



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File #: FMP 18-001, **Version:** 1

Dan Hull, Chairman
David Witherell, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Arctic Exploratory Fishing - Discussion Paper

STAFF CONTACT: Steve MacLean (NPFMC)

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review Discussion Paper
- Action as necessary

BACKGROUND:

In June 2017, the Council directed staff to produce a discussion paper that reviews international fishery agreements and provisions regarding exploratory fishing. The Council requested that the paper identify how the agreements define exploratory fishing, lay out any management measures applied to exploratory fishing under each of the agreements, discuss any problem areas and challenges for management as well as successes, and describe any “best practices” or “lessons learned” that might be applied to the Central Arctic Ocean. The Council noted that they intend to amend the Fishery Management Plan for Fish Resources of the Arctic Management Area (Arctic FMP) to incorporate guidance on exploratory fishing that would inform the Council’s precautionary approach to opening commercial fisheries in the Arctic. The Arctic FMP currently precludes any commercial fisheries in the Arctic management area until sufficient information is available to support the sustainable management of a commercial fishery.

The Discussion Paper presented here summarizes the exploratory fishing provisions and management measures for six Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) that address fishing in the North Pacific, North Atlantic, European Union, and the Southern Oceans. They include the North Pacific Fisheries Commission, Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, and the European Union. Although each organization manages exploratory fisheries uniquely, there are elements that are common throughout. In general, RFMOs require:

- Advance notice before any contracting party can conduct exploratory fishing,
- Fishing plans,
- Monitoring plans,
- Data collection plans, and
- Reporting.

The Discussion Paper presents potential requirements that the Council may consider for advance notice, fishing plans, monitoring plans, data collection plans, and reporting requirements if it chooses to amend the Arctic FMP to address exploratory fishing.