web site) by late May.

**Improved Retention/Improved Utilization (IR/IU) Committee** is tentatively scheduled to meet in September.

**Western/Central Gulf Committee** is tentatively scheduled to meet in late September.

**Groundfish Plan Teams** have scheduled tentative meeting dates for the weeks of September 14 and November 16, 1998.

#### **Documents Available from the Council Office**

1. Essential Fish Habitat Reports for the BSAI Groundfish, GOA Groundfish, BSAI King & Tanner Crab, Scallop and Salmon Fisheries and NMFS Recommendations are available.
2. Draft Essential Fish Habitat EA/RIR (BSAI FMP Amendment 55; GOA FMP Amendment 55; King & Tanner Crab FMP Amendment 8; Scallop FMP Amendment 5, and; Salmon FMP Amendment 5) will be available by May 13.
3. Draft EA/RIR for Amendments 48/48 to the BSAI and GOA FMPs to revise the annual quota specification process is available.
4. The revised draft analysis of a proposal to ban trawling with a bottom trawl in directed pollock fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and reduce PSC bycatch (including a regulatory amendment to split the pollock/Atka mackerel/other fishery category for apportionment of PSC limits) will be available by mid-May.
5. The draft analyses to examine alternative definitions of maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield (OY) and overfishing for the groundfish, crab, scallop and salmon FMPs are available.
6. The draft analysis for the seasonal/area apportionment of Atka mackerel will be available by mid-May.
7. The CDQ Committee meeting minutes are currently available and the Pollock CDQ analysis will be available on May 8.
8. The Inshore/Offshore Pollock Allocations (I/O3) analysis will be available after May 8.
9. The analysis to extend the current vessel moratorium will be available after May 8.
10. The draft analysis of Plan Amendments 54/54 (IFQ proposals) will be available on August 1.
11. The Gulf of Alaska FMP Summary is available and will posted on the web site by June 1, 1998.

## Alaska Airlines Special Fare Agreement for Dutch Harbor Meeting

<b>Contact:</b>	Group/Convention desk 1-800-445-4435
<b>Fare Basis Code:</b>	CMA 0188 (for our group)
<b>Meeting Name:</b>	N. Pacific Fisheries
<b>Itinerary:</b>	Any of Alaska Airlines' and Horizon Air's cities except Sun Valley to Dutch Harbor, Alaska.
<b>Travel Dates:</b>	June 5 - 18, 1998. Travel must be completed by June 18, 1998.
<b>Meeting Dates:</b>	June 8 - 15, 1998
<b>Fares:</b>	10% off Excursion fares and 10% off YAS fares. Saturday night stay requirement waived.

### North Pacific Fishery Management Council Tentative Meeting Schedules - 1997-99\*

	February Week of/ Location	April Week of/ Location	June Week of/ Location	October Week of/ Location	December Week of/ Location
<b>1998</b>			8/Dutch Harbor	5/Seattle	7/Anchorage
<b>1999</b>	1/Anchorage	19/Anchorage	7/Kodiak	4/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 and on the Council's web site.

### Tentative Meeting Dates for 2000-2002\*

	February Week of/ Location	April Week of/ Location	June Week of/ Location	October Week of/ Location	December Week of/ Location
<b>2000</b>	7/Anchorage	10/Anchorage	5/Portland	2/Sitka	4/Anchorage
<b>2001</b>	6/Anchorage+	10/Anchorage	5/Kodiak	2/Seattle+	4/Anchorage
<b>2002</b>	5/Anchorage+	9/Anchorage	4/Dutch Harbor	1/Seattle+	3/Anchorage

+These two locations may be reversed (February in Seattle and October in Anchorage).

**NPFMC: Three- Year Outlook\***

June '98 8/Dutch Harbor	October '98 5/Seattle	December '98 7/Anchorage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IFQ/CDQ Fee/Loan Program: Status Report</li> <li>• Total weight measurement: Discussion</li> <li>• Pollock/YFS scales &amp; bins: Report</li> <li>• SFA Compliance: Status Report</li> <li>• VBA/HMAP/IVCP Committee: Report</li> <li>• Atka mackerel apportionment: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Essential Fish Habitat: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Cape Edgecombe Pinnacles Closure: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• BSAI Pollock CDQ: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Multi-species CDQ Program: Status Report</li> <li>• Inshore/Offshore 3: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Observer Program &amp; JPA Report and Final Action to extend current program</li> <li>• Halibut DMRs: review IPHC recommendations</li> <li>• Prohibit BSAI pollock bottom trawls: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Groundfish, scallop, salmon &amp; crab Overfishing Definitions: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• OY/MSY groundfish definitions: <i>Initial Review</i></li> <li>• LLP Amendments: <i>Initial Review</i></li> <li>• Moratorium rollover: <i>Final Action</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IFQ Amendments: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• IFQ/CDQ Fee/Loan Program: Council comment</li> <li>• Weighmaster Proposal: Report</li> <li>• Halibut GHL Discussion Paper</li> <li>• Local area management plan proposals: Review</li> <li>• Sablefish Rolling Closures: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• SFA Compliance: Status Report</li> <li>• Ecosystem Management: Status Report</li> <li>• VBA/HMAP/IVCP Committee: Status Report</li> <li>• Social/economic data: Status Report</li> <li>• IR/TU Regulatory Amendments: <i>Initial Review/Report</i></li> <li>• W/C GOA Fair Start: <i>Initial Review</i></li> <li>• W/C GOA Committee: Report</li> <li>• GOA Communities Request: Review</li> <li>• Multi-species CDQ Program: Status Report</li> <li>• Observer Program: Status Report</li> <li>• GOA MRB Pacific cod/ATF: <i>Initial Review</i></li> <li>• GOA DSR Rockfish Retention: <i>Initial Review</i></li> <li>• Halibut DMRs: review IPHC recommendations</li> <li>• Crab SAFE Review</li> <li>• Groundfish Specs for 1999 BSAI/GOA: <i>Initial Review</i></li> <li>• Annual Amendment Proposals: Review &amp; direction</li> <li>• Chinook Bycatch Control: <i>Initial Review</i></li> <li>• OY/MSY groundfish definitions: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Scallop Limited Entry: <i>Initial Review</i></li> <li>• LLP Amendments: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Crab Buyback Program: Report &amp; direction</li> <li>• Draft SEIS for groundfish: Status Report</li> <li>• EGOA Boundary Change: Status Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halibut Subsistence: Discussion</li> <li>• IR/TU Regulatory Amendments: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• W/C GOA Fair Start: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• GOA MRB Pacific cod/ATF: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• GOA DSR Rockfish Retention: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Groundfish Specs for 1999 BSAI/GOA: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Chinook Bycatch Control: <i>Final Action</i></li> <li>• Scallop Limited Entry: <i>Final Action</i></li> </ul>
<b>IPHC/Council Joint Meeting</b>		

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

MRB = maximum retainable bycatch; ATF = arrowtooth flounder; SRRE = shortraker/rougeye rockfish; GHL = guideline harvest level  
DSR = demersal shelf rockfish; HMAP = Halibut Mortality Avoidance Program; IVCP = Individual Vessel Checklist Program