

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NEWSLETTER

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NORTH PACIFIC COUNCIL TENTH PLENARY SESSION SUMMARY

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Advisory Panel (AP) met concurrently from Sept. 22-24 at the State Court Bldg., Anchorage, Alaska. The SSC and AP met separately prior to the Council meeting dates. A public hearing was conducted by the Council during the course of its meeting Sept. 22.

The meeting was well attended, with representatives from fishermen's organizations, processors and foreign interests present.

The Council approved the Tanner Crab Management Plan for the fishery off Alaska with the following specifications: size limits for C. bairdi were set at 5.5 inches (140mm) for the Bering Sea and remainder of Alaska except for Prince William Sound where a size limit of 5.3 (135mm) continues; the Bering Sea area south of 58° N. lat., and east of 164° W. long., was closed to foreign crab fishing; the domestic annual harvest for the Bering Sea south of 58° N. lat., and east of 164° W. long., will not exceed the allowable biological catch currently set at 78 million lbs., and present State regulations setting Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound as exclusive registration areas, and setting pot limits now in effect in Southeastern Alaska areas were recommended for adoption as Federal regulations. The foreign allowable catch north of 58° N. was recommended to be 15,000 metric tons, up from 12,500 MT in 1977.

The Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan was approved with the following specifications: a management regime was selected protecting the halibut and rebuilding stocks.

o The domestic groundfish fishery is encouraged to develop as rapidly as possible consistent with halibut protection.

o A method of monitoring the domestic groundfish fishery has been developed whereby observers will determine if halibut comprise more than one percent of the catch in any given statistical area. Should the catch of halibut exceed one percent in any area, that area will be closed to fishing.

o The question of trawl mesh size was deferred for one year.

o Joint Venture activity was disapproved until July 1, 1978, at which time there will be a re-evaluation of joint-venture proposals and the state of development of the domestic groundfish fishery effort.

o Optimum yield for blackcod was closed to foreign longlining.

o Foreign longlining will be allowed west of 157° W. inshore of the 500 meter isobath for true cod.

o Groundfish catches are to be apportioned by statistical areas in the Gulf of Alaska for both the U.S. and foreign fisheries.

* The Council recommended that a 30 percent reserve of the OY be withheld for all species; the reserve to be reapportioned in midyear.

* The Council directed that there be no foreign trawling in three sanctuary areas off the coast of Southeastern Alaska.

* A report of the Halibut Working Group was accepted as an official Council document. A committee of five members was named to develop an official Council position on halibut. Harold Lokken and Gordon Jensen will co-chair the committee. Other Council members include Skoog, Tillion, and Rietze.

* The Council formally received the Draft Fishery Management Plan for the Commercial Troll Fisheries Off the Coast of Alaska and ordered it forwarded for public comment and review. A series of public hearings is tentatively scheduled in December for Ketchikan, Sitka, and Juneau, with a possibility of an additional hearing in Petersburg. Copies of the plan should be available for distribution to all interested parties by October 21.

* The Council heard a report on clam fishing in the Bering Sea and determined a controlled fishery is feasible. A production fishery based on previous experimental work may develop in 1978.

* The Council's staff was directed to review foreign applications for permits to fish in the Fishery Conservation Zone per guidelines to be developed by a Council subcommittee.

* The Council approved the appointments of Don Rawlinson and John Jacobson as new members of the Advisory Panel. Mr. Rawlinson is with Peter Pan Fisheries and Mr. Jacobson is a professor of International Law at the University of Oregon. A letter was directed to Hank Eaton and James Brooks commending them for their service on the Council.

* Harold Lokken (Seattle) was elected chairman for the coming year, replacing Elmer Rasmuson who declined the nomination. Clem Tillion (Alaska) was elected vice-chairman.

* The next meeting of the Council will be a combined November-December meeting to be held Dec. 1-2, in the State Court Bldg., 3rd and K Streets, Anchorage, Alaska.

OTHER MEETINGS:

U.S./Canadian Salmon talks - Oct. 5-7, Seattle
INPFC renegotiation talks - Oct. 24-28, Anchorage
INPFC - Oct. 31-Nov. 4, Anchorage (Annual Meeting)
(Biology & Research Committee will hold meetings
commencing Oct. 17 until INPFC meeting.)
U.S./Canadian Salmon talks - Nov. 28-30, Vancouver, B.C.

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