

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Fishery Council Meets in Juneau

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met with the Alaska Board of Fisheries in Juneau on January 5-9, 1981 to discuss troll salmon management for 1981. On Monday the Council and Board heard staff reports from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Council's Plan Development Team. Public testimony was taken on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and the Council and Board discussed proposed 1981 amendments to the Salmon Fishery Management Plan on Thursday and Friday.

Council Chooses Preferred Options for Salmon Management in 1981

The Council chose preferred options for managing the Southeast Alaska Troll Fishery in 1981 from proposals offered by the Council's Plan Development Team and the public. This action is intended only to indicate preferred options. Final action will not be taken on the 1981 amendments until the Council meets in late March. Following is a synopsis of the preferred options chosen by the Council.

New Management Objectives. The Council tentatively agreed to replace existing objectives of the Salmon FMP with six new ones.

1. Manage the troll fishery in conjunction with other Southeast Alaska fisheries to obtain the number and distribution of spawning fish capable of producing the optimum total harvest on a sustained basis from all wild salmon stocks harvested in Southeast Alaska.
2. Allocate the optimum yield to the various Southeast Alaska user groups as directed by the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.
3. Decrease directed and incidental harvest of smaller, immature fish and reduce sub-legal chinook hook/release mortalities where possible, consistent with allocation decisions and with the objectives of maximizing benefits to user groups.
4. Control and reverse recent trends of expanding effort and catch in outer coastal and offshore Southeast Alaskan waters to accomplish conservation goals.

5. Develop fishery management techniques which will allow full utilization of salmon returning to supplemental production systems while providing necessary protection for intermingling natural runs which must be harvested at lower rates.
6. Work toward the development of an integrated coastwide management plan for chinook salmon.

Lower Optimum Yield and Shorter Season for Chinooks. The chinook OY was reduced 15% from last season's OY to help rebuild depressed chinook stocks all along the Pacific Coast. The Council was concerned with both Southeastern Alaska and Columbia River chinook stocks. The Washington Department of Fisheries requested a 17-24% reduction to help rebuild the Columbia River stocks. The Council preferred only 15% because of the economic hardship a greater reduction would impose on the fishing community in Alaska. A 15% reduction would mean a ceiling of 272,000 chinook for the 1981 season. The 1981 chinook season will be from May 15 to September 20 (rather than April 15 to December 30 as in 1980). This later opening will benefit both Southeastern and Columbia River stocks. The coho season will remain the same as last year, June 15 to September 20. The Board of Fisheries later voted to go along with the Council on the opening and closing dates for the chinook and coho seasons; however, the Board differed from the Council in its final actions to reduce the chinook OY, setting harvest guidelines at 272,000-288,000 fish for the season. This is equivalent to a 10-15% reduction from the 320,000 chinook of 1980.

Area Closures Same as Last Year. As in 1980, only that portion of the Fishery Conservation Zone east of Cape Suckling will be open to salmon fishing. This proposal curtails any expansion into western waters.

Gear Restrictions for Power and Hand Trollers. The Council imposed limitations of six lines north of Cape Spencer and four lines south of Cape Spencer for power trollers, the same as last year. Hand trollers were limited to two gurdies or four sport lines. These actions will simplify enforcement in the Southeast Alaska-Yakutat area and help to standardize effort. By taking these actions the Council intended to duplicate the hand troll gear restrictions of the State. Later, the Board of Fisheries agreed to a six and four line limitation for power trollers as in 1980, but limited hand trollers to one gurdy and one sport line or four sport lines for the 1981 season.

Treble Hooks vs Single Hooks. The Council voted to allow treble hooks in the troll fleet because little evidence was available to show the effects of treble versus single hooks. The Council indicated, however, that it would go along with the Board of Fisheries in their decision. The Board banned treble hooks for the 1981 season.

Fishermen Landing Out-of-State Must Report. The Council approved a requirement that all salmon being taken out of Alaska by fishermen be reported in person prior to leaving the area.

Heads-on Requirements Modified. The Council voted to allow troll caught salmon to be landed heads-off except for fin-clipped fish. This will provide coded wire tag data without over-burdening freezer boat operators.

Limited Entry Postponed. The Council voted to postpone the discussion of limited entry for the hand troll fleet in the FCZ until further information is obtained from the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission on the number of fishermen who could participate under different qualifying schemes. This information should be available by the March Council meeting.

Advisory Panel Elects New Officers

The Advisory Panel re-elected Robert D. Alverson, Manager of the Fishing Vessel Owners Association in Seattle, as Chairman, and Bud Boddy of Juneau as Vice-Chairman. Both were confirmed by the Council to serve for one year terms.

West German and Soviet Joint-Venture Fishing Permits Approved

The Council approved a West German permit application allowing the FRIEDRICH BUSSE AND REGULUS to fish alone or in joint-venture operations in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Island groundfish fisheries. West Germany's initial 1981 allocation for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area is 13,058 mt. A Gulf of Alaska allocation of 10,300 mt for West Germany was requested, but has not yet been approved by the U.S. Department of State. The Council also approved Soviet permit applications for processor vessels to work in joint-ventures with American vessels in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries. This Soviet joint-venture, operated by Marine Resources Company, intends to harvest 65,000 mt from the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island area and 7,500 mt from the Gulf of Alaska in 1981.

Contacts for Joint Venture Operations

The Council has had numerous inquiries concerning companies which may provide joint-venture opportunities for American fishermen off Alaska. The following list gives contact persons for several operations.

1. Japanese joint-venture

Contact: Pan Alaska or Universal Seafoods in Seattle
(206) 284-0900 and (206) 881-8181 respectively

2. Korean joint-venture, KMIDC

Contact: Ken Puckett
Fish Producers Associates
Vancouver, Washington
(206) 696-0737

3. German joint-venture

Contact: John Schmiedtke
Hochseefischerei Nordstern
2019 Third Avenue, Room 102
Seattle, Washington 98121
(206) 447-1812

4. Soviet joint-venture

Contact: Wally Pereyra
Marine Resources Company
4215-21st Avenue W., Suite 206
Seattle, Washington 98199

Council to Meet Next in February

The North Pacific Council will meet at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel on February 26 and 27, 1981. The meeting will be devoted primarily to review and final approval of the 1981 proposed amendments to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island and Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Management Plans. The Council will also make final recommendations on a management plan for the Alaska king crab fishery.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee will meet in the Council Conference Room in Anchorage on February 24 and 25. The Council's Advisory Panel will meet in the Westward Hilton on February 25.

Capital Construction and Vessel Guarantee Fund Workshops

Floyd Unger, Financial Services Chief for the Alaska and the Northwest Regions of NMFS, with Lee Bauerson, national head of the Capital Construction Fund Program of NMFS, will conduct workshops in Anchorage at Alaska Pacific University on January 28 and in Kodiak on January 29 on several financial assistance programs available to the fishing industry. Both workshops start at 6:30 p.m.

The workshops will cover the Department of Commerce Capital Construction Fund and the Fishing Vessel Obligations Guarantee Program; provisions of the newly-passed American Fisheries Promotion Act as it applies to those programs, with particular emphasis on the new provisions for shore-side facilities in the Guarantee Program; and the Fishermen's Protective Act and the Fishermen's Contingency Fund.

All segments of the fishing industry are urged to attend.