

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

Council to Hold Special Meeting in Kodiak

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will meet with the Alaska Board of Fisheries in Kodiak to discuss provisions of a draft King Crab Fishery Management Plan that should be in place for the 1982 fishery. The meeting will be sometime during the week of September 7th. The Council's Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee will not hold formal meetings in conjunction with the Kodiak Council/Board meeting.

Council's Next Regular Meeting Slated for Anchorage

The North Pacific Council will hold its next regular monthly meeting in Anchorage on September 24-25, 1981 beginning at 9 a.m. in the Sheraton Hotel. Major actions will include final Council consideration of a prohibited species amendment to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, a review of proposed changes to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan, further discussion of the King Crab Plan, and possibly another look at salmon and halibut limited entry. The Council's Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee will meet before the Council meeting.

Seward Port Privileges for Polish

Representatives from the Seward business community requested Council support for allowing the Polish fishing fleet to use Seward as a re-supply and RR port for its fishing vessels when they are working off Alaska. The Polish now spend about \$20 million each year on similar activities in Vancouver, British Columbia, and also have landing privileges in Washington, Oregon, and California. The Council voted to advise Senator Stevens that it had no objection to extending Seward port privileges to the Polish.

Troll Salmon Limited Entry

The Council appointed a work group to closely examine an options paper on limited entry for the Southeast Alaska troll fishery. The work group has representatives from State and Federal fisheries agencies as well as the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission and industry. The options paper

discusses various goals for limited entry and presents alternatives on the type and extent of system contemplated. The work group will report to the Council at a future meeting, possibly September's.

Call for Proposals for 1982 Troll Salmon Fishery

Proposals for regulations for the 1982 troll salmon fishery in the Fishery Conservation Zone off Southeast Alaska are now being accepted. These should be sent to the Council office at P.O. Box 3136DT, Anchorage Alaska 99510, by September 23, 1981.

Proposed Changes to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan

Proposed changes to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan are now being accepted. For the fullest review, the proposals should be submitted by September 1, 1981. However, proposals will be accepted anytime up to the week of the Anchorage Council meeting (week of September 21). A meeting of the Gulf Plan team and subgroups from the Council, Scientific and Statistical Committee, and Advisory Panel will be held sometime the week of September 21 to review public input on proposed changes to the plan. The plan team is now considering whether optimum yield estimates should be changed, how to protect prohibited species, and ways of streamlining the plan into a more flexible multi-year plan.

Bering Sea Prohibited Species Amendment to be Revised

The Council deferred final action on Amendment #3 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan--Reducing the Catch of Prohibited Species--until its late September meeting. The Council reviewed the latest version of Amendment #3 and instructed the plan development team to come back in September with an amendment that places no prohibited species restrictions on domestic fishermen, is flexible in setting prohibited species catch levels in future years, relates these levels to natural variations in stocks, applies only to foreign fisheries, and does not link foreign and domestic catches of prohibited species.

No New Amendments to the Tanner Crab Plan

The Council reviewed minor inconsistencies between the Tanner Crab Plan and State of Alaska regulations. These minor inconsistencies involve fishing seasons, differences in optimum yield estimates, area descriptions, and pot limits and storage. They do not pose immediate management problems and the Council voted to not amend the plan until further inconsistencies materialize.

Council Receives Latest Draft King Crab Plan

A draft King Crab Plan for the 1982 fishery was received by the Council and will be the subject of a special meeting between the Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries sometime the week of September 7th in Kodiak. The Council will review the draft plan prior to the special meeting. In October and

November, the public will be able to review the plan and any agreements reached with the Board. Final Council consideration will most likely be in early December. The plan now covers those king crab fisheries in the Bering Sea, Bristol Bay, Dutch Harbor, and Adak areas.

Economists Work Group Reports on Halibut Limited Entry

The Council heard a summary report on a workshop on limited entry in the Alaska Halibut fishery. The workshop, held in Seattle on May 14-15, 1981, was attended by various notable fisheries economists from the Pacific Coast. The report evaluated the present status of halibut, discussed the economic theory of effort limitation as it might apply to the fishery, and presented several alternative schemes to limit effort.

The Council will be selecting individuals for a work group that will develop objectives for limited entry for the halibut fishery. These objectives will be reviewed by the Council at one of its future meetings, possibly September's.

Enforcement and Surveillance

Since the May Council meeting the U.S. Coast Guard issued seven reports of violation to foreign stern trawlers: one Polish, four Japanese, and two West German. Two citations were issued to a Taiwanese stern trawler. Two Canadian tugs and their barges were seized on May 28 for catching and processing herring in the Bristol Bay and Norton Sound areas. A Japanese stern trawler was seized for failure to properly maintain its daily cumulative catch log and a Japanese gillnetter was seized for fishing without a valid 1981 permit, failing to report its fishing activities, retaining a prohibited species, refusing to permit a lawful boarding and resisting lawful arrest.

Domestic Catch Report

By the end of June, U.S. fishermen had harvested 13,474 mt of groundfish in the Bering Sea and 355 mt in the Gulf of Alaska. Four joint ventures provided 83% of that catch with much of the remaining domestic catch taken in salt cod operations. This catch is about 20,408 mt more than the total 1980 domestic groundfish catch.

The Tanner crab fishery is essentially over for the year. By June 28, 29.7 million pounds of bairdi and 50.2 million pounds of opilio had been taken in the Bering Sea. The total catch of 79.9 million pounds compares with 73.6 million pounds for 1980.

A total of 25.1 million pounds of herring were landed in the Togiak herring fishery in 1981. There were six commercial openings and the preliminary catch breakdown indicates that 82% was taken by purse seiners and 18% by gillnetters. All herring fishing areas are now closed.

The Southeast Alaska troll salmon fishery opened on May 15 and by July 10, about 145,000 or 53% of the optimum yield had been caught. A 9-day closure was implemented from June 26-July 5 to slow the harvest.

Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Foreign Groundfish Fisheries

NMFS reported that 501,124 mt or 36% of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands 1981 foreign quota had been taken by July 4, 1981. In the Gulf of Alaska, 60,091 mt or 22% had been taken. The Bering Sea catch was 78% pollock, 12% flounders, and 3% Pacific cod. The Gulf catch was 59% pollock, 25% Pacific cod, 7% rockfish, 4% flounders, and 3% sablefish.

On July 17, 1981, 417 foreign vessels were on the grounds. Ninety-four percent were Japanese. Most were concentrated along the shelf break of the Bering Sea fishing pollock and flounders.

Joint Venture Updates

The West German Friedrich Busse is currently fishing pollock in the Unimak Pass area with one U.S. catcher-vessel. The pollock are small and about 80-100 mt of raw material are needed each day to make the operation successful.

The Nippon Suisan/Universal Seafoods joint venture fished for 37 days in the Gulf of Alaska beginning June 1. The operation was successful with 6200 mt of pollock and 300 mt of incidental species being caught.

The Taiyo/Pan Alaska Fisheries joint venture used two U.S. catcher vessels to fish in April and May. The total catch was 5252 mt pollock, 43 mt cod, and 20 mt other species. Most hauls were mid-water tows.

Marine Resources Company reported that the Soviet joint venture fished pollock in the Southeastern Bering Sea until May 18. The fishery lasted 88 days and produced 16,164 mt of groundfish with 83% pollock. The yellowfin sole fishery commenced on May 3 in the Bering Sea flats with three processors and five U.S. trawlers. There are now six processors and eight catchers working. As of July 4, the fleet had produced 6200 mt of raw fish and was well on its way to topping last year's production.

The Korean/U.S. joint venture produced about 19,500 mt pollock using seven U.S. trawlers to deliver to four Korean processors before leaving the grounds on June 6. Various problems arose between the U.S. fishermen and the Korean processors. Some of these problems seem to have been resolved and the U.S. fleet is once again out fishing.