

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## NEWSLETTER

April 25, 1980

#4-80

### COUNCIL VOTES "NO" ON BRISTOL BAY

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, after extended debate and a vote of 6-5, passed a motion during the Friday portion of its meeting to disapprove the concept of processing by foreign ships of Bristol Bay salmon in the Fishery Conservation Zone.

The action came on a request from the State of Alaska to allow the sale of U.S. caught salmon to foreign processing ships operating in the FCZ from 3-200 miles offshore. The salmon would have been the three-plus million fish the State of Alaska has forecast as surplus to U.S. processing capacity during a predicted record run of red salmon to Bristol Bay.

The Council's management plan for high seas salmon prohibits all domestic and foreign salmon fishing off the coast of Alaska (3-200 miles) and west of the longitude of Cape Suckling. The only authorized high seas fishery is the troll salmon fishery off Southeast Alaska.

### ENFORCEMENT DOWN ... VIOLATIONS, TOO ...

The U.S. Coast Guard has reported their patrol effort for fisheries surveillance was lower in the month of April than in previous months and that only one violation has been reported since the last meeting. That was by a Soviet vessel which was found to have three salmon aboard. A total of 210 individual foreign vessels were engaged in fisheries during the month of March, 16 more than in February.

### GROUND FISH FMP's

Final amendment packages have been set for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutians groundfish plans. The changes from previous material slated for public review in April and postponed are minor. They include a joint venture time/area closure concept for both plans and the addition of several species in the Gulf for consideration of an assigned Gulf-wide OY. The changes will be incorporated into the proposed amendment package for mailing prior to public hearing dates.

The Gulf of Alaska FMP amendment package will also include a detailed foreign trawl closure in the Kodiak area to prevent gear conflicts and grounds preemption problems.

## DOMESTIC FISHING

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game reports that there have been no deliveries of groundfish in Kodiak since April 17 and only a dozen boats involved in the blackcod effort so far. The accumulated catch for C. bairdi for the BS/A is 20.+ million lbs., and the C. opilio catch is approximately a quarter of that, 5.9 million lbs. It is estimated that the C. bairdi season will close in mid-May and that the C. opilio may end by mid-June.

## HERRING

An update on the status of the 1980 Bering Sea herring season shows no herring in Togiak as of May 1, but that's the only thing not there. When the fish show, they can expect to be met by 30 different companies employing 86 tenders, 29 processors, 639 gillnetters, 117 seiners, 14 trampers and 38 airplanes.

## AP MEMBERS SELECTED

Weaver Ivanoff, Board vice president of the Norton Sound Fisherman's Coop (Unalakleet), and Eric Jordan, Sitka handtroller, are the two new Advisory Panel members named at the April meeting. Their appointments bring the group back to its full complement of 25. Advisory Panel vacancies in the future will be filled each time from a new list of nominees, with no candidates being carried over on a cumulative listing. Terms for many of the current members expire in December.

## TANNER CRAB

Tanner crab amendments proposed to the Council for adoption by the Alaska Board of Fisheries found relatively easy going as the Council accepted seven of the eight amendments with little comment. The seven amendments include new fishing section descriptions within the Kodiak district, some season changes, tank inspections 24 hours prior to the season opening in each district in Area J, Area J district registration system, vessel registration prior to season opening in Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound, definition of a Tanner crab pot and a requirement for floating processors to report their intended processing location before start-up.

The eighth amendment, a 250 pot limit for Tanner crab for Kodiak approved by the Board of Fisheries was not adopted: rather the Council expressed its intent to allow that State regulation to be enforced in Federal waters.

## RESERVE RELEASE

The Council authorized the release of reserves scheduled for May 2 in the Gulf of Alaska to be handled at the discretion of the Regional Director, NMFS, Alaska Region. No release is scheduled in the Bering Sea/Aleutian area until June 2.

## PACIFIC COD OY/ABC

The optimum yield for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea was increased approximately 30,000 metric tons (58,700 to 88,000 mt); the ABC was set at 111,000 mt. The change is in line with the current status of stocks report which shows an increase in the abundance of cod, a short-lived species which is on the high side of a natural cyclical fluctuation.

## HERRING FMP

The Herring Plan Development Team proposed a number of options for the conduct of the herring fishery offshore. The options were drawn from extensive public comment and presented to the Council for review and approval and incorporation into the final draft FMP. Options chosen following review by both the SSC and AP and acceptance by the Council include:

Allowable Incidental Catch (AIC) will be set as a percentage of the total groundfish catch;

Allocations to offshore domestic and foreign fisheries will be made in September following the inshore fishery. All of the surplus from the inshore fishery will be allocated;

A TALFF should be allowed if there is a surplus;

Time/area closures during the inshore herring roe season for the food and bait fishery will be restricted to the inshore waters;

Domestic food and bait fishery is unrestricted if any of the initial allocation remains after Sept. 30, and,

A herring savings area will be implemented for all fishing when there is no TALFF or when TALFF does not exceed AIC. Longliners are exempt from the closure.

Action by the Council to formally approve the plan to send to the Secretary of Commerce will not take place until August or September.

## FMP POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Council took initial steps during the April meeting to establish policies and guidelines for the management plan process and the associated drafting teams. The SSC and AP have appointed subgroups to work with a Council subgroup to define a policy for the roles played by agency and department personnel on drafting teams and to re-examine some of the basic operations of the Council.

## ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND PETITION

The Environmental Defense Fund, described as a national, non-profit membership group, has filed a petition for the amendment of guidelines for fishery management plan development. Council review and comment on this petition has resulted in a letter of objection to the proposed changes listed in the petition. The Council was concerned over the inappropriate approach to issues and the lack of supporting data and analysis to support the EDF conclusions. Other concerns were proposed changes in baseline data required for plans and changes in MSY and over-fishing definitions.

### SALMON STUDY CONTRACT AWARDED

A contract for \$48,000 was approved with Natural Resources Consultants from Seattle, for a study of the Offshore Chinook and Coho Salmon Fishery off Alaska. The group is composed of Drs. Dayton Alverson, Mike Fredin and Frank Fukuhara, all formerly of the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center, Seattle and all renowned scientists.

### HALIBUT LIMITED ENTRY CONTRACT AWARDED

A contract for \$41,494 was approved with Tetra Tech, Inc., of California for a study to "Gather Information to Determine the Applicability of Limited Entry in the Halibut Fishery off Alaska." When the contract is signed Tetra Tech will begin work immediately and will rely greatly on the service of their subcontractor, Sam Bledsoe of NORFISH, from the University of Washington.

### SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

On May 12th in Seattle the Council's Incidental Species Policy Group will meet with the Bering Sea and Gulf Management Plan Drafting Teams to discuss the proposed Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for prohibited species concept contained in the amendment package. On May 13th subgroups of the SSC and AP will meet with the Plan Development Teams to review amendments proposed for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan.

The Kodiak Council meeting dates have been changed slightly. The Council meeting will be one day only, Friday, May 23rd. A public hearing to consider amendments to the 1981 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan will be held Thursday, May 22nd. More information on the public hearing will be forthcoming. No other meetings are planned.

### AP-SSC SCHEDULE

The formal meetings of the Scientific and Statistical Committee and Advisory Panel will not be conducted during the May meeting in Kodiak. Those members of both groups who wish to attend either the GOA public hearing or the Friday Council meeting are invited to do so.