

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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## COUNCIL'S KODIAK CAPER INCLUDES FLIGHT & DINNER

The NPFMC meeting held in Kodiak from the 21-23 of May included a welcome change of pace from the ordinary. Council members, some Advisory Panel and Scientific & Statistical Committee members and Kodiak citizens were hosted Wednesday on a Coast Guard C-130 flight which covered part of the Aleutian Chain Islands, the Pribilof Island of St. Paul and lots of water. The Purpose of the flight was to acquaint the Council with the work done by the Coast Guard in its patrol and enforcement activities concerning the foreign fleet which fishes in the Fishery Conservation Zone. The Coast Guard keeps accurate records, but according to the amateurs aboard during the flight, the number of foreign vessels sighted ranged from "30 or 40" to "a whole bunch, maybe more." All agreed the flight was "very interesting."

The flight was arranged by RADM Robert Duin, Commandant of the 17th U.S. Coast Guard District, who will soon retire from the post to accept the job of Director of Operations, Port of Seattle. In honor of that occasion and the Council visit to Kodiak Island, the Admiral hosted the Council at an evening cocktails and dinner affair Thursday at the U.S. Coast Guard Base Officer's Club.

Dave Herrnsteen, acting Kodiak Borough Mayor and Kodiak fisherman, officially welcomed the Council to the island during remarks when the meeting convened following the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fishery management plan public hearing. Herrnsteen paid special tribute to the fact that the Council meeting was being held "where the fishermen are." (Ed. Note - The Council, insofar as budget and work schedule permits, schedules at least two meetings a year outside of Anchorage, and holds the vast majority of fishery management plan hearings at the port cities most commonly associated with whatever plan is being discussed. Those locations have included Dutch Harbor, Kodiak, Togiak, Dillingham, Kotzebue, Nome, Tooksook Bay, Hooper Bay, Homer, Sitka, Pelican, Petersburg, Ketchikan, Seattle, Juneau and others.)

### GOA PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing on the Gulf of Alaska groundfish FMP was conducted in the Elks Club in Kodiak on May 22. The following is a summary of the action taken by the Council on the 11 proposed amendments to the plan:

- Proposal #1 - The Council deferred action on the concept of the TAC (total allowable catch) for prohibited species until the same subject comes up in regard to its application to the Bering Sea/Aleutian FMP.

- Proposal #2 - The "plan year" will be changed to Jan.1-Dec. 31 with an allowance to continue the present OY values over the 2-month period from Nov. 1 to Jan. 1.
- Proposal #3 - Gulfwide OY values were assigned to squid, other species; rattails and other rockfish, with rattails assigned to the non-specific category (see below #4) and the assignment for other rockfish was for one year only while information is being gathered on their distribution.
- Proposal #4 - Four species categories were established for the Gulf of Alaska: prohibited, target, other and non-specified.
- Proposal #5 - The Eastern Regulatory area (Southeast & Yakutat) was divided into Yakutat-inside-outside (3 areas) for the allocation of the sablefish OY.
- Proposal #6 - (a) The Council will specify the authority of the NMFS Regional Director to issue field orders to prevent gear conflicts; and,  
(b) has deferred until the date for the BS/A public hearing (not yet determined) a decision on the exact form of time/area closure in the Kodiak king crab district for foreign trawl closures during the crab seasons.
- Proposal #7 - A schedule for the release of reserves was adopted as follows: RESERVE to TALFF = 40% in the 4th and 6th months (April and June) and 20% in the 8th month (August); DAH to TALFF = as soon as practicable after the 1st day of August (8th month); DAH to RESERVE = as soon as practicable after the first day of April, June and August.
- Proposal #8 - The Council took no action to prohibit foreign trawling in the Eastern Regulatory area (Southeast and Yakutat).
- Proposal #9 - The Council took no action to prohibit foreign trawling east of 150 degrees West longitude.
- Proposal # 10 - The Council accepted the requirement to have one biodegradable panel in all blackcod pots.
- Proposal # 11 - The Council deferred a decision to include a joint venture policy statement to the FMP and will include it with Proposal #1 when the subject comes up in regard to its application to the Bering Sea/Aleutian FMP.

#### BS/A FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Council has recommended that the release of reserves in the Bering Sea/Aleutian groundfish area be left to the discretion of the NMFS Regional Director. Word from NMFS is that the release scheduled for June 2 (third release, with a final release to come on August 2) will

be a normal release (up to 25% of available stocks) but maybe less for Pacific cod. Since no releases have been made to date, (with the exception of 25% of Atka mackerel made on Feb. 14), the release will consist of any amount of the accumulated bi-monthly amounts which have not been released to date.

#### BS/A PACIFIC COD OY

NMFS Juneau reports it will be assigning 20,000 mt of the Pacific cod OY to TALFF via the Preliminary Fishery Management Plan (PFMP) which governs foreign fishing in lieu of a fishery management plan (FMP) which has yet to be implemented.

The increase is to allow the by-catch of Pacific cod in target fishing for other species, especially pollock, by the foreign fleet and is excess to the amount required for the DAH. The up-dated PFMP includes the new figures from the status of stocks section which is part of the proposed amendment to the Council FMP. That section shows the ABC for Pacific cod at the 111,000 mt figure. The addition of 20,000 mt brings the Pacific cod OY to 78,700 mt.

#### FISHERIES ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Foreign fishing activity reflects a seasonal peak (June) due mostly to the appearance of the Japanese salmon fleets...15 Japanese longliners are in the Gulf of Alaska, fishing primarily for cod...pelagic trawl requirements were lifted June 1...3 surimi factory fleets have returned...the Soviet joint venture (Marine Resources, Inc.) is winding down...South Korean effort is at a low level...the Sugong is fishing the Bering Sea with 4 catcher boats on pollock...As of May 15, the line-up showed S. Korea with 19 vessels, USSR with 11, Poland with 5, Taiwan with 1 and Japan with 188 for a total of 224 vessels fishing. That contrasts with 210 in March and 215 in April.

Catches through the first of May indicate 151,420 mt (Japan, BS/A)... 20,226 (Japan, GOA)...46,477 mt (Korea, BS/A)...2,768 (Korea, GOA)... 24,109 mt (Poland, BS/A)...17,962 (Poland, GOA)...3,183 mt (Taiwan, BS/A) ...20,187 (U.S.S.R., GOA)...

U.S. Coast Guard reports one verbal warning issued since the last meeting and patrol activity stepping up to near normal after a hiatus due to the fuel emergency earlier in the year...

On the domestic side...halibut season is open with a 3,000,000 lb. quota... Canadians will fish 27 boats for 1,200,000 lbs expected to be taken in 1 period compared to 1979 when they fished 34 boats and took 1,800,000 lbs in 1 period...they will fish only in Area 3 north of Dixon Entrance...black cod catch in S.E. Alaska through April is 620,000 lbs, with increased effort (27 vessels) and low prices (35-40¢/lb)...little effort in groundfish with that effort shifting to halibut...total groundfish catch in the Gulf of Alaska (Nov., 1979 through April, 1980) shows pollock (3.7 million lbs.), flounder (1.6 million lbs.), unspecified (1 million lbs.), cod (748,000 lbs.), and POP, rattail, Atka mackerel, Squid, idiot rockfish and other to total 8,039,000 lbs...dressed weight of blackcod was 620,000 lbs. Total catch of groundfish in the BS/A was 12,706 mt., with pollock (6,754 mt) and Pacific cod (5,405 mt) leading the catches (reporting period is Jan., 1980-April 30, 1980).

### KING CRAB FMP

The Council received the second draft of the king crab FMP for its consideration during the July meeting. The plan is for western Alaska (Kodiak and the Bering Sea) and is a separate FMP apart from the original king crab plan which covered all stocks throughout the state. Implementation of the plan is expected for September 1, 1981.

### LITTER CONTROL ?

Will there be a "Litterbug Law" on the ocean in the future? The NMFS has prepared a report detailing and documenting the accumulation of plastic litter on the beaches at Amchitka Island. Credit for most of the litter goes to foreign vessels, and the most noticeable and most damaging is discarded plastic netting. NMFS suggests an education program to curb the growing problem through eventual awareness of the damage to wildlife, birds, mammals and fishes, but suggests mandatory constraints with enforcement provisions to be implemented through treaties or international organizations and unilateral action by any nation controlling geographic areas for the quicker measures that are needed.

### TOGIAK HERRING FISHERY

The Togiak herring fishery opened on April 15 with a bang and closed a lot sooner than the May 13 date when it was officially shut down. The biggest contributor to a bad season was weather. Totals from the fishery show an 18,000 mt harvest with deadloss totals pushing the figure past 20,500 mt. The fishery had 23 companies involved, with 102 processor and tender vessels, 140 purseseiners and 370 gillnetters on site.

The roe-on-kelp fishery showed a harvest of 185,000 lbs., with poor to fair roe quality due to light spawn coverage and a price to fishermen of .50 per lb. Heavy damage was reported to as many as 15 light aircraft parked on the beach, and to tenders and barges.

### FOREIGN PERMITS

The Council has approved the permit applications for MYS PROKOFYEVA and NOVAYA ERA as substitute vessels for the USSR/Marine Resources, Inc., joint venture with the provision that the permits carry the processor preference restriction in effect for the Akutan-Akun Island area. The two vessels will take the place of six vessels which have withdrawn from the joint venture for R&R.

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FISHERIES REPORT SPARKS COUNCIL INTEREST

A report by the National Park Service Ad Hoc Fisheries Task Force has drawn the interest of the Council for the possible implications it may have on the effects of commercial fishing and spawning salmon stocks.

The report places a low priority on commercial fishing and adds that such efforts, where possible, be phased out of park system waters.

The State of Alaska is preparing comments on the report, and that will be used as a basis for Council comment, along with specific Council concerns. Those concerns include obtaining information from the Park

Service on just how its policy will affect national parks in Alaska. The Council will seek an extension in the comment date in order to prepare its comments and forward them for consideration.

#### HR 7039 - THE BREAUX BILL

HR 7039, a House Resolution whose primary sponsor is Congressman John B. Breaux (Chairman, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation, and the Environment of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries), proposes changes to, among other acts, the Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council sent a telegram following the Council meeting in Kodiak, and followed with a letter advising the Congressman of its interest in the bill's provisions and commenting specifically on the loan and capital construction program (should be narrowly focused on unutilized or underutilized fishery resources), loan limits (flexibility in the 75% American owned company requirement), foreign fishing fees (favor increases), observer program (favor increased coverage), mandatory consideration of foreign trade barriers in the allocation process (favor), and the phase-out of foreign fishing within the FCZ.

The Council commended the Congressman for the general intent of the legislation and expressed its support in any helpful way.

#### FISH 'N CHIPS POLICY

The U.S. Department of Commerce's foreign trade mission, otherwise known as the "Fish 'n chips" trip, drew Council comment to the effect that the Council would prefer not to have any concessions which did not involve fish (fish-for-fish, not TV sets), no trading of fishery resources between areas (Georges Bank cod for Gulf groundfish), and early consultation with the Council on any trades which involve fishery resources within the Council's area of jurisdiction.

#### MEETING SCHEDULE

The June Council meeting has been cancelled, with the July meeting to be the next regularly scheduled affair during the July 22-25 period. The SSC will hold a 2-day meeting on July 22-23 in the Council Conference Room, the AP will meet July 23 in the Anchorage/Westward Hilton Hotel, and the Council will meet July 24-25 in the Anchorage/Westward Hilton Hotel Kenai/Aleutian Room.

Other meetings include the Council's Scheduling Sub-committee group which will meet in Juneau on June 5-6 and an upcoming BS/A + king crab PDT meeting to be announced.

#### A CORRECTION

The minutes of the April meeting, held for approval in May, have been found to contain an error in the recording of a vote concerning Option #1 of Part #3 of the plan development team presentation.

For the record, the motion to accept Option #1 (which does not reduce the allocation to the offshore fisheries) was proposed and carried by a vote of 7-4, not unanimously as stated in the minutes.