

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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APPENDIX E

Scientific and Statistical Committee Minutes for August 23, 1978

The Scientific and Statistical Committee met on August 23, 1978, at the Council headquarters. Those attending include:

Dr. Dayton L. Alverson, Chairman
Mr. Steve Pennoyer, Vice Chairman
Dr. Donald E. Bevan
Mr. Jack Robinson
Mr. Donald Rosenberg
Mr. Alan E. Millikan

Absent were: D.W. Collinsworth, C. L. Rosier, E.L. Miles, and G.W. Rogers.

Topics covered include: Review of Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game shrimp management program; review of Tanner crab plan; U.S./U.S.S.R. Agreement; clam research; Dames & Moore social and economic study; Bering Sea Groundfish management plan; release of Gulf of Alaska groundfish reserves; release of herring DAH in Bering Sea; draft Halibut plan; present research contracts; and SSC membership.

1. Alaska Department of Fish & Game Shrimp Management Program:

The ADF&G staff presented a program concerned with the survey assessment techniques and management strategies for Pandalid shrimps. The committee, however, felt they were not in a position to comment on the relationship between the Gulf of Alaska programs and the differing Bering Sea shrimp plan nor to comment on the quality of the contemporary shrimp management.

Hence, they felt it important that the management plan team continue to evolve a management plan for the Bering Sea taking into account the history of management in other areas of Alaska and other areas of the world where Pandalid shrimp are fished.

The SSC recommends to the Council, however, that a workshop be sponsored by ADF&G, NMFS, Sea Grant, and the North Pacific Fishery Council on Alaska shrimp including an evaluation on prospective management strategies used in various areas of the world, a profile of catch and effort data in the Alaska shrimp fisheries, and analysis of the biological data base for management, a background study of the contemporary management strategies as well as consideration of the harvest and processing techniques. The workshop should be considered for January 1979.

SSC Report

2. Review of the Tanner Crab Plan:

The SSC recommends that the Council implement its existing management plan as soon as possible with updating and modifications desired. As a second step, the Council should consider a complete review of the plan and its basic management strategies with the intent of recommending modifications taking into account the most recent biological and economic data.

The Council should consider the proposed modifications by its October meeting. In the interim, ADF&G and NMFS should forward to the management team all the most recent information on the statistics of the tanner crab resource stocks.

3. U.S.A./U.S.S.R. Agreement:

See copy attached.

4. Clam Research:

See memo attached: 8/17/78 to Dr. Alverson from Dr. Hayes of NW&AFC, on the subject: Summary of Results, 1978 Surf Clam Joint Venture.

The Committee noted that considerable progress has been made in terms of experiments on the clam resource and on the catch rates, economic data, and studies of paralytic poisoning, and that there is a potential for a clam fishery in the eastern Bering Sea.

The committee strongly urges the Council to instruct the management team to consider a limited entry concept in the management plan and the management plan team develop a plan which would insure close monitoring of any newly developed fishery to ascertain the consequences of a clam dredge on the target resource as well as on the environment.

5. Dames & Moore Contract:

The committee felt that the financial overrun on the Dames & Moore contract was a problem which should be handled by the contractual officer and the budget committee of the Council. The SSC did recognize that certain acts taken by Dames & Moore were in the interest of developing a better final report. The committee felt that the contracting officer and the budget committee should carefully evaluate the extent and scope of the work and whether or not required changes could have been anticipated.

SSC Report

6. Bering Sea Trawl Plan:

The committee reviewed the Bering Sea trawl plan to determine the adequacy of the technical data and whether or not there were other options which should be considered. In general, the committee felt the plan was satisfactory, however, they recommended a change in the section dealing with statistical requirements imposed on user groups. The committee suggested a more general system outlining the minimum requirements for all domestic vessels operating in the area. The committee also felt that the Council should consider an option more carefully defining POP and other rockfish, recognizing the poor status of this resource and the number of years required to rebuild the stocks.

The committee also noted the difficulty in establishing MSY and EY in an area representing fringe populations. The committee noted that in the future the stock units might have to be more clearly defined.

7. Release of Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska:

The committee proposed that the Council release the reserve resources of Pacific cod, flounders, and blackcod outside of the special closed areas in southeast Alaska. The committee also noted that the reserve for POP could be released but suggested the Council consider withholding this reserve in order to allow for more rapid rebuilding of POP stocks in the Gulf of Alaska.

8. Release of 2,000 tons DAH Herring in the Bering Sea:

The committee noted discrepancies between the reported catch of herring from foreign fleets and the reports from observers. Observer data suggested that foreign catch is 2 to 3 thousand tons greater than the reported foreign catches. Because of the discrepancy in the catch data, the committee did not wish to recommend release of the 2 thousand tons DAH for herring. The committee suggested that the condition of the herring stock should be reevaluated when the statistical data could be verified and at such time as information was available from ADF&G and NMFS surveys.

9. Halibut Plan:

The SSC commended the management team for putting together a management plan in a relatively short time for Pacific halibut. The committee noted it made several minor recommendations to the team, adding an option which would allow for reallocating part of the traditional Canadian catch to U.S. fishermen and holding back part of the Canadian catch to help faster rebuilding of the halibut stocks. The management team stated that such an option would be built into the plan.

SSC Report

10. Research Proposals:

The committee evaluated the programmatic funding for research activities in FY 79. It noted that work being undertaken by Tetra Tech in the Bering Sea, by ADF&G in the Bering Sea for herring and that the observer program for salmon in the Gulf of Alaska should be forwarded in FY 79.

The committee also felt it important that the tag recovery program on chinook and coho salmon in southeast Alaska be continued in 1979 but noted that the program also has a much or more value to the Pacific Fishery Council than it has to the North Pacific Fishery Council. Hence, the committee recommends that the Pacific Council be requested to fund 50% of the contractual arrangements. The committee also suggested that some funds be made available to support the shrimp workshop considered for January next year.

The committee noted to the Council that the tenure of its present membership would terminate in September and it would be necessary to reappoint members and to elect certain new members. Miles, Pennoyer, Robinson, Millikan, Rogers, Bevan, and Rosenburg are willing to continue to serve. Dr. Alverson noted that he would be resigning from the SSC in September and recommended that Dr. Frank Fukuhara be his replacement. Mr. Pennoyer has recommended Jack Lechner of ADF&G be a new member on the SSC. There will still be a need to nominate one additional member to the SSC to fill its 10-membership level. The committee also noted, however, that it is important to nominate an individual having a broad background in marine mammal management and to assist the SSC in dealing with economics and species interactions.



Dayton L. Alverson, Chairman

Attachments



Date

cc: SSC Members

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August 23, 1978

The Scientific and Statistical Committee has reviewed the draft agreement proposed by the USSR to allow a pollock fishery by U.S. citizens within the Soviet 200-mile zone.

The language in Article 10 seems to require scientific research by the U.S. in the Soviet zone. We suggest that the language in Article 10 be modified to allow research with the details to be worked out by the Scientists from the Pacific Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography ~~and~~ (TINRO) and the Northwest & Alaska Fisheries Center.

We believe the section concerning research vessel entry to the Soviet zone could be expressed in a more direct and positive fashion.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center
Division of Resource Assessment and
Conservation Engineering

August 17, 1978

TO : Dayton L. Alverson, Center Director, NWAFC, F11
THRU : *Murray L. Hayes*
Murray L. Hayes, Director, RACE Division, NWAFC, F111
FROM : Steve Hughes, Leader, Latent Resource Assessment, RACE, F111
SUBJECT: Summary of Results, 1978 Surf Clam Joint Venture

Final budgetary and logistic preparations for the 1978 joint industry-government Bering Sea surf clam research were completed in June. A \$241,000 budget was adopted and contributed from the following participants: NMFS - \$80,000; Alaska Department of Commerce - \$60,000; North Pacific Fisheries Management Council - \$20,000; and eight industry representatives -- \$81,000 (New England Fish Company, Seattle, WA; Snow Foods of Borden, Inc., Columbus, OH; Campbell Soup Company, Camden, NJ; Gortons of General Mills, Inc., Gloucester, MA; Peter Pan Seafoods, Seattle, WA; Dutch Harbor Seafoods, Redmond, WA; Pacific Seapro, Inc., Tacoma, WA; and Guilford Packing Company, Port Townsend, WA). As the above arrangements were being completed, the NPMC finalized a \$107,000 contract with Tetra Tech of California for environmental impact studies.^{1/}

The 102' chartered vessel Sea Hawk, equipped with a 6'-wide hydraulic clam harvester, departed Seattle June 20, 1978 and initiated operations in the Bering Sea July 3. NOAA R/V Oregon joined the Sea Hawk for a period of July 9-26. Tetra Tech's contracted environmental impact studies were conducted from the Oregon and completed from the Sea Hawk following the Oregon's departure. Field studies were completed August 9, 1978 with the Sea Hawk's departure from Port Moller to Seward where that 60-day charter period ended August 18, 1978.

The Sea Hawk and her crew provided an excellent research platform, and all planned studies were completed. A total of 488 hauls with the 6' clam harvester were completed. About 500 samples of clams were collected, prepared and shipped to Seattle for Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) tests; and over 70,000 pounds of whole surf clams, 3,000 pounds of shucked surf clam meat and 1,100 pounds of whole tellin clams were

^{1/} In addition to the budgeted funds, ADF&G, RACE, URD, and various industry cooperators (especially Pete Harris and Egil Ellingson) provided services in kind.



frozen aboard the Sea Hawk and shipped to Seattle for industry evaluation of product quality. All of the above samples were tagged in compliance with FDA requirements and are currently being held in Seattle pending completion of PSP tests.

As you know, one of the primary objectives of this year's venture was for the Sea Hawk to conduct high, medium and low density fishing in three respective sites, thereby establishing production catch rates and providing harvest sites where environmental impacts could be determined from the Oregon.

Production fishing in these areas reflected catches of about 25 80-pound bushels of surf clams per hour (actual fishing time on the seabed). Tetra Tech chief scientist, Dr. Kawling, indicated the environmental studies went well and that the inbenthic community is very limited in both quantity and species diversity. They completed 140 benthic grabs with a frame-mounted van Veen grab which retains a 3.0 sq.ft. substrate sample to a depth of 10 inches. From each grab sample, 16 individual core samples were collected for analysis and the remaining sediment washed through 2 mm screen to separate the macrofauna. In addition, they completed six benthic trawls for predator-food studies, 6-8 hours of video tape and completed clam re-burrowing studies.

The Sea Hawk also completed extensive exploratory and production fishing studies along the Alaska Peninsula between Port Moller and Ugashik Bay. Production rates established generally averaged about 25 bushels of surf clams per hour, with best fishing reaching 35.5 bushels per hour.

In general, the work progressed well, cooperation by all agencies and industry members was excellent, and more than adequate data base has been established to determine economic feasibility of the fishery and its initial management. I was personally somewhat disappointed in the production rates which seem possible. It appears to me that the Bering Sea surf clam does not form high density beds as the east coast species but tends to occur over large areas in a variety of substrates. Catches tend to be "trashy" with substantial quantities of dead shell and starfish. In some areas, rocks and gravel which clog the harvester also presented problems. While the surf clam resource is very large and extensive, development of a sound financial fishery will probably require use of twin 8-10' harvesters as employed in the east coast offshore fishery and mechanical sorters to separate surf clams from old shell and starfish.