

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Clement V. Tillion, Chairman
Jim H. Branson, Executive Director

Suite 32, 333 West 4th Avenue
Post Office Mall Building



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3136DT
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 274-4563
FTS 271-4064

#5-82

May 27, 1982

NEWSLETTER

July Council Meeting Slated for Anchorage

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will meet on Wednesday and Thursday, July 21-22, 1982, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage. The Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting times and locations will be announced later.

The Council will review proposed amendments to the Bering/Chukchi Sea Herring Fishery Management Plan. The Tanner Crab Plan Development Team will present for Council review a "housekeeping" amendment to remove inconsistencies between State and Federal Tanner crab regulations. The Plan Development Team for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery Management Plan will present a draft amendment to establish a Fishery Development Zone north of Unimak Pass. The Council will take final action on the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association proposal included in Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Amendment #11 to establish an exclusive hook and line fishery for sablefish and will consider increasing the Domestic Annual Harvest for pollock in the Gulf of Alaska in order to encourage joint venture development.

All meetings are open to the public.

Council Instructs Herring Plan Development Team to Draft Amendment

The Council voted unanimously to instruct the Herring Plan Development Team to develop an amendment to the Bering/Chukchi Sea Herring FMP, now itself under Secretarial review. The amendment will address conditions under which an offshore fishery will be allowed and make minor technical changes as needed. This amendment was initiated because of a general concern that the plan as now written allows for an offshore foreign fishery on an annual basis if for some reason, environmental or otherwise, the herring optimum yield is not taken inshore or offshore by the domestic fisheries. It was felt that "under-harvesting" in any particular year due to stock assessment, environmental, or other problems does not justify an offshore fishery that cannot target accurately on specific age classes or stocks. The amendment is scheduled for Council review at the July meeting.

Tanner Crab Amendment #8 Up For Council Review in July

The Council instructed the Tanner Crab Plan Maintenance Team to prepare an amendment to the Tanner Crab FMP to eliminate inconsistencies between State and Federal regulations. These inconsistencies deal mainly with fishing seasons, allowable biological catch and optimum yield. The Team will also incorporate a

"framework" approach where such modifications would improve the performance of the plan. The Council will review and possibly approve the amendment for public review at the July Council meeting.

Council Commends Board of Fisheries on 1982 King Crab Regs

The Council commended the Alaska Board of Fisheries for their positive efforts in complying with the Joint Statement of Principles and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King Crab Framework in setting regulations for the 1982 king crab season. Council and Board staffs plan now to work toward streamlining Council/Board interaction in managing the king crab fishery.

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Update

At the May meeting the Council discussed various aspects of the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, including parts of Amendment #11 which were left unresolved after the March meeting. The Council formally adopted its objective for Amendment #11, to manage the sablefish resource to develop the domestic fishery Gulf-wide. Submission of this amendment to Secretarial review will be delayed until after the July Council meeting so that results of the 1982 sablefish pot survey can be considered. The Council delayed action on an Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA) proposal to restrict the sablefish fishery to hook and line gear only east of 140°W until the July meeting so that pot and longline gear groups can have additional time to resolve their differences or present an alternative proposal for Council consideration. The Council adopted the recommendation of the Plan Maintenance Team for determining Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH), Reserve, and Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing (TALFF) and for reapportionment of Reserve and unneeded DAH, as follows:

Derivation of DAH, Reserve, and TALFF Amounts

Initial DAH amounts for each species or species group established for the beginning of the fishing year shall equal the amount of those species harvested by domestic fishermen during the previous year plus any additional amounts the Regional Director projects to be necessary to satisfy the needs of the growing domestic fishery. These supplemental amounts will be based on projected increase in (1) U.S. processing capacity and/or intention to process and (2) U.S. harvesting capacity and/or intention to harvest. The initial reserve amounts for domestic fishery expansion will equal 20 percent of the OY for each species or species group. The TALFF amounts for each species or species group will be established from the following equation: $TALFF = OY - (DAH + Reserve \text{ for domestic fishery expansion})$.

Reapportionment of Reserve and Unneeded DAH

At any time the Regional Director may assess DAH and apportion to DAH any amounts from the reserve for domestic fishery expansion that are needed in order to prevent a closure of the domestic fishery. As soon as practicable after April 1, June 1, August 1, and on such other dates as he determines necessary, the Regional Director may apportion to TALFF any portion of DAH or the reserve for domestic fishery expansion that he determines will not be harvested by United States fishing vessels during the remainder of the fishing year.

When the Regional Director determines that apportionment is required on dates other than those scheduled and that immediate action is necessary to increase a TALFF or DAH amount, he may decide that such an adjustment is to be made without affording a prior opportunity for public comment. Public comments on the necessity for, and the extent of the apportionment, shall then be submitted to the Regional Director for a period of 15 days after the effective date of such action.

The Council did not adopt the ALFA proposal to close the sablefish fishery from December 15 to March 15. The Council voted to add a provision to Amendment #11 for the NMFS Regional Director to issue field orders to adjust time and/or area restrictions on foreign fisheries for conservation reasons. Domestic vessels will be required to report their catch or advise the management agencies by radio or telephone of their departure before leaving Alaskan waters.

The Council heard a report on the status of the Gulf of Alaska pollock resource suggesting that the Equilibrium Yield in the Western and Central areas of the Gulf may now exceed the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). The Council instructed the Plan Development Team to reexamine the MSY and determine if there is sufficient biological information to support an Allowable Biological Catch higher than the current OY in the fishery management plan.

The Council also instructed the Plan Development Team to develop wording to replace Part 5 of Amendment #8, which was officially rejected by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries on January 11, 1982. Part 5 would have given the Regional Director authority to issue field orders to resolve gear conflicts between foreign and domestic fishermen.

NMFS Alaska Region has informed the Council that Amendment #10 to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP will be published in the Federal Register next week and will be effective on June 1. Amendment #10 will eliminate all foreign fishing in the Eastern area of the Gulf of Alaska between Dixon Entrance and 140°W longitude and sets the OY for Pacific Ocean perch at 875 mt, all of which will be designated for the domestic fishery.

Two Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Amendments
to Begin Secretarial Review

The Council voted to send Bering Sea Groundfish Amendment #1, last revised in March 1982, to Washington, D.C. to resume Secretarial review. This amendment began Secretarial review in September 1981, but was suspended after problems were identified in some of its operational concepts. The amendment will initiate a multi-species, ecosystem optimum yield management regime for groundfish in the Bering Sea.

Amendment #5, which will limit the foreign incidental catch of chinook salmon to 45,500 fish in 1983 in accordance with the reduction schedule already approved by the Council, will also be sent to Secretarial review.

The Council instructed the Plan Maintenance Team to develop an amendment to establish a U.S. Fishery Development Zone north of Unimak Pass to protect areas of heavy fish concentrations traditionally favored by U.S. trawl and pot fishermen. The draft amendment is scheduled for Council review at the July meeting.

Council Adopts Policy for Joint Venture Permit Review

The Council adopted a policy for the review of joint venture permits. The following is a summary of that policy:

The North Pacific Council has responsibility under the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act for assuring the conservation and wise use of fishery stocks in its area of jurisdiction and to foster the development of the U.S. fishery for those stocks currently underutilized by this country, even though they may be fully exploited by other nations. The Council believes that it is in the greatest national interest for the resource to be both harvested and processed by U.S. industry. However, until the domestic industry can both harvest and process the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), the Council will encourage joint ventures between Americans and foreigners that will increase U.S. participation in the utilization of these resources, provided that such joint ventures will not adversely affect the development of totally domestic harvesting and processing operations focused upon the same species. Believing that the best foundation for a successful joint venture is mutual profitability to the partners, the Council will consider the performance record of joint ventures when reviewing project proposals and allocations. Future allocations will depend upon the degree to which those operations have demonstrated good faith satisfaction of commitments to U.S. fishermen and the U.S. fishing industry. Joint venture projects are expected to make realistic allocation requests which will be within their capability for harvesting and processing.

When reviewing permit applications from foreign processors asking to receive deliveries of raw or semi-processed fish from U.S. fishermen (and requesting the amount of fish they expect to receive), the Council will consider criteria such as the applicant's history of participation in fisheries off Alaska and the rest of the United States, including length of participation; species and volume taken; compliance with U.S. laws and treaty agreements; cooperation in scientific studies of the resource off Alaska; technology transfer; extent to which they purchase finished fishery products from the U.S.; and trade barriers to U.S. fishery products by the applicant country. The Council will also consider the applicant's history in joint ventures with U.S. fishermen or companies.

Joint ventures will only be considered for species and resources that are not being fully utilized by U.S. industry. The Council will continue to give priority to fishery operations that are wholly American through whatever management measures are reasonable and equitable. When a resource no longer has a surplus for foreign allocation, the Council intends to phase out joint ventures involving foreign processing as rapidly as is consistent with good management and the intent of the MFCMA.

Council Speaks Out in Support of Direct Allocations to Polish and Soviet Joint Venture Processors

The Council will send letters to the Department of State in Washington, D.C. in support of granting small direct allocations to Polish and Soviet joint venture processors. These allocations would be used only in the event that U.S. fishermen cannot provide fish due to weather conditions, mechanical problems, or other factors beyond their control. The Council realizes that small direct allocations for this purpose can provide the safety valve for profitability to foreign processors participating in joint ventures.

Foreign Fisheries Update

The National Marine Fisheries Service reported that through the end of April, 25% (195,568 mt) of the 792,510 mt Bering Sea groundfish TALFF had been taken. At the same time last year, 21% of the TALFF had been utilized. Pollock comprised over 78% of the catch; flounders 15.2%, Pacific cod 2.1%, and all other species 4.3%.

By the end of April only 11% (12,916 mt) of the 113,612 mt Gulf of Alaska groundfish TALFF had been taken. Approximately 20% of the Gulf TALFF had been utilized at the same time last year. Seventy-two percent of the 1982 catch was Pacific cod; 22.5% pollock; 3.1% sablefish; and 2.4% other species.

NMFS Enforcement reported that although the number of foreign vessels off Alaska has continued its normal decline for this time of year, a dramatic increase is expected in late May/early June with the arrival of the Japanese mothership fleets.

On Monday, May 17, forty observers were working aboard vessels off Alaska: four in joint ventures; 21 on Japanese vessels in the eastern and central Bering Sea; 10 on Korean vessels in the Bering Sea; and one on the West German FRIEDRICH BUSSE.

Coast Guard Capers

The Coast Guard reported that since the March Council meeting the Coast Guard has issued 23 reports of violation and 10 citations for various MFCMA infractions to 24 Japanese and four South Korean vessels. Additionally, the Japanese stern trawler DAIEI MARU NO. 2 was seized in the central Bering Sea for underlogging its total catch by 30 mt or 12%.

Council Awards Contract for Study of Halibut Limited Entry

Upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Council awarded the contract for a study of halibut limited entry to Northwest Resources Analysis of Seattle. Work will begin in June and the final report is due by the end of December. Public hearings will be conducted in January 1983.

Update on Joint Venture Activity

As of April 30, joint ventures had harvested 10,113 mt in the Bering Sea and 77,508 mt in the central Gulf of Alaska.

The Marine Resources yellowfin sole fishery began on April 17 and is now operating with five processors and seven catcher vessels in Bristol Bay. Marine Resources' Atka mackerel fishery with the mothership SULAK began on May 12 and is working in the Segum Pass area of the Aleutians. Both fisheries are expected to continue into September.

The Polish joint venture with Mrs. Paul's Kitchen began with three to four trawlers on March 20 and will end in June. A fifth trawler is scheduled to join the operation at Unimak shortly.

The West German FRIEDRICH BUSSE and four U.S. trawlers have taken 2,500 mt of cod and 1,100 mt of pollock since February 27. They are fishing in the Unimak Pass area.

The joint venture between Fish Producers Associates and Korea Wonyang Fisheries ended on April 25 with a total catch of 32,000 mt, mostly pollock. Their original target was 30,000 mt.

Universal Seafoods and Nippon Suisan concluded their first operation on April 27 after 47 days of fishing near Unimak Pass and Shelikof Straits. The AMERICAN NO. 1 and STARWARD delivered 9,908 mt, mostly pollock, to the Japanese factoryship KONGO MARU. The second operation, which hopes to catch and process another 10,000 mt, will begin on June 7 in the Bering Sea.

Westward Trawlers and Taiyo Fishery Company completed their first 10,000 mt operation on April 4 and began fishing on a second 10,000 mt quota. They are currently fishing in the Bering Sea. As of May 15 the catch totaled 15,060 mt of pollock, 95% food grade fish. Operations have continued without loss of codends, damage to vessels, or injury to personnel. The partners expect to reach their goal of 20,000 mt by June 5.

On April 20 Joint Venture Fisheries, Ltd. and their Korean partner, the North Pacific Joint Fishing Operating Committee of the Korea Deep Sea Fishing Association, successfully concluded their operation with a total catch of 16,321 mt of pollock, primarily from the Shelikof Straits area.

Open Groundfish Team Meetings Scheduled

The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan Maintenance Team will meet on June 23 at 10 a.m. at the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center to discuss the proposed fishery development zone and year-round foreign longlining in the Winter Halibut Savings Area.

The Gulf of Alaska Groundfish PMT will meet on June 25 at 8:30 a.m. at the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center to discuss the Maximum Sustainable Yield and Allowable Biological Catch for pollock in the Gulf of Alaska, the Equilibrium Yield for sablefish Gulf-wide, and the proposed exclusion of all foreign longlining for sablefish in the Eastern Regulatory Area.