

North Pacific Fishery Management Council


Clement V. Tillion, Chairman
Jim H. Branson, Executive Director

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3136DT
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Suite 32, 333 West 4th Avenue
Post Office Mall Building



Telephone: (907) 274-4563
FTS 271-4064

Certified By: 

Date: 2/11/80

SCIENTIFIC & STATISTICAL COMMITTEE MEETING FEBRUARY 6, 1980

The SSC meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Vice-Chairman Don Rosenberg. The following members were present:

Don Rosenberg - Chairman
Jerry McCrary for Jack Lechner
Al Millikan
Ed Miles
Robert Burgner
Richard Marasco
George Rogers
Larry Hreha
Jim Balsiger for Frank Fukuhara

E-6 ITEMS CONSIDERED BY THE SSC NOT LISTED ON COUNCIL AGENDA

Proposal by Al Cominsky of the Arctic Environmental Information And Data Center

The SSC reviewed a letter proposal received by the Council staff regarding the relationship between climatological parameters and fisheries resources and production.

The SSC recommends that the Council not request a more definitive proposal at this time. Although research and its results may be of importance in the future, we do not consider that it holds high priority at this time for the Council.

North Pacific Fur Seal Convention

The SSC recommends opposition to HR 5033 which would (1) terminate the Interim Convention on the Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals of February 9, 1957, and (2) prohibit the taking of seals within a Pribilof Wildlife Refuge to be established on the Pribilof hauling grounds and rookeries and a Marine Sanctuary 200 miles seaward of the Islands.

Such legislation could have the following effects:

(a) The termination of the Convention would re-open the pelagic taking of fur seals by other nations outside the refuge or sanctuary. The competitive pelagic harvest of this resource brought it to the brink of extinction prior to the original Convention of 1911, and the re-opening of this highseas fishery could have the same effect today.

(b) The basic economy of the Aleut communities of St. Paul and St. George would be destroyed by this action. The harvesting and processing of the fur seal was the reason for establishment of the communities during the period of Russian jurisdiction and continued after transfer to the United States. The people have since the 18th Century, had no tradition of fishing, or other potentially commercial activities which could provide a substitute economy.

(c) If, somehow, pelagic sealing is not allowed and if the fur seal population does increase, the food requirements of the herds could adversely affect fisheries which are or could become commercially important.

Comments on FCMA by Environmental Defense Fund

The SSC reviewed a document entitled "Statement of the Environmental Defense Fund Before the House Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment on the Implementation of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976." It is our understanding that the Council has been asked to endorse the document.

The SSC is unable to support the endorsement of the document. We find that the conclusion which has been drawn regarding the problem of implementation of the FCMA are not substantiated by fact for the nation as a whole. The problems which are addressed in the document are far more complex than made out to be and the document is not valid at least with regard to the action of this Council.

G-1 TROLL SALMON FMP

The SSC reviewed a report from our members who attended the joint meeting of the Pacific and North Pacific SSC's. We are reviewing the minutes of that meeting with the Pacific SSC and will be prepared to make specific recommendations to the Council on issues discussed by our next meeting.

The SSC discussed the proposed amendment to the FMP which we had not reviewed previously, that of "All troll caught chinook and coho salmon be landed with heads on." We are requesting that a brief report be prepared by the ADF&G providing the data which supports this amendment. We request that the report be made available to both the SSC and the PDT. We have scheduled a discussion of that amendment at our next meeting.

Additionally, we have requested that the PDT review a State of Washington letter of January 21 and that they be prepared to discuss the contents of that letter and the matter of the conservation of chinook salmon at our next meeting.

The SSC does recommend that the Council consider development of an adjustment to the FMP proposing a limit of 2 lines on hand trolling in the FCZ in the event the current proposed amendment banning hand trolling fails to receive Commerce approval.

G-2 GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH FMP

The SSC received the proposed list of topics to be considered by the PDT during the formalization of the proposed amendments. We have no additional topics at this time.

The Committee did instruct our subgroup to meet with the PDT prior to our next scheduled meeting to review any proposed amendments.

The SSC was asked to comment on the second release of reserves of groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska. We did not have sufficient scientific data with which to make a recommendation.

However, before approving a release of reserves the Council should be aware that small domestic landings thus far in the season reflect the normally slow winter period and can be expected to increase during the spring and summer. Further, the extent of joint venture operations in the GOA is uncertain and should be determined prior to release of reserves to TALFF. In general, little information is available on the potential joint venture and domestic fishery for groundfish in the GOA and a cautious review is advised.

G-3 BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLAND GROUND FISH FMP

The SSC reviewed the proposed list of topics to be considered by the PDT during the formalization of the proposed amendments to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP.

The SSC did recommend that the team review the means for release of the reserves to DAH to insure that this is accomplished in an expeditious manner.

The SSC did review various documents regarding joint venture operations and their requirements for at least a portion of the reserves. The SSC was concerned that it did not have in hand to review the actual catch data from either the joint venture, the domestic fishery or the foreign fleet. (We received the foreign fleet data just before the end of our meeting.) Therefore, the SSC was unable to make a specific recommendation to the Council on the first release of the reserves. We do recommend that the Council proceed with caution in light of the proposed efforts by the joint ventures. Based upon the letter from Marine Resources, Inc., the SSC does recommend that the Council not release the reserves for yellowfin sole to TALFF and that the Council be prepared to make that release to DAH.

G-4 TANNER CRAB FMP

The SSC briefly reviewed the status of the Tanner Crab FMP and the proposed changes in the plan regarding the closing date of the C. opilio season. The Committee found that the matter had not been considered by the PDT nor were they available to discuss the problem with the Committee.

The SSC therefore recommends that the Alaska Board of Fisheries Resolution regarding Tanner crab in the Bering Sea be reviewed by the total membership of the Team and that they prepare any proposed recommendations for changes to the plan. The SSC will then discuss those changes with the team and be prepared to make a recommendation to the Council before the proposed joint meeting with the Board of Fisheries.

G-5 HERRING FMP

The SSC discussed the Board of Fisheries Resolution regarding trawling north of 56° N. latitude. We have requested that this resolution be reviewed by the PDT and that it be discussed during the meeting of our subgroup with the PDT. The SSC will then be able to make recommendations on this issue at the time we provide the Council with our final review of the Herring Plan.

H-1 NOAA TRADE MISSION

The SSC did not have time to review this draft document as many members has not even received copies. We were informed that the document was being reviewed by our NMFS member for his agency and have therefore requested that copies of his review be made available to the Council.

H-2 BEVAN LETTER OF DECEMBER 11, 1979

See I-3.

H-4 NMFS VESSEL FINANCING PROGRAM

The SSC discussed the issue whether the conditional fisheries concept should be amended to allow use of the FVOG and FVCCF programs for vessels which will combine operations for both underutilized and conditional species. We realize that this is a large and complex issue.

For example, given current market conditions affecting the prospects for underutilized species, there is an inevitable connection between the crab fisheries and expansion of harvesting capabilities for these species. The crab fisheries have already experienced, and are still undergoing, rapid growth in the number of vessels entering the fisheries. Extending these two programs to the king crab fishery could lead to a further increase in the number of vessels in the fleet. This expansion could have serious management implications. Therefore, the SSC recommends that the Council consider preparing a response.

H-5 AMENDMENT TO CONFIDENTIALITY STATUTE

The SSC has received two draft bills which have been submitted to the Alaska Legislature to modify the current Alaska Confidentiality Statute. The SSC did have some concern regarding the wording in these proposed bills and therefore has drafted proposed wording for consideration by the Council.

For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to the confidential nature of certain reports required by the Department of Fish and Game."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

*Section 1. AS 16.05.815 is repealed and re-enacted to read:

Sec. 16.05.815. CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF CERTAIN RECORDS.

Records required by regulations of the department concerning landing of fish, shellfish, or fishery products, and annual statistical reports of buyers and processors are confidential and may not be released, except that records may be released to (1) the National Marine Fisheries Service as required for preparation and implementation of North Pacific Fishery Management Council fishery management plans within the Fishery Conservation Zone; and (2) the Department of Revenue and the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to assist them in carrying out their statutory responsibilities. Reports which do not identify individual fishermen, buyers, or processors or the specific locations where fish have been taken are public information.

I-1 DOMESTIC OBSERVER CONTRACT

The SSC reviewed the modification to the Domestic Observer Groundfish Contract. The Committee concurred with the need for this modification. The SSC would like the council to be aware of our concerns regarding the need for a means of insuring the long-range funding for these domestic observer programs.

I-2 PROPOSAL - ALASKA CATCH DATA REPORTING SYSTEM

The SSC reviewed the status of the Council's current contract and the proposed extension of the contract for the expansion and enhancement of the Alaska Commercial Catch Data Reporting System. We find that the continuation of this effort is necessary to insure the completion of the total data system. This proposal has been reviewed and commented on by the Contract Monitoring Committee.

The SSC recommends the approval of the proposal with the modifications which have been recommended by the Contract Monitoring Committee.

I-3 LIMITED ENTRY RFP

H-2 BEVAN LETTER OF DECEMBER 11, 1979

The SSC reviewed the draft RFP for a comparative study of limited entry systems around the world. The SSC does not recommend proceeding with this RFP at this time. A report on the Canadian and Alaska systems by Rogers and Moorehouse and the report on the clam subleasing for the Clam FMP will soon be available. These reports, taken in conjunction with such concepts as expressed in the Bevan letter of December 11, 1979, need to be discussed by the Council. The Council then needs to establish a working group or use it's existing Limited Entry Workgroup to develop a Council philosophy.

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February 7, 1980

Dr. Dayton L. Alverson, Chairman
Scientific & Statistical Committee
Pacific Fishery Management Council

Dear Lee,

The SSC of the North Pacific Council has reviewed the draft document entitled "Current Status and Problems in Management of Ocean Salmon Fisheries of the Pacific Coast, and Recommendations of the SSC of the Pacific Management Council to That Council." We would like to provide you the following:

1. That the statement on the cover page starting with "Joint" be modified to read, "Resulting from a joint meeting of the SSC for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the SSC for the Pacific Management Council."

We request this in that we believe that our SSC should not be making statements directly to the Pacific Council.

2. We have requested that the State of Alaska review the section on the "Status of Salmon Management and Stocks - Alaska" and that they condense that statement as necessary. They will be responding directly to you on this issue.

3. On page 12, second paragraph, we believe that this should be considered as a recommendation and addressed in the section on recommendations.

4. We have considered the recommendations section. Although these recommendations were not arrived at during the joint session, we believe that items 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7, and item 3 above, could be considered to apply to both Councils. We, therefore, request that the Pacific SSC review them in that light and pass upon them. We will then take your recommendations under consideration at our next meeting and formulate a recommendation to our Council.

5. We believe that another meeting between the SSC's and Plan Development Teams to discuss the areas of research and data needs is necessary. If you concur we will be happy to work to set up such a meeting.

6. We suggest a joint statement from both the SSC's to both Councils asking that they establish a coordinating group to consider salmon conservation issues of mutual interest.

Hopefully, these comments will be helpful to your group.

Sincerely,

Don Rosenberg
Vice-Chairman
Scientific & Statistical Committee
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

cc: SSC Members
Dr. Bevan