



North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Simon Kinneen, Chair | David Witherell, Executive Director
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Meeting Summary

253rd Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
February 5th and February 8 -10, 2021
Webconference – Adobe Connect

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Attachments

- 1) Time Log
- 2) Newsletter

The time log is included as a reference attachment for names, dates and times of each agenda item, and the newsletter is included to provide details of the agenda items and the meeting as a whole.

All documents and information related to the meeting are accessible online at:

<https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/1844>

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met on February 5th, and on February 8th through February 10, 2021. The following Council members, Council staff, SSC, and AP members attended the meetings.

Council Members

Jim Balsiger/Glenn Merrill
National Marine Fisheries Service

Nicole Kimball
Appointed

Rachel Baker/Karla Bush (for Doug Vincent-Lang)
Alaska Department Fish and Game

Simon Kinneen, **Chair**
Appointed

Cora Campbell
Appointed

Staci MacCorkle
US Dept of State

Craig Cross
Appointed

Steve Marx (for Curt Melcher)
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

Kenny Down
Appointed

Andy Mezirow
Appointed

Jon Gerken (for Greg Siekaniec)
US Fish & Wildlife Service

Bill Tweit (for Kelly Susewind), **Vice Chair**
Washington Department Fish & Wildlife

Dave Hanson
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

RADM Matthew Bell Jr/CAPT Brennell
United States Coast Guard

John Jensen
Appointed

Council Staff

Armstrong, Jim
Cleaver, Sara
Cunningham, Sam
Davis, Maria
Evans, Diana (DD)
Fey, Mike (PSMFC)

Forristall, Angela (Sea Grant
Fellow)
Gleason, Shannon
Haapala, Kate
Henry, Anna
Hillary, Kaylah
La Belle, Sarah

MacLean, Steve
Marrinan, Sarah
McCracken, Jon
Schmidt, Nicole
Stram, Diana
Witherell, Dave (ED)

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from February 1st to February 5, 2021 via adobe connect in a virtual conference. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings:

Anne Hollowed, Co-Chair
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Milo Adkison
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Curry Cunningham
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Dana Hanselman
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Andrew Munro
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game

Ian Stewart
Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission

Sherri Dressel, Co-Chair
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game

Chris Anderson
University of Washington

Mike Downs
Wislow Research

Brad Harris
Alaska Pacific University

Matt Reimer
University of California, Davis

Patrick Sullivan
Cornell University

Alison Whitman, Vice Chair
Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Amy Bishop
Alaska Sea Life Center

Jason Gasper
NOAA Fisheries – Alaska Region

George Hunt
University of Washington

Chris Siddon
ADF&G

Absent: Tien -Shui Tsou
WDF&W

Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel met from February 1st to February 3, 2021, via adobe connect in a virtual conference. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings:

Christiansen, Ruth (Co-Vice Chair)
Drobnica, Angel (Chair)
Gruver, John
Gudmundsson, Gretar
Johnson, Jim
Johnson, Mellisa
Kauffman, Jeff

Kavanaugh, Julie
Lowenberg, Craig
Mann, Heather
O'Connor, Jamie
O'Donnell, Paddy
O'Neil, Megan
Peterson, Joel

Ritchie, Brian
Scoblic, John
Upton, Matt (Co-Vice Chair)
Vanderhoeven, Anne
Velsko, Erik
Wilt, Sinclair

A1 Call Meeting to Order

The Council approved the agenda without objection.

B Reports

The following reports were provided in writing and discussed. Dr. Robert Foy, gave an oral report and presentation on the AFSC agenda item. Sam Rauch, NMFS Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs gave an update to the Council on the NOAA administrative transition. Dr. Wilson and Dr. Stewart provided an oral report from the IPHC. Public testimony was heard.

B1 Executive Director's Report – David Witherell

B2 NMFS Management Report – Dr. James Balsiger

B3 NOAA GC Report – Molly Watson

B4 AFSC Report – Dr. Robert Foy

B5 ADFG Report – Kendall Henry

B6 USCG Report – CAPT Jason Brennell and LCDR Jedediah Raskie

B7 USFWS Report – Jon Gerken and Holly Carroll

B8 Protected Species Report – Steve MacLean

B9 IPHC Report – Dr. Dave Wilson and Dr. Ian Stewart

C1 BSAI Pacific Cod Pot Catcher Processor LLP Endorsements

Council Staff: Sam Cunningham

Other Presenters: Krista Milani, Alicia Miller, & Abby Jahn (NMFS Sustainable Fisheries)

Action Required: 1. Consider designating a preferred alternative

***Summary:** The Council will consider reducing the number of LLP licenses, from 8 to either 4 or 5, that can fish for BSAI Pacific cod as a CP using pot gear. The purpose is to provide stability for a fishery confronting reduced harvest opportunity and shortened seasons, weighed against the loss of future access for some license holders.*

After the staff presentation, the following action was taken:

Mr. Down made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:

For Final Action, the Council selects:

Alternative 1: No action

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously on February 5, 2021, at 2:05 p.m.

C2 Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology

Council Staff: Sara Cleaver, Angela Forristall (NPFMC/Sea Grant)

Other Presenters: Doug Duncan, Jennifer Mondragon (NMFS Sustainable Fisheries)

Action Required: 1. Review SBRM Report
2. Adopt or revise recommendations

Summary: The Council will review a proposed action to amend the BSAI Crab, Scallop, and Salmon Fishery Management Plans to ensure they are consistent with federal requirements for bycatch reporting. The action outlines current bycatch reporting methodologies and additional clarifications within the FMPs that may be needed to ensure consistency with federal requirements.

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

Mr. Merrill made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Marx:

The Council recommends the following:

- Update the BSAI Crab FMP, consistent with the Initial/Final Review Draft (Review Draft) section 2.2, to identify the combination of Crab Observer Program and industry reports as the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) and explain how it meets the purpose of collecting, recording, and reporting bycatch.
- Update the Scallop FMP, consistent with the Review Draft section 2.3, to identify the combination of industry reports and the Scallop Observer Program as the SBRM and explain how it meets the purpose of collecting, recording, and reporting bycatch.
- Update the Salmon FMP, consistent with the Review Draft section 2.4, to identify fish tickets combined with other management measures as the SBRM and explain how it meets the purpose of collecting, recording, and reporting bycatch.

These updates are FMP amendments only; there are no regulations that will be changed as a result of these amendments.

VOTE MOTION: Motion passed unanimously on February 5, 2021, at 3:08 p.m.

D1 Community Engagement Committee Recommendations

Council Staff: Steve MacLean

Action Required:

1. Review Final Committee Report
2. Action as appropriate

Summary: *The Community Engagement Committee final report contains recommendations from the committee to improve the Council's engagement with rural and Alaska Native communities. The Council will review the report and may decide to enact some of the recommendations.*

After the staff presentation and public comment, the following action was taken:

Ms. Kimball moves the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:

The Council recommends the following actions relative to improving rural community engagement resulting from the Community Engagement Committee's (CEC) work. These are iterative actions that may require Council Executive Director, Executive Committee, or Finance Committee input prior to implementation.

- Provide cultural awareness training for Council members and Council staff. The Executive Director will determine the contract and timing, with the primary objective being educational training.
- The Executive Director should assign responsibilities of a Rural Fisheries Community/Tribal Liaison position to staff. The primary duties would be to 1) serve as a first point of contact in the Council office for rural communities and Tribes to navigate the Council process; 2) provide outreach on Council actions; 3) facilitate presentations from rural and/or Alaska Native communities or Tribal organizations to the Council on Council issues of particular concern or with a direct or significant effect on such entities; and 4) account for and measure the impact of its engagement strategies over time.
- Continue and re-constitute the Community Engagement Committee with its charter to identify and recommend strategies for the Council to enact processes that provide effective rural and Alaska Native community engagement. The Chair and ED should determine terms of reference and meeting frequency, and solicit membership (no more than 9 public members) to include representatives of small rural fishing communities and/or the Alaska Native or Tribal entities associated with those communities in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska.
- Explore ways to improve opportunities for public testimony, including allowing remote testimony, that can be accommodated within the Council's agenda and budget.
- Clarify the Council process to allow any member of the public to waive questions by Council members during public testimony.
- Review current Council meeting requirements in the SOPPs and additional IT requirements that may be needed to support remote access to Council meetings. Support holding in-person Council meetings in rural and Alaska Native communities that can meet these requirements.
- Work with NMFS to receive and understand results of Tribal Consultation meetings as early in the process as possible, preferably prior to Council final action.

- Continue current outreach practices, including the new practices implemented after initial CEC recommendations, and continue to explore ways to improve information delivery and strategies to foster two-way engagement.
- Support FEP taskforce efforts to create processes and protocols through which the Council can identify, analyze, and incorporate Traditional Knowledge, Local Knowledge, and subsistence information into Council decision-making processes to support the use of best available scientific information.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously on February 8, 2021, at 2:16 p.m.

C3 IFQ Sablefish Release Allowance

Council Staff: Jim Armstrong

Other Presenters: Dr. Joseph Krieger (NMFS, AKRO); Jane Sullivan, Dr. Dan Goethel, Phil Ganz, Jen Cahalan, Dr. Chris Lunsford (NMFS, AFSC)

Action Required:

1. Initial Draft EA/RIR - review
2. Action as necessary

Summary: *Commercial fishermen have been catching lots of sablefish that are much smaller than what they usually catch. Fishermen would like to release these fish back to the water alive, but regulations say they have to keep any sablefish they catch. The Council is thinking about changing the rules and will review an analysis that looks at what could happen if they allow fishermen to release small sablefish.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

Ms. Campbell made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:

Move to postpone action on this item until the Council can consider recommendations from the IFQ Committee concerning the relative priority of this action.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection (Mr. Kinneen absent for vote) on February 9, 2021, at 10:49 a.m.

C4 Crab PSC Limit Reductions

Council Staff: Sarah Marrinan, Sara Cleaver and Angela Forristall (NPFMC/Sea Grant)

Action Required:

1. Review the Preliminary/Initial Review Draft of the EA/RIR
2. Determine whether to select a PPA and release the document for final action, request an IRA with additional information, or take no action.

Summary: *The Council is considering action that would set crab bycatch in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish trawl fisheries to the lowest limits when the same crab fishery is closed. This is an effort to make an obvious link between the crab fishery and bycatch in the groundfish fisheries.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

Mr. Cross made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:

The Council takes no further action on this issue.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with one objection (Mr. Down) on February 9, 2021, at 3:10 p.m.

D2 EFP Applications and Reports

Staff: Anna Henry (NPFMC), Megan Mackey (NMFS)

Other Presenters: Halibut Excluder: John Gauvin (Alaska Seafood Cooperative)

Action Required: 1. Review Halibut Excluder EFP application and provide feedback

Summary: *An exempted fishing permit (EFP) allows fishing activities that would otherwise be prohibited, to occur for limited experimental purposes that could benefit fisheries and the environment. The SSC will hear a report on an EFP in the AI pollock fishery that was completed last year, and the SSC, AP and Council will hear an application for an EFP that would test improved designs in gear to minimize halibut bycatch in the Bering Sea flatfish trawl fishery.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

Mr. Cross made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

The Council recommends the Alaska Seafood Cooperative (AKSC) EFP application be approved by NMFS noting suggestions by the SSC for some experimental protocols where possible.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously on February 9, 2021, at 3:53 p.m.

C5 BSAI Crab – Norton Sound Red King Crab Specs, PT/Workshop

Council Staff: Jim Armstrong

Other Presenters: Katie Palof (ADF&G, Crab Plan Team Co-Chair)

Action Required: 1. Norton Sound Red King Crab – Specify OFL/ABC for 2021
2. Crab Plan Team Report for the January 2021 meeting, review

Summary: *A team of technical experts (the Crab Plan Team) met in January to discuss the status and appropriate harvest level for Norton Sound red king crab as well as to review scientific information on other Alaska crab stocks. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Council will review the report and recommendations of the Plan Team and will set harvest limits based on that information.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

Ms. Bush made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:

The Council accepts the Norton Sound red king crab SAFE report and adopts the SSC's recommended total catch OFL of 0.29 thousand metric tons (0.63 million pounds) and ABC of 0.17 thousand metric tons (0.38 million pounds) for Norton Sound red king crab.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously (Mr. Kinneen absent for vote) on February 10, 2021, at 10:36 a.m.

D3 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

Council Staff: Diana Evans, Dr. Diana Stram, Dr. Kate Haapala, and Steve MacLean

Other Presenters: Dr. Kerim Aydin, Dr. Kirstin Holsman, Dr. Sarah Wise (all AFSC)

Action Required:

1. Review Bering Sea FEP PT report, Climate Change Taskforce work plan, LKTK Taskforce update, and Ecosystem Committee report
2. Provide feedback and make recommendations as necessary.

Summary: *The Council will receive an update on ongoing work under the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) including progress updates from the FEP's Climate Change and the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforces.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:

The Council supports the goal of the Climate Change Module as developed by the CCTF: *to facilitate the Council's work towards climate-ready fisheries management that helps ensure both short- and long-term resilience for the Bering Sea.* The Council also approves the three objectives/steps from the draft workplan. The Council's existing public process incorporates extensive, primarily near-term, ecosystem and climate information in decision-making. The CCTF workplan should focus on how to incorporate long-term trend information from a diverse knowledge base into our existing processes.

The Council approves the CCTF workplan after the following revisions to incorporate: 1) regular check-ins with the SSC and Council, including prior to using resulting work products in existing Council processes; 2) a list of deliverables that relate to the module's objectives/steps and the taskforce's remaining timeframe (2021 - 2025); 3) identification of NMFS and/or Council groups proposed to take on ongoing maintenance of new climate information once the work of the CCTF is complete; and 4) input provided by the Ecosystem Committee intended to increase understanding and readability of the workplan.

The Council is cognizant of the multiple tools developed and in development in recent years to assess the impacts of climate change on our ecosystems and species. The Council recommends the FEP Team review the CCTF workplan when revised and work with the CCTF to review the list of existing and newly proposed deliverables related to ecosystem and climate information to focus and/or consolidate products where appropriate to make them more accessible:

Economic and Social Profiles (ESPs) (existing)
Ecosystem Status Reports (ESRs) (existing)
Risk Table (existing)
Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (BS FEP) (existing)
Climate Impacts Update for contribution to ESR, proposed annually by CCTF (new)
Ecosystem Health Report Card (EHRC), proposed by the FEP Team (new)
EBS Climate Change and Fisheries Report, proposed biennially by CCTF (new)
Additional CCTF products not listed

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection on February 10, 2021, at 1:47 p.m.

E1 Staff Tasking

Council Staff: David Witherell, Diana Evans

Action Required:

1. Review Committees and Plan Teams
2. Receive balance of Ecosystem Committee Report
3. Provide direction on tasking priorities and scheduling

Summary: *The Council will listen to public testimony about existing and new management measures that the public may be interested in and will provide feedback to staff and the Council Chair about how to prioritize staff work on existing and new projects. The Council will specifically discuss the agenda for the April Council meeting.*

The Council will also review its committee membership and identify agendas for any upcoming committee meetings.

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

Risk Tables

Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:

The Council requests the opportunity to review the written report, including SSC comments and recommendations, from the recent SSC risk table workshop, before any changes are implemented to the process of developing and using risk tables.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection on February 10, 2021, at 3:59 p.m.

Monitoring Requirements

Mr. Down made the following motion which was seconded by Ms. Kimball:

The Council recommends NMFS not proceed with additional monitoring requirements for the BSAI CP Pot cod sector until such a time as the NPFMC recommends proceeding with additional monitoring requirements for this sector.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion failed 4/7 (Dr. Balsiger, Ms. Baker, Mr. Cross, Mr. Jensen, Mr. Marx, Mr. Mezirow, and Mr. Tweit voting in opposition) on February 10, 2021, at 4:29 p.m.

Emergency Rule IFQ Transfers

Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:

The Council requests the Secretary promulgate emergency regulations under the authority of Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to allow the temporary transfer of catcher vessel halibut and sablefish IFQ for all individual quota share holders for the 2021 fishing season. This action does not modify other aspects of the IFQ Program.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed 10/1 (Dr. Balsiger voted no) on February 10, 2021, at 5:02 p.m.

Emergency Rule IFQ Vessel Use Caps

Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:

The Council requests the Secretary promulgate expedited regulations to remove vessel use cap regulations under 50 CFR Section 679.42(h)(1) for IFQ halibut harvested in IPHC regulatory Areas 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D for the 2021 IFQ fishing season. This action does not modify other aspects of the IFQ Program.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection on February 10, 2021, at 5:09 p.m.

Emergency Rule Adak CQE

Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:

The Council requests the Secretary promulgate emergency regulations under the authority of Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to suspend the residency requirements applicable to the Adak Community Quota Entity (CQE) Program for 2021 (50 CFR 679.41(g)(6)(ii)). This action does not modify other aspects of the CQE or IFQ Program.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed 10/1 (Dr. Balsiger voted no) on February 10, 2021, at 5:13 p.m.

Emergency Rule Rockfish

Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:

The Council requests the Secretary promulgate emergency regulations under the authority of Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to move the start date of the 2021 Central Gulf Rockfish Program fishery to April 1 (regulations under 50 CFR 679.80(a)(3)(ii)). This action does not modify other aspects of the Central Gulf Rockfish Program.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed 10/1 (Dr. Balsiger voted no) on February 10, 2021, at 5:27 p.m.

The Council adjourned on Wednesday February 10, 2021 at 6 P.M.



TIME LOG
NPFMC February Council Meeting – 253rd Plenary Session
Meeting held via web conference Adobe Connect
February 5, 8 - 12, 2021

Friday, February 5, 2021

A & B REPORTS

2/5/2021 8:07 AM	Call to Order
2/5/2021 8:11 AM	Bob Mace Award to Chris Oliver
2/5/2021 8:18 AM	Terry Quinn Award to Jim Ianelli
2/5/2021 8:25 AM	B ED Report – David Witherell
2/5/2021 8:37 AM	B Reports Combined
2/5/2021 8:55 AM	B4 AFSC Report – Dr. Robert Foy
2/5/2021 9:45 AM	B reports continued
2/5/2021 10:20 AM	Break
2/5/2021 10:30 AM	B Public Testimony
2/5/2021 10:30 AM	Jim Ayers
2/5/2021 10:43 AM	Theresa Peterson
2/5/2021 10:50 AM	Jeff Kauffman, Lauren Divine, Marissa Merculieff
2/5/2021 10:56 AM	Natasha Hayden – only half her testimony
2/5/2021 10:58 AM	Linda Behnken
2/5/2021 11:08 AM	Becca Robbins Gisclair
2/5/2021 11:13 AM	Hannah Heimbuch
2/5/2021 11:18 AM	Natasha Hayden Continued
2/5/2021 11:23 AM	Raychelle Daniel
2/5/2021 11:28 AM	Austin Ahmasuk

C1 BSAI Pacific Cod Pot Catcher Processor LLP Endorsements

2/5/2021 11:45 PM	C1 and C2 AP report – Matt Upton
2/5/2021 11:50 PM	Lunch Break
2/5/2021 12:52 PM	C1 Presentation – NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham
2/5/2021 1:31 PM	C1 Public Testimony
2/5/2021 1:32 PM	Mike Shelford
2/5/2021 1:40 PM	Heather McCarty
2/5/2021 1:43 PM	Leonard Herzog
2/5/2021 1:45 PM	Doug Wells and Gerry Davis
2/5/2021 1:50 PM	C1 Mr. Down Motion
2/5/2021 2:18 PM	Break

C2 Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM)

2/5/2021 2:32 PM **C2 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Sara Cleaver and Angela Forristall, AK Sea Grant Fellow
2/5/2021 3:06 PM **C2 Public Testimony**
2/5/2021 3:06 PM Jamie Goen
2/5/2021 3:08 PM **C2 Mr. Merrill Motion**
2/5/2021 3:15 PM Recess

Monday, February 8, 2021

2/8/2021 8:00 AM Call to Order
2/8/2021 8:04 AM Sam Rauch, Deputy Assistant Administrator
2/8/2021 8:30 AM **Balance of AP Report** – Ruth Christiansen

D1 Community Engagement Committee Recommendations

2/8/2021 8:55 AM D1 Presentation – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean
2/8/2021 10:02 AM Break
2/8/2021 10:15 AM **D1 Public Testimony**
2/8/2021 10:15 AM Mellisa Johnson
2/8/2021 10:31 AM Julie Raymond-Yakoubian
2/8/2021 10:40 AM Lauren Divine
2/8/2021 10:45 AM Theresa Peterson
2/8/2021 10:52 AM Natasha Hayden
2/8/2021 11:02 AM Rebecca Skinner
2/8/2021 11:08 AM Tom Panamaroff
2/8/2021 11:17 AM Raychelle Daniel
2/8/2021 11:27 AM Duncan Fields
2/8/2021 11:39 AM Austin Ahmasuk
2/8/2021 11:45 PM Break
2/8/2021 12:47 PM **B9 IPHC Report** – Dave Wilson and Ian Stewart

D1 Community Engagement Committee Recommendations Continued

2/8/2021 1:25 PM **D1 Ms. Kimball Motion**
2/8/2021 2:17 PM Break

C3 Small Sablefish Release

2/8/2021 2:31 PM **C3 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Jim Armstrong, NMFS, Dr. Joe Krieger, Jane Sullivan, Dr. Dan Goethel, Phil Ganz, Jen Cahalan, Dr. Chris Lunsford (NFMS, AFSC)
2/8/2021 4:01 PM Recess

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

C3 Small Sablefish Release Continued

2/9/2021 8:00 AM Call to Order
2/9/2021 8:03 AM **C3 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Jim Armstrong and NMFS, Joe Krieger
2/9/2021 8:30 AM Enforcement Committee Report – NPFMC staff, Jon McCracken
2/9/2021 8:37 AM C3 SSC Report – Dr. Sherri Dressel
2/9/2021 8:52 AM **C3 Public Testimony**
2/9/2021 8:53 AM Bob Alverson
2/9/2021 9:19 AM Bernie Burkholder
2/9/2021 9:28 AM Paul Clampitt
2/9/2021 9:35 AM Stephen Rhoads
2/9/2021 9:38 AM Linda Behnken
2/9/2021 9:55 AM Shawn McManus
2/9/2021 9:59 AM James Johnson
2/9/2021 10:04 AM Break
2/9/2021 10:26 AM **C3 Ms. Campbell Motion**

C4 Crab PSC Limit Reductions

2/9/2021 11:09 AM **C4 Presentations** – NPFMC staff, Sarah Marrinan, Sara Cleaver, and SeaGrant Fellow, Angela Forristall
2/9/2021 11:48 AM Break
2/9/2021 12:45 PM C4 Presentation Continued
2/9/2021 1:04 PM C4 & C5 SSC Report – Dr. Sherri Dressel
2/9/2021 1:26 PM **C4 Public Testimony**
2/9/2021 1:26 PM Lance Farr
2/9/2021 1:29 PM Jamie Goen and Cory Lescher
2/9/2021 1:49 PM Chris Oliver and Chris Woodley
2/9/2021 2:18 PM Heather McCarty
2/9/2021 2:26 PM Mateo Paz-Soldan
2/9/2021 2:31 PM Erik Velsko
2/9/2021 2:33 PM Craig Lowenberg
2/9/2021 2:35 PM Break
2/9/2021 2:50 PM **C4 Mr. Cross Motion**

D2 EFP Applications and Reports

2/9/2021 3:13 PM D2 Halibut Excluder Presentation – John Gauvin
2/9/2021 3:43 PM D2 SSC Report – Dr. Sherri Dressel
2/9/2021 3:50 PM **D2 Mr. Cross Motion**
2/9/2021 3:57 PM Recess

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

2/10/2021 8:00 AM Call to Order

2/10/2021 8:02 AM Balance of the SSC Report – Dr. Sherri Dressel

C5 BSAI Crab

2/10/2021 9:42 AM **C5 Staff Presentation** – ADFG, Katie Palof
2/10/2021 10:03 AM Break
2/10/2021 10:15 AM **C5 Public Testimony**
2/10/2021 10:17 AM Charles Lean
2/10/2021 10:29 AM Julie Raymond Yakoubian
2/10/2021 10:34 AM **C5 Ms. Bush Motion**

D3 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

2/10/2021 10:39 AM **D3 BS FEP Team Report** – NPFMC staff, Diana Evans & AFSC, Kerim Aydin
2/10/2021 10:55 AM C3 Climate Change Task Force Presentation – NPFMC staff, Dr. Diana Stram and AFSC, Kirstin Holsman
2/10/2021 12:54 PM D3 LKTK Taskforce – NPFMC staff, Dr. Kate Haapala and AFSC, Dr. Sarah Wise
2/10/2021 1:09 PM D3 Ecosystem Committee Report – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean
2/10/2021 1:20 PM **D3 Public Comment**
2/10/2021 1:20 PM Lauren Divine
2/10/2021 1:25 PM Mike LeVine
2/10/2021 1:35 PM **D3 Ms. Kimball Motion**

E1 Staff Tasking

2/10/2021 1:48 PM David Witherell Overview
2/10/2021 1:49 PM Balance of Ecosystem Committee Report – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean
2/10/2021 2:20 PM **E Public Testimony**
2/10/2021 2:20 PM Craig Lowenberg
2/10/2021 2:25 PM Kiril Basargin
2/10/2021 2:32 PM Paul Clampitt
2/10/2021 2:39 PM Mike Alfieri
2/10/2021 2:41 PM Mike Shelford
2/10/2021 2:46 PM Paddy O’Donnell
2/10/2021 2:52 PM Break
2/10/2021 3:01 PM Heather Mann
2/10/2021 3:07 PM Heather McCarty and Mateo Pas-Soldan
2/10/2021 3:18 PM Julie Bonney
2/10/2021 3:26 PM Jamie Goen
2/10/2021 3:31 PM Stephen Rhoads
2/10/2021 3:58 PM **E1 Mr. Tweit Motion** – Risk Tables
2/10/2021 4:01 PM **E1 Mr. Down Motion** – Monitoring Requirements – motion failed
2/10/2021 4:53 PM **E1 Ms. Baker Motion** – IFQ Transfers
2/10/2021 5:05 PM **E1 Ms. Baker Motion** – IFQ Vessel Use Caps
2/10/2021 5:12 PM **E1 Ms. Baker Motion** – ER Adak CQE
2/10/2021 5:23 PM **E1 Ms. Kimball Motion** – ER Rockfish
2/10/2021 6:00 PM Meeting Adjourned

February 2021 Newsletter

Call for Nominations for Council Advisory Groups

The Council is calling for nominations for an additional industry participant on the Council's **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Climate Change Taskforce** (CCTF). The goal of the Taskforce is to facilitate the Council's work towards climate-ready fisheries management that helps ensure both short- and long-term resilience for the Bering Sea. The Taskforce has a scope of work of 4-5 years, to complete deliverables outlined in the CCTF draft **workplan** (which will be finalized with the Council's **recommendations** at this meeting). The Taskforce will meet 2-3 times a year, either in person or by teleconference. Candidates are asked to provide a voluntary time commitment of approximately 40 hours to prepare for each meeting, in addition to the meeting itself. The Council will pay travel costs for non-Federal Taskforce members to attend officially noticed in-person Taskforce meetings.



Taskforce membership qualifications:

- Bering Sea fishing industry expertise requested; other desirable expertise includes that related to the Bering Sea ecosystem oceanography, food web, or biological species, fisheries, or communities; climate change scenario modeling; and/or resilience planning.
- Demonstrate some familiarity with Council processes, as the intent is to provide advice that is relevant to the Council's decision-making process.
- Able and willing to commit to attending meetings 2-3 times per year through 2025 (some by teleconference), and additionally to volunteer approximately 40 hours of preparation time before each meeting.

Please send a letter of interest to Taskforce co-Chair Diana Stram (diana.stram@noaa.gov) by **March 15, 2021**.

At a later date, the Council will also call for nominations for the **reconstituted Community Engagement Committee**. An announcement will be issued on the Council website once a new Terms of Reference has been developed for the reconstituted Committee.

Election of Officers for AP and SSC

The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Advisory Panel (AP) each convened with some new members, and each group re-elected the same officers as in 2020. The SSC and AP leadership for 2021 is:

The Scientific and Statistical Committee

Co-Chairs: Dr. Sherri Dressel, Dr. Anne Hollowed

Vice Chair: Alison Whitman

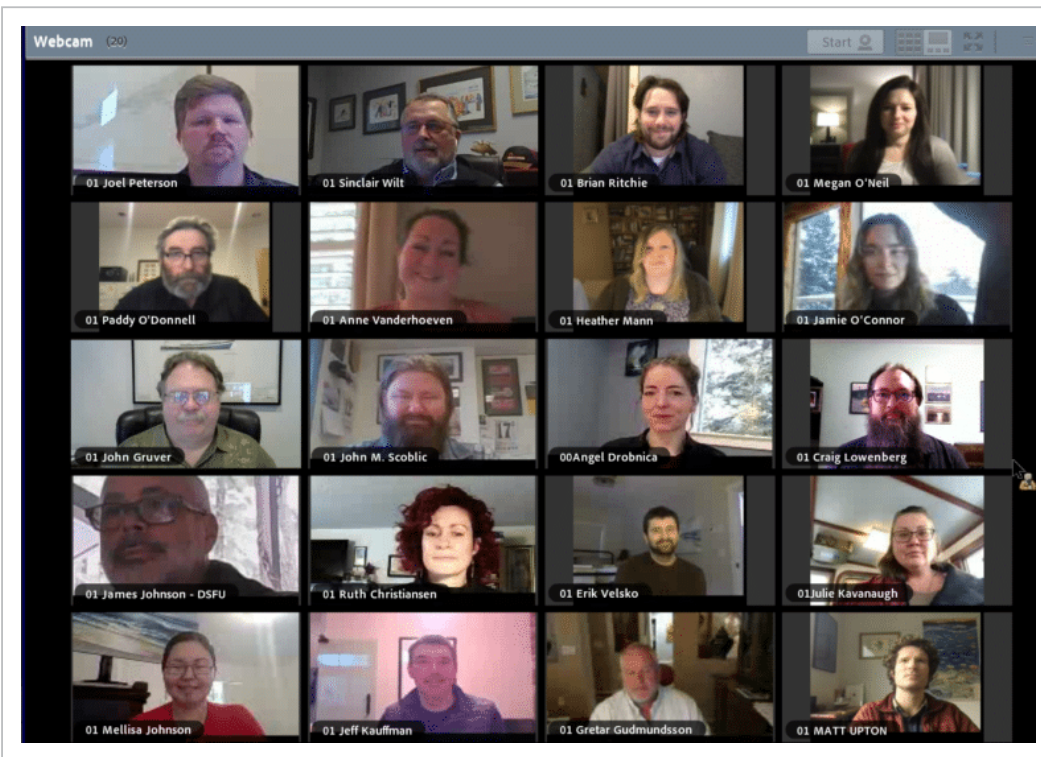


L to R Top row: Alison Whitman, Amanda Bishop, Brad Harris; Second row; Patrick Sullivan, Andrew Munro, Anne Hollowed; Third row; Dana Hanselman, Mike Downs, Sherri Dressel; Fourth row; Matthew Reimer, Jason Gasper, Curry Cunningham; Bottom row; Chris Anderson, Milo Adkison, George Hunt (not pictured: Franz Mueter, Chris Siddon, Theresa Tsou)

Advisory Panel

Chair: Angel Drobnica

Vice-Chairs: Ruth Christiansen, Matt Upton



1st row L to R: Joel Peterson, Sinclair Wilt, Brian Ritchie, Megan O'Neil. 2nd row: Paddy O'Donnell, Anne Vanderhoeven, Heather Mann, Jamie O'Connor. 3rd row: Jim Johnson, Ruth Christiansen, Erik Velsko, Julie Kavanaugh. 4th row: Mellisa Johnson, Jeff Kauffman, Gretar Gudmundsson, Matt Upton.

Chris Oliver and Jim Ianelli receive Council awards

On the first day of the February Council meeting, the Council presented Mr. Chris Oliver with the Bob Mace Distinguished Service Award, and Dr. Jim Ianelli with the Terry Quinn II Distinguished Scientist Award.

Bob Mace Award

The Council selected Chris Oliver to receive the Bob Mace award because of his recent role in serving the regional fishery management councils as part of his position as NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. Mr. Oliver assisted with securing the Councils' role in managing fisheries while also improving communication and emphasizing efficient rulemaking. He pushed the Agency to prioritize sustainable fishery management, support scientific advancement and surveys, revise management and regulatory regimes, and build economic value in fisheries-related industries. Under his leadership, NOAA Fisheries' mission, staff, and budgets were protected, and agency scientists continued to serve sustainable fisheries and ecosystem preservation.



Chris Oliver, along with the rest of the Council staff, was the first recipient of this award in 2006.

Representing the state of Oregon as a Council member for over 23 years, Bob Mace known for his integrity, dedication, professionalism, and conservation ethic. In Bob's honor, the Council established the **Bob Mace Distinguished Service Award**. This award is only occasionally bestowed by the Council, to an individual that

exemplifies the highest levels of dedication, professionalism and conservation ethic necessary to make the fisheries off Alaska the best managed in the world.

Terry Quinn II Distinguished Scientist Award

Dr. Jim Ianelli was selected by the Council to be the second recipient of the Terry Quinn II Distinguished Scientist Award. Dr. Ianelli is a senior scientist at the NOAA Fisheries Alaska Fishery Science Center. He is a well-known and highly esteemed stock assessment author for Bering Sea pollock and other groundfish stocks, a member and chair of our groundfish plan teams since the early 1990s, a mentor to many scientists at the AFSC, and a prolific contributor to numerous important council analyses including salmon and halibut PSC limits.

Council Chair Simon Kinneen noted, "Dr. Ianelli shares two important traits with Dr. Quinn: his understanding of the importance of working with and listening to members of the fishing industry, and his ability to be a great ambassador for the NPFMC on the global stage."

Dr. Quinn served on the Council's SSC until his death in 2019. This award is bestowed by the Council to an individual who, over the course of many years, has made outstanding contributions in fisheries science or other related field, and has been dedicated to ensuring that fisheries science and management in the North Pacific is the best in the world.



BSAI Pacific Cod Pot CP LLP Licenses

The Council received a public review analysis of alternatives that could modify the number of License Limitation Program (LLP) licenses endorsed to fish for BSAI Pacific cod with pot gear as a catcher-processor and **selected the No Action alternative**. As a result, there will continue to be eight LLP licenses that are endorsed for use in the "Pot CP" sector of the BSAI Pacific cod fishery. The action alternative that was not selected would have removed the endorsement from licenses that were not credited with a minimum amount of commercially retained Pacific cod over a defined qualifying period. That alternative would have reduced the number of remaining endorsements to either four or five licenses depending on the qualifying period selected.

The Council's selection of No Action at this time was based on weighing the benefits and costs of removing license endorsements in the context of the Council's purpose and need statement. The Council determined, on balance, that the challenges facing the sector stem primarily from low TAC levels that would not be affected by the action alternative. The Council determined that potential benefits to the most active participants of removing other licenses did not outweigh the loss of future or continued access for other license holders. The Council also noted that some licenses that could lose the endorsement had been used in the fishery during the considered historical period.

Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodologies

The Council took final action recommending amendments to the BSAI crab, salmon, and scallop FMPs, to make them consistent with [national guidance](#) on Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodologies. The Council determined that existing bycatch reporting requirements in fisheries managed under these FMPs are consistent with SBRM requirements, however, the language in the FMPs needs to be modified to explicitly identify a SBRM in each fishery and explain how it meets the purpose of collecting, recording, and reporting bycatch. These amendments are necessary to increase transparency about how the SBRM in each fishery is consistent with national guidance.

The MSA requires FMPs to establish a standardized reporting methodology (SBRM) to assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery and include conservation and management measures that minimize bycatch and minimize the mortality of bycatch which cannot be avoided. National guidance set out in the [Final Rule](#) defines SBRM as an “established, consistent procedure or procedures used to collect, record, and report bycatch data in a fishery.” SBRMs may include one or more combination of data collection and reporting programs such as observer programs, electronic monitoring, and industry reports (e.g. landing reports or “fish tickets”).

The analysis evaluated the BSAI crab, scallop, and salmon FMPs in relation to the national guidance about SBRM requirements. In February 2020, the Council had previously determined that its Arctic, BSAI Groundfish, and GOA Groundfish FMPs are already in compliance with current SBRM guidance and that no amendments are necessary for those FMPs. The Final Rule established a deadline of February 2022 for FMPs to be in compliance with guidance on SBRM.

Staff contact is Sara Cleaver.

IFQ Small Sablefish Release

The Council conducted its initial review of an analysis to allow vessel operators in the fixed gear IFQ sablefish fishery to voluntarily release sablefish they consider to be too small to have much economic value. After reviewing the analysis, the Council suspended action on this issue pending IFQ Committee recommendations on the relative priority of this action. An IFQ Committee meeting is scheduled for March 25-26, 2021, and the Committee’s recommendations will be provided at the Council April 2021 meeting, at which point the Council could consider further action on this analysis.

The draft analysis reviewed by the Council identified a wide range of potential reductions in sablefish ABC (0.8% – 51%) under a voluntary sablefish release allowance, and these reductions are dependent on discard mortality rates (DMRs) for released sablefish as well as the size composition of retained sablefish (retention selectivity). Impacts to sablefish IFQ and Bering Sea trawl fisheries are directly linked to potential ABC reductions, however, because DMRs and retention selectivities are not well understood, the probability of any given ABC reduction remains unclear.

Should the analysis be reactivated, the SSC recommends additional analysis be included to support final action by the Council. The SSC highlighted the need to address the effects of different DMRs and retention

selectivities on sablefish age structure and productivity, and the contribution of uncertainty in DMRs and selectivities to stock assessment uncertainty and possible buffers on ABC.

The draft analysis focused on issues associated with the four Elements that the Council had identified for Alternative 2 under this action at its December 2019 meeting. Element 1 addresses DMRs, and provides a range of potential DMRs for analysts to consider. Elements 2, Catch Accounting, and 4, Monitoring and Enforcement, address how discards could be estimated, and the analysts noted that a release allowance would necessitate a variety of changes to observer data collection methods, each of which is associated with costs and logistical challenges for implementation. Element 3 has to do with accounting for the discards in the sablefish stock assessment, instead of creating a new system for discard accounting within the IFQ Program or annual groundfish specifications. The range of scenarios described under Element 3 contributed to the characterization of potential ABC reductions and fishery impacts.

The draft analysis indicates that a discarding allowance would be expected to provide near term flexibility to fishermen and could allow them to improve the value of landings, but it is unlikely that a reduction in IFQ value from reduced ABC could be overcome at very large ABC reductions. Also, the impacts to the IFQ fishery would vary geographically, so that areas like the Bering Sea where large sablefish are not as available to the fishery would be negatively impacted.

Staff contact for this issue is Jim Armstrong.

Crab PSC Limit Reductions

The Council chose to take no further action on a preliminary/initial review analysis of a proposed action that would set crab prohibited species catch (PSC) in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish trawl fisheries to the lowest limits when the corresponding crab directed fishery is closed. As a result, bycatch limits for Bristol Bay red king crab (BBRKC), Eastern Bering Sea (EBS) Tanner crab, and EBS snow crab in the groundfish trawl fisheries will continue to be set based on crab abundance, but not explicitly linked to the open/closed status of the corresponding directed crab fishery. This means there could be times when the crab directed fishery is closed but the PSC limits for that species are not at their lowest abundance-based limit.

Bristol Bay Red King Crab



The proposed action was developed by the Council in December 2019 in response to public testimony. The intent considered was to balance the impacts of depressed crab stocks across fisheries and communities and align management across fisheries. However, after reviewing the analysis, the Council determined that the proposed action would have minimal impact to the PSC limits for BBRKC – the stock most at risk of reaching an overfished status. This is in part because the lowest BBRKC PSC limit for the groundfish trawl fisheries already align with the thresholds in the state harvest strategy for determining whether to open the BBRKC fishery, thus these management systems are already implicitly linked. The action alternative may have resulted in lower Tanner and snow crab PSC limits, but since crab PSC usage in these fisheries has typically been well below the lowest PSC limits, the additional incentive to change groundfish trawl fishing behavior under this action may have been limited. The Council noted that for all crab species considered, observed trawl bycatch represents a small fraction of the fisheries-induced crab mortality. Thus, an isolated action to lower the crab trawl PSC limits may increase costs and decrease revenue in the groundfish trawl fisheries without producing substantial benefits to the crab stocks.

Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

BSAI Crab

Norton Sound Red King Crab OFL/ABC for 2021 and January Crab Plan Team Meeting Report

The Council received an overview of the 2021 stock assessment for Norton Sound red king crab (NSRKC) as well as other issues addressed at the January 2021 CPT meeting. For NSRKC, the SSC recommended increasing the buffer for ABC in 2021 from 30% to 40%, based on a wide range of concerns identified in their report to the Council. Consistent with the recommendations of the SSC, the Council specified 2021 NSRKC OFL at 0.29 thousand metric tons (0.63 million pounds) and ABC of 0.17 thousand metric tons (0.38 million pounds).

Norton Sound Red King Crab



Norton Sound Red King Crab Stock Status

The updated BSAI Crab SAFE chapter for NSRKC indicates that the 2021 biomass of mature male crab is 2.27 thousand metric tons, which is above B_{MSY} (2.05 thousand metric tons) but above the minimum stock size threshold (1.03 thousand metric tons), and, therefore, the stock not overfished. Additionally, because the 2020 total catch was below the OFL specified for 2020 (0.13 thousand metric tons), overfishing did not occur.

The Crab Plan Team and SSC identified a range of concerns related to the NSRKC stock that contributed to the reduction in ABC. These included uncertainty in methods for estimating discards and total abundance, declining reproductive potential, and uncertainty in model inputs and model fit.

Other issues covered at the January CPT meeting and reviewed by the SSC, AP, and Council included modeling scenarios for the May 2021 stock assessment for Aleutian Islands golden king crab, survey planning and data collection, using the groundfish risk table for crab stocks, a questionnaire for improving stakeholder input, the 2020 crab economic SAFE, ecosystem inputs for snow crab modeling, tagging studies, climate change and crab management, crab PSC in groundfish fisheries, research priorities, terms of reference, stock assessment prioritization, and a CPT workshop on the GMACS modeling framework.

Staff contact for the BSAI Crab Plan Team is Jim Armstrong.

Community Engagement Committee Report

The Council reviewed the [final report](#) of its Community Engagement Committee (CEC) and recommended several actions to enhance engagement with rural and Alaska Native communities. The CEC was authorized and formed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in June 2018 to identify and recommend strategies for the Council

Community members in Nenana discuss fishery impacts.



to provide effective engagement with rural and Alaska Native communities. The CEC developed recommendations for the Council over the course of five meetings and one teleconference. The final meeting was held online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The full list of CEC recommendations is available on the committee's [final report](#).

The recommendations from the Council in response to the Committee's report are detailed in the [Council motion](#) and include:

- Providing cultural awareness training for Council members and staff;
- Assigning responsibilities for a Rural Fisheries Community/Tribal Liaison position to an existing staff member;
- Reconstituting and maintaining the Community Engagement Committee with its charter to identify and recommend strategies for the Council to enact processes that provide effective rural and Alaska Native community engagement;
- Exploring ways to improve opportunities for public testimony;
- Clarifying the Council process to allow any member of the public to waive questions during public comment;
- Reviewing current Council meeting standard operating procedures and policies and IT requirements to support remote access to Council meetings and to support in-person Council meetings in rural and Alaska Native communities;
- Working with NMFS to receive and understand results of Tribal Consultation meetings early in the Council process;
- Continuing current outreach practices and explore ways to improve information delivery and strategies to foster two-way engagement;
- Supporting FEP Taskforce efforts to create processes and protocols for the Council to identify, analyze, and incorporate Traditional Knowledge, Local Knowledge, and subsistence information into the Council decision making process.

Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Exempted Fishing Permits



The Council reviewed an exempted fishing permit (EFP) application from the Alaska Seafood Cooperative to test 'hallway' style excluders in the Bering Sea flatfish trawl fisheries, and recommended that NMFS approve the EFP noting suggestions by the SSC for some experimental protocols where possible.

This EFP project will document halibut and target species escapement rates by using a twin trawl to compare excluder performance in one of the trawl nets. Ancillary data collection will involve taking fin clips from halibut to see whether the sex can be identified. The Council discussion emphasized the importance of this project in helping to understand the use of excluders and associated tradeoffs between escapement of target fish and halibut encounters. The Council was particularly interested in the SSC recommendation that if possible, given logistical constraints, the experiment consider switching sides on the excluder more frequently. The Council commended the applicants for the clarity of project objectives, and early coordination with NMFS on application review and the process for monitoring fishing conducted under the EFP.

The SSC also received a presentation on work completed under a previous EFP, to determine what factors were associated with Pacific ocean perch bycatch in pollock trawling in the Aleutian Islands. While no strong predictors were identified, the SSC appreciated the effort involved in the experiment and suggested avenues for future work. Staff contact is Anna Henry.

Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan



The Council reviewed reports from the FEP Team, Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF), and Local Knowledge/Traditional Knowledge/Subsistence Taskforce (LKTKS). The Council approved the workplan for the CCTF following requested revisions.

Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team

The FEP Team provided a report on their March 2020 meeting, at which they discussed the ongoing work of the two Taskforces as well as research priorities and the development of a new ecosystem report focused on strategic and long-term indicators. The Team will meet again before June to continue development of the report, and will continue to coordinate with the Taskforces on consolidating and distinguishing ecosystem and climate information products for the Council. Staff contact for the FEP Plan Team is Diana Evans.

Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF) Workplan

The Council received a report from the Bering Sea FEP Climate Change Task Force (CCTF) on their draft work plan. The Council endorsed the work plan and supports the goal of the Climate Change Module as developed by the CCTF: 'to facilitate the Council's work towards climate-ready fisheries management that helps ensure both short- and long-term resilience for the Bering Sea' as well as the steps outlined by the CCTF to achieve this goal. The Council noted that its existing public process incorporates extensive, primarily near-term, ecosystem and climate information in decision-making. The CCTF workplan will focus on how to incorporate long-term trend information from a diverse knowledge base into the Council's existing processes. The Council requested some additional revisions for the CCTF workplan including: 1) regular check-ins with the SSC and Council; 2) a list of deliverables that relate to the module's steps and the taskforce's remaining timeframe (2021 – 2025); 3) identification of NMFS and/or Council groups proposed to take on ongoing maintenance of new climate information once the work of the CCTF is complete; and 4) input provided by the Ecosystem Committee intended to increase understanding and readability of the workplan. The CCTF will be holding its next meeting in the Spring of 2021 to finalize the work plan and draft the timeline for their work. Additional information on the meeting will be posted to the Council's website.

The Council also issued a call for nominations for a new CCTF member with industry expertise. Staff contact for the CCTF is Diana Stram.

Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce

The Council received a presentation on the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Taskforce's work over 2020. The co-chairs' update reminded the Council of its past action in January 2020 which adopted two over-arching goals and five objectives for its work. In 2020, the LKTKS Taskforce had three

meetings (one in-person and two virtual), completed their workplan, created a glossary of terms to guide their work, made progress towards identifying initial onramps for LKTKS experts and information, and began to outline protocols. The LKTKS Taskforce's next meeting will be held virtually on March 16 and 17. Staff contact for the LKTKS Taskforce is Kate Haapala.

Groundfish and Crab Economic SAFE Review

At this meeting, the SSC reviewed the Groundfish and Crab Economic SAFE reports as presented by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center's Economic and Social Science Research Division. The SSC appreciated these presentations.

The Groundfish Economic SAFE has continued to evolve over the last several years and is a useful reference on the economic status of fisheries, becoming more useful, organized, and accessible to the public over time. The SSC was especially appreciative of the continued development of the data webtool as well as other new initiatives such as the in-season nowcast and the new graphical displays of the Amendment 80 Economic Data Report (EDR) data. The decomposition of first-wholesale revenues into their respective price and quantity effects was also appreciated. The SSC was grateful for the report card in the Groundfish Economic SAFE, and believes it provides an excellent overview of general trends in the groundfish fisheries. Unfortunately, due to time limitations in the remote-meeting format, the SSC did not receive a presentation of the report card metrics and thus will be presented during the February 2022 meeting.

Specific to the Crab Economic SAFE, the SSC appreciated the **Groundfish and Crab Economic SAFE Review** tracking of quota lease rates to identify who is benefitting from the fishery. The SSC continues to look forward to completion of the quota ownership decomposition effort, which will allow better tracking of what communities are capturing the ownership benefits of the crab fishery. The SSC recommended the development of a report card for the Crab Economic SAFE, similar to the Groundfish Economic SAFE. The SSC also noted that the rationalized crab fisheries offer a unique opportunity to track the economic health of the fisheries thanks to the comprehensive economic data collected under the crab EDR program.

Finally, due to time limitations at this meeting, the previously scheduled presentation of the new Annual Community Engagement and Participation Overview (ACEPO) was postponed to the April 2021 meeting.

Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Marine Mammal Status

The SSC reviewed the status of marine mammals for which there are conservation concerns or unusual or unexpected results, through a number of presentations from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center Marine Mammal Laboratory, NMFS Alaska Region, and the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island. The presentations covered a wide variety of topics, species, and regions and several themes related to fisheries management including populations trends, integrated research projects and bioenergetics, changes in the Bering Sea, and Co-management and local knowledge and traditional knowledge (LKTK). This was the first time that the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island presented to the SSC as a Co-manager with NMFS for northern fur seals.

The SSC supports continuing to receive annual updates and new findings that are not captured through other Council pathways. The SSC also recommended that abundance information for marine mammals be included in the Ecosystem Status Reports as an indicator of the nearshore system. The SSC also supported continuing investigations to understand shifts in marine mammal migratory patterns north and south, but also including potential changes in east-west migratory patterns. The SSC also supported presentations from other species' Co-management organizations along with the northern fur seal Co-management presentation.

Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

SSC Workshop on Risk Tables

The SSC convened a workshop on 'Risk Tables for ABC advice to the Council'. The workshop was motivated by the need to provide feedback to stock assessment authors and Plan Teams, as well as the SSC's plan to assess risk table performance after they had been presented for groundfish stocks. The Council originally outlined its purposes for the risk tables in December 2019, as an opportunity to increase transparency and consistency for incorporate uncertainty into the harvest specifications process from factors that are not already addressed in the stock assessment. It was intended that the risk tables would evolve over time, and the primary goals of this SSC workshop were to: 1) Evaluate how the risk table process is working; 2) Address consistency issues with the risk tables as identified by the Groundfish Plan Teams, assessment authors, and SSC; and 3) Provide guidance for moving forward through an open discussion between stock assessment authors, Plan Teams and SSC members. The workshop included a number of presentations from different AFSC scientists and two breakout groups discussed the necessary steps towards quantifying the following: the importance of external changes in fishery performance in stock assessments; the importance of assessment risk; and the risk of external changes in population and ecosystem conditions. The SSC will prepare a report of the workshop discussions and findings, and address a number of additional discussion topics outlined in the SSC minutes, such as the consideration of LK/TK information in cases of data lags or missing surveys and a working definition of 'risk'. The Council has asked to review SSC advice on the risk table before it is applied for Council action. Staff contact is Diana Stram

Staff Tasking

The Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects. The revised [3 meeting outlook](#) reflects this guidance. Council [meetings](#), including Plan Team and Committee meetings, will be held virtually through the first part of 2021. The Council also heard the report of the Council's Finance Committee.

The Council directed staff to write letters to NMFS on the implementation of the recent Executive Order requiring protection of 30% of the U.S. ocean by 2030, and to Senator Sullivan's office regarding proposed language affecting Council management of salmon fisheries in Alaska.

The Council also discussed proposals from the public requesting emergency relief for situations arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council recommended four emergency rule requests to NMFS, with supporting rationale indicating the need for these actions stem from unforeseen and adverse impacts on harvesters, processors, and communities as a result of travel restrictions, health mandates, and operational

challenges directly attributable to the global pandemic. The emergency rules recommended by the Council for the 2021 fishing season are to:

- Allow temporary transfer of halibut and sablefish IFQ ,
- Waive vessel use cap on IFQ halibut in Areas 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D,
- Suspend residency requirements applicable to the Adak CQE program, and
- Move up the start date for the Central GOA Rockfish Program from May 1 to April 1.

Finally, the Council issued a [call for nominations](#) for a new member for the Climate Change Task Force

Upcoming Meetings

Council Committees, Plan Teams, Taskforces

Committee and Plan Team meetings that are currently anticipated in the first half of 2021, at this point all likely to occur virtually, include the following.

February – March

- **Scallop Plan Team** – February 17, 2021
- **Social Science Planning Team** – March 4, 2021
- **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Taskforce on Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence** – March 16-17, 2021
- **IFQ Committee** – March 25-26, 2021
- **Ecosystem Committee (T)** – March 2021
- **Enforcement Committee (T)** – late March 2021
- **Executive Committee** – March/April 2021

April – May

- **Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC)** – April 2021
- **BSAI Crab Plan Team** – May 17-21, 2021
- **Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC)** – May 2021
- **EM Trawl Committee** – May 21, 2021

