

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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#2-91

5/10/91

NEWSLETTER

Council Meets for Five Days in Kodiak; June Meeting May be Longer

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Kodiak, April 23-27, and addressed a wide array of issues, as detailed in this newsletter, ranging from inshore-offshore allocations, to salmon bycatch, to limited access and a user-fee program to fund domestic observers. The Council will meet next in Anchorage on June 24-28, and may extend into Saturday, June 29. Final decisions scheduled for June include individual fishing quotas for the sablefish fixed gear fishery, inshore-offshore allocations, the observer user-fee program, and groundfish amendments. The Council's Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee will meet starting Sunday, June 23. All meetings will be held in the Anchorage Hilton. A schedule of committee meetings between now and the June meeting is included in this newsletter.

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Council Again Urges Restrictions on Donut Fisheries

The Council adopted a policy last September calling for a strict prohibition on all foreign and U.S. fishing in the Donut Hole, the central Bering Sea outside 200 miles, and for all vessels operating there to carry observers and adhere to appropriate reporting requirements. At the April meeting, the Council received a report from the US-USSR Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body concluding that the decline in pollock biomass and spawning intensity in the Bering Sea was attributable to two main factors: (1) over-exploitation of pollock resources due to disproportionately high fishing pressure in the Donut Hole, and (2) the absence of strong year-classes since 1978. The Council went on record again at the April meeting urging the Secretary of Commerce to restrict fishing in the central Bering Sea and to require comprehensive observer coverage and reporting of catches as are required within 200 miles.

User-Fee Plan Sent Back to Committee for Work with Industry

The Council received public testimony on the proposed alternatives for an industry-wide user-fee plan to fund the domestic observer program. Concerns were raised with the projected budget of the current groundfish observer program, the additional costs associated with inclusion of the State of Alaska's crab observer program, and the methods for collecting fees from fishermen and processors. The Council directed its Data Committee to meet with interested members of the public to address these issues and further refine the proposed user-fee plan. The Data Committee is scheduled to meet June 5-6, 1991, in Room 2079, Building 4, at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Seattle. Depending on the outcome of that meeting, the Council could review the revised plan and take final action on the user-fee program at its June meeting.

SSC Elects Officers

Drs. William Clark and Terrance Quinn have been elected Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee for 1991. Dr. Clark is the staff biometrician for the International Pacific Halibut Commission in Seattle, Washington, and has been a member of the SSC since 1987. Dr. Quinn, a Professor of Population Dynamics at the Juneau Center for Ocean Sciences, University of Alaska, has served on the SSC for four years.

Inshore/Offshore Analysis Goes to Public Review

After receiving a staff presentation of the inshore/offshore supplemental environmental impact statement and economic and social impact analysis, the Council approved release of the analytical documents for a 45-day public review. The SEIS defines the inshore/offshore issue as a preemption problem where one industry sector risks resource preemption by another sector. Seven management alternatives are evaluated as to their effectiveness in addressing the problem, and their potential impacts are analyzed from a biological, economic, and social context. The Council's public review period will begin on May 10 and end on June 24. Copies of the analytical documents are available upon request from the Council office at (907) 271-2809. A Notice of Availability is attached to the end of this newsletter.

Sablefish and Halibut Management

The Council reviewed the revised Supplement to the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for sablefish limited access alternatives. This Supplement was prepared as an addition to the previous analyses for sablefish limited access and contains a detailed analysis of the four proposed Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) management alternatives that the Council has identified from previous meetings. The Supplement incorporates data from the 1990 sablefish fishery into the analysis. The Council has released this document for a 30-day public comment period prior to the June 1991 meeting, at which a final decision on sablefish management is scheduled. A Notice of Availability of the Supplemental analysis is attached.

In conjunction with sablefish management, the Council is also considering an IFQ alternative for management of the halibut fisheries off Alaska. The Council originally identified the same options for a halibut IFQ program as have been analyzed for sablefish. At the April meeting, the Council reviewed this list of alternative IFQ programs as they apply to the halibut fisheries. Two of the alternative programs were eliminated from the list and one optional program was added upon recommendation from the Advisory Panel. The revised list of IFQ alternatives to be analyzed for halibut is on the pages following this article. An analysis is being prepared by staff to be brought before the Council at the June meeting in Anchorage. It will assess the potential effects of the proposed IFQ systems versus status quo (open access management). A final decision on halibut management is scheduled for the September 1991 meeting. As with sablefish, the Council may choose one of the proposed IFQ programs or they may choose from among the components of each of the proposed IFQ programs in structuring the final preferred system. If the Council elects to adopt IFQ management for sablefish and halibut, it is their intent that the two systems be implemented concurrently, beginning with the 1993 fisheries.

Moratorium and Groundfish/Crab IFQ Systems May be Combined for Analysis

The Council has requested the National Marine Fisheries Service to report in June on procedures and requirements necessary to develop a moratorium on entry into all fisheries under the Council's jurisdiction, except salmon, and to develop individual fishing quota (IFQ) systems for those fisheries. The report will examine the general moratorium outlined by the Fishery Planning Committee and modified by the Advisory Panel. A work schedule with analytical and staff tasking requirements will be included in the report.

ALTERNATIVE IFQ SYSTEMS FOR MANAGEMENT OF HALIBUT FIXED GEAR FISHERIES OFF ALASKA

ALTERNATIVE 1 - is the status quo (open access)

ALTERNATIVES 2.1 - 2.3 - are variations of Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) systems being considered by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

| Provisions | ALTERNATIVE 2.1 | ALTERNATIVE 2.2 | ALTERNATIVE 2.3 (from April 1991 meeting) |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Gear and Areas | Halibut fisheries (hook and line) in all IPHC regulatory areas: 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E. Further breakdown of IPHC areas may be proposed in order to more fully implement the intent of the 20% set aside fishery under Alternatives 2.2 and 2.3 | | |
| Shares and Quotas | Quota shares (QS) are a percentage of the fixed gear halibut quota for a specific IPHC management area. An Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) is the weight equivalent of the QS. It is also area specific. It will vary annually with changes in the halibut quota for each area. | | |
| Initial Assignment of Quota Shares | <p>Tentative schedule: After the application and appeals process in 1992, QS will be assigned for use in 1993. IFQs to be issued yearly to QS owners.</p> <p>Initial QS recipients will be owners or leaseholders of vessels that made legal fixed gear landings of halibut during the qualifying period. They must be non-foreign, but otherwise are 'Persons' as defined by the Magnuson Act: any individual who is a U.S. citizen, any corporation, partnership, association, or other entity (whether or not organized or existing under the laws of any State but being owned and controlled by a majority of U.S. citizens), and any Federal, State, or local government or governmental entity. Initial assignment would go to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(1) vessel owner(s) unless qualified lease exists (bareboat charter) (2) qualified leaseholder would receive credit for landings.</p> | | |
| Qualifying Period | 1984 - 1990 | Option 1: 1984 - 1990 Option 2: 1988 - 1990 | Option 1: 1984 - 1990 Option 2: 1986 - 1990 |
| Initial QS Amount | Best 5 of 7 years | Option 1: Best 5 of 7 years, 1984-1990 Option 2: Best single year, 1988-1990 | Option 1: Best 5 of 7 years, 1984-1990 Option 2: Best 6 of 7 years, 1984-1990 Option 3: Best 3 of 5 years, 1986-1990 |

4

| Provisions | ALTERNATIVE 2.1 | ALTERNATIVE 2.2 | ALTERNATIVE 2.3 |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Vessel Category Designations | <p>Each 'Person' would receive QS for the vessel category of their most recent landings within the qualifying period. If, in their most recent qualifying year, they owned or leased 2 or more vessels that landed halibut, their allocation would be for the category of their largest vessel.</p> <p>Vessel categories as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Catcher vessels 2. Freezer/longliners | <p>Option 1: NO vessel categories</p> <p>Option 2: Vessel categories of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) up to 60' length overall (b) 61' and greater <p>Option 3: Vessel categories of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) up to 35' (b) 36' - 60' (c) 61' and greater | <p>Option 1: NO vessel categories</p> <p>Option 2: Vessel categories of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) up to 35' (b) 36' - 60' (c) 61' - 90' (d) 91' and greater |
| Duration of QS Program | <p>Harvest privileges may be subject to periodic change, including revocation, in accordance with appropriate management procedures as defined by the Magnuson Act. Ending the program would not constitute 'taking' and QS/IFQ owners would not be compensated. Privileges are good for an indefinite period with no specified ending date.</p> | | |
| Calculating IFQ pounds | <p>IFQ poundage is obtained by multiplying the QS percentage times the halibut quota for an area for each year. This would be calculated after the 'set aside' portion of the fishery for each area is subtracted from the total quota. This 'set aside' is further described in a separate section.</p> | | |
| Transfer of QS/IFQs | <p>* Freezer/longliner QS/IFQs: Fully saleable to any 'Person' (U.S. individual, partnership, corp., etc.) Leasable, but recipient must own vessel using IFQs or be on board as crew or operator.</p> <p>* Catcher vessel QS/IFQs: Initial recipients can be 'Persons' and do not have to be on the vessel or sign the fish ticket to use the IFQs. Subsequent users must be (or designate within 90 days) a U.S. citizen as owner of the QS who must be on board the vessel using the IFQs and sign the fish ticket, unless an allowable lease exists. (cont'd on next page)</p> | <p>* QS/IFQs fully saleable, and:</p> <p>Option 1: Leasable Any 'Person' may control IFQs. Proof of citizenship or majority ownership and control may be required.</p> <p>Option 2: Non-leasable Any 'Person' may purchase QS, but must own the vessel the QS/IFQs will be used on, or must be on board the vessel using the QS/IFQs as crew or operator.</p> | <p>* Catcher vessel and freezer/longliner QS/IFQs: Initial recipients can be 'Persons' and do not have to be on the vessel or sign the fish ticket to use the IFQs. Subsequent users must be (or designate within 90 days) a U.S. citizen as owner of the QS who must be on board the vessel using the IFQs and sign the fish ticket, unless an allowable lease exists. (cont'd on next page)</p> |

| Provisions | ALTERNATIVE 2.1 | ALTERNATIVE 2.2 | ALTERNATIVE 2.3 |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Transfer of QS/IFQs cont'd. | <p>In the event an allowable lease exists, the leaseholder must be a U.S. citizen and must be aboard the vessel and sign the fish ticket. No more than 50% of any person's IFQs may be leased except in cases of illness, injury, or emergency to be defined by NMFS.</p> <p>* Freezer vessels that fish for species other than halibut must acquire QS for halibut in order to retain them.</p> <p>* Maximum of 15% of all halibut QS may be held by freezer/longliner fleet.</p> | | <p>In the event an allowable lease exists, the leaseholder must be a U.S. citizen and must be aboard the vessel and sign the fish ticket. No more than 50% of any person's IFQs may be leased except in cases of illness, injury, or emergency to be defined by NMFS.</p> |
| Limitations on holdings (own/control) | <p>3% limit of overall quota but, initial recipients of more than 3% may continue to control the excess but not more.</p> | <p>2% limit of overall quota but, initial recipients of more than 2% may continue to control the excess but not more. No more than 2% can be used on one vessel. Suboption under this alternative for a 1% cap on ownership.</p> | <p>2% limit of overall quota but, initial recipients of more than 2% may continue to control the excess but not more. No more than 2% can be used on one vessel. Suboption under this alternative for a 1% cap on ownership.</p> |
| General Provisions | <p>* NMFS must approve QS/IFQ transfers based on findings of eligibility criteria before fishing commences.</p> <p>* Persons must control IFQs for amount to be caught before a trip begins.</p> <p>* QS and IFQs are specific to management areas and vessel categories (if used).</p> <p>* Halibut cannot be landed without IFQs except in open access fishery under Alternatives 2.2 and 2.3. Under these alternatives, all catch would be counted against either IFQs or open access, whichever is appropriate.</p> <p>* IFQs are not valid for halibut caught by any means other than hook and line fishing in any IPHC area covered by this plan.</p> | | |
| Discards | <p>IFQ users cannot discard legal sized halibut.</p> | <p>Discards permitted but count towards TAC or IFQ. Any longline fishery that takes halibut must control IFQs.</p> | <p> Holders of unused IFQs must retain legal sized halibut.</p> |

| Provisions | ALTERNATIVE 2.1 | ALTERNATIVE 2.2 | ALTERNATIVE 2.3 |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Open Access | No open access fishery | <p>Up to 20% of any area's quota may be set aside for community development quota, bycatch for other fisheries, or open access fishery as described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Each area's quota may be divided 7% IFQ and 7% open access. (up to 20% open access) * IFQ holder for any area would not be permitted to fish any area's open access fishery except as noted. * Open access fishery managed by exclusive registration area (existing IPHC areas to begin with). * 4th quarter open access cleanup fishery open to any person or vessel if they do not own/control unused IFQs. Exclusive areas rescinded. * Amount and structure of each area's 'set aside' quota to be determined by regulatory amendment process prior to implementation of QS program. | <p>20% of each area's quota will be set aside for open access fishery described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Each area's quota will be divided 80% IFQ and 20% open access. * IFQ holder for any area would not be permitted to fish any area's open access fishery except as noted. * Open access fishery managed by exclusive registration area (existing IPHC areas to begin with). * 4th quarter open access cleanup fishery open to any person or vessel if they do not own/control unused IFQs. Exclusive areas rescinded. * Up to 8% of total quota for any area may be used for coastal community development (within the 20% open access portion). Unused CDQ rolled over into 4th quarter cleanup fishery. |
| Coastal Community Considerations | 3% cap on use of any area's quota for disadvantaged communities such as Atka or the Pribilofs. | See above. | <p>See above.</p> <p>Option: that CDQs be set at the following percentages for the following IPHC areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4A - 20% of quota 4B - 20% of quota 4C - 50% of quota 4D - 20% of quota 4E - 50% of quota |

| Provisions | ALTERNATIVE 2.1 | ALTERNATIVE 2.2 | ALTERNATIVE 2.3 |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Administration | <p>* NMFS Alaska Regional Office would administer the program.</p> <p>* Settlement of appeals disputes during the initial assignment process will be based on fact. Unsubstantiated testimony will not be considered. Leaseholders would have to come to the Appeals Board with verifiable records and agreement of the owner of record of the vessel. Initial appeals would be heard by an Appeals Board composed of government employees rather than industry members. Subsequent appeals would go to NMFS Alaska Regional Director followed by appeals to the Secretary of Commerce and then the court system.</p> <p>* Appeals could be brought forth based on the following criteria: (1) Errors in records. (2) Documented leaseholder qualification.</p> | | |
| Unloading Provisions | No unloading provisions. | <p>* All first point of sale purchasers of halibut (processed or unprocessed) would be required to obtain a purchaser's license from NMFS.</p> <p>* Vessels may unload halibut (processed or unprocessed) only in areas designated by NMFS. Prior notification of such offloading may be required.</p> | <p>Option 1: No unloading provisions.</p> <p>Option 2: * All first point of sale purchasers of halibut (processed or unprocessed) would be required to obtain a purchaser's license from NMFS. * Vessels may unload halibut (processed or unprocessed) only in areas agreed to by industry and NMFS. Prior notification of such offloading may be required by NMFS.</p> |
| Program Financing | <p>* It is the Council's intent to find a way to finance the IFQ program without redirecting costs, possibly including a cost recovery program from QS/IFQ owners.</p> | | |
| Other | <p>* While the alternative IFQ programs shown here constitute individual packages, it is the Council's intent to be able to choose from among the components of each program when designing the final IFQ alternative.</p> | | |

Groundfish Plan Amendments

At the April meeting, the Council reviewed a draft Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA) for proposed amendments to the groundfish fishery management plans. This package would constitute Amendment 22 to the Gulf of Alaska groundfish plan and Amendment 17 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish plan. Included in this plan amendment package are the following five items:

1. A proposed FMP amendment to allow authorization of experimental fishing permits.
2. A proposed FMP amendment to re-establish protective buffer zones around the Walrus Islands walrus haul-out sites in northern Bristol Bay.
3. A proposed FMP amendment to delete statistical area 68 (East Yakutat District) in the Gulf of Alaska.
4. A proposed FMP amendment to create a separate statistical subarea around the area of Bogoslof Island for pollock management.
5. A proposed regulatory amendment that would define a groundfish pot to differentiate it from king and Tanner crab pots.

The Council has released the 17/22 Amendment package for a 30-day public comment period prior to the June 1991 meeting in Anchorage. A Notice of Availability is attached to this newsletter. Final action on this plan amendment package is scheduled for the June meeting.

Trawling Ban in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska

Over the past several months the Council has received many requests from industry and communities to close the Southeast area to trawling for reasons related to bottom habitat destruction and conservation of demersal shelf rockfish stocks. At the April meeting, the Council responded by requesting emergency action by the Secretary of Commerce to prohibit trawling east of 140°W longitude in the Gulf of Alaska. This action was primarily based on concern over potential overfishing of demersal shelf rockfish stocks if trawling were allowed to continue. In terms of a permanent closure to trawling in this area, the Council has included consideration of this issue in the bycatch amendment package to be analyzed later this year. They will also consider delaying the Gulf of Alaska rockfish season opening until July 15 next year.

Quarterly Allocation of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

At its January 1991 meeting, the Council reaffirmed its earlier request for emergency action to quarterly apportion the Pacific cod harvest in the Bering Sea and Aleutians. After this request was denied by the Secretary of Commerce, the Council put the issue on the agenda for the April meeting to discuss the possibility of an amendment to permanently address the issue. At the April meeting the Council took no action but noted that the issue should be kept alive pending staff availability to accomplish the necessary analysis.

Bycatch Management in the Groundfish Fisheries

Performance of new "pelagic trawls". Last September the Council adopted regulations which redefined pelagic trawls, and fishermen may continue fishing with this newly designed gear when bottom trawling is closed. However, NMFS indicates that the newly designed trawls have not been effective in reducing bycatch, especially in fisheries for Pacific cod at or near the bottom of the ocean.

Therefore the Council passed a motion requesting the Regional Director to take emergency action, followed by a regulatory amendment, to reduce the allowable retention of Pacific cod in the midwater pollock fishery in the BSAI to 7 percent, from the current standard of 20 percent. Regarding the Gulf of Alaska, the motion requests the Regional Director to take emergency action, followed by a regulatory amendment, to prohibit all trawling for groundfish, other than for pollock with pelagic trawls, when the halibut PSC allowance for trawl gear is reached. Also, the directed fishing for all groundfish in the midwater pollock fishery will be reduced to 7 percent from the current level of 20 percent.

In addition, on May 6, 1991, NMFS implemented, as part of the Interim Final Rule for the Vessel Incentive Program, a rule prohibiting directed trawling for Pacific cod in the BSAI when the halibut PSC allowance for trawl gear is reached. This ruling will become effective Friday, May 10, 1991.

Bycatch Rate Standards. The Council adopted the Advisory Panel's recommendation on bycatch rate standards for the third and fourth quarters for Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands fisheries. The Council recommended the standards below for the last two quarters of 1991.

| <u>Fishery</u> | <u>Rate</u> <u>Halibut wt as % of groundfish catch</u> |
|---------------------------------|---|
| BSAI Pacific Cod | 2.2% |
| BSAI flatfish | 0.3% |
| GOA rockfish | 4.0% |
| GOA Pacific Cod, third quarter | 3.29% |
| GOA Pacific Cod, fourth quarter | 5.15% |

| | <u>Red king crab numbers/mt groundfish</u> |
|---------------|--|
| BSAI flatfish | 1.5/mt |

The Council requested additional bycatch information for the June Council meeting, including halibut bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska pot groundfish fishery and total halibut bycatch for all gear types in 1990. The Council also expressed interest in the analysis of logbook halibut bycatch data which NMFS will have available by the end of June.

The Council adopted a motion requesting the Regional Director to reapportion halibut PSC in the Gulf of Alaska as appropriate from the third and fourth quarters to the second quarter to allow the trawl fisheries to continue as long as salmon bycatch did not pose a problem. Industry representatives expressed interest in not disrupting ongoing second quarter fisheries and processing operations due to excessive amounts of second quarter halibut PSC taken in the rockfish fisheries. They also noted that the local flatfish fisheries would rather have the third and fourth quarter PSC now during better weather than in the final quarter when fishing is more difficult.

Salmon Bycatch. The Council requested the Secretary to take emergency action to close the Gulf of Alaska rockfish trawl fisheries to reduce the incidental take of salmon. There was considerable testimony and discussion over this issue of high salmon bycatches in the trawl fisheries and the need to address the problem. As of April 28, 34,152 chinook salmon have been taken in the 1991 GOA trawl fisheries and 37,136 chinook salmon have been taken in the 1991 BSAI trawl fisheries.

The Council believes the request for emergency action is a useful first step, but also requested the Regional Director to closely monitor salmon bycatch in various fisheries, and if a fishery is experiencing high bycatch, to convene a teleconference with the Council to consider whether or not to take action to close down that fishery. The Council indicated this action should apply to the salmon troll fishery as well.

The Council also discussed troll fishery bycatch, stock origin of fish caught in various fisheries and relative mortalities of chinook. The Ad Hoc Bycatch Committee will review in more detail the issues and concerns regarding salmon bycatch during its June 23 meeting in Anchorage. The Council also approved a Joint Statement on Salmon Bycatch with Alaska, Washington, and Oregon, declaring their desire to minimize, to the extent feasible, the incidental take of salmon, and to take steps to stop excessive bycatches. The statement is attached to this newsletter.

Comprehensive Bycatch Amendment

The Council's Ad Hoc Bycatch Committee has been working over the past year on a comprehensive bycatch amendment package to address several bycatch related issues in the groundfish fisheries. At the April meeting, the Council requested the Bycatch Committee to continue developing this package with analysis to begin this summer.

LIST OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

| Meeting | Date/Time | Location |
|---|--|---|
| NPFMC Bycatch Committee | June 3-4, 1991 Starts 10:00 AM June 14 | AFSC, Sand Point Room 2079, Bldg. 4 Seattle, WA |
| NPFMC Data Committee | June 5-6, 1991 Starts 8:00 AM June 5 | AFSC, Sand Point Room 2079, Bldg. 4 Seattle, WA |
| NPFMC Bycatch Committee | June 23, 1991 | Anchorage Hilton Hotel Anchorage, AK |
| NPFMC Advisory Panel/ Scientific and Statistical Committee Meetings | Begin June 23, 1991 | Anchorage Hilton Hotel Anchorage, AK |
| North Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting | Begins June 24, 1991 | Anchorage Hilton Hotel Anchorage, AK |

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
and
Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis
of Proposed Inshore/Offshore Allocation Alternatives
Amendments 18/23 to the
Groundfish Fishery Management Plans
for the Gulf of Alaska the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

A draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (SEIS/RIR/IRFA) for proposed inshore/offshore allocation alternatives in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands was reviewed by the Council at their April 23-26 meeting and approved for public distribution. This document is available upon request by calling the Council staff at 907-271-2809.

The Council requests that anyone having additional information pertaining to the amendment, its alternatives, or the SEIS/RIR/IRFA, submit it to the Council during the 45-day public comment period which commences May 10. All new information will be summarized and included when possible in the final documents. Written comments should be received in the Council office no later than 5:00 p.m. (ADT) on June 20, to ensure they are included in the Council's briefing books. Additional written comments received by the close of the 45-day comment period, June 24, will be supplied to the Council in their supplemental folders.

At their June 24-29 meeting in Anchorage, the Council will make their final decision and submit the amendment and supporting documentation to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation. The Council will accept oral testimony at the June meeting; however, such testimony should be limited to clarification of earlier written comments and recommendations about the Council's choices rather than submission of new information.

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

LONGLINE AND POT GEAR SABLEFISH MANAGEMENT

Draft Supplement to
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
and
Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis
Amendment 20 to the
Groundfish Fishery Management Plan for the Gulf of Alaska
and
Amendment 15 to the
Groundfish Fishery Management Plan for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

A draft supplement to the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (SEIS/RIR/IRFA) for longline and pot gear sablefish management in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands was reviewed by the Council at their April 23-26 meeting and approved for public distribution. This document, which analyzes an individual fishing quota system for sablefish, is available upon request by calling the Council staff at 907-271-2809.

The Council requests that anyone having additional information pertaining to the amendment, its alternatives, or the draft supplement to the SEIS/RIR/IRFA, submit it to the Council during the 30-day public comment period which commences May 14. All new information will be summarized and included when possible in the final documents. Written comments should be received in the Council office no later than 5:00 p.m. (ADT) on June 14.

At their June 24-29 meeting in Anchorage, the Council will make their final decision on whether to submit the amendment and supporting documentation to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation. The Council is not restricted to accepting an alternative in its entirety, but may combine elements of different alternatives in structuring its preferred alternative for Secretarial Review. The Council will accept oral testimony at the June meeting; however, such testimony should be limited to clarification of earlier written comments and recommendations about the Council's choices rather than submission of new information.

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR GROUND FISH OF THE
GULF OF ALASKA

AMENDMENT 22

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR GROUND FISH OF THE
BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

AMENDMENT 17

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has directed the Groundfish Plan Teams for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands to prepare Amendments 22 and 17 respectively, and supporting documentation for management of the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries. The Council has identified the issues and problems to be addressed by Amendments 22 and 17 but has not yet chosen preferred solutions. The Plan Teams have 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 information available to it at this time.

A draft Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA) was reviewed by the Council at their April 23-26 meeting and approved for public distribution. This document, which includes both Amendment 22 and 17, is available upon request by calling the Council staff at 907-271-2809.

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 meaningful and constructive feedback to aid the Council in their deliberations.

The Council requests that anyone having additional information pertaining to the amendment, its alternatives, or the EA/RIR/IRFA, submit it to the Council during the 30-day public comment period which commences May 14. All written comments should be received by 5:00 p.m. (ADT) on June 14.

At their June 24-29 meeting in Anchorage, the Council will make their final decision and submit the amendment and supporting documentation to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation. The Council will accept oral testimony at the June meeting; however, such testimony should be limited to clarification of earlier written comments and recommendations about the Council's choices rather than submission of new information.

DRAFT**

**JOINT STATEMENT ON SALMON BYCATCH
by the
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL,
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES,
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES,
and
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

WHEREAS The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is composed of individuals from the states of Oregon, Washington, and Alaska, and has the responsibility and jurisdiction for the management of fishery resources within the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone in the North Pacific; and,

WHEREAS The Alaska Board of Fisheries is composed of individuals appointed by the State of Alaska to represent broad interests and geographic areas of Alaska, and has the responsibility and jurisdiction for the management of fishery resources within the Territorial Waters of the State of Alaska; and,

WHEREAS The Washington Department of Fisheries has the responsibility and jurisdiction for the management of fishery resources within the Territorial Waters of the State of Washington; and,

WHEREAS The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has the responsibility and jurisdiction for the management of fishery resources within the Territorial Waters of the State of Oregon; and,

WHEREAS Salmon taken incidentally as bycatch in various fisheries under the jurisdiction of the Council and/or the Alaska Board of Fisheries have their origin in watersheds in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska; and,

WHEREAS The ceremonial and subsistence salmon fisheries, the directed commercial salmon fisheries, and the recreational and personal-use salmon fisheries of the three states have enormous social, economic and cultural importance; and,

WHEREAS Maintenance of the biological health and reproductive capacity of salmon stocks indigenous to the three states is essential to continued and improved salmon populations and the benefits derived from those stocks to these users; and,

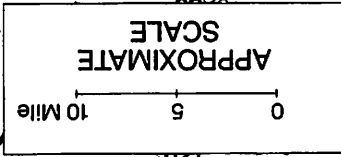
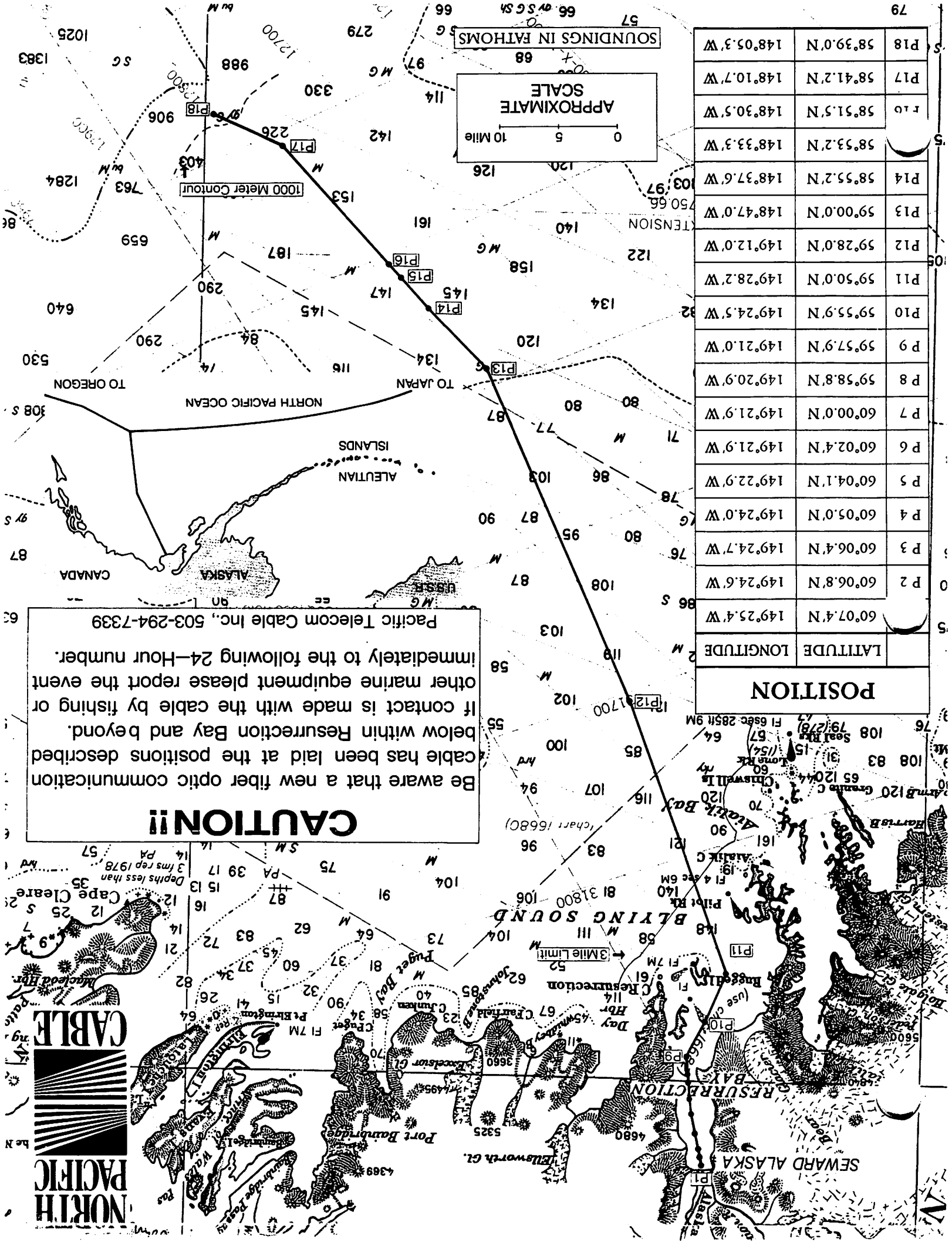
WHEREAS There is increasing public inquiry and concern as to the intent of the managing agencies with respect to the bycatch of salmon in the various fisheries under their jurisdictions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Alaska Board of Fisheries, the Washington Department of Fisheries, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife jointly declare that it is their desire to minimize, to the extent feasible, the incidental take of salmon as bycatch in the fisheries under their respective jurisdictions in order to protect the biological health and reproductive capacity of the salmon species and the social, economic and cultural benefits derived from the harvest of salmon stocks within the three states; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Alaska Board of Fisheries, the Washington Department of Fisheries, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife agree that in the event salmon bycatch in any of the fisheries under their respective jurisdictions becomes excessive, the responsible body will take appropriate steps to mitigate the excessive bycatch; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Alaska Board of Fisheries, the Washington Department of Fisheries, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife agree to share information and otherwise work in furtherance of the goals of this Resolution.

****This resolution was approved by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council at their April 1991 meeting and will be forwarded to the Washington Department of Fisheries, the Oregon Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Alaska Board of Fisheries for formal signature.**



SOUNDINGS IN FATHOMS

| POSITION | |
|----------|------------------------|
| LATITUDE | LONGITUDE |
| P18 | 58°39.0' N 148°05.3' W |
| P17 | 58°41.2' N 148°10.7' W |
| P16 | 58°51.5' N 148°30.5' W |
| P15 | 58°53.2' N 148°33.3' W |
| P14 | 58°55.2' N 148°37.6' W |
| P13 | 59°00.0' N 148°47.0' W |
| P12 | 59°28.0' N 149°12.0' W |
| P11 | 59°50.0' N 149°28.2' W |
| P10 | 59°55.9' N 149°24.5' W |
| P9 | 59°57.9' N 149°21.0' W |
| P8 | 59°58.8' N 149°20.9' W |
| P7 | 60°00.0' N 149°21.9' W |
| P6 | 60°02.4' N 149°21.9' W |
| P5 | 60°04.1' N 149°22.9' W |
| P4 | 60°05.0' N 149°24.0' W |
| P3 | 60°06.4' N 149°24.7' W |
| P2 | 60°06.8' N 149°24.6' W |
| P1 | 60°07.4' N 149°25.4' W |

CAUTION!!

Be aware that a new fiber optic communication cable has been laid at the positions described below within Resurrection Bay and beyond. If contact is made with the cable by fishing or other marine equipment please report the event immediately to the following 24-Hour number. Pacific Telecom Cable Inc., 503-294-7339

