

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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North Pacific Fishery Management Council Met December 7-11

During their five-day December meeting in Seattle, the Council set the 1994 groundfish harvest levels, reviewed progress on the salmon bycatch program off Alaska, clarified their intent concerning several of the provisions of the final rule for the sablefish and halibut fixed gear IFQ system, and released proposed management changes for public review concerning the halibut fishery off Atka, and the Norton Sound red king crab fishery. Council actions are recapped in this newsletter.

The Council will meet next the week of January 10. The Advisory Panel will begin at 1 p.m., Sunday, January 9, and the Scientific and Statistical Committee will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Monday. The Council will begin at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, January 11 and likely continue into Saturday, all at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel.

A draft agenda is included in this newsletter. Please note that final action on scallop management has been deferred until the April meeting. The Council will then be scheduled to take final action on the plan and the proposed moratorium on further entry into the scallop fishery. The Alaska Board of Fisheries will be setting regulations for the scallop fishery at their March meeting, and the Council will have the benefit of their discussions when it convenes in April.

1994 Advisory Panel Appointments Announced

Five new members have been appointed to the Council's Advisory Panel for 1994:

<i>Dave Benson</i>	Arctic Alaska Fisheries
<i>Bruce Cotton</i>	Long John Silver's
<i>Spike Jones</i>	Commercial Fisherman
<i>Doug Ogden</i>	Alaska Sportfish Association
<i>Hazel Nelson</i>	Bristol Bay Economic Development

The following seventeen Advisory Panel members were reappointed for the coming year:

John Bruce	Deep Sea Fishermen's Union
Al Burch	Alaska Draggers Assn.
Phillip (Steve) Drage	Commercial Fisherman
Dan Falvey	Alaska Longline Fishermen's Assn.
Kevin Kaldestad	Kaldestad Fisheries

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David Little	Clipper Seafoods
Stephanie Madsen	Aleutian Logistics
Pete Maloney	UniSea
Dean Paddock	Bristol Bay Driftnetters Association
Penny Pagels	Greenpeace
Byron Pfundt	Petersburg Vessel Owners Association
John Roos	Pacific Seafood Processors Association
John Sevier	Alaska Pacific Seafood
Harold Sparck	Bethel
Michael Stevens	Native Seas, Inc.
Beth Stewart	Aleutians East Borough
Robert Wurm	Kodiak Longline Vessel Owners Association

Scientific and Statistical Committee Appointments

Three new appointments to the SSC were confirmed at the December meeting. *Dr. Albert Tyler* returns to the Committee after serving as an alternate during portions of 1992 and 1993. Dr. Tyler is an Associate Dean for the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, University of Alaska. *Dr. Hal Weeks* was confirmed as the representative for Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. Dr. Weeks is a former NPFMC staff member and familiar with the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea fisheries. Appointed to her first term on the SSC is *Dr. Susan Hills* with the Institute of Marine Science, University of Alaska. Dr. Hills brings to the SSC extensive knowledge of Alaska marine mammals and seabirds.

The following nine members of the SSC were reappointed for 1994:

William Aron	Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NMFS
Keith Criddle	Univ. of Alaska Fairbanks, Dept. of Economics
Douglas Eggers	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Daniel Huppert	Univ. of Washington, Institute of Marine Studies
Richard Marasco	Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NMFS
Marc Miller	Univ. of Washington, School of Marine Affairs
Terrance Quinn II	Univ. of Alaska, Juneau Center for Ocean Sciences
Phil Rigby	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Jack Tagart	Washington Department of Fisheries

NPFMC Losing Two Staff Members

Brent Paine and *Regina Stewart* will be leaving the Council staff by the end of the year. Brent, who has been the Council's Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands fishery management plan coordinator since April 1991, will be going to work as the Executive Director of a new industry coalition, United Catcher Boats. Regina, best known as the Advisory Panel's secretary and staff support, has been with the Council since May 1991. She will be moving back to her native Texas. We'll miss them both and wish them well.

Gulf of Alaska Specifications

The Council established final Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for the 1994 fisheries, including Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs), Total Allowable Catches (TACs), and Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits. Twenty-five percent of the preliminary TACs (set in September) will go forward as interim harvest limits for the first of the fishing year until superseded by the final specifications, which

will be published in late January. The Council's final recommendations for ABC, TAC, and apportionments are listed in Table 1. They were based on the most current stock assessment information contained in the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document as well as recommendations from the Plan Team, Scientific and Statistical Committee, and Advisory Panel.

Specifications for pollock were based on an updated assessment and evaluation of several exploitation strategies. The Council is concerned about the continuing decline in pollock stock biomass, and recommends conservative exploitation on this stock. Although the 1994 spawning biomass is regarded as healthy, it is projected to fall below historic lows by 1996. Moreover, the current fishery is largely supported by a single dominant 1988 year class with no signs of incoming strong year classes in the immediate future. In light on this information, the Council recommended an exploitation strategy that minimizes the risk of spawning biomass falling below threshold (defined as 20% of pristine spawning biomass). The Council's final ABC and TAC recommendation was 102,000 mt for the Western and Central regulatory areas, and 7,300 mt for the Eastern Gulf.

Conservative exploitation rates were also recommended for Pacific ocean perch (POP) and other slope rockfish. Consistent with the Council's POP rebuilding policy, the recommended TAC (2,550 mt) was based on a rate intermediate between the optimal fishing rate and the rate required to provide unavoidable bycatch. The recommended POP ABC (3,030 mt) provides a buffer between TAC and the overfishing level (3,943 mt). The Council provided for additional protection of POP by recommending that overfishing levels for POP be apportioned by regulatory area. For other slope rockfish, the recommended TAC (2,235 mt) is much lower than ABC (8,300 mt), reflecting the Council's concern about bycatch and discards reported for this newly developing fishery. The TAC apportionment for the Eastern Gulf (1,048 mt) was set at the amount required to provide unavoidable bycatch of other slope rockfish in other fisheries. The Council also recommended that NMFS specify thornyhead and shortraker/rougheye rockfish be treated as bycatch only fisheries, and that Pacific ocean perch catches in the Pelagic Shelf rockfish fisheries be monitored very closely, so that the Pacific ocean perch rebuilding program is not compromised.

Several other changes were recommended for the 1994 fishing year. Rex sole was split from the deepwater flatfish complex and assigned a separate TAC of 10,140 mt. For Atka mackerel, the Council recommended a TAC of 3,500 mt, of which 2,500 mt was apportioned to the Western Gulf and 1,000 mt to the Central Gulf. Atka mackerel was split from the 'other species' category under Amendment 31; consequently, the 'other species' category of groundfish was not apportioned by management area for 1994.

The Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for halibut in the Gulf of Alaska are set by gear type and may be apportioned seasonally over the fishing year. For 1994, the Council recommended the following halibut PSC apportionments for the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries:

Trawl gear		Hook and Line gear	
1st quarter	600 mt (30%)	1st trimester	200 mt (26.7%)
2nd quarter	400 mt (20%)	2nd trimester	500 mt (66.7%)
3rd quarter	600 mt (30%)	3rd trimester	50 mt (6.7%)
4th quarter	400 mt (20%)		
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TOTAL	2000 mt		750 mt

These 1994 bycatch specifications remain unchanged from 1993. For hook and line gear, the Council again is recommending a separate PSC allowance of 10 mt for hook and line demersal shelf rockfish

fisheries in the Southeast Outside District, to be taken from the third trimester. As in 1993, pot gear would be exempt from the halibut PSC limits.

In September, the Council initiated a regulatory amendment for the GOA to apportion the trawl halibut PSC cap by specific fishery. Currently, the Gulf-wide cap applies to all bottom trawling, regardless of target species. The Council reiterated its support for this amendment and recommended that NMFS proceed with an emergency action to apportion halibut PSC among trawl fisheries for 1994. Future modifications to the apportionments would be made during the annual specifications process. When implemented, the overall cap for the trawl fishery may be apportioned among a 'Shallow water complex' and a 'Deep water complex.' Species in the shallow water complex are: pollock, Pacific cod, shallow water flatfish, Atka mackerel, and other species. Deep water complex species include: deep water flatfish, rockfish, flathead sole, sablefish, and arrowtooth flounder. The Council recommended the following apportionments for 1994:

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Shallow Complex</u>	<u>Deepwater Complex</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	500 mt	100 mt	600 mt
2	100 mt	300 mt	400 mt
3	200 mt	400 mt	600 mt
4	No apportionment.		400 mt

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Specifications for 1994

The Council adopted final groundfish specifications for the 1994 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands fisheries, including Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs), Total Allowable Catches (TACs), Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits, and apportionments. The Council recommendations for ABCs, TACs, and apportionments listed in Table 2 are based on the most current stock assessment information, as well as recommendations from the Plan Team, Scientific and Statistical Committee, and Advisory Panel.

Abundance of the species managed in the BSAI remains stable. For 1994 the Council recommended a BSAI pollock TAC of 1,330,000 mt for the Eastern Bering Sea, 45 percent to be allocated to the roe season ('A') and 55 percent to the non-roe season ('B'). The 'A' season will begin on January 20th, and the 'B' season on August 15, 1994. Due to the strong showing of the 1989 year class in the EBS trawl survey, stock assessment scientists are predicting a fairly large average fish size in this year's pollock fishery. The pollock TAC for the Aleutian Islands area is set at 56,600 mt, and 1,000 mt for the Bogoslof District (Area 518). The Council continues to recommend that there be no directed fishing for pollock in the Bogoslof District, and that the recommended 1,000 mt be used for bycatch purposes in other trawl fisheries in this area. The pollock TACs in the BSAI represent nearly 70% of the total groundfish tonnage available. Total CDQ catches of pollock for 1994 will be 99,750 mt for the Eastern Bering Sea, and 4,245 mt for the Aleutian Islands.

The Council also set a Pacific cod TAC of 191,000 mt for 1994, up from 1993's TAC of 164,500 mt. Assuming Amendment 24 to the BSAI Fishery Management Plan is implemented by the Secretary of Commerce in early 1994, 2 percent of the TAC will be reserved for jig gear, 44 percent for hook and line gear, and 54 percent for trawl gear. For the fixed gear seasonal apportionment of Pacific cod, the Council recommends that 90 percent of this gear's allocation be released during the first trimester (January 1 - April 30), 10 percent be released for the second trimester (May 1 - August 31), and any remaining TAC be rolled over into the third trimester. The Council also recommended that if the trawl gear component does not catch all of its 54% of the 1994 cod TAC, then the rollover of the cod TAC into the fixed gear component should be assigned 25% to the second trimester and the rest to the third.

TABLE 1. GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH
Final 1994 Council recommendations and apportionments (metric tons)

Species	Area	1993			Council 1994 ABC	Council 1994 TAC
		ABC	TAC	Catch*		
Pollock	W (61)	34,068	24,087	20,274	22,130	22,130
	C (62)	36,737	25,974	23,452	23,870	23,870
	C (63)	86,195	60,939	61,990	56,000	56,000
	E	3,400	3,400	689	7,300	7,300
	Total	160,400	114,400	106,405	109,300	109,300
Pacific Cod	W	18,700	18,700	18,398	16,630	16,630
	C	35,200	35,200	35,029	31,250	31,250
	E	2,800	2,800	1,621	2,520	2,520
	Total	56,700	56,700	55,048	50,400	50,400
Flatfish, Deep	W	2,020	1,740	371	460	460
	C	35,580	15,000	5,612	12,930	7,500
	E	7,930	3,000	126	3,120	3,120
	Total	45,530	19,740	6,109	16,510	11,080
Rex sole	W				800	800
	C	included in deepwater flatfish			9,310	7,500
	E				1,840	1,840
	Total				11,950	10,140
Flathead sole	W	12,580	2,000	581	9,120	2,000
	C	31,830	5,000	1,864	23,080	5,000
	E	5,040	3,000	8	3,650	3,000
	Total	49,450	10,000	2,453	35,850	10,000
Flatfish, Shallow	W	27,480	4,500	378	20,290	4,500
	C	21,260	10,000	6,302	12,950	12,950
	E	1,740	1,740	6	1,180	1,180
	Total	50,480	16,240	6,686	34,420	18,630
Arrowtooth	W	38,880	5,000	1,790	28,590	5,000
	C	253,330	20,000	15,663	186,270	20,000
	E	29,080	5,000	957	21,380	5,000
	Total	321,290	30,000	18,410	236,240	30,000
Sablefish	W	2,030	2,030	740	2,290	2,290
	C	9,610	9,610	11,877	11,220	11,220
	W. Yakutat	3,830	3,830	4,441	4,850	4,850
	E. Yak./SEO	5,430	5,430	5,357	7,140	7,140
	Total	20,900	20,900	22,415	25,500	25,500
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	753	341	474	680	571
	C	949	949	1,078	850	714
	E	1,676	1,270	283	1,500	1,265
	Total	3,378	2,560	1,835	3,030	2,550
Shorthead / Rougheye	W	100	90	84	100	100
	C	1,290	1,161	1,169	1,290	1,290
	E	570	513	609	570	570
	Total	1,960	1,764	1,862	1,960	1,960
Rockfish (Other Slope)	W	330	214	313	330	199
	C	1,640	1,064	1,493	1,640	988
	E	6,330	4,105	1,003	6,330	1,048
	Total	8,300	5,383	2,809	8,300	2,235
Northern Rockfish	W	1,000	1,000	902	1,000	1,000
	C	4,720	4,720	3,862	4,720	4,720
	E	40	40	115	40	40
	Total	5,760	5,760	4,879	5,760	5,760
Rockfish (Pelagic Shelf)	W	1,010	1,010	231	1,030	1,030
	C	4,450	4,450	2,081	4,550	4,550
	E	1,280	1,280	824	1,310	1,310
	Total	6,740	6,740	3,136	6,890	6,890
DSR	S.E. Out.	800	800	671	960	960
Thornyhead	Gulfwide	1,180	1,062	1,348	1,180	1,180
Atka mackerel	Gulfwide	with other species		6,993	4,800	3,500
Other Species	Gulfwide	NA	14,602	11,821	NA	14,504
GULF OF ALASKA TOTAL		732,868	306,651	252,880	553,050	304,589

* Catch through October 30, 1993

W = 2,500
C = 1,000

The Council set the TAC for BSAI Atka mackerel at 68,000 mt, well below the 122,500 mt ABC. In order to protect Atka mackerel stocks in the eastern region from overharvesting, this TAC was further apportioned into the three districts within the Aleutians (Area 540) as follows: 10,000 mt in the Western District, 44,525 mt in the Central District, and 13,475 mt in the Eastern District. The Council also recommended apportioning two-thirds of the Greenland turbot TAC to the Eastern Bering Sea and one-third of the TAC to the Aleutian Islands. The Council also recommended that Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Bering Sea and shortraker/rougheye in the Aleutians be managed as bycatch only.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands PSC Bycatch Apportionments

Table 3 presents the 1994 apportionments of prohibited species (halibut, herring, and crab) catch limits among the designated trawl fisheries and also the non-trawl fisheries. In the BSAI, PSC allowances for Pacific halibut, red king crab and Tanner crab may be apportioned to six different trawl fisheries. Herring PSC may be apportioned into seven trawl fisheries, and is 1 percent of the estimated biomass of the EBS herring stocks. For halibut PSC bycatch, the 3,775 mt cap is accounted for in terms of halibut discard mortality, rather than total halibut handled. Therefore, the halibut PSC caps presented in Table 3 are in terms of discard mortality. Attainments of an apportionment or seasonal allowance of a PSC will close the particular fishery.

The halibut PSC limit for the non-trawl fisheries is set at 900 mt, and also based on discard mortality rates. At this meeting, the Council recommended that 725 mt of the cap be placed in the Pacific Cod hook and line fishery, and the remaining 175 mt go for other non-trawl fisheries, including sablefish, turbot and rockfish longline and jig. The Council chose to seasonally apportion the halibut PSC cap for the Pacific cod fishery by recommending 95 percent for the first trimester, 5 percent for the second trimester, and a rollover of any remainder into the third trimester. The Council again recommended exempting groundfish pot gear from the non-trawl halibut PSC program for 1994.

Emergency Actions

The Council reaffirmed its action in September, by recommending emergency action to change the BSAI flatfish season opening date from May 1 to January 20, when other trawl fisheries open. This does not include Greenland turbot. Also included is a recommended change in directed fishing standards to prevent using arrowtooth flounder as "ballast" in the flatfish fisheries. The Council hopes these changes can be in place by March 1, 1994.

Halibut Management

The Council reviewed an analysis of a proposal submitted by the Atka Fishermen's Association that requested implementation of a 5,000 pound trip limit for the 12-hour early season halibut openings in Area 4B for the 1994 halibut season, with a set aside of 20 percent of the annual Area 4B catch limit (quota) for the early season openings. After receiving public comment, the Council recommended that the analysis go out for public review, and scheduled final action on this issue for the January meeting.

The draft analysis, which is available by contacting the Council office, examines three alternatives. Alternative 1 would allow for two options: (1) A set aside of 10 percent of the annual catch limit with no trip limits for a series of 12-hour periods prior to the general opening in August (this has been the management strategy for the past two seasons); or (2) Termination of the 10 percent set aside and early season 12-hour openings. The annual Area 4B catch limit would be taken in the general opening in August. Alternative 2 would establish a 5,000 pound trip limit combined with a 20 percent set aside for

**Table 2. BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GROUND FISH (December 1993)
Final 1994 Council ABC and TAC Recommendations and Apportionments (mt)**

Species	Area	Seasons	ABC 1993	ABC 1994	Allowance	TAC	ITAC	CDQ
Pollock	EBS	Roe	1,340,000	1,330,000	45% of ITAC	1,330,000	1,130,500	99,750
		Non-Roe					508,725	
(Bogoslof)	AI		58,700	56,600	*	56,600	48,110	4,245
	518		42,000	31,750		1,000	850	75
Pacific cod	BS/AI		164,500	191,000		191,000	162,350	
Yellowfin sole	BS/AI		238,000	230,000		150,325	127,776	
Greenland turbot	BS/AI		7,000	7,000		7,000	5,950	
	BS				2/3	4,669	3,969	
	AI				1/3	2,331	1,981	
Arrowtooth flounder	BS/AI		72,000	93,400		10,000	8,500	
Rock sole	BS/AI		185,000	313,000		75,000	63,750	
Other flatfish	BS/AI		191,000	225,000		56,000	47,600	
Sablefish	EBS		1,500	540		540	459	
	AI		2,600	2,800		2,800	2,380	
POP complex								
True POP	EBS		3,330	1,910		1,910	1,624	
Other POP complex	EBS		1,400	1,400	*	1,400	1,190	
True POP	AI		13,900	10,900		10,900	9,265	
Sharp/Northern	AI		5,670	5,670		5,670	4,820	
Short/Rougheye	AI		1,220	1,220	*	1,220	1,037	
Other rockfish	EBS		400	365	*	365	310	
	AI		925	770	*	770	655	
Atka mackerel	BS/AI		117,100	122,500		68,000	57,800	
	W			53,900	10,000	8,500		
	C			55,125	44,525	37,846		
	E			13,475	13,475	11,454		
Squid	BS/AI		3,400	3,110		3,110	2,644	
Other species	BS/AI		26,600	27,500		26,390	22,432	
BS/AI TOTAL			2,476,245	2,656,435		2,000,000	1,700,000	

Notes:

* Council recommends as bycatch only (no directed fishery).

Roe Season for Pollock: January 20 to April 15. Non-Roe season: August 15 to December 31.

ITAC = recommended TAC less the 15% reserve.

CDQs equal half the reserve for Pollock, or 7.5% of the BSAI Pollock TAC.

Approval of Amendment 24 in early 1994 will allocate the P. cod TAC as follows: 44% hook-&-line, 54% trawl, 2% jig.

BSAI flatfish fisheries open May 1, but may open earlier subject to implementation of an Emergency Rule in early 1994.

**Table 3. Final 1994 Council Recommendations for BSAI Prohibited Species Catches
BSAI Trawl Fisheries PSC Apportionments and Seasonal Allowances**

Fishery Group	Assumed Mortality*	Halibut Mortality Cap (mt)	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab (animals) Zone1**	C. bairdi (animals) Zone1	C. bairdi (animals) Zone2
Yellowfin sole Jan. 20 - Aug. 2 Aug. 3 - Dec. 31	70%	592 230 362	332	40,000	175,000	1,275,000
Rocksole/other flatfish Jan. 20 - Mar. 29 Mar. 30- June 28 June 29 - Dec. 31	70%	688 428 180 80		110,000	475,000	260,000
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish	40%	137				5,000
Rockfish Jan. 20 - Mar. 29 Mar. 30 - June 28 June 29 - Dec. 31	60%	201 40 120 41	8			10,000
Pacific cod Jan. 20 - June 28	60%	1,200	25	10,000	175,000	200,000
Pollock/mackerel/"o. species" Jan. 20 - April 15 April 16 - Dec. 31	60%	957 430 527	178	40,000	175,000	1,250,000
MW Pollock (Herring)			1,419			
TOTAL		3,775	1,962	200,000	1,000,000	3,000,000

* Council recommended discard mortality rates for 1994.

** Zone 1: Areas 511, 512, & 516. Zone 2: Areas 513, 517 & 521

BSAI Non-Trawl PSC Bycatch Apportionments and Seasonal Allowances

Fishery Group	Assumed Mortality**	Halibut Mortality (mt)	Seasonal Apportion (mt)	%
Pacific Cod Jan 1 - April 30 May 1 - August 31 Sept. 1 - Dec. 31	12.5/15%	725	685 40 Rollover	95 5
Other Non-Trawl*	12.5/15%	175		
Groundfish Pot	5%	Exempt		
TOTAL		900 metric tons		

* Includes Hook & Line Sablefish, Turbot, Rockfish, and Jig.

** Council recommended discard mortality rates. Lower number reflects the Careful Release Program.

the 12-hour halibut periods prior to the general opening for the 1994 season. This would reserve 20 percent of the Area 4B quota for harvest by vessels fishing under the 5,000 pound trip limit rule. In addition, the remainder of the 20 percent set aside not harvested prior to the general opening would be made available during that opening. Alternative 3 would establish a 5,000 pound trip limit combined with a 10 percent set aside for the 12-hour halibut periods prior to the general opening in August for the 1994 season. Copies of the analysis are available by contacting the Council office. The deadline for written comments to be included in meeting notebooks is 5:00 p.m. Thursday, January 6. However, oral comments will be accepted during the Council January 11-15 meeting.

Crab Management

The Council reviewed the analysis of a proposal that would allow the Council to designate the Norton Sound red king crab area as a super-exclusive registration area. Specific alternatives considered in the analysis include the following. Alternative 1 would result in no superexclusive registration for the Norton Sound king crab fishery. Vessels could fish in this area and any other king crab registration area. The fishery would continue to be managed by the State of Alaska. Existing regulations include a guideline harvest limit, vessel size specific pot limits, a July 1 opening date, closed area within 15 miles of shore, and nonexclusive registration. Alternative 2 would allow the Council to designate the Norton Sound king crab fishery as superexclusive. Any vessel participating in this fishery would not be able to participate in other statewide or BSAI king crab fisheries. Alternative 3 would recommend designating Norton Sound as an exclusive king crab registration area. By choosing this alternative the Council would be recommending that the Alaska Board of Fisheries change the registration status of this area. Any vessel fishing in the Norton Sound king crab fishery would not be able to fish in any other exclusive king crab fishery, but would be able to fish in any nonexclusive area for king crab. At this time all king crab areas in the BSAI are nonexclusive except Bristol Bay and Dutch Harbor, which are exclusive. Both alternatives 2 and 3 include suboptions that would allow the registration area to be designated for 1994 only, or until changed.

The Council recommended releasing the document for public review and scheduled final action for the January meeting. Copies of the analysis are available by contacting the Council office. The deadline for written comments to be included in meeting notebooks is 5:00 p.m., Thursday, January 6. However, oral and written comments will be accepted during the Council January 11-15 meeting.

Crab Advisory Committee Appointments Made

Two changes have been made in the membership of the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee. Dave Benson was confirmed as the replacement for Phil Chitwood who retired recently, and Garry Loncon was appointed to fill another position. Benson works for the Arctic Alaska Fisheries Corporation and Loncon is Vice President and General Manager for Royal Aleutian Seafoods, Inc.

The Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee was formed by the Council to provide the Bering Sea crab industry from the Pacific Northwest access to the Alaska regulatory process, similar to that of Alaskan residents. The committee meets several times a year to review proposed changes in crab fishery regulations.

Other committee members include:

Arne Aadland	Ocean Viking Fisheries
Bart Eaton	Trident Seafood
Don Giles	Icicle Seafoods, Inc.
Spike Jones	Commercial Fisherman
Bruce Joyce	Commercial Fisherman
Kevin Kaldestad	Kaldestad Fisheries

Robert Miller
Arni Thomson
Rich White

Cascade Boat Company
Alaska Crab Coalition
Dutch Harbor Seafoods Ltd.

Salmon Bycatch Management

The Council heard status reports on the development of its "Salmon Bycatch Control Policy," now commonly known as the "Salmon Bycatch Initiative." Chief among the provisions in the policy is the establishment of the Salmon Foundation and changes in federal groundfish regulations that will require retention of salmon taken in the BSAI trawl fisheries until all salmon have been counted by an observer, and also authorize the disclosure of vessel specific observer data on prohibited species bycatch. The Council was informed that these changes in regulations will not occur until sometime after the pollock 'A' season. Regarding regulations requiring processing of the salmon PSC and food bank distribution, NMFS has informed the Council of its concerns on distribution of a PSC species, such as food quality standards and product liability, and will be working on solutions. Hopefully, regulations allowing distribution of the salmon taken in the BSAI trawl fisheries will be in place sometime in 1994.

Industry representatives presented a status of developments for the Salmon Foundation, including a review of projected income from the \$20.00 assessment on chinook salmon, status of its research plan for stock identification research, in-season feedback of salmon bycatch information, and lastly a proposal for analysis of historical bycatch data. The representatives also presented the Council with a list of 120 vessels that have agreed to participate in the Salmon Foundation program. These vessels comprise significant production of BSAI groundfish. The Council was informed that though the regulations are not in place which will provide for exact counting of salmon bycatch, participants in the Salmon Foundation program will begin assessing themselves the \$20 fee/chinook for fisheries that begin on January 20, 1994 (primarily pollock and cod).

The Council also has indicated concern over the high bycatch of chum salmon in the Bering Sea and Aleutians and has scheduled a discussion of that issue for January.

Observer Program

Changes to the existing Observer Plan, approved by the Council in December of 1992, were outlined in our September newsletter and are expected to be in place in early 1994. The provisions of the existing Plan, including these changes, will remain in place until full implementation of the North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan. Full implementation of the Research Plan is expected beginning in 1996, though some fee collection could begin in 1995 for vessels not already paying directly for observers.

At the December meeting, the Council received a status report on the Research Plan from NMFS. This report indicated that the proposed Research Plan was nearing completion for Secretarial and public review and will likely be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce in early 1994. After publication by the Secretary as a Proposed Rule, public hearings will be held in each of the three states represented on the Council. Look for these hearings to be scheduled around March or April of next year.

At the December meeting, NMFS proposed some changes to the fee collection provisions of the Research Plan which differ from what the Council passed in 1992. Originally, the Plan would require bonding or letters of credit from processors to ensure Research Plan fee payments. NMFS has recommended, and the Council has approved, that this provision be dropped. In place of that, NMFS will bill processors every two months for fee payments, which will be due within thirty days of the billing date. Coupled with this provision will be a semi-annual groundfish permitting process, whereby those operations whose fee payments are not current will not receive a permit to fish. NMFS and the Council feel that this method is the least burdensome on the industry and the administration. In addition, the three-year sunset provision on the Research Plan, originally adopted by the Council, has been dropped.

Comprehensive Rationalization Planning

The Council received an update from staff on progress on the analyses of alternatives for the Comprehensive Rationalization Plan. Included in this was a report on the issue of awarding quota share based on reported (total) catch vs. retained catch. This issue will likely be addressed once again in January. The Council received public testimony but tabled any discussions until the January meeting when it will be the primary agenda item. The January meeting promises to be an important one for further development of the comprehensive plan, with the Council taking a close look at the suite of alternatives to be considered further.

On Monday evening, January 10, 1994 at 7:00 pm, there will be an open meeting to discuss the economic analyses for the plan. The purpose of the meeting will be to inform industry members of the type and scope of analyses being conducted by staff, and to receive feedback from the industry. All interested parties are invited to attend. The Council will consider comprehensive rationalization planning on Tuesday, January 11th.

Sablefish/Halibut IFQ Program

The Final Rule for the sablefish/halibut fixed gear IFQ program was published on November 9, 1993, with the program scheduled for implementation in 1995. The Council's IFQ Industry Implementation Team, established back in 1991, met on Monday evening, December 6, to discuss the specifics of this rulemaking. The Council took up the issue on Tuesday, December 7th. Copies of the Final Rule are available from the Council offices. The Council looked closely at program regulations and specifically discussed areas of the regulations which differed from their original motion approved in April of 1992. The Council requested NMFS to take the following specific actions, through regulatory or Plan amendment if required, to change or clarify the regulations:

1. Improve the ability of persons with non-written lease agreements to demonstrate their qualification for an initial QS allocation. Other evidence of a lease would include the applicant providing independently verifiable documents for each of the following: (1) cancelled checks or receipts for IPHC or CFEC (halibut or sablefish) permits; (2) IRS tax forms showing a business deduction for the lease; and (3) 1099 tax forms for any crew. Presentation of such evidence shall be considered presumptive for determining that such a lease existed.
2. Prohibit the use of halibut catcher vessel IFQ on freezer vessels (sablefish catcher vessel IFQ can still be used on freezer vessels).
3. Clarify that the use of sablefish catcher vessel IFQ on freezer vessels is still subject to appropriate vessel size categories.
4. Change the limitation of sablefish Community Development Quota from 12 percent, to 33 percent, for any one CDQ applicant.
5. Base CDQ compensation for sablefish on the average of sablefish TACs in 1988, 1989, and 1990, rather than just on 1994.
6. Restrict the use of catcher vessel QS/IFQ by solely owned corporations in southeast Alaska (Area 2C for halibut) to the same requirements as for individuals.
7. Relative to items 2 and 3 above, prohibit the use of catcher vessel sablefish IFQ on any vessel with frozen or otherwise processed IFQ product on board (this would allow retention and freezing of rockfish or Pacific cod bycatch for example). NMFS will report to the Council in January any

other changes in the regulations required to make this change, such as definitions of freezer vessels or definitions of a 'trip'.

Another item discussed at length by the Council had to do with vessel clearances for vessels landing IFQ fish outside of Alaska. NOAA GC has been requested to provide the Council with possible solutions to this issue that would not violate other Constitutional law. The Council will address this issue in January.

The Council's IFQ Industry Implementation Team will meet once again on Tuesday, January 4, 1994 in Juneau to discuss these and other issues relating to the IFQ program. The meeting is open to the public and will begin at 8:00 am at NMFS offices in downtown Juneau, 709 West 9th Street, Room 445.

Council Meeting Schedule for 1994

Week of	Location*
January 10	Anchorage
April 18	Anchorage
June 6	Anchorage
September 19 (Tentative)	Seattle (This meeting could be as late as early October depending on the late sablefish season)
December 5	Anchorage
*Anchorage meetings will be held at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. Out-of-town meeting location has not yet been determined.	

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!