

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Meeting Timing

We have tried to arrange the schedule for this meeting so the plan teams will have an opportunity to review Council action, rewrite the material, and bring it back to the Council for final review and confirmation before we adjourn. We hope this will eliminate the misunderstandings and omissions that have occurred all too frequently recently.

The Council and the AP will meet together today for staff reports and public testimony on the groundfish amendments, which are the major item of business at this meeting. As soon as public testimony is finished, and that may be well into the evening, the AP will meet to develop its recommendations on the groundfish amendments. The Council will go on to other business, primarily reports and "C" agenda items as well as contracts and budget. By noon Wednesday we should have the recommendations of the Advisory Panel and the SSC on the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish amendments. The Council can then choose their preferred alternatives and give them to the Plan Team for drafting. That should be done by early Wednesday afternoon.

On Thursday morning the Council should get the Advisory Panel and SSC recommendations on the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish amendments, choose their alternatives, and give them to the Plan Team by shortly after lunch. The Gulf of Alaska Plan Team may be ready by that time to bring their material back for Council review. In any case, we expect to have all of the material for both plans back by Friday morning. The Council can then review and confirm their decisions on the groundfish amendments and adjourn early Friday.

We have not scheduled any evening activities so Council sessions can proceed into the evening.

First Halibut Opening

The halibut fishery took 15.5 million pounds in the first opening of all the areas. The IPHC news release is in your book as attachment B-1(a). It looks like there will probably be at least two more openings in Area 3 and perhaps two in Area 2C.

Price was down; 55¢ and 65¢ appeared to be the highs. Catch rates were still up. So far as I have heard, no lives were lost although there were four boats lost in the American opening and four in the Canadian opening.

UFA Asks for Delay in North Aleutian Shelf Lease Sale

Attachment B-1(b) is a letter from United Fishermen of Alaska to Chairman Campbell suggesting the Council may want to consider taking a position on the upcoming sale of North Aleutian Shelf Lease No. 92. The State of Alaska has

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called for a ten-year delay on the lease sale and NMFS has also expressed concern over proceeding with it. They conclude by saying that any action the North Pacific Council feels would be appropriate to take toward requiring a delay would be most appreciated.

Miscellaneous Items

Doug Larson is going back for graduate work at the University of Maryland, leaving the Council staff in late June or early July. We will miss him. Doug has been a productive and enjoyable colleague. I hope that we will be able to work something out with him that will allow continued contact since he will be staying in the fisheries field and we may be able to continue to take advantage of his expertise if it appears everyone will profit.

We had a number of excellent applicants for Jeff Povolny's position, which we had decided to change to that of Economist/Analyst. We brought four of them to Anchorage for visits and interviews the last week in April. We have made job offers to two, one of whom, Terrence Smith, is present at this meeting with his wife to look over the terrain. The other is a gentleman named Tom Cusack, currently with the Natural Resources Economics Department at Oregon State University.

The Interim Action Committee held a teleconference on May 14 at the request of the Factory Trawlers Association. Catch rates for codfish in the Bering Sea have fallen off so much that they are concerned about the resource and their inability to keep their ships working at full capacity. The Interim Action Committee concluded that it was not a biological emergency, although it appeared to be an economic one. The report of that teleconference is under the Bering Sea tab, item D-3(e).

The Factory Trawlers Association will probably have additional information to bring before the Council at this meeting. Whether or not something can be done this year, the Council will have to look it at carefully for 1986.

We have added some additional material under agenda item C-3 for foreign allocations. You will recall that total TALFF in the Gulf of Alaska was set by the Council at 25,000 tons of Alaska pollock and 10,000 tons of Pacific cod. Twelve thousand five hundred tons of the pollock have been allocated to the Japanese; 5,000 have been allocated to South Korea with a promise of 5,000 more in later releases. The Council had originally established a 25,000 ton TALFF for pollock with the understanding that it would all go to the Japanese to fulfill their agreement with U.S. industry in December. There is pollock still in reserve that could be released to bring Japan up to that full 25,000 mt (another 10,000 is needed). The data from recent NMFS DAH surveys and catches is available under tab C-3.

A letter from the newly formed USA Coalition is under tab C-2. They ask the Council for a motion at this meeting for americanization of the fisheries. It's not clear whether they are asking for a general statement or a resolution in support of their proposal for a date-certain phase-out of the both the directed fishery and joint venture fisheries. I responded to the letter from Larry Cotter, asking them to have more information available when you consider this item.

Attachment B-1(c) is the usual Status of FMPs.

News Release

ACTUAL	ROUTE TO	INITIAL
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9 May 1985

RECEIVED MAY 10 1985

P.O. BOX 5009, UNIVERSITY STATION, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98105

HALIBUT CATCH REACHES 15.5 MILLION POUNDS

Preliminary figures compiled by the International Pacific Halibut Commission show that the 1985 halibut catch was 15.5 million pounds by the end of the first fishing period in April.

The halibut catch in Area 2B (British Columbia) was 3.5 million pounds, about 1.7 million pounds less than was taken during the first period in 1984. The catch limit in Area 2B is 10.0 million pounds. As provided in the Pacific Halibut Fishery Regulations, Area 2B will reopen to halibut fishing at 12:00 Noon Pacific Standard Time on June 7 and close at 12:00 Noon Pacific Standard Time on June 16.

The halibut catch off Alaska was 3.8 million pounds in Area 2C, 7.85 million pounds in Area 3A, and 0.4 million pounds in Area 3B. No catch was reported from Area 4. The 1985 catch in these areas was approximately half of the first period catch in 1984 when the first fishing period was longer. The respective catch limits for these areas are 9.0, 23.0, and 9.0 million pounds. These areas, along with Areas 4A, 4B, and 4D will reopen to halibut fishing at 12:00 Noon Pacific Standard Time on May 27, and close at 12:00 Noon Pacific Standard Time on May 29.

The first halibut fishing period in Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, California) will open at 12:00 Noon Pacific Standard time on May 9 and close at 12:00 Noon Pacific Standard Time on May 21, as provided in Pacific Halibut Fishery regulations.

-END-

Donald A. McCaughran, Director
Phone: (206)634-1838

DRAFT

Dear Secretary Hodel:

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has primary management responsibility for the fishery resources of the federal waters in the Bering Sea. The fisheries conducted in this area are not only of immense importance to the State of Alaska, but also to the nation and the international community.

On May 23, the Minerals Management Service (MMS), State of Alaska and the United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) made a presentation to the Council on the proposed North Aleutian Shelf lease sale No. 92 presently scheduled for December, 1985. The consultation process undertaken by the three parties to assess the biological and oceanographic information available on the proposed lease area was described. The critical information needs and concerns associated with the biological resources of the area that were identified through this process were presented and discussed.

The Council wishes at this time to both express its concern for the fisheries resources at risk, and to request that you fully address, prior to leasing, the information needs as identified by the State of Alaska and the United Fishermen of Alaska. We hope that the consultation process which was begun will continue, and that a studies plan to address these information needs will be developed and implemented. The data obtained from such a research program will then provide the information necessary to make a decision to lease in the

North Aleutian Basin.

While recognizing the need for the nation to discover and develop oil reserves, the Council feels strongly that the fisheries resources of the North Aleutian Basin and vicinity are a national resources of equal value, and need to be protected. It is our opinion that the State of Alaska and UFA have identified valid information needs which must be filled prior to a lease sale in the North Aleutian Shelf.

Sincerely,

STATUS OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS

1. Salmon FMP

The Council will review the status of the FMP in relation to provisions of the U.S.-Canada Salmon Treaty. The entire plan needs to be updated and operative portions may need revision to be responsive to salmon management changes recommended next year by the U.S.-Canada Salmon Commission.

2. Herring FMP

No action is scheduled for this meeting. The Bering-Chukchi Sea Herring Fishery Management Plan was approved by the Council on September 28, 1983 for Secretary of Commerce review. In May 1984, however, the Council decided to take no further action on the plan until more scientific data become available. The data needed include winter and summer stock distribution and composition as well as offshore biomass estimates. On December 11, 1984, the Council requested the Secretary of Commerce to implement a data collection plan. No response has been received.

3. King Crab FMP

No action is scheduled for this meeting. The FMP became effective December 2, 1984, but final implementing regulations will not be published until late 1985 or early 1986.

4. Tanner Crab FMP

No action is scheduled for this meeting. Only one minor season change by regulatory amendment was needed as a result of decisions by the Board of Fisheries this March.

The FMP's most recent amendment, #9, was partially approved by NMFS on August 24, 1984. NMFS approved the section revising MSY and ABC, "conditionally" approved broadening the Regional Director's authority to set seasons using biological, social, and economic data using rule-related notices and a 30-day comment period, and disapproved broadening the Regional Director's field order authority to make inseason adjustments. The Regional Director has been asked to clarify the "conditional" approval and provide alternative language for the disapproved section.

5. Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

At this meeting the Council will approve Amendment 14 to go to Secretarial Review. The Council will also review a draft regulatory amendment concerning single species OYs, approve a net entanglement provision, and consider emergency action to minimize joint venture and foreign interceptions of salmon.

Emergency regulation to close the Western and Central Gulf directed sablefish fisheries at 92% of the OY and leave 8% for bycatch: The Council passed this in March 1985 and it is still being prepared in the NMFS Region. NMFS is concerned that it may be very difficult to monitor and are not sure it can be implemented.

Emergency regulation to make the domestic sablefish fishery east of 147°W hook and line longline only: The Council passed this in February 1985 and it was published in the Federal Register on April 1 to be effective March 27. The area east of 147°W closed to directed sablefish fishing on May 15, 1985.

Emergency regulation to reduce OYs for Atka mackerel, pollock, Pacific ocean perch, other rockfish and other species: The Council passed this in December 1984 but the paperwork is still in the Region. NMFS reports there may be some problems with justifying the Gulfwide rockfish OY at 5,000 mt when the plan team originally recommended 2,500 mt.

Emergency regulation to raise halibut bycatch limits for U.S. trawlers in the Western and Central areas: The Council passed this in September 1984 and it took effect on December 10, 1984. It was extended on March 14, 1985 for another 90 days.

6. Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

At this meeting the Council will approve Amendment 9 for Secretarial Review. They will also approve a net entanglement provision, consider emergency action to minimize joint venture interceptions of salmon, and receive a status report on crab aggregations in the Eastern Bering Sea.

The Council's recommended 20-mile closure to foreign trawls around the Aleutians is being prepared in the Region. The foreign fleets have abstained voluntarily from fishing in that area.