



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

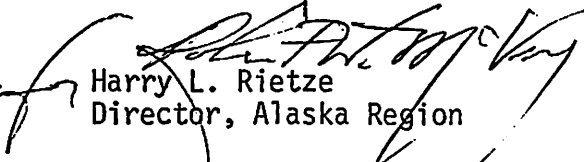
*National Marine Fisheries Service
P. O. Box 1668, Juneau, Alaska 99802*

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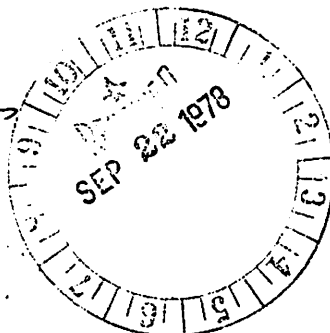
Agenda Item #18

Reply to Attn. of:

To : See Distribution Below

From :  Harry L. Rietze
Director, Alaska Region

Subject: Incidental Species



At the July 24, 1978 meeting of the Incidental Species Group, it was decided that NMFS would develop a discussion paper for the group to consider at its next meeting. Because we were unable to meet in August, the next opportunity will be in Sitka later this month.

We have completed a working draft of a paper (appended) which the group should be prepared to discuss at Sitka. As a policy statement, it includes no specifics relating to the naming of species or species groups which might be assigned to various categories. The statement does, however, set out quite clearly just what the problems are and suggests strategies and guidelines for dealing with them.

Distribution:

Jim Branson ✓
Don W. Collinsworth
Don Bevan
Keith Specking
Jim Ellis
Don Hales
Bert Larkins

MANAGEMENT OF MIXED SPECIES FISHERIES
PROVISIONAL STRATEGY AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Foreign fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea prior to March, 1977 were freely competitive, governed only by each country's preferences and perceived advantages and lacking discernible regard for resource conservation. Accommodation to FCMA controls was achieved remarkably quickly with respect to technical requirements (call signs, check in-check out procedures, etc.) although the inertia of established practices seemed to prolong changes in more basic activities such as target fishing and careful logging of catches. The past and continuing failure of certain foreign fleets to fish with adequate selectivity for target species, either through inability or inadvertance, has forced premature termination of a few fisheries and poses risk of additional closures. The existing situation contains an undesirable potential for fishery disruption and economic and biologic waste, which could worsen as domestic trawl fisheries develop. A management strategy and implementing procedures to overcome these fishery management hazards are presented below for the Council's consideration.

Council Objectives and Guidelines

The Council finds that FCMA prescribed policies require augmentation with interpretive statements that address and govern fishery management regimes. In particular, the management of mixed stock fisheries can be especially complex and will benefit from clear policy guidelines and objectives.

The following statements represent the Council's policy relative to mixed stock fisheries, including management of incidental catches. They will serve as guidelines to plan drafting teams and management agencies exercising control of fisheries in the FCZ.

I. In accord with the purposes of the FCMA, economic efficiency within a sound conservation framework is a major objective in fishery management, normally dictating that target species govern the conduct of principal fisheries. To give effect to this objective, proper enabling elements must be included in the regulatory foundation.

1. All species that are amenable to management, have commercial value, and are taken as target or incidental catches shall have an OY specified that will maintain perpetual economic productivity. All such catches will be logged and retained.
2. Any species not amenable to discrete management, but which has commercial value and is taken as an incidental catch or as an element in directed mixed stock fisheries shall be grouped together with similar related species (i.e., other rockfish, other flounder, etc.) and an OY specified for the group that will maintain perpetual economic productivity. Individual species may not be permitted to diminish below a level of viability within the ecosystem. All such catches will be retained and, to the extent possible, logged by individual species.
3. Species of inconsequential commercial value taken only incidentally in small or trace amounts and which are not amenable to specific management control shall be grouped together in an "other species" category with an OY specified that will maintain every component as a viable element within the ecosystem. All such catches shall

be logged; retention is optional.

4. Prohibited species (salmon, halibut, shellfish and corals) will not be retained, but catches in trace amounts should not be cause for terminating a fishery.

II. Integral to the objective of economic efficiency is the maintenance of orderly fisheries that pursue harvest goals without premature termination or disruptive redirection. The management regime must be effective in promoting, within each fishery, a high degree of synchrony in the attainment of quotas for the various species characteristic of that fishery. This objective will be supported by the following strategies which are appropriate to the known range of situations common to the fisheries of the FCZ.

1. Impose compelling incentives on fishermen to selectively direct effort to target species. Undoubtedly, the certainty of premature termination of their fishing activities is the most persuasive sanction available. Modern fishing technology coupled with the right intentions justify high expectation that substantial control over species composition of catches is possible.
2. Within the constraints of OY's, species quotas must be assigned in proper relationship to the mix and quantities of species typically caught in each distinctive fishery or area, taking into account the preferences and selective fishing capabilities of each nation or fleet. Analysis of the fishing performance of each nation or fleet since imposition of FCMA controls will be an initial and continuing guide to allocation decisions.

3. A portion of each OY should be held in reserve for allocation as needed. It is expected that DAH's and foreign allocations at the species level will not prove to be perfectly accurate as fishing progresses. The ability to make prompt adjustments from reserves will be absolutely vital to achieving the objectives of economic efficiency and maintenance of orderly fisheries.