

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

## News and Notes



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## BSAI Pacific cod allocations

The Council reviewed a discussion paper highlighting three components of the current Council options to revise the allocations of BSAI Pacific cod to all participating gear sectors (trawl, jig, hook-and-line, and pot). Upon review of the discussion paper and public testimony, the Council made several changes to its current components and options, including: 1) clarification of the eligibility criteria for the non-AFA trawl catcher vessel sector to participate in the AFA trawl catcher vessel sector for the purpose of Pacific cod allocations; 2) additions to the catch history years used to determine sector allocations; 3) clarification of the options for separate jig gear and <60' fixed gear sector allocations; and 4) additional options to establish a hierarchy for reallocating quota that is projected to remain unused from one sector to another.

In addition, the Council directed staff to explore options for the revised sector allocations that would maintain the current seasonal harvest distribution between the fixed and trawl gear sectors. Understanding that this concept would modify the seasonal apportionments of harvest within gear types currently authorized under Federal regulations, staff is directed to work with NMFS to determine if these potential options would trigger a formal reconsultation.

The Council also discussed how the sector allocations would be managed, in terms of hard and soft caps. The Council requested that NMFS provide a review of alternative management measures that can be applied, in order to assist in the development of measures that would avoid closing fisheries in which cod may occur as incidental catch, mitigate the risk of approaching the overfishing level, and prevent a situation in which one sector's actions would pre-empt another sector's fisheries. A discussion paper(s) addressing the seasonal apportionment issue and management measures is requested for the June meeting. The April Council motion and the revised components and options for analysis are provided on the Council's website. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

## Crab Rationalization

At its April 2005 meeting, the Council received a staff report concerning allocations of harvest and processing shares for the Bering Sea *C. bairdi* fisheries under the crab rationalization program. Under its authority under the FMP, the State of Alaska has determined to manage Bering Sea *C. bairdi* as two separate stocks, one east of 166° W longitude and one west of 166° W longitude. The Council has adopted two options for each sector for allocation of harvesting and processing shares for these two separate fisheries. At this meeting, the Council adopted a problem statement describing the issue, revised the alternative for the allocation of processing shares to be consistent with the current provisions concerning the allocation of processing shares for Bering Sea *C. bairdi*, and requested NOAA Fisheries to withhold its allocations of shares for Bering Sea *C. bairdi* until action is taken to make separate allocations for two fisheries.

The Council revision to the processor share allocation options provides for those allocations to be based equally on processing in the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery and the Bering Sea *C. opilio* fisheries. Under the first option, equal processing share allocations for each *C. bairdi* fishery would be made to each person based on their qualifying history in the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery and the *C. opilio* fishery. Under the second option, a single pool of PQS would be created, which would yield annual allocations of IPQ in an amount equal to the total annual allocation of A share IFQ in both *C. bairdi* fisheries. Holders of *C. bairdi* IPQ could then use their IPQ allocations to receive A share landings from either fishery. The Council action requesting that NOAA Fisheries withhold share allocations until after action on this issue is intended to avoid confusion that could arise from having to retract the allocation once the two-fishery share allocations are defined. Delaying those allocations should not affect fishing because, under the current harvest strategy, the *C. bairdi* fisheries cannot open this year or next year, as stock threshold requirements have not been met. Staff contact is Mark Fina.

**REMINDER: June Council Meeting** If you are planning on attending the June Council meeting in Girdwood, please make your hotel reservations early. The AP and SSC start Wednesday, June 1 and the Council starts Friday, June 3 running through the 9th. Call the Alyeska Prince Hotel (in-state 754-1111 and out of state 800-880-3880) and ask for reservations under the NPFMC room block **by May 2**. It would also be a good idea to make any necessary travel arrangements at this time, too, since rental cars during tourist season are scarce.

# GOA Rationalization

The Council received a report summarizing the ongoing work of the Gulf Rationalization Community Committee that the Council formed to refine options for two programs intended to benefit Gulf communities under Gulf groundfish rationalization. The committee met on March 30 to further discuss the design and implementation issues associated with the Community Fisheries Quota (CFQ) Program and the Community Purchase Program (CPP). These programs are proposed for inclusion in either of the Council's primary Gulf rationalization alternatives.

In March, the committee made several recommendations to modify the current Council motion on the CFQ Program, including changes to the administrative entity (or entities) representing eligible communities; providing a mechanism by which the initial allocation can be made to administrative entities should more than one entity be selected by the Council to receive CFQ; refining the eligibility criteria to require commercial fishing participation; clarifying the class of eligible residents that could lease CFQ; refining the use caps and landing requirements; and providing options for elements to be included in an administrative entity's statement of eligibility and annual report submitted to NMFS. The committee also recommended modifications to the options in the CPP that govern administrative entities, report requirements, and aggregate caps on the amount of Gulf groundfish quota that could be purchased by eligible communities. The committee report and recommendations are provided on the Council website.

Upon review of the report, the Council moved to table a motion that would effectively adopt the committee's recommendations, including an addition by the AP, until the June Council meeting. Several issues and further clarifications surfaced during Council discussion, and the Council noted that there was not sufficient time between the March 30 committee meeting and this Council meeting for the Council to fully absorb the effect of the committee recommendations. The Council requested that the committee report and recommendations be considered again in June. Staff contact on community provisions is Nicole Kimball.

The Council also received a report on the Gulf rationalization alternatives and the process for refining the elements and options that define those alternatives. Staff intends to provide the Council with analyses of several outstanding options within the alternatives at the Council's June meeting. The Council intends to resume the process of refining the alternatives at that time. Staff contact is Mark Fina.

In June, the Council will discuss preliminary proposed areas and limits for the Tanner crab bycatch measures and methodology for analysis. The intent is to assist staff in clarifying the specifics of the trigger limits and area closures for the analysis. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

# Groundfish Workplan

In adopting the revised management policy for the groundfish FMPs in April 2004, the Council committed to conduct an annual review of the objectives that are part of the management policy. At this meeting, the Council received a report on the management objectives and the status of the Council's workplan for implementing the revised management policy. The workplan and supplemental review material are available on the Council's website. The Council will discuss this further in June. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

# CDQ Program

The Council reviewed the State CDQ Team's draft allocation recommendations for the 2006 – 2008 allocation cycle for the western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) Program, as well as draft recommendations for two new crab species that were included in the program starting in 2005: Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab and Adak red king crab. Commissioner Blatchford, Department of Commerce Community and Economic Development (DCCED), presented the CDQ Team's initial recommendations, the Team's rationale for those recommendations, and the allocation process and Council consultation requirement in State regulations.

The Council engaged in extensive discussion during the CDQ Team's presentation. While the Council recognized that the CDQ Program has provided significant benefits to western Alaska, it raised many concerns with the program as it continues to mature. The concerns expressed were related primarily to the way in which the program standards and evaluation criteria in State regulation are applied by the State CDQ Team in its evaluation of the Community Development Plans and development of the allocation recommendations, and included concerns regarding the ability of the CDQ groups to understand the most important factors for consideration and the relative weighting of the criteria in each new allocation cycle.

The Council thus approved a motion to send a letter to the State of Alaska to encourage the initiation of a small "blue ribbon" committee which, after a review of the CDQ program in its entirety, would provide a report and recommendations to the Governor, with special attention to the following:

- *Thorough review of the CDQ regulations to ensure that all regulations continue to fit the program as it evolves*
- *Thorough and independent financial review of the CDQ investments and procedures and commitments*
- *Prioritize the goals of the CDQ program with regard to the following:*
  - *Investment in local community infrastructure (i.e., Amendment 71)*
  - *Improvement in basic needs for community residents*
  - *Development of sustainable business ventures in the CDQ regions*
  - *The need to expand the opportunities for CDQ investment and development outside fishery businesses*
  - *Other items identified by the Governor*

The CDQ Team's draft allocation recommendations will be revised after consideration of any applications for reconsideration from the CDQ groups and Council comments. The Governor's final allocation recommendations will then be forwarded to NMFS with the proposed Community Development Plans. The State will include any comments and responses generated from the reconsideration periods, as well as any Council comments, into its written findings to NMFS. The Council's motion is on the website. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

## Exempted Fishing Permits Approved

The Council received requests from NMFS to approve two applications for Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP). One is a request from the North Pacific Longline Association (NPLA) to test Integrated Weight Groundline (IWG) gear in the 2005 Pacific cod longline fishery in the BSAI. The longline industry hopes that IWG gear might sink more rapidly and thereby reduce interactions between baited longlines and seabirds. The proposed tests would involve experimental fishing using IWG gear without paired streamer lines which are currently required by Federal seabird avoidance regulations. The request from NPLA also includes:

- A start date for the experimental testing of July 15
- Allocation of harvested cod and bycatch species to participating vessels
- Harvest of cod above the TAC and ABC specified for 2005
- Exemption from IR/IU regulations at 50 CFR 679.27

The Council approved the proposed application, and requested that NPLA also include in the experimental fishing trials a treatment that would test combined IWG and paired streamer lines. The SSC had recommended adding this to the experimental fishing to evaluate the performance of both seabird deterrent measures when used together. Staff contact is Bill Wilson.

The second request for an EFP is for continued research on salmon excluder devices for the BSAI pollock fishery. This request builds on several years of continued testing of excluder devices which are behaviorally based means of avoiding salmon bycatch by providing an opportunity for salmon to escape from pollock trawl nets. The experiment would focus upon continued incremental improvements in the effectiveness of the excluder (with a recapture bag) within the trawl net as well as paired experiments without the use of the recapture bag (to simulate real world fishing conditions).

The request includes:

- Fishing in the Salmon Savings Areas and Catcher Vessel Operating Area, regardless if closed (due to timing of closures or for specific vessel type exemption)
- Exemption from certain AFA observer requirements since trained "sea samplers" will be employed for catch sampling and data collection
- An allocation of 5,000 mt of pollock above the TAC allocation for September 2005-March 2006 and 2,500 mt above TAC for September 2006-March 2007
- A bycatch allowance of up to 5,000 chum salmon and 2,000 Chinook salmon that would not count against the salmon bycatch caps

The Council recommended NMFS approve the request for the EFP for this research. The Council hopes that information from these experiments can be used to develop more effective means for salmon bycatch avoidance in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery. It also is hoped that eventually the salmon excluder device might be adaptable to other trawl fisheries where salmon bycatch occurs. Staff contact in Diana Stram.

## State Pollock Fishery

On February 25, 2005 the Council met with the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) to discuss several issues of mutual interest. One of those issues was a proposal the BOF had received to open two areas in the GOA and one area in the Aleutian Islands to a State pollock trawl fishery. During the February 25 meeting, the BOF and Council were briefed by NMFS and Council staff on concerns over the possible impacts of the proposed pollock fishery on Steller sea lions and the possibility that opening the State pollock fishery might trigger an Endangered Species Act Section 7 formal consultation.

During its March 7-13, 2005 meeting, the BOF discussed the proposal to open State waters to a pollock trawl fishery, but decided to table the action until October and requested that between now and October the Council and BOF meet through a Joint Committee process to work through the issues of concern.

At its April 2005 meeting, the Council discussed the BOF request and will establish a committee with the Board to be co-chaired by the Chairs from the Council and BOF, to further evaluate the proposed State pollock trawl fishery. A meeting time and date will be announced soon and posted on the Council and BOF web sites. Staff contact is Bill Wilson.

## Ecosystem Committee

The Council's Ecosystem Committee met on Monday, April 4, and reported to the Council during the staff tasking agenda item. The Committee reviewed a staff discussion paper, written at the request of the Committee, to examine potential roles for the North Pacific Council in developing an ecosystem approach to management in Alaska. The paper was requested in response to indications from NOAA leadership that NOAA intends to pursue the development of voluntary ocean councils on a regional basis. The Committee recommends that the Council consider exploring the creation of an independent ecosystem council on a pilot basis by partnering with NOAA Fisheries and the State of Alaska, and focusing initially on the Aleutian Islands ecosystem area. Should the Council concur with the Committee's recommendation, a co-sponsored workshop, to which all interested agencies or organizations with interest in the Aleutian Islands would be invited, could be held to further elaborate the idea. The Council received the staff discussion paper at this meeting, and will discuss the Committee's recommendations in June. The full agenda and minutes from the Committee meeting, and the staff discussion paper, are available on the Council website.

The Committee will also meet on the morning of Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, by teleconference, to discuss the Council's Aleutian Islands Area-Specific Management paper. The Committee intends to provide recommendations to the Council on the Aleutian Islands paper in June. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

# BSAI Salmon bycatch

The Council is continuing to work on means to address salmon bycatch management issues in the BSAI groundfish trawl fisheries following reports of an increasing problem with both chum and Chinook salmon bycatch in 2003 and 2004. The Council refined their problem statement and draft alternatives for analysis. There are two different amendment packages that the Council is initiating; amendment package A is prioritized for immediate analysis, while amendment package B is broader in scope and will likely take into 2006 for completion.

The following problem statement and alternatives were approved for amendment package A:

In the mid-1990s, the Council and NMFS implemented regulations to control the bycatch of chum salmon and Chinook salmon taken in the BSAI trawl fisheries. These regulations established closure areas in areas and at times when salmon bycatch had been highest based on historical observer data. Information from the fishing fleet indicates that bycatch may have been exacerbated by the current regulatory closure regulations, as much higher salmon bycatch rates were reportedly encountered outside of the closure areas. Some of these bycaught salmon include Chinook and chum stocks of concern in western Alaska. Further, the closure areas impose increased costs on the pollock fleet and processors. To address this immediate problem, the Council will examine and consider other means to control salmon bycatch that have the potential to be more flexible and adaptive, but still meet Council intent to minimize impacts to the salmon in the Eastern Bering Sea.

## Alternatives under amendment package A:

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: Eliminate the regulatory salmon savings area closures.

Alternative 3: Suspend the regulatory salmon savings area closures so long as the pollock cooperatives and CDQ groups have in place an effective salmon bycatch voluntary rolling "hot spot" (VRHS) closure system to avoid salmon bycatch. The Council will require that the VRHS agreement have a term (meaning length of time) sufficient for analysis and implementation of the alternatives in Package B.

Suboption. The ICA managers will report to the Council immediately if there is non-participation or non-compliance without effective enforcement action under the VRHS system. In that event, the Council may recommend re-imposition of the regulatory salmon savings area closures on an expedited basis. If the regulatory closure area system is reinstated, it is the Council's intent that the closure areas be based on the most recent information available and if the analysis of Package B alternative 1 supports the approach, with regular adjustments.

The Council also clarified that an annual report on the results of salmon bycatch should be provided to the Council if the closures are suspended. A list of bycatch reduction criteria which will be included in this report was provided by the Council and additional details were supplied by ICA representatives. Additional details on the Inter-Cooperative Agreement and plans for salmon bycatch management under alternative 2 will be included in the EA/RIR/IRFA.

The Council adopted the following problem statement and alternatives under amendment package B:

The Council and NMFS have initiated analysis of a voluntary rolling hotspot (VRHS) alternative to regulatory salmon savings area closures. Concurrent with that analysis and possible implementation, development will continue on the alternatives that could be implemented if the VRHS approach does not achieve the desired bycatch reduction.

Two possible scenarios under which the VRHS system could produce unsatisfactory results are (1) breach of the inter-cooperative agreement (i.e. one or more vessels fail to participate in the VRHS system, or there are substantial violations of VRHS closures that are not effectively halted through penalties or other measures); or (2) compliance what the VRHS system is good, but the VRHS system fails to achieve the Council's desired level of salmon bycatch reduction. In the first scenario, the Council may ask NMFS to reinstate on an expedited basis the regulatory salmon savings area closure system that is based on the best information available. In the second scenario, the Council intends to consider implementation of an alternative regulatory system from Package B, or consider and evaluate NFMS hot spot management authority as an option for salmon bycatch management.

## Alternatives under amendment package B:

Alternative 1: Establish new regulatory salmon savings area closures taking into account the most recent available salmon bycatch data. This analysis should be completed first and be updated regularly so that it can be implemented on an expedited basis if necessary.

Suboption A: Adjust the Chinook and non-Chinook regulatory closure areas annually based on the most current bycatch data available, such as the 2-3 year rolling average of bycatch rates by species and area.

Suboption B: Adjust the Chinook and non-Chinook regulatory closure areas once inseason based on the best bycatch information available.

Alternative 2: Develop a regulatory individual vessel salmon bycatch accountability program.

Suboption A: managed at the individual level

Suboption B: managed at the co-op level

Suboption 1 (to both alternatives): Develop an individual vessel accountability program that may be implemented if, after 3 years, it is determined the pollock cooperatives' "hot zone" closure system has not reduced salmon bycatch.

Suboption 2 (to both alternatives): Analyze the need and implementation strategy of an appropriate cap to meet requirements of National Standard 9.

[The SSC notes that a great deal of analysis is required to support implementation of such a system and that the current hot spot closure system likely requires additional protection measures, such as a cap.]

The Council also identified the importance of a research plan in cooperation with the pollock fleet, western Alaskan entities, NMFS and ADF&G to facilitate salmon bycatch reduction. The full Council motion and additional details on the alternatives for analysis under both amendment packages are available on the Council's website. The analysis of amendment package A was prioritized for initial review in June with final action anticipated for October. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

# GOA Other Species TAC Calculation

The Council reviewed the draft EA/RIR/IRFA for an amendment to the GOA groundfish FMP to modify the current TAC calculation for the other species complex. Currently the TAC for the other species complex is calculated as equal to 5% of the sum of the target species TACs for the GOA.

The other species complex in the GOA contains the following species: squid, sculpins, sharks and octopus. As currently configured, the other species complex is open to directed fishing up to the TAC for the complex. The other species complex TAC can be taken on any single species within the complex-wide TAC. This has caused conservation concerns given the removal of several species over time from the complex, which under the current calculation has served to increase the TAC by placing additional species into target categories upon which the TAC for the other species complex is based. Additionally, given the configuration of the complex, it is possible to target one member of the complex up to the full complex-level TAC, which inhibits in-season management's ability to control directed fishing within the complex and raises concerns given the lack of available stock information on most members of the complex.

Three alternatives and one sub-option are considered in this analysis:

Alternative 1: Status Quo. TAC for the other species complex is fixed at 5% of the sum of the target groundfish TACs.

Alternative 2: Set the other species complex TAC at less than or equal to 5% of the sum of the target species TACs.

Alternative 3: Set the other species complex TAC at a level anticipated to meet incidental catch in other directed fisheries throughout the fishing year.

Sub-option: Revise the maximum retainable amount for the other species complex by fishery.

This analysis is limited in scope to an evaluation of this TAC calculation only. These alternatives are intended as a short-term solution, understanding that a more comprehensive amendment package is planned which will consider a broader range of alternatives to modify the management of target and non-target species in the GOA.

The analysis noted that under Alternative 1, the status quo, directed fisheries could be developed on individual stocks such as spiny dogfish or octopus. Under Alternatives 2 and 3, the Council would be able to set TAC at lower levels than under Alternative 1. Under Alternative 2 it would set it at or below 5%, and would have the opportunity to set it high enough to allow a directed fishery; under Alternative 3, it would set it at or below 5%, but only high enough to allow incidental harvests. Under Alternative 3, directed fishing under the other species complex would be prohibited. These alternatives give the Council more tools to address the impacts of potential directed fisheries on these

species. Several different approaches to revising the MRA for the other species complex by fishery are discussed in the analysis.

The Council approved the release of the analysis for public review following some revisions suggested by the SSC. The public review draft of the EA/RIR/IRFA will be available on the Council's website. Final action for this amendment is scheduled for the June Council meeting. At that time the Council will select its preferred alternative. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

## Groundfish Management

The Council adopted a problem statement and initiated a joint groundfish FMP amendment to analyze the following suite of alternatives to modify the "other species" category in the BSAI and GOA, based on recommendations by the SSC, Bering Sea Groundfish Plan Team, Advisory Panel, and Non-Target Species Committee. The analysis is scheduled for initial review in February or April 2006, to allow the analysis to include the summer 2005 trawl survey results for the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska and the resulting stock assessments for squids, skates, sculpins, sharks, and octopi. Note that squid in the BSAI and skates in the GOA are already managed as separate quota categories. Final action would need to occur during the June 2006 meeting to be implemented in time to set separate specifications for the 2007/2008 fisheries during the December 2006 meeting.

Alternative 1. No action.

Alternative 2. Set aggregate "other species" OFL and ABC for the GOA.

Alternative 3. Break out BSAI skates from the other species category

Alternative 4. Break out BSAI skates and BSAI and GOA sculpins from the other species category

Alternative 5. Eliminate "other species" assemblage and manage squids, skates, sculpins, sharks, and octopi as separate assemblages under specification process

Option: Add grenadiers and other non-specified species that are caught in the fishery.

The Council also adopted a recommendation by the Non-Target Species Committee to organize a previously tasked discussion paper, which would address management of target and non-target rockfish, by applying all Bering Sea rockfish to a proposed management alternative for revising management of non-target groundfish species (Alternative 4b in committee minutes). An annotated outline will be prepared for review by the committee on May 31 in Girdwood to assess staff progress in implementing that approach for the paper. The completed discussion paper will incorporate a broad range of topics previously identified by staff. It will be reviewed by the committee and the joint groundfish plan teams in September, and at the October 2005 Council meeting. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

# GOA Rockfish

At the April 2005 meeting, the Council conducted an initial review of the analysis of the pilot program alternatives to rationalize the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) rockfish fishery and also reviewed a discussion paper concerning undecided options in the alternatives. Staff received comments from the SSC, AP, and the Council concerning a range of issues in the analysis. Specifically, the SCC requested that staff expand the discussion of monitoring and enforcement of fishing under the program, providing more detail on the management of catch, and provide a discussion of potential effects of the expanded season on rockfish reproduction. The SCC also requested staff to consider the effects of vertical and horizontal integration and foreign ownership on the distribution of benefits under the program. Lastly, the SSC requested additional information concerning the relative share of revenues of the fishery that are derived from incidental catch species (i.e., Pacific cod, shortraker, rougheye, thornyhead, and sablefish). The AP requested that staff expand its discussion of the impacts of the allocations of shortraker and rougheye to the rockfish fishery on participants in other fisheries and passed a series of motions affecting the alternatives, most of which were adopted by the Council.

The Council directed staff to revise the analysis consistent with the comments of the Scientific and Statistical Committee. The Council also made a few revisions to the alternatives using the

recommendations of the AP as its starting point. Included in the changes to the motion of the Council were provisions for dividing the halibut PSC allocation to the fishery between the two sectors (catcher vessel/catcher processor), a provision that would reduce the allocations of shortraker and rougheye to the catcher processor sector to a low as 75 of the sector's historic catch, several options concerning management of shortraker and rougheye for the catcher vessel sector, and the removal of a provision that would penalize the allocation to a limited access fishery for non-members of cooperatives. The Council requested that NOAA Fisheries consider adopting a season opening date of March 1 and a season closing date of November 15 for the cooperative fisheries. Another request was to provide further analysis on the secondary allocations of shortraker and rougheye rockfish to the different sectors, and to assess the respective impacts of these allocations on other users of the rockfish resources in the CGOA.

After responding to the comments and direction from this meeting, the Council determined that the analysis of the rockfish pilot program should be released for final review and action at the June meeting.

A complete copy of the initial review draft analysis, and the alternatives, elements, and options as updated through the April meeting appears on the Council website. The completed analysis should be available by May 16. Staff contact is Mark Fina.

# NPRB Seeks Nominations

The North Pacific Research Board is seeking nominations for its Advisory Panel. The Advisory Panel represents user groups and other interested parties from the various regions within the Board's purview. Advisory Panel members advise the Board on accomplishing its overall mission of fielding a high caliber, comprehensive research program that will improve our understanding of the North Pacific, Bering Sea, and Arctic Ocean ecosystems and their fisheries, and help to sustain and enhance the living marine resources. The Board believes it is important to incorporate meaningful community involvement throughout its science program from planning to oversight and review. The Advisory Panel has a significant advice-giving role, with active

involvement in setting research priorities and defining questions, though it does not participate in reviewing research proposals. Advisory Panel members serve two-year terms and the Board covers travel, food and lodging for panel members.

Nominations and self-nominations may be submitted to the Board by email to [cpautzke@nprb.org](mailto:cpautzke@nprb.org), or by regular mail to: Clarence Pautzke, Executive Director, North Pacific Research Board, 1007 West 3rd Avenue, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Deadline for nominations is **Thursday, May 12, 2005**. Please include a brief 1-2 page resume and full contact information, including email address. Please visit the Board's web site at [www.nprb.org](http://www.nprb.org) for more information about the Board and its activities.

## NPFMC Tentative Meeting Dates for 2005-2007\*

	February Week of/ Location	April Week of/ Location	June Week of/ Location	October Week of/ Location	December Week of/ Location
2005	7/Seattle	4/Anchorage	1/Girdwood**	3/Anchorage	5/Anchorage
2006	6/Seattle	3/Anchorage	5/Kodiak	2/Dutch Harbor	4/Anchorage
2007	5/Portland	March 26/Anchorage	4/Sitka	1/Anchorage	3/Anchorage

\*Meeting dates subject to change depending on availability of meeting space. Any changes will be published in the Council's newsletter. \*\*Memorial Day is Monday May 30, therefore the meetings will begin two days later; the SSC and AP start on Wednesday, June 1 and the Council starts Friday, June 3.

**DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 4/13/05**

June 1, 2005 Girdwood, Alaska	October 3, 2005 Anchorage, Alaska	December 5, 2005 Anchorage, Alaska
NPRB research projects: <b>Receive report</b> AFSC Fishery Interaction research: <b>Receive report</b>		
CDQ Management of Reserves: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>	CDQ Management of Reserves: <b>Final Action (T)</b>	
Bairdi Crab Amendment: <b>Initial Review (T)</b> Crab Plan Team report: <b>Action as necessary</b>	Bairdi Crab Amendment: <b>Final Action (T)</b> Crab Management: <b>Review SAFE report</b>	Crab Overfishing: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>
Proposed rule for EFH (VMS) & Am 79: <b>Provide Comments</b>	BS Habitat Conservation: <b>Review strawman problem statement and alternatives, and finalize for analysis</b>	
GOA Rockfish Demonstration: <b>Final Action</b>		
GOA Rationalization: <b>Action as necessary</b>	GOA Rationalization: <b>Action as necessary</b>	GOA Rationalization: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>
Halibut Charter GHL: Status <b>Report and action as necessary</b> Halibut Charter IFQ Cost Recovery: <b>Review Discussion Paper (T)</b> Halibut Charter IFQ: <b>Review Proposed Rule (T)</b>	IFQ Omnibus 5 Amendments: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>	IFQ Omnibus 5 Amendments: <b>Final Review (T)</b>
BOF/NPFMC pollock sub-committee: <b>Receive Report</b>	BOF/NPFMC pollock sub-committee: <b>Receive Report</b>	
MMPA List of Fisheries EA: <b>Action as Necessary (T)</b>	Protected Species Report: <b>Action as Necessary (T)</b>	
Flatfish IRIU Trailing Am80: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>	Flatfish IRIU Trailing Am80: <b>Final Action (T)</b>	
Observer Program: <b>Preliminary Review</b>	Observer Program: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>	Observer Program: <b>Final Action</b>
PSEIS Workplan: <b>Discuss</b>	Rockfish Management: <b>Review Discussion Paper</b>	
AI Special Management Area: <b>Review Discussion Paper</b> Council role in EAM: <b>Review Discussion Paper</b>	Groundfish specs for 2006/07: <b>Review proposed specs</b>  SAFE Ecosystem Chapter: <b>Review</b>	Groundfish specs for 2006/07: <b>Review final specs</b> Groundfish SAFE Report: <b>Review</b>
GOA Other Species Calculation: <b>Final Action</b>		
BSAI P.cod sector allocations: <b>Receive Report on seasonal allocation and alternative management measures</b>	BSAI P.cod sector allocations: <b>Action as Necessary (T)</b>	BSAI P.cod sector allocations: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>
BSAI salmon bycatch: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>	BSAI salmon bycatch: <b>Final Action (T); Discuss Package B</b>	

TAC - Total Allowable Catch  
BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands  
IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota  
AFA - American Fisheries Act  
HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern  
LLP - License Limitation Program  
PSC - Prohibited Species Catch

MSA - Magnuson Stevens Act  
GOA - Gulf of Alaska  
SSL - Steller Sea Lion  
BOF - Board of Fisheries  
EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit  
CDQ - Community Development Quota  
IRIU - Improved Retention/Improved Utilization

SAFE - Stock assessment and fishery evaluation  
VMS - Vessel Monitoring System  
EAM - Ecosystem Approach to Management  
SSC - Scientific & Statistical Committee  
FMP - Fishery Management Plan  
DPSEIS - Draft Programmatic Groundfish SEIS  
**(T) Tentatively scheduled**



North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
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## Upcoming Meetings

- **Ecosystem committee**  
teleconference May 11th, 8am AK time, 907-271-2896
- **The Crab Plan Team** will meet in Seattle, WA May 16-18, 2005 at the Traynor Room at the Alaska Fishery Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Bldg 4, Seattle, WA.
- **The Observer Advisory Committee** will meet May 12-13, 2005, at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, Seattle. Building 4, Room 1055. 8:30 am - 5 pm. The committee will review the initial review draft of the analysis to restructure the observer deployment and funding mechanism of the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program.
- **Managing Fisheries - Empowering Communities Conference**  
April 21-23, 2005  
<http://www.uaf.edu/seagrant/Conferences/fish-com/announce.html> for more information

## Observer Program

At its June meeting, the Council will review a preliminary analysis for an FMP amendment to restructure the funding and deployment mechanism in the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program. Under the new system, NMFS would contract directly with observer providers for observer coverage, and this would be supported by a user fee and/or Federal funding.

The action alternatives under consideration range from including only Gulf groundfish vessels in the new program to including all vessels and processors operating in the Federal fisheries of the North Pacific. The preliminary analysis also proposes a four-level system of coverage, to replace the existing vessel-length based categories. Vessels and processors would be placed into one of four coverage levels based on their fishery and operating mode. The purpose is to establish clear and uniform criteria for determining what level of coverage is required in each fishery.

An Observer Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for May 12 – 13 at the AFSC in Seattle to review the draft analysis. The committee's report, the draft analysis, and an update on Fair Labor Standards Act issues, will be provided at the June Council meeting. Forman initial review of the analysis is tentatively scheduled for October 2005. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

## Other April Actions

Under the Staff Tasking agenda item the Council discussed a number of other issues, including the schedule for review of pending amendment packages or rulemakings, and scheduled for review in June the following items: (a) review and comment on the proposed rule for EFH, specifically to discuss the potential VMS requirements for GOA vessels relative to the EFH/HAPC closure areas - this will include review of the supplemental analyses for such VMS requirements by the SSC, AP, and Enforcement Committee; (2) review and comment on the proposed rule for Amendment 79 (minimum groundfish retention standard) if it is published in time for the meeting; (3) initial review of Amendment 80 which would establish fishery cooperatives for the non-AFA catcher/processor (H&G) sector; (4) a report on the halibut guideline harvest level (GHL) program previously recommended by the Council and approved by the Secretary, and to what extent halibut charter boat fisheries might be approaching the target GHL levels; (5) a discussion of CDQ crab fishery overages/underages and alternative ways to address the issue in state or federal regulations; (6) potential review of a problem statement and initial alternatives for EFH measures in the Bering Sea (though this issue may be scheduled for October); and (7) the Council approved the Scallop SAFE and technical revisions to the FMP.