

Last Updated 5/2/97

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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April 1997 Newsletter - Published 5/2/97

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April Council Meeting in Anchorage - 127th Plenary Session

The Council's April meeting was highlighted by a number of issues related to management of halibut fisheries, including review of IFQ program amendments, IFQ/CDQ fee program development, halibut charterboat management, and halibut subsistence regulations. The Council also held initial discussions regarding inshore/offshore pollock allocations.

The June Council meeting will be held in Kodiak the week of June 16 at the Westmark Hotel. Due to the limited number of rooms at the Westmark, the Kodiak Convention and Visitor's Bureau (800-789-4782) has offered to assist people in finding accommodations. They also have provided the Council office with a list of hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts. Please contact us to request a copy.

Advisory Panel Election of Officers

John Bruce and Stephanie Madsen were unanimously re-elected Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. John Bruce is the Personnel Director for Jubilee Fisheries in Seattle, Washington and has been a member of the AP since 1991. Stephanie, a 17-year resident of Unalaska, is the Executive Director of Aleutian Seafood Processor's Association in Dutch Harbor, Alaska and has been a member of the AP since 1993.

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Forage Fish Protection

The Council adopted Amendments 36/39 to the BSAI and GOA groundfish fishery management plans to prevent development of commercial fisheries for forage fish. Forage fish are an important ecosystem component, and are prey for marine mammals, seabirds, and commercially important fish species. Recent changes in predator abundance have raised concerns that forage fish may require additional protection.

Under this amendment, a "forage fish species" category would be established for both the BSAI and GOA groundfish FMPs. Forage fish include capelin and a host of other forage species such as euphausiids (krill). Herring are already protected by regulations, so they were not included in the forage fish category. The amendment will establish a 2% maximum retainable bycatch amount in other

directed fisheries and prohibit the selling, bartering, trading, or receiving any other remuneration for forage fish species. However, within the 2% limit, forage fish may be reduced to fish meal and sold. Staff contact is David Witherell.

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Scallop Fishery Management

The Council approved the 1997 stock assessment and fishery evaluation (SAFE) for the scallop fishery. The SAFE details the current biological and economic status of fisheries, total allowable catch levels (TACs), and background information on fishery management and harvest strategies. Copies of the SAFE are available to the public by contacting the Council office.

The Council also approved the State and plan team's recommended scallop TACs and crab bycatch limits for the July 1, 1997 through June 30, 1998 scallop fishing year. The total annual TAC for scallops off Alaska was established at 1,775,400 pounds of shucked scallop meat, as shown in Table 1 below. For most areas, the scallop TACs remain unchanged from the previous fishing year. Crab bycatch limits for the scallop fishery vary from year-to-year because they are based on a percentage of the crab abundance in each area as determined by the recent crab surveys. The 1997-1998 crab bycatch limits approved by the Council are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 1. Scallop TAC amounts for the period July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998, in pounds and kilograms of shucked scallop meat by scallop registration area and district:

Scallop Registration Area	TAC lbs	TAC kg
Area A (Southeastern)	zero	zero
Area D (Yakutat)		
- District 16	35,000	15,876
- All other districts	250,000	113,398
Area E (Prince William Sound)	17,400	7,893
Area H (Cook Inlet)	28,000	12,701
- Kamishak District	400,000	181,437
Area K (Kodiak)	200,000	90,718
Area M (Alaska Peninsula)	170,000	77,111
	600,000	272,155
Area O (Dutch Harbor)	75,000	34,019
Area Q (Bering Sea)		
Area R (Adak)		

TOTAL	1,775,400	805,308
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Table 2. Crab bycatch limits for the period July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998, in numbers of crabs by scallop registration area and district:

Registration Area	Red king	C. bairdi	C. opilio
Area A (Southeastern)	-	-	-
Area D (Yakutat)	-	-	-
Area E (Prince William Sound)	-	630	-
Area H (Cook Inlet)			
- Kamishak District	60	29,000	-
- Outer/Eastern Districts	98	2,170	-
Area K (Kodiak)			
- Shelikof District	35	51,000	-
- Northeast District	50	91,600	-
Area M (Alaska Peninsula)	79	45,300	-
Area O (Dutch Harbor)	10	10,700	-
Area Q (Bering Sea)	500	238,000	172,000
Area R (Adak)	50	10,000	-
TOTAL	882	478,400	172,000

In March, the Alaska Board of Fisheries approved a change in the opening dates for the Yakutat/District 16 and Prince William Sound scallop fisheries from January 10 to July 1 with a biological closure of February 15. This change will allow scallop fisheries in all areas to open simultaneously on July 1, with the exception of Cook Inlet that will open on August 15. NMFS will be preparing a housekeeping regulatory amendment to make scallop season openings in federal waters the same as state waters. Staff contact is David Witherell.

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Atka Mackerel Jig Fishery

The Council reviewed an analysis of a proposal from the Unalaska Native Fishermen's Association for a 2% allocation of Atka mackerel to jig gear. Such an allocation would provide more opportunity to the local small vessel jig gear fleet. Under the existing management program, directed fishing for Atka mackerel closes to all vessels, including those that fish with jig gear. The Council recommended that the analysis be released for public review. A ½% per year step-up provision up to 2% of the TAC may be included if the Council chooses to base the jig allocation percentage on the Atka mackerel

TAC for the entire BSAI rather than just the Eastern Aleutians and Bering Sea management areas. Copies of the analysis will be available from the Council office by May 16. Final action is scheduled for June. Staff contact is David Witherell.

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Halibut Issues

Subsistence

The Council approved the release to the public of a revised EA/RIR to create and define a halibut subsistence category in federal regulations. During its initial review of the draft analysis, the Council added an alternative that would define a personal use category for halibut. The public review draft of the EA/RIR, which contains the following list of revised alternatives, will be available by May 15.

ALTERNATIVE 1. Status quo.

ALTERNATIVE 2. Allow the harvest of halibut for subsistence.

OPTION 1. Define subsistence.

Halibut subsistence regulations are needed to allow the continued practice of long-term customary and traditional practices of fishing halibut for food for families in a non-commercial manner for non-economic consumption. Subsistence is defined as 'long-term, customary and traditional use of halibut.'

OPTION 2. Define eligibility for halibut subsistence:

Suboption A. Members of Alaska Native Federally-recognized Tribes with customary and traditional use of halibut and other permanent residents of such Native villages.

Suboption B. Alaska rural residents as defined in ANILCA and identified in the table entitled 'Alaska Rural Places and Native Groups with Subsistence Halibut Uses,' and will also include other communities for which customary and traditional findings are developed in the future.

Suboption C. Tribal members and other permanent residents of Native villages who have legitimate subsistence needs.

OPTION 3. Define legal gear.

Suboption A. Rod-and-reel gear

Suboption B. Hook-and-line gear (including set and hand-held gear) with a range of:

1. 2 hooks
2. 10 hooks
3. 30 hooks
4. 60 hooks.

Suboption C. Allow Tribal governments to contract with NMFS to register designated fishermen to fish for the community using:

1. 1 - 3 skates of gear, up to 60 hooks each
2. Any gear type

OPTION 4. Define minimum size.

Suboption A. No minimum size be imposed for subsistence harvests of halibut.

Suboption B. Revise the commercial halibut minimum size regulations to allow the retention of halibut under 32 inches caught with authorized commercial halibut gear in Area 4E for subsistence use.

OPTION 5. Allow the customary and traditional trade of subsistence halibut.

Suboption A. Prohibit the customary and traditional trade of subsistence-caught halibut.

Suboption B. Allow the customary and traditional trade of subsistence-caught halibut limited to:

(i) an annual amount of:

1. \$200
2. \$400
3. \$600

(ii) and exchanges with:

1. other Alaska Tribes
2. any Alaskan rural resident
3. any Alaskan resident
4. anyone.

OPTION 6. Define a daily bag limit of between 2-20 halibut.

OPTION 7. Develop cooperative agreements with Tribal, State, and Federal governments to collect,

monitor, and enforce subsistence harvests and develop local area halibut subsistence use plans in coastal communities.

ALTERNATIVE 3. Provide for personal consumptive use of halibut.

OPTION 1. Define legal gear.

Suboption A. 1-3 hooks per line

Suboption B. 1-3 skates, up to 60 hooks each

Suboption C. Any gear type.

OPTION 2. Define legal gear by area.

Suboption A. Statewide

Suboption B. IPHC halibut regulatory area

Suboption C. Through local use plans.

OPTION 3. Define minimum size.

Suboption A. No minimum size be imposed for personal use harvests of halibut.

Suboption B. Revise the commercial halibut minimum size regulations to allow the retention of halibut under 32 inches caught with authorized commercial halibut gear in Area 4E for personal use.

OPTION 4. Define trade and barter of personal use halibut.

Suboption A. Prohibit the customary and traditional trade of personal use halibut.

Suboption B. Allow the customary and traditional trade of personal use halibut.

None of the alternatives now being considered by the Council would allow commercial sale of subsistence or personal use halibut. A final decision on this package is scheduled for the June meeting in Kodiak. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Seabird Avoidance

The Council approved sending out for public review an EA/RIR that describes methods designed to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds in the halibut hook-and-line fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. Gear modifications, seabird avoidance devices, or changes in fishing methods designed to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds would be required in regulation. The measures would apply to vessels fishing for Pacific halibut with hookandline gear in U.S. Convention waters off Alaska. Proposed regulations would likely mirror those recently approved by the Council for the groundfish fisheries. The public review draft will be available by May 8. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.



1. All applicable hook-and-line fishing operations would be conducted in the following manner:

- a. Use hooks that when baited, sink as soon as they are put in the water. This could be accomplished by the use of weighted groundlines and/or thawed bait.
- b. Any discharge of offal from a vessel must occur in a manner that distracts seabirds, to the extent practicable, from baited hooks while gear is being set or hauled. The discharge site onboard a vessel must either be aft of the hauling station or on the opposite side of the vessel from the hauling station.
- c. Make every reasonable effort to ensure that birds brought aboard alive are released alive and that wherever possible, hooks are removed without jeopardizing the life of the bird.

2. All applicable hook-and-line fishing operations would be required to employ one or more of the following seabird avoidance measures:

- a. Set gear between hours of nautical twilight (as specified in regulation) using only the minimum vessel's lights necessary for safety;
- b. Tow a streamer line or lines during deployment of gear to prevent birds from taking hooks;
- c. Tow a buoy, board, stick or other device during deployment of gear at a distance appropriate to prevent birds from taking hooks. Multiple devices may be employed; or
- d. Deploy hooks underwater through a lining tube at a depth sufficient to prevent birds from settling on hooks during deployment of gear.

The required measures to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds would not be applicable to

vessels using hook-and-line gear on:

Option 1: vessels less than 26 ft length overall (LOA) in the Pacific halibut fishery.

Option 2: vessels less than 26 ft LOA in the Pacific halibut fishery and the GOA and BSAI groundfish fisheries. Rulemaking to allow for a small vessel exemption in the groundfish fisheries would be initiated separately.

Option 3: No exemption for small vessels.

Area 4 Catch Sharing Plan

During its January 1997 annual meeting, the IPHC approved a method for setting Area 4 subarea quotas based on an estimation of biomass for each subarea using catch-per-unit-effort and habitat area estimates for Areas 4A, 4B, and combined Areas 4C-4E. The IPHC deferred implementing these apportionments until 1998 to allow the Council time to amend its catch sharing plan (CSP), which apportions these subarea quotas based on historical allocations.

Alternative 2 would withdraw Areas 4A and 4B from the CSP while continuing to apportion the combined Area 4C-E catch limit with the CSP subarea apportionments of: 4C 46.4%; 4D 46.4%; and 4E 7.2%. An additional 80,000 lb above a total Area 4 catch limit of 5.92 million lb allocated to Area 4E is unaffected by this action. Alternative 3 would allow Area 4D and 4E CDQ QS to be harvested in either area. The public review draft of the analysis is available from the Council office. Final action is scheduled for June. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Alternative 1: Status quo.

Alternative 2: Remove Areas 4A and 4B from the Area 4 catch sharing plan.

Alternative 3: Allow Area 4D and 4E CDQ QS to be harvested in either Area 4D or 4E.

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Donation to Food Banks

The Council approved submitting plan amendments 50/50 to the BSAI and GOA FMPs to the Secretary to authorize a distributor to coordinate the donation of halibut taken as bycatch and landed at specified shoreside processing sites in the Alaska trawl fisheries to economically disadvantaged individuals through a tax-exempt, authorized distributor selected by NMFS. This amendment would require a NMFS-authorized distributor to issue Halibut Retention Permits to vessel operators and processors to authorize the donation of halibut caught as bycatch in the groundfish trawl fisheries to

economically disadvantaged individuals. The NMFS-authorized distributor(s) would be determined by the Regional Administrator under a halibut donation program. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Halibut/Sablefish IFQs

IFQ Amendments

The Council approved the release for public review of the EA/RIR to allow QS transfers to immediate family members, under the 3-year emergency provision. This proposal would change 'surviving spouse' to 'heir.' Proposed regulations would extend transfer privileges of QS and IFQ to surviving members of a deceased QS holder's immediate family. This alternative would provide for cases in which a deceased QS holder has no surviving spouse, but has other surviving members of his or her immediate family who might be in need of temporary financial support from the deceased QS holder's fishing interests. As with the provisions for transfer to a surviving spouse, this alternative would allow a surviving heir, first, to transfer any current year's IFQ for the duration of the allocation year and, second, to transfer annual allocations of IFQ resulting from the total QS transferred by right of survivorship for three calendar years from the date of the deceased QS holder's death. Immediate family is defined as a spouse and children of a holder of QS or IFQ.

Another EA/RIR was approved for public review, which would define ownership of a vessel for purposes of using a hired skipper. A loophole currently exists in the IFQ regulations that allows leasing in perpetuity by initial QS recipients due to inexact language related to ownership of vessels on which QS is fished. The status quo ownership requirements for hiring a skipper to fish a QS holder's IFQ remain unspecified, allowing for minimal interest in vessels (e.g., 1%). Alternative 2 would revise regulations to require a specific minimum percentage of interest in vessels for QS holders wishing to hire skippers, either at (a) 5%; (b) 20%; (c) 49%, or (d) 51%. Alternative 3 would grandfather existing ownership levels held as of: (a) Secretarial approval of the amendment; or (b) April 16, 1997. Alternative 4 would base the ownership requirements on the percentage that the poundage transferred to another vessel is of the vessel's overall poundage cap. Both documents will be available to the public on May 15, 1997. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Central Title Registry

The Council approved sending a letter to Congress in support of a request by lending institutions and the industry for a six-month extension on implementation of a title and lien registry for the IFQ program. This would allow for greater industry involvement in developing the regulations that would govern the registry's operations. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

IFQ Weighmasters

The Council approved sending a letter to IPHC requesting its staff to develop a discussion paper requiring weighmasters, paid by the processors, for IFQ deliveries. The discussion paper would address enforcement needs for the program, as well as potential costs to the industry. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

IFQ Enforcement

The Council received a report on current enforcement presence in the IFQ fisheries. Because of budget limitations, there is a serious manpower shortage to cover all the landings. NMFS was requested to provide its views in June on how to improve enforcement capabilities as they relate to the IFQ program. The Council will send a letter to NOAA expressing its concerns over inadequate enforcement and urge that these shortfalls be addressed. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

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Sablefish Rolling Closures

The Council approved development of an EA/RIR to implement rolling closures around the annual sablefish survey beginning in 1998. Options for closed areas, reordering the area sequence of the existing sablefish survey, maintaining a nearshore open area for halibut and other fisheries, and limiting closures to specific gear types were approved for inclusion in the analysis. Staff also was requested to consider the use of logbook data as an eventual substitute for stock surveys. Initial review is scheduled at the June Council meeting. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Halibut Charterboat Management

The Council reviewed a revised analysis of the proposed alternatives for managing the guided halibut sport fishery, and directed staff to condense the study to a shorter, more readable document for public review. The new document should be completed and available from the Council offices by late May. **The Council has postponed final action on this issue until the September 1997 meeting, which will be held in Seattle, Washington. This item will not be on the June meeting agenda in Kodiak.** While all of the original management alternatives are still included for Council consideration, some additional alternatives were included at the April meeting. The Council added April 15, 1997 as a potential cut-off date for purposes of a moratorium, as well as the date of final Council action (likely September 1997). While other, earlier dates are still contained within the analysis, the Council's intent is to notice the affected industry that more recent dates, such as the April 15, 1997 date, are more likely to be adopted for purposes of qualification. Examples of specific criteria (permits, licenses, insurance, etc.) to prove qualification will also be provided in the revised

document.

The Council also discussed a specific management proposal submitted by Council member Clem Tillion, which includes a combination of reporting requirements, quota allocations, and limited entry, with the addition of minimum participation levels for qualification. This proposal will also be included and discussed in the revised analysis. The Council also clarified that their intent, with regard to this issue, is to include lodges and outfitters (in addition to charterboats), at least in terms of catch accounting in the event of a quota allocation. Staff contact for this issue is Marcus Hartley or Darrell Brannan.

While this issue has been removed from the June agenda, a related issue is scheduled for review and discussion in June the Sitka Sound Task Force proposal, and an associated template for local area management plans, is scheduled for review in June. Other areas interested in localized management plans will be encouraged to submit them once a template is developed. Staff contact for this issue is Jane DiCosimo.

Vessel Bycatch Allowances (VBAs)

The Council's VBA committee met in early April and provided a detailed report to the Council at this meeting. Several issues including initial allocation options and monitoring and enforcement issues still need further resolution. The Council requested that staff, NOAA GC, and the committee continue to work on resolution of these issues and report back to the Council in September 1997. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

Inshore/Offshore and Pollock CDQ Programs

With the current inshore/offshore pollock allocations (and pollock CDQ program) scheduled to expire at the end of 1998, the Council engaged in initial discussions at this meeting regarding potential reauthorization of those amendments. Regarding the inshore/offshore allocations, the Council received public comment, identified current issues for consideration, discussed potential problem statements, and accepted proposed alternative allocation percentages for posting in this newsletter. In terms of the Gulf of Alaska allocations, the prevailing sentiment is to consider reauthorization of the existing percentage allocations - 100% of pollock and 90% of Pacific cod allocated to vessels delivering onshore. For the BSAI, the initial alternatives proposed include: (1) No Action - the allocations expire; (2) the Status Quo allocation percentages - 35% of pollock onshore/65% of pollock offshore; and, (3) a variety of allocation percentages which differ from the status quo. The Council will develop a Problem Statement and finalize the alternatives for formal analysis at the June meeting in Kodiak. While the new Magnuson-Stevens Act contains mandates for CDQ programs, reauthorization of the

BSAI pollock CDQ program, and the associated percentage, has to be accomplished through a plan amendment process and would be part of the overall inshore/offshore amendment, otherwise it would expire at the end of 1998.

To facilitate public consideration and comment on the inshore-offshore issue, several informational items have been consolidated in a special supplement at the end of this newsletter:

1. Current BSAI Fishery Management Plan language for inshore-offshore.
2. Alternatives proposed at the April 1997 meeting.
3. Preliminary staff reformatting of the proposals to facilitate analysis.
4. Past, current, and proposed problem statements.
5. Information requested by Council for their June meeting.

Written public comments on the above should be provided to the Council office by June 9 to be placed in the Council meeting notebooks. There will be time set aside at the Council meeting for further comment. Staff contact is Marcus Hartley.

Magnuson-Stevens Act Issues

The Council specifically discussed the IFQ/CDQ fee program, and the associated North Pacific Loan Program, which are mandated by the recently reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act. A report from NMFS indicates that the fee program, which will charge up to 3% of exvessel value of IFQ/CDQ species, could be in place sometime in 1998 and may be able to collect fees on 1998 landings of those species. The Loan Program, which uses 25% of the IFQ fees collected to underwrite small vessel and entry level purchases of IFQ, could be operational in 1998 depending upon Congressional appropriation of funds via the 1998 federal budget. A further report will be provided to the Council at the June meeting. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

Other Magnuson-Stevens Act directives and deadlines were also discussed by the Council at this meeting in order to assess our progress relative to the provisions of the Act. Additional discussion of these issues is scheduled for the June meeting. As an example, the Council will need to assess its compliance with several bycatch related provisions of the Act and whether existing programs adequately comply with those provisions. Staff contact is Clarence Pautzke.

Groundfish and Crab License Limitation/CDQ Programs

The Council received an update from NMFS regarding preparation of the proposed rulemaking for the License Limitation (LLP) and CDQ programs approved by the Council in 1995. It is anticipated that a proposed rule will be published prior to the end of May and available for Council review at the

June meeting. NMFS advised that the crab CDQ program is scheduled for implementation in early 1998, while the multi-species groundfish CDQ program will not be implemented before mid-1998. Implementation of the License Limitation Program (LLP) could begin in 1998, if approved, but fishing under that program would not begin until 1999. The Council's moratorium is in place through 1998, which should mitigate any adverse impacts of the delayed LLP implementation.

Related to the LLP is a skipper reporting system requested by the Council to track participation in the fisheries by vessel skippers. A preliminary report was given to the Council at this meeting, which outlined options for defining the 'skipper' and options for collecting the necessary information, but no action was taken. The Council is interested in receiving feedback on the proposed options from the affected industry participants, and will discuss this issue again at the June meeting. Copies of the discussion paper are available from the Council offices. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

The Council also heard a report from an industry group which is organizing a potential vessel buyback program for the BSAI crab fisheries. The Capacity Reduction and Buyback (CRAB) group has been incorporated under Alaska statute, and has initiated an industry survey to ascertain the level of interest and potential participation in a buyback program. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

Observer Program

The observer program was not an issue on the Council's April agenda, however, it is scheduled as a major agenda item for the June meeting. We hope to have information available in June regarding potential contracting structures, funding issues, observer coverage levels, observer wage and insurance considerations, and a host of other issues related to restructuring the existing program. A meeting of the Council's Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) will occur prior to the June meeting, likely during the first week of June. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

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Ecosystems Committee

The Committee met informally on the evening of April 16 to discuss essential fish habitat and other issues. The proposed rule on guidelines for determining essential fish habitat is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register by the end of April for a 30-day comment period. The ecosystems committee will provide comments on the proposed rule. The committee also discussed having a meeting one evening during the June Council meeting in Kodiak to review recent habitat research. Committee chairman and Council member Dave Fluharty has been appointed to the national Ecosystem Principles Advisory Panel. Staff contact is David Witherell.

VIP Standards

The Council approved Vessel Incentive Program (VIP) rate standards for the second half of the 1997 fishing year. VIP standards are established for halibut and crab Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) for all trawl fisheries in both the BSAI and GOA. The grouping for VIP fishing categories and approved standards are the following:

	<u>Fishery</u>	<u>PSC Species</u>	<u>Current Standards</u>
BSAI	mid-water pollock	halibut	1.0 kg halibut / mt of
BSAI	bottom pollock	halibut	groundfish
BSAI	yellowfin sole	halibut	5.0 kg halibut / mt of
		red king crab	groundfish
BSAI	other trawl	halibut	5.0 kg halibut / mt of
		red king crab	groundfish
			2.5 crab / mt of groundfish
GOA	mid-water pollock	halibut	30.0 kg halibut / mt of
GOA	other trawl	halibut	groundfish
			2.5 crab / mt of groundfish
			1.0 kg halibut / mt of
			groundfish
			40.0 kg halibut / mt of
			groundfish

NMFS was requested to bring recommendations to the September meeting on an appropriate VIP rate for *C. bairdi* Tanner crab taken as bycatch in the BSAI cod fishery. Staff contact is David Witherell.

Experimental Fishing Permit

The Council recommended that NMFS approve an experimental fishing permit submitted by Groundfish Forum, Inc. The experiment would be conducted in the Bering Sea in early August 1997 to test trawl designs that would reduce bycatch of pollock and cod in the flatfish fisheries. It responds directly to the Council's proposed improved retention and utilization program for pollock and cod scheduled to start in 1998. A copy of the experimental permit request is available from the Council office. Staff contact is Linda Roberts.

Emergency Action Taken to Help Kodiak Processor After Fire

A fire swept through the Tyson Seafoods processing plant in Kodiak on April 3rd. This left many processing workers in Kodiak without employment, and the fleet of vessels that supplies Tyson, without a market. At the April Council meeting, the Council was requested by Tyson to make an exception to the inshore-offshore rules to allow one of its other inshore processing vessels to transfer to the Kodiak area to provide processing capability that otherwise would have been lost. The Council urged NMFS to make an emergency regulatory change which would allow that transfer by early June.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

Essential Fish Habitat: A public meeting to discuss the proposed rule will be held on Wednesday, May 21, 1997 from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. at the Centennial Hall Building in the Hickel Room, 101 Egan Drive, Juneau, Alaska. For more information, you may contact the Protected Resources Management Division in Juneau at (907) 586-7235, or in Maryland, Lee Crockett or Ramona Schreiber at Habitat Conservation (301) 713-2325.

VBA Committee: Sometime after the June Council meeting.

Observer Advisory Committee: Likely the first week of June in Seattle.

IFQ Implementation Committee: is scheduled to meet during the June Council meeting in Kodiak on Monday, June 16 from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. at Fishermen's Hall.

Ecosystems Committee: May meet during the June Council meeting in Kodiak to review Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) progress and habitat research.

Documents Available To The Public

- **Scallop Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE)** is currently available from the Council office.
- **2% Atka Mackerel Jig Allocation** analysis will be available from the Council office by May 16, 1997.
- **Halibut Subsistence EA/RIR** will be available from the Council office by May 15, 1997.
- **Seabird Hook-and-line Avoidance EA/RIR** will be available from the Council office by May 8, 1997.
- **Halibut Area 4 Catch Sharing Plan** analysis is currently available from the Council office.
- **Amendment 50/50** (donation of halibut to food banks) is currently available from the Council office.

- **IFQ Amendment Changing Surviving Spouse“ to Heir“ EA/RIR** will be available from the Council office by May 15, 1997.
- **IFQ Amendment for Hired Skipper“ EA/RIR** will be available from the Council office by May 15, 1997.
- **Halibut Charterboat Management EA/RIR.** The –condensed“ version of the analysis for public review will be available from the Council office by late May.
- **Gulf of Alaska Improved Retention & Utilization EA/RIR** will be available for public review from the Council by May 14, 1997.
- **License Limitation Program - Skipper Reporting System Discussion Paper** is currently available from the Council office.



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