

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

Council and Board of Fisheries Meet in Juneau

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met with the Alaska Board of Fisheries on January 4-6, 1983 at the Baranof Hotel in Juneau to hear technical reports on the status of the salmon resource and public testimony on regulatory proposals to the Board for the 1983 season. The Council also met alone to discuss tanner crab and set a schedule for the Council's further consideration of its proposed moratorium on new entries into the halibut fishery. Highlights of the meetings follow.

Preliminary 1982 Troll Catch Data

Preliminary data indicate that the total 1982 commercial chinook salmon harvest by all fisheries was approximately 285,800 fish. This includes a total season (winter plus summer) troll fishery harvest of 241,300 chinooks and an incidental net fishery harvest of 44,500, approximately 26,000 (58%) of which occurred after the troll chinook closure on July 28. About 15 percent of the troll chinook catch was taken by hand trollers; 18 percent of the troll chinook catch was taken in the Fishery Conservation Zone (FCZ).

Overall chinook salmon escapements to Southeast Alaska streams were slightly below 1981 levels although well above average escapements during 1975-1980 and well ahead of the Council's 15-year rebuilding plan. Current management goals were achieved in 1982 for three of the nine Southeast Alaska index systems - the Stikine, Keta and King Salmon Rivers.

Preliminary catch data for coho salmon indicate that approximately 525,000 fish were harvested by the troll fishery from June 17 through July 29. Following a 10-day closure, an estimated 814,500 coho salmon were harvested through September 20 for a total season harvest of approximately 1.3 million. With an estimated harvest of 714,200 cohos by the net fisheries, the 1982 season commercial harvest of almost 2.1 million by all gear types in Southeast Alaska was the largest coho salmon harvest since 1951 when 3.3 million coho were caught. Approximately 94 percent was taken in State waters and 6 percent from the FCZ.

Hook and release mortality of chinook salmon during the coho-only season from August 8 through September 20 presented problems in 1982. Preliminary analyses indicate that immediate chinook mortality resulting from hook and release appears to have been low, 2-3 percent. Delayed mortality may be greater. The value of these fish as potential spawners and the value lost to the commercial fishing industry (approximately \$50-60 per fish) increase the

significance of this mortality and raise doubts about the advisability of using selective single-species closures for troll gear. The Council and Board of Fisheries have deferred action on this problem until review of the U.S./Canada treaty has been completed.

Council Prefers Lifting Ban on Treble Hooks

After hearing considerable testimony from Southeast Alaska fishermen, the Board voted to rescind the ban on treble hooks enacted last year. The Council then voted to follow the lead of the Board and selected this position as their preference for the 1983 season.

Provisions of Draft U.S./Canada Salmon Treaty Revealed

Major provisions of a recently negotiated draft treaty between the U.S. and Canada to conserve chinook stocks were presented to the Council and Board by the chief negotiator for the U.S., Dr. Dayton L. Alverson. Under the terms of the draft treaty, the total Southeast Alaska chinook catch could not exceed 263,000 fish in 1983, and the commercial ceiling would be 243,000 chinooks. The Canadian fisheries (except the west coast of Vancouver Island) would be limited to 868,000 chinooks in 1983. This is the first step in a ten-year rebuilding plan for major natural chinook stocks coastwide. Public testimony before Council and Board members indicated opposition in Southeast Alaska to the proposed draft treaty. The majority of the opposing testimony came from fisherman and processors who depend on chinook salmon. Many trollers do not think that the draft treaty adequately accounts for the conservation measures that have been imposed in Southeast Alaska since 1979. The trollers feel that the Canadians have not yet matched these conservation efforts and the treaty offers no guarantee that they will.

Governor Bill Sheffield addressed the Council and Board on Wednesday, January 5, to announce that he will appoint a review committee to study the treaty and asked the Council and Board to take no action for at least 60 days to give him time to develop a position and make his final recommendation to the chief U.S. negotiator, Dr. Alverson.

AP and SSC Elect Officers For 1983

Robert D. Alverson, Manager of the Fishing Vessel Owners Association in Seattle, was re-elected Chairman of the Advisory Panel, and A.W. "Bud" Boddy, sport fish representative from Juneau, was re-elected Vice-Chairman. The Scientific and Statistical Committee re-elected Donald Rosenberg, Director of Alaska Sea Grant, as Chairman and Dr. Richard Marasco of the NMFS Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center, Seattle, as Vice-Chairman. The Council looks forward to a continued close working relationship with these experienced leaders.

Tanner Crab Amendment #9 in Limbo

The status of Amendment #9 to the Tanner Crab FMP, which would increase the NMFS Regional Director's flexibility for setting fishing seasons, is unresolved at this time. The Council will submit the amendment for Secretarial review and implementation only if upcoming discussions between the Regional Director and NMFS officials indicate that field order authority cannot be used to set season dates.

Halibut Moratorium Decision Set For March 8 in Anchorage

The Council will make its decision on the proposed halibut moratorium at a March meeting in Anchorage. To gather material to aid in making this decision, the Council held public hearings on January 7, 9, and 10 in Juneau, Ketchikan and Petersburg and has scheduled additional on-site and teleconference hearings as follows:

On-site Hearings

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| January 17, 1983 | Elks Club Homer, Alaska | 1-5 p.m. (local time) |
| January 18, 1983 | Fishermen's Hall Kodiak, Alaska | 1:30-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. (local time) |
| January 20, 1983 | Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center (Auditorium) 2725 Montlake Blvd. East Seattle, Washington | 5-10 p.m. (local time) |

Teleconference Hearings

Times indicated for these teleconference hearings are Alaska Standard Time. Times may be extended if necessary. Additional information is attached as the last page of this newsletter.

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| January 24, 1983 | Connecting Seward, Cordova Valdez, Soldotna, Yakutat, and Seattle (Anchorage, moderator only) | 8-10 a.m. |
| January 26, 1983 | Connecting Sand Point, Unalaska, St. Paul, King Cove, Anchorage and Seattle | 8-10 a.m. |
| January 28, 1983 | Connecting Sitka, Hoonah, Wrangell, Craig, and Haines (Anchorage, moderator only) | 8:30-10:30 a.m. |

HALIBUT MORATORIUM TELECONFERENCING PROCEDURES

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will hold teleconferenced public hearings at fourteen sites in Alaska: Seward, Cordova, Valdez, Soldotna, Yakutat, Sand Point, Unalaska, St. Paul, King Cove, Sitka, Hoonah, Haines, Craig and Wrangell. Each of these sites will be connected with Anchorage where representatives of the Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service will be present to receive the public testimony. Seattle will be connected to Southcentral and Western Alaska sites during the hearings mainly to inform Seattle fishermen of the views held by residents of Southcentral and Western Alaska communities. An on-site hearing will be held in Seattle on January 20 to take public testimony.

The sites will be grouped as follows with all times Alaska Standard Time:

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| <u>January 24, 1983</u> (Monday) | Seward, Cordova, Valdez, Soldotna, Yakutat and Seattle | 8 to 10 a.m. |
| <u>January 26, 1983</u> (Wednesday) | Sand Point, Unalaska, St. Paul, King Cove and Seattle | 8 to 10 a.m. |
| <u>January 28, 1983</u> (Friday) | Sitka, Hoonah, Haines, Craig and Wrangell | 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. |

The periods of the teleconference have been limited to two hours. However, these may be extended if necessary. The teleconferencing network provides a place at each site for people to meet and arranges for a volunteer coordinator to be present to open up the room and make the appropriate connections with the telephone operators. These coordinators will also help distribute information concerning the moratorium though they are in no way affiliated with the Council and cannot answer questions concerning the moratorium.

The following list indicates the local volunteer coordinator and where and when people should gather:

Monday - January 24, 1983: 8-10 a.m. (AST)

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| <u>Seward:</u> | Alaska Vocational Tech. Center (Diane McRae: 224-3322) |
| <u>Cordova:</u> | High School (John Davis: 424-3266) |
| <u>Valdez:</u> | Prince William Sound Community College (Tom VanBrocklin: 835-2539) |
| <u>Soldotna:</u> | High School (Bill Musson: 262-7411) |
| <u>Yakutat:</u> | High School (Jerry Schoenberger: 784-3317) |
| <u>Seattle:</u> | Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center (U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service: 442-7719) |

Wednesday - January 26, 1983: 8-10 a.m. (AST)

Sand Point: School
(Jeanette Kent: 383-3077)

Unalaska: City of Unalaska Recreation Center
(Marilyn Rasmussen: 581-1616)

St. Paul: Pribilof School District
(Edna Kauffman: 546-2221)

King Cove: Teacher's Lounge at King Cove School
(Wanda Newman: 497-2355)

Seattle: Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center
(U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service: 442-7719)

Friday - January 28, 1983: 8:30-10:30 a.m. (AST)

Sitka: Community College
(Don Cecil: 747-6653)

Hoonah: Community Education Adult Basic Education Room
(Ken Wicks: 945-3611)

Haines: High School
(Stephan McPhetres: 766-2644)

Craig: Prince of Wales Principle's office
(Doug Rhodes: 826-3273)

Wrangell: High School
(Robert Prunella: 874-3397)