

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

News and Notes



605 West 4th Avenue, Ste 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252
Phone (907) 271-2809
Fax (907) 271-2817

Eric A. Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

Volume 5-07

Visit our webpage at www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc

December 2007

2008 Appointments Announced

Appointments the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and Advisory Panel were made at the December meeting. The Council announced the following re-appointments for three-year terms to the Advisory Panel: Joe Childers, Julianne Curry, Tom Enlow, John Henderschedt, Simon Kinneen, and Ed Poulsen. Bob Jacobson was reappointed to a two-year term, and Chuck McCallum was appointed for a one-year term. New appointments on the AP include a three-year term for Mark Cooper, from Oregon; a one-year term for John Crowley from Washington; and a one-year term for Beth Stewart from Alaska. We would like to thank Jeb Morrow, Kent Leslie and Lisa Butzner for their participation on the Advisory Panel, and look forward to working with them in different capacities in the future.

The Council reappointed the remaining SSC members to one-year terms, with Dr. Kathy Kuletz of the USFWS appointed as a new member. A full list of AP, SSC, and Council members and their contact information and terms is available on our website.

Staff Changes

Council staffers Cathy Coon and Jim Richardson will be leaving at the end of the year. Coon, who has been the Council's GIS specialist and a fishery analyst since 1999, is moving on to work with the Minerals Management Service. Richardson, a staff economist, came to work for the Council on a temporary detail. Both will be greatly missed, and we wish them calm seas ahead.

Rasmuson Departs Council

Ed Rasmuson, a Council member since 2003, served his last meeting in December. Rasmuson, who was also a member of the US Commission on Ocean Policy, resigned to pursue other interests. A farewell party was held during the Council week to honor Ed's contributions to the Council, fisheries education, and resource conservation. Ed's father, Elmer Rasmuson, was the Council's first chairman. We wish Ed all the best in his future endeavors and travels!

GOA Pollock Trip Limit

In December, the Council took final action on the Gulf of Alaska pollock trip limit amendment, selecting Alternative 2 as their preferred alternative. The amendment will add the following language to existing regulations: (a) *Limit trawl catcher vessels in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) pollock fishery to landing no more than 136 metric tons, through any delivery means, in a calendar day - 12 AM to 12 AM (or 0001 hrs to 2400 hrs); and (b) The cumulative amount of pollock harvested from any GOA reporting area landed by a trawl catcher vessel cannot exceed the daily trip limit of 136 metric tons times the numbers of calendar days the fishery is open in the respective regulatory area.*

If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, this regulatory change could be in effect by late 2008, or early 2009.

February Council Meeting Reminder

The Council will be meeting the week of February 3 at the Renaissance Hotel in Downtown Seattle. Please make your reservation under the NPFMC room block to receive the special discounted room rate. (1-800-546-9184) When the Council travels, the deadline for comments is moved up a day in order to accommodate packing and shipping of the materials to our meeting location. Submission of written comments and materials to be included in the notebooks for this meeting **MUST BE RECEIVED** by 5:00 pm Alaska time **January 29 (Tuesday)**. If you miss the deadline and bring your own copies, please bring **25** for the Council, **28** for the Advisory Panel, and **18** for the SSC.

Upcoming Meetings

Stellar Sea Lion Mitigation Committee: January 6-8, 2008 in Seattle. The **FIRST** day, the 6th, is at the Hotel Nexus; January 7 and 8 is at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center starting at 8:30.



**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

AFA Processing Permit

In October the Council was requested by Adak Fisheries LLC to review an application for an unrestricted AFA processor permit. By regulation, NMFS may grant such a permit application only upon recommendation by the Council to do so. The Council may only make such recommendation when the combined BSAI TAC for pollock, in any year, exceeds 1,274,900 mt, or upon the actual total or constructive loss of an existing AFA processor, and after providing an opportunity for public comment. The regulations also allow the Council to establish additional procedures for review and approval of such permit requests.

In December the Council reviewed the proposal and regulatory language, a letter from NOAA Fisheries explaining the process and issues related to the application, and received public testimony. Following deliberation on the issue, the Council took no action on the request.

Steller Sea Lions

The Council received an updated schedule for completion of the final Revised Steller Sea Lion Recovery Plan, the ongoing formal Consultation, the draft *status quo* Biological Opinion, and the accompanying EIS process. NMFS and Council staffs have developed a new schedule that would accommodate the Council's previous request for new regulations (SSL protection measures) to be in effect for the 2010 fishing year. The Council acknowledged that this new schedule reflects the Council's intent, and therefore the Council recommended that NMFS proceed with publication of a notice of intent (NOI) that would provide a longer scoping period and more opportunity for public comment. However, the Council requested that the scoping period should be scheduled so that it overlaps and provides for a 30-day review period after publication of the final SSL recovery plan. Staff contact is Bill Wilson.

Am 80 Post Harvest Transfers & Rollovers

The Council reviewed an analysis of an amendment to the Amendment 80 program that would (1) allow cooperatives to engage in post-delivery transfers to cover quota overages, and (2) authorize rollovers of Amendment 80 limited access allocation that is projected to be unharvested to the Amendment 80 cooperatives. The Council selected, as preliminary preferred alternatives, unlimited post-delivery transfers (Alternative 2) and Amendment 80 limited access rollovers (Alternative 2). The Council instructed staff to release the analysis for public review and final action at the February 2008 meeting. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Alaska Regional Collaboration Team

The Council received a report from Ms. Laura Furgione, Regional Director of the National Weather Service, and the leader of the NOAA's Regional Collaboration Team. The Team is part of a national NOAA effort to increase communication and cooperation across NOAA line offices. The teams bring together NOAA employees working in a particular region, with the goal to improve NOAA's productivity and value to customers. In concert with key partners and stakeholders, the Alaska team is currently developing an integrated services plan, which will feed into NOAA budget planning, containing specific visions for NOAA services in the Alaska region through 2015. The Council and fishery stakeholders have been asked to participate in the development of this assessment, as NOAA partners. A link to the draft plan will be posted on the Council website once it is available. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

Observer Program

The SSC and AP completed initial review of a regulatory amendment package which examines alternatives to revise Federal regulations relevant to several administrative and procedural requirements applicable to the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program. Both the SSC and AP recommended the analysis be released for public review, with specified changes; however, the Council did not have time to address this agenda item in December. The Council has rescheduled initial review of the analysis for the February 2008 Council meeting, and final action remains scheduled for April 2008. An Observer Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled prior to final action. The current version of the analysis is on the Council website: www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/observer. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

VMS Exemption Request

The Advisory Panel received a report on a request for VMS exemption for vessels using dinglebar gear; the Council postponed their review until February. The VMS requirement was implemented as part of a suite of measures to conserve and protect essential fish habitat, including a prohibition on fishing with mobile contact gear in the GOA Coral Habitat Protection Areas. The VMS requirement for dinglebar gear has been questioned because of the small numbers of operators, the small size of the vessels, the short period of the fishery, and the relatively small revenues generated. Staff contact is David Witherell.

GOA Pacific Cod

At its December 2007 meeting, the Council reviewed a discussion paper on the Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod sector split action that specifically addressed: (1) incidental catch, and (2) coordination of federal fisheries with the State waters Pacific cod fishery. The Council requested this discussion paper after reviewing the draft EA/RIR/IRFA for the proposed sector split at the October 2007 meeting. The purpose of the paper was to provide the Council with additional information needed to revise the components and options for analysis. After reviewing the discussion paper, the Council deleted Component 6 of the October 2007 motion, which included options for management of incidental catch under sector allocations, and revised Component 3 to defer management of each sector's allocation (including incidental catch) to NMFS inseason management. In effect, the Council removed the option to set aside a single ICA off the top of the TAC. Instead, incidental catch needs would be managed inseason (similar to the status quo) and each sector's allocation would support its own incidental catch needs.

Several concerns were raised during public testimony and Council deliberations regarding coordination of the federal and state-managed Pacific cod fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. At the December 2007 meeting, the Council requested that staff work with the State of Alaska and NOAA General Counsel to explore possible options for the jig fishery management structure (both federal and State) that will minimize the amount of stranded quota.

Possible solutions include:

1. Separate State and federal allocations- manage accounting by seasonal structure.
2. State managed jig Pacific cod fishery- federal management authority goes to the state of Alaska to manage a state gear specific fishery.

Finally, the Council added several options for analysis under sector definitions. New options include splitting the hook-and-line catcher vessel sector by vessel length (<60 and ≥60 feet in length), splitting trawl catcher processors by vessel length (<125 and ≥125 feet in length) and combining the pot and hook-and-line catcher vessel allocations.

Both the sector split and fixed gear recency actions are scheduled for Initial Review at the April 2008 Council meeting in Anchorage. At the February 2008 meeting, staff will present a discussion paper outlining options for revising management of the jig fishery.

The sector split and fixed gear recency motions are available on the Council website. Staff contact is Jeannie Heltzel.

Trawl LLP Recency

The Council was unable to address the BSAI/GOA trawl recency RIR/EA/IRFA report at the December meeting due time constraints. The report was reviewed by the SSC and AP and both groups recommended that the report be released for public review once several issues (noted in their respective minutes) were addressed. Both the SSC and the AP noted problems with aspects of Component 4, which establishes new non-AFA trawl licenses for the Aleutian Islands.

The Council took public testimony on the proposed amendment. Based on public comment, the Council may consider a revised approach for Component 4 at the February meeting. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.

Arctic FMP

The Council received an update on development of the Arctic Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and efforts made to date to inform the communities and organizations in Alaska's arctic region of the Council's intent. The Council recommended proceeding with the outreach program as outlined by staff. A preliminary review of the Arctic FMP analysis package is scheduled for the February 2008 meeting. Staff contact is Bill Wilson.

Rockfish Post-Delivery Transfers

The Council took action selecting a preferred alternative to permit post-delivery transfers of cooperative quota (annual allocations to cooperatives) in the Central Gulf of Alaska rockfish pilot program. The action is intended to prevent harvest overages that could be covered by quota transfers, reducing enforcement costs and allowing for more complete harvest of the TAC. The preferred alternative would apply no limits on the number or magnitude of post-delivery transfers, but would require that any transfers be completed within a set time period. In addition, vessels would not be permitted to begin a fishing trip without unused quota for all allocated species. Staff contact is Mark Fina.

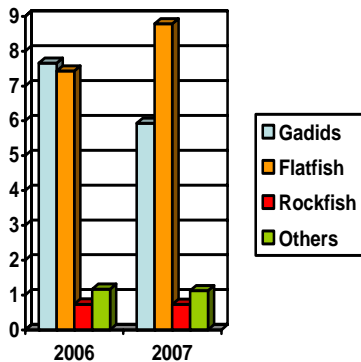
GOA Bycatch

The Council postponed receiving a report on GOA salmon and crab bycatch until April. The Advisory Panel received the report and discussed the information on salmon and crab bycatch and observer data on the prohibited species catch. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

BSAI Groundfish Specifications

The Council established final catch specifications for the 2008 and 2009 BSAI groundfish fisheries. The sum of the recommended ABCs for 2008 is 2,500,000 mt. This is still well above the 2 million mt cap, which was adopted as an overall ecosystem conservation measure for setting total quotas. Total biomass for 2008 (16.6 million mt) is down by about a half million metric tons relative to last year's estimate. The general trend of BSAI groundfish biomass and ABCs is down for gadids (particularly walleye pollock and Pacific cod) and up for flatfish stocks.

Abundance of EBS **walleye pollock** has declined steadily since 2003 due to poor recruitment from the 2001-2005 year classes. The bottom trawl pollock biomass estimate is only 87% of the long term mean. Preliminary indications are that the 2006 year class is well above average, however. Both the SSC and BSAI Groundfish Plan Team agreed to add extra conservatism by setting the ABC lower than the maximum permissible ABC (1.17 million mt). The Council set the TAC for EBS pollock at 1 million mt.

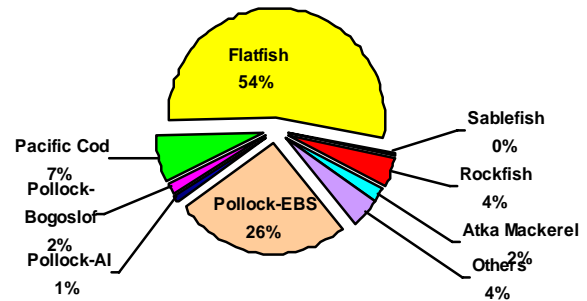


Biomass Changes by Major Groups

Due to concerns regarding specific assumptions in the **Pacific cod** stock assessment, the SSC suggested maintaining the 2007 ABC and OFL for 2008 and 2009, recognizing that the model indicates that spawning biomass will be on an upward trend in the near future. The spawning biomass of **sablefish** is projected to be similar between 2007 and 2008, but is expected to decline through 2012. Biomass estimates declined by 4% in the eastern Bering Sea and 13% in the Aleutian Islands.

Total flatfish biomass increased 18% from last year. The **yellowfin sole** stock was moved to Tier 1 status in 2007 and allowed for an increase in TAC under the 2 million mt cap, as a result of a decrease in pollock TAC this year. **Greenland turbot** continues to be the only flatfish species that remains low in abundance compared to 1970 levels. Compared to the 2007 spawning biomass of 56,900 mt this represents a very slight increase, a departure from the decline prevalent since the mid 1970s. The **arrowtooth flounder** biomass is peaking. The stock assessment was expanded to include 10 Aleutian Islands survey results, and the ABC and OFL increases are an artifact of the added data. Recruitment of the four most recent year classes (2002-2005) has been below average for **Atka mackerel**. There are no new **rockfish** assessments due to the lack a bottomfish

trawl survey in the Aleutian Islands this year. None of the groundfish stocks are overfished or approaching an overfished condition.



BSAI Exploitable Biomass Year 2008 Total = 16.6 MMT (down 2.5% from last year)

The Council adopted total TACs less than the 2 million mt cap for all species in 2008 and 2009, based on recommendations from the Advisory Panel and BSAI fishery sectors. The pollock and Pacific cod TACs decreased 394,000 mt and less than 2,000 mt (including a reduction of 3% for state water fishery catches) in 2008, respectively. The yellowfin sole TAC in 2008 increased substantially to 225,000 mt. The Council recommended catch specifications are attached.

The **prohibited species catch** (PSC) limits and their apportionments for crabs, halibut, and herring were revised, particularly as they relate to managing the Amendment 80 flatfish sector. Revised halibut discard mortality rates were adopted for the 2008 CDQ fisheries in October 2007, based on IPHC recommendations. Tables for PSCs and halibut discard mortality rates will be posted on the Council's website. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Alaska Board of Fisheries Request

The Council received a request from the Alaska Board of Fisheries to consider a proposal to allow a 454 mt A-season pollock fishery in the Kanaga Sound area in the Aleutian Islands in 2008. The Council passed a motion to request that NMFS evaluate this proposal to determine if it would have *de minimus* impacts to Steller sea lions and would not require a formal consultation process, or whether the proposal should be integrated into the ongoing Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee's proposal review process. The Council requested an update at the February 2008 meeting. Staff contact is Bill Wilson.

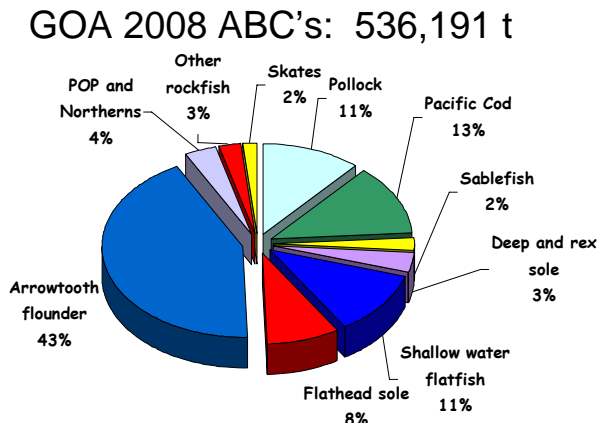
GOA Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved the 2007 Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final catch specifications for the 2008 and 2009 groundfish fisheries. A GOA groundfish survey was conducted in 2007 thus full assessments for all species were presented in this year's GOA SAFE report. Proposed and final specifications are now established for a period of up to two years. This requires specifying OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2008 and 2009.

The sum of the GOA ABCs for 2008 is 536,191 t. The sum of the ABCs increased 9% compared with last year. This increase is primarily driven by increases in the flatfish stocks. ABC levels increased in deep water flatfish (2%), shallow water flatfish (19%), arrowtooth flounder (23%), and flathead sole (14%). ABC levels also increased in some rockfish, such as Pacific ocean perch (2%), roughey rockfish (30%), shortraker rockfish (7%) and other slope rockfish (3%). The species with ABCs that declined relative to 2007 are pollock (-12%), sablefish (-11%), northern rockfish (-8%), pelagic shelf rockfish (-6%), demersal shelf rockfish (-7%), thornyhead rockfish (-14%) and big skates (-6%).

The abundances of rex sole, Dover sole, flathead sole, arrowtooth flounder, Pacific ocean perch, roughey rockfish, northern rockfish, and dusky rockfish are above target stock size. The abundances of pollock and sablefish are below target stock size. The target biomass levels for other deep-water flatfish, shallow-water flatfish, shortraker rockfish, demersal shelf rockfish, other pelagic shelf rockfish, other slope rockfish, thornyhead rockfish, Atka mackerel, and skates are unknown. The status of Pacific cod is unknown based on the present stock assessment. However, in 2006 it was estimated to be above the $B_{40\%}$ target level. None of the groundfish stocks are overfished or approaching an overfished condition.

2008 ABCs by species groups are shown below:



For most stocks, the Council established TACs equal to ABCs with some exceptions. These exceptions include Pacific cod, where the quota was reduced approximately 24.4% to account for removals in the state managed fishery, and those fisheries where the bycatch of other target species is a concern, specifically for Shallow water flatfish (W and C GOA), Flathead sole (W and C GOA), Arrowtooth flounder (GOA wide) and Other slope rockfish (EYAK/SEO). For those fisheries, the TAC was set below the ABC. Atka mackerel was also established at levels to meet incidental catch needs in other fisheries only (no directed fishing is allowed). The Council recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2008 and 2009 are attached. The SAFE Report for the GOA groundfish for 2007 and additional information on the summary of GOA groundfish stocks may be viewed at: www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm.

Other Species:

In June of 2005, the Council took final action to implement a calculation change to the other species complex in the GOA such that the Council may recommend a TAC at or below 5% of the sum of the target species TACs during the annual specifications process. This interim measure is intended to provide additional flexibility in responding to potential conservation concerns as they arise until more comprehensive management changes can be made to the other species complex (i.e., analysis of individual species level assessments). Based on information provided to the Council by the Plan Team in the annual GOA SAFE report as well as recommendations from the Advisory Panel, the Council established TAC for the other species complex at 4,500 mt. This will meet incidental catch needs in other groundfish fisheries as well as allow for limited directed fishing within the complex but is low enough to alleviate any conservation concerns regarding exclusive targeting on any one member of the species complex. Initial review of an analysis to establish specifications for GOA other species is scheduled for February 2008.

Staff contact for GOA groundfish specifications is Diana Stram.

BSAI Salmon Bycatch

The Council moved to refine their current suite of alternatives for the forthcoming salmon bycatch reduction measures EIS. The main aspects to the Council motion included specific years for defining the cap formulations for Chinook and non-Chinook salmon species, an option to divide any resulting cap by sectors, and to further subdivide such a cap within sectors by cooperatives.

In considering the ranges of numbers to include for caps by species, the Council moved to consider a range of Chinook caps from 21,000–114,000 and a range for non-Chinook of 55,000–925,000. These ranges are considered for analysis of the likely impacts on the pollock fishery and salmon stocks of any proposed cap. Multiple caps levels are considered within this range by species. For Chinook salmon, the alternatives also include an option to split the resulting caps by season.

The Council motion indicated that two methodologies will be considered for dividing up the sector-specific salmon cap:

1. Division of the cap based upon AFA percentages (i.e. 50% shore based CV fleet; 10% for the mothership fleet; and 40% for the offshore CP fleet)
2. Division of the cap based upon historical average of percent bycatch by sector

The option to further subdivide sector allocation by cooperative shall be based upon the percent of total sector pollock catch their coop allocation represents. The motion further indicated that when the Chinook salmon coop cap is reached, the coop must stop fishing for pollock and may lease their remaining pollock to another coop (inter-cooperative transfer) within their sector for that year, or purchase salmon bycatch from other cooperatives.

Further refinement of alternatives will occur at the February Council meeting. At that time, the Council will review candidate closure areas for incorporation into the alternatives. The Council will also receive information from staff on monitoring and enforcement considerations with the current suite of alternatives and additional information as necessary to assist the Council in further refining alternatives at that meeting. The analysis will be analyzed within an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and as such, NMFS drafted a Notice of Intent (NOI) for Council review at the December meeting. The Council reviewed and approved the NOI. Once the NOI is published the scoping period for the EIS will begin and will continue through the February Council meeting. Information on submitting written comments on the range of alternatives and issues to be analyzed in the EIS is contained in the NOI. Refinement of alternatives is scheduled for the February Council meeting. A preliminary analysis is scheduled for the April meeting and an initial review draft of the full EIS is scheduled for June 2008. The full Council motion as well as additional information on salmon bycatch can be found on the Council website. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Charter Halibut

The Council adopted final alternatives for analysis for an interim solution for charter halibut management. Alternative 1 is the status quo. Alternative 2 includes the following options for initial allocation: (1) four suboptions based on fixed percentages; (2) three suboptions based on fixed pounds, and (3) three suboptions based on 50% fixed percentages/50% fixed pounds. Exceeding the initial allocation would not close the charter halibut fishery, but trigger an analysis to amend Federal regulations to implement appropriate measures to reduce charter halibut harvests to the allocation. The Council would select from among numerous management tools that have been previously analyzed. While this delayed feedback regulatory process is the same as under the current Guideline Harvest Level program, Alternative 2 includes a unique element that would allow the use of commercial halibut IFQs by both (future) business and community charter halibut limited entry permit holders (either IFQs they hold because they meet eligibility requirements to hold commercial halibut quota shares or those they lease from commercial halibut QS holders) to provide anglers with additional harvesting opportunities above the initial allocation and avoid additional regulatory restrictions. The use of commercial IFQs in the charter sector may be subject to numerous limitations. Recordkeeping and reporting requirements for the charter halibut that would be harvested by the use of commercial halibut IFQs will be identified by the management agencies. The Council has scheduled initial review of the analysis in April 2008. The Council scheduled final action in October 2008, so as not to select its preferred alternative during the peak of the charter halibut season at its June meeting. The Council's motion is posted on the Council's website www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc.

The Council also received an update from its Charter Stakeholder Committee on long-term management alternatives (see Stakeholder Committee website). The committee recommended tabling those alternatives until after the Council has selected its preferred alternative for an allocation split between the charter and commercial halibut sectors.

NMFS staff updated the Council on the timeline for implementation of the charter halibut limited entry (moratorium) program. If approved by the Secretary, qualification criteria for a business operator to receive a permit would require a minimum of 5 bottomfish trips reported to ADF&G on State logbooks during 2004 or 2005 and the year prior to implementation. NMFS projects that 2008 would be the projected "year prior to implementation," 2009 is the projected year of implementation, 2010 is projected to be the first year that permits will be required to participate in the charter halibut fisheries in Areas 2C and 3A. Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Crab Overfishing Definitions

The Council took final action on Amendment 24 to the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab FMP to revise overfishing definitions for FMP crab stocks. The BSAI crab FMP establishes a State/Federal cooperative management regime that defers crab fisheries management to the State of Alaska with Federal oversight. The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that FMPs specify objective and measurable criteria for identifying when the fishery is overfished (with an analysis of how the criteria were determined and the relationship of the criteria to the reproductive potential of stock).

The Council's preferred alternative includes the selection of alternative 2 (a five-tier system), option 2 (OFLs reviewed by the Council) and option A (removal of 12 FMP stocks). The proposed tier system is structured based upon the availability of information for a given stock, and once a stock is assigned to tiers accordingly, this tier then determines how the OFL is calculated. Annual determination of overfishing would occur by comparison of the OFL as calculated for all catch (retained and discard losses) with the total catch for the same time period. This total catch would include all fishery removals for those stocks where non-target fishery removal data are available. For those stocks where only retained catch information is available, the OFL would be estimated for the retained catch portion only, with the corresponding overfishing comparison on the retained catch only. The overfished criterion is expressed in terms of annual estimates of biomass (in mature male biomass or MMB) compared to the established minimum stock size threshold (MSST). For stocks where MSST (or proxies) are defined, if the MMB drops below the MSST (or proxy thereof) then the stock is considered to be overfished.

The timing of OFL determination under option 2 begins with the Spring Crab Plan Team (CPT) meeting. The CPT will review model parameter choices by the stock assessment authors and resultant tier assignments and make recommendations to the SSC. In June, the SSC will recommend the parameters and tier assignments to be utilized in the OFL calculation simulations. The process of OFL determination and stock status determination varies depending on a stock's tier (and subsequent information availability).

The model simulations for OFL and MSST setting will be conducted after obtaining the most recent survey results from the NMFS summer trawl survey. The OFL will be set and involve the incorporation of new survey data to determine stock status level for the OFL calculation. Therefore, while the tier assignments and many of the parameters will be established following the June SSC review, OFLs will not be calculated until the survey results are available in late August. Model structure would not be changed in the interim. Following the incorporation of survey results, assessment authors will calculate the OFLs and MSSTs. NMFS will determine the status of the stocks relative to the MSSTs. The CPT will

review the survey data, the OFLs, and the status of the stocks at its September meeting when it prepares the SAFE report. The State will set the TACs on October 1, constrained by the OFLs. The CPT will then report the OFLs and TACs to the Council at the October Council meeting in conjunction with the presentation on the status of stocks. Once the fisheries are closed and catch data is available, overfishing will be determined for that crab fishing year. This new OFL setting process may begin as soon as Spring 2008. Twelve stocks are also removed from the FMP under this amendment with full management authority thereby turned over to the State of Alaska. These stocks are all minor stocks with either no directed fishery or the majority of catch occurring in state waters. The full analysis for Amendment 24 is available on the Council website. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

GOA Sideboards

At the December 2007 meeting the Council was presented a revised discussion paper on GOA sideboards associated with American Fisheries Act (AFA), Crab Rationalization Program, Rockfish Pilot Program, and Amendment 80 Cooperative Program. At the meeting, the Council requested staff initiate regulatory actions to address several sideboard issues:

- Exempt non-AFA Pacific cod sideboarded crab vessels from GOA Pacific cod sideboards on November 1, if the B season Pacific cod in WGOA and CGOA directed fisheries will not be fully harvested;
- Change the GOA Pacific cod sideboard exemption qualifications for non-AFA crab vessels;
- Exempt qualified non-AFA crab vessels from GOA pollock sideboards;
- Adjust the Amendment 80 third season deep-water halibut PSC sideboard limit to account for halibut usage by rockfish pilot program catcher processors that join the limited access and opt-out fisheries;
- Exempt catcher processors that participate in the rockfish pilot program and also belong to a cooperative in the BSAI under Amendment 80 from the July 1–July 14 stand in the BSAI; and
- Change the GOA Pacific cod and pollock sideboards limits for the AFA CV fleet.

The analyses for these actions are scheduled for initial review at the Council's April and June 2008 meeting. The December 2007 Council motion is available on the Council's website. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

BSAI Crab Rationalization

At its December meeting, the Council took up the following issues in the crab rationalization program:

- A preliminary review of an analysis to modify the active participation requirements for the acquisition and use of captain and crew shares (C shares),
- Final action to exempt C share IFQ from 90/10 A share/B share split,
- Final action to exempt certain custom processing from the processor share cap,
- Final action to allow for post-delivery transfers of individual fishing quota, and
- A review of the outline for the 3-year preliminary program review and the purpose and need statement concerning a potential action to modifying the program structure (including modification of the 90/10 A share/B share split).

After reviewing the preliminary analysis of alternative to modify C share active participation requirements, the Council chose to modify the provisions under consideration to establish separate (and possibly complementary) provisions governing (1) eligibility of C QS share holders to receive IFQ allocations, and (2) required divestiture of C share QS. Under the first of these provisions, the Council modified the provision for withholding IFQ allocations to consider withholding IFQ allocations from persons who (1) have not participated as captain or crew in any of the fisheries governed by the rationalization program for three consecutive years preceding the application for IFQ, and (2) persons who have less than 30 days of participation as captain or crew in a State of Alaska or federal fishery during the three years preceding the IFQ application. The Council also modified the provision requiring divestiture of C share QS, to require that divestiture after five years of failing to participation as captain or crew in the rationalized fisheries. The Council chose not to modify provisions under consideration to allow persons displaced from the crab fishery to acquire C shares for a transitional period.

In a related motion, the Council requested staff to prepare a discussion paper for review at the February 2007 meeting examining options defining eligibility for the entry level loan program to acquire harvest shares in the crab program. The Council's motion requests staff to examine various active participation requirements, borrowing limits, and share holdings thresholds.

On a second issue, the Council elected to indefinitely exempt C shares from the 90/10 A share/B share split. Under that split, 90% of the C share IFQ would be subject to the IPQ and regionalization landing requirements. Those landing requirements were scheduled to apply to C shares beginning in July of 2008. The Council action removes any regional and IPQ landing requirements from C shares indefinitely.

The third issue addressed by the Council was the exemption of certain custom processing from processing share use caps. Under the Council action, all processing share holdings would remain subject to the cap, but for qualified custom processing only those share holdings would count toward a facility owner's processing

share cap. The exemption would apply to custom processing in the following fisheries and regions:

- North region of the Bering Sea C. opilio fishery (from the MSA reauthorization – not decided by the Council)
- Western Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery (only West designated or Undesignated shares processed in the West region),
- Western Aleutian Islands red king crab fishery,
- Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery,
- St. Matthew Island blue king crab fishery, and
- Pribilof Islands red and blue king crab fishery.

In general, to qualify for the exemption the custom processing would be required to take place at a shore plant, or on a floating processor that is moored at a dock or docking facilities (e.g. dolphins, permanent mooring buoy) in a harbor in a community that is a first or second class city or home rule city. An exception for the community of Atka is included to allow the exemption at a floating processor anchored within the municipal boundary. To ensure adequate processing competition, the Council included a cap that would apply outside of the West region, limiting processing at any single facility to 60% of the IPQ in the Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery or the Western Aleutian Islands red king crab fishery. As a part of this action, the Council also adopted a provision that would exempt custom processing of shares currently or formerly subject to a right of first refusal that have been transferred from the initial recipient of those shares, provided that custom processing is undertaken in the community of origin. In all cases, the shares would count toward the use cap of the share holder.

The fourth issue considered by the Council was an amendment to allow for the post-delivery transfer of IFQ to cover overages. The Council selected a preferred alternative for this action that places few limits on the use of post-delivery transfers. Under that preferred alternative, the number and size of transfers would not be limited. Transfers of any share type (A share IFQ/B share IFQ/C share IFQ/IPQ) would be permitted, but only to address overages. All transfers would be required to be completed by the end of the crab fishing year (June 30).

The Council also received a report on the development of the three-year review of the crab rationalization program and the purpose and need statement for modification of the program (which could include revision of the A share/B share split from the current 90/10 split). On reviewing the proposed outline, the Council made several suggestions and clarifications to ensure that the analysis would adequately explore all effects of the program, including effects of the 90/10 split and the arbitration system, effects on communities and crew, effects of community investment, effects of vertical integration, and the share prices under the program. The Council elected to take no action at this time to revise its purpose and need statement, but chose to request the newly reconstituted crab advisory committee to propose possible revisions to that purpose and need statement and alternatives to modify the rationalization program. That committee is scheduled to meet on December 17-18 and will report to the Council at the February 2008 meeting. The Council's motions can be viewed in their entirety at its website. Staff contact is Mark Fina.

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 12/14/07

February 4, 2008 Seattle, WA	March 31, 2008 Anchorage, AK	June 2, 2008 Kodiak, AK
<p>Review proposed rule for ACL Guidelines (T) Adak Kanaga Sound NMFS PR Review: Report AI pollock EFP: Report</p> <p>AFA Coop Reports: Review</p> <p>GOA State Mgmt P. cod jig fishery: Discussion paper</p> <p>CGOA Rockfish Coop Reports: Review GOA Rockfish Pilot Program Review: Review Outline AM 80 Post Delivery Transfers/rollovers: Final Action Trawl LLP Recency: Initial Review</p> <p>BSAI Crab data collection quality and confidentiality: Report BSAI Crab Committee: Report BSAI Crab Arbitrator Immunity: Discussion paper (T) BSAI Crab Arbitration Regulations: Initial Review (T) BSAI Crab 'C' Share active participation: Initial Review (T) St George protection measures: Initial Review (T) BSAI Crab Loan Eligibility: Discussion Paper</p> <p>Social and Economic Data Committee: Report (T)</p> <p>Observer Program Reg. Package: Initial Review BSAI Salmon Excluder EFP: Review BSAI Salmon Bycatch Analysis: Refine Alternatives AI FEP Implementation: Ecosystem Committee report Arctic FMP: Preliminary Review Evaluation of HAPC Criteria: SSC Review (T) VMS Exemption for Dinglebar Gear: Discussion paper</p> <p>4E Seabird Avoidance Measures: Initial Review</p> <p>GOA OSpecies ABC/OFL Specifications: Initial Review Other Species Mgmt: Review discussion paper BS and AI P. cod area split: Report</p> <p>PSEIS Outreach Plan: Review Stakeholder Participation Principles: Review</p>	<p>Joint Meeting with BOF</p> <p>SSL EIS NOI: Review and Comment SSL Recovery Plan: Review Final Plan SSLMC Report on proposals</p> <p>GOA fixed gear LLP recency: Initial Review GOA P cod sector split: Initial Review GOA sideboards for BSAI crab vessels: Initial Review</p> <p>Trawl LLP Recency: Final Action Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Constructive Loss: Initial Review</p> <p>BSAI Crab Arbitrator Immunity: Initial Review (T) BSAI Crab Arbitration Regulations: Final Action (T) BSAI Crab 'C' Share active participation: Final Action (T) St George protection measures: Final Action (T)</p> <p>Charter Halibut Allocation/Reallocation: Initial Review Charter Halibut Logbook Program: Report; Action as nec. Charter Halibut Longterm: Committee Report</p> <p>Halibut Subsistence Rural Definition: Initial Review</p> <p>Observer Program Reg. Package: Final Action</p> <p>BSAI Salmon Bycatch EIS: Preliminary Review GOA Crab and Salmon Bycatch: Discussion paper Arctic FMP: Initial Review</p> <p>VMS Exemption for Dinglebar Gear: Initial Review</p> <p>4E Seabird Avoidance Measures: Final Action</p> <p>GOA OSpecies ABC/OFL Specifications: Final Action Other Species Mgmt: Review Progress; Action as nec. CDQ Program: Update on Oversight Regulations</p> <p>Scallop SAFE: Review and Approve</p>	<p>SSL draft status quo BiOp: Review and Comment SSLMC Report on proposals</p> <p>GOA Rockfish Pilot Program Review: Report</p> <p>GOA fixed gear LLP recency: Final Action GOA P cod sector split: Final Action GOA sideboards for BSAI crab vessels: Final Action GOA sideboards re Am 80 PSC: Initial Review GOA sideboards re GOA rockfish: Initial Review GOA sideboards for AFA CVs: Initial Review Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Constructive Loss: Final Action</p> <p>BSAI Crab Arbitrator Immunity: Final Action (T)</p> <p>Halibut Subsistence Rural Definition: Final Action</p> <p>BSAI Salmon Bycatch EIS: Initial Review</p> <p>Arctic FMP: Final Action</p> <p>VMS Exemption for Dinglebar Gear: Final Action</p> <p>PSEIS Priorities: Review workplan</p>

AI - Aleutian Islands
GOA - Gulf of Alaska
SSL - Steller Sea Lion
BOF - Board of Fisheries
FEP - Fishery Ecosystem Plan
CDQ - Community Development Quota
VMS - Vessel Monitoring System
NOI - Notice of Intent
(T) Tentatively scheduled

TAC - Total Allowable Catch
BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
GHL - Guideline Harvest Level
EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
LLP - License Limitation Program
SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
PSC - Prohibited Species Catch
HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

February 4 - , 2008 in Seattle
March 31 - , 2008 in Anchorage
June 2 - , 2008 in Kodiak
September 29- , 2008 in Anchorage
December 8- , 2008 in Anchorage
February 2 - , 2009 in Seattle
March 30 - , 2009 in Anchorage

NPFMC recommended GOA TACs for 2008 and 2009 and SSC recommendations for OFLs and ABCs

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2007				2008			2009			
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC	
Pollock	W (61)		25,012	25,012	18,012		17,602	17,602		23,700	23,700	
	C (62)		20,890	20,890	19,366		19,181	19,181		25,821	25,821	
	C (63)		14,850	14,850	14,315		13,640	13,640		18,367	18,367	
	WYAK		1,398	1,398	86		1,517	1,517		2,042	2,042	
	Subtotal		87,220	62,150	62,150	51,779	72,110	51,940	51,940	95,940	69,930	69,930
	EYAK/SEO		8,209	6,157	6,157	0	11,040	8,240	8,240	11,040	8,240	8,240
	Total	95,429	68,307	68,307	51,779	83,150	60,180	60,180	106,980	78,170	78,170	
Pacific Cod	W		26,855	20,141	13,227		25,932	19,449		25,932	19,449	
	C		37,873	28,405	23,404		37,901	28,426		37,901	28,426	
	E		4,131	3,718	65		2,660	2,394		2,660	2,394	
	Total		97,600	68,859	52,264	36,696	88,660	66,493	50,269	88,660	66,493	50,269
Sablefish	W		2,470	2,470	1,996		1,890	1,890		1,727	1,727	
	C		6,190	6,190	5,536		5,500	5,500		5,026	5,026	
	WYAK		2,280	2,280	1,769		1,950	1,950		1,782	1,782	
	SEO		3,370	3,370	3,238		3,390	3,390		3,098	3,098	
	Total		16,906	14,310	14,310	12,539	15,040	12,730	12,730	12,924	11,633	11,633
Deep-water flatfish	W		420	420	8		690	690		707	707	
	C		4,163	4,163	247		6,721	6,721		6,927	6,927	
	WYAK		2,677	2,677	2		965	965		995	995	
	EYAK/SEO		1,447	1,447	10		527	527		543	543	
	Total		10,431	8,707	8,707	267	11,343	8,903	8,903	11,583	9,172	9,172
Shallow-water flatfish	W		24,720	4,500	281		26,360	4,500		26,360	4,500	
	C		24,258	13,000	7,761		29,873	13,000		29,873	13,000	
	WYAK		628	628	0		3,333	3,333		3,333	3,333	
	EYAK/SEO		1,844	1,844	0		1,423	1,423		1,423	1,423	
	Total		62,418	51,450	19,972	8,042	74,364	60,989	22,256	74,364	60,989	22,256
Rex sole	W		1,147	1,147	413		1,022	1,022		948	948	
	C		5,446	5,446	2,432		6,731	6,731		6,241	6,241	
	WYAK		1,037	1,037	1		520	520		483	483	
	EYAK/SEO		1,470	1,470	0		859	859		796	796	
	Total		11,900	9,100	9,100	2,846	11,933	9,132	9,132	11,065	8,468	8,468
Arrowtooth flounder	W		20,852	8,000	3,134		30,817	8,000		31,080	8,000	
	C		139,582	30,000	21,808		167,936	30,000		169,371	30,000	
	WYAK		16,507	2,500	63		15,245	2,500		15,375	2,500	
	EYAK/SEO		7,067	2,500	68		12,472	2,500		12,579	2,500	
	Total		214,828	184,008	43,000	25,073	266,914	226,470	43,000	269,237	228,405	43,000
Flathead sole	W		10,908	2,000	696		12,507	2,000		13,001	2,000	
	C		26,054	5,000	2,407		28,174	5,000		29,289	5,000	
	WYAK		2,091	2,091	2		3,420	3,420		3,556	3,556	
	EYAK/SEO		57	57	0		634	634		659	659	
	Total		48,658	39,110	9,148	3,105	55,787	44,735	11,054	57,962	46,505	11,215

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2007				2008			2009		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific ocean perch	W	4,976	4,244	4,244	4,428	4,376	3,686	3,686	4,397	3,704	3,704
	C	8,922	7,612	7,612	7,125	9,717	8,185	8,185	9,764	8,225	8,225
	WYAK		1,140	1,140	1,242		1,100	1,100		1,105	1,105
	SEO	3,260	1,640	1,640	0		2,028	2,028		2,038	2,038
	E(subtotal)	3,260	2,780	2,780	1,242	3,714	3,128	3,128	3,732	3,143	3,143
Total		17,158	14,636	14,636	12,795	17,807	14,999	14,999	17,893	15,072	15,072
Northern rockfish ³	W		1,439	1,439	1,107		2,141	2,141		2,047	2,047
	C		3,499	3,499	2,982		2,408	2,408		2,302	2,302
	E		0	0	0		0	0		0	0
	Total		5,890	4,938	4,938	4,089	5,430	4,549	4,549	5,120	4,349
Rougheye	W		136	136	71		125	125		124	124
	C		611	611	175		834	834		830	830
	E		241	241	153		327	327		325	325
	Total		1,148	988	988	399	1,548	1,286	1,286	1,540	1,279
Shortraker	W		153	153	193		120	120		120	120
	C		353	353	155		315	315		315	315
	E		337	337	244		463	463		463	463
	Total		1,124	843	843	592	1,197	898	898	1,197	898
Other slope ³	W		577	577	252		357	357		357	357
	C		386	386	319		569	569		569	569
	WYAK		319	319	49		604	604		604	604
	EYAK/SEO		2,872	200	45		2,767	200		2,767	200
	Total		5,394	4,154	1,482	665	5,624	4,297	1,730	5,624	4,297
Pelagic shelf rockfish	W		1,466	1,466	595		1,003	1,003		986	986
	C		3,325	3,325	2,440		3,626	3,626		3,566	3,566
	WYAK		307	307	293		251	251		247	247
	EYAK/SEO		444	444	1		347	347		341	341
	Total		6,458	5,542	5,542	3,329	6,400	5,227	5,227	6,294	5,140
Demersal rockfish	Total	650	410		178	611	382	382	611	382	382
Thornyhead	W		513	513	338		267	267		267	267
	C		989	989	247		860	860		860	860
	E		707	707	184		783	783		783	783
	Total		2,945	2,209	2,209	769	2,540	1,910	1,910	2,540	1,910
Atka mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700	1,500	1,441	6,200	4,700	1,500	6,200	4,700	1,500
Big skate	W		695	695	68		632	632		632	632
	C		2,250	2,250	1,218		2,065	2,065		2,065	2,065
	E		599	599	8		633	633		633	633
	Total		4,726	3,544	3,544	1,294	4,439	3,330	3,330	4,439	3,330
Longnose skate	W		65	65	46		78	78		78	78
	C		1,969	1,969	814		2,041	2,041		2,041	2,041
	E		861	861	240		768	768		768	768
	Total		3,860	2,895	2,895	1,100	3,849	2,887	2,887	3,849	2,887
Other skates	Total	2,156	1,617	1,617	1,104	2,806	2,104	2,104	2,806	2,104	2,104
Other Species	Total	NA	NA	4,500	2,695		4,500				4,500
Total		611,153	490,327	269,912	170,797	665,642	536,201	262,826	690,888	556,183	279,264

NPFMC Recommendations for Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Groundfish OFL, ABC, and TAC for the 2008-2009 Fisheries

Species	Area	2007				2008			2009		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	1,640,000	1,394,000	1,394,000	1,350,000	1,440,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,320,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
	Aleutian Islands	54,500	44,500	19,000	2,488	34,000	28,200	19,000	26,100	22,700	19,000
	Bogoslof	48,000	5,220	10	0	58,400	7,970	10	58,400	7,970	10
Pacific cod	BSAI	207,000	176,000	170,720	172,655	207,000	176,000	170,720	207,000	176,000	170,720
Sablefish	BS	3,520	2,980	2,980	1,090	3,380	2,860	2,860	2,910	2,610	2,610
	AI	3,320	2,810	2,810	1,080	2,890	2,440	2,440	2,510	2,230	2,230
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	240,000	225,000	136,000	119,332	265,000	248,000	225,000	296,000	276,000	205,000
Greenland turbot	Total	15,600	2,440	2,440	1,946	15,600	2,540	2,540	16,000	2,540	2,540
	BS		1,680	1,680	1,435		1,750	1,750		1,750	1,750
	AI		760	760	511		790	790		790	790
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	193,000	158,000	20,000	11,700	297,000	244,000	75,000	300,000	246,000	75,000
Northern rock sole	BSAI	200,000	198,000	55,000	37,013	304,000	301,000	75,000	379,000	375,000	75,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	95,300	79,200	30,000	19,500	86,000	71,700	50,000	83,700	69,700	50,000
Alaska plaice	BSAI	241,000	190,000	25,000	19,411	248,000	194,000	50,000	277,000	217,000	50,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	28,500	21,400	10,000	5,840	28,800	21,600	21,600	28,800	21,600	21,600
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	26,100	21,900	19,900	17,800	25,700	21,700	21,700	25,400	21,300	21,300
	BS		4,160	2,160	811		4,200	4,200		4,100	4,100
	AI total		17,740	17,740	16,960		17,500	17,500		17,200	17,200
	WAI		7,720	7,720	7,421		7,610	7,610		7,490	7,490
	CAI		5,050	5,050	4,423		4,990	4,990		4,900	4,900
	EAI		4,970	4,970	5,116		4,900	4,900		4,810	4,810
Northern rockfish	BSAI	9,750	8,190	8,190	3,940	9,740	8,180	8,180	9,680	8,130	8,130
Shortraker	BSAI	564	424	424	318	564	424	424	564	424	424
Rougheye	BSAI	269	202	202	163	269	202	202	269	202	202
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,330	999	999	635	1,330	999	999	1,290	968	968
	BS		414	414	205		414	414		414	414
	AI		585	585	430		585	585		554	554
Atka mackerel	Total	86,900	74,000	63,000	56,620	71,400	60,700	60,700	50,600	47,500	47,500
	WAI		20,600	9,600			16,900	16,900		13,200	13,200
	CAI		29,600	29,600			24,300	24,300		19,000	19,000
	EAI/BS		23,800	23,800			19,500	19,500		15,300	15,300
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	1,970	1,190	2,620	1,970	1,970	2,620	1,970	1,970
Other species	BSAI	91,700	68,800	37,400	26,500	104,000	78,100	50,000	104,000	78,100	60,000
Total	BSAI	3,188,973	2,676,035	2,000,045	1,849,221	3,205,693	2,472,585	1,838,345	3,191,843	2,577,944	1,814,204

**2007 catch is through October 27, 2007 (includes CDQ and state water harvests).



North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W 4th Ste 306
Anchorage, AK 99501

PRESRT STD
US Postage
PAID
Anchorage, AK
Permit #69

NPFMC Tentative Meeting Dates for 2008-2009*

	February Week of/ Location	April Week of/ Location	June Week of/ Location	October Week of/ Location	December Week of/ Location
2008	4/Seattle Marriott Renaissance	March 31/ Anchorage Hilton	2/Kodiak	September 29/ Anchorage Sheraton	8/Anchorage Hilton
2009	2/Seattle	March 30/ Anchorage Hilton	June 1/Dutch Harbor	TBA	TBA

*Meeting dates subject to change depending on availability of meeting space. Any changes will be published in the Council's newsletter.