

## Alaska Board of Fisheries Committee Summary

# COMMITTEE B

**Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod**  
October 20, 2013

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### Board Committee Members:

1. Orville Huntington, \*Chair
2. Tom Kluberton
3. John Jensen
4. Karl Johnstone (Present, not on committee)

### Alaska Department of Fish and Game Staff Members:

1. Wayne Donaldson – Westward Regional Groundfish/Shellfish Coordinator, CF
2. Heather Fitch – Bering Sea - Aleutian Islands Area Management Biologist, CF
3. Jan Rumble – Central Region Area Management Biologist, CF
4. Nicole Kimball – Federal Fisheries Coordinator, Commissioner’s Office
5. Al Cain – Enforcement Specialist
6. Kevin Messing – Regulations Specialist, CF
7. Melissa Good – Fishery Biologist I, CF

### Alaska Department of Law:

1. Mike Mitchell

### Advisory Committee Members:

1. Frank Kelty – Unalaska AC

### National Marine Fisheries Service:

1. Glenn Merrill – Assistant Administrator, Alaska Region

### Public Panel Members:

1. Dan Veerhusen – Self
2. Dave Fraser – Adak Community Development Corporation
3. Todd Loomis – Ocean Peace, Inc.
4. Henry Mitchell – Coastal Villages Regions Fund
5. Clem Tillion – Aleut Enterprise Corporation
6. Brent Paine – United Catcher Boats
7. Matt Hegge – Self

8. Todd Hoppe –Self
9. Leonard Herzog–Self
10. Andy Wilder - Self

Federal Subsistence Representative:

1. None

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The committee met October 20, 2013 at 2:16 p.m. and adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

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PROPOSALS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE WERE: (7 total) 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 37.

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**PROPOSAL 34 – 5 AAC 28.6XX. Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod Management Plan.** Place moratorium on new or expanded state-waters Pacific cod fisheries in Area O.

**Comment Summary:**

Proposal author withdrew support for the proposal, RC 48.

Department:

- None

Department of Law:

- The present Board cannot prohibit future Board actions.

Federal Subsistence Representative:

- None

Public Panel Comments:

- There should be a cost analysis for current participation in the fishery done by staff to be presented before the start of the Board meetings.
- A moratorium should never be placed onto fishery.
- Vessels should have the ability to switch gear types with lower bycatch during a fishery.
- Pacific cod cannot be reallocated to the federal fishery.
- The impetus of the proposal was concern that vessels under 60 feet could impact harvest by vessels over 60 feet.
- If the Bering Sea District GHL is left unharvested, it should be rolled over to over 60 feet.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to take no action.

**PROPOSAL 29 – 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.** Increase Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod guideline harvest level (GHL) to 4.5 percent of the federal Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands acceptable biological catch (ABC).

**Comment Summary:**

Proposal author withdrew support for the proposal, RC 5.

Department:

- The NPFMC is expected to split the Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Pacific cod ABC at the December 2013 meeting.
- The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands GHL allocation calculations in relation to the ABC split will be addressed at a later date.

Department of Law:

- None.

Federal Subsistence Representative:

- None

Public Panel Comments:

- The Aleutian Islands GHL was not reached because the local Adak processor was not in operation.
- Should hold off on increasing the GHL until after the Bering Sea – Aleutian Islands ABC has been split by NPFMC.
- The Board should take a look at what they intend to allocate to the Bering Sea Subdistrict Pacific cod fishery.
- Andreanof Islands is the only place small vessels can fish.
- The Board needs to be aware how much fish they intend to take in an area to avoid local depletion.
- Historically, greater than 60 percent of Pollock was taken from state waters of the Aleutian Islands.
- Bering Sea Pacific cod abundance is at a historically high level.
- Steller sea lion consultation ongoing.
- Community protection measures coming before NPFMC.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to take no action.

**PROPOSAL 30 – 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.**  
Clarify Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod guideline harvest level (GHL) rollover provision from A to B season.

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- None.

Department of Law:

- None.

Federal Subsistence Representative:

- None.

Public Panel Comments:

- No allocative impacts on our fishery.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.

**PROPOSAL 31 – 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.**

Clarify Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery bycatch provisions with respect to the state-federal jurisdiction.

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- None.

Department of Law:

- None.

Federal Subsistence Representative:

- None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Good clarification.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.

**PROPOSAL 32 – 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.**  
Amend Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery management plan to address concurrent state-waters and federal Pacific cod seasons.

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- None.

Department of Law:

- None.

Federal Subsistence Representative:

- None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Cod end transfers would still be allowed, so at-sea processing operations would not be affected.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.

**PROPOSAL 33 – 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.**

Update Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery management plan to identify Steller sea lion and essential habitat closure areas.

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- None.

Department of Law:

- A Department generated Steller sea lion area closure table could be adopted into regulation, but a reference to the NMFS table is sufficient.

Federal Subsistence Representative:

- None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Support the proposal, but would like to see a reference to a Department generated table rather than the federal tables to clear up potential confusion for fishermen.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.



**PROPOSAL 37 – 5 AAC 28.6XX. Aleutian Islands District Atka Mackerel Management Plan.** Establish state-waters Atka mackerel fishery.

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- Jig fishery projected 2014 allocation is 83 metric tons (181,880 pounds).

Department of Law:

- None.

National Marine Fisheries Service:

- When the Steller sea lion issue was looked at in 2010, the species of greatest concern for Steller sea lion foraging was Atka mackerel. As a result, the TAC was reduced in area 542 and complete closure in the area 543.
- In area 541 (from 170°W to 177°W), the jig allocation can be up to 2 percent; however, 0.5 percent is currently allocated to the jig fishery. The remaining 1.5 percent of jig allocation is harvested by the trawl sector.
- In area 542 (from 177°W to 177°E), there is no jig allocation.
- Any allocation to seine gear over 0.5 percent in area 541 would reduce the trawl allocation.
- In area 542, the TAC is set at 47 percent of the ABC to prevent impacting Steller sea lions under the Endangered Species Act.
- The GHF would reduce the trawl allocation in area 541 and 542.
- We will need to examine the impact of this fishery and gear and its effect on Steller sea lions.
- Current proposal would cause catch accounting issues for NMFS.
- Area 543 closed due to Steller sea lion concerns.

Note: Area 541 refers to the federal Eastern Aleutian District. Area 542 refers the federal Central Aleutian District. Area 543 refers to the federal Western Aleutian Islands.

Federal Subsistence Representative:

- None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Puts existing fisheries at risk.
- With this proposal, the jig allocation could be fished in both area 541 and 542.

- Because the Atka mackerel fishery has been fished outside of 20 nautical miles, there is concern about adding any new removals of Atka mackerel inside of Steller sea lion critical habitat areas.
- One vessel is down from six months to a month and a half fishery due to Steller sea lion measures.
- Experimental fishery took place, though no fish were reported harvested.
- Sympathy was expressed to the trawl fleet affected by Steller sea lion restrictions.
- Trawl sector allocation is typically fully harvested.
- RC 45 shows data from the stock assessment. In 2014, the jig allocation is expected to be up to 330 metric tons (2 percent; 727,518 pounds).
- This fishery would keep the processor in Adak open during the off season and help support the community.
- Member of the public believes seine gear has low bycatch.
- All Atka mackerel is currently processed at sea so does not support the shore based processor.
- Commissioner's permit allowed harvest up to 250,000 pounds, which is more than the 181,880 pounds allocated to the jig TAC in 2014.
- 4,000 metric tons (8.8 million pounds) would make this fishery viable.
- If not harvested, the state could roll back to the federal fishery (*state cannot allocate back to federal fisheries*).
- The Board is being asked to re-allocate from the trawl fishery to a new seine fishery.
- According to Economic SAFE, one percent of the Atka mackerel fleet are Alaska residents, but some residents are crew on catcher/processors.
- Amendment 80 allocated a portion of the TAC to catcher/vessel fleet to bring harvest to communities to process, but catcher/processors bought up catcher/vessel allocations so none is processed on shore.
- Too large of a reduction in the trawl allocation would have a negative effect on Adak community (fuel sales, labor, fish tax, etc.).
- Processor intends to fly the fish out fresh to Korea.
- One fourth of jig allocation left unharvested.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** No consensus.