

Executive Director's Report

Smile!

Pictures of the Council, SSC, and AP will be taken Tuesday between 11:30 am and noon. We will need to go to the Iliamna Room (last meeting room on right at end of mezzanine toward the windows). Here's the schedule:

SSC - 11:30 am Council - 11:45 am AP - Noon Staff - 12:15 pm

April Meeting

This is beginning to sound redundant, but here it goes again: the next Council meeting, in this case April, is going to be a long and very full meeting. As shown in item B-1(a), there are many items for initial and final action. And more initiatives could arise under staff tasking and review of proposals (agenda item D-2). I would offer the following cautionary note: at this meeting when we get to the sea lion issues under C-2 and the groundfish SEIS under C-5, it will become very clear that NMFS is under the gun to produce very comprehensive studies in a very short time. This will tie up most of the Region and Center staff, and impact our own staff's ability to respond to Council needs. We will need to be very selective about new initiatives, and recognize that very few may make it quickly through NMFS and NOAA GC review in the next six to nine months.

Committees, Committees

The Council will need to meet in executive session this week to consider several committee changes. Hal Weeks has resigned from the SSC because of other job-related responsibilities. He was a very productive member and I hope we can find a suitable replacement. Steve Ganey has gone to work for Pew Charitable Trust and resigned from the AP. Chairman Lauber will consider making an interim appointment to fill these vacancies. The Council may consider other committee appointments as well.

Observer Committee Activities

As indicated in item B-1(b), the Observer Committee, chaired by Joe Kyle, will meet on March 20-21 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle and discuss the topics listed in the memo.

Fishing Capacity Task Force

Item B-1(c) is a letter from Penney Dalton, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, describing a NMFS initiative to qualitatively assess and quantitatively measure levels of capacity in federally managed fisheries. This initiative stems from various international accords noted in the letter, and it is part of the NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan which has an objective of eliminating overcapitalization in 15% of federally managed fisheries by 2004. Ms Dalton requested us to nominate a staff member that could provide technical input to a national team and I have nominated Darrell Brannan. Their two milestones for FY2000 is to report in March on capacity levels for species listed in federal fishery management plans, and to provide a more quantitative report in August. Early in 2001, NMFS will publish a formal capacity report as a special volume in Our Living Oceans - Economic Series.

NPFMC Three Meeting Outlook

February 7, 2000
Anchorage

April 10, 2000
Anchorage

June 5, 2000
Portland

Halibut Charter GHL: Final Action	Seabird bycatch research: report	
Groundfish Processor Sideboard Caps/Pollock Excessive Share Analysis: Initial Review	Inshore Co-op structure: Final Action	
Research Priorities	Groundfish Processor Sideboard Caps/Excess Share Analysis: Final Action	→ June
LLP P.cod Endorsements: Initial Review	CV Sideboard pools: Initial Review	CV Sideboard pools: Final Review
	LLP P.cod endorsements: Final Action	
	Cook Inlet Non-Pelagic Trawl Ban: Final Action	
	Shark and Skate Management: Final Action	
Groundfish SEIS: Status Report	Groundfish SEIS: Status Report	Groundfish SEIS: Status Report
Steller Sea Lions: Status Report	FMP Updates: Initial Review ?	FMP Updates: Final Review
HAPC: Initial Review	HAPC: Final Review	
	Observer Program: Committee Report	
	Observer Regulatory Amendments: Initial Review	Observer Regulatory Amendments: Final Review
	St. Matthew Blue and Opilio Crab Rebuilding Plan: Initial Review	St. Matthew Blue and Opilio Crab Rebuilding Plan: Final Review
	IFQ Charter Elements / Options	SR/RE Retention: Initial Review
	P. cod bycatch and PSC reg. Amendments: Initial Review	P. cod bycatch and PSC reg. Amendments: Final Review
	Gulf Ecosystems Management: Report	
	P. cod pot split CV/CP: Initial Review	P. cod pot split CV/CP: Final Review
Staff Tasking: Review Groundfish/IFQ proposals received: Direction to staff		
	Halibut Subsistence: Initial Review	Halibut Subsistence: Final Review
Joint Meeting with AK Board of Fish	Groundfish overfishing definitions (MSST): Initial Review	Groundfish overfishing definitions (MSST): Final Review

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

AFA - Amercian Fisheries Act
HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
LLP - License Limitation Program

GHL - Guideline Harvest Level
SEIS - Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
CDQ - Community Development Quota

CV - Catcher Vessel
SR/RE - Shortraker/Rougheye

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Observer Committee Members

FROM: Chris Oliver 
Deputy Director

DATE: February 1, 2000

SUBJECT: Meeting Scheduled

Clarence and I met recently with Committee Chairman Joe Kyle, and staff from the NMFS Regional Office and the NMFS Observer Program Office, to discuss observer program issues and to schedule a meeting of our newly reconstituted Committee. We have scheduled a meeting for March 20-21 (Monday and Tuesday) to be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), 7600 Sand Point Way in Seattle. We will begin at 9:00 am Monday morning in Room 2079 in Building 4, and plan on meeting through Tuesday the 21st. I apologize if those meeting dates do not fit your schedule - we simply had to work around Chairman Kyle's availability and the schedules of key staff persons. I likely will have a more detailed agenda prior to the meeting, but based on our recent discussions we will address the following:

1. Receive update from NMFS on current issues and initiatives, including status of MRAG review, program goals and objectives, and observer availability.
2. Discuss near-term issues including: (a) rollover of existing program (which expires at end of 2000); (b) ATLAS hardware requirements and associated rulemaking; and, (c) an omnibus regulatory amendment package (presently to include issues of housing support for observers, sharing of plant observers, changing from a monthly to weekly threshold to determine plant coverage requirements, clarification of definition of a fishing day, and distribution of personal information on observers).
3. Identify and discuss intermediate issues - the issue of observer availability and training requirements for CDQ/AFA observers was discussed by the Council in October and remains an issue for resolution. This discussion likely ties back to program goals and objectives, for CDQ as well as other fisheries.
4. Discuss long-term program issues and establish timelines for further resolution. These include overall program funding issues, service delivery model, fee program development, cost distribution, appropriate coverage levels by fishery, etc. A discussion paper prepared in the fall of 1998 could serve as background for these discussions, and will be provided to you prior to our meeting.

We look forward to seeing you there.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
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THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Richard B. Lauber
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RECEIVED

JAN 20 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

N.P.F.M.C

This fiscal year, NOAA Fisheries will initiate a program to qualitatively assess and quantitatively measure levels of capacity in federally managed fisheries. Since this program has implications for fisheries within the area of jurisdiction of the Regional Fishery Management Councils (Councils), I would like to take this opportunity to explain its background, rationale and objectives. There are both domestic and international reasons to implement this program.

Internationally, a series of negotiations begun in 1993 culminated in three international instruments: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; the FAO Agreement on Compliance; and the United Nations Agreement on Highly Migratory and Straddling Fish Stocks. Given this increased interest in global fisheries, U.S. officials meeting of the FAO at the 1997 Committee on Fisheries (COFI) proposed three international plans of action (IPOA) concerning sharks, sea birds, and fishing fleet capacity. The IPOA on fishing fleet capacity directs all FAO member nations to assess capacity levels in their domestic fisheries, and in 1998 an FAO technical working group met in La Jolla, California to begin the difficult task of developing international definitions and measures of fishing capacity. This work was carried forward by a technical consultation held in Mexico City in December 1999 focusing on numerous case studies of fisheries in many countries.

In the domestic sphere, under the NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan, we have included the capacity issue under the Build Sustainable Fisheries element. This planning objective calls for the elimination of overcapitalization (or overcapacity) in 15 percent of federally managed fisheries by 2004. In addition, NOAA Fisheries established a Capacity Task Force in 1998 that prepared

THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FOR FISHERIES



a national report on defining and measuring fishing capacity. This report was approved by the NOAA Science Board in July 1999.

Subsequently, the Office of Sustainable Fisheries began the process of implementing the recommendations of the task force report. This includes generating measures of fishing capacity for federally managed domestic fisheries, conducting a capacity measurement workshop in cooperation with the Office of Science and Technology for regional NOAA Fisheries economists, and developing an outreach program to explain the capacity measurement initiative to industry and the Councils.

Copies of the Technical Report of the National Task Force for Defining and Measuring Fishing Capacity, the training manual from the capacity measurement workshop, and the NOAA Fisheries FY 2000 work plan to qualitatively and quantitatively estimate fishing fleet capacity for each of our federally managed fisheries are enclosed. The NOAA Fisheries plan to develop qualitative and quantitative estimates of fishing capacity for each region is in line with the FAO member nation requirement to assess their domestic fishing capacity. NOAA Fisheries will prepare a report on the qualitative capacity estimates by March 2000 based on information in currently available scientific literature.

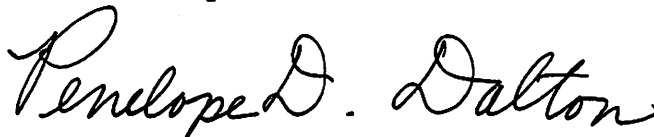
Quantitative estimates are planned for completion toward the end of FY 2000, perhaps as early as August 2000, and will be published in FY 2001 as a special volume in Our Living Oceans - Economic Series. Subsequently, each Stock Assessment Fisheries Evaluation (SAFE) report will contain a quantitative capacity estimate updated periodically in the region. These capacity estimates will provide the Councils with data on the extent and magnitude of excess capacity that may exist in domestic fisheries for which they have management responsibility. The estimates also will provide a basis for developing plans to eliminate excess capacity in 15 percent of our managed fisheries by the year 2004.

Once the qualitative assessments and quantitative measures of capacity are completed, a national team will be established. The national team will be composed of technical experts from NOAA Fisheries headquarters and regional offices, and the Councils. Accordingly, if there is a member of your staff with the appropriate technical expertise available to participate on this team please provide his or her name to Dr. Gary Matlock, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, by January 24, 2000.

Based on the recommendations of the national capacity task force report, work will commence on placement of the measured fisheries in one of three agreed categories of "no," "moderate," or "substantial" excess capacity. The expert team will prepare a report that categorizes each fishery and includes a narrative that describes the proceedings of the meetings, giving explanations for the categorization decisions reached.

In addition to having membership on the national team, the Councils will have the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions on the draft results of the qualitative and quantitative capacity reports, and those comments will be included in the final report.

Sincerely,



Penelope D. Dalton
Assistant Administrator
for Fisheries

Enclosure

NATIONAL CAPACITY FY 2000 WORK PLAN

BACKGROUND: In recent years, NOAA Fisheries has taken a number of actions domestically and internationally to promote more accurate assessments of, and effective policy responses to the problem of overcapacity in fisheries. Last year, NOAA Fisheries elected to explicitly address overcapacity in the NOAA Fisheries strategic planning process. Toward that end, NOAA Fisheries has developed the following performance measure under the element: "Build Sustainable Fisheries (BSF)."

"By the year 2004, 15 percent fewer overcapitalized fisheries"

(NOTE: BSF coordinators explain that the expression "overcapitalized fisheries" may be interpreted to mean "fisheries with excess capacity.")

To meet this and other related domestic goals and international commitments, the NOAA Fisheries Offices of Science and Technology (S&T) and Sustainable Fisheries (SF) agreed in August 1998 to launch a two-step process that would address, first, the scientific and technical aspects of defining and measuring capacity, and, second, an implementation phase in which the agreed definitions, measures, and categories would be applied to domestic, Federally managed fisheries.

In late 1998, a NOAA Fisheries "National Task Force for defining and measuring fishing capacity," established under the direction of S&T, began work on developing definitions, identifying methods for measuring technical capacity, and different categories of capacity in capture fisheries. The national capacity task force prepared a report in June 1999 that summarized its conclusions, and this report was endorsed, with few modifications, by the NOAA Fisheries Science Board in July 1999. The task force report will soon be published as a NOAA Technical Report.

FY 2000 Work Plan

General

The second phase of this initiative on capacity, to be coordinated by SF, is to implement the recommendations of the task force report. In FY 2000, the Agency will accomplish two key milestones:

- A report in March 2000 that reviews currently available scientific literature and draws conclusions about capacity levels in Federally managed fisheries for species listed in Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). This report will also identify those species which do not exhibit overcapacity, and will categorize as "unknown" those other species for which the scientific literature does not provide any information on capacity levels.
- A second report will provide quantitative evaluation of capacity levels in Federally managed fisheries for species listed in FMPs using appropriate methodologies identified in the national capacity task force report and the technical manual prepared for the September 1999 workshop (mainly, Peak-to Peak, Data Envelope Analysis (DEA), Stochastic Production Frontier (SPF), and other appropriate methods). The target date for this second report is August 2000. This deadline however, could be adjusted depending on the quality and coverage of the information in the scientific literature used to generate the March 2000 report.

The assessments based on existing scientific literature in the March 2000 report will not make any distinction between commercial and recreational components for fisheries that have both. However, the technical measures in the second report should attempt to make this distinction if possible.

II. Major Elements and Timelines

(A) Training and Research

Schedule: An SF sponsored Capacity Training workshop was held in late September 1999. GAMS and LIMDEP computer software will be made available for doing the quantitative measures of capacity by the Office of Science & Technology. Additional training and software needs will be addressed as required.

(B) Application of Measures to Domestic Fisheries

Schedule: NOAA Fisheries will prepare, first, capacity assessments based on available scientific literature, and, second, technical quantitative measures of capacity for domestic,

Federally managed fisheries for species listed in FMPs; and, on the basis of these two tasks, will issue a formal report on capacity in U.S. fisheries through the "Our Living Oceans - Economic Series" in early 2001.

1. Qualitative Assessment of Capacity

Schedule: March 2000

NOAA Fisheries will prepare a report - to be completed in March 2000 - that qualitatively assesses the level of harvest capacity in all fisheries managed under FMPs based on information in currently available scientific literature. For each fishery, the report will summarize the conclusions of existing scientific literature with respect to capacity levels. It will also provide references and a very brief statement that explains the basis for the determination.

This initial qualitative assessment will be based on existing technical literature and on information already developed by NOAA Fisheries for FMPs. The format of this report will resemble that used in the annual NOAA Fisheries overfishing report to the Congress: "Report to Congress - Status of Fisheries of the United States."

2. Quantitative Measures of Capacity

Schedule: August 2000

NOAA Fisheries will apply appropriate methodologies to develop technical, quantitative measures of capacity levels for domestic, Federally managed fisheries for species listed in FMPs. During this first year, technical, as opposed to economic measures will be conducted. However, it is possible that in a few fisheries, economic measures of capacity may be utilized.

3. Formally Categorizing Fisheries According to Levels of Capacity/Overcapacity

Schedule: September 2000

Once the qualitative assessments and quantitative measures of

capacity are completed, a national team will be established. Based on the recommendations of the national capacity task force report, work will commence on placement of the measured fisheries in one of the agreed categories. The team will prepare a report that categorizes each fishery and includes a narrative that describes the proceedings of the meetings, giving explanations for the categorization decisions reached.

4. NOAA Fisheries Capacity Report

Note: This last action item will be completed in FY 2001, but it follows closely the previous assignments and is therefore included in this work plan.

Schedule: Early 2001

The qualitative and quantitative reports will form the basis of a formal capacity report that will be published in early 2001 as a special volume in Our Living Oceans - Economic Series. Most important, this report should be more than a simple collation of inputs from the regional teams. It should be the first serious and reasonably comprehensive attempt to scientifically assess the level of harvest capacity in U.S. fisheries. Finally, the capacity report should include a discussion of the most pressing needs for additional data, research, and analysis. In particular, this report should evaluate the prospects, including pros and cons, of carrying out economic measures of capacity for domestic, Federally managed fisheries.

III. Coordination and Staff Resources

SF will be responsible at Headquarters for directing the implementation of the task force's recommendations, and will work closely with S&T on the second phase. A national team that includes Headquarters staff from SF and S&T, and selected Field staff from each NOAA Fisheries Region will coordinate the FY2000 work plan.

The following NOAA Fisheries Field staff participated at the workshop on capacity measures in late September 1999, and it is expected that they, among others will be engaged in the application of capacity measures as outlined in this work plan:

Eric Thunberg (Northeast)
John Walden (Northeast)

Andrew Kitts (Northeast)
Steve Freese (Northwest)
Joe Terry (Alaska)
Dan Holland (Alaska)
Todd Lee (Alaska)
Mike Travis (Southeast)
Dale Squires (Southwest)
Sam Herrick (Southwest)
Cindy Thomson (Southwest)
Sam Pooley (Southwest)
Marcia Hamilton (Southwest)

IV. Outreach

The national capacity team will develop in the course of FY 2000 an outreach plan, including briefings directed at industry and other constituent groups, Hill staff, and the Councils. Specifics of this outreach plan will be provided in draft to the Regions as soon as they are available.