

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## NEWSLETTER

### Council Zeros in on Groundfish at December Meeting

Meeting in Anchorage the week of December 3rd, the North Pacific Council took a major step in reducing the directed foreign fisheries around Alaska. The rapid expansion of the American fishery for sablefish in the Gulf of Alaska and the Aleutians in 1984 has eliminated any possibility of a directed foreign fishery or a joint venture fishery for that species or Pacific ocean perch and Atka mackerel in most areas. Alaska pollock in the Gulf are expected to be entirely utilized by U.S. shoreside processors and joint venture fisheries next year. Only limited amounts of Pacific codfish, sole and flounder would then be available for a foreign directed fishery. The Council determined that because the foreign fisheries for those species take heavy bycatches of sablefish, Pacific ocean perch and other rockfish, that the OY for those species should be set equal to the amounts needed by U.S. fishermen. The final determination was that there were no fish available for a foreign directed fishery in 1985 in the Gulf of Alaska.

The Gulf of Alaska extends from Southeast Alaska westward to 170°W. longitude, just west of Umnak Island in the Aleutian Chain. Foreign fishing vessels have been fishing in that area since 1962 when Japanese and Soviet vessels mounted large scale groundfish fisheries that exploited and rapidly depleted many of the resources in the Gulf. Some species, such as Pacific ocean perch, have not responded to careful Council management since the Magnuson Act was implemented in 1976. They are still badly depleted.

The Council will reevaluate the demands of the U.S. fishery as the season progresses.

The Council also asked the Secretary of Commerce to implement an emergency regulation closing all of the area within 20 miles of the Aleutian Islands to foreign trawling. That emergency regulation will be followed by a regular Council plan amendment during the course of the year. Eliminating foreign trawling in that area provides for expansion of the U.S. fishing effort for sablefish, Pacific ocean perch, rockfish and turbot, all high-value species caught by both U.S. longliners and trawlers.

There will still be considerable tonnages of groundfish available for foreign fishing in other areas of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands in 1985, primarily Alaska pollock, yellowfin sole and other flatfish.

In December the Council also approved joint ventures for 1985, adopted comprehensive fishery management goals and restructured its Advisory Panel. These and other items are discussed in this Newsletter.

Salmon and Groundfish Will Highlight  
February Council Meeting in Sitka

The North Pacific Council will hold its next meeting February 6-8 at the Centennial Hall in Sitka. The Council will meet with the Alaska Board of Fisheries to hear staff reports on the salmon fisheries, a report on the U.S./Canada treaty negotiations, and public testimony before making decisions on proposed regulations for the 1985 fishery. When meeting alone, the Council will review proposed changes to the groundfish fishery management plans for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutians and instruct the plan teams on further developing draft decision documents for public and Council review. Final decisions on amendments to the groundfish plans will be made in May.

Management Goals

The Council adopted nine comprehensive management goals that are intended to provide direction for the Council's fishery management decisions over the next few years. The goals are accompanied by a set of findings and explanatory text. Copies of this material may be obtained by contacting the Council offices.

Council Restructures its Advisory Panel

Following the recommendations of a Council-appointed workgroup the Council approved restructuring the Advisory Panel to consist of 20 members (currently 25) each having one-year terms. These 20 members will be chosen to represent a variety of gear types and the major geographic regions of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest having an interest in the fisheries off of Alaska. The Council recognizes that gear conflicts and allocations will be the issues of greatest concern for the next few years and will rely on the Advisory Panel for comprehensive industry advice on how various fishery management alternatives will affect the industry and local economies, on potential conflicts between user groups of a given fishery resource or area, and on the extent to which the United States will utilize resources managed by the Council's fishery management plans. With a smaller 20-member Advisory Panel, funds will be available to include additional individuals with expertise needed to work through problems before the Council at any given meeting.

The Council has asked for nominations to the Advisory Panel with a deadline of December 31. The Council will be looking for people actively involved in the community and business to ensure the best and most pertinent input into the Council. All prospective members will be asked to commit to active participation in each meeting during their terms.

In addition to geographic representation it is hoped that the major gear types from the harvesting sector will be broadly represented though no particular seat will be guaranteed by gear type or fishery. In addition to the above mentioned interests the Council will be looking for representatives of the recreational fishing, environment, and consumer/marketing communities. It is expected that, as the issues and concerns of the Council change and evolve, so too will the profile of the membership of the AP.

All persons interested in serving on the Council's Advisory Panel are requested to send a short resume to the Council office by December 31. The Council expects to review and approve the nominees in January and invite the new AP participants for the February meeting.

Gulf of Alaska Optimum Yields are Revised for 1985

Based on recent comprehensive surveys of groundfish stocks in the Gulf of Alaska indicating declining abundance of certain stocks, several optimum yield (OY) values were reduced for 1985 as follows:

<u>Species</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>
Pollock	416,600 mt	321,600 mt
Pacific ocean perch	11,475	6,083
Atka mackerel	28,700	4,678
Rockfish	7,600	5,000
Other Species	28,780	22,430

The 1985 Gulf of Alaska OYs for all species are shown in Table 1. The Council requested the Regional Director of NMFS to promulgate an emergency regulation implementing the revised OYs by January 1.

Council Ends All Directed Foreign Fishing in Gulf

The Council reviewed an NMFS survey of the amount of groundfish expected to be harvested by U.S. fishermen for U.S. processors (DAP), and sold over-the-side to foreign processors (JVP) in 1985 and approved the apportionments shown in Table 1 for the Gulf of Alaska (Figure 1). DAP and JVP are the amount required by U.S. fishermen. Since optimum yield for most species is lower in 1985 and estimates of U.S. need are higher, and because of concern over bycatches of valuable, fully-utilized species in foreign fisheries, the Council voted to eliminate all directed foreign fishing (TALFF) in the Gulf of Alaska.

U.S. demand for sablefish, Pacific ocean perch and rockfish, equals or exceeds the fish available for harvest (Table 1). Since U.S. fisheries take precedence over both foreign and joint venture fisheries there cannot be any directed joint venture or foreign fishery on these species.

In an attempt to balance the requirements of the burgeoning U.S. longline sablefish fishery with the need for an incidental catch by U.S. joint venture trawlers, the Council recommended setting aside up to 10% of the sablefish harvestable yield, by regulatory area, for joint ventures. These fish must be returned to the American fishermen for discard or domestic processing and are counted against OY. Individual joint venture permits will have bycatch limits, which when reached, will end the operation, regardless of progress toward target species goals. Bycatch rates in various areas will be based on past performance. In general, joint ventures using off-bottom trawls will catch much less than the 10% ceiling, while on-bottom trawl operations may be greatly constrained. Since no joint ventures are expected in the Eastern area it will not be necessary to hold back any sablefish for joint venture trawlers in that area.

TABLE 1  
GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH  
1985 OYS, DAPS, JVPS, AND TALFF (MT)

<u>Species</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>1985 OY</u>	<u>1985<sup>1/</sup> DAP</u>	<u>1985<sup>2/</sup> JVP</u>	<u>Reserves<sup>3/</sup></u>	<u>TALFF</u>
Pollock	Western/Central	305,000	9,371	293,250	61,000	0
	Eastern <sup>4/</sup>	16,600	2	0	3,320	0
Pacific cod <sup>4/</sup>	W	16,560	2,460	7,327	3,312	0
	C	33,540	8,624	10,073	6,708	0
	E	9,900	766	0	1,980	0
Flounders <sup>4/</sup>	W	10,400	400	102	2,080	0
	C	14,700	1,781	498	2,940	0
	E	8,400	627	0	1,680	0
Pacific ocean perch	W	1,302	1,302 <sup>5/</sup>	0	260	0
	C	3,906	3,906 <sup>5/</sup>	0	781	0
	E	875	875 <sup>5/</sup>	0	175	0
Sablefish	W	1,670	1,670 <sup>5/</sup>	0	334	0
	C	3,060	3,060 <sup>5/</sup>	0	612	0
	W. Yakutat	1,680	1,680 <sup>5/</sup>	0	336	0
	E. Yakutat	1,135	1,135	0	0	0
	S.E. Outside	1,435	1,435	0	0	0
Atka Mackerel	W	4,678	0	4,678	936	0
	C	bc	0	0	0	0
	E	bc	0	0	0	0
Rockfish	Gulfwide	5,000	4,600	0	1,000	0
Thornyhead <sup>4/</sup>	GW	3,750	0	10	750	0
Squid <sup>4/</sup>	GW	5,000	0	10	1,000	0
Other Species <sup>4/</sup>	GW	<u>22,430</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>1,400</u>	<u>4,486</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL		471,021	43,763	317,348	93,690	0

bc = bycatch amounts only.

1/ Estimates determined by NMFS Industry survey.

2/ Estimates determined by joint venture permit applications.

3/ Reserves = 20% OY.

4/ OY = DAH not to exceed stated OY for each species.

5/ DAP estimates have been reduced to equal OY.

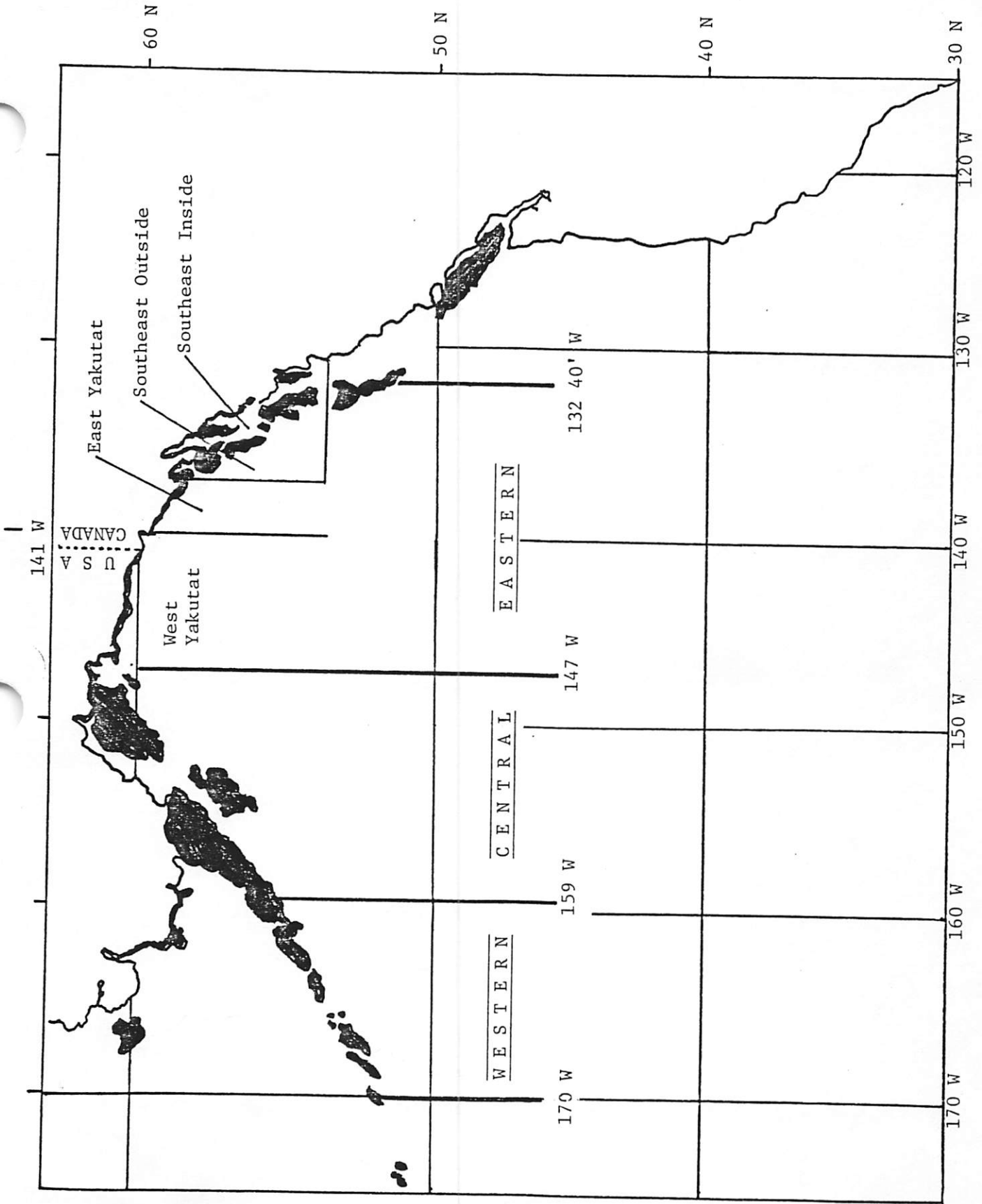


Figure 1. Regulatory Areas of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP)

These procedures for conserving and managing sablefish constitute a short-term fix that will allow a trawl fishery of about 300,000 mt, worth \$26 million, in the Gulf in 1985, while minimizing the impacts on the domestic longline fleet. Gear restrictions for sablefish, including pots, will be considered by the Council during its groundfish annual management cycle. Proposals submitted by December 7, 1984 will be reviewed initially by the Council in early February. Final review is scheduled for May. Currently there are no regulations preventing the use of trawls or pots in the domestic sablefish fishery.

The Council also adopted a 10% bycatch ceiling by area for Pacific ocean perch and rockfish, two other species fully utilized by the U.S. in 1985.

The 1984 NMFS Triennial Groundfish Survey indicated that Atka mackerel in the Central and Eastern regulatory areas are depressed and showing no signs of recruitment. Therefore, the Council reduced the OY for Atka mackerel in both areas to bycatch only in an attempt to rebuild the stocks. In the Western regulatory area, JVP for Atka mackerel equals the OY.

The Council set OY equal to the total domestic harvest for the remaining groundfish species in the Gulf to minimize bycatch of sablefish, Pacific ocean perch, and rockfish. A large bycatch was considered unacceptable given the Council's desire to rebuild these stocks and encourage their domestic utilization.

#### Aleutians Closed to Foreign Trawling Within 20 Miles

The Council unanimously recommended closing foreign trawling within 20 miles of the Aleutian Islands; last year they could fish to within 3 miles. The 1985 U.S. fishermen will harvest the available sablefish, Pacific ocean perch, and Atka mackerel in the Aleutians. The foreign trawl closure will help minimize bycatch of these species. This will still allow the foreign mid-water fishery on pollock north of the Aleutians which annually produces nearly 100,000 mt, and foreign longliners will be able to fish outside 3 miles along the Aleutians.

#### Council Separates Foreign Pacific Cod Fishery From Traditional U.S. Areas in the Bering Sea

By unanimous vote the Council has restricted directed longline fishing for Pacific cod to areas north of 55°N. latitude in the Bering Sea, and to the extent that ice conditions permit, to the area west of 170°W. longitude. The Council also voted to allow only minimal Pacific cod bycatches in foreign trawl fisheries and to restrict the foreign longline catch to 35,000 mt.

#### Council Sets 1985 Quotas and Domestic Apportionments for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish

The Council has set the 1985 total allowable catches (TAC) of groundfish species in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands region and apportioned up to 85% of each TAC to domestic processors (DAP), joint ventures (JVP), and foreign fisheries. Their decisions were based on the 1984 status of stocks analyses surveys of U.S. industry needs and testimony at the December meeting.

Table 2 shows the TACs, DAPs and JVPs. Four species have separate amounts for the Bering sea and Aleutian Islands areas, pollock, Pacific ocean perch, other rockfish, and sablefish. The rest are managed as a unit for both areas. Table 2 also shows the amount of fish available for foreign harvest (TALFF). TALFF is the remainder, if any, of 85% of the TAC after it has been apportioned to DAP and JVP.

The 300,000 mt of reserves (Table 2) is not designated by species. It is 15% of the sum total of the TACs and can be apportioned during the fishing year by the Regional Director of NMFS.

Table 2 shows zero TALFFs for Pacific ocean perch in the Aleutians and for Atka mackerel and sablefish in the Bering Sea and Aleutians. The Council asked the Regional Director to reapportion only a minimal foreign bycatch from the reserves of those species.

Squid and sablefish have zero JVPs in the Bering Sea. The Council asked the Regional Director to make minimal reserve reapportionments of these species to allow directed joint venture fishing.

#### Halibut Management

The Council recommended that the International Pacific Halibut Commission implement for the 1985 season in IPHC areas 2C (Southeast Alaska) and 3 (the Gulf of Alaska) concurrent one-, two- or three-day openings spaced approximately 20 to 30 days apart, pre-season hold inspections and pre-season non-exclusive area registration. If pre-season hold inspections are implemented, the Council recommended elimination of the five-day closure for setline gear before a halibut opening. They also recommended that its working relationship with the IPHC be formalized through a joint memorandum of understanding. The IPHC is expected to consider these recommendations at its annual meeting January 28-31, 1985 in Vancouver, B.C.

The Halibut Subcommittee gave a report on management options available to the Council in the halibut fishery. The Subcommittee was directed to rework the report into a format suitable for public workshops in Alaska and Washington beginning, possibly, next spring.

#### Net-discard Regulation

The Council discussed a regulation to prohibit U.S. fishermen from intentionally discarding fishing gear and other debris. A similar regulation already applies to foreign fishermen in the FCZ. Discarded fishing gear has been identified as a source of mortality, perhaps in significant numbers, of several species of marine mammals and birds in the Alaska area. The Council recommended that the draft regulation be circulated among other Regional Fishery Management Councils to solicit their support for the proposal.

TABLE 2

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLAND GROUND FISH  
1985 APPORTIONMENTS (MT)

<u>Species</u>	<u>TAC</u>	<u>DAP</u>	<u>JVP</u>	<u>Reserves</u>	<u>TALFF</u>
Pollock (Bering Sea)	1,200,000	211,680	635,776		172,544
Pollock (Aleutian Is.)	100,000	10,540	17,174		57,286
POP (Bering Sea)	1,000	200	500		150
POP (Aleutian Is.)	3,800	3,000	230		-0-
Rockfish (Bering Sea)	1,120	600	2		350
Rockfish (Aleutian Is.)	5,500	800	98		3,777
Sablefish (Bering Sea)	2,625	2,235	-0-		-0-
Sablefish (Aleutian Is.)	1,875	1,485	109		-0-
Pacific cod	220,000	100,000	75,000		12,000
Yellowfin sole	229,900	1,770	86,800		106,845
Turbots	37,100	-0-	5,000		26,535
Other Flatfish	111,400	1,200	55,850		37,640
Atka mackerel	37,700	-0-	32,045		-0-
Squid	10,000	-0-	-0-		8,500
Other Species	<u>37,980</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>600</u>		<u>31,683</u>
TOTALS	2,000,000	333,510	979,184	300,000	457,310



Council Approves Joint Ventures for 1985

The Council reviewed 31 different joint venture operations proposing to harvest over 800,000 mt for 1985. These operations represent partnerships between U.S. fishermen and seven foreign countries including Japan, South Korea, the U.S.S.R., Poland, Iceland, Portugal and West Germany. Permit applications received at the Council meeting indicate the following tonnages of joint venture groundfish to be purchased in 1985:

Japan	345,000 mt	Iceland	15,000 mt
Korea	160,000 mt	Spain	12,000 mt
U.S.S.R.	200,000 mt	Portugal	40,000 mt
Taiwan	9,000 mt	West Germany	6,000 mt
Poland	40,000 mt		

The Council's Permit Review Committee reviewed testimony from representatives of nearly all joint venture companies and foreign nations. Following up on the Committee recommendations the Council approved 7 joint ventures for Japan, 12 for South Korea, 1 for the U.S.S.R., and 1 for Poland. Three other joint ventures were given provisional approval: A joint venture between Arctic Venture Fishery and Korea Wong Yang Fisheries was approved, but Korea Wong Yang must have a letter of credit in place before the joint venture can begin. This action was taken by the Council because of past pay disputes between Korea Wong Yang Fisheries and U.S. trawlermen. In addition, two Taiwanese joint ventures were approved provided the Government of Taiwan satisfactorily explains the steps it is taking to stop the illegal high-seas catch of salmon. The Permit Review Committee has been delegated authority by the Council to review and make recommendations on the Taiwanese permit request when the information becomes available.

The Council recommended denying a joint venture permit for a proposed Spanish joint venture with Alaska Salt Fish Company for cod and pollock, because of the high tariffs and import restrictions that prevent competition by U.S. products in Spain and displacement of U.S.-processed products in world markets by Spanish-processed salt cod.

Several other requests were reviewed but no action could be taken until the associated vessel permit applications were published in the Federal Register.

Finally, the Council approved a request by the Alaska Pacific Seafood Industry Coalition to include the following tonnages in the Council's estimate of U.S. utilization of fish for 1985: 700,000 mt of pollock and 70,000 mt unspecified other groundfish species for Japan-U.S. joint ventures, and 200,000 mt pollock to be harvested by U.S. fishermen, processed by U.S. processors, and purchased by Japan during 1985.

ADF&G Reports on 1985 Domestic Groundfish Harvests

ADF&G estimates that through November 14 U.S. industry harvested and processed nearly 50,000 mt of groundfish off Alaska. As shown below, sablefish accounted for 7,725 mt and Pacific cod for 34,301 mt of this American harvest. an additional 1,072 mt of sablefish were caught in State internal waters.

Summary of Joint Venture Operations for 1954

The Board reviewed the joint venture operations program for 1954. The program was approved for 1954. The Board reviewed the joint venture operations program for 1954. The Board reviewed the joint venture operations program for 1954. The Board reviewed the joint venture operations program for 1954.

15,000 sq	10,000 sq	10,000 sq	10,000 sq
10,000 sq	10,000 sq	10,000 sq	10,000 sq
10,000 sq	10,000 sq	10,000 sq	10,000 sq
10,000 sq	10,000 sq	10,000 sq	10,000 sq

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Several other requests were reviewed for an earlier date. The Board reviewed the joint venture operations program for 1954. The Board reviewed the joint venture operations program for 1954. The Board reviewed the joint venture operations program for 1954.

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Summary of Joint Venture Operations for 1955

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	<u>Eastern Gulf</u>	<u>Central Gulf</u>	<u>Western Gulf</u>	<u>Bering Sea</u>	<u>Aleu- tians</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pollock	0	330	0	4788.6	239.1	5357.7
Sablefish	4330.1	2755.5	211.3	425.3	2.6	7724.8
Pacific cod	31.9	2147.8	44.6	31345.4	731	34300.7
Flounder	64.2	239.8	4.8	4	0.3	313.1
P. ocean perch	3.2	0	116	1240.2	2.3	1361.7
Rockfish	576.2	48.1	8.2	45.4	0	677.9
Atka mackerel	0	0	31.3	0	0	31.3
Other	<u>82.9</u>	<u>1.6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>84.5</u>
Total	5088.5	5522.8	416.2	37848.9	975.3	49851.7

(All in round weight in metric tons)

These figures do not include joint venture harvests by U.S. trawlers delivering to foreign processing vessels in over-the-side sales off Alaska. This 50,000 mt Domestic Annual Processed (DAP) harvest for 1984 is an increase over past years: 46,651 mt in 1983, 26,491 mt in 1982, 20,672 mt in 1981, 11,023 mt in 1980, and less than 10,000 mt in earlier years.

#### Joint Venture Update

The total joint venture catch off Alaska through November 10, 1984 was 579,114 mt. In the Gulf of Alaska, joint venture trawlers harvested 201,082 mt pollock, 4,314 mt Pacific cod, 3,095 mt flatfish, 1,657 mt Pacific ocean perch, and 2,540 mt of other species. In the Bering Sea and Aleutians, the joint venture harvest was 242,692 mt pollock, 34,011 mt Pacific cod, 35,595 mt Atka mackerel, 50,507 mt flatfish and 2,621 mt other species.

During 1984 there were 22 different joint venture company arrangements employing about 90 U.S. trawlers off Alaska. This year's joint venture catch is a significant increase over that of previous years: 350,901 mt in 1983, 179,556 mt in 1982, 95,501 mt in 1981, 33,425 mt in 1980, and 1,507 mt in 1979, the first year of significant joint ventures off Alaska. It is anticipated that joint venture harvests may go well over 800,000 mt off Alaska in 1985.

#### Foreign Fisheries Update

By November 10 the foreign fleets in the Gulf of Alaska harvested 111,360 mt of groundfish, or 52% of the current foreign allocation for that area. The catch included 87,781 mt of pollock, 15,622 mt of Pacific cod, 2,579 mt of Pacific ocean perch, and 1,052 mt of sablefish. The Central Gulf was closed to all foreign fishing on November 16.

In the Bering Sea and Aleutians they harvested 982,466 mt or about 72% of the current foreign allocation. The catch included 785,437 mt of pollock, 96,056 mt of yellowfin sole, 52,092 mt of flounders, 38,472 mt of Pacific cod, and 1,108 mt of Pacific ocean perch.

There were 109 foreign vessels off Alaska on November 28, 1984, 47 from Japan, 24 from South Korea, 9 from the USSR, 26 from Poland, and 1 each from West Germany, Taiwan and Portugal. Last year at this time there were nearly twice as many vessels off Alaska.

#### U.S. Coast Guard Reports on Enforcement

The Coast Guard reported that enforcement efforts since September 19 have resulted in six reports of violation and forty written warnings issued to foreign fishing vessels. Violations included failure to submit the required activity message 24 hours prior to beginning or ceasing fishing within the Fishery Conservation Zone, failure to respond to visual signals to stop for boarding, failure to sort catch and return prohibited species as soon as possible, failure to respond to visual signals to heave to for boarding, failure to maintain a Daily Cumulative Catch Log, failure to provide a safe boarding ladder, impeding a boarding party, and failure to accurately log incidental catch of prohibited species. In September, the Coast Guard issued a written warning to the Soviet stern trawler MYS GROZNY for fishing within the FCZ without a current permit. On November 13 two more Soviet vessels, the KALAR and TEKHNOLOG, were issued written warnings for the same infraction, and on November 15 the TEKHNOLOG was again issued a written warning for fishing within the FCZ without a permit.

Thus far in 1984, the U.S. Coast Guard enforcement effort has totaled 780 cutter patrol days and 3,039 aircraft patrol hours for a total coverage of 521,372 patrol miles. Combined enforcement efforts have resulted in three seizures, and the issuance of 32 reports of violation and 117 written warnings.

From the Council staff to all of you, HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

