

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Date: 8/7/83

## MINUTES

North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
Scientific and Statistical Committee  
Homer, Alaska  
July 25-26, 1983

The Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Homer on July 25-26, 1983. Members present were:

Donald Rosenberg, Chairman  
Richard Marasco, Vice Chairman  
William Aron  
Bud Burgner  
Larry Hreha  
Don Bevan  
John Burns  
Steve Langdon  
Jerry McCrary for Jack Lechner  
Fred Gaffney for John Clark

### C-3 Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures

The SSC briefly reviewed the modified Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures. We will provide the Council with our comments at the September meeting.

### D-2 Herring FMP

The SSC has provided the Council at previous meetings our concerns regarding the management regime being proposed within the draft FMP. The SSC did find that the staff has followed the Council's instructions regarding the compilation of the complete plan. The SSC recommends a minor modification to the formula on winter apportionment of OY. We feel that the subsistence adjustment should be renamed subsistence harvest and the limit of 500 mt be deleted.

In the event the Council accepts the draft, which includes the Prohibited Species Catch provisions, the SSC recommends that the drafters examine the winter apportionment of OY formula to insure they are including the AIC or PSC for the Reserves portion of the groundfish OY.

The SSC discussed the reporting requirement, as provided for in the plan and the draft regulations, and the need for information for the Herring Savings Area closure and accounting of AIC. The SSC felt that there could be problems but has no recommendations.

The SSC did receive a presentation by Vidar Westpestad and Steve Fried on their paper entitled, "Productivity of Pacific Herring in the Eastern Bering Sea Under Various Patterns of Exploitation." The SSC commends the authors on this document. We recommend that the Council review the paper in depth as it provides information on how an offshore harvest will impact individual herring stocks.

#### D-4 Tanner Crab FMP

##### Amendment #9

The SSC received the first draft of Amendment #9 to the Tanner Crab FMP and the Regulatory Issues Paper which has been developed in support of the amendment. The SSC recommends that the regulatory issues paper be expanded to include a discussion of the impact of the amendment on administrative costs. Additionally, we recommended the Council staff examine the statements in the document regarding the king crab industry to insure they are current. The SSC recommends that the amendment be submitted for Secretarial review.

##### Amendment #10

The SSC reviewed the staff's modification to the justification of the management changes as proposed in draft Amendment #10.

The Council deliberation on this amendment would be facilitated by: (1) specification of what the objectives of the measures proposed are; and (2) a discussion of how the various user groups would be affected by the alternatives proposed. The SSC recognizes that only qualitative statements relative to the impacts of the proposed options may be possible. However, it is felt this information will contribute significantly to the Council's consideration of these issues. The SSC does not recommend that this amendment be released for public review at this time.

#### D-5 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

##### Report of Prohibited Species Workgroup

The SSC received a report from the Council's workgroup on Prohibited Species. The workgroup has completed phase I of the analysis it was directed to perform by the Council. The workgroup requested that AP and Council members be appointed to the group to review the draft of the phase I report. The SSC supports this request.

##### Pollock OY for the Central and Western Gulf

The SSC received an updated report on the status of pollock resources in the Central Gulf of Alaska from Gary Stauffer of the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center. This report removes some of the concerns the SSC has relative to the status of the pollock stocks.

With respect to allowing the pollock catch in the Western and Central areas to increase to 240,000 mt in 1983, the SSC feels that the risk of overfishing is minimal. This assessment was based on current estimates of the size of the biomass and applying exploitation rates employed in the FMP.

The SSC used the same information and the percentage distribution contained in the FMP between the Western and Central areas. The SSC concluded that the increase of 40,000 mt can come out of the Central areas.

It is expected that as a result of a 40,000 mt increase in pollock catch, that the incidental catch of halibut will remain at 1982 levels.

The SSC recommends that the final adjustment to the ABC for pollock wait until the status of stocks analysis is further updated to include the 1983 survey and the joint venture data.

#### Sablefish

It was brought to the attention of the SSC that a catch reporting problem existed for the East Yakutat and Southeast management areas. Currently, the State of Alaska management Area 16 includes portions of both of the FMP districts. Fishermen at present report by state areas and not by FMP districts. Therefore, it is impossible to determine the sablefish catches coming out of those two areas. Because of this problem, the SSC recognizes that in the short-term the two FMP districts will have to be combined for management purposes. The SSC recommends that the PMT be directed to re-examine the data to determine if there still is a need to break up the area in question into two management districts.

#### D-6 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

##### Amendment #9

The SSC reviewed the draft Amendment #9 which is to provide the Regional Director with the authority for in-season management of the fishery. The SSC interprets that this amendment is to provide the Regional Director management authority when there is a conservation issue. The SSC is concerned that the criteria to be considered by the Regional Director are too general and contain items on which information may not be available in the near future. The SSC feels that the team should reconsider the criteria and limit it to items which deal with conservation of the resource and which can be monitored. The SSC recommends that the team make these modifications before the amendment is released for public review.

##### Resource Assessment Document

The SSC received the Resource Assessment Document for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish complex. The SSC would like to compliment the team and the lead agency on the document. The SSC was concerned with status quo option (TAC 3). The SSC recommends that the team modify this option to keep the OY total at the status quo (1,623,591) level but distribute the individual species harvest levels in accordance with the criteria in the plan. Information on current species OYs should remain in this section to allow comparison but should not necessarily be considered an option. Subject to those modifications the SSC recommends that the document be released to the public.

#### Amendment #6

The SSC reviewed the Regulatory Impact Review for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP, Amendment #6. The SSC concludes that the document was not complete. The main conclusion in the document is that short-term benefits will accrue from establishment of the FDZ. Central to the analysis contained in the RIR is a conceptual framework that utilizes the notion that reductions in effort will increase catch rates. While monthly Japanese catch data for 1979, 80 and 81 were used to statistically estimate the relationship between catch and effort, it is not clear that the results provide information about the relationship. During the course of any given year, there are any of a number of factors that could mask the relationship between catch and effort. Seasonality is an example of one such variable. Given the data used in the analysis, seasonality could be an important explanatory variable. Failure to account for its influence could lead to erroneous conclusions concerning the effect on catch rates of changes in the level of foreign fishing effort. That is, it might be concluded that, as the result of incomplete analysis of the data, effort reductions by the foreign fleet would increase catch rates when in reality no such increases would occur. A thorough statistical analysis would have examined the importance of various explanatory factors. Since this was not done, there is concern over whether or not the relationship between catch and effort presented in the RIR is indicative of the true relationship or the confounding effects of several variables. It must be emphasized that examination of the responsiveness of catch to changes in effort is constrained by the limited nature of the data available. Therefore, it is unlikely that additional data exists which would make it possible to estimate the FDZ benefits in a definitive manner. Recognizing this, the SSC recommended that the drafters of the RIR use the conceptual model contained in the document to qualitatively explore the impacts of the FDZ. Further, any attempt to quantify benefits should be appropriately qualified in the document. The SSC recommends the drafters address our concerns before the document is submitted in support of the amendment. The SSC commended Doug Larson and Jeff Povolny for their efforts. Information such as that contained in the RIR is capable of contributing significantly to the understanding of important issues associated with the topic under discussion. It is recommended that in the future these documents be made available to the SSC prior to release of amendments or plans for public review.

#### Amendment #1

The SSC reviewed the status of Amendment #1 and the wording changes which have occurred. The SSC received presentations from Jay Hastings, Pat Travers and Council staff. It is quite apparent that wording changes have been made. It was pointed out that these changes were made to bring the amendment into conformity with certain guidelines. It was unclear to the SSC which guidelines were being referred to. In addition, it was also stated that the same changes were made to bring the document into conformity with Council intentions. It was pointed out that at the time the Council acted, it had a written copy of the amendment. It was noted further that the Council did not direct the staff to make the changes being questioned.

The SSC believes that the changes are significant. Further, it was felt that the changes could have scientific implications. The SSC recommends that the Council examine the changes made to determine if the changes made correspond with its intentions.

The SSC recommended to the Council staff that they clearly identify for the Council the exact current wording in the amendment as it is today.

#### Prohibited Species Catch

The SSC was requested by the AP at the last meeting to examine the methods of reduction of prohibited species by the foreign fishery. The SSC noted that a report has been provided by the foreign industry. In addition, the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center has examined the data. No one specific item can be identified, all indications are that it is a complex scenario of events which have lead to the reduction.

#### E-1 Contracts

##### Contract 82-3 Salmon Economic Profile

The SSC received the draft final report for Contract 82-3, Salmon Economic Profile. The SSC will review this draft report and provide the Council with our recommendations at the September meeting.

##### Contract 82-4 Halibut Limited Entry Study

The SSC at our last meeting reviewed the appendix to the draft final report on Contract 82-4, Halibut Limited Entry Study. The results of our review have been discussed with the contractor. The contractor has agreed to make the minor modifications which were identified and, therefore, the SSC recommends approval of the final report.

##### Lowell Wakefield Symposium

The SSC reviewed the proposal from the University of Alaska for partial support for a scientific symposium on the non-fishing and fishing induced changes in the king crab populations. The SSC recommends that the Council support this conference.

##### Contract 81-5 Incidental Salmon Catch Study

The SSC reviewed the quarterly report for the contractor on Contract 81-5, Incidental Catch of Salmon. The SSC notes that the contractor has identified additional areas of research. We recommend waiting until the receipt of the final report before evaluating additional research in this area.

#### E-2 FY84 Programmatic Research Proposals

##### Golden King Crab Study

The SSC received the proposal on Golden king crab. This proposal has been modified in accordance with our recommendations. The SSC feels that the modified proposal should now be received by ADF&G and NMFS crab biologists to insure it meets the information needs. The SSC will make its final recommendation at the September meeting.

### Sablefish Research Priorities

The SSC has identified the need for additional research in regard to the sablefish resource. The SSC heard a report by Gary Stauffer of the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center. The basis of this report was a document compiled by scientists working in sablefish management and research from Pacific coast agencies. The SSC recommends the Council support the efforts of these various agencies to coordinate their research on sablefish. The SSC recommends that the research priorities identified in the document be sent to management agencies for their consideration and identification of those areas they can support. The Council will then be able to determine within its guidelines the areas of research they will need to support.

### Limited Entry Conference

The SSC reviewed the correspondence regarding the possibility of a conference on limited entry. The SSC recommends that the Council participate in the identification of the objective and format for such a conference.