

**15th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT  
OF POLLOCK RESOURCES IN THE CENTRAL BERING SEA**

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL  
COMMITTEE

1-31 August 2010 Virtual Process Meeting

Final Version 25 August 2010

**1. Opening of the Meeting**

Patricia Livingston (United States) served as the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting. A list of the participants is provided in Attachment 1.

**2. Appointment of Rapporteur**

Loh-Lee Low (United States) served as rapporteur to compile the S&T report. The following individuals served as the contact point from each party for email exchange – Japan (Toshiyuki Kubodera), the Republic of Korea (Jeong Suk Park), Poland (Jerzy Janusz), the Russian Federation (Alexander Glubokov) and the United States (Loh-Lee Low). The People's Republic of China did not participate in the email exchanges.

A copy of the 2009 S&T report can be downloaded from:

[http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/14th%20Annual%20Conference/CBS\\_2009\\_Conf-report\\_Stev.pdf](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/14th%20Annual%20Conference/CBS_2009_Conf-report_Stev.pdf)

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

3.1: The agenda (Attachment 2) was adopted.

**4. Discussion of Science Issues**

**4.1. Update catch and effort statistics**

4.1.1. The United States and Russia provided updated pollock catch statistics for the Bering Sea, by region (See Table 1. in

<http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/15th%20Annual%20Conference/Tables-1-5.pdf>

4.1.2. No pollock fishery was conducted in 2010 in the central Bering Sea Convention Area.

4.1.3. Japan asked for explanations for the decrease in pollock catches in the U.S. and Russia EEZs after 2007 and the forecast for catches after 2010.

Russia responded that the main reason for decreasing catches is Navarin pollock stock status. Only one pollock year class produced between the years 2003-2009 is above average strength. It is the 2006 year class. Russia expects that the total biomass of Navarin pollock will increase in 2011 when the 2006 year class fully recruits into the fishing biomass.

The United States explained that declining catches of pollock in the Eastern Bering Sea from 2007-2009 reflected declining exploitable biomass of the stock (6.4 million t in 2007, 4.7 million t in 2008, and 4.6 million t in 2009). This declining trend is the result of 4 years of consecutive weak year classes (2002-2005) that entered the population. The total allowable catch (TAC) was set by the United States at 1.394 million t in 2007, 1.0

million t in 2008, 0.815 million t in 2009 and 0.813 million t in 2010. The 2006 year class strength has been estimated to be above the long term average recruitment level and is expected to raise the exploitable biomass level after 2009 when the fish recruit more fully into the fishery.

Projecting forward, the United States anticipates that the exploitable biomass of the Eastern Bering Sea pollock stock will increase as the 2006 and 2008 year classes, which are above average strength, recruit into the exploitable biomass. The 2007 year class strength is below the long term average level which would moderate the expected increasing trend of the exploitable biomass. Figure 3 of “Update on Status of Pollock Resources in the eastern Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and the Bogoslof Island Regions through 2009” submitted by the United States shows the time series of year class strengths and the trajectories of the biomass levels.

[[http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/15th%20Annual%20Conference/US\\_pollock\\_assmt09-1.pdf](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/15th%20Annual%20Conference/US_pollock_assmt09-1.pdf)]

#### **4.2. Review results of trial fishing**

4.2.1. There was no trial fishing reported by the Parties for 2010.

#### **4.3. Review results of research cruises**

4.3.1. The United States did not conduct a pollock research cruise in the Bogoslof area in 2010. The last survey there was in 2009. From last year’s S&T report, “the 2009 survey showed an estimated pollock spawning stock biomass of 73 million fish or 110,000 mt in the Specific Area of the Convention—the lowest level on record”. The fish were primarily ages 7-10 from the 1999-2002 year classes. .

4.3.2. The United States is conducting a pollock stock echo-integration trawl survey by the NOAA ship *OSCAR DYSON* in the eastern Bering Sea in summer 2010. This cruise will also enter the Russian EEZ in the northern Bering Sea to survey pollock. The United States is also conducting its standard trawl survey on the eastern Bering Sea shelf using two chartered fishing trawlers. The results of all these surveys are not yet available for this meeting as the cruises are still ongoing.

4.3.3. Japan presented a report on “Walleye pollock bycatch in salmon gillnet survey in the central Bering Sea, 1981-2010”. The report indicated that no pollock bycatch was encountered in the survey in 2009 and 2010. Japan commented in the report that “in spite of more than 10 years of moratorium, there has been no evidence of recovery of stock abundance or new recruitment of young fish in the area”.

[[http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/15th%20Annual%20Conference/Japan%20Gillnet%20bycatch2010\\_-0730-1.pdf](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/15th%20Annual%20Conference/Japan%20Gillnet%20bycatch2010_-0730-1.pdf)]

4.3.4. Russia submitted a report on 3 research cruises: (a) cruise aboard R/V *PROFESSOR KAGANOVSKI* to the Northwestern Bering Sea in August - September 2009, (b) cruise aboard SRTM *ARCTIC LEADER* to the Northwestern Bering Sea and Petropavlovsk-Komandorsk subzone in September - December 2009, and (c) cruise aboard RS *SOKUR* to the Kommandor Islands in April 2010.

[[http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/15th%20Annual%20Conference/Russian\\_Federation\\_Studies\\_2010.pdf](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/15th%20Annual%20Conference/Russian_Federation_Studies_2010.pdf)]

#### **4.4. Review the status of Aleutian Basin pollock stocks**

4.4.1. No new information was provided.

#### **4.5. Factors affecting recovery of the stock**

4.5.1. Japan asked if there have been any changes in the conservation and management measures taken by the United States and Russia to deal with the decrease of catch of pollock in their areas.

Russia responded that the total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in the western Bering Sea was decreased from 428,000 t in 2009 to 338,000 t in 2010.

The United States responded that the TAC of pollock was also reduced to reflect the declining exploitable biomass of the eastern Bering Sea pollock stock, as explained in Agenda Item 4.1.3.. In addition, the TACs for pollock in the Aleutian area were set at 19,000 t between the years 2007-2010, substantially below their acceptable biological catch levels. The resultant catches were even lower (1,277 to 2,488 t for 2007-2009). The United States has not authorized a directed fishery on pollock in the Bogoslof Islands area for as long as the Convention has been implemented and bycatches have been minimal.

#### **4.6. The effects of the moratorium and its continuation**

4.6.1. No new information was provided.

#### **4.7. Methodologies to determine Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) and Allowable Harvest Level (AHL)**

4.7.1. No new information was provided.

4.7.2. The Committee recommended that the methods remain as agreed at the 14th Annual S&T Meeting in 2009.

4.7.3. Japan further supported its position at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for setting ABC in the Convention Area.

[<http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM//CBS/Docs/13th%20Annual%20Conference/Report%2013th%20Conference%209-2008.pdf>]

#### **4.8. Recommendation on AHL**

4.8.1. No new information was provided.

4.8.2. Using the indirect method described in the Convention Annex Part I (b), the extrapolated biomass for the Convention area is 183,333 t. This is not large enough to trigger an AHL as determined by the Convention Annex Part 1 (c).

4.8.3. Japan and Korea reiterated their position that the Parties should set an AHL, even if it is small.

4.8.4. There was no consensus among the Parties on how to set AHL and therefore the process must follow that established in the Annex of the Convention.

#### **4.9. Research Plans**

4.9.1. The United States plans to conduct next Bogoslof Island pollock survey in 2011 and welcomes foreign participants. The United States will also continue to conduct bottom trawl

surveys on the eastern Bering Sea Shelf in 2011. In the summer 2011, midwater pollock assessment survey by the United States in the Bering Sea is not currently planned.

4.9.2. Russia plans to conduct the next Navarin Basin and western Bering Sea pollock surveys in April-December 2011 with at least two vessels.

## **5. Discussion of Enforcement and Management Issues**

### **5.1. Violations of the Convention**

5.1.1. No new information was provided.

### **5.2. Trial fishing terms and conditions for 2011**

5.2.1. No new information was provided.

5.2.2. The Committee recommended that the terms for trial fishing in 2011 remain as discussed at last year's meeting.

## **6. Other Issues and Recommendations**

### **6.1. Future Meetings of the Scientific and Technical Committee**

6.1.1. The virtual meeting process employed this year will continue in 2011.

## **7. Report to the Annual Conference**

7.1. The Chair of the Scientific and Technical Committee will convey the Scientific and Technical Meeting Report to the Annual Conference.

## **8. Closing Remarks**

8.1. This was the first time the virtual meeting process has been used for the S&T Meeting. The Chair thanked all for participating in this process.

8.2. The participants thanked the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Committee for leading the meeting.

## **Attachment 1. List of Participants**

### China

No one from China participated in the S&T exchange.

### Japan

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## Attachment 2. Agenda

Agenda for the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting  
15th Annual Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management  
of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea  
Virtual Meeting hosted by the U.S. Party August 2010

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Appointment of the Rapporteur (U.S. will undertake this task)
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Discussion of Science Issues
  - 4.1 Update catch and effort statistics
  - 4.2 Review results of trial fishing
  - 4.3 Review results of research cruises
  - 4.4 Review the status of Aleutian Basin pollock stocks
  - 4.5 Factors affecting recovery of the stocks
  - 4.6 The effects of the moratorium and its continuation
  - 4.7 Methodologies to determine Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) and Allowable Harvest Level (AHL)
  - 4.8 Recommendation on AHL
  - 4.9 Research plans
5. Discussion of Enforcement and Management Issues
  - 5.1 Violations of the Convention
  - 5.2 Terms and Conditions for Trial Fishing for the following year
6. Other Issues and Recommendations
7. Report to the Annual Conference
8. Closing Remarks