

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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October 2, 1981

NEWSLETTER

December Council/Board Meeting in Anchorage

The next meeting of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council will convene at 9 a.m. on Monday, December 7, 1981, in the Alaska Room of the Westward Hilton Hotel, Anchorage. The meeting will continue through about 4 p.m. on Wednesday, December 9. The Council will meet alone on Monday and in joint session with the Alaska Board of Fisheries on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Council and Board will discuss fisheries of mutual concern, including Gulf of Alaska groundfish, herring, and king crab. The Council will take final action on Amendment #11 to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP, discuss the proposed king crab observer program, and give final approval to the recommended technical changes made in the Herring FMP.

The Advisory Panel will meet on Sunday, December 6, beginning at 9 a.m. in the Alaska Room at the Westward Hilton.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee will meet on Wednesday and Thursday, December 2 and 3, 1981 in the Council's headquarters Conference Room.

Tillion and Lokken Re-Elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Council re-elected Clem Tillion as Chairman and Harold Lokken as Vice-Chairman of the Council. Tillion, formerly President of the Alaska State Senate and long-time fisherman and charter boat operator, has been a member of the Council since its inception in 1976. Lokken, who served for 52 years as Executive Secretary and Manager of the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association, Seattle, has also served on the Council since its beginning.

Herring Plan Review Suspended for Technical Improvements

Upon recommendation of the Herring Plan Maintenance Team, the Council voted to withdraw the Bering-Chukchi Sea Herring FMP from Secretarial review to make technical modifications which will allow the FMP to work more effectively. It is important to note that the suggested changes to the FMP will not in any way alter the current direction or objectives of the Plan.

The PMT recommended that differences between state and federal management approaches to OY determination and offshore allocation be resolved; that the Allowable Incidental Catch (AIC) formula be modified to more effectively compensate for changes in herring abundance; that the Nelson Island subsistence stocks be disregarded in the determination of OY; and that greater flexibility be built into the plan to allow for inadequate data. Secretarial review of the Herring FMP is expected to resume in early 1982.

King Crab Plan Will Go To Washington, D.C.

After incorporation of minor technical changes suggested by the Scientific and Statistical Committee, the Council's Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King Crab Fishery Management Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce for review. A Council workgroup plans to meet with the Washington Office of NMFS after their preliminary review of the Plan to answer questions, clarify the Council's position if necessary and consider changes which may be suggested by the Central Office. If plan review remains on schedule, the plan would become effective late 1982.

Council Gives Final Approval to Bering Sea Prohibited Species Amendment

The Council approved a slightly modified version of the September 3 draft of Amendment #3, Reducing the Catch of Prohibited Species, to the Bering Sea Groundfish FMP for submission to Secretarial review. Suggested changes to the draft include clarifications in the target reduction schedule from 1977-1980 base levels and text and footnote editing. Also approved was the addition of a new Annex 1, reprinted below, which explains up-front the Council's position on what is expected of domestic groundfish fishermen to control their catches of prohibited species.

"The North Pacific Fishery Management Council believes that domestic fishermen targeting on the groundfish fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutians share a responsibility to avoid to the fullest extent practicable the incidental taking of halibut, salmon, king crab, and Tanner crab. They also share with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council a responsibility to develop an accurate information base concerning these species through maintenance of logbooks, accurate reporting of catch, and contributions to knowledge of fish distribution, behavior, etc.

"The North Pacific Fishery Management Council advocates and strongly supports development of domestic harvesting and processing of the groundfisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. To avoid any unnecessary impediments to that development, the Council will not at this time recommend any regulations of the domestic fishery specifically designed to protect "prohibited" species. However, the Council also is fully committed to protection from needless waste of stocks of salmon, halibut, king crab, and Tanner crab which are fully utilized in other domestic fisheries. Furthermore, in accordance with MFCMA provisions, the Council has a continuing obligation to assure their management in accordance with optimum use objectives. Therefore, the Council charges domestic fishermen to develop their fishing strategies, techniques, and practices with full regard for and attention to the objectives of the Council for protection of species not properly a target of those groundfisheries, as demonstrated by the measures taken to assure protection by foreign fleets. The Council urges domestic fishermen to study the techniques used by foreign fleets to meet Council requirements for protection of non-target species, to adapt those techniques where appropriate for domestic use, and to experiment actively with gear modifications, selection of time and area fishing strategies designed to avoid concentrations of prohibited species, and other techniques designed to develop a clean fishery. The Council will work with domestic fishermen to facilitate transfer of useful information and technology from foreign sources, and to insure the collection of relevant fisheries data and information from all sources, foreign and domestic.

"The Council will follow the development of Bering Sea and Aleutian Island groundfish fisheries with much interest, and with particular attention to the success of those fisheries in avoiding unnecessary or excessive taking of prohibited species.

"The Council hopes that through voluntary measures developed with the cooperation of domestic fishermen, stocks of salmon, halibut, king crab, and Tanner crab can be sufficiently sequestered from unnecessary and wasteful bycatch to make unnecessary the imposition of special protective regulations upon the domestic groundfish fishery."

Gulf of Alaska Amendment #11 Goes to Public Review

Gulf of Alaska Amendment #11, with proposals for amendments to reduce the sablefish optimum yield, establish catch reporting procedures, allow foreign longlining in the Davidson Bank area, restrict gear used for sablefish to hook and line only, and close the entire Gulf sablefish fishery from November 15 to March 15, will go to public review within the next week. The Council also agreed to address a prohibited species management regime for the Gulf of Alaska FMP in the total reorganization of the Plan, which is scheduled to begin early in 1982.

Amendment #11 will be the subject of public hearings in October and November in Seattle and Sitka.

Council to Hold Public Hearings

The North Pacific Council will conduct two public hearings this fall, in Seattle and Sitka. The Seattle hearing will be held on Saturday, October 24, 1981, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the University Tower Hotel, 4507 Brooklyn Avenue, N.E., in the College Room. The hearing may be lengthened or shortened depending upon the amount of testimony received. The Council wishes to receive comments on the proposed Amendment #11 to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP. Comments on any of the Council's other plans -- Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish, Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King Crab, Bering-Chukchi Sea Herring, Tanner Crab Off Alaska, and Southeast Alaska Troll Salmon - will also be accepted.

The Sitka hearing, which will focus on the proposed Gulf Groundfish amendment and the Southeast Alaska troll salmon fishery, will be held on Monday, November 2, 1981, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Centennial Building. The hearing may be lengthened or shortened depending upon the amount of testimony received. The Council is particularly interested in how the troll salmon industry views its operation under the 1981 regulations and whether the status quo should be maintained for the 1982 fishery.

Offshore Winter Herring Fishery Proposal Fails by Default

A proposal by Marine Resources Company to conduct an offshore winter fishery for food grade herring in the Bering Sea failed as a result of a tie vote by the Council. Because of the disparity in the formula used to determine the existence of a surplus of herring under the PMP, there was disagreement among

Council members over whether the surplus was real or a "paper" surplus. Several domestic processors had also expressed interest in utilizing whatever herring may have been taken by U.S. fishermen had the surplus been released for the winter fishery.

Advisory Panel Gets Two New Members

Chairman Clem Tillion appointed Kristy Long of Ketchikan and Forbes G. Baker of Sitka to fill interim vacancies on the Advisory Panel resulting from the resignation of Paula Easley and the appointment of Keith W. Specking to the Council.

Ms. Long is a home economist with the University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Home Economics from California Polytechnic State University. Baker, president of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, is a commercial fisherman. He has worked in the fishing industry since 1964. The Council welcomes the expertise and experience of its new AP members.

Council Sets 1982 Meeting Schedule

Council meetings for 1982 are scheduled as follows, but are subject to change.

January 4 - 7	Juneau
March 24-26	Anchorage
May 27-28	Anchorage
July 29-30	Anchorage
September 23-24	Sitka
December 6-10	Anchorage

Domestic Fisheries Update

Through the end of July, the Alaskan domestic groundfish catch was over 180 million pounds -- almost twice the 1980 total catch of 98 million pounds. As many as 11 foreign processors and 15 domestic catcher vessels participated in the groundfish fishery off Alaska during August.

The Southeast Alaska troll salmon season closed on August 10 in the FCZ. Preliminary harvest estimates indicate that optimum yield (243,100 - 272,000 chinooks) had been reached. Final figures are not yet available, but they will probably be at or above the upper end of the range.

Bristol Bay produced 27.7 million salmon in 1981, second only to the 28.1 million landed in 1980. Record landings of chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho were also recorded.

The Westward king crab fishery opened on September 15 from the Kodiak area westward. The opilio Tanner crab season closed on September 1 with a total catch of approximately 53 million pounds.

Council Co-Sponsors Groundfish Trawler Conference

The first Alaska Groundfish Trawler Conference will be held in Seattle on October 22-23, 1981 at the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center. The Conference is a joint effort of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, National Marine Fisheries Service, and North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Admission is free. For information contact Mark Miller, ADF&G - Juneau, (907) 465-4210.

Review of Foreign Permit Applications

Under Council policy, all foreign permit applications for vessels with violations in the previous year resulting in settlements of over \$3,000 are reviewed by the Permit Review Committee. Upon recommendation of the Permit Review Committee, the Council made no recommendation for either approval or disapproval of 1982 permit applications from five Japanese vessels with unresolved settlements for serious violations committed during 1980 and 1981. Those vessels were the RYUHO MARU 39, DAIRIN MARU NO. 28, YAMASAN MARU NO. 85, YURYO MARU NO. 8, and FUKUI MARU NO. 8. The Council did recommend approval for the stern trawler DAIKICHI MARU NO. 38, which had settled for \$550,000 and a six-month permit suspension after an April seizure for mislogging its catch.

Enforcement Update

Since the July Council meeting the Coast Guard issued nine reports of violation and six citations to seven Japanese, six Korean, and one Taiwanese vessel fishing in the FCZ off Alaska.

The Japanese stern trawler FUKUI MARU NO. 8 was seized near Attu for 37% underlogging of its turbot catch. That case is pending. Two Korean vessels, NO. 7 SANG WON and JINAM NO. 305, were seized for apparent underlogging; however, upon inventory of the holds, the catch logs were found to be reasonably correct and the vessels were immediately released.

Foreign Fish Figures

Slightly over 59% -- 837,000 mt -- of the 1.4 million mt Bering Sea TALFF had been taken as of August 29. Poland had taken 63% of its 71,000 mt allocation; Korea, 76% of its 160,000 mt allocation; and Japan, 58% of its 1.1 million mt allocation. Pollock comprised 81% of the catch, flatfish 11.5%, Pacific cod 2.3%, Atka mackerel, 1.3%, and all other species, 4.2%.

Thirty-five percent or 110,000 mt of the 309,000 mt Gulf of Alaska TALFF had been taken as of August 29. Pollock comprised the greatest portion of the catch (56%), followed by Pacific cod, 18%.

Joint Ventures Active Off Alaska

Seven joint ventures have operated in the Alaska FCZ during 1981. Nippon Suisan and Universal Seafoods used the AMERICAN NO. 1 and the MUIR MILACH to supply 6,225 mt of pollock and cod and 775 mt of incidental species to the

Japanese mothership KONGO MARU from June 1 to July 7 in the Bering Sea. Nippon Suisan is currently evaluating another, possibly longer joint venture operation with the two U.S. vessels.

The Taiyo/Pan-Alaska venture ended on June 1 with a catch of 5,253 mt pollock, 43 mt cod, and 20 mt other species.

Five processors and eight U.S. catcher vessels harvested over 28,000 mt of yellowfin sole and cod from early May to September 12 in the Marine Resources Company joint venture. The operation plans to continue into early October.

Two U.S. trawlers delivered about 2,200 mt of pollock and 20 mt of cod to a Polish processor between June and mid-September from the Unimak Pass area. Although temporarily halted now, the operation is expected to resume on October 1.

With improved coordination between KMIDC and its American partners, approximately 27,000 mt of pollock has been harvested in that venture since March. The operation is expected to continue through October.

The West German operation using the FRIEDRICH BUSSE ended on September 1 with a total of approximately 3,000 mt of fish bought, which is 25% of the allocation. The operation was quite good for the U.S. fishermen, but not economically viable for the BUSSE on pollock alone. Nevertheless, Nordstern is trying to work out the details for a 1982 joint venture and wants to carry trainees and observers on board.

Pribilof-Highly SeaProducts, Inc. has encountered mechanical and other problems in its operation with the Taiwanese vessel GOLDEN DRAGON NO. 1. Highly Enterprises reports a total catch of 2,174 mt for the GOLDEN DRAGON and 574 mt for the HIGHLY 302, replacement vessel for the GOLDEN DRAGON during its down time. All but one of the Aleut trainees who were working aboard the GOLDEN DRAGON have dropped out of the program and returned to St. George Island. The other trainee is now enrolled in the commercial fisheries program at Clatsop Community College in Oregon.

The Question of Halibut Limited Entry

The Council's special Halibut Limited Entry Workgroup, appointed at the July Council meeting, met in August to further explore limited entry for the halibut fishery off Alaska. As a result of their report, the Council instructed the Workgroup to draft a specific Request for Proposals to evaluate and analyze the long-term benefits and costs of specific alternatives for a limited entry program.

Fishery Research Institute Gets Contract

The Council awarded a research contract to the University of Washington Fishery Research Institute for "Determination of Stock Origins of Chinook Salmon Incidentally Caught in Foreign Trawls in the Alaska FCZ." Work on the study should begin in early October.

Walrus/Clam Study Completed

The Council approved the final report for Contract 80-3, "Seasonal Use and Feeding Habits of Walruses in the Proposed Bristol Bay Clam Fishery Area." The final report will be available in the near future as Council Document #18.