

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The North Pacific Council met in regular session on May 25th - 26th at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. Some of the highlights of the meeting included:

### Salmon Troll Plan

The Salmon Troll Plan Drafting Team was directed to rewrite and edit according to specific directions based on examination of the draft by the SSC. Members of the SSC will make individual comments and recommendations to the Plan Drafting Team. The SSC noted that over the five year period of 1972 to 1976 average catches in the chinook and coho troll fishery were 45,248 and 35,511 respectively. When the standard error for the average is added, this would establish a guideline catch range of 34,891 to 55,605 for chinook and 27,847 to 43,175 for coho. These are the catch guidelines for monitoring the future troll fishery and its overall fishing effort.

### Incidental Halibut Catch

The Council adopted a motion that would consider the new Japanese longline fishery inside the 500 meter isobath west of 157°, a test fishery from the implementation date of the Gulf of Alaska management plan until the July meeting. At the same time the Council asked NMFS to make observer activity a priority. Observer reports for June and July will form the basis for decision by the Council as to the future conduct of that fishery. The decision was spurred by observer reports from the Japanese longline fishery for Pacific cod inside the 500 meter isobath in the Bering Sea. Observer reports in that fishery from two boats indicate a catch rate range from 18 to 23.5 percent for incidental halibut. That rate of catch is considered not acceptable.

### Regulations

The Council designated a working group to review and suggest changes in the regulations for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan. The group met in Juneau following the Council meeting and drafted changes for the regulations which were forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce prior to the June 6 closing date for comments. Tanner crab plan regulation revisions will be made prior to the June meeting.

## Consultative Committee

Chairman Harold Lokken and member Charles Meacham have been confirmed by the Council as delegates to the Pacific Panel of the United States/Canada Consultative Committee. Alternates are Gordon Jensen and Ronald Skoog. The four will also work as a coordinating group with the Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Canadian fishery specialists on matters of common interest.

### Crab Fishery

As of 21 May, 56.2 million pounds of Tanner crab were taken by the domestic fleet with over 100 vessels participating. In the Japanese crab fishery, a total of 6,222 metric tons were taken with C. opilio representing 85 percent of the catch.

### Togiak Herring Fishery

The fishery started on May 10th and through May 24th 5,076 metric tons of herring had been taken. Roe recovery ranged from 9 to 11 percent with 25 seiners and 15 gillnetters working. Nearly 200,000 pounds of roe on kelp were taken, all described as poor quality because of sand deposits from storm actions in the area.

### New Member

Mr. Allan Millikan, Washington Department of Fisheries, has been named to replace Dr. Charles Woelke as a Scientific and Statistical Committee member. Dr. Woelke resigned from the Council.

### Regulation Amendments to PMP

The Council, by telegram to the Secretary of Commerce on May 26th, requested immediate amendment to the PMP for the Gulf of Alaska Trawl Fishery and the Sablefish in the Gulf of Alaska. It was felt that the amendments will provide protection for the U.S. sablefish fishery until the FMP for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery is implemented. They are the same provisions that are contained in the FMP for this fishery, printed in the Federal Register on April 21st, 1978. Public testimony during the meeting indicated American fishermen, because of the undue delay in the implementation of the FMP, find their grounds preempted by, or lose substantial amounts of gear to, foreign fishermen.

### MAFAC

The Council has asked the Secretary of Commerce to consider Dr. Ronald Skoog and Mr. James Campbell for membership on MAFAC. Council Vice Chairman Clem Tillion's term on that group has just ended.

## Fishery Management Plan Schedule

A subcommittee met in Seattle May 3rd and determined the following schedule for the first eight management plans:

- |    |                           |   |                    |
|----|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | Ocean Salmon              | - | October - November |
| 2. | Bering Sea Groundfish     | - | January - February |
| 3. | Tanner Crab Revisions     | - | October - November |
| 4. | Bering Sea Shrimp         | - | April - May        |
| 5. | King Crab                 | - | February - March   |
| 6. | Bering Sea Herring        | - | March - April      |
| 7. | Gulf of Alaska Groundfish | - | May - June         |
| 8. | Bering Sea Clams          | - | June - July        |

The group concurred with Chairman Lokken's recommendation to appoint a Council subcommittee for each management plan. The subcommittee would do a preliminary review of each draft and develop initial recommendations for the plan before it is addressed by the Council as a group. The Committee agreed that a reasonable work load was two plan reviews at a single Council meeting.

### Limited Entry Workshop

The following members of the NPFMC, the SSC and the AP will be delegates to the Limited Entry Conference in Denver on July 17 - 19, 1978: Council members Tillion, Campbell and Eaton; SSC members Rogers, Robinson and Collinsworth; AP members Jaeger, Kurtz, R. Alverson and Jack Cotant; staff Branson and Hutton.

### Contract Award

Tetra-Tech, Inc., of Pasedana, California has been selected by the Council to conduct a study to determine the effects of hydraulic clam harvesting in the eastern Bering Sea. Total amount of the contract may not exceed \$107,550.

### Alaska Fisheries Development Corporation

The Alaska Fisheries Development Corporation is an Alaska wide (including Seattle based fishermen and processors) non-profit industry organization. The group became a legal entity on March 6th, 1978 and held its first annual meeting June 1st in Anchorage. Jim Branson, Executive Director for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council will serve on the Board of Directors as an observer. Money for operating the Corporation for the first year is expected to come from the State of Alaska. Sarah Hemphill, AFDC temporary Executive Director was successful in securing an allocation of \$1.45 million from the Sieberling-Kennedy funds which have been made available to develop Alaska's bottomfish resources.

The next meeting of the NPFMC will be June 22-23 at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel. The SSC and AP will meet June 21 in the Council offices and Westward Hotel respectively.