

The Wheel Watch

a newsletter of the
Fishing Vessel Owners' Association
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Vol. XV, No. 6

October/November 2001

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****Pacific Council****

2001 Season. The Stacking Program was implemented and the season was extended. The season will be from August 15 to October 31, 2001. NMFS deserves some credit for their work in getting this program up and running. Additional changes for this fishery include regulatory changes that allow a once per 12 month period to change the name on the permit rather than once per calendar year and elimination of the 22-inch size restriction.

The following are the result of the Stacking Programs for 2001.

Tier Levels of all Sablefish Endorsed Permits	Number of Permits	Tier Levels of Permits that were Stacked	Number of Permits
Tier 1	27	Tier 1	11
Tier 2	43	Tier 2	10
Tier 3	94	Tier 3	31
Total	164	Total	52

The Council will be discussing and taking final action on the 2002 season in November in San Francisco. The following will be discussed as options affecting the stacking program for 2002.

Sablefish Harvest Levels. Up to a 35% reduction. This is due to the lack of recent year classes in the survey conducted a year ago. However, NMFS finished a slope survey in August of 2001. The preliminary report on Sablefish indicates a strong showing of pre-recruits. There will be an update on this most recent survey at the November Council meeting. If this preliminary news is accurate, this may allow the Council to go to the top of the harvest range and be good news for 2003 and 2004. You should expect a 30% reduction in 2002. The harvest range is from 4500 to 3200 Mt.

Season Change. The season for 2002 currently is scheduled to run from April 1st to October 31. There is a proposal to allow the Sablefish fishermen to operate from April through May and then from September through October. Additionally, there is a proposal to close the fishery in June through August unless the vessels fish 150 fathoms or deeper. This would be monitored with a VMS program if available. Otherwise, the summer months would be closed. This closure is being proposed to protect Yellow-Eye Rockfish, which have been listed as overfished. The theory is that Yellow-Eye mix with Sablefish in the summer as Sablefish move shallow. A summer closure may reduce the incidental catch of Yellow-Eye.

Full Retention. There is a proposal submitted by a pot fisherman to require the full retention of Sablefish. That is, no releasing juvenile Sablefish at all during the months of June, July and August. The pot representative presented a study showing high mortality rates for Sablefish when left on a deck for 15 minutes then returned to the water during warm water months. I expect a lot of energy expelled over this proposal.

The traditional trawl fleet off Washington, Oregon and California are looking potentially at a

January through March season with an October through December opening with a closure from April through September. The trawl pink shrimp fishery will likely end up with fish excluders in their nets to protect different overfished species of rockfish, most of which occupy habitats less than 150 fathoms.

Markets

Halibut. The market was proceeding nicely until the attack on our country, September 11, 2001. The immediate effects of the attack resulted in the FAA grounding all flights, including air cargo flights. The trucking industry, during the week of chaos, was reported to have objected to traveling east to the eastern seaboard. With inadequate transportation, much of the halibut bought during the week of 9/11/01 had to be frozen rather than sold fresh. The secondary impact now that the transportation systems are operating, is that people are hunkered down in their homes and not frequenting restaurants where a great deal of fresh halibut is consumed. The price dropped \$0.45/lb. between 9/15 and 9/17 and potentially more in Seward. The preliminary inventory as of August 30, 2001, is at 8,597,000 lbs., or 8% higher than last year.

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings						
From 15-MAR-01 through 17 October 01						
Area	Species	Vessel Landings	Total Catch Pounds	[----- TAC -----]		
				Allocation Pounds	Remaining Pounds	Percent Landed
2C	halibut	2,525	7,601,608	8,780,000	1,178,392	87
3A	halibut	2,339	19,198,997	21,890,000	2,691,003	88
3B	halibut	817	14,517,167	16,530,000	2,012,833	88
4A	halibut	359	4,737,811	4,970,000	232,189	95
4B	halibut	182	3,374,117	3,928,000	553,883	86
4C	halibut	156	724,815	1,015,000	290,185	71
4D	halibut	36	1,348,989	1,421,000	72,011	95
4E	halibut	0	0	0	0	0
		6,414	51,503,504	58,534,000	7,030,496	88

Sablefish. The market for sablefish has been surprisingly good considering the economic slump in Japan. The Plan Team for the NPFMC will meet on November 13-16, 2001, to discuss groundfish harvest recommendations for 2002 including sablefish. There are no rumors yet as to what their recommendations will be. I encourage you to attend the day for sablefish, that specific date is not set yet.

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings From 15-MAR-01 through 17 October 01 [----- TAC -----]						
Area	Species	Vessel Landings	Total Catch Pounds	Allocation Pounds	Remaining Pounds	Percent Landed
AI	Sablefish	117	1,538,285	3,306,900	1,768,615	47
BS	Sablefish	98	728,289	1,375,670	647,381	53
CG	Sablefish	599	8,951,710	9,541,509	589,799	94
SE	Sablefish	694	6,838,480	7,407,456	568,976	92
WG	Sablefish	137	3,227,078	3,544,997	317,919	91
WY	Sablefish	233	3,820,150	3,944,029	123,879	97
		1,878	25,103,992	29,120,561	4,016,569	86

Farmed Sablefish. Earlier this year, pen-raised sablefish hit the market from B.C. farms. There is expected to be a December harvest for sale to Japan. There are three sablefish farms in British Columbia. Earlier deliveries this year were rejected due to soft flesh problems.

****North Pacific Council****

Charter IFQs. The State of Alaska representative, Kevin Duffy, moved to rescind the previous action of the Council on Charter IFQs. The motion failed 6 to 5. The three Washington representatives, the NMFS representative, Robin Samuelson from Dillingham, and Stosh Anderson from Kodiak, voted against the motion. The Chairman, Dave Benson, switched his vote from being in favor to being against the Charter IFQs. This shows a significant weakness from the Council with a 6 to 5 vote, with a lack of support from the Chair and the State of Alaska. The original vote in April was 8 to 3 in support of the IFQ amendment. There were numerous Alaska State Congressional persons who supported the charter boat rescinding motion. Congressman Norm Dicks from Washington apparently lobbied one of the Washington Council members. Congressman Dicks was supporting the rescinding motion. Congressman Dick's son was representing a charter group in Sitka opposed to the IFQ amendment.

In summary, with the changed vote of the Chair, Dave Benson, the Council sends a weak message to D.C. about the IFQ charter amendment. Governor Knowles looks weaker, having made this such a big issue and losing. The good news is that the Council actions probably secures the Guideline Harvest amendment voted on two years ago. The charter folks don't like that one either, but it will look poor on D.C.'s part to throw both the GHL and IFQ Charter amendments out. Overall, this was a good defensive effort for IFQs.

Birds. The Council will take final action at the December Council meeting. The Council's options include the following (from Council newsletter): Please note that someone has requested that tory lines be predicated on your crew size, vessel size, etc.

The Council received a report from Dr. Ed Melvin, Washington Sea Grant Program, on his collaborative two-year research program (1999-2000) entitled "Solutions to seabird bycatch in Alaska's longline fishery".

The WSGP study recommends the following regulatory measures for all Alaska longline vessels: 1) paired streamer lines deployed during the setting of gear, and 2) eliminate the direct discharge of residual bait and offal from the stern of the vessel while setting gear. Material standards and performance standards for streamer lines are specified.

The Council took action on the AP recommendations and voted to release the EA/RIR on seabird avoidance measures for public review with final action in December. The Council requested the following additional information and options be included, to the extent possible, prior to release:

1. Add a section discussing monitoring and enforcement issues with particular reference to performance standards, the role of observers, and ability to modify confidentiality restrictions to allow for industry use of peer pressures,
2. Expand the description of vessels to include gear type, crew size and setting speed by vessel size,
3. Expand the economic discussion to include the cost of rigging small vessels to deploy 2 streamer lines,
4. Add the following options to Alternative 4:
 - a. Allow single streamer lines on vessels based on gear type or vessel size, or area, with specific reference to 35 to 60 feet vessels, broken down into increments of 5 feet (i.e., 35, 40, 45, etc.);
 - b. Allow for modification of the performance standard based on gear type and/or vessel size,
5. Require a seabird avoidance plan aboard every vessel in the groundfish and IFQ fisheries.
6. Vessels 32' or less fishing halibut in IPHC Area 4E would be exempted from seabird avoidance regulations. Vessels fishing in the internal waters of Southeast and Prince William Sound would also be exempted. Staff Contact is Cath Coon. NPFMC phone no. is (907) 271-2809.

Gulf Coalition Report. The report that addresses allowing certain Gulf communities to purchase halibut or sablefish IFQs and lease them to certain individuals is due. I expect the State of Alaska to support this in some format.

Report on How IFQ Fishermen are Taking Undue Money from Processors. The ADF&G representative, Kevin Duffy, has hired Dr. Matulich to prove his own theory, which is that IFQ fishermen are disproportionately taking money from fish processors. Some believe the State of Alaska is attempting to use this report to dump on the halibut/sablefish program in order to justify a two-pie system or processor quotas. Actually, these two-options need to be justified on

their own merits, independent of existing IFQ programs. The study examines the halibut fleet from 1991 to 1999. Of course, 1991 to 1994 were intense derbies, which put the fishermen at a distinct disadvantage in the market place. If Alaska fishermen are at all concerned about the fairness of this, they should contact their Governor at (907) 465-3500, or Kevin Duffy, ADF&G at (907) 465-6136.

****Second Watch****

U.S. Seafood Consumption up in 2000. Total U.S. consumption of seafood increased 2.3% to 4.3 billion pounds or 15.6 pounds per person (up .2 pounds).

Durbin Considering Anti-Trawl Bill. Senator Richard Durbin, D-Ill., is considering introducing a bill to ban trawling vast areas of U.S. waters, similar to the bill Joe Hefley (R-Col.). Those land-locked politicians, do you just luv em!

Governor declares Western Alaska fishing industry disaster. Governor Knowles has declared Western Alaska commercial fishing sector an economic disaster. This is due in a large part from record low salmon prices. Under the Knowles governorship, groundfish is also a disaster. IFQ halibut and sablefish seem to be the only bright spot for commercial fishermen and Governor Knowles is opposed to fishermen IFQs.

Pew Commission West to Alaska (Associated Press). The 19 commissioners from PEW and Governor Knowles went on a boat tour in Kodiak. Governor Knowles was quoted as saying, "he remembered seeing scores of sea lions on the same trip with his in-laws 20 years ago." "It's like a graveyard compared to that." He said, "its astounding." The Pew Charitable Trust was established by Sun Oil Company. Why are so many do-gooder trusts established by the biggest abusers of the environment?

75% Reduced Mercury Emissions Planned. Amid growing warnings that mercury contamination is making fish unsafe for many people to eat, New England governors and eastern Canadian premiers yesterday agreed to slash emissions of the metal from power plants and incinerators by 75 percent by the end of the decade. This is good news. It may keep the focus off fishing if the power plants reduce emissions.

Coast Guard Approved First Aid at Sea Class Offered. Washington Sea Grant Program Marine Advisory Services is offering a Coast Guard Approved First Aid at Sea class for commercial fishers and recreational boaters on **Tuesday, December 4 and Wednesday, December 5.** The class will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, in the Nordby Conference Center, Nordby Building, Fishermen's Terminal in Seattle.

Topics to be covered include CPR, safety, patient assessment, shock, trauma, burns, fractures, lacerations, choking, severed limbs, hypothermia, cold water near drowning, immobilization, backboards, discussion of First Aid Kits and more.

Because of space limitations, preregistration is advised. Checks for \$80 per person should be

made payable to the University of Washington and mailed in advance to Sarah Fisken, Washington Sea Grant Program, West Wall Bldg., Room 125, 4005 - 20th Ave. West, Seattle, WA 98199. For more information, please contact Sarah Fisken at (206) 543-1225.

Meeting with NMFS, U.S. Coast Guard scheduled. Pasty Bearden, Recordkeeping & Reporting Specialist with NMFS and representatives from the Coast Guard and perhaps, Enforcement, will be meeting with members of FVOA on **Wednesday, November 28, 2001 at 2:00 p.m.** in the Association's offices to review new recordkeeping and reporting requirements for new changes that will be in affect by 2002. The Coast Guard will present information on how they handle boardings, etc.



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****Calendar of Events****

Oct. 29-Nov. 2, 2001	Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting	San Francisco, CA
Nov. 13-16, 2001	Plan Team meets to discuss groundfish harvest levels for 2002	NMFS-Sand Point Seattle, WA
Nov. 15-17, 2001	Fish Expo	WA. State Convention Center Seattle, WA
Nov. 22-23, 2001	Thanksgiving Holidays	Office closed
Nov. 28, 2001	NMFS presentation on Recordkeeping in FVOA offices	2:00 p.m.
Dec. 3-8, 2001	NPFMC meeting	Anchorage Hilton Hotel Anchorage, AK
Dec. 24-25, 2001	Christmas Holidays	Office closed
Jan. 22-25, 2002	IPHC Annual Meeting	Hilton Hotel Seattle, WA

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