

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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September 15, 1981

NEWSLETTER

Council Meets With Board of Fisheries in Kodiak

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met with the Alaska Board of Fisheries in Kodiak on September 10-11 to discuss king crab management in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area. Public comments on Draft #11 of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island King Crab Fishery Management Plan were heard on Thursday, September 10.

Preliminary results from the 1981 NMFS Bering Sea Trawl Survey indicate a sharp decline in the number of recruit crabs from the original prediction of 20 million animals to approximately 10 million. The survey also indicates a lower number of pre-recruits than expected, but female stocks appear consistent in number and reproductively healthy. Based on the data contained in the survey report, the Board of Fisheries denied a petition by the North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners Association, the Alaska Crab Institute, and the Alaska Marketing Association for a higher-than-normal exploitation rate to reduce the economic hardship caused by setting quotas based on NMFS's abundance estimates. The petitioners questioned the accuracy of the NMFS survey and alleged that an exploitation rate of almost 100% on all male crabs 6½ inches and larger would pose no threat to future king crab spawning stocks.

The Council and Board adopted the Joint Statement of Principles as revised September 8, 1981 to reflect the current situation, discussed management and enforcement strategies to be used in the "framework" plan, and directed the Plan Development Team to make minor changes to the draft FMP. The Council will consider the revised draft at its September 24-25 meeting in Anchorage.

Confederated Tribes vs. Secretary Baldrige

The Council and Board of Fisheries heard a report on the status of the lawsuit filed by the Confederated Tribes of Washington against the Secretary of Commerce to gain confirmation of their treaty rights over conservation measures implemented to increase spawning escapements of upper Columbia River "bright" chinook stocks. The Regional Directors of the Northwest and Alaska regional offices of NMFS must answer the Court on behalf of the Secretary by November 6. Council members Skoog, Demmert, and Bevan will work with Bob McVey and Bert Larkins in coordinating Council input for the response to the Court.

Next Council Meeting Less Than Two Weeks Away

The next Council meeting will be held on September 24-25 at the Sheraton Hotel, Anchorage. Heading the agenda will be final action on the draft Bering Sea/Aleutian Island King Crab Fishery Management Plan and Amendment #3,

Reducing the Catch of Prohibited Species, to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan. The Council will elect officers for 1981-82 and may discuss and take further action on a possible limited entry system for the halibut fishery off Alaska. Discussions of the Salmon, Herring, and Gulf Groundfish FMP's are also scheduled.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee will convene at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, and continue through 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 23, in the Council headquarters' conference room.

The Advisory Panel will meet from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in room 311 of the Sheraton Hotel on Wednesday, September 23.

The Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Development Team will meet with Council, SSC, and AP subgroups and interested public at 9 a.m., September 22, in the conference room.

Council Appointments

Harold E. Lokken and Keith W. Specking were appointed by Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldrige to serve three-year terms as voting members of the North Pacific Council. Lokken, who has served as both chairman and vice-chairman of the Council, is beginning his third term. Executive Secretary and Manager of the Fishing Vessel Owners Association, Seattle, from 1924 to 1976, Lokken is highly experienced in the fishing industry.

Specking, currently Special Assistant to the Governor of Alaska, is a former Alaska legislator, having served as Republican Minority Leader in the Alaska House of Representatives during his term beginning in 1974. He will fill the vacancy resulting from the expiration of the term of Charles P. Meacham, Anchorage.

Bevan to Testify at Oversight Hearings

Dr. Donald Bevan will testify on behalf of the North Pacific Council at the House Subcommittee for Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment oversight hearings in Washington, D.C. on September 24-25. Major amendments to the Magnuson Act to be addressed include placing a definite time limit on the Secretarial review period for plans and amendments, regionalization of fishery management activities, and autonomy of the Councils.

National Standards Workshop to be Held in Anchorage

Central Office - NMFS will conduct a workshop on the Draft National Standards Guidelines for Council, SSC, and AP members and interested members of the public on Saturday, September 26, 1981, beginning at 9 a.m. in the Council's conference room. Daphne White, Mary Thompson, and Margaret Frailey from the Central Office will lead the workshop.