

Draft Minutes

Comprehensive Data Collection Committee

Wednesday, May 27, 2009 Meeting 8am

Location – Traynor Room, Alaska Fishery Science Center, Seattle

Attendance

Members: Glenn Reed, Brett Reasor, Dave Colpo, Ed Richardson, Mike Szymanski (ph), Joe Plesha, Sky Starkey, Becca Robbins Gisclair

Staff: Jennifer Sepez (AFSC), Ron Felthoven (AFSC), Alan Haynie (AFSC), Sally Bibb (AKR), Stefanie Moreland (ADFG), Brian Garber-Yonts (AFSC), Mark Fina (NPFMC), Jeannie Heltzel (NPFMC), Diana Stram (NPFMC), Martin Loefflad (AFSC), Jeff Guyon (AFSC), Don Rivard (USFWS-ph), Christina Package (AFSC), Demian Schane (AKR-ph), Nicole Kimball (NPFMC-ph)

Public: Steve Minor, Brent Paine, John Gruver, Karl Haflinger, Ken Tippet, Anne Vanderhoeven, Paul Peyton, John Henderschedt, Dorothy Lowman, Stephanie Madsen.

Reviewed Agenda

Purpose and Need for the Action

The committee reviewed the Council's main Chinook bycatch motion and the data collection motion. The committee discussed whether the purpose of a new data collection program is to monitor the effectiveness of the incentive plan agreements (IPAs), and other management measures at reducing bycatch, or to monitor the overall effects of the bycatch measures. The first approach would focus on examining whether the management measures result in a reduction in bycatch and have other effects on fishing choices related to salmon bycatch (e.g., creating incentives to join IPAs, changes in fishing behavior). The second approach would facilitate a comprehensive evaluation of the fishery-wide effects of the bycatch reduction measures. Committee members suggested that the scope of the data collection program could differ depending on the Council's purpose.

NMFS staff noted that in order to implement the data collection program concurrently with the Chinook bycatch program, the Council would likely need to take final action by December 2009. Time constraints could limit the scope of what can be analyzed by this date. In addition, complex data collection measures could increase the time from Council action to implementation. The Council may wish to clarify its intent for a data collection program. The data collection program could focus specifically on the effectiveness of the IPAs at reducing bycatch, the effects of the program on bycatch reduction, or the overall effects of the bycatch reduction program.

Review of currently available data

The Committee reviewed existing data sources and additional data that will be collected under Amendment 91. These sources include Observer data, VMS data, price and revenue data from ADFG Fish Tickets and Commercial Operator Annual Reports (COAR), and NMFS daily product production reports. In addition, the IPA participants will be required to submit annual reports to NMFS. The IPA reporting requirements are generally described in the main Chinook salmon bycatch motion.

Review of discussion paper on data collection options

Alan Haynie and Ron Felthoven presented a discussion paper that describes the types of analyses that could be conducted to evaluate the salmon bycatch program and the data needed to support them. The paper proposes a range of potential approaches to evaluating the program that can be conducted either with existing data sources or through additional data collection. The paper suggests various data

collection options and evaluates the potential quality of the information that could be derived from these options. The paper concludes that while enhanced data collection under Amendment 91 will be useful in evaluating the effects of the bycatch program, additional data collection may be necessary to develop reliable conclusions about the effectiveness of the incentive programs and the hard cap at reducing bycatch and the effects of the program, depending on the scope of analysis.

It was noted that data collection efforts can be time-consuming and costly. At the same time, data collection can be important to understand the effectiveness of management measures, including associated industry costs. There was general disagreement concerning the potential collection of additional revenue and cost data to yield a better understanding of the effectiveness of the bycatch program. Some suggested that collection of these additional data would enable an improved independent analysis of the effectiveness of bycatch reduction measures. Others suggested that collection of these additional data could be very costly and is unlikely to provide accurate information concerning performance of bycatch reduction measures than is unavailable with currently collected data.

To overcome this disagreement, the committee discussed focusing on information that is feasible to collect and likely to be of value in evaluating the bycatch program. For example, it was suggested that collecting haul-level data on revenues and costs may not be feasible. In addition, it was suggested that models that rely exclusively on economic motivations for fishing decisions are likely to lead to erroneous conclusions. To address these concerns, surveys could be designed to evaluate decision making by individual vessels during the fishing season, accounting for fishing decisions made as a result of salmon bycatch avoidance, the identification of voluntary rolling hotspots, weather, and other factors, in addition to economic motivations (such as revenues from products produced from the catches).

Discussion of committee's recommendation to the Council

The committee discussed a range of possible alternatives for a data collection program, described below. Alternatives 2A and 2B only differ with respect to transaction data. Alternative 2A would only collect salmon transfer data, and Alternative 2B would collect both salmon and pollock transfer data. The committee recommended consideration of both approaches, because there was disagreement as to the preferred approach. Alternatives 3 and 4 would collect the same information as Alternative 2B. In addition, alternative 3 would collect data finer-scale revenue data (e.g., data on roe quality). Alternative 4 would also collect information on daily vessel operating costs. There was not complete consensus on any of the alternatives. The committee agreed that all of the alternatives could be included for Council consideration to reflect the diversity of views concerning the appropriate scope of the data collection program.

Alternative 1

Status quo (existing data sources)

Alternative 2A

In addition to the status quo data sources:

- (1) Transaction data for salmon – quantity and price of transfers (survey will be used to determine whether these are arm's length transactions).
- (2) Surveys to estimate costs of moving vessels to avoid salmon bycatch (vessel fuel use, transit time, and lost fishing time).
- (3) Post-season surveys of skippers to determine rationale for decision making during the pollock season (fishing location choices and salmon bycatch reduction measures).

Alternative 2B

In addition to the status quo data sources:

- (1) Transaction data for salmon and pollock– quantity and price of transfers (survey will be used to determine whether these are arm’s length transactions).
- (2) Surveys to estimate costs of moving vessels to avoid salmon bycatch (vessel fuel use, transit time, and lost fishing time).
- (3) Post-season surveys of skippers to determine rationale for decision making during the pollock season (fishing location choices and salmon bycatch reduction measures).

Alternative 3

In addition to the status quo data sources:

- (1) Transaction data for salmon and pollock– quantity and price of transfers (survey will be used to determine whether these are arm’s length transactions).
- (2) Surveys to estimate costs of moving vessels to avoid salmon bycatch (vessel fuel use, transit time, and lost fishing time).
- (3) Post-season surveys of skippers to determine rationale for decision making during the pollock season (fishing location choices and salmon bycatch reduction measures).
- (4) Survey of roe quantity, quality, and revenues at the minimum level collected by the company (e.g., lot, trip).

Alternative 4

In addition to the status quo data sources:

- (1) Transaction data for salmon and pollock– quantity and price of transfers (survey will be used to determine whether these are arm’s length transactions).
- (2) Surveys to estimate costs of moving vessels to avoid salmon bycatch (vessel fuel use, transit time, and lost fishing time).
- (3) Post-season surveys of skippers to determine rationale for decision making during the pollock season (fishing location choices and salmon bycatch reduction measures).
- (4) Survey of roe quantity, quality, and revenues at the minimum level collected by the company (e.g., lot, trip).
- (5) Survey of daily vessel operating costs (labor, observer, etc.).

The committee suggested that the Council could adopt a set of alternatives such as these for analysis, recognizing that additional work on survey development is required for a complete analysis of the alternatives. The process of defining what would be included in surveys could begin immediately. NMFS staff would develop draft surveys that could be shared with interested stakeholders for comment. Workshops could be held with industry and other stakeholders to discuss revisions to surveys. Once revised, surveys could be incorporated into an analysis for presentation to the Council for initial review at its October meeting.

Review of community data collection

Jennifer Sepez (AFSC) presented an overview of upcoming plans for collecting community fisheries data. Annual surveys will be mailed to Alaska communities to collect this community-level data, and the success of the first year of the project may determine whether long-term funding is available. Local and regional organizations will act as partners to help increase the response rate of the survey. Also, an update of the community profiles document is planned, beginning in 2011.