

COUNCIL UPDATING MAILING LIST

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# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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N E W S L E T T E R

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## Proposals for Groundfish Amendments Given Preliminary Review; Next Review Scheduled for March

At its January 21-22 meeting the Council screened 27 proposed changes to the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery Management Plans and forwarded 15 to the plan teams for further development and analysis. In March the Council will review the 15 proposals and associated analyses to determine which should go out for public review. The Council also will receive its regular reports on foreign and domestic fisheries, Coast Guard enforcement, and joint venture activity. Troll salmon regulations and crab management will also be on the agenda. The Council's Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee will begin on Monday, March 16, and the Council will begin on Wednesday, March 18. All meetings will be held at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel.

## SSC and AP Elect Officers for 1987

Dr. Phillip Mundy and Dr. Richard Marasco were elected chairman and vice chairman, respectively, of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee for the coming year. Dr. Mundy is the Chief Fisheries Scientist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Juneau, Alaska, and Dr. Marasco is Director of the Resource Ecology and Fisheries Management Division of the Northwest & Alaska Fisheries Center in Seattle.

Nancy Munro and Robert Alverson were re-elected to another one-year term as chairman and vice chairman of the Council's Advisory Panel. Ms. Munro is the owner of Salt Water Productions in Anchorage and Mr. Alverson is the director of the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association in Seattle.

## Staff Changes at Council

Denby Lloyd has been hired as the new coordinator for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish management plan. Mr. Lloyd comes to the Council after working several years in the Habitat Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. He fills the vacancy left by Jim Glock who is now Chief Staff Assistant at the Pacific Fishery Management Council in Portland, Oregon.

## Non-profit Fishery Foundation Begins to Take Shape

The Council received a report of a meeting held on Sunday, January 18, to discuss the need for and creation of a private, non-profit fishery foundation to fund fisheries research and data gathering. At the meeting, presentations were given on data needs, agency funding problems, what is possible under current law, legislative approaches, and possible structure of a foundation.

In addition, a steering committee was appointed consisting of Council member Oscar Dyson, and Advisory Panel members Barry Fisher, Ron Hegge, Ron Peterson, and Rich White. They will draft a resolution regarding the creation of the non-profit fisheries foundation and its project priorities. The resolution will then be sent to the commercial fishing industry for review. A public meeting will be held in Anchorage in conjunction with the March 18-20 Council meeting to discuss and act on the resolution.

#### Halibut Management Proposals for 1987

The Council reviewed International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) staff proposals for changes in halibut regulations for 1987 as well as several industry proposals requesting Council support for exclusive area registration around Atka Island and within Bristol Bay, opening a portion of the now-closed "nursery area" in Bristol Bay, and implementing vessel clearance requirements, vessel size limitations and hold inspections. By a vote of 8 to 2, the Council adopted the Advisory Panel's recommendations on these matters, as summarized below:

#### Atka Proposal

The Council stated its support for fishery development in small coastal communities. To aid the fishermen of Atka in achieving reasonable access to the halibut resource in Area 4B, the Council recommended that IPHC manage Areas 4A and 4B as discrete stocks. Also, IPHC's Conference Board should fully consider adopting an opening scheme for Area 4B similar to that used in Areas 4C and 4E.

#### Bristol Bay Proposal

Regarding the proposed opening of the Bristol Bay nursery area to commercial fishing, the Council is mainly concerned with the impacts on the juvenile halibut stocks. This biological issue falls within the sole jurisdiction of IPHC.

#### Hold Inspections

The Council encouraged IPHC to explore all methods that would minimize unlawful fishing, including preseason hold inspections.

#### Groundfish Proposals to be Analyzed

The Council received 27 proposals for amendments to the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery Management Plans for processing in this year's groundfish amendment cycle. The cycle calls for the Council to determine in January which, if any, of the proposals received should be forwarded to the plan teams for further development and analysis.

At last week's meeting the Council instructed the plan teams to analyze 15 of the 27 proposals and report back in March. The Council will then decide which proposals to send out for public review. Final decisions are scheduled for May, and those proposals that pass muster should be implemented by early November.

The plan teams will meet on March 5-6 in Seattle to finalize the public review package. The 15 proposals that the plan teams will analyze include the following:

#### Gulf of Alaska

- (1) Analyze options for limited entry in the longline sablefish fishery.
- (2) Establish a sablefish size limit to increase maximum sustainable yield from the resource.
- (3) Establish reporting requirements to help verify at-sea transfers of groundfish catch.
- (4) Clarify the term "prohibited species".
- (5) Revise the definition of acceptable biological catch.
- (6) Establish a framework procedure to set fishing seasons without plan amendment.
- (7) Expand the existing halibut prohibited species bycatch framework to include salmon and crab.
- (8) Reorganize and update the Gulf groundfish FMP.

#### Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

- (1) Establish priority access for domestic processors around Dutch Harbor.
- (2) Raise the upper limit of the optimum yield range from 2 million to 2.4 million metric tons.
- (3) Prohibit pollock roe-stripping operations.
- (4) Establish a sablefish size limit to increase maximum sustainable yield from the resource.
- (5) Establish reporting requirements to verify at-sea transfers of groundfish catch.
- (6) Clarify the term "prohibited species".
- (7) Revise the definition of acceptable biological catch.

The sablefish limited entry proposal for the Gulf of Alaska will undoubtedly require a great deal of input from the fishing industry. Testimony from longline fishermen and processors indicated that the sablefish fishery requires some form of effort control. At this time it is uncertain whether the plan team will be able to fully develop and analyze this proposal by the March Council meeting. More time and a separate implementation schedule may be needed. In the meantime, the Council has requested affected industry participants to meet and develop an effort control scheme that the majority of the industry could support.

The proposal for priority access for U.S. processors in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands also may require additional industry input and time for analysis. At a minimum, the plan team will present a status report on this proposal to the Council in March.

#### Help Available for Cod IQs

The U.S.-Japan industry-to-industry agreement, hammered out in late November, called for greatly increased access by U.S. groundfish processors to Japanese markets. Increased markets for Pacific cod were of particular concern to the Council when it recommended directed cod allocations to the Japanese to encourage compliance with the agreement. At the January Council meeting, Paul MacGregor, representing the Japan Longline Gillnet Association, offered his assistance in gaining cod import quotas for U.S. processors. For further information he may be contacted at (206) 624-5950.

#### Seattle Crab Meetings Set

The Council's Crab Management Committee, established to oversee the development of a new crab management plan for king and Tanner crab, will meet March 3-4 in Seattle, at the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center at Sand Point. They will review progress of the plan team in drafting the new plan and then report to the Council later in March. In conjunction with the committee meeting, the Council will hold its annual public hearing on king crab proposals the afternoon of March 4. Further details on these meetings will be available later in February.

#### New Bycatch Workgroup Organizes Agenda for 1987

The Council's new workgroup on bycatch met Friday, January 23, to discuss its objective and tasking, and its agenda for 1987. In attendance were: Larry Cotter--Chairman, Rich White, Ted Evans, Bob Alverson, Chris Blackburn, Arni Thomson, Harold Thompson and Bill Jacobson. Workgroup members Bill Woods, Barry Fisher and Ed Fuglvog were unable to attend. The workgroup is an extension of the Advisory Panel/Industry Tanner Crab Bycatch Subcommittee which worked on Tanner crab bycatch problems in the Bering Sea yellowfin sole/flatfish fishery in 1986. The workgroup identified data needs during the meeting and directed staff to prepare further information. They will meet next during the March 16-20 Council meeting in Anchorage.

#### Groundfish Industry to be Surveyed

In September 1986 the Council approved sending out a Request for Proposals for an industry survey on groundfish management alternatives. Nine potential contractors responded to the RFP and last week the Council awarded the contract to Dittman Research Corporation and Graystar Technical Services. The contractor will develop a questionnaire on management alternatives and this spring will survey components of the U.S. groundfish industry involved in Alaska fisheries. Survey results should be available to the Council in June.

Meeting Dates to Note

Following is a listing of meetings which may be of interest to you:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
Feb. 4/5	NMFS Southwest Region Economists Mtg	San Diego
Feb. 6 (2 p.m.)	Pacific Seafood Processors' Assn. - hosted industry meeting to discuss activities of the U.S. Trade Office  3rd Floor Conference Room Icicle Court Building 4019 21st Avenue West	Seattle
Feb. 8-13	Pacific Salmon Commission	Vancouver
Feb. 21- March 1	Pacific Salmon Commission	Seattle
March 3-4	Crab Management Committee and King Crab Public Hearing	Seattle
March 5-6	Joint GOA/BSAI Groundfish Plan Team Meeting	Seattle
March 16-20	North Pacific Fishery Mgmt Council Meeting	Anchorage
March 25-27	Western Groundfish Conference	Oregon
April 20	Yukon Salmon Negotiations	Anchorage