

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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ADVISORY PANEL REPORT

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Meeting of November 30-December 1, 1977
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

The Advisory Panel considered the Troll Plan and arrived at the following conclusions: The Panel wishes to advise the Council that the present two options contained in the Plan are unacceptable and wanted the status quo to remain on the Fairweather Grounds during 1978 season. The Advisory Panel recommended that the 28-inch limit be adopted and that the limited entry concept be adopted. Additionally, the Panel recommended that the logbook program be continued on a voluntary basis. The Advisory Panel recommends that research on the Alaska troll salmon fishery should be undertaken. Additionally, the Panel recommended the redefinition of the statistical areas and the adoption of trollers self enforcement plan and that it requests the Council to give this plan its approval.

The Panel expressed substantial concern over the status of king salmon stocks in southeast Alaska and believes that the research on the Alaska troll fishery will give the Council a better idea of how to take care of that problem. The Panel further expressed its concern for a great need for interaction between the Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries in order that the troll fishery may be managed as a complete fishery.

The Panel adopted a motion that the 500-meter isobath language contained on page 237 of the Groundfish Fishery Plan be amended as follows:

"The foreign longline effort that would be permitted inside the 500-meter isobath west of 157° L should be restricted during the period of the domestic halibut season which will be set in January at the IPHC meeting in Seattle."

Arguments in favor of this were that substantial gear conflicts results from competition on the grounds. The Panel felt that this would be a minimal closure inasmuch as the 1978 halibut season probably won't last more than 48 days, leaving 316 days for the foreign effort to be undertaken.

The Panel took the Tanner crab problem into consideration and determined that it would recommend that there be no change in the line of 58^o, and that the suggested dip to 57^o 10' does not give all the protection to C. bairdi that it really should. The Panel believes that there are probably more stocks of bairdi within the "dip" than what is generally known. Further, the Panel recommends that the Council recommendation of 15,000 metric ton contained in the plan be maintained inasmuch as this represents a 20% increase over last year. The Panel further believes that an additional foreign quota would give substantial competition to the domestic industry and points out that a 10% import duty imposed by Japan on U.S. crab places the United States market in a real disadvantage. Further, the Panel states that the domestic industry can and will take all the bairdi and that there should be no bairdi for the Japanese.

The Panel discussed the sablefish problem, determined that the recommendations previously made should remain and can find no compelling reason to change the recommendations. While the SSC has stated they cannot justify the 10,000 metric ton OY recommended by the Panel, they indicate that such a recommendation should be based on "value judgment."

Many factors indicate a downward trend in stock abundance, that is, catch per hotchi, catch per boat day. Catch per unit of effort off Canada was down 30% in 1977 and the Canadians have reduced their OY from 5,000 metric tons to 3,500 metric tons indicating a lower abundance of Canadian stocks. The catch per boat day is down 65% since 1970-71. Gear saturation has masked the CPUE downward trend as more halibut fishermen have been fishing blackcod; therefore, more intensive effort.

INPFC data shows the 1976 catch of 43,000 metric tons to be a 21,000 metric ton overcatch over the negotiated quota.

The Panel believes that there is a body of "influential" evidence that indicates a decline. This might be referred to as "intuitive information" that the industry has regarding

sablefish stocks. Advisory Panel Member Al Otness cited figures of landings at Petersburg Fisheries, Inc.:

"1974 - 785,349 pounds
1975 - 674,840 pounds
1976 - 544,320 pounds
1977 - 356,413 pounds"

The 1977 indication is that it took a great deal more effort to get the 356,000 pounds than previous. Initially, figures were quoted at another facility in southeastern Alaska landings were as follows:

"1974 - 156,000 pounds
1975 - 220,000 pounds
1976 - 200,000 pounds"

1977, with substantially greater effort, only 130,000 pounds."

Catch of a highline fisherman in 1975 netted 57,000 pounds with 100,810 hooks on one trip. In 1976, the same fisherman on his first trip took 33,000 pounds with 53,000 hooks and 54,000 pounds with 103,200 hooks. In 1977, he only took 20,000 pounds with 81,548 hooks; 19,000 pounds with 63,250 hooks and on his third trip 33,000 pounds with 108,090 hooks. All denoting a downward trend. The Panel adopted a recommendation that the Council be advised that there still was no consumer data appearing in the plans and that more consumer data needs to be reflected in the Management Plans.

The Panel adopted a motion to recommend to the Council that a longterm bottomfishery development plan, a document, be made with input from Federal, and State governments, universities and industry.

Keith Specking, Chairman

List of people testifying at December 1977 Council Meeting:

Lawrence Cotter, P.O.Box 3662, Juneau, AK 99802

Sara Hemphill, 5341 Ballard Ave., Seattle, WN 98107

Jon Rowley, P.BOX 5825, Ketchikan, AK 99901

Mel Morrison for William K. Deshler, Pacific Pearl Co., 1450 114th Av. SE, Bellevue
Washington 98004

Ed Linkous, Alaska Trollers Assoc. , Box 5825 Ketchikan, AK 99901

H. Nakamura, NP Longline & Gillnet Assoc., Tokyo, Japan

J.G. Ferguson, Pelican Cold Storage, Pelican, AK

speaker for Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, Inc.

Mr. Shoji Ono, Tanner Crab Fishery Industry of Japan

Thomas A. Casey, Box 1035, Kodiak, AK 99615