



For Immediate Release

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Commercial Fishing Group Receives Sustainability Award

Cooperative Fishing Efforts Net National Commendation

Washington, DC—June 5, 2006 – Today, the Pollock Conservation Cooperative (PCC), comprised of fishing companies that participate in the largest U.S. fishery—the Alaska pollock fishery, received the first annual *Stewardship and Sustainability Award* from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Member companies of the At-sea Processors Association (APA) formed the PCC in 1999 to foster conservation through a unique cooperative fishing agreement. PCC participants apportion the catch on an individual company basis to eliminate a wasteful race to catch the quota. This voluntary fishing arrangement by the Alaska pollock catcher/processor fleet has been an unqualified success. APA/PCC members utilize 99.5% of their total catch, produce 50% more fish products per pound of fish harvested than they produced prior to creating the PCC, and have reduced the number of vessels in the fishery by one-quarter.

“We are grateful that NOAA, one of the leading federal science agencies, has recognized the PCC’s commitment to sustainable fishing,” said Kevin Duffy, executive director of APA, in accepting the NOAA Stewardship and Sustainability Award. “We hope that the success of our cooperative fishing practices can be replicated in other fisheries.”

The Alaska pollock fishery alone accounts for about one-third of all U.S. seafood harvested annually or about 3.0 billion pounds in 2005. Alaska pollock is one of the most popular seafood items sold in the U.S. Alaska pollock is a whitefish often used in fish sandwiches, fish & chips, fish sticks and imitation crab products.

APA/PCC members also support marine research projects through local universities. PCC members contribute \$1.0 million annually to support the PCC Research Center at the University of Alaska/Fairbanks School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. In addition, APA/PCC members help fund marine mammal research through a consortium of west coast and Alaska universities.

Other winners of NOAA’s Marine Stewardship Awards included U.S. Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), who received a Special Recognition Award. Seattle area non-profit, SeaShare, which works with the fishing industry to direct seafood donations for hunger relief, won an award for community service. Also, Ed Melvin of the University of Washington Sea Grant program received the Science, Research and Technology Award for cooperative research to reduce seabird interactions with longline fishing gear.

(more)

The NOAA award to the Alaska pollock catcher/processor vessels follows on to the 2005 certification of the Alaska Pollock fishery as a sustainable and responsibly managed fishery under the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) program (see www.msc.org). APA/PCC members were responsible for gaining a green “thumbs-up” for the fishery, following a rigorous third-party evaluation of the fishery by an international team of independent scientists.

For more information about APA/PCC, please visit our website at www.atsea.org.

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