

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

News and Notes



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Volume 6-00

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December 2000

Steller Sea Lion Interactions

On November 30, NMFS released a comprehensive Biological Opinion (BiOp) on the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI and GOA, pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The BiOp examines the fisheries and existing management measures to determine if these measures ensure the protection of listed species and critical habitat (CH). The BiOp concluded that the groundfish fisheries do not jeopardize any listed species other than Steller sea lions. For Steller sea lions, the BiOp concluded that fisheries for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel jeopardize the recovery of Steller Sea lions and adversely modify their critical habitat due to competition for prey and modification of their prey field. The BiOp also noted that fisheries for salmon and herring may have similar impacts on sea lions. The BiOp provides a reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) to modify the pollock, cod, and Atka mackerel fisheries in a way that avoids jeopardy and adverse modification. Following submission of the November 30 BiOp to the court, Judge Zilly lifted the injunction issued last August that prohibited trawl fishing within critical habitat. Judge Zilly's order, along with the BiOp is available for reading on the NMFS Alaska Region home page: www.fakr.noaa.gov.

The RPA contains measures intended to mitigate potential effects of the pollock, cod, and Atka mackerel fisheries on Steller sea lions. The RPA includes an experimental design to allow NMFS to monitor and assess the effectiveness of sea lion protection measures and make changes as necessary. The design establishes open and closed areas of CH for fishing pollock, cod, and Atka mackerel; closures apply to all gear types. Initial discussions with NMFS indicated that closures may also apply during the state water Pacific cod fisheries for those vessels holding federal permits when the federal waters are open to cod fishing.

NMFS informed the Council that the RPA measures, together with the groundfish specifications, will be implemented by emergency rule for 2001, and these regulations are expected to become effective on January 20. Senator Ted Stevens, who made a brief appearance at the Council meeting, announced that he was planning to introduce a rider on the budget appropriations to set aside the RPA provisions of the BiOp, and have the National Research Council review the BiOp.

The Council moved to not adopt the conclusions of the biological opinion, or the RPAs as contained therein. Numerous concerns were expressed by the public, Advisory Panel, and Scientific and Statistical Committee on the conclusions of the BiOp with regard to Steller sea lions, the economic impact of the RPAs, and the efficacy of the monitoring experiment. The Council's final motion is attached as **Attachment 1**.

RPA management measures detailed in the BiOp.

- Global control rule to reduce harvest rates at low stock sizes.
- CH closures to eliminate competition (66%).
- 3 nm no-entry zones around rookeries and major haulouts.
- Seasonal harvest limits in CH (4 seasons).
- Seasonal harvest limits outside CH (2 seasons).
- Closure in CH from 1 Nov. through 20 January.
- Spatial apportionment of TAC in open areas in CH.
- Monitoring experiment (3 blocks, 13 areas).

The Council further discussed details and schedules of the committees and review teams established by this motion. A Council Steering Committee has been established and will meet within the coming month to coordinate and develop a game plan for the Council's response to the BiOp. Members are D. Benton, J. Balsiger, D. Austin, K. Duffy and C. Oliver. In February, an RPA Committee will be established to respond to the RPA and experimental design in a technical, operational, and practical sense to try to make it more functional. The SSC will review the BiOp and report back to the Council in February. Additionally, we intend to establish an independent review team consisting of international scientists to review the BiOp and experimental design. Staff Contact is Dave Witherell or Chris Oliver.

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BSAI Pacific Cod Pot Allocations

The Council adopted a problem statement for BSAI FMP Amendment 68, which proposes further apportioning the BSAI Pacific cod pot gear allocation (18.3% of the fixed gear BSAI Pacific cod TAC) among pot catcher/processors and catcher vessels, based on catch histories from 1995-1999. The problem statement for Amendment 68 is as follows:

The catcher/processor and catcher vessel pot fisheries for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands are fully utilized. Competition for this resource has increased for a variety of reasons, including increased market value of cod products and a declining ABC/TAC.

Pot fishermen who have made significant long-term investments, have long catch histories, and are significantly dependent on the BSAI cod fisheries need protection from others who have little or limited history and wish to increase their participation in the fishery. This requires prompt action to promote stability in the BSAI pot cod fishery until comprehensive rationalization is completed.

The problem statement is intended to address the need for separate, direct allocations of BSAI Pacific cod to the pot catcher/processor and pot catcher vessel fleets, to ensure the historical catch distribution that has occurred between the two sectors. The analysis is scheduled for initial review and final action at the February and April 2001 Council meetings, respectively. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

Halibut Subsistence

In December, the Council confirmed its October final action decision to include Adak on its list of rural communities determined to be eligible for halibut subsistence. Staff determined that Adak met the Alaska Board of Fisheries halibut customary and traditional (C&T) use criteria and was inadvertently omitted from the proposed list of eligible communities during final action. The Council went on to clarify its policy of requiring a finding of halibut C&T use from the BOF prior to its consideration by the Council. The Council will also consider similar recommendations from the Federal Subsistence Board; however the Council recognized that the FSB's jurisdiction is limited to those waters withdrawn under ANILCA. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

GOA Rationalization

The reconstituted **GOA Rationalization Committee** will meet Thursday, February 8th at 6:00 p.m., during the Council's February 2001 Council meeting. The Council charged the committee with developing a problem statement and alternatives for analysis by June 2001. It will review the problem statement, previous lists of alternatives for analysis and proposals from the previous incarnation of the committee. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo. Members are as follows:

<i>Dave Hanson, Chair</i>	<i>Chris Blackburn</i>	<i>Joe Childers</i>
<i>Duncan Fields</i>	<i>Mike Martin</i>	<i>Joe Plesha</i>
<i>John Henderschedt</i>	<i>Dick Jacobsen</i>	<i>Kris Norosz</i>
<i>Ken Roemhildt</i>	<i>Sue Aspelund</i>	<i>Arne Fuglvog</i>
<i>Paula Brogdon</i>	<i>Dorothy Childers</i>	<i>Jeff Stephan</i>
<i>Dale Schwarzmilller</i>	<i>Craig Cochran</i>	<i>Tom Suryan</i>

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved the 2000 Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final catch specifications for the 2001 groundfish fisheries as listed in **Attachment 2**. The sum of the recommended ABCs for 2001 is 447,710 mt, only slightly down from the 2000 ABC of 448,010 mt. The sum of the 2001 TACs is 300,510 mt, up slightly from 298,510 mt in 2000.

Overall, the status of GOA stocks continues to be relatively favorable. The recommended ABC of 105,810 mt for pollock is up slightly from 100,000 mt in 2000. It recommended a lower Pacific cod ABC of 67,800 mt, compared to 76,400 mt in 2000 and 84,400 mt in 1999. The Council reduced its TAC recommendation by the guideline harvest level set aside by the Board of Fisheries for the state water P. cod fishery (15,690 mt). ABC recommendations for flatfish were the same as in 2000, except for a slight increase for arrowtooth flounder. TACs for shallow water flatfish and flathead sole were set equal to those in 2000. Rockfish ABCs were also only slightly different than in 2000. The recommended ABC for sablefish dropped to 12,800 mt from

13,400 mt in 2000. Since the Southeast Alaska trawl ban was implemented, the Council has reapportioned 5% of the combined Eastern GOA sablefish TAC to trawl gear in the West Yakutat District. This resulted in 180 mt being reapportioned from the SEO ABC and TAC to those of the West Yakutat area. The Council requested that NMFS set the TAC for other slope rockfish in the Eastern GOA at a level that would allow the maximum retainable bycatch levels to be retained throughout the year in other directed fisheries yet would not be sufficient to support a directed (open) fishery. The TAC would need to be low enough that the Regional Administrator could determine that a directed fishery allowance of 0 mt was appropriate for this target category. This would reduce the sum of TACs, and the other species TAC, which is set equal to 5% of the sum of all groundfish TACs. Lastly, the Council initiated a plan amendment to revise the specification process for GOA Other species. (See **Attachment 2A** for PSC's (including PSCs based on an RPA contingency) and **2B** for Halibut Discard Mortality Rates.) Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Specifications

The Council adopted final groundfish specifications for the 2001 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish fisheries, including Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), Total Allowable Catch (TAC), and Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits and apportionments. The Council recommendations for ABCs, TACs, and apportionments are listed in **Attachment 3**. Abundance of Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish is high overall, but flatfish stocks are projected to decline due to poor recruitment. None of the groundfish stocks are overfished or approaching an overfished condition.

The pollock stock in the Eastern Bering Sea is at near record high levels. Projected 2001 biomass of age 3+ pollock in the Eastern Bering Sea stock was estimated at 10.1 million mt. Biomass has increased with recruitment of a strong 1996 year-class. Although the maximum allowable ABC for this stock based on an MSY fishing rate is 2.12 million mt, the plan team and SSC recommended a more conservative ABC of 1.842 million pounds based on an $F_{40\%}$ strategy. The Council adopted an ABC of 1.842 mt and recommended a 1.4 million mt TAC for Eastern Bering Sea pollock. The pollock TAC for the Aleutian Islands area was set at bycatch amounts only (2,000 mt), and 1,000 mt for the Bogoslof district.

The other red rockfish complex was split into separate species to reduce the potential for overfishing. This year, the Council recommended separate ABCs for northern rockfish, shortraker rockfish, and rougheye rockfish. For the non-CDQ fisheries, separate TACs were recommended for the BS and AI areas. To further reduce the potential for differential harvesting, it was recommended that these species be placed on bycatch only status in 2001. The Council also recommended that sharpchin rockfish, which were previously included in the other red rockfish complex, be moved into the other rockfish complex.

Recommended apportionments of prohibited species catch (PSC) limits for 2000 are listed in **Attachment 3A** (trawl fisheries and non-trawl fisheries). PSC limits for herring, red king crab, bairdi crab, and opilio crab are based on biomass. For 2001 trawl fisheries, crab PSC limits will be 97,000 red king crab, 730,000 bairdi crab in Zone 1 and 2,070,000 bairdi crab in Zone 2, 4,350,000 opilio crab, and 3,675 mt of halibut mortality. The Council again recommended that pot gear, jig gear, and sablefish hook-and-line fisheries be exempt from the non-trawl PSC program for 2001.

Note that the Council's recommendations for BSAI groundfish specifications, as described above, are contingent upon the fisheries being allowed to be prosecuted without the RPA management measures described in the November 30

Biological Opinion. If the RPA is implemented, the Council recommended the specifications be modified to better reflect the fisheries that would occur. For catch specifications, the Council recommended the following changes to the TACs: AI pollock 12,000 mt, rock sole 73,000 mt, flathead sole 35,000 mt, and other flatfish 25,000 mt. For PSC apportionments under the RPA scenario, see **Attachment 3B**. Staff contact is David Witherell.

Other Staff Tasking

The Council discussed several issues but initiated no major amendments or analyses at this meeting. They will discuss staff tasking once again in February. At this meeting they did initiate some minor actions, including the following: (1) A discussion paper, for review in February, to review the issues and steps necessary to disclose vessel-by-vessel catch and bycatch information in all fisheries; (2) requested the Crab Plan Team to further review crab bycatch information and potential measures as necessary; and, (3) requested vessel-by-vessel halibut mortality and seabird bycatch information (coded to protect confidentiality) for the freezer longline fleet for discussion in February.

Halibut Charter GHL

At final action in February 2000, the Council adopted guideline harvest levels (GHLs) for halibut harvested from charter vessels in IPHC Areas 2C and 3A. The GHLs were based on charter harvest estimates for 1995-99. Preliminary harvest estimates for 1995-98 were from the ADF&G Sport Fish Division's Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS). The estimates used during the GHL analysis for 1999 charter harvests summarized in these tables were not SWHS estimates, but were interim projected values.

At this meeting, the Council reviewed a report by ADF&G staff on revised ADF&G Sport Fish Division's Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) halibut charter estimates for 1996-98. In Area 2C, the corrected charter harvest estimates (in pounds) increased by 27% and 21% above the original estimates for 1996 and 1997, and decreased 10% below the original estimates for 1998. Non-charter harvest estimates followed a similar pattern. In Area 3A, corrected charter harvest estimates decreased below the original estimates for all three years: 2% in 1996, 3% in 1997, and 8% in 1998. Non-charter harvest estimates also decreased in all three years.

These harvest changes do not imply large changes in the resulting GHL percentages for Areas 2C and 3A. The revised GHL calculation for Area 2C rose less than ½ percentage point from 12.68% to 13.05%. In Area 3A, it dropped less than 1 percentage point, from 14.94% to 14.11%. The Council will submit a supplemental analysis of the corrected halibut charter estimates and recommend that the Secretary of Commerce implement the halibut charter GHL using the revised percentages. The charter IFQ analysis will also use the revised GHL percentages. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Halibut Charter IFQ & Community Set-Aside

In December, staff presented a discussion paper outlining several key features of a program proposed to set aside a percentage of halibut charter initial quota share for Gulf of Alaska coastal communities. This program is included as an option in the overall halibut charter IFQ analysis. The discussion paper also provided the proposed framework for analysis, which was reviewed by the SSC.

The Council adopted the following problem statement for the community set-aside:

National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act directs that "conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of this Act (including the prevention of overfishing and rebuilding of overfished stocks), take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities in order to: (a) provide for the sustained participation of such communities, and (b) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts in such communities." Although the halibut IFQ program was developed under the Halibut Act, which does not require consistency with all of the Magnuson-Stevens' national standards, the Council believes Congress clearly intended that the Council consider the impacts of all its management measures, including halibut management regulations, on fisheries-dependent communities. The current halibut and sablefish IFQ management structure, despite its many benefits, was not designed to provide transferable quota shares to halibut charter fishermen to provide community development opportunities. As the Council considers modifying the current IFQ management structure to include quota share allocations to halibut charter fisheries, adverse economic impacts on fisheries-dependent coastal communities in the Gulf of Alaska may occur in communities which receive insufficient initial quota share and may further limit economic development opportunities in halibut charter businesses for residents of these communities. In pursuing a community set-aside, the Council seeks to: a) remove an economic barrier for residents of underdeveloped communities to participate in the halibut charter industry; b) provide for sustained participation in the charter industry; c) increase geographical diversity of charter operations; d) reduce the potential for localized depletion; and e) foster economic development and stability in these communities.

The Council also clarified the following for purpose of initial review in February: 1) interpretation of a community set-

aside; 2) purpose and need for considering a set-aside; and 3) the basis for the magnitude of the set-aside. The Council added options for a sunset provision, as well as expanded the range of the proposed the set-aside. With these modifications, the Council is scheduled to take final action in April on whether to:

Set-aside 0.5-2.5 percent of the combined commercial/charter TAC for Gulf of Alaska communities:

Option 1. Source of the set-aside

- A. Equal pounds from the commercial and charter sectors.
- B. Proportional amount based on the split between the commercial and charter sectors.
- C. 100 percent of the pounds taken out of the charter sector.

Option 2. Sunset provision

- A. no sunset
- B. sunset in 5 years
- C. sunset in 10 years

The Council also identified 37 communities (23 in Area 2C and 14 in Area 3A) to be included as potential eligible communities for the purpose of initial review. While it is not part of the Council's final action decision in April 2001, the number of eligible communities determines the basis for the magnitude of the 0.5-2.5 percent range.

The administrative and structural details of a community program, including the exact number of eligible communities, individual and community quota share caps, and community eligibility criteria, will be included in a separate, more detailed analysis that will be initiated as a trailing amendment should the Council choose to create a community set-aside. The halibut charter IFQ analysis is scheduled for initial review and final action at the February and April 2001 Council meetings, respectively. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

CDQ Oversight

NMFS staff updated the Council on the status of its review of the State's recommended percentage allocations of halibut, crab, groundfish, and prohibited species to the CDQ groups for 2001 and 2002. Two CDQ groups recommended that NMFS disapprove the State's recommended allocations. NMFS has not yet made a final decision on the CDQ allocations.

The Council will appoint a **CDQ Policy Committee** to address issues related to Community Development Quota oversight responsibilities of the State and NMFS. The new committee will provide policy recommendations to the Council on changes that may be needed to regulations governing the role of NMFS and the State in program oversight, the CDQ allocation process, and the administration of the CDQ Program. The committee also will address the on-going analysis of the State's proposed revisions to the CDQ administrative regulations which would determine whether oversight extends to the financial decisions of businesses owned by the CDQ groups. The committee is expected report to the Council by June 2001. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Habitat Areas of Particular Concern Stakeholder Meetings

The first public HAPC stakeholder meetings are set for January. The first meeting is on January 10th in Sitka at 7pm at NSRAA, Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (1308 Sawmill Creek Road) and January 12 in Yakutat at noon at the ANB Hall Alaska Native Brotherhood (220 Max Italo). The meetings will be hosted to provide information exchange on Gorgonian corals and vulnerable habitats. The purpose of these meetings is to disseminate information in regards to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and HAPC designation. Additionally, the Council intent is to gather local input and get direct feedback toward the public process on locations and the importance of Gorgonian coral. The concept of the stakeholder meetings is to develop a comprehensive and iterative approach for future HAPC area identification and habitat protection.

The involvement of stakeholders is critical for several reasons. First, stakeholders can provide local and traditional knowledge about abundance and locations of habitat types. Second, by being part of the stewardship process, stakeholders can increase the public awareness and take more responsibility for habitat protection. Third, local stakeholder involvement can reduce enforcement requirements by creating an understanding that leads to better compliance. In the North Pacific, stakeholders for the HAPC process may include commercial fishers, CDQ groups, native communities, people living in coastal communities, recreation fisheries, coastal business, fish processing companies, and other businesses such as mining and dredging.

Council staff has prepared materials for this portion of the Gorgonian coral HAPC initiative. The materials prepared included a discussion paper on the stakeholder process and the identification of HAPC, as well as a paper summarizing the why's and how's of protecting Gorgonian corals off Alaska. Both of these are available on the Council web site. <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/Reports/reports.htm> Staff contact is Cathy Coon or David Witherell.

Crab Rationalization

The Council reaffirmed its intent to appoint a formal Council Committee to address crab rationalization, with that Committee working to develop elements and options for analysis and report to the Council at the April 2001 meeting. It is possible that the Committee could meet in January, and provide an initial report to the Council in February where the Council would provide additional direction as appropriate. Please check our website for updates on this issue. Staff contact is Chris Oliver, and the committee members are as follows:

<i>Dave Hanson, Chairman</i>	<i>Gordon Blue</i>	<i>Tom Casey</i>	<i>Terry Cosgrove</i>	<i>John Garner</i>	<i>Don Giles</i>	
<i>Leonard Herzog</i>	<i>John Hickman</i>	<i>John Iani</i>	<i>Frank Kelty</i>	<i>Linda Kozak</i>	<i>Brent Paine</i>	<i>Gary Painter</i>
<i>Joe Plesha</i>	<i>Jeff Steele</i>	<i>Jeff Stephan</i>	<i>Tom Suryan</i>	<i>Simeon Swetozoff</i>	<i>Arni Thompson</i>	<i>Karen Wood-Dibari</i>

SSC Nominations

The Council is considering nominations for appointment to its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in the following areas of expertise:

1. Resource Economics
2. Marine mammal science
3. Seabirds
4. General Ecology and Ecosystems

Nominations should be directed to the Executive Director at the Council offices and are due by January 25th. The Council will review these nominations at their February meeting, with appointees beginning service at the April meeting. The SSC meets 5-6 times per year for 3-4 days at each meeting. The Council pays for travel and per diem associated with these meetings. For more information please contact Chris Oliver at the Council offices.

American Fisheries Act

The Council received the end-of-year performance reports from the various pollock cooperatives, including a plan to manage salmon and herring bycatch more effectively among the co-ops (see separate newsletter item on this issue). The Council reviewed the information in these reports and made some minor suggestions to the preparers with regard to final reports due in February. Copies are available from the Council offices. The Council will also be requesting information from the inshore sector AFA processors with regard to changes in product forms and overall utilization rates. During this agenda item the Council also heard additional testimony from AFA catcher vessel representatives and from some non-AFA cod fishermen with regard to the additional, early season effort in the cod trawl fisheries. The Council reiterated its earlier position that these sectors develop an industry-based solution, and the Council will discuss this issue again on their February agenda, and initiate action to resolve the issue if necessary. Council staff contact for AFA issues is Chris Oliver.

Other Committee Meetings

The **IFQ Implementation Team** will convene on Sunday, February 4, 2001, to review and provide comments to the Council on the draft analysis for creating an individual fishing quota program for the halibut charter fishery. The proposed program also includes a set-aside of initial charter allocation to Gulf coastal communities. The meeting will convene at 1 pm at the Anchorage Hilton, room to be announced. The draft analysis will be available to the public on the website and by mail from the Council office by January 22. Copies will be mailed to committee members. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

The **Charter IFQ Committee** also will convene to review and comment on the draft charter IFQ/community set-aside analysis. It will meet on Monday, February 5, 2001, beginning at 8 a.m. at the Anchorage Hilton (room TBA). Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

The **Observer Committee** will meet sometime in late February or March. Council staff contact is Chris Oliver.

The **Joint Council/Board of Fish sub-committee** may meet on January 8th. Council staff contact is Chris Oliver.

Salmon Bycatch Management

Three issues regarding salmon bycatch were discussed at the December meeting. First, in response to the Council's initiation of a salmon bycatch reduction analysis back in October, the Council received preliminary reports from the pollock fishery cooperatives, including a proposal to reduce and manage salmon bycatch through cooperatives. Final reports from the cooperatives will be submitted by the February Council meeting. At that time, the Council intends to review this information and decide whether additional regulatory measures to reduce salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea are necessary.

The second issue was the impacts of the Biological Opinion (see the Steller sea lion news item) on the pollock fisheries. Because the management measures to be implemented will move the fleet into new areas, it is possible that salmon bycatch could increase, or at least become more difficult for the fleet to predict where and when salmon bycatch will occur. The Council has requested the National Marine Fisheries Service to provide additional information regarding the expected effects on salmon bycatch rates.

Lastly, the Council received a preliminary data analysis of salmon taken as bycatch in Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries (available on the NPFMC web site). The Council requested staff to further analyze the data and develop a discussion paper for review in April. The discussion paper will identify possible means to control and reduce salmon bycatch, such as area closures and bycatch limits. Staff contact is Cathy Coon or David Witherell.

Advisory Panel Appointments Announced for 2001

Six new members were appointed to the Advisory Panel for the year 2001: **Kim Dietrich**, Observer Representative, **Ben Ellis**, Sportfishing Representative, **Lance Farr**, Crab Representative, **Duncan Fields**, Shoreside Consulting, **John Henderschedt**, Groundfish Fourm, Inc. and **Kris Norosz**, Icicle Seafoods.

The following AP members were reappointed for the coming year:

Ragnar Alstrom – Commercial Fisherman, APICDA
Dave Benson – Trident Seafoods
Dave Boisseau – Westward Seafoods
John Bruce – Jubilee Fisheries/DSFU
Al Burch – Alaska Dragger's Association
Craig Cross – Commercial Fisherman – Aleutian Spray

Dan Falvey – Commercial Fisherman - ALFA
Dave Fraser – Commercial Fisherman
Arne Fuglvog – Commercial Fisherman
Spike Jones – Commercial Fisherman
Stephanie Madsen – Pacific Seafood Processors Assn
Hazel Nelson – Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp
Michelle Ridgway – Oceanus Alaska
Jeff Steele – Commercial Fisherman – Obsession fisheries
Jeff Stephan – United Fishermen's Marketing Assn
Bob Ward - A-Ward Charters
Lyle Yeck – Commercial Fisherman

We also wish to thank the following outgoing AP members for their dedicated service: Justine Gundersen, Kris Fanning, Melody Jordan, Teresa Kandianis, and Doug Ogden.

Final Council Motion on SSL at 9:35 am - 12/9/00

- A. That the Council not adopt the conclusions of the BiOp of 11/30/2000 with regard to Steller sea lions or the RPAs contained therein.
- B. Call for a Council review and analysis of the proposed RPAs in the current biological opinion compared to the 1999 pollock and Atka mackerel RPAs, and RPA options in the 2000 draft EA for Pacific cod, to determine the potential benefits to recovery of SSLs versus the costs to the groundfish fishing industry.
- C. Move that the Council conduct an independent peer review of the BiOp and experimental design and to evaluate other possible explanations for the decline of Steller sea lions and the ability of Steller sea lions to recover. The peer review should include independent scientists and a subset of SSC members.
- D. Establish a committee to develop a proposal for RPAs and an experimental design that satisfies ESA mandates and is consistent, to the extent possible, with Magnuson-Stevens Act standards.

The Committee should be of a workable size, and include representatives for the Agency, the State, the SSC, Council industry & conservation community.

In developing the experimental design, we task the committee with testing the fisheries impacts hypothesis, and the differential impacts of various gear types.

The Committee should begin work ASAP, bringing an initial report back to the Council in April and thereafter as needed, with final recommendations to be presented to the Council (family) no later than December 2001.

- E. The Council announces its commitment to disregard 2001 catch history in any future rationalization plan, and
- F. The Council requests NMFS to:
 - 1. clarify coordinates of closed areas; and
 - 2. allow vessels to participate in State Pacific cod fishery without surrendering Federal groundfish permits.

DRAFT								
Gulf of Alaska Recommended 2001 Catch Specifications (mt)								
Species	Area	2001 Biomass	2001 OFL	2001 ABC	2001 TAC	2000 ABC	2000 TAC	2000 Catch
Pollock	W (61)	(W-WY)		35,240	35,240	29,290	29,290	21,418
	C (62)	699,000	117,750	14,260	14,260	17,430	17,430	286
	C (63)			26,650	26,650	22,930	22,930	21,229
	Shelikof			20,680	20,680	21,550	21,550	26,384
	WY			2,520	2,520	2,340	2,340	2,096
	EY/SEO	28,710	8,610	6,460	6,460	6,460	6,460	4
Total		727,710	126,360	105,810	105,810	100,000	100,000	71,417
Pacific Cod	W			24,400	18,300	27,500	20,625	21,661
	C			38,650	30,250	43,550	34,080	31,949
	E			4,750	3,560	5,350	4,010	416
	Total		526,000	91,200	67,800	52,110	76,400	58,715
Flatfish, Deep Water	W			280	280	280	280	26
	C			2,710	2,710	2,710	2,710	797
	WYAK			1,240	1,240	1,240	1,240	116
	EYAK/SEO			1,070	1,070	1,070	1,070	26
	Total		74,460	6,980	5,300	5,300	5,300	5,300
Rex Sole	W			1,230	1,230	1,230	1,230	866
	C			5,660	5,660	5,660	5,660	2,623
	WYAK			1,540	1,540	1,540	1,540	4
	EYAK/SEO			1,010	1,010	1,010	1,010	0
	Total		81,020	12,300	9,440	9,440	9,440	9,440
Shallow water flatfish	W			19,510	4,500	19,510	4,500	564
	C			16,400	12,950	16,400	12,950	5,872
	WYAK			790	790	790	790	5
	EYAK/SEO			1,160	1,160	1,160	1,160	2
	Total		299,100	45,330	37,860	19,400	37,860	19,400
Flathead Sole	W			8,490	2,000	8,490	2,000	274
	C			15,720	5,000	15,720	5,000	1,214
	WYAK			1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440	9
	EYAK/SEO			620	620	620	620	0
	Total		207,520	34,210	26,270	9,060	26,270	9,060
Arrowtooth	W			16,480	8,000	16,160	5,000	6,159
	C			99,590	25,000	97,710	25,000	17,508
	WAYK			24,220	2,500	23,770	2,500	133
	EYAK/SEO			7,860	2,500	7,720	2,500	256
	Total		1,586,530	173,550	148,150	38,000	145,360	35,000
Sablefish	W			2,010	2,010	1,840	1,840	1,578
	C			5,410	5,410	5,730	5,730	6,102
	WYAK			2,060	2,060	2,207	2,207	2,059
	EYAK/SEO			3,360	3,360	3,553	3,553	3,832
	Total		188,000	15,720	12,840	12,840	13,330	13,330
Other slope rockfish	W			20	20	20	20	49
	C			740	740	740	740	361
	WYAK			250	250	250	250	117
	EYAK/SEO			3,890	3,890	3,890	3,890	45
	Total		102,510	6,390	4,900	4,900	4,900	4,900

Species	Area	2001 Biomass	2001 OFL	2001 ABC	2001 TAC	2000 ABC	2000 TAC	2000 Catch
Northern rockfish	W			600	600	630	630	747
	C			4,280	4,280	4,490	4,490	2,578
	E			0	0			0
	Total	93,850	5,780	4,880	4,880	5,120	5,120	3,325
Pacific Ocean Perch	W		1,520	1,280	1,280	1,240	1,240	1,161
	C		11,350	9,610	9,610	9,240	9,240	8,359
	WYAK		WY/EY/SEO:	870	870	840	840	616
	EYAK/SEO		3,090	1,750	1,750	1,700	1,700	2
	Total	211,160	15,960	13,510	13,510	13,020	13,020	10,138
Shortraker/Rougheye	W			210	210	210	210	138
	C			930	930	930	930	882
	E			590	590	590	590	707
	Total	70,890	2,510	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,727
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W			550	550	550	550	189
	C			4,080	4,080	4,080	4,080	3,073
	WYAK			580	580	580	580	445
	EYAK/SEO			770	770	770	770	20
	Total	66,440	9,040	5,980	5,980	5,980	5,980	3,727
Demersal shelf rockfish	Gulfwide	14,695	410	330	330	340	340	253
Atka Mackerel	Gulfwide	Unknown	6,200	600	600	600	600	170
Thornyhead	W			420	420	430	430	333
	C			970	970	990	990	546
	E			920	920	940	940	403
	Total	52,100	2,770	2,310	2,310	2,360	2,360	1,282
Other Species	Gulfwide	NA	NA	NA	14,310	NA	14,215	5,606
GULF OF ALASKA	TOTAL	4,301,985	554,710	447,710	300,510	448,010	298,510	202,268

*5% of the SEO area sablefish ABC and TAC were reapportioned to the West Yakutat area due to the SEO trawl prohibition

**The Council requested that NMFS set the TAC for other slope rockfish in the Eastern GOA at bycatch levels only.

Deep water flatfish includes dover sole, Greenland turbot and deepsea sole.

Shallow water flatfish includes rock sole, yellowfin sole, butter sole, starry flounder, English sole, Alaska plaice, and sand sole.

Catch data source: NMFS Blend Reports (through October 28, 2000).

Prohibited Species Catch Limits

The following halibut prohibited species catch limits have been in place since 1996.

	Trawl gear		Hook and Line
1st quarter	600 mt (30%)	1st trimester	250 mt (86%)
2nd quarter	400 mt (20%)	2nd trimester	15 mt (5%)
3rd quarter	600 mt (30%)	3rd trimester	25 mt (9%)
4th quarter	400 mt (20%)	DSR	10 mt
	2,000 mt		300 mt

	Trawl apportionments		
	Shallow water	Deep water	
<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Complex</u>	<u>Complex</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	500 mt	100 mt	600 mt
2	100 mt	300 mt	400 mt
3	200 mt	400 mt	600 mt
4	No apportionment		400 mt

Under the Steller sea lion reasonable and prudent alternatives (RPAs) proposed for implementation by NMFS (see Steller sea lion summary), the GOA pollock TAC would be reduced by 19,000 mt to 86,810 mt. Under the RPAs, the Council recommended the following halibut PSC apportionments for trawl gear (RPA contingency):

	Trawl apportionments		
	Shallow water	Deep water	
<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Complex</u>	<u>Complex</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jan - Mar	350 mt	100 mt	450 mt
Apr - Jun 10	100 mt	300 mt	400 mt
Jun 11 - Jul 3	250 mt	0 mt	250 mt
Jul 4 - Sep	200 mt	400 mt	600 mt
Oct - Dec	No apportionment		300 mt
Total			2,000 mt

Halibut Discard Mortality Rates

The Council approved the halibut discard mortality rates based on long-term averages for 2001-2003 BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries as recommended by IPHC staff, except for BSAI longline P. cod for which it recommended setting annual DMRs. The Council noted that halibut bycatch may be affected by changes to fishing practices due to the reasonable and prudent alternatives implemented to mitigate fishery interactions with Steller sea lions. The Council may identify other fisheries for which it will request that the IPHC calculate annual rates. Annual DMRs will continue to be set for the CDQ groundfish fisheries.

BSAI		
Gear/Target	Long-Term Mean DMR	Basis
<i>Trawl</i>		
Atka mackerel	75	1990-1999
Bottom pollock	76	1990-1999
Pacific cod	67	1990-1999
Other Flatfish	71	1990-1999
Rockfish	69	1990-1999
Flathead sole	67	1994-1999
Other species	67	Pcod fishery
Pelagic pollock	84	1990-1999
Rock sole	76	1990-1999
Sablefish	50	1990-1999
Turbot	70	1990-1999
Yellowfin sole	81	1990-1999
<i>Pot</i>		
Pacific cod	8	1990-1999
Other species	8	Pcod fishery
<i>Longline</i>		
Pacific cod	12	1996-1999
Rockfish	25	1990-1998
Other species	12	Pcod fishery
Sablefish	22	1990-1994
Turbot	18	1990-1999
<i>CDQ Trawl</i>		
Atka mackerel	82	Latest year
Bottom pollock	88	Latest year
Pelagic pollock	90	Latest year
Rockfish	88	Latest year
Yellowfin sole	83	Latest year
<i>CDQ Longline</i>		
Pacific cod	10	Latest year

Gulf of Alaska		
Gear and Target	Long Term Mean DMR	Basis
<i>Trawl</i>		
Atka mackerel	70	1990-1996
Bottom pollock	61	1990-1999
Pacific cod	61	1990-1999
Deep wtr flats	60	1990-1999
Shallow wtr flats	69	1990-1999
Rockfish	69	1990-1999
Flathead sole	58	1994-1999
Other species	61	Pcod fishery
Pelagic pollock	72	1990-1999
Sablefish	66	1990-1999
Arrowtooth fldr	62	1996-1999
Rex sole	61	1994-1999
<i>Pot</i>		
Pacific cod	14	1990-1999
Other species	14	Pcod fishery
<i>Longline</i>		
Pacific cod	14	1990-1999
Rockfish	8	1990-1998
Other species	14	Pcod fishery
Sablefish	24	1990-1994

**Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
Council Recommended 2001 Catch Specifications (mt)**

Species	Area	2001	2001	2001	2001	2000	2000	2000
		Biomass	OFL	ABC	TAC	ABC	TAC	Catch
Pollock	EBS	10,060,000	3,536,000	1,842,000	1,400,000	1,139,000	1,139,000	1,112,100
	AI	106,000	31,700	23,800	2,000	23,800	2,000	1,228
	Bogoslof	301,000	60,200	8,470	1,000	22,300	1,000	28
Pacific cod	BS/AI	1,320,000	248,000	188,000	188,000	193,000	193,000	173,995
Yellowfin sole	BS/AI	2,380,000	209,000	176,000	113,000	191,000	123,262	76,714
Greenland turbot	BS/AI	210,000	31,000	8,400	8,400	9,300	9,300	6,927
	BS			67%	67%	67%	67%	5,610
	AI			33%	33%	33%	33%	995
Arrowtooth	BS/AI	701,000	141,500	117,000	22,015	131,000	131,000	12,818
Rock sole	BS/AI	1,940,000	271,000	228,000	75,000	230,000	134,760	49,494
Flathead sole	BS/AI	618,000	102,000	84,000	40,000	73,500	52,652	19,640
Other flatfish	BS/AI	865,000	147,000	122,000	28,000	117,000	83,813	15,596
Sablefish	EBS	20,000	1,910	1,560	1,560	1,410	1,470	742
	AI	38,000	3,070	2,500	2,500	2,490	2,430	1,020
Pacific Ocean Perch	EBS	41,000	2,040	1,730	1,730	2,600	2,600	451
	AI	191,000	11,800	10,200	10,200	12,300	12,300	8,572
	Eastern			2,900	2,900	3,120	3,120	1,920
	Central			2,560	2,560	3,510	3,510	2,219
	Western			4,740	4,740	5,670	5,670	4,433
Northern rockfish	BS/AI	150,000	9,020	6,760	6,760	***	*	**
	BS				19			
	AI				6,741			
Rougheye rockfish	BS/AI	14,000	349	262	262	***	*	**
	BS				32			
	AI				230			
Shortraker rockfish	BS/AI	34,000	1,020	766	766	***	*	**
	BS				84			
	AI				682			
Other rockfish	EBS	6,880	482	361	361	369	369	235
	AI	12,900	901	676	676	685	685	583
Atka mackerel	AI	553,000	138,000	69,300	69,300	70,800	70,800	42,394
	Eastern			7,800	7,800	16,400	16,400	13,147
	Central			33,600	33,600	24,700	24,700	20,552
	Western			27,900	27,900	29,700	29,700	8,695
Squid	BS/AI	n/a	2,620	1,970	1,970	1,970	1,970	333
Other species	BS/AI	567,000	69,000	33,600	26,500	31,360	31,360	20,696
BS/AI TOTAL		20,128,780	5,017,612	2,927,355	2,000,000	2,260,113	2,000,000	1,548,935

EBS = eastern Bering Sea

BS/AI = Bering Sea & Aleutians

BS = Bering Sea

AI = Aleutian Islands

OFL = overfishing level

ABC = acceptable biological catch

TAC = total allowable catch

* species managed together as other red rockfish

**2000 catch as of 10/30/00 (includes O. Red Rocks)

***recommended as bycatch only. TAC apportionment only applied to open access fishery.

**2001 BSAI Trawl Fisheries PSC
Council Recommended Apportionments and Seasonal Allowances**

Fishery Group	Halibut Mortality Cap (mt)	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab (animals) Zone1	C. bairdi		C. opilio COBLZ
				Zone1	Zone2	
Yellowfin sole	886	139	11,664	253,894	1,246,502	2,876,981
January 20 - March 31	262					
April 1 - May 20*	196					
May 21 - July 3	49					
July 4 - Dec 31	380					
Rocksole/other flatfish	779	20	64,782	272,126	415,501	869,130
January 20 - March 31	448					
April 1 - July 3	164					
July 4 - Dec 31	167					
Sablefish/arrowtooth		9				40,238
Rockfish	69	7			7,658	40,237
Pacific cod	1,434	20	11,664	136,400	225,941	124,736
Pollock/mackerel/o.species	232	1,330	1,615	12,830	19,148	72,428
CDQ Fisheries	275		7,275	54,750	155,250	326,250
TOTAL	3,675	1,526	97,000	730,000	2,070,000	4,350,000

- 1) Unused PSC allowances may be rolled into the following seasonal apportionment.
- 2) 35% of the red king crab PSC for the rock sole fishery is apportioned to the 56 - 56o10' RKCSA strip.

**2001 BSAI Non-Trawl Fisheries PSC Bycatch Allowances
and fixed gear Pacific cod seasonal apportionments**

Fishery Group	Halibut Mortality (mt)	Freezer Longline Gear Cod Apportionment		Pot Catcher Vessel Cod Apportionment
Pacific Cod	743			
Jan 1 - April 30		495	60,000	13,230
May 1 - August 31		0	0	3,000
Sept. 1 - Dec. 31		248	10,951	0
Other Non-Trawl*	90			
May 1 - December 31		90		
CDQ Fisheries	67			
TOTAL	900 mt		70,951	16,230

Note: If cod and halibut PSC remain on April 30: Up to 10,000 mt of cod excess rolls to second trimester; balance rolls to third trimester.

Up to 40 mt of halibut PSC rolls to second trimester; balance rolls to third trimester.

If the fishery shuts down prior to April 30, both cod and halibut excesses roll to 3rd trimester.

* Includes hook & line fisheries for rockfish and Greenland turbot.

Sablefish hook & line fisheries will be exempted from the halibut mortality cap.

Jig and pot gear will also be exempted from the halibut mortality cap.

2001 BSAI Trawl Fisheries PSC - RPA Scenario
Council Recommended Apportionments and Seasonal Allowances

Fishery Group	Halibut Mortality Cap (mt)	Herring (mt)	Red King Crab (animals) Zone1	C. bairdi		C. opilio COBLZ
				Zone1	Zone2	
Yellowfin sole	911	139	11,664	253,894	1,246,502	2,876,981
January 20 - March 31	286					
April 1 - May 20*	196					
May 21 - July 3	49					
July 4 - Dec 31	380					
Rocksole/other flatfish	854	20	64,782	272,126	415,501	469,130
January 20 - March 31	498					
April 1 - July 3	179					
July 4 - Dec 31	177					
Sablefish/arrowtooth		9				40,238
Rockfish	69	7			7,658	40,237
Pacific cod	1,334	20	11,664	136,400	225,941	524,736
Pollock/mackerel/o.species	232	1,330	1,615	12,830	19,148	72,428
CDQ Fisheries	275		7,275	54,750	155,250	326,250
TOTAL	3,675	1,526	97,000	730,000	2,070,000	4,350,000

- 1) Unused PSC allowances may be rolled into the following seasonal apportionment.
- 2) 35% of the red king crab PSC for the rock sole fishery is apportioned to the 56 - 56o10' RKCSA strip.

2001 BSAI Non-Trawl Fisheries PSC Bycatch Allowances
and fixed gear Pacific cod seasonal apportionments -RPA Scenario

Fishery Group	Halibut Mortality (mt)	Freezer Longline Gear Cod Apportionment		Pot Catcher Vessel Cod Apportionment
Pacific Cod	755			
Jan 1 - June 10		300	28,380	13,230
Aug 1 - Dec. 31		455	42,571	3,000
Other Non-Trawl*	78			
May 1 - December 31		90		
CDQ Fisheries	67			
TOTAL	900 mt		70,951	16,230

Note: Rollovers of PSC and cod would be consistent with RPAs.

- * Includes hook & line fisheries for rockfish and Greenland turbot.
Sablefish hook & line fisheries will be exempted from the halibut mortality cap.
Jig and pot gear will also be exempted from the halibut mortality cap.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Tentative Meeting Dates for 2001-2005*

	February Week of/ Location	April Week of/ Location	June Week of/ Location	October Week of/ Location	December Week of/ Location
2001	5/Anchorage	9/Anchorage	4/Kodiak	1/Seattle	3/Anchorage
2002	4/Anchorage	8/Anchorage	3/Dutch Harbor	9/30/Seattle	2/Anchorage
2003	3/Seattle	3/31/Anchorage	9/Kodiak	6/Anchorage	8/Anchorage
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.