

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

News and Notes



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Visit our webpage at www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc

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Environmental Excellence Award

The National Association of Environmental Professionals has awarded their 2003 award for environmental excellence in NEPA to NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council for our Steller sea lion protective measures SEIS. This project was chosen from over 50 nominations from various agencies around the country. In addition to the SEIS itself, the award committee was impressed with the open public process that we employed, including the use of a unique stakeholder constituent committee to develop the alternatives.

Council bids farewell to trio

The Island and Community of Kodiak hosted a reception for the Council and public on Wednesday evening of the Council meeting week. All of the Council family turned out for the event and enjoyed the food and hospitality offered by our island hosts. During that reception, we took time to honor three departing Council members - Ben Ellis, David Fluharty, and David Benton. While only serving a limited time on the Council, Ben Ellis marked his tenure with distinction. David Fluharty served three full terms on the Council, and served as chairman of the Ecosystem Committee. David Benton served several years as the representative for the State of Alaska, and served his most recent term as Council Chairman, providing exemplary leadership to the Council process. We wish them all the best with their future endeavors.

A visit by Dr. Hogarth

Dr. Bill Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, convened a special constituent session in conjunction with the Council meeting. Many people from the fishing industry and community participated, and shared a number of concerns about habitat protection, processing quota shares, small vessels, the future of fishery management, and a variety of other issues. Thanks Bill, for coming all the way to Kodiak to hear our concerns!

Fixed gear Pacific cod allocations

The Council took final action on BSAI Amendment 77, which will continue to apportion the fixed gear share of the BSAI Pacific cod TAC among the fixed gear sectors as follows (status quo):

- 80% hook-and-line catcher processors
- 0.3% hook-and-line catcher vessels
- 18.3% pot vessels
- 1.4% to <60' pot/hook-and-line catcher vessels

The current allocations were established under BSAI Amendment 64 in September 2000 and will sunset on December 31, 2003. The Council recommended to continue the allocations to maintain stability in the various sectors of the BSAI fixed gear Pacific cod fishery. The status quo includes the provision that harvests by the <60' catcher vessel sector will accrue toward the 1.4% allocation only when the general allocations to pot and longline catcher vessels are closed. The Council also took action to split the portion of the fixed gear BSAI Pacific cod TAC allocated to vessels using pot gear between pot catcher processors and pot catcher vessels, based on 1998 - 2001 catch histories in the directed BSAI Pacific cod fishery. This action will apportion the 18.3% allocated to pot gear as follows: 3.3% for pot catcher processors, and 15.0% for pot catcher vessels.

In addition to establishing the allocations, the Council included several provisions which address the reallocation of quota that may remain unused in the Pacific cod fixed gear, trawl, and jig fisheries. The primary change from the status quo is to reapportion the jig sector's allocation (2% of the BSAI Pacific cod TAC) on a trimester basis (40% - 20% - 40%) and reallocate any unused jig quota to the <60' catcher vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear near the end of each jig season. All of the reallocation provisions are included in the complete Council motion as attached (and on the Council website). The intent is for this action to be implemented January 1, 2004, upon expiration of BSAI Amendment 64. The Council did not include a sunset date for this action. Council contact is Nicole Kimball.

GOA Rationalization

Based on staff and advisory panel recommendations, and testimony from 75 individuals who testified, the Council crafted a revised purpose and need statement and refined alternatives for the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), to rationalize the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries. The complete Council motion is posted on our website.

The Council identified three primary alternatives to rationalize the GOA groundfish fisheries. Alternative 1 is the "No Action" alternative. Alternative 2 would result in issuance of harvester shares to individuals. Catcher/processors (C/P) would either join cooperatives or fish in an open access pool under bycatch allowance reductions. Two decision points occur for cooperatives for trawl catcher vessels (CV). These participants would either: (1) join a cooperative with a closed class of processors or fish in an open access pool under bycatch allowance reductions or (2) join a cooperative with processor linkages or fish in an open access pool under bycatch allowance reductions. High producing fixed gear CVs would join a cooperative with a closed class of processors or fish in an open access fishery with reduced bycatch allowances. Low producing fixed gear CVs would join a cooperative (with no processor restrictions ["open delivery"]) or fish their individual fishing quotas (IFQs).

Alternative 3 would create sector allocations with a closed class of processors and processor linkage. Harvester shares would be issued to individuals within fishing sectors (CV trawl, CV longline, CV pot, CP trawl, CP longline, CP pot). Each sector could form cooperatives. Those in the CP sectors could: (1) join cooperatives or (2) either (a) fish in the open access fishery under bycatch allowance reductions or (b) not fish. Those in the CV sectors could: (1) join cooperatives linked to a closed class of processors with penalties to move between processors to fish their shares or (2) either (a) fish in the open access fishery with bycatch allowance reductions or (b) not fish.

The Council provided extensive rationale for why it did not recommend either a harvester only share program ("1-pie") or a harvester and processor share program ("2-pie") to be included as alternatives for full analysis in the SEIS. The Council made dozens of modifications to the April suite of elements and options, and also narrowed the options under numerous elements to further focus the analysis. It narrowed the range of qualifying periods to four specified options, though numerous options remain by allowing initial recipients of catch history to drop 1 or 2 years. The Council dropped an entry level rockfish fishery element and added one for an entry level Pacific cod fishery. Also, a number of issues related to communities were addressed and clarified.

New options were added to address management of both state water and parallel groundfish fisheries. Along with a status quo option, Option 2 would directly allocate a percentage of federal GOA groundfish TACs to fisheries inside 3 miles to be directly managed by the State (this option would create a "bright line" between State and Federal fisheries). Option 3 would allocate a fixed percentage of federal GOA groundfish TACs to parallel fisheries to be prosecuted within State waters with additional State restrictions (this option would allow Federal fishing within State waters, and is intermediate in effect between Options 1 and 2). Before proceeding with analysis, the Council recommended

that the Board of Fisheries/North Pacific Council Joint Protocol Committee convene this summer (July 28-29, 2003 in Anchorage) to provide recommendations on these options and other possible solutions to the dilemma of additional entry into State-managed fisheries, which could compromise success of any Federal rationalization program.

In October, the Council will review and consider options to implement salmon and crab bycatch measures for inclusion in the GOA rationalization analysis. Additional discussion papers will be provided to assist the Council in further clarifying the alternatives and narrowing the options under a number of the elements.

The tentative schedule is for preliminary review of the draft SEIS in December 2003, initial review in February 2004, release of the draft SEIS in March 2004, public comment period in April 2004, and selection of a final preferred alternative in June 2004. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more detailed information.

SSL Mitigation Committee to Meet

During its June meeting, the Council restated its intent that the Steller Sea Lion (SSL) Mitigation Committee examine the recommendations from the National Research Council (NRC) committee on SSL decline in Alaska, and explore possible alternative SSL protection measures in the Gulf of Alaska that might provide some regulatory relief to fishermen in the Gulf. The Committee met June 24-26, at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. The Committee agenda includes several presentations including:

- Legal and NEPA framework for adjusting SSL protection measures (NOAA General Counsel)
- Overview of the NRC committee report
- The 2001 BiOp Addendum, including updated SSL telemetry data and fishery catch information
- A discussion paper on experimental design considerations in SSL management
- Updated SSL rookery and haulout counts
- Economic/catch data for fisheries affected by the SSL conservation measures

Staff contact is Bill Wilson.

IFQ Proposals

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council invites proposals to amend the halibut and sablefish IFQ program. To be eligible for consideration, proposals must include a brief statement of the proposal, objectives, justification, foreseeable impacts, possible alternative solutions, and supportive data and other information relevant to the proposal. For convenience, a proposal form is attached to this newsletter. Proposals are due September 1; please fax them to the Council office. The IFQ Implementation Committee will review new and previously submitted proposals in October. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

EFH

The Council received a progress report on the development of the EIS for the essential fish habitat (EFH) amendments. On May 20, NMFS and the plaintiffs filed a joint stipulation to amend the original settlement agreement deadlines. Under the new agreement, a preliminary draft EIS must be released for Council review by September 15, and the Draft EIS published for public comment by January 16, 2004. In October 2003, the Council will review the preliminary draft and identify a preliminary preferred alternative.

The Council received a report from the EFH Committee on a process to identify and implement habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC). The Council adopted the draft process for inclusion into the EFH EIS, so that the public can comment on the proposed HAPC process in October, 2003. The Council intends to initiate the HAPC process prior to Nov. 2003, and to implement any HAPC's on the same schedule as EFH FMP amendments. A copy of the draft HAPC process, and June final motion are available on the Council's web site. Staff contact is Cathy Coon.

Pribilof Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan

The Council completed initial review of the analysis of the Pribilof Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan, which will be Amendment 17 to the BSAI King and Tanner crab FMP. There are three alternatives proposed in this rebuilding plan: Alternative 1, the status quo management of the fishery; Alternative 2, a rebuilding plan which allows for some directed harvest before the fishery is rebuilt; and Alternative 3, a rebuilding plan which allows for no directed fishing prior to the fishery being rebuilt. Each of these alternatives has options regarding thresholds for fishery opening, incremental changes in harvest rates and more conservative caps on the harvest. No additional habitat or bycatch measures were included in any of the alternatives because neither habitat nor bycatch measures were expected to have a measurable impact in rebuilding. Habitat is thoroughly protected from fishing impacts by the existing Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Zone while bycatch in both crab and groundfish fisheries is an extremely small proportion of the total population abundance. The Council identified Alternative 2D as their preliminary preferred alternative to be forwarded to the Board of Fisheries for their review in October. Alternative 2D includes a conservative harvest strategy and the most conservative threshold for fishery opening of all of the options examined under the rebuilding plans which allow for some directed harvest prior to the stock being rebuilt. The public review draft will be available prior to September 1st; contact the Council office for copies of the document. The Board of Fisheries will meet in early October to review the rebuilding plan and choose their preferred harvest strategy. Final action by the Council is scheduled for October. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Improved Retention and Utilization (IR/IU)

The Council reviewed a number of issues and amendments packages related to the IR/IU program for flatfish in the BSAI. Last October the Council voted to delay implementation of 100% flatfish retention requirements in the BSAI until June of 2004 (Amendment 75), in order to allow further development of a more generic groundfish retention standard (GRS) labeled Amendment C. NMFS only partially approved Amendment 75, effectively removing the 100% flatfish retention requirements in the BSAI. At this meeting the Council took final action on Amendment C, approving a phased-in GRS for the non-AFA catcher processor sector in the BSAI (the head and gut, or H&G fleet), to begin in 2005.

Further refinement of Amendment A (to establish sector allocations in the BSAI and to establish a fishery cooperative for the H&G fleet) will occur at the October meeting in Anchorage, with a target implementation of 2006. Amendment D has already been approved by the Council and will still be relevant to the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This Amendment will outline requirements and exemptions for full flatfish retention in the GOA, specifying an annual review process to ascertain whether sectors in the GOA are meeting the 5% maximum bycatch threshold to remain exempt from full flatfish retention requirements.

The Council's specific action on these issues is attached. Several tasks are outlined for the Council's IR/IU Technical Committee which will be active this summer and fall (meeting schedule pending), including (1) review of the Council's action on Amendment C and discussion of implementation issues; (2) identification of options to achieve the pollock MRA objectives; (3) discuss and develop options for treatment of the under 125' vessels in the H&G sector; and, (4) review the revised discussion paper and analytical approach for Amendment A, as proposed by staff, and provide recommendations at the October 2003 meeting. Council staff contact is Chris Oliver.

AI Pollock Trawl Issues

The Council discussed issues associated with opening the Aleutian Islands regulatory area in the future for a pollock trawl fishery. The Aleutian Islands area currently is closed to pollock trawling because no TAC was apportioned to this fishery in this area. The Council discussed whether such a fishery might be authorized in the future. Of particular concern is whether there exists sufficient NEPA documentation and an adequate cumulative effects analysis to make such a decision. The Council requested that staff prepare a discussion paper on the history of previous Council discussions and motions on this issue, and a summary of what NEPA documentation is available. The Council intends to discuss this issue at their October meeting. Staff contact is Bill Wilson.

USCG Fisheries Enforcement Strategy

During the week of the June Council meeting in Kodiak, the U.S. Coast Guard held a very successful listening session to obtain public comment and suggestions on the U.S. Coast Guard's fisheries law enforcement mission in Alaska. For those unable to attend a public comment session, or wish to provide additional comments, the Coast Guard is seeking input from all sectors of the fishing industry on its fisheries law enforcement strategy, especially as it relates to current fisheries trends and future challenges. Specifically, the public is invited to send ideas and comments to the Coast Guard on:

- Threats to fisheries in the North Pacific
- Coast Guard enforcement priorities
- Ways to improve compliance with regulations
- Ways the Coast Guard could improve their vessel boarding process
- Coast Guard communications with the fishing industry, communities, and organizations
- Ways to improve Coast Guard relationships with fishers, managers, non-governmental organizations, environmental groups, and others
- Top priorities for fishery enforcement in the next 5 years
- What major industry changes are likely to occur in the coming 5 years

If you have comments or would like to provide input to the Coast Guard in the above categories, the Coast Guard is very interested in hearing from you. Comments can be sent by mail to LCDR Robert Hendrickson, Commandant (G-OPL-4), 2100 2nd Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20593. The Coast Guard also has a web site where comments can be made:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-o/G-OPL/mle/indexOGreval.htm>

E-mail comments can be sent to Rhendrickson@comdt.uscg.mil

CDQ Amendments

In June, NMFS informed the Council that the agency would be including a formal appeals process in the proposed rule for BSAI Amendment 71 (CDQ policy and administrative issues) based on due process concerns. Recall that when the Council took final action on BSAI Amendment 71 in June 2002, it did not incorporate an appeals process in its preferred alternative. Staff will be working over the summer to develop the structure and timeline for a formal CDQ appeals process. Understanding that the proposed rule will not be completed by October, the Council requested scheduling a review of the proposed appeals process at its October meeting, in order to facilitate a discussion regarding timing, implementation, and the effect on the CDQ allocation process. The Council also requested that staff prepare a discussion paper regarding the eligibility status of the current list of eligible CDQ communities. As identified by NMFS, this task is necessary to ensure consistency with the criteria established both in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Federal regulations. This paper and its findings would also be reviewed by the Council in October. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

Fur Seals and North Pacific Right Whales

During the June meeting, the Council received a report from NMFS' Office of Protected Resources on some upcoming issues associated with North Pacific right whales and northern fur seals.

NMFS has received a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity requesting that an area of the eastern Bering Sea be designated as Critical Habitat for the North Pacific right whale. NMFS has concurred with the petitioners that designation of Critical Habitat may be warranted based on scientific information provided in the petition. NMFS has also reviewed additional right whale sightings data from their 2002 surveys, new genetics data, and the recommendations from a January 2003 NMFS workshop on right whales, and now intends to prepare a discussion document on this issue. Specifically, the document will include information on features of the marine environment that are considered essential to the conservation of right whales, what geographic areas might constitute Critical Habitat under the Endangered Species Act, and an economic assessment of what areas might be excluded from the proposed Critical Habitat designation. NMFS intends to provide this information and their plans for designating Critical Habitat to the Council for review and discussion at either the December 2003 or February 2004 meeting. The Council may empanel a committee to track this issue, and has asked staff to prepare an outline of possible committee tasks and a draft work schedule for Council review and action in October.

NMFS also reported to the Council their intent to prepare an EIS on the management of the northern fur seal subsistence harvest on the Pribilof Islands. The 2001 Steller sea lion protection measures supplemental EIS had concluded that groundfish fisheries may have conditionally significant adverse effects on fur seals. In addition, NMFS reported that the northern fur seal population on the Pribilofs has been declining in recent years, and new information on the groundfish fishery indicates that pollock catch has increased since 2001 in the 0 to 10 nautical mile zone around the Pribilofs. The EIS will include an analysis of the potential indirect effects on fur seals of prey removal by the Bering Sea groundfish fisheries (i.e. pollock and Pacific cod). NMFS published a notice of intent to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register on June 18 (68 FR 36539). The Council requested that the Chairman establish a small committee to provide interaction between the Council and NMFS, and to provide information and guidance to NMFS regarding fisheries management concerns of the Council during the preparation of the EIS authorizing subsistence harvest regulations for the Northern fur seal. If you wish to be considered for membership on this committee, please fax your nomination to the Council office by 5:00 pm July 18th. Staff contact is Bill Wilson.

Non-Target Species Management

The Council received a progress report from an ad hoc working group, which has been developing criteria for managing target and non-target species under separate management goals and objectives. Criteria is being developed for management at the complex (e.g., pelagic shelf rockfish), group (e.g., sharks), and species (e.g., Pacific ocean perch) levels. Data quality and species vulnerability to overfishing would be used to “sort” complexes, groups, and species to prioritize management strategies. Two management categories would be established: (1) “targets” are those species intended to be harvested, and (2) “non-targets” are those species incidentally caught. The management goal of target species categories is to optimize sustainable yields. Target species would be managed at the species level; this category could include the following: pollock, Pacific cod, sablefish, Atka mackerel, rock sole, yellowfin sole, flathead sole, dover sole, rex sole, Greenland turbot, Pacific ocean perch, shortraker rockfish, rougheye rockfish, shortspine thornyheads, yelloweye rockfish. The goal of non-target management is to protect them from fishing effects. Management options may include prohibiting directed fishing and establishing Maximum Retainable allowances. All species not listed as targets would be included in the non-target category.

The Council will appoint a committee to review the ad hoc committee’s report and provide recommendations on the following: (1) identification of efficient methods for monitoring of non-target catch, (2) improving abundance estimates of non-target species, and (3) development of harvest recommendations that build sustainable populations of non-target species. Nominations for the committee closed on June 20. The first meeting is tentatively identified for September 12, immediately following the Groundfish Plan Team meetings at the Seattle Alaska Fisheries Science Center. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Miscellaneous Actions

The Council voted not to release the BSAI Crab Rationalization EIS for review until authority to implement the alternative program is granted by Congress. Should congressional action authorizing the program occur prior to the October Council meeting, the document would be released and the Council would make an initial review of the document in October.

The Council initiated an amendment to repeal the vessel incentive program (VIP), given concerns about the effectiveness of the program and potential for additional administrative burden due to increased legal standards.

The Council also tasked staff with other issues, including CDQ amendments, halibut subsistence, AI pollock, as well as right whales and fur seal issues, all of which are discussed in other parts of this newsletter.

Halibut Subsistence

Halibut subsistence regulations became effective on May 15, 2003. Nearly 7,000 Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificates have been issued to date by NOAA Fisheries. In June, the Council received a staff report regarding the “sale” of halibut caught by subsistence users and sold for profit. **The Council notified NOAA Fisheries staff, and the public, that sale of subsistence-caught halibut was not the Council’s intent.** The Council did intend to allow for compensation for halibut subsistence fishing expenses up to an annual limit of \$400 as part of customary and traditional barter. Although Council intent is clear in the proposed and final rule that commercial sale of subsistence-caught halibut is not allowed, NOAA Fisheries Enforcement advised the Council that the limit was not enforceable for increments less than \$400. Enforcement staff currently advises that the sale of subsistence halibut is considered a legal activity, as they are unable to distinguish between customary trade for cash, and sale for profit. The Council requested that NOAA Fisheries and Council staffs meet to recommend regulatory language changes to meet Council intent to prohibit sale. The Council will discuss this issue again in October 2003.

Since the fishery opened, Council and NMFS staff have received numerous calls and e-mails from Alaska communities/residents who are ineligible for the program and are seeking inclusion. U.S. Fish and Wildlife staff have reported that the Federal Subsistence Board will review proposals by tribes and communities for findings of customary and traditional use of halibut. The Board of Fisheries, via the Board/Council Joint Protocol Committee, will reconsider whether it will also review such proposals. This issue has been referred to the next meeting of the Board/Council Joint Protocol Committee (July 28/29 in Anchorage). The Council process requires a finding from one of these agencies prior to its consideration of adding those communities or tribes. The Council is scheduled to take final action in October 2003 on a proposal to include the community of Ninilchik, which received such a finding by the Federal Subsistence Board.

The Joint Protocol Committee also will discuss the different gear restrictions in state and federal subsistence fisheries. The discrepancy will be partially mitigated once a final rule is published to lower the subsistence gear limit from 30 to 10 hooks in a number of populated areas in South Central Alaska (Kodiak, Prince William Sound, and Cook Inlet) and to 15 hooks in Sitka Sound during June, July, and August. That final rule is not expected to become effective until 2004. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Groundfish Fisheries Programmatic SEIS

At the June 2002 meeting in Kodiak, the Council approved a Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) to be identified in the revised draft PSEIS that will be released to the public in late summer of this year. The PPA consists of a management approach, policy, a set of objectives, and a pair of bookends that illustrate the range of management measures corresponding to the policy. The PPA maintains the same format as the existing alternatives, but combines objectives and management measures from all of the alternatives. The full text of the PPA is available on the website.

The Council chose not to take action on identifying a draft timeline for implementation of the PPA, although they reaffirmed their intent to craft such a timeline in spring of 2004 in conjunction with finalizing the Preferred Alternative for the Final PSEIS.

The Council also recommended various clarifications to the analysis. The SSC was asked to convene as soon as possible to review the PSEIS methodology, in particular to determine its consistency with the ongoing EFH EIS, as some of the habitat elements of the methodology have purportedly not been peer-reviewed. The SSC meeting will take place by teleconference on Thursday, June 26. The public will be able to listen in to the meeting, but not participate.

National Fisheries Conference

Mark your calendar and save the date to attend the first-ever fisheries management conference co-sponsored by the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). The conference is open to the public and will be held on **November 13-15, 2003** at the Omni-Shoreham Hotel and Conference Center in Washington, D.C. The conference, titled "Managing Our Nation's Marine Fisheries – Past, Present, and Future", aims to educate the public and the media on the fishery management process and current management research initiatives, and to help bridge the gap between perception and reality regarding management of our nation's fisheries. The conference also will provide a forum for information exchange and examination of a wide range of perspectives on future management and marine research directions. Registration will be free of charge, although there will be a registration fee for the evening reception and banquet. A website with additional information will be up and running shortly.

NPFMC Tentative Meeting Dates for 2003-2005*

	February Week of/ Location	April Week of/ Location	June Week of/ Location	October Week of/ Location	December Week of/ Location
2003				6/Anchorage Sheraton 1-800-478-8700	8/Anchorage Hilton 1-907-272-7411
2004	2/Anchorage	3/29 Anchorage	7/Portland	4/Sitka	6/Anchorage
2005	7/Seattle	4/Anchorage	6/Dutch Harbor	3/Anchorage	5/Anchorage

*Meeting dates subject to change depending on availability of meeting space. Any changes will be published in the Council's newsletter.

Upcoming Meetings

Listed below are upcoming committee and other meetings. Please check our website for updates and details.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
July 28-29	BOF/NPFMC Joint Protocol	Anchorage
September 8-11	Groundfish Plan Teams	Seattle
September 22-24	Crab Plan Team	Kodiak
November 13-15	National Fisheries Conference	Washington, D.C.
November 17 – 21	Groundfish Plan Teams	Seattle

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK

October 6, 2003 Anchorage (Sheraton Hotel)	December 8, 2003 Anchorage	February 2, 2004 Anchorage
CDQ Amendments: Discussion		
IFQ Implementation Committee Report: Action as necessary		
Halibut Subsistence: Discuss and action as necessary. Final action on Ninilchik eligibility.		
Crab EIS: Initial Review (T)	Crab EIS: Action as necessary	Crab EIS: Action as necessary
Pribilof Blue King Crab Rebuilding: Final Action		
GOA Rationalization: Action as necessary	GOA Rationalization: Preliminary review (T)	GOA Rationalization: Initial Review (T)
EFH: Preliminary Review of EIS		EFH: Review Draft EIS
HAPC: Report and action as necessary	HAPC: Report and action as necessary	HAPC: Report and action as necessary
SSL Mitigation Committee: Report and action as necessary		
Repeal of VIP: Discuss and action as necessary		
BSAI Crab SAFE: Review	DPSEIS: Progress Report	DPSEIS: Preliminary review (T)
Groundfish Specifications: Initial Action	Groundfish Specifications: Final Action	
AI pollock fishery: Discussion		
Flatfish IRIU Trailing Amendment (A): Refine Alternatives & Receive Committee Report		Flatfish IRIU Trailing Amendment (A): Initial Review (T)
Observer Program: Preliminary Review (T)	Observer Program: Action as necessary	Observer Program: Action as necessary
Non-Target Species Management: Committee Report	Non-Target Species Management: Major discussion (T)	
TAC-setting Process: Final Action (T)		
F40 Recommendations: Progress report	Scallop SAFE and FMP: Review	

TAC - Total Allowable Catch
 BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
 IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
 AFA - American Fisheries Act
 HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
 LLP - License Limitation Program
 PSC - Prohibited Species Catch

MSA - Magnuson Stevens Act
 GOA - Gulf of Alaska
 SSL - Steller Sea Lion
 GHl - Guideline Harvest Level
 SEIS - Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
 CDQ - Community Development Quota
 IRIU - Improved Retention/Improved Utilization

SAFE - Stock assessment and fishery evaluation
 VMS - Vessel Monitoring System
 CV - Catcher Vessel CP- Catcher Processor
 MSST - Minimum Stock Size Threshold
 FMP - Fishery Management Plan
 PGSEIS - Programmatic Groundfish SEIS
(T) Tentatively scheduled

**HALIBUT AND SABLEFISH IFQ PROGRAM
AMENDMENT PROPOSAL
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Fax: (907) 271-2817**

Name of Proposer:

Date:

Address:

Telephone:

Brief Statement of Proposal:

Objectives of Proposal (What is the problem?):

Need and Justification for Council Action (Why can't the problem be resolved through other channels?):

Foreseeable Impacts of Proposal (Who wins, who loses?):

Are there Alternative Solutions? If so, what are they and why do you consider your proposal the best way of solving the problem?

Supportive Data and Other Information (What data are available and where can they be found?):

Signature:

MOTION

IRIU

Amendment C

Alternative 2- Establish a Minimum Groundfish Retention Standard (GRS)

This action would add a minimum GRS for all groundfish fisheries (excluding pollock target fisheries) to the Goals and Objective section of the BSAI Groundfish FMP. In addition, a regulation establishing a GRS would be promulgated and enforced on the following vessels and sectors in the groundfish fleet. The GRS would not supercede the 100 percent retention standard already set for pollock and Pacific cod under existing IRIU regulations. In addition to establishing a GRS, the regulation would require that processors create product that yield at least 15 percent from each retained fish harvested. The GRS regulation would consist of the following components:

Component 1. Establishes the GRS percentage.

<u>GRS Schedule</u>	<u>Vessels >125</u>
2005	65 percent (Option 1.2)
2006	75 percent (Option 1.4)
2007	80 percent (Option 1.5)
2008	85 percent (Option 1.6)

For vessels less than 125', the IR/IU Technical Committee is tasked with discussing and developing an implementation plan which may allow for their future inclusion in this program. The Committee will report their initial discussions to the Council in October 2003

Component 2. Specifies the vessels required to comply with GRS

Option 2.5 Trawl catcher processors that are not AFA eligible

Component 3. Sets the period over which the retention rate is calculated

Option 3.3 At the end of each year.

Component 4. Defines the seasonality of the GRS

Option 4.1 A year round standard

Component 5. Determines at which level of aggregation the GRS is applied.

Option 5.2 The GRS applies to each vessel.

Component 6. Considers revision of the maximum retainable bycatch allowance (MRA) for pollock.

Suboption 6.1.2 *revised* MRA compliance is accounted for in fishing trips as defined by offloading of fish. The Council intends for this component to be implemented as soon as possible, with the objective being increased retention of pollock taken as incidental catch in the directed fisheries for other, non-pollock groundfish species, but without increasing the overall amount of pollock that has been historically caught as incidental catch in such fisheries.

Component 7. Determines how total catch is measured under GRS regulations (GRS is defined as the percentage of total groundfish catch retained.)

Option 7.3 All regulated vessels are required to use NOAA Fisheries-certified scales to determine total catch and either maintain 200 percent observer coverage for verification that all fish are being weighed, or use an alternative scale-use verification plan approved by NOAA Fisheries. PSC would not be included in the calculations for GRS compliance.

Component 8. Determines how retained catch is measured.

Option 8.1 Retained catch is calculated using NOAA Fisheries standard product recovery rates (PRRs) For each product/species combination, retained tonnage is equal to product tonnage divided by the PRR.

Additionally, the Council requests the IR/IU Committee review the adopted program, provide recommendations on implementation issues, and identify options to achieve the pollock MRA objectives, and report back at the October (2003) meeting.

Amendment A

The Council requests the IRIU committee review approach identified by staff (Amendment A-1 and A-2) and provide recommendations with the following schedule in mind.

October 2003	Refine alternatives
February 2004	Initial review
June 2004	Final Action
January 2006	Implementation

Amendment D

Given the action taken by the Secretary of Commerce on Amendment 75, the Council requests the NMFS move forward on the exemption provisions for the Gulf of Alaska fisheries as adopted by the Council at the April 2003 meeting.

MOTION - Pacific cod fixed gear allocations

BSAI Amendment 77

Overall fixed gear allocations (status quo):

The Council approved continuing the current (under BSAI Amendment 64) BSAI Pacific cod allocations among the fixed gear sectors as follows:

- 80% hook-and-line catcher processors
- 0.3% hook-and-line catcher vessels
- 18.3% pot vessels
- 1.4% to <60' pot/hook-and-line catcher vessels

Pot split:

The Council also apportioned the pot share (18.3%) of the BSAI Pacific cod fixed gear TAC between pot catcher processors and pot catcher vessels according to catch histories from 1998 - 2001:

- 3.3% pot catcher processors
- 15.0% pot catcher vessels

Rollover provisions:

Any unharvested portion of the hook-and-line catcher vessel and the <60' pot and hook-and-line vessel quota that is projected to remain unused by a specified date shall be reallocated to the hook-and-line catcher processor fleet.

Any quota reallocated from the trawl sector shall be apportioned 95% to the hook-and-line catcher processor sector and 5% to the pot sectors.

Apportion the 2% BSAI Pacific cod jig allocation on a trimester basis as follows:

- 40% (Jan. - April)
- 20% (May - August)
- 40% (Sept. - Dec.)

Any jig gear quota that is projected to remain unused will be reallocated to the catcher vessels <60' using hook-and-line or pot gear at the end of each jig season.

Any portion of the Pacific cod pot catcher processor or pot catcher vessel quota that is projected to remain unused shall be reallocated to the other pot sector before it is reallocated to the other fixed gear sectors.

Sunset provision:

No sunset provision.

(Status quo includes the following methods for allocating BSAI Pacific cod: Bycatch of Pacific cod in other fixed gear fisheries will continue to be subtracted from the overall fixed gear allocation before allocations for the directed fisheries are set. Harvests by pot and/or hook-and-line catcher vessels <60' LOA only accrue against the 1.4% allocation after all hook-and-line catcher vessels or pot catcher vessels harvest their 0.3% and 15.0% set-asides, respectively.)

The intent is for this action to be implemented beginning January 1, 2004.



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