

NOTICE



The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is Developing a Fishery Management Plan for the Arctic

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is developing a fishery management plan (FMP) that recognizes the unique resources of Arctic waters and the potential for continued climate warming trends. The Council does not currently have a fishery management plan for the Arctic region; this proposed plan would cover Federal marine waters (3 - 200 nm off Alaska) of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas. The plan will guide the Council with respect to ecosystem-based management decisions affecting Arctic waters in the future. To date, very little commercial fishing has occurred in this region. The Council intends to be precautionary and prohibit commercial fisheries in Arctic waters under this plan until adequate knowledge is acquired upon which to make sound decisions. The proposed analysis includes an option to allow existing small scale commercial fisheries in this region, such as a reported small commercial red king crab fishery in the southern Chukchi Sea. The Council does not intend to affect local, small-scale commercial fisheries. Otherwise, no commercial fishing would be allowed under the authority of the new Arctic FMP.

The Arctic FMP will:

- create a policy that directly affects commercial fishing in Federal waters

The Arctic FMP will NOT:

- affect management of birds or marine mammals such as whales, seals, or polar bears
- regulate subsistence or personal use harvests of any fish, shellfish, bird, or marine mammal

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

The Council is interested in hearing from local residents and communities, as well as agencies, organizations and the general public, during the development of the analysis and prior to decision-making. Interested stakeholders are encouraged to contact the Council and/or attend upcoming Council meetings with their concerns and suggestions as the Council proceeds with this effort.

Proposed Timeline:

- December 3 - 11, 2007, Council meeting in Anchorage - Additional review of FMP outreach plan
- February 4 - 12, 2008, Council meeting in Seattle - Preliminary review of FMP analysis and draft FMP
- April 1-8, 2008, Council meeting in Anchorage - Initial review of FMP analysis and draft FMP
- April to June 2008 - Ongoing public review of FMP analysis and draft FMP language
- June 2 - 10, 2008, Council meeting in Kodiak - Final review of FMP analysis and Council approval of FMP
- After the June 2008 meeting, the Council would send its recommended FMP to the Secretary of Commerce for review and approval. Prior to approval by the Secretary, a public comment period would be noticed in the Federal Register.
- 2009 - Anticipated date when the Arctic FMP would be effective

As they are completed, working drafts of the analysis and FMP will be available at www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc.