

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

News and Notes



David Benton, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Acting Executive Director

605 West 4th Avenue, Ste 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252
Phone (907) 271-2809
Fax (907) 271-2817

Volume 3-01

Visit our webpage at www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc

April 2001

Halibut Charter IFQ

After two days of public testimony from more than 100 individuals and reviewing hundreds of written comments, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council approved an individual fishing quota (IFQ) program for the halibut charter fleet in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska on April 14, 2001. This decision culminated eight years of debate and over 8,000 comments on managing the charter halibut fishery. The IFQ program would replace the guideline harvest level (GHL) program approved by the Council in February 2000, and currently under Secretarial review. No changes were made to the 2-fish daily bag limit or 2-day possession limit for charter anglers. The charter IFQ program could be implemented as early as 2003 if adopted by the Secretary of Commerce. Major features of the approved program will include:

1. The action does not restrict non-charter recreational anglers. It only affects charter operations.
2. The action does not permit a charter captain to sell the fish. Fish caught by charter clients belong to the client.
3. The halibut charter IFQ program would be integrated into the existing halibut commercial IFQ program. The charter sector would be allocated 125% of the average 1995-99 charter harvest to allow for growth in the fishery. The allocation equates to approximately 13% of the combined commercial and charter quota in Southeast Alaska and approximately 14% of the combined commercial and charter quota in Southcentral Alaska. This is more than 36 percent in Southeast Alaska and 37 percent in Southcentral Alaska than is presently being harvested by the charter sector.
4. Charter allocations can grow over time. Charter quota shares may not be transferred (sold) to the commercial sector. In the future, the Council will determine whether to allow a portion of charter QS to transfer to the commercial sector. Quota shares may be transferred within the charter sector. Commercial quota shares may be transferred to the charter sector. These shares also may be transferred back to the commercial sector. Restrictions on those commercial quota shares would continue to be applied while they are used in the commercial fishery.
5. Twenty percent of charter IFQs (an IFQ is the amount which can be harvested in any one year based on a person's number of quota shares multiplied by the quota) may be leased within the

charter sector for the first three years of the program; ten percent may be leased to the commercial sector for the first five years.

6. Up to 1% of the combined charter and commercial QS will be set aside initially for underdeveloped Gulf coastal communities to develop additional charter operations. (The Council will identify those communities who are eligible for developing new operations and the details for how the program will be administered in a subsequent action). The community set-aside may increase to 2% as the program matures.
7. Charter quota will be issued to a charter vessel owner, or to a person who leased a vessel from an owner, and who carried clients in 1998 or 1999, and 2000.
8. A quota share use cap of 1 percent in Southeast Alaska and ½ percent in Southcentral Alaska as well as a cap of ½ percent for both areas combined was approved, however, anyone who is initially issued quota shares above those levels would be grandfathered into the program at their qualifying level.
9. A delay of one year between the issuance of quota shares and fishing under the IFQ program.
10. IFQs would be issued in numbers of fish (compared with pounds in the commercial program) to allow current fishing practices to continue.
11. An agency and charter industry committee will be established to develop an implementation plan to address reporting, monitoring, and enforcement.

The Council's full final motion is included as Attachment 1. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2	Charter IFQ Implementation Team, 'Other Species', EFH
3	BSAI Crab Rationalization, GOA Rationalization
4	AFA, Call for Tenders, SEIS, LAMPs and Subsistence, Web Copies
5	Steller Sea Lions, September Meeting, Committee Meetings
	Attachment 1: Council Motion on Halibut Charter IFQs Attachment 2: GOA Rationalization Problem Statement Attachment 3: Steller Sea Lion Measures Attachment 4: Conferences and Meetings Attachment 5: Three Meeting Outlook

Charter IFQ Implementation Team

The Council will appoint a Charter IFQ Implementation Team comprised of industry representatives and agency personnel. The committee will be charged with recommending appropriate recordkeeping and reporting requirements for implementing the charter IFQ program. The committee will likely meet once or twice in 2001, and perhaps annually thereafter to review proposals to amend the charter IFQ program. It will function similar to the commercial IFQ Implementation Team, and the two teams may be combined by the Council in the future to biannually review the combined program. Charter industry representatives who would like to be considered for the committee should submit a letter to the Council by May 30. Costs for attending committee meetings (likely in Anchorage or Juneau) would be borne by committee members. Agency representatives from the NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS Restricted Access Management Division, NMFS Enforcement, US Coast Guard, ADF&G Sportfish Division, and State of Alaska Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection will meet with the industry team to jointly recommend the design of the new program. The work of the Charter IFQ Committee, which was instrumental in providing recommendations to the Council in its development of the charter/moratorium analysis and final action, has been completed and that committee is disbanded.

Essential Fish Habitat

The Council will be receiving a detailed report in June regarding development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to protect essential fish habitat (EFH). The Council's original EFH amendment has been challenged in court, along with similar amendments from other parts of the country, and has been found deficient, particularly in terms of identifying and precluding impacts from fisheries. Over the next 20 months this will be a workload for NMFS and Council staff, and a major agenda item for the Council. To facilitate this process and coordinate stakeholder input, the Council will be appointing an EFH Committee which may meet prior to the June meeting. Persons interested in being appointed to this Committee need to get their nominations to the Council offices quickly (attention: Chris Oliver) - by Friday, May 11.

Related to this is the habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) stakeholder process, which was initiated earlier this year with meetings in Sitka and Yakutat. Meetings in other areas of the state, including Kenai and the Aleutians, will occur later this year, likely in the fall.

BSAI and GOA 'other species'

The Council has revised its schedule for proposed management measures affecting BSAI and GOA "other species" under Plan Amendments 63/63. The Council has scheduled initial review of an analysis that combines a number of proposed actions related to sharks, skates, squid, octopi, and sculpins for October 2001, with final action in December 2001 including:

1. separate BSAI and GOA "other species" into their component groups;
2. allow determination of ABCs for GOA groups;
3. prohibit directed fishing of sharks and skates;
4. prohibit shark finning;
5. remove "other species" from the multi-species CDQ program.

Separate ABC and TACs for the groups in the "other species" category are currently determined in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area and then summed for an "other species" total. The GOA FMP does not authorize an ABC for 'other species' and mandates that the other species TAC be set equal to 5% of the combined TACs for all other GOA species/assemblages). Species have been removed from the other species category over time (Atka mackerel, forage fish species), but the TAC formula has not changed. In December 2000, the GOA Groundfish Plan Team recommended that the Council amend the GOA FMP to prevent the potential for targeting species groups within this category. The Team noted that Atka mackerel became such a target and ultimately was broken out of the other species category. The BSAI Team raised similar concerns for BSAI "other species."

The first two proposed actions address eliminating the "other species" category and separating out their 'group' components and determining separate ABCs and TACs for BSAI and GOA "other species." The goal is to develop stock assessments for sharks, skates, octopi, sculpins, and squid). The third proposed action responds to an Alaska Board of Fisheries request for the Council to mirror action in federal waters which it took in State waters in 1998. The fourth proposed action to prohibit finning of sharks would conform with the national policy on sharks.

In response to a request by the CDQ groups, the Council restated its intent that the non-specific reserve was intended, in part, to provide adequate "other species" quota to allow reasonable CDQ fisheries. The CDQ groups identified that the reduction in the BSAI arrowtooth TAC had a large and unintended impact on other species quotas allocated to the CDQ groups. The impacts of the above proposed actions on the CDQ allocations, as well as a measure to remove "other species" from the multi-species CDQ program, will be included in the analysis. Staff Contact is Jane DiCosimo.

BSAI Crab Rationalization

Since the February Council meeting, the Crab Rationalization Committee held two meetings, one in Seattle on February 15-16 and another in Anchorage on March 22-23. (Minutes for both meetings are available on the Council website.) During these two meetings, the Committee made significant progress toward defining elements and options for analysis of a rationalization program for the BSAI crab fisheries. At the April meeting, the Council reviewed the draft problem statement and the Committee's recommended suite of elements and options for analysis. The Council also reviewed a suite of additional recommendations from its Advisory Panel and received public testimony on this agenda item.

The proposed elements and options define a BSAI crab IFQ program that consists of several components. Harvester quota shares are proposed for the harvesting sector, processing quota shares are proposed for the processing sector and regional landing restrictions are proposed for purposes of addressing community concerns. This approach resulted in a complex array of recommended elements and options which define each of the three components, as well as options for fitting the components together.

During staff tasking and again under this agenda item, the Council stated that it considers BSAI crab rationalization a high priority. Given the complexity of the proposed IFQ program, however, the Council requested staff to prepare for the June meeting a discussion paper on the proposed program. The Council requested that the discussion paper articulate the key issues involved and how the elements and options as proposed would address the various issues. The Council also requested staff to provide a perspective on the anticipated amount of effort and time required to analyze the suite of options under consideration and, where possible, identify ways to make the analytical task more manageable. The Council requested staff to highlight in the discussion paper any proposed options that may be problematic in terms of data requirements, analytical difficulty, or legal aspects, in light of the Council's desire for the analysis to be completed by December 2001.

The Council indicated that, with the guidance provided by the discussion paper, it hopes to finalize the suite of options for the proposed BSAI crab rationalization program during the June meeting and task staff to initiate the analysis. While the Council did not disband the Crab Rationalization Committee, no future meetings are scheduled at this time. Finally, the Council adopted the Committee's draft problem statement as a reference point for the discussion paper. Staff contact is Maria Tsu.

BSAI Crab Rationalization Problem Statement

The crab fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands are fully utilized. Despite amendments to the LLP Program and AFA sideboards, capacity in these crab fisheries far exceeds available resources. The ability of crab harvesters to diversify into other fisheries has been severely curtailed under the LLP program and other management actions designed to bring stability to other gear groups and species. Many of the concerns identified by the NPFMC at the beginning of the comprehensive rationalization process in 1992 still exist for the BSAI crab fisheries. The race for fish continues to result in:

1. Resource/conservation management problems
2. Bycatch/handling mortality and dead loss
3. Excess harvesting capacity
4. Lack of economic stability
5. Safety issues

In the continued process of comprehensive rationalization, prompt action is needed to protect the crab resource and to promote stability for those dependent on the crab fisheries. In order to achieve a balanced resolution, the concerns of harvesters, processors and coastal communities must be addressed.

GOA Rationalization

The Council received the second report of the GOA Rationalization Committee at the April Council meeting. The Council adopted a problem statement upon the advice of the committee (Attachment 2). Two other problem statements on: 1) latent groundfish licenses, and 2) state parallel fisheries were reviewed but not yet approved. Those problem statements are posted on the Council website at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/Committees/Groundfish/GOAratMar01.pdf>. The committee will next meet on May 15-16 at the Anchorage Hilton to develop elements and options for analysis. Due to the complexity of rationalizing different groundfish fisheries in the five GOA management areas, the committee may select a few sample fisheries for analysis as a first step. It is also looking into recommending a framework for rationalizing the fisheries into the GOA FMP to allow development of separate individual fishing quota programs, American Fisheries Act-style cooperatives, or other limited entry programs to rationalize local fisheries, perhaps using a local area management plan approach. The committee is charged with providing final recommendations for elements and options to rationalize GOA groundfish at the June Council meeting. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

American Fisheries Act

The Council reviewed Amendment 69 which would allow catcher vessels from one inshore cooperative to lease their BSAI pollock quota to members of another inshore cooperative. Currently inshore catcher vessels are only allowed to lease their allocation to members of their own cooperative. After reviewing the amendment package, the Council recommended that the problem statement be updated to recognize that the proposed change is an FMP amendment and that processors associated with the cooperative would also need to give their approval before a lease would be allowed. With those minor changes, the Council voted to release the document for public review. A final decision on the amendment package is scheduled for the June meeting in Kodiak.

The Council also received a report on an inter-cooperative salmon bycatch agreement from Joe Sullivan and John Gruver. The cooperatives are moving forward with measures to reduce and manage salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery and will provide a year-end report this December. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

Call for Tenders Fishing vessels needed

MRAG Americas, Inc. has been involved in a two year project (Contract No. 52ABNF900054) for the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). They have completed the design of new biological sampling protocols to be used by the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program, and require field trials of these protocols on fishing vessels involved in these fisheries.

Up to six commercial fishing vessels will be required to undertake the trials from either Kodiak or Dutch Harbor. Each fishing trip will last for a period of 6 days, including 4 days actively fishing, and will be undertaken between 14 May and 4 June 2001. Vessels will be required to fish under conditions as similar as possible to those during the regular commercial season. Trials will be undertaken on as many different vessel types as possible, including at a minimum, one each of longline, pot, bottom and pelagic trawl vessels.

Up to two scientists will be used per vessel, and will require the same assistance, accommodation, food, space for sampling etc. that is usually provided to scientific observers in the fishery. Catch taken during the trial period will be in addition to any other quotas or allowable catches allocated to an individual vessel or fishery. Vessels will be allowed to keep and sell the catch taken during the trials. No other form of compensation will be provided.

For full details on requirements and how to submit a tender, please contact Heidi Lovett, MRAG Americas, Inc., 5445 Mariner St, Suite 111, Tampa, Florida 33609. Telephone (813) 639-9519 or MRAGAmericas@compuserve.com

Draft Programmatic Groundfish SEIS

At its April 2001 meeting, the North Pacific Council received a status report on the Draft Programmatic Groundfish SEIS (Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) and the extension of the comment period to June 25, 2001. The Council has requested its Scientific and Statistical Committee and its Ecosystem Committee to review the draft and provide comments to the Council by its June 2001 meeting to meet the current deadline. Since the Council, its committees, fishing industry, environmental organizations, and interested members of the public have been concentrating their most recent efforts on providing recommendations on Steller sea lion protection measures for the second half of 2001, and developing alternatives for analysis to protect sea lions for 2002, the Council has requested that NMFS grant a further 80 to 90-day extension of the comment period to allow the Council and its committees to formulate a more considered set of comments for NMFS consideration in preparing the final SEIS. Such an extension would allow the Council to formally comment on the SEIS during its September 7-10, 2001 meeting or assign a sub-committee to review it outside the regular meeting process. The Council recognizes that legal and other considerations may not allow such an extension, in which case it will formulate comments by the current June 25 deadline. NMFS is considering this request.

LAMPs and Subsistence Issues

In June the Board of Fisheries will provide an initial report to the Council regarding their work this spring on local area management plans (LAMPs) and on potential regional adjustments to the halibut subsistence regulations passed by the Council last fall. Follow-up work on both of these issues will depend on the recommendations forwarded by the Board.

Web Copies

Copies of this newsletter and others, as well as minutes, meeting notices, agendas, and other items of interest are posted on our website at www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc. Usually, items are posted there first, before we mail the paper copies out. If you already get your copy of the newsletter and agenda from our website, and would like to remove your name from our list for these mailings, send an e-mail to maria.shawback@noaa.gov.

Steller Sea Lions

Based on recommendations from the RPA Committee and Advisory Panel, the Council adopted emergency rule measures for the second half of 2001. The current emergency rule expires July 17, but will implement the closed areas contained in the Biological Opinion on June 10 at noon, unless modified by subsequent rules. The Council urged NMFS to implement the modified emergency rule measures by June 10, or as soon as possible thereafter. The Council's recommended emergency rule includes a series of closure areas and season changes that will increase protection for Steller sea lions and reduce impacts to fisheries and coastal communities. These measures would be in addition to most of the measures contained in the emergency rules governing the first half of 2001. The full suite of measures contained in the motion is included as Attachment 3. A map of these areas and RPA Committee minutes are available on our web site.

Summary of recommended protection measures relative to BiOp criteria.

Criteria	Measures from BiOp RPA	Measures Recommended
Protect \geq 50% of Critical Habitat	66%	57%
Protect \geq 50% of non-pups	56%	80%
Protect \geq 75% of pups	74%	80%

Relative to the November 30 Biological Opinion RPA, and the existing emergency rule, the recommended suite of measures for the remainder of 2001 provides more protection for sea lions. The adjacent table compares these two sets of measures relative to criteria set forth in the BiOp. More animals are protected because the only one "green area" off Kodiak was adopted in its entirety. The critical habitat amount was lower due to opening of a portion of the foraging areas in the Bering Sea. However, new telemetry data analysis showed that the large majority of at-sea locations are in the nearshore areas inside 10 nm.

The Council was updated on progress for the 2002 plan amendment analysis, including a review of a draft table of contents, and discussion of an initial set of alternatives for analysis. The RPA Committee will be meeting in May to develop an alternative RPA; their discussions will include consideration of the elements and options from the October 2000 Pacific cod EA/RIR. Meetings of the RPA Committee have been scheduled for May 9-11 in Juneau and May 21-24 in Seattle. A final set of alternatives will be identified at the June Council meeting for analysis over the summer. Initial review of the analysis will occur at a special Council meeting scheduled for September 7-9, in Sitka. Final action on the plan amendment package will occur in October, to allow time for Secretarial review, including a separate Section 7 consultation on that package, and for implementing regulations to be developed by January 2002. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

Council Schedules Extra Meeting in September

The Council has scheduled an extra meeting this year for initial review of recommendations for Steller sea lion protection measures for the 2002 groundfish fisheries. The meeting will be held at the Harrigan Centennial Hall in Sitka, Alaska. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will begin on Wednesday, September 5, the Advisory Panel will begin on Thursday, September 6, and the Council will begin on Friday, September 7, continuing through Sunday, September 9. This is currently scheduled as a one-issue meeting.

Committee Meetings

Council-related meeting dates and times, and sometimes agendas and minutes are published on our website. Also on our website is an interactive calendar where members of the public are encouraged to post fisheries-related meetings and conferences which may be of interest.

CDQ Policy Committee

April 26-27, 2001

Clarion Suites

325 W. 8th Avenue

Anchorage, Alaska

Begins at 8:30 a.m. on April 26

AND

May 24-25, 2001

Hilton, Iliamna Room, Begins at 8:30 a.m. on May 24th

Anchorage, Alaska

Staff: Nicole Kimball

GOA Groundfish Rationalization Committee

May 15-16, 2001

Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Iliamna Room

500 W. 3rd Avenue

Anchorage, Alaska

Begins at 10:00 a.m. on May 15

Staff: Jane DiCosimo

SSL RPA Committee

May 9-11, 2001 Begins at 10 a.m. on May 9

NMFS Conference Room

709 W. 9th Street

Juneau, Alaska

and

May 21-23, 2001 Begins at 1:00 p.m. on May 21

Alaska Fisheries Science Center

7600 Sand Point Way NE, Building 4

Seattle, Washington

Staff: David Witherell

**North Pacific Fishery Management Council
(Draft) Final Motion on Halibut Charter Fishery Management
April 14, 2001**

Alternative 2. Include the halibut charter sector in the existing halibut IFQ program.

IFQs are an access privilege, not an ownership right. They may be revoked or limited at any time in accordance with the North Pacific Halibut Act as well as the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other federal laws. Charter IFQ halibut may not be sold into commerce - i.e., all sport regulations remain in effect.

Issue 1. Initial QS may be based on:

1. Equal to 125% of corrected average 1995-99 charterboat harvest.
2. (13.05% in Area 2C and 14.11% in Area 3A of a combined charter and commercial quota).
3. 100% of an individual's QS would float with abundance.

Issue 2. Initial allocation of QS would be issued to U.S. citizens or to U.S. companies on the following basis: 75% U.S. ownership

1. Charter vessel owner - person who owns the charterboat and charterboat business; and
2. Bare vessel lessee, where a lease occurred (instead of owner) - person that leases a vessel and controls its use as a charterboat for this fishery. May operate the vessel or may hire a captain/skipper. Lessee determines when the vessel sails and by whom captained.

Issue 3. Qualification Criteria

Initial issuees who carried clients in 1998 or 1999 and who submitted ADF&G logbooks for an active vessel (as received by ADF&G by February 12, 2000). Initial issuees will be required to be currently participating (meeting all legal requirements including filing a logbook) during season prior to final action and any year claimed during the qualifying period (currently May- Sept 20, 2000) and claimed trips must have been under the operation of a person holding a U.S. Coast Guard license. Overall, must have participated in 1998 or 1999, and 2000.

Issue 4. Distribution of QS may be based on:

70% of 1998 and 1999 logbook average with an additional 10% added for each year of operation 1995-97 (longevity reward). (Excess QS would be distributed equally among those initial issuees with participation in at least one year during 1995-97).

Issue 5. Transferability of QS (permanent) and IFQs (on annual basis [leasing])

Charter QS is non-leasable

Charter QS transfers:

1. Initially issued Charter QS is fully transferrable within the charter sector.
2. For purposes of transfer to commercial sector, 75% of an individual's initially issued charter QS is permanently nontransferable and 25% may be transferrable upon Council review and approval after 3 years.
3. Commercial QS purchased by charter operator is fully transferable (two-way) across sectors and retains original designations.

Charter IFQ leasing:

1. 20% of a charter operator's annual IFQ is leasable within the charter sector for the first 3 years of the program.
2. Leasing is defined as the use of Charter IFQ on a vessel which the owner of the QS has less than a 50% ownership interest.
3. 10% of a charter operator's annual IFQ may be leased to the commercial sector for the first 5 years.

Block restrictions

1. any initially issued (i.e., unblocked) charter QS once transferred to commercial sector shall be unblocked.
2. allow splitting of commercial blocks to transfer a smaller piece to the charter sector - split blocks retain original designations.

Vessel class restrictions

1. from A, B, C, and/or D commercial vessel category sizes to charter sector, except that no charter business may own or control more than 1 "D" category block equal to or above the sweep-up level.
2. from charter to commercial at B, C, and D category.
3. initial transfer from undesignated charter only to catcher vessel of comparable size class. Buy down allowances apply (e.g., charter vessel 35'-60' must sell to C or D class commercial vessel.)

Issue 6. To receive halibut QS and IFQ by transfer:

For the charter sector, must be either:

1. an initial charter issuee; or
2. qualified as defined by State of Alaska requirements for registered guides or businesses; and
3. fulfill all legal obligations of the charter sector; and
4. hold USCG license.

For the commercial sector, must have a commercial transfer eligibility certificate. All commercial rules apply to any provision that may permit the use of commercial QS/IFQ for commercial purposes by any entity in the Charter IFQ sector.

Issue 7. Caps

1. use cap for charter QS owners only of 1 percent of combined QS units in Area 2C and ½ percent of combined QS units in Area 3A (for all entities, individually and collectively) and grandfather initial issuees at their initial allocation.
2. use caps for charter QS owners only of ½ percent of combined QS units for combined Areas 2C and 3A (for all entities, individually and collectively) and grandfather initial issuees at their initial allocation

Issue 8. Miscellaneous provisions

1. Maximum line limit of 12 in Area 3A (remains at 6 lines for Area 2C), grandfather initial issuees at maximum lines in 2000, however, line limits in excess of the maximum are non-transferable.
2. 10% underage provision of total IFQs.
3. A one-year delay between initial issuance of QS and fishing IFQs.
4. Halibut harvested aboard a charter vessel continues to be the property of the angler who caught the halibut provided the charter owner possesses sufficient IFQ.

Issue 9. IFQs associated with the charter quota shares may be issued in:

Numbers of fish (based on average weight determined by ADF&G)

Issue 10. Reporting:

The Council defers design of the reporting and enforcement strategy to an IFQ technical implementation team, comprised of agency and industry. It is the intent of the Council that a more comprehensive reporting system will address the following items. The Council noted that ADF&G logbooks would not be considered sufficient for monitoring and that the team should consider fish tags and other reporting systems suggested by industry.

1. More timely, verifiable reporting of catch;
2. Enforcement concerns;
3. More accurate geographic referencing of catch location which provides for analysis of halibut harvest in LAMP districts.

Issue 11. Community set-aside (revised)

1. Set aside 1% of the combined commercial and charter halibut quota to communities with ¼ percent annual increases if utilized, to a maximum of 2 percent.
2. Source of the set-aside: Equal pounds from the commercial and charter sectors.
3. Sunset provisions: 10 years (starting in the first year of issuance). Persons currently participating in the set-aside program at the time of sunset would be allowed to operate within the guidelines of the program.

LAMPs

The Council also supports an expedited local area management planning (LAMP) process by the Alaska Board of Fisheries to address localized depletion and user group conflicts and other issues as appropriate. The Council encourages the Board to complete this process and report back to the Council as soon as possible.

GULF RATIONALIZATION DRAFT PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Gulf of Alaska (GOA) ecosystem is complex and productive, supporting diverse communities of fish, seabirds, marine mammals, fishermen, processors and coastal communities. The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) charges the Council with minimizing bycatch, protecting habitat, preventing overfishing, promoting safety at sea and enhancing opportunities for fishery-dependent communities.

Increasing participation in Gulf of Alaska fisheries, as well as increasing catching and processing capacity, have intensified the race for fish with attendant problems of high bycatch, decreased safety, and reduced product value. In addition there are concerns about sea lion recovery, consequences of Bering Sea crab reductions, spillover effects from the American Fisheries Act (AFA), and habitat conservation requirements. All of these factors have made achieving MSA goals difficult and force re-evaluation of the status quo.

Amendments to the MSA, passed by Congress in December of 2000, called for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to examine the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries to determine whether rationalization is needed. The statute specifically requires the Council to analyze individual fishing quotas, processor quotas, cooperatives and quotas held by communities and to include an economic analysis of the impact of all rationalization options on communities, processors, and the fishing fleet.

Alternative strategies for fisheries management in the Gulf need to be analyzed as required by the MSA amendments. These strategies must be developed in an open and accessible public process.

Specific objectives for GOA rationalization implementation include:

1. Meeting MSA conservation requirements (bycatch avoidance, habitat conservation, prevention of overfishing);
2. Improved ability of industry to adjust to ecosystem measures such as spatial and temporal management for sea lion protection;
3. Promotion of safety at sea;
4. Increase utilization and improved product quality;
5. Community stability, including fish tax revenue;
6. Maintaining the character of an independent harvester fleet while allowing for meaningful reduction of excess capacity;
7. Fostering of a healthy, competitive processing environment;
8. Protecting both the harvesting and primary processing sectors from losing the value of those existing investments and maintain the existing market balance between the two;
9. Provide opportunities for coastal communities to directly participate in the economic benefits of the fisheries;
10. Recognize historic and recent participation; and
11. Accountability through performance reviews.

The examination will include an economic analysis of the impact of all options on communities, processors and fishing vessel owners and crews.

Steller Sea Lion Measures

The following list describes the Council's recommended modifications to the Emergency Rule for GOA and BSAI groundfish fishery management measures for the second half of 2001.

Season changes:

- Gulf of Alaska: For all gears, Pacific cod fisheries¹ would open September 1.
- Bering Sea: Seasons would open as follows: June 11 - All CDQ fisheries, pollock trawl, cod trawl, jig¹, and vessels <60' targeting cod using pot gear²; August 15 - longline cod; September 1 - Vessels >60' targeting cod using pot gear.
- Aleutian Islands: Seasons would open as follows: June 11 - All CDQ fisheries, cod trawl, jig¹, and vessels <60' targeting cod using pot gear²; August 15 - longline cod; September 1 - Atka mackerel, and vessels >60' targeting cod using pot gear.

Notes:

¹The recommendation includes continuation of exemptions (66 FR 17083) for jig gear, and vessels <60' fishing with fixed gear in the BS

²The catch of Pacific cod for pot vessels <60' would be deducted from their 1.4% quota when the pot fishery for vessels >60' is closed. When the pot fishery for vessels >60' is open, the catch of cod by vessels <60' would be deducted from the 18.4% quota.

Area Closures:

- Area 1 (PWS): Prohibit fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types within 20 nm of listed rookeries and haulouts.
- Area 2 (North Gulf Coast): Prohibit fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types in Area 631 and within 20 nm of listed rookeries and haulouts except for Chiniak and Long Island that would be closed only out to 10 nm from October 1- December 31. Exception: Vessels < 60' fishing with fixed gear would be allowed to fish within haulout areas (3-20 nm). *In addition, to accommodate the NMFS experiment on the effect of fishing, all fishing with trawl gear would be prohibited in the entire Chiniak gully region during the period August 1 through September 20, for 2001 through 2003.*
- Area 3 (Kodiak): Maintain the BiOp RPA that allows fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types in critical habitat and the Shelikof foraging area, except within 3 nm of listed haulouts.
- Area 4 (Chignik): Maintain the BiOp RPA that prohibits fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types in critical habitat within 20 nm of listed rookeries and haulouts.

- Areas 5+6 (Sand Point): Prohibit fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types within 10 nm of listed rookeries and haulouts. Exception: Vessels < 60' fishing with fixed gear would be allowed to fish within haulout and rookery areas (3-20 nm).
- Areas 10+11 (S. Unalaska): Prohibit fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types in critical habitat within 20 nm of listed rookeries and haulouts.
- Area 7 (Unimak): Prohibit fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types within 10 nm of listed rookeries and haulouts, otherwise all of area 7 remains open with no SCA catch limits for pollock.
- Area 8 (Dutch Harbor/EBS): Prohibit fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types within 10 nm of listed rookeries and haulouts, otherwise all of area 8 remains open with no SCA catch limits for pollock, except that: the four Pribilof haulouts would remain open outside 3 nm, and the five northern haulouts would be closed out to 20 nm. Exception: Pot vessels, and vessels < 60' fishing with fixed gear would be allowed to fish within haulout and rookery areas (3-20 nm).
- Area 9 (Bogoslof): Maintain the BiOp RPA that prohibits fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel with all gear types in this entire area.
- Areas 12+13 (AI): Closures based on target fisheries, as listed below. In addition to the current closure areas (10 nm rookery and 3 nm haulouts), 20 nm closures would be implemented for pollock, mackerel, and Pacific cod using all gear types around the listed areas known as Agligadak (in area 12) and Buldir (in area 13).

Atka mackerel- West of 178° west longitude: keep open to mackerel fishing, but with closures as per NMFS Table 21 from regulations. East of 178° west longitude: close to all mackerel fishing.

Pacific cod TRAWL: West of 178° west longitude: close to all Pacific cod fishing. East of 178° west longitude: keep open to Pacific cod fishing, but with closures as per NMFS Table 21 from regulations. Segum foraging area would be closed.

Pacific cod FIXED GEAR: In both areas 12 and 13, allow fixed gear vessels to fish within CH outside of 3 nm. Segum foraging area would be closed.

Other Recommendations: The Council recommends that NMFS coordinate with the State of Alaska, and consider additional measures to protect sea lions in State waters. The Council further requests the State to close the state waters portion of the Chiniak gully to pelagic trawling, from August 1 through September 20 for the years 2001 through 2003, to ensure the effectiveness of the fishing effects experiment.

DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

Beginning with this newsletter we will list major meetings and conferences of which we are aware that may be of interest to readers. Council-related committee and workgroup meetings are listed elsewhere in this newsletter and on our website. Also on our website is an interactive calendar where we will endeavor to post all committee meetings, workshops and major conferences. Members of the public may also post fisheries meetings or conferences that may be of interest to others to this interactive calendar.

May 10-11, 2001:

28th Annual Conference on Ecosystems
Restoration & Creation
Tampa, Florida
Info: Call 812-757-2104

May 21-24, 2001:

52nd Tuna Conference
Lake Arrowhead, California
Info: <http://swfsc.nmfs.noaa.gov/tunaconf.html>

May 22-24, 2001:

3RD International Conference on Recreational Fishing
Darwin, Australia
Info: John Harrison (afant@octa4.net.au)

May 30 - June 1, 2001:

NASA Alaska Needs Workshop
Anchorage Hilton Hotel
Info: Paula Scavera, Office of the Governor
907-465-3981

June 1-2, 2001:

Effects of Bottom Trawling on the Environment
National Research Council
West Coast International Inn
Anchorage, Alaska
Info: Susan Roberts, 202-334-3479

June 6-8, 2001:

Practical Approaches for Conserving Native Inland
Fisheries of the West
University of Montana
American Fisheries Society/University of Montana
Info: www.umt.edu/afs/

June 6-8, 2001:

3rd Int'l Conference on Ecosystems and Sustainable
Fisheries Development
Alicante, Spain
Sponsored by University of Alicante, Spain
Info:
www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2001/ecosud01/

August 19-23, 2001:

American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting
Phoenix, Arizona
Info: www.fisheries.org/annual2001

August 27-30, 2001:

Putting Fishers' Knowledge to Work
Fisheries Centre, University of British Columbia
Info: UBC Fisheries Centre, 604-822-8934

September 17-21, 2001:

Central Bering Sea Annual Conference
Poland
Details TBA

October 28-November 2, 2001:

North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
Victoria, British Columbia
Info: <http://www.npafc.org>

November 15-17, 2001:

Fish Expo
Seattle, Washington

November 28-29, 2001:

International Pacific Halibut Commission
Interim Meeting - Seattle, Washington
Details TBA

December 5-7, 2001:

Int'l Workshop Training Managers for 21st Century
Fisheries
Queenstown, New Zealand
Info: www.seafood.co.nz

NPFMC Three Meeting Outlook

NOTE: Special September meeting for initial review of Steller sea lion measures only

June 4, 2001	October 1, 2001	December 3, 2001
Kodiak	Seattle	Anchorage
GCCC community IFQ purchase: Review discussion paper	BSAI pot cod split (Amendment 68): Final action	GOA Salmon bycatch: Review and discuss
		BSAI trawl P. cod LLP recency: Initial review (T)
EFH: report and direction	HAPC process: Report	EFH: Preliminary Review
Steller sea lions: Review independent review, report from RPA committee, finalize alternatives for analysis	Steller sea lion RPAs: Final action	
Programmatic SEIS: Review and comment	Shark/Skate other species FMP: Initial Review	Shark/Skate other species FMP: Final Review
LAMPs/subsistence: Review Board of Fish recommendations	Observer Program: Review Committee Report and NMFS recommendations	Observer Program: Final action on reg amendments
AFA - co-op leasing proposal: Final action	TAC-setting process: Final action (T)	AFA: Review initial coop reports
AFA report to Congress: Review and provide direction	Seabird Avoidance Measures: Report and final action	SR/RE Retention: Initial review
Industry report on bycatch measures		Catch and bycatch disclosure: Review discussion paper
Crab Rationalization: Discussion/direction	Crab Rationalization amendment: Preliminary review	Crab Rationalization amendment: Initial review
GOA Rationalization: Discussion/direction	Groundfish Specifications for 2002: Initial recommendations	Groundfish Specifications for 2002: Final recommendations
MSA Reauthorization: Review issues		

NOTE: This tentative timeline will be updated periodically, particularly after each Council meeting, as the Council works through its decision process

TAC - Total Allowable Catch

IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota

AFA - American Fisheries Act

HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

LLP - License Limitation Program

PSC - Prohibited Species Catch

SSL - Steller Sea Lion

GHL - Guideline Harvest Level

SEIS - Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

CDQ - Community Development Quota

GCCC - Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition

MSA - Magnuson-Stevens Act

SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation

CV - Catcher Vessel CP - Catcher Processor

SR/RE - Shortraker/Rougheye

MSST - Minimum Stock Size Threshold

FMP - Fishery Management Plan

(T) Tentatively scheduled

NPFMC Tentative Meeting Dates for 2001-2005*

Special meeting September 5-10 in Sitka for Steller sea lion measures initial review: see page 5.

	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.