

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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24-79

The regular meeting of the NPFMC was held Aug. 23-24 at the Anchorage/Westward/Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska. The SSC held its meeting Aug. 21-22 and reconvened Aug. 23 to finish its agenda. The AP meeting was held Aug. 22.

NPFMC OFFICERS REELECTED

NPFMC Chairman Clement V. Tillion and Vice Chairman Harold E. Lokken were elected to succeed themselves for a term which will expire September 30, 1980. The election was conducted during the August meeting because of the meeting schedule which would see the Chairman's term expire before the October 4-5 meeting in Sitka. Dr. Donald Bevan, former SSC member appointed to fill the seat made vacant by the death early this year of Prof. D.L. McKernan, took his place on the Council and members Bart Eaton and James O. Campbell commenced their terms of reappointment.

AP NOMINATIONS OPEN

Nominations for membership on the Advisory Panel will be taken until the close of the meeting Oct. 5. Names of those who wish to be appointed may be sent to the Council office, P.O. Box 3136 DT, Anchorage, Alaska, 99510, or delivered to the Executive Secretary up to closing time of the Oct. 5 meeting in Sitka. All nominations will be reviewed and those who are selected for membership will be announced during the November meeting.

FUR SEAL CONVENTION

The NPFMC has endorsed the continuation of participation by the U.S. in the Interim Convention for the Conservation of North American Fur Seals. One of the important facets of the Convention is the continuing study of that resource by the participating governments. The Convention presently allows the harvest of seals from St. Paul Island in the Pribilof Islands. The nations involved in the Convention are the U.S., Canada, Japan and Russia. One of a series of public hearings conducted on the Draft Environmental Impact Study for the Interim Convention for the Conservation of North American Fur Seals was held in the Council conference room in the Post Office Mall, 333 West Fourth Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska, starting at 9:30 a.m., Monday, Aug. 27. NPFMC Executive Director Jim H. Branson served as Council liaison to that hearing.

STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS THANKS

The NPFMC supported the State Department in opposing the threat of an office operations budget cut which had been proposed in a House of Representatives bill. The bill would have cut by 50% the budget of the Dept. of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Thanks to the Council was extended by Ray Arnaudo, States' representative on the Council, for the expressions from the Council to the Alaskan Congressional delegation. Arnaudo said the threat did not materialize.

RESERVE RELEASE

NMFS Alaska has made a release of reserve amounts for the GOA groundfish FMP according to the schedule of species/amounts adopted by the Council during the June meeting. The total amount added to TALFF becomes 64,533mt. The release comes in two stages, with the 1st stage effective July 31 and the 2nd effective Aug. 15 or as soon after as possible and will consist of any amounts in the reserves the regional director determines will not be utilized by U.S. fishermen through the end of the fishing year.

STATE TO FINANCE HERRING WORKSHOP

The State of Alaska will grant \$10,000 toward the financing of a herring workshop to be held in early 1980. The SeaGrant office at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, will publish the proceedings of the workshop scheduled to be held in Anchorage in February.

FISHING EFFORT OFF ALASKA

NMFS reports that the number of fishing vessels engaged off the coast of Alaska has dropped sharply in the past month. The main cause is the departure of the Japanese salmon fleets. While that fishery was being conducted, 515 vessels were off our coast. As of Aug. 17, only 259 remained. The Soviets had 23 vessels at work, South Korea had 13, Poland had two, Mexico had 3 and Japan had 218.

U.S. COAST GUARD REPORT

A report to the Council from the U.S. Coast Guard reveals that there were eight violations of FCZ regulations detected during the period between Council meetings (June 28-August 23). Two of the most significant, Taiwanese stern trawlers Highly #301-302, are reported on below. The KAIYO MARU #53 information is an update on a report from the last newsletter.

KAIYO MARU # 53

The case of the Kaiyo Maru #53, a vessel seized for several violations of the FCMA including underlogging and retaining prohibited species, is still to be settled finally, but the ship is out of the fishery for the time being. NOAA has initiated action to revoke the vessel's permit for the remainder of the year with prejudice to the issuance of its 1980 permit. The license was revoked immediately, an action was filed in Anchorage District Court to prevent NOAA from revoking the permit until a hearing could be held and a decision was made to uphold the revocation. The ship has left for Japan. A cargo valued at \$750,000 was forfeited, auctioned and sold. The search of the Kaiyo Maru #53 set a new standard for searches on seized vessels from the FCZ. It was conducted by the U.S. Marshall's office in Kodiak and cost an estimated \$40,000. The civil action concerning the forfeiture of the cargo was appealed by the vessel owners and has been set for trial sometime in late October. Kim White, NMFS regional attorney, predicts an administrative hearing on the revocation.

HIGHLY #301-302

Two Taiwanese stern trawlers, the Highly #301 and 302 were boarded August 19 at Sand Point after Coast Guard boardings revealed both ships were logging processed fish weight instead of round fish weight. Further investigation revealed the weekly catch reports also consisted of processed

weight values. Both vessels were seized a day later. They have been escorted to Kodiak and turned over to the U.S. Marshall's office. To date for the year, the Coast Guard has logged 1,115 aircraft patrol hours and 349 cutter patrol days in their surveillance and enforcement efforts. This has resulted in 4,368 fishing vessel identifications.

BERING SEA GROUND FISH

The FMP for the Bering Sea/Aleutian area is in an interrupted SOC review period. An amendment prepared by the Council has been adopted and consists of implementing processor preference requirements, establishing a DAH of 56,100 mt, a reserve of 5% of OY, an increase to 72,200 mt as OY for "other species" and a mechanism for the release of DAH to TALFF. A non-specified species category was also adopted and the proposed salmon/savings area proposals have been referred to the Plan Development Team for further study. The review period for the plan was interrupted when the SOC's review team questioned the determination of the DAH amount and the method from which it was derived.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CRAB REGULATIONS

The NPFMC is considering a possible study of the economic analysis of regulations in the king and Tanner crab fisheries.

A possible solution to a pot storage and fuel savings problem between Federal and State regulations has been proposed through the expedient of extending the Tanner crab season and allowing pots stored to be on the fishing grounds coincidentally with the opening of king crab season. It could save an estimated 900,000 gallons of diesel fuel fleetwide.

CONTRACTS

Final reports on two contracts were received by the Council and are available from the Council office. They are (1) Pilot Troll Salmon Observer Program and (2) Salmon Tag Recovery Program. Both reports were approved for final payment.

COUNCIL BUDGET -FY 1980

A final budget in the amount of \$839,000 was approved by the Council as the administrative budget. An additional \$510,000 is earmarked for the programmatic budget.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The NPFMC meeting schedule for the remainder of this year shows the October meeting being held in Sitka on Oct. 4-5. The SSC will hold either a regular two-day meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 2-3, or a one-day meeting. Details will be announced later. The AP will meet on Tuesday, Oct. 2. The final Council meeting in 1979 will be held on Nov. 29-30, in Anchorage.

FMP SCHEDULING

The Council's working group on FMP scheduling will meet Sept. 10 in the Council conference room. Members of the group are Ron Skoog, John Harville, Don Bevan, Don Collinsworth, Sig Jaeger.

DEFINITION OF "PERSON"

State and Federal regulations differ on the definition of "person". The loophole would allow a person to apply for transfer of a permit to a corporation, be refused by the State of Alaska's Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, then appeal that decision to the NMFS Regional Director and be granted the transfer. The State turn-down would be based on the definition of "person" as a "natural" person and not a corporation, whereas the Federal regulations recognize a "person" as either a "natural person" or a "corporation." A change in the federal regulations now has closed the loophole so far as the definition concerns the troll salmon fishery and limited entry.

OUT-OF-TOWN MEETINGS FOR NPFMC

Meetings of the NPFMC will be held in Anchorage, Sitka and Kodiak in 1980. No dates have been set as yet but will be announced shortly.

TROLL SALMON HEARING

A public hearing on the High Seas Salmon Fishery off the Coast of Alaska East of 175 Degrees East Longitude (FMP) will be held Oct. 3 in Sitka at the Centennial Bldg. The development of a proposed comprehensive salmon management plan by the State of Alaska will make necessary some regulatory changes in the Council FMP to bring both plans into harmony to adequately address the chinook and coho resource of the troll fishery.

INCIDENTAL SPECIES REPORT

The Council has adopted as a guideline document the Incidental Species report forwarded by the Council working group. The report will be used by the various Plan Development Teams as a reference for the next round of FMP amendments which will begin in mid-spring.

SHARI GROSS TO DENMARK

Ms. Shari Gross, former executive director for the United Fishermen of Alaska, Juneau, will leave Alaska soon to assume her duties as Alaska's representative in the State of Alaska's fisheries office in Copenhagen.

The Council voted Shari a round of thanks for her work on the Advisory Panel during the past year. Her seat becomes vacant September 1.

FCMA OVERSIGHT HEARINGS

The House subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and the Environment held oversight hearings on the FCMA July 10 and 12 in Washington, D.C. Chairman Clement V. Tillion and Executive Director Jim H. Branson attended both days of the subcommittee's hearings. Additional hearings on the FCMA are to be conducted the second week in October and further comment will be offered on a list of topics the subcommittee has specified.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA NEEDS REPORT

A report by the Council working group on the Social and Economic Data Needs for Fishery Management Plans has been accepted by the Council as Council Document #6. Anyone wishing copies may obtain them from the Council office.

SSC APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Richard Marasco (NW&FC) and Dr. Bud Burgner (U. of Washington School of Fisheries) have been appointed as new members of the Council's SSC. The SSC will discuss the possibility of adding a member who is a marine mammal specialist during their next meeting in Sitka. The new member, if added, would bring to 11 the number of those on the group.

GOA FMP AMENDMENT

The NPFMC has adopted an amendment to the GoA groundfish FMP which extends the plan year through October 31, 1980, implements provisions of the Processor Preference Amendment (P.L. 95-354), raises OYs for Pacific cod and Atka mackerel, establishes a separate OY for idiot rockfish, proposes a provisional time and area concept for joint ventures and proposes domestic and joint venture reporting requirements. The Council amendment would be in lieu of a Secretarial amendment which extends the plan and implements provisions of the Processor Preference amendment to the FCMA. DAH for the Gulf of Alaska groundfish has been set at 49,000 metric tons and is comprised of domestic annual processing estimates (DAP) of 20,000 mt, domestic non-processed (DNP) of 4,000 mt and joint venture estimates (JVP) of 25,000 mt. A reserve amount of 20% of OY has also been established.

The new OYs bring the total for Atka mackerel to 28,700 mt, Pacific cod to 60,000 mt and idiot rockfish (Sebastes) to 3,750. The DAH concept is new: DAH is an estimate of the expected domestic annual harvest that will be utilized and is comprised of three elements, DAP, DNP and JVP. Joint venture processing (JVP), as a portion of DAH, is allowed only if the estimated U.S. harvesting capacity exceeds the estimates of DAP and DNP. DNP (domestic non-processed) is that portion of the DAH entering U.S. non-processed fish markets (bait or fresh).

A concept in the proposed SOC amendment to extend the FMP was also approved by the Council.

TANNER CRAB FMP

An amendment to extend the Tanner crab FMP through its expiration date of October 31 was approved by the Council. An additional amendment is to follow as soon as data from the fishery can be analyzed and will address the determinations of OY, DAH and TALFF in the Bering Sea.

ST. GEORGE BASIN LEASE SALE

A proposal for oil development leasing in the St. George Basin of the Bering Sea (Pribilof area) has been forwarded from the Alaska Region NMFS for Council comment. The sale is scheduled for 1982 and involves ocean areas within the Bering Sea/Aleutian FMP fishery management unit. Comments are requested specifically for seasonal or operational restrictions and areas that should be deferred from leasing (adjacent to spawning areas, etc.)

ECONOMIST POSITION FOR COUNCIL STAFF

The Council has approved the addition to the NPFMC staff of an economist. The present staff consists of eight full-time positions and part-time clerical help as necessary.

HERRING FMP

The NPFMC has approved the draft for the Herring FMP with revisions to be made for the final version which will be available for public comment. As accepted by the Council, the proposed revisions include clarifying the concept and writing the formulas for OY, TAC, DAH and TALFF. Copies of the FMP in its proposed draft form will be available in mid-to-late September and public hearings are tentatively scheduled for the last portion of October. Announcement of the plan availability and the final public hearing schedule will be made as soon as possible.

U.S.-U.S.S.R. FISHING AGREEMENT

The State Department's representative to the Council, Ray Arnaudo, reported there has been an exchange of diplomatic notes in the process of establishing the reciprocal fishing agreement between the two countries. The Governing International Fishery Agreement (GIFA) provides for the right to initiate reciprocal agreements. U.S. fishermen are reportedly interested in fishing pollock and crab in Soviet waters. Mr. Arnaudo said the most relevant questions that have been raised have been what is the amount of fish to be allocated and does that amount equal the amount of fish the Soviets are taking from U.S. waters. Inquiries as to the probable size of the resource have been sent to the Russians but to date there has been no response.

ALASKA HAS LION'S SHARE OF FISH AND EFFORT

Alaska not only has the bulk of foreign fishing effort off the coast of the U.S., but recent figures from NMFS indicate that nearly 90% of the catch off the coast of the entire United States comes from waters off the coast of Alaska. The catch from the Gulf of Alaska alone, according to NMFS, outstrips the total of catches from the Washington/Oregon coast and the Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico.

BERING SEA CRAB CATCH

Final reports from the ADF&G show that the total catch of Tanner crab in the Bering Sea for the past fishing year included 19,200 mt of C. bairdi and 14,200 of C. opilio. The U.S. fishery is fast winding down and only 5 independent Japanese vessels are fishing.