

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Clement V. Tillion, Chairman  
Jim H. Branson, Executive Director

605 West 4th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3136DT  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 274-4563  
FTS 271-4064

#8-82

December 15, 1982

## NEWSLETTER

### December Council Meeting Held in Anchorage

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met on December 7-9, 1982 at the Anchorage Westward Hilton Hotel. The Council heard reports on the various fisheries, met with the Alaska Board of Fisheries to discuss herring and groundfish management, and reviewed and took action on several fishery management plans. Highlights of the meeting follow.

### It's Juneau in January

The North Pacific Council will meet with the Alaska Board of Fisheries beginning at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, January 4, 1983, in the Gold Room of the Baranof Hotel in Juneau, Alaska to hear technical reports on the status of the salmon resource. On Wednesday and Thursday, January 5 and 6, the Council and Board will reconvene to hear public testimony on proposed 1983 amendments to the Troll Salmon Fishery Management Plan, discuss regulations for 1983, and select preferred options for public review. The joint session is expected to adjourn about 5 p.m. on January 6. The Council will meet alone from 9 a.m. until 12 o'clock noon on Friday, January 7, in the Gastineau Room of the Baranof Hotel to review and possibly approve for Secretarial review Amendment #9 to the Tanner Crab FMP and conclude other Council business.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee will convene on Monday, January 3, 1983, at 1:30 p.m. in the Capitol Room of the Baranof Hotel and continue on Tuesday, January 4.

The Advisory Panel meeting will convene at 1 p.m. on Monday, January 3, in the Gastineau Room of the Baranof Hotel and continue on Tuesday, January 4.

### Council and Fishermen's Groups Tell NOAA to Proceed With Proposed Rule for Halibut Moratorium

The Council was presented a statement signed by eight fishermen's organizations and two individuals asking the NOAA Administrator to publish as currently written the proposed rule for a moratorium on participation in the Alaska halibut fishery. The statement stressed the fact that even though the signers support immediate publication they are not in total agreement with the present wording and may ask for amendments to it during the public comment period. Publication of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking will get the public comment period underway so the Council and NOAA/NMFS can conduct public hearings to receive the comments and suggestions of the industry for consideration in developing the Final Rule. Fishermen and organizations who signed the statement are Phillip McCrudden for the North Pacific Fisheries Association;

Robert Alverson for the Fishing Vessel Owner's Association; Greg Baker for the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association; Jay Brevik for the Deep Sea Fishermen's Union of the Pacific; Eric Jordan, conservationist; Nick Delaney for Independent Kodiak Halibut Vessels; Thomas Stewart for Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association; Stanley Mack for Alaska Peninsula Gillnetter's Association; Peter Zachary for Independent Fishermen of Alaska/Sitka; and Edward Wojeck for Alaska Troller's Association.

Applauding the fishermen's efforts to convince Washington, D.C. of the urgency of the situation in the Alaska halibut fishery, the Council took formal action asking the NOAA Administrator to publish the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking immediately so everyone could get on with the public hearings. As it is in the NOAA review the projected effective date of the moratorium is June 6, more than a month after the halibut season will probably open.

The Council staff is analyzing the cost of holding hearings in various locations around the State and in Seattle and will make recommendations for holding the maximum possible number of face-to-face hearings within budgetary limitations. Communities not chosen for on-site hearings will have an opportunity to testify via the State's teleconference network.

The first three NPFMC/NMFS public hearings will be held in conjunction with the January Council meeting in an effort to minimize travel expense. The first will be in Juneau on Friday, January 7, 1983, from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Gastineau Room of the Baranof Hotel. The second in Petersburg, Alaska on Saturday, January 8, 1983, from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building and the third in Ketchikan on Sunday, January 9, at a site yet to be determined.

#### Herring FMP to Receive Thorough Examination

The Council voted to defer further consideration of the Bering-Chukchi Sea Herring FMP until the March Council meeting. During the interim a working group of Council, SSC, and Plan Development Team members will examine the Scientific and Statistical Committee's concerns about two of the Plan objectives and the determination of Optimum Yield. The Working Group will focus on integrating the Council-approved management scheme into the Plan and in the process may consider any proposals necessary to accomplish that goal. They will report to the Council at the March meeting.

#### Sablefish Pot Ban Stands

The Council clarified its intent on the vote taken at the July meeting to prohibit pots for sablefish in that part of the Gulf of Alaska between Cape Addington and 140° West longitude. The re-stated motion goes on to say that trawlers are also banned from taking sablefish except as incidental catch in fishing operations for other species in that area.

Sablefish EYs and OYs. The Council adopted the recommendations of the SSC and Plan Maintenance Team for sablefish EYs and OYs for 1983 as follows:

	<u>Western</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>W. Yakutat</u>	<u>E. Yakutat</u>	<u>Southeast</u>
EY (mt)	2,225	4,075	2,240	1,135-1,510	1,290-2,580
OY (mt)	1,669	3,056	1,680	851-1,133	968-1,935

If in-season fishery indicators (catch per unit of effort and size of fish being caught) in the Eastern Yakutat and Southeast districts are similar to last year's fishery, the two areas will be managed for the upper end of the OY range. If they reflect decreased abundance and average size, the fishery will be managed to protect the resource.

Prohibited Species in the Gulf. The Council will establish an ad hoc working group to examine the problem of prohibited species catches in the Gulf of Alaska. During the first phase of the investigation, Plan Maintenance Team members and selected scientists will examine the nature of the problem. For the second phase of the examination the workgroup will be augmented with selected industry, Council, and SSC members to develop options for reducing the catch of prohibited species and analyze their impacts on the fishery.

Framework Amendment. The Council directed the Plan Maintenance Team to continue working to develop a framework procedure that would allow the NMFS Regional Director, in consultation with the Council, to determine annually the OY for each species and species group. This procedure will be more responsive to changes in status of stocks and expansion of the domestic fishery than the present system of Plan amendments.

Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical  
Committee Appointments Confirmed

The Council made re-appointments and new appointments to the Advisory Panel and SSC. The two-year terms begin on January 1. Both bodies plan to elect officers at the January meeting. Three new members joined the AP and one the SSC. Barry Fisher, a trawler from Newport, Oregon and a pioneer in joint venture fisheries; Ron Jolin, long-time shrimp and crab fisherman from Kodiak; and Tom Stewart, a veteran blackcod and halibut longliner from Petersburg are the new AP members. Dr. Donald Bevan, who has already served as a member of the North Pacific Council, its SSC and its AP, in its six years of existence, was re-appointed to the SSC.

Advisory Panel

Robert Alverson  
F. Gregory Baker  
Robert Blake  
A. W. "Bud" Boddy  
Alvin Burch  
Larry Cotter  
Barry Fisher  
Jesse Foster  
Richard Goldsmith

Weaver Ivanoff  
Ron Jolin  
Eric Jordan  
Joe Kurtz  
Rick Lauber  
Ray Lewis  
Kristy Long  
James O'Connell

Dan O'Hara  
Jack Phillips  
Don Rawlinson  
H. H. Samuelsen  
Walter Smith  
Tom Stewart  
Tony Vaska  
Ed Wojack

Scientific and Statistical Committee

Dr. William Aron  
Dr. Donald Bevan  
Dr. Robert Burgner  
John J. Burns

Dr. John Clark  
Larry Hreha  
Dr. Steve Langdon  
Jack Lechner

Dr. Richard Marasco  
Alan Millikan  
Donald Rosenberg

Congratulations to all new and returning appointees. The Council welcomes your expertise and experience.

### Tanner Crab Amendment #9 Sent to Public Review

The Council voted to send a proposed Amendment (#9) to the Tanner Crab FMP out to public review in hopes of taking final action on it at the January meeting. The proposal will allow the NMFS Regional Director to use his field order authority to set season dates consistent with State regulations. Amendment #9 proposes to framework the Fishing Seasons section of the FMP, significantly expanding the factors the Council may consider in setting season dates and providing for more rapid implementation of new dates by utilizing a "notice" procedure rather than going through the time-consuming process of amending the Plan.

The amendment package was mailed to the public on December 10 and the comment period will end on January 6, 1983 during the Council meeting. Because the next Council meeting is out of town and meeting materials will be prepared in Anchorage, written comments should be received at the Council office no later than December 27 to ensure inclusion in the Council's meeting materials.

### Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Stocks Assessed

National Marine Fisheries Service scientists report that groundfish stocks in the Bering Sea and Aleutians are considered to be in good to very good condition, except for Pacific Ocean perch (POP) and sablefish, which are in poor condition. Pacific ocean perch will be available to foreign fleets only as incidental catch, and the Council asked NMFS to manage the Bering Sea/Aleutians Pacific Ocean perch fishery so that normal fishing operations are not unnecessarily disrupted while staying within new estimates of Equilibrium Yield (EY). EY estimates are currently 1,700 mt for the Bering Sea and 10,100 mt for the Aleutians, down from 6,500 mt and 15,000 mt respectively.

### Council Adopts Natural Chinook Stock Policy

The Council ratified the natural chinook stock policy that they had tentatively adopted at the September meeting in Sitka.

"It is the policy of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to restore or maintain important natural spawning stocks of chinook salmon to optimal levels as presently included or to be set forth in the goals, objectives, strategies, and definitions of its salmon management plan."

The Pacific Council adopted an identical policy statement at its September meeting.

### Council and Board Plan King Crab Hearing in Seattle

In accordance with the Draft Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King Crab Fishery Management Plan and Joint Statement of Principles for management of king crab fisheries off Alaska signed by the Council and Alaska Board of Fisheries in December 1981, the Council and Board will conduct a public hearing on king crab regulatory proposals in Seattle. The date for the hearing has not been finalized, but will probably be during the week of March 13. Details will be announced as soon as available.

### Joint Venture Logbook Program Launched

The Council gave its support to the Joint Venture Trawl Logbook Program developed by the North Pacific Council, Pacific Council, National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission, and the States of Washington, Alaska, Oregon and California. A major goal of the project is to combine NMFS observer and joint venture logbook data into a single data base, provide detailed species composition data from observers, and effort and area information from catcher vessels.

The mail-in logbook program will cost very little and can be in place before the spring pollock fishery. Necessary funding will come from the Pacific Coast Fisheries Information Network (PacFin), a program administered by the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission.

### Observer Coverage Continues to Climb

Observer coverage for foreign and joint venture fisheries off Alaska was 32.9% through October 1982, according to Russ Nelson of the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center, director of the Observer Program. Year-to-date coverage for foreign directed fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutians area was 27.2% for Japan, 31.6% for South Korea, 24.8% for Taiwan, and 89% for West Germany. In the Gulf of Alaska, coverage for foreign fisheries was 34.4% for Japan and 21.7% for South Korea. Overall observer coverage for the joint venture fisheries was 63.5% in the Bering Sea/Aleutians and 37.9% in the Gulf.

Through October the incidental catch of salmon by foreign groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska was 12,751 fish, less than 22% of the 59,154 incidental salmon taken through the same period last year.

### Domestic Fisheries Update

The 1982 king crab season has closed in most areas with total landings dismally below those of 1981. Only Kodiak (Area K), Dutch Harbor (Area O), and Adak (Area R) remained open as of December 8. The 1982 catch to date is 27 million pounds compared to the 1981 harvest of 72.2 million pounds.

Statewide catches of Pacific cod through October 1, 1982 were 33,370 mt compared to only 18,562 mt taken at the same time last year. Almost 85% of the total was caught in the Bering Sea, 9.7% in the western Gulf of Alaska, 5.6% in the central Gulf, and less than 1% in the eastern Gulf.

Sablefish catches through October 1 were 1,943 mt compared to 1,134 mt taken in 1981. Over 91% of the catch came from the eastern Gulf.

Catches of pollock through October 1 were more than twice the 1981 catch of 57,308 mt. Over 60% of the 124,742 mt 1982 catch to date came from the central Gulf, with 39.3% from the Bering Sea.

### Foreign Permit Review

Directed Fisheries. The Council reviewed and recommended approval of permits for eighteen Japanese vessels with a record of violations in 1982. The Council said that permit sanctions may be warranted for the vessels DAIEI MARU NO. 2 and HAMAZEN MARU NO. 35 if they are found guilty of the charges of serious underlogging and species data manipulation.

The Council recommended approval for three South Korean vessels charged with violations in 1982, but suggested that permit sanctions be imposed if the vessels are found guilty of the charges against them.

Approval was recommended for five Taiwanese vessels with relatively minor violations for mislogging, prohibited species retention, and failure to respond to USCG signal instructions.

The Council also recommended approval for a permit for the West German FRIEDRICH BUSSE. The BUSSE had no violations in 1982, though cited for three violations in 1981.

The Council also reviewed directed fishery permit requests from Norway and Poland and recommended denial of the Norwegian request in the absence of a joint venture proposal. Denial was also recommended for the Polish permits unless Poland can offer a joint venture operation equivalent to at least 30% of whatever direct allocation is granted.

Joint Venture Requests. The Council reviewed applications and recommended approval for 1983 joint ventures from Japan, South Korea, West Germany, Taiwan, and the U.S.S.R.

Japan requested joint ventures totalling 161,000 mt spread over seven different operations using 30 to 38 U.S. trawlers and 12 Japanese processing vessels. These operations will work in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska at various intervals from January through September, targeting on Pacific cod and pollock.

South Korea requested joint ventures in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska totalling 58,600 mt spread over three companies and using 25 processing vessels. The operations are scheduled at various times between March and October, targeting on pollock and Pacific cod.

West Germany requested 8,360 mt for a joint venture with three U.S. trawlers provided by Jeff Hendricks and Associates of Anacortes, Washington. This operation will work in both the Gulf and Bering Sea from February through September, targeting on pollock and Pacific cod.

Taiwan requested 4,000 mt for a joint venture targeting on flatfish and Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska. Three U.S. draggers and four Taiwanese vessels will be used.

The U.S.S.R. requested a joint venture totalling 104,000 mt, 91,000 mt from the Bering Sea and 13,000 mt from the Gulf. The Bering Sea operations will use from 12 to 20 U.S. trawlers and up to 27 Soviet processing and support vessels. The Gulf operation will use as many as eight U.S. trawlers and up to 20 Soviet vessels.

#### Foreign Fisheries Figures

The National Marine Fisheries Service reported that through November 6, 1982, ten joint venture operations using 31 U.S. and 18 foreign vessels took 105,998 mt of groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutians. Joint ventures in the Gulf took 74,711 mt of groundfish using 23 U.S. and 25 foreign vessels.

Just over 76% -- 1,072,467 mt -- of the 1,409,980 mt Bering Sea TALFF had been caught by foreign nations fishing off Alaska as of mid-November. Pollock comprised 82.8% of the catch; flounders, 11.9%; Pacific cod, 2.1%; Atka mackerel, 0.3%; and other species, 2.9%.

Running a full 10% behind last year's foreign catches in the Gulf, about 46% or 134,249 mt of the 293,978 mt TALFF had been taken by mid-November. The majority of the catch was pollock (62.7%), followed by Pacific cod at 15.9%, rockfish at 7.2%, flounders at 6.4%, other species at 5%, and sablefish, 2.8%.

The number of foreign vessels operating off Alaska declined steadily this fall with the departure of the Japanese surimi fleets in October and the Japanese yellowfin sole and flounder fleets in November. As of December 1 there were 117 foreign vessels fishing off Alaska, mostly Japanese.

#### USCG Enforcement Activities

Since the September Council meeting the Coast Guard has issued 29 citations and 14 reports of violation to 22 Japanese, eight Korean, and seven Taiwanese vessels and seized a Japanese trawler for MFCMA infractions.

On October 9 the Japanese vessel HAMAZEN MARU NO. 35 was seized in the central Bering Sea for gross underlogging of its catch of pollock (17% or 28 mt) and species manipulation in its logging procedures. The most severe logging discrepancies were found in Pacific cod and turbot.

#### Council Extends Crab Observer Contract

The Bristol Bay Crab Observer Program, funded by the North Pacific Council under contract to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, placed observers aboard king crab vessels this season to examine female king crabs for fecundity and age and to count and measure legal and sub-legal male king crabs. As of November 30 only \$28,339 of the \$69,000 grant was expended for the king crab program. The Council extended the term of this contract from March 15, 1983 to July 31, 1983 so the program can be continued during the Tanner crab season. The additional observer data collected will be beneficial to biologists in their analysis of the Bristol Bay area fishery.

From the Council staff to all of you, HAPPY HOLIDAYS!