North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
Clarence G. Pautzke, Executive Director

605 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

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Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 271-2809
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November 30, 1992

DRAFT AGENDA

105th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
December 8-13, 1992
Anchorage, Alaska

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will convene at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 8, 1992, at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. Other meetings to be held during the week are:

Committee/Panel	Beginning
Advisory Panel	10:30 a.m., Monday, Dec. 7
Scientific and Statistical Committee	10:30 a.m., Monday, Dec. 7
Enforcement Committee	1:00 p.m., Monday, Dec. 7
Advisory Panel/SSC Nominating Committee	4:00 p.m., Monday, Dec. 7
Finance Committee	12:30 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 8
Habitat Committee	To be announced

All meetings except Council executive sessions and the Advisory Panel/SSC Nominating Committee are open to the public. Other committee and workgroup meetings may be scheduled on short notice during the week.

INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WISHING TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE COUNCIL

Those wishing to testify before the Council on a specific agenda item must fill out a registration card at the registration table **before** public comment begins on that agenda item. Additional cards are generally not accepted **after** public comment has begun. A general comment period is scheduled toward the end of the meeting, time permitting, for comment on matters not on the current agenda.

Submission of Written Testimony During Council Meeting. Any written comments and materials provided during a meeting for distribution to Council members should be provided to the Council secretary. A minimum of 18 copies is needed to ensure that every Council member, the executive director, NOAA General Counsel and the official meeting record each receive a copy. Some agenda items may have a formal, published deadline for written comments. For those items, written comments submitted after the published deadline or at the Council meeting, other than simple transcripts of oral testimony, will be stamped "LATE COMMENT." They will not be summarized or analyzed in preparation for the Council meeting, nor will they be placed in Council member notebooks. All "LATE COMMENTS" will be placed in a special notebook, marked as such, and made available to Council members upon their request.

Information on testifying before the Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee is found on the next page.

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.

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.**

DRAFT AGENDA

105th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
December 8-13, 1992
Anchorage, Alaska

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
(a) Approval of Agenda
(b) Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

B. REPORTS
B-1 Executive Director's Report

B-2 Domestic Fisheries Report by ADF&G

B-3 NMFS Management Report
(includes status of amendments and regulatory actions)

B-4 Enforcement and Surveillance Report

B-5 Marine Mammal Report

C. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS

C-1 Observer Program
(a) Status report on North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan.
(b) Observer requirements for 1993--final approval of regulatory amendment.

C-2 Community Development Quotas
(a) Status report on CDQ program for 1992 and 1993.
(b) Management of CDQ fisheries in 1993.

C-3 Committee Memberships
Approve memberships on AP, SSC, and Plan Teams.

C-4 Magnuson Act Reauthorization
Legislative update and Magnuson Act issues.

C-5 Other Business

D. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS

D-1 Final Groundfish Specifications for 1993
(a) Review recommended assumed mortality rates for halibut.
(b) Comprehensive Gulf of Alaska rockfish management plan.
(c) Consider adopting policy of setting TAC below ABC to provide a conservation buffer.
(d) Review final Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and EA/RIR for 1993 groundfish specifications for Gulf of Alaska and approve final GOA groundfish and bycatch specifications for 1993.
(e) Review final Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and EA/RIR for 1993 groundfish specifications for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and approve final BSAI groundfish and bycatch specifications for 1993.
(f) VIP rate standards.

D-2 Groundfish Regulatory Amendments - Final Review
- (a) Pollock "B" season delay.
- (b) Gangion-cutting/careful release provisions.
- (c) Define legal gears.
- (d) Comment on enforcement standards for performance-based pelagic trawl definition.
- (e) Comment on Proposed Rule for hook and line longline fair start.
- (f) Comment on proposed rule for delay of GOA 2nd quarter pollock season.

D-3 Groundfish Plan Amendments - Final Review
- (a) Pribilof Island trawl closure.
- (b) Exclusive Registration areas.
- (c) Inshore-Offshore/CDQ Bycatch.

D-4 Groundfish Plan Amendments - Initial Review
BSAI salmon bycatch amendment analysis.

D-5 Other Groundfish Issues
- (a) Bycatch management planning.
- (b) Permit requests for experimental fishing.
- (c) Review proposal for trawl mesh regulations.
- (d) Preliminary report on subdividing Aleutian region.

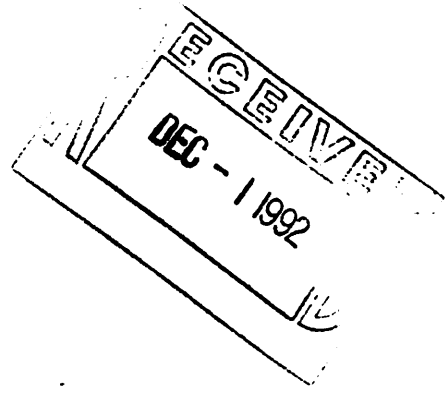
D-6 Staff Tasking
Review current tasking and give staff direction.

E. FINANCIAL REPORT
F. PUBLIC COMMENTS
G. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

Acronyms Used in Groundfish Specification Process

ABC	Acceptable Biological Catch
BSAI	Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands
EA	Environmental Assessment
GOA	Gulf of Alaska
ITAC	Initial Total Allowable Catch
DAP	Domestic Annual Processing
FMP	Fishery Management Plan
RIR	Regulatory Impact Review
PSC	Prohibited Species Catch
SAFE	Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
VIP	Vessel Incentive Program

LATE REQUEST FOR AGENDA ITEM



December 1, 1992

Mr. Richard Lauber, Chairman
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
P.O. Box 103136
Anchorage, AK. 99510 FAX 271-2871

Dear Mr. Lauber,

The people of Savoonga and Gambell on St. Lawrence Island in the northern Bering Sea would like to begin fishing commercially for halibut. The purpose of this letter is to request a change in regulations which currently allow us only one or two days a year to fish in our region, IPHC region 4D.

We would like fishing regulations similar to those for the area around Nunivak and Nelson Islands where commercial halibut fishing extends over most of the summer. Specifically, we request:

1. a fishing season that runs from June 1 to September 30
2. a seperate registraion area, i.e. callod 4F, that extends to a distance of 20 nautical miles around St. Lawrence Island
3. 6,000 lb. trip limits, in order to make fishing here not worth doing for the larger boats from the south
4. a 100,000 lb. quota

St. Lawrence Island people badly need more sources of income. Catching and selling our local fish resources is one of the only opportunities we have to expand our economy. The reasons we need regulations similar to area 4E is that we need time to learn and perfect longline fishing methods, time to find the best longline fishing areas, time to develope markets, and time to fish in between times of bad weather. Our boats are only 16' to 20' skiffs. Since large boats do not presently trawl or longline around our island, we realize fish stocks may not be large enough to attract them, but we feel very strongly that we need to protect what little we do have locally through trip limits and a separate registration area just as a precaution.

There is some urgency to this letter. We want to be able to fish this summer, and so want the IPHC to consider our request at their January meeting. We understand that such an allocation request must first be discussed and acted upon by the North Pacific Council.

Richard Lauber
Page 2.

We regret that this letter is arriving so soon before your December Council meeting. We learned just this week of the regulation problem and how to correct it in a halibut fishing workshop.

The workshop was requested by the St. Lawrence Island Economic Development Corporation (SLEDCO), and was sponsored jointly by the Bering Sea Commercial Fisheries Development Foundation, the Community Enterprise Development Corporation, the University of Alaska Marine Advisory Program, and SLEDCO.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for considering this request.

Sincerely,

[illegible], CITY COUNCIL

Joseph O Akeya

Jerry Wongittilin, Ws SLEDCO

Elmer Noongwook

Paul Rookok, SLEDCO

[illegible]

Truman Kava, IRA COUNCIL

Clyde Rookok

Rex Pungowiyi

Wayne Penayah

[illegible] Rookok

[illegible] Kava CITY COUNCIL

Wilfred Mitchel

[illegible]

The People of Savoonga
↓

Dean Kinoway

Morris Toolie Sr

Gertrude Toolie

Amelia Kingeekuk

Theresa Kava

Cecelia Noongwook

Helen Kiyuklook

Arnold Gologergen

[illegible] - City council

Adeline Ongowiyi

Barbara Kogassagoon

Viva Kulowiyi

Aaron Alowa

Marie Rookok

Carl Pelowook

Merrill Ongtowasruk

Hortense Okoomealingok

Vilma Okoomealingok IRA council

Frank T. Seppilu

Bob Kava Fire chief

Morris Toolie Jr.

Justina Noongwook

Hilda Noongwook

Sterling Gologergen - Savoonga Native Corp.

J. Kingeekuk Jr

Regina Kava

Jason Roonan

Mabelene Wongittilin

Arlene Wayhiyi

Roland Alowa

Mrs Linda J Akeya

December 1, 1992

Mr. Richard Lauber, Chairman
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
P.O. Box 103136
Anchorage, AK. 99510 FAX 271-2817

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Thank you Mr. Chairman for considering this request.

Sincerely,

People of Gambell

1. Edmund Apassingok
2. [signature]
3. John Apassingok
4. [signature]
5. Peggie Annogiyan
6. Mitchell Ungott
7. Harold Koonooka
8. [signature]
   Mayor City of Gambell
9. Mark Nupowhotuk
10. [signature]
    City Clerk
11. Jane Walunga
12. [signature]
13. [signature]
14. Merle Cyrmil - PRES. SIVUQAQ INC.
15. Clement Ungott Ivory Co-op Manager
16. Paul Tungalook
17. Ralph Apatiki Sr. Gambell

DRAFT MINUTES

104th Plenary Session
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
September 22-27, 1992
Hilton Hotel
Anchorage, Alaska

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met September 22-27, 1992 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. The Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee began on September 21. The Gulf of Alaska Industry Rockfish Committee and the Bycatch Cap Committee also met during the week. The following members of the Council, staff, SSC and AP attended the meetings.

Council

Richard Lauber, Chairman
Donna Darm/Alan Millikan for Robt. Turner
RADM Roger Rufe/CAPT Bill Anderson
Linda Behnken
Oscar Dyson
Bob Mace for Randy Fisher
Ron Hegge
Robert Alverson, Vice Chair
Henry Mitchell
Dave Hanson
Steve Pennoyer
Wally Pereyra
Clem Tillion for Carl Rosier

NPFMC Staff

Clarence Pautzke, Executive Director
Judy Willoughby
Brent Paine
Marcus Hartley
Chris Oliver
Helen Allen
Gail Peeler
Regina Stewart

Support Staff

Earl Krygier, ADFG
Ray Baglin, NMFS-AKR
Sue Salveson, AFSC
Jessie Gharrett, NMFS-AKR
Loh-Lee Low, NMFS-AFSC
David Benton, ADFG
Ron Berg, NMFS-AKR
Galen Tromble, NMFS-AKR
Dave Flannagan, NMFS-AKR
Lisa Lindeman, NOAA-GC
Russ Nelson, AFSC
Dick Merrick, NMFS-MML
Sue Mello, NMFS-AKR
Sandra Lowe, AFSC
Joe Terry, AFSC

Scientific and Statistical Committee

Terry Quinn, Vice Chair
Bill Clark, Chair
Bill Aron
Doug Eggers
Larry Hreha
Richard Marasco
Marc Miller
Don Rosenberg
Jack Tagart
Phil Rigby for Gordon Kruse
Al Tyler (alternate-Quinn)

Advisory Panel

John Woodruff, Chairman
Dave Fraser, V. Chairman
John Bruce
Al Burch
Gary Cadd
Phil Chitwood
Dan Falvey
Spike Jones
Kevin Kaldestad
David Little
Pete Maloney
Dean Paddock
Penny Pagels
Perfenia Pletnikoff
John Roos
John Sevier
Harold Sparck
Beth Stewart
Robert Wurm

General Public

Approximately 150 people attended the meeting. The following members of the public signed the attendance register:

Katsuni Kenaston
Tom W. Rueter
Laurie Williams
CDR Gary W. Palmer
Dick Tremaine
David Allison
John Henderschedt
CAPT Robert Gavino
Helen Woods
Bruce Cotton
Brian Bigler
Cecelia Angason
Steve Hughes
Arni Thomson
Kenneth Allread
Steve Drage
Andy Hollenbeck
Byrce Morgan
Steve Heimel
Karen Samuelson
Pat Marcuson
Steve Finley
George Pletnikoff
Robert Morgan
Jeff Povolny
Bill Sullivan
Eugene Asicksik
Brenda Huber
Tyson Vogeler
Gail Oba
Mark Snigaroff
Michele Hope
Jessie Nelson
Michael Swetzof
Bill Orr
Michael Chuorcke
Shari Gross
Alvin Merculief
Roger Woods
Agafm Krukof
Joe Kyle
Alendander Galanin, Sr.
Denby Lloyd
Thor Olsen
Steve Grabacki
Chuck Soxie
Hazel Nikol
Kati Wyman
Jed Whittaker
Norman Aloben
Michael Lake
Kate Graham
Rick Shelford
Joe Plesha
Frank Kavairlook, Sr.
Karl Ohls
Richard Ferrero
Larry Cotter
Paul Peyton
Kris Norosz
Mel Monsen
Sara Higgins
David & Wanda Jentry
David Harville
Lance Newman
Richard Wood
Tuck Donnelly
Kirk Connally
Sinclair Wilt
Chris Blackburn
Joe Sullivan
John Grames
H. Gazaway
Vic Horgan, Jr.
Ed Glotfelty
Mike Atterberry
Greg Baker
Rick Kniaziowski
Svend Brandt-Ericksen
John Harty
Mary Bruckmeier
Karl Woodruff
Marilyn Helman
Chris Bryner
Deming Cowles
Heather Melarty
Gary Westman
Donna Parker
Nick Delaney
Lynn Fitch
Jack Crowley
John Iani
Bill Jacobson
Robert S. Otto
Scott Tiernan
Cheryl Hess
Liz Talbot
Andree McLeod
Tom Marshall
Ed Wyman
Vern Hall
Paul Seaton

Laura Cooper
Mark Springer
R.A. Self
Bob Younger
Steve Fish
G. Wong
Suzanne Rebert
Lynn Shawback
Kevin Rowdebush
Kurt Schelle
Patricia Self
Lonnie Chesnut
Carolyn Nichols
Ed Boyce
Dennis Robinson
Kris Poulsen
Raquel Goni
Dennis Van Sky
Debby Swenson
Robert Scofield
Thorn Smith
Buck Fowler, Jr.
Nancy Lane
Sandy Murray
Jere Murray

NOTE: A list of those testifying on Council agenda items is found in Appendix I to these minutes.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

Chairman Lauber called the meeting to order at approximately 10:34 a.m. on Tuesday, September 22, 1992. The Oath of Office was administered to Ron Hegge and Linda Behnken. Chairman Lauber also introduced and welcomed Alan Millikan who will be the designated alternate for the Washington Department of Fisheries, and CAPT Bill Anderson, the alternate for RADM Rufe, the new commander for the 17th Coast Guard District. Admiral Rufe was introduced when he arrived later in the week.

Agenda. Linda Behnken suggested the addition of a discussion of recent foreign commerce transfer problems. Council members agreed to take it up under Agenda item D-8(h). The agenda was approved with this addition. Wally Pereyra suggested that Council members discuss priorities on the agenda because of its length. Steve Pennoyer and Clarence Pautzke agreed to prepare recommendations for the Council to consider later in the meeting.

Election of Officers. Rick Lauber and Bob Alverson were nominated and elected to continue as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, for another year.

Minutes of Previous Meetings. The minutes of the June and August 1992 meetings were approved as submitted.

B. REPORTS

B-1 Executive Director's Report

Clarence Pautzke announced the appointment of Chris Oliver as the Deputy Director. The Council was provided with copies of testimony from the September 9 hearing on the reauthorization of the Magnuson Act, and advised of a nationwide Council review by the Inspector General. Council members were also provided with current Council committee lists and asked to review membership and contact Chairman Lauber if they wish to serve on a particular committee. The Council also agreed that the Chairman should appoint an Enforcement Committee to review regulations in light of their enforceability. Ron Hegge agreed to chair the committee. Council members were also advised that a call for AP and SSC nominations will go out in the next newsletter and that travel claims should be submitted immediately after the meeting, before the end of the fiscal year (September 30). Council members were also asked to update their financial disclosure forms during the meeting.

Don Bevan provided an update for the Council on current appropriations proceedings. He indicated that the outlook is not optimistic, with a 7% across the board cut recommended by the House and a 3% cut recommended by the Senate. Dr. Bevan advised that the industry coalition is trying to convince those in Washington that cutting "across the board" is not the best way to reduce the budget, and are making suggestions for specific areas where cuts might be accomplished.

B-2 ADF&G Report

The Council received a report from Earl Krygier, ADF&G, on the catch statistics for the Bering Sea king and Tanner crab, troll salmon, and demersal shelf rockfish fisheries.

Council member Ron Hegge asked whether a scallop management plan or moratorium being considered by the State would apply in federal waters. Mr. Krygier said that vessels harvesting scallop in federal waters would be required to comply. However, there is some question whether the Council needs to take some action so regulations in state and federal waters will be the same. Mr. Krygier said that ADF&G is working with NMFS and NOAA-GCAK to determine if Council action is necessary. Mr. Pereyra asked that the Council put the issue on the January agenda. Mr. Krygier said

List of Persons Testifying at NPFMC Meeting
September 22-27, 1992

Agenda C-1 Observer Program

Roger Woods, Data Contractors
Arni Thomson, Alaska Crab Coalition
Steve Drage, F/V Coho
Lauri Williams, Pacific Observers

Agenda C-2 Community Development Quotas

John Jimewouk, Hazel Nelson, Joe Paniyak, Perfenia Pletnikoff, Alvin Merculief, CDQ Coodinating Group
Steve Hughes, Midwater Trawlers

Agenda C-3 International Fisheries

Shari Gross, Halibut Association of North America

Agenda C-4 Marine Mammals

Steve Hughes, Midwater Trawlers
Kate Graham, American High Seas Fishermen's Assn.
Penny Pagels, Greenpeace

Agenda C-6 Sablefish/Halibut IFQs

Jeff Stephan, United Fishermen's Marketing Assn.
Paul Seaton, Anchor Point, Alaska
Nancy Lande, SCALE
Laura Cooper, North Pacific Fisheries Protection Assn.
Jere Murray, Seldovia
Dennis Robinson, Ounalaska Corporation
Jack Crowley, Fishing Vessel Owners Assn.
Dan Falvey, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Assn.
Kris Norosz, Petersburg Vessel Owners Assn.

Agenda C-7 Comprehensive Rationalization Program

Dave Fraser, Joe Blum, Wally Pereyra, Kris Poulsen, Fog Alumni Association

Agenda D-2 Crab Management

Kris Poulsen, Kris Poulsen & Assoc.
Arni Thomson, Alaska Crab Coalition

Agenda D-3 Groundfish Specifications

Tricia King, Clear Thought
Chris Chavasse, AKPIRG
Chris Blackburn, Groundfish Data Bank
Pat McBride, Alaska Sablefish, Inc.

Agenda D-4 GOA Amendment 26

Raquel Goni, Conservation Action Group
John Henderschedt, Golden Age Fisheries
Matt Donohoe, Sitka
Bob Younger, Sitka
Steve Fish, Sitka
Carolyn Nichols, Sitka
Lonnie Chesnut, Sitka
R.A. Self, Sitka
Vince Curry, Alaska Factory Trawlers
Steve Hughes, Midwater Trawllers Co-op
Kris Norosz, Deming Cowles, Fishery Conservation Action Group
George Anderson, Fishing Company of Alaska
Dan Falvey, ALFA
Dave Fraser, Alaska Independent Fishermen
Arni Thomson, United Fishermen of Alaska
Hope Eldridge, Sitka

Agenda D-5 Plan Amendments - Initial Review

Ed Wyman, Seattle
Linda Kozak, Kodiak Longline Fishermen's Assn.
Kate Graham, AHSFA
Phil McCrudden, Unipak
Dave Benson, Arctic Alaska Fishermen's Assn.
Art Goddard, Canadian Consulate
Kris Norosz, PVOA
Chris Blackburn, AGDB
Joe Blum, Paul Macgregor, AFTA
John Henderschedt, Golden Age Fisheries
Don Iverson
Steve Hughes, Midwater Trawlers

Agenda D-6 Regulatory Amendments--Final Review

Steve Hughes, Fred Yeck, Midwater Trawlers
Kate Graham, AHSFA
Linda Kozak, KLVOA
Jim Beaton, Thorn Smith, Don Iverson, North Pacific Longline Assn.
Vince Curry, AFTA

Agenda D-7 Groundfish Regulatory Amendments--Initial Review

Chris Blackburn, AGDB
David Harville, Kodiak & Western
Steve Drage, Kodiak
Gary Westman, Midwater Trawlers

Agenda D-8 Other Groundfish Issues

David Harville, Kodiak & Western
Gary Cadd, Kenai Peninsula Sportsmen's Assn
Jed Whittaker, Earth
Tuck Donnelly, Terra Marine

Agenda D-9 Staff Tasking

Steve Davis, Sally Bibb, LGL Research Associates
Thorn Smith, NPLA

that they could provide informational reports then, but that the Alaska Board of Fisheries will not have met on the issue by that time. A motion was made and approved to put scallop management on the January Council agenda.

B-3 NMFS Management Report

Ron Berg, NMFS Region, reported on the current status of regulatory amendments in progress and the status of groundfish fisheries. Council members inquired why the moratorium notice of a cut-off date has not been finalized. Mr. Berg responded that in the press of other regulations which need to be in place or submitted to the Secretary, their staff has not been able to complete the necessary paperwork. Staff is also working on the complicated set of regulations for the sablefish and halibut IFQ program; they hope to submit them for General Counsel review within two weeks.

Council member Pereyra asked for information on the overrun of the halibut bycatch cap in the longline cod fishery. Mr. Berg explained that in June they realized that the bycactch rate in that fishery had increased significantly and was almost at the 750 mt cap at that time, however the amendment to actually implement the cap would not be implemented until about the first of September. An emergency rule to implement the cap was not undertaken because NMFS felt that the bycatch rate would not approach 750 mt before the amendment was in place. At the August meeting NMFS advised the Council of the situation and was advised to proceed with the regulation with the attendant 30-day cooling off period. Based on previous data, NMFS did not feel that the 750 mt cap needed to be implemented by emergency rule as they did with the trawl cap. Subsequently the cod TAC was reached and the cap issue became moot.

B-4 Enforcement Report

Dave Flannagan reported on NMFS enforcement activities for the period of June 1 through September 1, 1992. He also advised the Council that the Alaska Enforcement Division has a hiring freeze in effect in anticipation of the FY 1993 budget shortfalls and that their ability to investigate violations and pursue prosecutions has been severely affected. He advised that they will only have the capability to pursue the most serious violations for the foreseeable future.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to send a letter to Under Secretary Knauss expressing concern in support of sufficient funding for enforcement.

Capt. Bill Anderson reported on Coast Guard enforcement activities for the period June 1 through August 31, 1992, including six vessel and three catch seizures. In addition, two incidences of vessels fishing within sea lion rookeries were investigated. The Coast Guard also investigated, along with Japanese enforcement officials, a report from two Japanese driftnet vessels of harrassment by two vessels of the Sea Shepherd Society and investigated a report of numerous South Korean driftnet vessesl operating north of the authorized boundary for July.

Capt. Anderson also told the Council he is in favor of an Enforcement Committee to review proposed regulations for enforceability.

B-5 Halibut Fisheries Stock Status Report

Bob Trumble, IPHC, reported on the 1992 halibut fisheries to date. There is no new information on stock assessment at this time but an updated SAFE document will be available for the Council in December. In general, the stock is in good condition, but declining at a rate of about 7% a year. Council member Linda Behnken suggested that the IPHC authorize higher trip limits in the September opening to avoid later openings during bad weather.

C. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS

C-1 Observer Program

The Council received a status report on the Research Plan. Draft regulations are currently being prepared but not yet complete because of the press of other Council tasking. Staff is also awaiting the outcome of a change to the Magnuson Act which would set the fee limit at 2% of exvessel value. This legislation would be consistent with Council intent but would affect the way the Proposed Rule is structured. Action on the legislation is expected within the next few weeks; the Proposed Rule package would then be completed and forwarded for Secretarial review.

The Council received proposed changes to the current Observer Program for 1993. A draft EA/RIR/IRFA was prepared for Council review at this meeting. Staff consulted with the Observer Oversight Committee in preparing the regulatory amendment for the proposed changes.

Proposed changes were:

1. Reduce the lower length limit for 100% coverage from 125' to 115'.
2. Reduce the lower length limit for 30% coverage from 60' to 55' or 57'.
3. Change the 30% coverage requirement from a quarterly requirement, with no connection to a target fishery, to a monthly requirement, possibly also by target fishery.
4. Consider reducing the level of coverage for vessels fishing with pot gear.
5. Redefine 'fishing day.'
6. Revise conflict of interest standards for observers and observer contractors.

Report of the Observer Oversight Committee

The Committee had the following comments (summarized from the full report):

Reduce the lower length limit for 100% coverage from 125' to 115'. In discussing the potential gains derived from this increased coverage, it was noted that Pacific cod and pollock fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska are in need of additional coverage. The Committee felt that this proposal should be examined in the regulatory amendment for Council review.

Reduce the lower length limit for 30% coverage from 60' to 55' or 57'. The Committee noted that vessels from 55' and 58' probably are not as much in need of coverage as the larger vessels and that insurance coverage for observers on smaller vessels is an area of concern. Also, data collected from these vessels most likely would not be comparable to that collected from the larger vessels. However, the Committee felt that sablefish longline vessels, particularly from the 58'-60' length are very much in need of some type of observer coverage because of bycatch. The Committee recommended that these options be included in an analysis and that some type of pilot program for trawl fisheries be considered.

Change the 30% coverage requirement from quarterly to monthly requirement, possibly by target fishery. The Committee generally agreed that some change should be made to eliminate the potential for vessels to manipulate observer coverage to avoid having an observer when they are fishing in fisheries, or at times, when their bycatch rates are high. There were concerns, however, that such a change would require observers to change vessels more frequently and that the quality of data collected may suffer; additional costs to vessels were also a concern of the Committee.

Consider reducing the level of coverage for vessels fishing with pot gear. In reviewing the 1990 bycatch data provided to the Committee, the members noted that there was also a substantial crab catch in the Pacific cod pot fishery and suggested the mortality on crab also be evaluated. The Committee asked NMFS to review whether the loss of data would significantly impact the overall accuracy of the bycatch estimates. The recommendation to staff from the Committee was to consider an option in the analysis for 30% coverage for all pot vessels above 60' or 57' (if the lower length limit is reduced).

Redefine 'fishing day.' Questions were raised by the Committee regarding the enforceability of the options provided. They suggested that an option be considered that would define an observer day (for credit purposes) as a day in which catch is made available to the observer for sampling.

Revise conflict of interest standards for observers and observer contractors. The Committee felt that some of the proposed changes were unduly restrictive on the observers. Overall, the Committee felt that the job of an observer should be made as attractive as possible and not restrictive to the point where the job was no longer attractive. With regard to conflict standards for observer contractors, the Committee felt that the financial interest provision should be applied to the individual owners of the contracting company, but that it was too restrictive to impose such a restriction on their employees.

The **Scientific and Statistical Committee** did not comment on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the Council send the proposed regulatory amendment out for public comment.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The Council received an overview of the proposed changes to the Observer Plan for 1993. In light of an earlier report from NMFS Enforcement indicating a critical shortage in enforcement funds, Council members asked whether the changes proposed would be enforceable under the current enforcement budget problems. Mr. Nelson responded that although Enforcement may not be able to actively pursue a great number of prosecutions there is still a need for the data to be collected.

Bob Mace moved to send the EA/RIR for the proposed changes to the Observer Program out for public review. The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson.

Linda Behnken moved to amend to add, under Section 5, the flexibility to require coverage by area in the 30% coverage category. The motion was seconded by Clem Tillion.

Council member Bob Alverson expressed concern over the increased cost to small vessels and asked that the staff look into that aspect of the option.

The amendment carried, 9 to 2, with Alverson and Dyson voting against.

Wally Pereyra moved to amend to include a section on enforceability and compliance for each of the proposed changes. The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell and carried without objection.

Bob Alverson moved that those sections addressing reduction of length limits (Sections 2, 3, and 6) of the document be withheld until the Research Plan is adopted by the Secretary of Commerce. The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson.

Mr. Alverson felt that these alternatives will impose additional costs on the research plan and that before adding costs the Council should have a good idea where the money will come from. Other members felt that the proposed amendments should be sent out to solicit public comment at this time.

The amendment failed, 10 to 1, with Alverson voting in favor.

Bob Alverson moved to re-insert an option calling for multiple observers on larger vessels. The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson.

The option had been recommended earlier but dropped from the package after NMFS suggested, and the Observer Oversight Committee agreed, that this option could be postponed until the Research Plan is implemented. This option would require catcher/processor vessels, mothership vessels, and shoreside processors of a certain size to carry multiple observers.

The motion carried, 10 to 1, with Pereyra voting no.

The main motion, as amended, carried without objection.

Council members also discussed arranging for the public hearings which will be held on the Research Plan. Lisa Lindeman advised that the hearings are actually part of the Secretarial review process and that the Council need not be involved. Steve Pennoyer pointed out that the Secretary will most likely consult with the Chairman of the Council when setting the hearings. Council members stressed the need to coordinate with leading fishing industry groups in Washington, Oregon and Alaska before setting the dates and locations.

C-2 Community Development Quotas

The Council was informed that the proposed rule incorporating the criteria and procedures for the Western Alaska Community Development Quota Program has been drafted and sent to the Central Office, however it had not yet been published. Upon publication of a final rule the State of Alaska will be ready to evaluate CDQ proposals and make recommendations on which ones to forward to the Secretary.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee had no comment on this agenda topic.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP unanimously recommended the Council schedule teleconferences on CDQ proposals with the Governor as soon as it is appropriate.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The Council received an update from both NMFS and State of Alaska representatives. If the final rule is implemented in a timely manner, approximately 101,370 mt of pollock could be released for CDQs before the end of the year. CDQ fisheries would be required to comply with current regulations such as gear closures and bycatch restrictions. There was some doubt that all the regulatory actions could be completed in time for any CDQ fishery by the end of 1992. Dave Benton, State of Alaska representative, suggested that, as soon as the final rule is published and the State can solicit applications, the Council hold a teleconference with the Governor to discuss the applications and the Governor's recommendations.

It was noted by the Clarence Pautzke that the proposed rule does not include a provision requiring the Governor to consult with the Council before sending recommendations to the Secretary. The Council voted to include this when approving the CDQ program. NMFS staff indicated that although it is not in the proposed rule it could be added to the final rule. By consensus the Council agreed to request that the provision be included in the final rule. It was stressed, however, that if such a request would slow the process of Secretarial review and approval that it would be dropped at this time. It was also pointed out that the State regulations do call for consultation with the Council. Summaries of applications received by the State will be provided to the Council for the teleconference review. It was agreed that a full copy of each proposal will be available for review in the Council office in Anchorage, in Juneau at NMFS and State locations, and at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. This will be contingent on an Attorney General opinion regarding confidentiality of the applications.

The Council also agreed to recommend to the Secretary that the public comment period on the final rule be a short as possible in order to try to have CDQ reserves released for 1992.

The Council also discussed the issue of whether or not CDQ users should be required to follow the same restrictions as other pollock fisheries, i.e., the A-B season TAC split, current seasons, bycatch caps, etc. The consensus was that all the current regulations should apply.

Donna Darm moved to notify the public that the Council will consider various alternatives for the CDQ fisheries: Whether they are fished in the same seasons and proportions as the olympic

pollock fishery, or not; if they are, then will the division between the A and B season be the same (40/60), or not; if not, would it be in addition to or subtracted from the 40% of the olympic system. The motion was seconded by Clem Tillion and carried, 9 to 2, with Hegge and Mitchell objecting.

C-3 International Fisheries

The Council received a written update on several items: a reacp of the Moscow International Conference on Central Bering Sea Pollock Management, regulations affecting U.S. operations in the Russian EEZ and Donut Hole, and legislative disincentives to foreign Donut Hole and driftnet fisheries. Because of a lack of time, there was no Council discussion or action.

C-4 Marine Mammals

The Council received a status report from Dick Merrick of the NMFS Marine Mammal Lab in Seattle on the 1992 Steller sea lion research program and results from this summer's research and census counts. The Council also received a presentation from Andrew Trites who recently completed a study for the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission on Steller sea lions and potential fishery interactions in the commercial fisheries off Alaska.

The Council was asked by NMFS to consider additional fishery management measures to protect Steller sea lion foraging habitat on the southeastern Bering Sea shelf near Ugamak Island. Staff provided an EA/RIR for a regulatory amendment to implement the proposed measure which would add the Ugamak Island Steller sea lion rookery to the 20-mile no-trawl zones during the pollock A season.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC agreed with the proposal to add the Ugamak Island Steller sea lion rookery to the 20-mile no-trawl zone for the pollock fishery. However, they noted that there should be no biological reason the Pacific cod fishery in the area could not continue. The SSC was informed that allowing the cod trawl fishery would present an enforcement problem.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel recommended status quo with regard to the proposed Ugamak Island closure. They noted that this isn't an area where pollock are caught and that this particular area has shown a double-digit increase in sea lion population this past year. The AP also expressed frustration that they are asked to provide recommendations on actions such as this with inadequate time for review.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Bob Mace moved to adopt the AP's recommendation to maintain the status quo with regard to the trawl closures around Ugamak Island. The motion was seconded by Wally Pereyra.

Mr. Mace felt that there is not enough evidence that trawling for cod would be detrimental to the sea lion population because the cod is taken at depths greater than those used by the sea lions. He also expressed concern that if this area is closed industry may not be able to harvest the cod TAC.

Steve Pennoyer indicated that the cod TAC could still be taken in other areas. He also pointed out that the summer sea lion surveys show a substantial change in the downward trend in areas where the no-trawl zones have been implemented, while other sea lion areas, without the restrictions, haven't shown the same improvement.

Although some Council members felt there aren't enough data on the relationship between bottom trawling for cod and sea lion pup survival, Steve Pennoyer pointed out that there is a need to be conservative with a species nearly on the endangered species list.

The motion failed, 8 to 3, with Dyson, Pereyra and Mace voting in favor.

Clem Tillion moved approval of Alternative 2: Expansion of 10 nm trawl closures around Ugamak Island to 20 m trawl closures during the BSAI pollock "A" season. The motion was seconded by Donna Darm.

Wally Pereyra moved to amend to add: "Except that directed fishing for cod would be allowed in this area as long as vessels have observers on board. The motion was seconded by Bob Alverson and carried, 6 to 5, with Behnken, Hegge, Darm, Pennoyer and Tillion voting against.

Bob Alverson moved that the amendment would only be effective for 1993. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

The main motion, as amended, carried, 10 to 1, with Darm voting against.

Later in the meeting, **Linda Behnken moved to reconsider the vote on this motion. The motion to reconsider was seconded by Donna Darm and carried, 7 to 4, with Alverson, Dyson, Mace, and Pereyra voting no.**

Henry Mitchell moved to reconsider the amendment to allow the cod trawl fishery with observers. The motion to reconsider carried, 6 to 5, with Alverson, Dyson, Mace, Pereyra and Lauber voting no.

This amendment failed on the second vote, 6 to 5, with Alverson, Dyson, Mace, Pereyra and Lauber voting in favor.

Wally Pereyra moved to amend to exclude all fishing vessels from the area. The motion was seconded by Bob Mace and failed, 6 to 5.

It was pointed out that the amendment could only address the fisheries covered by a fishery management plan and also that the current EA/RIR only addresses trawling.

The main motion, as amended (without the cod trawl exemption) carried, 7 to 3, with Dyson, Mace and Lauber voting no, and Pereyra abstaining.

C-5 Habitat

The Council received a request from the Commission of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to:

(1) Jointly establish a continuous location reporting system for offshore fishing and processing vessels and require their participation; and

(2) Require vessels participating in the fishery to sign standby contracts with response action contractors as a minimal contingency planning measure against oil spills.

Svend Brandt-Eriksen of the ADEC gave the Council an overview of the request.

The **Scientific and Statistical Committee** had no comment on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP felt the Council should not be directly involved in this type of activity. They suggested that the Council suggest that the EPA, Coast Guard and other appropriate agencies work with ADEC to develop minimum oil spill preparedness requirements and consider requiring fishing vessels over a certain size to obtain standby contracts for oil spill response.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The Council suggested that the Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation consult with NMFS on their progress with the COMSAT reporting system and explore the possibility that the system could be used to report oil spills.

C-6 Sablefish/Halibut IFQs

The Council received three discussion papers developed by the State of Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission on the two block proposals and the 1,000 lb. minimum proposal considered by the Council last December.

The Council also received a request from the Kodiak Island Borough to consider several conservation management techniques to address immediate concerns in the halibut and sablefish fisheries.

The **Scientific and Statistical Committee** had no comment on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the Council send the analyses of both block proposals and the 1,000 lb. minimum out for public comment. The AP also endorsed the request submitted by the Kodiak Island Borough to analyze interim management measures for sablefish and halibut.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Oscar Dyson moved to send Kodiak Island Borough proposals for staff analysis and then out for public review. The motion was seconded by Clem Tillion.

It was pointed out that the IPHC has the tools to deal with the halibut fishery and that the other management measures enumerated in the proposal were status quo or methods which have been used and found to be ineffective. CAPT. Anderson, USCG, commented that several of the proposals were either unenforceable or would be very impractical to enforce. Most Council members felt that the issue had been thoroughly covered during their consideration of the IFQ plan.

The motion failed, 8 to 3, with Dyson, Tillion and Lauber voting in favor.

Steve Pennoyer moved to send the two block proposals and 1,000 lb. minimum discussion papers out for public comment and schedule Council discussion in January. At that time the Council would review public comments and instruct staff on further analysis. The motion was seconded by Linda Behnken and carried with Dyson objecting.

The Council asked that the two block proposals be combined in one document. [Note: Council member Hegge requested that for further analysis and discussion, the block proposal he submitted no longer be referred to as the "Hegge Proposal".]

Wally Pereyra asked for a comparison of the two block proposals along with the analysis. Staff agreed this could be done.

C-7 Comprehensive Rationalization Program

Moratorium. The Council received a status report on the Moratorium and control date publication. Staff reported that the EA/RIR/IRFA for the moratorium is ready to be submitted for Secretarial review. Work on the proposed rule has been delayed because of pressing work on other Council actions. A draft of the *Federal Register* notice of the control date is undergoing review by NOAA-GC before publication.

Comprehensive Rationalization Program. The Council was provided with a discussion paper developed by Council staff. The paper was prepared as a starting point for the Council to begin development of their comprehensive rationalization program for all fisheries under their jurisdiction.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC supports the development of a comprehensive rationalization program for all groundfish and crab fisheries. However, they strongly recommended that the Council set out specific objectives to be achieved by a new management system, or problems to be solved by it, and select well-defined alternatives before forming focus groups to design the analysis and begin the data gathering process.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP did not take up this issue because of a lack of time; however Dave Fraser, AP Vice Chairman, reiterated the AP's request that the Council review their amendment cycle and decide whether they wish to deal with the fishery problems in a piece-meal way or move forward with a comprehensive plan.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Marcus Hartley reviewed the discussion paper prepared by Russell Harding. It was noted that crab was not specifically addressed in the document although it has been the Council's intent to include the crab fisheries in the comprehensive rationalization program. The Council discussed how to proceed with narrowing the alternatives for an in-depth analysis. Although the Council has stated that traditional management measures are not sufficient, it was suggested by NOAA General Counsel

that they should be referenced and some explanation given as to why they are not being considered. If measures have been analyzed previously, those analyses should be incorporated by reference.

Henry Mitchell moved that the Council form a "committee of the whole" [Council] to begin narrowing alternatives for an in-depth analysis. The motion was seconded by Linda Behnken and carried without objection.

The Council directed staff to send out the discussion paper, after it is revised to include crab, for public comment and to encourage industry to submit their comments or ideas before the committee meets. The Committee will meet sometime in November and report their recommendations to the Council at the January 1993 meeting.

D. FISHERY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

D-1 Salmon Management

Because of the lengthy agenda and lack of time, this agenda item was postponed until the January 1993 Council meeting.

D-2 Crab Management

The Council was scheduled to receive a report on the 1992 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab survey, a report from ADF&G on potential observer coverage for crab catcher vessels, an optimum yield analysis for the Bering Sea *C. opilio* fishery, and a report from the Crab Interim Action Committee on crab pot limits.

Because of a lack of time, the Council received only a written summary of the results of the BSAI crab survey; the full report will be available at the December meeting. The Council received a brief overview from ADF&G on the ADF&G observer program and the feasibility of placing observers on crab catcher vessels. The Council was informed that the crab OY analysis is not yet available for review; the issue was delayed until the January 1993 Council meeting.

Steve Pennoyer reported on the meeting of the Crab Interim Action Committee (CIAC) to hear an appeal regarding the Alaska Board of Fisheries' decision to limit the number of crab pots in the Bering Sea Crab fisheries. The CIAC consists of NMFS Regional Director Steve Pennoyer, Judy Merchant, representative for the Washington Department of Fisheries, and Carl Rosier, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The committee has no authority to grant an appeal; their function is to comment in writing to the Secretary of Commerce on pre-season appeals to assist her with review of new State crab regulations to determine if they are consistent with the Crab FMP. The committee did not reach a consensus on a recommendation to the Secretary, but agreed that resolution of the appeal is necessary. Each of the committee members will provide individual comments to the Secretary.

There were no AP or SSC comments on this agenda item. These were all information-only items and no Council action was taken.

D-3 Initial Groundfish Specifications for 1993

The Council received the draft SAFE documents and economic assessment for 1993 for both the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Island groundfish fisheries. As in the past, it was noted that the documents contained limited new information as the data from summer surveys are not complete and analyzed until after the Council meets. The revised SAFE documents will be prepared for the Council's December meeting.

The groundfish Plan Team chairs reviewed the status of stocks for each of the fisheries along with plan team recommendations for groundfish ABCs for 1993. These recommendations, along with those of the SSC and AP, are found in Appendix II to these minutes.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC's ABC recommendations are found in Appendix II; specific comments relating to each species are found in Appendix III to these minutes.

For the majority of stocks the SSC endorsed the Teams' recommendations. For the Gulf of Alaska stocks, the SSC recommended that ABC be distributed regionally in proportion to abundance but that the overfishing limit be set Gulf-wide except where there is evidence of stock separation for any species. Some stocks, particularly rockfish, appear to have low mixing rates and would be subject to local depletion if ABCs are not distributed regionally. With regard to Gulf of Alaska pollock, the SSC requested analysts provide a more extensive discussion in the December SAFE of the stock synthesis model used. The SSC also advised the Council that Gulf pollock exploitation rates are being examined by stock assessment analysts who are presenting a paper for peer review at an upcoming symposium. The paper will be available to the Plan Team for their consideration in preparation of ABC recommendations for the December SAFE.

With respect to BSAI Atka mackerel, the SSC noted that almost all of the 1992 catch was taken in the eastern Aleutian Islands area. They feel the 1993 ABC is at a level that cannot be safely taken entirely from that area, and in addition there may be an impact on marine mammals. Therefore, the SSC recommended that the Council develop a plan amendment to subdivide the Aleutian Islands maanagement areas so that all TACs for Atka mackerel may be allocated geographically. Without the ability to apportion ABCs by area, the SSC recommended the ABC for BSAI Atka mackerel should be constrained to 32,100 mt, which can be safely taken in the eastern Aleutians area.

The SSC also reviewed a proposal from the Alaska Groundfish Data Bank to consider a review of the current boundaries between the Aleutian subarea and the Gulf of Alaska management area. The SSC also discussed the need to make regional distributions of ABC for such species as rockfish and Atka mackerel and recommended the groundfish plan teams examine this issue and develop a plan amendment for consideration during 1993, which would examine all area boundaries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP's recommended TACs are found in Appendix II to these minutes. Complete AP minutes are found in Appendix IV.

For the Gulf of Alaska, the AP agreed with the plan teams' recommendations for all species except the following:

Pollock. The AP received new information the Plan Team did not have, and therefore supported the SSC's recommendation.

Arrowtooth. The AP felt that halibut bycatch will significantly restrain this fishery and since "other species" amounts are 5% of the total TACs, a lower TAC will notice industry more correctly on the amount of "other species" which might be available.

POP/Shortraker/Rougheye. The AP felt the rockfish quotas should have a buffer between ABC and TAC and that exploitation of these rockfish species should be conservative. Some members question the accuracy of the survey numbers since these species don't survey well, and therefore felt that management should be conservative.

Demersal Shelf Rockfish. The AP was concerned about the differences between plan team and SSC definitions of overfishing; if the overfishing level for this species is 800 mt, then the TAC should be set well under that number.

In addition, the AP recommended that the 1992 halibut PSC releases should be used as preliminary quotas for 1993 for public comment purposes.

For the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island groundfish fisheries, the AP had several caveats for the TACs recommended in Appendix II to these minutes. For the SAFE document, the AP recommended that it be amended to include 1992 salmon bycatch rates broken down by species as much as the data will allow.

Other recommendations were:

- Rockfish and Atka mackerel harvests should be split in terms of geographical subarea, within the overall Aleutians area.
- The split line for Atka mackerel should be 178°W.
- If there is no geographical division of catches, the TAC for Atka mackerel should be 32,000 mt.

For the purpose of public comment, the AP recommended that 30% of the pollock ITAC be apportioned to the A season. The AP also unanimously recommended that the Council adopt their recommended PSC apportionments (see Appendix II) for public comment, and that the VIP rates for 1993 be developed at the December Council meeting.

The AP had several other general recommendations regarding research, peer review of the NMFS field science modeling program, and a workshop on salmon bycatch data for the BSAI. (See the AP Minutes, Appendix IV)

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Gulf of Alaska

ABCs

Steve Pennoyer moved to adopt the Gulf of Alaska groundfish ABCs as recommended by the SSC (Appendix II). The motion was seconded by Bob Alverson.

Clem Tillion moved to amend to use the Plan Team's recommendation for the Pacific ocean perch ABC. The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell.

Steve Pennoyer suggested that more information and discussion is needed on this species and its exploitation rate.

Henry Mitchell moved to amend to use a range of the SSC and Plan Team's recommendations for Pacific ocean perch ABC. The motion to amend was seconded by Bob Alverson and carried without objection. This amendment carried the previous amendment.

Bob Mace moved to amend to use a range of the SSC and Plan Team's ABC recommendations for thornyhead rockfish. The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell and carried without objection.

TACs

Steve Pennoyer moved to send out the Advisory Panel recommendations for TACs (Appendix II). The motion was seconded by Bob Mace.

Oscar Dyson moved that Pacific ocean perch be designated bycatch only. The motion was seconded by Ron Hegge and carried without objection. It was clarified that this includes the AP recommendation for a directed fishery later in the year if it is determined that there are sufficient stocks.

Wally Pereyra requested that the Plan Team provide analysis of what reasonable bycatch rates would be for the fishery.

Bob Alverson noted that in the past the Council has set the rockfish TAC at 25% of the ABC for rebuilding purposes and that they hadn't been following that regime recently.

Bob Alverson moved that, in the cover letter accompanying the groundfish specifications for public review, it be noted that with regard to Pacific ocean perch, shortraker, other slope, pelagic, demersal, and thornyhead rockfish that (in addition to the AP recommendation), the Council will be looking at a TAC of 70% of the ABCs. The motion was seconded by Wally Pereyra.

Bob Mace suggested that a specific percentage not be set at this time, but to outline the Council's concerns in the cover letter and indicate that they may consider a percentage below ABC. It was the consensus of the Council to follow this suggestion and Mr. Alverson withdrew his motion.

Linda Behnken moved to establish a 10% buffer between the ABC and TAC if ABC equals the overfishing definition, as recommended by the Advisory Panel. The motion was seconded by Donna Darm and carried without objection.

Oscar Dyson moved to separate black rockfish into its own TAC species. The motion was seconded by Linda Behnken.

Wally Pereyra moved to amend the motion to look at redefining rockfish statistical areas to more accurately reflect distribution of the resource, and to break out Atka mackerel as a separate category. The motion was seconded by Bob Mace and carried after deletion of the portion on rockfish.

Steve Pennoyer pointed out that both of these motions would require separate FMP amendments and changes would not be available for management in 1993. **Mr. Pereyra withdrew the portion of the motion regarding rockfish as that would apply to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands.**

Mr. Dyson's motion, as amended, carried without objection.

Wally Pereyra moved to direct the plan team to begin work on an amendment to break out Atka mackerel from the "other species": category. The motion was seconded and carried without objection.

Earl Krygier moved that, along with the FMP amendment recommended by Mr. Pereyra, that staff also examine the "Other Species" category to resolve inconsistencies in state and federal management, including breaking out Atka mackerel. The motion was seconded by Steve Pennoyer and carried without objection.

The main motion to approve preliminary ABCs and TACs (as amended) for public review carried without objection.

PSCs

Bob Alverson moved to approve the AP recommendations for initial PSC limits for 1993 (that the halibut PSC releases for 1993 be the same as the actual releases in 1992, both in amount and over time). The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson and carried without objection.

Steve Pennoyer pointed out that this recommendation would mirror the Council's decision last year to allocate 10 mt halibut PSC specifically to the demersal shelf rockfish fishery out of the second trimester hook and line gear allowance; so the hook and line PSC, excluding the DSR fishery, would be 740 mt.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

ABCs

Steve Pennoyer moved to adopt the SSC's recommendations for preliminary 1993 ABCs for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish. The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson.

Wally Pereyra moved to use the 117,100 mt ABC for Atka mackerel. The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell and carried without objection.

Mr. Pereyra noted the SSC's concerns over the distribution of the resource and suggested that concern be dealt with under the TAC-setting process.

The motion, as amended, carried without objection.

For species where the plan team and SSC recommendations differ, a range of the two figures will be used for public comment purposes.

TACs

Steve Pennoyer moved to adopt the AP recommendations for initial 1993 TACs for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. The motion was seconded by Bob Alverson.

Henry Mitchell moved to reduce the rocksole TAC to 25,000 mt. The motion was seconded by Clem Tillion.

Mr. Mitchell said the rocksole fishery in the BSAI has a high rate of bycatch and should be curtailed; Mr. Pereyra felt the Council should set a more reasonable TAC for the fishery.

Wally Pereyra moved to amend to reduce the rocksole TAC to 40,000 mt. The motion was seconded by Bob Mace and carried unanimously. This motion carried the previous amendment.

The main motion, as amended, carried without objection.

Wally Pereyra moved to retain the 1992 percentages for the pollock A-B season split (40%/60%). The motion was seconded by Bob Mace and carried without objection.

Ron Hegge moved to notice the public that in December the Council will be considering bycatch-only status for shortraker rougheye in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands for 1993. The motion was seconded and carried without objection.

The main motion, as amended, carried without objection.

Wally Pereyra moved to task the plan team with preparing an analysis of dividing the Atka mackerel ABC in the Aleutians into two areas, east and west. The motion was seconded by Donna Darm and carried without objection. Mr. Pereyra and the Council agreed to use the AP's recommendation of 178°W as the dividing line for the two areas. The analysis would also include sablefish.

Bob Alverson moved to request the plan team to report back to the Council in January on the ability to expand current foreign or domestic longline surveys in Sarachef to 170°W between 300 and 600 fathoms to better assess the Greenland turbot stocks in the area, and to consider the same for the trawl survey. The motion was seconded by Wally Pereyra and carried without objection.

Bob Alverson moved to send out for public review the preliminary PSC allowances recommended by the AP for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson and carried without objection.

D-4 Groundfish Plan Amendments - Final Review

Amendment 26a - Eastern Gulf of Alaska Trawl Closure

Last June the Council reviewed information contained in the proposed Eastern Gulf trawl closure analysis and deferred action until September, requesting staff to gather additional information relative

to gear interactions with benthic habitat. The Council also asked staff to provide information to the Council on previous amendments to the Gulf FMP dealing with gear conflicts. The report was compiled and mailed to the Council before the meeting.

Also at the June meeting, the Council appointed an industry rockfish committee to discuss the proposed amendment and also to begin work on a long-range comprehensive rockfish management strategy for the Gulf of Alaska.

The Council received a supplementary rockfish report and received staff presentations on the information contained in the report.

Report of the Industry Rockfish Committee

The Committee met several times before and during the Council meeting. They received reports from NMFS, AFSC and ADF&G staff regarding the status of stocks for the rockfish fisheries, habitat, allocation, and gear conflicts. The Committee discussed Amendment 26a but had no recommendation. They did express concern over the current situation, however, and agreed that studies of rockfish biology and habitat by submersibles off Southeast Alaska should continue. The Committee will continue work on recommendations for a long-term rockfish management strategy.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC received staff presentations on the supplemental rockfish report prepared for the Council and the Rockfish Committee Report and offered several specific comments (see SSC Minutes, Appendix III). The SSC concluded that the assembled information does not contain convincing scientific evidence that trawling should be banned in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel also received staff presentations on the supplemental rockfish report and provided an array of recommendations: conservative management of Southeast rockfish stocks and fishing quotas, specific recommendations for the current Eastern Gulf of Alaska rockfish quota

management, improved survey techniques, industry development of an effort limitation program for rockfish, habitat research and impact studies, and establishment of a Rockfish Gear Committee. The details of these recommendations are found in a Council motion later in these minutes; the recommendation does not include a ban on trawling in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Linda Behnken moved to adopt the alternative submitted by the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association:

1. **Close deepwater rockfish fisheries (i.e., POP, rougheye/shortraker, idiot) to directed fishing by all gear types.**

2. **Designate the area east of 140°W longitude a hook and line only zone.**

3. **Allow an experimental trawl fishery east of 140°W longitude for research purposes. The studies would examine: the status of rockfish stocks; central rockfish habitat, and gear impact.**

The motion was seconded by Clem Tillion.

The motion failed, 7 to 4, with Behnken, Hegge, Tillion and Lauber voting in favor.

Clem Tillion moved the following:

1. **East of 140°W the following species would be bycatch only for the entire year: POP, shortraker/rougheye, shortspine thornyhead;, and other slope rockfish; and**
2. **Reinstate the original GOA trawl closures: Cross Sound Gully, Fairweather, and Salisbury Sound/Edgecombe.**

The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell.

There was some discussion whether this motion was within the parameters of the analysis done. Regional Director Steve Pennoyer said that it would be within the Council's judgement because the closures had been previously analyzed for an earlier management action, although those closures were lifted later. Some Council members felt that an earlier analysis would not be relevant to the current situation. Council members discussed the need for conservative management for rockfish species and the need for some type of rebuilding schedule or strategy; however they felt that Amendment 26a was not the appropriate action to be taken at this time.

The motion failed, 8 to 3, with Behnken, Hegge and Tillion voting in favor.

Bob Mace moved to adopt the recommendations of the Advisory Panel with the provision that the issues and recommendation be addressed by the Industry Rockfish Committee. The entire AP recommendation is:

1. **ABCs AND TAC. Continued conservative management of Southeast rockfish stocks and fishing quotas. For the next 5 years annual TACs should be set at 10% below the ABC for all Southeast rockfish species.**

2. **Recommendations for current Eastern Gulf of Alaska rockfish quota management:**

   a) **Shortraker/rougheye will be designated bycatch only in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska for 1993.**
   b) **POP and other slope rockfish will be managed as a target fishery in the Eastern Gulf. Other slope rockfish in the Eastern Gulf will close when/if bycatch of Demersal shelf rockfish reaches 25 metric tons.**
   c) **1% bycatch retention limit for Demersal Shelf Rockfish will continue to apply for trawl gear.**

3. **Improved Survey Techniques. Design and implementation of improved rockfish survey techniques to limit the apparent overestimation and underestimation which present surveys produce. Rockfish fishing is a specialized activity and industry input into rockfish survey systems should be considered.**

4. **Effort Limitation Program/Initial Industry Development. Implementation of an industry committee incorporating staff support to design and recommend within one year, an effort limitation program for all rockfish gear groups currently harvesting rockfish in Southeast Alaska. The Council is encouraged to designate and announce a December 1992 cut-off date for new entrants into Southeast Alaska rockfish fisheries for all gear groups.**

5. **Habitat Definition. Request NMFS to implement a program which will accomplish the following by 19_:**

   a) **Conduct a comprehensive survey to record all coral habitat in the Gulf of Alaska.**

   b) **Task a scientific team to identify and designate coral and other benthic habitat critical for continuing recruitment of rockfish stocks and maintenance of a generally healthy ecosystem within Southeast Alaska. This team should define isolated areas suitable for future fishing gear impact studies for all gear types harvesting rockfish.**

6. **Improve Rockfish Fishery and Coral Impact Data. Expand the current rockfish fishery data collection system to provide accurate and timely data of all rockfish harvest, bycatch, and discard activity. The expanded data system should cover all gear groups harvesting rockfish in the Southeast. Vessel participation in expanded at-sea observer coverage data collection, check-in/check-out procedures, and logbooks requirements specifically designed to record**

coral removals should be required as a precondition to rockfish fishing within Southeast Alaska.

7. **Establish a Rockfish Gear Conflict Committee. A gear conflict committee should be constituted by two representatives from all gear groups harvesting rockfish in Southeast Alaska. The purpose of a Rockfish Industry Gear Conflict Committee is implementation of an efficient communication and cooperation system on the fishing grounds between gear groups. The system should be capable of receiving and arbitrating complaints of gear conflicts. The Committee objective is to minimize actual gear conflicts between gear groups and keep gear dispute resolution within the industry.**

The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell.

Steve Pennoyer pointed out that there are several provisions within the motion which will require plan amendments. The maker of the motion suggested that the process should begin now to achieve what can be done and necessary amendments could follow. He recommended the Rockfish Committee be continued to work on the suggestions contained in the motion. Steve Pennoyer said he felt that current rockfish concerns could be handled in the TAC-setting processing in December.

Wally Pereyra moved to amend the motion to eliminate the "10%" provision in item #1, so the recommendation would be that "TACs should be set below the ABC for all Southeast rockfish species;" and to eliminate item 2(b) and item 4. The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson and carried unanimously.

The main motion, as amended, failed 7 to 4, with Behnken, Mace, Millikan, and Pereyra voting in favor.

The Council expressed the intent to examine rockfish concerns during the specification process in December and consider explicit stock rebuilding schedules when setting quotas for some species.

D-5 Groundfish Plan Amendments - Initial Review

(a) Pribilof Island Trawl Closure

This amendment proposal was originally part of Amendment 21 to the BSAI FMP. In April, after a preliminary review, the Council requested additional analysis before sending the proposal out for public review. The Council received the revised analysis and a staff review of the information.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The revised draft analysis responds to SSC concerns expressed in April and they recommended it be released for public comment. The SSC did provide staff with some additional comments on the current draft.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel recommended the analysis be sent out for public review after additional information is added. See AP Minutes, Appendix IV for specific information.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND REVIEW

Clem Tillion moved to send the analysis out for public comment. The motion was seconded by Ron Hegge and carried, 8 to 2, with Pereyra voting no and Millikan abstaining.

Wally Pereyra said he feels the analysis does not show the necessity for a trawl closure and that the effects of a CDQ program has not been addressed in the document.

(b) Pollock 'B' Season Delay/Exclusive Registration Areas

The Council received draft analyses for the above two amendment proposals and a review of the document from Drs. Terry Smith, Gunnar Knapp, and Matt Berman of the the University of Alaska Institute for Economic Research, who prepared the analysis under a Council contract.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC believed the economic analyses were comprehensive and the methods used appropriate; however, they had several suggestions for clarification before the document is sent out for public review. See SSC Minutes for specific suggestions.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the Council send the analyses out for public comment after clarification of several items (specific suggestions in AP Minutes).

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Council members requested the two issues, delay of the pollock 'B' season and the exclusive registration areas, be addressed in separate analyses. Wally Pereyra requested that the analysis for the exclusive registration areas consider whether an IFQ program would address the problem. He indicated that a qualitative approach to this issue would be sufficient at this time.

Bob Mace moved to send the analysis for the 'B' season delay out for public review, as a separate analysis, with the incorporation of SSC recommendations to the extent possible. The motion was seconded by Oscar Dyson and carried without objection.

Oscar Dyson moved to send out the exclusive registration area analysis for public review after incorporating AP recommendations to the extent possible. The motion was seconded by Bob Mace.

Ron Hegge moved to amend to add two additional alternatives: (5) would apply to trawl vessels only; and (6) would apply to all vessels. The motion was seconded by Bob Mace.

Analysts indicated that this additional work would not be within the scope of the original contract and that considerable time would be required to include and analyze these alternatives. After conferring with Dr. Smith, the Executive Director indicated the original contract could be extended to allow analysis of these two alternatives.

The amendment carried, 10 to 1, with Pereyra voting against. The main motion carried, as amended, 10 to 1, with Pereyra voting against.

(c) Preferential Allocation of Pacific Cod

The Council was provided with a draft EA/RIR/IRFA for preferential allocation of Pacific cod to gear types which exhibit low bycatch rates. A document, "Revisions to Council Review Draft," was provided to Council members at the meeting. Dr. Joe Terry, who drafted the analysis, indicated to the SSC that additional work is planned for the analysis pending receipt of data on discard mortality rates and yield loss to the halibut fishery caused by each bycatch fishery based on 1991 bycatch data.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC indicated they would prefer to see the revised draft of the analysis in December before sending it out for public review.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the Council wait to send the document out for public comments until the document is revised and reviewed.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Henry Mitchell moved to delay release of the analysis until revised. The motion was seconded by Donna Darm and carried without objection.

The Council agreed to postpone consideration of the analysis until the April 1993 meeting to allow for revision, including the incorporation of AP and SSC concerns to the extent possible. A status report from the author of the analysis will be presented at the January 1993 meeting.

D-6 Groundfish Regulatory Amendments - Final Review

(a) Fixed Gear Halibut PSC Limit in the BSAI

In approving Amendment 21 at its June 1992 meeting, the Council deferred action on consideration of fixed gear halibut PSC until this meeting. Amendment 19 established a non-trawl fishery halibut

bycatch mortality limit of 750 mt for 1992 only. Therefore, a plan amendment to address bycatch mortality limits for non-trawl gear for 1993 and beyond was prepared. The amendment included three alternatives:

(1) Status quo - no limit for the non-trawl fishery.

(2) Three options:

50% (375 mt), 100% (750 mt), and 150% (1,125 mt) of the 1992 limits for the non-trawl fisheries.

(3) In addition to Alternative 2, allow PSC limits to be changed by regulatory, rather than plan amendment.

The Council received staff reports from NMFS on the proposed regulation and was scheduled to take final action.

There was no report from the **Scientific and Statistical Committee** on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the Council adopt 900 mt as the fixed gear halibut PSC cap for BSAI fisheries, that pot gear be exempted from the cap, and that the Council encourage IPHC and NMFS to pursue implementation of any careful release techniques that could reduce bycatch mortality. The AP realized that a three-month summer closure of Pacific cod longline fishing could significantly reduce the total halibut bycatch mortality and recommended a seasonal split of longline halibut PSC as follows: Jan. 1-May 14 - 65%; May 15-Aug. 31 - 10%; and Sept. 1 - End - 25%.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Bob Alverson moved that there be a halibut bycatch cap of 825 mt for 1993 for Pacific cod longline operations in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, that there be a halibut bycatch cap of 75 mt for the 1993 hook and longline black cod fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, and that pot gear be exempted for 1993. For 1994, the Council would reassess the hook and longline cap based on the effectiveness of gangion-cutting and reassess the cap at between 500 and 750 metric tons. The motion was seconded by Wally Pereyra.

It was clarified that Mr. Alverson wished to initiate the regulation for mandatory gangion-cutting as part of the motion. It was pointed out that this would have to be a separate regulatory amendment and an analysis completed and that the subject would be brought up under Agenda item D-6(d).

The motion carried, 9 to 2, with Pereyra and Tillion voting against.

Bob Mace moved to provide for seasonal apportionment of the halibut longline PSC, as recommended by the Advisory Panel:

Jan. 1-May 14 - 65%; May 15-Aug. 31 - 10%; and Sept. 1 - Dec 31 - 25%.

The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell and carried, 6 to 5, with Alverson, Behnken, Hegge, Millikan and Lauber voting against.

(b) Performance-based Pelagic Trawl Regulatory Amendment

In June NMFS provided a discussion paper outlining alternatives for a performance-based definition of pelagic trawls. At this meeting the Council was provided with a more fully developed analysis for review. A previously-approved redefinition of pelagic trawl based on gear configuration is currently going forward for Secretarial review. If the current proposal for a performance-based definition is approved, it will accompany the one already submitted and will be activated when on-bottom trawling is prohibited for PSC closure reasons. The regulation essentially is to minimize crab bycatch.

The **Scientific and Statistical Committee** did not comment on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel recommended adoption of Alternative 3, option 2, with a performance standard of one crab per haul.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Wally Pereyra moved to adopt Alternative 2 (the Council's previously approved definition of pelagic trawl), deleting the reference to "lifting devices and floats" under item 2(a). The motion was seconded by Bob Mace. The motion was later amended, by unanimous consent, to incorporate a specific statement with regard to lifting devices and floats: **Lifting devices, e.g. kites or floats, will be prohibited.**

Mr. Pereyra felt the Council should allow their previously approved definition to be implemented and assess its effectiveness before taking any further action. The Council could consider changes later if necessary. Steve Pennoyer said he feels a performance standard is needed and that NMFS is willing to work on a more acceptable one if that is what the Council wants.

The motion failed, 6 to 5, with Dyson, Mace, Millikan, Mitchell and Pereyra voting in favor.

Steve Pennoyer moved to adopt Alternative 3, Option 2, for the performance standard and revised pelagic trawl definition, incorporating the previous motion on lifting devices and floats. The motion was seconded by Earl Krygier, and carried, 7 to 4, with Dyson, Mace, Millikan and Pereyra voting no.

Mr. Pennoyer said that NMFS will work with industry on the enforcement standards included in the Proposed Rule which will be available for review during the Secretarial public comment period. The Council will also have an opportunity to review the entire package during that comment period.

(c) Longline Fishery "Fair-Start" Regulatory Amendment

In July the Council received a request from the Petersburg Vessel Owners Association that the Council consider regulations which would prohibit deployment of gear within a certain time period before the start of the sablefish longline fishery. PVOA stated that prior to this year's sablefish opening vessels were observed on the grounds with gear set prior to the opening, ostensibly targeting on miscellaneous finfish although it was very probable that at least some where targeting on sablefish. To remedy the situation NMFS proposed a regulatory amendment with provisions similar to those in the halibut fishery.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee had no comment on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP unanimously recommended the Council adopt the 72-hour fair start provision provided by NMFS.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Bob Alverson moved to endorse the hook and line fair start regulation and request NMFS to submit it directly to the Secretary. The motion was seconded by Ron Hegge and carried unanimously.

(d) Gangion-cutting Provisions

The Council received a request from the International Pacific Halibut Commission to consider a mandatory requirement to release halibut by cutting gangions at the hook. The IPHC believes this could reduce discard mortality from 16% to between 5% and 11%. For trawl vessels the IPHC recommended the Council approve changes to current regulations which would allow sorting halibut on deck of factory trawlers, under supervision of observer, for quick return to the sea.

Ron Hegge moved that NMFS develop a regulation for the Bering Sea Pacific cod fishery requiring mandatory gangion cutting or, in the case of observed vessels, a combination of gangion cutting and an approved fish removal technique and, for 1993 only, that an appropriate mortality rate be established. The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell.

Mr. Hegge said he specified the Bering Sea Pacific cod fishery because it has significant observer coverage which will provide better information on the effectiveness of these measures. **The "for 1993 only," portion was removed later by consensus.** The regulation is to be frameworked so that mortality rates can be set through regulatory, rather than plan, amendments in the future. Staff noted that mortality rates are set annually, through the specifications process and would not require a regulatory amendment.

Mr. Alverson suggested that NMFS work closely with industry regarding enforcement of these regulations. The Coast Guard stressed that it should be made clear that the regulation applies only to halibut.

The motion carried with Henry Mitchell objecting.

The regulatory amendment will be available for final Council action at the December meeting.

D-7 Groundfish Regulatory Amendments - Initial Review

(a) PSC Allowances for the Inshore-Offshore and CDQ Pollock Fisheries

Last June the Council asked staff to prepare an analysis of alternatives to allocate prohibited species catch limits among the separate pollock fisheries established under the inshore/offshore/CDQ program approved for the Bering Sea/Aleutians Islands. The concern is that the ability to take each of the three pollock allocations in a cost effective manner may be diminished by PSC-induced closures. The Council received a draft analysis for review. Joe Terry told the Council that he has additional work to do on the analysis, but that it could be available for public review before the December Council meeting.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC recommended the analysis go out for public review after the inclusion of the additional alternatives and other changes mentioned by staff in their report.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the analysis be sent out for public review after it is complete. They also asked that the king salmon and other salmon bycatch data be updated for 1992 within the document, with a breakout of other salmon by species.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Steve Pennoyer moved to send the analysis out for public review upon its completion, and with an additional alternative which would exempt the CDQ pollock fishery from PSC requirements under certain circumstances. The motion was seconded by Henry Mitchell and carried without objection.

(b) Regulatory Amendment Defining Legal Gear Types

The Council received a discussion paper from NMFS staff on this issue. Currently, the groundfish regulations only specify illegal gear types and therefore if a gear type is not specifically mentioned, it can be used. NMFS stated that the action would clarify the application of prohibited species catch closures and protect the environment from the hazards of new gear types. If approved by the Council, NMFS would prepare the regulatory amendment for public review before the December meeting when the Council could take final action.

There was no **Scientific and Statistical Committee Report** on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the amendment be prepared for public review.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Linda Behnken moved to recommend NMFS proceed with the amendment defining legal gear types. The motion was seconded by Alan Millikan and carried without objection.

One example of the need for this action is that current regulations allow the use of sunken gillnets or longline configurations which can be fished after a PSC closure. Council members were assured that new gear types can be tested under experimental permits.

(c) Total Catch Measurement Initiative

The NMFS-Alaska Region has been working to develop a means to accomplish total catch measurement which would not rely on product recovery rates. They reported that they have been working with industry representatives and are continuing to develop options. A further progress report will be made in December. This was an information-only item; no Council action was taken. The Advisory Panel reported that they are disappointed with the progress on this measure.

(d) Interactive Communications

This was also an information-only item. NMFS reported their progress on developing interactive communications systems with the fishing fleet to facilitate inseason management of the fisheries. There are about 135 vessels now in the Alaska groundfish fisheries using some type of COMSAT communications at a substantial savings in operational costs. The Observer Office is continuing to test the systems and if testing is successful and software installation can be coordinated with the vessels, a system using complete COMSAT communications could be implemented by the start of the trawl fishery on January 20. By the first of the year the Region is prepared to offer industry the opportunity to submit weekly and check-in and check-out notices by way of Standard C communications. There were no comments from the AP or SSC on this agenda item.

(e) Proposed Changes to Groundfish Seasons

The Council received two proposals from the Alaska Groundfish Data Bank requesting changes to the fishing seasons in the Gulf of Alaska. The first is to open the Pacific cod trawl fisheries on January 1 instead of January 20, to allow a "fair start" for all gear types fishing for Pacific cod. The second is to delay the second quarter pollock fishery in the Gulf until June 1 (or the Monday nearest June 1). They cited increased recovery rates, decreased salmon bycatch and decreased discards of undersized pollock as reasons for the change. They also stressed that the proposal assumes that both inshore/offshore and exclusive registration would be in place for 1993; otherwise, they prefer the Gulf pollock openings to coincide with the Bering Sea openings.

There was no **Scientific and Statistical Committee** report on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP expressed concern over receiving amendment proposals when the Council had decided not to call for them. The AP felt that the plan team and PAAG should review such proposals before they come before the Council. They asked the Council to review their policy on the groundfish amendment cycle. The AP took no action on the first proposal submitted by AGDB. On the second proposal, they recommended staff move forward with an analysis for review by the Council in December.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Oscar Dyson moved to begin analysis of changing the opening date of the Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod trawl fishery to January 1. The motion was seconded by Bob Mace but was withdrawn by Mr. Dyson after discussion indicated that a regulatory amendment could not be prepared and implemented in time for the first of the year without coming back for Council review. Mr. Pereyra indicated that he wants the issue to be on the January agenda for inclusion in the amendment process.

Oscar Dyson moved to ask staff to begin analysis to change the opening date of the second quarter Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery to the Monday nearest June 1. The motion was seconded by Ron Hegge.

Wally Pereyra moved to amend the motion to include a provision that all bottom fisheries would start on January 20, however the motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Dyson's motion carried unanimously. Staff suggested, and the Council concurred, that this amendment could be sent directly to the Secretary with no further Council action.

D-8 Other Groundfish Issues

(a) Comprehensive Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Management Plan

The Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Industry Committee provided their report to the Council under Agenda item D-4. They will continue to work on a comprehensive management strategy for rockfish in the

Gulf of Alaska. This was an information item. There were no SSC or AP reports and the Council took no action.

(b) Bycatch Management Planning

The Bycatch Cap Committee met to begin their review of halibut bycatch caps, halibut mortality, validity of data used in setting caps and mortality rates, and the equity of caps. The Committee reported that their first meeting was an information-gathering session with reports provided by staff from NMFS, ADF&G, and the Council. They have requested additional data before their next meeting to continue discussion of bycatch caps and begin developing recommendations for Council consideration.

The Council received several bycatch proposals from IPHC and industry. The proposals from IPHC were considered under agenda item D-6(d). The other proposals were not discussed at this meeting.

The Council was also advised that the salmon bycatch amendment (originally part of the BSAI Amendment 21) being prepared by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is in progress and should be available for initial Council review by the December meeting.

There was no **Scientific and Statistical Committee** report on this agenda item.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel requested that future presentations of salmon bycatch data include a breakdown of the 'other salmon' category by individual species. The AP also reviewed a request by the Alaska Groundfish Data Bank regarding the overage policy on retainable bycatch trip limits. The AP was not prepared to endorse AGDB's proposed solution but felt that the problem should be addressed, perhaps by a policy of mandatory forfeiture of such overages. The AP asked the Council to encourage NMFS to review this problem.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Responding to a request from the Advisory Panel, the Council agreed to request staff to schedule a salmon bycatch workshop in Anchorage in November to discuss BSAI salmon bycatch and salmon bycatch data requirements and whether there are plan to initiate a salmon bycatch limit in 1993.

(c) Discard Committee Report

Because of a lack of time, the Council only received a written report on this agenda item. The Committee met in June to receive staff reports on the current magnitude of discarded catch in the North Pacific fisheries and to define the Committee's objectives.

(d) Necessity for Outdated Groundfish Regulations

The groundfish fishery management plans contain several regulations which are no longer relevant. The Executive Director suggested that the Council consider amending the plans to delete those regulations which are not longer relevant, for example, those pertaining to the foreign fisheries. Because of a lack of time, this agenda item was delayed until the January 1993 meeting.

(e) Petition from St. Paul Island for Pollock Research

The Council received a request from the City of St. Paul to ask NMFS to authorize and support independent research on the origin and migration of pollock stocks in the Eastern Bering Sea.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC was advised that research on this subject is well under way, including research with Japan, Russia, Poland, Korea and China.

Report of the Advisory Panel

AP unanimously supported the request.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The Council felt that sufficient research is in progress on the issue of stock distribution and migration for Bering Sea pollock and took no action on this request.

(f) Request for Experimental Fishing Permit

The Council received a request from Terra Marine Research to express support for their plans to request an experimental fishery permit to retain halibut and salmon bycatch for processing and distribution to needy people. Mr. Tuck Donnelly of Terra Marine gave a presentation to the Council on their plans.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC recommended Terra Marine submit the appropriate formal application to the National Marine Fisheries Service which will provide more detailed answers to questions they have.

Report of the Advisory Panel

The AP recommended the Council endorse the proposal, with the inclusion of requirements to accumulate scientific data on salmon bycatch, allow halibut to be kept only if classified as dead by the observer, and that a comparable amount of normally discarded fish should be retained and processed.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

While the formal application has not yet been filed with NMFS, the Council in principle supported the concept. They did, however, express concern over distribution controls to keep the fish out of the commercial markets in competition with commercial operations. They also had the same concern as the AP over the definition of "dead" for fish to be retained and processed. Enforceability was a concern, as well as international implications and other details not provided. The Council encouraged Mr. Donnelly of Terra Marine to prepare and submit a formal application to NMFS for consideration, stressing the need for specific details in the areas they have outlined. If the paperwork is completed in time, the Council could review the application and comment in December.

(g) Request for PRR Research

Natural Resource Consultants has expressed interest in conducting pollock yield studies and has suggested an industry steering committee be formed to provide oversight and secure industry participation.

Report of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC received a presentation from Steve Hughes on the proposal and recommended that NMFS and industry design a program to estimate product recovery rates during normal factory operations according to season, fish size, filleting machine type, product, and type of operation.

There was no **Advisory Panel** report on this agenda item.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The Council had no comment on this suggestion at this time. Steve Pennoyer said that NMFS would like to move toward volumetric measurement, but can always use better data.

(h) Foreign Commerce Transfer

In setting the agenda at the beginning of the meeting, Council member Linda Behnken asked that this issue be discussed. Industry representatives provided Council members with information on a problem that has arisen with the application of the Act on the use of foreign trampers accepting processed seafood for export. In many remote areas of Alaska, where natural bays and harbors exist, the waters inside the baseline are too shallow for deep draft tramper vessels to anchor and received fish products for export so in the past they have anchored or drifted in deeper state waters beyond the baseline to receive the American products for export. Until recently the domestic industry was generally unaware that this is not permitted under the Magnuson Act.

There were no AP or SSC Reports on this item.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Clem Tillion moved that the Council send a letter to the Secretary of Commerce expressing the Council's concern with the application of the Act on the use of foreign trampers accepting processed seafood for export from United States processors in State waters seaward of the baseline in areas which are not currently designated ports or roadsteads. The Council hopes that NMFS/NOAA will work with the industry to develop both short- and long-term solutions to this problem. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously with Pennoyer abstaining.

Lisa Lindeman, NOAA-CGAK, told the Council they will work with industry for a solution to this problem, but ultimately there may have to be a change in the Magnuson Act.

D-9 STAFF TASKING

The Council received an update of Council projects and tasks. They also received a request from the North Pacific Longline Association to proceed with the proposal for seasonal allocation of Pacific cod in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, approved for analysis by the Council last year. Because of the press of other tasking, the amendment has not yet been prepared. NPLA contracted with LGL Research Associates to prepare a preliminary analysis for the Council to consider. The plan teams reviewed the analysis and felt that it could provide a solid basis for development of an EA/RIR/IRFA.

The Council briefly discussed the Pacific cod analysis and, because of the current staff load, felt that the proposal should be placed in the regular amendment cycle.

Steve Pennoyer moved to request that staff provide the Council with the appropriate analysis of the Pacific cod TAC allocation by gear type and by season for preliminary review in January, for public review in April, and a final decision in June of 1993. The motion was seconded by Bob Alverson and carried with Henry Mitchell objecting.

E. FINANCIAL REPORT

There was no financial report at this meeting.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no further public comments.

G. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m. on Sunday, September 27, 1992.

TABLE 1: GULF OF ALASKA
1993 Council Preliminary Recommendations for ABC, TAC, and Apportionment

26-Sep-92 — All Values in Metric Tons

Species	Area	Council ABC	Council TAC	Council DAP	Council JVP
Pollock	W/C	111,000	111,000	111,000	
	Shelikof	0	0	0	
	E	3,400	3,400	3,400	
	Total	114,400	114,400	114,400	
Pacific Cod	W	18,700	18,700	18,700	
	C	35,200	35,200	35,200	
	E	2,800	2,800	2,800	
	Total	56,700	56,700	56,700	
Flatfish, Deep	W	2,020	2,020	2,020	
	C	35,580	35,580	35,580	
	E	7,930	7,930	7,930	
	Total	45,530	45,530	45,530	
Flathead sole	W	12,580	12,580	12,580	
	C	31,830	31,830	31,830	
	E	5,040	5,040	5,040	
	Total	49,450	49,450	49,450	
Flatfish, Shallow	W	27,480	27,480	27,480	
	C	21,260	21,260	21,260	
	E	1,740	1,740	1,740	
	Total	50,480	50,480	50,480	
Arrowtooth	W	38,880	5,000	5,000	
	C	253,330	15,000	15,000	
	E	29,080	5,000	5,000	
	Total	321,290	25,000	25,000	
Sablefish	W	2,500	2,500	2,500	
	C	9,570	9,570	9,570	
	W. Yakutat	3,740	3,740	3,740	
	E. Yak./S.E. Out.	4,990	4,990	4,990	
	Total	20,800	20,800	20,800	
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	800-1620	720	720	
	C	1,230-1,720	1,107	1,107	
	E	2,690-2,390	2,421	2,421	
	Total	4,720-5,730	4,248	4,248	
Shortraker/Rougheye	W	100	90	90	
	C	1,290	1,161	1,161	
	E	570	513	513	
	Total	1,960	1,764	1,764	
Other Slope	W	1,390	1,390	1,390	
	C	6,510	6,510	6,510	
	E	6,160	6,160	6,160	
	Total	14,060	14,060	14,060	
Rockfish (Pelagic Shelf)	W	1,210	1,210	1,210	
	C	4,400	4,400	4,400	
	E	1,280	1,280	1,280	
	Total	6,890	6,890	6,890	
Rockfish (Demersal Shelf)	S.E. Out.	800	720	720	
Thornyhead	G W	1,500-1,834	1,500	1,500	
Other Species	G W	0	19,577	19,577	
GULF OF ALASKA TOTAL		689,924	411,119	411,119	

Table 2. Preliminary 1993 Council Recommendations for BSAI Groundfish Specifications (mt)

Species	Area / Seasons\1	1992 ABC	1993 Preliminary Recommendation ABC\2	TAC	Seasonal Allowance	ITAC\3
Pollock	EBS	1,490,000	1,690,000	1,300,000		1,105,000
	Roe (1/20-4/15)				40%	442,000
	Non-Roe (6/1-12/31)				60%	663,000
	AL	51,600	67,000	51,600		43,860
	518	25,000	33,000	1,000		850
Pacific Cod		182,000	178,000	178,000		151,300
Yellowfin sole		372,000	372,000	200,000		170,000
Greenland turbot		7,000	7,000	7,000		5,950
Arrowtooth flounder		82,300	68,000	10,000		8,500
Rock sole		260,800	311,000	40,000		34,000
Other flatfish		199,600	226,000	79,000		67,150
Sablefish	EBS	1,400	1,400	1,400		1,190
	AL	3,000	3,000	3,000		2,550
POP complex						
True POP	EBS	3,540	2,100 - 3,540	2,100		1,785
Other POP Complex	EBS	1,400	1,400	1,400		1,190
True POP	AL	11,700	11,700 - 14,800	11,700		9,945
Sharp/Northern	AL	5,670	5,670	5,670		4,820
Short/Rougheye	AL	1,220	1,220	1,220		1,037
Other rockfish	EBS	400	400	400		340
	AL	925	925	925		786
Atka mackerel	BS/AI	43,000	117,100	32,000		27,200
Squid		3,600	3,400	2,000		1,700
Other Species		27,200	26,600	20,000		17,000
BS/AI TOTAL		2,773,355	3,126,915 - 3,131,455	1,948,414		1,656,153

/1 Seasonal allowances of pollock TAC are made after deduction for reserves

/2 Preliminary specifications subject to change upon incorporation of 1992 groundfish survey data

/3 Recommended TAC less 15% reserve

Table 3. Council Recommended Preliminary 3
Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Fisheries

Fishery Group	Halibut, Primary (mt Mortality)*	Halibut, Secondary (mt Mortality)*	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab Zone1	C. bairdi Zone1	C. bairdi Zone2
Yellowfin sole	557	637	391	75,000	100,000	1,225,000
May 1 - Aug. 2		239				
Aug. 3 - Dec. 31		239				
Rocksole/other flatfish	495	566	0	85,000	700,000	300,000
Jan. 1 - Mar. 29		425				
Mar. 30 - June 28		71				
June 29 - Sept. 27						
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31		0				
Rockfish	131	150	10	0	0	50,000
Jan. 1 - Mar. 29		15				
Mar. 30 - June 28		45				
June 29 - Sept. 27		90				
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Pacific cod	1,007	1,153	29	10,000	75,000	712,500
Jan. 1 - June 28		976				
June 29 - Sept 27		177				
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Pollock/mackerel/"o. species"	1,109	1,269	210	30,000	125,000	712,500
Jan. 1 - April 15		916				
April 16 - May 31		0				
June 1 - Dec. 31		353				
7 MW Pollock (Herring)	n/a	n/a	1,668	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	3,300	3,775	2,308	200,000	1,000,000	3,000,000

* Based on IPHC halibut mortality estimate for Trawl Gear of 75%

Table 4. Council Recommended Preliminary 1993 PSC Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Non-Trawl Fisheries

Fishery Group	Halibut** (mt)	Seasonal Apportion %	(mt)
Pacific Cod	825		
Jan 1 - May 14		65%	536
May 15 - August 31		10%	83
Sept. 1 - Dec. 31		25%	206
Other Non-Trawl*	75		
Groundfish Pot	Exempt		
TOTAL	900		

* Includes Hook & Line Sablefish, Rockfish and Jig

** Assumes IPHC mortality estimate for Hook and Line Gear of 16%

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Date: 1-1/92

MINUTES
Scientific Statistical Committee
September 21-24, 1992
Anchorage, Alaska

The Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met September 21-24, 1992 at the Hilton Hotel. All members except John Burns, Gordon Kruse and Dan Huppert, were present, namely:

Bill Clark, Chair
Larry Hreha
Richard Marasco
Jack Tagart
Don Rosenberg
Bill Aron
Terry Quinn, Vice Chair
Phil Rigby (alternate-Kruse)
Al Tyler (alternate-Quinn)
Doug Eggers
Marc Miller

C-4 MARINE MAMMALS

The SSC heard reports by Ferrero (AFSC) on harbor seal population status, Merrick (AFSC) on results of 1992 Steller sea lion population estimates, Trites (UBC) on a historical review of Steller sea lion population status, and Mello (NMFS-AK Region) on a regulatory amendment to Amendment 25 to the Gulf of Alaska groundfish management plan and Amendment 20 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island groundfish plan proposing expansion of the groundfish trawling prohibition zone around Ugamak Island's Steller sea lion rookery.

Ferrero briefly outlined the contents of a draft report on harbor seal population status and summarized current NMFS survey results. The report, which will be issued shortly, indicates high variability in local population trends across regions, with healthy stocks in Bristol Bay and the north side of the Alaska Peninsula and declines in the Gulf of Alaska populations, particularly in the Tugidak Island area and Prince William Sound. It is anticipated that additional surveys will be conducted in Southeast Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

Merrick's report indicated a continuing overall decline in the Steller sea lion population of about 5% in the past year. Local population status was variable with largest declines in the Eastern Gulf and Central Aleutians and increases in the Eastern and Western Aleutians. Overall pup counts also

declined, but this decline is largely driven by the pup counts of the Central Gulf which fell 29.2% since 1989-90, while pup counts during this period increased in all other areas from 9.3-15.1%.

Merrick also reported the latest findings on pup behavior indicating that they feed primarily in the upper 30m and within 20 miles of the rookeries.

Trites reported on his study, co-authored with Peter Larkin, which examined historic population trends of the Steller sea lion. The report essentially confirms the declines during the decade of the 80's and that the cause of these declines is uncertain. The study also contains recommendations for additional research, particularly long-term research on ecosystem dynamics. The report recommends continuing prudent restraints on fisheries as suggested by the sea lion recovery team and NMFS.

Mello discussed the proposed regulatory amendment to expand the groundfish trawling prohibition zone around the Ugamak Island sea lion rookery. The SSC concurs with the draft EA/RIR statement that

> "the 20 nm closure around Ugamak Island, in conjunction with the closures around Akun and Akutan Islands, would create a large contiguous area where groundfish trawling could not occur. Data from sea lion tracking studies and fish surveys indicate that this region is probably an important feeding area for Steller sea lions in the eastern Aleutian Islands, particularly for juveniles whose foraging depth range and prey appear more limited than adults. Most trips by juvenile animals tagged in the eastern Aleutian Islands in the winter of 1992 were within the boundaries of this zone. Preliminary data from winter 1992 NMFS hydroacoustic surveys indicate that there were dense, mid-water aggregations of small pollock in this region. Conversely, pollock aggregations east of 164° 45'W on the shelf and in the Basin waters surrounding Bogoslof Island were generally comprised of large fish, oriented on or near the bottom. Presumably, smaller, mid-water fish provide a more attainable food source for young sea lions.
>
> The proposed closed area will further reduce the amount of fish, including bycatch, harvested from an area that appears to be particularly important for Steller sea lion foraging. Although there are no data that elucidate the effects of commercial fishing, if any, on the Steller sea lion's ability to obtain adequate food, decreased fishing effort may improve sea lion foraging success and will reduce negative interactions between sea lions and fishing vessels/gear. Increased juvenile survival may be attained, which would aid recovery of the species."

The SSC noted that over 25% of the GOA Pacific cod TAC came from the proposed no-trawl zone during the first quarter of 1992. The proposed amendment does not discuss why this cod fishery could not be allowed. We were informed that this fishery is an on-bottom trawl fishery and was below the foraging depth of juvenile sea lions. This SSC was informed that allowing the cod trawl fishery would present an enforcement problem.

C-7 COMPREHENSIVE RATIONALIZATION

The SSC considered a set of proposals from the Executive Director for expediting the development of the comprehensive rationalization program for all groundfish and crab fisheries, and reviewed the paper prepared by Russell Harding. We strongly support the development of a new fishery management system, and we agree that the analytical work should begin as soon as possible. However, we expect the analysis will be a major undertaking. The Council must select a limited number of

well-defined alternatives before it will be productive to form focus groups to design the analysis and to begin the gathering data process. The best way to start the process may be for the Council to set out the objectives it wants to achieve by adopting a new management system, or a list of problems it wishes to solve, or a set of criteria by which it would judge different regimes.

C-8 ABC/OVERFISHING REDEFINITION

Since July, when the SSC submitted a plan amendment proposal for redefining ABC and the overfishing level (OFL), two substantive and constructive responses have been received. Pamela Mace, a scientist working on fishing mortality levels, had several suggestions, including not abandoning F_{msy} and frameworking the minimum percentage of spawning stock biomass per recruit. The Plan Teams also provided a response with several good suggestions, including a modified set of definitions. Bill Clark will attempt to merge the SSC and Plan Team versions and to incorporate Mace's comments into a new draft which will be sent to the Teams in time for their November meeting. The SSC will then consider final action in either December or January.

D-3 GROUNDFISH SPECIFICATIONS

The SSC reviewed the SAFE reports and the Team's recommendations. For the great majority of stocks the SSC endorses the Team's recommendation. For most stocks OFL exceeds ABC, but the two coincide for Basin pollock, rock sole, all BS/AI rockfish, and Gulf POP.

Gulf of Alaska - Regional ABC and OFL

For Gulf of Alaska stocks, the SSC recommends that ABC be distributed regionally in proportion to abundance, but that OFL be set Gulf-wide except where there is evidence of stock separation for any species. Some stocks, particularly rockfish, appear to have low mixing rates and would be subject to local depletion if ABC's are not distributed regionally.

Gulf of Alaska - Pollock

The SSC received a supplementary report on the status of Gulf of Alaska walleye pollock in which stock biomass was estimated using the stock synthesis model after incorporating data from the 1992 NMFS GOA hydroacoustic survey. The SSC expressed concern that Model E may be overparameterized, particularly with respect to fishery selectivity, and requests that the analysts provide a more extensive discussion of this issue for the December SAFE. Consequently, the SSC supports a range of biomass estimates as reported in the supplementary analysis (models G and E, 0.701-1.112 million t) and therefore recommends an ABC range of 70,000 to 111,000 t based on an annual 10% exploitation strategy (F=0.12). Overfishing is defined as the rate of exploitation which drives spawning biomass per recruit to 30% of the unfished level and is estimated to be F_{OF}=0.283. Since F_{OF} is much greater than the suggested harvest rate, the recommended ABC is well below the overfishing level. The SSC estimates the OFL (163,200 to 258,800 t) using simple ratio expansion of OFL/ABC from the SAFE document (156,880/67,400), times the mid-year biomass from the supplemental analysis.

Finally, the SSC wishes to advise the Council that Gulf pollock exploitation rates are being examined by the stock assessment analysts who are presenting a paper for peer review at an upcomming

symposium. This paper will be available to the Plan Team for their consideration in preparation of ABC recommendations for the December SAFE.

Gulf of Alaska - Pacific Cod

The SSC agrees with the Team's specification of ABC and overfishing limit for Pacific cod. ABC (50,00 mt) was calculated by applying the $F_{0.1}$ rate (0.177) to the projected 1993 exploitable biomass (324,000 mt) estimate by SRA fitted to the 1984, 1987 and 1990 bottom trawl survey results. The overfishing limit (78,100 mt) was calculated by applying the $F_{30\%}$ rate (0.245) to the 1993 exploitable biomass.

Gulf of Alaska - Flatfish

Flatfish stocks in the Gulf of Alaska are at high levels and generally stable, excepting arrowtooth flounder which is increasing. The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's determinations of ABC which used methods consistent with last year's determinations. Some biomass estimates have been updated for this year after the 1990 trawl survey results were re-edited. Biomass is estimated directly from the 1990 trawl survey, except for the deeper dwelling Dover sole for which 1987 survey estimates were used for depths between 500m and 1000m. The $F_{0.1}$ exploitation rate was used to calculate the 1993 ABC, and the overfishing level was set at $F_{30\%}$.

The 1993 ABCs are :	deepwater flatfish	- 45,530 mt;
	shallow water flatfish	- 50,480 mt;
	flathead sole	- 49,450 mt;
	arrowtooth flounder	- 321,290 mt.

These ABCs represent increases from 1992 for deepwater flatfish, flathead sole, and arrowtooth flounder.

Gulf of Alaska - Sablefish

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommended ABC. Sablefish biomass was estimated using an SRA model adjusted by relative population weights from longline surveys scaled to trawl survey biomass. The method is identical to that used in 1991. Estimated biomass is 178,700 mt. The preferred fishing mortality rate is calculated using the $F_{0.1}$ strategy and is estimated to be 0.13. ABC is computed to be 20,800 mt. The overfishing level (28,200 mt) is derived from the fishing mortality that drives spawning biomass per recruit to 30% of the unfished spawning biomass (F_{OF}=0.18).

Gulf of Alaska - Slope Rockfish - POP

The SSC commends AFSC scientists for using stock synthesis and believes that this will be the technique of choice for future assessments. The SSC has asked Team and Center scientists to examine inconsistencies in both the survey and stock synthesis biomass estimates. Specifically, we recommend: (1) an analysis to determine if new fishing power correction factors will change survey biomass estimates, (2) examination of fishery data to determine if it can be integrated into the analysis, and (3) further examination of the inconsistencies in the various biomass estimates. In the meantime, the SSC recommends that the preliminary ABC be determined using the 1991 procedure. This estimate was developed by applying F=M=0.05 to the average of the 1987 and 1990 survey biomass estimates (229,100 mt) and applying the overfishing definition. As last year, the ABC should

be distributed among the three management areas in the following manner: Western - 1,620 mt, Central - 1,720 mt, and Eastern - 2,390 mt.

Gulf of Alaska - Shortraker/Rougheye

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendation that the ABC for these two species should be set at the 1992 level, 1,260 mt. This ABC was obtained by applying the appropriate natural mortality for each of these species (0.03 for shortraker and 0.025 for rougheye) to the respective average 1987/1990 survey biomass (28,493 mt - shortraker and 44,469 mt - rougheye). Based on results of the 1987 and 1990 trawl surveys, the ABC should be distributed among regulatory areas in the following manner: 5.3% in the Western area (100 mt), 65.5% in the Central area (1,290 mt) and 29.1% in the Eastern area (570 mt). The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendation that $F_{30\%}$ (0.046) and F=M be used to define overfishing (2,900 mt) for rougheye and shortraker, respectively.

Gulf of Alaska - Other Slope Rockfish

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendation that the ABC for this group of rockfish be set at last year's level (14,060 mt). This value was obtained by applying estimates of natural mortality (northern - 0.06, sharpchin - 0.05, redstripe - 0.10, silvergray - 0.04, harlequin - 0.06, and others - 0.06) to the average of the 1987/1990 survey biomass estimates (northern - 96,071 mt, sharpchin - 51,768 mt redstripe - 23,096 mt, silvergray - 8,697 mt, harlequin - 49,386 mt, and others - 1,459 mt). The regional distribution of the proposed ABC is 1,390 mt for the Western, 6,510 mt for the Central, and 6,160 mt for the Eastern areas. As last year, the SSC recommends that overfishing be set at the $F_{30\%}$ levels of 0.113 for northern and 0.08 for sharpchin rockfish, and F=M for other species. The resulting overfishing level is 20,706 mt for this group of rockfish.

Gulf of Alaska - Pelagic Shelf Rockfish

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendation that the ABC for pelagic shelf rockfish be set at the 1992 level, 6,890 mt. This ABC was calculated by determining the average survey biomass for 1984, 1987, and 1990. To get around the lack of 1984 survey biomass estimates for black, widow, and blue rockfish, the assessment used the 1987/1990 average for the missing data point. The 6,890 mt ABC was obtained by applying F=M=0.09 (M for dusky rockfish)to the exploitable biomass of 76,501 mt. The SSC agrees with the Team that overfishing be determined by applying $F_{30\%}$ for dusky rockfish (11,500 mt).

Gulf of Alaska - Demeral Shelf Rockfish

The SSC supports the Team's recommended ABC for this complex, 801 mt. This value was obtained by applying F=M=0.02, the natural mortality for yelloweye rockfish, to the lower 90% confidence limit of the biomass estimate obtained from line transect data. Because yelloweye rockfish dominate both target landings and bycatch of the DSR complex, a decision was made by those responsible for conducting the assessment to use it for calculating ABC. The SSC suggests that the line transect data be examined to determine if usable density estimates for the other seven species are possible. Alternatively, the SSC would like the Team to explore other techniques to estimate the biomass of species other than yelloweye in this complex.

The catch level that would constitute overfishing was determined in the SAFE by applying F=M=0.02 to the estimated (midpoint) biomass for yelloweye rockfish (48,366 mt). The SSC believes that the overfishing cap should be determined by applying the appropriate exploitation rate

to the best estimate of current exploitable biomass. Since the Team used the lower 90% confidence limit of the estimated yelloweye biomass estimate to calculate ABC, the SSC interpreted it to be the best estimate of current biomass. Further, since the Council's overfishing definition requires that $F_{30\%}$ be used when it is available, the SSC recommends that overfishing for this complex be defined as 0.04*40,049 mt = 1600 mt. Bycatch of DSR taken in the halibut fishery will be counted against the TAC for DSR.

Gulf of Alaska - Thornyheads

The 1990 estimated survey biomass for thornyheads was reported to be 26,207 mt, with a 90% confidence interval of 21,411 mt to 31,003 mt. This represents a revision of the estimate used last year, 25,697 mt. The Team used the lower end of the 90% confidence interval as an estimate of the 1993 biomass because of uncertainties associated with abundance estimates. Sources of uncertainty included: (1) the downward and upward trends in the abundance indexes for the cooperative and domestic longline surveys, respectively, for 1988-1991, (2) large declines in bottom trawl survey CPUEs between 1987 and 1990, and (3) length frequency distributions for the bottom trawl surveys that do not indicate any incoming year classes. While recognizing uncertainties associated with biomass estimates, the SSC believes that the point estimate represents the best estimate of biomass. Therefore, the SSC recommends that the ABC be set at 1,830 mt (F=M=0.07* 26,207 mt). The SSC suggests that as last year, $F_{30\%}$=0.095 be used to determine the overfishing catch level, 2,490 mt.

Gulf of Alaska - Other Species

The TAC for other species is determined as 5% of the sum of the TACs for target species. The SSC recommends that this TAC be allocated to management areas based upon recent catch levels. The intent of this recommendation is to prevent Atka mackerel catches in the western Gulf from precluding miscellaneous fisheries for other species such as octopus in the central and eastern Gulf. The SSC recommends that the Council consider the reestablishment of an ABC for Atka mackerel in the Gulf.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Pollock

Eastern Bering Sea

Four different age-structured methods are used to estimate exploitable biomass and all methods showed the same trends in biomass over time. The SSC agrees with the Team that the status quo method, cohort analysis tuned to survey biomass and age composition estimates, should be used to determine exploitable biomass. Exploitable biomass in 1993 from this method was estimated to be 7.9 million tons and represents a substantial increase from last year's assessment. The increase is due to the incorporation of data from ages 10-16 which were not available before this year and to recruitment from the 1989 and 1990 yearclasses. The SSC accepts the Team's recommendations for ABC and overfishing limit, which are based on $F_{0.1}$ and $F_{30\%}$, respectively. The reasons for not using F_{msy} are that the population was in a period of decline since 1985, that recruitment from the 1989 and 1990 yearclasses is subject to uncertainty, and that there is concern over the potential impact of removals from the Basin area on EBS populations.

Aleutian Islands

The 1993 pollock biomass was based on the 1991 bottom trawl survey estimates expanded for the off-bottom component and projected to 1993 based on the relative population change observed in the

EBS stock. The SSC accepts the Team's recommendation for ABC and overfishing limit. The SSC recommends that the analyst and the Team consider the development of estimates of ABC and overfishing limit based on age-structured analyses and appropriate estimates of growth and natural mortality which use data collected from the Aleutian Islands population and explain the advantages and disadvantages in the final SAFE document. An $F_{0.1}$ estimate for the Aleutian Islands should be calculable from existing information.

Bogoslof Area

The SSC believes the Aleutian Basin pollock population should be managed separately from the EBS and AI populations. The Basin population has a different age structure, a different size at age, a different area and time of spawning, a different migration pattern, and has experienced a different level of exploitation. Available evidence indicates that the fishery that occurs in the international zone of the Bering Sea (i.e., the Donut Hole) exploits the Basin stock. A portion of the stock spawns in the vicinity of the Commander Islands and another portion spawns in the vicinity of Bogoslof Island. It is generally believed that a majority of the Basin pollock originate from the Bogoslof component.

The SSC strongly supports the international effort (P.R.C., Japan, R.O.K, Poland, U.S.S.R., and U.S. scientists) to develop a comprehensive assessment and management of Aleutian Basin pollock. A second workshop was held in late February 1992 in Seattle to assemble available data and to refine and expand population models. A major development was an agreement in August, 1992 by these nations to cease fishing in international waters for two years and to cooperate in further research.

A precipitous decline in the biomass of the Bogoslof pollock has occurred since the 1989 survey. Available evidence strongly suggests that the Bogoslof stock has been overexploited. Recent hydroacoustic surveys provide estimates of biomass of 600,000 tons in 1991 and 800,0000 tons in 1992. The SSC could not concur with the Team's estimate of biomass projected for 1993, because the Team assumed that natural mortality M was 0.3. Because the Bogoslof population is much older than EBS population, the SSC believes the best estimate of natural mortality is 0.2, which is the value accepted by scientists in the assessments of Aleutian Basin pollock. Assuming that little or no recruitment has occurred recently, the best estimate of 1993 biomass is obtained from the 1992 survey decayed by natural mortality, which is 655,000 mt.

The SAFE indicates that the current Basin biomass as predicted by the preliminary Aleutian Basin stock cohort analysis is only about 10% of the largest observed biomass and well below B_{msy}. A precise estimate of the ratio B/B_{msy} is impossible, but it is probably on the order of 1/4. Given the low level of abundance, the SSC believes that under the Council's overfishing definition an exploitation rate of 1/4 of the natural mortality (F=1/4*0.20) is appropriate. Following the same procedure that the Council accepted last December, the SSC applied this rate (M/4) to the 1993 biomass estimate to obtain an ABC of 33,000 tons. This is also the overfishing limit.

Because of the current status of the Bogoslof population, the importance of supporting international efforts to curtail fishing on the Basin population, and the potential impacts on marine mammals and seabirds, the SSC strongly recommends that the TAC be set at a level to provide for bycatch only.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands - Pacific Cod

The SSC agrees with the Team's specification of ABC and overfishing limit for Pacific cod. ABC (178,000 mt) was calculated by applying the $F_{0.1}$ rate (0.145) to the 1993 exploitable biomass

(825,000 mt) projected by the EBS cod model. The overfishing limit (183,000 mt) was calculated by applying the $F_{30\%}$ rate (0.149) to the projected 1993 exploitable biomass.

The SSC commends the Team for developing the stock synthesis approach for BS/AI Pacific cod assessment and notes that the results of the stock synthesis model are similar to the EBS cod model.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Flatfish Summary

The methods used to calculate ABC for this complex are generally the same as for prior years. The SSC encourages the analysts and Plan Teams in their efforts to use new methods such as the stock synthesis model which can make use of additional sources of information. The estimates for ABC and overfishing are expected to be revised by the November Plan Team meetings when the 1992 trawl survey results are available.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Yellowfin Sole

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team approach. Yellowfin sole abundance is high and stable. Survey results have been somewhat variable and three methods were used to estimate exploitable biomass. Applying $F_{0.1}$ to a projected exploitable biomass (2.66 million mt) estimated by the stock synthesis model yields an 1993 ABC of 372,00 mt, the same as for 1992. Overfishing level is calculated by applying $F_{30\%}$.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Greenland Turbot

Continuous poor recruitment has been observed since the early 1980s and biomass of the adult population is expected to decline throughout the 1990s. Given continued recruitment failure, the Plan Team rejected an ABC of 14,100 mt based on $F_{0.1}$. The Team believes that no increases in exploitation on this species are warranted and recommends a continuation of the 1992 ABC of 7,000 mt. Given the poor stock conditions, the SSC agreed with this approach. However, the SSC did not accept the estimate of F_{msy}, based on an assumed spawner recruit relationship, used to calculate overfishing. The SSC calculated on OFL of 34,600 mt from average catch. The SSC recommends that the Team calculate $F_{30\%}$ for the determination of OFL.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Arrowtooth Flounder

Recruitment from the 1986 and 1987 year classes was good. Biomass, although slightly reduced in 1990 and 1991, remains high. In the absence of a stock recruitment relationship, $F_{0.1}$ was applied to a projected biomass for the 1991 survey to calculate a 1993 ABC of 68,000 mt, a reduction of 14,300 mt from the 1992 calculation. Overfishing is calculated at $F_{30\%}$. The methodology used remains similar to the prior year.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Rock Sole

A projected biomass from the 1991 trawl survey and an exploitation rate of F_{msy} provide an estimated ABC for 1993 of 311,000 mt, 50,000 mt above 1992. ABC is equal to the level of overfishing.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Other Flatfish Complex

Reliable estimates of B_{msy} and F_{msy} are not available for this group of species. Consequently $F_{0.1}$ was applied to an increased biomass estimate based on the 1991 survey to calculate an ABC of 226,000 mt, 26,000 mt above 1992. Overfishing was calculated using $F_{30\%}$.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Sablefish

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team's recommended ABCs. Sablefish is assessed jointly in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. Consequently, the methods are identical to those discussed in the Gulf of Alaska section above.

Estimated biomass is 25,700 mt and 11,700 mt respectively for the Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea. ABCs are estimated to be 3,000 and 1,400 mt with companion overfishing levels of 4,040 and 1,840 mt.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - POP Complex

True POP

The SSC recommends acceptance of the last years ABC pending clarification of issues that surfaced during its review of the assessment. Prior to the December meeting the SSC requests clarification of the following:

1. Why were selectivity functions of different forms used for the trawl survey and the fishery?

2. Why were 1990 and 1991 length frequency data not used in the analysis?

3. Is there a difference in the age composition between the fishery and survey?

4. How does ABC compare between F35% with estimated selectivity, and F=M with knife edge recruitment.

Pending responses to these questions the SSC recommends that the preliminary ABCs for true POP be set as last year's levels for both the eastern Bering Sea (3,540 mt) and Aleutian Islands (11,700 mt). These values were obtained by applying F=M=0.05 to estimates of the current exploitable biomass for the eastern Bering Sea (70,800 mt) and Aleutian Islands (234,000 mt). The stock assessment authors (but not the Team) once again recommended dividing the Aleutian ABC up into 4 parts to reduce the possibility of the entire ABC being removed from a portion of the region. As stated below, the SSC favors a plan amendment to redefine management areas in the BS/AI region.

Lacking a value of $F_{30\%}$, the F=M criterion was used to define overfishing for true POP, which is therefore equal to ABC.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Other Red Rockfish

The SSC accepts the Team's ABC recommendations for species in this group. ABCs were calculated by using F=M for exploitation rates and average biomass estimates from bottom trawl surveys to obtain an estimate of current biomass. Natural mortalities used were 0.06 for northern and sharpchin, 0.025 for rougheye, and 0.03 for shortraker. Biomass estimates were as follows: northern/sharpchin

(EBS) 17,500 mt; (AI) 94,500 mt; rougheye (EBS) 3,000 mt; (AI) 25,300 mt; and shortraker (EBS) 9,200 mt; (AI) 19,700 mt.

The other red rockfish ABC for the eastern Bering Sea is 1,400 mt. The SSC does not recommend splitting this complex up. It still believes that the added protection afforded rougheye and shortraker by separating them into their own group is insignificant. The SSC recommend that this complex be divided into two groups for the Aleutian Islands: rougheye and shortraker, and all remaining species. The ABC for rougheye/shortraker is 1,220 mt and 5,670 mt for northern/sharpchin.

Lacking a value of $F_{30\%}$, the F=M criterion is used to define overfishing (ABC=OFL).

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Other Rockfish

The SSC accepts the Team's ABC recommendation for this complex. ABCs were calculated by applying an exploitation rate equal to natural mortality for POP, (0.05), to the estimate of current exploitable biomass, 8,000 mt for the eastern Bering Sea and 18,500 mt for the Aleutian Islands. Current biomass estimates were obtained by averaging recent trawl survey results. The F=M criterion was used to define overfishing (lacking $F_{30\%}$), which is therefore equal to ABC.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Atka Mackerel

The SSC accepts the Team's determination that the best estimate of ABC, given information now available is 351,000 mt. The ABC was derived by applying the estimated rate of natural mortality (0.30) to the 1993 exploitable biomass (1,121,000 mt) based on the stock synthesis model fitted to catch at age data (age 3+) and bottom trawl survey results. The SSC notes the biomass projections are higher than the 1992 projection due to updated 1991 survey data and inclusion of fish older than age 7 that appear in the fishery catches. This biomass estimate is conservative because some fraction of Atka mackerel biomass is distributed in mid-water and nearshore, and therefore is not included in the standard bottom trawl survey estimate.

While accepting the Team's ABC determination, the SSC is concerned that the series of trawl surveys is short and inconsistent in their extent of coverage. We are also apprehensive about the possible environmental problems that may result from an increased catch of the magnitude implied by the 1992 and 1993 ABC estimate. Atka mackerel is a prey species of northern fur seals and northern sea lions. During their migrations, northern fur seals (a depleted species) feed heavily on Atka mackerel as they move through the Aleutian passes.

In these circumstances, the SSC prefers to phase in the new higher ABC over a six-year period, adopting the current biomass estimate and raising the exploitation rate in steps from M/6 in 1992, M/3 in 1993, to M in 1997. According to the this schedule, the recommended ABC for 1993 is (0.30/3)* 1,171,000 = 117,100 mt. While this approach provides a 6 year schedule for increasing ABC, it should be clear that the estimate and procedures will be reviewed annually. The main purpose of the gradual approach is to postpone a large ABC increase until its correctness has been confirmed by additional data and analysis.

The SSC accepts the Team's overfishing limit calculated by applying the $F_{30\%}$ rate (F=0.506) to the 1993 exploitable biomass.

The SSC is particularly concerned about the need to distribute a greatly increased harvest over the range of the stock in proportion to the distribution of biomass. This would require 70% of the catch

to be taken west of 180° W. The SSC recommends that ABC for the eastern Aleutians be 32,100 mt and for the Western Aleutians be 85,000 mt.

The SSC notes that almost all of the 1992 catch of Atka mackerel was taken in the eastern Aleutian Islands area. The 1993 ABC is at a level that cannot be safely taken entirely from eastern Aleutians area, and may impact marine mammals. It is critical that the Council develop a plan amendment that will allow TAC's to be allocated geographically. In the absence of means to apportion ABC's, the SSC recommends the ABC for BS/AI Atka mackerel should be constrained to 32,100 mt, which can be safely taken in the eastern Aleutians area.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Other Species

At present the ABC for other species is calculated as the average recent catch, which is steadily dropping. The SSC requests the Team to consider an alternative procedure, such as calculating ABC as a proportion of total biomass.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Management Areas

The SSC received a proposal from the Alaska Groundfish Data Bank to consider a review of the current boundaries between the Aleutian subarea and the Gulf of Alaska management area. Additionally the SSC during its deliberations discussed the need to make regional distribution of ABC for such species as rockfish and Atka Mackerel. The SSC recommends that the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Plan Teams examine this issue and develop a plan amendment for consideration during 1993 to make appropriate modifications.

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

The SAFE report contains important information documenting some economic variables and characteristics of the fishery. It does not contain a concise analysis of the status of the fishery. An attempt should be made to include indicators of economic performance (profitability, efficiency, employment generation, impacts on key communities, etc.).

Specific comments:

(1) Presentation of catch by Alaska resident and non-resident boat owners is easily confused with the concept of catch by Alaska resident and non-resident fishermen. In fact, this mistake is so tempting that the report itself slips into this error (p.3., second line from bottom). It is clear that information on residence of harvester is of great interest, while classification of catch by vessel owner residence is the only simple procedure for developing such information. The problem is that this does not measure the extent to which Alaskans participate in harvesting, processing,, or other activities of the groundfish industry. The tables and text should be more clearly labeled to warn readers of the restricted meaning of the existing resident/non-resident categories.

(2) A striking fact in the report is the $353.7 million increase in groundfish product value from 1990 to 1991. This increased value derives largely from increasing prices for roe and surimi. In Table 26 surimi product value increased from $276.9 to $438.7 million from 1990 to 1991, due to an apparent doubling of price from $0.7092/lb (226.4 yen/kg) to $1.423/lb (423.1 yen/kg). However, based upon the monthly average price of "kneaded product" (surimi) in

Japan (Table 33), the price increased only 12.5% from 462.38 yen/kg to 519.9 yen/kg. Did the U.S. value per unit double due to increasing the "grade" of surimi product? The apparent price of roe in Table 26 increased from $3.46 to $5.18/lb, but no price series on roe is displayed in the remaining tables. Given the importance of these two prices, and the difficulty encountered in establishing accurate values for surimi and roe prices during the inshore/offshore economic analysis, there is a need for more thorough documentation.

D-4 EASTERN GULF TRAWL CLOSURE (AMENDMENT 26A)

The SSC reviewed the document entitled "Supplemental Information for the Proposed Eastern Gulf Trawl Closure and Future Management of Rockfish in the Gulf of Alaska". We received a presentation from the staff on the material presented in the document. The SSC had specific questions regarding the meaning of certain statements within the document and has requested that the authors clarify specific statements in the final document. The SSC also received comments from George Anderson of the trawl industry and Barry Bracken of ADF&G.

Our review of Amendment 26A was guided by the biological and social/economic problems listed in the draft EA/RIR/IRFA. Our conclusions are:

Problem 2. Concerns with further depletion of Eastern Gulf rockfish stocks which are still considered by many to be depressed.

The supplemental document provides a detailed discussion of the procedures used by the Council in setting the ABC's for the various rockfish species. The SSC and Team have employed conservative procedures in setting ABC. Conservative estimates of biomass (from trawl surveys) have been used. Exploitation rates have been set low and when the industry targeted on a specific species in a rockfish complex a separate ABC was established. Likewise when regional subdivision of ABC and TAC were required such subdivisions were made. Exploitation rates for depleted stocks (mainly POP) have been further reduced according to the Council's overfishing definition. As we stated in June, even if there still concerns about ABC, we do not believe that gear allocation is an appropriate way to address them.

Problem 3. Concern over high trawl bycatch levels of salmon in the Eastern Gulf.

As stated in June, the analysis does not demonstrate a problem with the bycatch of salmon by trawls in the Eastern Gulf. No new information was provided in the supplemental document.

Problem 4. Concern over potential declines of marine mammals and seabirds as a result of trawl fishing activity in the Eastern Gulf.

No new information is provided in the supplemental document. The SSC did receive a presentation on the status of the threatened Steller sea lion. For the SE Alaska area, trend site counts indicated a small decrease in adults while the pup counts indicated an increase. There is no need for concern regarding the effect of trawling on marine mammals at this time.

Problem 5. Concern over the potential impacts of trawling on deep water corals and benthic habitat.

The supplemental information provides a review of the status of knowledge regarding damage to the benthic environment by fishing gear, the importance of coral habitat to rockfish stocks, and the

distribution of coral in the Eastern Gulf. The SSC notes that both trawl and non-trawl gear have impacts on the benthic environment and that there is no estimate of the actual extent of damage by either gear. The SSC notes that since both gear types can damage the benthic environment, banning one gear type is not the most effective means of providing protection. If coral is determined to be a critical habitat, then such habitats should be identified and steps taken to provide adequate protection. At present the impact has not been assessed and there was testimony that trawlers avoid dense coral beds to prevent net damage. Impacts of trawling can continue to be monitored through the observer program.

Problem 1. Anticipation of unprecedented levels of factory trawler participation in the SEO during 1991 and even greater future expansion.

Current data indicates that a large expansion of the factory trawler participation in SEO has not occurred.

Problem 6. Grounds preemption and economic displacement of the local shore-based hook and longline fleet, and Problem 7. Concern that important traditional fisheries for groundfish and halibut could be curtailed if trawl harvests exceed the TAC's for some species.

The supplemental information provides a discussion of grounds preemption, gear conflicts and gear loss. The report indicates that recent management measures have successfully reduced or resolved many of the gear conflicts and grounds preemptions. The report indicates that there are problems in estimating the effects of fishing by one gear type or CPUE of another gear type.

It was pointed out by Mr. Bracken that one of the preemption problems was the harvest of slope rockfish. During the last year the trawl fishery reportedly took most of the allocation of this complex before the fall halibut opening. This required vessels in the halibut fishery to discard these species. This discard is largely unaccounted for in the longline fishery because of a lack of observers on these small fishing vessels. Steps should be taken to account for all sources of mortalities of this complex and if possible NMFS should take the steps necessary to allocate sufficient TAC among the directed and bycatch fisheries.

In summary, the assembled information does not contain convincing scientific evidence that trawling should be banned.

D-5(a) PRIBILOF ISLAND TRAWL CLOSURE

The SSC reviewed the draft EA/RIR/IRFA for chapter 4 of Amendment 21 to the Bering Sea FMP. The new draft has addressed our concerns over the inconsistent results of previous model runs. The SSC has provided the staff with some additional comments, including a reference on a report regarding critical rearing habitat for blue and red king crab.

We recommend that the amendment be released for public review.

D-5(b) POLLOCK "B" SEASON DELAY/EXCLUSIVE REGISTRATION EA/RIR/IRFA

The SSC reviewed the EA/RIR/IRFA proposing amendments to delay the pollock "B" season (non-roe fishing season) and provide for exclusive area registration. We heard a presentation by Drs.

Terrence Smith, Matthew Berman and Gunnar Knapp, University of Alaska Anchorage, of the economic analyses contained in the proposal. The SSC believes the economic analyses were comprehensive in their scope including estimates of income distribution from I/O models, a benefit/cost analysis, and an analysis of impacts on bycatch. Furthermore, we believe the economic analytical methods were appropriate. Nevertheless, the SSC recommends that prior to releasing the document for public review, the analysts expand their discussion of how the choice model was used to determine net economic benefits. The discussion at the bottom of page 3-21 that describes how compensation was calculated is confusing. There also is a need to expand the description of the underlying reasons for the results reported in the economic impact section, section 3.5.

The SSC recommends that the environmental and biological impacts section be revised prior to sending the document out for public review. Specifically, the SSC notes that the economic analysis contains a concise examination of bycatch consequences as evaluated with the bycatch model. The discussions in the environmental and biological section on bycatch are redundant and inconsistent with the results represented in the economic analysis. The EA should consolidate this discussion and resolve the inconsistencies. Next, the SSC recommends that the analysts compute instantaneous rates of growth for pollock, predict in-season changes in pollock mean weight appropriate for alternative season opening dates and compute the number of pollock which will be harvested at each date. These quantitative data can be used to evaluate the assumed benefits of a delayed season on pollock mortality.

The SSC recommends that the amendment be released for public review after the changes suggest above are made.

D-5(c) PREFERENTIAL ALLOCATION OF PACIFIC COD TO GEAR TYPES (AMENDMENT 24)

The SSC received a report from Dr. Joe Terry summarizing the contents of the amendment package and "Revisions to Council Review Draft" which was received at this meeting. Dr. Terry identified a number of changes that are planned. For example, IPHC staff is expected to have estimates of discard mortality rates and yield loss to the halibut fishery caused by each bycatch fishery based on 1991 observer data. Since additional work on the amendment is planned, the SSC would like the opportunity to review the modified document in December prior to its release for public review.

The results of the benefit/cost analysis are dependent upon (a) the allocation of fixed costs among multiple fisheries and (b) the measurement of "impact costs" of prohibited species discards. Economists frequently struggle with the need to allocate fixed costs among products of multi-product firms. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find a more defensible procedure than the type of allocation used in this document (based upon an average proportion of weeks and catch). However, the proportions used are of "groundfish catch and weeks" not total catch or weeks fished by the vessel. As noted in this report, this procedure overstates costs attributable to cod fishing for pot gear because it ignores the fishing for crab. If the definition of groundfish excludes halibut (as is usual), then this procedure would also overstate the fixed costs of longline vessels. A logical escape from these problems would be to adopt as a benefit measure the quasi-rents for each vessel type (i.e. subtract only non-sunk costs from revenues). It is suggested that the authors consider subtracting the usual variable costs (vessel operating costs, crew payments, bait, ice, etc.) and any incremental annual fixed costs attributable to fishing for the species in question (incremental costs associated with setting up to longline for cod rather than sablefish/halibut or fish pots for cod rather than crab). In the longer term, establishment of an open access equilibrium in all fisheries will assure that there are no significant net benefits left in any segment of the fishery.

These points need to be applied to the "impact costs" of discarded fish as well as to the target species. The report (p. 50 and Table 4.2) adopts the halibut impact cost of about $2,900/mt that was used in Amendment 21 (Appendix I, Table 4). Then a range is added to yield a halibut discard impact cost of $2,900 to $2,200/mt. This range is poorly explained. A greater concern, however, is that the impact cost deducts only variable costs which are estimated to be 47% of wholesale value. Consistency would require either (i) a proportional allocation of fixed costs to halibut fishing and processing, or (ii) adoption of the quasi-rent measure of benefits for the non-halibut fisheries.

The SSC recommends that the authors consider these issues in the development of the next draft of the document.

In the construction of Table 3.20, the discard mortality rates for the PSC species other than halibut were assumed to be 1.0 for all gear types. The SSC recommends that the validity of this assumption be examined.

D-7(a) PSC ALLOWANCES FOR THE INSHORE-OFFSHORE AND CDQ POLLOCK FISHERIES

This amendment analyzes 3 alternatives to allocate the pollock fishery prohibited species catch (PSC) among the 3 pollock allocation fisheries: CDQ fisheries, vessels delivering pollock onshore, and vessels that process at-sea.

The SSC recommends the amendment go out for public review, when the changes detailed under section 1.8, page 1-6 are completed and included in the document.

D-8(e) PETITION FOR POLLOCK RESEARCH FROM ST. PAUL ISLAND

The SSC reviewed a petition from the City of St.Paul to examine the theories regarding eastern Bering Sea pollock stock structure. The petition asks the Council to direct NMFS to support independent research using Japanese and Russian data as well as the best available technology to resolve the issue of stock distribution and migration. The SSC was informed that NMFS has already provided the petitioners' representative, former Governor Steve Cowper, a package of material describing the work in progress, including international research with Japan, Russia, Poland, Korea, and China.

D-8(f) EXPERIMENTAL RETENTION OF PSC

The SSC heard an explanation by Tuck Donnelly of Terra Marine Research of his group's request for an experimental fishery permit to retain halibut and salmon bycatch, which otherwise would have to be discarded, for processing and distribution to needy people. This would be a worthwhile study. The SSC recommends that the proposers complete a formal application for an experimental permit, which would necessarily contain answers to questions such as how the operators would decide which fish to retain and which to release.

D-8(g) MEASUREMENT OF PRODUCT RECOVERY RATES

The SSC heard a proposal from Steve Hughes for an industry-government program to gather hard data on pollock product recovery rates in shore plants and shipboard factories. Good data of this sort are needed to allow better estimates of pollock removals in recent years and to provide accurate efficiency comparisons for decisions on matters such as inshore-offshore allocations and the timing of fishery openings. Product recovery rates are also used for enforcement purposes. The SSC recommends that NMFS and industry design a program to estimate product recovery rates during normal factory operations according to season, fish size, filleting machine type, product, and type of operation.

SSC Recommendations - Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

Stock	Region	B_{92}	B_{MSY}	F_{msy}	ABC Strategy	ABC	Overfishing Definition	Y_{of}	Notes
Pollock	EBS	7.96M	6.0M	0.38	$F_{0.1a}$=.31	1.69M	F_{msy}=.38	2.39M	Cohort Analysis
	AI	277K	?	0.38	$F_{0.1a}$=.31	67.0K	F_{msy}=.38	83.1K	
	Bogoslof	655K	?	?	F=M/4=.05	33K	F=M/4	33K	B/B_{msy} = 1/4
Cod	BSAI	825K	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.145	178K	$F_{30\%}$=.149	183K	
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	2.7M	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.14	372K	$F_{30\%}$=.17	452K	
Greenland turbot	BSAI	292K	?	?	Bycatch only	7K	Ave.Catch	34.6K	1977-1987
Arrowtooth	BSAI	378K	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.18	68.0K	$F_{30\%}$=.25	94.5K	
Rock sole	BSAI	1.71M	904K	.176	F_{MSY}=.176	311K	F_{msy}=.176	311K	
Other flatfish	BSAI	1.42M	?	?	$F_{0.1b}$=.159	226K	$F_{30\%}$=.23	327K	
Sablefish	EBS	11.7K	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.13	1400	$F_{30\%}$=.18	1840	
	AI	25.7K	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.13	3000	$F_{30\%}$=.18	4040	
POP complex									
True POP	EBS	70.8K	?	?	F=M=.05	3540	F=M	3540	SRA & trawl survey
	AI	234K	?	?	F=M=.05	11700	F=M	11700	
NO/SC/RE/SR	EBS	29.7K	?	?	F=M	1400	F=M	1400	
NO/SC	AI	94.5K	?	?	F=M	5670	F=M	5670	
RE/SC	AI	45.K	?	?	F=M	1220	F=M	1220	
Other Rockfish	BS	8K	?	?	F=M	400	F=M	400	Surveys
	AI	18.5K	?	?	F=M	925	F=M	925	
Atka Mackerel	BS/AI	1.17M	?	?	F=M/6=.05	32.1K[a]	$F_{30\%}$=.5	771K	Stairstep ABC
Squid	BS/AI	?	?	?	Ave. Catch	3400	Ave. Catch	3400	
Other species	BS/AI	794K	?	?	Ave. Catch	26,600	Ave. Catch	26,600	

a/ If there is a Plan Amendment to separate eastern and western Aleutian Island - ABC =117K

SSC Recommendations - Gulf of Alaska

Stock	Region	B_{92}	B_{MSY}	F_{msy}	ABC Strategy	ABC	Overfishing Definition	OFL	Notes
Pollock	W/C	701,000 - 1,112,000	?	?	F_{hist}=10%	70,100 - 111,200	$F_{30\%}$=.283	163,200 - 258,800	SS Model E, G
	E					3,400	$F_{30\%}$=.283	7,880	1990 Trawl survey
Cod	W					18,700			
	C					35,200			
	E					2,800			
	GOA	324,000	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.177	56,700	$F_{30\%}$=.245	78,100	Survey B 84, 87, 90 in SRA Model
Deepwater flat	W					2,020			
	C					35,580			
	E					7,930			
	GOA	227,656	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.20	45,530	$F_{30\%}$=.265	59,650	Survey B 90
Shallow flat	W					27,480			
	C					21,260			
	E					1,740			
	GOA	261,724	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.20	50,480	$F_{30\%}$=.26	70,860	Survey B 90
Flathead	W					12,580			
	C					31,830			
	E					5,040			
	GOA	247,247	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.20	49,450	$F_{30\%}$=.26	64,780	Survey B 90
Arrowtooth	W					38,880			
	C					253,330			
	E					29,080			
	GOA	1,889,922	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.17	321,290	$F_{30\%}$=.30	451,690	Survey B 90
Sablefish	W					2,500			
	C					9,570			
	WYK					3,740			
	SEO					4,990			
	GOA	179,000	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.13	20,800	$F_{30\%}$=0.18	28,200	Constant R Longline, trawl surveys in SRA model

(GOA continued)

Stock	Region	B_{92}	B_{MSY}	F_{msy}	Strategy	ABC	Overfishing Definition	OFL	Notes
Slope rockfish:	W					1,620			
POP	C					1,720			
	E					2,390			
	GOA	229,100	?	?	F=M/2	5,730	F=M/2	5,730	B_{92}/B_{msy}=1/2
SR/RE	W					100			
	C					1,290			
	E					570			
	GOA	72,960	?	?	F=M	1,960	$F_{30\%}$(RE) F=M (SR)	2,900	Ave. Survey B 87, 90
Other slope	W					1,390			
	C					6,510			
	E					6,160			
	GOA	230,480	?	?	F=M	14,060	$F_{30\%}$ and F=M	20,710	Ave. Survey B 87, 90
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W					1,210			
	C					4,400			
	E					1,280			
	GOA	?	?	?	F=M	6,890	$F_{30\%}$	11,550	Includes black rockfish. Ave. Survey B 84, 87, 90
Demersal shelf rockfish	GOA	?	?	?	F=M=0.02	800	$F_{30\%}$	1,600	Lower 90% CI submersible Survey B
Thornyhead	GOA	26,210	?	?	F=M=.07	1,830	$F_{30\%}$=0.095	2,490	Survey B 90

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Approved by _____
Date _____

ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21-24, 1992
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

The Advisory Panel for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met on September 21-24, 1992, at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. Members in attendance were:

John Bruce
Alvin Burch
Gary Cadd
Phil Chitwood
Dan Falvey
Dave Fraser, Vice Chair
Spike Jones
Kevin Kaldestad
David Little
Pete Maloney
Dean Paddock
Penny Pagels
Perfenia Pletnikoff
John Roos
John Sevier
Harold Sparck
Beth Stewart
John Woodruff, Chair
Robert Wurm

Approval of minutes for the August 1992 meeting has been delayed.

C-1 OBSERVER PROGRAM

The AP heard a staff report on the Draft EA/RIR and **unanimously** recommends that the Council send it out for public comment with the inclusion of a longline pilot program in alternative 4.

The AP also received an update on the status of the Research Plan especially related to its phase in.

C-2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council schedule teleconferences on CDQ proposals in concert with the governor's time frame and review. The AP also thinks summaries of CDQs should be submitted to the Council so that it would have the opportunity to make recommendations to the Secretary.

C-4 MARINE MAMMALS

The AP heard extensive presentations and reports from NMFS Scientists and others on the status of Steller sea lions and harbor seals.

In terms of new measures for 1993 relative to sea lions, the AP recommends the Council adopt alternative 1 of the Draft EA/RIR for Amendments 20/25. Further, the AP recommends the Council direct the Plan Team to develop a more comprehensive way to dealing with seasons, TACs, etc., with regard to marine mammals along the maritime mammal corridor. In making these recommendations, some AP members

feel frustration in that we are asked to make recommendations such as this with very little time to review and digest the data and potential options.

(This motion passes 12-6)

Those voting in favor of this motion cite these reasons;

- the proposed closure around Ugamak Island isn't an area where pollock are caught,
- the area around Ugamak has actually seen a double digit increase in animals in the last year,
- and the key harvest in the 10-20 mile proposed closure is Pacific cod; this fish is harvested on the bottom where sea lion pups do not feed and the bycatch of pollock is large fish anyway. To push this cod harvest into another area would exacerbate bycatch, CPUE, ground preemption, etc., problems elsewhere, without providing any benefit to the area vacated.

MINORITY REPORT

C-4 Marine Mammals

We, the undersigned members of the AP, support the more protective measures that aim to reverse the declining trend of the "threatened" Steller sea lion. We recognize that rookery and haulout sites provide critical habitat for this marine mammal and that these areas should be protected with proactive measures.

In our view, alternative 2 of the proposed EA/RIR/IRFA should be approved. This recommendation is consistent with the protective measures that were instituted in January of 1992. However, we also believe that those areas in the central Aleutians also warrant more protective measures. The central Aleutians index area denotes further decline of Steller sea lions, yet there has not been an effort to further consider protective measures for this species habitat.

We recommend more habitat considerations that reflect increased fishery activity that may occur during the Atka mackerel fishery and that may in turn effect Steller sea lion populations in this area.

Signed: John Bruce

Dan Falvey
Dean Paddock
Penny Pagels

C-5 HABITAT

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council support having EPA, the Coast Guard, and other appropriate agencies work closely with ADEC to develop minimum oil spill preparedness requirements and consider requiring fishing vessels over a certain size to obtain standby contracts for oil spill response.

In making this recommendation, the AP believes this is an area the Council doesn't belong in as the lead agency since it requires expertise well outside the business of fishing.

C-6 SABLEFISH AND HALIBUT IFQs

The AP received a staff report on the preliminary analysis of proposed amendments to the IFQ plan.
The AP recommends the Council send out both the "Hegge" and "Sitka" block proposals and 1000 lbs. floor proposal for public review. (This motion **passes 10-1**)

The AP reviewed a request to initiate analysis of a proposal submitted by the Kodiak Borough for interim management of sablefish and halibut.
The AP endorses this request. (This motion **passes 9-2**)

D-3 (A,B) INITIAL GROUNDFISH SPECIFICATIONS FOR 1993

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council send the GOA SAFE document out for the public review period with appropriate editorial changes. The AP further recommends there be some discussion in the SAFE document of "other species" and that they be broken down by district.

The AP recommends the attached table of TACs go with the SAFE document for public comment.
(This motion **passed 16-3**)

In adopting the TACs listed, the AP follows the Plan Team's recommendations in all species except:

Pollock — The AP is aware of new information the Plan Team did not have when making their recommendation; we support the SSC recommendation.

Arrowtooth — The AP realizes that halibut bycatch will significantly restrain this fishery and since "other species" amounts are 5% of total TACs, we think this lower TAC notices the industry more correctly on the amount of "other species" that might be available.

POP/Shortraker/Rougheye

Many of the AP think these rockfish quotas should have a buffer between ABC and TAC and that exploitation of these rockfish should be conservative. Many question the veracity of the survey number since these species don't survey well. There were problems with these species in 1992 and the AP wants to assure the ABCs are not exceeded in 1993. Further, we think that, unlike many shorter lived species, uncaught rockfish will be available in future fishing years and therefore urge conservative TACs.

Demersal Shelf Rockfish

The AP is concerned about the differences between Plan Team and SSC on the definition of overfishing. If the overfishing level is in fact 800 mt, the TAC should be well under that number.

The AP further recommends that for this public comment period, the halibut PSC releases for 1993 be the same as the accrual releases in 1992 both in amount and over time. The AP is aware that there is new information on bycatch mortality coming in November and the industry should be on notice of this.

(This motion passed unanimously)

GULF OF ALASKA GROUNDFISH

1993 Plan Team, SSC, and AP recommendations and apportionments (metric tons)

22-Sep-92

		1992			Plan Team	SSC	Advisory Panel	
Species	Area	ABC	TAC	Catch**	ABC - 1993	ABC - 1993	TAC	DAP
Pollock	W/C	96,000	84,000	65,528	64,000	111,000	111,000	
	Shelikof *	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	
	E	3,400	3,400	62	3,400	3,400	3,400	
	Total	99,400	87,400	65,590	67,400	114,400	114,400	
Pacific Cod	W	23,500	23,500	34,007	18,700	18,700	18,700	
	C	39,000	39,000	34,753	35,200	35,200	35,200	
	E	1,000	1,000	418	2,800	2,800	2,800	
	Total	63,500	63,500	69,178	56,700	56,700	56,700	
Flatfish, Deep	W	1,740	1,740	120	2,020	2,020	2,020	
	C	33,550	15,000	7,022	35,580	35,580	35,580	
	E	3,990	3,000	66	7,930	7,930	7,930	
	Total	39,280	19,740	7,208	45,530	45,530	45,530	
Flathead sole	W	12580	2000	295	12,580	12,580	12,580	
	C	31,990	5,000	1,308	31,830	31,830	31,830	
	E	3,710	3,000	0	5,040	5,040	5,040	
	Total	48,280	10,000	1,603	49,450	49,450	49,450	
Flatfish, Shallow	W	27,480	3,000	1,630	27,480	27,480	27,480	
	C	21,260	7,000	3,068	21,260	21,260	21,260	
	E	1,740	1,740	1	1,740	1,740	1,740	
	Total	50,480	11,740	4,699	50,480	50,480	50,480	
Arrowtooth	W	38,880	5,000	940	38,880	38,880	5,000	
	C	253,320	15,000	10,429	253,330	253,330	15,000	
	E	11,680	5,000	911	29,080	29,080	5,000	
	Total	303,880	25,000	12,280	321,290	321,290	25,000	
Sablefish	W	2,500	2,500	1,884	2,500	2,500	2,500	
	C	9,570	9,570	8,674	9,570	9,570	9,570	
	W. Yakutat	3,740	3,740	4,072	3,740	3,740	3,740	
	E. Yak/S.E. Out.	4,990	4,990	4,578	4,990	4,990	4,990	
	Total	20,800	20,800	19,208	20,800	20,800	20,800	
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	1,620	1,470	1,248	800	1,620	720	
	C	1,720	1,561	2,325	1,230	1,720	1,107	
	E	2,390	2,169	2,255	2,690	2,390	2,421	
	Total	5,730	5,200	5,828	4,720	5,730	4,248	
Shortraker/Rougheye	W	100	100	88	100	100	90	
	C	1,290	1,290	1,260	1,290	1,290	1,161	
	E	570	570	640	570	570	513	
	Total	1,960	1,960	1,988	1,960	1,960	1,764	
Other Slope	W	1,390	1,390	1,166	1,390	1,390	1,390	
	C	6,510	6,510	3,539	6,510	6,510	6,510	
	E	6,160	6,160	487	6,160	6,160	6,160	
	Total	14,060	14,060	5,192	14,060	14,060	14,060	
Rockfish (Pelagic Shelf)	W	1,212	1,212	73	1,210	1,210	1,210	
	C	4,393	4,393	1,604	4,400	4,400	4,400	
	E	1,281	1,281	617	1,280	1,280	1,280	
	Total	6,886	6,886	2,294	6,890	6,890	6,890	
Rockfish (Demersal Shelf)	S.E. Out.	550	550	459	800	800	720	
Thornyhead	G W	1,798	1,798	1,527	1,500	1,834	1,500	
Other Species	G W	0	20,432	15,742	0	0	19,577	
GULF OF ALASKA TOTAL		656,604	289,066	212,796	641,580	689,924	411,119	

* Eliminated beginning in 1992

** Catch through August 23, 1992

The AP recommends that NMFS initially designate GOA Pacific ocean perch and shortraker/rougheye as bycatch species. Should NMFS subsequently determine the TAC of these species in any area is sufficient to provide for bycatch needs in all fisheries plus a directed fishery, the designation in the appropriate area should be changed to directed fishing. The AP recommends that any directed fishery for these species be held to an amount that when added to bycatch does not exceed the TAC. To the extent possible, directed fishing for these species should occur during the third quarter when halibut bycatch would be at a minimum.

As a further comment to the Council, the AP sees black rockfish as a specie that is at risk of over exploitation. The AP heard of developing fisheries/markets for this specie and thinks the Council should direct NMFS to look at separating it from the rest of the pelagic shelf species.

D-3 (C,D,E) INITIAL GROUNDFISH SPECIFICATIONS FOR 1993

The AP heard staff and NMFS reports on the BSAI SAFE document. The AP **unanimously** recommends the BSAI SAFE document go out for public review. It further recommends that the document be amended to include 1992 salmon bycatch rates broken down by specie as much as the data allows.

The AP **unanimously** recommends the attached table of TACs for the public comment period with the following caveats:

1. Rockfish and Atka mackerel harvests should be split in terms of geographical area.
2. The split line for Atka mackerel should be 178° W.
3. If there is no geographical division of catches, the TAC for Atka mackerel should be 32,000 mt.

Pollock Seasons

The AP recommends the Council for purposes of public comment apportion 30% of the ITAC to the pollock "A" season.

(This motion **passed 11-7**)

Those voting in favor of this motion cite that:

1. this may allow for some sea lion protection,
2. this proposed apportionment will generate plenty of public comment,
3. and salmon bycatch in the "A" season is higher than in the "B" season.

PSC Apportionments

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council adopt the attached table of PSC apportionments for the public comment period. It notes that:

1. halibut bycatch mortality numbers may be changed in November 1992 and that we will go to a mortality based count if Amendment 21 is approved,
2. and the herring number is based on 1% of the EBS herring biomass estimate and, therefore, will very likely change in 1993.

VIP Rates

The AP recommends these rates be developed at the December meeting, similar to last year and that after this meeting the Regional Director use his authority to adjust these rates prior to the start of the 1993 trawl season.

(This motion passed 14-1)

Additional Recommendations

The AP suggests the Council request that NMFS expand its dedication of manpower and funding to increase its investigation of interspecific relationships between marine species and environmental conditions that influence productivity and recruitment in the Bering Sea fisheries.

The AP further recommends that the fisheries science section of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center undergo independent peer review of its field science modeling program as does the marine mammal lab.

The AP is very concerned that the apparent health of individual fish species may not reflect the health of the Bering Sea ecosystem as a whole, noting increased problems with populations of marine mammals and piscivorous seabirds for unknown reasons.

The AP requests the Council set up a meeting in November in Anchorage to have ADF&G, NMFS, and any other appropriate agencies conduct a public workshop on salmon bycatch data for the BSAI area, and whether a regulatory or plan amendment will be pursued in 1993 to limit salmon bycatch.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish

1993 Plan Team, SSC, AP and Council Recommendations and Approtionments (mt)

Species	Area / Seasons	Council ABC 1992	Plan Team ABC 1993	SSC ABC 1993	Advisory Pannel TAC 1993	Advisory Pannel ITAC 1993	Council TAC 1993	Council ITAC 1993
Pollock	EBS	1,490,000	1,690,000	1,690,000	1,300,000	1,105,000		
	Roe (1/20-4/15)				30%	331,500		
	Non-Roe (6/1-12/31)				70%	773,500		
	AL	51,600	67,000	67,000	51,600	43,860		
	518	25,000	142,000	33,000	1,000	850		
Pacific Cod		182,000	178,000	178,000	178,000	151,300		
Yellowfin sole		372,000	372,000	372,000	200,000	170,000		
Greenland turbot		7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	5,950		
Arrowtooth flounder		82,300	68,000	68,000	10,000	8,500		
Rock sole		260,800	311,000	311,000	75,000	63,750		
Other flatfish		199,600	226,000	226,000	79,000	67,150		
Sablefish	EBS	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,190		
	AL	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,550		
POP complex								
True POP	EBS	3,540	2,100	3,540	2,100	1,785		
Other POP Complex	EBS	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,190		
True POP	AL	11,700	14,800	11,700	11,700	9,945		
Sharp/Northern	AL	5,670	5,670	5,670	5,670	4,820		
Short/Rougheye	AL	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,037		
Other rockfish	EBS	400	400	400	400	340		
	AL	925	925	925	925	786		
Atka mackerel	BS/AI	43,000	351,000	32,100	32,000	27,200		
Notes: 1) If there is a plan amendment to separate the AI into E.AI and W.AI then SSC recommends the ABC= 117,100 with 70% (85,000) in the W..AI. 2) If the AI is split then the AP recommends the total TAC=43,000.								
Squid		3,600	3,400	3,400	2,000	1,700		
Other Species		27,200	26,600	26,600	20,000	17,000		
BS/AI TOTAL		**2,773,355**	**3,472,915**	**3,043,355**	**1,983,415**	**1,685,903**		

AP recommended 1993 Preliminary PSC Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Fisheries

Fishery Group	Halibut, Primary (mt)	Halibut, Secondary (mt)	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab Zone1	C. bairdi Zone1	C. bairdi Zone2
Yellowfin sole	743	849	391	75,000	100,000	1,225,000
May 1 - Aug. 2		424				
Aug. 3 - Dec. 31		425				
Rocksole/other flatfish	660	755	0	85,000	700,000	300,000
Jan. 1 - Mar. 29		566				
Mar. 30 - June 28		95				
June 29 - Sept. 27		94				
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31		0				
Rockfish	175	200	10	0	0	50,000
Jan. 1 - Mar. 29		20				
Mar. 30 - June 28		60				
June 29 - Sept. 27		120				
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Pacific cod	1,343	1,537	29	10,000	75,000	712,500
Jan. 1 - June 28		1,301				
June 29 - Sept 27		236				
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Pollock/mackerel/"o. species"	1,479	1,692	210	30,000	125,000	712,500
Jan. 1 - April 15		1,221				
April 16 - May 31		0				
June 1 - Dec. 31		471				
7 MW Pollock (Herring)	n/a	n/a	1,668	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	4,400	5,033	2,308	200,000	1,000,000	3,000,000

Sept. 24, 1992

D-4 GROUNDFISH PLAN AMENDMENTS - FINAL REVIEW

The AP heard a staff report, received Rockfish Committee minutes and took public testimony on this agenda item. After much discussion and debate, the AP recommends the Council adopt the suggested compromise action as follows:

1. ABCs AND TAC. Continued conservative management of Southeast rockfish stocks and fishing quotas. For the next 5 years annual TACs should be set at 10% below the ABC for all Southeast rockfish species.

2. Recommendations for current Eastern Gulf of Alaska rockfish quota management:

   a) Shortraker/rougheye will be designated bycatch only in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska for 1993.
   b) POP and other slope rockfish will be managed as a target fishery in the Eastern Gulf. Other slope rockfish in the Eastern Gulf will close when/if bycatch of Demersal shelf rockfish reaches 25 metric tons.
   c) 1% bycatch retention limit for Demersal Shelf Rockfish will continue to apply for trawl gear.

3. Improved Survey Techniques. Design and implementation of improved rockfish survey techniques to limit the apparent overestimation and underestimation which present surveys produce. Rockfish fishing is a specialized activity and industry input into rockfish survey systems should be considered.

4. Effort Limitation Program/Initial Industry Development. Implementation of an industry committee incorporating staff support to design and recommend within one year, an effort limitation program for all rockfish gear groups currently harvesting rockfish in Southeast Alaska. The Council is encouraged to designate and announce a December, 1992 date for cut-off for all gear groups of new entrants into Southeast Alaska rockfish fisheries.

5. Habitat Definition. Request NMFS to implement a program which will accomplish the following by 19__:

   a) Conduct a comprehensive survey to record all coral habitat in the Gulf of Alaska. (Availability of new was noted).
   b) Task a scientific team to identify and designate coral and other benthic habitat critical for continuing recruitment of rockfish stocks and maintenance of a generally healthy ecosystem within Southeast Alaska. This team should define isolated areas suitable for future fishing gear impact studies for all gear types harvesting rockfish.

6. Improve Rockfish Fishery and Coral Impact Data. Expand the current rockfish fishery data collection system to provide accurate and timely data of all rockfish harvest, bycatch, and discard activity. The expanded data system should cover all gear groups harvesting rockfish in the Southeast. Vessel participation in expanded at-sea observer coverage data collection, check-in/check-out procedures, and logbooks requirements specifically designed to record coral removals should be required as a precondition to rockfish fishing within Southeast Alaska.

7. Establish a Rockfish Gear Conflict Committee. A gear conflict committee should be constituted by two representatives from all gear groups harvesting rockfish in Southeast Alaska. The purpose of a Rockfish Industry Gear Conflict Committee is implementation of an efficient communication and cooperation system on the fishing grounds between gear groups. The system should be capable of receiving and arbitrating complaints of gear conflicts. The Committee objective is to minimize actual gear conflicts between gear groups and keep gear dispute resolution within the industry.

Those voting in favor of this motion cite the follow rationale:

1. The gear conflict issue is moot due mostly to the July 1st rockfish opening for trawlers.
2. The main species the trawl fleet is targeting, Pacific ocean perch, is not taken by the longline fleet.
3. Closing East of 140° would simply put all of the East Gulf effort into the 140-147° area and exacerbate the problems there. It would lead to higher bycatches, lower CPUEs and potentially more damage to the habitat (if you think it occurs).
4. Marine mammals do not feed on POP and other rockfish.
5. All fishermen (all gear types) avoid coral; it destroys gear.
6. The current trawl fleet working East of 140° is 100% observed.

The AP further endorses and encourages the continuation of the Rockfish Scientific Committee to explore many of the items above and especially stock assessment and habitat.

(This motion **passed 9-4**).

MINORITY REPORT

D-4 Groundfish Plan Amendments

We, the undersigned members of the AP, do not support the AP recommendation on Amendment 26 to the FMP for the Gulf of Alaska.

This recommendation does not, in any effective way, address the present concerns about habitat degradation and depleted rockfish stocks in the area of the Eastern Gulf.

We propose putting all slope rockfish species on "bycatch only" status to all gear groups to promote stock rebuilding, and closing the Southeast outside area to trawling to protect habitat.

The information in the supplemental information supports the need for these measures. From the New Zealand study on trawl impacts: "The heavier the gear in contact with the seabed, the greater the damage. The effects vary depending on amount of gear in contact with the bottom, together with the depth and nature of seabed." The study also notes that, "where macrobenthos is substantially removed and if recovery is not permitted, the change is permanent."

From the Van Dolan study in Amendment I to the snapper grouper plan: "A live bottom area may be trawled through over and over, and habitat damage would be expected to be much greater than described in the study."

Additionally, because rockfish species are associated with coral habitat, destruction to coral may have an adverse effect on these species' recovery. Coral exhibit extremely slow growth rates of approximately 1 cm/yr.

Although there is some evidence that longline gear can also impact habitat, the magnitude of these impacts are not comparable to bottom trawl gear.

Protective management measures are required to aid in the recovery of Pacific ocean perch. This population has not yet rebounded from the effects of overfishing because approximately 12% of the POP population is older than 15 years of age, we recommend rebuilding strategies that address both habitat protection and limited directed fisheries on this largely juvenile population.

We are also concerned about adequate data collection on the impacts of habitat destruction and information that includes the status of these rockfish stocks. We strongly endorse further study, but further study alone does not address all of our concerns.

Signed: Penny Pagels
Dan Falvey
Robert Wurm

D-5 (A) PRIBILOF ISLAND TRAWL CLOSURE

The AP recommends the Draft EA/RIR be sent out for public comment once the following information is added to it:

1. Expansion of the red-legged kittiwake habitat issues.
2. Some development of where the displaced fleet might go (especially with regards to the pollock fillet fleet).
3. Groundfish catch from the last few years from the proposed closed areas (including average length frequency data on rock sole and pollock).
4. Crab distribution in the proposed closed areas and assurance that the king crab bycatch rates in the document are blue crab only.
   (This motion **passed 17-2**).

The AP believes there are currently some serious deficiencies that should and can be corrected prior to public review. It also believes this Amendment should stay on track.

D-5 (B) POLLOCK "B" SEASON DELAY/EXCLUSIVE REGISTRATION AREAS

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council send the Draft EA/RIR for the Pollock "B" Season and Exclusive Registration out for public comment after these pieces of the document have been amplified:

1. The document should focus some on the impacts on fishermen in fisheries the delayed pollock fishermen might go into (i.e., yellowfin sole: What are the impacts on these guys?).
2. The "estimated net benefits of exclusive registration" table needs more explanation so it can be more easily understood.
3. Recovery rates/yields should be supplemented with any available observer data, especially as it relates to when rates increase.
4. Herring bycatch should be developed considering enactment of a CVOA.
5. The impact on the existing salmon industry and new entrants into processing should be more clearly defined (realizing that in indepth examination of this is not possible).

D-5 (C) PREFERENTIAL ALLOCATION OF PACIFIC COD

The AP recommends the Council wait to send this document out for public comment until the expected changes in the document occur and can be massaged into the draft.

In making this recommendation, the AP realizes this delay sets back any allocation plan. However, this plan would not be in effect until mid-1993 in any case.

D-6 (A) FIXED GEAR HALIBUT PSC IN BSAI FOR 1993

The AP recommends the Council adopt 900 mt as the fixed gear halibut PSC cap for BSAI fisheries. (This motion **passed 11-2**). The AP further recommends that pot gear be exempted from this cap and that the Council encourage IPHC and NMFS to pursue implementation of any careful release techniques that reduce bycatch mortality.

As part of this motion, the AP realizes that a three-month summer closure of Pacific cod longline fishing could significantly reduce the total halibut bycatch mortality.

The AP recommends a seasonal percent split of longline halibut PSC as follows:

Jan. 1 - May 14	65%
May 15 - Aug. 31	10%
Sept. 1 - END	25%

D-6 (B) PERFORMANCE-BASED PELAGIC TRAWL DEFINITION

The AP recommends the Council adopt alternative 3, option #2, with a performance standard of 1 crab per haul.

The AP also recommends the Council request NMFS to bring enforcement standards back to the Council in December, working with industry and scientists to determine enforcement guidelines to ensure that regurgitated crab are not counted as a violation and determine how many crabs would trigger and enforcement action.

(This motion **passed 15-1**).

D-6 (C) HOOK AND LINE LONGLINE FAIR START

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council adopt the 72 hour fair start provision.

D-6 (D) GANGION-CUTTING PROVISIONS

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council to proceed post haste with mandatory requirements for careful release of halibut.

D-7 (A) PSC ALLOWANCES FOR INSHORE-OFFSHORE & CDQ POLLOCK FISHERIES

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council send the EA/RIR out for public comment when the document is complete. Further, the AP recommends king salmon and other salmon bycatch data be updated for 1992, with a breakout of other salmon by species.

D-7 (B) LEGAL GEAR DEFINITION

The AP **unanimously** recommends that NMFS proceed with this regulatory amendment.

D-7 (C) TOTAL CATCH MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE

The AP received a report on the status of development of regulations requiring weighing of groundfish at sea, and adopted the following motion:

The AP is dissatisfied with the progress of NMFS in implementing regulations to require the weighing of groundfish. Whereas volumetric estimates are a step in the right direction, this is no different than what is already implemented when NMFS observers make catch estimates. The regulation to require marking bin heights to make volumetric estimates does not fulfill the regulation to require actual weighing of groundfish. Accuracy is more important than cost and NMFS should not consider cost in developing such regulation, as industry should accept it as a cost of doing business.

(This motion **passed 7-0 with 3 abstentions**).

Those in favor of the motion believe this is critical to sound fisheries management.
Those abstaining agree that it is important to implement regulations to get accurate determination of groundfish weights but felt that volumetrics were a valid method for making such determinations, and that cost should be weighed against the degree of precision desired.

D-7 (E) GOA 2ND QUARTER POLLOCK OPENING

The AP adopted a motion to move forward with analysis of delaying the 2nd quarter pollock opening until June 1, and to do it by whatever method is necessary to get it in place for 1993.
(This motion **passed 9-2**).

D-8 (B) BYCATCH MANAGEMENT

The AP requests that future presentations of salmon bycatch data include a breakdown of the "other salmon" category by individual species. This request was endorsed with no objection.
D-8 (B)(3)

The AP reviewed a request by AGDB concerning the overage policy on retainable bycatch trip limits. While the AP was not prepared to endorse this particular proposed solution it felt that this problem should be addressed, perhaps by a policy of mandatory forfeiture of such overages, and requests that the Council encourage NMFS to review this problem.

D-8 (E)

The AP **unanimously** endorsed the petition by the city of St. Paul to authorize independent research on the EBS pollock stocks.

D-8 (F) PERMIT REQUEST FOR EXPERIMENTAL FISHING

The AP recommends the Council review and endorse the Terra Marine proposal with the inclusion of:

1. Scientific data on salmon bycatch by accumulated (salmon origin, condition, etc.).
2. Halibut may be kept for processing only if classified as dead by the observer.
3. A comparable amount of normally discarded fish should be retained and processed.

(This motion **passed 8-4**).

D-9 STAFF TASKING

The AP **unanimously** recommends that the Council proceed with the analysis of seasonal allocations of Pacific cod in the BSAI.

The AP received a report on the status of the pollock roe retention regulation, and adopted the following motion:

The AP recommends that NMFS use 6% for pollock roe retention as measured against round weight equivalents of pollock.
(This motion **passed 7-2 with 1 abstention**).

Those in favor of this motion noted that during peak weeks of the roe season even shoreside roe recovery rates exceeded the 5% being proposed by NMFS. Those opposed to the motion felt 6% would allow "roe stripping" during periods of lesser recovery.

The AP requests the Council to review its policy on the plan amendment cycle, noting that several proposals to initiate plan amendments were presented even though no request for submission of proposals had been made. Many people in industry and the public at large refrained from submitting proposal which may have had equal or greater validity than those which were before us, based on their understanding that new proposals were not being accepted this cycle. The AP would prefer that the plan team and PAAG review and prioritize new proposal for plan amendments. The current apparent lack of a clear policy invites a situation in which the Council will be flooded with plan amendment proposals at every meeting.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
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Approved by _____
Date _____

ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21-24, 1992
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

The Advisory Panel for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met on September 21-24, 1992, at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. Members in attendance were:

John Bruce
Alvin Burch
Gary Cadd
Phil Chitwood
Dan Falvey
Dave Fraser, Vice Chair
Spike Jones
Kevin Kaldestad
David Little
Pete Maloney
Dean Paddock
Penny Pagels
Perfenia Pletnikoff
John Roos
John Sevier
Harold Sparck
Beth Stewart
John Woodruff, Chair
Robert Wurm

Approval of minutes for the August 1992 meeting has been delayed.

C-1 OBSERVER PROGRAM

The AP heard a staff report on the Draft EA/RIR and **unanimously** recommends that the Council send it out for public comment with the inclusion of a longline pilot program in alternative 4.

The AP also received an update on the status of the Research Plan especially related to its phase in.

C-2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council schedule teleconferences on CDQ proposals in concert with the governor's time frame and review. The AP also thinks summaries of CDQs should be submitted to the Council so that it would have the opportunity to make recommendations to the Secretary.

C-4 MARINE MAMMALS

The AP heard extensive presentations and reports from NMFS Scientists and others on the status of Steller sea lions and harbor seals.

In terms of new measures for 1993 relative to sea lions, the AP recommends the Council adopt alternative 1 of the Draft EA/RIR for Amendments 20/25. Further, the AP recommends the Council direct the Plan Team to develop a more comprehensive way to dealing with seasons, TACs, etc., with regard to marine mammals along the maritime mammal corridor. In making these recommendations, some AP members

feel frustration in that we are asked to make recommendations such as this with very little time to review and digest the data and potential options.

(This motion passes 12-6)

Those voting in favor of this motion cite these reasons;

- the proposed closure around Ugamak Island isn't an area where pollock are caught,
- the area around Ugamak has actually seen a double digit increase in animals in the last year,
- and the key harvest in the 10-20 mile proposed closure is Pacific cod; this fish is harvested on the bottom where sea lion pups do not feed and the bycatch of pollock is large fish anyway. To push this cod harvest into another area would exacerbate bycatch, CPUE, ground preemption, etc., problems elsewhere, without providing any benefit to the area vacated.

MINORITY REPORT

C-4 Marine Mammals

We, the undersigned members of the AP, support the more protective measures that aim to reverse the declining trend of the "threatened" Steller sea lion. We recognize that rookery and haulout sites provide critical habitat for this marine mammal and that these areas should be protected with proactive measures.

In our view, alternative 2 of the proposed EA/RIR/IRFA should be approved. This recommendation is consistent with the protective measures that were instituted in January of 1992. However, we also believe that those areas in the central Aleutians also warrant more protective measures. The central Aleutians index area denotes further decline of Steller sea lions, yet there has not been an effort to further consider protective measures for this species habitat.

We recommend more habitat considerations that reflect increased fishery activity that may occur during the Atka mackerel fishery and that may in turn effect Steller sea lion populations in this area.

Signed: John Bruce

Dan Falvey
Dean Paddock
Penny Pagels

C-5 HABITAT

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council support having EPA, the Coast Guard, and other appropriate agencies work closely with ADEC to develop minimum oil spill preparedness requirements and consider requiring fishing vessels over a certain size to obtain standby contracts for oil spill response.

In making this recommendation, the AP believes this is an area the Council doesn't belong in as the lead agency since it requires expertise well outside the business of fishing.

C-6 SABLEFISH AND HALIBUT IFQs

The AP received a staff report on the preliminary analysis of proposed amendments to the IFQ plan. The AP recommends the Council send out both the "Hegge" and "Sitka" block proposals and 1000 lbs. floor proposal for public review. (This motion **passes 10-1**)

The AP reviewed a request to initiate analysis of a proposal submitted by the Kodiak Borough for interim management of sablefish and halibut.
The AP endorses this request. (This motion **passes 9-2**)

D-3 (A,B) INITIAL GROUNDFISH SPECIFICATIONS FOR 1993

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council send the GOA SAFE document out for the public review period with appropriate editorial changes. The AP further recommends there be some discussion in the SAFE document of "other species" and that they be broken down by district.

The AP recommends the attached table of TACs go with the SAFE document for public comment.
(This motion **passed 16-3**)

In adopting the TACs listed, the AP follows the Plan Team's recommendations in all species except:

Pollock — The AP is aware of new information the Plan Team did not have when making their recommendation; we support the SSC recommendation.

Arrowtooth — The AP realizes that halibut bycatch will significantly restrain this fishery and since "other species" amounts are 5% of total TACs, we think this lower TAC notices the industry more correctly on the amount of "other species" that might be available.

POP/Shortraker/Rougheye

Many of the AP think these rockfish quotas should have a buffer between ABC and TAC and that exploitation of these rockfish should be conservative. Many question the veracity of the survey number since these species don't survey well. There were problems with these species in 1992 and the AP wants to assure the ABCs are not exceeded in 1993. Further, we think that, unlike many shorter lived species, uncaught rockfish will be available in future fishing years and therefore urge conservative TACs.

Demersal Shelf Rockfish

The AP is concerned about the differences between Plan Team and SSC on the definition of overfishing. If the overfishing level is in fact 800 mt, the TAC should be well under that number.

The AP further recommends that for this public comment period, the halibut PSC releases for 1993 be the same as the accrual releases in 1992 both in amount and over time. The AP is aware that there is new information on bycatch mortality coming in November and the industry should be on notice of this.

(This motion **passed unanimously**)

GULF OF ALASKA GROUNDFISH

1993 Plan Team, SSC, and AP recommendations and apportionments (metric tons)

22-Sep-92

		1992			Plan Team	SSC	Advisory Panel	
Species	Area	ABC	TAC	Catch**	ABC - 1993	ABC - 1993	TAC	DAP
Pollock	W/C	96,000	84,000	65,528	64,000	111,000	111,000	
	Shelikof *	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	
	E	3,400	3,400	62	3,400	3,400	3,400	
	Total	99,400	87,400	65,590	67,400	114,400	114,400	
Pacific Cod	W	23,500	23,500	34,007	18,700	18,700	18,700	
	C	39,000	39,000	34,753	35,200	35,200	35,200	
	E	1,000	1,000	418	2,800	2,800	2,800	
	Total	63,500	63,500	69,178	56,700	56,700	56,700	
Flatfish, Deep	W	1,740	1,740	120	2,020	2,020	2,020	
	C	33,550	15,000	7,022	35,580	35,580	35,580	
	E	3,990	3,000	66	7,930	7,930	7,930	
	Total	39,280	19,740	7,208	45,530	45,530	45,530	
Flathead sole	W	12580	2000	295	12,580	12,580	12,580	
	C	31,990	5,000	1,308	31,830	31,830	31,830	
	E	3,710	3,000	0	5,040	5,040	5,040	
	Total	48,280	10,000	1,603	49,450	49,450	49,450	
Flatfish, Shallow	W	27,480	3,000	1,630	27,480	27,480	27,480	
	C	21,260	7,000	3,068	21,260	21,260	21,260	
	E	1,740	1,740	1	1,740	1,740	1,740	
	Total	50,480	11,740	4,699	50,480	50,480	50,480	
Arrowtooth	W	38,880	5,000	940	38,880	38,880	5,000	
	C	253,320	15,000	10,429	253,330	253,330	15,000	
	E	11,680	5,000	911	29,080	29,080	5,000	
	Total	303,880	25,000	12,280	321,290	321,290	25,000	
Sablefish	W	2,500	2,500	1,884	2,500	2,500	2,500	
	C	9,570	9,570	8,674	9,570	9,570	9,570	
	W. Yakutat	3,740	3,740	4,072	3,740	3,740	3,740	
	E. Yak./S.E. Out.	4,990	4,990	4,578	4,990	4,990	4,990	
	Total	20,800	20,800	19,208	20,800	20,800	20,800	
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	1,620	1,470	1,248	800	1,620	720	
	C	1,720	1,561	2,325	1,230	1,720	1,107	
	E	2,390	2,169	2,255	2,690	2,390	2,421	
	Total	5,730	5,200	5,828	4,720	5,730	4,248	
Shortraker/Rougheye	W	100	100	88	100	100	90	
	C	1,290	1,290	1,260	1,290	1,290	1,161	
	E	570	570	640	570	570	513	
	Total	1,960	1,960	1,988	1,960	1,960	1,764	
Other Slope	W	1,390	1,390	1,166	1,390	1,390	1,390	
	C	6,510	6,510	3,539	6,510	6,510	6,510	
	E	6,160	6,160	487	6,160	6,160	6,160	
	Total	14,060	14,060	5,192	14,060	14,060	14,060	
Rockfish	W	1,212	1,212	73	1,210	1,210	1,210	
(Pelagic Shelf)	C	4,393	4,393	1,604	4,400	4,400	4,400	
	E	1,281	1,281	617	1,280	1,280	1,280	
	Total	6,886	6,886	2,294	6,890	6,890	6,890	
Rockfish (Demersal Shelf)	S.E. Out.	550	550	459	800	800	720	
Thornyhead	G W	1,798	1,798	1,527	1,500	1,834	1,500	
Other Species	G W	0	20,432	15,742	0	0	19,577	
GULF OF ALASKA TOTAL		656,604	289,066	212,796	641,580	689,924	411,119	

* Eliminated beginning in 1992

** Catch through August 23, 1992

The AP recommends that NMFS initially designate GOA Pacific ocean perch and shortraker/rougheye as bycatch species. Should NMFS subsequently determine the TAC of these species in any area is sufficient to provide for bycatch needs in all fisheries plus a directed fishery, the designation in the appropriate area should be changed to directed fishing. The AP recommends that any directed fishery for these species be held to an amount that when added to bycatch does not exceed the TAC. To the extent possible, directed fishing for these species should occur during the third quarter when halibut bycatch would be at a minimum.

As a further comment to the Council, the AP sees black rockfish as a specie that is at risk of over exploitation. The AP heard of developing fisheries/markets for this specie and thinks the Council should direct NMFS to look at separating it from the rest of the pelagic shelf species.

D-3 (C,D,E) INITIAL GROUNDFISH SPECIFICATIONS FOR 1993

The AP heard staff and NMFS reports on the BSAI SAFE document. The AP **unanimously** recommends the BSAI SAFE document go out for public review. It further recommends that the document be amended to include 1992 salmon bycatch rates broken down by specie as much as the data allows.

The AP **unanimously** recommends the attached table of TACs for the public comment period with the following caveats:

1. Rockfish and Atka mackerel harvests should be split in terms of geographical area.
2. The split line for Atka mackerel should be 178° W.
3. If there is no geographical division of catches, the TAC for Atka mackerel should be 32,000 mt.

Pollock Seasons

The AP recommends the Council for purposes of public comment apportion 30% of the ITAC to the pollock "A" season.

(This motion **passed 11-7**)

Those voting in favor of this motion cite that:

1. this may allow for some sea lion protection,
2. this proposed apportionment will generate plenty of public comment,
3. and salmon bycatch in the "A" season is higher than in the "B" season.

PSC Apportionments

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council adopt the attached table of PSC apportionments for the public comment period. It notes that:

1. halibut bycatch mortality numbers may be changed in November 1992 and that we will go to a mortality based count if Amendment 21 is approved,
2. and the herring number is based on 1% of the EBS herring biomass estimate and, therefore, will very likely change in 1993.

VIP Rates

The AP recommends these rates be developed at the December meeting, similar to last year and that after this meeting the Regional Director use his authority to adjust these rates prior to the start of the 1993 trawl season.

(This motion **passed 14-1**)

Additional Recommendations

The AP suggests the Council request that NMFS expand its dedication of manpower and funding to increase its investigation of interspecific relationships between marine species and environmental conditions that influence productivity and recruitment in the Bering Sea fisheries.

The AP further recommends that the fisheries science section of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center undergo independent peer review of its field science modeling program as does the marine mammal lab.

The AP is very concerned that the apparent health of individual fish species may not reflect the health of the Bering Sea ecosystem as a whole, noting increased problems with populations of marine mammals and piscivorous seabirds for unknown reasons.

The AP requests the Council set up a meeting in November in Anchorage to have ADF&G, NMFS, and any other appropriate agencies conduct a public workshop on salmon bycatch data for the BSAI area, and whether a regulatory or plan amendment will be pursued in 1993 to limit salmon bycatch.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish

1993 Plan Team, SSC, AP and Council Recommendations and Approtionments (mt)

Species	Area / Seasons	Council ABC 1992	Plan Team ABC 1993	SSC ABC 1993	Advisory Pannel TAC 1993	Advisory Pannel ITAC 1993	Council TAC 1993	Council ITAC 1993
Pollock	EBS	1,490,000	1,690,000	1,690,000	1,300,000	1,105,000		
	Roe (1/20-4/15)				30%	331,500		
	Non-Roe (6/1-12/31)				70%	773,500		
	AL	51,600	67,000	67,000	51,600	43,860		
	518	25,000	142,000	33,000	1,000	850		
Pacific Cod		182,000	178,000	178,000	178,000	151,300		
Yellowfin sole		372,000	372,000	372,000	200,000	170,000		
Greenland turbot		7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	5,950		
Arrowtooth flounder		82,300	68,000	68,000	10,000	8,500		
Rock sole		260,800	311,000	311,000	75,000	63,750		
Other flatfish		199,600	226,000	226,000	79,000	67,150		
Sablefish	EBS	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,190		
	AL	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,550		
POP complex								
True POP	EBS	3,540	2,100	3,540	2,100	1,785		
Other POP Complex	EBS	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,190		
True POP	AL	11,700	14,800	11,700	11,700	9,945		
Sharp/Northern	AL	5,670	5,670	5,670	5,670	4,820		
Short/Rougheye	AL	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,037		
Other rockfish	EBS	400	400	400	400	340		
	AL	925	925	925	925	786		
Atka mackerel	BS/AI	43,000	351,000	32,100	32,000	27,200		
Notes: 1) If there is a plan amendment to separate the AI into E.AI and W.AI then SSC recommends the ABC= 117,100 with 70% (85,000) in the W..AI. 2) If the AI is split then the AP recommends the total TAC=43,000.								
Squid		3,600	3,400	3,400	2,000	1,700		
Other Species		27,200	26,600	26,600	20,000	17,000		
BS/AI TOTAL		**2,773,355**	**3,472,915**	**3,043,355**	**1,983,415**	**1,685,903**		

AP recommended 1993 Preliminary PSC Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Fisheries

Fishery Group	Halibut, Primary (mt)	Halibut, Secondary (mt)	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab Zone1	C. bairdi Zone1	C. bairdi Zone2
Yellowfin sole	743	849	391	75,000	100,000	1,225,000
May 1 - Aug. 2		424				
Aug. 3 - Dec. 31		425				
Rocksole/other flatfish	660	755	0	85,000	700,000	300,000
Jan. 1 - Mar. 29		566				
Mar. 30 - June 28		95				
June 29 - Sept. 27		94				
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31		0				
Rockfish	175	200	10	0	0	50,000
Jan. 1 - Mar. 29		20				
Mar. 30 - June 28		60				
June 29 - Sept. 27		120				
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Pacific cod	1,343	1,537	29	10,000	75,000	712,500
Jan. 1 - June 28		1,301				
June 29 - Sept 27		236				
Sept. 28 - Dec. 31		remainder				
Pollock/mackerel/"o. species"	1,479	1,692	210	30,000	125,000	712,500
Jan. 1 - April 15		1,221				
April 16 - May 31		0				
June 1 - Dec. 31		471				
7 MW Pollock (Herring)	n/a	n/a	1,668	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	4,400	5,033	2,308	200,000	1,000,000	3,000,000

Sept. 24, 1992

D-4 GROUNDFISH PLAN AMENDMENTS - FINAL REVIEW

The AP heard a staff report, received Rockfish Committee minutes and took public testimony on this agenda item. After much discussion and debate, the AP recommends the Council adopt the suggested compromise action as follows:

1. ABCs AND TAC. Continued conservative management of Southeast rockfish stocks and fishing quotas. For the next 5 years annual TACs should be set at 10% below the ABC for all Southeast rockfish species.

2. Recommendations for current Eastern Gulf of Alaska rockfish quota management:

   a) Shortraker/rougheye will be designated bycatch only in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska for 1993.
   b) POP and other slope rockfish will be managed as a target fishery in the Eastern Gulf. Other slope rockfish in the Eastern Gulf will close when/if bycatch of Demersal shelf rockfish reaches 25 metric tons.
   c) 1% bycatch retention limit for Demersal Shelf Rockfish will continue to apply for trawl gear.

3. Improved Survey Techniques. Design and implementation of improved rockfish survey techniques to limit the apparent overestimation and underestimation which present surveys produce. Rockfish fishing is a specialized activity and industry input into rockfish survey systems should be considered.

4. Effort Limitation Program/Initial Industry Development. Implementation of an industry committee incorporating staff support to design and recommend within one year, an effort limitation program for all rockfish gear groups currently harvesting rockfish in Southeast Alaska. The Council is encouraged to designate and announce a December, 1992 date for cut-off for all gear groups of new entrants into Southeast Alaska rockfish fisheries.

5. Habitat Definition. Request NMFS to implement a program which will accomplish the following by 19__:

   a) Conduct a comprehensive survey to record all coral habitat in the Gulf of Alaska. (Availability of new was noted).
   b) Task a scientific team to identify and designate coral and other benthic habitat critical for continuing recruitment of rockfish stocks and maintenance of a generally healthy ecosystem within Southeast Alaska. This team should define isolated areas suitable for future fishing gear impact studies for all gear types harvesting rockfish.

6. Improve Rockfish Fishery and Coral Impact Data. Expand the current rockfish fishery data collection system to provide accurate and timely data of all rockfish harvest, bycatch, and discard activity. The expanded data system should cover all gear groups harvesting rockfish in the Southeast. Vessel participation in expanded at-sea observer coverage data collection, check-in/check-out procedures, and logbooks requirements specifically designed to record coral removals should be required as a precondition to rockfish fishing within Southeast Alaska.

7. Establish a Rockfish Gear Conflict Committee. A gear conflict committee should be constituted by two representatives from all gear groups harvesting rockfish in Southeast Alaska. The purpose of a Rockfish Industry Gear Conflict Committee is implementation of an efficient communication and cooperation system on the fishing grounds between gear groups. The system should be capable of receiving and arbitrating complaints of gear conflicts. The Committee objective is to minimize actual gear conflicts between gear groups and keep gear dispute resolution within the industry.

Those voting in favor of this motion cite the follow rationale:

1. The gear conflict issue is moot due mostly to the July 1st rockfish opening for trawlers.
2. The main species the trawl fleet is targeting, Pacific ocean perch, is not taken by the longline fleet.
3. Closing East of 140° would simply put all of the East Gulf effort into the 140-147° area and exacerbate the problems there. It would lead to higher bycatches, lower CPUEs and potentially more damage to the habitat (if you think it occurs).
4. Marine mammals do not feed on POP and other rockfish.
5. All fishermen (all gear types) avoid coral; it destroys gear.
6. The current trawl fleet working East of 140° is 100% observed.

The AP further endorses and encourages the continuation of the Rockfish Scientific Committee to explore many of the items above and especially stock assessment and habitat.

(This motion **passed 9-4**).

MINORITY REPORT

D-4 Groundfish Plan Amendments

We, the undersigned members of the AP, do not support the AP recommendation on Amendment 26 to the FMP for the Gulf of Alaska.

This recommendation does not, in any effective way, address the present concerns about habitat degradation and depleted rockfish stocks in the area of the Eastern Gulf.

We propose putting all slope rockfish species on "bycatch only" status to all gear groups to promote stock rebuilding, and closing the Southeast outside area to trawling to protect habitat.

The information in the supplemental information supports the need for these measures. From the New Zealand study on trawl impacts: "The heavier the gear in contact with the seabed, the greater the damage. The effects vary depending on amount of gear in contact with the bottom, together with the depth and nature of seabed." The study also notes that, "where macrobenthos is substantially removed and if recovery is not permitted, the change is permanent."

From the Van Dolan study in Amendment I to the snapper grouper plan: "A live bottom area may be trawled through over and over, and habitat damage would be expected to be much greater than described in the study."

Additionally, because rockfish species are associated with coral habitat, destruction to coral may have an adverse effect on these species' recovery. Coral exhibit extremely slow growth rates of approximately 1 cm/yr.

Although there is some evidence that longline gear can also impact habitat, the magnitude of these impacts is not comparable to bottom trawl gear.

Protective management measures are required to aid in the recovery of Pacific ocean perch. This population has not yet rebounded from the effects of overfishing. Because approximately 12% of the POP population is older than 15 years of age, we recommend rebuilding strategies that address both habitat protection and limited directed fisheries on this largely juvenile population.

We are also concerned about adequate data collection on the impacts of habitat destruction and information that includes the status of these rockfish stocks. We strongly endorse further study, but further study alone does not address all of our concerns.

Signed: Penny Pagels
Dan Falvey
Robert Wurm

D-5 (A) PRIBILOF ISLAND TRAWL CLOSURE

The AP recommends the Draft EA/RIR be sent out for public comment once the following information is added to it:

1. Expansion of the red-legged kittiwake habitat issues.
2. Some development of where the displaced fleet might go (especially with regards to the pollock fillet fleet).
3. Groundfish catch from the last few years from the proposed closed areas (including average length frequency data on rock sole and pollock).
4. Crab distribution in the proposed closed areas and assurance that the king crab bycatch rates in the document are blue crab only.
   (This motion **passed 17-2).**

The AP believes there are currently some serious deficiencies that should and can be corrected prior to public review. It also believes this Amendment should stay on track.

D-5 (B) POLLOCK "B" SEASON DELAY/EXCLUSIVE REGISTRATION AREAS

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council send the Draft EA/RIR for the Pollock "B" Season and Exclusive Registration out for public comment after these pieces of the document have been amplified:

1. The document should focus some on the impacts on fishermen in fisheries the delayed pollock fishermen might go into (i.e., yellowfin sole: What are the impacts on these guys?).
2. The "estimated net benefits of exclusive registration" table needs more explanation so it can be more easily understood.
3. Recovery rates/yields should be supplemented with any available observer data, especially as it relates to when rates increase.
4. Herring bycatch should be developed considering enactment of a CVOA.
5. The impact on the existing salmon industry and new entrants into processing should be more clearly defined (realizing that in indepth examination of this is not possible).

D-5 (C) PREFERENTIAL ALLOCATION OF PACIFIC COD

The AP recommends the Council wait to send this document out for public comment until the expected changes in the document occur and can be massaged into the draft.

In making this recommendation, the AP realizes this delay sets back any allocation plan. However, this plan would not be in effect until mid-1993 in any case.

D-6 (A) FIXED GEAR HALIBUT PSC IN BSAI FOR 1993

The AP recommends the Council adopt 900 mt as the fixed gear halibut PSC cap for BSAI fisheries. (This motion **passed 11-2).** The AP further recommends that pot gear be exempted from this cap and that the Council encourage IPHC and NMFS to pursue implementation of any careful release techniques that reduce bycatch mortality.

As part of this motion, the AP realizes that a three-month summer closure of Pacific cod longline fishing could significantly reduce the total halibut bycatch mortality.

The AP recommends a seasonal percent split of longline halibut PSC as follows:

Jan. 1 - May 14	65%
May 15 - Aug. 31	10%
Sept. 1 - END	25%

D-6 (B) PERFORMANCE-BASED PELAGIC TRAWL DEFINITION

The AP recommends the Council adopt alternative 3, option #2, with a performance standard of 1 crab per haul.

The AP also recommends the Council request NMFS to bring enforcement standards back to the Council in December, working with industry and scientists to determine enforcement guidelines to ensure that regurgitated crab are not counted as a violation and determine how many crabs would trigger and enforcement action.

(This motion **passed 15-1**).

D-6 (C) HOOK AND LINE LONGLINE FAIR START

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council adopt the 72 hour fair start provision.

D-6 (D) GANGION-CUTTING PROVISIONS

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council to proceed post haste with mandatory requirements for careful release of halibut.

D-7 (A) PSC ALLOWANCES FOR INSHORE-OFFSHORE & CDQ POLLOCK FISHERIES

The AP **unanimously** recommends the Council send the EA/RIR out for public comment when the document is complete. Further, the AP recommends king salmon and other salmon bycatch data be updated for 1992, with a breakout of other salmon by species.

D-7 (B) LEGAL GEAR DEFINITION

The AP **unanimously** recommends that NMFS proceed with this regulatory amendment.

D-7 (C) TOTAL CATCH MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE

The AP received a report on the status of development of regulations requiring weighing of groundfish at sea, and adopted the following motion:

The AP is dissatisfied with the progress of NMFS in implementing regulations to require the weighing of groundfish. Whereas volumetric estimates are a step in the right direction, this is no different than what is already implemented when NMFS observers make catch estimates. The regulation to require marking bin heights to make volumetric estimates does not fulfill the regulation to require actual weighing of groundfish. Accuracy is more important than cost and NMFS should not consider cost in developing such regulation, as industry should accept it as a cost of doing business.

(This motion **passed 7-0 with 3 abstentions**).

Those in favor of the motion believe this is critical to sound fisheries management.
Those abstaining agree that it is important to implement regulations to get accurate determination of groundfish weights but felt that volumetrics were a valid method for making such determinations, and that cost should be weighed against the degree of precision desired.

D-7 (E) GOA 2ND QUARTER POLLOCK OPENING

The AP adopted a motion to move forward with analysis of delaying the 2nd quarter pollock opening until June 1, and to do it by whatever method is necessary to get it in place for 1993.
(This motion **passed 9-2**).

D-8 (B) BYCATCH MANAGEMENT

The AP requests that future presentations of salmon bycatch data include a breakdown of the "other salmon" category by individual species. This request was endorsed with no objection.

D-8 (B)(3)

The AP reviewed a request by AGDB concerning the overage policy on retainable bycatch trip limits. While the AP was not prepared to endorse this particular proposed solution it felt that this problem should be addressed, perhaps by a policy of mandatory forfeiture of such overages, and requests that the Council encourage NMFS to review this problem.

D-8 (E)

The AP **unanimously** endorsed the petition by the city of St. Paul to authorize independent research on the EBS pollock stocks.

D-8 (F) PERMIT REQUEST FOR EXPERIMENTAL FISHING

The AP recommends the Council review and endorse the Terra Marine proposal with the inclusion of:

1. Scientific data on salmon bycatch by accumulated (salmon origin, condition, etc.).
2. Halibut may be kept for processing only if classified as dead by the observer.
3. A comparable amount of normally discarded fish should be retained and processed.

(This motion **passed 8-4**).

D-9 STAFF TASKING

The AP **unanimously** recommends that the Council proceed with the analysis of seasonal allocations of Pacific cod in the BSAI.

The AP received a report on the status of the pollock roe retention regulation, and adopted the following motion:

The AP recommends that NMFS use 6% for pollock roe retention as measured against round weight equivalents of pollock.
(This motion **passed 7-2 with 1 abstention**).

Those in favor of this motion noted that during peak weeks of the roe season even shoreside roe recovery rates exceeded the 5% being proposed by NMFS. Those opposed to the motion felt 6% would allow "roe stripping" during periods of lesser recovery.

The AP requests the Council to review its policy on the plan amendment cycle, noting that several proposals to initiate plan amendments were presented even though no request for submission of proposals had been made. Many people in industry and the public at large refrained from submitting proposal which may have had equal or greater validity than those which were before us, based on their understanding that new proposals were not being accepted this cycle. The AP would prefer that the plan team and PAAG review and prioritize new proposal for plan amendments. The current apparent lack of a clear policy invites a situation in which the Council will be flooded with plan amendment proposals at every meeting.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
Clarence G. Pautzke, Executive Director

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Certified: _____
Date: 12/1/92

MINUTES
Scientific Statistical Committee
September 21-24, 1992
Anchorage, Alaska

The Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met September 21-24, 1992 at the Hilton Hotel. All members except John Burns, Gordon Kruse and Dan Huppert, were present, namely:

Bill Clark, Chair
Larry Hreha
Richard Marasco
Jack Tagart
Don Rosenberg
Bill Aron
Terry Quinn, Vice Chair
Phil Rigby (alternate-Kruse)
Al Tyler (alternate-Quinn)
Doug Eggers
Marc Miller

C-4 MARINE MAMMALS

The SSC heard reports by Ferrero (AFSC) on harbor seal population status, Merrick (AFSC) on results of 1992 Steller sea lion population estimates, Trites (UBC) on a historical review of Steller sea lion population status, and Mello (NMFS-AK Region) on a regulatory amendment to Amendment 25 to the Gulf of Alaska groundfish management plan and Amendment 20 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island groundfish plan proposing expansion of the groundfish trawling prohibition zone around Ugamak Island's Steller sea lion rookery.

Ferrero briefly outlined the contents of a draft report on harbor seal population status and summarized current NMFS survey results. The report, which will be issued shortly, indicates high variability in local population trends across regions, with healthy stocks in Bristol Bay and the north side of the Alaska Peninsula and declines in the Gulf of Alaska populations, particularly in the Tugidak Island area and Prince William Sound. It is anticipated that additional surveys will be conducted in Southeast Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

Merrick's report indicated a continuing overall decline in the Steller sea lion population of about 5% in the past year. Local population status was variable with largest declines in the Eastern Gulf and Central Aleutians and increases in the Eastern and Western Aleutians. Overall pup counts also

declined, but this decline is largely driven by the pup counts of the Central Gulf which fell 29.2% since 1989-90, while pup counts during this period increased in all other areas from 9.3-15.1%.

Merrick also reported the latest findings on pup behavior indicating that they feed primarily in the upper 30m and within 20 miles of the rookeries.

Trites reported on his study, co-authored with Peter Larkin, which examined historic population trends of the Steller sea lion. The report essentially confirms the declines during the decade of the 80's and that the cause of these declines is uncertain. The study also contains recommendations for additional research, particularly long-term research on ecosystem dynamics. The report recommends continuing prudent restraints on fisheries as suggested by the sea lion recovery team and NMFS.

Mello discussed the proposed regulatory amendment to expand the groundfish trawling prohibition zone around the Ugamak Island sea lion rookery. The SSC concurs with the draft EA/RIR statement that

> "the 20 nm closure around Ugamak Island, in conjunction with the closures around Akun and Akutan Islands, would create a large contiguous area where groundfish trawling could not occur. Data from sea lion tracking studies and fish surveys indicate that this region is probably an important feeding area for Steller sea lions in the eastern Aleutian Islands, particularly for juveniles whose foraging depth range and prey appear more limited than adults. Most trips by juvenile animals tagged in the eastern Aleutian Islands in the winter of 1992 were within the boundaries of this zone. Preliminary data from winter 1992 NMFS hydroacoustic surveys indicate that there were dense, mid-water aggregations of small pollock in this region. Conversely, pollock aggregations east of 164° 45'W on the shelf and in the Basin waters surrounding Bogoslof Island were generally comprised of large fish, oriented on or near the bottom. Presumably, smaller, mid-water fish provide a more attainable food source for young sea lions.
>
> The proposed closed area will further reduce the amount of fish, including bycatch, harvested from an area that appears to be particularly important for Steller sea lion foraging. Although there are no data that elucidate the effects of commercial fishing, if any, on the Steller sea lion's ability to obtain adequate food, decreased fishing effort may improve sea lion foraging success and will reduce negative interactions between sea lions and fishing vessels/gear. Increased juvenile survival may be attained, which would aid recovery of the species."

The SSC noted that over 25% of the GOA Pacific cod TAC came from the proposed no-trawl zone during the first quarter of 1992. The proposed amendment does not discuss why this cod fishery could not be allowed. We were informed that this fishery is an on-bottom trawl fishery and was below the foraging depth of juvenile sea lions. This SSC was informed that allowing the cod trawl fishery would present an enforcement problem.

C-7 COMPREHENSIVE RATIONALIZATION

The SSC considered a set of proposals from the Executive Director for expediting the development of the comprehensive rationalization program for all groundfish and crab fisheries, and reviewed the paper prepared by Russell Harding. We strongly support the development of a new fishery management system, and we agree that the analytical work should begin as soon as possible. However, we expect the analysis will be a major undertaking. The Council must select a limited number of

well-defined alternatives before it will be productive to form focus groups to design the analysis and to begin the gathering data process. The best way to start the process may be for the Council to set out the objectives it wants to achieve by adopting a new management system, or a list of problems it wishes to solve, or a set of criteria by which it would judge different regimes.

C-8 ABC/OVERFISHING REDEFINITION

Since July, when the SSC submitted a plan amendment proposal for redefining ABC and the overfishing level (OFL), two substantive and constructive responses have been received. Pamela Mace, a scientist working on fishing mortality levels, had several suggestions, including not abandoning F_{msy} and frameworking the minimum percentage of spawning stock biomass per recruit. The Plan Teams also provided a response with several good suggestions, including a modified set of definitions. Bill Clark will attempt to merge the SSC and Plan Team versions and to incorporate Mace's comments into a new draft which will be sent to the Teams in time for their November meeting. The SSC will then consider final action in either December or January.

D-3 GROUNDFISH SPECIFICATIONS

The SSC reviewed the SAFE reports and the Team's recommendations. For the great majority of stocks the SSC endorses the Team's recommendation. For most stocks OFL exceeds ABC, but the two coincide for Basin pollock, rock sole, all BS/AI rockfish, and Gulf POP.

Gulf of Alaska - Regional ABC and OFL

For Gulf of Alaska stocks, the SSC recommends that ABC be distributed regionally in proportion to abundance, but that OFL be set Gulf-wide except where there is evidence of stock separation for any species. Some stocks, particularly rockfish, appear to have low mixing rates and would be subject to local depletion if ABC's are not distributed regionally.

Gulf of Alaska - Pollock

The SSC received a supplementary report on the status of Gulf of Alaska walleye pollock in which stock biomass was estimated using the stock synthesis model after incorporating data from the 1992 NMFS GOA hydroacoustic survey. The SSC expressed concern that Model E may be overparameterized, particularly with respect to fishery selectivity, and requests that the analysts provide a more extensive discussion of this issue for the December SAFE. Consequently, the SSC supports a range of biomass estimates as reported in the supplementary analysis (models G and E, 0.701-1.112 million t) and therefore recommends an ABC range of 70,000 to 111,000 t based on an annual 10% exploitation strategy (F=0.12). Overfishing is defined as the rate of exploitation which drives spawning biomass per recruit to 30% of the unfished level and is estimated to be F_{OF}=0.283. Since F_{OF} is much greater than the suggested harvest rate, the recommended ABC is well below the overfishing level. The SSC estimates the OFL (163,200 to 258,800 t) using simple ratio expansion of OFL/ABC from the SAFE document (156,880/67,400), times the mid-year biomass from the supplemental analysis.

Finally, the SSC wishes to advise the Council that Gulf pollock exploitation rates are being examined by the stock assessment analysts who are presenting a paper for peer review at an upcomming

symposium. This paper will be available to the Plan Team for their consideration in preparation of ABC recommendations for the December SAFE.

Gulf of Alaska - Pacific Cod

The SSC agrees with the Team's specification of ABC and overfishing limit for Pacific cod. ABC (50,00 mt) was calculated by applying the $F_{0.1}$ rate (0.177) to the projected 1993 exploitable biomass (324,000 mt) estimate by SRA fitted to the 1984, 1987 and 1990 bottom trawl survey results. The overfishing limit (78,100 mt) was calculated by applying the $F_{30\%}$ rate (0.245) to the 1993 exploitable biomass.

Gulf of Alaska - Flatfish

Flatfish stocks in the Gulf of Alaska are at high levels and generally stable, excepting arrowtooth flounder which is increasing. The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's determinations of ABC which used methods consistent with last year's determinations. Some biomass estimates have been updated for this year after the 1990 trawl survey results were re-edited. Biomass is estimated directly from the 1990 trawl survey, except for the deeper dwelling Dover sole for which 1987 survey estimates were used for depths between 500m and 1000m. The $F_{0.1}$ exploitation rate was used to calculate the 1993 ABC, and the overfishing level was set at $F_{30\%}$.

The 1993 ABCs are :	deepwater flatfish	- 45,530 mt;
	shallow water flatfish	- 50,480 mt;
	flathead sole	- 49,450 mt;
	arrowtooth flounder	- 321,290 mt.

These ABCs represent increases from 1992 for deepwater flatfish, flathead sole, and arrowtooth flounder.

Gulf of Alaska - Sablefish

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team's recommended ABC. Sablefish biomass was estimated using an SRA model adjusted by relative population weights from longline surveys scaled to trawl survey biomass. The method is identical to that used in 1991. Estimated biomass is 178,700 mt. The preferred fishing mortality rate is calculated using the $F_{0.1}$ strategy and is estimated to be 0.13. ABC is computed to be 20,800 mt. The overfishing level (28,200 mt) is derived from the fishing mortality that drives spawning biomass per recruit to 30% of the unfished spawning biomass (F_{OF}=0.18).

Gulf of Alaska - Slope Rockfish - POP

The SSC commends AFSC scientists for using stock synthesis and believes that this will be the technique of choice for future assessments. The SSC has asked Team and Center scientists to examine inconsistencies in both the survey and stock synthesis biomass estimates. Specifically, we recommend: (1) an analysis to determine if new fishing power correction factors will change survey biomass estimates, (2) examination of fishery data to determine if it can be integrated into the analysis, and (3) further examination of the inconsistencies in the various biomass estimates. In the meantime, the SSC recommends that the preliminary ABC be determined using the 1991 procedure. This estimate was developed by applying F=M=0.05 to the average of the 1987 and 1990 survey biomass estimates (229,100 mt) and applying the overfishing definition. As last year, the ABC should

be distributed among the three management areas in the following manner: Western - 1,620 mt, Central - 1,720 mt, and Eastern - 2,390 mt.

Gulf of Alaska - Shortraker/Rougheye

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendation that the ABC for these two species should be set at the 1992 level, 1,260 mt. This ABC was obtained by applying the appropriate natural mortality for each of these species (0.03 for shortraker and 0.025 for rougheye) to the respective average 1987/1990 survey biomass (28,493 mt - shortraker and 44,469 mt - rougheye). Based on results of the 1987 and 1990 trawl surveys, the ABC should be distributed among regulatory areas in the following manner: 5.3% in the Western area (100 mt), 65.5% in the Central area (1,290 mt) and 29.1% in the Eastern area (570 mt). The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendation that $F_{30\%}$ (0.046) and F=M be used to define overfishing (2,900 mt) for rougheye and shortraker, respectively.

Gulf of Alaska - Other Slope Rockfish

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendation that the ABC for this group of rockfish be set at last year's level (14,060 mt). This value was obtained by applying estimates of natural mortality (northern - 0.06, sharpchin - 0.05, redstripe - 0.10, silvergray - 0.04, harlequin - 0.06, and others - 0.06) to the average of the 1987/1990 survey biomass estimates (northern - 96,071 mt, sharpchin - 51,768 mt redstripe - 23,096 mt, silvergray - 8,697 mt, harlequin - 49,386 mt, and others - 1,459 mt). The regional distribution of the proposed ABC is 1,390 mt for the Western, 6,510 mt for the Central, and 6,160 mt for the Eastern areas. As last year, the SSC recommends that overfishing be set at the $F_{30\%}$ levels of 0.113 for northern and 0.08 for sharpchin rockfish, and F=M for other species. The resulting overfishing level is 20,706 mt for this group of rockfish.

Gulf of Alaska - Pelagic Shelf Rockfish

The SSC concurs with the Team's recommendation that the ABC for pelagic shelf rockfish be set at the 1992 level, 6,890 mt. This ABC was calculated by determining the average survey biomass for 1984, 1987, and 1990. To get around the lack of 1984 survey biomass estimates for black, widow, and blue rockfish, the assessment used the 1987/1990 average for the missing data point. The 6,890 mt ABC was obtained by applying F=M=0.09 (M for dusky rockfish)to the exploitable biomass of 76,501 mt. The SSC agrees with the Team that overfishing be determined by applying $F_{30\%}$ for dusky rockfish (11,500 mt).

Gulf of Alaska - Demeral Shelf Rockfish

The SSC supports the Team's recommended ABC for this complex, 801 mt. This value was obtained by applying F=M=0.02, the natural mortality for yelloweye rockfish, to the lower 90% confidence limit of the biomass estimate obtained from line transect data. Because yelloweye rockfish dominate both target landings and bycatch of the DSR complex, a decision was made by those responsible for conducting the assessment to use it for calculating ABC. The SSC suggests that the line transect data be examined to determine if usable density estimates for the other seven species are possible. Alternatively, the SSC would like the Team to explore other techniques to estimate the biomass of species other than yelloweye in this complex.

The catch level that would constitute overfishing was determined in the SAFE by applying F=M=0.02 to the estimated (midpoint) biomass for yelloweye rockfish (48,366 mt). The SSC believes that the overfishing cap should be determined by applying the appropriate exploitation rate

to the best estimate of current exploitable biomass. Since the Team used the lower 90% confidence limit of the estimated yelloweye biomass estimate to calculate ABC, the SSC interpreted it to be the best estimate of current biomass. Further, since the Council's overfishing definition requires that $F_{30\%}$ be used when it is available, the SSC recommends that overfishing for this complex be defined as 0.04*40,049 mt = 1600 mt. Bycatch of DSR taken in the halibut fishery will be counted against the TAC for DSR.

Gulf of Alaska - Thornyheads

The 1990 estimated survey biomass for thornyheads was reported to be 26,207 mt, with a 90% confidence interval of 21,411 mt to 31,003 mt. This represents a revision of the estimate used last year, 25,697 mt. The Team used the lower end of the 90% confidence interval as an estimate of the 1993 biomass because of uncertainties associated with abundance estimates. Sources of uncertainty included: (1) the downward and upward trends in the abundance indexes for the cooperative and domestic longline surveys, respectively, for 1988-1991, (2) large declines in bottom trawl survey CPUEs between 1987 and 1990, and (3) length frequency distributions for the bottom trawl surveys that do not indicate any incoming year classes. While recognizing uncertainties associated with biomass estimates, the SSC believes that the point estimate represents the best estimate of biomass. Therefore, the SSC recommends that the ABC be set at 1,830 mt (F=M=0.07* 26,207 mt). The SSC suggests that as last year, $F_{30\%}$=0.095 be used to determine the overfishing catch level, 2,490 mt.

Gulf of Alaska - Other Species

The TAC for other species is determined as 5% of the sum of the TACs for target species. The SSC recommends that this TAC be allocated to management areas based upon recent catch levels. The intent of this recommendation is to prevent Atka mackerel catches in the western Gulf from precluding miscellaneous fisheries for other species such as octopus in the central and eastern Gulf. The SSC recommends that the Council consider the reestablishment of an ABC for Atka mackerel in the Gulf.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Pollock

Eastern Bering Sea

Four different age-structured methods are used to estimate exploitable biomass and all methods showed the same trends in biomass over time. The SSC agrees with the Team that the status quo method, cohort analysis tuned to survey biomass and age composition estimates, should be used to determine exploitable biomass. Exploitable biomass in 1993 from this method was estimated to be 7.9 million tons and represents a substantial increase from last year's assessment. The increase is due to the incorporation of data from ages 10-16 which were not available before this year and to recruitment from the 1989 and 1990 yearclasses. The SSC accepts the Team's recommendations for ABC and overfishing limit, which are based on $F_{0.1}$ and $F_{30\%}$, respectively. The reasons for not using F_{msy} are that the population was in a period of decline since 1985, that recruitment from the 1989 and 1990 yearclasses is subject to uncertainty, and that there is concern over the potential impact of removals from the Basin area on EBS populations.

Aleutian Islands

The 1993 pollock biomass was based on the 1991 bottom trawl survey estimates expanded for the off-bottom component and projected to 1993 based on the relative population change observed in the

EBS stock. The SSC accepts the Team's recommendation for ABC and overfishing limit. The SSC recommends that the analyst and the Team consider the development of estimates of ABC and overfishing limit based on age-structured analyses and appropriate estimates of growth and natural mortality which use data collected from the Aleutian Islands population and explain the advantages and disadvantages in the final SAFE document. An $F_{0.1}$ estimate for the Aleutian Islands should be calculable from existing information.

Bogoslof Area

The SSC believes the Aleutian Basin pollock population should be managed separately from the EBS and AI populations. The Basin population has a different age structure, a different size at age, a different area and time of spawning, a different migration pattern, and has experienced a different level of exploitation. Available evidence indicates that the fishery that occurs in the international zone of the Bering Sea (i.e., the Donut Hole) exploits the Basin stock. A portion of the stock spawns in the vicinity of the Commander Islands and another portion spawns in the vicinity of Bogoslof Island. It is generally believed that a majority of the Basin pollock originate from the Bogoslof component.

The SSC strongly supports the international effort (P.R.C., Japan, R.O.K, Poland, U.S.S.R., and U.S. scientists) to develop a comprehensive assessment and management of Aleutian Basin pollock. A second workshop was held in late February 1992 in Seattle to assemble available data and to refine and expand population models. A major development was an agreement in August, 1992 by these nations to cease fishing in international waters for two years and to cooperate in further research.

A precipitous decline in the biomass of the Bogoslof pollock has occurred since the 1989 survey. Available evidence strongly suggests that the Bogoslof stock has been overexploited. Recent hydroacoustic surveys provide estimates of biomass of 600,000 tons in 1991 and 800,0000 tons in 1992. The SSC could not concur with the Team's estimate of biomass projected for 1993, because the Team assumed that natural mortality M was 0.3. Because the Bogoslof population is much older than EBS population, the SSC believes the best estimate of natural mortality is 0.2, which is the value accepted by scientists in the assessments of Aleutian Basin pollock. Assuming that little or no recruitment has occurred recently, the best estimate of 1993 biomass is obtained from the 1992 survey decayed by natural mortality, which is 655,000 mt.

The SAFE indicates that the current Basin biomass as predicted by the preliminary Aleutian Basin stock cohort analysis is only about 10% of the largest observed biomass and well below B_{msy}. A precise estimate of the ratio B/B_{msy} is impossible, but it is probably on the order of 1/4. Given the low level of abundance, the SSC believes that under the Council's overfishing definition an exploitation rate of 1/4 of the natural mortality (F=1/4*0.20) is appropriate. Following the same procedure that the Council accepted last December, the SSC applied this rate (M/4) to the 1993 biomass estimate to obtain an ABC of 33,000 tons. This is also the overfishing limit.

Because of the current status of the Bogoslof population, the importance of supporting international efforts to curtail fishing on the Basin population, and the potential impacts on marine mammals and seabirds, the SSC strongly recommends that the TAC be set at a level to provide for bycatch only.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands - Pacific Cod

The SSC agrees with the Team's specification of ABC and overfishing limit for Pacific cod. ABC (178,000 mt) was calculated by applying the $F_{0.1}$ rate (0.145) to the 1993 exploitable biomass

(825,000 mt) projected by the EBS cod model. The overfishing limit (183,000 mt) was calculated by applying the $F_{30\%}$ rate (0.149) to the projected 1993 exploitable biomass.

The SSC commends the Team for developing the stock synthesis approach for BS/AI Pacific cod assessment and notes that the results of the stock synthesis model are similar to the EBS cod model.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Flatfish Summary

The methods used to calculate ABC for this complex are generally the same as for prior years. The SSC encourages the analysts and Plan Teams in their efforts to use new methods such as the stock synthesis model which can make use of additional sources of information. The estimates for ABC and overfishing are expected to be revised by the November Plan Team meetings when the 1992 trawl survey results are available.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Yellowfin Sole

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team approach. Yellowfin sole abundance is high and stable. Survey results have been somewhat variable and three methods were used to estimate exploitable biomass. Applying $F_{0.1}$ to a projected exploitable biomass (2.66 million mt) estimated by the stock synthesis model yields an 1993 ABC of 372,00 mt, the same as for 1992. Overfishing level is calculated by applying $F_{30\%}$.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Greenland Turbot

Continuous poor recruitment has been observed since the early 1980s and biomass of the adult population is expected to decline throughout the 1990s. Given continued recruitment failure, the Plan Team rejected an ABC of 14,100 mt based on $F_{0.1}$. The Team believes that no increases in exploitation on this species are warranted and recommends a continuation of the 1992 ABC of 7,000 mt. Given the poor stock conditions, the SSC agreed with this approach. However, the SSC did not accept the estimate of F_{msy}, based on an assumed spawner recruit relationship, used to calculate overfishing. The SSC calculated on OFL of 34,600 mt from average catch. The SSC recommends that the Team calculate $F_{30\%}$ for the determination of OFL.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Arrowtooth Flounder

Recruitment from the 1986 and 1987 year classes was good. Biomass, although slightly reduced in 1990 and 1991, remains high. In the absence of a stock recruitment relationship, $F_{0.1}$ was applied to a projected biomass for the 1991 survey to calculate a 1993 ABC of 68,000 mt, a reduction of 14,300 mt from the 1992 calculation. Overfishing is calculated at $F_{30\%}$. The methodology used remains similar to the prior year.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Rock Sole

A projected biomass from the 1991 trawl survey and an exploitation rate of F_{msy} provide an estimated ABC for 1993 of 311,000 mt, 50,000 mt above 1992. ABC is equal to the level of overfishing.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Other Flatfish Complex

Reliable estimates of B_{msy} and F_{msy} are not available for this group of species. Consequently $F_{0.1}$ was applied to an increased biomass estimate based on the 1991 survey to calculate an ABC of 226,000 mt, 26,000 mt above 1992. Overfishing was calculated using $F_{30\%}$.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Sablefish

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team's recommended ABCs. Sablefish is assessed jointly in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. Consequently, the methods are identical to those discussed in the Gulf of Alaska section above.

Estimated biomass is 25,700 mt and 11,700 mt respectively for the Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea. ABCs are estimated to be 3,000 and 1,400 mt with companion overfishing levels of 4,040 and 1,840 mt.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - POP Complex

True POP

The SSC recommends acceptance of the last years ABC pending clarification of issues that surfaced during its review of the assessment. Prior to the December meeting the SSC requests clarification of the following:

1. Why were selectivity functions of different forms used for the trawl survey and the fishery?

2. Why were 1990 and 1991 length frequency data not used in the analysis?

3. Is there a difference in the age composition between the fishery and survey?

4. How does ABC compare between F35% with estimated selectivity, and F=M with knife edge recruitment.

Pending responses to these questions the SSC recommends that the preliminary ABCs for true POP be set as last year's levels for both the eastern Bering Sea (3,540 mt) and Aleutian Islands (11,700 mt). These values were obtained by applying F=M=0.05 to estimates of the current exploitable biomass for the eastern Bering Sea (70,800 mt) and Aleutian Islands (234,000 mt). The stock assessment authors (but not the Team) once again recommended dividing the Aleutian ABC up into 4 parts to reduce the possibility of the entire ABC being removed from a portion of the region. As stated below, the SSC favors a plan amendment to redefine management areas in the BS/AI region.

Lacking a value of $F_{30\%}$, the F=M criterion was used to define overfishing for true POP, which is therefore equal to ABC.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Other Red Rockfish

The SSC accepts the Team's ABC recommendations for species in this group. ABCs were calculated by using F=M for exploitation rates and average biomass estimates from bottom trawl surveys to obtain an estimate of current biomass. Natural mortalities used were 0.06 for northern and sharpchin, 0.025 for rougheye, and 0.03 for shortraker. Biomass estimates were as follows: northern/sharpchin

(EBS) 17,500 mt; (AI) 94,500 mt; rougheye (EBS) 3,000 mt; (AI) 25,300 mt; and shortraker (EBS) 9,200 mt; (AI) 19,700 mt.

The other red rockfish ABC for the eastern Bering Sea is 1,400 mt. The SSC does not recommend splitting this complex up. It still believes that the added protection afforded rougheye and shortraker by separating them into their own group is insignificant. The SSC recommend that this complex be divided into two groups for the Aleutian Islands: rougheye and shortraker, and all remaining species. The ABC for rougheye/shortraker is 1,220 mt and 5,670 mt for northern/sharpchin.

Lacking a value of $F_{30\%}$, the F=M criterion is used to define overfishing (ABC=OFL).

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Other Rockfish

The SSC accepts the Team's ABC recommendation for this complex. ABCs were calculated by applying an exploitation rate equal to natural mortality for POP, (0.05), to the estimate of current exploitable biomass, 8,000 mt for the eastern Bering Sea and 18,500 mt for the Aleutian Islands. Current biomass estimates were obtained by averaging recent trawl survey results. The F=M criterion was used to define overfishing (lacking $F_{30\%}$), which is therefore equal to ABC.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Atka Mackerel

The SSC accepts the Team's determination that the best estimate of ABC, given information now available is 351,000 mt. The ABC was derived by applying the estimated rate of natural mortality (0.30) to the 1993 exploitable biomass (1,121,000 mt) based on the stock synthesis model fitted to catch at age data (age 3+) and bottom trawl survey results. The SSC notes the biomass projections are higher than the 1992 projection due to updated 1991 survey data and inclusion of fish older than age 7 that appear in the fishery catches. This biomass estimate is conservative because some fraction of Atka mackerel biomass is distributed in mid-water and nearshore, and therefore is not included in the standard bottom trawl survey estimate.

While accepting the Team's ABC determination, the SSC is concerned that the series of trawl surveys is short and inconsistent in their extent of coverage. We are also apprehensive about the possible environmental problems that may result from an increased catch of the magnitude implied by the 1992 and 1993 ABC estimate. Atka mackerel is a prey species of northern fur seals and northern sea lions. During their migrations, northern fur seals (a depleted species) feed heavily on Atka mackerel as they move through the Aleutian passes.

In these circumstances, the SSC prefers to phase in the new higher ABC over a six-year period, adopting the current biomass estimate and raising the exploitation rate in steps from M/6 in 1992, M/3 in 1993, to M in 1997. According to the this schedule, the recommended ABC for 1993 is (0.30/3)* 1,171,000 = 117,100 mt. While this approach provides a 6 year schedule for increasing ABC, it should be clear that the estimate and procedures will be reviewed annually. The main purpose of the gradual approach is to postpone a large ABC increase until its correctness has been confirmed by additional data and analysis.

The SSC accepts the Team's overfishing limit calculated by applying the $F_{30\%}$ rate (F=0.506) to the 1993 exploitable biomass.

The SSC is particularly concerned about the need to distribute a greatly increased harvest over the range of the stock in proportion to the distribution of biomass. This would require 70% of the catch

to be taken west of 180° W. The SSC recommends that ABC for the eastern Aleutians be 32,100 mt and for the Western Aleutians be 85,000 mt.

The SSC notes that almost all of the 1992 catch of Atka mackerel was taken in the eastern Aleutian Islands area. The 1993 ABC is at a level that cannot be safely taken entirely from eastern Aleutians area, and may impact marine mammals. It is critical that the Council develop a plan amendment that will allow TAC's to be allocated geographically. In the absence of means to apportion ABC's, the SSC recommends the ABC for BS/AI Atka mackerel should be constrained to 32,100 mt, which can be safely taken in the eastern Aleutians area.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Other Species

At present the ABC for other species is calculated as the average recent catch, which is steadily dropping. The SSC requests the Team to consider an alternative procedure, such as calculating ABC as a proportion of total biomass.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands - Management Areas

The SSC received a proposal from the Alaska Groundfish Data Bank to consider a review of the current boundaries between the Aleutian subarea and the Gulf of Alaska management area. Additionally the SSC during its deliberations discussed the need to make regional distribution of ABC for such species as rockfish and Atka Mackerel. The SSC recommends that the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Plan Teams examine this issue and develop a plan amendment for consideration during 1993 to make appropriate modifications.

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

The SAFE report contains important information documenting some economic variables and characteristics of the fishery. It does not contain a concise analysis of the status of the fishery. An attempt should be made to include indicators of economic performance (profitability, efficiency, employment generation, impacts on key communities, etc.).

Specific comments:

(1) Presentation of catch by Alaska resident and non-resident boat owners is easily confused with the concept of catch by Alaska resident and non-resident fishermen. In fact, this mistake is so tempting that the report itself slips into this error (p.3., second line from bottom). It is clear that information on residence of harvester is of great interest, while classification of catch by vessel owner residence is the only simple procedure for developing such information. The problem is that this does not measure the extent to which Alaskans participate in harvesting, processing,, or other activities of the groundfish industry. The tables and text should be more clearly labeled to warn readers of the restricted meaning of the existing resident/non-resident categories.

(2) A striking fact in the report is the $353.7 million increase in groundfish product value from 1990 to 1991. This increased value derives largely from increasing prices for roe and surimi. In Table 26 surimi product value increased from $276.9 to $438.7 million from 1990 to 1991, due to an apparent doubling of price from $0.7092/lb (226.4 yen/kg) to $1.423/lb (423.1 yen/kg). However, based upon the monthly average price of "kneaded product" (surimi) in

Japan (Table 33), the price increased only 12.5% from 462.38 yen/kg to 519.9 yen/kg. Did the U.S. value per unit double due to increasing the "grade" of surimi product? The apparent price of roe in Table 26 increased from $3.46 to $5.18/lb, but no price series on roe is displayed in the remaining tables. Given the importance of these two prices, and the difficulty encountered in establishing accurate values for surimi and roe prices during the inshore/offshore economic analysis, there is a need for more thorough documentation.

D-4 EASTERN GULF TRAWL CLOSURE (AMENDMENT 26A)

The SSC reviewed the document entitled "Supplemental Information for the Proposed Eastern Gulf Trawl Closure and Future Management of Rockfish in the Gulf of Alaska". We received a presentation from the staff on the material presented in the document. The SSC had specific questions regarding the meaning of certain statements within the document and has requested that the authors clarify specific statements in the final document. The SSC also received comments from George Anderson of the trawl industry and Barry Bracken of ADF&G.

Our review of Amendment 26A was guided by the biological and social/economic problems listed in the draft EA/RIR/IRFA. Our conclusions are:

Problem 2. Concerns with further depletion of Eastern Gulf rockfish stocks which are still considered by many to be depressed.

The supplemental document provides a detailed discussion of the procedures used by the Council in setting the ABC's for the various rockfish species. The SSC and Team have employed conservative procedures in setting ABC. Conservative estimates of biomass (from trawl surveys) have been used. Exploitation rates have been set low and when the industry targeted on a specific species in a rockfish complex a separate ABC was established. Likewise when regional subdivision of ABC and TAC were required such subdivisions were made. Exploitation rates for depleted stocks (mainly POP) have been further reduced according to the Council's overfishing definition. As we stated in June, even if there still concerns about ABC, we do not believe that gear allocation is an appropriate way to address them.

Problem 3. Concern over high trawl bycatch levels of salmon in the Eastern Gulf.

As stated in June, the analysis does not demonstrate a problem with the bycatch of salmon by trawls in the Eastern Gulf. No new information was provided in the supplemental document.

Problem 4. Concern over potential declines of marine mammals and seabirds as a result of trawl fishing activity in the Eastern Gulf.

No new information is provided in the supplemental document. The SSC did receive a presentation on the status of the threatened Steller sea lion. For the SE Alaska area, trend site counts indicated a small decrease in adults while the pup counts indicated an increase. There is no need for concern regarding the effect of trawling on marine mammals at this time.

Problem 5. Concern over the potential impacts of trawling on deep water corals and benthic habitat.

The supplemental information provides a review of the status of knowledge regarding damage to the benthic environment by fishing gear, the importance of coral habitat to rockfish stocks, and the

distribution of coral in the Eastern Gulf. The SSC notes that both trawl and non-trawl gear have impacts on the benthic environment and that there is no estimate of the actual extent of damage by either gear. The SSC notes that since both gear types can damage the benthic environment, banning one gear type is not the most effective means of providing protection. If coral is determined to be a critical habitat, then such habitats should be identified and steps taken to provide adequate protection. At present the impact has not been assessed and there was testimony that trawlers avoid dense coral beds to prevent net damage. Impacts of trawling can continue to be monitored through the observer program.

Problem 1. Anticipation of unprecedented levels of factory trawler participation in the SEO during 1991 and even greater future expansion.

Current data indicates that a large expansion of the factory trawler participation in SEO has not occurred.

Problem 6. Grounds preemption and economic displacement of the local shore-based hook and longline fleet, and Problem 7. Concern that important traditional fisheries for groundfish and halibut could be curtailed if trawl harvests exceed the TAC's for some species.

The supplemental information provides a discussion of grounds preemption, gear conflicts and gear loss. The report indicates that recent management measures have successfully reduced or resolved many of the gear conflicts and grounds preemptions. The report indicates that there are problems in estimating the effects of fishing by one gear type or CPUE of another gear type.

It was pointed out by Mr. Bracken that one of the preemption problems was the harvest of slope rockfish. During the last year the trawl fishery reportedly took most of the allocation of this complex before the fall halibut opening. This required vessels in the halibut fishery to discard these species. This discard is largely unaccounted for in the longline fishery because of a lack of observers on these small fishing vessels. Steps should be taken to account for all sources of mortalities of this complex and if possible NMFS should take the steps necessary to allocate sufficient TAC among the directed and bycatch fisheries.

In summary, the assembled information does not contain convincing scientific evidence that trawling should be banned.

D-5(a) PRIBILOF ISLAND TRAWL CLOSURE

The SSC reviewed the draft EA/RIR/IRFA for chapter 4 of Amendment 21 to the Bering Sea FMP. The new draft has addressed our concerns over the inconsistent results of previous model runs. The SSC has provided the staff with some additional comments, including a reference on a report regarding critical rearing habitat for blue and red king crab.

We recommend that the amendment be released for public review.

D-5(b) POLLOCK "B" SEASON DELAY/EXCLUSIVE REGISTRATION EA/RIR/IRFA

The SSC reviewed the EA/RIR/IRFA proposing amendments to delay the pollock "B" season (non-roe fishing season) and provide for exclusive area registration. We heard a presentation by Drs.

Terrence Smith, Matthew Berman and Gunnar Knapp, University of Alaska Anchorage, of the economic analyses contained in the proposal. The SSC believes the economic analyses were comprehensive in their scope including estimates of income distribution from I/O models, a benefit/cost analysis, and an analysis of impacts on bycatch. Furthermore, we believe the economic analytical methods were appropriate. Nevertheless, the SSC recommends that prior to releasing the document for public review, the analysts expand their discussion of how the choice model was used to determine net economic benefits. The discussion at the bottom of page 3-21 that describes how compensation was calculated is confusing. There also is a need to expand the description of the underlying reasons for the results reported in the economic impact section, section 3.5.

The SSC recommends that the environmental and biological impacts section be revised prior to sending the document out for public review. Specifically, the SSC notes that the economic analysis contains a concise examination of bycatch consequences as evaluated with the bycatch model. The discussions in the environmental and biological section on bycatch are redundant and inconsistent with the results represented in the economic analysis. The EA should consolidate this discussion and resolve the inconsistencies. Next, the SSC recommends that the analysts compute instantaneous rates of growth for pollock, predict in-season changes in pollock mean weight appropriate for alternative season opening dates and compute the number of pollock which will be harvested at each date. These quantitative data can be used to evaluate the assumed benefits of a delayed season on pollock mortality.

The SSC recommends that the amendment be released for public review after the changes suggest above are made.

D-5(c) PREFERENTIAL ALLOCATION OF PACIFIC COD TO GEAR TYPES (AMENDMENT 24)

The SSC received a report from Dr. Joe Terry summarizing the contents of the amendment package and "Revisions to Council Review Draft" which was received at this meeting. Dr. Terry identified a number of changes that are planned. For example, IPHC staff is expected to have estimates of discard mortality rates and yield loss to the halibut fishery caused by each bycatch fishery based on 1991 observer data. Since additional work on the amendment is planned, the SSC would like the opportunity to review the modified document in December prior to its release for public review.

The results of the benefit/cost analysis are dependent upon (a) the allocation of fixed costs among multiple fisheries and (b) the measurement of "impact costs" of prohibited species discards. Economists frequently struggle with the need to allocate fixed costs among products of multi-product firms. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find a more defensible procedure than the type of allocation used in this document (based upon an average proportion of weeks and catch). However, the proportions used are of "groundfish catch and weeks" not total catch or weeks fished by the vessel. As noted in this report, this procedure overstates costs attributable to cod fishing for pot gear because it ignores the fishing for crab. If the definition of groundfish excludes halibut (as is usual), then this procedure would also overstate the fixed costs of longline vessels. A logical escape from these problems would be to adopt as a benefit measure the quasi-rents for each vessel type (i.e. subtract only non-sunk costs from revenues). It is suggested that the authors consider subtracting the usual variable costs (vessel operating costs, crew payments, bait, ice, etc.) and any incremental annual fixed costs attributable to fishing for the species in question (incremental costs associated with setting up to longline for cod rather than sablefish/halibut or fish pots for cod rather than crab). In the longer term, establishment of an open access equilibrium in all fisheries will assure that there are no significant net benefits left in any segment of the fishery.

These points need to be applied to the "impact costs" of discarded fish as well as to the target species. The report (p. 50 and Table 4.2) adopts the halibut impact cost of about $2,900/mt that was used in Amendment 21 (Appendix I, Table 4). Then a range is added to yield a halibut discard impact cost of $2,900 to $2,200/mt. This range is poorly explained. A greater concern, however, is that the impact cost deducts only variable costs which are estimated to be 47% of wholesale value. Consistency would require either (i) a proportional allocation of fixed costs to halibut fishing and processing, or (ii) adoption of the quasi-rent measure of benefits for the non-halibut fisheries.

The SSC recommends that the authors consider these issues in the development of the next draft of the document.

In the construction of Table 3.20, the discard mortality rates for the PSC species other than halibut were assumed to be 1.0 for all gear types. The SSC recommends that the validity of this assumption be examined.

D-7(a) PSC ALLOWANCES FOR THE INSHORE-OFFSHORE AND CDQ POLLOCK FISHERIES

This amendment analyzes 3 alternatives to allocate the pollock fishery prohibited species catch (PSC) among the 3 pollock allocation fisheries: CDQ fisheries, vessels delivering pollock onshore, and vessels that process at-sea.

The SSC recommends the amendment go out for public review, when the changes detailed under section 1.8, page 1-6 are completed and included in the document.

D-8(e) PETITION FOR POLLOCK RESEARCH FROM ST. PAUL ISLAND

The SSC reviewed a petition from the City of St.Paul to examine the theories regarding eastern Bering Sea pollock stock structure. The petition asks the Council to direct NMFS to support independent research using Japanese and Russian data as well as the best available technology to resolve the issue of stock distribution and migration. The SSC was informed that NMFS has already provided the petitioners' representative, former Governor Steve Cowper, a package of material describing the work in progress, including international research with Japan, Russia, Poland, Korea, and China.

D-8(f) EXPERIMENTAL RETENTION OF PSC

The SSC heard an explanation by Tuck Donnelly of Terra Marine Research of his group's request for an experimental fishery permit to retain halibut and salmon bycatch, which otherwise would have to be discarded, for processing and distribution to needy people. This would be a worthwhile study. The SSC recommends that the proposers complete a formal application for an experimental permit, which would necessarily contain answers to questions such as how the operators would decide which fish to retain and which to release.

D-8(g) MEASUREMENT OF PRODUCT RECOVERY RATES

The SSC heard a proposal from Steve Hughes for an industry-government program to gather hard data on pollock product recovery rates in shore plants and shipboard factories. Good data of this sort are needed to allow better estimates of pollock removals in recent years and to provide accurate efficiency comparisons for decisions on matters such as inshore-offshore allocations and the timing of fishery openings. Product recovery rates are also used for enforcement purposes. The SSC recommends that NMFS and industry design a program to estimate product recovery rates during normal factory operations according to season, fish size, filleting machine type, product, and type of operation.

SSC Recommendations - Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

Stock	Region	B_{92}	B_{MSY}	F_{msy}	ABC Strategy	ABC	Overfishing Definition	Y_{of}	Notes
Pollock	EBS	7.96M	6.0M	0.38	$F_{0.1a}$=.31	1.69M	F_{msy}=.38	2.39M	Cohort Analysis
	AI	277K	?	0.38	$F_{0.1a}$=.31	67.0K	F_{msy}=.38	83.1K	
	Bogoslof	655K	?	?	F=M/4=.05	33K	F=M/4	33K	B/B_{msy} = 1/4
Cod	BSAI	825K	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.145	178K	$F_{30\%}$=.149	183K	
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	2.7M	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.14	372K	$F_{30\%}$=.17	452K	
Greenland turbot	BSAI	292K	?	?	Bycatch only	7K	Ave.Catch	34.6K	1977-1987
Arrowtooth	BSAI	378K	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.18	68.0K	$F_{30\%}$=.25	94.5K	
Rock sole	BSAI	1.71M	904K	.176	F_{MSY}=.176	311K	F_{msy}=.176	311K	
Other flatfish	BSAI	1.42M	?	?	$F_{0.1b}$=.159	226K	$F_{30\%}$=.23	327K	
Sablefish	EBS	11.7K	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.13	1400	$F_{30\%}$=.18	1840	
	AI	25.7K	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.13	3000	$F_{30\%}$=.18	4040	
POP complex									
True POP	EBS	70.8K	?	?	F=M=.05	3540	F=M	3540	SRA & trawl survey
	AI	234K	?	?	F=M=.05	11700	F=M	11700	
NO/SC/RE/SR	EBS	29.7K	?	?	F=M	1400	F=M	1400	
NO/SC	AI	94.5K	?	?	F=M	5670	F=M	5670	
RE/SC	AI	45.K	?	?	F=M	1220	F=M	1220	
Other Rockfish	BS	8K	?	?	F=M	400	F=M	400	Surveys
	AI	18.5K	?	?	F=M	925	F=M	925	
Atka Mackerel	BS/AI	1.17M	?	?	F=M/6=.05	32.1K[a]	$F_{30\%}$=.5	771K	Stairstep ABC
Squid	BS/AI	?	?	?	Ave. Catch	3400	Ave. Catch	3400	
Other species	BS/AI	794K	?	?	Ave. Catch	26,600	Ave. Catch	26,600	

a/ If there is a Plan Amendment to separate eastern and western Aleutian Island - ABC =117K

SSC Recommendations - Gulf of Alaska

Stock	Region	B_{92}	B_{MSY}	F_{msy}	ABC Strategy	ABC	Overfishing Definition	OFL	Notes
Pollock	W/C	701,000 - 1,112,000	?	?	F_{hist}=10%	70,100 - 111,200	$F_{30\%}$=.283	163,200 - 258,800	SS Model E, G
	E					3,400	$F_{30\%}$=.283	7,880	1990 Trawl survey
Cod	W					18,700			
	C					35,200			
	E					2,800			
	GOA	324,000	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.177	56,700	$F_{30\%}$=.245	78,100	Survey B 84, 87, 90 in SRA Model
Deepwater flat	W					2,020			
	C					35,580			
	E					7,930			
	GOA	227,656	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.20	45,530	$F_{30\%}$=.265	59,650	Survey B 90
Shallow flat	W					27,480			
	C					21,260			
	E					1,740			
	GOA	261,724	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.20	50,480	$F_{30\%}$=.26	70,860	Survey B 90
Flathead	W					12,580			
	C					31,830			
	E					5,040			
	GOA	247,247	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.20	49,450	$F_{30\%}$=.26	64,780	Survey B 90
Arrowtooth	W					38,880			
	C					253,330			
	E					29,080			
	GOA	1,889,922	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.17	321,290	$F_{30\%}$=.30	451,690	Survey B 90
Sablefish	W					2,500			
	C					9,570			
	WYK					3,740			
	SEO					4,990			
	GOA	179,000	?	?	$F_{0.1a}$=.13	20,800	$F_{30\%}$=0.18	28,200	Constant R Longline, trawl surveys in SRA model

(GOA continued)

Stock	Region	B_{92}	B_{MSY}	F_{msy}	Strategy	ABC	Overfishing Definition	OFL	Notes
Slope rockfish:	W					1,620			
POP	C					1,720			
	E					2,390			
	GOA	229,100	?	?	F=M/2	5,730	F=M/2	5,730	B_{92}/B_{msy}=1/2
SR/RE	W					100			
	C					1,290			
	E					570			
	GOA	72,960	?	?	F=M	1,960	$F_{30\%}$(RE) F=M (SR)	2,900	Ave. Survey B 87, 90
Other slope	W					1,390			
	C					6,510			
	E					6,160			
	GOA	230,480	?	?	F=M	14,060	$F_{30\%}$ and F=M	20,710	Ave. Survey B 87, 90
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W					1,210			
	C					4,400			
	E					1,280			
	GOA	?	?	?	F=M	6,890	$F_{30\%}$	11,550	Includes black rockfish. Ave. Survey B 84, 87, 90
Demersal shelf rockfish	GOA	?	?	?	F=M=0.02	800	$F_{30\%}$	1,600	Lower 90% CI submersible Survey B
Thornyhead	GOA	26,210	?	?	F=M=.07	1,830	$F_{30\%}$=0.095	2,490	Survey B 90