



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

*National Marine Fisheries Service  
P. O. Box 1668, Juneau, Alaska 99802*

Date : December 28, 1978

Reply to Attn. of:

To : NPFMC Members  
Jim Branson, Executive Director

AGENDA 18  
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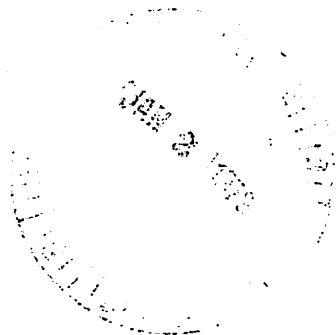
From : *John C. Furunes*  
Harry L. Rietze  
*for* Director, Alaska Region

Subject: Report by Incidental Species Committee

The subject report was provided to you at the December council meeting. It is hoped you will find opportunity to read and consider the report in anticipation of discussing and possibly acting on it at the January meeting.

A copy of the report is furnished here for convenient reference, as well as to members of the AP and SSC.

cc:  
SSC  
AP



FINAL DRAFT

November 29, 1978

MANAGEMENT OF MIXED SPECIES FISHERIES  
PROVISIONAL STRATEGY AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Foreign fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea prior to March 1977 were freely competitive, governed only by each country's preferences and perceived advantages and often lacking discernible regard for resource conservation. Accommodation to FCMA controls was achieved remarkably quickly with respect to technical requirements (call signs, check-in/check-out procedures, etc.) although the inertia of established practices seemed to prolong changes in more basic activities such as target fishing and careful logging of catches. The past and continuing failure of certain foreign fleets to fish with adequate selectivity for target species, either through inability or inadvertence, has forced premature termination of a few fisheries and poses risk of additional closures. The existing situation contains an undesirable potential for fishery disruption and economic and biologic waste, which could worsen as domestic FCZ fisheries develop. Recognizing that resource conservation is a fundamental mandate of the FCMA and an uncompromising objective of the Council, management strategies and implementing procedures designed to promote both conservation and full utilization of fishery resources with the FCZ are approved as presented below:

COUNCIL OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES

The Council finds that FCMA prescribed policies require augmentation with interpretive statements that address and govern fishery management regimes. In particular, the management of mixed stock fisheries can be especially complex and will benefit from clear policy guidelines and objectives.

The following statements represent the Council's policy guidelines to FMP drafting teams and management agencies exercising control of fisheries in the FCZ.

- I. Conservation and Economic Efficiency. In accord with the purposes of the FCMA, economic efficiency within a sound conservation framework is a major objective in fishery management, normally dictating that target species govern the conduct of principal fisheries. Practical complications arise, however, because even the best applied fishing technology and regulatory procedures may sometimes fail to control the species composition of mixed stock fisheries well enough to avoid serious underharvest of some species as catches of other approach OY levels or the limits of allocations. Where such underharvests are reasonably predictable, represent large unrealized

benefits, and cannot be controlled by other means, then thought must be given to incorporating economic considerations in appropriate balance with other factors in establishing OY levels. Thus, some fisheries may be so constituted that a designed overharvest of one or more species in a biological sense (i.e., EY deliberately held below MSY) will be justified by larger sustained economic benefits from the mixed stock complex as a whole. Contrary situations may also occur whereby sustained economic benefits are maximized by deliberate biological underharvest of certain species (i.e., *C. opilio* south of 58° N.). Assuming the identification, analysis, and adjustments required for such special situations, the following enabling elements should be included in management and regulatory regimes.

- A. All species that are amenable to management,<sup>1/</sup> have commercial or recreational value, and are taken as target species or as a primary or incidental element in mixed stock fisheries shall have an OY specified for each species. All such catches will be logged and retained to the extent that protective measures (i.e., size or sex restrictions), do not require their immediate return to the sea.
- B. Any species not amenable to discrete management, but which has real or potential value either when taken as an incidental catch or as an element in directed mixed stock fisheries shall be grouped together with similar related species (i.e., other rockfish, other flounder, etc.) and an OY specified for the group, taking into account the desirability of maintaining each species as a functional element within the ecosystem. All such catches, unless otherwise prohibited, will be retained and, to the extent possible, logged by individual species.
- C. Species of inconsequential commercial value taken only incidentally and which presently are not amenable to discrete management shall be grouped together in an "other species" category with an OY specified for the group that will maintain every component as a functional element within the ecosystem. Catch logging requirements will vary in recognition that some species may be caught in substantial quantities and may have significant potential for future commercial production (i.e., capelin, smelt, greenling, ratfish, etc.). Where practical, it is desirable to log such species separately to build a data base in anticipation of elevating them to category 1 or 2 management as fisheries begin to focus on them. Otherwise,

<sup>1/</sup> Being amenable to management means that: (a) there is a rational basis for determining production parameters; and (b) the fishery is reasonably capable of controlling the species composition of catches.

species caught in small or trace amounts and have little commercial promise will be logged as a group and not specifically identified. Retention of species within the "other species" category is optional.

- D. Pending development and approval of alternative strategies, species listed as prohibited in any fishery may not be retained (i.e., salmon and halibut taken with trawl gear). The management regime for each fishery must include provisions as necessary to effectively minimize or avoid the incidental taking of prohibited species. Log-keeping practices will be appropriate to management needs.
- E. Species that are extraneous to fisheries and have no recognized or foreseeable value (usually plants and invertebrate animals) will have neither an OY specified nor any requirements for logging or retention unless related to special research interests.

II. Conservation and Maintenance of Orderly Fisheries. Integral to the objectives of conservation and economic efficiency is the maintenance of orderly fisheries that pursue harvest goals without premature termination or disruptive redirection. Despite quite effective demonstrations of selective fishing by certain participants in FCZ fisheries, sustained pure, single species catches rarely if ever occur. By design or by inadvertance mixed species catches typify all fisheries and dictate the requirement that a management area be closed to a fishery when the OY for any species or species group is attained, even though unharvested surpluses remain for other species characteristic of that fishery.

Thus, management regimes must be effective in promoting, within each fishery, a high degree of synchrony in the attainment of OY's or allocations. This objective of maintaining orderly fisheries will be supported by the following strategies which are appropriate to the known range of situations common to the fisheries of the FCZ.

- A. Impose compelling incentives on fishermen to selectively direct effort to target species and away from prohibited or unwanted incidental species. Undoubtedly, the certainty of premature termination of fishing activities is the most persuasive sanction available. Equally effective and more desirable alternatives may exist, however, and the identification and evaluation of other sanctions that are legally and pragmatically sound should be given priority attention. For example, charging higher fees or reducing the succeeding year's allocation to offenders have been mentioned as potential deterrents.

- B. Within the constraints of OY's, species quotas must be assigned in proper relationship to the mix and quantities of species typically caught in each distinctive fishery or area, taking into account the preferences and selective fishing capabilities of each nation or fleet. Analysis of the fishing performance of each nation or fleet since imposition of FCMA controls will be an initial and continuing guide to allocation decisions.
- C. It is expected that DAK's and foreign allocations at the species level will not prove to be perfectly accurate as fishing progresses. Therefore, a portion of each OY should be held for reserve for allocation as needed to balance inadequate allocations of incidental species or species groups with actual fishing experience. The ability to make prompt adjustments from reserves will be absolutely vital to achieving the objectives of economic efficiency and maintenance of orderly fisheries.