

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, SSC, and AP members

FROM: Jim H. Branson
Executive Director

DATE: September 13, 1982

SUBJECT: Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery Management Plan

ACTION REQUIRED

Final Council action is scheduled on Amendment #6, the Fishery Development Zone north of Unimak Pass, and the proposal to allow foreign longliners to fish shallower than 500 m year-round in the Winter Halibut Savings Area.

BACKGROUND

- I. The Council released Amendment #6 for public review on August 9, 1982. Part I of the Amendment proposed that a Fishery Development Zone (FDZ) for exclusive use by domestic fishermen, be established north of Unimak Pass in the Bering Sea. A map of the FDZ is included in your briefing books as Agenda Item D-6(a).

Part II of the Amendment was a proposal to allow foreign longliners access to waters less than 500 m deep in the Winter Halibut Savings Area year-round. Currently, they must fish deeper than 500 m from December 1 to May 31, in order to minimize their halibut by-catch. A map of the winter Halibut Savings Area is included in your briefing books as Agenda Item D-6(b).

- II. The Council received reports on Part I of the Amendment from the Plan Maintenance Team at the May and July meetings. The PMT reported on the effect of the FDZ on the ability of the foreign fisheries to catch their historic allocations, and on the potential foreign catch of prohibited species, concluding that the impact on foreign fisheries will be negligible. There is a potential for increased foreign prohibited species catches, but previous Council action on prohibited species regulations will limit the foreign by-catch of prohibited species in any case. Foreign longliners would be denied access to traditional Pacific cod grounds under the FDZ proposal and may not be able to find other grounds elsewhere in the U.S. fishery conservation zone.

Copies of the PMT reports are available from Peggy McCalment.

III. The PMT reported to the Council at the July meeting on Part II of Amendment #6, the proposal to allow foreign longliners access to waters shallower than 500 m in the Winter Halibut Savings Area year-round. They focused on the effect of the proposal on the by-catch of halibut and not on competition between foreign and domestic fishermen for the Pacific cod resource. The PMT recommended that the amendment, if approved, include a requirement that when the by-catch of Pacific halibut by all foreign longliners reaches 75% of the 1978-81 by-catch level (105 mt), the restriction should be reactivated administratively to slow the halibut by-catch.

If foreign longliners are permitted to fish year-round at depths less than 500 m in the area they will be in a better position to catch Pacific cod, a species of great interest to them as well as to the U.S. fishery. Japanese longline catches of Pacific cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands area have been as follows:

<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>
5,248 mt	3,356 mt	5,662 mt	6,081 mt

U.S. catches of Pacific cod from the Bering Sea have been as follows:

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>
JVP	8,456.0	9,330.0	12,696 (thru August 28)
DAP	<u>5,858.3</u>	<u>8,718.9</u>	<u>7,999</u> (thru July 31)
TOTAL	14,314.3	18,048.9	20,695

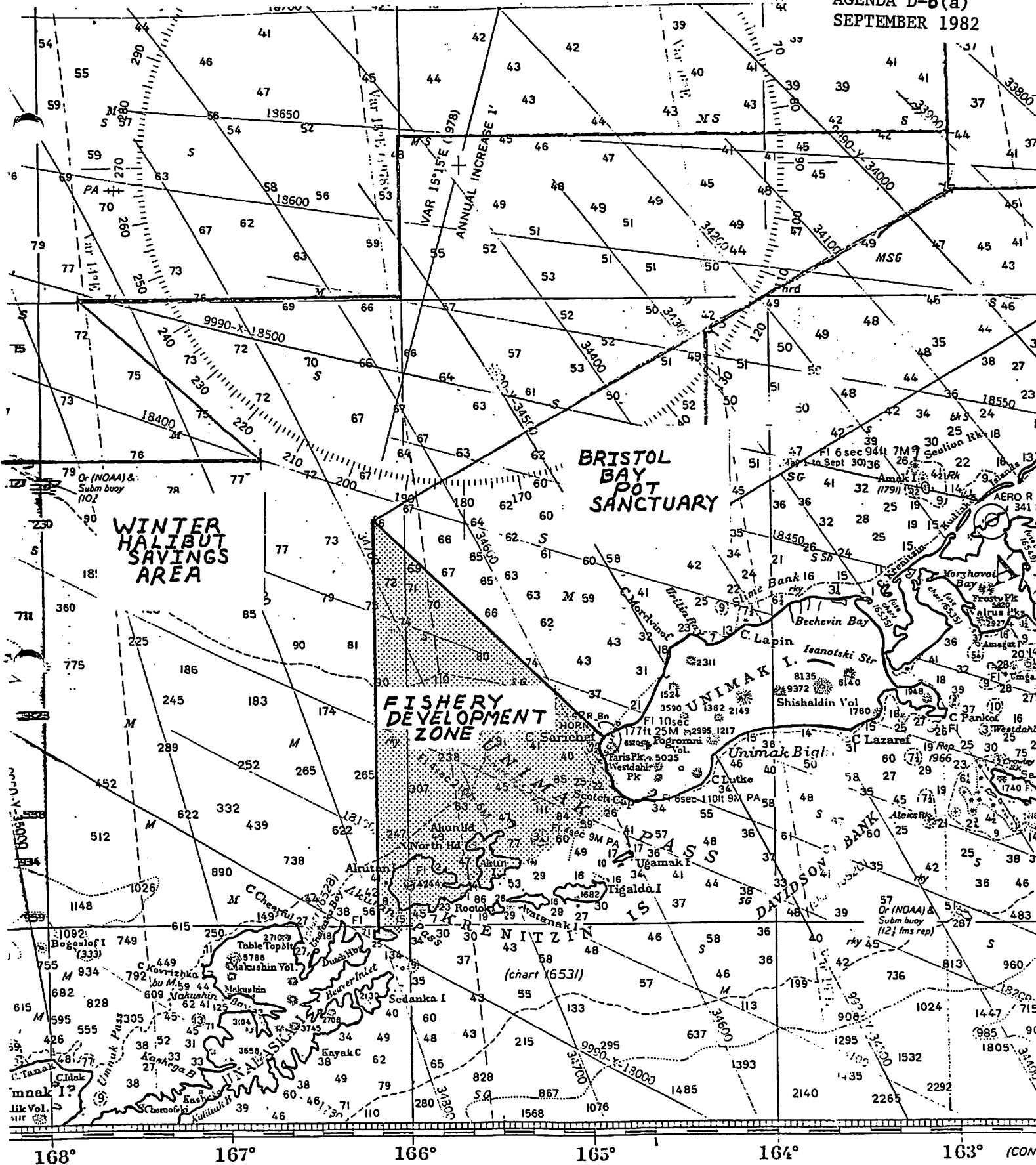
The status of the Pacific cod resource is as follows:

	<u>1982</u>	<u>Amendment #4</u>
OY	78,700 (mt)	120,000 (mt)
JVP	17,065	17,065
DAP	26,400	26,400
Reserve	3,395	6,000
TALFF	31,500	70,735

Amendment #4 is undergoing Secretarial review. It will be implemented in 1983.

The Pacific cod OY will be 120,000 in 1983, but U.S. scientists report that this high figure is based on the very strong 1977 year-class, which is expected to decline substantially by 1984. OY at that time will probably have to be lowered to historic MSY levels, about 55,000 mt.


IV. All written comments on Amendment #5 received to date are included in your briefing books as Agenda Item D-6(d), which is under a separate tab. In addition there is a trip report from Jeff Povolny, the groundfish plan coordinator, on his recent visit to the Bering Sea, Akutan and Dutch Harbor. Some of his observations and information obtained from domestic fishermen are pertinent to the consideration of establishing the Fishery Development Zone. Jeff's report is Agenda Item D-6(c) in your briefing books.



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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Jim H. Branson
Executive Director

FROM: Jeff Povolny 
Plan Coordinator

DATE: September 13, 1982

SUBJECT: Report on my trip to the Bering Sea, Akutan, and Dutch Harbor,
August 20 to September 1.

Trip Description

At the suggestion of R. Barry Fisher, I contacted Marine Resources Company in Seattle to arrange a trip to the Bering Sea aboard their catcher and processing vessels. Mick Stevens of MRC arranged for me to meet the F/V EXCALIBUR II in Port Moller about August 19. He said that the fleet would be off-loading product to transport vessels at that time and it would be convenient for me to get aboard.

On August 18, I was advised that EXCALIBUR II had mechanical difficulties. A part was sent to us from Oregon and I carried it with me when I left on August 20. When I arrived in Port Moller, I met Kent Leslie, skipper of EXCALIBUR II. He was glad to get the part, a hydraulic hose, and made the necessary repairs. We left for the fishing grounds on the midnight tide.

The next day, August 21, I found out that the off-loading had been rescheduled for September 1, and that the fleet had separated into two parts. Most of the U.S. catcher vessels and Soviet processors stayed within about four hours running time of Port Moller. The EXCALIBUR II, the MARGARET LYN, the MARY LOU, the BMRT's TURKUL, and SOYUZ V went north and west in search of better fishing grounds. We went as far as 58°20'N, 167°W, about 16-20 hours running time from Port Moller. The U.S. vessels fished this area after they found excellent concentrations of Alaska plaice and yellowfin sole, their primary target species.

I stayed aboard EXCALIBUR II until August 24, when I transferred to the BMRT TURKUL.

The Soviet fleet commander, Yuri Ermatov, and TURKUL captain, Valez Goloshumov, greeted me when I boarded. We repaired to the captain's cabin, where I explained the purpose of my trip, presented some gifts, and spent the remainder of the day socializing.

I was aboard the TURKUL until the night of August 27 when I transferred to the TIGIL. While aboard the TURKUL I visited and noted all phases of the operation, landing and transferring cod ends, emptying into deck bins, fish culling, fish lines on the factory deck, freezing, packaging, storage, and fish meal production. I received excellent assistance from the MRC representatives while on board as well as from the Soviet fleet officers and interpreter.

I transferred to the TIGIL, a processor with the southern fleet, when a factory worker was injured on the TURKUL and needed the attention of the surgeon on board the TIGIL. Fortunately, the worker was not seriously damaged. When the TIGIL returned south, I was aboard. I stayed one night and boarded the F/V ROSELLA late the next day, August 28. The ROSELLA was going to run for Akutan and Dutch Harbor for a break, supplies and repairs. Because it was Saturday and there were no flights from Cold Bay to Dutch Harbor on Sunday, I elected to stay with the ROSELLA, and arrived in Akutan on Sunday night.

Our run from Port Moller to Akutan lasted 28 hours. It was a bit bouncy, but I was able to closely inspect the proposed fishery development zone. When I arrived in Akutan on August 29, I radioed the Trident Plant, announced my arrival, asked if they had been advised (they had not) and requested shelter for the night.

I stayed on Akutan at the Trident Seafoods complex until August 31. I visited their new fish processing facility with the various key people there, namely Charles Bundrant, President of Trident Seafoods, Gary Nothstein, whitefish processing foreman, Don Tucker, construction superintendent, and Ken Hildebrand, AFDF observer/analyst.

While I was on Akutan I also met and socialized with Jim Beaton, who has just finished herring fishing, and Bart Eaton. Bart was preparing for the king crab season.

I spent the night of August 31 in Dutch Harbor and returned to Anchorage on September 1.

Observations

I took copious notes each day of the trip. Going over them, my general impression is that it was great to get out to the fishing grounds, see the operations, and talk to the people in this industry.

It seems that we are having limited success communicating with the people most affected by the Council's work. For example, while with the MRC operation, the EXCALIBUR II snagged a crab pot during a tow. When I asked the skipper if he knew the coordinates of the state and federal pot storage areas, he did not and would have appreciated having them.

I took copies of Amendment #6 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP and handed them out at sea and when I was in Akutan. After the fishermen read the material, we talked, and I was impressed with their perception of the issues. I also noted that prior to my contact, they were not aware of the proposed Council action.

The vessel skippers I talked with working for the MRC joint venture supported the fishery development zone proposal. They thought that having an area where there were excellent concentrations of fish and no foreign fishing would be advantageous for them and the joint venture partner.

While in Akutan, I met the skippers of two vessels delivering cod to Trident Seafoods, the JAN-BET and PACIFIC VIKING. I talked extensively with the skippers of the two vessels about the fishery development zone, and their work in general.

Jeff Freeze, skipper of the JAN-BET, vigorously supports the proposed fishery development zone. He fishes the area regularly. He has had significant problems with Korean factory trawlers harassing him, and running across his bow while he was towing for cod. He gave me very precise details from one particular incident, showed me the tow on his CRT plotter which had a memory bank, when he had to interrupt his tow or collide with a Korean vessel. I have given the details of that incident to Craig Hammond.

The skipper of the PACIFIC VIKING, Dave Shumacher, also reported problems with Korean vessels, particularly that they showed up in the same spot shortly after he reported good cod sign to other boats fishing for Trident Seafoods.

Both skippers felt that the fishery development zone was well situated for them, that having no foreign competition in that area would ~~increase their~~ catches of Pacific cod immediately and allow them to get good pollock catches when the processors start buying more of it.

While aboard the ROSELLA, the skipper, Richard Parker, told me that he fishes Pacific cod for Johansen/Seapro, Captain's Bay, Unalaska, during the winter. Johansen/Seapro has sent us a comment on proposed Amendment #6. Other processors who have bought Pacific cod this year are Clipperton, Inc., a floating processor now reported to be in Sand Point, and Universal Seafoods in Dutch Harbor.

From talks with the skippers and processors in Akutan and Dutch Harbor, and my own observations, I can list 13 U.S. vessels reported or sighted using the fishery development zone. They are the ARCTIC TRAWLER, EAGLE, GOLDEN PRIDE, GOLDEN PROVIDER, OCEAN LEADER, PACIFIC VIKING, ROSELLA, SEA-FOAM, MAR-PACIFICO, CAPTAIN JULIAN, SMARAGD, STORM PETREL, and JAN-BET.

The new Trident Seafoods fish processing plant is impressive. They have been taking deliveries of cod for six months and have had to relocate their equipment three times, due to construction. Still, they have over one million pounds of salt cod stored which represents over four million pounds round weight. Virtually all of the cod is coming from the proposed fishery development zone.

While aboard the EXCALIBUR II and TURKUL, I made some CPUE comparisons for the EXCALIBUR II, the MARY LOU, and the MARGARET LYN. After I had asked each skipper what elements of his vessel and net contributed to fishing effort, I standardized their fishing effort and calculated their CPUE for three factory days. The exercise was mostly to satisfy my curiosity about how the skipper thought his vessel would fish, and to learn about domestic trawling techniques.

While I was making calculations, I discovered that the EXCALIBUR II had the ADF&G Alaska Trawl Logbook on board. It was not being used, but the skipper said it was a good logbook. After going through it with him, I noted that its format is very similar to the log he used, and the identification of fishing effort is almost identical to the information I had obtained from the three skippers.

I think that joint venture and shore-based fishermen would use the ADF&G Alaska Trawl Logbook if we could get out to the fleets, work with the fishermen, and explain the benefits to them and fisheries management. The skippers

of the MARY LOU, MARGARET LYN, and EXCALIBUR II were very interested in their efficiency and CPUE and how they compared, and I probably generated a little bit of rivalry among them with my elementary calculations.

Richard Parker, skipper of the ROSELLA, reported that for two seasons he has had an ADF&G observer on board when fishing for cod. He was quite favorably impressed with the observer and would have him on board again any time. I think that a domestic observer program on some domestic fishing vessels working in joint ventures could be easily arranged and that the information would be very helpful to the Council, the fishery scientists, and the fishermen. There are two main sources of data for fishery management, commercial fishery statistics, and government surveys. My view is that observers in the domestic fishery can get valuable information much more cheaply than surveys, that this information can be used to verify surveys and vice versa, and that fishermen will cooperate with and appreciate a well run observer program. As the domestic fleets move into the groundfish fisheries in the North Pacific, it will become essential to have the best information available for management.

I must compliment MRC on their well run operation. The Americans and Soviets are well satisfied. I believe MRC's representatives, who are fluent in Russian, are an important contribution to the success of the venture.

