

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

January Council Meeting in Juneau

The next meeting of the North Pacific Council will convene in Juneau at 9 a.m. on Monday, January 4, 1982, in Room 770 of the Federal Building. Then beginning on Tuesday, January 5, and continuing through Thursday, January 7, the Council will meet in joint session with the Alaska Board of Fisheries in the Gold Room of the Baranof Hotel, Juneau, to hear staff reports and public testimony on the 1982 troll salmon fishery. The Council and Board will discuss management strategies for the 1982 Southeast Alaska troll salmon fishery, and the Council will select its preferred options for the 1982 amendment package. The Council will meet alone, if necessary, at the Federal Building on Friday, January 8, to conclude its business.

The Council will hold a public hearing on Amendment #11 to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP on Friday, January 8, 1982, at 9 a.m. in Room 117 of the Federal Building in Juneau.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee will convene at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, January 4, in the Capitol Room of the Baranof Hotel and continue through 5 p.m. on Tuesday, January 5.

The Advisory Panel will meet from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, January 4, in the Gastineau Room of the Baranof Hotel.

Council and Board Talk Herring

The second highest Pacific herring harvest (17,652 mt) and the highest spawn on kelp harvest (207.1 mt) recorded since these inshore herring fisheries began in 1960 took place in the eastern Bering Sea Commercial Fishing Districts during the 1981 season, according to ADF&G staff reports presented to the Council and Board of Fisheries at the December joint meeting. The estimated total value of these harvests to fishermen was \$6.2 million.

The Council and Board heard extensive testimony from subsistence fishermen from Yukon-Kuskokwim area villages who were concerned that their subsistence lifestyle may be jeopardized if an offshore herring fishery were allowed. The Board and Council also heard testimony in support of an offshore fishery from U.S. fishermen hoping to work in herring joint ventures.

Though the Council and Board were unable to settle their differences over the question of an offshore herring fishery, NMFS Regional Director Bob McVey went on record saying that NMFS has made a commitment to allow an offshore herring

fishery if a surplus exists under the dictates of an FMP or similarly implemented PMP. The Council's Bering-Chukchi Sea Herring FMP will resume Secretarial review in January if approved by the Council at the Juneau meeting.

GoA Amendment #11 Comment Period Extended

Following the recommendation of the Gulf of Alaska Plan Maintenance Team, the Council extended the public comment period for Amendment #11 to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP for 60 days, until 5 p.m. on February 8, 1982. Amendment #11 contains proposals for amendments to reduce sablefish optimum yield, establish catch reporting procedures, allow foreign longlining in the Davidson Bank area, restrict gear used for sablefish to hook and line only, and close the entire Gulf sablefish fishery from November 15 to March 15. A new method for specifying groundfish DAH and establishing reserves will also be included in the package. Three new documents reviewed by the PMT before making their recommendation to extend the comment period, "Interim Reports on the Results of Sablefish (*Anoplapoma fimbria*) Tagging Experiments in Southeastern Alaska 1979-1981" by Barry Bracken, ADF&G, "Relative Abundance and Size Composition of Sablefish in the Coastal Waters of Southeast Alaska 1978-1981" by Harold H. Zenger, Jr., NWAFC, and "A Simulation Model for Sablefish in the Gulf of Alaska" by Joseph Terry and James Balsiger, NWAFC, are available from the authoring agencies. Revised Amendment #11 is expected to be mailed to the public around December 16, 1981, and the Council is scheduled to take final action on the amendment at the March meeting.

Council/Board Hearing Date Set

Under the provisions of the Joint Statement of Principles between the Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries for king crab management, a joint public hearing on State proposals for the 1982 king and Tanner crab fisheries will be conducted in Seattle on Saturday, March 13, 1982. Further details will be released as soon as available.

Columbia River Indians Get PDT Representation

Willis "Chip" McConnaha, fishery biologist for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, was appointed by the Council to serve as a member of the Salmon Plan Development Team. Mr. McConnaha has worked closely with the Indian fisheries of Washington state. It is hoped that his affiliation with the PDT will provide valuable inter-action with the Indian user groups of the upper Columbia River and other Washington chinook salmon stocks.

New Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Amendment Will Go to the Secretary

Because of increases in the projected 1982 domestic harvest of groundfish, the Council voted to amend the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP to allow for these increases. The amendment, the fourth for the Bering Sea Groundfish Plan, will increase the DAH for pollock from 19,550 mt to 74,500 mt; yellowfin sole from 26,200 mt to 31,200 mt; other flatfish from 4,200 mt to 11,200 mt; Atka mackerel from 100 mt to 14,500 mt; and other species from 2,000 mt to 7,800 mt. The OY for Pacific cod will also be increased from 78,700 mt to 120,000 mt to coincide with the Pacific cod ABC in Amendment #1. Amendment #4 will be sent to the Secretary for review as soon as possible.

The Council also agreed to sever from Bering Sea Amendment #1 the section dealing with incidental halibut catch for domestic species ventures in the Bristol Bay Pot Sanctuary. Because this section has hampered implementation of Amendment #1, the Council felt it prudent to remove the section from the amendment so that implementation of Amendment #1 can proceed approximately on schedule.

Bering Sea PMT to Consider Concept of Fishery Development Zone

The Council instructed the Bering Sea Groundfish Plan Maintenance Team to review a new concept, a "fishery development zone" proposed by Council member Bart Eaton, designed to promote U.S. development in areas of high concentrations of fish stocks. Under this proposal, foreign fishing would be prohibited in designated areas of heavy fish populations which are favored by U.S. trawl and pot fishermen. The PMT will make its report on this subject to the Council at the March meeting.

Council Voices Position on Foreign Processing in State Internal Waters

The State's position on the Bering Sea Herring Marketing Association's lawsuit against the State of Alaska to enjoin the state from prohibiting foreign processing in State internal waters is under development by the State's Task Force. The Task Force is also drafting federal legislation designed to allow foreign processing with the consent of the governor of the state involved, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce.

While reserving comment on suggested language for the enabling legislation, the Council did go on record approving in principle the concept of allowing foreign processing in internal waters when, upon approval of the governor in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, domestic processing capacity is insufficient to handle the demands of the fishery.

Foreign Permit Review

The Council considered a number of foreign permit applications and joint venture permit requests at its December meeting. The Council will recommend to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries that no permit be granted to the Polish vessel ANDROMEDA until the pending underlogging case against that vessel is settled and, if found guilty of the charges, that the Polish allocation be reduced by the average annual expected catch for that type of vessel.

The Council approved the joint venture permit for the Soviet mothership SULAK to work in the Marine Resources Company joint venture off Alaska. MRC expects to take 38,000 mt of groundfish in the Bering Sea and 20,000 mt in the Gulf of Alaska, primarily pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel. The Council stipulated in its approval, however, that the availability of Pacific herring as requested by MRC will be dependent on the provisions of the Herring FMP or a similarly implemented PMP and will not be available until the fall of 1982.

The Council approved only the joint venture portion of the permit request from the West German FRIEDRICH BUSSE, charged with three violations in 1981 with combined penalties of \$237,500. The Council recommended that no directed

fishery permit be granted until the pending cases are settled, and if the FRIEDRICH BUSSE is found guilty of the charges, that West Germany's allocation be reduced by the annual average catch for that type of vessel.

The Council approved joint venture permits for 27 Korean vessels expecting to work in joint ventures with Korea Won Yang and Joint Venture Fisheries, Ltd. Korea Won Yang requested JVP allocations totaling 30,700 mt in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska and Joint Venture Fisheries, Ltd. requested JVP allocations totaling 16,500 mt. During 1981 South Korean joint venture operations caught approximately 30,000 mt -- 39% of their original JVP request of 77,500 mt.

The Council also endorsed a 1982 allocation of 19,607 mt to Taiwan (the amount of their 1981 allocation) so the Pribilof-Highly SeaProducts operation can be continued this year. St. George Tanaq, U.S. partner in the operation, is working to develop a profitable fishery for the residents of the Pribilofs and offers at-sea training for island residents aboard the Taiwanese vessels. Because Taiwan took less than 19% of its allocation last year, the Council made it clear that they expect the allocation to be better utilized in 1982.

Council Appoints Workgroup to Study Plan Maintenance Team's Role

The Council appointed William Aron, Director of the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center, Don Rosenberg, SSC Chairman, Ron Skoog, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner, Robert Alverson, AP Chairman, Robert McVey, Regional Director - NMFS Alaska Region, and Council Executive Director Jim Branson to serve on a workgroup to explore the role and composition of Plan Maintenance Teams. The workgroup will report to the Council at the March meeting.

Foreign Fisheries Update

Just over 79% -- 1,173,000 mt -- of the 1,480,000 mt Bering Sea TALFF had been caught by foreign nations fishing off Alaska as of November 14. Japan has taken 82% of its 1,181,000 mt allocation; South Korea 81% of its 180,000 metric tons; Poland 64% of its 74,000 metric tons; West Germany 39% of its 23,000 mt allocation; and Taiwan 19% of its 21,000 mt allocation. Bering Sea catches were 79% pollock, 13% flatfish, 2% Pacific cod, 1% Atka mackerel, and 5% other species.

Running slightly behind last year's Gulf of Alaska catches, about 56% or 208,000 mt of the 374,000 mt Gulf of Alaska TALFF had been taken as of November 14. Japan has taken 86% of its 219,000 mt allocation; South Korea 84% of its 88,000 mt allocation; and Poland 39% of its 64,000 mt allocation.

Phil Chitwood of NMFS - Juneau noted that percentage species composition of joint venture catches have changed drastically since the first joint venture fisheries off Alaska. In 1979 the total joint venture catch was 1,507 mt, of which 47% was cod, 38% pollock, and 15% other species. By 1981, the catch had grown to 95,408 mt, with 62% pollock, 23% flounders, 10% Pacific cod, and 5% other species.

Domestic Fish Figures

Mark Miller of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reported that Alaskan groundfish landings are up 250% over 1980 with total landings through the end of October of 237.1 million pounds. Eleven percent of the catch was processed by domestic operations, 89% by joint venture processors. About 81% was landed in the Bering Sea.

The 1981 king crab fishery continues to be depressed with a total Alaska catch of 76 million pounds as of November 15. This compares to the 1980 total catch of 186 million pounds. Prices vary from \$2.25/pound in Kodiak to \$2/pound in Dutch Harbor.

Tanner crab catches off Alaska are down about 15% from 1980 with a total catch through October of about 105 million pounds, compared to 121.7 million pounds at the same time last year. Most of the 1981 landings came from the Bering Sea.

The preliminary final catch of salmon off Alaska for 1981 was 109,872,300 fish compared to landings of 110,283,100 fish in 1980. A complete report will be given at the January meeting in Juneau.

Enforcement Update

Since the last Council meeting the Coast Guard has issued seven citations and nine reports of violation to three Japanese, one Taiwanese, and four South Korean vessels. Infractions included underlogging, failure to properly maintain readability of vessel international radio call signs, failure to provide a safe boarding ladder, failure to minimize catch of and improper discarding of prohibited species, and failure to properly maintain daily cumulative catch logs and prohibited species disposition logs.

This year through the end of November the Coast Guard had made 273 boardings off Alaska, 22% of which resulted in detection of infractions.

Council Votes to Change Meeting Days

The Council voted to change its traditional meeting days, the fourth Thursday and Friday of the month, to the fourth Wednesday and Thursday of the month. A revised schedule for 1982 meetings will be published as soon as dates and locations are confirmed.

New Council Publications Available

Council Document #18, "Seasonal Use and Feeding Habits of Walruses in the Proposed Bristol Bay Clam Fishery Area" is available by request from the Council's headquarters.

Attached to this Newsletter is a copy of a new publication, "North Pacific Fishery Management Council," which describes the history, operation, and role of the Council in managing the fisheries off Alaska.