

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in its regular monthly session on July 27-28 at the Captain Cook Hotel. Some of the highlights of the meeting included:

* HIGH SEAS (TROLL) SALMON FMP:

The Council, after a lengthy discussion, approved for public comment the revised draft of the troll salmon plan. A previous plan had been submitted to the Secretary of Commerce and then withdrawn for revision. The new plan will offer a number of possible ways of attaining the Council's objective of stabilizing the catch in the troll fishery at the average catch level of the past seven years. Limited entry in the troll fishery, quotas and combining offshore and state water catches will be topics offered in the plan for comment. Copies of the revised FMP for the troll fishery should be available for distribution by late August. Review of the plan will take a minimum of reading since most of the background material remains the same. Calculations for MSY and topics listed above are generally the only new material in the revision.

* BERING SEA GROUND FISH FMP:

The first draft of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Area Groundfish FMP was presented to the Council at the July meeting and approved to go forward for public comment. It is on schedule with the troll plan and copies will be available about the end of August.

* GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH FMP:

The Council agreed with the NMFS recommendation that the FMP for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery could be implemented by November 1, 1978, to extend for a twelve-month period. Information available indicates there is no need to change stock assessments and catch expectations for 1979.

* PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE FOR MANAGEMENT PLANS:

Juneau has been added to the public hearing schedule for the salmon troll FMP, which already includes Ketchikan on September 23rd, Petersburg on September 24th, Pelican on September 25th, and Sitka on September

27th. The Juneau hearing will be September 22nd. Another public hearing on the troll plan will be held concurrently in Seattle with a public hearing on the Bering Sea/Aleutian Groundfish FMP on October 7th. Other locations selected for the BSA plan include Unalaska, Kodiak and Anchorage later in October.

* MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:

A format for monthly reporting on management plan development was presented for Council consideration. This report will provide details and current standing on a regular monthly basis for all the fishery management plans under Council consideration.

* STEERING COMMITTEE FOR BERING SEA SHRIMP FMP:

Council members Ron Skoog and Henry Wendler were appointed as a Council Steering Committee for the Bering Sea Shrimp FMP.

* COUNCIL VISIT BY ROBERT SCHONING:

Mr. Robert Schoning attended the July Council meeting in his role as special assistant to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries to study means of improving Council/NMFS relationships. During his visit he met with the Council staff, SSC and AP as well as the Council.

* U.S./U.S.S.R. FISHING AGREEMENT:

Sue Jelley, U.S. State Department representative who attended the meeting, presented a draft U.S./U.S.S.R. Fishing Agreement which will allow U.S. fishermen to fish for pollock in Soviet waters. The SSC, AP and Council will review it at the August meeting and submit comments to the State Department.

* The Council, by request from the NMFS, recommended release of 400 mt of sablefish and 500 mt of Pacific cod from the Bering Sea reserve amounts, making them available to other nations.

* D-2 LANDS BILL (H.R. 39):

A letter outlining the Council's position on the Alaska (d) (2) lands issue was approved and forwarded to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The Council is opposed to the 6-mile seaward extension of coastal refuges and the Title 7 provisions for subsistence boards contained in House Bill 39. They feel the added overlay of regulations added by these sections will only further confuse an already complicated jurisdictional area. Existing law provides adequately for management in both areas.

* HALIBUT FMP:

Chairman Harold Lokken reported to the Council on the status of U.S./Canadian negotiations concerning halibut. He feels that because of time constraints, agreement on halibut should be sought immediately and asked for a Council view on a proposed U.S. position paper which he had drafted. The subject has been tabled until the August meeting.

The Halibut PDT and Council Steering Committee for halibut met in Seattle July 10 to begin work on the halibut FMP. An outline of the plan is expected by the August 24 Council meeting.

* ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERSHIP AND POLICY:

At the recommendation of the AP, the Council reconsidered its policy on AP membership and composition. The AP recommended that the current practice of allowing six consecutive unexcused absences from meetings be changed to allow only two meetings with an automatic resignation due as a result of the third consecutive absence. It was decided that the current mix of representation is satisfactory. The Council directed that AP vacancies be advertised for interested applicants and held over action until August on the suggested attendance policy.

* ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERSHIPS SOLICITED:

The Council is advertising for memberships on the Advisory Panel. Any individual who feels they would like to serve a two-year term on the AP is asked to apply to the Council office. No salary is paid but expenses are reimbursed. Meetings of the AP are generally held once a month on the day preceeding the Council meeting.

NOTICE

The Council meeting for August will be held at the Captain Cook Hotel, Anchorage, August 24-25, 1978. Meeting time is 8:30 a.m. both days. A public comment session is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. August 24. The Scientific and Statistical Committee will meet in the Council office on August 23rd and the Advisory Panel will meet in the Easter Island Room of the Captain Cook Hotel on August 23rd.