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# Fish News

Dec. 19, 2008

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## **Fishery Management Council Recommends Cutting 2009 Pollock Quota to 815,000 tons**



**The NPFMC recommends reducing the 2009 pollock quota to 815,000 metric tons.**

Last weekend, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) recommended a substantial cut to the 2009 Bering Sea Pollock. The 11-member panel, comprised of government officials and industry representatives, voted unanimously on Dec. 13, 2008, to limit next year's pollock catch to 815,000 metric tons. That's the lowest catch limit in more than thirty years. It represents an 18.5 percent decline from this year's catch limit and a 45 percent decline from the peak of 1.5 million tons in 2004. The

vote was expected and had widespread support of government scientists who monitor the fish and believe the stock is healthy, but declining. The council action is subject to final approval by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

[Read more – Anchorage Daily News article](#)

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## **NPFMC Votes to Consider Providing More Entry Opportunities in Crab Program**

The NPFMC voted this week to consider providing more entry opportunities through increasing the participation of crew in share purchases within the crab rationalization program. The goal of the council was to take a look at the crab program to determine what kinds of changes are needed. Since crab rationalization was implemented in 2005, some Alaska groups have criticized the program because of the loss of crew jobs and the unique processor share component of the crab plan.

Last spring, the council passed a motion that proposed a variety of possible actions, ranging from keeping the status quo (87% shares that must be matched with processor quota, 13% undesignated) to eliminating processor quota shares entirely.

The crab issue this week was whether to continue a full-scale review of every aspect of the program or narrow the review to a specific problem. In the end, the council voted 6 – 5 to focus specifically on providing more entry opportunities through increasing the participation of crew in share purchases. According to the final motion, with amendments, the council will now study the following alternatives for possible implementation this year:

- 1) Take no action
- 2) Change the current 3% share reserved for crew by increasing it to: 6% of total; 8% of total; or 10% of total.



**The NPFMC decided to focus on how to provide more entry opportunities within the crab program.**

## Other Information about Council Actions

### Pacific cod:

The LLP (Limited License Program) Recency issue is scheduled for final action in April of 2009. The proposal deals only with fixed gear (pots, hook and line and jig). Those LLPs that haven't been used recently will not receive a cod endorsement. Without a cod



Pacific cod

endorsement, the LLP cannot be used to fish P. (Pacific) cod in the Gulf of Alaska. A technical choice was made to *add* a cod endorsement rather than *eliminate* the LLP. The idea behind this was in case some other species became available, the LLP would still be good. In addition, some fishermen felt it would be a feel-good thing to give something back rather than take something away.

There is a proposed exemption for LLPs owned by people living in Sand Point, King Cove and other CQE (community quota entity) communities. If the LLP owner (LLPs are issued to people, not to boats) lives in a CQE community, the LLP will be exempt from recency requirements. There will be some restrictions, however:

- 1) If sold, the LLP must stay in the community. In other words, if you live in Sand Point and own a LLP that did not qualify for a cod endorsement, you can still fish cod. If you sell the LLP, it must go to another Sand Point resident.
- 2) In some cases, the LLP could go to Aleutia (the community quota entity).

Sand Point has 30 western gulf LLPs and 17 central gulf LLPs. Of these, 10 western gulf and 16 central gulf LLPs did not qualify under the recency dates and would therefore not have received the cod endorsements. If the exemption is approved, they would receive the cod endorsement on the above mentioned restricted basis.

King Cove has 24 western and 5 central gulf LLPs. Eight western and all 5 central gulf LLPs did not qualify and would get the exemption.

### **Sector Split:**

The sector split proposal is scheduled for initial review in April and possibly final action in June of 2009. This proposal would divide the P. cod catch among the various gear types (trawl, pot, hook and line, and jig). In addition, the gear types could be further divided by vessel size and type and type of operation (catcher processor and catcher vessel). The split would be based on history and possibly other factors such as conservation and social objectives. An example of a conservation factor may be halibut bycatch, which is quite high for the hook and line catcher processors. An example of a social objective may be considering factors such as one gear type doesn't deliver any product ashore, thereby making no contribution to a fishery-dependent community.

### **Observers:**

A new approach to observer coverage may be in the works. The current system has no coverage for vessels under 60 feet. It requires 30 percent coverage for vessels between 60 and 125 feet and 100 percent coverage for vessels greater than 125 feet. The proposed program would impose a fee on all vessels and allow the agency to determine which fisheries needed coverage and at what level, on a case-by-case basis. The fee system would cover the cost, rather than charging the cost to the individual boat owner. The advantage would be better catch monitoring and perhaps fewer closures due to PSC (prohibited species catch) limits being exceeded. The disadvantage would be the fees and the possibility that some boats not currently required to have observers, would now have to take observers. Problems expressed in the past include inadequate space for extra folks and the general "big brother" hassle of having someone watching you.

### **Gulf Salmon and crab bycatch:**

This agenda item was put off to a future meeting, but it's a good idea to be aware that it will come up and may get similar attention to the Bering Sea salmon bycatch issue currently before the council. The Bering Sea program will include a hard cap (when a certain number of King salmon are caught, the fishery would shut down).

## **Adak:**

The council considered a proposal that would have provided Adak with some protection from at-sea processors that may have more time on their hands now, since certain rationalization programs have gone into effect (American Fisheries Act [AFA], crab rationalization and Amendment 90 vessels).

## **State Board of Fisheries:**

The State Board of Fisheries met in Cordova recently and is considering a 60 foot vessel size limit and a 75,000 pound limit on cod deliveries during the state water fishery (in Adak). The vote on these proposals is expected later this month.

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## **Correction to Recent Story:**

### **Snopac Explores Sand Point Seafood Plant Proposal**

In the last edition of Fish News (Dec. 5, 2008), a local number in Sand Point was incorrectly listed for obtaining more information about Snopac Products. The correct number is (907) 386-1015. In Seattle, contact (206) 764-9230. You can also email Snopac owners Nancy and Greg Blakey at [nblakey@snopac.net](mailto:nblakey@snopac.net) or [gblakey@snowpac.net](mailto:gblakey@snowpac.net).

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