

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council


Clement V. Tillion, Chairman  
Jim H. Branson, Executive Director

Suite 32, 333 West 4th Avenue  
Post Office Mall Building



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3136DT  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 274-4563  
FTS 271-4064

Certified By: 

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## MINUTES

### SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

Anchorage, Alaska  
May 17-18, 1982

The Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Anchorage on May 17-18, 1982. Members present were:

Donald Rosenberg, Chairman  
Richard Marasco, Vice-Chairman  
Al Millikan  
Jack Robinson, alternate for Larry Hreha  
John Burns  
Bud Burgner  
Jack Lechner  
Bill Aron  
Phil Rigby, alternate for John Clark  
Steve Langdon  
Ed Miles

#### D-5 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

##### Sablefish OY

The SSC, at the request of Dr. Bevan, reviewed the Council actions from the March meeting regarding the sablefish OY in the area East of 140°W. The Council combined the recommended OYs for the Southeastern (960 mt) and the Yakutat East of 140°W (850 mt) into one OY (1,810 mt) for the total area. Dr. Bevan was concerned that there could be a conservation problem if the total OY were taken out of one of the sub areas. The team, at its April 28 meeting, has also reviewed this issue.

The SSC is unable to provide the Council with a specific recommendation with respect to dividing the OY into the two areas or leaving it as one OY for the total area. The SSC does note the following:

On the positive side, leaving the OY at 1,810 mt will allow the domestic fishery to maintain catches in their traditional fishing areas at near current levels. This will have a favorable short-term impact on the economic health of the industry.

However, on the negative side, leaving the OY at 1,810 mt leaves the possibility of the harvest in the Southeastern management area to exceed the EY for that area. This creates the potential for the stock in the area to be adversely affected and thus, could lead to a deterioration of the economic viability in the long-term for the industry.

If the Council does choose to leave the OY combined and thus, leave the possibility that the harvest may exceed the EY for one of the sub areas in the area, the SSC recommends that the Council advise the Regional Director to monitor the progress of the fishery and to take necessary actions in the event there is an indication of a conservation problem.

#### DAH of Pollock in the Central Gulf

The SSC concurs that there is the need for an immediate adjustment to the DAH for the pollock in the Central Gulf management area. In this context, the SSC did review the document from the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center on the status of the Gulf of Alaska pollock resource and the request from the Japan Deep Sea Trawlers Association for an increase in the OY for pollock in this area. The SSC was unable to make any extensive evaluations of this matter since the issue was raised only some 10 days ago.

The SSC did examine the MSY ranges for pollock as contained in the plan (169,000 to 338,000 mt Gulf-wide). The report from the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center indicates that these ranges are still valid. The FMP sets the ABC equal to the low end of MSY (169,000 mt) and apportioned it to the three management areas based on trawl survey data and sets the OY equal to ABC. In accordance with the Plan, ABC was set at the lower end of the MSY range because of the degree of incompleteness of the biological data base. A conservative approach to exploitation was therefore considered to be warranted. The FMP further notes that until there is evidence to support a contention that higher yield can be sustained, only catch levels which are equal to or less than the lower end of the MSY/EY range can be considered relatively free from risk of over-exploitation. The Council should note that this procedure for establishment of ABC was not limited to pollock, but also included cod, flounder, squid and rockfish (other than ocean perch).

The SSC recommends that in light of this request and the expanding domestic industry, a review of current biological and other appropriate information be undertaken to determine if the ABCs and OYs for these species should be modified. The SSC recommends that the team undertake this evaluation by the July Council meeting.

#### D-6 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

##### Amendment #1

The SSC reviewed Amendment #1 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP. The major concern expressed by the SSC regarding this amendment as now presented was the two-tiered approach to the establishment of the final total allowable catch. The SSC felt that this approach added an additional administrative burden and created operational problems in the foreign industry as the DAH approached the initial TAC.

In our discussion with the team, we found that little additional information would be available to the Council between the time of establishment of the initial TAC (January 1) and the establishment of the final TAC (April 1). As a result of this discussion, the team has modified the TAC approach. Under this new system, the TAC for the groundfish complex and its component species groups will be determined by the end of the preceding fishing year. Because of this modification, the resource assessment documents will need to be prepared for the Council by July 1.

The SSC also recommended to the team that they identify in the amendment who would be responsible for the resource assessment documents.

The team, in developing the modification to the one-step TAC, recommended that reserves be increased from 10 percent to 15 percent of the TAC. The team felt that this increase in reserves was necessary as an additional safeguard. The SSC concurs with that recommendation.

The SSC notes that the reserves are designated for the groundfish complex as a whole and not on a species by species basis. The SSC concurs with this designation to the groundfish complex as it will allow the Regional Director the flexibility required for management of the groundfish complex.

The SSC recommends that Amendment #1 as now amended be approved and submitted to the Secretary for review.

#### U.S. Fishery Development Zone

The SSC reviewed the document entitled "Creation of a United States Fisheries Development Area in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Region as Proposed by Bart Eaton - Effect of Foreign Catches and Catch Distribution." Additionally, the SSC reviewed the discussion at the December Council meeting where Mr. Eaton discussed the concept of such a zone.

The SSC finds that the objective for the establishment of such a zone has not been fully developed and feels that before the team can develop an amendment the Council must spell out to the team those objectives. The Council must provide guidance on such questions as:

1. What is the actual zone to be considered by the team?
2. Will joint ventures be allowed in the zone?
3. Are all foreign gear types to be excluded?

Questions such as these must be answered before analysis of the impact can be completed. For example, the SSC does not feel that foreign longlines will be able to make up lost catch resulting from exclusions from the area where foreign trawlers may.

The SSC feels it cannot evaluate this concept until the objectives have been defined and the analysis completed.

## E-1 Contracts, Proposals and Financial Reports

### Programmatic Research Funding - FY83

The SSC reviewed the FY83 requests for programmatic research funding. In addition, we reviewed those projects which had been requested in FY82, but had not been funded and the special request from the AP for an analysis of joint ventures.

With regard to those projects carried forward from last year, the SSC recommends that the following be deleted from the list:

1. Analysis of Southeastern Salmon Scale Patterns

We recommend dropping until the current FRI/UW study is completed. At that time, the SSC will evaluate the need for this type of study.

2. Analysis of Southeastern Alaska Troll Data

It is recommended that this be dropped. Most of this work has been undertaken by ADF&G. Any additional work after that analysis is completed could be undertaken in later years.

3. Halibut Mortality in Crab Pots

We recommended this study be dropped. Some data on the impact of crab pots on halibut will be collected under the current crab observation program. After that data is available, a determination of the need for this study will be made.

The SSC recommends that the other two projects be carried forward for consideration in FY83.

The SSC reviewed the new proposal for FY83. A total of six proposals had been requested. The SSC recommends that the proposal entitled "A Review of the Management Process, Strategies and Procedures of the King Crab Fishery" be dropped. The SSC believes that current analysis underway both within NMFS and ADF&G will provide insight into this issue. The SSC did not find that the issue was of high enough priority at this time to be included in the FY83 priority list.

The SSC also recommends that the project entitled "The Development of Fisheries Economics Data" be withheld from the list. It was the feeling by the SSC that this project should be extensively modified to obtain data that was useful to the Council. Likewise, the SSC recommends that the proposed study for joint ventures be withheld. The SSC recommends that both of these studies be modified and be considered for funding with rapid response monies.

The SSC reviewed the remaining proposals and agency comments and recommends that the following priorities be assigned:

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
-	Rapid Response	\$ 80,000	\$
1	FMP Development ADF&G	60,000	140,000
2	Sablefish Symposium	4,000	144,000
3	Domestic Trawl Logbook Program	167,300	211,300
4	Feasibility of Using Scale Analysis to Identify Bering Sea Herring Stocks	60,000	271,300
5	High Seas Tagging of Salmon	60,000	331,300
6	Golden King Crab Study	20,000	351,300

With regard to these specific studies, the SSC recommends the following:

1. That, as with last year's, the Council propose this funding as a package to Washington and that it include a request for unspecified or rapid response funding. That project would not have a priority.
2. With regard to the trawl logbook program, the SSC recommends it for one year funding. There are questions raised as to whether the logbook program should be mandatory or voluntary. We also discussed the need to investigate the feasibility of a coastwide logbook.
3. The SSC recommends that the High Seas Tagging of Salmon project be modified to include gathering data on net marked salmon.

#### Contracts

1. Contract 81-2 ADF&G Fisheries Data

The SSC reviewed the final report resulting from this contract. The SSC finds that the contractor has met the conditions of the contract and we recommend that the contract be approved.

2. Contract 81-4 Marine Mammal Feeding Habits

The SSC was requested by the Council staff to postpone the review of the draft final report for this contract. The reason for this request was because the written comments were not available from the Marine Mammal Commission. The SSC is concerned over this delay as agencies and individuals have been given sufficient time to provide written review. The SSC has authorized its subcommittee (Rosenberg, Aron) authority to make final approval for the SSC and strongly recommends that the Council forward all written reviews to the contractor. It was the feeling of the SSC that it was unfair to the contractor to delay beyond June 1 in providing them with the written comments.

#### Proposal Review

The SSC requested that the chairman meet with the executive director to discuss the procedures for review of RFP and proposals.