

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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FINAL ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES June 6-8, 2011 Nome, Alaska

The following (19) members were present for all or part of the meetings:

Kurt Cochran	Becca Robbins Gisclair	Ed Poulsen
Craig Cross	Jan Jacobs	Neil Rodriguez
John Crowley	Bob Jacobson	Beth Stewart
Jerry Downing	Alexus Kwachka	Lori Swanson
Tom Enlow	Chuck McCallum	Anne Vanderhoeven
Tim Evers	Matt Moir	
Jeff Farvour	Theresa Peterson	Absent: Julianne Curry

Minutes of the March-April 2011 meeting were approved.

C-2(a) BSAI Crab SAFE Norton Sound Red King crab & AI Golden King Crab

The AP supports the SSC recommendations on ABC for the four crab stocks under this agenda item.

Motion passed 18/0

C-2(b) Pribilof Island Blue King crab rebuilding

The AP recommends that increased observer coverage be made a priority under the restructured observer program for the pot cod fleet fishing in the Pribilof and St Matthews areas. The analysis should include suboptions regarding triggered threshold caps for the affected sectors and should also include relative dependence by sector on the affected area. The analysis should include information from the Norton Sound subsistence fishery if possible.

Motion passed 18/0

C-3(a) Habitat Conservation Area Boundary

The AP recommends that the Council reschedule this topic until the December 2011 meeting in order to allow interested parties further opportunity to have discussions.

Motion passed 19-0

C-3(b) Northern Bering Sea Research Plan

The AP recommends the Council request that NMFS:

1. Engage subsistence experts from communities in the Northern Bering Sea research area in the planning process.
2. Include in the plan how the before-and-after trawl effects study will be integrated with ongoing or new ecosystem research in the region.
3. Focus research on the effects of using modified trawl gear.

Motion passed 19-0

C-4 Final action on GOA Chinook Salmon Bycatch control measures

The AP recommends the Council specify January 1, 2013 as the implementation date for the observer requirements contained in this action and clarify that the coverage levels specified in this action apply to the Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery.

Motion passed 19-0

The AP requests the Council adopt the following alternative for final action on Chinook salmon PSC limits and increased monitoring with the changes in Component 1 (~~bold/strikeout~~) as revised:

Component 1: ~~22,500~~ **30,000** Chinook salmon PSC limit

Apportion limit between Central and Western GOA - annual PSC limits:

Central GOA: ~~15,816~~ **23,000** Chinook salmon

Western GOA: ~~6,684~~ **7,000** Chinook salmon

[Motion to change PSC limit and split passed 12-7]

Minority Report: The minority of seven AP members believes that the Preferred Preliminary Alternative (PPA) cap of 22,500 represents an upper limit above the historical averages and is a compromise. It is stated in the problem statement that the objective is to reduce Chinook PSC. Chinook are a fully allocated valuable species and GOA Chinook user groups are anticipating meaningful action. While some fishermen may voluntarily work to avoid Chinook PSC there is no effective fleet-wide incentive to do so. Under a reasonable cap the fleet will be economically motivated to avoid Chinook to prosecute the Pollock TAC.

Signed by: Theresa Peterson, Alexis Kwachka, Jeff Farvour, Tim Evers, Bob Jacobson, Chuck McCallum, Becca Robbins Gisclair

The AP notes that this action is not intended to predetermine Chinook salmon PSC limits in non-pollock fisheries

[A motion to add the following option failed 8/11]

~~Option: The PSC limit may be exceeded by up to 25 percent one out of three consecutive years. If the PSC limit is exceeded in one year, it may not be exceeded for the next two consecutive years.~~

Central and Western GOA PSC limits would be managed by area (measures to prevent or respond to an overage would be applied at the area level, not Gulf-wide). Chinook salmon PSC limits shall be managed by NMFS in-season similar to halibut PSC limits.

If it is not possible to implement a Chinook salmon PSC limit in the first year for the full calendar year, it shall be implemented midyear for C and D seasons. The PSC limits under this scenario for C and D seasons, combined, will be as follows:

Central GOA: ~~7,710~~ **11,213** Chinook salmon
Western GOA: ~~5,598~~ **5,863** Chinook salmon

The preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) PSC limits for the first year under a midyear implementation are the result of the PPA annual PSC level in each area multiplied by the average bycatch taken in the C and D seasons within each area across the years noted in the PPA, and adjusted upward by 25%.

Midyear PSC limit calculation:

Central GOA: ~~(15,816~~ **23,000** x 0.39) x 1.25 = ~~7,710~~ **11,213** Chinook salmon
Western GOA: ~~(6,684~~ **7,000** x 0.67) x 1.25 = ~~5,598~~ **5,863** Chinook salmon

Component 2: Improved Chinook salmon PSC estimates

Extend existing 30% observer coverage requirements for vessels 60'-125' to trawl vessels less than 60' directed fishing for pollock in the Central or Western GOA.

Require full retention of all salmon in pollock trawl fisheries
NMFS shall work with the processors to evaluate and address the quality of sorting at the plants to assist improvements in observer salmon estimates. The Council encourages NMFS to apply lessons learned from the BSAI to the GOA where applicable.

Processing plants, with assistance from NMFS, should endeavor to ensure their fish tickets accurately reflect the species and number of salmon, which will be delivered and sorted as salmon bycatch at their facilities.

NMFS is also encouraged to collaborate with industry to facilitate information sharing in order to speed delivery of in-season data (total catch and salmon counts, by species) for the NORPAC data system and Catch Accounting System.

Motion passed 12/7

C-5 Initial review of BSAI Chum Bycatch analysis

The AP recommends the Council request staff to revise the analysis as described below and bring it back for initial review again in December 2011.

1. Revise Alternative 4 to read:

Alternative 4

Rolling Hot Spot (RHS) system – similar to status quo (with RHS in regulation), participants in a vessel-level (platform level for Mothership fleet) RHS would be exempt from:

Option 1: a hard cap (selected from the range in Alternative 2)

Suboption: In addition to the RHS, the fleet would be subject to a large area trigger closure (encompassing 80% of historical bycatch) with Components 1-3 under

Alternative 3 for cap level, application of trigger caps, sector allocations and cooperative provisions.

Option 2: A large area trigger closure (encompassing 80% of historical bycatch)

With Components 1-3 under Alternative 3 for cap level, application of trigger caps, sector allocations and cooperative provisions.

2. Analyze parameters of the RHS program under Alternative 4 that could be adjusted by the council including:
 - Modification of RHS to operate at a vessel level, instead of at the cooperative level;
 - Faster reaction/closure time (shorter delay between announcement and closure);
 - Amount of closure area;
 - Adjustments that would address timing and location of bycatch of Western Alaska chum stocks;
 - Base rates.

3. Make the following revisions to the Draft EA
 - Add caveats to all sections describing the impacts to specific stocks describing the limitations of the stock identification and AEQ information;
 - Where run size impacts are presented for aggregated stocks (i.e. Western Alaska, coastal Western Alaska), clarify that these aggregations may mask impacts on smaller runs (i.e. Norton Sound);
 - Revise the analysis of pollock fishery impacts and potential foregone revenue for Alternative 3 to present actual numbers for each year;
 - Include the discussion previously requested by the Council of “a discussion of the meaningfulness of fines, including histograms of number and magnitude of fines over time as well as a comparison of penalties under the RHS program to agency penalties and enforcement actions for violating area closures.”
 - Include a qualitative discussion of the impacts on salmon fisheries, i.e. impacts of fishing restrictions on drying fish, lower CPUEs, gas costs, increased travel time, fish camps and culture;
 - Include an expanded discussion of Norton Sound salmon fisheries by district including escapement and harvest information for an expanded time period and a full discussion of the tier II fishery.
 - Add to Alternative 3, Component 4: apply trigger closures only in June and July.
 - apply restriction to the June and July portions of Pollock fishery.
 - Expand discussion of cumulative effects of the Area M commercial fishery on other western Alaska stocks.

Motion passed 19-0

D-1(d) Research Priorities

The AP recommends the following change (in bold) to the listed research priorities:

Immediate Concerns:

I.C.2. Salmon genetics and stock identification work to better understand stock of origin of Chinook bycatch in GOA trawl fisheries **and Chinook and chum bycatch in BSAI trawl fisheries.**

Motion passed 18-0

D-2 Staff Tasking

Halibut PSC Cap [referenced under B-1(g) of Executive Director's Report]

The AP received an update from staff on action to reduce halibut bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska and took the following actions:

The AP requests the analysis fully discuss the current halibut stock issues:

1. The serious decrease in exploitable biomass.
2. The mystery associated with poor growth rates
3. Extremely high overall biomass

As well as the challenges associated with other increasing groundfish stocks in the GOA.

Motion passed 18-0.

The AP recommends that the Council retain Alternative 2, Option 2, and suboption b2 for AFA CV, Amendment 80, and Rockfish Program sideboards.

Motion passed 19/0

[A motion to recommend that the Council develop a comprehensive FMP amendment and regulatory amendment and analysis of ways to reduce halibut bycatch by all sectors and gear types engaged in GOA groundfish fisheries failed 9-10.]

Minority Report on halibut PSC cap: The minority of the AP believes that changes in the GOA halibut PSC cap should be addressed through a comprehensive FMP amendment and regulatory amendment. We are concerned that changing the halibut PSC cap through the specification process will not allow adequate time for public consideration and comment relative to changes in groundfish ABC levels resulting from new survey data.

Signed by: Beth Stewart, Jerry Downing, Craig Cross, Lori Swanson, Jan Jacobs, Matt Moir, Tom Enlow, Kurt Cochran