


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke 
Executive Director

DATE: July 31, 1992

SUBJECT: Implementation of the BSAI non-trawl 750 mt halibut prohibited species catch

ACTION REQUIRED

Receive a report from the NMFS on implementation of the 750 metric ton halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) for the non-trawl gear group in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. The Council may take action as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

In December 1991, the Council took final action on Amendments 19 and 24 to the BSAI and GOA Fishery Management Plans, and recommended emergency action as appropriate to implement the proposed measures early in the 1992 fishery. One major element of this amendment established, for one year, a 750 mt halibut PSC mortality limit for the non-trawl fisheries. Of this amount, 300 mt came out of the BSAI trawl fishery halibut PSC limit of 5,333 mt, reducing it to 5,033 mt.

On March 30, 1992, NMFS, Alaska Region, enacted an emergency rule (ER) that implemented PSC bycatch measures put forth in Amendment 19. Provisions in this ER included:

1. reducing halibut bycatch for the BSAI trawl gear fisheries from 5,333 mt to 5,033 mt;
2. revised halibut bycatch allowances for the different BSAI trawl fishery categories;
3. revised retention of a closed directed fishery (species group) to seven percent of groundfish in an open directed fishery taken with pelagic trawl gear (directed fishing standard);
4. revised definition of a fishing trip for purposes of the directed fishing standards; and
5. delayed directed fishing for GOA rockfish with trawl gear until June 29, 1992.

The ER did not implement the 750 mt halibut PSC limit for the non-trawl fisheries, because NMFS estimated that, given the historical halibut bycatch rates in the Pacific cod hook and line fishery, this gear type would not reach its PSC limit before Amendment 19/24 was implemented. NMFS approved the amendment on July 22, 1992 (day 95) (See Item 1). Waving the 30-day cooling off period, the final rule could become effective by August 6, 1992 (day 110); however, NMFS Alaska Region estimates that the final rule is more likely to take effect sometime in late August.

Current catch and bycatch statistics on the BSAI Pacific cod fishery through the week ending on July 19, 1992 are presented as Item 2. As of that week, NMFS estimated hook and line gear had taken 69,859 mt, or 45 percent of the Pacific cod ITAC and the fixed gear component had taken 724.95 mt of halibut mortality. Roughly 15,000 mt of Pacific cod remain before reaching the ITAC. Over the past two months, the hook and line fleet has experienced a weekly halibut bycatch (not mortality) rate of 132 kg halibut/mt groundfish. At this rate, the fleet will require 316 mt of halibut mortality to prosecute 15,000 mt of Pacific cod, assuming a 16 percent mortality rate. At current effort, the hook and line fleet will take the remaining ITAC within six weeks, at which point the fleet will have taken 1,041 mt of halibut mortality, assuming bycatch rates remain the same.

In addition, approximately 27,300 mt of Pacific cod remain in reserve and could be released after the ITAC is taken. Harvesting the reserve will require even more halibut PSC.

Note that the above numbers are based on catch and bycatch information through July 19, 1992. NMFS will provide you with updated estimates of catch and bycatch in the Pacific cod fishery during the Council meeting.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

AGENDA ITEM III(1)

AUGUST 1992

July 22, 1992

RECEIVED
JUL 27 1992

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
P.O. Box 103136
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Dear Rick,

This letter is to notify you of my decision to approve Amendment 19 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (BSAI) and Amendment 24 to the FMP for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The North Pacific Fishery Management Council adopted these FMP amendments and associated regulatory amendments at its December 1991 meeting. The intent of this action is to augment existing prohibited species bycatch management measures implemented for the Alaska groundfish fisheries. As you are aware, many of these measures have been implemented in 1992 under emergency interim rulemaking.

Under Amendment 19, the 1992 Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limit established for BSAI trawl gear is reduced from 5,333 metric tons (mt) to 5,033 mt. A 1992 halibut bycatch mortality limit of 750 mt is also established for BSAI non-trawl gear. Amendments 19 and 24 also establish FMP authority to develop and implement regulatory amendments that allow for time/area closures to reduce prohibited species bycatch rates.

The final rule implementing Amendments 19 and 24 will also implement the following regulatory amendments:

- (1) Revision of BSAI fishery definitions for purposes of monitoring and managing fishery specific bycatch allowances and assigning vessels to fisheries for purposes of the vessel incentive program;
- (2) Expansion of the vessel incentive program to address halibut bycatch rates in all trawl fisheries;
- (3) Delay of the season opening date of the BSAI and GOA groundfish trawl fisheries to January 20 of each fishing year and further delay the season opening date of the GOA trawl rockfish fishery to the Monday closest to July 1; and
- (4) Changes to directed fishing standards to further limit halibut bycatch associated with bottom trawl fisheries, and to enhance surveillance and enforcement.

Implementation of that portion of Amendment 19 which changes the



basis of assignment to target fisheries for the vessel incentive program from observed to retained catch will be delayed until such time as product recovery rates are published in the Federal Register.

At its June 23 - 28, 1992 meeting, the Council considered the proposed rule to expand the vessel incentive program. In response to our concerns about implementing the expanded program, the Council commented that the proposed seven BSAI trawl fishery categories eligible for specific halibut bycatch rate standards should be aggregated to four categories. This action would provide more sampled hauls per vessel to support statistically valid estimates of monthly bycatch rates. We concur with the Council's comment and intend to implement the Council's suggested fishery categories (midwater pollock, yellowfin sole, bottom pollock, and "other trawl fisheries").

Sincerely,



Steven Pennoyer
Director, Alaska Region

1992 BERING SEA & ALEUTIANS REPORT ON DAP HARVEST
BY GEAR TYPE
Source: NMFS weekly production reports through 07/19/92

	TRAWL	H&L	POT	TOTAL	ITAC	TAC
Pacific Cod	63,193	69,859	6,893	139,945	154,700	182,000

1992 BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS FISHERIES
PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH
Week Ending: 07/19/92
Source: NMFS AKR

TRAWL HALIBUT, BSAI						
Fishery group	Halibut (mt)	1st-3rd Quarter cap	% taken	Annual Primary cap	Annual Secondary cap	
Pacific cod	1679	1537	109.3%	1343	1537	
FIXED GEAR HALIBUT MORTALITY, BSAI (hook-and-line, pot)						
Fishery group	HALIBUT (mt)	Cap (mt)	% taken			
All targets	724.95	750	96.66%			

1992 Halibut and Chinook Salmon Bycatch by target fishery and week
 Source: NMFS AKR

<u>Trawl Gear. Pacific cod</u>					
KEY	Groundfish Tons	Halibut Tons	Halibut kg/mt	Chinook Bycatch	Chinooks per mt
C 01/26/92	269.96	8.43	31.21	0.00	0.00
C 02/02/92	3053.08	78.00	25.55	0.00	0.00
C 02/09/92	3548.65	93.10	26.24	0.00	0.00
C 02/16/92	2807.66	53.24	18.96	112.64	0.04
C 02/23/92	185.76	3.90	20.98	0.00	0.00
C 03/08/92	699.46	25.10	35.88	53.93	0.08
C 03/15/92	6993.49	125.97	18.01	1230.66	0.18
C 03/22/92	6854.72	149.86	21.86	976.05	0.14
C 03/29/92	5967.67	127.02	21.28	394.33	0.07
C 04/05/92	3950.59	45.12	11.42	126.73	0.03
C 04/12/92	8312.70	127.00	15.28	672.82	0.08
C 04/19/92	6805.74	163.51	24.02	288.29	0.04
C 04/26/92	8087.08	308.00	38.08	110.02	0.01
C 05/03/92	7238.88	242.67	33.52	422.58	0.06
C 05/10/92	2630.46	121.86	46.33	49.93	0.02
C 05/17/92	309.03	3.60	11.64	0.00	0.00
C 06/21/92	209.93	2.44	11.64	0.00	0.00
C 06/28/92	38.13	0.44	11.64	0.00	0.00
<u>Hook & Line Gear. Pacific cod</u>					
KEY	Groundfish Tons	Halibut Tons	Halibut kg/mt	Chinook Bycatch	Chinooks per mt
C 01/05/92	1628.56	60.99	37.45	0.00	0.00
C 01/12/92	1168.43	46.32	39.64	0.00	0.00
C 01/19/92	1981.68	49.54	25.00	0.00	0.00
C 01/26/92	1880.35	43.35	23.06	0.00	0.00
C 02/02/92	2309.53	57.29	24.81	3.87	0.00
C 02/09/92	2111.48	40.90	19.37	0.00	0.00
C 02/16/92	2235.18	43.39	19.41	0.00	0.00
C 02/23/92	2812.06	42.63	15.16	0.00	0.00
C 03/01/92	3088.04	39.41	12.76	0.00	0.00
C 03/08/92	2020.90	57.53	28.47	0.00	0.00
C 03/15/92	2917.18	42.80	14.67	1.53	0.00
C 03/22/92	3231.40	46.93	14.52	0.00	0.00
C 03/29/92	3207.65	77.44	24.14	1.27	0.00
C 04/05/92	3386.82	161.93	47.81	49.19	0.01
C 04/12/92	3266.16	92.62	28.36	5.00	0.00
C 04/19/92	3476.12	88.82	25.55	0.00	0.00
C 04/26/92	3894.15	127.15	32.65	0.00	0.00
C 05/03/92	4420.84	131.66	29.78	0.00	0.00
C 05/10/92	3227.27	84.06	26.05	0.00	0.00
C 05/17/92	2505.49	71.17	28.41	0.00	0.00
C 05/24/92	3062.96	182.46	59.57	0.00	0.00
C 05/31/92	2790.75	198.96	71.29	0.00	0.00
C 06/07/92	3114.61	303.36	97.40	0.00	0.00
C 06/14/92	2435.81	276.44	113.49	0.00	0.00
C 06/21/92	2705.77	371.97	137.47	0.00	0.00
C 06/28/92	2936.25	414.43	141.14	0.00	0.00
C 07/05/92	2500.18	520.41	208.15	0.00	0.00
C 07/12/92	2569.07	370.94	144.39	0.00	0.00
C 07/19/92	3035.35	261.77	86.24	0.00	0.00

1992 Halibut and Chinook Salmon Bycatch by target fishery, zone and mode
Source: NMFS AKR

<u>Trawl Gear, Pacific cod</u>					
KEY	Groundfish Tons	Halibut Tons	Halibut kg/mt	Chinook Bycatch	Chinooks per mt
C 511 M	630.16	10.11	16.04	0.00	0.00
C 511 P	3612.31	65.11	18.03	0.00	0.00
C 511 S	30.82	0.64	20.76	0.00	0.00
C 513 M	219.24	6.13	27.96	0.00	0.00
C 513 P	231.36	2.55	11.04	0.00	0.00
C 515 S	6.33	0.07	11.64	0.00	0.00
C 517 M	11446.96	485.15	42.38	695.36	0.06
C 517 P	3652.46	176.48	48.32	521.60	0.14
C 517 S	12651.09	505.83	39.98	591.72	0.05
C 518 P	297.36	1.61	5.41	0.00	0.00
C 518 S	881.43	10.66	12.09	5.23	0.01
C 519 M	513.33	22.30	43.44	17.17	0.03
C 519 P	108.24	3.22	29.76	2.16	0.02
C 519 S	210.54	6.40	30.37	4.99	0.02
C 521 M	440.23	7.65	17.39	19.48	0.04
C 521 P	12129.43	208.50	17.19	1620.98	0.13
C 522 M	7.82	0.10	13.20	0.31	0.04
C 522 P	8681.94	94.42	10.88	957.37	0.11
C 540 M	705.74	7.42	10.51	0.00	0.00
C 540 P	11506.20	64.89	5.64	1.61	0.00
<u>Hook & Line Gear, Pacific cod</u>					
KEY	Groundfish Tons	Halibut Tons	Halibut kg/mt	Chinook Bycatch	Chinooks per mt
C 511 P	2306.36	122.08	52.93	0.00	0.00
C 512 P	721.96	21.32	29.53	0.00	0.00
C 513 P	134.91	2.61	19.37	0.00	0.00
C 513 S	23.60	0.70	29.87	0.00	0.00
C 515 P	113.02	3.38	29.86	0.00	0.00
C 516 P	87.37	3.06	34.98	0.00	0.00
C 517 M	14.86	0.85	56.90	0.00	0.00
C 517 P	5302.75	680.84	128.39	0.00	0.00
C 517 S	121.97	26.23	215.04	0.00	0.00
C 518 P	549.01	126.62	230.64	0.00	0.00
C 518 S	133.19	21.72	163.11	0.00	0.00
C 519 M	1.36	0.04	29.87	0.00	0.00
C 519 P	396.88	27.43	69.11	0.00	0.00
C 519 S	95.94	2.99	31.13	0.00	0.00
C 521 P	50055.31	2347.31	46.89	3.87	0.00
C 521 S	14.18	1.10	77.80	0.00	0.00
C 522 P	6173.83	198.56	32.16	1.53	0.00
C 522 S	0.32	0.04	136.53	0.00	0.00
C 540 P	13644.96	718.06	52.62	55.46	0.00
C 540 S	28.26	1.72	60.99	0.00	0.00