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“THE GULF CHANNEL MARKER”

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Edited by

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This is the first issue of the Gulf of Alaska Coastal Communities Coalition (GOAC3) “*The Gulf Channel Marker*,” a bi-weekly “mini-newsletter”¹ to help keep our members posted on immediate fisheries-related issues facing Gulf of Alaska coastal communities with places to get further information. This first issue is lengthy in order to provide background information; subsequent newsletters will build on previous information. Many of our members subscribe to a number of newsletters for the industry. Our intent here is to focus on items specific to the Gulf of Alaska.

The Gulf Channel Marker is distributed by e-mail and by fax and by hard-copy to those members who request it. This publication is in MS Word. All newsletters will be archived. Your questions or suggestions for issues and linkages are always welcome. Please note that all links are subject to change.

What is in this issue?

I. State of the Gulf Fisheries-Dependent Communities	p. 2
II. State of the Industry (Gulf of Alaska)	p. 2
III. GOAC3 Major Initiatives	p. 8
IV. Governance and Allocations	p. 10
a. North Pacific Fishery Management Council	
b. Alaska Board of Fisheries	
c. Other	
V. Laws of the Sea	p. 13
VI. State of the Oceans	p. 19
VII. Research	p. 24
VIII. Important dates	p. 25
IX. General Information links	p. 26
X “Join us”	p. 27

¹ Our more in-depth quarterly publication “*The Gulf Navigator*”, will be back on schedule later this summer

I STATE OF THE GULF OF ALASKA FISHERIES –DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

The Gulf of Alaska (GOA) is a big arc, with communities occupying a narrow strip of coastline and islands extending from the Dixon Entrance to the south eastern coast of the Aleutian Islands. The Gulf of Alaska is estimated to be 12.5% of the total U.S. continental shelf. When it comes to fisheries economics, the bad news is that the Gulf of Alaska is hurting. Our small coastal communities have lost substantial marine-related access and infrastructure in the past 20 years. The good news is that many talented people (probably you among them) are working on solutions species by species, issue by issue. Our challenge is to keep one thought foremost in our minds: “Are the decisions we are making today going to keep our coastal communities healthy and provide a sustainable future for the next generations?”

Gulf coastal communities are economically dependent on the resources around them and on the sustainability of those resources. In general, the Gulf of Alaska Coastal Communities Coalition (GOAC3) supports many efforts – including substantial research – in order to keep our resources healthy and keep the opportunities close to home.

What the GOAC3 specifically seeks is to retain the maximum sustainable amount of fishing effort – harvesting, processing, tourism, subsistence, etc., within our coastal communities. We believe that rebuilding our fishing communities will also help us re-build markets and increase opportunities.

Where can you find demographic information about the Gulf of Alaska?

- 1 Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development
<http://www.dced.state.ak.us/>
2. Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs)
www.dced.state.ak.us/cbd/ardor/ardor
 - >Prince William Sound Economic Development Council
 - >Southeast Conference
 - >Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
3. Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska-Anchorage. <http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/>
4. North Pacific Fishery Management Council <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>

II STATE OF THE INDUSTRY (GULF OF ALASKA) **IMPORTANT TO KNOW**

A February report to the Alaska Legislature illustrates the economic impact of the Alaska seafood industry in the billions of dollars in both sales and tax revenue. “Economic Impact of the Seafood Industry on Alaska’s Economy” by Northern Economics economist Patrick Burden states that seafood is still Alaska’s number one export, accounting for almost half of the state’s total exports in 2001.² Burden noted that “Alaska’s fisheries provide more than half the volume of fish landings in the nation” with ex-vessel value of the collective catch at over \$974 million

² “Study Finds Alaska Seafood Industry Generates Billions”, Drew Cherry, Intrafish News, February 21, 2003, *The Wave News Network*

and an after-processing worth of \$2.3 billion in sales. This amounts to \$932 million in payroll for labor, with only 40% going to Alaskan residents. This generated about \$65 million in state and local taxes. The salmon industry is the largest employer but the total payroll for the pollock industry is \$200 million more.³

“70 percent of the nations fish-rich continental shelf lies within Alaskan waters, which represents a tremendous opportunity to both create more fisheries jobs in Alaska and supply important food products to a hungry world.” The study was sponsored by the Pacific Seafood Processors Association and a variety of other fisheries organizations.

GROUND FISH: HOT NEWS !

Groundfish in the North Gulf of Alaska (*north and east of Yakutat*) is currently being considered for “rationalization” or limited entry in federal waters. In a move that surprised many, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council at their June 2003 meeting in Kodiak decided not to consider individual quotas for Gulf of Alaska bottom-fish harvesters and processors. The concept of assigning shares of fish harvests to individual processing companies is particularly controversial in the seafood industry. Instead, the council will consider replacing the current race for fish with cooperatives, where groups of fishermen and processors can pool their efforts. The council will also consider "status quo" as a third management option. The council hopes to make a final decision on Gulf fisheries management by this time next year. Check out the NPFMC for the full story.

We strongly advise following the North Pacific Fishery Management Council action on this, participating where you can, and promoting community options every step of the way. Check out the GOAC3 or the NPFMC web sites on a regular basis for information updates. Attend the next Council meetings if possible. See the NPFMC web site for more detail. Check out the NMFS “Fisheries Market News” web sites for current market conditions.

www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/market_news/

HALIBUT & SABLEFISH:

“Halibut is hotter than a pistol” according to ISI International seafood sales (a division of Icicle Seafoods.)⁴ Ex-vessel prices are around the \$3 per pound range with wholesale fresh prices hovering well above last year’s. This means small margins for processors and marketers with the fishermen driving the boat. Bruce Leaman, Executive Director of the International Pacific Halibut Commission, reports that since the 1995 IFQ system was implemented, 80% of the catch is now on the fresh market vs. pre-1995 when about 85% was fresh-frozen.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission set the 2003 TAC at their annual meeting in Victoria, British Columbia. Catch limits were not changed from 2002 because the IPHC is changing its assessment of data. The prediction is that “the trajectory of the halibut stock

³ “Pollock industry payroll tops salmon’s”, the Associated Press, Anchorage Daily News, February 24, 2003

⁴ “U.S. halibut market sizzles with summer sales”, Drew Cherry, Intrafish News, June 30, 2003, *The Wave News Network*

biomass is downward but that the biomass is still above the long-term average level and is expected to remain above this level for the next several years.”⁵ Catch limits for the Gulf of

Alaska:	Area 3A (Central Gulf)	22,630,000#
	Area 3B (Western Gulf)	17,130,000#
	Area 2C (Southeast)	8,500,000#

Sablefish prices have leveled off for the summer with wholesale prices in Tokyo for 5-7 lb range @¥1,350/KILO (\$5.16lb).⁶

SALMON **IMPORTANT TO KNOW**

Governor Frank Murkowski has declared the week of June 30th through July 4th as “Alaska Wild Salmon Week,” stating that “Alaska salmon is an important part of Alaska culture. Alaska's abundant salmon fishery has supported commercial and sport uses for many generations, and has provided sustenance to Alaska's indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Alaska's commercial wild salmon fishery is the largest in the world. In 2002, over 130 million salmon were commercially harvested, bringing harvesters more than 140 million dollars. The Alaska commercial salmon industry is one of the state's most important economic engines, employing 29,000 people, supporting fishing families, businesses, and regional economies throughout the state, and providing millions in revenue to state and local governments. ... Alaska salmon is managed with conservation in mind to ensure future healthy runs. Alaska's salmon fishery meets the strict environmental standards of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and has been certified as sustainable under the MSC program. Alaska salmon is recognized as a healthy nutritious food and is prized throughout the world as one of Alaska's most flavorful seafood treasures. NOW, THEREFORE, I, Frank H. Murkowski, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim June 30TH-July 4, 2003 as: Alaska Wild Salmon Week in Alaska.”⁷

The Alaska salmon season in the North Gulf typically kicks off with the Copper River opening in mid-May. The marketing mystique created by the Copper River Salmon Producers Association (CRSPA), organized to promote Copper River Salmon assists fishermen in obtaining the highest value for their salmon. Opening ex-vessel prices for Copper River Reds were lower than last year but remained steadier through subsequent openers. Ikura (chum) and pink Sujiko prices in Tokyo remain lower than last year but sockeye Sujiko is higher as of May.⁸

The Copper River experience illustrates that our salmon industry in Alaska may be less in “crisis” than in transition. Low ex-vessel prices are a combination of many circumstances, not just market conditions. The way we do the business of salmon in Alaska is – and should be – changing dramatically. How our coastal communities and its residents benefit from those changes is directly related to our imagination and initiative. We can no longer rely on traditional infrastructures.

⁵ IPHC press release 1/2/7/03

⁶ “Sablefish Market in Japan Winds Down”, Bill Atkinson’s News Reports, June 16, 2003, via Intrafish

⁷ Governor’s Press Release, June 17, 2003

⁸ ASMI Salmon Market Bulletin, June 2003

While this is being debated by almost everyone who has anything to do with salmon, some bright horizons are emerging. **IMPORTANT TO KNOW**

- “Fish money”: The State of Alaska, through the combined efforts of our Congressional delegation and the new State administration, is administering up to \$50 million dollars in 2003 of federal grant money to help fishermen and coastal communities leverage fishing opportunity. “State of Alaska Fisheries Revitalization Strategy” grants will go to qualifying communities, non-profit organizations and small businesses directly related to the fishing industry for fisheries economic development projects and transportation and harbor infrastructure. A list of applicants is available at the Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) web site www.dced.state.ak.us/cbd/seafood/revitalization/projects2
- Farmed salmon is becoming increasingly under attack because of a variety of health and environmental concerns. As the world awareness that farmed salmon is bad for people and bad for the environment increases, so does our potential for re-gaining market share. **We highly recommend ordering the “Farmed and Dangerous” brochure in quantity and sharing this with all your friends.** <http://www.farmedanddangerous.org/>
- The Legislative Salmon Task Force, authorized by the Alaska Legislature in 2002 and re-authorized in May of 2003, is comprised of a group of industry and community people to help assess specifics of what might be changed in Alaska’s salmon industry to bring about increased quality, value and return in the form of ex-vessel value and infrastructure. Check out the Task Force’s web site for a wealth of information. www.ufa-fish.org/taskforce/
- **HOT NEWS!** “Country of Origin” labeling: In October of 2002, The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Tuesday issued Interim voluntary country-of-origin labeling guidelines for seafood and other commodities as required in the 2002 Farm Bill.⁹ The USDA is required by the 2002 Farm Bill to develop mandatory country-of-origin labeling regulations by Sept. 30, 2004. Under the guidelines, fresh and frozen beef, veal, lamb, pork, fish, fruits and vegetables and peanuts are required at retail to indicate their country of origin. Farm-raised fish and shellfish covered commodities must be derived exclusively from fish or shellfish hatched, harvested and processed in the United States. Covered commodities for wild fish and shellfish must be derived exclusively from fish or shellfish either harvested in the waters of the United States or by a U.S. flagged vessel and processed in the United States or aboard a U.S. flagged ship. The voluntary guidelines, related Farm Bill provisions, and questions and answers on the voluntary guidelines can be found at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/COOL>. The guidelines stem from the 2002 Farm Act and are voluntary for the next two years. They become mandatory in September 2004.....But not everyone thinks this is a good idea. A national food industry

⁹ “Made in the USA -- Country-of-origin seafood labels take shape”, By John Fiorillo, Oct. 9 2002 - WorldCatch Wave -

organization has asked grocery stores not to follow the voluntary country-of-origin labeling guidelines issued by the United States Department of Agriculture... "It is expensive, it is complicated, and we believe it isn't in the best interest of the consumer," said John Motley, senior vice president of government and public relations for the Food Marketing Institute.¹⁰

- **HOT NEWS!** "Organic" labeling has been a hot button for a long time with Alaska wild salmon being left out of the "organic" labeling by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) while farmed salmon was been approved. Why? Because the NOSB couldn't verify where the wild salmon had been. That's going to change. Alaska wild-caught seafood finally can be labeled organic. President Bush has signed into law legislation that will allow Alaska salmon and other wild-caught seafood to be marketed as organic food. The organic labeling amendment lets the secretary of agriculture develop regulations to designate wild-caught fish as organic. Alaska's market rival - salmon raised on farms in Norway, Chile and Canada - already may be called organic since the environment in which they're raised can be controlled. The Alaska salmon industry hopes the organic label will boost sales and prices paid to fishermen.¹¹
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification: Check out their web site for how this helps market sustainable Alaskan wild stock. <http://www.msc.org/>
- **HOT NEWS!** Canned salmon is finding new –if not temporary- markets because of the efforts of our Congressional delegation. U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will donate 130 tons of canned salmon for use in Cambodia to the Salesian Missions, a private volunteer organization. The donation will be made under USDA's Food for Progress program, administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service to provide for USDA donations of agricultural commodities to needy countries to encourage economic or agricultural reforms that foster free enterprise.¹²

SHELLFISH

BSAI CRAB RATIONALIZATION PROPOSAL: A plan to divide Bering Sea crab catches between harvesters and processors was approved by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in June of 2002. The plan has since drawn fire from previous supporters. In an April 2003 report, the Alaska Crab Coalition (ACC) said the plan does not do enough to protect fishermen. The crab plan requires that 90 percent of the catch must be sold to a handful of processors. To level the playing field, ACC had proposed an arbitration system that would set a minimum fleet price. But in April 2003 the Council defeated an amendment offering that protection. That prompted an abrupt about face by the ACC. CRAB Group's Gordon Blue felt processing concerns could be better addressed through regionalization measures. The crab plan is still waiting for Congressional approval to change the nation's antitrust laws to allow processors

¹⁰ "Is mandatory country-of-origin labeling good for consumers?" By Chicago Daily Herald,

¹¹ "Organic fish bill signed into law", Alaska Digest, April 18, 2003

¹² Press release/"Murkowski announces USDA to purchase 130 tons of canned salmon for humanitarian mission in Cambodia, June 23, 2003

to have guaranteed quotas of the crab catch. A lot of people are concerned that Congress will not hear a balance view because of the cost of getting that information to them.¹³

On a related note, (Alaska) House Fisheries Committee chairman Paul Seaton of Homer introduced HJR25 a resolution in the State House in the first session of the 23rd Legislature opposing processing quota shares, but, despite passionate arguments, it did not pass.

KING CRAB: The good news is that Bristol Bay RED KING CRAB total allowable catch could go up as much as 25% according to recent Board of Fish action. The stocks are healthy enough to support a substantial increase. The fishery, which opens October 15th, has brought an average of \$4.56 per pound in the last few years.¹⁴ The bad news is that Chile is increasing their study of the propagation of king crab.¹⁵

SHELLFISH IN GENERAL: As the Alaska Shellfish Growers Association puts it, "At a time when the family farm has virtually disappeared from the American landscape, it is enjoying a resurgence in the remote bays of Alaska's long coastline."¹⁶ Fish farming is not allowed in Alaska, but the farming of shellfish and sea plants is a small but steadily growing industry with a bright future. Since aquaculture was approved by the Alaska legislature in 1988, 61 farm sites have gotten permission to operate -- 36 in Southcentral Alaska and 25 in Southeast.. About half of the farms are actually in production, and oysters by far have been the most popular species to cultivate. Alaska oysters are promoted by growers as "the safest shellfish in the marketplace, coming from the world's cleanest waters." According to the Department of Natural Resources, the value of the "crop" has seen a steady increase from \$50,000 in 1990 to more than \$400,000 last year. Littleneck clams from Southeast farms are now also making it to market; several farmers are starting to have success with mussels; and others are interested in growing seaweeds like kelp. ” Check out the Alaska Department of Natural Resources for more information.

SUBSISTENCE

Check out the United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) web site for a really good definition of the subsistence situation in Alaska. Learn about subsistence and how to participate in federal decision-making. For more information check their web site @ www.subsistmginfo.org/ Also check out the Alaska Department of Fish & Game’s subsistence web at <http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH.GAME/subsist/subhome.htm>. The federal subsistence web is located at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: www.r7.fws.gov/asm/home.html

OTHER HOT ISSUES:

MERCURY: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration met in October of 2002 to discuss whether or not it will lift a four-year moratorium and resume measuring mercury levels in fish. The FDA stopped monitoring mercury in fish four years ago while it studied the data it had

¹³ “Alaska Crab Fishermen's Organizations United in Opposing Current Rationalization Plan”
By Laine Welch, April 18, 2003, via SeaFood.com News

¹⁴ “Alaska red king crab catch could shoot up 25%”, Anchorage Daily News via *The Wave News Network*, June 30, 2003

¹⁵ :King crab farming making headway in Chile:, Paula Carvajal, Intrafish News, June 30, 2003

¹⁶ “Shellfish farms enjoy resurgence in Alaska's remote coves and bays” *Alaska Journal of Commerce*, Fish Factor By Laine Welch, December 2, 2002

accumulated.¹⁷ Mercury is one of the most debated and controversial issues affecting the seafood industry. The upcoming debate is likely to further raise media scrutiny and consumer concerns regarding mercury in tuna, swordfish and other popular seafoods. A report is expected shortly.

MARKET INFORMATION RESOURCES

- The ALASKA REPORT is one of the most useful web sites for Alaska's commercial fishermen. <http://www.alaskareport.com/>
- Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) <http://www.alaskaseafood.org/> The mission statement of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute: "To increase the worldwide consumption of Alaska Seafood and promote the quality and superiority of Alaska seafood products."
- Alaska Seafood Marketing Board (PENDING)
- Salmon Marketing Information Service
<http://asmi.safeshopper.com/34/cat34.htm?17>
- Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) <http://www.afdf.org/>
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/>
- North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC)
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>
- *National Fisherman* <http://www.nationalfisherman.com/>
- *Pacific Fishing* <http://www.pfmag.com/>
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) <http://www.cfec.state.ak.us/>

III GOAC3 MAJOR INITIATIVES UPDATE

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

The Gulf of Alaska Coastal Communities Coalition is involved in many issues but there are key initiatives that we have helped to develop and that we promote as part of our mission. These include (but are not limited to)

COMMUNITY PURCHASE OF HALIBUT AND SABLEFISH

This initiative was approved by the North Pacific Council in April of 2002. It has since been reviewed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in Juneau for regulatory language. It should be heading to Washington, DC, soon for further regulatory and legal review. It will then be published in the *Federal Register* as "proposed rule." It will have a 30-day commentary period and then it will go back through the review process to be approved by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and to be published as "final rule." What does this mean to potential application of this program for 2004. "Cautiously possible."

What should we be doing in the meantime?

- look for funding sources
- start the development of community-based non-profits for the administration of the community purchase program
- develop recommendations for uniform protocols

¹⁷ "Mercury -- it's in the news again" By John Fiorillo, Oct. 16 2002 - WorldCatch Wave -

HALIBUT CHARTER IFQS COMMUNITY SET-ASIDE

In April of 2001, the NPFMC approved a “community set-aside” within the proposed halibut charter IFQ system. The IFQ proposal is currently being reviewed by the National Marine Fisheries Service before being considered for publication in the *Federal Register* as “proposed rule.” Please see NPFMC web site, “Halibut Issues” for details.

One of the reasons the program may be in jeopardy is the use of data from log books required by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game during the qualifying years. A report requested by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding this issue is available on the ADF&G web site.

LAMPS (LOCAL AREA MANAGEMENT PLANS)

The GOAC3 has actively pursued Local Area Management Plan (LAMP) options for our Gulf communities. We have initiated the Kodiak Island LAMP, which is before the Alaska Board of Fisheries. We have also encouraged residents of Prince of Wales Island to develop a template for a LAMP, especially regarding dive and mariculture issues.

LAMPs have many potential benefits, not the least of which is to help keep decision making local and to encourage cooperation among user groups when it comes to gear-conflicts, habitat protection and other near-shore issues.

The Sitka Sound Local Area Management Plan is the only active LAMP , developed because of near-shore depletion of halibut stocks - and results seem to be favorable. User groups including commercial, sports and subsistence users worked hard on the plan. The Sitka Sound plan may be reviewed through the NPFMC web site.

GOA PROPOSED GROUND FISH IFQ COMMUNITY OPTIONS

Currently before the North Pacific Council are options for analysis for a proposed groundfish IFQ program in the North Gulf. GOAC3 has taken a very strong position in support of analyzing a wide variety of community options so that our communities are not artificially restricted from harvesting and processing opportunities. Check out the items for analysis at the NPFMC website.

RESEARCH

The GOAC3 is working actively with research groups to provide as much *applied science* (science applicable to the needs of our fishing communities and industry) as possible to help all of us make the best decisions we can about fisheries and habitat management. In addition, the GOAC3 feels strongly about research on *socio-economic* impacts of regulatory decisions.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

GOAC3 Technical Team members or Board of Directors are active members of the following organizations as part of our initiatives development:

- North Pacific Fishery Management Council Advisory Panel

- North Pacific Research Board Advisory Panel
- Alaska Legislative Salmon Task Force
- Prince William Sound Science Center Board of Directors
- United Fishermen of Alaska, Executive Board
- Alaska Board of Fisheries Marine Protected Area Committee (GOAC3's involvement is to help the state define criteria on whether or not we need MPAs and to provide community protections)
- International Pacific Halibut Commission Conference Committee

Find further information at our website - www.goac3.org - or the North Pacific Fishery Management Council <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>

IV GOVERNANCE & ALLOCATIONS

Fisheries management in the United States is probably *the* most complex, regulated and convoluted management process for any resource in the country. Governance in the North Pacific (fisheries management) falls to three major governing bodies:

- The Alaska Board of Fisheries (0-3 miles out)
- The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (3-200 miles)
- The International Pacific Halibut Commission – halibut only

These organizations have protocols to work with each other and with related and other agencies. There are probably hundreds of groups that are involved in this process.

North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is the largest of eight federally-mandated fisheries management councils established by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 1976 (which has been renamed the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act) to oversee management of the nation's fisheries. With jurisdiction over the 900,000 square mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off Alaska, the Council has primary responsibility for groundfish management in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI), including cod, pollock, flatfish, mackerel, sablefish, and rockfish species harvested mainly by trawlers, hook and line longliners and pot fishermen.

The Council also makes allocative and limited entry decisions for halibut, though the U.S. - Canada International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is responsible for conservation of halibut. Other large Alaska fisheries such as salmon, crab and herring are managed by the State of Alaska.

The Council has eleven voting members, six from Alaska, three from Washington, one from Oregon, and a federal representative, the Alaska Regional Director of NMFS. The non-federal voting members represent state fisheries agencies, industry, fishing communities, and academia. The Council also has four non-voting members representing the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Department of State.

The Council meets five to six times each year, four times in communities around Alaska, and once in Washington or Oregon. The Council's staff of ten resides in Anchorage, Alaska. The Council receives advice each meeting from its twenty-two member Advisory Panel (AP) representing user groups, environmentalists and consumer groups, and from its twelve-member Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) of highly respected scientists who review all information brought to the Council.

Although the Council is fully open to the public, participating at Council meetings is timely and costly. Issues can take years to resolve and meetings are expensive to attend. It takes a long time to fully understand the Council process. Still, the Council is very good about providing as much information as people need within a reasonably easy-to-access format. Though heavily burdened, Council staff are quick to respond to questions.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW National Standard #8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that the NPFMC consider the impacts on Alaska's coastal communities as part of their regulatory process for federally managed fisheries.

Go to the Council's web site to get information about Council members, Advisory Panel and Science and Statistical Committee members, staff, meeting dates and issues and links to other web sites for allocation information, etc. Go to the National Marine Fisheries Service web site at for specific information on federal fisheries allocations. The next Council meeting is scheduled for October 6th at the Anchorage Sheraton. (This is a departure from the Anchorage Hilton.)

Scheduled are

Initial Action:	Groundfish specifications Observer program Flatfish IRIU Trailing Amendment
Final Action:	Pribilof Blue King Crab Rebuilding TAC-setting process
Action as necessary:	Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) GOA Rationalization plan
Reports:	GOA Salmon Bycatch Steller sea lion mitigation Non-target species management F40 Recommendations

The October Council meeting will also mark the first meeting of two new Council members, Ed Rasmussen (Anchorage) and Arnie Fuglvog (Petersburg.)

Council newsletters and the Council web site are always the best source of Council actions and information. They are archived on their web site in pdf format. They will mail you a hard copy on request.

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES (BOF)

www.state.ak.us/adfg/boards/fishinfo/bofhome.htm

The Alaska Board of Fisheries consists of seven members serving three-year terms. Members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature. Members are appointed on the basis of interest in public affairs, good judgment, knowledge, and ability in the field of action of the board, with a view to providing diversity of interest and points of view in the membership (see Alaska Statute 16.05.221).

The Board of Fisheries' main role is to conserve and develop the fishery resources of the state. This involves setting seasons, bag limits, methods and means for the state's subsistence, commercial, sport, guided sport, and personal use fisheries, and it also involves setting policy and direction for the management of the state's fishery resources. The board is charged with making allocative decisions, and the department is responsible for management based on those decisions.

The Board of Fisheries meets four to six times per year in communities around the state to consider proposed changes to fisheries regulations around the state. The board uses the biological and socioeconomic information provided by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, public comment received from people inside and outside of the state, and guidance from the Alaska Department of Public Safety and Alaska Department of Law when creating regulations that are sound and enforceable.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries responsible for governing fisheries inside state waters (0-3 miles) as well as management of crab and herring.

The most current Board of Fisheries calendar: Check their web site for further information

<u>Dates/Duration</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Location</u>
October 1 – 3, 2003 [3 days]	Work Session ACRs, cycle organization,, Stocks of Concern	Anchorage
October 4, 2003	Pribilof Island Blue King Crab	Anchorage
November 12 – 17, 2003	Statewide Finfish	Anchorage
November 18 – 19, 2003	Chignik Salmon Co-op	Anchorage
December 9 – 17, 2003	Bristol Bay Finfish	Anchorage
January 12 – 19, 2004	Arctic/Yukon/Kuskokwim Finfish	Fairbanks
February 15 – 26, 2004 [12 days]	AK Peninsula/Aleutian Islands Finfish and Supplemental Issues	Anchorage

INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION (IPHC)

www.iphc.washington.edu/halcom/pubs/annmeet/IPHCAM

Authorized by the International Pacific Halibut Treaty, the IPHC is responsible for research and allocations of halibut commercial catches the U.S. and Canadian North Pacific. It is a six-member commission, three American commissioners and three Canadian commissioners. They conduct an annual meeting in January, alternating between an U.S. and a Canadian location. Research proposals are usually due in October. Check out IPHC web site for complete

allocations for 2003. Regulatory conservation of halibut is through an agreement with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION / NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NOAA/NMFS) www.nmfs.noaa.gov. Check out the current action:

- Achievements in Marine Stewardship Since Passage of the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996
- SFA Achievements Report (.PDF)
- Scientists Debate Pew Report on NPR
- NOAA Fisheries Director Responds to Pew Report
- New England Council's Response to Pew
- Pacific Council's Response to Pew
- NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan for 2003-2008 **FOR COMMENT / DATED***
- Annual Status of Stocks Report for 2002

V LEGISLATION / LAWS OF THE SEA

There are probably more laws governing state, federal and international waters than anyone could name, but they all hold jurisdiction in some form. *The Gulf Channel Marker* will try to keep up with the most pertinent laws, their re-authorizations or analyses, regarding the North Pacific, but we encourage folks to do their own research on any laws that might be impacting your fishery or community.

The U.S. Oceans Commission has one of the best web sites for linking to many of the primary ocean laws: http://oceancommission.gov/documents/gov_oceans/gov_oceans.html

ALASKA LEGISLATURE <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/home.htm>

The first session of the 23rd Alaska State Legislature adjourned in May 2003. The legislature will reconvene in January of 2004. Fisheries bills passed in the first session:

- HB24 Agreements on Management of Fish & Game
- HB90 Tax credit for salmon development utilization
- HB104 Payment of fishery business tax
- HB105 Commercial fishing loans
- HB118 Transportation of commercial fish
- HB159 Exams for those making small CFAB loans
- HB191 Coastal management programs
- HB210 Chitina dip net fishery
- HB226 Organic food
- HCR6 Extend Legislative Salmon Task Force
- HCR11 Alaska Wild Salmon Week
- SB139 Alaska Salmon Price Report program
- SB215 Seafood and food safety laboratory
- SCR13 Canned salmon for prisoners
- SJR12 Supporting halibut bycatch project

To check all state statutes and regulations you need to know about, visit the State of Alaska official web site at <http://www.state.ak.us/>.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Federal legislation is even trickier. The major laws impacting federal fisheries in the North Pacific include, but are not limited to:

- The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act (1996)
- The Sustainable Fisheries Act (1996)
- The Jones Act
- Clinton Presidential Proclamation 7219 (Contiguous Zone)
- Reagan Presidential Proclamation 5928 (Territorial Sea)
- Submerged Lands Act
- Truman Presidential Proclamation 2667 (Continental Shelf)
- Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)
- Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act
- Estuary Restoration Act of 2000
- Oceans Act of 2000
- Coastal Barrier Resources Act
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- National Flood Insurance Act of 1968
- Rivers and Harbors Act
- MPA Executive Order 13158
- National Marine Sanctuaries Act
- Clean Water Act
- National Climate Program Act
- Ocean Dumping Act
- Oil Pollution Act of 1990
- Salmon and Steelhead Conservation and Enhancement Act of 1980
- Fisherman's Protection Act 1967
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Lacey Act
- Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention Control Act of 1990
- National Invasive Species Act of 1996
- National Aquaculture Development Act of 1980
- Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act
- OCS Deep Water Royalty Relief Act
- Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act
- National Park Service Act
- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Authorization Act Program Act
- National Sea Grant College Program Act
- Deepwater Port Act of 1974
- Ports and Waterways Safety Act of 1972
- Abandoned Shipwreck Act
- Antiquities Act of 1906

- Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979
- Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships
- Intervention on the High Seas Act
- Anti-Smuggling Act of 1935

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

MAGNUSON-STEVENSON FISHERY CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT ACT (MSFCMA – or “Mag Act”) is the authorization for federal fisheries management. The last re-authorization was in 1996 and a new one is over-due. The following is taken verbatim from NOAA’s web site on the Magnuson-Stevens Act: Please keep this for future reference.

Overview

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has made recommendations to Congress for changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act during this year’s reauthorization. The accompanying fact sheets outline these recommendations and explain how they would strengthen conservation and management of America’s living marine resources. The information below is intended to help our constituents understand what the Magnuson-Stevens Act is and why our recommendations would benefit the nation’s marine ecosystems and sustain our recreational and commercial fishing industries.

Q: What is the Magnuson-Stevens Act?

A: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act directs how our nation manages its fishery resources. Originally enacted by Congress in 1976, the Magnuson-Stevens Act created eight regional fishery management councils to advise NOAA Fisheries on management issues. Through a highly democratic and public process, this dynamic council system has utilized the skills, expertise and insights of citizens in coastal communities around America for the past 27 years to determine how best to balance conservation and human use and enjoyment of the oceans. As a result of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the council system of fisheries management, the United States has become a world leader in marine science and conservation, and Americans enjoy some of the world’s best seafood and sportfishing opportunities.

Q: What is Reauthorization?

A: Congress revisits the authorization and provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act periodically to determine whether the authority and mandates of the Act need modification to keep pace with the changing needs of the environment, the evolution of fishing practices, and the growing scientific body of knowledge about the oceans. The last reauthorization, known as the Sustainable Fisheries Act, occurred in 1996. This reauthorization resulted in sweeping changes in the way we look at and manage our nation’s fisheries, and the benefits of these changes are just beginning to be realized.

Q: What Role Does NOAA Fisheries Take in Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act?

A: Scientists, managers and policy staff working at NOAA Fisheries have first-hand knowledge about fisheries management reform needs as we strive to adapt the nation's fisheries policy to the dynamic and ever-shifting environment in which we operate. Therefore, as Congress considers reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the agency provides recommendations for modifications to the Act that would allow us to continue strengthening our conservation and management programs and building on our successes.

Q: **What Recommendations is NOAA Fisheries Making for the 2003 Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act?**

A: The 1996 reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act provided NOAA Fisheries with the tools we needed to meet the challenges of the new millennium as world-class leaders in fishery stewardship. Six years ago, Congress overhauled our nation's fisheries management policies, which has led to unprecedented advancements in rebuilding fish populations and protecting ocean ecosystems. Since 1996, we have been placing a stronger emphasis on bycatch and on halting overfishing and rebuilding fish stocks to sustainable levels, as well as protecting marine habitats of ocean species. We already have seen many fish stocks rebound as a direct result of the 1996 changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act. However, the true magnitude of our achievements since 1996 has yet to be realized, as fish stocks continue to recover and our recreational and commercial fishing industries flourish, contributing over \$55 billion dollars each year to the U.S. economy.....Those sweeping changes to the Act have been in place for a relatively short period of time. NOAA Fisheries' recommendations for this reauthorization would refine and build upon current successes and expand the vision Congress advanced in 1996.Check out http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fact_sheets.htm for some very good information on this process and on NOAA's proposals for re-authorization.

WATCH FOR THIS The moratorium on new IFQ programs has been lifted by default when the deadline passed in September of 2002. A re-authorization could re-instate the moratorium or allow it with specific requirements. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) came out with a report on IFQs in 2000. Another report is pending.

WATCH FOR THIS The issue of PROCESSOR SHARES has been hotly debated for a long time, but specifically so since the proposed BSAI crab rationalization plan was adopted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in June of 2002. Watch for this as an issue during the Congressional re-authorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

HOT NEWS!

NEW BILLS IN CONGRESS:

S. 1106 - Fisheries Quota Act of 2003 **WATCH FOR THIS**

On June 26th, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation marked-up S.1106, a bill sponsored by Senators Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) and John Kerry (D-Mass.) which seeks to create national guidelines for the implementation of individual transferable quotas

(ITQs).¹⁸ Sen. Snowe is seeking national standards for IFQs, excluding processor quotas. Sen. Gordon Smith (R- Ore.) is expected to introduce language regarding the inclusion of processor quota shares in any ITQ legislation. The National Fisheries Institute (NFI) also wants processor quota language. If the bill passes in committee it goes to the floor to be debated on by the full Senate.

H.R.2621 – “Fishing Quota Standards Act of 2003” WATCH FOR THIS

In news dated 6/30/03 via the Marine Fisheries Conservation Network (MFCN) “Congressmen Bill Delahunt and Tom Allen move to conserve fish and fishermen: Responding to urgent calls for conserving fish and pleas from fishermen to protect their livelihood, Representatives Tom Allen (D-ME) and Bill Delahunt (D-MA) yesterday introduced a bill, H.R. 2621, designed to rescue threatened fish populations while protecting fishing communities. The proposed law deals with Individual Fishing Quotas, known as IFQs, which until recently were banned because of concerns about their impact on fish populations and on fishermen in coastal communities. The Allen-Delahunt bill, the “Fishing Quota Standards Act of 2003,” would set explicit legal standards that fishery managers would have to follow when using IFQs. “Frankly, the idea of unregulated IFQs scares fishermen who are already worried about their future and the future of fish populations. We know we’ll be left on the docks, while the large industrial fishing fleet gets allocated all of the catch,” explains fisherman Ray Kane from Cape Cod, Massachusetts.”

Congress had prohibited the creation of new IFQ programs under a six-year moratorium that expired on September 30, 2002. Since then Rep. Allen, who is co-chair of the bipartisan House Oceans Caucus, Rep. Delahunt, and other congressional leaders have worked together to create legislation that will protect America’s fishing communities while insuring that any new programs protect marine resources. The new bill would require IFQ programs to:

- Promote the conservation of ocean fish by providing additional and substantial conservation benefits.
- Limit the duration of IFQ programs and quota shares to seven years.
- Provide for a fair and equitable initial allocation of quota shares.
- Ensure that IFQ programs and shares are reviewed and renewed only if they are meeting or exceeding the conservation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, if not, they must be revised or revoked.
- Define and prohibit the excessive consolidation of quota shares. If Congress does not act to establish national standards similar to those contained in the Allen-Delahunt bill, the Marine Fish Conservation Network believes that it should renew the IFQ moratorium.

Find the bill, H.R. 2621 at <http://www.conservefish.org/site/catch01>

U.S. CHILE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT: HOT NEWS!

The United States and Chile signed Friday an historic and cutting-edge Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that when fully implemented eliminates bilateral tariffs, lowers trade barriers, promotes economic integration and expands opportunities for the peoples of both countries.¹⁹

¹⁸ Senate committee marks up ITQ bill today By Dan McGovern Jun. 26 2003 - The Wave News Network

¹⁹ “U.S., Chile sign free trade agreement” June. 9 2003 - The Wave News Network -

In a Press Release of June 20, 2003,²⁰ U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) announced a joint effort with Sen. Olympia Snowe (Maine) to help communities whose key industries have been harmed by foreign trade expansions. The Senators are co-sponsoring legislation to provide additional funds to communities that have been impacted by foreign trade. Murkowski, noting how rural Alaska fishing communities have been harmed by increased production of farmed salmon, as an example. "There have been a number of Alaska's communities where fishermen have been harmed by imported farm salmon or other related trade matters. While individuals already are entitled to aid, it has proven a difficult process for workers to qualify. By this bill communities will be able to file for assistance on behalf of the entire town -- aid going for community investment projects," said Murkowski. The bill would funnel the assistance to rural communities facing higher unemployment because of free trade agreements, such as GATT (the Global Agreement on Trade & Tariffs) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The bill, which most likely will aid state fishermen, could also impact workers in timber and mining industries. The bill (S. 1299) will head to the Senate Finance Committee for its review.

SOMETHING YOU CAN DO NOW MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

How to contact our Congressional delegation:

- **Senator Ted Stevens**
 - <http://stevens.senate.gov/>
 - Anchorage Office 907-271-5915
 - Washington DC Office 202-224-3004

- **Senator Lisa Murkowski**
 - <http://www.senate.gov/~murkowski/>
 - Anchorage Office 907-271-3735
 - Washington DC Office 202-224-6665

- **Congressman Don Young**
 - <http://www.house.gov/donyoung/>
 - Anchorage Office 907-271-5978
 - Washington DC Office 202-225-5765

How to contact other members of Congress

- On-line <http://congress.org/congressorg/home/>
- "Congress at Your Fingertips" Capitol Advantage© 108th Congress, via Capitol Advantage Publishing, www.capitoladvantage.com

VI STATE OF THE OCEANS

²⁰ "Murkowski Seeks Trade Assistance for Communities", Press Release, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, June 20, 2003

If you listen to the doom and gloom of recent oceans reports, you could easily lose sight of a central point – the North Pacific is actually in fairly good shape whereas the rest of the world’s oceans and fisheries are likely not. How is that? The short reason is that we have managed well and we don’t have the industrialization (dams, water pollution, etc.) that many other places have. The long answer – everything is relative. There are many serious issues within the North Pacific and we all need to be part of the answers. But we could very well be the leaders to the rest of the world.

Many of the reports are strongly suggesting that our local small boat fleets might be the key for low-impact, sustainable fisheries. This is a central theme that should resonate well with coastal communities.

However *****BE CAUTIOUS*****. The overall agenda of many of these reports is to completely restructure our fisheries management system by largely negating or by-passing the role of the eight management councils and creating a single national board which would be triggered by “eco-systems” management. If there is any scenario that would shut out the small boat fleet – this is it.

Whatever the state of our oceans, it is critically important to protect our fishery management process in the North Pacific as being the primary tool coastal communities have in mitigating the impacts of regulatory issues while educating ourselves and participating in the solutions.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW Future issues of *The Gulf Channel Marker* will have in-depth commentary on many of the reports coming out. Only the U.S. Oceans Commission report will be of primary interest to Congress, but all the reports will have impacts on the public in general. The Nation’s response could very well have long-range implications for the North Pacific.

*****BE CAUTIOUS****

- PEW Oceans Commission 144-page report just came out. The Commission’s 18-member panel of politicians, scientists, fishermen and others, includes former Alaska Gov. Tony Knowles and is chaired by former White House Chief of Staff (Clinton Administration), Leon Panetta. The panel urges Congress to create a new federal agency to corral the mishmash of agencies that have some say in regulating oceans, and to set up new, conservation-minded regional councils to govern commercial fishing and other activity, specifically:
 - Formation of a new oceans agency to take over the Commerce Department’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and marine-related programs run by departments of Interior and Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
 - A White House oceans council and a network of "regional ocean ecosystem councils" to participate in the regulation of farmland and urban runoff into oceans.

Alaska’s Congressional delegation blasted the report in no uncertain terms²¹ even though it praised fishery management in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska, which

²¹ “Alaska lawmakers pan report on oceans/ Stevens troubled by criticism of councils “ The Associated Press, June 6, 2003

serve up half the nation's commercial catch. They said the Pew panel was too quick to junk the existing system of fishery management in favor of a new, Washington-centered bureaucracy. Alaska Republican Sen. Ted Stevens, chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee and author of some of the foremost federal fishery laws, said "I believe the Pew report is tainted by the millions of dollars they spend on environmental litigation aimed at stopping commercial fishing." Sen. Lisa Murkowski, said other activities such as recreational boating and fishing, and mineral interests "could be greatly restricted or wholly prohibited" by the Pew proposals.

The Pew study was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, a multibillion-dollar Philadelphia-based foundation established by the family of Sun Oil Co. founder Joseph Pew. www.pewoceans.org

- **WATCH FOR THIS** [U.S. Oceans Commission](#) report is due out this fall. This is the group commissioned by Congress and their report is expected to get the most attention in Congress. In 2002 they released a preliminary report entitled: "Developing A National Ocean Policy: A Midterm Report from the U.S. Commission on Oceans." Ed Rasmussen of Anchorage, newly appointed to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, has been a member of this Commission. For details check out their web site at www.usoceancommission.gov/
- *****BE CAUTIOUS**** A May 2003 *Nature* article on state of the oceans extrapolates research to indicate that "90%" of the world's fish stocks are depleted²². In this scathing report, two marine scientists at Dalhousie University in Canada, A. Myers and Boris Worm, say that commercial fishing has killed off all but 10 percent of populations of large prized tuna, swordfish, marlin, and other fish species. However, Nelson Beideman, who directs the Blue Water Fishermen's Association in Barnegat Light, N.J., said the report seemed aimed at developing "Chicken Little-type scenarios" to please the Pew Charitable Trusts, which helped finance the study. Pew backs a number of environmental groups.
- *U.S. News and World Report*: "Empty Oceans: Why The World's Seafood Supply is Disappearing", June 9, 2003
- "Horrors of the Deep: Chilling Tales of Denial, Conflict of Interest and Management of America's Ocean Resources", Marine Fish Conservation Network, 2003. Check out at www.conservefish.org
- "Shifting Gears: Addressing the Collateral Impacts of Fishing Methods in U.S. Waters," Prepared by MCBI, and initiated and supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The report was published by Island Press Publication Services. The full report is available at www.mcbi.org.

²² "Study shows 90 percent decline in stocks of big oceangoing fish" 15 May 2003, By John Heilprin, Associated Press

- “Blue Frontier: Saving America’s Living Seas” First published in 2001, and re-released this spring with a new publisher, David Helvarg's book Blue Frontier: is part history, part you-are-there journalism exploring the past and future of a frontier many Americans may have forgotten.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) AND HABITAT AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN (HAPC)

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/Committees/EFH/efh.htm>

The Magnuson-Stevens Act mandates that any Fishery Management Plan (FMP) must include a provision to describe and identify essential fish habitat (EFH) for the fishery, minimize to the extent practicable adverse effects on such habitat caused by fishing, and identify other actions to encourage the conservation and enhancement of such habitat. Essential Fish habitat has been broadly defined by the Act to include "those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity."

Check the NPFMC web site for all EFH updates and linkages.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPA)

*****BE CAUTIOUS*****

There are six categories of recognized Marine Protected Areas ranging from strict nature reserves to managed resource protected areas. This is often ignored in discussions of Marine Protected Areas, with many extremists promoting MPAs only in the most restrictive category with no consideration of the range of possibilities. MPAs should be designed for specific objectives, one of which can be to protect fishing opportunities and benefits to communities.

MPAs are increasingly being considered around the world as the more extreme options for protecting large habitat. MPAs range from limited restrictive access to “no-take” zones which could eliminate any kind of fish and / or traffic in a specific marine area. GOAC3 is participating with the State of Alaska on developing guidelines for MPAs in state waters (our state management system could already be considered a form of MPA) so that they are (a) considered only with sound science, and (b) do not impact our local fisheries without good rationale and local input.)

The Federal MPA Committee met June 24-25th in Washington, DC. Check their web site: <http://mpa.gov/mpabusiness/fac.html>.

For more information see the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas website: http://www.unep-wcmc.org/protected_areas/categories/eng/

The State of Alaska has established an MPA Committee (GOAC3 is a member) in order to take more of a pre-emptive role in providing guidelines for any MPA discussions / process in Alaskan waters. The primary goal of the administration is to protect the interests of our coastal communities while fulfilling our constitutional mandate to provide for the maximum benefit of our fisheries resources.

The State MPA Committee (governed by the Alaska Board of Fisheries) met for the first time in Kodiak in June. The task for the meeting was to help the Board of Fish and the North Pacific Council joint protocol committee in MPA-related definitions.

The State of Alaska MPA web site is

http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/geninfo/special/mpa/mpa_home.htm

INVASIVE SPECIES

There is a looming threat to Alaska that many are becoming aware of that could affect our environment, a few of which are showing up in our communities.²³ A recent report by the USDA Forest Service finds that one of the four most important threats to our natural areas is the spread of invasive species. These eco-terrorists can be animals, insects, or microorganisms that may be an important part of a balanced ecosystem in their ancestral homeland but become aggressive invaders when transplanted outside their range.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski testified in June before the Committee on Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Fish, Wildlife and Water regarding the specific dangers of invasive species in Alaska and describes very clearly the dangers to Alaska. "The port of Valdez, in Prince William Sound, receives the third-largest volume of ballast water of any U.S. port, due to the regular arrival of very large oil tankers, many of which arrive from ports already infested with invasive species. This is a significant and continuing threat, although to date only a small number of problems have been detected. Work is continuing on technologies and practices that will meet this challenge. Among the most promising is a new method of introducing ozone into ballast water both when it is pumped aboard and when it is discharged, which has so far shown excellent results in removing biological hitchhikers. I want to note also this is research that has been funded by the oil and gas industry - British Petroleum to be precise. The industry's willingness to step forward on this issue should be recognized and applauded, but the government's obligation to address this issue should not be overlooked. I hope that this committee will agree that research of this kind is worthy of its strong support.A variety of both animal and plant organisms already have shown up in Alaskan waters. Some, such as Northern Pike, which has been introduced illegally into areas where it is not native, are a serious threat to native Pacific salmon and other fish. Atlantic salmon escaping from salmon farms in other areas have also been found in streams from Southeast Alaska to Prince William Sound, and in ocean waters as far north as the Bering Sea. Natural reproduction of escaped Atlantic salmon has been observed in British Columbia, and it is possible this species could find a foothold in Alaska, posing a serious threat to native stocks. Plants such as Japanese knotweed, Reed Canary grass and Foxtail barley are also colonizing, posing a threat to naturally occurring species.. Several other species have not yet been observed in Alaska, but are considered to be a danger, and officials are watching carefully in the hope of intercepting them before they become a problem. The European green crab is an example; it became established in California and has already moved as far north as Vancouver Island. Although small, it is highly aggressive, and preys on juveniles of other crab species, as well as on clams, mussels, urchins, other fish and plants. In Alaska, all the major crab species - king, Dungeness and Tanner - could all be at risk.Another small crab of concern is the Chinese mitten crab, which has become established in the San Francisco area and may be

²³ "Coming soon to a place near you: eco-terrorist plants, animals, bugs" By Tom Heutte For the Juneau Empire © 2003

moving northward. One specimen has been found near the mouth of the Columbia River. Because this creature comes into fresh water to spawn, potentially moving hundreds of miles up rivers, it is a serious threat. . . . This is by no means an exhaustive list. . . .²⁴

OTHER GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL WEB LINKS:

- Alaska Marine Conservation Council (AMC2) <http://www.akmarine.org/>
- Tidepool <http://www.tidepool.org/>
- Prince William Sound Regional Citizen's Advisory Council (PWS/RCAC) <http://www.pwsrcac.org/>
- Oil Spill Response Institute (OSRI) www.pwssc-osri.org/
- Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOS/TC) <http://www.oilspill.state.ak.us/>
- Gulf Ecosystem Management (GEM) <http://www.oilspill.state.ak.us/>
- The North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) <http://www.nprb.org/npmri/>
- The Prince William Sound Science Center. <http://www.pwssc.gen.ak.us/frames/>

MARINE MAMMALS AND ALASKA'S FISHERIES

The Marine Mammal Act and the Endangered Species Act probably have as much control over North Pacific Fisheries as any fisheries regulatory acts. Why? Because declines of specific marine mammal stocks are often blamed on fishermen first. This is a simple – and political – reaction to very complex problems and fishermen are easy targets. If we had put the money we have spent on mostly worthless litigation into applied research, we would probably all be far ahead of where we are now in understanding all the complexities of marine interactions. But our regulatory agencies – most notably the National Marine Fisheries Service – must divert many of its valuable resources toward fighting lawsuits that charge that they are not doing their job well enough and fast enough.

Ironically, in June of 2003, the National Association of Environmental Professionals presented the 2003 "Award for Environmental Excellence in NEPA" (National Environmental Policy Act) to the Alaska Region of NOAA Fisheries and to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council for their work on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on Steller sea lion protection measures".²⁵ It was well-deserved. Both NMFS-Alaska and the NPFMC have worked long and hard over a number of years to respond to the requirements of the Biological Opinions generated by environmental lawsuits against the Agency.

Steller Sea Lions: Steller sea lions have been, as we all know, the center of attention on the marine endangered species list in Alaska. While we still do not know all the reasons for the dramatic decline in the Western herd, we are beginning to understand that the basic premise of the contentious lawsuit brought against the National Marine Fisheries Service charging that NMFS was not doing enough to curtail the commercial fishing industry was greatly flawed. Nevertheless, the suit managed to create a long chain of events which ultimately had devastating

²⁴ A recent editorial by Paula Easley of the Resource Development Council offered much caution. While recognizing the serious problem, Easley strongly advises against giving the federal government too much responsibility for the solutions. Easley thinks solutions should be local so that a governmental bureaucracy does not run away with "public interest lawsuits designed to force more lifestyle restrictions on communities and citizens. "Don't let feds invade alien species issue", Paula Easley, Anchorage Daily News Opinion, June 29, 2003

²⁵ "NOAA fisheries and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council win National Environmental Policy Act Award", NOAA Press Release, NMFS 03-AKR, June 25, 2003

impacts on the small boat fleets of the Gulf of Alaska communities from the Aleutian East Borough to Kodiak Island. This issue has probably generated more time, frustration, money and paperwork than any other single endangered species. The only good news is that some settlement of litigation has occurred and that millions of dollars have been generated in research and that collaborative research is showing strong evidence that there are a variety of reasons for the decline and competition for pollock as forage food is probably the least of these.

Good places to get a lot of information on Steller sea lions:

- NMFS Steller sea lion site: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/stellers.htm>
- The Alaska Department of Fish and Game's SSL page: http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/geninfo/special/ssl/ssl_com.htm
- The North Pacific Fishery Management Council
- National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML) Report to Congress <http://nmml.afsc.noaa.gov/>
- The North Pacific Universities Marine Mammal Research Consortium– UBC <http://www.marinemammal.org/>

Aleutian Sea Otters: A dramatic decline in sea otter population is spurring the federal government to recommend they be added to the endangered species list. While sea otter populations have increased or remained steady in other parts of Alaska, they have plummeted in the Aleutians, Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak Island since the 1980s.²⁶ However, gillnet fishermen may be exempt from any culpability if there are restrictions. Fisheries have two potential areas of interaction with sea otters: entanglement and competition for food. Burns said the gill net fishery does not appear to have much impact on sea otters and has caused no injuries or deaths.²⁷

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the agency responsible for sea otter management. They are working with the National Marine Fisheries System's observer program to help determine some of the cause of decline.

VII RESEARCH

CHECK OUT

“The future of fisheries research: online matchmaking for fishermen and scientists interested in working together. Thanks to a generous grant from NOAA Fisheries Northwest Science Center, the Pacific Marine Conservation Council (PMCC) and partners including Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission are launching the first Web-based clearinghouse for information on West Coast collaborative research. “We need fishermen and scientists working together to better understand what's really going on in the ocean, said Dan Parker, a commercial fisherman in Astoria, Oregon, and board member of PMCC.²⁸ “FishResearchWest.org, a neutral and independent Web site developed through an intensive interview process with fishermen, marine

²⁶ Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. “Declining sea otter numbers may mean endangered designation”, by Jeff Richardson, March 27, 2003

²⁷ “Data suggests gill net fishery not harming sea otters” Associated Press, February 11, 2003

²⁸ Industry Launching FishResearchWest! -- 06/23/03, Head's Up,

scientists and fishery managers, provides links to individuals with interests in research as well as to fishery research priorities, funding opportunities, and ongoing projects.

This is one of many projects all over the country. There is a lot of marine research going on – especially in the North Pacific - but it seems it is never enough. The challenge is getting *applied science* that works for us. Your comments are certainly welcome to both us and any of these groups.

- The North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) met May 20th in Anchorage. A newly-appointed 10-member Advisory Panel met the day before.
<http://www.nprb.org/npmri/>
- University of Alaska-Fairbanks <http://www.uaf.edu/>
- University of Alaska – Southeast <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/>
- Kodiak Fish Tech Center
- Office of Fisheries Development
<http://www.dced.state.ak.us/cbd/seafood/seafood.htm>
- The Prince William Sound Science Center Board of Directors met in Cordova in May. <http://www.pwssc.gen.ak.us/frames/>
 - Oil Spill Response Institute (OSRI) www.pwssc-osri.org/
- Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOS/TC) <http://www.oilspill.state.ak.us/>
 - Gulf Ecosystem Management (GEM) <http://www.oilspill.state.ak.us/>
 - Prince William Sound Regional Citizen’s Advisory Council (PWS/RCAC)
<http://www.pwsrcaac.org/>
 - Cook Inlet Regional Citizen’s Advisory Council (CI/RCAC)
<http://www.circac.org/>
- Alaska SeaLife Center) <http://www.alaskasealife.org/>
- Arctic Institute of the North <http://www.ucalgary.ca/aina/>
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration / National Marine Fisheries Service NOAA/ NMFS - main web site – www.nmfs.noaa.gov– Alaska fish artist Ray Troll has designed their new web page... Also – Subscribe to their “Fish News” and have automatically delivered to your e-mail. This site will connect you to the numerous other NMFS sites of importance to you.

VIII IMPORTANT DATES

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- North Pacific Fishery Management Council: Check the NPFMC for their 2003-05 meeting schedule and for committee meetings, etc. Next scheduled begins October 6th in Anchorage.
- Alaska Board of Fisheries – Check the BOF web site for their 2003-04 calendar
- National Marine Fisheries Service- November 13-15, 2003 Washington, DC. First fisheries-management conference co-sponsored by the eight regional fishery management councils. For more information check the NPFMC web site.
- Gulf of Alaska Coastal Communities Coalition (GOAC3): Our annual meeting is in October See our web site at www.goac3.org for this and many other important fisheries dates.

IX WHERE TO GET OTHER INFORMATION

LEXICON (OR: that strange fishery code) Does the jargon of fisheries management confuse you? You aren't alone. There are several hundred, probably thousands, of acronyms that are used in fisheries management. We've tried to keep current with most of them. You can request comprehensive list of acronyms from our office.

OTHER WEB LINKS OF INTEREST

The ALASKA Report <http://www.alaskareport.com/>
North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/>
Alaska Board of Fisheries <http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/boards/fishinfo/bofhome.htm>
State of Alaska - Department of Fish & Game <http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/adfghome.htm>
State of Alaska - Department of Fish & Game Division of Commercial Fisheries
International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)
<http://www.iphc.washington.edu/halcom/default.htm>
United Fishermen of Alaska <http://www.alaska.net/~usag/ufa/>
Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) <http://www.afdf.org/>
Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) <http://www.alaskaseafood.org/>
Alaska Seafood Marketing Report <http://asmi.safeshopper.com/34/512.htm?783>
Alaska Symphony of Seafood <http://www.symphonyofseafood.com/>
Alaska Department of Community & Economic Development <http://www.dced.state.ak.us/>
Fishing For The Future <http://www.fishingforthefuture.org/>
Fish Expo & Work Boat Northwest-- <http://www.fishexposeattle.com/>
Heads Up! -- <http://www.heads-up.net/>
International Boston Seafood Show <http://www.bostonseafood.com/>
National Fisheries Institute <http://www.nfi.org/>
Marine Fisheries Conservation Network (MFCN) <http://www.conservefish.org/>
International West Coast Seafood Show <http://www.westcoastseafood.com/>
At-Sea Processors Association (APA) <http://www.atsea.org/>
Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA) <http://www.pspafish.net/>
Saltonstall Kennedy Grant Program <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/skhome.html>
State of Alaska - Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Health's seafood page <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/>
United Salmon Association <http://www.ptialaska.net/~usalmon/>
University of Alaska Fishery Industrial Technology Center, Kodiak
<http://www.sfos.uaf.edu/fitc/>
University of Alaska School of Fisheries & Ocean Sciences <http://www.sfos.uaf.edu/>
University of Alaska Sea Grant College Program <http://www.uaf.edu/seagrant/>
University of Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program <http://www.uaf.edu/map/>
USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) <http://www.fas.usda.gov/>
Wild Salmon Center (Visit for more information on the 2001 Pacific Rim Wild Salmon and Steelhead Conference, Nov. 5-6.) <http://www.wildsalmoncenter.org/>
World Trade Center Alaska <http://www.wtcak.org/>
FishLink.com www.fishlink.info/fishlink/
Comfish at www.ComFish.org

STAT PACK: Looking for the latest statistical information on your fishery? Check out

- the National Marine Fisheries Service <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/>
- *Pacific Fishing Year Book 2003* March 2003 <http://www.pfmag.com/>
- Salmon Market Information Service
www.alaskaseafood.org/fishingprocessing/bulletin

X JOIN US: SOMETHING YOU CAN DO NOW

As you can see, the marine-related issues facing our coastal communities are multiple and complex. The Gulf of Alaska Coastal Communities Coalition (GOAC3) is a 501(c)6 non-profit, working hard to protect Gulf of Alaska communities' *sustainable* access to adjacent marine resources in perpetuity. We can't do this without your participation and without the help of our members and many other organizations. We are one piece of the puzzle, but an important piece. Please join us in this effort. Contact us directly or through our web site at www.goac3.org