

AGENDA B-2
DECEMBER 1994



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

December 7, 1994

Fisheries managed under delegated authority of the State of Alaska since the last council meeting include crab, salmon and demersal rockfish.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES:

Adak King Crab: On October 5, the Alaska Board of Fish (Board) telephonically considered a petition submitted by the Kodiak Longliner Vessel Owners Association requesting pot limits be established in the Adak red and brown king crab fisheries to protect these stocks from anticipated increased effort levels due to the Bristol Bay red king crab closure. After receiving staff reports on these fisheries, the Board discussed the pot limit petition for the third time in 18 months and without additional information, felt they could not justify a emergency under their petition policy, and therefore rejected the petition.

With the closure of the Bristol Bay red king crab season and a reduced Tanner crab quota, the management of the Adak king crab fisheries are a major concern of the Board and ADF&G staff. Based on the concerns of the public and staff, the Board directed the staff to use any inseason management measures they saw fit to ensure a manageable fishery was conducted for the 1994/95 season, and if emergency measures were needed in the future, submit a petition for Board action during the spring 1995 Board meeting. During their mid-October work session in Fairbanks, the Board reconfirmed their desire to review additional information and receive petitions for emergency management measures during the spring meeting.

On September 30, emergency regulations were adopted requiring vessels to pre-register for the Adak king crab fisheries by October

14. The department felt that the pre-registration requirement would indicate potential effort levels for the November 1 opening and allow managers the opportunity to design a pre-season management strategy. Over 90 vessels pre-registered for the fisheries, 30 indicating that they intended to fish the area on the November 1 opening. After tank inspections were conducted on October 29, 28 vessels had registered for red king crab and 26 for brown. Pre-registrations also indicated that additional vessels planned to move to the Adak fisheries once the Bering Sea *C. bairdi* fishery closed.

On November 28, the Department closed the Adak red king crab fishery based on significant declines in the fishery performance and that the stocks appeared to be depressed relative to previous years. The emergency order noted that the lack of recruitment of legal-size crabs observed in other Bering Sea/Aleutian king crab fisheries may be occurring in the Adak area, and the early closure, only the fourth in the past 12 years, was based on inseason catch information that indicated the red king crab populations were at levels too low to support a continued commercial fishery. Approximately 200,000 pounds was harvested for the season.

Bering Sea Tanner Crab: The Bering Sea *C. bairdi* fishery opened west of 163° W. long. on November 1, with a pre-season GHLL of 7.5 million pounds. State regulations require the area east of 163° to be closed to Tanner crab fishing if there is no Bristol Bay king crab season. Approximately 6.9 million pounds of legal sized *C. bairdi* are in the closed area. On October 31 tank inspections were given to approximately 186 vessels, approximately 100 vessels less than experienced in previous years.

Daily catch reports were received from 49 vessels, and were used to compute the daily harvest and indicated a steady decline in CPUR during the 3 week fishery. Based on the decline in the CPUE and the fishery performance, the fishery closed November 21 with a preliminary harvest of over 7.7 million pounds.

SALMON TROLL FISHERY: The winter Chinook troll fishery opened on October 11, 1994 and will continue through April 14, 1995 or until a total of 45,000 Chinook are harvested. Harvest to date is approximately half of last years catch at this time and possibly could be attributed to the outstanding summer coho catches, and bad weather.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH FISHERY: Although quotas have not been taken, the Lingcod fishery inside 3 miles closed November 30, 1994 to assist with enforcement of outside waters closures.

The DSR quotas in the Northern Southeastern and Central Southeastern sections have been taken and are closed for the remainder of the year. The Southern Southeastern, East Yakutat and the two inside sections are still open.

The fall 1994 Pacific Cod effort is well below the recent year average, due to weak market conditions in this area.