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News & Notes

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

April 2010

Two New Members Appointed to Plan Teams

Karla Bush (ADFG) was appointed to the Crab Plan Team. Ms. Bush has been attending Council meetings as Lead Fisheries Biologist and is familiar with the Council process. Additionally, Joseph Stratman has been appointed to the Scallop Plan Team. Mr. Stratman is a shellfish biologist for the State of Alaska and is stationed in Petersburg.

Governor Sean Parnell Addressed the Council

The Governor of Alaska addressed the Council meeting on Thursday. He praised the Council for effective management of fish resources, and highlighted the cooperative efforts between the states of Oregon, Washington and Alaska. He thanked Council members for their dedication to ensure viable and sustainable fisheries off Alaska.



HAPC Proposals

At the April Council meeting, the Council set **skate nurseries** as a HAPC priority, and initiated a call for proposals for candidate sites to meet this priority and potentially be identified as HAPCs. Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) are geographic sites that fall within the distribution of EFH for the Council's managed species. The Council has a formalized process, identified in the FMPs, for selecting HAPCs, which begins with the Council identifying habitat priorities. Candidate sites must be responsive to the Council priority, rare (defined as uncommon habitat that occurs in discrete areas within only one or two Alaska regions), and must meet one of three remaining considerations: provide an important ecological function, be sensitive to human-induced degradation, or be stressed by development activities. The Council adopted evaluation criteria, included in the proposal package, to guide proposers and reviewers as to how the three considerations will be assessed.

The 2010 Request for HAPC Proposals and HAPC Proposal Application package is posted on the Council website, www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc. Proposers should specify the geographic delineation of the proposed HAPC, as well as its purpose and objectives, any proposed management measures for the site, and effects that may be expected from such measures. Identified in the proposal package are web resources that may be helpful in completing the proposal application.

The Council deferred a decision on whether to identify Bristol Bay red king crab spawning habitat as a HAPC priority pending the completion of a discussion paper, initiated under the EFH agenda item, considering the effects of fishing on crab stocks. Rather than identifying sablefish pre-recruit sites as a HAPC priority, the Council requested NMFS prepare a discussion paper on all factors that may be affecting sablefish recruitment. Finally, the Council identified the timing of the HAPC consideration process to occur every 5 years, to synchronize with the EFH 5-year review. Staff contacts are Diana Evans and Sarah Melton.

GOA Chinook Bycatch

The Council reviewed a draft discussion paper on Chinook salmon bycatch in the GOA groundfish fisheries, and asked that it be revised and expanded. The revised paper will update and map bycatch patterns in the groundfish fisheries, and will discuss what would be required to implement full retention of salmon in the GOA groundfish fisheries. Background information will also be expanded with respect to Chinook salmon stock assessment data, environmental variables affecting the abundance of salmon, stock of origin information, and the limitations of using GOA observer data for inseason management of Chinook bycatch. The Council will also request NMFS to accelerate analysis of GOA Chinook salmon bycatch samples, which can be used to help identify stocks of origin. Staff contact is Diana Evans.



Upcoming meetings

Crab Plan Team meeting. May 10-14, 2010. Alyeska Hotel, Girdwood, AK. Agenda to be posted shortly on Council website.

Notice of statewide public teleconference on alternatives under consideration to limit non-Chinook (chum) salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. **May 4, from 9 am – 11 am. Please call: (888) 248-0699, code: 9589.** This teleconference is open to the public. Council analysts will be on the line to share information and answer questions. The call will be recorded and moderated. Details are posted on our website.

Groundfish Plan Team conference call to review proposals for Pacific cod stock assessments: 12:30 pm, May 6. *The meeting will be available via webex: Meeting Number: 572 132 778; Meeting Password: pcod; To join the online meeting (Now from iPhones too!)*
1. Go to <https://akfsc.webex.com/akfsc/j.php?ED=142165952&UID=1126352982&PW=NYTUzZjEYyZcz&RT=MIMQ>
2. Enter your name and email address.
3. Enter the meeting password: pcod
4. Click "Join Now". To join the audio conference only 1-866-762-1812 access code 5367175

Observer Advisory Committee meeting. May 25-26, AFSC, Seattle.

Groundfish Plan Teams – week of September 20, Seattle

Wakefield Symposium November 8-11, Anchorage

Groundfish Plan Teams – week of November 15, Seattle

Groundfish Annual Catch Limits

The Council recommended amendments to the BSAI and GOA Groundfish Fishery Management Plans to comply with requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to end and prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished stocks, achieve optimum yield, and to comply with statutory requirements for annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs). Species and species groups must be identified in the fishery for which ACLs and AMs would be required. An ecosystem component (EC) may also be included in the FMPs for species and species groups that are not targeted for harvest, or likely to become overfished or subject to overfishing, and are not generally retained for sale or personal use. The Council selected Alternative 2 as its preferred alternative. The preferred alternative would (1) manage target species "in the fishery"; (2) eliminate the other species category and manage (GOA) squids, (BSAI and GOA) sculpins, (BSAI and GOA) sharks, and (BSAI and GOA) octopuses separately "in the fishery"; (3) manage prohibited species and forage fish in an ecosystem component category; and (4) remove the non-specified species category from the FMPs. The Council also adopted housekeeping amendments to the FMPs and amendments to federal regulations for consistency with the FMP amendments.

The Council discussed specific cases where new group level ACLs based on tier 6 (average catch) may constrain directed fisheries, noting particular concern regarding octopus and shark bycatch in the Pacific cod longline fisheries. The Council requested that the SSC schedule a discussion of tier 6 methodologies on its June 2010 agenda, with the goal of developing new methods for determining tier 6 for those groups that are poorly sampled by the bottom trawl surveys. After its June discussion, the SSC may schedule a workshop during Summer 2010 to develop new Tier 6 approaches for possible application for 2011 or later. Recommendations from a report from a 2009 SSC/Plan Team workshop on groundfish stock identification and splitting assemblages, which also may be germane to the management of tier 6 stocks, will be scheduled for review by the Groundfish Plan Teams in September 2010 and SSC in October 2010. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

Scallop Annual Catch Limits

The Council took preliminary review of an analysis to meet ACL requirements for the Scallop FMP. Compliance with ACL requirements for the Alaska Scallop FMP will require substantive changes to the FMPs primarily in order to incorporate an ABC control rule into the annual specifications process as well as to address the necessary approach to manage non-target scallop stocks. The analysis considers four alternatives: Alternative 1: Status Quo, Alternative 2: Set ACL equal to the upper end of the Guideline Harvest Ranges (GHRs); Alternative 3: Set ACL equal to 90% of the upper end of the GHR and Alternative 4: Set ACL equal to 75% of the upper end of the GHR. For alternatives 2-4, two options are considered for each; establishing a statewide ACL, and establishing ACLs by region. Three additional options are included for the treatment of non-target scallop stocks: option 1: remove non-target stocks from the FMP; option 2: move non-target scallop stocks to an ecosystem component category under the FMP (and do not establish ACLs for these stocks); and option 3: Set ACLs for non-target scallop stocks. The Council approved the suite of alternatives under consideration and endorsed the comments by the SSC with respect to re-estimating the OFL to include estimates of total mortality. Initial review is scheduled in June, with final action scheduled in October. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Scallop SAFE: The 2010 Scallop Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report was compiled by the Scallop Plan Team, which meets annually to review the status of stocks and to update the SAFE report. The SSC reviewed the SAFE report and made a number of suggestions for inclusion in the document the next year. During the 2008/09 season, 8 of 9 registration areas were open for scallop fishing. Of these 8 areas, 7 had fishing effort occurring in them. Scallop harvests within these areas are limited by the Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) established by the State. Information on scallop stocks is provided by biennial surveys in two regions and by the statewide scallop observer program. New video survey technology is being utilized to provide additional information on scallop stocks. The scallop stocks in Alaska are neither overfished nor approaching an overfished condition. The 2010 Scallop SAFE report and the minutes from the Scallop Plan Team are available on our website. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Pribilof Islands blue king crab rebuilding plan

The Council took preliminary review of a draft EA/RIR/IRFA to evaluate proposed alternative rebuilding measures for the Pribilof Islands blue king crab (PIBKC) stock. The PIBKC stock remains overfished and the current rebuilding plan has not achieved adequate progress to rebuild the stock by 2014. This revised rebuilding plan considers five alternatives. Four of the alternatives are different closure configurations to restrict groundfish fisheries in the areas of the stock distribution. The fifth alternative considers a prohibited species bycatch cap on the groundfish fisheries. The Council endorsed comments from the SSC and AP at this meeting as well as explicitly added alternatives that would use a range of PSC caps to trigger the area closure configurations included in the preliminary suite of alternatives. Revisions to the analysis will include analysis of these triggered closures as well as requested information from the SSC such as the uncertainty surrounding biological reference points for this stock, issues of stock separation between the PIBKC and St. Matthew blue king crab stocks, the extent of halibut fishing (and related PIBKC mortality) in the Pribilof Region, the breakout of annual PIBKC bycatch by gear type and fishery historically, and an option for increased observer coverage on groundfish fisheries in that area. Initial review for this analysis is scheduled for October 2010. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

BSAI Crab ACLs and Rebuilding

The Council took preliminary review of a combined analysis of amendments to address BSAI Crab annual catch limits (ACLs) and Snow and Tanner crab rebuilding plans. The Tanner crab rebuilding plan currently contained in the preliminary review analysis will proceed through review in a separate analysis. Two proposed actions will remain. The first proposed action is to specify the method by which ACLs will be established to meet the requirements of the revised Magnuson Stevens Act. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 includes provisions intended to prevent overfishing by requiring that FMPs establish a mechanism for specifying ACLs in the plan (including a multiyear plan), implementing regulations, or annual specifications, at a level such that overfishing does not occur in the fishery, including measures to ensure accountability (accountability measures or AMs). All crab fisheries must have ACL and AM mechanisms by the 2011/2012 crab fishing year. The MSRA includes a requirement for the Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) to recommend acceptable biological catch (ABC) levels to the Council, and provides that ACLs may not exceed the fishing levels recommended by the SSC.

The ACLs are to be established based upon ABC control rules which account for the uncertainty in the overfishing limit (OFL) point estimate. To meet the ACL requirements, the ABCs for each stock will be established under the FMP such that $ACL = ABC$ and the total allowable catches (TAC) and guideline harvest levels (GHLs) must be established sufficiently below the ABC so as not to exceed the ACL. Determinations of TACs and GHLs are Category 2 management measures and are deferred to the State following the criteria in the FMP. ABCs must be annually recommended by the NPFMC SSC.

Two alternative means of establishing the ABC control rule are considered: 1) a constant buffer approach where the ABC for each stock would be set by application of a constant pre-specified buffer value below the OFL; and 2) a variable buffer approach where the ABC would be established based upon a pre-specified percentile of the distribution for the OFL which accounts for scientific uncertainty regarding the OFL. A range of constant buffers and probabilities are considered under each alternative approach.

The second proposed action is a revised rebuilding plan for the eastern Bering Sea (EBS) snow crab stock. The EBS snow crab stock will not rebuild by the end of the rebuilding time frame of 2009/2010, thus a revised rebuilding plan must be developed for this stock. Both of these proposed actions must be implemented prior to the start of the 2011/12 crab fishing year. These actions are considered together in this analysis as the implementation timing is identical and the actions themselves are related in the interplay between rebuilding plan catch constraints and ACL catch constraints for the EBS snow crab stock. For the remaining eight BSAI crab stocks for which rebuilding provisions are not considered in this analysis, only Action 1 (establishment of ACLs) applies. The Council endorsed recommendations from the SSC and Crab Plan Team in directing staff to revise these documents for initial review in June. The Council further requested that staff begin to consider crab bycatch limits in the BSAI groundfish fisheries as a possible means to address accountability measures understanding that any analysis of these measures would be a separate amendment process from the combined ACL package under consideration at this time.

Staff will prepare a discussion paper on crab bycatch in groundfish and scallop fisheries for review by the Crab Plan Team at the May 10-14, 2010 meeting. The discussion paper will be reviewed by the Council at a future meeting. Initial review for the BSAI Crab ACL and snow crab rebuilding analysis is scheduled for June, with final action in October. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Amendment 80

At this meeting, the Council received a year-end report from Best Use Cooperative (BUC). The report summarized its catch for the 2009 fishing year, and the processes implemented to ensure that catch limits are not exceeded.

During staff tasking, the Council added a new option to the Amendment 80 lost vessel replacement action that is scheduled for final action in June. The new alternative would allow Amendment 80 replacement vessels to have a length overall that is 50, 100, or 150 feet greater than the original qualifying length of the vessel. The Council also requested that NMFS report to the Council on the status of monitoring, enforcing, and prosecuting the Groundfish Retention Standard (GRS) Program in June. Specifically, the Council has requested enforcement and prosecution concerns that were raised by NMFS during development of the GRS Program, Amendment 80, and Amendment 93 in addition to any new concerns about monitoring and enforcing the GRS program that have been identified by the agency or industry participants, and any potential concepts for refining the GRS Program to address these concerns. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Community Quota Entity Program

During staff tasking, the Council reviewed two separate letters from residents of Game Creek and Naukati Bay in southeast Alaska, requesting that the Council initiate an analysis to evaluate the eligibility of these communities in the GOA Community Quota Entity (CQE) Program. During the development of this program in GOA Am. 66, these communities did not appear to meet the halibut or sablefish landings criteria, due to the fact that community residents' mail is sent to and distributed from other communities. Thus, the permit holders' landings were not attributed to their communities in the CFEC data. The Council was also informed that the communities of Cold Bay and Kupreanof, while not petitioning the Council for inclusion, are also potentially eligible for the program. No other communities in the GOA appear to meet the eligibility criteria. Upon review, the Council initiated a regulatory amendment to assess the eligibility of Game Creek, Naukati Bay, Cold Bay, and Kupreanof in the CQE Program. If determined eligible, these communities would need to form a CQE in order to participate in the program. This analysis is tentatively scheduled for Council initial review in October 2010. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

Northern Bering Sea Research Area

The Council received a progress report on the efforts to develop a research plan for the Northern Bering Sea Research Area (NBSRA), including a community and subsistence workshop that occurred February 24-25 in Anchorage. The NBSRA was established and closed to bottom trawl fishing in 2008, with the purpose of creating a research plan that would evaluate the effects of bottom trawling habitat in the area and inform the development of future protection measures and potential commercial fishing. The Council reviewed the main concerns voiced by community and tribal representatives at the workshop, recognizing that a written report from the workshop will be available prior to June. Some of the primary concerns include: the need for NMFS to foster ongoing communication and participation with communities and tribes throughout the development of the plan; the need for tribal consultation and outreach with the agency prior to commercial bottom trawling in the NBSRA, including the scheduled 2010 summer trawl survey; and the need to slow down the process for developing the research plan.

The Council also reviewed a letter from AFSC/NMFS to workshop participants relative to NMFS' plan to extend the annual eastern Bering Sea shelf bottom trawl survey to the northern Bering Sea in 2010. The letter outlines the objectives of the survey (to understand the impacts of the loss of sea ice on groundfish, shellfish, and marine mammals), the timing (late July/early August), and the total seafloor area to be trawled by the research trawl (1.75 nm², or 0.003% of the total northern Bering Sea survey area). The letter also includes an invitation for one or two biologists representing communities to participate as part of the scientific field staff. NMFS also plans to host an open house on one of the survey ships in Nome during the survey.

Finally, the AFSC provided a revised schedule, which would add four months to the timeline for development of the NBSRA research plan. The delayed schedule would accommodate a science meeting in January 2011, allow incorporation of the results from the summer 2010 trawl survey, as well as provide additional time to engage with Alaska Native tribes and rural communities, including a follow-up community workshop in March 2011. Upon review at this meeting, the Council approved the revised schedule, and recommended that the science meeting include community and subsistence stakeholders. The Council also recommended that the

next progress report to the Council schedule for April 2011 be moved to June 2011, while the Council is in Nome. This would allow rural stakeholders to more easily participate. The revised schedule is posted on the Council website. Staff contacts are Nicole Kimball and Diana Evans.

Rockfish Program

At the April meeting, the Council conducted an initial review of the Central Gulf of Alaska rockfish analysis and released it for public review. The Council, by striking specific options and the catcher processor limited access alternative, suggested that it would not include these as part of its preferred alternative during final action. Specific analysis associated with most of the stricken provisions will remain in the public review analysis, however, should the Council elect to revisit those provisions or the alternative in its preferred alternative. Finally, the Council modified several options under consideration and added a few new options for consideration. The more significant modifications and additions include:

- Inclusion of an option to allocate 1.5 to 5 percent of the TAC to harvesters that participated in the pilot program entry level fishery. Distribution of this allocation amongst those that qualify would be either: 1) in proportion to the number of years a license was used to make a delivery to an entry level processor from 2007 to 2009, or 2) equally to all eligible entry level license holders.
- Expanding the shore based processor cap to include 10 percent with a provision that would adjust the cap and the grandfather amount in the event a grandfathered processor is not available for processing or the cap might prevent fully processing rockfish catch.
- Exempt catcher vessels that participated in the West Yakutat rockfish fishery in 2006, 2007, and 2008 and participated in the entry level pilot fishery for a least one year, from a sideboard prohibition on directed fishing for West Yakutat primary rockfish species. Exempt vessel will be sideboarded at their catch history from 2006-2008. An option to opt-out of the rockfish program is also included for vessels that qualify for an allocation of shares due to participation in the entry level pilot program.

A revised copy of the elements and options is provided on the Council website. The Council has scheduled final action for the rockfish program for the June Council meeting. Staff contacts are Mark Fina and Jon McCracken.

Steller Sea Lion BiOp Update

The Council was originally scheduled to review the draft Steller Sea Lion Biological Opinion, that NMFS had planned to release for public review on March 1, 2010. Prior to the scheduled release date, NMFS announced that the release of the BiOp would be delayed. In April, the Council discussed with NMFS the potential timing of the BiOp release, and the extent of the Council's involvement in the review process and designing any needed mitigation measures.

NMFS indicated that the Council's and public's involvement in the Center for Independent Expert's (CIE) review process could be truncated, given the delay in the release of the BiOp, if new rules need to be implemented for the 2011 fisheries. In addition, NMFS indicated that if a jeopardy situation exists that could be exacerbated by the 2011 groundfish fisheries, the agency could be compelled to take immediate action. Again, such emergency action would limit the extent of Council's and public's involvement in the process of reviewing the BiOp and developing any additional mitigation measures. NMFS indicated that it will proceed with the development of the BiOp, but that it is likely that the BiOp will not be released before the June 2010 Council meeting.

The Council asked NMFS if 2010 Steller sea lion aerial survey data would be incorporated into the draft BiOp. In 2010, NMFS plans to conduct non-pup counts at all Western stock trend sites, including five rookeries and haulouts in the Western Aleutians that were not surveyed during pup counts in 2009 due to logistical issues. Typically, NMFS provides the Council with a memorandum summarizing the annual survey results at the December meeting. Depending on the timing of the release of the draft BiOp, these data could potentially be included in the draft BiOp.

The Council requested NMFS prepare a short white paper that clearly describes the methodology it is using to determine the current status (total count) of Western Distinct Population Segment (DPS) Steller sea lions relative to the downlisting criteria in the Final Steller Sea Lion Recovery Plan. The Council made this request at the February 2010 meeting, and NMFS had indicated that this information would be incorporated in the draft BiOp. Staff contact is Jeannie Heltzel.

BSAI Crab Program

At its April 2010 meeting, the Council took final action selecting a preferred alternative that would create an exemption to west region landing requirements in the Western Aleutian Island golden king crab fishery and advanced a set of alternatives to create an emergency exemption to regional landing requirements in all fisheries for analysis.

In the Western Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery, fifty percent of the Class A catcher vessel individual fishing quota (IFQ) is required to be landed west of 174° West longitude (the West region). Since the second year of fishing under the Bering Sea and Aleutian Island crab rationalization program, participants in the Western Aleutian Island golden king crab fishery have voiced concerns that the absence of available processing capacity in the West region of that fishery could prevent harvest of the West region quota. This season, the bankruptcy of the operator of the Adak shore plant increased these concerns, leading the Council to recommend that NOAA Fisheries undertake emergency rulemaking to remove the landing requirement for the current (2009-2010) season. An emergency rule creating an exemption for the season went into effect earlier this year. The Council's action at this meeting would allow for an exemption to the regional landing requirement in the future. The exemption would be created annually by contractual agreement annually of any quota share holders whose holdings exceed 20 percent of the West region pool, any PQS holders whose holdings exceed 20 percent of the West region pool, and the communities of Adak and Atka. Once established by the agreement, the exemption would be applicable to all West region QS and West region PQS in the fishery.

The Council also advanced an emergency exemption from regional landing requirements in other fisheries for analysis. The amendment package would create an exemption that would be established by contractual agreement of the holders of the IFQ and IPQ receiving the exemption and a regional representative, which could be from either: a) the community holding the right of first refusal on the subject PQS, or b) the region as a whole. Several aspects of the exemption and its administration could be defined under the alternatives, including a requirement for harvesters to establish a "reserve pool" to coordinate use of IFQ to avoid need for the exemption and a requirement that parties develop a framework agreement defining the terms of the exemption by a date certain as a prerequisite for the exemption. Staff contact is Mark Fina.

Lowell Wakefield Symposium

A call for papers has been announced for the 26th annual Lowell Wakefield Symposium, the theme of which is "Ecosystems 2010: Global Progress on Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management". The meeting will occur from November 8-11, 2010, in Anchorage. The goals of Ecosystems 2010 are to (1) evaluate global progress toward Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management (EBFM) by reviewing regional case studies, development of new analytical tools, and practical approaches toward future progress; and (2) offer explicit, practical advice for future progress in ecosystem-based fisheries management implementation. Abstracts will be accepted through June 4, 2010. More information is available at <http://seagrant.uaf.edu/conferences/2010/wakefield-ecosystems/>.

AI Ecosystem Team

The Council reviewed and approved Terms of Reference for the AI Ecosystem Team. The Terms of Reference will be posted on the Council website, and address the purpose of the Team, the purpose of the FEP, and the relationship of the Team with other aspects of the Council management process. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

GOA Tanner Crab Area Closures

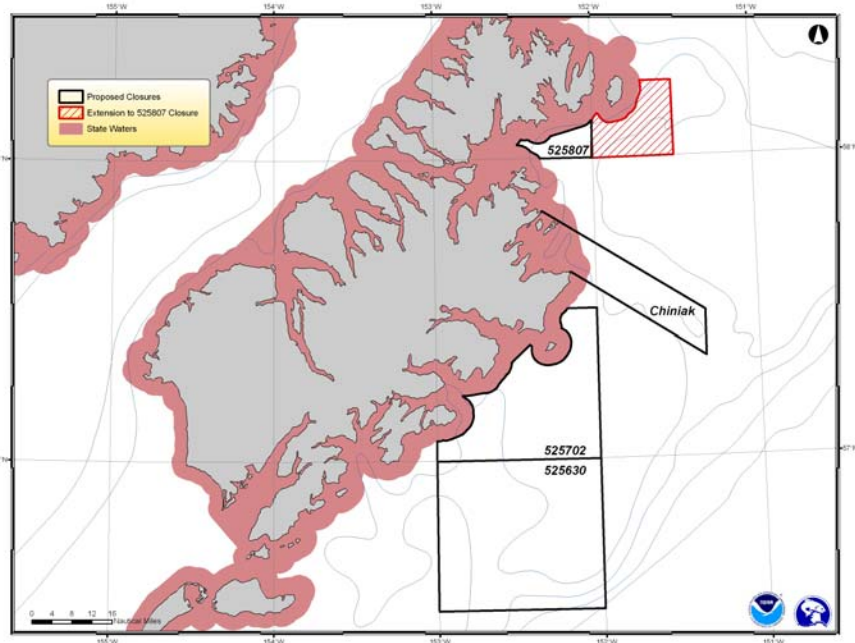
The Council reviewed an analysis to close areas around Kodiak Island to the groundfish fishery to protect Tanner crab. Four areas are proposed for closure, all on the northeastern side of Kodiak Island. The alternatives include options to apply the closures year-round or seasonally, and to different gear types. Additionally, some vessels may be exempted from the area closures if they meet specific conditions such as using approved gear modifications, or a 100% observer coverage requirement.

At this meeting, the Council clarified the problem statement, modified the alternatives, and requested additional information to be included in the analysis. The primary changes to the alternatives are the following:

- limit the gear types that may be affected by the closures to trawl and pot gear (by removing longline gear from the analysis);
- clarify that the areas in the analysis may be selected individually at final action;
- expand the boundary of the Marmot Bay closure; and
- modify the option to exempt vessels from the closures: pot vessels must meet a 30% observer coverage requirement, trawl vessels must meet 100% coverage requirement.

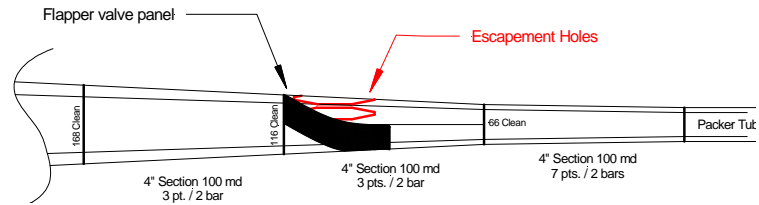
Additional information to be addressed in the analysis, to the extent that data allows, will include mapping the distribution of Tanner crab abundance in the proposed area closures, using VMS data to see how many unobserved vessels may be fishing in the closed areas, effects of displacing vessels on catch per unit effort of target fish and bycatch of other prohibited species, sex and age composition of Tanner crab bycatch, and differing definitions used to enforce nonpelagic trawling prohibitions in Federal and State waters.

Once the Council's requested changes are made, the analysis will be released for public review, with final action scheduled for the October 2010 meeting. The revised alternatives are also available on the Council website. Staff contact is Diana Evans.



Chinook Salmon Excluder Experiments

The Council reviewed recent results from Chinook salmon excluder experiments in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fisheries, conducted under an exempted fishing permit. Results show that the newly redesigned flapper excluder consistently achieved Chinook escapement ranging from 25-34%, while minimizing pollock escapement to 0.4-1.6%. More information is available from John Gauvin, working on behalf of the North Pacific Fisheries Research Foundation, or John Gruver, of United Catcher Boats.



EFH 5-year Review

The Council reviewed the summary report of the 5-year review of essential fish habitat (EFH) provisions. The report addresses new habitat information available since the last comprehensive review of EFH, documented in the 2005 EFH EIS, and how it pertains to the EFH provisions of the Council's fishery management plans (FMPs) for BSAI and GOA groundfish, BSAI crab, scallop, and salmon. Based on the review, the Council initiated amendments to revise EFH individual species descriptions, the description of nonfishing impacts on EFH, and EFH research priorities, in all five Council FMPs.

Additionally, the Council asked staff to prepare a discussion paper to further examine the Crab Plan Team's recommendation to re-evaluate the effects of fishing on crab stocks. The discussion paper

will provide clarification on the issues raised by the Plan Team with respect to the methodology that was used in the 2005 evaluation of fishing effects, and whether the appropriate parameters for crab stocks are included in that analysis (such as the importance of spawning and larval distribution relative to oceanographic currents for crab settlement). The paper will also look at the importance of southwestern Bristol Bay for red king crab populations, and whether and how interactions with the trawl fisheries in that area may be impacting the crab stock. Finally, the paper will evaluate existing crab protection areas in light of new information about shifting populations. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 4/20/10

June 7, 2010 Sitka, AK	October 4, 2010 Anchorage, AK Captain Cook	December 6, 2010 Anchorage, AK Hilton Hotel
SSL Biological Opinion: Review and comment (T) Am 91 Proposed Rule: Review AM 80 GRS program: Report and action as necessary GOA P.cod sideboards for crab vessels: Initial Review GOA Halibut PSC Discussion Paper: Preliminary Review Am 80 Lost Vessel Replacement: Final Action CGOA Rockfish Program: Final Action Observer Program Restructuring: OAC report; Initial Review BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch: Review Disc paper; finalize alts.; Outreach Update Salmon Bycatch Genetics: Receive update on research Arrowtooth Flounder MRA: Initial Review BSAI Crab ACLs/snow crab rebuilding: Initial Review Alaska MPA System Briefing: Review Scallop ACLs: Initial Review Groundfish Tier 6 methodology discussion (SSC Only)	Joint Protocol Committee (T) SSL Measures: Action as necessary Research Priorities: Finalize BS&AI P.cod Split: Discuss plan/action as necessary (T) GOA P.cod sideboards for crab vessels: Final Action GOA Halibut PSC Discussion Paper: Review disc. paper CQE area 3A D class purchase: Initial Review CQE in Area 4B: Review Discussion paper Area 4B D shares on C vessels: Initial Review/Final Action Electronic Monitoring Research: Receive report Observer Program Restructuring: Final Action BSAI Crab ROFR: Initial Review BSAI Crab Emergency Relief: Initial Review Economic Data Collection: Review discussion papers BSAI Chinook salmon bycatch EDR: Review regulations and forms Arrowtooth Flounder MRA: Final Action GOA Tanner Crab Bycatch: Final Action BSAI Crab SAFE: Review and Approve BSAI Crab ACLs/snow crab rebuilding: Final Action Pribilof BKC Rebuilding Plan: Initial Review MPA Nomination Discussion Paper: Review Hagemeister Island: Initial Review Scallop ACLs: Final Action Groundfish Specifications: Receive Plan Team Reports Adopt Proposed Catch Limits HAPC: Review Proposals for Analysis	SSL Measures: action as necessary Annual AFA Reporting Requirements: Initial Review (T) P.cod Jig Fishery Management: Discussion Paper (T) CQE area 3A D class purchase: Final Action Four new CQE eligible communities: Initial/Final Action(T) BSAI Crab ROFR: Final Action BSAI Crab Rationalization 5-year review: Receive report BSAI Crab Emergency Relief: Final Action AI P.cod Processing Sideboards: Initial Review GOA Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Discussion paper BBRKC Spawning Area/fishing effects: Discussion paper (to Feb.) Pribilof BKC Rebuilding Plan: Final Action Sablefish Recruitment Factors: Discussion Paper (T) Hagemeister Island: Final Action Groundfish Specifications: PT reports; Approve SAFE; Adopt Final Catch Limits EFH Amendment: Initial Review (T)

ACL - Annual Catch Limit
 AI - Aleutian Islands
 GOA - Gulf of Alaska
 SSL - Steller Sea Lion
 BKC - Bue King Crab
 BOF - Board of Fisheries
 FEP - Fishery Ecosystem Plan
 CDQ - Community Development Quota
 VMS - Vessel Monitoring System
 EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit
 BiOp - Biological Opinion
 MRA - Maximum Retainable Allowance

PSC - Prohibited Species Catch
 TAC - Total Allowable Catch
 BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
 IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
 ROFR - Right of First Refusal
 GHl - Guideline Harvest Level
 EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
 LLP - License Limitation Program
 SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
 MPA - Marine Protected Area
 EFH - Essential Fish Habitat
 HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

Future Meeting Dates and Locations
 June 7 - , 2010 in Sitka
 Oct 4-, 2010 in Anchorage (Captain Cook)
 Dec 6- 2010 in Anchorage Hilton
 January 31-February 8, 2011-Seattle
 March 28-April 5, 2011-Anchorage
 June 2011 - Nome
 September 26-, 2011 in Unalaska

(T) Tentatively scheduled



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North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Charter Halibut Permit Endorsements

The Council recommended an amendment to the charter halibut limited entry (moratorium) program to revise the approach used to assign angler endorsements to charter halibut permits held by businesses that receive more than one permit in Area 2C or Area 3A. The effect of the action is to more closely align angler endorsements with the distribution of highest client loads for vessels used by qualifying applicants. The Council selected Alternative 2, Option 3 for *businesses that would be issued multiple permits*. One permit would be issued to a business with an endorsement equal to the greatest number of charter vessel anglers onboard any vessel used by the business to generate a permit as reported to ADF&G on any bottom fish logbook trip in 2004 or 2005, but not less than 4. *Each subsequent* permit issued to the same business would be issued with an endorsement equal to the next greatest number of charter vessel anglers onboard any other vessel used by the business to generate a permit, whose catch history has not already been used by the business to determine an angler endorsement, as reported to ADF&G on any trip in 2004 or 2005, until all permits are issued. The Council deleted the following language from its original motion for analysis, "The year selected for determining angler endorsements must be the year selected by the applicant for permit qualification." The effect of the action is to reduce the number of permit endorsements by approximately 400 in both areas. The Council intended that this amendment be implemented in regulation prior to issuance of charter halibut permits to businesses that would be issued multiple permits.

The Council also initiated a discussion paper to amend the charter halibut permit program to promulgate regulations to prohibit leasing of charter halibut permits. The Council noted that its highest priority for staff tasking remains implementation of the halibut catch share plan that was adopted by the Council in October 2008. The Council's next priorities would be two commercial IFQ analyses initiated in February 2010. Four commercial IFQ discussion papers were also initiated in February. The priority of the discussion papers will be identified in the future by the Council. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

Rural Outreach

The Council reviewed the Rural Community Outreach Committee report from its February meeting, and the draft outreach plan for proposed action on non-Chinook (chum) salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. The committee had received updates on ongoing efforts to improve overall outreach and communications with rural stakeholders, as well as tribal consultation issues from NMFS. The committee also discussed a regional partnership approach, which will be a primary agenda item at a future meeting. The committee also reviewed and made recommendations on the draft outreach plan for the Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch action. The Council approved the committee's recommendations to: 1) formalize contact with NMFS, such that the Council would receive a report on tribal consultations; and 2) support an effort to develop an educational workshop for rural communities on environmental law and the Council process, proposed by the Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program and World Wildlife Fund.

The Council also approved moving forward with the draft outreach plan for chum salmon bycatch, recognizing that the plan continues to be refined. As part of that plan, staff is holding a **Statewide public teleconference on May 4**, from 9 am – 11 am, to discuss the current suite of alternatives proposed for chum bycatch limitation measures. To participate, please call (888) 248-0699, code: 9589. Details are provided on the Council website. Both the February committee report and the chum salmon bycatch outreach plan are also on the Council website. Finally, the Council approved a future committee meeting, which will likely be a half-day teleconference scheduled for early June or fall 2010. Staff contacts are Nicole Kimball and Sarah Melton.

Public Testimony Reminder

The deadline for written public comment is announced along with the agenda, and the deadline is usually a week before the Council meeting. If a member of the public would like to submit written testimony as part of the "public record," **it needs to be submitted to the Council before the deadline**, or handed out during the testifier's time at the table during oral public comment. Letters passed out at any time during the meeting are not part of the public record.