



D1 Exempted Fishing Permits

December 2018 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Staff: Sara Cleaver (NPFMC), Megan Mackey (NMFS), Bridget Mansfield (NMFS)

Presenters: Adak pollock: Dave Fraser/ Kay Larson-Blair (Aleut Corporation); Red king crab: Cory Lescher (APU)

Action Required: 1. Review Adak pollock EFP package and provide feedback
2. Review AM80 red king crab EFP package and provide feedback

BACKGROUND

NMFS has received two exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications, both of which are included under this agenda item. By regulation, NMFS is required to consult with the Council before issuing an EFP. Included under each EFP attachment are the following:

- Letter to Council chairman from Dr. Jim Balsiger (NMFS AKR) regarding receipt of the application;
 - The EFP application;
 - AFSC memorandum of approval of the experimental design;
 - NMFS' draft determination for categorical exclusion under NEPA.
1. NMFS received an EFP application from Dave Fraser and Kay Larson-Blair, on behalf of the Aleut Corporation, to test methods to minimize Pacific Ocean perch (POP) bycatch in the Aleutian Islands (AI) pollock fishery. This could provide an opportunity for the Aleut Corporation to develop an economically viable AI pollock fishery while improving safety at sea and reducing POP bycatch mortality. This EFP would:
 - Allow an exemption from the POP maximum retainable amount (MRA) of 5% for AFA vessels and non-AFA vessels less than 60 feet length overall fishing for AI pollock.
 - Allow an exemption from the halibut PSC limit applicable to directed fishing for POP in the BSAI.

Dave Fraser and Kay Larson-Blair from the Aleut Corporation will be present to answer questions about the study.

2. NMFS received an EFP application from Mr. Cory Lescher and Dr. Bradley Harris (Alaska Pacific University/Fisheries, Aquatic Science, and Technology Laboratory). Two concurrent studies would be conducted under this EFP. The first would compare RKC PSC rates generated using Observer Program sub-sampling protocols to whole-haul censuses in the Amendment 80 Bering Sea yellowfin sole and role sole fisheries. The second is an at-sea crab vitality pilot study to examine factors which influence RKC discard mortality. This EFP would:

- Allow up to five Amendment 80 vessels in the BSAI yellowfin and rock sole fisheries to retain RKC on board for periods of no more than 72 hours during the 2019 BSAI flatfish fisheries' "A" season.
- Exempt participating permit holders, vessel owners, and operators from requirements to immediately return RKC PSC to the sea.
- Exempt participating permit holders, vessel owners, and operators from the prohibition on biasing the observer's sampling procedure by pre-sorting RKC catch, and scale requirements for weighing catch at-sea.

The project manager, Cory Lescher will be available to present a description of the study. Mr. John Gauvin is the industry collaborator on this project and will also be available to answer questions.