

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## NEWSLETTER

### Council Completes Heavy Agenda in September

The North Pacific Council met September 25-28 in Anchorage, Alaska. Part of the meeting was with the Alaska Board of Fisheries to discuss exclusive registration areas, pot limits and other Tanner crab management proposals for 1985. The Council reviewed the status of groundfish stocks off Alaska and the needs of U.S. harvesters and processors for 1985. Two emergency regulations for Gulf of Alaska groundfish were also approved. These and other Council actions are described in this newsletter.

### Council Will Meet in Anchorage in December

The next scheduled meeting of the Council will be December 5-7 at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage. Topics to be discussed will include final groundfish harvest levels for 1985 and their apportionments to U.S. and foreign fisheries, Advisory Panel operations, options for halibut management, and a major review of foreign allocations, vessel permits, and joint venture operations for 1985.

A draft agenda will be available about mid-November. An extra day, Tuesday, December 4, may be added if required.

### Two New Members Named to Council

The Council welcomed two members appointed for three-year terms to the Council by Secretary Baldrige. Henry Mitchell, Executive Director for the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, is an attorney who, in his present and past positions, has been active in promoting and protecting rural Alaskan fisheries. Before coming to the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association he was the Subsistence Director at the Tanana Chiefs Conference in Fairbanks and Director of Legal Services in Galena.

The second new member is John Peterson from Washington State. He is Vice-Chairman of the Board for Ocean Beauty Seafoods, Seattle, and brings to the Council a wealth of experience in the processing sector of the U.S. fishing industry.

### Council Elects Officers

James O. Campbell was re-elected to serve as Chairman and Rudy Petersen elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the next 12 months.

Jim Campbell, a member of the Council since 1978, is the President of the Alaska Division of Spenard Builders Supply and has served as President of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Anchorage Businessmen's Association, and the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce.

Rudy Petersen hails from Seattle and has been on the Council for two years. He is a member of the Highliners Association and has broad experience in Northwest and Alaska fisheries.

### Council Issues Call for Advisory Panel Nominations

Terms of current Advisory Panel members were to expire in December, but have been extended through the January 1985 Council meeting. This extension will give the ad-hoc Advisory Panel Operations Committee the opportunity to make its recommendations on form and function of the Panel to the Council in December. In the interim, the Council is issuing the call for nominations. Advisory Panel members may succeed themselves, and the incumbents will be asked to indicate whether they wish to serve another two-year term. Resumes of nominees will be reviewed by the AP Nominating Committee just before the January Council meeting. The Council is expected to make appointments during that meeting to become effective shortly thereafter.

Persons who wish to be considered for Advisory Panel membership should submit a resume before December 31, 1984, to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, P.O. Box 103136, Anchorage, AK 99510, Attention: Judy Willoughby.

### Comprehensive Fishery Management Goals

The Council reviewed written comments and testimony gathered at two public hearings on its draft comprehensive management goals. Final action on adopting the draft goals was deferred until December to allow Council members time to submit written comments.

### Halibut Management

The Council reviewed its previously adopted goals for the halibut fishery and an analysis of the management options available to achieve those goals. By unanimous vote they amended Goal #5, adopted in December 1983 to read:

Extend the length of the halibut season to make available high quality fresh and frozen halibut to the consumer over as long a period as practicable and thereby maximize the economic return to the fishing industry and to maritime communities.

Instead of: Provide high quality fresh, frozen or preserved halibut to the consumer throughout the year.

Administrative Matters

James O. Gandy was selected to serve as Director and will be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the year 1965.

The Council, a body of 12 members, is the highest authority in the Administration of the Agency. It has the honor of being the highest authority in the Administration of the Agency and the highest authority in the Administration of the Agency.

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Council Meeting for Advisory Board

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Comparative Salary Management

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The Council then voted 9 to 2 to take an active role in the management of the halibut fishery working in conjunction with the International Pacific Halibut Commission in accordance with §5(c) of the North Pacific Fishery Halibut Act of 1982. That section gives the Council authority to develop regulations for the U.S. halibut fishery, including limited entry, which are in addition to, but not in conflict with, IPHC regulations. A special Council subcommittee will prepare material on halibut management options for review by the full Council in December. This report will emphasize, but not necessarily be limited to exclusive area registration, license limitation and quota shares.

#### Board Revises State Tanner Crab Regulations

Meeting together on Wednesday, September 26, the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Council discussed differences in state/federal pot limits and exclusive registration area regulations. State regulations designate the Southeast, Yakutat, Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Chignik and South Peninsula districts as exclusive registration areas, and limit the number of Tanner crab pots used in the Kodiak fishery to 200 per vessel. Federal regulations designate only Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet as exclusive registration areas, and there are no pot limits. An analysis prepared by Council, NMFS, and ADF&G staff on the conservation, allocation and enforcement aspects of the proposed exclusive registration areas and pot limits showed that under certain conditions a pot limit or exclusive registration area might serve a conservation purpose, and that both management measures could allocate catches in the short term to local Alaskan fishing communities, but by reducing catches of other Alaskan and non-Alaskan fishermen. The study also showed that a pot limit may be as enforceable as other fishery regulations.

The Board and Council reviewed the current conditions of the Southeast, Yakutat, Kodiak, Chignik and South Peninsula Tanner crab fisheries. Based on their review, staff reports, the special analysis, and public testimony, the Board made the following revisions to state regulations:

Exclusive Registration Areas: Maintain the Southeast district as an exclusive registration area, but repeal the exclusive area designation from Chignik, South Peninsula and Yakutat districts.

Pot Limits: Suspend the 200-pot limit in the Kodiak district until January 1, 1986.

Season Dates: Change the Yakutat Tanner crab opening date to January 15 from February 10. The Southeast district will still open on February 10.

Federal Tanner crab regulations for 1985 are the same as those of the state, except for the state designation of the Southeast district as an exclusive area and a needed season adjustment in Yakutat. The difference between the state designation of the Southeast district as an exclusive area and the federal non-exclusive status should present no management problem since Tanner crab harvests in this district have historically been taken within state waters. In regard to the change in season date, the NMFS Regional Director plans to adjust the federal seasons in Yakutat to match those of the state for 1985. Therefore, no Council action was required as a result of the Board revisions.

### Gulf of Alaska Halibut Bycatch Limits for the Domestic Trawl Fishery

The Council voted unanimously to request the Secretary of Commerce to issue an emergency regulation which sets the halibut bycatch limits at 270 mt in the Western Gulf of Alaska and 768 mt in the Central Gulf for the period December 1, 1984 to May 31, 1985, and to exempt domestic midwater trawling from the regulation altogether. These are the same halibut bycatch limits the Council approved in December 1983. Without this action the current regulation, which is based on 1979 conditions in the groundfish and halibut fisheries, would likely close all Gulf of Alaska joint venture fisheries until May 31, 1985.

The Council also asked the National Marine Fisheries Service to assign specific halibut bycatch amounts to individual joint venture operations and to use information from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's Domestic Fisheries Observer Program to monitor and enforce the halibut bycatch limits. The Council also requested the State of Alaska to enforce the halibut bycatch limits in the state internal waters joint ventures for bottomfish.

### Southeast Alaska FCZ Cul-de-Sac Problem

The sablefish stocks in the federal cul-de-sacs located within the Southeast Alaska archipelago are included in the state's guideline harvest level, not in the federal OY. However, the general groundfish (including sablefish) season in federal waters opens each year on January 1 while the state's sablefish seasons begin on March 15 in southern Southeast and September 1 in northern Southeast.

Last February the Council voted unanimously to keep the four cul-de-sacs closed by emergency rule until the surrounding state waters opened. Those emergency regulations have now lapsed and the Council needed to take action again to forestall the coming January 1, 1985 opening for sablefish in federal cul-de-sac waters while surrounding state waters are still closed.

However, the Alaska Region of NMFS recommended that the Council take no action since they can close the season using a field order, solving the problem for 1985. The Council's Gulf of Alaska plan team is developing an FMP amendment which will permanently solve this problem. The amendment will go through the normal amendment cycle with expected implementation by late 1985. There is also an amendment to the Magnuson Act providing for state management of FCZ cul-de-sacs pending in Washington, DC, but details are not available at this time.

### Status of Amendment 12 to the Gulf of Alaska FMP

Amendment 12, which would have prohibited the use of pot gear for sablefish in much of the FCZ off Southeast Alaska, was reviewed by the Council. Originally approved by the Council in July, 1982, subsequent NMFS reviews indicated that the Secretary would probably disapprove the amendment because no demonstrated conservation purposes or real gear conflict problems were addressed. Most fishermen testifying at the Council meeting preferred longline gear. The Council withdrew Amendment 12 to allow the Gulf of Alaska plan team to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of this and other gear types in this fishery.

### Initial Review of Gulf of Alaska Status of Stocks

The Gulf of Alaska plan team presented a report on the 1984 status of stocks in the Gulf of Alaska. Downward adjustments of MSY are being recommended for two species, Pacific ocean perch and Atka mackerel. Final results from the NMFS Gulf-wide stock assessment survey were not available to the team when they prepared their report. These results could affect the conclusions made on stock conditions and abundance trends. This survey and any other information will be incorporated into a revised team report and presented to the Council at the December meeting.

### Status of Bering Sea Groundfish

In 1985, Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish stocks are predicted to be about the same as they were in 1984. Total allowable catch (TAC) for all species combined will remain at 2 million metric tons. Proposed 1985 TACs which have changed significantly are Atka mackerel at 37,700 mt (up from 23,130 mt), Bering Sea pollock at 1,100,000 mt (down from 1,200,000 mt), and Pacific ocean perch in the Bering Sea at 680 mt (down from 1,780 mt). A request for comments on all proposed 1985 TACs, as well as amounts to be apportioned to domestic and joint venture fisheries will be sent to the public shortly.

### Joint Venture Permit Restrictions

The Council discussed two restrictions which are currently on all joint venture permits: (1) the amount of sablefish which may be retained by the foreign processing vessel cannot exceed 1.5% of all fish received by that vessel; and (2) no further fish may be received by a foreign processing vessel in a quota management area if the joint venture quota for any one species in the area has been caught. Because the domestic fishing and processing industries have utilized most of the sablefish in the Gulf of Alaska this year and are expected to utilize all the sablefish in the Gulf and the Aleutians in 1985, the Council decided that the first permit restriction was not a pressing issue. The second permit restriction may no longer be relevant because of implementation of the Council's Interim Joint Venture Policy described elsewhere in this newsletter.

### Groundfish Management Proposals for 1985 Requested

The Council requests that all proposals for changes in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Management Plans or their implementing regulations be in the Council offices by the end of the next Council meeting, December 7, 1984. All proposals will be reviewed initially by the Council staff for structural completeness using the following four criteria:

1. Is the objective clearly evident and stated?
2. Is a preferred solution offered?
3. Is supporting documentation presented to explain the problem and need?
4. Does it affect the U.S. Fishery Conservation Zone?

Please be sure to indicate a contact phone so the staff can contact you to gather additional information if required. The relevant plan team will then perform an initial review, assessing the technical merits of proposals against Council goals and plan objectives. They will be reviewed by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and Advisory Panel in January. The Council will take preliminary action on the proposals in January and final action in May when public review is completed. For further information on proposal format please contact Steve Davis for Gulf of Alaska groundfish or Jeff Povolny for Bering Sea/Aleutian groundfish at the Council office: (907) 274-4563.

#### New Foreign Vessel Permit Review Policy

The Council adopted a new policy for reviewing permit applications for foreign fishing vessels to operate in the Alaska Fishery Conservation Zone. Among its provisions are the following:

1. The Council will request to review all permit applications for the Alaska region.
2. The Executive Director is authorized to routinely approve all permits except for joint ventures, serious violators, new countries, and unusual operations.
3. Permits requiring more than routine approval will be reviewed by the Permit Review Committee and the Council at regularly scheduled meetings.
4. The Permit Review Committee shall have five Council members who are voting members and two Advisory Panel members designated by the AP chairman who shall be non-voting members.
5. Serious violations are those resulting in penalties of \$10,000 or more (revised from previous \$3,000) and seizures.

The major review for 1985 permit applications will occur the week of December 3, 1984. The Permit Review Committee will review permits on December 3-4 and their recommendations will be passed to the Council for consideration later that week. The Council expects to have all applications by November 16. Applications should be published in the Federal Register by November 30. The Council will not consider applications published later than Monday of the Council week, December 3. Any permits not meeting these deadlines will be acted on at the Council's next scheduled meeting in January.

#### Interim Policy on Joint Ventures and Allocations Adopted

The Council has adopted an Interim Policy on Joint Ventures and Allocations to guide its review of applications for joint venture operations and foreign allocations for 1985. The Council continues to place highest priority on operations that are wholly American. Second priority is given to operations involving foreign processing vessels and U.S. harvesters and other sectors of the U.S. industry. Joint venture applications will be appraised on the basis of 16 criteria designed to promote development of the U.S. fishing industry, fisheries research off Alaska, and compliance with U.S. laws and treaties. The relative ordering of joint operations using these criteria will become especially important when joint venture needs for groundfish exceed the available resource. Those operations of least merit may not receive the requested tonnages of fish.

The Council will recommend the amount of fish that may be received by the foreign vessels of each joint operation. Those ceilings will be in the permit conditions with the provision that only 50% of the permitted maximum may be received until the NMFS Regional Director, after consulting with the Council and U.S. joint venture partner, determines that the venture is proceeding satisfactorily. In-season increases to permitted amounts may be made by the Regional Director if a foreign fishery exists for the species in question. However, the Council will review all additional requests for species with no foreign fisheries.

The major review for 1985 permit applications will occur the week of December 3, 1984. The Permit Review Committee will review joint venture requests on December 3-4 and their recommendations will be passed to the Council for consideration later that week. The Council expects to have all applications and information on each operation by November 16. Applications should be published in the Federal Register by November 30. The Council will not consider applications published later than Monday of the Council week, December 3. Any permits not meeting these deadlines will be acted on at the Council's next scheduled meeting in January.

A request for information to enable the Council to judge how a particular operation fulfills the policy criteria will be sent to all joint venture operators from 1984 or earlier years. Anyone planning to initiate joint venture operations for the first time in 1985 should contact Clarence Pautzke on the Council staff: (907) 274-4563.

#### ADF&G Reports on Domestic Fisheries

The 1984 troll salmon fishery harvested approximately 240,000 chinook salmon; 33,000 in the winter fishery and 207,000 in the summer fishery. Another 31,000 chinook were taken in net fisheries targeting on other species of salmon. The 1984 catch of chinook was 20,000 less than in 1983 and the summer troll chinook season was 45 days, 25% shorter than the 60 days in 1983. In 1984 Southeast Alaska coho salmon continued the pattern of strong returns experienced during the last several years. The 1984 commercial harvest is expected to reach 1.8 million fish, the third largest since statehood. The troll coho harvest accounted for about 60% or 1.1 million, down somewhat from the 1983 catch of 1.3 million.

A total of 25,989 mt of herring was harvested in the eastern Bering Sea sac roe commercial fishery and Aleutian Islands food and bait fishery during 1984. Wasted herring, mostly because of gear loss, were estimated at less than 300 mt for all fishing districts. Spawn-on-kelp fishermen harvested 202 mt. Value to the fishermen was estimated at \$8.9 million, with 45 buyers participating. The number of fishermen increased from 1983 levels in Togiak, Goodnews Bay, and Cape Romanzoff districts but decreased in Security Cove and Norton Sound. Biomass for spawning herring from Togiak to Norton Sound was estimated at 139,000 mt. The commercial exploitation rate was 16.4%. Approximately 70% of the run was ages 6 and 7 fish and recruitment was poor. The 1984 Aleutian Islands herring fishery was prosecuted by 9 seiners who harvested 3,246 mt in state waters near Dutch Harbor and Akutan. The ex-vessel price was \$200-\$300 per ton for the food and bait fishery.



All 1983/84 Tanner crab fisheries are now closed except for the Bering Sea opilio fishery north of 58°N. latitude. Preliminary catch statistics (in millions of pounds) are as follows:

	<u>1983/84</u>	<u>1982/83</u>
Southeast/Yakutat	1.6	1.2
P.W.S.	Closed	1.5
Cook Inlet	2.8	3.0
Kodiak	14.4	18.9
Chignik	.7	3.5
South Peninsula	1.8	2.9
Dutch Harbor	.2	.5
Adak	.3	.5
Bering Sea		
C. bairdi	1.2	5.2
C. opilio	<u>22.9</u>	<u>29.5</u>
TOTAL	46.0	66.7

The only Gulf of Alaska sablefish fishery still open is the Western District. Preliminary harvest figures are 994 mt for Southeast inside, 2,654 mt for Southeast outside/East Yakutat, 1,600 mt for West Yakutat, 2,830 mt for the Central Area, and 156 mt for the Western Area, with a total Gulf catch of 8,234 mt.

#### Joint Ventures Off Alaska

The total joint venture catch off Alaska through September 1, 1984 was 525,631 mt. In the Gulf of Alaska joint ventures harvested 187,803 mt including 179,608 mt pollock, 3,021 mt Pacific cod, 1,707 mt flatfish, 1,460 mt Pacific ocean perch, 248 mt sablefish, and 1,759 mt other species. The Bering Sea and Aleutians harvest was 337,828 mt including 225,529 mt pollock, 40,520 mt flatfish, 36,537 mt Atka mackerel, 31,855 mt Pacific cod and 3,387 mt other species. Of the 20 different joint venture arrangements in 1984, eight are still operating employing 29-35 U.S. trawlers.

#### Foreign Fisheries Update

By September 15 foreign fleets in the Gulf of Alaska harvested 63,622 mt of groundfish, or 32% of the current foreign allocation for that area. The catch included 45,228 mt pollock, 12,718 mt Pacific cod, 2,389 mt Pacific ocean perch, and 403 mt sablefish.

In the Bering Sea and Aleutians they harvested 691,068 mt, about 58% of the current foreign allocation. The catch included 562,198 mt pollock, 24,162 mt Pacific cod, 61,336 mt yellowfin sole, 36,837 mt flatfish, and 734 mt sablefish.

There were 193 foreign vessels off Alaska on September 19, 158 from Japan, 18 from South Korea, 6 from the U.S.S.R., 5 from Poland, 4 from Taiwan, and one each from West Germany and Spain. Last year at this time there were nearly 250 foreign vessels off Alaska.

### U.S. Coast Guard Reports on Enforcement Activities

The U.S.C.G. reported that enforcement effort through September 24, 1984, totaled 648 cutter patrol days and 2,714 aircraft patrol hours for over 450,357 patrol miles.

Enforcement effort since May resulted in 14 reports of violation and 53 written warnings issued to foreign fishing vessels. The infractions included failure to submit required activity reports upon beginning or ending fishing, to maintain legible International Radio Call Signs, to properly maintain cumulative catch logs, and to promptly return prohibited species to the sea.

The Coast Guard seized three Canadian salmon trollers for trolling or processing salmon north of the A-B convention line.

### Council Recommends Holding Up Further Allocations to West Germany

The Council heard testimony from West German representatives that because of heavy financial losses incurred in their joint venture last spring, no further joint ventures were being considered. This runs counter to the Council's previously recommended stipulations for West German performance in joint ventures in return for a direct allocation off Alaska. Last February the Council recommended a 25,000 mt allocation based on a commitment to purchase 8,000 mt in joint ventures. So far in 1984, West Germany has been allocated 27,995 mt of groundfish by the U.S. State Department, and by September 1 had harvested about 54%. Their joint venture purchase has only been 4,000 mt to date. Therefore, at its September meeting, the Council recommended no additional releases of groundfish to West Germany until an additional 4,000 mt joint venture is completed.

### Council Reviews Portuguese Permits

The Council reviewed eight permit applications from Portugal to fish with trawls or sunken gillnets for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea in 1984. The Council recommended against any use of sunken gillnets because of concerns over gear conflicts with trawl and longline gear and that the sunken netting, if lost, would continue to entangle fish, shellfish and other marine life for a considerable time until it finally disintegrates or is buried. Further the Council recommended that Portugal not be allowed to fish off Alaska until NMFS is satisfied and has written evidence that Portugal is living up to commitments made earlier in return for a directed allocation. These commitments include purchases of product from U.S. processors.

The Council recommended approval of a joint venture between Portugal and Alaska Contact, Ltd. for 1984, provided that an import license is granted by the Portuguese government to bring fish into Portugal, and there is written evidence provided to NMFS of a firm contract to purchase product from U.S. processors. The joint venture plans to use six U.S. trawlers to deliver about 1,800 mt of Pacific cod to two Portuguese processors in the Bering Sea, Aleutians and Gulf of Alaska during October-December.

A Portuguese application to carry out a joint venture operation with Alaska Salt Fish Company in internal waters was also reviewed by the Council. The Council recommended approval of the 2,500 mt cod operation with the same two provisions on import licenses and commitments to buy U.S. product as were placed on the approval of Alaska Contact's joint venture.

#### Polish and South Korean Joint Ventures Increased

The Council recommended approval of a 5,000 mt joint venture for pollock between Quest Export Trading Company of Coos Bay, Oregon and Poland for 1984. The operation will use 2-3 U.S. trawlers and two Polish vessels in the Western/Central Gulf of Alaska. The Poles already have a 15,000 mt joint venture for pollock in the Gulf and Bering Sea approved by the Council last spring. The Council also approved an additional 5,000 mt directed allocation of pollock for Poland, but stated they were very concerned with part of the product coming back into U.S. markets.

Requested augmentations of South Korean joint ventures were also approved by the Council. These amounted to 15,000 mt of groundfish spread over three companies operating with U.S. trawlers in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea.

#### Herring FMP

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for offshore herring research in the Bering Sea released by the Council in May did not generate much interest among offshore fishermen. The lack of response was due at least in part to the conflict with the Shelikof fishery which occurs during the same time period as the proposed research. The Council has decided to ask the Secretary of Commerce to produce the necessary data with the stipulation that no ongoing federal research should be reduced in the process. Council staff will specify the data needed for further development of the FMP and draft a letter to the Secretary for Council approval at the December meeting.

#### Council Offices Now in New Location

The offices of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council were moved last week from the Old Federal Building to the Sunshine Plaza, 411 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 2D, in Anchorage. The Council will remain at this location for a period of approximately two years while the Old Federal Building is being renovated. The Council phone numbers and mailing address will remain the same.