

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, AP and SSC Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke  
Executive Director



DATE: September 19, 1991

SUBJECT: Staff Tasking

**ACTION REQUIRED**

- a. Review current tasking and status of amendments and emergency rules.
- b. Receive Plan Amendment Advisory Group, Plan Team, and Bycatch Committee recommendations for groundfish management proposals for the 1992 amendment cycle and task staff with further analyses.

**BACKGROUND**

- a. Current tasking and status of amendments and emergency rules

The Council has several ongoing projects at or near completion as well as projects already tasked which still require substantial staff time to complete. Item D-3(a) provides an overview of current and future Council projects. Items scheduled for Council action at this meeting include:

1. Approval of sea lion protective measure for 1992 and beyond.
2. Extension of the 7% directed fishing standard Emergency Rule.
3. Approval for public review of the Bycatch Amendment.
4. Approval of an Emergency Rule to institute that part of the Bycatch Amendment relating to season delays.
5. Final action on sablefish and halibut IFQ programs.
6. Consideration of proposed moratorium and tasking.
7. Final action on North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan.

- b. Proposals for 1992 Groundfish Plan Amendment Cycle

The Council solicited proposals to the groundfish FMPs over the summer with the deadline for proposals occurring on August 23, 1991. The Council received 51 proposals, including an omnibus proposal from the Bycatch Committee which includes 23 items identified by the Committee but not included in the current Bycatch Amendment (19/24). These proposals are summarized as Item D-3(b) and are grouped by issue categories. A package of the proposals, in their entirety, is available at this meeting.

The GOA and BS/AI Groundfish Plan Teams met in Seattle during the week of September 3-6 to prepare preliminary SAFE's and to provide an initial review of the groundfish proposals. The report from the Plan Teams is included here as Item D-3(c). In summary, the Plan Teams recommend pursuing only two individual proposals from the package: #45 which extends crab protection measures around Kodiak Island and #49 which is to pursue some avenue to prohibit fishing in the Donut Hole. All other proposals would be grouped by broad issue category and addressed in a holistic approach with input from the Plan Teams to the Council as to the best alternatives to accomplish the goals of the Council relative to each issue.

The Plan Amendment Advisory Group (PAAG) met in Seattle on September 16 to provide their review of the amendment proposals. The PAAG report is included here as Item D-3(d). In summary, the PAAG recommends two alternatives for addressing the proposal package for the 1992 amendment cycle. The first alternative would be to endorse the Plan Team recommendation and group the proposals by broad issue category and receive a Plan Team report at the January, 1992 meeting which would advise the Council on long term solutions to the problems/goals identified by the Council. The following broad categories, with priority rankings, are recommended by the PAAG:

- Priority #1: Moratorium
- Priority #2: Bycatch
- Priority #3: Specific allocation/Limited access
- Priority #4: Reevaluation of existing management areas

The second alternative would be to provide a list of the HIGH priority items from the package of proposals in the event the Council wishes to address individual proposals for the 1992 cycle. Under this alternative, the PAAG recommends the following proposals for the 1992 cycle:

- Proposals #1-#3: Require weighing or volumetric measuring of all groundfish.
- Proposal #7: Use weekly observer data for catch and discards accounting.
- Proposal #25: Pre-registration for pollock and Pacific cod fisheries.
- Proposal #12: Review delineation of all existing management areas.
- Proposal #13: Postpone the pollock season until September 1 (or some other date).
- Proposal #45: Extend crab protection measures around Kodiak Island.
- Proposal #48: Prohibit discards of finfish for which a TAC exists.

Please refer to the PAAG report attached for the specific discussion by the PAAG of each of the proposals listed above. For some of these recommended proposals, the PAAG discussed possible variations or modifications to be considered.

For bycatch related proposals, the PAAG refers all of these to the Bycatch Committee for further consideration. A report from the Bycatch Committee will be available for this meeting.

PLAN AMENDMENT ADVISORY GROUP (PAAG) REPORT  
September 16, 1991

The Plan Amendment Advisory Group (PAAG) met on Monday, September 16 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle to review the groundfish plan amendment proposals received by the Council and to formulate recommendations to the Council concerning which proposals should be tasked to the staff and Plan Teams for analysis in the 1992 amendment cycle.

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am by Chairman Larry Cotter. PAAG members in attendance were Bob Mace, Wally Pereyra, Jim Balsiger, and Gordon Kruse (for Doug Eggers). Also in attendance were Bob Alverson, Dave Fraser, Steve Hoag, and several members of the public and industry.

The PAAG first heard a report from the groundfish Plan Teams who had provided an initial review of the proposals two weeks earlier. The gist of the Plan Team report, included as Item D-3(b)(2) was to not pursue any of the individual proposals (with a few exceptions) but, rather, to group the proposals by broad 'issue' categories and to devote any available staff time to pursuing long-term solutions to the identified problems in a more holistic fashion. The Plan Teams further recommended that they be given the task of formulating such an approach and advising the Council on possible alternatives after being given broad objectives by the Council. The Plan Team's initial intent would be to report to the Council in April, 1992. The Plan Teams do not anticipate having any amendment proposals available for final action in 1992 (with a few exceptions) under this approach; rather, a comprehensive amendment would be available in 1993 for implementation in 1994.

There was general consensus among the PAAG that this could be a desirable approach, particularly since the staffs are heavily involved in ongoing projects/analyses and there is the potential that the Council will wish to act on the proposed moratorium which would also consume available staff time. The PAAG heard from staff that analyses on any plan amendments would likely not begin until January of 1992 due to ongoing projects. The PAAG noted the following concerns with the approach recommended by the Plan Teams:

1. There are some amendment proposals, such as administrative type proposals or proposals designed to "roll over" existing regulations, which need to be addressed in the 1992 amendment cycle.
2. There are some proposals which may have individual merit to the extent that the Council will wish to pursue them regardless of the broad-based work plan.
3. There are some proposals, such as the requirement to weigh or volumetrically measure all groundfish, which would likely form part of the basis for a longer term management regime and, therefore, need to be put into place up front.
4. Uncertainty as to how this approach would tie into the broad 'rationalization' initiative which is already tasked to the staff under the inshore/offshore motion.
5. The danger of having the Plan Team process 'politicized', to the extent that the Plan Teams would be working to develop alternatives to carry out the Council's stated objectives.
6. Under this proposed approach, the implementation of broad based solutions may be two years away; immediate problems in the fisheries would not be addressed in a more timely manner. Salmon bycatch was given as an example, though noting that we are

considering some immediate responses to the salmon bycatch problem in the current bycatch amendment.

After considerable discussion, the PAAG recommends two alternative approaches to addressing the proposals for the 1992 amendment cycle.

The first alternative is to endorse the Plan Team's approach and to group the proposals by broad 'issue' categories. The Plan Teams would report back to the Council at the January, 1992 meeting with their recommendations as to how to proceed in addressing each of the issue categories with long term solutions (the PAAG notes that the Plan Team originally anticipated an April report and the PAAG has asked the Plan Team whether they could meet the PAAG's recommended January deadline). Inherent in this approach will be the necessity for the Council to develop a strategic plan for the future - the Council must review its current projects and staff availability and define its commitments for the future in terms of what avenues it, and the Plan Teams, should pursue under this proposed approach. The following broad categories, with priority rankings, are recommended by the PAAG:

- Priority #1: Moratorium
- Priority #2: Bycatch
- Priority #3: Specific allocation/limited access
- Priority #4: Reevaluation of existing management areas

The PAAG recognizes that each of these priorities is linked to the others in terms of reciprocal impacts.

The PAAG notes that, under this approach, it is not intended that the Plan Teams operate in a vacuum without specific Council guidance. This approach will still require the Council to provide overall guidance with respect to identifying problems and objectives in the fisheries, but will allow the Plan Teams to come up with proposed solutions to accomplish the stated goals. The Council may want to appoint a small liaison committee of Council members to work in association with the Plan Teams.

The second alternative is to provide a list of those proposals which the PAAG does recognize as HIGH priority in the event that the Council ultimately chooses to address individual proposals for the 1992 cycle. This will also provide a "fall back plan" in the event that the recommendations from the Plan Teams (due to the Council in January, 1992) prove unsatisfactory to the Council. In that event, it is the recommendation of the PAAG that the following proposals be pursued (from the summary list, Item D-3(b)(2)):

#### ADMINISTRATIVE

Proposals #1- #3: Require weighing or volumetric measuring of all groundfish.

PAAG notes the dissatisfaction and associated inaccuracies with the current method of using Product Recovery Rates (PRRs) and the need, from both a scientific and fishery management perspective, to have an accurate accounting of catch and discards of groundfish. This proposal also provides a foundation for any long term rationalization of the fisheries.

Proposal #7: Use weekly observer data for catch and discards accounting.

PAAG discussed the problems associated with using processor reports to monitor catch and discards, but also noted that there may be problems with trying to use observer data to do the same. Perhaps a system could evolve which would utilize both sources of information in a 'cross-check' system. Committee felt that this proposal was desirable, but noted that it is a policy/implementation decision not requiring a Plan Amendment. The Council should address this issue.

Proposal #25: Pre-registration for pollock and Pacific cod fisheries.

PAAG discussed the difference between this proposal and other proposals which dealt with exclusive registration. PAAG recommends this proposal to provide NMFS better ability to anticipate groundfish harvests and to monitor the fisheries to prevent overharvest.

#### MANAGEMENT AREAS

Proposal #12: Review delineation of all existing management areas.

PAAG notes that many of the existing management areas are artifacts left over from INPFC, and may not represent the best geographic divisions from a management standpoint or from a stock distribution standpoint. Such a review would likely fit well into any plan for a long term solution to current fishery management problems. Note that this proposal subsumes proposals #8 through #11.

#### FISHING PERIOD/FISHING YEAR

Proposal #13: Postpone the pollock season until September 1 (or some other date).

The PAAG Committee identified alternatives to the September 1 date which would include a three year phase in of July 15, August 15, and September 15. PAAG noted that other season delays may be appropriate as well, but are being addressed in the current bycatch amendment package.

#### LIMITED ACCESS/ALLOCATION

PAAG recommends not pursuing any of the individual proposals since they are covered under the Council's broad rationalization initiative. The Fishery Planning Committee (FPC) may be the appropriate body to address this issue category.

#### BYCATCH MANAGEMENT

The PAAG referred these proposals to the Bycatch Committee. The Bycatch Committee will meet on September 22, before the Council convenes, and will be able to provide a report to the Council later in the week when this agenda item is discussed.

#### OTHER

Proposal #45: Extend King crab protective measures around Kodiak Island.

PAAG recommends this action to reestablish non-pelagic trawling zones around Kodiak Island to protect King and Tanner crab. These measures, under Amendment 18 to the Gulf FMP, will sunset on December 31, 1992.

Proposal #48: Prohibit discards of finfish for which a TAC exists.

PAAG notes that some kind of further consideration of this issue may be warranted, particularly to the extent that some current management programs may actually promote discarding. Though this proposal would likely be difficult to analyze in its entirety, the Council need to look at ways in which to reduce the current levels of discards. Perhaps a phased in approach could be evaluated which would ultimately lead to an overall prohibition.

Proposals #50 and #51 were moved to the bycatch category and would be taken up by the Bycatch Committee. The PAAG wishes to emphasize that the Council should take action on the proposed moratorium before the proposed January 15, 1992 cutoff date. The PAAG also notes that the Council has already initiated a Plan Amendment to quarterly allocate Pacific cod in the BS/AI.

**STATUS OF COUNCIL TASKING**

**PROJECTS NEARING COMPLETION OR COMPLETED**

**Plan Amendments**

**Groundfish**

Am. 17/22	Delete reporting areas in GOA Criteria for experimental fisheries Bogoslof pollock TAC Walrus protection Groundfish pot definition	Region preparing Proposed Rulemaking. Submit to Secretary in early October.
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Am. 18/23	Inshore-Offshore Allocations	Revised SEIS sent to Region on Sept. 19, 1991. Region preparing rest of amendment package for Secretarial Review.
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Am. 19/24	Bycatch Amendment for implementation in 1992	Develop analysis for initial review in September and final action in December 1991. Implement by June 1992. Emergency action in December 1991 to cover first half of year.
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North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan		Final action in September 1991 and submit to Secretarial Review.
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**Emergency Rules from April 1991 Meeting**

Reduce directed fishing standard for Pacific cod, in the midwater pollock fisheries, to 7% in the BSAI. Reduce directed fishing standard for all groundfish, in midwater pollock fishery, to 7% in the GOA. When halibut trawl PSC allowance is reached in GOA, all trawling for groundfish, other than pollock with pelagic trawls, is prohibited.		Effective on August 7 (through Nov. 12). Need Emergency Rule for remainder of 1991. Included in Bycatch Amendment for 1992.
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Close GOA rockfish to trawls.		Decision pending further developments in the fisheries.
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Prohibit trawling east of 140°W		Emergency rule under review in D.C. Currently closed by inseason action.
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**Regulatory Amendments and Other Actions**

Prohibit longlining of pots (except Aleutians) (from 12/90)		Proposed Rule in D.C.; pending publication.
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Product Recovery Rates		Final Rule pending publication.
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Marine Mammal Protection Measures for 1992		Council approval in September; implement for 1992, initially by emergency rule.
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**STATUS OF COUNCIL TASKING**

**UNCOMPLETED PROJECTS REQUIRING SUBSTANTIAL STAFF TIME**

Am. 15/20 Sablefish IFQ system	Final decision in September 1991. Implement in 1993.
Halibut IFQ system	Initial review in June, final decision in September 1991. Implement in 1993.
Final SAFEs for 1992	Prepare for final review in December 1991.
Environmental Assessments for Specifications Process	Due by end of October.
Reporting/Recordkeeping Requirements	Council reviews in September for 1992.
Season Changes	Emergency action in September. Submit regulatory amendment.
Prohibit trawling east of 140°W	ADF&G will complete analysis of plan amendment by April 1992. Amendment could be implemented for 1993.
Groundfish/Crab IFQs	Needs to be incorporated into comprehensive rationalization program. See below.
Moratorium	Council needs to develop schedule and elements of moratorium, and determine if emergency action is necessary.
Comprehensive Rationalization Program	Develop schedule for analysis.

**POTENTIAL NEW PROJECTS**

Seasonal apportionment of BSAI Pacific cod	Begin analysis when staff available.
Delay 2nd Qtr W/C GOA pollock opening to June 1	Begin analysis when staff available.
Restrictions affecting Donut operations	Develop alternatives and schedule.
Groundfish Proposals for 1993. Bycatch Proposals for 1993. Halibut Proposals for 1992.	Choose alternatives. Choose alternatives. Choose alternatives.
Pre-Registration	Possible Council action in September.

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FOR 1992 AMENDMENT CYCLE**

<u>Number (applicable FMP)</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Action required</u>
<b>Administrative</b>		
1. (GOA/BSAI)	Require weighing of all groundfish	Plan Amendment
2. "	"	"
3. "	"	"
4. (GOA/BSAI)	Prepare SEIS's for groundfish FMPs	Council review...
5. (GOA/BSAI)	Revise overfishing definitions	Plan Amendment
6. (GOA/BSAI)	Add snails to 'other species' category	Plan Amendment
7. (GOA/BSAI)	Use observer data to manage fisheries	Council review...
<b>Management areas</b>		
8. (BSAI)	Redefine Aleutian Management area	Plan Amendment
9. (BSAI)	Redefine Area 515	Plan Amendment
10. (GOA/BSAI)	Redefine boundary between BSAI and Western Gulf	Plan Amendment
11. (GOA)	Redefine boundary between Eastern Gulf and Western Gulf	Plan Amendment
12. (GOA/BSAI)	Review delineation of all Areas...	Plan Amendment
<b>Fishing period/Fishing year</b>		
13. (GOA/BSAI)	Commence pollock fishing on September 1	Plan Amendment
14. (GOA)	Quarterly allocate Pacific cod TACs	Plan Amendment
15. (BSAI)	Commence Greenland turbot on July 1	Reg. Amendment
16. (GOA)	Delay rockfish season to July 1	Reg. Amendment
17. (GOA)	Delay trawl rockfishing until September 1	Reg. Amendment
18. (GOA/BSAI)	Delay P. cod season until February 1	Reg. Amendment
19. (GOA/BSAI)	Synchronize GOA/BSAI pollock seasons	Plan Amendment
20. (GOA/BSAI)	Change fishing year to Sept. 1 to August 31	Plan Amendment
<b>Limited Access/Specific Allocation</b>		
21. (GOA/BSAI)	ITQs as primary management tool...	Plan Amendment
22. (GOA/BSAI)	Implement rockfish ITQ system	Plan Amendment
23. (BSAI)	Allocate 8% of groundfish to Pribilofs	Plan Amendment
24. (BSAI)	7.5% CDQ of P. cod set aside as part of Inshore/Offshore package...	Plan Amendment
25. (GOA/BSAI)	Pre-registration for pollock and P. cod in either GOA or BSAI	Plan Amendment
26. (GOA/BSAI)	Exclusive registration for P. cod ...	Plan Amendment
27. (GOA)	Allocate a fixed gear, inshore quota of P. cod to Western Gulf	Plan Amendment
<b>Gear Restrictions</b>		
28. (GOA)	Institute mesh size restrictions	Plan Amendment
29. (GOA/BSAI)	Removal of groundfish pots from the grounds at certain times ...	Reg. Amendment
<b>Bycatch management</b>		
30. (GOA/BSAI)	Individual bycatch accounts for halibut	Plan Amendment
31. (BSAI)	Close IPHC Area 4C to bottom trawling	Plan Amendment



32. (GOA/BSAI)	Reduce halibut bycatch caps by 10% per year for 5 years	Plan Amendment
33. (BSAI)	Change bycatch accounting from halibut handled to mortality of halibut discarded	Plan Amendment (?)
34. (BSAI)	Change trawl halibut mortality rate	Plan Amendment (?)
35. (BSAI)	Change trawl halibut/crab mortality rates	Plan Amendment (?)
36. (GOA/BSAI)	Allow 30 minute 'window' where halibut may be returned to water w/o counting	Plan Amendment (?)
37.(GOA/BSAI)	Exempt from closure those fisheries with halibut bycatch of less than 0.7%	Plan Amendment
38. (GOA/BSAI)	Set floating halibut PSC caps	Plan Amendment
39. (GOA/BSAI)	Preferentially allocate PSC to gears or fisheries with low bycatch rates	Plan Amendment
40. (GOA/BSAI)	ITQs for PSCs ...	Plan Amendment
41. (BSAI)	Additional herring bycatch measures	Reg. Amendment (?)
42. (BSAI)	Set chinook bycatch cap of .004%	Plan Amendment
43. (GOA/BSAI)	Omnibus bycatch package (23 items)	Various
<b>Other</b>		
44. (GOA)	Close the Sitka Sound DSR Sanctuary to halibut fishing year round	State jurisdiction
45. (GOA)	Extend crab protection measures around Kodiak Island	Plan Amendment
46. (GOA)	Seasonally allocate P. cod in the Gulf	Plan Amendment
47. (BSAI)	Reopen Area 512 to trawling	Plan Amendment
48. (GOA/BSAI)	Prohibit discards of groundfish for which A TAC exists	Plan Amendment
49. (?)	Prohibit U.S. fishing in donut hole	(?)
50. (GOA)	Exempt Southeast directed longline DSR fishery from halibut PSC caps/closures	Reg. Amendment
51. (BS/AI)	Give preferential access to groundfish to fixed gear operators	Plan Amendment

## PLAN TEAM REPORT ON AMENDMENT PROPOSALS FOR 1992 CYCLE:

### SUMMARY

The Team recommends only the following individual proposals be pursued in the 1992 amendment cycle:

#45 – extend crab protection measures around Kodiak Island

#49 – pursue some avenue, perhaps plan amendment, to prohibit/discourage fishing in the Donut Hole.

Proposal #4 was given HIGH priority but would occur on its own cycle.

Proposal #6 and #29 were given only MEDIUM priority, but it was noted that these two proposals would be relatively easy to analyze and may be done 'in house' by NMFS Region.

Requiring weighing or volumetric measurement of all groundfish was given a MEDIUM to HIGH priority by the Teams and originally was on the list of "recommend to do". However, the final recommendation by the Teams was to assign this a lower priority than the 'package measures' listed below.

The ultimate recommendation of the Plan Teams, aside from that shown below, is to pursue a more comprehensive approach to fishery management issues. In other words, for the most part do not pursue individual proposals in this amendment cycle but rather look at the following broad categories and attempt to address them as a package rather than apply the band-aid approach:

Priority #1: Bycatch issues.

Priority #2: Specific allocation or limited access

Priority #3: Redefinition of management areas (although this may be related to the first two)

The Teams are also reluctant to pursue the approach of estimating staff time for any of the individual proposals. This approach only encourages us down the path of utilizing all available staff to put out impending 'fires' and allowing no time to address long term, rational solutions. The Teams feel that if all available resources were devoted to an issue-oriented approach, as opposed to the band-aid approach, that reasonable progress could be made on some of these major issues during the 1992 amendment cycle. The Team does note that approximately 10% of their collective analytical time would be required to address the specific proposals which do need to be addressed in the 1992 cycle (#s 45, 49, 6, and 29). The Teams wish to emphasize that current, on-going analyses will consume all available staff time until (likely) the end of this year. If the staff then pursues the Council's 'rationalization' initiative (part of the inshore/offshore motion), this would likely consume all available staff through the spring of 1992.

The collective Plan Teams from both the BS/AI and the GOA formed working groups to oversee analyses on the following broad categories as described above:

1. Bycatch
2. Allocative/limited entry
3. Management areas, fishing periods/seasons, and gear
4. Administrative
5. Stock assessment

It is the hope of the Plan Teams that these working groups would be able to provide input as to the appropriate alternatives to be pursued for each of these major issues, after receiving broader guidance from the Council; i.e., the Plan Teams, through the working groups, would be more involved from the beginning in formulating solutions to the major issues at hand. These working groups would then track progress on the analyses being conducted, whether the analyses were being conducted by the Plan Teams or by special analytical teams, which has been the case recently in most of the Council's major initiatives.

### TEAM REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS

#### #1, 2, and 3: (Require weighing of all groundfish)

Team recommends MEDIUM-HIGH priority and HIGH difficulty.

Comments: Needs to include an alternative for volumetric 'weighing'. Team would like to see this pursued, but not necessarily at the expense of staff time which could be devoted to projects which the Team feels are the highest priorities (See summary at the end of this section)

#### #4: (Prepare programmatic SEIS's for the groundfish plans)

Team recommends HIGH priority and HIGH difficulty.

Comments: Not a plan amendment, but very likely will be required due to archaic nature of existing SEIS's. A large undertaking but may not eliminate the need to prepare annual EA's for the specifications process. On its own cycle...

#### #5: (Revise overfishing definitions)

Team recommends LOW priority and MEDIUM difficulty.

Comments: Some debate over basic philosophy of altering overfishing definition designed to protect species from overfishing...We would need the ability to either (1) change the overfishing definition for a species relative to its ABC or, (2) provide the ability to exceed the overfishing level in certain situations. Team recommends low priority but notes that certain exceptions may be relevant. Debate centered around the need to have a 'black and white' line as opposed to a 'grey area' line.

#### #6: (Add snails to the other species category in both FMP's)

Team recommends MEDIUM priority and LOW difficulty.

Comments: Adding snails to the other species category could have implications on the

overall OY cap in the Bering Sea... its got to come from somewhere. But, if the 'other species' TAC is not raised, it will only impose on that category (directly), and not from pollock, for example.

#7: (Use observer data to manage, on weekly basis, the catch and discards of groundfish)

Team recommends LOW priority and MEDIUM difficulty.

Comments: Despite low priority ranking, Team feels that some mechanism to get a better handle on discards is highly desirable and should be a priority goal. Discard info should be forwarded to and utilized as necessary ... and maybe compared to processor reports as was done in the foreign fishery days.

#8 through #12: (Redefinition of management areas)

Team recommends HIGH priority and MEDIUM difficulty.

Comments: Team discussed proposals 8-11 and decided that they should be addressed in a more "holistic" approach as encompassed within proposal #12. For biological and management reasons, changes in existing areas should be looked at closely.

#13 through #20, including #46: (Changes in the fishing year or fishing period)

Team recommends MEDIUM priority and MEDIUM to HIGH difficulty.

Comments: The Team recommends grouping these proposals and addressing them in a more comprehensive approach, rather than as separate amendments. Many of these could be accomplished via regulatory amendment as opposed to plan amendments. Team notes that some of the proposals contained in this group are currently being addressed in the Bycatch Amendment in preparation.

**NOTE: for proposals #21 through #27, the following represents the Team's 'first pass' through the package where the proposals were addressed individually. The Team's final recommendation for proposals 21-27 was to combine them under the Limited Access/Specific allocation umbrella and address them as a package (please see summary of Team recommendations at the end of this section).**

#21: (ITQs as primary management tool in all fisheries)

Team recommends HIGH priority and HIGH difficulty.

Comments: Though this proposal is already on the docket as part of the inshore/offshore motion, the Team wished to go on record as specifically recommending an analysis of ITQs as a potential to 'rationalize' the fisheries under the Council's jurisdiction.

#22: (ITQs for rockfish management)

Team recommends HIGH priority and MEDIUM difficulty.

Comments: As last year, Team notes acceptance/approval of the proposal by those involved in the fishery (primarily) and willingness of the industry involved to fund the necessary analyses. It may be appropriate to include Atka mackerel within this proposed ITQ system.

#23 and #24: (Direct allocation to Pribilofs and set aside of P. cod quota in Bering Sea as CDQ)

NO ranking by Plan Team.

Comments: Team feels that these proposals are best addressed (or are being addressed) under the inshore/offshore motion approved by the Council or by other mechanisms, possibly proposed IFQ programs.

#25: (Registration for Gulf or Bering Sea for pollock and P. cod)

Team recommends LOW priority and MEDIUM difficulty.

Comments: The primary issue stated in the proposal is the ability to close fisheries in time to prevent overharvest. There are other management methods to accomplish stated goal. In terms of being an 'exclusive' registration issue, such a management alternative has already been approved under part of the Council's inshore/offshore motion – the part which initiates analyses of several different management measures, including registration areas, as means of rationalizing the fisheries.

The Team notes that though many of the proposals in this package may have individual merit, the Council should resist the urge to pursue them in a piecemeal fashion, but rather, follow through with a long-range plan which will involve all inter-related aspects of the fisheries.....

#26: (exclusive registration for P. cod)

NO ranking by Team.

Comments: Again, Team feels that this is being taken care of under 'Phase 3' of the inshore/offshore motion which includes an analysis of exclusive registration areas.

#27: (Fixed gear, inshore allocation of P. cod in Western Gulf)

Team recommends LOW priority and MEDIUM difficulty.

Comments: State of Alaska has no monitoring program for inshore waters in this area and does not expect to initiate in near future. Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest that there is a separate inshore stock of P. cod inside of three miles.

#28: (institute mesh size restrictions)

Team recommends MED-HIGH priority and LOW-MED difficulty.

Comments: Team heard testimony that incentive program may encourage the use of small mesh sizes and increase the number of discards in an attempt to build up the base against which bycatch rates are measured. There seems to be broad-based industry support for this measure. Marine Mammal concerns were also discussed relative to the fact that small fish, particularly pollock, may be a primary food source for juvenile sea lions, the numbers of which are currently depressed. Team notes that there has already been extensive research done on these types of gear restrictions and their effects on catch compositions which may be used in the analyses. The Team ultimately chose to place this proposal under the umbrella of the bycatch package of proposals and address it in that context.

#29: (Removal of groundfish pots from the grounds at certain times)

Team recommends MEDIUM priority and LOW difficulty.

Comments: NMFS Region will do (as Regulatory Amendment?) to alleviate an

enforcement problem.

#30 through #43 and including #28, #47, #50, and #51 (Bycatch proposals)

Team Declines to make any recommendation on the specific proposals included in this package relative to bycatch problems.

Comments: Team notes that while there may be merit to individual proposals contained herein, the temptation to address any one of them individually should be resisted. This would merely be following the same path as has been done in the past; i.e., implementing a mishmash of often incongruous regulations which represent quick fixes to actual or perceived bycatch management problems. Though it always seems necessary to pursue such a path, in order to head off real and potential problems, it detracts staff time and Council time from really solving the problem in a truly comprehensive approach. The Team therefore strongly recommends scrapping all of the proposals contained herein and initiating some type of real solution – possibly something along the lines of what is contained in the 'Phase 3' of the inshore/offshore motion. While the Team considers bycatch solutions in general to be a HIGH priority, it feels that all of the individual proposals here should be given a LOW priority ranking, if ranked at all.

#44: (Close Sitka Sound DSR Sanctuary if Halibut IFQs are adopted)

NO ranking by Team.

Comments: Team feels that this should be addressed when and if IFQs area implemented in the halibut fisheries. This area is managed by the State of Alaska anyway – if catch of DSR becomes a problem, then the State can take appropriate measures as necessary.

#45: (Extend crab protection measures around Kodiak Island)

Team recommends HIGH priority and LOW difficulty.

Comments: Falls into the category of "needs to be done"...Would probably be relatively easy to incorporate any new information and perform the analyses to roll this measure over.

#47: (Reopen Area 512 to trawling)

Team recommends that this proposal be included under the bycatch umbrella.

#48: (Prohibit discards of all groundfish for which a TAC exists)

Team recommends LOW priority and HIGH difficulty.

Comments: Team notes that this full utilization (and bycatch) issue has recently been examined under another label and was rejected. Feels that it is not time to revive it yet.

#49: (Prohibit fishing in the Donut Hole)

Team recommends HIGH priority and ??? difficulty.

Comments: Team notes that Council has adopted a policy statement regarding this issue and that negotiations are ongoing at State Department levels. While the Team feels that this is a priority, it is unsure as to how it should be addressed by the Team and whether it would be in the form of a Plan amendment. Questions arose as to how such an analysis would be performed and as to the political issues involved.

**#50: (Exempt the Southeast longline DSR fishery from the halibut PSC cap closures)**

Team recommends putting this in with the bycatch package.

Comments: Team notes de minimus bycatch rates in this fishery, but, to maintain consistency, recommends not addressing the issue individually for the reasons stated above concerning the overall bycatch issue. Also noted were concerns over a directed fishery on a species for which a potential conservation/overfishing problem exists.

**#51: (Preferential access to groundfish for fixed gear operators)**

Team recommends putting this proposal into the bycatch package.

TESTIMONEY BEFORE THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
ON THE STATUS AND TRENDS OF ALASKA SEABIRDS

Jon M. Nelson  
September 29, 1991

**BACKGROUND**

Populations of seabirds off coastal Alaska are more abundant and diverse than in any similar region of the northern hemisphere. Coastal estuaries and offshore waters provide breeding, feeding and migration habitats for 66 different species. At least 38 species nest in Alaska; eight of these nest no where else in North America.

An estimated 50 million seabirds, 96 percent of the United States' continental population, nest in Alaska. Alaska supports approximately 1,350 colonies ranging in size from a few dozen to over a million birds. Another 50 million seabirds comprising 28 species come north to Alaska from breeding grounds in the central and south Pacific to spend the summer.

Alaska has long been recognized for its importance to seabirds. Between 1909 and 1932, nine "seabird" refuges were created: Bering Sea, Bogoslof, St. Lazaria, Tuxedni, Chamisso, Forrester, Hazy Island, Aleutian Islands, and Semidi Islands. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, among other things, consolidated these islands and many more off the coast of Alaska into the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Today, refuge islands and coastal areas support 40 million, or 80 percent, of Alaska's nesting seabird population.

But the birds spend only 20 percent of their life cycle on protected areas; the other 80 percent of their time is spent at sea. We know very little about what goes on during this period.

**MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

The Fish and Wildlife Service's seabird management and research program in Alaska has focused on: mapping and censusing selected breeding colonies; seabird breeding biology; general distribution patterns; and food habits and energetics.

At present, we are focusing our efforts on a few select species, those which are not only important in themselves but also are believed to be "indicator species" in that they tend to mirror the status of other species. Three characteristics of a good indicator species are that it can be reliably counted; it is widespread and fairly common; and it is sensitive and vulnerable to environmental change.

Kittiwakes and murrens are two such indicators. The Service for over a decade has been monitoring populations and productivity rates of black-legged kittiwakes and murrens (thick-billed and common) and other selected species at 10 sites in the Bering and Chukchi Seas and northern Gulf of Alaska. Routine monitoring programs have recently been expanded to the western Aleutians and central Alaska Peninsula. We have done only limited monitoring in the central and eastern Aleutians, western Alaska Peninsula and Southeast Alaska. Our goal is to use censusing methods and colony site selection that will allow us to statistically detect a 20 percent change in a population's abundance.



## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

A. **Seabird Diets and Energetics...**Diets have been described for seabirds in the Chukchi and Bering seas, and portions of the Gulf of Alaska. Information includes preferred fish species and the predominance of these species in the diets of adults and the food they carry to their chicks.

Commercially important fish which are also important to seabirds are: juvenile walleye pollock, herring and Atka mackerel. Non-commercial fish species also important in seabird diets are capelin and Pacific sand lance. In any given region, most seabird species share a single dominant prey, such as capelin in the northwest Gulf of Alaska, sand lance in the Aleutians and Norton Sound, and walleye pollock in the Bering Sea and southwestern Gulf.

Seabirds may require up to 80 percent of the prey fish near a large colony. Many breeding seabirds depend on a single prey species, which may comprise 40 to 90 percent of all prey fed to the young each summer. At colonies where breeding success is monitored, productivity can be correlated directly with the availability of prey.

B. **Population Trends...**Seabird monitoring has been too irregular at many colonies to reveal statistically reliable population trends. After a site is selected, several consecutive annual visits are required to determine baseline numbers and variability. Thereafter, the site is monitored biennially or triennially. We are only now establishing baseline population numbers for many sites.

### CAPE PEIRCE...

Black-legged kittiwake numbers have shown no significant population trends since 1985 at 15 study plots.

Common Murres numbers and productivity declined significantly in the mid- to late-1980's, then increased again in 1989-90. No overall population trend is apparent.

### BLUFF (E. OF NOME ON SEWARD P. COAST)...

Black-legged kittiwake numbers have fluxuated significantly at 5 plots since 1978. In general, abundance was high in the late '70's and early 80's; low in the mid-1980's; and high again in the late 80's and 1990. It appears that both productivity and abundance correlate directly with abundance of sand lance near the colony.

Common Murres abundance mirrors that of kittiwakes.

We are unable to detect any rising or declining population trends in either kittiwakes or murres at Bluff.

### CAPE THOMPSON...

Black-legged kittiwakes have shown a slow but steady increase in abundance since monitoring began in 1960; and in 1990 were the highest ever recorded (2.6 times the 1960 levels)

Murres, on the other hand, have shown a slow, but steady decline during the same period.

#### BERING SEA...

Red-legged kittiwakes have declined more than 50 percent since 1978. Alaska's current red-legged kittiwake population is estimated to be 250,000; 95 percent of these breed at a single colony on St. George Island in the Pribilofs.

Black-legged kittiwakes have also declined more than 50 percent in the Pribilofs since the 1970's.

#### CHUKCHI SEA AND GULF OF ALASKA...

Black-legged kittiwake populations are stable or increasing at selected monitoring sites.

#### IN CONCLUSION...

- i. Kittiwakes and murrens have fluxuated significantly over the past 10-13 years or more they have been monitored. Abundance and productivity of murrens and kittiwakes in 1990 in all study areas EXCEPT BERING SEA, were generally high and, at least in one instance, was the highest since monitoring began. In the Bering Sea, kittiwake and murre populations have declined precipitously to half or less of former abundance.
2. The abundance of prey species, such as sand lance, pollock and capelin, is probably the single most dominant factor influencing seabird abundance and year-to-year variability, although other factors such as predation by gulls and ravens may be important under certain conditions.
3. The abundance and availability of forage prey for seabirds, particularly during the critical nesting and chick rearing periods, can be influenced by several conditions, including: abundance and productivity of parent stocks; and near-shore environmental conditions. For example, water temperatures in the vicinity of Cape Thompson in 1990, when kittiwake productivity and abundance were high, was 2 degrees C. warmer than in 1986 when productivity was low.



**A.D.S.M.A.**

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September 10, 1991

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A.D.S.M.A. is a company recently formed by a group of Bristol Bay fisherman. Below is a brief summary of the goals of A.D.S.M.A.

1. To assemble a group of professionals knowledgeable in the ways and means of the Alaskan salmon industry.
2. To improve upon the existing domestic markets and develop alternative export markets.
3. Exploring the possibilities of creating consumer-oriented and alternative packaging and product forms.
4. Researching the possibilities of utilizing the existing processing capability of the off-shore factory trawler industry, and if feasible coordinate a supply/demand relationship between the fishing fleet and the processors.
5. To examine the availability of and coordinate transportation of the salmon pack from the fishing grounds to U.S. wholesale destination points.
6. To research the availability of warehousing and holding facilities.
7. To research the possibility of joint-venturing between the fishing fleet and the processors.

8. To make recommendations to fishermen and processors on improving quality to help insure consumer confidence.
9. To persuade State and Federal agencies to draft laws or regulations requiring restaurants and stores that sell or serve salmon to specify the species and origin of the salmon.
10. If off-shore factory trawlers are used to process salmon:
  - a. Can the BAADER machines that are now onboard be used to process salmon into shatterpack or frozen block form?
  - b. Can salmon be processed in minced or surimi form?
  - c. Can salmon by-products (skin, bone, heads...viscera) be produced into fishmeal?
  - d. Can the vessels be outfitted to process the salmon roe to Japanese standards and specifications?
  - e. Are the vessels equipped to process salmon in IQF H&G form?
  - f. In addition to the standard canning methods, can a skin and boneless canned product be developed?

The answers and the feedback that I have received from the off-shore factory trawler companies indicate that they are very interested in participating in the processing of salmon in Bristol Bay and possibly in other areas of Alaska beginning in 1992.

The problem that these companies face is that the 1992 B portion of the pollock allocation starts June 1. This would prevent the factory trawler fleet from participating in the Bristol Bay salmon processing.

The fishermen of Bristol Bay and the factory trawler companies are asking that the starting date of the B portion of the pollock allocation be changed from June 1 to September 1.

By being able to utilize this ready and modern equipped processing fleet, a repeat of the problems of the 1991 salmon season in Bristol Bay will be avoided.

The justification for this request is that the present processing capability in the Bay is inadequate to handle the volume of fish being caught. The processors in the Bay are placing the fishing vessels on daily catch limits and are loading tenders to capacity who are holding the fish for days, sometimes in high ocean swells before they are unloaded. This delay and method of holding fish before processing is a detriment to quality and is reflected in the price and limits the marketability of the product. The inability of the processors to process the optimum amount of fish that could be caught causes overescapement leading to ecological damage and financial loss to the industry. A greater processing competition is needed so that we do not have a repeat of the 1991 season. The major portion of the salmon coming out of the Bay are destined for Japan.

In checking with the major processors and wholesale companies that processes sockeye salmon in Alaska and Puget Sound I was informed that there was no sockeye salmon available for wholesale distribution for a major buyer who had asked me to locate it for him. If in August there is no sockeye salmon to be found in the Seattle area, that in itself should be justification to create an alternative processing fleet to fill this need.

Sincerely



Jorgen W. Bogdanoff  
Bristol Bay Fisherman and  
Fisheries Consulant