

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Plan Amendment Advisory Group

FROM: Chris Oliver & Hal Weeks^{CO}
Groundfish Plan Coordinators

DATE: September 20, 1990

SUBJECT: Supplemental Estimate of Plan Amendment Analysis Requirements

During its September 10 meeting, the Plan Amendment Advisory Group (PAAG) noted that the Groundfish Plan Teams had provided estimates of the time and effort necessary to analyze the amendment topics which the Teams had rated high priority and medium priority but readily addressed (hereafter referred to as high priority). Because the priority ratings of the PAAG differed from that of the Teams, the PAAG requested that a supplemental analysis of the analytic requirements be prepared addressing those additional amendment topics which the PAAG considered to be high priority.

This memorandum supplements the Plan Teams' memo of September 10 and estimates the analytic requirements of amendment topics 8 (Council policy on regulating fishing by U.S. vessels in the international waters of the Bering Sea), 12/13 (community allocations of groundfish to Atka and the Pribilof Islands). Total analytic requirements are then compared to the availability of staff and their current commitments.

#8 The Teams feel that preparation of a plan amendment to address Council policy concerning fishing by U.S. vessels in the international waters of the Bering Sea would be straightforward. However, analysis of the economic impacts of transforming Council policy into regulation may well be more complex. Anywhere from two weeks to two months effort could be needed.

#12/13 The analysis of allocations of groundfish to specific communities will necessarily rely heavily on the biological, economic and social analyses currently being prepared in the context of the Inshore-Offshore allocation issue. Council guidance concerning an outer bound of aggregate community allocations will be essential. Analysis of specific community allocations would then rest heavily on stock distribution and fishing patterns in the vicinity of that community. It is estimated that full time effort by one biologist and two economists for three months will be required to address specific community allocations, provided that the biological and socio-economic studies currently underway for the Inshore-Offshore issue can be drawn upon. If these studies are unavailable or incomplete, the necessary time and effort for analyses will increase substantially.

SUMMARY OF ANALYTIC REQUIREMENTS

Proposal No.	Economists	Biologists
2.		1 week - NMFS RO
4.		1 week - NMFS RO
5.		1 week - NMFS RO
8.		2 weeks - 2 months
12/13.	2 @ 3 months	1 @ 3 months
16.	1 @ 1.5 months (assumes analysis prepared by outside entity)	1 @ 1.5 months
18/19/20.	1 @ 2 months	1 @ 2 weeks
32.		1 week - ADF&G
31.	4 @ 4 months	2 @ 4 months

(N.B. The plan team estimate was 2 economists and 1 biologist for three months for salmon bycatch plus 2 economists and 1 biologist full time for the balance of a comprehensive bycatch program. Consequently, the estimate for proposal #31 represents the sum of the two plan team estimates.)

37/38.		2 @ 6 months
41.		1 @ 2 weeks - NMFS
42.		1 @ 3 weeks: assuming ADF&G and USFWS support and data

Aggregate time demands total to 23.5 economist months, 13 biologist months, and 15 months by mixed, unspecified disciplines. The limiting resource is clearly economists. Social scientists will also be needed to perform impact analyses associated with several allocative proposals. At present, the Council and NMFS has no one to do this work.

As presently tasked, Council staff economists (3) are fully committed to the Inshore-Offshore analyses. Council staff biologists/plan coordinators are available for approximately 50% of their time to work on amendment proposals and could most easily contribute to analyses requiring mixed disciplines.

The Alaska Fisheries Science Center has one economist who can be committed to amendment analyses. This individual is responsible for preparing the economic portions of the SAFE documents, and is currently doing substantial work on bycatch.

Center biologists are committed to status of stocks evaluations during the fall months, and are largely committed to the environmental portion of the Inshore-Offshore analyses. Several individuals may be able to contribute to the biological portions of other plan amendment analyses.

Other entities (ADF&G, IPHC, WDF, UAS) contribute expertise to the plan teams and may be able to contribute to specific plan amendment analyses. As individual scientists are not interchangeable across any and all problems or analyses, their availability in the generic sense cannot be quantified.

In summary, the high priority issues facing the Council clearly exceed the resources of the Plan Teams, and staffs of the Council, NMFS Region and Alaska Fisheries Science Center. The Teams feel strongly that adequate staff resources be devoted to any specific issue or topic so that a high quality and timely analysis can be prepared. Analyses which are rushed or addressed with inadequate data or human resources are a disservice to the Council, the resource, the industry, and the nation as a whole. In short, it is better to work on fewer analyses and do them carefully, well and once, than to work on many analyses and do them hastily, poorly and over again.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, members of the Council, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Matthew Weber and I represent Gorton's of Gloucester, which is a division of General Mills, Inc. We are a major producer and merchandiser of retail fish sticks and portions in the United States, and, as such, are one of this country's biggest purchasers of domestically caught and processed Alaskan Pollock blocks.

My purpose in appearing before you today is to underscore the need for careful and thorough deliberation before determining the 1991 Alaskan Pollock quota allocation.

The decision to divide the fishing season into two parts, with an interval between them, and to set an overall quota to conserve the stock are well understood and, I think, generally appreciated. Our concern today is not the size of the quota, but rather how it will be apportioned.

There should not be a disproportionate allocation which would impede a sustained flow of fillet blocks for use by secondary producers, such as ourselves. Large scale manufacturers, have to be able to rely upon long term dependable sources of supply.

THE GORTON GROUP

For the past 5 years we have been working with West Coast processors to make Alaska just such a fishery and, in the process, we have made, considerable investments of time, expertise and resources to give the American consumer the opportunity to purchase truly American products.

With the establishment of excellent consumer acceptance for this domestically caught and processed fish, to jeopardize taking full advantage of this United States resource would be, to say the least, unfortunate.

As we are in production on a year round basis we must have a constant supply of raw materials. We cannot afford interruptions in delivery schedules nor can we live with uncertainties in future programs.

It follows that if American secondary producers cannot rely upon a predictable flow of product from Alaska they will have no choice but to look overseas for substitute raw material.

Therefore, I call upon you to give earnest consideration in the allocation of the 1991 quota to ensure there will be a programmable, realistic, regular supply of product entering the marketplace.

I thank you for your time and attention.

Don Johnson
D-3/4F

CHINOOK SALMON

The total commercial catch of 40,000 chinook salmon in Bristol Bay was considerably less than the 20-year (1970-89) average of 117,000, and less than one-half of the recent 10-year (1980-89) average (Table 3). Chinook salmon escapement in Nushagak River totaled 78,000, slightly over the desired goal of 75,000 (Table 2). Nushagak is the only system in Bristol Bay with a defined escapement objective for chinook salmon. For the fifth consecutive year the Nushagak chinook return has been below average. This year's excellent escapement was only achieved through a complete closure of the commercial fishery from June 1 through June 26, and a reduction in the mesh size of the gear fished in the first two commercial openings.

The Togiak chinook return of 22,000 was below average, Naknek-Kvichak District, like the rest of Bristol Bay, also produced a below average commercial catch of chinook salmon (Table 1). The Egegik district chinook harvest (approximately 1,800 fish) was the lowest since 1976. Ugashik chinook harvest of 2,100 fish was less than half the 1979-88 average of 5,500 fish,

Chinook escapements were also lower than average throughout the Bay. Concern continues to mount for the health and continued viability of the chinook salmon stocks in Bristol Bay. Consistent poor returns from good escapements are not well understood and without a major research program to determine the freshwater survival, the cause of the problem is only speculation.

CHUM SALMON

The total commercial catch of 1.2 million chum salmon was slightly above the 20-year average of 1.1 million and below the recent 10-year average of 1.4 million (Table 1). Escapements in Nushagak and Togiak Districts were 378,000 and 100,000, respectively (Table 2). The provisional escapement goal for the Nushagak River is 350,000, and 200,000 for Togiak River. While the Nushagak River chum salmon escapement goal was slightly exceeded, only 50% of the Togiak goal was achieved. Naknek/Kvichak chum catch of 309,000 was above the long-term average harvest of 235,000. Chum salmon escapements into both Naknek and Branch (Alagnak) River drainages, although lower than the recent-year average, were deemed adequate. Escapements in the other districts were considered fair.

PINK SALMON

Pink salmon return to Bristol Bay in significant numbers only in even years and the 1989 run of less than 1,500 was considered normal.

Table 3. Historical commercial salmon catch by species, in thousands of fish, Bristol Bay.

Period	Sockeye	Chinook	Chum	Pink a/	Coho	Total
1970-79 (10-Yr. Av.)	8,160	108	834	1,543	71	9,945
1980-89 (10-Yr. Av.)	22,482	126	1,386	1,752	284	25,154
1970-89 (20-Yr. Av.)	15,321	117	1,110	1,647	177	17,550
1980	23,762	96	1,301	2,563	348	28,070
81	25,603	237	1,505	7	314	27,666
82	15,104	254	921	1,492	620	18,391
83	37,372	199	1,632	+	128	39,331
84	24,710	102	2,023	3,366	575	30,776
1985	23,703	120	1,068	+	163	25,055
86	15,776	92	1,227	401	182	17,680
87	16,069	76	1,529	+	65	17,739
88b	14,006	45	1,477	936	202	16,666
89b	28,710	40	1,172	1	238	30,161

a/ Average includes only even-numbered years.

b Preliminary

Appendix Table 39. Inshore commercial catch and escapement of chinook salmon in the Nushagak and Togiak Districts, in numbers of fish, Bristol Bay, 1969-88.^a

Year	Nushagak District			Togiak District		
	Catch	Escapement ¹	Total Run	Catch	Escapement	Total Run
1969	80,803	35,000	115,803	20,181	8,000	28,181
70	87,547	50,000	137,547	28,664	15,000	43,664
71	82,769	40,000	122,769	27,026	20,000	47,026
72	46,045	25,000	71,045	19,976	14,000	33,976
73	30,470	35,000	65,470	10,856	11,000	21,856
1974	32,053	70,000	102,053	10,798	15,000	25,798
75	21,454	70,000	91,454	7,226	11,000	18,226
76	60,684	100,000	160,684	29,744	14,000	43,744
77	85,074	65,000	150,074	35,218	20,000	55,218
78	118,548	130,000	248,548	57,000	40,000	97,000
1979	157,321	95,000	252,321	30,022	20,000	50,022
80	64,958	141,000	205,958	12,543	12,000	24,543
81	193,461	150,000	343,461	23,911	27,000	50,911
82	195,287	147,000	342,287	33,786	17,000	50,786
83	137,123	162,000	299,123	38,497	22,000	60,497
1984	61,378	81,000	142,378	22,179	26,000	48,179
85	67,783	116,000	183,783	37,106	14,000	51,106
86	63,859 ^b	43,000	106,859	19,895 ^b	8,000 ^c	27,895
87	47,592 ^b	84,000	131,592	17,618 ^b	11,000	28,618
88	16,501 ^b	57,000	73,501	15,615 ^b	10,000	25,615
20 Year Average	82,536	84,800	167,336	24,893	16,750	41,643
1969-78 Average	64,545	62,000	126,545	24,669	16,800	41,469
1979-88 Average	100,526	107,600	208,126	25,117	16,700	41,817

1 Escapements were estimated from the following:

1969-70 - comprehensive aerial surveys.

1971 - mean exploitation rates from 1966-70 and 1972-76.

1972-81 - comprehensive aerial surveys.

1982-85 - correlation between index counts and total escapement estimates when aerial surveys were complete.

1986-88 - sonar estimate.

a Escapement estimates supersede those previously reported and are rounded to the nearest thousand fish.

b Preliminary.

c Minimal estimate based on incomplete data.

(Sources: 1, 5 and 13)