

Meeting Summary

225th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
October 7-13, 2015
Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK

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Attachments (2)

- 1) Time Log
- 2) Newsletter

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in October at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Alaska.
The following Council, NPFMC staff, and SSC and AP members attended the meetings.

Council Members

Dan Hull, Chair (re-elected)	Kenny Downs	Simon Kinneen David
Jim Balsiger	Duncan Fields	Long
Sam Cotten/Nicole Kimball	Dave Hanson	Bill Tweit (re-elected)
Craig Cross (Oath of Office)	Roy Hyder	CAPT Phillip Thorne
John Lepore (NOAA General Council)	Andy Mezirow (Oath of Office)	

NPFMC Staff

Jim Armstrong	Peggy Kircher	Chris Oliver
Shannon Gleason	Maria Shawback	Sam Cunningham
Sarah Marrinan	Diana Evans	Mike Fey (AKFIN)
David Witherell	Jon McCracken	Diana Stram
Steve MacLean	Matt Robinson (Sea Grant Fellow)	

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from October 5th through October 7th, 2015. Members present were:

Farron Wallace, Chair <i>NOAA Fisheries – AFSC</i>	Robert Clark, Vice Chair <i>ADF&G</i>	Chris Anderson <i>UAF (Fairbanks)</i>
Jennifer Burns <i>UAA (Anchorage)</i>	Sherri Dressel <i>ADF&G</i>	Brad Harris <i>APU (Anchorage)</i>
Anne Hollowed <i>NOAA – AFSC</i>	George Hunt <i>UW (Seattle)</i>	Seth Macinko <i>URI (Rhode Island)</i>
Steve Martell <i>IPHC</i>	Lew Queirolo <i>NOAA – AK Region</i>	Lew Coggins <i>U.S. Fish & Wildlife</i>
Kate Reedy <i>ISU (Pocatello)</i>	Matt Reimer <i>UAA (Anchorage)</i>	Kari Fenske <i>Dept. F&W (Washington)</i>
Franz Mueter <i>UAF (Fairbanks)</i>	Gordon Kruse <i>UAF (Fairbanks)</i>	Alison Whitman <i>Dept. F&W (Oregon)</i>

Advisory Panel

The AP met from October 6th through October 10th, 2015. Members present were:

Ruth Christiansen (Chair)	Jeff Kauffman	Joel Peterson
Kurt Cochran	Mitch Kilborn	Theresa Peterson
John Crowley	Alexus Kwachka	Sinclair Wilt
Jerry Downing	Craig Lowenberg	Jeff Stephan
Jeff Farvour	Chuck McCallum	Matt Upton (Co-Vice Chair)
Art Nelson	Dan Donich	Anne Vanderhoeven
John Gruver	Paddy O'Donnell	Ernie Weiss (Co-Vice Chair)

B REPORTS

The following reports were given and heavily discussed. Public Comment was taken on item B1 and B2 items. No action was taken.

- B1 Executive Director's Report – Chris Oliver
- B2 NMFS Management Report – Glenn Merrill
- B3 ADF&G Report – Karla Bush
- B4 USCG Report – CAPT Phillip Thorne, LCDR Corrie Sargent
- B5 USFWS Report
- B6 Protected Species Report - Steve MacLean

C1 CRAB MANAGEMENT

The Council heard Presentations on the Crab Plan Team Report. The following actions were taken:

Commissioner Cotten made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

The Council moves to accept the BSAI Crab SAFE report and adopts the SSC's recommendations for OFLs and ABCs for snow crab, Tanner crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, Saint Matthew blue king crab, Pribilof Island red king crab and Pribilof Island blue king crab.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes 9/0 October 8, 2015 at 8:50 a.m.

C2 GROUND FISH HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS

The Council heard presentations from NPFMC staff Diana Stram and Jim Armstrong:
The following actions were taken:

Mr. Cross made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

The Council adopts the proposed Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC for 2016 and 2017 and set TACs as shown in Item 4 in the action memo, with final TACs from 2016 rolled over for proposed 2016 and 2017 TACs. Proposed federal TACs for 2016 and 2017 for Pacific cod have been revised to account for the State cod fisheries. The Council adopts the 2016 and 2017 annual and seasonal Pacific halibut PSC limits and apportionments in the Gulf of Alaska as provided in Tables 9, 10, and 11 for Item 6 in the action memo. The Council adopts the proposed Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC for 2016 and 2017 and set TACs as shown in Item 2, with final TACs from 2016 rolled over for proposed 2016 and 2017 TACs. The Council adopts BSAI PSC specifications as shown in Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 listed as HANDOUT: C2 BSAI PSC limits.pdf on the Council's Granicus Agenda. The Council recommends that the Council adopt Table 7 in Item 3a for ABC reserves for flathead sole, yellowfin sole, and rock sole. The

Council adopts the proposed Discard Mortality Rates (DMRs) for 2016 and 2017 for the GOA and BSAI as shown below.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes 11/0 October 8, 2015 at 11:50 a.m.

Mr. Cross made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

The Council will form a workgroup and begin discussion and development of stock structure and spatial management for BSAI and GOA with an emphasis to begin the discussion with BSAI Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objection October 8, 2015 at 12:11 p.m.

Mr. Cross made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:

The Council supports the Plan Team and SSC recommendations that the squid assessment for November include different approaches for establishing OFL, fishing mortality and using survey biomass as a minimal biomass estimate

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objection October 8, 2015 at 12:13 p.m.

Mr. Fields made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Balsiger:

It is the Council's intent to review BSAI species specification setting in December recognizing a shared responsibility with the IPHC to maintain a viable commercial halibut fishery in Areas 4CDE for the sustained participation of Saint Paul and other Western Alaska communities. Further, it is the Council's intent to continue to minimize bycatch by assessing the adequacy of the Amendment 80 cooperatives bycatch savings agreements(s) as well as actual halibut bycatch savings up to the December specifications setting as the Council determines final species specifications for the 2016 season.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes 9/2 (Mr. Tweit and Mr. Cross) October 8, 2015 at 12:19 p.m.

C3 PRIBILOF CANYON CORALS

The Council heard presentations from Alaska Fishery Science Center staff Mike Sigler and Chris Rooper as well as NPFMC staff Steve MacLean. The following actions were taken:

Mr. Tweit made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Cross:

Scientific evidence does not suggest there is a risk to the deep-sea corals present in the Pribilof and Zhemchug canyons and adjacent slope areas under current management. This conclusion is based on both the coral abundance model developed by NOAA Fisheries and the recent stereo camera survey. The evidence shows low occurrence and density of deepsea corals, lack of

substrate to support corals, and low vulnerability of existing deep-sea corals in these areas to fishery impacts. In order to be responsive to the purpose and need to evaluate the historical and current patterns of fishing effort, the Council requests the agency provide updated data on the distribution, intensity, and depth of fishing effort in locations of both known and predicted coral abundance. In order to provide continued monitoring of the current coral communities in the Bering Sea canyons and slope, the Council also requests that AFSC report in the Ecosystem SAFE, chapter: 1. Changes in coral frequency, composition and distribution in the trawl survey and chapter 2. Changes in trawl and fixed gear effort in areas of model predicted coral abundance.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes 11/0 October 9, 2015 at 8:05 a.m.

Mr. Fields made the following substitute motion and was seconded by Mr. Long:

Moves that the Council take no further action on this agenda item.

VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Motion fails 3/8 (Mr. Tweit, Mr. Merrill, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Cross, Mr. Kinneen, Mr. Mezirow, Mr. Hull) October 9, 2015 at 8:27 a.m.

C4 AI PACIFIC COD ALLOCATION – FINAL ACTION

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Jon McCracken. The following actions were taken.

Ms. Kimball made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Long: 7:30

The Council recommends Alternative 2, with the following options, as its preferred alternative.

Alternative 2: Prior to (options: March ~~1, 15~~, **21**) the A season trawl CV Pacific cod harvest in the Bering Sea shall be limited to an amount equal to the BSAI aggregate CV trawl sector A season allocation minus the lesser of the AI directed Pacific cod non-CDQ TAC or (options: ~~3,000 mt~~, **5,000 mt**, ~~7,000 mt~~). Directed fishing for **non-CDQ** AI Pacific cod is prohibited for all vessels except CVs delivering to shoreplants west of 170° longitude in the AI prior to (options: March ~~1, 7~~, **15**), **unless restrictions are removed earlier under Option 3 or 4 below. If the non-CDQ AI Pacific cod TAC is taken before these dates, the restriction on the trawl CV Pacific cod harvest in the Bering Sea is suspended for the remainder of the year at that time.**

Option 1: Any amount of the AI **directed** Pacific cod non-CDQ TAC above the amount set aside from the trawl CV BSAI allocation may be available to any sector for directed fishing and is not subject to the regional delivery requirement.

Option 2: ~~———— If less than 50% of the AI Pacific cod non-CDQ TAC has been landed shoreside by (options: February 28, March 7, 15), the restriction on the delivery to other processors and the restriction on the trawl CV sector allocation shall be removed.~~

Option 3: If less than 1,000 mt of the AI Pacific cod non-CDQ TAC has been landed shoreside **at AI shoreplants** by (options: February ~~21~~, **28**) the restriction on delivery to other

processors and the restriction on the trawl CV sector allocation shall be suspended for the remainder of the year.

Option 4: If prior to (options: **November 1**, ~~December 15~~), neither the City of Adak nor the City of Atka have notified NMFS of the intent to process **non-CDQ directed AI** Pacific cod in the upcoming year, the Aleutian Islands shoreside delivery requirement **and restriction on the trawl CV sector allocation** is suspended for the upcoming year. Cities can voluntarily provide notice prior to the selected date if they do not intend to process.

~~Option 5: Any processor that has processed cod in the Aleutian Islands management area in at least 12 years between 2000 and 2014 shall be exempt from these restrictions for processing levels up to 2,000 mt.~~

Shoreplant is defined as a processing facility physically located on land.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Mr. Tweit moves to amend the following and was seconded by Mr. Fields.

Provides the specifications from the Council's perspective on how regulations should be developed. The Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with Section 303c and therefor the council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under Section 303c are consistent with these instructions.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Amendment passes unanimously October 9, 2015 at 4:28 p.m.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Motion passes 8/3 (Mr. Twiet, Mr. Cross, Mr. Hyder)
October 9, 2015 4:29 at p.m.

C5 ELECTRONIC MONITORING WORKGROUP 2016

The Council heard from NPFMC staff Diana Evans present on the 2016 Electronic Pre-Implementation Plan. The following actions were taken.

Mr. Tweit made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Cross:

The Council approves the draft 2016 Electronic Monitoring Pre-implementation Plan, and supports the EM Workgroup's suggestions for next priorities for EM implementation, which are for longliners under 40 ft, longliners over 57.5 ft, and vessels fishing with pot gear.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objection October 9, 2015 5:22 at p.m.

(Note – Public Testimony taken out of place at 5:08 p.m. by Dan Falvey)

C6 OBSERVER PROGRAM 2016 ANNUAL DEPLOYMENT PLAN

The Council heard presentations on the Annual Report and EM Workgroup 2016 Recommendations from NMFS AFSC Observer Program staff Dr. Craig Faunce and Chris Rilling. NPFMC staff Diana Evans presented on the Observer Advisory Committee report. The following actions were taken.

Ms. Kimball made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

The Council recommends the following for the draft 2016 Annual Deployment Plan:

- Use the trip-selection method to assign observers to vessels in partial coverage in 2016.
- Deploy observers in the trip-selection pool by gear in 2016, with optimal allocation. Support the following preliminary coverage rates resulting from this stratification:

Trawl (29%)

Longline (14%)

Pot (14%)

The no selection pool would include catcher vessels <40 ft LOA; vessels fishing with jig gear; and fixed gear vessels that participate in the 2016 electronic monitoring (EM) cooperative research.

- No temporary exemptions from observer coverage are allowed due to insufficient life raft capacity, given the option for these vessels to be in the electronic monitoring pool in 2016.
- Continue the policy (programming in ODDS) that prevents a 40 – 57.5' fixed gear vessel from being selected for a third consecutive observed trip.
- Maintain the ability for vessels to log up to three trips in advance in ODDS.
- Modify eLandings to enable the ODDS trip number to be entered voluntarily on groundfish landing reports to facilitate data analysis and provide a better link between ODDS and eLandings.
- Maintain the current Chinook salmon sampling protocols to identify stock of origin.
- Allow BSAI cod trawl catcher vessels to opt-in to full coverage and carry an observer at all times when fishing in the BSAI.
- Continue to conduct outreach in fall and winter 2015/2016, with efforts to meet in Kodiak earlier than the proposed April 2016.

The Council also supports the OAC's recommendations with regard to the status of analytical projects related to the observer program.

The Council requests that Observer Program staff evaluate different weighting schemes in the sampling design based on gear with optimal allocation, such that discards are weighted more heavily than retained catch, for the draft 2017 annual deployment plan.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objection October 10, 2015 at 1:37 p.m.

C7 OBSERVER COVERAGE ON BSAI TRAWL CVs

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Sam Cunningham and Sustainable Fisheries' staff Alicia Miller. The following actions were taken:

Mr. Cross made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Down:

Add a new suboption under Alternative 3

Suboption 3 -- Vessels must opt-in to full (100%) coverage by October 15 of the previous year.

The Council identifies the following preliminary preferred alternative:

Alternative 3 – Allow trawl catcher vessels currently assigned to partial observer coverage to voluntarily choose full (100%) observer coverage for all fishing in the BSAI, and

Suboption 1 – Vessels must opt-in to full (100%) coverage by July 1 of the previous year.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objection October 10, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.

C8 GOA TRAWL BYCATCH MANAGEMENT

The Council heard presentations from NPFMC staff Sam Cunningham and NPFMC's contractor, Darrell Brannan. The following actions were taken:

Commissioner Cotten made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

The Council approves the following alternative for inclusion in the Gulf of Alaska trawl bycatch management program analysis and revisions to the purpose and need statement. This alternative would apportion Chinook salmon and halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits to voluntary inshore trawl cooperatives, based on their member vessels. The analysis should evaluate: how well such a program may meet the Council's stated objectives; methods for distributing PSC to cooperatives; approaches for cooperative formation; consolidation controls; effects on processors, communities, and harvesters; and additional decision points necessary for implementation. The result is intended to further the Council's objective of advancing bycatch reduction and management and provide industry with additional tools to adapt to present and future management needs. The paper should also discuss whether such a program would be subject to the Limited Access Privilege Program provisions under Section 303A of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The following elements comprise **Alternative 4** for a Gulf of Alaska Trawl Bycatch Management Program for trawl catcher vessels in the Western Gulf, Central Gulf and West Yakutat areas:

1. Observer Coverage and Monitoring

All trawl vessels in the GOA will be in the 100% observer coverage category (or carry electronic monitoring at such time it is a regulated option for trawl vessels), whether they participate in the voluntary cooperative structure or the limited access fishery with trawl gear. The Council authorizes NMFS to report weekly vessel-level bycatch information as authorized under MSA Sec 402(b)(2)(A). NMFS will develop monitoring and enforcement provisions necessary to track cooperative allocations of PSC.

2. Sector allocations of target species

Allocations to the trawl sectors for WG and CG Pacific cod (Am 83), CGOA rockfish program (Am 88), and GOA pollock (Am 23) are maintained. GOA flatfish eligibility for the trawl CP sector under Am 80 is maintained.

Pollock and cod apportionments:

Option 1. Revise the GOA-wide pollock apportionments to 30% (A); 30% (B); 20% (C); 20% (D)

Option 2. Modify the pollock fishery to two seasons: Jan 20 to June 10 and June 10 to Nov 1.

(If selected with Option 1, the seasonal split would be 60%/40%).

None of the options change the distribution of GOA pollock among Areas 610, 620, or 630 as established through the specifications process.

Option 3. Modify the trawl cod fishery seasons: Jan 20 – June 10 and June 10 – Nov 1. No change to the A and B seasonal allocations.

3. Sector allocations of PSC

Chinook salmon:

The pollock trawl CV Chinook salmon PSC limit is:

Option 1. 25,000 (status quo based on Am 93)

Option 2. 18,750 (25% reduction)

The non-pollock/non-rockfish trawl CV Chinook salmon PSC limit is 2,700 (status quo based on GOA Am 97). Any Chinook salmon PSC caught in WY comes off of the (cooperative or limited access fishery) Chinook salmon PSC limit. The CG rockfish program Chinook PSC limit for the trawl CV sector is 1,200 (status quo based on Am 97). The Chinook salmon PSC limit for the trawl CP fishery is 3,600 (status quo based on Am 97); any Chinook salmon PSC caught by CPs in the GOA accrues to this limit.

Halibut:

The apportionment of the halibut PSC limit between the CP and CV sectors will be based on halibut PSC use by each sector during:

Option 1. 2008 - 2012

Option 2. 2007 – 2012

Option 3. 2003 - 2012

The halibut PSC limit (excluding the CG rockfish program) for each (CP and CV) sector is reduced by:

Option 1. 10% (phased in over a two-year period)

Option 2. 15% (phased in over a three-year period)

Option 3. 20% (phased in over a three-year period)

Option 4. 25% (phased in over a three-year period)

Different percentage reductions can be applied to the CP and CV sectors.

All CPs operating in the GOA are subject to the CP halibut PSC limit. The CP halibut PSC limit is not further divided by area (CG/WG). Vessels can only be in one sector (i.e., vessels with CP licenses that have delivered shoreside during the selected years can elect to be in the CV sector and deliver their catch shoreside).

Rockfish Program PSC:

Option: Any Rockfish Program halibut or Chinook salmon PSC that would roll over for use in other trawl CV fisheries under the current rules (after the set aside for halibut savings) can be transferred to the trawl CV cooperatives through inter-cooperative transfer.

4. Voluntary inshore cooperative structure

- a. Cooperative eligibility: Shoreside processors with an eligible FPP and harvesters with an eligible FFP and a CV trawl LLP or a CP trawl LLP that did not process catch onboard during the years selected above. Eligible harvesters must have the applicable area endorsement to use PSC apportioned to the cooperative in that area.
- b. PSC species allocated to the cooperative are halibut and Chinook salmon, divided first by area (WG and CG/WY) based on historical PSC use (*options: 2003 – 2012; 2007 – 2012; 2008 - 2012*). Once in the cooperative, PSC can be used to support any target fisheries within the cooperative in that area at any time (no seasonal PSC apportionments). PSC would be apportioned to the cooperatives as follows (a different option may be selected for each area, WG and CG/WY):

Option 1. Equal shares. Annually apportion PSC limits to each cooperative on an equal share basis relative to the number of member vessels in the cooperative.

Suboption: The non-pollock Chinook salmon PSC limit and halibut PSC limit would first be divided between cod and flatfish landings, before allocating equal shares per vessel to each

cooperative. A vessel must have historical target cod and/or flatfish landings in order to receive a PSC apportionment associated with the flatfish and/or cod fishery.

Option 2. Vessel capacity. Apportion halibut PSC and Chinook salmon PSC limits to each cooperative on a pro rata basis relative to the capacity of the vessel assigned to the cooperative member's LLP the first year it enters a cooperative. The vessel capacity to determine the PSC apportionment associated with that LLP does not change in subsequent years.

Suboption: Vessel capacity is based on highest GOA groundfish landing associated with the license on which the vessel is designated during 2008 – 2012 (or most recent 5 years of landings).

Option 3. (can be selected with Option 1 or 2 above): Each processor controls a portion of the annual PSC [options: 5% - 20%] within a cooperative associated with its member vessels.

Each processor would assign the incremental PSC to vessels in the cooperative under the terms of the cooperative agreement. PSC made available by these agreements cannot be used by vessels owned by the processor (a vessel with more than 10% ownership by a processor using individual and collective rules for determining ownership).

Suboption 1: Cooperatives that consist exclusively of processor-owned vessels are exempt from this prohibition.

Suboption 2: No prohibition on processor-owned vessels using processor-controlled PSC. Processor-owned vessels cannot access an amount of the cooperative's processor-controlled PSC greater than the amount they brought into the cooperative.

- c. Participants can choose to either join a cooperative or operate in a limited access fishery on an annual basis. Harvesters would need to be in a cooperative with a processor by November 1 of the previous season to access a transferable PSC allocation. A trawl CV license holder can be in one cooperative per region (WG and CG/WY) on an annual basis.

Option 1: Cooperative formation requires at least [options: 2 – 5] vessels with a CV trawl LLP.

Option 2: One cooperative for CG/WY and one cooperative for WG (more than one processor is allowed in each cooperative)

- d. Each cooperative would be required to have an annual cooperative contract filed with NMFS by November 1 of the previous year. Cooperative members shall internally allocate and manage the cooperative's PSC allocation per the cooperative contract. Cooperatives are intended only to conduct and coordinate harvest activities of the members and are not FCMA cooperatives.
- e. The annual cooperative contract must include:
 - Bylaws and rules for the operation of the cooperative
 - Annual fishing plan
 - Operational plan for monitoring and minimizing PSC, with vessel-level accountability

- Provisions that prohibit, on a species or species group basis (pollock, cod, flatfish), an LLP holder/vessel that has had PSC allocated to the cooperative for that species or species group from receiving economic benefits from the cooperative for PSC quota use unless the vessel actively participates in the fishery for which the cooperative was awarded PSC. Active participation shall be determined by the cooperative agreement but shall not be less than 3 annual deliveries per species or species group (pollock, cod, flatfish).
 - Specification that processor affiliated harvesters cannot participate in price-setting negotiations except as permitted by general anti-trust law.
- f. Cooperative members are jointly and severally responsible for cooperative vessels harvesting in the aggregate no more than their cooperative's PSC allowances, as may be adjusted by annual inter-cooperative transfers.
- g. Cooperatives will submit a written report annually to the Council and NMFS. Specific criteria for reporting shall be developed by the Council and specified by NMFS as part of the program implementing regulations.
- h. Permit post-delivery transfers of annual PSC among cooperatives. All post-delivery transfers must be completed by December 31.

5. Transferability and consolidation limits

(Annually) Allow transferability of PSC cooperative quota for annual use within the cooperative. Limit the amount of each species of annual PSC cooperative quota a person can use in the cooperative to (options: 110% - 150%) of what they brought into the cooperative.

Cooperatives can engage in inter-cooperative transfers of PSC to other cooperatives on an annual basis. Inter-cooperative transfers must be processed and approved by NMFS. Limit the amount of annual PSC cooperative quota a cooperative can transfer to another cooperative to no more than (option: 10% - 50%) of the initial cooperative allocation.

(Long-term) LLPs are transferable. PSC cannot be permanently transferred separately from a license or vessel.

6. Limited access trawl CV fishery

If a license holder chooses not to join a cooperative, it may fish in the limited access fishery with an eligible FFP and LLP endorsed for GOA trawl. Vessels must pre-register to operate in the limited access fishery by November 1 of the previous year.

Option 1. Sector-level PSC limits. PSC limits in the limited access fishery will retain status quo apportionments by area, season, and/or fishery. Halibut and Chinook salmon PSC limits are annually apportioned to the limited access fishery (sector-level) based on the number of vessels that are not assigned to a cooperative, using the same method selected for the cooperatives, as reduced by:

- Suboption 1. 10%
- Suboption 2. 20%

Suboption 3. 25%

Option 2. Individual PSC limits. Non-transferable halibut and Chinook salmon PSC limits are annually apportioned to the limited access fishery participants using the same method selected for the cooperatives, as reduced by:

Suboption 1. 10%
Suboption 2. 20%
Suboption 3. 25%

7. Program review

A program review would be conducted five years after implementation and every seven years thereafter.

Revisions to the Purpose and Need Statement are in bold-underline and strikeout:

Management of Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish trawl fisheries has grown increasingly complicated in recent years due to the implementation of measures to protect Steller sea lions and reduced Pacific halibut and Chinook salmon Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits under variable annual total allowable catch (TACs) limits for target groundfish species. These changes complicate effective management of target and non-target resources, and can have significant adverse social and economic impacts on harvesters, processors, and fishery-dependent GOA coastal communities.

The current management tools in the GOA Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) do not provide the GOA trawl fleet with the ability to effectively address these challenges, especially with regard to the fleet's ability to best reduce and utilize PSC. As such, the Council has determined that consideration of a new management regime for the GOA trawl fisheries is warranted.

The purpose of the proposed action is to create a new management structure which allocates **prohibited species catch limits and/or** allowable harvest to individuals, cooperatives, or other entities, which will mitigate the impacts of a derby-style race for fish. It is expected to improve stock conservation by creating vessel-level and/or cooperative-level incentives to eliminate wasteful fishing practices, provide mechanisms to control and reduce bycatch, and create accountability measures when utilizing PSC, ~~target, and secondary species~~. It will also **increase at-sea monitoring in the GOA trawl fisheries**, have the added benefit of reducing the incentive to fish during unsafe conditions, and improving operational efficiencies.

The Council recognizes that GOA harvesters, processors, and communities all have a stake in the groundfish trawl fisheries. The new program shall be designed to provide tools for the effective management and reduction of PSC and bycatch, and promote increased utilization of both target and secondary species harvested in the GOA. The program is also expected to increase the flexibility and economic efficiency of the GOA groundfish trawl fisheries and support the continued direct and indirect participation of the coastal communities that are dependent upon those fisheries. These management

measures could apply to those species, or groups of species, harvested by trawl gear in the GOA, and/or ~~as well as~~ to PSC. This program will not modify the overall management of other sectors in the GOA, or the Central GOA rockfish program, which already operates under a catch share system.

Goals and Objectives:

1. Balance the requirements of the National Standards in the Magnuson Stevens Act
2. Increase the ability of the groundfish trawl sector to avoid PSC species and utilize available amounts of PSC more efficiently by allowing groundfish trawl vessels to fish more slowly, strategically, and cooperatively, both amongst the vessels themselves and with shore-based processors
3. Reduce bycatch and regulatory discards by groundfish trawl vessels
4. Authorize fair and equitable access privileges that take into consideration the value of assets and investments in the fishery and dependency on the fishery for harvesters, processors, and communities
5. Balance interests of all sectors and provide equitable distribution of benefits and similar opportunities for increased value
6. Promote community stability and minimize adverse economic impacts by limiting consolidation, providing employment and entry opportunities, and increasing the economic viability of the groundfish harvesters, processors, and support industries
7. Improve the ability of the groundfish trawl sector to achieve Optimum Yield, including increased product retention, utilization, landings, and value by allowing vessels to choose the time and location of fishing to optimize returns and generate higher yields
8. Increase stability relative to the volume and timing of groundfish trawl landings, allowing processors to better plan operational needs as well as identify and exploit new products and markets
9. Increase safety by allowing trawl vessels to prosecute groundfish fisheries at slower speeds and in better conditions
10. Include measures for improved monitoring and reporting
11. Increase the trawl sector's ability to adapt to applicable Federal law (i.e., Endangered Species Act)
12. Include methods to measure the success and impacts of all program elements
13. Minimize adverse impacts on sectors and areas not included in the program
14. Promote active participation by owners of harvest vessels and fishing privileges

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Mr. Fields moves to include the following language (in **bold**) and was seconded by Mr. Cotten.

Section 4 - Voluntary Inshore Cooperative Structure, C:

Participants can choose to either join a cooperative or operate in a limited access fishery on an annual basis. Harvesters would need to **indicate by affidavit their intent to participate in the GOA trawl Pollock, Pacific cod, or flatfish fisheries in the upcoming year** and be in a cooperative with a processor by November 1 of the previous season to access a transferable PSC allocation. A trawl CV license holder can be in one cooperative per region (WG and CG/WY) on an annual basis.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passes no objection October 11, 2015 at 3:36 p.m.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Mr. Tweit moves the following and was seconded by Mr. Cross.

Under Option 3 change the range of analysis from 5% - 20% to 5%-**40%** of the portion of the annual PSC.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment fails 3/8 (Mr. Tweit, Mr. Cross, Mr. Down)
October 11, 2015 at 3:40 p.m.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Mr. Tweit moves to include the following language in the Purpose and Needs Statement and was seconded by Mr. Cross.

Strike the striking and instead insert the word **and/or target, and secondary species**.

The purpose of the proposed action is to create a new management structure which allocates **prohibited species catch limits and/or** allowable harvest to individuals, cooperatives, or other entities, which will mitigate the impacts of a derby-style race for fish. It is expected to improve stock conservation by creating vessel-level and/or cooperative-level incentives to eliminate wasteful fishing practices, provide mechanisms to control and reduce bycatch, and create accountability measures when utilizing PSC, **and/or** ~~target, and secondary species~~. It will also **increase at-sea monitoring in the GOA trawl fisheries**, have the added benefit of reducing the incentive to fish during unsafe conditions, and ~~improving~~ operational efficiencies.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passes no objection October 11, 2015 at 3:43 p.m.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objection October 11, 2015 at 3:45 p.m.

Mr. Merrill made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Cross:

Mr. Merrill moves to amend the following provisions (in **bold**) of Alternative 2.

Observer Coverage and Monitoring:

All trawl vessels in the GOA will be in the 100% observer coverage category, whether they participate in the voluntary cooperative structure or the limited access fishery with trawl gear. NMFS will develop monitoring and enforcement provisions necessary to track quota, harvests, and use caps for catcher vessels and catcher processors, including those necessary for gear conversion. **The Council authorizes NMFS to report weekly vessel-level bycatch information as authorized under MSA Sec 402(b)(2)(A).** Full retention of allocated target species is required.

The Council request staff to evaluate the ability/challenges for the fleet to meet the full retention requirement for allocated species if the prohibition for directed fishing for Pollock and cod remains in effect for the time period of Nov 1 to Dec 31.

Pollock and Pacific cod:

Option 3. Modify the Pollock trip limit from 136 mt (300,000 lbs.) to 159 mt (350,000 lbs.).

Option 4: Modify the trawl Pacific cod fishery to two seasons: Jan 20 to June 10 and June 10 to November 1. (The seasonal split for trawl gear would be maintained per Am 83).

Other target species and secondary species: Sector allocations would be based on each sector's retained catch (**Option: total catch for secondary species**) from:

- Option 1. 2008 – 2012
- Option 2. 2007 – 2012
- Option 3. 2003 – 2012

Halibut:

Option 4. 1,212 mt (additional 20% reduction relative to 2016, phased in over a three-year period)

Option 5. 1,136 mt (additional 25% reduction relative to 2016, phased in over a three-year period)

Voluntary Inshore Cooperative Structure:

Suboption: No prohibition on processor-owned vessels using processor-controlled PSC. Processor-owned vessels cannot access an amount of the cooperative's PSC greater than the amount they brought into the cooperative.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Mr. Tweit moves to include the following additional language and was seconded by Mr. Cross.

Voluntary Inshore Cooperative Structure:

Suboption: Alternatives for distribution of PSC quota to processors:

- 1) NMFS holds the PSC and distributes the PSC quota upon the processor's request.
- 2) Distribute to processors using the same method as harvester's portion of the PSC quota is distributed.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passes no objection October 11, 2015 at 4:25 p.m.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objection October 11, 2015 at 4:26 p.m.

Mr. Merrill made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

Council and NMFS staff are requested to provide a workplan that outlines the analytic and procedural requirements to complete the EIS, and tasking for specific analytic products. Staff are requested to provide the Council with a brief review of the timelines required to complete EIS's prepared for past comprehensive management programs (example: BSAI Crab Rationalization Program). The Council recognizes that progress on Gulf of Alaska Trawl Bycatch Management will be the top analytic priority for staff.

WITHDRAW OF MOTION: Mr. Merrill withdrew motion October 11, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.

C9 100% OBSERVER COVERAGE ON GOA TRAWL

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Sam Cunningham. No Action was taken on this agenda item.

(Note: Public Testimony Beth Stewart and Jody Cook were taken out of order 8:57 a.m.)

C10 GOA SALMON PSC REAPPORTIONMENT

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Sam Cunningham. The following actions were taken.

Mr. Merrill made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Cross:

The Council adopts the following revisions to the Purpose and Need statement (additions in **bold**, deletions in ~~striketrough~~):

Regulations establish a Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) limits of 32,500 Chinook in the Central and Western Gulf of Alaska (GOA) trawl fisheries. Chinook salmon PSC limits are managed under two separate programs; one that ~~allocates~~ **apportions** 25,000 Chinook to the catcher vessels in the pollock trawl fishery (Amendment 93 to the GOA FMP), and another that ~~allocates~~ **apportions** 7,500 Chinook to three sectors in the non-pollock trawl fisheries: the catcher/processor (3,600), Rockfish Program catcher vessel (1,200), and the non-Rockfish Program catcher vessel (2,700) sectors (Amendment 97 to the GOA FMP). Closures could occur under the existing Chinook salmon PSC limits.

The 2,700 Chinook salmon PSC limit on the non-pollock/non-rockfish catcher vessel sector has resulted in a closure in that fishery. Currently, there is no ability for managers to ~~reallocate~~ **reapportion** unused Chinook salmon PSC between the pollock or non-pollock fisheries. Fishery closures could be avoided, or limited, by providing NMFS the authority to use inseason management to ~~reallocate~~ **reapportion** unused Chinook salmon PSC between the GOA pollock and non-pollock fisheries would provide increased management flexibility without exceeding the overall 32,500 Chinook salmon PSC limit, increase the likelihood that groundfish resources are more fully harvested, and minimize the adverse socioeconomic impacts of the fishery closures on harvesters, processors, and communities.

The Council adopts the following alternatives for analysis (additions in **bold**, deletions in ~~striketrough~~):

If the Council selects Alternative 2 it can modify the main Alternative with one or a combination of the options.

Alternative 1. No action alternative (status quo)

Alternative 2. Allow NMFS to ~~reallocate~~ **reapportion** unused Chinook salmon PSC between the GOA pollock and non-pollock sectors based on criteria established for inseason ~~reallocations~~ **reapportionments** (examples in regulations at §679.20). Existing ~~reallocation~~ **reapportionment** procedures from the Rockfish Program catcher vessel sector to the non-Rockfish Program catcher vessel sector would not be modified.

Option 1. Only allow ~~reallocations~~ **reapportionments** between the GOA pollock and the non-Rockfish Program catcher vessel sectors (no ~~reallocation~~ **reapportionment** to Rockfish Program catcher vessels).

Option 2. Only allow ~~reallocations~~ **reapportionments** that do not exceed (Suboptions: 10%, 20%, or 30%) of any initial ~~allocation~~ **apportionment** of a Chinook salmon PSC limit during a calendar year.

Option 3. Prohibit the ~~reallocation~~ **reapportionment** of Chinook salmon PSC from catcher vessel sectors to the non-pollock catcher/processor sector.

Option 4. To increase flexibility and options for NMFS Alaska region to manage the different catcher vessel non-pollock Chinook salmon PSC caps, revise the Rockfish Program Chinook salmon PSC reapportionment provision to read as follows:

If, on October 1 of each year, the Regional Administrator determines that more than 150 Chinook salmon are available in the Rockfish Program catcher vessel sector Chinook salmon PSC limit, the Regional Administrator may reapportion Chinook salmon PSC available to the Rockfish Program catcher vessel sector except for 150 Chinook salmon to the non-Rockfish Program catcher vessel sector Chinook salmon PSC limit.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Ms. Kimball moves to include the following option and was seconded by Mr. Fields.

Option 5. Only allow a sector to receive a reapportionment that does not exceed (Suboptions: 10% to 50%) of the sector's initial Chinook salmon PSC limit during a calendar year.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passes no objection October 12, 2015 10:25 a.m.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objection October 12, 2015 10:30 a.m.

C11 WESTERN AI GOLDEN KING CRAB OFFLOAD REQUIREMENT

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Sarah Marrinan. The following actions were taken. (Note: Mr. Kinneen recused from vote)

Mr. Fields made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:

I would move that the Council adopt Alternative 2 and create an exemption from the prohibition from resuming fishing for CR crab on board a vessel once a landing has commenced and until all CR crab are landed for vessels harvesting in the western Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery, and that we adopt the current purpose and need statement.

Mr. Tweit made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

The Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with Section 303 (C) and therefore the Council authorizes the executive director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under Section 303 (C) are consistent with these instructions.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passes no objection October 12, 2015 at 11:21 a.m.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes 10/0 October 12, 2015 at 11:21 a.m.

D1 ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Steve MacLean and Diana Evans. No action was taken.

E1 STAFF TASKING

A handout was given with “Additional Items for Staff Tasking Discussion, October 2015”
The following actions were taken.

SQUID MANAGEMENT

Mr. Cross made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

The Council moves the following problem statement and suite of alternatives for an analysis of moving squid species into the Ecosystem Component in both the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs.

Draft problem statement:

Establishing appropriate catch specifications for squid species in the BSAI and GOA has been problematic. The abundance of squid in the BSAI and GOA is uncertain and trawl survey biomass estimates, while available, likely greatly underestimate the true population level. Development of biological reference points is complicated by a lack of information. OFL and ABC specifications for squid have been based on average catch calculations which poorly estimate the OFL and potentially constrain fisheries. Squid are short-lived, highly productive, and an important prey species. There are no directed fisheries for squid in either the BSAI or

GOA, there is limited retention, and there are no conservation concerns for squid populations in either region. According to the National Standard 1 guidelines, in order to be designated as an “ecosystem component” (EC), the species or species group should be a non-targeted species or species group; not subject to overfishing, overfished, or approaching an overfished condition; not likely to become subject to overfishing or overfished in the absence of conservation and management measures; and not generally retained (a small amount could be retained) for sale or personal use. As such, moving squid to the Ecosystem Component seems to meet the intent of this category in the FMPs, and will continue to promote conservation and management measures for squid while alleviating unnecessary constraints on other groundfish fisheries.

Alternative 1: Status quo. Continue to manage squid ‘in the fishery’ in both the BSAI and GOA groundfish FMPs. OFL, ABC and TAC will continue to be set for squid in both areas. Stock assessments for squid will continue to be done.

Alternative 2: Move squid in both BSAI and GOA FMPs into the ‘Ecosystem Component’. Catch specifications (OFL, ABC, TAC) will no longer be required. Directed fishing for squid species would be prohibited.

Option 1: Continue to monitor and report catch of squid species annually and continue to report on the status of the stock in periodic stock assessments for squid in both BSAI and GOA.

Option 2: Establish an MRA for squid species as incidental catch in the BSAI and GOA using the MRAs (20%) in tables 10 and 11 of 50 CFR 678 when directed fishing for groundfish species at a level to discourage retention while allowing flexibility to prosecute groundfish fisheries.

Suboption 1: establish MRA at 2% consistent with forage fish species

Suboption 2: establish MRA at 10%

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objections October 13, 2015 at 11:15 a.m.

AI GROUND FISH LIMITED ACCESS FOR OFFSHORE SECTORS

Mr. Cross made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

I move that the Council initiate a discussion paper looking at methods for limiting access to groundfish fisheries in the offshore sectors in the Aleutian Islands. This would be in conjunction with the establishment of a control date of December 31, 2015 that may be used as a reference for future management actions that limit offshore participation.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objections October 13, 2015 at 11:27 a.m.

HALIBUT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Chairman Hull made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

The Council tasks staff to refine the draft halibut framework paper for review by the Council as follows:

1. Describe existing halibut bycatch management objectives from the BSAI and GOA Fishery Management Plans and the Programmatic SEIS for the groundfish fisheries.
2. Clarify and elaborate on the description of primary research issues on page 3 and how they relate to Council and IPHC decision making; including the lead agency. Add the following to the list:
 - Natural mortality variability with age/size/sex/density, to understand the effects of bycatch, wastage, and discards on the spawning biomass and harvestable biomass.
 - An integrated decision-making framework that addresses biological, economic, and social issues, as identified by the June 2015 SSC minutes
 - Development of abundance based approaches to management, in particular Dr. Martell's MPR approach, and implications for Council and IPHC decision making.
3. Task the SSC to review the halibut management framework in December with a focus on identifying primary research issues and data needs from a halibut management perspective.
4. Describe the processes that the Council and IPHC use to receive public input and review scientific information. Identify opportunities within our processes that can be used to provide more formal and regular communications between the bodies, to be more substantive, direct, and informative to each body's decision making process.
 - Explore methods by which the Council can more formally and regularly communicate with US Commissioners.
 - Explore the potential for a joint NPFMC-IPHC committee, similar to the NPFMC-BOF Joint Protocol Committee, through which regular communication on issues of mutual interest could be discussed. Draft TOR for such a committee.
5. Explore the potential for a broad stakeholder workgroup, region specific or coastwide, composed of domestic US stakeholders that would explore solutions to problems identified by the Council that are consistent with Council short-term and/or long-term management objectives. The solutions may include voluntary or regulatory management measures. Draft TOR for such a workgroup and describe conditions under which they are likely to be successful – e.g., a common understanding of why we are in the current situation, etc.
6. Revise the section on public review of the draft framework to reflect Council decisions in October 2015.
7. Revise the tasks identified in Attachment 1 as follows and include updates to potential timelines:

- Revise #4 to read that discussion of annual IPHC data needs from the Observer Program would first occur between Observer Program, NMFS AK Region and IPHC staff.
- Eliminate #8, since there is no action required and it is encompassed in issue #11.
- Revise #9 to read that initially a determination of research priorities of mutual interest should be a discussion between NMFS, IPHC, and Council staff.
- Eliminate #10, since no particular action is required and bycatch allocations are part of the Council's GOA trawl bycatch management action.
- Eliminate #12, since the June 2015 action on BSAI halibut PSC has been taken.
- Eliminate #18, not necessary.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objections October 13, 2015 at 12:57 p.m.

LL2 OBSERVERS

Mr. Down made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Cross:

The Council request staff to update a discussion paper requested by Council at the June 2014 meeting, addressing considerations for regulatory changes to alleviate the ongoing shortage of LL2 observers available for deployment to the hook-and-line CP fleet in the BSAI. To initiate discussion, the paper should consider the following concepts.

- Allow deployment of a non-fixed gear LL2 observer on FLC vessels if the only alternative is that the vessel must stand down:
- Deploy any non-LL2 observer
- Deploy a trawl LL2 observer
- Allow observer experience on fixed gear vessels in other regions to count towards LL2 certification.
- Allow full-coverage providers to deploy observers on pot CVs (in the partial coverage category) to secure fixed gear LL2 certification.
- Institute an at-sea training component to the Federal observer training program, whereby the agency would pay for fixed gear LL2 certification.

As well as the following non-regulatory option:

- Encourage AIS to become a certified observer provider, and supply LL2 observers to FLC vessel.

As well as the following updated options from June 9th 2014 D-5 Staff tasking motion for Lead Level 2 Observer Discussion Paper.

1. Identify how many fixed-gear, newly LL2 qualified observers were certified in 2013, 2014 and 2015 working in each the full coverage and partial coverage programs
2. How many fixed-gear, LL2 certified observers were available for deployment in 2013, 2014 and 2015 compared to 2012.
3. Identify alternative methods to develop a sustainable, renewable and adequate pool of fixed- gear, LL2 qualified observers. Methods could be regulatory (such as further modifications to prior experience requirements) or non-regulatory (such as additional work with an in-season advisor via ATLAS, especially during the early days of the cruise).

The discussion paper is intended to guide the Council in developing potential alternatives for a regulatory amendment package to the Observer Program.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objections October 13, 2015 at 1:12 p.m.

YELLOWFIN TLAS OFFSHORE PARTICIPATION EVALUATION

Mr. Long made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Cotten:

The Council requests a discussion paper to evaluate participation and effort in the Bering Sea yellowfin sole limited access fishery in response to a potential need to limit entry into that fishery.

Mr. Kinneen made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

The Council further establishes a control date of October 13, 2015 for any council action considering future participation in the offshore sector of this fishery.

VOTE ON Kinneen AMENDMENT: Amendment passes 7/4 (Mr. Balsiger, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Fields, Mr. Hull) October 13, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Cotten made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

The Council requests a discussion paper to evaluate participation and effort in the Bering Sea yellowfin sole limited access fishery in response to a potential need to limit entry ~~into that~~ **in the offshore sector in that** fishery.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passes no objection October 13, 2015 at 1:55 p.m.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passes no objections October 13, 2015 at 1:56 p.m.

THE COUONCIL ADJOURNED ON TUESDAY OCTOBER 13, 2015 AT 2:22 P.M.