

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Certified by *Beth Stewart*
Date April 21, 1995

ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES JANUARY 9-12, 1995 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Advisory Panel members in attendance:

Bruce, John (Chair)
Benson, Dave
Burch, Al
Cotton, Bruce
Falvey, Dan
Fraser, David
Fuglvog, Arne
Highleyman, Scott
Jones, Spike
Madsen, Stephanie
Maloney, Pete

Nelson, Hazel
Ogden, Doug
Paddock, Dean
Roos, John
Sevier, John
Stevens, Mick
Stewart, Beth (Vice Chair)
Westman, Gary
Wurm, Robert
Yeck, Lyle

Absent was Harold Sparck.

The December 1994 Advisory Panel minutes were approved with no changes. Motion passed with no opposition.

C-1 Halibut Charterboat

The AP recommends that the Council adopt the following Problem Statement:

Based on information presented, the AP notes the following areas of concern with respect to the recent growth of halibut charter operations, lodges and outfitters:

1. Pressure by charter operations, lodges and outfitters may be contributing to localized depletion in several areas.
2. The recent growth of charter operations, lodges and outfitters may be contributing to overcrowding of productive grounds and declining catches for historic sport and subsistence fishermen in some areas.

3. As there is currently no limit on the annual harvest of halibut by charter operations, lodges, and outfitters, an open-ended reallocation from the commercial fishery to the charter industry is occurring. This reallocation may increase if the projected growth of the charter industry occurs. The economic and social impact on the commercial fleet of this open-ended reallocation may be substantial and could be magnified by the IFQ program.
4. In some areas, community stability may be affected as traditional sport, subsistence, and commercial fishermen are displaced by charter operators, lodges, and outfitters. The uncertainty associated with the present situation and the conflicts that are occurring between the various user groups may also be impacting community stability.
5. Information is lacking on the socioeconomic composition of the current charter industry. Information is needed that tracks: 1) the effort and catch of individual charter operations, lodges, and outfitters; and 2) changes in business patterns.
6. The need for reliable catch data will increase as the magnitude of harvest expands in the charter sector.

Motion passes 20/0.

The AP recommends that the Council initiate a Regulatory Amendment to establish a management plan for the halibut charter fleet with the goal of addressing the concerns identified in the above problem statement. The analysis should review the following management alternatives both separately and in combination:

Option 1: Make an explicit long-term sport/commercial allocation expressed as a percentage, and delegate sports management to the state. Motion passes with no opposition.

Option 2: Focus on the charter segment of the sport fishery including the following measures:

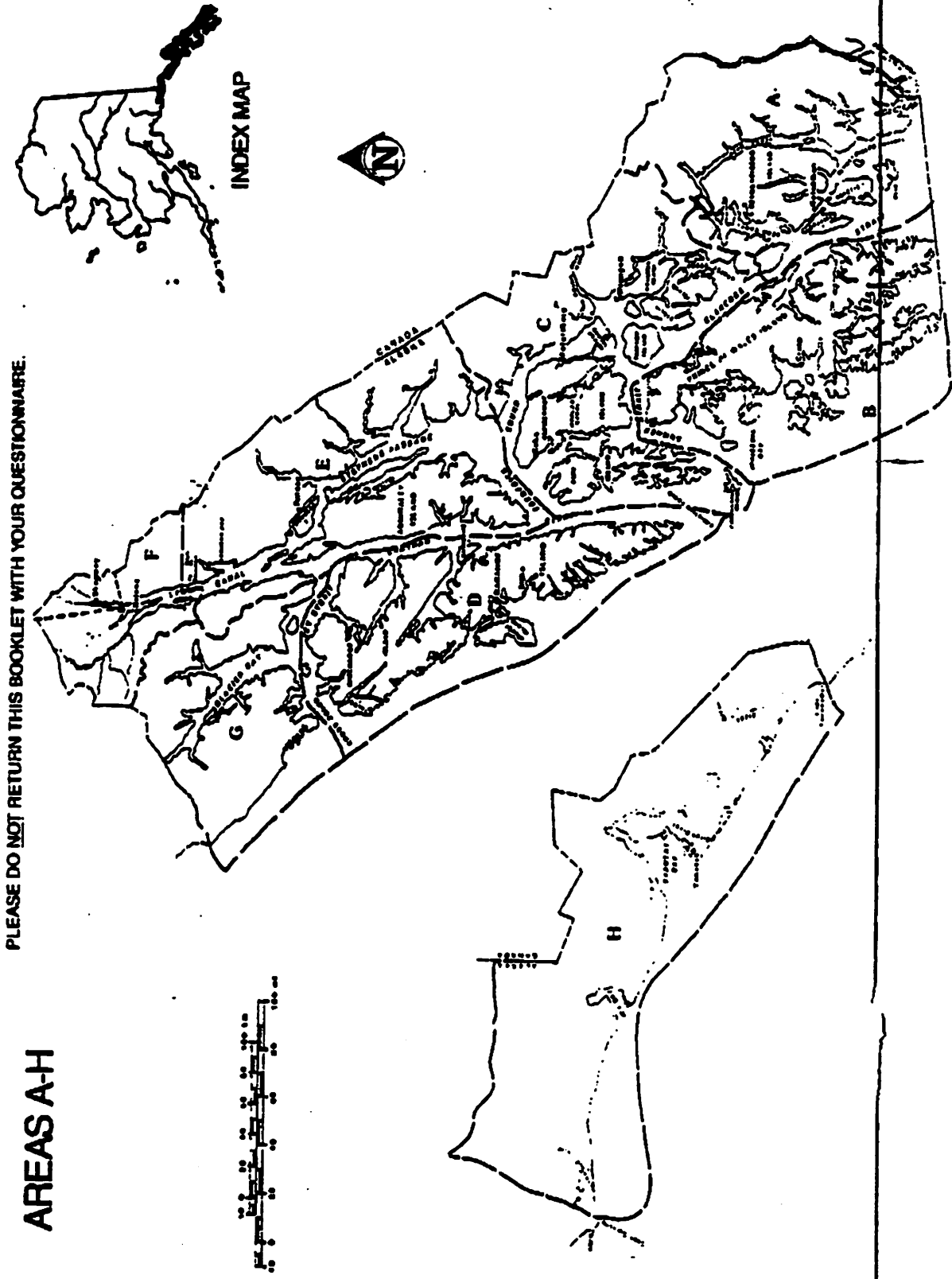
- a. A moratorium using the 9/23/93 control date,
 - i. Statewide
 - ii. Areas 2C and 3A only
 - iii. By zones (see maps attached):

<i>Zone 1 Southeast:</i> ADF&G areas A, B, C, D, E, F, G & H	120% of '94 guided sport
<i>Zone 2 Prince William Sound:</i> ADF&G area J	120% of '94 guided sport
<i>Zone 3 Cook Inlet/Kenai:</i> ADF&G areas K, L, N, and P	120% of '94 guided sport
<i>Zone 4 Kodiak:</i> ADF&G area Q	120% of '94 guided sport
<i>Zone 5 Alaska Peninsula:</i> ADF&G area R	No limit
<i>Zone 6 Bering Sea:</i> ADF&G areas T, U, V, W, X, Y and Z	No limit
- b. Cap charter at 120% of 1994 retained catch using area options in i, ii, and iii.
- c. Allow charters to acquire ITQs for use after cap is reached.

Motion passes 17/2.

Option 3: Charter boat operators will be required to fill out a federally mandated catch report for all retained and discarded catch for each species for each trip. Motion carries 21/0.

The AP further recommends that the Council explore specific management measures such as subsistence and unguided sport fishing zones to mitigate local depletion of halibut resources near communities. Motion passes with no opposition 21/0.

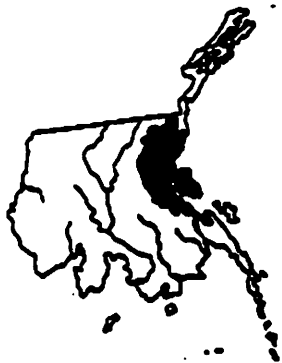


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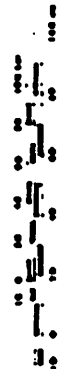
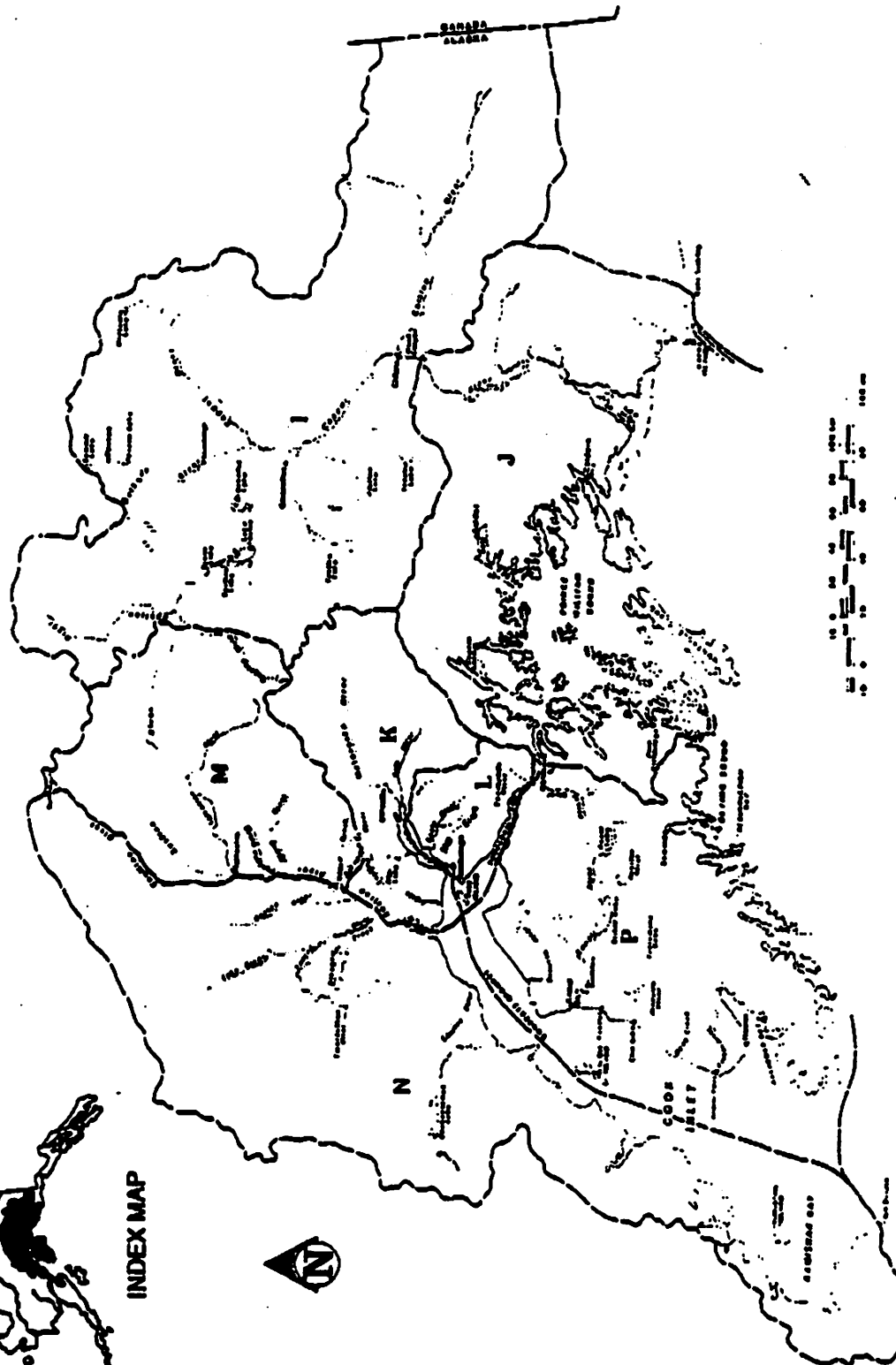
AREAS A-H

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AREAS I-P

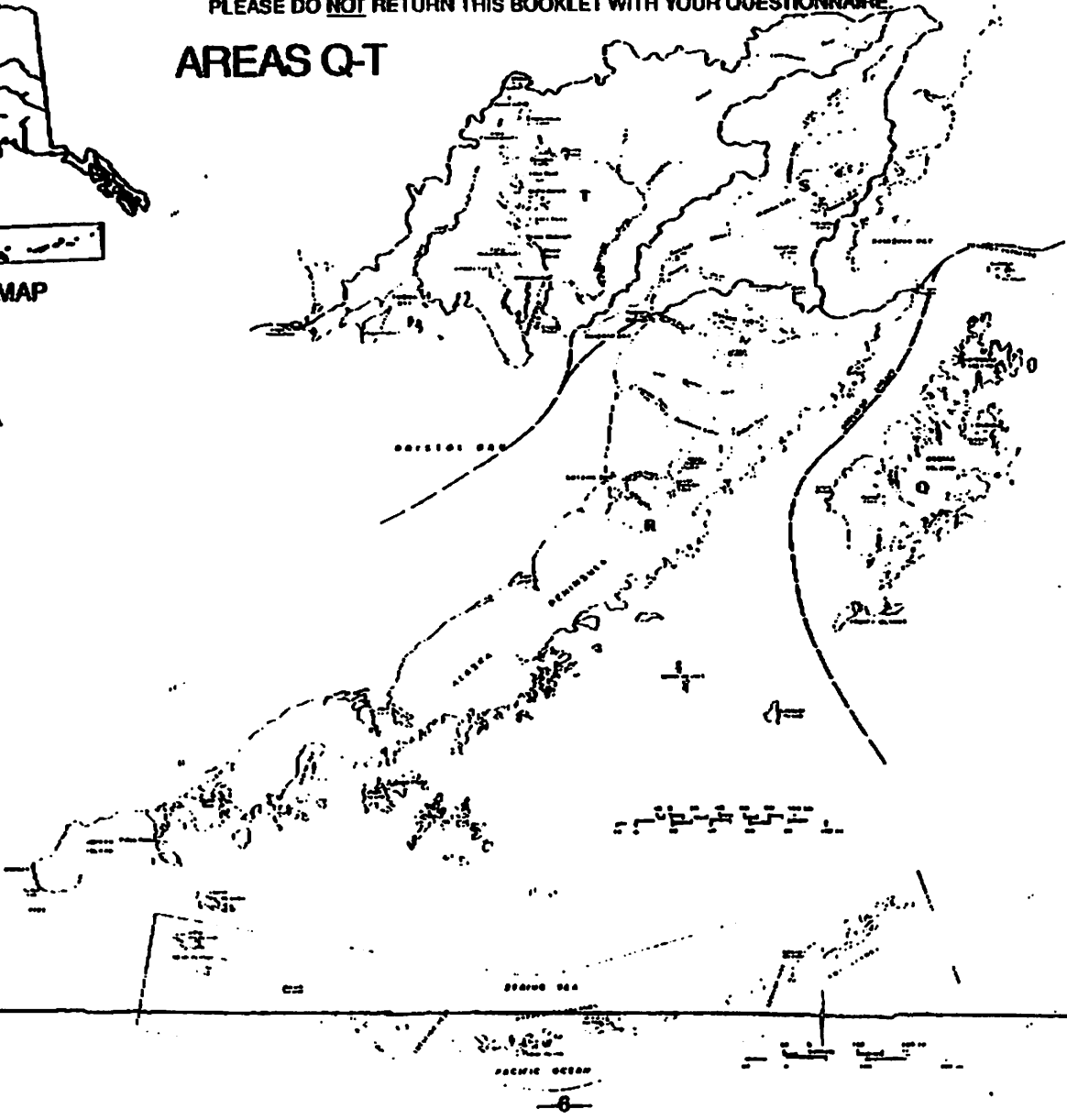
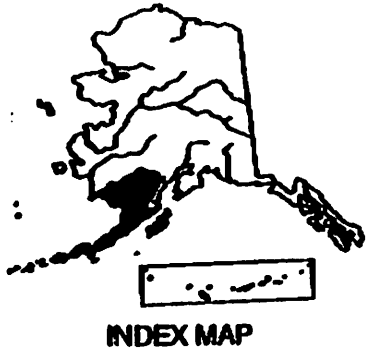


INDEX MAP

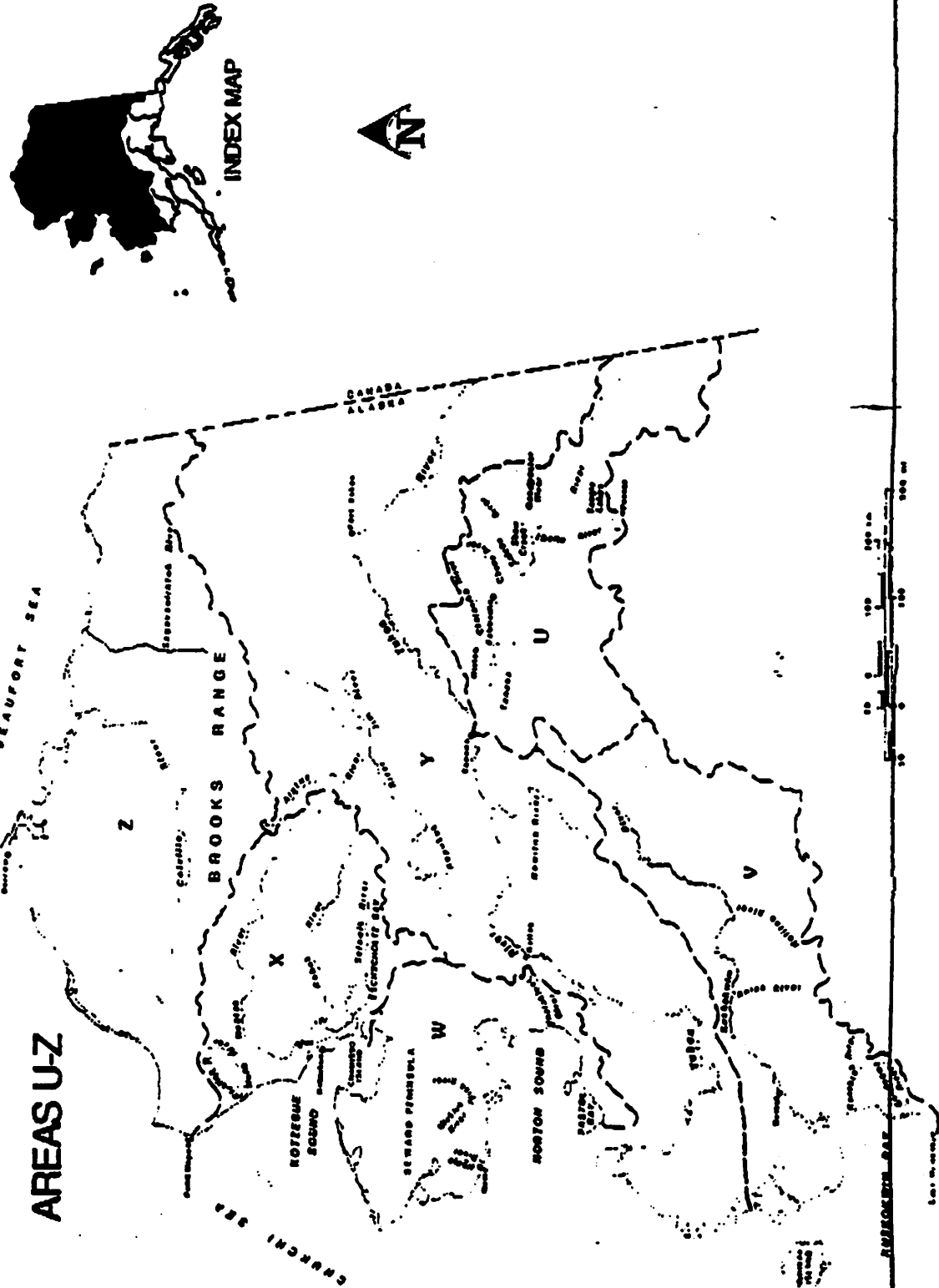


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AREAS Q-T



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AREAS U-Z

C-3 Inshore-Offshore

The AP recommends that the Council proceed with the analysis as outlined and presented for the rollover of the inshore-offshore/CDQ amendment. The AP feels that other options are not appropriate at this time for the following reasons:

1. reasonable alternatives were previously considered and rejected in the original inshore-offshore analysis, and
2. other options are better considered under CRP.

Motion passes 17/2.

The AP recognizes the inseparability of the CVOA from the inshore-offshore package. However, the AP wishes to clarify that it may recommend some modification of boundaries or seasonal structure and the implementation of any such changes. Therefore, the AP wants to ensure that the staff analysis takes these matters into consideration. Motion passes 10/7.

C-4 Seamount Fisheries

The AP recommends that the Council go forward with Alternative 3, Option 3 (on page 1 of the Executive Summary in the EA/RIR). However, the AP does not support requiring observers. The AP also recommends that the Council proceed with Alternative 4 (on page 2 of the Executive Summary in the EA/RIR). The resulting regulation should be applied to groundfish and shellfish fishing trips. Motion passes 17/1.

C-5 Sablefish and Halibut IFQs

The AP requests that NMFS expedite development of a waiver exempting tenders from the electronic reporting and 6 am-6 pm landing requirements. Motion passes with no opposition. Because of technical problems with electronic reporting equipment, many, if not all tenders, would be unable to operate. The AP fully supports the development of an alternative reporting system.

CDQ Compensation QS Block/Vessel Category Exemption

The AP recommends that the Council proceed with Alternative 2, Option B, Sub-option A (on page 7 of the EA/RIR). Motion passes 19/0.

CDQ/IFQ One-Time Trade

The AP recommends that the Council proceed with Alternative 3 for the CDQ/IFQ One-Time Trade (on page 7 of the EA/RIR). Motion passes 18/0.

Sablefish Survey

The AP recommends that the Council go forward with the annual sablefish stock survey in the GOA during 1995 and that the timing and other details of the survey be developed by the SSC, Alaska Fisheries Science Center and industry. Consideration should be given to conducting a winter survey if it is believed that the 1995 data will not be on a comparable basis compared to previous year's surveys.

The AP recommends that Kris Norosz, Rob Wurm and Dan Falvey be included in the industry group. Motion passes with no opposition.

P.S. This process should begin immediately so that there is adequate time to finalize the survey.

D-2(a) Grid Sorting

The AP was evenly divided (10/10) on a motion to hold this document back. Those in favor had particular concerns about IPHC's statements regarding anticipated improvements in halibut mortality.

The AP recommends that the Council send the halibut grid sorting analysis out for public review. Recognizing there are concerns with data collection, the vessel incentive program, observer safety and workload, and enforcement, the AP believes deck sorting has potential for reductions in trawl halibut mortality and recommends proceeding with public review of the concept. The AP further recommends that the Council establish an ad hoc work group comprised of fixed gear, trawl, environmental and agency members. The AP further asks that before this document is released, IPHC expand and clarify the potential improvement for halibut mortality rates. Motion passes 13/6.

D-2(b) Crab Bycatch Issues

The AP spent several hours on this agenda item. After receiving staff comments, a report from the SSC, public testimony and some AP discussion, the AP asked a committee to meet and develop both long-term and short-term objectives. The committee, consisting of Steve Hughes, Chris Fanning, John Gauvin, Gordon Blue, Arni Thomson and staff met on Wednesday evening and reported back to the AP on Thursday morning. The minutes of that meeting are appended to the AP minutes.

The AP developed the following recommendations:

I. The AP recommends that the Council address the current problems resulting from low king and bairdi crab abundance in a comprehensive way. The AP believes that a band-aid approach benefits neither the groundfish nor the crab industries, although the AP recognizes that some short-term adjustments may be necessary.

The AP endorses the SSC recommendations, particularly the recommendation that the crab and groundfish plan teams begin meeting jointly. The AP requests that, under the direction of a Council member, the joint plan teams begin to develop a problem statement, objectives and finally a rebuilding plan for king and bairdi crab, with a status report at the April meeting. The AP recommends that the crab and groundfish industries actively participate in the committee meetings.

Realizing that the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the State of Alaska are an integral part of crab management, the AP recommends that the State begin examining:

- a. multi-species retention,
- b. season changes,
- c. crab gear modifications and enforcement of current gear restrictions,
- d. changing harvest strategies, including harvest of females, size limits, etc., and
- e. improved data on all sources of mortality.

The AP recognizes that ecological changes (i.e., oceanic conditions, habitat, predator/prey relationships) as well as fisheries have impacted crab stocks and that such ecological impacts are not well understood. It is imperative to the development of an effective rebuilding program that these changes be examined.

The AP also requests that an evaluation of the effectiveness of past and present trawl closures in contributing to crab stock rebuilding be undertaken.

The AP believes that individual vessel accountability for bycatch is, as always, a key to the success of bycatch management.

The AP recommends that the Council ask the Alaska Board of Fisheries to waive the April 10, 1995 proposal deadline, so that any proposals arising from Council activities between this meeting and the April meeting can be submitted.

Motion passes with no opposition.

II. The AP recommends that the Council initiate analysis of the following options for a trawl closure with these three options:

- 56°
- 56° 10"
- 55° 45"

Using the methodology of the BSAI bycatch simulation model originally developed by Terry Smith after it has been appropriately updated, the analysis should examine:

1. Bycatch consequences:
 - a. impact on halibut
 - b. impact on opilio
 - c. impact on bairdi
2. Target species impacts:
 - a. CPUE
 - b. Catch composition of groundfish (retention)
3. Effort redistribution impacts on other fisheries
4. Seasonality of the closure
5. Application of the closure on a target fishery specific basis
6. Size and sex of red king crab
7. The analysis should also examine the effects of bycatch rates being calculated on overall catch versus retained, how the current method of calculating bycatch effects fishing techniques, strategies, restricts gear modification and achieving caps.

The AP believes a 2-year sunset should be analyzed. Motion carries 15/2.

III. The AP recommends that the crab bycatch amendment alternatives developed by the State of Alaska as a package for analysis should also include:

1. analysis of a floating cap with no upward limit,
2. deleting all references to scallop caps, and
3. change variable caps as follows:

	<u>Variable caps indexed between:</u>
red king crab	0.25 - 1.0%
bairdi	0.25 - 2.0%
opilio	.005 - .25%

The AP believes a rigorous analysis of these options is critical. Motion carries 10/7.

IV. The AP recommends that the Council draft a proposal to the Alaska Board of Fish repealing the 3-mile trawl closure in Bristol Bay. The AP believes that the loss of this area, which had few bycatch problems, may have exacerbated king crab bycatch in other areas of Bristol Bay. Motion carries 13/5.

D-2(c) Salmon Bycatch

The AP acknowledges and supports the work the Salmon Foundation has done and recommends the Council further support those efforts. Motion passes with no opposition.

The AP recommends the reinstatement of the restrictions as they were in 1994, namely the adoption of Alternative 3, Option 7 (Alt. 3: 42,000 cap and Opt. 7: 5 block closure) to sunset in three years with the provision that we reconsider the trigger level annually. Motion passes 13/2.

The AP recommends that August 15 be the start date for counting salmon bycatch in the CVOA. Motion passes 13/1.

The AP recommends that the Council adopt the following:

- a. Closure will be in place from August 1 to September 1.
- b. If less than 50% of the cap is taken by September 1, the closed area will re-open.
- c. If 75% of the cap is taken by September 1, the closed area will re-open September 7.
- d. If 100% of the cap is taken by September 1, the closed area will re-open September 15.

It is the AP intent to have this in place by August 1, 1995. Motion passes 15/0.

The AP continues to be concerned about NMFS's methodology regarding blended data when mandatory retention and count are in place. Motion passes with no opposition.

Advisory Panel Crab Committee Meeting Minutes
January 11, 1995 - 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Persons attending:

Steve Hughes	Jeff Stephan
John Gauvin	Gordon Blue
Kris Fanning	Harold Jones
Arni Thomson	Steve Hall
Paul MacGregor	Phil Rigby
Frank Kelty	Gary Westman
Ken Parker	Stephanie Madsen
Mark Kandianis	

Problem

The committee agrees that there is a low abundance of crab in the Bering Sea, particularly Bristol Bay red king crab and *bairdi* Tanner crab, and that low crab abundance is likely to continue for the next several years. Factors that may explain low abundance include environmental factors, high fin-fish abundance, predator-prey interactions, habitat degradation, and bycatch/discard in crab and groundfish fisheries.

Mother nature is one of the controlling factors but we are not doing the best job we can do to control human factors.

Objectives

Objectives are to:

1. work toward rebuilding crab stocks,
2. more comprehensive management,
3. create crab/groundfish committee to make continuing recommendations,
4. review harvest strategies, both crab and groundfish, and
5. improve scientific understanding of crab biology/management.

Specific Recommendations:

- investigate more multi-species crab retention in crab fisheries
- investigate beneficial season changes
- modification to groundfish seasons to allow groundfish harvest when crab impacts are lower
- investigate authority for and development of hot-spot closures for groundfish bycatch of crab
- gear and fishery practice modification for trawl and pots
- size limits for crab
- obtain size and sex data on crab bycaught in groundfish fisheries
- harvest of females
- very important to understand crab mortalities in crab fisheries and trawl fisheries with particular emphasis on cold weather impacts (i.e., Cook Inlet regulations and scientific studies)
- more comprehensive ecosystem management approach
- evaluate existing and potential future sanctuaries for crab protection
- evaluate results of area closures (Have they worked?)

Miscellaneous Notes

Category 3 - State Only Authority

- season
- size
- sex
- multi-species retention
- crab bycatch in crab fishery
- gear, storage

Category 2 - framework

- sex restriction
- pot limits
- GHLS
- size limits
- closed waters

Category 1

- legal gear
- permit
- federal observer
- limited access

The group was divided over whether the State proposals should go forward.