MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, AP, and SSC Members

FROM: Chris Oliver
Executive Director

ESTIMATED TIME
8 HOURS
(all D-1 items)

DATE: September 26, 2005

SUBJECT: 2006-2007 BSAI and GOA Groundfish Specifications

ACTION REQUIRED

(a) Adopt proposed specifications and EA/IRFA for 2006 and 2007 groundfish fisheries
(b) Review SAFE Ecosystem chapter

BACKGROUND

(a) Adopt proposed specifications and EA/IRFA for 2006 and 2007 groundfish fisheries

In November 2004, the Secretary implemented FMP Amendments 48/48 which revised the administrative process used to establish annual harvest specifications for the groundfish fisheries of the GOA and the BSAI. Amendments 48/48 allow harvest specifications to be effective for up to two fishing years, allowing for the use of either an annual or biennial harvest specifications process. For species on an annual harvest specifications schedule, the Council would set two years of harvest specifications, with the second year of specifications being superseded (in approximately March of the second year) by the new two-year set of harvest specifications. Specifying two-year harvest specifications each year is necessary to allow for Administrative Procedure Act (APA) requirements to be met after the December Council recommendations without disrupting the start of the groundfish fisheries and ensure that harvest specifications can be updated on an annual basis.

Following this new policy, the Council adopted final specifications in December 2004 for a two-year period, 2005-2006 and adopted a biennial cycle for some Gulf of Alaska and Aleutian Island groundfish stocks. The BSAI and GOA specifications adopted for 2006 (Item D-1(a)(1)) will start the fishery on January 1, 2006, and will be replaced in March 2006 by final specifications for 2006-2007 that will be adopted by the Council at its next meeting in December. The December action will be incorporated into the final rule, and will adjust the 2006 specifications upon implementation, as just described.

At this October meeting, the Council will adopt proposed specifications that will be incorporated into the proposed rule and TAC-setting EA/IRFA that will meet APA requirements. *Some confusion still exists about the new process, so I want to emphasize that the specifications set in December 2004 will start the 2006 fisheries and the specifications adopted at this meeting will only be used in the proposed rule to set a logical outgrowth for the Council's December action for final 2006-2007 specifications.*

The BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams recommended projected groundfish specifications for 2006 and 2007 during their September 19-21, 2005 meetings for publication in the proposed rule (Item D-1(a)(2)). The projections for Tier 1 to 3 stocks used species-specific AFSC population models, which include information on age structure, growth and reproduction, and natural and fishing mortality. The projections for Tiers 4-6 "roll over" the 2006 final specifications. Further information on the methodology for projecting these specifications

may be found in the TAC-setting EA that was provided to you at this meeting. Reports from the Joint, GOA and BSAI groundfish plan team meetings are provided under Item D-1(a)(3).

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands In the BSAI, Prohibited Species Catch limits are established for halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, opilio crab, and herring. These PSC limits are further allocated among gear types and apportioned by target fisheries. The 2006 PSC limits and apportionments and 2006 CDQ groundfish halibut discard mortality rates, as adopted by the Council in December 2004, are attached as Item D-1(a)(4). The trawl halibut allocations would start July 1, 2006, as set in the regulations.

Gulf of Alaska In the GOA, Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits are established for halibut. Since 1995, total halibut PSC limits for all fisheries and gear types have totaled 2,300 mt. This cap was reduced from 2,750 mt after the sablefish IFQ fishery was exempted from the halibut PSC requirements in 1995. The halibut PSC apportionments recommended based upon the 2005 apportionments for the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries are attached as Item D-1(a)(5).

GOA TAC Considerations for State Pacific Cod Fishery:

Since 1997, the Council has reduced the GOA Pacific cod TAC to account for removals of not more than 25% of the Federal P. cod TAC from the state parallel fisheries. Using the area apportionments of the 2006 P. cod proposed ABC recommended by the Plan Team (for the proposed rule), the federal TAC for P. cod would be adjusted as listed below.

Proposed 2006 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, TACs and state Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) (mt).

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	19,952	31,590	3,858	55,400
State GHL	4,988	7,663	386	13,037
(%)	25	24.25	10	23.5
Federal TAC	14,964	23,927	3,472	42,363

(b) Review SAFE Ecosystem chapter

The Ecosystem Considerations section is utilized to advance our understanding of marine ecosystem dynamics and deliver ecological, oceanographic, and climatic indices to stock assessment scientists and managers. It is comprised of three main sections. Integration of information regarding ecosystem status and trends and the use of models to predict possible future ecosystem states using an indicator approach constitutes the framework of a BSAI and GOA *Ecosystem Assessment*. Annual updates of historical trend and present status of various indicators are performed and range from climate, oceanographic, production, species, community, to ecosystem-level indicators as well as ecosystem-based indicators. The second section, *Ecosystem Status Indicators*, provides stronger links between ecosystem research and fishery management and to spur new understanding of the connections between ecosystem components by bringing together many diverse research efforts into one document. The third section, *Ecosystem-based Management Indices and Information*, provides either early signals of direct human effects on ecosystem components that might warrant management intervention or provides evidence of the efficacy of previous management actions. In the first instance, the indicators are likely to be ones that summarize information about the characteristics of the human influences (particularly those related to fishing, such as catch composition, amount, and location) that are influencing a particular ecosystem component.

Changes to the Ecosystem Considerations chapter in 2005 include the addition of an executive summary that highlights important recent trends in the climate, biology, and fishery effects; a list of updates/changes to the

chapter; the inclusion of comments received and addressed; and the addition of three contributions regarding the physics, nutrients, chlorophyll, juvenile sockeye salmon and young of the year pollock distribution in the Bering Sea. The chapter was or will be updated in April, September, and November, 2005 and was distributed to the Environmental Assessment authors, stock assessment authors, plan team members, the Council, and the public. Also new this year is the Ecosystem Considerations website. The Ecosystem Considerations intranet website not only provides the chapter contributions but also provides access to some of the time series data, presented in the chapter. The website intranet address was provided to stock assessment authors and plan team members. The website will be updated and viewable to all on the internet by the fall.

Jennifer Boldt, NMFS AFSC, will summarize the 2006 Ecosystem Chapter to the 2006 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluations (SAFE) reports for the BSAI and GOA.

OFL, ABC, and TAC Specifications as Implemented for the 2005-2006 BSAI Groundfish Fisheries

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Species	Area	2005					2006				
		OFL	ABC	TAC	ITAC[2]	CDQ[3]	OFL	ABC	TAC	ITAC[2]	CDQ[3]
Pollock[4]	BS[2]	2,100,000	1,960,000	1,478,500	1,330,650	147,850	1,944,000	1,617,000	1,487,756	1,338,980	148,776
	AI[2]	39,100	29,400	19,000	17,100	1,900	39,100	29,400	19,000	17,100	1,900
	Bogoslof	39,600	2,570	10	10	.....	39,600	2,570	10	10	.....
Pacific cod	BSAI	265,000	206,000	206,000	175,100	15,450	226,000	195,000	195,000	165,750	14,625
Sablefish[5]	BS	2,950	2,440	2,440	1,037	336	2,690	2,310	2,310	982	87
	AI	3,170	2,620	2,620	557	442	2,880	2,480	2,480	527	47
Atka mackerel	BSAI	147,000	124,000	63,000	53,550	4,725	127,000	107,000	63,000	53,550	4,725
	EAI/BS	.....	24,550	7,500	6,375	563	.....	21,190	7,500	6,375	563
	CAI	.....	52,830	35,500	30,175	2,663	.....	45,580	35,500	30,175	2,663
	WAI	.....	46,620	20,000	17,000	1,500	.....	40,230	20,000	17,000	1,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	148,000	124,000	90,686	77,083	6,801	133,000	114,000	90,000	76,500	6,750
Rock sole	BSAI	157,000	132,000	41,500	35,275	3,113	145,000	122,000	42,000	35,700	3,150
Greenland turbot	BSAI	19,200	3,930	3,500	2,975	263	11,100	3,600	3,500	2,975	263
	BS	.....	2,720	2,700	2,295	203	.....	2,500	2,500	2,125	188
	AI	.....	1,210	800	680	60	.....	1,100	1,000	850	75
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	132,000	108,000	12,000	10,200	900	103,000	88,400	12,000	10,200	900
Flathead sole	BSAI	70,200	58,500	19,500	16,575	1,463	56,100	48,400	20,000	17,000	1,500
Other flatfish[6]	BSAI	28,500	21,400	3,500	2,975	263	28,500	21,400	3,000	2,550	225
Alaska plaice	BSAI	237,000	189,000	8,000	6,800	600	115,000	109,000	10,000	8,500	750
Pacific ocean perch	BSAI	17,300	14,600	12,600	10,710	945	17,408	14,600	12,600	10,710	945
	BS	.....	2,920	1,400	1,190	105	.....	2,920	1,400	1,190	105
	EAI	.....	3,210	3,080	2,618	231	.....	3,210	3,080	2,618	231
	CAI	.....	3,165	3,035	2,580	228	.....	3,165	3,035	2,580	228
	WAI	.....	5,305	5,085	4,322	381	.....	5,305	5,085	4,322	381
Northern rockfish	BSAI	9,810	8,260	5,000	4,250	375	9,480	8,040	5,000	4,250	375
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	794	596	596	507	45	794	596	596	507	45
Rougheye rockfish	BSAI	298	223	223	190	17	298	223	223	190	17
Other rockfish[7]	BSAI	1,870	1,400	1,050	893	79	1,870	1,400	1,050	893	79
	BS	.....	810	460	391	35	.....	810	460	391	35
	AI	.....	590	590	502	44	.....	590	590	502	44
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	1,275	1,084	.....	2,620	1,970	1,275	1,084	.....
Other species[8]	BSAI	87,920	53,860	29,000	24,650	2,175	87,920	57,870	29,200	24,820	2,190
TOTAL		3,509,332	3,044,769	2,000,000	1,772,171	186,608	3,093,360	2,547,259	2,000,000	1,772,778	187,350

[1] These amounts apply to the entire BSAI management area unless otherwise specified. With the exception of pollock, and for the purpose of these harvest specifications, the Bering Sea (BS) subarea includes the Bogoslof District.

[2] Except for pollock and the portion of the sablefish TAC allocated to hook-and-line and pot gear, 15 percent of each TAC is put into a reserve. The ITAC for each species is the remainder of the TAC after the subtraction of these reserves.

[3] Except for pollock, squid and the hook-and-line or pot gear allocation of sablefish, one half of the amount of the TACs placed in reserve, or 7.5 percent of the TACs, is designated as a CDQ reserve for use by CDQ participants (see §§ 679.20(b)(1)(iii) and 679.31).

[4] Under § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(1), the annual Bering Sea pollock TAC after subtraction for the CDQ directed fishing allowance - 10 percent and the ICA - 3.35 percent, is further allocated by sector for a directed pollock fishery as follows: inshore - 50 percent; catcher/processor - 40 percent; and motherships - 10 percent. Pending

approval of Amendment 82, the annual AI pollock TAC, after first subtracting for the CDQ directed fishing allowance - 10 percent and second the ICA - 2,000 mt, would be allocated to the Aleut Corporation for a directed pollock fishery.

[5] The ITAC for sablefish reflected in Table 1 is for trawl gear only. Regulations at § 679.20(b)(1) do not provide for the establishment of an ITAC for the hook-and-line and pot gear allocation for sablefish. Twenty percent of the sablefish TAC allocated to hook-and-line gear or pot gear and 7.5 percent of the sablefish TAC allocated to trawl gear is reserved for use by CDQ participants (see § 679.20(b)(1)(iii)).

[6] "Other flatfish" includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), flathead sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, arrowtooth flounder and Alaska plaice.

[7] "Other rockfish" includes all Sebastes and Sebastolobus species except for Pacific ocean perch, northern, shortraker, and rougheye rockfish.

[8] "Other species" includes sculpins, sharks, skates and octopus. Forage fish, as defined at § 679.2, are not included in the "other species" category.

OFL, ABC, and TAC Specifications as Implemented for the 2005-2006 GOA Groundfish Fisheries

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Species	Area	2005			2006		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (610)		30,380	30,380		30,452	30,452
	C (620)		34,404	34,404		34,485	34,485
	C (630)		18,718	18,718		18,762	18,762
	WYAK		1,688	1,688		1,691	1,691
	SubTotal	144,340	85,190	85,190	103,250	85,390	85,390
	EYAK/SEO	8,690	6,520	6,520	8,690	6,520	6,520
	Total	153,030	91,710	91,710	111,940	91,910	91,910
Pacific Cod	W		20,916	15,687		18,396	13,797
	C		33,117	25,086		29,127	22,064
	E		4,067	3,660		3,577	3,219
	Total	86,200	58,100	44,433	65,800	51,100	39,080
Sablefish	W		2,540	2,540		2,407	2,407
	C		7,250	7,250		6,870	6,870
	WYAK		2,580	2,580		2,445	2,445
	SEO		3,570	3,570		3,383	3,383
	Total	19,280	15,940	15,940	17,530	15,105	15,105
Deep water flatfish[1]	W		330	330		330	330
	C		3,340	3,340		3,340	3,340
	WYAK		2,120	2,120		2,120	2,120
	EYAK/SEO		1,030	1,030		1,030	1,030
	Total	8,490	6,820	6,820	8,490	6,820	6,820
Rex sole	W		1,680	1,680		1,680	1,680
	C		7,340	7,340		7,340	7,340
	WYAK		1,340	1,340		1,340	1,340
	EYAK/SEO		2,290	2,290		2,290	2,290
	Total	16,480	12,650	12,650	16,480	12,650	12,650
Shallow water flatfish[2]	W		21,580	4,500		21,580	4,500
	C		27,250	13,000		27,250	13,000
	WYAK		2,030	2,030		2,030	2,030
	EYAK/SEO		1,210	1,210		1,210	1,210
	Total	63,840	52,070	20,740	63,840	52,070	20,740
Flathead sole	W		11,690	2,000		11,111	2,000
	C		30,020	5,000		28,527	5,000
	WYAK		3,000	3,000		2,842	2,842
	EYAK/SEO		390	390		370	370
	Total	56,500	45,100	10,390	53,800	42,850	10,212

Species	Area	2005			2006		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Arrowtooth flounder	W		26,250	8,000		27,924	8,000
	C		168,950	25,000		179,734	25,000
	WYAK		11,790	2,500		12,539	2,500
	EYAK/SEO		9,910	2,500		10,543	2,500
	Total	253,900	216,900	38,000	270,050	230,740	38,000
Other Slope rockfish	W		40	40		40	40
	C		300	300		300	300
	WYAK		130	130		130	130
	EYAK/SEO		3,430	200		3,430	200
	Total	5,150	3,900	670	5,150	3,900	670
Northern rockfish	W		808	808		755	755
	C		4,283	4,283		3,995	3,995
	E[3]		0	0		0	0
	Total	6,050	5,091	5,091	5,640	4,750	4,750
Pacific ocean perch	W	3,076	2,567	2,567	3,019	2,525	2,525
	C	10,226	8,535	8,535	10,008	8,375	8,375
	WYAK		841	841		813	813
	SEO		1,632	1,632		1,579	1,579
	E	2,964			2,860		
	Total	16,266	13,575	13,575	15,887	13,292	13,292
Shortraker rockfish	W		155	155		155	155
	C		324	324		324	324
	E		274	274		274	274
	Total	982	753	753	982	753	753
Rougheye rockfish	W		188	188		188	188
	C		557	557		557	557
	E		262	262		262	262
	Total	1,531	1,007	1,007	1,531	1,007	1,007
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W		377	377		366	366
	C		3,067	3,067		2,973	2,973
	WYAK		211	211		205	205
	EYAK/SEO		898	898		871	871
	Total	5,680	4,553	4,553	5,510	4,415	4,415
Demersal Shelf Rockfish	**Total**	640	410	410	640	410	410
Thornyhead rockfish	W		410	410		410	410
	C		1,010	1,010		1,010	1,010
	E		520	520		520	520
	Total	2,590	1,940	1,940	2,590	1,940	1,940
Atka Mackerel	**Total**	6,200	600	600	6,200	600	600

Species	Area	2005			2006		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Big skates	W		727	727		727	727
	C		2,463	2,463		2,463	2,463
	E		809	809		809	809
	Total	5,332	3,999	3,999	5,332	3,999	3,999
Longnose skates	W		66	66		66	66
	C		1,972	1,972		1,972	1,972
	E		780	780		780	780
	Total	3,757	2,818	2,818	3,757	2,818	2,818
Other skates	**Total**	1,769	1,327	1,327	1,769	1,327	1,327
Other Species	**Total**	NA	NA	13,871	NA	NA	13,525
Total		713,667	539,263	291,298	622,918	542,456	284,023

1/ "Deep water flatfish" includes Dover sole, Greenland turbot and deepsea sole.
2/ "Shallow water flatfish" includes rock sole, yellowfin sole, butter sole, starry flounder, English sole, Alaska plaice, and sand sole.
3/ The EGOA ABC of 2 mt for northern rockfish has been included in the WYAK ABC for other slope rockfish.

NOTE: ABCs and TACs are rounded to nearest mt.
GW means Gulfwide.

BSAI Plan Team OFL and ABC Recommendations for the 2006-2007 Fisheries for Publication in the Proposed Rule

Species	Area	2005				2006			2007		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch**	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,100,000	1,960,000	1,478,500	1,362,815	1,966,100	1,636,800		1,487,100	1,223,200	
	Aleutian Islands	39,100	29,400	19,000	1,460	39,100	29,400		39,100	29,400	
	Bogoslof District	39,600	2,570	10	0	39,600	2,570		39,600	2,570	
Pacific cod	BSAI	265,000	206,000	206,000	159,353	250,700	195,000		222,000	172,200	
Sablefish	BS	2,950	2,440	2,440	888	3,085	2,556		6,000	5,000	
	AI	3,170	2,620	2,620	1,404	3,315	2,744				
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	148,000	124,000	90,686	90,550	139,500	117,700		130,000	109,600	
Greenland turbot	Total	19,200	3,930	3,500	2,419	18,100	11,400		16,900	10,500	
	BS		2,720	2,700	2,045		7,590			7,500	
	AI		1,210	800	374		3,410			3,000	
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	132,000	108,000	12,000	12,842	128,500	104,200		125,800	102,100	
Rock sole	BSAI	157,000	132,000	41,500	37,168	145,100	121,700		138,400	116,100	
Flathead sole	BSAI	70,200	58,500	19,500	15,138	65,900	54,900		60,800	50,600	
Alaska plaice	BSAI	237,000	189,000	8,000	11,157	231,000	183,400		224,400	178,100	
Other flatfish	BSAI	28,500	21,400	3,500	4,286	28,500	21,400		28,500	21,400	
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	17,300	14,600	12,600	8,528	17,600	14,900		17,900	15,100	
	BS		2,920	1,400	625		3,000			1,678	
	AI total		11,680	11,200	7,903		12,000			13,422	
	WAI		5,305	5,085	3,281		5,450			6,096	
	CAI		3,165	3,035	2,086		3,252			3,637	
	EAI		3,210	3,080	2,536		3,298			3,689	
Northern rockfish	BSAI	9,810	8,260	5,000	2,743	9,800	8,200		9,700	8,200	
Shortraker	BSAI	794	596	596	154	794	596		794	596	
Rougheye	BSAI	298	223	223	83	298	223		298	223	
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,870	1,400	1,050	398	1,870	1,400		1,870	1,400	
	BS		810	460	154		810			810	
	AI		590	590	244		590			590	
Atka mackerel	Total	147,000	124,000	63,000	41,171	126,700	107,000		106,900	90,800	
	WAI		46,620	20,000	5,555		40,230			28,825	
	CAI		52,830	35,500	29,891		45,580			51,165	
	EAI/BS		24,550	7,500	5,725		21,190			10,810	
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	1,275	1,081	2,620	1,970		2,620	1,970	
Other species	BSAI	87,920	53,860	29,000	19,460	87,920	57,870		87,920	57,870	
Total	BSAI	3,509,332	3,044,769	2,000,000	1,773,098	3,306,102	2,675,929		2,746,602	2,196,929	

**2005 catch is through September 17, 2005 (includes CDQ). The 2006 Pacific cod ABC and TAC is rounded from 194,800 mt to 195,000 mt to be consistent with the 2006 TAC recommended at the December 2004 NPFMC meeting.

GOA Plan Team OFL and ABC Recommendations for the 2006-2007 Fisheries for Publication in the Proposed Rule

Species	Area	2005				2006			2007		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch**	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (61)		30,380	30,380	18,797		35,202			31,743	
	C (62)		34,404	34,404	27,613		39,865			35,947	
	C (63)		18,718	18,718	10,339		21,678			19,547	
	WYAK		1,688	1,688	1,879		1,955			1,763	
	Subtotal	144,340	85,190	85,190	56,749	133,900	98,700		119,800	89,000	
	EYAK/SEO	8,690	6,520	6,520	0	8,690	6,520		8,690	6,520	
	TOTAL	153,030	91,710	91,710	56,749	142,590	105,220		128,490	95,520	
Pacific Cod	W		20,916	15,687	11,242		19,952			16,783	
	C		33,117	25,086	19,343		31,590			26,572	
	E		4,067	3,660	13		3,858			3,245	
	TOTAL	86,200	58,100	44,433	30,598	82,000	55,400		68,900	46,600	
Sablefish	W		2,540	2,540	1,729		2,371			2,215	
	C		7,250	7,250	6,255		6,768			6,322	
	WYAK		2,580	2,580	1,741		2,409			2,250	
	SEO		3,570	3,570	3,009		3,333			3,113	
	TOTAL	19,280	15,940	15,940	12,734	18,000	14,880		16,900	13,900	
Deep water flatfish[1]	W		330	330	3		330			330	
	C		3,340	3,340	394		3,340			3,340	
	WYAK		2,120	2,120	4		2,120			2,120	
	EYAK/SEO		1,030	1,030	3		1,030			1,030	
	TOTAL	8,490	6,820	6,820	404	8,490	6,820		8,490	6,820	
Rex sole	W		1,680	1,680	574		1,680			1,680	
	C		7,340	7,340	1,564		7,340			7,340	
	WYAK		1,340	1,340	0		1,340			1,340	
	EYAK/SEO		2,290	2,290	0		2,290			2,290	
	TOTAL	16,480	12,650	12,650	2,138	16,480	12,650		16,480	12,650	
Shallow water flatfish[2]	W		21,580	4,500	104		21,580			21,580	
	C		27,250	13,000	4,514		27,250			27,250	
	WYAK		2,030	2,030	0		2,030			2,030	
	EYAK/SEO		1,210	1,210	6		1,210			1,210	
	TOTAL	63,840	52,070	20,740	4,624	63,840	52,070		63,840	20,740	

Species	Area	2005				2006			2007		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch**	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Flathead sole	W		11,690	2,000	587		12,314			12,356	
	C		30,020	5,000	1,833		31,614			31,721	
	WYAK		3,000	3,000	0		3,149			2,336	
	EYAK/SEO		390	390	0		408			308	
	TOTAL	56,500	45,100	10,390	2,420	59,240	47,490		59,500	47,650	
Arrowtooth flounder	W		26,250	8,000	2,345		25,790			26,935	
	C		168,950	25,000	15,349		166,015			173,383	
	WYAK		11,790	2,500	21		11,574			12,087	
	EYAK/SEO		9,910	2,500	30		9,761			10,175	
	TOTAL	253,900	216,900	38,000	17,745	249,140	213,460		260,150	222,600	
Other Slope rockfish[3]	W		40	40	77		40			40	
	C		300	300	531		300			300	
	WYAK		130	130	70		130			130	
	EYAK/SEO		3,430	200	35		3,430			3,430	
	TOTAL	5,150	3,900	670	713	5,150	3,900		5,150	3,900	
Northern rockfish[3]	W		808	808	567		752			704	
	C		4,283	4,283	4,208		3,978			3,726	
	E		0	0	0		0			0	
	TOTAL	6,050	5,091	5,091	4,775	5,620	4,730		5,270	4,430	
Pacific Ocean perch	W	3,076	2,567	2,567	2,339	3,019	2,525		2,985	2,494	
	C	10,226	8,535	8,535	8,145	10,008	8,375		9,896	8,293	
	WYAK		841	841	872		813			803	
	SEO		1,632	1,632	0		1,579			1,560	
	E(subtotal)	2,964				2,860			2,829		
	TOTAL	16,266	13,575	13,575	11,356	15,887	13,292		15,710	13,150	
Shortraker	W		155	155	68		155			155	
	C		324	324	220		324			324	
	E		274	274	192		274			274	
	TOTAL	982	753	753	480	982	753		982	753	
Rougheye	W		188	188	51		188			188	
	C		557	557	117		557			557	
	E		262	262	117		262			262	
	TOTAL	1,531	1,007	1,007	285	1,531	1,007		1,531	1,007	

Species	Area	2005				2006			2007		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch**	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W		377	377	115		366			366	
	C		3,067	3,067	1,842		2,973			2,973	
	WYAK		211	211	215		205			205	
	EYAK/SEO		898	898	3		871			871	
	TOTAL	5,680	4,553	4,553	2,175	5,510	4,415		5,510	4,415	
Demersal rockfish	SEO	640	410	410	171	640	410		640	410	
Thornyhead rockfish	W		410	410	182		410			410	
	C		1,010	1,010	384		1,010			1,010	
	E		520	520	125		520			520	
	TOTAL	2,590	1,940	1,940	691	2,590	1,940		2,590	1,940	
Atka mackerel	GW	6,200	600	600	869	6,200	600		6,200	600	
Big Skate	W		727	727	26		727			727	
	C		2,463	2,463	751		2,463			2,463	
	E		809	809	60		809			809	
	Total	5,332	3,999	3,999	837	5,332	3,999		5,332	3,999	
Longnose skate	W		66	66	15		66			66	
	C		1,972	1,972	935		1,972			1,972	
	E		780	780	132		780			780	
	Total	3,757	2,818	2,818	1,032	3,757	2,818		3,757	2,818	
Other skates	GW	1,769	1,327	1,327	646	1,769	1,327		1,769	1,327	
All skates (2003)											
Other Species	GW	NA	NA	13,871	3,115	NA	NA		NA	NA	
TOTAL		713,667	539,263	291,298	154,386	694,748	547,181		677,191	505,229	

**Catch through September 17, 2005
1/ Deep water flatfish includes Dover sole, Greenland turbot and deepsea sole.
2/ "Shallow water flatfish" includes rock sole, yellowfin sole, butter sole, starry flounder, English sole, Alaska plaice, and sand sole.
3/ The EGOA ABC of 2 mt for northern rockfish has been included in the WYAK ABC for other slope rockfish.
* Indicates rollover from previous year (no age-structured projection data available)
4/ The ABC for sablefish has been reduced by 5% in the SEO and added to the WYK to allow for 5% of the EGOA TAC to be made available for trawl incidental catch

NOTE:
ABCs and TACs are rounded to nearest mt.
GW means Gulfwide.
Catch data source: NMFS Blend Reports.

Groundfish Plan Team Meetings

September 19th-21st, 2005

Joint GOA/BSAI Groundfish Plan Team

Introduction

The Bering Sea/Aleutian Island Groundfish Plan Team and the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team met jointly on September 19-21, 2005 to review a number of management initiatives, survey results, and new stock assessment models.

Groundfish Plan Team members are listed in Attachment 1. Jeff Fujioka was absent. Loh-lee. Low, Ward Testa and Tory O'Connell attended part of the meeting. Brenda Norcross was connected via teleconferencing and internet document exchange. New Plan Team member Dan Lew, and two nominated Plan Team members Ken Goldman (GOA) and Tien-Shui Tsou (BSAI and GOA) were warmly welcomed.

The Joint Teams adopted a revised agenda (Attachment 2).

A list of all draft documents and presentations made during the Plan Team meetings is provided in Attachment 3. NOTE that these are to be considered working documents and are subject to further review and possible changes.

Council and Center updates. Diana Stram provided an overview of BSAI and GOA groundfish FMP amendments underway and recently adopted. These included the BSAI salmon bycatch amendment, GOA other species TAC calculation, EFH/HAPC amendments, and Central GOA rockfish rationalization.

Habitat and Ecosystems Processes Research (HEPR). Mike Sigler reviewed the new Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) program he leads, will bring together relevant expertise for collaborative research. This is an organized program for research tailored toward ecological processes. Initial areas of research include studies on the impact of sea ice loss, EFH, and Critical Habitat. The HEPR core Team includes one individual from each AFSC division that participates in an initial workshop.

Ecosystem Approaches to Management. Diana Evans provided an update on different approaches the Council is considering to include ecosystem-based management (EBM) initiatives. EBM extends beyond fisheries management jurisdictions since it proposed to coordinate information across agencies. The Ecosystem Committee has been reactivated by the Council and will review and advise the Council on appropriate approaches to pursue under EAM. More information is available on the Council website.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) update. The Teams received an update that pollock in the GOA and BSAI has been certified under the MSC. The MSC program requires an annual audit of certified fisheries, and At-Sea Processors Association is working to meet various conditions attached to the original certification determination. A new assessment Team has been appointed to perform the annual audit and evaluate APA's response to conditions. There is no direct responsibility for NMFS. The BSAI Pacific cod freezer-longliner sector is currently being considered for MSC certification as are the sablefish and halibut longline fisheries.

Center for Independent Experts (CIE). The CIE is a national initiative to review critical research and assessment activities by independent experts. Kerim Aydin reported that the CIE reviewed the multi-species and predator-prey models developed by the AFSC, as well as the technical interactions model used for the PSEIS in 2005. The CIE concluded that the approaches used were reasonable and provided a number of suggestions for improvement. These included incorporation of better seasonal coverage, use of statistical methods (e.g., ADMB), potential of age-structured models, length-based models GADGET (better for use with trends on weight and consumption at age), fleet dynamics, alternative model configurations, and sensitivity analyses on uncertain assumptions. The CIE panel also suggested that the time-horizon for considerations should be within 3-7 years for MSVPA whereas the Ecopath/Ecosim be used for evaluating policy implications are of more medium to long-term duration.

In 2004, the CIE reviewed the EFH habitat model and provided a number of suggestions for further evaluation that were completed by AFSC staff. A review of the salmon program at the Auke Bay Lab (ABL) also took place and future CIE reviews include crab (OFL update), and possibly rockfish.

Jim Ianelli noted that despite these efforts, the overall level of review for critical assessments for North Pacific groundfish has declined over the past several years due to increasing numbers (and size) of stock assessments and management analyses. The Plan Teams and SSC should continue to strive to improve the level of review for these documents.

Proposed Rule on NS1 Guidelines. Grant Thompson summarized draft comments on the proposed NS1 guidelines prepared by the SSC and others (see attached). The Plan Teams expressed concern about proposed treatment of "core" and assemblage species. The draft comments encourage NMFS to provide flexibility in the guidelines regarding management of non-target species. The Teams expressed concern that species currently managed as single species may be moved into assemblages to "cover" poorly understood species. The ability to move individual species from assemblages may be restricted.

Economic SAFE Report. Ron Felthoven, AFSC, summarized the draft economic SAFE report. He reviewed recent work by his staff, including discard rates and the impact of utilization regulations, recovery rate trends (whole fish to product), estimates of value based on fish-ticket data, the impact of Steller sea lion conservation area, a fish processing boom in China, and halibut bycatch mortality impacts.

Research Priorities. Jane DiCosimo reviewed the status of the Council's list of research priorities, which was last revised in 2003. Council staff reduced the list to 5 general themes to assist the North Pacific Research Board in setting its 2006 research funding priorities. The Teams divided the key items to a number of subcommittees to review research priorities. These smaller groups are to review and update their sections and report back by the November 2005 meeting. The revised research priorities is scheduled to be reviewed by the SSC and adopted by the Council in February 2006.

Information Quality Act. Bubba Cook, NMFS AKRO, reviewed the Information Quality Act provisions as they relate to Council and NMFS fishery actions. While the Plan Teams are part of the Council's review process, the SSC is the peer review process that has been determined to meet the requirements of the IQA.

TAC Projections. Ben Muse, NMFS AKRO, provided an overview of the projection methodology used to prepare OFL and ABC projections for BSAI and GOA Team consideration. The projections for Tier 1 to 3 species used species-specific AFSC population models, which include information on age structure, growth and reproduction, and natural and fishing mortality. The projections follow procedures adopted by the Council and are detailed in the TAC specification environmental assessment (EA). The

projections for Tiers 4-6 "roll over" the 2006 final specifications. The draft specifications table is available using the updated projection models. NOTE that these will change as information is presented during the November 2005 Plan Team meetings.

The Plan Teams concurred with the improved methodology but noted a number of inconsistencies in the tables that needed to be checked. The Teams also agreed to schedule additional review at the November Plan Team meeting. The Teams will provide recommendations on the projected OFLs and ABCs in their separate meetings. These recommendations will be published in the proposed rule for 2006/2007 specifications, but will not be used to start the fishing year.

Sablefish. Tory O'Connell reviewed Alaska state sablefish fisheries and Team members clarified how these stocks are managed and assessed relative to the federal sablefish fishery. The Chatham strait fishery is the largest state fishery; it is managed under limited entry with an equal share distribution. The assessment is based on a mark recapture program and annual longline survey. Generally, the AK sablefish is considered a single stock and includes state waters. The trends in state abundance are very similar to trends in federal waters for southeast (and Chatham). The federal catch accounting system includes removals from state fisheries in the BSAI, but not from the state waters in the Chatham and Clarence regions because of the state management system. Since there is a large buffer between ABC and OFL and given that the IFQ fishery is able to remain below the TAC, the ~5% state catches are not considered a problem. The Teams noted the need to clarify state and federal waters fishery information.. The Teams recommended that the assessment authors consider adding information on state stocks, catches, and management programs in the sablefish stock assessment chapter.

A sablefish symposium is planned towards the end of 2006 or in early 2007. Ken Goldman noted that this is the 10th year of a sablefish survey in PWS and that analyses of these data may provide some useful insights.

Non-target species update. Rebecca Reuter reviewed a preliminary draft worksheet to determine relative "sensitivity" of non-target species. The Teams provided a number of suggestions for revisions.

The Teams expressed a number of concerns with regards to the use of the terms "sensitivity" and "vulnerability." "Sensitivity" relates to a statistical analysis that is part of a stock assessment. Vulnerability" describes the susceptibility of a species to overfishing. The Teams suggested "overall level of concern" to rank the potential vulnerability of the species for management purposes. Species might be "sensitive" according to their life-history characteristics, but not currently vulnerable to fishing pressure and/or of management concern. Likewise, other species might not have sensitive life-history characteristics as such, yet it is possible that a high harvest rate may increase their relative "level of concern." The Teams found it useful to vet these ideas as they could advise on the potential pitfalls and possibilities of the management implications of the tables. The Teams suggested clearly displaying a column on relative risk or "concern," in addition to a column on species sensitivity. They also suggested that this key be updated to better characterize these species as information becomes available. The Teams expressed great concern that given the current information, many long-lived species would not be characterized as sensitive, whereas it may be that some or all of these species are just not candidates for additional management actions at this time.

Other specific recommendations for the authors:

- Possibly use economic information and market-driven data as well in characterizing the relative vulnerability of species
- Fishery Interactions: Need to consider additional fisheries for incidental catch in characterizing the potential interactions

- Abundance trend: survey selectivity should be changed to catchability in this section (if that is what is being approximated); important to note when using the survey versus the model for results.
- Important to note when using the survey abundance estimates versus output from the assessment model for abundance trend

This information might eventually be summarized in the introductory section of the SAFE reports (e.g., similar to trends that are summarized in the GOA SAFE introductory Table 2)

The Teams discussed the possibility of expanding this sort of characterization to target species as well as non-target species. Concerns were noted that this might prove repetitive with current summaries of assessments. The Teams suggested that one approach might be to review existing information in assessments in order to ensure that this type of information is already available in each assessment.

Jane DiCosimo explained that the Non-Target Species Committee needs the results of this sensitivity analysis in order to move forward with refining management alternatives for analysis. The timeline for this analysis is indeterminate at this point. The next step is to assess vulnerability/sensitivity of various species and evaluate revising management regimes for those deemed "at-risk." Anne Hollowed noted that this work must coordinate with pending revisions for proposed assemblage management under the National Standard 1 guidelines. Jane suggested re-starting the "Ad Hoc" working group to review this information with the committee but the Teams did not comment on to what extent that was necessary.

Rockfish Management. Jane DiCosimo reviewed a paper on rockfish management to be presented to the Council at its October meeting. This paper was compiled following a Council request in 2004 for a comprehensive review of rockfish management and habitat. She requested that the Teams specifically comment on to what extent the science in the paper was correct. The Teams provided some specific guidance on corrections to tables and information in the paper. The Teams further recommended that the definitions of sensitivity and vulnerability should be clearly defined in the paper. Concerns were expressed regarding the classifications of sensitive and non-sensitive in the paper (as described under the previous agenda item).

Rockfish studies on localized depletion. Dana Hanselman, AFSC, presented results from his study on localized depletion of Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish and dusky rockfish. Results suggest that depletions from small-scale areas appeared to occur but the periods were relatively short (generally less than two weeks). The depleted areas seemed to be replenished in the following year for Pacific ocean perch, but not for northern and dusky rockfish in at least one area. The rate of replenishment (i.e., within a year) was unknown given the available data.

Dark rockfish amendment. The GOA Plan Team recommended in 2004 that dark rockfish be removed from the FMP and turned over to the state for management. The Council initiated that analysis in 2005. The analysis was delayed until 2005 GOA trawl survey data was available for development of the analysis. It was discussed to what extent the BSAI Team had a similar recommendation (and that a combined amendment for both could be pursued). The BSAI Team noted that they did not discuss this last year and were provided no additional catch information. The Teams in general recommend that treatment of species be consistent among region. Ivan Vining, ADF&G, commented that there is no research or monitoring in BSAI and that the State may not implement such a program. The BSAI Team agreed to discuss independently in their break out discussion to what extent this should be a priority or recommendation for a BSAI amendment.

Aleutian Islands Fishery Ecosystem Plan. Diana Evans reviewed Council initiatives on the Aleutian Islands FEP. The Council decision to move forward with developing the idea of an AI FEP was

done with the understanding that it represents a non-binding document without legal standing. It would provide a guidance document in addition to (and not superseding in any way) the current FMPs. The intent is that this would represent an information and planning document to provide the Council with a greater understanding within an ecosystem context for policy decisions. She noted that guidance was sought from the Teams on to what extent this sort of initiative would actually provide additional guidance for the Council, in addition to the current activities on ecosystem considerations. If it did not, this would be important for the Council to be aware of this prior to moving further along this path. The Council's Ecosystem Committee is to meet sometime this fall, and further Council activity has been rescheduled to after this committee meets again.

The Teams felt that an FEP seemed to be a good idea as a guiding document but were not clear on the necessity of a separate ecosystem Team, and suggested that the Plan Teams ought to be considered for reviewing and revising FEPs. The Teams also noted that while the idea and content seemed to be a good idea the operational management was as yet unclear. David Witherell noted that the FEP should be more focused on management and policy level decisions than specific stock assessment.

The difference between AI and BS stocks and their boundaries were noted. While many single stocks might be easier to separate by region, species complexes are notably different between the BS shelf and the AI region.

Ivonne Ortiz, AFSC, noted that where the eastern AI and western GOA overlap might also present a problem. She commented that while the FEP might not have a weight of its own for regulations, it could serve as a type of legal precedence-setting document. Thus care should be taken in its drafting and use.

Ecosystem Considerations Chapter. Jennifer Boldt, AFSC, reviewed additions and improvements to the Ecosystem Considerations chapter. She noted the new availability of easily accessible information via the new website. The Teams acknowledged the immense amount of effort that continues to go into this chapter and noted the utility of the updates and improvements since suggestions were given last year. The web interface facilitates easier updates and increased communication and extensive reference and updated information can be easily accessed. These include ecological indicators and all time series and data as provided by authors.

The Plan Teams recommended that the chapter be produced once per year, perhaps with an additional update on sections and topics that have been changed or are new. The website can facilitate with these changes and should be marked with a date stamp accordingly.

Ecosystem Assessment/Update on multi-species modeling. Kerim Aydin, AFSC, summarized the February 2005 SSC modeling workshop, which included MSVPA/MSFOR, Ecopath/Ecosim (CIE review on ecosystem modeling), and technical interaction modeling. One output from the trophic models has proved useful in comparing the change in biomass by species relative to single species models. This is particularly relevant for evaluating responses of apex predators in the absence of fishing (e.g., changes in Steller sea lions). Changes may be more apparent on local scales than the larger scales used for these models.

The food-habits website now has extensive presentations of modeling results that can be accessed interactively. The Teams acknowledged the usefulness of these improvements and strongly encouraged authors to examine these resources in the development of the assessment chapters. Another new development includes the possibility of using some food habits data as indices of abundance. A presentation of length frequencies of pollock in predator stomachs suggests a significant correlation with subsequent estimates of year-class strengths. As on-board sampling and food habits data processing

continue to improve, these data may become increasingly useful for assessment modeling and ecosystem considerations.

A discussion on how the ecosystem chapter could be more effectively presented and summarized by the Plan Teams ensued. Bob Foy suggested that a summary of the ecosystem effects relative to GOA flatfish would be useful to include in the introduction section to the GOA SAFE Report, if it were not adequately covered in the assessment document. Other examples included how the ecosystem information was incorporated into the Atka mackerel chapter of the BSAI SAFE Report. Stock assessment authors were encouraged to work closely with Kerim to incorporate information in a similar way for this year's assessments. The Teams will attempt to incorporate a summary section of the ecosystem considerations and ecosystem modeling chapter in the introductory section of the SAFE reports and will also draw information from the individual species chapters as available.

Survey Overview. Bob Lauth, AFSC, summarized the EBS trawl survey results. Northern stations were added to evaluate the possibility of an expanded snow crab distribution. There were three tows that were rejected for inclusion in the survey results (due to gear damage etc). There was a slight biomass increase for pollock, particularly in the northwest stations. Pacific cod increased in northwest area (increased abundance was noted in the combined 8 areas but it is important to note that this does not necessarily imply a biomass increase in the standard area). Observed bottom temperatures in 2005 were warmer to the southeast with colder waters further to north, compared to the 1-3 degree water in 2004 seen further south. The sea surface temperatures in 2005 were slightly cooler than 2004. A deeper-water slope survey is scheduled for summer 2006.

Mark Wilkins, AFSC, summarized the GOA trawl survey results. The survey crew was ahead of schedule most of the summer and was able to add stations resulting in 839 tows. They attempted to add stations proportionately across all depth strata. The presentation of time-series of biomass estimates required the caveats that: in 1999 deep stations were sampled whereas in 2001 there were no deep stations and the Eastern GOA was not covered. Unusual sightings occurred, such as sardines in southeast GOA, and hake, pelagic armorheads, and frigate birds seen further north.

The Teams greatly appreciated the excellent presentations on the summer trawl surveys by both Lauth and Wilkins. The Teams would encourage a similar presentation for the September meeting in 2006.

Phil Rigby, AFSC, briefly reviewed the sablefish longline survey, noting that the survey overall was successful although he did not have available information on the trends in sablefish by area. This year represented a Bering Sea year for the survey; archival tagging of Greenland turbot and shortspine thornyhead continued this year.

Management Strategy Evaluation. Teresa A'Mar provided an update on the MSE project she is conducting for GOA pollock. One objective is to test the robustness of decision rules and changes over time and incorporate changes in climate, spatial and temporal TACs. The Teams suggested that ecosystem effects be taken into consideration since food web interactions show that of all recent mortality on pollock, only about 6% appears to be due to fishing. If fishing is only 6% of total mortality to what extent will minor adjustments to the management strategy for a stock like GOA Pollock matter? The project is still preliminary and no results are available at this time.

Some suggestions for the author include:

- Using the existing tier system and proposed changes due to NS1 Guideline revisions.
- How to accommodate climate change? Consider including calculations of recruitment following the 1977 regime shift.

- When would it be appropriate to switch baseline years? Currently we don't have an analysis to support changing baseline years for reference purposes so perhaps MSE could incorporate this.

BSAI Pacific cod model. Grant Thompson summarized the new Pacific cod model using stock synthesis 2 (SS2). To focus attention on differences between models, no new data were used in the analysis, except for an updated estimate of the maturity schedule (Stark, in review). Overall the model was seen to be an improvement over earlier versions and despite some technical difficulties with implementing SS2, in the long run the conversion will provide a number of benefits for the analyst and reviewers.

The Teams discussed the changes in the results with the new model. The spawning biomass time series is somewhat lower under the new model. Whether the lower estimates of spawning biomass imply that recent harvests have exceeded retroactively computed OFLs depends on which maturity schedule is used (the old maturity schedule implies that recent harvests have exceeded retroactively computed OFLs, the new maturity schedule implies the opposite). The time series of total biomass is also somewhat lower under the new model. Jim Ianelli commented that the lower estimates of total biomass are explained largely by the fact that the new model estimates higher survey selectivity for large fish than the old model.

Kerim Aydin commented that the new model is better from an ecosystem modeling perspective, the lower abundance estimates (with less dome-shaped survey selectivity) was more consistent with the ecosystem modeling work because the higher biomass estimates consistently drove the other species extinct. The new model results are more likely to balance well with ecosystem models.

The Teams concurred that the new model presents substantial improvements over the old, specifically that the new model's estimates of total biomass are much closer to those obtained from the survey. However, Team members also noted that Stock Synthesis 2 is still inflexible in some ways and suggested that the authors consider creating a new model which is more flexible.

The BSAI Team requested that additional information be provided to them on the new maturity schedule by November because applying the new maturity curve will have a substantial impact on the assessment. Information should be included in the draft mailed to Plan Team members in advance for review and should be on the agenda as a major discussion item for the BSAI Team in November. Grant noted that he would try to do a model run for the GOA stock as well. A revised maturity schedule is also available for the GOA stock and will be presented in November as well.

The Teams noted that the model is to be evaluated by the SSC in October. Given the Plan Team convention to review all new models before recommended their use in estimating ABCs, the Teams recommend going ahead with this new model, noting that they will likely consider using the new model for guiding ABC recommendations in November given improved fits to available data.

The Teams suggested using the longline survey data in the model. Grant noted that he would consider using those data in the future (possibly next year) and has tried to do so in the past, but without much success. The new model framework will facilitate adding these types of data.

Marine Mammals. Lowell Fritz provided an overview of two pinniped stocks in Alaska, along with an update of the northern right whale critical habitat issue. A survey of western stock Steller sea lion pups across the AI and GOA was conducted in 2005. Relative to 2001, pup numbers increased in the eastern Aleutian Islands and eastern Gulf of Alaska, continued to decrease in the western Aleutian Islands, and were relatively unchanged overall. An update through 2004 of a demographic model of sea lions in the CGOA indicated that, since the early 1990s, survival rates of juvenile and adult sea lions rebounded to

rates observed in the mid 1970s before the steep decline, while reproductive rates of adult females have continued to decline. This suggests that reduced condition or health of adult females may be affecting fecundity, but there is currently no direct evidence to support this.

Northern fur seal pup production on St Paul and St George Islands was assessed in 2004 and indicated an average decline of 6% per year since 1998; no new information was available this year. In July 2005, adult males were counted on the two Pribilof Islands, and their numbers are correlated positively with pup production; there was an increase in harem males relative to 2004, but trends in male counts are variable. Pup production was assessed on Bogoslof Island in 2005 for the first time since 1997. Pup numbers more than doubled since 1997, to over 12,000 pups born in 2005. Much of this increase is thought to be driven by immigration of seals, possibly from the Pribilof Islands. The increase observed on Bogoslof Island, however, does not account for decreases observed on the Pribilof Islands.

The Teams were briefed on the status of the lawsuit regarding designation of right whale critical habitat. On June 14, 2005, the U.S. District Court remanded the matter of revising critical habitat for the northern right whale in the Pacific Ocean to NMFS. The remand includes orders for NMFS to publish a conclusive determination by October 28, 2005 by either proposing designation of an area in the North Pacific Ocean as critical habitat for right whales or by explaining why such a designation should not occur due to more paramount statutory considerations.

The Joint Plan Team meeting adjourned at 12:30pm on Wednesday September 21st. Individual teams met that afternoon.

GOA Plan Team Report

The September meeting of the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team took place on September 21st, 2005 at the Alaska Fishery Science Center in Seattle, WA. Members of the public and state and agency staff present included: Julie Bonney, Dan Falvey, Phil Rigby (NMFS), Gary Stauffer (NMFS), Dana Hanselman (NMFS), Chris Wilson (NMFS), Diana Evans (NPFMC), Dave Clausen (NMFS)

Proposed Specifications The Team recommended the use of the projections as listed in the table provided for use in establishing the proposed 2006 specifications. Where projections were not available (as for tier 5 species in the GOA) the Team recommended rolling over the 2005 specifications.

The Team discussed the difficulty presented for establishing proposed specifications for tier 5 species. The Team noted that for these species, biomass estimates and hence the related ABCs and OFLs could change dramatically from one year to the next as they are tied to (i.e., a straight calculation of) the survey estimate of biomass. In the GOA where biennial assessments are now being done for these stocks, biomass estimates from an "off cycle" year could change dramatically in an "on cycle" year once the survey estimates and stock assessments are available in November for the full stock status. This could result in large relative differences in ABCs and OFLs for those stocks between proposed and final specifications. The Team noted that a follow up discussion of noticeable changes from the proposed specifications would be appropriate in discussing stock status (and final specification recommendations) in November.

The Team noted a discrepancy in the sablefish projection, whereby the ABC declines from 2005 to 2006, but OFL for this species is increasing. The Team recommends that this discrepancy be further evaluated and updated prior to moving forward with proposed specifications.

The Team also noted that specification tables should be distributed to Plan Team members in advance of the meeting for their review and to facilitate discussion and decision-making at the meeting.

Other species. Diana Stram reviewed the final action by the Council on the interim measure to establish the TAC for the other species complex in the GOA at less than or equal to 5% of the sum of the target TACs. Tom Pearson noted that the proposed rule will not be finalized prior to action taken by the Council on proposed specifications.

The Team discussed what additional information on other species could be included in the November SAFE report. It was agreed that a brief overview section would be included in the SAFE report introduction containing information on the incidental catch of other species in GOA groundfish fisheries as well as any additional information on new and developing fisheries. This would provide the Council with additional information should they wish to set the complex TAC at less than 5%.

Shortraker/rougheye. Dana Hanselman presented a report from a recent research project addressing the potential for misidentification of shortraker and rougheye rockfish on fish-ticket data at processing plants in the Gulf of Alaska. This project was a cooperative effort between the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA) and NOAA Auke Bay Laboratory.

The Team discussed the results regarding the average percent of landings and the correlation between low landings percentages and increased tendency to misidentify rougheye as shortraker in those ports. Tom Pearson noted that a similar project was occurring in Kodiak with Alan Kinsolving.

The author sought input from the Plan Team on to what extent they continued to feel that misidentification of rougheye rockfish as shortraker could represent a problem. Based on the results of this project the Team did not feel that it represented a problem, however they noted that additional work on verifying the validity of these rates would be beneficial. Concerns were expressed regarding the small sample size although it was notably difficult to observe landings at those plants that rarely see rougheye and shortraker landings. The Team noted that smaller fish tend to be more difficult to identify. The Team questioned to what extent discard rates have increased after separating the species and placing on bycatch only status. A discussion of the relative impacts of discards was suggested for the November meeting.

The Plan Team noted that identification concerns extend to many species (e.g., skates) and recommended that sampling be coordinated with existing agencies especially in plants where observer coverage is lacking and also to evaluate the fish-ticket identification issues.

Shelikof Strait winter EIT survey and summer GOA EIT studies. Chris Wilson provided the team with an update on the 2005 GOA winter and summer acoustic trawl survey results which included winter surveys of the Shumagin Islands, Sanak Trough, Shelikof Strait, Chirikof Shelf Break, and the summer GOA survey . He noted that the summer survey represented the first cruise on the new Oscar Dyson.

No juvenile fish were seen in the survey areas for the Shumagins and Sanak Island. For the Shelikof survey this represented the second year, since 2000, when spawners were observed in the western Strait area where they have traditionally been found. Preliminary indications are that the 2004 year class appears strong.

Chris explained that the contribution of acoustic backscatter from eulachon appears insignificant to that from pollock in the Shelikof area and this affected the pollock biomass estimates since 1992. The target strength to length relationship for eulachon was assumed to be the same as that for pollock until recent research provided evidence to the contrary. This assumption meant that, since 1992, the acoustically derived biomass estimates for pollock were incorrectly reduced an average of about 8% because of the assumed contribution from eulachon. Because researchers in the Program have now determined that the backscatter from eulachon is much less than that from pollock, the reduction in the pollock biomass estimates in the past were greater than was necessary. Chris argued that given the eulachon to pollock catch composition and target strength relationship between these two species, it is unnecessary to make adjustments for the presence of eulachon in the Shelikof Strait area. Thus, no adjustments are currently being made for eulachon so the previous biomass estimates (1992-2005) have been modified (increased) to reflect this change. Pollock estimates from the other winter survey areas have never been adjusted for eulachon because little, if any eulachon are caught during those surveys. Chris noted that the process report for the winter surveys will be available shortly and will be presented at November plan team meeting.

For the summer of 2005, the primary objective was to look for pollock beyond the shelf break (typically 30 nmi beyond the break) in response to earlier comments during an external program review where it was suggested that significant quantities of pollock might exist beyond the shelf. Results indicated that although pollock were located along the shelf break, pollock were not detected beyond the shelf break. Given those results, the summer 2007 survey will concentrate effort on the shelf, in bays, and along the shelf break but little effort will be spent surveying beyond the shelf break. Chris also mentioned the that 2007 summer survey effort may be redistributed so that areas along the shelf where pollock have not been detected during the 2003 and 2005 surveys may be surveyed with less effort so that more effort could be spent in areas where pollock have been detected earlier so that the entire GOA could be covered during a 2-2.5 month period. He noted that the survey is designed for assessing pollock and not all species. To get

additional information on non-pollock species, requires more trawling to accurately identify those species from the backscatter.

The summer 2005 survey was cut short with the Dyson because of mechanical problems (about 50% of days scheduled were lost) thus coverage was not as good for overlap in comparing 2003 and 2005 areas across the GOA. In a cursory comparison of 2003 and 2005 data, one plan team member commented that many survey areas showed much lower biomass. However, one should not consider the difference in biomass from areas between the two surveys related to that fact that the FREEMAN was used in 2003 and the DYSON was used in 2005. Many other biological and physical factors could explain these differences. The Team then questioned how comparable surveys are between vessels. Chris noted that the 2006 summer and winter work will conduct comprehensive inter-vessel comparison experiments with the 2 vessels and more information will be available following those studies. The 2006 survey efforts will utilize the Miller Freeman as the primary survey vessel, even though the Dyson will also conduct the survey (for inter-comparison reasons) because the time series is based on the Freeman data and it is necessary to ensure that the Dyson is reliable before basing the survey on that vessel.

GOA rockfish pilot project. The Team was requested by the SSC to comment on the potential biological implications of the change in the central GOA rockfish fishery under the Rockfish Pilot Project approved by the Council for implementation in 2007. Members noted that moving the start date could result in catching rockfish when they are spawning as opposed to after spawning. If the fishery occurs before spawning this could result in a lower projected ABC. The assessment authors noted that the change in start date would be factored into the assessment, and that concerns regarding the biological impacts had been more focused on the proposed March 1 start data (not the recommended May 1st start date). The Plan Team noted that it will review the biological implications of the new start date when reviewing the stock assessment in November.

The Team noted that the proposed rockfish fishery opening in May could conflict with the longline survey for sablefish. Tom Pearson noted that in the past start dates for rockfish were changed specifically to avoid or minimize interactions with the longline survey. Julie Bonney suggested that if fishermen are appropriately notified about the location and dates of the sablefish longline survey, they can make a voluntary effort to avoid those areas and times.

Other Slope Rockfish: silver grey rockfish discussion. Dan Falvey (ALFA) provided the Team an overview of current efforts under an EFP to develop hook and line gear for targeting underutilized species. He provided the Team a document describing the EFP utilizing shrimp fly troll gear and an estimate of the catchability results and bycatch using this gear type. He noted that the gear works particularly well for targeting silvergrey rockfish, but that fishermen are not permitted to target anything in the other slope rockfish (OSR) complex because the whole complex is placed on bycatch-only status from the beginning of the year. He requested Plan Team input on the conservation concerns with potentially allowing a directed fishery under the OSR complex, and/or possible recommendations for additional EFP work if opening the complex for directed fishing is not recommended at this time.

Team members questioned the bycatch of species using this gear and were shown results indicated that the bycatch was minimal presumably due to the fishing habit of finding a school and then targeting that school specifically. Concerns were expressed that bycatch might be greater if the fishing practice did not include surfing directly on the school.

Team members questioned the level of economic incentive to fish for silvergrey rockfish. Dan indicated that that there may be a market for it that there was a higher price per pound was found in 2005 compared with 2004. He noted that it would not be a high value fishery for awhile but represents a possible entry level fishery opportunity to augment income without high overhead costs.

Stock assessment authors noted that age and growth information for the species is contained in the assessment for OSR. The Team reviewed the current survey data and the 2005 ABC noting that the ABC is unlikely to increase this year substantially. The Team expressed concerns that if the OSR complex were opened to directed fishing it would be possible to take the entire TAC on silvergrey rockfish. The Council has specifically established the TAC at a level to meet incidental catch needs. If the fishery were opened concerns were expressed regarding the potential for localized depletion, and the need for improved port sampling and better age data from the unexploited population.

Dan Falvey indicated his desire to protect the fishery from over exploitation by limiting the gear type. It was noted that this would require an FMP amendment to do so. Team members expressed concern that if the complex were open to all gear types there could be increased halibut bycatch from baited longlines.

The Team recommended that the EFP be continued to collect additional data prior to opening the complex to directed fishing. The Team felt that additional data are required to appropriately assess and manage this stock. Opening a complex to directed fishing is not generally recommended. Hence, continuing an EFP while the needed data collection systems and management analyses (e.g., an FMP amendment) are initiated seems reasonable. It was noted that collecting data on the age distribution of this lightly exploited stock may be a useful baseline for management.
Specific recommendations for the EFP included the following:

- Look at OR and CA data on similar gear for seabird interactions
- Longer gear train could result in degraded product.

The Team recommended that cooperative research funding be pursued in order to age otoliths collected under the EFP. The Team discussed the possibility of also pursuing an amendment to limit the gear type, but in the absence of that felt that it was premature to open the complex to directed fishing at this time.

The meeting adjourned 4:45pm Wednesday September 21st.

BSAI Groundfish Plan Team

The BSAI Team convened from 1:30 to 5:00 PM on Wednesday, September 21, 2005 at the AFSC, Seattle. Joint Plan Team members Kathy Kuletz (USFWS) and Tien-Shui Tsou (WDFW) attended the GOA Plan Team meeting. The agenda included: 1) proposed 2006/2007 BSAI groundfish specifications; 2) ecosystem considerations; 3) Bogoslof pollock survey and stock assessment; 4) 2-year Aleutian Island stock assessment cycle; 5) draft "other species" assessments; 6) dark rockfish FMP amendment.

2006/2007 BSAI groundfish specifications. The BSAI Plan Team reviewed the following tables provided by Ben Muse, NMFS AKRO: 1) the 2006 BSAI specification table that was implemented in 2005 and will start the 2006 season until it is replaced; 2) projected specifications for the 2006/2007 seasons that include projected catch through 2005; and 3) a table comparing the two. The projections for Tier 1 to 3 species used species-specific AFSC population models, which include information on age structure, growth and reproduction, and natural and fishing mortality. The projections follow procedures adopted by the Council and detailed in the TAC specification environmental assessment (EA) (see Appendix). The projections for Tiers 4-6 "roll over" the 2006 final specifications.

The Team noted that two of the 2006 ABC projections are higher than those that are in place for the start of the 2006 fishing year. The Greenland turbot ABC projection increased by a factor of 3 (from 3.6 to 11 mt) and the Alaska plaice ABC projection is higher by 68 percent. The 2005 projection model assumed that those TACs would be completely harvested in 2005, which resulted in lower ABC estimates for 2006. The 2006 projection model no longer makes that assumption; therefore the revised ABC projections are higher for those species (since fewer fish were actually removed).

The Team recommended adoption of the projected OFL and ABC for the 2006/2007 seasons. These recommendations will be published in the proposed rule for 2006/2007 specifications, but will not be used to start the fishing year.

Inclusion of ecosystem considerations into assessment chapters. The Team recalled that the 2004 Atka mackerel assessment incorporated ecosystem considerations into an examination of the appropriate ABC level due to close collaboration between the author Sandra Lowe, AFSC and Kerim Aydin, AFSC Resource Ecology and Ecosystem Modeling (REEM). The Team recognized that such collaboration could not be achieved for every BSAI assessment this year. The Team identified its highest priority for broadening the use of ecosystem considerations as the 2005 pollock assessment. Dr. Aydin also will provide information at the November 2005 meeting to assist the Team in setting a timeline for broadening the use of ecosystem considerations in the remaining assessments. He encouraged all authors to review the ecosystem databases on the REEM website and provide comments on corrections or enhancements. The Team also plans to address how well each stock assessment meets guidelines for ecosystem considerations during its November meeting.

Bogoslof pollock. The Council manages three management areas for walleye pollock in the BSAI: Bering Sea shelf, Aleutian Islands, and Aleutian Basin (comprised of the Donut Hole and Bogoslof Islands area). The degree to which pollock intermix among these areas is unknown.

Taina Honkalehto reported on the 2005 Bogoslof EIT pollock survey (a survey was not conducted in 2004). She identified three periods of Bogoslof pollock abundance. Abundance declined during 1988-1993, following a dominant 1978 year class around Bogoslof Island with an average biomass of 1.5 M mt. It stabilized during 1994-1999, with a dominant 1989 year class and an average biomass of 540,000 mt concentrated in Samalga Pass and northeast of Umnak Island. Since 2000, the EIT biomass estimates have averaged about 230,000 mt.

Jim Ianelli presented a newly developed age-structured assessment model for Bogoslof Island region pollock. This model makes extensive use of the EIT surveys since fishery data are limited. This assessment evaluated trends in recruitment and abundance of pollock from this region using all available data. An initial age-structured model was presented in 1997 as part of the BSAI pollock assessment chapter. At that time, the SSC noted that the stock is believed to extend outside the range of the Bogoslof Island area. This model partially addresses those concerns by including more data from the region and allowing survey catchability to be freely estimated. A concern discussed by the Plan Team was whether pollock in the Bogoslof during winter are on the eastern Bering Sea shelf during summer, and thus would be double-counted in AFSC surveys.

The fishery has been closed since 1992 following high catches between 1985 and 1991. The extent to which this stock is vulnerable to fisheries in other regions (e.g., eastern Bering Sea shelf, Russian waters) remains a key question. As with pollock in other waters, an anomalous 1978 year class dominated the Bogoslof Island region. Results from the age-structured analysis suggest that largely due to the 1978 year class the peak biomass in the Bogoslof Region was nearly ten times what might be expected under average recruitment conditions (where the average included the 1978 estimate). As with other pollock stocks, it is clear that Bogoslof region pollock abundance is highly variable due to large year class fluctuations.

The author presented some preliminary alternative values for setting the 2006 ABC: 1) 5,500 mt using the SSC's procedure (with a rebuilding target of 2 M mt); 2) 56,925 mt under Tier 5; 3) 184,090 mt under Tier 3a of the age-structured model; and 4) 470 mt using recent 5-year average fishing mortality level to allow bycatch removals in other fisheries.

Other species. AFSC staff prepared two draft assessments in response to proposed revisions to the National Standards and a planned joint BSAI/GOA FMP amendment to set specifications at the group level for sharks, skates, squid, sculpins, and octopus for the 2007 fishing year. The Team endorsed the proactive response by the AFSC in preparing these assessments and encourages the development of draft assessments for the remaining BSAI other species groups: sharks and skates.

Elizabeth Conners, AFSC, presented a draft assessment for BSAI octopus. The author noted that historical catch is much less than estimated biomass for all species of octopus. The Team concurred with the analytical approach and the author's recommendation for using tier 5 for this group. The Team recommended that the author: 1) examine the BS and AI separately; 2) include information on appropriate maximum retention allowances by gear and fishery; 3) include ecosystem considerations as octopus are an important forage species for species such as Steller sea lions and northern fur seals; and 4) explore using habitat associations as a means of identifying catch to species.

Rebecca Reuter, AFSC, presented a draft assessment on BSAI sculpins. The Team concurred with the authors' recommendation for managing sculpins at Tier 5, and recommended adding species-level information.

2-year cycle for Aleutian Islands assessments. Anne Hollowed, AFSC, discussed the protocol in the BSAI and GOA FMPs for 2-year assessments cycles where biennial surveys occur. The GOA Plan Team adopted this cycle in 2004 for some 2005 GOA rockfish and flatfish assessments. The Team endorsed biennial assessments for the Aleutian Islands for Pacific Ocean perch, northern rockfish, and the other rockfish assemblage.

Dark rockfish FMP amendment. The Team recommended that the Council add an alternative to analyze the effects of removing dark rockfish from the BSAI Groundfish FMP in the analysis that it initiated for the Gulf of Alaska FMP in 2004.

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AGENDA 9/30/2005 September 19th-21st, 2005

A. Joint Plan Team Meetings

	Mon Sept 19th	**Room 1055 (Observer training room)**
13:00	Introductions	Scheduling, adoption of agenda
13:15	Council and AFSC update	BSAI salmon, GOA rockfish, GOA/BSAI other species, Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, Ecosystem approach to mgt (EAM) actions Habitat and Ecological Processes Research (HEPR), Marine Stewardship Council, Center for Independent Experts, Proposed Rule on NS1 guidelines
14:00		Economic SAFE
14:30	Break	
14:45		Research Priorities
	EA & Projections	Standardized projections and methods used for EA; Discussion of multi-year EA/EIS for specifications
16:00		Information Quality Act
	Tues Sept 20th	
9:00	Sablefish	Update on State removals, recent catches, population trends in AK compared to elsewhere, upcoming symposium
	Non-target	Sensitive non-target species update
10:30	Break	
10:45	Rockfish	Rockfish management paper GOA dark rockfish amendment(possible combined GOA/BSAI)
12:00	Lunch	
13:00	Ecosystem	AI Fishery Ecosystem Plan, Ecosystem Considerations Chapter review
15:00	Break	
	Ecosystem	Ecosystem Considerations Chapter review (continued)
16:00	Economic	Economic SAFE report and other socio-economic information
16:40	Research priorities	Update council list (will be related to NPRB themes)
	Wed Sept 21st	
09:00	Surveys	Survey updates: EBS bottom trawl, GOA LL survey, EIT survey, GOA bottom trawl surveys
09:30	MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation update
10:15	Models	BSAI and GOA Pacific cod models
11:30	Mammals	Marine Mammal assessments: fur seals, SLLs, Right Whale CH designation

B. Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team

	Wed Sept 21st	**Room 1055 (Observer training room)**
13:00	Other species	Discussion of available information for November SAFE report
	Rockfish	SR/RE breakout, OSR(silver grey rockfish EFP results) GOA rockfish pilot project (POP, northerns and PSR)
15:00	Assessments	Pollock: Shelikof survey, 2006 TAC/ABC projections (from EA), other issues.
	Planning	Wrap-up/planning for November meeting
	Other Business	As needed

C. Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan Team

	Wed Sept 21st	**Room 2039 (NMML Room)**
13:00	Rockfish	Rockfish working group studies
	Bogoslof	Survey results, new model, Donut hole
15:00	Assessments	2-year cycle for Aleutian Islands stocks, Atka mackerel survey approaches, Octopus, Skates, Sharks, and Sculpins
	Other Business	As needed

Document list presented at the September 2005 Plan Team meeting
The following lists the documents available for download as presented at the September groundfish Plan Team meetings held in Seattle.
Selecting links will allow users to download the electronic documents.

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Joint Plan Team

Document

Agenda
List of Plan Team Members
Ecosystem approach to Management (EAM) (Diana Evans)
Aleutian Islands Fishery Ecosystem Plan—Project planning (Diana Evans)
Area-specific Management for the Aleutian Islands Discussion Paper (Diana Evans)
Update on council actions (BSAI salmon, GOA rockfish, HAPC, Amndmnt 80; Diana Stram)
Research priorities, Res. Priorities NPRB Letter (Jane Dicosimo)
NS1 Proposed rule and Council memo, Federal Reg Announcement for NS1 (Grant Thompson)
Ecosystem / Ecosystem assessment considerations chapter (Jennifer Boldt)
Non-target species Sensitivity key (Rebecca Reuter)
Rockfish management, Supplemental paper (Jane Dicosimo)
Environmental Assessment (TAC specs; Ben Muse)
Marine Mammal Assessments (Presentation; Lowell Fritz)
Rockfish depletion study (Dana Hanselman)
Sablefish issues (Summary; Tory O'Connell)
Economics Draft, summary presentation (Terry Hiatt and Ron Felthoven)

BSAI Plan Team

An alternative model for BSAI Pacific cod assessment (Presentation, or handout; Grant Thompson)
An age-structured assessment model for Bogoslof pollock (James Ianelli)
Bogoslof EIT survey presentation (Taina Honkalehto)
Presentation on alternative Atka mackerel survey approaches (Liz Conners)
Octopus draft Assessment (Liz Conners et al.)
Sculpin Draft (Todd Tenbrink et al.)

GOA Plan Team

Memo to SSC for 2005 GOA SAFE authors to address rockfish issue (Bill Richardson)
Shelikof and summer EIT Survey results (Presentation) (Chris Wilson)
SR/RE species ID study (Dana Hanselman)
Silvergrey rockfish (Dan Falvey)
SEO Fishery development (Presentation) (Dan Falvey)

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2005 AND 2006 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR THE BSAI TRAWL AND NON-TRAWL FISHERIES

Trawl Fisheries	Prohibited species and zone					
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red King Crab (animals) Zone 1[1]	C. opilio (animals) COBLZ[1]	C. bairdi (animals) Zone 1[1]	C. bairdi (animals) Zone 2[1]
Yellowfin sole	886	183	33,843	3,101,915	340,844	1,788,459
January 20 - April 1	262	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
April 1 - May 21	195	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
May 21 - July 5	49	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
July 5 - December 31	380	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Rock sole/other flat/flathead sole[2]	779	27	121,413	1,082,528	365,320	596,154
January 20 - April 1	448	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
April 1 - July 5	164	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
July 5 - December 31	167	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish[3]	.....	12	.....	44,946	.....	.....
Rockfish	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
July 5 - December 31	69	10	.....	44,945	.....	10,988
Pacific cod	1,434	27	26,563	139,331	183,112	324,176
Midwater trawl pollock	.....	1,562	.....	.....	.....	.....
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other[4]	232	192	406	80,903	17,224	27,473
Red King Crab Savings Subarea[6]	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
(non-pelagic trawl)	.....	.....	42,495	.....	.....	.....
Total trawl PSC	3,400	2,012	182,225	4,494,569	906,500	2,747,250
Non-trawl Fisheries						
Pacific cod - Total	775					
January 1 - June 10	320					
June 10 - August 15	0					
August 15 - December 31	455					
Other non-trawl - Total	58					
May 1 - December 31	58					
Groundfish pot and jig	exempt					
Sablefish hook-and-line	exempt					
Total non-trawl PSC	833					
PSQ reserve[5]	342	.....	14,775	364,424	73,500	222,750
PSC grand total	4,575	2,012	197,000	4,858,993	980,000	2,970,000

[1] Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas.

[2] "Other flatfish" for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole and arrowtooth flounder.

[3] Greenland turbot, arrowtooth flounder, and sablefish fishery category.

[4] Pollock other than pelagic trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and "other species" fishery category.

[5] With the exception of herring, 7.5 percent of each PSC limit is allocated to the CDQ program as PSQ reserve. The PSQ reserve is not allocated by fishery, gear or season.

[6] In December 2004, the Council recommended that red king crab bycatch for trawl fisheries within the RKCSS be limited to 35 percent of the total allocation to the rock sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category (see § 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)).

Pacific Halibut Discard Mortality Rates as Implemented for the 2006 BSAI Fisheries

Fishery	Mortality rate (percent)
Hook-and-line gear fisheries	
Greenland turbot	15
Other species	11
Pacific cod	11
Rockfish	16
Trawl gear fisheries	
Atka mackerel	78
Flathead sole	67
Greenland turbot	72
Non-pelagic pollock	76
Pelagic pollock	85
Other flatfish	71
Other species	67
Pacific cod	68
Rockfish	74
Rock sole	77
Sablefish	49
Yellowfin sole	78
Pot gear fisheries	
Other species	8
Pacific cod	8
CDQ trawl fisheries	
Atka mackerel	85
Flathead sole	67
Non-pelagic pollock	85
Pelagic pollock	90
Rockfish	74
Yellowfin sole	84
CDQ hook-and-line fisheries	
Greenland turbot	15
Pacific cod	10
CDQ pot fisheries	
Pacific cod	8
Sablefish	33

GOA Pacific halibut PSC Limits

2006 Trawl			2006 Hook and Line		
Jan 20 - Apr 1		550 mt	1st trimester	Jan 1 - Jun 10	250 mt
Apr 1 - Jul 1		400 mt	2nd trimester	Jun 10 - Sep 1	5 mt
Jul 1 - Sep 1		600 mt	3rd trimester	Sept 1 - Dec 31	35 mt
Sept 1 - Oct 1		150 mt			
Oct 1 - Dec 31		300 mt	DSR	Jan 1 - Dec 31	10 mt
TOTAL		2,000 mt			300 mt

Trawl fishery categories

Season	Shallow Water	Deep Water	Total
Jan 1 - Apr1	450 mt	100 mt	550 mt
Apr 1 - Jul 1	100 mt	300 mt	400 mt
Jul 1 - Sep 1	200 mt	400 mt	600 mt
Sep 1 - Oct 1	150 mt	any rollover	150 mt
Oct 1 - Dec 31	no apportionment		300 mt
TOTAL	900 mt	800 mt	2,000 mt

Dave Goldstein
D16

CITY OF WHITTIER, ALASKA
RESOLUTION #774-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITTIER, ALASKA OPPOSING INTEGRATION OF THE HALIBUT CHARTER FISHERY INTO THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL IFQ SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, the sport halibut charter is an important part of the growth of the tourism industry in the City of Whittier; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Halibut Charter IFQ plan is not based on any biological need; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rule to integrate the sport halibut charters in the commercial IFQ system transfers ownership of a resource to the private sector that traditionally belonged to the public; and

WHEREAS, encouraging new entrants in the charter business in turn encourages competition and diversity in the fleet; and

WHEREAS, the implementation and allocation of the Halibut Charter IFQ will significantly reduce the number of charter operators in Whittier, thereby reducing tourism revenue and taxable earnings proportionately within our community; and

WHEREAS, the proposed management plan will not meet the needs of the current fleet. Industry estimates show the proposal will only satisfy the needs of 160 six packs for Area 3-A, which includes Whittier, Homer, Kodiak, Seward, Ninilchik and Valdez; and

WHEREAS, catch and effort statistics from the International Pacific Halibut Commission and sport fishing license sales records from the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game show that the growth in the sport halibut fishery is flat or has increased less than 1% per year; and

WHEREAS, The Whittier Chamber of Commerce is in opposition to current Charter IFQ management plans until such time an economic impact on the community can be completed; and

WHEREAS, The City is well positioned to maintain and become further involved in the development of the tourism industry due to its long history with the industry, strong membership in the Chamber of Commerce, outstanding port and harbor facilities, diverse tourism infrastructure, and location on the National Highway System; and

WHEREAS, the negative financial impacts resulting from the implementation of the Halibut Charter IFQ will have a damaging effect on the economic infrastructure of Whittier, including direct losses to Port and Harbor, business tax revenues, and satellite businesses dependent on a healthy fleet; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Whittier City Council finds that the proposed halibut charter IFQ plan would present a significant barrier to free enterprise; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, when an area needs management for the conservation of the halibut resource, we encourage that community to turn to "Local Area Management Plans" (LAMPS) in order to address the unique situation of that particular fleet; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council finds that the proposed Charter IFQ plan will impair services to the public, stifle incentive for new charter operators and retard the goals of the Whittier Chamber of Commerce; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Whittier City Council would support a management plan that is equitable to all existing charter operators and include provisions for new entrants.

Passed and approved by the duly constituted quorum of the Whittier City Council on this 18th day of April 2005.

Introduced by: Rick A. Hohnbaum
Introduction date: April 18, 2005

ATTEST:

Brenda Krol
City Clerk

Lester Lunceford
Mayor

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Absent: 1
Abstain: 1