

Staff Recommendations for 1991 Bycatch Amendment

The Bycatch Committee requested an appraisal of staff requirements to analyze the various proposals for the 1991 bycatch amendment package. The Committee will review this assessment June 23 and develop recommendations for the Council. Proposals chosen by the Council will be analyzed during the summer for initial review in September and final action in December.

Attachment 1 lists 26 proposals reviewed by the Bycatch Committee June 3-4 in Seattle. These were reviewed by the staffs of the Council, Region, Center, and ADF&G on June 18 and the following recommendations developed for Committee and Council consideration.

Proposals Deferred until 1992

The Bycatch Committee ranked the following seven proposals as low priority or extended cycle. Therefore, staff recommends deferring further activity on these proposals until 1992 at the earliest.

- 4A Close Seward Gully to sablefish and Pacific cod longlining to protect halibut.
- 4B Depth restrictions on sablefish longlining in GOA to protect halibut.
- 8 Authority to allocate trawl PSC by fishery in GOA.
- 10 Apportion unused quarterly PSC to any remaining quarter.
- 11 Gear modifications.
- 17 Retention of halibut.
- 19 Floating crab caps in GOA/BSAI.

Also, for #4A and #4B, IPHC is compiling information on these issues which will not be ready for this summer's analytical package. For #11, industry is doing some work on modifying gear and AFSC and IPHC have a joint project underway using television cameras to observe trawl performance.

Staff also recommends deferring the following additional proposals for the reasons given:

2 Weight/Volume Measurement of Harvest

NMFS will study feasibility over winter and may extend incentives for vessels to do this voluntarily in 1992. Possibly have regulations for 1993.

3 E. Gulf Closure

This could be highly allocative and will take considerable economic analysis, which is in short supply. NMFS has proposed mitigative measures to conserve DS rockfish that should hold the problem in abeyance for 1992 and it could be analyzed in 1992 for possible implementation in 1993.

4C Unimak Pass Closure

This could be addressed if necessary under an enhanced hotspot authority for the Regional Director and improved incentive program. This area is not critical habitat for halibut and IPHC is developing additional data on this issue.

4D Pribilof Island Trawl Closure to Protect King Crab

King crab are already protected by a PSC cap and zonal closures. Tow-by-tow data will not be available for 1990 until early summer. Pribilofs may be promoting groundfish activity, pending the outcome of the inshore-offshore decision.

4E Close Zone 1 to Bottom Trawling

This could be addressed if necessary under an enhanced hotspot authority for the Regional Director and improved incentive program.

7 COMSAT

NMFS will study feasibility over winter and extend incentives for vessels to comply voluntarily for 1992. Possibly implement regulations for 1993.

12. Apportion PSC by Area

The BSAI and GOA already allow PSC by area, and this may be less necessary if the incentive program is effective.

15A/B Fixed Groundfish Gear Preference

This could be highly allocative and would require considerable economic analysis. If anything, this should be considered a stand-alone amendment and ranked in priority against other projects needing immediate staff attention and implementation in 1992.

16 Change Halibut Accounting Regarding Use of Mortality

There is insufficient quantitative data available to examine this proposal this summer.

21 BS Herring Savings Area

Information presented by ADF&G at the June 3-4 Bycatch Committee meeting questions whether the area should be changed. This program is quite new and would benefit from a full year of observer data before changes are made. ADFG is examining data but will not be ready for this summer's analysis.

22 Modify/limit Rocksole Fishery

The DAP rocksole fishery has halibut and crab PSCs, so this is more of a full utilization issue and should be taken up in that context, perhaps in 1992. A season delay will be analyzed under "Review of PSC Allowances by Fisheries" or as a season change by regulatory amendment.

Proposals Reassigned

6 Check-in/out

NMFS will cover in recordkeeping/reporting requirements package.

14 Prohibit Halibut Prospecting

IPHC regulations 16 (7,8) restrict halibut fishermen from using setline gear 72 hours before a halibut opening. IPHC could be requested to extend this prohibition to 10 days.

Proposals to be Analyzed in 1991

The remaining proposals fall into five categories:

1. Administrative-Technical
2. Time/Area Closures
3. Revised Halibut Bycatch Measures
4. Salmon Bycatch Controls
5. Bycatch Allowances

These would be the major sections of the bycatch amendment, each having the components shown in Table 1. Such a package would require considerable staff work and could only be done if other ongoing Council projects are completed in a timely fashion as discussed in "Tasking Requirements For Summer - Fall 1991". Attachment 2 discusses staffing needs for the salmon issue alone.

The bycatch proposals listed in Table 1 comprise the suite of items that we can reasonably expect to be analyzed this summer with the combined staff economists available and other ongoing tasks. Considering that most of July will be spent wrapping up issues from the June meeting, and that the bycatch amendment package needs to be sent to the Council family for preliminary review by September 6, there are 4-5 weeks for hard-core analysis. Many staff members have saturated the leave hours they can have on the books, awaiting a breathing spell in summer. In addition, SAFE documents will require work this summer. Therefore, any changes to the list must be through substitution, or additional funds must be made available for consultants, or additional help must be garnered from NMFS outside the local region.

Other concerns expressed by the staff are that the elements of the salmon bycatch proposal have not been identified fully yet, nor will the IPHC bycatch work group have its recommendations available until late July. Both these items could require additional staff time.

Table 1. Components of Proposed 1991 Bycatch Amendment

ITEM	GROUPING	Area
	<u>Administrative-Technical</u>	
1	Enhance Hotspot Authority & Extend to GOA -Redefine and specify triggering criteria	Both
9	Improve Current Incentive Program, include MW Pollock Fishery to Address Compliance Problems with Pelagic Gear Definition	
	<u>Time/Area Closures</u>	
5	Prohibit Night Trawling for Pacific Cod	Both
20	Delay GOA Rockfish Opening to July 15	GOA
	<u>Halibut Bycatch Measures</u>	
13A-C, 15C	Options for Revising Halibut PSC Including Floating and Reducing Caps, Extend Halibut PSC to Fixed Gear in BSAI	Both
18	Framework authority to Reduce Mortality (e.g. cut gangions)	Both
	<u>Salmon Bycatch</u>	
23	Controls on Salmon Bycatch	Both
	<u>Bycatch Allowances</u>	
	Review PSC Allowances by Fisheries	Both
	- Combine Rocksole with YFSol/oth flats and Delay Fishery until May 1	
	- Specify Separate Bycatch Allowances for Pacific Cod/Bottom Pollock	
	- Prohibit all Trawling for Species in "Other Fishery" Category When Bycatch Allowance is Reached	

<u>Priority</u>	<u>1992 Bycatch Amendment Items</u>	<u>Category</u>
High	1. Hotspot Authority in GOA (and revised hotspot authority in BSAI).	General
High -	2. Require all groundfish harvests to be weighed or measured volumetrically. Suboption1: could differ by sector, for example, weigh onshore, volumetrics at sea. Suboption 2: Require all groundfish to be quantified by the most accurate method possible.	General
High	3. Close trawling in Eastern GOA east of 140W.	General
High	4. Review effectiveness of all Time/Season/area closures, including:	General
High	A) Close Seward Gully to sablefish and Pacific cod longlining to save halibut bycatch.	Halibut
ext. cycle	B) Depth restrictions on sablefish longlining in GOA to protect halibut -include seasonal depth restrictions.	Halibut
High	C) Time/area closure of the Unimak Pass area.	Halibut
High	D) Close bottom trawling around the Pribilof Islands to protect king crab.	Crab
High	E) Year round closure of Zone 1 to bottom trawling.	Crab
High	5. Prohibition of night trawling for Pacific cod.	General
High	6. Check-in, check-out for specific fisheries.	
High	7. Require real time (COMSAT) communication equipment on vessels.	General
Low	8. Provide Council the authority to allocate trawl PSC in GOA by fishery. (or "to allocate PSC for all fisheries in GOA by fishery")	General
-	9. Continuation of current Incentive Program.	
Low	10. Apportion outstanding quarterly bycatch to any remaining quarter.	General
Low	11. Gear modifications.	General
High	12. Provide authority to apportion PSC by area in GOA and BSAI.	General
High	13. Review Halibut PSC cap options:	Halibut
	A) Base line/floating caps for halibut in BSAI/GOA.	
	B) Reduce BSAI PSC cap 10% per year (5300mt to 4800mt)	
	C) Reduce BSAI PSC cap of 5300mt to 4500 mt	
High	14. Prohibit longlining 10-14 days before halibut season in GOA to discourage prospecting. Suboption: limit the prohibition to those that have registered to fish halibut	Halibut
	15. Halibut bycatch by gear types:	
High	A) Fixed groundfish gear preference for Pacific cod.	General
High	B) Include all gears under the bycatch limits, and preferentially allocate PSC to gears or fisheries that demonstrate the lowest bycatch mortality (IPHC).	Halibut
High	C) Establish halibut PSC limit for longliners in BSAI.	Halibut
High	16. Change halibut accounting in BSAI from halibut handled to mortality of halibut discarded.(IPHC)	Halibut
low	17. Retention of Halibut.	Halibut
High, ext	18. Mortality reduction measures.	General
Low	19. Floating caps for crab in BSAI/GOA.	Crab
High	20. GOA rockfish options: delay opening date (to July 15).	Rockfish
low	21. Review BS herring savings area.	Herring
High	22. Modify/limit rocksole fishery in BS. Options: 1) Eliminate the fishery, or 2) prohibit discards.	Rocksole
deferred	23. Controls on salmon bycatch. Suboption: include retention of all salmon caught as bycatch in BSAI and forfeiture to the federal government.	Salmon
deleted	24. Require vessels to register for midwater or bottom trawling.	General
deleted	25. Prohibit all trawling for a species if bottom trawling for that species is closed.	General
deleted	26. Prohibit trawling in the GOA by vessels with hb greater than ____.	General

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May 8, 1991

MAY 10 1991

Dr. Clarence G. Pautzke
Executive Director
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Dear Clarence,

The following table outlines, in broad categories, the major analytical tasks we suggest will be necessary to complete analyses for proposed chinook bycatch amendments to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BS/AI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) FMPs. We have evaluated our staff time and indicate in the table those tasks which ADF&G could take the lead in developing, with some support from other agencies. For the other tasks, we suggest that other agencies or consultants take the lead. For these other tasks and management areas, the department could, however, serve a support role. As you can see, as a continuation of department involvement which you requested in your letter of March 6 to Dave Carlile, we are volunteering for a large portion of the technical analysis.

We have already conducted some preliminary analyses toward identifying factors associated with chinook bycatch (Task 1). In addition we have requested detailed observer data for the BS/AI and GOA to expand our analysis of factors associated with chinook bycatch. Assuming we receive these data soon, we anticipate completing the analyses for Task 1 by the June Council meeting.

Tasks 7 and 8 are closely tied. That is, development or refinement of a bycatch model will be advantageous for completing the necessary economic analyses. However, we have identified these as somewhat separate tasks because we have staff that can refine or develop a bycatch model, but we do not have staff to conduct the necessary economic analyses. We plan to work closely with the economist(s) responsible for these analyses.

We have identified Tasks 4 through 6 as separate tasks, because we will need to call upon staff from three different divisions within ADF&G to provide data to document chinook harvests.

With respect to the refinement or development of bycatch models, there are two distinct approaches that may be taken. One approach is to use separate models for the BS/AI and GOA. This approach

TASK	Lead Agency	
	for BS/AI	for GOA
1. Analyze observer data to yield set of management alternatives	ADF&G	ADF&G
2. Document areawide chinook stock status	ADF&G	ADF&G
3. Summarize available information on stock composition of chinook in groundfish bycatch.	ADF&G	ADF&G
4. Summarize areawide catch (directed and incidental) of chinook in sport salmon fisheries.	ADF&G	ADF&G
5. Summarize areawide catch (directed and incidental) of chinook in subsistence salmon fisheries.	ADF&G	ADF&G
6. Summarize areawide catch (directed and incidental) of chinook in commercial salmon fisheries.	ADF&G	ADF&G
7. Refine (BS/AI) or develop (GOA) a bycatch model to evaluate alternatives.	NMFS ? NPFMC ? CONSULTANTS ?	NMFS ? NPFMC ? CONSULTANTS ?
8. Conduct economic analyses to evaluate alternatives.	NMFS ? NPFMC ? CONSULTANTS ?	NMFS ? NPFMC ? CONSULTANTS ?

would entail refining the current BS/AI bycatch model by adding yet-to-be-proposed management alternatives for chinook salmon. A completely new model, which included chinook salmon, would need to be developed for the GOA.

An alternative approach would be to develop a single model which included both the BS/AI and the GOA. An advantage of the latter

Dr. Pautzke

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approach is that fleet movements between the two areas resulting from management actions might be accountable in a combined model. In addition, the combined model could incorporate known movement of bycatch species, such as chinook salmon and halibut, between the two areas. Management decisions related to bycatch in one area may affect the bycatch and/or directed catch in the other area. Inclusion of bycatch incentive program factors into any model would increase the complexity of the model.

We are indicating our staffing capability for chinook bycatch amendments now, to allow sufficient time for you to identify the additional staff necessary to complete amendment packages for chinook bycatch management in the BS/AI and GOA.

Preparation of viable plan amendments to control the bycatch of chinook salmon is an important task and, within our capabilities, we are willing to give it a high priority. We will appreciate any suggestions or comments you have regarding staffing and assignments for all of these amendments.

Sincerely,



Denby S. Lloyd
Director

cc Carl Rosier
Larry Cotter
Steve Pennoyer
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Doug Eggers
Earl Krygier
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