

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER
March, 1978

Issue #8

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The North Pacific Council met in regular session on March 24th at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. Some of the highlights of the meeting included:

- * Fishery Management Plan Schedule ... The Ocean Salmon and Bering Sea Herring FMP's share first priorities among fishery management plans. Council, SSC and AP members were appointed to a Committee to set development priorities for the rest of the management plans.
- * Bering Sea Groundfish Plan Briefing ... A development plan for Bering Sea Groundfish was presented by Bert Larkins. The Council encouraged the management plan development team to continue drafting the plan using the objectives outlined in his presentation:
 1. Continue rebuilding the halibut resource
 2. Rebuild depleted stocks and maintain healthy stocks at levels of abundance that will produce MSY.
 3. Provide an opportunity for U.S. involvement in the Bering Sea/Aleutian groundfish fishery limited only by the OY of individual species and objectives 1 and 2 above.
 4. Allow foreign participation in the fishery consistent with objectives 1, 2 and 3 above.
- * Permit Application Review ... An application was approved for the TAISAN MARU #1 and the application deferred for the TAE YANG #12 to conduct support activities in the proposed KMIDC/Davenny joint venture.
- * RFP Bering Sea Clam Fishery ... Council approved for advertisement an RFP dealing with "A Study of the Effects of Hydraulic Clam Harvesting in the Eastern Bering Sea" for approximately \$100,000.
- * Troll Salmon Observer Program ... A pilot observer program for the Troll Salmon Fishery off Alaska was recommended by the SSC and approved by the Council. The Council requested a legal opinion on

the confidentiality of material gathered through an observer program from the NOAA attorney. The question of liability coverage for observers on U.S. ships was considered but not resolved. The Council staff will continue to coordinate the quest for an answer to this problem.

- * NOAA Satellite Service ... A representative of the National Environmental Satellite Service (NOAA) showed satellite pictures of the Bering Sea ice pack in the area of the Japanese Tanner crab fishery north and west of the Pribilof Islands. There were no indications that ice posed a threat to the foreign crab fishery in the area north of 58° North Latitude. The Japanese Tanner crab catch as of March 24th is slightly over 700 metric tons with daily catch rates ranging from 3.2 to 54 metric tons (same as 1977).

Sixty-five U.S. vessels are currently fishing Tanner crab in the Bering Sea. Domestic Tanner crab catch of C. bairdi has exceeded 15 million pounds and is expected to reach 75 million pounds by May 30th.

- * Gulf of Alaska Groundfish ... Following an address to the Council from a representative of the Japanese Longliners and Gillnet Association, the Council requested members of the SSC, the AP and the Japanese to hold a meeting during the noon hour. Following that meeting the Council unanimously adopted the following recommendations:

1. In the designated longline fishery for Pacific Cod (west of 157° West Longitude) increase the combined TALFF and reserve from 6,230 metric tons to 7,600 metric tons.
2. The reserve for Pacific Cod in Shumagin and Chirikof areas be immediately released for allocation to the foreign longline fishery.
3. The DAH for Pacific Cod in Shumagin and Chirikof areas be reassessed in August and any projected shortfall be assigned to the foreign longline fishery.

The Japanese also requested immediate implementation of the recommendation contained in the Council's FMP regarding Pacific Cod inasmuch as the regulations had not at that time been published in the Federal Register.

CONTRACT AWARD

A contract for \$80,826 has been signed by Dames & Moore, Environmental Consultants, for "A Study of Social and Economic Impacts of a Commercial Herring Fishery on the Villages and Residents of the Arctic/Yukon/Kuskokwim Area in Western Alaska."

FINANCE REPORT

The Council approved the 1979 budget at \$1,276,000 which includes modest increases in the numbers of meetings, public hearings, travel and salaries.

PLAN PREPARATION SCHEDULE (FMP)

The preparation of any fishery management plan is an involved process. From day number 1, when the Council receives the first draft of any fishery management plan to the day the plan takes effect, over 300 days are involved. This does not include the time it takes to prepare the first draft for presentation to the Council.

OTHER COUNCIL ACTION

A testimonial luncheon was held during the noon hour on March 24th to honor Rear Admiral J. B. Hayes, a Council member, on the occasion of his appointment as Commandant of the United States Coast Guard.

CHAIRMEN'S MEETING

Council Chairman Harold Lokken and Executive Director Jim Branson attended the Chairmen's Meeting held in Charleston, South Carolina on March 27th and 28th. Accompanying them was Harry Rietze, Regional Director, NMFS.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the NPFMC will be held on May 25th and 26th at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska.