

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands Finfish
February 15-26, 2004

DESIGNATED REPORTER: Joe Chythlook

This summary of actions is for information purposes only and is not intended to detail, reflect or fully interpret the reasons for the board's actions.

SUBSISTENCE HALIBUT

H-1: Naukati

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: A community petition by the Homeowner's Association for subsistence halibut eligibility.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed to recommend to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) that Naukati be included as an eligible community for subsistence halibut because the community is outside of any nonsubsistence use area and halibut was the third most important resource used by the community according to the most recent subsistence use survey done.

H-2: Port Tongass Village

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: An individual resident living near the abandoned village of Old Port Tongass for subsistence halibut eligibility.

DISCUSSION: The board carefully considered the information and the criteria presented by the department and agreed to recommend to the NPFMC to allow the area to be determined as having customary and traditional uses because it had similar patterns of use as the larger area that already had that determination.

H-3: Qutekcak Native Tribe

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: A request an Alaskan Native nonprofit organization for Alaska Natives living within the community of Seward for subsistence halibut eligibility.

DISCUSSION: The board determined that this request came from a non-federally recognized tribe, and noted that the Seward community is a nonsubsistence use area.

H-4: Funter Bay

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: A family request to be included for subsistence eligibility on northwest Admiralty Is.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed that this area is within the Juneau nonsubsistence use area.

H-5: Boathouse Cove

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: A request from a family who lives ten miles south of Ketchikan for subsistence halibut eligibility.

DISCUSSION: The board referenced their comments for H-4; this area is also a nonsubsistence use area and does not fit the criteria.

H-6: Chinita Bay

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: A request from a family in the in Cook Inlet area for subsistence halibut eligibility.

DISCUSSION: The board referenced their comments for H-4; this area is also a nonsubsistence use area and does not fit the criteria.

H-7: Loring

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: A request submitted by locals in the area of an old cannery site located ten miles north of Ketchikan for subsistence halibut eligibility.

DISCUSSION: The board voted against this as this area is a nonsubsistence use area and does not fit the criteria.

GROUND FISH

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Rationalization

PROPOSAL NO. 257

ACTION: Tabled to GOA Gr'fish Comm.

DESCRIPTION: Identify a range of options for managing state waters groundfish fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA).

DISCUSSION: The board agreed to table this as a placeholder proposal in the GOA groundfish rationalization process in order to allow the established steering committee the opportunity to continue its work.

Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Groundfish

PROPOSAL NO. 175

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish a log book requirement for black rockfish.

DISCUSSION: The public panel had consensus and the board committee recommended supporting the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 176

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish a landing requirement for sablefish.

DISCUSSION: This action will reduce the chances of overfishing, maintain better control over the fishery, minimize bycatch, and provide more accurate data.

PROPOSAL NO. 177

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Establish a state waters season for Pacific cod.

DISCUSSION: The board discussed that current allocations, other than the jig sector, are fully utilized in the federal and parallel fisheries. The NPFMC express concerns about establishing a new state waters fishery here, and the board agreed the timing was not right.

South Alaska Peninsula Groundfish

PROPOSAL NO. 178

ACTION: Tabled to GOA Gr'fish Comm.

DESCRIPTION: Establish all groundfish in state waters as open access utilizing a portion of the federal TAC.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed to table this as a placeholder proposal in the GOA groundfish rationalization process.

PROPOSAL NO. 179

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Allocate entire Pacific cod TAC to state waters season.

DISCUSSION: The department opposed because of ongoing GOA groundfish rationalization discussions and the board agreed that all groundfish species in state waters would be discussed in the GOA rationalization committee.

PROPOSAL NO. 180

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Allocate up to 100 percent Pacific cod TAC to state waters season.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 179.

PROPOSAL NO. 181

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Increase allocation to 50 percent of Pacific cod TAC to state-waters season.

DISCUSSION: The board stated that this will be addressed in the GOA groundfish rationalization process.

PROPOSAL NO. 182

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Increase allocation of Pacific cod TAC to state waters season.

DISCUSSION: The board referenced comments under proposal 179 and 181. In addition, the board noted there may be concerns with sea lion interactions.

PROPOSAL NO. 183

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Establish Pacific cod jig allocation, superexclusive registration and trip limits.

DISCUSSION: The board stated this will be discussed in the GOA groundfish rationalization process. Trip limits are hard to enforce. Proposal has a potential to increase the harvest rate in the pot fishery.

PROPOSAL NO. 184

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Establish Pacific cod jig allocation, superexclusive registration and trip limits.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 183.

PROPOSAL NO. 185

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Establish Pacific cod jig allocation, and trip limits.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 181.

PROPOSAL NO. 186

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Establish Pacific cod jig allocation.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 181.

PROPOSAL NO. 187

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Establish Pacific cod jig allocation.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 183.

PROPOSAL NO. 188

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Reduce jig gear and establish trip limits for the state waters Pacific cod season.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed no change was needed because most fish with three jigging machines already.

PROPOSAL NO. 189

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Establish jig trip limits

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 183.

PROPOSAL NO. 190

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Establish criteria for reopening of the state waters Pacific cod pot season.

DISCUSSION: Adoption of this proposal would be unworkable and the proposed reporting requirement would be impractical as well.

PROPOSAL NO. 191

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify pot gear storage requirements.

DISCUSSION: This proposal eases storage ability for fishermen. The board noted that this had already done for the Chignik and Kodiak management areas.

PROPOSAL NO. 192

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Establish superexclusive vessel registration for black rockfish.

DISCUSSION: There was no public support for a superexclusive fishery.

PROPOSAL NO. 193

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish vessel registration for black rockfish.

DISCUSSION: The department recommended support to make the current management practice into regulation. Registration helps the department track effort.

PROPOSAL NO. 194

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish fishing sections for management of black rockfish.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed with the department's assessment of this proposal to distribute effort between three sections and that it would make management align with the Chignik state water P-cod fishery.

PROPOSAL NO. 195

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish a logbook requirement for black rockfish.

DISCUSSION: See discussion under proposal 175.

PROPOSAL NO. 196

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish allowable gear for black rockfish.

DISCUSSION: The department wishes to make its management of this fishery similar to Kodiak and Chignik management areas and the board agreed that this type of gear would be used appropriately.

SPORT FISHING

Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands

PROPOSAL NO. 197

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify the salmon closed waters area at Summer Bay Lake.

DISCUSSION: The public panel and board committee had consensus to support.

PROPOSAL NO. 198

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify the bag, possession, and size limits of trout and steelhead.

AMENDMENTS: Rainbow/steelhead trout (freshwater and saltwater) two per day, two in possession, only one daily and in possession over 20 inches in length, with an annual limit of two trout over 20 inches in length. In Anchorage Bay Runway Lake, the annual limit for rainbow/steelhead trout does not apply. In the Sandy River drainage, retention of rainbow/steelhead trout is not allowed. Rainbow/steelhead trout under 20 inches in length caught in freshwater do not count towards the annual limit.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed that this would give the department guidance in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands sport fishery regulations and align the regional regulations with statewide regulations while allowing a small harvest.

SALMON

Alaska Peninsula Subsistence

PROPOSAL NO. 199

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify the Alaska Peninsula subsistence fishing regulations.

AMENDMENTS: Clarify the description of districts and sections and clarify waters closed to subsistence fishing; prohibit taking of salmon in waters open to commercial fishing within 24 hours before and 12 hours following each commercial period. Customary and traditional uses of salmon

were found to be 34,000 to 56,000 salmon and of and other finfish was found to be 47,000 to 79,000. Set lawful gear and specifications of length of gillnets and purse seines in various waters and require identification of gear. Describe special location provisions where subsistence fishing is allowed with certain gear in certain waters; allow only one subsistence permit per household; require marking of subsistence fish harvested.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed with staff that this clarifies and updates Alaska Peninsula subsistence fishing practices into regulations. This action will also provide additional opportunity. The board discussed the problems with concurrent openings of commercial and subsistence harvest, and wanted to avoid reducing subsistence opportunity if no concurrent openings were allowed.

Alaska Peninsula Coordinates

PROPOSAL NO. 200

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Consider using GPS for all regulatory coordinates.

DISCUSSION: The board supports the department's statewide effort to adopt GPS as the method used to describe geographical coordinates in fishing regulations.

PROPOSAL NO. 201

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify several regulatory boundary line coordinates in Alaska Peninsula Area.

AMENDMENTS: Substitute language as given in RC 92, pages 11 and 12.

DISCUSSION: The proposal clarifies definitions of points in the management area as boundary lines. This will aid enforcement of closed waters.

PROPOSAL NO. 202

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Define closed waters in Lenard Harbor.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed with the department's plan to reduce closed waters surrounding two small creeks and clarify the lines.

Alaska Peninsula Gear Specifications and Definitions

PROPOSAL NO. 203

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Eliminate the drift gillnet mesh size restrictions.

DISCUSSION: Concerns were expressed about increasing harvest efficiency, and possible increased morality of fish passing through larger sized mesh. The department prefers uniform mesh size through the management area.

PROPOSAL NO. 204

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Amend the drift gillnet mesh size.

DISCUSSION: The board and department were unclear which area this proposal refers to. The department prefers uniform mesh size throughout the entire management area.

PROPOSAL NO. 205

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Eliminate gillnet filament requirements in Area M.

DISCUSSION: The board honored the proposer's request to withdraw.

Alaska Peninsula June Fishery

PROPOSAL NO. 206

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Increase the open waters in the South Unimak fishery.

AMENDMENTS: Include waters as far east as Cape Tolstoi to give management a clean divide between the South Unimak and the SEDM—Shumigan Islands fisheries.

DISCUSSION: This will allow local fishermen an opportunity to fish closer to home. The board discussed whether it will have a positive effect on the sockeye to chum ratio. This will also address economic concerns experienced under the current management regime.

PROPOSAL NO. 207

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Amend the opening date of the June fishery.

AMENDMENTS: The plan replaces the 2001 plan with a schedule providing for a maximum of 416 hours of fishing over a span of 19 days, between June 7 and June 29. Essentially this establishes 88-hour open periods, followed by 32-hour closures (windows); the final open period is only 64 hours long. A significant amount of the added time will come during nighttime hours, when harvests are expected to be significantly lower than during daytime hours.

DISCUSSION: The majority of the board agreed that actions to further restrict the Area M June fishery in the last board cycle were unnecessary and caused undue hardship on the fishermen of the area. The decision was based on the best information presented by the department which indicates a very small percentage of AYK chums were actually caught during the time of fishing and did very little to contribute to the problem of no chums in that area. The minority opinion was that the board should take a more precautionary approach when the data does not clearly indicate either way. Amendments that were proposed but failed included returning to the 8.3 percent allocation of Bristol Bay sockeye guideline, to begin this plan June 10 instead of June 7, to create an onboard observer requirement, and to remove references to the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy and the Mixed Stock Policy. The board adopted finding #2004-229-FB.

PROPOSAL NO. 208

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Amend the fishing period times and dates.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

PROPOSAL NO. 209

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Amend the fishing periods for purse seine and drift gillnet gear.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

PROPOSAL NO. 210

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Amend the fishing periods to 6 p.m. Monday through 6 p.m. Friday.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

PROPOSAL NO. 211

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Amend the fishing periods to Monday through Friday.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

PROPOSAL NO. 212

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Increase the fishing period times and dates for purse seine and drift gillnet gear.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

PROPOSAL NO. 213

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Return to the pre-January 2001 regulations.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

PROPOSAL NO. 214

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Establish a sockeye to chum salmon ratio for the seine and drift gillnet fisheries.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

PROPOSAL NO. 215

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Amend the sockeye to chum salmon ratio for set gillnet gear during June 10-24.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

PROPOSAL NO. 216

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Amend the sockeye to chum salmon ratio for set gillnet gear after June 24.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 207.

Alaska Peninsula Post-June Fishery

PROPOSAL NO. 217

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Amend the fishing period times and dates and base the fishery on pink and chum salmon.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed with staff that the result of adoption of this proposal could result in harvest of migrating coho stock whose origin is unknown, and therefore may have conservation effects.

PROPOSAL NO. 218

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Remove the coho salmon cap.

DISCUSSION: The majority of the board agreed that biological support for retaining the coho cap was missing. The minority opinion was coho bound for other areas would be caught if the cap was removed.

PROPOSAL NO. 219

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Remove the coho salmon cap.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 218.

PROPOSAL NO. 220

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Exempt set gillnet gear from the coho salmon cap.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 218.

PROPOSAL NO. 221

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Clarify management options when the coho salmon cap is approached.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 218.

PROPOSAL NO. 222

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Clarify an allocative conflict between the post-June and the Southeastern District Mainland Salmon Management Plans.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action taken on proposal 218.

PROPOSAL NO. 223

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Repeal the immature per set threshold number.

DISCUSSION: The board noted the department was opposed to this because of conservation concerns.

PROPOSAL NO. 224

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Amend the immature per set threshold number.

DISCUSSION: Adoption of this proposal would require considerable number of state dollars to implement a test fishery program that is currently unfunded. The department pointed out logistical difficulties in implementing this test fishery.

Southeastern District Mainland Fishery

PROPOSAL NO. 225

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Amend the estimate of sockeye salmon destined for Chignik to 60 percent.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed that this would reallocate fish from the long standing allocation already in place.

PROPOSAL NO. 226

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Beginning August 20 close a portion of the fishery.

DISCUSSION: Western Perryville coho are a distinct stock on which there is a separate subsistence finding. The board found that the current data do not support closing the fishery.

Southeastern District Fishery

PROPOSAL NO. 227

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: In post-July 25 fisheries, cap the sockeye salmon harvests.

DISCUSSION: The board found that passage of this proposal would place an undue burden on management decision making. In the last ten years, Chignik has not failed to meet escapement goals. The board saw this as an allocation, rather than conservation, issue.

PROPOSAL NO. 228

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Base September through October fisheries on coho, pink, chum or sockeye salmon stocks.

DISCUSSION: The department supports keeping the fishery open through October, but the board did not believe it was time to make this change.

North Peninsula Fisheries

PROPOSAL NO. 229

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Amend the Ilnik Section fishing period.

DISCUSSION: The board discussed historic stock separation studies, Areas M and T overlap areas, and North Alaska Peninsula sockeye salmon run timing. Area was closed to prevent harvest of Ugashik River fish. The Meshik River also supports a subsistence fishery that may be impacted by this proposal. The department reported that the upper escapement goal was exceeded by 60,000 fish prior to the June 25 openings in the last six years. Concern about interception of salmon bound for Bristol Bay fisheries was expressed. The 100,000 cap was deemed unnecessary. Board discussed amending to close that portion of the Ugashik River SHA for the conservation of Kvichak River sockeye salmon; however, the amendment failed as the board did not find there was significant presence of Kvichak stocks there. This proposal offers opportunity to harvest surplus while still protecting Ugashik stocks. These systems are constantly being overescapemented.

PROPOSAL NO. 230

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Amend the North Peninsula fishing boundaries.

DISCUSSION: Reducing the fishing area might cause both congestion of the fishery and movement to other areas by from traditional fishing grounds. Processors expressed concern of product quality

by creation of a “pulse fishery.” Board expressed concern of removal of a valuable management tool and that this would cause confusion and difficulty in management.

PROPOSAL NO. 231**ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Amend fishing periods or reduce gear depths.**AMENDMENTS:** Allows commercial fishing from June 25 through July 4 in the 3 Hills Section based on the abundance of sockeye salmon stocks in the Bear, Sandy and Ilnik rivers. Fishing periods may not begin before June 25 and may not last longer than 24 hours each, with at least a 24-hour closure between each fishing period. All 24-hour fishing periods and all 24-hour mandatory closures shall take place at the same time as the fishing periods and closures provided shall be subject to a total harvest cap of 100,000 from both districts.**DISCUSSION:** Provides windows for the commercial fishery. Board expressed a concern of pushing people from traditional fishing grounds, believes this would create conflicts on the fishery and produce no management benefit. Board discussed the male/female component of fish in the area. Escapement estimates are based on female rather than total fish. Board discussed spawning capability of net-marked fish, which showed unless severely net-marked these fish still make it to the spawning grounds and spawn, and the Nelson Lagoon harvest and escapement history.**PROPOSAL NO. 232****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Establish closed fishing times.**DISCUSSION:** The benefit of creating these terminal fisheries is believed to reduce interception of Bristol Bay stocks. Quality of the salmon harvested may be reduced. Present long term management strategy has been effective. Board opposes using windows here; concerns of overescapement.**PROPOSAL NO. 233****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Amend open waters areas when escapement goals are met.**DISCUSSION:** Restriction of state waters would cause further conflicts between set and drift gillnet gear. The board also has safety concerns; heavy surf occurs within a mile of shore which would create more dangerous fishing grounds. Board discussed the interception of Bristol Bay stocks.**PROPOSAL NO. 234****ACTION: No action****DESCRIPTION:** Close the Three Hills Section.**DISCUSSION:** No action due to action taken on proposal 230.**PROPOSAL NO. 235****ACTION: Carried****DESCRIPTION:** Define the fishing boundaries in the Nelson Lagoon Section.**DISCUSSION:** Clarifies the closed waters in the upper portion of Nelson Lagoon to reflect the GPS coordinates. Closure line remains where it has traditionally been located. The board saw this as a housekeeping measure.**PROPOSAL NO. 236****ACTION: Carried****DESCRIPTION:** Delay the season opening date in the Urilia Bay Section.**DISCUSSION:** Fishery is somewhat problematic to manage because of difficulty estimating the escapement until well after the fishery is prosecuted. This allows department flexibility in openings to allow for biological escapement goals.**PROPOSAL NO. 237****ACTION: No action****DESCRIPTION:** Amend the fishing season during June in the Urilia Bay Section.**DISCUSSION:** No action due to action taken on proposal 236.

Aleutian Islands Fisheries

PROPOSAL NO. 238

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Consider using GPS for all regulatory coordinates in the Aleutian Islands Area.

DISCUSSION: The board supports the department's statewide effort to adopt GPS as the method used to describe geographical coordinates in fishing regulations.

Atka-Amlia Islands Fisheries

PROPOSAL NO. 239

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Consider using GPS for all regulatory coordinates in the Atka-Amlia Islands Area.

DISCUSSION: The board supports the department's statewide effort to adopt GPS as the method used to describe geographical coordinates in fishing regulations.

Miscellaneous Salmon

PROPOSAL NO. 240

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Enable salmon cooperatives in the Area M.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed this would result in a very complex system and difficult to manage because of the many allocation aspects to each gear group in the fishery involved. The proposal is vague, and did not designate an area.

HERRING

Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands

PROPOSAL NO. 241

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Consider using GPS for all regulatory coordinates in the AK Pen/Aleutian Is Area.

DISCUSSION: The board supports the department's statewide effort to adopt GPS as the method used to describe geographical coordinates in fishing regulations.

PROPOSAL NO. 242

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Amend Aleutian closed waters areas where buildups of salmon occur.

DISCUSSION: Adoption of this proposal closes the Aleutian Islands waters to herring fishing that are also closed to subsistence salmon fishing. This action protects salmon streams.

PROPOSAL NO. 243

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Consider changes to the Dutch Harbor herring food and bait fishery to prevent exceeding the allocation.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed that the market demand, not the GH, will continue to dictate the catch.

PROPOSAL NO. 244

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Amend the allocation between gear groups in the Dutch Harbor herring food and bait fishery.

AMENDMENTS: Change the allocation for the seine fishery to 86 percent (from 93 percent) and for the gillnet fishery 14 percent (from 7 percent). Reserve up to 100 tons from the seine GH for the purposes of an experimental seine and pound fishery under a commissioner's permit.

DISCUSSION: The experimental permit will designate construction and placement of a pound. It will occur the same time as the regular seine fishery; if separate openings are allowed it will be stated on

the permit. Only a person who owns a seine interim use permit will be eligible. The department will require preregistration. The board agreed that this was a good compromise because there have been fewer problems with the gillnet allocation than the seine, and would give the local users more of a chance to participate. The experimental pound fishery addresses quality of the product as it relates to the seine fishery.

PROPOSAL NO. 245**ACTION: Carried as amended****DESCRIPTION:** Amend the gillnet mesh size in the Dutch Harbor herring food and bait fishery.**AMENDMENTS:** Increase the gillnet mesh size from 2 ½ inches to 3 ½ inches.**DISCUSSION:** The board noted this action places the current practice into regulation.**PROPOSAL NO. 246****ACTION: Carried as amended****DESCRIPTION:** Create an exploratory herring fishery.**AMENDMENTS:** Allow the department to manage the commercial herring fishery in the Adak District by commissioner's permit. The goal is to allow up to 500 tons to be harvested in all waters between 175 degrees 30 minutes and 177 degrees west longitudes.**DISCUSSION:** The board agreed this would give a market opportunity for small boats in the area.**BRISTOL BAY SALMON****PROPOSAL NO. C****ACTION: Carried as amended****DESCRIPTION:** Create a General District Management Plan in Bristol Bay.**AMENDMENTS:** The commissioner may open and close fishing periods by emergency order, on or about June 7 through June 25, to drift gillnet fishing based on inseason run information. A harvest cap of 10 percent of the preseason sockeye salmon forecast (3.47 million) is specified for the General District, and 150 fathoms of gillnet with mesh size no larger than 5 ½ inches will be allowed. A CFEC permit holder must be registered in one of the five districts of Bristol Bay to fish in the General District. The 48-hour waiting period to transfer between the regular districts remains in effect, however, the waiting period does not apply to moving between the General District and the district in which the permit holder is registered. Allocation in the General District will be calculated based on the proportion of drift gillnet registrations in the five regular districts of Bristol Bay. The proportion of catch taken from the General District equal to the proportion of drift registrations by district will be attributed to the drift gear group in each district and be counted in the allocation plan for that district upon closure of the General District.**DISCUSSION:** The board discussed with the department what it uses as inseason indicators of run size in Bristol Bay. This option will allow processors a better start-up time, and will give the department a better opportunity to evaluate run size prior to the runs hitting the various districts. The department will track catch based on registration areas. The majority of the board agreed that this would give the department a tool to respond to the larger than normal projected harvest with potential substantial underharvest due to processing capacity in 2004. This could also address the quality and market of the resource. The regulation will sunset at the end of the 2004 season. The minority shared concerns that the benefits would not stay within the region, and that the department could deal with the issue by allowing earlier openings in each district as needed.**SALMON POLICIES****PROPOSAL NO. 2****ACTION: No action****DESCRIPTION:** Provide flexibility in setting escapement goals used in the management of salmon fisheries.

DISCUSSION: The department's "EGPIT" (Escapement Goal Policy Implementation Team) will meet and provide recommendations in October 2004. This specific proposal will not be carried forward by the board.

PROPOSAL NO. 3

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Provide for maximum utilization of salmon stocks.

DISCUSSION: Board referenced comments made during discussion of proposal 2.

PROPOSAL NO. 4

ACTION: No action

DESCRIPTION: Restrict nonresidents first when implementing measures for conservation of salmon stocks.

DISCUSSION: The board declined to refer this issue to the department's EGPIT.

PETITIONS

1) Naknek/Kvichak Allocation Plan

ACTION: Failed

DISCUSSION: This request did not fit the emergency petition criteria.

2) Northern Cook Inlet Subsistence

ACTION: Failed

DISCUSSION: Cook Inlet is a nonsubsistence area and it will take joint board action to address the issue. In addition, the petition did not fit the emergency petition criteria.

3) Revisit Chignik Coop Fishery

ACTION: Failed

DISCUSSION: The board agreed they had recently considered the Chignik Coop fishery in its December 2003 meeting, and this petition failed to meet the emergency criteria. The board also noted that the regular Chignik finfish cycle is next Fall of 2004.

4) Change Gillnet Size in the Yukon River

ACTION: Failed

DISCUSSION: This request did not fit the emergency petition criteria.

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

Prince William Sound Allocation

ACTION: Carried

An update was given on the Prince William Sound Allocation Workgroup's December 2003 meeting. A motion was made to address trigger points for seiners, and the buffer zone at a special meeting before the fishery begins.

DISCUSSION: The board discussed the need to deal with this as a long-term fix to the stated problem. A special meeting was scheduled for April 4-5, 2004 in Anchorage.

Schedule Joint Meeting with the NPFMC

The board scheduled its joint meeting with the NPFMC for March 30, 2004. Agenda items will include reporting recommendations on subsistence halibut eligibility, providing recommendations on the TAC split in the Gulf of Alaska groundfish rationalization plan, and crab rationalization.

Finding re: GOA Groundfish Rationalization

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Board of Fisheries findings and purpose in regard to a moratorium on entry of new vessels into state groundfish fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska, and further work of the board's GOA groundfish rationalization steering committee.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed that the proposed findings and purpose language define the authority of the board and the state regulations that differ from the federal waters fisheries as well as defining the board's timeline and GOA committee process. This finding will be forwarded to the NPFMC for further discussion.