

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

News and Notes



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Steller Sea Lions

The Council received the SSC review of the Biological Opinion (BiOp), received several reports on Steller sea lion (SSL) research, and discussed the workplan for the 2002 amendment package. Generally, the SSC concluded that the BiOp is scientifically deficient. Once final, their full report will be available on the Council's web site. The Council discussed issues to be examined in the short term by an independent scientific review team, with a focus on developing a sound monitoring program. Other issues and questions will be addressed in the longer term by independent scientific review by the National Academy of Sciences.

The Council received a progress report on the Kodiak adaptive management experiment and reviewed preliminary spending plans for the new sea lion research funding made available this year. They recommended that research immediately address four priority issues, including (1) field studies to assess the SSL prey field in known local areas; (2) research to improve the measurement of the numbers of SSLs; (3) the development of a probabilistic assessment of the simultaneous pursuit of prey by juvenile sea lions and the fisheries; and (4) the development of a population-dynamics (i.e., virtual population) model for the western stock of SSL.

A full amendment package will have to be developed during this year for Council action in October 2001, which would propose a package of protective measures (RPAs) for implementation in January 2002. Final action on that package would have to occur in October, to allow time for Secretarial review, including a separate Section 7 consultation on that package, and for implementing regulations to be developed by January 2002. Feeding into that process will be the Council's RPA Committee as well as information developed from the scientific reviews. The Council reviewed a 'roadmap' for amendment development, and reviewed an initial set of alternatives for analysis. Additional alternatives may be developed, and specified in more detail, through the Council/Committee process this spring, with a final set of alternatives identified at the June meeting.

A critical part of this process in 2001 will involve the RPA Committee, which was recently appointed. The closed areas contained in the BiOp would go into effect on June 10, 2001, subject to modifications proposed by the Council at the April

meeting in Anchorage. Such modifications would be subject to meeting certain requirements of the BiOp with regard to minimum critical habitat protection. The Committee will be involved in the longer-term development of RPAs and experimental design, but will be tasked in the short term with development of open/closed area recommendations for the latter half of 2001. Council direction to that Committee includes consideration of small boat concerns in development of open/closed areas for the latter half of 2001, with the added direction that such measures should be developed in a 'non-allocative' manner. The RPA Committee, chaired by Larry Cotter, includes members of fishing community, the conservation community, NMFS, SSC, and State agencies. Meetings have tentatively been scheduled as follows: February 20 in Juneau, March 6-8 in Seattle, March 26-28 in Anchorage, and possibly April 3-5 in Anchorage. (*Continued, page 2*)

Two New Members Appointed to the SSC

During the February meeting, the Council approved appointment of Drs. Mark Herrmann and George Hunt, Jr. to the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Dr. Herrmann is a Professor in the Economics Department of the University of Alaska Fairbanks and has served on the Council's Crab Plan Team since 1998. Dr. Hunt is a Professor at the University of California, Irvine, and has expertise in the area of seabirds, particularly in the Bering Sea region. Both appointments will enhance the varied disciplines needed on the SSC to effectively advise the Council on the complex biological and socio-economic aspects of fishery management decisions.

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(Steller Sea Lions, continued)

Other actions taken at the February meeting on the SSL issue include: the Council requested that NMFS provide a comparison of the management measures contained in the 2000 and 2001 RPAs, and that the EIS developed for SSL RPAs include a retrospective analysis and current approach relative to ecosystem management theory. A request was made that NMFS and ADF&G provide the SSL satellite tagging information to the public by March if possible. The Council also may retain an attorney for legal advice regarding actions taken under the Endangered Species Act. Of immediate importance, the Council sent a letter to the Secretary of Commerce requesting that he use his discretionary authority, as follows:

The Council recommends that the Secretary of Commerce exercise his discretionary authority, pursuant to Public Law 106-554, provision (c)(6), in enforcing regulations for the 2001 fisheries, by pursuing any or all of the following measures:*

Opening Critical Habitat

- 1. in the Gulf of Alaska to allow fishing except for 10 nm closures around those haulouts and rookeries listed in the current emergency rule.*
- 2. in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands to allow fishing as per the RFRPAs in place in 2000.*

Adjusting Seasonal Catch Levels

- 1. allow 100% of Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) beginning January 1, 2001, as was conducted in 2000.*
- 2. allow 2001 removals in the Bering Sea sea lion conservation area using the identical percent as in 2000, instead of a fixed metric ton cap, or*
- 3. consider a proposal by the Unalaska Native Fishermen's Association to exempt from the red zone closures around Unalaska and Akutan the jig fisheries for Pacific cod (2% set-aside of the TAC) and fixed gear vessels under 60 ft (1.4% of the TAC), and*
- 4. consider deferring imposition of the June closures in the current emergency rule (for bycatch considerations, or any other measures the Secretary may identify).*

**(c)(6) In enforcing regulations for the 2001 fisheries, the Secretary, upon recommendation of the North Pacific Council, may open critical habitat where needed, adjust seasonal catch levels, and take other measures as needed to ensure that harvest levels are sufficient to provide income from these fisheries for small boats and Alaskan on-shore processors that is no less than in 1999.*

A letter to this effect has been forward to the Secretary of Commerce. Staff contacts are David Witherell and Chris Oliver.

Vessel Monitoring Systems

Under the SSL item, the Council recommended releasing for public review the analysis requiring vessels that conduct directed fishing operations for pollock, Atka mackerel, or Pacific cod in the BSAI and GOA to install and use a vessel monitoring system with the following modifications listed below. Final action is scheduled for no later than June 2001.

1. Add option not requiring vessels to stop fishing in the event of a system failure.
2. Provide data regarding failure rate of VMS units and VMS data transfer system and potential costs to vessels resulting from breakdowns if required to stop fishing. Additionally, add an attachment from Argos documenting performance attributes of existing technology and proposed upgrades to VMS.
3. Remove floating, inshore processors from data in Tables.
4. Add option not prohibiting vessels without VMS to stop fishing in quota management area when CH closed to directed fishing.
5. Add option requiring VMS only when fishing for cod, pollock or Atka mackerel.
6. Add option dropping Motherships if vessels delivering to MS has VMS.
7. Add clarification of protocols for use of VMS to evaluate fish harvests inside/outside CH and separately protocols for using VMS for enforcement purposes.
8. A discussion comparing costs for VMS systems relative to current enforcement costs as well as a discussion of lost opportunity costs due to current catch accounting.
9. Discussion on potential use of state or federal funds (ie: savings from enforcement costs) to provide assistance to fisherman for VMS equipment, installation and operating costs.
10. Add discussion of the % of each management area's quota taken by each vessel category, and the % of effort spent inside and outside of CH.
11. Explore the option of archiving data in the event of equipment failure in order to allow continued fishing;
12. Explore the option of exempting vessels under 55 ft. for each of the alternatives in the analysis.

GOA Rationalization

The first meeting of the reconstituted GOA Rationalization Committee was held on February 8. The committee will use the problem statement adopted by the Council in June 2000 for public comment as its starting point. An ad hoc subcommittee will provide recommendations to revise the problem statement to address Section 144(b)(2) language from the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) of 2001 and changes already adopted by the Council that affect GOA groundfish fisheries. The committee identified its objectives:

1. to determine *whether* rationalization in GOA is needed;
2. for what species/areas;
3. to recommend analysis of economic impacts of:
 - a. IFQs
 - b. processor Quota Shares
 - c. cooperatives
 - d. community Quota Shares

The next meeting of the committee will be on March 20 and 21 in Anchorage (location to be announced). The committee will:

1. approve a revised problem statement;
2. review a flowchart that will aid in the determination of whether certain fisheries could be identified for fast-track development or for a demonstration fishery;
3. review an interactive spreadsheet that compares all the previously submitted proposals for rationalizing GOA groundfish fisheries; and
4. review a discussion paper of lessons learned from past rationalization efforts, identification of data issues, major goals of allocation issues, and decision points for potential allocations.

The committee recommended that the Council not proceed with prioritizing rationalizing the Pacific cod fishery until the committee makes its final recommendations in June 2001. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Nominations sought for NPRB

The North Pacific Research Board (Board), created by Congress for the purpose of carrying out marine research activities in all waters off Alaska, is seeking nominations for the fifth member who will represent fishing interests. The other four voting members include: representatives of the Secretary of Commerce (Dr. Jim Balsiger), the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game (Mr. Kevin Duffy), the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Mr. David Benton), and the Alaska SeaLife Center (Mr. Tylan Schrock).

Nominees should be knowledgeable of groundfish, shellfish, salmon and other fisheries, as well as possess a general understanding of other research initiatives currently underway in the waters off Alaska. Nominations should be sent to Mr. Bill Hines, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 21668,

Juneau, Alaska, or by fax at 907-586-7249, or email at william.hines@noaa.gov. Nominations should include a curriculum vitae and any other pertinent information. Nominations are due by February 26, 2001. The Board will hold its first meeting in Anchorage April 9-10, 2001.

HAPC Stakeholder Meeting Update

The first public HAPC stakeholder meetings were held in Southeast Alaska on January 10th in Sitka and January 12th in Yakutat. Sitka had approximately 70 participants and Yakutat had 40. The purpose of the meetings was to have an open discussion on HAPC and the importance of coral and sponge habitat and potential HAPC areas. Our task was to get input from local communities and stakeholders typically not involved in the Council process. We were requesting public input in two areas: 1) Where are these corals and sponges located beyond what we have documented? and, 2) how best to protect them; does anything need to be done? The intent was to obtain feedback for the Council and to begin dialogue on these issues.

Both meetings began with an overview which included the following: presentation of HAPC and the importance of gorgonian corals by staff, Cathy Coon; current HAPC coral research by NMFS-Auke Bay Lab, slides and video from Linc Freese; and a video of NMFS experimental trawl research presented by Eric Jordan, AMCC. Key questions and concerns were raised in both communities on gorgonian coral/sponge HAPC designation as well as other concerns expressed below:

Sitka

- Longline gear has minimal effect on coral and sponge habitat.
- More research is needed on coral and impacts by fisheries.

Yakutat

- Local fleet has no impact on coral and sponges
- Concerned about scallop fishery impacts on crab habitat.

Public comment addressed the need for a means to summarize stakeholder information into a more detailed analysis to designate HAPC areas.

Council has interest in holding two further HAPC meetings in the future, one for the Kenai area and one at an area in the Western Aleutians. Staff contact is Cathy Coon at Cathy.Coon@noaa.gov.

EFH scoping meetings relative to a revised EIS for EFH amendments, are going to be scheduled this spring. Please check the NMFS website for updates at www.fakr.noaa.gov.

BSAI Pacific Cod Pot Allocations

The Council voted to release for public review the analysis for proposed BSAI Amendment 68, which would create direct allocations for pot catcher/processors and pot catcher vessels fishing Pacific cod in the BSAI. The amendment would further split the current 18.3% of the fixed gear Pacific cod TAC allocated to pot gear according to recent catch histories. The Council provided direction on several revisions to the analysis and indicated specific information that should be added, including a provision for how to distribute any unused quota that is rolled over from either pot sector. The Council also revised the problem statement to better express the exact nature of the problem this amendment is intended to address. The new problem statement for Amendment 68 is as follows:

The catcher/processor and catcher vessel pot fisheries for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands are fully utilized. Competition for this resource has increased for a variety of reasons, including increased market value of cod products and a declining ABC/TAC.

Pot catcher/processors who have made significant long-term investments, have long catch histories, and are significantly dependent on the BSAI cod fisheries need protection from pot catcher vessels who want to increase their Pacific cod harvest. This requires prompt action to promote stability in the BSAI pot cod fishery until comprehensive rationalization is completed.

Staff intends to revise the analysis as recommended by the Council and make it available for public review by the end of March. However, because of the potential implications of proposed BSAI Amendment 67 and the uncertainty of the implications related to management measures currently being developed to protect Steller sea lions, the Council decided to delay final action pending further resolution of these issues.

Depending on the outcome of these two issues, and the level to which they affect the BSAI Pacific cod pot gear fishery, the analysis may need further revision before final action. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

Revising Groundfish Specification Process

NMFS staff presented an initial review draft to revise the specification (quota-setting) process for BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries. Revisions to the program are attempting to meet the following objectives:

1. manage fisheries based on best available information respond to new information or conservation concerns
2. comply with Congressional requirements while minimizing unnecessary disruption to fisheries
3. provide adequate opportunity for public review and comment
4. promote administrative efficiency while minimizing public confusion regarding annual specifications.

The draft analysis will be revised for public review to address recommendations by the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, and Council. Final action may be scheduled for no later than June 2001. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Disclosure of Catch and Bycatch Data

The Council reviewed a draft discussion paper describing regulatory changes needed in order for a vessel's state and federal harvest information to be publicly disclosed. The Council then directed Council staff to initiate an analysis evaluating the effectiveness of public disclosure on reducing bycatch and requested NMFS staff to update the 1996 bycatch and discard report compiled by Dr. Joe Terry. The Council also voted to send a letter to the Governor and Alaska State Legislature proposing a change to state law to allow the public disclosure of catch and bycatch for vessels in Federal groundfish fisheries. Staff contact is Elaine Dinneford.

Opilio Crab Bycatch

Last fall, the Council requested the crab plan team to examine the 2000 bycatch of *opilio* crab in trawl fisheries within the *C. Opilio* Bycatch Limitation Zone (COBLZ) and Area 517, and consider possible boundary line changes for the COBLZ relative to previous industry negotiations on *opilio* bycatch management measures. The Team met by teleconference on January 25 and recommended maintaining status quo for *opilio* bycatch limits, but suggested that the Council discuss including *opilio* in the vessel incentive program (VIP). In February, the Council received the Team's report, and moved the following: 1) Request the observer program examine the feasibility of providing weight measures of *opilio* bycatch to allow for better comparison of bycatch removals and commercial catches of *opilio*; 2) Work towards including *opilio* into the VIP with an initial rate standard of 25 *opilio* per metric ton of groundfish in the yellowfin sole fishery; 3) Ask ADF&G to review and evaluate the AMCC concerns about the impacts of trawl bycatch on local *opilio* abundance; and 4) Include in the analysis of processor sideboards/IR/IU some discussion about the potential for *opilio* bycatch reduction. (See separate article.) Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

American Fisheries Act

The Council reviewed the final co-op reports for the 2000 fisheries, including reports from the inshore processor and mothership sectors on product mix and overall utilization rates. Similar information was provided in the offshore catcher/processor report. These reports are available upon request from the Council offices. Under this agenda item, the Council initiated several amendment packages to address a suite of issues. First, the Council revisited the issue of groundfish processing sideboards, and requested that a plan amendment analysis be prepared, in time for implementation in January 2003, which would re-examine the Improved Retention/Improved Utilization (IR/IU) requirements for flatfish species, as an alternative to processing sideboards based on processing history. Recall that in 2003, under the existing IR/IU amendments, these species will come under the 100% retention requirements. The amendment initiated by the Council will examine options of (a) no retention, (b) full retention, or status quo, (c) 50% retention for rocksole and 85% retention for yellowfin sole, and (d) other bycatch reduction measures that may be developed by industry. The analysis is intended to examine the effects of these options relative to other species catch and bycatch. Related action was taken with regard to opilio crab bycatch (see separate newsletter article). Work on this analysis would not begin until 2002 likely, with action by the Council likely scheduled for June of 2002.

Under this agenda item the Council also adopted an AP motion intended to facilitate potential development of co-ops in the BSAI cod trawl fisheries by recognizing the ability of harvesting cooperatives to address the race for fish and Steller sea lion concerns. The Council did not appoint a Committee in this regard, but is encouraging the industry to pursue further discussions which could address both general management issues and recent conflicts between AFA and non-AFA cod trawl fishermen early in the season. To facilitate this process the Council also passed a motion initiating an amendment for P. cod trawl LLP recency requirements, as follows: *to eliminate latent BSAI trawl-endorsed LLP permits by establishment of a recency requirement for non-AFA vessels (using qualification years proposed by the AP in June 2000), with the addition for non-AFA trawl catcher/processors, a recency requirement for all groundfish species in the BSAI/GOA of one landing in 1999 and 2000.* Work on such an amendment would begin when staff or outside contact assistance become available.

To more specifically address the issue of competition between AFA and non-AFA cod trawl fishermen early in the season, the Council initiated an amendment to examine alternatives suggested by the non-AFA cod fishermen, with the specific direction that work on such an amendment package would not begin until at least April, pending other staff tasking priorities and/or an industry-based solution. The proposed action would examine the following: *(a) limiting access to the directed trawl fishery for P. cod to the cod-exempt AFA vessels and to open access vessels which have a history of economic dependency upon the winter Bering Sea P. cod fisheries, as demonstrated by average January and February deliveries of at least 500,000*

pounds for 4 out of the 5 pre-AFA years of 1995-1999 (or such other measures of dependency as the Council deems fit), and (b) allocating a minimum of 5,000,000 pounds (with no cap) of P. cod to non-AFA vessels which meet the criteria set forth above.

Also under the AFA agenda item, the Council approved development of an amendment which would allow an AFA co-op catcher vessel to contract with a vessel(s) from a different co-op to harvest its pollock, after notification to its co-op and approval of its associated processor. This amendment is scheduled for initial review at the April meeting, and final action in June, so that it would be in place for 2002 if approved.

Regarding the AFA report to Congress, that project is underway and it is expected that a draft report will be available for Council review at the June meeting. Council contact for AFA issues is Chris Oliver.

Crab Rationalization

The Council received a report from NMFS on the recently legislated capacity reduction (buyback) program for the BSAI crab fisheries, noting corrections to the legislation which are now being developed for Congress' consideration which would make that legislation consistent with the Council's eligibility criteria, and exemptions, under LLP. Regulations to implement the buyback are being developed by NMFS, and specific questions on that program should be directed to the NMFS Restricted Access Management (RAM) Division in Juneau. In the meantime, the Council's Crab Rationalization Committee is working to develop a suite of alternatives, elements, and options for analysis, with the expectation of a report to the Council in April in that regard. The focus of that Committee is on some type of co-op or IFQ program, and includes representation of harvesters, processors, and communities. Staff contact is Maria Tsu.

Other Staff Tasking

The Council requested development of a discussion paper, for review in June, of the proposal by the Gulf Coast Community Coalition (GCCC) to allow communities to purchase commercial halibut IFQ. Staff will use the original GCCC proposal for guidance in this effort. A formal amendment analysis could occur in October, pending Council direction and staff availability. Council contact is Nicole Kimball. Under this agenda item the Council also discussed its various Committees, and noticed its intent to further discuss this in April with the intent of consolidating and streamlining the Committee process. General staff tasking, including a discussion of existing projects and Council prioritization, will also occur in April.

Halibut Charter Management

The Council approved the release of the draft analysis for managing the halibut charter sector, dependent on numerous revisions to the alternatives and the economic analysis of those revised alternatives. Principal changes include: (1) revised problem statements for the charter IFQ program and the community set-aside option; (2) added an owner/operator or vessel moratorium as a new alternative to the no action and Individual Fishing Quota program alternatives; (3) add a separate section on the impacts of an IFQ program or moratorium on anglers; and (4) added a chronology of events relative to development of the IFQ program alternative. The revised suite of alternatives is listed as Appendix I. The revised analysis will be released to the public on March 12. Copies will be available by mail or may be downloaded from the Council website.

Final action is scheduled for the April Council meeting. The IFQ Implementation Team will convene on Sunday, April 8, and the Charter IFQ Committee will convene on April 9, to review the revised analysis and provide recommendations to the Council for final action. Staff contact for this analysis is Jane DiCosimo.

REVISED CHARTER IFQ PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Pacific halibut resource is fully utilized. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council recently adopted a GHL to address allocation issues between the guided sport sector and other users of the halibut resource. Upon adoption by the SOC, the GHL is intended to stop the open-ended reallocation between commercial and guided sport sectors and to address a number of other concerns. The Council remains concerned that over time allocation conflicts between sectors may resurface, and that overcapitalization in the guided sport fleet may have a negative impact on both guided sport operators and anglers. The Council is developing a management plan *for the guided sport sector* to address these concerns while:

1. recognizing the unique nature of the guided sport sector
2. controlling consolidation;
3. providing entry level opportunities for guided sport operators, and
4. encouraging diversity of opportunities for anglers.

In evaluating alternatives, the Council seeks to maintain access opportunities for halibut fishermen, processors and consumers and to assess costs and benefits to anglers.

REVISED SET-ASIDE PROBLEM STATEMENT

A number of small, coastal communities in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska are struggling to remain economically viable. The charter IFQ program, as with other limited entry programs, will increase the cost of entry to the halibut charter fishery.

A community set-aside of halibut charter IFQs will remove this economic barrier, promoting geographic diversity in the charter industry and sustained economic opportunity in small remote coastal communities in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska.

Bering Sea Summit 2002

A Bering Sea Summit, sponsored by the EPA, has been re-scheduled for April 22-26, 2002, at the Egan Center in Anchorage, Alaska. The purpose of the Summit is "to foster open dialogue among the highly diverse organizations, management agencies and communities in the Bering Sea region to establish creative alliances and partnership, and achieve sustainable policies and durable decisions." Resource managers, commercial and industrial interests, subsistence users, scientists, local communities, Tribal governments, Native organizations, community leaders and conservationists, as well as anyone with an interest in the future of the Bering Sea watershed and its resources, are invited to attend. The goal of the Summit will be to produce a multi-party strategic vision for protecting and utilizing the Bering Sea. For more information, participants should contact Jo-Ann Saville, SAIC contractor: savillej@saic.com. Sponsors should contact Suzanne Marcy, EPA; 907-271-2895; 907-271-3424 (fax), or marcy.suzanne@epa.gov.

Public Hearings Set for Alaska Groundfish Fisheries SEIS

The draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands has been released by the National Marine Fisheries Service for public review and comment. The comment period began January 26, 2001 and will end April 26. The draft SEIS, which consists of nine volumes and is over 3,300 pages, is available in hard copy, on CD, and on the NMFS Alaska Region website: www.fakr.noaa.gov. To request a hard copy or CD, contact Steven K. Davis, NMFS, 222 West 7th Ave., Room 517, Anchorage, AK 99513. Five public meetings will be held to provide information and solicit comments on the SEIS. The meetings will begin with an 'open house' style meeting followed by a formal public hearing. Comments can also be submitted in writing to the Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, Alaska 99802 (Attn: Lori Gravel).

Public Meeting Schedule

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
MARCH 27, 2001	5:00-6:00p.m. Open House 6:00-8:00p.m. Formal Hearing	Juneau, Alaska Centennial Hall, 101 Egan Drive Hickel Room
MARCH 28, 2001	5:00-6:00p.m. Open House 6:00-8:00p.m. Formal Hearing	Portland, Oregon Federal Building, 911 NE 11th Ave. Conference Room C
MARCH 29, 2001	5:00-7:00p.m. Open House 7:00-9:00p.m. Formal Hearing	Seattle, Washington NOAA Facilities, AFSC 7600 Sand Point Way NE Building 9, Conference Rooms A & B
APRIL 3, 2001	5:00-6:00p.m. Open House 6:00-8:00p.m. Formal Hearing	Kodiak Alaska Fishery Industrial Technology Center Near Island
APRIL 11, 2001	5:00-7:30p.m. Open House 7:30-10:00p.m. Formal Hearing	Anchorage, Alaska Anchorage Hilton, 500 W. 3rd Ave. Aleutian Room

NPFMC Tentative Meeting Dates for 2001-2005*

	February Week of/ Location	April Week of/ Location	June Week of/ Location	October Week of/ Location	December Week of/ Location
2001	5/Anchorage	9/Anchorage	4/Kodiak	1/Seattle	3/Anchorage
2002	4/Anchorage	8/Anchorage	3/Dutch Harbor	9/30/Seattle	2/Anchorage
2003	3/Seattle	3/31/Anchorage	9/Kodiak	6/Anchorage	8/Anchorage
2004	2/Anchorage	3/29/Anchorage	7/Portland	4/Sitka	6/Anchorage
2005	7/Seattle	4/Anchorage	6/Dutch Harbor	3/Anchorage	5/Anchorage

*Meeting dates subject to change depending on availability of meeting space. Any changes will be published in the Council's newsletter.

- Alternative 1. Status quo.
- Alternative 2. Include the halibut charter sector in the existing halibut IFQ program.

Issue 1. Initial QS may be based on:

- Option 1. 14.11% in Area 3A and 13.05% in Area 2C of a combined charter and commercial quota
Equal to 125% of corrected average 1995-99 charterboat harvest
- Option 2. 12.26% in Area 3A and 13.32% in Area 2C of a combined charter and commercial quota
Equal to 100% of corrected average 1998-99 charterboat harvest
- * Option 3. 11.29% in Area 3A and 10.44% in Area 2C of combined charter and commercial quota
Equal to 100% of corrected 1995-99 average harvest
- Suboption: 0-50% of an individual's QS initial issuance would be fixed and the remainder would float with abundance.

Issue 2. Initial allocation of QS would be issued to U.S. citizens or to U.S. companies on the following basis:
U.S. ownership based on: a) 51% ownership; b) 75% ownership

- Option 1. Charter vessel owner - person who owns the charterboat and charterboat business
- Option 2. Bare vessel lessee - person that leases a vessel and controls its use as a charterboat for this fishery. May operate the vessel or may hire a captain/skipper. Lessee determines when the vessel sails and by whom captained

Issue 3. Qualification Criteria

- Option 1. Initial issues who carried clients in 1998 and 1999 and who submitted ADFG logbooks for an active vessel (as received by ADFG by February 12, 2000)
- Option 2. Initial issues who carried clients in 1998 or 1999 and who submitted ADFG logbooks for an active vessel (as received by ADFG by February 12, 2000)
- Option 3. Initial issues who carried clients prior to June 24, 1998 and who submitted at least one ADFG logbook for an active vessel (as received by ADFG by February 12, 2000)
- Option 4. Initial issues who carried clients four out of five years between 1995-1999 as evidenced by IPHC, CFEC and ADFG business and guide documentation for 1995-99 and submitted logbooks for an active vessel in 1998 and 1999
- Option 5. Initial issues who carried clients four out of five years between 1995-1999 as evidenced by IPHC, CFEC and ADFG business and guide documentation for 1995-99 and submitted logbooks for an active vessel for either 1998 or 1999
- *Option 6. Initial issues who carried clients three out of five years between 1995-1999 as evidenced by IPHC, CFEC, and ADFG business and guide documentation for 1995-99 and submitted logbooks for an active vessel in 1998 and 1999
- *Option 7. Initial issues who carried clients three out of five years between 1995-1999 as evidenced by IPHC, CFEC, and ADFG business and guide documentation for 1995-99 and submitted logbooks for an active vessel in 1998 or 1999
- *Suboption: Require that initial issues be currently participating (meeting all legal requirements including filing a logbook) during season prior to final action (currently May- Sept 2000) and claimed trips must have been

under the operation of a person holding a U.S. Coast Guard license.

Issue 4. Distribution of QS may be based on:

Option 1. 70% of 1998 and 1999 logbook average with an additional 10% added for each year of operation 1995-97 (longevity reward).

Option 2. Modified Kodiak proposal: 5-30% for A, 33% for B, 37-62% for C

Part A: each individual gets an equal percentage of the qualified pool as identified by the Council's final action.

Part B: each individual's average 98/99 logbook harvest as percentage of overall harvest is multiplied by 33% of the qualified pool.

Part C: one point for each year of participation during 1995-99.

Suboption: Base distribution for the preferred option on both total catch retained and caught and released

Issue 5. Transferability of QS (permanent) and IFQs (on annual basis [leasing])

Option 1. Two types of Charter QS/IFQ:

- a) Leasable
- b) Non-leasable

* Suboption: Define leasing as the use of QS/IFQ on vessels on which the owner of the QS/IFQ has less than 20-75% ownership

Option 2. Transfer of QS (permanent) and/or IFQs (leasing):

- a) prohibit transfers between charter and commercial sectors
- b) allow transfers between charter and commercial sectors
 - 1. 1-yr one way transfer from commercial to charter
 - 2. 3-yr one way transfer from commercial to charter
 - 3. two-way (between commercial and charter sectors).

*

Suboptions under Options b (1-3):

- i. Designate QS pool into two classes for transfer from charter to commercial sector: transferable (25%) and non-transferable (75%) pools on an individual's basis
- ii. Cap the percentage of annual IFQ transfers (de facto leasing) between sectors not to exceed 25% of total IFQs and a range of 0-10% of IFQs per year from charter to commercial.
- iii. on percentage of annual QS transfers between sectors not to exceed 25% of total QS and a range of between 0-10% of QS per year from charter to commercial.
- iv. A range of 0-10% leasing of Charter IFQ to charter from charter for the first 3 years

Option 3. Block restrictions

- c) any initially issued (i.e., unblocked) charter QS once transferred to commercial sector shall be:
 - 1. blocked
 - 2. blocked up to the limits of the commercial sweep-up and block limits

- *
 - 3. unblocked
 - d) allow splitting of commercial blocks to transfer a smaller piece to the charter sector
 - e) allow splitting of commercial blocks once transferred to the charter sector
- 3 Option 4. Vessel class restrictions
 - d) from A, B, C, and/or D commercial vessel category sizes to charter sector
 - 1. Leasable
 - 2. Non-leasable
 - b) from charter to commercial:
 - 1. D category only
 - 2. C and D category only
 - 3. B, C, and D category
 - c) initial transfer from undesignated charter to a particular commercial vessel category locks in at that commercial category
- Option 5. Minimum size of transfer is range of 20-72 fish

Issue 6. To receive halibut QS and IFQ by transfer:

- Option 1. For the charter sector, must be either
 - a) a initial charter issuee or
 - b) qualified as defined by State of Alaska requirements for registered guides or businesses*
 - *Suboption: and hold a USCG license.
- *this would require a change in the commercial regulations to allow transfer of commercial QS/IFQ to charter operator
- *
 - c) fulfill all legal obligations of the charter sector

- Option 2. For the commercial sector, must have a commercial transfer eligibility certificate.
 - * Suboption: all commercial rules apply to any provision that may permit the use of commercial QS/IFQ for commercial purposes by any entity in the Charter IFQ sector.

Issue 7. Caps

- Option 1. No caps - free transferability
- Option 2. Caps:
 - * a) use cap for charter QS owners only of ¼, ½, and 1% of combined QS units in Area 2C and ¼, ½, and 1% of combined QS units in Area 3A (for all entities, individually and collectively) and grandfather initial issues at their initial allocation
 - * b) use cap for charter QS owners only of ¼, ½, and 1% of combined QS units for combined Areas 2C and 3A (for all entities, individually and collectively) and grandfather initial issues at their initial allocation

Issue 8. Miscellaneous provisions

- Option 1. Maximum line limit of 12 in Area 3A (remains at 6 lines for Area 2C), grandfather initial issues
- Option 2. 10% underage provision of total IFQs
- Option 3. 10% overage provision of IFQs remaining on last trip to be deducted from next year's IFQs
- * Option 4. A one-year delay between initial issuance of QS and fishing IFQs.

Issue 9. IFQs associated with the charter quota shares may be issued in:

- Option 1. Pounds
- Option 2. Numbers of fish (based on average weight determined by ADFG)

Issue 10. Reporting:

- Option 1. Require operator to report landings at conclusion of trip
- Option 2. ADFG logbook
- Option 3. Require a reporting station in every city and charter boat location to accurately weigh every halibut caught.
- * Option 4. Charter IFQ fish tags
- * Option 5. Require operator to log the catch at the time the fish is retained.

Issue 11. Community set-aside

- Option 1. No community set-aside.
- Option 2. Set-aside 1/2-2 1/2 percent of combined commercial charter TAC for Gulf coastal communities

Suboption 1. Source of the set-aside

- a) equal pounds from the commercial and charter sectors.
- b) proportional amount based on the split between the commercial and charter sectors.
- c) 100 percent of the pounds taken out of the charter sector.

Suboption 2. Sunset provision

- a. no sunset
- b. sunset in 5 years
- c. sunset in 10 years
- d. *persons currently participating in the set-aside program at the time of sunset would be allowed to operate within the guidelines of the program.

*Alternative 3. Moratorium

Issue

- Option 1. owner/operator or lessee (the individual who has the license and fills out logbook) of the charter vessel/business that fished during the eligibility period (based on an individual's participation and not the vessel's activity)
- Option 2. vessel

Qualification Criteria

- Option 1. Initial issues who carried clients in 1998 and 1999 and who submitted ADFG logbooks for an active vessel (as received by ADFG by February 12, 2000)
- Option 2. Initial issues who carried clients in 1998 or 1999 and who submitted ADFG logbooks for an active vessel (as received by ADFG by February 12, 2000)
- Option 3. Initial issues who carried clients prior to June 24, 1998 and who submitted at least one ADFG logbook for an active vessel (as received by ADFG by February 12, 2000)

- Option 4. Initial issues who carried clients four out of five years between 1995-1999 as evidenced by IPHC, CFEC , and ADFG business and guide documentation for 1995-99 and submitted logbooks for an active vessel in 1998 and 1999
- Option 5. Initial issues who carried clients four out of five years between 1995-1999 as evidenced by IPHC, CFEC and ADFG business and guide documentation for 1995-99 and submitted logbooks for an active vessel for either 1998 or 1999
- Option 6. Initial issues who carried clients three out of five years between 1995-1999 as evidenced by IPHC, CFEC , and ADFG business and guide documentation for 1995-99 and submitted logbooks for an active vessel in 1998 and 1999
- Option 7. Initial issues who carried clients three out of five years between 1995-1999 as evidenced by IPHC, CFEC , and ADFG business and guide documentation for 1995-99 and submitted logbooks for an active vessel in 1998 or 1999
- Suboption: Require that initial issues be currently participating (meeting all legal requirements including filing a logbook) during season prior to final action (currently May- Sept 2000) and claimed trips must have been under the operation of a person holding a U.S. Coast Guard license.

Evidence of participation

- C mandatory:
 IPHC license (for all years)
 CFEC number (for all years)
 1998 logbook
- C supplementary:
 Alaska state business license
 sportfish business registration
 insurance for passenger for hire
 ADF&G guide registration
 enrollment in drug testing program (CFR 46)

Vessel upgrade

- Option 1: license designation limited to 6-pack, if currently a 6-pack, and inspected vessel owner limited to current inspected certification (held at number of people, not vessel size)
- Option 2: allow upgrades in southeast Alaska (certified license can be transferred to similar sized vessel)

Transfers

will be allowed

Duration for review

- Option 1: tied to the duration of the GHL
- Option 2: 3 years
- Option 3: 5 years (3 years, with option to renew for 2 years)

NPFMC Three Meeting Outlook

NOTE: Special September meeting for initial review of Steller sea lion measures only

April 9, 2001 Anchorage	June 4, 2001 Kodiak	October 1, 2001 Seattle
Halibut Charter IFQ Program: Final Action	GCCC community IFQ purchase: Review discussion paper	BSAI trawl P. cod LLP recency: Initial review (T)
Steller Sea Lion measures for second half of 2001 (open/closed areas): Final action		BSAI pot cod split: Final action (T)
Steller Sea Lion measures for 2002: Review RPA Committee report, staff progress on analysis, alternatives for analysis, and independent scientific review	Steller sea lions: Review independent review, report from RPA committee, finalize alternatives for analysis	Steller sea lion RPAs: Final action
Seabirds: Report/discussion	Shark/Skate FMP: Final action	
Programmatic SEIS: Review and comment	LAMPs/subsistence: Review Board of Fish recommendations	
AFA - co-op leasing proposal: Initial review	AFA - co-op leasing proposal: Final action	
AFA- salmon bycatch Inter co-op agreement: Review	AFA report to Congress: Review and provide direction	BSAI P.cod sideboards: Initial review (T)
Essential Fish Habitat/HAPC: Report and Council input	GOA Salmon bycatch: Review discussion paper	Breakout GOA 'other species' category: Initial review (T)
Crab Rationalization: Discussion/direction	Crab Rationalization: Discussion/direction	Crab Rationalization amendment: Initial review (T)
GOA Rationalization: Discussion	GOA Rationalization: Discussion/direction	Groundfish Specifications for 2002: Initial recommendations
Observer Program: Review NMFS no-cost contract proposal	Observer Program: Final action on NMFS no-cost contract proposal	
TAC-setting process: Final action (T)	TAC-setting process: Final action (T)	
Catch and bycatch disclosure: Review discussion paper (T)		

NOTE: This tentative timeline will be updated periodically, particularly after each Council meeting, as the Council works through its decision process

TAC - Total Allowable Catch

IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota

AFA - American Fisheries Act

HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

LLP - License Limitation Program

PSC - Prohibited Species Catch

SSL - Steller Sea Lion

GHL - Guideline Harvest Level

SEIS - Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

CDQ - Community Development Quota

GCCC - Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition

MSA - Magnuson-Stevens Act

SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation

CV - Catcher Vessel CP - Catcher Processor

SR/RE - Shortraker/Rougheye

MSST - Minimum Stock Size Threshold

FMP - Fishery Management Plan

(T) Tentatively scheduled

Upcoming Council Committee Meetings

Steller Sea Lion RPA Committee

March 7-8, 2001, Time TBA
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Bldg 4, Room TBA
Seattle, Washington
Contact: David Witherell 907-271-2809

GOA Rationalization Committee

March 20-21, 2001, Time TBA
Hilton Hotel, 500 W. 3rd Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska
Contact: Jane DiCosimo 907-271-2809
[GOA Rationalization Committee is also tentatively scheduled for April 12, details TBA]

BSAI Crab Rationalization Committee

March 22-23, 2001, Time & Location TBA
Anchorage, Alaska
Contact: Maria Tsu 907-271-2809

Observer Committee

March 22-23, 2001
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Bldg 4, Room 2039
Seattle, Washington
Contact: Chris Oliver 907-271-2809

Steller Sea Lion RPA Committee

March 26-28, 2001, Time TBA
Hilton Hotel
500 W. 3rd Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska
Contact: David Witherell 907-271-2809

Halibut Charter IFQ Committee

April 9, 2001, 8:00 a.m.
Hilton Hotel
500 W. 3rd Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska
Contact: Jane DiCosimo 907-271-2809

Groundfish Plan Teams

September 11-14, 2001 and November
12-16, 2001
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
Details TBA