

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

James O. Campbell, Chairman
Jim H. Branson, Executive Director

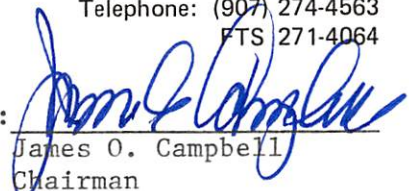
411 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99510



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 103136
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 274-4563
FTS 271-4064

Certified:


James O. Campbell
Chairman

Date:

9/27/85

MINUTES
67th Plenary Session
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
August 12-14, 1985
Alyeska Resort
Girdwood, Alaska

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met August 12-14, 1985 at the Alyeska Resort in Girdwood, Alaska. The purpose of the meeting was to review problems in the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Management Plan and provide direction for its revision.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee and Advisory Panel did not meet; however, their Chairman and Vice-Chairman were invited to participate.

Council members, SSC and AP representatives and invited participants appear below.

Participants

James O. Campbell, Council Chairman
Rudy Petersen, Council Vice-Chairman
Steve Pennoyer for Don Collinsworth
Henry Mitchell
Mark Pedersen for
Bill Wilkerson
CDR Dick Clark for
RADM Robt. Lucas
Larry Cotter, AP Chairman
Don Rosenberg, SSC Chairman
Don Bevan

Robert U. Mace for
John Donaldson
Bob McVey
John Peterson
Sara Hemphill
John Winther
Oscar Dyson
Bob Alverson, AP Vice-Chairman
Rich Marasco, SSC Vice-Chairman
Bart Eaton

NPFMC Staff

Jim H. Branson, Executive Director
Clarence Pautzke
Judy Willoughby
Steve Davis

Jim Glock
Ron Miller
Ron Rogness
Helen Allen

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Support Staff

Dick Roe, NMFS-DC
Joe Terry, NMFS-NWAFC
Pat Travers, NMFS
Jim Brooks, NMFS
Fritz Funk, ADF&G
Robert Fagen, UAJ
Steve Hoag, IPHC
Kurt Schelle, CFEC

Gary Stauffer, NMFS-NWAFC
Fred Gaffney, ADF&G
Greg Baker, CFD
Phil Rigby, ADF&G
Bill Robinson, NMFS
Jeff Fujioka, NMFS-NWAFC
Rick Listowski, CFEC

General Public

Han Mo Kim, Korean Deep Sea Fisheries Assn.
Al Burch, Alaska Draggers' Assn.
Ted West, Alaska Fisheries Co.
Dave Harville, Kodiak
Steve M. Dickinson, Japan Deep Sea Trawlers Assn.
Hideki Iwanoto, Taiyo
I. Murakami, Nichiro Co.
Chuck Kekoni, Central Alaska Commerical Fishermen
Ted Evans, Alaska Factory Trawlers Assn.
Paul MacGregor, North Pacific Longline Assn.
H. Kawamura, Japan
Peggy McCalment, Alaska Contact, Ltd.
Don McGreevy, American Salmon Co.
Ken Kobayashi, JDSTA
Jon C. Zuck, Anchorage
Thorn Smith, NPFVOA
Rick Steiner, US Marine Advisory
Jay Hastings, Hokuten Trawlers
Chuck Meacham, Sr.

I. OPENING BUSINESS

Chairman Jim Campbell called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, August 12. Mr. Campbell introduced new Council member Oscar Dyson, Mark Pedersen, new alternate for Bill Wilkerson, CDR Dick Clark, new alternate for Admiral Lucas, and Dick Roe from NMFS, Washington, DC. Other guests included past Council members Bart Eaton and Don Bevan who had been invited to participate in Council discussions.

A. Approval of Agenda and Minutes of Previous Meeting

Steve Pennoyer asked that the issue of high-sea salmon interceptions be added to the agenda. Bob Alverson asked that the issue of the bycatch of crab in the yellowfin sole fishery also be added. The agenda was approved with these additions.

Jim Branson announced a Finance Committee meeting at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 13.

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Three corrections to the May minutes were given to Council members prior to the meeting. Bob Mace moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Sara Hemphill seconded the motion and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

B. Election of Officers

John Winther nominated Jim Campbell and Rudy Petersen as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, for the next year. Sara Hemphill seconded the nomination. Nominations were then closed on the motion of John Peterson, and, there being no objection, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Petersen were elected for a one-year term.

C. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Branson presented his report and advised the Council of a telegram received that morning from China indicating their intention to request 10,000 mt groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska, consisting of 1,000 mt directed and 9,000 mt joint venture, mostly pollock.

Mr. Campbell asked Council members to indicate their interest in attending the Law Symposium in Seattle, October 11-12. Jim Campbell, Henry Mitchell and Sara Hemphill indicated they would like to attend.

II. REPORT ON THE CHAIRMEN'S MEETING

Clarence Pautzke briefly reviewed the written report in Council notebooks on the recent Chairmen's meeting held July 29-31 in Washington.

The Council/NOAA Task Force, formed to examine the present fishery management process and the respective roles of the Councils and involved federal agencies, developed a questionnaire focusing on each section of the MFCMA and sent it to all Councils, SSCs, APs, and NMFS Regional Offices. Responses were reviewed at the Chairmen's meeting and the general consensus was that the current arrangement is the best available, but that some refinements could be made. The task group will consolidate the responses, including the Chairmen's discussion, into a working document for NOAA.

OMB has directed NMFS to do a broader study of fisheries management in the U.S. and its cost effectiveness under the current arrangement. The study is scheduled to be completed by next summer and its recommendations will be presented to the Secretary of Commerce for use in recommending possible changes in the MFCMA and related institutions. Don Bevan suggested the Council look at the RFP, due to be released shortly, to see whether the Council, Fisheries Research Institute (UW-Seattle), or Sea Grant should bid on it.

The Chairmen also discussed the possibility of a Council liaison position in Washington, DC with the cost shared among the eight Councils. The Chairmen agreed to try to secure an agreement that if at least five Councils approve the concept, all Councils will provide their share of the required funding.

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III. MFCMA REAUTHORIZATION

Ron Miller provided the Council with information on the latest action regarding reauthorization of the MFCMA. Chairman Campbell testified before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation on July 23 and a copy of his testimony was provided for Council members. Bob Martin, Chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Council, testified on behalf of the other Regional Councils and his written statement also was provided.

IV. GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH PLAN REVISIONS

A. Plan Team Report

Steve Davis gave a report on the reorganization of the Gulf of Alaska FMP and a suggested schedule for accomplishing this task. The full written report of the Plan Team was available in the Council notebooks.

Jim Branson suggested a moratorium on new proposals for the Gulf FMP for this amendment cycle to allow the plan team time to rewrite the plan.

COUNCIL ACTION

John Winther moved to waive the call for proposals for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP for the 1986 amendment cycle. Bob McVey seconded the motion and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

B. Status of Pollock Resources

Gary Stauffer, Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center (NWAFC), reported on the status of pollock in the Gulf of Alaska. The 1985 NWAFC hydroacoustic survey indicates that the pollock resource has continued to decline and biomass levels are lower than originally estimated. The pollock biomass in 1981 was estimated at 3 million mt (the largest on record), with indications a decline was in store for the resource. By 1984 the pollock biomass had fallen to 1.5 million mt and the 1985 forecast was for 1 million mt. Results from this year's survey indicate a biomass of only 700,000 mt. The primary cause for the decline is thought to be the failure of the 1981-83 year classes. Very young and very old fish comprise most of the current biomass.

Analysis of the survey results are continuing with a full report on the status of pollock and other groundfish resources scheduled for the Council's September meeting. The 1985 biomass estimate may change as a result of this analysis. If the final biomass estimate remains low, it is likely that there will be a reduction in OY which will constrain the joint venture fishery in 1986.

C. Status Report on the Southeast Sablefish Fishery

Richard Listowski and Kurt Schelle of the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission told the Council that the State is adopting limited entry for the Chatham Straits sablefish fishery with a total of 73 vessels allowed to participate. They are currently studying the possibility of instituting limited entry for sablefish in Clarence Strait. Only those participants who

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have fished for sablefish in these areas before January of this year will be eligible to fish under this program.

V. GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Jim Branson gave the Council an overview of the procedure suggested by the staff and plan team for developing specific goals and objectives for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP and for rewriting the plan.

Sara Hemphill, Chairman of the Councils GOA FMP Goals Committee reported on their work and submitted draft goals and objectives developed by the committee. She told the Council that this was a very difficult procedure and that the draft document was very preliminary and for discussion purposes only.

Council staff identified ten issues to generate discussion which would give direction to the Plan Team for rewriting the plan. The ten issues were:

- ISSUE 1: MANAGEMENT OF DEPRESSED STOCKS
- ISSUE 2: DECLINING STOCK MANAGEMENT
- ISSUE 3: BYCATCH OF SPECIES NOT MANAGED BY GOA GROUND FISH FMP
- ISSUE 4: BYCATCH OF SPECIES MANAGED WITHIN THE PLAN
- ISSUE 5: ALLOCATIONS BY GEAR GROUPS
- ISSUE 6: GEAR CONFLICTS
- ISSUE 7: PROTECTING ALASKAN MARITIME COMMUNITIES
- ISSUE 8: EFFICIENT DATA COLLECTION FROM U.S. FISHERY
- ISSUE 9: RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT WHILE MINIMIZING CHANGES IN REGULATIONS
- ISSUE 10: SETTING SEASONS

The Council discussed how to define "depressed" stocks and decided that the definition should be based on biology and not economics. Gary Stauffer offered the following definition for use in the plan:

A depressed stock is when the biomass falls considerably below the point of producing MSY to the point of hampering reproduction.

Subsequent discussions focused on the TAC concept outlined in the Plan Team report:

TAC = ABC - Protection - (+) Other Socioeconomic Factors,
where protection includes rebuilding of depressed species, and/or measures to reduce the incidental catch of prohibited species. Target quotas for each species category would be determined using the guideline:

Target Quota = TAC - Incidental Catch - Reserve.

Reserves would be some percentage of TAC and set aside for release to JVP after DAP is accurately projected for the year. The Council agreed that the Plan Team should pursue this approach as an option for setting harvest levels. Don Bevan suggested another strategy for developing optimum yields for each species complex in the Gulf (See Appendix I). The Plan Team was directed to develop this alternative for setting harvest levels as well for each species or species complex. Under either option, the Council directed that it should include an accounting of both directed and incidental fishery removals from a resource.

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The Council also discussed restricting gears in the Gulf of Alaska to those already in use with others allowed on a permit basis for experimental fisheries. The Plan Team was directed to pursue this option during the preliminary rewrite along with separating gear types using season and area restrictions.

When discussing the issue of protecting Alaskan maritime communities, Larry Cotter suggested the Council should make an effort to consider the economic impact of their decisions on Washington, Oregon, and Alaska maritime communities. The Council agreed with the suggestion to reword Issue 7 to read, "Protecting Maritime Communities," but disagreed about how necessary it would be to protect certain segments of the industry. They felt that each case should be considered individually.

When discussing efficient data collection from the domestic industry, it was agreed that a domestic observer program is a necessity, although the funding for such coverage is not likely to become available in the near future. The Council decided that for the present they would form a Council/industry workgroup to look for ways to obtain needed data in the developing U.S. groundfish fisheries.

The Council discussed ways to manage responsively while minimizing changes in regulations. One of the suggestions was to call for proposals on certain portions of the plan every two or three years instead of every year, but several Council members felt this was not feasible because of the rapidly changing groundfish industry. Bob Mace suggested that the Plan Team should advise the Council of issues that could be dealt with on a longer-term schedule.

During the discussion on setting seasons, the Council agreed that the criteria developed by the plan team and staff (fish availability, fish size and/or quality, spawning times, coordination w/other fisheries, abundance of bycatch species, type of fishery, wastage, cost to industry, enforcement costs, safety and market requirements) should be considered when setting seasons, but that they should not be rated in any particular order. Several Council members objected to the suggestion that the Council should try to regulate economic efficiency or product quality.

Other discussion included the need to broaden the Regional Director's field order authority to include socioeconomic concerns and time/area closures to protect salmon and crab. The Plan Team will rewrite the plan to broaden the field order authority to resolve inseason fishery management problems. Steve Davis asked the Council whether the Plan Team should eliminate the possibility of TALFF in 1986 and was advised to do so.

Bill Robinson, NMFS, mentioned that the current frameworked method of setting DAP/DAH is not as efficient as it could be because the industry questionnaires are sent in the fall before participants have completed the current season and have planned for the next year. The Plan Team suggested a method using a formula which uses the prior year's figures plus a certain percentage for growth, a formula similar to one used by the Pacific Council. The Council agreed that the Plan Team should pursue this method for their draft rewrite of the plan.

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Public Testimony

Dave Harville, Kodiak, is concerned about the reference to making codfish a longline only fishery. There is no history of a longline fishery for codfish. He is also concerned about the restraints on bycatch of sablefish in the trawl industry because of the potential constraint they may have on the developing processing industry for other groundfish species.

Al Burch, Kodiak, is also concerned about making codfish a longline only fishery. He thinks any such proposal will cause a great deal of controversy.

Chuck Kekoni, Association of Halibut Fishermen and Central Commercial Fishermen, feels that only biological data should be used to control any fishery, not socioeconomic considerations. The domestic observer program is a must and will not be successful unless there is 100% coverage. He thinks that fishermen will have to share in the costs of such a program.

Ted Evans, Alaska Factory Trawlers, said they hope to play a significant part in the Americanization of groundfish fisheries off Alaska. However, he feels that they are not getting the support that they had hoped for. If the Council makes Pacific cod a longline-only fishery, it would be very detrimental to his industry. His organization would like to be involved in the workgroup dealing with the TAC strategy developed by Dr. Bevan. They would also be willing to work with the Council on the domestic observer program issue.

Thorn Smith, NPFVOA. NPFVOA is willing to help in any way in developing proposals discussed during the meeting. He has not had time to comment on specifics of the proposals, but will do so as soon as possible.

Paul MacGregor, Japan Longline Association, feels that the plan should not be rewritten to preclude the possibility of a TALFF. The Council should have the flexibility to allow TALFF if there is a reason to do so.

Recap of Council Direction

The Plan Team was directed to develop procedures that would set a single Gulfwide optimum yield with individual harvest levels for each species or species complex and account for both directed and incidental fishery removals from a resource. In addition, the team will framework procedures for apportioning harvests between fully domestic and joint venture fisheries, for setting bycatch limits and fishing seasons, and for using field orders to resolve inseason fishery problems. Problems such as gear conflicts or allocations between gear types will still be processed as formal plan amendments.

VI. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Finance Committee met Tuesday, August 13, to review the status of FY85 administrative funds, a proposal from Sea Grant to conduct fishery management option courses, the proposed Groundfish Data Coordinator project, the Council liaison position in Washington, DC, and a request for funding for Clem Tillion to attend bilateral meetings with Japan concerning high seas salmon interception.

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The Committee recommended funding the groundfish data project for \$15,000 and the fishery management option courses for up to \$20,000. They recommended that the groundfish data project proceed only if confidentiality of fish ticket information can be assured. The Committee also recommended that the Council approve the Council liaison concept in the broadest terms without trying to restrict the job description. They also recommended approval of not more than \$1,000 for travel expenses for Clem Tillion to participate in U.S./Japan discussions in Seattle August 19-20 about the interception of U.S. salmon in Japanese high-seas driftnet fisheries. Ambassador Wolfe had asked the Council to support Mr. Tillion's travel because the U.S. State Dept. was unable to.

COUNCIL ACTION

Oscar Dyson moved to approve the Finance Committee's recommendations. The motion was seconded by John Peterson and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

AP Appointment

Sara Hemphill reported that the Advisory Panel Nominating Committee recommends the Council appoint Thorn Smith, NPFVOA, to fill the vacancy on the AP for the remainder of 1985. Sara Hemphill moved to appoint Thorn Smith to the Advisory Panel for the remainder of 1985. John Winther seconded the motion and, there being no objection, it was so ordered.

Crab Bycatch in the Yellowfin Sole Fishery

The Council received several telegrams and letters expressing concern over the high incidental catch of crab in the yellowfin sole fishery in the Bering Sea. They also received a petition (Appendix I to these minutes) from a number of fishermen and organizations asking the Council to prohibit trawling in the pot sanctuary area of the Eastern Bering Sea by domestic fishermen, as it now is to foreign fishermen.

The Council discussed the issue but because it was not on the advertised agenda or published in the Federal Register they could not take any regulatory action. Jim Branson said that if the situation could be determined a conservation emergency the Regional Director could take emergency action, but the necessary information for the determination is not available. Several Council members felt the action proposed in the petitions is too drastic and could impose hardships on domestic fishermen, but did feel that the Council should work with industry to resolve the problem for next year.

Bob Alverson said that he had heard from Russ Nelson that whole tows were being dumped because of excessive crab bycatches in this fishery. Rich Marasco said he would follow up on this statement and will get back to Jim Branson.

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It was agreed that the Council would work closely with industry between now and September to come up with some voluntary action for the remainder of this year. John Peterson suggested that the Council should send letters to all of the vessel operators in the fishery warning them that the bycatch is not acceptable and suggest they move off the crab stocks and take steps to reduce the incidental catch. Council members agreed with this suggestion and instructed Council staff to do so.

Rich Marasco said the Center staff is studying the ramifications of moving the yellowfin sole fishery out of the pot sanctuary; they should have a report for the Council at the December meeting.

High Seas Salmon Interception

Steve Pennoyer reviewed the history of efforts to reduce the high seas interception of Alaska salmon. The Council received a resolution from the Alaska State Legislature urging action. Mr. Pennoyer submitted a draft of a letter to Secretary of State Shultz urging the State Department to redouble efforts to resolve this problem.

Henry Mitchell moved to approve the letter to be signed by Chairman Jim Campbell. John Peterson seconded the motion and, there being no objection, it was so ordered. (The final letter is included as Appendix II to these minutes.)

Committee Membership

Jim Campbell reviewed current Council committee membership. The Halibut Workgroup was disbanded and a new Council/industry workgroup on a domestic observer program was formed. Rudy Petersen, John Winther, Bart Eaton, and Oscar Dyson, as Chairman, were appointed to the committee. Oscar Dyson and Al Burch were added to the Gulf of Alaska FMP workgroup. Mr. Dyson was also appointed to the AP Nominating Committee and the Incidental Species Workgroup.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Campbell adjourned the meeting at 10:29 a.m. on Wednesday, August 14.