



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Dan Hull, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

Executive Director's Report

Legislative Update

In December the President signed the implementing legislation for the North Pacific Fisheries Convention (HR 6452 - "To Implement the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean....in the South Pacific Ocean....and for other purposes." Among the primary provisions of this legislation, it bestows Commissioner status to the Chair (or designee) of the North Pacific, Pacific, and Western Pacific Fishery Management Councils. It also establishes an 11-member permanent Advisory Committee, to include a member of the commercial fishing industry from the North Pacific, an indigenous member from Alaska, and a marine fisheries scientist from Alaska. The appointment process for these positions is still being clarified, and I will update you as that information becomes available.

Payment of travel expenses is not explicitly authorized for members of the Advisory Committee, and the legislation encourages the use of teleconference for meetings of the Advisory Committee. The legislation also does confirm the payment of meeting expenses for the Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body (BSFAB) to the U.S./Russia ICC process, as well as the advisors to the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC).

I have no new information regarding the schedule or timing of potential Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization.

WCPFC Advisory Committee nominations

While we do not really participate, our Council is party to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention. **Attached** is a notice soliciting nominations for their permanent Advisory Committee, with nominations due February 24.

Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology - Final Rule

On January 19, 2017 NMFS published a final rule (**attached**) to implement requirements and guidance to the regional Councils and Secretary regarding the development, documentation, and review of FMP provisions to establish a standardized bycatch reporting methodology (SBRM). Last year we commented extensively on a proposed rule, citing the existing, combined provisions of our observer program, our recordkeeping and reporting requirements, and our comprehensive catch accounting system (CAS). We expressed concern that what should be a minor housekeeping amendment for the North Pacific could become a major amendment process, similar to what we experienced with the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) requirements.

Based upon my cursory review of the final rule, the agency was receptive to many of our comments and concerns; however, it is likely we will have to develop an amendment package to our FMPs, in order to more explicitly document and explain our current process to capture the intent of the SBRM requirements. Our staff will be working with NMFS Regional staff in the coming months to further assess the provisions of the final rule, compare those requirements to our specific CAS provisions, and report back to you on the necessary FMP adjustments.

NPRB Science Panel and Advisory Panel nominations

Attached is a solicitation for nominations to both the Science Panel and the Advisory Panel for the North Pacific Research Board (NPRB), with letters of interest due March 1. Four positions on each body will become available on June 1, 2017.

Alaska Marine Gala

On Saturday, February 11 the annual Alaska Marine Gala, to benefit the Alaska SeaLife Center, will be held in Anchorage, Alaska. The Council is once again sponsoring two tables for this event. Council, SSC, and AP members who live (or will be) in the Anchorage area are welcome to attend. A limited number of seats are still available, so please see me if you are interested in attending.

Recent and upcoming meetings

Chairman Hull and I attended the recent annual meeting of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), as well as several other Council members, Council and agency staff, and other members of the Council family. The IPHC will be providing a report to the Council under agency reports.

Chairman Hull and I, along with Vice-Chair Tweit, will be attending the upcoming interim meeting of the Council Coordination Committee (CCC) during the last week of February in Washington, D.C. Agenda items include budget issues; NMFS 2017 priorities; legislative outlook; NS1 guidelines; national bycatch strategy; marine national monument designations; climate action plans; EBFM roadmap; and other business. We will report to you in April on outcomes from this meeting.

Events this week

On Tuesday evening, January 31, starting around 5:30 pm, Dr. Ray Hilborn from the University of Washington will be hosting a seminar on trawling effects on benthic habitat. This will be in the AP room.

On Wednesday evening, February 1, the Pacific Northwest fishing industry will be hosting an open reception here in the Renaissance Hotel.

On Thursday evening, February 2, beginning at around 5:30 pm, personnel from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) will host an open workshop on their climate modeling work (ACLIM). This event will be in the SSC meeting room, and the work they are doing will be relevant to our work on the Bering Sea Fisheries Ecosystem Plan and other Council initiatives.