

Fishery panel to review groundfish regulations

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will convene at 1 p.m. April 11 at the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel and continue through at least April 14.

The council will review, and may confirm, a proposed Jan. 16 cutoff date for participation in the groundfish fisheries off Alaska and discuss criteria for determining vessels already in the process of entering the fishery.

Also, public testimony will be taken

the afternoon of April 13 on issues and concerns for future management of the sablefish, halibut and other groundfish and crab fisheries.

In other matters, the council will:

- Allocate sablefish total allowable catch and domestic annual processed catch to gear types in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area.

- Establish a framework for setting fishing seasons for all groundfish species in the Gulf of Alaska and Ber-

ing Sea/Aleutian Islands region.

- Establish a Shelikof District in the central regulatory area of the Gulf of Alaska.

- Establish a groundfish fishing closed zone near the Walrus Islands and Cape Pierce in the Bering Sea.

- Replace the king crab protection time/area closure around Kodiak Island and modify the halibut bycatch

management regime for the Gulf of Alaska.

- Extend the Pacific cod trawl fishery exemption area in the Bering Sea from about 25 fathoms to 30 fathoms.

- Clarify authority to split or combine species groups within the target species management category by a framework procedure for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea.