

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Jim H. Branson *JHB*
Executive Director

DATE: May 15, 1985

SUBJECT: Trawl closures to protect king crab aggregations.

ACTION REQUIRED

Information Only

BACKGROUND

The Bering Sea and Aleutians Groundfish FMP limits the foreign bycatch of king crab, Tanner crab, halibut and salmon. Each nation receives a prohibited species catch limit (PSC) in proportion to its directed fishing allocation (Table 1). The plan provides that the Regional director shall close the entire management area to a nation's trawlers when its PSC is reached. Some selected fleet elements may be exempted.

Early this year the Soviet yellowfin sole operation far exceeded its PSC before NMFS could curtail the fishery. The Soviets caught 51,185 crabs, well above their PSC of 13,650.

In March the Council expressed great concern over the high Soviet bycatch and asked the Plan Team to examine available data on king crab distribution over time to determine if areas of aggregation could be identified for possible spot closures at certain times of the year. The Team has reviewed a report by Dave Somerton and Jeff June addressing this issue, and has gathered additional information as well. Unfortunately the Team has been unable to get all the data necessary to recommend specific time/area closures in time for this meeting. A comprehensive report will be available prior to the September meeting.

TABLE 1

MAY 9 85

1985 BERING SEA PROHIBITED SPECIES
 CUM. CATCH REPORT WEEK ENDING APR 27 85

	GROUND FISH MT.	HALIBUT MT.	KING CRAB NO.	TANNER CRAB NO.	SALMON NO.
JAPAN					
CATCH	55,177	86.4	4,986	84,288	652
QUOTA	501,578	737	282,714	4,934,875	11,709
KOREA					
CATCH	17,240	7.9	1,177	14,351	11
QUOTA	128,041	188	72,170	1,259,757	2,989
PORTUGAL					
CATCH	0	0.0	0	0	0
QUOTA	600	1	338	5,903	14
POLAND					
CATCH	7,229	0.0	0	12	328
QUOTA	20,600	30	11,611	202,677	481
USSR					
CATCH	10,782	2.0	51,185	12,909	18
QUOTA	24,217	36	13,650	238,264	565
TOTAL					
CATCH	90,428	96	57,348	111,560	1,009
QUOTA	675,036	992	380,484	6,641,477	15,759

TAB B-3

