

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

February 22, 1978

9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Council Offices

Members present:

Steve Pennoyer (Acting Chairman)
 Don Collinsworth
 Jack Robinson
 George Rogers
 Charles Woekle
 Don Bevan
 Lechner (For Carl Rosier)
 Balsinger (for Lee Alverson)

Items Considered

1. SSC reviewed document "Development of OY and TALFF for Tanner Crab North of 58° North in the Bering Sea" dealing primarily with rationale for OY and TALFF for C. opilio Tanner crab. The paper adequately described the public testimony and that of others used to arrive at a 15,000 MT TALFF for opilio north of 58° North. However, since no new data was presented to document a cause/effect relationship between Japanese harvest and the domestic marketing and harvesting of this species the SSC had no basis for any recommendations to the Council.

2. The SSC reviewed additional explanatory documentation from ADF&G regarding the Bering Sea Herring and Capelin research proposal prepared in response to questions asked at its January meeting. The proposal was discussed with the project leader and the research team was requested to submit a detailed operational plan to the SSC prior to the field season. While the explanation and some of the already incorporated proposal modifications (elimination of larval studies and algae growth studies) did answer most of the questions posed, there was still concern that the investigators would be physically able to carry out all of the tasks outlined without diluting the research results.

3. In response to a new Council RFP for socio-economic studies on herring utilization in Western Alaska, six new proposals were received at this meeting. Due to the volume of these proposals and the fact that they were not made available until the start of our meeting the SSC adopted the procedure used on the original set of proposals - deferral to a working group of Collinsworth (Chairman), Miles, Rogers, Bevan and Rosenberg. Other SSC members will submit any comments to this group and the recommendation to the Council will represent the SSC's view. The group has tentatively scheduled a meeting on March 3 in Juneau to provide the Council with our advice in time to issue a contract for this field season.

4. The SSC has recommended the Council appoint ADF&G as lead agency for Bering Sea Herring Plan Development. Suggested membership is Louis Barton, Ron Regnart, Irving Warner, Richard Randall, Pete Jackson-all ADF&G and Vidar Wespestad from NMFS, Seattle. Other scientific advisors or team members may be suggested later. The SSC notes that to have an FMP in place for the fall '78 foreign fishery would require that the plan be submitted in draft form within two months. This does not appear physically possible and an August submission date is suggested, which would allow implementation by Spring 1979 for the domestic fishery. This would require a PMP for the foreign early spring 1979 fishery.

5. The SSC was informed that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be forwarding to the Council (SSC and AP) a general information paper on the distribution of the Alaskan shrimp harvest by management area within 3 miles and in the FCZ.

The report will indicate that the substantial majority of the catch has historically been taken in State waters and in fact, approximately 99 percent of the 1977 harvest was taken within 3 miles.

Under these circumstances the SSC recommends that the Council consider placing a relatively low priority on the development of the shrimp plan and that when it is drafted, it be a rather brief plan that reflects State of Alaska Management policy and regulations.

It was recognized, however, that there has been some interest expressed by Japan in the shrimp resource in the Pribilof area. The SSC therefore suggests that the Council designate the Bering Sea as a separate management unit and proceed with the development of a Bering Sea Trawl Shrimp Management Plan.

6. The SSC reviewed a proposal for Council support of the Alaska Fisheries Atlas. Our opinion was that the atlas will be of great value to resource planners such as CZM but was not of direct use in Council preparation of management plans for the FCZ. We recommend that the Council endorse the preparation and publication of this material and recommend that funding be sought elsewhere. (ADF&G personnel are available to discuss atlas at Council discretion.)

7. The SSC reviewed the latest draft of the Council contract to ADF&G to fund the development of a computerized fisheries information system. Apparently funding for this Council approved contract is imminent. The SSC reaffirmed its approval of the contract content. We cautioned the agency that software developers be encouraged to develop machine-independent

language for file storage to facilitate data usage by the many potential interested users. The need for compatibility with other agencies' systems was again stressed. A steering committee to monitor system development was recommended consisting of Mark Hutton (Council) as Chairman, Don Bevan (UofW), Jack Robinson (Oregon), Chuck Woelke (Wash), Ivan Frohne and Don Collinsworth (ADF&G) and Murray Hayes (NMFS).

8. The SSC reviewed the progress on developing a proposal for a salmon troll fishery observer program - Agenda Item 19. Apparently ADF&G and ATA were unable to develop a joint proposal in time for this meeting. Discussion with ATA members present at our meeting indicated that there would be substantial logistic problems with developing a full scale program in time for this season. The SSC recommended that ATA and ADF&G meet immediately and produce a scaled-down pilot program for this first season which would serve as the basis for design of a full implementation program in 1979. This would hopefully be made available to the SSC in March. In the meantime, ATA could proceed with canvassing its members for fishermen to take observers once some questions on liability and fair reimbursement of expenses have been decided. The SSC also recommended that the two groups also discuss what progress can be made this season on improving the data base at low cost by such means as redefining catch reporting areas and that their proposal be presented in the framework of all related programs (catch statistics, logbook progra, coded wire tag recovery, ADF&G smolt and fingerling marking) that will be undertaken this season.

9. The Committee examined the interim policy on joint ventures. We believe that NMFS erred in designating conservation as the main justification for promulgating a policy. We suggest that the need to offer protection under the Act to the domestic processing sector of the industry should be recognized as the main justification.

A section of the policy states:

"Permits shall be approved only when the Secretary is satisfied that (1) the optimum yield for the fishery involved will not be exceeded; (2) the capability and intent of the U.S. fishing industry to harvest fish to be sold or delivered exceeds the capability and intent of the U.S. industry to process such fish; and (3) the relevant foreign vessel has capability and intent to process such fish. Actions with respect to applications for permits for 1978 shall have no precedential effect on any applications for permits for subsequent years."

We suggest that some consideration of economic factors should be included in this statement. The present language might be interpreted to require measurement of capability and intent without reference to the price paid to fishermen.

10. The SSC reviewed the Gulf of Mexico Council's estuarine protection resolution. No recommendation was made beyond that the Council might acknowledge their efforts.
11. The Committee noted that an important National Conference on Limited Entry will be held, probably this summer. SSC members Bevan and Rogers plan to attend. We think it important that the Council respond to Dr. McKernan's request by suggesting regional representation for this conference.
12. No SSC recommendations were made regarding the foreign fee conference.
13. The SSC reviewed a proposal from ADF&G to prepare graphical and printed summaries of the 1977 troll logbook program for \$10,000. This proposed work would take the logbook field data and make it available in easily interpretable form for Council use in management plan development. SSC recommended funding of this proposal.

14. A proposal to study age, growth and size/weight relationships of Bering Sea surf clams for \$28K from the U of A was reviewed along with a background document (SSC Info. 42) Sea Grant Progress Report "Growth, Mortality Recruitment and Size at Maturity...". This was a preliminary draft to determine Council interest. The SSC recommended that the work be scaled down by de-emphasizing predator food habits; that the project leader confer further with the plan development team to blend this work in with this summer's research program; that an updated proposal be presented at the next SSC meeting to include further information on methodology.

15. The SSC recommends that Don Collinsworth represent the Council at a March meeting, in Sacramento, California of West Coast economists. This meeting has been called by the Pacific Council and is to develop a standardized list of economic and social data to be collected for the development of management plans. Trying to start a data collection clearinghouse to avoid problems of multiple-overlapping data requests to industry by different individuals or agencies is a major emphasis.