

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## COUNCIL MEETS IN SITKA

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Sitka at the Centennial Building the week of September 22nd. The Scientific and Statistical Committee met the afternoon of the 22nd and all day on the 23rd. The Advisory Panel met the 23rd and the afternoon of the 24th, with the Council meeting through Wednesday and Thursday, the 24th and 25th and until noon on Friday, the 26th. Interspersed with those meetings were a series of plan development team meetings for Salmon and Tanner Crab, and various review subgroups of the Advisory Panel and the SSC. Highlights of the meeting were the Council action on the 1981 Tanner Crab FMP, proposing to eliminate the foreign fishery on that resource, and the development of proposed or possible amendments to the Salmon FMP for 1981. A minor amendment to the Bering Sea Groundfish FMP was proposed to increase the amount of fish available for U.S. fishermen in 1981 and the Council OK'd development of an amendment proposal for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP that would eliminate or greatly reduce the foreign fishery off Southeastern Alaska.

Two new Council staff Plan Coordinators attended the Sitka meeting. Jim Glock will oversee the Salmon and Herring Plans and Jeff Povolny will be responsible for the development and coordination of both the Tanner and King Crab Plans.

## COUNCIL MEETINGS IN OCTOBER AND DECEMBER

The next Council meeting will be held in Anchorage at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel on October 30th and 31st. The Council is scheduled for final review and approval of the Herring Plan to go to the Secretary of Commerce for review, and expects to take action on a proposed amendment to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan which could close the area off Southeastern Alaska to foreign fishing. The December Council meeting is scheduled for December 10th, 11th, and 12th, again in Anchorage at the Westward Hilton. They hope to meet jointly with the Alaska Board of Fisheries on December 11th and to hold a public hearing with them on December 9th on the fishery management plans for King Crab, Tanner Crab, Bering Sea Groundfish, and Salmon. The October Advisory Panel meeting will be on the 29th and the SSC intends to meet the 28th and 29th, all in Anchorage.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS ON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS

The Council has scheduled public hearings on the King Crab, Tanner Crab, and Groundfish FMP's for Dutch Harbor on October 21st, for Nome the first part of November, Kodiak and Seattle on December 6th, and Anchorage on December 9th. Hearings on the Salmon FMP amendments for 1981 are tentatively scheduled for Ketchikan on November 14th, and Sitka and Juneau on November 13th. Testimony on the Salmon Plan will also be taken at the previously mentioned hearings in Seattle, Kodiak, Anchorage, and Dutch Harbor.

## DOMESTIC FISHERIES

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game reported that U.S. fishermen through August, 1980 have taken 5,600 mt of groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska and 30,600 mt in the Bering Sea. The GoA catch included 2,100 mt of pollock and 1,125 mt of flounder and rockfish. The Bering Sea catch included 12,600 mt of pollock, 9,300 mt of yellowfin sole, and 8,000 mt tons of Pacific cod. The great bulk of the U.S. catch has been delivered to foreign processing ships in "joint ventures". Marine Resources Incorporated, for instance, conducting an operation with five U.S. catcher boats and two to three Soviet processors in the Bering Sea this summer, has taken 13,178 mt through September 18th. This included 8,638 mt of food grade yellowfin sole, 3,118 mt of fish meal grade small flounders and other under-utilized species.

## FOREIGN FISHERIES

As of September 17th, 259 foreign vessels, mostly Japanese, were fishing off Alaska, down from the 346 ships reported in August. Foreign groundfish fishermen have taken 146,000 mt, or 43% of their allocations in the Gulf of Alaska, and 787,000 mt, or 53% of their allocations in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island area as of August 30th.

The Japanese have taken almost all of their 7,500 mt allocation of Tanner crab. Only one boat is still fishing in the Bering Sea. Catch composition was 83% opilio, 12% bairdi, and 4% hybrids.

## ENFORCEMENT AND VIOLATIONS

Since the last Council meeting, the Coast Guard issued four reports of violations and eight citations. Additionally, they have seized five Japanese stern trawlers for underlogging their catches. All five ships show a pattern of underlogging more valuable species, such as sablefish and Pacific Ocean perch, and overlogging less valuable species, such as pollock.

## SCHEDULE FOR 1981 COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Council has scheduled eleven meetings in 1981 on the following dates: January 22-23, February 26-27, March 26-27, April 23-24, May 28-29, June 25-26, July 23-24, August 27-28, September 24-25, October 29-30, and December 2-4. Some of those meetings will probably be canceled since the Council has met on an average of eight times a year. At least two meetings will be held in communities other than Anchorage, though the dates and locations have not been set at this writing.

## CLEM TILLION RE-ELECTED AS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

Clem Tillion was re-elected to his third one-year term as Council Chairman, and Harold Lokken was re-elected for a third term as Vice-Chairman. Both men are well-known figures in the fishing community. Clem has been a commercial fisherman for over 30 years and a State legislator for 18. He is currently president of the Alaska State Senate. Harold Lokken, for 50 years manager of the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association, has a life-time of experience in fisheries matters, local, national, and international.

## RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE ADVISORY PANEL

Current Advisory Panel terms expire in November. The Council is asking for nominations for the Advisory Panel to be received in the Council office by October 20th. Nominees will be reviewed prior to the October meeting and the Council will announce new appointments on October 31st. Advisory Panel members can succeed themselves, and the incumbents have been asked to indicate whether they wish to serve another two-year term. The new Advisory Panel will reorganize itself at the December meeting with the election of officers and appointments to subcommittees. For further information, please contact Mrs. Judy Willoughby at (907) 274-4563.

## APPOINTMENT TO THE SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

Dr. William Aron, new Director of the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center, was appointed to the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee to fill the unexpired term vacated by Bert Larkins. The terms of the current SSC members expire in November. They expect to nominate members for the 1981-82 terms in October with an election of officers taking place either then or at the December meeting.

## CRAB POT/HALIBUT STUDIES

A recent study by the International Pacific Halibut Commission and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, funded by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, to determine the catch rates of halibut in various kinds of crab pots showed that the standard rectangular, side-entry crab pots took many more halibut than the conical, top-loading pots. The study also indicated that use of boards on side-loading rectangular pots resulted in a higher crab catch and a lower halibut catch. Final results of this study should be available in December.

## COUNCIL PREFERS ZERO TALFF FOR TANNER CRAB

The Council reviewed material prepared by the Plan Development Team for the Tanner Crab FMP and adopted their recommendation as the Council's preferred option for the fishery in 1981. That recommendation reduces the foreign fishery to zero from the 7,500 mt Tanner Crab allocation the Japanese had in 1980. The PDT recommendation was based on a paper prepared by the Council staff economist, Jim Richardson, which indicated that any foreign catch of Tanner crab would be detrimental to the U.S. industry. Additional proposals adjusting guideline harvest levels along the lines proposed by ADF&G for other Tanner crab management areas are included in the amendment package. Following the hearings outlined in this newsletter and a meeting with the Alaska Board of Fisheries in December, the Council is expected to make a decision at the December meeting to approve 1981 amendments for Secretarial review. The comment period on the Tanner Crab amendment will close at midnight on December 9th.

## SALMON AMENDMENTS FOR 1981 GO TO PUBLIC REVIEW

Following a presentation by the Salmon PDT on proposed changes for salmon management in the troll fishery for 1981, the Council reviewed their proposals and listened to public testimony. The Council approved the PDT proposals for

public review, added three proposals from the Advisory Panel, and several proposals originated by Council members. Briefly, those proposals (or options) reduce the OY for chinook salmon by 10%, delay opening of the troll salmon season from April 15th to May 15th, close trolling on September 10th, limit the number of gurdies on power trollers to four and on hand trollers to two, require check-out reports before any troller can leave Alaskan waters with fish aboard, close the FCZ to all trolling, various proposals for limited entry in the FCZ, go back to the 1979 requirement for landing only fin-clipped salmon with heads on, eliminate the use of treble hooks, delay opening of coho season to July 1st, and others. It should be stressed that these are options for amendments. It is obvious that some of them are mutually exclusive. As noted earlier, public hearings on this amendment package will be held in Ketchikan, Sitka, and Juneau. The amendment package will be distributed as soon as it is drafted and printed, we hope by October 15th. The comment period will run through midnight, December 9th, and the Council is expected to act on the amendment proposals at the December meeting.

The completely revised Salmon FMP, now being developed by the Plan Development Team with the aid of the consultants from Natural Resources Consultants, should be completed by the end of the year. It is not expected to go into effect in 1981, although it will serve as background material for many of the 1981 amendments.

#### BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN GROUND FISH FMP

The Council approved a proposed amendment to increase DAH in the Bering Sea in 1981 for review and final action at the October meeting. The success of the joint venture fisheries this year in the Bering Sea indicates that the amount of yellowfin sole and other flounder available under the FMP for 1981 will not be adequate. Those amounts will be increased from 850 tons to 25,000 tons for yellowfin sole and from 100 tons to 2,900 tons for other flounder.

#### GULF OF ALASKA FMP

At the request of the Advisory Panel and numerous members of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, the Council has asked the Plan Development Team to develop background information for a proposed amendment that would either close the Eastern Regulatory area (the area east of 147° West longitude in the Gulf of Alaska) to all foreign fishing, or at least greatly reduce the OY for all groundfish species in that area. The Southeastern Alaska longline fishermen are greatly concerned about the scarcity of sablefish, the gear conflicts and ground preemption problems with foreign trawlers off Southeastern Alaska, and the scarcity of Pacific Ocean perch, known to be depleted and apparently not increasing with the speed the Council had hoped when they originally set the OY for that species. The amendment, with the background material, will be considered by the Council at the October meeting for further action.

#### BERING SEA HERRING FMP

The SSC reviewed the Herring FMP in final draft form before approval by the Council and submission to the Secretary of Commerce as their recommendation for the management of that resource. They asked the Plan Development

Team to clarify two sections and suggested that the Council defer final action until the October meeting. Those sections are being redrafted and we expect to have them out to the Council group by the middle of October.

#### KING CRAB FMP

The draft King Crab Fishery Management Plan has not been mailed to the reviewers. It is complete and will probably be in the mail by the 1st of October with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to follow within two weeks. Final action on that Plan by the Council is not expected until January. The comment period will run until December 15th. As mentioned earlier, hearings have been set for that Plan in Dutch Harbor, Nome, Kodiak, Seattle, and Anchorage.

#### TESTIMONY AND OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS

Pat Pletnikoff and Mike Jones of St. George Tanaq Corporation testified before the Council on a joint venture they are proposing with a Taiwanese fishing company that would allow training and experience for the people of their corporation in a groundfish fishery in the Bering Sea. The proposal is dependent upon an increased allocation to Taiwan.

Representatives of Hochseefischerei Nordstern, A.G. and the 13th Regional Corporation testified on the performance of the West German fishery in the Bering Sea and the difficulty they were having in finding the product to buy from U.S. sources that they had committed themselves to when given their allocation. They have signed a contract with Alaska Food Company for groundfish products beginning January 1, 1981, but have not been able to locate the needed supplies, other than salmon, for 1980.

Representatives of Calista and Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI) testified on a joint venture they are putting together, hoping to use Norwegian factory trawler ships to develop some economic data on the feasibility of a groundfish fishery for their corporations. That operation is dependent on the negotiation of a Governing International Fishery Agreement (GIFA) with Norway, currently in progress by the U.S. State Department and the Norwegian government.

Also testifying before the Council on salmon and other matters were Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fishery Commission representatives Wilbur Johnson and Doug Dampier, Alaska Trollers Legal Fund representatives, Alaska Longline Fishermen representatives, and many individual longline fishermen and trollers.