

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

News and Notes



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Observer Program

At its June meeting in Portland, the Council took final action on a package of regulatory amendments for the groundfish observer program. The five issues in that package, and the Council's actions, are summarized as follows:

Shoreside plant observer periods - The Council approved Alternative D from the analysis, which would allow for a reduction in observer coverage from 100% to 30% in plants for the remainder of a month when pollock or Pacific cod fisheries close. A plant would be required to maintain 30% coverage for the rest of the month, and landings received by the plant may not exceed 250 mt/week for the remainder of that month (increased observer coverage would be allowed if the plant wishes to exceed the 250 mt/week threshold.)

Shoreside plant observer logistics - The Council approved Alternative B from the analysis, which would require the observer contractor to provide observer logistical support, including minimum lodging conditions, travel, and communications support.

Assignment of observer to multiple shoreside plants - The Council approved Alternative A, status quo, from the analysis, which means there are no restrictions on the number of plants to which an observer may be concurrently assigned.

Groundfish pot fishery coverage requirements - The Council approved Alternative B, Option 1 from the analysis, which would amend observer coverage requirements for a vessel equal to or greater than 60 ft LOA fishing with pot gear that participates for more than 3 days in a directed fishery for groundfish in a calendar quarter so that such a vessel must have an observer aboard during at least 30% of the total pot retrievals by that vessel in that calendar quarter (rather than for 30% of its fishing days in that quarter). Groundfish would be required to be retained each day the observer is on board and gear is retrieved for the observer coverage to be valid.

Confidentiality of observer personal information - The Council approved Alternative B from the analysis, which would amend the regulations to prohibit observer contractors from distributing personal information, such as observers' resumes, home addresses, phone numbers, etc. Observer evaluations and deployment ratings were not included in the prohibition as approved by the Council. Council contact is Chris Oliver (or Bridget Mansfield at NMFS in Juneau).

Council to Hold Special September Meeting

The Council will be meeting at the Anchorage Sheraton Hotel September 6-12 to review an analysis of measures to address Steller Sea Lion interactions with the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Island Pacific cod fisheries. (Please see article on page 2 for details.) Other issues, including consideration of AFA crab processing sideboards, will also be placed on that meeting agenda. See the 3-meeting outlook for further details.

Halibut Donation Program

The Council took final action to extend, without a sunset provision, the Halibut Donation Program (HDP), which was set to expire at the end of this year. The Council also requested a review of the HDP every three years. As originally implemented under Amendments 50/50 to the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs in 1998, Federal regulations would extend the program to allow a NMFS-authorized distributor to receive and distribute halibut bycatch if approved by the Secretary. Regulations authorized the retention and processing of halibut taken as bycatch up to a limit of 50,000 pounds for donation to economically disadvantaged individuals. Two of the three processors in Dutch Harbor, Unisea and Alyeska, have participated in the HDP. Together, they donated 21,196 pounds of halibut in 1998 and 4,476 pounds in 1999. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2	Steller Sea Lions, HAPC, Crab Rebuilding, Eiders
3	American Fisheries Act
4	AFA Continued, Groundfish Management
5	Halibut Management
6	Staff Tasking, GOA Coops, CDQ Management, Meeting Dates
	Committee Meetings
	ATTACHMENT 1: Gulf Rationalization Problem Statement ATTACHMENT 2: Three Meeting Outlook

Steller Sea Lions

The 1999 biological opinion on TAC specifications for Alaskan groundfish fisheries suggested areas of concern about potential competition between cod fisheries and Steller sea lions. At the June meeting, NMFS staff provided the Council with a discussion paper on potential interactions between Steller sea lions and the GOA and BSAI Pacific cod fisheries. The Council and its Advisory Panel requested that additional information be added to the analysis, including the effects of previous management actions such as the pollock trawl closures, the midwater pollock trawl restriction, and the effects of the American Fisheries Act. NMFS will be holding public meetings (June 27 in Kodiak and June 29 in Seattle) to develop potential measures to alleviate concerns about potential competition of Steller sea lions and the cod fisheries. At a special Council meeting scheduled for September 6-12, NMFS will present the analysis for initial review. Final action is scheduled for October. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

Stakeholder Process and HAPC

Habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) are those areas of special importance that may require additional protection from adverse effects. Part one of the HAPC amendment package was finalized for action in April 2000, and applies to both the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska groundfish FMP's. The amendment added corals and sponges to the prohibited species category. The action split prohibited species into two types, the first will continue to allow no retention and includes halibut, salmon, and crab species and the second type would include only corals and sponges. These HAPC prohibited species would allow retention for personal use, but sale, barter, and trade would be prohibited.

The second part of the amendment involves setting up a more comprehensive and iterative approach for future HAPC identification and habitat protection involving researchers, stakeholders and management agencies. The discussion paper "The Stakeholder Process and Identification of Habitat Areas of Particular Concern" can be viewed on our website: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/reports>.

The Council directed staff to prepare meeting materials on corals and sponges for an initial set of stakeholder meetings this fall. The purpose of the meetings will be information exchange on Gorgonian corals. The meetings will be held in Sitka, Yakutat, and a location representing the Western Aleutians. Persons interested in stakeholder meetings should contact Cathy Coon for more information. Staff contacts are Dave Witherell and Cathy Coon.

Crab Rebuilding Plans

The 1999 NMFS Bering Sea survey indicated that snow crab (C. opilio) and St. Matthew blue king crab stocks were below their minimum stock size thresholds. The 1999 estimate of spawning biomass for snow crab (283.3 million pounds) was below the MSST (460.8 million pounds) and was severely curtailed in 2000. Similarly, the spawning biomass estimate for St. Matthew blue king crab (4.8 million pounds) was well below the MSST (11.0 million pounds), and the fishery was not opened. On September 24, 1999, NMFS informed the Council that these stocks were "overfished" pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act guidelines, which require a rebuilding plan to be developed within one year.

In June 2000, the Council took final action on these rebuilding plans. The plans consist of conservative and precautionary harvest strategies, reduced crab bycatch in crab fisheries, and increased habitat protection through consultations and expanded essential fish habitat. Under the rebuilding plans, the stocks are projected (with a 50% probability) to rebuild to the BMSY level in 7 to 10 years for snow crab and 6 years for St. Matthew blue king crab. The Council also requested that the crab plan team add habitat maps and bycatch information to the SAFE reports, review the southern boundary of the C. opilio bycatch zone, and evaluate/critique a proposal by the Alaska Marine Conservation Council to establish additional bottom trawl closures. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

Eiders

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to designate critical habitat for spectacled eiders and Steller's eiders, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Proposed critical habitats include both upland and marine areas. The public comment period for both species has been extended until June 30, 2000. For more information, contact USFWS personnel: For spectacled eiders contact Ann Rappoport (907) 271-2787; for Steller's eiders contact Ted Swem (907) 456-0203. The proposed rule, along with eider fact sheets, is available on the internet at the FWS Region 7 home page (www.r7.fws.gov).

Council staff has been developing GIS maps to evaluate the overlap of the proposed critical habitat areas with commercial fisheries (maps available on the Council's web site). Based on 1999 observer data, some overlap exists with pot fisheries in Bechevin Bay (False Pass) and with trawl fisheries in the northern part of Kuskokwim Bay. Other nearshore fisheries prosecuted with small vessels also occur within the proposed critical habitat for Steller's eider, but cannot be identified using observer data. The Council requested that this information be forwarded to USFWS during the comment period.

American Fisheries Act

The Council took action on several AFA-related issues at this meeting, including inshore cooperative structure, the definition of a qualified catcher vessel, allocation of pollock not currently assigned to a specific AFA catcher vessel, review of crab and groundfish processing sideboards, BSAI pollock excessive share caps, Pacific cod harvest sideboard modification, crab harvest vessels sideboard exemptions, and a status report on development of the AFA EIS. A summary of the Council's actions on each of these issues is contained below.

Inshore Cooperative Structure: The Council reviewed and discussed a revised discussion paper on this issue (the Dooley-Hall proposal) presented by Dr. Robert Halvorsen of the University of Washington. In addition to testimony from numerous industry members, they also reviewed a related paper from Dr. Scott Matulich of Washington State University. The Council voted to postpone any action on the Dooley-Hall issue specifically, until such time as adverse impacts could be demonstrated. The Dooley-Hall proposal would have changed the AFA's requirements that a catcher vessel must deliver the majority of their pollock to a processor in the year prior to being in that processor's cooperative. The Council indicated that they reserved the right to take action on this issue at any future meeting should adverse impacts, as a result of cooperative structure, be brought to the Council's attention.

Qualified Catcher Vessel Definition: A definition of "inactive" catcher vessels was also crafted by the Council, which essentially allows for the retirement of pollock vessels from the fishery, while still maintaining that vessel's history in a co-op. A qualified catcher vessel shall not be required to make a delivery in each calendar year to continue to be a qualified catcher vessel. Such "inactive" catcher vessels will be qualified to join the cooperative associated with the processor to which it made the majority of its landings in the BSAI pollock fishery in the most recent year that it fished. Any such vessel returning to the fishery would be required to go either into the open access fishery or to its original co-op. No AFA catcher vessels can fish more than two seasons annually in the GOA directed pollock fishery except vessels less than or equal to 125' LOA fishing east of 157 degrees W. Latitude.

License Transfer Issues: The Council voted to prohibit, as of June 9, 2000, any transfers of LLP licenses from inactive AFA vessels to non-AFA catcher vessels, except when transferred to designated replacement vessels. A designated replacement vessel is defined as only those AFA vessels eligible to participate in the BSAI pollock fishery identified under Section 208, or a designated replacement vessel for lost vessels as allowed under the AFA.

Inshore BSAI Pollock Allocation: The Council also revised the formula to allocate BSAI pollock among each inshore

cooperative and the open access fishery. The new formula would set each cooperative and the open access fishery's allocations equal to the aggregate official history (1995-1997 best two of three years plus offshore compensation for vessels with more than 500 mt of offshore landings) of the member vessels in each cooperative or open access sector divided by the aggregate official catch histories of all inshore qualified AFA catcher vessels. Changing the formula will proportionately redistribute the 1995-97 inshore BSAI pollock harvest of non-AFA catcher vessels and catcher vessels in the catcher processor sector among all AFA inshore catcher vessels. This will reduce the amount of pollock in the open access fishery relative to what it was in year 2000.

Pacific Cod Harvest Sideboards: The Council took no action to change the years used to calculate the Pacific cod harvest sideboards. This action was proposed to help distribute cod among each of the cooperatives, by changing the years from 1997 only to 1995-97. However, the Council was advised that this issue was resolved by inter-co-op agreements.

Crab Harvest Sideboard Exemptions: The Council voted to exempt AFA crossover vessels from crab harvesting sideboards that can demonstrate participation in all opilio, bairdi, Bristol Bay red king crab fisheries during the years 1991-97 and that have AFA qualifying pollock catch histories of less than 5,000 mt (1995-1997 best two of three years plus offshore compensation for vessels with more than 500 mt of offshore landings). This action is expected to affect only one vessel, which will be allowed to fish BBRKC without sideboard restrictions.

Pollock Processing Sideboards and Excessive Share Caps: The Council voted to send out the pollock processing sideboard and excessive share cap amendment package for public review, with the following revisions:

1. Attempt to balance the analysis by ground-truthing existing hypothetical scenarios. Replace those that are not found to be true or likely, with hypothetical scenarios that are reality based.
2. Add a bycatch section that examines processing of bycatch when sideboards for that species are reached. In that section, the analysis should look at the potential of processing caps that might result in the discards of bycatch. It should also identify an option that would allow AFA processors to accept bycatch above their processing caps.
3. The IR/IU section of the analysis should examine the potential role of processor sideboards in mitigating additional operating advantages to AFA processors (such as fishing cooperatives and additional investment capital) in competing with non-AFA processors under IR/IU.
4. Ask staff to include in the analysis an evaluation of the option of allowing the Council to pick different sets of processing sideboard limits for the GOA and BSAI fisheries.

Continued Page 4

5. Ask staff to include in the analysis a discussion of the consequences or impacts that would result from setting catcher processor processing sideboards lower than the harvesting sideboards that apply to the catcher processor sector and its catcher vessel fleet.

During Council discussions, five additional issues and options were raised relevant to consideration of processing sideboards. The Council did not include these for additional analysis at this time, but requested that they be highlighted for public comment, and notice that the Council may consider them further this October when final action is scheduled on this issue. These are:

1. Comparison of non-AFA catcher processor cod and flatfish processing amounts as a percentage of catch before and after the AFA.
2. Potential activation of latent LLP permits in the BSAI groundfish trawl fisheries.
3. Consideration of an option to allocate to non-AFA catcher processors their historic percentages of TACs and PSCs in underutilized species.
4. Consideration of imposing processor sideboard limits whether or not an AFA processor participates in a cooperative.
5. Identification of the owners of non-AFA groundfish processing vessels/plants in the BSAI and GOA.

This document is expected to be completed and available for public review by late July. Council action is scheduled for October in Sitka, Alaska.

Crab Processing Sideboards: The Council reviewed a report on the 2000 opilio fishery presented by ADF&G. Based on that report the Council requested that a discussion paper be prepared for consideration at the next Council meeting (September in Anchorage). The discussion paper would look at modifying the crab processing caps to allow each cooperative to exceed their processing cap by 10-20 percent without being subject to penalty, as well as look at the option of completely eliminating the caps. The discussion paper will also include the option of using 1998 processing activity (as opposed to only 1995-1997) in setting the caps, as that relates to the issue of latent capacity. If the Council changes the crab processing caps, it is expected that those changes would be included in the final rule making package that will be released for public comment in October, and would be effective for the 2001 fishing year. This paper is expected to be available by late July for review. The Council will take action in September.

Staff contacts for these issues are Chris Oliver and Darrell Brannan.

Groundfish Management

NMFS and the Council are considering revising the existing groundfish TAC specification process to respond more effectively to the following objectives:

1. Manage fisheries based on the best available information;
2. Respond to new information or conservation concerns;
3. Comply with NEPA, ESA, and RFA provisions while minimizing unnecessary disruption to fisheries;
4. Provide adequate opportunity for public review and comment; and
5. Promote administrative efficiency, while minimizing public confusion.

A preliminary analysis was available at the June meeting, but based on SSC recommendations, the Council decided to postpone initial review until the October meeting and set final action in December. The analysis will be revised to include additional discussion of some of the options and to allow the groundfish Plan Teams an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed alternatives (listed below). The draft analysis is available from Jane DiCosimo at the Council office.

Alternative 1: Status Quo.

Alternative 2: Eliminate publication of interim specifications. Issue Proposed and Final Specifications Prior to Start of the Fishing Year.

A. Issue Proposed and Final Specifications based on previous year's abundance surveys.

B. Issue Proposed and Final Specifications based on an alternate fishing year schedule.

C. Proposed and Final Specifications Issued based on current year survey results but conduct surveys earlier in year.

Alternative 3: Interim Specifications calculated from ABC, followed by Proposed and Final Specifications.

Alternative 4: Rollover of existing specifications until superseded by new specifications.

A: Rollover of current year's specifications on interim basis; NMFS would publish proposed specifications with a 15-day comment period and final specifications, following the December Council meeting.

B: Rollover of current year's specifications on interim basis; NMFS would publish interim final specifications with a 30-day comment period. If necessary after considering comments received, NMFS would publish revised final specifications.

Alternative 5: Abolish TAC Reserves.

Halibut Management

The Council reviewed two advocacy discussion papers prepared by the Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition (GCCC). The first paper proposed that certain specified communities should be able to purchase and hold halibut and sablefish quota shares (QS). No analysis of impacts of such a proposal on the commercial fisheries was presented, but the Council wanted the document made available for public comment. The Council noted that Magnuson-Stevens Act national standards apply to sablefish and groundfish, but not to the halibut fishery which is managed under the North Pacific Halibut Act. The draft problem statement was adjusted accordingly (see below), and various elements and options in the original proposal were revised to provide a more balanced set of alternatives (also available on the website). The Council has not endorsed the proposal, but would like to receive public views on it. The GCCC community purchase discussion paper may be found on the Council website or is available by mail from the Council office.

Some of the issues raised by the Council's Advisory Panel in June include the following:

1. Community QS being leased to non-residents (e.g., CDQ program);
2. Procedures for communities selecting lessee(s);
3. Whether lessee(s) must be "new" to fisheries, or may hold salmon or herring permits, for example;
4. Is the proposed 25% cost recovery fee adequate for communities;
5. Would the community or lessee own the vessel(s) on which the IFQs would be fished;
6. Competition with commercial crewmen for purchase of QS;
7. Proposed code of conduct requirements; and
8. Periodic review of community non-profit organizations.

Comments are due in the Council office by mail or FAX by **September 15, 2000**. The Council will decide in October whether to task staff with an analysis for review sometime in 2001. Any analysis will rely heavily on demographic, economic, and sociological data collected by the State of Alaska to describe the forty proposed Gulf coastal communities that would be eligible to purchase QS under the proposal.

Draft Problem Statement on Community Purchase of Quota Shares

National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act directs that "Conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of this Act (including the prevention of overfishing and rebuilding of overfished stocks), take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities in order to: (a) provide for the sustained participation of such communities; and (b) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts in such communities." Although the halibut IFQ program was developed under the Halibut Act which does not require consistency with all of the Magnuson-Stevens' national standards, the Council believes Congress clearly intended that Council consider the impacts of all of its management measures, including halibut management regulations, on fisheries dependent communities. The current halibut and sablefish IFQ management structure, despite its many benefits, was not designed to minimize adverse economic impacts on fisheries-dependent coastal communities in the Gulf of Alaska, and by all current indications, will not provide for the sustained participation of many of Alaska's smaller Gulf communities in the halibut and sablefish IFQ fisheries.

GCCC's second proposal is to set aside a percentage of any future halibut charter QS for community use during initial issuance. The set aside could come off the top of the combined commercial/charter QS or only from the charter allocation. Though this proposal will not be included in the Council's analysis of charterboat IFQ's due back for preliminary review in October, the analysis will include a discussion of charter harvest by port (data at the community level are not available). Another option would be to allow communities to purchase commercial halibut QS and use them on charter boats. The community set aside advocacy paper is on the Council website and available from our office. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Staff Tasking

The Council evaluated the current tasking assignments of staff between now and October, which include further work on the programmatic groundfish SEIS and FMP updates; completion of an EIS for the AFA provisions; a preliminary AFA report to Congress; analyses of the halibut charter boat IFQ program; phase 2 of the EFH/HAPC stakeholder process; Steller sea lion issues; and other items. Additional staff tasking between now and the October meeting was limited to the following:

- additional analysis relative to the crab processing sideboard limits (see news article under AFA) for review in September.
- additional analysis on the groundfish processing sideboard/ pollock processing excessive share caps package, which is scheduled for action in October (see AFA news article).
- completion of the demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) retention amendment previously approved by the Council.
- completion of the Cook Inlet bottom trawl ban amendment for final action in September.
- development of a preliminary database on crab harvest and processing histories, at the request of the crab industry co-op committee. This would allow industry members to assess various catch (and processor) history options relative to a potential co-op or IFQ program. This is expected to be available in late July or early August.
- additional staff support to the Observer Committee to continue development of long-term changes to the groundfish observer program.

The Council also requested staff to pursue outside (contract) assistance to develop amendment packages for a further split of the BSAI Pacific cod allocation to pot gear (between catcher and catcher/processor vessels), and two regulatory amendments relative to the BSAI P. cod fisheries which would examine bycatch set-asides and maximum retainable bycatch (MRB) amounts. There were discussions of additional sideboard issues, including the proposal for three separate sideboard pools (in lieu of the current sideboards and exemptions), as well as the impact of AFA vessels in the cod fisheries early in the season. However, the Council decided to withhold any action on these issues at this time, and allow the industry an opportunity to address these issues through negotiations among co-ops and other industry members.

The Council will not be soliciting groundfish proposals this summer due to the existing backlog of projects. However, they will revisit the entire list of existing projects this October and determine staff tasking priorities at that time. Council staff contact is Chris Oliver.

Gulf of Alaska Cooperatives

The Council reviewed the work produced by its Gulf of Alaska Cooperative Committee and approved a draft problem statement for public comment (Attachment 1). It appointed Kris Norosz (Icicle Seafoods) and John Henderschedt (Groundfish Forum) as new members to the committee and announced its intent to add a representative of the environmental community after nominations are made. The minutes from the June 8 and previous committee meetings are posted on the Council website. To date, the committee's efforts have focused on rationalizing all groundfish fisheries in Gulf regulatory areas 620, 630, and 640. A separate initiative to rationalize the Gulf Pacific cod fishery is being considered by the council. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

CDQ Management

NMFS and State of Alaska staff will prepare a draft analysis of proposed revisions to the Community Development Quota (CDQ) administrative regulations for initial Council review at the October 2000 meeting. The alternatives analyzed will be based on a proposal presented to the Council at its June 2000 meeting by the State of Alaska. The proposed revisions would change the process by which Community Development Plans are amended for new CDQ projects or additional expenditures in on-going CDQ projects. The thresholds that trigger requirements to submit substantial amendments for State and NMFS review would be increased to allow the CDQ groups to respond more quickly to business and investment opportunities. NOAA General Counsel will provide a legal opinion on the definition of a "CDQ project" prior to Council action.

Council Meeting Dates

September 6 – 12, 2000, Anchorage Sheraton, Alaska
October 2 – 9, 2000, Centennial Building, Sitka, Alaska
December 4 – 11, 2000, Anchorage Hilton, Alaska

February 5 – 12, 2001, Anchorage Hilton, Alaska
April 9 – 16, 2001, Anchorage Hilton, Alaska
June 4 – 11, 2001, Kodiak Inn, Kodiak, Alaska
October 1 – 8, 2001, Seattle, Washington
December 3 – 10, 2001, Anchorage Hilton, Alaska

February 4 – 11, 2002, Anchorage, Alaska
April 8 – 15, 2002, Anchorage, Alaska
June 3 – 10, 2002, Dutch Harbor, Alaska
September 30 – October 7, 2002, Seattle, Washington
December 2 – 9, 2002, Anchorage, Alaska

Committee Meetings

The **Groundfish Plan Teams** have rescheduled their meetings to September 13-15 because of a conflict with the dates for the Council's newly scheduled September 6-12, 2000 meeting. An agenda will be posted on the Council website in September. The November Plan Team meeting is still scheduled for November 6-9. Contact Jane DiCosimo or David Witherell for more information.

The **Halibut Subsistence Committee** is tentatively scheduled to convene from 9 am to noon on September 7, 2000. The committee will review the public review draft of the halibut subsistence analysis and provide recommendations to the Council. The public review draft and meeting information will be available in early August. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

The **CDQ Implementation Team** will schedule a meeting in September to review a draft analysis of regulatory revisions to the Community Development Quota administrative regulations for initial Council review at the October 2000 meeting. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

The Council's **Socio-economic Data Committee** may meet in August to discuss collection of industry data. Staff contact is Darrell Brannan.

The **Observer Committee** will likely meet sometime in mid to late July (July 24-25 tentatively) to review the MRAG report and discuss long term program issues. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

GULF RATIONALIZATION PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Gulf of Alaska ecosystem is complex and productive, supporting diverse communities of fish, seabirds, marine mammals and fisherman. The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) charges the Council with minimizing bycatch, protecting habitat, preventing overfishing, promoting safety of life at sea and enhancing opportunities for fishery dependent communities.

Increasing participation of Gulf of Alaska fisheries as well as increasing catch capacity and efficiency have intensified the race for fish with the attendant problems of high bycatch, decreased safety, and reduced product value. In addition there are concerns about sea lion recovery, consequences of Bering Sea crab reductions, spillover effects from the American Fisheries Act, and habitat conservation requirements. All of these factors have made achieving MSA goals difficult and force re-evaluation of the status quo.

Some additional problems which have been identified include:

- ◆ The trawl, hook-and-line and pot fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska federal fisheries are fully utilized. Competition for this resource has increased for a variety of reasons, including additional recent fishing effort due to declines in non-groundfish fisheries and increased effort by traditional, long-term fishermen.
- ◆ Fishermen who have made significant long-term investments and have long catch histories in the Gulf fisheries need protection from others who have little or limited history and wish to increase their participation in the fisheries. At the same time, the economic and social interests of communities must be addressed, and provisions need to be included to provide opportunities for new entrants and small-boat fishermen.
- ◆ The race for fish has negative impacts on:
 - ◆ Efficient utilization
 - ◆ The ability of the fleet to make spatial and temporal adjustments necessary to comply with the sea lion RPAs
 - ◆ Bycatch
 - ◆ Safety
 - ◆ The ability of the fleet to avoid further over-capitalization, or to find a way to de-capitalize.
- ◆ With the advent of the AFA and the subsequent formation of a co-op management structure in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, the potential exists for increase in effort into the Gulf fisheries. AFA sideboards address this problem to some extent. However, sideboard restrictions placed on AFA qualified vessels:
 - ◆ Do not deal with the race for fish amongst non-AFA vessels,
 - ◆ Can become more punitive rather than restrictive, and possibly do not provide adequate protection for all participants in Gulf fisheries.
 - ◆ Can have allocative impacts within the AFA fleet that negatively impact GOA dependent AFA vessels.

Consequently, a new strategy for fisheries management in the Gulf is needed to address these problems and ensure the MSA goals are achieved. This strategy must be developed in an open and generally accessible public process.

The objective of Gulf rationalization must be to ensure fisheries, ecosystem, and community sustainability by achieving MSA requirements and promoting stewardship of marine resources. Specific objectives for rationalization include:

- ◆ Meeting MSA conservation requirements (bycatch avoidance, habitat conservation, prevention of overfishing)
- ◆ Improved ability for industry to adjust to ecosystem measures such as spatial and temporal management for sea lion protection
- ◆ Promotion of safety of life at sea
- ◆ Increased utilization and improved product quality
- ◆ Community stability
- ◆ Preservation of the independent harvester fleet
- ◆ Fostering of a healthy, competitive processing environment
- ◆ Recognize historic and recent participation
- ◆ Accountability through performance reviews

NPFMC Three Meeting Outlook

September 6, 2000 Sheraton, Anchorage	October 2, 2000 Sitka	December 6, 2000 Hilton, Anchorage
<p>Pacific cod /SSL Interactions amendment package: Initial review</p> <p>Crab Processing Sideboards: Review discussion paper/final action</p> <p>MSA Reauthorization Issues: Report</p> <p>MRAG Report and Observer Committee Progress: Review</p> <p>Socio-economic data committee: Report</p> <p>HAPC Stakeholder Process: Report</p> <p>Cook Inlet Bottom trawl ban: Final Action</p>	<p>Pacific cod /SSL Interactions amendment package: Final Action</p> <p>Groundfish Processor Sideboard Caps/Excess Share Analysis: Final Action</p> <p>Halibut subsistence: Final Action</p> <p>GOA Rationalization: Discuss</p> <p>TAC setting process: Initial Review</p> <p>IFQ Program for Charter fleet: Preliminary Review</p> <p>AFA Proposed Rule/ EIS: Review and comment</p> <p>Groundfish specifications/SAFE: Initial Review</p> <p>CDQ Program Reg Amendments: Initial Review (T)</p> <p>P. cod bycatch and PSC reg. Amendments: Initial Review (T)</p> <p>P. cod pot split CV/CP: Initial Review (T)</p>	<p>TAC setting process: Final Action</p> <p>IFQ Program for Charter fleet: Initial Review</p> <p>Groundfish SEIS/FMP Updates: Review and Comment</p> <p>Groundfish specifications/SAFE: Final Action</p> <p>Groundfish overfishing definitions (MSST): Initial Review (T)</p> <p>CDQ Program Reg Amendments: Final Action (T)</p> <p>P. cod bycatch and PSC reg. Amendments: Final Action (T)</p> <p>P. cod pot split CV/CP: Final Action (T)</p>

*NOTE: This tentative timeline will be updated periodically, particularly after each Council meeting, as the Council works through its decision process.

TAC - Total Allowable Catch
 IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
 AFA - Amercian Fisheries Act
 HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
 LLP - License Limitation Program
 PSC - Prohibited Species Catch

SSL - Steller Sea Lion
 GHl - Guideline Harvest Level
 SEIS - Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
 CDQ - Community Development Quota
 GCCC- Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition
 MSA - Magnuson-Stevens Act

SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
(T)-Tentatively schedulec
 CV - Catcher Vessel CP- Catcher Processor
 SR/RE - Shortraker/Rougheye
 MSST - Minimum Stock Size Threshold
 FMP - Fishery Management Plan