

# The Wheel Watch

a newsletter of the  
Fishing Vessel Owners' Association  
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Dear Longliner:

This newsletter will bring you up-to-date on Magnuson Act activity, Pacific Council issues, North Pacific Council activity, and market information.

**\*\*Washington, D.C. Trip\*\***

Hearings on the Magnuson-Stevens Act have been completed by the Senate. There is speculation that Senator Snow from Maine will attempt to develop a set of amendments available in April or May. At a recent hearing in Louisiana, the harvesting industry testified in favor of removing the moratorium on IFQs. Those testifying were involved in the highly regulated “red fish” fishery in the Gulf of Mexico. Apparently, many who opposed the original IFQ program on red fish in 1996 have reversed their previous positions and testified affirmatively in favor of IFQ options. The Pacific Council members and associated industry testified similarly several months ago in Seattle.

There might not be time to complete a full set of amendments for the Magnuson-Stevens act by the time Congress finishes in the fall, due to it being an election year. There is speculation that something will be attached to a late fall appropriations bill. On the Senate side of Congress, the bill will likely have something for the problems in New England perhaps language permitting the Gulf Council to proceed with their “red fish” IFQ; the Pacific Council may be granted certain IFQ opportunities predicated on their existing trip limit management, and Alaska may get some language to allow for certain types of harvester-processor coops. However, there is a great deal of controversy about coops in Alaska, especially recently proposed Gulf groundfish coops. There is some effort by the crab fleet to negotiate coop language for the Bering Sea. The message in Washington, D.C., is whatever is proposed, better have lots of regional support.

The moratorium on new IFQs will expire in October of this year. The speculation seems to indicate that some extensions to the moratorium will occur; however some regional councils may be granted certain exceptions. In order for Alaska to pursue coops, the current moratorium on IFQs would have to be changed to provide for certain coops and/or IFQ options.

It is likely that Congressman Young will have a bill in May addressing Magnuson-Stevens Act amendments. It has been suggested that Congressman Young will seek an extension to the current moratorium. However, regional fishing disasters are creating increasing demands for alternative management regimes that address over-capitalization, and not just in Alaska.

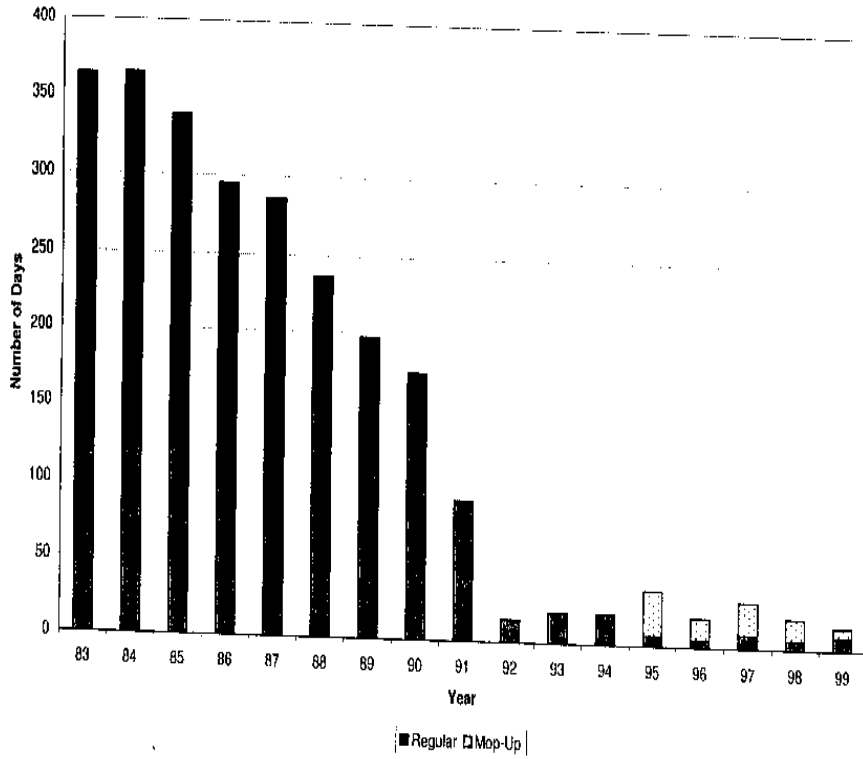
Those hoping for a big shot of cash from a federal buy-out are probably out of luck. There have been requests from Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, the mid-Atlantic, and New England for cash buy-outs this year. I doubt there will be any big cash buy-out of the respective fleets.

Senators Wyden and Stevens, separately, have been looking at amendments to the Capital Construction Fund. Some of the ideas being floated are (1) to allow the funds to roll over into an IRA; (2) allow the funds to be used to purchase fishing privileges, such as IFQs or limited entry permits, and (3) allow the funds to be used to buy down the fleet in some fashion.

## **\*\*PACIFIC COUNCIL\*\***

The Council will take final action in setting the directed sablefish fishing for this year. The preferred date will likely be August 6, 2000, based on the tides. The harvest levels will be similar to last years and the amount of time will be 9 or 10 days. The Council sent out three options for this years tiered derby. The Council’s preferred option is as follows:

Figure ES-4. Length of Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Season, by Year



The poundages are all in round pounds and the option represents a 9-day fishery.

Below you can see how the coastal sablefish fishery has collapsed in time to fish.

The Council is requesting ideas from the public as to how to manage this fishery beyond 2000.

The more exciting proposals that seem to have appeal are (1) allow a 3 to 8 month season and allow for stacking of permits. This, of course, would need to meet the congressional standards on IFQs. One theory is that the congressional standards will not be ready for this year so now is the right time to ask for these options through the Council. A final vote on these suggested options would have to take place in November if the Council chooses to pursue this option.

From the Pacific Fishery Management Council (2/4/00): "At its November 1999 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) gave notice that it does not intend to count groundfish harvested in the year 2000 toward individual quotas or any other allocation of harvest access rights including access to what is currently the open access fishery. The Council unanimously adopted a new control date of November 5, 1999 to cover all groundfish fishing not covered by a previous control date..."

## **\*\*North Pacific Council\*\***

**Freezer Longliners.** The Council adopted a motion to establish a recent qualifying period of 1996-1999. During anyone year of that period, vessels must have landed a minimum poundage of 300 mt. The Council's action will reduce the number of LLP qualified vessels from an estimated 56 vessels to 42 vessels.

The North Pacific Council voted to ask Congress to provide authorization for a "Catch History based Rationalization Program for BSAI Crab Fisheries". This is significant should Congress provide this flexibility, because it would require some relaxing of the current moratorium on IFQs.

**Council appointments.** Governor Tony Knowles is proposing to replace Council members Rick Lauber and Joe Kyle with Dave Benton and Bob Penny. Mr. Penny is known as a sports enthusiast and Dave has been on the Council as the State's representative for many years. He is retiring from the State and will hold an Alaska at-large seat. With all the fuss over halibut sports charter issues, the Governor felt a sports representative needed to be on the Council. It is unclear who Mr. Benton will be employed with at this time, now that he is leaving the State.

## **\*\*General Info\*\***

**Albatross and Sea Birds.** The Association, in cooperation with the University of Washington and NMFS, will have five of its vessels testing bird deterrents. Thanks to crews and owners of the Judi B, Republic, Seymour, Kristiana and Masonic. Albatross are long-lived (up to 45 years) and breed at five to ten years of age and lay one egg every two years. Populations can decline with even small increases in adult mortality. Mortality of only four short-tailed albatross over two years can close the entire Alaska Longline groundfish fishery. Mortality of two short-tailed albatross can close the Alaska Halibut fishery. Our vessels tested paired tori lines last year and weighted gear. Paired tori lines reduced bird catch rates by 90 percent and weighted lines reduced rates by 35%. In the freezer longline fleet, day and night sets were studied and surprisingly seabird bycatch increased 300% at night.

**Frankenstein Foods.** Environmentalists sounded alarm bells after a U.S. firm, AF Protein, engineered GM, fish which could cut cost of raising salmon and trout by half. The fish are given

an extra gene to make them grow faster. They are nick-named “Franken Fish”.

**Enforcement.** Lloyd Collins, Kenai fisherman, was sentenced to six months in federal prison and six months home detention. He was ordered to surrender all of his halibut IFQs, his vessel, and skiff. This was for fishing in closed seasons in 1998 and 1999. From the U.S. Attorney’s office in Anchorage.

**Iceland and IFQs.** A lower court in Iceland threw out their IFQ program; however, the Icelandic Supreme Court upheld the program on a four to three vote.

**Dogfish.** Most dogfish caught on a single SSA set: 337 dogfish were caught on five standard skates by the F/V Kristiana in 1995 while fishing off the dogfish banks in Canada.

**Label Warnings.** Below are some label warnings based on actual litigation. On a Sear’s hair dryer, “do not use while sleeping”. On packaging for a Rowenta iron, “Do not iron clothes on body.” On a child’s Superman costume, “Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly.”

## \*\*Market Report\*\*

**Halibut.** At the end of February, inventories were at four million pounds, which represented a 27% increase from February 1999. The price has been great in Seward and Homer with prices ranging in the \$2.60 and higher range.

### Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings

From 15-MAR-00 through 17-APR-00

Area	Species	Vessel Landings	Total Catch Pounds	<-----TAC----->		Percent Landed
				Allocation Pounds	Remaining Pounds	
2C	halibut	525	1,757,879	8,400,000	6,642,121	21
3A	halibut	405	2,937,415	18,310,000	15,372,585	16
3B	halibut	44	770,547	15,030,000	14,250,473	5
4A	halibut	2	14,611	4,970,000	4,955,389	0
4B	halibut	1	18,287	3,928,000	3,909,713	0
4C	halibut	0	0	1,015,000	1,015,000	0
4D	halibut	0	0	1,421,000	1,421,000	0
4E	halibut	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>977</b>	<b>5,498,719</b>	<b>53,074,000</b>	<b>47,575,281</b>	<b>10</b>

**Sablefish.** The markets are back to 1996 levels. FVOA vessels have record prices from \$3.80 to \$4.20, depending on the size of the fish. The market is hot with little in inventory in Japan. Mero productions have fallen off due to alleged overfishing, which apparently is helping the sablefish

price.

## Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings

From 15-MAR-00 through 17-APR-00

Area	Species	Vessel Landings	Total Catch Pounds	<-----TAC----->		Percent Landed
				Allocation Pounds	Remaining Pounds	
AI	sablefish	4	144,812	3,215,189	3,070,377	5
BS	sablefish	1	23,879	1,296,305	1,272,426	2
CG	sablefish	71	763,928	10,105,886	9,341,958	8
SE	sablefish	138	1,783,361	7,832,944	6,049,583	23
WG	sablefish	4	223,660	3,245,171	3,021,511	7
WY	sablefish	38	804,993	4,230,627	3,425,634	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>256</b>	<b>3,744,633</b>	<b>29,926,122</b>	<b>26,181,489</b>	<b>13</b>

**Cod.** The North Sea cod harvest continues to be lowered. Scientists blame rising water temperatures. Climate variability is piling further stress on the cod stocks. The North Sea, for over 40 years, has averaged 200,000 tons annually. In 1997, 100,000 tons and 1998, 114,000 tons were harvested. The decline of young cod has paralleled warming of the North Sea over the past ten years.

### **\*\*Second Watch\*\***

Please welcome **Lynn Walton with Access Unlimited, Inc., Port Angeles, Washington** as a new Sustaining Sponsor. Also welcome **Ron Hegge from Sarasota, Florida** as a new Associate Member. Thank you for your support.

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We would like to express our sincere sympathy to the family and friends of Dave Taylor (F/V Tordenskjold), who was killed in a car accident in March of this year.

## **\*\*Calendar of Events\*\***

June 5-11, 2000	North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting	Portland, Oregon
June 26-30,2000	Pacific Fishery Management Council	Portland, Oregon
August 6 or 7	Probable date for Coast opener for approx. 9 days *We have some members who may wish to lease their permits. If interested, call Bob at FVOA (206) 284-4720.	
Sept. 11-15, 2000	Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting	Sacramento, CA
Sept. 23, 2000	Fishermen's Fall Festival                  Fishermen's Terminal	Seattle, WA

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