

December 11, 1986

### Recommendations of the AP Bycatch Subcommittee

As part of the bycatch control measures in the yellowfin sole/other flatfish DAH fisheries within Amendment 10 to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Fishery Management Plan, the Secretary is given discretionary authority to allow fisheries to continue or resume under specific conditions when PSC caps have been achieved. This was provided to allow some management latitude in imposing restrictions on domestic fishermen in areas and under circumstances where continued fishing can be determined to have insignificant deleterious effects on crab stocks. This discretionary authority is designed to strike a balance between conservation of depressed crab stocks and excessive regulatory burden on the developing domestic groundfish fishery.

The Advisory Panel Bycatch Subcommittee met on December 10, 1986 to address an issue that had arisen which it felt calls for an appropriate application of this discretionary authority.

At its previous meetings, the subcommittee was clear in its intent to allow developing DAP flatfish fisheries to not be impeded unnecessarily by the bycatch caps while keeping the conservation of crab stocks as its primary objective. The subcommittee had considered projected levels of DAP flatfish harvests for the 1986 season and determined that the expected level of DAP groundfish fishing for flatfish and its associated bycatch of tanner and king crabs in zone 1 in the eastern Bering Sea would be de minimis.

At the December, 1986 meeting of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, it became evident that the DAP fishery for flatfish in zone 1 will expand in 1987. In light of new information concerning this expanded fishery, the subcommittee considered recommendations to the Council and the Secretary regarding the appropriate use of the discretionary authority provided by Amendment 10.

The subcommittee recommends that the Secretary should use his discretionary authority to provide a supplemental bycatch allowance to account for DAP vessels participating in the newly developing zone 1 other flatfish fishery. The supplemental bycatch allowances, by species, will be 10,000 C. bairdi and 10,000 red king crab in zone 1.

The recommendation reflects the offer of the DAP trawlers to take one NMFS approved observer at their own expense for a period not to exceed 45 days during the primary fishing period which is expected to be completed by 3/31/87.

The subcommittee recommends the Secretary take these supplemental bycatch allowances into consideration if the overall DAH caps are reached in zone 1 later in the year. That is, the Secretary

should exercise his authority to allow DAP fisheries to continue after the C. bairdi and red king crab PSC limits for zone 1 in Amendment 10 have been reached by allowing continued fishing up to an additional catch of 10,000 C. bairdi or 10,000 red king crab, to take into account the bycatch of the earlier DAP flatfish fishery.

This recommendation has the support of representatives of the crabbers and trawl fishermen attending the December subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee emphasizes that this is only a short term solution. The subcommittee will continue to work toward a long term strategy for managing bycatch in the eastern Bering Sea.

D-3 BERING SEA/ALEUTIANS GROUND FISH CHECKLIST

The Council needs to review and take action on the following items at this meeting.

1. Review plan team and SSC ABC recommendations. D-3(a)  
Set 1987 ABCs and initial TACs. D-3(a)
2. Review DAP and JVP survey results. C-5, D-3(b)  
Review any carry over from GOA. D-2(b)  
Review TALFF requests. C-6
3. Set initial DAPs, JVPs, and TALFF. D-3(b)
4. Identify zero-TALFF/zero-JVP species and D-3(c)  
provide bycatch amounts to joint venture  
and foreign fisheries as necessary.
5. Review TACs, DAPs, JVPs, TALFFs; adjust as D-3(c)  
necessary.
6. Approve 1987 TACs, DAPs, JVPs, TALFFs.