

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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COUNCIL ENDS TWO-PART MEETING

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council concluded a five-day session, conducted in two parts, on Jan. 11. Major Council actions and decisions include activities during meetings held Dec. 12-13-14, 1979 and Jan. 10-11, 1980.

JOINT VENTURE PERMITS/RESTRICTIONS SET

Applications for foreign processing ships to joint venture with American catcher boats were approved in December, with most restrictions on those permits set in January. The Presidential announcement that ended Russian fishing in the Bering Sea did not complicate any decisions by the Council but did create a period of confusion for casual observers and most media.

The final decision on joint venture fishing restricts the catch of herring to 5,000 mt between Jan. 1 and April 1, limits the by-catch of sablefish to 1½% of the total catch and establishes a 12-mile closure around Akutan and Akun Island within which there is no joint venture processing.

During the discussion of joint venture fishing closed areas which developed, a concern centered on the possible effects on fish stocks by allowing large-scale joint venture activity in addition to U.S. fishermen delivering to U.S. processors from near-shore areas.

The joint ventures concerned are the Korean Marine Industrial Development Corporation (KMIDC) and Marine Resources, Inc., of Bellingham, Wash., in association with the Soviet fishing organization Sovrybflot. KMIDC is expected to resume operations in April; Marine Resources is presently fishing with five boats with two more enroute to the grounds.

COUNCIL BANS HANDTROLLING - AGAIN

A motion during the January meeting to ban handtrolling from the FCZ marked the second time the Council has taken such action. A recommendation will be made to the Secretary of Commerce that no handtrolling be allowed in the offshore fishery. A similar recommendation by the Council in 1979 was disapproved although handtrolling continued to be prohibited by the State of Alaska outside the surfline.

TANNER CRAB

Changes in the Tanner crab regulations have been proposed to conform to Board of Fisheries actions regarding the repeal of tank inspection requirements, allowing the sale after the season of crab by the owner of a vessel lost through sinking, require the reporting of deadloss and other crab not sold or purchased on the fish tickets and divide the South Peninsula district into two sub-districts.

The Council deferred until March a decision on the August 15 C. opilio proposed closure and declined to alter the C. bairdi OY of 22-33 million pounds.

GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH

The Gulf of Alaska sablefish OY was discussed during the December portion of the meeting, with the Council adopting the AP, SSC and plan development team recommendations to retain the 13,000 mt sablefish OY. The alternative was to drop it to the 10,500 mt level.

Other GoA considerations included a proposal to alleviate last years' Kodiak king crab/foreign trawler gear conflict and grounds preemption problem. The Council referred the matter to the plan development team for study and preparation of a possible amendment to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. The proposed amendment will be an item on the Council's March agenda.

HERRING HEARINGS TO BE HELD

The final series of public hearings on the proposed herring FMP for the Bering/Chukchi Sea will be held Feb. 9 in Tooksook Bay and Bethel and on Feb. 10 in Hooper Bay. A hearing will be held in Togiak on either Feb. 9 or 10 depending on airplane schedules and travel conditions.

TROLL SALMON PROPOSALS ACCEPTED

Proposals for amendments to the troll salmon FMP have been

adopted following their development by the plan drafting team and acceptance by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. The Board of Fisheries formally presented them to the Council in December. The proposals adopted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council as proposed amendments include: 1. A 10-day troll fishery closure, probably in early July unless the run is deemed to be of such strength as to make the closure unnecessary. 2. Require the landing with heads on of all troll caught chinook and coho salmon. 3. Prohibits the possession of any species aboard any trolling vessel fishing in an area or during a time when the season for that species is closed. 4. Prohibits the mutilation in any manner which obscures the length of any species for which a minimum legal length has been set. 5. Restricts to four the maximum number of lines which may be fished from a troll vessel south of Cape Spencer. 6. Restricts to six the maximum number of lines which may be fished from a troll vessel north of Cape Spencer. 7. Restricts to six the maximum number of gurdies which may be aboard any licensed power troller. 8. Redefines Fishery Conservation Zone regulatory areas #154-157-181.

The proposal package was accepted with only one dissenting vote, that of Council member Gene DiDonato of the Washington Dept. of Fisheries.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN FMP

The "Misty Moon Grounds" is no more...at least temporarily. The former halibut hotspot in the Bering Sea has been opened on a temporary basis to foreign winter trawling.

An American request to relax quota restrictions in the Winter Halibut Savings Areas has been granted by the Council which stripped away present limits of 2,000 mt for both trawlers and longliners. The U.S. trawl fishery there and in the Bering Sea Pot Sanctuary will be viewed as an experimental fishery and monitored closely by observers in lieu of restraints. The fishery will be conducted from Jan. 1 through May 31 with information from the fishery to be prepared for a formal report to the Council. The fishery will be subject to all restrictions on prohibited species and all fish will be counted and recorded whether they are retained or not.

WALRUS STUDY TO GO FORWARD

The Council has approved a contract in the amount of \$87,220 to study the seasonal use and feeding habits of walrus in the proposed Bristol Bay clam fishery area. Dr. Bud Fay, UofA (Fairbanks) and Lloyd Lowrey, ADF&G (Fairbanks), will be the principal investigators for a study which will shed some light on the distribution, abundance and feeding habits of the big mammals.

HALIBUT LIMITED ENTRY PROPOSAL

A request for proposals will go out to bidders on the subject of the applicability of limited entry for the halibut fishery. The subject of limited entry for that fishery has caught the attention of most halibut fishermen.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

A number of committee assignments and appointments have been made in the past month: Al Burch, William H. Scott, Sharon Macklin and Anthony Vaska have been appointed to the Advisory Panel; John Burns has been named to the Scientific and Statistical Committee as a marine mammal specialist; Larry Hreha has been named to the SSC and former SSC member Jack Robinson has been named his alternate.

Council member Jim Campbell and AP member Joe Kurtz have been appointed to the Foreign Permit Review Committee. Capt. Bart Eaton is chairman of the committee.

AP VACANCIES

The resignation of Oral Burch and Joe DeMantle from the Advisory Panel has created two vacancies for replacement members to be named in March. Nominations are open and will be received until the close of the Council meeting on Feb. 8. In other action concerning the AP, Bob Alverson was confirmed as chairman, with Bud Boddy 1st vice chairman and Chuck Jensen 2nd vice chairman.

LIMITED ENTRY WORKGROUP

NPFMC Chairman Clement V. Tillion and member Gordon Jensen have been appointed to the Limited Entry Workgroup with fishermen members to be nominated by Harold Lokken (Seattle fleet), Gordon Jensen (Petersburg fleet), Tillion (Cook Inlet area) and Bart Eaton (Kodiak area).

COUNCIL ASKS FOR SALMON INFO

The Council has asked for a formal report from the troll salmon

PDT on specific items relating to the contribution of non-Alaska chinooks to the Southeast Alaska troll fishery. Included in the request is a current status report of Pacific Northwest chinook stocks, the contribution of non-Alaska stocks to the troll fishery, with emphasis on Columbia River stocks and new data to come from ongoing research and analysis. The PDT has also been asked to make a list of data or research needed for better salmon management.

The Council also wants an estimate of the amount of money and time necessary to bring the comprehensive salmon plan to completion. Cooperation in the drafting of that plan will involve the NPFMC, Pacific Fishery Management Council, Columbia Inter Tribal Fisheries Commission and the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission.

COMBINED SSC MEETING

A joint meeting of the NPFMC and PFMC Scientific and Statistical Committees will be held Jan. 23-24 at the NW&AFC auditorium starting at 10 a.m. The meeting will focus on "Principles of Salmon Management."

GOA-BS/A GROUND FISH TEAMS TO MEET

Plan Development Team members of both the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian groundfish teams will meet in a joint session in Seattle for three days, Jan. 29-31, at the NW&AFC, Room 369 West, at 9 a.m. Bert Larkins will convene the meeting. Dr. Jim Balsiger leads the GoA team and Dr. Loh-Lee-Low will lead the Bering Sea/Aleutian Group. Larkins has steered both teams through their initial phases and will resign as BS/A team leader after opening the joint meeting.

COUNCIL-BOARD OF FISHERIES MEETING

The Council/Board of Fisheries meeting held Dec. 13 resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding and a committee to develop procedures for future meetings. Named to the committee was Jim H. Branson, Executive Director for the Council, Greg Cook, Executive Director for the Board, and Steve Pennoyer, Chairman of the SSC and Acting Director, Division of Commercial Fisheries, ADF&G.

FEBRUARY MEETING

The North Pacific Council will hold its February meeting on Feb. 7-8 at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel, Anchorage. The SSC will meet Wednesday, Feb. 6 in the Council Conference Room and the AP will meet Wednesday, Feb. 6 in the Kenai/Aleutian Room, Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel.

FIRST CLASS

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