

JAPAN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

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APPENDIX N, Sept. 1977

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September 22, 1977

Mr. Jim H. Branson
Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Suite 32 Post Office Mall
333 West 4th Anchorage Alaska 99501

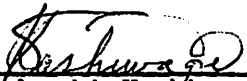
Dear Mr. Branson:


Enclosed please find the statement prepared by Mr. Yoshiro Okazaki on behalf of the North Pacific Longline-Gillnet Association for the public hearing on the draft fishery management plan about the Japanese longline fishery off the Gulf of Alaska.

Mr. Hajime Nakamura will present his testimony at the public hearing of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's tenth convention being held at Anchorage, Alaska on September 22-24.

Thank you for your due arrangements.

Sincerely,


Sadayuki Kashiwagi
Representative of
Japan Fisheries Association



Requests from Japan "North Pacific
Longline-Gillnet Association" which
operates with 200-Mile Fishing Zone
of the U.S.A.

Yoshiro Okazaki
President
North Pacific Longline-
Gillnet Association

Japan North Pacific Longline-Gillnet Association is organized by the Japanese Longline-Gillnet Vessel Owners, and is engaged in fishing operations under the guidance of the Japanese Government, with its 22 fishing vessels which have not increased for the past 10 years.

These fishing vessels have conducted orderly longline fishing for sablefish and Pacific cod in the Bering Sea, the Aleutians and the Gulf of Alaska, and gillnet fishing for herring during the May-June period in accordance with the U.S. Japan Fishery Agreement.

With regard to the development of deep-sea sablefish resources, we have made considerable financial and technical investments in the long-term survey of the fishing grounds, improvement of fishing methods, maintenance of fishing vessels and expansion of production facilities to pave the way for the establishment of our enterprise as it exists today.

At the outset, sablefish was not familiar to the Japanese market and the catch of this fish was not profitable. As a result of the publicity of its cooking methods and various features through mass communication media, however, this species has come to be valued as food material and has become one of those fishes which has won popularity in the diet of the general public.

In our longline fishing for sablefish, as it is regulated by the U.S. regulation of foreign fishery, we have been catching the fish living near the steep slopes along the outer edge of the continental shelf. Therefore, there should be no conflict of fishing ground between the U.S. and Japanese fisheries.

Most of the sablefish thus caught by our vessels are large, grown-up ones. Our fishing method using longlines is passive in nature, and is considered to be a highly ideal method from the standpoint of preserving marine resources since this method does not hurt the deep-sea environment in any way.

Thus, we believe that our longline fishing has a historical performance along the lines of the U.S. Fisheries Conservation and Management Act enacted in 1976.

The sablefish catch quota for our vessels for 1977 has been decreased by about 30 percent below the previous year's level, and it is considered that the U.S. fishing for this species will take a big step forward now that the sablefish resources in the Gulf of Alaska have attracted your special attention.

The implementation of various regulatory measures, based on the currently proposed draft management plan, however, will bring about extreme difficulties to our longline fishing, *the method* which is ideal for the conservation and effective use of the sablefish resources will become very difficult.

Under such circumstances, we most earnestly request the following points in your determining F.M.P. for 1978.

1. Optimum Yield (OY) of the sablefish for 1978 should be decided taking the opinions of both the U.S. and Japanese scientists. We request that the catch quota allocation of the sablefish for 1978 not decrease from that for 1977.
2. It is earnestly desired that the plan for establishing no-fishing zones in the Southeastern and Yakutat waters in the Gulf of Alaska in and after 1978 be cancelled.

Reasons:

- (1) The Southeastern and Yakutat waters in which the non-fishing zones are to be established are very important areas where 40 to 50 percent of our sablefish catch has been hauled. Therefore, management of our longline fishing industries will be hit severely by the establishment of such zones.
- (2) Japanese longline fishing vessels usually operate at the depth of more than 500 meters, much deeper than the depth of operation of the U.S. longline fishing vessels in their fishing ground. Therefore, there should be no conflict of the fishing ground between the U.S. and Japanese fisheries.
- (3) In longline fishing, fishing lines are laid out at equal depth over a long distance; (approx. 20 miles)

and a rotating harvest is required. Therefore, the establishment of non-fishing zones not only prohibits fishing operation there, but makes fishing operation in the fishing zones between non-fishing zones extremely difficult.

3. It is desired that the no longline fishing zones in waters less than 500 meters deep be lifted, so that our longline fishing for Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska may become possible.

Reasons:

- (1) The drastic decrease in our catch quota of sablefish in the Gulf of Alaska in 1977 from that of 1976 has made the management of our longline fishing very difficult. To remedy this situation, your favorable consideration is highly desired so that we may catch Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska now that foreign catch quota of Pacific cod for 1978 in the same waters, as suggested by the U.S. Government is to be considerably increased.
- (2) In the fishing grounds west of 157°W, the amount of mixed fishing of halibut is small and little competition with the U.S. fishing boats is seen. Therefore it is strongly desired that, in waters west of 157°W the 500-meter depth restrictions be lifted so that Pacific cod fishing is possible.

4. The U.S. establishes a no-fishing period for all foreign vessels in waters 140°W - 147°W and 147°W - 157°W in the Gulf of Alaska. But it is desired that this proposal be withdrawn so far as longline fishing is concerned.

Reasons:

- (1) The Japanese longline fishing vessels which catch sablefish catch very few halibut and do not destroy their spawning grounds.
 - (2) There is no conflict between the U.S. halibut fishing vessels and Japanese longline fishing vessels.
5. With regard to the non-fishing zone for herring in the Bering Sea, it is desired that the present zone (North of 58°N , east of 168°W) be altered to a zone encircled by the 168°W longitude, the line connecting the points 60°N - 168°W and 58° - 163°W , the 58°N latitude and the coastal line.

Reason:

As a rule, the amount of herring catch depends largely on the condition of sea ice. It is therefore feared that the present no-fishing zone may severely influence our fishing operations in some years. It is strongly desired therefore in regard to the fishing from next year on that the southwestern corner of

the present no-fishing zone, which has no conflicts with the coastal indigenous fishing, be opened for us. As the herring resources are abundant, we believe that such partial liberation of the non-fishing zone will not affect the amount of catch by the coastal inhabitants.

for 14, Nakamura Date
Yoshiro Okazaki
President
North Pacific Longline-
Gillnet Association