

Joint Protocol Committee of the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2012

The meeting was chaired by John Jensen. Members present were: John Jensen, Mike Smith and Sue Jeffrey from the Board of Fisheries (BOF); Eric Olson, Dave Benson, and Ed Dersham from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council). Also in attendance were Chris Oliver, Monica Wellard, Lance Nelson, and numerous other staff.

1. Status of Tanner Rebuilding

Dr. Diana Stram provided a summary before the Joint Protocol Committee regarding the current stock assessment model which is currently under development. The model will be reviewed by the Crab Plan Team in May and the Council's Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) in June and will hopefully be approved for use in specifications for the 2012-2013 season as well as for projection purposes for the rebuilding analysis. Dr. Stram also reviewed the outline for the Tanner crab rebuilding plan; the timeframe for rebuilding is 10 years or less depending upon management measures under consideration and the projections of rebuilding time frames under these alternatives. It was noted there will be a presentation to the Council for preliminary review in June and final action is expected in December. The Pribilof blue king crab rebuilding plan was also presented to the Committee. It was reported the stock has not made progress towards rebuilding under the current rebuilding plan thus additional management measures are under consideration. These measures include fixed and triggered area closures in the groundfish fisheries. Final action is expected by the Council in June of 2012.

2. Status of GOA Halibut Bycatch

Ms. Jane DiCosimo gave a presentation regarding the GOA halibut prohibited species catch limit alternatives and options being presented which the Council is expected to take final action on in June of 2012. It was also mentioned there will be a Halibut Workshop scheduled April 24-25, 2012 in Seattle regarding this issue, which is open to the public.

3. Status of Salmon Bycatch

Dr. Diana Stram gave a presentation reviewing the previous action by the Council on Bering Sea (BS) Chinook, Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Chinook, and pending actions on BS chum salmon bycatch. It was communicated that reports from the first year under the new BS Chinook management measures will be presented at the Council's March/April meeting. Regarding GOA Chinook, it was communicated that the Council took final action to implement a hard cap on the pollock trawl fishery and will be looking at alternatives for the non-pollock trawl fishery in October of 2012. The BS chum bycatch analysis will be presented to the Council in late March, with final action expected in October of 2012.

4. Status of GOA Pacific Cod (discussion papers)

Ms. Sarah Melton and Dr. Mark Fina presented a summary to the Committee regarding the reverse parallel jig fishery, revisions to A-season opening dates in the GOA Pacific cod fisheries, and limiting other gear on board while jig fishing. Ms. Melton stated in her presentation regarding the reverse parallel jig fishery that the discussion paper would be presented to the Council at its meeting in March/April. Member Smith questioned options and authority of the Council and Board in regards to the parallel jig fishery which was clarified by staff and ADF&G Attorney General, Lance Nelson. Member Jeffrey further questioned the step-up provision which was discussed with staff. Dr. Fina reported that available harvest information in the GOA Pacific cod sectors will be presented to the Council at the March/April meeting. Member Dersham spoke in favor of the sector splits. Member Benson questioned staff regarding the effects of moving the A-season start dates and Steller sea lions;

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he received further information from staff. There was further discussion between Committee members and staff regarding initiation of these actions. Ms. Melton wrapped up the presentation with a review and breakdown for the Committee of other gear used by vessels that also participate in the federal jig fisheries.

5. Close state waters to bottom gear in PWS

Ms. Karla Bush and Mr. Charlie Trowbridge presented a summary of the BOF proposal 43. Department of Law provided clarification regarding halibut and BOF authority. It was communicated if the BOF chose to amend this proposal to deal with all groundfish in relation to a conservation issue, it would have authority.

6. Aleutian Islands golden king crab TAC increase

Ms. Karla Bush reviewed the BS/Aleutian Islands golden king crab Management Plan. She went on to explain fishery catch per unit effort data and various factors that may affect said data. It was communicated the Department would be conducting another tri-annual survey in summer 2012.

7. Remove minimum total allowable catch (TAC) in Bristol Bay red king crab fishery

Ms. Karla Bush gave an overview of BOF proposal 384 and summarized the current TAC threshold. She also provided the Committee further clarification on what the proposal was seeking and communicated it was no longer needed now that the fishery is managed with individual fishing quotas.

8. Statewide scallops

Ms. Karla Bush reviewed with the Committee BOF proposals 352 and 353. Background of the fishery in recent years was presented. Member Smith raised a question regarding cause and effect of passing proposal 352 and its impact on the commercial Tanner crab fishery. Mr. Wayne Donaldson from the department provided further information and clarification. Proposal 354 was presented to the Committee; staff stated it provided clarification on boundary coordinates. Proposals 350 and 351 were presented to the Committee by staff. Further clarification regarding 351 – it would essentially rename the areas, but have no impact on how the fishery is managed. Proposal 350 was discussed with Committee members; Member Jensen sought clarification as to why Cook Inlet was excluded and staff provided further clarification.

Public Testimony:

Darius Kasprzak, Alaska Jig Association
Theresa Peterson, Alaska Marine Conservation Council
Orville Huntington, Tanana Chiefs Conference
Arni Thomson, Alaska Crab Coalition
Mel Grove, Prince William Sound Charter Boat Association
Paul Gronholdt
Robert Beedle, Cordova District Fishermen United
Linda Kozak, Kodiak Vessel Owners
Gordon Scott
Dianne Dubuc
Jon Van Hyning, Whittier Advisory Committee

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Final Committee Comments

Member Dersham commented on the reverse parallel Pacific cod jig fishery and recommended tabling the issue until there is more experience under the new sector split management structure. The Board recently took action to align state-water Pacific cod fisheries with this new management structure and provided additional opportunity for the jig fleet to fully harvest both the state GHF and federal TAC jig allocations.

Member Eric Olsen suggested both executive directors (Wellard and Oliver) communicate, as well as members Jensen and Olsen with their respective bodies regarding the day's meeting discussion to determine a future meeting date, if needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m.