

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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## Observers and Groundfish Amendments Approved for 1990

At its June 20-23 meeting the Council signed off on comprehensive observer coverage for 1990 and several amendments to the groundfish plans for the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea and Aleutians. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review with implementation scheduled for January 1, 1990. The Council also approved a pollock roe-stripping amendment for public review. Final action on that proposal is scheduled for September along with a preliminary review of the status of groundfish stocks and harvest levels for 1990. The Council will review options for inshore-offshore allocations in September and also take another look at the issue of full utilization of groundfish. Additionally, the salmon plan is up for final consideration in September. The Council and its advisory bodies will meet the week of September 25 at the Anchorage Sheraton.

## Council Bids Good-Bye to Several Members

With new Council appointments due, retirements, and reassignments of agency representatives, this was the last meeting for several members. John Winther, a member of the Council for six years, will be devoting more time to his fishing business. He has participated on eleven different Council Committees, was chairman of the Finance Committee, and served as Vice Chairman of the Council for the past year. RADM Edward Nelson, Commander of the 17th U.S. Coast Guard District, is retiring in August and his alternate, Captain George White, will be reassigned to Washington, DC. This was also the last meeting for Robert Ford, the State Department's representative on the Council, who will be taking on other duties within the State Department. The Council expressed its appreciation for their participation in the Council process.

## New Council and Advisory Panel Members Announced

Today the Secretary of Commerce announced the appointment of Ronald Hegge and the reappointment of Lawrence Cotter to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council for terms of three years beginning August 11. Mr. Hegge has been a member of the Council's Advisory Panel since 1985 and serves on the Council's Data Gathering Committee. He is the Director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association in Sitka and owns and operates vessels in a variety of Alaskan fisheries.

Mr. Cotter, appointed to his second three-year term on the Council, is a private fisheries consultant. He served as Chairman of the Council's Crab Management and Bycatch Committees and is currently a member of the Council's Advisory Panel Nominating, Data Gathering, and Habitat Committees, the Groundfish Plan Amendment Advisory Group, and Council liaison on an industry ad hoc committee for herring bycatch issues.

Vic Horgan, Jr. was appointed to the Advisory Panel to fill the seat vacated by Steve Smith of Kemp Pacific Fisheries. Mr. Horgan, Senior Vice President and Operations Manager for Ocean Beauty Seafoods in Seattle, is a director on the board of Pacific Seafood Processors Association and served on the North Pacific Council's Future of Groundfish Committee.

### Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab FMP Approved

On June 2, 1989 the Secretary of Commerce approved the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This FMP culminates a ten-year effort by the Council to develop a plan that defers management of the crab resource to the State of Alaska while maintaining federal oversight. The next step with the new plan in place is to encourage the formation of the Pacific Northwest Industry Advisory Committee later this summer. The Alaska Board of Fisheries has just called for shellfish proposals with an October 1, 1989 deadline. The committee may want to meet before then to prepare proposals. The Board will later ask this committee, as well as other State advisory committees, to comment on Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands shellfish proposals submitted for their consideration at their meeting in March 1990.

### Full Utilization in the Groundfish Fisheries

In April the Council asked its staff and plan teams to develop management alternatives which would address the issue of non-utilization in the groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska. The examination was to encompass all types of non-utilization: roe-stripping of species other than pollock, high-grading, economic discard, discard of prohibited species, and processing waste. A discussion paper was prepared by the staff and the groundfish plan teams which defines non-utilization, describes when it occurs, notes that quantitative information is lacking, and suggests ten management alternatives to the status quo which could be used to address the issue. The Council will continue its examination of this issue in September, focusing on other state and federal policy on full utilization in fisheries, processing practices in roe fisheries other than pollock, and determining the availability of information on which to base estimates of non-utilization in harvesting and processing activities.

### Comprehensive Observer Program Approved

The Council approved comprehensive, mandatory observer coverage of the groundfish fisheries off Alaska beginning in 1990. The North Pacific Council approved 100% coverage for next year on all vessels 125 ft and over in length and 30% coverage on smaller vessels capable of taking observers. Shore operations also will be covered to augment at-sea information. Funding for the observers will be provided by the vessel carrying the observer or by the shoreplant in which the observer is operating. After 1990, the Council will annually review and determine coverage levels in September for the following year.

This momentous decision follows the rapid expansion of the fully domestic groundfish fisheries and the associated decline in information generated by the foreign observer program in the foreign directed and joint venture fisheries. The Council went on record in January that the lack of observer data was preventing them from meeting their obligations under the Magnuson Act. They also petitioned the Secretary of Commerce to prepare, implement, and fund an observer program, and to use marine mammal observers to collect fisheries data. Public testimony last week strongly supported an observer program which would yield the types of data needed to manage target fisheries and control bycatch of other groundfish species and more valuable species such as halibut and crab.

The Council's decision on observers is a major one that should help in preparing for effective conservation and management of the abundant fish resources off Alaska for the 1990s and beyond. NOAA Fisheries will be reviewing the proposed program and working out the administrative details over the summer. They will report back to the Council in September on how to successfully field the observers next year.

### Council Passes Groundfish Plan Amendments

The Council took action on the eight proposals in Amendment 18 to the Gulf of Alaska groundfish plan and Amendment 13 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands plan. Subject to approval by the Secretary of Commerce, the following measures will be incorporated into the management plans:

#### Both Plans

- An observer coverage framework starting with the 1990 fishing season that will allow up to 100% observer coverage.
- An enhanced system of recordkeeping and data reporting requirements.
- Fishing seasons for any managed groundfish species now may be changed by regulatory amendment.
- Secretary of Commerce may combine or split species within the target species categories using a framework procedure.

#### Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Plan

- Allocation of sablefish Total Allowable Catch (TAC) between fixed and mobile gears in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands region: fixed will receive 50% of the TAC in the Bering Sea and 75% in the Aleutians, mobile gear taking the remainder.
- Groundfish fishing closed within 12 miles of the Walrus Islands (Round Island and The Twins) and Cape Peirce in Bristol Bay from April 1 to September 30 to provide additional protection to walrus hauled out during the summer months. This provision will sunset on December 31, 1991.

#### Gulf of Alaska Plan

- Establish a Shelikof District and east and west reporting areas to more effectively manage pollock in the Central and Western Gulf of Alaska.
- Extension of the king crab time/area closures adjacent to Kodiak Island for three years, with additional areas to be closed if there is a significant recruitment event.
- Allocations of 2,000 mt to trawl and 750 mt to fixed gear of the halibut mortality cap for 1990. Commencing in 1991, the Council will allocate halibut PSC bycatch among gear groups using a framework procedure; NOAA Fisheries will prepare a regulatory amendment to implement this measure later this year or early in 1990. The Council also requested NOAA Fisheries to develop a regulatory amendment that would prohibit pot gear that does not minimize halibut bycatch. The Council expects to review the gear specifications in September.

Trawlers currently may obtain an exemption from NOAA Fisheries to fish for Pacific cod in waters of less than 25 fathoms in the area from 160° to 162° W. (to 163° W. for March 15 through June 15 under Amendment 12a) between 58° N. and the Alaska Peninsula even though the rest of that area is closed to protect crab and halibut. The Council voted not to extend this exemption out to the 30 fathom line.

**Council Ups Pollock Specifications in Western/Central Gulf of Alaska  
But Turns Down Request for More Pacific Cod**

After reviewing results from the 1989 Shelikof Strait hydroacoustic survey and a revised status of stocks report from Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center scientists, the Council increased the 1989 Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) and Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for pollock in the Western and Central Gulf of Alaska from 60,000 mt to 72,000 mt. The Scientific and Statistical Committee also had recommended the increase in ABC after considering recent analyses that showed earlier stock estimates to be low. Because the pollock catch now stands at 65,000 mt, these adjustments will provide another 7,000 mt for the rest of the year. The Council requested that NOAA Fisheries manage pollock to accommodate estimated domestic bycatch needs before allowing a directed fishery. These actions came on the heels of a request by the Council for the Secretary of Commerce to use his emergency authority to implement what is known as the single-species rule in managing groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska. That rule enables NOAA Fisheries to curtail a directed fishery to provide for bycatch needs from a groundfish harvest quota.

The Council also had received a request from industry to increase the harvest quota for Pacific cod in the Western Gulf. The request was turned down because there was no new scientific evidence to justify raising the ABC or shifting cod from the Central to the Western Gulf. The Council will be taking a close look this fall at the distribution of cod between areas of the Gulf.

**Draft Pollock Roe Stripping Amendment Approved For Public Review**

In April the Council requested that a draft amendment to the groundfish fishery management plans be prepared to address the issue of roe stripping in the pollock fisheries of the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. The plan teams subsequently prepared an amendment document which was reviewed by the Council at its June meeting. The draft amendment proposed five alternatives:

1. Do nothing - status quo.
2. Prohibit roe stripping in the pollock fisheries of the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands.
3. Require full utilization in the pollock fisheries of the GOA and BSAI.
4. Implement a split harvesting season to place limits on the winter/early spring harvest of pollock and ensure the availability of product later in the year in the GOA and BSAI.
5. Prohibit roe stripping and implement a split harvesting season in the GOA and BSAI (a combination of Alternatives 2 and 4).

The Council recommended that the amendment document be expanded to include a descriptive section on conventional measures that might be used to limit harvest of pollock during the spawning season (seasonal quotas, trip limits, etc.), and revisions to the alternatives that specify that the GOA and/or the BSAI could be geographically divided for the purposes of limiting harvest on roe-bearing pollock in one or more sub-areas of a management area.

The pollock roe stripping draft amendment document will be revised by staff and the plan teams and will be available for public review in August. A Notice of Availability will be mailed to the public at that time. The Council will review public comments and take action on this issue at its September meeting with a goal of implementing an appropriate management measure for the 1990 pollock fishery.

#### Inshore-Offshore Allocations

In April a coalition of shorebased interests petitioned the Council for some form of inshore-offshore preference. The Council agreed to review the concept at its June meeting and requested that public proposals be submitted. The management measures proposed by the public covered a wide range of possible approaches, mainly falling into three main categories: allocations, limited access, and differential regulation. After reviewing all proposals and taking extensive public testimony, the Council decided to appoint a committee to work with staff in developing a list of suitable management alternatives for allocating resources between at-sea and non at-sea components. NOAA General Counsel will be asked to provide a legal opinion on the alternatives. In September the Council will determine whether or not to proceed with further development of any of the alternatives and the accompanying schedule.

#### Sablefish Management Alternatives Go to Final Analysis

The Council directed its staff to do the final analysis this summer of the proposed license limitation and individual fishing quota (IFQ) systems for the sablefish longline fishery off Alaska. The schedule now calls for the Council to consider sending the proposals out for public review after the September meeting. Also in September, and again in January and June, the Council will review its schedule of consideration of limited access alternatives for not only sablefish, but, halibut, groundfish and crab, to determine if they should be revised or possibly abandoned altogether. If the current schedules hold, final consideration of sablefish limited access will occur this December, followed by halibut next April, and groundfish and crab in December 1990.

#### Salmon Fishery Management Plan - A Reminder

This is a second notice to the public that the Council's draft management plan for salmon fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska is available for review. The Council approved release of the salmon plan for public review at its April meeting and extended the comment period through the summer so that fishermen would have sufficient opportunity to respond. Copies of the draft plan are available from the Council offices or from the Fishery Management Division of National Marine Fisheries Service in Juneau. Written comments should be sent to the Council offices no later than 5:00 pm, September 1, 1989. Please see the attached Notice of Availability for more information.

## Legislative Update

Magnuson Act Reauthorization. The current reauthorization period of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MFCMA) expires on September 30, 1989. Both the Senate and House held hearings on the Act in May. Hearings in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska have been scheduled for the following dates and locations:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Subject</u>                        |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| July 6      | Anchorage       | Senate hearing on MFCMA               |
| July 7      | Seattle         | Senate hearing on MFCMA and fisheries |
| August 8    | Seattle         | House hearing on MFCMA and fisheries  |
| August 9    | Cordova         | House hearing the oil spill           |
| August 11   | Anchorage       | House hearing on MFCMA and fisheries  |

No federal legislation providing MFCMA amendments has been introduced to date. However, legislation has been introduced to authorize appropriations to carry out the MFCMA through fiscal year 1992. The bill (H.R. 2061) has been forwarded to the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee for review. It currently shows \$75 million, \$76 million, and \$77 million for fiscal years 1990, 1991, and 1992, respectively.

Fur Seal Act. On April 15, 1989 Congressman Don Young introduced H.R. 2105 which would provide continued access to certain fisheries in the Bering Sea should the Council and Secretary of Commerce approve a limited access program. The legislation proposes allocating 10% of the applicable Bering Sea Total Allowable Catch to the Pribilof Islanders.

Federal Fish Inspection Act. Legislation has been introduced that would establish a national fish inspection program administered by the Department of Agriculture. The intent of the bill is to ensure public confidence in the wholesomeness, safety, and quality of fish and fish products. The bill would expand existing inspection programs for meat and meat products to include fish and fish products.

### Council Steps Up Pressure on Korea and Taiwan Driftnet Fisheries

The North Pacific Council went on record urging Congress to withhold renewal of the Governing International Fishery Agreement (GIFA) with the Republic of Korea. The GIFA establishes the basis for the Republic of Korea to gain access to the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone and its fish resources. It paves the way for that country to profit from joint ventures with U.S. fishermen, and for Korean fishing, processing and support vessels to conduct fishing-related activities such as transshipment of product within 200 miles of Alaska.

In taking this action, the Council hopes to increase pressure on Korea to stop their high seas interception of North American salmon by their driftnet fleet. Fishermen all along the Pacific Coast have expressed outrage over these interceptions, especially with returning salmon runs being so disappointing last year. The issue has received extensive press coverage and the attention of environmentalists, all deploring the continued use of these miles-long driftnets that indiscriminately catch and kill everything from fish, to marine mammals, to birds, often breaking loose but continuing to ghost fish and be hazardous to navigation. The North Pacific Council has called on the U.S. Department of State to provide leadership to stop these interceptions on the high seas. Many members of Congress have expressed similar concerns.

In accordance with the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Korean GIFA will be approved automatically unless negative action is taken by Congress within sixty calendar days. Therefore, the Council wants Congress to place a hold on the GIFA unless Korea signs an acceptable enforcement and monitoring agreement pursuant to the Driftnet Impact Monitoring, Assessment, and Control Act of 1987. This action would send a strong message that the United States will no longer tolerate high seas interceptions by any foreign fleets.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council also is sending a letter to President Bush urging him to restrict imports of fish products from Taiwan if that country is certified pursuant to the provisions of the Driftnet Act. Imposing sanctions on fish imports under the Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967 would send a strong signal to Taiwan to stop their high seas interceptions of North American salmon.

### Taiwanese Caught Red-Handed

Driftnet Fisheries. The Council viewed a videotape provided by the Coast Guard which showed crewmen on a Taiwanese vessel, the TA CHIEH NO. 3, disposing of salmon, both frozen and fresh, after being spotted retrieving its driftnet in an area outside of their INPFC fishing area. The Coast Guard reported 87 trays of frozen product and 24 large individual salmon, estimated to total approximately 2 metric tons of salmon, were thrown overboard. A small boat dispatched from the Coast Guard Cutter MIDGETT was able to retrieve four unfrozen salmon and 2 trays from the water; the frozen blocks sank and were unretrievable. The crew of the vessel hosed and brushed its deck before allowing enforcement officers to board. The master of the vessel admitted fishing too far north and apologized and the boarding party was offered various forms of bribes to leave and forget the incident. While the boarding party awaited permission from Taiwan to conduct a thorough investigation on the vessel, they were asked to leave the vessel by the Master who said he had been ordered back to Taiwan. The Taiwanese vessel headed southeast toward the squid fishing area, not toward Taiwan. The MIDGETT followed until they received permission from Taiwan to board and conduct their investigation. The boarding party found fish scales and logs indicating the vessel had fished in prohibited areas the previous two years. On June 13, Taiwan requested that the vessel be escorted to the nearest U.S. port, Midway Island, and turned over to Taiwanese authorities for prosecution.

This encounter was part of a concerted effort by the Coast Guard to monitor fishing activities of foreign driftnet vessels on the high seas in the North Pacific. Two high endurance cutters have patrolled the area and C-130 aircraft from California have been assigned to augment Kodiak aircraft, giving the Coast Guard the ability to conduct surveillance flights almost daily.

In addition to the above incident, the Coast Guard sighted a Taiwanese vessel, the CYI YANG No. 1, with nets in the water north of Taiwan's authorized squid fishing boundary. When the Coast Guard identified itself, the Taiwanese vessel left the area, leaving its nets behind. On April 18, the Coast Guard was authorized to board the vessel on behalf of Taiwan and order it back to retrieve the nets. The nets were not relocated; however, seven Taiwanese driftnet vessels were sighted in the area on April 19, and it is believed that they retrieved the CYI YANG's nets. No salmon were found during the boarding; however, fish impressions were found in ice in the freezer and fish scales were discovered which were later analyzed and proved to be from salmon. The results of the investigation and evidence seized were delivered to Taiwan authorities in Washington, DC. Taiwan has ordered the vessel to return to port which, at the time of the report, they had failed to do.

During April and May, a total of 25 Taiwanese squid driftnet vessels were observed operating north of the fishing boundary established by Taiwan. Fourteen of the vessels were fishing when sighted. One driftnet vessel, the ST. PIETRO 108, showed Kingston, Jamaica as its home port. Four Japanese driftnet vessels were sighted underway, and on May 31, four Japanese landbased salmon driftnet vessels, two of which were fishing, were sighted north of their INPFC fishing area. This information was passed on to the Fisheries Agency of Japan through the American Embassy in Tokyo.

Donut Hole Activities. Since the closure of all joint venture fishing in March, foreign fishing activity in the Donut Hole has increased substantially. The Coast Guard reported 549 sightings of foreign vessels in the area during the period April 1 to June 11; six were sighted fishing in the U.S. EEZ. Two vessels were seized during this period. On May 10, a Soviet stern trawler, the NOVOELNYA, was seized after it was observed, along with two other vessels, fishing approximately four nautical miles inside the U.S. EEZ. The other two vessels departed the EEZ before they could be identified. The vessel was escorted to Kodiak where it was turned over to the U.S. Marshal and later released on a \$350,000 bond. On May 20, the Polish stern trawler WLOZNIK was tracked on radar moving out of the Donut Hole and up to three miles inside the EEZ. The vessel sped away from the Coast Guard cutter and back into the Donut Hole. When the vessel was boarded, fresh fish and wet nets were found on deck and the vessel's charts and logs proved that it had been fishing in the EEZ. The vessel was escorted to Kodiak, turned over to the U.S. Marshall, and later released on a \$300,000 bond. On June 5 an unidentified Soviet stern trawler was sighted and photographed fishing approximately two nautical miles inside the EEZ. It reversed course and returned to the Donut Hole after being sighted. The Coast Guard is investigating the incident in an attempt to identify the vessel and issue a report of violation.

On May 11, the Japanese stern trawler KOEI MARU No. 20 was sighted and photographed fishing approximately two miles inside the U.S. EEZ. The vessel reversed course and returned to the Donut Hole after the Coast Guard aircraft flew overhead. Results of the Coast Guard investigation and a report of violation will be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service for assessment of penalties.

Domestic Activities. During a short patrol in the Gulf of Alaska in May, Coast Guard personnel boarded several factory trawlers in the West Yakutat area and found sablefish on board. Sablefish became a prohibited species for trawlers in the area on April 12. All the vessels claimed the sablefish had been caught in the Central area. Reports of violation were issued, and the vessels were advised to offload the sablefish before continuing to fish in the West Yakutat area.

#### Groundfish Harvests in 1989

U.S. industry harvested and processed 642,720 mt of groundfish off Alaska by June 3. The catch in the Gulf of Alaska was 137,668 mt including 64,942 mt pollock, 26,865 mt Pacific cod, 23,139 mt sablefish, 14,701 mt rockfish, 7,126 mt flounders, and lesser amounts of other species. The catch in the Bering Sea and Aleutians was 750,650 mt including 397,813 mt pollock, 58,633 mt Pacific cod, 30,273 mt rock sole, 3,541 mt yellowfin sole, 1,378 mt sablefish, 2,209 mt Greenland turbot, 1,575 mt Arrowtooth flounder, 5,874 mt other flounders and minor amounts of other species. NOAA Fisheries is now surveying domestic processors to project their needs for the rest of 1989. Comments are due by July 28, 1989.



The joint venture catch remains at 245,599 mt, all from the Bering Sea and Aleutians. There has been no joint venture activity since mid-March.

NOAA Fisheries has taken the following management actions since March 15:

- March 21: Closed pollock fishery in Shelikof.
- March 23: Closed pollock fishery in Central/Western Gulf of Alaska.
- April 12: Prohibited trawl retention of sablefish in West Yakutat.
- April 17: Prohibited longline retention of sablefish in Southeast Outside and East and West Yakutat.
- April 25: Prohibited trawl retention of sablefish bycatch in Southeast Outside and East Yakutat.
- May 3: Reopened longline fishery for sablefish in West Yakutat.
- May 27: Closed directed longline fishery for sablefish in Central Gulf of Alaska.
- June 6: Prohibited trawl retention of sablefish in Central Gulf of Alaska.
- June 9: Prohibited longline retention of sablefish in West Yakutat.
- June 13: Prohibited retention of pelagic shelf rockfish in Eastern Gulf of Alaska.

#### Upcoming Meetings

|   |                      |                                |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Marine Entanglement Research Planning Meeting | July 6-7             | NWAFC, Seattle                 |
| NPFMC Habitat Committee                       | July 27-28           | NMFS Conference Room<br>Juneau |
| Fishery Planning Committee                    | To be announced      | To be announced                |
| MFCMA Hearings                                |                      |                                |
| Senate Hearings                               | July 6               | Anchorage                      |
|   | July 7               | Seattle                        |
| House Hearings                                | August 8             | Seattle                        |
|   | August 11            | Anchorage                      |
| GOA and BSAI Groundfish Plan Teams            | Week of August 28    | NWAFC, Seattle                 |
| Council, AP, & SSC Meetings                   | Week of September 25 | Sheraton Hotel<br>Anchorage    |

**NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

**FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN  
FOR THE SALMON FISHERIES IN THE EEZ OFF THE COAST OF ALASKA**

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY**

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council announces the availability of a revised fishery management plan (FMP) for salmon fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the coast of Alaska. This revised plan provides for setting annual catch levels based on Pacific Salmon Commission recommendations, and season and inseason management measures compatible with the State of Alaska. The plan also updates various biological sections and catch statistics.

The Council's Plan Team has identified the issues and analyzed the biological, socioeconomic, and management impacts of various alternative solutions for public and Council consideration based on all available information. These issues and alternative solutions focus specifically on: (1) deferring regulations to the State of Alaska, or (2) retaining status quo with Council and NOAA Fisheries management in the EEZ under Federal regulations. The plan also requires the Council to decide whether to extend jurisdiction of the plan west of 175° East longitude. The Council requests the public be aware of and comment on the unresolved issue in this plan of how extending Council jurisdiction west of 175° East longitude would impact future management of high seas salmon by the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission.

A draft Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA) was reviewed by the Council at their April 11-14 meeting and approved for public distribution. This document and the new plan are available upon request by calling the Council offices at (907) 271-2809 or by contacting the Fishery Management Division, Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 021668, Juneau, Alaska 99802, (907) 586-7228.

The Council requests that anyone having additional information pertaining to the proposed FMP, its alternatives, or the EA/RIR/IRFA, submit it to the Council during the public comment period which commences April 24. All new information will be summarized and included as appropriate in the final documents. The comment period closes at 5:00 p.m. on September 1.

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/RIR/IRFA will help the public provide meaningful and constructive feedback to aid the Council in their deliberations.

At their September 25-29 meeting in Anchorage, the Council will make their final decision and submit the FMP and supporting documentation to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation. The Council will accept oral testimony at the September 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.