NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

July 26-28, 1978

APPENDIX E

July 27, 10:00 a.m. Council Offices:

- SSC convened, acting chairman, Steve Pennoyer, all other members or an alternate present except D.W. Collinsworth. Finalized an agenda and adjourned to consider reports.

- Reconvened at 3:00 p.m. and met with Robert Schoning, NMFS. At his request we discussed SSC views on how NMFS is interfacing with the Council operation. Main areas of concern expressed:

1. Length of time to final approval of FMP?

2. Need for regional authority to implement plan by Field Order in response to changing resource or fishery conditions.

3. Lack of formal agreement on roles of Councils, AP, SSC, NMFS and the State in resource management.

4. Problems with regional recommendations being altered by NMFS Washington D.C. often by simple editorial changes that inadvertently alter meaning of regulations or plan management options significantly.

5. Strict adherence to plan technical requirements, even when terms or definitions are inappropriate for a particular resource or area has delayed and complicated plan acceptance.

6. It was suggested that regional regulation recommendations be immediately published upon receipt in the Federal Register to initiate the mandatory 45-day review period.

7. Tendency to standarize some things such as formatting on a nationwide basis regardless that some problems are unique to each region.

Salmon Plan

The Scientific and Statistical Committee met with the high seas salmon plan drafting team members who were present and Council staff off and on for two days. As a result of these discussions the drafting team put in some long hours reordering and reworking the plan sections on management options. We should note that the whole team was not present during this process and has not had the opportunity to sign off on this product.

It is obvious to us that the team has had a particularly difficult time formulating a management regime or regimes that would satisfy Council objectives for this fishery, would be workable and could be expressed as a range of options for public review. The team prepared an abbreviated summary of this section of the plan for Council review.

Due to the difficulties in writing meaningful options and the team's desire to not present the Council with less than a first class document as an end point to the year or more struggle to create a viable salmon plan there were a number of people on the team and SSC who initially recommended not submitting anything at this time and requesting further Council direction. The view prevailed, however, that some of these options will never be perfectly devised if they are logically imperfect anyhow and the only fair way to request definite Council direction is to present a plan in writing to which the Council can react point by point.

The SSC suggested that the ocean high seas salmon management plan proceed to the public hearing process. We are concerned that a great deal of editorial work is required to put the draft in final form, however we consider the alternative of continuing without a FMP in the Fishery Conservation Zone as less desirable than going to public hearings with an imperfect plan.

A number of suggested regulations in the plan (items IV 1 through 8) have the unanimous approval of the SSC. We suggest the Council propose as soon as possible a plan including these regulations on size limit, seasons, closures west of Cape Suckling, gear restrictions, etc.

The SSC was divided on the question of proceeding with a Limited Entry option. While we agree with the Council's goal to prevent expansion in the fishery some of us believe that the complications of providing a Limited Entry program that would have significant control of fishing effort may unduly delay the implementation of a plan.

The Committee is unanimous that consideration of a quota as outlined in the draft is impractical if not unworkable.

Socioeconomic Herring Contract - Dames and Moore

The SSC reviewed the interim report from Dames and Moore on this contract. The background sections in the report regarding the history and local dependence on subsistence use of herring in Western Alaska are excellent. Some concern was expressed that the contractor would not have adequate information placed in front of him in a timely fashion to finish the sections of the contract still missing in this report - that is, the parts on evaluation of alternative management strategies. These strategies are going to be developed by the management plan drafting team for Bering Sea herring and this team will also have access to all the basic biological research and fishery data on this stock. At the Council's suggestion a letter was developed from the Council to Dames and Moore indicating that Council staff would coordinate interactions between the contractor and the drafting team to insure that the necessary exchange of information took place.

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Management Plan

The Scientific and Statistical Committee was requested to consider whether there was any need to modify the existing plan since it will be implemented in 1979 rather than 1978. Following a discussion with Burt Larkins of NMFS it was decided that there was no indication of any major biological changes for these stocks. In 1978 the actual harvest for the United States will be less than DAH and it seemed probable that the reserve would take care of any expansion in the domestic fishery in 1979. No data was presented on the possible effects of joint ventures on the DAH.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Island Groundfish Fisheries Management Plan

The Scientific and Statistical Committee reviewed this draft plan. We could see no major problems in what was presented. The plan was well written and the sections presented seemed complete. Some of the backup data on the stock status was not included and apparently would not be available until after August 1. The SSC had some questions on the EY's, ABC's and OY's for some of the major stocks which we were not able to answer. The Committee plans on completing its review of this draft for the August Council meeting. The Committee saw no reason why the draft as it stands could not go forward for public review.

Effects of Hydraulic Clam Harvesting On The Bering Sea INCA System

The Committee reviewed this preliminary draft report and noted that it was basically a background and literature study in satisfaction of contract requirements. It was noted that a bibliography needs to be included in this section.

Computerized Fisheries Information System Contract - ADF&G

An interim report was submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on this contract. The report indicates that there had been a delay in work implementation due to delay in receiving the funding, but that the work is now well underway. The contractor has requested that to try and make up some of the lost time he be allowed to shift funding from one category to another but not increase the overall amount in the contract. The Committee recommends that this be approved.

Future of INPFC

A paper on the Northwestern Alaska Fisheries Center provisicnal views on the future of INPFC, BNR Committee and Sub-Committees was received. The authors of this paper were not present or available at this meeting for questioning. The Committee decided to delay its review of the paper until the next meeting.

Membership

The terms of the present Scientific and Statistical Committee membership will expire after either the August or September meeting. The Committee discussed the present mix of disciplines and the size of the Committee and concluded that we were generally satisfied with the status quo. The Committee noted that additional outside expertise could be called on at any time to support it and that the Council had provided funds to bring non-Committee experts to required meetings. Agency and non-agency Committee members were requested to come to the August meeting with replacement nominations, if required, for their positions or general nominations if they thought there were others that should be considered for Committee membership. The Committee will bring its recommendations on membership to the Council at their August meeting.