

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

APPENDIX E
October 1979

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Chairman

Date: 10/30/79

DRAFT MINUTES
SCIENTIFIC & STATISTICAL COMMITTEE
October 2-3, 1979
Sitka, Alaska

The SSC meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. on October 2, 1979 by Chairman Steve Pennoyer. The following SSC members were present:

Steve Pennoyer, Chairman
Jack Robinson, Vice Chairman
Al Millikan
Dr. Richard Marasco
Dr. Ed Miles
Dr. Frank Fukuhara
Dr. Robert L. Burgner
Don Rosenberg
Jack Lechner

The Chairman welcomes Dr. Robert L. Burgner and Dr. Richard Marasco, the two new members of the Committee.

The following items were discussed by the SSC but were not on the Council's agenda.

FMP Development Team Membership Review

The SSC reviewed a list of Development Team Members and appointed or reconfirmed an SSC Subgroup to review each of the plans. The Subgroups are as follows:

Clam FMP (This group had been appointed previously)

Don Rosenberg (Leader)
Jack Robinson
Jim Balsiger

King Crab FMP

Frank Fukuhara (Leader)
Jack Lechner
Jack Robinson/Steve Pennoyer
George Rogers
Robert L. Burgner

Tanner Crab FMP

Frank Fukuhara (Leader)
Jack Lechner
Jack Robinson/Steve Pennoyer
George Rogers
Robert L. Burgner

Bering Sea/Aleutian Groundfish & Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP's

Richard Marasco (Leader)
Ed Miles
Jack Robinson
Al Millikan

Halibut FMP

Steve Pennoyer (Leader)
Ed Miles
Don Rosenberg

Herring FMP (This Subgroup had been appointed previously)

Al Millikan (Leader)
Steve Pennoyer
George Rogers

Troll Salmon FMP

Robert L. Burgner (Leader)
Don Rosenberg

The SSC also discussed composition of the Plan Development Teams after implementation of the Plan, and the role of the PDT in plan review. In terms of plan amendment, the present teams which developed the plans may no longer be appropriate to the amendment process. It is possible that each agency should identify their manager responsible for amendment proposals and coordinate this through the Council staff. The Council schedule for amendments needs to be better formalized and coordinated with various other agency and regulatory body requirements. Teams are still appropriate to address questions from the Council or SSC on specific study needs. However, composition of these teams may vary with topic.

King Crab FMP Update Report

In a memorandum dated August 20, 1979, the Plan Review Team consolidated the comments of the SSC membership for consideration by the PDT of the King Crab FMP. The PDT responded to the SSC's comments in a memorandum dated September 24, 1979. On September 25, 1979 a meeting was held in Seattle between the two groups to determine the procedure by which the PDT would further proceed with the completion of the King Crab FMP.

The Plan Review Team's principal concerns dealt with the Plan's lack of alternative management schemes and the adequacy of the data to support current king crab management regimes which were proposed for continuation in the FMP.

The meeting was not successful in totally reconciling the differences in viewpoint between the PDT and Review Team. The meeting did, however, clarify the respective team views and set some guidelines for redrafting the FMP.

It was conceded that to satisfactorily answer all questions raised by all reviewers might not be accomplished within a reasonable time frame because of inadequacies in the data base, our relatively short history of experience in king crab management and the voluminous data base and literature which has not yet been examined.

All present at the meeting agreed it was desirable to have a King Crab FMP in place for the 1981 season. Therefore, further analyses should be confined to existing data. Much of this analyses should be contained in the model studies now being done by Drs. Marasco and Reeves.

As a result of revisions, some of which will be keyed to the results of the Marasco-Reeves simulation studies, the time schedule for completion of the first draft of the King Crab FMP has now been rescheduled from January of 1980 to March, 1980. This should provide sufficient lead time for implementation of the Plan for the 1981 season.

SSC Meeting

The next SSC meeting will be in Anchorage on November 27th for one day only (if possible). There will be a Subgroup review team meeting in Juneau on November 19th to discuss the Salmon Plan. The November 27th meeting was decided on in order to avoid conflicts of commitments with the Alaska Board of Fisheries meetings the week of the Council meeting.

Review of OTA Staff Planning Paper Entitled "Future Needs in Ocean Research Technology"

The SSC undertook a preliminary review of the Office of Technology Assessment Planning Paper on the Study of Future Needs in Ocean Research Technology. Frank Fukuhara of the Northwest & Alaska Fisheries Center informed the Committee that the document is currently under review of the Center's Ocean Research Staff and that their review will be made available to the Committee. The SSC therefore decided to withhold detailed comment until the Center's staff review is available to the Committee.

FCMA Oversight Hearings, (Council Agenda Item F-1)

The Committee reviewed the report of the September 11th meeting of the Working Group to Develop Council Testimony for the October Congressional Oversight Hearings. They reviewed each individual item and had no problems with any of the recommendations except (5) regarding data on the nature and extent of the recreational harvest being sufficient for the preparation of fishery management plans. The SSC feels that it is adequate for now, but see it as a possible problem much later.

The SSC again brought up the matter of reimbursement for certain SSC members who are not representatives of any agency. They feel that they could be reimbursed for their time.

SSC Comments on the Scheduling Subcommittee Report (Council Agenda Item F-3)

The SSC reviewed the Scheduling Subcommittee Report. We approved the proposed schedule for the development of the Surf Clam and the amended schedule for the King Crab Fishery Management Plan. The annual review cycles for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea Groundfish Fishery Management Plans were also approved. The SSC pointed out that although the report assumes the review will be undertaken by the Plan Drafting Teams, the basic question of whether the responsibility for monitoring the fishery should be taken by a team, an agency or an individual has not yet been addressed. The availability of personnel for the review and monitoring of fishery management plans will depend on the administrative schedule of the State and Federal management agencies.

The SSC recommends that the annual review cycle be reviewed by the management agencies to ensure that the proposed review schedules are in accordance with their agency requirements. Our Committee review of plan amendments will be facilitated by our formulation of SSC study groups for each plan and the schedules as given are acceptable to our work.

Tanner Crab FMP Amendment (Council Agenda Item G-2)

The SSC met jointly with the AP and reviewed the status of the Tanner crab resource in the eastern Bering Sea. The Committee and the Panel received a presentation by Dr. Jerry Reeves and was provided a paper by the National Marine Fisheries Service on the 1979 assessment of the Tanner crab stocks in the eastern Bering Sea. We also received and discussed the AP subcommittee's report on the preliminary estimate of 1980 U.S. catch and processing capacity for C. opilio. Additionally, we had a presentation by ADF&G staff on the status of the 1979 crab fishery including timing of catch, price levels and the expansion of the fishing fleet.

A representative of the Japanese Tanner Crab Industry made a presentation and provided data to the SSC on the Japanese Tanner Crab eastern Bering Sea 1979 season and their projections for the 1980 U.S. catch.

The SSC noted the following:

1. The NMFS survey estimated that ABC for C. bairdi is down 30% from the 1978 estimate to 27 million pounds with a range of 22-33 million pounds. For C. opilio the total ABC is estimated to be 126 million pounds with a range of 103 to 153 million pounds. These estimates are similar to the 1978 estimates.

The survey indicates that the ABC north of 58°N is estimated to be 4 million pounds. During the testimony of the Japanese Tanner Crab Industry verbal testimony was presented that their data indicated the population north of 58° was similar to the 1979 fishing season. No written report or data was provided.

The Committee accepted the NMFS estimates for ABC as the best available data.

2. That the ADF&G fleet data indicates that there has been a 40% increase in the vessels in the king crab fishery this fall. It is expected that this increase will also occur in the Tanner crab industry.

3. That the NMFS report indicates a 30% decline in the C. bairdi population.

4. That a relatively low price is being paid U.S. fishermen for king crab this season which will probably increase the U.S. fishermen's interest in the Tanner crab fishery.

5. The AP subpanel report indicated that the U.S. industry will have both the harvesting and processing capacity (129.6 million pounds) to utilize the total ABC estimates for C. opilio (126.0 million pounds).

6. That the U.S. industry indicated that there is a possible depressent effect on the U.S. marketing potential of any Tanner crab TALFF.

The SSC did have concern with:

1. Last year's catch by Japan north of 58° was 3 times what the NMFS 1978 survey indicates was available to be harvested.

2. There is a total lack of data available to us on potential markets for U.S. C. opilio or the possible effects of a TALFF on those markets.

The SSC therefore recommends the following for Council consideration in view of the data presented and the uncertainties:

1. That the Council accept the NMFS estimates of ABC and that they set OY equal to ABC.
2. That the Council accept the AP subcommittee recommendation of DAH for C. opilio.
3. That the Council amend the plan to allow the Council to release DAH to TALFF in the event that a limited surplus is available. The best mechanism for doing so needs to be explored.
4. That the Council review U.S. fleet performance and marketing factors during the coming season and by May 1 assess DAH in regards to (a) U.S. ability to harvest the remaining OY taking into consideration such items as ice and weather conditions, and total fleet performance, (b) the area of the U.S. fishery, and (c) potential effects on the market of any foreign harvest.
5. If a TALFF is appropriate, the Japanese fishery north of 58° should be closely monitored to assess what part of the population is available in that area and the season shortened as appropriate.

I wish to emphasize that the Committee is very uncomfortable with a decision dependent on presently unpredictable marketing information. All we can suggest is that the Council adopt a mechanism to preserve its flexibility to respond to various situations.

SSC Charter Review (Council Agenda Item H-2)

The SSC reviewed the Charter and asks that Council approve consideration of an 11th member being added to the Committee. This would be a Marine Mammal Specialist. The SSC feels that the expertise now on the Committee is needed and that in order to have a marine mammal specialist on the Committee that the 11th member be approved. The SSC does have two resumes at present for consideration as that member. We understand Charter amendments may take three months for approval. We chose not to review candidates until at least Council concurrence for an amendment is assured.

Contracts, Reports, Proposals (Council Agenda Item I)

I-1 Contract 79-4; A Study and Analysis of Troll Salmon Fisheries Data by ADF&G: The Committee learned that this contract had been signed and that those portions of the contract which the SSC had questioned had been resolved. The SSC appointed a subgroup consisting of Dr. Burgner and Don Rosenberg to follow the progress of the contract. The full revised contract was provided us at this meeting and was not reviewed by the Committee as a whole.

I-2 A Proposal for Funding: To Key punch and Re-edit 1975-78 Halibut Fish Ticket Data: The SSC reviewed the proposal from the Limited Entry Commission. The Committee felt that the information gained for this study will benefit the Council in its future work on limited entry in the halibut fishery. The Committee recommended that the Introduction to the proposal be expanded to include the Council interest in this research. The Committee felt that the proposed funding level was reasonable and recommended that it be funded by the Council.

I-3 A Proposal for Funding: To Assess the Distribution and Abundance of certain Marine Mammal Population (walrus) in Bristol Bay by Bud Fay (University of Alaska). The SSC reviewed the proposal by Bud Fay and requested some additional reviews before any decision could be reached. Specifically, the Committee questioned whether a one year study could adequately survey and address the distribution and abundance of walrus in a meaningful manner. It appeared that significant fluctuations from year to year in the distribution and abundance of walrus in Bristol Bay may lead to incomplete or an inaccurate prediction.

The SSC has requested a review of the proposal by the Marine Mammal Section of the Northwest & Alaska Fisheries Center and by John Burns, ADF&G, Fairbanks.

Additionally, the Committee recommends that a subgroup of Jim Balsiger and Don Rosenberg be assigned to meet with Bud Fay to explore the concerns of the SSC. The proposal will be considered in December.

I-4 A Draft of a Request for Proposal (RFP): To provide information which will indicate whether access to the halibut fishery in Alaska should be limited. The SSC reviewed the draft halibut limited entry RFP and generally concurred with its purpose and work elements. The Committee did raise the question of clarifying the purpose of the study as it may relate to the goals and objectives of the Halibut Fishery Management Plan. Additionally, the Committee felt the work elements might need restating in order to provide a clearer picture to any potential contractor who may wish to submit a proposal. The Committee assigned a working group consisting of Drs. Marasco and Miles to work with Bruce Hart to address these concerns. A redrafted and complete RFP should be available in December.