

The Wheel Watch

a newsletter of the

Fishing Vessel Owners= Association
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Thank you for your support!

Dear Longliner:

This newsletter will bring you up-to-date on events at the North Pacific Council, the Pacific Council, IPHC, Washington, D.C., and markets. Have a safe season!

****NPFMC****

Congratulations to Mr. Duncan Fields of Kodiak and Mr. Sam Cotton of Halibut Cove on their re-appointments to the NPFMC.

Observer Program. The Council could choose to take final action at the October 4th Anchorage meeting. The Council seems to be focused on Alternative 3 as a possible final action. This proposal would put all halibut and groundfish operations currently with less than 100% observer coverage in one group. Each vessel's landings would be assessed a landing fee of not more than 2% of your exvessel value. In theory, 1% from the vessel owner and 1% from the processor. However, the Council added the following option to be analyzed for October:

Option 1: For halibut fishery landings and landings by vessels less than [40', 50', or 60' LOA] participating in Groundfish fisheries (fisheries and sectors not currently subject to the observer program), vessels and shoreside processors would pay one-half the ex-vessel value based fee established under the alternative.

In other words, if you had an over 60', 50', or 40' vessel (whichever the Council chooses), you would pay 2%. The undersized vessel (less than 40' or 50' or 60') pays 1%. Should the Council take such an arbitrary action against boats greater than 40 feet or greater than 50 feet, etc.? The money collected will likely only fund enough for an ivory tower for the observer manager with no observers. The money collected at 2%, paid by everyone, barely covers existing coverage levels. The Council has sent a letter to Secretary Locke requesting additional funds.

Observer Placement: There are two placement concepts. The first would be for vessels under 60' in length. A certain number of vessels would be randomly picked before the season starts and assigned coverage at a time the vessel operator is planning to fish. (Time and place would not be dictated by NMFS.) This could be vessels between 50' and 60', for example. This would be similar to the observer program in the Pacific Council. The second group, over 60' would be required to call in no later than 72 hours before a halibut or groundfish landing. You could call earlier if you so chose. When you log into NMFS at that time, they would randomly pick you or not, for coverage on your next trip.

If the Council did vote affirmatively on some new program at the October meeting, it would not be until 2014 that the amended program would be up and running. The new coverage provisions will subject halibut vessels and the <60' trawl, pot, and longline boats to observers and hopefully a more legitimate coverage on some of the over 60' trawl fleet out of Kodiak.

FVOA has requested the Council and NMFS to provide funds to supplement the current program in order to prop up the weak spots of the current program between now and 2014. Neither NMFS nor the Council has acted on our requests to this date.

Rockfish Catch Share Program. The Council took final action on the Rockfish Catch Share

Program, which includes target catches on Pacific Ocean Perch, Northern rockfish and Pelagic Shelf rockfish. The program allocates Pacific cod, Sablefish (a percentage long ago allocated to the trawl fleet), Thorny heads and Halibut as non-retainable PSC to the program.

The Council's action would establish cooperative programs for both catcher processors and catcher vessels. Licenses qualifying for the program would annually form cooperatives that would receive allocations based on the catch histories of members. Catcher vessel cooperatives would be required to associate with a shore-based processor in Kodiak, but members may change cooperatives and cooperative may change processor associations annually without penalty. All deliveries of catcher vessel catch are required to be made in Kodiak.

The processors had requested a percentage of the quota share, similar to the 20% given to the processors in the Pacific council for Whiting. The NPFMC rejected that request.

***The council took some positive steps on bycatch reduction.** The Council reduced the rock fish program's halibut PSC Cap by 12.5%. This amount is 27 Mt from their original 216 Mt. PSC allocation. This reduces the overall trawl GOA halibut cap from 2000 Mt to 1973 Mt. This program has run for several years as a pilot program and they have not used all their halibut PSC, so the Council voted that any halibut not used by November of each year, only 45% could be used for other trawl activities. This will increase the halibut savings. This will save additionally 45 Mt to 50 Mt. for a net gain of about 70 Mt. The Rockfish Program has 100% observer coverage.

This program was given a 10 year sunset. This raises concerns of how much will a boat owner upgrade a vessel if he/she does not know if they get the fish after 10 years. It raises interesting financing questions. Will a bank finance for 10 years or not at all during the last several years of the program? Would you buy rockfish quota with only 2 years left on this program? Would crew wages be minimized by forcing all capital expenditures into a 10-year or less window? All of these questions will be looked at in ten years.

****Pacific Council****

IFQ Trawl Program. The public comment period ended on July 12th and final action by Secretary Gary Locke is expected on August 10, 2011. We believe it will be approved in total. There was a late push by Pacific Choice Seafoods to stop the implementation of the non-whiting portion of this program. The betting line is it will be approved.

Tentative 2011 and 2012 fixed tier limits for Sablefish.

2011

Tier 1	49,268
Tier 2	22,394
Tier 3	12,797

2012

Tier 1	47,757
Tier 2	21,708
Tier 3	12,404

For 2011 and 2012, the allowable catch of Yelloweye is anticipated to be 17 Mt. If this remains the situation, the depth restrictions should not change for 2011 and 2012.

IPHC

The current trawl mortality CAP in the Bering Sea will be 3475 Mt by 2012 and it is 1973 Mt in the Gulf of Alaska. The following are the official mortality numbers from 2007 and 2008, which are the most current years for complete information. There is concern that due to the lack of adequate observer coverage in the GOA, those numbers are low. The BSAI numbers reflect mostly 100 and 200% observer coverage levels.

Table 12. Prohibited species bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska by species, gear, and groundfish target fishery, 2007-08 (Metric tons (t) or number in 1,000s).

		Halibut mortality (t)	Herring (t)	Red king crab (1,000s)	Other king crab (1,000s)	Bairdi (1,000s)	Other tanner (1,000s)	Chinook (1,000s)	Other salmon (1,000s)	
2007 Gear/ Target	Hook & Line	Sablefish	n.a.	.0	.0	.1	.2	.0	.0	.1
		Pacific cod	n.a.	.0	.0	.0	.1	.0	.0	.0
		Total	n.a.	.0	.0	.1	.3	.0	.0	.1
	Pot	Pacific cod	18.9	.0	.0	.0	292.4	5.0	.0	.0
		Total	18.9	.0	.0	.0	292.4	5.0	.0	.0
	Trawl	Pollock, bottom	79.3	9.3	.0	.0	19.4	.0	8.2	.2
		Pollock, pelagic	.6	10.2	.0	.0	.0	.0	26.8	.7
		Sablefish	4.3	.0	.0	.0	.2	.0	.0	.0
		Pacific cod	474.2	.0	.0	.0	15.8	.0	.6	.1
		Arrowtooth	442.3	.0	.0	.0	44.5	.0	1.5	.7
		Flathd. sole	16.5	.0	.0	.0	.3	.0	.0	.0
		Rex sole	132.2	.0	.0	.0	45.3	.0	.7	.7
		Flat deep	.3	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Flat shallow	707.5	.1	.0	.0	78.8	2.0	.4	.2
		Rockfish	91.7	.0	.0	.1	.2	.0	2.0	.7
Atka mack.		.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	
Total		1,949.0	19.7	.0	.1	204.4	2.0	40.4	3.5	
All gear	Total	1,967.9	19.7	.0	.2	497.1	7.0	40.4	3.6	

Table 12. Continued.

		Halibut mortality (t)	Herring (t)	Red king crab (1,000s)	Other king crab (1,000s)	Bairdi (1,000s)	Other tanner (1,000s)	Chinook (1,000s)	Other salmon (1,000s)	
2008 Gear/ Target	Hook & Line	Sablefish	n.a.	.0	.0	.1	.0	.0	.2	
		Pacific cod	n.a.	.0	.0	.0	1.6	.0	.0	
		Total	n.a.	.0	.0	.1	1.6	.0	.0	
	Pot	Pacific cod	30.1	.0	.0	.0	240.0	.3	.0	.0
		Total	30.1	.0	.0	.0	240.0	.3	.0	.0
	Trawl	Pollock, bottom	69.4	.0	.0	.0	.3	.0	5.2	.1
		Pollock, pelagic	1.9	.4	.0	.0	.1	.0	5.2	.7
		Sablefish	4.0	.0	.0	.0	.2	.0	.0	.0
		Pacific cod	576.9	.0	.0	.0	18.4	.0	.4	.0
		Arrowtooth	529.0	.0	.0	.0	34.4	.2	2.6	.0
		Flathd. sole	57.6	.0	.0	.0	6.8	.3	.0	.0
		Rex sole	109.3	.0	.0	.0	48.2	.0	.0	.1
		Flat shallow	496.7	.1	.0	.0	23.1	1.2	.2	.6
		Rockfish	107.1	.0	.0	.3	.1	.0	2.3	.5
		Total	1,951.9	.6	.0	.4	131.5	1.7	15.9	2.2
All gear		Total	1,981.9	.6	.0	.4	373.1	2.0	15.9	2.4

Notes: These estimates include only catches counted against federal TACs. Totals may include additional categories. The target, calculated by AFSC staff, is based on processor, week, processing mode, NMFS area and gear. The estimates of halibut bycatch mortality are based on the International Pacific Halibut Commission discard mortality rates that were used for in-season management. The halibut Individual Fishing Quota program allows retention of halibut in the hook-and-line groundfish fisheries, making true halibut bycatch numbers unavailable. Therefore, estimates of halibut bycatch mortality are not included in this table for those fisheries.

Source: Catch Accounting System, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 15700, Seattle, WA 98115-0070.

Table 13. Prohibited species bycatch in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands by species, gear, and groundfish target fishery, 2007-08 (Metric tons (t) or number in 1,000s).

			Halibut mortality (t)	Herring (t)	Red king crab (1,000 s)	Other king crab (1,000 s)	Bairdi (1,000 s)	Other tanner (1,000 s)	Chinook (1,000 s)	Other salmon (1,000 s)
2007 Gear/Target	Hook & Line	Sablefish	n.a.	.0	.0	1.3	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Pacific cod	537.9	.0	7.6	.7	16.6	43.8	.1	.2
		Arrowtooth	1.1	.0	.0	.4	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Turbot	4.5	.0	.0	2.6	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Rockfish	.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Total	544.2	.0	7.7	5.2	16.6	43.9	.1	.2
	Pot	Sablefish	2.9	.0	.0	307.0	.3	.1	.0	.0
		Pacific cod	.8	.0	24.9	220.1	485.1	619.9	.0	.0
		Total	3.7	.0	24.9	527.1	485.4	620.0	.0	.0
	Trawl	Pollock, bottom	29.6	6.7	.0	.0	.6	.3	12.6	3.9
		Pollock, pelagic	263.0	338.3	.0	.0	.9	2.9	109.2	89.7
		Sablefish	.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Pacific cod	1,032.2	1.0	1.6	2.6	137.0	250.6	6.3	1.6
		Arrowtooth	24.6	.4	.0	.2	22.8	5.8	.1	.2
		Flathd. sole	306.6	1.9	.9	.0	144.2	267.2	.0	.0
		Rock sole	988.4	5.9	82.7	1.0	99.3	73.4	.9	.8
		Yellowfin	554.0	55.2	15.1	.4	332.4	1,221.7	.2	.1
		Flat, other	74.4	.0	.1	.0	4.6	.0	.0	.0
		Rockfish	17.4	.0	.2	3.0	.0	.1	.0	.0
		Atka mack.	201.0	.0	.4	1.5	.3	.0	.3	.7
Total		3,497.7	409.4	100.9	8.7	743.7	1,836.5	129.5	97.0	
All gear		Total	4,044.4	409.4	133.5	541.0	1,245.6	2,500.2	129.5	97.2

Table 13. Continued.

			Halibut mortality (t)	Herring (t)	Red king crab (1,000 s)	Other king crab (1,000 s)	Bairdi (1,000 s)	Other tanner (1,000 s)	Chinook (1,000 s)	Other salmon (1,000 s)
2008 Gear/Target	Hook & Line	Pollock, bottom	.2	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Sablefish	n.a.	.0	.0	.2	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Pacific cod	765.8	.3	5.6	7.6	27.1	77.8	.0	.1
		Turbot	1.7	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Total	769.2	.3	5.6	7.8	27.3	77.8	.0	.1
	Pot	Sablefish	1.8	.0	.4	200.3	.0	.2	.0	.0
		Pacific cod	5.5	.0	35.6	.1	834.5	284.6	.0	.0
		Total	7.3	.0	36.0	200.4	834.6	284.8	.0	.0
	Trawl	Pollock, bottom	49.5	3.1	.0	.0	.1	.1	1.7	1.8
		Pollock, pelagic	241.9	127.1	.0	.0	.8	4.9	18.7	13.3
		Sablefish	2.8	.0	.0	.0	.1	.1	.0	.0
		Pacific cod	346.1	.4	1.4	.0	37.6	22.9	2.0	.2
		Arrowtooth	138.7	2.0	.2	3.4	36.0	7.5	.0	.3
		Flathd. sole	236.5	1.2	3.2	1.0	116.8	117.3	.1	.1
		Rock sole	676.9	.5	45.7	.0	104.2	26.0	.1	.7
		Turbot	2.0	.0	.0	.1	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Yellowfin	1,015.0	81.7	37.8	.9	379.8	606.8	.1	.0
		Flat, other	15.1	.0	.0	.1	.7	.1	.0	.0
		Rockfish	44.6	.0	.2	3.3	.0	.0	.0	.0
		Atka mack.	68.5	.0	1.6	21.7	.1	.0	.3	.3
Total		2,840.2	216.2	90.3	30.6	677.3	803.1	23.0	16.7	
All gear	Total	3,615.3	216.4	131.9	238.8	1,538.7	1,157.0	23.0	16.8	

IPHC will be having a review of bycatch issues later this summer. The Council has GOA halibut PSC on their discussion list. The BSAI halibut trawl CAPs will be reduced by about 50 tons a year over the next several years.

****Markets****

Halibut. Halibut, in the ancient Druid language means “holy fish.” Yep, for this “holy fish” FVOA vessels received \$5.70 for 40↑, \$5.35 for 20-40’s, and \$4.90 for ↓20’s during the third week of July in Homer, Alaska. Supplies, I am told, are tight, even with prices at record levels.

**Individual fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings
For fishing year 2010**

Area	Species	Vessel Landings	Total Catch Pound	TAC		Percent Landed
				Allocation Pounds	Remaining Pounds	
2C	Halibut	948	2,833,238	4,400,000	1,566,762	64
3A	Halibut	1,297	12,513,438	19,990,000	7,476,562	63
3B	Halibut	391	4,947,078	9,900,000	4,952,922	50
4A	Halibut	73	727,214	2,330,000	1,602,786	31
4B	Halibut	32	395,442	1,728,000	1,332,558	23
4C	Halibut	16	55,012	812,500	757,488	7
4D	Halibut	21	635,786	1,137,500	501,714	56
Total		2,778	22,107,208	40,298,000	18,190,792	55

Sablefish. Sablefish, Wow! FVOA vessels received \$6.30, \$6.15, \$5.70, and \$5.20 in King Cove during late June. Blackcod prices in Seward during the same time were \$6.50 for 7-ups; \$6.25 for 5-7's; \$5.85 for 4-5's; \$5.60 for 3-4's; and \$5.00 for 2-3's.

**Individual fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings
For fishing year 2010**

Area	Species	Vessel Landings	Total Catch Pounds	TAC		Percent Landed
				Allocation Pounds	Remaining Pounds	
AI	Sablefish	52	1,213,129	2,738,113	1,524,984	44
BS	Sablefish	71	503,214	2,460,334	1,957,120	20
CG	Sablefish	432	6,407,989	7,954,197	1,546,208	81
SE	Sablefish	373	4,223,377	5,687,868	1,464,491	74
WG	Sablefish	74	1,379,137	2,927,709	1,548,572	47
WY	Sablefish	170	2,656,814	3,108,486	451,672	85
Total		1,172	16,383,660	24,876,707	8,493,047	66

Pacific cod. Before the GOA fisheries ended, Kodiak price was \$0.30/lb but dropped at the end of the season to \$0.25. Adak prices were \$0.25/lb with a split at 19 to 24 inch fish getting \$0.18/lb.

The European markets were hit with a late spring drop in the Euro vs. the dollar. It dropped 18% in three months earlier this spring. This has resulted in downward pressure on U.S. cod export prices. Lately, the Euro has had a positive bump up but not enough to compensate for the earlier drop. The Euro was \$1.49 on December 5th and \$1.21 by May. This is a 19% drop.

World cod volume has increased. Bering Sea Pacific cod is up 16%; Russian quotas are up 24%. Russian and U.S. cod productions have been about half of world productions which was 750,000 Mt in 2008. Atlantic harvest has been on the increase recently. Baltic cod will be up 15%. ... *Seafood International*

****Washington, D.C.****

H.R. 4213. This bill was being sponsored by Senators Murkowski and Begich. This bill is known as the “Western Alaska Community Development Organization’s Tax Relief Act.” This would exempt “all activities of the CDQ groups to be considered tax-exempt in the Bering Sea. So for the purchase of IFQs, fish companies in the Bering Sea, etc., the corporate income would be tax exempt. Currently, they don’t pay the 3% IFQ tax either. Does this put existing processing markets in the Bering Sea at such an economic disadvantage that it begins to restrict trade or be anti-trust in nature? If you think this is unfair for independent fishermen to fund the government and the CDQ companies not, let someone know or just let elected officials know we all want the same deal. It’s risky in the Bering Sea. Normal people should not go to the Bering Sea in the first place and if they do, they should not pay taxes on their income. By the way, APICDA has always paid taxes and Norton Sound currently does as well.

Senate passes Murkowski-Boxer Legislation to Extend Moratorium on Discharge Permits for Commercial Vessels. Legislation that would extend the current moratorium on a permit requirement for commercial and charter fishing vessels and other commercial vessels under 79 feet long, sponsored by U.S. Sens. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, and Barbara Box, D-California, passed the Senate tonight by unanimous consent. The bill would provide these commercial vessels a three-year moratorium extension from permits for discharges under the Clean Water Act.

Two years ago, in the 110th Congress, bipartisan legislation introduced by Murkowski was enacted to place a two-year moratorium on the permit requirement while the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Coast Guard were directed to conduct a study to evaluate the impacts of discharges incidental to the normal operation of such vessels. The results of that study will determine whether the discharges should be regulated by EPA through National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.

FVOA thanks Senator Murkowski for this extension but no thanks on H.R. 4213.

****Eat on the Wild Side****

Marine Stewardship Certification (MSC). Our five-year renewal review has begun. EOWS signed a contract with Scientific Certification Systems for both U.S. Halibut and Alaskan Sablefish. The cost will be approximately \$125,000.00. It should be completed by next spring 2011.

Mark Maunder. Through EOWS, we hired Dr. Mark Maunder to review the new Alaskan Sablefish model or models for 2011. This will be completed this fall at the November Plan Team meeting. It is uncertain how much of our recommendations will be added to the model. The sperm and killer whales interaction with the survey vessel is eroding the viability of the survey. An outside review team indicated the assessment authors need to account for whale interactions both on the impact of the survey and on commercial catches.

Maersk. Sealand has refused to ship unsustainable seafood products. Sealand said Chilean sea bass and Orange roughy are not welcome aboard. ...Intrafish.com

Dalhaize, parent of Hannafords, Food Lion, and other banners with 1600 U.S. stores, has told seafood suppliers that they have until March 2011 to document the sustainability of all products they sell to Dalhaize, after which time the company will not purchase seafood items that cannot be shown to be sustainable. ...Seafood.com

Tordenskjold. Through EOWS, we are funding a documentary of the old schooner fleet with Sabella & Associates. This documentary is centered on the Tordenskjold turning 100 years old in 2011 and the long sustainability of your fishery. We will hopefully finish shooting film in August and finish the project in February 2011.

****Second Watch****

Lawsuit #1. Pacific Choice Seafoods has been hit with an antitrust lawsuit. Mike Haglund is the attorney for the plaintiffs alleging intimidation and price manipulation. Pacific Choice Seafoods has denied the claims. Mike Haglund successfully sued Weyerhaeuser on antitrust issues in the past.

Lawsuit #2. In a Jones Act claim the 9th Circuit Court ruled that under general maritime law, a plaintiff may recover damages for emotional distress if the plaintiff was in a “zone of danger” from defendant’s negligent conduct, irrespective that the plaintiff did not actually witness injury to another.

This case arose in the circumstances of a flotilla of commercial salmon fishing boats operating in heavy fog off the coast of California. A commercial ship passed through the flotilla, narrowly missing collision with the plaintiff’s vessel, and subsequently collided with another vessel causing the death of the other vessel’s master. The plaintiff did not actually witness the collision.

Membership. For those of you who sign up as an Associate Member or a Sustaining Sponsor, the Association will provide a \$130 gift certificate to the restaurant of your choice. If you sign up a new member, we will make you the same offer.

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****Calendar of Events****

Sept. 11-16, 2010 Advisory Bodies may begin Thur, Sept. 9 Council session begins Sat. Sept. 11	PFMC meeting	Doubletree Hotel Boise- Riverside, Boise, ID
Sept. 25, 2010	Fishermen's Fall Festival 11 am - 6 pm	Fishermen's Terminal Seattle, WA
Week of October 4, 2010	NPFMC Meeting	Captain Cook Hotel Anchorage, AK
November 4-9, 2010 Advisory Bodies may begin Tue., Nov. 2; Council Session begins Thur., Nov. 4.	PFMC Meeting	Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa Costa Mesa, CA
Week of Dec. 6, 2010	NPFMC	Hilton Hotel Anchorage, AK