



# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## Meeting Summary

251st Plenary Session  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and October 12 -14, 2020  
Webconference – Adobe Connect

## CONTENTS

A1	Call Meeting to Order/Oath of Office/Election of Officers.....	3
B	Reports.....	4
C1	BSAI Crab 4 Stocks – Final Specs, SAFE Report, Crab PT Report .....	4
C2	BSAI and GOA Groundfish Harvest – Proposed Specs, PT Reports.....	5
C3	Squid and Sculpin Processing.....	6
C4	Cook Inlet Salmon FMP Amendment.....	6
C6	BSAI Halibut ABM.....	7
C5	Observer 2021 ADP Review, PCFMAC Report, Trawl EM Report .....	11
D1	Survey Planning.....	12
D2	Seafood Production Executive Order.....	13
E1	Staff Tasking.....	15

### Attachments

- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1) C2 GOA Specs Motion  | 3) Time Log   |
| 2) C2 BSAI Specs Motion | 4) Newsletter |

The time log is included as a reference attachment for names, dates and times of each agenda item, and the newsletter is included to provide details of the agenda items and the meeting as a whole.

**All documents and information related to the meeting are accessible online at:**

<https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/1565>

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met October 2<sup>nd</sup>, October 9<sup>th</sup>, and on October 12 through October 14, 2020 . The following Council members, Council staff, SSC, and AP members attended the meetings.

### Council Members

Jim Balsiger/Anne Marie Eich/Alicia Miller  
*National Marine Fisheries Service*

Nicole Kimball  
*Appointed*

Rachel Baker/Karla Bush (for Doug Vincent-Lang)  
*Alaska Department Fish and Game*

Simon Kinneen, **Chair**  
*Appointed*

Cora Campbell  
*Appointed*

Staci MacCorkle  
*US Dept of State*

Craig Cross  
*Appointed*

Steve Marx (for Curt Melcher)  
*Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife*

Kenny Down  
*Appointed*

Andy Mezirow  
*Appointed*

Stewart Cogswell (for Greg Siekaniec)  
*US Fish & Wildlife Service*

Bill Tweit (for Kelly Susewind), **Vice Chair**  
*Washington Department Fish & Wildlife*

Dave Hanson  
*Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission*

RADM Matthew Bell Jr/CAPT Brennell  
*United States Coast Guard*

John Jensen  
*Appointed*

### Council Staff

Armstrong, Jim  
Cleaver, Sara  
Cunningham, Sam  
Davis, Maria  
Evans, Diana (DD)  
Fey, Mike (PSMFC)

Gleason, Shannon  
Haapala, Kate  
Henry, Anna  
La Belle, Sarah  
MacLean, Steve  
Marrinan, Sarah

McCracken, Jon  
Moran, Angela (Sea Grant fellow)  
Schmidt, Nicole  
Stram, Diana  
Witherell, Dave (ED)

## Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from September 28 to October 2, 2020 via adobe connect in a virtual conference. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings:

Anne Hollowed, Co-Chair  
*NOAA Fisheries—AFSC*

Chris Anderson  
*University of Washington*

Mike Downs  
*Wislow Research*

Kate Reedy  
*Idaho State University Pocatello*

Brad Harris  
*Alaska Pacific University*

Tien-Shi (Theresa) Tsou  
*Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife*

Sherri Dressel, Co-Chair  
*Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game*

Amy Bishop  
*Alaska Sea Life Center*

Jason Gasper  
*NOAA Fisheries – Alaska Region*

George Hunt  
*University of Washington*

Franz Mueter  
*University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Matt Reimer  
*University of California, Davis*

Alison Whitman, Vice Chair  
*Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife*

Curry Cunningham  
*University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Dana Hanselman  
*NOAA Fisheries—AFSC*

Gordon Kruse  
*University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Andrew Munro  
*Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game*

Ian Stewart  
*Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission*

## Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel met from October 5-9, 2020, via adobe connect in a virtual conference. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings:

Christiansen, Ruth (Co-Vice Chair)  
Curran, Tori  
Donich, Daniel  
Drobnica, Angel (Chair)  
Gruver, John  
Gudmundsson, Gretar  
Hayden, Natasha

Johnson, Jim  
Kauffman, Jeff  
Johnson, Mellisa  
Kavanaugh, Julie  
Lowenberg, Craig  
Mann, Heather  
O'Connor, Jamie  
O'Donnell, Paddy

Peterson, Joel  
Scoblic, John  
Upton, Matt (Co-Vice Chair)  
Vanderhoeven, Anne  
Velsko, Erik  
Weiss, Ernie  
Wilt, Sinclair

## **A1 Call Meeting to Order/Oath of Office/Election of Officers**

**Dr. Jim Balsiger administered the Oath of Office to Council members Kenny Down and Simon Kinneen.**

**For the upcoming year, Simon Kinneen was re-elected Chair and Bill Tweit was re-elected Vice-chair by unanimous consent.**

The Council approved the agenda without objection.

## B Reports

The following reports were provided in writing and discussed. CAPT Jason Brennell and Staci MacCorkle provided an oral report on Russian military activities in the EEZ. Public testimony was heard.

**B1 Executive Director’s Report** – David Witherell

**B2 NMFS Management Report** – Alicia Miller

**B3 NOAA GC Report** – Molly Watson

**B4 ADFG Report** – Karla Bush

**B5 USCG Report** – CAPT Jason Brennell & Staci MacCorkle

**B6 USFWS Report** – Stewart Cogswell

**B7 SSC Report in full** – Dr. Sherri Dressel (**SSC Co-Chair**)

**B8 AP Report**– Ruth Christiansen and Matt Upton (**AP Co-Vice Chairs**)

### C1 BSAI Crab 4 Stocks – Final Specs, SAFE Report, Crab PT Report

**Council Staff:** Jim Armstrong

**Other Presenters:** Dr. Martin Dorn (Crab Plan Team Co-Chair, AFSC Seattle)

Action Required: 1. Review/approve 2020 BSAI Crab SAFE Report  
2. Review Crab Plan Team Report  
3. Recommend final 2020/21 OFL/ABC specifications for 4 stocks

***Summary:** A team of technical experts met in September to discuss the size and status of four crab stocks in the Bering Sea and to make recommendations on how much crab can be caught. The Council’s SSC will review the recommendations and the Council will set harvest limits based on their recommendations.*

After the staff presentation, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Bush made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

The Council accepts the Crab SAFE report and adopts the OFLs and ABCs recommended by the SSC for Eastern Bering Sea snow crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab, St. Matthew Island blue king crab, and Pribilof Islands blue king crab.

Species/Stock	OFL (kt)	ABC (kt)	Year(s)
Eastern Bering Sea snow crab	95.40	71.55	2020/21
Bristol Bay red king crab	2.14	1.61	2020/21
Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab	21.13	16.90	2020/21
St. Matthew Island blue king crab	0.05	0.04	2020/21
Pribilof Islands blue king crab	0.00116	0.00087	2020/21

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 2, 2020, at 3:45 p.m.

## C2 BSAI and GOA Groundfish Harvest – Proposed Specs, PT Reports

**Council Staff:** Sara Cleaver (GOA), Steve MacLean (BSAI)

**Other Presenters:** Dr. Jim Ianelli (AFSC), Dr. Steve Barbeaux (AFSC)

**Action Required:**

1. Review Joint, BSAI, and GOA Plan Team reports
2. Recommend proposed BSAI and GOA groundfish harvest limits, prohibited species catch limits, and halibut discard mortality rates for 2021-2022

**Summary:** *The Council will review information from teams of technical experts about the status of the ecosystem, available scientific information, and other issues relevant to the upcoming assessment of groundfish stocks. The Council will recommend proposed catch limits for the 2021 BSAI groundfish fisheries, however, final catch limits will not be chosen until December.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

**Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:**

The Council adopts the proposed 2021 and 2022 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC and sets the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1. The TACs for both Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod and pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water GHF fisheries. The proposed GOA Pacific cod adjustments for state water fisheries are shown in attached Table 2. The Council adopts the proposed 2021 and 2022 annual and seasonal Pacific halibut PSC limits and apportionments in the GOA as provided in attached Tables 9, 10, and 11. The Council adopts the updated halibut discard mortality rates for the GOA for 2021 and 2022 as shown in attached Table 12 (motion with tables as attachment 1).

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 9, 2020, at 3:21 p.m.

**Mr. Cross made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council adopts the proposed 2021 and 2022 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish harvest specifications of OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC and sets the TACs as shown in the attached BSAI Table 1, with all proposed OFLs and ABCs consisting of rollovers of final 2021 specifications approved in December 2019, with a change to northern rock sole due to a data file error. The Council adopts the 2021 and 2022 flatfish flexibility ABC reserves as shown in Table 7, attached. The Council adopts the PSC limits as shown in Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11, attached, for halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, opilio crab, and herring and their gear type and target fishery apportionments. The 2021 and 2022 crab PSC limits have been revised using current biomass amounts. The Council adopts the halibut DMRs for 2021 and 2022 as shown in Table 12 (motion with tables as attachment 2).

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 9, 2020, at 3:30 p.m.

### C3 Squid and Sculpin Processing

**Council Staff:** Steve MacLean

**Action Required:**

1. Review revised analysis
2. Approve a preferred alternative for final action

**Summary:** *The Council will review a document that analyzes the effects of allowing the processing and sale of squid and sculpin and make a final recommendation.*

After the staff presentation and public comment, the following actions were taken:

**Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

The Council adopts Alternative 2 as its preferred alternative, which is to maintain the designation of squid and sculpin in both the BSAI and GOA FMPs as non-target ecosystem component species (no directed fisheries), with no restrictions on product form for processing incidental harvest of these species. The limitations on maximum retainable amounts and recordkeeping and reporting requirements are not changed.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 9, 2020, at 4:11 p.m.

**Mr. Tweit made the following deeming motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

The Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c). The Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 9, 2020, at 4:25 p.m.

### C4 Cook Inlet Salmon FMP Amendment

**Council Staff:** Jim Armstrong

**Other Presenters:** Doug Duncan (NMFS AKR)

**Action Required:**

1. Initial Review Draft EA/RIR – review, action as necessary

**Summary:** *The Council will review a document analyzing changes that would affect commercial salmon fisheries in an offshore part of the Cook Inlet. These fisheries were previously managed entirely by the State of Alaska. A final recommendation will be made in December.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council recommends releasing the Initial Review Draft for public review, considering SSC comments as applicable, for final action at the December 2020 Council meeting with the existing purpose and need statement and the following revised alternatives. **Added text is shown in bold and deletions are shown in strikethrough.**

*Alternative 1: No Action. No amendment to the Salmon FMP. This alternative would maintain status quo. Alternative 1 is not a viable alternative given the Ninth Circuit decision, however, NEPA requires that Federal agencies analyze a no action alternative.*

*Alternative 2: Federal management **of the commercial fishery in the EEZ** with specific management measures delegated to the State. Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's fishery management unit in the West Area and establish a Federal management regime for these salmon fisheries that delegates specific management measures to the State of Alaska, to use existing State salmon management infrastructure, in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Ninth Circuit ruling. Alternative 2 would identify the management measures that would be managed by the Council and NMFS, the management measures that would be delegated to the State to manage with Federal oversight, and the process for delegation and oversight of management.*

*Alternative 3: Federal management **of the commercial fishery in the EEZ.** Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's fishery management unit in the West Area and apply Federal management to these portions of the fisheries that occurs in the EEZ.*

*Alternative 4: Federal management **of the commercial fishery in the EEZ with the EEZ closed to commercial fishing.** Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's fishery management unit in the West Area and apply Federal management by extending the existing West Area prohibition on commercial salmon fishing in the EEZ to the Cook Inlet EEZ.*

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 12, 2020, at 10:07 a.m.

## **C6 BSAI Halibut ABM**

**Council Staff:** Dr. Diana Stram, Sam Cunningham, Anna Henry  
**Other Presenters:** Dr. Carey McGilliard, Dr. Jim Ianelli (AFSC)  
 Dr. Mike Downs (Wislow Research Associates)

**Action Required:**

1. Initial Review Draft EIS – review; action as necessary
2. Discussion paper – review; action as necessary

**Summary:** *The Council will review changes to halibut bycatch limits for most trawl catcher/processor vessels fishing for non-pollock species in the BSAI. The bycatch limits under consideration could fluctuate up and down annually with changes in the overall abundance of BSAI halibut. The Council will also review a discussion paper with additional management options to address halibut bycatch in the BSAI.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

**Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:**

The Council revises the purpose and need statement and the alternatives for an initial review analysis as follows:

**Purpose and Need:**

*Halibut is an important resource in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI), supporting commercial halibut fisheries, recreational fisheries, subsistence fisheries, and groundfish fisheries. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is responsible for assessing the Pacific halibut stock and establishing total annual catch limits for directed fisheries and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is responsible for managing prohibited species catch (PSC) in U.S. commercial groundfish fisheries managed by the Council. The Amendment 80 sector is accountable for the majority of the annual halibut PSC mortality in the BSAI groundfish fisheries. While the Amendment 80 fleet has reduced halibut mortality in recent years, continued decline in the halibut stock requires consideration of additional measures for management of halibut PSC in the Amendment 80 fisheries.*

*When BSAI halibut abundance declines, PSC in Amendment 80 fisheries can become a larger proportion of total halibut removals in the BSAI, particularly in Area 4CDE, and can reduce the proportion of halibut available for harvest in directed halibut fisheries. The Council intends to establish an abundance-based halibut PSC management program in the BSAI for the Amendment 80 sector that meets the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, particularly to minimize halibut PSC to the extent practicable under National Standard 9 and to achieve optimum yield in the BSAI groundfish fisheries on a continuing basis under National Standard 1. The Council is considering a program that links the Amendment 80 sector PSC limit to halibut abundance and provides incentives for the fleet to minimize halibut mortality at all times. This action could also promote conservation of the halibut stock and may provide additional opportunities for the directed halibut fishery.*

Alternatives:

**Alternative 1:** No Action

**Alternative 2:** A 3X2 look-up table with PSC limits that range from current PSC limit to 20% below current limit. PSC limit is determined annually based on survey values from the most recent year available.

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,571 mt (10% below current)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,483 mt (15% below current)	1,571 mt (10% below current)
	Low < 8,000	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,483 mt (15% below current)



**Alternative 3:** A 4X2 look-up table with PSC limits that range from 20% above current PSC limit to 30% below current limit. PSC limit is determined annually based on survey values from the most recent year available.

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,745 mt (current limit)	2,007 mt (15% above current)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Low 6,000-7,999	1,309 mt (25% below current)	1,396 mt (20% below current)
	Very Low < 6,000	1,222 mt (30% below current)	1,309 mt (25% below current)

**Alternative 4:** A 4X2 look-up table with PSC limits that range from current PSC limit to 45% below current limit. PSC limit is determined annually based on survey values from the most recent year available.

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,222 mt (30% below current)	1,396 mt (20% below current)
	Low 6,000-7,999	1,047 mt (40% below current)	1,222 mt (30% below current)
	Very Low < 6,000	960 mt (45% below current)	1,047 mt (40% below current)

Options for Alternatives 2, 3 and 4:

**Option 1:** PSC limit is determined using a 3-year rolling average of survey index values instead of the most recent survey value.

**Option 2:** PSC limit varies no more than (suboptions: 10% or 15%) per year.

**Option 3:** Establish an annual limit of (suboptions: 80% or 90%) of the PSC limit generated by the look-up table. In 3 of 7 years, the A80 sector may exceed the annual limit up to the PSC limit generated by the look-up table. If the A80 sector has exceeded the annual limit in 3 of the past 7 years, then (suboptions: 80% or 90%) of the PSC limit generated by the look-up table is a hard cap for that year.

**Ms. Kimball made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

(under Alternative 3, added text is shown in **bold** and deletions are shown in ~~strikethrough~~)

**Alternative 3:** A 4X2 look-up table with PSC limits that range from ~~20%~~ **15%** above current PSC limit to 30% below current limit. PSC limit is determined annually based on survey values from the most recent year available.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed unanimously on October 13, 2020, at 2:15 p.m.

**Ms. Kimball made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

Add new Option 4 for consideration under all action alternatives, but mutually exclusive with Options 2 and 3:

Option 4: PSC unused in one year may roll to the following year to increase the PSC limit generated by the lookup table up to 20%. Any PSC savings in excess of 20% would stay in the water.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed with one objection (Mr. Down voting in opposition) on October 13, 2020, at 2:20 p.m.

**Mr. Tweit made the following amendment which was not seconded:**

(added text to Option 4 is shown in **bold**)

Option 4: (mutually exclusive with Options 2 and 3) PSC unused in one year may roll to the following year to increase the PSC limit generated by the lookup table up to 20% (**suboption % of PSC limit or numbers of fish below the PSC limit**). Any PSC savings in excess of 20% would stay in the water.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment failed due to lack of a second on October 13, 2020, at 2:26 p.m.

**VOTE ON MAIN AMENDED MOTION:** Motion passes unanimously on October 13, 2020, at 2:56 p.m.

## C5 Observer 2021 ADP Review, PCFMAC Report, Trawl EM Report

**Council Staff:** Dr. Kate Haapala, Diana Evans, Anna Henry  
**Other Presenters:** Geoff Mayhew (AFSC/PSMFC)  
 Jennifer Ferdinand (AFSC)

**Action Required:**

1. Review the draft 2021 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP)
2. Review Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC) and Trawl EM Committee Reports
3. Provide recommendations to NMFS for the final 2021 ADP
4. Provide other recommendations based on the PCFMAC and Trawl EM Committee reports, as necessary.

**Summary:** *The Council will review plans and make recommendations to get observers and/or electronic monitoring (camera) systems on fishing boats in 2021. Depending on what type of gear the boats use to fish which species, some need observers or cameras all the time, and some only part of the time. Two of the Council's fishery monitoring advisory committees will provide advice.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

**Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council supports using the three gear-based deployment strata (hook-and-line, pot, and trawl) and allocation scheme of 15% plus optimized allocation based on discarded groundfish, halibut PSC, and Chinook salmon PSC for the 2021 Observer Annual Deployment Plan (ADP). Observer coverage rates resulting from this approach and the final budget are expected in the final 2021 ADP in December. The Council also supports:

- maintaining the current coverage/selection rates for vessels carrying electronic monitoring (30% fixed gear; 100% trawl gear)
- due to COVID-19, continuing to deploy observers from select ports throughout Alaska consistent with the revisions to the 2020 ADP
- the ability for NMFS to release a vessel or trip from observer coverage on a case-by-case basis
- the ability for NMFS to issue waivers to vessels on a case-by-case basis
- the proposed zero selection pool
- the criteria to determine new potential participants in the fixed gear electronic monitoring pool if funding is insufficient to accommodate all new requests

The Council recognizes that COVID-19 has disrupted efforts on several Council priority tasks related to achieving cost efficiencies in the observer program. The Council recommends NMFS develop an abbreviated Annual Report on 2020 deployment and requests an updated timeline for the following analyses related to cost efficiency: 1) integration of electronic monitoring into the determination of baseline observer coverage necessary in fixed gear to meet data gaps, including exploration of existing data sources to provide information on average weights of discards and biological data for stock assessments; 2) re-evaluation of the 'zero selection' pool criteria; and 3) re-evaluation of the bias metrics.

**Ms. Campbell made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

(deletions are shown in ~~strikethrough~~)

- maintaining the current coverage/selection rates for vessels carrying electronic monitoring (30%fixed gear; 100% trawl gear)
- due to COVID-19, continuing to deploy observers from select ports throughout Alaska consistent with the revisions to the 2020 ADP
- the ability for NMFS to release a vessel or trip from observer coverage on a case-by-case basis
- ~~the ability for NMFS to issue waivers to vessels on a case-by-case basis~~
- the proposed zero selection pool
- the criteria to determine new potential participants in the fixed gear electronic monitoring pool if funding is insufficient to accommodate all new requests

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed unanimously on October 14, 2020, at 8:46 a.m.

**VOTE ON MAIN AMENDED MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 14, 2020, at 8:51 a.m.

**Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

The Council expresses its support for extension of the EFP for the development of EM for the pollock trawl fishery in the CGOA, WGOA and BSAI through 2022, and requests NMFS to determine the best approach for accomplishing that. The Council supports the trawl EM Committee recommendations for changes to the EFP for 2021.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 14, 2020, at 9:03 a.m.

## D1 Survey Planning

**Council Staff:** Diana Evans, Dr. Diana Stram

**Other Presenters:** Dr. Robert Foy (AFSC)

**Action Required:**

1. Receive AFSC presentation on 2021 survey planning
2. Review SSC report on longer-term survey planning recommendations
3. Provide feedback to AFSC, as appropriate

**Summary:** *The Council will hear a presentation from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center on their plans for sending out boats to do fish surveys in 2021. The Council will also consider recommendations from their Scientific and Statistical Committee about longer-term survey planning.*

After the staff presentation, no action was taken on this agenda item.

## D2 Seafood Production Executive Order

**Council Staff:** David Witherell

**Action Required:** Develop a prioritized list of recommended actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production within sustainable fisheries.

**Summary:** *The President issued an Executive Order that asked each Regional Fishery Management Council to submit a prioritized list of recommended actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production within sustainable fisheries. The Council will hear testimony and provide recommendations.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

**Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:**

The North Pacific Council provides the following recommendations in response to the Secretary of Commerce's request to identify actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and increase production within sustainable fisheries as required under Section 4 of Executive Order 13921.

### High priority – non-regulatory actions related to domestic production

#### **NOAA groundfish surveys off Alaska and stock assessments**

Prioritize internal NOAA funding to fund full suite of NOAA groundfish surveys in federal waters off Alaska for 2021 and beyond, and resulting stock assessments. This is a core data set for stock assessments, understanding climate effects, and ecosystem management, and should include the Northern Bering Sea as an annual survey for the near-term. Regular stock assessment surveys increase certainty about stock status which is the largest driver in increasing catch limits and therefore domestic production within sustainable fisheries.

#### **NOAA funding for observer coverage and electronic monitoring**

Prioritize internal NOAA funding to supplement the North Pacific Observer Program for observers and electronic monitoring. Actions that increase certainty and data in our management process serve to improve management of domestic seafood production and ability to meet optimum yield objectives in the Magnuson Stevens Act. While the North Pacific fishery participants have been the primary funders of monitoring costs for decades, supplemental funds toward both North Pacific observers and electronic monitoring are needed.

### Council regulatory actions

**Implement and regulate pelagic trawl electronic monitoring** – potential to increase efficiency and reduce cost of monitoring, and improve bycatch accounting on pelagic trawl catcher vessels. Currently operating under an exempted fishing permit until information sufficient to support analysis and rulemaking.

**Squid/sculpin processing restrictions** – allow processing of incidental retained catch of these species to reduce discards and increase seafood value/production.

**BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod LAPP** – catch share program intended to create operational efficiencies, minimize bycatch, improve safety, and maximize value/production of BSAI Pacific cod.

**BSAI pot cod CP action** – may create efficiencies by limiting effort to historically dependent vessels as determined by eligibility criteria.

**Continued evaluation to remove recordkeeping and reporting requirements or regulations that are no longer necessary** - to simplify or reduce the burden of existing requirements.

Non-regulatory actions related to U.S. seafood competitiveness

**Increase marketing funds, promotion of sustainable US seafood, and science-based consumption advice**

Prioritize funding for domestic seafood marketing and promotion programs and engage with other agencies to encourage safe consumption of domestic seafood. This could take the form of NOAA (1) ensuring that any available S-K funding prioritizes fisheries marketing and promotion efforts in soliciting and approving applications; (2) undertaking assertive actions to communicate the sustainability of US fisheries, through its Fish Wise program and other public relations efforts; (3) consider the MAFAC recommendation to launch a National Seafood Council; and (4) urge the USDA/HHS to ensure their seafood consumption advice is based on recent scientific evidence.

**Improve trade policy and foreign market access for domestic seafood**

Dedicate staff and resources in NOAA and across the Administration to facilitate resolution of trade barriers and make exports of domestic seafood more competitive. This could take the form of ensuring that other agencies, including USTR and ITA, prioritize efforts to (a) address how US seafood competes against other seafood-producing nations and (b) secure more favorable trade terms (i.e., removal of tariffs on seafood exports or the assurance of reciprocity in trade relationships).

NOAA policy

**Allocation Reviews: Policy Directive 01-119** Remove policy directive. Allocation reviews can be undertaken at any time a Council deems necessary, and LAPP allocation reviews are already on a mandated schedule under the Magnuson Stevens Act. Effect of removal is to build efficiencies and save staff and Council time by undertaking allocation reviews only when warranted.

**Approval of Council SOPPs: Procedural Directive 01-115-01** Eliminate the requirement for NMFS to formally approve the Council SOPP and publish it in the federal register every time it is amended. Removal of this regulation will save staff and Council administrative time.

**Ms. Campbell made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**  
(Include the following as a third topic under Seafood Competitiveness)

**Allow refinance of fisheries buyback loans**

To increase competitiveness of US fisheries, allow refinance of fisheries buyback loans. Many buyback loans have interest rates substantially above market rates, imposing additional costs and burdens on domestic fishermen.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed unanimously on October 14, 2020, at 11:59 a.m.

**Mr. Tweit made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Down:**  
(Include as an additional recommendation)

Potential future Council regulatory action

**Identify and implement non-regulatory alternatives to MRAs for some fisheries**

The objective is to reduce regulatory discards and increase seafood production by identifying alternatives to MRAs that achieve the same objective of removing incentives to target certain species. Work with industry to identify non-regulatory alternatives that maintain disincentives but reduce discards, and implement viable alternatives through modification of the MRA regulations on a fishery-by-fishery basis, as not all fisheries may be suitable for implementing alternative approaches.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment failed 2/9 (Dr. Eich, Ms. Baker, Ms. Campbell, Mr. Cross, Mr. Down, Mr. Jensen, Ms. Kimball, Mr. Mezirow, and Mr. Kinneen voting in opposition) on October 14, 2020, at 12:20 p.m.

**VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 14, 2020, at 12:25 p.m.

## **E1 Staff Tasking**

**Council Staff:** David Witherell, Diana Evans

**Action Required:**

1. Review Committees and Plan Teams
2. Provide direction on tasking priorities and scheduling

**Summary:** *The Council will listen to public testimony about existing and new management measures that the public may be interested in and will provide feedback to staff and the Council Chair about how to prioritize staff work on existing and new projects. The Council will specifically discuss the agenda for the December Council meeting. The Council will also review its committee membership and identify agendas for any upcoming committee meetings.*

After staff presentations by Executive Director David Witherell, and public comment, the Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects, as well as tasking issues.

The following action was taken:

**Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council recommends prioritization of the following agenda items for the December 2020 Council meeting:

Must do issues:

B reports, SSC report, Exec. Session, and Staff tasking	7 hours
Charter Halibut annual management measure recommendations	} 16 hours
BSAI Groundfish harvest: Final specifications and ecosystem report	
GOA Groundfish harvest: Final specifications and ecosystem report	
Cook Inlet Salmon FMP: Final action	

Additional prioritized issues:

BSAI Pacific cod Trawl CV LAPP: Initial Review	12 hours
BSAI Pacific cod pot CP: Initial Review	3 hours
Survey planning for 2021	2 hours
	<hr/>
	<b>40 hours</b>

Add the following issues, listed in order of priority, if additional time is available; otherwise schedule for February:

- Small sablefish release: Initial review
- BSAI Crab PSC limit reductions: Prelim/Initial Rev.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on October 14, 2020, at 4:45 p.m.

**THE COUNCIL ADJOURNED ON WEDNESDAY October 14, 2020 AT 5:06 P.M.**



**Council motion**

**C2 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications**

**October 9, 2020**

The Council adopts the proposed 2021 and 2022 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC and sets the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1. The TACs for both Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod and pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water GHF fisheries. The proposed GOA Pacific cod adjustments for state water fisheries are shown in attached Table 2.

The Council adopts the proposed 2021 and 2022 annual and seasonal Pacific halibut PSC limits and apportionments in the GOA as provided in attached Tables 9, 10, and 11.

The Council adopts the updated halibut discard mortality rates for the GOA for 2021 and 2022 as shown in attached Table 12.

**Table 1. Proposed SSC recommended OFLs and ABCs and Council recommended TACs for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska (metric tons) for 2021-2022**

Species	Area	2019				2020				2021-2022		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch as of 12/31/2019	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch as of 8/29/2020	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	State GHL	n/a	3,396	-	-	n/a	2,712	-	-	n/a	2,797	-
	W (610)	n/a	24,875	24,875	21,868	n/a	19,175	19,175	6,492	n/a	19,775	19,775
	C (620)	n/a	67,388	67,388	64,120	n/a	54,456	54,456	42,757	n/a	56,159	56,159
	C (630)	n/a	34,443	34,443	24,662	n/a	26,597	26,597	6,775	n/a	27,429	27,429
	WYAK	n/a	5,748	5,748	6,612	n/a	5,554	5,554	5,180	n/a	5,728	5,728
	Subtotal	194,230	135,850	132,454	117,262	140,674	108,494	105,782	61,204	149,988	111,888	109,091
	EYAK/SEO	11,697	8,773	8,773	-	13,531	10,148	10,148	-	13,531	10,148	10,148
Total	205,927	144,623	141,227	117,262	154,205	118,642	115,930	61,204	163,519	122,036	119,239	
Pacific Cod	W	n/a	7,633	5,343	5,067	n/a	4,942	2,076	118	n/a	4,942	2,076
	C	n/a	7,667	5,750	5,918	n/a	8,458	3,806	2,187	n/a	8,458	3,806
	E	n/a	1,700	1,275	229	n/a	1,221	549	244	n/a	1,221	549
	Total	23,669	17,000	12,368	11,214	17,794	14,621	6,431	2,549	30,099	14,621	6,431
Sablefish Beginning in 2020, Alaska-wide OFL	W	n/a	1,581	1,581	1,545	n/a	2,278	1,942	852	n/a	3,003	3,003
	C	n/a	5,178	5,178	6,283	n/a	7,560	6,445	3,267	n/a	9,963	9,963
	WYAK	n/a	1,828	1,828	1,807	n/a	2,521	2,343	1,263	n/a	3,323	3,323
	SEO	n/a	2,984	2,984	3,124	n/a	4,524	3,663	1,954	n/a	5,963	5,963
	Total	25,227	11,571	11,571	12,759	50,481	16,883	14,393	7,336	64,765	22,252	22,252
Shallow-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	25,620	13,250	74	n/a	23,849	13,250	18	n/a	24,256	13,250
	C	n/a	25,731	25,731	2,791	n/a	27,732	27,732	3,001	n/a	28,205	28,205
	WYAK	n/a	2,279	2,279	1	n/a	2,773	2,773	1	n/a	2,820	2,820
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	1,957	1,957	1	n/a	1,109	1,109	1	n/a	1,128	1,128
	Total	68,309	55,587	43,217	2,867	68,010	55,463	44,864	3,021	69,129	56,409	45,403
Deep-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	416	416	2	n/a	226	226	1	n/a	225	225
	C	n/a	3,443	3,443	95	n/a	1,948	1,948	80	n/a	1,914	1,914
	WYAK	n/a	3,280	3,280	8	n/a	2,105	2,105	3	n/a	2,068	2,068
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,362	2,362	4	n/a	1,751	1,751	1	n/a	1,719	1,719
	Total	11,434	9,502	9,501	109	7,163	6,030	6,030	85	7,040	5,926	5,926
Rex Sole	W	n/a	2,951	2,951	74	n/a	2,901	2,901	30	n/a	3,013	3,013
	C	n/a	8,357	8,357	1,536	n/a	8,579	8,579	1,098	n/a	8,912	8,912
	WYAK	n/a	1,657	1,657	2	n/a	1,174	1,174	1	n/a	1,206	1,206
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	1,727	1,727	-	n/a	2,224	2,224	-	n/a	2,285	2,285
	Total	17,889	14,692	14,692	1,612	18,127	14,878	14,878	1,129	18,779	15,416	15,416
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	n/a	35,994	14,500	684	n/a	31,455	14,500	119	n/a	30,545	14,500
	C	n/a	70,995	70,995	23,786	n/a	68,669	68,669	18,203	n/a	66,683	66,683
	WYAK	n/a	15,911	6,900	88	n/a	10,242	6,900	42	n/a	9,946	6,900
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	22,941	6,900	28	n/a	17,694	6,900	20	n/a	17,183	6,900
	Total	174,598	145,841	99,295	24,586	153,017	128,060	96,969	18,384	148,597	124,357	94,983
Flathead Sole	W	n/a	13,234	8,650	210	n/a	13,783	8,650	58	n/a	14,191	8,650
	C	n/a	21,109	15,400	2,457	n/a	20,201	15,400	1,604	n/a	20,799	15,400
	WYAK	n/a	2,016	2,016	-	n/a	2,354	2,354	-	n/a	2,424	2,424
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	423	423	-	n/a	1,858	1,858	-	n/a	1,912	1,912
	Total	44,865	36,782	26,489	2,667	46,572	38,196	28,262	1,662	47,919	39,326	28,386

Sources: 2019 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2018; 2020 and 2021 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are from the harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2019; 2019 catches through December 31, 2019 and 2020 catches through August 29, 2020 from AKR Catch Accounting.

Note: State waters GHL for Pacific cod fisheries are not included within the Federal TAC, but they are accounted for, as to not exceed the ABC when added together.

**Table 1 (cont'd). Proposed SSC recommended OFLs and ABCs and Council recommended TACs for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska (metric tons) for 2021-2022**

Species	Area	OFL	2019			Catch as of 12/31/2019	2020			Catch as of 8/29/2020	2021-2022		
			ABC	TAC			OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific ocean perch	W	n/a	3,227	3,227	3,144	n/a	1,437	1,437	1,253	n/a	1,379	1,379	
	C	n/a	19,646	19,646	19,038	n/a	23,678	23,678	17,977	n/a	22,727	22,727	
	WYAK	n/a	3,296	3,296	3,288	n/a	1,470	1,470	1,466	n/a	1,410	1,410	
	W/C/WYAK	31,113	26,169	26,169	25,470	31,567	26,585	26,585	20,696	30,297	25,516	25,516	
	SEO	2,838	2,386	2,386	-	5,525	4,653	4,653	-	5,303	4,467	4,467	
	Total	33,951	28,555	28,555	25,470	37,092	31,238	31,238	20,696	35,600	29,983	29,983	
Northern Rockfish	W	n/a	1,190	1,190	820	n/a	1,133	1,133	701	n/a	1,079	1,079	
	C	n/a	3,338	3,338	1,928	n/a	3,178	3,178	1,605	n/a	3,027	3,027	
	E	n/a	1	-	-	n/a	1	-	-	n/a	1	-	
	Total	5,402	4,529	4,528	2,748	5,143	4,312	4,311	2,306	4,898	4,107	4,106	
Shortraker Rockfish	W	n/a	44	44	58	n/a	52	52	5	n/a	52	52	
	C	n/a	305	305	232	n/a	284	284	156	n/a	284	284	
	E	n/a	514	514	412	n/a	372	372	221	n/a	372	372	
	Total	1,151	863	863	702	944	708	708	382	944	708	708	
Dusky Rockfish	W	n/a	781	781	198	n/a	776	776	217	n/a	759	759	
	C	n/a	2,764	2,764	2,196	n/a	2,746	2,746	1,825	n/a	2,688	2,688	
	WYAK	n/a	95	95	93	n/a	115	115	83	n/a	113	113	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	60	60	4	n/a	39	39	1	n/a	38	38	
	Total	4,521	3,700	3,700	2,491	4,492	3,676	3,676	2,126	4,396	3,598	3,598	
Rougheye and Blackspotted	W	n/a	174	174	78	n/a	168	168	3	n/a	169	169	
	C	n/a	550	550	440	n/a	455	455	168	n/a	455	455	
	E	n/a	704	704	230	n/a	586	586	138	n/a	587	587	
	Total	1,715	1,428	1,428	748	1,452	1,209	1,209	309	1,455	1,211	1,211	
Demersal shelf rockfish	Total	411	261	261	140	375	238	238	81	375	238	238	
Thornyhead Rockfish	W	n/a	326	326	127	n/a	326	326	38	n/a	326	326	
	C	n/a	911	911	383	n/a	911	911	182	n/a	911	911	
	E	n/a	779	779	267	n/a	779	779	146	n/a	779	779	
	Total	2,688	2,016	2,016	777	2,688	2,016	2,016	366	2,688	2,016	2,016	
Other Rockfish	W/C	n/a	1,737	1,737	693	n/a	940	940	617	n/a	940	940	
	WYAK	n/a	368	368	183	n/a	369	369	94	n/a	369	369	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	3,489	200	81	n/a	2,744	2,744	82	n/a	2,744	2,744	
	Total	7,356	5,594	2,305	957	5,320	4,053	4,053	793	5,320	4,053	4,053	
Atka mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700	3,000	1,254	6,200	4,700	3,000	578	6,200	4,700	3,000	
Big Skate	W	n/a	504	504	132	n/a	758	758	13	n/a	758	758	
	C	n/a	1,774	1,774	1,117	n/a	1,560	1,560	695	n/a	1,560	1,560	
	E	n/a	570	570	102	n/a	890	890	160	n/a	890	890	
	Total	3,797	2,848	2,848	1,351	4,278	3,208	3,208	868	4,278	3,208	3,208	
Longnose Skate	W	n/a	149	149	60	n/a	158	158	16	n/a	158	158	
	C	n/a	2,804	2,804	633	n/a	1,875	1,875	285	n/a	1,875	1,875	
	E	n/a	619	619	321	n/a	554	554	193	n/a	554	554	
	Total	4,763	3,572	3,572	1,014	3,449	2,587	2,587	494	3,449	2,587	2,587	
Other Skates	GOA-wide	1,845	1,384	1,384	902	1,166	875	875	341	1,166	875	875	
Sculpins	GOA-wide	6,958	5,301	5,301	645	6,932	5,199	5,199	507	-	-	-	
Sharks	GOA-wide	10,913	8,184	8,184	1,998	10,913	8,184	8,184	733	10,913	8,184	8,184	
Octopuses	GOA-wide	1,300	975	975	336	1,307	980	980	68	1,307	980	980	
TOTAL		664,889	509,508	427,280	214,609	607,120	465,956	399,239	126,018	632,836	466,791	402,783	

**Table 2. Proposed 2021 and 2022 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, TACs and State Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) in metric tons**

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	4,942	8,458	1,221	14,621
State GHL	1,483	2,115	305	3,902
(%)	30%	25%	25%	25-30%
Federal TAC	2,076	3,806	549	6,431

Note: The Federal TAC is only for Federal fisheries. It does not include the State GHL.

**Table 9. Proposed 2021 and 2022 Pacific Halibut PSC Limits, Allowances, and Apportionments (values in metric tons)**

Trawl gear			Hook-and-line gear <sup>1</sup>				
			Other than DSR			DSR	
Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Percent	Amount <sup>2</sup>	Season	Amount
January 20 - April 1	30.5	519	January 1 - June 10	86	221	January 1 - December 31	9
April 1 - July 1	20	341	June 10 - September 1	2	5		
July 1 - August 1	27	462	September 1 - December 31	12	31		
August 1 - October 1	7.5	128					
October 1 - December 31	15	256					
Total		1,706			257		9

<sup>1</sup> The Pacific halibut PSC limit for hook-and-line gear is allocated to the demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) fishery and fisheries other than DSR. The hook-and-line IFQ sablefish fishery is exempt from halibut PSC limits, as are pot and jig gear for all groundfish fisheries.

**Table 10. Proposed 2021 and 2022 Seasonal Apportionments of the Pacific Halibut PSC Limit Apportioned Between the Trawl Gear Shallow-Water and Deep-Water Species Fisheries (values in metric tons)**

Season	Shallow-water	Deep-water <sup>1</sup>	Total
January 20 - April 1	384	135	519
April 1 - July 1	85	256	341
July 1 - August 1	121	341	462
August 1 - October 1	53	75	128
Subtotal, January 20 - October 1	643	807	1,450
October 1 - December 31 <sup>2</sup>			256
Total			1,706

<sup>1</sup> Vessels participating in cooperatives in the CGOA Rockfish Program will receive 191 mt of the third season (July 1 through September 1) deep-water species fishery halibut PSC apportionment.

<sup>2</sup> There is no apportionment between trawl shallow-water and deep-water species fisheries during the fifth season (October 1 through December 31).

**Table 11. Proposed 2021 and 2022 Apportionments of the “Other Hook-and-Line Fisheries” Halibut PSC Allowance Between the Hook-and-Line Gear Catcher Vessel and Catcher/Processor Sectors (values in metric tons)**

“Other than DSR” allowance	Hook-and-line sector	Sector annual amount	Season	Seasonal percentage	Sector seasonal amount
257	Catcher Vessel	144	January 1 - June 10	86	124
			June 10 - September 1	2	3
			September 1 - December 31	12	17
	Catcher/Processor	113	January 1 - June 10	86	97
			June 10 - September 1	2	2
			September 1 - December 31	12	14

**Table 12. Proposed 2021 and 2022 Halibut Discard Mortality Rates for Vessels Fishing in the Gulf of Alaska (values are in percent of halibut assumed to be dead)**

Gear	Sector	Groundfish fishery	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	All	100
	Catcher/processor	All	100
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	Rockfish Program	60
	Catcher vessel	All others	69
	Mothership and catcher/processor	All	84
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	All	15
	Catcher vessel	All	13
Pot	Catcher vessel and catcher/processor	All	10

## **Council Motion**

### **C2 BSAI Groundfish Specifications**

**October 9, 2020**

The Council adopts the proposed 2021 and 2022 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish harvest specifications of OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC and sets the TACs as shown in the attached BSAI Table 1, with all proposed OFLs and ABCs consisting of rollovers of final 2021 specifications approved in December 2019, with a change to northern rock sole due to a data file error.

The Council adopts the 2021 and 2022 flatfish flexibility ABC reserves as shown in Table 7, attached.

The Council adopts the PSC limits as shown in Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11, attached, for halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, opilio crab, and herring and their gear type and target fishery apportionments. The 2021 and 2022 crab PSC limits have been revised using current biomass amounts.

The Council adopts the halibut DMRs for 2021 and 2022 as shown in Table 12, attached.

Table 1. Council proposed OFL, ABC, and TAC for Groundfish in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (metric tons) for 2021-2022

10/9/2020

Species	Area	2019				2020				2021/2022		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch as of 12/31/2019	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch as of 8/29/2020	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	3,914,000	2,163,000	1,397,000	1,409,219	4,085,000	2,043,000	1,425,000	1,097,046	3,385,000	1,767,000	1,450,000
	AI	64,240	52,887	19,000	1,663	66,973	55,120	19,000	2,786	70,970	58,384	19,000
	Bogoslof	183,080	137,310	75	8	183,080	137,310	75	37	183,080	137,310	75
Pacific cod	BS	216,000	181,000	166,475	164,098	191,386	155,873	141,799	107,705	125,734	102,975	92,633
	AI	27,400	20,600	14,214	12,941	27,400	20,600	13,796	3,436	27,400	20,600	13,796
Sablefish	BSAI	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	50,481	n/a	n/a	n/a	64,765	n/a	n/a
	BS	3,221	1,489	1,489	3,191	n/a	2,174	1,861	2,382	n/a	2,865	2,865
	AI	4,350	2,008	2,008	661	n/a	2,952	2,039	1,015	n/a	3,891	2,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	290,000	263,200	154,000	128,061	287,307	260,918	150,700	93,718	287,943	261,497	168,900
Greenland turbot	BSAI	11,362	9,658	5,294	2,850	11,319	9,625	5,300	2,199	10,006	8,510	5,795
	BS	n/a	8,431	5,125	2,678	n/a	8,403	5,125	1,530	n/a	7,429	5,125
	AI	n/a	1,227	169	171	n/a	1,222	175	669	n/a	1,081	670
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	82,939	70,673	8,000	10,063	84,057	71,618	10,000	8,122	86,647	73,804	10,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	10,965	9,260	5,000	4,488	11,495	9,708	6,800	7,093	11,472	9,688	7,116
Northern rock sole	BSAI	122,000	118,900	47,100	25,799	157,300	153,300	47,100	21,480	251,800	245,400	49,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	80,918	66,625	14,500	15,912	82,810	68,134	19,500	6,526	86,432	71,079	24,000
Alaska plaice	BSAI	39,880	33,600	18,000	16,164	37,600	31,600	17,000	17,552	36,500	30,700	24,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	21,824	16,368	6,500	3,784	21,824	16,368	4,000	3,767	21,824	16,368	5,000
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	61,067	50,594	44,069	43,614	58,956	48,846	42,875	28,507	56,589	46,885	42,036
	BS	n/a	14,675	14,675	14,518	n/a	14,168	14,168	3,690	n/a	13,600	13,600
	EAI	n/a	11,459	11,009	10,945	n/a	11,063	10,613	7,929	n/a	10,619	10,619
	CAI	n/a	8,435	8,385	8,263	n/a	8,144	8,094	6,993	n/a	7,817	7,817
	WAI	n/a	16,025	10,000	9,888	n/a	15,471	10,000	9,895	n/a	14,849	10,000
Northern rockfish	BSAI	15,507	12,664	6,500	9,063	19,751	16,243	10,000	7,643	19,070	15,683	10,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish	BSAI	676	555	279	393	861	708	349	412	1,090	899	439
	EBS/EAI	n/a	351	75	89	n/a	444	85	115	n/a	560	100
	CAI/WAI	n/a	204	204	304	n/a	264	264	297	n/a	339	339
Shorthead rockfish	BSAI	722	541	358	383	722	541	375	166	722	541	375
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,793	1,344	663	1,269	1,793	1,344	1,088	816	1,793	1,344	1,088
	BS	n/a	956	275	699	n/a	956	700	236	n/a	956	700
	AI	n/a	388	388	569	n/a	388	388	580	n/a	388	388
Atka mackerel	BSAI	79,200	68,500	57,951	57,206	81,200	70,100	59,305	47,355	74,800	64,400	54,482
	EAI/BS	n/a	23,970	23,970	23,654	n/a	24,535	24,535	13,845	n/a	22,540	22,540
	CAI	n/a	14,390	14,390	14,110	n/a	14,721	14,721	13,531	n/a	13,524	13,524
	WAI	n/a	30,140	19,591	19,441	n/a	30,844	20,049	19,979	n/a	28,336	18,418
Skates	BSAI	51,152	42,714	26,000	20,205	49,792	41,543	16,313	13,639	48,289	40,248	16,000
Sculpins	BSAI	53,201	39,995	5,000	5,606	67,817	50,863	5,300	3,837	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sharks	BSAI	689	517	125	146	689	517	150	156	689	517	200
Octopuses	BSAI	4,769	3,576	400	268	4,769	3,576	275	643	4,769	3,576	700
<b>Total</b>	BSAI	5,340,955	3,367,578	2,000,000	1,937,052	5,584,382	3,272,581	2,000,000	1,478,038	4,857,384	2,984,164	2,000,000

Sources: 2019 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs and 2020 OFLs and ABCs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2018 and December 2019, respectively; 2019

TABLE 7—PROPOSED 2021 AND 2022 ABC SURPLUS, ABC RESERVES, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUOTA (CDQ) ABC RESERVES, AND AMENDMENT 80 ABC RESERVES IN THE BSAI FOR FLATHEAD SOLE, ROCK SOLE, AND YELLOWFIN SOLE

[Amounts are in metric tons]			
Sector	Flathead sole	Rock sole	Yellowfin sole
ABC	71,079	245,400	261,497
TAC	24,000	49,000	168,900
ABC surplus	47,079	196,500	92,597
ABC reserve	47,079	196,500	92,597
CDQ ABC reserve	5,037	21,026	9,908
Amendment 80 ABC reserve	42,042	175,475	82,689

TABLE 8—PROPOSED 2021 AND 2022 APPORTIONMENT OF PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH ALLOWANCES TO NON-TRAWL GEAR, THE CDQ PROGRAM, AMENDMENT 80, AND THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTORS

PSC species and area <sup>1</sup>	Total PSC	Non-trawl PSC	CDQ PSQ reserve <sup>2</sup>	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ	Amendment 80 sector <sup>3</sup>	BSAI trawl limited access sector
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	3,515	710	315	n/a	1,745	745
Herring (mt) BSAI	2,532	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	97,000	n/a	10,379	86,621	43,293	26,489
<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	12,850,000	n/a	1,374,950	11,475,050	5,639,987	3,688,081
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 1	980,000	n/a	104,860	875,140	368,521	411,228
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 2	2,970,000	n/a	317,790	2,652,210	627,778	1,241,500

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of zones.

<sup>2</sup> The PSQ reserve for crab species is 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

<sup>3</sup> The Amendment 80 program reduced apportionment of the trawl PSC limits for crab below the total PSC limit. These reductions are not apportioned to other gear types or sectors.



TABLE 9-PROPOSED 2021 AND 2022 HERRING AND RED KING CRAB SAVINGS SUBAREA PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH ALLOWANCES FOR ALL TRAWL SECTORS

Fishery categories	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	110	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish <sup>1</sup>	54	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	7	n/a
Rockfish	7	n/a
Pacific cod	13	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	2,299	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species <sup>2,3</sup>	42	n/a
Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear <sup>4</sup>	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,532	97,000

<sup>1</sup>“Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

<sup>2</sup>Pollock other than midwater trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and “other species” fishery category.

<sup>3</sup>“Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

<sup>4</sup>In October 2019, the Council recommended that the red king crab bycatch limit for non-pelagic trawl fisheries within the RKCSS be limited to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC allowance (see § 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)(2)).

Note: Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 10–PROPOSED 2021 AND 2022 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTOR

BSAI trawl limited access sector fisheries	Prohibited species and area <sup>1</sup>				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	<i>C. bairdi</i> (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	150	23,338	3,476,708	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	-	-	-	-	-
Rockfish April 15-December 31	4	-	5,743	-	1,000
Pacific cod	391	2,954	148,192	60,000	49,999
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species <sup>3</sup>	200	197	57,438	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access sector PSC	745	26,489	3,688,081	411,228	1,241,500

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas.

<sup>2</sup> “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

<sup>3</sup> “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

**Note:** Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 11–PROPOSED 2021 AND 2022 HALIBUT PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR NON-TRAWL FISHERIES

Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI				
Non-trawl fisheries	Seasons	Catcher/processor	Catcher vessel	All Non-Trawl
Pacific cod	Annual Pacific cod	648	13	n/a
	January 1-June 10	388	9	n/a
	June 10-August 15	162	2	n/a
	August 15-December 31	98	2	n/a
Non-Pacific cod non-trawl-Total	May 1-December 31	n/a	n/a	49
Groundfish pot and jig	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Sablefish hook-and-line	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Total for all non-trawl PSC	n/a	n/a	n/a	710

TABLE 12–PROPOSED 2021 AND 2022 PACIFIC HALIBUT DISCARD MORTALITY RATES (DMR) FOR THE BSAI

Gear	Sector	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic trawl	All	100
Non-pelagic trawl	Mothership and catcher/processor	84
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	59
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	9
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	9
Pot	All	32



**TIME LOG**  
**NPFMC October Council Meeting – 251st Plenary Session**  
**Meeting held via web conference Adobe Connect**  
**Friday, October 2 - 14, 2020**

**Friday, October 2, 2020**

**A REPORTS**

10/2/2020 1:02 PM	Call to Order
10/2/2020 1:02 PM	<b>Oath of Office – Simon Kinneen, Kenny Down</b>
10/2/2020 1:06 PM	Election of Officers – Mr. Simon re-elected Chair and Mr. Tweet re-elected Vice Chair
10/2/2020 1:07 PM	Administrative Issues
10/2/2020 1:23 PM	Approval of Agenda

**C1 BSAI Crab 4 Stocks - Final Specifications, SAFE Report, Crab Plan Team Reports**

10/2/2020 2:24 PM	<b>C1 Presentation</b> – Dr. Martin Dorn, AFSC
10/2/2020 2:33 PM	SSC Report – Dr. Sherri Dressel
10/2/2020 3:30 PM	<b>C1 Public Testimony</b>
10/2/2020 3:30 PM	Jamie Goen
10/2/2020 3:43 PM	<b>C1 Ms. Bush Motion</b>
10/2/2020 3:51 PM	Recess

**Friday, October 9, 2020**

10/9/2020 8:04 AM	Call to Order
10/9/2020 8:15 AM	B1 Executive Director Report – David Witherell
10/9/2020 8:25 AM	B2 NMFS Management Report – NMFS, Alicia Miller
10/9/2020 8:31 AM	B3 NOAA General Council Report – David Witherell
10/9/2020 8:32 AM	B4 ADF&G Report
10/9/2020 8:33 AM	B5 USCG Report – CAPT Jason Brennell & Staci MacCorkle
10/9/2020 9:29 AM	<b>B7 SSC Report</b> – Dr. Sherri Dressel
10/9/2020 11:14 AM	<b>AP Report on C2 &amp; C3</b> – Matt Upton
10/9/2020 11:24 AM	<b>B Public Testimony</b>
10/9/2020 11:24 AM	Chad See
10/9/2020 11:29 AM	Jon Warrenchuk
10/9/2020 11:36 AM	Lunch Break

## **C2 BSAI and GOA Groundfish Harvest – Proposed Specifications, Plan Team Reports**

10/9/2020 12:30 PM	C2 Joint Plan Team Report – AFSC, Dr. Jim Ianelli
10/9/2020 1:08 PM	C2 BSAI Groundfish Plan Team Report – AFSC, Dr. Steve Barbeaux
10/9/2020 2:13 PM	C2 GOA Plan Team Report – AFSC, Dr. Jim Ianelli
10/9/2020 2:12 PM	<b>C2 Public Testimony</b>
10/9/2020 2:12 PM	Linda Behnken
10/9/2020 2:24 PM	Hannah Heimbuch
10/9/2020 2:29 PM	Alexus Kwatchka
10/9/2020 2:35 PM	Gerry Merrigan
10/9/2020 2:43 PM	Chad See
10/9/2020 2:53 PM	Jamie Goen
10/9/2020 3:01 PM	Jon Warrenchuk
10/9/2020 3:05 PM	Break
10/9/2020 3:17 PM	<b>C2 Ms. Kimball Motion – GOA Specs</b>
10/9/2020 3:26 PM	<b>C2 Mr. Cross Motion – BSAI Specs</b>

## **C3 Sculpin/Squid Product Types**

10/9/2020 3:39 PM	C3 Presentation – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean
10/9/2020 4:01 PM	<b>C3 Public Testimony</b>
10/9/2020 4:01 PM	Christopher Oliver
10/9/2020 4:04 PM	Brent Paine
10/9/2020 4:11 PM	<b>C3 Ms. Kimball Motion</b>
10/9/2020 4:27 PM	Recess

## **Monday, October 12, 2020**

10/12/2020 8:01 AM	Call to Order
10/12/2020 8:03 AM	AP Report for C4, C5, D1, E – Ruth Christiansen

## **C4 Cook Inlet Salmon FMP**

10/12/2020 8:18 AM	<b>C4 Presentation</b> , NMFS AKRO, Doug Duncan
10/12/2020 9:14 AM	<b>C4 Public Testimony</b>
10/12/2020 9:14 AM	Hannah Heimbuch
10/12/2020 9:26 AM	John McCombs
10/12/2020 9:26 AM	David Martin
10/12/2020 9:29 AM	Steve Vanek
10/12/2020 9:33 AM	Roland Maw
10/12/2020 9:50 AM	Break
10/12/2020 10:03 AM	<b>C4 Ms. Baker Motion</b>

## **C6 BSAI Halibut ABM**

10/12/2020 10:31 AM	<b>C6 BSAI Halibut ABM DEIS Presentation</b> , Council Staff, Dr. Diana Stram, Anna Henry, Sam Cunningham, AFSC staff, Dr. Jim Ianelli and Dr. Carey McGilliard, and Mike Downs Wislow Research
10/12/2020 1:40 PM	Lunch Break
10/12/2020 12:44 PM	C6 Presentation Continued
10/12/2020 3:30 PM	<b>C6 ABM Discussion Paper Presentation</b>
10/12/2020 4:05 PM	Recess

## **Tuesday, October 13, 2020**

10/13/2020 8:00 AM	Call to Order
10/13/2020 8:03 AM	C6 BSAI Halibut ABM Continued
10/13/2020 8:28 AM	C6 AP Report – Ruth Christiansen
10/13/2020 8:58 AM	<b>C6 Public Testimony</b>
10/13/2020 8:46 AM	Bob Alverson
10/13/2020 8:56 AM	John Gauvin
10/13/2020 9:15 AM	Forest Braden
10/13/2020 9:22 AM	Mateo Pas-Soldan
10/13/2020 9:29 AM	Chris Woodley and Mark Fina
10/13/2020 9:52 AM	Linda Behnken
10/13/2020 10:19 AM	Jeff Kauffman, Ray Melovidov, Heather McCarty
10/13/2020 10:41 AM	Angel Drobnica
10/13/2020 10:53 AM	Jason Anderson and Mary Beth Tooley
10/13/2020 11:21 AM	Theresa Peterson
10/13/2020 11:28 AM	Arne Fuglvog
10/13/2020 11:31 AM	Rebecca Skinner
10/13/2020 11:37 AM	Lunch Break
10/13/2020 12:46 PM	Heather Mann
10/13/2020 12:56 PM	Todd Loomis
10/13/2020 1:00 PM	Lauren Divine
10/13/2020 1:06 PM	Natasha Hayden
10/13/2020 1:17 PM	Break
10/13/2020 1:25 PM	<b>C6 Ms. Baker Motion</b>
10/13/2020 2:15 PM	C6 Kimball Amendments

## **C5 Observer 2021 ADP – Review, PCFMAC Report, Trawl EM Committee Report**

10/13/2020 3:00 PM	<b>C5 2021 ADP Presentation</b> – AFSC staff, Jennifer Ferdinand and Geoff Mayhew
10/13/2020 3:56 PM	Recess

## **Wednesday, October 14, 2020**

## **C5 Observer 2021 ADP – Review, PCFMAC Report, Trawl EM Committee Report**

10/14/2020 8:00 AM Call to Order  
10/14/2020 8:01 AM **C5 PCFMAC Report**, Council staff, Dr. Kate Haapala  
10/14/2020 8:10 AM **C5 Trawl EM Committee Report**, Council staff, Diana Evans  
10/14/2020 8:27 AM **C5 Public Testimony**  
10/14/2020 8:27 AM Dan Falvey  
10/14/2020 8:38 AM **C5 Ms. Kimball Motion** – Observer ADP  
10/14/2020 8:50 AM **C5 Mr. Tweit Motion** – Trawl EM

### **D1 Survey Planning – AFSC Report**

10/14/2020 9:18 AM **D1 Survey Planning Presentation** – Dr. Robert Foy  
10/14/2020 10:37 AM D1 Public Testimony  
10/14/2020 10:37 AM Gerry Merrigan  
10/14/2020 10:43 AM Jamie Goen

### **D2 Seafood Production Executive Order**

10/14/2020 10:52 AM **D1 Presentation**, Executive Director, David Witherell  
10/14/2020 11:13 AM **D1 Public Testimony**  
10/14/2020 11:13 AM Heather Mann and Julie Bonney  
10/14/2020 11:19 AM Theresa Peterson  
10/14/2020 11:24 AM **D2 Ms. Kimball Motion**  
10/14/2020 12:25 PM Lunch Break

### **E1 Staff Tasking**

10/14/2020 1:30 PM **E1 Staff Tasking Presentation** – David Witherell  
10/14/2020 2:29 PM E1 Public Testimony  
10/14/2020 2:29 PM Bob Alverson (out of turn due to bad reception)  
10/14/2020 2:32 PM Paul Clampitt  
10/14/2020 2:38 PM Bob Alverson Continued  
10/14/2020 2:41 PM Bernie Burkholder  
10/14/2020 2:46 PM Craig Lowenberg  
10/14/2020 2:53 PM Linda Behnken  
10/14/2020 3:00 PM Mike LeVine  
10/14/2020 3:10 PM Malcolm Milne  
10/14/2020 3:14 PM John Gruver  
10/14/2020 3:20 PM Break  
10/14/2020 3:30 PM Heather Mann  
10/14/2020 3:37 PM Verner Wilson III  
10/14/2020 3:50 PM Julie Bonney  
10/14/2020 3:55 PM Lauren Divine  
10/14/2020 4:03 PM Ephraim Froehli  
10/14/2020 4:35 PM **E1 Ms. Baker Motion**  
10/14/2020 5:06 PM Meeting Adjourned

# October 2020 Newsletter

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## Re-appointments and Election of Officers

Mr. Simon Kinneen and Mr. Kenny Down took the oath of office after being re-appointed for their final three-year term. Council members may only serve three terms, and Kinneen and Down's third term will expire in August of 2023. Additionally, the Council re-elected Simon Kinneen as Chair, and re-elected Bill Tweit as Vice-Chair for the upcoming year. Biographies for all Council members [are available on our website](#).



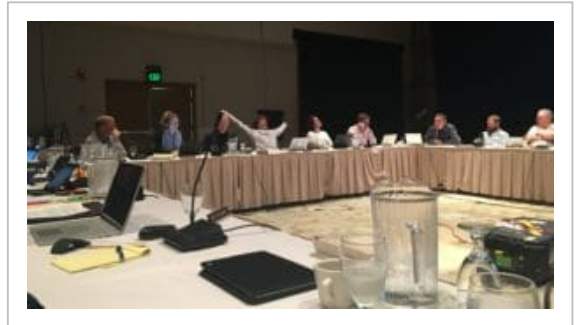
Mr. Simon Kinneen and Mr. Kenny Down

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## Call for Nominations

The Council is accepting nominations for its Scientific and Statistical Committee, its Advisory Panel, ([link to page for nominations](#)) and its Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC).

**Scientific and Statistical Committee** (SSC) nominees should have areas of expertise in biology/stock assessment, marine mammals, statistics, fisheries/resource economics, sociology/anthropology, or other relevant disciplines and be federal employees, state employees, academicians, or independent experts not employed by advocacy or interest groups. SSC members serve one-year terms but may be reappointed. The SSC advises the Council on all aspects of the decision-making process, including stock assessments and annual specifications, protected species interactions, and adequacy of analyses supporting various management actions. New SSC candidates should submit nominations, letters of interest, and a resume to the Executive Director through our comment portal by **November 27th at 5pm** Alaska time. More information on the terms of reference, appointment process, and duties of SSC members can be found in the [SSC Handbook](#).



Members of the Advisory Panel in Sitka.

The **Advisory Panel** (AP) is composed of representatives of the fishing industry and others interested in the management of the North Pacific fisheries, and provides advice from those perspectives. AP members generally serve for three-year terms, and may be reappointed for up to two subsequent, consecutive terms. Members of the panel are expected to attend up to five meetings, four to five days in length, each year. In 2021, it is likely that several of these meetings will be held virtually. Note that no seats on the Advisory Panel are designated to a particular stakeholder group or geographical area, and the Council encourages all interested stakeholders to apply. Of paramount importance, the Council will consider the demonstrated ability of the candidate to be objective and to consider all aspects of an issue. More information on the terms of reference, appointment process, and duties of AP members can be found in the [AP Handbook](#).

There are seven seats with 3-year terms available for appointment on the AP. Of these, six are currently occupied by AP members who are eligible to serve another term: Victoria Curran, Natasha Hayden, James Johnson, Mellisa Johnson, Matt Upton, and Anne Vanderhoeven. One current AP member has a term that is expiring: Ernie Weiss, and the remaining seat is held by John Gruver, who was appointed to a one-year term only. Nominations, letters of interest, and a resume should be submitted to the Executive Director through our comment portal by **November 27th at 5pm** Alaska time. Letters of support are not required but will also be considered. Please note that the names, resumes, and supporting letters of those who submit a nomination will be public.

The **Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee**'s function is to provide the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council with advice and recommendations regarding appropriate measures for the conservation and management of the BSAI king and Tanner crab fisheries. There are up to 15 seats available, and each member serves a two-year term. Nominations close **November 27th at 5pm** Alaska time. Please send a letter of interest to staff contact Sarah Marrinan.

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## Russian Military Activity in the EEZ

During the U.S. Coast Guard agency report to the Council, Captain Jason Brennell of 17<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District and Ms. Staci MacCorkle of U.S. State Department provided an in-depth briefing on the events surrounding the 26 August 2020 encounter between Russian naval vessels and aircraft, and the U.S. domestic fishing fleet legally fishing in the U.S. EEZ of the Bering Sea. Russian vessels and aircraft were participating in a Russian military exercise called Ocean Shield, which is a multi-fleet, multi-service Russian military exercise that has occurred annually for the past two years in the Mediterranean and the Baltic. This year's exercise took place in the Bering Sea and the Arctic regions, which aligns with Russia's Arctic strategy of using the Northern Sea Route to exploit Arctic resources in the future.



Map showing locations of the Russian military in the EEZ.

During the 26 August encounter with several of U.S. fishing vessels, Russian naval vessels and aircraft directed these U.S. fishing vessels to depart the area due to safety concerns associated with a missile launch. As noted in September 22, 2020, testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Subcommittee on Security, the tone of the request by Russian warships and aircraft resulted in U.S. captains and their crews experiencing genuine fear for their safety, and resulted in operational decisions that cost companies hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost fishing opportunities and gear.

It was noted by the U.S. Coast Guard during their presentation that the U.S. fishing fleet is not required to depart from legal fishing grounds in the U.S. EEZ at the directed of a foreign entity. However, safety of life at sea should always be paramount in managing the safe navigation of any vessel on the high seas, and it is the responsibility of the mariner with firsthand situational awareness. The responsibility of safety within a military exercise firing zone in international waters and on the high seas belongs to the military service and Nation conducting the exercise. Essentially, everyone on the high seas has a responsibility to themselves and one another to operate in a safe manner.



To advise mariners of the planned Ocean Shield exercise, Russia used the HYDROPAC process to provide information on the area of operation. HYDROPAC are navigational warnings that are issued regularly and contain information about persons in distress, or objects and events that pose an immediate hazard to navigation. HYDROPAC is one of five types of navigation warnings that are categorized by their location. These maritime security alerts and advisories are issued by the US Maritime Advisory System. Mariners can subscribe [here](#) to receive email updates at sea (via Iridium, INMARSAT, Globalstar, or other method of internet access).

In [staff tasking](#), the Council thanked the U.S. Coast Guard for the thorough briefing, while highlighting the alarm that this situation created for U.S. vessels. The Council recommends that the Coast Guard consider additional ways to improve communication with vessels and communities in the future.

Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

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## BSAI Crab Specifications

### Approval of the SAFE and 2020/2021 OFL/ABC

The Council approved the Final 2020 BSAI Crab SAFE and specified OFLs and ABCs for EBS snow crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, EBS Tanner crab, Saint Matthew blue king crab and Pribilof Island blue king crab for the 2020/21 fishing season. The Council took this action following a review of the affected crab stocks as well as the BSAI Crab Plan Team's (CPT) Report from their September 2020 meeting. Cancellation of the 2020 summer trawl survey due to COVID-19 created the potential for additional uncertainty in OFL as estimated in crab stock assessments, and the Council adopted additional reductions in ABC (i.e., "survey loss buffer") to account for that uncertainty, as recommended by the SSC and the CPT. The Council's motion adopting the 2020/21 OFLs and ABCs for these five BSAI crab stocks is provided [here](#).

### Crab Stock Status

The [final 2020 BSAI Crab SAFE](#) describes how the status of a crab stock is determined based on a system of five tiers that stocks fall into based on the amount of information that can be generated in the stock assessment. For most of the crab stocks managed by the Council, data support estimation of stock biomass ( $B$ ), so stock status compares current biomass (i.e.,  $B_{2020}$ ) to target ( $B_{MSY}$ ) and threshold ( $\frac{1}{2} B_{MSY}$ ) biomass (see Figure 1). The final 2020 SAFE indicates that EBS snow crab, Aleutian Islands golden king crab, and Pribilof Islands red king crab are all above  $B_{MSY}$ , while EBS Tanner crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, and Norton Sound red king crab are below  $B_{MSY}$  but above  $\frac{1}{2} B_{MSY}$ . The biomass estimate for EBS Tanner crab was above  $B_{MSY}$  last year, and so the updated biomass estimate represents a decline.

#### BSAI Crab Stock Status



Saint Matthew blue king crab and Pribilof Islands blue king crab stock are both below  $\frac{1}{2} B_{MSY}$  (Figure 1) which defines the minimum stock size threshold (MSST) for these stocks and means that they are both overfished. Pribilof Islands blue king crab has been overfished since 2002, while Saint Matthew blue king crab was declared to be overfished in October 2018. The Council-recommended rebuilding plan for Saint Matthew blue king crab has been approved and will be effective for the 2020/2021 fishing season. Under the rebuilding

plan, the fishery will remain closed until the stock has growth to a level that allows for an opening under the State of Alaska's harvest strategy.

Under the five-tier system described in the Crab SAFE methods are provided for estimating catch levels that constitute overfishing (i.e., the OFL). According to the 2020 SAFE, overfishing did not occur for any of the Council's crab stocks.

Staff contact for BSAI crab stocks is Jim Armstrong.

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## BSAI Groundfish Proposed Harvest Specifications

The Council reviewed reports from the Joint and BSAI Groundfish Plan Teams and recommended 2021 and 2022 groundfish harvest and prohibited species catch (PSC) specifications for proposed rulemaking.

The SSC was presented with the [Joint Groundfish Report](#) and the [BSAI Groundfish Plan Team Report](#) that summarized the issues discussed and actions taken by the Plan Teams at their September meeting. For proposed rulemaking for the 2021 and 2022 fishing years, the Council recommended OFLs and ABCs consistent with SSC recommendations, based on rollover of the existing 2021 specifications for all stocks except for updated northern rock sole. The Council also recommended proposed TACs for all species, PSC limits for halibut, crab, and herring, and adopted Halibut discard mortality rates (DMRs) for 2021 and 2022. Full details are included in the Council [motion](#) for the BSAI.

The Council received a letter from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) indicating that the combined, post-season sum of the three-river index (Upper Yukon, Unalakleet, and Kuskokwim Rivers) of Chinook salmon is 173,416 and is below the threshold level of 250,000. Therefore, the performance standard for the Bering Sea pollock fishery will decrease from 47,491 to 33,318 Chinook salmon and the PSC limit will decrease from 60,000 to 45,000 Chinook salmon, as identified at 50 CFR 679.21.

Information for the GOA Proposed Specifications is available [here](#). Staff contact for BSAI Groundfish is Steve MacLean.

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## GOA Groundfish Proposed Harvest Specifications

The Council received a report from the GOA Groundfish Plan Team and adopted proposed harvest and prohibited species catch (PSC) specifications for 2021 and 2022. The [GOA Groundfish Plan Team report](#) summarized the issues discussed and actions taken by the Plan Team at its virtual September meeting. Highlights of the GOA Plan Team report included results from the winter acoustic trawl survey, an update on survey design optimization for the GOA bottom trawl survey, and team discussions with individual assessment authors. The SSC provided guidance and recommendations on these issues as well as on harvest specifications for 2021.

For proposed rulemaking for the 2021 and 2022 fishing years, the SSC recommended OFLs and ABCs based on a rollover of existing 2021 specifications for all stocks. Updated stock assessments and PT and SSC recommendations will be reviewed by the Plan Team at the upcoming virtual meeting November 16-20. The

Council recommended OFLs and ABCs consistent with SSC recommendations and proposed TACs. The Council also recommended halibut PSC limit apportionments and adopted updated halibut DMRs for 2021; full details are included in the [Council motion](#) for the GOA.

Staff contact for GOA Groundfish is Sara Cleaver. Information on proposed specifications for the BSAI is available [here](#).

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## Squid and Sculpin Processing

The Council took final action on an analysis evaluating the potential impacts of removing restrictions to processing and sale of squids and sculpins as part of the Ecosystem Component (EC) category of the BSAI and GOA Fishery Management Plans. The Council selected the action alternative, Alternative 2, as their Preferred Alternative.

Squids were added to the EC category of the BSAI and GOA FMPs in 2018, and sculpins were added to the EC category in 2020. Current regulations prohibit the processing and sale of any EC species in Alaska unless they are processed as fishmeal. When squids were added to the EC category, the Council's stated intention was that processing of squid into bait would continue. However, the final rule for the 2020 action revised regulations to limit processing of squids into fishmeal only. At this meeting, the Council recommended aligning the allowable use of squids with past practice, and to make regulations for the allowable use of sculpins consistent with squids.

Both squids and sculpins are caught incidentally to other targeted groundfish fisheries. Sculpin catch has always been low in the BSAI and GOA, and no market for sculpin products currently exists. Squid catch has been variable in the BSAI and GOA. Historically, squids have been sold as whole bait or whole fish/food fish. Although squid catch in 2019 was remarkably higher than in earlier years, analysis suggests that factors other than the reclassification of squids into the EC category likely contributed to the overall catch. Such factors could include the overall abundance of squids, patchy distribution of squids or the effects of the pollock fleet avoiding Chinook salmon and sablefish.

Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

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## Cook Inlet Salmon

The Council conducted its initial review of an analysis of alternative approaches to extend the authority of the Salmon FMP to include management of commercial salmon fishing in the Cook Inlet EEZ. The Council's SSC reviewed the technical

merits of the analysis and approved it for use by the Council for selecting a preferred alternative. In addition to the existing alternative set, the Council added a fourth alternative that would include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's West Area and extend the existing West Area prohibition on commercial salmon fishing to the Cook Inlet EEZ. The possibility of an extended closure of the Cook Inlet EEZ to commercial salmon fishing was also analyzed under Alternative 3, with the difference that the option to close federal waters under Alternative 3 would be contingent on the availability of information needed for management. By adding Alternative 4, the

**Salmon driftnet boats, Kenai River, August 2019**  
(photo by J. Armstrong)

Council clarified that prohibiting commercial salmon fishing in Cook Inlet could also occur as a policy decision, and, as such, would only be changed through a future amendment to the FMP.

Under this action, the Council is also considering a delegated management approach described in the analysis under Alternative 2, which would establish federal authority in the Cook Inlet EEZ, but would allow some management measures to be established by the State of Alaska. Such an approach would be consistent with the Council's BSAI Crab FMP, which identifies distinct federal and State of Alaska management measures. Management under Alternative 3, on the other hand, would occur entirely at the federal level. This would be similar to how fisheries are managed under the Council's GOA and BSAI Groundfish FMPs. Under either Alternative 2 or 3, the Council would need to establish a regular specifications cycle for Cook Inlet salmon stocks, including creation of a Salmon Plan Team and ongoing reviews of fishery performance and stock status. Under Alternative 4, commercial salmon fishing in Cook Inlet would only occur in state jurisdictional waters, involving established state management processes, and no changes to Federal management would be necessary.

The motion passed by the Council at its October 2020 meeting is provided in its entirety [here](#). The Council expects to take final action on the Salmon FMP by December 2020, which will allow NMFS to complete Secretarial review of the FMP amendment and implementing regulations by December 2021 in order to have them effective for the 2022 fishing season. The Alaska Board of Fisheries and Council's Joint Protocol Committee will meet by [webconference](#) on November 5, 2020 to review and discuss potential impacts and management changes associated with the alternative approaches for federal management of commercial salmon fishing in the Cook Inlet EEZ.

Staff Contact is Jim Armstrong.

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## Observer Issues

# Observer Program Draft 2021 Annual Deployment Plan

FT Northern Hawk



The Council reviewed the Observer Program Draft 2021 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP), received a report from the Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC), and supported NMFS' recommendations for deploying observers and electronic monitoring (EM) on groundfish and halibut vessels in the partial coverage fisheries in 2021. Specifically, the Council supported NMFS' recommendation to continue to utilize a port-based approach for partial coverage observer deployment, consistent with the redesigned 2020 ADP that is responsive to COVID-19 impacts on monitoring. The Council also supported NMFS' recommendations for the coverage allocation scheme of 15% plus optimized allocation based on discarded groundfish and halibut PSC and Chinook PSC, as described in the Draft 2021 ADP. Observer coverage rates resulting from this approach and the final budget will be available in the final 2021 ADP in December.

NMFS reported that funding is sufficient to maintain the current fixed gear EM selection pool of 169 vessels in 2021. The Council supported NMFS' criteria to determine new potential participants in the fixed gear EM pool if funding is insufficient to accommodate all new requests.

Finally, the Council recommended NMFS develop an abbreviated 2020 Observer Annual Report and requested an updated timeline for cost efficiency analyses consistent with its adopted priorities from January 2020. These priorities include integrating fixed gear EM into the determination of observer baseline coverage, a re-evaluation of the zero-selection pool, and re-evaluation of the bias metrics. The PCFMAC will meet in Spring 2021 to review work on these analyses prior to the annual FMAC meeting.

Staff contact is Kate Haapala.

## Trawl EM

The Council received a report from the Trawl EM Committee, reporting on progress with using electronic monitoring (EM) in pollock trawl fisheries in the BSAI and GOA in 2020. The Council continues to support the trawl EM development work, and the schedule that targets implementation of EM as a regulatory alternative for monitoring in the pollock trawl fisheries by 2023. As such, the Council supports extending the EFP, which is currently set to expire in 2021, through 2022, and supports industry efforts to seek out funding to support development work in 2022. The Council intends to review a regulatory analysis for implementing EM for the trawl fisheries next year, with the Trawl EM Committee continuing to track ongoing fieldwork and the development of analytical options during that time.

In the Trawl EM Committee report, the Council also received recommendations to NMFS for updates to the Draft NMFS Alaska Regional Electronic Technologies Implementation Plan update for 2020-2024, which is under preparation. The Council will review an updated version of this document in February 2021.

Staff contact is Anna Henry.

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## Halibut Abundance-based Management

The Council reviewed both a preliminary draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) and a discussion paper on approaches to indexing Amendment 80 (A80) halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits to abundance and other incentives to minimize halibut bycatch. Following review, the Council revised the purpose and need statement and alternatives for the action, and provided direction to staff.

**Closed-loop Simulation Model Schematic**



The action alternatives in the preliminary DEIS were initially proposed by stakeholders and refined and adopted by the Council over a series of meetings. Alternatives 2 through 4 set PSC limits for the BSAI Amendment 80 groundfish fishery based on control rules that are indexed to either the EBS trawl survey (Alternative 2) or the IPHC setline survey (Alternatives 3 and 4). The alternatives included a range of elements and options for floors, ceilings and other features that modify the responsiveness of the control rule that establishes the PSC limit based on abundance. The model-based analysis of alternatives indicated that the magnitude of change in PSC limits over time would be higher than the change in directed fishery catch and

that, given the information available on Pacific halibut recruitment projected forward, PSC limits within the projected range negligibly impact long-term spawning stock biomass (SSB), but near-term trends in SSB vary mainly based on the current IPHC assessment age structure. Lower PSC limits are projected to result in greater directed halibut fishery catches (although at less than a 1:1 ratio) and are expected to reduce gross revenues for the A80 groundfish sector to varying degrees. The Council also reviewed a social impact assessment (SIA) that evaluates community and regional patterns of engagement in, and dependency on, the BSAI Amendment 80 groundfish fishery and the BSAI/Area 4 commercial and non-commercial halibut fisheries as well as the potential for community level impacts under the no-action and action alternatives.

The discussion paper provided information on three proposed approaches that could substitute for the ABM approach analyzed in the DEIS: a look-up table control rule with breakpoints based on states of both surveys, a PSC performance standard applied to the status quo limit, and a concept that would shift halibut mortality from the A80 PSC limit to the CDQ reserve for directed commercial halibut harvest in Area 4CDE.

Following extensive review of the DEIS and discussion paper and considerable public testimony, the Council revised the purpose and need statement to more directly address the action before the Council. In doing so, the Council noted that it was removing the previously derived objectives and instead was relying upon those folded into the new purpose and need as the stated objectives for any future action. The revised purpose and need statement is shown below:

*Halibut is an important resource in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI), supporting commercial halibut fisheries, recreational fisheries, subsistence fisheries, and groundfish fisheries. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is responsible for assessing the Pacific halibut stock and establishing total annual catch limits for directed fisheries and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is responsible for managing prohibited species catch (PSC) in U.S. commercial groundfish fisheries managed by the Council. The Amendment 80 sector is accountable for the majority of the annual halibut PSC mortality in the BSAI groundfish fisheries. While the Amendment 80 fleet has reduced halibut mortality in recent years, continued decline in the halibut stock requires consideration of additional measures for management of halibut PSC in the Amendment 80 fisheries.*

*When BSAI halibut abundance declines, PSC in Amendment 80 fisheries can become a larger proportion of total halibut removals in the BSAI, particularly in Area 4CDE, and can reduce the proportion of halibut available for harvest in directed halibut fisheries. The Council intends to establish an abundance-based halibut PSC management program in the BSAI for the Amendment 80 sector that meets the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, particularly to minimize halibut PSC to the extent practicable under National Standard 9 and to achieve optimum yield in the BSAI groundfish fisheries on a continuing basis under National Standard 1. The Council is considering a program that links the Amendment 80 sector PSC limit to halibut abundance and provides incentives for the fleet to minimize halibut mortality at all times. This action could also promote conservation of the halibut stock and may provide additional opportunities for the directed halibut fishery.*

The Council also revised its alternatives to meet the purpose and need, and provided direction to staff on the scope of the analysis for the next draft. The Council recommended replacing the existing suite of action alternatives in the DEIS with the following three action alternatives, based upon different look up tables utilizing breakpoints determined by both the IPHC setline survey and the EBS trawl survey. Under any of the action alternatives, the PSC limit would be determined annually based on survey values from the most recent

year available. A synopsis of the alternatives is provided below; the actual look up tables are in the Council's [motion](#).

**Alternative 2:** A 3X2 look-up table with PSC limits that range from current PSC limit to 20% below current limit.

**Alternative 3:** A 4X2 look-up table with PSC limits that range from 15% above current PSC limit to 30% below current limit.

**Alternative 4:** A 4X2 look-up table with PSC limits that range from current PSC limit to 45% below current limit.

The Council also adopted four options that could be applied to any of the alternatives.

**Option 1:** PSC limit is determined using a 3-year rolling average of survey index values instead of the most recent survey value.

**Option 2:** PSC limit varies no more than (suboptions: 10% or 15%) per year.

**Option 3:** Establish an annual limit of (suboptions: 80% or 90%) of the PSC limit generated by the look-up table. In 3 of 7 years, the A80 sector may exceed the annual limit up to the PSC limit generated by the look-up table. If the A80 sector has exceeded the annual limit in 3 of the past 7 years, then (suboptions: 80% or 90%) of the PSC limit generated by the look-up table is a hard cap for that year.

**Option 4:** (mutually exclusive with Options 2 and 3) PSC unused in one year may roll to the following year to increase the PSC limit generated by the lookup table up to 20%. Any PSC savings in excess of 20% would stay in the water.

The Council requested that the next version of the DEIS shift the analytical focus from a management strategy evaluation (MSE) approach centered on evaluating objectives with respect to performance metrics to a more traditional impacts analysis on the affected fishing sectors and other affected resource components. The analysis will provide the information necessary for the Council to understand the expected impacts of each alternative on the affected sectors, and use the information to develop an action that balances the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The analysis is scheduled for initial review in April 2021 which, following EIS timing requirements under NEPA, could allow for final action for October 2021. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

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## Survey Planning

The Council received a presentation from the Director of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Dr. Robert Foy, on planning for the 2021 Alaska surveys. The Council also received a report from the SSC on recommendations for longer-term survey planning given dwindling resources. The Council will continue to dialogue with Dr. Foy on 2021 survey planning in December. In particular, Dr. Foy will provide additional information on the various scenarios and contingency planning in place for 2021, based on

### Survey areas



logistical considerations (e.g., whether there is a full or partial complement of staff, what types of vessel are available, opportunities for cooperative work with partners, and opportunities for incorporating advanced technology) and the potential consequences of not getting survey data. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

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## Executive Order Promoting American Seafood

In May, the President issued a new Executive Order 13921 “Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness Economic Growth.” Section 4 of the E.O. requires each Regional Fishery Management Council to submit, within 180 days of the date of the order (by November 2, 2020), a prioritized list of recommended actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production within sustainable fisheries.

At the October meeting, the Council approved its list of priority actions. The highest priority actions are *Non-regulatory actions related to domestic production*, including prioritizing internal NOAA funding for groundfish surveys off Alaska and stock assessments; and prioritizing internal NOAA funding for observer coverage and electronic monitoring.

Lower priority items include:

*Council regulatory actions* – Implement and regulate pelagic trawl electronic monitoring; squid/sculpin processing restrictions; BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod LAPP; BSAI pot cod CP action; and continued evaluation to remove recordkeeping and reporting requirements or regulations that are no longer necessary.

*Non-regulatory actions related to U.S. seafood competitiveness* – Increase marketing funds, promotion of sustainable US seafood, and science-based consumption advice; Improve trade policy and foreign market access for domestic seafood; and allow refinance of fisheries buyback loans.

*NOAA policy* – Remove Allocation Review Policy Directive 01-119; Eliminate review process for approval of Council SOPPs as described by Procedural Directive 01-115-01.

Staff contact is David Witherell.

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## Staff Tasking

The Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects, and provided guidance to the Chair and Executive Director about which items to prioritize for December and subsequent meetings. The revised 3 meeting outlook reflects this guidance, along with the posted [December eAgenda](#). In addition to must-do items in December (BSAI and GOA groundfish specifications, 2021 Charter halibut management measures, and the Cook Inlet Salmon FMP amendment final action), the Council will review two initial review analyses for a BSAI Pacific cod Trawl Catcher Vessel LAPP and a BSAI Pacific cod Pot Catcher Processor Recency action. [Council meetings](#), including Plan Team and Committee meetings will be held virtually for the remainder of the calendar year and likely into 2021.



The Council directed staff to write a letter to the U.S. Coast Guard, thanking them for the thorough [briefing](#) on recent Russian military activities in the U.S. EEZ that involved interactions with U.S. fishing vessels, and highlighting the alarm that this situation created for U.S. vessels. The Council recommends that the Coast Guard consider additional ways to improve communication with vessels and communities in the future.

The Council also recognized the additional difficulties sustained by vessel and shoreside observers in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and very much appreciates the dedication of individuals who nonetheless continued their critical work in support of sound science for the management of sustainable fisheries.

Finally, the Council will consider appointments for the SSC, AP, and PNCIAC in December, for which a [call for nominations](#) has been posted.

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## Upcoming Meetings

### Council Committees, Plan Teams, Taskforces

#### October

- Charter Halibut Management Committee – October 27

#### November

- NPFMC-Board of Fisheries Joint Protocol Committee – November 5
- Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Taskforce on Local Knowledge/Traditional Knowledge/Subsistence Impacts – November 9-10
- Ecosystem Committee – November 12 (T)
- BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams, November 16-20
- Charter Halibut Management Committee – late November (date TBD)
- EDR stakeholder discussions (one for each EDR)
  - *Amendment 80*: Monday 11/16, 9-11 am AKT
  - *Crab*: Tuesday 11/17, 9-11 am AKT
  - *Amendment 91*: Monday 11/23, 9-11 am AKT
  - *GOA trawl*: Tuesday 11/24, 9-11 am AKT

#### 2021 – exact dates yet to be determined in most cases

- BSAI Crab Plan Team – January 11-15, 2021
- Community Engagement Committee – January
- Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Taskforce on Climate Change – January
- Social Science Planning Team – January
- Ecosystem Committee – January
- Enforcement Committee – late January
- Scallop Plan Team – February 17, 2021
- IFQ Committee – March
- Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC) – March or April
- BSAI Crab Plan Team – May 17-21, 2021

## Former Council member wins prestigious award

Linda Behnken, a member of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council from 1992 to 2001, recently won the **Heinz Award for the Environment** for her advocacy work promoting sustainable fishing practices while bolstering rural Alaskan fishing communities.

**Linda Behnken**



The Heinz Awards, administered by the Heinz Family Foundation to honor the memory of Senator John Heinz, recognize outstanding individuals for their contributions in the areas of: **Arts and Humanities, Environment, Human Condition, Public Policy, and Technology, the Economy and Employment.** The candidates for the Heinz Awards are selected without any action on their part. Nominations are submitted by invited experts, who serve anonymously, and are reviewed by an independent panel of jurors appointed by the Heinz Family Foundation.

After her time as a Council member, Behnken continues to contribute her knowledge and expertise in Alaskan fisheries through her participation both as an active stakeholder in the Council process as well as her involvement in international fisheries policy. Behnken is the executive director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association.

Congratulations, Linda!