



NPFMC June Meeting sets up Critical Upcoming October Meeting

The October 2021 meeting of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council will be the first in-person meeting of the Council since February 2020. The April 2020 meeting was cancelled and every meeting since then has been virtual by internet and phone connections. Council staff is recommending that only the Council meets in-person, while the AP and SSC meetings would remain virtual for October. The Staff plans to continue to allow remote testimony using the Adobe Connect software.

Final Action for the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod Catcher Vessel Trawl Cooperative Program is set for the in-person October NPFMC Meeting. The Council moved the limited access privilege program forward at the June meeting, choosing several preliminary preferred alternatives (PPAs) within the 14 elements of the program. Of particular interest to the Aleutians East Borough are Element 4-GOA Sideboards, and Element 5-Processor and Community Provisions:

- Under Element 4, the Council chose options to sideboard LLP licenses for all GOA groundfish fishing activity based on GOA catch history during the qualifying period, or if exempt from the sideboards, the vessel/license may not lease the BSAI cod coop quota. Exceptions would be vessels participating in the CGOA Rockfish Program and vessels with small qualifying BSAI cod history.
- While Element 5 is titled Processor and Community Provisions, the only community provisions are for the onshore processors located in communities. The Council will limit the amount of BSAI cod that may be delivered to motherships offshore. The Council will also allocate harvest shares to processors. Specifics on these and other provisions will be determined at the October meeting.

Trawl Electronic Monitoring & Exempted Fishing Permit:

The June Council Agenda Item C2 covered the Trawl EM EFP report presented by the principal investigators (PIs), the Trawl EM Committee report and the Trawl EM Analysis including draft purpose and needs statement, and set of alternatives. In addition to the

Standard Alternative 1 – status quo, Alternative 2 would be implementation of the Trawl EM program as it currently operates under the pollock EM trawl EFP with all catcher and tender vessels delivering in all regions (BS, CGOA, WGOA). Alternative 3 would only include catcher vessels delivering to shoreside processors, and included sub-options for just the Bering Sea or Gulf of Alaska. At the Trawl EM Committee, there was unanimous support for the purpose and needs statement, but no consensus on the draft alternatives due to controversy on Alternative 3 – an alternative which excludes tenders and effectively precludes a large portion of the WGOA catcher vessel fleet. Several members of the public testified against Alternative 3, including AEB Natural Resources Assistant Director Charlotte Levy who also serves as an EFP PI, representing the WGOA.

Ultimately, the Council moved to initiate an analysis of a regulated trawl electronic monitoring program by adopting a purpose and need statement and the suite of 3 alternatives as written. Many council members agreed there is a practical advantage to including all 3 alternatives, primarily to provide the Council with flexibility to implement different elements of the program, however, the Council strongly expressed support for Alternative 2 and agreed that Alternative 3 is not a preferred Alternative. Preliminary review of the EM Trawl program is scheduled for the February 2022 NPFMC meeting.

At the June meeting, the Council also initiated an analysis of BSAI Pcod Small Boat Access, adopting a purpose and need statement and 2 alternatives for analysis: status quo, and to redefine the BSAI Pcod Jig sector to include hook & line and pot gear vessels less than either 55’ or 56 feet length overall. This analysis has not yet been scheduled on the 3-meeting outlook.

In response to a discussion paper on trawl overages of sablefish, the Council declined to take any further action. A full review of the June NPFMC meeting can be found in the Council June Newsletter [here](#).

Climate change impacts on GOA fishing communities

In the May 25th Fish News newsletter, we introduced [a project](#) focusing on climate change impacts on Gulf of Alaska fishing communities. Marysia Szymkowiak, a social scientist from NOAA Fisheries Alaska Fisheries Science Center out of Juneau, is working on the project to understand how fishermen may respond to changes in their fisheries.

Marysia has developed a [very brief set of questions](#) to gauge how fishermen across the Gulf are experiencing changes in their ecosystems and how they can respond. She is asking fishermen to share their experiences with her through this questionnaire and

conversations that she's hoping to have over the summer and into the fall.

She notes: "Fishermen provide rich context to the changes they are witnessing in their fisheries and how they may respond. This research is just starting and it has multiple parts. The questionnaire is intended to get people thinking, then I have individual conversations with them, and then we have a dedicated group meeting. Summer is so busy for folks, so for now, I am hoping to have chats with people during their down time when it works for them - waiting to deliver fish, fixing something on their boat. And then in the fall, I'd like to get folks together in a group setting to share thoughts on this topic."

If you have a couple of minutes, please take a look at the questions and next time you get a few extra minutes, give Marysia a call at 907-500-5262 or email her: marysia.szymkowiak@noaa.gov.

Nominations for Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee Open Through July 29

NOAA Fisheries is seeking nominations to fill vacancies on the [Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee](#). MAFAC advises the Secretary of Commerce on all living marine resources under the responsibility of the Department of Commerce. Nominations should be submitted by July 29th. For more information on the MAFAC nomination process, see this [NOAA Fisheries press release](#). If interested, please contact eweiss@aeboro.org by July 5th.

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