

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council held its regular monthly meeting Mar. 22-23, 1979, in McPhetres Hall, 4th St., Juneau, Alaska, at 8:30 a.m. each day. Chairman Clement V. Tillion presided.

The Advisory Panel to the Council met in the Gold Room, Baranof Hotel, Juneau, at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, Mar. 21, 1979. Chairman Keith Specking presided.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee conducted its meetings at the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center, 2725 Montlake Blvd., Seattle, Wash., on Mar. 21-22, 1979. Chairman Steve Pennoyer presided.

Highlights of the Council meeting were:

MEETING SCHEDULE- The Council has determined that the May meeting will be cancelled and that the Executive Director will assess the staff workload and FMP development schedule to determine if the April meeting can likewise be cancelled. A telephone poll will be made to the Council members within 10 days to see if that meeting will or will not be held.

AGENCY REPORTS- The Council received reports from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Coast Guard:

ADF&G: The strike by Bering Sea (Dutch Harbor) crab fishermen was settled Mar. 15 with fishermen agreeing on a price of 52¢/lb;

NMFS: The Japanese crab fleet is now fishing south of 58 degrees N latitude and west of 173 degrees W longitude under a TALFF of 2,500mt of C. opilio. Reports to date indicate a lower CPUE than for a similar time period last year;

USCG: Two Japanese vessels seized and cited for under-logging catches have been released on bail, the first such action of that kind.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS- The Council received meeting reports from the SSC and AP:

SSC: Chairman Steve Pennoyer of the SSC informed the Council of the decision by the SSC to have a careful, and if necessary, lengthy study and review of the proposed king crab FMP, now in final form for review. The decision was made by the SSC during its final review of the plan with the plan development team during the Seattle meeting. The decision was based on the observations that the fishery is entirely a domestic fishery, the management regime covers a large area and the two-week

review period allowed the SSC was an inadequate time for a full review and criticism of such an important subject. Major critical areas according to the SSC include supportive data and alternative management strategies.

With respect to the review of the Bering Sea/Aleutian groundfish FMP, the SSC recommended adoption of the FMP as presented, using management regime options as outlined and endorsed by the plan development team in chartlet 2 of the plan, a winter halibut-savings longline closure landward of the 500 meter isobath and other provisions of the FMP as submitted for final review.

AP REPORT- AP member Don Rawlinson presented the AP report to the Council. The AP reviewed the Bering Sea/Aleutian groundfish FMP and recommended adoption utilizing Chartlet 2 and the PDT recommendations. A working definition of "Processing" was given the Council as follows: "Processing is the preparation of fish products caught and/or delivered for commercial utilization." The AP indicated the definition is just a working point and that great care should be exercised in the definition to avoid problems in various fisheries where processing methods are either absent or unusual due to marketing demands.

The AP report also contained recommendations to the Alaska Board of Fisheries on proposals received for board consideration during its meeting to be held in April in Anchorage. (March 29-April 6, 1979 starting at 10 a.m., at the Anchorage Westward-Hilton Hotel, 3rd St.) Fifteen specific proposals were addressed as they related to the FMP development by the Council and one additional item concerning trawl closures in the FCZ on herring was addressed. On that subject, the AP comment was that such a proposal, if enacted, would preclude either a food fishery or research/test fisheries from which valuable information could be gained.

A motion on that subject from the AP is as-follows:

"The Council is requested to request the Alaska Board of Fisheries to reconsider its actions in proposing that no trawl fishing be permitted in the FCZ pending the completion of work on the Council's herring FMP by the plan development team."

On another subject, the AP directed the following motion to the Council:

"The Council is requested to recommend to the Alaska Board of Fisheries that they not eliminate or change agreed-upon regulations for the troll fishery off Southeast Alaska as decided upon at the December Board of Fisheries meeting."

A companion motion followed:

"The Council is requested to inform the Secretary of Commerce of the need to expedite review and approval of the salmon troll FMP."

A motion relative to the establishment of marine sanctuaries is as follows:

"The Council is advised that the Advisory Panel is in agreement with and supports the Branson correspondence concerning marine sanctuaries, proposals and regulations and their implications."

CATCHER/PROCESSOR OPERATIONS- Two vessel operators testified before the Council on the activities and probable future role of catcher/processing vessels in Alaskan fisheries. Charles Bundrant operates the "Billikin" (19 processors and 5 fishermen) and the "Bountiful" and is concentrating on crab at the present, with king crab going to the domestic market and Tanner crab to the Orient. He is based in Akutan and has an associated shore facility. He indicated observers are welcome aboard his ships at all times and said it would be easier for him if they were present all the time. His company is Trident Seafoods, Inc.

A second operator (of the floating processor "Seawest", Akutan) was Mr. Jerry Tilley, who told the Council he has three boats fishing for him and employs 40 processing workers. Commenting on the bottomfishing, he indicated they had tried it three years ago and found little of commercial importance as they could not get blackcod. Both men indicated they had to sell their bottomfish product for \$1.25 to break even on costs. Mr. Tilly called for a tariff on foreign imports.

INTERIM REGULATIONS ON P.L. 93-354- Council member John Harville called for an extension of the comment date and this will be requested by the Executive Director. Both the AP and the SSC had conducted extensive debate on the subject. The AP in particular questioned the need for market and price information from U.S. processors. A study group will report.

RESERVE RELEASE- No release of reserve amounts of Gulf of Alaska groundfish, scheduled for March 2, was made with the exception of 25% of the sablefish reserve in all areas except east of 140 degrees W longitude. The next scheduled date for release of reserves is May 2.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN GROUND FISH FMP- The Council approved adoption of the BS/A groundfish FMP, and chose Option I of the proposed management regime as indicated on page 162 of the FMP. Other modifications were made including the reservation of paragraph (iii) under Sec. B TRAWL which is to be changed by PDT leader Larkins and forwarded for inclusion in the FMP, and the development of limited entry ahead of cessation of foreign fishing.

MARINE SANCTUARIES- The Council directed a letter be sent concerning adequate review or input by the Council on the proposed establishment of any marine sanctuaries in which federal agency regulations might overlay any management regime proposed for the similar area under an FMP.

PERMIT REVIEW PROCEDURES- The Council expressed its intent to use the existing review procedures it has worked under in the past for permitting foreign vessels to fish in the FCZ. The permits are reviewed annually and additions or deletions to permit requirements can be made during review.

RELEASE RESERVE MECHANISM- The Council directed that the mechanism for the release of reserves be detailed and made a part of future FMP's where that information is necessary (groundfish).

S-K FUNDS- The Council has directed that a letter requesting the release and apportionment of S-K funds be made as soon as possible. The letter is to be directed to NMFS.

HERRING- Mr. Greg Cook, Executive Director, Board of Fisheries, informed the Council of the BoF management philosophy regarding herring. It consists essentially of managing herring as segregated stocks with an emphasis on food fisheries and subsistence uses as reflected in a management regime. He said the no-trawl proposal was made in consideration of the following: (1) winter congregations of herring at sea should be managed as discrete stocks managed closer to terminal fisheries; (2) subsistence needs are protected under that plan as fish are allowed to get inshore without a high seas fishery taking them enroute, and (3) there is a benefit to local users, apart from subsistence users, of herring returning inshore without interference by a high seas fishing effort.

PUBLIC HEARING- During the public hearing portion of the meeting, the Japanese Fishery Agency requested an additional month to study the BS/A proposed closures. They promise to meet immediately in Japan and conduct the meeting among their various groups until a decision is reached.

Mr. Robert Davenny told the Council the KMIDC-AFC joint venture would start fishing April 1 with five boats and other boats joining during May. He said fees charged foreign fishermen covered only 20% of the administrative costs of administering the FCMA provisions and suggested a higher fee be charged foreign processors to equalize their costs with U.S. processing costs.