

DRAFT FOR COMMENTS—LB BOYDSTUN—JANUARY 25, 2001

Mr. Jim Lone
Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council

Dear Mr. Lone:

Permit Requirement for the Open Access Commercial Groundfish Fishery

A subcommittee of the Strategic Plan Oversight Committee (SPOC) held a teleconference January 18, 2001 to discuss and develop an implementation strategy regarding subject.

The committee reviewed the pertinent Groundfish Strategic Plan (Plan) sections and received input from Dr. Jim Hastie on his preliminary assessment of the quantity and quality of data available for the various segments of the open access commercial fisheries. The subcommittee initially identified three fishery strategies that fall under the “directed” or “B” fishery heading, as described in the Plan. These include the directed hook-and-line fisheries (troll, fixed, and long line gear); fishpots (primarily for sablefish); and directed fishery set nets. Under the “incidental” or “C” gear category we identified the following gear types or fishery strategies: exempted trawl (pink shrimp, spot prawn, sea cucumber, and California halibut), salmon troll, halibut longline, and non-directed set net fisheries (for California halibut and white seabass). Dr Hastie noted some open access data do not specify gear type and will require additional analysis if they are to be included as part of the data base. The group noted there are geographic differences in the fisheries that should probably be taken into account in the final partitioning of the data for initial permitting and fishery allocation purposes.

We had a brief discussion about the need to allocate catches consistent with future permitting decisions. The window period selected for making such allocations could be quite contentious. The window period used for making fishery allocations for existing limited entry fisheries may not be appropriate for allocations between open access fisheries based on changes in those fisheries in recent years. Also, the resolution in the data, particularly for nearshore species, is poor at best for years prior to about 1994.

The group did not delve deeply into the myriad of specific issues (and problems) associated with the development of a new restricted access program.

The group recommends that the Council move forward with developing a restricted access program for the subject fisheries. To do, that we recommend the formation of a core policy group to guide and make recommendations on plan development process. We suggest the group be comprised of one representative each from the coastal states, a National Marine Fisheries Service member, and other Council entities or members, as appropriate. The core group should consider ways and means of soliciting and receiving public input to the process. Appropriate Council and agency staff will need to be scheduled to prepare plan development documents and to analyze fishery data, as directed.

This will be a major work load issue that will have to be considered in the context of the Council's other high priority groundfish issues.

We developed the following implementation schedule for Council consideration:

- Mar 2001: Council considers the need for restricted access in the open access commercial fishery and recommends formation of core planning group (CPG). Council guidance at his meeting could help the CPG get started. The CPG should plan to meet before or soon after the April 2001 Council meeting to scope the issue, agree on a problem statement, determine how to receive public input to the process, and make initial assignments.
- June 2001: CPG provides the Council a plan development update and seeks guidance.
- Sep 2001: CPG provides a draft plan to the Council and sets public hearing dates and places.
- Nov 2001 or
March 2002: Adopt final plan.
- April to
Dec 2002: Complete groundfish plan amendment process, issue permits, hear appeals, etc.
- Jan 1, 2003: Restricted access plan is implemented.

Participants: Eileen Cooney, Bill Robinson, and Jim Hastie; WDFW--Brian Culver, ODFW--Jim Golden; CDFG--LB Boydston and Dave Thomas; PFMC staff-- Jim Glock.