


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke 
Executive Director

DATE: September 18, 1995

SUBJECT: Initial BSAI Specifications for 1996

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| ESTIMATED TIME 8 Hours (all D-3 items) |
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ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Review Preliminary 1996 BSAI Final Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document.
- (b) Approve preliminary BSAI groundfish specifications for 1996:
 1. Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), and Annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC)
 2. Division of the pollock ITAC into the January 1-April 15 ('A' Season) and August 15-December 31 ('B' Season) allowances;
 3. Amount of the pollock TAC that may be taken with bottom trawls;
 4. Seasonal apportionment of the fixed gear Pacific cod TAC; and
 5. Bycatch allowances, and seasonal apportionments of Pacific halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, and herring to target fishery (PSC) categories.

BACKGROUND

At this meeting, the Council sets initial recommendations of groundfish and bycatch specifications as listed above. The preliminary SAFE report, groundfish ABCs and TACs, and bycatch apportionments need to be approved and made available for public review and comment. Twenty-five percent of the initial specifications will go forward as interim specifications for management of the 1996 groundfish fisheries until superseded by publication of the Council's final specifications. On the basis of comments and new information, the Council will adopt final recommendations for the 1996 fishing year at its December 1995 meeting.

BSAI SAFE Document

The groundfish Plan Teams met in Seattle during the week of September 5-8, 1995, to prepare the preliminary SAFE documents provided at this meeting. This SAFE forms the basis for preliminary groundfish specifications for the 1996 fishing year.

The preliminary BSAI SAFE contains the Plan Team's estimates of biomass and ABCs for all groundfish species covered under the FMP and information concerning PSC bycatch to provide guidance to the Council in establishing PSC apportionments. The attached tables from the SAFE lists the Plan Team's recommended 1996 ABCs and corresponding overfishing levels for each of the species or species complexes. Draft minutes of the BSAI plan team are also attached (Item D-3(b)(1)).

Preliminary ABCs, TACs, and Apportionments

During the week of this Council meeting the SSC and AP recommendations will be provided to the Council. Attached as Item D-3(b)(2) are Tables 6 - 8 from the SAFE summary chapter indicating 1996 ABCs and biomass levels. The Plan Team's sum of recommended ABCs for 1996 is 3.4 million mt. Overall, the status of the stocks continues to appear relatively favorable.

Adopt Seasonal Allowances for the Pollock Seasons

The FMP requires the Council to apportion pollock in the BSAI between the roe (January 1 - April 15) and non-roe (August 15 - December 31) seasons. For the 1991 and 1992 fisheries, the Council recommended a 40/60 percent split between the roe and non-roe seasons, and a 45/55 percent split for the 1993-1995 pollock fishery.

In recommending seasonal allowances of the BSAI pollock TAC, the Council will need to consider the following factors presented in Appendix C of the SAFE document.

Adopt Amounts Of Pollock That Could Be Taken With Bottom Trawls

To control the bycatch of crab and halibut, the Council implemented Amendment 16a, which provided for the apportionment of pollock to pelagic trawl gear (i.e., set a limit on the amount of pollock that can be taken in the bottom trawl pollock fishery). A copy of the current definition of "pelagic trawl" is attached to this agenda item. In 1990, the Council adopted a 88%-12% split (midwater-bottom trawl). For the 1991 through 1995 fisheries, the Council noted that additional pollock harvests with non-pelagic trawl gear likely would be constrained by halibut bycatch, and did not recommend a specific apportionment between pelagic and non-pelagic gear.

In December 1994, Council member Wally Pereyra suggested that the Council should consider limiting pollock trawling to pelagic fishing only as a way to reduce bycatch and waste. Data from the 1992-1994 fisheries were examined to provide some insights on discarding (Tables 1 and 2, Item D-3(b)(3)). These data show that:

- For the 1994 directed pollock fishery, pollock catch was 93.2 % pelagic and 6.8 % bottom trawl. In 1992, the split was 67.2 % pelagic and 32.8% bottom trawl; 1993 split was 85.3% pelagic and 14.7% bottom trawl.
- Overall discard rates have been lower in the pelagic trawl fishery (2% in 1994) than in the non-pelagic trawl fishery (11% in 1994).
- Discard of Pacific cod has been higher in the pelagic trawl fishery than the non-pelagic trawl fishery.
- Bycatch rates of crabs and halibut have been higher for the bottom trawl fishery.
- Bycatch rates for herring and other salmon have been higher for the pelagic trawl fishery.

Regulations (675.24) require that pollock allocations to non-pelagic trawls be based on the following types of information:

- A. The PSC limits and PSC bycatch allowances established under 675.21;
- B. The projected bycatch of prohibited species that would occur with and without a limit in the amount of pollock TAC that may be taken in the directed fishery for pollock using non-pelagic trawl gear;
- C. Costs of a limit in terms of amounts of pollock TAC that may be taken with non-pelagic trawl gear on the non-pelagic and pelagic trawl fisheries; and
- D. Other factors pertaining to consistency with the goals and objectives of the FMP.

Adopt Seasonal Apportionments of the Pacific Cod TAC Allocated to Fixed Gear

Amendment 24 regulations allow seasonal apportionment of the Pacific cod TAC allocated to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear. Seasonal apportionments will be divided among trimesters and established through the annual specifications process.

In recommending seasonal apportionments, regulations will require the Council to base its decision on the following information:

1. Seasonal distribution of Pacific cod relative to PSC distribution;
2. Expected variations in PSC bycatch rates in the Pacific cod fishery throughout the fishing year; and
3. Economic effects of any seasonal apportionment of Pacific cod on the hook-and-line and pot gear fisheries.

Under Amendment 24, 2% of the TAC is reserved for jig gear, 44% for hook and line, and 54% for trawl gear. For the 1995 fisheries, the Council recommended that 68,000 mt of the fixed gear's allocation be released during the first trimester (January 1 - April 30), 18,000 mt be released for the second trimester (May 1 - August 31), and 7,500 for the third trimester. The remaining 16,500 mt of this gear's allocation was held in reserve.

Adopt bycatch allowances of Pacific halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab (*C. bairdi*), and herring, and seasonal allowances

Halibut PSCs

For the Trawl Fisheries: Amendment 21 established a 3,775 mt limit on halibut mortality for trawl gear. This limit can be apportioned to the following trawl fishery categories:

1. Greenland turbot, arrowtooth flounder and sablefish;
2. rock sole and "other flatfish;"
3. yellowfin sole;
4. rockfish;
5. Pacific cod; and,
6. pollock, Atka mackerel and "other species."

For Fixed Gear Fisheries: A 900 mt non-trawl gear halibut mortality can be apportioned to the following fishery categories:

1. Pacific cod;
2. Other non-trawl (includes hook-and-line sablefish, rockfish and jig gear); and
3. Groundfish pot (recommended exempt for 1995).

Item D-3(b)(4) contains a table indicating 1995 PSC allocations and seasonal apportionments for the trawl and non-trawl fisheries and a current summary of PSC bycatch accounting for the 1995 BSAI fisheries.

Crab PSCs

Overall crab PSC limits for the BS trawl fisheries adopted by the Council in Amendment 16 are:

C. bairdi: 1,000,000 crabs in Zone 1 for a Zone 1 closure
 3,000,000 crabs in Zone 2 for a Zone 2 closure

Red king crab: 200,000 crabs in Zone 1 for a Zone 1 closure

Zone 1 is comprised of Areas 511, 512, and 516. Zone 2 is comprised of Areas 513, 517 and 521.

Herring PSCs

Amendment 16a established an overall herring PSC bycatch cap of 1% of the EBS biomass of herring. This cap is to be apportioned to the same six PSC fishery categories listed above, plus a seventh group, mid-water pollock. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has not completed its forecast for 1996 herring biomass, so interim specifications will be based on the 1995 estimate (1,861,000 mt). The PSC limit is set at 1% of the biomass in metric tons. The complete herring assessment should be available for the Council meeting.

Seasonal Apportionment of PSC

The Council may also seasonally apportion the bycatch allowances. Regulations require that seasonal apportionments of bycatch allowances be based on the following types of information:

1. Seasonal distribution of prohibited species;
2. Seasonal distribution of target groundfish species relative to prohibited species distribution;
3. Expected prohibited species bycatch needs on a seasonal basis relevant to change in prohibited species biomass and expected catches of target groundfish species;
4. Expected variations in bycatch rates throughout the fishing year;
5. Expected changes in directed groundfish fishing seasons;
6. Expected start of fishing efforts; and
7. Economic effects of establishing seasonal prohibited species apportionments on segments of the target groundfish industry.

NOTE: Additional information on PSC limits and apportionments is presented in BSAI SAFE, Appendix D.

Staff will present a worksheet with SSC and AP recommendations for ABCs, TACs, PSC and seasonal apportionments when the Council addresses this action item.

**Minutes of the
Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan Team
Meeting, September 5-8, 1995**

Members Present:

Andrew Smoker (NMFS-AKRO)
Dave Ackley (ADF&G-Juneau)
Loh-lee Low (NMFS-AFSC, Chairman)
Farron Wallace (WDF)

Grant Thompson (NMFS-AFSC)
Brenda Norcross (UAF)
Dave Colpo (NMFS -AFSC)
Dave Witherell (NPFMC)

The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Groundfish Plan Team met September 5-8 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. The meeting was open to the public, and several industry representatives attended. A packet of materials was distributed to team members prior to the meeting, and several additional documents were distributed at the meeting. The focus of the meeting was to review results of the latest trawl and hydroacoustic surveys, new assessments, ecosystem considerations chapter, and amendment proposals.

The meeting began a review of the agenda and general business. Dave Witherell volunteered to write the meeting minutes. Grant Thompson volunteered to draft the SAFE summary section, with the exception of the tables that would be updated by Andy Smoker. Gregg Williams (IPHC) previously requested that two members of each team have a teleconference on September 15th to review updated estimates of halibut discard mortality rates; Dave Ackley and Loh-lee Low volunteered from the BSAI team.

The team heard from Gary Walters (AFSC) on biomass estimates from the 1995 Bering Sea trawl survey. With the exception of pollock, survey data for all species indicated about a 10-20% decline. The team discussed possible causes of such an even decline in survey biomass, but could not come to any other conclusion other than the survey observations were real. No changes in survey gear, design, or data analysis were made. However, NMFS is examining the possibility of revising the survey design to shorten tow times to 15 minutes. Estimates of biomass from the two most recent Bering Sea bottom trawl surveys will be included in the SAFE.

Andy Smoker briefed the team on the 1995 flatfish fisheries. Changes in exvessel price for flatfish, combined with modifications to directed fishing standards, have changed the character of this fishery. For example, the yellowfin sole fishery tended to be more mixed, with 35% retention of individual species allowed (such as rock sole, rex sole, Alaska plaice, etc.). Presumably, discarding of flatfish was also lower this year.

Vidar Wespestad, Taina Honkalehto, Neal Williamson, and Dennis Benjamin of the AFSC briefed the team on pollock status in the Bering Sea, Bogoslof, and Aleutian Islands area. The 1989 and 1990 year-class comprise the bulk of the pollock biomass in the Bering Sea area. Preliminary observations suggest that the 1994 year-class is average. Vidar is investigating the biological effects of a seasonal split on harvest strategies. In general, higher catches and spawning biomass is obtained with an A/B season split as opposed to a year-round constant harvest.

There was some discussion about the Aleutian assessment and management of this stock. Data are not available for a quantitative assessment of this stock. In recent years, the fishery has been prosecuted nearshore east of Seaguan, suggesting that some of the harvest is comprised of eastern Bering Sea fish. The possibility of combining the Aleutian stock with the eastern Bering Sea stock, and setting ABC as a portion of this stock, was considered. The team discussed potential problems if the stocks were managed as one unit. The primary problem is that the overfishing level would be set for the unit as a whole, but the fishery could potentially target on the Aleutian basin stock.

The team reviewed the 1995 echo integration survey in the Bogoslof region. Survey results indicated that the biomass consisted primarily of the 1989 and 1990 year-class. Age data were not yet available. The 1995

biomass was estimated at 1.02 million tons. The team concluded that the 1995 estimate would be a conservative predictor of 1996 biomass. Examination of previous survey data 1988-1994 indicated that there is an increase in numbers and biomass from age 5 to 6. Therefore, continued recruitment and growth of the 1990 year class will likely offset any losses due to mortality. At a harvest rate of F35%, the recommended ABC for the Bogoslof region was 265,000 tons. The team discussed the issue of TAC recommendations but could not come up with a convincing set of rationale from which to adjust the TAC.

An updated assessment of Atka mackerel was presented by Sandra Lowe. Sensitivity analysis of survey and fishery catchability indicated dome shaped selectivity, which was incorporated into the assessment model. New reference rates were generated based on new maturity information. The plan team recommended that ABC be based on the F35% rate, rather than F=M adjusted strategy used in previous years. The resulting ABC was 138,000 tons, apportioned among the eastern, central, and western Aleutian Island areas based on the 1994 trawl survey. No stairstep adjustment was recommended.

Updated assessments for pollock, Pacific cod, rockfish, flatfish, and other species will be completed in November.

The team reviewed amendment proposals and made a spreadsheet summarizing the BSAI team recommendations, which were presented at the joint meeting later in the week. Because the Council's plan amendment advisory group (PAAG) had disbanded last December, the team felt that providing estimates of time required and priority would not be of much help to the Council. Instead, the team classified the proposals into management actions and their primary effects (allocative, efficiency, or biological). Comments were provided in some cases.

The BSAI team reviewed the draft ecosystem chapter and identified nine specific ecosystem concerns. This section will be written by Loh and Richard Merrick. Additional chapters will be provided by Lowell Fritz (bycatch estimates) and Dave Ackley (salmon resources).

The BSAI team finished their separate meeting on Thursday afternoon.

Others in attendance at the BSAI team meetings were:

Vince Curry
Lauri Jansen
Teresa Kandianis

Joe Sullivan
Thorn Smith
Bob Alverson
Brent Paine

Wally Pereyra
Bob Babson (NOAA GC)
Lowell Fritz
Paul McGregor

**Minutes of the
Joint GOA and BSAI Groundfish Plan Team
Meeting, September 5-8, 1995**

Members Present:

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Team

Dave Ackley (ADF&G)
Dave Colpo (NMFS-AFSC)
Loh-lee Low (NMFS-AFSC, Chair)
Brenda Norcross (UAF)
Andrew Smoker (NMFS-AKRO)
Grant Thompson (NMFS-AFSC)
Farron Wallace (WDF)
Gregg Williams (IPHC)
Dave Witherell (NPFMC)

Gulf of Alaska Team

Bill Bechtol (ADF&G nominee)
Kaja Brix (NMFS-AKRO)
Jane DiCosimo (NPFMC)
Jeff Fujioka (NMFS-AB)
Lew Haldorsen (UAF)
Jim Hastie (NMFS-AFSC)
Jon Heifetz (NMFS-AB)
Jim Ianelli (NMFS-AFSC)
Sandra Lowe (NMFS-AFSC, Chair)
Tory O'Connell (ADF&G nominee)
Farron Wallace (WDF)
Gregg Williams (IPHC)

The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Groundfish Plan Teams met September 5-8 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. The meeting was open to the public, and several industry representatives attended. A packet of materials was distributed to team members prior to the meeting, and several additional documents were distributed at the meeting. The focus of the meeting was to review new assessments, ecosystem considerations chapter, and amendment proposals.

The meeting began on Tuesday afternoon with introductions, a review of the agenda, and SSC comments relative to the SAFE documents. The teams welcomed new members Brenda Norcross, Farron Wallace, Jon Heifetz, and Jim Ianelli. SSC comments were addressed, and the team added that authors would follow the SAFE guidelines as closely as possible. Jim Ianelli agreed to present an overview of stock synthesis at the November plan team meeting. Gregg Williams (IPHC) requested that a subcommittee of the teams have a teleconference on September 15th to review updated estimates of halibut discard mortality rates, as this document was not ready in time for the team meeting. Team members agreed to this approach, and Dave Ackley, Loh-lee Low, Jane DiCosimo, and Tory O'Connell volunteered to participate in the teleconference. Because PacFin data were not ready for the 1995 year, Dave Colpo and Joe Terry indicated that the preliminary SAFE would only include 1994 data, and some price and value data for 1995.

Gregg Williams summarized the status of halibut and provided a draft assessment chapter for the SAFE. Pacific halibut continue to decline in abundance. Coastwide, halibut exploitable biomass was estimated at 243 million pounds at the start of the 1995 season. This represents a decline of 14% between 1994 and 1995. Recruitment data indicate that the stock decline will continue in the near future. This year's recruitment of 8 year-olds was the lowest observed in 20 years. Coastwide halibut bycatch was 16 million pounds in 1994. The teams discussed bycatch issues regarding halibut. Some thought it was time to consider instituting a bycatch cap that fluctuated with juvenile abundance. Juvenile abundance may be difficult to measure, however.

The teams again met jointly on Friday to review the economic SAFE, amendment proposals, and this year's ecosystem chapter. No changes to the economic SAFE were recommended. The BSAI team summarized their review of amendment proposals and the ecosystem chapter to the GOA team. Rather than ranking proposals, the BSAI team classified proposals into management actions and primary effects. The GOA team agreed with the approach taken, submitted their own amendment proposal, and provided some additional comments. The team's evaluation is summarized by the attached table. The teams made nine ecosystem recommendations to

be included in the ecosystem chapter. Suggestions for the next chapter included highlighting ecosystem changes occurring elsewhere in the Pacific and incorporating more traditional knowledge and observations of recent ecosystem change.

It was noted that there was currently not a seabird expert on either team. The teams agreed that a person with knowledge of seabird biology would be a good addition to the teams.

Another suggestion for next years SAFE would be to include a summary of management changes that occurred in the fishery over the previous year. A table showing closure dates would be helpful to managers, fishermen, and analysts. Kaja Brix and Jim Hastie volunteered to prepare this chapter for the next meeting.

The teams decided on the week of November 13-17 for the next meeting, which will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. in room 2079, Building 4. In addition to reviewing stock assessments, the teams will review research priorities.

The meeting adjourned Friday at noon September 8.

Others in attendance at the joint team meetings were:

Vince Curry
Lauri Jansen
Teresa Kandianis
Chris Blackburn
Joe Terry

Pat Livingston
Joe Sullivan
Thorn Smith
Bob Alverson
Brent Paine

Wally Pereyra
Bob Babson (NOAA GC)
Lowell Fritz
Fritz Funk
Paul McGregor

1995 Groundfish Amendment Proposals
Plan Team Review

| # | Proposal | Area | Action Required | Primary Effect | Comments |
|--|--|------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|
| Allocate Pacific cod | | | | | |
| 1 | to trawl (40%), hook and line (20%), and pots (40%) | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 3 | no directed fishing with trawls | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 6 | no directed fishing with trawls | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 7 | to jig gear, 2% | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 9 | among gear groups: with 20% H&L, 40% pots | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 24 | increase TAC for fixed gear to 55% in 1996, 65% in 1997 | BSAI | plan | allocative | option could be examined in Amendment 24 rollover analysis if initiated |
| 26 | rollover P.cod allocation of Amendment 24 | BSAI | plan | allocative | option could be examined in Amendment 24 rollover analysis if initiated |
| 30 | reduce allocation of P.cod by trawl gear | BSAI | plan | allocative | option could be examined in Amendment 24 rollover analysis if initiated |
| Other actions specific to Pacific cod | | | | | |
| 2 | exclusive registration for directed P.cod fisheries | BOTH | plan | allocative | |
| 4 | no directed fishing for P.cod with trawls after Feb 21 | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 5 | close areas 610 and 630 to trawl fishing for P.cod | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 18 | apportion central gulf P.cod TAC seasonally (65/35) | GOA | plan | efficiency/allocative | |
| 22 | apportion GOA P.cod TAC seasonally | GOA | plan | efficiency/allocative | |
| Bycatch allocation | | | | | |
| 10 | allocate trawl halibut PSC by vessel size (>134') | BSAI | plan | allocative | |
| 11 | allocate trawl halibut PSC by vessel size (>85') | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 12 | allocate zone 1 bairdi for P.cod fishery by vessel size (>134') | BSAI | plan | allocative | |
| 13 | allocate zone 1 bairdi total by vessel size (>134') | BSAI | plan | allocative | |
| 14 | allocate red king crab PSC by vessel size (>134') | BSAI | plan | allocative | |
| 15 | allocate H&L halibut PSC by vessel size (>60') | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 20 | implement a vessel bycatch account system for trawl fisheries | BSAI | plan | efficiency | IBQ's adopted for analysis; provides useful options for consideration |
| 27 | allocate bycatch species between catcher vessels and c/p | BSAI | plan | allocative | |
| 29 | allocate 50% of halibut PSC "savings" to directed fishery | BSAI | plan | allocative/efficiency | |
| late | set PSC limit for rex sole fishery | BSAI | regulatory | efficiency | catalyst to examine bycatch allocation in flatfish fisheries |
| License limitation | | | | | |
| 16 | revise action to allow pelagic trawling in EY and SO | GOA | plan | allocative | L.L. not yet approved; could be addressed by Council before PR |
| 17 | revise action to allow processing by catcher vessels | BOTH | plan | allocative | L.L. not yet approved; could be addressed by Council before PR |
| Pollock season changes | | | | | |
| 19 | allocate pollock TAC in Central/western GOA into trimesters | GOA | plan | effic./biol./alloc. | may be preferable to have simultaneous openings with BSAI |
| 21 | delay pollock B season until September 1 | BSAI | regulatory | effic./alloc./biol. | analysis already done (1993) |
| 34 | allocate pollock TAC in western GOA into A&B season | GOA | plan | allocative/efficiency | may be preferable to have simultaneous openings with BSAI |
| 35 | allocate pollock TAC in BSAI into quarterly releases | BSAI | plan | allocative/efficiency | may be preferable to have simultaneous openings with BSAI |
| 38 | require 15-day delay period to fish in pollock B season | BSAI | regulatory | allocative | |
| IFQ changes | | | | | |
| 39 | repeal "Sitka Block" provision of the IFQ program | BOTH | plan | efficiency | would increase efficiency of the program |
| Other changes | | | | | |
| 8 | close areas with high bycatch of crab to trawl and pot gear | GOA | plan | allocative | some of these areas already closed to trawling |
| 23 | move western GOA boundary to 165 W | BOTH | plan | allocative | |
| 25 | trip limits for central GOA pollock (100-125 mt/trip) | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 28 | seperate out pollock from OY cap and make seperate | BSAI | plan | alloc./effic./biol. | |
| 31 | establish flatfish VIP rate rather than just yellowfin | BSAI | regulatory | efficiency | catalyst to examine bycatch allocation in flatfish fisheries |
| 32 | fluctuate PSC caps with abundance of PSC species | BSAI | plan | alloc./effic./biol. | being analyzed for crab; should be done for halibut. GOA also. |
| 33 | VIP rates based on retention rather than sample weights | BOTH | regulatory | efficiency | catalyst to re-examine VIP program |
| 36 | make GOA an exclusive registration area | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| 37 | restrict size of pelagic trawl footropes in western GOA to 250' | GOA | regulatory | allocative | |
| late | move Cook Inlet area to State jurisdiction | GOA | plan | allocative | |
| team | move pelagic shelf rockfish (except dusky) to State jurisdiction | GOA | plan | biological/allocative | submitted by GOA plan team |

Table 6-- Summary of stock abundance, overfishing constraints, and fishing mortality rates for the eastern Bering Sea (EBS), Aleutian Islands (AI), and Bogoslof district (518) in 1996. Biomass and catch are in metric tons.

| Species | Area | Biomass ^a | OFL ^b | F _{OFL} ^c | F _{ABC} ^d |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Walleye pollock | EBS | 8,080,000 | 1,500,000 | 0.38 | 0.31 |
| | AI | 189,000 | 60,400 | 0.45 | 0.42 |
| | Bogoslof | 1,020,000 | 265,000 | 0.40 | 0.33 |
| Pacific cod | | 1,620,000 | 390,000 | 0.51 | 0.42 |
| Yellowfin sole | | 2,770,000 | 319,000 | 0.15 | 0.12 |
| Greenland turbot | | 150,000 | 27,200 | 0.37 | 0.24 |
| Arrowtooth flounder | | 625,000 | 138,000 | 0.25 | 0.18 |
| Rock sole | | 2,330,000 | 388,000 | 0.20 | 0.18 |
| Flathead sole | | 725,000 | 167,000 | 0.23 | 0.19 |
| Other flatfishes | | 677,000 | 137,000 | 0.20 ^e | 0.17 ^e |
| Sablefish | EBS | 16,500 | n/a | n/a | 0.13 |
| | AI | 13,900 | n/a | n/a | 0.13 |
| | BSAI | n/a | 4,900 | 0.17 | n/a |
| POP complex | | | | | |
| True POP | EBS | 47,100 | 2,910 | 0.093 | 0.058 |
| Other red rockfish ^f | EBS | 29,700 | 1,400 | 0.047 ^e | 0.047 ^e |
| True POP | AI | 252,000 | 15,900 | 0.093 | 0.058 |
| Sharp/Northern ^g | AI | 94,500 | 5,670 | 0.06 | 0.06 |
| Short/Rougheye ^h | AI | 45,000 | 1,220 | 0.027 | 0.027 |
| Other rockfish | EBS | 7,300 | 365 | 0.05 | 0.05 |
| | AI | 15,500 | 770 | 0.05 | 0.05 |
| Atka mackerel | AI | 578,000 | 164,000 | 0.75 | 0.59 |
| Squid | BSAI | n/a | 3,100 | n/a | n/a |
| Other species | | 682,000 | 136,000 | 0.045 | 0.045 |

- a/ Projected exploitable biomass for January, 1996
- b/ Maximum 1996 catch level allowable under overfishing definition (the "overfishing level").
- c/ Maximum fishing mortality rate allowable under overfishing definition.
- d/ Fishing mortality rate corresponding to acceptable biological catch.
- e/ Weighted average of species-specific rates.
- f/ Sharpchin, northern, shortraker, and rougheye rockfish.
- g/ Sharpchin and northern rockfish
- h/ Shortraker and rougheye rockfish.

Table 7-- Total allowable catches (TAC) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) for 1995 (Council) and 1996 (Plan Team) ABCs for groundfish in the eastern Bering Sea (EBS), Aleutian Islands (AI), and Bogoslof district (518). Figures are in metric tons.

| Species | Area | TAC (1995) Council | ABC(1995) Council | ABC(1996) Plan Team |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Walleye pollock | EBS | 1,250,000 | 1,250,000 | 1,250,000 |
| | AI | 56,600 | 56,600 | 56,600 |
| | Bogoslof | 1,000 | 22,100 | 265,000 |
| Pacific cod | | 250,000 | 328,000 | 328,000 |
| Yellowfin sole | | 190,000 | 277,000 | 277,000 |
| Greenland turbot | | 7,000 | 7,000 | 18,500 |
| Arrowtooth flounder | | 10,227 | 113,000 | 113,000 |
| Rock sole | | 60,000 | 347,000 | 347,000 |
| Flathead sole | | 30,000 | 138,000 | |
| Other flatfish | | 19,540 | 117,000 | 117,000 |
| Sablefish | EBS | 1,600 | 1,600 | 1,600 |
| | AI | 2,200 | 2,200 | 2,200 |
| POP complex | | | | |
| True POP | EBS | 1,850 | 1,850 | 1,850 |
| Other red rockfish | EBS | 1,260 | 1,400 | 1,400 |
| True POP | AI | 10,500 | 10,500 | 10,500 |
| Sharp/Northern | AI | 5,103 | 5,670 | 5,670 |
| Short/Rougheye | AI | 1,098 | 1,220 | 1,220 |
| Other rockfish | EBS | 329 | 365 | 365 |
| | AI | 693 | 770 | 770 |
| Atka mackerel | | 80,000 | 125,000 | 138,000 |
| Squid | | 1,000 | 3,110 | 3,110 |
| Other species | | 20,000 | 27,600 | 27,600 |
| Groundfish complex | | 2,000,000 | 2,836,985 | 3,104,385 |

a/ Included in other flatfish in 1994.

Pelagic Trawl Definition (672.2 (7))

(7) **Pelagic trawl** means a trawl that:

- (i) Has no discs, bobbins, or rollers;
- (ii) Has no chafe protection gear attached to the foot rope or fishing line;
- (iii) Except for the small mesh allowed under paragraph (7)(ix) of this definition:
 - (A) Has no mesh tied to the fishing line, head rope, and breast lines with less than 20 inches (50.8 cm) between knots, and has no stretched mesh size of less than 60 inches (152.4 cm) aft from all points on the fishing line, head rope, and breast lines and extending past the fishing circle for a distance equal to or greater than one half the vessel's length overall; or
 - (B) Has no parallel lines spaced closer than 64 inches (162.6 cm), from all points on the fishing line, head rope, and breast lines and extending aft to a section of mesh, with no stretched mesh size of less than 60 inches (152.4 cm), extending aft for a distance equal to or greater than one half the vessel's length overall;
- (iv) Has no stretched mesh size less than 15 inches (38.1 cm) aft of the mesh described in paragraph (7)(iii) of this definition for a distance equal to or greater than one half the vessel's length overall;
- (v) Contains no configuration intended to reduce the stretched mesh sizes described in paragraphs (7)(iii) and (iv) of this definition;
- (vi) Has no flotation other than floats capable of providing up to 200 pounds (90.7 kg) of buoyancy to accommodate the use of a net-sounder device;
- (vii) Has no more than one fishing line and one foot rope for a total of no more than two weighted lines on the bottom of the trawl between the wing tip and the fishing circle;
- (viii) Has no metallic component except for connectors (e.g., hammerlocks or swivels) or net-sounder device aft of the fishing circle and forward of any mesh greater than 5.5 inches (14.0 cm) stretched measure;
- (ix) May have small mesh within 32 feet (9.8 m) of the center of the head rope as needed for attaching instrumentation (e.g., net-sounder device); and
- (x) May have weights on the wing tips;

Table 8-- Summary of stock biomass, harvest strategy, 1995 acceptable biological catch (ABC), and stock condition for groundfish in the eastern Bering Sea (EBS), Aleutian Islands (AI), and Bogoslof district (518). Biomass and ABC are in metric tons.

| Species | Area | Biomass ^a | Rate ^b | ABC | Relative abundance, trend |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Walleye pollock | EBS | 8,080,000 | $F_{0.1}$ | 1,250,000 | Average, stable |
| | AI | 189,000 | F_{35t} | 56,600 | Average (?), stable (?) |
| | Bogoslof | 1,020,000 | F_{35t} | 265,000 | Low, increasing |
| Pacific cod | | 1,620,000 | F_{35t} | 328,000 | Average, increasing |
| Yellowfin sole | | 2,770,000 | F_{35t} | 277,000 | High, increasing |
| Greenland turbot | | 150,000 | F_{40t} | 18,500 | Low, declining |
| Arrowtooth flounder | | 625,000 | F_{35t} | 113,000 | High, increasing |
| Rock sole | | 2,330,000 | F_{35t} | 347,000 | High, increasing |
| Flathead sole | | 725,000 | F_{35t}^c | 138,000 | High, stable |
| Other flatfish | | 677,000 | F_{35t}^d | 117,000 | High, stable |
| Sablefish | EBS | 16,500 | F_{35t}^d | 1,600 | Low, increasing |
| | AI | 13,900 | F_{35t}^d | 2,200 | Average, declining |
| | BSAI | n/a | n/a | n/a | |
| POP complex | | | | | |
| True POP | EBS | 47,100 | F_{44t} | 1,850 | Low, stable |
| Other red rockfish ^e | EBS | 29,700 | $F=M^f$ | 1,400 | Not available |
| True POP | AI | 252,000 | F_{44t} | 10,500 | Low, stable |
| Sharp/Northern ^f | AI | 94,500 | $F=M^f$ | 5,670 | Not available |
| Short/Rougheye ^g | AI | 45,000 | $F=M^f$ | 1,220 | Not available |
| Other rockfish | EBS | 7,300 | $F=M$ | 365 | Average, stable |
| | AI | 15,500 | $F=M$ | 770 | Average, stable |
| Atka mackerel | AI | 578,000 | F_{35t} | 144,500 | High, stable |
| Squid | BSAI | n/a | F_{hts} | 3,110 | n/a |
| Other species | | 682,000 | F_{hts} | 27,600 | High, increasing |
| Groundfish Complex Total | | 19,967,500 | | 3,110,885 | High, stable |

- a/ Projected exploitable biomass for January, 1995.
 b/ Harvest strategy used to compute ABC.
 c/ Weighted average of species-specific rates.
 d/ Sablefish F_{35t} scaled by ratio of projected biomass to B_{35t} .
 e/ Sharpchin, northern, shortraker, and rougheye rockfish.
 f/ Sharpchin and northern rockfish.
 g/ Shortraker and rougheye rockfish.

TABLE 1

Catch and Discard in BSAI Directed Pollock Fisheries 1992

| | Pelagic Trawl | | | Bottom Trawl | | |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| | Catch (mt) | Discard (mt) | Percent Discarded | Catch (mt) | Discard (mt) | Percent Discarded |
| pollock | 1,295,707 | 80,653 | 6% | 631,140 | 55,523 | 9% |
| Pacific cod | 13,492 | 8,658 | 64% | 19,646 | 8,404 | 43% |
| flatfish | 12,132 | 11,127 | 92% | 18,798 | 16,047 | 85% |
| rockfish | 205 | 180 | 88% | 510 | 104 | 20% |
| other | 4,408 | 3,918 | 89% | 4,863 | 4,315 | 89% |
| total | 1,325,944 | 104,536 | 8% | 674,957 | 84,393 | 13% |

Catch and Discard in BSAI Directed Pollock Fisheries 1993

| | Pelagic Trawl | | | Bottom Trawl | | |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| | Catch (mt) | Discard (mt) | Percent Discarded | Catch (mt) | Discard (mt) | Percent Discarded |
| pollock | 1,227,495 | 41,359 | 3% | 210,744 | 21,895 | 10% |
| Pacific cod | 8,648 | 7,052 | 82% | 17,027 | 9,347 | 55% |
| flatfish | 5,951 | 5,695 | 96% | 13,984 | 11,878 | 85% |
| rockfish | 234 | 227 | 97% | 200 | 188 | 94% |
| other | 2,382 | 1,286 | 54% | 2,831 | 2,591 | 92% |
| total | 1,244,710 | 56,619 | 5% | 244,786 | 45,899 | 19% |

Catch and Discard in BSAI Directed Pollock Fisheries 1994 (through October 29)

| | Pelagic Trawl | | | Bottom Trawl | | |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| | Catch (mt) | Discard (mt) | Percent Discarded | Catch (mt) | Discard (mt) | Percent Discarded |
| pollock | 1,185,024 | 20,774 | 2% | 85,784 | 5,837 | 7% |
| Pacific cod | 8,230 | 4,906 | 60% | 7,944 | 1,317 | 17% |
| flatfish | 2,958 | 2,195 | 74% | 4,434 | 3,553 | 80% |
| rockfish | 91 | 61 | 67% | 42 | 42 | 100% |
| other | 775 | 662 | 85% | 466 | 465 | 100% |
| total | 1,197,078 | 28,558 | 2% | 98,670 | 11,205 | 11% |

TABLE 2
Bycatch of PSC in BSAI Directed Pollock Fisheries 1993

| | Pelagic Trawl | | Bottom Trawl | |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Bycatch | Bycatch rate | Bycatch | Bycatch rate |
| red king crab | 9,550 | 0.01 | 49,370 | 0.45 |
| other king crab | 405 | 0.00 | 1,628 | 0.02 |
| bairdi Tanner crab | 392,461 | 0.32 | 1,279,104 | 11.57 |
| other Tanners | 217,946 | 0.18 | 534,152 | 4.83 |
| halibut | 638 | 0.51 | 702 | 6.36 |
| herring | 520 | 0.42 | 8 | 0.07 |
| chinook | 34,450 | 0.03 | 4,188 | 0.04 |
| other salmon | 239,654 | 0.19 | 2,609 | 0.02 |

Bycatch of PSC in BSAI Directed Pollock Fisheries 1994

| | Pelagic Trawl | | Bottom Trawl | |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Bycatch | Bycatch rate | Bycatch | Bycatch rate |
| red king crab | 715 | 0.00 | 42,388 | 0.31 |
| other king crab | 141 | 0.00 | 616 | 0.00 |
| bairdi Tanner crab | 144,666 | 0.12 | 225,098 | 1.62 |
| other Tanners | 304,218 | 0.25 | 551,261 | 3.97 |
| halibut | 592 | 0.49 | 356 | 2.56 |
| herring | 1,576 | 1.29 | 79 | 0.57 |
| chinook | 32,071 | 0.03 | 1,833 | 0.01 |
| other salmon | 87,818 | 0.07 | 7,444 | 0.05 |

*Source: Data from NMFS Alaska Region blend estimates.

**Note: Bycatch units are tons for halibut and herring, and numbers for crab and salmon. Likewise, the bycatch rate could be kilograms/ton or numbers/ton.

Table 5

1995 Distribution of Red King Crab and Tanner Crab Prohibited Species Catch and Actual Bycatch by Fishery as of August 18, 1995

| Fishery Group | 1995 | Red King Crab (animals) Zone 1 | Tanner Zone 1 | Tanner Zone 2 | Occurrence of PSC limit closure Date |
|-----------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| Yellowfin Sole | | | | | Tanner PSC Zone1 April 4 Halibut PSC May 1 |
| PSC limit | | 50,000 | 225,000 | 1,525,000 | |
| Amount bycaught | | <u>5,906</u> | <u>254,488</u> | <u>479,594</u> | |
| Difference | | 44,094 | -29,488 | 1,045,406 | |
| Rocksole/other flatfish | | | | | Halibut PSC Feb. 21 Halibut PSC April 17 Halibut PSC Aug. 1 |
| PSC limit | | 110,000 | 475,000 | 510,000 | |
| Amount bycaught | | <u>20,536</u> | <u>340,151</u> | <u>95,230</u> | |
| Difference | | 89,464 | 134,849 | 414,770 | |
| Turbot/sablefish/arrowtooth | | | | | Halibut PSC May 3 |
| PSC limit | | | | 5,000 | |
| Amount bycaught | | | | <u>3,301</u> | |
| Difference | | | | 1,699 | |
| Rockfish | | | | | Halibut PSC March 15 |
| PSC limit | | | | 10,000 | |
| Amount bycaught | | | | <u>1,989</u> | |
| Difference | | | | 8,011 | |
| Pacific Cod | | | | | Tanner PSC Zone1 March 20 Halibut April 24 |
| PSC limit | | 10,000 | 225,000 | 260,000 | |
| Amount bycaught | | <u>2,450</u> | <u>217,653</u> | <u>44,924</u> | |
| Difference | | 7,550 | 7,347 | 215,076 | |
| Pollock/mackerel/o.species | | | | | Halibut PSC Aug.22 |
| PSC limit | | 30,000 | 75,000 | 690,000 | |
| Amount bycaught | | <u>845</u> | <u>46,315</u> | <u>1,981</u> | |
| Difference | | 29,155 | 28,685 | 688,019 | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |
| PSC limit | | 200,000 | 1,000,000 | 3,000,000 | |
| Amount bycaught | | <u>29,737</u> | <u>858,607</u> | <u>627,019</u> | |
| Difference | | 170,263 | 141,393 | 2,372,981 | |

*Data from NMFS 1995 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Fisheries Prohibited Species Bycatch Mortality and NMFS 1995 closure notices

**Halibut Prohibited Species Catch Limit and Actual Amount Bycaught
by the Bering Sea / Aleutian Islands Trawl Fisheries**

| Trawl Fishery | 1992 | | | 1993 | | | 1994 | | | 1995 | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | PSC limit | amount bycaught | % of PSC taken | PSC limit | amount bycaught | % of PSC taken | PSC limit | amount bycaught | % of PSC taken | PSC limit | amount bycaught | % of PSC taken |
| Pacific cod | 1537 | 1609 | 104.70% | 1000 | 1082 | 108% | 1200 | 1260 | 105% | 1550 | 1478 | 95% |
| Yellowfin sole | 849 | 719 | 84.70% | 592 | 603 | 102% | 592 | 580 | 98% | 750 | 382 | 51% |
| Rock sole /other flatfish | 755 | 746 | 98.90% | 588 | 558 | 95% | 688 | 809 | 118% | 690 | 889 | 129% |
| PLCK/AMCK/other | 1692 | 1889 | 111.70% | 1257 | 1123 | 89% | 957 | 866 | 90% | 555 | 317 | 57% |
| Rockfish | 200 | 207 | 103.60% | 201 | 122 | 61% | 201 | 44 | 22% | 110 | 53 | 48% |
| Sablefish/Turbot/Arrowtooth | | | | 137 | 1 | 0% | 137 | 374 | 273% | 120 | 282 | 235% |
| Total | 5033 | 5170 | | 3775 | 3489 | | 3775 | 3933 | | 3775 | 3401 | |

* Data from NMFS 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 Bering Sea / Aleutian Islands Fisheries Trawl Halibut Bycatch Mortality (Metric Tons)

* All Data in Metric Tons

* 1995 Data as of August 25, 1995

**CANADIAN STATEMENT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
SEATTLE, SEPTEMBER 25-27, 1995**

1. Canada's major concern continues to be the high levels of halibut bycatches occurring in International Pacific Halibut Convention (IPHC) waters. High levels of halibut bycatch mortality in the U.S. groundfish fisheries both off Alaska and Washington-Oregon are adversely affecting the Canadian halibut fishery. These bycatches are seriously reducing Canadian catch opportunities and harming the state of the halibut resource. Canadian halibut fishermen are penalized for high Alaskan bycatches, losing over two million pounds.
2. The United States Government failed in 1994 to meet previous undertakings to reduce by 10 percent annually the level of bycatch mortality in its groundfish fisheries, primarily in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea/Aleutians. Canada has continued to urge U.S. authorities to recommit to a phased reduction of 10 percent annually in its halibut bycatch mortality as agreed in 1991. We understand that the United States Government continues to regard this issue seriously and has taken extensive and costly measures to address the problem.
3. Individuals and organizations in Canada and Alaska have actively promoted more responsible fishing practices such as "careful release" for hook and line vessels and sorting grids and trawl nets with lower bycatch rates. We also note that there is a workshop on solving by-catch issues taking place this week in Seattle which will provide technical information and fishing techniques to reduce bycatch.
4. However the halibut bycatch mortality caps in Alaska have continued at the same level for several years in spite of the Canada-U.S. agreement in the IPHC to reduce this bycatch. From Canada's perspective there appears to be an indifference to the seriousness of the bycatch problem by the fisheries managers of the Alaskan fishery.
5. It is noted that to date the Bering Sea trawl fishery has taken about 3350t from the 3775t halibut bycatch mortality cap. Canada requests that the Bering Sea groundfish trawl fishery be closed immediately in order to

- 2 -

ensure that the halibut bycatch reduction targets pledged earlier in 1995 can be implemented. This would demonstrate to the groundfish fleet in the Bering Sea that each gear sector, whether hook and line or trawl or groundfish pot, must be accountable for its own bycatch, and thus promote more responsible fishing practices.

Peninsula Marketing Association
P.O. Box 248
Sand Point, Alaska 99661
(907) 383-3600

D-3
250
Melanie Anderson

September 28, 1995

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
P.O. Box 103136
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

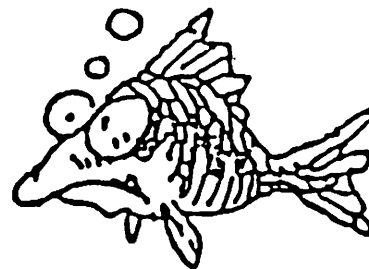
RE: Trimester Management

Peninsula Marketing Association fishermen would like to express their support of a trimester fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska and the movement of the July 1st and the October 1st opening to a period between September 1st and September 15th. If the Bering Sea opening is August 15th, we would like to see the Gulf of Alaska opening scheduled for as near to September 1st as possible.

The Western Gulf has gone from a twenty-four hour opening to a twelve hour opening. The Bering Sea closure causes a large increase in boats for the Western Gulf fishery and the catching power of these boats is double the allowable quota. We believe this increase is the cause of this reduction in fishing time. We also believe this increase of boats into the Western Gulf is a biological and an economical burden to it's coastal communities.

Our understanding is that proposals will not be taken up at this meeting. We would like to support Kodiak's proposal for a trimester fishery for pollock in the Gulf of Alaska.

North
Pacific
Longline
Association



Agenda D-3 (b)

Mr. Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: 1995 BSAI Specs

Dear Rick:

We would like to raise two issues related to longlining in the BSAI:

1. Start Date, Third Trimester Cod Fishery

Currently the third trimester fishery for the fixed gear cod fishery starts September 1. Just as the longline industry has largely removed itself from the summer fishery to avoid halibut bycatch, we would like to consider postponing the third trimester opening of our fishery to September 15 or October 1 - for the same reason. We have not yet reached a consensus on this, but would like the option to do so in December. I do not know whether this can be accomplished within the specification process, or if it requires a regulatory change. If the latter is required, we should consider a framework measure to facilitate future changes.

This purpose can also be achieved by zeroing out halibut PSC for the fishery to the later date - provided the regulations provide that flexibility.

2. BSAI Turbot Fishery

The overfishing level for Greenland turbot is some 24,000 mt - a directed fishery of 7,000 mt cannot jeopardize the species. NMFS has noted that the trawl fishery for turbot takes so much halibut that it may have to be discontinued. This is not true of the longline fishery. When our turbot season ended in 1995 we still had 40 mt of halibut PSC left for the fishery. There may be a need to set aside some turbot for bycatch in IFQ fisheries, but there is no reason to end the longline directed fishery for turbot by declaring it a bycatch-only fishery.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Transcript
Discussion of North Pacific Fishery Council Members
Regarding the Bogoslof pollock quota
September 30, 1995

[Transcript omits formalities of addressing the chair for recognition and recognition by the chair]

Tape 49

Morris Barker: I make the motion that the AP TACs be moved forward for public review with the exception that we have a range for the Bogoslof pollock to cover the speculative needs of the action with the Donut Hole issue, and that that range be from 100,000 to 1,000. [Wally Pereyra seconded the motion]

Rick Lauber (Chair): 100,000 to 1,000? [affirmative reply] Your motion includes the A and B season split of 45/55?

Barker: No, it doesn't.

Steve Pennoyer: That's a separate action, Mr. Chairman.

Lauber: O.K., is there any discussion?

Earl Krygier: This is a tough one. On the range on the Bogoslof, I'm not at all comfortable with that considering the discussions that need to occur soon in the bilaterals with the other folks in the Donut Hole and I certainly have listened carefully to what industry had said about having something on the table on allowing them some alternatives, but I think the high end of that range is more than I'm comfortable with and we had something last year's, was set around, what was the ABC, it was around 22. I'm comfortable with that and uncomfortable with that number, and I don't know what. . . I'd just like to hear what some of the other Council members feel about that before we go much further in the discussion.

Lauber: Well, the Council ABC was 22,000, the TAC was 1,000.

Krygier: Right, right. What do they think about the TAC range that Morris. . .

Wally Pereyra: I think this Council in the past had a history of trying to be, I think the proper word now is risk averse, in setting quotas and so forth and we've done that in a number of fisheries. I think in this case here we're being quite risk averse. We had a ABC that was recommended by the plan team and we had testimony from Dr. Low that they really scrutinized this because of the fact that the hydroacoustic survey showed a significant increase of pollock in Bogoslof due to the strength of the 89-90 year class. But the plan team, after a lot of analysis, came forward with a ABC of 165,000 tons. Then the SSC, wanting to be more conservative, established an ABC that was based on an exploitation rate, base on M divided by 2, which again is being more conservative. [Begin Tape 50] The normal procedure is having $F = M$, in this case here they took one-half of that to be even more conservative. So, the whole process to arrive at the ABC in my mind has been quite conservative. In terms of the TAC side, the Bogoslof area, the fish in the Bogoslof area if you look at the feeling scientists have expressed to us that some 80% of those fish are really U.S. fish anyway and they come from our shelf. They tend to be older aged fish, five years old, six years old, and beyond. And so what we're dealing with here, is we're dealing with I think a resource which is largely a U.S. resource. Now, to tie it to the so-called Donut Hole treaty I think is probably inappropriate for several reasons. First of all, the United States to my knowledge has not ratified that treaty, so in effect it's a treaty in initials only and it's not really a treaty in force. Secondly, I've read

the treaty, or I've read the agreement, and I don't see anything in there that ties what we do in the Bogoslof to what happens in the Donut Hole, and I think for a reason. The reason being that the Bogoslof area really is in our zone, it's in our EEZ and we determine what happens in our EEZ. As far as the Donut Hole goes, we have you might say an extra-territorial interest beyond 200 miles because those fish happen to originate predominantly in our zone, so I think

we can comfortably determine what we want to do with the fish that are in our zone based upon what our scientists tell us and what the science is. When you look at the Gulf of Alaska, we just now have agreed to put out TACs on a stock which the scientists tell us at the present time is low. The biomass is one-half of what it is in Bogoslof, one-half of what is in Bogoslof, and yet we've seen fit to go forward with a TAC on the Gulf pollock. Now, granted, it looks like there's probably a strong year class coming in, but we don't have that represented in the exploited biomass yet, so here again, I think there's a need for us to have some consistency in what we're doing. Greenland turbot, Greenland turbot's been low for years, but the concern that we've shown I don't think is quite to the degree to this concern that we're showing for Bogoslof where in fact the stock is increasing. Lastly, . . . a exploitation rate that we're looking at for Bogoslof, the maximum it is is about 6% of the total central basin stock. That's a very, very conservative number. That's 10%, one hundred thousand tons of 1.6 or 1.7 million tons, which is what Dr. Low says that the U.S. figures would project for the total central basin stock, 6% is a very low number. So, even if we were to go that far, and I'm not suggesting that we do, we're still going to be very conservative in our TAC. And lastly, this is just out for discussion purposes and I think that by putting this kind of a range in there we will get some good discussion going that we can then make our final decision in December without compromising the type of fishery that we may or may not want to have for next year, so I think it's the proper thing to do and it's not making a decision at this time.

Pennoyer: I was going to clarify something. Well, I hate to throw a monkey wrench into something that sounds like a plan that you've thought out on this, but what the regulations say is the . . . perspective TAC that you set here is what we start the season with and I don't know how you adopt a range that lets me start the season on either the thousand tons or the hundred thousand tons and it's sort of my option. I don't think we can do that. I think the regulations really say you're going to pick a number and that's the number we're going to go with for the start of the season, so I think if you want to take the direction that you're going to in essence wait and see, and look at the information between now and December and you accept the fact that we are not going to fish until the final specs come into place, and we're under pressure to try and get them in by some date and you don't think the Bogoslof fish mature until later anyway, then you could certainly go with the thousand and see what happened and make a decision in December. But, I don't think you can pick a range because then basically you could do that for anything and the whole concept of us being stuck with the initial TAC for pollock until the final specs goes out the window because you could pick a range on anything. So, I don't think a range works by regulation.

Pereyra: Well, if that's the case then, I think that we have to put some number in Bogoslof at this meeting because the Bogoslof fishery is only a winter fishery, the fish are not available during the other times of the year, they're dispersed and they move into the central basin and so forth, so if it's really the intent to have something take place then we would have to discuss it at greater length here and come up with some decision.

Lauber: This is a very interesting situation. The biomass estimate comes in at 1.02 million. I think that comes out to a 1,020,000 metric tons, doesn't it. Now, what the effect of this, you've heard all this, but I just want to summarize it. What the effect of this is, that that 20,000 tons, when we get above the million, whatever the number above that, it could be 1 ton, theoretically, but that triggers the treaty and that will be in effect. Now, if we don't ratify that treaty it means some interesting things. It doesn't mean that the treaty isn't in effect, because I think that there have been enough other countries ratify the treaty, that there is a treaty. We may not be party to it, but I suspect that we will be shortly a party to this; after this situation arises, it's going to be prodding somebody in the United States Senate to make damn sure that that treaty is ratified. Now, what this 20,000 metric tons does, and we heard this, triggers the Donut Hole, central Bering Sea, for foreign fishing at 130,000 metric tons. And now we're in a range, or some number, of fishing in the Bogoslof on these stocks of an

additional 100,000. So we get some kind of a mid-point estimate at 1.02; 20,000 tons triggers a fishery of 230,000 metric tons of fish in a stock of fish that is distressed. Now if those numbers had come in, or they come in next year, substantially higher than 1.02 million, or 20,000 more, if we see there are significant numbers of fish, I can understand that. But we have, as I say, a mid-point range and I have the utmost confidence in our scientists, but I don't have the utmost confidence in our science when you start putting zeros after points, that they have that degree of expertise, and so it seems to me that this is an extremely drastic action, to have happen to us. Now, if you don't think that by us putting a range of somewhere around 100,000, or quite frankly if we allow a Bogoslof fishery, fortunately I'm going to be out of the loop of negotiations because I'm going to be chairing that central Bering Sea meeting, but there are others in the U.S. Section that are going to have to do that, and I pity them to try to hold off the foreigners and make a case of why there should not be a central Bering Sea Donut Hole fishery, so this has some extreme ramifications. I can understand that business may not be good for some people, I understand that there's all kinds of interests in additional product, be that as it may, but to trigger a potential 230,000 ton harvest, and by the way, once you trigger 130,000 metric tons in the Donut Hole, you've got a lot more confidence in how much they adhere to the exact amount of fish that they're supposed to adhere to than I do, this could have far-reaching ramifications. And so, I'm hesitant to put in a number that would allow anything but a bycatch fishery at this time. Next year, if these numbers persist and we see that this is a continuing climb, as Dr. Low suggested it might, then I think we'd have to re-think that, but at this time I'm very hesitant. These numbers could be a serious glitch in this hydroacoustic survey and if it was just a one little blip, one little anomaly, it would have come out below 1.02.

Pereyra: . . . I'd just like to point out a few things. First of all, the biomass which the fishery would be prosecuted on is not what was measured last February. I think Dr. Low pointed that out. There's every indication to believe, based upon their knowledge of the stocks, that in fact the biomass is going to be larger. And, I asked Dr. Low what it might be and I don't want to say what he told me in private, but it was more than you're talking about here. The other thing is if you look at the SSC report, they say, "the substantial increase in abundance also alleviates our concern regarding fishery impacts on marine mammals and birds and like the team we no longer recommend the fishery be prosecuted as bycatch only. Now, I think that's a fairly strong statement from the SSC which are very conservative when they set the ABC. Now they're telling us that there's no longer any need to keep this as a bycatch only. The other thing is that they went ahead and calculated the overfishing level. The overfishing level is over 300,000 tons. If you go through the various ABCs that we've set and the TACs we're setting relative to the overfishing level, of all the other stocks we have in our zone, and I think that you'll find that most of them are right up there close to the overfishing level, and yet we seem to have no concern about that. And here's a case where we have a great range between the overfishing level and what might be a reasonable fishery. Now, I'm not saying 100,000 tons it should be, but I think if there's a need to have something in place in order to do something next year, I think we have to do it at this meeting and I feel quite strongly that there's a strong biological basis to support some sort of a small fishery in that area. I think that if the foreigners were sitting here they would be just sort of smiling to themselves. I think this is exactly what they'd like to hear, that in fact the United States is so frightened by what type of foreign actions there might be out there in the Donut Hole that they're not willing to allow their fishermen to fish on their fish. I think it's a great deal for the foreigners and I just think we're playing right into their hands by having these kinds of discussions, these kinds of arguments.

Lauber: Further discussion on this item?

Barker: Wally has spoken pretty well to this. I would point out that Dr. Low did point out they did not have the Russian numbers, so it's a straight extrapolation based on the 60% that occurs on this side of the basin. If those numbers are not present on the Russian side there probably won't be a fishery and we'll be sitting here with no directed fishery on a resource that can certainly stand it. If they are on the Russian side and we keep seeing this process grow in population as Dr. Low suggested, there will be a fishery every year for the next couple of years, for the foreseeable future, and we'll still be sitting in this same place, wondering what we're going to do with this surplus in the Bogoslof that we're afraid to touch.

Krygier: I guess I'll offer an amendment to this section on the Bogoslof, and I would move the AP's 1,000 TAC for that area.

Lauber: . . . The original motion . . . contained a variation in the AP TAC, on a range of 1,000 to 100,000. Your amendment to the main motion would put it back to no range, but 1,000, in other words the AP original recommendation.

Krygier: Right.

Lauber: Was there a second to that?

Linda Behnken: I'll second that.

Lauber: O.K., speak to your amendment.

Krygier: Well, this is a very frustrating thing to have to deal with and I certainly listened carefully on the testimony on this issue and I definitely see both sides of the issue. I do have. . . I probably should have amended the ABCs to the lower end of the range which would have been a better choice, but I think that the issue as I see it, is that this is a fishery when we allow it to occur it is going to trigger a much larger fishery so that the sum total of the extractions are going to be a lot greater than that 20,000 that got us above the 1 million switch. And, the concern that I had expressed earlier to Dr. Low about whether or not their original. . . when they originally developed the model as far as the recruitments of the various age classes, whether or not they had a significant fishery right at the U.S./Russian border and he indicated "no" and that in fact they did this year and probably would next and a lot of that recruitment is a lot of what's going to be refueling the rebounding of the stock. I think it's early for us to do this, see such a significant increase, I understand that Dr. Low has. . . he believes that there is a. . . at least he has a high comfort level with that. I saw that jump from more than double; I don't have that kind of comfort in there and I think that by moving this on to a fishery which is going to encourage a larger fishery in the Donut Hole is the wrong thing to do.

Pereyra: I can't support this amendment and all the things I said before are certainly reflective of my feelings on this subject. But, in addition, there's going to be a fishery out in the Donut Hole, whether it's something that we want or don't want, and I know for a fact the Japanese already have these numbers. They know what's going on out there. You're going to get sitting down at the table and they're going to have all the facts on their side that are really facts from the U.S. scientists. So, a fishery starts out in the Donut Hole and U.S. fishermen, I don't care whether they're from shore plants or whether they're factory trawlers or whether they're with motherships, cannot fish out there under U.S. law. We presently have regulations on the book that prevent U.S. fishermen from going out there. So, who are the ones that are going to fish out there? The ones that are going to fish out there are the very ones that we have to compete with, and I say "we" meaning the whole U.S. industry, have to compete with in their markets. The very ones that drove us out of Bogoslof in the first place are going to be back there fishing in the Donut Hole while we sit on the beach and I think that is a travesty and I don't want to be a part of it, so I can't support this amendment.

Pennoyer: Mr. Chairman, what you've said is obviously very true about negotiations being a difficult process and they're certainly not going to be made easier by whatever is done here, but the quotas, if there are any, in the central Bering Sea are supposedly driven by the biomass estimate and obviously what we do in our zone has a bearing on that in terms of conservativeness or not being conservative, or how we view the population estimates when we set our own quotas, but we're going to look at the Russian data, we're going to have the countries meet together to try and determine biomass, the Russian and U.S. side have to discuss that, and ultimately then if the only thing is, is go to formula, then the formula will be based on the numbers we've heard here. And that could trigger, if it went it went down to that third step, trigger a fishery in the Donut Hole that then would be divided

up amongst six countries and in some fashion have to be regulated. So, I understand what you said about the difficulty in regulation, observers and transponders and all that stuff has to be worked out, but I guess I'm having a hard time, too. . .if we didn't have this other question we wouldn't go for this ABC and we wouldn't go for a TAC based on the ABC; we'd go for something conservative, quite conservative, and I don't know what that does to the discussion, if the U.S. goes to a half or a third in its preliminary estimate we're still going to look at again in December, preliminary estimate of what could be taken out there according to scientists. That's a pretty strong message, too. So, we can't do a range, or if you do a range what you're doing is saying you're not going to open the fishery until February or whenever the final specs go into effect, and you could do that. . .if you're really uncertain. . .particularly if we want to see the Russian data which we haven't seen yet, and have the chance for this Council to see what the combined stock looks like. You won't know that until December. If you went for the lower end or an intermediate, some low level, it would in essence say you're not going to fish until February 20, and I don't know if that's O.K. or not; that certainly is an option. But I'm having trouble just indicating we're not going to fish IF our scientists' estimates are right, and if we could be that conservative. And the only reason we're doing it is really to send a message that. . .we could be very conservative and allow a 30,000 ton. . .I won't even project a number, I'm not going to propose one, which is so much less than the projections here that would be said not to have an impact, so we're doing it based on a projection that there'd be another 130,000 tons taken and I don't know that. There's no biomass estimate yet for the Donut Hole and if you use the biomass estimates just based on our estimate, nothing else, but . . .[couldn't understand]. . .practically by formula the way it. . .so I'm having a little trouble going with the 1,000 tons too unless the presumption is that we're looking at this thing waiting for the Russian data and we're not going to open a directed fishery until the specs are done.

Lauber: Let me ask a question, Steve. I don't know if the number, if we have a TAC in the Bogoslof, as far as the effect it would have on the other fishing nations is significant. I think the fact that's significant is that we have a directed fishery in the Bogoslof on those stocks is what's significant, whether it's 20,000 or 100,000. I don't know. . .I don't think that's a major factor, but. . .and it's unfortunate that we have to make a decision at this time on this kind of an issue. If we had some opportunity to have some kind of range or something of that nature, but you say we can't do that because you have to have some kind of a figure, an exact figure so that you can open this fishery come January.

Pennoyer: You can have a range, what it means is you don't open, except at the lower end of the range, until final specs are published. Then in December you still come back and decide what your final specs are going to be.

[break]

Pennoyer: . . .We've talked about the Bogoslof issue for quite a little while here and we've had presentations from the SSC and the Plan Team. I think many concerns have been evinced here about the status of that stock and what the appropriate action would be in terms of a fishery in our zone. We've discussed the implications internationally as well, but clearly the first decision we've got to make is how comfortable we are with being able to exploit that stock, taking into account the possibility of harvest elsewhere on that stock as well. We've had some discussion of the fact that the estimate we've got is right at some magic level. It is a dramatic increase over last year, it's a dramatic turn-around in a downward trend that we've been seeing over a considerable period of time, it's also in the face of an unknown impact of a potential Russian harvest on stocks of year classes that would be entering the Aleutian basin and starting to feed this stock and perhaps contribute to appropriate increases in it. We've been told by the plan team that they are looking at the question of risk and ranges but aren't prepared to do that at this stage. We've also been told that some of the other implications on the Russian fishery and the stock in the Russian zone and the total Aleutian basin stock may become clear to us when we meet with the Russians later this month, but we don't have that information at this time. We know that because of the ways that our laws are constructed, a fishery to occur at the start of the season has to be specified at this time. Because of getting the specs in place after you pass a number in December takes a period of time, probably about a month and a half. So we're looking at the final specs for the Bering Sea not coming into place until about

February 17. That's obviously a tremendous imposition on our fishery if we were to have a fishery. Yet, I hear the concern here for the stock being such that people are willing to wait that period of time to get the appropriate information to make a decision and I guess what I would propose is that we go ahead with a initial specification which will drive the fishery at the opening of the season in January for 1,000 metric tons, which is a bycatch level, with the understanding and footnoting this decision by the fact the Council is waiting for this additional information to make a final decision in December, recognizing that when they make that final decision, if it's a positive decision for a fishery, that fishery could not take place, really, until mid-February at the earliest, and that we proceed in that fashion. So I move that, Mr. Chairman, that we adopt 1,000 metric tons, or bycatch level, for Bogoslof at this stage and footnote it that pending the receipt of the other information I've discussed in this discourse. [Seconded by Linda Behnken]

Lauber: O.K., it's been moved and seconded. Dr. Barker.

Barker: Just to clarify for myself and the record, then the footnote caveat is such that would allow if the information and the decision for such to go up to perhaps 100,000 metric tons in the final specs?

Pennoyer: There would be no limit, per se, on what you're going to do. That decision would be made in December as it is for all the other stocks. You have a 2 million metric ton OY and the distribution of the harvest within the stocks is up to you to discuss. Obviously my presumption is you wouldn't go over ABC on any stock; you haven't in the past, but there's no specific number in place, so it would be after receipt of the data and examination of the data, at least the way the motion's constructed.

Pereyra: I can't support the motion even though I'm sympathetic to what Mr. Pennoyer is saying. Dr. Low reported to us that based upon their discussions with the Russian scientists that we really can't expect much from them, and what we're going to have in December is not going to be much different from what we have now in terms of stock information. The only thing that we're going to have is we're going to have the results of some discussions that will be going on in a multilateral forum regarding the Donut Hole and as I stated before, I think to make the linkage between what happens in Bogoslof, what we determine to do in Bogoslof, with what a multi-national forum decides to do in the Donut Hole, I think is a very dangerous precedent and one which I certainly can't support. I think we need to make a decision based upon the information as we see it and move accordingly, so while I'm sympathetic I can't support . . .

Pennoyer: Mr. Pereyra, I'm very sympathetic to what you're saying and I don't think the implication here is that we are going to manage our fishery driven by the foreign fishery. That was not what I was intending to put across. [Begin Tape 51] We have the meeting later this month, there'll be a scientific and technical committee that will meet to discuss the status of the Bering Sea pollock stocks in general, specifically those of the Aleutian Basin for which we have half or maybe more of the total spawning stock in our zone. There will be more information available in December and I wish it was available now and if it was available now, we would go ahead and make that decision I think now. We are dis. . . [couldn't understand the word]. . . ourselves to the extent that our fishery is going to be delayed in opening for at least two or three weeks if it's going to open. That is a sacrifice on the part of the U.S. industry and I think this Council is recognizing that in what they're doing. But, again, this stock has been going downhill in face of a very huge harvest in the mid-80s for a considerable number of years and this is the first point of turnaround and I, like you, think that the information we've got is pretty good and it seems like the other things about year classes coming in are supportive of that, but it's not two years of increase in a row; there's been no trend of increase, we just have one point; we have the questions of the age composition effects; fish don't recruit into the. . . we don't know how they recruit into the Aleutian Basin very well, but they don't recruit on an incremental basis starting at 2-year-olds and going up. They appear out there at a certain age class and we have information that there may be substantial removals occurring on a couple of those age classes, so I don't agree with you that all the information is in yet. I do agree with you that we shouldn't abase our decision strictly on what the foreigners are going to do. We do have a negotiation to go through and

frankly if we're going to have any type of a fishery out there I would expect us to be hard on the period of time that fishery can occur in, on maybe things like limitation of gear, very hard on transducers, transponders, and observers on every boat, a lot of other factors and then, of course, you're also going to have to divide that harvest up by a factor of six. It may not even be economical at this level of harvest of fish out there, so there's a number of things that might occur. I don't think we can say those are going to drive what we think is appropriate to do on the part of the stock in our zone. But there are also some unknowns and I hear a lot of uncomfortableness around this table with those unknowns. I'm trying to structure a system whereby we can bring the maximum information to bear at the time we're doing all the other stocks, which is in December, and still have the ability to prosecute a fishery if it's warranted, and that's what the tenor of my motion was.

[Several calls for the question]

Lauber: I guess we'd better call the roll. We're voting on Mr. Pennoyer's amendment to the motion, which is AP TACs in the Bering Sea. His motion is on the Bogoslof, bycatch only, 1,000 metric tons, and decision to be made in a range at the December meeting.

| | | |
|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Roll Call: | Behnken | Yes |
| | Krygier | Yes |
| | Fluharty | Yes |
| | Mace | Not present |
| | O'Leary | Yes |
| | Pennoyer | Yes |
| | Pereyra | No |
| | Samuelsen | Yes |
| | Tillion | Yes |
| | Barker | Yes |
| | Lauber | Yes |

Pass.

Lauber: O.K., now we have the main motion as amended, which is the AP TACs; any further amendments. Ready for the question? Is there any objection to the motion as amended? Hearing none, it passes.

[End of this subject]

Transcription Time: 2.5 hours