

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

News and Notes



David Benton, Chairman
Clarence Pautzke, Executive Director

605 West 4th Avenue, Ste 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252
Phone (907) 271-2809
Fax (907) 271-2817

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Steller Sea Lions

In October, the Council made a final review of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on Steller sea lion protection measures. The SEIS evaluated five alternatives to modify fisheries in such a way that the fisheries neither jeopardized the continued existence of Steller sea lions, nor modified their critical habitat. Both the Council and NMFS had previously identified Alternative 4, the area and fishery specific approach, as the preferred alternative. This was the alternative originally proposed by the Council's RPA Committee. A draft biological opinion, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act Section 7, concluded that the proposed action implemented by this alternative would not be likely to cause jeopardy or adverse modification. The SEIS and biological opinion are available on the NMFS Alaska region website (www.fakr.noaa.gov).

The Council adopted Alternative 4 as its final preferred alternative, with only minor modifications and clarifications. These modifications are contained in the Council's final motion (attached). In addition, the Council recommended that a vessel monitoring system be required on all vessels, except those using jig gear, participating in directed fisheries for pollock, Pacific cod, or Atka mackerel. The Council requested NMFS to explore federal funding options for purchasing, installing, and implementing vessel monitoring systems on vessels.

The Council also identified eight items to be analyzed in a trailing amendment, for possible implementation in the 2003 season (see attached list). A preliminary evaluation of the jeopardy consequences of the individual elements, as well as combinations of the elements, would be provided to the Council in February. A full initial review of the analysis would be scheduled for April or June. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

Major elements of Alternative 4.

- Temporal dispersion of fisheries achieved via multiple seasons and TAC apportionments.
- Spatial dispersion of fisheries achieved via fishery and gear specific area closures in sea lion critical habitat.
- All vessels will be prohibited 0-3 nm around rookeries, and all pollock, cod, and mackerel fisheries will be prohibited from extensive areas of critical habitat.
- Trawling is prohibited for pollock, cod, and mackerel within 10 nm of all sea lion rookeries and most haulouts.
- Pollock fishing will be limited in the SCA and prohibited within 10 nm of land in the southeast Bering Sea.
- A modified harvest control rule will stop directed fishing for pollock, cod, and mackerel should stock biomass ever fall below 20% of unfished biomass.

Council Additions

The Council welcomed **Roy Hyder**, who has been designated as the Council representative for the State of Oregon. Mr. Hyder retired as head of the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division and has a longstanding involvement with fish and wildlife management with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Shortly before the September meeting, Chairman Benton appointed **Teresa Kandianis** to the Advisory Panel for the remainder of the year to fill the seat vacated by John Hendershedt. Ms. Kandianis, of Kodiak Fish Company, previously served on the AP for two years. In addition, **Tom Enlow**, of Unisea in Dutch Harbor, was appointed to fill the seat vacated by Stephanie Madsen.

The Council also approved the appointment of **Lowell Fritz** of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center to the BSAI Groundfish plan team, and **Forest Bowers**, of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, to the BSAI Crab plan team. It is also noted that **Dr. Doug DeMaster** has been selected as the Director for the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. Congratulations Doug!

Mace Farewell

During the Seattle meeting, numerous members of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska fishing industry sponsored a reception for the Council, and to honor the retirement of long-time Council member Bob Mace. The reception, held at Salty's, was packed to overflowing as members of the industry and Council family gathered to honor Bob's long-term commitment to the management of the fisheries off Alaska, and to the Council itself. Bob began serving as the designee for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at the second meeting of the Council, in late 1976 and holds the record as the longest-serving Council member among all of the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils. Thanks to all who contributed to making the evening such a success, with special thanks to the event coordinator, Shari Gross.

BSAI and GOA Groundfish Harvest Specifications

In past years, ABCs, TACs, bycatch apportionments, and halibut discard mortality rates were approved and made available for public review and comment at both the October (preliminary and interim specifications) and December (final specifications) meetings based on the BSAI and GOA groundfish SAFE reports. However, NMFS implemented the BSAI and GOA 2001 harvest specifications through an emergency interim rule to implement Steller sea lion protection measures. The normal procedure of publishing proposed, interim, and final TAC specifications was not

| Fishery and Quarter | Rate* | Fishery and Quarter | Rate* |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| BSAI | | GOA | |
| Mid-water pollock | | Mid-water pollock | |
| QTR 1 | 1.0 | QTR 1 | 1.0 |
| QTR 2 | 1.0 | QTR 2 | 1.0 |
| Bottom pollock | | Other trawl fisheries | |
| QTR 1 | 7.5 | QTR 1 | 40.0 |
| QTR 2 | 5.0 | QTR 2 | 40.0 |
| | | BSAI Zone 1 Red king crab | |
| Yellowfin sole | | Yellowfin sole | |
| QTR 1 | 5.0 | QTR 1 | 2.5 |
| QTR 2 | 5.0 | QTR 2 | 2.5 |
| Other trawl fisheries | | Other trawl fisheries | |
| QTR 1 | 30.0 | QTR 1 | 2.5 |
| QTR 2 | 30.0 | QTR 2 | 2.5 |

followed in 2001 because of the impracticability of publishing proposed specifications prior to the issuance of the Comprehensive BiOp. To avoid the uncertainty and disruption to the fisheries that would have been caused by republishing proposed specifications, NMFS decided to use its authority to issue the final 2001 specifications by emergency rule. The 2002 harvest specifications again will be tied closely to new Steller sea lion protection measures that will be implemented by emergency rule for the 2002 fishing year. The Council recommendations will be based on the BSAI and GOA Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Reports which will be available on the Council website by November 21. The BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams are scheduled to meet on November 13-16 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. The Plan Team agendas will be posted on the Council website by November 5. TAC and bycatch specifications for 2002 will be recommended by the Council at the December meeting.

The Vessel Incentive Program to reduce Pacific halibut and crab bycatch rates in the BSAI and GOA trawl fisheries requires that bycatch rate standards be specified for purposes of vessel accountability. The bycatch rates for the first half of 2002 must be specified by NMFS prior to the start of the 2002 trawl fisheries on January 20. The Council reviewed observed bycatch rates of halibut and red king crab for 1997-2001 and adopted the vessel bycatch rates shown in the box at right for the first half of 2002. These rates have remained unchanged since 1995. The Council further noted its intent to reexamine the VIP and other programs, such as the proposed Halibut Mortality Avoidance Program, to encourage individual responsibility to reduce bycatch. Jane DiCosimo is the staff contact for this issue.

Groundfish SEIS

The Council received a status report on the draft Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The public comment period closed on July 26, 2001, with more than 21,000 comment letters received by mail or FAX. Since then, the SEIS Team has been preparing a synthesis of all substantive comments contained in those letters. The Council moved to send a letter to Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans informing him that the Council intends to adopt a preferred alternative from the SEIS at its February meeting, after reviewing the public comments. The Council's preferred alternative would be analyzed and compared to the other alternatives contained in the draft SEIS. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the preferred alternative and its analysis. The Council may reconstitute the Ecosystem Committee to examine ways to incorporate ecosystem principles into the FMP process and provide guidance on the SEIS preferred alternative. Contact Steve Davis at NMFS-Anchorage or Jane DiCosimo at the Council for more information.

Halibut Charter IFQ

In June, the State of Alaska representative on the Council notified the Council of his plan to move to rescind the Council's April 2001 motion approving a halibut charter individual fishing quota (IFQ) program. As a result, this issue was placed on the October Council agenda. The motion to rescind failed 5:6. The Council analysis will be revised to reflect the preferred alternative and submitted to NMFS for regional review by the end of the year. If approved by the Secretary, the charter IFQ program could be implemented 1-2 years later (quota shares will be issued in year 1, IFQ fishing would commence in year 2).

The halibut charter guideline harvest level (GHL) program was scheduled to be submitted to the Secretary this week. If approved, it could be implemented for 2002. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

Seabird Avoidance Measures

The council received a report from Dr. Ed Melvin, Washington Sea Grant Program, on his collaborative two-year research program (1999-2000) entitled "Solutions to seabird bycatch in Alaska's longline fishery". Dr. Melvin presented the final research results and made recommendations for changes to the existing seabird avoidance regulations as well as recommendations for optional non-regulatory actions and future research.

The WSGP study recommends the following regulatory measures for all Alaska longline vessels: 1) paired streamer lines deployed during the setting of gear, and 2) eliminate the direct discharge of residual bait and offal from the stern of the vessel while setting gear. Material standards and performance standards for streamer lines are specified. Other recommendations are made for gear, methods, and operations which should not be allowed as seabird avoidance measures.

A copy of the October draft EA/RIR/IRFA for Revisions for Seabird Avoidance Measures can be viewed at www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/ea/draft901/ea.pdf.

A public meeting was held in Seattle on October 1 for interested parties concerned on the limitations of Dr. Melvin's report for the applicability to smaller vessels, those fishing with snap on gear, and those fishing within inside waters of Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound.

The Council took action on the AP recommendations and voted to release the EA/RIR on seabird avoidance measures for public review with final action in December. The Council requested the following additional information and options be included, to the extent possible, prior to release:

1. Add a section discussing monitoring and enforcement issues with particular reference to performance standards, the role of observers, and ability to modify confidentiality restrictions to allow for industry use of peer pressure,
2. Expand the description of vessels to include gear type, crew size and setting speed by vessel size,
3. Expand the economic discussion to include the cost of rigging small vessels to deploy 2 streamer lines,
4. Add the following options to Alternative 4:
 - a. Allow single streamer lines on vessels based on gear type or vessel size, or area, with specific reference to 35 to 60 foot vessels, broken down into increments of 5 feet (i.e., 35, 40, 45, etc);
 - b. Allow for modification of the performance standard based on gear type and/or vessel size,
5. Require a seabird avoidance plan aboard every vessel in the groundfish and IFQ fisheries.
6. Vessels 32' or less fishing halibut in IPHC Area 4E would be exempted from seabird avoidance regulations. Vessels fishing in the internal waters of Southeast and Prince William Sound would also be exempted.

Staff contact is Cathy Coon.

EFH

At the October meeting the Council received a report from NMFS on the public scoping meetings that were held during June 2001 in response to its intent to prepare an SEIS. The comments were used to determine the issues of concern and the appropriate range of management alternatives to be addressed in the upcoming SEIS. The comments were addressed under 3 topics 1) to describe and identify EFH and potential Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) designations 2) to minimize to the extent practicable the adverse effects of fishing on EFH, 3) and to identify other actions to encourage the conservation and enhancement of EFH.

The Council also received a report from the EFH Committee. This committee was formed in May 2001, to work with the agency and Council staff to develop alternative(s) for the SEIS, and review the draft documents before publication. The EFH Committee met for the second time on August 13-14th to address the needs for upcoming work on the EFH SEIS and review the comments received by NMFS and identify major issues from the scoping process. Draft minutes are available on the Council website www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc. The committee met during the evening on October 10th for 2 hours to address specific timelines for the upcoming analysis and participation of the committee in formulating the alternatives. It was proposed to split the development of alternatives into two parts: the first for EFH and HAPC designation for review during the December 2001 Council meeting, and the second to mitigate effects of fisheries on EFH during the February 2002 Council meeting. The committee will meet in November to 1) identify significant issues from the NMFS scoping report, 2) review a staff summary of prior EFH and HAPC assessments, and 3) meet with scientists in a joint workshop hosted by NMFS to review available data and analytical capabilities and develop alternatives for the designation of EFH and HAPC.

The Council further clarified the EFH Committee's mission statement with the intent that the Committee act as a steering committee for the EFH process. Linda Behnken chairs the committee and Stosh Anderson has been designated as vice-chair. Staff contact is David Witherell or Cathy Coon.

CDQ Management

The Council modified the alternatives and requested additional analysis prior to release of a draft regulatory analysis of two proposed actions to change the CDQ program in Area 4D and 4E. The proposed management actions were requested by the CDQ groups and the Council in late 1998 and early 1999 to increase the possibility that the CDQ groups could fully harvest their halibut CDQ allocations and to further develop small, local halibut fisheries in Area 4E. The revised analysis will be available for public review in early November for final action in December 2001. This timeline would allow the Federal and IPHC regulations to be approved by the Secretary by the start of the halibut CDQ fishery in 2002.

Issue 1: Modification or elimination of the Area 4E 6,000 pound trip limit

- Alternative 1: No action
- Alternative 2: Revise the 6,000 pound trip limit for Area 4E halibut CDQ to apply through:
Option 1. September 1 of each year, after which no trip limit applies.
Option 2. September 15 of each year, after which no trip limit applies.
- Alternative 3: Revise the 6,000 pound trip limit for Area 4E halibut CDQ. A CDQ group must offer to transfer Area 4E halibut CDQ unharvested by August 15 to any other CDQ group with communities located in or proximate to Area 4E for harvest between:
Option 1. August 15 and September 1, unless the CDQ group that was initially awarded the allocation intends to harvest this quota prior to 9/1.
Option 2. September 1 and September 15, Unless the CDQ group that was initially awarded the allocation intends to harvest this quota prior to 9/1.
- Alternative 4: Remove the 6,000 lb halibut CDQ trip limit in Area 4E entirely.

Issue 2: Allow Area 4D halibut CDQ to be harvested in Area 4E

- Alternative 1: No action
- Alternative 2: Allow the harvest of Area 4D halibut CDQ in Area 4E.
- Alternative 3: Allow the harvest of Area 4D halibut CDQ in Area 4E *and* the harvest of Area 4E halibut CDQ in Area 4D.

NMFS staff also briefed the Council on two issues that the Council may wish to address when it makes recommendations for the 2002 harvest specifications in December 2001. These are: (1) how the catch of some rockfish species should be managed given changes that were made in the rockfish quota categories in 2001, and (2) accounting for the catch of "other species" in the CDQ fisheries. Both of these issues were addressed in separate interim emergency rules that expire on December 31. These issues will be scheduled for the November Groundfish Plan Team meeting agenda and the Council's December 2001 harvest specifications agenda for further action. Contact Jane DiCosimo at the Council or Obren Davis at NMFS-Juneau for more information.

Call for Nominations

Terms for members of the Council's **Advisory Panel (AP)** and **Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)** and the **Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC)** expire in December.

The SSC advises the Council on scientific and other technical matters relating to issues before the Council. The AP is composed of representatives of the major segments of the fishing industry and other interested parties, including sport fishing and environmental concerns, and provides advice from those perspectives. Members of these panels are expected to attend up to five meetings, three to 5 days in length, each year. Both the SSC and AP serve one-year terms and are eligible for reappointment each year.

The PNCIAC was formed in 1989 to provide the Bering Sea crab industry from the Pacific Northwest access to the Alaska regulatory process. Appointments to this committee are for two years. The committee typically meets a few times a year, usually in the Seattle area, to review proposed changes in crab fishery regulations and meets at least once a year with representatives of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on current crab issues.

Letters of interest or nomination, along with a resume of experience, for persons wishing to be considered for any of these panels, should be sent to the NPFMC, 605 W. 4th Avenue, #306, Anchorage, AK 99501, by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 16. Appointments will be announced at the end of the next Council meeting the week of December 3rd at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage and will become effective in January 2002. For more information, contact the Council office.

American Fisheries Act

The Council was scheduled to review a draft EIS and proposed rulemaking that will implement provisions of the American Fisheries Act (AFA) for 2002 through 2004. This regulatory package will put in place all provisions of the AFA, including all Council actions since 1998, which previously were implemented via emergency rulemaking. The Council was unable to review that package in October because the proposed rule is not yet published; however, they will review these documents at the December meeting in Anchorage, during the public comment period on the EIS/proposed rule, and provide comment as necessary.

The Council did review a suite of other issues under this agenda item, including previously tasked amendment packages and a draft Report to Congress on AFA implementation. With regard to the previously tasked items, the Council provided direction to staff on the timing and packaging of these amendments, summarized as follows:

IR/IU

Staff will begin analysis immediately of a potential amendment to Improved Retention and Utilization (IR/IU) regulations for BSAI flatfish and for the GOA shallowwater flatfish, for both catcher processors and catcher vessels, that would:

a. Examine a range of retention rates for those fisheries.

The suggested range:

- 100% retention
- 85% retention
- 50% retention
- No retention requirement

b. Initiate analysis of halibut bycatch reduction for the BSAI, with options for a range of 0%, 10% and 15%, and analyze the probability and range of likely halibut mortality savings from implementation of the halibut mortality avoidance program (HMAP), including deducting those savings from the appropriate halibut bycatch cap.

c. Proceed with evaluation of IR/IU for pollock and P cod.

This amendment package will be scheduled for initial review by the Council in April 2002, with final action in June 2002, so that any adjustments can be made in time for the January 2003 target implementation date for flatfish IR/IU provisions.

LLP RECENCY

Staff will develop information and a discussion paper on non-AFA catcher/processors and non-AFA catcher vessels BSAI trawl LLP recency requirements. The paper should contain a matrix showing participation based on a catch threshold of 50, 150, 250 mt/year of trawl groundfish deliveries for the years 1995-2000. As part of the discussion for LLP recency, similar information will be included for trawl catcher processors and catcher vessels in the Gulf of Alaska for the years 1995-2000. The intent is to allow the Council to examine information on participation patterns at the February 2002 Council meeting, and provide further direction to staff on specific alternatives for

analysis, as well as provide direction on the timelines for such analyses for the various sectors.

The paper will include a discussion on the potential conversion of AFA-eligible catcher/processors' and catcher vessels' non-pollock target species and non-target species sideboard caps into allocations, in order to compare and contrast opportunities to rationalize these fisheries with opportunities to rationalize other fisheries with LLP recency actions.

ADDITIONAL AFA MEASURES

A. Sideboard measures to further protect non-AFA catcher vessel Pacific cod fishermen (submitted by Russell Pritchett) with the following provisions:

1. Limiting access to the directed trawl fishery for Pacific cod in January and February to the cod-exempt AFA vessels and to open access vessels which have a history of economic dependency upon the winter Bering Sea Pacific cod fisheries, as demonstrated by average January, February deliveries of at least 500,000 lbs for 4 out of the 5 pre-AFA years of 1995-1999 and
2. Allocating 1) a range of 2.5 to 5 million lbs (with no cap) or 2) historical catch of TAC of Pacific cod to non-AFA vessels which meet the criteria set forth in #1 above.
3. Require co-ops to use such measures as limiting the number or size of AFA vessels on the cod grounds at any given time to ensure that non-AFA vessels do not get preempted and insure their historical participation.

This amendment is tentatively scheduled for initial review at the April 2002 meeting.

B. An analysis to examine the conversion of AFA eligible c/p and c/v non-pollock target species and non-target sideboard caps into allocations in order to allow the use of such target species to be maximized through possible rationalization. The analysis should consider the potential to rollover any unused cod by AFA-eligible c/ps to the other trawl sectors. The analysis should also examine cod rollovers from the trawl sector to the fixed gear sector from 1997-2000 (2001 if data available) so the Council can consider a reapportionment of BSAI cod TAC based on cod catch history during that period. There would be no change in the jig apportionment. A discussion of converting sideboard caps to allocations is also included in the LLP recency discussion paper (see discussion above) scheduled for review in February 2002. The formal amendment analysis described under item B will be scheduled for sometime in 2002.

C. A proposal to change the single geographic location (SGL) restriction for floating processors, as submitted by Icicle Seafoods. This regulatory amendment is scheduled for initial review at the February 2002 meeting and final action at the April 2002 meeting.

(AFA Continued, page 6)

(...AFA Continued from page 5)

REPORT TO CONGRESS

With regard to the draft Report to Congress, the Council made some minor suggestions, and also passed a specific motion to address one major aspect of the draft report, that portion dealing with changes in business practices as mandated by the AFA. In order to assess changes in business practices of AFA-eligible vessels and processors, it is necessary for staff to obtain information on ownership of vessels, consolidation in the fleet through co-op leasing arrangements, and vertical integration. A survey conducted by ADF&G has been largely unsuccessful in obtaining the relevant information from the AFA catcher vessel sector. To address this deficiency in relevant information, the Council strongly encourages these fishery participants to supply such information, and passed a motion that the draft Report to Congress not be submitted until at least 90% response has been obtained. The Council will review the status of this information at their upcoming December meeting and will take appropriate actions at that time to finalize the report to Congress.

Chris Oliver is staff contact for AFA issues. For the AFA Report to Congress, Darrell Brannan is our contact person at 352-466-0335 (or Darrell.Brannan@noaa.gov).

Other Staff Tasking

In order to accomodate available staff time, and prioritize agenda items for upcoming meetings, the Council took the following actions under the Staff Tasking agenda item:

*Requested a report on salmon bycatch and how SSL management measures may be affecting such bycatch. This report would include projections from the recent SSL SEIS as well as actual bycatch information as it becomes available, perhaps on a quarterly basis. The Council also voted to postpone until the February 2002 meeting a discussion paper already tasked on Gulf of Alaska salmon bycatch. Finally, the pollock co-op final reports in February 2002 will contain information on 2001 salmon bycatch. Therefore, we intend to schedule a report and discussion on collective salmon bycatch issues as an agenda item for February 2002. A preliminary report on implications of the SSL measures may be available for review in December.

*Delay final action on the proposed Pacific cod pot gear quota split (between catcher and catcher/processor vessels) until at least February, or until Secretarial action on Amendment 67 (fixed gear LLP recency requirements for Pacific cod) is resolved.

*Delay until February 2002 the discussion paper on Gulf of Alaska groundfish rationalization. This will coincide with information on trawl LLP recency also being discussed in February.

*Delay until at least February initial review of the shark/skate/other species plan amendment package.

*Delay until April review of a proposed amendment to require retention of shortraker/rougheye. This package is dependent upon resolution of the demersal shelf rockfish retention amendment, and associated issues.

*The CDQ Policy amendment package is still scheduled for initial review in December, with final action in February.

These and other issues are reflected in the 3-meeting outlook (attached). Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

NPFMC Tentative Meeting Dates for 2001-2005*

| | February Week of/ Location | April Week of/ Location | June Week of/ Location | October Week of/ Location | December Week of/ Location |
|-------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| 2001 | 5/Anchorage | 9/Anchorage | 4/Kodiak | 1/Seattle | 3/Anchorage |
| 2002 | 4/Anchorage | 8/Anchorage | 3/Dutch Harbor | 9/30/Seattle | 2/Anchorage |
| 2003 | Jan 27/Seattle | 3/31/Anchorage | 9/Kodiak | 6/Anchorage | 8/Anchorage |
| 2004 | 2/Anchorage | 3/29/Anchorage | 7/Portland | 4/Sitka | 6/Anchorage |
| 2005 | 7/Seattle | 4/Anchorage | 6/Dutch Harbor | 3/Anchorage | 5/Anchorage |

*Meeting dates subject to change depending on availability of meeting space. Any changes will be published in the Council's newsletter.

Council Final Motion on Steller Sea Lions

Adopt Alternative 4 as described in the action memo attached to Agenda item C-2, titled "Revised Description of Alternative 4, based on September 2001 Council action" (pages 2-26 through 2-36), with the following modifications:

- 1) Page 2-28, Applicable to BSAI Atka mackerel fisheries: (second bullet)
"TAC would be further apportioned inside and outside critical habitat, with 60% inside and 40% outside.
- 2) Page 2-32, Exclude Options 1 and 3, Include Option 2: Unalaska small boat exemption for Pacific cod. This would establish a fishing zone in the Dutch Harbor area (Area 9) for jig, and longline catcher vessels less than 60 ft. as described on the attached map (presented by the Dutch Harbor fisherman). {All waters of the Bering Sea and Area 9 south of the line connecting the point 3 nm north of Bishop Point to Cape Tanak.} This Option would include a 10 nmi radius closure around the Bishop Pt haulout in Area 9. This area would fish under a 250,000 lbs. Pacific cod harvest cap.
- 3) Page 2-33, Closure of the Aleutian Islands to directed Pollock fishing West of 170 West Longitude in 2002. Directed pollock fishing would open in the Aleutian Islands in 2003 with a seasonal TAC split of 40/60.

Also include the following clarifications:

- 4) P. cod rollover in the BSAI: – Unharvested cod can be rolled over from one season to the next, consistent with bycatch consideration objectives of optimizing catch by gear groups and sectors.
- 5) P. cod trawl fishery closures during the Atka mackerel CH fishery: - P. cod trawling should be closed from 0-20 nmi off rookeries and haulouts in the AI west of 178 West Longitude during the Atka mackerel CH fishery.
- 6) P. cod fishery in the GOA B Season accounting: - The start date for the GOA cod B season would be 6/10, but directed fishing would be prohibited for all gear until 9/1.
- 7) AI CDQ mackerel season: - CDQ mackerel fishing should be governed by a single season as per the 2001 provisions.

With the exception of vessels using jig gear, all vessels participating in a directed fishery for pollock, Pacific cod, or Atka mackerel must have onboard an operable VMS unit during the time period that the respective directed fishery is open in federal waters. Specific VMS provisions will be included in the emergency rule implementing the 2002 Steller sea lion protection measures and would be effective on June 10, 2002.

The Council encourages NMFS to develop standards and protocols for integrating a software backup system which uses existing vessel electronics into the vessel monitoring and data reporting program for groundfish fisheries. The Council also requests NMFS to explore federal funding options for these measures. Should federal funding for VMS become available, NMFS should prioritize funding to vessels fishing for cod with disproportionate costs, possibly based on earnings estimates. NMFS should provide notice to fishermen of possible federal funding 90 days prior to June 10, 2002.

Further, the Council requested that NMFS provide a discussion paper for February on procedures NMFS would use when a VMS unit breaks down on a vessel.

The Council moved to seek an independent scientific review of the F40 harvest policy relative to national standards. The intent of this review is to determine whether changes need to be made to account for ecosystem needs.

Items for a trailing amendment to be analyzed and considered for the 2003 season:

1. Area 8 exemption: allow catcher vessels (of any LOA) using longline gear to fish 3-10 nm from haulouts of Reef-Lava and Bishop Point.
2. Area 4 exemption: allow vessels under 60 feet LOA using fixed gear to fish in waters of the Chignik area.
3. Stand down provisions between A/B and C/D seasons for pollock in the GOA
4. Exemption for all longline, pot, jig gear, and trawl catcher vessels and catcher processors under 60 ft. Identify as a preliminary preferred alternative that the exemption would only apply to catcher vessels.
5. Examine options for a Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod split other than the current 60/40 split.
6. For the BSAI Atka mackerel fishery, analyze options to change percentage inside/outside critical habitat of 50/50 and 70/30.
7. For the Aleutian Islands pollock fishery, examine three options:
 - a) closure;
 - b) a single season outside of critical habitat;
 - b) a split season (40/60 % of TAC).
8. In Area 9, analyze a range of caps for pot, longline and jig gear.

DRAFT NPFMC Three Meeting Outlook

December 3, 2001

February 4, 2002

April 8, 2002

Anchorage

Anchorage

Anchorage

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Groundfish Forum report on Halibut Excluder Device Research | | |
| Right whale critical habitat: Discuss | BSAI pot cod split (Amendment 68): Final Action (T) | Processor s/b IR/IU/HMAP: Initial Review |
| Community QS purchase: Initial Review | Community QS purchase: Final action | Alternative Bycatch measures: Discuss |
| Ecosystem Committee: Provide direction | GOA Rationalization: Review white paper | P.cod s/b proposal: Initial Review (T) |
| Review IFQ Committee Report | Shark/Skate other species FMP: Initial Review (T) | Shark/Skate other species FMP: Final Action (T) |
| AFA Extension: Review discussion paper | LLP Recency: Review Discussion Paper and data | LLP Recency: Discussion /Direction |
| AFA EIS/Proposed Rule: Review and comment | AFA SGL change: Initial Review | AFA SGL change: Final Action |
| AFA: Review initial coop agreements/reports | AFA: Final review coop agreements/reports | AFA S/B caps to quotas: Progress Report/Discussion |
| CDQ Policy Amendments: Initial Review | CDQ Policy Amendments: Final Review | |
| 4E/4D CDQ Amendment: Final Action | Observer Program: Initial Review on reg amendments | Observer Program: Final Action on Reg Amendments |
| Programmatic SEIS: Status Report | General Salmon Bycatch info: Review | SR/RE Retention: Initial Review (T) |
| Differential gear impact analysis: Provide direction | SSL Trailing Amendments: Discuss | SSL Trailing Amendments: Initial Review (T) |
| Catch and bycatch disclosure: Review discussion paper (T) | | TAC-setting process: Initial Review (T) |
| Crab Rationalization amendment: Preliminary Review | Crab Rationalization amendment: Initial Review | Crab Rationalization amendment: Final Review |
| Halibut Subsistence Amendments: Final Review | | |
| Groundfish Specifications for 2002: Final Recommendations | FMP Updates: Initial Review (T) | FMP Updates: Final Action (T) |
| Seabird avoidance measures: Final Action | GOA salmon bycatch: Review and Discuss | |
| EFH: Discuss alternatives for designating EFH/HAPC | EFH: Discuss alternatives for mitigating fisheries impacts | EFH: Review Progress |

*NOTE: This tentative timeline will be updated periodically, particularly after each Council meeting, as the Council works through its decision process.

TAC - Total Allowable Catch
 IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
 AFA - American Fisheries Act
 HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
 LLP - License Limitation Program
 PSC - Prohibited Species Catch
 QS - Quota Share

MSA - Magnuson Stevens Act
 SGL - Single Geographic Location
 SSL - Steller Sea Lion
 GHl - Guideline Harvest Level
 SEIS - Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
 CDQ - Community Development Quota
 GCCC- Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition

SAFE - Stock assessment and fishery evaluation
 CV - Catcher Vessel CP- Catcher Processor
 SR/RE - Shortraker/Rougheye
 MSST - Minimum Stock Size Threshold
 FMP - Fishery Management Plan
(T) Tentatively scheduled