

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

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

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



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

#6-82

NEWSLETTER

August 1, 1982

## Council Meets in Anchorage

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met on July 21-22, 1982 at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage. The Council heard reports on the various fisheries, reviewed and took action on several fishery management plans, and approved the Council's budget for FY 83. Highlights of the meeting follow:

### Council's 50th Meeting To Be in Sitka

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will convene its 50th meeting at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, September 21, 1982, in the Sitka Centennial Building. The meeting will adjourn by noon on Thursday, September 23. An evening session on Tuesday is scheduled for public hearings on the troll salmon fishery. The Council will accept testimony on other subjects by agenda item during the meeting.

Both the Advisory Panel and the Scientific and Statistical Committee meetings will begin at 2 p.m. on Monday, September 20, and continue on Tuesday, the 21st, at the Centennial Building.

On the agenda will be final Council action on Amendment #8 to the Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan, intended to remove differences between State and Federal Tanner crab regulations; final Council action on Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Amendment #6, which proposes to establish a domestic Fishery Development Zone closed to foreign fishing north of Unimak Pass and allow foreign longlining at depths of less than 500 meters in the Winter Halibut Savings Area from December 1 through May 31; and a report by NMFS Central Office staff on the progress of Secretarial review of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King Crab Fishery Management Plan. The Council is also scheduled to receive reports on the 1982 Southeast Alaska troll fishery and preliminary results of the NMFS king crab trawl survey in the Bering Sea.

The September Council meeting is a very important one and the usual heavy attendance is expected. As a reminder, flight schedules into Sitka are significantly reduced in the fall and winter months. Plane reservations should be made well in advance. Following are the scheduled flights to and from Sitka from Seattle and Anchorage:

From Seattle to Sitka

daily Alaska 65 leaves Seattle 7:10 am  
arrives Sitka 11:45 am (3 stops)

daily Alaska 67 leaves Seattle 1:00 pm  
arrives Sitka 4:00 pm (1 stop)

Returning from Sitka to Seattle

daily Alaska 62 leaves Sitka 1:20 pm  
arrives Seattle 4:10 pm (1 stop)

M,W,F Alaska 66 leaves Sitka 8:25 pm  
arrives Seattle 10:30 pm (non-stop)

From Anchorage to Sitka

daily Alaska 62 leaves Anchorage 8:10 am  
arrives Sitka 12:45 pm (1 stop)

Returning from Sitka to Anchorage

daily Alaska 67 leaves Sitka 4:35 pm  
arrives Anchorage 5:05 pm (1 stop)

Council Reaffirms Position on Moratorium  
on New Entries to Alaska Halibut Fishery

The International Pacific Halibut Commission reported that the 1982 halibut season was even shorter than the truncated 1981 season, with the number of vessels again increasing. Off Southeastern Alaska the quota was caught in only five days, compared to seven days in 1981. As recently as 1977 the season lasted 73 days.

The Council renewed its strong recommendation to the Department of Commerce for a moratorium on new entries to the halibut fleet well in advance of the 1983 fishing season. While this action will not turn back the clock to earlier days of fewer vessels and longer seasons, it will keep the present serious situation from worsening by stemming the flood of new vessels into the fishery. The Council proposes that this moratorium be imposed at once to give both the Council and the public time to consider management alternatives to improve the quality and price of halibut to the consumer and stabilize the fishery so participants can expect reasonable returns on their investment and efforts.

The Council began its study of the halibut fishery in 1979 after representatives of the halibut fleet expressed their concern to the Council about shorter seasons, even though the resource was showing improvement. They were afraid that it would soon be impossible for a fishermen to earn a major share of his income from hook and line halibut fishing, even though the resource had supported a halibut fleet since the turn of the century. The Council formed a workgroup of halibut fishermen, industry representatives, and the regulatory agencies, including the Halibut Commission and the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, to search for solutions to the problem. They met several

times in 1979 - 1981, concentrating their efforts on limited entry systems similar to those used by the State of Alaska and British Columbia. Neither system had been entirely successful in stopping the increase in effort in their fisheries. Although the number of participants was stabilized, fishing effort was not controlled by either system.

The situation in the halibut fishery continued to deteriorate. In 1981 the entire catch in the Gulf of Alaska was taken in less than two weeks. Consumer prices rose and quality deteriorated because of long storage times before it reached the market. The staff of the International Pacific Halibut Commission is concerned because the short seasons may have put too much pressure on some parts of the halibut stocks while not utilizing other parts. Their ability to manage the fishery is curtailed because there is so much fishing effort the quota can be exceeded in a day or so of fishing.

At the annual meeting of the International Pacific Halibut Commission in Seattle in February 1982 the American members of the Fishermen's Conference Board, a group of fishermen representatives from all over the North Pacific, developed a consensus on a request for limited entry based on a "fishermen's share" system and brought that consensus to the North Pacific Council at their meeting in March. The Council responded by developing a research proposal which they subsequently sent out to bid that asked for a study of limited entry systems for the hook and line halibut fishery off Alaska that would accomplish the following purposes:

1. Distribute the hook and line halibut fishery in time and space to insure resource conservation.
2. Provide high quality fresh and frozen fish to the consumer twelve months of the year.
3. Encourage development of an economically viable and efficient year-round U.S. hook and line fishery that would make it possible for some fishermen to earn a major share of their income from hook and line halibut fishing and is made up of owner/operator rights holders.
4. Make sure that no single individual or entity acquires excessive control of the resource and minimize disruption of the present fleet by using past performance to distribute initial rights in the fishery, using the market to transfer fishing rights after initial distribution.

The Council also asked for a moratorium on participation in the 1982 halibut season; however, the halibut legislation then in Congress did not pass until May 17, too late to institute a moratorium. As mentioned earlier, the Council is again urging a moratorium to be in effect well before the 1983 season.

The halibut fishery off Alaska is still managed by the International Pacific Halibut Commission, three members each from the United States and Canada, who employ a permanent staff of Canadian and American biologists based in Seattle to do the research and develop management measures for the fishery. The Commission recommends to the member countries the seasons and regulations for the fishery each year, Canada and the United States then adopt those by national regulation. The fishery is controlled by Federal regulations

wherever it may occur, in State waters or the FCZ. The Commission does not have the power to impose special restrictions on the nationals of either country. In the United States, that power rests in the Department of Commerce; the recently passed Halibut Act (PL 97-176) allows the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to develop a limited entry system as a recommendation to the Secretary of Commerce, who may then implement it. The Council, on the other hand, does not have the authority to change seasons, size limits, allocations, etc. That is a responsibility of the Federal government based on the recommendations of the IPHC.

The contract for a study of limited entry between the Council and Northwest Resources Analysis signed on June 17, 1982 calls for an analysis of known limited entry systems and their ability to achieve the previously described objectives, with further detailed study of the fishermen's share system. Emphasis on that system is made for two reasons: (1) It is the system currently favored by a fairly large segment of the halibut industry; and (2) more is known about other limited entry systems, their problems and advantages, than is known about the share system. The share system has not been used for a fishery of any magnitude, though British Columbia will institute a share system for halibut in 1983. We will have some benefit from their experience. Other systems to be analyzed include a permit system similar to the one used in Alaska which places restrictions on the holder and the British Columbia system that ties the permit to a vessel tonnage limit.

The "share" system being studied by the contractor can be likened to shares of common stock in that they represent a specific portion of the resource and could be traded and sold the stock shares. Because an individual fisherman would not have to compete in time against all the other fishermen in the fishery, he should be able to concentrate on efficiency in harvesting his share of the resource. Long seasons should be possible so halibut could be fished whenever available, which is most of the year. Fishermen would be able to pick their fishing time to fit with other fisheries, better market conditions, equipment availability, and weather conditions. The present fishery of very short, intense periods forces fishermen to take unnecessary chances to fish the full period. An engine or equipment failure can mean the loss of the entire season and market conditions are never at their best when an entire year's catch is landed in a few days. Those, at any rate, are some of the perceived advantages of the share system.

Any limited entry system has disadvantages. Entry into the fishery by newcomers will be more difficult. Precautions will have to be taken to ensure that no one can monopolize the fishery. The cost of administration and enforcement can exceed the benefits.

Phase I of the contract was finished in July with a report at the Council meeting. Phase I identified the numbers of fishermen and boats which have participated in the halibut fishery since 1979 by port, area fished, vessel size and other characteristics, and the impacts on these groups of various criteria for eligibility to fish for halibut. The Council is also working on a parallel study of probable impacts of limited entry on the fishing industry and local communities. The Council gave some further direction to the contractor for Phase II, asking him to assess the impact of the following qualifying schemes:

1. Fishermen who made at least one delivery in at least one of the years 1979 - 81.
2. Fishermen who made at least one delivery, delivered over 200 pounds, over 500 pounds, and over 1,000 pounds in each of the three years 1979 to 1981.
3. Fishermen who delivered at least once, delivered over 200 pounds, over 500 pounds, and over 1,000 pounds in any two of the four years 1979 to 1982.
4. Fishermen who delivered in at least three of the four years 1978 to 1981.

They also suggested that the number of shares initially granted to a fisherman be based on his best, not his average, catch when multiple years determine share size. They recommended using 200 pounds as a working unit share size, but did not make a recommendation for an appropriate share size for transfer, etc. The Council was told by their legal staff that participation by fishermen in 1982 must be considered in any limited entry system developed, although it need not be given the same weight as participation in other years.

Phase II of the contract should be completed by the December Council meeting. Following receipt of that report, the Council will schedule public hearings to determine (1) if a limited entry system is the best approach to the problems of the halibut fishery, and (2) if the answer to the first question is positive, what form of limited entry should be used and the details of that particular system. Public hearing schedules will probably be announced in December.

#### Council Policy on PMT/PDT Operations Adopted

The Council revised its policy on plan team composition, tasking and operations as recommended by the SSC. A Plan Team will be appointed for each major fishery for which a fishery management plan is being developed or has been implemented, and will be composed primarily of representatives of those agencies having major roles in research and management of the fishery. The Council feels that teams should be small enough to work efficiently but large enough to provide the expertise needed to cover a fishery. For tasks beyond the team's ability or manpower, team members will serve as primary contacts to draw on agency resources as necessary and appropriate.

Plan Teams will prepare plans and amendments and coordinate preparation of supporting documents (EISs, RIRs, etc.); evaluate public and industry proposals and comments; evaluate data related to the biological and socioeconomic implications of the plan or amendment; monitor the fishery and status of stocks; the effectiveness of management measures in achieving the plan's objectives; and recommend when and how management measures need to be changed.

Team meetings will be conducted in conformance with the Council's Statement of Operating Policies and Procedures approved in July 1981.

### Council Sets Meeting Schedule for 1983

The Council approved the following schedule of seven meetings for 1983, six in Anchorage and one in Juneau.

January 3-7 (with the Board)	Juneau
February 23-24 (Council only)	Anchorage
March 22-25 (with the Board)	Anchorage
May 25-26	Anchorage
July 27-28	Anchorage
September 28-29	Anchorage
December 5-9 (with the Board)	Anchorage

In an effort to reduce operating costs, the Council adopted the policy of holding regular Council meetings in Anchorage, except the January meeting with the Board of Fisheries in Juneau. Because they won't be meeting out of Anchorage, the Council will make a concerted effort to hold more public hearings in fishing communities to stay in better touch with the areas most affected by Council actions.

### Council Votes to Withdraw Herring FMP from Secretarial Review

The Council voted to withdraw the Bering/Chukchi Sea Herring Fishery Management Plan from review by the Secretary of Commerce a second time so the section on the offshore fishery can be revised.

In the current version of the FMP, all of the OY remaining after the inshore commercial harvest is allocated to the offshore fishery. Revisions approved by the Council at this meeting provide additional safeguards for stocks found offshore. The new formula for calculating OY offshore will reduce any surplus left after the inshore fishery by one-half. The offshore allocation will then be further reduced by subtracting from it the Allowable Incidental Catch (AIC) rather than treating AIC as part of the calculation of the surplus, as currently provided in the FMP. Under the new approach, OY will be calculated only for the FCZ. Inshore harvests and management are controlled by the State of Alaska and catches in State waters, while used to determine OY offshore, are not part of the OY specified in the Plan.

Other revisions say that there is no surplus expected (TALFF = zero) for a directed foreign herring fishery in the FCZ. The Council asked that the initial apportionment to a U.S. food and bait fishery along the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutians as now provided in the Plan be clarified based on the latest available information. The revised FMP is scheduled for Council review at the September meeting.

### Tanner Crab Amendment #8 Goes to Public Review

The Council voted to send Amendment #8 to the Tanner Crab FMP to public review. The proposed amendment is an attempt to solve a number of inconsistencies between State and Federal Tanner crab regulations. The amendment package will be mailed by August 15 and the comment period will continue through the September Council meeting, when the Council is expected to take final action on the amendment.

### Fishery Development Zone Proposal Goes to Public Review

The Council voted to send Amendment #6 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP to public review. It includes a proposal to establish a Fishery Development Zone north of Unimak Pass, closing all foreign fishing in that area to promote the development of domestic operations and a proposal to allow foreign longliners to fish at depths less than 500 meters in the Winter Halibut Savings Area from December 1 to May 31. From 1977 through 1981, foreign longliners fished year-round at all depths in that area, but in 1982 they were banned from fishing in that area at depths less than 500 meters to protect halibut.

The amendment package will be mailed by August 15 and the comment period will continue through the September Council meeting. The Council requests, however, that written comments reach the Council's office by Tuesday, September 14, 1982, so they can be copied for distribution to the Scientific and Statistical Committee and Plan Team before the meeting. Oral comments can be made at the Council meeting.

### Council Approves Swiftsure/Chong Shing Joint Venture

The Council recommended that, with certain restrictions, permits for a joint venture between Swiftsure Fisheries, an affiliate of Koniag, Inc. Alaska, and Chong Shing Ocean Enterprise Corporation of Taiwan be approved. The companies plan to catch and process approximately 8,400 mt of Pacific cod, pollock, and flounder from the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea. Swiftsure will employ the U.S. vessel ROYAL AMERICAN and other U.S. catcher vessels as needed to deliver fish to up to five Taiwanese vessels. The Council stipulated that all fishing in the Gulf of Alaska must be in the Western Regulatory Area and that the GOLDEN DRAGON NO. 1 engage only in processing activities because of its prior obligation to fish with St. George Tanaq in the Pribilofs. A small direct allocation in the Gulf was recommended for the SEA LIGHT so it can fish when U.S. catcher vessels are unable to provide sufficient amounts of raw fish for processing. Operations are scheduled to run from August through December 1982.

### Council Extends a Fond Farewell to Council Member Bart Eaton

The July 1982 Council meeting was the last for Douglas "Bart" Eaton as a voting member of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Eaton, who has been a voting member of the Council since its inception, will complete his final term on August 10, 1982. A driving force toward gaining enactment of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, Bart Eaton's many contributions to fishery management activities off Alaska have not gone unnoticed by fellow Council members or the public. Best of luck, Bart, and many thanks for your hard work and dedication.

## Observer Program Meeting Its Objectives

With a goal of 25% coverage by the end of 1982, the Observer Program has already come a long way from the 10% coverage reported in 1981 to an average of 20% overall coverage at the end of June 1982.

Estimated catches of prohibited species (halibut, salmon, king crab and Tanner crab) in the Bering Sea/Aleutian region through June 1982 are down 49% from 1981 levels, from 3,053 mt in 1981 to 1,545 mt in 1982. Estimated 1982 prohibited species catches for the Gulf of Alaska, on the other hand, are up 27% over 1981 levels, from 739 mt to 1,014 mt in 1982, primarily due to increased catches of halibut. Incidental catches of salmon in the Gulf, however, are down 89%, from 18,520 fish in 1981 to 3,286 fish in 1982.

## Domestic Fisheries Update

Preliminary estimates indicate that 24,845 mt of Pacific herring were harvested in the eastern Bering Sea coastal fishery during 1982. This was the highest harvest since the fishery began in the 1960's. Exploitation of estimated available spawning biomass was 21%; wastage was estimated at less than 500 mt for all districts combined and was attributed primarily to storms and vessel mishaps rather than dumping of unwanted herring. Spawn-on-kelp harvests in Togiak and Norton Sound Districts totaled 141.7 mt. The total value of herring and spawn-on-kelp harvests was \$8 million.

The Southeast Alaska troll fishery opened May 15, closed June 7 for ten days to complement the northern British Columbia closure designed to increase coastwide spawning escapement of depressed natural chinook stocks, and reopened June 17. The troll chinook harvest through July 5 is estimated at 196,000 fish.

As of July 16, 1982, domestic groundfish catches from the Gulf of Alaska were 81,845 mt, compared to 18,942 mt at the same time last year. The 1982 domestic catch from the Bering Sea through May was 29,186 mt, considerably less than the 47,499 mt taken at the same time last year.

## Council Completes Action on Gulf Amendment #11

After reviewing their previous actions on Amendment #11 to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP, the Council acted on unresolved issues. They set the Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) for sablefish in the Gulf of Alaska at 75% of Equilibrium Yield (EY); Optimum Yield (OY) was set equal to ABC. Three management districts were designated for the Eastern Regulatory Area: Western Yakutat, which is the area of west of 140° to 147°W longitude; Eastern Yakutat, between 137° and 140°W longitude; and Southeast, which contains both State and FCZ waters. New EYs and ABCs (in mt) for the Eastern Regulatory Area are as follows:

	<u>EY</u>	<u>ABC</u>
Western Yakutat	2,240	1,680
Eastern Yakutat	1,135	850
Southeast	1,290	970



The Council adopted the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association proposal for an exclusive hook and line fishery for sablefish east of 140°W after pot and longline gear groups failed to reach a compromise on their own. The area affected by this restriction is the Southeast area, from Cape Addington to 140°W longitude.

The amendment will be submitted as soon as possible to the Secretary of Commerce for review. The Council expects that the EY for sablefish in the Gulf will be recalculated and should be available for review at the September meeting. Any changes adopted for the calculation of EY will then be incorporated into the amendment as it continues Secretarial review.

#### Southeastern Domestic Sablefish Fishery to Close August 2

The NMFS Regional Director and Commissioner of ADF&G have issued a joint Field Order/Executive Order closing the southeastern domestic sablefish fishery in the FCZ on August 2. The closure is necessary because the catch will exceed, or already may have exceeded, the ABC and EY and, in fact, will likely exceed last year's harvest of 1,850 tons. State waters inside Southeast will remain open until the guideline harvest level of 500 mt is achieved.

#### Council Increases Pollock OY in Central Gulf

New studies have shown that the pollock biomass in the Central Gulf of Alaska (between 140°W and 159°W) has increased. The Council feels that the stock is capable of producing the current Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in the FMP, 95,000 to 191,000 mt for the Central Gulf, and therefore voted to increase the OY to the mid-point of the MSY range, 143,000 mt for 1983. They asked the Regional Director to use the same OY figure for determining allocations for the remainder of 1982. The 143,000 mt OY for 1983, up from the current 95,000 mt (bottom of the MSY range) will be split for Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH) of 109,400 mt, reserves of 28,600 mt, and a TALFF of 5,000 mt. The amendment is being prepared by Council staff and will be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce as soon as possible.

#### USCG Enforcement Activities

Since the May Council meeting the Coast Guard has issued three reports of violation and two citations to one Japanese longliner, three South Korean stern trawlers, and one Taiwanese stern trawler. Infractions included harassment of NMFS observers, failure to report time and location of independent fishing operations, and catch log irregularities.

Coast Guard surveillance flights during June detected large fleets of foreign vessels in the high seas squid/albacore gillnet fisheries in the vicinity of 40°N 175°W. The majority of the vessels sighted were Japanese, although eight Taiwanese vessels were also observed in the area.

#### Foreign Fisheries Report

Foreign catches in the Bering Sea through June 1982 were 348,104 mt, or 29% of the 1,195,748 mt TALFF. Pollock comprised 78.8% of the catch, flounders 13.9%, Pacific cod 2.2%, and all other species 5.1%.

Foreign catches through June from the Gulf of Alaska totaled 39,423 mt, or 24% of the 165,803 mt TALFF. The majority of the catch was pollock and Pacific cod, at 49.8% and 30.9% respectively, with 5.8% flounders, 3.6% sablefish, 4.6% all rockfish, and 5.3% other species.

The number of foreign vessels operating off Alaska rose sharply with the arrival of the Japanese groundfish and salmon fleets, from 232 at the end of May to 470 by the end of June. By July 15 the number of foreign vessels had fallen to 405, mostly Japanese.

NMFS staff reported that Japanese interceptions of Bristol Bay sockeye salmon were estimated at 63,000 this year, compared to 137,000 last year. Estimates are projected from NMFS observer reports.

#### Joint Venture Update

Joint ventures in the Bering Sea/Aleutians area harvested 45,956 mt through June 26. The 1982 joint venture catch for the Gulf of Alaska stands at 74,503 mt.

U.S./Japan industry discussions held in Seattle in June resulted in a Japanese commitment to buy 120,000 mt of groundfish between June 1, 1982 and May 31, 1983 and 200,000 mt between June 1, 1983 and May 31, 1984.

The Marine Resources yellowfin sole fishery began on April 17 in Bristol Bay. As of July 17 slightly over 21,000 mt of the projected 32,000 mt target had been harvested, with a 10% by-catch of Pacific cod. The MRC Atka mackerel fishery near Segum Pass got off to a slow start due to bad weather. As of July 17 about 9,400 mt had been taken, 65% Atka mackerel, 20% cod, and 15% other species.

The Polish/Mrs. Paul's Kitchen operation ended on June 30 with a total harvest of 7,000 mt, about 29% of their 1982 JVP request of 24,300 mt. Their operations have now moved to the waters off Canada where a direct allocation was granted.

The second 10,000 mt joint venture between Universal Seafoods and Nippon Suisan began on June 7 in the Bering Sea with the U.S. catchers STARWARD and NEAHKAHNIE. As of July 3 the catch was 3,000 mt. The operations have moved to the Pribilof area and should continue through August 5.

The Whitney-Fidalgo/Kyokuyo Fisheries operation ended on July 15 with a harvest of 9,932 mt. Only 22 mt of the catch was non-target species and both partners were well satisfied with the joint venture.

The Jeff Hendricks and Associates/Hoko Fishery Company operation began on May 19 near Unimak Pass and moved to the Pribilofs on June 26. Operations ended on July 6 with a total catch of 11,632 mt, over 99% pollock. The average catch per day was 237.4 mt; average daily catch per boat was 59.3 mt.

The Westward Trawlers/Taiyo Fishery Company joint venture concluded on June 5 with a total catch of 17,000 mt, 98.5% food grade pollock. Mid-water gear was used exclusively to minimize the incidental catch of prohibited species.

Pacific and North Pacific Councils' SSCs to  
Develop Natural Chinook Salmon Stock Policy

The Council will ask its Scientific and Statistical Committee and that of the Pacific Council to draft a policy for the management of natural salmon stocks for consideration by Inter-Council Salmon Coordinating Committee. The adoption of a "common" natural stock policy was also a topic of discussion at the Pacific Council's July meeting.