

DRAFT SUMMARY

**Joint Meeting
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
and
Alaska Board of Fisheries
February 4, 1997
Anchorage Hilton Hotel
Anchorage, Alaska**

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries met in joint session on February 4, 1997, to discuss recent Board actions concerning groundfish fisheries in State waters, as well as to discuss other fisheries issues of mutual concern.

Board members present were: Dr. John White (Chair), Dan Coffey (Vice Chair), Larry Engel, Grant Miller, and Virgil Umphenour.

Council members present were: Rick Lauber (Chair), Wally Pereyra (Vice Chair), Morris Barker, Linda Behnken, Dave Benton, Dave Fluharty, Bob Mace, Kevin O'Leary, Steve Pennoyer, Robin Samuelson, and Clem Tillion.

Following is a summary of agenda items discussed.

State Groundfish Management

Gulf of Alaska Pacific Cod. In December, the Council expressed serious concerns over the newly-established fishery for Pacific cod in State waters, approved by the Board in October. After meeting with the Board via teleconference on December 13, the Council reduced the total allowable catch for Pacific cod fisheries under Council management in the Gulf of Alaska by the percentages that the Board had set for Pacific cod fisheries in State waters. During the teleconference Council and Board members agreed to appoint a committee of Board and Council member representatives to meet to discuss the issue of managing stocks which occur both inside and outside State waters, and to meet jointly in February.

Joint Protocol. The committee met in January and agreed on a draft protocol (Appendix I to this summary) to facilitate coordination between the Council and Board on all fisheries of mutual concern. Major features of the protocol included:

1. The protocol will cover all fisheries where there are mutual concerns.
2. The Council and Board will meeting jointly each year, in February.
3. A joint committee of Council and Board members will meet in January, and possibly quarterly, to improve communications.
4. The Council Executive Director will provide a briefing to the Board at their fall work session that will cover current Council activities and upcoming issues.
5. The Board may adjust its groundfish proposal schedule to coincide with the Council's, and will not take final action on groundfish proposals until after the joint meeting in February.

At this meeting, Dr. White advised the Council that the Board has unanimously approved the protocol in the spirit of cooperation, although some members did have reservations about how it would be carried out.

Lisa Lindeman, NOAA General Counsel, expressed concern over Section III.A., stating that the Council does not have the authority to limit its actions in order to be "consistent with the laws of the State of Alaska." There were some suggestions to change the wording, adding "as appropriate." However, it was made clear that the intent of that section was for each body, Council and Board, to approach a compatible fisheries management approach, within the limits of the laws appropriate to each body. Neither body would be expected to take actions inconsistent with their own guidelines, or to adhere to guidelines of the other body which conflicted with their own.

When discussing the joint committee, Dave Benton suggested several areas that should be directed to the committee for discussion: (1) the definitions for "impacts" and "mutual concerns" for the protocol; (2) issues of concern expressed by the Advisory Panel with regard to the Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod actions taken by the Board; and (3) determining whether a mutual amendment proposal cycle can be accomplished.

Other Fisheries Under State/Federal Management

The Council and Board received a brief written staff report on other groundfish fisheries under state/federal management, including Prince William Sound pollock, Aleutian Islands sablefish fisheries, pelagic shelf rockfish in the Gulf of Alaska, and Southeast Alaska rockfish, and halibut sports and subsistence fisheries.

Reports

The Council and Board received reports on crab management issues from the Council's Crab Plan Team and the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee, a stock status report on Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crabs, and a brief review of crab management proposals before the Board of Fisheries for 1997.

Other staff reports included an update on the State's observer program and crab CDQ program management.

Public Comment

The following people provided public comments on groundfish issues:

Duncan Field, Old Harbor Native Corp.

Brent Paine, United Catcher Boats

Joe Macinko, Kodiak fisherman

Ken Allread, Western Alaska Fisheries

Tony Gregoria, Chignik Advisory Committee

Alvin Osterback, Aleutians East Borough

Chris Blackburn, Alaska Groundfish Data Bank

The following people provided public comments on crab issues:

Tom Case, Alaska Fisheries Conservation Group

Arni Thomson, Alaska Crab Coalition

Ken Poulsen

Sitka Sound Halibut Proposal

A proposal for management of sport and subsistence-caught halibut in the Sitka Sound was originally submitted to the Board of Fisheries for consideration; however the Board referred the proposers to the Council because the proposed regulations were not within the Board's authority. The Council indicated the subject would be taken up during their plenary session later in the week.

Seabird Avoidance Measures

Dave Benton advised the Board of Council action to implement regulations in the groundfish and halibut longline fisheries to require certain measures be taken to avoid seabird entanglement and mortality, and formally requested that the Board consider similar measures for fisheries under their jurisdiction.

Joint Board/Council Committee

Dr. White advised the Council that their representatives to the joint committee would be Dan Coffey, Grant Miller, and Virgil Umphenour.

The joint meeting between the Council and Board of Fisheries was adjourned at approximately 3:40 p.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 1997.