



Fish News

Oct. 10, 2011

AEB Gets a Win at the Board of Fish

By Ernie Weiss, AEB Natural Resources Director

AEB fishermen got their sought-after language in the adopted Alaska Board of Fisheries motion, which will coordinate the opening of the state Pacific cod fishery with the closure of the soon-to-be implemented gear sector split federal fishery. The Board of Fish meeting began Thursday, October 6, 2011. The Board took action on the South Alaska Peninsula proposals yesterday afternoon (Oct. 9, 2011).



The Board of Fisheries took action on the South Alaska Peninsula proposals yesterday (Oct. 9, 2011).

Proposal 21, submitted by a group of Sand Point fishermen, requested that the fishery start seven days after the closure of the federal pot cod season or March 1st, whichever is later. Proposal 22, submitted by the King Cove Advisory Committee asked that the state season start March 15th or seven days after the federal season, whichever comes later.

Before the Board of Fish meetings began, the King Cove and Sand Point fishermen groups agreed on a compromise date of March 7th as a date certain to open the state fishery, or seven days after the closure of the federal pot cod season. The state Pacific cod season will open seven days after the federal season closes, or March 7th, whichever is later.



The board also formalized the jig allocation to 15% of the quota.

The Board also formalized the de facto jig allocation to 15% of the quota. The board at first shunned an amendment by Sue Jeffery to institute the 15% allocation. However, it later became apparent that other sections of the proposed regulation referenced the jig guideline harvest level (GHL), so they needed to specify it. Until now, the regulations

have only indicated the pot sector allocation at 85% in the South Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod plan.

Ernie Weiss, Sam Cotten and area fishermen Melvin Larsen, Gary Mack and Raymond Nutt were all at the meetings discussing the issues with Board members and participating in the committee and the Board process.

Highlights from the Oct. 2011 NPFMC Meeting

By Sam Cotten, AEB Fisheries Consultant



The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Unalaska Sept. 28 - Oct 4, 2011. In attendance for TAC were E. Larry Gromoff and Clem Tillion. Also attending: Everett Anderson, with APICDA, Dave Fraiser with AC/DC and Simeon Swetzof, the Mayor of St. Paul. A few Council members and other interested persons took a Trident-sponsored

trip to Akutan on Tuesday, September 27, 2011. The group toured the plant and met with some locals, including Joe Bereskin, Mayor of Akutan.

The Council dealt with the following issues:

Salmon FMP: Federal law requires the Council to have a fishery management plan (FMP) for all fish in federal waters. The current plan allows the state to manage all salmon. The council wants to maintain the status quo. There were some folks who asked the Council to get involved in Cook Inlet salmon issues. They complained that the state was letting too many fish up the Kenai River, thereby denying the commercial fishermen revenue.



The Council wants to maintain the status quo of the fishery management plan.

Groundfish Harvest Specifications: The council made preliminary recommendations for harvest levels in October. The groundfish plan team will meet in November after receiving the stock assessment information and will then give their recommendations to the Council. The council will make final recommendations at the December 2011 meeting.

Crab: Pribilof blue king crab stocks are severely depleted, and the Council is required by law to come up with a rebuilding plan. The proposed plans include more restrictions on fishing in the area, although even with the proposed restrictions, the stocks are not expected to adequately rebuild. Bristol Bay red king crab quota will be about half of last year, while the opines are significantly up. Crab harvest levels are set by the State of Alaska.

Observer program: The new, restructured observer program is still on schedule to begin in Jan. 2013. Vessels 40' - 60' will now get some coverage, depending on the data requirements of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).



The Council decided to postpone a decision until next year on whether to implement efforts to reduce halibut by-catch.

until next year to begin efforts to reduce halibut by-catch. Council members could have lowered the prohibited species catch (PC) limits this December during the harvest specification process. Instead, they decided to consider reductions using a regulatory amendment. Bottom line reductions will not happen for 2012 and may be in place in 2013.

Adak: The Council advanced a proposal to allow Adak to become a community quota entity (ICQ). The Council may take final action in DEC. Allowing Adak to achieve ICQ status gives AC/DC the right to purchase 4B halibut and black cod individual fishing quota (IFQ). The Council temporarily relaxed the residency requirements of the program in order to allow Adak to attract participants interested in leasing the quota from AC/DC. Area 4B halibut IFQ "D" shares must be fished on vessels 35' or less. The Council took no action on a proposal to allow "D" share owners to "fish up" or use a larger vessel. Everett Anderson of APICDA had asked for the "fish up" opportunity. Atka residents own some "D" share halibut and wanted to use larger vessels, citing safety reasons and the fact that years ago, the council allowed 3B "D" shares to "fish up". The Council decided to take no action and wait to see how the CQE program shakes out. Other developments that bear watching included the renewed operation of the plant in Adak and the improvements to the Atka plant.

You are reading FISH NEWS, published quarterly by the Aleutians East Borough to help keep the lines of communication open among Alaska's commercial fishing interests. If you would like to have FISH NEWS delivered to you via e-mail subscription, send an e-mail message to ltanis@aeboro.org. For more information about our fisheries, our people, and our communities, please visit us at www.aleutianseast.org and check out our new blog at <http://aebfishblog.blogspot.com/>.