# th Pacific Fishery Management Cou

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NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES: February 24-25, 1981 Anchorage, Alaska

The Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Anchorage, February 24 and 25, 1981. present were:

Donald Rosenberg, Chairman Richard Marasco, Vice Chairman Al Millikan Larry Hreha Ed Miles John Burns Jack Lechner William Aron John Clark (alternate for Steve Pennoyer who resigned January 1981)

The SSC subgroups for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska FMP's met Monday, February 23rd, with members from the PDT's and also members from the Advisory Panel groundfish FMP subgroups. The SSC subgroups reports which were presented to the SSC on Tuesday, February 24th.

### E-6 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

The SSC reviewed the Amendment #1 dated October 7, 1980 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP. With regard to the proposed amendments to the Sections 11 and 12 of the plan (i.e. optimum yield and allocation procedures), the SSC recommends Option 1 as proposed by the This option provides a range for OY from 1.4 to 2.0 million metric The SSC was concerned by the method for releasing the reserves which is provided for in Option 1. We find that the release method proposed provides less flexible than that in Option 2. The Option 1 release mechanism offers less possibility for the orderly attainment of OY. The SSC therefore recommends the adoption of the release procedures provided in Option 2. The SSC notes that there is a lack of a well defined, orderly procedure for moving from the Initial TAC to Final TAC in both Options 1 and 2.

The SSC reviewed the proposed change to Section 14 (i.e. management regime) to the FMP. The proposed management objectives were found to be satisfactory as was the proposed change in the fishing year making it the same as the calendar year.

With regard to domestic fishery area restrictions, the SSC concurs with the PDT that domestic trawlers be permitted to operate more freely in Areas A and B. However, the SSC strongly recommends that new and expanding domestic fisheries in these areas be required to utilize gear which would have the least adverse impact on non-targeted resources. The SSC is concerned about the potential adverse impact that these developing fisheries could have on the resources in these areas. As an example, an expanded domestic trawl fishery in the Halibut Savings Area may be detrimental to the goal of reducing incidental catch of halibut. The SSC also notes that any such restrictions should involve a careful analysis of relative costs and benefit from both a conservation and socioeconomic standpoint.

The SSC concurs with the recommendation regarding Domestic Fishery in-season adjustment of time and area and with the recommendation regarding foreign area restrictions. The SSC supports the recommendation regarding the procedures for foreign fishing in-season adjustment of time and areas. These procedures involve authority and flexibility granted to the NMFS Regional Director.

The SSC reviewed the proposed amendment closing the INPFC Areas I and II to all trawling from October 1 to March 31. The SSC considers that time/area closures are an extreme approach to the solution of the prohibited species issue. Although time/area closures are the easiest management regime to enforce, they are the least flexible and may preclude realization of optimum yield from the fishery. Time and area closures may be best suited for short-term relief of specific problems relative to protection of single species. In the instance of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery complex, an array of prohibited species are involved including salmon, crab, herring and halibut. The SSC finds that this proposed time/area closure will not serve to protect halibut. Therefore, the possible gains which accrue to one species and the users of that species are offset by potential losses to another species.

The SSC therefore, although not in unanimous agreement; recommends against the proposed time/area closure.

The SSC continued its consideration of this important matter of the incidental catches of prohibited species in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area. Our conclusions are as follows:

- 1. considering all sources of high seas interception of chinook salmon, there is a very significant removal of fish which would otherwise return to Alaskan streams and rivers to spawn;
- 2. an important component of foreign fishing efforts which intercept chinook salmon of Alaskan origin is the trawl fleet operating in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area;
- 3. from a biological perspective, the best available data for the salmon stocks in question indicate that a conservation issue (i.e. severely depressed stocks) does not exist at this time;

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with regard to domestic flatery area restrictions, the ACC country with the BT that comestic travilers by nemalite to operate note its is to Areas A and B theorem, the USC atrently recommends that we not expanding domestic fisheries in those areas he required to attity per which reald bave the least advito inject on domested to attity per ASC is concerned about the potential adverse appeared the chest developing fisheries raild have on the resources is thus areast the an example, an expended domestic trawl firesy in the Matabut Sarings Area may be detrivented to the gual of reducing incidental ration of hallows. The SDC also notes that my such rectrictions should involve a careful analysis of relative casts and bout to the motes that analysis of relative casts and bout to the motes conservation and positive concern.

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- 2. from a biological payspective, the base evalable daug our the ball of the selection issue (i.e. expendion issue) (i.e. expend) according aucord does not evist within time;

- 4. that the magnitude of foreign interception of chinook salmon may be contributing significantly to problems with respect to the management of the chinook resource and has reduced the yield that could be taken by domestic fishermen: and
- 5. environmental features of the region present severe difficulties in assessing escapement, thus requiring a conservative approach to assure proper management of the resource. This problem is exacerbated by the large offshore incidental catch of chinooks of undetermined origin.

The SSC recommends the following:

- 1. That the prohibited species amendment dated February 25, 1981, by the PDT be released for public review immediately. Additional comments on this proposed amendment are provided later in this report.
- 2. That all possible efforts be made to achieve a satisfactory, long-term solution to the problems of incidental catches of prohibited species including chinook salmon; and
- 3. That the resulting management regime for protecting prohibited species be put in place by October 1, 1981.

The SSC determined if it would recommend any other time/area closure as an interim management measure.

By majority vote the SSC does not recommend time/area closures as a desirable interim measure for addressing the problem of incidental catch of prohibited species in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands foreign trawl fishery.

The majority concluded that when the data on the impact of alternative time/area closures were examined, it became apparent that some domestic fishermen would benefit and others would lose from any such action. Given this fact, it is impossible on scientific grounds to conclude that one outcome is preferrable to any other.

The minority view point was as follows:

The conservation of prohibited species in the Bering Sea is of utmost importance to the continued productivity of the species and stocks involved. The present magnitude of the incidental harvests of prohibited species is cause for concern. Conservation of salmon, herring, halibut, and crabs is adversely affected by the trawl fisheries of the Bering Sea which take these fish in large quantities. The high seas mixed stock harvest of salmon and herring seriously complicates the inshore/ terminal area management for these species. The conservation and wise use of salmon and halibut is frustrated by the harvest of small immature fish and the loss of productivity of the stocks involved. Furthermore, high rates of harvest of prohibited species results in unacceptable waste (dead loss) which is contrary to acceptable conservation practices.

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Until such time as a permanent solution to this problem is in effect, some steps should be taken to address the problem on an interim basis. Specific time and area closures of the Bering Sea trawl fisheries are seemingly the only interim measures available to the Council which may affect the harvest of prohibited species. In the absence of interim time and area closures for the protection of prohibited species, there will be no mechanism by which the rate of incidental harvests or the absolute incidental harvest can be reduced. Therefore, in order to prevent the continued high rate of incidental harvests of prohibited species in the Bering Sea, it is recommended by the minority that a four-month closure (November through February) be instituted in either

- 1. INPFC Areas I and II, or
- 2. Statistical blocks numbered 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8.

The preferred option by the minority is the closure of statistical blocks 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8.

The data prepared by the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest and Alaska Fishery Center indicate that the closure of Areas I and II result in greater reductions in the harvest of prohibited species. The savings resulting from each of these area closures for the four-month period is as follows:

	Closure of Areas I and II	Closure of Statistical Blocks 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8	
Groundfish	1-2% Decrease	No Change	
Halibut	1-5% Increase	11% Increase	
King Crab	2-6% Decrease	No Change	
Tanner Crab	8-9% Decrease	No Change	
Salmon	55% Decrease	39% Decrease	
Herring	74% Decrease	67% Decrease	

The SSC unanimously urges the Council to submit for public review, the proposed Amendment #3 to this plan. The SSC recommends that the schedule for review of proposed Amendment #3 be established to allow the selected amendment to become effective by October 1, 1981.

The SSC found that the issues involved with the protection of prohibited species to be very complicated. Marasco and Terry in their report stated,

"The incidental catch of the groundfish fishery off Alaska includes halibut, salmon, and crab. The retention of the incidental catch of these high-valued species is prohibited in order to eliminate the incentive groundfish vessels would otherwise have to target on them. However, this prohibition does not provide an incentive to avoid incidental catch; and the stress associated with capture, holding, and release is

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sufficient to assure that most of the incidental catch does not survive to enter directed domestic halibut, salmon, or crab fisheries."

The SSC would like to point out to the Council that the PDT has presented in this amendment package an innovative and, in the long-term, beneficial approach to the problem of protecting and enhancing the status of prohibited species. The SSC stongly leans toward the option involving the establishment of incidental allowable catches (IAC) together with imposition of a fee schedule for incidentally-caught prohibited species. We believe that such a management measure would provide ample incentive for foreign fisheries to adopt or develop procedures to significantly reduce the incidental catch of prohibited species. It was noted that this option will require continued, adequate level of observer coverage.

The SSC would like to commend those individuals and agencies which were involved in the preparation of the report entitled "Reducing the Incidental Catch of Prohibited Species by Foreign Groundfish Fisheries in the Bering Sea." This report was the major guideline used by the SSC to review this critical issue.

### E-5 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

The PDT, in developing Amendment #10 to the Gulf of Alaska FMP, attempted to provide a solution to several points of concern associated with ground-fish activities in the Eastern Regulatory Area. Issues addressed were:

- 1. the present condition of Pacific Ocean Perch (POP) stocks;
- the present condition of sablefish stocks;
- 3. reported gear conflicts and ground preemptions.

The SSC examined the following information and data prior to the formulation of their recommendation:

- 1. Gulf of Alaska POP catch data;
- 2. POP CPUE data for the Southeastern and Yakutat areas;
- 3. foreign groundfish catches taken from the GOA;
- 4. sablefish CPUE data for the GOA;
- 5. results of a Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center report on the abundance of sablefish by Zenger and Hughes; and
- 6. reports containing information on the number of occurences of gear conflicts as well as the magnitude of the losses incurred.

Additionally, the SSC received extensive testimony by agencies and industry personnel.

The SSC, based upon the examination of these data and public testimony, finds and makes the following recommendations:

1. With regard to Pacific Ocean Perch that there is a conservation issue, that the POP stocks in this area are severely depressed. The SSC therefore recommends that the ABC and OY for POP in the Eastern

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The SSS would like to point out to the Council that the PST by presented in that amendant prekage an amoverive and, in the languagement, residiated approach to the problem of proceeding to enhancing the storm, residiated approach to the species. The SSC trougly limits toward the option fivolving the autabitied appeals and incidental allowable catches (AC) trueling a fivolving the council of a few subsections of a few subsections of a season to allow the provide amount incentive to britiste that such a management measure to if provide amount is nearly reduced to significantly reduced the trueling trueling to the continue to appear the analysis. It was noted that the opening the continue of the continued of the c

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Regulatory Area be reduced from the present ABC of 29,000 mt and the present OY of 14,400 mt to an ABC of 875 mt. We also recommend the OY be set equal to ABC.

- That DAH for POP in the Eastern Regulatory Area be set at 500 mt.
   It is the intention of the SSC that this DAH would be used only as
   an incidental catch to facilitate development of a domestic
   groundfish fishery.
- 3. TALFF for POP would therefore be 375 mt in the Eastern Regulatory Area. This would avoid difficulties associated with the addition of POP into the prohibited species category.
- 4. That foreign trawl fishing be conducted only in mid-water, meaning that trawl gear (doors and nets) shall not be in contact with the seabed and that trawl gear shall consist only of mid-water trawl doors and nets without roller gear.
- 5. It was noted this method of protection for POP from the foreign trawlers will require a significant increase in the foreign observer coverage. The SSC concurred that in the event the increase observer coverage was not made available, then the only immediate relief for the POP stocks was to close the Eastern Regulatory Area to foreign trawlers.
- 6. With regard to the sablefish resources, the SSC did not find a conservation issue exists. The SSC concluded that the ABC should remain at 10,500 mt and the OY at 7,100 mt. The SSC believes that the reduction in the foreign catch of sablefish and halibut will occur as a result of the mid-water gear restrictions.
- 7. In addition to the above, the SSC recommends that efforts be directed toward improving communication between foreign and domestic vessels.

In summary of the four proposed options, the SSC recommends Option 3 modified as follows:

- a) Foreign trawling in the Eastern Regulatory Area will be only with mid-water trawl gear, meaning trawl gear (doors and nets) shall not be in contact with the seabed. Trawl gear shall consist only of mid-water trawl doors and nets without roller gear.
- b) POP TALFF for the Eastern Regulatory Area = 375 mt.
- c) POP DAH = 500 mt.
- d) Sablefish OY will not be increased over current OY.
- e) Present sanctuaries in the Eastern Regulatory Area will be continued.

### B-8 SSC Appointments

The SSC recommends that Dr. John Clark by appointed to the SSC vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Steve Pennoyer. Dr. Clark is the chief fisheries scientist of the Commercial Fisheries Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Dr. Clark brings to the committee, in

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- 2. That DAR for POP is the Eastern degalatory and be seen a 560 mg.

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- 3. TABLE for for would therefore be 15 of in the Renero Logolatics; from the weeker keyplatics of from 1818 world formed diffronthise resocrated victorial addition of 1904 late the architect species category.
- 4. That foreign trewictishing he conducted only in mid-lance, meaning that travil goar (floors and inches) shall not he in control that the seated and that there gear shall consist only of molecular treat duors and note without collection.
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- 9. With regard to the amblettab resources, the SSO did not find a conservation issue exists. The SSO concluded that the ABU should require at -0.500 ms and the eV at 7.00 at 1.00 at the dSC belie up that the reduction in the intelegal cotton of subjection and indicate will address as a casualt of the mid-rate resources as a casualt of the mid-rate resources.
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addition to his fisheries science expertise and knowledge about Alaskan fisheries, the necessary linkage to the Department's staff and scientists to insure the continuation of the committee ability to fully utilize the full expertise of the department.

The SSC also recommends to the Council that Dr. Steve Langdon be appointed to the SSC vacancy created by the resignation of Dr. George Rogers. The SSC in reaching this recommendation review resumes and recommendations for seven scientists who had indicated a willingness to serve on the SSC. The Committee was impressed and pleased by the interest shown, and the task of a making a recommendation was difficult in light of the impressive background of the individual reviewed.

Dr. Langdon is with the Department of Anthropology of the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Dr. Langdon's background and Alaskan experience will complement the existing expertise on the Committee. His Alaskan experience includes both research on the State's limited entry system and on native subsistence issues.

The SSC received a request from Mr. Burns that he be allowed to have an alternate on the SSC. Dr. Burns indicated that his schedule during the next few months would preclude his participation in the SSC. He felt obligated, unless he had an alternate, in resigning from the Committee. The Committee wishes to continue to have Dr. Burns' expertise in the area of marine mammals and ecosystem matters, and, therefore, recommends that Dr. Burns be allowed an alternate.

#### C-1 Joint Venture Data Workgroup Report

The SSC reviewed the report of the Council's workshop to evaluate the need to collect additional data from domestic fishermen and to determine what method would be most effective. The SSC encourages the development of a logbook program to gather additional data. We encourage that the development of the program take place, if possible, in conjunction with the logbook program being developed by the Pacific Council and in cooperation with already existing logbook programs. The SSC has identified three members (Millikan, Lechner, and Marasco) who are willing to work on a Council task force to undertake development of this program. The SSC did note that to be effective, the results from such a logbook program must be made immediately available to the industry.

### F-1 Contracts

#### Contract 81-3

The final report on Contract 81-3, "A Comparison of Pacific Halibut and Tanner Crab Catches in (1) Side-entry and Top-entry Crab Pots, and (2) Side-entry Crab Pots with and without Tanner Boards," was received in late January 1981. The revised text incorporates most of the comments and criticisms contained in the SSC's review of the first draft and now constitutes a complete and acceptable report.

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The SSC else recommends to the council that us. Share Langdon be appointed to the SEC receases recommend by the resignation of the this this end appointed to the SEC in reaching this secondarial recommendations for seven ectantists who and indicated a willingness to serve or the SEC. The Council the was impressed and planned by the activities of the configuration was difficult at the configuration was difficult.

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The research conducted suggests that halibut incidence Tannner crab pots could be controlled by gear modifications. The recommendation of the contractee is that further research be initiated to explore the suggested gear modifications and that observer programs be funded to assess the utility and effectiveness of such gear in the commercial fishery. The SSC recommends that the Council accept this report.

### Contract 80-5

The SSC has reviewed the comments and additions to the final report for Contract 80-5, "A Study of the Offshore Chinook and Coho Salmon Fishing Off Alaska." The SSC recommends acceptance of the draft report and contractor comments as fullfilment of the contract. It was the SSC's opinion that the contractor had complied with the work statements to the best of his ability and that the contractors inability to complete certain parts of the contract were due to circumstances beyond his control.

### Contract 80-6

The SSC just received the modified final report and answer to our questions on Contract 80-6, "A study to Determine the Applicability of Limited Entry in the Halibut Fishing Area Off Alaska." The SSC will be prepared to make its recommendation at our next meeting.

### F-2 New Research Proposals

The SSC received the draft RFP to design of an experiment to evaluate the accuracy of herring aerial savings biomass estimates. The SSC was informed that ADF&G has received substantial support from the Alaska Legislature this year to carry out an internal evaluation of the herring assessment techniques. The SSC therefore recommends that this RFP not be released at this time. The SSC would prefer to wait until the results of the self evaluation are made available. We were informed that this should be by September 1981.

The SSC attempted to review the draft statement of work for the study to determine the stock origins of chinook incidentally caught in foreign trawls in the U.S. Eastern Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska FCZ. The SSC had some serious question regarding the magnitude of this study. Dr. Burgner, who drafted the RFP, was not able to attend this SSC meeting, and, therefore, the SSC was unable to have its concerns addressed. The SSC therefore is postponing its recommendation on this proposed RFP until our next meeting.

The SSC did review the draft RFP for the study on the compilation and evaluation of data on the feeding habits and food requirements of marine mammals in the Bering Sea. The SSC recommends some modification to the draft and recommends to the Council that the RFP be released as amended.

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# Continuent 80-3

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