

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## NEWSLETTER

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### Seattle Council Meeting Longest in 17 Years

The Council met eight consecutive days in Seattle, Washington, September 28-October 5, 1994. Many hours were spent reviewing a draft analysis for the proposed license limitation program for groundfish and crab. The Council also set preliminary groundfish specifications for 1995, and approved amendments requiring total weight measurement for processors and minimum mesh sizes for the pollock, cod, and rock sole trawl fisheries. The qualifying period for the moratorium was shortened, and a 2% fee assessment was approved for the North Pacific Fisheries Research (Observer) Plan. The Council also directed staff to begin analysis of alternatives for continuation of the inshore-offshore allocation amendments, and approved Community Development Quota plans for the sablefish and halibut IFQ fisheries for 1995-97. Details of these and other issues are presented in this newsletter.

The Council will meet by **teleconference on Monday, November 14, 1994** to discuss possible groundfish closures to protect red king crab in the Bering Sea. Possible adjustments to the 1995 recommended vessel incentive program rate standards for the BSAI other trawl category will also be discussed. The call will begin at 9:00 a.m. Alaska time (10:00 a.m. for Seattle). Listening sites are being set up in Juneau, Kodiak, Sitka, Anchorage and Homer, Alaska, and Seattle. For information on the sites, contact Helen Allen at the Council office.

The Council will next meet at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, the week of December 5. A full agenda will mean another lengthy meeting which will more than likely last into the beginning of the following week. An agenda for that meeting should be available by November 18.

### Secretary of Commerce Appoints Professor Fluharty to Council

Word was received shortly before the meeting that Commerce Secretary Ron Brown appointed **Dr. David L. Fluharty** to the Council. Dr. Fluharty, a Research Associate Professor in the School of Marine Affairs at the University of Washington, brings with him an extensive background in fisheries policy and economics research, particularly in the international arena. Dr. Fluharty's first Council experience has the distinction of being the longest-ever meeting of the Council.

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## Council Elects Chair and Vice Chair

The Council chose **Rick Lauber** and **Wally Pereyra** to serve as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for the next year. Mr. Lauber, who represents Pacific Seafood Processors Association, was first appointed to the Council in 1990 and has served as Council Chairman since 1991. This will be a first term for Dr. Pereyra of ProFish International in Seattle. He has been a Council member since 1990 and serves on Council committees for Advisory Panel Nominations, Discards, Habitat, and the Plan Amendment Advisory Group.

## Nominations Due for Advisory Panel & Scientific and Statistical Committee

One-year terms of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Advisory Panel (AP) members expire in December. The SSC advises the Council on scientific and other technical matters relating to Council functions and the AP is composed of representatives of the major segments of the fishing industry and other interested groups. Members of these panels are expected to attend up to six meetings, three to four days in length, per year.

Resumes for persons who wish to be considered for these committees should be sent to the attention of Judy Willoughby, North Pacific Fishery Management Council, P.O. Box 103136, Anchorage, AK 99510, to arrive no later than 5:00 p.m. November 16, 1994. Appointments will be announced at the Council's December meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, and will become effective in January 1995. For more information, contact Judy Willoughby at the Council office.

## Moratorium

The Council's moratorium on vessel entry into the groundfish, crab, and halibut fisheries, as approved by the Council in June of 1992, was disapproved by the Secretary of Commerce (SOC) on August 5, 1994. At this meeting, the Council examined the reasons for the disapproval and structured a revised moratorium for resubmittal to the SOC. The primary elements of the revised moratorium are as follows:

1. Remove halibut and sablefish from the moratorium when both species come under the IFQ program (i.e., landings of sablefish or halibut will not qualify a vessel to participate in groundfish and crab fisheries).
2. The appeals process for the moratorium will be the same as is outlined for the sablefish and halibut IFQ program.
3. The eligibility period for moratorium qualification will be January 1, 1988 through February 9, 1992 (as opposed to the original moratorium period of January 1, 1980 through February 9, 1992).
4. Crossovers are allowed between groundfish and crab fisheries (the Council did not change this aspect of the moratorium).
5. As originally proposed, the moratorium will sunset three years from the effective date.

The Council will resubmit this revised moratorium to the SOC by the end of October, and the SOC has 60 days to either reject or approve it. This will allow for Council comment on the moratorium at the December 1994 meeting. If approved, the revised moratorium could be implemented early in 1995.

## Comprehensive Rationalization Planning (CRP)

The Council's current CRP initiatives are still centered around some form of a license limitation program, as a first step toward development of potential IFQ programs in the future. Based on development of the license limitation alternatives in April and June earlier this year, the staff prepared and

presented to the Council a draft analysis (EA/RIR) of various license limitation program configurations. The original schedule called for a public review period this fall, with a final decision by the Council in January of 1995. Because of the multitude of possible elements and options within the license limitation alternatives, the Council has altered this schedule slightly to accommodate further public review and comment. The revised schedule is summarized as follows:

1. The analysis as presented to the Council in September will go out for public review, after some editorial and error corrections are incorporated, and two supplemental attachments are added to the document. The revised document will be available sometime in November with the following two supplements: (1) a discussion and preliminary analysis of the proposed A and B license concept, whereby some license recipients would receive a restricted, non-transferable B license, and (2) identification of a more specific license limitation configuration for which the Council is requesting specific comment. This is not necessarily a 'Preferred Alternative' at this time, but is an indication of the direction the Council may be heading. Additional analyses will be provided for this particular configuration.
2. At the December meeting, the Council will attempt to refine the elements and options and identify a 'Preferred Alternative' for additional analysis and comment. Additional analysis would include a follow-up social impact study of the specified configuration. At that time, the Community Profiles and baseline Social Impact Study contracted by the Council will be made available as part of the formal public review package.
3. The Council will make a final decision on the license limitation alternative at the April 1995 meeting.

Requests for these documents should be made to the Council offices. Contact person for additional information is Chris Oliver.

### Crab Management

The Council heard a report from the crab Plan Team and a summary of the 1994 Annual Area Management Report, which includes information regarding the status of stocks, guideline harvest levels, and recent management actions. Results from the 1994 eastern Bering Sea crab survey indicated that stocks are stable or below levels estimated in 1993. Bristol Bay red king crab are estimated to be at their all time low level of abundance, and as a result there will be no fishery for these crab this year. Tanner crab (*bairdi*) also continue to decline, with a guideline harvest set at 7.5 million pounds for the fishery west of 163 degrees W. longitude. No fishery for Tanners will be allowed to the east of 163 degrees because of potential impacts on red king crab. The plan team recommended that the Council set the red king crab PSC bycatch cap to zero in the groundfish fishery east of 163 degrees. The Council will consider this recommendation during a conference call to be held in early November. Please see the article on page 1 for further details on the teleconference. Staff contact is David Witherell.

### Observer Fees for 1995

Four years ago in reauthorizing the Magnuson Act, the Congress granted authority to the North Pacific Council to develop a fee program to support observers for the groundfish, crab and halibut fisheries. This authority finally came to fruition in early September when the Secretary of Commerce approved the Council's proposed North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan (Observer Plan). Fees will be charged beginning in 1995. At its September meeting, the Council determined, based on estimated costs of sufficient observer coverage and projected exvessel prices, that the full 2% of exvessel value allowed by the Magnuson Act, would be needed to support observers in 1995.

Next year will be a "start-up" year for the program. Current observer requirements will remain in effect and direct payments to contractors still will be required by those vessels and processors that have already been doing so. Sufficient start-up funds must be generated in 1995 to allow full implementation of the Research Plan by January 1996. NMFS will continue to contribute towards the financial support of the observer programs, at least through fiscal year 1996. Actual costs paid by persons for direct observer coverage during 1995 will be fully credited to their portion of their fee liability and there will be no "double payments" by any component of the Research Plan fisheries in 1995. With these conditions in mind, here is the way that the fees will be applied to the various fisheries in 1995 (a full report with details of the program can be obtained from NMFS or the Council office):

#### Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fisheries

1. One half of the fee percentage will be applied to retained catch by vessels less than 60 feet in length overall (LOA).
2. All catcher vessels 60 ft and over LOA are exempt from the half of the fee percentage that would otherwise be collected from these vessels.
3. One half of the fee percentage will be applied to the retained catch received by an on-shore processor or a mothership; however, each such processor may subtract its observer coverage costs from the processor's portion of its bimonthly bill.
4. The full fee percentage of 2% will be applied to the retained catch of a catcher/processor vessel; however, each such processor may subtract its observer coverage costs from its bimonthly bill.

#### Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fisheries

1. The full 2% fee percentage will be applied to retained catch delivered to on-shore processors, floating processors, and crab caught or delivered to catcher/processors. However, each such processor may subtract its observer coverage costs from the processor's portion of its bimonthly bill.
2. Crab catcher vessels that participate in special-use permit crab fisheries are exempt from the half of the fee percentage that would otherwise be collected from these vessels for their catch in the special-use permit fisheries. Special-use fisheries are developing crab fisheries and less than 2 percent of the crab catcher vessels participate in them. They are required to obtain a special-use permit from ADF&G and to carry observers. Those developing fisheries are limited in scope and the associated observer coverage costs are insignificant relative to the total exvessel value of the crab fisheries.

#### Halibut Fishery

1. The full 2% fee will be applied to all retained catch in the halibut fishery.

The overall fee liability of 2% will be based on a standardized exvessel price for each species. There was discussion of an alternative method of basing the fee liability on the actual exvessel price as recorded on fish tickets, an option previously considered and rejected by the Council. This alternative will be examined in the future, with the possibility of amending the program at a future time. For 1995, the Council is recommending that the fee liability be based on the following standard exvessel prices (Table 1):

**Table 1. Proposed standard exvessel prices for groundfish (\$ per pound round weight).**  
 Season 1 - for pollock and BSAI rock sole in January - March.  
 Season 2 - includes non-roe pollock and rock sole (April - December).  
 (Seasonal prices were not used for any other species except pollock and rock sole.)

BSAIO = BSAI Other Gear

WCGO = Western & Central Gulf Other Gear

EGO = Eastern Gulf Other Gear

BSAIT = BSAI Trawl

WCGT = Western & Central Gulf Trawl

EGT = Eastern Gulf Trawl

Season/Species	BSAIO	BSAIT	WCGO	WCGT	EGO	EGT
Arrowtooth	.020	.020	.020	.020	.020	.020
Atka mackerel	.090	.090	.090	.090	.	.
Deep flat	.	.	.563	.125	.563	.
Demersal shelf rockfish	.	.	.310	.151	.545	.151
Flathead sole	.122	.122	.122	.122	.	.122
Greenland turbot	.300	.300	.	.	.	.
Other flatfish	.060	.060	.	.	.	.
Other groundfish	.188	.020	.188	.020	.188	.020
Other rockfish	.484	.120	.	.	.	.
Pacific ocean perch	.249	.063	.249	.063	.249	.063
Pacific cod	.140	.131	.180	.142	.200	.152
Pelagic shelf rockfish	.	.	.393	.130	.250	.130
1 Pollock	.072	.075	.078	.080	.	.
Rex sole	.	.	.	.150	.	.150
1 Rock sole	.300	.300	.	.	.	.
Sablefish	1.000	.702	1.100	.702	1.100	.701
Shallow flat	.	.	.	.147	.147	.
Sharpchin/northern	.208	.104	.208	.104	.208	.
Shortraker/rougheye	.315	.200	.260	.200	.260	.120
Slope rockfish	.	.	.200	.104	.200	.104
Thornyhead rockfish	.	.	.400	.263	.400	.263
Yellowfin sole	.050	.050	.	.	.	.
2 Pollock	.072	.062	.078	.071	.	.058
2 Rock sole	.060	.060	.	.	.	.

**Sablefish and Halibut IFO Program**

At this meeting the Council reviewed the status of various regulatory and plan amendments in progress relative to the sablefish and halibut individual fishing quota (IFO) program for fixed gear. They also

received a report from NMFS on the issue of potential hardship provisions and a central registry for recording titles and liens on quota shares (QS) and IFQs. A new amendment was initiated by the Council which will examine an exemption from the Block Amendment (now approved by the SOC) for QS allocated as Community Development Quota (CDQ) compensation. Because a multitude of small 'pieces' of CDQ compensation QS will be issued, a full or partial exemption from the provisions of the Block Amendment will likely make transfers of these small pieces easier for both fishermen holding these pieces and the implementing agency, NMFS RAM Division. The Council will look at the options for this proposal in December and take final action.

The issue of a central registry for titles and liens on QS has been a topic of interest to the fishing industry, banking community and the Council over the past several meetings. NMFS reported to the Council that they are still examining the options for NMFS' involvement as the keeper of this registry, and whether it would be a mandatory or voluntary registry. The Council reiterated their desire that this be a central, mandatory registry kept and maintained by NMFS. We expect to hear more on this issue in December.

On the issue of potential hardship considerations for the program, the Council received a report from NMFS outlining the various considerations which would be involved in opening up the program to hardship claims. The Council determined that the original qualifying period (which allowed eligibility based on any landing during a three year window from 1988-1990) was sufficient consideration, and that no additional hardship provisions would be considered for this program.

The Council took action at this meeting which will allow for exemption of the sablefish fixed gear fisheries from the halibut PSC caps. This regulatory amendment is being processed by NMFS and will be in place in 1995. This amendment was approved by the Council to eliminate the possibility of sablefish IFQ holders being unable to harvest their IFQs if the fixed gear cap is reached during the year. Because so many sablefish IFQ holders will also utilize halibut IFQ and retain their halibut bycatch, the total halibut bycatch mortality is expected to be lower than in previous years. The Council will still set PSC caps for the remaining fixed gear fisheries each year.

Finally, the Council reviewed and approved the Governor's recommendations for 1995-97 CDQ apportionments for halibut and sablefish. These apportionments are summarized in an attachment on the last page of this newsletter.

### Inshore-Offshore Allocations

The Council discussed the inshore-offshore program which is scheduled to expire at the end of 1995 along with the pollock CDQ program. The Council identified this issue as highest priority for an analysis of a rollover at the end of 1995. The alternatives which will be analyzed are (1) no rollover, and (2) rollover of the existing program as is, including the CDQ program, for a period of three years. The schedule for this issue is to have an analysis for Council review in April 1995 with a final decision in June 1995. A progress report on the analysis will be provided at the December 1994 meeting in Anchorage.

### Amendment Proposals/Staff Tasking

The Council did not solicit a call for proposals this past summer as we normally do, due to the press of current projects. Nonetheless, we received some 20 proposals for plan or regulatory amendments to the groundfish FMPs. Rather than review these proposals at this meeting, the Council decided to postpone consideration until the December meeting later this year. Proposals will be reviewed by the Groundfish Plan Teams in November, then the Council's Plan Amendment Advisory Group (PAAG), and finally, by the Council itself in December.

## Full Retention/Full Utilization and Harvest Priority

The Council reviewed several discussion papers regarding full retention/full utilization (FR/FU) and harvest priority (HP). Reduction of bycatch and waste of North Pacific fishery resources is one goal of the Comprehensive Rationalization Plan. Because the FR/FU and HP proposals may have some potential to address these problems, the Council recommended further development of both proposals. A committee has been established to further flesh out the alternatives and details of each program, focussing on four specific fisheries as case examples. These fisheries are mid-water trawl pollock, Bering Sea rock sole, GOA flatfish, and Bering Sea Pacific cod longline. The committee (as listed below) will meet and report back to the Council in December. Staff contact is David Witherell.

Bob Alverson (Chairman)	Fishing Vessel Owners' Assn.
Dave Benson	Arctic Alaska Fisheries Corp.
John Iani	Unisea, Inc.
Spike Jones	Crab/groundfish fisherman
Mandy Merklein	Fishery observer/biologist
Hazel Nelson	Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp.
Paul Seaton	Alaska Marine Conservation Council

## Salmon Bycatch

Among the provisions of the Council's salmon bycatch control policy is development of regulations requiring retention of salmon for processing and delivery to nonprofit foodbank organizations. Current regulations require salmon bycatch retention until an observer can examine the fish. The regulation adopted by the Council at this meeting establishes a voluntary program that would allow those retained salmon to be processed for foodbanks. Under this plan amendment (BSAI Amendment 26 and GOA Amendment 29), permits will be issued to those processing, possessing, or distributing these salmon.

The Council received a status report on the Salmon Research Foundation, a non-profit corporation, whose purpose is to use income generated from salmon bycatch assessment payments to develop a salmon bycatch avoidance program for the BSAI trawl fisheries, and to fund research on stock origin of salmon taken as bycatch. An additional assessment payment of \$5 per chum salmon taken as bycatch was proposed. Recent Foundation activities were summarized, including a review of fleet participation and assessment collection, results of the pollock "B" season bycatch avoidance program, and Foundation development. A full report is available from the Council office.

Two analyses of time/area closures designed to reduce bycatch of chinook and chum salmon were reviewed by the Council, and released for public review. Alternatives examined to reduce chum salmon bycatch included those that would close specified areas of the BSAI (depending upon the closure option selected) to trawling year-round or during the period of high "other" (chum) salmon bycatch, which generally occurs July through October. One option examined for a time/area closure was the 5-block area in the Catcher Vessel Operational Area (CVOA), which was closed to vessels using trawl gear on August 20, when bycatch of 42,000 "other" salmon was reached. For chinook salmon bycatch, alternatives examined would trigger time/area closures based on PSC limits. Closures would be triggered during times of high chinook bycatch (September through April) and may be selectively applied to fisheries with high chinook bycatch. Copies of these documents, with several minor revisions, will be available from the Council office in November. The Council will take final action on these proposed amendments in December or January. Staff contact is David Witherell.

## Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Initial Groundfish Specifications

The Council adopted for public review the preliminary Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document for the 1995 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) fisheries. This document contains

information on the current status of stocks for each groundfish species, including biomass estimates and recommended Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) levels. The Council also set preliminary groundfish Total Allowable Catches (TAC) and bycatch allowances for the BSAI fisheries.

The recommended preliminary ABCs and TACs for the BSAI fisheries are presented in Table 2. Stock assessments on which the ABCs and TACs are based do not include information from this past summer's trawl survey, and these specifications are subject to revision when the 1994 survey data are incorporated into the final SAFE document which will be prepared by the groundfish Plan Team in November. Twenty-five percent of the initial specifications will go forward as interim specifications for management of the 1995 groundfish fisheries until superseded by publication of the Council's final specifications. On the basis of comments and new information, the Council will adopt final recommendations for the 1995 fishing year at its December 1994 meeting.

For pollock, the Council adopted last year's pollock TACs for the BSAI and Bogoslof district. The Bogoslof TAC of 1,000 mt will serve as bycatch in the non-pollock fisheries. Although the Council discussed 40/60 and 45/55 splits for the seasonal apportionment of pollock in the Eastern Bering Sea for the roe (January 20-April 15) and non-roe seasons (August 15-December 31), recommendation on this specification was deferred until December following public review. The Council also discussed specification of the apportionment of pollock to bottom trawl and pelagic trawl gear, as allowed under Amendment 16a, but deferred any recommended changes until December.

For Pacific cod, the Council recommended a preliminary TAC of 191,000 mt for 1995, the same as 1994. Under Amendment 24, two percent of the TAC is reserved for jig gear, 44 percent for hook and line, and 54 percent for trawl gear. For the 1995 hook and line fisheries, the Council discussed seasonal allocations split 90/10 and 70/30 for the first trimester (January 1 - April 30) and second trimester (May 1 - August 31), with any remaining TAC to be rolled over into the third trimester. Recommendation on this apportionment was deferred until December.

For all other species, the Council made preliminary recommendations based on the 1994 TACs and apportionments. One exception was that the TAC for POP in the Aleutian Islands would be apportioned among the AI regulatory areas based on distribution of biomass. Another difference was that flathead sole was split out from the other flatfish category and assigned a separate ABC (119,000 mt) and TAC (29,618 mt).

Regarding apportionment of PSCs in the BSAI groundfish fisheries, the Council recommended the same bycatch allowances for Pacific halibut, herring, red king crab, and Tanner crab as for 1994 (Table 3). Note that these apportionments will only be in place until the final recommendations of the Council in December are adopted by the Secretary of Commerce. Lastly, the Council recommended standards for the Vessel Incentive Program (VIP) for the first two quarters of the 1995 Gulf and BSAI trawl fisheries. These recommendations appear in Table 4. The Council may consider adjustments to the rate standards for the BSAI other trawl category during the November 14 teleconference (see article on page 1). Table 4 also has initial recommendations for assumed discard mortality rates for halibut. Please note that the Council is also considering 12% as a rate for the hook and line Pacific cod fishery in addition to the 18% shown in the table. Staff contact is David Witherell.

### Steller Sea Lions

Biologists from the NMFS Marine Mammal Lab presented a summary of amendments to the Marine Mammal Protection Act, as well as recent survey data for Steller sea lions. Survey data indicate a continuing population decline of Stellers in much of Alaska. For adults and juveniles, declines were observed in overall (haul-out and rookery) trend site numbers in all Alaska regions except southeast Alaska and the western GOA. Kenai-Kiska (K-K) area sea lion numbers declined by 9.6% (from 20,679 to 18,702) during 1992-94. Pup numbers decreased in all regions from 1991/92 to 1993/94. Excluding the central Aleutians, pup numbers in the K-K area decreased 19.5%. NMFS intends to issue a proposed



status determination in late December 1994 or early January 1995. A report is available from the Council office. Staff contact is David Witherell.

### **Total Weight Measurement**

The Council reviewed an analysis for a regulatory amendment to improve total catch weight estimates in the groundfish fisheries. Based on this review, and recommendations from the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, and public, the Council adopted a proposed regulation whereby the total weight of all pollock harvested or processed by all processors while engaged in directed pollock fishing must be determined by weighing on a scale (that meets specific performance standards) prior to discard or processing. This would not apply to catcher vessels, only to catcher/processors, motherships and shore-based processors. Regulations fully implementing this requirement will not be in place until late 1996, or early 1997. Staff contact is David Witherell.

### **Trawl Mesh Regulations**

The Council reviewed an analysis of a proposal that would regulate mesh size of codends used in trawl fisheries for Pacific cod, pollock and rock sole. The objective of the proposed regulation is to reduce discarding in these fisheries, and to increase the usable portion of the catch. The Council adopted Alternative 3, which requires a codend constructed of single layer square mesh top panel to be used for these fisheries. If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, regulations will require codends used in listed trawl fisheries to be constructed with the following specifications:

- for the BSAI rock sole fishery, and the BSAI and GOA Pacific cod fisheries, a minimum of 155 mm (6 inch) stretched measure (between knot), single layer square mesh top panel;
- for the GOA and BSAI pollock fisheries, a minimum of 82.5 mm (3.25 inch) stretched measure (between knot), single layer square mesh top panel;

In addition, codends for the above pollock, rock sole, and Pacific cod fisheries may require the following:

- codend top quarter panel measure no less than 3 feet between top riblines (no less than 12 bars wide of 6" mesh, or no less than 18 bars wide of 3.25" mesh) for vessels less than 125' LOA; and no less than 4 feet in width (no less than 16 bars in width of 6" mesh or no less than 24 bars in width of 3.25" mesh) if deployed aboard vessels 125' LOA and greater;
- a maximum of the aft 3 feet of codends measured along riblines may be equipped with a codend liner of any mesh size;
- the codend's top panel may be equipped with a maximum of 6 feet in width of double web for chafing gear under the lifting straps for Pacific cod and rock sole fisheries, and a maximum of 9' in width measured along the riblines of double web for chafing gear under the lifting straps for pollock fisheries.

To accommodate changes in bycatch rates that would likely be caused by a mesh regulation of the BSAI rock sole fishery, rock sole would be separated out from the other trawl category in the Vessel Incentive Program and assigned a maximum allowable rate. Regulations that change the Vessel Incentive Program, along with mesh size requirements, may be implemented in 1995. Staff contact is David Witherell.

### **Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Specifications**

The Council approved interim 1995 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for public review, including Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs), Total Allowable Catches (TACs), and Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits. Twenty-five percent of the preliminary TACs (set in September) will go

forward as interim harvest limits for the first of the fishing year until superseded by the final specifications published in late January. The Council's preliminary recommendations for ABCs, TACs, and apportionments are listed in Table 5. The specifications are based on the current stock assessments contained in the preliminary Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document that was released for public review, as well as recommendations by the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team, Advisory Panel, and Scientific and Statistical Committee.

Specifications for pollock and Pacific cod received the most attention by reviewers. Pollock ABC was reduced to 65,360 mt for 1995 from 109,300 mt in 1994. This recommendation was based on a new stock assessment which calculated an ABC based on the fishing mortality rate that produced a minimal (5%) probability of falling below the threshold spawner biomass level in the long term. This exploitation strategy was chosen because of recent trends of poor recruitment of Gulf of Alaska pollock and ecosystem considerations. Biomass projections would be below threshold by 1997 without reduced fishing mortality. An additional result of the 1993 trawl survey was noting a westward geographic shift in the pollock biomass, resulting in different ABC distributions between the west/central areas (i.e., a shift from the largest concentration of pollock biomass from the Kodiak area in 1990 to the Shumagin area in 1993) and may reflect migration of Eastern Bering Sea pollock into the Gulf. The approved TAC was set at the ABC level of 65,360 mt.

The Pacific cod ABC for 1995 more than doubled to 103,000 mt from 50,400 mt in 1994. A new stock assessment was used for estimating Pacific cod ABC for 1995, incorporating a higher biomass estimate and natural mortality rate (the same as used for Eastern Bering Sea Pacific cod). This resulted in a higher ABC, although the stock has been in a period of decline since 1987. The Plan Team and SSC recommended technical modifications to the assessment for the November SAFE. The SSC recommended a range for ABC of last year's estimate and the current model estimate (50,400 - 103,000 mt). The AP recommended a TAC equal to the Plan Team ABC (103,000 mt) for public review.

The Plan Team and SSC differed in their recommended ABCs for thornyheads and Pacific ocean perch (POP). The Plan Team recommended a thornyhead ABC of 2,320 mt, more than twice the 1994 value of 1,180 mt. The new assessment used improved information, including maturity data and longline survey catches and size compositions. The SSC agreed with the assessment's result of 2,320 mt, but recommended phasing in the new ABC over four years because rockfish are vulnerable to over-exploitation, the model is new, based only on length data, and suggests a much larger component of the population not sampled by the trawl survey. For 1995, the recommended ABC is 1,450 mt,  $\frac{5}{8}$  of the Plan Team ABC. The Plan Team and SSC agreed with the results of the 1994 stock assessment for POP, but the Plan Team took an additional conservative measure as outlined in their policy statement by constraining the computation of ABC to ensure a buffer between ABC and the overfishing level of the stock. The TAC recommended by the AP, however, is calculated according to the rebuilding schedule for the species independent of the ABC level. The Council approved recommending a POP TAC of 5,977 mt.

The AP recommended setting 1995 TACs equal to 1994 TACs for all flatfish species groups and Atka mackerel. New assessments for sablefish and demersal shelf rockfish will be available for the November 1994 SAFE, and the 1995 TAC was rolled over from 1994. The AP recommended setting 1995 TACs equal to the Plan Team/SSC recommended ABCs for the rockfish assemblages, except that the Council modified the ABC for the other slope rockfish category to be the range between the 1994 TAC and recommended 1995 ABC. Also, red banded rockfish, previously included in demersal shelf rockfish, is now included in other slope rockfish.

The Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for halibut in the Gulf of Alaska are set by gear type and may be apportioned seasonally over the fishing year. For 1995, the Council recommended initial PSC apportionments shown below for the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries. PSCs from 1994 were approved for 1995 except for hook and line gear which was reduced to 300 mt for public review. The 300 mt PSC is contingent upon a regulatory amendment initiated by the Council to exempt the IFQ sablefish fishery

from the halibut PSC requirement, subject to annual review. The lowered PSC cap for hook and line gear includes 10 mt for demersal shelf rockfish fisheries in the Southeast Outside District, to be taken in the third trimester. The second trimester apportionment will again be released coincident with the opening of the sablefish season on May 15, and will end on August 31. The third trimester apportionment will be released on September 1. As in 1993 and 1994, pot gear will be exempt from the halibut PSC limits. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

	<u>Trawl</u>		<u>Hook and Line</u>
1st quarter	600 mt (30%)	1st trimester	80 mt (26.7%)
2nd quarter	400 mt (20%)	2nd trimester	200 mt (66.7%)
3rd quarter	600 mt (30%)	3rd trimester	20 mt (6.7%)
4th quarter	400 mt (20%)		
<hr/>		<hr/>	
TOTAL	2,000 mt		300 mt

<u>Season</u>	<u>Shallow Water</u>	<u>Deep Water</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jan 20 - Mar 31	500 mt	100 mt	600 mt
Mar 31 - Jun 30	100 mt	300 mt	400 mt
Jun 30 - Sep 30	200 mt	400 mt	600 mt
Sep 30 - Dec 31		no apportionment	400 mt
<hr/>			
TOTAL	800 mt	800 mt	2,000 mt

### Meeting Reminders

#### **Council Teleconference**

November 14, 1994, 9:00 a.m., Alaska Time

Subject: Time/area closures in groundfish fisheries to protect red king crab in Bristol Bay and consider adjustments to the vessel incentive program (VIP) rate standards for the BSAI other trawl category.

Contact: David Witherell (NPFMC)

#### **Groundfish Plan Team Meetings**

Week of November 14, 1994

Agenda: Stock assessments, plan amendment proposals, research.

Contacts: Jane DiCosimo, David Witherell (NPFMC)

#### **International Flatfish Symposium**

October 26-28, 1994 — Anchorage, Alaska

Subject: Biology, Assessments, Management

Contact: David Witherell (NPFMC)

Table 2

**BERING SEA AND ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GROUND FISH  
Initial 1995 Recommendations and Apportionments (mt)**

Species	Area	Council	Council	Plan Team	ABC	Council	ITAC
		TAC 1994	ABC 1994	ABC 1995		TAC	
Pollock	EBS	1,330,000	1,330,000	1,330,000	1,330,000	1,330,000	1,130,500
	"A"	45%				as yet	
	"B"	55%				unspecified	
	AI	56,600	56,600	56,600	56,600	56,600	48,110
	518	1,000	31,750	127,000	20,000	1,000	850
Pacific cod	BS/AI	191,000	191,000	191,000	191,000	191,000	162,350
Yellowfin sole	BS/AI	150,325	230,000	230,000	230,000	150,325	127,776
Greenland turbot	BS/AI	7,000	7,000	17,200	7,000	7,000	5,950
	BS	67%				67%	
	AI	33%				33%	
Arrowtooth	BS/AI	10,000	93,400	93,400	93,400	10,000	8,500
Rock sole	BS/AI	75,000	313,000	313,000	313,000	75,000	63,750
Flathead sole	BS/AI	included in other flats		119,000	119,000	29,618	25,175
Other flatfish	BS/AI	56,000	225,000	106,000	106,000	26,382	22,425
Sablefish	EBS	540	540	540	540	540	459
	AI	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,380
POP complex							
True POP	EBS	1,910	1,910	1,910	1,910	1,910	1,624
Other POP	EBS	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,190
True POP	AI	10,900	10,900	10,900	10,900	10,900	9,265
	Eastern			16%	16%	1,744	1,483
	Central	not apportioned in 1994		28%	28%	3,052	2,594
	Western			56%	56%	6,104	5,188
Sharp/Northern	AI	5,670	5,670	5,670	5,670	5,670	4,820
Short/Rougheye	AI	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,037
Other rockfish	EBS	365	365	365	365	365	310
	AI	770	770	770	770	770	655
Atka mackerel	BS/AI	68,000	122,500	245,000	163,200	68,000	57,800
	Eastern	10,000	53,900	44%	71,810	10,000	8,500
	Central	44,525	55,125	45%	73,440	44,525	37,846
	Western	13,475	13,475	11%	17,950	13,475	11,454
Squid	BS/AI	3,110	3,110	in other sp.	3,110	3,110	2,644
Other species	BS/AI	26,390	27,500	30,610	27,500	26,390	22,432
<b>BS/AI TOTAL</b>		<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>2,656,435</b>	<b>2,884,387</b>	<b>2,685,386</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>1,700,000</b>

"A" season for pollock: January 20 to April 15. "B" season: August 15 to December 31.  
ITAC = recommended TAC less the 15% reserve.

Table 3

**Initial 1995 BSAI Trawl Fisheries PSC  
Apportionments and Seasonal Allowances**

Fishery Group	Assumed Mortality <sup>1</sup>	Halibut Mortality Cap (mt)	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab (animals) Zone1	C. bairdi Zone1	C. bairdi Zone2
Yellowfin sole Jan. 20 - Aug. 2 Aug. 3 - Dec. 31	76%	592 230 362	332	40,000	175,000	1,275,000
Rocksole/other flatfish Jan. 20 - Mar. 29 Mar. 30 - June 28 June 29 - Dec. 31	75%	688 428 180 80		110,000	475,000	260,000
Turbot/sablefish/arrowtooth	48%/49%	137				5,000
Rockfish Jan. 20 - Mar. 29 Mar. 30 - June 28 June 29 - Dec. 31	69%	201 40 120 41	8			10,000
Pacific cod Jan. 20 - June 28	65%	1,200	25	10,000	175,000	200,000
Pollock/mackerel/o. species Jan. 20 - April 15 April 16 - Dec. 31	77%/59%/60%	957 430 527	178	40,000	175,000	1,250,000
# MW Pollock (Herring)	89%		1,419			
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,775</b>	<b>1,962</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Mortality rates of halibut based on IPHC recommended mortality rates for 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Mortality rates used in 1994.

**Initial 1995 Recommendations for Non-Trawl PSC Bycatch Allowances**

Fishery Group	Assumed Mortality**	Halibut Mortality (mt)	Seasonal Apportion (mt)	%
Pacific Cod Jan 1 - April 30 May 1 - August 31 Sept. 1 - Dec. 31	12-18%	725	685 40 Rollover	95 5
Other Non-Trawl*	17/24/19%	175		
Groundfish Pot	8%	Exempt		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>900 metric tons</b>		

\* Includes Hook & Line sablefish, rockfish, and Greenland turbot, respectively.

\*\* Mortality rates based on IPHC recommended mortality rates for 1995.

**Table 4 Council Recommendations for 1995 VIP Rate Standards  
(first and second quarters)**

Fishery and quarter	Incentive Program Rate Standards	
	Halibut (kg halibut/mt groundfish)	Zone 1 Red King Crab (# of crab/mt groundfish)
<b>BSAI Midwater Pollock</b>		
First Quarter	1.0	n/a
Second Quarter	1.0	
<b>BSAI Bottom Pollock</b>		
First Quarter	7.5	n/a
Second Quarter	5.0	
<b>BSAI Yellowfin Sole</b>		
First Quarter	5.0	2.5/mt
Second Quarter	5.0	2.5/mt
<b>BSAI Other Trawl Fisheries</b>		
First Quarter	30.0	2.5/mt
Second Quarter	30.0	2.5/mt
<b>GOA Midwater Pollock</b>		
First Quarter	1.0	n/a
Second Quarter	1.0	
<b>GOA Other Trawl Fisheries</b>		
First Quarter	40.0	n/a
Second Quarter	40.0	

Table 5 GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH ABCs and TACs Initial 1995 Plan Team, SSC, and AP recommendations (metric tons)							
Species	Area	1994			APPROVED BY COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC REVIEW		
		ABC	TAC	Catch*	Plan Team 1995 ABC	SSC 1995 ABC	Advisory Panel 1995 TAC
Pollock	W (61)	22,130	22,130	16,709	30,380	30,380	30,380
	C (62)	23,870	23,870	18,475	15,310	15,310	15,310
	C (63)	56,000	56,000	44,618	16,310	16,310	16,310
	E	7,300	7,300	6,848	3,360	3,360	3,360
	Total	109,300	109,300	86,650	65,360	65,360	65,360
Pacific Cod	W	16,630	16,630	14,679	29,900	16,630 - 29,900	29,900
	C	31,250	31,250	30,066	68,000	31,250 - 68,000	68,000
	E	2,520	2,520	1,646	5,100	2,520 - 5,100	5,100
	Total	50,400	50,400	46,391	103,000	50,400 - 103,000	103,000
Flatfish, Deep Water	W	460	460	53	670	670	460
	C	12,930	7,500	2,344	8,150	8,150	7,500
	E	3,120	3,120	697	5,770	5,770	3,120
	Total	16,510	11,080	3,094	14,590	14,590	11,080
Rex Sole	W	800	800	50	1,350	1,350	1,350
	C	9,310	7,500	2,819	7,050	7,050	7,050
	E	1,840	1,840	5	2,810	2,810	2,810
	Total	11,950	10,140	2,874	11,210	11,210	11,210
Flathead Sole	W	9,120	2,000	495	8,880	8,880	2,000
	C	23,080	5,000	1,362	17,170	17,170	5,000
	E	3,650	3,000	2	2,740	2,740	3,000
	Total	35,850	10,000	1,859	28,790	28,790	10,000
Flatfish, Shallow Water	W	20,290	4,500	184	26,280	26,280	4,500
	C	12,950	12,950	2,549	23,140	23,140	12,950
	E	1,180	1,180	10	2,850	2,850	1,180
	Total	34,420	18,630	2,743	52,270	52,270	18,630
Arrowtooth	W	28,590	5,000	1,165	28,400	28,400	5,000
	C	186,270	20,000	14,141	141,290	141,290	25,000
	E	21,380	5,000	422	28,440	28,440	5,000
	Total	236,240	30,000	15,728	198,130	198,130	35,000
Sablefish	W	2,290	2,290	566	2,290	2,290	2,290
	C	11,220	11,220	8,112	11,220	11,220	11,220
	W. Yakutat	4,850	4,850	2,836	4,850	4,850	4,850
	E. Yak./SEO	7,140	7,140	6,292	7,140	7,140	7,140
	Total	25,500	25,500	17,806	25,500	25,500	25,500
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	680	571	170	1,370	1,780	1,195
	C	850	714	626	2,460	3,190	2,152
	E	1,500	1,265	121	2,970	3,860	2,630
	Total	3,030	2,550	917	6,800	8,830	5,977
Shortraker/Rougheye	W	100	100	77	170	170	170
	C	1,290	1,290	837	1,210	1,210	1,210
	E	570	570	554	530	530	530
	Total	1,960	1,960	1,468	1,910	1,910	1,910
Rockfish, Other Slope	W	330	199	74	170	170	170
	C	1,640	988	590	1,150	1,150	1,150
	E	6,330	1,048	726	5,610	5,610	5,610
	Total	8,300	2,235	1,390	6,930	6,930	2,235 - 6,930
Rockfish, Northern	W	1,000	1,000	1,610	640	640	640
	C	4,720	4,720	4,384	4,610	4,610	4,610
	E	40	40	49	20	20	20
	Total	5,760	5,760	6,043	5,270	5,270	5,270
Rockfish, Pelagic Shelf	W	1,030	1,030	253	910	910	910
	C	4,550	4,550	1,226	3,200	3,200	3,200
	E	1,310	1,310	888	1,080	1,080	1,080
	Total	6,890	6,890	2,367	5,190	5,190	5,190
Black Rockfish	Gulfwide	NA	NA	295	400	-	-
Rockfish, Demersal Shelf	SEO	960	960	406	960	960	960
Thornyhead	Gulfwide	1,180	1,180	1,068	2,320	1,450	1,450
Atka Mackerel	W		2,500	2,658			2,500
	C		1,000	5			1,000
	E			5			5
	Gulfwide	4,800	3,505	2,663	6,480	4,300	3,505
Other Species	Gulfwide	NA	14,504	2,913	NA		15,315 - 15,549
<b>GULF OF ALASKA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>553,050</b>	<b>304,594</b>	<b>196,380</b>	<b>535,110</b>	<b>481,090 - 533,690</b>	<b>321,591 - 326,521</b>

\* Catch through August 6, 1994

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**Review Committee**  
**1994 Halibut Sablefish CDQ Recommendations**

<b>FISHING AREA &amp; SPECIES</b>	<b>Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation</b>	<b>Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association</b>	<b>Coastal Villages Fisheries Cooperative</b>	<b>Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation</b>	<b>Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association</b>	<b>Atka Fishermen's Association</b>	<b>Pribilof Island Fishermen</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>4B - Halibut</b>	0	0	0	0	0	100%	0	100%
<b>4C - Halibut</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	100%	100%
<b>4D - Halibut</b>	20%	33%	24%	23%	0	0	0	100%
<b>4E - Halibut</b>	0	0	70%	30%	0	0	0	100%
<b>Bering Sea - Sablefish</b>	25%	75%	0	0	0	0	0	100%
<b>Aleutian Island - Sablefish</b>	30%	10%	25%	25%	10%	0	0	100%