

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Meeting Summary

234th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
June 5-12, 2017
Centennial Hall, Juneau, Alaska

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- 1) Time Log
- 2) Newsletter

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met June 7-12 at Centennial Hall in Juneau, Alaska. The following Council, NPFMC staff, SSC, and AP members attended the meetings.

Council Members

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Balsiger, Jim | Hyder, Roy | Peterson, Theresa |
| Cotten, Sam | Kinneen, Simon | Sergent, LCDR Corrie |
| Cross, Craig | Laukitis, Buck | Smoker, Lauren (GC) |
| Down, Kenny | Sullivan, Maura (GC) | Tweit, Bill (Vice Chair) |
| Hanson, Dave | White, CAPT Stephen | |
| Hartill, Trent (Alt for Cotten) | Merrill, Glenn (Alt for Balsiger) | |
| Hull, Dan (Chair) | Mezirow, Andy | |

NPFMC Staff

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Armstrong, Jim | Kircher, Peggy | Shawback, Maria |
| Cunningham, Sam | Marrinan, Sarah | Schmidt, Nicole |
| Evans, Diana | McCracken, Jon | Stram, Diana |
| Fey, Mike (AFKIN) | Oliver, Chris (ED) | Witherell, Dave (DD) |

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from June 5th through 7th at Centennial Hall, Juneau, AK.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Farron Wallace, Chair <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i> | Sherri Dressel, Vice Chair <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i> | Milo Adkison <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i> |
| Chris Anderson <i>University of Washington</i> | Jennifer Burns <i>University of Alaska Anchorage</i> | Robert Clark <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i> |
| Brad Harris <i>Alaska Pacific University</i> | Anne Hollowed <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i> | Gordon Kruse <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i> |
| Dayv Lowry <i>Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i> | Kate Reedy <i>Idaho State University Pocatello</i> | Matt Reimer <i>University of Alaska Anchorage</i> |
| Ian Stewart <i>Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission</i> | | |

Advisory Panel

The AP met June 6-10 at Centennial Hall. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent ~~stricken~~):

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Carroll, Shannon | Gruver, John | Peterson, Joel |
| Christiansen, Ruth | Kauffman, Jeff | Scoblic, John |
| Cochran, Kurt | Kwachka, Alexus | Stephan, Jeff |
| Crowley, John | Lowenberg, Craig | Stevens, Ben |
| Downing, Jerry | McCallum, Chuck | Upton, Matt (Co-Vice Chair) |
| Drobnica, Angel (Co-Vice Chair) | Nichols, Carina | Weiss, Ernie (Chair) |
| Donich, Daniel | O'Donnell, Paddy | Wilt, Sinclair |

B REPORTS

The following reports were given and discussed. No action was taken.

- B1 Executive Director's Report – Chris Oliver
Sam Cunningham – Social Science Planning Team
- B2 NMFS Management Report – Glenn Merrill
SAIP Overview, Dr. Cisco Werner, Dr. Patrick Lynch
Mary Seidis, Linda Shaw
- B3 NOAA Enforcement – Will Ellis, Nathan Lagerwey
- B4 ADF&G Report – Trent Hartill
- B5 USCG Report – LCDR Corrie Sargent, CAPT Stephan White
- B6 USFW Report – written report

The Council took no action on items in the B Reports.

IPHC/NPMFC Joint Meeting

The Council and the International Pacific Halibut Commission met June 8, 10am-5pm on the first day of the Council meeting, to discuss several issues of mutual concern. Status reports were given on specific management actions and research priorities, and views of individual members were expressed. The Council noted that occasional meetings with the IPHC can be useful when focused on specific issues directly related to halibut management, while recognizing the respective management authorities of each agency. The Council further requested that the Executive Director and Chair explore ways to improve dialog with the IPHC in the future by examining the communication and collaborative process used by other international commissions and domestic fishery management bodies.

C1 2016 Observer Annual Report and OAC Report

The Council heard reports from Diana Evans, NPMFC Staff, Craig Faunce (NMFS), Jennifer Mondragon (NMFS) and Chris Rilling (AFSC) on the 2016 Observer Annual Report. Nathan Lagerwey from NOAA Enforcement gave a report on Annual Compliance and Enforcement. The OAC report was taken as well as the SSC and AP report and public testimony.

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

- 1) The Council recommends that the draft 2018 Annual Deployment Plan include the following:
 - Maintain status quo for:
 - Dockside monitoring of observed pollock trips (see comments below for longer term solutions for tender offloads).
 - The trip-selection method to assign observers to vessels in partial coverage and continue to deploy observers in the trip selection pools defined by gear (pot, hook-and-line, and trawl).
 - Programming in ODDS that prevents a 40 – 57.5' fixed gear vessel from being selected for a third consecutive observer trip.
 - Allowing vessels to log up to three trips in advance in ODDS.
 - Continuing to place vessels less than 40 ft in the no selection pool.
 - Evaluate:
 - Whether to continue the tender strata definition in 2018.
 - Comparing the following alternative deployment designs: 1) 15% coverage rates across all strata; 2) equal coverage rates that can be afforded with available funding; and 3) optimization allocations based on discards that includes prioritization of PSC limited fisheries in the weighting schemes.
 - A preliminary evaluation of the method to split the fee budget between EM and human deployment.
 - For the EM pool:
 - If funding is insufficient to expand the EM pool up to 165 vessels, prioritize deployment in the EM pool as follows: 1) longline vessels, whose data will be used for inseason management; 2) vessels that are already equipped with EM systems; and 3) vessels 40-57.5 ft LOA where carrying a human observer is problematic due to bunk space or life raft limitations
 - To the extent possible, the Council recommends that NMFS consult with the EM Workgroup and/or the OAC on policy choices made during the transition to an integrated EM program in the 2018 ADP.
 - Reprogram ODDS to allow vessels to change the dates for observed trips, rather than cancelling and inheriting observed trips.
- 2) The Council recommends that NMFS incorporate the following in future annual reports:
 - Evaluate pelagic trawl and non-pelagic trawl trips for evidence of observer effect;
 - Include information on progress toward estimating variance of catch and bycatch;
 - SSC comments, as appropriate.
- 3) The Council is concerned about the increase in Observer Program complaints for OLE priority issues of safety and creating a hostile work environment, and encourages the industry to work with OLE and observer providers to proactively engage in education and outreach effort to reduce the number of complaints.
- 4) The Council appreciates NOAA Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO) efforts to accommodate stakeholder input on the Statement of Work for the next partial coverage observer provider contract, including presentations at the OAC meeting. The Council requests that AGO schedule their upcoming outreach events during the October Council meeting.
- 5) Regarding tasking of observer projects:

- Low sampling rates: The Council approves the OAC’s recommendation to create an OAC subgroup over the summer to scope out potential solutions for addressing low coverage rates.
- Tendering and dockside monitoring: The Council tasks staff to develop a discussion paper identifying specific data concerns with respect to vessels engaged in tendering, and to work with industry groups to develop both short term and long-term solutions, including potential regulatory changes.

An amendment by Mr. Down and seconded by Mr. Cross to add a third bullet which states “and report back to Council on such efforts” was withdrawn.

An amendment by Mr. Harthill which was seconded by Mr. Kinneen requests to add the following language to the end of the motion:

- 6) The Council remains concerned about the combined effects of decreased funding and sequestration and other delays in the release of fees. The Council recommends that NMFS consider providing supplementary funds to help alleviate the shortage in funding for observer deployment as well as continue to pursue solutions that remove these funds from sequestration rules and streamline the release of the collected funds.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed without objection on June 9, at 10:01am.

VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION: Motion passed without objection June 9 at 10:10 am.

C2 Lead Level 2 Observers

Alicia Miller, NMFS staff, gave the report on this agenda item. The AP report was taken, and the SSC did not take up this agenda item. Public testimony was taken.

Mr. Merrill, with a second by Mr. Kinneen, made the following motion:

The Council recommends Alternative 3 Option 3.2 as its preferred alternative with the following clarification (in bold) from the PPA:

Alternative 3: Observer Options. Modify the nontrawl LL2 observer coverage requirement. Require the vessel ~~owners operator or manager~~ **owners operator or manager** to participate in a pre-cruise meeting if requested to do so by NMFS.

Option 3.2: Modify the nontrawl LL2 endorsement to allow sampling experience on trawl CPs to count toward nontrawl LL2 endorsement with an additional training requirement.

Mr. Tweit with a second by Mr. Cross, made an amendment which states: 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). 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: Motion on the amendment passed 9-0, with Mr. Down recusing himself on June 9 at 1:34pm. Mr. Hyder was absent.

VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION: Amended main motion passed 9-0 with Mr. Down recusing himself again on June 9 at 1:36pm. Mr. Hyder was absent.

C3 Area 4 Halibut IFQ leasing

Sarah Marrinan gave the staff report on this agenda item. The AP gave its report, the SSC did not take up this agenda item, and public comment was taken.

Mr. Kinneen, with a second by Mr. Hartill, made the following motion:

The Council recommends Alternative 2, with the following options, as its preferred alternative. Changes from Preliminary Preferred Alternative: new language in **bold and underlined**, deleted language in ~~strikethrough~~.

Alternative 2. Allow CDQ groups to lease halibut IFQ in Areas 4B, 4C and 4D in years of low halibut catch limits in regulatory Areas 4B and 4CDE. **A CDQ group may lease IFQ only in areas it is allocated halibut CDQ.** Any IFQ transferred to a CDQ group under this provision would be added to their available halibut CDQ. ~~intended to be leased from non-residents for use only by residents of a CDQ community with a halibut CDQ permit and a CDQ hired master permit.~~ No vessel over 51 feet LOA would be eligible to harvest the leased IFQ and vessels would have to comply with IFQ use restrictions.

Option 1. Defining 'low catch limits' for the purpose of allowing leases. Designation of low catch limits is independently determined for Areas 4B and 4CDE. The threshold for designating a year of low halibut catch limit in each area is less than:

Sub-option 1. 1 million pounds for area 4B

Sub-option 3. 1.5 million pounds for area 4CDE

Option 2. Leased Area 4D IFQ, may be fished in Area 4E.

Sub-option 2. Any **CDQ owned or non-CDQ owned Area 4D A Class IFQ** leased by a CDQ group may be fished in Area 4E **by vessels less than or equal to 51 feet** when the ~~abundance~~ **catch limit** threshold in Area 4CDE is reached.

Option 3. Any Area 4B, 4C, or 4D catcher vessel QS transferred after December 14, 2015 may not be leased as IFQ to CDQ groups under this action for a period of:

Sub-option 1. 3 years

Option 4. No individual halibut QS holder may lease catcher vessel halibut IFQ to any CDQ group, on a consecutive basis, for more than:

Sub-option 1. 2 years

Option 5. Limit the ability to lease Area 4B catcher vessel halibut IFQ to CDQ groups under this action to quota holders that own less than the following total area 4B holdings, inclusive of all class and blocked or unblocked categories:

Sub-option 3. 7,500 lbs

Sub-option 4. **Convert** ~~Sub-options 1 through 3 using the~~ **to 2016 QS pool units**

Option 6. Require CDQ groups **to submit a report for each year the group leases IFQ. The report must specify** the criteria used to select IFQ holders leasing to a CDQ group, the criteria used to determine who can receive leased IFQ, and the amount and type of IFQ leased. **A CDQ group will not be eligible to lease halibut IFQ until a timely and complete report is submitted.**

The Council intends for IFQ to be leased from non-residents for use only by residents of a CDQ community.

The motion was amended by Mr. Tweit, seconded by Mr. Cross that the Council deem proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c). 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 AND AMENDED MAIN MOTION: The vote on the amendment passed without objection at 3:56 pm on June 9, 2017, and the amended main motion passed without objection at 3:45 pm on the same day.

C4 BSAI Yellowfin Sole Trawl Limited Access Fishery

Jon McCracken, NPMFC Staff, gave the report on this agenda item. The AP gave its report and public comment was taken. The SSC did not address this agenda item.

Mr. Merrill made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

The Council recommends Alternative 2, Option 1.1, and Suboption 1.1.1 as its preferred alternative. Alternative 2: A catcher vessel may target the BSAI TLAS yellowfin sole fishery and deliver its catch to a mothership or catcher/processor only if that catcher vessel is assigned an LLP that is credited with at least one trip target landing in the BSAI TLAS yellowfin sole fishery made to a mothership or catcher/processor between:

Option 1

Option 1.1: 2008-2015

Suboption 1.1.1: in any year

If more than one LLP license is assigned to a catcher vessel that made at least one trip target in the BSAI TLAS fishery, the vessel owner must specify only one LLP license to receive credit with the landings made by that vessel when more than one LLP license was assigned to the vessel.

Mr. Tweit with a second by Mr. Cross, made an amendment which states: 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). 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: The amendment passed without objection, at 11:59 on June 11, with Mr. Down and Mr. Kinneen recusing themselves.

VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION: The amended main motion passed 6-3, at 12:23 pm on June 11, with Mr. Hartill, Mr. Laukitis and Ms. Peterson voting in opposition, and Mr. Down and Mr. Kinneen recusing themselves.

C5 Halibut Abundance-based PSC limits; Candidate Performance Metrics

Diana Stram, NPFMC staff, along with Dana Hanselman from NMFS, gave the staff report. The AP report was given, the SSC had given its report earlier, and public comment was taken.

Mr. Trent Hartill made a motion, and Mr. Mezirow seconded a motion which stated:

In preparation for the October discussion paper, the Council directs staff to:

- Eliminate all U12, AI and GOA indices from further consideration at this time, and provide a full description, including a qualitative evaluation of each index as described in the SSC minutes.
- Provide a comparison of indices as they relate to sector specific PSC limits and fishery characteristics.
- Prioritize focusing on biomass based indices for development. In addition, the Council clarifies that PSC limits should be specified in biomass.
- Limit the set of abundance indices for initial development to those which reflect 1) halibut encountered by the groundfish fishery in the Bering Sea, and 2) halibut abundance in the Bering Sea.
- Include a discussion on control rules that is not limited to only sloping control rules with floors and ceilings, but also include other control rules as outlined by the SSC. The discussion should include tradeoffs of each control rule. In preparing for the October discussion paper, the Council directs staff to apply continuous sloping control rules to candidate indices.
- Consider using the IPHC Coastwide halibut stock status as an element of the control rule, rather than a component index in an integrated index.
- Include a discussion on incentives corresponding to different control rules and abundance indices as noted in the SSC minutes. In addition, include a discussion of how a performance standard could be included in an abundance based approach for establishing PSC limits.
- When considering a starting PSC limit in future discussion papers, the Council directs the working group to consider starting points within the following range: 50% above and below the 2016 PSC limit.
- Include a discussion on establishing separate starting points for each gear type.
- Include the following in the outline for the October paper (new text in **bold and underline**):
 - II. Components of abundance-based halibut PSC management
 - a. Indices of halibut abundance
 - i. All available
 - 1. Listing of indices with characteristics, proportion of population, **proportion of population encountered in directed and groundfish fisheries**
 - 2. Qualities of indices (units, 2016 value, variability, frequency), **extent each index meets principles developed by staff**

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed without objection at 2:00 pm on June 10, 2017.

C6 Squid to Ecosystem Component Category

Diana Stram and Jon McCracken, NPFMC staff, gave the report. The AP gave its report, and public comment was heard. The SSC did not address this agenda item.

Mr. Merrill moved with a second by Mr. Cross, to adopt the following purpose and need statement and recommends Alternative 2, Option 3 as its preferred alternative: designate squid in both the BSAI and GOA FMPs as non-target 'Ecosystem Component Species' and maintain the current MRA of 20%.

Purpose and Need

Squid are short-lived, highly productive, and an important prey species. No conservation concerns exist for squid populations in the BSAI and GOA. Squid are thought to be substantially more abundant than

can be estimated from trawl survey data. Current OFLs for squid are based on average catch calculations that are poorly linked to abundance. Although limited life-history information exists, the best available scientific information suggests that squid biomass estimates are substantial underestimates of true biomass. Squid are currently managed as target species despite being caught only incidentally under status quo, and an annual OFL, ABC, and TAC for the squid complex is specified separately for the BSAI and GOA. While there are no directed fisheries for squid in either the BSAI or GOA, squid bycatch is retained in some fisheries and often utilized to prevent waste. If the total TAC of squid is caught, retention is prohibited for the remainder of the year.

The purposes of this action are to identify the appropriate level of conservation and management required for squid and to accurately classify the squid complex in the BSAI and GOA groundfish FMPs based on the best available scientific information. The revised National Standard 1 (NS1) guidelines include options for classification and management of target and non-target species in FMPs. Options for classification and management of non-target stocks include identification of the species as “non-target species in need of conservation and management,” or as “non-target ecosystem component species, not in need of conservation and management.”

Alternative 2: Designate squid in both BSAI and GOA FMPs as non-target ‘Ecosystem Component Species.’ Establishment of OFL, ABC, and TAC will no longer be required.

Remove regulations referring to squid as target species and implement regulations for the groundfish fishery that:

- Prohibit directed fishing for squid
- Establish a squid maximum retainable amount (MRA) when directed fishing for other fisheries at a level to discourage retention while allowing flexibility to prosecute other fisheries
 - Option 1 MRA = 2%
 - Option 2 MRA = 10%
 - Option 3 MRA = 20%
- Require recordkeeping and reporting to monitor and report catch and discards of squid species annually.

Encourage the Alaska Fisheries Science Center to continue to explore methods to estimate squid abundance and assess the squid stocks.

Mr. Tweit with a second by Mr. Cross, made an amendment which states: 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). 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 AND AMENDED MAIN MOTION: The amendment and amended main motion passed without objection, 10-0, at 2:17 on June 11, with Mr. Down recusing himself on both votes.

C7 BSAI Crab Harvest Specifications and Plan Team Report

Diana Stram gave the staff report and the Crab Plan Team Report on this agenda item. The AP gave its report, the SSC had given its report earlier, and there was no public comment.

Mr. Hartill moved, seconded by Mr. Cross, to adopt the BSAI Crab SAFE and SSC recommendations for three crab stocks.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed without objection on June 11 at 3:09 pm.

C8 Five-year Research Priorities

Jim Armstrong, NPFMC staff, gave the report on this agenda item. The AP gave its report, the SSC had given its report earlier, and there was no public comment.

Mr. Tweit moved, which was seconded by Mr. Cross to to accept the SSC's recommendations on research priorities with the following exceptions: leave research projects 148, 163 and 165 as Urgent as the Council had previously decided.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 11 at 4:11 pm.

Mr. Merrill moved, seconded by Mr. Hartill, to request the Executive Director, Council Chair, and SSC Chair to explore methods to refine the review of Council research priorities.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 11 at 4:14 pm.

D1 AFA and Non-AFA Small Sideboard Elimination

Keeley Kent, NFMS staff, gave the report on this agenda item. The AP gave its report, and there was no public comment. The SSC did not address this issue.

Mr. Merrill moved, which was seconded by Mr. Hartill, to adopt the following purpose and need statement and alternatives for analysis:

Purpose and Need Statement

Many of the sideboards for non-exempt American Fisheries Act (AFA) vessels and Crab Rationalization Program vessels for groundfish species in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska are not opened for directed fishing because the sideboard limits are not large enough to support a directed fishery. Additionally, other sideboards are fully allocated to programs such as the Amendment 80 Program or have no prohibited species catch apportioned to them so therefore NMFS cannot open them to directed fishing. NMFS must annually close these sideboard fisheries to directed fishing through the groundfish harvest specifications. Closing these sideboard fisheries could be simplified administratively by prohibiting directed fishing by regulation. There are also some sideboard limits that may not be required due to other regulatory limits on harvests. The purpose of this action is to simplify the administration of the fisheries by establishing prohibited fishery closures instead of sideboard limits, or by removing sideboard limits that are no longer required.

Alternative 1. No Action

Alternative 2. Prohibit directed fishing by regulation for all species in Tables 2-1, 2-2, 2-3 and 3-1 of the discussion paper, except catcher/processors fishing for Central Aleutian Islands Atka mackerel.

Option 1. Remove the sideboard limit on AFA catcher/processors for Central Aleutian Islands Atka mackerel.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed without objection on June 11, 4:40 pm.

D2 GOA Crab Habitat Conservation Measures

Jim Armstrong and Sam Cunningham gave the staff report on this agenda item.

Ms. Peterson moved, which Mr. Cotten seconded, to recommend staff provide a discussion paper reviewing the following:

1. Review the Arrowtooth / Shallow Water Flatfish / Rex Sole / Flathead Sole Non-pelagic trawl (NPT) target fisheries and the pot cod fishing efforts in ADF&G statistical areas 525702, 525630 and the Chiniak gully from 2006-2016. Provide a time series to understand if the fishing effort is increasing.
2. Evaluate observer coverage rates in the ADF&G statistical areas 525702, 525630 and the Chiniak Gully from 2006 – 2016. Break out NPT in the CV sector, the trawl CP sector, the trawl Rockfish Program and the pot cod fishery coverage rates in each area referenced above.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed with Mr. Cross and Mr. Hyder objecting on June 12 at 9:48 am.

D3 Allocation Review Triggers

David Witherell, NPFMC staff, gave the report on this issue. The AP gave its report, and the SSC did not address the issue. There was no public comment.

Mr. Tweit moved, with a second by Mr. Laukitis, to identify three non-LAPP allocations (the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and the GOA and BSAI Cod Allocations), and LAPPs as subject to the allocation policy directive. The CDQ allocation is not subject to this review. The Council adopts the LAPP review process for LAPPs with the necessary modifications to the LAPP review recommended by staff. The Council adopts the 10-year time frame as the primary trigger criteria for review for non-LAPP allocations, and the existing Council public input process as the secondary trigger criteria for review. The Council will specify its approach to allocation review at final action for any future allocation decisions. The Council will post this policy on its website and provide NMFS with notification.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 12 at 11:17 am.

E Staff Tasking

Chris Oliver reviewed issues designated for discussion during this agenda item, the AP gave its report and public comment was taken.

Social Science Planning Team

Ms. Peterson, with a second by Mr. Kinneen moved to approve formation of a social science planning team with the proposed purpose, scope and membership to be outlined by a working group.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 12 at 2:15 pm.

Research Priority – New Project

Mr. Laukatis moved, with a second by Mr. Down, to evaluate interactions between fisheries and killer whales and sperm whales. Additionally, attempt to quantify killer whale and sperm whale predation on halibut, sablefish, and turbot in the CV and CP longline and trawl fleets. Also, study the effects on DMR's, the observer program, stock estimates, wastage and unobserved mortality. Additionally, evaluate methods of avoidance, deterrence and cost. The Council initially scopes this as 'urgent priority.'

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 12 at 2:40 pm.

Self-Guided Rental Boats

Mr. Mezirow moved which was seconded by Ms. Peterson to direct the Executive Director to draft a letter to both the National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, asking for these organizations to explore the best way to define this type of self-guided commercial entity, and explore a mechanism to create a registration for motorized rental boats in regulatory areas 2C and 3A that intend to harvest halibut.

The benefit of this registration is that it fills a data gap in fishery participation by a commercial business entity which allows access resulting in significant harvest of Pacific halibut. Knowing how many rental boats there are and where they are spatially distributed will help the Council assess the potential impacts of this sector to communities, the halibut resource, and other stakeholders in the future.

The expectation is that the NMFS staff can work with ADF&G and Council staff to provide a discussion paper to the Council, that can provide a definition of a self-guided rental boat and mechanisms to move to a regulatory amendment creating a registration, if the Council concludes that this is necessary.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 12 at 2:54 pm.

Trawl Limited Access Fishery Yellowfin Sole

Mr. Mezirow moved, which was seconded by Ms. Peterson, to request an annual report from the participants of the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sector Yellowfin Sole fishery in regards to the formation of a voluntary cooperative or other measures taken to reduce the halibut bycatch rate in this fishery to a level consistent with prior history in the fishery and the Amendment 80 Yellowfin Sole fishery.

Mr. Cross proposed a substitute motion, with a second by Mr. Tweit, to request an annual report from the AFA and Amendment 80 sector in regards to the formation of a voluntary cooperative or other measures taken to reduce bycatch in the BSAI trawl limited access yellowfin sole fishery.

VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 12 at 3:51 pm.

Halibut Retention in BSAI Sablefish Pots

Mr. Laukatis moved, with a second by Ms. Peterson, to request that staff develop a discussion paper outlining steps necessary to allow retention of Pacific halibut in pot gear in the sablefish IFQ fishery in the BSAI. The IPHC recently amended its gear regulations to make pot gear a legal gear type for retaining halibut throughout Alaska as authorized by the Council in response to GOA FMP Amendment 101. However, Federal regulations at 679.2 limit the definition of legal pot gear for the harvest of halibut as "longline pot gear" harvested "from any GOA reporting area," because that was the action

recommended by the Council. As a result, halibut taken with pot gear in the BSAI must currently be discarded.

The discussion paper should outline how the Council's action and coordination with IPHC would differ if the intent of an action is to allow (1) retention of incidentally-caught halibut in pot gear in the sablefish IFQ fishery, or (2) a directed BSAI halibut IFQ pot fishery.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 12 at 3:56 pm.

Arctic Exploratory Fisheries

Mr. Tweit moved, with a second by Mr. Cross, to request that staff develop a discussion paper that reviews relevant international fishery agreements (North Pacific, North Atlantic, Antarctic, etc.) and provisions regarding exploratory fishing. The paper should identify how these agreements define exploratory fishing, lay out any management measures applied to exploratory fishing under each of these agreements, discuss any problem areas and challenges for management as well as successes, and describe any "best practices" or "lessons learned" that might be applied to the Central Arctic Ocean. The Council intends to amend the Arctic FMP to incorporate guidance on the exploratory fishing that would inform the Council's precautionary approach to opening commercial fisheries in the Arctic.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously on June 12 at 4:03 pm.

Appointments

Chairman Hull named the following appointments:

Teresa A'mar, currently at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center as an Operations Research Analyst and Nathaniel Nichols of ADFG in Kodiak as an Area Management Biologist have been appointed to the [Groundfish Plan Team](#). Mike Byerly and John Olson have been appointed to the [Scallop Plan Team](#). Byerly is a Groundfish Research Biologist for ADFG in Homer, and Olson is Marine Habitat Resource Specialist for NMFS in Anchorage. Krista Milani has been appointed to the [BSAI Crab Plan Team](#) and is currently a Resource Management Specialist for NMFS in Juneau. Also to the Crab Plan Team, an 11-month acting appointment was made for Katie Palof (filling in for Laura Slater) of ADFG in Juneau who is the Southeast Region Shellfish Biometrician.

Nicole Kimball, Abigail Turn, and Dennis Jaszka and Brett Iwataki (occupying a shared position) have been appointed to the [Observer Advisory Committee](#). The Council is soliciting for a western GOA trawl representative.

John Abel was selected as the 3A representative for the [Charter Halibut Management Committee](#). The Council continues soliciting for a 2C representative from one of the smaller communities to complement representation from Juneau and Sitka.

Council member Theresa Peterson will Co-Chair the [Ecosystem Committee](#) along with Bill Tweit.

The Council adjourned on June 12 at 4:20 pm.