

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN or REGULATORY AMENDMENT PROPOSAL
North Pacific Fishery Management Council – Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee
Provide the following information – attach additional pages as necessary:

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Date: August 17, 2006

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Fishery Management Plan: GOA Groundfish

Brief Statement of Proposal: Reduce Steller Sea Lion cod fixed gear closure around the SSL haul-out at Sutwik Island to three miles.

Objectives of Proposal (What is the problem?): Small-boat fixed-gear cod fishery opportunities of a scale too small to have an impact on SSL but of relatively large economic importance to the small fishery dependent communities of Chignik, continue to be significantly hindered as a result of the unusually large closure around the SSL haul-out at Sutwik Island.

A similar closure around Kak Island was reduced when a proposal was submitted in 2003 to reduce the 20 mile closures around both Kak Island and Sutwik Island. While the closure around Kak Island was reduced the 20 mile closure around Sutwik Island remains. This closure on the small boat pot fleet is unnecessary to protect Steller Sea Lions and primarily affects the local small boat fleet of the Chignik area.

It is relatively unusual for haulouts to have twenty mile closures but one currently exists at Sutwik Island where it reduces the traditional flexibility of local residents to participate in the federal cod fishery. Many haulouts and even rookeries with greater SSL populations than Chignik's have 3 mile closures (cod fixed-gear) in nearby fishing areas.

Typically only two or three vessels have participated in the federal fishery (per. comm.: Alfredo Abou-eid). Realistically, unless cod is tendered or processed locally, or unless the communities get access to groundfish quota through a community protection measure under a rationalized Gulf Groundfish program, this is not likely to change markedly and might vary from one to four. This amount of fishing activity is important to the local economy. But this proposal is also about keeping options open for the local fleet should processing/tendering opportunities or rationalization opportunities arise, in which case the small boat participation could increase to perhaps 10. Adding this number of small pot and/or jig boats to the fishery is still not going to materially change the relative scale of the low volume Chignik cod pot and jig fishery when compared to most other areas. To get a notion of what is meant by Chignik being a low volume fishery, note that during the entire federal and state seasons combined, the total Chignik Area cod harvest has never exceeded four to five million *pounds* in an entire year -. compare that to other areas where harvests are typically much larger (per. comm.: Alfredo Abou-eid).

One objective of this proposal is to allow a fishery, yet continue to protect Sea Lions from potential localized food depletion resulting from fishing activities. Steller Sea Lion population trends at Sutwik Island are positive and local observations are also for increasing populations at Sutwik Island. It seems likely that a three mile closures for pot fishing around Sutwik Island SSL haulout will provide and adequate protection for SSL. The 2001 BiOp telemetry data indicate that SSL's appear to remain within a few nautical miles of shore for most of the year. This suggests that 3 mile closures should preserve the primary SSL foraging areas around Kak and Sutwik Islands.

Need and Justification for Council Action (Why can't the problem be resolved through other channels?): This problem will not be resolved without council action. Only the council has the authority to recommend changing these closures.

Foreseeable Impacts of Proposal (Who wins, who loses?): Impacts on SSL is diminimous, local area fishermen derive a benefit as well as any fisherman who fishes groundfish in the region. No one is disadvantaged.

Are there Alternative Solutions? If so, what are they and why do you consider your proposal the best way of solving the problem? None considered

Supporting Data & Other Information. What data are available and where can they be found? Be specific and cite references.

NMML Website, Steller Sea Lion Database

<http://nmml.afsc.noaa.gov/AlaskaEcosystems/sslhome/Databases/Adult%20count%20database.htm>

Sease and Gudmunson, 2002. Aerial and Land-Based Surveys of Steller Sea Lions (*Eunetopias jubatus*) from the Western Stock in Alaska, June and July 2001 and 2002,

Endangered Species Act – Section 7 Consultation
Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statement, October 2001

Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures
Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Offsetting Measures. OPTIONAL - What protection measures might be increased in the region to offset the proposed action?

Signature:



8/17/06

STELLER SEA LION ADULT COU Last Update: April 5, 2006

The file NMML.SSL.ZIP is a zip archive

The table below is an excerpt from the file

sitename	regionnumb	trendsite	rookery	month	day	year	adultcount	counttype	source	comments
SUTWIK	7	1	0	7	99	1956	733	1	7	Mathisen & Lopp, 1963
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	99	1976	6	1	2	Calkins et al, 1994 (valdez book)
SUTWIK	7	1	0	3	99	1977	22	1	2	Calkins & Pitcher, 1978 annual report
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	9	1985	224	1	2	DCM data sheet from adf&g, fall 2000
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	14	1989	210	1	1	Loughlin et al, 1992
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	14	1990	153	1	1	Merrick et al, 1991
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	14	1991	138	1	1	round down OCt00; Merrick et al, 1992 (91 surv)
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	19	1992	136	1	1	checked to excel spreadsheet
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	24	1992	94	1	1	checked to excel spreadsheet
SUTWIK	7	1	0	3	12	1993	56	1	1	round down OCt00; from spreadsheet
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	14	1994	94	1	1	Strick et al, 1997 (94 aer survey)
SUTWIK	7	1	0	12	10	1994	0	1	1	
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	12	1996	132	1	1	Sease et al, 1999 (96 survey)
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	11	1997	142	1	1	round down Oct00; Sease & Loughlin 1999
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	11	1998	178	1	1	Sease & Loughlin 1999
SUTWIK	7	1	0	3	8	1999	93	1	1	
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	12	2000	114	1	1	from nmfs datasheet
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	16	2002	114	1	1	survey spreadsheet
SUTWIK	7	1	0	6	26	2004	206	2	5	

