

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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#5-87

NEWSLETTER

10/5/87

Council Plans for Future Groundfish Management Highlight September Meeting

The Council met September 23-25 in Anchorage. The agenda included a review of halibut management criteria and goals, proposals for 1987 halibut management, review and approval of Amendment 16 to the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fishery management plan, discussion of future management regimes for sablefish and long-term goals for the total groundfish complex in the Gulf and Bering Sea Aleutians. The Council also reviewed a draft fishery management plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands king and Tanner crab, approved preliminary harvest quotas for 1988 for groundfish, and elected new officers. Details of these and other Council actions are found in this newsletter.

The Council's next meeting will be the week of December 7, when they will finalize groundfish harvest levels for 1988 and apportionments to U.S. and foreign fisheries. They also will review foreign allocations, vessel permits, and joint ventures for next year. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, and Permit Review Committee will also meet that week.

Council and SSC Elect Officers

James O. Campbell and John Peterson were elected to serve as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council for the next 12 months. Mr. Campbell, a member of the Council since 1978, has served as Chairman since 1984. He currently serves on the Community Advisory Board of Alaska Airlines, is Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Alaska Railroad, and is past President of the Alaska Division of Spenard Builders Supply.

John Peterson was appointed to the Council in 1984 and in August of this year was reappointed by the Secretary of Commerce for a second three-year term. Mr. Peterson is the past Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors for Ocean Beauty Seafoods and served on NOAA's 1986 Blue Ribbon Task Force to review and assess fishery management systems under the Magnuson Act.

Rich Marasco and Doug Eggers were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the SSC for the next twelve months. Dr. Marasco is the Director of the Resource Ecology and Fishery Management Division at the Northwest & Alaska Fisheries Center and Dr. Eggers is the Acting Chief Fisheries Scientist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Miscellaneous Meetings Scheduled

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>
Council Chairmen's Mtg	Oct. 9-10	Seattle, WA
1987 National Fishery Law Symposium	Oct. 9-10	Seattle, WA
Pacific Rim Debris Conf.	Oct. 12-16	Kona, HI
BSAI Crab Plan Team	Oct. 14	Juneau, AK
WAVE Meeting	Oct. 14-16	Vancouver Island
IRIS/INPFC	Oct. 22-30/31	Vancouver, BC
Council Bycatch Committee	Oct. 26-30	Seattle, WA
Public Hearing Industry Bycatch Proposal	Oct. 27	NMFS/Montlake Seattle, WA
Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission Annual Meeting	Oct. 27-28	San Pedro, CA
Fish Expo	Oct. 28-31	Seattle, WA
INPFC Plenary Session	Nov. 2-5	Vancouver, B.C.
IPHC Halibut Industry Mtg	Nov. 2	NWAFRC, Sand Point Bldg. 9, Rooms A & B
Regional Council Policy Team/Uniform Standards	Nov. 4-6	Denver, CO
SSC Review of Crab FMP	Nov. 12-13 (tent)	NWAFRC, Sand Point Seattle, WA
BSAI Groundfish Plan Team	Nov. 16-18	NWAFRC, Sand Point Seattle, WA
Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team	Nov. 16-19	NWAFRC, Sand Point Seattle, WA
Halibut Management Team	Nov. 19-20	NWAFRC, Sand Point Seattle, WA
AK Board of Fisheries (Finfish)	Nov. 28- Dec. 18	Anchorage, AK
AP/SSC Meetings	Dec. 6-7	Anchorage, AK
Council Meeting	Dec. 8-11/12	Anchorage, AK

Council Issues Call for AP Nominations

The current one-year Advisory Panel terms expire in December and the Council is now calling for nominations for 1988. Incumbents who indicate a desire to serve another term may be reappointed. Resumes for persons wishing to be considered for AP membership should be received at the Council office by 5:00 p.m., November 2. Please send them to the attention of Judy Willoughby, North Pacific Fishery Management Council, P.O. Box 103136, Anchorage, Alaska 99510. The Council will make new appointments in December, effective January 1988.

Private Non-profit Fishery Research Foundation

On September 20, 1987 the third public forum was held to discuss the formation of a private non-profit fishery foundation. The steering committee reviewed the possibility of user fees being levied on the industry by Congress, potential foundation-financed research and data gathering projects, draft bylaws and articles of incorporation, and a general work plan.

After a general discussion it was the consensus of the committee and the audience that background material and a resolution regarding the formation of a foundation should be sent to all relevant fishing and processing associations. The associations are to approve or disapprove the resolution within 60 days and notify the steering committee of their actions. A meeting will be held in conjunction with the 1987 Fish Expo to provide an opportunity for association members to ask questions about the foundation concept. The steering committee intends to hold an organizational meeting in conjunction with the December 8-11, 1987 Council meeting to which all associations approving the resolution will be invited.

Legislative Update

Reflagging

The fishery issue generating the most Congressional interest and action since the last Council meeting is reflagging of foreign processing vessels. In July, faced with proposed reflagging of Korean vessels, Congress quickly approved a temporary moratorium effective until October 15, 1987, intending to buy time to consider pending reflagging bills. The Senate Commerce Committee was to have held a mark-up on Senators Stevens and Murkowski's reflagging bill, S. 377, on September 22, but postponed it because proposed amendments were not yet fully developed. Floor action on House reflagging legislation, H.R. 2598, may be scheduled for mid-October. Language was added to that bill this summer restricting rebuilding or reconstruction of U.S. fish processing vessels to American yards and requiring all vessels seeking U.S. documentation after July 28, 1987 to have at least 51% ownership by U.S. citizens.

User Fees

H.R. 3341 was introduced on September 23, 1987 by Representative Don Young to levy license fees on fish processors and commercial and recreational fishermen in federal waters. The bill is entitled the "Fisheries Research Funding Act of 1987" and is intended to raise money for research programs. The money is to be channeled to the Marine Fisheries Commissions, the Regional Councils, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Plastics Pollution

Another bill implementing Annex V to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) was recently introduced. S. 1562, introduced by Senator Stevens on July 29, 1987, has been added to S. 560, S. 663, and H.R. 940 which also seek to implement Annex V. On September 16, the Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment and Coast Guard and Navigation Subcommittees of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee marked up H.R. 940. Title II of the bill, addressing entanglement and pollution problems associated with high seas driftnets, was deleted at the mark-up session.

Vessel Safety and Insurance Legislation

On September 16 the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing on S. 849, a bill that seeks to set safety standards for commercial fishing vessels and provide compensation for injured fishermen. The Council family was briefed on this bill in May. No substantive changes to the legislation were proposed at the hearing. Mark-ups on the House vessel safety legislation, H.R. 1830 and H.R. 1841, are expected in the near future.

NMFS to Department of Agriculture or Department of Interior

While there is legislation pending that would establish NOAA as an independent agency--S. 330, S. 821 and H.R. 2135--some consideration is being given to moving NMFS out of the Department of Commerce. Senator Pat Leahy is reported to be working on legislation that would move NMFS to the Department of Agriculture and some members of the oceans sciences community reportedly are lobbying Congress to move the Service to the Department of Interior.

Seafood Inspections

Senator Pat Leahy is also preparing legislation that would require the Department of Agriculture to inspect all commercially processed fish products used for human consumption. Senator Leahy's bill may be similar to H.R. 1483, introduced earlier this year by Representative Dorgan, that also proposes to establish a mandatory seafood inspection program.

National Marine Fisheries Service Reports on Crab Resources in the Bering Sea

The 1987 Eastern Bering Sea crab survey consisted of 380 successful trawl tows covering an area of approximately 135,900 square nautical miles, the same area covered in 1986 except that 6 stations northwest of the Pribilof Islands were omitted and 16 stations were added northwest of St. Matthew Island. Golden king crab were not surveyed. Twelve additional stations were towed at 10-mile intervals in water less than 25 fm deep along the coast of the Alaska Peninsula between 160° and 162°W longitude to assess the abundance of king crab in inshore waters. The following is a brief summary of survey findings:

Red king crab, Southeast and Pribilof Districts. Estimated 7.9 million legal males, an increase of about 30%. There was no significant change in the population of pre-recruits, but large females increased significantly by 240%. NMFS concludes the population is increasing in 1987 with an outlook of long-term improved recruitment.

Blue king crab, Pribilof Islands. Estimated 732,000 legal males, an increase of about 70%. No significant change in pre-recruits and a slight decrease in large females. NMFS characterized the population as stable but poor. Recruitment information is questionable because of inadequate data.

Blue king crab, St. Matthew, Northern District. Estimated 737,000 legal males, an increase of about 90%. No significant change in pre-recruits or large females. The population is characterized as stable but poor. Recruitment and reproduction information questionable due to inadequate data.

Tanner crab, Southeast and Pribilof Districts. Estimated 8.3 million legal males, a significant increase of 164%. Both pre-recruits and large females also showed significant increases of 53% and 163%, respectively. The population is increasing with significantly increased abundance of juveniles and improving recruitment.

Tanner crab, all districts, excluding northwest corner. Estimated 132.6 million large males, an increase of 60%. Both small males and large females showed significant increases of 260% and 520%, respectively. The population is increasing and the fishery is increasing because of expansion of grounds. Recruitment to the fishery is improving because of successful reproduction in recent years. Further increases are expected in the near term.

Hair crab. Estimated 1.2 million large males, no significant change. Pre-recruits also showed no significant change while females increased slightly. The fishery was characterized as declining, but juvenile production seems to be improving.

The detailed written report submitted to the Council was prepared by B.G. Stevens, R.A. MacIntosh and R.S. Otto at the Kodiak Island Laboratory, NMFS/NOAA, P.O. Box 1638, Kodiak, Alaska 99615.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Crab Plan

Last December the Council directed its Crab Management Committee and Plan Team to draft a fishery management plan for king and Tanner crab in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands that would give substantial deference to State of Alaska management. The Council reviewed the draft plan last week. It describes the fisheries, management approaches, and the roles of federal and state agencies. Management measures fall into three categories:

1. Fixed measures that require Council action and must be implemented by Federal regulation.
2. Frameworked measures that the State implements under specific criteria in the plan.
3. Measures left to the discretion of the State.

The plan has an appeals procedure which assures residents and non-residents access not only to State management agencies but also to federal managers. Overall, the draft plan attempts to strike a reasonable balance between federal oversight and flexible State management.

There is substantial controversy over whether management authority over crab in federal waters should be deferred to the State. The Council asked the Crab Management Committee to prepare another draft of the plan for review in January. The new draft should accommodate concerns about appropriate federal oversight and respond to Scientific and Statistical Committee concern about management strategies and the use of different exploitation rates at various population levels.

Pilot Domestic Observer Program Underway

Alaska Sea Grant is heading up the Council's pilot observer program on U.S. vessels fishing for groundfish off Alaska. The rapid Americanization of the groundfish resources of the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska and the commensurate decrease in the foreign fishing observer program have created a paucity in data needed to evaluate conditions of the fish stocks and impacts of management decisions.

The goal of the Council's voluntary program is to collect firsthand information on the catch and biological status of the groundfish resource as well as incidental harvest of other species. The pilot program is also serving as a trial run to resolve logistical problems of placing observers on domestic vessels. Only observers that are experienced and well trained in identifying and sampling various fish species are being used in the program. They are instructed to minimize any interruption of normal vessel operations. All data gathered will remain confidential and provide valuable insight for future management of the fisheries.

Four observers have been sent to Dutch Harbor and Kodiak to embark on vessels heading for the fishing grounds. Of main interest this fall will be the Pacific cod fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and Greenland turbot and pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutians. Vessel operators and owners who desire to take an observer or would like more information about the program are encouraged to contact Ron Dearborn, Director of Alaska Sea Grant, (907) 474-7086.

Sablefish Management Options

The Council asked for proposals for management of the sablefish fishery last June in response to previous requests for limited access for sablefish longlining. Fifty-nine proposals were received, analyzed by the groundfish plan teams, and reviewed by the Council. The next step is to develop detailed options for license limitation and individual transferable quota systems. The Council set 1989 as the target date to implement a system, although such a fast-paced schedule may be optimistic.

Halibut Allocative Regulations for 1988

The Council asked for proposals for allocative regulations in August for the 1988 halibut fishery. Over 70 proposals were received. The Council's Halibut Management Team and Halibut Regulatory Amendment Advisory Group reviewed them and recommended no action on nine because there was no solution clearly identified, no remedy was possible, or the request was simply the status quo. Twenty-one proposals were determined to be more appropriately considered by the International Pacific Halibut Commission. Twenty-seven requested some form of limited access and were integrated with the Council's longer term

consideration of sablefish and groundfish limited access. Two proposals to control the bycatch of halibut in other fisheries were forwarded to the Council's Bycatch Committee. Proposals to limit the number of skates per vessel were deferred until after the Halibut Commission considers similar measures for conservation purposes next year. Proposals advocating vessel size limits were deemed impracticable and would adversely impact the existing fleet.

The remaining proposals advocated exclusive registration areas. The Council voted only to consider the allocative aspects of the 1987 IPHC regulatory regime as applied to Areas 4C (Pribilof Islands) and 4E (Nelson Island) for possible adoption in 1988. The Halibut Management Team is analyzing those regulations and a notice of availability for public review of their analysis will be published October 15 in the Federal Register. In December the Council will review public comments and team analysis and decide whether to adopt the regulations.

Council Adopts Halibut Policy Statement and Management Goals

The Council approved a policy to guide review of allocative proposals for the halibut fishery. Proposals must intend to allocate the resource among users and must not conflict with conservation regulations adopted by the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

Although not required by the Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982, the Council will ensure that its halibut regulations are consistent with the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act's National Standards and the Council's Comprehensive Fishery Management Goals adopted December 7, 1984. They must be implemented by the Secretary of Commerce, can not discriminate between residents of different states, and shall be consistent with the limited entry criteria of the Magnuson Act.

The Council adopted the following halibut management goals:

1. Promote conservation while providing for rational and optimal socioeconomic use of the resource.
2. Base management actions upon the best scientific data available.
3. Promote economic stability, growth, and self-sufficiency in maritime communities.
4. In accordance with goals 1 and 3, promote efficient use of fishery resources with due consideration for existing social and economic structures.
5. Assure that any resource allocation is fair and equitable to the fishermen concerned without assigning an excessive share of the privileges to any one fisherman or other entity.
6. Adopt allocative measures that are flexible enough to account for unpredictable variations in resource and industry and are based upon the rights and obligations in existing federal law.

The new policy and goals will be used to guide the Council's consideration in December of allocative regulations proposed to protect emerging halibut fisheries near the Pribilofs and Nelson Island.

Future of Groundfish Management

The Council intends to pursue management methods that will support its comprehensive goals and achieve more productive and rational effort and harvest levels in the groundfish fishery. An industry workgroup will be established to examine alternatives and report back next June. The Council will then consider cut-off dates beyond which new entrants to the groundfish fisheries may not accrue credit should access limitation be implemented. The alternative dates include, but are not limited to, December 31, 1987, December 31, 1988, and the date of final Council action. At its December 8-11, 1987, meeting the Council will reconsider inclusion of the December 31, 1987 date. The Council intends to have a new groundfish management regime in place by 1990.

The Council is also developing license limitation and individual transferable quota (ITQ) strategies for the sablefish longline fishery. They intend to have one or the other ready for the 1989 season. General information on both types of systems will be available at the Council's exhibit at Fish Expo in Seattle. The Council is also considering effort management in the halibut and crab fisheries.

Council Wants Public Comment on Groundfish Harvest Levels and Industry Needs

Surveys of Gulf of Alaska stocks have been completed but because the data are still unanalyzed, the plan team was unable to provide new estimates of biomass. Pollock biomass is estimated from an independent hydroacoustic survey, but equipment failure prevented such estimates this year. The team will meet in early November to develop biomass estimates for species other than pollock.

Accordingly, the Council is sending out for public review the Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs) as recommended by the plan team and SSC for 1988, the Target Quotas for 1987 (now called Total Allowable Catches), and current DAP and JVP apportionments as preliminary figures for 1988 (Table 1). The ABCs for all species or species groups remain the same as in 1987 except for pollock, Pacific cod, and rockfish. Pollock ABC of 200,000 mt for 1988 was estimated from a catch simulation model using 1986 biomass and catch data and catch estimates for 1987 and 1988. The Pacific cod ABC of 110,000 mt - 206,900 mt differs from the 1987 ABC of 125,000 mt because of new assumptions on natural mortality rates for the species. The 1988 ABC for rockfish was set at 10,500 mt, distributed 2,520 mt to the western, 3,465 mt to the central, and 4,515 mt to the eastern areas. This complex combines the Pacific ocean perch group of five Sebastes spp. with the remaining rockfish species (formerly called "other rockfish") into a single rockfish group. The 1988 ABC for the ADF&G-managed shelf demersal rockfish assemblage in the Southeast Outside management district is set at 625 mt in recognition of state research indicating recent declines in CPUE.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish stocks, except Greenland turbot and Atka mackerel, appear to be in good condition. Plan team recommendations for ABC for 1988 sum to over 2.8 million metric tons (Table 2). The Scientific and Statistical Committee reviewed the plan team's analyses and recommended

TABLE 1

GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH - PRELIMINARY 1988 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ABC, TAC, DAP, JVP, TALFF, and HALIBUT PSC, and 1987 CATCH-TO-DATE (all in mt).

Species	Area	1987		COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1988 1/						CATCH-TO-DATE, 1987	
		ABC	TAC	ABC	TAC	RESERVE 2/	DAP	JVP	TALFF	DAP 3/	JVP 4/
Pollock (1/15-4/10)	W/C	95,000	84,000	200,000	84,000	0	67,200	16,800	0	10,750	23
	Out.Shel.		4,000	N/A	20,000	0	0	20,000	0		
	E	17,000	20,000	N/A	4,000	0	4,000	0	0	110	0
	Total	112,000	108,000	200,000	108,000	0	71,200	36,800	0	10,860	23
Pacific Cod	W	38,000	15,000	29,700-55,860	15,000	0	14,700	300	0	1,041	0
	C	77,000	33,000	61,600-115,865	33,000	0	31,900	1,100	0	14,713	61
	E	10,000	2,000	18,700-35,175	2,000	0	2,000	0	0	18	0
	Total	125,000	50,000	110,000-206,900	50,000	0	48,600	1,400	0	15,772	61
Flounders	W	101,000	3,000	101,000	3,000	0	2,550	450	0	113	0
	C	346,000	5,500	346,000	10,000	0	4,000	6,000	0	996	702
	E	90,000	500	90,000	500	0	500	0	0	40	0
	Total	537,000	9,000	537,000	13,500	0	7,050	6,450	0	1,149	702
Sablefish	W	3,750	3,000	3,750	3,000	0	3,000	0	0	3,420	0
	C	11,000	8,800	11,000	8,800	0	8,800	0	0	10,595	7
	W. Yakutat	5,000	4,000	5,000	4,000	0	4,000	0	0	3,198	0
	E. Yak./ S.E.Out.	5,250	4,200	5,250	4,200	0	4,200	0	0	3,264	0
	Total	25,000	20,000	25,000	20,000		20,000	0	0	20,477	7
Rockfish(P.O.P.) 5/	W	2,800	1,500	2,520	2,160	0	2,160	0	0	1,322	0
	C	3,300	1,500	3,465	2,970	0	2,970	0	0	1,314	1
	E	4,400	2,000	4,515	3,870	0	3,870	0	0	377	0
Rockfish(other) 5/	GW	N/A	4,000							4,264	2
	Total	10,500	9,000	10,500	9,000	0	9,000	0	0	7,277	3
Shelf Demersal Rockfish	SE Out.	1,250	1,250	625	625	0	625	0	0	700	0
Thornyhead	GW	3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750	0	3,700	50	0	1,811	0
Other Species	GW	N/A	10,050	N/A	10,244	0	9,054	1,190	0	12	14
GULF OF ALASKA TOTAL		814,500	211,050	887,875-983,775	215,119	0	169,229	45,890	0	58,058	811
HALIBUT PSC		DAP 3,000	JVP 200								

NOTES:

1. As established by the Council on September 23, 1987. All numbers are preliminary and were chosen to represent current 1987 TQs, and DAP and JVP apportionments.
2. Reserves for pollock, Pacific cod, and flounders are calculated as 20% of TAC. For 1987 all reserves have been apportioned to DAP or JVP.
3. Catch-to-date as of September 12, 1987. NMFS-AKR.
4. Catch-to-date as of September 9, 1987. PacFIN.
5. For 1988 these two rockfish groups—the P.O.P. complex and the "other rockfish" group—are combined into a single rockfish category.

TABLE 2

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GROUND FISH: Preliminary recommendations for 1988 ABC; Council recommendations for 1988 TAC, DAP, JVP, and TALFF apportionments; and Catch-to-date (all in metric tons).

Species	Area	1987		1988 ABC Recommendations		Current 1987 and Proposed 1988 Apportionments				Catch to early 9/87	
		ABC	TAC 1/	(PT)	(SSC) 2/	TAC 3/	DAP	JVP	TALFF	DAP	JVP
Pollock	BS	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,410,000	2,820,000	1,200,000	185,987	1,009,013	5,000	106,715	967,416
	AI	100,000	88,000	160,000	320,000	88,000	7,210	80,790	0	126	26,479
Pacific cod		400,000	280,000	326,000	700,000	280,000	91,787	94,938	73,295	33,160	53,697
Yellowfin sole		187,000	187,000	216,000	349,000	187,000	100	181,900	5,000	0	182,775
Greenland turbot		20,000	20,000	19,000	19,000	20,000	15,213	67	1,750	5,821	56
Arrowtooth flounder		30,800	9,795	109,500	109,500	9,795	830	3,363	5,602	21	806
Other flatfish		193,300	148,300	440,700	440,700	148,300	17,043	71,972	37,080	13,374	33,803
Sablefish	BS	3,700	3,700	3,900	6,800	3,700	3,310	350	40	2,728	1
	AI	4,000	4,000	6,700	11,600	4,000	3,317	83	0	2,958	44
Pacific ocean perch	BS	3,800	2,850	6,000	6,000	2,850	2,423	120	17	403	43
	AI	10,900	8,175	16,600	16,600	8,175	6,786	563	0	312	490
Other rockfish	BS	450	450	400	400	450	382	59	9	352	5
	AI	1,430	1,430	1,100	1,100	1,430	1,001	304	0	92	226
Atka mackerel		30,800	30,800	21,000	21,000	30,800	250	30,540	10	104	25,014
Squid		10,000	500	10,000	10,000	500	4	48	393	0	35
Other species		49,500	15,000	59,000	59,000	15,000	500	10,000	4,500	204	5,750
BS/AI TOTAL		2,245,780	2,000,000	2,805,900	4,890,700	2,000,000	336,123	1,484,110	132,696	166,370	1,296,640

- NOTES:
1. These TACs were immediately reduced by 15% for apportionment to non-specific reserves.
 2. The Council endorsed recommendations from the SSC, which were generally ranges from PT recommendations upwards to the values listed.
 3. Current reserves equal 47,071 mt; actual 1988 apportionments will initially set reserves equal to 15% of the sum of TACs.

Sept. 30, 1987

ABCs ranging from the team's estimates upwards to almost 4.9 million metric tons. The Council voted to send the ranges out for public review. The estimates of ABC are preliminary and exceed the optimum yield range of 1.4 to 2.0 million metric tons now in the plan. Therefore, the Council is using current 1987 apportionments as preliminary estimates of DAP, JVP, TALFF, and reserves that comply with the 2 million mt OY ceiling (Table 2). The Council will have revised estimates of ABC in December and will then recommend TACs and apportionments for 1988.

Comments are requested on estimates of ABC and initial apportionments in preparation for the December Council meeting. Review packages for the Gulf and Bering Sea/Aleutians will be mailed out on October 5. The period for written comments will last until November 6, after which the plan teams will meet to prepare final Resource Assessment Documents for 1988. Further comments on plan team recommendations and apportionments for 1988 will be accepted at the December Council meeting.

Gulf of Alaska Amendment 16 Approved and New Reporting Requirements
Adopted for Groundfish Operations

The Council approved Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Amendment 16 for review by the Secretary of Commerce. The amendment redefines prohibited species to clearly identify crabs, halibut, herring, and salmon as prohibited, requiring return to the sea as quickly as possible. The plan's descriptive sections were revised, chapters reorganized, and current Council groundfish policy incorporated.

The Council also adopted new reporting requirements for U.S. catcher/processors and motherships in all areas off Alaska. A Reporting Requirements Workgroup appointed last spring to work with NMFS, the Council, and industry, recommended that at-sea transfer information be added to the weekly catch report and that vessels maintain a cargo transfer/ offloading log. The Council adopted the recommendations and will forward regulations to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation.

International Waters and Bycatch Control
High on List for Permit Review in December

The Council will review in December joint venture and foreign vessel applications for 1988. New provisions incorporated in the Council's Permit Review Policy request all foreign nations operating in the Bering Sea and Aleutians to provide verifiable catch statistics for pollock and other species from the international waters. The new policy, which also calls on foreign nations to cooperate in fishery research, is available from the Council office.

The Council is very concerned with excessive bycatches of halibut and crab by some individual joint ventures targeting yellowfin sole and other flatfish. A plan to control bycatch in the Bering Sea by sanctioning vessels exceeding prescribed bycatch limits has been developed by concerned industry representatives. It will be the subject of a public hearing in Seattle at the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center's Montlake Lab beginning at 9:00 a.m. on October 27. The Council will consider individual company plans to control bycatch when reviewing permits for 1988.

Domestic Fisheries Report

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game reported that approximately 50,882 tons of herring, worth over \$41 million exvessel, were harvested between July 1, 1986 and June 30, 1987. The 1987 Southeast Alaska all gear chinook salmon catch is projected to be 278,000 fish, with trollers catching 242,000, net fishermen taking 14,000 chinook, and sport fishermen 22,000.

Based on ADF&G and National Marine Fisheries Service surveys, the state set the following dates and harvest guidelines for the 1987-88 Westward king crab fisheries:

	<u>Opening Date</u>	<u>GHL (lbs)</u>
Kodiak	Closed	0
Alaska Peninsula	Closed	0
Dutch Harbor	Closed	0
St. Matthew	September 1	600,000 - 1,000,000
Pribilof Islands	September 25	300,000 - 1,700,000
Bristol Bay	September 25	8,500,000 - 17,700,000
Adak	November 1	500,000 - 1,500,000

The National Marine Fisheries Service reported that domestic groundfish fishermen processing on board or delivering to U.S. processors (DAP) have harvested approximately 166,370 mt of groundfish in the Bering Sea and 57,358 mt in the Gulf of Alaska through early September. The Gulf harvest included about 10,860 mt pollock, 1,149 mt flounders, 15,771 mt Pacific cod, 3,013 mt Pacific ocean perch, 4,264 mt rockfish, 1,811 mt thornyhead, 20,477 mt sablefish, and a small amount of other species. The Bering Sea and Aleutians U.S.-processed catch included 106,841 mt pollock, 5,821 mt Greenland turbot, 21 mt arrowtooth flounder, 13,374 mt flounders, 33,160 mt Pacific cod, 715 mt Pacific ocean perch, 444 mt rockfish, 5,686 mt sablefish, 104 mt Atka mackerel, and 204 mt of other species.

Joint Venture Update

The joint venture catch off Alaska through September 12 as reported by NMFS was 1,308,216 mt. Mainly from the Bering Sea and Aleutians, by species:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Catch (mt)</u>
Pollock	1,000,219
Pacific cod	54,928
Flatfish	35,764
Yellowfin sole	182,612
Others	<u>34,693</u>
TOTAL	1,308,216

The catch to date exceeds the 1,025,735 mt and 789,832 mt joint venture catches reported at the September Council meetings in 1986 and 1985. Joint venture activity picked up in February with 92 U.S. trawlers making deliveries. The number of trawlers increased to 110 in early June and then declined with the pollock closure on June 6 and the yellowfin sole closure

June 29. Fishing for Atka mackerel, other flatfish, Pacific cod, and Aleutian pollock continued through early August with additional harvests of a few thousand tons of each of those species. Most of the joint venture companies are participating in this fall's pollock fishery.

Foreign Fisheries Report

Foreign allocations this year have been 87,995 mt, all in the Bering Sea. Japan got 73,194 mt, South Korea 14,157 mt and the Republic of China 644 mt. The foreign catch through September was 27,225 mt, almost all by Japan. Eighty-three percent of the catch was Pacific cod taken by Japan longliners. Foreign catches were about 487,000 mt off Alaska last year.

Coast Guard Enforcement Activities

Coast Guard enforcement activities this summer have focused on monitoring the high seas salmon gillnet fleet operations south of 46°N latitude and west of 174°E longitude and the high seas squid gillnet fleets of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Japanese squid gillnet vessels were boarded nineteen times but no salmon were found. Numerous vessels were observed fishing north of the authorized areas and the Japanese government is investigating a report of one vessel being sighted 160 nautical miles northeast of the authorized squid fishery area. The Coast Guard also reported two separate incidents of Soviet trawlers operating east of the Soviet-claimed 1867 Convention Line and inside the U.S. EEZ. The incidents were investigated by the Soviets and masters of two vessels were dismissed.

Since May the Coast Guard has issued fifty-one reports of violations and written warnings to foreign fishing vessels for MFCMA infractions such as retention of prohibited species, failure to maintain required logs, failure to provide adequate boarding ladders, illegal taking of a marine mammal, and failure to maintain an International Radio Call Sign.

Two days after the halibut opening in IPHC Area 4A the U.S. vessel CONSTITUTION was boarded and 29,925 pounds of illegal halibut were found. The vessel's catch logs were not maintained and buoys were not marked with the vessel's name or identifying numbers. The Coast Guard seized the halibut.