

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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SUMMARY OF MEETING
OF THE
SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

Anchorage, Alaska

November 29-December 5, 1976

The attached summary was excerpted and condensed from 469 pages of verbatim minutes of the series of meetings convened by the SSC immediately before and during the Second Plenary Session of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

The verbatim minutes are on file at the following location:

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Suite 32, Post Office Mall Building
Post Office Box 3136-DT
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

The opening meeting was called to order by Acting Chairman D.L. Alverson at 1:30 p.m. November 29, 1976 in the Banquet Room of the Sheffield House. By November 30th, all committee members were in attendance along with several participants of the Fishery Plan Working groups.

Committee members in attendance:

Alverson, D. Lee (Acting Chairman)	Rogers, George
Bevan, Donald	Rosenberg, Donald
Loeffel, Robert	Rosier, Carl
Miles, Edward	Skud, Bernard
Pennoyer, Steven	Woelke, Charles

A partial listing of Work Group participants in attendance:

Lechner, Jack	Collingsworth, Don
McCrary, Jerry	Gaffney, Fred
Reeves, Jerry	Olsen, James
Davis, Al	Simpson, Robert
Edfelt, Larry	Donaldson, Bill
Koenemin, Tim	Kaiser, Rod
Powell, Guy	

Francis Fukuhara was in attendance as alternate spokesman for Dr. Alverson on matters concerning the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The general order of business of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) was as follows:

November 29, 1976

Monday 2:00 pm

Elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman, considered special assignment by the Council to examine total allowable catch for King Crab and for Eastern Bering Sea Tanner Crab; described general charge to SSC in advising Council on management plans, emphasized Committee's need to maintain credibility, defined procedures and priorities for Committee action.

November 30, 1976

Tuesday 8:30 am

Reviewed King Crab Management Plan

4:30 pm

Examined re-analysis of Tanner Crab Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the Eastern Bering Sea Study and Resolution of King Crab Management Plan and Assignments were made to sub-committee for revamping Plan.

December 1, 1976

Wednesday 8:30 am

Recognized need for sub-committee to develop more explicit working definitions of MSY, TAC, OY, and capacity and to revise some language in the SSC Charter.

3:00 pm

Discussed definitions and suggested revision to Charter. Reviewed new draft introduction to King Crab Management Plan. Begin reviewing of Shrimp Management Plan.

December 2, 1976

Thursday 8:30 a.m.

Discussed new revisions to introduction to draft King Crab Management Plan to serve also as guidance to redrafting other fishery management plans. Briefly discussed fishery management plans for scallops and trawl fisheries. Reviewed draft letter to Council Chairman unanimously requesting changes to the Charter. Consider contents for a SSC report to the Council. Discussed need for Council to define socio-economic objectives so that SSC can determine kinds of data and analyses that will be required.

Afternoon

Committee attended the opening Council meeting.

December 3, 1976

Friday 1:30 p.m.

Discussed working definitions of certain terms for use in management plans sub-committee designated to prepare recommendations on socio-economic drafts and statistics required for management plan. Discussed revisions for Tanner Crab Management Plan.

December 3, 1976

Friday, 8:30 p.m.

Discussed priorities and strategies for management plan development. Committee progress report on draft plan preparation prepared for presentation to the Council. Working definitions of MSY, equilibrium yield, TAC and OY generally agreed to. Statement on annual fishing capacity needed further consideration.

Saturday
December 4, 1976
1:00 p.m.

Discussed revisions on preliminary management plans (PMP) for King and Tanner Crabs of the Eastern Bering Sea because of revised estimates of TAC of legal sized C. bairdi. Discussed management recommendations for herring in the PMP for trawl fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands.

December 4, 1976
8:00 p.m.

Discussed revisions to PMP's on Tanner Crab, trawl fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, and trawl fisheries of the Gulf of Alaska. Prepared statements of recommendations to present to the Council on December 5, 1976 on PMP's.

LIST OF ACTIONS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) took the following actions during its series of meetings from November 29 - December 5, 1976. SSC Chairman Alverson's report to the Council on December 2, and Vice-Chairman Pennoyer's report to the Council on December 5, recorded on pages 5-32 and on pages 383-438 of the Council's verbatim minutes, refers to in greater detail most of the actions listed below:

1. Nominated for Council approval of Alverson to serve as Chairman and Pennoyer as Vice-Chairman to the SSC for 2-year terms.
2. In response to the Council charges from the first plenary session, the committee:
 - (a) Resolved differences in viewpoints between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service on interpretation of King Crab TAC values;
 - (b) Reanalyzed Tanner Crab data for the Eastern Bering Sea to develop graphic information on:
 - (i) The geographic distribution of C. bairdi and C. opilio.
 - (ii) The geographic separation and overlap of Japanese and U.S. fisheries for C. bairdi.
 - (c) Identified four individuals who could provide a good general overview to the Council on Limited Entry.
 - (d) Confirmed management plan working teams to prepare eight draft fisheries management plans on King Crab, Tanner Crab, shrimp, Dungeness Crab, Scallop, Gulf and Bering Sea trawl fisheries, and black cod.
 - (e) Did not fulfill one charge. Work demands for developing a large number of management plans did not allow time for the staffs of NMFS or AFD & G to develop socio-economic data for adjusting downward the Tanner Carb TAC's.

3. The Chairman reported to Council the SSC's compliments to the members of working teams who produced the seven planning documents constituting more than 1,000 pages in 1 months time. This was accomplished under a tremendously strained time period and without adequate guidelines. He pointed out, however, that the SSC found some difficulty with all of the plans in that some of the material and conclusions were at times not supported by reference or appropriate scientific or statistical information and that socio-economic information was in most instances quite superficial.
4. Reported to Council the SSC's view that all of the draft fishery management plans could be improved with a substantial redraft of the introductory sections. Further, that during the week the SSC dealt with the draft King Crab Management Plan in detail by working with the drafters of the plan to redraft the entire introduction section which could serve as a model for redrafting all draft plans.
5. Recommended that the Council move with the development of the Management Plans on a phased basis:
 - (a) The first phase being to adopt as plans the State regulations. They would stand alone and would be justified by the best scientific information that is now available. These first plans should be adopted to insure stability in the fisheries. The introductory materials now written into the drafts establishes this philosophical tone. The redrafted plans should be available for Council review by the next session.
 - (b) The second phase would be amended plans based upon systematic in-depth reviews and analyses of old and new data sources of biological, economic, and sociological information that would be relevant to specific regulatory measures. It was further recommended that the phased plans be submitted to the secretary of Commerce by April 1978.
6. Advised that the Council soon develop some very specific socio-economic objectives and goals, especially in terms of optimum yield, against which the SSC can judge any regulation or proposed regulations. Establishing such goals and objectives would provide direction to determining the kind of data required.

7. Called the Council's attention to some serious difficulties with the draft Tanner Crab Plan dealing with allocations to foreign fisheries. The plan gives no rationale for a disparity between the 333 million pound surplus of C. opilio and the allocation of 7,700 metric tons. The legality of treating the matter under Creatures of the Continental Shelf should be explored. In the case of C. bairdi, a major logical error was found in the surplus which increased the TAC from 40 million to 108 million pounds.
8. The Council was informed a letter would be forthcoming on the changes the SSC wanted written into its committee charter.
9. The SSC asked the Council to consider sending a wire to the Department of Commerce and NOAA asking for an extension of time -- beyond December 2 -- to comment on interim regulations.
10. Informed the Council that the SSC was developing a list of Operational definitions of technical terms so that their use in the plans and discussions will be in accord with consistent interpretations.
11. Expressed hope that the Council Chairman and the Executive Secretary would be in consultation with the Chairman of the SSC in developing agenda. A number of items should be grouped in the proper places thus enabling the SSC to dismiss itself from Council attendance and go into session to continue working on issues important to the Council.
12. In response to the Council's reorientation of priorities on fishery management plans, SSC Vice Chairman Pennoyer reported on the Committee's analyses and advice on Preliminary Management Plans for Tanner Crab of Eastern Bering Sea and for Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries.

A) Main actions on the Tanner Crab PMP were to reexamine the plan in view of certain new data and analyses that became available in preparation of the Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan during this session. These analyses resulted in a TAC of 108 million pounds of legal size C. bairdi for the

Eastern Bering Sea and a TAC of 167 million pounds of C. opilio North of 58 degrees North and West of 173 degrees West. Data presented to the SSC in the draft management plan indicate the United States had both the harvesting and processing capacity to take the TAC of C. bairdi in the Eastern Bering Sea but no quantitative market data was available for evaluating the desire of the U.S. industry to increase harvests from the present level of 22 million pounds up to the TAC. The U.S. and foreign fleets could be separated by allowing no foreign crab harvests South and East of 58 degrees lat. and 173 West long.

B) Bering Sea Trawl PMP: Based on additional information the SSC concurred that:

1) Herring - The overall condition of the herring stocks was severely depressed and recommended that the trawl harvest be severely reduced to perhaps one-half the most recent year of documented harvest or approximately to 11,000 metric tons. Subsistence utilization of herring in Western Alaska is very important to the residents of the area, herring stocks in some areas are greatly depressed, hence the gillnet fishery on Western Alaska stocks should be eliminated.

2) Sablefish - Bering Sea: There is a declining trend in harvest and the TAC is presently set somewhat higher than last year's harvest level and may be too high.

3) Pacific Ocean Perch - Bering Sea: TAC may be high for rebuilding this admittedly greatly reduced stock. The SSC recommends that lead agency for PMP development revise this figure as appropriate.

C) Gulf of Alaska PMP: The SSC pointed out several errors in the trawl tables on TAC. The TAC for rockfishes should be 30,000 metric tons instead of 50,000 and for flounders should be 24,000 metric tons rather than 37,500.

13. During the several SSC meetings public comment was heard from several members of the fishery sector:

A. Sig Jaeger, Manager of the North Pacific Vessel Owner's Association, who expressed his hope that as an advisor he can be equally helpful to the Scientific Committee and to the Council in the deliberations of these groups.

B. Hank Ostrosky, commercial fisherman, objected to the meetings not being adequately advertised and also to the ultimate authority resting with the Secretary of Commerce for fisheries management.

C. Tom Casey, representing United Fishermen's Marketing Association, requested that the Tanner Crab Plan include the fact that there was a twenty-one percent drop in the catch per unit effort in the triangle area, and stated he would provide a draft note to the Committee on this matter.

On definitions of OY and capacity Mr. Casey stated that optimization of the catch should promote the goal of strengthening the U.S. domestic commercial fishery. The calculations on capacity should include the capacity being constructed in Seattle and transferring from the East Coast to Alaska for the 1977 King Crab fishery. Please remind the Council to let more economists on Scientific and Statistical Committee.

D. Oral Burch, shrimp fisherman, favors the State's system of guideline harvest levels as now being applied to protect the shrimp resources around Kodiak. It is on a very cautious scale and he is all for it.