

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Meeting Summary

237th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
February 5 - 12, 2018
Renaissance Hotel, Seattle, Washington

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Attachments

- 1) Time Log
- 2) Newsletter

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met Thursday, February 8, through Monday, February 12, 2018, at the Renaissance Hotel, Seattle, Washington. The following Council, NPFMC staff, SSC, and AP members attended the meetings.

Council Members

Balsiger, Jim	Marx, Steve	Peterson, Theresa
Cotten, Sam	Kinneen, Simon	LT Yvonne Yang (Alt for CAPT)
Cross, Craig	Laukitis, Buck	Smoker, Lauren (GC)
Down, Kenny	Lepore, John (GC)	Sullivan, Maura
Hanson, Dave	CAPT Stephen White	Tweit, Bill (Vice Chair)
Hartill, Trent (Alt for Cotten)	Merrill, Glenn (Alt for Balsiger)	
Hull, Dan (Chair)	Mezirow, Andy	

NPFMC Staff

Armstrong, Jim	Kircher, Peggy	Shawback, Maria
Cunningham, Sam	MacLean, Steve	Schmidt, Nicole
Evans, Diana (DD)	Marrinan, Sarah	Stram, Diana
Fey, Mike (AKFIN)	McCracken, Jon	Witherell, Dave (ED)
Gleason, Shannon	Cleaver, Sara (SeaGrant Fellow)	

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from February 5 - 6, 2018 at the Renaissance Hotel, Seattle, WA.

Members present were:

Anne Hollowed, Co-Chair <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>	Amy Bishop <i>Alaska Sea Life Center</i>	Robert Clark <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i>
Jason Gasper, <i>NOAA Fisheries – Alaska Region</i>	Brad Harris <i>Alaska Pacific University</i>	Anne Hollowed <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>
George Hunt <i>University of Washington</i>	Gordon Kruse <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>	Dayv Lowry <i>Washington Dept. of Fish and Game</i>
Mike Downs <i>Northern Economics</i>	Franz Mueter <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>	Terry Quinn <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>
Heather Renner <i>U.S. Fish and Wildlife</i>	Matt Reimer <i>University of Alaska Anchorage</i>	Ian Stewart <i>Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission</i>
Alison Whitman <i>Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i>	Chris Anderson <i>University of Washington</i>	

Members absent were:

Kate Reedy <i>Idaho State University Pocatello</i>	Sherri Dressel, Vice Chair <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i>
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Advisory Panel

The AP met Tuesday, February 6, through Friday, February 9, 2018. Members present were:

Carroll, Shannon	Kauffman, Jeff	Upton, Matt (Co-Vice Chair)
Christiansen, Ruth	Kwachka, Alexis	Vanderhoeven, Anne
Cochran, Kurt	Lowenberg, Craig	Weinstein, Samantha
Donich, Daniel	Nichols, Carina	Weiss, Ernie (Chair)
Drobnica, Angel (Co-Vice Chair)	O'Donnell, Paddy	Wilt, Sinclair
Gruver, John	Peterson, Joel	
Hayden, Natasha	Scoblic, John	
Johnson, Jim	Stevens, Ben	

B REPORTS

The following reports were given and discussed. Actions were deferred to staff tasking.

B1 Executive Director's Report – David Witherell

B2 NMFS Management Report – Glenn Merrill

- AFSC Report – Dr. Doug DeMaster
- GOA Climate Regional Action Plan Report – Dr. Martin Dorn
- Pollock Age Determination – Dr. Tom Helser
- NOAA GC Litigation Update – Lauren Smoker

B3 ADF&G Report – Trent Hartill

B4 USCG Report – LT Yvonne Yang

B5 USFWS Report – No report was given

B6 IPHC Report – Steve Keith and Ian Stewart

B7 Protected Species Report - Steve MacLean

C1 BSAI CRAB NORTON SOUND RKC ACL, CPT REPORT – FINAL SPECS

The Council received a presentation from Sara Cleaver, SeaGrant fellow at the NPFMC and Dr. William Stockhausen of AFSC. The following action was taken:

Mr. Hartill made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

The Council adopts the 2018 NSRKC SAFE and adopts the OFL of 0.43 million lbs. and the ABC of 0.35 million lbs. as recommended by the AP and SSC.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously February 9, 2018, at 9:05 a.m.

C2 SMALL SIDEBOARDS

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff, Jon McCracken. The following action was taken:

Dr. Balsiger made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:

The Council recommends final action to change regulations for American Fisheries Act (AFA) and Crab Rationalization (CR) Program sideboard limits and adopts the following alternative and option:

Alternative 2. Prohibit directed fishing by regulation for AFA and Crab Rationalization sideboard limits listed in Tables 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4.

Option 1. Remove the sideboard limit on AFA catcher/processors for Central Aleutian Islands Atka mackerel.

Mr. Tweit made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Down:

The Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c). The Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection February 9, 2018, at 9:32 a.m.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously February 9, 2018, at 9:33 a.m.

C3 GOA CATCHER VESSEL CHINOOK PSC LIMIT ADJUSTMENTS

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham. The following action was taken.

Mr. Merrill made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:

The Council recommends another initial review of the analysis with the following revisions to the purpose and need statement and alternatives. (Added text is shown in **bold and underline**, deleted text is shown in **~~bold and strikeout~~**):

Purpose and Need Statement

The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) National Standards require, **among other factors, that** the Council to balance the objectives of achieving optimum yield, minimizing bycatch, and minimizing adverse impacts on fishery-dependent communities. Chinook salmon PSC taken in GOA trawl fisheries is a resource concern, and the Council has taken action to set hard cap PSC limits that are below the incidental take amount that would trigger reconsultation under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Attainment of a PSC hard cap closes the trawl fishery. Since the 2015 implementation of Chinook salmon PSC limits for the GOA non-pollock groundfish trawl CV sector, the fishery has continued to display variable levels and unpredictable timing of salmon encounter. Potential closures and PSC encounter rates that vary from year-to-year or even week-to-week create uncertainty for fishery

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participants, which in turn can ~~exacerbate a “race for fish,”~~ make business planning more difficult, or directly lead to forgone harvest opportunities. Those outcomes adversely affect trawl harvesters, crew, processors, and GOA coastal communities.

Relative to what was available when the Council established the PSC limits, new information about the resource and the fishery’s rate of salmon encounter has been gathered from salmon genetic identification studies and the expansion of observer sampling onto smaller trawl vessels. Meanwhile, the ~~non-Rockfish Program GOA trawl fisheries fishery~~ will continue to operate under a limited access management structure where harvesters must compete for a share of the available catch without formalized cooperative tools to ~~best minimize and utilize~~ PSC. ~~As a result, individual actions to avoid PSC often confer an individual competitive disadvantage. Voluntary collective action is costly to organize, and agreements to stand down from fishing to minimize PSC have not always held.~~

The proposed action would consider increasing Chinook salmon PSC limits and establishing an annual rollover of unused Chinook salmon PSC for the GOA non-pollock non-Rockfish Program trawl CV sector and/or the Central GOA Rockfish Program CV sector. Alternatives to increase PSC limits or provide more flexibility under the existing PSC limits are offered in light of new information and multiple years of experience fishing under constraining hard caps for these fisheries in a limited access fishery with variable and unpredictable PSC rates. The action would not modify ~~other existing features of the GOA Chinook salmon PSC limits for non-pollock trawl fisheries such as~~ PSC rollovers from the Rockfish Program CV sector to the limited access CV sector, and NMFS’s ability to make in-season Chinook salmon PSC limit reapportionments between certain trawl sectors. The action seeks to find the most appropriate PSC limits or flexibility within the existing PSC limits for these fisheries ~~this fishery~~ by ~~considering historical PSC and~~ providing a margin that accommodates expected high variability, while remaining within previously established outer bounds for annual GOA-wide PSC levels that are not expected to jeopardize the Chinook salmon resource.

Alternatives

Revise the alternatives and options as follows:

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: ~~Increase~~ Modify the Chinook salmon PSC limit for the GOA non-pollock non-Rockfish Program CV sector by:

Option 1: 1,000 fish

Option 2: 2,000 fish

Option 3: 3,000 fish

Option 4: Replace the performance standard/incentive buffer with an annual rollover of any unused Chinook salmon PSC in this sector. NMFS will determine the amount of unused Chinook salmon PSC based on the amount used in the sector relative to the base limit of 2,700 fish. The maximum amount of Chinook salmon PSC that may be rolled over cannot exceed:

Suboption 1: 675 fish (25% of the limit of 2,700 fish)

Suboption 2: 1,350 fish (50% of the limit of 2,700 fish)

Suboption 3: 2,025 fish (75% of the limit of 2,700 fish)

Under this option, in any year the total amount of Chinook salmon PSC available cannot exceed the base limit plus the amount in the suboption selected.

Alternative 3: ~~Increase~~ **Modify** the Chinook salmon PSC limit for the Central GOA Rockfish Program CV sector by:

Option 1: 300 fish

Option 2: 600 fish

Option 3: 900 fish

Option 4: Allow an annual rollover of any unused Chinook salmon PSC in this sector. NMFS will determine the amount of unused Chinook salmon PSC based on the amount used in the sector relative to the base limit of 1,200 fish. The maximum amount of Chinook salmon PSC that may be rolled over cannot exceed:

Suboption 1: 300 fish (25% of the limit of 1,200 fish)

Suboption 2: 600 fish (50% of the limit of 1,200 fish)

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed 10/1 (Kenny Down voting in opposition) February 9, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.

C4 IFQ MEDICAL LEASE PROVISION

The Council heard a presentation from NMFS' staff, Stephanie Warpinski, and NPFMC contractor, Darrell Brannan. NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham also presented the IFQ Committee Minutes on this agenda item. The following actions were taken.

Mr. Laukitis made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:

The Council recommends the following purpose and needs statement for this action and initiates analysis:

The Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program was designed to ensure that the sablefish and halibut fisheries are predominately owner-operated where the quota share (QS) holders fish the annual IFQ. Transfers (leases) of IFQ derived from catcher vessel QS has generally been prohibited. However, the program includes a provision that allows for the temporary leasing of catcher vessel IFQ if the QS holder has a medical condition, or must care for someone with a medical condition, that prevents the QS holder from fishing. The medical transfer provision was intended to reduce the hardship on QS holders while they address a temporary medical condition. However, the Council is concerned that a small group of QS holders is consistently using the medical transfer provision and the current regulatory language makes it difficult to deny transfers that appear to be counter to the Council's original intent. NMFS and IFQ fishermen would benefit from clarification of the Council's intent for the program and if necessary adjusting the regulations to better reflect the program's objectives.

The Council recommends the following suite of alternatives for the proposed action to modify the IFQ Medical Transfer provision.

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: Define "Certified Medical Professional"

Option 1: Replace the current definition with a single, broader definition of certified medical professional, such as "Health care provider." Health care provider could be defined as:

An eligible health care provider is an individual authorized to provide health care services by the State where he or she practices, and performs within the scope of their specialty to diagnose and treat medical conditions as defined by applicable Federal, state, or local laws and regulations. A health care provider outside the U.S. and its territories licensed to practice medicine is included in this definition.

Option 2: Define a Certified Medical Professional as all or a sub-set of those individuals defined in the Social Security Act Sections 1861(r) and 1861(s).

Alternative 3: Revise federal regulations to allow the medical transfer provision to be used for any medical reason for:

Option 1: 2 of 5 most recent years

Option 2: 3 of 7 most recent years

Note: Only transfers after implementation of new rule would count towards the limit

Mr. Marx made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Down:

Add suboption under Alternative 3 (**suboption in bold**)

Suboption 2: Define most recent year as one year (365 days) from the date the medical transfer application was approved by NMFS.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with one objection (Mr. Mezirow) February 10, 2018, at 10:15 a.m.

Ms. Peterson made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Cotten:

Add suboption under Alternative 2, Option 2 (**suboption in bold**)

Alternative 2: Define "Certified Medical Professional"

Option 1: Replace the current definition with a single, broader definition of certified medical professional, such as "Health care provider." Health care provider could be defined as:

An eligible health care provider is an individual authorized to provide health care services by the State where he or she practices, and performs within the scope of their specialty to diagnose and treat medical conditions as defined by applicable Federal, state, or local laws and regulations. A health care provider outside the U.S. and its territories licensed to practice medicine is included in this definition.

Option 2: Define a Certified Medical Professional as all or a sub-set of those individuals defined in the Social Security Act Sections 1861(r) and 1861(s).

Suboption: Option 1 and Option 2 would be limited to U.S. medical professionals.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed 6/5 (Mr. Mezirow, Mr. Tweit, Mr. Down, Mr. Balsiger, and Mr. Hull voted in opposition) February 10, 2018, at 10:17 a.m.

Ms. Peterson made the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

Add suboption under Alternative 3 option 2 that would apply to both option 1 and option 2 (**suboption in bold**)

Suboption 1: Establish a limit on the number of times (based on two options to define years) the medical transfer provision may be used (range of 5 to 10 times)

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection February 10, 2018, at 10:42 a.m.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Motion passed with no objection February 10, 2018, at 10:46 a.m.

C5 IFQ BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION PROVISION

The Council heard a presentation from NMFS' staff, Stephanie Warpinski, and NPFMC contractor, Darrell Brannan. NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham also presented the IFQ Committee Minutes on this agenda item. The following action was taken:

Mr. Laukitis made the following motion which was seconded by Ms. Peterson:

The Council adopts the following purpose and need statement and initiates analysis:

Purpose and Need

The Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program was designed to ensure that the sablefish and halibut fisheries are predominately owner-operated where the quota share (QS) holders fish the annual IFQ. Transfers (leases) of IFQ derived from catcher vessel QS has generally been prohibited. However, the IFQ Program includes provisions allow for temporary leasing of catcher vessel IFQ under a survivorship transfer privilege that is limited to the surviving spouse or designated "immediate family member." The intent is to reduce hardships for an estate's beneficiary or beneficiaries for up to three years while the estate is being settled. NMFS and IFQ fishermen would benefit from clarification of the Council's intent regarding who has the authority to lease IFQ for up to three years under the IFQ Program.

The Council recommends the following suite of options for the proposed action to modify the current regulations for the IFQ Beneficiary Transfer provision. The Council supports further analysis in considering permitting transfers to the estate in addition to spouses and immediate family members.

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: At 50 CFR 679.41(k) modify all references to surviving spouse and immediate family member by adding "estate."

Alternative 3: Define "immediate family member" in regulations at 50 CFR 679 as follows:

Option 1: US Office of Personnel Management definition

Option 2: Federal Family Medical Leave Act definition

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously on February 10, 2018, at 11:37 a.m.

C6 IFQ COMMITTEE – REPORT ON PROPOSALS

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham. The following actions were taken:

Mr. Laukitis made the following motion which was seconded by Ms. Peterson:

At the outset of the halibut/sablefish program, and through program revisions, the Council has worked to promote owner/operated fisheries. This has resulted in some quota share holders hiring a vessel and crew to harvest their IFQ while they are onboard but not actively participating. This practice occurs for many reasons; however, is inconsistent with the Council's objective that the fishery is dominated by owner/operators. The Council has three concerns with respect to this practice; 1) that it works against the objective of an owner/operated fleet, 2) the effects of uneven distribution of rents between the walk-on and vessel, and 3) that the walk-on arrangements may be exacerbating the lack of access to the fishery for second generation fishermen and new entrants. The Council intends to examine whether the program's participation and eligibility requirements should be improved to further promote the original objective of the halibut and sablefish program being dominated by owner/operator operations.

The Council tasks staff to develop a discussion paper that considers replacing the existing Transfer Eligibility Requirement (TEC) to hold halibut/sablefish quota share, with an eligibility requirement that is based on recent participation in any US commercial fishery. The discussion paper should focus on sea day requirements of 30, 60 or 90 days over a fixed three or five-year periods (not a rolling number of years).

This discussion paper should also focus on the tradeoffs and benefits of how this would fulfill the Council's original objective of promoting an owner/operator fleet, and concerns of the Council. Staff should consider how a sea day requirement based on recent participation may impact:

- Existing second generation participants, initial recipients, and new entrants
- Participants with small a amount of quota vs large amounts of quota
- Vessel owners, non-vessel owners and crew
- Participants utilizing walk-on arrangements and hired masters

Mr. Tweit made the following amendment which was seconded by Ms. Peterson:

(insert the following language **in bold**)

The Council tasks staff to develop a discussion paper that considers replacing the existing Transfer Eligibility Requirement (TEC) to hold halibut/sablefish quota share, with an eligibility requirement **that applies to both prospective and existing QS holders** that is based on recent participation in any US commercial fishery. The discussion paper should focus on sea day requirements of 30, 60 or 90 days over a fixed three or five-year periods (not a rolling number of years).

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection on February 11, 2018, at 9:20 a.m.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with one objection (Mr. Marx) on February 11, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.

Mr. Laukitis made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cotten:

A primary objective of the IFQ Program is to ensure that the halibut and sablefish IFQ fisheries are dominated by owner/operators. The Council has amended the IFQ Program several times since the program was implemented to further limit the use of hired masers and promote achievement of the objective of owner/operated fisheries. Despite these actions, the use of hired masters has increased. From 1995 to 2014, hired master use increased from 13% to 40% of the commercial catch limits in the halibut IFQ fishery, and from 13% to 55% of the TACs in the sablefish IFQ fishery.

The Council realizes it may be appropriate to further modify the hired master provision to meet its objective of ensuring the halibut and sablefish fisheries are dominated by owner/operators. The Council recognizes modifying this provision could have far reaching effects on participants and intends to carefully evaluate tradeoffs and benefits of limiting use of hired masters.

- Hired master use (count of hired masters and harvest) by regulatory area
- Hired master use (count of hired masters and harvest) by vessel size class
- Identify use of hired masters (count and harvest) for A shares, Corporations, CQE, and medical/beneficiary leases
- Describe the amount and distribution (by area and vessel) of IFQ harvested by a hired master and a quota share holder on the same vessel, by area and vessel size class
- Describe the participation patterns and connectivity between vessel owners, quota share holders and crew

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed 9/2 (Mr. Marx and Mr. Tweit voted in opposition) on February 11, 2018, at 10:02 a.m.

Ms. Peterson made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow:

I move that the Council initiate a discussion paper to allow Community Quota Entities (CQEs) in Area 3A to fish "D" class quota on "C" class vessels after (options: August 15, September 1st).

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection on February 11, 2018, at 10:05 a.m.

D2 OBSERVER AND EM PROJECTS

The Council heard presentations from NPFMC staff, Elizabeth Figus, and Deputy Director, Diana Evans, NOAA Fisheries staff, Jennifer Mondragon and Alicia Miller; and Liz Chilton of the National Observer Program in Maryland. The following actions were taken:

Mr. Merrill made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

The Council adopts the following purpose and need statement and alternatives for analysis:

Purpose and need

The North Pacific Observer Program (Observer Program) is widely recognized as successful and essential for the management of the North Pacific groundfish and halibut fisheries. The funding and annual planning and review process for monitoring vessels and processors in the partial coverage category are

designed to implement a scientifically reliable sampling plan to collect data necessary to manage the commercial groundfish and halibut fisheries. This system distributes the cost of observer coverage across participants in the partial coverage category, and provides annual flexibility to evaluate the performance of and improve the sampling plan, in consultation with the Council. Through this process, monitoring selection rates are adjusted annually according to the available budget. In addition, the monitoring selection rates may be adjusted in response to fishery management objectives, as funding allows.

The annual process of establishing observer coverage and EM selection rates in the partial coverage category using the Observer Program Annual Report and Draft Annual Deployment Plan is a well-designed, flexible, and legally defensible process. This annual process produces a statistically reliable sampling plan for the collection of scientifically robust data at any level of observer coverage, and can allow for annual consideration of policy-driven monitoring objectives identified through the Council process.

To continue to improve the program, maintain and enhance the Council's ability to meet policy objectives through monitoring, and fund deployment of electronic monitoring systems, additional funding for monitoring in the partial coverage category may be necessary.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: Status quo. Observer fee of 1.25% applies equally to all landings in the partial coverage category.

Alternative 2: Increase the observer fee up to 2% (analyze a range), to apply equally to all landings in the partial coverage category.

Alternative 3: Maintain the 1.25% observer fee applying equally to all landings in the partial coverage category, and additionally, raise the fee up to 2% (analyze a range) by gear sector (longline, pot, jig, trawl).

The Council supports the analytical approach as presented in the Analysis update. The analysis should also include a discussion of the relative impact of the alternatives with respect to Council policy objectives for monitoring beyond base thresholds.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection on February 11, 2018, at 2:50 p.m.

Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Cross:

The Council recommends the following order of priority for the EM projects:

1. Deck sorting of halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) with EM for compliance monitoring
2. Evaluation of alternative sampling methods for salmon on CGOA Rockfish trawl CVs
3. Full retention on AFA Pollock CVs with EM compliance
4. Full retention on WGOA pollock trawl CVs with EM compliance
5. Implementation of EM on fixed gear catcher vessels <40ft Length Overall (LOA)

The EM Workgroup should continue to be a forum for EM development and to inform Council decisions and recommendations to NMFS on EM integration. However, to accommodate the prioritized list of EM projects, the focus of the EM Workgroup should shift its primary focus from fixed gear to trawl gear and membership in the EM Workgroup should be reconfigured to ensure representation of the trawl fleet. As a first task, the Council directs the reconstituted EM Workgroup to assess the ways in which EM can meet monitoring objectives for different trawl fisheries.

The Council also requests that NMFS coordinate with the OAC to review aspects of the fixed-gear EM program and incorporate stakeholder input to continue to improve and support the program.

Regarding the list of analytical priorities, the Council supports the prioritization of the observer fee analysis as the first priority for projects in Council review.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection on February 11, 2018, at 3:12 p.m

D1 ARCTIC EXPLORATORY FISHING

The Council heard a presentation and the Ecosystem Committee Report on this issue from NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean. The following action was taken:

Mr. Cotten made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

The Council moves to take no further action at this time.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection on February 11, 2018, at 4:03 p.m

D3 PROGRAMMATIC GROUND FISH OBJECTIVES

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff, Jim Armstrong. The Council took no action on this agenda item.

E1 ECOSYSTEM WORKSHOP – REPORT ON OUTCOMES

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC Deputy Director, Diana Evans and Fisheries Forum Co-Director, Katie Latanich. The Council did not take action on this agenda item.

The Council held a one-day ecosystem research workshop on Wednesday, February 7th, in conjunction with the February Council meeting. The workshop was intended to engage the broader Council community, including Council members, scientific and industry advisors, and stakeholders, in a discussion about how the growing body of ecosystem knowledge can be incorporated into the Council process.

E2 ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean. The following action was taken:

Mr. Tweit made the following motion which was seconded by Ms. Peterson:

The Council tasks the Bering Sea FEP Team to incorporate the Ecosystem Committee's comments on the pre-draft Core FEP into the next draft. The Council also tasks staff and the Bering Sea FEP Team to continue to develop, in the FEP, an approach for a community engagement plan and structured process to integrate traditional knowledge in the Council process.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection on February 12, 2018, at 10:34 a.m.

E3 SOCIAL SCIENCE PLANNING TEAM UPDATE

The Council received a Social Science Planning Team (SSPT) update from NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham on the new advisory body's membership, scope, and preliminary agenda for a public in-person meeting in May 2018.

After receiving feedback from the SSC, the Chairman provisionally approved nominations for three new members. Dr. Mike Downs (SSC), Dr. Elizabeth Figus (NPFMC), and Mike Fey (AKFIN) were nominated based on their relevant expertise and experience with the collection and application of social science data to fishery management. The Council will discuss and finalize the nominations in executive session in April.

E1 STAFF TASKING

Executive Director, David Witherell presented a list of items for discussion at staff tasking from the B reports and other items during the meeting and other staff tasking materials. In addition to discussing the relative priority of previously tasked projects, the Council initiated new actions and letters and clarified direction and tasking for its various committees.

THE COUNCIL ADJOURNED ON MONDAY FEBRUARY 12, 2017 AT 3:40 P.M.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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David Witherell, Executive Director



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TIME LOG North Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting held in Seattle, Washington Renaissance Hotel February 8 – 12, 2018

THURSDAY February 8, 2018

02/08/2018 08:05:35 AM Call to Order
02/08/2018 08:05:43 AM Motion – Approval of the Agenda

B1 REPORTS

02/08/2018 08:06:52 AM **B1 Executive Director's Report** – David Witherell
02/08/2018 08:12:52 AM Douglas DeMaster Farewell
02/08/2018 08:15:52 AM B1 Continued
02/08/2018 08:54:26 AM **B2 AFSC Report** – Dr. Doug DeMaster
02/08/2018 09:49:16 AM B2 GOA Climate Regional Action Plan Report – Dr. Martin Dorn
02/08/2018 10:13:11 AM Break
02/08/2018 10:35:57 AM B2 Pollock Age Determination – Tom Helser
02/08/2018 10:56:38 AM **B2 NMFS Report – Glenn Merrill**
02/08/2018 11:22:32 AM B2 NOAA GC Litigation Update – **Lauren Smoker**
02/08/2018 11:27:16 AM **B3 ADF&G Report** – Trent Hartill
02/08/2018 11:41:07 AM **B4 USCG Report** – LT Yvonne Yang
02/08/2018 11:54:30 PM Lunch Break
02/08/2018 01:10:38 PM **B5 USFWS Report** – No report was given
02/08/2018 01:11:01 PM **B6 IPHC Report** – Steve Keith and Ian Stewart
02/08/2018 02:12:52 PM **B7 Protected Species Report** – Steve MacLean
02/08/2018 02:20:23 PM SSC Report – Anne Hollowed
02/08/2018 02:30:43 PM B Public Testimony Out of Order – Fred Phillip and Harry Lincoln
02/08/2018 02:49:28 PM Break
02/08/2018 03:15:10 PM SSC Report Continued
02/08/2018 03:28:11 PM **B Public Testimony**
02/08/2018 03:28:46 PM Mark Fina
02/08/2018 03:34:11 PM Chris Woodley
02/08/2018 03:55:07 PM Mike Hyde
02/08/2018 04:05:52 PM Becca Gisclair & Mike Lenne
02/08/2018 04:19:16 PM Jeff Farvour
02/08/2018 04:35:26 PM Recess

FRIDAY February 9, 2018

C1 BSAI CRAB NORTON SOUND RKC ACL, CPT REPORT – FINAL SPECS

02/09/2018 08:04:06 AM C1 Introduction to Presentation – NPFMC staff, Sara Cleaver
02/09/2018 08:06:02 AM **C1 Presentation** - William Stockhausen (AFSC)
02/09/2018 08:50:21 AM SSC Report – Anne Hollowed
02/09/2018 09:03:39 AM AP Report – Angle Drobnica
02/09/2018 09:04:19 AM **C1 Mr. Hartill Motion**

No public testimony was taken on this agenda item.

C2 SMALL SIDEBOARDS

02/09/2018 09:21:39 AM **C2 Presentation** – Jon McCracken
02/09/2018 09:24:15 AM AP Report – Matt Upton
02/09/2018 09:27:31 AM **C2 Dr. Balsiger Motion**
02/09/2018 09:33:18 AM Break

No public testimony was taken on this agenda item.

C3 GOA CATCHER VESSEL CHINOOK PSC LIMIT ADJUSTMENTS

02/09/2018 09:54:28 AM **C3 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham
02/09/2018 11:34:36 AM SSC Report – Anne Hollowed
02/09/2018 11:43:06 AM AP Report – Angel Drobnica
02/09/2018 12:01:11 PM Lunch Break
02/09/2018 01:05:52 PM Final SSC Report – Anne Hollowed
02/09/2018 01:40:08 PM **C3 Public Testimony**
02/09/2018 01:39:54 PM Bob Krueger
02/09/2018 01:49:25 PM Rebecca Skinner
02/09/2018 02:03:05 PM Paddy O'Donnell
02/09/2018 02:06:36 PM Jeff Farvour
02/09/2018 02:15:06 PM Heather Mann
02/09/2018 02:25:14 PM Julie Bonney
02/09/2018 02:35:53 PM Tom Evich
02/09/2018 02:40:23 PM Beth Stewart
02/09/2018 02:48:25 PM Don Ashley
02/09/2018 03:00:02 PM Rob Sanders
02/09/2018 03:00:11 PM Break
02/09/2018 03:24:44 PM **C3 Mr. Merrill Motion**
02/09/2018 04:00:03 PM Recess

No public testimony was taken on this agenda item.

SATURDAY February 10, 2018

02/10/2018 08:08:55 AM C6 Public Testimony Out of Order – Alexis Kwachka
02/10/2018 08:17:02 AM C6 Public Testimony Out of Order - Natasha Hayden

C4 IFQ MEDICAL LEASE PROVISION

02/10/2018 08:33:13 AM **C4 Presentation** – Stephanie Warpinski (NMFS) and NPFMC Contractor, Darrell Brannan
02/10/2018 09:17:17 AM C4 IFQ Committee Minutes – NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham
02/10/2018 09:19:28 AM C4 AP Report – Matt Upton
02/10/2018 09:30:06 AM **C4 Mr. Laukitis Motion**
02/10/2018 09:54:58 AM Break
02/10/2018 09:54:58 AM C4 Deliberations Continued
02/10/2018 10:50:18 AM Break

No public testimony was taken on this agenda item.

C5 IFQ BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION PROVISION

02/10/2018 11:05:18 AM **C5 Presentation** – Darrell Brannan and Stephanie Warpinski
02/10/2018 11:23:19 AM C5 IFQ Committee Minutes – Sam Cunningham
02/10/2018 11:25:57 AM AP Report – Matt Upton
02/10/2018 11:31:33 AM **C5 Public Testimony**
02/10/2018 11:31:39 AM Shawn McManus
02/10/2018 11:37:17 AM **C5 Mr. Laukitis Motion**
02/10/2018 11:43:42 AM Lunch Break

C6 IFQ COMMITTEE – REPORT ON PROPOSALS

02/10/2018 01:06:58 PM **C6 IFQ Committee Report** – NPFMC staff, Sam Cunningham
02/10/2018 01:56:36 PM AP Report – Matt Upton
02/10/2018 02:08:45 PM **C6 Public Testimony**
02/10/2018 02:09:34 PM Duncan Fields
02/10/2018 02:26:52 PM John McHenry
02/10/2018 02:43:02 PM Dwight Riederer
02/10/2018 02:51:54 PM Wade Bassi and Brian Dalfom
02/10/2018 03:02:48 PM Adam Westfall
02/10/2018 03:05:29 PM Eric Thorkildsen
02/10/2018 03:10:29 PM Break
02/10/2018 03:28:13 PM James Reed
02/10/2018 03:32:24 PM Maria Gibson
02/10/2018 03:34:34 PM Jeff Peterson
02/10/2018 03:37:18 PM Jack McHenry
02/10/2018 03:47:09 PM Shawn McManus

02/10/2018 04:07:47 PM Jim Johnson
02/10/2018 04:15:11 PM Bob Alverson
02/10/2018 04:38:35 PM John Crowley
02/10/2018 04:43:01 PM Michael Offerman
02/10/2018 04:44:43 PM Jacob Clampitt
02/10/2018 04:47:03 PM Andrew Olsen
02/10/2018 04:52:21 PM Kristian Olsen
02/10/2018 04:56:05 PM Peter Olsen
02/10/2018 05:03:40 PM Simeon Swetzof Jr.
02/10/2018 05:13:19 PM Jeff Farvour
02/10/2018 05:16:12 PM Dave Fraser
02/10/2018 05:21:33 PM Dan Falvey
02/10/2018 05:28:25 PM Jan Standaert
02/10/2018 05:35:43 PM Recess

SUNDAY February 11, 2018

02/11/2018 08:38:11 AM Call to Order
02/11/2018 08:45:19 AM **C6 Mr. Laukitis Motion – Eligibility Requirement (TEC)**
02/11/2018 09:40:17 AM **C6 Mr. Laukitis Motion – Hired Masters**
02/11/2018 10:05:25 AM **C6 Ms. Peterson Motion – CQEs and D Class Quota**
02/11/2018 10:26:06 AM Break

D2 OBSERVER AND EM PROJECTS

02/11/2018 10:48:47 AM **D2 Presentation** –Diana Evans, Elizabeth Figus, and Liz Chilton
02/11/2018 11:48:37 AM Lunch Break
02/11/2018 01:05:22 PM Observer Task Status – NMFS’ staff, Alicia Miller and Jennifer Mondragon
02/11/2018 02:00:46 PM **AP Report** - Angel Drobnica
02/11/2018 02:03:56 PM **D2 Public Testimony**
02/11/2018 02:04:37 PM Dan Falvey, Abigail Turner and Julie Bonney
02/11/2018 02:14:37 PM Ruth Christiansen
02/11/2018 02:19:51 PM Molly Zaleski
02/11/2018 02:31:42 PM **D2 Mr. Merrill Motion**
02/11/2018 02:50:58 PM **D2 Mr. Tweit Motion**
02/11/2018 03:12:53 PM Break

D1 ARCTIC EXPLORATORY FISHING

02/11/2018 03:30:46 PM **D1 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean
02/11/2018 03:53:23 PM Ecosystem Committee Review of D1 – Steve MacLean
02/11/2018 03:58:05 PM AP Report – Angel Drobnica
02/11/2018 04:02:33 PM **D1 Mr. Cotten Motion**

No public testimony was taken on this agenda item.

D3 PROGRAMMATIC GROUND FISH OBJECTIVES

02/11/2018 04:05:37 PM **D3 Presentation** – NPFMC staff, Jim Armstrong
02/11/2018 04:38:22 PM Recess

No public testimony was taken on this agenda item.

MONDAY February 12, 2018

E1 ECOSYSTEM WORKSHOP – PRELIMINARY REPORT ON OUTCOMES

02/12/2018 08:38:54 AM E1 Workshop Summary Report – NPFMC Deputy Director, Diana Evans and Fisheries Forum, Katie Latanich
02/12/2018 09:22:20 AM **E1 Public Comment**
02/12/2018 09:22:28 AM Phillip Zavadil and Mateo Paz-Soldan
02/12/2018 09:39:55 AM Break

E2 ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

02/12/2018 10:01:59 AM **E2 Ecosystem Committee Report** – NPFMC staff, Steve MacLean
02/12/2018 10:05:58 AM **E2 Public Comment**
02/12/2018 10:06:14 AM Lauren Divine
02/12/2018 10:26:45 AM **E2 Mr. Tweit Motion**

E3 SOCIAL SCIENCE PLANNING TEAM UPDATE

02/12/2018 10:37:59 AM **E3 SSPT Update** – Sam Cunningham
02/12/2018 11:18:54 AM **E3 Public Comment**
02/12/2018 11:19:02 AM Lauren Divine

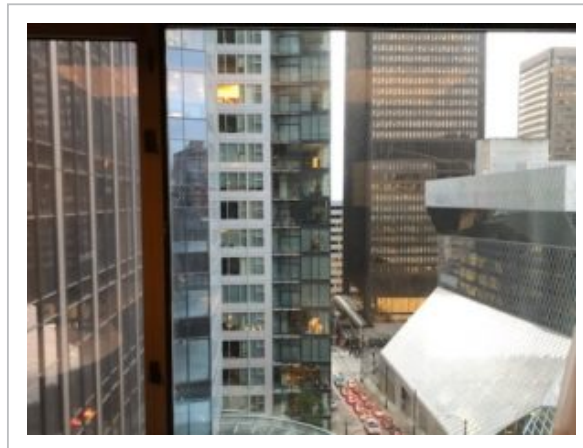
E5 STAFF TASKING

02/12/2018 11:38:20 AM Summary of Items & 3 Meeting Outlook – NPFMC Executive Director David Witherell
02/12/2018 11:57:44 AM AP Report – Angel Drobnica
02/12/2018 12:00:47 PM Lunch Break
02/12/2018 01:19:09 PM **E5 Public Comment**
02/12/2018 01:19:49 PM Dave Fraser and Angel Drobnica
02/12/2018 01:36:14 PM Mark Fina
02/12/2018 01:47:58 PM Steve Minor
02/12/2018 01:59:11 PM Jerry Downing
02/12/2018 02:06:20 PM Stephen Rhoads
02/12/2018 02:31:45 PM Break
02/12/2018 02:40:52 PM Deliberations
02/12/2018 03:40:30 PM Meeting Adjourned

February 2018 Newsletter

Thank you, Seattle!

The evening before the Council meeting, fishing industry and other involved groups hosted a seafood buffet and reception at the Renaissance Marriott Hotel in downtown Seattle. Many people had attended the Ecosystem Research Workshop held at the same location earlier in the day and were able to continue their conversations in a relaxed setting. Thank you to the industry groups for sponsoring the event and for providing a chance for Council members, stakeholders, staff, and public to engage outside the scheduled meeting days. A good time was had by all.



Elections and Appointments

The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) elected Anne Hollowed and Gordon Kruse as co-Chairs of the SSC for 2018. Dr. Hollowed chaired the February meeting, and will chair in April and December. Dr. Kruse will chair in June and October. Sherri Dressel was re-elected as vice-Chair.

The Council noted the retirement of Doug DeMaster. DeMaster has been the Science and Research Director of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center since 2001, and served in numerous capacities as marine mammal expert prior to Director. David Witherell noted that he has worked closely with the Council throughout his tenure, providing guidance on the conservation measures for Steller sea lions and other marine mammals, fisheries, and marine ecosystems. His knowledge and wisdom, positive attitude, and friendly demeanor will be sorely missed by all of us in the North Pacific. Best wishes in your retirement Doug, and a big mahalo nui loa for your dedication to the conservation and management of marine ecosystems off Alaska.



Chairman Hull presents Dr. Doug Demaster with a plaque commemorating service

The Council's Advisory Panel re-elected Ernie Weiss as Chair, and Angel Drobnika and Matt Upton as vice-Chairs.

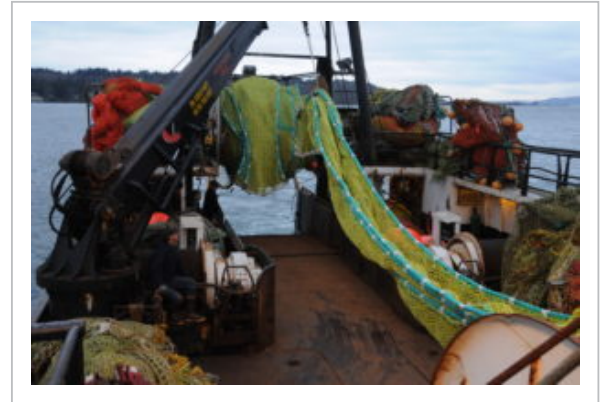
The Council Chairman appointed Denise May to the Charter Halibut Management Committee.

The Chairman also provisionally appointed Dr. Mike Downs (SSC member), Dr. Elizabeth Figus (NPFMC staff), and Mike Fey (AKFIN staff) to the Social Science Planning Team. The Council will consider **making their appointments permanent in April**.

Seeking Trawl CVs to Join EM Workgroup

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

In February 2018, the Council changed priorities for the EM workgroup to reflect a new focus in developing EM use on trawl catcher vessels. The Council formed the EM Workgroup in **February 2014** to create an ongoing forum for EM discussions (initially with a fixed gear focus), and to inform Council decisions and recommendations to NMFS on EM integration. To date, the EM Workgroup has helped Council and the agency to develop the EM program that has been implemented in fixed gear sectors. **This February, the Council announced that it is reconstituting membership and is soliciting representatives of trawl catcher vessels and EM providers in the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska to join the EM Workgroup.**



The EM Workgroup's next meeting is scheduled for May 15 in Seattle. If you are interested in joining the EM Workgroup or re-confirming your existing membership (if you represent an EM provider), please send a letter of interest to Elizabeth Figus at the Council office (elizabeth.figus@noaa.gov; 907-271-2801) by noon on March 30, 2018.

AFSC Marine Mammal Lab Mammal Status

The SSC received a series of presentations from ecosystem program leads at the AFSC Marine Mammal Laboratory, as requested by the SSC in December 2017. The purpose of the presentations is to regularly bring to the SSC information about marine mammals of conservation concern, or for those with unexpected survey or research results. For this meeting, Dr. John Bengtson provided an overview of the Marine Mammal Laboratory, Dr. Tom Gelatt provided an overview of the Alaska Ecosystem Program and recent survey results for the Eastern and Western Distinct Population Segments of Steller sea lions. Dr. Peter Boveng provided an overview of the Polar Ecosystems Program and provided information about harbor seals and Bearded seals. Dr. Phil Clapham provided an overview of the Cetacean Assessment Program, and information about the eastern Pacific population of North Pacific right whales. Future presentations will occur during the February Council meetings. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.



Steller Sea Lions at a haulout

BSAI Crab Specifications

The final Norton Sound red king crab assessment was reviewed by the SSC, AP and Council in order to set catch specifications for the 2018 fishery. This stock has a separate specifications timing in order to accommodate the CDQ fishery which can open in early May. The stock is healthy and with an estimated mature male biomass for this stock slightly below its target level ($B_{MSY\ proxy} = 4.82$ million lbs) with an OFL calculated by the Tier 4b control rule. The Council adopted the 2018 Norton Sound Red King Crab SAFE chapter and an OFL of 0.43 million lbs and ABC of 0.35 million lbs (which used a 20% buffer from the OFL), as recommended by the SSC. The SSC also recommended the stock as a candidate for Tier 3 management. The stock is not overfished nor is overfishing occurring on this stock. Staff contact is Diana Stram.



Small Sideboards

The Council took final action in February to prohibit directed fishing by regulation for species with sideboard limits insufficient to support directed fishing for non-exempt American Fisheries Act (AFA) vessels and Crab Rationalization (CR) vessels. The Council also recommended removing the sideboard limit on AFA catcher/processors for Central Aleutian Islands Atka mackerel since the sideboard limit under the AFA (11.5%) exceeds the allocation to the trawl limited access sector (10%) that was established by the Amendment 80 Program. This alternative and option support the original intent of creating these sideboard limits to protect non-AFA and non-CR Program fisheries from potential adverse impacts associated with AFA and CR programs. The Council's recommendation eliminates the need for NMFS staff to annually calculate dozens of sideboard limits for the harvest specifications, and then concurrently close most of these sideboard fisheries to directed fishing at the beginning of the fishing years. This approach also simplifies an element of annual data entry and programming for NMFS's groundfish catch accounting system and should realize modest cost savings.



Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

GOA Trawl CV Chinook Salmon PSC

The Council considered an initial review analysis of alternatives to modify the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) non-pollock trawl catcher vessel (CV) sector's prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for Chinook salmon. The Council

established a purpose and need statement that affirms the need to balance the optimum yield objective with bycatch minimization, and the need to do so in light of the best available information on variability in annual Chinook PSC levels and in the groundfish fisheries themselves. The Council's statement notes that new information has become available since the Council originally took action to set PSC limits for these sectors in 2013; that information includes expanded observer coverage on smaller trawl CVs (less than 60 feet in length) and continued genetic sampling efforts to determine the region of origin for GOA trawl Chinook PSC.



The alternatives under consideration include a No Action alternative (status quo PSC limits), increased limits for the non-pollock trawl CV sectors (Rockfish Program and non-Rockfish Program), and additional flexibility under the existing limits in the form of limited one-year rollovers of unused Chinook PSC. The current limit ("base limit") for non-Rockfish Program CVs is 2,700 Chinook salmon PSC per year; the limit for Rockfish Program CVs is 1,200 Chinook per year. Alternatives to modify existing annual PSC limits could increase allowable Chinook removals by up to 3,000 fish in the non-Rockfish Program CV sector and by up to 900 fish in the Rockfish Program CV sector. For each sector, the Council added a "flexibility approach" (Option 4) that would maintain the current annual PSC limit but allow a portion of unused Chinook—relative to the sector's base limit—to be rolled over to the sector's limit in the following year. Rollovers would not accumulate over multiple years. The maximum amount of Chinook PSC that can be rolled over would be capped at (suboptions) 25%, 50%, or 75% of the sector's base limit. The maximum rollover for the non-Rockfish Program CV sector would be 2,025 Chinook, and the maximum for the Rockfish Program CV sector would be 900 Chinook. None of the alternatives under consideration would permit total Chinook PSC in the GOA trawl fisheries to exceed the annual amount that triggers reconsultation under the Endangered Species Act listing for Chinook salmon or southern resident killer whales (40,000 Chinook).

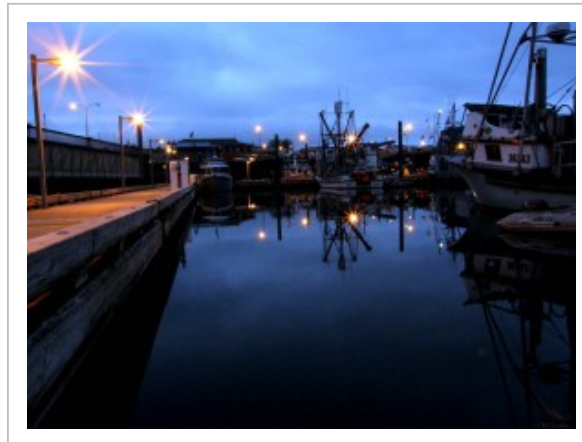
The Council requested a second initial review draft so that it could receive additional information about the status of Chinook salmon stocks and commercial/non-commercial salmon fisheries that might be affected by PSC in the groundfish trawl fishery. The Council noted that multiple Chinook stocks from regions whose presence has been detected in trawl PSC samples are experiencing poor returns. Among other items, the next iteration of this analysis will include additional information on Chinook stock status throughout the Pacific coast (US and Canada), conservation management measures enacted in directed salmon fisheries, Chinook abundance in the GOA, hatchery releases, and the best available estimates of natural mortality rates for the immature Chinook that are taken as PSC in trawl fisheries.

The Council is scheduled to receive an updated initial review draft at its April 2018 meeting in Anchorage, AK. Final action is tentatively scheduled for October 2018.

Staff contact is Sam Cunningham

IFQ Medical Transfer Provision

The Council reviewed a discussion paper, developed a Purpose and Need Statement, and approved alternatives for analysis. Alternatives were included to broaden the definition of a Certified Medical Professional that would be allowed to certify the Medical Transfer Application Form. Currently only a licensed medical doctor, an advanced nurse practitioner, or a primary community health aide may submit an affidavit to NMFS. The two options included in the Council's motion would broaden the definition to include other commonly used medical professionals as well as an option to either include or exclude medical professionals who are practicing outside the U.S.



An alternative was also added to provide options for the maximum number of years that the medical transfer provision can be used for **any medical reason**, beyond which the QS holder would be precluded from fishing his or her IFQ that year. Those options are: 2 of 5 most recent years, or 3 of 7 most recent years. Two options were also included to define when a "year" begins. A year would be defined as either a calendar year or 365 days from the date on which the medical transfer was approved by NMFS. Finally, the Council included an option that would establish a limit on the number of times a QS holder could use the medical transfer provision. The range of years to be analyzed is 5 to 10 years.

The Purpose and Need Statement and the Council's alternatives for analysis are available on the [Council's website](#) under the C-4 Agenda Item from the February 2018 Council meeting.

Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

IFQ Beneficiary Designation

The Council reviewed a [discussion paper](#) on IFQ survivorship beneficiary designation and developed a [Purpose and Need Statement and alternatives to be analyzed](#) (available on the Council's website under the Agenda Item C5).

The alternatives provide options for the Council to add "estate" to all references to surviving spouse and immediate family at 50 CFR 679.41(k). The proposed change is intended to clarify which individuals may receive QS and lease IFQ for three years after a QS holder's death. The Council also developed an alternative to address the definition of an "immediate family member." That term is not defined in regulations at 50 CFR 679, and the lack of a



definition has created problems for NMFS when administering the provision. The two definitions of an immediate family member being considered by the Council are those currently used by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the Federal Family Medical Leave Act.

Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

IFQ Committee

The IFQ Committee met on February 5, 2018 to review two Council discussion papers and a set of 20 proposals for modifications to the IFQ program which were offered by members of the Committee. The discussion papers addressed use of IFQ lease provisions that cover **medical hardship** and **survivorship beneficiaries** and are summarized separately.

The Committee reviewed proposals that fell into six general categories: eligibility to own/purchase quota share (QS), use of the hired master provision, definition of an “owner-operator,” QS ownership/use caps and QS blocks, the creation of QS pools to support new entrants and/or rural community engagement, and the Federal loan program administered by NMFS Financial Services Division.



The Council made three motions to request discussion papers.

- *Eligibility Requirement* – The Council will consider whether to replace the Transfer Eligibility Certificate (TEC) to purchase QS with a requirement to demonstrate recent fishery participation in order to purchase or hold QS. “Sea-day” requirements could range from 30 to 90 days over a fixed three- to five-year period. The Council is considering this issue in light of public testimony and information in the 20-year Program Review that identifies arrangements that do not reflect the original program goal of an owner-operated fleet.
- *Hired Master Use* – The Council initiated a discussion paper that explores the use of the hired master provision relative to its original intent. The Council recognized the natural tension between the objective of an owner-operated fleet and the diversity of business arrangements that utilize hired masters in a net beneficial manner. The Council requested information on the use of the provision and a characterization of the various business arrangements.
- *CQE Fish-Up Provision in Area 3A* – The Council will consider whether to allow Community Quota Entities (CQE) to fish Category D halibut IFQ on Category C vessels after (options) August 15 or September 1. The Council received testimony that vessel size restrictions and poor weather and/or disabled small vessels has led to CQE IFQ going unfishable by eligible residents.

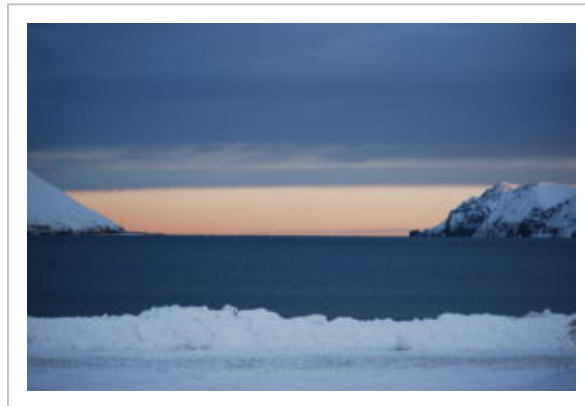
In staff tasking, the Council noted its intent to consider other IFQ proposals at a future meeting and will reconvene the IFQ Committee as the discussion papers become ready for review. The Council plans to hold an

informal IFQ outreach session concurrent with its June meeting in Kodiak, AK. Further information will be made available at www.npfmc.org or by contacting the Council at 907-271-2809.

Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

Arctic Exploratory Fishing

The Council reviewed a discussion paper that reviewed international fishery agreements and provisions regarding exploratory fishing. The Council requested in June 2017 that the paper identify how different international organizations define exploratory fishing, discuss management measures related to exploratory fishing, identify challenges and successes to management, and identify best practices that could be applied to the Central Arctic Ocean and Arctic Management Area. The Council, in the motion, noted their intention to amend the Arctic FMP to provide guidance for exploratory fishing in the Arctic Management Area. The discussion paper summarized exploratory fishing provisions in six international organizations in the North Pacific and Bering Sea, North Atlantic, and Antarctica. After review and discussion, the Council approved a motion to take no further action to amend the Arctic FMP or continue development of the paper. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.



Electronic Monitoring Priorities

At the February 2018 meeting in Seattle, the Council reviewed the status of observer and electronic monitoring (EM) projects in the groundfish and Pacific halibut fisheries off Alaska. The Council received a presentation from the National Observer Program about **observer insurance issues**. The presentation further provided an overview of the National Observer Program Safety Review. The Safety Review document was not available for public review at the time of the meeting, but it will likely be available for Council review at the upcoming meeting in April or June 2018.

The Council reviewed the **observer tasking list** and a discussion paper about **EM prioritization**. The Council recommended the **following reordered priority for EM projects**:



1. Deck sorting of halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) with EM for compliance monitoring

2. Evaluation of alternative sampling methods for salmon on CGOA Rockfish trawl CVs
3. Full retention on AFA Pollock CVs with EM compliance
4. Full retention on WGOA pollock trawl CVs with EM compliance
5. Implementation of EM on fixed gear catcher vessels <40ft Length Overall (LOA)

The Council further recommended that the EM Workgroup continue to be a forum for EM development and to inform Council decisions and recommendations to NMFS on EM integration. However, to accommodate the re-prioritized list of EM projects, the focus of the EM Workgroup will shift from fixed gear to trawl gear and membership in the EM Workgroup will be reconfigured to ensure representation of the trawl catcher vessel fleet. [A call for nominations](#) of representatives from the trawl catcher vessel fleet is open **until noon on March 30, 2018**.

The Council noted the importance of passing on the legacy of information from fixed gear EM Workgroup members to the newer trawl members. Therefore, the Council is interested in having a transition meeting of old and new fishery representatives at the EM Workgroup meeting this May to change over the workgroup focus from the fixed gear fleet to the trawl fleet. As a first task, the Council directed the reconstituted EM Workgroup to assess the ways in which EM can meet monitoring objectives for different trawl fisheries. Staff contact is [Elizabeth Figus](#).

Observer Fee Analysis

The Council reviewed a progress report on the observer fee analysis. The Council adopted a purpose and need statement, as well as three action alternatives for the fee analysis:

Alternative 1: Status quo. Observer fee of 1.25% applies equally to all landings in the partial coverage category.

Alternative 2: Increase the observer fee up to 2% (analyze a range), to apply equally to all landings in the partial coverage category.

Alternative 3: Maintain the 1.25% observer fee applying equally to all landings in the partial coverage category, and additionally, raise the fee up to 2% (analyze a range) by gear sector (longline, pot, jig, trawl).

The Council supports the analytical approach presented by staff, which outlines the milestones for the earliest implementation date in 2021. In addition, the Council recommended that the analysis include a discussion of the relative impacts of the alternatives with respect to Council policy objectives for monitoring beyond base thresholds. The Council supported placing the observer fee analysis as the first priority for observer tasking projects in Council review.



The Council requested the OAC and OAC subgroup review and provide input on the Analysis prior to initial review by the Council. Initial coordination with the OAC is planned in May, with an opportunity for further coordination expected in September of 2018.

The Council [motion](#) is available online, and staff contact is Elizabeth Figus.

Economic SAFE review

The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the Groundfish and Crab Economic SAFE reports as presented by economists Ben Fissel and Brian Garber-Yonts, respectively, from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center's Economic and Social Science Research Division. Through dialogue with the SSC, these Economic SAFEs are continually being improved in order to better capture and communicate economic and sociological conditions relative to the groundfish and crab fisheries. Improvement in the quality and quantity of socio-economic information available to the SSC increases their ability to assess actions proposed by the Council. The Economic SAFEs characterize economic and social conditions from the latest complete year for which data are available. [For the February 2018 review](#), the data were complete through 2016.



The SSC also received a presentation from social scientist Sarah Wise (AFSC) on community metrics in the SAFE, and an overview of programmatic research on human dimensions in North Pacific fisheries that will be undertaken. This research is important for understanding how important fisheries are to the culture and economy of individual communities, and for identifying communities that are vulnerable to changes in fisheries or fishery management.

Steve Kasperski presented updates on other socio-economic programs and projects to keep the SSC informed about developments in research relevant to Alaska fisheries and affected communities, and also to solicit recommendations from the SSC to improve these programs and projects. Ongoing revisions to improve the Economic Data Reports required under Amendment 91 to the BSAI Groundfish FMP (Chinook salmon bycatch management) were reviewed. The SSC supported revision of the EDR process including the skipper surveys to better reflect current issues.

Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

Ecosystem Research Workshop

The Council held a one-day ecosystem research workshop on Wednesday, February 7th, in conjunction with the February Council meeting. The workshop was intended to engage the broader Council community,

including Council members, scientific and industry advisors, and stakeholders, in a discussion about how the growing body of ecosystem knowledge can be incorporated into the Council process. The workshop was well attended and included stakeholder representation from diverse interest groups and Alaska communities. A successful outcome of the workshop was the opportunity for Council members to sit down together with SSC and Advisory Panel members, and stakeholders, to examine a strategic topic for the Council.



Speakers in the first half of the workshop set the stage for understanding the context for ecosystem-based fishery management in Alaska, and the tools in use for bringing in ecosystem information and for understanding and planning for climate change effects. Presentations are posted on the [Council website](#). In the afternoon, participants used the recent example of the change in stock status of Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska in 2017, and how the Council, NMFS, and stakeholders reacted, as a case study. In breakout groups, participants explored what worked well, what were challenges or opportunities for improvement, and how to apply these lessons to other management scenarios.

[Fisheries Forum staff](#), who helped to facilitate the workshop for the Council, presented a [preliminary summary](#) of the cross-cutting themes from participants at the end of the February Council meeting. The participants emphasized that the starting point for the discussion should be that Alaskan fishery management is working well, with healthy fisheries and intact ecosystems, and an inclusive and transparent process. With respect to how that management framework will hold up in a changing environment, there were some key issues that were echoed throughout the breakout groups. These included how to identify early warning indicators of change, and what to do about them; how to incorporate “squishy” data in the management process, and what is the role for non-traditional data sources such as local and traditional knowledge; how to strengthen two-way communication between and among scientists, managers, and stakeholders; and how to build management strategies that are flexible enough to respond to a changing environment.

A formal workshop summary will be available for the June Council meeting. The Council requested staff consider how the report might focus the Council on how to continue the conversation, especially with respect to some of the cross-cutting themes such as what are the Council’s objectives for managing in a changing environment; do we share the same tolerance for risk; and how do we prioritize and make tradeoffs to make the best use of limited resources. The Council intends to schedule time during the June Council meeting to review the report and consider how to take further action.

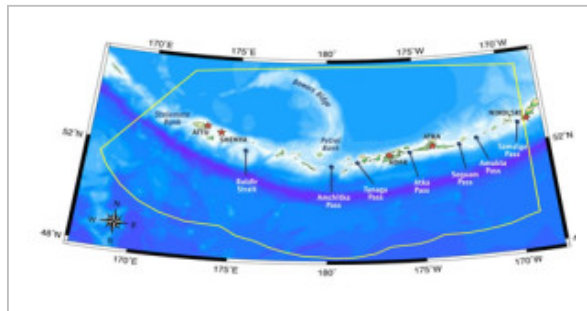
Staff contact is Diana Evans.

Ecosystem Committee/Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

The NPFMC Ecosystem Committee met on February 6, 2018 from 8 AM to 5:30 PM in Seattle, WA. In addition to the discussion of the Arctic Exploratory Fishery discussion paper addressed elsewhere, the committee

reviewed a pre-draft Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan and received presentations from the Pribilof Islands on their perspectives on ecosystem issues. The committee thanked the representatives from St. Paul Island and St. George Island for their presentations. The committee requested examples of co-production of knowledge and suggested that NOAA Fisheries may consider a workshop to evaluate the potential for co-production methods to be incorporated into fishery management processes.

The Council requested that staff continue to work on the FEP document and incorporate comments from the committee, available in the [committee minutes](#). At the committee's request, the Council chose to delay review of the preliminary draft FEP to October and requested that the committee provide additional opportunity to review and provide feedback on the revised FEP document before it is distributed to the Council.

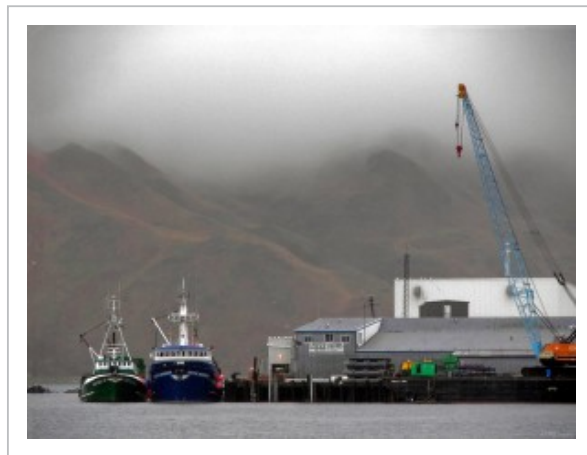


Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Social Science Planning Team

The Council received a Social Science Planning Team (SSPT) update on the new advisory body's membership, scope, and preliminary agenda for a public in-person meeting in May 2018. The meeting will take place in Anchorage, AK on dates to be determined during the week of May 7. Details will be provided on the [SSPT webpage](#) when they become available.

The SSPT will review the first iteration of a social science data "gap analysis" that identifies areas of need, existing sources that are underutilized, and pathways to incorporate existing/new information into the management process. The SSPT will continue to refine its scope and prioritize its activity by reviewing past SSC comments on social science information needs. The Council encouraged the SSPT to reflect on its "mission" as the group gains insight from the gap analysis. The SSPT was asked to consider how best to communicate its findings to the broader Council process, and how the group might interact with efforts such as rural community outreach and the Bering Sea FEP initiative. The Council is interested in the SSPT's feedback on how to systematically collect and incorporate local/traditional knowledge about the fishery resource, the ecosystem, and human dimensions.



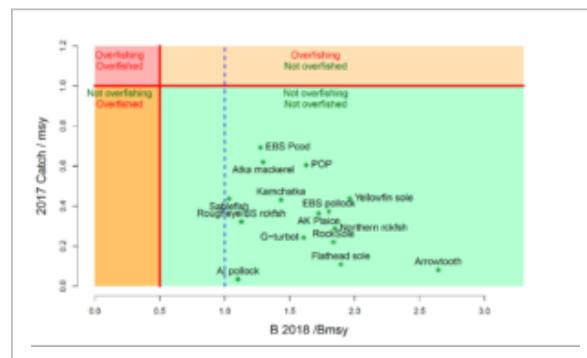
After receiving feedback from the SSC, the Chairman provisionally approved nominations for three new members. Dr. Mike Downs (SSC), Dr. Elizabeth Figus (NPFMC), and Mike Fey (AKFIN) were nominated based on their relevant expertise and experience with the collection and application of social science data to fishery management. The Council will discuss the nominations in executive session in April.

Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

Assessment Modeling Workshop

The Council will be hosting a stock assessment ensemble modeling workshop over the summer of 2018. The focus of the workshop will be to examine approaches to and best practices for

ensemble modeling employing examples from stock assessment and other disciplines within the North Pacific and other regions. Members of the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Groundfish Plan Team will lead the workshop with invited experts from other regions, as well as representatives from both groundfish plan teams and assessment authors. The workshop will be open to the public. A report from the workshop will be presented to the Joint Groundfish Plan Teams in September in order to solicit recommendations on both approaches for ensemble modeling as well as rationale and approaches for establishing ABC below the maximum permissible. Additional details and an agenda for the workshop will be posted to the Council website later in the spring. Staff contact is Diana Stram.



Groundfish Management Policy

The Council conducted its annual review of the Programmatic Groundfish Management Policy, as required under the GOA and BSAI Groundfish FMPs. The management policy was added to the FMPs through the 2004 Programmatic SEIS and reflects the Council's vision for management of these fisheries from an ecosystem-based management perspective. The Council's anticipation that management of the groundfish fisheries will always be a dynamic process was built into the management policy and so annual review was identified as a necessary tool to ensure that management continues to be adaptive to changes in the fisheries and ecosystem. More specifically, annual review allows the Council to evaluate the adequacy of the Policy relative to current issues and concerns such that revisions, if necessary, can be identified. It also allows the Council to review its numerous actions and statements and whether those are fulfilling the Policy. Finally, it provides a framework for revision to the Council's workplan for the coming year.

This year's review highlighted Council activities in 2017 that were relevant to the Groundfish Management Policy. The Council recognized the ecosystem-based management response to the change in GOA Pcod stock conditions, the re-categorization of squid to the ecosystem component category, ongoing projects under the observer program, halibut abundance-based management, progress in conservation of northern fur seals, ongoing sector reports, and outreach to the community on St Paul Island, among many other issues to be consistent with priorities and objectives in the Policy. Additionally, it was pointed out that each Council agenda includes many non-action items that parallel or directly fulfill the Policy. As with previous review in April 2017, the Council determined that the PSEIS continues to be appropriate as a guiding document and

chose not to initiate any amendments to the Policy. Furthermore, the Council found that its actions over the past year and pending actions for the current year continue to fulfill the Policy and did not feel that new Council actions needed to be initiated.

Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

Staff Tasking

In addition to discussing the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects, the Council took the following actions and clarified direction and tasking for its committees:

- Requested staff to bring back ideas for improving outreach and community engagement, in general and on the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan. This should include considering appropriate roles for the various Council committees, including the Ecosystem Committee, the Outreach Committee, the Social Science Plan Team, and the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan team.
- Directed staff to send letters: a) to the IPHC, to respond formally to their letter on abundance-based management and to comment on 2018 harvest specifications; b) to BOEM in response to the proposed oil and gas lease sales, requesting removal of several areas in Alaska from consideration; and c) to St Paul, in response to their request to add a member to the Ecosystem Committee, which is not possible at this time but the Council encourages their continued involvement in the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan development.
- Directed staff to prepare a comment letter on HR 200 that builds on previous Council comments and incorporates the Legislative Committee recommendations, in case the Council is requested to comment on the bill. Additionally, all future Council comments on legislative actions should be copied to the Congressional delegations for AK, WA, and OR.
- Recommended that an agenda item be added to the Council Coordination Committee agenda to discuss funding for the fishery science centers, noting especially this Council's concerns about stable base funding for surveys and ecosystem process studies.
- Notified the public that some Council members intend to host an informal IFQ outreach session in Kodiak in conjunction with the June Council meeting. More information on the planning process will be forthcoming.
- Established guidance that out of cycle public comment on IFQ and charter halibut management issues should be included in the Council's staff tasking agenda item at the immediate meeting, but if the Council takes no action, should be compiled for review by the relevant committees at their next meetings.



The Council received written and verbal testimony on additional IFQ proposals and shoreside access issues in Adak. The Council expressed interest in some of the issues raised, and while they took no further action at this

time, they indicated they may revisit these issues in future. The Council also acknowledged a request to change the CDQ program boundaries but noted that the request is not within the Council's authority.

Upcoming Meetings

Enforcement Committee: April 3 from 1 – 4, Anchorage Hilton

EMWG: May 15, 8:15 -5:30 AFSC, Traynor Room, Seattle

OAC: May 16-17, 8:15 -5:30 AFSC, Traynor Room, Seattle

PT Workshop: July (TBD) Seattle

Ecosystem Committee: June 5, Kodiak, early July or September, TBD, Seattle

BSFEP Team: Summer 2018 (TBD)

IFQ Committee: December (T)

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