

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

John G. Peterson, Chairman  
Clarence G. Pautzke, Executive Director

605 West 4th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 103136  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 271-2809  
FAX (907) 271-2817

#5-88

NEWSLETTER

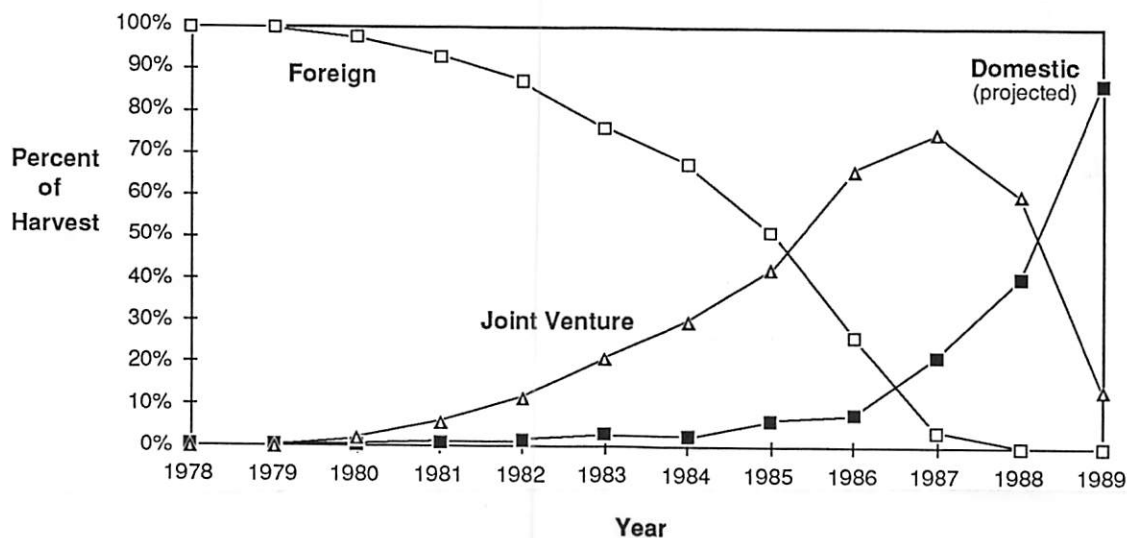
12/15/88

## Groundfish Quotas and Bycatch Limits Dominate December Meeting

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met last week in Anchorage to set groundfish harvest levels and apportionments to U.S. and joint venture fisheries for 1989 and to approve bycatch limits as necessary for halibut and crab. Other agenda topics included a decision to move forward in developing limited access plans for the hook and longline sablefish fishery, a change in the definition of directed fishing for sablefish in the Bering Sea, and a proposed regulation to set early, short openings and a special harvest quota for halibut in Area 4B of the Aleutians.

Major news at the Council's December meeting was the dramatic increase in domestic processing needs for 1989, which will leave little resource to support joint venture fishing. The National Marine Fisheries Service's annual survey of domestic processing requirements received responses from shorebased processors, floating processors, and catcher/processors. The catcher/processor sector has grown significantly in 1988. Factoring in this growth, domestic annual processing (DAP) is projected to increase from an estimated 822,600 mt this year to as high as 1.9 million mt in 1989. As a result, joint venture processing (JVP), approximately 1.3 million mt in 1988, will be apportioned only 300,000 mt for 1989. With limited fishery resources in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska, it is apparent that again in 1989 there will be no directed foreign fisheries off Alaska.

### ALASKA GROUND FISH HARVEST



### Council Meets Again in January

The North Pacific Council will meet the week of January 16 at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage. They will review proposals for amendments to the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish fishery management plans and determine which should be developed by the plan teams for review at the April meeting. Final decisions on the chosen amendments will be made in June. The Council will consider future development of long-term management alternatives for groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and appoint an advisory committee to begin development of those alternatives for future Council consideration. The Council will also receive a report from their newly-appointed Sablefish Management Committee which will meet in early January to identify concerns and options for further analysis of individual fishing quotas and license limitation as alternatives to open access management of the longline fishery. The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan also will be reviewed and approved for review by the Secretary of Commerce. The Council will also approve a regulatory amendment revising the directed fishing definition.

### Council Appoints New Advisory Committee Memberships

Seven new members were appointed to the Council's Advisory Panel:

Phil Chitwood	Arctic Alaska Fisheries Corporation, Seattle
Paul Clampitt	commercial longliner from Washington
Dave Fraser	commercial trawler from Washington
John Gilbert	Wards Cove Packing Company, Seattle
Stephen Smith	Kemp Pacific Fisheries, Seattle
Harold Sparck	consultant for Western Alaska fisheries
Lyle Yeck	commercial trawler from Oregon

Members reappointed to the Advisory Panel for another one-year term are:

Arne Aadland	Pete Isleib	Ron Peterson
Alvin Burch	Richard Lauber	Dave Woodruff
Lamar Cotten	Nancy Munro	John Woodruff
Edwin Fuglvog	Daniel O'Hara	Fred Zharoff
Ronald Hegge		

The only changes to the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee were the appointments of Jack Tagart representing the Washington Department of Fisheries, and Bill Clark of the International Pacific Halibut Commission, who will fill an "at-large" seat and replace Robert Burgner who has retired.

The remaining members of the SSC who were reappointed for another year are:

William Aron	Doug Eggers	Terrance Quinn
Donald Bevan	Larry Hreha	Donald Rosenberg
John Burns	Richard Marasco	Dana Schmidt

### 1989 Council Meetings Will Be Held in Anchorage

All meetings of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in 1989 will be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage. Meeting dates are tentatively scheduled as follows:

<u>Scientific and Statistical Committee</u>	<u>Advisory Panel</u>	<u>Council</u>
January 15-16	January 15-16	January 16-20
April 10-11	April 10-11	April 12-14
June 19-20	June 19-20	June 21-23
September 25-26	September 25-26	September 27-29
December 3-4	December 3-4	December 5-8

Beginning dates are subject to change according to the length of agenda. A draft agenda will be mailed to those on the Council's newsletter mailing list approximately two weeks before each meeting.

### **Coast Guard to Maximize Effectiveness in EEZ**

The Coast Guard has determined that the presence of its cutters is essential to effectively detect illegal foreign, joint venture, and domestic activity in the U.S. EEZ. To maximize their enforcement efforts, the Coast Guard has announced the following operational goals for next year:

1. One cutter on patrol in the Aleutian Island and southern Donut Hole boundary areas year-round.
2. One cutter on patrol in the Western Bering Sea and eastern and northeastern Donut Hole boundary areas year-round.
3. One cutter on patrol in the Eastern Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska year-round.
4. One cutter on patrol in the North Pacific Ocean high seas driftnet fisheries area from May through October of each year.
5. Daily long-range air surveillance flights to support cutter patrols and provide coverage when cutters are not available in an area (30 flights/240 hours per month).
6. Boardings of every foreign joint venture processor, U.S. mothership processor, and catcher/processor at least once every 60 days they are within the EEZ.

### **Domestic Landings Up and Joint Venture Landings Down in 1988**

Domestic processing (DAP) as of November 30 was 125,694 mt in the Gulf of Alaska and 555,505 mt in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands for a total of 681,199 mt. NMFS estimates that an additional DAP harvest of 141,400 mt will occur for a year-end total of 822,600 mt. This represents an increase as much as 102% from 1987 year-end DAP of approximately 408,000 mt. DAP harvests to date include 467,579 mt pollock, 102,526 mt Pacific cod, 35,790 mt flatfish, and 35,074 mt sablefish. At least 60 catcher/processers reported landings in 1988, up from 36 in 1987 and 23 in 1986. There are 10 more catcher/processers reportedly ready to enter the fishery in the very near future and an additional 25 could come on line before the end of 1989.

As of November 19 joint venture landings had accounted for 1,276,682 mt, all but 3,718 mt coming from the BS/AI. This is a decrease of almost 100,000 mt from 1987. Deliveries included 809,831 mt pollock, 205,625 mt yellowfin sole, 114,462 mt other flatfish, and 110,605 mt Pacific cod. During May a record 124 U.S. harvesters delivered to joint venture processors, 13% more than the previous monthly record set in June 1987.

### **Council Releases Crab Plan for Public Review**

The Council will be taking final action on the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in January. A revised FMP and Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review are now available for a 30-day public review. A Notice of Availability is attached to this newsletter and the comment period runs from December 15 through January 17, 1989. Comments should be sent to the Council office.

### **Council Approves Early Halibut Seasons for Area 4B**

After reviewing an analysis of allocative proposals for management of halibut fisheries in Regulatory Areas 4B (Aleutian Islands) and 4C (Pribilof Islands), the Council voted to recommend that a series of short openings be established for Area 4B in June and July for 1989 and 1990, within a limit of 500,000 pounds, to help satisfy a

request by the Atka Fishermen's Association. For Area 4C, however, the Council agreed to stay with the status quo which currently includes 10,000 pound trip limits until 50% of the area catch limit is taken, and 20,000 pound trip limits thereafter. The proposed regulations for Area 4B will be submitted shortly to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation.

#### Sablefish Longline Management Will Focus on Limited Access

After hearing public comments strongly favoring some form of limited access, the Advisory Panel decided, by a vote of 9 to 6, that the status quo is unacceptable for managing the sablefish longline fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. The AP went on, by a vote of 12 to 4, to recommend to the Council that a one-year moratorium on vessel entry be instituted beginning December 31, 1988.

The Council heard similar public testimony and voted 6 to 5 that the status quo is unacceptable for sablefish longline management throughout the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off Alaska. In a subsequent motion, the Council indicated its preference to expand and analyze two options: individual fishing quotas and license limitation. A committee of Council members has been formed to identify areas of concern and options that might accompany such systems. They will report back in January. These management alternatives will be reviewed during each Council meeting in 1989 and final action is scheduled in December. Under this schedule, a sablefish longline limited access program could be in effect by 1991. The first meeting of the Sablefish Management Committee will be on January 4 in Anchorage. The Council did not approve a moratorium.

A note to sablefish fishermen, vessel owners, processors, and other interested parties: The Council has not yet formally decided upon the criteria necessary for inclusion in any limited access system which may be adopted. However, since the analyses will begin in January it will not be possible to include landings or participation data from 1989.

#### Council Sets Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Quotas for 1989

For 1989 the harvest limits or total allowable catches (TACs) of groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska will be nearly 232,000 mt. Of this amount, the Council allocated 10,000 mt flounders to joint ventures; no other joint venture fisheries are expected in the Gulf next year.

Harvest levels for each management area are shown in Table 1 along with the apportionments between U.S. fishermen and processors (DAP) and U.S. fishermen selling to foreign processors (JVP). The DAP allocations were determined by the Council on the basis of recent NMFS surveys of U.S. processor industry needs for 1989. Some reserves of pollock, Pacific cod, and flounders may be held back for release to DAP or JVP as need arises later in the fishing year.

A major concern in the Gulf is the status of pollock. The Plan Team was unable to recommend an acceptable biological catch (ABC) for 1989 due to uncertainty surrounding stock survey data and the previously-established threshold biomass. The SSC recommended an ABC of 63,400 mt based on a conservative biomass estimate. This ABC represents a 32% decline from 1988. The Council carefully weighed available information on the Gulf pollock stock and set a TAC of 60,200 mt, of which 200 mt was allocated to the Eastern Regulatory Area and the remainder to the combined Central and Western areas. The Council established a Shelikof Strait District (Figure 1) within the Central Area and specified a pollock TAC of only 6,250 mt to protect the spawning stock during the March/April period. The Council intends to facilitate continued data collection from Shelikof Strait for stock assessment purposes and encourage a fishery on pollock in other areas of the Gulf. The Council urges industry not to roe-strip within Shelikof Strait, but to fully utilize the pollock carcasses to allow a longer season and thus, more information to be collected. In June the Council intends to closely review data generated from the fisheries and research surveys on pollock stocks throughout the Gulf to determine if further adjustments in TAC are necessary.

Table 1. GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH: Council Recommendations for 1989 Groundfish ABC, TAC, Reserves, DAP, and JVP (in metric tons).

Species	Area	1988		Council Recommendations for 1989				
		ABC	TAC	ABC	TAC	Reserves 1/	DAP	JVP
Pollock	W/C	90,000	90,000	60,000	53,750	0	53,750	0
	Shelikof	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,250	0	6,250	0
	E	3,000	3,000	3,400	200	0	200	0
	Total	93,000	93,000	63,400	60,200	0	60,200	0
Pacific Cod	W	19,000	19,000	13,500	13,500	0	13,500	0
	C	73,000	60,800	52,000	52,000	0	52,000	0
	E	7,000	200	5,700	5,700	0	5,700	0
	Total	99,000	80,000	71,200	71,200	0	71,200	0
Flounders	W	142,650	1,600	111,500	3,200	0	3,200	0
	C	538,280	21,300	384,300	31,800	0	21,800	10,000
	E	86,770	100	58,900	1,000	0	1,000	0
	Total	767,700	23,000	554,700	36,000	0	26,000	10,000
Sablefish	W	5,075	4,060	4,900	3,770	n/a	3,770	0
	C	15,680	12,540	13,900	11,700	n/a	11,700	0
	W. Yakutat	6,125	4,900	5,300	4,550	n/a	4,550	0
	E. Yak./S.E. Out.	8,120	6,500	6,800	5,980	n/a	5,980	0
	Total	35,000	28,000	30,900	26,000	n/a	26,000	0
Rockfish (Slope)	W	4,850	4,850	5,774	5,774	n/a	5,774	0
	C	7,100	7,100	8,452	8,452	n/a	8,452	0
	E	4,850	4,850	5,774	5,774	n/a	5,774	0
	Total	16,800	16,800	20,000	20,000	n/a	20,000	0
Rockfish (Pelagic Shelf)	W	550	550	1,000	500	n/a	500	0
	C	2,350	2,350	4,800	2,400	n/a	2,400	0
	E	400	400	800	400	n/a	400	0
	Total	3,300	3,300	6,600	3,300	n/a	3,300	0
Rockfish (Demersal Shelf)	S.E. Out.	n/a	660	n/a	420	n/a	420	0
Thornyhead	GW	3,750	3,750	3,800	3,800	n/a	3,800	0
Other Species	GW	n/a	12,426	n/a	11,046	0	11,046	0
<b>GULF OF ALASKA TOTAL</b>		<b>1,018,550</b>	<b>260,936</b>	<b>750,600</b>	<b>231,966</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>221,966</b>	<b>10,000</b>

Hallbut Mortality Goal for 1989 = 2,000 mt.

12-Dec-88

1/ A reserve account may be set for pollock, Pacific cod, flounder, and other species categories with subsequent releases to DAP or JVP as the needs arise, with DAP given priority.

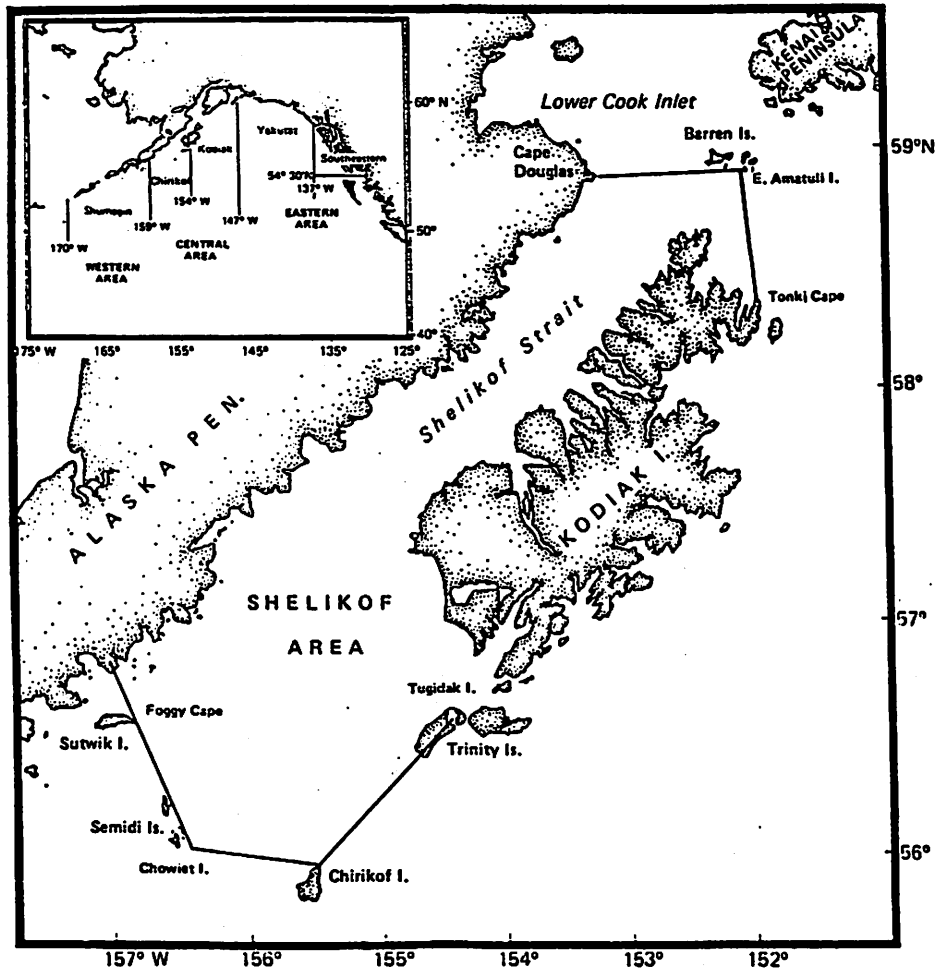


Figure 1. The "Shelikof District" is enclosed by line segments beginning to the north at Cape Douglas (58 degrees 51'N. latitude; 153 degrees 15'W. longitude), to East Amatuli Island (58 degrees 55'N. latitude; 152 degrees 00'W. longitude), to Tonki Cape (58 degrees 21'N. latitude; 151 degrees 59'W. longitude); includes the waters north and northwest of Kodiak Island and to the west and southwest waters shoreward of line segments connecting Tugidak Island (56 degrees 30'N. latitude; 154 degrees 40'W. longitude) to Chirikof Island (55 degrees 50'N. latitude; 155 degrees 37'W. longitude) to Chowiet Island (56 degrees 02'N. latitude; 156 degrees 42'W. longitude) in the Semedi Islands; and through Foggy Cape (56 degrees 32'N. latitude; 156 degrees 58'W. longitude) to the Alaska Peninsula (56 degrees 49'N. latitude; 157 degrees 06'W. longitude.)

Source: NPFMC, Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Resource Assessment Document, November 1988.

Pacific cod stocks continue to be healthy and the Council followed recommendations from the Plan Team and the SSC in setting TAC. The ABC for flounders in the Gulf is far above expected fishery interest, and thus the Council set TAC to accommodate projected domestic harvesting needs. The only JVP fishery allowed in the Gulf will be on flounders in the Central Regulatory Area.

Sablefish biomass remains high although the expected strength of the 1984 year class has not yet fully materialized. The Council heard testimony recommending a reduction in TAC due to reports of lost gear, high bycatch mortality, and reduced catch per effort in the fishery. Following the recommendation of the Advisory Panel, the Council reduced TAC for sablefish to 26,000 mt.

The Council recognized increasing interest in slope rockfish by setting TAC at 20,000 mt with apportionments in the Western, Central, and Eastern Regulatory areas in the same ratio as in 1988. This level of fishing is near the mid-point of the Plan Team's recommended ABC range of 14,700 mt to 30,700 mt. Pelagic shelf rockfish catches in 1988 were low and the Council had no new information to justify changing TAC from the 1988 level of 3,300 mt. Demersal shelf rockfish, managed by the State of Alaska within the framework of the Council's Gulf of Alaska Fishery Management Plan, are not as well known as other rockfish species. The Council followed recommendations from the State in setting TAC at 420 mt. Thornyheads appear to have changed little in stock biomass and TAC for 1989 was set at 3,800 mt.

The Council continued to express concern over incidental catch (bycatch) of halibut in the groundfish fisheries in the Gulf by reaffirming its 2,000 mt halibut mortality goal for 1989. The NMFS has authority for inseason management of these fisheries to protect halibut such that the goal is not exceeded. When the 2,000 mt cap is reached (using the best available information on bycatch rates and halibut mortality), bottom trawl fisheries in the Gulf will be closed. NMFS intends to use the bycatch and mortality rates adopted by the Plan Team (Table 2) unless new information becomes available during the season. For 1989 the Council apportioned 10,000 mt of flounder to the fall joint venture fishery, recognizing that bycatch of pollock, Pacific cod, halibut, and other fully domestic utilized species may occur. This JVP fishery will only be authorized if sufficient bycatch amounts of these species are available. It will not commence before September 15.

#### Cooperative Industry-Government Research Program for Gulf of Alaska Pollock Set for 1989

Concerned over the status of the pollock stock in the Gulf of Alaska, fishing industry representatives and NMFS met in Kodiak before the December Council meeting to establish a plan to gather important data on this species. NWAFC Director Dr. William Aron presented to the Council an outline of a cooperative program involving NMFS and the fishing industry. The program is designed to collect as much data as is practicable on Gulf pollock stocks in order to improve the 1989 stock assessment work by the Plan Team. The pollock research program will have the following elements:

- Increased observer coverage on board pollock fishing vessels in the Kodiak area.
- A voluntary logbook program for the Gulf pollock fishery.
- Increased port sampling to collect logbook and other data on the fishery.
- Continued acoustic surveys in Shelikof Strait for spawning pollock biomass, including both mid-water and bottom trawls to assess the relative distribution of pollock in bottom and off-bottom zones of the water column.
- A series of short, exploratory surveys by fishing vessels with NMFS personnel aboard to search for spawning pollock aggregations outside Shelikof Strait.

As noted earlier, the Council urges industry to fully utilize the pollock carcasses in the Shelikof fishery in 1989, rather than roe-stripping, so that the season in Shelikof will last longer and provide catch data over a longer period.

Table 2. Assumed bycatch and mortality rates used to estimate Gulf of Alaska halibut bycatch, by gear type and fishery.

Fishery	<u>Bottom Trawl - All Areas</u>		<u>Midwater Trawl</u>		
	Bycatch	Mortality	<u>Bycatch</u>		Mortality (All Areas)
			Western	Central	
DAP	4.50%	50%	0.02%	0.06%	50%
JVP	5.15%	100%	0.02%	0.06%	100%
TALFF	2.53%	100%	0.02%	0.06%	100%

Fishery	<u>Longline - Pacific cod</u>			<u>Longline - Sablefish</u>		
	<u>Bycatch</u>			Mortality (All Areas)	<u>Bycatch</u>	
	Western	Central	Eastern		(All Areas)	Mortality (All Areas)
DAP	5.23%	9.15%	9.15%	25%	1.20%	25%
JVP	5.23%	9.15%	9.15%	25%	1.20%	25%
TALFF	1.49%	4.97%	4.97%	25%	1.20%	25%

Source: Gulf of Alaska Resource Assessment Document, November 1988.



### Domestic Processors to Upstage Joint Ventures in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

Initial NMFS projections of U.S. processor (DAP) demand for groundfish in the BS/AI for 1989 exceed 1.7 million mt. After considering the amounts required as reserves (15%) for each species, the Council reassessed DAP requirements and set aside a little over 290,000 mt for joint ventures (Table 3). This total for JVP is down from almost 1.3 million mt of catch in 1988, evidence of a very rapid rate of full-utilization by domestic processors.

Directed joint venture fisheries will be allowed for the following approximate amounts: 50,000 mt pollock, 22,000 mt Pacific cod, 8,000 mt rock sole, and 130,000 mt yellowfin sole/other flatfish. The remaining JVP apportionments will be required as bycatch; unanticipated bycatch needs may be further accommodated from reserves. NMFS will be implementing an emergency rule to eliminate the split-season for joint venture pollock, but the opening date will remain January 15.

On the domestic side, DAP demand for pollock increased dramatically from 1988. Apportionments for Pacific cod and Atka mackerel in 1989 are also substantially above those for last year. Total DAP for 1989 exceeds 1.4 million mt, with up to another 300,000 mt available from reserves.

Groundfish harvests will continue to be limited by the 2.0 million mt upper limit to the optimum yield range. The status of most groundfish stocks is healthy; the only notable decline in acceptable biological catch (ABC) from 1988 is for sablefish which are apparently suffering from low recruitment. The total of ABCs for groundfish in the BS/AI is over 2.7 million mt.

### Bycatch Plan Revised for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

The Council voted to revise the crab and halibut bycatch controls that they established in September for trawl fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the new bycatch plan for 1989, and possibly 1990, will close prescribed "target fisheries" in specific areas when prohibited species catch (PSC) limits of C. bairdi Tanner crab, red king crab, and Pacific halibut are taken by trawl gear.

Overall PSC limits recommended by the Council include:

<u>C. bairdi</u> crab:	1,000,000 crabs in Zone 1 to close Zone 1 3,000,000 crabs in Zone 2 to close Zone 2
Red king crab:	200,000 crabs in Zone 1 to close Zone 1
Pacific halibut:	4,400 mt catch in BS/AI to close Zones 1 and 2H (as modified) 5,333 mt catch in BS/AI to close entire BS/AI

The bycatch limits will be apportioned to the following four fisheries in proportion to their anticipated bycatch "need": U.S. processed (DAP) flatfish fisheries (including yellowfin sole, rock sole, and other flatfish), other DAP groundfish fisheries, joint venture (JVP) flatfish fisheries, and other JVP groundfish fisheries. If a flatfish fishery attains one of its bycatch apportionments, then bottom trawling for flatfish (yellowfin sole, rock sole, and other flatfish) will be closed in the appropriate area (zone). If the other fisheries attain one of their bycatch apportionments, then bottom trawling for pollock and Pacific cod will be closed in the appropriate zone. The Regional Director of NMFS is expected to reapportion the respective bycatch apportionments among fisheries as necessary to achieve optimum yield from the groundfish resource.

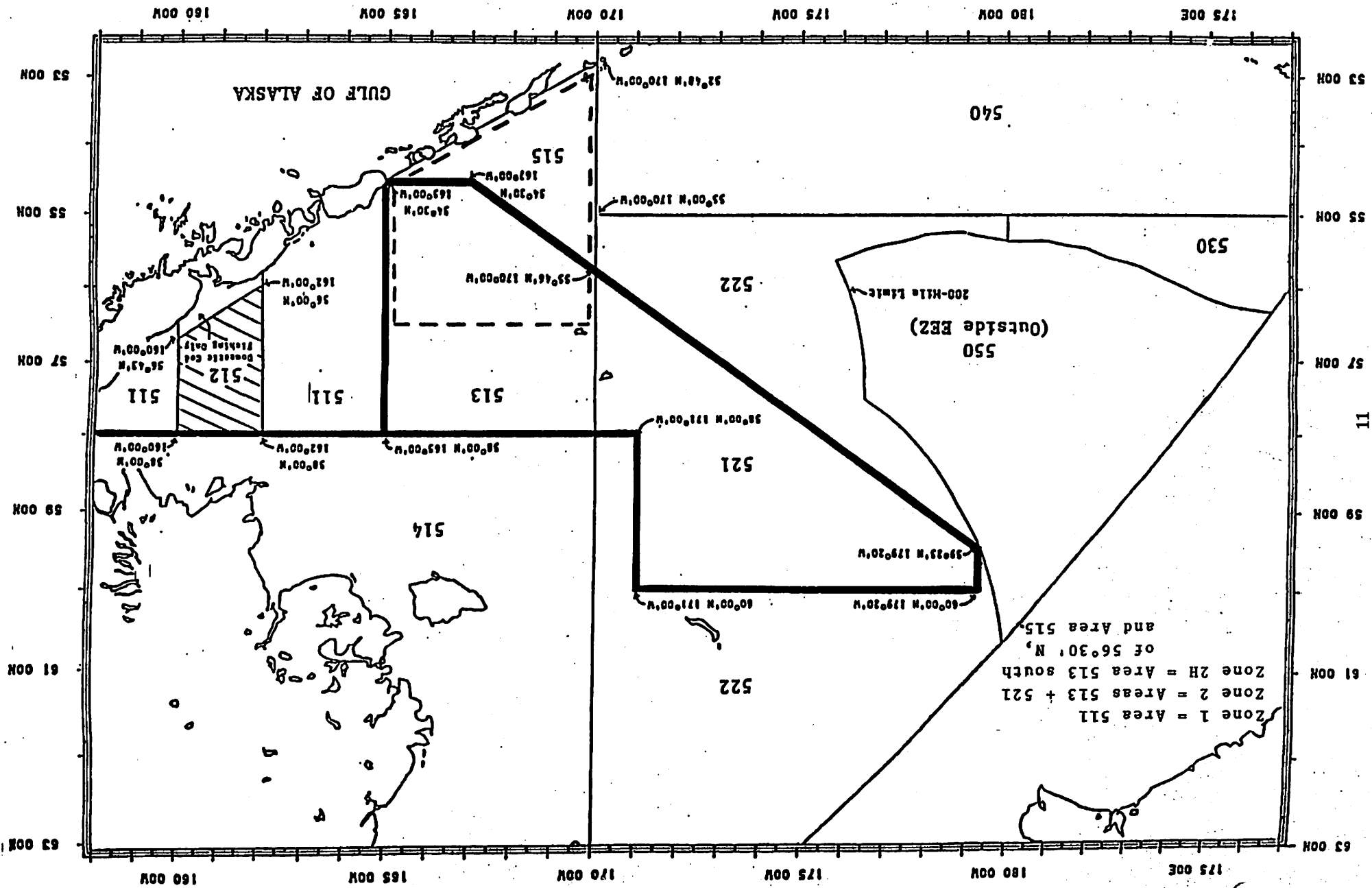
Figure 2 outlines bycatch protection zones in relation to statistical areas. Zone 2H has been modified since September to include Area 515 and that portion of Area 513 south of 56 degrees, 30 minutes N. The Crab and Halibut Protection Zone (160 to 162 degrees W, south of 58 degrees N), originally created under Amendment 10, will be expanded westward to 163 degrees W for the period March 15 to June 15 to provide additional protection

Table 3. BERING SEA / ALEUTIAN ISLANDS: Council Recommendations for 1989 Groundfish ABC, TAC, Reserves, Initial TAC, DAP, and JVP (in metric tons).

Species	Area	1988		Council Recommendations for 1989					
		ABC	TAC	ABC	TAC	Reserves 1/	ITAC	DAP	JVP
Pollock	BS	1,500,000	1,300,000	1,340,000	1,340,000	201,000	1,139,000	1,045,585	93,415
	AI	160,000	45,000	117,900	13,450	2,018	11,432	11,432	0
Pacific cod		385,300	200,000	370,600	230,681	34,602	196,079	158,613	37,466
Yellowfin sole		254,000	254,000	241,000	182,675	27,401	155,274	45,274	110,000
Greenland turbot		14,100	11,200	20,300	8,000	1,200	6,800	6,774	26
Arrowtooth flounder		99,500	5,531	163,700	6,000	900	5,100	5,100	0
Rock sole		(Previously in other flatfish)		171,000	90,762	13,614	77,148	67,543	9,605
Other flatfish		331,900	131,369	155,900	75,183	11,277	63,906	23,906	40,000
Sablefish	BS	3,400	3,400	2,800	2,800	420	2,380	2,380	0
	AI	5,800	5,000	3,400	3,400	510	2,890	2,890	0
Pacific ocean perch	BS	6,000	5,000	6,000	5,000	750	4,250	4,250	0
	AI	16,600	6,000	16,600	6,000	900	5,100	5,100	0
Other rockfish	BS	400	400	400	400	60	340	340	0
	AI	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	165	935	935	0
Atka mackerel		21,000	21,000	21,000	20,285	3,043	17,242	17,242	0
Squid		10,000	1,000	10,000	1,000	150	850	850	0
Other species		54,000	10,000	59,000	13,264	1,990	11,274	11,274	0
BS/AI TOTAL		2,863,100	2,000,000	2,700,700	2,000,000	300,000	1,700,000	1,409,488	290,512

1/ Each species TAC is reduced by 15%, providing for 300,000 tons of nonspecific reserves; TAC minus reserves equals initial TAC, which is apportioned to DAP and JVP.

Figure 2.--Bycatch protection zones in BS/AI (Amendment 12a).



to crab during molting. The existing exemption for domestic trawling for Pacific cod will also be extended to 163 degrees W during this period, along with current requirements for approved data gathering programs and a 12,000 crab PSC limit for red king crab. The trawl industry has agreed to voluntarily abstain from fishing in the original Crab and Halibut Protection Zone outside 25 fm before formal regulations closing the area are implemented.

The Council still expects NMFS to report back by June or September 1989 with a bycatch management proposal to account for and control the crab and halibut bycatch of specific groundfish target fisheries. If approved by the Council, such a comprehensive plan could be in effect by the 1990, or 1991, fishing year.

#### **Definition of Sablefish Directed Fishing Changed in the Bering Sea**

After considering that the sablefish total allowable catch (TAC) in the Bering Sea would be reduced from 3,400 mt in 1988 to 2,800 mt in 1989, and that bycatch of sablefish in other groundfish fisheries could use more than the available TAC, the Council approved an emergency measure to lower the retention limits on sablefish when fishing for other groundfish.

The previous directed fishing definition allowed fishermen to retain up to 20% sablefish after the directed fishing season was closed. The emergency action will reduce allowable retention to 1% for all groundfish fisheries except that sablefish retention could be up to 10% of the amount (round weight conversion) of Greenland turbot and Pacific ocean perch onboard. The demand for sablefish in other DAP fisheries at these new retention levels will equal about 2,000 mt TAC. However, any delay in implementing the emergency rule past January 1 may increase the amount of sablefish that needs to be held back for bycatch. Therefore, NMFS will most likely declare the Bering Sea fishery for sablefish as bycatch only and allow a directed fishery later in the year if sufficient tonnages are available.

This emergency action, which will be effective for a maximum of 180 days if approved by the Secretary of Commerce, may be followed by an amendment to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP or to the BS/AI groundfish regulations after Council consideration of a proposal by the Bycatch Committee. The Committee has indicated a desire to redefine future directed fishing on the basis of catch rather than retention, which would enhance control of total fishing mortality for those species of concern.

#### **Foreign Vessel Permit Review**

The Council recommended approval of foreign vessel permits in 1989 for 209 processing and 158 cargo vessels and 6 tankers. One Korean processor, the SHIN YANG HO, was denied a permit because of a serious violation that has not yet been settled.

The Council recommended three restrictions on vessel permits:

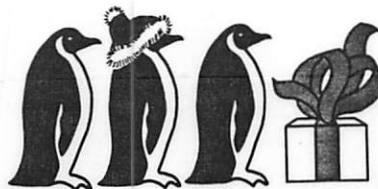
1. No support activities involving transshipment of fish harvested in the Donut Hole would be allowed inside 200 miles.
2. Joint ventures would be prohibited from operating in the Gulf of Alaska until September 15.
3. The industry bycatch steering committee and restrictions used in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands areas in 1988 are to be continued in 1989.

All foreign processing and support vessels are encouraged to utilize U.S. domestic services. Several listings of these services are available including Ports Alaska from Alaska Business Publishing, Alaska Marine Directory by the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, and the Commercial Marine Directory phone book by NYNEX. A major contact for further information on available services is John Levy at the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, phone (907) 274-7555.

Upcoming Meetings

Sablefish Management Committee	January 4	Council Offices Anchorage, AK
Groundfish Plan Amendment Advisory Group	January 5	NWAFC, Room 2079 9:00 a.m.
Alaska Board of Fisheries Crab Subcommittee	January 6	Juneau, AK
Western Groundfish Conference	January 8-11	Doubletree Hotel Monterey, CA
Scientific and Statistical Committee	January 15-16	Anchorage Sheraton
Advisory Panel	January 15-16	Anchorage Sheraton
Council	January 16-20	Anchorage Sheraton
International Pacific Halibut Commission	January 24-27	Vancouver, BC
Council Chairmen's Meeting	January 27-28	Charleston, SC
Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee	Jan. 31 - Feb. 2	Washington, DC

*From the Council staff to all of you, HAPPY HOLIDAYS!*



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner  
Crab Fishery Management Plan

Notice of Availability

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has directed its crab plan team to prepare a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for king and Tanner crab fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands area. A committee of Council members and industry representatives was established to work with the plan team during the development process. The plan team has reviewed the issues and identified and analyzed the biological, socioeconomic, and management impacts of various alternative solutions for public and Council consideration based on all available information. These issues and alternative solutions focus specifically on the management role of Federal and State agencies when making preseason and inseason decisions.

A draft Environmental Assessment and Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA) was reviewed by the Council, Alaska Board of Fisheries, and public during the summer. On September 26, 1988, the Committee met to review comments and directed the team to revise the documents to address the remaining deficiencies. This document, and the revised plan are now available upon request by calling (907) 271-2809, or at one of the following locations:

Alaska Crab Coalition  
3901 Leary Way N.W., Suite 6, Seattle

Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Unisea Building, Dutch Harbor

North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association  
Fishermen's Terminal C-3, Room 218, Seattle

United Fishermen's Marketing Association  
Fishermen's Hall, Kodiak

The Council requests that anyone having additional information pertaining to the proposed FMP, its alternatives, or the EA/RIR/IRFA, submit it to the Council during a 30-day public comment period which commences December 15. All comments will be presented to the Council at its meeting which is scheduled for the week of January 16. The comment period closes at 5:00 p.m. on January 17.

The Council is also asking for the opinions of the fishing community and other affected individuals regarding which alternatives the Council should approve. It is hoped that the draft EA/RIR/IRFA will help the public provide constructive feedback to aid the Council in their deliberations.

At their January 1989 meeting in Anchorage the Council will make their final decision and submit the FMP and supporting documentation to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation. The Council will accept oral testimony at the meeting; however, such testimony should be limited to clarification of written comments and recommendations about the Council's choices rather than submission of new information.