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## North Pacific Fishery Management Council December 2015 Meeting Recap

*By Ernie Weiss, AEB Natural Resources Director*

The Council took final action in December on the following items: final action on [BSAI](#) and [GOA](#) TACs and harvest specifications for 2016, final action on charter halibut management measures for 2016, and final action on the GOA groundfish fishery Chinook salmon [PSC reapportionment](#).

### **Crab**

In response to a [petition](#) submitted by the crab association Inter-Cooperative Exchange (I.C.E.), the Council requested that the Secretary of Commerce take an [emergency action](#) to waive the 30% Individual Processing Quota (IPQ) use caps for custom processing of crab delivered under the 2015/2016 Bering Sea Tanner crab catcher vessel owner IFQ. The Council then initiated a regulatory amendment to the Crab Rationalization program to add Bairdi to the list of species for which custom processing arrangements do not count against the IPQ use cap.

The 10-year review of the Crab Rationalization program has been moved from the February meeting and has been rescheduled to the April meeting in Anchorage.

### **Gulf of Alaska Trawl Bycatch Management**

Council Staff Sam Cunningham and Darrell Brannan presented their [work plan](#) for the analytical tasks moving forward on the Gulf of Alaska Trawl Bycatch Management program (GOA TBM). The Peninsula Fishermen's Coalition Executive Director Beth Stewart testified to the Council that scheduling of GOA TBM discussions at the February meeting in Portland and again in Kodiak in June, does not work for the Western Gulf trawl fishermen. Stewart suggested that the Council conduct an outreach to Sand Point in

January sometime before the 20<sup>th</sup>, when the Pacific cod trawl season opens. The Council is considering the request.

Aleutians East Borough representatives Ernie Weiss and Joe Sullivan met with Central GOA and Western GOA trawl fishermen and representatives during the December meeting to discuss the Community Fishing Association (CFA) proposal that is part of the Council GOA TBM program. The AEB was awarded a NFWF [grant](#) in part to help the council develop the approach, structure and CFA language in the council proposal. The AEB expects to deliver a work product to the Council in advance of the June meeting.

## **Staff Tasking**

Under NPFMC December Staff Tasking, there was a concerted effort by the Freezer Longline Coalition and others in reaction to a recent Board of Fisheries decision. At the Pacific cod meeting earlier this month, the Board voted unanimously to expand the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery western boundary to 170 W. longitude and increase the GHL of the fishery to 6.4 percent of the federal Bering Sea subarea ABC.

A motion introduced by member Kenny Down would have initiated an analysis of the impacts of that Board Pacific cod action. The [motion](#) failed 4-6 with all the Alaska members (Long, Mezirow, Balsiger, Kimball, Kinneen and Hull) voting against, while the Washington/Oregon members (Tweit, Cross, Down, Hyder) supported the motion. Member Duncan Fields missed Staff Tasking to attend a School Board meeting in Kodiak.

## **Council appointments and Advisory Panel**

One Council member, Alaskan David Long, is up for reappointment this year, while another Alaska NPFMC member, Duncan Fields, terms out in August after serving 3 terms on the Council. The process for Council appointments begins each year in mid-January and nominations are due to the Secretary of Commerce from Governor Walker by March 15. In late June, the Secretary announces the appointee selections.

The Advisory Panel (AP) to the Council held the first AP executive session ever in December. The AP was trying a slightly revised protocol for recording minutes at this meeting by including rationale both for and against any motion that had dissenting votes. Minority Reports are still included in the written minutes if 3 or more members who voted in the minority sign on.

Appointments to the AP and Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) are announced at the finish of each December meeting. There was a change-up at the AP as the Council appointed two new members: Angel Drobnika of Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association, and Ben Stevens of the Tanana Chiefs Conference were

appointed to the AP. Elections for the AP Chair and other leadership positions will take place in Portland at the February meeting.

The bulk of the agenda items and overall discussions in December were halibut related. For more information on all the actions at the NPFMC check the December [agenda](#) or see the soon-to-be-published December newsletter *News & Notes*, on the Council [website](#).

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## Upcoming Meetings:

### **Dec. 29, 2015: AEB Fishermen's Winter Fisheries Enforcement Meeting:**

10 a.m. – teleconference.

- Discussion by the USCG about the revised safety inspection requirements
- Mary Furuness of NMFS Alaska Region discussing the recently adopted TACs
- Glenn Campbell of the Observer Program & Luke Szymanski of the observer provider A.I.S. to answer questions
- Other fisheries enforcement information
- Call-in sites to include Anchorage & Sand Point AEB offices, King Cove Harbor
- Call 274-7557 for call-in info or visit <http://www.aebfish.org/>

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