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**To:** Erin Reinders, City Manager, JR Pierson, Asst. Manager, Mayor Tutikoff, & Unalaska City Council Members

**Subject:** September Fishery Activities

On Tuesday of this week I have been attending the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Groundfish Plan team meetings via Zoom the meeting this week are a four-day meeting. The Plan teams will be covering both the BSAI and Gulf of Alaska. On Tuesday, thru noon today, the meeting was a joint GOA and BSAI team meeting.

The joint team heard updates on wide range of topics such as the Observer Program, Ecosystem Status report (ESR), Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Ecosystem Surveys, Ecological and Socioeconomic Profiles and the Economic Safe Document which is Stock Assessment Fishery Evaluation(SAFE) I have a document attached with this memo.

On Wednesday morning they continued with the Joint Plan Teams' meetings with a discussion of survey prioritization the Eastern Bering Sea (EBS) is still the top priority that will be done annually the Aleutians Islands will be done every other year. The Northern Bering Sea plus Norton Sound will move into the annual survey area at the expense of the Gulf of Alaska losing some areas. The plan team then moved to Survey loss uncertainty and discussed some of the issues they will face with the lack of information. I have included the PowerPoint presentations on the last two survey topics.

Later, Wednesday team moved on to the Eastern Bering Sea Groundfish issues. Up first was the Bogoslof Area Bering Sea Pollock, the Bogoslof area survey was done in February of this year before the Covid -19, shut down NMFS vessels. This area which is surveyed biannually is west of Unalaska Island and continues to not perform well the 2020 survey show a 48% decline from the 2018 survey the estimated total Bio-mass is estimated at 350,000MT and hasn't been fished commercially in over 20 years. The BSAI team then move on to the EBS Pollock survey as you are aware the 3 traditional Pollock surveys Acoustic Trawl, Bottom Trawl and Acoustic Index. NMFS without trawl surveys available chartered three sail drones from a San Francisco company; you may recall they were in Unalaska last year doing Crab Acoustic Tag recovery for the Crab

Harvesters. The drone arrive in the Eastern Bering Sea and were outfitted with equipment to do Pollock biomass data and since Pollock is the dominate species in the area so they were confident that most of the data would be Pollock. The trouble with this type of survey is you do not get size or age information. The drones are halfway back to San Francisco. NMFS cannot get the data until the Sail Drones arrive back in California; they expect them to arrive in early October. NMFS will be hard pressed to get the data analyzed in time for the November Plan Team meeting which is the meeting they make there recommendations to the Science Statistical Committee for them to make their Pollock allocation for the December North Pacific Council meeting where the 2021 fishing allocations are set .

The Plan team on the Bering Sea will be working until Thursday morning and then they will move on to the Gulf of Alaska species until Friday. I have attached various documents on the Bering Sea species and surveys that you may want to review.

Regards

Frank Kelty