

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 23, 1978

TO: Council, Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical
Committee Members

FROM: Jim H. Branson, Executive Director *JMB*

SUBJECT: Council Contracts - Progress Reports: on (77-4) University
of Washington (FRI) High Seas Salmon Continent of Origin and
(77-5) ADF&G Domestic Groundfish Observer Program

(77-4)

We received quarterly report number 1 (January 15, 1978) from the Fisheries Research Institute of the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington on their contract to investigate the continent of origin of sockeye and coho salmon in the area of the Japanese land based fishery for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. The report, signed by Robert Burgner, Director, includes a comprehensive bibliography of reports being reviewed and a literature survey to develop the historic methods for identifying origins of sockeye salmon by possibly using the polynomial discriminate function method. To complete this task, scales have been requested from Japan and the Soviet Union and have been promised for years past as well as 1978. Scales are also being collected from the major rivers in Alaska, including the Nass River, Scena River, and Rivers Inlet of British Columbia, and all major stocks of Bristol Bay, Alaska and Kodiak Island coho and sockeye salmon. The investigation into the feasibility of tagging fish on the high seas will not be possible with seine vessels but could be done with Japanese longline vessels which are now being considered.

The progress of the contract appears to be on schedule. Since the feasibility of utilizing such techniques as the polynomial discriminate function method depends on developing standards of known stocks based on known scale samples and the scale samples have not been obtained, that portion of the contract which is of major interest to the Council has not yet been developed. This report and the January 25 review with the Council and the SSC have formally fulfilled the requirements of Article II, Project Scheduled and Deliverables on page 6 of the contract. Copies of the formal interim progress report are available upon request in the office.

(77-5)

On January 17 Mark Hutton met with the principal investigators from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Kodiak regarding Contract 77-5, An Observer Program for the Domestic Groundfish Fishery in the Gulf of Alaska. Because there has been no progress in the Groundfish Fishery there have subsequently been no reports on the contract. The December 1 and 2, the January 15, and the January 26 progress reports and project reviews were accomplished in Kodiak on January 17.

Of major concern to the Council were several problems which developed in this project review. These centered primarily around the contractor's confidence in adhering to the domestic regulations in the groundfish plan with a contract which in the first year was described and defined only as to "Develop methodology." While this is considered a valid concern it nevertheless had been taken into account in the language of the contract as it was expected that for FY 1978 the majority of all groundfish effort would be both minimal and probably within State waters. The contractor appears to be uncertain as to the statutory and regulatory authority afforded the observers in the required fulfillment of their obligations. The final regulations implementing the groundfish plan should handle this problem.

The contractor expressed concern over the lack of insurance for personnel and the captains of the vessels in case of an accident and pending lawsuit. This appears to be a valid problem that has not yet been worked out but is being investigated.

In general terms, it is expected that the groundfish observer program will be initiated next month as the Kodiak shrimp season is closed and there have been positive commitments to begin groundfish trawling in February. We will keep the Council informed as the fishery develops and the contractor begins the observer program.