

# Appendix B

## Appendix B - Scoping Process

### Scoping Document (May 18, 2001)

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

Annotated Schedule and Milestones

Crosswalk of Management Measures in the Alternatives

Issues to evaluate associated with implementing Steller sea lion protection measures

Template for submitting scoping comments (optional)

### Tribal Governments

Letter to Tribal Governments (June 4, 2001)

Mailing List used to send Letters to Tribal Governments

### Written Comment Letters Received During Scoping

National Environmental Trust WorldWildlife Fund (June 22, 2001)



## **Appendix B: Scoping Process**

Scoping, one of the early activities when conducting an environmental assessment, is designed to provide an opportunity for the public, agencies, and other interest groups to provide input on potential issues associated with the proposed project. Scoping is used to identify the range of environmental issues related to the proposed project and can also identify alternatives to meet the purpose and need of the action considered in the SEIS. Scoping is generally accomplished through written communications, statements at public meetings, or formal and informal consultation with agency officials, interested individuals, organizations, and groups. In this case, scoping was conducted in conjunction with other meetings held by the Council, and the Council's advisory committees: Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, and the Council's RPA Committee. Meetings occurred in Juneau, Kodiak, and Anchorage, Alaska and in Seattle, Washington, in December 2000, January, February, March, April, May, and June 2001.

The formal scoping period for this SEIS opened with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to produce a SEIS, published in the *Federal Register* on May 15, 2001 (66 FR 26828). In the NOI, comments were solicited on what issues should be addressed in this analysis and what alternatives meet the purpose and need, including a "no action" alternative. A Scoping Document (copy attached) containing the NOI, annotated schedule and milestone information, crosswalk of management measures in the alternatives, issues to evaluate associated with implementing the Steller sea lion protection measures, and a template for submitting comments was prepared and distributed broadly. Letters (copy attached) containing information about this analysis were also sent to a list of Tribal Governments in Alaska to draw their attention to it and solicit comments. Public comments were due to NMFS by June 22, 2001. All public comments received prior to and during the formal scoping period were considered by NMFS and used to identify the key environmental issues to be addressed. No replies to the letters to Tribal Governments in Alaska were received. One comment letter was received in response to the NOI. It is attached.

### **Issues and Areas of Concern Identified for Analysis**

The various alternatives analyzed in this SEIS will have differing effects on several aspects of the human environment. During scoping, several issues and areas of concern with respect to the effects of the fishery management measures being applied were identified as important aspects of the human environment that should be analyzed in detail. Therefore, this analysis will pay special attention to the effects of the management measures on:

- Pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel stock status and biomass distribution;
- Temporal and spatial distribution of fishing effort;
- Prey availability for Steller sea lions;
- Areas of special concern for Steller sea lions;
- Other marine mammals;
- Seabirds;
- Bycatch of prohibited species;
- Incidental catch of other groundfish species;
- Essential fish habitat; and
- Socioeconomic impacts.

A bulletized list of issues identified is contained in the attached Scoping Document.

**Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures in the Alaska Groundfish  
Fisheries  
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement**

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery Management Plan  
Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska Fishery Management Plan

*comments due by June 22, 2001*

Contents:

1. Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement
2. Annotated Schedule and Milestones
3. Crosswalk of Management Measures in the Alternatives
4. Issues to evaluate associated with implementing Steller sea lion protection measures
5. Template for submitting scoping comments (optional)

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Co-Project Leaders:

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NMFS Alaska Region  
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funded, or authorized by a Federal agency. Section 4(b)(2) of the Act requires that we designate or revise critical habitat based upon the best scientific and commercial data available, after taking into consideration the economic impact of specifying any particular area as critical habitat. Based upon the previously published proposal to designate critical habitat for *Sidalcea oregana* var. *calva*, we have prepared a draft economic analysis of the proposed critical habitat designation. The draft economic analysis is available on the Internet and from the mailing addresses in the Public Comments Solicited section below.

#### Public Comments Solicited

We will accept written comments and information during this re-opened comment period. If you wish to comment, you may submit your comments and materials concerning this proposal by any of several methods:

(1) You may submit written comments and information to the Manager, Western Washington Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 102, Lacey, Washington 98503-1263.

(2) You may send comments by electronic mail (e-mail) to: [fw1www\\_checker\\_mallow@r1.fws.gov](mailto:fw1www_checker_mallow@r1.fws.gov). If you submit comments by e-mail, please submit them as an ASCII file and avoid the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include "Attn: RIN 1018-AH05" and your name and return address in your e-mail message. If you do not receive a confirmation from the system that we have received your e-mail message, contact us directly by calling our Western Washington Office at telephone number 360/753-9440.

(3) You may hand-deliver comments to our Western Washington Office at the address given above.

Comments and materials received, as well as supporting documentation used in preparation of the proposal to designate critical habitat, will be available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the address under (1) above. Copies of the draft economic analysis are available on the Internet at "[www.r1.fws.gov](http://www.r1.fws.gov)" or by writing to the Manager at the address under (1) above.

#### Author

The primary author of this notice is Ted Thomas (see ADDRESSES section).

#### Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: March 14, 2001.

Rowan W. Gould,  
Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 01-12173 Filed 5-14-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-U

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 216

[Docket No. 990927266-0240-02; I.D. 972699A]

RIN 0648-AM62

#### Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Navy Operations of Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low Frequency Active Sonar

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of extension of comment deadline.

**SUMMARY:** Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, on March 19, 2001, NMFS published a proposed rule (66 FR 15375) to authorize the taking of marine mammals incidental to the world-wide deployment of the U.S. Navy's SURTASS LFA sonar. Please refer to this document for additional information on this proposed action. By this document, NMFS announces an extension of the comment deadline.

**DATES:** Comments must be postmarked no later than May 31, 2001. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the Internet.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be addressed to Donna Wieting, Chief, Marine Mammal Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kenneth R. Hollingshead, NMFS (301) 713-2055, ext. 128.

A copy of the Navy's application is available and may be obtained by writing to this address or by telephoning the contact listed here (see FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than

commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and regulations are issued.

Under section 101(a)(5)(A) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, on March 19, 2001, NMFS published a proposed rule (66 FR 15375) to authorize the taking of marine mammals incidental to the world-wide deployment of the U.S. Navy's SURTASS LFA sonar. Please refer to this document for additional information on this proposed action.

On April 16, 2001 (66 FR 19413), NMFS announced an extension of the comment period until May 18, 2001, and the dates and locations for public hearings on this matter. By this document, the comment period for this proposed action is hereby extended until May 31, 2001.

Dated: May 9, 2001.

Wanda Cain,  
Acting Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.  
[FR Doc. 01-12082 Filed 5-14-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[I.D. 050901A]

#### Groundfish Fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area and the Gulf of Alaska

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of intent; scoping process; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces its intent to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) to modify certain fishery management measures governing the Federally managed groundfish fisheries that are conducted in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) to protect the endangered Steller sea lion population.

The scoping process is occurring in parallel with meetings of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and the Council's Reasonable and Prudent Alternative Committee. In addition to collecting scoping information at these meetings, NMFS is accepting written comments on the issues, alternatives, and impacts that should be considered in this analysis.

**DATES:** Written comments will be accepted through June 22, 2001. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for meeting times and special accommodations.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments and requests to be included on a mailing list of persons interested in the SEIS should be sent to Lori Gravel, Records Management Office, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, or fax to (907) 586-7557. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for meeting locations and special accommodations.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Tamra Faris, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, phone number (907) 586-7645, or tamra.faris@noaa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the United States has exclusive fishery management authority over all fishery resources found within the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The management of these fishery resources is vested in the Secretary of Commerce and in regional Fishery Management Councils. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has the responsibility to prepare fishery management plans for those marine resources off Alaska, which it finds require conservation and management.

Management of the Federal groundfish fishery located off Alaska in the EEZ is carried out under the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area and the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMPs). These FMPs, their amendments, and implementing regulations (found at 50 CFR part 679) are developed in accordance with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. When implementing these FMPs, their amendments, and regulations, FMPs must also comply with other applicable Federal laws and executive orders, notably the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Executive Order 12866, and the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

In accordance with section 7 of the ESA, NMFS issued on November 30, 2000, a comprehensive Biological Opinion on both groundfish FMPs. The Biological Opinion determined that the BSAI and GOA walleye pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel fisheries as

prosecuted under the FMPs and implementing regulations jeopardized a listed species, the western population of Steller sea lions, and that the FMPs adversely modified designated critical habitat of Steller sea lions due to competition for prey and modification of their prey field. The Biological Opinion included a Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) designed to mitigate the adverse effects of the FMPs and regulations. The November 30, 2000, RPA contains various protective measures such as total allowable catch reductions, critical habitat harvest limits, closure areas and an experimental monitoring program.

On December 21, 2000, Public Law 106-554 (Pub. L. 106-554) was signed by the President. Among other things, this law established a one-year phase in for implementing the November 30, 2000, RPA as well as provisions affecting its implementation in 2001. For 2002, Pub. L. 105-554 at section 209 (c)(2) states that the November 30, 2000, RPA will become fully effective on January 1, 2002, as revised if necessary and appropriate based on independent scientific review and other new information. As a result of this provision, the Council is developing alternatives to the November 30, 2000, RPA. NMFS has determined that changes to the FMPs and their implementing regulations to protect Steller sea lions may be controversial and could result in significant impacts on the human environment. Therefore, NMFS has decided that the decision making process should be informed through preparation of an SEIS.

#### Scoping Process

NMFS is seeking information from the public through the scoping process on the range of alternatives to be analyzed as well as environmental and economic issues to consider in the analysis. The scoping process for this SEIS consists of written comments received by NMFS in response to this Notice of Intent as well as public comments received at the Council and Council committee meetings described below. NMFS plans to issue a draft SEIS in August 2001 and a final SEIS in November 2001.

#### Alternatives

The alternatives currently under consideration for analysis in the SEIS include:

1. *Alternative A. No Action.* Regulatory measures implemented by emergency rule, and designed to protect

Steller sea lions, would expire. Although this is not currently a viable alternative, as it is non-compliant with the ESA and P.L. 106-554, it is being analyzed because it is the no action alternative and will be useful for comparative purposes.

2. *Alternative B.* Implement the suite of Steller sea lion protection measures that were in place for the year 2000 pollock and Atka mackerel fisheries, and implement measures for the Pacific cod fishery that include seasonal apportionments and harvest limits within critical habitat.

3. *Alternative C.* Implement the measures detailed in Alternative B, and prohibit all trawling for groundfish within critical habitat (as was the case under the Court ordered injunction on the groundfish fisheries that began in August 2000).

4. *Alternative D.* Implement the November 30, 2000, RPA in its entirety.

5. *Alternative E.* Implement the RPA currently being developed by the Council and its Committees.

#### Public Meetings

Public comments on the scope of the analysis, the alternatives under consideration, and issues to be analyzed may be made at the following meetings and will be considered in preparation of the SEIS. The Council will be meeting in Kodiak, Alaska, on June 6 through 11, 2001, at the Westmark Hotel, 236 West Rezanof Drive, Kodiak, AK. Steller sea lion fishery management measures will be discussed by the Council, the Council's Advisory Panel, and the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee under item C-1 of the agenda. The Council's Steller Sea Lion RPA Committee will be meeting in Seattle, WA, on May 21 through 24, 2001, at the NMFS Alaska Fishery Science Center, Building 4 Room 2039, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA.

#### Special Accommodations

The meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Helen Allen (907) 271-2809 at least 5 days before the meeting dates.

Dated: May 9, 2001.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**  
*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 01-12218 Filed 5-14-01; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

**Steller Sea Lion Protective Measures  
(BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMP Amendments)  
Draft SEIS Annotated Schedule in Major Milestones**

Milestone	Date
Scoping	
Scoping Process: The Analytical Team is using all discussions of Steller sea lion protection measures at Council and Council RPA Committee meetings to scope the analysis.	Began in December 2000 and continuing through June 22, 2001
Identification of alternatives and issues that need to be analyzed. A first cut at alternatives and analytical issues was made Feb 1, 2001, refinement through June 2001	February - June 2001
The Regional Administrator wrote a letter to the Council advising of the need to prepare an environmental impact statement on this action.	February 1, 2001
Notice of Intent to Prepare an SEIS. <i>Federal Register</i> Volume 66 26828.	Published May 15, 2001.
SEIS Analytical Alternatives Council and the Analytical Team initially set the range of alternatives at January and February 2001 meetings. Each alternative is a suite of fishery management measures that together comprise the SSL protection measures of the groundfish fisheries. We think the spectrum of alternatives is spanned with five different suites of management measures, thus we have five alternatives (Alternatives A, B, C, D, and E). The suite of measures that result from NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion RPA is known as “Alternative D”. The Council is being given an opportunity to develop an alternative. It will be known as “Alternative E”.	January-June 2001
Alternative E: The Council appointed a committee to do the pre-work drafting their alternative. The June Council meeting is the point at which the Council will specify to the Analytical Team the particulars of management measures in their alternative.	June 10, 2001

Milestone	Date
<p>Preferred Alternative: It has not been decided whether a preferred alternative will be designated in the Draft SEIS. The Council may opine on that topic at their June meeting. Whether any alternative is designated preferred or not, all alternatives will receive equal analytical treatment in the NEPA analysis.</p>	<p>June-July 2001</p>
<p>SEIS Outline / SEIS Table of Contents: An outline of the analysis is one means of communicating analytical design with the Analytical Team and the Council.</p>	<p>First draft February 2001; revisions following every couple weeks</p>
<p>ESA Section 7 Consultation - This is a parallel project. Formal consultation under section 7 of the ESA is only being reinitiated for Alternative E. The ESA document is to be contained in the subject NEPA analysis (SEIS) as Appendix A. As such, the Draft BO undergoes public review with the Draft SEIS and all comments received on it are reproduced and responded to in the Final SEIS.</p>	<p>June - October 2001</p>
<p>Analysis and Writing of the Draft SEIS</p>	<p>February - August 2001</p>
<p>Project Management: Weekly meetings, usually conference calls, some with summary minutes circulated to a wider mailing list, of managers and analysts were started in February and will run through completion of the Draft SEIS. Agenda varies according to stage of the developing analysis.</p>	<p>February - August 2001</p>
<p>The Regional Administrator signed a tasking memorandum that designates the Analytical Team for this analysis. Tamra Faris, NMFS, and David Witherell, Council Staff are Co-Project Leaders; approximately 40 staff are contributing to the analysis. The memo also distributed a draft schedule of the major milestones, a crosswalk between alternatives and fishery management measure variables, and a draft table of contents.</p>	<p>April 19, 2001</p>
<p>Meeting of Analytical Team members with Project Leaders to go over their understanding of NEPA terms including determination of significance for direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts.</p>	<p>April 24, 2001, Juneau, April 30, 2001 Seattle May 2, 2001 Seattle</p>
<p>Establish contract with URS/Dames and Moore for the cumulative impacts analysis section using information provided by the NMFS Analytical Team.</p>	<p>contract signed funded by NPFMC</p>
<p>Establish contract with Northern Economics for preparation of a social impact assessment.</p>	<p>contract signed May 2001, deliverable due late July</p>



Milestone	Date
Deadline for analysts to complete their direct and indirect impacts analyses and submit them to the Project Leaders.	July 23, 2001
Deadline for analysts to complete their cumulative impacts analysis and submit them to the Project Leaders.	August 8, 2001
Deadline for submission of draft Biological Opinion on Alternative E to the Project Leaders.	August 8, 2001
Distribution and Review of Draft SEIS	
Project Leaders send Draft SEIS to printer advancing 10 bound copies to HQ on the same date with an understanding that five of those bound copies need to be filed by the NOAA NEPA Coordinator with the Environmental Protection Agency by August 17 to start the public comment period.	August 14, 2001
Council staff mail Draft SEIS to Council members and public.	August 20, 2001
NMFS AKR post Draft SEIS on SSL website.	August 24, 2001
Notice of Availability of Draft SEIS publishes in <i>Federal Register</i> (serves as day 1 of the 45-day minimum public comment period). If it doesn't make it; August 31 is fallback date.	August 24, 2001, or August 31, 2001 fallback
Special September Council Meeting in Anchorage: The Draft SEIS is presented to the AP, SSC and Council by Project Leaders and certain of the lead analysts. Public comments will be taken. If the Council articulates a desire for additional information or analysis (very specifically) the Analytical Team will attempt to assemble that additional information or analysis for initial review at the October Council meeting.	September 5-9, 2001

Milestone	Date
<p>Regular October Council meeting in Seattle. Project Leaders will present any revised analytical portions of the Draft SEIS (doesn't mean we are doing a whole second draft). Analytical Team will take down any more public comments on the Draft SEIS. The Council may affirm or change a previously expressed opinion as to what the "Preferred Alternative" is to be designated in the Final SEIS. If the Council does not specifically designate a "Preferred Alternative" the alternative closest to the motion passed by the Council will be designated the preferred alternative.</p> <p><b>The Council motion, assuming it is compliant with ESA, becomes the Regulatory Action that is put in place by Emergency Rule on January 1, 2002.</b></p>	October 1-8, 2001
<p>Deadline for public comments on Draft SEIS (assuming August 25 was day 1, if August 31 was day 1 then the deadline is October 15).</p>	October 8, 2001 or October 15, 2001 fallback
<p>Respond to comments on Draft SEIS, prepare Final SEIS. (Work to be done by the designated Analytical Team).</p>	October 2001
<p>Finalize the Section 7 Biological Opinion on Alternative E.</p>	October 19, 2001
<p>Project Leaders send Final SEIS to printer advancing 10 bound copies to HQ on the same date with an understanding that five of those bound copies need to be filed by the NOAA NEPA Coordinator with the Environmental Protection Agency before November 9 to start the 30 day comment period (some people call this a waiting period or cooling off period).</p>	November 1, 2001
<p>Notice of Availability of Final SEIS publishes in <i>Federal Register</i> (30 day comment period).</p>	November 16, 2001 no later than December 1, 2001
<p>Council meeting in Anchorage. The SSL Protection Measures are not on the Council agenda at this meeting.</p>	December 3-10, 2001
<p>Record of Decision on SEIS (publish SSL management measures rule in the <i>Federal Register</i>). If the ROD is first published as an "emergency rule" to get something in place before January 1, 2002, the same SEIS will be used for the final rulemaking, unless substantial changes are made to the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns. If the latter, we will prepare a supplement to the Final SEIS.</p>	No later than December 31, 2001

## Crosswalk of Management Measures in the Analytical Alternatives

last updated May 17, 2001

Alternative Table - Summary of fishery management measures associated with the different analytical alternatives. Only the management measures that vary between alternatives are listed; management measures common to all alternatives - the rest of the 679 regulations that are common to all alternatives are not listed.

Management Measure	Alt. A - No Action. Regulatory measures implemented by emergency rules, and designated to protect Steller sea lion would expire	Alt. B - 2000 fishery management measures (without the injunction) Additionally, there may be management measures for P. cod.	Alt. C - 2000 fishery management measures with the injunction.	Alt. D - RPA from the 2000 Biological Opinion	Alt. E - Council modified RPA
No transit zones within 3 nm of 37 rookery sites	YES	YES	YES	YES	
No fishing zones within 3 nm of 114 haulout sites	NO	NO	NO	YES	
Closure within 10 or 20 nm of 37 rookeries to all trawling year-round	YES	YES	YES	NO	
Closure to pollock fishing within 10 or 20 nm of 75 haulouts, seasonally or year-round based on use by sea lions	NO	YES	YES	NO	
BSAI-Four seasons for pollock inside sea lion critical habitat foraging areas	NO	NO	NO	YES	
BSAI-Two seasons (40:60% allocation) outside CH, continuation of BS fishery coops established under AFA	NO (two seasons overall only)	YES	YES	YES	

	Alt. A -	Alt. B -	Alt. C -	Alt. D -	Alt. E -
GOA pollock fishery distributed over 4 seasons (30:15:30:25 % allocation)	THREE seasons (25:42:33)	YES	YES	NO	
Atka mackerel fishery measures include: VMS requirement	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Atka mackerel: two equal seasons	YES	YES	YES	NO	
Atka mackerel: restrictions on harvests in critical habitat	YES	YES	YES	NO	
Atka mackerel: restrictions on harvest in AI	NO	YES	YES	NO	
Global control rule for setting pollock TAC	NO	NO	NO	YES	
Closure of all CH to trawl fishing	NO	NO	YES	NO	
Red/green open closed critical habitat areas	NO	NO	NO	YES	
Catch restrictions in open critical habitat based on seasonal availability of biomass	NO	NO	NO	YES	
Two seasons outside critical habitat (40/60%) and 4 seasons inside for pollock, P. cod, and Atka mackerel	NO	NO	NO	YES	

## List

**Alternative A** No Action. Regulatory measures implemented by emergency rule, and designed to protect Steller sea lions, would expire. *Note that this is not a viable alternative, as it is non-compliant with the ESA and Pub. L. 106-554.*

**Alternative B** Implement the suite of RPA measures that were in place for the 2000 pollock and Atka mackerel fisheries, and implement measures for the Pacific cod fishery that include seasonal apportionments and harvest limits within critical habitat.

**Alternative C** Implement the measures detailed in Alternative 2, and prohibit all trawling within critical habitat (injunction).

**Alternative D** The RPA detailed in the November 30, 2000 Biological Opinion will be implemented in its entirety.

**Alternative E** The RPA developed by the Council and its Committees.

## More Details:

**Alternative A** Under this alternative, the regulatory measures implemented by emergency rule, and designed to protect Steller sea lions, would expire. The measures that would stay in place to protect sea lions would include:

Applicable to all fisheries:

- No transit zones within 3 nm of 37 rookeries.
- Closure within 10 nm of 37 rookeries to all trawling year-round, some extending to 20 nm on a seasonal basis.

Applicable to the Atka mackerel fisheries:

- Atka mackerel fishery: two equal seasonal TAC apportionment, with restrictions on harvest within critical habitat, and a VMS requirement.

**Alternative B** Implement the suite of RPA measures that were in place for the 2000 pollock and Atka mackerel fisheries, and implement measures for the Pacific cod fishery that include seasonal apportionments and harvest limits within critical habitat.

Applicable to all fisheries:

- No transit zones within 3 nm of 37 rookeries.
- Closure within 10 or 20 nm of 37 rookeries to all trawling year-round.

Applicable to pollock fisheries:

- Closure to pollock fishing within 10 or 20 nm of 75 haulouts, seasonally or year-round based on use by sea lions.
- In the Bering Sea pollock fishery: four seasons with harvest limits within sea lion critical habitat foraging areas; and two seasons (40:60% allocation) outside critical habitat.
- In the Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery: fishery distributed over 4 seasons (30:15:30:25).
- Closure of the Aleutian Islands to pollock fishing.

Applicable to the Atka mackerel fisheries:

- Atka mackerel fishery: two equal seasonal TAC apportionment, with restrictions on harvest within critical habitat, and a VMS requirement.

Applicable to the Pacific cod fisheries:

- In the BSAI cod fishery: separate TACs would be established for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, two seasons (A season Jan 20-April 30 at 40% of TAC; B season May 1-Nov 1 at 60% of TAC) with harvest limits within critical habitat based on best estimates of biomass. Using these estimates, the Bering Sea TAC limits within CH are 20% in the A season and 3.6% in the B season. In the Aleutian Islands, the TAC limits within CH are 20% in the A season and 48.3% in the B season.
- In the GOA cod fishery: two seasons (A season Jan 20-April 30 at 40% of TAC; B season May 1-Nov 1 at 60% of TAC) with harvest limits within critical habitat based on best estimates of biomass. Based on these estimates, the TAC limits within CH to start with are 20% in the A season and 31.8% in the B season.

**Alternative C** Implement the measures detailed in Alternative 2, and prohibit all trawling within critical habitat (injunction).

Applicable to all fisheries:

- No transit zones within 3 nm of 37 rookeries.
- Closure of all critical habitat within the EEZ to all trawling year-round.

Applicable to pollock fisheries:

- In the Bering Sea pollock fishery: four seasons with harvest limits within sea lion critical habitat foraging areas (note: no trawling would be allowed within CH, so the TAC allocation would be essentially forgone); and two seasons (40:60% allocation) outside critical habitat.
- In the Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery: fishery distributed over 4 seasons (30:15:30:25).
- Closure of the Aleutian Islands to pollock fishing.

Applicable to the Atka mackerel fisheries:

- Atka mackerel fishery: two equal seasonal TAC apportionment, with restrictions on harvest within critical habitat (note: no trawling would be allowed within CH, so the TAC allocation would be essentially forgone), and a VMS requirement.

Applicable to the Pacific cod fisheries:

- In the BSAI cod fishery: separate TACs would be established for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, two seasons (A season Jan 20-April 30 at 40% of TAC; B season May 1-Nov 1 at 60% of TAC) with harvest limits within critical habitat based on best estimates of biomass.
- In the GOA cod fishery: two seasons (A season Jan 20-April 30 at 40% of TAC; B season May 1-Nov 1 at 60% of TAC) with harvest limits within critical habitat based on best estimates of biomass.

**Alternative D** The RPA detailed in the November 30, 2000 Biological Opinion will be implemented in its entirety.

Applicable to all fisheries:

- No transit zones within 3 nm of 37 rookeries.
- No fishing zones within 3 nm of all major haulouts.

Applicable to all pollock, Pacific cod and Atka mackerel fisheries:

- Application of the Global Control Rule, whereby the allowable biological catch (ABC) for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel in the BSAI and GOA will be reduced when the spawning biomass is estimated to be less than 40% of the projected unfished biomass. There would be no directed fishing for a species when the spawning biomass is estimated to be less than 20% of the projected unfished biomass.
- Closure areas to directed fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel inside CH-RFRPA sites (designated in the BiOp as Areas 2,4,6,8, 9,10,11,13).
- Fishing for pollock, Pacific cod and Atka mackerel with trawl gear will be prohibited from November 1 through January 20.
- Fishing for pollock, Pacific cod and Atka mackerel will be prohibited from November 1 through January 20 inside critical habitat.
- Outside of critical habitat, NMFS will establish 2 evenly spaced seasons for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel fisheries in the EBS, GOA, and AI. An amount of the annual TAC would be apportioned to each season based on the approach used in the 1998 Biological Opinion so that 40% of the annual TAC is available in the winter season (A/B seasons) and 60% would be available in the fall season (C/D seasons). Inside critical habitat, four seasons will be established for the open CH-RFRPA zones to ensure against high removal rates and possible localized depletions of prey in the most important area for Steller sea lions. This measure will evenly subdivide the combined winter allocation of 40% to the A and B seasons (20% each to the A and B season inside CH), and the combined fall allocation of 60% to the C and D seasons (30% each to the C and D season inside CH).
- Catch limits for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel inside critical habitat will be established based on the proportion of biomass estimated to be in critical habitat open to fishing to the total biomass in the overall management area.

Applicable to pollock fisheries:

- A portion of the Aleutian Islands will be open to pollock fishing.

Applicable to the Pacific cod fisheries:

- The Pacific cod TAC will be split from a combined BSAI TAC to separate TACs for the EBS and the AI based on the distribution of the stock.

**Alternative E** The RPA (suite of management measures) developed by the Council and its Committees.

**Table comparing application of management tools under the different alternatives.**

<b>Management Tool</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>
<b>Control Rule</b>	Amendment 56 Tiers	Amendment 56 Tiers	Amendment 56 Tiers	BiOp Global Control Rule	
<b>No transit zones</b>	3 nm no-transit zones around principal rookeries.	3 nm no-transit zones around principal rookeries.	3 nm no-transit zones around principal rookeries.	3 nm no-transit zones around principal rookeries.	
<b>Area Closures</b>	No trawling 10/20 nm from 37 rookeries	No pollock fishing in AI area. No trawling 10/20 nm from 37 rookeries	No pollock fishing in AI area. No trawling in critical habitat.	All CH/RFRPA sites designated as restricted or closed to fishing for pollock, cod, and mackerel.	
<b>Season Closures</b>	No trawling Jan 1- Jan 20.	No trawling Jan 1- Jan 20. No trawling for pollock 11/1- 1/20.	No trawling Jan 1- Jan 20. No trawling for pollock 11/1- 1/20.	No trawling Jan 1- Jan 20. No trawling for pollock, cod, or mackerel 11/1 - 1/20. No fishing for pollock, cod, or mackerel inside CH 11/1 - 1/20	
<b>Seasons and Apportionments - pollock</b>	BSAI - 1/20 (45%), 9/1 (55%) GOA - 1/20-4/1 (25%), 6/1-7/1 (35%), 9/1-12/31 (40%)	BSAI - 1/20, 4/1 (40%); 6/10, 8/20-11/1 (60%) GOA - 1/20-3/1 (30%), 3/15-6/1 (15%); 8/20-9/15 (30%), 10/1-11/1 (25%)	BSAI - 1/20, 4/1 (40%); 6/10, 8/20-11/1 (60%) GOA - 1/20-3/1 (30%), 3/15-6/1 (15%); 8/20-9/15 (30%), 10/1-11/1 (25%)	BSAI - 1/20 (40%), 6/11 (60%) GOA - 1/20 (40%), 6/11 (60%)	
<b>Seasons and apportionments - cod</b>	BSAI trawl - 1/20 BSAI fixed -1/1, 1/5, 9/1 GOA trawl -1/20 GOA fixed - 1/1	BS trawl + fixed - 1/20-4/30 (40%), 5/1-11/1 (60%) AI trawl + fixed - 1/20-4/30 (40%), 5/1-11/1 (60%) GOA trawl + fixed - 1/20-4/30 (40%), 5/1-11/1 (60%)	BS trawl + fixed - 1/20-4/30 (40%), 5/1-11/1 (60%) AI trawl + fixed - 1/20-4/30 (40%), 5/1-11/1 (60%) GOA trawl + fixed - 1/20-4/30 (40%), 5/1-11/1 (60%)	BSAI - 1/20 (40%), 6/11 (60%) GOA - 1/20 (40%), 6/11 (60%)	
<b>Seasons and apportionments - mackerel</b>	AI - 1/20-4/15 (50%), 9/1-10/31 (50%)	AI - 1/20-4/15 (50%), 9/1-10/31 (50%)	AI - 1/20-4/15 (50%), 9/1-10/31 (50%)	BSAI - 1/20 (40%), 6/11 (60%) GOA - 1/20 (40%), 6/11 (60%)	



<p><b>Catch Limits inside CH</b></p>	<p>mackerel: incremental change to 40% inside CH and 60% outside in 2002.</p>	<p>mackerel: incremental change to 40% inside CH and 60% outside in 2002.  <u>BSAI Pollock:</u> maximum TAC % allowed inside CH/RFRPA sites = 20% in A+B season combined (15% for A + B singly), 4.5% in C season and 7.5% in D season.  <u>BS cod:</u> maximum TAC % allowed inside CH = 20% (A), 3.6% (B).  <u>AI cod:</u> maximum TAC % allowed inside CH = 20% (A), 48.3% (B).  <u>GOA cod:</u> maximum TAC % allowed inside CH = 20% (A), 31.8% (B season).</p>	<p>mackerel: incremental change to 40% inside CH and 60% outside in 2002.  <u>BSAI Pollock:</u> maximum TAC % allowed inside CH/RFRPA sites = 20% in A+B season combined (15% for A + B singly), 4.5% in C season and 7.5% in D season.  <u>BS cod:</u> maximum TAC % allowed inside CH = 20% (A), 3.6% (B).  <u>AI cod:</u> maximum TAC % allowed inside CH = 20% (A), 48.3% (B).  <u>GOA cod:</u> maximum TAC % allowed inside CH = 20% (A), 31.8% (B season).</p>	<p>pollock, cod, and mackerel: 4 seasons (1/20, 4/1, 5,11 8/22) inside CH/RFRPA with catch limits based on season and area specific biomass estimates.</p>	
<p><b>Monitoring Requirements</b></p>	<p>Obs. Program all fisheries, and VMS for mackerel fishery.</p>	<p>Obs. Program all fisheries, and VMS for mackerel fishery.</p>	<p>Obs. Program all fisheries, and VMS for mackerel fishery.</p>	<p>Obs. Program all fisheries, and VMS for pollock, cod, and mackerel fisheries.</p>	
<p><b>Experimental Design</b></p>	<p>small scale: Kodiak and Segum localized depletion testing</p>	<p>small scale: Kodiak and Segum localized depletion testing</p>	<p>small scale: Kodiak and Segum localized depletion testing</p>	<p>large scale: 4 sets of restricted/closed areas for comparison</p>	

## **Issues to evaluate associated with implementing Steller sea lion protection measures**

last revised May 18, 2001

### Biological Issues:

#### Endangered Species Act (ESA) Issues:

Effects on ESA listed species - Steller sea lions (prey availability), listed great whales, listed Pacific salmon, and short tailed albatross

- effect of the "global control rule" on biomass (in relation to the unfished level), compare the time and level below B40% between the different alternatives - what would be the effects on listed species?
- analysis of the differential effects of gear types on "local" or small scale fish populations.
- analyses of pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel biomass by season and area to better evaluate biomass on a scale meaningful to a foraging marine mammal.
- for cumulative impacts analysis, further analyze historic local harvest rates including the cumulative impacts of State managed fisheries in relation to the bullet above.
- telemetry data needs to be included in the analysis and interpretation of impacts to Steller sea lions adjusted accordingly.
- overview ESA requirements on actions affecting listed species. Explain the requirements for recovering the listed species, or neutralizing the decline.
- affected environment: summarize status of ESA recovery plan and recovery planning team for Steller sea lion. Overview of process associated with changing or amending an ESA critical habitat designation. Overview what is known about Steller sea lion rookeries contaminated with PCBs.

#### Other Biological Issues:

Pollock size and age: The dynamics of the pollock fishery catch at age (and accordingly size, because size correlates with age) by area throughout the EBS depends on the current age structure of the population. The population is characterized by highly variable recruitment and significant spatial segregation by age/size. The relative amount of pollock caught within the areas to be closed under the new fishery management measures appears substantial. The question remains how this re-distribution of harvest by area may affect the ABC recommendation. For example, if the catch in the new closed area represents a substantial amount of the catch *and* the pollock caught in this area have distinctly different age compositions, then redistributing the catch can change the advice on harvest levels. This

follows because the harvest principle is one of conserving the spawning segment of the pollock population. The magnitude of the spawning segment is linked to the abundance at age.

Effect of a global control rule on TAC – change in single species TAC

Prohibited Species Catch: management considerations due to location and rates of PSC compared across alternatives, whether and how much PSC limits will have to be adjusted to allow comparable harvest of quotas

Octopus in pot catch: predict incidental catch of octopus if pot gear use increases. Plot locations that have high octopus catch rates

Atka mackerel: location of fishing, prediction of incidental catch rates of northern rockfish based on location. Analyze fished and unfished Atka mackerel population. Predict whether Atka mackerel are harvestable from locations outside of critical habitat

Atka mackerel aggregate on bottom at night. Fishing occurs at night using bottom trawl gear. During day fish spread throughout the water column. What about fishing during day with mid-water trawls and thereby avoiding disturbance of benthos with harvest gear?

Management complexity and enforcement: Number of quotas being monitored based on open and closed areas, seasons being managed, amount of participation and potential rate of harvest, availability of VMS information, clarity of regulations with regard to fishing location - predict whether different interpretations of open and closed areas would occur. Use of observer data.

Consider the possibility of fishing effort moving from one area to another due to changes in season openings and the associated regulatory program that would have to be developed to prevent it from happening. (Creating or diffusing allocation impacts across the two fishery management plans.)

Consider ease and means of (specified or unspecified?) sequential, more, phase in, and future changes to these fishery management measures.

Management and enforcement concerns comparing use of arcs, curved lines, straight lines, ADF&G statistical areas, or latitude longitude lines as means to communicate management measure boundaries.

Clarify distinction between pot catcher vessel and pot catcher processor. Flesh quality and market considerations may be different for the two types.

Federal fishing license: participation in State waters fisheries – Whether federal fishing licenses can be returned as a way around federal groundfish fishery closure areas.

Benthic habitat disturbance – change in location, amounts, and rate of benthic habitat disturbance associated with harvest by various gear groups (trawl, pot, hook-and-line).

Characterize the benefit of Steller sea lion critical habitat closures to other marine resources.

Impacts on related fisheries (State of Alaska Pacific cod fishery) Major cumulative impact.

Impacts on CDQ fisheries – direct and indirect consequences.

Effects on other protected species - Seabirds and non-listed marine mammals.

Baleen whale and toothed whale species should be analyzed in groups, but separately

Northern fur seal, harbor seal and other pinnipeds may be analyzed as a group.

Sea otters have very different life histories from pinnipeds and need to be analyzed separately

#### Social and Economic Issues:

Changes in the operating costs to the fishing and fish processing industries associated with the different levels of restriction on fishing activity.

Change in revenues to the fishing and fish processing industries from different amounts of pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel harvest and processing.

Lost revenues due to reduced product quality caused by the restrictions on industry operation.

Human safety -- loss of life and property associated with displacing the fishing fleets farther offshore and into different waters than those to which they are accustomed or would prefer.

Consider the concept of using conversion from trawl gear to pot gear as an incentive to promote safety at sea

Social effects to coastal communities of changing fishery management regulations:

-need for a Social Impact Assessment, update village profile descriptions.

The “deadweight” loss in consumer surplus from reduced supplies of pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel products.

Changes in export revenues associated with quantity induced changes in product prices.

Long term market difficulties associated with the reductions in production.

Increased public costs for management and enforcement.

Existence benefits to the nation from an increased likelihood that the western population of Steller sea lions will not become extinct.

Benefits to subsistence, eco-tourism, and possibly other users of the western population of Steller sea lions from an increased likelihood that the population will not become extinct and may increase in size.

Energy consumption -- change in amount of fuel burned in pursuit of harvest based on number and sizes of vessels participating, distances and time underway.

Increased fishing costs will require the investigation of a large number of issues. These should include:

- Impacts on the fleet and processors due to changes in product throughput
- Costs changes due to changes in travel time to and from fishing grounds
- Costs of learning new fishing grounds
- Costs of undertaking new bycatch avoidance measures or costs due to premature closure caused by excessive bycatch
- Changes in CPUE due to changes in concentration of target stocks
- Changes in the level of gear conflicts
- Changes of opportunity costs if fishing must take place when other, potentially profitable, fisheries, are taking place
- Changes in costs incurred by fishermen due to changes in the level of safety
- Costs and benefits may accrue in dissimilar ways to different industry participants. In addition to a cost and benefit analysis, it will be important to examine the ways in which different fleet elements will be impacted by the alternative measures.

Community impacts in the small, remote fishing-dependent communities from Kodiak west along the Alaska Peninsula and into the Aleutians and Bering Sea should be evaluated.

Potentially different impacts on different fleet segments should be evaluated. Separate fleet segments will probably be defined by gear type, vessel length, processing status (catcher vessel or catcher-

processor vessel) and product type (species and type of processed output). The results will vary dependant on the fleet segment definitions.

Data limitations will preclude monetary estimates of many of the costs and benefits. Currently no data are available on the valuation of the benefits from Steller sea lion preservation. The necessary research has not been done and cannot begin and be completed in the time available for this analysis. Very little is known about the nature of the demand for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel products. This information would be required for estimation of market demand impacts. Little or no data are available on the operating costs for the fishing and processing industries, and on how they might change under the different proposals. In addition to the lack of data, the different proposals involve large, not marginal, changes in fishing patterns. This means that even if information and models were available, they would be pushed beyond the point for which their conclusions would have much reliability. For these reasons, much of this analysis will have to be qualitative.

The one topic on which quantitative and monetary estimates might be produced is on the changes in revenues to the fishing and processing industries implied by different alternatives (the portion of revenue change due to changes in output holding output prices constant). We have some experience in modeling these impacts from previous analyses. Even on this issue, however, the results will be based on strong assumptions and will not be robust.

(Template for submitting scoping comments - Use of this form is totally optional)  
Written comments accepted through June 22, 2001

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Agency and Mailing Address)

National Marine Fisheries Service  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, Alaska 99802  
Attn: Lori Gravel, Records Management Office

Subject: Scoping comments on the Steller sea lion protection measures supplemental  
environmental impact statement (SEIS)

Dear NMFS:

The following are issues that should be analyzed in the subject analysis....

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Signature)

Check box to reserve a hard copy of the Draft SEIS

June 4, 2001

FIELD (Name)  
FIELD (Address)  
FIELD (Address2)  
FIELD (City, ST Zip)

Dear Sir or Madam:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is currently preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for revised fisheries management measures under the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Groundfish Fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area and the FMP for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) to incorporate Steller sea lion protection measures. In this document, NMFS intends to define the federal action under review as proposed fisheries management measures to implement a reasonable and prudent alternative to modify the fisheries in a way that avoids jeopardy to Steller sea lions and adverse modification of their habitat.

Management measures are being designed to reduce potential competition between the pollock, Pacific cod and Atka mackerel fisheries and the western stock of Steller sea lions in ways that will still sustain viable fisheries in Alaska. NMFS will present in the SEIS an overview and an assessment of all impacts (including environmental, biological, and socio-economic) that result from revising existing fisheries management measures. The public scoping period for the Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures SEIS, as published in the *Federal Register*, began on May 15, 2001, and will conclude on June 22, 2001. Scoping is being conducted in parallel with meetings of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Council's Reasonable and Prudent Alternative Committee.

NMFS has special obligations to consult and coordinate with Tribal governments on a government-to-government basis pursuant to Executive Order 13084. A scoping document is enclosed to provide you with more information about the analysis. In addition, as a result of your unique tribal status, you may request NMFS to meet to discuss our work on this project and to provide comments. If you desire to meet individually with either of the co-project leaders, please contact us. We would be pleased to arrange a meeting. If you and representatives of other coastal Tribal Governments want to meet together with NMFS, that also could be arranged.

We look forward to working with you through the completion of this project and beyond. I can be reached by mail at the above address, or by telephone at 907-586-7221.

Sincerely,

James W. Balsiger  
Administrator, Alaska Region



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Aleut Community of Saint Paul  
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Bristol Bay Native Association  
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Chilkat Village  
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Chilkoot Indian Association  
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Emmonak Village  
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Hoonah Indian Association  
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Hydaburg Cooperative Association  
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Klawock Cooperative Association  
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Knik Village  
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Wasilla, AK 99687

Kodiak Area Native Association  
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Kokhanok Village  
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Iliamna, AK 99606

Lesnoi Village a.k.a. Woody Island  
P.O. Box 9009  
Kodiak, AK 99615

Levelock Village  
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Levelock, AK 99625

Maniilaq Association  
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Kotzebue, AK 99752

Manokotak Village  
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Manokotak, AK 99628

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Native Village of Aleknagik  
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Aleknagik, AK 99555

Native Village of Atka  
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Atka, AK 99547

Native Village of Belkofski  
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King Cove, AK 99612

Native Village of Brevig  
P.O. Box 85063  
Brevig Mission, AK 99785

Native Village of Chanega  
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Chenega Bay, AK 99574

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Native Village of Eek  
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Cordova, AK 99574

Native Village of False Pass  
P.O. Box 29  
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Native Village of Gambell  
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Native Village of Goodnews Bay  
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Native Village of Hooper Bay  
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Native Village of Karluk  
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Native Village of Kipnuk  
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Native Village of Kongiganak  
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Native Village of Koyuk  
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Native Village of Kwigillingok  
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Native Village of Kwinhagak  
General Delivery  
Quinhagak, AK 99655

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Native Village of Nanwalek  
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Native Village of Napakiak  
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Native Village of Nightmute  
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Native Village of Ouzinkie  
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Native Village of Saint Michael  
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Native Village of Teller  
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Native Village of Toksook Bay  
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Native Village of Tuntutuliak  
General Delivery  
Tuntutuliak, AK 99680

Native Village of Tununak  
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Native Village of Umkumiute  
General Delivery  
Nightmute, AK 99690

Native Village of Unalakleet  
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Native Village of Unga  
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Platinum, AK 99651

Traditional Village Oscarville  
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Village of Bill Moore's Slough  
P.O. Box 20037  
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Village of Chefornak  
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Chefornak, AK 99561

Village of Clark's Point  
P.O. Box 16  
Clark's Point, AK 99569

Village of Grayling  
General Delivery  
Grayling, AK 99590

Village of Kotlik  
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Village of Old Harbor  
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Village of Saxman  
Route 2, P.O. Box 2-Saxman  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Village of Solomon  
P.O. Box 243  
Nome, AK 99762

Village of Togiak  
P.O. Box 310  
Togiak, AK 99678

Village of Ugashik  
206 E. Fireweed Lane, Suite 204  
Anchorage, AK 99503

Wrangell Cooperative Association  
P.O. Box 1198  
Wrangell, AK 99929

Yakutat Tlingit Tribe  
P.O. Box 418  
Yakutat, AK 99689

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST WORLDWILDLIFE FUND

June 22, 2001

Ms. Lori Gravel  
Records and Management Office  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, AK 99802

Dear Ms. Gravel:

On behalf of the National Environmental Trust and the World Wildlife Fund, we are writing to urge you to adopt the Council's recommendation for changes to Alternative C, substituting the Leape/Cline proposal. The Leape/Cline proposal not only maintains the "no trawling" in critical habitat for pollock or atka mackerel but also presents a zonal approach for Pacific Cod which would allow certain gears to fish within certain sectors of critical habitat with specific caps on total catch.

We hope that you will use our proposal to conduct a differential gear impact analysis.

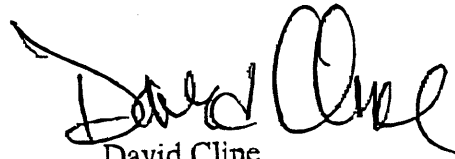
Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Gerald B. Leape

National Environmental Trust



David Cline

World Wildlife Fund