



Agenda Topics

September 30 to October 9, 2019, Land's End, Homer, AK

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

October will be the first meeting since Council membership has changed. In addition to the Council approving the agenda, two new Council members will take the oath of office, and the Council will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.

B. REPORTS

In this section of the meeting, each of the statutory agencies represented on the Council provides a management report to the Council. After all the reports, the public has a chance to provide comment and discussion with the Council will follow.

C1 BSAI Halibut ABM PSC limits – Initial Review

The Council will review an analysis to modify halibut bycatch limits applied to most trawl and longline vessels fishing in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI). A major change from current bycatch limits is that new ones under consideration would fluctuate up and down annually with changes in BSAI halibut abundance. The Council will decide if the range of limits considered in the analysis is sufficient or should be modified.

C2. Observer fee analysis – Final action, FMAC report

The Council is deciding whether to increase the observer fee from 1.25% up to 2% for most trawl, longline, pot, and jig catcher vessels fishing for cod, sablefish, and halibut in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), and some vessels in the BSAI. The analysis includes options to raise the fee to different amounts for trawl, longline, pot, and jig vessels.

C3 Observer 2020 Annual Deployment Plan – Review, FMAC report

NMFS has developed a plan for how to deploy observers in 2020 on vessels that take an observer on only some, not all, of their trips, and how many fixed gear vessels can opt in to carry electronic monitoring systems instead of an observer. The Council will review and provide feedback on the plan, including proposed coverage rates for each fishery gear sector (trawl, longline, pot and jig).

C4 BSAI Crab: a) ABC/OFL for 5 stocks (BBRKC, EBS snow crab, EBS tanner crab, SMBKC, PIRKC); b) Final 2018-2019 SAFE report; c) Crab Plan Team Report

A team of technical experts (the BSAI Crab Plan Team) will meet in September to discuss the size and status of five crab stocks in the Bering Sea to make recommendations on harvest limits. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will review the recommendations and the Council will set harvest limits based on their recommendations.

C5 BSAI Groundfish – Proposed harvest specifications, Preliminary Ecosystem Status Report, Joint Plan Team report, BSAI Groundfish Plan Team Report

The Council will review information from a joint team of technical experts (the BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams) about the status of the ecosystem, summer survey results, and other issues relevant to the upcoming assessment of groundfish fish stocks. The Council will recommend proposed catch limits for the 2020 BSAI groundfish fisheries, however, final catch limits are chosen in December.

C6 GOA Groundfish – Proposed harvest specifications, GOA Groundfish Plan Team report

The Council will receive a report from a team of technical experts (the GOA Groundfish Plan Team) with updates relevant to the upcoming assessment of groundfish stocks and recommend proposed catch limits for the 2020 GOA groundfish fisheries. Final catch limits are chosen in December.

C7 Sculpins to ecosystem component – Final Action

Sculpins are not intentionally caught in any commercial fishery, population levels are considered healthy, and bycatch is low enough that overfishing is not a concern. The Council is reviewing an analysis to remove sculpins from the list of species that are managed with catch limits. This may provide some economic benefit to Bering Sea fishermen without putting any sculpin population in danger of becoming overfished. This action will not affect any subsistence harvest.

C8 BSAI parallel waters – Initial Review

The Council is reviewing a management measure to prohibit all Federal vessels from fishing for Pacific cod in waters from shore to 3 miles in the BSAI without the proper permits and licenses. Even with the proper permit, these vessels would still be required to stop fishing if the federal waters fishery to which they are linked closes. The analysis also evaluates an additional requirement that if a vessel removes the permit from their vessel, they must wait three years before it could be re-issued.

D1 Trawl EM: a) Trawl EM EFP review, b) Trawl EM Committee Report

The Council is reviewing an Exempted Fishing Permit application to allow vessels testing a trawl electronic monitoring (EM) system to retain all fish onboard until bycatch can be monitored dockside. The Council's Trawl Electronic Monitoring Committee met in August, and will provide recommendations to the Council.

D2 BSAI Pcod trawl/pot CV management – Scoping paper

The Council is considering developing catch share programs for two sectors of the BSAI Federal Pacific cod fisheries: one for trawl catcher vessels and one for large pot catcher vessels. The Council will decide at this meeting whether to initiate an analysis of such programs.

D3 Stranded BSAI and GOA Pcod – Discussion paper

The Council will review a paper outlining regulatory constraints resulting in unharvested Pacific cod in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska. The paper includes information on when Pacific cod becomes available late in the year and potential ways to make that fish available earlier. The paper evaluates harvest opportunities in both State and federal waters.

D4 BSAI Pcod pot CP participation – Discussion paper

The Council will review the fishing activity of pot catcher processors fishing in the Bering Sea, relative to all those who hold a pot CP endorsed license, to determine whether to consider removing inactive licenses.

D5 Cook Inlet Salmon FMP – Discussion paper, Committee report

The State of Alaska has historically had management authority over all salmon fishing in Cook Inlet, but following a recent court decision, the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service must now manage the fishery in federal waters (more than three miles from the shoreline). The Council has created a Committee of people who fish for salmon in Cook Inlet to explore rules that should apply, especially for reporting catch. The Committee is meeting on Monday September 30, and staff will report results to the Council.

E Staff Tasking

The Council will review its committee membership, identify agendas for upcoming committee meetings, and receive updates on events and committees that have met during the course of the week in Homer (Recreational Fisheries Roundtable, Salmon FMP outreach, Community Engagement Committee).

The Council will also listen to any testimony from the public about existing and new management measures that the public may be interested in and will provide feedback to staff and the Council Chair about how to prioritize staff work on existing and new projects.