

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

News and Notes



Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
Clarence G. Pautzke, Executive Director

605 West 4th Avenue, Ste 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252
Phone (907) 271-2809
Fax (907) 271-2817

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Lauber and Mace to Lead Council into Year 2000



Rick Lauber



Bob Mace

During a Council teleconference in August, **Rick Lauber** was re-elected to serve as Chairman of the Council for the upcoming year, and **Bob Mace** elected Vice Chair. Mr. Lauber, recently retired from the Pacific Seafood Processors Association, was appointed to the Council in early 1990 and has served as chairman since March 1991. Mr. Mace has served on the Council as the official designee for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife since the second meeting of the Council back in 1976. This is Mr. Mace's first term as Vice Chairman.

Council Appointments

Secretary of Commerce William Daley announced in late June the reappointment of **Robin Samuelsen** and the appointment of **John Bundy** to the Council. This is the third three-year term for Mr. Samuelsen who was first appointed in August of 1993. Samuelsen serves on the joint Council/Alaska Board of Fisheries Consultation Committee and chairs the Council's Halibut Subsistence Committee, and is active in fisheries activities in his hometown of Dillingham. Mr. Bundy, beginning his first three-year Council term, is President of Glacier Fish Company in Seattle, Washington. Mr. Bundy has also served as president of the Pacific Whiting and Pollock Conservation Cooperatives, and as Vice President of the At-Sea Processors Association.

Nominations Due for Three Panels

One year terms of the Council's **Advisory Panel (AP)** and **Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)** members expire in December. The SSC advises the Council on scientific and other technical matters relating to Council functions and the AP is composed of representatives of the major segments of the fishing industry and other interested parties, including sport fishing and environmental concerns. Members of these panels are expected to attend up to five meetings, three to five days in length, per year.

The **Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC)** was formed in 1989 to provide the Bering Sea crab industry from the Pacific Northwest access to the Alaska regulatory process. Appointments to this committee are for two years. The committee typically meets a few times a year to review proposed changes in crab fishery regulations and meets at least once a year with representatives of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on current crab issues.

Resumes of persons who wish to be considered for any of these panels, along with a letter of interest or nomination should be sent to the NPFMC, 605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK, 99501. The deadline for resumes and nominations is 5:00 p.m. AK Time, on Friday, November 19, 1999. Appointments will be announced at the end of the Council's December meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, and will become effective in January 2000. For more information, contact the Council office.

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American Fisheries Act (AFA)

Several AFA issues were considered by the Council at this meeting including requirements for the 1999 cooperative performance reports, proposed rulemaking issues, crab processor sideboards, groundfish processor sideboards and excessive share caps, and inshore pollock cooperative structure. A general discussion of those actions is provided here followed by the Council's approved motion (Attach. #1).

The Council requested that the cooperatives provide a preliminary report of their activities through November 1, by December 1, and provided additional direction on what should be contained in that report. A final report covering the entire year will be due by January 30. Initiation of a regulatory package which would allow disclosure of catch and bycatch information for all GOA and BSAI groundfish on a vessel-by-vessel basis was also requested.

NMFS was requested to delay implementation of the groundfish sideboard exemption in the GOA for AFA catcher vessels that harvested less than 1,700 mt of BSAI pollock, on average, from 1995-97. The delay was requested so the Council would have time to review other options outlined in a discussion paper that will be presented at the December meeting. At that time the Council will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule by expressing their desire to select a new alternative for implementation or keeping the exemption as it was passed in June.

Crab processing sideboard provisions were further refined at this meeting. NMFS has been developing crab processor sideboards as outlined in the AFA. Actions by the Council (Attach. #1) further define or supplement the alternatives provided in the Act.

Groundfish processing sideboards for AFA processors and excessive processing share caps for BSAI pollock were combined for review in February. The alternatives for pollock processing share caps include 10, 20, and 30 percent, however, the Council will have the option to select any point within the 10-30 percent range. A suite of sub-options was also included in the motion. This analysis is scheduled for initial review at the February 2000 Council meeting, with final action at the April meeting. The analysis will bring back all available information on groundfish processing sideboards, and supplement that with analysis of share caps for BSAI pollock processing.

An EA/RIR/IRFA will be developed on inshore cooperative structure using a revised version of the discussion paper from the University of Washington, including alternatives and issues outlined by the Council at this meeting. The new analysis will be made available by the middle of January. The Council will then review that paper and have the ability to make a final decision on inshore cooperative structure at the February 2000 Council meeting.

Staff contacts are Chris Oliver or Darrell Brannan.

BSAI Pacific Cod Fixed Gear Allocation

The Council adopted a preferred alternative to allocate Pacific cod among the fixed gear sectors operating in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. The allocation percentages passed by the Council are listed below:

- 80% freezer longliners
- 0.3% catcher longliners
- 1.4% pot or longline vessels under 60'
- 18.3% pot vessels

Harvests by pot and/or longline catcher vessels less than 60' LOA would only accrue against the 1.4% allocation after all pot or longline catcher vessels harvest the 18.3% and 0.3% set asides, respectively. The following also apply:

1. Any unharvested portion of the catcher vessel longline and the under 60' pot and longline vessel quota that is projected to remain unused shall be rolled over to the freezer longliner fleet in September.
2. Any jig or trawl rollovers will be apportioned among the freezer longline and pot sectors according to the actual harvest of rollovers from 1996-98.
3. Bycatch of Pacific cod in other fixed gear fisheries would be subtracted from the overall fixed gear allocation before allocations for the directed fisheries are set.
4. This allocation will sunset on December 31, 2003.

In addition, the Council requested NMFS to implement the above amendments by emergency rule as early in 2000 as possible.

Two additional analyses related to this issue were requested by the Council:

1. Initiate a plan amendment to allocate halibut bycatch among the longline components of the fixed gear sector. This subdivision, as envisioned, would ensure that halibut bycatch in the freezer longline sector would not close the directed cod fishery for longline catcher vessel and vice versa.
2. Initiate an analysis to determine the Pacific cod bycatch needs in the BSAI trawl and fixed gear fisheries. This analysis will help determine the impacts that bycatch accounting will have on the directed cod fishery allocations among the various sectors of industry.

Staff contacts are Darrell Brannan or Chuck Hamel.

Crab Buyback Program and Cooperative Development

The Council did not specifically address the industry proposed crab license buyback program at this meeting, though they did discuss the current status of crab fisheries and possible programs to mitigate the expected economic hardships facing that industry. It appears that further progress on a crab license buyback program is on hold for now, while the industry works to develop alternative measures, including development of a fishery cooperative. The Council received testimony and a written summary of recent industry meetings on this issue, and encouraged the industry to continue their work in this area with Council members Dave Fluharty and Kevin O'Leary volunteering to act as facilitators in this effort. At some point this effort could come back to the Council to develop regulations to implement such a program. As a backdrop for development of such a program (and to discourage speculative fishing activity), the Council reaffirmed its earlier policy statement that catch history in the crab fisheries beyond December 31, 1998 may not count in future rationalization programs, including a fishery cooperative system.

Further development of the cooperative concept will likely occur in the near future, depending on how fast the industry organizes to discuss the issue. Details on meeting dates and locations are not yet available. However, the Council office anticipates being kept apprised of developments and will serve as an interim contact point, at least until a more formal industry initiative is organized. Input on this issue can be forwarded to our offices, and hopefully we will have information soon regarding upcoming industry meetings. Council contacts are Chris Oliver or David Witherell.

Initial 2000 BSAI and GOA Groundfish Specifications and SAFE Reports

The Council has recommended rolling over all 1999 final groundfish specifications as initial specifications for 2000. These include overfishing levels, allowable biological catches, total allowable catches, prohibited species catches, and halibut discard mortality rates. Initial ABCs and TACs are listed in Tables 1 and 2 (attached). Twenty-five percent of the initial specifications will go forward as interim specifications for management of the 2000 groundfish fisheries until superseded by publication of final specifications. Assessments for all groundfish stocks will be finalized by the Groundfish Plan Teams in November.

Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

Habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) are those areas of special importance that may require additional protection from adverse effects. HAPC is defined on the basis of its ecological importance, sensitivity, exposure, and rarity of the habitat. Several habitat types have been already identified as HAPC as part of the essential fish habitat amendments. Additional research is required to determine where these habitat types are located. These HAPC's included:

1. Areas with living substrates in shallow waters (e.g., eelgrass, kelp, mussel beds, etc.)
2. Areas with living substrates in deep waters (e.g., sponges, coral, anemones, etc.)
3. Freshwater areas used by anadromous fish (e.g., migration, spawning, and rearing areas)

In October 1998, the Council approved for analysis several proposals regarding habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC). These proposals requested that a gap analysis be prepared, and additional habitat types and areas be designated as HAPC. Proposed HAPC habitat types included seamounts and pinnacles, the ice edge, the shelf break, and biologically-consolidated fine-grained sediments. Proposed specific HAPC areas included a deep basin in Prince William Sound, the Chirikov Basin north of St. Lawrence Island, and the red king crab bycatch areas around Kodiak Island. The HAPC technical team has completed a preliminary analysis of HAPC types and alternatives to minimize potential impacts. The Ecosystem Committee and the Scientific and Statistical Committee reviewed the preliminary analysis, and have recommended several changes, including additional options to be analyzed. Initial review of this amendment package has been tentatively scheduled for February and final action in April 2000. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

The Council will recommend final specifications at its December meeting based on analysis and recommendations provided by the BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams, as well as SSC, AP, and public comments.

The Council also recommended preliminary bycatch allowances for Pacific halibut, herring, red king crab, snow crab, and Tanner crab for 2000 that are identical to those for 1999, except that seasonal apportionments will not be made in the BSAI or GOA (except for GOA rockfish). These allowances will only be in place until the final recommendations of the Council in December are adopted by the Secretary of Commerce. Staff contact is David Witherell for the BSAI and Jane DiCosimo for the GOA.

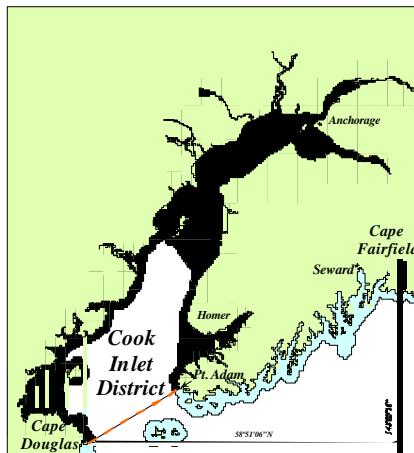
Groundfish Amendments

The Council approved two analyses for public review. GOA Plan Amendment 60 proposes to **prohibit non-pelagic trawling in federal waters of Cook Inlet** to protect and promote rebuilding of king and Tanner crab resources. This measure would match action taken by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in state waters of Cook Inlet. The analysis examines four management alternatives:

- Alternative 1: No action.
- Alternative 2: Prohibit the use of non-pelagic trawl in federal waters of Cook Inlet.
- Alternative 3: Defer management of groundfish in federal waters of Cook Inlet to the State of Alaska.
- Alternative 4: Remove waters of Cook Inlet from the Gulf of Alaska FMP.

Based on recommendations from the Advisory Panel, the Council added three alternatives listed below. Staff will add these alternatives in the public review draft analysis that will be available March 1. Final action is scheduled for April 2000. If approved by the Secretary, implementation would not occur prior to January 1, 2001.

- Alternative 5: Require observer coverage when operating within the proposed closure area.
- Alternative 6: Establish time and area closures.
- Alternative 7: Place federal waters of Cook Inlet under a Commissioner's Permit.



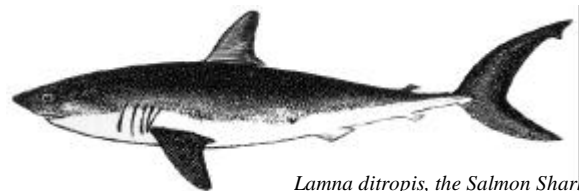
Federal waters of Cook Inlet

A second analysis to **revise management of sharks and skates** (BSAI and GOA FMP Amendments 63/63) was also approved for public review. This action was also proposed by the Alaska Board of Fisheries to match its February 1998 action to close the directed commercial fishery for sharks and establish a Commissioner's permit requirement to commercially fish skates and rays in state waters of Alaska.

The Board also placed an annual statewide harvest limit on the sport take of sharks.

The management alternatives are listed below. The Council clarified that action under Alternative 2 would match state regulations with two additional options: 1) a ban on shark finning; and 2) allow the retention of skates (in addition to sharks) as bycatch. The AP and Council did not address a recommendation in the analysis to require the mandatory release of live sharks and skates. Final action is scheduled for April 2000 to allow staff to revise the analysis to incorporate stock assessment and Plan Team findings from its November 1999 meeting. Staff contact for these two analyses is Jane DiCosimo.

- Alternative 1: No action.
- Alternative 2: Separate sharks and skates from the "other species" category and enact specific federal regulations.
- Alternative 3: Separate sharks and skates from the "other species" category and defer management to the State of Alaska.
- Alternative 4: Delete sharks and skates from the BSAI and GOA groundfish FMPs.



Lamna ditropis, the Salmon Shark

December Meeting Set for Anchorage

The Council will meet next at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, beginning on Wednesday, December 8. The Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee will begin on Monday, December 6. A draft agenda should be available by mid-November.

Plan Teams to Meet in November

The Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan teams will meet at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle the week of November 15, beginning at 1:00 p.m. on that day. The teams will finalize the groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation reports for the year 2000. For more information, contact David Witherell or Jane DiCosimo at the Council office.

Programmatic SEIS

NMFS staff reported to the Council that they have begun work on a programmatic supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the BSAI and GOA Groundfish Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). This document is intended to serve as the central environmental document for both FMPs. This goal will be achieved by: (1) updating the original EISs by providing a historical review of how the groundfish fisheries and the environment have changed since publication of the original EISs; (2) describe how new scientific and fishery information is being utilized; (3) determine whether the principles of ecosystem management are being followed; (4) describe the cumulative effects of past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future groundfish fisheries management upon the marine ecosystem and the environment; and (5) review current and alternative management measures (individually and in combination) to assess their utility for addressing current and foreseeable environmental issues.

The purpose of this programmatic SEIS is to prepare a reference document that accurately describes the current management regime in Alaska and our current knowledge about the physical, biological, and human environment. Future proposal-specific NEPA documents will be able to incorporate by reference, or tier off, this SEIS, thereby concentrating the public's attention on the issues specific to the action being evaluated at that time. It is reasonable to expect that this programmatic SEIS will again require periodic updates as new information and/or significant changes occur to the environment.

The environmental consequences section of the SEIS will be structured around issues that have shaped Alaska groundfish fisheries and those that are currently facing management of groundfish resources in the BSAI and GOA. The SEIS will evaluate the impacts of current groundfish harvest as defined by regulations at Sec.679 (status quo) and the potential environmental impacts of a range of representative alternative management regulations on Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea issues. The list of issues may include: the harvest of directed and non-directed species; prohibited species catch; allocation of resources; marine mammals, seabirds, and habitat; ecosystem management; and the cumulative effects of fisheries. These issues, as refined through scoping, will be used to focus the analysis on the specific FMP management measures to be studied in the SEIS.

Pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), consultations for listed species and critical habitat affected by these fisheries have been or will be initiated and will be prepared in parallel with development of the programmatic SEIS. These consultations will be

conducted in accordance with the ESA and implementing regulations, 50 CFR 402 *et seq.*, and will analyze the individual and cumulative impacts of activities relating to the groundfish fisheries authorized and managed under the FMPs, and amendments thereto, to determine whether the cumulative impacts of the groundfish fisheries are likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species, including Steller sea lions, or adversely modify critical habitat. Results from these consultations will be incorporated into the SEIS to the maximum extent practicable. The schedule for completion of consultation will correspond generally to the schedule for the issuance of the programmatic SEIS as the information, evaluations, and conclusions that are required for both documents will be similar in many respects.

Scoping for the programmatic SEIS began with publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on October 1, 1999 and public comments are due to NMFS by November 15, 1999. The public is specifically being requested to provide comments on what issues should be addressed in the SEIS and what reasonable alternatives should be analyzed. The Council requested that NMFS consider extending the scoping period to provide the public with more time to develop comments on what issues should be addressed in the analysis and what alternatives to status quo management should be considered. A series of public meetings have been scheduled for the purposes of scoping the SEIS at the following dates, locations, and times:

1. Juneau--November 8, 1999, 1-3 p.m., Juneau Federal Building, Room 445, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK.
2. Anchorage--November 9, 1999, 1-3 p.m., Anchorage Federal Building, Room 135, 222 West Seventh Avenue, Anchorage, AK.
3. Kodiak--November 10, 1999, 1-3 p.m., Kodiak Inn, 236 West Rezanof Drive, Kodiak, AK.
4. Seattle--November 12, 1-3 p.m., Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Building 4, Room 2039, Seattle, WA.

Written comments and requests to be included on a mailing list of persons interested in the programmatic SEIS should be sent to Lori Gravel, Sustainable Fisheries Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802. Comments may also be hand-delivered to Room 457-1 Federal Office Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. For further information contact: Steve Davis, NMFS, (907) 271-3523. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

Tanner Crab Rebuilding Plan Adopted

The Bering Sea Tanner crab (*C. bairdi*) was declared "overfished" on March 3, 1999, because survey data indicated that spawning biomass was below the minimum stock size threshold established for this stock. In October, the Council adopted a rebuilding plan for this stock. The plan consists of a conservative and precautionary harvest strategy, reduced crab bycatch in crab fisheries through the Board of Fisheries, increased habitat protection through consultations, and allowances for future actions to be taken to stay within the projected rebuilding time period. The stock is projected to rebuild to the Bmsy level within 10 years under the rebuilding plan, although early indications from recent surveys suggest a shorter rebuilding period. The crab plan team will monitor the progress of stock rebuilding, and report changes in abundance in the annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report. In addition to status reports, future SAFEs will provide information on bycatch, handling mortality, ghost fishing, bycatch hotspot areas, and any new habitat information. If *bairdi* rebuilding milestones are not met, the crab plan team may propose more restrictive management measures. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

Observer Program

The Council discussed general observer program issues and specifically discussed the issues of new observer qualification requirements for AFA and MSCDQ programs, including the current shortage of some qualified observers. The Council voted to reconstitute its Observer Advisory Committee to begin examining a broad range of observer program issues. **Letters of nomination should be sent to the Council office by Friday, November 12.** Chairman Lauber will appoint Committee members shortly thereafter. Council staff contact is Chris Oliver.

2000 Community Development Quota Allocations

The Council has approved the State of Alaska recommendations for 2000 pollock and associated bycatch Community Development Quota allocations. They are the same allocations as are in place for 1999 and are attached in the table below. Consultation with the Council is required before the State may submit the CDQ recommendations to NMFS for approval by the Secretary. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

CDQ Groups	Pollock	Arrowtooth	Other Species	PSQ Chinook Salmon	PSQ Other Salmon
APICDA	16%	18%	19%	16%	16%
BBEDC	21%	21%	22%	21%	21%
CBSFA	5%	9%	9%	5%	5%
CVRF	22%	16%	14%	22%	22%
NSEDC	22%	16%	15%	22%	22%
YDFDA	14%	20%	21%	14%	14%

Four New Faces on Council Staff

The Council office is bursting at the seams with the addition of three new staff members. In addition, the vacancy left by Linda Roberts was filled in early September. All four attended the recent meeting in Seattle to become better acquainted with the issues and people involved. Welcome to our newest Council family members:

Maria Shawback has replaced Linda Roberts as our new Secretary and graphics specialist. Among other duties, Maria will maintain the Council website and provide staff support for the Advisory Panel. Maria's previous position was as Municipal Clerk for the Lake and Peninsula Borough in King Salmon. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Utah State University.

Cathy Coon is our new essential fish habitat specialist on staff. She has been recognized with a Presidential Management Internship and will be our GIS expert, detailing everything we know about fish habitat in the Bering Sea, Aleutians and Gulf of Alaska. She just finished her masters in fisheries at University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Elaine Dinneford is our new data resources person to help us develop our analytical data bases that will ease the way toward more rapid economic analyses. Previously, Elaine worked at the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

Nicole Kimball is our new fisheries analyst. She previously worked at the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and holds a Masters Degree in Environmental Policy from Tufts University.

Steller Sea Lions

In June 1999, the Council reviewed and adopted a series of measures intended to provide protection for Steller sea lions for the remainder of 1999 and for 2000 and beyond. As with previous actions taken by the Council, these measures respond to the Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs) stemming from the Biological Opinion issued by NMFS in 1998.

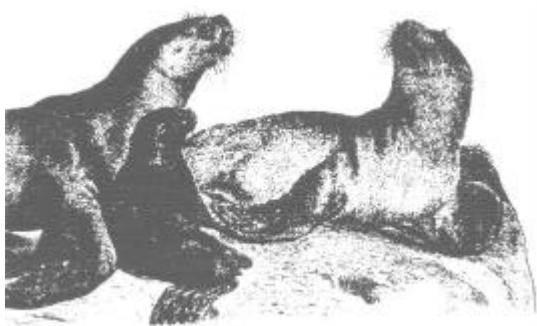
On July 9, U.S. District Court Judge Thomas S. Zilly issued a ruling supporting the NMFS determination of jeopardy for the pollock fishery, and no jeopardy for the Atka mackerel fishery. The Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs) were found to be arbitrary and capricious because they were not justified under the prevailing legal standards and the record did not show that they were reasonably likely to avoid jeopardy. On July 19, the plaintiffs filed a proposed order of remand calling for intensive analysis and implementation of management measures to ensure that pollock fisheries avoid jeopardizing Stellers and any adverse modification of critical habitat, and requiring NMFS to show how the measures temporally and spatially disperse the fisheries and protect rookeries and haulouts.

On August 6, Judge Zilly remanded the December 1998 Biological Opinion back to NMFS, directing them to explain how the revised RPAs will avoid the likelihood of jeopardy or adverse modification of critical habitat. On October 15, NMFS filed a revised Biological Opinion that contained several revised RPAs from those previously adopted by the Council. NMFS made two major changes to the RPAs. First, several modifications were made to the rookery and haulout no trawl zones in the GOA. Second, to more temporally disperse pollock fisheries in the Bering Sea, seasons and TAC apportionments were changed. These changes are captured in the tables below.

Comparison of Original and Revised RPA's for protection of GOA rookeries and haulouts.	
<u>Original</u>	<u>Revised</u>
44 closed areas	same
Pt. Elrington & The Needles closed May 1 to Jan. 20	work with State of Alaska
Rugged Island closed May 1 to Jan. 20	closed Nov. 1 to June 1
Cape Barnabas, Gull Point open	open as part of fishery experiment only
Point Ikolik open	closed Nov. 1 to June 1
Spitz and Mitrofanina Is. Open Jan 20-April 30, Sept 1-Nov 1; 60' limit	Spitz open Jan 20-June 1 Mitrofanina closed
Sea Lion Rocks closed to vessels > 60'	same

Revised RPA's for temporal dispersion of the BSAI pollock fishery.			
Seasons			
Dates	Jan 20 Apr. 1 Jun 10 Aug 20 Nov 1		
TAC	maximum 40% A+B 60% in C+D		
Outside CHCVOA	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> maximum of 40% of annual TAC, minus catch taken Inside CHCVOA </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> 60% of the annual TAC, minus catch taken inside the CHCVOA </td> </tr> </table>	maximum of 40% of annual TAC, minus catch taken Inside CHCVOA	60% of the annual TAC, minus catch taken inside the CHCVOA
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maximum of 20% of annual TAC for A+B combined, and 15% for A+B singly.	maximum of 4.5% of annual TAC in C season and 7.5% of annual TAC in D season.		

A proposed rule to implement the revised RPAs is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register by mid-November. The Council will comment on the proposed rule at its December meeting. Council staff contact is Dave Witherell.



Staff Tasking of New Management Proposals

Due to the press of various analyses already being developed, and the processing of amendments already approved by the Council, no new proposals from this year's amendment cycle were approved for study at this meeting. Rather, the Council will schedule a discussion of staff tasking for the February 2000 meeting where they will review proposals received to date, as well as a report from the IFQ Implementation Committee on recommendations for IFQ proposals that will be postponed from the December Council meeting.

Other Rebuilding Plans Being Developed

The 1999 NMFS Bering Sea survey indicated that the snow crab stock and the St. Matthew blue king crab stocks were below minimum stock size thresholds (MSST). Abundance of snow crab (*C. opilio*) declined sharply this year, resulting in a spawning biomass value (283.3 million pounds) that falls below the MSST (460.8 million pounds) and hence precipitated a severe curtailment of the fishery in the 2000 season. The St. Matthew Island blue king crab stock also declined sharply and the current estimate of spawning biomass (4.8 million pounds) is considerably below the MSST (11.0 million pounds); consequently no fishery will be allowed in 1999.

On September 24, 1999, NMFS informed the Council that these stocks were declared overfished pursuant to the Magnuson Act guidelines, which require rebuilding plans to be developed for these crab stocks within one year. To meet this time frame, analysis of rebuilding plan alternatives will need to be ready for initial review in April, 2000, with final action at the June Council meeting. Harvest strategy, bycatch controls, and habitat protection would be examined as possible components of the rebuilding plans. The analysis will examine existing habitat information to identify discrete areas important to mating, pre-mating/molting adults, and juvenile *opilio* crabs. Methodology developed for the spatial analysis may serve as a template for analysis of other crab species in the future. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

Halibut Subsistence and Personal Use Regulations

The Council scheduled a review of the alternatives in the 1997 analysis for a regulatory amendment to define the legal harvest of halibut for food fishing in the BSAI and GOA for the December 1999 meeting. Initial review and final action on those revised alternatives is scheduled for April and June 2000 respectively. An option under the original alternatives to revise the minimum size regulations to allow the retention of halibut under 32 inches caught with authorized commercial halibut gear in Area 4E for subsistence use was approved in June 1997 and implemented in 1998. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Halibut Charterboat Guideline Harvest Level

The Council's Scientific and Statistical committee reviewed and approved a Council staff discussion paper of the analytical design of the halibut GHL/moratorium EA/RIR. As part of staff discussions with the SSC, a proposed restructuring of the GHL alternatives also was reviewed. The analysis is scheduled for initial review and final action in December 1999 and February 2000, respectively. The restructured alternatives, if approved by the Council in December, will not add or delete any feature of the alternatives approved by the Council in April 1999 but will be designed to facilitate preparation of the analysis and final decision making. The October 1999 discussion paper is available on the Council's website. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Council/Board Protocol Revised

The Council reviewed and approved an addendum to its joint protocol with the Alaska Board of Fisheries. The addendum was developed by a joint committee of the Board and Council. It expands the purview of the State/Federal Policy Group and describes a process for categorizing crab proposals and addressing important, off-cycle issues. The joint committee also identified inter-jurisdictional issues that potentially could concern both bodies. The addendum and list of issues have been forwarded to the Board for their approval. Copies are available at the Council office. Staff contact is Clarence Pautzke.

Table 1. Council recommended total allowable catch specifications (mt) for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area for 2000.

Species	2000 Specifications			
	Area	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	Bering Sea (BS)	1,720,000	992,000	992,000
	Aleutian Is. (AI)	31,700	23,800	2,000
	Bogoslof District	21,000	15,300	1,000
Pacific cod	BSAI	264,000	177,000	177,000
Sablefish	BS	2,090	1,340	1,340
	AI	2,890	1,860	1,380
Atka mackerel	Total	148,000	73,300	66,400
	Western AI	.....	30,700	27,000
	Central AI	.....	25,600	22,400
	Eastern AI/BS	.....	17,000	17,000
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	308,000	212,000	207,980
Rock sole	BSAI	444,000	309,000	120,000
Greenland turbot	Total	29,700	14,200	9,000
	BS	.....	9,515	6,030
	AI	.....	4,685	2,970
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	219,000	140,000	134,354
Flathead sole	BSAI	118,000	77,300	77,300
Other flatfish	BSAI	248,000	154,000	154,000
Pacific ocean perch	BS	3,600	1,900	1,400
	AI Total	19,100	13,500	13,500
	Western AI	.....	6,220	6,220
	Central AI	.....	3,850	3,850
	Eastern AI	.....	3,430	3,430
Other red rockfish	BS	356	267	267
Sharpchin/Nrthm.	AI	5,640	4,230	4,230
Shortkr./roughey	AI	1,290	965	965
Other rockfish	BS	492	369	369
	AI	913	685	685
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	1,970
Other species	BSAI	129,000	32,860	32,860
TOTAL		3,719,391	2,247,846	2,000,000

Table 2. Council recommended total allowable catch specifications (mt) for the Gulf of Alaska management area for 2000

Species	2000 Specifications				
	Area	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch
Pollock	W (61)		23,120	23,120	16,736
	C (62)	134,100	38,840	38,840	22,005
	C (63)		30,520	30,520	18,747
	W. Yakutat	12,300	8,440	2,110	1,759
	E. Yak./SEO			6,330	3
	Total	146,400	100,920	100,920	59,250
Pacific Cod	W		29,540	23,630	22,907
	C		53,170	42,935	37,131
	E		1,690	1,270	815
	Total	134,000	84,400	67,835	60,853
Flatfish, Deep Water	W		240	240	20
	C		2,740	2,740	1,811
	W. Yakutat		1,720	1,720	378
	E. Yak./SEO		1,350	1,350	6
	Total	8,070	6,050	6,050	2,215

Table 2. Council recommended total allowable catch specifications (mt) for the Gulf of Alaska management area for 2000 (Continued)

Rex Sole	W		1,190	1,190	496
	C		5,490	5,490	2,241
	W. Yakutat		850	850	41
	E. Yak./SEO		1,620	1,620	22
	Total	11,920	9,150	9,150	2,800
Flatfish, Shallow Water	W		22,570	4,500	245
	C		19,260	12,950	1,065
	W. Yakutat		250	250	7
	E. Yak./SEO		1,070	1,070	4
	Total	59,540	43,150	18,770	1,321
Flathead Sole	W		8,440	2,000	145
	C		15,630	5,000	564
	W. Yakutat		1,270	1,270	14
	E. Yak./SEO		770	770	11
	Total	34,010	26,110	9,040	734
Arrowtooth	W		34,400	5,000	2,674
	C		155,930	25,000	9,515
	W. Yakutat		13,260	2,500	363
	E. Yak./SEO		13,520	2,500	171
	Total	308,880	217,110	35,000	12,723
Sablefish ²	W		1,820	1,820	1,335
	C		5,590	5,590	5,087
	W. Yakutat		5,290	2,090	1,411
	E. Yak./SEO		-	3,200	2,312
	Total	19,720	12,700	12,700	10,145
Rockfish, Other Slope	W		20	20	38
	C		650	650	639
	W. Yakutat		470	470	118
	E. Yak./SEO		4,130	4,130	7
	Total	7,560	5,270	5,270	802
Rockfish, Northern	W		840	840	556
	C		4,150	4,150	4,762
	E		-	-	-
	Total	9,420	4,990	4,990	5,318
	Pacific Ocean Perch	W	2,610	1,850	1,850	1,917
C		9,520	6,760	6,760	8,002
W. Yakutat		6,360	1,350	820	626
E. Yak./SEO			3,160	3,160	-
Total		18,490	13,120	12,590	10,545
Shortraker/Rougheye	W		160	160	169
	C		970	970	569
	E		460	460	430
	Total	2,740	1,590	1,590	1,168
	Rockfish, Pelagic Shelf	W		530	530	129
C			3,370	3,370	3,896
W. Yakutat			740	740	647
E. Yak./SEO			240	240	20
Total		8,190	4,880	4,880	4,692
Rockfish, Demersal Shelf	SEO	950	560	560	243
Atka Mackerel	Gulfwide	6,200	600	600	260
Thornyhead	W		260	260	258
	C		700	700	567
	E		1,030	1,030	262
	Total	2,800	1,990	1,990	1,087
	Other Species	Gulfwide		NA	14,600	3,147
GULF OF ALASKA	TOTAL	778,890	532,590	306,535	177,303