

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

DATE: _____

I wish to testify on:

AGENDA TOPIC: Fa Pot Storage

AGENDA Numbers: _____.

Time required for presentation: _____.

NAME: Dale Samuelson

MAILING ADDRESS: 18504-55th NR SEATTLE WA 98155

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

DATE: _____

I wish to testify on:

AGENDA TOPIC: DUTCH KING CRAB

AGENDA Numbers: _____

Time required for presentation: 5 MIN

NAME: THORNE TASKER

MAILING ADDRESS: BOX 1172, HOMER, AK, 99603

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

DATE: 3-27-80

I wish to testify on:

(General Comment Period)

AGENDA TOPIC: King Crab - Bevan agenda item

AGENDA Numbers: _____.

Time required for presentation: _____.

NAME: Sig Jans

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

DATE: 3/27/80

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

I wish to testify on:

AGENDA TOPIC: G-3 TANMER Fmg. — & King Crab Proposals

AGENDA Numbers: G-3 _____.

Time required for presentation: _____.

NAME: Sig. Jaeger NPFVOA

MAILING ADDRESS: Bldg C-3, Rm 218

Remains

DATE: 3-26-80

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

I wish to testify on:

AGENDA TOPIC: ~~G-3~~ Tanner crab FMP & Bering Sea FMP

AGENDA Numbers: G-3 G-2

Time required for presentation: G-3 (1 minute) G-2 (3 minutes)

NAME: Jay D. Hastings

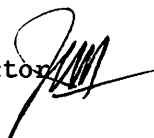
MAILING ADDRESS: Seattle, Wa

Agenda Item G-3
March, 1980

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 21, 1980

TO: Council Members, Scientific & Statistical Committee and
Advisory Panel

FROM: Jim H. Branson, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan

ACTION REQUIRED

Approve the recommendation of the Management Plan Drafting Team regarding seasonal closures for C. opilio in the Bering Sea.

BACKGROUND

The Tanner Crab Management Plan Drafting Team met in Anchorage on Monday, March 17th to discuss background information for an amendment to the Plan to close the C. opilio season by field order for biological reasons rather than a fixed date. The report is attached but concludes that:

-The Team recommends that the Council express their intent to have the closing date of the C. opilio season in the Bering Sea handled by the in-season field order authority provision of the plan.

The report goes on to discuss the biological impacts of an August 15th closure for the C. opilio season; biological impacts of various pot storage alternatives; a discussion of the background issues surrounding

the need to remove crab pots from the grounds before the opening of king crab season; size limits for C. opilio; and a "recruit-only" fishery for C. opilio and C. bairdi. Noteworthy is an attachment to the report estimating fuel and cost comparisons for various pot storage alternatives.

On Thursday the Council has been invited to join the Alaska Board of Fisheries for their staff reports and for public testimony on the State's Bering Sea crab proposals. On Friday morning we have invited the Board of Fisheries to join us to discuss the closing date for the C. opilio season and the relationship of the Tanner crab season to the beginning of the king crab season. Friday afternoon the issue is scheduled for Council action.

Attachment:

Tanner Crab Report

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TANNER CRAB MANAGEMENT PLAN DRAFTING TEAM

REPORT OF MEETING

Monday, March 17, 1980

Anchorage, Alaska

The Tanner Crab Management Plan Drafting Team met in Anchorage on Monday, March 17th, 1980 to discuss (a) background information for an amendment to the Tanner Crab Plan closing the C. opilio season in the eastern Bering Sea by field order for biological reasons and (b) the pot storage issues involved in a closure of the Tanner crab season early enough to require gear off the ground before king crab season opens. Present were Dr. Jerry Reeves, Marty Eaton, Fred Gaffney, Sig Jaeger and Mark Hutton.

The committee addressed the following points:

1. Assess biological impacts of August 15 closure for Tanner crab C. opilio season in the Bering Sea.

The group concluded there were no known biological reasons for an August 15th closure noting the following:

- a. There is strong evidence of the year-round availability of hard shell crabs;
 - b. Warmer water temperatures later in the year could influence "tanked" mortality;
 - c. Any increase in sorting could influence handling mortality.
2. Examine background information for an amendment to close Tanner crab C. opilio season by field order in-season announcement for biological reasons.

The Team noted that the plan currently contained language regarding opening and closing dates as follows:

Section 8.3.1.4 - It is expected that the actual opening and/or closing dates for the seasons prescribed in this plan will be adjusted by the Regional Director pursuant to the authority described in this section. Such action is not considered emergency action but would require amendment of the plan or regulations implementing the plan: adjusting the season opening and closing dates is meant to be an inherent part of the seasons themselves. For this reason any adjustments made by the Regional Director or his designee will be effected by the issuance of a field order and announcement in the manner currently utilized by the State of Alaska.

The team believes that the eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab C. opilio season can be closed without an amendment pursuant to the current provisions in the plan when the Regional Director or his designee find that the quota has been reached, or will be reached, or after considering the following, decide it is in the best interest of the resource to close the fishery: (1) the effect of overall fishing effort within the registration area, (2) catch per unit of effort and rate of harvest, (3) relative abundance of Tanner crab within the area in comparison with the preseason expectation, (4) the proportion of immature or softshell Tanner crab being handled, (5) the general information on the condition of Tanner crab within the area, (6) information pertaining to the OY for Tanner crab within the registration area, or (7) any other factors necessary for the conservation and management of the Tanner crab resource.

The team believed that any in-season adjustment made by the Regional Director must be coordinated with similar actions by the State for waters under State jurisdiction. It is necessary that the Regional Director, to the extent possible, act in conjunction with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in order to effect uniformity of management in State waters and the Fishery Conservation Zone.

3. Discuss the biological impacts of various pot storage alternatives.

The team considered various crab pot storage alternatives: i.e., dry land storage, storage in less than 25 fathoms of water, storage in special designated areas "on-the-grounds" and random-pot storage. The team concluded it was not possible to differentiate the biological impacts of different pot storage alternatives (excluding dry land storage). The team felt there was no reason to believe, (and data to substantiate), that biological impacts of one pot storage alternative were better or worse than any other pot storage or alternative.

4. Discuss the need to remove crab pots from the grounds before the opening of king crab season.

The team considered four issues for background for the discussion:

(a) the "equitable-start" theory, (b) enforcement, (c) crab mortality, and (d) industry expense/fuel issues.

(a) The "equitable-start." The Alaska Board of Fisheries' Resolution 80-67-FB regarding Tanner crab in the Bering Sea states the overwhelming weight of the public testimony presented to the Board was concerned with an "equitable-start" of the king crab season. The regulations in effect in 1980 have evolved through four earlier basic regulation changes beginning with (i) a season opening date when gear may be on the ground and no tank inspection required: (ii) a date 72 hours prior to the season opening where gear may be on the grounds, unbaited, doors open, with a tank inspection required: (iii) a date the season opens and simultaneous tank inspection with no gear on the grounds prior to fishing: (iv) gear allowed baited on the grounds five days prior to the opening of the king crab season with tank inspection required on the opening date.

(b) Enforcement concerns. The Team felt that the evolution of the regulatory changes was at least in part due to the enforceability of the regulations. For the regulations that were not

enforceable, the issue of the "equitable-start" became important. Therefore, the ability to enforce the regulations the Team felt, was an important element in any background discussion of the need to remove crab pots from the grounds before the opening of the king crab season.

The Team also discussed where the burden of responsibility for enforcement cost should fall (i.e., should the cost be borne by the fishing industry or the enforcement agency). The Team felt the answer would be dictated by economics. The Team also discussed, in general terms (and with no resolution) problems posed by catcher/processors in the crab fishery.

- (c) Biological factors. The team agreed that a data base did not exist to evaluate the biological soundness of various "equitable-start" openings and/or the related pot storage alternatives.

The team did address a study by High and Worland (March, 1977) on the escape of king crabs from pots: noting that the report concludes that 80 to 92% of the crabs readily escape from derelict pots and that the mortality among crabs which do not escape may be as high as 50%; or 10% of the crabs. The team noted that the study was relatively short term in duration (18 days) and was rather inconclusive in its findings regarding the problem at hand. The probable range of alternatives, assumptions or variables which may exist regarding the alternatives for various "equitable-start" openings seem to indicate that between \$20 and \$140 per pot would be lost in legal male king crab during a 30-day period with the doors closed. With pots stored with their doors open, the expected mortality should be minimal.

(d) Fuel and other issues. The team developed estimates of the cost of the present pot storage regulations and the requirement to have all gear off the grounds prior to the opening of king crab season: (see attached table).

5. Discuss size limits for C. opilio.

The team generally concluded a safe biological minimum size limit for C. opilio could be 3.5 inches. The team believed, however, that an economic or OY size limit would be 4.5 inches or 114 millimeters: 114 millimeters is the current minimum length accepted by the American processor. The ABC for C. opilio at 114 millimeters would be 90 million pounds.

6. Discuss a recruit only fishery for C. opilio and C. bairdi.

The team believed the Reeves and Marasco paper on the king crab fishery would also shed light on the subject of a Tanner crab recruit only fishery.

	<u>DRY LAND STORAGE</u>	<u>LESS THAN 25 FATHOM</u>	<u>DESIGNATED HIGH SEA STORAGE AREA</u>	<u>RANDOM STORAGE</u>
FUEL - GALLONS	1,944,000 gal.	972,000 gal.	651,240 gal.	210,000 gal.
COST (\$1.20/gal.) (per pot)	\$2,332,800 (37)	\$1,166,400 (18.50)	\$781,488 (12.40)	\$252,000 (4)
FOOD	\$126,000	\$63,000	\$44,100	0
STORAGE/POT	630,000	0	0	0
TANK INSPECTION	\$388,800	\$388,800	\$388,800	\$388,800
TOTAL COST	\$3,477,600.00	\$1,618,200.00	\$1,214,388.00	\$640,800.00
TOTAL COST/POT	\$55.00	\$25.70	\$19.28	\$10.17

ASSUMPTIONS

75% of 240 boats fish tanner crab = 180 boats
 Average 350 pots each
 20 hours running from grounds to shore
 10 hours running from grounds to 25F
 6.7 hours running from grounds to designated storage area
 3 round trips necessary beginning
 3 round trips necessary end
 1 round trip for tank inspection
 fuel \$1.20/gallon
 45 gallons/hour
 Food = \$100./day

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Resolution 80-67-FB

Regarding Tanner Crab in the Bering Sea


WHEREAS, the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council held a joint meeting on December 13, 1979, and discussed the Bering Sea tanner crab fishery; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Fisheries has adopted regulations to close the Bering Sea tanner crab fishery on August 15, 1980, because

- (a) all indications show that industry will take the allowable harvest well before August 15,
- (b) the overwhelming weight of public testimony presented to the Board was concerned with an equitable start of the king crab season. In order to achieve an equitable start of the king crab season, it is necessary to require removal of all gear from the fishing grounds prior to the start of the king crab season,
- (c) a workable enforcement strategy is needed which alleviates the burden of pulling each pot to determine if it is fishing prior to the beginning of the season,
- (d) it is biologically sound to prevent the fleet from fishing early and stockpiling crab. Stockpiling reduces the viability of the crab and increases wasteful deadloss,
- (e) the vast majority of the tanner crab gear is removed from the fishing grounds by the fishermen in order to lessen gear loss.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Board of Fisheries requests the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to exercise his Emergency Order authority granted under Alaska Statute 16.05.060 to extend the C. opilio season beyond August 15, 1980, if by that date the domestic harvest has not yet achieved a harvest level consistent with sound biological management principles and such an extension is determined to be in the broad public interest.

ADOPTED: January 11, 1980
Anchorage, Alaska



Nick Szabo, Chairman
Alaska Board of Fisheries

VOTE: 6/0

include as
appendix to
minutes

Appendix E-b

COMMENT ON THE
CURRENT STATUS
OF THE
JAPANESE TANNER CRAB FISHERY

submitted by the
Japanese Tanner Crab Industry
Anchorage, Alaska
March 25, 1980

This comment is being submitted by the Japanese Tanner crab industry as a part of our commitment and belief, as proposed by our industry during the October, 1979 Council meeting, that it is necessary to monitor the progress of both the U.S. and Japanese fisheries on a continuous basis whenever any decisions are to be made in the future by the Council. It is our intention to continue maintaining close contact with the Council and provide it with information on the progress of our fishing operations. We believe the following information should be considered in conjunction with the results of surveys conducted respectively by the U.S. and Japan.

The latest information is as follows:

SCALE OF OPERATIONS

Due to a drastic reduction in the Japanese allocation, it has become impossible for us to maintain previous levels of operation. We have been compelled to scale down our operations as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Vessel Type \ Year	1979	1980
Motherships	2	1
Mothership Catcher Vessels	13	4
Land Based Vessels	11	14

Fishing Grounds by Mothership Fleets During the Period up to March 20, in 1979 and 1980

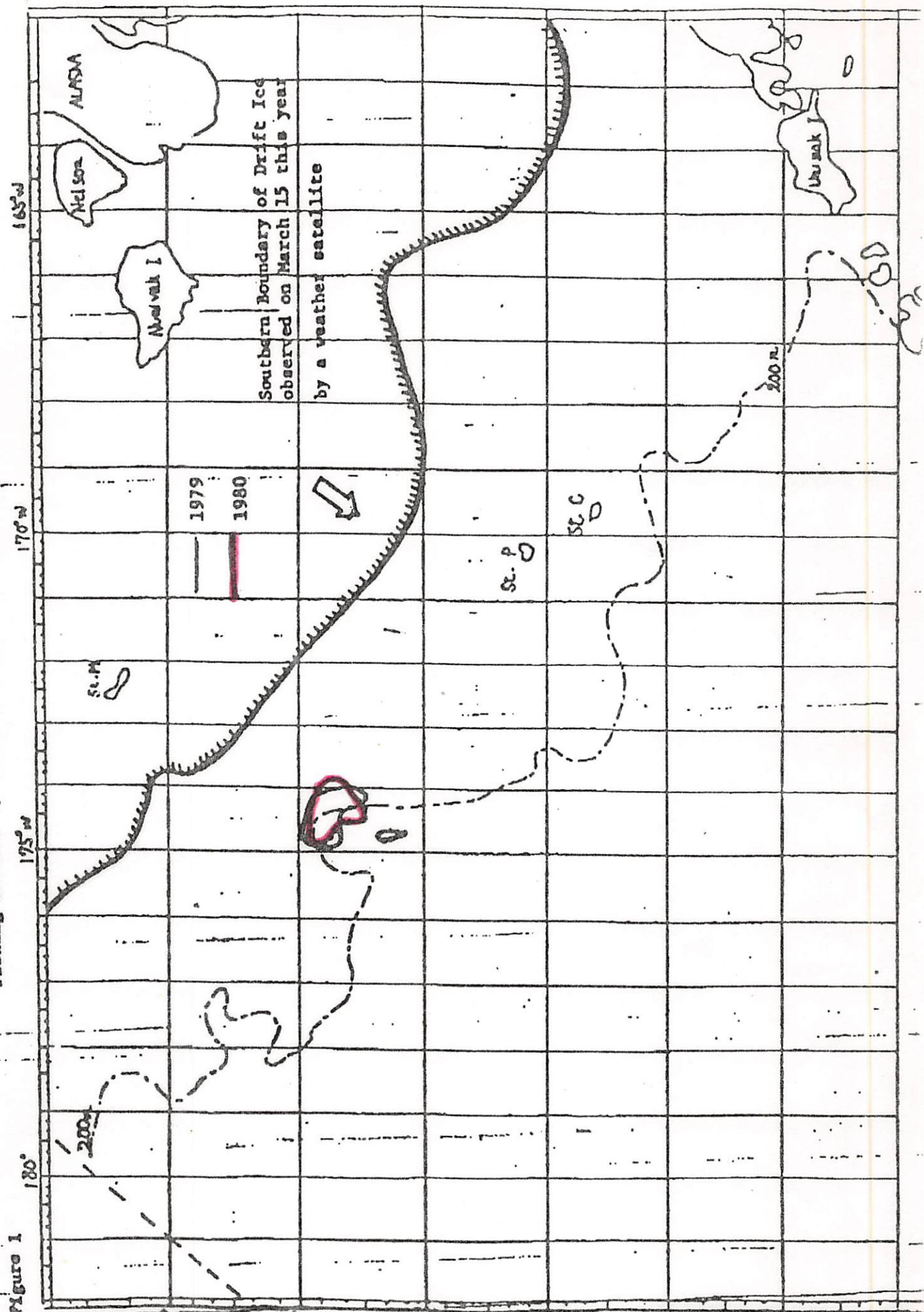


Figure 1

FISHING SCHEDULE

The mothership fleet operation was commenced on the 25th of February, the same as last year. One land-based vessel began fishing on the 9th of March. Both operations involve almost the same fishing grounds as last year. See Figure 1.

The mothership operation is scheduled to end in July while the land-based operations are scheduled to end in September due to the differences in commencement dates.

FISHING CONDITIONS

Quite unlike the two previous years when the Bering Sea weather was warmer, the same fishing grounds this year have been scattered with ice flow from the start of fishing making operations extremely difficult. Sea conditions are not yet such as to require fishing to stop, but operations are experiencing difficulty because of persistent strong winds. However, if northerly winds persist in the days ahead, the ice flow will move south reducing the areas open to fishing thereby causing fishing operations to become increasingly difficult.

In comparison with last year, bottom temperatures this year are lower by about 0.6 - 0.7° C. Regarding C.P.U.E., it is much higher for the mothership operation this year than last year. Similar data from the land-based operations is not yet available.

Table 2

YEAR	FISHING PERIOD	NO. OF POTS LIFTED	CATCH (CRABS)	C.P.U.E. (CRAB/POT)
1980	2/25 - 3/20	40,768	874,178	17.9
1979	2/25 - 3/20	131,461	1,646,208	12.5

CONCLUSION

Because of the short period of time in which the operations have been underway, it is difficult to forecast future fishing conditions. However, current observations would seem to indicate that the Tanner crab resource north of 58° N latitude remains stable at the same level as last year.

Fig. 2 C.P.U.E. OF 10 DAY PERIOD

DATA BASE: MOTHER SHIP ONLY

