

Meeting Summary

228th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
April 5th – 11th, 2016
Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska

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Attachments

- 1) Time Log
- 2) Newsletter
- 3) List of Cooperative Reports for 2015

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in April at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska. The following Council, NPFMC staff, and SSC and AP members attended the meetings.

Council Members

Dan Hull, Chair
Jim Balsiger/Glenn Merrill
Sam Cotten/Karla Bush
Craig Cross
Maura Sullivan (NOAA GC)
Lauren Smoker (NOAA GC)

Kenny Downs
Duncan Fields
Dave Hanson
Roy Hyder
Andy Mezirow

Simon Kinneen
David Long
Bill Tweit
CAPT Phillip Thorne
Aaron Martin

NPFMC Staff

Jim Armstrong
Shannon Gleason
Sarah Marrinan
David Witherell
Steve MacLean

Peggy Kircher
Maria Shawback
Diana Evans
Jon McCracken
Matt Robinson (Sea Grant Fellow) Joy Stein

Chris Oliver
Sam Cunningham
Mike Fey (AKFIN)
Diana Stram

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from April 4th to April 6th, 2016. Members present were:

Farron Wallace, Chair
NOAA Fisheries – AFSC
George Hunt
UW (Seattle)
Kari Fenske
Dept. F&W (Washington)
Ian Stewart
IPHC
Jennifer Burns
UAA (Anchorage)

Anne Hollowed
NOAA - AFSC
Brad Harris
APU (Anchorage)
Franz Mueter
UAF (Fairbanks)
Matt Reimer
UAA (Anchorage)
Robert Clark
ADF&G (Oregon)

Chris Anderson
UAF (Fairbanks)
Lew Coggins
U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Alison Whitman
Dept. F&W (Oregon)
Gordon Kruse
UAF (Fairbanks)

Advisory Panel

The AP met from April 5th to April 8th, 2016. Members present were:

Ruth Christiansen
~~Kurt Cochran~~
John Crowley
Jerry Downing
Jeff Farvour
Art Nelson (co-chair)
Paddy O'Donnell

Jeff Kauffman
Angel Drobnica
Alexus Kwachka
Craig Lowenberg
Chuck McCallum
Dan Donich
Ernie Weiss (Chair)

Joel Peterson
Theresa Peterson
Sinclair Wilt
Jeff Stephan
Matt Upton (Co-Vice Chair)
Ben Stevens
John Gruver

B REPORTS

The following reports were given and discussed. No action was taken.

B1 Executive Director's Report – Chris Oliver
B2 NMFS Management Report – Glenn Merrill
B2 EBS Coral Habitat Report – Chris Rooper and Brad Harris
B2 NOAA GC Report – Maura Sullivan
B3 ADF&G Report – Karla Bush
B4 USCG Report – LCDR Alanna McGovern
B5 USFWS Report – Aaron Martin
B6 Protected Species Report - Steve MacLean
B7 NIOSH Report – Jennifer Lincoln

C1 SCALLOP SAFE AND CATCH LIMITS; PLAN TEAM REPORT; OFL/ABC

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Jim Armstrong and ADF&G staff, Quinn Smith. The following actions were taken:

Ms. Bush made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

The Council adopts the 2016 Scallop SAFE report and set the 2016/2017 ABC at 1.161 million pounds of shucked meats and the OFL equal to 1.29 million pounds.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously April 6, 2016 at 1:28 p.m.

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

C2 COOPERATIVE REPORTS (AFA, AM80, GOA ROCKFISH, BSAI CRAB)

The Council heard reports from the following cooperatives: AFA, Am80, GOA Rockfish, and BSAI Crab Cooperatives.

The Council developed several cooperative programs as options to manage the groundfish fisheries as well as the crab fisheries. Some cooperatives are required or therefore requested to provide annual reports to the Council. These reports are intended to be a resource for the Council to track the effectiveness of the cooperative program and the ability to meet the Council's goals in that particular program. In general these reports have been provided by the cooperative managers at each annual April Council meeting. See attachment 3 for a list of submitted cooperative reports.

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

C3 POLLOCK ICA/IPA REPORTS AND SEASHARE UPDATE

The Council heard pollock ICA/IPA Reports and an update from Jim Harmon of SeaShare.

In addition to the AFA Cooperative Reports (under C2) participants in the Bering Sea pollock fishery are required to submit two additional annual reports to the Council by April 1 of each year.

- Chinook Salmon IPA Annual Report
- Non-Chinook Salmon Intercooperative Agreement (ICA) Annual Report

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

C4 SALMON GENETICS DATA UPDATE AND SPATIAL REFINEMENT

The Council heard a presentation on genetic stock composition from AFSC staff Jeff Guyon, Chuck Guthrie, and Chris Kondzela. NPFMC staff, Dr. Diana Stram also gave a report from the Salmon genetics work group. The following actions were taken:

Ms. Bush made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

The Council recommends that the Salmon Genetics workgroup be expanded to include members of the SSC.

The Council asks the Salmon Genetics workgroup conduct some exploratory data analysis (EDA) to attempt to depict spatial and perhaps temporal patterns of stocks of origin likely to be of most interest to the Council and industry. As a starting point, the workgroup should examine:

- Bering Sea pollock A-season Chinook PSC in ADF&G statistical areas that are in or adjacent to NMFS areas 509 and 517 associated with the pollock fishery (as was provided as examples in the spatial maps from the WG);
- Bering Sea pollock B-season chum PSC in ADF&G statistical area clusters identified in Figure 1 of the WG report.

The next workgroup report should also include a list of benefits and capabilities of the new NMFS analysis tool that uses ADF&G statistical areas.

The Council requests future genetic reports include:

- Summaries of PSC totals by time and area.
- Report genetic classification accuracy for both chum and Chinook in the reports.

The Council also requests an update of the AEQ for Chinook salmon in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, based on the existing model with updated data.

The Council supports ongoing efforts to improve Chinook baseline data in Coastal Western Alaska to separate out Norton Sound, Lower Yukon, and Kuskokwim/Nushagak, and in the GOA

for US West Coast Stocks and British Columbia, and improving the chum baseline in Norton Sound, Lower and middle Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Bristol Bay.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed with no objection April 7, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

C5 ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GROUND FISH OFFSHORE SECTOR

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Jon McCracken. The following actions were taken:

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

Continue with discussion paper on the A/B Aleutian Island Pacific Cod seasonal apportionment as described in the Council February 2015 motion. The analysis will explore conservation and management issues surrounding the establishment of an A/B split as well as consideration of a range of potential ITAC mt thresholds as potential triggers for the A/B split.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion failed 3/8 (Mr. Merrill, Mr. Cotten, Mr. Hyder, Mr. Kinneen, Mr. Long, Mr. Mezirow, Mr. Tweit, and Mr. Hull voting in opposition) April 7, 2016 at 3:51 p.m.

C6 BERING SEA HALIBUT ABUNDANCE-BASED PSC LIMIT

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Dr. Diana Stram. The following actions were taken:

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

Draft Purpose and Need

The current fixed yield based halibut PSC caps are inconsistent with management of the directed halibut fisheries and Council management of groundfish fisheries, which are managed based on abundance. When halibut abundance declines, PSC becomes a larger proportion of total halibut removals and thereby further reduces the proportion and amount of halibut available for harvest in directed halibut fisheries. Conversely, if halibut abundance increases, halibut PSC limits could be unnecessarily constraining. The Council is considering linking PSC limits to halibut abundance to provide a responsive management approach at varying levels of halibut abundance. The Council is considering abundance-based PSC limits to control total halibut mortality and protect the halibut spawning stock biomass, particularly at low levels of abundance. The Council recognizes that abundance-based halibut PSC limits would increase and decrease with changes in halibut abundance.

The Council directs the Workgroup to continue meeting and address the following issues in the next discussion paper:

- Consider and incorporate SSC comments as appropriate.

- Focus on efforts that describe halibut PSC abundance based on both weight and numbers, with DMRs applied to set PSC limits.
- Coordinate with ongoing efforts to review and revise halibut DMRs (Agenda Item C-7) to ensure consistent approaches are being used.
- Focus analysis on the use of the NMFS eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey and the biomass estimate from the IPHC stock assessment as potentially appropriate indices and explore a variety of assumptions on the appropriate weighting of indices, including using each index as a bookend. If time is available, focus on potential advantages and challenges of incorporating additional surveys (e.g., the Bering Sea shelf, Aleutian Islands, NMFS Sablefish longline survey, and Gulf of Alaska trawl surveys to develop an Alaska-wide index of abundance), and the Integrated Model-based index approach outlined in Section 3.4 of the paper.
- Describe the potential implications of abundance-based halibut PSC allocations using the proportional allocations to the four sectors defined under Amendment 111 as the basis for structure and comparison.
- Provide further discussion on the potential management and operational implications of control rules that change on an annual basis. (e.g., How would NMFS implement such changes? When are data available to establish a revised limit? How would annual changes impact groundfish operations?)

Provide an opportunity for the public to participate in the workgroup beginning in August 2016.

Provide a revised discussion paper for the October 2016 Council meeting.

Mr. Merrill made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

(The following addition language is in **bold**)

The Council is considering abundance-based PSC limits to control total halibut mortality, **provide an opportunity for the directed halibut fishery**, and protect the halibut spawning stock biomass, particularly at low levels of abundance.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed no objection April 8, 2016 at 3:04 p.m.

Mr. Merrill made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

(The following addition language is in **bold**)

Provide further discussion on the potential management and operational implications of control rules that change **PSC Limits** on an annual basis. (e.g., How would NMFS implement such changes? When are data available to establish a revised limit? How would annual changes impact groundfish operations?)

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed no objection April 8, 2016 at 3:05 p.m.

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

(The following additional language is in **bold and** deletions indicated with ~~strikeout~~)

Provide an opportunity for the public to ~~review~~ **participate** the workgroup **products** beginning in August 2016.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection April 8, 2016 at 3:07 p.m.

Mr. Fields made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Down:

(The following additional language is in **bold and** deletions ~~stricken~~)

The Council recognizes that abundance-based halibut PSC limits ~~would~~ **may** increase and decrease with changes in halibut abundance.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection April 8, 2016 at 3:21 p.m.

Mr. Fields made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Down:

(The following addition language is in **bold**)

The Council recognizes that abundance-based halibut PSC limits may increase and decrease with changes in halibut abundance, **that the Council's goal remains to minimize halibut bycatch in all circumstances to the maximum extent practicable.**

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment fails 2/9 (Mr. Merrill, Ms. Bush, Mr. Cross, Mr. Hyder, Mr. Kinneen, Mr. Long, Mr. Mezirow, Mr. Twiet, and Mr. Hull voting in opposition) April 8, 2016 at 3:30 p.m.

VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION: Motion passed with no objection April 8, 2016 at 3:39 p.m.

C7 HALIBUT DISCARD MORTALITY RATE METHODOLOGY

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Jim Armstrong. The following actions were taken:

Mr. Merrill made the following motion and was seconded by Ms. Bush:

The Council directs the working group to continue evaluating DMR methodology improvements in an expanded discussion paper.

1. The working group should:
 - Focus its evaluation on the alternative methods described in row 2 of Table 10 in the discussion paper.
 - Provide calculated DMRs under the status quo and the alternative methods, similar to Table 2 in the discussion paper.
 - Incorporate the SSC's comments as practical.

- Provide an opportunity for public participation in the working group.

The Council acknowledges that the alternative DMR methodologies under consideration would continue to result in specification of DMRs through the annual harvest specifications process prior to the fishing season. These specified DMRs will be used for inseason management of halibut PSC limits in the NMFS Catch Accounting System.

2. The expanded discussion paper will be reviewed by the Groundfish Plan Teams at their September 2016 meetings.

At its October 2016 meeting, the Council will consider the expanded discussion paper, input from the Plan Teams, the SSC, AP, and public testimony in considering whether to revise the methodology for establishing DMRs for 2017/2018.

3. The Council encourages the working group to continue coordinating with the NMFS Observer Program to review the halibut viability assessment procedures to ensure that randomized sampling takes place and that sample sizes are adequate for calculating DMRs.
4. The Council encourages the working group to evaluate longer term changes to DMR calculation methods, as described in rows 3 and 4 of Table 10, as feasible and provide recommendations to the Council for continuing to improve methods for estimating halibut DMRs.

Mr. Cross made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

Include the following language under bullet point number 3:

The Council requests the workgroup consider steps needed to evaluate the assumed 16 percent mortality rate in the directed halibut fishery.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection April 8, 2016 at 5:36 p.m.

VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION: Motion passed with no objection April 8, 2016 at 5:39 p.m.

C8 HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

The Council heard an update on the Halibut Management Framework as well as the Halibut Management Committee Report from NPFMC Executive Director, Chris Oliver. Bruce Leaman and Allen Hicks from the IPHC also gave a presentation on the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process. No actions were taken.

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

C9 CHARTER HALIBUT RECREATIONAL QUOTA ENTITY

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Sarah Marrinan and Jonathan King of Northern Economics. The following actions were taken:

Mr. Mezirow made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

The Council recommends the analysis be released for public review. The Council's preliminary preferred alternative is shown in **bold** and changes from the December 2015 motion are indicated (deletions are ~~struck out~~ and additions are underlined).

Purpose and Need Statement

Alaska's guided halibut anglers have seen recent increases in regulatory restrictions due to declining halibut stocks and guided recreational allocations. A market-based mechanism for the guided halibut recreational sector may be an effective means to supplement their annual allocations. Allowing an RQE (Recreational Quota Entity) to hold a limited amount of commercial halibut QS on behalf of guided recreational halibut anglers under a "willing seller and willing buyer" approach may result in less restrictive annual harvest measures for guided recreational anglers in times of low halibut abundance, while complying with total halibut removals under the guided halibut catch limits determined by the International Pacific Halibut Commission. The guided recreational halibut allocation under the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan would be combined with the halibut quota share held by the RQE to determine the annually adjusted total guided halibut allocation. The total allocation would be the basis for the determination of appropriate management measures for the guided halibut sector each year. The intent is to consider such a mechanism without undermining the goals of the halibut IFQ Program or significant adverse impacts to other halibut sectors.

Alternative 1. No Action

Alternative 2. Establish a Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) as a qualified non-profit entity to purchase and hold commercial halibut QS for use by the guided halibut sector

Element 1. Number of entities

Option 1. Two entities, one for each IPHC Regulatory Area 2C and 3A

Option 2. One entity with two area quota pools, Area 2C and Area 3A

Element 2. Restrictions on transfers. Two-way transfers are allowed. Quota class and block designation is retained if the quota is transferred back to the commercial sector.
(Options below are not mutually exclusive)

Option 1. No restrictions

Option 2. Annual limit on transfers to the RQE in each regulatory area (Area 2C and 3A) of 1% - 5% of commercial QS units in each area (2015)

Option 3. Total (cumulative) limit on amount held by RQE by regulatory area (Area 2C and 3A)

Sub-option 1. 5% - 20% of commercial QS units (2015)

Sub-option 2. 5% - 20% of each class of QS units (2015)

Option 4. Restrictions on RQE quota share purchases (in either or both areas)

Sub-option 1. Restrict purchase of D class quota share (limits selected under Option 2 and Option 3 are calculated excluding D class QS)

Sub-option 2. Restrict purchase of blocked QS by class that equates to (≤1,500 lbs or ≤2,000 lbs in 2016 lbs)

Element 3. Setting of annual charter management measures. Use RQE quota share holdings as of October 1 each year as the basis to estimate IFQ pounds to add to the estimated guided recreational allocation under the catch sharing plan for the upcoming year. This amount must be maintained for the following fishing year. This estimated combined allocation would be used to recommend the guided recreational harvest measures for the following year. The procedural process steps and timeline would remain unchanged.

Option 1. If the RQE holdings provide a charter harvest opportunity greater than the unguided recreational bag limit in either area, NMFS would not issue annual IFQ in excess of the amount needed for the charter sector to obtain the unguided recreational bag limit to the RQE for that area. Unallocated RQE IFQ would be reallocated as follows:

Sub-option 1. Equally to all catcher vessel QS holders which hold not more than 1,500 to 3,000 pounds in 2016 pounds (by area, proportional to QS holdings)

Sub-option 2. Equally to all catcher vessel QS holders (by area, proportional to QS holdings and based on the percent of each class of QS purchased by the RQE)

Sub-option 3. Equally to all CQEs actively participating in Area 2C/Area 3A

Sub-option 4. Unallocated RQE IFQ would not be allocated (left in the water)

Sub-option 5. 50% equally to all CQEs actively participating in Area 2C/Area 3A and 50% equally to call catcher vessel QS holders which hold not more than 1,500 to 3,000 pounds in 2016 pounds (by area, proportional to QS holdings)

Element 4. Limit on use of RQE funds. RQE funds are limited in their use to acquisition of commercial halibut quota; acquisition of charter halibut permits; halibut conservation/research; promotion of the halibut resource; and administrative costs.

Option 1. RQE will be responsible for associated IFQ Program fees (Observer fees and administrative fees) and fish taxes that are collectible.

Element 5. RQE Organizational Structure. The RQE shall consist of a board of ~~seven~~ eleven people and shall include the following: ~~4~~ 6 CHP holders, ~~3~~ from each halibut management area (2C/3A); ~~± 2~~ commercial halibut quota share holders, one from each halibut management area (2C/3A); ~~± 2~~ community representatives (not a holder of a CHP or commercial QS), one from each management area (2C/3A); and the Commissioner of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, or designee.

Option 1. A representative of the Alaska Department of Revenue shall sit as an ex-officio member of the RQE board.

Option 2. RQE board terms shall be for [Options: 3 or 5 years].

Option 3. The RQE shall hold no less than two board meetings annually.

Option 4. The RQE shall file an annual report to NMFS detailing RQE activities during the prior year.

~~Alternative 3. RQE purchase of charter halibut permits. The RQE shall be limited in the purchase of charter halibut permits to [options: 10% – 30%] of the permits in each area.~~

Mr. Merrill made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Cotten:

Substitute 2015 for 2016 where giving reference to specific quota share pools:

(Additions in **bold** and deletions ~~striked~~)

Sub-option 2.

Restrict purchase of blocked QS by class that equates to ($\leq$ 1,500 lbs or $\leq$ 2,000 lbs in ~~2016~~ **2015** lbs)

Sub-option 1.

Equally to all catcher vessel QS holders which hold not more than 1,500 to 3,000 pounds in ~~2016~~ **2015** pounds (by area, proportional to QS holdings)

Sub-option 5.

50% equally to all CQEs actively participating in Area 2C/Area 3A and 50% equally to call catcher vessel QS holders which hold not more than 1,500 to 3,000 pounds in ~~2016~~ **2015** pounds (by area, proportional to QS holdings)

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection April 10, 2016 at 11:58 p.m.

Mr. Merrill made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

Bold the following Elements and options as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative:

Element 1. Number of entities

Element 2. Restrictions on transfers. Two-way transfers are allowed. Quota class and block designation is retained if the quota is transferred back to the commercial sector. (Options below are not mutually exclusive)

Element 3. Setting of annual charter management measures. Use RQE quota share holdings as of October 1 each year as the basis to estimate IFQ pounds to add to the estimated guided recreational allocation under the catch sharing plan for the upcoming year. This amount must be maintained for the following fishing year. This estimated combined allocation would be used to recommend the guided recreational harvest measures for the following year. The procedural process steps and timeline would remain unchanged.

Option 1. If the RQE holdings provide a charter harvest opportunity greater than the unguided recreational bag limit in either area, NMFS would not issue annual IFQ in

excess of the amount needed for the charter sector to obtain the unguided recreational bag limit to the RQE for that area. Unallocated RQE IFQ would be reallocated as follows:

Option 1. RQE will be responsible for associated IFQ Program fees (Observer fees and administrative fees) and fish taxes that are collectible.

Element 5. RQE Organizational Structure. The RQE shall consist of a board of ~~seven~~ eleven people and shall include the following: ~~4~~ 6 CHP holders, ~~3 from each halibut management area (2C/3A); ± 2~~ commercial halibut quota share holders, ~~one from each halibut management area (2C/3A); ± 2~~ community representatives (not a holder of a CHP or commercial QS), ~~one from each management area (2C/3A);~~ and the Commissioner of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, or designee.

Option 1. A representative of the Alaska Department of Revenue shall sit as an ex-officio member of the RQE board.

Option 2. RQE board terms shall be for [Options: 3 or 5 years].

Option 3. The RQE shall hold no less than two board meetings annually.

Option 4. The RQE shall file an annual report to NMFS detailing RQE activities during the prior year.

Mr. Tweit made the following amendment to the amendment and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

(Bold the following language to reflect as the preliminary preferred alternative)

Element 4. Limit on use of RQE funds. RQE funds are limited in their use to acquisition of commercial halibut quota; acquisition of charter halibut permits; halibut conservation/research; promotion of the halibut resource; and administrative costs.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT to AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection April 10, 2016 at 12:00 p.m.

VOTE ON MAIN AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection April 10, 2016 at 12:01 p.m.

Mr. Merrill made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Tweit:

Add Option 3A to Alternative 2, Element 2:

Option 3A: Total (cumulative) limit on amount of commercial quota share held by RQE and leased under GAF.

10% of the 2015 commercial QS pool may be held as RQE and GAF combined in Area 2C and 15% of the 2015 commercial QS pool may be held as RQE and GAF combined in Area 3A.

The cumulative cap will be managed annually on a sliding scale between RQE and GAF, with GAF transfers restricted to accommodate RQE QS holdings.

Mr. Fields made the following amendment to the amendment and was seconded by Mr. Cotten:

Add **Sub-option 1** to Alternative 2, Element 2:

Sub-option 1. GAF shall not be reduced below a range or 1% - 3% of the 2015 commercial QS pool for Area 2C or 3A.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT to AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with 2 objections (Mr. Merrill and Mr. Tweit) April 10, 2016 at 12:24 p.m.

VOTE ON MAIN AMENDMENT: Amendment passed no objection April 10, 2016 at 12:25 p.m.

Mr. Tweit made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Fields:

Add **Sub-option 2** to Alternative 2, Element 2:

Sub-option 2. GAF shall not be reduced below 1.15 times the previous year's GAF transfers for either Area 2C or 3A.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with 4 objections (Mr. Merrill, Mr. Long, Mr. Mezirow, and Mr. Hull) April 10, 2016 at 1:42 p.m.

Mr. Fields made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Down:

Under **Element 4** add the following sentence (in **bold**)

Element 4. Limit on use of RQE funds. RQE funds are limited in their use to acquisition of commercial halibut quota; acquisition of charter halibut permits; halibut conservation/research; promotion of the halibut resource; and administrative costs.
RQE funds shall not be used directly or indirectly to lobby local, state, or federal officials.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with 2 objections (Mr. Merrill & Mr. Cross) April 10, 2016 at 1:59 p.m.

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

Change the following Preliminary Preferred Alternative from ~~Option 3, Suboption 1~~ to **Alternative 2, Element 2, Option 3A:**

~~Option 3. Total (cumulative) limit on amount held by RQE by regulatory area (Area 2C and 3A)~~

~~Sub-option 1. 5% - 20% of commercial QS units (2015)~~

Option 3A: Total (cumulative) limit on amount of commercial quota share held by RQE and leased under GAF.

10% of the 2015 commercial QS pool may be held as RQE and GAF combined in Area 2C and 15% of the 2015 commercial QS pool may be held as RQE and GAF combined in Area 3A.

The cumulative cap will be managed annually on a sliding scale between RQE and GAF, with GAF transfers restricted to accommodate RQE QS holdings.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection April 10, 2016 at 2:12 p.m.

Mr. Down made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Long:

Under Alternative 2, Element 2, **Option 2** change the following (deletions ~~strike-out~~ additions in **bold**)

Option 2. Annual limit on transfers to the RQE in each regulatory area (Area 2C and 3A)
of ~~1%~~ **0.5- 5%** of commercial QS units in each area (2015)

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with 2 objections (Mr. Merrill & Mr. Mezirow)
April 10, 2016 at 2:22 p.m.

Mr. Klinneen made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Hyder:

Under Alternative 2, Element 3, Option 1, Sub-option 5 add the following language (in **bold**). Note that the new language (in **bold**) would not be considered the preliminary preferred alternative.

Sub-option 5. 50% equally to all CQEs actively participating in Area 2C/Area 3A and **either 1) 50% equally to call catcher vessel QS holders which hold not more than 1,500 to 3,000 pounds in 2016 pounds (by area, proportional to QS holdings); or 2) equally to all catcher vessel QS holders (by area, proportional to QS holdings and based on the percent of each class of QS purchased by the RQE)**

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with 1 objection (Mr. Mezirow) April 10, 2016 at 2:32 p.m.

Mr. Fields made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

Under Alternative 2, Element 2, Option 4, add the following Sub-option (in **bold**). Note that the new language (in **bold**) would **not** be considered the preliminary preferred alternative.

Option 4. Restrictions on RQE quota share purchases (in either or both areas)

- Sub-option 1. Restrict purchase of D class quota share (limits selected under Option 2 and Option 3 are calculated excluding D class QS)
- Sub-option 2. Restrict purchase of blocked QS by class that equates to ($\leq$ 1,500 lbs or $\leq$ 2,000 lbs in 2015 lbs)
- Sub-option 3. Prohibit an RQE from purchasing a percent of blocked QS above the <1,500 lbs or <2,000 lbs in 2015 for each class of QS for each of the Area 2C and 3A, 50%, 75%, 100%**

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with 2 objections (Mr. Merrill & Mr. Cross) April 10, 2016 at 1:59 p.m.

VOTE ON MAIN AMENDED MOTION: Amendment passed with no objections April 10, 2016 at 3:04 p.m.

D1 EFH 5-YEAR REVIEW

The Council heard a presentation from NMFS staff Matt Eagleton, John Olson, Chris Rooper, Brad Harris, and NPFMC staff Steve MacLean. The following actions were taken:

Mr. Tweit made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Down:

The Council recognizes that the report received satisfies the Council's requirement to review Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The Council acknowledges and commends the work done by staff. The Council finds that the Species Distribution Modelling Approach provides a solid scientific basis for decisions as to whether and how the current descriptions of EFH in the following FMPs should be amended.

- BSAI Groundfish
- GOA Groundfish
- BSAI Crab
- Salmon
- Arctic

The Council asks the stock assessment authors to review the maps of EFH for all FMP species based on new modeling approaches available since the last EFH 5-year review and select a representative EFH map for each life stage of their respective FMP species. The plan teams and SSC should review the stock assessment authors' choices. Following these reviews, the Council will have adequate information to make decisions about amending the description of EFH in its FMPs.

Mr. Merrill made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Kinneen:

(The following addition language is in **bold and** deletions ~~struck~~)

The Council ~~finds~~ **believes** that the Species Distribution Modelling Approach provides a solid scientific basis for decisions as to whether and how the current descriptions of EFH in the following FMPs should be amended.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Amendment passed with no objection April 10, 2016 at 5:04 p.m.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Motion passed unanimously April 6, 2016 at 5:05 p.m.

D2 GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT POLICY AND WORKPLAN REVIEW

The Council heard a presentation from NPFMC staff Jim Armstrong and reviewed the Groundfish Management Policy. No action was taken.

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

E1 STAFF TASKING

The Council heard from NPFMC Executive Director, Chris Oliver. The following actions were taken:

In addition to discussing the relative priority of previously tasked projects, the Council initiated a new project and clarified direction and tasking for its various committees. The Council also took the following actions:

- Requested additional information be included in the cooperative reports for next April, including use of standardized terminology that is used in federal regulations.
- Directed staff to prepare a discussion paper to evaluate gear specific MRAs for gear types and sectors for GOA skates. Longline sectors were defined as CVs <50', CVs >50', and CPs. Public testimony had suggested that the recent regulatory change in MRA rates may not reflect intrinsic rates for the longline fisheries and thus result in unnecessary regulatory discards.
- Finalized a letter with comments on the draft guidelines for standardized bycatch reporting methodology and descriptions in the FMPs, and submit comments by the April 25 deadline.

SKATE MAXIMUM RETAINABLE AMOUNTS

Mr. Down made the following motion and was seconded by Mr. Long:

Council shall initiate a discussion paper to examine a gear specific MRA for longline gear for skates in the GOA that more accurately reflects the intrinsic rate of incidental catch of all skates in the GOA by that gear type. The discussion paper should also include new and additional

information that was not considered in the previous analysis as well as discussion of range of MRAs (from 5-20%) for longline gear for all GOA skates.

Mr. Cross made the following amendment and was seconded by Mr. Hyder:

(The following addition language is in **bold and** deletions ~~stricken~~)

Council shall initiate a discussion paper to examine a gear **rates of catch** ~~specific MRA for longline gear~~ for skates in the GOA that more accurately reflects the intrinsic rate of incidental catch of all skates in the GOA by ~~that~~ gear type. The discussion paper should also include new and additional information that was not considered in the previous analysis as well as discussion of range of MRAs (from 5-20%) ~~for longline gear~~ for all GOA skates.

Mr. Fields made the following amendment to the amendment and was seconded by Mr. Down:

Council shall initiate a discussion paper to examine a gear specific MRAs for **GOA gear types and sectors** ~~longline gear~~ for skates in the GOA that more accurately reflects the intrinsic rate of incidental catch of all skates in the GOA by that gear type. The discussion paper should also include new and additional information that was not considered in the previous analysis as well as discussion of range of MRAs (from 5-20%) for longline gear for all GOA skates.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT to AMENDMENT: Amendment passed no objection April 11, 2016 at 12:01 p.m.

VOTE ON MAIN AMENDMENT: Amendment passed no objection April 11, 2016 at 12:01 p.m.

VOTE ON AMENDED MAIN MOTION: Motion passed no objection April 11, 2016 at 12:02 p.m.

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Gretchen Harrington of NMFS in Juneau has been appointed to the Bering Sea Crab Plan Team to replace Dr. Jason Gasper who now sits on the SSC. Ms. Harrington has expertise in crab management, and has served on the Crab Plan Team from 1998 to 2012.

THE COUNCIL ADJOURNED ON MONDAY APRIL 11, 2016 AT 12:07 P.M.

TIME LOG
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Meeting held in Anchorage, Alaska
April 6 – 11, 2016

Wednesday April 4, 2016

04/06/2016 08:06:49 AM Call to Order
04/06/2016 08:08:24 AM Approval of Minutes

B1 REPORTS

04/06/2016 08:09:28 AM Executive Director's Report – Chris Oliver
04/06/2016 08:44:07 AM Steve Davis Recognition
04/06/2016 08:54:18 AM **B2 NMFS Management Report** – Glenn Merrill
04/06/2016 09:28:32 AM B2 EBS Coral Habitat Report – Brad Harris & Chris Rooper
04/06/2016 09:56:02 AM B2 NOAA GC Report – Maura Sullivan
04/06/2016 10:00:54 AM Break
04/06/2016 10:19:26 AM **B3 ADF&G Report** – Karla Bush
04/06/2016 10:33:32 AM **B4 USCG Report** – Lt Alana McGovern
04/06/2016 10:43:55 AM **B5 USFWS Report** – Aaron Martin
04/06/2016 10:51:09 AM **B6 Protected Species Report** – Steve MacLean
04/06/2016 10:56:48 AM **B7 NIOSH Report** – Jennifer Lincoln
04/06/2016 11:26:03 AM **B Public Comments**
04/06/2016 11:26:24 AM Joe Sullivan et. al
04/06/2016 11:31:49 AM Gerry Merrigan

C1 SCALLOP SAFE AND CATCH LIMITS: Plan Team Report; set OFL/ABC Limits

04/06/2016 11:42:04 AM **C1 Scallop SAFE Report** – Jim Armstrong & Quinn Smith
04/06/2016 11:55:58 AM Lunch
04/06/2016 01:17:03 PM C1 Presentation Continued
04/06/2016 01:22:42 PM SSC Report – Gordon Kruse
04/06/2016 01:24:31 PM AP Report – Art Nelson
04/06/2016 01:25:25 PM **C1 Ms. Bush Motion**

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

C2 COOPERATIVE REPORTS (AFA, Am 80, GOA Rockfish, BSAI Crab)

04/06/2016 01:34:28 PM	NPFMC Staff Introduction Coop Reports – Jon McCracken
04/06/2016 01:37:14 PM	AFA Report - John Gruver United Catcher Boats
04/06/2016 01:52:06 PM	AFA Report - Stephanie Madsen & Austin Estabrooks PCC/HSCC
04/06/2016 02:01:58 PM	Am 80 Report AK Seafood – Mark Fina and Jason Anderson
04/06/2016 02:13:02 PM	Am 80 Report AK Groundfish - Bill Orr
04/06/2016 02:20:42 PM	GOA Rockfish Report - Julie Bonney
04/06/2016 02:49:28 PM	GOA Rockfish Report – Anica Saltman
04/06/2016 02:53:10 PM	Break
04/06/2016 03:16:53 PM	Crab ICE Report – Joe Sullivan & Jake Jacobsen
04/06/2016 03:51:37 PM	Crab Dog Boat Report - Kaitlyn Yaeger
04/06/2016 03:58:11 PM	Crab ACE Report – Gretar Gudmunsson
04/06/2016 04:01:49 PM	PNCIAC Report - Steve Minor & Mark Gleason
04/06/2016 04:08:32 PM	Break
04/06/2016 04:35:32 PM	Adjourn for the day

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

Thursday April 7, 2016

C3 POLLOCCK ICA/IPA Reports and SeaShare Update

04/07/2016 08:37:56 AM	NPFMC Introduction - Dr. Diana Stram
04/07/2016 08:42:29 AM	SeaShare PSDP Report – Jim Harmon
04/07/2016 08:51:55 AM	Sea State Report - Karl Haflinger & John Gruver
04/07/2016 09:09:53 AM	Mothership and Inshore SSIP Report – John Gruver ?
04/07/2016 09:28:07 AM	CP Chinook Salmon Incentive Plan – Austin Estabroks & Stephanie Madsen
04/07/2016 09:48:36 AM	Break

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

C4 SALMON GENETICS DATA UPDATE AND SPATIAL REFINEMENT

04/07/2016 10:17:19 AM	Genetic Stock Composition – Jeff Guyon, Chuck Guthurie, Chris Kondzela
04/07/2016 11:22:13 AM	Work Group Report Presentation – NPFMC Dr. Diana Stram
04/07/2016 12:01:05 PM	Lunch
04/07/2016 01:08:40 PM	SSC Report – Bob Clark
04/07/2016 01:21:20 PM	AP Report – Art Nelson
04/07/2016 01:22:53 PM	C4 Public Testimony

04/07/2016 01:22:41 PM	John Gruver
04/07/2016 01:25:17 PM	John Gauvin
04/07/2016 01:30:04 PM	C4 Ms. Bush Motion
04/07/2016 01:42:04 PM	Break

C5 ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GROUND FISH OFFSHORE SECTOR

04/07/2016 01:52:49 PM	NPFMC Staff Presentation – Jon McCracken
04/07/2016 02:26:33 PM	AP Report – Matt Upton
04/07/2016 02:34:22 PM	C5 Public Comment
04/07/2016 02:34:11 PM	Mark Fina
04/07/2016 02:39:34 PM	Chad See & Gerry Merrigan
04/07/2016 02:49:30 PM	Dave Fraser
04/07/2016 02:54:59 PM	Jon Warrenchuk
04/07/2016 02:57:57 PM	Brent Paine
04/07/2016 03:13:06 PM	Break
04/07/2016 03:28:02 PM	C5 Mr. Down Motion
04/07/2016 03:52:02 PM	Meeting is Adjourned

Friday April 8, 2016

C6 BERING SEA HALIBUT ABUNDANCE-BASED PSC LIMIT

04/08/2016 08:11:21 AM	SSC Report – Bob Clark
04/08/2016 09:15:26 AM	Break
04/08/2016 09:25:26 AM	NPFMC Staff Presentation – Dr. Diana Stram
04/08/2016 10:50:24 AM	Break
04/08/2016 11:16:11 AM	C6 SSC Report
04/08/2016 11:33:28 AM	NPFMC Staff Closing Remarks/Questions – Dr. Diana Stram
04/08/2016 11:45:06 AM	AP Report – Matt Upton
04/08/2016 11:54:04 AM	Break
04/08/2016 01:09:48 PM	C6 Public Testimony
04/08/2016 01:10:07 PM	Illia Cuzeman
04/08/2016 01:14:49 PM	Gerry Merrigan
04/08/2016 01:25:19 PM	Mark Fina
04/08/2016 01:28:45 PM	Paul Olson
04/08/2016 01:31:25 PM	John Gauvin
04/08/2016 01:43:43 PM	Shannon Carroll & Linda Behnken
04/08/2016 01:54:33 PM	Heather McCarty & Jeff Kauffman
04/08/2016 02:05:37 PM	Simeon Swetzof & Mateo Paz-Soldan
04/08/2016 02:10:42 PM	Peggy Parker
04/08/2016 02:20:15 PM	Break
04/08/2016 02:30:57 PM	C6 Mr. Kinneen Motion
04/08/2016 03:40:25 PM	Break

C7 HALIBUT DISCARD MORTALITY RATE METHODOLOGY

04/08/2016 03:53:42 PM	NPFMC Staff Presentation – Jim Armstrong
04/08/2016 04:54:58 PM	AP Report – Ernie Weiss
04/08/2016 04:57:38 PM	C7 Public Testimony
04/08/2016 04:57:49 PM	John Gauvin
04/08/2016 05:05:10 PM	Chad See and Gerry Merrigan
04/08/2016 05:16:33 PM	Linda Behnken
04/08/2016 05:21:52 PM	C7 Mr. Merrill Motion
04/08/2016 05:39:21 PM	Adjourn for the day

Saturday April 9, 2016

C8 HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

04/09/2016 09:08:22 AM	Call to Order
04/09/2016 09:10:17 AM	NPFMC Staff Update - Executive Director, Chris Oliver
04/09/2016 09:18:43 AM	Halibut Management Committee Report – Chris Oliver
04/09/2016 09:28:11 AM	IPHC Presentation on MSE – Allen Hicks & Bruce Leaman
04/09/2016 10:22:29 AM	Break

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

C9 CHARTER HALIBUT RECREATIONAL QUOTA ENTITY

04/09/2016 10:44:18 AM	C9 NPFMC Presentation - Jonathan King & Staff Sarah Marrinan
04/09/2016 12:13:17 PM	Break
04/09/2016 01:29:48 PM	C9 Presentation Continued
04/09/2016 03:00:39 PM	RQE Committee Report – NPFMC Staff Sarah Marrinan
04/09/2016 03:06:14 PM	Break
04/09/2016 03:24:07 PM	AP Report
04/09/2016 03:38:45 PM	C9 Public Testimony
04/09/2016 03:38:33 PM	Bob Alverson – Out of Order
04/09/2016 03:42:12 PM	Megan O’Neil – Out of Order
04/09/2016 03:50:10 PM	Steve Zernia – Out of Order
04/09/2016 03:58:29 PM	Mark Taylor – Out of Order
04/09/2016 04:02:49 PM	Byron Colson – Out of Order
04/09/2016 04:07:18 PM	Carina Nichols – Out of Order
04/09/2016 04:14:54 PM	Mark Clemens – Out of Order
04/09/2016 04:20:16 PM	James Akana – Out of Order
04/09/2016 04:25:49 PM	Russell Thomas
04/09/2016 04:36:27 PM	Jim Mack
04/09/2016 04:41:12 PM	Dave Goldstein

04/09/2016 04:45:40 PM	Bruce Gabrys
04/09/2016 04:54:18 PM	Kiril Basargin
04/09/2016 04:59:16 PM	Jan Standaert
04/09/2016 05:09:28 PM	Mel Grove
04/09/2016 05:19:25 PM	Jeff Farvour
04/09/2016 05:29:09 PM	Tom Ohaus
04/09/2016 05:38:57 PM	Adjourn for the day

Sunday April 10, 2016

C9 CHARTER HALIBUT RECREATIONAL QUOTA ENTITY CONTINUED

04/10/2016 08:37:25 AM	Call to Order
04/10/2016 08:37:34 AM	C9 Public Comment Continued
04/10/2016 08:37:03 AM	Peggy Parker
04/10/2016 08:41:54 AM	Richard Yamada
04/10/2016 08:59:47 AM	Malcolm Milne
04/10/2016 09:18:17 AM	Aaron Bean
04/10/2016 09:22:20 AM	Samantha Weinstein
04/10/2016 09:32:24 AM	Ben Martin
04/10/2016 09:36:08 AM	Eric Lehn
04/10/2016 09:39:14 AM	Garrett Lambert
04/10/2016 09:42:17 AM	Jeff Stephan
04/10/2016 10:00:05 AM	Break
04/10/2016 10:12:31 AM	Matt Alward
04/10/2016 10:17:23 AM	Matt Kopeck
04/10/2016 10:23:41 AM	Seth Bone
04/10/2016 10:27:09 AM	Tom Gemmell
04/10/2016 10:42:48 AM	Linda Behnken
04/10/2016 11:00:35 AM	Break
04/10/2016 11:17:12 AM	C9 Mr. Mezirow Motion
04/10/2016 11:58:42 AM	C9 Mr. Merrill Amendments
04/10/2016 12:15:29 PM	C9 Mr. Fields Amendment
04/10/2016 12:25:20 PM	Break
04/10/2016 01:22:27 PM	Deliberations Continued
04/10/2016 01:23:29 PM	C9 Mr. Tweit Motion to Amend
04/10/2016 01:51:30 PM	Mr. Fields Amendment
04/10/2016 02:00:52 PM	Mr. Down Amendment
04/10/2016 02:04:39 PM	Break
04/10/2016 02:08:22 PM	Mr. Down Amendment Continued
04/10/2016 02:22:52 PM	Mr. Kinneen Amendment
04/10/2016 02:32:39 PM	Mr. Fields Amendment
04/10/2016 03:04:39 PM	Break

D1 EFH 5 - YEAR REVIEW; ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

04/10/2016 03:19:55 PM	EFH Presentation – Steve MacLean, Matt Eagleton, John Olson, Chris Rooper, Brad Harris
04/10/2016 04:45:18 PM	AP Report – Matt Upton
04/10/2016 04:47:47 PM	D1 Public Testimony
04/10/2016 04:47:55 PM	Jon Warrenchuk
04/10/2016 05:00:29 PM	D1 Mr. Tweit Motion
04/10/2016 05:07:21 PM	Adjourn for the Day

Monday April 11, 2016

D2 GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT POLICY AND WORKPLAN REVIEW

04/11/2016 08:09:22 AM	Call to Order
04/11/2016 08:10:03 AM	NPFMC Staff Presentation – Jim Armstrong
04/11/2016 09:40:03 AM	AP Report – Matt Upton
04/11/2016 09:45:02 AM	Break

NO PUBLIC COMMENT WAS TAKEN ON THIS AGENDA ITEM

E1 STAFF TASKING

04/11/2016 10:04:59 AM	Three Meeting Outlook – Executive Director, Chris Oliver
04/11/2016 10:20:33 AM	AP Report – Matt Upton
04/11/2016 10:22:16 AM	E1 Public Comment
04/11/2016 10:23:13 AM	Chad See
04/11/2016 10:27:44 AM	Julie Bonney
04/11/2016 10:39:48 AM	Break
04/11/2016 11:02:00 AM	Nomination of Gretchen Harrington for CPT
04/11/2016 11:21:39 AM	E1 Mr. Down Motion
04/11/2016 12:07:25 PM	Meeting Adjourned

Dan Hull
Chairman
Chris Oliver
Executive Director

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News & Notes

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

April 2016

Davis Retires

Mr. Steven K. Davis, former Council staff Deputy Director and 35 year member of the 'Council family' is retiring from federal service this June. For the past 17 years Steve worked for NMFS Alaska Region, most recently as Supervisory Fisheries Biologist and Senior Policy Advisor. At this meeting the Council recognized Steve for his outstanding career in the management and conservation of North Pacific fisheries. Congratulations Steve!!!



Plan Team Appointment

Gretchen Harrington of NMFS in Juneau has been appointed to the Bering Sea Crab Plan Team to replace Dr. Jason Gasper who now sits on the SSC. Ms. Harrington has expertise in crab management, and has served on the Crab Plan Team from 1998 to 2012. Welcome back, Gretchen!

NPFMC Newsletter
April 2016
Page 1



Charter Halibut RQE

At the April Council meeting, the Council released the analysis of the proposed Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) for Public Review. This initial review analysis looked at two action alternatives to reach the objective of allowing for an opportunity for the charter halibut sector to reduce the restrictiveness of annual management measures for the charter sector as a whole, in regulatory Area 2C and 3A, while considering impacts on other user groups. The Council's Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) would allow for one non-profit RQE to purchase commercial halibut quota share (QS), to hold and use on behalf of the guided halibut anglers in Area 2C and 3A (separately). Any IFQ annually generated from an RQE's QS holdings would augment the pounds allocated to the sector through the charter catch limit, established by the catch share plan. The charter catch limit plus any pounds of IFQ holdings would be the basis on which halibut charter annual management measures are established (for example, size limits, annual limits, day of the week closure, etc.).

The Council's PPA includes a number of restrictions on QS transfer. The Public Review analysis will consider annual transfer limits of 0.5% through 5% of the 2015 QS pool. The PPA also includes a total cumulative limit on the amount of QS held by an RQE and leased under the Guided Angler Fish (GAF) program of 10% for area 2C and 15% for

Area 3A. Also included are restrictions on an RQE's ability to purchase D class QS and certain blocked QS.

If an RQE holdings become sufficient to provide an opportunity up to and greater than the established opportunity under the unguided halibut sport sector (2 halibut of any size in each regulatory Area 2C and Area 3A), under the Council's PPA any "surplus IFQ" would be reallocated at the start of the season, without charge, to the Community Quota Entities as well as all catcher vessel QS holders that hold a small amount of QS (options considered are no more than 1,500 through 3,000 pounds, in 2015 pounds).

The Council's PPA also includes elements that detail the structure of an RQE and the use of any funds acquired by such an entity.

The second action alternative, allowing an RQE to purchase between 10 to 30% of the Charter Halibut Permits (CHPs) in each area, was dropped from further analysis under this package. Given the significant latent and underutilized capacity, paired with current leasing patterns of CHP, the Council determined this alternative in its current state would be unlikely to achieve the purpose and need identified. Further examination of the leasing of CHPs and potential ways to restrict the leasing of non-transferable CHPs is scheduled for a future Council discussion paper. Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

Halibut Management

The Council reviewed a number of halibut related items at this meeting, including a letter from the IPHC regarding the Council's halibut management Framework and a presentation from Dr. Leaman on the IPHC's management strategy evaluation (MSE) process. An organizational meeting of the Council's newly formed Halibut Management Committee was also held on April 4, and the Council reviewed a report from that Committee. There was no specific action at this meeting, recognizing that Chairman Hull will be providing a response to the letter from the IPHC, and that the Framework document will be updated to reflect Council discussions as well as the Council's specific motion from the February 2016 meeting. The Council's Halibut Management Committee will meet again this fall to review upcoming halibut related agenda items, and to further discuss its role in coordinating Council positions, and informing U.S. positions, on halibut issues in general. Council contact is Chris Oliver.

Salmon Bycatch

The Council received several reports related to bycatch performance within the EBS pollock industry IPAs, chum salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery ICA, a report from SeaShare on PSC donations and distributions of salmon and halibut PSC within the State of Alaska and nationwide and on the stock composition of Chinook and chum salmon caught as bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, the GOA pollock fishery and the GOA arrowtooth and rockfish fisheries.

Chinook and chum salmon industry reports from the EBS pollock fishery:

Under regulations to implement the Amendment 91 Bering Sea Chinook salmon bycatch management program, annual reports are required of each IPA entity and provided to the Council at this meeting. IPA entities report annually on the efficacy of their bycatch reduction measures. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Incentive measures in effect in the previous year;
- How incentive measures affected individual vessels;
- How incentive measures affected salmon savings beyond current levels;
- Transfer information between vessels as well as entities

Reports from each of the 3 IPAs are posted on the Council's website.

In conjunction with requirements under Amendment 84, the Non-Chinook Inter-Cooperative Agreement (ICA) provides an annual report on the efficacy of Chum (Non-Chinook) salmon bycatch management measures under the rolling hot spot (RHS) program. The ICA report to the Council contains the number of salmon taken by species and season, an estimate of number of salmon avoided and a compliance/audit report on the closures.

SeaShare program update:

SeaShare provided an update to the Council on the participation and donations in the Prohibited Species Donation Program whereby bycaught salmon and halibut in BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries may be reclaimed and distributed to hunger-relief programs. This program has been in operation since 1993. In the last three years

SeaShare has donated over 630,000 pounds of fish in Alaska. The annual report from the program is available on the Council's website.

Salmon genetics:

Annual reports were provided to the Council on the results of the 2014 analysis of the stock of origin of Chinook and chum salmon from the EBS pollock fishery and the following fisheries in the GOA: pollock, rockfish, arrowtooth flounder. These reports are available as NOAA technical memos on the Council's website. An analysis of the coded-wire tag recoveries from the GOA rockfish fishery was also provided per Council request.

The Council previously requested a white paper to evaluate the feasibility of further temporal and spatial refinements of stock composition data, including identification of the minimum number of samples necessary to meet accuracy and precision standards. Staff from NMFS AFSC, ADF&G, NMFS AKRO and the Council met to prepare this discussion paper highlighting many issues relative to spatial and temporal evaluation of samples for stock of origin estimates. Following review the Council requests that staff conduct some exploratory analysis to depict spatial and/or temporal patterns of stock of origin likely to be of interest to the Council and industry as well as provide additional information on the benefits and capabilities of the new AKFIN analysis tool using ADF&G statistical areas. The Council also requested an update of the existing AEQ model used for Chinook salmon in the Bering Sea pollock fishery with updated data. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Scallops

The Council reviewed the annual stock assessment and fishery evaluation (SAFE) report for Alaska weathervane scallops. The SSC set the acceptable biological catch (ABC) limit at 1.161 million pounds of shucked scallop meats, a level equivalent to 90% of the overfishing limit (OFL) per the ABC control rule for scallops. The ABC is specified statewide while guideline harvest levels (GHLs) are established by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game by registration area. The fishery has 100% observer coverage, except in Cook Inlet. Fishery CPUE is monitored and scallop beds are closed if catch rates fall below established minimum performance standards.

The Council was informed of plans to increase the extent of the state fishery-independent dredge survey. ADF&G scallop biologists will survey scallop beds north of Yakutat Bay, near Kayak Island and in Shelikof Strait in 2016, and will include areas not previously surveyed. The observer program for the scallop fishery is also being expanded. Observers are sampling scallops discarded in the shucking house in order to more accurately quantify and characterize total catch.

The Council was also informed of ongoing analyses of digital image data collected by CamSled (camera sled) surveys. The image analysis includes counts and measurements of scallops as well as data collection on habitat and other benthic community organisms. This work is being conducted by researchers at the Fishery, Aquatic Science, and Technology Lab at Alaska Pacific University. Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

AI Groundfish Limited Access

At this meeting, the Council reviewed a discussion paper that examined participation and effort in the Aleutian Islands (AI) groundfish fisheries to determine the need to limit access in these fisheries. The Council, concerned with potential spillover effects from several recent changes in the AI groundfish fisheries, tasked staff during their October 2015 meeting to evaluate historical fishing behavior in the offshore sector of the trawl groundfish fisheries in the AI. In addition, the Council also reviewed a brief assessment of the conservation and management issues associated with establishing an A/B seasonal split for the AI Pacific cod fishery. The seasonal split issue was first brought to the Council's attention during the February 2015 meeting. At that meeting, members of the Freezer Longline Conservation Cooperative testified during the initial review of the AI Pacific cod shoreside processing stability action (Amendment 113) to add an option for an A/B seasonal AI Pacific cod split due to the steadily declining harvest opportunities in the AI Pacific cod fishery for their sector. Although the Council did not include the requested option in Amendment 113, the Council did task staff to prepare a discussion paper on the conservation and management issues associated with establishing a seasonal split of the AI Pacific

cod TAC. Since this discussion paper had not yet been presented to the Council and that discussion was germane to the discussion paper examining participation and effort in the AI groundfish fisheries, the Council combined the A/B seasonal split issue and examination of participation and effort in the AI offshore groundfish fishery into one discussion paper.

After reviewing the discussion paper and hearing public testimony, the Council elected to take no action at this time concerning limiting access in the AI groundfish fisheries. The Council did debate a motion to further explore an A/B AI Pacific cod split, but the Council voted against taking action at this time. The Council noted that the AI Pacific cod fishery is intertwined with Bering Sea (BS) Pacific cod fishery, and taking action in the AI would likely create spillover effects in the BS, and vice versa. To limit spillover effects, the Council is providing time for the offshore participants to develop alternatives for comprehensively managing the offshore BS and AI Pacific cod fisheries. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Upcoming Meetings

Crab Plan Team: May 9-13,
Anchorage Hilton

EM Workgroup Meeting: May 11,
Seattle and via teleconference; July
27- 28 and August 31

Observer Advisory Committee:
May 12 -13, Seattle

Groundfish Plan Team:
September 12-16, Seattle
November 14-18

EFH Review

The Council reviewed the report of the 2016 review of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the Council's FMPs and reviewed the model-based definitions of EFH and the Fishery Effect model. The Council acknowledged that a great deal of work has been done to advance the definitions of EFH and directed staff to work with the stock assessment authors to review and select a representative map of EFH for each life stage of their respective FMP species. The authors' choices should be reviewed by the Plan Teams and SSC and presented to the Council at a future meeting. Stock assessment authors will review text and select maps in May. Those selections will be reviewed by the joint groundfish plan team and crab plan team in September. New definitions of EFH will be presented to the Council in October or December. After EFH definitions have been determined, the Council will choose whether a new analysis of the effects of fishing on EFH is necessary. If necessary, that analysis will be conducted on the new EFH definitions and presented to the Council at a later meeting. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Staff Tasking

In addition to discussing the relative priority of previously tasked projects, the Council initiated a new project and clarified direction and tasking for its various committees. The Council also took the following actions:

- Requested additional information be included in the cooperative reports for next April, including use of standardized terminology that is used in federal regulations.
- Directed staff to prepare a discussion paper to evaluate gear specific MRAs for gear types and sectors for GOA skates. Longline sectors were defined as CVs <50', CVs >50', and CPs. Public testimony had suggested that the recent regulatory change in MRA rates may not reflect intrinsic rates for the longline fisheries and thus result in unnecessary regulatory discards.
- Finalized a letter with comments on the draft guidelines for standardized bycatch reporting methodology and descriptions in the FMPs, and submit comments by the April 25 deadline.

SAVE THE DATE

On December 8, 2016 at the Hotel Captain Cook, the NPFMC will host a black-tie celebration in conjunction with the December 2016 Council meeting. This event celebrates the fisheries and management programs we have today as well as highlighting some of the major events of the last decade. More information to follow.

Cooperative Reports

At the April meeting, the Council reviewed cooperative reports for the Amendment 80 Program, Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program, American Fisheries Act Program, and BSAI Crab Rationalization Program. As part of the cooperative programs, cooperatives have provided annual written reports detailing the use of the cooperative quota or addressing other specific areas of Council interest. These reports create a dialogue between the Council and industry groups outside of what can be discerned from just available statistical data. The Council expressed their appreciation to the cooperative managers for work gone into the written reports and the initiative to provide oral presentations. The Council underscored the importance of participation to those cooperatives in the crab program that chose not to submit.

At this meeting, the Council made several minor requests regarding the presentation of information in different cooperative reports. Given the nature of this type of collection of information, requests may be subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act and approval under the Office of Management and Budget.

The Council noted that in general, presenters of cooperative reports should use regulatory terminology. There were a few examples of inconsistent terminology identified in presentations for the Central GOA rockfish and crab reports. Specifically, the Council requested crab cooperatives use terms in a manner that is consistent with their definition under the crab rationalization program regulations, and that the cooperatives provide a glossary of key terms in their reports. For example, when reporting on the types of quota share (QS) transfers to active participants and other categories of QS holders, definitions for 'crew members', 'active fishermen' and other QS holders should be provided that track with crab program regulatory definitions.

The Council also requested that Amendment 80 cooperative reports include more information on directed and bycatch species transfers. Specifically, the Council requested species, amount and date of transfer. The Council also requested monthly chinook bycatch by stock of origin for the Central GOA rockfish cooperatives which would be supplied by NMFS during their Inseason Management reports.

Copies of the cooperative reports are available on the Council website. Staff contact is Jon McCracken and Sarah Marrinan.

Groundfish Management Policy

The Council carried out a review of its Groundfish Management Policy, which, according to the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs, must be conducted annually. The Policy consists of a management approach statement, nine general priorities, and 45 management objectives. Each of these components was discussed as a part of the review, which has several purposes: First, it allows the Council to consider the adequacy of the Policy relative to current issues and concerns such that revisions, if necessary can be identified; second, it allows the Council to examine its numerous actions and statements, and whether those are adequately fulfilling the Policy; and third, it provides a framework for revision to the Council's workplan for the coming year.

The Council found that its Policy, though originally established in 2004, was crafted in a manner that continues to allow the Council to develop actions in an adaptive manner. In other words, the Council anticipated that it would confront an evolving set of fishery management issues and the current Policy adequately frames those issues, allowing the Council to emphasize specific issues as circumstances change. The Council also found numerous areas of Council activity relative to each of the 45 management objectives including actions outside of the groundfish FMPs that were developed using the framework established by the Groundfish Management Policy. These include the Arctic FMP and the Aleutian Islands FEP and new development of the Bering Sea FEP. Staff contact is Jim Armstrong.

BSAI Halibut PSC Limits

The Council reviewed a discussion paper on establishing abundance-based PSC limits for Pacific halibut in the BSAI groundfish fisheries. The Council had previously tasked an inter-agency workgroup of Council, NMFS (AFSC and Regional Office) and IPHC staff to consider a number of issues related to indexing halibut PSC to abundance. The discussion paper provides information on current usage of BSAI halibut PSC, data sources available to inform an abundance index, candidate indices and control rule considerations. The paper also provides a series of key decision points and a workplan to guide the process of development of alternatives, elements and options for the analysis.

As a starting point for developing the alternatives, the Council adopted the following purpose and need statement for this analysis:

The current fixed yield based halibut PSC caps are inconsistent with management of the directed halibut fisheries and Council management of groundfish fisheries, which are managed based on abundance. When halibut abundance declines, PSC becomes a larger proportion of total halibut removals and thereby further reduces the proportion and amount of halibut available for harvest in directed halibut fisheries. Conversely, if halibut abundance increases, halibut PSC limits could be unnecessarily constraining. The Council is considering linking PSC limits to halibut abundance to provide a responsive management approach at varying levels of halibut abundance. The Council is considering abundance-based PSC limits to control total halibut mortality, provide an opportunity for the directed halibut fishery, and protect the halibut spawning stock biomass, particularly at low levels of abundance. The Council recognizes that abundance-based halibut PSC limits may increase and decrease with changes in halibut abundance.

The Council requested that staff continue to explore appropriate measures of abundance of halibut that would meet the goals and objectives of the Council's action. Specifically staff was requested to focus analysis on the NMFS eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey and the biomass estimate from the IPHC stock assessment as potentially appropriate indices and explore a variety of assumptions on the appropriate weighting of indices, including using each index as a bookend. If time is available, staff is directed to also focus on potential advantages and challenges of incorporating additional surveys (e.g., the Bering Sea shelf, Aleutian Islands, NMFS Sablefish longline survey, and Gulf of Alaska trawl surveys to develop an Alaska-wide index of abundance), and the Integrated Model-based index approach outlined in the paper.

The Council requested that a workshop be convened in August 2016 to provide for review of the revised discussion paper prior to Council action in October. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Halibut Discard Mortality Rates

The Council reviewed a discussion paper on alternative methods for calculating discard mortality rates (DMRs) for halibut that occur as prohibited species catch (PSC) in the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries. DMRs are regularly updated and specified for groundfish target fisheries and are used by in-season management to estimate the mortalities of halibut PSC through the catch accounting system (CAS). Halibut mortalities are counted against specified PSC limits and a fishery is closed if it reaches the PSC limit.

A transfer of responsibility for calculating DMRs from IPHC to Council support staff occurred in 2015. As a part of that transfer the need to improve DMR estimation methods was identified. The discussion paper reviewed issues with existing observer data that serve as the basis for DMR calculations. Viability

sampling is conducted by observers to assess the condition of individual halibut just before they are discarded. Viability categories are associated with specific mortality probabilities and the aggregation of viability samples leads to an overall DMR for a given target fishery. Observer sampling of halibut viabilities declined in recent years, but beginning in 2016, the sampling protocol was modified so that halibut viability sampling is a major priority. Although DMRs have been specified for 2017, the estimation methods were based on data through 2014 and were not adapted to the decline in viability samples. Alternative methods are needed to re-specify DMRs for 2017.

A conceptual framework was described in the discussion paper for improving DMR estimation methods over time as the improved sampling protocol contributes increasingly to the underlying source data. Any of the alternative methods under consideration would be designed to improve accuracy, reduce bias, and incentivize DMR reductions by the fisheries. Near term modifications to the estimation methods will serve as a bridge to longer term improvements. Revised DMRs for 2017 and underlying methods will be presented to the Council in October. Besides DMRs for the groundfish fisheries, the Council directed staff to work on the steps needed to evaluate the DMRs used for the directed halibut fishery.

June in Kodiak

The Council will be meeting in Kodiak June 6-14. Alaska Airlines is offering a discount code for these dates; ECMJ118. If you need assistance with finding rooms, email Chasity McCarthy at the Visitor's Bureau at director@kodiak.org. The Agenda will be posted on our website as soon as it's available.

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 4/15/2016

June 6-14, 2016 Kodiak, AK	October 3-11, 2016 Anchorage, AK	December 6-14, 2016 Anchorage, AK
Electronic Monitoring: Review of analytical components (SSC only) Observer Program Annual Report, OAC report, and Variance estimation methodology (SSC Only) GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Review Discussion paper, action as necessary Tanner Crab Custom Processing Cap: Initial/Final Action BSAI Crab: Plan team report, OFL/ABC for 3 stocks BSAI Crab 10-year Review: Review Report Squid to Ecosystem Component Category: Initial Review Research Priorities: Determine priorities P. Cod assessment models (SSC only)	Stock Assessment 101 Training EM Integration: Initial Review Observer Program 2017 Annual Deployment Plan: Review; OAC rpt Observer Lead Level 2: Discussion paper Area 4 Halibut IFQ Leasing: Initial Review (T) Halibut/sablefish IFQ Program 10-year Review: Review Draft BSAI Crab: Plan team report, OFL/ABC for 6 stocks AFA 10-year Review: Review Draft (T) BSAI Halibut Abundance-based PSC: Discussion paper Halibut DMRs methodology: Discussion paper Stock Structure Report (T) Groundfish Harvest Specifications: Proposed specs EFH non-fishing effects report: Ecosystem Cttee Review BSAI Salmon genetics spatial/temporal distribution: Disc paper (T)	40 Year Anniversary Celebration Banquet - December 8 GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Action as necessary (T) 2017 Charter halibut management measures: Final action Charter Halibut RQE Program: Final Action Deck Sorting EFP: Report on preliminary results Groundfish Harvest Specifications: Final specifications BSAI YFS TLA Fishery limited entry: Initial Review (T) Squid to Ecosystem Component Category: Final Action EFH Descriptions: Review updated report; Identify EFH ITEMS BELOW NOT YET SCHEDULED GOA Gear Specific Skate MRAs: Discussion paper EFH fishing and non-fishing effects: Report on model results Charter Halibut permit leasing: Discussion paper Observer discharge location: Discussion paper Observer deployment trip determination and transfer: Disc paper Bering Sea FEP: Review Draft FEP Remove WAI Red King Crab from FMP: Initial Review Bristol Bay red king crab PSC: Discussion paper Bering Sea Snow Crab PSC Limits: Initial Review Observer Insurance Requirements: Disc paper for Reg Am

AI - Aleutian Islands
AFA - American Fisheries Act
BiOp - Biological Opinion
BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
BKC - Blue King Crab
BOF - Board of Fisheries
CQE - Community Quota Entity
CDQ - Community Development Quota
EM - Electronic monitoring
EFH - Essential Fish Habitat
EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit
EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
FEP - Fishery Ecosystem Plan
FLL - Freezer longliners
GOA - Gulf of Alaska
GKC - Golden King Crab
GHL - Guideline Harvest Level

HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
ICA - Inter-cooperative Agreements
IPA - Incentive Program Agreements
LLP - Limited License Plan
MRA - Maximum Retainable Allowance
PSC - Prohibited Species Catch
RKC - Red King Crab
RQE - Recreational Quota Entity
SIR - Supplemental Information Report
SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee
SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
SSL - Steller Sea Lion
TAC - Total Allowable Catch
TLAS - Trawl Limited Access Sector
YFS - Yellowfin sole
VMS - Vessel Monitoring System

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

June 6-14 , 2016, Kodiak
October 3 -11, 2016 Anchorage
December 6-14, 2016, Anchorage
January 28 – February 7, 2017, Seattle
April 3-11, 2017, Anchorage
June 5-13, 2017, Juneau
October 2-10, 2017, Anchorage
December 4-12, 2017, Anchorage

(T) = Tentative

List of Cooperative Reports and Contacts -

Crab Coop Reports (Am 18-19 Crab Ratz)

Staff: Sarah Marrinan

1. Alaska King Crab Harvesters Coop- Heidi A. Yocom
2. Aleutian Island Coop - Heidi Yocom
3. Alternative Crab Exchange (ACE) - Gretar Gudmundsson
4. Coastal Villages Crab Coop – Lorena Rosenberger lorena_r@coastalvillages.org
5. Crab Producers and Harvesters LLC – Rob Rogers
6. Dog Boat Coop – Ed Poulsen
7. Independent Crabbers Coop - ?
8. Inter-cooperative Exchange (ICE) – Joe Sullivan joe@sullivanrichards.com
9. R& B Coop – Mary Mezich
10. Trident Affiliated Crab Harvesting Coop – Brian Parsons

Amendment 80 Cooperative Reports (H&G bottom trawlers)

Staff: Jon McCracken

1. Alaska Seafood Cooperative – Jason Anderson and Mark Fina
2. Alaska Groundfish Cooperative (FSA) – William McGill bill_mcgill@fcasea.com

Central GOA Rockfish Cooperative Reports (Goa Am 88)

Staff: Jon McCracken

1. I.S.A. Rockfish Cooperative – Julie Bonney
2. North Pacific Rockfish Cooperative – Julie Bonney
3. OBSI Rockfish Cooperative – Julie Bonney
4. Star of Kodiak Rockfish Cooperative – Julie Bonney
5. Western Alaska Fisheries Rockfish Cooperative – Julie Bonney
6. Global Rockfish Cooperative – Julie Bonney
7. Pacific Rockfish Cooperative – Julie Bonney
8. FCA Cooperative – Julie Bonney
9. Best Use Cooperative – Annika Salman asaltman@fishermensfinest.com

AFA (American Fisheries Act) Cooperative Reports

Staff: Jon McCracken

1. Peter Pan Fleet Cooperative – Glenn Guffey glenng@ppsf.com
2. Unisea Fleet Cooperative – Scott Goodman sgoodman@nrccorp.com
3. Westward Fleet Cooperative - Scott Goodman sgoodman@nrccorp.com
4. Catcher Vessel Intercooperative – John Gruver jgruver@ucba.org
5. Unalaska Fleet Cooperative – Caitlin Yeager CaitlinY@alaskaboatcompany.com
6. Akutan Catcher Vessel Cooperative – Brian Parsons brianp@TridentSeafoods.com
7. Northern Victor Fleet Cooperative – Hunter Berns HunterB@IcicleSeafoods.com
8. Mothership Fleet Cooperative – Sylvia Ettefagh
9. Pollock Conservation Cooperatives and High Sea Catchers' Cooperative – Austin Estabrooks [austin.estabrooks@atsea.org](mailto:<austin.estabrooks@atsea.org) /Stephanie Madsen smadsen@atsea.org

SALMON SAVINGS

IPA (Incentive Plan Agreement) Reports (Am 91) – due April 1 Staff: Diana Stram

1. Bering Sea Pollock Mothership Salmon Saving Incentive Plan (MSSIP) – James Mize
2. Inshore Salmon Savings Incentive Plan (SSIP) – John Gruver
3. Chinook Salmon Bycatch Reduction Incentive Plan - Richardson

ICA (Intercooperative Agreement) Reports (Am 84) – due April 1 Staff: Diana Stram

1. Bering Sea Pollock Intercooperative Salmon Avoidance Agreement – Gruver/Haflinger
2. Audit of Salmon Closure Zone Compliance Monitoring, Bering Sea Pollock Fishery, 2013 – Gruver/Haflinger