

COUNCIL MANAGEMENT PLANS

All identified Fishery Management Units (and the exact number and identity is still undetermined) must have management plans developed for them. The 8 PMP's currently in draft form apply only to fisheries involving foreigners; domestic fisheries, even though involved in most of the 8 FMU's identified, cannot be managed on the basis of those plans alone.

Immediate priorities for the NPFC will undoubtedly be those fisheries involving U. S. fishermen that occur in large part more than 3 miles offshore. Tab 1 of this section points out some of the legal questions involved. Basically it appears offshore fisheries may be almost completely unregulated until management plans with appropriate regulations are promulgated.

Guidelines for developing management plans are laid down in Sec. 303 of PL94-265 and expanded in Section III of the Council operating manual.

A working structure for developing and drafting plans will of necessity be one of the first requirements facing the Council.

Plans for the fisheries off Alaska of critical importance in point of time and probable problems are in the initial drafting stage at this time by the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game. Current information is in Tab 4 of this section.

References: PL 94-265

Sec. 303 Contents of Fishery Management Plans

Sec. 304 Action by the Secretary

Sec. 305 Implementations of Fisheries Management Plans.

Council Operating Manual

Sec. II-9-14

Sec. III Fishery Management Plans

Sec. IV Fishery Management Regulations

FISHERY MANAGEMENT UNITS

Eight have been identified and Preliminary Management Plans drafted for the North Pacific Council. These involve foreign fisheries and are:

1. Trawl fishery of the Gulf of Alaska
2. Bering Sea trawl fisheries
3. Bering Sea king and tanner crab
4. Shrimp of the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska
5. High seas salmon (Japan)
6. Troll salmon fisheries
7. Northeast Pacific blackcod longline fishery
8. Bering Sea snail fishery

Other units will need to be identified by the Council and may include some of the following possibilities:

1. Scallops in Gulf of Alaska
2. Dungeness crab in Gulf of Alaska
3. King and tanner crab in Gulf of Alaska

In any case it is the Council's job to assess the fisheries in its area and identify all FMV's requiring plan preparation. Councils may wish to consider the units already identified by the PMP's in the preparation of their own plans.

The Act specifies in Sec. 301.(a)(3) that:

(3) To the extent practicable, an individual stock of fish shall be managed as a unit throughout its range, and interrelated stocks of fish shall be managed as a unit or in close coordination.

Sec. 3 of the Act in par. (7) defines "Fishery" as follows:

(A) one or more stocks of fish which can be treated as a unit for purposes of conservation and management and which are identified on the basis of geographical, scientific, technical, recreational, and economic characteristics; and

(B) any fishing for such stocks.

SOVIET FISHERIES OFF ALASKA, 1975

During 1975 Soviet fishing off Alaska included a groundfish trawl fishery generally along the Continental Shelf edge; in the Gulf of Alaska, along the Aleutian Islands chain, and in the Bering Sea. The Soviets also conducted a herring fishery during the winter months in the central Bering Sea. In 1975 as in the previous three years, the Soviets did not fish for crab in the eastern Bering Sea. Also in 1975, the Soviets did not employ a fleet of side trawlers supported by a factory ship to fish primarily for flounders and pollock near Kodiak Island. Such a factory ship fleet was used in 1973 and in 1974 and their catches included significant number of Pacific halibut. Another departure from the Soviet fishing patterns in 1975 was the non-employment of a fleet of side trawlers for shrimp in the Gulf of Alaska. The Soviets had previously conducted that fishery annually since 1964.

Groundfish Fishery

Soviet trawling for groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska was primarily by stern trawlers concentrated mainly along the Continental Shelf edge off Albatross and Portlock Banks near Kodiak Island. During March, May, and August a few vessels fished near Chirikof, Sanak and the Shumagin Islands in the western Gulf of Alaska. During July, a few ships operated near Kayak and Middleton Islands in the central Gulf of Alaska. The effort was fairly constant with 5-10 trawlers except during February and September when the number of vessels increased to 20. Those increases reflected the passage of vessels to and from the hake fishery off the Pacific Northwest coast. Principal species taken in the Gulf of Alaska were rockfish, pollock and Atka mackerel.

Soviet trawling along the Aleutian Islands chain was conducted mainly by stern trawlers in three principal areas. The area south of the Fox Islands was fished by three trawlers from late March through late April and by one vessel in May. The Seguam-Amukta Islands area in the central Aleutians had a small fishery by four vessels in late August and mid-September. A new fishery was initiated along Petrel Bank in the western Aleutians by about 20 vessels in August and it increased steadily to 40 vessels by the end of September. The principal species taken along the Aleutians are rockfish, Atka mackerel and pollock.

Soviet trawling for groundfish in the Bering Sea was again conducted primarily in two areas: (1) in the eastern Bering Sea north of the Fox Islands in the eastern Aleutians, and (2) in the central Bering Sea northwest of the Pribilof Islands. The principal species taken were arrowtooth flounder, sablefish, rockfish, and pollock in the eastern Bering Sea, and pollock in the central Bering Sea. The central Bering Sea fishery was continuous throughout the year and was conducted by side trawlers and stern trawlers. The fishery in the eastern Bering Sea was also continuous but was conducted principally by side trawlers. The number of vessels present simultaneously in the groundfish fishery ranged from 10 to 75. The peak months were March, April, May, June, and September averaging 60 vessels. February, July, and August averaged 30 vessels while only 10 vessels fished in January.

It is estimated that the 1975 groundfish catch will approach 270,000 metric tons.

Herring Fishery

The annual Soviet herring expedition was begun in early December 1974 and involved nearly 45 vessels by mid-month. The fleet increased to 50 ships from late December until mid-January and then decreased to 45. In mid-February the herring expedition ended and the fleet shifted to the groundfish fishery. The 1975 herring expedition was about two months shorter than in 1974.

It is estimated the 1975 herring expedition took between 20,000 and 30,000 metric tons.