

Agenda Item D
April, 1980

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Personnel Matters

I'd like to start by introducing Jim Richardson who we have recently hired as an economist. He is here to get a first look at the Council operation and to see if he can find a place to settle when he moves permanently to Anchorage about mid-June.

This is the last Council meeting for Harry Rietze, who is retiring in May and for Irma Nelson, who has been a vital part of the Council staff since we started operation over three years ago. Irma is leaving on May 14th for Florida where her husband has been reassigned. We're having an open luncheon in this room Friday to honor both Harry and Irma. All of you are invited.

National Fisheries Policy Conference

The Sixth National Fisheries Policy Conference will be held May 13th and 15th at the National Food Processors Association Conference Room in Washington, D.C. We have received copies of the meeting notice but we're not entirely clear as to whether Council representation is invited. Their agenda includes such things as Saltonstall/Kennedy funding, fish quality and safety programs, fishing vessel safety and inspection programs, economic considerations affecting U.S. export opportunities, and marine mammal programs. At least two of those subjects, economic considerations affecting U.S. export opportunities, and marine mammal programs are of considerable interest to the Council. If we are really invited, do you want someone to attend to represent the Council?

State/Federal Policy Meeting

A meeting of the west coast Policy Group for State/Federal cooperation, planning, and funding is scheduled for May 13th in Portland. This is an outgrowth of a similar meeting in Washington early in January and will be attended by NMFS Regional Directors, Center Directors, Fisheries Commissioners, PMFC representatives and Council representatives from the West Coast. The initial meeting and planning session in Washington was useful and I would recommend that we send a representative to this meeting.

*Recommendation
to attend!*

Hearings by the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment

The Congressional Subcommittee hearings originally scheduled on HR-5033, the Wolfe Bill, to prohibit the killing of Northern fur seals has been expanded to include marine mammal/fishery interrelationships as well as Northern fur seals. I have been planning on going back to testify with Tony Vaska. A copy of my proposed testimony is in this tab. We had to send testimony to the Subcommittee to arrive by the 24th so I have not had a chance to review it with the Council or any of its advisory groups. John Burns from the Scientific and Statistical Committee is also testifying on behalf of the State of Alaska. I believe we have most of the important aspects of this field covered between the three of us.

North Pacific and Pacific Council Salmon Coordinating Group

The North Pacific Council Salmon Coordinating Group, appointed at the last meeting, Ron Skoog, Gordon Jensen and Don Bevan, ^{is NPFMC Chairman} have had counterparts appointed from the Pacific Council. They are Jack Donaldson, John Martinis and Herman McDevitt. The six are planning on an initial organizational meeting in Seattle on ^{April} May 29th, the day before the American Section meeting of the U.S./Canadian Salmon Negotiating Team.

*this is closed meeting.
no public allowed to
there will be no public input
just an organization meeting.*

May Council Meeting

Since we have had to postpone the groundfish hearings originally scheduled for April 23rd, and it appears that we must tie the Bering Sea amendment package to a supplemental environmental impact statement, it looks like it will be necessary to split the amendment process for the two groundfish plans. We can go into more details on that procedure under those specific agenda items. The earliest we can hold a Bering Sea Groundfish public hearing is late May. If the Council is to act on the Gulf Groundfish amendments in time to have them implemented when the Plan is now due to expire, October 31, they should be approved at the next meeting, an impossibility if the public hearing is held in conjunction with the Council meeting. We could postpone the Council meeting to the first week in June, that would be June 5th and 6th and keep the amendments on schedule. I would like to have you consider that at this meeting.

Amendments to the FCMA, Saltonstall/Kennedy Act, Capitol Construction and Loan Guarantee Programs

Congressman Breaux has introduced amendments to all of the subject Acts. We just received a copy this week. He proposes two rather sweeping changes, one to allow a capitol construction fund for shore based processors and the other to phase out all foreign fishing off the United States by 1985, whether or not the U.S. fishermen is using all of the resource by then. We have not had time to analyze the Bill for you. We will have it ready for the next Council meeting and copies of the amendment are available at this meeting.

Incidental Species Group

The Council's Incidental Species Workgroup needs to be reorganized and asked to study and report to the Council on the provisions of the 1981 groundfish amendments that put a flat amount on the catch of prohibited species and provides for economic disincentives for catching them. The

membership of that group consists of Don Hale, Don Bevan, Ron Skoog, Harry Rietze, Keith Specking, Oral Burch, Don Collinsworth, Lt. Cmdr. Smith, Frank Fukuhara. New members should be appointed to replace Don Hale, Harry Rietze, Keith Specking, Oral Burch and Frank Fukuhara. The SSC has recommended Bert Larkins as Frank's replacement.

Request to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Leroy Sowl, the Fish and Wildlife Service member of the Council, has suggested that the Council follow-up on the presentation by John Savage at the last meeting with a letter to the FWS Regional Director, Mr. Kahler Martinson, suggesting that the Fish and Wildlife Service put some money into tag recovery programs and into a tagging program for natural stocks of chinook salmon, particularly in the Upper Columbia River area. Funding for both programs is badly needed and I would recommend that we act on that suggestion.

Council Staff Activity

The bulk of the Council staff's time has gone into preparing groundfish amendment packages for the public hearing process, review of and response to comments on the Herring Draft FMP, and new developments in the Salmon Plan, particularly as it relates to the Bristol Bay fishery. We didn't travel very much, Maggie Duff made one trip to Seattle and I was in Washington, D.C. for three days.

A large delegation from Norway visited the Council offices for a two-hour discussion, the group consisted of the Norwegian Parliament's Committee on Shipping and Fisheries, as well as representatives from their Fisheries and Commerce Ministries.

Seven members of the Danish Advisory Group also visited the Council offices for a discussion of fishery management and mutual problems in that field.

April 19, 1980

STATUS OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS

1. Gulf of Alaska FMP

A public hearing on the proposed 1981 amendment package has been postponed until mid-May. The amendments are expected to be approved at the May meeting for implementation by November 1, 1980.

2. Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

This plan has been approved and proposed regulations have been published. The review of our comments on the proposed regulations is still underway. A request has been made by NMFS Central Office not to implement the plan in 1980 but rather incorporate the upcoming amendments into the draft plan for implementation January 1, 1981.

Proposed 1981 amendments are prepared for public comment. The public hearing date will be decided at this meeting with Council approval of the package at the next meeting. Implementation is tentatively scheduled for January 1, 1981.

3. Troll Salmon FMP

The amendments for the 1980 fishing season have not yet been approved by the Secretary of Commerce; the existing troll salmon regulations lapsed at midnight April 14th, 1980. The entire troll fishery is now managed by the State of Alaska. We expect the plan amendment to be approved by the end of the week, April 24, and emergency regulations resuming control of the fishery to be published on May 1, 1980.

Additionally, the State of Alaska has asked the Council to amend the plan to authorize joint venture processing in Bristol Bay. The amendment, if approved, could be effective May 1.

4. Tanner Crab FMP

Amendment 5 was published in the Federal Register on April 15, 1980. Implementation is expected by the end of July, 1980.

The Board of Fisheries approved several changes in the State's Tanner crab regulations at their spring meeting. These will be reviewed for approval at this meeting. Implementation of these and other amendments approved in January will probably be late 1980 or early 1981.

5. King Crab FMP

A draft of the plan is expected for the May meeting. It will be reviewed by the SSC and Council and possibly approved for public comment at the meeting in June. Implementation of this plan is still expected for September, 1981.

6. Herring FMP

The PDT met several times prior to this Council meeting to discuss the comments made by the public on the draft fishery management plan. The recommendations of the SSC and Council on the issues and options presented by the PDT at this meeting will provide a basis for the revision and finalization of the plan. The plan will be sent to the Council for final approval at the May meeting. The approved plan will be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for his "60-day review."

7. Clam Draft FMP

Implementation of the plan is expected by January 1, 1981. The final revisions to this plan, incorporating the recommendations of the plan drafting team will be delayed until May. It will be sent out to the SSC and Council for their review at the June meeting.

STATEMENT OF JIM H. BRANSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

BEFORE THE

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

April 28, 1980

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council on the Interim Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals; HR-5033, introduced by Congressman Wolfe on July 31st, 1979; and the relationship between the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 and the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Interim Convention on the Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals and commented on the DEIS at a public hearing in Anchorage on August 27th, 1979 and by letter to Dr. William Aron, Director of the Office of Marine Mammals, National Marine Fisheries Service. A copy of that letter is attached to my testimony. The Council, in that testimony, recommended extending the Convention in its current form with continued controlled harvest and expanded research on the relationship of the Northern Fur Seal with the other facets of the complex ecological system within which it lives, including man.

I will not go into the many reasons the Council feels that this course of action is the proper one. It follows, of course, from the Council's position on the Interim Convention, that they are opposed to HR-5033, which would prohibit any take of Northern fur seal by the United States. The social, economic and conservation rationale for continued management, harvest and research on Northern fur seal populations can be much more ably explained by my colleagues at this hearing. John Burns is a marine mammal scientist with a world wide reputation employed by the State of Alaska, he is also a member of the Scientific & Statistical

Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Mr. Anthony Vaska, who has a lifetime familiarity and an active professional interest in the social and economic relationship of marine mammals, particularly pinnipeds, to the people of Alaska bordering on the Bering Sea, is a member of the North Pacific Council's Advisory Panel. Both are far better qualified than I to speak to those facets of this complex problem.

I would like to speak briefly to the relationship between the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 and the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. There are inherent problems in that relationship, particularly as the Marine Mammal Protection Act has been interpreted by some Federal agencies. Congress, in passing the FCMA, said that the fishery resources should be managed to provide "an optimum supply of food and other fish products," then went on to define optimum as "the amount of fish which, if produced, will provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation, especially in terms of food production and recreational opportunities." In the Marine Mammal Protection Act Congress said that "Marine mammals should be protected and encouraged to develop to the greatest extent feasible commensurate with sound policies of resource management." Most of us in resource management don't believe that those objectives are incompatible. The problem has come with the definition of optimum sustainable population (OSP) as used in the MMPA by some Federal agencies and many protectionist groups. OSP seems to be increasingly defined as all of the animals the system can possibly sustain, even at the expense of balanced management and harvest of the fishery resources to which they are so closely interrelated and frequently dependent. I know of no fishery managers who would opt for anything other than healthy, viable populations of all the components of the ecosystem, whether used by man or not. In order to achieve and maintain healthy populations it is necessary to consider all members of the system in a resource management program. It is our opinion that the MMPA has failed to allow that necessary integrated management and in fact, with respect to pinniped populations, restricts the ability of the Federal government and the states to properly manage those resources, in some cases to their detriment.

The North Pacific Council is working closely with the Marine Mammal Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the State of Alaska to define the complex interrelationships of the system and to identify areas where both immediate and long-term study is necessary, so that we will be able to manage our living marine resources in compliance with both the Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Our initial approach probably will rely on computer modeling of the Bering Sea ecosystem where the interrelationships of man, fish and marine mammals are probably the most extensive in the world.

If we are to fully utilize these abundant natural resources for the benefit of the nation as mandated by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act we must make a conscious management decision on priorities within that ecosystem to provide the optimum yield for man without sacrificing any of its components. That decision must determine what a healthy, viable population is, within the definition of optimum sustained population as originally intended in the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and provide for management of all components, including marine mammals, fisheries, birds and man. A prohibition on harvesting as envisioned in HR-5033 is a step backward from that decision since it locks out options that are vital to successful management.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Clement V. Tillion, Chairman
Jim H. Branson, Executive Director

Suite 32, 333 West 4th Avenue
Post Office Mall Building



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3136DT
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 274-4563
FTS 265-5435

September 11, 1979

Dr. William Aron, Director
Office of Marine Mammals
National Marine Fisheries Service
3300 Whitehaven Street, Page #2
Washington, D.C. 20235

COPY

Dear Bill:

The North Pacific Fishery Council reviewed the Environmental Impact Statement on the Interim Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals at its meeting on August 23 and 24, 1979 in Anchorage. I testified on their behalf at the public hearing on the DEIS in Anchorage on August 27, and am sending you this summary of the Council's comments on the EIS for inclusion in the record.

Of the three alternatives offered in the EIS, (A) Terminate the Convention, (B) Renegotiate the Convention, and (C) Extend the Convention, the Council believes that Alternative C, extending the Convention, is by far the most desirable. Termination or renegotiation would, as is pointed out in the EIS, remove the economic base for the community of St. Paul by terminating the harvest of Northern Fur Seals. There is no evidence presented to indicate that population levels are such that harvest should be terminated. In fact, there is evidence in the EIS that indicates the harvest could be increased substantially, perhaps to the general improvement of the health and well being of the fur seal population. Either of the first two Alternatives could lead to a resumption of pelagic sealing, which I think we all agree would be much more detrimental to the general fur seal population than the carefully controlled humane harvest now conducted.

In addition to the (1) potential adverse impacts to the St. Paul community, (2) the possible resumption of pelagic sealing, and (3) probable drastic fluctuations in northern fur seal populations as they attempt to seek their own level under nature, there's a fourth consideration that the Council considers very important: that is the continuation of the current research programs on northern fur seals.


We need greatly increased research on fur seals and the other marine mammals inhabiting the Bering Sea, particularly on their interaction with the other animal communities and the way they are all impacted by man's activities in the area.

The Council is just beginning to work with the Marine Mammal Commission to develop additional data that will enable us to move closer to ecosystem management of the complex animal communities in the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska. While it is obvious that there is a relationship between northern fur seals and fisheries in the Bering Sea, that relationship is ill defined and poorly known at this time. Future ecosystem management, if at all possible, will necessitate the ability to manage the various elements of that system in consideration of the whole. To lock ourselves out of the possibility for management of one of the larger segments of the system would be a great handicap.

In summary, the Council recommends extending the Convention with a continued harvest of Northern Fur Seals and increased emphasis on research to define the role of the Northern Fur Seal in the ecosystem of the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. In addition, they believe that it appears feasible to increase the harvest to carry the full costs of administration and make the operation self-sustaining. In no case, of course, should the harvest be increased to the point where the overall health and viability of the fur seal population is harmed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement. We look forward to working with you in developing some of the answers to the very complex questions involved in the interaction between the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act of 1976 and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Sincerely,


Jim H. Branson
Executive Director

STATEMENT OF ANTHONY VASKA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
NUNAM KITLUTSISTI
BEFORE THE
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

April 28, 1980

My name is Anthony Vaska. I am an anthropologist by training, and I am presently the Assistant Director for an organization called Nunam Kitlutsisti which in my language, translates into English as "Protectors of the Land." Nunam Kitlutsisti was given the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating the renewable resources including fish, wildlife and their habitat in the Yukon/Kuskokwim delta. The Yukon/Kuskokwim delta is graced by the two largest rivers in Alaska, the Yukon and the Kuskokwim, and is the approximate size of the State of Washington (Pennsylvania).

My work relates to the management and conservation of the renewable resources within the State of Alaska extending to those migratory species of the land, water and air. I am especially interested in establishing a symbiotic relationship between man and the environment. This to me is the definition of conservation.

While you will have heard the many arguments, pro and con, concerning the Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals, I would like to briefly outline to you some thoughts on considering the issue.

But, first, I would like to tell you that I was chosen by the Advisory Panel (AP) to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to represent its support of the continuation of the existing Interim Convention on the conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals. The AP, a 25-member group from all areas of interests in the conservation and management of fishery and other marine resources, gives recommendations and advice to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in its decision-making processes. The AP is unanimously in favor of continuation of the Interim Convention Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals. There are many

reasons for the AP being in favor of the continuation of the management of the North Pacific Fur Seals, and while I will not delve into the management of the fur seals in terms of the biological, social or economic factors, I will give you some impressions and thoughts about the people directly affected by any proposed changes in the Fur Seal Convention.

I've planned to present this after having much contact with the Aleuts of the Pribilof Islands and understand their concerns with this proposed change in their lifestyle as well as livelihood. I've known about the Aleuts since living with and meeting many of them in government boarding schools for Alaska Natives; I've come to know them more throughout my recent years by academic research of peoples in Alaska; and more recently, I've come to know them even more through a variety of contacts when we've had to meet about some impending issue common between us. I share with the Aleuts a brotherly relationship of a Public Law, 92-203, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, actually its a legal and perhaps technical relationship. But more importantly, for me, there is a very personal and fraternal feeling between the Aleut and the Eskimo. Within the policies of the U.S. there is a common history which must be viewed within a historical context to fully grasp the nature of the position of the Native Americans in U.S. history.

Twenty-one years after the U.S. was formed the Russians were moving Aleuts to the Pribilof Islands to harvest the fur seals for their pelts. The movement of Native people from one part of the country to another was not limited to foreign countries. In 1854 the U.S. Department of War escorted the "Five Civilized Tribes" from North Carolina to Oklahoma in what is now known as "The Trail of Tears."

After being established in the Pribilofs, the Aleuts adopted their lifestyles and cultural modes to the familiar Pribilof Islands. Their adaptation to the Pribilof Islands took into account the available resources. The present day Aleuts still derive much of their livelihood from the resources surrounding them. This includes the fur seal harvests to a large extent. Where the Aleuts once depended entirely on such

resources as the fur seals (this is inclusive of all available resources used), today, despite the many outside influences and amenities, the Aleuts are still heavily dependent on these resources. The fur seal is still a good part of the diet of the Aleuts. The permitted harvests also affords a large part of the population of St. Paul with some employment.

This aspect of the permitted harvest is an important part of the Pribilovian life. The fur seal has always been a part of the Aleut lifestyle even as the Aleut has had to deal with the many outside forces whether these originated with the Russians, first, and the American second. The significance of dealing with outside forces has its effects on how the residents deal with their environment.

When one looks closely at the management and conservation of the North Pacific Fur Seal and how the Pribilovians interact with them, one sees a whole history of a closely tied relationship between man and beast. Today, with the present management schemes structured by the Fur Seal Convention, some Aleuts are able to earn a cash income through the controlled harvest of the fur seals. A large number of people also earn some cash on a temporary basis, and when one looks closely, again, at this aspect of the Pribilof Islands, one begins to see the sociological and cultural importance of this practice. There is a long history of interaction between the Aleuts and the fur seals even beyond the Pribilof Islands where they were hunted as they migrated. This continues despite many changes throughout their histories.

While it is possible to show a dependency on the continued harvest of the fur seals, the alternatives in comparison to the continuation of this Convention are self-defeating. They are self-defeating because by the simple elimination of this management program, you take man as a controlled influence out of the environment where he always has been.

This thought is important because it says that man has the ability to continue to protect his environment and continue to also exist within

it as he is. For instance, I see the seal rookeries being protected by the Pribilovians because they have a vested interest in the continued health and population of the fur seals. This feeling of having a vested interest in a renewable resource also extend to other parts of the Pribilof Islands, such as the bird rookeries. Other relationships can be shown about the management and conservation of the fur seals. Obviously, this frame of thought extends directly to the fisheries in the Bering Sea. Where there is a direct competition for needed resources for food, fish in this instance, there needs to be an overall management plan to maximize the fish harvest for human consumption. This goal includes the protection and management of other resources such as the fur seal. The management and utilization of these resources to their fullest extent is an important aspect of man allowing himself a continued place in his environment.

The continuation of the Interim Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals is a part of this, what I call symbiotic relationship, that should be allowed to continue. And as such, I strongly urge the continuation of this Convention.