



# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## Meeting Summary

255th Plenary Session  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
June 9 -11 and June 14-16, 2021  
Webconference – Adobe Connect

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### Attachments

- 1) Time Log
- 2) Newsletter

The time log is included as a reference attachment for names, dates and times of each agenda item, and the newsletter is included to provide details of the agenda items and the meeting as a whole.

**All documents and information related to the meeting are accessible online at:**

<https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2104>

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met on June 9<sup>th</sup> through June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and on June 14<sup>th</sup> through June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The following Council members, Council staff, SSC, and AP members attended the meetings.

### Council Members

Jim Balsiger/Glenn Merrill  
*National Marine Fisheries Service*

Nicole Kimball  
*Appointed*

Rachel Baker/Karla Bush (for Doug Vincent-Lang)  
*Alaska Department Fish and Game*

Simon Kinneen, **Chair**  
*Appointed*

Cora Campbell  
*Appointed*

Staci MacCorkle  
*US Dept of State*

Craig Cross  
*Appointed*

Steve Marx (for Curt Melcher)  
*Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife*

Kenny Down  
*Appointed*

Andy Mezirow  
*Appointed*

Holly Carroll (for Greg Siekaniec)  
*US Fish & Wildlife Service*

Bill Tweit (for Kelly Susewind), **Vice Chair**  
*Washington Department Fish & Wildlife*

Dave Hanson  
*Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission*

RADM Nathan Moore/CAPT Brennell  
*United States Coast Guard*

John Jensen  
*Appointed*

### Council Staff

Armstrong, Jim

Gleason, Shannon

McCracken, Jon

Cleaver, Sara

Haapala, Kate

Schmidt, Nicole

Davis, Maria

Henry, Anna

Stram, Diana

Evans, Diana (DD)

Hillary, Kaylah

Witherell, Dave (ED)

Fey, Mike (PSMFC)

La Belle, Sarah

Forristall, Angela (Sea Grant  
Fellow)

MacLean, Steve

Marrinan, Sarah

## Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from June 1<sup>st</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, via adobe connect in a virtual conference. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent members are ~~stricken~~):

Anne Hollowed, Co-Chair  
*NOAA Fisheries—AFSC*

~~Milo Adkison~~  
*University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Curry Cunningham  
*University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Dana Hanselman  
*NOAA Fisheries—AFSC*

Andrew Munro  
*Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game*

Ian Stewart  
*Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission*

Sherri Dressel, Co-Chair  
*Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game*

Chris Anderson  
*University of Washington*

Mike Downs  
*Wislow Research*

Brad Harris  
*Alaska Pacific University*

Matt Reimer  
*University of California, Davis*

Patrick Sullivan  
*Cornell University*

Alison Whitman, Vice Chair  
*Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife*

Amy Bishop  
*Alaska Sea Life Center*

~~Jason Gasper~~  
*NOAA Fisheries – Alaska Region*

George Hunt  
*University of Washington*

Chris Siddon  
*ADF&G*

~~Tien-Shui Tsou~~  
*WDF&W*

## Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel met from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and on June 7<sup>th</sup> to June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, via adobe connect in a virtual conference. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent members are ~~stricken~~):

Christiansen, Ruth (Co-Vice Chair)  
Drobnica, Angel (Chair)  
Gruver, John  
Gudmundsson, Gretar  
Johnson, Jim  
Johnson, Mellisa  
Kauffman, Jeff

Kavanaugh, Julie  
Lowenberg, Craig  
Mann, Heather  
O'Donnell, Paddy  
O'Neil, Megan  
Peterson, Joel  
~~Ritchie, Brian~~

Scoblic, John  
Upton, Matt (Co-Vice Chair)  
Vanderhoeven, Anne  
Velsko, Erik  
Wilson, Marissa  
Wilt, Sinclair

## A1 Call Meeting to Order

The Council approved the agenda without objection.

## B Reports

The following reports were provided in writing and discussed. In addition, Paul Doremus, NOAA Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations gave an oral update on the 30 x 30 Initiative. Alicia Miller Provided an oral update on the status of emergency rules. Dr. Robert Foy provided an oral update and presentation on AFSC surveys and climate research.

**B1 Executive Director’s Report** – David Witherell, Steve MacLean

**B2 NMFS Management Report** – Alicia Miller

- B2 30 x 30 Initiative – Paul Doremus

**B3 NOAA GC Report** – Josh Fortenberry

**B4 NOAA Enforcement Report** – Nathan Lagerwey

**B5 AFSC Report** – Dr. Robert Foy

**B6 ADFG Report** – Kendall Henry

**B7 USCG Report** – CAPT Jason Brennell and LCDR Jedediah Raskie

**B8 USFWS Report** – Holly Carroll and Jordan Muir

## C1 Observer Report on 2020 Deployment during COVID

**Council Staff:** Dr. Kate Haapala

**Other Presenters:** Jennifer Ferdinand (NMFS), Dr. Craig Faunce (NMFS), Dennis Jaszka (OLE)

**Action Required:**

1. Review the 2020 Observer Annual Report
2. Review the April PCFMAC Report
3. Review the May FMAC Report

**Summary:** *The Council will hear a report on the 2020 observer program and COVID-19 effects. They may also make recommendations on electronic monitoring and next year’s observer plan and electronic monitoring.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council provides the following recommendations on the draft 2022 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) for partial coverage fisheries:

- 1) maintain the three gear-based strata (pot, longline, trawl).
- 2) evaluate trip-based vs port-based deployment. Evaluation of port-based deployment should maintain the existing 14 ports and reflect updated COVID-19 rules (e.g., vaccination status may alleviate

need for 14-day quarantine and allow movement among ports).

3) maintain the 15% baseline hurdle for each gear type and optimize such that all additional observer days above the baseline coverage level are placed on trawl gear. The Council supports evaluation of the FMAC suggestion to ensure optimization days if funding alone is not sufficient, as practicable.

4) additional fixed gear electronic monitoring (EM) vessels should be added as possible under existing funds. A vessel's ability to share EM systems in select ports should be considered as an additional criterion to prioritize new candidate EM vessels for the EM pool.

The Council further supports the May 2021 FMAC recommendations including completion of the comprehensive partial coverage cost efficiencies analysis in 2022 for implementation in the 2024 ADP and in time to inform and affect the next Federal observer contract. The Council priorities for cost efficiency in partial coverage remain: 1) completing a regulated program for use of EM for pelagic trawl in the GOA and BSAI; 2) integration of electronic monitoring into the overall monitoring of fixed gear; and 3) evaluation of different criteria to define the 'zero selection' pool for fixed gear. The Council recommends ongoing communication with the Council's PCFMAC during this process

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on June 10, 2021, at 11:19 a.m.

## C2 Trawl EM

**Council Staff:** Anna Henry

**Other Presenters:** Josh Keaton (NMFS); Ruth Christiansen, Julie Bonney, Charlotte Levy (EFP Principal Investigators)

**Action Required:**

1. Review Trawl EM EFP report
2. Review Trawl EM Committee Report
3. Review draft of alternatives, adopt purpose and need and alternative set

**Summary:** *The Council will review recommendations and options for allowing electronic monitoring for pollock trawl fisheries off Alaska.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

**Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

Analysis to implement electronic monitoring on pollock catcher vessels using pelagic trawl gear and tender vessels transporting pollock catch in the eastern Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska.

**The Council approves the following purpose and need statement:**

To carry out their responsibilities for conserving and managing groundfish resources, the Council and NMFS must have high quality, timely, and cost-effective data to support management and scientific information needs. In part, this information is collected through a fishery monitoring program for the groundfish fisheries off Alaska. While a large component of this monitoring program relies on the use of human observers, the Council supports integrating electronic monitoring and reporting technologies into NMFS North Pacific fisheries-dependent data collection program, where applicable, to ensure that scientists, managers, policy makers, and industry are informed with fishery-dependent information that

is relevant to policy priorities, of high quality, and available when needed, and obtained in a cost-effective manner.

The Council and NMFS have been on the path of integrating technology into the fisheries monitoring systems for many years, with electronic reporting systems in place, and operational EM in some fisheries. An EM program for compliance purposes on pelagic pollock trawl catcher vessels and tenders both delivering to shoreside processors will obtain necessary information for quality accounting for catch including bycatch and salmon PSC in a cost-effective manner, and provide reliable data for compliance monitoring of a no discard requirement for salmon PSC. This trawl EM program has the potential to advance cost efficiency and compliance monitoring, through improved salmon accounting and reduced monitoring costs.

Regulatory change is needed to modify the current retention and discard requirements to allow participating CVs to maximize retention of all species caught (i.e., minimize discards to the greatest extent practicable) for the use of EM as a compliance tool on trawl catcher vessels in both the full and partial coverage categories of the Observer Program and meet monitoring objectives on trawl catcher vessels in the Bering Sea (BS) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) pelagic pollock fisheries.

**The Council approves the following alternatives:**

Alternative 1: status quo--EM would not be implemented and catch monitoring would be provided by at-sea observers.

Alternative 2: Electronic Monitoring is implemented on pelagic pollock trawl catcher vessels and tenders delivering to shoreside processors in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska.

Alternative 3: Electronic Monitoring is implemented on pelagic pollock trawl catcher vessels delivering to shoreside processors and not on tenders.

Option 1 Bering Sea

Option 2 Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 10, 2021, at 3:20 p.m.

**Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

I move that the Council draft a letter of support for the following NFWF project proposals:

- Portable EM systems/machine learning, proposal from ALFA and NPFA
- Pelagic trawl EM in GOA and BSAI, proposal from AGDB, UCB and AEB, including Interchangeability of EM for trawl and pot gear in WGOA, additional proposal from AEB and SWI
- Fishery Monitoring Coop proposal by FVOA

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 10, 2021, at 3:30 p.m.

### C3 Crab BSAI

**Council Staff:** Jim Armstrong

**Other Presenters:** Martin Dorn (AFSC Crab Plan Team Co-Chair)

**Action Required:**

1. Pribilof Islands Blue King Crab – Specify OFL/ABC for 2021/22 -22/23
2. Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab – Specify OFL/ABC for 2021/22
3. Crab Plan Team Report for the May 2021 meeting - review

**Summary:** *The Crab Plan Team met to discuss the size and status of two crab stocks in the Bering Sea to make recommendations on harvest limits. The Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee will review their recommendations and the Council will set appropriate harvest limits for those stocks for the upcoming crab seasons.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Bush made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

The Council accepts the Crab SAFE report and adopts the following OFLs and ABCs recommended by the SSC for Aleutian Islands golden king crab and Pribilof Islands blue king crab:

Species	OFL (kt)	ABC (kt)	Year(s)
Aleutian Islands golden king crab	4.817	3.372	2021/22
Pribilof Islands blue king crab	0.00116	0.00087	2021/22, 2022/23

*kt = thousand metric ton*

The Council supports moving the assessment timing for Pribilof Islands blue king crab to the fall.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection (Mr. Mezirow absent from vote) on June 10, 2021, at 4:11 p.m.

### C4 BSAI Pacific Cod Trawl CV LAPP

**Council Staff:** Jon McCracken

**Other Presenters:** Darrell Brannan (Brannan & Associates), Dr. Mike Downs (Wislow Research Associates), Abby Jahn and Joe Krieger (NMFS AKRO SF)

**Action Required:**

1. Review Analysis
2. Provide clarification and adjustments to elements and options strawman alternatives.

**Summary:** *The Council will review a paper that examines catcher vessels in the BSAI with existing licenses fishing Pacific cod. These licenses will be assigned an allocation based on a percentage of historical catch.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

**Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

The Council recommends releasing the analysis for final action after making the following revisions to the elements and analysis. Staff should consider and address comments from the SSC to the extent practicable. Additions are shown in underline and deletions are shown in ~~strikethrough~~. The Council's preliminary preferred alternative is shown in **bold**.

**Purpose and Need:**

*Over the last several years, total allowable catch for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea-Aleutian Island has steadily decreased. The pace of the fishery has contributed to an increasingly compressed season, resulting in decreased ability to maximize the value of the fishery, and negatively impacting all fishery participants (catcher vessels, motherships, shoreside processors, and communities). This race for fish also discourages fishing practices that can minimize bycatch and threatens the sustained viability of the fishery. The Council is considering the development of a cooperative-based program to improve the prosecution of the fishery, with the intent of promoting safety and stability in the harvesting and processing sectors, increasing the value of the fishery, minimizing bycatch to the extent practicable, providing for the sustained participation of fishery dependent communities, and ensuring the sustainability and viability of the resource.*

**Element 1. Cooperative Style System**

**Voluntary harvester cooperatives** ~~with no minimum number of licenses required.~~

**Holders of qualified trawl CV LLP licenses under Element 2 must join a cooperative annually in association with an eligible licensed processor (FFP or FPP) to harvest trawl CV allocations of Pacific cod. Harvesters may change cooperatives and cooperative associations may change annually without penalty.**

**No limitation on the number of LLP licenses holders or eligible catch history needed to form a cooperative.**

**No limitation on the number of cooperatives that may form.**

**Inter-cooperative formation is allowed.**

**Option: A minimum of three unique LLP licenses holders are needed to form a cooperative, ~~using the 10% ownership rule.~~**

**Element 2: Allocation to LLP Licenses**

**Catch history to determine allocations under this management action will not be considered beyond December 31, 2019.**

**2.1. Eligibility – Any LLP license assigned to a vessel that made legal landings of targeted trawl catcher vessel BSAI cod during the qualifying years (or an LLP license as of December 31, 2019 assigned to an**



**AFA trawl CV that had BSAI Pacific cod catch in 1997)<sup>1</sup> and any transferable AI endorsement is eligible to receive harvest shares.**

Option: Establish a minimum threshold percentage range of 0.25%-1% by LLP holder for eligibility to receive harvest shares. Partial ownership of LLP licenses counts toward the minimum threshold using the individual and collective rule. Does not apply to those 8 licenses with a transferable AI endorsement.

**2.2. Harvester Allocations – Eligible LLP licenses must be assigned to a cooperative to receive annual Pacific cod quota. The ~~sector's~~ initial allocation of harvest shares will be allocated made to eligible LLP licenses or transferable AI endorsements, with each LLP license's or transferable AI endorsement's allocation based on the Pacific cod catch history (legal landings) of targeted BSAI cod authorized by that LLP license or a transferable AI endorsement<sup>2</sup> during the following qualifying years:**

Option 2.2.1: 2014 - 2019

**Option 2.2.2: 2009 –2019**

Option 2.2.3: 2004 –2019

Option 2.2.4: Allocations based on a blend of catch history and AFA sideboard history<sup>3</sup>

Suboptions to credit catch history/sideboard at:

Suboption 2.2.1: 50%/50%

Suboption 2.2.2: 80%/20%

Suboption 2.2.3: 20%/80%

Suboptions (applicable to Options 2.2.1 – 2.2.4):

Suboption 2.2.1. Drop 1 Year

Suboption 2.2.2. Drop 2 Years

**2.3. For the initial allocation of harvest shares, catch history is attached to the LLP license at the time of harvest. If multiple licenses authorized catch by a vessel, in the absence of an agreement of provided by the license holders at the time of application, history will be:**

Option 2.3.1: divided equally between those licenses.

**Option 2.3.2: assigned to an LLP license by the owner of the vessel that made the catch.**

**2.4. Annual cooperative quota (CQ) will be issued to each cooperative license by NMFS based on the aggregate QS attached to LLP licenses based on its share of the total qualifying BSAI trawl catcher vessel catch history that are assigned to the cooperative by the LLP license holder. Allocations will not be designated for harvest in a management area (i.e., BS or AI) but may be harvested from either area.**

<sup>1</sup>The latter criteria (LLP assigned to an AFA trawl CV that had BSAI Pacific cod catch in 1997) is only applicable if one of the blend options is selected under Option 2.2.4.

<sup>2</sup> **Landings of targeted AI Pacific cod in the parallel fishery prior to receiving a transferable AI endorsement (2004 through September 13, 2009) in addition to legal landings of targeted Pacific cod in the parallel and federal fishery after receiving a transferable AI endorsement would qualify for catch history.**

<sup>3</sup> Using staff approach of blending 1997 sideboard history with qualifying year option catch history attached to the eligible LLP license at the time of implementation of the trawl CV LAPP.

### 2.5. Option to allocate A and B season BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod only:

A and B season TACs (after deduction of the ICAs) will be allocated to cooperatives as CQ annual cooperative quota (and to seasonal limited access fisheries, if applicable). Annual cooperative allocations (~~and seasonal limited access allocations, if applicable~~) attributable to each LLP license will be that LLP license's proportional share of the total qualifying Pacific cod history.

The C season allocation will remain 15 percent and remain a limited access trawl fishery to any vessel with an eligible groundfish LLP license with an applicable area endorsement. The C season limited access fishery will be managed as currently by NMFS, including management of incidental catches of Pacific cod in other directed fisheries. C season TAC (and A and B season ICAs and CQ cooperative quota) that NMFS projects to go unused are subject to reallocation to other sectors under current reallocation rules.

2.6. All species not allocated to cooperatives will be managed by maximum retainable amounts (MRAs), as under current management.

2.7 The BSAI Pacific cod sideboard limit for AFA trawl CVs at 50 CFR 679.64(b)(3)(ii) is removed upon implementation of this program.

### Element 3. Prohibited Species Catch Limits

The annual crab and halibut PSC available to the BSAI trawl catcher vessel Pacific cod sector will be as follows:

~~Establish trawl CV Pacific cod and halibut PSC apportionment based on historic use (using qualifying years selected under Element 2) and between the trawl CV sector and the AFA C/P sector.~~

Option 3.1: Crab PSC will be maintained at the BSAI trawl limited access sector level.

**Option 3.2: Establish separate PSC limits for the BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod sector. Halibut PSC limit will be based on historic use (using qualifying years selected under Element 2) between the trawl CV sector and the AFA C/P sector. Crab PSC limits will be based on the proportion of BSAI Pacific cod allocated to the trawl CV sector and the AFA C/P sector.**

~~Reduce (Suboption 1: halibut and crab PSC Suboption 2: halibut PSC) apportionment to BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod sector by 10% to 35%.~~

**Option 3.3: Reduce PSC limit to BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod sector.**

Suboption 3.3.1: Reduce halibut PSC limit by 10%; 25%; 35%.

Suboption 3.3.2: Reduce crab PSC limit by 10%; 25%; 35%.

Suboption 3.3.3: Phase in PSC limit reduction over 3 years. One-third of the total reduction is implemented each year.

**Option 3.4: If Element 2.5 is selected, establish separate C-season halibut and crab PSC apportionments (5-15%) before applying PSC limit reductions for the PCTC program.**

Each cooperative will receive annual ~~CQ cooperative quota~~ allocations of Pacific cod and apportionments of PSC based on members' qualifying catch histories (and processing histories, if applicable) to be harvested in accordance with the harvest cooperative agreement. The sector's PSC will be apportioned to cooperatives in proportion to their members' Pacific cod qualifying catch histories (and processing histories, if applicable). PSC limits are transferable between cooperatives based on the same rules established for Pacific cod CQ.

#### Element 4: Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Sideboards

Option 4.1: All AFA non-GOA exempt CVs and AFA LLP licenses will be sideboarded (in aggregate) as to for all GOA groundfish fishing activity, except for vessels participating in the CGOA Rockfish Program, based on their Gulf GOA catch history during the BSAI Pacific cod qualifying period.

Prohibit directed fishing in regulations for the GOA non-exempt AFA CVs and LLPs for SEO pollock, Western shallow-water flatfish, and both Central and Eastern deep-water flatfish, and Eastern POP.

Option 4.2: AFA GOA-Exempt and non-AFA CVs ~~and assigned to~~ LLP licenses that receive annual BSAI Pacific cod CQ will not be permitted to lease their BSAI Pacific cod ~~CQ cooperative quota~~ as a condition of benefiting from an AFA GOA sideboard exemption. If the vessel assigned to the qualified GOA exempt LLP license does not fish the GOA during the calendar year, except for the CGOA Rockfish Program, the BSAI Pacific cod CQ generated by the LLP license can be leased that calendar year. Cooperatives will be required to monitor GOA AFA exempt and non-AFA ~~exempt~~ vessels to ensure they do not lease their BSAI Pacific cod CQ and implement a penalty structure for violations. Cooperatives will be required to report leasing activities and penalties issued in the BSAI Pacific cod cooperative annual report.

**Suboption 4.2.1: AFA GOA Exempt and non-AFA CVs with LLP licenses of less than 200 mt, 400 mt, or 600 mt of average annual qualifying BSAI Pacific cod history may lease their BSAI Pacific cod history and benefit from the AFA GOA sideboard exemption.**

#### Element 5: Processor and Community Provisions

**5.1. No closed class of processors; all processors with an eligible FPP or FFP are eligible to process BSAI Pacific cod under this program (subject to eligibility requirements under ~~the April 2019 Council action BSAI FMP Amendment 120~~ to limit catcher processors acting as motherships).**

**5.2. Limit (sideboard) on directed BSAI Pacific cod that can be delivered by trawl CVs to eligible C/Ps acting as motherships.** The sideboard would be based on BSAI Pacific cod processing history by eligible C/Ps during qualifying years under Element 2.

Option 5.2.1: Each eligible CP acting as a mothership may process up to the higher of 1) the eligible CP's processor's processing history (percentage based on qualifying years selected in Element 2.2); or 2) the history (percentage based on qualifying years selected under Element 2.2) from LLP licenses that are owned (in excess of 75%) directly or indirectly by the owner of a catcher processor LLP eligible for the offshore sector of the target non-CDQ BSAI Pacific cod trawl CV fishery (as of December 31, 2019), not to exceed 125% of the eligible CP's processing history.

Option 5.2.2: Each eligible CP acting as a mothership may process up to the eligible CP's processing history (percentage based on qualifying years selected in Element 2.2).

5.3. Limit number of trawl CVs in the directed BSAI Pacific cod fishery that can deliver to eligible CPs acting as motherships. Trawl CVs can qualify for the offshore sector in one of two ways:

- 1) An LLP license that is owned (in excess of 75%) directly or indirectly by the owner of a catcher processor LLP eligible for the offshore sector of the target non-CDQ BSAI Pacific cod fishery (as of December 31, 2019)
- 2) ~~Council will develop other eligibility thresholds for LLPs on trawl catcher vessels~~ An LLP license in which 90% or more of the quota arising from the history of the LLP license qualifying for the non-CDQ BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod fishery was delivered offshore during the qualifying years selected in Element 2.2.

Only initial quota arising from the history of an LLP license qualifying for the offshore sector will be permitted to be delivered offshore. Only vessels that are assigned LLP licenses that qualify for the offshore sector will be permitted to make offshore deliveries. Vessels using LLP licenses that are permitted to deliver offshore may also deliver any or all of the quota derived from the LLP license to shore based or floating processors.

**5.4. Allocation of harvest shares to processors (this option is only applicable to Bering Sea processors and eligible C/Ps if ~~AI allocations~~ provisions are selected under element 6):**

**Onshore and offshore processors with an eligible FFP or FPP (subject to eligibility requirements under ~~the April 2019 Council action~~ BSAI FMP Amendment 120 to limit catcher processors acting as motherships) that have history of processing in the federal BSAI Pacific cod trawl CV fishery will be eligible to receive a percentage of total harvesting shares based on each onshore processor's and offshore processor's processing history. To be used, the processor's harvest shares would be transferred to the CV cooperative.**

**Option: A cooperative cannot assign a greater proportion of the harvest shares allocated to a processor to ~~an vessel LLP license~~ owned by that processor for harvest by a vessel owned by that processor than the ~~vessel LLP license would have~~ brought into the cooperative absent any processor held shares. The cooperative will monitor this provision and include reporting on allocation and harvest of processor held shares in their BSAI Pacific cod cooperative annual report to the Council.**

**Percent of harvest shares to be allocated to eligible processors:**

- Option 5.4.1: 5%
- Option 5.4.2: 10%
- Option 5.4.3: 15%
- Option 5.4.4: 20%
- Option 5.4.45: 25%
- Option 5.4.56: 30%

**Processing history years to receive harvest shares are the same as harvester years in Element 2.**

**Processors that are no longer active (no longer hold an FPP) would not be issued harvester shares. The processing history associated with those processors would be deducted from the total amount of eligible processing history during the qualifying years when calculating the distribution of harvester shares to processors.**

#### Element 6: Aleutian Islands Processor Provisions

Options 6.1 and 6.2 are mutually exclusive.

**Under this element:**

**An Aleutian Islands shoreplant is defined consistent with vacated Amendment 113 regulations.**

**An Aleutian Islands shoreplant operating under the provisions of this element is exempt from the processing facility use cap in element 8.4.**

**All cooperatives will be required to establish an intercooperative agreement that describes how either the set-aside provision in option 6.1 or the annual Aleutian Islands community shore plant allocations in option 6.2 will be administered by the cooperatives to ensure that harvests in the Bering Sea do not exceed the minimum set aside or shore plant allocation amounts. This intercooperative agreement should establish how the cooperatives intend to harvest the set-aside or shore plant allocation amounts in years when it applies. This intercooperative agreement must be provided as part of the annual cooperative allocation and is required before NMFS can issue CQ.**

**Option 6.1: In any year when the community of Adak and/or Atka files a notice of intent to process, require the cooperative(s) to reserve a set-aside for delivery to an Aleutian Islands shoreplant, as defined in Amendment 113 regulations, in the Aleutian Island management region. The amount of the set-aside will be 10% to 25% of the BSAI CV trawl directed A season harvest amount and is in effect only during the A-season. Any remaining portion of the set-aside will be reallocated to cooperatives in the same proportion as the initial allocation if Adak and/or Atka- Adak or Atka may withdraws its intent to operate notice during the A-season, or after the end of the A-season, whichever comes first if necessary; if so, the set aside requirement is removed.**

**The intercooperative agreement must establish how cooperatives would ensure that CVs < 60 feet LOA assigned to an LLP license with a transferable AI trawl endorsement have the opportunity to harvest a percentage of the Aleutian Islands set-aside for delivery to an AI shoreplant. Option 1: 50%, option 2: 25%, or option 3: 10% of the A-season Aleutian Islands community set-aside.**

**Option 6.2: In any year when the community of Adak and/or Atka files a notice of intent to process, annual harvest quota shall be issued to the plant operator designated in that notice of intent. In the event, one community issues a notice, the lesser of 5,000 mt or (option 1: 5.5%, option 2: 10%) of the total BSAI trawl catcher vessel Pacific cod quota (prior to allocations based on harvesting or processing histories) shall be issued to the plant. In the event both communities issue a notice the allocation shall be divided equally between two plants. Adak or Atka may withdraw its intent to operate notice during the season if necessary. In that case, the unharvested portion of the allocation will be reissued to the other AI shoreplant if it is operating.**

Suboption 6.2.1: If no AI shoreplants are operating, the amount of annual quota equivalent to unharvested portion will be reissued to cooperatives (holders of LLP licenses with BS and/or AI harvest history in proportion to their annual allocations).

Annual Aleutian Islands community shore plant allocations shall be transferable to any cooperative(s) (and between cooperatives) for harvest by member vessels that are assigned an AI trawl CV LLP license eligible under this program. Quota shall be harvestable exclusively in the AI and landed in the AI management region.

Suboption 6.2.2: If the community of Adak and/or Atka files a notice of intent to process, annual harvest quota should be issued to an entity representing the community designated in the notice of intent.

Suboption 6.2.3: AI trawl vessels less than 60' assigned to an LLP license with a transferable AI endorsement will be eligible under the program to receive and harvest be assigned to a cooperative annually in association with the Adak and/or Atka plant regardless of whether they otherwise qualify for the program. Option 1: 50%, option 2: 25%, or option 3: 10% of the Annual Aleutian Islands community shore-plant allocation ~~of which must be harvested by these vessels. These vessels will be eligible to join a cooperative annually in association with the Adak and/or Atka plant regardless of whether they otherwise qualify for the program.~~

## Element 7. Transferability

**7.1. Catch histories are attached to trawl CV LLP licenses and are non-severable from the LLP. Transfer of an LLP license eligible for this program results in the transfer of any program eligibility and catch history/harvest shares associated with the LLP license.**

**Suboption 7.1.1:** For the LLPs associated with the non-exempt AFA vessels, within ninety (90) days of ~~publishing the Final Rule of this program~~ initial issuance of harvest quota shares, the owners of the LLP licenses that are associated with AFA non-exempt catcher vessels that had engaged in fish transfer agreements during the qualifying periods ~~will be allowed to~~ may transfer the quota shares between other LLPs associated with AFA non-exempt vessels. After these transfers are approved by NMFS, Upon redistribution of the initial allocation to the designated LLP license, the BSAI P-acific Cod harvest quota shares will no longer be severable from ~~it's the applicable~~ the applicable LLP license to which it was reassigned.

**7.2. Allocations based on processing history are issued as separate permits, and the permit is only transferable to another processor. Permits issued to shoreside processors can only be transferred to other shoreside processors that hold an FPP. The history is non-severable from the permit except in the case that transfer of the permit to another eligible processor would result in exceeding the use cap under Option 8.3. In that case, the portion of the history over the cap is allowed to be severed from the permit and transferred to another eligible processor permit or shoreside processor that holds an FPP.**

**7.3. Annual allocations of Pacific cod and PSC (whether derived from harvesting or processing histories) are transferable between cooperatives.**

7.4. Post-delivery transfers of CQ cooperative quota are permitted, but must be completed by December 31 (i.e., prior to annual CQ cooperative quota expiring).

#### Element 8: Ownership and Use Caps

8.1. Harvester-issued cooperative shares. Processor-issued cooperative shares do not count toward this use cap. No person may hold or use more than option: 5%- 10% percent of the Pacific cod CQ cooperative quota issued:

Option 8.1.1: using the individual and collective rule or

Option 8.1.2: using 10% ownership threshold or management and control for assigning quota to a holder's/entity's cap.

**Suboption 8.1: Persons over the cap at the time of implementation quota share issuance are grandfathered.**

8.2. No vessel may harvest more than option: 3%; 4%; ~5% percent of the annual Pacific cod CQ cooperative quota issued in the fishery.

Option 8.2.1: Vessels over the cap at the time of implementation quota share issuance are grandfathered.

8.3. Processor-issued cooperative shares<sup>4</sup>: No person may hold or use more than option: 15% - 20% percent of the Pacific cod CQ cooperative quota:

Option 8.3.1: using the individual and collective rule or

Option 8.3.2: using 10% ownership threshold or management and control for assigning quota to a holder's/entity's cap.

**Suboption 8.3: Persons over the cap at the time of implementation quota share issuance are grandfathered.**

8.4. No processing facility may process more than 20%-30% percent of the Pacific cod CQ cooperative quota.

Option 8.4.1: Processing facilities over the cap are grandfathered.

#### Element 9. Cooperative Provisions

Annual cooperative applications must be filed on or before November 1 of the preceding year.

Cooperatives shall be formed by holders of qualified LLP licenses with trawl CV Pacific cod history QS. Each LLP license is eligible to join may be assigned to one cooperative. A vessel assigned a qualified LLP license is a member of that LLP license's cooperative. A vessel may join a single cooperative. A list of CVs (both trawl and pot gear vessels, if Element 14 is selected) eligible to harvest a portion of that cooperative's CQ must be identified in the annual cooperative application. Vessels that are not

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<sup>4</sup>This cap refers to any harvest shares initially issued to processors on a processor permit under Element 5.3.

~~designated on a trawl CV-qualified LLP license are not eligible to join a cooperative unless participating under Element 14.~~

Cooperatives are intended only to conduct and coordinate harvest activities of members and are not Fishermen's Collective Marketing Act (FCMA) cooperatives.

Membership agreements will specify that processor affiliated members cannot participate in any price setting negotiations, except as permitted by antitrust laws.

#### Element 10. Share duration

All allocations and allowances under this program are revocable privileges that 1) may be revoked, limited or modified at any time; 2) shall not confer any right of compensation to the holder, if they are revoked limited, or modified, and; 3) shall not create or be construed to create any right, title or interest in or to any fish before the fish is harvested by the holder.

The duration of all harvest shares and associated PSC apportionments is 10 years. These permits will be renewed before their expiration, unless revoked, limited, or modified.

#### Element 11. Monitoring

All vessels ~~in the program~~ harvesting CQ will be in ~~the full coverage program~~ (100% observer or electronic monitoring coverage category, if applicable). This element is not intended to modify the observer coverage exception provided for CVs delivering unsorted codends to a mothership or the current observer data transmission requirements for non-AFA trawl catcher vessels. NMFS will develop monitoring and enforcement provisions necessary to track quota, harvest, PSC, and use caps. The Council authorizes NMFS to report weekly vessel-level bycatch information as authorized under MSA Sec 402(b)(2)(A).

#### Element 12. Reporting and Program Review

Each cooperative shall annually produce a report for the Council describing its membership, cooperative management, and performance in the preceding year including use of processor issued harvest shares, if applicable.

Per the Magnuson Stevens Act, a formal detailed review of the program shall be undertaken 5 years after implementation, with additional reviews, at a minimum, each seven years thereafter.

#### Element 13. Cost recovery

A fee, not to exceed 3% of the ex-vessel value, will be charged on all program landings to cover the actual costs directly related to the management, data collection, and enforcement of the program.

#### Element 14. Gear Conversion

Pacific cod CQ allocations/quota associated with trawl CV LLP licenses may be fished annually ~~with by~~ a CV using pot CV gear, by vessels that are a member of the trawl CV cooperative. A pot endorsement is not ~~necessary~~ required, but the LLP license used by a CV must have the appropriate area



endorsement. Harvest would ~~continue to be deducted from the annual trawl CQ cooperative quota~~ account to which the LLP is assigned and will not affect sector allocations. Cooperative Quota derived from this program harvested by a pot CV is not permanently designated as pot CV quota. If Option 2.5 is selected, gear conversion only applies to the A and B seasons based on the start and end dates for the trawl fishery. Pot CVs harvesting CQ would be subject to 100% coverage and PSC use would be deducted from the PSC allocated to the cooperative. NMFS will develop monitoring and enforcement provisions necessary to track quota, harvest, PSC, and use caps.

## AMENDMENTS TO C4 MOTION

**Mr. Down made the following amendment which was seconded by Ms. Campbell:**

Amendment to add new language as underlined (not as part of PPA)

Option 3.3: Reduce PSC limit to BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod sector.

Suboption 3.3.1: Reduce halibut PSC limit by 10%; 25%; 35%.

Suboption 3.3.2: Reduce crab PSC limit by 10%; 25%; 35%; 45%

Suboption 3.3.3: Phase in PSC limit reduction over 3 years. One-third of the total reduction is implemented each year.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed 6/5 (Mr. Merrill, Mr. Cross, Ms. Kimball Mr. Marx, Mr. Mezirow voting in opposition) on June 14, 2021, at 4:55 p.m.

**Mr. Marx made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

Amendment to add 15% to suboption 3.3.1, and to remove identification of a PPA in that suboption (new language as underlined).

*Council's preliminary preferred alternative is shown in **bold**.*

Option 3.3: Reduce PSC limit to BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod sector.

Suboption 3.3.1: Reduce halibut PSC limit by 10%; 15%; **25%**; 25%; 35%.

Suboption 3.3.2: Reduce crab PSC limit by 10%; 25%; 35%.

Suboption 3.3.3: Phase in PSC limit reduction over 3 years. One-third of the total reduction is implemented each year.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment failed 3/8 (Mr. Merrill, Ms. Baker, Ms. Campbell, Mr. Down, Mr. Jensen, Ms. Kimball, Mr. Mezirow, Mr. Kinneen voting in opposition) on June 14, 2021, at 5:01 p.m.

**Mr. Tweit made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

Amendment in Element 5.3, paragraph 2) add "an LLP license in which a) 90% or b) 75% or more of the quota arising from..." (new language as underlined)

5.3. Limit number of trawl CVs in the directed BSAI Pacific cod fishery that can deliver to eligible CPs acting as motherships. Trawl CVs can qualify for the offshore sector in one of two ways:

- 1) An LLP license that is owned (in excess of 75%) directly or indirectly by the owner of a catcher processor LLP eligible for the offshore sector of the target non-CDQ BSAI Pacific cod fishery (as of December 31, 2019)
- 2) ~~Council will develop other eligibility thresholds for LLPs on trawl catcher vessels~~ An LLP license in which a) 90% or b) 75% or more of the quota arising from the history of the LLP license qualifying for the non-CDQ BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod fishery was delivered offshore during the qualifying years selected in Element 2.2.

Only initial quota arising from the history of an LLP license qualifying for the offshore sector will be permitted to be delivered offshore. Only vessels that are assigned LLP licenses that qualify for the offshore sector will be permitted to make offshore deliveries. Vessels using LLP licenses that are permitted to deliver offshore may also deliver any or all of the quota derived from the LLP license to shore based or floating processors.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed with no objection on June 14, 2021, at 5:14 p.m.

**Mr. Merrill made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

Amendment: Add a new suboption 7.1.2 (new language as underlined)

7.1. Catch histories are attached to trawl CV LLP licenses and are non-severable from the LLP. Transfer of an LLP license eligible for this program results in the transfer of any program eligibility and catch history/harvest shares associated with the LLP license.

Suboption 7.1.1: For the LLPs associated with the non-exempt AFA vessels, within ninety (90) days of ~~publishing the Final Rule of this program~~ initial issuance of harvest quota shares, the owners of the LLP licenses that are associated with AFA non-exempt catcher vessels that had engaged in fish transfer agreements during the qualifying periods ~~will be allowed to~~ may transfer the quota shares between other LLPs associated with AFA non-exempt vessels. After these transfers are approved by NMFS, ~~Upon redistribution of the initial allocation to the designated LLP license,~~ the BSAI Pacific Cod harvest quota shares will no longer be severable from ~~it's~~ the applicable LLP license to which it was reassigned.

Suboption 7.1.2: Within a 90-day period after initial allocation the owner(s) of an eligible LLP may transfer initially allocated quota shares to another eligible LLP. After these transfers are approved by NMFS, the BSAI Cod harvest quota shares will no longer be severable from its applicable LLP license to which it is assigned.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment failed 3/8 (Ms. Baker, Ms. Campbell, Mr. Cross, Mr. Down, Mr. Jensen, Ms. Kimball, Mr. Mezirow, and Mr. Kinneen voting in opposition) on June 14, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.

**Mr. Tweit made the following amendment which was not seconded:**

Under Element 9 add new option (new language as underlined).

Element 9. Cooperative Provisions

Option: Each LLP may be assigned to one cooperative.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment died for lack of a second on June 14, 2021, at 5:33 p.m.

**VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION:** Motion passed 10/1 (Mr. Cross voting in opposition) on June 14, 2021, at 5:58 p.m.

## D1 BSAI Pacific Cod Small Boat Access

**Council Staff:** Dr. Kate Haapala  
**Other Presenter:** Krista Milani (NMFS)

**Action Required:**

1. Receive discussion paper
2. Determine whether future action is warranted

**Summary:** *The Council will review a paper discussing allowing new access opportunities for smaller hook and line and pot boats to fish BSAI Pacific cod.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

The Council adopts the following Purpose and Need and set of alternatives for Initial Review.

### **Purpose and Need**

*Increased participation in the <60 ft hook-and-line and pot catcher vessel Pacific cod sector by higher-capacity vessels over 57 ft LOA has negatively impacted smaller vessels in the sector through shortened seasons. These shortened seasons limit smaller vessels' ability to compete within the sector as they are limited to fish in less productive waters near port due to their size. The jig sector allocation has not historically been fully utilized, particularly in the A and C seasons. Allowing these smaller catcher vessels using hook-and-line and pot gear to harvest Pacific cod from the jig sector allocation may provide additional opportunities for current fishery participants and potential new entrants with smaller catcher vessels without negatively impacting catcher vessels using jig gear.*

### **Alternatives**

Alternative 1: Status quo

Alternative 2: Redefine the current BSAI Pacific cod jig sector to include HAL/pot CVs less than or equal to:

Option 1: 55 feet LOA.

Option 2: 56 feet LOA.

Suboption: B-season fishery would remain jig gear only fishery.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 15, 2021, at 9:35 a.m.

## D2 Sablefish Trawl Overages

**Council Staff:** Steve MacLean  
**Other Presenters:** Mary Furuness, Steve Whitney (NMFS Alaska Regional Office)

**Action Required:** 1. Review discussion paper, action as necessary.

**Summary:** *The Council will review a discussion paper that looks at possible tools to limit or prevent trawl fisheries exceeding their allowable catch of sablefish.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Mr. Jensen made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

The Council takes no further action at this time on this issue.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on June 15, 2021, at 1:42 p.m.

## D3 BS Fishery Ecosystem Plan

**Council Staff:** Diana Evans (BS FEP Co-Chair), Dr. Diana Stram (CCTF Co-Chair)  
**Other Presenters:** Dr. Kerim Aydin (AFSC; BS FEP Team Co-Chair)  
Dr. Kirstin Holsman (AFSC; CCTF Co-Chair)

**Action Required:** 1. Review Bering Sea FEP Plan Team report  
2. Review CCTF report and work plan milestones  
3. Provide feedback and make recommendations as necessary

**Summary:** *The Council will review progress reports from advisory groups working on Bering Sea ecosystem issues and the effects of climate change on Bering Sea fisheries.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Dr. Balsiger:**

The Council commends the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team (BS FEP Team) and Climate Change Task Force for progress made during the May 2021 workshop and meetings. The Council directs the BS FEP Team to incorporate the input from the Ecosystem Committee and the SSC, and continue the work as outlined in the presentation, including the development of ecosystem indicators to inform an Ecosystem Health or Evaluation Report and continued coordination with the BS FEP Action Module task

forces. The Council supports the milestones and timeline developed for the Climate Change Task Force workplan.

The Council authorizes a joint meeting of the FEP Team and the Ecosystem Committee in spring 2022 to coordinate and provide consistent input to the Council.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on June 15, 2021, at 3:31 p.m.

## D4 SSC Workshop on Risk Table Advice

**Council Staff:** Sara Cleaver  
**Other Presenters:** Dr. Sherri Dressel (SSC Co-Chair)

**Action Required:** 1. Review SSC workshop report, SSC recommendations, Council action as necessary.

**Summary:** *The SSC and Council will review a report from a recent workshop to discuss how best to use risk tables as part of the process of setting appropriate harvest limits.*

After staff and SSC presentations and public comment, the following action was taken:

**Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

The Council supports the preliminary SSC guidance on the application of the risk tables and looks forward to final recommendations from the SSC and Council in October 2021. The Council supports SSC recommendations to provide risk tables during each full assessment. The Council also supports delay of application of the risk table to the crab specifications process until further progress is made on groundfish. In addition, the Council requests the SSC consider the following when developing its final recommendations in October:

- Include description of any new or modified concern categories, including whether positive stock trends should be included as similar ‘concerns’.
- Request the SSC consider the roles of the stock authors and/or Plan Teams in presenting risk, and the role of the SSC in making specific recommendations on potential reductions from maxABC, if appropriate.
- Clear language relative to SSC guidance that the risk tables are intended to inform the SSC determination of adjusting ABC from maximum permissible when needed. Previous reductions to maxABC should not be the basis for reducing maxABC unless relevant risk factors for a stock continue to be present.

The Council recommends that the consideration of risk and its incorporation into the assessment process continue to be regularly reviewed by the Council and SSC.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 15, 2021, at 10:02 a.m.

## E1 Staff Tasking

**Council Staff:** David Witherell, Diana Evans, Steve MacLean, Dr. Diana Stram, Sarah Marrinan

**Action Required:**

1. Review Committees and Plan Teams
2. Provide direction on tasking priorities and scheduling

**Summary:** *The Council will listen to public testimony about existing and new management measures that the public may be interested in and will provide feedback to staff and the Council Chair about how to prioritize staff work on existing and new projects. The Council will specifically discuss the different aspects of returning to in-person meetings.*

*The Council will also review its committee membership, identify agendas for any upcoming committee meetings, and discuss plans for returning to in-person meetings.*

After staff presentations and public comment, the following actions were taken:

### E1 AI Golden King Crab

**Ms. Baker made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council requests a discussion paper to consider two possible changes to the Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery. The discussion paper should:

- 1) Identify potential regulatory or administrative changes that would allow Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab (EAG) and Western Aleutian Islands golden king crab (WAG) IFQ to be issued or fished prior to August 1. Changes could include regulatory changes to the crab fishing year for golden king crab or other administrative or regulatory changes that would allow golden king crab IFQ to be issued or fished earlier in the year. The paper should include potential impacts on other Crab Rationalization program fisheries including cost recovery fees.
- 2) Review current EAG facility use caps and discuss impacts of removing or changing them to recognize custom processing arrangements. The paper should include the history and intent of facility use caps and a discussion of the current processing conditions related to facility use caps in the EAG fishery.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 16, 2021, at 11:22 a.m.

## E1 Outreach with Tanana Chiefs Conference

### **Ms. Kimball made the following motion which was seconded by Jensen:**

The Council supports the Executive Director working with Tanana Chiefs Conference to schedule an outreach trip as proposed to some of their member communities in the summer of 2021.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously on June 16, 2021, at 11:30 a.m.

## E1 Ecosystem Committee Workplan

### **Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

The Council supports the EC recommendation for staff to finalize plans for ongoing briefings with northern fur seal co-managers and researchers and schedule them on an ecosystem committee calendar.

The Council requests that the EC receive an update in October 2021 from the Alaska Regional Office Protected Species Division on the status of the Conservation Plan for the Eastern Pacific Stock of Northern Fur Seal, including information from the co-managers on the Pribilof Islands.

The Council requests that staff reach out to organizations addressing marine debris in Alaska to develop an overview of activities for committee review and consider whether a Regional Action Plan for Alaska would be useful.

The Council suggests that the discussion paper requested by the Council in April 2021 to summarize whether Council regulatory actions meet the OECM could be delayed until other projects to address OECMs are understood.

The Council requests that the EC continue to track how important ecological areas identified by tribes and NGOs can contribute to the EO 14008 discussion, and whether additional management measures can strengthen their resilience to climate change.

The Council tasks staff with developing a scoping paper on the status of research initiatives taking place in the GOA and the timelines associated with those projects.

The Council tasks staff with developing a scoping paper on the state of scientific understanding of forage fish ecology, coastwide, the status of research initiatives on forage fish ecology, and the timelines associated with those projects. The scoping paper should identify gaps in understanding, species status and trends, and list potential any major issues regarding forage actions that the Council could take to address them.

The Council requests the Ecosystem Workshop steering group meet again soon to continue planning.

**Ms. Kimball made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Tweit:**

(In the sixth and seventh paragraph ~~strike~~ the following and replace in **bold**)

The Council supports the EC recommendation for staff to finalize plans for ongoing briefings with northern fur seal co-managers and researchers and schedule them on an ecosystem committee calendar.

The Council requests that the EC receive an update in October 2021 from the Alaska Regional Office Protected Species Division on the status of the Conservation Plan for the Eastern Pacific Stock of Northern Fur Seal, including information from the co-managers on the Pribilof Islands.

The Council requests that staff reach out to organizations addressing marine debris in Alaska to develop an overview of activities for committee review and consider whether a Regional Action Plan for Alaska would be useful.

The Council suggests that the discussion paper requested by the Council in April 2021 to summarize whether Council regulatory actions meet the OECM could be delayed until other projects to address OECMs are understood.

The Council requests that the EC continue to track how important ecological areas identified by tribes and NGOs can contribute to the EO 14008 discussion, and whether additional management measures can strengthen their resilience to climate change.

The Council tasks staff with developing a ~~scoping paper~~ **report** on the status of research initiatives taking place in the GOA and the timelines associated with those projects.

The Council tasks staff with developing a ~~scoping paper~~ **report** on the state of scientific understanding of forage fish ecology, coastwide, the status of research initiatives on forage fish ecology, and the timelines associated with those projects. ~~The scoping paper should identify gaps in understanding, species status and trends, and list potential any major issues regarding forage actions that the Council could take to address them.~~

The Council requests the Ecosystem Workshop steering group meet again soon to continue planning.

**VOTE ON AMENDMENT:** Amendment passed with no objection on June 16, 2021, at 12:10 p.m.

**VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION:** Motion passed with no objection on June 16, 2021, at 12:15 p.m.

**The Council adjourned on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, at 12:30 P.M.**





## TIME LOG

### NPFMC June Council Meeting – 255th Plenary Session

Meeting held via web conference Adobe Connect  
June 9-11 and June 14-16, 2021

#### Wednesday, June 9, 2021

#### A & B REPORTS

6/9/2021 8:12 AM	Call to Order
6/9/2021 8:16 AM	<b>B2 NMFS 30x30 Update</b> – Paul Doremus
6/9/2021 8:43 AM	<b>B ED Report</b> – David Witherell
6/9/2021 9:00 AM	B Reports Combined
6/9/2021 10:00 AM	<b>B5 AFSC Report</b> – Dr. Robert Foy
6/9/2021 11:17 AM	<b>B Public Testimony</b>
6/9/2021 11:17 AM	Lauren Divine
6/9/2021 11:36 AM	Bob Alverson
6/9/2021 11:39 AM	Becca Robbins Gisclair
6/9/2021 11:44 AM	Brooke Woods
6/9/2021 12:00 PM	Lunch Break
6/9/2021 12:45 PM	B report discussion
6/9/2021 1:20 PM	AP report – C1-C3, and D items – Matt Upton and Ruth Christiansen
6/9/2021 1:41 PM	SSC Report – Dr. Sherri Dressel and Dr. Chris Anderson
6/9/2021 4:30 PM	Recess

#### Thursday, June 10, 2021

#### C1 Observer Report on 2020 Deployment during COVID

6/10/2021 8:00 AM	Call to order
6/10/2021 8:28 AM	C1 Observer Program Annual Report – Jennifer Ferdinand
6/10/2021 8:50 AM	C1 OLE Presentation – AFSC, Craig Faunce and Enforcement, Dennis Jaszka
6/10/2021 9:39 AM	C1 FMAC and PCFMAC Committee Report – NPFMC staff, Dr. Kate Haapala
6/10/2021 10:00 AM	Break
6/10/2021 10:13 AM	<b>C1 Public Testimony</b>
6/10/2021 10:15 AM	Bob Alverson
6/10/2021 10:18 AM	Troy Quinlan
6/10/2021 10:23 AM	Daniel Falvey
6/10/2021 10:33 AM	Theresa Peterson
6/10/2021 10:43 AM	Abigail Turner-Franke

6/10/2021 10:49 AM Julie Bonney  
6/10/2021 10:54 AM Alexis Kwachka  
6/10/2021 11:04 AM **C1 Ms. Kimball Motion**

### **C2 Trawl EM – EFP Report and Trawl EM Committee Report**

6/10/2021 11:23 AM **C2 EFP Report** – Ruth Christiansen, Julie Bonney, Charlotte Levy  
6/10/2021 11:43 AM Lunch Break  
6/10/2021 12:32 PM C2 EFP Report Continued  
6/10/2021 1:13 PM **C2 Trawl EM Committee Report** – NPFMC staff, Anna Henry and NMFS staff, Josh Keaton  
6/10/2021 1:55 PM **C2 Public Testimony**  
6/10/2021 1:55 PM Tom Evich  
6/10/2021 1:59 PM Charlotte Levy  
6/10/2021 2:06 PM Caitlin Yeager  
6/10/2021 2:09 PM Ben Ley  
6/10/2021 2:16 PM Dan Falvey  
6/10/2021 2:20 PM Brent Paine  
6/10/2021 2:24 PM Julie Bonney  
6/10/2021 2:51 PM **C2 Mr. Tweit Motion**  
6/10/2021 3:26 PM **C2 Mr. Tweit Motion** – NFWF letter

### **C3 BSAI Crab**

6/10/2021 3:54 PM **C3 Presentation** – Council staff, Jim Armstrong and AFSC, Martin Dorn  
6/10/2021 4:07 PM **C3 Ms. Bush Motion**  
6/10/2021 4:15 PM Recess

### **Friday, June 11, 2021**

### **C4 BSAI Pacific Cod Trawl CV LAPP**

6/11/2021 8:00 AM Call to Order  
6/11/2021 8:05 AM **C4 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Jon McCracken, Darrell Brannan (Brannan and Associates) and Mike Downs (Wislow Research), Abby Jahn and Joe Krieger  
6/11/2021 11:55 AM Lunch Break  
6/11/2021 12:35 PM C4 Presentation Continued  
6/11/2021 2:09 PM AP Report – Ruth Christiansen and Matt Upton  
6/11/2021 3:04 PM **C4 Public Testimony**  
6/11/2021 3:08 PM Phillip Powell  
6/11/2021 3:16 PM Bob Breskovich  
6/11/2021 3:21 PM Stoian Iankov  
6/11/2021 3:28 PM Michael Murdock  
6/11/2021 3:32 PM Tom Enlow  
6/11/2021 3:37 PM Shannon Carroll and ??  
6/11/2021 3:48 PM Frank Kelty  
6/11/2021 3:53 PM Mark Cooper

6/11/2021 3:57 PM	Abby Duffy
6/11/2021 4:05 PM	Chris Barrows
6/11/2021 4:18 PM	Steve Beard
6/11/2021 4:21 PM	Doug Wells
6/11/2021 4:29 PM	Brent Paine
6/11/2021 4:42 PM	Todd Loomis
6/11/2021 4:47 PM	Hunter Berns
6/11/2021 4:58 PM	Matt Upton
6/11/2021 5:00 PM	Recess

**Monday, June 14, 2021**

**D4 Risk Table Report**

6/14/2021 8:00 AM	Call to Order
6/14/2021 8:05 AM	<b>D4 SSC Presentation</b> – Dr. Sherri Dressel

**C4 BSAI Pacific Cod Trawl CV LAPP Continued**

6/14/2021 9:14 AM	<b>C4 Public Testimony Continued</b>
6/14/2021 9:14 AM	Paul Wilkins
6/14/2021 9:20 AM	Chris Cooper
6/14/2021 9:24 AM	Bert Ashley
6/14/2021 9:27 AM	Julianne Curry
6/14/2021 9:32 AM	Franke Brown
6/14/2021 9:37 AM	Jeff Lackey
6/14/2021 9:40 AM	Caitlin Yeager
6/14/2021 9:56 AM	George Pollock
6/14/2021 10:01 AM	Steven Minor
6/14/2021 10:10 AM	Ernie Weiss
6/14/2021 10:14 AM	Mateo Paz-Soldan
6/14/2021 10:18 AM	Layton Lockett
6/14/2021 10:24 AM	Heather McCarty
6/14/2021 10:30 AM	Jeff Kauffman
6/14/2021 10:39 AM	Hannah Heimbuch
6/14/2021 10:50 AM	Gerry Davis & Landry Price
6/14/2021 10:54 AM	Dan Martin
6/14/2021 10:56 AM	Gerry Merrigan
6/14/2021 11:12 AM	Theresa Peterson
6/14/2021 11:18 AM	Nanci Cooper
6/14/2021 11:20 AM	Jamie Goen
6/14/2021 11:29 AM	Alexus Kwachka
6/14/2021 11:33 AM	Trent Hartill
6/14/2021 11:39 AM	Julie Bonney
6/14/2021 11:47 AM	Jake Everich
6/14/2021 12:23 PM	Lunch Break

6/14/2021 12:34 PM	<b>C4 Public Testimony Continued</b>
6/14/2021 12:35 PM	Rebecca Skinner
6/14/2021 12:45 PM	Patrick O'Donnell
6/14/2021 12:53 PM	Robby Harrington
6/14/2021 12:56 PM	Kori Allen
6/14/2021 12:59 PM	Joe Ham
6/14/2021 1:03 PM	Mike Hyde
6/14/2021 1:09 PM	Sylvia Ettefagh
6/14/2021 1:13 PM	Dave Fraser
6/14/2021 1:27 PM	Heather Mann
6/14/2021 1:45 PM	Break
6/14/2021 2:18 PM	<b>C4 Ms. Baker Motion</b>
6/14/2021 6:01 PM	Recess

**Tuesday, June 15, 2021**

**D1 BSAI Pacific Cod Small Boat Access**

6/15/2021 8:00 AM	<b>D1 Presentation</b> – NPFMC staff, Dr. Kate Haapala
6/15/2021 8:30 AM	<b>D1 Public Testimony</b>
6/15/2021 8:34 AM	Adam Lalich
6/15/2021 8:37 AM	Dustin Dickerson
6/15/2021 8:51 AM	Frank Kelty
6/15/2021 8:55 AM	Hannah Heimback
6/15/2021 9:15 AM	<b>D1 Ms. Baker Motion</b>
6/15/2021 9:40 AM	Break

**D4 SSC Workshop on Risk Table Advice - Continued**

6/15/2021 9:51 AM	<b>D4 Ms. Kimball Motion</b>
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**D2 Sablefish Trawl Overages**

6/15/2021 10:04 AM	<b>D2 Presentation</b> – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean
6/15/2021 10:39 AM	AP Report
6/15/2021 10:56 AM	<b>D2 Public Testimony</b>
6/15/2021 10:56 AM	Paul Clampitt
6/15/2021 11:00 AM	Bob Alverson
6/15/2021 11:10 AM	Steve Martell
6/15/2021 11:15 AM	Chad See
6/15/2021 11:23 AM	Karl Haflinger
6/15/2021 11:30 PM	Lunch Break
6/15/2021 12:32 PM	Megan Williams
6/15/2021 12:36 PM	John Gruver
6/15/2021 12:42 PM	Beth Concepcion
6/15/2021 12:52 PM	Hannah Heimback
6/15/2021 1:00 PM	Theresa Peterson

6/15/2021 1:04 PM Alexander Stubbs  
6/15/2021 1:08 PM Alexis Kwachka  
6/15/2021 1:12 PM Arne Fuglvog  
6/15/2021 1:23 PM **D2 Mr. Jensen Motion**

### **D3 BS Fishery Ecosystem Plan – FEP Team Report, Climate Change Taskforce Report**

6/15/2021 1:45 PM **D3 FEP Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Diana Evans and AFSC, Kerim Aydin  
6/15/2021 3:03 PM **D3 CCTF Report** – NPFMC staff, Dr. Diana Stram and AFSC, Kirstin Holsman  
6/15/2021 3:10 PM Ecosystem Committee Report – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean  
6/15/2021 3:26 PM **D3 Mr. Tweit Motion**

### **Wednesday, June 16, 2021**

#### **E1 Staff Tasking**

6/16/2021 8:32 AM David Witherell Overview  
6/16/2021 8:35 AM Balance of Ecosystem Committee Report – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean  
6/16/2021 9:04 AM Staff Tasking Overview Continued  
6/16/2021 9:36 AM **E Public Testimony**  
6/16/2021 9:36 AM Steve Minor  
6/16/2021 9:40 AM Jaylene Wheeler  
6/16/2021 9:44 AM Craig Lowenberg  
6/16/2021 9:49 AM Frank Kelty  
6/16/2021 9:54 AM Hannah Heimbuch  
6/16/2021 9:59 AM Edward Poulsen  
6/16/2021 10:22 AM Heather McCarty  
6/16/2021 10:24 AM John Iani  
6/16/2021 10:26 AM Stephanie Quinn-Davidson  
6/16/2021 10:37 AM Theresa Peterson  
6/16/2021 10:40 AM Jon Warrenchuk  
6/16/2021 10:43 AM Chris Woodley  
6/16/2021 10:46 AM Rebecca Skinner  
6/16/2021 11:22 AM **C1 Ms. Baker Motion** – AI Golden King Crab  
6/16/2021 11:30 AM **C1 Ms. Kimball Motion** - Outreach  
6/16/2021 11:46 AM **C1 Mr. Tweit Motion** – Ecosystem Workplan  
6/16/2021 12:30 PM Meeting Adjourned

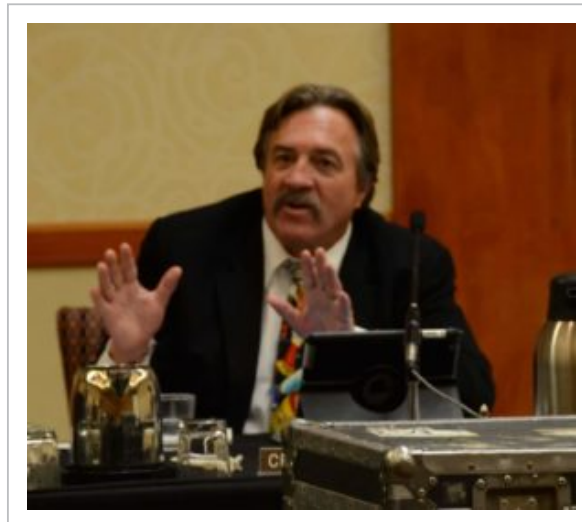
# June 2021 Newsletter

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## Craig Cross retires from Council member seat

Craig Cross, long-time fixture in the Council process, participated in his last meeting as a Councilmember after having served the limited 3 terms. Mr. Cross brought decades of personal experience in many of the fisheries and programs the Council manages. Craig became active on the Council's Advisory Panel in 1996 and served for 16 years and an industry representative before being appointed to the Council. Mr. Cross drafted some "lessons learned" from his years in the Council process:

1. Nothing in this process is by accident.
2. It seems you always have to pick a side, even if you don't want to.
3. Not everyone thinks a large catcher processor is cool.
4. It does matter where you live and where your company is based.
5. Fishermen and captains are wise and know a lot, but not everything.
6. Captains and fishermen are right about young fishery biologists.
7. What is a valueless fish today, may be a treasure tomorrow, so treat them as such.
8. It takes 6 votes at the Council.
9. Don't try to show up staff or catch them in a mistake, you will need their help next time.
10. Being earnest, sincere and respectful, will take you a long way in this process.



Thank you Craig, for your dedication to Alaska's fisheries, and the people involved in them.

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## Appointments and Call for Nominations

### GOA Groundfish Plan Team appointment

The Council appointed Andrew Olson to the GOA Groundfish Plan Team. Mr. Olson serves as the Southeast Regional Groundfish-Shellfish Coordinator for ADF&G. Mr. Olson is responsible for supervising all groundfish research in the Southeast Region and he has served as the principal investigator on Demersal Shelf Rockfish and Southeast sablefish stock assessment surveys.

### Call for Council Committee Nominations

The Council is soliciting nominations for a partial coverage observer representative for the **Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee** (PCFMAC). The PCFMAC convenes industry members, agency representatives, and observer/EM coverage providers to advise the Council on issues related to partial

coverage monitoring in the North Pacific halibut and groundfish fisheries. Please submit a letter of interest to Kate Haapala ([kate.haapala@noaa.gov](mailto:kate.haapala@noaa.gov)) by July 16, 2021, as the next PCFMAC meeting will be September 2021.

The Council is also soliciting nominations to fill a vacancy for an additional EM service provider for the **Trawl Electronic Monitoring Committee**. The Trawl EM Committee brings together industry members, agency representatives, and EM service providers to collaboratively design, test and develop electronic monitoring systems to suit the needs of the Alaska trawl catcher vessel fisheries. Please send a letter of interest to Anna Henry ([anna.henry@noaa.gov](mailto:anna.henry@noaa.gov)) by July 16, 2021.

## NOAA Fisheries seeks nominations for Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

NOAA Fisheries is accepting nominations through July 29, 2021 to fill vacancies on the [Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee](#). MAFAC advises the Secretary of Commerce on all living marine resource matters that are the responsibility of the Department of Commerce. The Committee researches, evaluates, and provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary and NOAA on the development and implementation of agency policies that address science and regulatory programs critical to the mission and goals of the NOAA Fisheries Service.

MAFAC members are highly qualified, diverse individuals with experience across the wide spectrum of fisheries, the seafood industry, marine resource management and conservation, and human dimensions associated with living marine resources. Members may be associated with tribes and indigenous peoples, environmental organizations, academia, consumer groups, and other marine life interest groups. A MAFAC member may not be a federal employee, member of a Regional Fishery Management Council, registered federal lobbyist, or state employee. Membership is voluntary, and except for reimbursable travel and related expenses, service is without pay.

Full nomination instructions and guidelines are available on the [Federal Register](#). For questions or more information, please contact Heidi Lovett, MAFAC Assistant Director, [heidi.lovett@noaa.gov](mailto:heidi.lovett@noaa.gov).

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## Observer Report on 2020 Deployment During Covid

The Council received a presentation from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the 2020 Observer Annual Report and provided recommendations for the development of the 2022 Draft Annual Deployment Plan (ADP). The Annual Report provides a scientific evaluation of the deployment of observers in 2020 to evaluate if deployment expectations were met that year. The report also includes information describing the program, enforcement trends, outreach efforts, and agency recommendations for developing the 2022 Draft ADP. The Council also received a report from the Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC) and Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC) on recommendations for the upcoming 2022 Draft ADP and ongoing analytical work for cost efficiencies in the partial coverage observer program.

The Council commends NMFS on the Annual Report, and all the hard work from observers, observer and electronic monitoring providers, fishermen, and staff that made observer coverage possible during a

challenging year. The Council supports NMFS' recommendations for the 2022 Draft ADP listed in section 6.1 of the Annual Report.

- Maintaining the three gear-based deployment strata (pot, hook-and-line, and trawl)
- Evaluating trip and port-based deployment approaches. Port-based deployment should only evaluate the existing 14 key ports from which observers deployed in 2020 and 2021 and reflect updated COVID-19 rules.
- Maintaining the 15% baseline hurdle for each gear type and optimize place all optimized days above the baseline coverage level on trawl gear. Currently, optimization is based on discards, Chinook salmon PSC, and halibut PSC. The Council supports evaluation of the FMAC suggestion to ensure optimization days if funding alone is not sufficient, as practicable.
- The Council supports expanding the fixed gear EM pool as funding allows. A vessel's ability to share EM systems in select ports should be considered as an additional criterion to prioritize new candidate EM vessels for the EM pool.

The Council further supports the May 2021 FMAC recommendations including completion of the comprehensive partial coverage cost efficiencies analysis in 2022 for implementation in the 2024 ADP and in time to inform and affect the next Federal observer contract which is set to expire in August 2024. The Council priorities for cost efficiency in partial coverage remain: 1) completing a regulated program for use of EM for pelagic trawl in the GOA and BSAI; 2) integration of electronic monitoring into the overall monitoring of fixed gear; and 3) evaluation of different criteria to define the 'zero selection' pool for fixed gear. The Council recommends ongoing communication with the Council's PCFMAC during this process. Staff contact is Anna Henry.

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## Trawl Electronic Monitoring

The Council took action to initiate analysis to implement electronic monitoring (EM) on pollock catcher vessels (CVs) using pelagic trawl gear and tender vessels transporting pollock catch in the eastern Bering Sea (BS) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA).

 **Photo credit: Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission**

The principal investigators on the BS and GOA pelagic pollock EM exempted fishing permit (EFP) presented an interim report on the progress of the EFP through April 2021. The EFP report highlighted that objectives are being met: maximized retention can be accomplished with limited changes in vessel activities, EM is effective in capturing at sea discard events to support catch accounting, biological sampling goals can be met by shoreside observers with effective communication, salmon bycatch accounting is improved, specifically in WGOA pollock fishery that relied on estimates with large variance under status quo methods and initial comparisons indicate that EM is more cost-effective, especially after the initial cost of systems in the first year.

The Council also received a report from the trawl EM Committee and reviewed a draft set of alternatives developed by NMFS and Council staff. The Council adopted the purpose and need statement as included in the draft alternatives document and recommended by the Trawl EM Committee and approved the following three alternatives to analyze to implement a regulated trawl EM program:



- Alternative 1: status quo—EM would not be implemented and catch monitoring would be provided by at-sea observers.
- Alternative 2: Electronic Monitoring is implemented on pelagic pollock trawl catcher vessels and tenders delivering to shoreside processors in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska.
- Alternative 3: Electronic Monitoring is implemented on pelagic pollock trawl catcher vessels delivering to shoreside processors and not on tenders.
  - Option 1 Bering Sea
  - Option 2 Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska

The Council was clear that their goal and intent is to implement Alternative 2 and include all CVs and tenders in the BS and GOA in the regulated program, as it is currently structured in the EFP. However, Alternative 3 is included in the alternative set to support a robust analysis of the elements necessary to implement an EM option in three different pollock fisheries (CVs in the BS, GOA and tenders), and provide a framework to promote analysis of the various complexities and unique characteristics of the three groups. The Council also recognized that there are some significant logistical and operational challenges in implementing EM. If the analysis identifies that one group of vessels is having unanticipated difficulties in addressing those logistical challenges and data are not available to be able to proceed with a regulated program, Alternative 3 allows for these challenges to continue to be examined and addressed through an EFP, without slowing implementation for the remainder of the program. The Council supported the current list of elements from the draft alternatives document be included in the analysis, understanding that new elements may be added and current elements may be modified in the future. The Council recognized the success of the collaborative approach of the EFP team and encouraged the continuation of this team to address complex issues as they arise in the analysis.

The implementation timeline is for the regulated trawl EM program to begin in January 2024.

The Council also passed a motion to draft a letter of support for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) EM funding proposals including:

- A proposal from United Catcher Boats (UCB), Alaska Groundfish Data Bank and Aleutians East Borough (AEB) to improve and expand EM systems onboard pollock mid-water trawl catcher vessels in the BS and GOA; including the sub-project from AEB to test current trawl EM systems on boats using fixed-gear in the WGOA.
- A proposal from the Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association (ALFA) and North Pacific Fishermen’s Association (NPFA) to develop machine learning algorithms that can evaluate image quality.
- A proposal from the Fishing Vessel Owner’s Association (FVOA) to form and test an industry run co-op model that will contract with existing NMFS-certified observer contractors and EM providers to improve cost efficiencies in the current partial coverage observer program.

Staff contact is Anna Henry.

## BSAI Crab

The Council specified OFLs and ABCs for Aleutian Islands golden king crab (AIGKC) and Pribilof Islands blue king crab (PIBKC) and accepted the updated BSAI Crab SAFE chapters for those stocks. The Council also reviewed model

**Golden king crab, (*Lithodes* *aequispinus*)** photo courtesy of



scenarios for Eastern Bering Sea snow crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, and Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab and several other issues from the May 2021 Crab Plan Team Report.

ADF&G

For AIGKC, the Council adopted an OFL of 4,817 mt and an ABC of 3,372 mt for the 2021/22 fishing year. The Council's specified ABC reflected a 30% buffer below OFL, consistent with the SSC's recommendations for several sources of uncertainty in the stock assessment. Uncertainty issues included a retrospective pattern in estimated biomass for the eastern portion of the stock, problems with model convergence, and declining fishery CPUE. Based on the updated stock assessment, AIGKC is not overfished.

For Pribilof Island blue king crab, which is assessed biennially, the Council adopted an OFL of 116 mt and an ABC of 87 mt for both the 2021/22 and 2022/23 fishing years consistent with the recommendations of the SSC and Crab Plan Team. The PIBKC stock is "overfished" and is in rebuilding, and no directed fishing is permitted. The specified ABC accommodates the occurrence of small amounts of PIBKC bycatch that occurs in other fisheries.

For both AIGKC and PIBKC, because 2021 catch data are still preliminary, a determination of stock status with respect to overfishing will not be provided until the final 2021 BSAI Crab SAFE is approved by the SSC at the October 2021 Council meeting.

Although the Crab Plan Team discussed development of risk tables for reducing ABC below the maximum permissible level, the Council addressed that issue separate from the Crab Plan Team report agenda item. Following a report from the SSC, the Council determined that further work on risk tables is needed through the Joint Groundfish Plan Teams before application to the crab specifications process.

Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

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## BSAI Pcod Trawl CV LAPP

At this meeting, the Council conducted a second initial review of an analysis for a Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Pacific cod trawl catcher vessel (CV) limited access program (LAPP). After reviewing the analysis, the SSC and Advisory Panel recommendations, and listening to public testimony, the Council recommended releasing the analysis for final action during the October 2021 meeting after addressing comments from the SSC to the extent practicable. The Council selected a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) and adjusted several of the elements and options. A summary of those adjustments and the PPA is provided below.

The proposed program considers allocations of quota shares (QS) to groundfish LLP licenses based on the harvest of targeted BSAI Pacific cod during the qualifying years. The action also considers allocating harvest shares to a processor permit based on processing history of BSAI Pacific cod during the qualifying years. Harvesters and processors could then assign the QS to cooperatives on an annual basis as an exclusive harvest privilege allocation.

The purpose of this action is to improve the prosecution of the fishery with the intent of promoting safety and stability in the harvesting and processing sectors, increasing the value of the fishery, minimizing bycatch to the extent practicable, providing for the sustained participation of fishery-dependent communities, and ensuring the sustainability and viability of the resource.

The following is a summary of the PPA as well as major adjustments to the elements and options made at the October meeting:

- Element 1 – Selected as part of the PPA: The Council adjusted the PPA option to require a minimum of three LLP licenses for cooperative formation rather than a minimum of three unique LLP license holders to form a cooperative.
- Element 2 – Selected as part of the PPA: 1) Options 2.2.2 (2009-2019) qualifying years, 2) in the case of stacked LLP licenses (Option 2.3.2) that authorized qualifying catch history when no agreement is provided by the vessel owner/license holders at the time of application, qualifying catch history would be assigned to an LLP license by the owner of the vessel that made the catch, and when only one of the LLP licenses authorized the catch, that qualifying catch history would be assigned to the LLP license that authorized the catch, 3) Element 2.5 which would allocate A and B season BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod only leaving the C season allocation as a limited access trawl fishery.
- Element 3 – Selected as part of the PPA: Establish a separate halibut BSAI PSC limit for the trawl CV Pacific cod sector based on historic use of halibut and establish a separate crab BSAI PSC limits based on the proportion of BSAI Pacific cod allocated to the trawl CV sector and the AFA CP sector. Also included in the PPA is a 25% reduction of halibut PSC and a 35% reduction of crab PSC applied to the PSC limits established for the trawl CV sector. The Council added Element 3.4 and selected it as a PPA, which would establish a separate C season halibut and crab PSC apportion (5-15%) before applying PSC limit reductions. The Council added Suboption 3.3.3 that would phase in PSC limit reductions over 3 years but that option was not selected as part of the PPA. Finally, Council added language that clearly indicates how PSC limits are transferable between cooperatives, which was selected as a PPA.
- Element 4 – Selected as a PPA which includes Option 4.1 and Option 4.2. Option 4.1 was adjusted to only modify the AFA non-exempt CV GOA groundfish sideboard limits based on Element 2.2.2 (2009-2019) qualifying years. AFA GOA halibut PSC sideboard limits for the AFA non-exempt CVs would remain unchanged. Option 4.2 was adjusted to authorize leasing of BSAI Pacific cod QS for vessels assigned to a qualified GOA exempt LLP license that do not fish in the GOA, except when fishing under the CGOA Rockfish Program, during the calendar year. Finally, the Council included Suboption 4.2.1 in its PPA, but did not select an average annual qualifying amount of BSAI Pacific cod history at this time.
- Element 5 – Selected as part of the PPA: 1) all of Element 5.1 which states that all processors with an eligible FPP or FFP are eligible to process BSAI Pacific cod under this program (subject to eligibility requirements under BSAI FMP Amendment 120), 2) Element 5.2 which would limit directed BSAI Pacific cod that can be delivered by trawl CVs to eligible CPs acting as a mothership. The Council did not select, at this time, the basis (to calculate the percentage) of the limitation, 3) Element 5.4 which would allocate harvest shares to eligible processors, but the Council did not select a percentage option at this time. The Council also modified Element 5 by adding: 1) revised option 5.2.1 to add 125% of processing history cap, and 2) added option 5.2.2 to allow each eligible CP acting as a mothership to process up to its processing history during the qualifying years, 3) another option for trawl CVs to qualify for delivering to the offshore sector based on either 90% or 75% or more of the quota arising from the history of the eligible LLP license having been delivered offshore during the qualifying years in Element 2.2, and 4) language stating processors that are no longer active (no longer hold an FPP) would not be issued harvest shares. The processing history associated with these processors would be deducted from the total amount of eligible processing history.

- Element 6 – Selected as part of the PPA is Option 6.1, which would require cooperatives reserve a 10% set-aside for delivery to an AI shoreplant if the community of Adak or Atka file a notice of intent to process. The Council clarified through new language that the set-aside is in effect only during the A season and any remaining portion of that set-aside will be reallocated to cooperatives in the same proportion as the initial allocation. Also included as part of the PPA, the Council added new language requiring cooperatives to establish intercooperative agreement that describes how either Option 6.1 (set aside) or Option 6.2 (shore plant allocation) will be administered by the cooperatives to ensure that harvests in the BS do not exceed the minimum set aside or shore plant allocation amounts. Although not part of the PPA, the Council also added language that the intercooperative agreement must also establish how cooperatives would ensure that CVs < 60' assigned to an LLP license with transferable AI trawl endorsement have the opportunity to harvest a percentage of the AI set-aside for delivery to AI shoreplants.
- Element 7 – Selected as part of the PPA.
- Element 8 – Selected as part of the PPA are the following: 1) Option 8.1 establishes a 5% hold and use cap using an individual and collective rule with a grandfather provision. 2) Option 8.2 establishes a 4% vessel use cap with a grandfather provision. 3) Option 8.3 establishes a 15% ownership and use cap on processor issued harvest shares using an individually and collective rule and a grandfather provision. 4) Option 8.4 establishes a 20% processing facility use cap with a grandfather provision.
- Element 9 – Selected as part of the PPA. The Council clarified that a cooperative is formed by holders of qualified LLP licenses with trawl CV Pacific cod QS, and LLP licenses may be assigned to only one cooperative. The Council also added language that a list of CVs, including pot gear vessels if Element 14 is selected that are eligible to harvest cooperative CQ, must be identified in the annual cooperative application.
- Element 10 – Selected as part of the PPA.
- Element 11 – Selected as part of the PPA.
- Element 12 – Selected as part of the PPA
- Element 13 – Selected as part of the PPA
- Element 14 – Selected as part of the PPA. The Council clarified that CVs using pot gear are associated with a cooperative and are not members of the cooperative, and pot CVs harvesting CQ would be subject to 100% observer coverage.

The Council also requested that staff adjust the strawman alternatives to include Option 2.4 (blend option) and Option 5.4.2 (10%) and 5.4.5 (25%) in the October 2021 final action analysis. The final Council **motion** is posted. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

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## BSAI Pacific Cod Small Boat Access

The Council reviewed a discussion paper and initiated an analysis for new access opportunities for smaller vessels (e.g., <57 ft) in the Bering Sea Aleutian Island (BSAI) Pacific Cod less than 60 ft hook-and-line (HAL) or pot sector by allowing smaller HAL/pot vessels to harvest Pacific cod from the BSAI Pacific cod jig sector allocation. Currently, the less than 60 ft HAL or pot sector has a 2% allocation, and the jig sector a 1.4% allocation, of BSAI Pacific cod under Amendment 85. After reviewing the discussion paper, the Council initiated an analysis and adopted the following alternatives:

**Targeted BSAI Pcod harvest (mt) by vessel LOA subgroup from 2008 to 2020**



**Alternative 1:** Status quo

**Alternative 2:** Redefine the current BSAI Pacific cod jig sector to include HAL/pot CVs less than or equal to:

**Option 1:** 55 feet LOA.

**Option 2:** 56 feet LOA.

**Suboption:** B-season fishery would remain jig gear only fishery.

By initiating this analysis, the Council recognized that increased participation from higher-capacity catcher vessels greater than 57 ft LOA in the BSAI Pacific cod less than 60 ft HAL/pot catcher vessel sector, which has negatively impacted smaller vessels in the sector through shortened seasons. These shortened seasons limit smaller vessels' ability to compete within the sector as they are limited to fish in less productive waters near port due to their size. The jig sector allocation has not historically been fully utilized, particularly in the A and C seasons. Allowing smaller HAL/pot vessels to harvest Pacific cod from the jig sector allocation may provide additional opportunities for current fishery participants and potential new entrants with smaller catcher vessels without negatively impacting catcher vessels using jig gear. Staff contact for this issue is Kate Haapala: [kate.haapala@noaa.gov](mailto:kate.haapala@noaa.gov).

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## Sablefish Overages

The Council reviewed a discussion paper, requested in December 2020, to examine management tools that the Council may consider to limit or prevent overages of trawl sablefish area- and sector-specific allocations. The Council initiated the discussion paper in response to public comment and a letter submitted to the Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries in October 2020 that identified a number of complaints about the trawl sector exceeding its sablefish allocation. The paper reviewed a number of potential management measures identified by the Council and provided context for sablefish ACLs and how they are managed, and sablefish catch in the trawl fisheries. After review, the Council passed a motion to take no further action, but did note during staff tasking that they are interested in hearing from the trawl sector about plans to avoid sablefish in the future.

photo courtesy of NOAA



A single sablefish stock occupies the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska. As appropriate for a single stock, a single Overfishing Level (OFL) is established for sablefish, statewide. Current model predictions indicate that this stock is not subject to overfishing, not overfished, and not approaching an overfished condition. Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs) for sablefish are specified by management area, and have been reduced from the maximum permissible ABC for the last several years. Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) are set well below biomass estimates, and Total Allowable Catches (TACs) are set well below ABC.

Recent large year classes have resulted in large numbers of juvenile sablefish that appear to be ubiquitous on the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska grounds. The large year classes have made it difficult for directed longline fisheries and trawl fisheries to avoid small sablefish. As a result, trawl fisheries have exceeded several area-based sablefish allocations in recent years. The potential management measures reviewed in the discussion paper were considered to limit or prevent overages in the trawl fisheries. Preliminary review of the proposed

management measures did not indicate that any of the proposed measures would have an appreciable effect on the catch of sablefish in the trawl fisheries. Trawl fisheries operate under a number of Prohibited Species Catch limits that are monitored closely by the cooperatives. Sectors have developed methods to track rates of bycatch for multiple species, including Chinook and chum salmon, herring, halibut, and sablefish. The Council encouraged the cooperatives to develop non-regulatory actions to reduce sablefish encounters in years of high abundance.

Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

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## Research Priorities

The Council received an update from the SSC on its proposed process for conducting triennial review of research priorities. Although the Council had approved three-year research priorities at its April 2021 meeting, the SSC deferred aspects of the review process and changes to a *strategic* priorities to the June 2021 meeting. For subsequent triennial reviews, the Council's Plan Teams and other advisory groups will not review all of the projects listed in the research priorities database. Those projects, however, will inform development of a strategic vision for research. The SSC urged that the review process be limited to candidates for a "Top 10", with a short abstract for each.

The Council discussed the importance of improving the visibility of public input opportunities (on-ramps) for research priorities review and Council staff will communicate these opportunities through the website. Public comment opportunities were recognized as needing to be transparent, predictable, efficient, and trackable so groups better understand how their ideas were considered by the SSC.

Other recommendations by the SSC included:

In preparation for the next triennial review-

- On-ramps for receiving stakeholder input on priorities.
- Rubric with a clear goal statement of how to evaluate priorities for the Top 10.
- SSC review of items 1-2 and an updated "Research Priorities and Process document".
- Maintaining database of past priorities, but without review by SSC and Plan Teams.
- SSC subgroup engagement with NPRB for 2024.

As part of the triennial review-

- SSC update of high level categorical narratives for Strategic and COM priorities.
- Top 3 – 5 priorities from Plan Team and other designated on-ramp entities including a ~150 word abstract.
- SSC review of priorities for Top 10.
- Priorities not selected for Top 10 will not continue to be tracked.

Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

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## Central Arctic Agreement

The Council noted the receipt of the Instrument of Approval of the Agreement from the People's Republic of China that allows the implementation of the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (Agreement). The Agreement, completed in Ilulissat, Canada on 3 October 2018, commits the parties to not authorize any vessel flying its flag to engage in commercial fishing in the high seas portion of the Arctic Ocean. The Council noted the extensive efforts by former Council member and current Ecosystem Committee member, David Benton, to complete the agreement and congratulated Mr. Benton on the implementation of the Agreement. More information on the agreement can be found on the [NOAA website](#).

Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

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## Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan



### Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

The Council reviewed reports from the FEP Team and the Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF), and continues to support their work in progress.

## Bering Sea FEP Team

The FEP Team provided a report on their May 2021 meeting, at which they discussed the development of a new ecosystem report focused on strategic and long-term indicators as well as the ongoing work of the two FEP Taskforces which are focused on assessing climate change resilience and protocols for using local knowledge, traditional knowledge, and subsistence information in the Council process. The Team clarified the purpose of the proposed new Bering Sea Ecosystem Health Report and how it is different from existing ecosystem reports, and outlined a plan for producing a pilot of the report for next year. At the Council's direction, the Team will incorporate recommendations from the Ecosystem Committee and the SSC in its ongoing design and development. Staff contact for the FEP Plan Team is Diana Evans.



## Climate Change Taskforce Workplan



### Proposed "on-ramps" and existing coordination

The Council also received an update from the Bering Sea FEP Climate Change Task Force (CCTF) on the milestones and deliverables for their workplan, which was approved by the council in February. The Council endorsed the work plan and supports the goal of the Climate Change Module as developed by the CCTF: 'to facilitate the Council's work towards climate-ready fisheries management that helps ensure both short- and long-term resilience for the Bering Sea' as well as the steps outlined by the CCTF to achieve this goal. The CCTF workplan, milestones and deliverable are posted to the Council website. The CCTF short-term goals for their fall 2021 meeting include providing a Climate readiness briefing for the Council which outlines how current management is poised to respond to climate change and identifies gaps

and areas for improvement as well as an outline of the planned Climate report. The process outlines in the CCTF workplan is displayed below with orange indicating the new climate information feeding into the Council's management system as a result of the proposed process to be developed by the CCTF between now and 2025. Staff contact for the CCTF is Diana Stram.

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## Risk Tables

The Council supported SSC guidance on the application of the risk tables for the fall groundfish assessment cycle. Previously, the Council had asked to review SSC advice on the risk table coming out of the February 2021 SSC Risk Table [workshop](#). The purpose of the workshop was for the SSC to provide feedback to stock assessment authors and Plan Teams, and to determine the SSC's plan to assess risk table performance. The SSC prepared a summary of the workshop, and at its June meeting the SSC used the workshop report as a basis to provide guidance on the development and use of risk tables in the fall assessment cycle. The [updated version of the report](#) reflects the SSC's most current recommendations regarding Risk Tables.

The Council specifically supported SSC recommendations to provide risk tables during each full assessment, and delay of application of the risk table to the crab specifications process until further progress is made on groundfish. In addition, the [Council motion](#) requests the SSC consider the following when developing its final recommendations in October:

- Include description of any new or modified concern categories, including whether positive stock trends should be included as similar 'concerns'.
- Request the SSC consider the roles of the stock authors and/or Plan Teams in presenting risk, and the role of the SSC in making specific recommendations on potential reductions from maxABC, if appropriate.
- Clear language relative to SSC guidance that the risk tables are intended to inform the SSC determination of adjusting ABC from maximum permissible when needed. Previous reductions to maxABC should not be the basis for reducing maxABC unless relevant risk factors for a stock continue to be present.

It is anticipated that the Plan Teams will review the SSC and Council guidance at the September Plan Team meetings, provide any additional input, and the guidance for using risk tables in 2021 assessments will be finalized in October. Consideration of risk and its incorporation into the assessment process will continue to be regularly reviewed by the Council and SSC.

Staff contact is Sara Cleaver.

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## Staff Tasking

The Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects, and identified new tasking. The revised [3 meeting outlook](#) reflects this guidance.



# Return to In-Person Meetings

The Council was briefed on staff progress with planning the transition back to in-person meetings, beginning in October. All Plan Team and Committee meetings will be held virtually through September 2021, and the Advisory Panel and the SSC will also meet virtually for the October meeting. Based on Council direction, staff will tentatively plan to hold the October 2021 Council meeting itself in person. The Council supported this phased-in approach in order to prioritize staff resources for piloting additional remote participation options as part of the return to in-person meetings, in particular allowing remote testimony at the Council, and in future, broadcasting AP and SSC meetings when they occur in-person.

## Other Tasking

The Council directed staff to write a letter to NFWF, in support of several electronic monitoring projects that have been submitted for funding (see discussion in [observer](#) and [trawl EM](#) newsletter articles).

The Council also provided the following additional direction:

- The Council [tasked](#) a discussion paper to consider changing the Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery start date and removing the facility use cap, in order to provide a live crab market opportunity for independent processing quota holders through custom processing arrangement as well as for more crab harvesters.
- The Council [endorsed](#) the Ecosystem Committee's proposed workplan to address a number of topics including northern fur seals, marine debris, areas-based management, GOA ecosystem-based fishery management research initiatives, and forage fish.
- The FMAC co-Chairs referenced an issue raised earlier in the meeting about a labor shortage of qualified observers for the Alaska fisheries, and noted they intend to follow up over the summer with NMFS, and report back to the Council.
- The Council [supported](#) the Executive Director working with Tanana Chiefs Conference to organize a potential outreach and engagement trip for Council members and staff over the summer.
- The Council also requested staff post discussion papers, reports, and analyses in support of upcoming agenda items at least 7 days before the closing of the written comment period whenever possible.

Finally, the Council appointed Andrew Olson to the GOA Groundfish Plan Team, and issued a [call for nominations](#) for vacancies on the PCFMAC and Trawl EM committees.

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## Ecosystem Committee

The Council reviewed the [ecosystem committee report](#) from their May 2021 meeting and made several recommendations for the ecosystem committee workplan and tasking. The Council supported the ecosystem committee recommendation for staff to finalize plans for ongoing briefings with northern fur seal co-managers and researchers and schedule them on an ecosystem committee calendar. The Council requested that the ecosystem committee receive an update in October 2021 from the Alaska Regional Office Protected Species Division on the update to the Conservation Plan for the Eastern Pacific Stock of Northern Fur Seal, including information from the co-managers on the Pribilof Islands. The Council requested that staff reach out to organizations addressing marine debris in Alaska to develop an overview of activities. The Council

suggests that the OECM discussion paper requested by the Council for October 2021 could be delayed until other projects to address OECMs are understood. The Council requested that the ecosystem committee continue to track how important ecological areas identified by tribes and NGOs can contribute to the EO 14008 discussion and whether additional management measures can strengthen their resilience to climate change. The Council tasked staff with developing a report on the status of research initiatives taking place in the GOA and timelines associated with those projects. The Council tasked staff with developing a report on the state of scientific understanding of forage fish ecology, coastwide, the status of research initiatives on forage fish ecology, and the timelines associated with those projects. The Council requested that the Ecosystem Workshop steering group meet again soon to continue planning.

Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

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## Upcoming Meetings

### Council Committees, Plan Teams, and Taskforces

The Council will be holding all meetings virtually through September 2021. For the October 2021 Council meeting, the AP and the SSC will be held virtually, with the Council meeting itself tentatively scheduled to occur in person in Anchorage.

Committee and Plan Team meetings that are currently anticipated, all occurring virtually, include:

- **BSAI Crab Plan Team** – September 13-17, 2021
- **BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams** – September 20-24, 2021
- **Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC)** – TBD (Sep 2021)
- **Ecosystem Committee** – TBD (September 2021)
- **IFQ Committee (T)** – TBD (September 2021)