



North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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September Council Meeting in Sitka

The Council's 124th plenary session, held September 16-22 in Sitka, Alaska, was highlighted by Council approval of an Improved Retention & Utilization program for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries. Under the first phase of this program, vessels will be prohibited from discarding any pollock or Pacific cod. Details on this and other actions are inside. The next meeting is scheduled for the week of December 9 in Anchorage.

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Council Holds Elections

By unanimous consent, Council members re-elected Rick Lauber and Wally Pereyra to serve as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, for another one-year term. First elected chairman in 1991, Mr. Lauber has been a member of the Council "family" since its inception in 1976, serving as an Advisory Panel member until his appointment to the Council in 1991. Mr. Lauber lives in Juneau and represents the Pacific Seafood Processors Association. This is the third term for Dr. Pereyra of ProFish International in Seattle who has been a Council member since 1990.

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Reappointed Council Members Take Oath of Office

In August, the Secretary of Commerce announced the reappointments of Robin Samuelsen to his second three-year term and Wally Pereyra to his third three-year term as voting members of the NPFMC. Both members were given the oath of office by NMFS Regional Director, Steve Penoyer. Mr. Samuelsen fishes commercially for salmon and herring and is active in fisheries issues in his community of Dillingham, Alaska. He also serves on the Council's Ecosystems Committee and the Council/Board of Fisheries Consultation Committee.

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Nominations Due for Advisory Panel, Scientific and Statistical Committee

One-year terms of the Council's Advisory Panel (AP) and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) members expire in December. The SSC advises the Council on scientific and other technical matters relating to Council functions and the AP is composed of representatives of the major segments of the fishing industry. Members of these panels are expected to attend up to six meetings, three to four days in length, per year.

Resumes for persons who wish to be considered for these committees should be sent to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501, to arrive no later than 5:00 p.m., November 22, 1996. Appointments will be announced at the Council's December meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, and will become effective in January 1997. For more information, contact the Council office.

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New Plan Team Member Appointed

Mr. Dave Jackson, ADF&G Kodiak and Alaskan Peninsula Area Shellfish and Groundfish Biologist, has been appointed to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team. Mr. Jackson has participated in the state's crab and groundfish surveys in the Kodiak and Alaskan Peninsula areas for nearly 20 years.

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Improved Retention and Utilization Program

The Council got a jump start on pending waste and discard reduction provisions of the Magnuson Act by approving a retention and utilization (IR/IU) program for Bering Sea and Aleutian Island groundfish fisheries. Following nearly two years of analyses, Council discussions, and industry participation, the Council voted unanimously to require 100% retention of pollock and Pacific cod in all BSAI fisheries. Rock sole and yellowfin sole retention requirements will follow, but will be delayed for a period of five years - the delay for

these two species, which are not yet fully utilized species, is to allow for development of markets and gear technological responses by the vessels engaged in these fisheries. The Council addressed the utilization side of the program by not mandating specific product forms, but by allowing individual operations the flexibility to process pollock and Pacific cod into whatever product forms they wish, subject to a minimum required product recovery rate of 15%.

The Council's target date for implementation of this program is January 1, 1998. It is also expected that a similar program for Gulf of Alaska fisheries will be developed and implemented on a parallel track. State regulations to extend these requirements to onshore processing plants will also be developed on a parallel schedule. The Council approved a relatively simple, straightforward program for the BSAI fisheries, with the expectation for future fine-tuning, including the continued involvement of the industry IR/IU Committee. The Council's action included specific provisions for monitoring and assessing the program's goals and objectives. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

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Bering Sea Ecosystem Study Report

Mr. Bob Francis, chairman of the National Research Council's Committee on the Bering Sea Ecosystem, summarized the Committee's findings. The Committee was tasked by the State Department to study the population dynamics and changes in marine mammals, seabirds, and commercially important species in the ecosystem and the probable causes of the changes. They also set out to identify gaps in knowledge and identify alternative management strategies. The committee concluded that changes in the Bering Sea ecosystem over the past 50 years are due to a combination of environmental change and human impacts. Their "cascade hypothesis" is based on changes in the physical environment acting in concert with human exploitation of long lived predators (such as whales) to create an environment in which pollock thrive. Hence, some changes that have occurred are likely irreversible in human time frames. They recommend that the Council utilize active adaptive management as a research tool, and that management adopt an ecosystem perspective. In consideration of declines in marine mammal and bird populations, the Committee suggests that fishing effort for pollock be broadly distributed over space and time. A copy of the full report, entitled "The Bering Sea Ecosystem," is available from the National Academy Press.

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Ecosystems Committee

The first meeting of the Council's Ecosystem Committee was attended by an enthusiastic group including committee members Dave Fluharty (Chairman), Linda Behnken, Robin Samuelsen, Chris Blackburn, Kristen Stahl-Johnson, and about 25 others interested in ecosystem based management. Discussion focused on the role, goals, and objectives of the committee. Most attendees agreed that the committee could serve as an educational forum and that the committee could interact with the groundfish plan teams as well as provide advice to the Council. The committee could also provide direction and feedback for specific ecosystem related research projects. The committee will meet again this fall to review current and historical information on the Bering Sea ecosystem and approaches to ecosystem based management.

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Observations from Coastal Communities Wanted!

The NPFMC, as part of its ongoing initiative to make ecosystem concerns a strong part of the fisheries management process, is soliciting comments from fishermen and residents of coastal communities on their observations. Observations of particular interest include:

- observed changes in the local ecosystem;
- observed changes in the local marine environment;
- abnormal or unusual phenomena;
- patterns or seasonal changes felt to be important to the local ecosystem; and
- traditional knowledge which explains patterns or relationships in the local ecosystem.

Please submit your comments to David Witherell at the Council office. A summary of these important observations will be part of the Council's annual Ecosystem Chapter, which is a permanent record available to the Council, scientists, and public. Thank you for your assistance.

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Groundfish Proposals and IFQ Program Proposals

At this meeting, the Council took an initial look at 45 proposals received in this year's groundfish proposal cycle, but deferred any final decisions on these proposals until the December meeting. Though the proposals covered a broad spectrum of potential plan and regulatory amendments, many of the proposals received had to do with pollock and cod fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. Between now and the December Council meeting, staff will develop a "scoping" document which more fully describes the various GOA groundfish proposals, assesses a potential time schedule for analyses and action, and generally attempts to combine these proposals in a more comprehensive, single package for Council consideration. Other proposals and Council priorities will also be discussed at the December meeting.

The Council also received six proposals specific to potential changes in the sablefish and halibut IFQ program. These will be forwarded to, and examined by, the Council's IFQ Implementation Team, tentatively scheduled to meet on October 17-18 in Anchorage. Their agenda will also include reviewing the IFQ reports described below, the regulatory amendment analysis to standardize ice and slime deductions for halibut and sablefish, and proposed changes to the 6-hour prior notice of landings requirement, overages/underages, definition of "ownership" for hiring skippers, and fishing conflicts with the sablefish longline survey. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

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IFQ Research Plan Team Reports

In consideration of intense public interest in the short and long-term effects of the Pacific halibut and sablefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program, and in response to specific requests from Governor Knowles and Council members, an inter-agency, inter-governmental team of professionals was assembled in the summer of 1995 to research the performance of the program. The ten reports presented by the IFQ Research Planning Team examined distributional issues, resource conservation, impacts on QS holders and registered buyers, program implementation, enforcement and costs, and vessel safety for the first year (1995) of the halibut and sablefish IFQ programs.

The Executive Summaries are available from the Council office. Final reports will be available by October 15. We are encouraging interested persons to request the summaries to determine which individual reports may be of interest, since the complete set of final reports total over 1,500 pages. A description of the reports is provided in the list below. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Distributional Issues (2 Major Reports) - *State/CFEC*

- Expected v. actual distribution of QS
 - Initial distribution
 - Changes from transfers
 - Changes in landings
-

"Gap" Analysis (1 Major Report) - *State/CFEC*

- 1991 - 1994 participants
-

Conservation Issues - (1 Major Report) - *NMFS/AFSC and Halibut Commission*

- Gear loss
 - By-catch/discards
 - Under reporting and "high-grading"
 - Gear conflicts
-

Impacts on QS Holders and Registered Buyers - (3 Major Survey Reports) - *UAA/Anchorage/ISER*

- Changes in fishing practices/crew
 - Ex-vessel prices
 - Processing impacts
 - Wholesale prices
-

Implementation & Costs (Memorandum Report) - *NMFS/RAM Division Enforcement & Costs*

- Implementation of IFQ program, including agency changes, start-up activities, and costs
-

Enforcement Costs - (Memorandum Report) - *NMFS/Alaska Enforcement Division*

- Implementation of IFQ Enforcement regime, including staffing, 1st year activities, and associated costs
-

Safety - (Memorandum Report) - *US Coast Guard*

- Coast Guard search & rescue (SAR) activities; earlier years v. 1995

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Observer Program

The Council received a status report on development of the modified pay-as-you-go observer program which was initiated late last year with the repeal of the North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan (fee plan). The new program structure would utilize a third party contractor as an interface between fishing/processing operations and the private observer contracting companies. The Council was advised by NMFS that provisions of the Services Contract Act (SCA) would apply to this program structure (as well as a fee plan structure), and that determination of a minimum wage schedule for observers is expected from the Department of Labor, hopefully in the next few weeks. NMFS and Council staff will then bring back to the Council a more detailed cost analysis of the third party program for review in December.

The Council's discussions included a request to NMFS to more specifically outline observer duties (compliance related versus data gathering for fisheries management), and to separate the costs associated with each. Related to this is a current NMFS initiative to more accurately determine necessary observer coverage levels to accomplish specific program objectives by each of the major groundfish fisheries. This information is expected to help the Council and industry develop more appropriate coverage levels for each fishery, and to define the costs associated with that coverage. Some of this information may be available for Council review in December as well. A meeting of the Council's Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) will be held later this fall to review the revised analyses of the modified pay-as-you-go program, and other available information, prior to Council consideration in December. The meeting date has

not yet been set. Staff contact is Chris Oliver.

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Directed Fishing <Standards

The Council approved a regulatory amendment that would implement changes to Directed Fishing Standards (DFS) in the Gulf of Alaska for the 1997 fishing season to: (1) allow the use of GOA arrowtooth flounder as a basis species for Pacific cod and pollock retention at 5%; and (2) reduce the Maximum Retainable Bycatch (MRB) percentage for GOA sablefish from 15% to 7%. The allowable MRBs are detailed below:

BYCATCH SPECIES

BASIS SPECIES	Pacific cod	pollock	sablefish
Arrowtooth flounder	5%	5%	7%
Deep water flatfish			7%
Rex sole			7%
Flathead sole			7%
Pacific ocean perch			7%
Shortraker/rougheye			7%
Other rockfish			7%
Pelagic rockfish			7%
DSR - Southeast outside			7%
Thornyhead			7%

The Council scheduled final action for changes to DFS for GOA rockfish and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish for December 1996. Proposed changes would: (1) prohibit the use of GOA northern rockfish as a basis for retention of shortraker/rougheye rockfish; (2) reduce the MRB established for BSAI Greenland Turbot. The EA/RIR will be available from the Council office by October 11. The Council also recommended that NMFS initiate an analysis to framework future DFS changes. Proposed MRBs are detailed below. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

GOA BASIS SPECIES	BYCATCH SPECIES
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	shortraker/rougheye
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Northern rockfish	0%
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BS/AI BASIS SPECIES	BYCATCH SPECIES
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	Greenland turbot
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Flathead sole	1%
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Sablefish	10%
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Other rockfish	10%
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Other red rockfish - BS	10%
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Pacific ocean perch	10%
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Sharpchin/Northern - AI	10%
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Shortraker/Rougheye - AI	10%
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Halibut and Sablefish IFQs/Slime & Ice Deduction

The Council approved sending to public review a regulatory amendment to create standard deductions for ice and slime for halibut and sablefish to prevent inaccurate accounting of harvests. The proposed standard deduction for halibut is based on industry standards of 0% (washed) or 2% (for ice and slime). A deduction of 0% is proposed for sablefish. The IFQ regulations currently require that the initial accurate scale weight at the time of landing should be reported. Numerous reports from the fishing industry have pointed to widespread violations of this provision, primarily under the guise of deductions for ice and slime. Deductions varying between 0 - 9% have been reported. The EA/RIR will be available from the Council office by October 11. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

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Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Initial Groundfish Specifications

The Council adopted for public review the preliminary Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document for the 1997 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) fisheries. This document contains information on the current status of stocks for each groundfish species, including biomass estimates and recommended Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) levels. Based on this information, and input from its advisory bodies and the public, the Council recommended preliminary levels of ABC and Total Allowable Catch (TAC). These recommendations are presented in Table 1. Twenty-five percent of the initial specifications will go forward as interim specifications for management of the 1997 groundfish fisheries until superseded by publication of final specifications. Because current stock assessments do not include information from this past summer's trawl and hydroacoustic surveys, biomass estimates and subsequent catch specifications are subject to revision when the 1996 survey data are incorporated. These assessments will be finalized by the groundfish plan team in November. On the basis of comments and new information, the Council will adopt final recommendations for the 1997 fishing year at its December meeting.

ABCs were reduced for many species due to the adoption of a new overfishing definition under Amendment 44, which provides a buffer between ABC and the overfishing level (OFL) and reflects current scientific knowledge about conservative fishing levels. Although this amendment imposes increasingly conservative rules for specifying ABC for less understood populations, even these conservative ABCs are above the 1996 TACs for most species.

Regarding apportionment of PSCs in the BSAI groundfish fisheries, the Council recommended the same bycatch allowances for Pacific halibut, herring, red king crab, and Tanner crab as for 1996 (Tables 2 and 3). These apportionments will only be in place until the final recommendations of the Council in December are adopted by the Secretary of Commerce. Note that the Council has adopted reduced PSC limits for bairdi Tanner crab, which will become effective early in 1997 (see crab news article). Lastly, the Council recommended that standards for the Vessel Incentive Program (VIP) for the first two quarters of the 1997 Gulf and BSAI trawl fisheries be the same as last year's standards. Staff contact is David Witherell.

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Tanner Crab Bycatch Limits

The Council approved the agreement negotiated by affected industry groups regarding PSC

limits for *C. bairdi* Tanner crab taken in BSAI trawl fisheries. Under the agreement, PSC limits for *bairdi* in Zones 1 and 2 will be based on total abundance of *bairdi* crab as indicated by the NMFS trawl survey. Based on 1996 abundance (185 million crabs), the PSC limit for *C. bairdi* in 1997 will be 750,000 crabs in Zone 1 and 2,100,000 crab in Zone 2. Crab bycatch accrued from January 1 until publication of the final rule (expected by April 1997) will be applied to revised bycatch limits established for specified fisheries.

Amendment 41 PSC limits adopted for *bairdi*
Tanner crab

Zone	Abundance	PSC Limit
Zone 1	0-150 million crabs	0.5% of abundance
	150-270 million crabs	750,000
	270-400 million crabs	850,000
	over 400 million crabs	1,000,000
Zone 2	0-175 million crabs	1.2% of abundance
	175-290 million crabs	2,100,000
	290-400 million crabs	2,550,000
	over 400 million crabs	3,000,000

At its first meeting, the committee was unable to reach an agreement on a snow crab (*C. opilio*) PSC limit. The Council has requested that the committee meet again and attempt to negotiate an agreement for *opilio*. The Council is scheduled to take final action on *opilio* PSC limits in December. Staff contact is David Witherell.

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Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Initial Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved interim 1997 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish quota specifications, including Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs), Total Allowable Catches (TACs), and Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits (Table 4). The specifications are based on the current stock assessments contained in the preliminary 1997 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE), as well as recommendations by the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team, Advisory Panel, and Scientific and Statistical Committee

(SSC). One fourth of the interim 1997 TACs will be released for the first quarter of the 1997 fishing year until the final TACs are determined in December 1996.

The triennial Gulf of Alaska trawl survey was conducted in 1996, but these results were not yet incorporated into the preliminary stock assessments for all species/complexes. As a result, the interim 1997 quotas remain unchanged for deepwater flatfish, flathead sole, shallow water flatfish, arrowtooth flounder, northern rockfish, pelagic shelf rockfish (PSR), demersal shelf rockfish (DSR), other slope rockfish, and Atka mackerel. Survey results will be incorporated into the recommended ABCs in the Final SAFE in December and will likely result in changes to all species except DSR and sablefish (which do not rely on the survey).

The 1997 interim TACs increased for three GOA species. The pollock TAC increased to 78,100 mt from the 1996 level of 54,810 mt based on a revised stock assessment which incorporates evidence of a strong 1994 year class. The 1997 interim TAC for Pacific ocean perch increased from 6,959 mt to 8,130 mt and is calculated from the Council's rebuilding plan. The TAC for thornyheads increased from 1,248 mt to 1,560 mt because the Council did not include a 20% reduction of the interim TAC as was done for 1996.

The interim 1997 quotas decreased for four species. The TAC for Pacific cod decreased to 52,000 mt from the 1996 level of 65,000 mt to give industry notice of a continued trend in the decline of this stock. This interim TAC is believed to be a minimum estimate and will be revised for the December 1996 meeting with incorporation of the 1996 trawl survey results. ABCs and TACs were reduced for rex sole and shortraker rougheye, as a result of the revised ABC and overfishing definitions recently approved by the Council (Amendment 44).

The interim 1997 sablefish TAC was reduced to 11,620 mt, from 17,080 mt in 1996, for two reasons. A change to a scientifically stronger stock assessment model that projects continued declines in the stock accounted for part of the reduction, while the revised ABC and overfishing definitions account for most of the ABC and TAC reduction.

Industry expressed concern to the SSC and Council over the possibility of the sablefish longline survey results being affected by fishing operations just prior to and during station sampling and the disparity in survey results to the industry's experience on the fishing grounds. Because of the importance of the survey index in determining ABC and understanding the dynamics of the sablefish stock, the sablefish longline fleet was asked to avoid the survey areas for a few days before the area was to be sampled. For the most part, cooperation was good in 1995, and it improved in 1996. The longline survey schedule was modified in 1996 to provide

more opportunity for fishing activity that could avoid the survey. The survey started earlier and was halfway through the central Gulf before the July trawl opening, providing more area that had already been surveyed prior to fishing activities. Little interaction occurred in the Central Gulf. It was hoped that by the time the survey reached the West Yakutat area, the area would have been closed and allowed to rest after a short rockfish opening, or fishing activity would be avoided directly prior to the survey. However, the rockfish fishery did not close until the end of July and trawlers topping off on sablefish were observed in the survey area shortly before sampling. The survey scientists will examine observer reports of fishing in the area to determine if a valid adjustment of survey results can be obtained.

The survey covers most of the prime habitat along the slope and deep gulleys, but only partially covers marginal habitat and could be underestimating the rate of total stock decline if concentrations in marginal habitat decline at a greater rate. The greater rate of decline in the GOA gulleys and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands slope, compared to the GOA slope, indicate this could be happening. The fishery, which targets effort in prime habitat, may also continue to experience high catch rates as the stock contracts from marginal areas. The survey may confirm the pessimistic trend in the population, and confirm a need for a lower ABC. If the survey indicates a stable population and problems with misreported catch data are reconciled, the reduction in the ABC may be lessened. The stock assessment will be revised to address recommendations by the Plan Team and SSC for the December meeting; it is expected that the ABC recommendation could be higher than the 11,620 mt approved by the Council at this meeting.

The Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for halibut in the GOA are set by gear type and may be apportioned seasonally over the fishing year. For 1997, the Council recommended PSC apportionments shown below for the GOA groundfish fisheries. Pot gear and the sablefish fixed gear IFQ fishery continue to be exempt from the halibut PSC limits.

Trawl gear		Hook and Line	
1st quarter	600mt (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

The trawl gear PSC cap is further apportioned between "shallow" and "deep" water species

complexes as follows:

Quarter	Shallow water	Deep water	Total
	Complex	Complex	
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

Species in the shallow water complex are pollock, Pacific cod, shallow water flatfish, Atka mackerel, and other species while the deep water complex includes deep water flatfish, rockfish, flathead sole, sablefish and arrowtooth flounder.

The Council also reviewed a plan amendment to modify the GOA pelagic shelf rockfish (PSR) complex. Amendment 46 proposes to separate the PSR complex into nearshore (black and blue rockfishes) and offshore (dusky, widow, and yellowtail rockfishes) components and possibly transfer management authority for nearshore species to the State of Alaska. The Council may choose between: (1) retaining authority for defining ABCs, TACs, and overfishing levels and transferring in-season management to the State as was done under GOA Amendments 14 and 21; and (2) withdrawing black and blue rockfishes from the GOA FMP and turning their management over to the State for management in both State and Federal waters, dependent upon approval of the Magnuson Act reauthorization that would address extension of State authority into Federal waters in absence of Federal management. The public review draft will be available on October 11. The Council will make a final decision at the December meeting. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

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Electronic Reporting

The Council delayed final action until December on a regulatory amendment to require groundfish processors in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska to utilize an electronic recordkeeping and reporting system for NMFS-required documents. The delay until December would allow NMFS staff to work further with industry members to address continued concerns raised by industry on the recommended hardware and software

requirements. Nick Hindman at the NMFS/Regional Office (907-586-7228) is the staff contact for the industry meetings.

The proposed changes would replace conventional logbooks and associated NMFS reports with electronic versions. At-sea processors would be required to transmit in-season NMFS reports using Inmarsat satellite equipment and shore-based processors would be required to use modems and phone systems. All processors using the electronic reporting system would be required to have a computer-operated printer to make paper copies of electronic logbook pages and transmitted reports at the processing site.

The NMFS electronic reporting system would be implemented in two stages. Phase 1 would consist of electronic versions of the daily production, weekly production, and check-in/check-out reports and would be distributed to the groundfish processing industry for voluntary use in early 1997. Legal implementation of Phase 1 would take place on January 1, 1998. Phase 2 would consist of electronic logbooks, vessel activity reports, and product transfer reports. These will be developed in 1997 and 1998 with full legal implementation in 1999. Council staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

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Steller Sea Lions

Biologists from the NMFS Marine Mammal Lab summarized recent information on the status of Steller sea lions. Survey data indicate a continuing population decline of Stellers in much of Alaska. For adults and juveniles, a 7.5% decline was observed in overall (haul-out and rookery) trend site numbers from 1994 to 1996. Declines were observed in Southeast Alaska and in the Gulf of Alaska, but not in the Aleutian Islands as a whole. A 6.1% decline in pup numbers was also observed at selected rookeries.

In October 1995, NMFS published a proposed rule to list the western population of Steller sea lions as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and to retain the threatened status for the eastern population. A final rule is scheduled to be issued in October or November of 1996. As part of the evaluation of Steller sea lion status, NMFS will be reviewing all management actions enacted to conserve the U.S. population. A list of proposed actions that could be taken will be presented to the Council at its April 1997 meeting. Staff contact is David Witherell.

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Halibut Charter Boat Management

The Council received a report from staff on the proposed management alternatives for the guided sport fishery for halibut off Alaska. In August, the Council contracted with the University of Alaska's Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) to conduct much of the data gathering and analyses for that study. Council staff will also be devoting much of this fall to that study with a draft analysis expected for Council review in February of next year. A final decision could be made as early as the April 1997 meeting in Anchorage. Staff contact person(s) are Marcus Hartley or Chris Oliver.

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NPFMC TO CELEBRATE 20th ANNIVERSARY

It's been 20 years since the passage of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will celebrate this milestone with a mega-event which will include dinner, prominent speakers, special mementos of the occasion, and an orchestra. We hope this will be an opportunity for present and former Council, AP, SSC, and industry members of the past 20 years to visit and renew old friendships.

The gala is set for **Wednesday evening, December 11, at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel**. Plans are underway to make this a very special evening. Advance reservations for the event are necessary in order to be sure we can accommodate all who want to attend. The cost for the event is \$40 per person, or \$300 for a table for eight. Contact the NPFMC office now for reservations (907-271-2809, ask for Helen). The deadline for reservations is November 15, however space is limited and last-minute requests will depend on space available.
