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To: Erin Reinders, Michele Price, JR Pierson

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: November Fishery Activities, and Fishery Articles,

It has been a busy week so far, I have been attending the week long North Pacific Council Groundfish Plan Team meetings for the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) at this meeting the two plan teams make their final recommendations to the North Pacific Fishery Management Councils (NPFMC) Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) at the December NPFMC meeting. The SSC makes their Overfishing Limits (OFL) and the Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendation to the Council which then will sets the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) which is the harvest amount.

Monday, 11-16-20 both plan teams met together they had an overview of the assessments that will be made during the week and how they would deal with challenges of doing a virtual meeting.

The joint plan team then moved on stocks that are tied to both the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. They took up Grenadiers the ABC amount supported came in at Bering Sea 61,738MT Gulf of Alaska 21,623MT the harvest for Grenadiers in 2020 was just 2,500MT.

The joint plan team then moved on to the Sablefish assessment and they ran into trouble assessment author was trying to change the standard assessment method model and had lots of problems getting consensus with the plan team members, the authors presented 5 models for the teams review. They could not get consensus and they had strong public testimony from harvesters against the proposed ABC reductions in the GOA of 11% overall. Hardest hit was East Yakutat and Southeast of -18% Central Gulf -

12% and W Yakutat -13% all these areas are prime areas for the small longline fleet and pot boats. The Bering Sea and Aleutians had increases which upset harvesters further due to fact that a lot of that fish is taken as bycatch in the trawl fishery. The Plan team tabled the decision until Friday morning and they also had to move the Economic Safe Report until Friday as well as they ran out of time on Monday.

Tuesday 11-17- 20 The Bering Sea Team separated into two groups. The BSAI team heard the Ecosystem Status Report on the Bering Sea they covered impacts from the cold pool, lack of sea ice, water temperatures, and impacts they are seeing on seabirds, grey whales, zooplankton, marine mammals etc. I will include the PowerPoint on the ecosystem report with this memo. They then moved on into the assessment

Eastern Bering Sea Cod, this stock is continuing in decline. The Assessment authors recommendation was for a 40% reduction in the EBS Cod ABC amount from FY 2020 amounts of OFL 191,386MT ABC 155,873MT. The recommendations for FY21 recommended are 112,850MT(OFL) Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) is 94,552MT and for FY 2022 OFL 108,662MT ABC 90,665MT a 41% reduction from FY 20. **Aleutian Island Cod** ,was set at basically Status Quo with OFL for 27,400MT for both FY21 and FY22 the ABC is 20,600MT for both FY 21 an FY 22.

Wednesday 11-18-20 the morning session stated off the **Eastern Bering Sea Pollock**, report Dr. Ianelli made the presentation and recommendations to the NPFMC Groundfish Plan Team. The OFL and ABC recommendations for FY 21 were recommended an OFL 2.58MMT ABC 1.626MMT a 20% reduction from FY 2020 OFL of 4.085MMT and ABC of 2.043MMT. The FY 22 recommendations OFL 2.36MMT and ABC 1.484MMT. My best guess on what the Council would set the TAC for FY 21 would be in the 1.1-1.2MMT range a reduction from the FY20 TAC of 1.425MMT.

Bogolof Pollock, also saw a decline from FY 20 OFL 183,080MT and ABC of 137,310MT for both FY21 and FY22 OFL 113,479MT ABC 85,109MT.

Aleutian Island Pollock, saw a slight reduction from FY 20 OFL 66,973MT ABC55,120MT for FY 21 OFL 61,856MT ABC 51,241MT in FY22 OFL 61,308MT ABC 50,789MT

The afternoon session focused on many of the Amendment 80 bottom trawl stocks which all appear to be in good shape with some ABC increases.

Yellowfin Sole, saw an increase from FY 20 the OFL 306,410MT the ABC 278,370MT for FY 21 OFL 341,571MT and ABC 313,477MT FY 22 374,982MT ABC 344,140MT this stock is doing very well.

Northern Rock Sole, this species saw a 14% reduction from FY 20 recommendations OFL 168,000MT ABC 163,700MT for FY 21 OFL 145,180MT ABC 140,306MT the author recommended an increase for FY 22 OFL 213,783MT ABC 206,605MT

Atka Mackerel, this species is also doing well with a recommended for a slight increase in FY 21 from the FY 20 OFL 81,200MT ABC 64,400MT FY 21 OFL 85,580MT ABC 73,590MT in FY 22 a slight reduction to FY 22 OFL 79,660MT ABC 68,220MT

Shortraker Rockfish, basically status quo from FY 20 this is a small species from the FY 21 and FY 22 are both recommended at an OFL 722MT and ABC 541MT

On Thursday we have a full day of misc. Sole species and Pacific Ocean Perch, Octopus and Sharks. On Friday, the plan team will work on Sablefish assessment again, and the Economic Safe report for the Bering Sea will be given.

Wednesday, midday I attended a Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation meeting this is the Bering Sea Crab group Unalaska is a member of. Some of the topics discussed was a motion to except a guideline Antitrust guideline for the board members to comply with basically this states that industry members won't discuss pricing issues of seafood products and that the board will stay focused on scientific and research issues. We discussed the upcoming Opilio Tanner Crab (Snow Crab) virtual workshop set for January 21st and 22nd 2021 via Zoom. We were given an outline of the lineup of speakers some from ADFG and NOAA as well as Canadian scientists that work in the Snow Crab fishery in Eastern Canada.

The board also authorized a survey to be sent of Bering Sea Crab Captains of what they are seeing on the Bristol Bay Red King Crab, and Snow Crab grounds that can be presented to ADFG as additional information.

We also received and updated on the negotiations with the sail drone company to hopefully get them back on the crab grounds in May of 2021 to find the 300 acoustic tags that are very expensive which were placed on Bristol Bay Red King this summer, many of them were picked up by crab boats this past Bristol Bay Red King Crab season and set back in the ocean, with the location information sent to the foundation. We also were notified that one of the Kodiak based Crab boats assisted the foundation by bring about 30 live Bristol Bay Red Crab to the Kodiak NOAA lab for study work tis was authorized by ADFG. The item for this meeting was and update on the ASMI annual meeting held last week virtual on zoom last week.

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. Ecosystem Status Report
2. Pollock Assessment
3. EBS Cod Assessment
4. Other Species OFL and ABC Documents

