

## **ATTENTION**

The Council is seeking public comment on the inshore-offshore allocation issue. Written comments must be received by Friday, November 3, 1989. Public comment is sought on the definition of the problem and possible solutions. For more information, see page 6 of this newsletter.

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## NEWSLETTER

10/11/89

### North Pacific Council Begins Groundfish Cycle for 1990

The Council met Tuesday through Friday, September 26-29, in Anchorage and set initial groundfish quotas and apportionments for 1990. These will go out for public review and be finalized at the December 4-8 Council meeting. The Council also considered a ban on pollock roe-stripping, amended its salmon plan, adopted a draft problem statement of the inshore-offshore allocation issue, and approved sablefish limited access proposals to go out to public review. The items listed below recap Council actions for the week.

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### New Chairman and Vice Chairman Elected

Council members elected Don Collinsworth and Bob Alverson to serve as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, for the next twelve months. Mr. Collinsworth, Commissioner of the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, served as an alternate on the Council from 1978 to 1983, when he was appointed Commissioner and became the State's designated Council representative. He is a member of the Council's Finance, Fishery Planning, Permit Review, and MFCMA Reauthorization Committees. Mr. Alverson, Executive Director for the Fishing Vessel Owners Association, was appointed to the Council last year and previously served on the Council's Advisory Panel since its inception in 1976. He is currently a member of the Council's Fishery Planning and Advisory Panel Nominating Committees and the Regulatory Amendment Advisory Group for Halibut.

### Sablefish Management Alternatives Go to Public Review

By mid-November, the Council will release for public review a draft analysis of the fixed gear (hook & line and pot) sablefish management alternatives. **A final decision on sablefish limited access is scheduled for the January Council meeting.** The alternatives are: continued open access management with no new measures proposed at this time; continued open access management with optional, vessel-specific, annual landing limits; individual fishing quotas (IFQs); and license limitation. Five seminars will be held to explain the four alternatives. Each will conclude by taking public comment on the alternatives. Tentative locations and dates of the seminars are:

Kodiak	Monday, November 20
Petersburg	Monday and Tuesday, November 27-28
Sitka	Wednesday, November 29
Anchorage	Wednesday, December 13
Seattle	Tuesday, December 19

The Council will send out a Notice of Availability for the draft analysis with further information on November 1. For more information, contact Dick Tremaine at (907) 271-2809.

### Future Limited Access Considerations

Only a few changes were made to the schedule for analyzing limited access in all Council fisheries. As mentioned above, the final decision for fixed gear sablefish (hook & line and pot) will be in January 1990. At that same meeting the Council will decide on sending a draft alternative management package for halibut out for public review. The final halibut decision is still scheduled for April 1990. The decision on limited access in all other groundfish and crab fisheries remains scheduled for December 1990.

## AP and SSC Nominations Due by November 17

The one-year terms of the Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee expire in December. Resumes for persons wishing to be considered for AP or SSC membership should be received at the Council office by 5:00 p.m., November 17. Resumes should be sent to the attention of Judy Willoughby, North Pacific Fishery Management Council, P.O. Box 103136, Anchorage, AK 99510. Appointments will be made to both panels in December and will become effective in January 1990.

## Nominations Requested for Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee

The Council is seeking nominations to its Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee established under the new Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The advisory committee will interact with the Alaska Board of Fisheries and provide the Bering Sea crab industry from Washington and Oregon with access to the Alaska regulatory process similar to that of Alaskan residents.

Operational guidelines describing the committee's responsibilities, membership requirements and work schedules have been adopted by the Council and are available upon request from the Council office. Copies are also available at the Seattle offices of the Alaska Crab Coalition, North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners Association, and the Pacific Seafood Processors Association. The Committee will consist of nine members from the states of Washington and Oregon and if possible include representatives of at least three user groups (crab harvester, catcher/processor, processor/marketing). Nominations must be received at the Council office no later than November 17. The Council's Advisory Panel Nominating Committee will review the candidates and submit their nominations to the Council for confirmation during its December meeting. The committee will hold its first meeting in January 1990.

## Progress Report on 1990 Domestic Groundfish Observer Program

For 1990, the Council has specified that all groundfish vessels 125' or larger receive 100% observer coverage, and that all vessels less than 125,' capable of carrying observers, receive 30% coverage. Shorebased plants also will be covered. Industry will be responsible for the direct costs of obtaining and maintaining observers aboard their vessels while the National Marine Fisheries Service will be responsible for administration of the overall program.

NMFS, the fishing industry, and independent observer contractors will share responsibility for the proposed domestic groundfish observer program. NMFS will administer the program, including observer training and debriefing, data management, and certification of contractors to provide observer services to industry. To be certified, contractors must demonstrate they have no conflict of interest associated with the vessels to which they are providing observers and that they can adequately provide the services specified by NMFS.

The fishing industry will provide their fishing schedules to NMFS and be responsible for observer placement. The industry will also pay the direct costs of placing NMFS-certified observers aboard their vessels through an independent observer contractor certified by NMFS. The fishing schedules are needed to plan observer coverage and select vessels to carry observers. Any vessel owner who is required to carry an observer will be responsible for obtaining a NMFS-certified observer

from the certified observer contractor of his/her choice. The cost for that observer will be paid by the vessel owner directly to the contractor. The burden is on industry and the contractors to ensure they meet the observer coverage requirements.

Certified contractors will provide their industry clients NMFS-certified observers. The contractors will be responsible for recruiting and deploying observers, all logistics, ensuring that observers are NMFS-certified, providing insurance, and delivering observer data to NMFS. Contractors can be decertified if they are found to have a conflict of interest or fail to provide satisfactory services to industry.

NMFS is working on the operational details so that the program outlined above can be implemented in January 1990. The domestic observer program required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and funded by the federal government is now placing observers aboard 20% - 35% of the trawl fishing effort off Alaska. This program and the proposed domestic groundfish observer program will be integrated into a single unified program in 1990.

NMFS will summarize progress on the observer program at a meeting scheduled at 9:00 a.m., October 19, in Room 2039, Building 4, at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. The Council's Data Gathering Committee will also meet, in Juneau in early November, to review progress on the program. For more information, contact Steve Davis at (907) 271-2809.

#### Council Acts on 1990 Halibut Management Proposals

The Council received 17 proposals for regulatory changes in the Pacific halibut fishery for 1990. The Council is charged with the responsibility to analyze and ultimately recommend to the Secretary any changes in the halibut fishery regulations that are primarily allocative in nature. After receiving reports from the Halibut Management Team, the Regulatory Amendment Advisory Group, and the Advisory Panel, the Council approved for further analysis and public review a proposal to extend the 10,000 lb trip limits in Area 4C to 100 percent of the quota. The trip limits now apply only to the first 50 percent of the quota, with 20,000 lb trip limits thereafter. A draft amendment document should be available for public review by early November. Copies will be available from the Council office upon request. Final Council action is scheduled for December.

A number of the proposals requested some form of limited access for the halibut fishery. These are to be incorporated with ongoing alternative management analyses. A final Council action on alternative management for the halibut fishery is scheduled for April 1990.

The Council also requested that the International Pacific Halibut Commission consider allowing a small fishery in the Closed Area near Dillingham and Togiak if there are no major biological or conservation concerns. The Council felt that if such a fishery could be implemented, local benefits could accrue to communities in the Bristol Bay area.

The Council also decided to continue calling for halibut allocative proposals every year rather than biennially. Therefore, the next call for proposals will go out in August 1990 for the 1991 fishery.

### **Updated Salmon Plan Approved For Secretarial Review**

The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the High-Seas Salmon Fisheries off the Coast of Alaska was approved in 1979 and last amended in 1981. During its September meeting, the Council approved Amendment 3 which has two main provisions. First, the Council deferred salmon regulations to the State of Alaska while retaining federal oversight. This action was taken to capitalize on existing state management and to bring the FMP into conformity with the Pacific Salmon Treaty. Changes in regulations for salmon fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) will now be made annually by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in conformity with provisions set by the FMP and the Pacific Salmon Commission. The Council will continue to establish policy for these fisheries on an "as needed" basis.

Second, the Council recommended the salmon FMP be extended to cover the entire EEZ west of 175° East longitude should a dissolution of the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission occur. The FMP now covers only the EEZ east of 175°E with high-seas salmon fisheries to the west managed by the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission. In approving the new plan, the Council reaffirmed its support for provisions of the Magnuson Act that give the U.S. jurisdiction over anadromous fish wherever they range except within another nation's EEZ or territorial sea.

### **New Comment Deadline Policy Goes into Force**

Last June, the Council received public testimony on apparent inequities in Council procedures in receiving public comment. Though most members of the fishing industry submit their comments by the published deadlines, some written comments are received late but still made available to the Council. Some members of the public believe that this procedure has given late commenters an unfair advantage.

Therefore, in September, the Council approved a policy that strictly adheres to published comment deadlines. Comments received by the deadline will be included in staff summaries and other meeting materials. Written comments received after the published deadline or at the Council meeting, other than simple transcripts of oral testimony, will be stamped "Late Comment." All late comments will be placed in a special notebook and made available to the Council members only upon their request.

### **See You at Fish Expo!**

The Council will be back in the "Alaska Fisheries" booth at Fish Expo October 18-21, along with Alaska Sea Grant, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and NOAA Fisheries-Alaska Region. The location is in the Exhibition Hall at the Seattle Center, booth 6415-17. Please drop by and have your questions answered.

## Regional Director Asked to Reopen Gulf of Alaska Flatfish Fisheries to Fishermen with Low Halibut Bycatch

The Gulf of Alaska closed to bottom trawling on September 2 because the 2,000 mt halibut mortality cap was reached. Several Kodiak vessels targeting on flatfish for Eagle Fisheries had voluntarily carried observers during the season to document that they could fish cleanly. Faced with the closure, Eagle Fisheries petitioned the Council to allow further trawling as long as they continued to demonstrate their ability to maintain low halibut bycatch.

The Council authorized the halibut mortality cap to be exceeded by 40,000 lbs. so that additional flatfish can be harvested. The extended fishery is available to any group that has records verifying they maintained aggregate halibut bycatch rates of less than 4.5% while targeting flatfish in 1989. Adequate observer coverage will be required and catch data must be made available.

The Council's intent in approving this measure is to gather additional data on bycatch rates in Gulf flatfish fisheries, to provide opportunity for continued development of this underutilized resource, and provide incentives to fish cleanly and minimize halibut bycatch. NOAA-Fisheries is preparing regulations for this fishery which will be published in the Federal Register for public review and comment. The fishery is expected to open in November.

For 1990, the Gulf halibut mortality caps will be 2,000 mt for trawl and 750 mt for fixed gear. The Council passed a motion requesting the Region to develop a regulatory amendment for review in December that would provide management flexibility within the established mortality caps and reward clean fishing.

### Inshore-Offshore Allocations

The Council decided to further consider the inshore-offshore allocation issue which first surfaced last April when a coalition of shorebased interests petitioned the Council for some form of shoreside processor preference to the groundfish resource. Based on committee work and extensive public comments in June and September, the Council adopted the following problem statement and proposed solutions (alternatives):

#### **Problem Statement**

Domestic harvesting and processing capacity currently exceeds available fish for all species in the Gulf of Alaska and most species in the Bering Sea. The seafood industry is composed of different geographic, social, and economic components which have differing needs and capabilities, particularly within the inshore and offshore components of the industry. These components may be defined as follows:

- 1) **Inshore:** Includes fishing vessels that deliver product for processing to inshore and offshore (stationary or minimally mobile) processing facilities, and small catcher/processors which are dependent upon frequent shoreside logistical support.
- 2) **Offshore:** Includes highly mobile fishing vessels which have onboard facilities to process their own catch, mothership processors which are sufficiently mobile to pursue species throughout its range, and those processors which do not depend upon frequent shoreside logistical support.

The finite availability of fishery resources, combined with current and projected levels of harvesting and processing capacity and the differing capabilities of the inshore and offshore components of the industry, has generated concern for the future ecological, social and economic health of the resource and the industry. These concerns include, but are not limited to, localized depletion of stocks or other behavioral impacts to stocks, shortened seasons, increased waste, harvests which exceed the TAC, and possible pre-emption of one industry component by another with the attendant social and economic disruption.

The Council must determine whether or not to address these concerns through the adoption of appropriate management measures while protecting the conservation needs of the fishery resources in the North Pacific.

### **Management Alternatives**

1. Status quo with no change in regulations to address the problem.
2. Allocate the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) between inshore and offshore components of the industry. This could be done with or without specific operational areas.
3.
  - A. Prohibit factory/trawlers in the Gulf of Alaska. In the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, allocate a portion of the TAC between inshore and offshore components of the industry and define operational areas.
  - B. Prohibit catcher/processors in the Gulf of Alaska. In the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, allocate a portion of the TAC between inshore and offshore components of the industry and define operational areas.
  - C. Prohibit factory/trawlers in the Gulf of Alaska except as specifically provided for by the Council. In the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, prohibit factory/trawlers from the area between 168° and 163° West longitude and south of 56° North latitude except as specifically provided for by the Council.
  - D. In addition to the above, at the discretion of the Council, provide for future management options for disadvantaged communities.
4. Use traditional management tools including but not limited to: trip limits, periodic allocations, super-exclusive registration areas, and gear sizes.

Because of extensive public testimony last June and at the September meeting, and at several committee meetings, the Council has initiated the scoping process for the inshore-offshore issue. The Council now seeks public comment on the problem statement and alternatives plus any additional proposals for solutions to the problem. These comments are due at the Council office by Friday, November 3, 1989. The Fishery Planning Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on Wednesday, November 8, to review the comments and prepare recommendations for the Council at their December meeting. The Council will then task the staff with analyzing the



problem and alternatives by June 1990. At that time the Council will decide whether to send out a public review package over the summer. If they do, a final decision on the inshore-offshore issue will be considered in September and implemented sometime in 1991. The Council may change this schedule if necessary.

### Council Postpones Action on Pollock Roe-stripping Ban

The Council postponed taking final action on an amendment dealing with pollock utilization in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries because of legal and procedural questions. The pollock utilization issue arose in April as a result of reports of pollock roe-stripping in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea in this year's spring pollock fisheries and an unexpected early closure of the pollock fishery in the Gulf. (Roe-stripping is the practice of taking only the roe from pre-spawning females with subsequent discard of the carcasses as well as all males.) In June the Council approved for public review a draft analysis of the biological and economic impacts of: (1) continuing the status quo; (2) prohibiting roe-stripping in the pollock fishery; (3) requiring full utilization of pollock (final reduction to meal and oil); (4) using a split season apportionment schedule to limit the harvest of pollock during the spawning period; or, (5) prohibiting roe-stripping and using a split-season apportionment schedule.

At the September meeting, NOAA General Counsel suggested that the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act allows the Secretary of Commerce to regulate only fishing practices, not the type of processing that must occur. In addition, the Regional Director stated that the analysis of the proposed amendments failed to demonstrate superiority of any of the alternatives to the status quo and that it was technically deficient in certain areas. Following considerable discussion, the Council instructed staff to revise the analysis and include an option of quarterly allocations of pollock. The Council will consider releasing the document for public review in December and take final action in January. In December the Council may take emergency action to regulate the winter-spring roe fishery. The emergency rule would be in effect for 90 days and, if renewed, would cover the 1990 pollock spawning period. Despite taking no formal action on a proposed amendment to the groundfish plans for the reasons noted above, the Council did state their intention to ban pollock roe-stripping and promote full utilization.

### Full Utilization of Groundfish Discussed

The Council adopted new policy in the Bering Sea and confirmed existing policy in the Gulf of Alaska which encourages full utilization of all groundfish resources. The Council reviewed a discussion paper prepared by Council staff which outlined the difficulty of defining what is meant by full utilization, suggesting, that instead, the Council examine the issues of non-utilization and discard, that is, practices which prevent full utilization. There are many sources of loss in the fishery including those occurring during fishing operations, such as drop off loss and ghost gear mortality; losses occurring on the fishing deck such as high-grading and discard of undersized fish; and losses occurring during processing, including whole fish discard (for example, during a roe-stripping operation) and "normal" discard of frames, guts, and slurry.

The issue of "full utilization" is composed of a number of separate discard or loss issues and addressing each issue will require different strategies and techniques. Unfortunately, current reporting requirements are not sufficient for detailed description of the kinds and quantities of losses that are occurring. This data shortage will begin to be addressed next year as the Council's

new domestic observer program gets underway. Additionally, new reporting requirements for discards on all catchers and offshore and onshore processors under recent amendments to the groundfish plans will, if approved, provide a comprehensive picture of fishing and processing losses. In the interim the Council will be adding language by amendment to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP to reflect the Council's desire to encourage full utilization of all groundfish. This language will match that adopted in the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP three years ago. Later in the 1990 fishing year the Council will review the information on losses and discards gathered by the observer and logbook programs and decide how to proceed.

### **Council Wants Public Comment on Groundfish Harvest Levels and Industry Needs for 1990**

The Council heard plan team reports on the status of groundfish stocks off Alaska. The information is preliminary and may be updated with the inclusion of additional stock assessment survey information by December. The Council continues to be concerned with the low biomass estimates for pollock in the Gulf of Alaska and decided to set initial acceptable biological catch (ABC) in the range of 13,400 to 61,400 mt (Table 1). The initial total allowable catch (TAC) of 61,400 mt is approximately 15% less than the 1989 TAC of 72,000 mt. In response to industry comments that substantial portions of the pollock stock are not included in the Gulf surveys, the Council is recommending an additional TAC of 10,000 mt for an experimental midwater trawl fishery from January 15 to April 15, 1990 between 151° 30' and 147°W longitude. The Council also provided policy guidance to the NOAA Fisheries Regional Director to manage pollock on a quarterly basis.

A marked change in the Gulf for 1990 is the division of the flatfish category into arrowtooth flounder, a deep water assemblage (flathead sole, rex sole and Dover sole), and a shallow water assemblage (rock sole, yellowfin sole, butter sole, starry flounder, and other flatfish not specifically defined). Separation of flatfish into these three categories sets highly abundant arrowtooth flounder aside from other, more desirable flatfish species and recognizes the lower halibut bycatch rate associated with the deep water flatfish fishery, which may make it possible to stretch the halibut bycatch cap further through the year.

There is little change from last year for the remaining groundfish species in the Gulf. Pacific cod and sablefish continue to show high abundance, but are projected to decline in the near future for lack of incoming strong year classes. Rockfish continue to be relatively low in abundance, although slope rockfish show signs of increasing.

Table 1 sets forth the Council's preliminary Gulf of Alaska ABCs, TACs and apportionments to domestic processing (DAP) and joint venture processing (JVP) for 1990. Initial apportionments suggest that the entire Gulf groundfish resource will be utilized by domestic processors next year.

For the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, the Council approved an initial set of ABCs for 1990 that total to a range of 2.4 to 3.1 million metric tons. Within the optimum yield limit of 2.0 million metric tons for the Bering Sea and Aleutians, the Council approved an initial set of TACs and DAP and JVP apportionments as shown in Table 2.

The TACs are very similar to those set for 1989, due to the general strength of the various stocks. The plan team and the Council expressed concern over Greenland turbot, which has shown

repeated poor recruitment, and over pollock, due to an estimated 1.5 million metric ton catch in the donut hole which may have a still unknown impact on stocks in the U.S. EEZ.

Comments are requested on the estimates of ABC, TAC and initial apportionments in preparation for the Council's December meeting. Comments are also requested on prohibited species (PSC) bycatch for fully U.S.-utilized species and halibut in both the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska management areas and for crab in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area. Information on bycatch rates for fully utilized species may be found in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Stock Assessment & Fishery Evaluation (formerly the Resource Assessment Document) documents. Also in the respective SAFEs is information on halibut bycatch rates in the Gulf and Bering Sea, mortality rate estimates for halibut, and king and Tanner crab bycatch rates in the Bering Sea.

In December, the Council will establish PSC apportionments in the BSAI for king and C. bairdi Tanner crab and halibut under the provisions of Amendment 12A. Overall PSC limits of 200,000 red king crab in Zone 1, 1,000,000 C. bairdi Tanner crab in Zone 1, 3,000,000 C. bairdi in Zone 2, and 4,400 mt of halibut relevant to a Zone 1 and 2H closure, and 5,333 mt of halibut for a BSAI-wide closure will be apportioned among the DAP flatfish, DAP other, JVP flatfish, and JVP other fisheries in proportion to their anticipated share of bycatch of each species. A notice of availability for the SAFE documents is attached to this newsletter. The period for written comments will end on Friday, November 17. Oral comments on the 1990 figures will be accepted at the December Council meeting.

#### Domestic Harvests

The total domestic processing (DAP) catch of groundfish off Alaska through September 16 as reported by NOAA Fisheries was 854,187 metric tons from the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and 172,315 metric tons from the Gulf of Alaska. Pollock and Pacific cod account for over 90% of the total catch in the BSAI and over 62% in the Gulf. Rock sole (31,417 mt) and Atka mackerel (16,818 mt) are other strong components of the BSAI fishery, while rockfish (20,649 mt) and sablefish (27,709 mt) contribute substantially to the Gulf total. Bottom trawling was closed in the Gulf of Alaska on September 2 due to the attainment of the 2,000 mt halibut bycatch cap. Zone 1 of the BSAI area was closed to bottom trawling for pollock, Pacific cod and flatfish on September 3, when Amendment 12A to the BSAI groundfish fishery management plan came into effect, because red king crab bycatch caps had been reached.

#### Joint Venture Harvests

The total joint venture (JVP) catch off Alaska through September 23 as reported by NOAA Fisheries was 326,316 metric tons, all of which was taken from the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands region. The catch includes 129,383 mt yellowfin sole, 125,058 mt pollock, 38,318 mt Pacific cod, 15,578 mt rock sole, and 17,979 mt of other species. Zone 1 of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands region was closed to JVP pollock, Pacific cod, and flatfish fisheries on September 3 when Amendment 12A to the BSAI groundfish fishery management plan came into effect. As with the DAP fishery, this was due to red king crab bycatch caps having been attained. Zone 2H (statistical area 517) was also closed to bottom trawling by the JVP pollock and cod fishery on September 29 upon attainment of its primary halibut bycatch cap. There has been no JVP fishing in the Gulf of Alaska in 1989.

**TABLE 1**  
**GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH**  
 Current 1989 ABC, TAC, DAP, JVP and Preliminary Recommendations for 1990 Groundfish ABC, TAC, DAP, JVP<sup>1</sup>

Species	Area	1989		1990 Council Recommendations			
		ABC	TAC	ABC	TAC <sup>2</sup>	DAP	JVP
Pollock	W/C Shelikof <sup>3</sup>	72,000	65,750	10,000-58,000	58,000	58,000	0
	E	3,375	6,250	(6,250)	(6,250)	(6,250)	0
	Total	75,375	72,200	13,400-61,400	61,400	61,400	0
	Experimental <sup>4</sup>			(10,000)	10,000	10,000	0
Pacific cod	W	13,500	13,500	11,500-22,800	13,500	13,500	0
	C	52,000	52,000	44,200-87,600	52,000	52,000	0
	E	5,700	5,700	4,800-9,600	5,700	5,700	0
	Total	71,200	71,200	60,500-120,000	71,200	71,200	0
Flatfish/deep <sup>5</sup>	W	111,500	3,200	21,500	21,500	21,500	0
	C	384,300	31,800	89,900	89,900	89,900	0
	E	58,900	1,000	17,800	17,800	17,800	0
	Total	554,700	36,000	129,200	129,200	129,200	0
Flatfish/shallow <sup>6</sup>	W			30,200	30,200	30,200	0
	C			52,200	52,200	52,200	0
	E			2,100	2,100	2,100	0
	Total			84,500	84,500	84,500	0
Arrowtooth flounder	W			27,000	27,000	27,000	0
	C			141,000	141,000	141,000	0
	E			26,600	26,600	26,600	0
	Total			194,600	194,600	194,600	0
Sablefish	W	4,900	3,770	3,600-5,300	3,770	3,770	0
	C	13,900	11,700	11,200-16,300	11,700	11,700	0
	W. Yakutat	5,300	4,550	4,400-6,400	4,550	4,550	0
	E. Yak/SE Out	6,800	5,980	5,800-8,300	5,980	5,980	0
	Total	30,900	26,000	25,000-36,300	26,000	26,000	0
Slope rockfish	W	5,774	5,774	1,500-6,797	3,750	3,750	0
	C	8,452	8,452	2,600-9,983	6,500	6,500	0
	E	5,774	5,774	1,900-6,820	4,750	4,750	0
	Total	20,000	20,000	6,000-23,600	15,000	15,000	0
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W	1,000	500	1,000	1,000	1,000	0
	C	4,800	2,400	4,800	4,800	4,800	0
	E	800	400	800	800	800	0
	Total	6,600	3,300	6,600	6,600	6,600	0
Demersal shelf rockfish	SE Outside	n/a	420	470	470	470	0
Thornyheads	Gulfwide	3,800	3,800	3,800	3,800	3,800	0
Other species	Gulfwide	n/a	11,646	33,524	30,138	30,138	0
GULF OF ALASKA TOTAL		762,575	244,566	703,994 <sup>7</sup>	632,908	632,908	0

<sup>1</sup>All preliminary TACs and DAPs are subject to change during December when halibut bycatch constraints are evaluated.

<sup>2</sup>The Council's intent is for W/C pollock to be available on a quarterly basis.

<sup>3</sup>Shelikof Strait pollock is included within the W/C ABC range and TAC.

<sup>4</sup>Pollock TAC for experimental fishery between 151°30' and 147°, January 15-April 15, 1990 only.

<sup>5</sup>Deep water flatfish are flathead, rex, and Dover sole.

<sup>6</sup>Shallow water flatfish include rock sole, yellowfin sole, butter sole, starry flounder, and other flatfish not specifically defined.

<sup>7</sup>Using high end values in ranges.

TABLE 2

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLAND GROUND FISH  
 Current 1989 ABC, TAC, DAP, JVP and 1990 Preliminary Recommendations for 1990 Groundfish ABC, TAC, DAP, JVP, and Reserves  
 (all in metric tons)

Species	1989			1990 Recommendations				
	Area	ABC	TAC	ABC	TAC	15% Reserve	DAP	JVP
Pollock	BS	1,340,000	1,313,000	1,140,000 - 1,470,000	1,154,433	173,165	981,268	0
	AI	117,900	11,432		149,400	11,432	1,715	9,717
Pacific cod		370,600	226,079	209,200 - 345,399	309,200	46,380	184,500	78,320
Yellowfin sole		241,000	193,952	279,000	243,952	36,593	22,809	184,550
Greenland turbot		20,300	6,800	7,000 - 20,300	6,800	1,020	5,612	168
Arrowtooth flounder		163,700	5,800	65,100 - 134,500	5,800	870	4,333	597
Rock sole		171,000	77,148	222,500 - 320,000	102,148	15,322	47,841	38,985
Other flatfish		155,900	63,906	184,000 - 262,300	113,906	17,086	13,458	83,362
Sablefish	BS	2,800	2,380	1,700 - 2,400	2,380	357	2,023	0
	AI	3,400	2,890		2,500 - 6,600	2,890	434	2,456
Pacific ocean perch	BS	6,000	4,250	6,300	4,250	637	3,613	0
	AI	16,600	5,100		16,600	5,100	765	4,335
Other rockfish	BS	400	340	500	340	51	289	0
	AI	1,100	935		1,100	935	140	795
Atka mackerel		21,000	20,285	24,000	20,285	3,043	17,242	0
Squid		10,000	875	10,000	875	131	722	22
Other species		<u>59,000</u>	<u>15,274</u>	<u>59,000</u>	<u>15,274</u>	<u>2,291</u>	<u>9,581</u>	<u>3,402</u>
TOTAL		2,700,700	1,950,446	2,377,900 - 3,107,399	2,000,000	300,000	1,310,594	389,406

## NOAA Fisheries Reports on Crab Resources in the Bering Sea

The 1989 Bering Sea crab survey consisted of 439 successful bottom trawl tows covering an area of approximately 145,000 square nautical miles. The survey covered virtually all commercial crab fishing grounds with the exception of golden king crab. Survey results are summarized below.

Red king crab, Bristol Bay and Pribilof Districts. There are an estimated 11.9 million legal males, up a significant 86% from last year. Pre-recruit crabs also increased 41% from 1988, although this change is not considered statistically significant. The estimated abundance of large female crabs in Bristol Bay showed no significant change from 1988 to 1989, and now stands at 15.0 million animals. The estimated abundance of small females showed a non-significant increase of 63%. This year's estimate of legal abundance continues an upward trend begun in 1986. However, recruitment of juvenile crabs has been poor for several years and shows little improvement.

Blue king crab, Pribilof Islands. There are an estimated 225,000 legal males, an increase of 29,000 from 1988. Very few pre-recruits were caught. The abundance of juveniles has tripled since 1988, although this is not considered a significant change. The adult portion of this stock seems to have essentially disappeared; the range of legal males appears to have contracted, as they have been captured at only three stations in each of the last two years, as opposed to 11 stations in 1987. Juvenile recruitment may have improved over the last two years, but is still questionable. This population is still extremely depressed, and the fishery is closed in 1989.

Blue king crab, St. Matthew Islands, Northern District. There are an estimated 1.48 million legal crabs, an increase of 78%, and the population is now close to the average value over the history of the survey (1978-1989). The population of pre-recruits showed no significant change from 1988 levels. Overall, the population is rebuilding steadily and juvenile recruitment is improving.

Tanner crab, *C. bairdi*. Estimated abundance of legal *C. bairdi* in the Eastern District (E of 173° W) is 33.6 million crabs, a significant increase of 133% over 1988. Pre-recruits increased significantly by 64% while the abundance of small males showed no change from 1988. This population has essentially doubled each year since 1986. All portions of the stock are well above average long-term values, except for large females which are average in abundance.

Tanner crab, *C. opilio*. Estimated abundance of large males is 187 million crabs, a 14%, but statistically insignificant increase over 1988. Pre-recruits increased significantly by 75%. Size frequency data indicate that recruitment to the fishery may continue to improve in the near term as juveniles mature. However, these forecasts must be viewed with caution.

Hair crab. There are an estimated 400,000 large males, a decrease of 27% from 1988. The abundance of large males has been declining since 1981, and is now at a historic low. In contrast, the estimated abundance of small males increased 200% from 1988, but this is not statistically significant. The female population showed no significant change from 1988. Size frequency data show improved recruitment of small males over the past three years, and may indicate future improvement in fishable stocks.

The detailed written report concerning crab resources submitted to the Council is available from B.G. Stevens and R.A. MacIntosh at the Kodiak Island Laboratory, NMFS/NOAA, P.O. Box 1638, Kodiak, AK 99615.

## NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

### DRAFT STOCK ASSESSMENT AND FISHERY EVALUATION (SAFE) DOCUMENTS

### FOR THE BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AND GULF OF ALASKA

### GROUND FISH FISHERIES

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council announces availability of its draft Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) documents for the groundfish fisheries of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska for public distribution as of October 16, 1989. The documents contain stock assessments for all target groundfish species in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries. In addition, a fishery evaluation section common to both documents summarizes the economic status of the fisheries.

Both documents contain bycatch rate estimates for fully-utilized groundfish species. The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands SAFE document contains preliminary apportionments of halibut and crab bycatch limits (PSC) for the U.S. processed (DAP) and joint venture processed (JVP) fisheries and halibut and crab bycatch rate information. The Gulf of Alaska SAFE document contains estimated halibut bycatch rate and mortality rate information. Public comment on bycatch and mortality rate estimates, and preliminary Bering Sea PSC apportionments, will be accepted through Friday, November 17. Oral comments will be accepted at the Council's December meeting.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Salmon Plan Team	October 16 1:00 p.m.	Rm 1079, Bldg 4 AFSC, Seattle
Groundfish Plan Team Work Session/Overfishing	October 17 8:30 a.m.	Rm 2143, Bldg 4 AFSC, Seattle
Bycatch Technical Committee	October 18	AFSC, Seattle
Fish Expo 89	Oct. 18-21	Seattle Center Seattle
NOAA Fisheries Briefing on Domestic Observer Program	October 19 9:00 a.m.	Rm 2039, Bldg. 4 AFSC, Seattle
NPFMC Data Gathering Committee	November 2	NMFS Offices Juneau
INPFC Annual Meeting	Oct 29-Nov 11	Stouffer Madison Hotel Seattle
INPFC Gadid Stock Assessment Symposium	Oct 31-Nov 1	Stouffer Madison Hotel Seattle
Fishery Planning Committee	November 8*	TBA
NPFMC Groundfish Plan Team Meetings	Week of November 13	Rm 2079, Bldg 4 AFSC, Seattle
Sablefish Limited Access Seminar/Hearing	November 20	Kodiak
Sablefish Limited Access Seminar/Hearing	November 27-28	Petersburg
Sablefish Limited Access Seminar/Hearing	November 29	Sitka
Int'l Symposium on King and Tanner Crab - Alaska Sea Grant	November 28-30	Sheraton Hotel Anchorage
Council/AP/SSC Meetings	Week of December 3	Anchorage Sheraton
Sablefish Limited Access Seminar/Hearing	December 13*	Anchorage
Sablefish Limited Access Seminar/Hearing	December 19	Seattle

\*These dates are tentative.