

A DIALOGUE ON AMERICA'S FISHERIES



FEATURING
SUMMARIES OF
THE PEW OCEANS
COMMISSION

FOCUS GROUPS
ON FISHERY
MANAGEMENT



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FOREWORD

By Leon E. Panetta, Chair

During the Pew Oceans Commission's visit to Maine, several commissioners and I set out early one morning to go lobstering. Despite a thick fog that limited visibility to only several feet, Captain Bob Baines skillfully navigates the F/V *Thrasher* around dangerous rocks, all the while enjoying the chance to describe how his fishery is among the most innovative and profitable in the nation.

On this particular morning, Capt. Baines, father of two, embodies the ideal of the American fisherman. He possesses experience and knowledge passed down through the generations, and aided by modern technology. He contributes to the economic vitality of his community and supplies fresh seafood for our tables. He passes on a stewardship ethic that comes from working on the sea, and continues a heritage that is among the nation's oldest.

For Capt. Baines and the thousands of commercial fishermen in coastal communities around the country, fishing is much more than a job. It is a way of life, one with which I am intimately familiar. My grandfather came to America from Italy and fished off California and Alaska. I grew up along the Big Sur coast, and had the honor of representing fishing families in Congress for 16 years.

As chair of the Pew Oceans Commission, I am privileged to once again work with America's fishermen as we seek ways to restore and maintain the health of the oceans and preserve our fishing heritage.

Over the past two years, members of the Pew Oceans Commission have met with hundreds of fishermen in coastal communities from Maine to Hawaii, Alaska to Louisiana. Led by commissioners Pat White, a lobsterman from York, Maine, and Pietro Parravano, a salmon and crab fisherman from Half Moon Bay, California, we have spoken to shrimpers, longliners, crabbers, draggers, and many others. We did so in search of the shared goal of building a sustainable fishing industry.

This report represents a snapshot of the fishing industry we saw during our review of U.S. ocean policy. It captures the thoughts and concerns of dozens of fishermen who sacrificed a day at sea to talk to commissioners.

The goal of the Pew Oceans Commission is to restore and maintain our ocean ecosystems. Fishermen are key to our success.

INTRODUCTION

by Pat White and Pietro Parravano, Commissioners

America's fishermen are the finest in the world. They rise before dawn to bring fresh seafood to our restaurants and tables. In coastal communities from Maine to Louisiana to Alaska, fishing families are the backbone of the economy. Fishermen occupy a special place in our nation's heritage and culture. As stewards of the oceans, they represent a vital link to the goal of rebuilding our fisheries and sustaining the fishing industry.

As commercial fishermen, we joined the Pew Oceans Commission because we believe fishermen must have a voice in determining the future of our industry. Our goal was to make sure that our fellow commissioners heard from fishermen as we traveled around the country. To our great pleasure and tremendous pride, we met with hundreds of fishermen to talk about the state of the fishing industry and to find solutions for building a sustainable future.

The Pew Oceans Commission hosted regional fisheries focus groups in California, New Hampshire, Hawaii, South Carolina, Maryland, Washington, Alaska, and Louisiana, enabling the Commission to hear from fishermen in areas governed by federal fishery management councils and interstate commissions.

We heard from leaders in the fishing industry and fisheries managers about the status of U.S. fisheries. Whereas we found agreement about the need to improve fishery management, suggestions ranged from those wanting to start anew to those who felt sweeping changes are not required at this time. The groups did not identify priority issues or work towards consensus.

We were impressed with the willingness of all to roll up their sleeves and address the challenges facing America's fisheries, fishermen, and fishing communities.

This report presents some of the common themes that emerged from across the nation, followed by a summary of each region's discussion. We thank the *Alaska Fisherman's JOURNAL* and the *Kodiak Daily Mirror* for providing the summaries of the Seattle and Kodiak meetings. Each summary includes a section on "what works" — ideas from fishermen about solutions and innovations to current fishery management challenges.

We also profile several "Home Ports" — courtesy of *National Fisherman* magazine — to provide a flavor for the diversity found in America's fisheries. Finally, we include "Fisherman's Perspectives" to relate the thoughts and hopes of individual fishermen, and reflect some of the passion and energy we heard and saw over the past two years.

Common Viewpoints

The Commission was impressed by the diversity found across the nation's fisheries. The size of fishing fleets, the species sought, management approaches, and credibility of the management process varied from region to region. At the same time, the Commission was also struck by the similarities it found. Five common viewpoints emerged from the focus group discussions:

THE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The fishery management process faces many challenges, with ample room for improvement. Fishery management is increasingly inflexible, stifling innovative solutions to problems. The process is slow and bureaucratic, often without adherence to timelines. Accountability is lacking and litigation is placing fishery management decisions in the hands of federal judges. As management complexity increases, additional funding is necessary for more sophisticated data collection, management programs, and enforcement. There is a sense that as depleted stocks recover, the management process may strain under new and more controversial allocation decisions.

REPRESENTATION AND FISHERMEN INVOLVEMENT

The fishery management process lacks balanced and meaningful participation among the diverse fisheries and gear types. In particular, smaller, family-owned operations felt at a disadvantage. Barriers include time and financial constraints. Fishermen recognized the need to organize and professionalize the industry so that they may have a more effective voice in fishery management.

THE COLLECTION AND USE OF SCIENCE

Science plays a critical role in fishery management. Participants identified the need for more and better science to inform management decisions. The lag time between data collection and use can take years, even when technology exists for real-time data collection. This often results in management decisions based on outdated information.

The data collection process is also limited in its ability to consider fishermen's observations. Many would like to see more cooperative research between fishermen and scientists. Finally, the availability of socio-economic information is limited.

CHANGES TO FISHING COMMUNITIES

Fishing communities are changing as a result of the declining status of fish stocks and competing uses for coastal lands. The consolidation in fisheries and fleets being forced to fish further from home threatens the infrastructure of fishing communities. In addition, the gentrification of the coast — and the resulting rises in property costs and taxes — is pushing fishermen off the waterfront. In some areas, complaints from new coastal residents about fishing operations have resulted in limits to the location and hours of operation for fleets.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

America's fishing fleet is increasingly operating under the pressures of a global industry. In cases of highly migratory species that travel across international boundaries, conservation measures imposed on the U.S. fishing fleet alone cannot mitigate the declines in fishery resources. In addition, global markets for seafood, especially farm-raised products, can have devastating impacts on local fisheries. In particular, salmon and shrimp fishermen are feeling the financial burden of foreign aquaculture products.

In addition to these common challenges facing America's diverse fisheries, the focus groups unanimously concluded that fishery management works better with fishermen participation. Fishermen must have an effective voice in the management process.

The following sections of this report summarize the discussions held in each region.



NEW ENGLAND

Participants

*Yvette Alexander
Dick Allen
Rodney Avila
Bob Baines
Bud Brown
John Dunnigan
David Goethel
Will Hopkins
Paul Howard
Harry Mears
John Papalardo
Kristan Porter
Steve Train*

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

January 2001

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

- ◆ The group discussed the need for flexibility and discretion in fishery management decisions and some expressed concern that increasingly inflexible fishery laws seemed to be stifling innovation.
- ◆ There was uniform agreement on the need for more and better science and much concern about a general failure to evaluate the impact of existing regulations.
- ◆ Many felt the lack of adherence to timelines was a core problem. The regional council process was noted as being particularly slow and bureaucratic, in part due to its reliance on other agencies for information and the many requirements it must follow.
- ◆ As the system of management becomes more complex, financial resources to support more sophisticated data collection and management programs remain inadequate. Funding for law enforcement activities and training is insufficient.
- ◆ Many participants felt that federal fishery management was increasingly prone to interference from Congress and litigation.
- ◆ Most of the group felt that the combined toll of these problems contributed to an increasingly common view that the fishery management process lacks credibility.

REPRESENTATION & FISHERMAN INVOLVEMENT IN FISHERY MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Many participants expressed concern that the political nature of appointments to the regional fishery management councils did not always lead to balanced, meaningful representation.
- ◆ There was a general sense that fishermen are often more involved in local and state management issues than regional or national management processes. This raised concern

HOME PORT ROCKLAND, MAINE

THE TOWN

Population: 7,000
Fleet size: About 80 vessels

TOP 5 LANDINGS IN 1997

Herring: 70.4 million pounds; \$4.1 million
Lobster: 17.3 million pounds; \$51 million*
Sea urchins: 3.5 million pounds; \$4.2 million
Groundfish: 988,000 pounds; \$1.1 million*
Crabs: 784,000 pounds; \$260,000*

*Includes landings for all of Knox County, Maine

FISHING ASSOCIATIONS IN TOWN

New England Seiners
Association

that regional or national forums have difficulty incorporating individual community needs into the management process.

- ◆ Many supported some form of co-management or community-based management, recognizing that defining any particular “community” can be difficult. Others noted that management concentrated at more local levels often limits accountability to broad national objectives or interests.
- ◆ Many highlighted cultural differences, gaps in communication styles and understanding, and limited ability to attend all the meetings necessary to influence decisions as barriers to participation in management forums.

- Others felt it failed because management jurisdictions did not encompass the full range of species, leading to problems with interjurisdictional coordination and management.
- All agreed that single-species management had the unfortunate tendency of boxing fishermen into specific fisheries when diversity and flexibility was needed to cope with natural fluctuations in fish populations.
- ◆ Generally, most believed that incorporating the interrelations among fisheries in management decisions would allow people to manage the use of the ecosystem more holistically.

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

- ◆ Participants expressed a variety of frustrations with single-species management approaches:
 - Some felt it led to imbalances among species in the same ecosystem.

OVERCAPACITY

- ◆ Overcapitalization was identified as a serious concern — many felt it was the most significant concern. All agreed that open-access fisheries simply do not work and that limited entry is a necessary evil of modern fisheries.

Where we live

LOCAL BOATS AND THEIR FISHERIES

Starlight — Herring seiner
Western Sea — Herring seiner
Anteries — Lobster
Irene Alton — Groundfish dragger
Misty Mae — Groundfish dragger

FISHERMEN IN HIGH PLACES

Glenn Robbins, a herring fisherman aboard the Western Sea, heads the New England Seiners Association.

LOCAL FESTIVALS

July: Friendship Sloop Days
July: Schooner Days
August: Maine Lobster Festival

WHERE FISHERMEN GO FOR COFFEE...

Hole in the Wall Cafe

...FOR BEER

Wayfarer East Buzzy's



DAVID M. GERMA

CLAIMS TO FAME

Rockland bills itself as Maine's lobster capital, and for more than 50 years the port has celebrated its maritime heritage with the annual Maine Lobster Festival. The five-day summertime celebration draws thousands of visitors from throughout the Northeast and includes trap-hauling demonstrations, a Sea Goddess pageant, a little-lobster-diaper-dash contest, music and, of course, thousands of pounds of boiled lobsters.

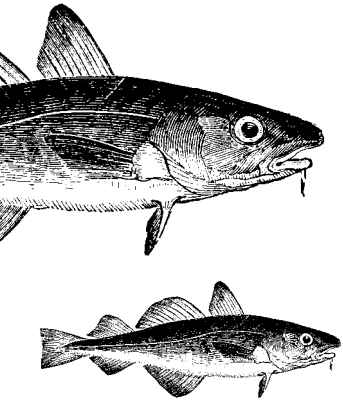
ONE MAN'S OPINION

Jon Trumble, Rockland Harbormaster: "The port had been focusing on bringing more recreational tourism to the waterfront, but in the past year a new management company has taken over the municipal fish pier and they're drawing in more fishing vessels by providing more services that the fishing industry needs. There's a bigger emphasis on fishing, and landings are increasing." — Rob Jagodzinski

Some questioned the role of government in dealing with overcapitalization, noting that it was a notoriously difficult concept to define and measure. There was a sense that the role of government should be to control fishing mortality while the market and industry should deal with ways to resolve overcapacity.

What Works?

◆ **Low Fishing Mortality.** Managers asserted that fishery management works when the system is properly applied and tough decisions are made. The problem is that in many cases a crisis has to happen before people are willing to make the tough decisions needed to sustain a fishery. Fisheries managed at a low fishing mortality work well, as noted by the recovery successes of Atlantic striped bass — and, more recently, summer flounder and weakfish.



◆ **Involving Fishermen in Management.**

Fishermen felt that their involvement in the management process is a key to success. From their perspective, the best results in fishery management are currently seen at the smallest level of government where industry participation is greatest. Effective involvement can range from co-management, where industry shares in the decision-making, to consultations with industry. Some felt that explicit requirements mandated by an external authority are still necessary in a co-management or community-based management system to force the industry to act.

◆ **The Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperation Management Act.** Many felt the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission process was more responsive and timely than the regional councils, and that it incorporated more equal representation.

◆ **The New England Fishery Management Council town hall meeting style.** Many felt that this forum allows greater industry participation in management decisions.

FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

YVETTE ALEXANDER / MAINE

Before Yvette Alexander married her husband, Lendall, they talked about the commitment required to make a fishing family work. Lendall is a fourth generation Maine groundfisherman, and Yvette is also the fourth generation in her fishing family.

"We made the decision that I would be a stay-at-home mom and run the shore side of the business" from their Cundy's Harbor home, said Yvette. "I've never been sorry." Their two boys are now 14 and 18. Yvette admits to being a natural optimist, but groundfishing in New England in recent years has tried her optimism to its limit. The trials, challenges and history of the industry have led her to some conclusions, however.

"We need to maintain diversity in our fisheries. A fishing community needs different gear types, different boat sizes and different fisheries if they are going to survive. We have to maintain the diversity of the fleet in order to maintain the infrastructure and markets."

The Alexanders are trying hard to keep their 60-foot trawler, Julie D, working and profitable. "This boat was his dream. He saw her when she was first built and came into the harbor in 1978. He said 'I want that boat.'"

The older boy is in college now, studying engineering at Maine Maritime Academy. "People also assume that a fourth generation fishing family will raise their sons to be fishermen. I want them to know there's a wide world out there." If either goes fishing, Yvette predicts it will be the younger one — if there's an opportunity. "I'm optimistic. I think there'll be a good future in fisheries. We just have to get the politics and all that settled, so we can go on with our lives."

"It's been hell. But we've come a long way. We know we have to protect our spawning stocks. They've increased by two and a half times since '94 and we don't want it to go back to where it was, so we have to have cooperation between the fishing community and government managers. The two have to work together," said Yvette.

"People sometimes ask me why we don't just do something else. They don't understand. It's not just a job. Fishermen just love it."

— NANCY GRIFFIN



MID-ATLANTIC

Participants

David Aripotch
Sherman Baynard
Bonnie Brady
Dieter Busch
Daniel Cohen
Harry Doernte
John H. Dunnigan
Dan Furlong
James Lovgren
Chris Montzaris
Jim Ruhle
Larry Simms
David Wallace

Baltimore, Maryland

April 2001

MANAGEMENT PROCESS

- ◆ Too much state-by-state, region-by-region, species-by-species management creates political fiefdoms, balkanization, and too many political masters to serve.
- ◆ Congressional micro-management of fisheries is a problem and federal judges are dictating too many fisheries management decisions.
- ◆ Allocation problems dominate management discussions. A better framework is necessary to deal with allocation issues. Councils need individual fishing quotas and transferable fishing units in their toolbox of management options.
- ◆ There is insufficient funding at all levels of management.
- ◆ Managing declining stocks presents difficult management challenges, but the greatest challenge could be managing through periods of stock increase and sustainable harvest.

FISHERMEN INVOLVEMENT

- ◆ The new generation of commercial fishermen is realizing that more people in the industry must be involved in shaping their own future.

CHANGES IN FISHING COMMUNITIES & THE LOSS OF FISHING INFRASTRUCTURE

- ◆ Commercial fishing businesses are losing access to industrial waterfront at an irreversible rate due to a number of factors, including coastal development, tourism, and stock declines.
- ◆ Atlantic City, New Jersey, allowed condominiums to be built directly across the street from the commercial fishing pier. Eventually residents demanded a halt to the round-the-clock operations of fishing businesses and the city enacted a prohibition on unloading of vessels from 11:00 p.m., to 7:00 a.m.
- ◆ In Ocean City, Maryland, restaurant owners have been pressuring city officials to remove fishing vessels from the piers in areas now popular with tourists.
- ◆ Reduction in infrastructure has reduced the number of seafood buyers in some areas to only one buyer serving a port or even an entire county. There is no competition for purchasing seafood products and fishermen suffer the consequences of limited markets and lower prices paid for their catch.

HABITAT DAMAGE FROM COASTAL DEVELOPMENT & POLLUTION

- ◆ Coastal development sets off a cascade of effects.
 - Runoff from developed lands and the continued loss of wetlands degrades estuaries that are critical nursery areas and habitat to fish populations.

- Power plant cooling water intake kills millions of larvae daily.
- Two-stroke engines from pleasure boats dump tons of petroleum by-products into the water.

What Works?

- ◆ Increased funding for science and management such as cooperative research programs, real-time electronic data reporting, more complete observer coverage, and implementing new programs such as the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program.
- ◆ Multi-species management including better habitat protection from all threats, including coastal development, and getting a handle on and limiting bycatch mortality.
- ◆ To stem the loss of working waterfront, some participants discussed adjusting taxes for working waterfront property to reflect a current use rate similar to farm and forest lands in many states.

HOME PORT

SMITH ISLAND, MD.

THE TOWN

Population: 460
Fleet size: 67 boats

TOP THREE LANDINGS

Hard blue crabs
Softshell crabs
Oysters

SOME LOCAL BOATS AND THEIR FISHERIES

Last Call: Hard crabs (pots)
Little Doll: Hard crabs (pots)
Bay Lady: Hard crabs (pots)
Annette Rene: Hard crabs (pots)
Lady Laura: Soft crabs (scrapes)
Robin Jay: Soft crabs (scrapes)
Amanda Lynn: Oysters

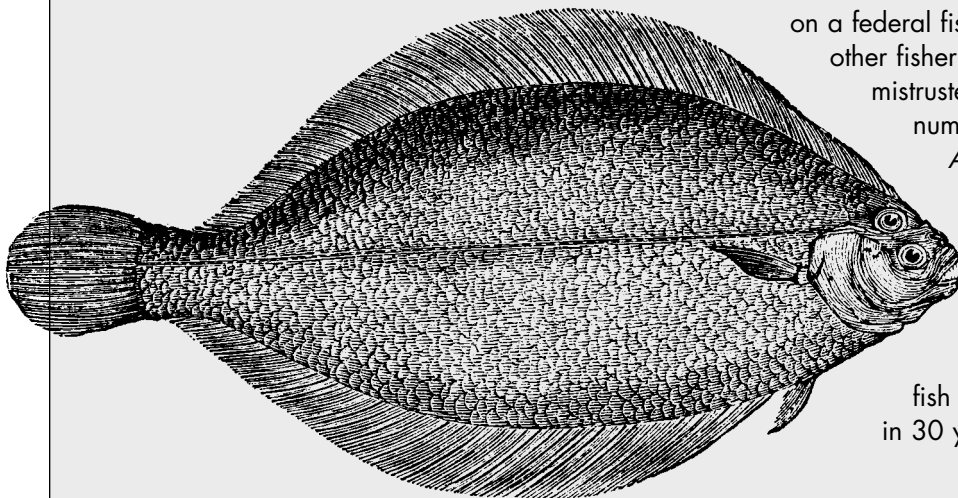
LOCAL BUYERS

Side Street Seafood and Crab House,
Crisfield
Metomkin Seafood, Crisfield
Smith Island Women's Cooperative

FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

JIM LOVGREN / NEW JERSEY

Jim Lovgren, 46, fishes from Point Pleasant, New Jersey, as did his grandfather, father, uncles, and brothers. Until it was burned up by an arsonist in January 2002, Jim fished a 67-foot dragger, harvesting loligo squid, whiting, summer and winter flounder, and some monkfish, "the usual mid-Atlantic mix." Jim has been a commercial fishing representative to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council for three years.



Even before the recent discovery of mismatched trawl lines on a federal fisheries research vessel, Lovgren said he and other fishermen in New England and the mid-Atlantic mistrusted the federal government's fish population numbers. Jim went along on a cruise aboard the *Albatross IV* when fishermen joined scientists to check the trawl gear in September 2002.

"We knew something was wrong, even before the cruise," said Lovgren, who has fished for 28 years.

"Sure, overcapitalization and overfishing have damaged the fisheries. But there are more fish out here in the mid-Atlantic than there have been in 30 years, especially our three main commercial and

Where we live

BOATYARDS

L. Marsh and Son Boatyard,
Smith Island
Goody's Seamark Ship Yard, Crisfield
Evans Boat Builders, Crisfield

LOCAL FESTIVALS

Camp Meeting, Smith Island, July
Tawes Crab and Clam Bake, Crisfield,
July

WHERE FISHERMAN GO FOR COFFEE...

Drum Point Market, Tylerton
Ruarks Restaurant, Ewell
Driftwood Country Store, Ewell

...FOR BEER

Unfortunately for the thirsty at heart,
Smith Island is dry.

CLAIM TO FAME

Smith Island is isolated by the waters
of the Chesapeake, and the local



CHARLIE PETROCCI

dialect still has a hint of old England. Maryland's only truly inhabited island, located 10 miles from Crisfield, it boasts three small villages. Wherever there's high ground, that's where people live. And the highest point on the island is a curb. The bay and its bounty are the islanders' livelihood; 99 percent of the working population is linked to the seafood industry, and crab is king. Most of the softshell crabs sold in the United States come from within a 50-mile radius of Smith Island. Oystering is done in the winter, and gillnetting between crab seasons.

ONE MAN'S OPINION

Retired waterman Jennings Evans, now a noted local historian, sums up life on Smith Island nicely: "The bay is our provider, protector, tormentor and sometimes our jailer, when it freezes over. The winds often govern our lifestyle here on the island. We never plant or sow, yet the bay has provided our livelihood for generations. And if the bay doesn't cover us over and people don't stop eating crabs, we should be here another 100 years."
— Charlie Petrocci

COURTESY OF NATIONAL FISHERMAN

recreational species — sea bass, porgies, and summer flounder."

The faulty trawl gear represents little to none of the problem fishermen have with the federal fishing gear, said Lovgren. "We noticed major modifications to the net before we left (on the cruise). They say they have been doing the same thing for 40 years, but we were shocked at what they were using. It was not the same net they started out with 40 years ago."

As for the fishing techniques used in the survey, Lovgren has harsh words. "If they tear up the net in a spot, they just don't fish there any more. But that's where the fish hide, and they're supposed to do random samples. Fish don't hang around the flat bottom.

"If they keep sampling that way, pretty soon, they'll be saying there are no fish out there, because they're not catching any. That will be like saying there are no people in California because you looked in Death Valley."

He believes the Magnuson-Stevens Act needs to be more flexible and favors a moratorium on further regulations for New England groundfishermen until the science issue is resolved. Besides, while guarding the stocks zealously, Lovgren said managers are ignoring another part of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which is the economic impact on communities.

"It's a sad statement, but I have three boys and I don't want any of them on a boat," said Lovgren. "When this generation of draggermen goes, I don't know if there'll be another to replace it."

"Sure, overcapitalization and overfishing have damaged the fisheries. But there are more fish out here in the mid-Atlantic than there have been in 30 years."

— NANCY GRIFFIN



SOUTH ATLANTIC

Participants

- Frank Blum
- Richen Brame
- John Dunnigan
- Ben Hartig
- Tony Iarocci
- Rutledge Leland
- Mark Marhefka
- John Merriner
- Jerry Schill
- Susan Shipman
- Tom Swatzel
- Gregg Waugh

Charleston, South Carolina

March 2001

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

- ◆ Fishermen feel most comfortable with fishery management at the state level because the process, people, and politics are familiar.
- ◆ Most fishermen supported the council process. Some participants speculated that support for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council developed with the increased involvement of the industry. Noting that industry input through the advisory process was flawed at the outset, significant improvements have been made to draw in good advisors under an acceptable process. Whereas some described the advisors as highly credible and respected, others believe that the advisory process remains flawed.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- ◆ The participants felt strongly that fishery management is currently limited by the lack of clear, measurable goals. Programs do not clearly state what is to be accomplished, nor do they define the end product of successful management.

FISHERMEN INVOLVEMENT IN MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Fishermen are beginning to recognize that fishery management is changing.

It is incumbent upon them to either involve themselves in the process or accept the outcomes of decisions that they have chosen to ignore. Two things are critical here:

- All stakeholders need to come to the table and the management process should ensure that everyone is involved and represented.
- The commercial fishing industry and fleet must organize and adopt professionalism programs similar to other industries.

HOME PORT MOUNT PLEASANT, S.C.

THE TOWN

Population: 45,000

THE FLEET

Approximately 40 vessels, including two dozen shrimp trawlers, longliners, shark boats and crabbers, line the commercial docks at Shem Creek.

SOME LOCAL BOATS AND THEIR FISHERIES

- Low Country Lady — shrimp
- Carol L — shrimp
- Lady Carolyn — shrimp
- Winds of Fortune — shrimp
- Capt. Tang — shrimp
- Miss Alva — shrimp
- Sea Tractor — shrimp
- Betty Boop — longline
- Charleston Star — longline
- Endangered One — shark

TOP LANDINGS IN 1999

Mount Pleasant ranked 47th on NMFS list of major U.S. fishing ports in 1998.

FISHERIES DATA

- ◆ A mechanism for collecting the necessary economic data on fisheries is lacking. This is a sensitive issue because it deals with personal matters such as income. Fishermen are more willing to provide information today than in the past because they understand why it is needed. However, it is a two-way street: fishery managers need the information to make more informed management decisions and fishermen expect improved management once they provide the information.
- ◆ Fishermen perceive that the data available for use in management is worsening. Data on recreational fishing is especially lacking.
- ◆ Some participants believe that since the fishery management process relies on the available data, the fisheries with available information seem to receive more management attention than fisheries that lack information.

CHANGES IN FISHING COMMUNITIES

- ◆ Coastal development, tourism, stock declines, resource allocation shifts, and increasing regulations are irrevocably changing fishing communities.
- ◆ Property values along the coasts are rising as people retire and move south. High demand for coastal property has led to increasing taxes for seafood docks and fishermen cannot afford to keep their boats in ports that have traditionally been used by the fishing industry.
- ◆ Fishermen in some areas of Florida are being forced to buy smaller boats that they can load on a trailer and leave at home when they are not fishing.
- ◆ Fishery planning and managing must evolve to support communities we want, rather than ending up with the communities we get.

Where we live

Shrimp: 2.2 million pounds;
\$8.4 million
Clams: 56,366 bags; \$2.4 million
Blue crabs: 2.2 million pounds; \$1.4 million
Swordfish: 250,000 pounds; \$685,617
Oysters: 41,000 bushels; \$501,458

FISHING ASSOCIATIONS

South Carolina Shrimper's Association

LOCAL FESTIVALS

Mount Pleasant Blessing of the Fleet and Seafood Festival, in May, plus numerous smaller fund-raising festivals and events sponsored by the shrimper's association.

WHERE FISHERMEN GO FOR COFFEE ...

Alex's Restaurant

... FOR BEER

Shem Creek Bar & Grill
RB's Seafood Restaurant & Raw Bar



CLAIMS TO FAME

Just south of the town at the mouth of Charleston Harbor is Fort Sumter, flash point of the Civil War.

UNIQUE FEATURES

Mount Pleasant, founded in 1680, has experienced explosive growth in the past 20 years, but it's a town that is still proud of its fishing and maritime heritage. Shem Creek, where the commercial boats dock, is home to the Shem Creek Maritime Museum. Longliners are welcome in Shem Creek. (They aren't welcome — just across



WARREN RECTOR

the harbor at the waterfront Maritime Center — in Charleston.)

ONE MAN'S OPINION

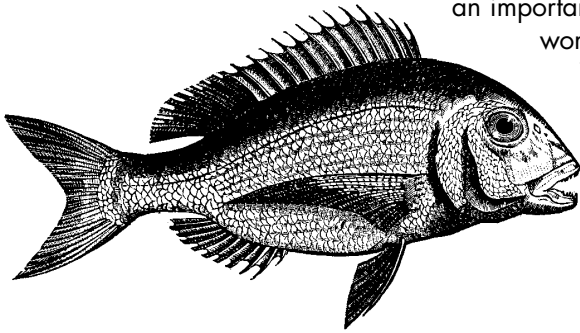
Hurricane Hugo in 1989 hit the area hard, says Randy Rhodes, owner and skipper of the *Low Country Lady*. "We probably had 15 percent of our fleet sunk," he says. After Hugo, shrimp showed up in record numbers. "We were hauling back 40-foot trees in the nets," Rhodes says, "and still you could catch shrimp."

— Hoyt Childers

COURTESY OF NATIONAL FISHERMAN

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

- ◆ Fishermen are concerned about the influence of international fleets, fishing practices, and markets. The international management — or mismanagement — of highly migratory species has an impact on U.S. fishermen. Highly migratory species cannot be managed effectively at a local level. Activities on the eastern side of the Atlantic can negatively affect the harvest of fish off the east coast of the U.S.
- ◆ Seafood imports are harming local fishermen and fishing communities. For example, imported crab products have taken over the local crab market. Picking crabs in South Carolina was more than a job, it was an important social activity for the women in fishing communities.



The workers lost not just a source of income, but a lifestyle and social structure.

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

- ◆ The group expressed concern about a disconnect between fishery management and other ocean problems, including pollution and land-use planning. At the state level, agencies responsible for watershed management, coastal zone management, and fishery management do not communicate. There are too many authorities that cross jurisdictional lines in the water — state boundaries, federal boundaries, closed areas, and fishery management plans.

What Works?

Taking the early initiative to address problems results in measurable improvements over the long-term. For example, the South Atlantic acted early to impose cuts in allowable snapper-grouper harvests and develop a limited entry program. The result was much short-term pain that is now bearing fruit for the fish stocks.

FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

BEN HARTIG / FLORIDA

Ben Hartig fishes for snapper, grouper, and king and Spanish mackerel from his 27-foot hook-and-liner *Spice of Life* out of Jupiter, Florida. He began recreational fishing in the 1950s, but switched to commercial fishing in high school. His fishing income, along with the GI bill, paid his way through college.

Ben put in many years as a member of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, so much so that his son, now 16, "grew up at council meetings." Ben is pleased that federal management plans have greatly increased South Atlantic fish stocks in recent years, but he believes there is a major threat to fish species that no one is addressing.

"Trawling needs to go away. Trawling for groundfish and shrimp should be done away with in the next generation," said Hartig. "Who made the decision to change over to big, mechanized fishing? It doesn't have to be done that way. We used to catch fish with dory boats and hooks and lines."

Shrimp nets, in particular, said Hartig, catch everything else while they're catching shrimp. "Why do we need to kill the biomass of other fish in order to supply 10 percent of the shrimp eaten in this country? The long-term costs of shrimp trawling are too great in terms of the environment. No one is getting up and saying that. Nobody's pushing for that, but we need to end it and go back to the old way of catching fish," said Hartig.

Hook-and-line, cast nets, and traps do no harm to the habitat, he added. "I'm not saying stop tomorrow. I'm saying let families have a generation to change the means by which we fish. It makes long-term sense for everyone."

— NANCY GRIFFIN



GULF OF MEXICO

Participants

Chris Dorsett
Steve Gremillion
Tracy Kuhns
Gary Muth, Sr.
James Matthews
Daniel Coulin
John Hickman
Michael Roberts

Barataria & New Orleans, Louisiana

March 2002

REPRESENTATION & FISHERMEN INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

- ◆ Over the last decade, sportfishing interests have gained significant influence over the direction of Gulf fisheries. The recreational sector dominates the regional management council today.
- ◆ Small-boat commercial operators have no voice on the council and believe that they are vulnerable to powerful forces they cannot affect.



- ◆ Despite a very large number of small-family fishing operations in the region, fishermen have not been able to generate an effective voice in management. They find it impossible to make a living as fishermen and stay abreast of and involved in management decisions at the same time. The process is too complex and the challenges of organizing the industry are daunting.

CHANGING FISHING COMMUNITIES

- ◆ Coastal gentrification also worries members of this group. People from away are moving into fishing communities and demanding new standards of living. They complain that fishing gear is visible in their neighbor's yard. They are also driving housing prices up. Although property taxes in Louisiana are low, fishermen are starting to feel the pinch. They are concerned that eventually this new wave of wealthier residents will drive them out of their homes and communities.

INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS

- ◆ The Louisiana shrimp fishermen are reeling from a recent rash of farm-raised shrimp imports from China. The fishermen are seeking help to address what they see as an illegal dumping into their market. Unable to compete with foreign prices, local fishermen are not fishing. Instead, they are getting seasonal work as carpenters or oil rig workers. Processors have enough frozen product to last the season and are not seeking fresh catch. Meanwhile, this farmed shrimp is purportedly being marketed as local, wild-caught product.

HABITAT DAMAGE FROM COASTAL DEVELOPMENT & POLLUTION

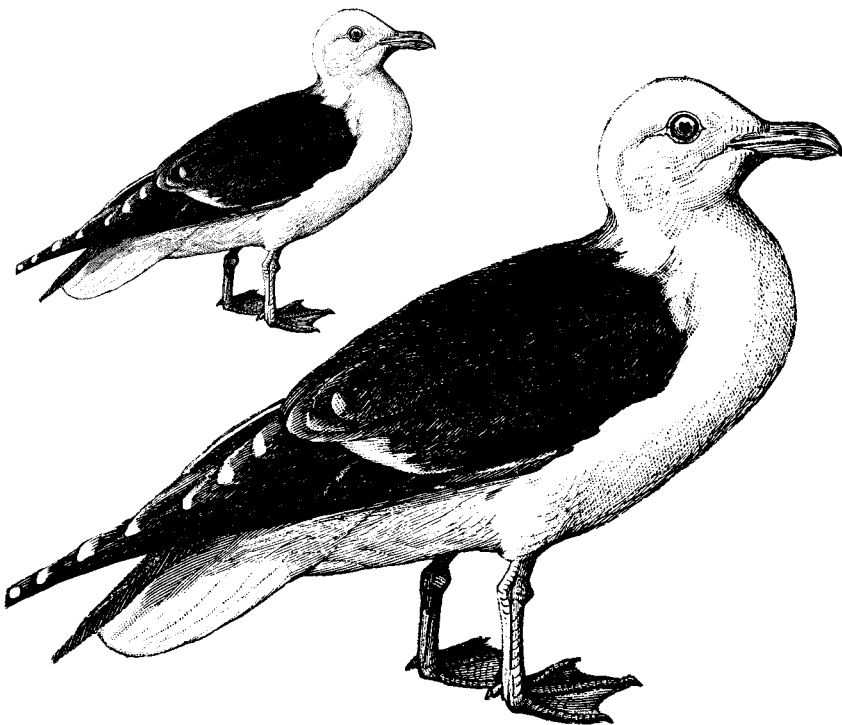
- ◆ The Gulf's dead zone, the escalating and apparently irreversible loss of the coastal wetlands and estuaries caused by the oil transport infrastructure, the alteration of the Mississippi River's inflows, and the impact of oil rigs on the marine environment were critical concerns of this group. They are well aware of these issues and feel powerless to affect them.
- ◆ Plans to alter tributaries of the Mississippi may upset critical shrimp spawning habitat and increase pollution in certain areas. Polluted water flowing down the Mississippi River, especially after a storm, can wipe out the fish and shrimp populations. The diversion projects also shift the freshwater-saltwater gradient toward the Gulf of Mexico, thus limiting the range of species that rely on brackish water in marsh habitat areas.
- ◆ The oil rigs may harbor large fish attractive to the charter boat industry, but these fish are full of contaminants.

- ◆ Accommodating shifts in the dead zone has become a part of everyday planning for fishermen. They have to be careful not to get too close. These concerns provide an important common ground for fishermen to work with the environmental community. A few even participate in statewide and Gulf-wide coalitions concerned with water quality, toxics, and other issues.

What Works?

Fair and equitable representation in decision-making processes. Successful management bodies must be composed of a truly diverse group and avoid domination by one sector of the industry.

Breaking up management into smaller regions. Fishermen from Florida have little in common — ecologically, culturally, or economically — with fishermen from the Texas coast or the Louisiana bayous. The region is distinct on either side of the Mississippi River and each side should be managed separately.



HOME PORT

DULAC-CHAUVIN, LA.

THE TOWN

Combined population: 7,000
Fleet size: Area fleet approximately 350, many of them Lafitte skiffs

1998 LANDINGS

Shrimp: 25.9 million pounds, \$52.2 million
Crabs: 8.9 million pounds, \$5.3 million
Finfish: 130,206 pounds, \$110,657

SOME LOCAL SHRIMP BOATS

Miss Brandy
Misty Morn
Randy Boy
Miss Kimberly Ann
Harvester
Little Sam
Marc and Jace

CLAIMS TO FAME

One of pirate Jean Lafitte's lieutenants, Vincent Gombie, holed up in the area now called Treasure Bayou, just south

FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

STEVE GREMILLION / LOUISIANA

Capt. Steve Gremillion, 51, of Kenner, Louisiana, runs his 34-foot charter fishing boat, the catamaran *Double UPS*, in the Gulf of Mexico. When he spoke at a focus group in March 2002, his concerns reflected those of many charter boat captains around the Gulf — a moratorium on entry into their business and the creation of marine protected areas that could potentially curtail fishing in their best areas.

The 72 Louisiana charter captains, like their counterparts in Texas and Mississippi, did not want a moratorium on charter permits. However, those in Florida, where there are 800 charter boats, and Alabama, did. The five-year, Gulf-wide moratorium passed and will go into effect next year. Gremillion grew up on the water and planned during his 28-year career with United Parcel Service to retire and run a charter boat. "I have two deck hands now. I nurture them and train them. The natural progression would be for them to become captains, but that can't happen now, at least for five years."

Regulators sought the moratorium in order to reduce the pressure on red snapper, which comes primarily from charter vessels. Besides limiting entry, the new rule cuts the season to six months and places a limit on catches. Gremillion is grateful for one thing: that the attempt to make the moratorium retroactive four years, back to the first suggestion of limited entry in the *Federal Register*, failed. "It would have put 40 of our captains out of business," he said.

Although rumors of the creation of a marine protected area in the prime tuna grounds fished by Louisiana charter boats have died down, Gremillion says he's still concerned about the possibility — especially since a marine reserve was created in Florida's Dry Tortugas.

— NANCY GRIFFIN

Where we live

of Dulac. Dulac is a big oil port and home of LUMCON, the Louisiana University Marine Consortium, famous for hypoxia, or "dead zone," research. Dulac-Chauvin is the 10th-largest U.S. fishing port in value of landings in most recent U.S. Department of Commerce rankings.

WHERE DO FISHERMEN GO FOR COFFEE, FOOD, BEER

Palmer House or Annie's, both in Dulac; Ceana's Cajun Cooking in Houma

FISHING ASSOCIATIONS

Louisiana Inshore Shrimper's Association
Terrebonne Fisherman's Organization

FISHERMEN IN HIGH PLACES

Lirette is chairman of the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, a state wetlands restoration advocacy group and



affiliate of the national group Restore America's Estuaries.

FISHING FESTIVALS

Chauvin hosts "Lagniappe on the Bayou," a Cajun seafood and cultural festival organized by the fishing community each October. Blessing of the Fleet, the fourth Sunday in April, features 80 or so decorated boats between Chauvin and Dulac.

WORST RECENT HURRICANE:

"Dulac took almost a direct hit" from Hurricane Andrew in 1992,



LA. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

says Lirette. "I had 14 inches of water in my living room. Many people in Dulac lost their homes completely. To give you an idea of the flooding, we had to push nine tombs out of the driveway ramp to the church."

ONE MAN'S OPINION

"My philosophy is, 'No wetlands, no seafood,'" says Donnie Lirette, president of the Terrebonne Fisherman's Organization. — Hoyt Childers

COURTESY OF NATIONAL FISHERMAN



PACIFIC

Participants

Craig Barbre
Peggy Beckett
David Danbom
Michael Ricketts
Michael Stiller

Monterey, California

November 2000

REPRESENTATION ON THE PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

- ◆ Smaller fishing operations are not represented well in the council process because they do not have the capital and cannot afford the time needed to participate effectively. The feared result is the loss of less lucrative operations — including those that may use more sustainable gear types and practices.

THE QUALITY OF FISHERY DATA & STOCK ASSESSMENT MODELS

- ◆ Outdated information and inflexible stock assessment models contribute to poor and ineffective management. Many stock assessment models are not capable of incorporating different types of information fishermen feel are useful. Often, the data used in these assessments are outdated — even when real-time data are available.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

- ◆ Participants felt that managers and scientists did not fully understand fishing issues while fishermen did not fully understand the regulatory and scientific issues and process.

HOME PORT

MORRO BAY, CALIF.

THE TOWN

Population: 10,000
Fleet size: 100

TOP 5 LANDINGS (1998)

Groundfish: 1.8 million pounds;
\$1.2 million
Pink shrimp: 276,000 pounds;
\$187,000
Spot prawns: 204,000 pounds;
\$1.4 million
Salmon: 154,000 pounds; \$235,000
Swordfish: 115,000 pounds; \$261,000
Albacore: 6,000 pounds; \$102,000

LOCAL BOATS AND THEIR FISHERIES

Barbara Marie: Salmon, swordfish,
crab, albacore
Preamble: Salmon, albacore, rockfish
Cynthia: Groundfish, shrimp
Trudy S: Salmon, herring
Judy: Albacore, swordfish
Shirley J: Groundfish, shrimp
Nor'wester: Albacore

HOME PORT

ANACORTES, WASH.

THE TOWN

Population: 14,000
Fleet size: It's estimated there are about
150 commercial fishing boats in the
harbor, 70 percent of which fish Alaska.

SOME LOCAL BOATS AND THEIR FISHERIES

Breakers Edge — crab, halibut
Trejo — salmon, squid
Midnight Charger — halibut, salmon
and crab
Lisa C — crab
Silver Fox — crab

TOP LANDINGS IN 1999

Dungeness crab: 885,000 pounds; \$2.1
million
Sea cucumbers: 170,000 pounds;
\$195,000
Shrimp (prawns and coonstripe):
90,000 pounds; \$90,000
Sea urchins: 28,000 pounds; \$29,000
Chum salmon: 26,000 pounds; \$11,000

Where we live

Verna Jean: Groundfish, shrimp

FISH BUYERS

Central Coast Seafood
The Cannery
Myng Dynasty Co.
Bayshore Fish Market

FISHING ASSOCIATION IN TOWN

Morro Bay Commercial Fisherman's Organization

LOCAL FESTIVALS

Morro Bay Harbor Festival, October

WHERE FISHERMEN GO FOR COFFEE...

Hungry Fisherman
Otter Rock
Dolly's Donuts

...FOR BEER

Great American Fish Co.
Harbor Hut
Happy Jack's



MORRO BAY HARBOUR DEPARTMENT

Otter Rock

CLAIMS TO FAME

Morro Bay's harbor patrol has executed several daring and heroic rescues, including saving a boatload of children pitched into the sea when a whale watch vessel capsized in 1983.

FISHERMEN IN HIGH PLACES

Former fisherman Cathy Novak served on Morro Bay's city council from 1994-96 and as Morro Bay's mayor from 1996-98.

UNIQUE FEATURES

Morro Rock looms 576 feet high.

SPECIAL ALERTS

Morro Bay has a notoriously dangerous harbor entrance

ONE MAN'S OPINION

Craig Barbre, president, Morro Bay Fisherman's Organization: "Morro Bay is one of the prettiest spots on the California coast. It's rustic and primitive, but we have all the services and conveniences of a larger port. Plus, we've got the most helpful, friendly Coast Guard and harbor patrol in the state." — *Mick Kronman*

COURTESY OF NATIONAL FISHERMAN

Where we live

FISHING ASSOCIATIONS IN TOWN

Inner Sound Crab Association
Puget Sound Gillnetters Association

THE WORD ON THE DOCKS

"We've got good facilities, but we don't have any fish to harvest," says Ed Knutson, a salmon and dungeness crab fisherman from Anacortes. "Last year, salmon was totally shutdown for sockeye. This year we get 100,000 fish. There's a chum fishery, but the prices are way down. The price of fish is unbearably low. It's what it was back in the '70s. Most of the boats go to Kodiak, Bristol Bay or Southeast Alaska."

WHERE FISHERMEN GO FOR COFFEE...

The Captain's Place

...FOR BEER

Randy's Pier 61



CITY OF ANACORTES, WASH.

CLAIMS TO FAME

Dakota Creek Industries Inc. a leading West Coast shipyard, builds commercial fishing boats and other larger vessels.

FISHERMEN'S WORRIES

"One of the main concerns over the past 10 years has been the salmon prices," says Merrill Thibert, a fisherman, processor and member of the port commission. "It's getting harder

and harder on our boats running back and forth to Alaska."

ONE MAN'S OPINION

"It's pretty much a waterfront flavor here, even though a lot of businesses have gone high tech," says lifelong Anacortes resident Thibert.

— *Charlie Ess*

COURTESY OF NATIONAL FISHERMAN

The use of commonly understood terms and people who are able to translate between the two groups are needed.

NO-TAKE ZONES

- ◆ Insufficient funding is hampering enforcement and monitoring in existing marine protected areas. Additional areas could be closed to fishing before the merits of existing no-take zones have been evaluated.

What Works?

The group highlighted the success of the Salmon Stamp Program, an industry-driven conservation initiative. The Salmon Stamp Program began in 1978 after a water diversion mitigation project demonstrated the benefits of supplementing natural salmon populations with hatcheries. Following the completion of a successful pilot project with the state fish and game department, fishermen requested a self-imposed tax on landings to support salmon hatcheries and habitat improvement projects. The fishermen believe in the program and can see the benefits.

FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

CRAIG BARBRE / CALIFORNIA

Craig Barbre comes from a fishing family and has been fishing from his own boat now for 26 years. These days, he and his wife, Marlyse Battistella, troll from the 55-foot *The Preamble* for salmon, tuna, and occasionally groundfish. Barbre says roughly 30 percent of their income is from salmon, around 60 percent from tuna, and the final 10 percent "everything else."

At one time, salmon provided a bigger part of Barbre's income, but the worldwide glut of cheap farmed salmon changed all that. The price for Barbre's wild-caught, king salmon from the Sacramento stock went from \$2.50 per pound to \$1 per pound in a short time.

"Our fish used to be the most sought-after by New York lox smokers," said Barbre. "All that market's gone to farmed now." Low prices and market loss curtail profits, so Barbre ends his season now when sea lion predation on his catch becomes too heavy.

Groundfish are another story. Barbre used to fish for groundfish with hooks, but now "ninety percent of the ocean here is closed for groundfishing" because certain stocks are deemed endangered by federal scientists.

"I'm a skeptic. When I'm fishing, I still see groundfish on my meter, in the same abundance as I saw them in the past," said Barbre. He believes the National Marine Fisheries Service stock assessments are flawed and that groundfish are not in as much trouble as scientists say. "I was fishing alongside the 85-foot NMFS trawler and they weren't catching as much with their trawl nets as I did with a few hooks. I asked if they were catching a lot of bocaccio, because I was seeing a lot of them. But they said they'd only caught three in two days."

Barbre believes the managers are afraid to allow fishermen access to some fisheries, even when stocks are up because they are afraid of being sued by environmental groups. "We're not managed by federal regulators now, we're managed by lawsuits."

Fear of environmentalists, seal and sea lion predation, and inaccurate stock estimates are three of the four problems commercial fishermen face, said Barbre. But there's one more.

"We have a powerful sport fishing lobby here. They like to portray us as catching all the fish for ourselves," he said. Although sport fishermen represent around eight percent of the state's population, Barbre says "the rest of the people in California rely on me and other commercial fishermen for their access to the resource."

"I hope that Congress will recognize that there are sustainable ways to harvest the resource and that they should be encouraged and kept alive, instead of shutting everything down," he added. "The farmers are seen as food producers, while fishermen are not. We are portrayed as greedy, but we're trying to provide food for people's tables."

– NANCY GRIFFIN



WESTERN PACIFIC

Participants

Sean Martin
Timm Timoney
Bob Endreson
Mike Sakamoto
Paul Loftus
William Aila

Maui, Hawaii

February 2001

ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PROCESS

- ◆ Some fishermen raised concerns about a lack of accountability in the fishery management process. Specifically, they alleged repeated failure of the regional council to act in time to prevent problems despite convincing scientific evidence. Other fishermen disagreed and stated they felt the regional council was proactive rather than reactive.

LIMITED REPRESENTATION

- ◆ The majority of the group cited concerns about inadequate representation in the regional council process for all the diverse segments of the region's fishing industry.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

- ◆ Some participants commented that fishermen need extensive education and training about how the management process worked before they can participate. The process is too complicated and drawn-out for fishermen who spend the bulk of their time on the water. Cultural and ethnic issues complicate communication among different fishery groups, fishermen, and managers in the region, creating another barrier to overcome.

LIMITED FUNDING FOR SCIENCE

- ◆ A lack of funding for scientific research was a significant concern for this group. This raises questions about the quality of the science used to make decisions.

INTERNATIONAL

- ◆ All agreed that the capacity of international fishing fleets in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean greatly exceeds that of the U.S. fleet. There are approximately 110 active U.S. longline boats fishing tuna and swordfish off Hawaii, compared to approximately 1,500 to 2,000 longline vessels from other countries that operate outside the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. Each year, another 400 foreign vessels enter the international longline fishery. Thus, the larger problems with fisheries in the region exist outside U.S. jurisdiction and are caused by vessels the U.S. cannot regulate. For example, one fisherman noted that a complete closure of the Hawaii swordfish longline fishery would not increase recovery prospects for leatherback sea turtles because so many are killed by international longline fleets. Having this type of international fishing pressure in the region significantly complicates U.S. fishery management and frustrates U.S. fishermen who are held to higher environmental standards.

What Works?

- ◆ More advisory panels and committees to increase representation in the management process
- ◆ Programs that allow fishermen to help collect data so managers have more information come decision time
- ◆ An international treaty establishing shared environmental responsibilities was proposed as one measure to help address many of these concerns.

FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

WILLIAM AILA / HAWAII

William Aila is 44 and figures he's been fishing for roughly 40 years. As a 4-year-old, he angered his parents when he wandered a mile away from home, following fishermen down to the reef.

One of the archipelago's more than 11,000 fishermen, Aila primarily trolls and handlines for tuna from his 21-foot boat. Sometimes he collects tropical fish for aquariums, or goes nighttime spearfishing for parrotfish and goatfish. But he hasn't done much fishing for the last year, because "I've gone to too many meetings...but if no one goes to the meetings, there'll be no future to go back to."

Aila feels the regional longline fleet exerts undue pressure on the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council because of its political connections. This fleet, with boats ranging in size from 50 to 140 feet, used to crowd the smaller boats out of the fishing grounds, said Aila. Then, eight years ago, "we got area closures that separated the two fleets. But some of the large boats still fish the perimeter and target the same fish the small boats are after." When large boats come in, prices are depressed for small boats.

He volunteers for several organizations, all of which are working toward different but connected goals. The Western Pacific Fisheries Coalition — a collaboration of environmentalists and commercial and recreational fishermen — is working to ensure sustainable fisheries. "We want fisheries that will last for seven generations, as opposed to fishing it all out and putting the money in the bank." "One of the biggest problems with the large vessels is bycatch: sharks, birds, and turtles," said Aila.

"Regulators are supposed to consider the biological, economic, and social impacts. Now it looks they are only considering the economics." When the biological factor is ignored, "the environmentalists go to court, then you get a judge who knows nothing about fisheries being educated by lawyers."

"There is not enough balance" in the decision-making process, said Aila. "But a rag-tag bunch of volunteers have a hard time getting attention."

He also volunteers for the Hawaiian Fishermen's Foundation, a group of small-boat tuna handliners and trollers, plus a few of the smaller longliners, trying to protect the small-boat fleet. Another organization, Mohala I Ka Wai, is a watershed restoration group. Translated, the name means "Unfolded by the water are the flowers." The *kona*, or hidden meaning, explains Aila, is that people and the environment thrive on clean water.

Aila said one area of Hawaiian management works well: the vessel monitoring system. Large vessels are supposed to fish at least 75 miles offshore, while the small vessels' maximum range is 50 miles. Theoretically, this creates a 25-mile buffer zone between the two fleets. Patrolling around all the islands with Coast Guard boats is not efficient, effective, or even possible, said Aila, but the vessel monitoring system is. "It's a practical and inexpensive way of doing it. I think it will become a model for the rest of the U.S."

"Regulators are supposed to consider the biological, economic, and social impacts. Now it looks they are only considering the economics."

– NANCY GRIFFIN



ALASKA

In August 2001, members of the Pew Oceans Commission held two focus groups with fishermen in Kodiak, Alaska. The following article appeared in the *Kodiak Daily Mirror* and is reprinted with permission.

Kodiak, Alaska

August, 2001

PEW GROUP HEARS FROM FISHERMAN

**By Erin Harrington
Kodiak Daily Mirror
August 20, 2001**

More than a dozen members of the Kodiak community spoke at two meetings Thursday afternoon and shared their insights into Alaska's fisheries and oceans with members of the Pew Oceans Commission.

The Pew Oceans Commission has been tasked with examining ocean issues throughout the United States.

Half of the commission's members were on the Emerald Island for the last leg of a six-day trip to Alaska. The commission has already visited Hawaii, California, South Carolina and Maine and will travel to Louisiana in October.

In town hall-style meetings, commission members heard presentations from fishermen, the Coast Guard, the Native community, and City of Kodiak officials. They talked about ocean and fish stock health, fishery management in Alaska, and the role of the fisheries in Alaskan communities.

There was a clear sense of pride from the speakers, who talked about Alaska's successful fishery management systems.

Matt Keplinger, a third generation fishermen, spoke about Alaska salmon.

"If you look at a model of the salmon fishery in Alaska you'll see how sustainable it has been over many years," Keplinger said.

Keplinger also credited some of the success to the involvement of fishermen in State of Alaska fishery management.

Mike Martin, a longtime Kodiak fishermen and a former Board of Fish member who currently runs Brechan Enterprises. spoke to the commission about management tools for the future.

He said he believes rationalization of Gulf of Alaska groundfish could safeguard both ocean ecosystem and the economy of the Gulf.

"The fact of the matter is fishing runs this community," Martin said. "The fish have to come back every year. Otherwise we don't support our families."

Martin said rationalization would assure continued fishing by reducing bycatch and making the groundfish fishery sustainable.

Linda Kozak, a local fishery consultant, said rationalization should not be imposed on Alaskans by Congress.

"We don't want to see rationalization happen in D.C., we want to see it happen in the (North Pacific Fishery Management) Council," Kozak said.

She told the commission the council process would ensure fair participation for all fishery stakeholders and would prevent powerful special interest group from controlling rationalization with lobbying groups.

Emphasis was also placed on the importance of funding for ongoing research of the ocean system and its relationship with fishing.

Jerry Bongen, a longline and pot fisherman and a member of the NPFMC Steller sea lion Rational and Prudent Alternative (RPA) committee, cited lack of research as a key obstacle to the work of his committee.

"It's the committee's job to come to a consensus. But we didn't have very good science," Bongen said.

(Continued)

"I urge the commission to continue to support research on the marine environment," he said.

In response to a question from commission-member Kathryn Sullivan, president of the Center of Science and Industry and a former astronaut, Bongen explained that the shortfall in the science available to the RPA and other groups stems from a lack of ongoing research before the crisis stage.

He asked that the commission recommend measures that would assure "when we're up against any issues like Steller sea lions, that we get funds available prior to arriving at the point where we are now."

Sven Haakanson Jr., director of the Alutiiq Museum and a former fisherman, spoke of the impact of restricted fishery access on Natives in Kodiak.

"Seeing the loss of (access to) fishing over the last 10 years has really changed what people my age and even the younger generation can really do," Haakanson said.

He explained that the ties between the Alutiiq and the ocean go back more than 7,000 years, and expressed concerns over the difficulties of cultural sustainability with decreased access to ocean resources.

Other presenters talked about decreasing access to fish resources, as well.

Both Keplinger and longliner Joe Macinko are worried about the next generation.

"My concerns focus on what future my children are going to have in the fishing industry," Keplinger said.

Similarly, Macinko told the commission he sees access decreasing for new fishermen.

"I'm not all that worried about my crew," he said. "I'm more worried about my kids."

Patten White, executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association, asked Keplinger about continued accessibility to the fisheries.

"Do you feel young people are going to have an ability to get in (to fishing) without fathers like yourself to leave (fishing rights) to them?" White asked.

Keplinger replied that salmon in Kodiak is abundant enough that a person could make a living, but that market value restricts that reality.

"It would be tough at the current prices to say that I'm going to make a living at it," he said.

Al Burch of the Alaska Dragger's Association expressed concerns over the association of the Pew Oceans Commission with the Pew Charitable Trust, a group that generally supports environmental causes.

"To be honest, the Pew (Charitable Trust) sends chills up and down my spine," he told the commission.

But Eileen Claussen, former Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans, Environment and Science under President Clinton, explained the group works independently of the Pew Charitable Trust. Funding for the Oceans Commission, although it originates from Pew, is handled by the group Strategies for the Global Environment.

"Pew has no seat on the board (of Strategies for the Global Environment)," she assured Burch.

Burch also sought assurances that ocean issues in Alaska would not be "painted with the same brush as other areas (of the country)."

White told Burch and other attendees that recommendations made to Congress would include attention to regional differences in fishery and ocean health.

"We're all working very hard to come forward with a plan that isn't a one-brush thing," White said.

"One of the big reasons that we came to Alaska was... to see how well your system works. We've come to Alaska to learn from you," White said.

Charles Kennel, president of the Scripps Institute for Oceanography, offered these parting words when departing one of these meetings:

"What a pleasure it has been to see a fishing culture at its best." ♦

On July 19, 2001, members of the Pew Oceans Commission met with members of the fishing industry and representatives for the Alaska distant water fleet based in Seattle, Washington. The focus group was cosponsored by the *Alaska Fisherman's JOURNAL*, and the following article is reprinted with permission.

Seattle, Washington

July 2001

PEW COMMISSION COULD ALTER YOUR FUTURE Sea change ahead for fisheries management?

by John van Amerongen
Alaska Fisherman's JOURNAL,
September 2001

Four representatives of the Pew Oceans Commission stopped in Seattle, July 19, to gather information as their privately funded, independent panel conducts a sweeping review of America's oceans policy. The commissioners got an earful from North Pacific fishermen and processors, but they didn't hear the same laundry list of problems about federal fishery managers and regional management councils that they heard in other parts of the country.

On the contrary, many who spoke to the panel wanted to make sure that the Pew commission fully appreciates the policies and management tools that continue to work successfully in sustaining groundfish, halibut and salmon resources in the waters off Alaska.

"I really urge you to be open minded as you go up to Alaska," said Greg Baker, a third-generation Alaska commercial fisherman who is currently president of Pacific Seafood Processors Association and CEO of Westward Seafoods. Westward is one of three primary pollock and crab processors in Dutch Harbor. Baker expressed concern that Pew commissioners might be inclined to paint all federally managed fisheries with a common brush of problems.

The North Pacific and Alaska are unique, Baker told the panel: "You should look at the management of these fisheries and not assume that the resource problems, the environmental problems, the marine pollution problems, the management problems, the allocation problems... do not presume that all those things you have either experienced personally in other parts of the country or the world occur in Alaska. Because by-and-large, they don't."

Stressing that no federally managed groundfish stocks have been listed as

overfished in the Bering Sea or Gulf of Alaska, Baker expressed satisfaction and pride in the overall health of the resource and its stewardship.

"Not only is it clearly the largest fishery... in the United States and perhaps one of the largest in the world," Baker said, "it is the best managed fishery in the United States as far as I can tell."

Rather than changing the way fisheries are managed in the North Pacific, Baker suggested that Pew use it as an example of how to maintain coastal economies and sustainable resources elsewhere.

"Perhaps from our experience you can learn, and perhaps from that experience you can offer some guidance to the rest of the country," Baker said.

In Alaska the fish come first, Baker noted. "It is that approach that is ultimately the reason why all our resources are in such good shape."

Baker's comments were delivered during a two-hour roundtable discussion co-hosted by the Pew Oceans Commission and the *Alaska Fisherman's Journal*. Earlier this year the *Journal* had encouraged the commission's fisheries representatives — Pietro Parravano and Pat White — to visit Seattle and listen to members of Seattle's distant-water fleet. POC communication director Justin Kenney set up the meeting.

A Pacific Coast crabber and salmon troller, Pietro Parravano is currently president of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations. Pat White is a lobster trap fisherman and executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association. Other commissioners at the table were Jane Lubchenco, professor of marine biology at Oregon State University and Carlotta Guerrero, director of the Ayuda Foundation of Guam.

The four members present are part of an 18-member board established and funded last year by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The commission is chaired by former Clinton chief-of-staff Leon Panetta, and includes other notable individuals like John Adams, president of the Natural Resources Defense Council; Eileen Claussen, president of Strategies for the Global Environment; Mike Hayden, president and CEO of the American Sportfishing Association; Julie Packard, founder and director of the Monterey Bay Aquarium and vice chair of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; Vice Adm. Roger Rufe, Jr., president of The Ocean Conservancy; and Alaska Gov. Tony Knowles.

Steve Ganey, the commission's fisheries director, and Jimmie Powell, its executive director, were also at the Seattle meeting. *Journal* editor John van Amerongen acted as moderator (and wrote this report).

In addition to looking at issues concerning pollution and coastal development, the commission is conducting a broad review of U.S. fisheries management. Twenty-five years after the signing of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the commission has charged itself with reforming the way U.S. fisheries are managed. Their stated goal is "to restore and protect our living marine resources." They will deliver formal recommendations to Congress in 2002.

Clearly the commission is not satisfied with the status quo.

The commission's press kit notes, "Our marine environment is facing a greater array of problems than ever before in our history. The adverse impacts of overfishing, unplanned development and pollution that continues unabated despite well-intended laws have led to the collapse of major fisheries in New England, a dead zone covering thousands of square miles in the Gulf of Mexico, and the tragic waste of millions of fish, mammals and seabirds needlessly killed and discarded as unwanted bycatch every year."

In addition to identifying problems in various geographical regions, commissioners Parravano and White have pledged to identify what is working elsewhere in the country.

After listening to Baker's positive report on the condition of fish stocks and management in the North Pacific, Parravano said, "That's exactly what we're trying to look for — programs that are successful."

David Fraser, partner and operator of the 86-foot trawler *Muir Milach*, echoed Baker's general approval of North Pacific Management. Prompted by the Pew commission's director Jimmie Powell to identify also what "the big challenges are," Fraser noted that one of the biggest challenges was to summarize North Pacific fisheries management in a 10-minute presentation.

"If there's one thing I hate its sound-bite communication," Fraser began, focusing his concerns more on Pew and its commission than on the current management structure in the North Pacific.

"One thing that really bothers me is the North Pacific getting tarred with the same brush and problems that may exist elsewhere

in the world and may exist elsewhere in the U.S." he said.

Referring to the Pew commission's own website (www.pewoceans.com), Fraser took issue with its alarming tone and its emphasis on overfishing and bycatch.

"In the North Pacific," Fraser told the commissioners, "we have probably the world's highest quality stock-assessment program, and not a single species of fish is overfished or has been for the last 20 years.

"Half the catch in the groundfish fishery is pollock," Fraser continued. "That fishery is 99.5-percent pollock. Utilization rates in that fishery have increased... We have a system where 5,325 of 5,370 hauls were observed in the offshore sector... 75 percent of the hauls at sea by catcher boats were observed, and 100 percent of those catches is sampled and observed as it goes through the plant."

Regarding a Pew statement that the cumulative effects of fishing may alter ecosystems, Fraser admitted "clearly there is evidence of that in various places in the world."

But to contrast Pew's nationwide alarm with the specific situation in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska, Fraser placed a foot-tall stack of blue books on the table, highlighting the depth of consideration already being given to the environmental impacts of fishing off Alaska. The documents are part of the Draft Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement(s) for the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska, prepared by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Pointing to the 3,700-page document, Fraser said, "This is the synopsis of what we've been doing for the last 25 years in the North Pacific Council. It's a programmatic review and it starts from the first amendment to the fisheries management plan, which was to set an OY cap which was less than the sum of the allowable biological catches.

"Right now," Fraser continued, "we've got allowable catches of some 3 million metric tons; we set a cap at 2 million; and we actually harvest significantly less than that."

Stressing the industry's support for conservation, Fraser noted, "We could have taken this year, according to scientists, 1.8 million tons of pollock. The industry recommended to the Council something less than 1.4 — that's the TAC [total allowable catch] this year."

Referring to the North Pacific Council he said, "We have, from that first amendment, amended the fishery management plan 137 times, and many, many of those amendments were bricks building the system that I think is probably one of the finest examples anywhere of ecosystem-based management."

"I don't think you can improve much on our system," echoed Thorn Smith, former NOAA general counsel from Juneau who currently heads the North Pacific Longline Association and has been working on Council matters for the past 22 years. He credited the North Pacific Council for managing marine resources in a "conservative, precautionary and successful ecosystem way," adding, "I think they've done it as well as is humanly possible."

Smith used much of his time to explain how the longline industry and fishery managers have been able to cooperate in the development of effective bycatch avoidance measures for seabirds. The current "tory-line" requirements protecting seabirds from being

hooked by longliners were researched by Smith's organization in conjunction with Sea Grant. The regulations were recommended by longliners themselves, passed by the North Pacific Council and implemented by NMFS.

Despite the positive picture painted by his colleagues in the North Pacific, Lance Farr, president of the Alaska Crab Coalition, could not be as optimistic. Unlike North Pacific groundfish, some stocks of crab have been officially designated as "overfished," and the ACC would welcome some changes to the status quo.

"Major stocks of king, Tanner and snow crab species are in a very depressed state," Farr told the panel. "There is pressing need to revamp the management structure...beginning with a quota based program that includes harvesters, processors and communities."

Blaming high pot turnover and associated mortality on the "race for fish," Farr made a case for fishery cooperatives and increased funding for crab research.

FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

STOSH ANDERSON / ALASKA

Stosh Anderson, 56, of Kodiak, has fished salmon, herring, crab, halibut, and black cod for 28 years. Stosh runs a 44-foot seiner/combination vessel and also serves as a commercial fishing representative to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. His primary concern about federal management of fish stocks is adjacency. "The bottom line is that communities adjacent to a resource need to maintain their harvesting privileges."

He believes it could be possible to use individual fishing quotas or individual transferable quotas for management, but that it would also be necessary to promote local ownership and participation, unlike current management regimes for Gulf of Alaska halibut and sablefish, and "AFA-style Bering Sea management for Alaska pollock."

"Not that either of these structures haven't proven to have some economic benefit, but there's no inherent part of these programs that insure maintenance of access by adjacent communities," said Anderson. "The current crab rationalization program in the Bering Sea suffers from some of the same problems. It has a processors' share component that's not legal—Congress has to act on it. The processors' part is problematic." Whereas shares for processors might be viewed as a form of guaranteeing community production, Anderson says "it would be the fiduciary responsibility of a corporation's shareholders and managers to act in the corporation's best interests, not the community's best interest."

In order to protect adjacent communities, Anderson said incentive programs should be built in to give those communities ownership or control of a portion of the quota, which may then be leveraged to give fishermen an incentive to perform in ways that benefit the communities. "Long term, I think the industry has to embrace the importance of protecting the habitat structure of our ocean shelves, but in a way that allows fishermen access to the resource," said Anderson.

— NANCY GRIFFIN

Focusing on bottom-trawl gear and associated impacts on crab stocks, Farr called for reinstatement of the crab protection area along the north side of the Alaska Peninsula, "similar to the pot sanctuary protection area in effect from the late 1960s through 1983."

He called for more crab research "at-sea, rather than in laboratories," and urged continued support for submarine research on the effects of trawl gear on the sea bottom.

Coincidentally the next speaker at the roundtable was John Gauvin, executive director of the Ground Fish Forum, a trade association of H&G catcher-processors who harvest flatfish and Atka mackerel in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska with bottom-trawl gear.

While he reported that stocks were in good shape, Gauvin admitted there were challenges for flatfish vessels.

"To prosecute fisheries for flatfish," he explained, "you are fishing right in the zone of halibut and crab, which are prohibited species for us."

Nevertheless, he noted that the primary purpose of his group was to develop methods to harvest flatfish with the minimum amount of bycatch. The first issue addressed by member vessels was king crab bycatch. The system they developed for monitoring bycatch became a model for subsequent fisheries that take halibut and other crab species in addition to their targeted catch.

"We imposed a system, working together to identify these hot-spot areas of crab and move the boats away from these areas using observer data," Gauvin explained. He reminded the Pew panel that most of the vessels in the H&G fleet have 100-percent observer coverage.

The problem early on was that NMFS observer data was not reaching individual vessels until prohibited species caps were attained and entire fisheries were shut down, Gauvin explained. To address the hot-spot issue in real time, Gauvin's group developed a cooperative program that used the NMFS information to produce chart printouts that could be electronically transmitted to vessels on the grounds. More recently the program, called Sea State, has been fine-tuned to identify and publicize the bycatch rates of individual vessels in the fleet.

"You can easily identify who is not playing by the game [rules] and exert some pressure," Gauvin said. He noted that other fleets now

use the Sea State service or something similar to track their bycatch on a fleet-wide or individual vessel level.

Gauvin lamented the fact that NMFS management has so far not been able to bring accountability and enforcement to the individual vessel level.

Addressing cooperative research opportunities, Gauvin pointed to fishery research conducted by member vessels to develop excluder devices for halibut. He credited Craig Rose at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center for helping the association "put together experimental fishing permits that have a sound experimental design."

Gauvin noted the fleet's work to develop a platoon system of fishing Atka mackerel so the fleet could minimize its localized impact on the fishery at any one time and provide additional foraging opportunities for endangered Steller Sea lions.

Specifically addressing the impact of trawl gear on the bottom, Gauvin told the Pew panel, "We have been working for the last three years on a cooperative research effort with the University of Alaska to study the effect of flatfish nets on flatfish habitat."

Gauvin's primary point was that all of these programs have been developed under the current management system.

"I think the system is working," Gauvin told the Pew representatives.

"I think the environmental community has helped to push some issues," he added, "but I think it has become almost an impediment now. We're spending most of our time addressing all of these campaigns coming at us and trying to stay alive. In fact, we were trying to conduct an experimental fishery last year, and with Greenpeace's injunction we couldn't actually conduct the work."

Instead of assaulting the industry with expensive, negative PR campaigns and lawsuits, Gauvin said environmental organizations should be encouraged to help fisheries scientists and the industry address its problems through research. Gauvin hoped the Pew commissioners could help.

"I'd like to see a message to the environmental community to at least put some of their resources into cooperative work with us. Because we'd be willing to," Gauvin explained.

"When I hear about this \$24 million going to these [environmental] programs, I could

spend a small portion of that and make incredible advances in the way we do business and conduct our fisheries...," he added.

Gauvin's final request was for assistance in rationalizing the flatfish fishery by developing a system of individual vessel accountability that could increase yields and eliminate the incentive for any vessel to fish fast and dirty.

The next speaker was John Crowley from Fishing Vessel Owner's Association. Owner of the 69-foot longliner *Kristiana* with his father Jack, Crowley followed Gauvin's comments with a positive recap of the development of the ITQ system for halibut and blackcod.

Crowley wasn't shy admitting that longliners had their own bycatch problems prior to implementation of the ITQ system. He recalled the derby years and the overcrowded blackcod fishery taking place on the edge of the shelf in the Gulf of Alaska. The boats were shoulder to shoulder. "Once you picked your gear up off of that ground and moved, you had only one choice," he said, "and that was you had to move in shallower [where halibut bycatch increased]..."

Addressing one particular trip where the skipper was forced to move in shallow, he said, "... for every 10,000 pounds of blackcod on hook and line, we were catching and throwing away 10,000 pounds of halibut, because we couldn't keep it and because we couldn't stay on blackcod ground only. We were forced out of it because of the overcapitalization.

"In addition to the high bycatch..." Crowley continued, "we had a high rate of crewmen being injured because of working sometimes 36 and 48 hours at a crack. We had sinkings that were horrendous... We had three to four halibut days for the season and about 14 blackcod days. I don't care who you are, you cannot survive on that style of fishery."

Crowley detailed how IFQs brought stability to the fishery, reduced bycatch, and increased safety. He noted the turmoil and discontent during the allocation process, but was emphatic that the current system was a much better system for fishermen and the resource.

"I realize the IFQs are not for everybody," he told the Pew panel, "but the fact is it works in halibut and blackcod, and it works very well."

"As you can tell, I support the IFQ program," Crowley said. "My question is, 'I don't know if it's possible — and no disrespect to Mr. White

or Mr. Parravano — I don't know if it's possible that you gentlemen are able to represent me. You not only have your own problems to deal with... But if you could represent me, and if you were going to go back and tell Congress what longline fishermen in Seattle have to say, this is what I would have you say:

"I would like you to say the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association...support the IFQ program because it has brought about a reduction of overcapitalization; it has brought about almost a total reduction in bycatch; it has brought about a high safety record and it has restored economic stability to their fishery. ...Now can you gentlemen do that on our behalf?"

Wally Pereyra, who served 10 years on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council was the next to speak. President and CEO of ProFish International and a partner in the Arctic Storm Partnership, Pereyra has been a longtime advocate for the pollock factory-trawl fleet and a proponent of IFQs.

Speaking of North Pacific fisheries management, Pereyra said, "Everyone's talked about the science-based management system we have, and that certainly is a strong part of our success. But the other part of the success is that fact that we have been able to enforce the quotas that we have set, and enforce them to a level of precision that has allowed us not to be overfishing the resource."

Contrasting the North Pacific to other parts of the world, he credited North Pacific managers for their ability to maintain safe harvest levels that not only account for fish brought to the dock, but also account for bycatch and discard mortalities.

Pereyra identified two major challenges. The first one has to do with expanding public awareness of natural abundance cycles. He specifically noted interdecadal regime shifts occurring in the oceans and their effects on the abundance and species composition of marine fish populations.

Reviewing three such shifts in the North Pacific in the past century, Pereyra noted a change in the '70s that decreased populations of crab, shrimp, and capelin and increased the abundance of cod, pollock and salmon.

Management regimes that are based on stable populations aren't always in synch with reality, Pereyra explained.

"We in the management area tend to establish some sort of level of abundance and we think that we can somehow operate in a

steady-state environment, which we can't," Pereyra admitted. "Populations go up. Populations go down. In the Magnuson Act...things like the overfishing definition are based on a static concept... So you have this level of population which is considered to be normal, and then all of a sudden, due to one of these regime shifts, the population drops significantly — and immediately the fishermen are to blame: it's overfishing!"

While he conceded that overfishing can be a major contributor to some stock declines, Pereyra said, "I think that understanding these regime shifts and how they affect marine populations — both fish and also birds and marine mammals — I think it's extremely important to focus national attention on understanding these so that we can then have a management system which is more reflective of the real world — and also is more reflective of what impact fisheries may or may not be having."

He, too, asked the Pew panel for help with research.

"I think that this is something that your commission might want, in fact, to contract for some in-depth study," Pereyra said, "because I think it would be very helpful...and useful to the national policy also."

Pereyra's second major point addressed the success of rationalization programs developed during the past decade in the North Pacific. Moving from what he termed the "resounding success" of the halibut and blackcod program, he itemized similar benefits that have accrued through the pollock cooperatives developed under the American Fisheries Act.

"I used to be enthusiastic about ITQs..." Pereyra said. "Now we've got a cooperative format, which I am really evangelical about. I think that using this success in the pollock fishery as some sort of a national model to see how it could be modified and applied to other fisheries would be a very valuable contribution."

In the pollock fishery, Pereyra noted, "We've seen our product yields over the last couple years increase by 35 percent. For every ton of pollock that comes aboard our vessel, we make 35 percent more product. That means in the pollock fishery this year, there was probably somewhere in excess of 100 million pounds of additional product, which was provided to the country and to the world..."

He noted how the system has allowed operators to "totally reconfigure our factories" to pursue quality rather than quantity.

FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

LINDA BEHNKEN / ALASKA

Until she became a mother, Linda Behnken of Sitka worked as crew on a 54-foot longliner, besides running her own 32-foot troller/longliner fishing for halibut or sometimes salmon. She is also the director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, which represents small-boat owners. A former member of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council for nine years, she still chairs the council's Habitat Committee.

The push to create marine protected areas and "the move toward corporate control and ownership of the fishery" are primary concerns of the members of her fishermen's group. She believes the impending management system represents a move by processors to take over the fishery, posing a threat to small boats.

The longliners' group worries about conservation issues "from the processors' quota share to the impact of factory trawlers in the ecosystem and the benthic habitat," said Behnken. "Our membership is very conservation-oriented. We've worked hard to protect the habitat."

But, said Behnken, small-boat owners now fear the pendulum will swing too far in the other direction, with "environmental organizations wanting to close down large areas, creating marine wildernesses, instead of finding out about the different impacts of different gear types." This regime, she believes, would be easier for large vessels to survive.

She wants to find a balance that works for everyone. "I see an opportunity to move to a small-boat, community-based fishery without undermining the productivity" of the fishery, Behnken said.

— NANCY GRIFFIN

"Now we were no longer racing for the fish," he said, "now we were sort of racing to see how high we could drive the success of the fishery from an economic standpoint and a product standpoint."

Acknowledging that regulations force 100-percent retention of pollock, Pereyra added that those regulations now make economic sense, because co-ops allow catcher-processors to slow down and produce products they could not afford to make in the past.

"We have been able to greatly reduce our bycatch," Pereyra added, explaining how, like Gauvin's vessels, the pollock fleet could now identify and avoid hot spots. As a result, he said, bycatch has dropped by one third.

He recommended that the Pew commission have a look at co-ops and "see if this doesn't make sense to elevate [co-ops] to a higher level in a national policy sense...to be looked at as a way of bringing fishermen together in a cooperative format and husbanding the resource in a better way."

In discussions that followed the initial roundtable presentations, commissioner White addressed a stated concern that the Pew Oceans Commission might not be able to act independently of the Pew Charitable Trusts.

"The commission is a completely independent organization, not only of the Pew Charitable Trusts, but anything else," White said, acknowledging that the Pew trust finances a wide variety of groups with diverse interests and viewpoints on fisheries. He admitted that he was personally against IFQs but noted that he had also testified in Congress in favor of allowing councils and fishermen to go ahead with such systems if they so choose.

Responding to John Crowley directly on the IFQ issue, he said, "I don't ever intend to represent you, but I will represent your views. I can't possibly represent you, because you're the only one that can do that. But I think Pietro and I are working very hard through these focus groups to represent the views of all the fishermen around the country that have participated in this process, or want to participate in this process by email or mail or whatever." ♦

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