



# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Simon Kinneen, Chair | David Witherell, Executive Director  
1007 W. 3rd Avenue, Suite 400, Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone 907-271-2809 | [www.npfmc.org](http://www.npfmc.org)

## Meeting Summary

250th Plenary Session  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
June 8 to June 10, 2020  
Webconference – Adobe Connect

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### Attachments

1) Timelog

2) Newsletter

The time log is included as a reference attachment for names, dates and times of each agenda item, and the newsletter is included to provide details of the agenda items and the meeting as a whole.

**All documents and information related to the meeting are accessible online  
at <https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/1443>.**

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met June 8, 2020 through June 10, 2020 and the SSC and AP met June 1, 2020 through June 5, 2020, all via adobe connect. The following Council members, Council staff, SSC, and AP members attended the meetings.

### Council Members

Jim Balsiger/Glenn Merrill  
*National Marine Fisheries Service*

Rachel Baker/Karla Bush (for Doug Vincent-Lang)  
*Alaska Department Fish and Game*

Cora Campbell  
*Appointed*

Craig Cross  
*Appointed*

Kenny Down  
*Appointed*

Jon Gerken  
*US Fish & Wildlife Service*

Dave Hanson  
*Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission*

John Jensen  
*Appointed*

Nicole Kimball  
*Appointed*

Simon Kinneen, **Chair**  
*Appointed*

Stacy MacCorkle  
*US Dept of State*

Steve Marx (for Curt Melcher)  
*Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife*

Andy Mezirow  
*Appointed*

Bill Tweit (for Kelly Susewind), **Vice Chair**  
*Washington Department Fish & Wildlife*

RADM Matthew Bell Jr/LCDR Yang  
*United States Coast Guard*

### Council Staff

Armstrong, Jim  
Cleaver, Sara  
Cunningham, Sam  
Davis, Maria  
Evans, Diana (DD)  
Fey, Mike (PSMFC)

Gleason, Shannon  
Haapala, Kate  
Henry, Anna  
La Belle, Sarah  
MacLean, Steve  
Marrinan, Sarah

McCracken, Jon  
Schmidt, Nicole  
Stram, Diana  
Witherell, Dave (ED)

## Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from June 1-3, 2020 via adobe connect in a virtual conference. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent members are stricken):

Anne Hollowed, Co-Chair  
*NOAA Fisheries—AFSC*

Chris Anderson  
*University of Washington*

Mike Downs  
*Wislow Research*

Dayv Lowry  
*Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife*

Kate Reedy  
*Idaho State University Pocatello*

~~Brad Harris~~  
*Alaska Pacific University*

Sherri Dressel, Co-Chair  
*Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game*

Amy Bishop  
*Alaska Sea Life Center*

Jason Gasper  
*NOAA Fisheries – Alaska Region*

George Hunt  
*University of Washington*

Franz Mueter  
*University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Matt Reimer  
*University of California, Davis*

Alison Whitman, Vice Chair  
*Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife*

Curry Cunningham  
*University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Dana Hanselman  
*NOAA Fisheries—AFSC*

Gordon Kruse  
*University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Andrew Munro  
*Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game*

Ian Stewart  
*Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission*

## Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel met from June 4-5, 2020, via adobe connect in a virtual conference. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent members are stricken):

Christiansen, Ruth (Co-Vice Chair)

Curran, Tori

~~Donich, Daniel~~

Drobnica, Angel (Chair)

Gruver, John

Gudmundsson, Gretar

Hayden, Natasha

Johnson, Jim

Kauffman, Jeff

Kavanaugh, Julie

Lowenberg, Craig

Mann, Heather

O'Connor, Jamie

O'Donnell, Paddy

Peterson, Joel

Scoblic, John

Upton, Matt (Co-Vice Chair)

Vanderhoeven, Anne

~~Velsko, Erik~~

Weiss, Ernie

Wilt, Sinclair

## **A Call Meeting to Order**

The Council approved the agenda without objection.

## **B Reports**

The following reports were given and discussed. Public testimony was heard.

**B1 Executive Director's Report** – David Witherell

**B2 NMFS Management Report** – Glenn Merrill

**B3 AFSC Report** – Dr. Robert Foy

- Ecosystems & Socioeconomic Profiles – Dr. Kalei Shotwell

**B4 NOAA GC Report** – Molly Watson

**B5 NOAA Enforcement Report** – Will Ellis

**B6 ADFG Report** – Kendall Henry

**B7 USCG Report** – LCDR Yvonne Yang

**B8 USFWS Report** – Jon Gerken

**B9 SSC Report in full** – Dr. Sherri Dressel (**SSC Co-Chair**)

**B10 AP Report in full** – Ruth Christiansen (**AP Co-Vice Chair**)

After presentations, reports, and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

The Council recommends NMFS use its inseason authority to provide for a targeted reopening of Herring Savings Area 2.

**Ms. Kimball made the following amendment which was seconded by Jensen:**

(added language in **bold**)

The Council recommends NMFS use its inseason authority to provide for a targeted reopening of Herring Savings Area 2, **and management, including potential closure, throughout the time period (July 1 – August 15).**

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed with no objection June 9, 2020, at 9:44 a.m.

**VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection June 9, 2020, at 9:45 a.m.

## **C1 Scallop SAFE Report – ABC/OFL Specifications, Scallop PT Report**

**Council Staff:** Jim Armstrong

**Action Required:** 1. Specify OFL/ABC  
2. Scallop Plan Team Report

***Summary:** The Scallop Plan Team met in Kodiak in February to discuss the status and appropriate harvest level for weathervane scallops off Alaska. The Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Council will review the Plan Team’s report and set appropriate harvest limits for the 2020/2021 scallop season.*

After the staff presentation, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Bush made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

The Council approves the scallop SAFE report and adopts the OFL of 1.284 million pounds (582 t) and the ABC of 1.156 million pounds (524 t) and as recommended by the SSC.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection June 9, 2020, at 10:36 a.m.

## C2 BSAI Crab AIGKC, PIGKC, WAIRKC – ABC/OFL Specifications, CPT

**Council Staff:** Jim Armstrong

**Other Presenters:** Katie Palof (ADFG, Crab Plan Team Co-Chair)

- Action Required:**
1. Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab – Specify OFL/ABC for 2020/21
  2. Pribilof Islands Golden King Crab – Specify OFL/ABC for 2021
  3. Western Aleutian Red King Crab – Specify OFL/ABC for 2020/21 – 2022/23
  4. Review BSAI Crab Plan Team Report

**Summary:** *The Crab Plan Team met online from May 4-7, 2020 to discuss the size and status of three crab stocks in the Bering Sea to make recommendations on harvest limits. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will review their recommendations and the Council will set appropriate harvest limits for those stocks for the 2020/2021 crab seasons.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Bush made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

The Council approves the crab SAFE reports for Aleutian Islands Golden king crab, Pribilof Islands Golden king crab, and Western Aleutian Islands red king crab and adopts the OFLs and ABCs for these stocks as recommended by the SSC, as shown in the table below.

<b>Stock</b>	<b>OFL (million lb)</b>	<b>ABC (million lb)</b>
Aleutian Islands golden king crab	10.579	7.934
Pribilof Islands golden king crab	0.20	0.15
Western Aleutian Islands red king crab	0.12387	0.03097

<b>Stock</b>	<b>OFL (mt)</b>	<b>ABC (mt)</b>
Aleutian Islands golden king crab	4,798	3,599
Pribilof Islands golden king crab	93	70
Western Aleutian Islands red king crab	56	14

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on June 9, 2020, at 11:11 a.m.

### C3 St. Matthew Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan

**Council Staff:** Jim Armstrong

**Action Required:**

1. Review the public review draft of the EA.
2. Recommend preferred alternative, as appropriate.

**Summary:** *The Council will choose its preferred approach for rebuilding the Saint Matthew Island blue king crab stock, which was declared overfished in October 2018. Because of poor ecosystem conditions, the rebuilding time frames are 14 to 24 years, and the Council will choose whether or not to allow for some harvest of the stock as it rebuilds.*

After the staff presentation and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Dr. Balsiger made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council adopts the following alternative and option for final action. The preferred alternative is indicated in **bold**.

Alternative 1: No Action: State harvest strategy with no rebuilding plan.

**Alternative 2: Set target rebuilding time frame for the number of years necessary to rebuild the stock to the BMSY level at a probability  $\geq 50\%$ . The stock will be considered “rebuilt” once it reaches BMSY.**

Option 1: No directed fishing until the stock is rebuilt.

**Option 2: Allow the directed fishery to open based on the State harvest strategy while the stock is rebuilding.**

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on June 9, 2020, at 1:14 p.m.

### C4 Cook Inlet Salmon FMP Amendment

**Council Staff:** Jim Armstrong

**Other Presenters:** Doug Duncan (NMFS AKR), Marcus Hartley (Northern Economics, Dr. Mike Dr. Dr. Mike Downs (Wislow Research)

**Action Required:**

1. Review Preliminary Draft EA/RIR
2. Review Cook Inlet Salmon Committee Reports from 2020
3. Revise or clarify alternatives to be analyzed for Initial Review

**Summary:** *The Council may change its Salmon Fishery Management Plan to include the driftnet fishery that fishes for salmon in federal waters of Cook Inlet. A very early version of an analytical document that will explain the impacts of different approaches for managing that fishery has been prepared for them to review, and the Council may clarify some of the approaches it is considering after reviewing that document.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

**Mr. Merrill made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council requests that staff move forward with development of the analysis for initial review at the October 2020 Council meeting with the following purpose and need statement and alternatives (unchanged from the discussion paper). The analysis should consider SSC comments in the initial review draft, as applicable. This action is consistent with NMFS's intent to have the FMP amendment implemented for the 2022 upper Cook Inlet salmon fishing season.

***Purpose and Need***

*The Council intends to amend the Salmon FMP to manage the traditional net fishing area that occurs in Federal waters of Cook Inlet. Federal management in an FMP must meet the Magnuson-Stevens Act required provisions for an FMP in section 303(a) and related Magnuson-Stevens Act provisions. This proposed action is necessary to bring the Salmon FMP into compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act consistent with the recent Ninth Circuit ruling and the Judgement of the District Court in UCIDA et al., v. NMFS.*

***Alternatives***

***Alternative 1: No Action.*** No amendment to the Salmon FMP. This alternative would maintain status quo. Alternative 1 is not a viable alternative given the Ninth Circuit decision, however, NEPA requires that Federal agencies analyze a no action alternative.

***Alternative 2: Federal management with specific management measures delegated to the State.*** Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's fishery management unit in the West Area and establish a Federal management regime for these salmon fisheries that delegates specific management measures to the State of Alaska, to use existing State salmon management infrastructure, in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Ninth Circuit ruling. Alternative 2 would identify the management measures that would be managed by the Council and NMFS, the management measures that would be delegated to the State to manage with Federal oversight, and the process for delegation and oversight of management.

***Alternative 3: Federal management.*** Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's fishery management unit in the West Area and apply Federal management to those portions of the fisheries that occur in the EEZ.

At this time, the Council anticipates it will be able to take final action by December 2020. This schedule should provide the Council with sufficient time to develop its preferred alternative for the FMP amendment and allow NMFS to complete Secretarial review of the FMP amendment by the start of the 2022 fishing season.

The Council is not moving the Cook Inlet Salmon Committee's (Committee's) recommended alternative forward for analysis, but staff will include it in the section on alternatives considered but not analyzed further. The Council has been clear on its intent to manage the commercial salmon fishery in the EEZ, and not in State waters outside its jurisdiction. The Council requests staff evaluate the recommended

management measures that may be applicable to the Council's alternatives, and analyze the implications of incorporating these recommendations in the current suite of alternatives.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 9, 2020, at 4:56 p.m.

**Mr. Jensen made the following motion which was seconded by Ms. Campbell:**

The Council thanks the Cook Inlet Salmon Committee for their work in providing recommendations for the Cook Inlet Salmon FMP amendment. The Committee has satisfied its originally identified purpose of providing comment and developing options for fishery management measures for Council-identified management needs and providing perspectives on potential social and economic impacts of proposed fishery management measures. At this time, the Council invites committee members and other fishery stakeholders to continue providing input on the development of the Cook Inlet Salmon FMP amendment through customary public comment at Council meetings.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 9, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.

## **D1 Observer update with respect to COVID-19 response**

**Council Staff:** Dr. Kate Haapala

**Other Presenters:** Jennifer Ferdinand (AFSC)

**Action Required:**

1. Update on agency response to fishery monitoring related to COVID-19
2. Receive FMAC Report

**Summary:** *Observer deployment and data collection in the full and partial coverage fleets has changed because of Covid-19. This agenda item will update the Council on these changes.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Tweet:**

### 2020 Annual Deployment Plan

The Council appreciates and supports NMFS's response thus far to COVID-19 relative to the observer program. Full coverage fisheries have been maintained, a majority of the pelagic trawl fleet is covered under trawl electronic monitoring (EM), and all partial coverage catcher vessels operating out of Kodiak are subject to observer coverage under the existing annual deployment plan. In considering resuming partial coverage for the remaining fleets in 2020, which are primarily fixed gear, the Council recommends NMFS strongly consider tradeoffs of the concerns outlined in the May 2020 FMAC report against the utility of limited data that may be collected. If NMFS proceeds, the Council recommends the following:

- Reintroduce partial coverage using trip selection out of a select number of key ports (e.g., in addition to Kodiak)
- Maintain the current coverage/selection rates for vessels carrying EM
- Given the limited opportunities for outreach, focus on communicating proposed changes to affected fleets



2021 Annual Deployment Plan

The Council recommends a high priority is placed on developing a 2021 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) that provides necessary data while being responsive to continued COVID-19 challenges and Council priorities. The Council reiterates the January 2020 Council priorities relative to the 2021 ADP, including: 1) continuation of the trawl EM EFP; 2) integration of electronic monitoring into the overall monitoring of fixed gear; and 3) evaluation of different criteria to define the ‘zero selection’ pool to meet data needs and improve cost efficiency.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 10, 2020, at 11:53 a.m.

**E Staff Tasking**

After staff presentations, by Executive Director David Witherell, and public comment, the Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects, as well as tasking issues. The following actions were taken:

**Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:**

The Council recommends prioritization of the following agenda items for the October Council meeting if virtual:

Must do issues:

B reports, SSC report in full, Exec. Session, and Staff tasking	13 hours
BSAI Crab 4 stocks: Final Specs, Crab PT report	} 11 hours
BSAI Groundfish harvest: Proposed specifications	
GOA Groundfish harvest: Proposed specifications	
2021 Annual Deployment Plan: Review, PCFMAC	
Cook Inlet Salmon FMP: Initial Review	

Additional prioritized issues:

Halibut ABM: Initial Review and Discussion Paper	12 hours
Squid/Sculpin product types: Final Action	2 hours
	<b>38 hours</b>

Add the following issues, listed in order of priority, if an in-person October meeting; otherwise consider for December:

BSAI Pacific cod Trawl CV LAPP: Initial Review	16 hours
BSAI Pacific cod pot CP: Initial Review	3 hours

**Mr. Tweit made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

(delete the following language in ~~strikethrough~~ and insert the following language in **bold**)

Add the following issues, listed in order of priority, if an in-person October meeting; otherwise ~~consider~~ **for schedule in** December:

BSAI Pacific cod Trawl CV LAPP: Initial Review	16 hours
BSAI Pacific cod pot CP: Initial Review	3 hours

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed with no objection on June 10, 2020, at 4:42 p.m.

**VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 10, 2020, at 4:44 p.m.

### **Letters**

The Council directed staff to develop the following letters:

- Letter to Dr. Robert Foy requesting detailed plans for surveys in 2021
- Letter of support to NFWF for funding proposals

### **Appointments**

#### **Committees and Plant Teams**

- The Council appointed Ms. Erin Fedewa to serve on the BSAI Crab Plan Team
- The Council appointed Mr. Scott Miller and Dr. Kate Haapala to the Social Science Plan Team

**THE COUNCIL ADJOURNED ON WEDNESDAY JUNE 10, 2020 AT 5:20 P.M.**



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## TIME LOG NPFMC June Council Meeting – 250<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session Meeting held via web conference Adobe Connect Monday June 8 - 10, 2020

### Monday June 8, 2020

#### B REPORTS

6/8/2020 8:31 AM	Call to Order
6/8/2020 8:33 AM	Approval of Agenda
6/8/2020 8:35 AM	<b>B1 Executive Director Report</b> – David Witherell
6/8/2020 8:40 AM	Farewell to LCDR Yvonne Yang
6/8/2020 8:50 AM	Farewell to Sally Bibb
6/8/2020 8:57 AM	<b>B2 NMFS Management Report</b> – Glenn Merrill
6/8/2020 10:00 AM	<b>B3 AFSC Report</b> – Dr. Robert Foy
6/8/2020 10:47 AM	Break
6/8/2020 10:57 AM	<b>B3 ESP Presentation</b> – Dr. Kalei Shotwell
6/8/2020 11:16 AM	<b>B4 NOAA GC Report</b> – Molly Watson
6/8/2020 11:23 AM	<b>B5 NOAA Enforcement Report</b> – Will Ellis
6/8/2020 11:31 AM	<b>B6 ADF&amp;G Report</b> – Kendall Henry
6/8/2020 11:40 AM	<b>B7 USCG Report</b> – LCDR Yvonne Yang
6/8/2020 11:47 AM	<b>B8 USFWS Report</b> – Jon Gerken
6/8/2020 11:50 PM	Break
6/8/2020 12:54 PM	<b>B9 SSC Report</b> in full – Dr. Sherri Dressell
6/8/2020 2:18 PM	<b>B10 AP Report</b> in full – Ruth Christiansen
6/8/2020 2:28 PM	<b>B Public Testimony</b>
6/8/2020 2:30 PM	Linda Behnken
6/8/2020 2:36 PM	Melissa Johnson
6/8/2020 2:42 PM	Chandler O’Connell
6/8/2020 2:48 PM	Jamie Goen
6/8/2020 2:54 PM	Jon Warrenchuk
6/8/2020 3:00 PM	Break
6/8/2020 3:17 PM	Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian
6/8/2020 3:21 PM	Brent Paine
6/8/2020 3:26 PM	Chad See
6/8/2020 3:34 PM	Becca Robbins Gisclair
6/8/2020 3:41 PM	Jamie O’Connor
6/8/2020 4:00 PM	Rose Fosdick
6/8/2020 4:05 PM	Peter Bradley
6/8/2020 4:20 PM	Break

**Tuesday, June 9, 2020**

6/9/2020 8:30 AM Call to Order  
6/9/2020 8:35 AM B Public Testimony – Peter Bradley  
6/9/2020 8:50 AM **B Ms. Baker Motion** – Herring PSC  
6/9/2020 9:59 AM Break

**C1 Scallop SAFE report – ABC/OFL specifications, Scallop Plan Team Report**

6/9/2020 10:12 AM **C1 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Jim Armstrong  
6/9/2020 10:34 AM **C1 Ms. Bush Motion**

**C2 BSAI Crab AIGKC, PIGKC, WAIRKC – ABC/OFL specifications, CPT Report**

6/9/2020 10:40 AM **C2 Presentation** – ADF&G staff, Katie Palof  
6/9/2020 11:08 AM **C2 Ms. Bush Motion**

**C3 St Matthew Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan – Final Action**

6/9/2020 11:12 AM **C3 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Jim Armstrong  
6/9/2020 12:00 PM Lunch Break  
6/9/2020 12:46 PM **C3 Public Testimony**  
6/9/2020 12:46 PM Mateo Paz-Soldan  
6/9/2020 12:51 PM Jamie Goen  
6/9/2020 1:11 PM **C3 Dr. Balsiger Motion**

**C4 Cook Inlet Salmon FMP Amendment – Preliminary Review, CISC Report**

6/9/2020 1:13 PM **C4 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Jim Armstrong and NMFS, Doug Duncan  
6/9/2020 2:30 PM Break  
6/9/2020 3:03 PM **C4 RIR Presentation** – Marcus Hartley  
6/9/2020 2:59 PM **C4 RIR and Fishing Communities Presentation** – Mike Downs  
6/9/2020 4:00 PM **C4 Public Testimony**  
6/9/2020 4:00 PM Sam Kelley  
6/9/2020 4:07 PM Dan Anderson  
6/9/2020 4:11 PM Erik Huebsch  
6/9/2020 4:17 PM Roland Maw  
6/9/2020 4:23 PM Matthew Oxford  
6/9/2020 4:28 PM **C4 Mr. Merrill Motion**  
6/9/2020 4:59 PM **C4 Mr. Jensen Motion**  
6/9/2020 5:05 PM Recess

**Wednesday, June 10, 2020**

6/10/2020 8:28 AM Executive Session  
6/10/2020 9:38 AM Call to Order

**D1 Observer update with respect to Covid-19 response – FMAC report**

6/10/2020 9:41 AM **D1 Observer Update** – NMFS staff, Jennifer Ferdinand  
6/10/2020 10:30 AM **D1 FMAC Report** – NPFMC staff, Dr. Kate Haapala  
6/10/2020 11:00 AM Break  
6/10/2020 11:09 AM **D1 Public Testimony**  
6/10/2020 11:10 AM Abigail Turner-Franke  
6/10/2020 11:18 AM Dan Falvey  
6/10/2020 11:27 AM Kathy Hansen  
6/10/2020 11:33 AM **D1 Ms. Kimball Motion**  
6/10/2020 12:00 PM Lunch Break  
6/10/2020 1:07 PM E1 Staff Tasking Presentation – Executive Director, David Witherell

**E1 Committees, New Business, and Tasking**

6/10/2020 1:53 PM **E1 Public Testimony**  
6/10/2020 1:53 PM Heather McCarty  
6/10/2020 1:57 PM Linda Behnken  
6/10/2020 2:02 PM Dennis Deaver  
6/10/2020 2:04 PM Louie Lowenberg  
6/10/2020 2:06 PM Scott Campbell Jr.  
6/10/2020 2:08 PM Scott Campbell  
6/10/2020 2:10 PM Kevin Campbell  
6/10/2020 2:13 PM Gretar Gudmundsson  
6/10/2020 2:15 PM Lance Farr  
6/10/2020 2:19 PM Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian  
6/10/2020 2:28 PM Jamie Goen  
6/10/2020 2:36 PM Oystein Lone  
6/10/2020 2:39 PM Craig Lowenberg  
6/10/2020 2:42 PM Nikolai Sivertstol  
6/10/2020 2:56 PM Mateo Paz-Soldan  
6/10/2020 3:00 PM Heather Mann  
6/10/2020 3:07 PM Brent Paine  
6/10/2020 3:14 PM John Gauvin  
6/10/2020 3:21 PM Break  
6/10/2020 3:35 PM E1 Staff Tasking  
6/10/2020 4:00 PM **E1 Ms. Baker Motion** – Council Priorities for October  
6/10/2020 5:17 PM Plan Team appointments  
6/10/2020 5:20 PM Meeting adjourned

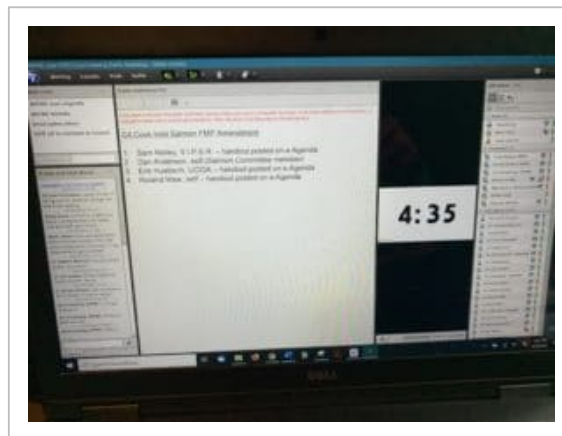
# June 2020 Newsletter

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## Council's June 2020 meeting held online

The Council held its June 2020 meeting online due to concerns surrounding COVID-19. This was the first regular virtual meeting with the SSC, AP, and the Council members all participating. The public was able to engage during public testimony and provide handouts, and other attendees were able to follow along through presentations and discussions by listening from their own computers. If you attended any of the recent meetings online, your feedback is valuable as we plan for future online meetings. The staff has developed a short [3-question survey](#) and you are encouraged to submit your comments.

If you are interested in the technical aspects of the meeting, feel free to email [npfmc.admin@noaa.gov](mailto:npfmc.admin@noaa.gov).



A screenshot from the adobeconnect meeting room during public testimony.

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## Appointments and Call for Nominations

### Appointments

The Council appointed Ms. Erin Fedewa to serve on the **BSAI Crab Plan Team**, as a replacement for Dr. Robert Foy. Ms. Fedewa is a Research Fisheries Biologist at the Kodiak Fisheries Research Center studying Bering Sea crab body condition, energetics, growth and trophic dynamics in relation to environmental conditions.

The Council also appointed Mr. Scott Miller and Dr. Kate Haapala to the **Social Science Planning Team**, to replace Ms. Sally Bibb and Dr. Elizabeth Figus, respectively. Mr. Scott Miller is an industry economist with the NMFS Alaska Region Sustainable Fisheries Division, and Dr. Kate Haapala is a social scientist with Council staff.

The Council Chair also announced that he will be appointing an interim **Advisory Panel** member before the October meeting to replace Ben Stevens, who resigned from the AP in the spring. The interim appointment will last for the remainder of Ben Stevens' AP term, which expires at the end of 2020.

### Call for Nominations

The Council is accepting nominations through July 31, 2020 for **an active, partial coverage observer to the Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC)**. The Committee convenes industry members, agency representatives, observers, and observer/EM coverage providers to advise the Council on issues related to all types of monitoring in the Alaskan fisheries that are subject to partial coverage. The Council Chair may appoint two active observers to share the PCFMAC seat.

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## Scallop Specifications

The Council reviewed the 2020 Alaska Weathervane Scallop SAFE report and specified scallop ABC for the 2020/2021 fishing year at 1.156 million pounds (524 t) of shucked scallop meats, a level equivalent to 90% of OFL, which is 1.284 million pounds (582 t). The federal specification of scallop OFL and ABC applies to all waters off Alaska, while guideline harvest levels (GHLs) for the State's scallop registration areas and districts are established by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



According to the Scallop SAFE, total harvest off Alaska in the 2018/19 season was 238,973 lb (108 t) of shucked scallop meats, and preliminary harvest for the 2019/20 season is 224,765 lb (102 t). Guideline harvest levels were achieved in most of the State's scallop management districts within the Yakutat, Kodiak, and Bering Sea registration areas. Some scallop beds with low productivity were abandoned by the fleet and these included the Alaska Peninsula registration area, and the Kodiak Southeast and Dutch Harbor districts.

Scallop harvest has been fairly stable in recent years, however, revenue of less than \$2.6 million in the most recent season is lowest historically. Port landings of scallops are limited to Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Yakutat, and Homer.

Fishery CPUE has been trending up in the productive beds since 2015 especially in the Yakutat district and the Northeast, Shelikof, and Southwest Kodiak districts. The stock status of Alaska weathervane scallops is not viewed as a conservation concern since scallops are distributed in many areas that are closed to fishing. Closed areas can almost be thought of as marine refuges and potential yields from these areas are not factored into fishery performance. Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

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## BSAI Crab Management

The Council approved OFLs and ABCs for Aleutian Islands golden king crab, Pribilof Islands golden king crab, and Western Aleutian Islands red king crab, and reviewed stock assessment scenarios and other issues addressed at the Crab Plan Team's May 2020 meeting.

For AI golden king crab specifications, the Council adopted an OFL of 4,798 mt and an ABC of 3,599 mt, and for Pribilof Island golden king crab, the Council adopted an OFL of 93 mt and an ABC of 70 mt, and for Western Aleutian Islands red king crab, the Council adopted an OFL of 56 mt and an ABC of 14 mt, all of which are consistent with the recommendations of



Golden king crab (*Lithodes aequispinus*)

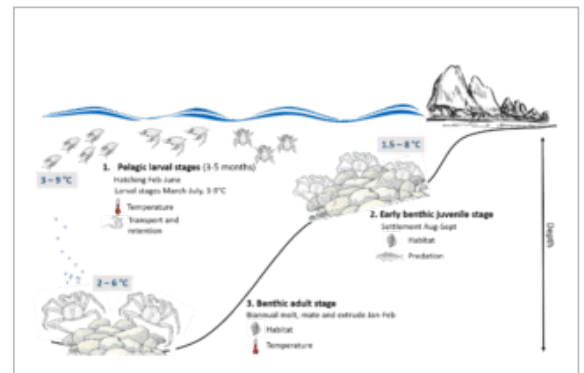
the Crab Plan Team, SSC, and AP.

Complete 2020 SAFE chapters for those stocks are posted, along with the Crab Plan Team May meeting report, on the Council's website. OFLs and ABCs for four additional BSAI crab stocks (snow, Tanner, Bristol Bay red king crab, and St. Matthew blue king crab) will be specified in October. The cancellation of the Bering Sea trawl survey was discussed at the May Crab Plan Team meeting and with the SSC with respect to uncertainty in developing OFL/ABC recommendations for some of these stocks. SSC and Crab Plan Team Chairs and other Plan Team Chairs will discuss appropriate approaches in preparation for Plan Team meetings in the fall. Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

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## St Matthew Island Blue King Crab Rebuilding

The Council took final action to adopt a rebuilding plan for St Matthew Island blue king crab and recommend a preferred alternative for Secretarial Action (Alternative 2/Option 2) that is projected to rebuild the stock within the time required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act's National Standard 1, while also providing affected communities with the possibility of directed harvest during rebuilding. The rebuilding timeframe for the Council's preferred alternative is expected to be protracted (25.5 years), mostly due to the low recruitment that could occur if current, unfavorable ecosystem conditions continue. Environmental stressors affecting survival and recruitment are considered to be the dominant factors in the decline of the stock and in stock recovery, rather than directed fishing or bycatch, and the possibility exists that rebuilding may never occur.



**St. Matthew blue king crab ecosystem processes (Fedewa 2019)**

If conditions improve so that the fishery can be opened under the Council's preferred alternative, stock biomass would have to have recovered to a minimum threshold (50% of the average 1978-2012 biomass) as specified in the State of Alaska's St Matthew Island blue king crab harvest strategy.

Every two years during rebuilding, progress on stock recovery will be reported by NMFS to the Secretary of Commerce. Additionally, directed harvest (if it occurs), bycatch, and ecosystem conditions will be monitored throughout rebuilding so that the contributions of these factors to rebuilding progress can be assessed.

The Council was notified that the stock was overfished in October 2018, which started a two-year process for implementing a rebuilding plan. Initial review occurred at the December 2019 Council meeting, and final action at this meeting will allow implementation to occur before the October 22, 2020 deadline. Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

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## Cook Inlet Salmon

The SSC, AP, and Council reviewed a preliminary draft of the environmental assessment and regulatory impact analysis (EA/RIR) that is being prepared to analyze the impacts of managing the salmon driftnet fishery in



federal waters of Cook Inlet through the Council's Salmon FMP. The Council also reviewed reports from the final meetings of the Cook Inlet Salmon Committee, in February and May 2020, which provide Committee recommendations on revising the alternatives under consideration. After its review, the Council confirmed the existing alternatives (provided below) for evaluation and requested staff move forward with development of a draft analysis for initial review at the October 2020 Council meeting.



**Salmon driftnet boats, Kenai River, August 2019  
(photo by J.Armstrong)**

The Cook Inlet salmon action was initiated in 2017 in response to a Ninth Circuit Court finding that the Salmon FMP was not in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) because it excluded three traditional salmon net fisheries (Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and South Alaska Peninsula) that overlap with portions of federal jurisdictional waters. The Court ruling was brought about by litigation from the United Cook Inlet Drift Association (UCIDA) and Cook Inlet Fishermen's Fund (CIFF) who want federal management in Cook Inlet. At present, the Council is specifically addressing the Cook Inlet fishery. In December 2019, UCIDA/CIFF appealed to federal court to expedite completion of an amended FMP. In January 2020, the Court established a deadline of December 31, 2020 for final Council action, and gave no instruction on the content of the amendment.

Two approaches for managing Cook Inlet salmon fisheries are currently under consideration by the Council (Alternatives 2 and 3), and a "No action" alternative (Alternative 1) is provided for comparison. Under Alternative 2, management measures necessary for the federal waters salmon driftnet fishery would be delegated to the State, primarily, while under Alternative 3, all management would be done at the federal level. Driftnet fishery stakeholders have indicated their support for Alternative 2 because it would incorporate the State of Alaska's widespread salmon data collection and inseason management capabilities into the fulfillment of federal management obligations.

In order to develop options for managing the Cook Inlet salmon fishery for the Council's deliberations, the Council created the Cook Inlet Salmon Committee in 2018. The Council Chair appointed salmon driftnetters from Cook Inlet to the Committee, most of whom are also UCIDA members. Since then, Council and agency staff have worked with the Committee to develop recommendations for the Council. Progress on developing those recommendations was frequently constrained by the insistence of some Committee members that federal management be able to direct and override salmon fishery management actions by the State of Alaska. While this is permissible in federal waters, the Committee members also wanted the FMP to direct management of fisheries that operate solely in State jurisdictional waters, such as in-river fisheries, and to take over the State's salmon escapement goal setting process.

The Cook Inlet Salmon Committee's recommendations were provided to the Council as a redline version of Alternative 2, in order to compare the recommendations to the existing alternative. The revised alternative was referred to as *Alternative 2 – Expanded Scope*, and the Committee recommended that this revised alternative replace the existing Alternative 2 in the analysis. After review, the Council chose not to move the Committee's recommended alternative forward for analysis, but requested staff include it in the section on alternatives considered but not analyzed further. Having satisfied its purpose, the Cook Inlet Salmon Committee will meet no longer. Staff Contact is Jim Armstrong.

## **Salmon FMP Purpose and Need and Alternatives**

## Purpose and Need

*The Council intends to amend the Salmon FMP to manage the traditional net fishing area that occurs in Federal waters of Cook Inlet. Federal management in an FMP must meet the Magnuson-Stevens Act required provisions for an FMP in section 303(a) and related Magnuson-Stevens Act provisions. This proposed action is necessary to bring the Salmon FMP into compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act consistent with the recent Ninth Circuit ruling and the Judgement of the District Court in UCIDA et al., v. NMFS.*

## Alternatives

*Alternative 1: No Action. No amendment to the Salmon FMP. This alternative would maintain status quo. Alternative 1 is not a viable alternative given the Ninth Circuit decision, however, NEPA requires that Federal agencies analyze a no action alternative.*

*Alternative 2: Federal management with specific management measures delegated to the State. Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's fishery management unit in the West Area and establish a Federal management regime for these salmon fisheries that delegates specific management measures to the State of Alaska, to use existing State salmon management infrastructure, in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Ninth Circuit ruling. Alternative 2 would identify the management measures that would be managed by the Council and NMFS, the management measures that would be delegated to the State to manage with Federal oversight, and the process for delegation and oversight of management.*

*Alternative 3: Federal management. Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's fishery management unit in the West Area and apply Federal management to those portions of the fisheries that occur in the EEZ.*

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## Observer coverage update

The Council reviewed changes to observer deployment and data collection this year in the full and partial coverage program related to COVID-19, presented by the agency. After a report from its Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC), the Council provided recommendations to NMFS about re-introducing observers into the partial coverage observer program as well as developing the 2021 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP). The Council commends and supports NMFS' response thus far to COVID-19 relative to the observer program.

The full coverage fleets typically provide 90% of the observed data and have thus far maintained observer coverage in the 2020 calendar year with industry working closely with the Observer Program and observer providers. Observer coverage has also been maintained via the pelagic trawl electronic monitoring (EM) Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) covering most of the pelagic trawl fleet, and all partial coverage catcher vessels operating out of Kodiak are subject to observer coverage under the 2020 ADP.



NMFS put forward an early proposal to the FMAC and Council for re-introducing observers into the partial coverage program this year comprised of two components: 1) using a modified vessel selection where, if a vessel was randomly selected for coverage in ODDS, every trip taken by that vessel would be selected for coverage under a specified time period; and 2) increasing the fixed gear EM selection rate from 30% to 100%.

The Council emphasized the tradeoffs outlined in the [May 2020 FMAC](#) report that weigh concerns about re-introducing observers into the partial coverage category in 2020 against the utility of limited data that would be collected primarily from fixed gear fleets. If NMFS proceeds, the Council recommends the following approach:

1. Reintroduce partial coverage using trip selection out of a select number of key ports (i.e., in addition to Kodiak).
2. Maintain the current coverage and selection rates for vessels carrying EM.
3. Given the limited opportunities for outreach, focus on communicating proposed changes to affected fleets.

The Council further recommends NMFS place a high priority on developing a 2021 ADP that provides necessary data and is also responsive to continued COVID-19 challenges and Council priorities, particularly improving cost efficiencies in the partial coverage category.

Staff contact is Kate Haapala. Staff contact specifically for EM issues is Anna Henry.

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## Sablefish apportionment

The SSC received a report regarding ongoing analyses of different ways to spatially apportion the sablefish stock sub-area ABCs across management regions in the GOA and BSAI. Preliminary results indicate limited biological differences amongst apportionment schemes. Final analyses of a range of apportionment schemes and their performance against some biological and economic objectives will be presented in conjunction with the fall sablefish assessment.



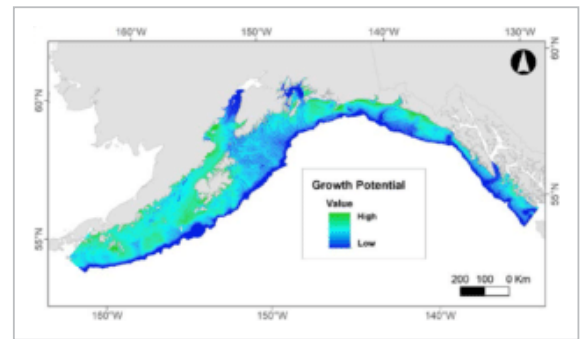
In responding to the SSC's report, the Council indicated that the SSC should continue to assess and make recommendations on the appropriate sub-area or aggregate (e.g., GOA-wide) ABCs for the sablefish stock based upon biological aspects of the stock, while economic concerns about area splits will be addressed by the Council in the TAC-setting process. Modifications to the ABC spatial apportionment will be considered during the annual specifications process and do not require additional analyses beyond what is already planned. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

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## Species Distribution Models for EFH

The SSC received a report from Jodi Pirtle (NMFS AKR) and Ned Laman (AFSC) on the development of new and revised species distribution models that may provide information to support descriptions and mapping of

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the Council's FMPs. The [discussion paper](#) and [presentation](#) reviewed analyses under development to provide information to stock assessment authors, Plan Teams, the SSC, and the Council to review and potentially revise EFH descriptions in the upcoming 2022 5-year review of EFH. The four in-progress studies are designed to provide information that may allow descriptions of EFH to evolve from the current Level 1 (distribution) to Level 2 (habitat-related densities), or Level 3 (habitat-related growth, reproduction, and survival).



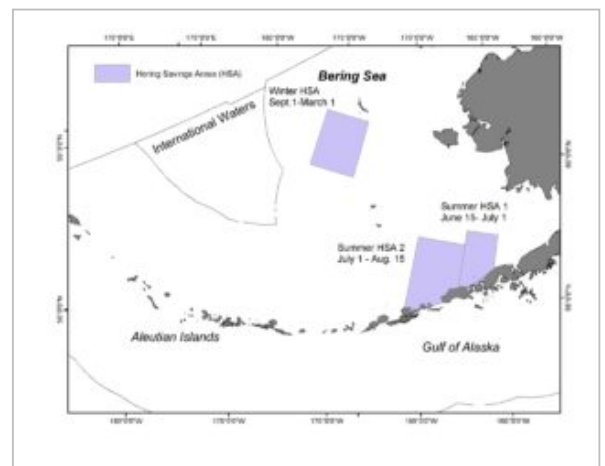
**Habitat-related growth potential for early juvenile stage pollock. From Laurel et al. study.**

The SSC supports the continued exploration of these approaches and provided specific feedback to the authors. The SSC suggested that fishery-dependent information and local and traditional knowledge may be useful to provide EFH information for seasons, areas, or habitats that are not sampled by fishery-independent surveys. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

## Herring PSC management

The Council discussed herring prohibited species catch (PSC) management in the Bering Sea following unanticipated high catch of herring in the pollock fishery A season in 2020, and affirmed NMFS' authority to use inseason adjustments to monitor and manage PSC closures during the summer.

By regulation, the PSC trigger limit for herring is 1% of the total estimated biomass of herring in the Bering Sea. This trigger limit is apportioned among target fisheries during the annual specifications process. When reached, three different herring savings areas (HSA) in the Bering Sea close for specified time periods. Two of the HSAs close for periods of time in the summer, and one closes in the fall and following winter. The establishment of the HSAs date back to Amendment 16a to the BSAI FMP, implemented in 1991, and were designated based upon bycatch data and migration assumptions from the 1980s as well as then-low BSAI-wide herring biomass estimates.



The Council discussed current concerns about the closure of HSAs in the pollock B season, the resulting movement of the pollock fleet away from productive fishing areas early in the B season, the potential for increased Chinook salmon bycatch as a result of longer B season fishing, the dated information upon which the HSAs were designated, as well as the considerably higher herring biomass currently than when the trigger limit was established in 1991. Given these considerations, the Council voted unanimously to recommend that NMFS use their inseason authority to adjust the HSA2 closure and allow for directed fishing within it. The NMFS will monitor for bycatch rates of herring and Chinook salmon within and outside of HSA2 during the 2020 B season, and will make adjustments to the closure and its timing as necessary. This will provide additional flexibility to achieve an appropriate balance between bycatch management of all PSC species and the achievement of OY on an annual basis. The agency further indicated that it will conduct tribal consultations on this herring issue.

Staff contact is Diana Stram.

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## Economic Data Reporting Stakeholder Meetings

The Council will be holding a series of facilitated stakeholder discussions to explore potential revisions to the four existing Economic Data Reporting (EDR) programs. EDR programs are currently implemented in four fisheries: the BSAI Crab Rationalization program, Amendment 80, GOA trawl fisheries, and the BSAI pollock fishery. The Council and the Council's Social Science Planning Team (SSPT) are engaging with fishery participants to develop a strategy to assess and improve EDR collections and improve their usability, efficiency, and consistency while minimizing their cost and burden to industry and the government.



The purpose of the EDR stakeholder discussions is generate input and ideas that can inform the Council's consideration of potential revisions to the four existing EDR programs. Specifically, these discussions will help focus and inform the SSPT's development of alternatives for the Council's consideration. The objectives include:

1. Discuss the Council's existing EDR programs, including their objectives, the use of EDR information to support decision-making, and the relationship between the data elements collected, economic performance metrics, and the management questions they can inform.
2. Generate ideas for improving the usability, efficiency, and consistency of existing EDR programs while minimizing their cost and burden to industry and the government.

These discussions will be held virtually. The date and times are to be determined and will be posted at: <https://www.npfmc.org/edr/>

The Council hopes to hear from a wide range of perspectives and all those interested are welcome to participate. Contact [sarah.marrinan@noaa.gov](mailto:sarah.marrinan@noaa.gov) to be added to the email list.

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## Staff Tasking

The Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects, in the context of the cancelled April and limited June meetings, and provided guidance to the Chair and Executive Director about which items to prioritize for October and subsequent meetings. The revised [3-meeting outlook](#) highlights this guidance. In addition to must-do items in October (crab and groundfish specifications, the 2021 Observer Annual Deployment Plan, and the Cook Inlet Salmon FMP amendment initial review), the Council will review workproducts for BSAI halibut abundance-based management and will take final action on the squid/sculpin product types analysis. The Council took into account the potential for additional agenda items based on whether the Council is able to meet in person or virtually. At this point, it appears that both the September Plan Team meetings and the October Council meeting will occur online, as reflected in the draft [3-meeting](#)



**outlook.** However, should the situation improve dramatically and in-person meetings be possible, the October agenda and schedule may be revised to include the BSAI Pacific cod actions.

The Council directed staff to develop the following letters:

- To the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center, expressing concern about the lack of surveys in 2020, and requesting a detailed plan, which would enable a full complement of 2021 surveys even if covid-19 limitations are still in effect.
- To NFWF, in support of three electronic monitoring projects that have been submitted for funding.

The Council provided the following additional direction:

- During the B reports, the Council provided direction to NMFS affirming their inseason management authority to respond selectively to triggered closures of **herring savings areas**.
- The Council also considered how to respond to NMFS' request for input regarding Executive Order 13921 on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth. The Council is interested in input from stakeholders about ideas or opportunities to identify recommended actions that would further reduce the regulatory burden on domestic fisheries. Such testimony should be provided directly to the Council at the October Council meeting, at which time the Council will compile a prioritized list of recommended actions.

Finally, the Council Chair announced Plan Team **appointments and a call for nominations** for an active observer to the PCFMAC.