

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

## News and Notes



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Volume 1-03

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February 2003

## Steller Sea Lion Report

On December 18, 2002, U.S. District Court Judge Zilly ruled that the 2001 Biological Opinion's finding of no adverse modification of critical habitat and no jeopardy to the continued existence of Steller sea lions was in part arbitrary and capricious, because the Amended RPAs' impacts on sea lions, their prey, and their critical habitat were not adequately described. The Judge remanded the 2001 BiOp to NMFS, but ruled that the BiOp (& RPAs) remain effective until June 30, 2003.

In response to the Judges remand order, NMFS will prepare supplemental information to address the issues in the Opinion that were identified by Judge Zilly. Between now and April, a joint work group consisting of Council, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Sustainable Fisheries and Protected Resources staff will work together to address the Remand. The Council will review and comment on the draft response in April. Staff contact is David Witherell or Bill Wilson.

## Miscellaneous Actions

During its staff tasking discussions, the Council passed a motion to request NMFS to prepare an analysis (amendment) for action in April which would manage 'other species' CDQ allocations similar to BSAI shorttraker, rougheye, and northern rockfish; i.e., 'other species' would be allocated to the CDQ reserve, rather than the individual CDQ groups, maximum retainable bycatch levels would be established for the CDQ fisheries, and that once aggregate CDQ harvests of 'other species' reaches 7.5% of the TAC, 'other species' would be treated as a PSC species. CDQ fisheries would be treated the same as non-CDQ fisheries with respect to the overfishing level for 'other species'. The Council is requesting implementation of this amendment as soon as possible in the 2003 fisheries.

As part of its scheduled April review of halibut subsistence proposed rulemaking, the Council also approved a recommendation from staff to review the status of a request from Ninilchik regarding its eligibility for halibut subsistence via a recent C&T finding from the Federal Subsistence Board. This and any other communities with C&T findings will be addressed as part of the Council's April discussions in Anchorage.

## Improved Retention and Utilization (IR/IU)

At its February 2003 meeting the Council reviewed a discussion paper for trailing Amendment C (minimum groundfish retention standards in BSAI) and an EA/RIR/IRFA analysis for trailing Amendment D (exemption of fisheries with less than 5 percent bycatch of IR/IU flatfish in GOA and BSAI). The Council approved Amendment D for public review, and final action in April. The Council also requested that Amendment C be revised to include those modifications noted below, and be brought back for initial review in April, with review and input from the IR/IU Technical Committee:

1. Ground-truth actual costs for purchase, installation, and operation of flow scales as well as explore options for scale monitoring that would ensure that all catch is weighed.
2. Examine variability in product recovery rates for products typically produced by the head and gut fleet.
3. Expand the quantitative discussion of the section regarding use of bin volumetrics as an enforceable means of monitoring.
4. Clarify treatment of vessels unable to install flow scales (vessels < 125 feet LOA) including:
  - a. Vessels exempt from the program
  - b. Exploring limitations on weekly production amounts for exempted vessels
  - c. New vessels entering the fishery must have flow scales regardless of length or weekly production amounts.

The Council also requested the IR/IU Committee to begin working on trailing Amendment A, which was modified from a PSC cooperative to a multi-species cooperative in the BSAI, and to provide a fleshed out proposal for Amendment A at the April Council meeting. In addition, the Council also directed staff to prepare an outline/discussion paper for the April meeting on how Amendments A and C could be combined into a single EA/RIR/IRFA document.

Given the expanded focus of Amendment A, the Council is soliciting nominations for the IR/IU Technical Committee to enhance the committee's ability to provide guidance to the Council. **Nominations for the IR/IU Technical Committee are due in the Council office by Monday, February 17.** Existing members are not required to re-apply for appointment. In addition, the Council is also reactivating the Enforcement Committee to work with agency staff in crafting recommendations that will allow implementation of programs requiring unique monitoring.

# Observer Program

At its October 2002 meeting, the Council tasked the Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) to develop a problem statement and alternatives for restructuring the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program (Observer Program), to be presented at the February Council meeting. In order to facilitate further progress by the committee, NMFS developed a discussion paper which proposes a problem statement, scope, and general alternatives and issues for long-term, significant revisions to the Observer Program. The OAC met January 23-24 with the primary purpose of reviewing this paper and providing recommendations to the Council. At its February meeting, the Council reviewed the discussion paper and the draft OAC report (available on the Council website).

The Council approved the following problem statement for restructuring the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program:

*The North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program (Observer Program) is widely recognized as a successful and essential program for management of the North Pacific groundfish fisheries. However, the Observer Program faces a number of longstanding problems that result primarily from its current structure. The existing program design is driven by coverage levels based on vessel size that, for the most part, have been established in regulation since 1990. The quality and utility of observer data suffer because coverage levels and deployment patterns cannot be effectively tailored to respond to current and future management needs and circumstances of individual fisheries. In addition, the existing program does not allow fishery managers to control when and where observers are deployed. This results in potential sources of bias that could jeopardize the statistical reliability of catch and bycatch data. The current program is also one in which many smaller vessels face observer costs that are disproportionately high relative to their gross earnings. Furthermore, the complicated and rigid coverage rules have led to observer availability and coverage compliance problems. The current funding mechanism and program structure do not provide the flexibility to solve many of these problems, nor do they allow the program to effectively respond to evolving and dynamic fisheries management objectives.*

Further, the Council recommended that staff develop a timeline and structural outline for a potential analysis based on the recommendations of the OAC to restructure the Observer Program design and funding mechanism to address the data quality and disproportionate cost issues resulting from the current program structure. The primary alternative should focus on modifying the Observer Program for all vessels and processors operating in the Gulf of Alaska, with a suboption to extend the fee-based program to all vessels with currently less than 100% coverage requirements in the BSAI. The Council also noted that staff should consider the problems encountered in past efforts to restructure the Observer Program in the development of the analysis. The Council requested a status report on this issue at the April Council meeting. Development

of this program will need to track closely with development of the Gulf of Alaska rationalization process.

In addition, the Council stated its intent to send a letter to the Secretary supporting the concepts embodied in the draft Federal Observer Compensation Act (FOCA). This draft legislation would potentially reduce costs for observer insurance, limit vessel liability in the case of negligence claims, and provide a more effective, comprehensive program for compensating observers in the event of work-related illness or injury. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

## Additional Pacific Cod Sideboards

At its February 2003 meeting the Council voted to postpone action on Amendment 73 indefinitely. The purpose of the amendment was to provide further protection for three non-AFA trawl catcher vessels that have traditionally harvested Pacific cod just north of Unimak Island during the January and February period. These vessels claimed that implementation of the AFA caused increased competition on the winter cod grounds to the point of adversely impacting their traditional fishery for winter cod. The alternatives under consideration ranged from status quo to establishing a limited access fishery for winter cod in statistical area 655430.

In its postponement of action, the Council acknowledged that the AFA cooperatives in the years following 2000 have reduced their effort on the winter cod grounds to levels seen before the AFA. Given that the AFA cooperatives have reduced their effort, the Council opted to postpone action until such time as competition from AFA vessels increases on the winter cod grounds to the point of significantly impacting the non-AFA vessels.

Please also note that the pollock fishery cooperatives have filed their 2002 end-of-year reports with the Council, and those are available upon request from the Council office. Council contacts for these and other AFA-related issues are Jon McCracken or Chris Oliver.

## Upcoming Council Meetings

A three-meeting outlook is attached, which reflects several major issues for Council action over the April and June meetings. We are also scheduled to hold our joint meeting with the Board of Fish on Tuesday, April 1, prior to the start of the Council plenary session on April 2. It is also likely that we will be holding an evening workshop during that week to review the analyses to date on the programmatic groundfish SEIS, as a primer to Council action in June. So, the April meeting will definitely go through Tuesday, April 8. At the June meeting in Kodiak, we will very likely need to schedule an additional meeting day to take care of this and other business. So please plan on meeting through Wednesday, June 18!

# Crab Rationalization

At its February 2003 meeting the Council addressed several items concerning the rationalization program for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab fisheries. The Council adopted trailing amendments establishing a structure for a system of binding arbitration, several community protections, and the details of a data collection program. The Council motion also established caps on QS holdings and use by CDQ groups and clarified the application of caps on vertical integration (caps on holdings of harvest QS by processors).

**Binding arbitration.** The Council selected several provisions defining a system of binding arbitration that would apply to A shares and C shares (captains shares) when those shares are subject to IPQ landing requirements. Under the system, the arbitrator would establish a finding that is intended to preserve the historic division of revenues while considering other relevant factors including current exvessel prices, location and timing of deliveries, and safety. Harvesters would be permitted to initiate a single arbitration proceeding with each IPQ holder in the preseason. Proceedings may be initiated by an IFQ holder (or a group of IFQ holders) prior to the season after committing to deliver shares to the IPQ holder. For a brief period of time prior to the commencement of hearings, other IFQ holders could join the proceeding by unilaterally committing deliveries to the IPQ holder. The arbitration would be in a last best (or final) offer format, which is used in the Newfoundland arbitration system. The IPQ holder would submit a single offer. Each IFQ holder could submit an offer or join a group to submit a collective offer. For each IFQ holder or group, the arbitrator would select between the IFQ holder's (or group's) offer and the IPQ holder's offer. IFQ holders that did not participate in the arbitration could receive the benefits of arbitration by agreeing to deliver to the IPQ holder, accepting all terms of the arbitration decision (assuming that the IPQ holder held adequate shares to accept the delivery). The Council also requested the arbitration committee to consider two additional options that could be included in the arbitration program. Under the first option, the arbitrator would apply the best arbitration finding from any proceeding involving more than 7 percent of the IPQ pool to all arbitrated deliveries. Under the second option, the arbitrator consult with harvesters in the preseason prior to any arbitration to develop an advisory price formula, which is intended to guide negotiations prior to the arbitration. A report from the Committee is scheduled for April.

**Community Protections.** The Council selected several community protection options including caps on the amount of IPQs issued, options concerning the purchase of harvest and processing shares by communities, and rights of first refusal on sales of processor shares in favor of communities. The IPQ caps would limit the annual allocation of IPQs in seasons when the TAC exceeds a threshold amount. In the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery IPQs would not be issued for the amount of the TAC in excess of 20 million pounds (the total IPQ allocation would not exceed 18 million, accounting for the 90/10 split). In the *C. opilio* fishery, IPQs would not be issued for the amount of the TAC in excess of 175 million pounds (the total IPQ allocation would not exceed 157.5 million pounds). Any Class A IFQ issued in excess of the threshold would not be subject to the IPQ landing requirements but

would be subject to the regional landing requirements. The Council adopted a provision that would waive the sea time eligibility requirements for communities that desire to purchase harvest shares. In addition, the Council adopted a provision outlining the oversight and management of community share holdings. The Council also adopted provisions that would establish rights of first refusal in favor of crab dependent communities for the sale of processor shares for transfer outside of the communities. A provision was also adopted that grants crab dependent communities in the Northern Gulf of Alaska right of first refusal on the sale of processor shares from communities that are not dependent on the crab fisheries. The Council has requested the Community Protection Committee to develop the specifics of these right of first refusal provisions. The Council also developed the details of the cooling down period. The cooling down period would restrict movement of processing activity from crab dependent communities for a period of two years. To facilitate coordination of deliveries, 10 percent of the IPQs (up to a maximum of 500,000 pounds) could be moved from the community of origin. The Council also expressed its intent to consider different management options in the event the *C. bairdi* fishery becomes a directed fishery. A report from the Committee is scheduled for April.

**Data collection.** The Council adopted elements of a program for the collection of economic data from harvesting and processing sectors to be used to evaluate the success of the rationalization program. The program would collect revenue, employment, and variable cost data and any fixed cost data necessary to analyze variable costs. A third party entity will collect the data and provide it to analysts in a blind format to ensure confidentiality. NMFS and the Council will promote development of additional legislative and regulatory protection for these data as needed.

**Additional Provisions.** The Council also adopted a provision that would establish different harvest share holding caps for CDQ groups. In the Bristol Bay red king crab, *C. opilio*, and *C. bairdi* fisheries, each CDQ group would be limited to holding 5 percent of the harvest shares. In the Pribilof red and blue king and the St. Matthew blue king crab fisheries, each CDQ group would be limited to holding 10 percent of the harvest shares. In the Eastern and Western Aleutian Islands brown and the Western Aleutian Islands red king crab fisheries, each CDQ group would be limited to holding 20 percent of the harvest shares.

The Council clarified that the 5 percent cap on QS holdings by processors shall exempt only the primary corporate processing entity from more restrictive generally applicable caps on QS holdings. All individuals and subsidiaries will be subject to the general caps on QS holdings.

The Council also requested that staff examine the implications of B shares trading independently from A shares and the purchase of B shares by processors.

The Council also received a report on continued preparation of the Crab FMP EIS, which will include the rationalization program as the central management alternative. Review of the EIS is scheduled for June 2003. Staff contact is Mark Fina.

## **Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Rationalization**

The Council spent two days in Seattle framing the alternatives, elements, and options for an analysis of proposed changes in the way groundfish are harvested and processed in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). Congress asked the Council to analyze ways of reducing overcapitalization in GOA fisheries, and to analyze how to 'rationalize' the fishery including interests of harvesters, processors, and communities. Rationalization would establish cooperatives or quotas among fishermen (and possibly processors and communities). These programs would allow harvesting and processing to occur economically and safely while still conserving the fisheries.

At this meeting, the Council streamlined the recommendations of its committee, which was tasked with developing alternatives for analysis. The Council's actions were based on advice from its Advisory Panel, public testimony, and written and oral testimony provided as part of the scoping process for this proposed action. The Council adopted three alternatives to the status quo (Alternative 1). Alternative 2 is a quota share-based program for harvesters only for either a quota share program, (voluntary or mandatory) cooperative(s), or a sector allocation to catcher/processors. Alternative 3 is a quota share-based program for harvesters with a closed class of processors for either a quota share program or (voluntary or mandatory) cooperative(s). Alternative 4 is a quota share program for harvesters and processors with either voluntary or mandatory cooperative(s). Allocations to communities and skippers and for an entry level rockfish fishery are included under each of those three alternatives.

The Council voted not to analyze a revision of the license limitation program for Gulf of Alaska groundfish because it did not address the problem statement and proposed management objectives. Separate amendments were recommended for addressing management of non-FMP and non-target groundfish species, a fee program, and a loan program. The Council also requested a discussion paper to describe processes currently underway to address bycatch of salmon, crab and herring and other forage fish. The Council then would determine if: (1) existing processes are sufficient or if some measures need to be more closely linked to rationalization decisions; and (2) if other or additional management approaches are appropriate to include in a rationalized fishery in a trailing amendment.

The 24-page draft suite of alternatives, elements, and options are posted on the Council's website. In June 2003, the Council will review the suite of alternatives, an analytical outline for preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement, and overall project schedule. An update and possible refinements will also be on the April agenda. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

## **Halibut charter IFQ program update**

During preparation of the analysis for incorporating the halibut charter (guided sport) fishery into the commercial individual fishing quota program, concerns were raised about using data collected under the Sport Charter Vessel Logbook program that was implemented in 1998. ADFG staff raised concerns about using those self-reported data for management purposes until they could be validated with other State halibut charter data collection programs. ADFG staff reiterated these concerns in September 2001.

The Council requested that ADFG provide additional information on data issues in order to proceed with Secretarial action on the Council's April 2001 preferred alternative. At this meeting, the Scientific and Statistical Committee reported to the Council that the halibut logbook data are suitable as a basis for determining eligibility and initial allocation of charter vessel quota shares. The Council accepted the SSC report and staff will proceed with finalizing the analysis for Secretarial review as soon as possible. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

## **BSAI Rockfish Management**

The Council and SSC received a report from the NMFS rockfish work group on past and current research on problems relevant to rockfish management in response to a Council request for long term management approaches. A second report was presented on efforts by an ad hoc committee, which is developing a general framework for prioritizing management decisions regarding lumping or splitting species complexes, such as the BSAI red rockfish and other red rockfish complexes. The ad hoc committee will continue to meet and staff will continue to consult with the SSC in developing alternatives for analysis. The Council prioritized developing alternative management strategies for rockfish complexes under its initiative to develop an analysis to revise management of all target and nontarget groundfish species. That analysis was originally initiated for sharks and skates but was expanded to all groundfish species in the BSAI and GOA by the Council in October 2002. The Council may receive an update on rockfish research and survey designs in April.

In December 2002, the SSC set northern rockfish in Tier 6 as a precautionary measure because of unreliable biomass estimates. This resulted in a higher allowable biological catch (ABC) but much lower overfishing level (OFL) than recommended by the stock assessment authors (by regulatory area). The Council accepted new information from NMFS AFSC scientists and a SSC recommendation, and revised its recommendation for 2003 northern rockfish specifications by combining the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands ABCs and OFLs. The revised ABC and OFL recommendations are 7,100 mt and 9,470 mt, respectively. The TAC for northern rockfish is unchanged. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

# Demersal Shelf Rockfish Management

Based on legal concerns raised with the Council's June 2000 preferred alternative, the Council adopted a new preferred alternative for a full retention program for demersal shelf rockfish in the hook-and-line and jig gear fishery in Southeast Outside. The program would: (1) eliminate the retention limit for incidental catch of DSR caught by federally-permitted vessels using hook-and-line and jig gear in SEO; (2) require that all DSR caught by federally-permitted vessels using hook-and-line and jig gear in the SEO be retained, landed, weighed and reported on State of Alaska fish tickets; (3) limit the sale of incidental catch of DSR to no more than 10 percent of the aggregate round weight of IFQ Pacific halibut, and other groundfish species open to directed fishing, that are landed during the same fishing trip; and (4) allow retention of any DSR in excess of the amount that may be sold for any use except for sale, barter, or trade. The Council also requested ADFG to assess whether the program is meeting the program objectives three years after implementation. The Council also requested that NMFS and ADFG further investigate whether a subsequent experimental fishing permit program could be developed to provide additional opportunity for distribution of landed fish. Additional information is available from Jane DiCosimo.

## Essential Fish Habitat

The Council received a progress report on essential fish habitat (EFH) including: a discussion paper on the concepts of an analytical baseline, a finalized set of the geographic bounds for mitigation alternatives (2-5), and a staff report of the two new mitigation alternatives (5B & 6) passed at the December 2002 Council meeting. The EFH Committee held a meeting January 26 to review these materials and passed their recommendations to the Council for consideration. The Council passed a motion that Alternatives 1-6 shall be included in the analysis with no new alternatives added, but with some modifications to existing alternatives. A copy of the final adjusted alternatives and draft maps are available on the Council's web site. Although NMFS has requested a 12-month extension, the EIS is currently scheduled for preliminary review in April 2003, and ready for final Council action in December 2003. EFH and HAPC designation alternatives are the same as previously adopted under the Council's final motion from October 2002.

The mitigation alternatives are briefly summarized below :

### **Alternative 1: Status quo.**

**Alternative 2: Gulf Slope Bottom Trawl Closures:** Prohibit the use of bottom trawls for rockfish in 13 designated areas of the GOA slope (200m-1000m), but allow vessels endorsed for trawl gear to fish for rockfish in these areas with fixed gear or pelagic trawl gear.

**Alternative 3: Bottom Trawl Gear Prohibition for GOA Slope Rockfish on upper slope area (200-1,000m).** Prohibit the use of bottom trawl gear for targeting GOA slope rockfish species on upper slope area (200-1000m), but allow vessels endorsed for trawl gear to fish for slope rockfish with fixed gear or pelagic trawl gear.

**Alternative 4: Bottom Trawl Closures in All Management Areas:** Prohibit the use of bottom trawl gear in designated areas of the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska. Bottom trawl gear used in the remaining open areas would be required to have disks/bobbins on trawl sweeps and footropes.

**Alternative 5: Expanded Bottom Trawl Closures in All Management Areas:** Prohibit the use of bottom trawl gear in designated areas of the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands with a Aleutian Seafloor Habitat Protection suboption, and Gulf of Alaska. Bottom trawl gear used in the remaining open areas would be required to have disks/bobbins on trawl sweeps and footropes.

**Suboption 5B: Suboption for Aleutian Islands:** Oceana's Aleutian Seafloor Habitat Protection Alternative dated Dec. 6, 2002. Close areas to bottom trawling that have high coral and sponge bycatch rates and low target species CPUE and reduce TAC by amount that historically came from those areas. No expansion of bottom trawl fisheries to new areas. Institute area-specific coral/ sponge bycatch limits that close specific areas if exceeded. If implemented it would include the following actions: Expand observer coverage to 100%, utilize the CADRES program, and require each vessel to have VMS.

Additionally the proposal requests a comprehensive plan for research and monitoring that would include: Seafloor mapping, benthic research, and habitat impacts of all bottom tending gears, annual habitat assessment reports, experimental fishing permits to identify additional open areas

**Alternative 6: Closures to All Bottom Tending Gear** Prohibit the use of all bottom tending gear (dredges, bottom trawls, pelagic trawls that contact the bottom, longlines, and pots) within approximately 20% of the fishable waters (i.e., 20% of the waters shallower than 1,000m) in each of the regions described below.

The closed areas would be identified based on the presence of habitat such as high relief coral, sponges, and *Boltenia*, with emphasis on areas with notable benthic structure and/or high concentrations of benthic invertebrates that provide shelter for managed species. The closed areas would include a mix of relatively undisturbed habitats and habitats that currently are fished. Within a given region, existing area closures could comprise all or a portion of the closed areas for this alternative. Staff contacts are Cathy Coon or David Witherell.



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## Upcoming Committee Meetings/Events

Between now and April, the Council’s Community Protection Committee and Binding Arbitration Committee (under Crab Rationalization) will both be meeting to provide further input to the Council in April. The Council’s IR/IU Technical Committee will also be meeting between now and April. Dates and locations for these meetings are still being finalized, so please check our WEB-site or call the office for updates. A reminder also that we are working on a multi-Council/Agency Conference in Washington, D.C. this fall (November 13-15), as described under the Executive Director’s report from the February Council meeting. Please stay tuned for more details but mark it on your calendar!

### NPFMC Tentative Meeting Dates for 2003-2005\*

	<b>February</b> Week of/ Location	<b>April</b> Week of/ Location	<b>June</b> Week of/ Location	<b>October</b> Week of/ Location	<b>December</b> Week of/ Location
2003		3/31 Anchorage Hilton 1-907-272-7411	9/Kodiak Kodiak Inn 1-888-KODIAK-4	6/Anchorage Sheraton 1-800-478-8700	8/Anchorage Hilton 1-907-272-7411
2004	2/Anchorage	3/29 Anchorage	7/Portland	4/Sitka	6/Anchorage
2005	7/Seattle	4/Anchorage	6/Dutch Harbor	3/Anchorage	5/Anchorage

\*Meeting dates subject to change depending on availability of meeting space. Any changes will be published in the Council’s newsletter.

## ***Special Announcement:***

# **NPRB Seeks Nominations for First Advisory Panel**

The North Pacific Research Board is seeking nominations for its first Advisory Panel which will have up to 20 members serving for 2-year terms. It will advise the Board on accomplishing its overall mission of developing a high caliber, comprehensive science program that will provide better understanding of the North Pacific, Bering Sea, and Arctic Ocean ecosystems and their fisheries, and help to sustain and enhance the living marine resources. The Board already has established its first Science Panel and believes it is equally important to incorporate meaningful community involvement throughout the science program from planning to oversight and review via an Advisory Panel. The Panel will have a significant advice-giving role, with active involvement in setting priorities and defining questions. The Advisory Panel will be representative of user groups and other interested parties from the various regions within the Board's purview. The Board will approve panel membership at the Board's March 18-20 meeting in Anchorage. The new Panel likely will hold its first meeting in May 2003 to help in identifying draft research priorities that eventually will be considered for incorporation in the 2004 request for research proposals. The Board will cover travel, food and lodging for Panel members.

Nominations and self-nominations may be submitted to the Board by email to [cpautzke@nprb.org](mailto:cpautzke@nprb.org), or by regular mail to:

Clarence Pautzke, Executive Director  
North Pacific Research Board  
441 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 500  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Deadline for nominations is **Friday, March 7, 2003**. Please include a brief 1-2 page resume and full contact information, including email address. Please visit the Board's web site at [www.nprb.org](http://www.nprb.org) for further information.

## **Electronic Newsletter**

If you would like to receive our newsletter in your *e-mail* in box, just send your e-mail address to [maria.shawback@noaa.gov](mailto:maria.shawback@noaa.gov). We will take you off our paper mailing list, and you will be sent the next newsletter and agenda immediately instead of having to wait for it to arrive in the regular mail or watching for it to show up on our website. If you have questions about this process, feel free to call our office.

**DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK**

March 31, 2003 Anchorage	June 9, 2003 Kodiak	October 6, 2003 Anchorage
<b>*Tue., April 1-Joint MtgNPFMC/Alaska Board of Fisheries</b>		
DC Conference in November: <b>Update</b>	DC Conference in November: <b>Update</b>	
Halibut Subsistence Program: <b>Review Proposed Rule</b>		
Crab Trailing Amendments: <b>Action as necessary</b>	Crab EIS: <b>Initial Review</b>	
	Pribilof Blue King Crab Rebuilding: <b>Initial Review</b>	Pribilof Blue King Crab Rebuilding: <b>Final Action</b>
GOA Rationalization: <b>Review Outline</b>	GOA Rationalization: <b>Review alternatives, elements, options</b>	GOA Rationalization: <b>Review preliminary analyses (T)</b>
EFH: <b>Report and Action as necessary</b>	EFH: <b>Preliminary review (T)</b>	EFH: <b>Action as necessary</b>
SSL BiOp Remand: <b>Review/Comment</b>		
P. cod allocation (Am 77): <b>Initial Review</b>	P. cod allocation (Am 77): <b>Final Action</b>	
DPSEIS: <b>Progress report/Review draft analysis</b>	DPSEIS: <b>Select draft Preferred Alternative</b>	AI Pollock Closure: <b>Report</b> DPSEIS: <b>Progress Report</b>
Flatfish IRIU Trailing Amendment (D): <b>Final Action</b>		Groundfish Specifications: <b>Initial Action</b>
Flatfish IRIU Trailing Amendment (C): <b>Initial Review</b>	Flatfish IRIU Trailing Amendment (C): <b>Final Action (T)</b>	
Flatfish IRIU Trailing Amend. (A): <b>Review proposal for Co-ops</b>	Flatfish IRIU Trailing Amendment (A): <b>Initial Review (T)</b>	
Observer Program: <b>Outline/Timeline</b>	Observer Program: <b>Progress Report</b>	Observer Program: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>
Rockfish Non-Target Species Management: <b>Report</b>	Non-Target Species Management: <b>Report</b>	Non-Target Species Management: <b>Final Action (T)</b>
F40 Report: <b>Discuss future actions (T)</b>		
TAC-setting Process: <b>Progress Report</b>	TAC-setting Process: <b>Initial Review (T)</b>	TAC-setting Process: <b>Final Action (T)</b>
Research Priorities: <b>Review</b>		
CDQ 'Other Species': <b>Final Action (T)</b>		NAS SSL Report: <b>Discuss future actions</b>

TAC - Total Allowable Catch  
BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands  
IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota  
AFA - American Fisheries Act  
HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern  
LLP - License Limitation Program  
PSC - Prohibited Species Catch

MSA - Magnuson Stevens Act  
GOA - Gulf of Alaska  
SSL - Steller Sea Lion  
GHL - Guideline Harvest Level  
SEIS - Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement  
CDQ - Community Development Quota  
IRIU - Improved Retention/Improved Utilization

SAFE - Stock assessment and fishery evaluation  
VMS - Vessel Monitoring System  
CV - Catcher Vessel CP- Catcher Processor  
MSST - Minimum Stock Size Threshold  
FMP - Fishery Management Plan  
PGSEIS - Programmatic Groundfish SEIS  
**(T) Tentatively scheduled**