

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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September 27, 2006

DRAFT AGENDA
178th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
October 4-10, 2006
Grand Aleutian Hotel
Dutch Harbor, Alaska

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will meet October 4-10, 2006 at the Grand Aleutian Hotel in Dutch Harbor, Alaska. Other meetings to be held during the week are:

Committee/Panel

Advisory Panel
Scientific and Statistical Committee
Enforcement Committee
Ecosystem Committee
BS/AI Crab Industry Meeting

Beginning

Oct 2, Mon – 8:00am - Unisea Central Building
Oct 2, Mon – 8:00am - Shishaldin Room - Grand Aleutian
Oct 3, Tue – 9:00am - Makushin Room
Oct 3, Tue – 1:00pm - Makushin Room
Oct 4, Wed - 6:00pm - Shishaldin Room

The Council and SSC will meet at the Grand Aleutian; the Advisory Panel will meet at the Unisea Central Building (there will be a shuttle between the two meeting locations). All meetings are open to the public, except executive sessions of the Council. Other committee and workgroup meetings may be scheduled on short notice during the week, and will be posted at the hotel.

INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WISHING TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Submission of Written Comments. Written comments and materials to be included in Council meeting notebooks must be received at the Council office by **5:00 pm (Alaska Time) on Monday, September 25.** Written and oral comments should include a statement of the source and date of information provided as well as a brief description of the background and interests of the person(s) submitting the statement. Comments can be sent by mail or fax—please **do not** submit comments by e-mail. **It is the submitter's responsibility to provide an adequate number of copies of comments after the deadline.** Materials provided **during** the meeting for distribution to Council members should be provided to the Council secretary. A minimum of **25** copies is needed to ensure that Council members, the executive director, NOAA General Counsel, appropriate staff, and the official meeting record each receive a copy. If copies are to be made available for the Advisory Panel (**28**), Scientific and Statistical Committee (**18**), or the public after the pre-meeting deadline, they must also be provided by the submitter.

**FOR THOSE WISHING TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE
ADVISORY PANEL**

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

**FOR THOSE WISHING TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE
SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**

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

COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

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

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	<u>Estimated Hours</u>
A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER	
(a) Oath of Office/Election of Officers	•
(b) Approval of Agenda	
(c) Approval of minutes	
B. REPORTS	(4 hrs)
B-1 Executive Director's Report	
B-2 NMFS Management Report (Status of the Interagency Electronic Reporting System and Electronic Catcher Vessel Logbook)	
B-3 USCG Report	
B-4 ADF&G Report	
B-5 USFWS Report	
B-6 Department of State Report	
B-7 Protected Species Report (including progress report on ESA consultation and partial draft BiOp)	
C. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS	
C-1 <u>Steller Sea Lion Management</u>	(4 hrs)
(a) Review revised SSL proposal ranking tool (SSC only).	
(b) Report from SSL Mitigation Committee (including proposals received).	
C-2 <u>CDQ Program</u>	(4 hrs)
Report on Coast Guard legislation (P.L. 109-241).	
C-3 <u>Trawl LLP Recency</u>	(4 hrs)
Preliminary review of analysis and direction as necessary.	
C-4 <u>BS and AI sector allocation split for Pacific cod</u>	(4 hrs)
Review discussion paper and direction as necessary.	
C-5 <u>MRA Adjustments</u>	(2 hrs)
Final Action on Regulatory Amendment (postponed until December)	
C-6 <u>Socioeconomic data collection (T)</u>	(2 hrs)
Review Discussion paper, and take action as necessary.	

D. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS

- D-1 Groundfish Management (10 hr)
(a) Review Ecosystem SAFE report.
(b) Review & comment on draft EIS for Groundfish Harvest Specifications.
(c) Recommend proposed groundfish specifications for 2007/08.
(d) Initial Review VMS Requirements.
(e) Review outline for 'other species' analysis (SSC only).
- D-2 Prohibited Species Bycatch (2 hr)
(a) Initial review of VIP repeal (T).
(b) Update and direction on Salmon Bycatch (B package).
- D-3 BSAI Crab Management (4 hr)
(a) Review discussion paper on BSAI Crab Vessel Use Caps.
(b) Review and approve BSAI Crab SAFE.
(c) Review crab CIE report/overfishing definitions update (SSC only).
- D-4 Essential Fish Habitat (4 hr)
(a) Review BS Habitat Conservation open area boundaries and crab data/plan team report, and revise alternatives as appropriate.
(b) Initial/Final action on EFH Aleutian Island open area adjustments.
- D-5 Ecosystem Approaches (1 hr)
(a) Update on Aleutian Island FEP, action as necessary.
(b) Update on Alaska Marine Ecosystem Forum.
- D-6 Staff Tasking (3 hr)
(a) Review Committees and tasking, and take action as necessary.
(b) Review PGSEIS Workplan.
- D-7 Other Business

Total Agenda Hours: 48 hours

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October 2006</h1>						
1	2 SSC/AP Dutch Harbor Fishery Depredation Workshop, thru 5, Vancouver BC	3 SSC/AP	4 SSC/AP Council	5 AP/Council	6 AP/Council	7 Council/AP
8 Council	9 Council Holiday	10	11	12 AK BOF Work Session - Anch thru 15th	13	14
15	16 SSLMC - Anch thru 18 Halibut Stake Holder Comm - Anch thru 18	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 SSLMC - Anch thru Nov 1 st Council member training/CCED Mtg. thru 2 nd - DC	31 Wakefield Symposium - Anch thru 3rd				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2006</h1>						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Crab PT - Sea	9	10 Holiday	11
12	13 Goundfish Plan Teams - Sea thru 17 th AFS AK Chapter - Fairbanks thru 16 th	14	15	16 Pacific Expo - Sea thru 18th	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Holiday	24	25
26	27	28				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 2006					1	2
					3	4 ^{SSC/AP}
10 ^{Council}	11 ^{Council}	12 ^{Council}	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 ^{Holiday}	26	27	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
January 2007						
	1 ^{Holiday}	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 ^{Holiday}	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 ^{Marine Science Symposium thru 26th}	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
FEBRUARY 2007						
				1	2	3
4	5 SSC/AP Portland - Benson Hotel	6 SSC/AP	7 SSC/AP Council	8 AP/Council	9 AP/Council	10 Council
11 Council	12 Council	13 Council	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	28				

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Certified: Nav Bendix
Date: 8/18/06

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE to the NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL June 5-7, 2006

The Scientific and Statistical Committee met during June 5-7 at Fishermen's Hall, Kodiak, AK. Members present were:

Gordon Kruse, Chair
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Pat Livingston, Vice Chair
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Keith Criddle
Utah State University

Steven Hare
International Pacific Halibut Commission

Sue Hills
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Anne Hollowed
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

George Hunt
University of Washington

Seth Macinko
University of Rhode Island

Steve Parker
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Ken Pitcher
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Terry Quinn II
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Farron Wallace
Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife

Doug Woodby
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Members absent:

Mark Herrmann
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Franz Mueter
University of Washington

B-7 Protected Species Report

The SSC received and reviewed multiple protected species reports from Council staff lead, Bill Wilson (NPFMC). As usual, the SSC commends Bill Wilson for his very thorough report on the many protected species issues. SSC comments are noted below under each specific item.

B-7 (a) GOA and BSAI groundfish FMP level consultation update. Formal section 7 consultation was reinitiated in April 2006 when NMFS Sustainable Fisheries submitted their biological assessment to NMFS Protected Resources. The Council's SSL Mitigation Committee (SSLMC) has been reconvened to review proposals for changes to SSL protection measures as "the principal interface between the Council and the consultation" process. The SSLMC met twice since the April Council meeting to review research that has taken place since the last BiOp. The SSLMC recommends that the Council issue a call for proposals to change SSL protection measures in Pacific cod, Atka mackerel and pollock fisheries in the GOA and BSAI, with proposals due in early August. The Council will need to issue a call for proposals at this meeting in order to initiate a review process that would result in regulations commencing in 2008.

The SSC notes that the SSLMC minutes refer to the development of a "tradeoff tool." The SSC has had concerns over the methods used in the past and notes that the same two methods, a modified "bump" analysis and the zone approach are being considered again for use. The last time the SSC saw this tool was in June 2004 when it was delivered during the meeting without lead time, and thus was not reviewed thoroughly by the SSC. The SSLMC apparently is proposing to use some sort of tradeoff tool as they work through proposals for changes to SSL conservation measures. **The SSC or some other peer review body should review the tradeoff tool before it is used to inform Council decision making.** If the tradeoff tool is revised during the summer, then at the October meeting, the SSC can review the application of the tool, rather than its formulation. One of the challenges of devising a tradeoff tool is that the tradeoffs involve different criteria measured in different ways that cannot be easily subsumed into a unified criterion or ranked in terms of absolute importance. The SSC has previously commented on the logical inconsistencies of summing scores across dissimilar criteria. The SSC notes that there are a variety of decision-making analytic tools that are specifically designed to evaluate the performance of alternatives in the context of multiple dissimilar criteria. We suggest that tests for outcome, event, and stochastic dominance could serve as appropriate measures for ranking alternatives. In addition, the SSC notes that there are a variety of decision analytic methodologies that could be used to elicit implicit weighted rankings of plural criteria. The analytic hierarchy process (AHP)², is one such methodology for reducing complex multiple criterion decisions to an internally consistent set of pairwise comparisons and could serve as a useful approach to assess tradeoffs.³

The SSC received a report from Jack Tagart (Tagart Consulting) on a compendium of SSL research reports since 2000. The Compendium is an annotated bibliography with summary sections by general topic and is available on the SSLMC web site. The SSC thinks this will be a useful document for the upcoming SSL discussions. The SSC noted that some publications are missing, particularly theses. The compendium includes abstracts and posters from conferences in an effort to capture the most recent information. The SSC understands that the project is basically finished and modifications are not possible from the authors but **strongly urges language be added to the document highlighting the differential quality of citations.** Some users of the material may not be aware that abstracts and posters are often preliminary analyses that may not have undergone peer review and conclusions may change with further

1 See for example:

- Keeney, R. and H. Raiffa. 1976. *Decisions with multiple objectives*. John Wiley and Sons 569 p.
- Bain, M. 1987. Structured decision making in fisheries management: trout fishing regulations on the Au Sable River, Michigan. *American Journal of Fisheries Management* 7:475-481.
- Brownlow, S. A. and S. R. Watson. 1987. Structuring multi-attribute value hierarchies. *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 38(4):309-317.
- Gass, S. 1983. Decision-aiding models: validation, assessment, and related issues for policy analysis. *Operations Research* 31(4):603-625.
- Healey, M. 1984. Multiattribute analysis and the concept of optimum yield. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 41:1393-1406.
- Hilborn, R. and C. Walters. 1977. Differing goals of salmon management on the Skeena River. *Journal of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada* 34: 64-72.
- Mackett, D. 1985. Strategic planning for research and management of the albacore tuna fishery. *Systems Research* 2(3):201-210.
- Walker, K. D., R. B. Rettig, and R. Hilborn. 1983. Analysis of multiple objectives in Oregon coho salmon policy. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Science* 40:580-587.

2 See for example:

- Saaty, T. L. 1990. *Multicriteria decision making*. University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. 287 pp.
- Merritt MA and KR Criddle. 1993. Multiple criterion decision theory for judging management strategies and resolving conflict: a case study of the Kenai River recreational fisheries. Pages 683-704 in G Kruse, DM Eggers, RJ Marasco, C Pautzke and TJ Quinn II (Editors). *Management Strategies for Exploited Fish Populations*, Alaska Sea Grant, Fairbanks, AK.

3 It might be advantageous to ask Dr. Margaret Merritt (University of Alaska Fairbanks) to participate as facilitator for a session of the upcoming SSLMC meeting to assist the SSLMC team members to structure an AHP model of the tradeoff tool.

analysis and peer review. Abstracts printed in symposium books of abstracts are printed in advance and may not even represent work as it was actually presented at the conference.

B-7 (b) The List of Fisheries (LOF) for 2006. Four of the 5 Category II fisheries listed in the 2005 LOF remain on the 2006 list; turbot longline was dropped. The SSC commented extensively on LOF analyses and issues in our minutes from February 2005 and October and December 2004. Some of the issues may have been addressed (e.g., double counting, assignment of killer whale takes to specific stocks) but others have not. From the February 2005 minutes:

“The SSC previously commented on the analyses and assumptions that went into the List of Fisheries for the 2005 report in our October and December 2004 minutes. Four main issues were highlighted: (1) the sampling of incidents of serious injury and mortality of marine mammals, which are rare events, and the appropriate length of time series of observations to use to estimate the frequency of these rare events, (2) the need for observers to estimate the frequency of serious injury and mortality in state-managed fisheries, (3) the assignment of observed mortalities to more than one marine mammal stock per occurrence, and (4) the appropriateness of procedures used to estimate incidents of serious injury and mortality for unobserved hauls and fisheries. The SSC feels that these issues remain to be addressed, but they are not easily resolved”.

In the future, the SSC requests that proposed rules for LOF be scheduled in a way that allows for SSC review before the end of the comment period. Also, the SSC requests the authors to work with the SSC to resolve outstanding analytical issues.

B-7 (c) Draft SSL Recovery Plan. The SSC appreciates the amount of work that has gone into this plan and recognizes the contentious nature of the discussions during its writing. SSC comments here will be cursory due to lack of time to review this large document. The SSC sees this as an important document that is likely to affect the upcoming FMP consultation and subsequent documents since those will need to be consistent with downlisting and delisting criteria, threats assessment, and associated conservation actions contained in the recovery plan. Because this document sets the basis for future actions, the SSC thinks it is important to do a thorough review. The deadline for comments will not allow the depth and quality of review that the SSC thinks is appropriate. **Therefore, the SSC requests that the Council ask for an extension on the comment period deadline. The SSC proposes to proceed with the review by establishing smaller workgroups to review specific elements of the recovery plan such as the PVA, threats, down-listing and delisting criteria, and the research plan or actions.**

During the presentation on the SSL Recovery Plan, most SSC questions concerned the following topics:

1. Availability of data on various hypotheses and ranking of various inputs.
2. Merits of comparing the western stock to the eastern stock.
3. Status of stocks relative to carrying capacity and evaluation of carrying capacity.
4. Use of growth rate-based vs. abundance-based criteria for downlisting or delisting.
5. Length of time over which rate must be maintained.
6. Ability to implement the adaptive management strategy, given previous obstacles to implementing such experiments.
7. Down-listing criteria that require that no two adjacent sub-areas can be declining significantly, with particular concern about the potentially low productivity in the western Aleutian Islands region and the Asian region, for which the U.S. has no regulatory authority.
8. The feasibility of obtaining comprehensive vital rate estimates (e.g., survival, fecundity) on a broad scale as a check on population growth rate in each region.
9. The need to hear a presentation and conduct a thorough review of the PVA presented in Appendix 3, including model structure, input, and assumptions.
10. The possibility of utilizing a PVA to develop a quantitative risk assessment of down-listing and de-listing criteria.
11. Development of a research plan that would produce data useful to support or falsify the three primary hypotheses regarding factors potentially affecting the western population (i.e., killer

whale predation, prey availability affected by climatic variability, and prey availability affected by fisheries).

12. Concern about circular reasoning in the development of de-listing criteria for the eastern stock. The requirement that “the population has increased at 3% per year for 30 years” appears to be based on the observed historical trend and not based on any assessment of risk or status of the stock.

The SSC anticipates that these issues would be explored and dismissed or highlighted and refined in connection with the workgroup reviews proposed above.

B-7 (d) Seabirds. The SSC received presentations on two reports concerning seabird abundance and distribution by Ed Melvin and Michelle Wainstein (Washington Sea Grant) and two reports from Sunny Rice (with co-authors Torie Baker and Paula Cullenberg, Alaska Sea Grant) discussing the development of alternative seabird bycatch deterrence devices for small longline vessels.

The analysis of seabird distribution and abundance was based on several summer surveys and concluded that longline fishing posed little to no risk for the tubenose (procellariiform) seabirds or other species with conservation concern encountered as bycatch in Alaskan inside waters. This conclusion is based on the low abundance of tubenose birds in areas most frequently fished by these vessels, the overall low bycatch of birds in Alaska inside waters, and operational characteristics of small vessels that reduce the probability of interaction. Of all Alaskan inside waters surveyed, black-footed albatrosses were observed only in the mouth of Chatham Strait and Dixon Entrance (four ADF&G statistical areas).

The SSC supports the development of an EA/RIR to analyze the feasibility of eliminating the requirements for seabird bycatch deterrents for longline fishing in inside waters, while at the same time upholding current deterrent requirements in all outside waters. This action would relieve requirements for vessels fishing only inside waters (at least 25% of longline vessels), and would help vessels fishing both inside and outside waters (up to 42% of longline vessels). A more formal assessment of bycatch risk and development of options to provide seabird bycatch protection in those areas should be pursued as management options are developed. In particular, the EA/RIR analysis should also explore an option to include the entrances of Chatham Strait and Dixon Entrance as outside waters, although they are presently considered inside waters, given the sightings of black-footed albatross in these areas. Also, the definition of vessels possessing masts or rigging as applied to deterrent regulations may be made simpler by removing many of the vessels that fish inside waters only. The SSC recommends the analysis include other potential sources of information on seabird distribution in inside waters, noting the paucity of data (only one survey station) in state waters of Cook Inlet. The SSC concurs with the inclusion of data from agency longline surveys and also recommends pursuing additional collaborations with other surveys and observer programs (e.g., pot or trawl gear) to increase the spatial and temporal distribution information collection about seabird activity, especially in relation to long-term changes in climate and fisheries.

Small longline vessels have unique challenges in conforming to the same performance standards implemented for larger vessels due to physical and operational constraints (e.g., limited storage space, rigging height, and financial ability). These projects were conducted to develop options for seabird deterrents on smaller vessels and to evaluate the necessity of deterrence devices for vessels operating in Prince William Sound (NMFS area 649), inside waters of Southeast Alaska (NMFS area 659), and the state waters of Cook Inlet.

The SSC also received two reports describing feasibility tests of alternative seabird deterrent devices designed specifically for small vessels. We applaud the collaborative approach with industry in developing options to address these problems. The authors tested several designs that would be acceptable under current regulation, such as using larger hoses to reduce entanglement with drag buoys, lighter-weight line for streamers, longer-length lines for streamers, and davits to deploy streamers when

appropriate rigging is not present. The authors also tested the feasibility of designs that would not be permissible under current regulation, such as an integrated weight mainline or water spray devices. The projects did not compare seabird encounter rates, only practicality of deployment and compliance with performance standards.

The SSC does not recommend development of an EA/RIR for new seabird mitigation measures for small vessels at this time. Information provided indicated that additional information is needed before an EA/RIR can be prepared. The SSC encourages further development of these tools and supporting experiments to determine efficacy of bycatch avoidance methods. Researchers should continue to work with the fishing industry to develop bycatch reduction measures that meet acceptable performance standards when applied to the diversity of small vessels in the fleet. Further development and testing under fishing trials is necessary before an amendment can be developed.

C-1 IR/IU

C-1(b) IR/IU Data. John McCracken (NPFMC staff) and Darrell Brannan provided an update on the development of a program to gather vessel-level production, cost, and financial performance data for the non-AFA catcher processor sector. **The SSC strongly supports the regular collection of these data as necessary inputs into retrospective analyses intended to determine whether amendment 80 is successful at achieving its intended purpose.** It will also serve as a basis for informing future Council decisions regarding the potential consequences of introducing similar management measures in other fisheries. **Because the non-AFA catcher processor sector includes a relatively small number of vessels and because there is considerable diversity in the size and configuration of the vessels, the SSC recommends that the data be collected as a census rather than a statistical sample.**

C-1(c) MRA. Jeff Hartman (NMFS) provided an overview of the draft EA/RIR/IRFA for changes to the MRA accounting intervals. **The SSC supports release of this draft amendment for public review.**

C-3 CV Eligibility. Jim Richardson (NPFMC) provided an overview of a staff discussion paper about a potential amendment to retract LLPs that have been relatively inactive. **The SSC notes that changes in the LLP could involve important distributional consequences for individuals and communities and that the character and magnitude of these impacts will need to be assessed if an amendment analysis is developed.**

C-5 Observer Program and Video Monitoring

Nicole Kimball (NPFMC staff) reviewed the status of Amendment 86, noting that the Council is slated to take final action at this meeting. Ms. Kimball noted that staff endeavored to adopt SSC recommendations in their analysis. **The SSC agrees that our prior concerns have been addressed and finds that the EA/RIR/IRFA provides a reasonable basis for Council decision-making.**

Alan Kinsolving (AKRO Sustainable Fisheries Division) presented a discussion paper on the regulatory and implementation issues associated with adoption of electronic monitoring systems for catch monitoring. An appendix to the discussion paper described results from the pilot study of video monitoring of bycatch in the Kodiak-based rockfish fishery. **The SSC encourages further research and evaluation of video monitoring technology. Automated catch monitoring is a promising but evolving technology that is not yet appropriate as a stand-alone system for routine catch monitoring.**

Public testimony was provided by Mark Buckley (Digital Observer Inc.) and Julie Bonney (Alaska Groundfish Databank).

Miscellaneous notes:

- The AFSC and the AKRO plan to hold a workshop later this month to assess the use of a Norwegian-made technology called "Catch Meter" for automatic detection purposes. The technology utilizes neural networks to train the software to identify species.
- Even with state-of-the-art image compression systems, data storage requirements for the GOA rockfish fishery alone would approach 20 terabytes per year.
- Transferring data from hard drives to tape could raise legal concerns regarding chain of custody for evidence.
- Concerns about discarding outside the video field of view could be minimized by implementing paired video systems with different fields of view – one targeting the overall activities of the crew and another targeting approved discard locations.
- Using surveys as a platform to collect information to evaluate this technology offers the advantage that issues regarding confidentiality could be alleviated.

D-1 Groundfish Management

D-1 (a) Review of EFP to test halibut excluder for GOA cod trawl fishery. Cathy Coon (NPFMC staff) presented the draft EA for issuance of an EFP to test a trawl gear modification intended to reduce bycatch rates of Pacific halibut in the Central Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod trawl fishery. John Gauvin (Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation) provided details on the proposed experiment, which had been modified to consider only 2 pairs of vessels to reduce the vessel effect. The SSC commented that it would be appropriate to re-do the power analysis with the changed design. There was also discussion about the significance level used in the power analysis and the possibility of the use of a recapture bag. The experiment has a performance goal of reducing halibut bycatch per metric ton of allocated groundfish by at least 40% over an unmodified net. This goal is based on an estimate of head size dimensions of Pacific cod and halibut relative to the escape opening. The SSC would like to see documentation regarding how the head dimensions were estimated. Although the EFP stated that the vessel fishing the net with the excluder would tow at a slower speed than the vessel with the unmodified net, Dr. Gauvin stated that both vessels will tow at the same speed and all paired tows will be side by side. **Based on the findings of the EA, the discussion of the experimental design, and the IPHC approval of the experiment, the SSC recommends approval of the EFP to allow conduct of this experiment.**

D-1(b) Progress report on trawl salmon excluder research. John Gauvin (North Pacific Fisheries Research Foundation) and John Gruver (United Catcher Boats) provided an update on the latest trials with the salmon excluder. Trials in 2005-2006 showed good results on Chinook escapement after changing placement and size of the excluder and time of slowdowns. Future work includes a focus on maximizing the escapement at slowdown through the use of a flap that opens when tow speed decreases. The SSC commended the PIs for their advancements in gear modifications to reduce salmon bycatch.

D-2 EFH

Cathy Coon (NPFMC Staff) provided an overview of two discussion papers, the first on Bering Sea Habitat Conservation alternatives and the second on an evaluation of possible protection measures for St. Matthew blue king crab and eastern Bering Sea snow crab. The papers were intended to provide a framework to assist the Council in formulating a range of alternatives to minimize the effects of fishing on EFH in the Bering Sea. The alternatives currently envisioned are: 1) an open area approach, 2) gear modifications, and 3) other measures, including rationalization and a HAPC process. The presentation included reference to comments and recommendations made in May by the Crab Plan Team with regard to additional analyses needed to evaluate new habitat conservation measures.

The SSC received detailed public testimony from Dorothy Childers (Alaska Marine Conservation Council), Jon Warrenchuk (Oceana), John Gauvin (H&G Environmental Work Group), Peggy Murphy (Alaska Marine Conservation Council), and Michelle Ridgway (speaking on own behalf).

The SSC supports the recommendations by the Crab Plan Team (page 11 of their draft minutes), particularly those calling for analysis of the species composition of crab in trawl bycatch by sex and life history stage. This should be done in a spatial context, including those areas north of the Pribilof Islands that have had recent increased effort in the yellowfin sole fishery.

The SSC recommends that the Council should broaden consideration of alternatives to consider a wider array of potentially meaningful measures than currently envisioned. Specifically, analyses should consider these alternatives:

- 1) restricting open areas to areas traditionally fished with trawls;**
- 2) expansion of closed areas surrounding St. Matthew Island beyond the 3 nm closure in state waters to protect blue king crab and their habitat;**
- 3) additional closures of shelf break waters to conserve habitat in canyons (Middle, Zemchug, and Pribilof Canyons) and known skate nurseries;**
- 4) additional closures corresponding to special areas that may emerge from the analysis of crab life history stages; and**
- 5) consideration of closures specifically for research to assess the importance of benthic habitat for fish production.**

The SSC also supports an assessment of the effects of pelagic trawl gear on benthic habitats, as advised in a letter to the Council from the Alaska Regional Office of NMFS (June 1). The analysis should include a review of the current performance standard based on the number of crab captured, which, given the design and placement of large mesh on pelagic trawls, may be a poor indicator of effect on benthic habitats.

The SSC also requests that Council staff prepare an analysis of the efficacy of existing closures to protect Bering Sea Tanner crab, red king crab, and snow crab, given that implementation of additional closed areas is predicated on the assumption that current closures have had their intended effects. The analysis should also include an examination of survey and fishery bycatch data for the northern areas, especially with respect to shifting distributions of fish and fisheries.

It was noted that Dr. Craig Rose (AFSC) is currently in the field conducting studies with modified trawl gear intended to reduce trawl impact on soft bottom habitats found in the Bering Sea. Results from this study may be critical to develop recommendations for specific gear modifications.

D-3 Crab Management

D-3(a)(1) Crab Overfishing Definitions. The SSC received two reports from members of an inter-agency workgroup on progress toward refining alternative overfishing definitions for BSAI crab stocks. Jack Turnock presented the first report on an analysis by Turnock and Rugolo and the second was presented by Shareef Siddeek on an alternative analysis by Sideek and Zheng. There was no public testimony.

Compared to most groundfish species, modeling of crab life history is complicated and model parameterization and the choice of default values can and does vary substantially from one analytical team to the next. The SSC commends the two workgroup teams for the substantial progress they have made since April in developing simulation models to evaluate overfishing definition alternatives. While a number of differences between the two teams persist, both sets of analyses demonstrate that the proposed tier system is a considerable improvement over the current guidelines. The analyses provide a framework – in terms of an approach and models – for the development of the EA/RJR. The SSC encourages the

Crab Plan team and the workgroup to continue to attempt to resolve remaining differences and to identify a recommended model for each species.

Because of the differences between the two team's approaches, it is not possible to directly compare model results. Members of the two teams have indicated it is unlikely they will reconcile their remaining differences without outside mediation. While the Crab Plan Team may opt to go that route, it is conceivable that the end result would be a set of assigned model specifications that are satisfactory to neither team. An alternative the SSC heard, that merits serious consideration, is to split responsibility for the various crab species between the two groups. In the analyses presented to the SSC, in fact, one team was more focused on king crab while the other was more focused on snow crab. Such a division of responsibilities would allow the teams to concentrate their energy on a smaller set of species and to more fully develop the analyses of the overfishing definitions.

Whether the decision is made to co-develop models for all species or assign species to each team, there is a need to develop consistency in model output, analysis scenarios, and performance measures. For example, one team provided a concise comparison of how the proposed tier system performed in relation to the current system. Also, one team introduced measurement error in biomass estimation and its effect on performance statistics, while the other conducted a sensitivity analysis on certain parameters of the overfishing Tier formulas. **The SSC encourages the workgroup to meet and set a common ground for analyses. Some members of the SSC and/or Crab Plan Team may be able to assist in this effort.**

Some details that need consideration in the EA/RIR include:

1. The rebuilding plan uses mature male biomass as its currency, whereas the overfishing definitions are related to effective spawning biomass or total fertilized egg production. Consideration should be given to establishing a common currency by converting the rebuilding plan.
2. The Turnock/Rugolo study needs a complete description of model details and simulation methods and justification of arbitrary parameter values.
3. The Siddeek/Zheng study should downplay the deterministic analysis for clarity.
4. The Siddeek/Zheng study should use the term h for steepness (rather than sp) for consistency with other authors.
5. Both teams should consider the CIE suggestion of using a nonlinear, asymptotic function of mature male biomass as a proxy for total fertilized egg production.
6. Simulations should include the ADF&G control rule, so that one can examine whether the new overfishing definition will constrain ADF&G's TAC setting process.
7. The authors should consider whether eliminating management parameter β from the overfishing definition would simplify the analysis and efficacy.
8. In Tier 3, the provisional range of $F_{50\%}$ to $F_{60\%}$ should be investigated. The SSC would like flexibility for assessment authors to recommend values within this range. Similarly in Tier 4, the value of γ (gamma) that converts natural mortality to the recommended fishing mortality rate should remain flexible in the definition. The teams appear to have chosen a reasonable range of values in their analyses for exploring this tier.

Council staff should spearhead the development of the EA/RIR by writing up the alternatives and review process related to overfishing and assessment as soon as possible.

D-3(a)(2) CIE review of crab overfishing definition issues. Mike Bell presented a summary of the reports that he, Nick Caputi, and Patrick Cordue prepared for the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) on their review of the proposed crab overfishing definition analyses conducted by the interagency workgroup. There was no public testimony. Although the presentation was informative and well done, the SSC has not yet received the written CIE report. The CIE commented that the intent of the overfishing level definition should be described to distinguish it from acting as a default harvest strategy. The presentation stressed that the proposed tier system is much better than the status quo for making management

decisions. It also pointed out the evaluation parameters involved, especially B (index of spawning biomass), may be difficult to develop but need to be defined and robust. They promoted developing a short-term approach to allow the new tier system to move forward while also developing medium- and long-term research programs to improve understanding of crab life histories and population dynamics.

We anticipate that the CIE report will be helpful to the interagency workgroup by promoting the development of common performance standards for the evaluation of the proposed tiered overfishing definition. The CIE also provided useful comments on the developing snow crab assessment model structure and assumptions, and also concurred with the list of outstanding research needs identified by the interagency work group and crab plan team. The SSC looks forward to receiving the CIE report.

D-3(a)(3) Snow crab model. Jack Turnock (AFSC) gave a presentation on the development of the stock assessment model for snow crab. There was no public comment.

The SSC is pleased with the evolution of this model and envisions that it will soon be acceptable for biomass and status determination, as recommended by the Crab Plan Team. The model will be particularly useful if the alternative tier system under consideration is implemented. A variety of uncertainties remain that should be addressed before the model is adopted. **A revised model that addresses these issues should be vetted through the Crab Plan Team and presented to the SSC for approval before adoption.** Issues identified by the SSC include:

1. There are troublesome trends in the residuals from the model fits. In particular, there is an unusual number of positive residuals in the period 1987 – 2001 (e.g., Figure 2), such that the model consistently underestimates biomass. The document would benefit from a more formal residuals analysis, in which deviations on a log scale are presented. The author should investigate the sensitivity of the model to the low biomass data from the 1985 and 1986 surveys. The author should investigate alternative weighting scenarios in addition to inverse variance weighting. Finally, retrospective analysis may assist in determining whether bias exists in the model.
2. The male maturity data need additional examination. The logistic curve fitted to maturity of new-shell males does not fit well at smaller sizes. Better justification should be given for the logistic curve, or else a curve that matches the data should be used. A comparison of early and late survey data with respect to maturity is needed. Because the early surveys were restricted to the south, the survey range may affect the time series of maturity.
3. The document should explain the current rebuilding plan and gauge population status in regard to rebuilding goals.
4. The SSC agrees that shell condition may not be an accurate measure of age and awaits further investigation and resolution of this issue.
5. Having separate recruitment parameters by sex does not seem biologically plausible, unless there is evidence of differential mortality in the early life history. Only in 1981 is there any difference in estimated male and female recruitment, and this may be an artifact of uncertainty in the early data sources. Better justification is needed beyond the enhanced fit, or else separate parameters by sex should not be used.
6. The results from the spawner-recruit curve are not plausible, in that biomass during the entire time has been below the estimated B_{msy} level, even when the population boomed during two different cycles. This could be a consequence of the very high recruitment event of 1981. The sensitivity of B_{msy} to this data point should be investigated, as well as alternative spawner-recruit relationships.
7. Because the fishery occurs toward the south (in winter) but the population in the summer is more northward, it is unclear whether there may be differential exploitation by area. The author should further justify a single-area model and consider whether a spatial model or analysis is feasible.
8. The SSC recommends using points for observed values and lines for model values in the figures.

9. More detail should be provided about the number of model parameters used and how many data points were used to fit the model. The model has a high number of estimated parameters. Efforts should be made to reduce this number.
10. A sensitivity analysis of the model to life history features should be undertaken.
11. A research priority should be fieldwork to understand variations in size, sex, and season, so that inferences about movement during the year and relative to the fishery can be made.
12. A sensitivity analysis should be conducted to examine the effects of the assumption that catchability is equal to 1.
13. Differential estimates of longevity were presented for males (18-20 years) and females (13-15 years), however the same natural mortality rate was used for both sexes. Therefore, a higher mortality rate for females than males seems appropriate, as was recommended during the February workshop. The effect of using a somewhat higher natural mortality rate for females should be explored through a sensitivity analysis. The model consistently estimates more large females than seen in the survey. Examination of residuals should be included in the sensitivity analysis.

D-3(b) Crab Plan Team, Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC) Reports. Doug Pengilly (ADF&G) provided an overview of the Crab Plan Team meeting held in Seattle during May 2006. There was no public testimony. The Plan Team noted the need for additional expertise and formed a committee to solicit ideas and personnel for potential membership. The SSC agrees that the Team needs additional expertise, particularly in the area of stock assessment.

The Plan Team requested clarification on their role in peer review of crab assessments. The SSC recommends a peer review system similar to that for groundfish. Stock assessment authors prepare the stock assessment document, which contains information, analysis, recommendations of tier level, biomass level, and OFL. The Crab Plan Team then provides review of the assessment and its recommendations to the SSC. The SSC then provides its review to the Council family. The difficulty will be in forming a schedule for review that is timely given scheduling constraints. This same problem occurred when considering TAC-setting in groundfish management and may require advice from NOAA on the requirements for accommodating public review, as well, recognizing that the process for crab differs in that the State of Alaska sets the TAC, and not the NPFMC.

Arni Thomson presented the PNCIAC report. Members are concerned about an increase in discards of legal male king crab. The SSC shares this concern in that discards must be measured and accounted for in estimates of total fishing mortality and crab assessments. The higher the discards, the more uncertainty there is in the estimate of total removals and size distribution.

D-4 Ecosystem-based Management (No SSC quorum)

Diana Evans (NPFMC staff) presented the main recommendations from the last Ecosystem Committee meeting held in Seattle with regard to the development of an AI Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). There was also a brief update with regard to progress in advancing an ecosystem approach to management through the Alaska Marine Ecosystem Forum. It appears that this Forum is still in the developmental stage and would involve an interagency level policy group that might begin with the Aleutian Islands in the definition of cross-sector ecological management goals. There was some recognition that this broader approach might intersect with the FEP efforts in the future.

The committee recommendations were to initiate the development of an FEP for the Aleutian Islands to meet a number of purposes, primarily to integrate information across FMPs, refine indicators, identify sources of uncertainty, and ultimately to assist the Council in setting management goals and harvest levels and in understanding cumulative effects of management actions. The committee recommended that the Council should form an AI Ecosystem Team to work with Council staff to develop the AI FEP. Members

of the SSC present agreed that it would be useful to constitute such a team with membership that might contain individuals knowledgeable about groundfish, crab, habitat, seabirds and marine mammals. There was a question regarding the extent to which ADF&G fishery representatives could be involved and an acknowledgement that a broad range of expertise should be included. Involvement of academics and representatives of interest groups might also be desirable as team members to generate new, forward-thinking ways of applying the FEP. The Council might need to support travel costs for these types of individuals. Some efficiencies could involve utilizing some groundfish plan team members and this workgroup could potentially meet in conjunction with the groundfish plan team meetings. The full SSC will discuss potential membership for the Ecosystem Team intersessionally and provide a list of possible members to the Council this summer.

Additional Items

The SSC gives its thanks to Lt. Dan Schaeffer for his organization of Coast Guard demonstrations and the tour of the training center. They were highly informative and enjoyable! Finally, the SSC wishes to thank Jeff Stephan for arranging the use of the Fishermen's Hall for the SSC meeting.

**ADVISORY PANEL
MINUTES
JUNE 5-9, 2006
Kodiak, Alaska**

B-7 Protected Species

The AP supports the SSC's intent to thoroughly review and comment on the draft SSL Recovery Plan and recommends the Council request that NMFS extend the comment period to facilitate their efforts. *Motion carried 16/0*

The AP recommends that existing seabird avoidance requirements be maintained in all outside waters. *Motion carried 14/0*

C1 – IRIU

Amendment 80

AP recommends moving forward with the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (starting on page 7 of the Action Memo) with the following amendments:

Component 3 and 13– Change the allocation of yellowfin sole to the non-AFA trawl CP sector to 95% of the ITAC and in Component 13, adopt the following table for threshold levels and sector allocations of ITAC above the threshold:

Threshold Level of ITAC	Allocation to Non-AFA Trawl CPs	Limited Access
87,500	87.5%	12.5%
95,000	82%	18%
102,500	76.5%	23.5%
110,000	71%	29%
117,500	65.5%	34.5%
125,000+	60%	40%

Motion carried 10/6

Component 6

For halibut, the AP recommends 6.1.4 with a possible increase to the floor and ceiling for non-AFA trawl CP fleet to account for the impacts of Amendment 85 allocations and with consideration of taxing rollovers of halibut PSC from limited access fishery. *Motion carried 10/6*

Minority Report

The undersigned minority opposes the halibut PSC allocation formula under Option 6.1.4. The formula under-funds the non-AFA trawl CP sector's needs while over-funding the limited access fishery. The non-AFA trawl CP sector may be unable to harvest its allocations of Amendment 80 target species with this limited amount of halibut PSC, and will have no assurance of rollovers from the limited access fishery. This is contrary to the problem statement to "...provide the opportunity for participants in this sector to mitigate the cost, to some degree, associated with bycatch reduction." Signed: Lisa Butzner, Lori Swanson and John Moller

For crab, the AP recommends that an amount equal to the sum of the AFA CV and CP crab sideboards would be available to the limited access fishery. The remainder of the crab caps would be allocated to the non-AFA trawl CP sector. *Motion carried 16/0*

Component 11

Vessel use caps – No vessel shall harvest more than 30% of the non-AFA trawl CP allocation in the aggregate. *Motion carried 15/1*

Component 13

See Component 3

The AP recommends that the data necessary for monitoring and enforcement be collected under Amendment 80. Data collection necessary to evaluate the impacts of Amendment 80 should be developed as a trailing amendment. *Motion carried 16/0*

C-1(c) MRA

The AP recommends that the final send out the EA/RIR/IRFA for public review with modifications as described below and for final action in October.

Components and options for changing MRA accounting

The following components are proposed to address this MRA regulatory amendment:

Component 1: Define Species- Increase the enforcement interval for all groundfish species (excluding pollock, sablefish, Alaska plaice, "other species," and squid). This includes the following species: cod, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, Atka mackerel, BSAI Pacific ocean perch, "Other flatfish", and arrowtooth flounder, ~~greenland turbot and rockfish~~.

Option 1: Applies to cod, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, "Other flatfish" and arrowtooth flounder.

Option 2: Applies to Amendment 80 species (yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, Atka mackerel, Aleutian Islands Pacific ocean perch) as well as cod, "Other flatfish," and arrowtooth flounder.

Component 2: Define Sector- Any increase in the current enforcement MRA interval applies only to the non-AFA trawl C/P sector (under the Department of Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2005, Public Law No. 108-447)

Component 3: Define Time Period- The MRA enforcement period for species defined in Component 1 would be increased from any time during a fishing trip to:

Option 1: the end of a fishing trip or (if a suboption is selected whichever option or suboption comes first), or

Option 2: at the time of offload (changed from "point of offload").

Alternatives for MRA enforcement of selected species

Alternative 1. No action, and no change in MRA enforcement period.

Alternative 2. In the BSAI, allow the calculation of the MRA of cod, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, "other flatfish", and arrowtooth flounder to occur at the end of a fishing trip, for the non-AFA trawl C/P sector.

Option: Include Aleutian Islands Pacific ocean perch and Atka mackerel.

Alternative 3. In the BSAI, calculate the period of enforcement for MRA of cod, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, "other flatfish", and arrowtooth flounder, ~~Atka mackerel and AI pacific ocean perch~~ at the time of offload, (previously read: "at the point of an offload") for the non-AFA trawl C/P sector.

Option: Include Aleutian Islands Pacific ocean perch and Atka mackerel. ~~Greenland turbot and rockfish species~~

Due to the interaction of Amendment 80 and changes to BSAI MRAs, the AP recommends that the Council request staff to expand the cumulative effects section to address relevant elements under the Council's most current Amendment 80 package. *Motion carried 17/0*

Corrected C-3 CV Trawl Eligibility

The AP recommends the Council adopt the following problem statement:

The trawl catcher vessel groundfish fisheries in the BSAI and trawl vessel groundfish fisheries in the GOA are fully utilized. In addition, the existence of latent licenses may exacerbate the disadvantages to GOA dependant CVs resulting from a lack of comprehensive rationalization in the GOA. Competition for these resources is likely to increase as a result of a number of factors, including Council actions to rationalize other fisheries, favorable current market prices and a potential for TAC changes in future years. Trawl ~~catcher~~ vessel owners who have made significant ~~long-term~~ investments, have long catch histories, and are significantly dependent upon BSAI and GOA groundfish resources need protection from others who have little or no recent ~~limited~~ history and with the ability to increase their participation in the fisheries. This requires prompt action to promote stability in the trawl catcher vessel sector in the BSAI and trawl vessel sector in the GOA until comprehensive rationalization is completed.

Motion passed 15/0

The AP requests the Council adopt the staff language to clarify that Council intent is to use a license basis for action. *Motion passed 14/0*

Additionally, the AP requests the following components and options be included:

Component 1 – Area / subarea endorsements

Option 1: Catch thresholds will be applied at the management area level in the BSAI/GOA. Failure to meet the management area threshold will result in the removal of all subarea endorsements in the management area.

Option 2: Catch thresholds will be applied at the endorsement subarea level in the BSAI/GOA. Failure to meet the threshold for an endorsement subarea will result in the removal of that subarea endorsement.

Motion carries 13/0/1

Component 2 In addition to the threshold information already provided in the analysis, the AP recommends inclusion of the following additional landing requirements:

Option 1. Trawl LLPS (BSAI CV and GOA CV and CP) – trawl landing requirement (except sablefish)

1. No action
2. at least one landing of groundfish from 2000-2005
Suboption: at least one landing of groundfish from 1995-2005
3. at least two landings of groundfish from 2000-2005
Suboption: at least two landings of groundfish from 1995-2005

Option 2: Trawl LLPS (BSAI CV and GOA CV and CP) –groundfish landing requirement (except sablefish)

1. No action
2. at least one landing of groundfish from 2000-2005
Suboption: at least one landing of groundfish from 1995-2005
3. at least two landings of groundfish from 2000-2005
Suboption: at least two landings of groundfish from 1995-2005

Motion carries 14/0

Catch history of a vessel accumulated while licenses are stacked on the vessel will be fully credited to all stacked licenses (with qualifying endorsements and designations). *Motion carries 14/0*

The AP requests the Council have staff provide the number of stacked licenses with identical endorsements within the trawl sector and to provide the number of <60 ft licenses that would be eliminated under component 1 and 2. *Motion passed 15/0*

The AP requests staff provide information describing the parallel fishery pcod harvest in the AI by CV trawlers who hold valid trawl llps but do not have AI area endorsements. *Motion passed 15/0*

C-4 Halibut Charter Program

The AP recommends that the Council fast-track analysis of a halibut charter boat permanent solution instead of the moratorium. The analysis should incorporate the elements and options recommended by the stakeholder committee and staff's recommendations concerning community provisions (Attachment 5 on page 4 of the May 23, 2006 discussion paper excluding the last paragraph on that page).

The AP further recommends that the staff (including State of Alaska) work with KACO to further develop their proposal.

In the Stakeholder Committee report:

Issue 1. Allocation.

- ~~i. Total Constant Exploitation Yield and~~
- ~~ii. Combined commercial/charter Fishery Constant Exploitation Yield.~~

Motion carried 15/1

The AP has heard the community of Kodiak charter halibut fleet in their desire to allocate the GHs between sub-areas and the development of local area and sub-area management plans and recommends inclusion of these concepts in the analysis. Area registration should be considered as part of the local area management plans.

Motion carried 16/0

Should the Council decide to go ahead with an interim moratorium, the AP recommends the following modifications to the Council's April 2006 moratorium alternative.

Issue 1. Areas

Option 1. ~~2C&3A~~

Option 2. For Areas 2C and 3A communities previously identified under Amendment 66.

~~Suboption a. Exclude the following communities from the moratorium~~

~~Suboption b. Provide community eligibility through CQE to purchase moratorium licenses between 3-25 per community.~~

Qualify community CQE's as eligible to purchase moratorium permits.

Area 2C- 5 permit limit

Area 3A - 10 permit limit

Suboption c. ~~Provide the qualifying CQE an option to request, on behalf of community residents, additional charter halibut moratorium permits from NMFS for use by residents in the community.~~

~~Between 5-25 permits per community~~

~~Permits requested would have limited duration for any one individual from 5-15 years.~~

The CQE in CQE qualified Communities that have less than 10 active charter business (with 20 or more charter trips per year) with their primary place of business in the community can request, on behalf of a community resident (as defined in amendment 66), a limited entry permit.

1. Area 2C – up to 3 permits per qualified community

2. Area 3-A - up to 5 permits per qualified community option

Issue 6:

Eliminate option 1 *Motion carried 14/1*

The AP further recommends the Council work with the State of Alaska to establish authority for the State to support management of halibut charter harvests within established allocation and conservation guidelines.

Motion carried 14/0/1

C-5 Observer Program

The AP recommends the Council adopt Alternative 2. *Motion carried 15/0*

Video Monitoring

The AP appreciates the efforts of the agency to date and looks forward to updates on the use of video monitoring in the rockfish pilot program. The AP recommends that the Council encourage the agency to continue development of video monitoring. *Motion carried 15/0*

C-6 IFQ Omnibus V proposed amendments

The AP recommends the following preferred alternatives:

Action 1. Use of catcher vessel QS

Alternative 2. Allow processing of non-IFQ species on a vessel that is otherwise authorized to process non-IFQ species when any amount of IFQ halibut resulting from quota share assigned to vessel categories B, C, or D are held by fishermen on board a vessel in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Aleutian Islands. *Motion passed 15/0*

Action 2. Sablefish pots

Alternative 2 Allow use of longline pot gear in the Bering Sea IFQ and CDQ sablefish fisheries during June *Motion passed 15/0*

Action 3. Inactive IFQ permits

Alternative 1. No action *Motion passed 12/3*

Minority Report

We, the undersigned, support Alternative 3, QS lottery program, which provides a means for redistributing unused halibut quota shares to qualified recipients. Signed, Julianne Curry, Michelle Ridgway, and John Moller

Action 4. Military exemption for mobilized reservists and guardsmen

Alternative 2. Allow mobilized reservists and guardsmen to temporarily transfer IFQs for the duration of their deployment. *Motion passed 15/0*

The AP discussed that future gear conflicts may occur under Action#2, and notes for the Council the possibility of future requests to address such conflicts should they occur.

Motion passed 14/1

D-1 Groundfish Management

The AP recommends the Council Issue an Exempted Fishing Permit to Test a Trawl Gear Modification to Reduce Bycatch Rates for Pacific Halibut in the Central Gulf of Alaska Pacific Cod Trawl Fishery. *Motion passed 16/0.*

D-2 EFH BSAI habitat conservation

The AP recommends the Council accept the following alternatives and options for analysis:

Alternative 1, status quo

Alternative 2, Open area approach utilizing fishing data through 2005 to define area

Option 1: Include the areas north of Bogoslof, south of Nunivak Island in the open area, and the 10 minute strip in the Red King Crab Savings Area.

Alternative 3, Require gear modifications on all bottom flatfish trawl gear to reduce seafloor contact and/or increase clearance between the gear and substrate.

Alternative 4. Open area approach utilizing fishing data through 2005 to define area, plus require gear modifications on all bottom flatfish trawl gear to reduce seafloor contact and/or increase clearance between the gear and substrate.

Option 1: include the areas north of Bogoslof and south of Nunivak Island in the open area, and the 10

minute strip in the Red King Crab Savings Area.

Motion passed 10/5/1

The minority of the AP objects to the very narrow range of alternative for addressing BS EFH in the motion. These alternatives do not sufficiently address crab EFH protection, do not incorporate research areas, or address other EFH priorities identified by the SSC. Signed: Michelle Ridgway, Duncan Fields, Bob Jacobson.

There was a motion to strike "bottom trawl gear" and replace with "trawl gear fished on bottom". *Motion failed 12/3/1*

Minority Report: The AP minority notes that NMFS letter on pelagic trawl definition, dated May 2006, public comment on the EFH EIS, and analysis in the EFH EIS mention that through labeled "pelagic" pelagic trawl nets are frequently fished in contact with seafloor habitat. For this reason, the AP minority feels that pelagic trawls fishing on the bottom should be evaluated for possible modifications under the current analysis. Signed Michelle Ridgway, Jeb Morrow, and Duncan Fields.

D-4 AI Ecosystem Plan

The AP recommends that the Council endorse the Ecosystem Committee's recommendations regarding initiating development of an Aleutian Islands Fisheries Ecosystem Plan and forming an AI ecosystem team.

Motion passed 15/0/1

D-5 Staff Tasking

The AP recommends that seabird avoidance requirements be eliminated for longline vessels fishing in the inside waters of Prince William Sound (NMFS Area 649), Southeast Alaska (NMFS Area 659), and state waters of Cook Inlet. Avoidance requirements in southern Chatham Strait and Dixon Entrance of the SEAK region should remain in place due to increased risk to seabirds in those areas. *Motion carried 14/0*

The AP strongly supports efforts to institutionalize the collection and management of seabird observation data from fish stock assessment surveys from NMFS and IPHC. We also strongly support making the data available through the North Pacific Palegic Seabird Databse. *Motion carried 14/0*

The AP requests the Council encourage further research regarding seabird avoidance measures for small vessels which do not have poles, mast and rigging (PMR). *Motion passed 16/0*

The data collection plan for the BSAI crab rationalization program and the anticipated data collection plan for the Amendment 80 groundfish fishery provide important information for program evaluation and review. The AP notes that parallel data collection protocols are not in place of the AFA and IFQ rationalization programs. Therefore, the AP recommends the Council direct staff to develop data collection programs that are appropriate for and applicable to the AFA and IFQ rationalization programs and will provide programmatic evaluation information that is parallel to the information obtained through the BSAI crab and Amendment 80 programs. *Motion passed 16/0*

The AP recommends that the Council request staff to develop a discussion paper addressing the following SSC recommendations on Bering Sea Essential Fish Habitat:

2. expansion of closed areas surrounding St. Matthew Island beyond the 3 nm closure in state waters to protect blue king crab and their habitat,
3. additional closures of shelf break waters to conserve habitat in canyons (Middle, Zemchug, and Pribilof Canyons) and known skate nurseries;
4. additional closures corresponding to special areas that may emerge from the analysis of crab life history stages;
5. consideration of closures specifically for research to assess the importance of benthic habitat for fish production.

Motion passed 15/1