



Fish News

Oct. 15, 2014

GOA Trawl Bycatch Management Moves Forward for Analysis

By Ernie Weiss, AEB Natural Resources Director



The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) took action in October to advance the proposed Gulf of Alaska Trawl Bycatch Management (GOA TBM) program for analysis with alternatives, elements & options to be measured against the Council's goals and objectives for the program. As is normal in this type of analysis, Alternative 1 is the no action alternative, status quo management of GOA Groundfish fisheries. Alternative 2 follows the Council's April motion with changes and Alternative 3 considers use of either a Community Fishing Association or an adaptive management model for improved community protections. The Council agreed that the magnitude of this proposed program warrants development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), rather than a less comprehensive Environmental Assessment (EA) that the Council normally relies upon.

The Council motion does not specifically include allocations to skippers and/or crew as requested by some stakeholders, but those could be addressed under Alternative 3. Council member Duncan Fields stated he was confident skipper and crew consideration could be included in a future iteration of the analysis. There are some inherent problems with the council motion. The proposed program still assumes some processor/harvester linkages in cooperative formation, but NOAA General Counsel has informed the NPFMC that this type of coop formation may not be legal.

The Council's three meeting outlook has GOA TBM scheduled to come up again at the April meeting in Anchorage for preliminary analysis. The Council has agreed to receive an update on the program in December but not to debate the issue nor to take any action at that time.



The final NPFMC GOA Trawl Bycatch October 2014 motion can be found here: <http://npfmc.legistar.com/gateway.aspx?M=F&ID=da7552d3-fbbb-4fda-9d0e-1704c14c8419.pdf>

Also at this meeting, the Council took Final Action on the Aleutia ROFR item to potentially award new PQS to Aleutia. Despite good arguments in front of Council by Shane Levesque, AEB representatives and others, Aleutia was not awarded the new PQS.

Board of Fisheries Action



At their October work session, the Alaska Board of Fisheries received an update from the NPFMC on the GOA Trawl Bycatch Management proposed program. The Board also received a report from the Pollock Workgroup, including a discussion draft circulated at the October meeting of the workgroup, a proposal for limited state/federal coordination in the proposed trawl bycatch action. That workgroup proposal would prohibit non-pelagic trawling for cod in state waters, but retain parallel fishery management for pollock with some changes. The draft discussion paper for limited state/federal coordination from the work group can be found at: <http://www.aebfish.org/pollockdraft100614.pdf>

The Board is also reviewing agenda change requests (ACRs) at their Work Session October 15 & 16th. The AEB fisheries meeting will not come up in the Board meeting cycle until March 2016, but the AEB did submit one ACR to expand on the new 'Dutch Harbor Sub-District Pacific Cod Fishery' out of cycle. Another ACR submitted by a local fisherman would increase the GHF for South Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod fishery. As of this writing, no ACRs have been accepted by the Board at this work session.

AEB Fishermen's Meeting to be held Nov. 19th at Seattle's Silver Cloud Hotel

Topics of discussion at this year's AEB Fishermen's Meeting in Seattle include NPFMC agenda items, Board of Fish actions and the small vessel discharge permit. The annual meeting will be held from 9 a.m. to noon on Nov. 19, 2014 at the Silver Cloud Hotel (1046 1st Ave. S. Seattle, WA) located across from the Pacific Marine Expo at the CenturyLink Stadium.



The Silver Cloud Hotel, located at 1046 1st Ave. S. in Seattle, is the location for the AEB Fishermen's Meeting.

Invited Presenters include:

- State Rep. Bryce Edgmon and staff
- Observer Program representatives
- CFEC Commissioner Bruce Twomley
- UFA Executive Director Julianne Curry

Topics:

Legislative Fishery Priorities, actions
2015 Deployment Plan Changes
Limited Entry Q & A
Membership Perks

Other Presenters:

- AEB Fisheries Consultant Sam Cotten
- AEB Natural Resources Director Ernie Weiss

Coffee, refreshments and breakfast will be available.

This meeting is scheduled to be teleconferenced to Aleutians East Borough communities and harbors. (8 a.m. AKST). Please call (907) 274-7555 for call-in information. Contact Ernie Weiss at (907) 274-7557 or email: eweiss@aeboro.org for further information.

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