

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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#2-80

COUNCIL MEETS FOR 30TH TIME

The Council convened on Thursday, February 7, 1980 at 8:30 a.m. and adjourned on Friday, February 8, 1980 at 10:30 a.m. in the Alaska Room of the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel, 3rd and E streets, Anchorage, Alaska. The Advisory Panel met on Wednesday, February 6th in the Aleutian Room of the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Scientific and Statistical Committee met on Wednesday, February 6th, 1980 in the Council Conference Room. The meetings were open to the public.

CANADIAN FISHERIES OFFICIAL SPEAKS TO COUNCIL

Mr. Michael Hunter, Associate Director, International Fisheries Relations Branch, Canada, spoke to the Council during its opening moments Thursday, February 7, concerning U.S./Canada relations on salmon and halibut issues.

Mr. Hunter, the first Canadian official to address the Council, had high praise for the Council's work and said the Canadian government recognizes the importance of the North Pacific fisheries. On the subject of halibut, Hunter said he was "very much encouraged by the progress made at the recent Halibut Commission meeting held two weeks ago in Seattle." Hunter, who has the responsibility for American-Canadian relations in fishery matters, said 1980 will be the last year the Canadians will fish off the U.S. coast for halibut.

Hunter said also that salmon enhancement for Pacific Ocean stocks will be more important as time goes on, and said each nation must get a fair share of return for money spent on enhancement programs. "Without an agreement on this important matter, streams in the Panhandle area of the Alaska/Canada border will be affected," he said.

Council Chairman Clement V. Tillion took the occasion to extend broad "thanks" to Mr. Hunter from "all Americans" for the recent part that the Canadian government played in securing the safety of American Embassy personnel who fled the Iranian situation and were escorted to safety through Canadian intervention and cooperation.

IPHC's McCAUGHRAN REPORTS

Don McCaughran, Director, International Pacific Halibut Commission, reported to the Council on the IPHC annual meeting which was concluded on January 24; a meeting which was, he said, "conducted in a spirit of cooperation." In addition to detailing quotas and seasons, McCaughran pointed out the concern of the Commission for the incidental mortality of halibut by foreign trawl fisheries, the U.S. king and Tanner crab fishery, the U.S. shrimp fishery and the developing U.S. trawl fishery. He asked for Council cooperation in reducing these incidental catches of halibut.

NMFS STATE/FEDERAL MEETING

Jim H. Branson, Executive Director, attended the State/Federal meeting called by NMFS in Washington, D.C., January 29-31 to develop priorities and funding sources for NMFS state assistance programs and directed NMFS programs. Branson said West Coast priorities should go to data management and analysis and enforcement; second to management related research, FCZ and Territorial Sea plan development and implementation; and third to marine mammal and endangered species research and habitat protection. A fourth priority is fisheries development, reported Branson, not necessarily in that order of importance, but in that order of timeliness. Fisheries development was not considered unimportant, but funding and proper attention can be given to it with existing or proposed funding and within existing organizational structures.

SPEAKING OF PEOPLE . . .

A number of fisheries figures are in our news this month, with changes in the SSC and AP membership, NMFS staff, and reassignments in Oregon, and Alaska.

Dr. Frank Fukuhara, recently named Acting Director of the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center, Seattle, submitted his resignation from the SSC and nominated Bert Larkins, Director of Resource Ecology and the Fisheries Management Division, as his replacement. Larkins has just recently stepped down as plan leader and coordinator for both the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Groundfish Plans; Dr. Loh-Lee Low assuming the leadership of the BS/A plan development team and Dr. Jim Balsiger the GOA team.

Kirk Beiningen has planned a one-year leave of absence from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to join NMFS in their Washington, D.C. Plan Review Office (F3) and will assume his new duties the first part of the summer.

Also from Oregon is Bill Robinson who leaves the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Columbia River responsibilities for NMFS, Juneau to work on salmon and other fisheries management matters.

New Advisory Panel members Al Burch, Sharon Macklin, Bill Scott and Tony Vaska attended their first AP meeting held Wednesday and were promptly named to assist plan development teams as follows: Macklin, troll salmon; Scott, Tanner crab; Vaska, herring; and Burch, GOA and BS/A groundfish.

AP SLOTS TO BE FILLED

Two additional Advisory Panel vacancies are to be filled at the March meeting. A total of 26 nominees have submitted resumes for consideration by the nominating committee. Nominations closed as of the end of the Council meeting Friday.

MEETING DATES STILL PENDING FOR NPFMC

Precise meeting dates for the March meeting of the Council are still pending a decision on a meeting proposed between the Alaska State Board of Fisheries and the Council. If the two groups hold a joint meeting, that meeting will be held Wednesday, March 26th, and the Council meeting will be held the 27th and 28th. SSC and AP meeting dates will be announced later. If no joint meeting is held, the normal end-of-the-month schedule will prevail, unless a three-day meeting is scheduled to accommodate an unusually heavy schedule for the Council.

COUNCIL NIXES "SEVERABILITY"

A proposal that portions of the proposed amendment to the troll salmon FMP be "severable" was turned down by the Council when it voted "all or nothing" on a plan amendment being presented to the SOC for the 1980 fishery. This decision means that if any portion of the plan amendment is not accepted by the Secretary, the Council recommends the remaining portions are not to be implemented separately.

During the salmon discussion, the Council asked that the plan development team be bolstered by the addition of personnel to coordinate data collection and provide expertise from unrepresented segments of the salmon industry. The possibility of a joint Pacific and North Pacific Council steering committee is also being explored.

GROUND FISH RESERVES NOT ALLOCATED

Decisions on whether or not to recommend a release of any Reserves for either the Gulf of Alaska or Bering Sea/Aleutians Groundfish Plans were made and will probably result in no Reserve releases to either ocean area until after the March meeting. The Reserves consist of 20% of the OY for each species in the Gulf of Alaska and 5% of the OY for each species for the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands area: they are held in abeyance for overages that may occur in the domestic or foreign catches. To date 310 mt of Atka Markerel have been released to the domestic fisheries in the Bering Sea and 18,263 mt of all species have been released to the foreign fishery in the Gulf of Alaska.

A "scoping" meeting has been tentatively set for both groundfish plans in Seattle on March 5-6 to address two annual amendment packages.

TANNER CRAB TEAM GETS NEW BLOOD
AND ANOTHER AMENDMENT IS SCHEDULED

An amendment to provide for an "open-ended" Bering Sea Tanner crab (C. opilio) season and the naming of a new Tanner crab plan development team has been called for by the Council.

The amendment will propose a seasonal closure based on biological factors and will presumably address some of the problems associated with gear storage and the start of the king crab season.

A new drafting team will also be named by the Executive Director in consultation with the Scientific and Statistical Committee and Don Collinsworth, Council member and Deputy Commissioner, ADF&G.

COUNCIL SPACE PROGRAM

Additional working space will be added to the NPFMC Council office soon. Approval was granted to lease an additional area to include two office spaces and a storage area.

FISHERY DATA CONTRACT APPROVED

The Council awarded a \$145,300 contract to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to "Expand and Enhance the Alaska Commercial Fishery catch Data Reporting System." The new contract brings the total to \$342,300 for Council supported computer/data contracts to the State. The expected completion date is December, 1981.

OBSERVERS ON U.S. BOATS

An existing contract was amended by the Council to authorize observers on the American trawlers in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands area. In mentioning another 2 year contract with the State to provide more observers for American trawlers, the Council urged the State to work closely with the NMFS observer programs and the NMFS data reporting programs in the upcoming proposal to the Council.

HERRING PUBLIC HEARINGS POSTPONED AGAIN

Due to gale-force winds, and another fierce Bering Sea storm, the Herring public hearings scheduled for Hooper Bay, Tooksook Bay and Togiak were cancelled. We have extended the public comment period to February 29, 1980 so that we can make a third attempt to hold the public hearings in these places.