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# Fish News

June 12, 2013

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## Highlights from the June North Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting

*By AEB Staff*

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) met in Juneau, June 5 - 11 along with the SSC, AP, Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) and the Ecosystem



The Council received a presentation on the analysis used in the Steller Sea Lion Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Committee. The Joint Protocol Committee of the NPFMC and the Board of Fisheries met June 12<sup>th</sup>. During the NPFMC meeting, the Council received a presentation on the analysis used in the Steller Sea Lion Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SSL DEIS), and a presentation of the Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Strategic Plan. The Council addressed

these reports as follows: the Council acknowledged NMFS's hard work on the SSL DEIS, yet criticized the document as jeopardizing the NEPA process by leaving out key information. The Council adopted the Strategic Plan on EM/ER and requested the formation of an EM workgroup to meet after the October meeting. In addition to

adopting most of the OAC's recommendations, the council requested the Committee meet again prior to the October Council meeting.

**One item on the agenda of popular concern was the Bering Sea Canyons.** NGOs got out the public comment in droves via email, and Greenpeace deployed their blimp to the Juneau skies. The Council motion on this item requests continued research on the Bering Sea canyons for possible future management measures for the conservation of deep sea corals in the Pribilof and Zhemchug canyons. The Council did not request any additional fishery closures near the canyons at this time.



**A Greenpeace blimp promotes the group's Bering Sea Canyons protection initiative as it sails over Juneau's Gastineau Channel. Photo by Ed Schoenfeld, CoastAlaska News.**

**The big topic of discussion was Bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska.** The Council took final action on Chinook salmon bycatch in GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries and set a hard cap limit of 7,500 fish, plus an 'uncertainty pool' of 1,000 in years following years when a sector's PSC usage is less than the sector's proportional share of 6,500. The limit is apportioned between the CV (3,900) and CP (3,600) sectors. The Rockfish program is apportioned 1,200 of the CV limit. Only 66% of the CP limit can be taken before June 1<sup>st</sup>. Full retention of all salmon is mandated only until an observer has counted all the salmon and taken any biological samples. The Chinook PSC cap of 7,500 is not expected to significantly impact the local 610 fleet that fish for cod because that fishing effort is earlier in the year.

**The larger bycatch discussion was about GOA Trawl Bycatch Management,** and included a roadmap and discussion paper presented by staff, a fast-tracked data collection program, and a report on tendering in the GOA. The Council requested staff prepare a summary of each of the proposals that were submitted in response to an earlier request for bycatch management proposals, and to describe each using the tier 1 & 2 framework from the 'roadmap' document. The discussion paper should address how each proposal addresses the Council Purpose and Need statement for this issue, and should clarify which proposals may not be authorized by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery & Conservation Act (MSA). The Council motion was amended to specifically address

proposals that include use of Community Fishing Associations (CFAs). The discussion paper will address a broad range, including a proposal submitted by the Peninsula Fishermen's Coalition that focuses on the WGOA. The Council also requested an expanded look at the state-waters issues.

**A tendering report was requested at the April meeting after a business decision by one processor to tender fish to other plants raised concerns in the community of Kodiak.** The Council disregarded an AP recommendation to analyze the full prohibition of tendering, and plans only to take another look at the tendering issue this winter. The data collection issue only is scheduled for final action in October.

**During the Juneau meeting, the Council was addressed by three prominent public servants.** Governor Sean Parnell spoke on the Steller Sea Lion issue and on the Chinook salmon crisis. Senator Mark Begich and Acting NOAA Administrator Kathryn Sullivan also addressed the Council. Dr. Sullivan is an accomplished oceanographer and was the first American woman to walk in space.

**The June meeting was the last for Council member Sam Cotten,** who got two motions passed during Staff Tasking on the final meeting day: one motion to take a look at a directed fishery for octopus, the other in response to a crab community workgroup request to clarify regulations regarding ROFR contract terms. Sam was recognized for his six years of service on the Council at a community reception on Wednesday evening and at the end of the meeting. The appointment of Sam's replacement is expected to be announced by July. The next NPFMC meeting begins October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Anchorage.



The Council recognized Sam Cotten for his six years of service on the NPFMC at a recent community reception.

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