

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## NEWSLETTER

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The regular meeting of the NPFMC was held Jan. 25-26 at the Sheffield House, Anchorage, Alaska. The SSC met starting on Jan. 22 and continued through Jan. 24; the AP met Jan. 24 and occasionally during the Council period. A public comment session was held Jan. 25 during the afternoon portion of the Council meeting. A closed session had been advertised but was found not to be necessary. No closed session is anticipated in February.

Chairman Clement V. Tillion convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m., Jan. 25 and turned the conduct of the meeting over to vice chairman Harold Lokken late in the day. (Mr. Tillion is President of the Alaska State Senate and found it necessary to return to his legislative duties in Juneau.)

Items of special interest during the two-day meeting included:

GoA Groundfish FMP- (Plan implemented Dec. 1, 1978). The Council considered a number of proposed amendments to the GoA FMP, several of which were pending from the Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1978 meeting. Action taken reduced from five to three the regulatory areas in the GoA, a matter of combining five areas into the following three: Yakutat/Southeast, Kodiak/Chirikof & Shumagin. This is expected to alleviate the operational difficulties encountered by the foreign fleet in

having small allocations from five areas with the possibility of early closures based on the distribution of OY among those areas. A second proposal was an increase of 2,000 mt to the OY for Atka mackeral in the Yakutat/Southeast area of the GoA. There was no previous allocation for that species in the SE area and no increase is expected in the total catch, which is incidental in nature. There is little interest in Atka mackeral by U.S. fishermen. This proposed amendment will be advertised for comment and final action at the Feb. 22-23 meeting. A third proposal discussed was a change in the sablefish (blackcod) OY for the Gulf; the Council decision was the 13,000 mt currently in effect in the FMP. A fourth proposal, to open the Davidson Bank area to foreign longlining, was deferred until February. Also deferred was the question of allowing a foreign longline fishery for Pacific cod between 157 and 140 W. longitude and landward of the 500 m isobath during the off-season for U.S. halibut fishermen. After discussing the special joint-venture reserve for Pacific cod, the Council decided to review each permit application on a case-by-case basis for species composition of the catch. The Council rescinded the restriction on the incidental catch of sablefish in j-v catches to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1% of the pollock catch.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN AREA GROUND FISH FMP- A recommendation to raise the OY of pollock to one million mt for the preliminary fishery management plan (PMP) for 1979 was passed by the Council. The action serves to bring the PMP figure to the same level as that proposed in the draft FMP.

In other action on the BS/A groundfish plan, the Council will

re-open for public comment at the February meeting only for determining time/area closures within the 3-12 nautical mile zone in the Bering Sea/Aleutian area.

BERING SEA SHRIMP FMP- Originally expected to go out for public comment in mid-February, this FMP was held back by the Council until more information on the resource becomes available. The shrimp workshop to be held in Kodiak in mid-February will bring together experts from around the world where the pandalid shrimp are found and projected survey work by NMFS (July-August) will allow a better estimate of the condition of the fishery and shrimp population. The FMP is not expected to be in effect until Jan. 1, 1980.

OBSERVER ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTED- Bob French, Northwest & Alaska Fisheries Center, Seattle, assisted by Janet Wall, presented an informative and well-received movie and slide show on the use of observers in the foreign fishery. The 1978 effort resulted in 18-man years of observer activity and involved 135 observers.

STATE CUMULATIVE BOTTOMFISH TOTAL FOR 1978- A report from the ADF&G reveals a total bottomfish catch in all areas of Alaska of 4,501.7 mt. Two-thirds of the total came from Southeast Alaska.

HALIBUT FMP- The halibut FMP is scheduled for implementation by April 2, 1979. Discussion of the halibut problem during the meeting resulted in support by the Council of proposed legislation to continue the Halibut commission research activities as a U.S. function to assure the effective maintenance of the Pacific halibut resource.

ADVISORY PANEL NOMINATIONS CLOSED- The Council is considering 14

nominees for two vacant seats on the 25-member AP. Successful candidates will be named at the February meeting.

COUNCIL INFORMATION BOOKLET- An informational booklet detailing the origin and work of the NPFMC will be printed soon. Council approved an initial printing of 2,000 copies.

LIMITED ENTRY COURT DECISION- John Garner, chairman of the Commercial Fishery Entry Commission, gave the Council a synopsis of the status of the Alaska limited entry system based on a recent court decision which declared invalid part of the process by which the LEC has determined eligibility for permits. According to Garner, if the ruling is upheld (it is now under appeal by the State) more fishermen will be eligible to apply for permits.

MEETING NOTE- A public hearing will be held Feb. 21, at 7:30 p.m. in the Alaska Room, Anchorage-Westward Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, to discuss the reimbursement of U.S. fishermen for certain damages and losses caused by activities related to development of the outer continental shelf. Further information can be obtained from the NMFS regional office in Juneau (907-586-7223).

MEETING ROOM AVAILABLE SOON- The NPFMC is in the process of adding more space to its offices on the 3rd floor of the Post Office Mall in Anchorage. A new conference room, designed to accommodate up to 50 persons, will be available on a reservation basis to any fishery-related group. For use of the room AFTER MARCH 1, contact Florence Mynarski at the Council office (274-4563).

SALMON INTERCEPTION GETS ATTENTION- Interceptions of king salmon by foreign trawlers in the Bering Sea/Aleutian area was a topic during

the January meeting. Jessie Foster and Joe DeMantle Jr., had brought the subject to the attention of the Council during a previous meeting, citing figures on the rate of interception and expressing concern about king salmon stocks in the A-Y-K district as a consequence of such interceptions. Council action was to request the PDT for the Bering Sea/Aleutian FMP to expand its study of the problem and suggest appropriate action.

AFDC SUPPORT FROM COUNCIL- Funds for the support of the Alaska Fisheries Development Corporation, once thought "in the bag" seem to have gotten sidetracked as a result of the belt-tightening in Washington, D.C. Sara Hemphill, Executive Director of the AFDC, asked for and received support from the Council in attempting to get the promised money to the Alaska group. A motion passed unanimously to send a letter requesting that Saltonstall-Kennedy funds be released immediately.

SPECKING, BODDY TO AP POSTS- Keith W. Specking retained his post as Chairman of the Advisory Panel and A.W. "Bud" Boddy, Juneau, was elected vice-chairman during the January Council meeting. The AP members voted to retain Specking and appoint Boddy and the action was made official by motion of the Council.

COOK INLET CRAB CLOSURE- An emergency order closing the Southern District of Cook Inlet to Tanner crab fishing, effective Jan. 26 at 11:59 p.m., has the distinction of being the first order issued under the joint Federal-State Cooperative Enforcement Agreement. The CEA was signed in December and is designed to take some of the problems out of the management of adjacent fisheries by the State and Federal governments.

NPFMC MEETING SCHEDULE- The regular monthly meetings of the NPFMC will be held on the following dates: FEBRUARY 22-23 (Sheffield House, Anchorage); MARCH 22-23 (McPheeters Hall, Juneau); APRIL 26-27 (Anchorage-Westward Hilton Hotel, Anchorage); MAY 24-25 (Anchorage-Westward Hilton Hotel, Anchorage).

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