

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

and

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF PROPOSED GROUND FISH AMENDMENTS

Council Readies Groundfish Proposals for Public Review

The Council met in Anchorage the week of March 25 and reviewed proposed changes to its groundfish plans along with supporting analyses of associated potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts. These documents were approved to go out for 30-day public review commencing April 4. A summary of the proposed changes is attached to this newsletter which also serves as a Notice of Availability for the proposed amendments.

The Council addressed the problem of having to close all groundfish fisheries in a regulatory area in the Gulf of Alaska when the optimum yield for any one species is attained, approved several Japanese joint venture requests for yellowfin sole, and reviewed actions by the Alaska Board of Fisheries on crab management. The Council also recommended a directed fishing allocation of pollock to South Korea in the Gulf of Alaska, but did not make any recommendation on allocations to Japan. These and other items are discussed in this newsletter.

Groundfish Major Topic of May Council Meeting

The next Council meeting is scheduled for May 21-24 at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage, with the possibility that it may continue into Saturday, May 25. They will review public comments received on proposed amendments to the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska groundfish management plans and the supporting environmental and regulatory analyses, then decide which proposals will be sent forward to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation.

The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will begin meeting on Sunday, May 19, and the Advisory Panel on Monday, May 20, both at the Sheraton. A draft agenda for the meeting should be available by May 6.

Public Review begins on Proposed Groundfish Amendments

The Council has approved proposals and alternatives for amendments to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska groundfish plans and their associated Draft Environmental Assessments (DEAs) and Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analyses (RIR/IRFAs) for public review and comment. These documents were prepared by the groundfish Plan Teams. A summary is included at the end of this newsletter.

The comment period begins April 4 and all comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. (Alaska time) May 3. The Council is seeking any additional information available on the issues and alternatives so that the DEAs and RIR/IRFAs can be expanded and improved prior to Council deliberations in May. New information will be addressed only if it arrives at the Council office prior to the close of the comment period. At the May meeting the Council will hear public testimony on these issues and alternatives; however, testimony will be limited to clarification of earlier written testimony and recommendations for Council action.

The amendment schedule is attached to the amendment summary. The entire amendment package for each FMP is available from the Council office upon request. Please call the Council office at (907) 274-4563 to expedite your request.

Council Discusses Single Species OY Closures

And DAP Apportionments

Gulf of Alaska groundfish regulations require all groundfish fisheries close in a management area when the optimum yield (OY) for any one species is attained. That requirement could impact the development of fisheries for more abundant species by domestic fishermen. The problem has surfaced already this season when the sablefish fishery was closed in the Southeast and East Yakutat Districts on March 18. By regulation, all further fishing on the other ten target species or species groups identified in the fishery management plan should also end, preventing continuation of the Southeast rockfish fishery even though rockfish OY remains.

The regulation is intended to prevent the incidental harvest of a groundfish species after its OY has been reached. For some species in the Gulf of Alaska the OY is equal to the equilibrium yield (EY), the catch which maintains the resource at current levels. For others the OY is set below EY to rebuild the resource. Allowing a harvest, incidental or otherwise, beyond OY undermines attempts to rebuild the resource in the latter case or leads to overfishing in the former.

After considerable public testimony and discussion, the Council directed the plan team to develop a regulatory amendment which would resolve the problem for consideration in May. Until then the Council recommended that the National Marine Fisheries Service manage the directed fisheries in such a way as to provide bycatch amounts to non-target fisheries but still not exceed OY. Under this guidance directed fisheries would be closed prior to achieving OY, thereby providing a small amount of fish for bycatch in other fisheries. Once both the directed and bycatch amounts of OY are harvested, the area would be closed to further groundfish fishing.

For Western and Central Gulf sablefish, where the OYs are higher and there is a larger variety of gear and non-target fisheries, NMFS was asked to close the directed sablefish fishery at 92% of the OY, leaving 8% for bycatch. Of the bycatch, 5% of the OY is apportioned to domestic trawlers and 3% to all other gears. Upon reaching the 92% level, the Council authorized a catch limit of 250 lbs. per vessel per week to slow the harvest of the remaining bycatch. These measures were suggested by an ad-hoc industry workgroup and accepted by the Council as an interim measure for the 1985 season. A long-term solution will be pursued during the 1986 amendment cycle. The 1985 sablefish apportionments would be as follows (mt):

<u>Area</u>	<u>OY</u>	<u>Directed Apportionment 92%</u>	<u>Bycatch Apportionment 8%</u>
Western Gulf	1,670	1,536	134
Central Gulf	3,060	2,815	245

King Crab Action

Because of budget problems and scheduling conflicts the Alaska Board of Fisheries was not able to meet with the Council this year to discuss crab issues. The Board and Council do intend to meet together in the future. A joint public hearing in Seattle on March 2 was poorly attended by the crab industry. The North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners' Association recommended the Seattle hearings be discretionary rather than mandatory in the future. The Council directed the Plan Team to draft an FMP amendment to implement this change.

The King Crab Fishery Management Plan does not require Council action unless the Board adopts a regulation that requires an amendment to the management framework. All the Board actions fell within the framework this year. They adopted new season opening dates (see below), reduced the Adak brown crab size limit from 6½" to 6", and made the Dutch Harbor brown crab fishery non-exclusive. Pot storage on the grounds will be allowed for seven days following a Bering Sea closure (except Norton Sound). The Board adopted the following opening dates:

	<u>Adopted</u>	<u>Was</u>
Norton Sound (Q)	Aug. 1 and Jan. 1	(Aug. 1 and Jan. 1)
St. Lawrence (Q)	Aug. 1	(Sept. 1)
St. Matthew (Q)	Sept. 1	(Sept. 1)
Pribilof (Q)	Sept. 25	(Oct. 1)
Bristol Bay (T)	Sept. 25 - red and blue	(Oct. 1)
Adak (R)	Nov. 1	(Nov. 10)
Dutch Harbor	Nov. 1 - red and blue	(Nov. 10)

Crab Stocks Continue in Poor Condition

A report on the current status of king and Tanner crab stocks by the National Marine Fisheries Service said recent surveys indicate some evidence of rebuilding in Bristol Bay but crab stocks in general remain in poor condition. A preliminary forecast for Bristol Bay king crab estimates the 1985 commercial harvest at 2 to 7 million pounds. The 1984 king crab catch was 4.2 million pounds; 1985 won't be much different. Stocks around the Pribilof Islands remain critical, there may not be a commercial fishery this year. The St. Matthew area is expected to continue producing low harvests of about 2 million pounds.

The abundance of prerecruit and legal male C. bairdi Tanner crab in the Bering Sea has been declining since 1975. Commercial harvests have also declined and many fishermen have switched from bairdi to C. opilio Tanner crab. Abundance of prerecruit and legal male C. opilio has increased from 22 to 74 million crab. However, while abundance of large C. opilio will remain high in 1985 NMFS surveys indicate some weaker prerecruit age classes will reduce recruitment into the fishery in two to three years. Fishermen harvested approximately 24 million pounds of C. opilio in 1984. Harvests in 1985 will probably be more dependent on market conditions than on availability of Tanner crab.

Council Approves Joint Ventures

The Council approved six Japanese joint venture requests totaling 19,730 mt. This includes 16,400 mt yellowfin sole and flounders and about 2,500 mt Pacific cod, all in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. The six company arrangements include Nippon Suisan/Universal Seafoods (4,880 mt), Kanai Fisheries/Westward Trawlers (1,940 mt), Nichiro/Peter Pan Seafoods (5,250 mt), Taiyo/Westward Trawlers (3,340 mt), Hokkaido/Alaska Fisheries (2,220 mt), and Japan Small Trawlers/ Alaska Contact (2,100 mt). These joint ventures will put more than 25 U.S. trawlers to work as early as April 25.

These requests follow up on commitments made in December 1984 by the Japanese industry when negotiating with representatives of the U.S. fishing and processing industry. In return for substantial allocations of groundfish off Alaska, the Japanese committed to purchase 430,000 mt pollock and 30,000 mt other species in joint ventures and to purchase at least 35,000 mt round weight equivalent of surimi from U.S. processors during 1985. With the above joint ventures on yellowfin sole and flounders approved, the Japanese appear to be well on their way to successful fulfillment of their joint venture obligations.

Joint Venture Update

The total joint venture catch off Alaska through March 9, 1985 was 151,160 mt. In the Gulf of Alaska, joint venture trawlers harvested 139,820 mt pollock, 764 mt Pacific cod, 11 mt Pacific ocean perch, 34 mt flatfish and 1,793 mt other groundfish, for a total of 142,422 mt. In the Bering Sea and Aleutians, the joint venture harvest was 8,738 mt including 2,300 mt pollock, 5,726 mt Pacific cod, 572 mt flatfish and 140 mt of other species. There were about 75 U.S. trawlers involved in these harvests.

Taiwan Proposes Squid Regulations to Control Salmon Interceptions

Last December the Council approved joint ventures between Taiwan and Alaska Contact and St. George Tanaq for 9,000 mt contingent upon the Government of Taiwan taking steps to reduce the interception of salmon by its high seas squid gillnet fleet. Draft regulations were reviewed in February and then again at this meeting. They include a ban on the retention of any salmon taken between 145°W and 170°E longitudes and prohibit fishing north of a boundary that seasonally varies between 40° and 46°N and is designed to keep squid fishermen out of colder waters frequented by salmon. To the west of 170°E squid fishermen can only use jigging gear but may retain any salmon caught. The full text of these and other draft provisions are available from the Council office.

Given these apparent efforts to reduce salmon interceptions, the Council recommended approval of the joint venture requests by Taiwan. Next December the Council will closely review Taiwan's progress in implementing the proposed regulations before granting any fishing privileges off Alaska for 1986.

Foreign Fish Allocations Reviewed

The Council reviewed a request by South Korea for a directed fishery on pollock in the Gulf of Alaska. So far this year only Japan has been able to fish in the Gulf and they are restricted to off bottom trawling for pollock and longlining for Pacific cod. After reviewing South Korea's progress toward purchasing 177,000 mt in joint ventures this year, the Council recommended a 10,000 mt pollock allocation and specified that the tonnage be taken out of the 12,500 mt unallocated TALFF, noting that TALFF could be increased from the 23,000 mt of reserves later in the year if it was not needed by U.S. industry. A similar request by Poland for directed fishing privileges in the Gulf was turned down by the Council because of large bycatches of salmon by the Poles late last year in their directed and joint venture fisheries.

The Council noted that Japan had yet to make final arrangements for the promised purchases of surimi from U.S. processors and provide the required import quotas into Japan during 1985. Contracts totaling 35,000 mt (round weight) were supposed to have been signed by March 31. The Council made no recommendation on further allocations of groundfish. They were pleased with the progress on U.S.-Japan industry commitments and said they will hold a special teleconference meeting on that subject if it appears necessary following U.S. industry discussions scheduled for April 2. The meeting will be advertised and open to the public.

ADF&G Reports on Domestic Fisheries

The winter chinook troll fishery has harvested about 20,000 salmon since opening October 1. Fishing effort is about the same as last year when 33,000 chinooks were caught. However, the distribution of the catch is different with lower harvests in outside waters because of inclement weather.

In the Southeast Region approximately 850,000 pounds of Tanner crab have been landed by 70 vessels since the season opened on February 10. ADF&G estimated that 1.0 million pounds would be taken by the season closure on March 28. In

the lower Cook Inlet approximately 2.8 million pounds of Tanner crab have been landed for the season. Tanner crab harvests in the Westward Region, totalled 27.7 million pounds. The South Peninsula and Chignik Districts closed March 10 with harvests of 2.5 million pounds and 0.3 million pounds, respectively.

King crab catches in the Westward Region totalled 12.8 million pounds. The Adak brown king crab fishery is the only area left open and five vessels are participating. Four are catcher/processors and are expected to transfer to the Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery soon.

Through March 22, 1985, ADF&G reported a total domestic groundfish catch of 157,263 metric tons. The domestic sablefish fishery east of 140° longitude closed on March 18 as the harvest neared the optimum yield of 2,570 mt for the East Yakutat and Southeast Outside areas combined.

Foreign Fisheries Update

By March 9 the foreign fleets in the Gulf of Alaska harvested 7,060 mt of groundfish or 30% of the current foreign allocation for that area. It was mainly Pacific cod taken by Japanese longliners.

Foreign fleets from Japan, Poland, South Korea, and the USSR in the Bering Sea harvested 64,274 mt or about 15% of the current foreign allocation. The catch included 19,451 mt pollock, 14,231 mt yellowfin sole, 10,320 mt Pacific cod and 2,239 mt assorted other species of groundfish.

There were 86 foreign vessels off Alaska on March 21, 1985, 40 from Japan, 20 from South Korea, 14 from the USSR, 11 from Poland, and 1 from Portugal. Last year at this time there were about 50 foreign vessels off Alaska.

U.S. Coast Guard Report on Enforcement Activities

The Coast Guard issued nine reports of violation and nineteen written warnings through March 19. Reports of violation were issued to one Polish and two Japanese vessels for failure to properly maintain daily cumulative catch logs. A Portuguese vessel received a report of violation for not having their International Radio Call Sign painted on an appropriate weather deck and for not keeping its call sign on the hull in clear view. Written warnings were issued to Japanese and Soviet vessels for not reporting 24 hours before fishing within the FCZ, and to four Polish vessels for various logging violations. A Soviet and a South Korean vessel were issued written warnings for not keeping their International Radio Call Signs in clear view.

The Coast Guard logged 170 cutter patrol days and 387 aircraft patrol hours for over 71,676 patrol miles through March 19, 1985.

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

NOTICES OF AVAILABILITY

Amendment 14: Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Management Plan
(Primary Contact: Steve Davis)

Amendment 9: Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery Management Plan
(Primary Contact: Jim Glock)

Comment Period: April 4 to May 3, 1985
(All written comments must be received in the Council
office by 5:00 p.m. May 3.)

GULF OF ALASKA AND BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
GROUND FISH PLAN AMENDMENT SCHEDULES - 1985

March 25 AP, SSC and Council receive amendment material; presentation by Plan Teams - discussion, questions, etc.; comments to Plan Team by March 29.

Staff/Plan Teams modify package as directed by Council.

April 3 Mail summary of amendment and notice of availability to public.

April 4 Public comment period begins (30 days)

Public will be requested to provide additional information to the Council on the various alternatives, and also to indicate which alternatives the Council should approve. All new information and analysis should be submitted during the comment period rather than at the May Council meeting.

May 3 Public comment period ends (5:00 p.m. Anchorage time)

Plan Teams review and summarize comments, prepare revised texts incorporating new information.

Plan Teams prepare draft amendment language.

Council Meeting - May 21-24

May 21-22 Council requests public testimony, reviews written comments and revised drafts. Testimony is limited to clarification of information submitted during comment period and recommendations on which alternatives the Council should approve.

Council approves management measures, directs Plan Teams to prepare final amendment and proposed regulations and to revise Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Impact Review as appropriate.

May 22-24 Plan Teams prepare final amendment text, Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Impact Review, and proposed regulations.

May 24 Council approves amendment, proposed regulations, Environmental Assessment & Regulatory Impact Review.

May 30 - Approved package mailed to Secretary of Commerce.
June 3

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR GROUND FISH
OF THE GULF OF ALASKA

AMENDMENT 14

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

The domestic and foreign groundfish fisheries in the 3- to 200-mile Fishery Conservation Zone of the Gulf of Alaska (Figure 1) are managed under the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This plan was developed by the Council and implemented by the Secretary of Commerce in 1978 and has been amended twelve times. One additional amendment was withdrawn.

In February 1985 the Council reviewed groundfish amendments proposed by the public and management agencies and selected seven proposal topics for inclusion in Amendment 14: (1) sablefish gear regulation; (2) rockfish quotas and management areas; (3) weekly catch reports by U.S. catcher/processor vessels; (4) new OY values; (5) halibut prohibited species catch limits on domestic trawlers; (6) implementation of NMFS habitat policy; and (7) sablefish fishing seasons. These topics and alternative solutions are presented in this Notice of Availability of Amendment 14 which was approved for public review by the Council in March.

The public review period commences April 14 and all written comments must reach the Council by 5:00 p.m. May 3. Detailed environmental and socioeconomic analyses of the potential impacts of the proposed alternatives are also available and may be requested by calling the Council staff at (907) 274-4563. The Council will give final consideration to these proposals at their next scheduled meeting on May 21-24 in Anchorage. Primary contact: Steve Davis.

AMENDMENT 14 SUMMARY

1. Establish a gear and/or area restriction in the sablefish fishery.

Alternative 1 - Maintain status quo.

Alternative 2 - Allocate the sablefish OY to specific gear types.

Alternative 3 - Establish hook and longline-only areas.

- a. Designate the area east of 147°W longitude as a hook and longline-only area for directed sablefish fishing.
- b. Designate the area east of 159°W longitude as a hook and longline-only area for sablefish.
- c. Designate the area east of 170°W longitude as a hook and longline-only area for sablefish.

Alternative 4 - Place a ceiling on the number of vessels harvesting sablefish using pot gear. The ceiling would be based on the number of current participants using this gear type prior to March 1, 1985.

Alternative 5 - License limitation.

2. Establish rockfish areas and quotas.

Alternative 1 - Maintain a Gulfwide OY for other rockfish.

Alternative 2 - Set the Southeast District shelf demersal rockfish OY at 600 mt between 56°N and 57°30'N latitudes with the remainder of the Gulfwide 5,000 mt OY (4,400 mt) to be taken elsewhere in the Gulf.

Alternative 3 - Set the Southeast District shelf demersal rockfish OY at 600 mt between 56°N and 57°30'N latitudes and set the OY for the pelagic and slope rockfish species within the Southeast-East Yakutat district at 880 mt for a combined other rockfish OY of 1,480 mt. The remaining 3,520 mt of the other rockfish resource would be harvested from the other areas of the Gulf. (Recommended by the Alaska Board of Fisheries).

- a. Change the accounting year to October 1 through September 30 as part of this alternative. (Board recommendation).
- b. Retain January 1 - December 31 as the accounting year.

Alternative 4 - Set the shelf demersal rockfish OY at 600 mt for the area where the 1984 domestic fishery was concentrated and establish separate OYs for slope, shelf pelagic, and shelf demersal rockfish species groups by Gulf of Alaska management area based on the best available data.

Alternative 5 - Set the OY for shelf demersal rockfish at 600 mt between 56°N and 57°30'N latitudes. Subtract this amount from the Gulfwide OY of 5,000 mt and apportion the remaining 4,400 mt by regulatory area as follows: Southeast-East Yakutat - 880 mt, West Yakutat - 880 mt, Central Gulf - 1,760 mt, and Western Gulf - 880 mt.

Alternative 6 - Remove the Southeast Alaska shelf rockfish fishery (depths less than 200 m) from the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP, giving full control of the fishery to the State of Alaska.

3. Implement new optimum yields for pollock, Pacific ocean perch, rockfish, Atka mackerel, and other species.

Pollock

Alternative 1 - Reduce the OY for pollock to 305,000 mt in the Western/Central Area.

Alternative 2 - Maintain the OY at 400,000 mt (status quo).

Pacific ocean perch

Alternative 1 - Reduce the OY for POP to 1,302 mt and 3,906 mt in the Western and Central Areas, respectively.

Alternative 2 - Maintain the OY for POP at 2,700 mt and 7,900 mt in the Western and Central Areas, respectively (status quo).

Rockfish

Alternative 1 - Reduce the Gulf of Alaska-wide OY for rockfish to 5,000 mt.

Alternative 2 - Reduce the OY to an amount that would provide for a bycatch only.

Alternative 3 - Maintain the OY at 7,600 mt (status quo).

Atka mackerel

Alternative 1 - Reduce the OY in the Central and Eastern Areas to an amount that would provide for a bycatch only.

Alternative 2 - Maintain the OY at 20,800 mt and 3,200 mt in the Central and Eastern Areas, respectively (status quo).

Other species

Alternative 1 - Reduce the Gulf of Alaska-wide OY for "other species" to its framework amount of 22,435 mt.

4. Implement Reporting Requirements for Catcher/Processors.

Alternative 1 - Maintain the current reporting requirement (status quo).

Alternative 2 - Require an FCZ processing permit with check-in/check-out and weekly report.

Alternative 3 - Require an FCZ processing permit with a weekly catch report, but without check-in/check-out.

Alternative 4 - Place observers aboard a small sample of catcher/processor vessels and mothership/processors and extrapolate the catch from the vessels to the entire fleet.

Alternative 5 - Place observers aboard all catcher/processors and mothership/processor vessels.

5. Establish measures to control the Pacific halibut bycatch.

Alternative 1 - Maintain the Western and Central Gulf PSC limits of 29 mt and 52 mt, respectively (status quo).

Alternative 2 - Raise the Western and Central Gulf PSC limits to 270 mt and 768 mt, respectively.

Alternative 3 - Develop a framework procedure for the annual adjustment of PSC limits.

Alternative 4 - Establish bycatch fees.

6. Implement the NMFS Habitat Policy.

Alternative 1 - Amend the FMP to address habitat considerations.

a. Include habitat policy and proposed text in the FMP.

b. Include a habitat goal in the FMP but not specific sections and detailed text. Detailed habitat discussion would be provided in a Council document as an annex or appendix to the FMP.

Alternative 2 - Do not amend the FMP to address habitat considerations.

7. Sablefish Fishing Seasons.

Alternative 1 - Maintain the current sablefish fishing season of January 1 through December 31 (status quo).

Alternative 2 - Change the opening date of the sablefish fishery in the Southeast and East Yakutat Districts from January 1 to March 15.

Alternative 3 - Change the opening dates of the Southeast-East Yakutat and Central area sablefish fisheries to March 15 and May 1, respectively.

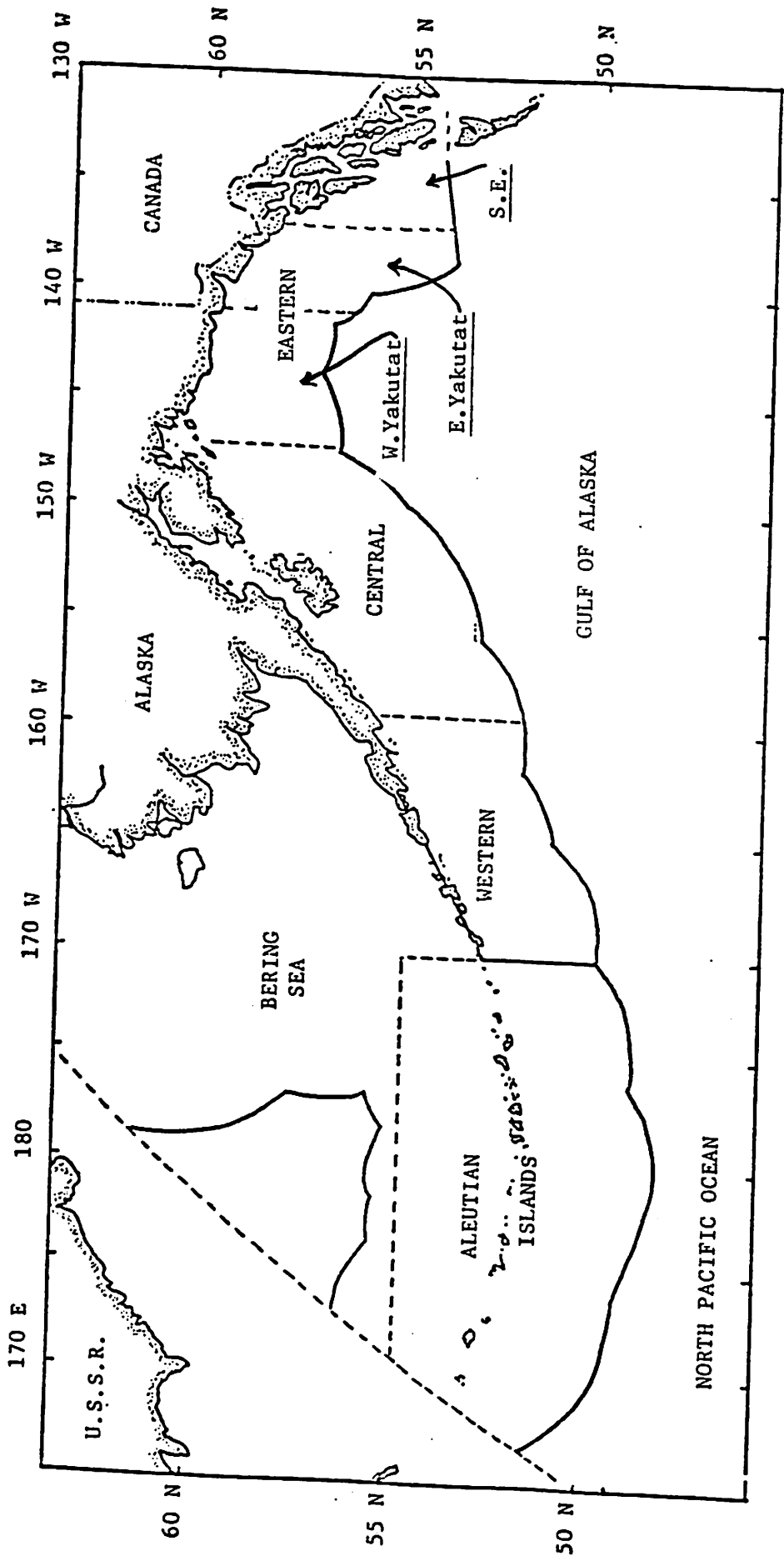
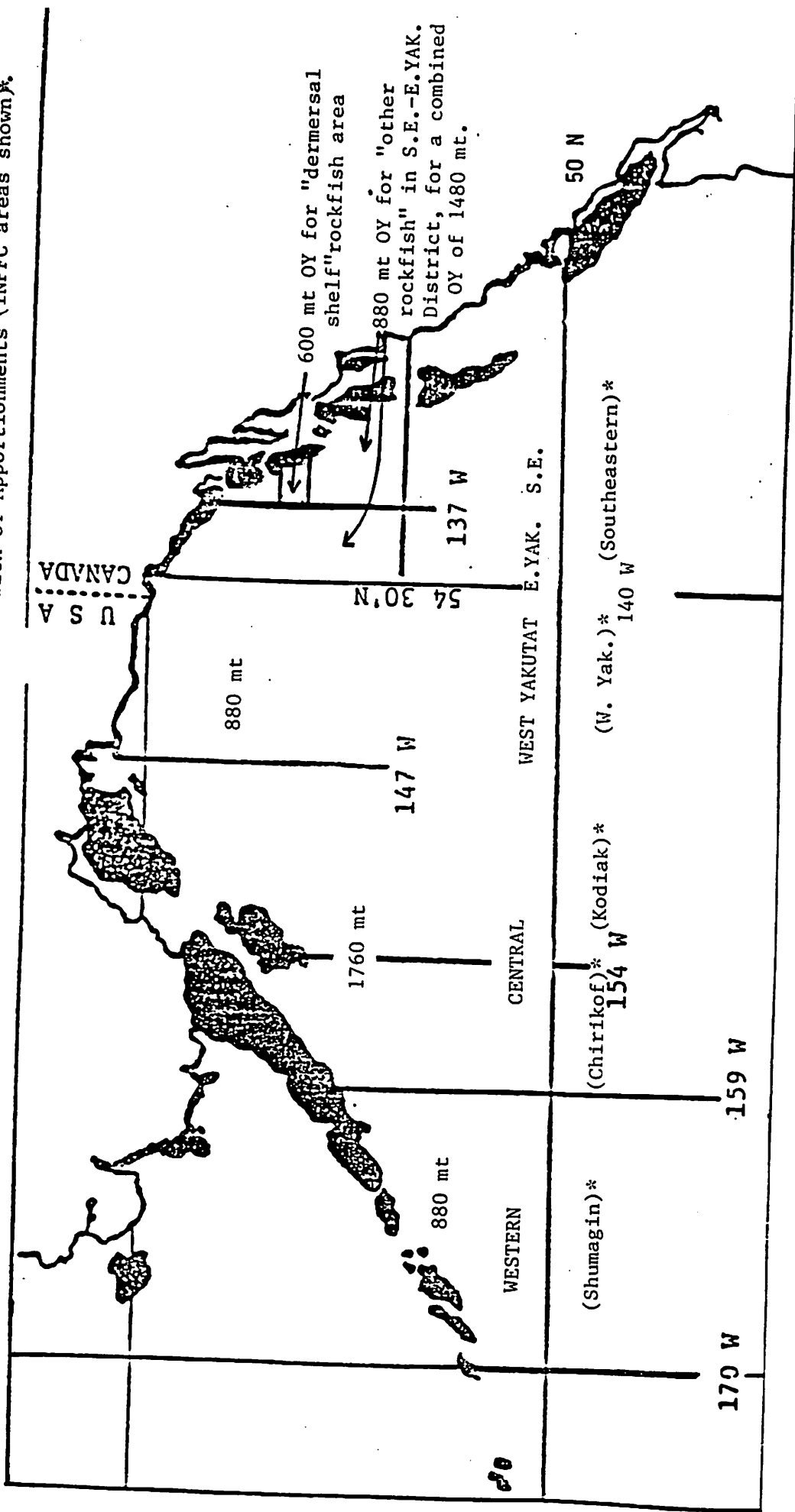


Fig. 1 Major regulatory areas of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Groundfish and Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP's.

Figure 2. Proposed FMP Regulatory Areas/Districts for "Other Rockfish" with OY Apportionments (INPFC areas shown).



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NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR GROUND FISH
OF THE BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

AMENDMENT 9

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has directed the Bering Sea Plan Team to prepare an amendment (No. 9) and supporting documentation for management of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries. The Council has identified the issues and problems to be addressed by Amendment 9 but has not yet chosen preferred solutions. The Plan Team has reviewed the issues and identified and analyzed the biological, socioeconomic and management impacts of various alternative solutions for public and Council consideration based on all information available to it at this time. These issues and alternative solutions are listed and briefly described below.

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA), and Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (RIR/IRFA) have been reviewed by the Council at their March 27-28 meeting and approved for public distribution. These documents are available upon request by calling the Council staff at (907) 274-4563. Primary contact: Jim Glock.

The Council is requesting that anyone having additional information pertaining to these issues or alternatives submit it to the Council during the 30-day public comment period which commences April 4. All new information will be summarized and included as appropriate in the final documents. Due to the time constraints imposed by the annual management cycle and Council meeting schedule, it will not be possible to include information received after the close of the comment period at 5:00 p.m. on May 3.

The Council is also asking for the opinions of the fishing community and other affected individuals regarding which alternatives the Council should approve. It is hoped that the draft EA and RIR/IRFA will help the public provide meaningful and constructive feedback to aide the Council in their deliberations.

At their May 21-24 meeting the Council will make their final decision and submit the amendment and supporting documentation to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation. The Council will accept oral testimony at the May meeting; however, such testimony should be limited to clarification of earlier written comments and recommendations about the Council's choices rather than submission of new information.

AMENDMENT 9 SUMMARY

ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

A. Raise the upper end of the Optimum Yield (OY) range.

Raising the upper end of the OY range would provide greater management flexibility to respond to years of high stock abundance and would allow the annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC) to be increased above the current ceiling.

Alternative 1 - Raise the upper OY from 2.0 million mt to 2.5 million mt.

Since FMP implementation the sum of the EYs has exceeded the ceiling in 1983, 1984, and 1985 and catches have had to be constrained. This situation may reoccur in the future, although current indications are that the overall TAC will probably fall within the current OY range in 1986.

The proposed upper limit is somewhat arbitrary. It is above the Maximum Sustained Yield (MSY) ceiling of 2.4 million mt.

Alternative 2 - Status quo.

The current OY range has constrained total catches in three years; however, the Council could have chosen to constrain these catches anyway. The current ceiling has been within 10% of the sum of the EYs every year.

B. Reduce the incidental catch of salmon in joint venture fisheries.

The first year of significant joint venture pollock harvest north of the Aleutians in INPFC Area I was 1983 when the incidental catch included 24,493 (mostly chum) salmon. The incidental catch in 1984 was 60,436 salmon, again mostly chums. In both years the catch was concentrated in a roughly 2°x5° area during July and August and caught almost entirely with mid-water gear. Joint ventures harvested 55,000 to 96,000 mt of groundfish (pollock) valued at \$5 to \$9 million in this area during this period. The availability of pollock outside this time/area window is not known, but it is likely that similar concentrations may not be present elsewhere. The likely bycatch rate of salmon outside the time/area window is also unknown.

Western Alaskan and other U.S. chum salmon stocks are already fully utilized in traditional fisheries and any catch of those stocks by joint ventures could reduce traditional catches. It is not known what proportion of the trawl catch is Western Alaskan or from other U.S. areas. However, the FMP states that trawlers must minimize their bycatch of salmon regardless of origin.

Alternative 1 - Close the area from 55°N to 56°30'N between 164°W and 169°W from July 20-August 25.

The majority of the incidental salmon catch was taken in this time-area in 1983 and 1984. The closure could reduce the joint venture groundfish harvest and/or increase the cost of harvesting those groundfish.

Alternative 2 - Close the area from 55°-56°30'N between 164°-169°W from July 20-August 25 when a salmon prohibited species catch limit is reached.

This closure would be implemented only if the salmon bycatch exceeds a certain level. It provides the opportunity to trawlers to modify their fishing gear or techniques to avoid salmon and the subsequent closure. Because the limit might be reached very quickly enforcement may prove difficult. The ceiling could be 10,000 salmon or some other number.

Alternative 3 - Impose incidental catch quotas for individual joint ventures.

A total catch ceiling (see Alternative 2) would be apportioned among individual companies or vessels either equally or in proportion to their projected groundfish catch during the July 1 - August 30 period. Upon reaching their quota the company or vessel must stop fishing in the identified time/area. Transferable quotas could be considered.

Alternative 4 - Impose incidental catch fees.

A catch fee of \$.25-\$.50 per pound of salmon (the approximate exvessel value to traditional salmon fishermen) or some other fee may be possible. Any fees collected would revert to the general treasury and could not go directly to any of the affected salmon fisheries.

Alternative 5 - Status quo.

Current regulations require trawlers to release all salmon but do not restrict the number of salmon actually caught. Voluntary measures could be recommended under this alternative.

C. Reduce the incidental catch of fully utilized domestic species by foreign trawlers.

The rapid expansion of U.S. fishing and processing capacities has led to full utilization by American fishermen of several groundfish species in Alaskan waters. Measures to reduce or eliminate bycatch of these species in foreign fisheries will allow domestic fishermen to capitalize on the resource more effectively.

Alternative 1 - Close the area within 20 miles of the Aleutians to all foreign trawling.

The Council has already voted an emergency regulation to close this area to foreign trawling to reduce the incidental catch of Pacific cod, Atka mackerel, sablefish, and Pacific ocean perch. If this closure had been in effect in 1983 it would have reduced the foreign bycatch of these species by approximately 88%-92% and the total harvest by 64%.

Alternative 2 - Status quo.

Although no data are available yet for definitive analysis, indications are that most foreign fishing in 1984 occurred outside the proposed 20 mile closure. This was due to the greatly reduced allocations of these fully utilized species.

Alternative 3 - Establish zero TALFFs for all species in the entire Aleutians Area (INPFC Area 4) except pollock.

This alternative would, in effect, expand the 20-mile closure and include all foreign vessels rather than just trawlers. Only directed pollock fisheries in areas of low abundances of other species would be allowed.

D. Require domestic catcher/processors to submit periodic catch reports.

Because U.S. catcher/processors often remain at sea for several months at a time, it is virtually impossible for management agencies to track cumulative catches on a timely basis and to accurately predict the attainment of DAP levels in the fishery.

Alternative 1 - Status quo.

The number of catcher/processor vessels and subsequent catches are expected to increase substantially in 1985. Without timely reporting it is likely that TACs will be exceeded in the future with possible resource damage.

Alternative 2 - Require an FCZ processing permit with check-in/check-out and weekly catch report.

Alternative 3 - Require an FCZ processing permit with a weekly catch report, but without check-in/check-out requirements.

Alternative 4 - Place observers aboard a small sample of catcher/processor and mothership/processor vessels and extrapolate the catch from these vessels to the entire fleet. The cost of NMFS observers is approximately \$235 per day. There are other associated costs such as food and transportation in and out of port for transfers, etc.

Alternative 5 - Place observers aboard all catcher/processor and mothership/processor vessels.

E. Implement the NMFS Habitat Policy.

Alternative 1 - Implement the entire proposed text into the FMP.

This action modifies and adds certain sections specifically to address habitat requirements of individual species. It also provides the necessary authorization for implementation of marine debris restrictions and other regulations to protect the marine habitat.

Alternative 2 - Include only a habitat goal into the FMP and reference specific sections and detailed text in a separate Council document. That would speed updating the document since it would not have to go through the tedious amendment process.

Alternative 3 - Status quo. Do not implement the habitat policy.