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News & Notes

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

December 2013

New Appointments

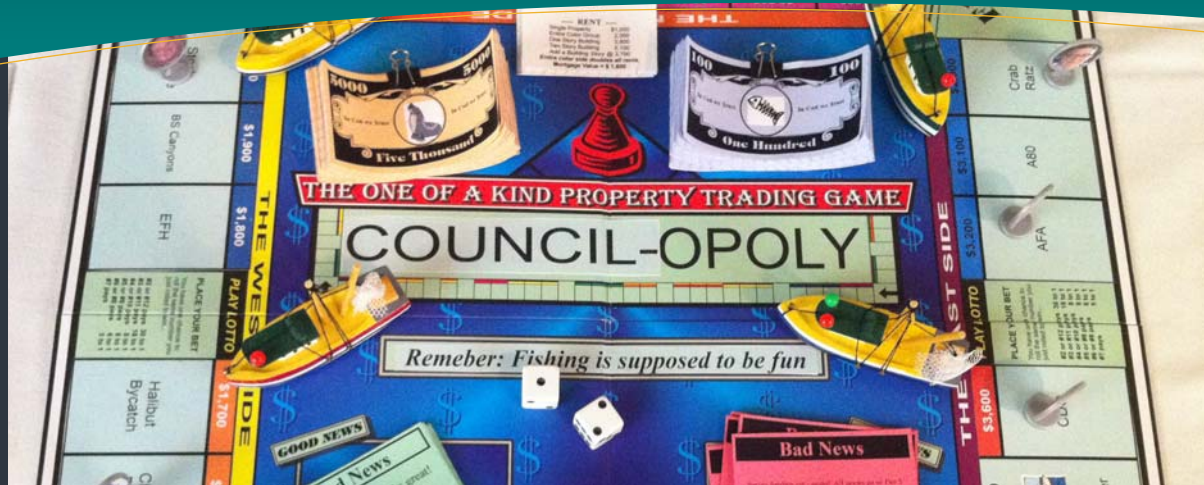
The Council re-appointed all SSC members for another year term, and re-appointed Ruth Christiansen, Kurt Cochran, Alexis Kwachka, Brian Lynch, and Jeff Kauffman for 3-year terms to the Council's Advisory Panel. New appointees to the AP include Sinclair Wilt of Westward Seafoods, and Heath Hilyard of SouthEast Alaska Guides Organization. Both members appointed for 3 year terms. Patrick O'Donnell of Kodiak's Golden West Fisheries was appointed for a special 1 year term dealing with GOA fisheries. We welcome them to the Council's process.

Enlow Leaves Advisory Panel

Long – time Advisory Panel member and Chairman, Tom Enlow of Unisea in Dutch Harbor, retired after 12 years on the Advisory Panel and 9 of them as Chairman. He was presented with a personalized "Councilopoly" from the AP, and a plaque from the Council marking his service in managing Alaska's fisheries. We thank him for his dedication and wish him luck in his future endeavors.



Chairman Eric Olson and retiring AP Chairman, Tom Enlow.



Charter Halibut

Since 2012 the North Pacific Council, NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish (and Game) (ADF&G) and International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) have cooperated on a joint process to use stakeholder input and agency expertise to develop recommendations for management measures to keep charter halibut harvests within their allocations in Area 2C and Area 3A.

The first year of the new Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) is 2014; it replaces the Guideline Harvest Level Program. The CSP 1) defines an annual process for allocating halibut between the charter and commercial halibut fisheries in Area 2C and Area 3A, 2) establishes by regulation sector allocations that vary in proportion with changing levels of annual halibut abundance and that balance the differing needs of the charter and commercial halibut fisheries over a wide range of halibut abundance in each area, and 3) describes a public process by which the Council may develop recommendations to the IPHC for charter angler harvest restrictions to limit harvest to the annual charter halibut fishery catch limit in each area.

In October, the Council's Charter Management Implementation Committee requested analysis of projected charter yield under the following measures. The range of possible measures was provided by consulting with numerous charter organizations and charter halibut permit holders.

Area 2C: 1) One-fish bag limit and U45-O68 reverse slot limit (status quo), 2) One-fish bag limit

with maximum size limit, 3) One-fish bag limit and annual limit combined with a maximum size limit, and 4) One-fish bag limit, and annual limit combined with a reverse slot limit.

Area 3A: 1) Two-fish bag limit, no size limit (status quo), 2) Two-fish bag limit with a maximum size limit on the second fish (one fish any size), 3) Two-fish bag limit (any size) with annual limit, 4) Two-fish bag limit (any size) and prohibit harvest by skipper and crew (default under CSP), and 5) Two-fish bag limit (any size) combined with vessel trip limit of one trip per day.

Due to meeting schedules, the Council considers charter halibut management measures for Area 2C and Area 3A in 2014 as part of the CSP before the IPHC has determined the combined charter and commercial halibut. In lieu of final combined catch limits, results from the December 4 - 5, 2013 interim IPHC meeting were used as a benchmark. The halibut exploitable biomass increased by about 9% in Area 2C. The charter allocation resulting from the "blue line" (the current IPHC harvest policy to the stock assessment) for Area 2C is 760,000 pounds. The Pacific halibut exploitable biomass declined by more than 20% compared to 2013 in Area 3A. The IPHC "blue line" results in a charter allocation in Area 3A of 1.78 million pounds.

The charter allocations resulting from the interim IPHC meeting (at the "blue line") are:

Area 2C: 18.3% of the combined commercial and charter catch limit

Area 3A: 18.9% of the combined commercial and charter catch limit (continued on back page)

Bering Sea Canyons Workshop

During staff tasking the Council discussed the public workshop that had been planned for November 2013 to review updates to the AFSC Bering Sea coral model, opportunities for collaborative research, and tools to reduce potential impact to corals. The original workshop was delayed due to the partial US federal government shutdown. The Council expressed its preference that the workshop should be held in Seattle, WA in February 2014, during the week of the Council meeting if possible, and should follow the same general agenda that was developed for Day 1 of the originally planned workshop. Staff will begin the planning process for that workshop, likely to be February 3, in Seattle. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Ecosystem Vision Statement

The Council reviewed a draft vision statement developed by the Ecosystem Committee, and requested that it be put out for public review. The draft vision statement is intended to synthesize the Council's policy on ecosystem-based management, and to work in concert with existing comprehensive management objectives such as included in the groundfish management approach which was adopted through the Programmatic Groundfish SEIS. The Committee's draft approach includes three parts: a value statement, the vision statement, and an implementation strategy. It is the Committee's intent to continue working on an action plan for the vision statement at its next meeting. After hearing from the public, the Council will consider whether to adopt the vision statement at the February 2014 Council meeting. The vision statement is posted on the Council's webpage. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

Walrus Island Transit Provisions

The Council reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment and Regulatory Impact Review for management provisions to allow vessels with Federal Fisheries Permits (FFPs) to transit walrus protection areas at Round Island and Cape Peirce in northern Bristol Bay. Transit prohibitions were put into place in 1992, but until recent years vessels with FFPs that served as tenders for the State managed herring and salmon fisheries were able to relinquish their FFP during the tendering season, thereby gaining access to the protection area. Amendment 83 to the Gulf of Alaska FFP prohibits vessels from reapplying for a surrendered FFP within three years, which effectively prevents vessels with FFPs from seeking tendering contracts for the herring or salmon fishery if they wish to maintain their FFP. Alternatives considered in this EA/RIR include the requisite no-action (Status Quo) alternative, and two alternatives to allow transit provisions at Round Island and Cape Peirce, respectively. Alternative 2 would allow transit through the Round Island walrus protection area. Three options are considered for the Round Island transit provisions, based on the premise that a closer approach to the walrus haulout on Round Island increases the likelihood of disturbance to those walrus. The three options considered allowed a closest point of approach to Round Island of 3 nm, 4.5 nm, and 6 nm. Alternative 3 would allow transit through the eastern portion of the Cape Peirce walrus protection area.

Based on the analysis in the EA/RIR, reports from the SSC and AP, and public testimony, the Council selected Alternative 2, Option 1 and Alternative 3 as their Preliminary Preferred Alternative. The Council will make its final decision at its April 2013 meeting. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

SSL EIS and BiOp

On November 27 2013, the National Marine Fisheries Service sent a letter to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council outlining two options for the agency to consider moving forward with the completion of the EIS and Biological Opinion for Steller sea lion protection measures in the Aleutian Islands. The current schedule, mandated by the U.S. District Court for Alaska, does not provide sufficient time for the agency to engage the Council in the development of fishery management measures to implement a Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) in the event that the biological opinion now under development concludes that the agency cannot insure the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the western distinct population segment of Steller sea lions or adversely modify their critical habitat.

Acting NMFS Administrator, Sam Rauch, presented two options to the Council and asked that the Council comment on which option the agency should pursue to complete the EIS and BiOp.

After discussions and public testimony, the Council passed a motion that acknowledged receipt of the Agency's letter dated 27 November, 2013 regarding the timing of completion of the EIS and BiOp, as well as the plaintiff's response letter of 11 December, 2013. The Council supports a request for an extension in order to engage in development of an RPA if necessary, and supports the recommendations in the plaintiff's response, including the five conditions to the extent the Agency is able to accommodate those provisions. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Visitors to the Council Meeting

The Council had a number of distinguished guests at its December Council meeting. Acting Assistant Administrator of NOAA Fisheries, Sam Rauch, attended a portion of the Council meeting, mainly to participate in the discussions about Steller Sea Lions. Anchorage Mayor, Dan Sullivan also greeted the Council and public and welcomed them to the city. Alaska State Senator Lesil McGuire addressed the Council and spoke to issues affecting Alaska's fisheries and the arctic. Throughout the meeting, the Council was also visited by attendees to the Young Fishermen's summit, which provides training and networking for future fishing leaders. We welcome all our guests and public and thank them for participating in the process.

BSAI Harvest Specifications for 2014/2015

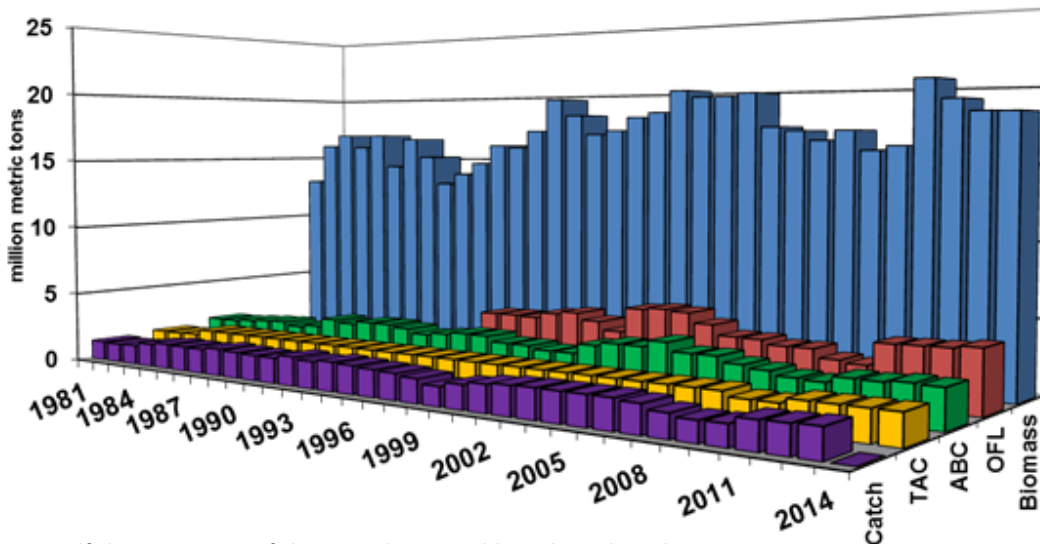
The Council adopted the BSAI Groundfish SAFE Report and annual catch limits based on recommendations from its advisory committees. The sum of the total allowable catches (TACs) or quotas for all groundfish is 2 million mt for 2014 and 2015. The TACs were set below the sum of the recommended ABCs for 2014 and 2015 are 2,572,819 mt and 2,474,632 mt, respectively. The Council raised the 2014 pollock TAC by 20,000 mt to 1.267 million mt from the 2013 TAC and made small downward adjustments to flatfish TACs.

For the first time, the Council adopted separate TACs for the eastern Bering Sea (EBS) and Aleutian Islands (AI) populations of Pacific cod. This action was tied to the decision at this meeting by the Scientific and Statistical Committee to manage cod as separate stocks due to its concerns about the declining AI cod population. The 2014 EBS Pacific

cod TAC was set at 246,897 mt; the AI cod TAC is 6,997 mt. These Federal TACs account for cod harvests in state water fisheries, which both have a guideline harvest level set to 3% of what previously had been a combined BSAI ABC. For 2014, the EBS cod GHL and AI cod GHL are each 8,103 mt.

Overall, the status of the BSAI groundfish stocks continues to appear favorable. The sum of the recommended ABCs for 2014 and 2015 indicating relative stability compare with the sums of the 2013 ABCs (2,639,317 t) and 2012 ABCs (2,510,000 t). All ABCs were set at their maximum permissible levels, except for EBS pollock. Nearly all stocks are above B_{MSY} or the B_{MSY} proxy of $B_{35\%}$.

The Council also adopted revised PSC limits for crab stocks, Pacific halibut, and herring. The final BSAI groundfish harvest specifications will be published as a final rule in the *Federal Register* by late February/early March 2014. They will replace the current 2014 harvest specifications that were adopted by the Council in December 2012. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information on BSAI groundfish quotas for 2014 and 2015.



BSAI Groundfish Biomass, Overfishing Level, Acceptable Biological Catch, and Total Allowable Catch, 1981-2013, and Catch, 1981-2014.

Note the Council's new webpage: www.npfmc.org
Please be sure to update your bookmarks.

Upcoming Meetings

Observer Advisory Committee:
February 3, 8-5, Seattle

Bering Sea Canyons Workshop:
February 3, 1-5:30, Seattle

Ecosystem Committee: Feb 4,
9-12, Seattle

Community Fishing Assoc
Workshop: February 10, 1-6,
Seattle

National EM workshop Jan 8-9
(invitation only)

Staff Tasking

In addition to discussing the relative priority of previously tasked projects, the Council initiated a number of new projects, clarified expectations for the Bering Sea canyons workshop, and discussed tasking for its various committees. Additionally, the Council tasked staff to do the following:

- send a letter to the IPHC with comments on the draft bycatch report;
- connect with the Alaska Board of Fisheries about the possibility of convening the joint protocol committee to discuss issues of mutual interest, including recent state groundfish proposals to the Alaska Board of Fisheries;
- Prepare analysis of options to modify the maximum retainable allowance of skates in GOA groundfish fisheries to avoid topping off and exceeding the TACs. Options include 5%, 10%, 15% and the status quo of 20%.

2014/2015 GOA Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved the Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final catch specifications for the 2014 and 2015 groundfish fisheries. As part of the Plan Team presentations and Council deliberations, the updated ecosystem SAFE report sections was presented. There was a summer trawl survey in the GOA in 2013, however full assessments were not provided for all stocks due to the compressed time frame as a result of the government furlough in October.

The sum of the ABCs increased by 8% (+44,755 t) compared with last year. This is primarily driven by projected increases in pollock 53,930 t (+45%), Pacific cod 7,700 t (+10%), and deep water flatfish 8,346 (+163%). Notable declines were projected in sablefish 450 t (-15%), shallow water flatfish -4,679 t (-10%), arrowtooth flounder -15,093 (-7%), and flathead sole -7,507 t (-15%). Nearly all rockfish stocks or stock complexes increased (total 12%) with the largest increase from Pacific ocean perch at 2,897 t (+18%) compared to the 2013 ABC.

The abundances of pollock, Pacific cod, Dover

sole, flathead sole, northern and southern rock sole, arrowtooth flounder, Pacific ocean perch, roughey and blackspotted rockfish, northern rockfish, and dusky rockfish are above target stock size. The abundances of sablefish are below target stock size (Fig. 2). The target biomass levels for deep-water flatfish (excluding Dover sole), shallow-water flatfish (excluding northern and southern rock sole), rex sole, shortraker rockfish, other rockfish (formerly other slope rockfish), demersal shelf rockfish, thornyhead rockfish, Atka mackerel, skates, sculpins, squid, octopus, and sharks are unknown.

For most stocks the Council established TACs equal to ABCs with some exceptions. For Pacific cod the ABC was reduced 25% in EGOA and CGOA and by 30% in WGOA to account for removals in the state managed fishery. This represents a 5% increase in the WGOA since 2013. Additional exceptions those fisheries where the bycatch of other target species is a concern, specifically for shallow water flatfish (W and Central GOA), flathead sole (W and C GOA), arrowtooth flounder (GOA wide) and other rockfish (EYAK/SEO). For those fisheries, the TAC is also set below the ABC. Atka

mackerel was established at levels to meet incidental catch needs in other fisheries only (no directed fishing is allowed). Specifications for 2013-2014 are posted on the Council's website.

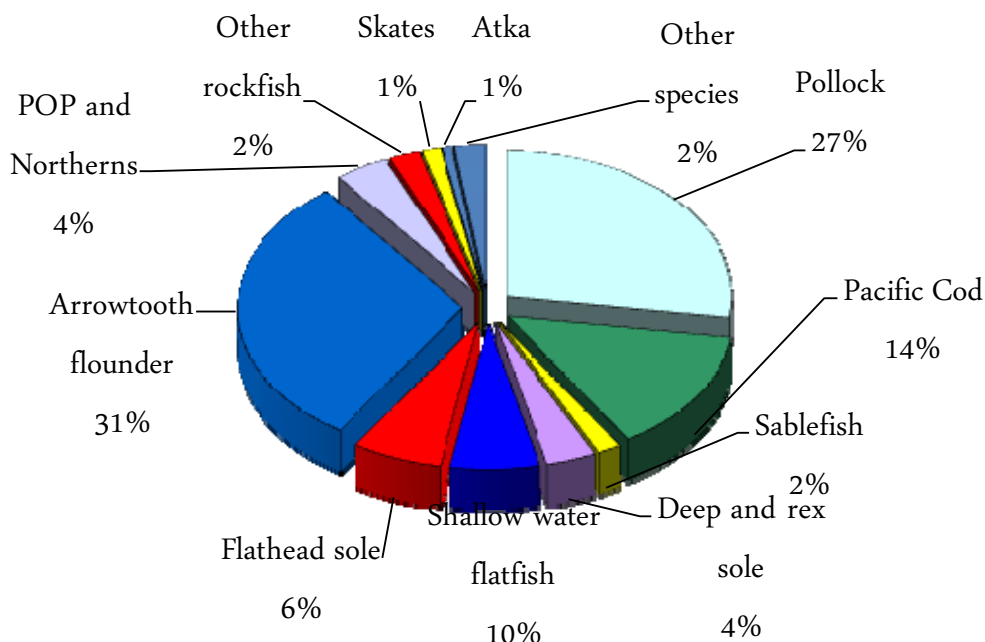
Prohibited Species Catch Limits:

The Council adopted halibut prohibited species catch limits, by season and gear apportionment for 2014-2015 and further specified apportionments of the 'other hook and line fisheries' annual halibut PSC allowance between the hook-and-line gear catcher vessel and catcher/processor sectors following the Pacific cod sector split allocation implemented in 2012. The PSC numbers for 2014 include the 7% reduction in year one of the three year stairs-step reduction in Halibut PSC limits based upon the action taken under Amendment 95 to the FMP. The final rule for this amendment has not yet published but the reductions will occur on schedule with 7% in 2014, 5% in 2015 (12% total) and 3% in 2016 (15% total). The PSC numbers and seasonal apportionments are available on the website.

The Council recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2014 and 2015, the SAFE report for GOA groundfish, the Ecosystem Considerations Chapter and the Economic SAFE report. Additional information on the summary of GOA groundfish stocks may be viewed at www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm

Directed fishing for Octopus and skates:

The Council also reviewed a discussion paper of issues related to opening up Big and Longnose skates to directed fishing in the EGOA and octopus gulf-wide. The Council took no action to recommend either skates or octopus for directed fishing at this time. In staff tasking the Council initiated an analysis of modifying the GOA skate maximum retainable amount (MRA). Currently the MRA is set at 20%. The Council requested an analysis to evaluate three alternatives: a) 5%, b) 10% and c) 15%. Staff contact is Diana Stram.



Percentage breakouts of 2013 ABCs by species and stock complexes.

Grenadiers

The Council reviewed a draft of an analysis to add grenadiers to the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs. They could be added under either of two management categories. If added "in the fishery" then they would be part of the annual harvest specification process for setting annual catch limits and total allowable catches (TACs). If added to the ecosystem components category, they would be managed without quotas, but with other management controls. The Council selected Alternative 2 as its Preliminary Preferred Alternative (Ecosystem Component) in the BSAI and GOA for all grenadier species with the following components. This alternative would include actions to: 1) Prohibit directed fishing for grenadiers; 2) Establish a maximum retainable amount in a range from 2 to 20 percent; 3) Require record keeping and reporting; 4) Define grenadier species codes; 5) Establish a separate management category for grenadiers in the FMP (i.e., do not include grenadiers in the forage fish category); and 6) Include product recovery rates. Final action is scheduled for February 2014. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

GOA Chinook Cap Rollover

The Council took final action on to refine the preferred alternative for management of Chinook salmon PSC in the GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries. In June 2013, the Council considered (but did not advance) an option to allow unused Chinook salmon PSC apportioned to the Central GOA Rockfish Program CV sector to "roll over" to support other GOA CV fisheries in the fall. Staff analyzed four action alternatives to determine whether or how reincorporating a rollover might hinder the achievement of the objectives expressed in the Council's June 2013 preferred alternative. The Council also considered a 'no action' alternative, which would advance the non-pollock Chinook PSC action with no rollover.

The Council selected a preferred alternative for this trailing action, under which all but 150 of the Rockfish Program CV sector's unused Chinook PSC would roll over to other non-pollock CV fisheries on October 1. Any Chinook PSC remaining in the Rockfish Program CV sector when the program closes (November 15) would roll over at that time. The Rockfish Program CV sector would not be included in the Uncertainty Pool incentive program, as defined in the Council's June 2013 preferred alternative. The Council noted that this alternative preserves fishing opportunities for both sectors of the CV fleet after October 1, without compromising the previously selected cap on Chinook PSC in the GOA non-pollock trawl fishery.

The preferred alternative for the trailing action, and its supporting analysis, will be integrated into the analytical document that informed the Council's June 2013 action on the broader Chinook PSC management program, and will be forwarded as part of the final rulemaking package. Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

IFQ Proposals

The Council reviewed four IFQ proposals and IFQ Committee recommendations for potential action on four proposals that the Council tasked for consideration at its last meeting. The four proposals are: 1) revise sablefish A share use ("ownership" cap; 2) revise when maximum retainable amounts (MRAs) are applied; 3) revise all IFQ vessel caps; and 4) allow clean-up fishing across multiple regulatory areas.

The Council took no action on revising sablefish A share use caps, and instead requested that the IFQ fleet work together to develop alternatives and options to revise halibut and/or sablefish vessel caps in all or some regulatory areas. The Council will consider the more detailed proposal at a future meeting under its staff tasking agenda.

The Council requested an analysis to amend when MRAs are calculated for not only IFQ species, but also for all groundfish species. The Council identified that this regulatory amendment was a lower priority than other actions the Council has in process.

The Council took no action at this time on the IFQ clean-up fishing proposal, recognizing that it would be included in a February 2014 discussion paper on numerous proposals to amend the restructured observer program. The Council will review this proposal in the context of other observer proposals at that time and identify priorities for future action. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

Observer Program

The Council received an update from the agency on the final 2014 annual deployment plan for the observer program, which is unchanged from the October draft. The agency also gave a presentation on the 2014 NMFS electronic monitoring (EM) pilot project. In February, NMFS is proposing to bring to the Council an outline of the annual performance review (scheduled for June 2014), including a list of the special evaluations that have been requested as part of the document. The Council will also be reviewing a discussion paper on proposed regulatory amendments for the observer program in February. The agency will ask the Council to prioritize the various observer evaluations that are scheduled for the coming months. The Council also requested the Observer Advisory Committee to meet before the February meeting, to review the projects for prioritization, and to discuss EM projects.

The Council also reviewed a discussion paper with options to address how observers monitor and are deployed on groundfish vessels delivering to tender vessels. The Council initiated an analysis to consider revising the regulations by either (1) deploying observers for catcher vessels from tenders, and/or (2) allowing catcher vessel observers to monitor deliveries on tenders. The draft purpose and need for this amendment is posted on the Council website. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

Amendment 80 Program 5-Year Review

The Council, at this meeting, examined and provided direction to staff concerning the draft work plan for the Amendment 80 5-year review. Amendment 80, implemented in 2008, enabled the formation of fishery cooperatives for non-AFA trawl catcher processors. As part of the Amendment 80 program and section 303(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), a 5-year review of the Amendment 80 program is required to ensure progress in meeting the goals of the program.

The Council provided a number of suggestions for the 5-year review, which include:

- Changes to the Amendment 80 fisheries as a result of the implementation of vessel replacement
- Estimate of the carbon footprint for the Amendment 80 fleet during the past 5-years
- Effects resulting from the change in cooperative formation requirements and how these changes have effected TAC utilization
- Effects of Amendment 85 allocation of Pacific cod on the sector's ability to harvest their allocation of Amendment 80 species
- How the flatfish flexibility action would be addressed if other flatfish species were allocated to the Amendment 80 sector
- How changes to the pollock MRA enforcement period and the arrowtooth MRA have affected pollock incidental catch by the Amendment 80 sector
- Effects resulting from Steller sea lion fishing limitations on the Amendment 80 sector and on the communities that rely to the sector
- Changes in groundfish retention standard for the Amendment 80 sector should utilize the approach that established the standard in Amendment 79 and not the approached used in the implementation of Amendment 79
- Finally, the 5-year review should include a discussion on how successful the Amendment 80 program has been in meeting the Council's goals of the program.

The final report is scheduled for the April Council meeting. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Crab Coop Reports

The Council received a first submission of BSAI crab cooperative reports. Most of the cooperatives submitted a written report and representatives from three cooperatives provided the Council with an oral presentation. Reports were intended to address concerns raised during the 5-review of the crab rationalization program; specifically, the transfer of quota shares to active participants in the fishery, high lease rates for quota share, and equitable crew compensation. The Council additionally received a staff presentation with updated 2012 crab Economic Data Report (EDR) information, highlighting data availability and timing of the crab EDR for review. With input from the stakeholders and understanding the utility of fully audited crab EDR for reference, the Council moved to change the timing of the reports. Beginning 2015, the reports will be requested March 1 of each year in with an opportunity for representatives to present at the April meeting.

Council members expressed support for the seven-question format used in many of the cooperative reports. However, the Council noted more information should be provided describing the effectiveness of the measures taken within the cooperative to address the concerns active participation, lease rates and crew compensation. A further discussion on structure and content expectations for the cooperatives reports is scheduled for the April 2014 meeting. The Council remains interested in the perspective of those

cooperatives that did not submit an annual report and requested staff follow-up with these cooperative representatives. Staff contact is Sarah Marrinan.

Co-op Reporting Requirements

At this meeting, the Council reviewed a discussion paper on cooperative reporting requirements. The paper provides an up-to-date synopsis of mandatory and voluntary elements of the different annual cooperative reports and the applicability of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) to Council requests for additional information in the cooperative reports.

The Council was notified that requests for additional information in annual cooperative reports could require a PRA information request to be submitted to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval. Preparing the PRA submissions will require additional work by staff in preparing the information requests. In addition, to help facilitate preparation of the paperwork necessary for the PRA submission, changes to the voluntary annual cooperative report should be in the form of a motion that the Council could approve. The deliberation of the motion would provide the needed rational and justification for the new information requests. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

The Council has moved to an entirely new document management system, which allows an easier way for the public to view items related to a council meeting. All the items associated with a Council meeting, either before or after, are available to the public via the online database: npfmc.legistar.com. The items are searchable and downloadable, and there's even a feature to be alerted if something new is posted on a specific agenda item. This means the entire Council notebook is available online. An easier interface is available through an app for the ipad called Granicus. Call the office if you'd like more information on this feature.

PUBLIC COMMENT GOES ONLINE

Starting for the February meeting, the Council will be accepting public comments online, through the same database: npfmc.legistar.com. Public comments will be accepted for each agenda item, and can either be input directly, or included as an attachment. More information on the process as February approaches. Staff contact is Maria Shawback.

(Charter Halibut: continued from front page)

Under the Catch Sharing Plan, the charter allocations include the estimates of the amount of wastage that would occur in each fishery. The preliminary estimates of sport fishery release mortality from the charter sector accounted for 41,000 lb in Area 2C total and 36,000 lb in Area 3A.

On December 9, 2013 the Charter Management Implementation Committee 1) reviewed an analysis for setting 2014 charter halibut annual management measures, which was prepared by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Sportfish Division and 2) recommended management measures for Area 2C and Area 3A for 2014. The analysis accounted for estimates of wastage in each area. On December 12, 2013, the Council reviewed the ADF&G analysis and adopted the committee recommendations, based on reference (“blue line”) allocations of 760,000 lb in Area 2C and 1.78 million lb in Area 3A and adjustments for estimates of wastage in each area.

Area 2C (Southeast)

1) One-fish daily bag limit and 2) Reverse slot limit of U44076 (≤ 44 inches or ≥ 76 inches)

If the final charter allocation is sufficiently higher than the “blue line” to accommodate a change in the reverse slot limit, adjust the size of the lower limit up one inch. The next adjustment would be to reduce the upper limit to meet the allocation.

Area 3A (Southcentral)

1) Two-fish daily bag limit, 2) Maximum size of the second fish is 29 inches, and 3) One trip per day (limit each vessel to one trip per calendar day)

If the final charter allocation is sufficiently higher than the “blue line” to remove the trip limit, the measures would be a two-fish daily bag limit, one of which is equal to or less than 29 inches. As needed, the size of the second fish may be adjusted up or down to meet the allocation.

At its January 13 – 17, 2014 Annual Meeting, the IPHC will consider the Council’s recommendations for setting charter management measures for Area 2C and Area 3A for 2014, when it adopts the CSP allocations for the commercial and charter halibut sectors in its 2014 Annual Management Measures. The Council’s recommendations to the IPHC include guidance on how to adjust its recommendations to account for differences between the “blue line” and final combined catch limits in each area (as described above). Area 2C and Area 3A management measures for 2014 will be implemented under final rulemaking for the IPHC Annual Management Measures, likely by March 2014.

Jane DiCosimo can be contacted for more information on Pacific halibut management.

GOA Pot Gear for Sablefish

After reviewing an expanded discussion paper to allow the use of longline pot gear in the Gulf of Alaska sablefish IFQ fishery, the Council adopted a problem statement and alternatives, with elements and options for analysis to be scheduled for initial review in 2014.

The Council scoped this issue in 2013 through two discussion papers, public testimony at three Council meetings, and a Sablefish Gear

Committee that was appointed and convened in October. The Council expressed its concern that interactions with sperm whales in the Central and Eastern Gulf and killer whales in the Western Gulf affect the ability of sablefish quota share holders to harvest their sablefish IFQs. Sablefish mortality associated with whale depredation is difficult to quantify, but increases total mortality and uncertainty in sablefish abundance indices. The use of pot gear for sablefish could reduce sperm whale and killer whale interactions with fishing gear in the Gulf of Alaska.

The analysis will address a wide range of issues that have been covered in the discussion paper (both versions are posted on the website) and identified by the Council’s Sablefish Gear Committee. Committee members have identified a number of North Pacific, British Columbia, and Northwest sablefish fisheries that successfully allow the use of longline pots to reduce the problems associated with whale depredation while minimizing gear conflicts that could result from allowing longline pot and hook-and-line longline gear to fish in the same regulatory areas. Proposed gear elements are anticipated to mitigate gear conflicts. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 12/23/13

Feb 3 - 11, 2014 Seattle, WA	April 7-15, 2014 Anchorage, AK	June 2-10, 2014 Nome, AK
Community Fishing Association 'workshop' (Feb 10) Bering Sea Canyon workshop (T) IPHC report Observer Annual Performance Review Outline: Review; OAC report Electronic Monitoring Update Observer Program Regulatory Amendments: Discussion paper IFQ vessel caps: Discuss in staff tasking SSL EIS: Action as necessary (T) GOA Pcod pot sector participation: Discussion paper AI P.cod CV allocation/delivery: Update/Discussion Paper BSAI Halibut PSC: Updated discussion paper (T) Charter Halibut Common Pool proposal: Review (T) BSAI Crab bycatch limits: Expanded discussion paper Ecosystem Approach Vision Statement: Review Definition of fishing guide: Final Action CDQ P. cod fishery development: Discussion paper GOA Tending: Update/Discussion Paper Grenadier management: Final Action Bering Sea FEP: Discussion Paper Crab modeling workshop: Report (SSC Only) Chinook Salmon EDR: Report from AFSC Groundfish and Crab Economic SAFE reports: SSC Review	BS Canyons: Discussion Paper VMS Discussion paper: Enforcement Committee Review Fishery Cooperatives (Am 80, CGOA rockfish, AFA): Reports BSAI Crab Co-op Report Template: Discuss SSL EIS: Action as necessary (T) GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Discussion paper Crab ROFR contract terms: Initial Review (T) Am 80 5-year review (T) Charter Halibut Common Pool: Discussion Paper (T) Round Island Transit: Final Action Scallop SAFE: Plan Team report and OFL/ABC specifications GOA Skate MRA revisions: Initial Review (T) PSEIS SIR: Review Draft	VMS Discussion paper: Review (T) Observer Annual Performance Review Observers for Tending: Initial Review SSL EIS: Action as necessary (T) GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Action as necessary Norton Sound RKC LLPs: Discussion paper BSAI crab ABC/OFLs for 4 stocks: Review and Approve GOA pot sablefish: Initial Review (T) Bering Sea Chinook/chum salmon bycatch: Discussion paper (T) BSAI Crab PSC numbers to weight: Discussion paper (T) CDQ P.cod fishery development: Action as necessary GOA Skate MRA revisions: Final Action (T) MRA calculation, all fisheries: Initial Review (T) ITEMS BELOW NOT YET SCHEDULED ROFR Aleutia PQS: Final Action Greenland Turbot allocation: Initial Review Electronic Monitoring Workgroup Report Salmon EFH revisions: Initial Review (T)

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
 EDR - Economic Data Reporting
 EFH - Essential Fish Habitat
 EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit
 EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
 FEP - Fishery Ecosystem Plan
 FLL - Freezer longliners

HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
 IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
 IBQ - Individual Bycatch Quota
 LLP - Limited License Plan
 MPA - Marine Protected Area
 MRA - Maximum Retainable Allowance
 PSEIS - Programmatic Supplemental Impact Statement
 PSC - Prohibited Species Catch
 RKC - Red King Crab
 ROFR - Right of First Refusal
 SIR - Supplemental Information Report
 SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee
 SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
 SSL - Steller Sea Lion

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

February 3-11, 2014, Seattle
April 7-15, 2014, Anchorage
June 2-10, 2014, Nome
October 6-14, 2014 Anchorage
December 8-16, 2014, Anchorage
February 2-10, 2015, Seattle
April 6-14, 2015, Anchorage
June 1-9, 2015, Sitka
October 5-13, 2015 Anchorage
December 7-15, 2015, Anchorage

(T) = Tentative