

Sunday, June 6 6PM GOA Co-op Committee (Kodiak Inn)	SSC Fishermen's Hall-503 Marine Way	AP Elks Lodge-102 Marine Way	Council Best Western Kodiak Inn
Monday, June 7	9:30am C-2 Steller Sea Lions	8:00am C-1 American Fisheries Act	
	1:00pm C-2 continued	1:00pm C-1 continued	
Tuesday, June 8	8:00am C-1 American Fisheries Act D-2 Crab Management	8:00am C-1 continued	
	1:00pm D-1 Groundfish Amendments	1:00pm C-1 continued	
Wednesday, June 9 6:30pm Community Reception Fish Tech Center	8:00am C-3 BSAI P.cod Fixed Gear Allocation	8:00am C-2 Steller Sea Lions	8:00am Call to order Agenda Approval C-1 American Fisheries Act Lunch
	1:00pm continue as necessary	1:00pm C-2 continued	12:00 Lunch 1:00pm C-1 continued
Thursday, June 10 6:30pm WFN-Alaska Chapter Annual Scholarship Fundraiser Auction (Kdk Inn) 7pm Interim Crab Obs Cmtee Fishermen's Hall		8:00am C-2 continued	8:00am C-1 continued 12:00 Lunch
		1:00pm C-2 continued C-3 BSAI P.cod Fixed Gear Allocation	1:00pm C-1 continued
Friday, June 11		8:00am D-1 Groundfish Amendments	8:00am C-1 continued 12:00 Lunch
		1:00pm D-2 Crab Management	1:00pm C-2 Steller Sea Lions 12:00 Lunch
Saturday, June 12			8:00am C-2 continued 12:00 Lunch
			1:00pm C-2 continued
			8:00am C-2 continued 12:00 Lunch 1:00pm C-3 BSAI P.cod Allocation
Sunday, June 13			8:00am C-2 continued 12:00 Lunch 1:00pm C-3 BSAI P.cod Allocation
			8:00am D-1 Groundfish Amendments 12:00 Lunch 1:00pm D-2 Crab Management C-4 Magnuson-Stevens Act B Reports
Monday, June 14			8:00am D-1 Groundfish Amendments 12:00 Lunch 1:00pm D-2 Crab Management C-4 Magnuson-Stevens Act B Reports
			8:00 am Continue as necessary
Tuesday, June 15			

NOTE: The above agenda items may not be taken in the order in which they appear and are subject to change as necessary. All meetings are open to the public with the exception of Council Executive Sessions.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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June 3, 1999

DRAFT AGENDA
139th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
June 9-14, 1999
Best Western Kodiak Inn
Kodiak, Alaska

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will meet June 9-14, 1999, beginning at 8:00 a.m. on the 9th, at the Best Western Kodiak Inn in Kodiak, Alaska. Other meetings to be held during the week are:

<u>Committee/Panel</u>	<u>Beginning</u>
GOA Co-op Committee	6:00pm, Sun., June 6 (Kodiak Inn)
Advisory Panel	8:00am, Mon., June 7 (Elks Lodge, 102 Marine Way)
Scientific and Statistical Committee	8:00am, Mon., June 7 (Fishermen's Hall, 503 Marine Way)

All meetings except Council executive sessions are open to the public. Other committee and workgroup meetings may be scheduled on short notice during the week, and will be posted at the Kodiak Inn.

INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WISHING TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sign-up sheets are available at the registration table for those wishing to provide public comments on a specific agenda item. Sign-up must be completed before public comment begins on that agenda item. Additional names are generally not accepted after public comment has begun.

Submission of Written Comments. Any written comments and materials to be included in Council meeting materials must be received at the Council office **by 5:00 p.m. (ADT) on Tuesday, June 1, 1999.** Please note that this is one day earlier than usual in order to accommodate shipping materials to Kodiak. Written and oral comments should include a statement of the source and date of information provided as well as a brief description of the background and interests of the person(s) submitting the statement. Comments can be sent by mail or fax--please do not submit comments by e-mail. **Material received after the deadline will not be included in meeting notebooks for this meeting. It is the submitter's responsibility to provide an adequate number of copies of comments after the deadline.** Materials provided during the meeting for distribution to Council members should be provided to the Council secretary. A minimum of 18 copies is needed to ensure that Council members, the executive director, NOAA General Counsel and the official meeting record each receive a copy. If copies are to be made available for the Advisory Panel (23), Scientific and Statistical Committee (13), staff (10) or the public (50) after the pre-meeting deadline, they must also be provided by the submitter. **Copying capabilities in Kodiak will be limited. Please plan ahead.**

FOR THOSE WISHING TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE ADVISORY PANEL

The Advisory Panel has revised its operating guidelines to incorporate a strict time management approach to its meetings. Rules for testimony before the Advisory Panel have been developed which are similar to those used by the Council. Members of the public wishing to testify before the AP must sign up on the list for each topic listed on the agenda. Sign-up sheets are provided in a special notebook located at the back of the room. The deadline for registering to testify is when the agenda topic comes before the AP. The time available for individual and group testimony will be based on the number registered and determined by the AP Chairman. The AP may not take public testimony on items for which they will not be making recommendations to the Council.

FOR THOSE WISHING TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

The usual practice is for the SSC to call for public comment immediately following the staff presentation on each agenda item. In addition, the SSC will designate a time, normally at the beginning of the afternoon session on the first day of the SSC meeting, when members of the public will have the opportunity to present testimony on any agenda item. The Committee will discourage testimony that does not directly address the technical issues of concern to the SSC, and presentations lasting more than ten minutes will require prior approval from the Chair.

COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

ABC	Acceptable Biological Catch	LLP	License Limitation Program
AP	Advisory Panel	MSFCMA	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
ADF&G	Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game	MMPA	Marine Mammal Protection Act
BSAI	Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands	MRB	Maximum Retainable Bycatch
CDQ	Community Development Quota	MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
CRP	Comprehensive Rationalization Program	mt	Metric tons
CVOA	Catcher Vessel Operational Area	NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
EA/RIR	Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review	NOAA	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Adm.
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone	NPFMC	North Pacific Fishery Management Council
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat	OY	Optimum Yield
FMP	Fishery Management Plan	POP	Pacific ocean perch
GHL	Guideline Harvest Level	PSC	Prohibited Species Catch
GOA	Gulf of Alaska	SAFE	Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Document
HAPC	Habitat Areas of Particular Concern	SSC	Scientific and Statistical Committee
IBQ	Individual Bycatch Quota	TAC	Total Allowable Catch
IFQ	Individual Fishing Quota	VBA	Vessel Bycatch Accounting
IPHC	International Pacific Halibut Commission	VIP	Vessel Incentive Program
IRFA	Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis		
IRIU	Improved Retention/Improved Utilization		
ITAC	Initial Total Allowable Catch		
LAMP	Local Area Management Plan		

June 3, 1999

DRAFT AGENDA
139th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
June 9-15, 1999
Best Western Kodiak Inn
Kodiak, Alaska

	<u>Estimated Hours</u>
A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER	
(a) Approval of Agenda	•
(b) Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings (Scheduled for end of meeting, as time allows)	•
B. REPORTS (Scheduled for end of meeting, as time allows)	
B-1 Executive Director's Report	•
B-2 State Fisheries Report by ADF&G	•
B-3 NMFS Management Report	•
B-4 Enforcement and Surveillance Reports	•
	(3 hours for A/B items)
C. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS	
C-1 <u>American Fisheries Act</u>	(20 hours)
(a) Sideboard analysis: final action. (Includes Implementation Committee Report)	
(b) AFA conformance measures (Amendments 62/62): final action.	
(c) CDQ conformance measures: final action.	
C-2 <u>Steller Sea Lions</u>	(16 hours)
Pollock fishery measures: final action.	
C-3 <u>BSAI P. Cod Fixed Gear Allocations</u>	(4 hours)
Amendment analysis: initial review.	
C-4 <u>Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization</u>	(1 hour)
Discussion of potential reauthorization issues.	
D. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS	
D-1 <u>Groundfish Amendments</u>	(2 hours)
(a) Analysis of HMAP proposal: discussion	
(b) Experimental fishery permit for AFDF bait test project: review.	
(c) NOAA GC opinion on DSR retention: review, and reconsider previous action.	
(d) Electronic shoreside catch reporting: review. (Delayed)	
D-2 <u>Crab Management</u>	(3 hours)
Bairdi rebuilding program: initial review.	
E. PUBLIC COMMENTS	
F. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT	

Total Agenda Hours: 49

TIME SUMMARY

Total agenda hours	49.0 hours
Lunches - 6. days (1 hr ea)	6.0 hours
Breaks (3/day, 15 min ea x 6 days)	4.5
(+ 2/Tuesday, 15 mi. x 2)	<u>.5 hours</u>
Total estimated hours required:	60.5 hours
Meeting as follows:	
Wed. - Mon - 8am-5:30pm = 9.5 hours x 6 =	57.0
Tuesday - 8am - Noon =	<u>4.0</u>
Total hours available:	61.0 hours

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Certified Saul Bendisen
Date 5/20/99

MINUTES Scientific and Statistical Committee April 19-21, 1999

The Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met April 19-21 1999 at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, AK. All members were present except Doug Larson, Al Tyler:

Richard Marasco, Chair
Doug Eggers
Seth Macinko
Steve Klosiewski

Jack Tagart, Vice-Chair
Steve Hare
Terry Quinn
Sue Hills

Keith Criddle
Dan Kimura (Alt.)
Harold Weeks

C-1 HALIBUT CHARTER LOGBOOKS

Jane DiCosimo (NPFMC), Rob Bentz (ADF&G) and Al Howe (ADF&G) presented the staff report on the use of charterboat logbooks for estimating guided recreational catch. The SSC supports postponement of initial review and action by the Council (to December 1999-February 2000 from October-December 1999) on this item as recommended by staff. It was indicated that the revised schedule would not impede the ability of NMFS to implement the necessary regulations for 2001. Postponing action would make it possible to compare 1998 logbook and SWHS results (available in September). Since the logbook program is new, the comparison would be of value.

C-2 STELLER SEA LIONS

Due to some problem with the NMFS mailing, many SSC members did not receive the EA/RIR document until Monday morning. Therefore, SSC review of this document was decidedly limited. Tim Ragen, Lowell Fritz, and Kent Lind (NMFS) provided an in-depth overview of the document, and public testimony was given by Glenn Merrill (Aleutian East Borough), Ken Stump (Greenpeace), Chris Blackburn (Alaska Groundfish Data Bank), Donna Parker (Arctic Storm), and Ed Richardson (At-Sea Processors).

The SSC found that the analysts were generally responsive to SSC comments from February (see our comments below) in developing the document. The SSC was impressed by the wealth of information about the 1999 A season, a fishery that has only been over about a month. The SSC commends the Observer Program and the analysts for their diligent efforts in this regard. In addition, the document contains useful information about historical spatial and seasonal distributions from both the fishery and from surveys, as well as other pertinent information about Steller sea lions and pollock.

The SSC believes that the following changes should be made to the document.

1. **Overall Tenor.** The overall tenor of the document presupposes that regulation of the pollock fishery through spatial and temporal dispersal will improve the condition of the Steller sea lion population, and parenthetically, the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska ecosystems. This point of view further assumes that the fishery impacts Steller sea lions through local depletion of food sources or some other mechanism. As noted in the past, the SSC found no compelling scientific information to support either of these two assumptions. The SSC acknowledges that actions are being taken in the spirit of precautionary management and the overriding context of the Endangered Species Act. It should be stated in the Executive Summary and the Introduction of the document that the “principles” that underlie what NMFS considers as “reasonable and prudent” measures are, in reality, management directives whose efficacy is either unknown or untestable.

In addition, the SSC recommends that some statements in the document, which are stated as facts, be relaxed to convey the uncertainty of the state of knowledge. The SSC requests that the analysts review the entire document in order to remove instances of subjectivity. A few examples of this subjective point-of-view are:

(a) p. 9. “However, this single-species approach and these stock-wide measures may not be consistent with ecosystem management and may have serious ecosystem effects.” The SSC notes that the opposite is also true and so questions why the negative inference is made.

(b) p.11. “Further dispersal of fishing effort and catch is necessary to prevent detrimental ecosystem effects and, specifically, to prevent detrimental effects on Steller sea lions.” The SSC notes that there is no evidence to support this statement; the word “is” should be changed to “may be”.

(c) p.35. “This midpoint estimate... suggests that the harvest rate is excessive in the winter period.” The SSC notes that the word “excessive” is subjective and the information used to come to this conclusion is highly uncertain. A possible rewording would be “ This midpoint estimate... suggests that the catch proportion from the CH/CVOA in winter may be higher than that indicated by relative biomass distributions.

2. **Range of alternatives.** The SSC notes the range of alternatives considered is governed primarily by the Biological Opinion. The analysts have clearly indicated which alternatives NMFS believes are consistent with RPA principles. The SSC suggests that meeting with interested parties might be of assistance in fine tuning the alternatives to meet ESA requirements at minimum cost. With respect to B/C seasonal apportionment, the SSC believes that analysts have overlooked an important data set (fishery catch per unit effort) which may provide additional insight. Accordingly, the SSC recommends additional analyses, as described below.

Spatial dispersal in B/C seasons. The EA/RIR provides a much-improved analysis of the seasonal and temporal pollock distribution on the EBS shelf. This analysis was largely based on the summer EBS shelf bottom trawl, summer EBS shelf hydroacoustic survey and limited winter hydroacoustic surveys of the EBS shelf. Comparison of the summer and winter surveys clearly demonstrates that pollock undergo significant seasonal feeding and spawning migrations, with the pollock more concentrated in the CH/CVOA during the winter period. The authors develop a conceptual model of the seasonal increase in the proportion of the stock occurring in the CH/CVOA. Here the summertime portion (15% based on the 1991-1998 average stock biomass proportion in the CH/CVOA) was increased through the season based on 3 scenarios of migration (late summer, linear, and winter

migration) and three scenarios of spawning concentrations (25%, 40%, and 63%) in the CH/CVOA. The SSC notes that the estimates of spawning concentrations in the CH/CVOA based on winter hydroacoustic survey were very sensitive to assumptions of maturity and selectivity for the winter hydroacoustic surveys.

Because the SSC does not believe the distribution of biomass based on the migration conceptual model reflects the B and C seasonal biomass distributions, we suggest that additional alternatives might in fact be consistent with the RPA principle of distributing catch in proportion to biomass.

The seasonal and the spatial distributions of catch and effort of the pollock fishery may provide useful information on temporal distribution of pollock on the EBS shelf. The foreign fishery consistently operated over large areas of the EBS shelf (including large areas of the CH/CVOA, and areas outside the CH/CVOA) during the June - December period for the years 1982 - 1985. Although the fishery was restricted from certain areas of the CH/CVOA these restrictions were consistent over the period. The SSC notes also that stock assessment surveys were conducted during this period and were concurrent with foreign fishery operations, and that summertime spatial distribution of pollock based on the assessment surveys during the period of the foreign fishery operations was consistent with those in recent years. Seasonal estimates of relative distribution of pollock in the EBS, for years of the foreign fishery operations can be estimated as follows: (1) Determine the area in the EBS where the operations of foreign fishery consistently occurred during June - December period and 1982-1985. (2) Stratify the foreign fishing area into CH/CVOA and outside CVOA subareas. (3) Develop estimates of distribution of pollock within the foreign fishery subareas based on summertime surveys. (4) Develop seasonal estimates of distribution within the foreign fishery subareas from foreign fishery CPUE data. Note that the first time period should conform with the time of the summer assessment surveys. (5) Use seasonal trends in the foreign fishery data to scale the summer survey distributions.

The SSC recommends that these estimates of seasonal changes in pollock distribution based on the foreign fishery performance be used along with other available information to evaluate consistency of proposed alternatives of spatial apportionment of B and C season quotas with the RPA.

3. The EA/RIR addresses the SSC request from February for a discussion of critical habitat and its designation. Critical habitat is defined in law as those areas essential to the conservation of the species and which may require special consideration or protection. Critical habitat for Steller sea lions was established in 1993 by NMFS based on recommendations of the SSL Recovery Team. Designation of aquatic critical habitat areas was based on foraging studies, at-sea observations, and observed locations of incidental take in fisheries. The SSC continues to believe that there is a need for an examination of critical habitat designations.
4. **The 170° line.** The proposed spatial distribution of catch East and West of 170° needs further elaboration and clarification. Does NMFS believe this division is necessary or not? Could such a division have negative impacts due to a greater presence of small fish West of 170°? Discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of this division should be enhanced.
5. **AI Closures.** Further discussion of the biological effects of the options should be included. For example, how do the options affect different stocks of walleye pollock in the area? Could the closures in Option 2 have negative effects due to concentrating the fishery in small areas where local depletion is more likely to occur?

6. **Economic and Management Effects.** The draft RIR/IRFA provides a limited discussion of the potential social and economic impacts of the proposed measures. These impacts are difficult to predict because of the wide variety of measures under consideration and because of changes associated with AFA and other recent management actions. While the analysis was able to provide an estimate of the magnitude of foregone revenues associated with a closure of the Aleutian Islands, no attempt was made to estimate the change in net national benefits attributable to the proposed actions, because cost data are lacking. Analysis of regional economic impacts and community impacts was also considered to be intractable.

The chapter on economic impacts uses predictions from industry, for example, CPUE declines and fish size reductions, which were not borne out by the limited experience of the 1999 fisheries under the emergency measures adopted by the Council. While the 1999 season is only a single data point, the chapter should be revised to balance industry predictions against actual experience.

The discussion of trip limits in GOA fisheries needs to be expanded to acknowledge their well known shortcomings. Trip limits as a tool of effort control are classically ineffective, routinely providing only short-term relief and requiring frequent revision. Beside deliberately encouraging discards, they confound time series from the fishery by capping fishery catch per unit effort. Under a trip limit management regime, accurate effort and catch monitoring requires 100% observer coverage.

7. **Table 3-4 clarification:** Further explanation should be given on how this table was constructed. The equation and data sources should be provided, and further information about likely values for catchability and proportion mature would be helpful. The analysts should consider a complete Bayesian analysis (with appropriate priors) to quantify their beliefs.

Adaptive management. The SSC reiterates its support for this management approach. Learning about the reasons for the Steller sea lion decline and the efficacy of management measures to mitigate this decline are of paramount concern. The document explains that such an adaptive approach cannot be considered in the short term, but that AFSC has developed a research plan to test the efficacy of no-trawl zones. The SSC received this plan and strongly endorses the studies contained therein. The SSC urges the Council to support these studies and to encourage NMFS and Congress to provide funding so that these studies can be carried out.

Research. Tim Ragen (NMFS-AKR) presented an outline of long term efforts to coordinate research and management activities which will provide a context for revisions to the Steller sea lion recovery plan. The revised plan is expected in the fall of 1999. The SSC acknowledges the significance of a long-term perspective on these activities. The estimated cost of the activities discussed is in the range of \$10-14 million annually, but there is no identified source for these funds. The SSC encourages ongoing efforts by NMFS to improve communications, so that inter-disciplinary and multi-institutional research efforts may emerge. Consistent with our prior statements, the SSC strongly urges that revisions to the recovery plan and future research and management efforts include a re-evaluation of critical habitat designations.

C-3 AFA SIDEBOARDS

The SSC received a presentation from Chris Oliver and Darrell Brannan (NPFMC), John Sproul (NMFS), and Scott Matulich (WSU). Public testimony was received from Joe Plesha (Trident Seafoods).

While the document presented by staff is generally complete and provides the Council with abundant descriptive statistics regarding the sideboard options being contemplated by the Council, several issues should

be addressed before the EA/RIR/IRFA is released for public review. Chapter 10 is largely unrelated to the rest of the document and is addressed separately below. The remainder of the document suffers from two omissions that should be addressed.

First, Chapter 11 does not provide a thorough summary of RIR/IRFA findings regarding the costs and the benefits associated with the various options examined. The SSC notes that whereas in the past the IRFA has received relatively little attention, the present analysis appears to devote undue attention to the IRFA and insufficient attention to the broader social and economic impacts of the proposed actions. The underlying assumption that there will be little to no impacts associated with measures designed to preserve the "status quo" is questionable. Even if in the aggregate net impacts are judged to be zero, there will clearly be distributional aspects that should be identified and brought to the Council's attention. The discussion of costs should also include costs of implementation.

Second, the document currently employs a haul-by-haul determination of "target" fishery. The SSC requests that this be replaced or augmented by a weekly determination of target fishery as this is consistent with existing practices that may influence industry behavior. Use of the haul-by-haul target determination generates a bias in the estimate of bycatch rates by target fishery and is likely to become an issue in setting PSC caps for AFA vessels.

Finally, the SSC highlights notes that the uncertainty associate with both the level and species composition of discards by CV it will be difficult to determine appropriate caps.

Comments Specific to Chapter 10

Chapter 10 does not relate to the remainder of the document which deals with sideboard options that were identified for analysis by the Council. Nor does Chapter 10 capture the full scope of the discussion paper requested by the Council at their February 1999 meeting. Chapter 10 most closely resembles a truncated analysis of a specific portion of the AFA itself. The SSC recommends that Chapter 10 be excised from the EA/RIR/IRFA.

As an analysis, Chapter 10 is inadequate and unsound. Some examples of the shortcomings of the analysis in Chapter 10 are:

1. The conclusions reached are speculative and unsupported by analysis (e.g., "independent catcher vessels could be expected to be worse off under the AFA cooperative structure than compared with their experience under the open-access fishery of recent years"(p.257)).
2. The analytical perspective is inexplicably restricted to that provided by the RFA. It is inappropriate to analyze any program/proposal/measure/option solely from the perspective of the RFA. The recent elevation of attention to the RFA does not diminish the necessity of considering potential benefits and costs from a broad perspective and in terms of all potentially affected parties. The SSC notes that an excerpt from a well-rounded, balanced, analysis could satisfy the RFA's compulsory focus on small entities, but, by definition, an analysis focused solely on the RFA is neither thorough nor balanced.
3. Chapter 10 features incautious and inconsistent arguments. For example, the text notes (p. 247) that "insufficient data exists to substantiate any quantitative discussion on the impact AFA fishery cooperatives would have on small non-profit organizations that may be present in these neighboring communities" but then concludes that "for these reasons, fishery cooperatives are not expected to create a negative economic impact. . ."

4. The "data" presented in Chapter 10 have not been ground-truthed with the companies involved or verified with available confidential data. In the specific context of the RFA, the identification of "small" entities should not be done by assumption as occurs in the current Chapter 10 (e.g., "Given their expected annual gross revenues less than \$3 million, most persons operating in the fishery impacted by the proposed action are small entities. For many of the catcher vessels operating in the inshore component of the directed pollock fishery, it may be assumed that these entities are independently owned and operated.").
5. There is no reference to the literature on pollock price formation (e.g., Herrmann et. al), market structure (Matulich et. al), or related markets such as whiting (Sylvia et. al). Similarly, there is no reference to the abundant literature on cooperative structures in agriculture and other resource industries. Future analyses/discussions should reflect an awareness of these literatures.
6. The analysis employs unrealistic assumptions about the price formation/negotiation processes. These processes are more likely to resemble bilateral monopoly.

C-6 SEABIRD AVOIDANCE

Jane DiCosimo (NPFMC) and Kim Rivera (NMFS-AKR) presented the staff report. Thorn Smith gave public testimony.

The SSC appreciates that the analysts have attempted to address our comments from February 1999 meeting; in some cases successfully and in other cases not.

The Council should note that seabird bycatch reduction measures were implemented early in 1997 and we do not yet have an evaluation of the efficacy of these measures. Consequently, we do not have a basis to estimate potential further reductions. Further, data are not yet available to decide which of the proposed seabird avoidance measures provide the most reductions in bycatch.

The SSC also reviewed a briefing from Ed Melvin (UW Sea Grant) on two experimental fishing permit applications to test seabird bycatch avoidance measures. The SSC endorses the issuance of EFPs for this important research. However, we note that a consequence of funding limitations will be a small expected take in the control segment of the IFQ portion of the study. As a result, it will be difficult to establish statistical significance of any reduction due to bycatch avoidance measures in this portion of the study unless the reduction in bycatch is large. There may be a potential to combine the control portions of the IFQ and P. cod studies to allow a more robust statistical analysis.

D-1(c) PROHIBIT NON-PELAGIC TRAWL GEAR IN COOK INLET

Bill Bechtol of ADF&G presented the EA/RIR/IRFA for a proposed amendment to ban non-pelagic trawl gear in Cook Inlet. No public testimony was received.

Historically, there has been very little non-pelagic trawl activity in Cook Inlet. The intent of the action proposed here is to minimize impacts on the brood stocks of Cook Inlet king and Tanner crab stocks. There has been no commercial harvest of king crab from Cook Inlet since 1984 and no commercial harvest of Tanner crab since 1994.

The SSC finds that the document is generally well structured and recommends it be released for public comment conditioned upon addition and expansion of the following discussion points:

1. There is no discussion of economic opportunities foregone due to closure of the area to non-pelagic trawling.
2. A listing of the groundfish composition in the region should be included as well as any survey data from the region.
3. The ADF&G has already closed state waters in Cook Inlet to non-pelagic trawling. A description of the proportion of total crab habitat and/or biomass that remains vulnerable to impact from bottom trawling would be helpful, i.e., identification of the fraction of the crab resource found in federal waters.
4. A figure showing trawl survey locations used to compute the trawl survey index should be added.
5. The decline in both the king and Tanner crab stocks has occurred at the same time as declines in many of the other crustacean stocks in the Gulf of Alaska. The document should discuss these declines in a broader ecosystem context.
6. A ban on trawling around Kodiak Island was instituted following collapse of those king crab stocks in the early 1980's. To date, those stocks have not recovered. It is likely that rebuilding of these stocks may await improved environmental conditions. The proposed activity is a pro-active measure whose intent is to preserve brood stock such that the populations are able to take advantage of a crab-favorable change in the environment.

D-1(e) SHARK MANAGEMENT

The SSC received a report on the Draft EA/RIR/IRFA for Amendment 63/63 to the Fishery Management Plans for the Groundfish Fisheries of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska from Jane DiCosimo (NPFMC) and Linda Brannian (ADF&G). We recommend that the document be released for public review after the following issues are addressed:

1. Reconsider the inclusion of common thresher sharks in the amendment given that its distribution is from British Columbia south to central Baja, California, Mexico.
2. Alternative 2 proposes to remove sharks and skates from the "other species" category and enact appropriate federal management measures

It is suggested that the forage fish species model is one way of managing these resources. The SSC suggests that a discussion of the implications of using the ABC/TAC approach be included in the document.

3. During the SSC's discussion of this amendment, it was suggested that the Plan Team review the "other species" category generally to determine if adequate protection is provided for individual species to ensure their conservation.

D-1(h) GROUND FISH FORUM 1999 EXPERIMENTAL FISHING PERMIT

John Gauvin (Groundfish Forum) and Sarah Gaichas (Alaska Fishery Science Center) presented an Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) application to test an improve species composition and size sampling methods for trawl fisheries.

The EFP application is focused on verifying adequacy of the Observer Program basket sampling method for species composition. A second portion of the EFP will look at the problem of sampling length frequency in the trawl haul. Both portions of the EFP will utilize stratified sampling to examine heterogeneity in the trawl hauls.

Species Composition Sampling

The species composition portion of this EFP will sample multispecies hauls targeted to the flathead sole fishery using:

1. Observer basket sampling (30 hauls).
2. Mechanical systematic sampling (30 hauls).

Both sampling methods will aim at 6 stratified samples of 100 kg each, evenly spaced throughout the haul. Observer samples will be taken using standard observer sampling method. The mechanical sample will be automatically drawn from the fish line.

A critical part of this study is an attempt to perform a "whole haul census" to the extent practicable. The "whole haul census" will use total haul weight from flow scales, weight by species using vessel specific product recovery rates, PSC discards, and major species discards. Some major discards may be determined by subtraction from total haul weight. In reality, the "whole haul census" is a substitute estimate of species composition, subject to error, which will be treated as the true estimate of catch by species.

The importance of the "whole haul census" is that this allows comparison of Observer Sampling and mechanical sampling results with values that are believed to be as accurate as possible. If the EFP is successfully executed, it will be possible to address some interesting questions concerning species composition samples:

1. What is the possible bias of the Observer sample?
2. Are mechanically selected samples less biased than current Observer sample methods?
3. How feasible is it to get accurate species compositions for a single haul?
4. What is the optimum level of Observer sampling for species composition?
5. In the longer-run, does Observer sampling method provide accurate estimates of species composition?

It should be noted that even if the "whole haul census" proves to be impossible, useful information will be gathered on the heterogeneity of species composition in the haul

Length Frequency Sampling

The length frequency portion of the EFP will sample hauls targeted on Greenland turbot. This is a limited study of only 10 hauls, with at least two species sampled systematically at six locations, with 20 fish randomly selected at each location. Although this portion of the EFP could provide useful information concerning size stratification of fish in hauls, it is also meant to provide economic incentive for vessels to bid on this EFP.

Because of the possibility of extremely useful information coming from the species composition portion of this EFP, the SSC recommends its approval. The attempt at a "whole haul census" will be difficult and labor intensive, so the allowance of Greenland turbot targeting to provide economic incentive appears reasonable.

D-2 (b) CRAB MANAGEMENT: BAIRDI REBUILDING PROGRAM

Dave Witherell presented the EA/RIR/IRFA describing a rebuilding plan for the Bering Sea Tanner crab stock. Drs. Gordon Kruse and Jie Zheng, ADF&G, provided a detailed technical report on the status of stocks and revised methodologies for harvest management. Public testimony was given by John Gauvin and Arni Thompson.

The Bering Sea Tanner crab stock is currently regarded as overfished. The BSAI King and Tanner crab FMP defines Tanner crab overfishing as an instantaneous fishing mortality rate in excess of 0.3, or a minimum stock size threshold (MSST) is 94.8 million pounds. The estimated 1997 mature spawning stock biomass (MSSB) was 64.2 million pounds, and the 1998 MSSB estimate is 36.9 million pounds. The 1998 estimate represents 2.2 million legal male crabs and 6.5 million large female crab and is the lowest estimated abundance on record.

To facilitate rebuilding of the depressed Tanner crab stock, the EA evaluates multiple alternative management actions: 1) endorsement of the new harvest strategy recently adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF), 2) request the BOF adopt concurrent *C. bairdi* and *C. opilio* fishing seasons to minimize *C. bairdi* discard, 3) lower bycatch discard mortality caps and 4) provide additional protection to *C. bairdi* Essential Fish Habitat.

Recently, the Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a revised stepwise harvest strategy replacing the fixed 40% exploitation rate for legal sized (>109 mm carapace width) male crab. The staircase policy lowers the exploitation rate as dependent upon the mature female biomass.

Having recognized a stock as overfished, the Council is obligated to rebuild the stock to MSY within an appropriate time interval. The MSY for Tanner crab is twice the MSST or 185.6 million pounds. The Council must specify the time interval for rebuilding the overfished stock. The minimum rebuilding time is the length of time it takes to rebuild to MSY under a zero harvest strategy. If this time interval exceeds 10 years, the rebuilding interval may be extended to 10 years plus a generation time. The estimated generation time for Tanner crab is 10 years, therefore the maximum rebuilding interval is 20 years.

The EA provides a thorough review of stock abundance, fishery catch history and bycatch, and an excellent review of the National Standards and guidelines related to overfishing and stock rebuilding. The EA attempts to estimate the rate of recovery to MSST based on predictions of future recruitment mitigated by stock size and environmental conditions. However, the SSC believes the qualitative assessment of the likelihood of rebuilding falls short of inputs needed to allow the Council to stipulate a rebuilding plan. Rebuilding to MSST does not meet the obligation to rebuild the stock to MSY biomass levels. There is no quantitative estimate of the probability that the stock will be rebuilt in the allotted time given an explicit set of proposed management actions.

The SSC recommends that the EA be revised to provide an estimate of the probability of rebuilding to MSY biomass levels within the allotted time interval under an explicit set of assumptions. These assumptions should be provided by the stock assessment scientists, and argued or reasonably defended to support the rebuilding plan. The projected rebuilding plan must demonstrate that rebuilding is achievable following one or more of the proposed alternative management actions. If rebuilding is not achievable under the proposed alternatives, additional recommendations to accomplish rebuilding should be provided. The SSC would like to review the revisions to the rebuilding plan before it goes out for public review.

HALIBUT DISCARD MORTALITY RATES (DMR)

Dr. Robert J. Trumble of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) presented results from tagging experiments which were planned to improve estimates of longline discard mortality rates (DMR). A trawl tagging experiment designed to test between the IPHC and University of Washington (UW) methods of estimating trawl DMR was also described. The IPHC uses two sets of DMR's, one for longlines and one for trawls.

Longline DMR

Condition factors, determined by Observers, are used in conjunction with specific mortality rates to estimate total DMR for the longline fishery. Condition categories are "excellent", "poor", and "dead", with mortality rates of 3.5%, 51.3%, and 100%, respectively. These condition categories are problematic because experiments have shown that significant numbers of "dead" halibut actually survive.

The IPHC recommends changing from 3 condition categories to 4 injury categories. Injury categories can be more objectively determined, and the "dead" category was dropped.

New tagging results from halibut caught with "cod-sablefish" 13/0 circle hooks showed lower DMR's than halibut caught with larger 16/0 circle hooks. The recommended injury categories with corresponding survival rates are: minor (96.5%), moderate (63.7%), severe (33.8%), and fleas/bleeding (0%). These survival rates are average survivals for large and small circle hooks. The reason for averaging is the confounding of various hook size and hydraulics in the different longline fisheries.

Trawl DMR

There are two competing methods for estimating DMR for trawl caught halibut: the IPHC model and the UW model developed by Dr. Ellen Pikitch. The IPHC model for trawl caught halibut used the 3 condition categories and mortality rates previously described for longline caught halibut. The UW model estimates probability of survival for each fish using "time out of water", "legal size indicator", "tow duration", "air temperature" and, "sand indicator". A tagging experiment conducted in 1995 to compare the IPHC and UW method of estimating DMR's failed due to insufficient numbers of tag returns. Therefore, no definite answer can be made to this question. IPHC recommends keeping the old method since there is no clear reason for making a change. However, IPHC recommends improving the conditioning key, by changing to dichotomous categories for a series of objective questions.

The SSC recommends accepting the new IPHC method for estimating longline DMR's. The new method based on severity of injuries is more objective, gets rid of the "dead" category, and uses new information from tagging fish with small hooks. However, in moving to the new system, the SSC recommends collecting data using both the old and new method so any dramatic changes in DMR's can be reconciled.

The SSC also recommends staying with the IPHC method of estimating trawl DMR's. The reason for this is that no definitive information is available as to which model is better, the current model is more easily transferable to different fisheries, higher DMR's are more conservative, and it is uncertain whether the information required by the UW model can be rigorously collected by observers. Nevertheless, the SSC urges further consideration of the UW model, because the additional variables in that model could perhaps be useful in addition to or in place of the condition codes in the IPHC model. In addition, the IPHC models need to evolve to use injury codes rather than condition codes, as has been done in the longline fisheries.

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ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES APRIL 19-22, 1999 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA Anchorage Hilton Hotel

Advisory Panel members in attendance:

Acuna, Erika	Ganey, Steve
Alstrom, Ragnar	Gundersen, Justine
Benson, Dave	Jones, Spike
Blott, Tim	Jordan, Melody
Bruce, John (Chair)	Kandianis, Teressa
Burch, Alvin	Madsen, Stephanie (Vice-Chair)
Cross, Craig	Nelson, Hazel
Falvey, Dan	Stephan, Jeff
Fanning, Kris	Ward, Robert
Fraser, Dave	Yeck, Lyle
Fuglvog, Arne	Yutzenka, Grant

Advisory Panel (AP) member, John Lewis, was absent. John Bruce and Stephanie Madsen were unanimously re-elected to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. The AP unanimously approved their February 1999 meeting minutes.

C-2 Steller Sea Lions

The AP recommends the Council release for public review the EA/RIR/IRFA to Implement Reasonable and Prudent Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures with the following additions:

Gulf of Alaska (GOA)

2.5.1. Options for Season Dates and TAC Apportionments

Season	Start Date	TAC Apportionment
A	January 20	25%
B	5 days after A season closure	25%
C	September 1	25%
D	5 days after C season closure	25%

Motion carries 16/0/2.

Provide a discussion of mechanism(s) available to revert to a trimester or A and B season openings if TAC is reduced. Motion carries unanimously (19/0).

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2.5.3 Options for Trip Limits in the GOA

Add Option 3: 300,000 lb trip limit in the western, central and eastern Gulf with a prohibition of tendering in 620, 630 and 640 and a 500,000 lb tendering limit in 610. Motion carries unanimously (19/0).

2.7 Options for Pollock No-trawl Zone in GOA

Include monthly break down of data for the 8 haulouts to determine whether there is a seasonal use pattern by the fleet. Motion carries unanimously (19/0).

Include data, by quarter, comparing pollock size distribution by the ADF&G statistical areas associated with the 8 additional rookeries versus size distribution in the remainder of the NMFS management areas. (Motion carries unanimously, 19/0, as part of the BSAI motion.)

Aleutian Islands:

Include option to open directed pollock fishing in all of the alternatives in Section 1.

Bering Sea:

Add option to all alternatives: Catcher vessels less than or equal to 99 ft length overall (LOA) would be exempt from CH/CVOA closures from September 1 through March 31 unless the percentage cap for the inshore sector has been reached. To accomplish this objective, NMFS would announce the closure of the CH/CVOA conservation zone to catcher/vessels over 99 ft LOA before the inshore sector percentage limit is reached and in a manner intended to leave remaining quota within CH/CVOA sufficient to support fishing by vessels less than or equal to 99 ft LOA for the duration of the current inshore sector opening.

A1/A2 Stand-down:

Add sub options to all stand-downs, to apply stand-down only inside CH.

B-season start dates:

Option 2: Add sub-option for 1999, to open earlier than August 1st, by the number of days equivalent to the stand-down

Add Option 3 (for the year 2000): Allow co-ops to open as of June 1st

Add Option 4: Allow motherships to open Sept. 1st with a single season (corrects page 14 of EA)

B and C season stand-down period:

Add Option 4: Stand-downs only apply inside CH

Add Option 5: Stand-down 5 days

C season start date:

Add Option 3: C season opens 5 days after the closure of B season.

TAC apportionments to individual seasons for non-CDQ sectors:

Add option 1: A1 = 30%, A2 = 15%

Add option 2: A1 = 15%, A2 = 30%

Add option 3: A1 = 15% inside CH, 7.5% outside CH,
A2 = 7.5% inside CH, 15% outside CH

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A1 and A2 seasons: (pages 35-37)

Add option 4: Based on overall split of A1 = 15% inside CH, 7.5% outside CH, and A2 = 7.5% inside CH, 15% outside CH, apportion by sector as follows: (Option would be approved only after industry consensus on percentages)

Inshore	A1 ___ in ___ out	A2 ___ in ___ out
CP	A1 ___ in ___ out	A2 ___ in ___ out
Mothership	A1 ___ in ___ out	A2 ___ in ___ out
CDQ	A1 ___ in ___ out	A2 ___ in ___ out

Weighted Average A1=66.6% in, 33.3% out A2=33.3% in, 66.6% out
Overall A1/A2 = 50/50

B/C season split Inside Outside CH:

Add option 3: 1999 phase-in for half of reduction for Y2K end point

Add option 4: based on the central tendency of the average of the bottom trawl survey distribution plus the 2 to 3 standard deviations.

Add option 5: 30% inside, 70% outside (CPs 100% outside; Inshore and Motherships 50% inside, 50% outside)

Add option 6: if motherships have a single B/C season, motherships to take 100% catch outside CH/CVOA.

Split of catch outside CH during B/C seasons:

Options for determining split amounts:

Add option 4: based on the central tendency of the average of the bottom trawl survey distribution, plus the 2 to 3 standard deviations.

Options for BS no trawl zones:

Under Option 3, add sub-option defining short-term as 5 years.

Modify Option 5: Comprehensive combination of closures and no closures around BSAI/GOA rookeries to comprise an adaptive management experiment incorporating rookery status through 1998.

Options for AI subarea:

Clarify that Option 2 allows for directed fishery in the AI.

Additions to the Analysis:

Before the analysis is released for public review, the AP requests that NMFS review the data and assumptions used to develop the analysis of the seasonal EBS pollock distribution. The analysis itself should be revised to include:

1. A list of the assumptions used to determine the values of Table 3.4;
2. The formulas and values used to calculate the entries of Tables 3-4 and Table 3-5;
3. The probabilities associated with the alternative scenarios of Figure 3-19;
4. A justification for the reliability of using the winter acoustic survey as an estimate of the absolute size of the EBS pollock biomass in the CH-CVOA.

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5. The estimates of selectivity and catchability for the winter CH/CVOA survey.
6. Add an appendix to the analysis preventing pollock catch, by percent and tons, within 10, 20, 40 and 60 nm of rookery and haulouts sites listed as CH over the period since late 1970s.

Clarify that stand-downs are not a principle or rule. Distinct separations of seasons are only one means to insure that the principle of temporal distribution is achieved. To the extent that co-ops can provide mechanisms to prevent lumping, stand-downs are not necessary.

Motion carries unanimously (19/0).

C-3 American Fisheries Act (AFA)

The Advisory Panel (AP) struggled with attempting to separate the document into two separate documents which would allow required sideboard decisions to be made in June while allowing issues surrounding possible co-op structures (Ch 10), implementation issues (Ch 9) and associated issues such as using 2 out of 3 years for determining pollock catch history and compensation of inshore catcher vessels with offshore catch history in another document that would provide for an initial review in June and final action in September. Through further discussion, it became apparent the decisions regarding the associated issues need to be made in June in order for catcher vessels to have information necessary to determine their interest in forming a co-op. The AP continued to move forward with recommendations to the current document.

The AP recommends the Council release for public review the EA/RIR/IRFA for American Fisheries Act sideboard measures with the following revisions:

6.0 AFA Catcher Processor Sideboards

Section 6.6.2. All fishing closes for the AFA catcher processor fleet.

Expand discussion of "squid box" problem and include discussion of the effects of a full pollock closure.

(A motion to delete modifications to catcher processors sideboard options from the analysis failed 9/13.)

7.3 Crab Sideboards

Section 7.3.1.6. Restrict Co-ops to their Aggregate Traditional Harvest.

Revise discussion in text to reflect intent that aggregate traditional harvest cap would apply to:

Option A: the percentage of crab harvest in each species between 95, 96 and 97.

Option B: average catch history 95, 96 and 97 on an each species by each species and vessel by vessel basis.

7.5 Groundfish Sideboards

Section 7.5.1. Determination of Traditional Non-pollock Groundfish Harvest.

Review tables 7.11, 7.17, and 7.23 - trawl caught Pacific cod for accuracy, verify that amounts do not include rollover. Revise any corresponding numbers if necessary.

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Section 7.5.1.1. To Whom Do the Sideboards Apply

Include histogram of catcher vessel pollock catches inshore with the intent of exempting certain vessels from sideboard caps whose pollock harvest is below a certain level.

Section 7.5.1.2. When do Sideboards Apply.

Clarification is needed in text reflecting intent that period of restrictions apply in the symmetrical window in which catch history was earned.

(Section 7.5.2.1. A motion to base catcher vessel PSC sideboards on historic PSC catch (as opposed to proportional to groundfish catch) failed 11/10.)

Section 7.5.3. Compensation for Inshore Catcher Vessels.

Include additional break points for minimum pollock delivery levels, below which a vessel would be ineligible for compensation. Table 7.29 add: less than 2,000 mt, 3,000 mt, and 5,000 mt.

7.6 GOA Sideboards

Section 7.6.1 Deep and Shallow water Flatfish Sideboard Caps.

1. Add sub-option to base sideboard on historical catch as well as bycatch. Closure would occur once either cap (target or halibut PSC) is reached.
2. Add option for super-exclusive registration by fishery period/season. Motion carried 14/6.

Include table equivalent to 7.27 for PSC bycatch rates in the deep and shallow water flatfish target fisheries for AFA vessels and non-AFA vessels.

8.0 Processing Limits on Species other than BSAI Pollock

Section 8.3 Identification of Ten Options.

Delete options 7 through 10 (all options that apply individual limits)

Additionally, the AP recommends:

1. Provide a more detailed explanation of options to determine catcher vessel pollock catch using 2 out of 3 years.
2. Include description of AFA requirement of inshore catcher vessels and processors to repay loan through assessment on all pollock catch.
3. Identify AFA eligible catcher vessels.
4. Include Dooley Hall proposal as an alternative. Motion carries 13/5/1.

The AP requests the Council establish a Co-op Implementation Committee representing industry and NMFS to examine possible inshore co-op structures and monitoring issues to facilitate development of the regulations necessary to implement inshore pollock co-ops.

Main motion carries unanimously (22/0).

The AP recommends the Council release for public review the EA/RIR/IRFA implementing AFA conformance measures. Motion carries unanimously (22/0).

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C-6 Seabird Protection

The AP recommends the Council adopt Alternative 2, Option 1 (with the changes noted below in bold), and Sub-option a.

Option 1: All applicable hook-and-line fishing operations would be conducted in the following manner:

1. Use groundlines which are sufficiently weighted to cause the baited hooks to sink out of reach of seabirds **promptly** after they are set.
2. If offal is discharged while gear is being set or hauled, it must be discharged in a manner that distracts seabirds from baited hooks, to the extent practicable. The discharge site on board a vessel must either be aft of the hauling station or on the opposite side of the vessel from the hauling station. Hooks must be removed from any offal (i.e., fish heads) that is discharged; and
3. Make every reasonable effort to ensure that birds brought aboard alive are released alive and that wherever possible, hooks are removed without jeopardizing the life of the bird.
4. Employ one of the following seabird avoidance measures:
 - a. Tow a bird scaring line during deployment of the gear to prevent birds from taking baited hooks. The bird scaring line would be towed directly over the baited hooks and would be of a sufficient length and attached to the vessel at a sufficient height to protect the entire area behind the stern of the vessel where baited hooks are accessible to seabirds. **If multiple bird scaring lines are used, they would be immediately adjacent, on each side, of the groundline bearing the baited hooks.**
 - b. Towed buoy bags or float devices and bird streamer lines would qualify as bird scaring lines if they are properly constructed to effectively deter and prevent seabirds from accessing baited hooks.
 - c. **Towing a board or stick must be accompanied by a or b above to be considered an acceptable measure.**
 - d. In addition to 4a or b above, deploy hooks underwater through a lining tube at a depth sufficient to prevent birds from settling on hooks during deployment of gear.
 - e. In addition to 4a or b above, deploy gear only during the hours specified in regulation ["hours of darkness" §679.24(e)(3)(iv)], using only the minimum vessel's lights necessary for safety.

Sub-option: These requirements under Option 1 would apply to:

- a. All vessels, 26 ft LOA or longer, using hook-and-line gear.

Motion carries 19/1.

The AP reiterates its previous recommendation that further study of seabird avoidance measures be conducted. These studies need to include:

1. Size and type of hook
2. Use of tory lines on different sizes of vessels

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3. Use of the line shooting device
4. Sablefish survey information in terms of seabird interaction.

The AP further recommends that NMFS provide programmatic research funding for seabird bycatch studies. Motion carries unanimously (20/0).

Regarding the letter from Jim Cook (WPFMC), the AP suggests the Council request:

1. Any information that provides the identity, origin and type of netting found.
2. Any information available that would enable determination of the length of time the material has been at sea in order to determine if it was pre-Marpol regulations.

The AP recommends the Council approve both experimental fishing permit (EFP) applications to study the effectiveness of seabird avoidance devices from Ed Melvin, University of Washington Sea Grant. Motion carries unanimously (18/0).

D-1(b) Shortraker/Rougheye (SR/RE) and Thornyhead MRB Reduction

The AP recommends the Council adopt Alternative 2 as modified below:

MRB for SR/RE in the eastern Gulf be adjusted to 7% for the deepwater complex fisheries and hook-and-line fishery.

Additionally, the AP recommends:

1. Any adjustment to the MRB be limited to SR/RE in the eastern Gulf of Alaska regulatory area.
2. No further action in regard to prohibiting fishing for POP with non-pelagic trawl at this time.

Further, the AP recommends the Council continue the analysis of:

1. Hook-and-line bycatch of SR/RE and thornyhead in the halibut ITQ fishery.
2. The natural bycatch rates of SR/RE and thornyhead in the halibut/sablefish ITQ fishery.
3. Spatial and temporal analysis of SR/RE bycatch in the halibut and sablefish ITQ fisheries.
4. Possible changes in distribution of fishery with a mid-water trawl fishery.
5. Review of size/age composition of POP in mid-water versus bottom trawl fishery.
6. Analysis of GOA trawl catch of thornyhead before and after change in sablefish MRB.
7. SR/RE bycatch in hook-and-line DSR fishery.
8. Examine a gear split for SR/RE by TAC management areas.
9. Include effects of the final action on SR/RE and thornyhead catches and any other conservation concerns identified in other areas.

Motion carries unanimously (18/0).

D-1(c) Non-pelagic Trawl Ban in Cook Inlet

The AP recommends the Council postpone action on the EA/RIR prohibiting the use of non-pelagic trawl gear in Cook Inlet until an analysis identifying less stringent alternatives such as:

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1. Observer coverage requirement when in area.
2. Time and area closures.
3. Commissioner's permit.

can be included for initial review in October 1999.

Additionally, include (1) a discussion regarding other fisheries that are currently prosecuted in this area and their effect on habitat, and (2) examine the suitability of this area as a marine sanctuary. Motion carries 15/2.

D-1(d) Halibut Mortality Avoidance Program (HMAP) Proposals

The AP recommends the Council approve the HMAP pilot program for analysis and rulemaking for implementation in the year 2000, or as soon as possible. Motion carries unanimously (16/0).

D-1(f) Allocation of BSAI Pacific Cod Among Fixed Gear Vessels

The AP is concerned that, because of time constraints, we were unable to provide input to the Council and would request the Council allow the AP to provide that input before moving forward with this action. Motion carries unanimously (17/0).

D-1(h) EFP for Species Composition Testing Methods

The AP recommends the Council approve the experimental fishing permit (EFP) application to test species composition testing methods. Motion carries unanimously (17/0).