

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Eric A. Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director



605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone (907) 271-2809

Fax (907) 271-2817

Visit our website: <http://www.npfmc.org>

Signed _____
Eric A. Olson

Minutes

Date _____ 6/9/2014 _____

February 2014, 217 Plenary Session

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Madison Hotel, Seattle, WA

Contents

A. CALL TO ORDER.....	3
B. Report	3
C1 GOA Pot Cod Sector Participation.....	3
C-2 Gulf of Alaska Tendering.....	4
C-3 Charter Halibut Common Pool Proposal	5
C-4 Definition of a Fishing Guide	5
C-5 Grenadiers	7
C-6 Crab PSC Discussion Paper.....	9
C-7 BSAI Halibut PSC	10
C-8 CDQ Pacific Cod Fishery Development Discussion Paper	12
C9 AI Pacific Cod Catcher Vessel Allocation/Delivery Requirement.....	14
C-11 Observer Program Annual Report Outline	17
C-13 Observer Program Regulatory Amendments Discussion Paper	18
C-14 Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) Report	19
D1 Ecosystem policy	19
D-2 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan	21
D-3 Chinook Salmon EDR	22
D-5 Staff Tasking	23

ATTACHMENTS ;

Time Log, AP and SSC Minutes, Newsletter

The following Council, SSC and AP members, and NPFMC staff attended the meetings.

Council Members

Eric Olson, Chair	Craig Cross	David Long
John Henderschedt, Vice Chair	Ed Dersham	Bill Tweit
Jim Balsiger	Duncan Fields	RADM Tom Ostebo/LT Tony Kenne
Cora Campbell/Nicole Kimball	Dave Hanson	
	Roy Hyder	
	Dan Hull	

NPFMC Staff

Gail Bendixen	Peggy Kircher	Chris Oliver
Sam Cunningham	Steve MacLean	Maria Shawback
Jane DiCosimo	Sarah Marrinan	Diana Stram
Diana Evans	Jon McCracken	David Witherell

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from February 3rd through 5th at the Renaissance Hotel, Seattle, WA. Members present were:

Pat Livingston, Chair <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>	Chris Anderson <i>University of Washington</i>	Alison Dauble <i>Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i>
Sherri Dressel <i>Alaska Department of Fish and Game</i>	Anne Hollowed <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>	George Hunt <i>University of Washington</i>
Gordon Kruse <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>	Seth Macinko <i>University of Rhode Island</i>	Steve Martell <i>Int'l. Pacific Halibut Commission</i>
Franz Mueter <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>	Lew Queirolo <i>NOAA Fisheries—Alaska Region</i>	Kate Reedy <i>Idaho State University Pocatello</i>
Matt Reimer <i>University of Alaska Anchorage</i>		

Members absent were:

Jennifer Burns <i>University of Alaska Anchorage</i>	Robert Clark <i>Alaska Department of Fish and Game</i>	Terry Quinn <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>
Farron Wallace <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>		

Advisory Panel

The following members were present for all or part of the meetings February 4-7.

Ruth Christiansen	Heath Hilyard	Paddy O'Donnell
Kurt Cochran	Jeff Kauffman	Joel Peterson
John Crowley	Mitch Kilborn	Theresa Peterson
Jerry Downing	Alexus Kwachka	Sinclair Wilt
Jeff Farvour	Craig Lowenberg	Lori Swanson, co-vice Chair
Becca Robbins Gisclair, Chair	Brian Lynch	Anne Vanderhoeven
John Gruver	Chuck McCallum	Ernie Weiss, co-vice Chair

Appendix I contains the time log of Council proceedings, including those providing reports and public comment during the meeting.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at approximately 8:03 am on Wednesday, February 5, 2014. Mr. Bill Tweit participated in the entire meeting in place of Phil Anderson, WDF Director.

The agenda was approved as written.

B. Report

The following reports were given:

- B-1 Executive Director's Report: Chris Oliver (Including review of MSA legislation and review of Regional Operating agreement)
- B-2 NMFS Management Report: Glenn Merrill, Jim Buxon, Jim Land, Mary Furuness, Matt Brown
- B-3 ADF&G Report: Karla Bush
- B-4 USCG Report: Capt. Phil Thorne, Lt. Tony Kenne
- B-5 IPHC Report: Gregg Williams, Bruce Leman, Ian Stewart
- B-7 Protected Species Report: Steve MacLean

Public comment was taken on all B items.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Chairman Olson noted that a majority of the actions for the B items can be discussed in the Staff Tasking portion of the agenda. Ms. Kimball noted that some level of engagement from the Council in determining critical habitat for the population Steller sea lions that remain listed on the ESA.

C1 GOA Pot Cod Sector Participation

BACKGROUND:

In October 2013, the Council requested that staff prepare a summary of information on participation, permit use, and harvest in the GOA Pacific cod pot fishery. This information could serve as a point of reference for any future examination of potential impacts to the pot sector relating to the Council's ongoing effort to evaluate elements and options for GOA Trawl Bycatch Management actions.

The discussion paper examines participation by LLP holders and non-LLP holders in the federally managed Pacific cod pot fishery, as well as the parallel fishery in state waters and the state-managed fishery. A summary of endorsements for other fisheries and gear types that are held on the current set of Pacific cod pot endorsed LLPs is included. The paper provides annual groundfish pot harvest data at an area level, as well as high-level information on the dependency of fishery participants on this and other groundfish fisheries.

Sam Cunningham gave the staff report on this agenda item and answered questions from the Council. The AP gave its report, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Merrill moved to take no further action on this agenda item. The motion was seconded by John Henderschedt. Mr. Merrill noted that the testimony has been helpful and the discussion paper outlined the issues. He stated that the best course of action would be to continue to look at issue as the GOA Bycatch Management program develops. The issue is best encompassed within that broader analytical package.

Mr. Hull noted that he will support the motion, but the Council needs to remain aware of activity and potential ways the Council could mitigate impact if there is speculative behavior or redistributed fishing effort.

Mr. Fields re-stated the concerns of the long term resident fleet and appreciates the discussion paper, but noted that it may not reflect all trends. He stated that the major driver is not speculative behavior, but the economics of the fishery and the cod market. It is important to be proactive in looking at impacts that could occur in other fisheries.

The motion passed without objection.

C-2 Gulf of Alaska Tendering

BACKGROUND:

At the June 2013 meeting, the Council reviewed the tendering activity report and tasked staff to update the report for review at a later meeting with the following information:

- *Data from the remainder of the 2013 fishing year*
- *Proportion of AFA vessels operating as tender vessels in the GOA pollock and Pacific cod fishery*
- *Information on impacts of tendering GOA pollock and Pacific cod concerning timely catch accounting, and*
- *Information concerning possible impacts of genetic sampling protocol of tendered GOA pollock.*

Since the June 2013 meeting, the Council has also reviewed a separate discussion paper (in December 2013) addressing how observers monitor and are deployed on catcher vessels delivering to tender vessels. After reviewing that discussion paper, the Council initiated an analysis of a regulatory amendment to address these issues. Given that the review of possible impacts of tendered GOA pollock on the genetic sampling protocol in that fishery has already been presented to the Council, and the Council has taken action, this paper will not include this information.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Ms. Kimball noted after examining share vs impacts to the community in regard to volume, there is not a difference although the number of tenders is high. **She moved to have the discussion paper updated at this time next year with 2014 activity. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tweit.** There was brief discussion on the motion. Mr. Henderschedt noted he will be supporting the motion, and is a reminder of the importance of the work that is ahead in dealing with bycatch and the rationalization of a fishery. Mr. Merrill clarified that tendering activity is not undermining SSL protection measures. Mr. Fields

noted he is concerned about significant change in tendering activity. Mr. Tweit noted that there is a lot of uncertainty and the Council must proceed with the main framework and not get sidetracked.

The motion passed without objection.

C-3 Charter Halibut Common Pool Proposal

BACKGROUND:

In October 2012, the Council requested a discussion paper on whether a proposal to create a Recreational Quota Entity to administer a common pool plan as a form of compensated reallocation under the halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) -- which was presented during public testimony at that meeting -- would fit into the current Community Quota Entity Program. The Council requested that the paper include a discussion of legal issues by NOAA General Counsel. Preparation of the discussion paper has been on hold pending the development of a detailed proposal.

Catch Accountability Through Compensated Halibut (CATCH) is a collaboration of the Alaska Charter Association and the South East Alaska Guides Organization to design a pool-based CSP for the charter halibut fisheries in Areas 2C and 3A. The conceptual approach would allow the charter halibut fisheries in each regulatory area to supplement its annual area allocation by purchasing commercial halibut quota shares (QS) and holding it in a common pool for all charter anglers. A holding entity would purchase QS from willing QS holders. Pooled fish would be applied to increase the annual bag and size limits in each area for all charter anglers. Such an approach would amend Federal regulations to replace the guided angler fish (GAF) component under the CSP.

As a prelude to submission of its specific proposal for a regulatory amendment to amend the CSP now scheduled for consideration at the April 2014 Council meeting, CATCH will provide an update on its CATCH report and a background economic study. The executive summary of its CATCH report is attached and the full reports are posted on the Council website. After this meeting, Council staff could work with CATCH staff to streamline the "common pool" approach described in the report to actionable items that the Council could consider and that NMFS could implement in Federal regulations. Staff recommendations could also be included in the previously requested discussion paper.

The Council received a report from Jane, DiCosimo, Tom Ohaus, and Richard Yamada. Gregg Williams of the IPHC also participated in the discussion. The AP gave its report on the agenda item.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

The Council did not take any action on this agenda item. A formal proposal for action will be in the October 2014 agenda.

C-4 Definition of a Fishing Guide

BACKGROUND:

The Council is considering whether to amend the definition of "sport fishing guide services" in Federal regulations that govern the charter halibut fishery in Southeast (Area 2C) and Southcentral (Area 3A) Alaska to be more consistent with State of Alaska regulations. A few businesses have developed a guide-assisted model that allows them to provide indirect assistance to anglers to harvest halibut for compensation from shore or adjacent vessels. This practice is not considered to be "sport fishing guide services" in Federal regulations because the guide is not on board the vessel. As a result, anglers on these vessels are allowed to fish under more liberal regulations in effect for unguided anglers. State of Alaska

regulations do not require the guide to be onboard the same vessel as the angler to be considered a sport fishing guide.

In February 2013, the Council adopted a problem statement and a suite of alternatives and options for a proposed action to revise the Federal definition of “sport fishing guide services.” In June, the Council revised its problem statement and range of alternatives and options during initial review. The Council approved release of a revised analysis for public review and it requested recommendations from Federal and State agency staff on proposed options to define “assistance” and “compensation.”

The analysis was distributed to the Council on January 10, 2014 and is attached as Item C-4. The suite of alternatives that was adopted by the Council is provided below. While deeming Pacific halibut regulations is not required under the Council’s policy, the Council may wish to request that NMFS consult with the Council on draft regulatory text prior to publishing the proposed rule in the Federal Register to ensure its consistency with Council intent.

Jane DiCosimo gave the staff report on this agenda item, and Roy Hyder gave the Enforcement Report portion of this agenda item. Public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Dersham made the following motion:

The Council recommends the following preferred alternative:

Alternative 2. Revise and clarify Federal definitions.

Option 1 (revised).

Sport fishing guide services, for purposes of §§ 300.65(d) and 300.67, means assistance, for compensation or with the intent to receive compensation, to a person who is sport fishing, to take or attempt to take fish halibut by being on board a vessel with such person accompanying or physically directing the sport fisherman in sport fishing activities during any part of a charter vessel fishing trip. Sport fishing guide services do not include services provided by a crew member.

Option 2, Suboption b. Define ‘compensation.’ within the context of sport fishing guide services.

“Compensation” means direct or indirect payment, remuneration, or other benefits received in return for services, regardless of the source; in this paragraph, “benefits” includes wages or other employment benefits given directly or indirectly to an individual or organization, and any dues, payments, fees, or other remuneration given directly or indirectly to a fishing club, business, organization, or individual who provides sport fishing guide services; and does not include reimbursement for the *reasonable* daily expenses for fuel, food, or bait;

The Council intends to review proposed regulatory text for this action prior to submission of the proposed rule to the Secretary for approval.

Mr. Dersham noted that there has been tremendous effort behind the scenes by agency staffs to construct appropriate language to meet the problem statement. The Enforcement Committee discussed the scope of the action and the enforcement of proposed regulations. The Committee stated the motion would facilitate enforcement and record-keeping for charter halibut fishery participants. Mr. Dersham noted that the recommended text incorporates a description of assistance consistent with State regulations without specifying a list of fishing activities, consistent with subsequent staff recommendations. John Lepore, from NOAA GC, walked through requirements of the Halibut Act. He noted that regulations do not discriminate between residents of different states and that it is reasonably calculated to promote conservation.

Ms. Kimball noted that the motion now identifies businesses and activities that were not captured in the initial draft analysis, and now more closely aligns the federal and state definitions. The options do meet the Council's problem statement. Mr. Tweit noted his support of the motion, and noted that the Council can work on developing mechanisms to align both the guided and unguided sectors. Mr. Tweit noted that as much as possible, the Council should take steps to synchronize state and federal regulations.

Mr. Fields noted that he is concerned about the bag limit differential, and the Council may see a growing number of businesses with the non-guided business model. It could create disruption in the industry. Mr. Fields noted that now with clarity in the definition, there will be less unintended consequences.

Mr. Hyder noted he will not be supporting the motion. He noted that the Council might be trying to resolve logbook issues that could differentiate between recreational vessel catch and guided catch. He also noted that the Council seems to be changing the rules after the game starts.

Dr. Balsiger stated he will be supporting the motion, and that it is important to align definitions between the Federal and state regulations.

The motion passed 9/2, with Mr. Hyder and Mr. Long voting in opposition

C-5 Grenadiers

BACKGROUND:

In June 2012, the Council adopted a problem statement and alternatives to consider adding the grenadier assemblage into either or both of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fishery management plans (FMPs). The purpose of this proposed action is to: (1) Improve the reporting and catch accounting of grenadiers in order to provide additional protection for them from the potential adverse effects of groundfish fisheries off Alaska; and (2) Adopt management measures to improve the protection, conservation, and catch accounting of grenadiers.

Council action to initiate an analysis was based on a NMFS discussion paper and recommendations from its Scientific and Statistical Committee and BSAI and GOA groundfish plan teams. Under the proposed alternatives, grenadiers would be added under either of two categories under the BSAI and GOA groundfish fishery management plans. If added "in the fishery," grenadiers would be part of the annual harvest specification process for setting annual catch limits and total allowable catches (TACs). If added to the "ecosystem component" category, grenadiers would be managed without quotas, but with other management controls.

In December 2013, the Council reviewed an initial review draft analysis and selected Alternative 2 (Ecosystem Component) in the BSAI and GOA for all grenadier species as its Preliminary Preferred Alternative. The Preliminary Preferred Alternative includes actions to: (1) Prohibit directed fishing for grenadiers; (2) Establish a maximum retainable amount in a range from 2 to 20 percent; (3) Require record keeping and reporting; (4) Define grenadier species codes; (5) Establish a separate management category for grenadiers in the FMP; and (6) Include product recovery rates. These management measures are summarized in Table 2-1 of the analysis.

The Council approved release of a revised public review draft analysis and scheduled final action for this meeting. The analysis was distributed to the Council prior to the meeting and was posted on the Council website on January 21, 2014. The proposed alternatives follow.

Alternative 1: No action (Status Quo).

Alternative 2: (Preliminary Preferred Alternative) Include grenadiers in the FMP as an Ecosystem Component species.

Alternative 3: Include grenadiers in the FMP as “in the fishery.”

Scott Miller of NMFS gave the staff report on this agenda item. Lori Swanson gave the AP report, and the SSC gave its report. Public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION /ACTION

Glenn Merrill made the following motion to select a preferred alternative for this action, which was seconded:

(1) Revise the Purpose and Need Statement to read as follows:

Grenadiers are not included in the BSAI or GOA groundfish FMPs. There are no limits on their catch or retention, and no reporting requirements. However, grenadiers are taken as bycatch, especially in longline fisheries; no other Alaskan groundfish has similar levels of catches that is not included in the FMP. Inclusion in the groundfish FMPs would provide for their precautionary management of the groundfish fisheries by, at a minimum, recording the harvest of grenadiers and/or placing limits on their harvest.

(2) Select Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative (Ecosystem Component) in the BSAI and GOA for all grenadier species with the following components:

- **Establish a separate ecosystem component category for grenadiers in the FMP (i.e., do not include grenadiers in the forage fish category)**
- **Implement regulations for the groundfish fishery that:**
 - 1. Prohibit directed fishing for grenadiers**
 - 2. Establish a grenadier maximum retainable amount of 5 percent**
 - 3. Require record keeping and reporting**
 - 4. Define grenadier species codes**
- **Include PRRs as noted in Table 2.1**

(3) Encourage the Alaska Fisheries Science Center to continue to conduct an informal stock assessment to provide information needed to monitor grenadier status.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Henderschedt.

Mr. Merrill spoke to the motion and clarified that grenadiers are a stock complex. The Councils have discretion in defining fisheries under FMPs, which is what the Council’s action does. Mr. Merrill noted that the Council has stock information and observer data that indicate total catch is below a level that overfishing would occur, that there is no directed fishery, and no indication that a directed fishery would take place. There is no market for grenadiers. National 7 guidelines show grenadiers do not require conservation management, however the Council is adopting a precautionary management approach. Mr. Merrill noted that the Alaska Fisheries Science Center is encouraged to continue to conduct an informal stock assessment to provide information needed to monitor the status of the grenadier stocks. Mr. Merrill answered questions of clarification on the motion. There was general discussion on how the Council would monitor the stock, and whether or not the MRA can be adjusted.

John Lepore, NOAA GC, noted that grenadiers are not targeted, are not economically viable, and there is no evidence that they are overfished. Because of the recordkeeping and reporting requirement in the motion, the Council will be able to make changes should the data change.

Mr. Hyder moved to amend, which was seconded, to change the MRA to 10% instead of 5%. He spoke to his motion noting there is no objective parameter that holds the decision at 5%. A higher percentage would not move the species out of the ecosystem component of management of the fishery. Mr. Hyder noted that a higher number gives the fishery a buffer that the industry expects. Mr. Tweit noted that based on the limited data, 5% should be practicable. Mr. Henderschedt noted he will not be supporting the amendment and that the Council should not feel obligated to accommodate every overage incident. Mr. Fields noted that going from no MRAs to 5% may be too precautionary. **Mr. Fields moved to substitute 10% with 8% MRA. Mr. Hyder seconded the motion.** He said the Council is working under broad goals and noted that what the Council is debating is whether or not grenadiers will be brought to the dock or thrown over the side. Mr. Hull stated he will be supporting the substitute motion, and 8% provides as much incentive to avoid grenadiers as does 5%. **The substitute amendment passed 6/5 Tweit, Merrill, Kimball Cross, and Henderschedt in opposition.**

Mr. Henderschedt spoke to the main motion, noting that the Council may need to re-evaluate whether or not this species complex needs to be in the ecosystem component before the 5% retention is reached. He noted his support for the motion, and that this motion is a good example of the National Standard Guidelines, and clearly meets the ecosystem component.

Ms. Kimball noted that this action meets the guidelines, and prevents an unmanaged target fishery of grenadiers. The action will improve catch reporting and estimation, and the Council will be able to reduce some amount of uncertainty about the complex.

Mr. Tweit moved, which was seconded, that the Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c).

The Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions. Mr. Tweit spoke to his motion noting that should changes come up during the writing of the final rule that the Council needs to review, the Executive Director and Chairman can alert them to those changes. **The amendment passed without objection, and the main motion passed without objection.**

C-6 Crab PSC Discussion Paper

BACKGROUND

The Council requested that staff prepare a discussion paper on crab PSC in groundfish fisheries and existing closure areas and management measures for 4 specific stocks: Bristol Bay red king crab (BBRKC), Bering Sea snow crab, Bering Sea Tanner crab and Saint Matthew blue king crab(SMBKC). Specifically the Council requested information on recent stock distribution and the distribution and amount of PSC in the trawl and fixed gear groundfish fisheries. Specific elements to include were the proportion of PSC by trawl and fixed gear fisheries inside of existing closure area boundaries and a detailed history of the closures to help identify the fraction of historical fisheries that occurred in these areas as well as their crab PSC. This paper briefly described the stock distribution for the 4 stocks, existing closures and their rationale historically as well as current trends by gear type in PSC in groundfish fisheries. This information is intended to assist the Council in deciding what, if any, action to take to initiate modifications to the existing management measures for these 4 stocks. The motion from February 2013 is attached as well as the discussion paper.

Diana Stram gave the staff report on this agenda item. Public comment was taken, and the AP gave its report, and the SSC did not address this agenda item.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Ms. Kimball moved to request a revised discussion paper to outline the steps and information needed to consider the appropriateness of revising or implementing crab PSC limits or other management measures to minimize crab PSC in directed groundfish fisheries. This paper should include:

- 1. A discussion of implementing future PSC limits in weights rather than numbers.**
- 2. A template that could be used for any crab stock that outlines the necessary information. The paper should use the snow crab stock and (COBLZ) management area as an example to develop the template.**

Information needed to evaluate current management measures could include:

- Figures depicting sample size, sex ratio and size frequency of crab bycatch in groundfish fisheries by gear.**
- Graphs of size data including a reference to average size of crabs taken in directed crab fisheries.**
- Maps that overlay existing closure area(s) with crab stock distribution at the time of survey (by sex and size category), the directed crab fishery(s), and groundfish bycatch by trawl, pot, and hook-and-line gear from 2008 – 2013.**
- Tables showing PSC reported by groundfish fishing year; actual PSC limits for trawl gear by area/zone; total PSC and total PSC within the closure area(s) by gear type.**

Information needed to develop future management measures could include:

- A description of the methodology that could be applied to set or revise abundance based PSC limits.**
- A discussion of the application of mortality rates to the crab PSC that accrues to trigger limits, by gear type.**

Ms. Kimball spoke to the motion. She briefly reviewed the item's background and noted that bycatch concerns and impacts are not equal among all the stocks. The Council has narrowed the stocks four, and should develop a template that helps determine the best approach and appropriate measures that can be used on a stock-by-stock basis. Ms. Kimball answered questions of clarification on the motion. She noted the information gathered on one stock would help inform the impact of groundfish bycatch on the overall stock as well as the efficacy of the current closure area for trawl gear. She emphasized a goal of developing a template for one stock that could be applied to all stocks.

Discussion ensued regarding the information included in the template. Mr. Henderschedt noted that the goal is to minimize, not reduce, and that it is essential to evaluate where the Council is now in order to set a path forward. **The motion passed without objection.**

C-7 BSAI Halibut PSC

BACKGROUND:

In April 2011 the Council requested development of discussion papers on reducing Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits in both the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA). Council action was taken in June 2012 to reduce GOA halibut PSC limits; those reductions under

GOA Plan Amendment 95 have been approved by the Secretary and are pending implementation in Federal regulations to coincide with implementation of groundfish harvest specifications for 2014/2015.

In March 2012 the Council requested a discussion paper to begin development of analyses to consider potential changes to the BSAI halibut PSC limits. Two papers were presented by Northern Economics to the Council also in June 2012. The first paper summarized the FMP basis of the current halibut PSC specifications, and the second summarized groundfish harvests wholesale values and halibut PSC by target fishery for 2003–2011. In February 2013 the Council requested that the second of the 2012 discussion papers be updated to include information for 2012, and include a discussion of potential management tools.

Marcus Hartley gave the staff report on this agenda item, and Gregg Williams of the IPHC also gave a report. Jane DiCosimo responded to questions. Lori Swanson gave the AP report, and the SSC did not address this agenda item. Public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION /ACTION

Mr. Henderschedt moved, which was seconded, to request an expanded discussion paper focused on developing an understanding of the status of the BSAI halibut resource and the impact of halibut PSC in the BSAI trawl and fixed gear groundfish fisheries on halibut stock biomass, the reproductive potential of the halibut stock, and short and long-term halibut yields to the directed halibut fisheries.

The paper should also identify the observer sampling protocols and regulatory changes necessary to provide for deck sorting of halibut on BSAI trawl catcher processors for fisheries in which this has been identified as a feasible and effective tool to reduce the halibut discard mortality rate.

The Council also requests that the BSAI groundfish sectors (AFA CP, AFA CV, A80, FLC, CDQ) move forward with measures in their cooperative and/or inter-cooperative agreements to minimize halibut PSC, including:

- **Development of effective and verifiable measures for halibut avoidance**
- **Individual accountability and use of incentives to reduce PSC**

The Council requests a report from representatives of these sectors at the June 2014 Council meeting.

Mr. Henderschedt spoke to the motion and noted that it is focused on providing information about the impacts of halibut PSC mortality on the halibut stock and halibut fishery. An understanding of relationships is essential to minimize halibut bycatch mortality and how future management actions can mitigate impacts. He noted that it is the intent in the expanded discussion paper to identify on a fishery-by-fishery basis the feasibility and the appropriate sampling protocols for halibut deck sorting. Each sector should be allowed to find the best tools to reduce bycatch using what is available to them. There are ways to combine cooperative management and regulation to arrive at the best possible outcome.

Mr. Henderschedt answered questions of clarification, and there was discussion regarding timing, possibly with the paper available for the June 2014 meeting. It is not intended that industry come back in June with finalized cooperative agreements that capture existing or new measures, but that they would be well along in that process and preparing next steps.

Mr. Henderschedt clarified that the paper should not include a full socio-economic impact, but develop the paper as to how the impacts affect users.

Mr. Tweit noted his support for the motion and how it addresses bycatch management, and that the Council should consider mechanisms that allow the harvesters to retain value of IFQs. Mr. Fields noted that the Council needs to move forward with regulatory action in concert with industry moving toward, but doesn't think the motion goes far enough quickly enough. This action should be priority one for everyone. Mr. Long noted his support of the motion, and has no reservation in moving forward with regulations, and wants to make sure discussion of the communities is included in the next version.

Chairman Olson noted that timing and priority will be discussed in the staff tasking agenda item and Council members should be considering which parts of the motion can be fast-tracked. He noted that whether voluntarily or regulatorily that the Council should move quickly as possible.

Mr. Henderschedt has confidence the Council has the ability to succeed and face this big challenge. Mr. Merrill noted his support of the motion, and encouraged industry to also be prepared and to manage expectations. Mr. Hull is supporting the motion because the sectors who have access the ability to reduce to PSC can take those actions themselves, without having the Council start a regulatory approach. He does want to signal to the industry that halibut PSC has to be lowered this year, and they have the tools to do it. Mr. Fields noted that everyone involved in this issue is responsible in trying to solve the problem.

The motion passed without objection.

C-8 CDQ Pacific Cod Fishery Development Discussion Paper

BACKGROUND:

In October 2013, during the staff tasking agenda item, representatives from the Bering Sea/ Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups introduced a proposal to make regulatory changes or exemptions that would encourage local development and participation in the harvest of CDQ Pacific cod allocations in both a directed CDQ Pacific cod fishery and while targeting CDQ and Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) halibut. This proposed fishery would allow CDQ village residents with vessels ranging in size from 16' to 46' in length, mainly using hook-and-line gear, to develop and actively participate in a CDQ village Pacific cod fishery in the BSAI.

The Council chose to move forward on the proposal's request to initiate a discussion paper. They acknowledged the problem statement identified by stakeholders in which the CDQ groups describe regulations that are prohibitive in allowing small hook-and-line vessels to direct fish Pacific cod. In their proposal, the CDQ groups identified regulation changes that they believe would encourage local development and participation in the harvest of CDQ Pacific cod allocations. These four proposed changes include:

- 1) Exempting vessels between 32' and 46' in length from License Limitation Program (LLP) requirements while harvesting CDQ Pacific cod.*
- 2) Exempting vessels up to 46' in length from Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) requirements while harvesting CDQ Pacific cod.*
- 3) Aligning observer requirements for hook-and-line catcher vessels targeting CDQ Pacific cod with observer requirements for hook-and-line catcher vessels targeting non-CDQ Pacific cod.*
- 4) Requiring 100% retention of CDQ Pacific cod, on vessels with the exemption in 1) and 2) above, while directed fishing for CDQ halibut and/or IFQ halibut, only if an allocation of CDQ Pacific cod is available to those vessels.*

The intent of this discussion paper is to provide the Council with background on the feasibility of developing of a small vessel CDQ fishery for targeting Pacific cod with hook-and-line gear based on the current regulatory landscape of the CDQ fisheries. A first examination of the four changes posed by the CDQ groups does not rule out the possibility of any of these changes; however, there are challenges associated with the changes requested in each component. The paper describes some of these challenges and some potential solutions if the Council wishes to move ahead with further analysis of this action.

Sarah Marrinan gave the staff report on this agenda item. The AP gave its report, and public comment was taken. The SSC did not address this agenda item.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Merrill moved, which was seconded, to initiate an analysis with the following purpose and need statement and alternatives.

Purpose and Need

Current regulations applicable to vessels targeting Pacific cod with hook-and-line gear are prohibitive for the CDQ village small boat fleets. Easing or revising certain regulations may make the development of a Pacific cod fishery more viable and provide additional harvest opportunities for the CDQ village small boat fleets, particularly if halibut quotas continue to decline.

Alternatives

Alternative 1. No action. Vessels fishing CDQ halibut are allowed to retain Pacific cod up to 20% of their CDQ halibut landings under the existing maximum retainable allowance (MRA).

Alternative 2. Increase the MRA up to 100% of the CDQ halibut landings for hook-and-line catcher vessels ≤46' length overall that hold Pacific cod CDQ. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod quotas.

Alternative 3. Create a new CDQ LLP for participating hook-and-line catcher vessels ≤46' length overall. Vessels with the CDQ LLP can participate in the CDQ directed Pacific cod fishery. Limit the number of LLPs each CDQ group would be provided. These LLP licenses would be non-transferable among CDQ groups. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod allocations. Vessels would be subject to the full coverage observer category consistent with existing full coverage observer requirements.

- **Option 1: Place these vessels in the partial coverage observer category. Incidentally caught halibut would accrue against the CDQ PSQ allocation.**
- **Option 2: Place these vessels in the partial coverage observer category. Require vessels to retain any incidentally caught halibut. Incidentally caught halibut would accrue against the halibut CDQ allocation.**

Alternative 4. Exempt hook-and-line catcher vessels participating in the CDQ Pacific cod fishery with ≤46' length overall from groundfish LLP requirements. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod allocations. Vessels would be in the partial coverage observer category.

The analysis should also consider other alternatives to VMS, such as the GPS electronic monitoring alternative identified on page 8 of the Observer Program Amendments discussion paper from the February 2014 meeting to monitor compliance with Steller sea lion protection measures, EFH, and HAPC closure areas.

Mr. Merrill spoke to his motion, noting that it is responsive to a number of concerns to provide additional harvest opportunities for small boat fleets in the CDQ villages. The analysis can examine the cut off point of vessels up to, and including 46 feet. Mr. Merrill reviewed the alternatives, and why they are appropriate for consideration. He noted NMFS has expertise with this type of program, with the CQE in the Gulf, and can help guide how the LLP program might be administered. Alternative 4 has enforcement concerns, but the next version will have viable alternatives. Mr. Merrill answered questions of clarification on the motion and on agency staff workload.

Mr. Hendershedt and Mr. Fields questioned the appropriateness of Alternative 3. They asked Mr. Merrill what the intent of the new LLP licenses would be with regards to limiting fishing participants and if these licenses would be transferable.

Mr. Merrill responded that the LLP licenses in Alternative 3 would be a tool to provide a mechanism to see which vessels are eligible or able to participate in the fishery and less as a tool to limit entrance. Other options may require us to set up whole new data-tracking systems. Therefore this LLP may be appropriate in that it would be doing two things: 1) providing the mechanism that would allow us to track the vessels and 2) it would also solve one of the regulatory hurdles that currently exists without specific exemptions.

Mr. Dersham stated his support of the motion and noted that this action will have an immediate effect on people involved.

Mr. Tweit moved to amend the motion by striking “particularly if halibut quotas continue to decline” and replacing with “which may be particularly urgent in light of steep declines of halibut quotas as one measure to mitigate the resulting economic disruption.”

The amendment was seconded by Mr. Dersham and it passed without objection.

Mr. Fields stated his support of the motion, and the Council should prepare to pare down and move forward, and can defended each provision as necessary. He reiterated that expanded fishing opportunities for cod are no substitute for loss of halibut.

The amended main motion passed without objection.

C9 AI Pacific Cod Catcher Vessel Allocation/Delivery Requirement

BACKGROUND:

At the October 2013 meeting, the Council, after reviewing the discussion paper, postponed further action on this issue until the February 2014 meeting. The Council recognized that any proposed action on the AI Pacific cod fishery would be extremely difficult given the uncertainty surrounding this fishery to include:

- 1) Establishing separate OFLs and ABCs for Pacific cod in the BS and AI during the 2014 fishing season*
- 2) Changes to the AI Pacific cod fishery from the Steller sea lion mitigation measures, and*
- 3) Board of Fish proposal that would increase the State water GHL Pacific cod fishery from 3% to 4.5%*

Since October, two of these issues have been resolved. The Council separated OFLs and ABCs for Pacific cod in the BS and AI. The Board of Fish proposal to increase the State water GHL Pacific cod fishery from 3% to 4.5% has been removed from consideration. However, uncertainty surrounding the Steller sea lion mitigation measures remains.

Per the Council's request, the following discussion paper provides an update on these three issues of uncertainty. In addition, discussion paper includes information on the state-water GHL fishery for AI Pacific cod, revised catch limit tables for alternative 2 and 3 from the Steller sea lion EIS, the 2013 distribution of AI Pacific cod processing, an update on the Adak shore-based processing facility, and a brief discussion on price negotiations between harvesters and shore-based processors under a regionalized delivery requirement.

Jon McCracken gave the staff report on this agenda item, and the AP gave its report. Public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Ms. Campbell made the following motion, which was seconded:

The Council initiates an analysis of Aleutian Islands community protection measures with the following problem statement and alternatives:

Problem statement: The American Fisheries Act, BSAI Crab Rationalization, and BSAI Amendment 80 management programs provided benefits to processing vessels that were intended to protect their investments in, and dependence on, the respective fishery resources. Each of these programs has also afforded participants opportunities for consolidation, allowing for increased participation in the nonrationalized BSAI Pacific cod fishery in the Aleutian Islands, thus diminishing the historical share of other industry participants and communities that depend on shorebased processing in the region.

Alternative 1: No action.

Alternative 2: Prior to [options: March 15, 21] the A season trawl catcher vessel Pacific cod harvest in the Bering Sea shall be limited to an amount equal to the BSAI aggregate trawl catcher vessel sector A season allocation minus the lesser of the AI directed fishing allowance or [options: 3,000 mt; 5,000 mt]. Harvest of the AI Pacific cod directed fishing allowance is limited to catcher vessels delivering to shoreplants west of 170 degrees longitude in the AI prior to [options: March 7, 15].

Option: If less than 50% of the AI Pacific cod directed fishing allowance has been landed by [options: March 7, 15], the restriction on delivery to other processors shall be removed.

The Council further requests industry sectors work together on developing additional alternatives to be brought back to the Council for consideration that may achieve the following goals in the AI Pacific cod fisheries:

- **Maintain functional Aleutian Islands shore plants west of 170 degrees**
- **Maintain trawl and fixed gear sector access to AI Pacific cod fisheries**
- **Minimize pre-emption of the AI CV cod fishery by the BS CV cod fishery**

Ms. Campbell spoke to the motion, noting this issue has evolved because of rationalization programs, and as excess processing capacity in AI cod fishery. The Council has been delaying action to try and anticipate other effects in the cod fishery. It is time for the Council to provide stability to the shoreside plants. The proposed action would prioritize a portion of the AI Pacific cod directed fishing allowance (TAC remaining after CDQ and ICA) for delivery to shoreplants in the Aleutian Islands management area, with some constraints on the amount and dates by which the measure would be removed. She noted part of the AP's motion was included and encourages the industry to work together to develop solutions, but that the Council will be prepared should there be no resolution with the industry.

Ms. Campbell answered questions of clarification from the Council members.

Mr. Cross noted that everything in the Aleutian Islands is difficult and different. Captains and boats have the best knowledge as to how to make the solution work. He is hesitant to start down a line limiting discussion and that starting with an analysis is premature. SSL rules affect how people work and may affect one gear group over another. He noted that industry negotiations may identify possible solutions.

Ms. Campbell stated the Council has to make difficult decisions. Cod is allocated under Amendment 85. Every other sector can harvest their allocation in the Bering Sea, but communities cannot go anywhere else. The Council must do everything they can to ensure coastal communities are successful. Now is the time to initiate analysis, and the door is open for the industry to work on solutions.

Mr. Henderschedt moved to add an alternative 3: Establish an Aleutian Islands Pcod split between the trawl and fixed gear sectors.

Option 1:

2008-2013: AI P-cod in all targets

Trawl: 79%

Fixed gear: 21%

Option 2: 2011-2013: AI P-cod in all targets

Trawl: 82%

Fixed gear: 18%

Further, the absence of a split between fixed gear and trawl sector, along with small AI cod TACs, and current sea lion mitigation measures result in an inability for the FLL sector to maintain access to this fishery.

Mr. Henderschedt spoke to the motion, stating that it is essential as the Council moves forward to be as comprehensive as possible. Provision for protections while overlooking other issues is unfortunate only to have to be evaluated and fixed at a later date. Realizing that this adds to the analysis, it does so as opposed to only an industry generated solution. Mr. Henderschedt answered questions of clarification.

Mr. Cross noted that programs support and affect some of the historical users of the cod fishery. Freezer longliners are one of those that are being affected. The core of the problem affects FLL as much as communities, and it is a judgment call which is more important. Discussion continued as to how the Council can protect all sectors as well as communities.

Mr. Olson stated he will be opposing the amendment. There is merit in examining one gear group that may use halibut less intensively, and he will not be opposed to seeing this work in the next version.

The vote on the amendment failed 5/6, with Henderschedt, Cross, Tweit, Balsiger, Hyder voting in favor.

Vote on the main motion passed without objection.

The Council received all the staff reports together on items C11-14, and the AP and SSC reports, as well as public comment was taken following all the reports. Council motions and actions also took place after all 4 reports, but for clarity in the minutes, the motions appear after each agenda item.

C-11 Observer Program Annual Report Outline

BACKGROUND:

As part of the Council's final motion recommending the restructured Observer Program in October 2010, the Council requested that the agency provide an annual report on the observer program. The report, which is scheduled to be presented to the Council each June, is intended to analyze the performance of the prior year's annual deployment plan, provide detailed information on the financial aspects of the program, and identify how industry participants have adapted to and been able to accommodate the new program.

While a preliminary report was presented to the Council in June 2013, with only the first four months of data under the new program, June 2014 will be the first time that the full report is presented, with all elements, and assessing a full year of fishing (in 2013) under the new program. In preparation for the June annual report, the agency will present the draft outline at this meeting, and provide the Council with an opportunity to provide feedback. The draft outline will be available after January 31.

Sally Bibb, Martin Loefflad and Diana Evans gave the staff report on this agenda item. Diana Evans also gave the OAC report, and Dr. Hunt gave the SSC report on this agenda item. Ernie Weiss gave the AP report, and public comment was taken on all agenda items.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded, to direct the Observer Program staff to incorporate OAC, and SSC comments as they finalize the 2013 Observer Annual Report.

He spoke to his motion noting this will be the first report using a full year of data to assess whether or not the program is achieving the expected goals. NMFS has indicated that they can't evaluate everything that has been requested, but they will try to address the comments. The report will also discuss statistically-based performance measures to evaluate the program. Providing variance around estimates is one such, it may not be the best approach, and there may be other methods for evaluating performance. With respect to the OAC comments about information for proposed regulatory amendments, the Council is not expecting those analyses to be in the annual report, but hopes that the agency will include relevant information in the annual report, and highlight how it is applicable.

The motion passed without objection.

C-12 Electronic Monitoring

BACKGROUND:

A National Electronic Monitoring Workshop was held in Seattle in January 2014. The steering committee for the workshop included Council members Dan Hull and John Henderschedt, and various Alaska agency and industry stakeholders were in attendance. A short written summary of the workshop is attached to this memo, and information is also available on the workshop's website, www.EMinformation.com.

Another national initiative underway for EM is the development of Regional Electronic Technology Implementation Plans. These were called for in NMFS' May 2013 Policy Directive on Electronic Technologies and Fishery-Dependent Data Collection, and their development is being spearheaded by NMFS consultant, George Lapointe. A description of the proposed contents of the regional plans is attached to this memo. Our early indication is that the EM/ER Strategic Plan adopted by the Council in June 2013 addresses much of what is requested for the regional implementation plan, but some

additional information may also need to be incorporated. At the workshop, it was identified that the goal is for these plans to be approved for each region by the end of the year.

Finally, the agency will present a summary document, attached, describing NMFS' plans for electronic monitoring cooperative research in 2014. The document describes the intention to test two different EM systems, and compares their relative merits. The paper also identifies how each system is applicable to fishery management requirements, and how the research links to the EM/ER Strategic Plan.

The Council received a report and presentation from Martin Loefflad and answered questions from the Council.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded, to endorse the recommendations of the OAC regarding EM that were listed on page 5 of the OAC report. He spoke to the motion noting that there has been a lot of work between the agency and industry organizations, with progress on this issue as to how to meet Council priorities in the small boat fixed gear fleet. He spoke about the agency's 2014 cooperative research plan, a proposed ad-hoc industry workshop in February, and the establishment of a Council EM workgroup, and that together these actions are all moving EM forward. Industry review is encouraged and desired. There was brief discussion, and the **motion passed without objection.**

Mr. Hull recommended that the Council send a letter to NMFS, or the appropriate agency, support the AFSC's request for additional funding for observers and cooperative research to support electronic monitoring. The Council supported the request, and requested the letter identify the importance of the funding in Alaska, as the AFSC will be competing against other regions for the national funds.

Mr. Cross noted his concern about the availability of lead level 2 observers for the freezer longline fleet. He wanted to flag the issue and hopes that the industry and observer program can find a solution. He hopes to hear back from the groups at the next meeting should the Council need to be involved. Mr. Cross also noted the public comment regarding observer insurance, and asked that further information be brought back to the Council if Council action should become necessary.

C-13 Observer Program Regulatory Amendments Discussion Paper

BACKGROUND:

In June 2013, the Council tasked staff to develop a discussion paper outlining the main issues associated with three proposed regulatory amendments to the restructured Observer Program. In October 2013, four other proposals were identified whose implementation would also require a regulatory amendment to the Observer Program. Two of them are included in this paper; the others have been advanced on a separate track (i.e., an analysis to improve observer coverage on catcher vessels delivering to tenders, initiated in December 2013, and a discussion paper on revisions to regulations governing fishing for Pacific cod in the CDQ fisheries, which will be reviewed at this meeting).

At this meeting, the Council will review the discussion paper on these five proposals, in the context of other analytical tasks relative to the Observer Program. The Council is asked to affirm or provide feedback on NMFS' recommendations for priorities for statistical and policy analysis about the Observer Program between now and June 2014, as well as recommended priorities for analyzing the proposed regulatory amendments.

Sally Bibb and Martin Loefflad gave the staff report on this agenda item. The SSC gave its report, and the AP gave its report. Diana Evans gave the OAC report. Public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION /ACTION

Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded, to identify changes to observer coverage for small catcher processors as the highest priority for consideration of amendments to the observer program, followed by changes for BSAI trawl CVs. These priorities do not take precedence over the current analytical priorities identified in the discussion paper on page 5. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henderschedt.

Mr. Hull noted the discussion paper assessed the observer program issues, and the rationale for each proposed amendment. He noted a clear need to address the financial hardship that the new observer coverage requirements impose on the vessels that act as CVs and CPs, or small CPs that process small amounts. One of the purposes of the restructured program was to address inequalities across the fleet in paying for observers, and this issue fell through the cracks at implementation. More detailed accounts of the affected vessels, and recommended changes, have become apparent since implementation. Mr. Hull prioritized the small CP issue over the BSAI cod CVs because the BSAI vessels are not required to take additional coverage, but are choosing to do so. Mr. Hull noted that he has purposely not prioritized the other three issues, with the understanding that staff would not work on them until the Council provides further direction. He answered questions of clarification of the motion. Mr. Henderschedt noted his agreement with the motion and the rationale behind it. Mr. Cross noted that stating priorities is a good indicator to the public and will be supporting the motion. **The motion passed without objection.**

C-14 Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) Report

BACKGROUND

The Council's Observer Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet on February 3, 2014, to review the Observer Program agenda items that are being presented to the Council under agenda items C11, C12, and C13: the Observer Program Annual Report outline, the discussion paper on regulatory amendments to the Observer Program, and an update on electronic monitoring. The OAC's agenda is attached, and a report on the Committee's recommendations will be available following the OAC meeting.

Diana Evans gave the staff report on this agenda item along with the Chairman of the OAC, Dan Hull. The AP gave its report, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

No action was taken.

D1 Ecosystem policy

BACKGROUND:

In December 2013, the Council's Ecosystem Committee developed a draft Ecosystem Vision Statement for the Council's consideration. The Council reviewed the draft, and requested that it be put out for public review. The draft vision statement is intended to synthesize the Council's policy on ecosystem-based management, and to work in concert with existing comprehensive management objectives such as are included in the groundfish management approach (adopted through the Programmatic Groundfish SEIS). The draft approach includes three parts: a value statement, the vision statement, and an implementation

strategy. The ecosystem approach has been posted on the Council's webpage, and at this meeting, the Council will consider whether to adopt the vision statement.

The Council's Ecosystem Committee is meeting on February 4, 2014, to review the ecosystem approach and public comment, as well as to discuss an action plan with respect to the approach. The Committee minutes will be available during the meeting.

Diana Evans gave the staff report on this agenda item. The SSC gave its report, and the AP gave its report. Public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION /ACTION

Mr. Tweit moved, which was seconded, that the Council adopt as Council policy the Ecosystem Approach, as developed and revised by the Ecosystem Committee and SSC. Below:

Value Statement

The Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Aleutian Islands are some of the most biologically productive and unique marine ecosystems in the world, supporting globally significant populations of marine mammals, seabirds, fish, and shellfish. This region produces over half the nation's seafood and supports robust fishing communities, recreational fisheries, and a subsistence way of life. The Arctic ecosystem is a dynamic environment that is experiencing an unprecedented rate of loss of sea ice and other effects of climate change, resulting in elevated levels of risk and uncertainty. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has an important stewardship responsibility for these resources, their productivity, and their sustainability for future generations.

Vision Statement

The Council envisions sustainable fisheries that provide benefits for harvesters, processors, recreational and subsistence users, and fishing communities, which (1) are maintained by healthy, productive, biodiverse, resilient marine ecosystems that support a range of services; (2) support robust populations of marine species at all trophic levels, including marine mammals and seabirds; and (3) are managed using a precautionary, transparent, and inclusive process that allows for analyses of tradeoffs, accounts for changing conditions, and mitigates threats.

Implementation Strategy

The Council intends that fishery management explicitly take into account environmental variability and uncertainty, changes and trends in climate and oceanographic conditions, fluctuations in productivity for managed species and associated ecosystem components, such as habitats and non-managed species, and relationships between marine species. Implementation will be based on adaptive management, incorporating the best available science (including local and traditional knowledge), and engage scientists, managers, and the public.

The vision statement shall be given effect through all of the Council's work, including long-term planning initiatives, fishery management actions, and science planning to support ecosystem-based fishery management.

Mr. Tweit spoke to the motion noting that the Council tasked the Ecosystem Committee with developing this as a foundation to ensure that future Council work is based on the best scientific understanding of ecosystems and their stressors as well as what makes them stable. The approach has 3 parts: values, vision, and implementation. He stated that implementation included an action plan, long-term planning processes, FMP management actions, along with science planning and the human component.

Mr. Tweit noted that he expected all work will be folded under this management policy, and the Council will be able to be more explicit as to how decisions account for climate change and variability. Mr. Tweit answered questions of clarification on the motion and there was general discussion. It was generally agreed that this was an overarching statement of guidance on how the Council should consider the ecosystem approaches when taking action.

Mr. Henderschedt moved, which was seconded, to change the last sentence of the first paragraph to the following: Implementation will be responsive to changes in the ecosystem, and our understanding of those dynamics, incorporate the best available science, including local and traditional knowledge, and engage scientists, managers, and the public. Mr. Henderschedt spoke to the motion, stating his appreciation of the Committee's efforts to appropriately capture to the need to respond to changing ecosystems, however, the term "adaptive management" may be misleading. Mr. Tweit noted that the Council is defining an increasing set of challenges to be sustained in an increasing rate of change and scientific uncertainty. Mr. Henderschedt is supportive of the motion, and approves of the continued effort to manage at the ecosystem level. **The amendment passed and the amended main motion passed without objection.**

D-2 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

BACKGROUND:

In June 2013, the Council tasked staff with a discussion paper on the development of a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). The motion was put forward in the context of an agenda item relating to the Bering Sea canyons, and a Council request to better understand the importance of these canyons, especially Pribilof and Zhemchug canyons, as part of a highly productive shelf break zone providing coral and sponge habitats for fish and crab species. In recognition of the Council's immediate focus on the Bering Sea slope, the Council's Ecosystem Committee originally recommended that the Council consider development of an FEP specifically for the slope area, however the Council ultimately broadened the scope of the discussion paper so as to allow the discussion to dictate the appropriate geographic scale for a potential FEP.

This discussion paper provides some background on the development of the Council's existing FEP, for the Aleutian Islands ecosystem area, as well as the availability of information about the Bering Sea ecosystem. The paper also identifies that if the Council chooses to proceed, a key consideration will be to define a management objective for a potential Bering Sea FEP, in addition to considering geographical scope of and logistical issues with such a project.

Diana Evans gave the staff report on this agenda item. George Hunt gave the SSC report on this agenda item, and the AP gave its report. Public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Tweit moved, which was seconded, to initiate work on a Bering Sea FEP with the EBS LME as the geographical scope. The objectives for the FEP will be developed through a public scoping process with Council decision on objectives at a follow-up meeting. Mr. Tweit spoke to the motion noting that it should be modeled after the AI FEP, and the Pacific Fishery Management Council's California Current FEP, with an emphasis on action-oriented implementation objectives. He noted that upcoming Council meetings are opportunities for scoping and outreach which will allow the Council to define what the objectives will be. Mr. Henderschedt noted his support for the motion, and stated there is a good opportunity to leverage existing opportunities already in place to achieve ecosystem-based

management. Mr. Fields was supportive of the motion, but noted concerns with expectations in use of the plan, and that not all concerns of the user groups may be met. Dr. Balsiger noted the project will be able to have a positive outcome with outreach on ecosystem management. Mr. Tweit noted that the BS FEP will provide a framework to adapt to changing ecosystems. **The motion passed without objection.**

Diana Evans outlined additional items the Ecosystem Committee discussed and answered questions.

D-3 Chinook Salmon EDR

BACKGROUND:

This report provides an update the Council on the status of the Amendment 91 Chinook Salmon Economic Data Report (EDR) program and related data collection measures implemented in relation to Amendment 91 to the BSAI Groundfish FMP. The Amendment 91 EDR program is managed primarily by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), with support from NMFS Alaska Region, and is administered in collaboration with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). The EDR is a mandatory reporting requirement under 50 CFR 679.65 for all entities participating in the American Fisheries Act (AFA) BSAI pollock trawl fishery, including vessel masters and businesses that own or lease¹ one or more AFA-permitted vessels active in fishing or processing BSAI pollock, CDQ groups receiving allocations of BSAI pollock, and representatives of Sector entities receiving allocations of Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) from NMFS.

The report includes the following:

- *A review of the Council's objectives and process for the development and implementation of this data collection;*
- *Summary of details regarding the administration of the 2012 Chinook EDR data;*
- *A summary of empirical results from the 2012 Amendment 91 data collection;*
- *A report on ongoing collaborative efforts between industry members and NMFS and Council staff to implement the EDR program, minimize EDR submitter burden, and ensure data quality standards and that the Council's stated objectives for the data collection program are met; and*
- *A discussion of the benefits and challenges of the data collection during 2012 and 2013.*

AFSC staff will be available to provide a presentation of the report.

Diana Stram gave a background and work to date on this agenda item and answered questions from the Council. Dr. Haynie and Brian Garber-Yonts gave the report on Amendment 91 data collection measures, process, and the Chinook EDR data collection program overall. The SSC gave its report, Becca Robbins-Gisclair gave the AP report, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Henderschedt moved, which was seconded, that the Council continue to collect data on compensated transfer, stop collecting check box data on paper log books, and not collect data on moves represented at the beginning of trip. Mr. Henderschedt spoke to the motion, noting that movement of pollock and Chinook is the most important information. He noted his concern with paper

¹ For the sake of clearer exposition, "vessel owners or leaseholders" as a group are referred to collectively as "vessel owners" hereafter in this report, except where a relevant distinction pertains.

logbooks: the information isn't used and does not reflect well on this process. The Council cannot model all behavior within a fishery. Discussion ensued regarding what data is collected. After a brief recess, **Mr. Henderschedt, with the concurrence of the second, withdrew the motion.** It was generally agreed that there was no action required. Ms. Kimball noted that she is satisfied with the report, and will start clarifying instructions to fleet, including questions that allow everyone to describe how they use the checkboxes. She noted that the one part of the data collection package that isn't working is getting improved, and that she is fine with status quo.

Mr. Cross stated that his concern remains with CVs and logbooks, and capturing that data at some point will be important to the Council.

D-5 Staff Tasking

Chris Oliver reviewed the various items that had been tagged for discussion during staff tasking. Jon McCracken reviewed a regulatory change of the enforcement period on MRAs and answered questions from the Council. Jane DiCosimo gave an overview of IFQ proposals to date. Steve MacLean gave the Bering Sea Canyons Workshop report. Chris Oliver reviewed other staff tasking items, including the three-meeting outlook and a possible agenda for April. The AP gave its report, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Fields moved, which was seconded, to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion passed without objection.

ROA

Dr. Balsiger noted he is ready to sign the regional operating agreement and thanked all the staff involved.

SSL Discussion

Mr. Tweit noted that if the draft EIS is ready, the Committee should be able to meet prior to Council review in April. He noted that in reviewing critical habitat of SSL, the Council should play a large role and should indicate its interest to NMFS as to why it is important to participate. The Council has a responsibility to protect the role the Steller sea lions play in the ecosystem. Dr. Balsiger noted his agreement and looks forward to the letter.

BSAI Halibut PSC

Mr. Fields stated that the halibut PSC package has urgency and priority. June 2014 would be appropriate to hear from those that use halibut in groundfish fisheries. Other Council members agreed, and although tasking staff may be difficult, the information that can be provided may decrease halibut mortality. It should be clear to stakeholders as to what the Council is expecting in June on progress for voluntarily implementing measures to minimize halibut PSC. Mr. Olson noted that the western CDQ groups will have to respond to a request, and CDQ groups and partners will have to discuss the issue. He is not expecting completed documents, but an up-to-date report on work in process.

Timing of CDQ Pcod Analysis

Mr. Olson noted that he would like to see this issue stay on-track.

Aleutia PQS Final Action

Mr. Fields noted that this issue has been needing resolution, and June would be the right time to schedule final action. Mr. Henderschedt noted that the Council is the wrong place to address this issue, and is fundamentally opposed to using the Council process to address an administrative error. Mr. Olson noted that there is no obligation for the Council to take action, but that it will be on the agenda for June. Ms. Kimball requested to contact the parties involved to make sure the parties involved will be available in June.

Observer Issues

Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded, that the Council would form a fixed gear EM workgroup with the following:

Purpose

The Fixed Gear EM Workgroup is a Council committee established so that industry, agency and EM service providers have a forum to cooperatively and collaboratively design, test and develop electronic monitoring systems that are consistent with Council goals and objectives to integrate electronic monitoring into the observer program. The Workgroup will inform Council decisions and recommendations to NMFS on integrating EM into the observer program.

Composition

The Council will appoint representatives from the fixed gear fleet and EM service provider companies, who submit letters of interest to the Council. Representatives from the fixed gear fleet include longline and pot gear, from all vessel sizes.

Agency representation is anticipated from the list below, but each agency will determine on its own who will participate, depending on the workgroup agenda and needs.

Agency staff: NMFS staff from SF, Regional office, AFSC, OLE, GC, etc., ADF&G, PSMFC, IPHC, Council staff

Operating rules and reporting

**The workgroup is a Council committee and support will be provided by Council staff.
The workgroup may recommend and the Council will set meeting times and agendas.
The workgroup chairman or facilitator will be appointed by the Council chairman.
The workgroup will operate on a consensus basis and report directly to the Council.**

Mr. Hull noted that there is a strong interest in developing this group. The application of EM technology is similar across gear groups, but first focus will be on fixed gear. He noted there may be overlap in issues and roles between this group and the OAC, and that can be a topic for discussion. Mr. Hull answered questions of clarification from the Council members. It was generally agreed this was an open workgroup, and other gear groups could attend. It was also noted that this group would likely take the place of the "ad-hoc" EM group. **The motion passed without objection.**

GOA IFQ Sablefish Pots

Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded, that an analysis on allowing use of sablefish pots in the GOA IFQ fishery would be focused on longline pots only. Mr. Hull noted that this was the original intent behind the motion. **The motion passed without objection.**

Area 4A Halibut IFQ Retention in BSAI Sablefish IFQ pot gear

Mr. Hull noted that it is not necessary to take initiate action now. Ms. Kimball was not prepared to address this issue, and noted that there is not a discussion paper coming back. If the Council wants to review the issue in the future, it will have to make a request.

Sablefish Vessel Caps

Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded, to request staff to develop a spreadsheet of issues and questions raised by these proposals for halibut and sablefish, by area, and potentially also by vessel and QS category. This would be qualitative and quantitative in nature to try and understand the nature and extent of the problem identified by the sablefish IFQ fleet. The paper should include data to the extent possible that can address the issues. In addition include information as to what would be needed to establish an Area 4 only vessel cap change for sablefish and halibut. Mr. Hull spoke to his motion, noting that this is a low priority item. There may be an increase of the problem moving from GOA to BSAI. He noted that this is a scoping document, rather than a discussion paper.

There was lengthy discussion on the type of analysis involved, and it was generally agreed that this is not a high priority, and the Council staff can gather information at this point. **The motion passed without objection.**

IPA Reports

Mr. Cross would like to have a presentation on IPA reports that are due in April and the Council can be prepared for questions and discussion in June.

Gulf Trawl Bycatch

Mr. Dersham is concerned about the timing for the GOA Trawl bycatch issue, and wanted to confirm if that information gained in April may necessitate action in June. There was discussion regarding not letting the issue lapse regardless where the meeting takes place. Mr. Fields noted that it is important the issue not be addressed outside of Alaska. Mr. Olson noted that the April meeting agenda will be drafted at a later date, and after that meeting progresses the Council can re-evaluate a June agenda.

Ecosystem Committee Tasking

Mr. Tweit re-confirmed tasking for the next Ecosystem Committee meeting. It was agreed that the direction Mr. Tweit and the Ecosystem Committee had outlined will be the path forward for the next meeting in April.

Hastings Bill Discussion

Mr. Oliver walked through the various sections and it was generally agreed the Council should outline general topics of discussion that could be presented in a letter. The Council reviewed the issues for comments/discussion. Mr. Henderschedt noted Councils have authority to establish ecosystem changes and economic changes to communities now, and there is no value in adding it. Adding an ecosystem component definition should be left to the implementation guidelines, and not included in legislation without a definition of 'in the fishery.' Allowing ACLs to be established up to and over a fishing level does not require Councils to take into consideration uncertainty and risk, which is a bad policy. Modifying NS1 guidelines is where flexibility should be addressed, not in this legislation. Mr. Fields noted that as the Council develops responses it should note the poor public policy. Mr. Tweit stated his agreement with other Council members. He noted that there are several departures in the Hastings bill from the way the Council currently does business which is concerning, and to accommodate

the recommendations in the bill would create more work for the Council and staff. Discussion continued on other highlighted areas of the bill. Mr. Oliver noted that the Council has transparency in the public process with webcasting of the audio and electronic documents. Ms. Kimball noted that other Councils may not have as much transparency, but feels our Council is meeting expectations in this area.

Mr. Tweit noted that timeframes and nature of NEPA makes it difficult to respond to concerns using adaptive management and also makes it difficult to respond to rapidly changing environments and exercise the Council's stewardship's role. NOAA GC noted that it may be administratively challenging, and less NEPA driven.

There was discussion regarding data collection, specifically EM, and confidentiality. Concerns were noted with enforcement and the use of EM, definitions of 'electronic monitoring' and public access to information.

Mr. Fields noted that the Council has had difficulty in implementing innovative solutions because of confidentiality constraints. He would oppose recommendations in this section as well as take a proactive approach, perhaps defining "entity."

Mr. Henderschedt suggests the Council support 'co-management,' with private efforts along with efforts of fishery managers to collect the best data. He also noted that Councils should neither be prohibited nor compelled to use data, but should be allowing for Council's authority to use the data in managing the fishery, and coastal and marine spatial planning often overlaps with ecosystem-based management. Mr. Olson noted that anything that impinges on review of catch share programs due to increased confidentiality requirements will make it more difficult to manage and monitor those fisheries.

Mr. Oliver continued, reviewing the remainder of the points in the Hastings bill. He noted that through the feedback and general comments, he will draft a response. Mr. Olson noted this is in iterative process as this legislation moves forward, and there may be additional times to address this issue. Mr. Fields requested a time on future agendas to discuss the process of this bill.

Mr. Dersham noted he will be attending a saltwater conference as a representation of the Council, and can bring up many of these points.

Mr. Oliver noted this issue is on CCC the agenda and will be reviewing legislation as it proceeds. It was confirmed that there will be a report on legislation at the April meeting.

Chairman Olson noted that Franz Mueter and Gordon Kruse will be going on sabbatical, and alternative SSC members Milo Atkinson and Brad Harris have been appointed.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their work and the meeting convened at 12:40 pm on February 10, 2014.

Time Log
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Meetings held in Seattle, Washington at Renaissance Hotel
February 5-10, 2014

February 5, 2014

Time of Day Subject

08:06	Call to Order
08:17	B1 - Executive Director's Report, Chris Oliver
08:54	Discussion on Hastings Bill
09:00	Marie Szymkowiak , Amber Himes-Corness, Keely Kent
09:01	GOA Groundfish Trawl Bycatch Management Social Survey
01:53	B2 - NMFS Management Report, Glenn Merrill
03:04	Jim Buxon, Jim Land
03:04	B2 - NOAA OLE
03:48	B3 - ADFG report, Karla Bush
04:10	B4 - USCG report, Tony Kenne
04:36	B5 – IPHC report, Gregg Williams, Bruce Leman
04:37	Ian Stewart
05:55	Recess

February 6, 2014**Time of Day** **Subject**

08:02	Call to Order
08:02	IPHC report continued
08:50	B7 - Protected Species Report, Steve MacLean
09:05	Public Comment on all B items
09:05	Henry Mitchell
09:20	C1 - Pod Cod Sector Discussion Paper, Sam Cunningham
09:58	Lori Swanson, AP report
10:01	Public Comment C1
10:01	Jeff Stephan
10:20	Bernie Berkholder
10:54	C2 - GOA Tendering, Jon McCracken
11:22	AP report, Lori Swanson
11:34	Public Comment C2
11:34	Bob Krueger
01:04	C3 - Charter Halibut Common Pool
01:05	Jane DiCosimo, Richard Yamada
01:27	Tom Olhaus
01:45	Greg Williams
01:54	AP report
02:15	C4 - Definition of a Fishing Guide
02:15	Jane DiCosimo
03:09	Roy Hyder Enforcement Committee Minutes
03:24	Mark Warner - public comment
03:33	Heath Hilyard
03:37	Tom Olhaus
03:40	Richard Yamada
03:50	Tom Gemmell
04:09	Dersham motion
04:54	Recess

February 7, 2014

Time of Day Subject

08:03	Call to Order
08:03	C5 - Grenadiers, Scott Miller
08:27	Lori Swanson, AP report
08:30	Public Comment on C5
08:30	Bob Krueger
08:40	Merrick Burden
08:43	Chad See
08:47	John Warrenchuk
08:52	Linda Behnken
08:57	Julie Bonney
09:19	Action
09:19	Glenn Merrill
09:19	C6 - Diana Stram BSAI Crab Bycatch Limits
10:59	Lori Swanson AP report
11:05	Public comment on C6
11:05	Ruth Christiansen
11:06	John Gauvin
11:11	Kimball action on C6
01:58	C7 - BSAI Halibut PSC
01:59	Marcus Hartley
03:40	Gregg Williams
03:40	AP report Lori Swanson
03:48	Todd Loomis, Mark Fina
04:07	Bob Alverson
04:42	Jeff Kauffman
04:45	Simeon Swetzoff, Mateo Paz Soldon
04:55	John Youngblood
04:59	Lenny Hertzog
05:10	John Gauvin, Bill Orr
05:26	Henry Mitchell
05:30	Rob Sanderson Jr.
05:36	Chad See
05:41	Brent Paine
05:51	Stephanie Madsen
05:59	Angel Drobnika
06:02	Linda Behnken
06:05	Recess

February 8, 2014**Time of Day** **Subject**

07:58	Call to Order
07:58	Council action on C7
07:59	John Henderschedt
09:10	C8 - CDQ Pacific Cod Fishery Development
09:10	Sarah Marrinan
09:35	AP report
09:42	Public Comment
09:42	Aggie Fautz, Heather McCarty
09:42	Anne Vanderhoeven, Angel Drobnica
09:56	Simeon Swetzof, Mateo Paz Soldon
10:01	Clem Tillion
10:06	Henry Mitchell
10:45	C9 – Aleutian Islands Pcod CV
10:45	Jon McCracken
10:54	AP report Lori Swanson
10:57	Public Testimony C9
10:57	Clem Tillion
11:03	Chad See
11:11	Brent Paine
11:16	Matt Upton
11:21	Angel Drobnica
11:27	Dave Fraser
03:40	Sally Bibb, Martin Loefflad
03:49	Diana Evans, Martin Loefflad
04:10	Diana Evans, OAC report
04:22	Dr. George Hunt, Observer Issues from SSC Report
04:35	Ernie Weiss
04:41	AP Report
04:41	Public Comment
04:41	Beth Stewart
04:45	Brent Paine
04:53	Paul Grundholdt
04:56	Niulai Silverstol
05:01	Recess

February 9, 2014**Time of Day** **Subject**

09:00	Call to Order
09:01	Public Comment, Observer issues
09:01	Andrew Richards
09:07	Lenny Hertzog
09:10	Chad See
09:16	Linda Behnken
09:30	Paul MacGregor
09:31	Michael Lake
09:53	Hull Motion
10:47	Diana Evans, D1
10:54	AP report, Becca Robbins Gisclair
10:54	SSC Report George Hunt
11:00	Mike Levine
11:39	D2 Bering Sea Ecosystem Plan
11:40	Diana Evans
01:51	George Hunt
01:52	SSC Report
02:15	Becca Robbins Gisclair AP report
02:17	Rose Fosdick
02:17	Public Comment
02:26	Jackie Dragon
02:36	Adam Arroyo
02:39	Hsiang-Yuan Wu
02:42	Heather McAuliffe
02:44	Matthew Scanlan
02:47	Joel Stewart
02:50	Amber Smith
02:53	Andrew Thorne
02:55	Amanda Dill
02:56	Brandon Tabares
02:59	Carlo Voli
03:02	Mike Levine
03:48	D3 - Diana Stram, Brian Garber Yonts, Alan Haynie
04:44	George Hunt, SSC Report
04:48	Becca Robbins Gisclair
04:51	Public Comment
04:51	Stephanie Madsen
04:56	Becca Robbins Gisclair
05:22	Recess

February 10, 2014**Time of Day Subject**

08:01	Call to Order
08:03	E - Staff Tasking
08:03	Chris Oliver
08:03	Jon McCracken - MRA
08:09	Jane DiCosimo - IFQ information
08:11	Steve McLean - Bering Sea Canyons Overview
08:40	Chris Oliver, review of staff tasking items
09:01	Weiss AP report
09:39	Linda Kozak
09:39	Terry Haines
09:43	Alexus Kwachka
09:50	Jeff Farvour
09:57	Chuck McCallum
10:03	Chad See
10:14	Bob Alverson
10:20	Theresa Peterson
10:23	Mark Fina
10:25	Lenny Hertzog
10:29	Jeff Stephan
10:31	John Gauvin
10:34	Heather McCarty, Mateo Paz Soldon
10:38	Becca Robbins Gisclair
01:22	CFA Workshop
01:22	Sam Cunningham
04:14	Meeting Adjourned

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Eric A. Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director



605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone (907) 271-2809

Fax (907) 271-2817

Visit our website: <http://www.npfmc.org>

ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES

February 4-7, 2014

Seattle, Washington

The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent ~~stricken~~):

Ruth Christiansen	Heath Hilyard	Paddy O'Donnell
Kurt Cochran	Jeff Kauffman	Joel Peterson
John Crowley	Mitch Kilborn	Theresa Peterson
Jerry Downing	Alexus Kwachka	Sinclair Wilt
Jeff Favour	Craig Lowenberg	Lori Swanson, co-vice Chair
Becca Robbins Gisclair, Chair	Brian Lynch	Anne Vanderhoeven
John Gruver	Chuck McCallum	Ernie Weiss, co-vice Chair

Election of Officers

The AP elected Becca Robbins Gisclair as Chair and Lori Swanson and Ernie Weiss as Co-Vice Chair.

Minutes from the December 2013 meeting were approved.

C1 Gulf of Alaska pot cod sector participation

The AP recommends that the Council take no further action on this issue at this time.

Motion carried 21/0.

Rationale:

- Discussion paper presents good baseline data that may be useful as the GOA trawl bycatch management program moves forward, in possible setting of sideboards for pot sector protection.
- Pot gear fishermen are not unified in a request for a control date or a future catch share program.
- It is unclear what purpose taking further action (e.g., setting a control date for history) would serve at this time.

C2 GOA Tendering

The AP recommends the Council request the GOA tendering report be updated and brought back to the Council hopefully at the June 2014 Council meeting. The data in the present February 2014 report should be expanded to include activities for the first half of 2014. In Addition, the report should provide the following:

1. Tendered cod catches by gear type and Area (610/620/630)
2. Tendered trawl Pollock and cod catches by location east and west of 157 degrees West longitude.

In addition, the report shall consider the effects of the following options to potentially reverse the new tendering behaviors:

1. Allow tendering only for trawl cod and Pollock harvest that occur west 157 degrees.
2. Prohibit tendering of CGOA trawl Pollock and cod catches from vessels equal to or greater than 60 ft.
3. Prohibit the use of AFA vessels as tenders for the trawl Pollock and cod catchers in the CGOA.

The effects of these options should be considered in combination as well as independently.

Motion carried 20/0.

Rationale:

- There has been an increase in tendering and transport of fish since implementation of GOA sector split and a continued race for fish.
- Change in GOA groundfish harvesting and processing behaviors undermine Steller sea lion protection measures and community stability.
- It's important to track these changes until new tools are in place for the GOA groundfish fishery that slow the race fish, increase vessel accountability and reduce bycatch.

C3 Charter Halibut Common Pool Proposal

The AP received a report from Mr. Richard Yamada describing how to integrate a recreational fishery into a catch share program (the Catch Accountability Through Compensated Halibut (CATCH) project). We look forward to a more focused proposal in the future to address details including whether RQE fish need to be tracked separately.

C4 Definition of Fishing Guide

The AP recommends the Council select the following for final action:

Alternative 2. Revise and clarify Federal definitions

1. Adopt option 1 to revise the Federal definition of sport fishing guide services AND incorporate text from the state's definition of "assistance," rather than adding a separate definition for assistance (option 3):

Sport fishing guide services, for purposes of §§ 300.65(d) and 300.67, means assistance, for compensation **or with the intent to receive compensation**, to a person who is sport fishing, to take or attempt to take **fish halibut** by ~~being on board a vessel with such person accompanying~~ **or physically directing the sport fisherman in sport fishing activities** during any part of a charter vessel fishing trip. Sport fishing guide services do not include services provided by a crew member.

2. Adopt option 2b to add a definition of compensation similar to the State definition, with a reference to "reasonable" instead of "actual" expenses:

Compensation means direct or indirect payment, remuneration, or other benefits received in return for services, regardless of the source; in this paragraph, "benefits" includes wages or other employment benefits given directly or indirectly to an individual or organization, and any dues, payments, fees, or other remuneration given directly or indirectly to a fishing club, business, organization, or individual who provides sport fishing guide services; and does not include reimbursement for the *reasonable* daily expenses for fuel, food, or bait;

Motion carried 19/1/1.

Rationale:

- The alternative and options align state and federal definitions so that all charter halibut fishery participants are treated fairly and are regulated under consistent state and federal rules.
- Enforcement and fishing participants will benefit from clearly articulated rules regarding fishing behavior and reporting requirements.

C5 Grenadier Management

The AP recommends the Council adopt Alternative 2 (to include grenadiers in the FMP as an Ecosystem Component species, the PPA) for final action with the MRA set at 5% in both areas.

Motion carried 21/0.

Rationale:

- Amending the FMP to include grenadiers as a component in the ecosystem makes sense for conservation and fishery management at this time.
- Setting the MRA at 5% is reasonable, allowing for some incidental catch of grenadiers.

C6 BSAI Crab PSC Limits

The AP recommends the Council request staff modify the Crab PSC Expanded Discussion Paper to include the following:

1. Maps should be provided that overlay the existing closure areas with recent crab stock distribution and distribution of PSC, in order to evaluate what changes may be necessary to match the closure area with stock distribution.
 - Recent crab distribution should include both survey and non-confidential commercial catch location since 2008.
 - Distribution of PSC should include all gear types – with each gear marked differently (or on separate maps).
2. Tables should be similar across stocks and include:
 - a. PSC reported by groundfish fishing year
 - b. Actual PSC limits for trawl gear by area/Zone (including the RKCSS)
 - c. For each gear type: total PSC and total PSC within the closure area(s) (separate Zones 1 and 2 for Tanner and RKCSS).

The AP requests the Council keep the discussion paper on BSAI crab PSC numbers to weight on schedule for the June 2014 (as tentatively scheduled) such that in the future, all regulatory bycatch thresholds are in weight rather than numbers of crab. In addition, the AP requests the Council initiate a new discussion paper on ways to establish limits and linkages between the BSAI Groundfish FMP and BSAI Crab FMP.

Motion carried 21/0.

Rationale:

- Crab bycatch management in BSAI groundfish fisheries is a complicated one that the Council has struggled with since 2010.
- With current crab PSC limits in numbers, it is difficult to gauge the impacts of such limits on annual crab abundance and standardizing crab bycatch to the same metric used in crab stock

assessments will reduce the uncertainty associated with multiple conversions from numbers to weights and back again.

- While questions relating to appropriate crab PSC limits for the groundfish fisheries and appropriate areas for crab PSC management are important ones that definitely need to be addressed, there are also key structural issues regarding crab bycatch management that also need to be resolved.
- In the future, it is envisioned that PSC discussion will include tables that show (assume this would be in pounds) OFL, ABC, total catch, proportion of total catch from directed crab fisheries, and PSC in groundfish fisheries.

C7 BSAI Halibut PSC

The AP recommends the Council move forward with an expanded discussion paper focused on developing an understanding of the BSAI halibut resource issues, the effects of reduced abundance on all user groups, and methods of bycatch reduction, both regulatory and non-regulatory, that promote the conservation and sustainability of the resource shared equitably among all user groups.

The expanded discussion paper should include examination of the IPHC concerns provided in their letter of January 31, 2014.

The expanded discussion paper should include a qualitative discussion on potential impacts of lowering halibut caps on all PSC species.

We believe that while possible regulatory actions are being evaluated, that the groundfish industry can build on its successful reduction of halibut bycatch with additional non-regulatory actions to further reduce bycatch, including:

- 1) groundfish industry incentive plans to more successfully manage halibut PSC;
- 2) consideration of identifying trends in timing and location in order to avoid halibut bycatch;
- 3) annual reports to the Council on progress in reducing bycatch; and
- 4) the use of individual bycatch accountability in the rationalized groundfish fisheries, looking to the success of IBQ programs in British Columbia and the US Pacific coast, and the Gulf Rockfish program in reducing halibut bycatch.

The discussion paper should focus on determining the immediate halibut resource issues, and impacts on directed halibut fisheries in the BSAI, including:

- 1) the status of the declining halibut resource in the BSAI and the directed halibut fisheries;
- 2) the impacts of BSAI halibut bycatch on the halibut resource and the directed halibut fishery; and
- 3) an evaluation of the BSAI halibut PSC allocations to each fishery.

and identifying possible regulatory changes, including:

- 1) incorporating incentive plan agreements similar to those implemented under Amendment 91 to reduce bycatch at all levels of abundance;
- 2) the effects of reducing the BSAI halibut PSC limits equitably among all user groups, including the effects of incorporating abundance-based bycatch limits on the halibut resource, the PSC users, the directed halibut fisheries, and the communities;
- 3) removing regulatory impediments such as time and area closures that may no longer serve their original purposes; and

- 4) allowing the Amendment 80 fleet to deck sort halibut in the BSAI and GOA.

Motion carried 20/1.

Rationale:

- The latest expanded discussion paper lays a good quantitative groundwork for a more qualitative discussion of a number of issues related to BSAI halibut PSC.
- The historic low halibut biomass is impacting all users and efforts to reduce by-catch are warranted, for the immediate and long term.
- Industry groups should be credited for having some success in reducing by-catch through 'best practices' and taking a wholistic approach to PSC reduction.
- Deck sorting has been shown to reduce halibut mortality, and regulatory changes to allow deck sorting could have dramatic positive effect.

C8 CDQ Pacific cod directed fishery

The AP recommends the Council initiate an analysis to facilitate a CDQ village vessel Pacific cod fishery.

The Council should develop a problem statement that identifies regulatory hurdles as identified in the discussion paper that currently preclude small, local boats from fishing CDQ cod allocations.

Alternatives

Alternative 1. No action. Vessels fishing CDQ halibut are allowed to retain Pacific cod up to 20% of their CDQ halibut landings under the existing maximum retainable allowance (MRA).

Alternative 2. Increase the MRA up to 100% of the CDQ halibut landings for hook-and-line catcher vessels <46' length overall that hold Pacific cod CDQ. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod quotas.

Alternative 3. Create a new CDQ LLP for participating hook-and-line catcher vessels <46' length overall. Vessels with the CDQ LLP can participate in the CDQ directed Pacific cod fishery. Limit the number of LLPs each CDQ group would be provided. These LLP licenses would be non-transferable among CDQ groups. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod allocations. Vessels would be subject to the full coverage observer category consistent with existing full coverage observer requirements.

- Option 1: Place these vessels in the partial coverage observer category. Incidentally caught halibut would accrue against the CDQ PSQ allocation.
- Option 2: Place these vessels in the partial coverage observer category. Require vessels to retain any incidentally caught halibut. Incidentally caught halibut would accrue against the halibut CDQ allocation.

Alternative 4. Exempt hook-and-line catcher vessels participating in the CDQ Pacific cod fishery with <46' length overall from groundfish LLP requirements. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod allocations. Vessels would be in the partial coverage observer category.

The analysis should also consider whether there are modifications to VMS that may work better on the smaller boats and whether there are other alternatives to VMS, such as the GPS electronic monitoring

alternative identified on page 8 of the Observer Program Amendments discussion paper for this meeting (C13) to monitor compliance with Steller sea lion protection measures, EFH and HAPC closure areas.

Consideration of exempting small vessels from VMS.

Motions carried 21/0.

Rationale:

- Discussion paper identifies alternatives and concepts that are developed well enough to move in to an analysis
- GPS option may provide a more cost effective and logistically feasible option to address closure area compliance concerns

C9 AI Pacific cod allocation

The AP recommends that the Council delay potential action on the Aleutian Islands Pacific cod allocation agenda item and request industry to work together on achieving the following goals in the AI Pacific cod fisheries:

- Maintaining functional Aleutian Island shore plants west of 170 degree
- Maintaining trawl and fixed gear sector access to AI Pacific cod fisheries
- Minimize pre-emption of the AI CV cod fishery by the BS CV cod fishery

Uncertainty around the impacts of the pending SSL restrictions, abundance of AI Pacific cod, and production requirements of Adak's plant, will be better known in December of 2014 at which time industry should report back to the Council on its progress on these issues.

Motion carried 11/8.

Rationale:

- The AI Pacific cod fishery continues to be in flux. This is the first year of the BS/AI split, the first year of operation for a new plant in Adak, and changes SSL RPAs are under discussion.
- It is premature to take actions that may preclude one or more stakeholders from this fishery.
- Industry discussions are the best forum for immediate action to address concerns about community protection, and have already taken place in this fishery.
- In December 2014 there will be more information about harvest and processing this year, possible resolution to SSL RPAs, and updated stock status information that will inform any future actions.

The following motion, as amended, failed

The AP recognizes the need of Aleutian Island Communities for a stable base in the P. cod fishery and requests that the Council move forward an analysis of community protection measures in the Aleutian Island Pacific cod fishery to mitigate the ~~impact of the re-direction of surplus processing capacity by rationalized sectors into the AI cod fishery~~, and impacts of the BSAI cod split in the context of the SSL protection measures in the AI cod fishery.

The analysis should include an option that would prioritize a portion of the AI P. cod Directed Fishing Allocation (after CDQ and ICA) for delivery to shoreplants in the Aleutian Island management area. [Amendment carried 11/10]

Alternative:

Prior to March [options: 10th, 15th, 21st, 31st] the A season trawl catcher vessel Pacific cod harvest in the Bering Sea shall be limited to an amount equal to the BSAI aggregate trawl CV sector A-season allocation minus the lesser of the AI directed fishing allowance or [options: 2,500 mt; 5,000 mt; 7,500 mt; 10,000 mt]

~~This alternative limits harvesting of the AI Pacific cod directed fishing allowance to CV's delivering to shoreplants west of 170 degrees in the AI prior to March [15th, 21st, 31st].~~

~~Option: If less than 50% of the AI Pacific cod directed fishing allowance has been delivered by March 10, the restriction on delivery to other processors shall be removed. [Amendment carried 11/9/1]~~

Minority Report: A minority of the AP opposed the final motion, having favored the original motion before amendments, which eventually failed. The minority feels that moving forward with an analysis of community protection measures in the AI Pacific cod fishery is warranted at this time. Delaying action will not address the problem, nor provide an incentive for industry to work towards a solution outside of Council action. Signed by: Ernie Weiss, Alexis Kwachka, Jeff Farvour, Theresa Peterson, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Jeff Kauffman, Chuck McCallum and John Crowley.

C11 Observer Program Annual Report

The AP recommends the Council direct the Observer Program staff to incorporate OAC, and SSC comments as they finalize the 2013 Observer Annual Report.

Motion carried 17/0/1.

Rationale:

- The OAC in particular identified a number of important issues and priorities to be addressed in the Annual Report.
- The iterative nature of the Annual Report process allows for feedback to be recurrently incorporated into the document.

C12 Electronic Monitoring

The AP recommends the Council endorse the recommendations of the Observer Advisory Committee regarding electronic monitoring on page 5 of their report.

Motion carried 20/0.

C13 Observer Program Regulatory Amendment's discussion paper

The AP recommends that the Council identify the changes of observer coverage category for BSAI trawl CVs and small CPs, as the two highest priority issues for consideration of amendments to the Observer Program.

These priorities do not supercede the current priorities identified in the discussion paper on page 5.

Amendment:

The AP further recommends that the Council continue to keep the other three proposals alive and prioritize them in the following order after the two identified above.

3. Develop alternatives related to observer coverage or other options to monitor vessels used to fish for IFQ in multiple regulatory areas on the same trip.

4. Develop alternatives to exempt from observer coverage, vessels used to harvest small amounts of IFQ under several scenarios.
5. Change the method of observer fee collection for the IFQ fleet to use standardized current year ex-vessel prices, rather than standard price lagged one year.

Amendment carried 17/2 with 1 abstention.

Amended motion carried 19/0 with 1 abstention.

C14 Observer Advisory Committee Report

The AP recommends that the Council instruct staff to develop a discussion paper on a regulatory amendment that would allow training observers for lead level 2 status on freezer longline vessels to be trained under an alternative method as presented on pages 5 and 6 of the OAC report.

Motion carried 15/5.

D1 Ecosystem Vision

The AP recommends the Council adopt the ecosystem approach as revised by the Ecosystem Committee and attached to their minutes of February 4, 2014.

Motion carried 17/0.

D2 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

The AP recommends the Council should proceed with developing an FEP for the Bering Sea. The AP recommends the scope of the Bering Sea FEP should be the Eastern Bering Sea large marine ecosystem.

Motion carried 16/0 with 1 abstention.

Rationale:

- This action follows the Ecosystem Committee's recommendations on page 2 of their report.
- The SSC recommended moving forward with an FEP for the Bering Sea, with this geographic scope.
- This motion does not address the management focus, goals and objectives for the FEP, and the AP is leaving these components up to the Council at this point.

D3 Chinook Salmon Economic Data Report from AFSC

The AP recommends the Council direct NMFS to continue using the Chinook EDR forms as currently written and request NMFS work with industry to refine the EDR "check the box" element to identify both "on grounds" movement and "trip start" location choices intended to reduce Chinook bycatch.

Motion carried 16/0.

Rationale:

- Keep the same EDR for a few years to allow industry and NMFS to get clarification on questions to meet expectations.
- Get some stability in data.
- Compensated transfers have not occurred thus no reason to change at this time.

E Committees and Staff Tasking

The AP recommends the Council initiate a discussion paper to consider ways to provide relief from vessel cap restrictions for halibut quota share holders and vessel owner in low harvest limit seasons. The paper should consider elements of the proposal presented by Kodiak Vessel Owners Association.

Motion carried 10/9.

Minority Report: A minority of the AP did not support this motion to forward the proposal presented by KVOA that would adjust upward the amount of Halibut IFQ a vessel can harvest when abundance is low. Increasing the vessel caps, even temporarily, does not achieve the original goals and intent of the IFQ program. To the contrary, the proposal may increase consolidation, provide for less opportunity and fewer crew jobs. Halibut quota is being nearly fully harvested in the GOA and mostly harvested in Area 4, therefore the proposal is unnecessary. This change will benefit a few boats at the expense of a many boats.

Signed by: Jeff Farvour, Alexis Kwachka, Ernie Weiss, Theresa Peterson, Chuck McCallum, Becca Robbins Gisclair and Sinclair Wilt

Rationale:

- Responsive to Council request at December 2013 meeting.

The AP recommends that the discussion paper on allowing the use of sablefish pots in the Gulf of Alaska IFQ fishery be focused on longline pots only.

Motion carried 18/0.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Eric A. Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director



605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone (907) 271-2809

Fax (907) 271-2817

Visit our website: <http://www.npfmc.org/>

Certified: Don Blendy
Date: 3/19/14

**REPORT
of the
SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE
to the
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
February 3rd – 5th, 2014**

The SSC met from February 3rd through 5th at the Renaissance Hotel, Seattle, WA.

Members present were:

Pat Livingston, Chair
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Chris Anderson
University of Washington

Alison Dauble
Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Sherri Dressel
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Anne Hollowed
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

George Hunt
University of Washington

Gordon Kruse
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Seth Macinko
University of Rhode Island

Steve Martell
Int'l. Pacific Halibut Commission

Franz Mueter
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Lew Queirolo
NOAA Fisheries—Alaska Region

Kate Reedy
Idaho State University Pocatello

Matt Reimer
University of Alaska Anchorage

Members absent were:

Jennifer Burns
University of Alaska Anchorage

Robert Clark
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Terry Quinn
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Farron Wallace
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

SSC Election of Officers

The SSC reappointed Pat Livingston as chair and Robert Clark as vice chair.

C-11 Observer Annual Performance Review

A presentation on the summary of requests and a draft outline for the 2013 Observer Program Annual Report was given by Martin Loefflad (NMFS-AFSC) and Jennifer Mondragon (NMFS-AKR). Public testimony was provided by Paul MacGregor (At-Sea Processors Association).

The SSC appreciates the presentation and the outline and looks forward to reviewing the 2013 Observer Program Annual Report in June. Last June (2013), the Observer Program Annual Report presented information from the first 16 weeks of 2013. The June 2014 report will evaluate the full 2013 observer

year. Presenters stressed that improvement to the observer program will be an ongoing and iterative process and not all analyses will be completed this first year. The goals of the revised observer program are to increase the statistical reliability of data collected by the program, address cost inequality among fishery participants, and expand observer coverage to previously unobserved fisheries. The focus of the Observer Annual Performance Review for 2013 will be measuring the effectiveness of the deployment plan by looking at deployment coverage and the amount of catch, bycatch, prohibited species catch, and discards. **The SSC requests that the descriptive statistics provided in the Performance Review for 2013 about catch, discard, and observer coverage by area, gear, and target fishery include a comparison between state and federal waters (refer to SSC December 2013 minutes).** In part based on the SSC comments in October 2013, the 2013 Performance Review will focus on the evaluation of the selection process and observer deployment in the vessel selection pool to explore potential sources of vessel selection bias. The SSC recognizes the efforts to decrease sampling bias using a random sampling design in the revised program. However, partial observer coverage presents opportunities to game the system, introduces an observer effect, and most likely leads to a downward bias in estimates of bycatch when extrapolating to the unobserved portion of the fleet. Examining deployment in the vessel selection pool does not address this bias, but will improve information collected from a broader cross section of the fishing fleets. Both the presenters and the SSC agree that it is not possible to address bias in estimates of bycatch, or an observer effect, without 100% observer coverage. The SSC heard a suggestion for the use of VMS and EM on vessels that have been exempted from the vessel pool to provide some coverage for vessels not carrying an observer. While the SSC is concerned about the bias resulting from exempted vessels, it concluded that those systems alone are not capable to provide the catch composition information needed from those vessels.

The SSC reiterates the need for statistically-based performance measures with estimates of uncertainty for the purpose of evaluating how well the observer program is meeting its objectives. Performance metrics that will be used in the June 2013 Performance Review were not presented at this meeting. If possible, the SSC would appreciate reviewing the metrics to be used for the 2013 Performance Review, accompanied with the stated objectives of the revised observer program, at its April 2014 meeting. The SSC looks forward to a discussion at the June 2014 meeting regarding performance metrics and how these address program objectives in the upcoming years. **An additional chapter in the annual report is requested to examine how changes in the observed program design impact incentives, both positive and negative, in the commercial fishing sectors. Direct collaboration with industry is encouraged for developing a better incentive-based structure, and for examining the pros and cons of other partial and 100% coverage models that are in use in other countries and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).** One example discussed was the penalty-based system in the British Columbia model where, if an individual is not maintaining a high standard in the logbooks, the individual is responsible to cover the costs of a 100% audit. However, presenters noted that it may not be legal in the US to implement a penalty-based system for failing to comply with logbook audits using an independent video monitoring system, as is the case in British Columbia fisheries.

D-1 Ecosystem Vision

Diana Evans (NPFMC) gave the SSC an update on efforts by the Council's Ecosystem Committee to develop an Ecosystem Vision Statement. An edited mark-up copy was presented of the version provided in the Action Memo. There was no public testimony.

Ecosystem principles are included in the Council’s management approach in both groundfish FMPs. As the Crab, Salmon, and Scallop FMPs do not have similar ecosystem-focused sections, it is appropriate for the Council to develop an Ecosystem Vision Statement that transcends all FMPs. **The SSC fully supports this effort.**

The draft value statement, vision statement, and implementation strategy embody elements consistent with an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. The SSC felt that the draft language looked reasonable, but three specific comments are offered. First, in the implementation strategy, the SSC recommends clarifying “associated ecosystem components” by something like the following phrase: “associated ecosystem components, such as habitats and non-managed species.” Second, it was noted that the new text “interrelationships among species” is redundant. It is preferable to say “relationships among species” or “interactions among species.” Last, it was requested that the final language should be clear that humans, and their communities, are part of the ecosystem.

D-2 Bering Sea FEP

A discussion paper was presented on the potential development of a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) by Diana Evans (NPFMC). The discussion paper lays out many of the issues that need to be considered if the Council moves forward with the FEP. Public comment was provided by Jackie Dragon (Greenpeace).

The SSC endorses the Ecosystem Committee (EC) recommendation to develop an FEP for the Bering Sea. However, we note that there are many ongoing activities that fulfill some of the potential purposes of an FEP, such as the annual Ecosystem Considerations chapter and Ecosystem Assessment. Therefore it is critical that the Council first identifies clear objectives for a future Bering Sea FEP that will add value to the existing management framework rather than duplicating what is already being done. **If the Council decides to go forward with a Bering Sea FEP, the SSC recommends making the FEP a living document that provides a framework for considering policy choices and trade-offs as these affect FMP species and the broader Bering Sea ecosystem.**

When evaluating the merits of a potential FEP and deciding on a possible structure, the Council should consider the full range of approaches that have been used in the development and implementation of other FEPs to identify FEP elements best suited for the Bering Sea region. As the discussion paper points out, it would be a formidable task to synthesize ecosystem information for the Bering Sea in light of the wealth of new information that is now becoming available from the Bering Sea Project and other research. Nevertheless, the SSC sees value in synthesizing key ecosystem information relevant to the management of FMP species to evaluate how recent advances in our understanding of the Bering Sea ecosystem can help inform management decisions.

The SSC discussed the geographic scope of a Bering Sea FEP and endorsed the EC recommendation to include the shelf and slope of the eastern Bering Sea to 60°N. However, the Council may want to consider expanding this area to include Norton Sound, which has a commercial fishery for red king crab. Furthermore, the FEP should include species such as seabirds and mammals that transit through the Bering Sea region or utilize the Bering Sea on a seasonal basis, as well as the communities of western Alaska, which form an integral part of the Bering Sea ecosystem. The SSC suggests allowing the

geographic scope of the FEP to change over time as the distribution of FMP species and the associated ecosystem boundaries change.

The SSC suggests that the risk assessment conducted for the AI FEP should provide a useful approach for evaluating risks from fishing and other anthropogenic activities and their effects on the ecosystem and coastal communities. This approach may be particularly useful for identifying and guiding high priority ecosystem-based initiatives that cut across existing FMPs, such as responses to ocean acidification, climate change and socio-economic initiatives.

Finally, the SSC highlights the need to conduct outreach in the development of the FEP as well as to include an outreach and communication component in the FEP. As suggested in the discussion paper, the FEP could be designed to regularly communicate new developments in ecosystem science to the Council and its constituents.

With regard to the process of developing an FEP, the SSC recommends drawing on a wide range of expertise from agencies, academia, and NGOs with frequent input from the public. While the SSC believes that a well-designed FEP for the Bering Sea would bring many potential benefits, these benefits need to be evaluated relative to the considerable costs of embarking on the development of such a plan.

D-3 Chinook EDR

The SSC received a presentation of the Chinook PSC avoidance economic data report (EDR) from Brian Garber-Yonts and Alan Haynie (NMFS-AFSC). Public testimony was provided by Ed Richardson (Pollock Conservation Cooperative). The report was informative and effective in responding to SSC questions. The analysts clearly summarized early experience gleaned from the survey instrument and responses received. **The SSC is encouraged by the information presented and supports continued efforts to improve, refine, and interpret survey design and responses.**

The authors identified a number of shortcomings with the Amendment 91 Chinook Salmon EDR program, including the potential misunderstanding of when/how to use the salmon movement “logbook checkbox” and the inability to capture pricing information for Chinook PSC quota from the Compensated Transfer Reports. The SSC suggests following up on several aspects of the Compensated Transfer Report and “logbook checkbox” as identified in the discussion. For example, “what constitutes a move when checking the logbook checkbox?” and “how can the price of Chinook PSC be disaggregated from reported transfers of bundled Chinook PSC and pollock quota?” In addition, “what assumptions are being made about CV at-sea sorting when interpreting responses about Chinook avoidance?” As explained by the analysts, CV Chinook PSC counts are documented during off-load to the processing facility. Depending upon the implicit assumption about whether at-sea sorting aboard CVs is or is not prevalent, interpretation of Chinook ‘avoidance’ behavior by CVs may be problematic.

Despite these possible shortcomings in the current instrument, the SSC recommends that the Vessel Fuel and Vessel Master survey questions remain consistent over time (to the extent practicable)—at least initially. Additional years of data, along with varying fishery conditions over time, will reveal whether or not the survey instruments are capturing adequate information to inform the Council on the performance of Chinook avoidance under Amendment 91. At this point, it is difficult to fully identify the

strengths and weaknesses of the data collection program with only a single year of data, particularly one in which the Chinook caps were far from binding, so avoidance was not a pressing issue.

The SSC looks forward to seeing additional analysis using the data collected from the Amendment 91 Chinook Salmon PSC Avoidance EDR program. Further analysis may reveal additional shortcomings/strengths of the survey instruments, and guide future refinement of the EDR program. The SSC cautions the authors when using EDR information to estimate the opportunity cost of avoiding Chinook PSC, given how difficult it is to identify this opportunity cost. While a legitimate topic for exploration, the appropriate disclaimers, caveats, and limitations must be presented.

Ideally, interpretation of survey statistics and subjective, open ended information provided by respondents would be presented in a context that identifies and, to the extent practicable, evaluates the importance of the many exogenous influences that enter into fishing behavior (e.g., world seafood demand [both in general and species/product specific], competing supplies, substitutes in the market, fuel supply and price, global economic parameters). These exogenous factors can provide a more comprehensive and contextually rich understanding of these fishery resources.

D-4 Crab Modeling

Andre Punt (UW, CPT member) presented a summary of the Crab Modeling workshop held at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage AK on January 14-17, 2014. The workshop focused on three major components: 1) development of the Generalized Crab Model (Gmacs), 2) the Norton Sound red king crab assessment, and 3) compilation of data used in crab assessments. Unfortunately, no one from the SSC was able to participate in this year's workshop.

Athol Whitten (UW) and Jim Ianelli (NMFS-AFSC) have made significant progress on developing a generalized length-based assessment model for use with all crab stocks. The code for this project is written in AD Model Builder and C++; it is open-source and hosted on a free public website in which anyone may obtain a copy of the source code. In its present state, the assessment model is not ready for conducting parallel assessments with existing models, although it is anticipated that parallel assessments may be ready as early as May 2014 and possibly for use in 2015 assessments. There are no explicit plans. The SSC encourages the continued development of the code. The SSC recommends that model developers include assessment analysts in discussions regarding model development to ensure that the end product will accommodate desired aspects of current and future models. It was also recommended that, if the assessment analysts request training on using the model, then Dr. Whitten should provide this training. **In addition, the SSC also recommends that a peer review of the new generalized crab model be conducted outside the CPT.**

A general confounding problem in all of the length-based assessment platforms used for crab stock assessment is jointly resolving growth, selectivity and natural mortality. The CPT recommends, where possible, that tagging data be integrated directly into the model to inform the length-transition matrices. Also, the CPT recommends avoiding dome-shaped selectivities unless there is a good biological reason for doing so. The SSC endorses both of these general recommendations.

Last year the SSC did not accept the NSRKC model presented in October 2013. In moving forward, the recent workshop made several notable changes to the underlying assessment model structure. First, weighting of the likelihood component for annual recruitment deviations was changed to have a CV of approximately 0.50. This change significantly reduced the most recent recruitment estimate over the model that was presented last year. Relative to other red king crab models, this is a relatively data poor assessment. Parameter bounds were used inappropriately to constrain the estimation problem. Increasing the range in the parameter bounds resolved some of the convergence issues. Additional issues surrounding the input data were also noted, specifically fitting the model to size-composition information from an abundance index, but not fitting the model to the actual abundance index. Other technical issues in the set-up of the assessment model were also discussed.

The last component of the crab modeling workshop dealt with identifying sources of input data for the assessment models. Many of the input data were legacy data that had no clear documentation on their derivation from the raw sources (databases). It was noted in the NSRKC data that strata selection for constructing the relative abundance index was not consistent among years. Bob Foy will present to the CPT and SSC a series of alternative strata options, and the SSC will need to make a recommendation on how these data sets should be assembled. **The SSC recommends that clear documentation of the protocols for assembling time series, length composition information, and criteria for specific strata be included as part of the annual documentation of the assessment so that it exists as a living document to be approved by the CPT when periodic changes are made.**

Another notable change to the data streams is the use of the chela height-to-length ratio to determine the maturity-at-length information that is required to calculate mature male biomass in the Tanner and snow crab stocks. Chela height versus carapace width data have been pooled across all years to develop a length-at-maturity relationship. This is analogous to pooling length-age data across all years and using it as an age-length-key for each year. These chela height versus carapace width data are now being disaggregated for the purposes of developing annual maturity-at-length keys. The SSC endorses this change to the protocol for determining the maturity-at-length schedules.

At present, a weight-length regression relationship is used to determine the haul weight for the survey; the sources of the data for this weight-length regression are unknown and recent data only date back to 2009. To correct for potential bias associated with changes in the weight-length regression parameters, the actual haul weight averaged over the strata will be used to calculate the abundance index. The SSC also endorses this change to calculating the relative abundance indices in survey data. In all cases when commercial fishery CPUE is used as an index in a stock assessment model, the SSC recommends investigating CPUE standardization before the model is fit to these data.

In addition to the data issues described above, the analysts discovered that size frequency data for crabs collected from groundfish fisheries extended further back in time than previously thought. The impact of adding these early data to the snow crab model will be presented in May 2014. Given the number of new changes to the model structure and the input data streams, there is concern about the number of permutations and combinations that will be required to address the issues raised in this most recent workshop.

D-5 Economic SAFEs

Crab Economic SAFE

The SSC received a presentation of the 2014 Crab SAFE from Brian Garber-Yonts (NMFS-AFSC). The draft document provides a marked improvement over previous Crab SAFE documents, which have been sporadically prepared in the past. This version provides economic and operational information, supported by improved interpretative text, and moves in the direction of providing a well-documented time series of key economic statistics, useful in the Council's management process. It is a good demonstration of the kinds of variables that can be tracked, and types of analyses that can be supported, when a more comprehensive data collection is available. New elements, such as employment statistics, labor compensation, source of labor, and shares accruing to labor, by target fishery add interesting information. Likewise, treatment of quota sale and leasing patterns across the type, species, price, and mode is a very nice addition. The SSC noted the importance of gathering information on a few key variables such as gear purchase and maintenance costs that were lost when scaling down the Crab EDR.

The accessibility of the document would be enhanced by the further development of the Executive Summary and inclusion of a more formal Economic Report Card at the start of the document that emulates the very helpful compilation of summary information and Ecosystem Indices at the beginning of the Ecosystem Considerations Chapter in the BSAI/GOA Groundfish SAFE. As with the groundfish SAFE, it would be useful to have retrospective information on where, broadly, Alaska fisheries benefits accrue, through tracking the communities in which their participants live. In particular, it would be informative to identify where quota owners, harvesters, crew, and processing workers live. Relevant scales for reporting might be Alaska, Pacific Northwest, U.S., or foreign residency.

There are numerous examples of inaccurate use of terminology in both the Crab and Groundfish Economic SAFEs. Authors are advised to consult the SSC's comments on the 2014 draft Groundfish Economic SAFE, as well the SSC's Reports on the SAFE from 2011 and 2012. The SSC will provide detailed editorial comments to the Crab Economic SAFE analysts.

Groundfish Economic SAFE

The SSC received a presentation of the 2014 Economic Groundfish SAFE document from Ron Felthoven and Ben Fissel (NMFS-AFSC). There was no public testimony.

It is encouraging to see continued progress on extending and improving the Economic SAFE. The SSC appreciates the effort, demonstrated in this draft, to elevate the Economic SAFE to a level nearer to par with the Biological SAFE documents. The improvements seen in the past two to three years exhibit the AFSC's renewed commitment of staff and resources proportionate to the importance of these data in the Council's decision-making process.

There are numerous improved elements in this draft. The effective presentation of data and improved supporting text make the SAFE a valuable reference document in support of the Council's management process. The effort to enhance the informational content of the SAFE by supplementing the statistical data with indices, to identify and highlight apparent trends over a series of seasons is a good contribution. One noteworthy improvement is the enhanced utilization of accurate and consistent terminology. Nevertheless,

improvement in accessibility through the use of accurate terminology understandable to the target audience is needed. Thorough proof-reading and editing are strongly recommended.

The uneven treatment of material in the SAFE is likely a product of multiple contributing authors. Selection of a single editor, responsible for checking consistency and relevancy of commentary, could potentially solve this problem and would further strengthen the document. Additionally the SSC requests that the authors explicitly identify the species included in the “other” species category. The SSC further recommends that the authors elaborate on the interpretation of some of the descriptive statistics presented throughout the 2014 Economic Groundfish SAFE document. For instance, Section 6 of the document references multiple figures containing the percentage of quota harvested by all groundfish catch share programs, with little interpretation as to why quota was not fully utilized. If the goal of the Economic Groundfish SAFE is to summarize the status of the groundfish fisheries, the authors should be careful to interpret some of the trends presented in the document, especially to highlight some of the challenges that North Pacific groundfish programs currently face.

As the Economic Groundfish SAFE document evolves over time to include additional informational content, it is important that the document remains accessible and informative to an audience that is looking for an overview of the current status of the North Pacific groundfish fisheries. To this end, the SSC recommends that the authors include summary information that highlights some of the recent trends in the North Pacific groundfish fisheries and some of the challenges that groundfish programs currently face. The accessibility of the document would be greatly enhanced by opening with an Executive Summary and Economic Report card, similar to the compilation of summary information and Ecosystem Indices that appears at the beginning of the Ecosystem Considerations Chapter of the Groundfish SAFE.

In response to the standing request for additional suggestions for information that could be integrated into the SAFE, the SSC recommends that the authors consider the following for inclusion in future versions:

- Use standard long-term forecasts of global economic conditions—like those used for business and investment forecasting—to project changes in the seafood consumer, supply or processing markets globally. For example, how big might the change in pollock demand in China be due to rising incomes? Might offshore processing become more expensive as a result of rising wages, and shifting locations? What will be the effect of long-term overfishing of flatfish in West Africa on the market for Alaska flatfish products?
- Use standard short-term forecasts of global economic conditions to foresee changes in global market conditions that will affect prices.
- Include retrospective information on where, broadly, Alaska fisheries benefits accrue, though tracking the communities in which their participants live. In particular, are harvesters, their crew, and the processing workers from Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, the U.S., or foreign countries?

The SSC commends the authors on their efforts to identify users of the SAFE, how this diverse audience uses it, and what they would like to see in the future. The SAFE cannot be all things to all people, but understanding its value to various groups can determine the content and organization for future iterations. The SSC would like to see the addition of links to relevant publications and technical memos, especially on community research. In addition, the authors are encouraged to explore ways to improve the quality of the graphs and tables in the document and in the PowerPoint presentations to the Council. Larger fonts,

more efficient figures with legends that can be read from the back of a large room, and a careful selection of representative figures rather than all of the graphs available will make for more powerful presentations. In summary, this Groundfish Economic SAFE represents a good advancement in documenting economic performance in these fisheries and **the SSC requests an annual update of the Economic SAFE documents at future February SSC meetings.**

Other Items

Bering Sea Canyons Workshop

Steve MacLean (NPFMC) convened a workshop on Bering Sea canyons. During the workshop, Mike Sigler, Chris Rooper, and Jerry Hoff (NMFS-AFSC) provided an update on Bering Sea canyons research, as well as ongoing coral and sponge research, including modeling. A written report accompanied the presentations on coral and sponge research initiatives. John Olson (NMFS-AKR) presented information on the relative distribution of fishing effort along the Bering Sea slope. Craig Rose (NMFS-AFSC, retired) and Carwyn Hammond (NMFS-AFSC) spoke about agency-industry cooperative research on trawl impacts. Merrick Burden (Marine Conservation Alliance) spoke about efforts to gather local knowledge about EBS bottom hardness from different industry sectors. During the workshop, there were many questions and comments by members of the Council family.

The SSC last heard a report on this research at the June 2013 Council meeting. Taken together, the ongoing research constitutes an impressive effort to improve understanding of bottom habitats in the GOA and BSAI regions. Considerable new progress on the canyon and coral/sponge research has been made. The SSC appreciates the information on terrestrial influences associated with productivity in deep sea canyons from a study in New Zealand, and requests additional information to place the Bering Sea canyons into a broader context. The EBS coral model has been improved by using a refined grid, improved trawl positioning, incorporation of tidal currents, and a hurdle model to estimate abundance rather than only presence or absence. In response to SSC comments, the work now includes considerations of biodiversity and rarity. Field research is now in its third and final year.

There was considerable discussion about the utility of industry knowledge about bottom hardness. Some expressed concern that the information was not being collected in standard, verifiable ways. It was explained that different gear groups may use different criteria to identify “hard” bottom. The intention is that this anecdotal information will be included in the analysis as data layers, and it would be retained in modeling efforts only if this information improves the model fits to known coral/sponge areas.

There was also considerable discussion about the design of upcoming drop camera surveys of the EBS slope. The plan is to deploy the drop camera using a design whereby each square is weighted by the model probability of coral abundance, with the proviso that each stratum would receive a minimum of 10 drops. Some concern was expressed about whether this approach would underestimate the presence of coral in perceived low-density areas. **The SSC recommends careful consideration of the optimal design of this survey with respect to the priority question to be addressed, including the variance in high and low density areas.**

The SSC appreciates information on the model predicted distributions of coral locations and the maps on fishing in these areas. The squares associated with fishing intensity were presented on a coarser scale. If possible, it would be better if fishing intensity and coral distributions could be presented on the same spatial scales, perhaps overlaid on one another for better comparisons.

Bering Sea Project Modeling

Jim Ianelli and Kerim Aydin (NMFS-AFSC) presented an overview of the new models and some results emerging from the Bering Sea Project (BEST/BSIERP). Three types of modeling efforts were identified: a) climate enhanced single or multispecies stock projection models, b) multi-species biomass dynamics modeling, and c) fully coupled end-to-end ecosystem models. The Bering Sea Project investigators acknowledge that each modeling approach has inherent strengths and weaknesses. The multi-model ensembles will provide interesting comparisons in the future.

The end-to-end ecosystem model developed from the Bering Sea Project was described. This model includes a nested suite of models with feedbacks between modeling components. The projections are driven by three IPCC class models that were developed for the 4th IPCC Assessment Report (AR4): the Japanese model MIROC, the Canadian model CGM3, and the German model ECHO-G. These 3 climate models do not reflect the most recent generation models that were developed for the 5th Assessment Report. Current versions of the model take approximately 40 days for one run, although improvements in runtime are expected due to new access to high speed computers.

The presentation primarily focused on the Forage Euphausiid and Abundance in Space and Time (FEAST) model which tracks species responses to climate/ocean change by tracking gradients of bioenergetic demands and local prey availability. Three categories of detail are included with respect to treatment of growth and ontogeny for species within the ecosystem. Preliminary results of the model show good correspondence with observed seasonal distributions of zooplankton and fish. The stocks that are tracked with the highest level of detail are the core species: arrowtooth flounder, Pacific cod, and walleye pollock. Current versions of the model do not track observed recruitment patterns for the three core species. However, simulations where the model is seeded with year-class strength estimated from single-stock assessments do track the population dynamics of juvenile and adult fish suggesting that the post-recruit population dynamics are reasonably parameterized in the model. Efforts to improve the recruitment processes component of the model include developing a short-term (6-9 month) projection capability. It was indicated that knowledge of the spatial distribution and abundance of zooplankton (including euphausiids) abundances in all four seasons would be valuable for advancing the understanding and parameterization of recruitment processes for the core stocks. The SSC would like to receive a description of how the new information would inform the FEAST model and improve recruitment projections. This research need could be considered by the SSC and Plan Teams for inclusion in the annual research priorities of the Council. It was indicated that the fisher's choice (FishSET, Haynie et al.) and fleet behavior (Dalton et al.) components of the model, are still under development. **The SSC noted that it would be useful to receive an update on the fleet/fisher's response component(s) of the end-to-end model in the future.**

Progress on the development of a multispecies management strategy evaluation tool was presented. This model utilizes future climate/ocean scenarios from the ROMS/NPZ model components and applies

bioenergetic and foraging responses from the FEAST model components to develop an operating model for the MSE. This modeling tool allows investigators to explore the implications of different harvest control rules on the future status and trends of a smaller suite of interacting species (arrowtooth flounder, Pacific cod and walleye pollock). A paper focused on the performance of different multispecies harvest strategies has been submitted for publication.

The SSC appreciated the chance to receive a progress report on the Bering Sea project models. Each of the modeling approaches hold considerable potential to inform the long-range strategic planning of the NPFMC. **The SSC supports the multi-model comparative approach, looks forward to future presentations by the three modeling teams, and requests that modelers assess the utility of using suites of bio-physical moorings as cost effective means of collecting information on the timing and spatial distribution of primary and secondary production in the Bering Sea.**

GOAIERP Project

Kerim Aydin and Olav Ormseth (NMFS-AFSC) provided an overview of NPRB's GOAIERP. This 5-year project was initiated in 2010. The field components have been completed and analysts are now conducting data analysis and interpretation. Field sampling was conducted in 2011 and 2013, but it was compromised by mechanical issues on the Oscar Dyson in 2011 and by the shutdown of the federal government in 2013. Field data indicated that 2011 was an unusual year and should provide good contrast to 2013.

The focal species for the project are Pacific ocean perch, arrowtooth flounder, sablefish, Pacific cod, and pollock. These 5 species were selected because they exhibit marked differences in life history. The goal of the project was to gather data and conduct analyses to evaluate three broad and not mutually exclusive hypotheses regarding recruitment variability: a) The primary determinant of year-class strength for marine groundfishes in the GOA is early life survival. This is regulated in space and time by climate-driven variability in a biophysical gauntlet comprising offshore and nearshore habitat quality, larval and juvenile transport, and settlement into suitable demersal habitat; b) The physical and biological mechanisms that determine annual survival of juvenile groundfishes and forage fishes differ in the eastern and western GOA regions; c) Interactions among species (including predation and competition) are influenced by the abundance and distribution of individual species and by their habitat requirements, which vary with life stage and season..

These hypotheses are related and the strength of each hypothesis will be evaluated based on two field years, modeling, and retrospective analyses. With only two years of field research the success of the project will rely heavily on retrospective studies and modeling. The SSC recommends that the investigators explore and consider other survey data to supplement NMFS bottom trawl survey data. Suggested data series include: oceanographic studies of Kaluda trough (Lagerloef 1983); the Steller Sea Lion Research Initiative (SSLRI), the eastside of Kodiak fishery interaction study (Walline et al. 2013); the Alaska Department of Fish and Game trawl survey and the OCSEAP nearshore surveys. The SSC also recommends that the role of pink salmon in the GOA ecosystem should be considered to the extent practicable.

The GOA IERP modeling approach was described. Investigators are developing individual-based models for the core species to track the reproductive products through space and time in the first year of life. So far, the models do not close the life cycle and only simulate the gauntlet of events during the first year until settlement occurs. The platforms use output from the GLOBEC NEP coupled bio-physical model of the Gulf of Alaska. The SSC notes that the current modeling approach does not formally allow testing of the Bailey et al. (2000) shifting control hypothesis because top down predation pressure is not tracked through the life cycle. The SSC encourages the investigators to explore options to address this shortcoming through modeling or retrospective analyses.

Bailey KM (2000) Shifting control of recruitment of walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*) after a major climate and ecosystem change. *Mar Ecol Prog Ser* 198: 215–224

Lagerloef, G. (1983) Topographically controlled flow around a deep trough transecting the shelf off Kodiak Island, Alaska. *J. Phys. Oceanogr.* 13:139–146.

Walline, P. A. Hollowed, S. Stienessen, C. Wilson. 2012. “Short-term effects of commercial fishing on the distribution and abundance of walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*). *Can. J. of Fish. and Aquatic Sci.* 69:354-368.

GOA Trawl Social Survey and BSAI Crab Rationalization Study Prospectus

The SSC received presentations from Marysia Szymkowiak (NMFS contractor) and Amber Himes-Cornell (NMFS-AFSC) on a social science survey of GOA trawl-fishery-dependent communities and a study prospectus on participation in the BSAI Crab Rationalization program. There was no public testimony.

The BSAI Crab Rationalization study will conduct qualitative research to understand participation, crew compensation, and lease rates. Researchers will conduct semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders to improve understanding of the issues they face by using a guiding list of topics. The SSC recommends that the interviews follow a more structured format than was presented so that answers are comparable among respondents. Presenters amended their initial methodology from a snowball sampling approach to a random sample of participants in each stakeholder group, which the SSC supports to get representative samples. The SSC looks forward to seeing the results of this project in the fall and following how their report will be used in the Council process and by stakeholders.

The GOA Groundfish Trawl Bycatch Management voluntary social survey was developed in anticipation of a management action to reduce bycatch and PSC that has yet to be developed and finalized. The SSC previously commented on the development of a fast track EDR that was aimed at collecting data from the groundfish trawl fisheries before and after implementation of this anticipated action. The SSC noted at that time that the EDR had a number of flaws and that research on community impacts was completely absent despite being identified in the Council’s Purpose and Needs statement. The SSC commends the researchers for implementing a survey that will address the social effects and provide a baseline before a GOA catch share plan is created. The SSC acknowledges the difficulty in developing such a comprehensive survey without knowing what the management action will be. The SSC had concerns with a number of issues such as how the data from this voluntary survey will be used alongside the mandatory EDR data, but these concerns were satisfactorily addressed. Nonetheless, the SSC suggests that the

analysts consider more deliberate ways in which these two data collection methods can be integrated, which could potentially result in a more comprehensive analysis and understanding.

The SSC is concerned that the survey population of vessel owners and operators, crewmembers, and processing sector members will capture impacts on only a portion of the place-based communities they are including. It was also a concern that this survey does not include those trawl fishermen who may have already left the fleet in anticipation of a catch share plan. The SSC supports efforts to conduct qualitative assessments to more fully survey the communities and quantify the potential impacts of the action.

Both of the social surveys of the crab and trawl fishery participants present interesting opportunities to collect information on leasing practices that can augment leasing data currently collected by EDR programs. **The SSC notes that it will be important to protect the anonymity of crew responding to the surveys and interviews.**

To the extent practicable, the SSC also advises the survey team to come up with a strategy to identify a control group for the baseline survey to assess the impact of a bycatch and PSC management action on GOA communities. The SSC recognizes that this is a difficult task given that the actual bycatch and PSC management action has yet to be identified. However, the ability to determine the actual impact of bycatch and PSC measures on communities may be limited in a before-and-after analysis that does not have an adequate proxy for what GOA communities would have looked like in the absence of implementation.

Eric A. Olson
Chairman
Chris Oliver
Executive Director

605 W 4th, Ste 306
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 271-2809
(907) 271-2817

www.npfmc.org



News & Notes

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
February 2014

Election of Officers and Appointments

The Council's Advisory Panel unanimously elected Becca Robbins-Gisclair as Chairman of the Advisory Panel, and Lori Swanson and Ernie Weiss as Co-Vice Chairs. The SSC re-appointed Pat Livingston as Chair, and Robert Clark as Vice Chair.

Thanks for Hosting!

The Council would like to thank the many generous industry sponsors who contributed to the reception given during the Council meeting. The seafood was delicious, the music was good, and there was a lot of talk about fish.

Electronic Agenda

All documents, motions, and related information will be available through the electronic agenda. Following the meeting, and as possible during the meeting, motions and handouts will be uploaded. The agenda and its attachments will be accessible through our website at npfmc.org under the meetings tab, or through npfmc.legistar.com.



Observer Program

The Council received a report from the agency about the proposed outline for the June 2014 Annual Report, a discussion paper on prioritizing regulatory amendments to the observer program, and an update on electronic monitoring (EM) cooperative research for 2014-2015. The Council's Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) and SSC provided comments on the Annual Report outline, and the Council directed staff to incorporate those comments as they prepare the annual report, noting that NMFS has already indicated that there may be some requests they will not be able to include in this first report. With respect to the regulatory amendments, the discussion paper identified four existing priorities for agency staff working on observer program issues: 1. the annual report and the annual deployment plan; 2. electronic monitoring; 3. the observer tendering activity regulatory amendment; and 4. the CDQ Pacific cod fishery amendment. The Council agreed with this precedence, and identified two additional priorities for the list: 5. regulatory amendment to change coverage category (full to partial) for small CPs and combination (CP/CV) vessels; and 6. regulatory amendment to change coverage category (partial to

full) for BSAI trawl Pacific cod CVs. The Council did not prioritize among the remaining three regulatory amendments, which will not be worked on until the Council directs otherwise.

The Council endorsed the recommendations of the OAC with respect to electronic monitoring, which approved the concept of the 2014 EM cooperative research plan, and supported an industry workshop to occur February 17-18 in Juneau to develop details of the cooperative research. The Council also intends to form a Fixed Gear EM Workgroup, with industry, agency, and EM service provider representation, to inform Council decisions and recommendations to NMFS on integrating EM into the observer program. **The Council is soliciting for interested persons representing the fixed gear fleet (longline and pot gear, of all vessel sizes) and EM service provider companies, to be on the Workgroup. Please provide a letter of interest to the Council by March 15.** The Council does not intend for the Workgroup to meet before the April Council meeting, and will provide specific tasking to the Workgroup at the April meeting. The Council's motion on the purpose and composition of the EM Workgroup, and the OAC's report, are available on the Council website. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

Vessel Caps

During its December 2013 meeting, the Council received separate industry proposals to amend the halibut and sablefish IFQ Program. The two December 2013 proposals replaced earlier proposals to increase sablefish A share use caps and halibut and sablefish vessels caps that had been reviewed by the IFQ Committee, Advisory Panel, and Council in 2013. Public testimony was received both for and against increasing the vessel caps, particularly in the Gulf of Alaska, suggesting there was not a consensus to move these proposals forward. In response, the Council requested a discussion paper that would summarize management issues identified for each species, regulatory area, and vessel category. The Council specifically requested summary data that addresses consolidation, prevalence of vessels and crew QS holders that are capped under the current limit, and the effects of setting separate vessel caps in halibut Area 4 and sablefish Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands regulatory areas on both overall (all area) vessel caps, and the remaining areas under the overall caps if separate westward caps are adopted. Contact Jane DiCosimo on halibut and sablefish management issues.

Halibut Management

Charter (Guided Sport) Fishery

The Council received a report on the status of a proposal to incorporate the charter sector into the commercial halibut individual fishing quota (IFQ) fisheries in Area 2C (Southeast) and Area 3A (Southcentral). Catch Accountability Through Compensated Halibut (CATCH) is a collaboration of the Alaska Charter Association and the South East Alaska Guides Organization to design a pool-based catch sharing plan for the charter halibut fisheries in these areas. The conceptual approach would allow these charter halibut fisheries to supplement each annual allocation by purchasing commercial halibut quota shares (QS) and holding it in a common pool for all charter anglers. A holding entity would purchase QS from willing QS holders. These transferred QS would be used to increase the annual bag and size limits in each area for all charter anglers.

CATCH provided an executive summary, full report, and a supplemental economic study (these are posted on the Council's website) that fulfilled a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Fisheries Innovation Fund grant. Council staff will work with CATCH staff to assist them in streamlining the "common pool" concept, which is described in the report, to actionable items that NMFS could implement in Federal regulations. In October, the Council will review the specific CATCH proposal for a regulatory amendment and a discussion paper that examines if the current Community Quota Entity Program could be used as a model for the program.

Definition of Sport Fishing Guide Services

The Council adopted a preferred alternative to revise and clarify sport fishing guide services for Pacific halibut to remove a requirement that a guide is required to be onboard the same vessel as the angler when guided services is provided to the angler during the fishing trip. The preferred alternative includes two elements. The first element is a revised combination of Alternative 2, options 1 and 3 from the Council's analysis, as follows.

"Sport fishing guide services, for purposes of §§ 300.65(d) and 300.67, means assistance, for compensation or with the intent to receive compensation, to a person who is sport fishing, to take or attempt to take fish halibut by being on board a vessel with such person accompanying or

physically directing the sport fisherman in sport fishing activities during any part of a charter vessel fishing trip. Sport fishing guide services do not include services provided by a crew member. "

The second element defines 'compensation' based on Alternative 2, Option 2b in the analysis, as follows.

"Compensation means direct or indirect payment, remuneration, or other benefits received in return for services, regardless of the source; in this paragraph, "benefits" includes wages or other employment benefits given directly or indirectly to an individual or organization, and any dues, payments, fees, or other remuneration given directly or indirectly to a fishing club, business, organization, or individual who provides sport fishing guide services; and does not include reimbursement for the reasonable daily expenses for fuel, food, or bait."

The preferred alternative incorporates the recommendations developed cooperatively by State and Federal enforcement and management staffs. The Council noted its intent to review proposed Federal regulatory text for this action prior to submission of the proposed rule to the Secretary for approval. Staff Contact is Jane DiCosimo.



Source: CATCH

Area 4A Pots

The Council also initiated a regulatory amendment to follow up on its April 2013 recommendation that the IPHC allow the retention of halibut in Area 4A that are harvested incidentally in sablefish pots in the BSAI when IFQs are held to cover the harvests of both species. The Council informed the IPHC that Federal regulations would need to be amended to identify pots as legal gear for halibut, at a minimum. The Council also reported that it may consider implementation of a discard mortality rate and/or maximum retainable allowance for this fishery. The IPHC supported the concept in principle and directed that IPHC staff assist with the Council's continued development of accompanying Federal regulations provided that the Council analyzes methods to: 1) limit the directed fishing for halibut using pot gear; 2) consider appropriate methods for the timing of pot removal; and 3) the marking of buoys (radar reflectors). The IPHC would schedule action to revise its definition of legal gear, after it reviewed the proposed additional limitations on the use of the gear at a future IPHC annual meeting. Federal regulations from Council action and IPHC annual management measures would need to be implemented simultaneously. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

BSAI Halibut Bycatch

The Council reviewed a discussion paper that addressed the following topics: 1) summary of closures due to halibut PSC limits; 2) historical bycatch amounts relative to current PSC limits; 3) halibut PSC mortality by sector in BSAI target fisheries for pollock, Pacific cod and yellowfin sole, as well as a summary of halibut bycatch mortality in fisheries prosecuted by the Amendment 80 CPs; 4) and potential long-term options to reduce halibut bycatch.

The Council requested an expanded discussion paper focused on three topics: effects on the halibut stock, changes necessary to allow deck sorting, and voluntary measures to minimize halibut bycatch. The first paper will summarize the status of the BSAI halibut resource and the impact of halibut PSC in the BSAI trawl and fixed gear groundfish fisheries on halibut stock biomass, the reproductive potential of the halibut stock, and short and long-term halibut yields to the directed halibut fisheries. This report is scheduled tentatively for June 2014.

A second report was requested to identify the observer sampling protocols and regulatory changes necessary to allow deck sorting of halibut on BSAI trawl catcher processors to reduce the halibut discard mortality rate. Experimental studies have documented significant reductions in halibut mortality that occur when halibut are returned to the water within 30 minutes. Deck sorting of halibut would require an amendment to Federal regulations that govern the domestic observer program. Current regulations require all halibut to be retained until accounted by an observer, which enables

accounting of halibut PSC. This report by NMFS staff is scheduled tentatively for October 2014.

The Council also requested a reports by BSAI groundfish sectors (AFA CP, AFA CV, A80, FLC, CDQ) on progress for voluntarily implementing measures in their cooperative and/or inter-cooperative agreements to minimize halibut PSC, including:

- Development of effective and verifiable measures for halibut avoidance
- Individual accountability and use of incentives to reduce PSC.

These reports are scheduled for June 2014. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Steller Sea Lions

On January 29 2014, the National Marine Fisheries Service was issued a short-term extension for the completion of the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS to April 7, 2014. This allows sufficient time for briefings of the motion to extend the SSL EIS deadline to August 15 2014, filed on January 10, 2014. If the court grants the full extension, and should the draft Biological Opinion conclude that the Council's preferred alternative forwarded in October, 2013 results in Jeopardy to the wDPS of SSL or Adverse Modification to its critical habitat, the Council will have the opportunity to work with the Agency to develop a Reasonable and Prudent Alternative. In this case, regulations will be in place by January 1, 2016. If the Court does not grant the full extension, or if the BiOp does not conclude JAM, then the Agency will complete the EIS and rulemaking in time to have regulations in place by January 1, 2015. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Grenadiers

The Council selected its final preferred alternative (Alternative 2) to add all grenadier species in its own unique subcategory (in addition to the forage fish and prohibited species categories) under the ecosystem component category in both the BSAI and GOA groundfish fishery management plans. The preferred alternative includes actions to: (1) Prohibit directed fishing for grenadiers; (2) Establish a maximum retainable amount of 8 percent; (3) Require record keeping and reporting; (4) Define grenadier species codes; (5) Establish a separate management category for grenadiers in the FMP; and (6) Include product recovery rates. The Council encourages continued efforts by the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center to conduct an informal stock assessment to provide information needed to monitor the status of the grenadier stocks. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

Pacific Cod Assessment Models

The Joint Groundfish Plan Teams request proposals for BSAI and/or GOA Pacific cod models by February 28, 2014 for Plan Team review in March 2014 and SSC review in April 2014. Contact Jane DiCosimo or Dr. Grant Thompson, at the NMFS AFSC, for more information.



Staff Tasking

In addition to discussing the relative priority of previously tasked projects, the Council initiated one new project, provided clarifications on the GOA sablefish pot gear analysis and the MRA analysis, and discussed tasking for its various committees, including establishment of a fixed gear electronic monitoring workgroup. The Council also spent considerable time reviewing a draft bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and providing comments and guidance relative to Council positions on several issues addressed in the bill. Additionally, the Council tasked staff to do the following:

- send a letter to NMFS expressing interest in participating in the re-evaluation of critical habitat for the western Distinct Population Segment of Steller sea lions.
- develop a spreadsheet with qualitative and quantitative information (by area, vessel category, and QS category) to assist the Council with understanding the various concerns regarding changing halibut and sablefish vessel caps. Included would be information about ways to increase the caps in Area 4 only.

Upcoming Meetings

Scallop Plan Team meeting.
February 25-26, 2014. Land's End Resort, Homer AK

Crab Plan Meeting: May 5-8, 2014.
Juneau (TBD)

Groundfish Plan Team Meetings:
September 23-September 27

AI Pacific Cod

The Council reviewed an update discussion paper on a catcher vessel apportionment of AI Pacific cod (area 541/542) with a regionalized delivery requirement to AI shoreplants. After reviewing the discussion paper and receiving recommendations from the Advisory Panel and testimony from the public, the Council initiated an analysis of Aleutian Islands community protection measures. The proposed action would prioritize a portion of the AI Pacific cod directed fishing allowance (TAC remaining after CDQ and ICA) for delivery to shoreplants in the Aleutian Islands management area, with some constraints on the amount and dates by which the measure would be removed. The proposed action also reserves an amount of harvest the trawl CV sector can take from BS in the A season, such that their entire allocation is not harvested in the BS. In addition, the Council requests industry sectors work together on developing additional alternatives to be brought back to the Council for consideration that may achieve the following goals in the AI Pacific cod fisheries:

- Maintain functional Aleutian Islands shore plants west of 170 degrees
- Maintain trawl and fixed gear sector access to AI Pacific cod fisheries
- Minimize pre-emption of the AI CV cod fishery by the BS CV cod fishery

The problem statement and alternatives are posted on the Council website. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

GOA Pacific Cod Pot Sector

The Council reviewed a discussion paper describing past and present levels of participation and harvest in the pot sector of the GOA Pacific cod fishery. Discussion particularly focused on whether or not the fishery has changed since LLP reduction in 2011, or since the Council began exploring changes to the management of the GOA trawl sector in 2012. The Council decided not to initiate a separate action analyzing whether or to what extent the pot cod sector is being impacted by changing patterns of participation. However, the Council noted that participation in the sector might be influenced by the development of a quota-based trawl fishery, and that some impacts may not be obvious when looking only at GOA-wide annual summary data. The Council directed staff to continue tracking this issue within the context of GOA Trawl Bycatch Management agenda items. Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

Ecosystem Policy

The Council adopted an ecosystem approach and vision statement, as Council policy. The ecosystem approach has been out for public review since December, and at this meeting, the Council integrated minor revisions. The adopted policy is posted on the Council website, and includes three parts: a value statement, the vision statement, and an implementation strategy. The intent is to affirm the importance of healthy ecosystems for maintaining sustainable fisheries, and synthesize the Council's policy on ecosystem-based management. The Council recognizes that challenges are potentially in store with respect to climate change, and the ecosystem approach, will help the Council find opportunities to learn from, adapt, and improve management in the future. The policy will work in concert with existing comprehensive management objectives such as the groundfish management approach adopted through the Programmatic Groundfish SEIS. The Ecosystem Committee will continue work to evaluate the implications of the ecosystem policy on Council near- and long-term actions, in the form of an action plan. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

Bering Sea FEP

The Council reviewed a discussion paper on considerations for developing a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP), and chose to initiate work on such an FEP. The Council heard support for developing the FEP from its advisory bodies and the public, along with suggestions for how the document could be structured to be used by the Council. The Council decided that potential objectives for the FEP should be developed through a Council scoping process, perhaps a series of stakeholder meetings in Anchorage, Nome, and Seattle. The Council identified the geographic scope of the FEP as the eastern Bering Sea large marine ecosystem area, but clarified that they did not intend to the FEP to include the Aleutian Islands. The scoping will inform a future Council discussion about the structure of the FEP, and how to assess the potential workload. The Council will also consider the linkages between a BS FEP, new information with respect to the Programmatic SEIS (scheduled for April), and the Ecosystem Committee's action plan for the Council's adopted ecosystem policy, as this process moves forward. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

CDQ Pacific Cod Fishery

The Council received a discussion paper on the feasibility of easing regulations for small Community Development Quota (CDQ) hook-and-line vessels in order to develop a village-based Pacific cod directed fishery. The discussion paper revealed opportunities and areas of concern for the Council to consider while proceeding with regulatory changes.

Based on this information, the Council initiated an analysis for review in June 2014. In addition to the no action alternative, this analysis will consider the viability and impacts from three other alternative scenarios. In the first, the maximum retainable amount of CDQ Pacific cod kept as a proportion of the CDQ halibut targeted fishery would increase from 20 percent to 100 percent for vessel \leq 46' length overall (LOA). The next alternative will evaluate the possibility of creating new CDQ Licenses Limitation Program (LLP) licenses similar to a Community Quota Entity LLP framework. In this model CDQ groups would receive a restricted number of annual non-transferable LLP licenses for their hook-and-line catcher vessel \leq 46' LOA. Options for observer coverage requirements and halibut bycatch requirements could be built off of this license. The final alternative for analysis will include direct exemptions of CDQ hook-and-line vessels \leq 46' LOA from groundfish LLP requirements and full observer coverage (i.e., placing them in the partial observer category). The analysis will also consider alternatives to a vessel monitoring system (VMS), such as GPS electronic monitoring, and other opportunities to minimize the physical challenges that may be associated with the installation and use of VMS on small vessel. Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

Community Fishing Association Workshop

The Council held a workshop to gain perspective on community protection measures that have developed within or alongside allocative quota-based management programs in other U.S. regions. The purpose of the workshop was to inform the Council and other North Pacific stakeholders on what action might be required to facilitate the inclusion of community fishing associations (CFAs) in a GOA Bycatch Management Program. Presenters from Cape Cod (Mass.) and the California central coast spoke about how rationalization affected fishery participation in their communities, how they have positioned themselves to manage quota, how that quota is used to achieve community objectives, and how those objectives are determined. Representatives from NMFS Greater Atlantic Region office (formerly Northeast Region) weighed in on key sticking points in the implementation process that were particularly important, or could have benefitted from explicit Council action during the development stage.

Stakeholders in attendance participated in an open question-and-answer session with the speaker panel. Themes from the Q&A discussion included: whether other programs addressed bycatch reduction, and how CFA-like structures further that objective; how CFAs engage the non-fishing elements of their community in the goal setting process; at what point, or to what extent, the Council has oversight of CFA operations; how CFAs provide opportunities for "new entrants"; the relative importance of receiving an initial allocation to achieving CFA goals; and whether other mechanisms – such as regionalization of landings – could achieve similar outcomes.

Staff will prepare a summary of the workshop discussion, and it will be made available on the Council website. Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

GOA Tendering

The Council reviewed an updated report on tendering activity in the GOA pollock and Pacific cod fisheries at this meeting. After considering the report, the Council requested an updated report for the February 2015 meeting. The updated report should include 2014 GOA pollock and Pacific cod tendering activity, tendering activity in the Pacific cod fishery by gear for areas 610, 620, and 630, and , to the extent practicable, tendering activity for both pollock and Pacific cod east and west of the 157° west longitude.

The Council recognized that recent changes in the GOA pollock and Pacific cod fisheries are potentially linked to the development of a GOA trawl bycatch management action, and therefore noted the importance of continuing to monitor the GOA pollock and Pacific cod fisheries for changes in tendering activity during the 2014 fishing season. The Council made it clear during their deliberation on this action that they will continue to focus on the development of GOA trawl bycatch management and maintain the existing control dates associated with that action. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Crab Prohibited Species Catch

The Council reviewed a discussion paper on crab PSC in groundfish fisheries focused upon 4 crab stocks: Bristol Bay red king crab, Bering Sea snow crab, Bering Sea Tanner crab and Saint Matthew blue king crab. This paper builds upon iterative reviews of the crab PSC issue by the Council and attempts to focus an increasingly broad analysis of treatment of crab PSC measures in groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea. After much discussion the Council moved to take a step back from its previous focus on specific stocks and instead develop a process for how best to move forward iteratively to address complicated crab bycatch issues in the Bering Sea groundfish fisheries. The nature of the Council's motion was to select a candidate stock (snow crab) and request that analysts assemble all relevant information including spatial maps overlaying the existing snow crab closure with bycatch by gear type and survey data, to compile size and sex of crabs caught as bycatch by gear type, as well as overall bycatch amounts by gear type and other pertinent information. This information would help inform the impact of groundfish bycatch on the overall stock as well as the efficacy of the current closure area for trawl gear. In this way a template could be developed for development of groundfish management measures for bycatch of any crab stock as needed. The Council also requested further considerations of data and methodologies available to evaluate setting biomass-based PSC limits in groundfish fisheries for crab stocks. As a first step, the Council's CPT will review available data at the May CPT meeting (and have a specific discussion of biomass based limits for multiple species) and provide input to analysts on appropriate data and methodologies to consider. The SSC will then have the opportunity provide input in June with the staff discussion paper available for Council review in October. The full motion is on the Council's website. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Chinook Economic Data Report

The Council reviewed a report on the status of the Amendment 91 Chinook Salmon Economic Data Report (EDR) program and related data collection measures implemented in relation to Amendment 91 to the BSAI Groundfish FMP. The EDR is a mandatory reporting requirement under 50 CFR 679.65 for all entities participating in the American Fisheries Act (AFA) BSAI pollock trawl fishery. This report provided an overview of information collected under the first year of the data collection program (2012) and information summarized by the three surveys: Chinook salmon PSC Allocation Compensated Transfer Report (CTR), Vessel Fuel Survey, and Vessel Master Survey. All of these surveys were created to augment existing information to better monitor the efficacy of management measures for Chinook salmon PSC in the BSAI pollock fishery. EDR results were not available in conjunction with the Council's review of Chinook salmon PSC at the October 2013 meeting and thus were provided at this meeting to both update the Council as well as to provide information on current reporting requirements prior to further Council review of Chinook and chum management in the Bering Sea pollock fishery in June. Upon review of the report, the Council indicated it's intent to retain the survey forms as currently configured for the time being, while allowing for consideration of regulatory amendments or other modifications if needed in the future. The EDR report is available on the Council's website. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Economic SAFEs

The SSC provided a review of the annual groundfish economic SAFE report for the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries as well as the first BSAI Crab economic SAFE report. The Groundfish economic SAFE report presents the economic status of the groundfish fisheries of Alaska in terms of economic activity and outputs using estimates of catch, prohibited-species catch (PSC), ex-vessel prices and value (i.e., revenue), the size and level of activity of the groundfish fleet, and the weight and gross value of (i.e., F.O.B. Alaska revenue from) processed products. The Crab SAFE report presents information on economic activity in commercial crab fisheries currently managed under the FMP for Bering Sea and Aleutian and Islands King and Tanner Crab (BSAI crab), with attention to the subset of fisheries included in the Crab Rationalization (CR) Program. Statistics on harvesting and processing activity; effort; revenue; labor employment and compensation; operational costs; and quota ownership, usage and disposition among participants in the fisheries are provided.

Comments to analysts for future work on these documents are contained in the SSC minutes.

Canyons Workshop

The Council hosted a workshop on Monday, February 3 to provide a public forum to review the outputs of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center model to predict areas of likely coral abundance in the Pribilof and Zenchug canyons, to facilitate discussion between AFSC and stakeholders to discuss possibilities for collaboration in order to survey areas of coral abundance, and to identify and develop tools for coral impact reduction. The results of the workshop will inform a discussion paper that will be reviewed by the Council at the April, 2014 meeting. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 2/14/14

April 7-15, 2014 Anchorage, AK	June 2-10, 2014 Nome, AK	October 6-14, 2014 Anchorage, AK
MSA Reauthorization: Update BS Canyons: Discussion Paper Observer EM: Update Fishery Cooperatives (Am 80, CGOA rockfish, AFA): Reports BS pollock fishery Chinook salmon IPA and chum ICA reports VMS Discussion paper: Enforcement Committee Review BSAI Crab Co-op Report Template: Discuss SSL EIS: Action as necessary (T) GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Discussion paper; Review draft EDR forms Am 80 5-year review Ecosystem Cttee Report on ecosystem action planning Round Island Transit: Final Action Scallop SAFE: PT report and OFL/ABC specifications BS and GOA Salmon PSC Genetics: Update EFH 5-year Review: Update PSEIS SIR: Review Research Priorities database: SSC Review Pacific cod assessment models: SSC Review	BSAI PSC Halibut Stock Impacts: Discussion paper Sector reports on BSAI halibut PSC measures Observer Advisory Committee report Observer Program Annual Report Observers for Tendering: Initial Review Electronic Monitoring: Report Crab ROFR contract terms: Initial Review CDQ P.cod fishery development: Initial Review BSAI crab ABC/OFLs for 4 stocks: Approve; PT report GOA pot sablefish: Initial Review (T) Norton Sound RKC LLPs: Discussion paper Bering Sea Chinook/chum salmon bycatch: Disc. paper BS Trawl Excluder EFP: Review/consultation Bering Sea FEP: Update/scoping of objectives Research Priorities	BSAI Halibut Deck Sorting: Discussion paper (T) AI Pcod Allocation: Initial Review VMS Discussion paper: Review Draft Observer Annual Deployment Plan: Review Observers for Tendering: Final Action (T) Charter Halibut Common Pool: CATCH report/Disc paper GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Action as necessary (T) Crab ROFR contract terms: Final Action ROFR Aleutia PQS: Final Action CDQ P.cod fishery development: Final Action (T) BSAI Crab bycatch: Discussion paper BSAI Crab SAFE report: set ABC/OFL for 6 stocks: PT report GOA pot sablefish: Final Action (T) Preliminary groundfish catch specs: Approve; PT report GOA Skate MRA revisions: Initial Review MRA calculation all fisheries: Discussion Paper ITEMS BELOW NOT YET SCHEDULED IFQ Vessel Cap 'spreadsheet' discussion paper Greenland Turbot allocation: Initial Review EFH 5-year Review (2015) GOA Tendering (Feb 2015) Observer coverage on small CPs: Discussion paper Observer coverage on BSAI trawl CVs: Discussion paper 3 other observer changes: (lower priority)

AI - Aleutian Islands
AFA - American Fisheries Act
BiOp - Biological Opinion
BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
BKC - Blue King Crab
BOF - Board of Fisheries
CQE - Community Quota Entity
CDQ - Community Development Quota
EDR - Economic Data Reporting
EFH - Essential Fish Habitat
EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit
EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
FEP - Fishery Ecosystem Plan
FLL - Freezer longliners

HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
ICA - Inter-cooperative Agreements
IPA - Incentive Program Agreements
LLP - Limited License Plan
MPA - Marine Protected Area
MRA - Maximum Retainable Allowance
PSEIS - Programmatic Supplemental Impact Statement
PSC - Prohibited Species Catch
RKC - Red King Crab
ROFR - Right of First Refusal
SIR - Supplemental Information Report
SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee
SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

April 7-15, 2014, Anchorage
June 2-10, 2014, Nome
October 6-14, 2014 Anchorage
December 8-16, 2014, Anchorage
February 2-10, 2015, Seattle
April 6-14, 2015, Anchorage
June 1-9, 2015, Sitka
October 5-13, 2015 Anchorage
December 7-15, 2015, Anchorage

(T) = Tentative