



## B1 Executive Director's Report

December 2022

### Action Memo

#### General Announcements

I have a couple of announcements to start off the meeting:

- There are Covid precautions for in-person attendees, consistent with CDC guidelines. The CDC Covid-19 community level for Anchorage is currently rated as LOW. As such, attendees may wish to wear a mask during the meeting, but none are required. We do ask that participants attend remotely and take a COVID test if feeling sick. Testing is available. A handout on Covid meeting protocols is attached under agenda item A.
- All lunches for Council members will be catered.

#### Testimony Tips for the Public

**Public Testimony Presentations:** The staff now has the ability to project presentations via during public testimony.

- If you would like to project a document during your public testimony, you must attach it when you sign up to testify (there will be a prompt on the signup screen to upload an attachment), and staff will bring up the document for you onscreen when your name is called.

**Remote Testimony Audio:** The Council needs to be able to hear your testimony, and it can be challenging sometimes to hear those who are testifying remotely. For best audio quality, staff have identified technical recommendations and tips for those who sign up to testify remotely:

- It is your responsibility to ensure your internet connection is strong, the audio is set at the correct volume, and you are in a quiet area. If you are calling in from a phone, please make sure it's the same number you used when signing up for testimony so the staff knows who to unmute.
- If you are having problems or have questions, please email [npfmc.admin@noaa.gov](mailto:npfmc.admin@noaa.gov) before your name is called.

#### Plan Team Nomination

The NMFS Alaska Region has nominated **Dr. Skylar Bayer** to serve on the Scallop Plan Team. Dr. Bayer is an expert in scallop biology, reproduction, population dynamics, habitat preferences, community ecology, and has research experience in fishery data analysis and field methodology development. She recently (September 2022) joined the NMFS AKRO Habitat Conservation Division as a Marine Habitat Resource Management Specialist. A cover letter and CV are attached. The SSC will be reviewing the nomination and provide a recommendation to the Council.

## Hunt to Retire from SSC

**Dr. George Hunt** is retiring from the SSC after serving 22 years. George is a Research Professor University of Washington, where his research focuses on the ecology and behavior of marine birds and how spatial and temporal variability in marine ecosystems influence marine bird foraging opportunities and reproductive performance. He has also led collaborative, interdisciplinary investigations of spatial and temporal variability in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands marine ecosystems, and the development of national and international programs for the investigation of how climate variability and warming may affect the sub-arctic seas. Dr. Hunt's research papers (he is an author on more than 200 scientific articles!) have been cited over 14,000 times in the primary literature. His good sense of humor, as well as his vast knowledge of fisheries, ecosystems and climate change, and ecology of seabirds will be greatly missed by all in the Council process. Best wishes in retirement George!

## SSC and AP appointments

The Council will review nominations for SSC and AP during Executive Session and the Chair will announce these appointments at the end of the meeting. Note that Advisory Panel members Ruth Christiansen, Jeff Kauffman, and Sinclair Wilt have served three full 3-years terms, and are thus not eligible for re-appointment. Thank you, Ruth, Jeff, and Sinclair for your service and contributions to the AP. Best wishes to you and I hope you stay involved in the Council process!

Note that the call for nominations for the Council's newly created Alaska Native Tribal representative seat on the Advisory Panel remains open through February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. Information about the seat is available on the [eAgenda portal](#), which is also where nominations may be submitted.

## CCC Meeting

The Council Coordination Committee met in Washington DC on October 18-20. Topics of discussion included budgets, climate governance and scenario planning, hybrid meeting operations, preventing harassment in the council process, and updates on various topics including Equity and Environmental justice, America the Beautiful initiative, Northeast fisheries habitat assessment, ESA-MSA policy integration, and reports from CCC committees. All meeting materials, and a summary report of the meeting can be found here: <http://www.fisherycouncils.org/ccc-meetings>

One action item included approval of model **harassment policies** for Council staff and all Council process participants. The Council staff model policy addresses situations where the employee is the alleged victim. The Council process participant model policy provides guidance on addressing allegations of harassment experienced by participants in the Council process other than staff (e.g., Council members, AP members, SSC members, consultants, etc.). These policies are **attached** and can be found on the CCC meeting eAgenda. These policies will need to be adopted as stand-alone policies or incorporated by reference in our SOPP, and we will discuss these options in Executive Session. NOAA GC will work with the regional council Executive Directors to operationalize and implement these with various checklists or potential forms that will involve implementing procedures. In addition, NOAA Fisheries has contracted to provide training for Council staff, Council members, and AP members (and potentially SSC members in the future). NOAA Fisheries staff coordinators will contact you directly about taking the online training course.

## Council Member Ongoing Development Meeting

Several Council members (Ms. Baker, Mr. Mezirow, Mr. Tweit, and Ms. Vanderhoeven), Ms. Evans (staff), and Dr. Ebett Siddon (AFSC staff) were North Pacific participants at the CCC Council Members Ongoing Development inaugural training workshop, on EBFM and EAFM. Meeting materials are available on the [CCC CMOD website](#), and a meeting report will be published early next year. Two documents that you might find interesting are a short background document on the [NPFMC ecosystem work](#), and a presentation from Dr. Ebett Siddon on how ecosystem information integrates into the groundfish specifications process. The NPFMC attendees found the cross-regional discussion very informative, and recommended that once the report is available, the Ecosystem Committee review specific tools in place or under development in other regions that might have utility in Alaska.

## Council Written Comment Policy

At every meeting, staff reports publicly to the Council on any comments removed from the commenting system, and the rationale for removal, so that we can monitor and revise the process as needed to address unanticipated events. The June meeting comment period was open for 15 days, from November 18 to noon on December 2. No submitted comments were removed.

## Alaska SeaLife Center Accepting Leadership Award Nominations

The Alaska SeaLife Center has announced that nominations are open for the 2023 Alaska Ocean Leadership Awards, which were established to recognize those who have made significant contributions to ocean sciences, education, and resource management in Alaska. Nominations for the 2023 Alaska Ocean Leadership Awards are open now through December 12, 2022. A flyer is attached.

## Recent Staff and Council Member Activities

- Dr. Haapala participated in two virtual Fisheries Tribal Consultations hosted by DOI and NOAA Fisheries. The sessions were held in Bethel on October 6 and Nome on November 21 to understand how the agencies can improve the Federal Subsistence Management Program to better protect and facilitate Alaska Native subsistence needs.
- On October 13, Council members Mr. Mezirow, Ms. Drobnic, and Mr. Down participated at the Joint Protocol Committee meeting. Presentations were made by Council staff: Dr. Stram and Ms. Rheinsmith.
- On October 19, Mr. Tweit, Mr. Kurland, Ms. Evans and I met with the National Marine Sanctuary Program staff regarding a potential roundtable to discuss the proposed sanctuary around St. Paul.
- On October 24, Mr. Tweit, Ms. Evans, and Dr. Stram participated in a listening session with the NOAA Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries Kelly Kryc, on avenues for adaptation for RFMCs with respect to climate and international fisheries.
- On October 25, Ms. Kimball and Ms. Evans participated in the Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee annual meeting.
- Ms. Drobnic, Mr. Richie (AP Chair), and Ms. Rheinsmith (staff) attended the New Council Member Training sessions held in October and November.
- Council members Ms. Baker, Mr. Mezirow, Mr. Tweit, and Ms. Vanderhoeven, as well as Ms. Evans (staff), participated in the CCC Council Members Ongoing Development inaugural training workshop on EBFM and EAFM.

- I participated in a meeting of the RFMC Executive Directors on November 17-18 to discuss best practices for administrative matters.
- Dr. Stram participated at several DOI Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meetings, and provided information on salmon bycatch: Western Interior RAC October 19<sup>th</sup>, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta RAC October 27, and Bristol Bay RAC November 2nd

## Committee Meetings

The following Committee and Plan Team meetings have occurred since the October meeting:

- The **Joint Protocol Committee** met on October 13 to review the status of BSAI crab and BOF proposals for pacific cod fisheries. The meeting was hosted by the BOF. A summary report of the meeting can be found here: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2022-2023/jp/Meeting%20Summary.pdf>
- The Groundfish Plan Teams met in Seattle November 14-18 to recommend final catch specifications for 2023/2024 (reports under agenda items C4 and C5).
- The Salmon Bycatch Committee met on November 28 to review that Chum Salmon discussion paper and Terms of Reference for the Committee (report under agenda item D1).
- The BSAI Crab Plan Team met on November 29 to review the snow crab rebuilding initial review analysis (report under agenda item C2).
- The Charter Halibut Management Committee met on October 21 and December 7 to discuss annual management measures for 2023 (report under agenda item C6).

## Other Upcoming Events

Dr. Ian Stewart will present information on the IPHC **halibut stock assessment** on Wednesday evening at 6 pm in the Denali Room at the Hilton.

The Council will have an **Executive Session** on Friday from 4-6 pm to review Plan Team, AP, SSC, and PNCIAC nominations, discuss administrative issues regarding incorporation of the model harassment policies, and other administrative matters.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (**IPHC**) is meeting in Victoria, BC on January 23-27 to set harvest limits for the 2023 fisheries.

NOAA Office on National Marine Sanctuaries is planning to host a **roundtable on Alaska sanctuary nominations**, to be held sometime early next year. It will likely be in Anchorage, with a virtual attendance option. My understanding is that session would provide an overview of the sanctuary nomination and designation process, an overview of the nominations for a National Marine Sanctuary in the Pribilof Islands (St. George Unangan Heritage and Alaġum Kanuuġ), and provide an opportunity for the nominators, NOAA, the Alaska Congressional Delegation, and the State of Alaska to learn what is important to the community from various perspectives through a Q&A session. I will share more information as this event develops.

The SSC is hosting an **SSC workshop**, “Rapid change in the northern Bering and southern Chukchi Seas: Identifying ecosystem responses and effects on the management of Federal fisheries,” on February 7-8, 2022, as part of the Council meeting in Seattle, WA. A flyer is [attached](#), and written public comments will be [accepted](#) in advance of the meeting to help guide SSC discussion.

A flyer announcing **ComFish Alaska**, which will be held on March 16-18 in Kodiak, is attached.

The **Marine Resources Education Program (MREP)** is launching a program in the North Pacific fishery region, with plans to offer annual workshops. The first workshop is scheduled for April 17-21, 2023, and the application deadline is in mid-February. The attached flyer provides more information. Seats are limited, and the travel to the workshop is free to participants.

## **NPRB Community Research**

The North Pacific Research Board will present one of five short films about the [Arctic Integrated Ecosystem Research Program](#) 2016-2021. This film illustrates how involving members of Alaska communities contributed to the overall success of the program. The film highlights several community members who participated in the research process, including Opik Ahkinga from the Native Village of Diomede who participated in the research cruises and continues to conduct her own research in her community. Also featured is Billy Adams of Utqiagvik, who participated in a social science study that examined the factors influencing food security for Arctic communities. Dr. Lynn Palensky, Executive Director for the NPRB, will be here to introduce the video.