



North Pacific Fishery Management Council - December Meeting

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting runs December 7 – 15, 2015 at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. Major items on the [agenda](#) include:

- Halibut – abundance-based management and a management framework, charter halibut measures and charter halibut Recreational Quota Entity (RQE), halibut retention in sablefish pots, halibut leasing options for CDQ groups and beginning the process for a comprehensive review of the IFQ program.
- GOA Chinook Salmon PSC Reapportionment – to provide NMFS flexibility to reapportion prohibited species catch amounts of chinook between the pollock and non-pollock trawl fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska, while remaining under an overall GOA Chinook PSC cap.
- Developing a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan – this builds upon the Council's ecosystem approach and compliments the Aleutian Islands Fishery Ecosystem Plan.
- Presenting the Gulf of Alaska Trawl Bycatch Management work plan – includes renumbering the alternatives 3 & 4 and sets the next review of the document for February in Portland.
- Spec setting process – the groundfish harvest specifications for the GOA and BSAI are set each year in December.

In Case You Missed It: Board of Fish – Pacific Cod Meeting

The Alaska Board of Fisheries decided in May to consider Pacific cod proposals separate from Area M salmon proposals, to allow greater participation by cod fishermen. Several AEB fishermen did participate during public testimony and the committee process during

the November 30 - December 1, 2015 Pacific Cod meeting. Here are some of the **Board actions from the meeting that directly impact our region:**

Proposal 10 – to increase the South Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod fishery GHL from 30% to 35% of the Western Gulf of Alaska Allowable Biological Catch, submitted by the King Cove Advisory Committee. Failed 0 - 7.

Proposal 11 – to increase the South Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod fishery GHL from 30% to 40% of the Western Gulf of Alaska Allowable Biological Catch, submitted by the False Pass Advisory Committee. The Board took no action.

Proposal 12 – to apportion the South Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod allocation for pot vessels by vessel length, submitted by Ken Mack. The Board took no action.

Proposal 13 – to resolve conflict in pot storage regulations for the SAP Pacific cod pot gear fishery, submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. Carried 7 - 0 as amended with substitute language found in Record Copy (RC) 32.

Proposal 15 – to expand the Dutch Harbor Sub-district state-waters Pacific cod fishery boundaries and increase the state-waters fishery GHL from 3% to 9% of the federal BSAI ABC, submitted by Buck Laukitis, Todd Hoppe and Andrew Wilder. Carried 7 - 0 as amended with an increase to 6.4%, and expanded area excluding haul-outs.

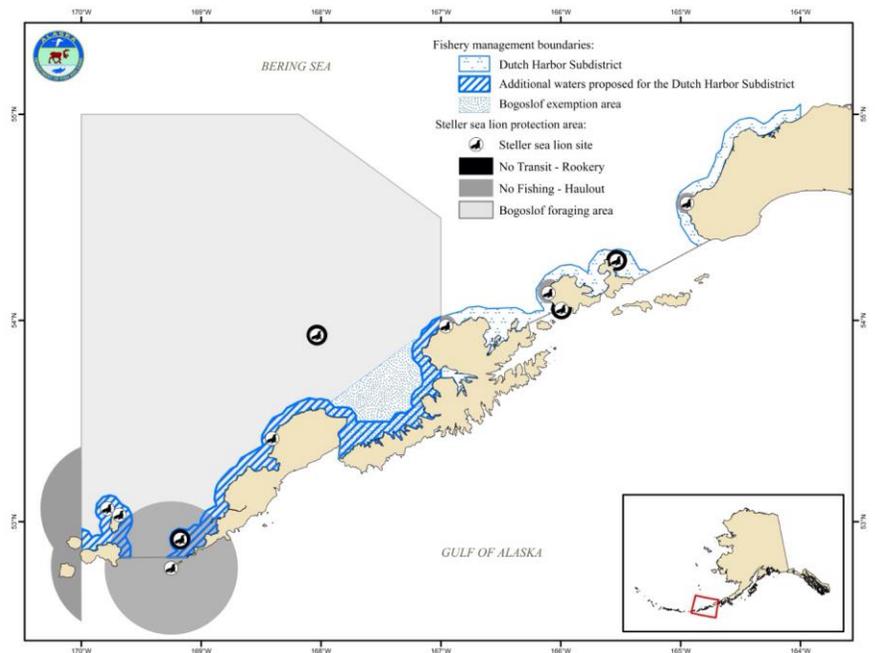


Figure 15-1.—Map of current and proposed areas for the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery.

In Case You Missed It: AEB Fishermen’s Meeting in Seattle

The AEB Fishermen’s Meeting at the Silver Cloud Hotel in Seattle on Nov. 18th was well-attended by numerous folks from the region as well as others. Noted speakers included Alaska State Senator Lyman Hoffman, Alaska Rep. Bryce Edgmon, ADF&G

Commissioner Sam Cotten, NPRB Executive Director Denby Lloyd, NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Special Agent Brent Pristas and Attorney Joe Sullivan, AEB's CFA grant consultant.



The AEB Fishermen's Meeting at the Silver Cloud Hotel in Seattle focused on a wide range of topics, including the state's budget deficit, the observer program and developing a possible Community Fishing Association (CFA) for the region.

Sen. Hoffman started off the discussion highlighting the state's budget crisis.

"We're facing a budget deficit of more than four billion dollars," said Sen. Hoffman. "The Governor has come up with some concepts, which include looking at additional revenue that involve the permanent fund in order to balance the budget. It's going to take a lot of work. Under the best scenario, we only have 24 months to rectify the finances of the State of Alaska. That's when our savings account of a little less than ten billion dollars runs out. So we need to look at tightening our belts where we can."

Rep. Bryce Edgmon added that legislators and the governor will have to make budget decisions that reach out further into the future.

“Our bond rating agencies have basically told us, if we don’t get our act together, not just spending cuts, but also new revenues, our credit rating will be downgraded further,” Edgmon explained. “Right now, we’re taking in about 40 percent of what we need to spend. So we’ve got about 60 percent and two years of spending left over.”

ADF&G Commissioner Sam Cotten said his department will also have to make some difficult decisions as a result of the budget deficit. He said recently Gov. Walker sat down with him and a couple of his key staff members while walking through the department’s budget, line by line, as he has done with every budget in state government.

“So I think he’s going to be better prepared to deal with questions about budget reductions,” said Cotten. “He’s taken a real interest in Fish and Game, as has Lt. Gov. Mallott.”

Denby Lloyd, Executive Director of the North Pacific Research Board, had some good news to share regarding revenue.

“We have, so far, knock on wood, a stable source of federal revenue that allows us to provide about five to eight billion dollars a year for marine research off of Alaska,” he said. “We have had quite a few large projects in the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska as well as out in the Aleutian Islands that we’ve supported.”

Other projects in the past have dealt with gear modification for bycatch mitigation.

“There have been a number of projects dealing with changing composition to fishing fleets,” Lloyd said. “We recently did a very large-scale project in the Bering Sea over the course of about five years in tandem with the National Science Foundation. It involved more than 100 scientists from 50 organizations and five years’ worth of field work. That has actually culminated in about 100 different scientific publications.”

Brent Pristas, NOAA’s Fisheries Enforcement Special Agent, focused on a number of topics, including the observer program. He said beginning in 2016, anyone who misses logging a commercial fishing trip with ODDS (the Observer Declare and Deploy System), an internet-based system, or on the phone, could face a \$1,000 fine.

“Up until now, it’s been a warning,” said Pristas. “But in 2016, it’s going to be a \$1,000 fine. So this is a change. Absent mitigating circumstances, it’s going to be a fairly steep penalty.”

Another topic discussed at the AEB Fishermen's Meeting was the CFA (Community Fishing Association), a proposal submitted to the Council and brought forward by AEB Natural Resources Director Ernie Weiss and other organizations.

"I believe that if you're going to have a rationalized fishery (trawl bycatch management program); if you're going to make it a catch share, you have to have some sort of structure that protects the communities," Weiss said.

The Borough applied and was awarded a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to explore developing a CFA and to determine whether it would work for the region. Fisheries attorney Joe Sullivan, who has an extensive background in fisheries rationalization programs, was hired with the grant funding to work with the Borough to develop a possible framework for the CFA.

"My role in connection with the grant is not to advocate for a CFA to be adopted at the Council," he said. "It's to work with the Borough on developing a framework on this CFA, so if it's appropriate, and if it gets to the point where the council makes progress on this program, and it looks like that should be part of the structure, at least there's some flesh on the bones."



Fisheries attorney Joe Sullivan, the Borough's CFA consultant, said his role is to work with the Borough on developing a framework for a CFA, if it's appropriate.

Sullivan said the whole point in talking about a Community Fishing Association is that when fisheries are rationalized and quotas are transferrable, it's possible those rights can migrate from community to community. He said that includes rights of any kind, even co-op shares that have been issued.

"It's been extremely well-documented now, starting with the halibut and sablefish IFQ programs, where a tremendous amount of fishing activity shifted from places like Kodiak

to other communities,” Sullivan said. “So we’re talking about landings, the migration of the businesses, the migration of the quota ownership or the ownership of the assets

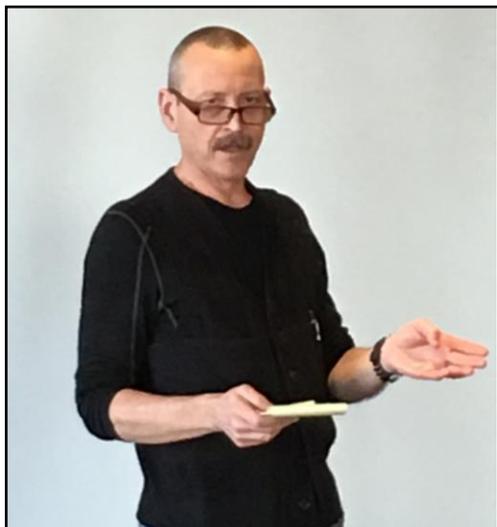
necessary to participate in the fishery. It becomes transportable and more easily taken to market. It can result in the fishing assets, whether it is the permits, the boats, the quotas or even the infrastructure, migrating away from the community in a way that can endanger the fishing economy and community stability.”

Several fishermen from AEB communities expressed opposition to

developing a CFA, citing possible negative effects, such as disrupting and reducing the fleets. Some called the CFA a hand out, concerned that the program would take from one boat and possibly provide a small piece here and there, while costing jobs. Suggestions included protecting the resource first, followed by safeguarding the economics of the communities, if the program is developed at all.



AEB Natural Resources Director Ernie Weiss told Borough fishermen that a CFA program will be developed to their advantage or it won't go anywhere at all.



Fisheries attorney Joe Sullivan, the Borough's CFA consultant, said AEB Fishermen will guide the process with their perspectives.

Weiss reassured them that the program will be reliant upon the fishermen.

“It’s going to be to your advantage or it’s not going to go anywhere at all,” he said.

Sullivan reiterated that point and said the perspectives of the Borough fishermen will be guiding him, rather than any outside organization.

“You have to look very carefully at the pluses and the minuses of a CFA program. It’s also important to take into account the risks with a

program and how you mitigate that,” Sullivan said. “That’s the dialogue that should be happening, and it should be happening in an open and transparent basis. It should be without an assumption that we’re jumping to anything. If there’s one message, it’s that the intention going forward is to bring your perspectives in, and decide whether there’s a CFA, and if so, what will it be like?”

Fish Meetings this month:

- A tentative AEB fishermen’s meeting has been scheduled with Attorney Joe Sullivan to further discuss CFAs with Borough trawl fishermen. The meeting is slated for **December 11th at 5 p.m. at the Anchorage Hilton.**
- The annual AEB general winter fisheries enforcement teleconference meeting with NOAA’s Brent Pristas is tentatively scheduled for **10 a.m. on December 29th.**

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