

Meeting Summary

222th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Anchorage AK

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ATTACHMENTS:

- Time Log
- Newsletter

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in April at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, AK . The following Council, SSC and AP members, and NPFMC staff attended the meetings.

Council Members

Dan Hull, Chair	Kenny Downs	Simon Kinneen
Jim Balsiger	Duncan Fields	David Long
Sam Cotten/Nicole Kimball	Dave Hanson	Bill Tweit
Craig Cross	Roy Hyder	Capt Phillip Thorne
Ed Dersham	Dan Hull	

NPFMC Staff

Jim Armstrong	Peggy Kircher	Chris Oliver
Gail Bendixen	Steve MacLean	Maria Shawback
Sam Cunningham	Sarah Marrinan	Diana Stram
Diana Evans	Jon McCracken	David Witherell

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from April 6th through 8th at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK. Members present were:

Farron Wallace, Chair <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>	Robert Clark, Vice Chair <i>Alaska Department of Fish and Game</i>	Milo Adkison <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>
Chris Anderson <i>University of Washington</i>	Brad Harris <i>Alaska Pacific University</i>	Anne Hollowed <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>
George Hunt <i>University of Washington</i>	Steve Martell <i>Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission</i>	Terry Quinn <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>
Matt Reimer <i>University of Alaska Anchorage</i>		

Advisory Panel

The AP met April 7-10, 2015 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, AK, and the following members were present for all or part of the meetings:

Ruth Christiansen	Jeff Kauffman	Joel Peterson
Kurt Cochran	Mitch Kilborn	Theresa Peterson
John Crowley	Alexus Kwachka	Wilt Sinclair
Jerry Downing	Craig Lowenberg	Jeff Stephan
Jeff Favour	Chuck McCallum	Matt Upton
Becca Robbins Gisclair	Andy Mezirow	Anne Vanderhoeven
John Gruver	Paddy O'Donnell	Ernie Weiss

B Reports

The following reports were given and briefly discussed. Public Comment was taken on all B items:

B1 Executive Director's Report – Chris Oliver

B2 NMFS Management Report – Glenn Merrill, Lauren Smoker (Financial Disclosure Report), Jim Armstrong, Wes Patrick and Ben Fissel (National Standards),

B3 ADF&G Report – Karla Bush

B4 NOAA Enforcement Report

B5 USCG Report – Capt. Phillip Thorne, Lt Cdr Corrie Sergent, CDR James Houck (Port Access Rout Study)

B6 USF&W Report – Doug McBride (ABSI Report)

B7 Protected Species Report - Steve MacLean

B8 NIOSH Report – Jennifer Lincoln

C1 Cooperative Reports

The Council heard presentations from the representatives of AFA cooperatives, CGOA Rockfish Cooperatives, Amendment 80 and BSAI Crab Cooperatives. No action was taken. (check with jon mccracken – he wanted to state some things)

C2 GOA and BSAI Salmon Bycatch Genetics Updates

Dr. Stram and Dr. Guyon gave an update on salmon bycatch genetics and answered questions from the Council.

Ms. Kimball made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

The Council requests staff provide a white paper evaluating the feasibility of further temporal and spatial refinements of stock composition data, including identification of the minimum number of samples necessary to meet accuracy and precision standards:

- BSAI Chinook and chum salmon: temporal within season (e.g., by statistical week and month); and spatially within NMFS areas, in particular within Areas 517 and 509.
- GOA Chinook salmon: temporal within season (e.g., by statistical week and month); and spatially within NMFS areas.

In addition, the Council would like to highlight the following suggestions from the SSC minutes:

- Future genetic reports should identify whether a subsample is used, and any potential tradeoffs in precision relative to using a subsample. Identify data standards used to achieve stock composition estimates.
- The CGOA rockfish dataset (2013 – 2015) that includes coded wire tag (CWT) and genetic samples should be analyzed to determine what fraction of the bycatch was from hatchery

production. This sample set will also be useful in determining future sampling goals in the GOA for a combined genetic/CWT sampling program.

The Council requests NMFS continue to pursue the more rapid timelines for both BSAI and GOA genetic reports, similar to the GOA reports provided in the past year (target final reports in December.)

Motion passed without objection. (4/11/15 4:16 pm)

C3 Salmon ICA/IPA and GOA Salmon Excluder EFP Reports

John Gruver, John Gauvin, and Kathy McGauley gave an update on the Salmon Excluder Experimental Fishing Permit, and Karl Haflinger, John Gruver, James Mize, and Stephanie Madsen gave ICA/IPA reports. No action was taken.

C4 Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch

After the reports, questions, and public comment, Mr. Cotton made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

The Council selects the following as its preferred alternatives for Chinook and chum salmon bycatch measures in the Bering Sea pollock fishery.

Alternative 2. Remove BSAI Am 84 regulations and incorporate chum salmon avoidance into the Am 91 Incentive Plan Agreements. An annual exemption from the Chum Salmon Savings Area is contingent upon participation in an incentive plan agreement that includes the provisions below. Revise regulations at 50 CFR 679.21(f)(13) to include associated reporting requirements for chum salmon. Revise regulations at 50 CFR 679.21(f)(12)(iii)(B)(3) to include chum salmon bycatch avoidance as follows:

(3) Description of the incentive plan.

The IPA must contain a written description of the following:

(i) The incentive(s) that will be implemented under the IPA for the operator of each vessel participating in the IPA to avoid Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch under any condition of pollock and Chinook salmon abundance in all years;

(ii) The incentive(s) to avoid chum salmon should not increase Chinook salmon bycatch;

(iii) The rewards for avoiding Chinook salmon, penalties for failure to avoid Chinook salmon at the vessel level, or both;

(iv) How the incentive measures in the IPA are expected to promote reductions in a vessel's Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch rates relative to what would have occurred in absence of the incentive program;

(v) How the incentive measures in the IPA promote Chinook salmon savings and chum salmon savings in any condition of pollock abundance or Chinook salmon abundance in a manner that is expected to influence operational decisions by vessel operators to avoid Chinook salmon and chum salmon;

(vi) How the IPA ensures that the operator of each vessel governed by the IPA will manage that vessel's Chinook salmon bycatch to keep total bycatch below the performance standard described in paragraph (f)(6) of this section for the sector in which the vessel participates;

(vii) How the IPA ensures that the operator of each vessel governed by the IPA will manage that vessel's chum salmon bycatch to avoid areas and times where the chum salmon are likely to return to Western Alaska; and

(viii) The rolling hot spot program for salmon bycatch avoidance and an agreement to provide notifications of closure areas and any violations of the rolling hot spot program to at least one third party organization representing western Alaskans who depend on salmon and do not directly fish in a groundfish fishery.

Alternative 3. Revise Federal regulations at 50 CFR 679.21(f)(12)(iii)(B)(3) to require that IPAs include the following provisions, with associated reporting requirements added to 50 CFR 679.21(f)(13):

Option 1. Restrictions or penalties targeted at vessels that consistently have significantly higher Chinook salmon PSC rates relative to other vessels fishing at the same time. Include a requirement to enter a fishery-wide in-season PSC data sharing agreement.

Option 2, Suboption. Required use of salmon excluder devices, with recognition of contingencies, from Jan 20 – March 31, and Sept 1 until the end of the B season.

Option 3. A rolling hotspot program that operates throughout the entire A and B seasons.

Option 4. Salmon savings credits last for a maximum of three years for savings credit based IPAs.

Option 5. Restrictions or performance criteria used to ensure that Chinook salmon PSC rates in the month of October are not significantly higher than those achieved in the preceding months.

Alternative 4. Revise the Bering Sea pollock fishery seasons:

Option 3. Reallocate pollock A and B season apportionments to:
Suboption: 45% (A) and 55% (B), with A to B season rollovers

Alternative 5. Revise Federal regulations to lower the performance standard and hard cap under Am 91 in years of low Chinook salmon abundance per the options below. Low abundance is defined as $\leq 250,000$ Chinook salmon, based on the post-season inriver Chinook salmon run size index of the Unalakleet, Upper Yukon, and Kuskokwim aggregate stock grouping. The performance standard and hard cap would be lowered in the year following the year in which the index was $\leq 250,000$ Chinook salmon. Sectors that exceed the applicable performance standard, in 3 out of 7 years, would be held to their proportion of the annual applicable performance standard in future years (for example, either 47,591 or the lowered performance standard, whichever is in place that year). In a year in which the lowered performance standard is in place and there are no approved IPAs, the PSC limit allocated to sectors would equal the lower performance standard.

Option: 33,318

Suboption: Reduce the 60,000 hard cap in years of low Chinook salmon abundance to 45,000.

The preferred alternative includes the regulatory amendments recommended by NMFS in Section 2.6 of the public review draft analysis. It also includes reporting requirements as necessary to implement the Council's preferred alternative, the removal of the chum ICA annual report, and the consolidation of chum and Chinook salmon IPA reporting.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Hyder moved to delete Option 1, Alternative 4. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dersham, and passed 8/2, with Dr. Balsiger and Mr. Cotton objecting.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Tweit moved to change Alternative 5 to 33,318 performance standard, and 45,000 hard cap.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT: Mr. Fields moved to set hard cap at 45, but leave the performance standard at 31,000. The motion failed 4/6, with Cotten, Fields, Long and Hull voting in the affirmative.

The amendment passed 6/4, with Cotton, Fields, Long and Hull voting in opposition.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Tweit moved that the Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c). Additionally, the Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions. The amendment passed without objection.

FINAL VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION: (4:15 4/11/15) Passed 9/0/2, with Kinneen and Long abstaining.

C5 Scallop Management

Ms. Kimball moved, which was seconded by Mr. Kinneen to approve the scallop SAFE and recommended setting the 2015/16 scallop ACL equal to an ABC of 1.161 million pounds of shucked meats and OFL equal to 1.29 million pounds for 2015/2016. The motion passed without objection.

C6 GOA Sablefish Longline Pots

Mr. Fields moved, which was seconded, the following:

The Council adopts the following Elements and Options for Agenda item C-6.

The Council adopts the Purpose and Need statement.

Alternative 2. Allow the use of pot longline gear in the GOA-Sablefish IFQ fishery.

Element 1 ~~Limit of 400-300 pots applied at the vessel level~~

Limit of 120 pots per vessel in WY and SEO

Limit of 250 pots per vessel for WGOA and CGOA

Option 1. Require identification tags for each pot.

Pot tags must be attached to the vessels pots before leaving port. Pots tagged to one vessel must be returned to shore before being tagged to another vessel

Element 2. Gear retrieval.

Option 2. ~~Gear cannot be left for more than 5 days without being moved. All gear must be removed from the grounds once an IFQ holder no longer has IFQ to harvest in a specific area.~~

Gear cannot be left for more than 5 days without being moved in the CGOA

Gear cannot be left for more than 7 days without being moved in the WGOA.

In SEO and WY Gear cannot be left on the fishing grounds when the vessel to which the pots are registered leaves the grounds.

~~All gear must be removed from the grounds once an IFQ holder no longer has IFQ to harvest in a specific area.~~

All sablefish pots set in GOA must be removed prior to the end of the season and cannot be set before the beginning of the season.

Element 3. Gear specifications.

Require both ends of the sablefish pot longline set to be marked with a 4-bouy cluster including a hard ball with "PL" (pot longline) marking on one buoy, flagpoles, and radar reflectors, including **ADF&G number and** vessel identification on buoys.

Element 4. Retention of incidentally caught halibut.

Allow the retention of halibut caught incidentally in sablefish pots, provided the sablefish IFQ holder also holds sufficient halibut IFQ.

Additionally, all vessels using longline pot gear are required to use logbooks and VMS.

IFQ holders fishing sablefish pots are encouraged to work co-operatively to develop electronic reporting protocols for reporting the location of pots being fished and/or pots left on the fishing grounds as well as any other methods or methodology that may enhance the sablefish pot longline fishery.

A review on the effects of allowing GOA Sablefish longline pot gear will be conducted 3 years after implementation and that NMFS include pot gear effort in their management report to the Council.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Tweit moved to amend to change numbers in Alternative 2, Element 1; 120 pots per vessel in SEO and 300 pots for WY, WGOA and CGOA.

AMENDMENT TO AMENDMENT: Mr. Fields moved to change to 120 pots per vessel in SEO and WY. The amendment passed 6/5; with Tweit, Cross, Dersham, Down, Hyder voting against, and Merrill, Kimball, Fields, Long, Kinneen and Hull voting in favor.

The amendment passed (120 pots in SEO and WY, and 300 for WGOA and CGOA) 10/1 with Mr. Fields objecting.

AMENDMENT: Under Alternative 2, Option1, Mr. Cotton moved to change "tagged" to "registered." The amendment passed without objection.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Long moved to change in Element 2 Option 2, 5 days to 7 days that gear cannot be left without being moved in the CGOA. The motion failed 5/6, with Cross, Dersham, Hyder, Long and Hull voting in the affirmative, and Tweit, Merrill, Cotton, Down, Fields, and Kinneen voting in opposition.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Cotton moved to add the words "to make a delivery" in Element 2, Option 2 to read: All sablefish pots set in GOA must be removed prior to the end of the season and cannot be set before the beginning of the season. The motion passed without objection.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Tweit moved to include WY in the first sentence of Element 2, Option 2, and to delete it from the 3rd sentence. The motion passed 6/5, with Tweit, Cross, Dersham, Down, Hyder and Long voting in the affirmative. Cotton, Cross, Kinneen, and Fields voted against.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Cross moved to add the words "'or federal fisheries permit number' on buoys," in Option 1 Element 3. The motion passed without objection.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Balsiger moved to change the wording of Element 4 to state: Require the retention of halibut caught incidentally in sablefish pots, provided the sablefish IFQ holder also holds sufficient halibut IFQ, and provided that the IPHC adopts complementary regulations that would allow NMFS to authorize retention of halibut caught incidentally in the sablefish longline pot fishery under the requirements of regulations implementing this program. The motion passed without objection.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Tweit moved to add after Element 4 in the portion of the motion which discusses logbooks and VMS; Add a data field, or fields, to the Prior Notice of Landing for a pot longline vessel to declare the number of pots fished, lost, and/or still fishing. The motion passed without objection.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Tweit moved that the Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c). Additionally, the Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions. The amendment passed without objection.

FINAL AMENDED MAIN MOTION passed unanimously. (4/12/14 at 6:20 pm)

C7 Area 4A Halibut Retention in Sablefish Pots

Mr. Cotton moved, which was seconded by Mr. Long, the following motion, which was later withdrawn:

The Council initiate an analysis with the following purpose and need statement and alternatives.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Currently halibut are incidentally caught and required to be discarded during the BSAI sablefish pot fishery. Industry is concerned that halibut discarded during the BSAI sablefish pot fishery are subject to high mortality from killer whale depredation. The Council seeks to promote efficiency in the utilization of halibut, as well as minimize halibut PSC and the mortality associated with current regulatory discards by allowing retention of halibut in pot gear in the portion of IPHC Area 4A that overlaps with the federal BSAI sablefish area if the vessel has sufficient Area 4A halibut IFQ.

The IPHC has regulatory authority to define legal gear for retaining commercial halibut; thus, the IPHC would need to approve regulations to permit the retention of halibut IFQ caught incidentally in Area 4A with pot gear in the BSAI sablefish IFQ or CDQ fishery. The IPHC has stated its desire to the Council to ensure that halibut retained in this case remains incidental in nature; thus, the Council has a need to consider measures such as maximum retainable amounts.

Alternative 1. No action

Alternative 2. Allow retention of legal-size halibut incidentally caught in pot gear fishing for sablefish where Area 4A halibut and BSAI sablefish regulatory areas overlap, provided the participant holds sufficient BSAI sablefish IFQ/CDQ and Area 4A halibut IFQ.

Option 1. Establish a halibut MRA of (options: 5%, 10%, 15%, or 20%).

The motion was withdrawn.

While Council acknowledged the policy importance of the efficient utilization of the halibut resource, the Council chose to take no action at this time.

C8 Observer Coverage on Small CPs

Ms. Kimball moved, which was seconded, to release the draft RIR/IRFA for public review after incorporating suggestions by the SSC.

Revise Alternative 2 to modify Element 5 (described below).

Select Alternative 2 as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA). Preferred elements in **bold**.

Purpose and Need Statement

Under the Restructured Observer Program, all catcher/processors are in the full coverage category unless they meet the requirements for an allowance to be placed in partial coverage. The placement of catcher/processors in full coverage enables NMFS obtain independent estimates of catch, at sea discards, and prohibited species catch (PSC) for catcher/processor vessels. In recognition of the relatively high cost of full coverage for smaller catcher/processors and the limited amount of catch and bycatch by these vessels, the Council recommended two limited allowances for placing a catcher/processor in partial coverage. Both of these allowances were based on vessel activity between 2003 and 2009.

Since implementation of the Restructured Observer Program, owners and operators of some catcher/processors have requested that the Council and NMFS revise these allowances to include vessels that began processing after 2009. First, the allowance for placing a catcher/processor in partial coverage should, as a minimum, be based on a measurement of ongoing production that shows that the catcher/processor processes a small amount of groundfish relative to the rest of the catcher/processor fleet. Second, the current regulations do not provide a way to move a catcher/processor placed in partial coverage into full coverage if production increases to a level deemed appropriate for full coverage.

This action would maintain a relatively limited exception to the general requirement that all catcher/processors are in the full coverage category; provide an appropriate balance between data quality and the cost of observer coverage; and establish a basis for placing catcher/processors into partial coverage that is not unduly difficult to apply and enforce.

Alternative 1. No Action; maintain existing exemptions.

Alternative 2. Revise the allowances for NMFS to place small catcher/processors into partial coverage. The criterion for placing a catcher/processor in partial coverage is the vessel’s production in the basis year as determined under Element 2.

Under this alternative, when a catcher/processor is required to have $\geq 100\%$ observer coverage because of the vessel’s participation in a catch share program, the vessel would be ineligible for partial observer coverage under this action.

Element 1: Production threshold for placing a catcher/processor in partial coverage.

Option	Measure	Threshold based on 10 th percentile approach	Threshold based on kernel density distribution approach
		Pounds (metric tons)	
1.	Average daily production	1A. 11,000 (5.0)	1B. 15,500 (7.0)
2.	Average weekly production	2A. 42,000 (19.1)	2B. 79,000 (35.8)
3.	Maximum daily production	3A. 26,000 (11.8)	3B. 44,000 (20.0)
4.	Maximum weekly production	4A. 94,000 (42.6)	4B. 197,000 (89.4)
5.	Annual production	5A. 677,000 (307.1)	5B. 2,665,000 (1,208.8)

Element 2: The basis year for placing a catcher/processor in partial coverage is the vessel’s production in a standard basis year or alternate basis year. The standard basis year is the fishing year minus two years. If the vessel has no production in the standard basis year, the alternate basis year will be the most recent year that the vessel has any production before the standard basis year going back to 2009.

Element 3: If a catcher/processor has no production in the basis year as determined under Element 2,

Option 1: Place catcher/processor in full coverage.

Option 2: Place catcher/processor in partial coverage.

Option 3: Place trawl catcher/processor in full coverage until vessel has production history; place other catcher/processors in partial coverage until vessel has production history. [Note: Under Element 5, the Council’s PPA places all trawl catcher/processors in full coverage.]

Element 4: For a catcher/processor to be in partial coverage,

Option 1. Vessel owner must choose partial coverage for the upcoming fishing year by an annual deadline (otherwise in full coverage).

Option 2. NMFS places vessel in partial coverage for the upcoming year without any action by owner.

Element 5: Trawl catcher/processors are ineligible for partial observer coverage (i.e., always in full observer coverage).

The motion passed without objection. (4/12/15 11:08 am)

D1 Review Methodology for BSAI Crab 10-year Review (SSC Only)

The SSC reviewed the agenda item and provided a report to the Council .

D2 Review National Standard 1 Guidelines (SSC Only)

The SSC reviewed the agenda item and provided a report to the Council .

D3 Research Priorities

Mr. Tweit moved, which was seconded the following:

- Adopt the revised research priority categories for use in June priority setting, and
- Affirm the management priorities we've been using for the past year, particularly the three identified in the 2014 research prioritization letter as the Council's highest short term priorities:
 - 1) building integrated ecosystem management capabilities,
 - 2) continuing efforts to reduce Chinook impacts, and
 - 3) increasing understanding of Stellar sea lion protections, and
- Communicate to the SSC our reluctance at this point to further include high, medium, and low categorization as suggested.

The motion passed unanimously. (4/13/15 10:33 am)

D4 Ecosystem Committee

Mr. Tweit moved, which was seconded by Dr. Balisger, the following:

During scoping for action items, the Council should identify where the Vision Statement could affect the proposed action and should ensure that discussion of the Vision Statement is included in final deliberation for Council actions.

The motion passed unanimously. (4/13/15 11:03 am)

E1 Staff Tasking

Mr. Tweit moved to approve the Plan Team nominations of Pete Webster to the Scallop Plan Team, and Cindy Tribuzio to the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team. The motion passed unanimously at 1:55 pm.

The Council adjourned at 3:07, on April 13th, 2015.

TIME LOG
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Meeting held in Anchorage, Alaska
April 8-13, 2015

Wednesday 4-8-15

Call to Order	08:07
Oath of Office	08:09
B1 Executive Director's Report - Chris Oliver	08:16
B2 NMFS Management Report - Glenn Merrill	09:32
Lauren Smoker – Financial Disclosure	09:41
D2 National Standards Report - Jim Armstrong, Ben Fissel	11:07
Public Comment out of Order – George Hutchings	11:59
D2 National Standards Report - Jim Armstrong and Wes Patrick	12:04
B3 ADFG Report - Karla Bush	12:28
B5 USCG Report – LCDR Courtney Sergent	12:43
CDR James Houck Port Access Route Studay (PARS)	12:53
B6 USFWS Report	01:42
ABSI Report	02:01
B7 Protected Species Report - Steve MacLean	02:10
B8 NIOSH Report – Jennifer Lincoln	02:21
Public Testimony all B Items	02:40
C1 Coop Reports – Jon McCracken	02:49
Ed Poulsen, Dogboat Cooperative	02:53
Gretar Gunderson ACE Cooperative Report	02:58
Joe Sullivan, Jake Jacobson	03:07
ICE Cooperative Report	03:08
Adjourn for the day	05:05

Thursday 4-9-15

Call to Order	08:08
C1 Cooperative Reports continued	08:09
Susan Robinson - CGOA Best Use Rockfish Cooperative Report	08:09
Julie Bonney	08:13
Jason Anderson, Mark Fina	08:24
Alaska Seafood Cooperative Report	08:25
John Gruever James Mize	08:42
Intercooperative Report	08:42
Stephanie Madsen, PCC	09:07
C2 GOA and BSAI Salmon Bycatch Genetics – Dr. Stram and Jeff Guyon	09:43
Salmon Genetics Update	09:43
Bill Templin ADFG	10:36
John Gauvin, Jonh Gruver, Kathy McGauley	10:46
Salmon Excluder Tests	10:47
Farron Wallace SSC Report	11:18
Senator Sullivan	11:43
Karl Haflinger Coop report	12:14
John Gruver	12:30
James Mize IPA	01:04
Stephanie Madsen	01:12
Rob Sanderson Jr, Public testimony out of order	01:55
Myron Nanangn	02:02
C4 Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch – Diana Stram	02:11
Steve MacLean - Outreach Report	02:21
Diana Stram review alternatives	03:12
Adjourn for the day	04:52

Friday 4-10-15

Call to Order	08:06
SSC Report, Farron Wallace	08:06
C4 Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch (continued)	
C4 Dr. Katie Howard	08:29
C4 Dr. Diana Stram	09:35
Dr. Jim Ianelli	09:40
Public testimony out of order	11:42
Gene Sandone	11:44
Rose Fosdick	11:58
Kevin Ganley	12:03
Stram, Ianeli, Haynie	12:15
Sally Blbb	01:58
Public Comment out of order	02:29
Stanlin Sheppard	02:30
Percy Logness	02:34
Sky Starky	02:39
Gayle Vick	02:48
Ben Stevens	02:56
Brandon Amosok	02:57
Dorothy Shockley	03:05
Jerry Davis	03:10
Dan Dietrick	03:19
David Irvine	03:32
AP report	03:44
Adjourn for day	05:20

Saturday 4-11-15

Call to Order	08:12
C4 Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch (continued)	
Public Comment	08:12
Glenn Reed	08:12
Howard Malcom	08:19
Donna Parker	08:38
Dan Ohara	08:54
Dan Martin	09:00
James Mize	09:19
James Buskurk	09:27
Tim Cusick	09:42
Frank Kelty	09:47
Brandon Lynn	09:52
Karl Haflinger	10:18
Don Ashley	10:39
Paul Peyton	10:46
Art Nelson	10:55
Bob Krueger	11:01
Tim Smith	11:16
Duane Cooper	11:16
Joe Garney	11:24
Jack Fagerstrom	11:29
John Gruver	11:36
Julie Bonney	11:57
Becca Robbins Gisclair	12:11
Angel Drobnika	12:18
Sam Cotten Speaks to motion on C4	12:48
Council Member comments on main motion	02:12
Nicole Kimball, C2, Salmon Bycatch Genetics	02:49
Public comment out of order	03:05
Jim and Rhonda Hubbard	03:05
Bob Alverson	03:13
C5 Scallop SAFE	03:16
Jim Armstrong, Quinn Smith	03:16
Kimball motion on C5	03:33
Adjourn for day	05:14

Sunday 4-12-15

Call to Order	09:08
Ben Muse Retiring; Jim Balsiger, Glenn Merrill speak	09:08
C8 Observer Coverage on small CPs – Mary Alice McKeen and Ben Muse	09:15
Ernie Weiss, AP report	10:50
Roy Hyder, Enforcement Report	10:52
Public Comment	10:58
Adam Lalich	10:59
Andrew Richards	11:01
Action on C8 - 15 minutes earlier	11:25
Public Comment out of Order	11:25
Jan Standard	11:25
C6 GOA Sablefish Longline Pots – Sam Cunningham	11:41
Public Comment out of order	12:07
Beth Stewart	12:07
Paul Clampett	12:09
Ernie weiss AP report	01:14
Jon McCracken Enforcement Report	01:22
Public Testimony	01:37
Megan Pasternak	01:37
Dave Franklin	01:41
Bill Connor	01:50
Jared Bright	01:57
John Johansen	02:21
Jerry Dahl	02:25
Bernie Huckholder	02:27
Jeff Farvor	02:41
Todd Hoppe	02:46
Linda Kozak	02:49
Cale LaDuke	02:53
Buck Laukitis	02:56
Dan Falvey	03:19
Megan ONeil	03:28
Jeff Stephan	03:31
Motion on C6	03:47
Recess	05:23
Adjourn for the day	06:21

Monday 4-13-15

Call to Order	08:15
C7 4A Halibut Retention in Sablefish Pots – Sara Marrinan	08:20
Public Comment on C7	09:08
Lenny Herzog	09:08
Council Action on C7	09:22
Sam Cotten Motion - withdrawn	09:30
D3 Research Priorities - Jim Armstrong	10:00
Beill Tweit Motion	10:32
D4 Ecosystem Committee Report – Steve MacLean	10:40
AP Report	11:00
Bill Tweit motion on D4	11:01
E1 Staff Tasking – Chris Oliver	11:30
AP report on staff tasking	01:09
Public Comment on E1	01:12
Ernie Weiss	01:12
Joe Sullivan	01:18
Bob Kruger	01:23
Action on Staff Tasking	02:13
Council meeting Adjourned	03:07

Dan Hull
Chairman
Chris Oliver
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News & Notes

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

April 2015

Senator Sullivan Addresses Council

Alaska Senator Dan Sullivan addressed the Council on the second day of the meeting. He outlined current issues his office is addressing, as well as discussed Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization. He encouraged the Council to provide comments and keep his office informed of MSA priorities as the reauthorization process evolves.



Kenny Down on Council, Tweit vice-chair

The president and CEO of Blue North Fisheries, Kenny Down, was sworn in on Wednesday to fill the seat vacated by John Henderschedt. Mr. Down has served on the Observer Advisory Committee, as well as the Steller Sea Lion mitigation committee. Also at this meeting, Mr. Bill Tweit, from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, was elected vice-chairman.



Photo: David Witherell

GOA Sablefish IFQ Pots

The Council took action to allow the use of longline pot gear in the GOA sablefish IFQ fishery. The preferred alternative gives vessel operators the choice to use either pot longline gear or hook-and-line longline (HAL) gear. Public testimony and the Council's analysis indicated that pot gear could help fishermen reduce the negative effects of whale depredation. Reduced depredation could also mitigate a source of unaccounted sablefish mortality, thus enhancing the precision of stock abundance estimates. The Council selected elements of its preferred alternative that are intended to limit the likelihood and severity of gear conflicts and grounds preemption that might result from the introduction of a second gear type. IFQ holders who use longline pots are formally encouraged to develop protocols for providing information that helps all fishermen share the fishing grounds. NMFS will report on pot gear effort in its management reports to the Council, and the Council will conduct a review of the fishery three years after rule implementation to identify any need for further management action.

In order to limit the amount of space that pots occupy on the fishing grounds, each vessel is limited in the number of pots that it can deploy in

each GOA management area. No more than 120 pots can be used in the West Yakutat or the Southeast Outside districts of the Eastern Gulf. No more than 300 pots can be used in the Central or the Western Gulf. NMFS will establish a system of pot tags to enforce this limitation. Vessels fishing longline pot gear, regardless of their size, must also fill out a NMFS logbook to aid in enforcement. The Council also limited the amount of time that pot gear can be left on the grounds without being moved or tended. Gear cannot be left for more than five days in CGOA and WY, and not for more than seven days in WGOA. Vessels in SE must remove their pots from the grounds when making a sablefish delivery. The different limits reflect the four GOA areas' varied fleet size, fishing area concentration, and run-times to port. To aid in enforcement, vessels using longline pot gear will be required to use VMS, and to declare the status of their pots when making a Prior Notice of Landing.

The Council recommended that legal-size halibut caught incidentally in GOA sablefish pots should be retained (by those holding halibut IFQ). Implementation of the halibut retention requirement is contingent upon rulemaking by IPHC, which would not occur until early 2016. If IPHC does not make longline pots a legal gear for halibut, any halibut caught in this fishery with pot gear would have to be discarded.

Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

Retirement Calls

Gail Bendixen, a long-time administrative assistant, administrative officer, finance officer and executive secretary for the Council, has decided 29 plus years is long enough to be "Managing our Nation's Fishery Managers." She will be retiring in June this year, and the Council took an evening to thank her for her service.



Gail receiving the plaque from Chairman Dan



Retirement well-wishers

Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch

The Council took final action on a comprehensive package to manage salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. After deliberating on alternative management measures for several meetings, the Council selected a preferred alternative which modifies current management of Chinook salmon bycatch (a program previously implemented under Amendment 91 in 2011) as well as management of chum salmon bycatch. The Council received a detailed analysis and heard extensive testimony from the public on the range of management measures under consideration. The Council has engaged in extensive outreach to western Alaskan communities to best inform them as to measures under consideration and receive direct input. The Council also received hundreds of letters and resolutions providing input on the different approaches. While bycatch in recent years has been lower than historical levels, concerns remain due to critically low western Alaskan and Upper Yukon Chinook stocks, a high proportion of western Alaskan Chinook in the stock composition of the bycatch, and the potential impact rate of the pollock fishery on those stocks should current cap levels be reached in times of low abundance. The Council's previous action under Amendment 91 was intended to minimize bycatch at all levels of salmon and pollock abundance and has been largely successful. However given concerns with continued poor western Alaskan Chinook returns, and indications that some improvements could be realized in the summer season as well as at the individual vessel level, the Council initiated this action in 2014. Additionally, the Council expressed its intent to comprehensively manage Chinook and chum salmon bycatch within the pollock fishery in a coordinated manner.

The preferred alternative combines a range of management measures including incorporation of chum salmon into existing industry-managed incentive plan agreements (IPA), tools to facilitate flexibility for the pollock fleet to best operate at times of lower bycatch rates by shifting quota to the winter season, more stringent IPA provisions to require excluders and address vessel-level behavior and late summer season Chinook bycatch rates, as well as a reduction to overall cap levels in times of low western Alaskan Chinook salmon abundance. The Council's preferred alternative explicitly reduces the

bycatch caps when an index of western Alaskan and Upper Yukon Chinook salmon abundance is below a designated threshold. This measure was incorporated into the Council's management approach in recognition of the need for more stringent measures in times of critically low western Alaskan Chinook abundance. The reduction in cap levels (from 47,491 to 33,318, and from 60,000 to 45,000) in times of low abundance is designed to provide for increased incentives to the pollock fleet to reduce bycatch to the maximum extent practicable to help in efforts to rebuild critically low western Alaskan Chinook stocks. These reduced cap levels will be enacted in all years where the index for assessing the status of western Alaskan Chinook stocks is below a designated threshold that indicates very poor run sizes. All other provisions of bycatch management will also be in place in those years.

The Council reiterated its commitment to maintain efforts to monitor and adjust bycatch management strategies as needed for salmon in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. Additional reporting requirements to assess the efficacy of the bycatch management program will be implemented in conjunction with the new regulations. The Council is also committed to continuing outreach efforts to affected communities. The full Council motion with all of the modifications to the management program including cap levels, index threshold and program details is posted on the Council website as is the analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA) of the impacts of the range of alternatives.

The Council also requested staff provide a white paper evaluating the feasibility of further temporal and spatial refinements of stock composition data, including identification of the minimum number of samples necessary to meet accuracy and precision standards. The Council further requested more rapid timelines for both BSAI and GOA genetic reports. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Upcoming Meetings

Crab Plan Team: May 4-7, Anchorage Hilton

Anchorage EM Workgroup: April 27, 2015;
Anchorage/teleconference

Observer Advisory Committee: May 29, 2015;
Anchorage, AK

Legislative Advisory Committee: June 2, 2015,
Sitka (T)

Area 4A Halibut Retention in BSAI Sablefish Pots

The Council received a staff presentation on management measures that could be implemented in tandem with the IPHC allowing the retention of Area 4A halibut in pots that fish for BSAI sablefish IFQ or CDQ. In 2013, correspondence from the Council to the IPHC recommended that the IPHC allow the retention of Area 4A halibut in pots that fish BSAI sablefish IFQ or CDQ for entities that hold both available sablefish IFQ/CDQ as well as Area 4A halibut. The IPHC responded by stating that while they were supportive of the concept of halibut retention in sablefish pots from a resource conservation perspective, they were only prepared to take action conditional on the Council taking action to ensure the take of halibut IFQ in sablefish pot remained at incidental levels only. Therefore the discussion paper presented to the Council set up management measures the Council may adopt in order to discourage the targeting of halibut with sablefish pot gear.

While Council acknowledged the policy importance of the efficient utilization of the halibut resource, given the limited number of active users in the BSAI sablefish IFQ/CDQ fishery in recent years for which these provisions would apply, the Council deemed action not to be of an urgent nature. Additionally, there was a desire to receive IPHC feedback on the potential retention of halibut in GOA sablefish pots before determining action in the BSAI. Therefore the Council chose to take no action at this time. Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

Cooperative Reports

At the April meeting, the Council reviewed cooperative reports for the Amendment 80 Program, Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program, American Fisheries Act Program, and BSAI Crab Program. As part of the cooperative programs, cooperatives have provided annual written reports detailing the use of the cooperative quota. At this meeting, the Council requested that historical GOA harvest activity for AFA sideboard exempt and non-exempt catcher vessels be included in future AFA Catcher Vessel Intercooperative reports to ascertain changes in fishing behavior for these vessels in the GOA.

The Council expressed their appreciation to the cooperative managers the written reports and oral presentations. The Council underscored that the reports are an invaluable resource for the Council to track the effectiveness of the different cooperatives and provide insight on effectiveness of the cooperative in meeting the Council's goals and objectives for the respective programs. The Council recognized and expressed appreciation for improvements and thoroughness of some of the written reports and voluntary oral presentations, demonstrating the utility of this important information exchange. The Council underscored the importance of participation to those cooperatives in the crab program that chose not to submit, and encouraged cooperatives that provided only minimal information to be more comprehensive in their

reports. Copies of the cooperative reports are available on the Council website. Staff contact is Jon McCracken and Sarah Marrinan.

Observer Program Small CPs

The Council reviewed an initial review draft analysis to revise the allowances for placing certain small catcher processors in the partial observer coverage category, and selected a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA). Currently, under the Observer Program, there is a general requirement that all catcher processors are placed in the full coverage category, with limited exceptions intended to address vessels with small levels of groundfish production. Under the Council's PPA, the exceptions would be revised such that only a fixed gear catcher processor vessel that is not participating in a catch share program would be eligible for partial coverage, and only if their production is below an average weekly level of 79,000 pounds (35.8 metric tons). Under the PPA, the three vessels that qualify for the current exceptions could continue in partial coverage if their fishing patterns remain unchanged, and potentially five to seven more vessels may qualify in future. The Council requested the analysis be revised with additional information, including SSC recommendations, and released for public review. The motion is available online, and staff contact is Diana Evans.

Ecosystem Committee

The Ecosystem Committee met March 17-18, to consider the application of the Council's Ecosystem Vision Statement, receive updates on recent habitat related science in the Bering Sea, and discuss the prospective development of a Bering Sea Ecosystem Plan. The Council passed a motion to explicitly incorporate the Council's Ecosystem Vision Statement as an element in scoping for Council actions and to ensure discussion of the Ecosystem Vision Statement occurs during final deliberation of Council actions. The Council also approved the next meeting of the Ecosystem Committee to be held August 6-7, 2015 in Juneau, AK. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Appointments to Plan Teams

The Council announced the appointment of Sarah Webster to the Scallop Plan Team, and Cindy Tribuzio to the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team. Ms. Webster is the Program Manager for the Fisheries, Aquatic Science and Technology lab in the Department of Environmental Science at Alaska Pacific University, and has worked on two current scallop research projects. Ms. Tribuzio is a research fishery biologist for the National Marine Fisheries Service at the Auke Bay Lab in Juneau. Ms. Tribuzio has worked with plan teams in the past, and has authored many SAFE chapters. We welcome both and look forward to working with them in the future.

Staff Tasking

In addition to discussing the timing and relative priority of previously tasked projects, and tasking for various workgroups and committees, the Council provided clarifications on several important issues. Additionally, the Council took the following actions:

- Established a new standing committee consisting of 4-5 Council members to review relevant national legislation, including future proposed MSA revisions.
- Provided feedback comments on MSA revision bill HR 1335.
- In its discussion of Council Committees, the Council expressed its intent to reconstitute the Rural Outreach Committee, including appointment of a new Committee Chair to replace previous Chair Eric Olson, and task it with discussion of various approaches to more regular outreach, in addition to issue-specific outreach efforts.
- Approved minutes from the February meeting, and committed to a future review of the new revised format for preparing meeting minutes. The new format is a combination of action memos, motions with voting records, the newsletter and audio files.
- Agreed to send a letter in support of ALFAs proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for funding to support EM implementation.

Scallop Management

The Council reviewed the annual stock assessment and fishery evaluation (SAFE) report for Alaska weathervane scallops. The Council approved the SAFE and recommended the SSC's determination of 1.161 million pounds of shucked scallop meats as the acceptable biological catch (ABC) limit. This ABC is equivalent to 90% of the overfishing limit (OFL) of 1.29 million pounds and is the maximum allowed under the Scallop FMP's ABC control rule. While ABC applies statewide, guideline harvest levels (GHLs) for the different scallop registration areas in Alaska are established by ADF&G.

The Council was informed that an open access State waters fishery was in place in 2014 following the sunseting of a moratorium on scallop vessels in Alaska. The state-waters management plan allows ADF&G to manage scallop beds in waters of Alaska separately from those in adjacent federal waters. Although several new vessels were registered to participate in the state fishery, only vessels that had been active under existing federal permits harvested scallops in 2014.

A CamSled (camera sled) survey that collects images as it is pulled over scallop beds could replace the state's more traditional dredge surveys. The processing of images from the CamSled would provide scallop density estimates which would be the basis for abundance estimates in a given survey area. Alaska Pacific University's Fisheries, Aquatic Science, and Technology Lab is currently involved in processing the image collection. A data-poor assessment workshop for scallop stocks is expected to be held towards the end of 2015 with participation by the members of the Scallop Plan Team, among others. Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

3 Meeting Update

Due to time limitations, as well as logistics, associated with the June meeting in Sitka, the following items (originally scheduled for the June meeting agenda) have been postponed to the October meeting agenda, in order to allow ample time for completion of major agenda items associated with the Observer Program and BSAI halibut PSC limits in June:

- final action on AI Pacific cod processing allocations
- discussion paper on 100% observer coverage requirements for GOA trawl vessels
- discussion paper on biomass-based (halibut) PSC limits
- slope and canyon survey report from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center - the report will be

released over the summer, and this issue will be scheduled for October where the Council will consider recommendations/alternatives from interested proposers and determine next steps.

Crab 10 Year Review

The SSC received a presentation from Council and AFSC staff soliciting feedback on the proposed scope and methods for the BSAI Crab rationalization 10-year program review. The presentation included a discussion of two AFSC studies related to the crab program and a proposed work-plan which included an annotated table of contents.

The SSC commented on the research and the proposal, and discussed the merits of having a more rigorous assessment of the impacts of the program using model-based approaches compared to the more rudimentary descriptive assessment of impacts currently proposed. Ultimately the SSC recommended a draft analysis be presented to the SSC at a later date so that major impacts can be identified for, potentially, more rigorous model-based analysis. The SSC also made several specific recommendations on information to include and ways to include the information.

The SSC also provided feedback on the two AFSC studies proposed for inclusion in the program review. The first study presented included information from semi-structure interviews solicited from a wide range of stakeholders in the crab fisheries. Members of the SSC remarked on the intrinsic merit of this work and supported further endeavors by the AFSC in this direction. However, significant concern was expressed regarding the way the information was presented and how it may be relied on for the purposes of a 10-year review. The SSC recommended that this work be limited to a supportive role for establishing hypothesis tests or data from other sources. The SSC recommended the inclusion of the AFSC's study on Community Vulnerability metrics in the 10-year review, conditional on incorporating feedback detailed in their minutes.

The Council received the SSC report and presentation. It clarified in staff tasking that, at this point, it was not comfortable with the AFSC's study on industry perception of the crab program going into the 10-yr review. Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 4/21/2015

June 1-9, 2015 Sitka, AK	October 5-13, 2015 Anchorage, AK	December 7-15, 2015 Anchorage, AK
National Standard 1 Guidelines: Review and Comment SSL Critical Habitat: Update (T) OAC report: Review Observer Program Supplemental EA: Review Observer Program Annual Report: Review EM Workgroup report: Review Observer coverage on small CPs: Final Action Observer coverage on BSAI trawl CVs: Define Alternatives Bering Sea Halibut PSC: Final Action Research Priorities: Determine priorities WAI GKC Partial Offloads: Initial Review BSAI Crab: Plan team report; OFL/ABC for 3 stocks	North Pacific Climate Vulnerability Assessment: Review (T) GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Preliminary Analysis Charter Halibut RQE Program: Initial Review (T) AI Pcod A/B Seasonal Apportionment: Discussion paper AI Pcod Allocation: Final Action AFA program review: Review Workplan (T) Observer Program 2016 Annual Deployment Plan: Review EM Workgroup recommendation for 2016 Pre-implementation Observer coverage on BSAI trawl CVs: Initial Review (T) 100% Observer coverage for GOA Trawl: Discussion paper Biomass based BSAI Halibut PSC Limits: Discussion paper Halibut Deck Sorting Scales 2016 EFP: Review BS FEP: Discussion paper, Ecosystem Ctte Report Groundfish Policy and Workplan: Review Proposed groundfish harvest specs: Approve; PT report WAI GKC Partial Offloads: Final Action (T) BSAI Crab SAFE/ specs for 6 stocks: Approve; PT report Pribilof Canyon Corals: Receive Survey Report/Next Steps	Enforcement Precepts: Review Paper GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Action as necessary (T) Charter Halibut RQE Program: Final Action (T) Charter Halibut Measures for 2016 Halibut/Sablefish IFQ program review: Review Workplan (T) Observer coverage on BSAI trawl CVs: Final Action (T) Final groundfish harvest specs: Approve; PT report EFH 5-year Review: Review Draft Report (T) ITEMS BELOW NOT YET SCHEDULED Salmon genetics spatial/temporal refinement: Disc Paper EM Integration: Initial Review (June 2016) BSAI Crab bycatch limits/area closure evaluation: Disc paper Observer Lead Level 2: Discussion paper for Reg Am Observer Tendering: Initial Review

AI - Aleutian Islands
AFA - American Fisheries Act
BiOp - Biological Opinion
BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
BKC - Blue King Crab
BOF - Board of Fisheries
CQE - Community Quota Entity
CDQ - Community Development Quota
EM - Electronic monitoring
EFH - Essential Fish Habitat
EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit
EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
FEP - Fishery Ecosystem Plan
FLL - Freezer longliners
GOA - Gulf of Alaska
GKC - Golden King Crab
GHL - Guideline Harvest Level

HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
ICA - Inter-cooperative Agreements
IPA - Incentive Program Agreements
LLP - Limited License Plan
MPA - Marine Protected Area
MRA - Maximum Retainable Allowance
PSC - Prohibited Species Catch
RKC - Red King Crab
ROFR - Right of First Refusal
RQE - Recreational Quota Entity
SIR - Supplemental Information Report
SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee
SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
SSL - Steller Sea Lion
TAC - Total Allowable Catch
VMS - Vessel Monitoring System

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

June 1-9, 2015, Sitka
October 5-13, 2015 Anchorage
December 7-15, 2015, Anchorage
February 1-9, 2016, Portland
April 4 - 12, 2016, Anchorage
June 6-14, 2016, Kodiak
October 3 -11, 2016 Anchorage
December 5-13, 2016, Anchorage

(T) = Tentative