

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There have been two Council mailings this month and little has occurred since the last one on September 13 to report here. One business item that is not on the agenda is a request from Joe Angelovic, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science and Technology of NMFS, for our input on an agenda for a meeting between the Councils and Center directors. He believes we should discuss the best ways to provide the Councils with continuing information for FMPs, information for new FMPs, and how Councils should be involved in the NMFS planning process [Attachment B-1(a)]. I would like your help in responding to that letter. We have recently summarized groundfish data needs in a letter to Bob McVey [Attachment B-1(b)] and that may be our primary thrust for the immediate future. Resource assessments for both utilized and currently unutilized stocks off Alaska can always be improved. The effects of different fishing techniques on the resource and the environment is another area where it's painfully clear that information is lacking. A small Council-SSC-AP ad-hoc workgroup might be an efficient route for developing a response to Mr. Angelovic's letter.

The Finance Committee should meet Wednesday morning prior to the Council meeting to review current finances and review bids and award the contract for our biannual audit. From the inquiries received we should have at least five bids by the deadline of September 20.

I'd like to introduce Terry Smith who entered on duty September 3 as a Council economist. He comes to us from the University of Maryland. Many of you met him on a earlier trip this spring. Will Barber, on a sabbatical from his post as professor of fisheries at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, will be working with us through at least the end of the year as a member of the Gulf groundfish team. I think we're very fortunate to have both of them, experts in their areas, as we tackle some of the very difficult problems that are facing us.

Please submit your travel claims as soon as possible after this Council meeting. The fiscal year ends September 30 and we need to get the books in order as soon as possible.

Judy needs to know how many of you expect to visit Fish Expo October 16-20. She'd like to work up a schedule so a Council member will be at our booth as often as possible.

Attachment B-1(c) is a current summary of the status of the Council's fishery management plans.



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**  
Washington, D.C. 20235

Mr. James O. Campbell  
Chairman, North Pacific Fishery  
Management Council  
Suite 2D, P.O. Box 103136  
Anchorage, AK 99510

AUG 16 1985

RECEIVED SEP 9 1985

ACTION	ROUTE TO	INITIAL
		J

Dear Mr. Campbell:

After hearing Bill Gordon's and Dick Roe's comments following their July 29th meeting with all the Council Chairmen, I am concerned that you feel we have made little or no progress in meeting the Council's information needs since the Hilo meeting. Because the information I receive on the subject varies so widely, I am uncertain as to whether the problems are just in communication or understanding, or are real. Therefore I believe that the only way to try to resolve the situation is to have representatives from all Councils sit down with our Center Director's at one time for discussions.

Prior to such a meeting, however, I would like you to give me your thoughts on an appropriate agenda for the meeting. My intentions are to discuss the following:

1. How to best provide the Councils with the continuing information required for FMPs already in place.
2. How to best provide the Councils with the information necessary to prepare new FMPs.
3. Where and how the Councils should be involved in the NMFS program planning process.

If you have any suggestions for a location and time for the meeting I would appreciate your input.

Finally, in order to keep this issue moving, I would appreciate having you responses to this letter by the end of September. This will provide us with the opportunity to schedule a meeting before the next scheduled Council Chairman's meeting.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Angelovic  
Deputy Assistant Administrator  
for Science and Technology



# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

James O. Campbell, Chairman  
Jim H. Branson, Executive Director

411 West 4th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 103136  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

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

September 13, 1985

Robert W. McVey  
Regional Director, NMFS  
P.O. Box 1668  
Juneau, Alaska 99802

Dear Bob:

We need to pursue major NMFS support for comprehensive monitoring of the domestic groundfish fisheries off Alaska. Current collection programs are a combination of state and federal efforts, the latter emphasizing foreign directed and joint venture operations. This arrangement sufficed so long as foreigners dominated the fisheries. But the composition of the fisheries is changing, and so must NMFS' attitude toward supporting domestic data collection.

Joint venture harvests have grown rapidly since 1978 and your office now projects them to catch 837,840 mt for 1985. DAP fishermen have cracked the 50,000 mt barrier of the past two years and are projected to harvest 136,000 mt this year. In 1986 the Gulf of Alaska will most likely be fished only by domestic fishermen as will a major share of Bering Sea and Aleutians groundfish.

The Council and NMFS have taken the lead in managing groundfish, but have relied on the State of Alaska to report on DAP deliveries which until now have been relatively small. The State has warned repeatedly that budget shortfalls will reduce their ability to monitor domestic groundfish activities and it now looks as though their groundfish budget may run out by June 30, 1986. Time is quickly running out to take a hard look at reprogramming NMFS' budget to pick up the shortfall and to ensure that subsequent budgets adequately reflect groundfish data collection needs off Alaska. The following table summarizes the funding required for groundfish monitoring:

### Summary of Annual Groundfish Data Funding Needs

Port sampling, logbook and fish ticket collection	\$239,000
Observers on Domestic Vessels	\$450,000-1,100,000
Observer Program Project Manager	50,000
Central Data Base Coordinator	50,000
Total	<u>\$789,000-1,439,000</u>

These funding levels are derived from a review of each of the general components of the data monitoring system discussed below. I refer several

times to recommendations of the Groundfish Data Workgroup made up of Rich Marasco, Loh Lee Low, Janet Smoker, Jim Wilson, Phil Rigby, Fritz Funk and Clarence Pautzke whose report of December 4, 1984 was forwarded to you and others on the Interagency Groundfish Data Workgroup on January 11, 1985.

### Fish Tickets

ADF&G collects landings receipts for shoreside deliveries and U.S. catcher/processors. Groundfish receipts make up 3-5% of ADF&G's total volume for all fisheries. Port biologists contact local processors and transmit catch data weekly to Juneau for aggregation and transmittal each Monday to PacFIN where they are pooled with joint venture and foreign fisheries catch reports coming in through the federal system. The slowest link in ADF&G's reporting is for catcher/processors which stay out long periods and land in Washington. WDF collects the tickets and forwards them to Alaska for entry into the groundfish data base. The catcher/processor radio reporting requirements of Amendments 9 and 14 to the groundfish FMPs will provide for much more timely reporting.

The data workgroup's recommendations focused on improved timeliness in reporting landings and adequate coverage of catcher/processors. The Council responded with its \$145,000 Groundfish Data Monitoring Contract (#84-4) which funds personnel to collect, enter, and edit ticket data, a communications link to Dutch Harbor, and computer equipment for ADF&G to facilitate data entry. In addition, ADF&G's Fritz Funk has contributed 25% of his time to ensure timely reports to PacFIN and to respond to data needs for management by your office. PacFIN, supported solely by NW and SW Region and Center funds, has contributed time of their data coordinator, Will Daspit, to develop groundfish report formats useful to our plan teams and your staff and to ensure timely aggregation and reporting of data coming in from ADF&G, WDF and NMFS. These efforts have resulted in comprehensive catch reports within 14-21 days of landing. Problems this past season with prompt sablefish reporting are being worked on by Fritz Funk and should be sorted out for 1986.

For 1986 we will be able to maintain ADF&G's monitoring of DAP catches only if NMFS can pick up the shortfall in ADF&G funding after July 1. This shortfall will reduce State groundfish permanent personnel to two biologists, one in Kodiak and the other in Petersburg, and some seasonal time in Sitka. The Council's data contract for ADF&G personnel also runs out next June. Therefore, to maintain the current level of reporting without any improvements, NMFS must find funds for the following positions beginning July 1, 1986:

Dutch Harbor	\$64,000	(one position)
Kodiak	\$40,000	(one position)
Homer	\$50,000	(one position to cover landings in Seward, Cordova, Valdez; 75% of W. Yakutat sablefish was processed through these ports)
Sitka	\$45,000	(3/4 position for FCZ landings in Yakutat and Pelican)
Petersburg	\$40,000	(one position to cover FCZ landings in Southeast inside ports)
Total	<u>\$239,000</u>	for July 1, 1986 - June 30, 1987

Funding these positions would provide for the needed data collection but for little data manipulation or analysis. ADF&G will continue to support the Dutch Harbor data link after Council funds run out.

### On-Board Observers

NMFS covers foreign and joint venture fisheries, but observer presence on U.S. catcher boats is minimal to non-existent. This year ADF&G observers made only 6 trawl trips, down from 22 in 1984. No longliners were observed.

Many of our management problems will be with incidental catches of highly valued prohibited species such as crab, salmon and halibut, and we cannot expect them to be reported adequately through voluntary logbooks. ADF&G has analyzed its needs for coverage of U.S. groundfish vessels (trawl or longline) delivering to shorebased processors. Minimal coverage of 20% of trawl fishing days in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea and 5% of longline days in the Gulf will require 62 observer man-months. An optimal level of 62% in GOA trawl, 18% in GOA longline, and 28% in BSA trawl would require 188 observer man-months at sea. An additional 12-18 man-months would be required to achieve 20% coverage of offshore U.S. catcher-processors. At \$5,600/month (salary and benefits), but not including travel and per diem or other costs which would likely add about 20%, the total costs for observers and a project coordinator are:

On-Board Observers:	\$450,000 (minimal) - \$1.1 million (optimal)
Project Manager:	\$ 50,000
Total:	\$0.5 - \$1.15 million

### Logbooks

A letter from Pete Jackson (Attachment A) originally prompted this epistle on groundfish data funding needs. The Council's \$33,400 support for port samplers to collect joint venture logbooks ran out in June, but as Jackson notes, it's very difficult to turn off a data collection program once it's started. Nor should it be. Initial response in 1982 was very meager with only 329 tows collected. It increased to 3,536 tows in 1983 and with ADF&G canvassing the docks twice daily in Dutch and Kodiak in 1984, 8,400 tows were collected. This year upwards of 14,000-16,000 tows will be added to the data base. ADF&G's samplers have contributed to the success of the program: this year alone 67% of tows received came through ADF&G personnel. Joint venture skippers have become accustomed to interacting with ADF&G personnel, having their logbooks reviewed, and providing additional details when necessary.

Some may argue that the logbook program became unnecessary when NMFS observers on joint venture processing vessels began using the new Form 2JV last January to collect tow-specific data. Neither I nor PacFIN's Joint Venture Subcommittee, chaired by Rich Marasco, think this is so. There are three compelling arguments for continued support of the logbook program despite some redundancy with the NMFS observer program:

- (1) With both programs in place, we have an opportunity to evaluate the accuracy of logbook data using observer information. This will be very useful when DAP trawlers, sans observers, dominate the fisheries.

- (2) The visibility of the logbook system needs to be maintained. Skippers are becoming accustomed to the program and we undoubtedly will need to rely more heavily on their voluntary compliance in the future unless major observer funding comes through.
- (3) Skippers are more comfortable in reporting certain tow-specific data in logbooks than over the radio to the NMFS observer on the grounds. Janet Wall, NWAFC, noted this problem and provided the following compliance levels for NMFS observer data which I've compared with responses in logbooks:

<u>Data Type</u>	<u>NMFS Obs. - 1985</u>	<u>JV Logbooks</u>	
		<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
Set Position	(%) 60	(%) 97	(%) 93
Retrieval Position	72	95	89
Net on/off bottom time	54	97	95
Fishery depth	82	1	16
Bottom depth	66	48	95
Number of Tows	(3,637)	(3,220)	(8,400)

ADF&G will continue to collect logbooks through June 1986 with support from the Council's data monitoring contract which also tasks ADF&G to build a data base from the 8,200 tows collected through DAP logbooks. PMFC will continue to publish and distribute the joint venture logbooks to the fleet and Rich Marasco has assigned Center personnel to analyze and tabulate results and prepare an annual report each June for distribution to fishermen, scientists and managers. However, unless NMFS funds positions in Dutch Harbor and Kodiak as described above in the section on fish tickets, important dockside contact with skippers, which accounted for 67% of the tow data sets, will be lost and response rates may decline significantly.

#### Port Sampling and Age-Weight-Length

ADF&G's port samplers provide catch composition and collect otoliths and age-weight-length data. Aging is done at a small lab in Kodiak. NMFS does AWL sampling during surveys and does the analysis at the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center. If NMFS funds the positions described above in the fish ticket section, AWL and species composition sampling can be maintained at current levels. However, without funding for the Kodiak ageing lab, all samples will need to be analyzed at NWAFC whose budget may need augmentation for the increased load.

#### Central Data Base Coordinator

The Data Workgroup identified an urgent need for a central data base coordinator to bring together multi-source groundfish data. He must be responsive to the information needs of management and cleared to handle unaggregated state and federal data. He will be supervised by a data committee of state, federal and Council personnel. We estimate that about \$45,000 will support a data program at the GS-11/12 level for a year in Seattle with some funds left over for travel. As you're aware, the Council recently approved \$15,000 to support the position and with the \$30,000 from

Robert W. McVey  
September 13, 1985  
Page 5

the Center and Region, someone will be hired in the near future. The position will become particularly important to the Region as Fritz Funk moves from FCZ groundfish data coordination on to other activities within ADF&G. The position will require the following annual support:

Central Data Base Coordinator: \$50,000

As you can see, Bob, a healthy sum of money is needed to annually monitor the groundfish fisheries off Alaska. Just to maintain a minimal program if state funding ends next summer, we'll need the following outlay:

Basic Groundfish Monitoring System Without Observers

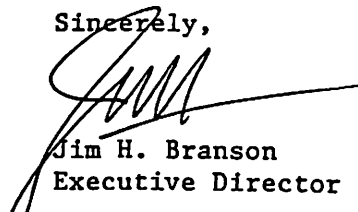
	<u>1 July-30 Sept 86</u>	<u>1 Oct 86-30 Sept 87</u>
Port Sampling, logbooks and fish tickets (approx. \$20,000/month)	\$60,000	\$240,000
Central Data Base Coordinator	---	50,000
Total	<u>\$60,000</u>	<u>\$290,000</u>

At the Chairmen's meeting in Alderbrook, Bill Gordon encouraged the Councils to participate in the budget process for NMFS but indicated that FY88 was the first budget we could possibly influence. He also indicated that a special appropriation may be needed to fund domestic observers. At the minimum, we should reprogram the NMFS budget to provide the needed \$60,000 for FY86 and \$290,000 for FY87 and also pursue observer funding for at least \$500,000. For FY88 NMFS should earmark about \$1.5 million for groundfish data activities off Alaska.

I realize these are hard funding decisions to make and that some other programs are going to have to be cut. Considering how rapidly the groundfish fisheries off Alaska are becoming Americanized, I see no other choice. And the above groundfish data monitoring funding is just part of the overall funding needed to support fisheries management off Alaska. Research and analysis, trawl surveys, etc., also need support. We are in the process of responding to Angelovic's letter (Attachment B) which goes far beyond basic groundfish data monitoring capabilities.

Let's get together during Council week to discuss these issues more thoroughly and develop strategies for their resolution.

Sincerely,

  
Jim H. Branson  
Executive Director

Enclosures

STATUS OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS

1. Salmon FMP

The Council will review a proposal to rewrite the FMP taking into account provisions of the U.S-Canada Salmon Treaty.

2. Herring FMP

No action is scheduled for this meeting. The Bering-Chukchi Sea Herring Fishery Management Plan was approved by the Council on September 28, 1983 for Secretary of Commerce review. In May 1984, however, the Council decided to take no further action on the plan until more scientific data become available. The data needed include winter and summer stock distribution and composition as well as offshore biomass estimates. On December 11, 1984, the Council requested the Secretary of Commerce to implement a data collection program. Bill Gordon sent a letter on July 3, 1985 stating that NMFS is not in a position to fund such a program.

3. King Crab FMP

No action is scheduled for this meeting. The FMP became effective December 2, 1984, but final implementing regulations will not be published until late 1985 or early 1986.

4. Tanner Crab FMP

No action is scheduled for this meeting. Only one minor season change by regulatory amendment was needed as a result of decisions by the Board of Fisheries last March.

5. Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

At this meeting the Council will review the status of groundfish stocks and send initial estimates of DAP/JVP/TALFF apportionments to public review. Final decisions will be made in December.

The Council passed Amendment 14 in May 1985 and the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was published in the Federal Register on July 26 for comment until September 9. NMFS/NOAA's final decision on the amendment is due September 26.

On July 15, 1985 NMFS published an emergency interim rule authorizing the Secretary of Commerce to close fishing for a single species of groundfish without closing fisheries for other species whose optimum yield has not been reached. This action dispelled any legal issues with closing the sablefish fishery. The rule was effective from July 10, 1985.

Also, on July 15, 1985 NMFS published a Notice of Closure for all sablefish fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska, effective from July 12, 1985.



On July 22 NMFS published an emergency interim rule reducing OYs for pollock, Pacific ocean perch, other rockfish, Atka mackerel, and other species to conform with Amendment 14. The rule also established PSC limits for sablefish and POP in joint venture fisheries and for sablefish, POP, and other rockfish in foreign fisheries. The rule is effective until October 15 and may be extended another 90 days.

6. Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

At this meeting the Council will review the status of groundfish stocks and send initial estimates of DAP/JVP/TALFF apportionments to public review. Final decisions will be made in December.

The Council in May approved Amendment 9 for Secretarial Review. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was published on August 16, 1985 with comments due by September 30. NMFS final decision is due October 17.

On September 4 NMFS made sablefish a prohibited species in the Bering Sea Management Area and closed all groundfish fishing in waters over 200 fm deep.