Meeting Summary
North Pacific Research Board
Science Panel Meeting
Seattle, WA
April 15-17, 2009

The Science Panel met on April 15-17, 2009 at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel in Seattle, Washington. The meeting was chaired by Doug Woodby and the following other members were in attendance: Vera Alexander, Dick Beamish, Jim Berner, Michael Dagg, Bob Gisiner, Seth Macinko, John Piatt, Andre Punt, Cheryl Rosa, Tom Royer, Pat Tester, and David Witherell. Pat Livingston joined the meeting via teleconference. The meeting was staffed by Clarence Pautzke, Francis Wiese, and Carrie Eischens.

1. Call to Order and Approve Agenda

a. The agenda for the meeting was approved with no changes.
b. Jim Berner was nominated and accepted the position of vice-chairman of the NPRB Science Panel.
c. The meeting summary from the February 2009 Science Panel was approved with no changes.

2. Proposals Review for 2009

The Science Panel was given a quick overview on past projects regarding their status (complete or on-going) and how they parse out into eco-system priorities. It was suggested by staff that this be taken into account if faced with a choice between equally meritorious proposals.

Before beginning the review of submitted proposals, the Science Panel discussed ways to improve the information gathered during the proposal process. SP members asked that the 2010 RFP more clearly indicate that under the "Project Management" section of the proposals researchers provide more information on what each PI and co-PI will actually be responsible for as part of the project and indicated that project milestones should be linked with specific PIs who are responsible for the accomplishment of that milestone. Science Panel members also suggested that the web-based proposal submission system could be improved to prevent PIs being hindered from submitting proposals due to software problems. Staff indicated that improvements are continuously being done after each submission cycle and that the safest way is for applicants to allow sufficient time for submission so that staff can assist them should unforeseen problems occur.

The panel reviewed 72 proposals that responded to the 2009 RFP (12 of 85 received were rejected earlier as non-responsive and not processed further, 1 proposal was withdrawn by the investigator and not processed further). Each panel member did a primary or secondary review of 10-11 proposals, which included considering anonymous technical reviews and developing a summary recommendation on whether the proposal should be funded. The two members presented their findings to the full Panel, followed by questions and discussion by the entire Panel and the development of a funding recommendation for Board. Science Panel conflict of interest procedures were reviewed and followed during the meeting.

Overall, the panel found the quality of submitted proposals to be somewhat lacking this year and produced a Tier 1 recommendation of 26 proposals totaling just over $3.4 million dollars, roughly $300,000 less than the amount of funding available for this year's RFP ($3.7 million). As in previous years, the Panel created a second tier of proposals that deserve consideration if specific concerns

regarding the scientific integrity of the proposals can be clarified and satisfactorily adjusted by the PIs. The Science Panel rated 14 proposals as Tier 2 totaling roughly $2.4 million. The remaining 32 proposals were placed in Tier 3, indicating that they had substantial scientific flaws and should not be funded. The panel's considerations of the various sections of the RFP are presented below. This summary will be accompanied by a spreadsheet showing the proposals identified for each of the tiers, and a document which summarizes the panel comments on each of the 72 proposals considered.

Oceanography and Lower Trophic Level Productivity (RFP Section 1a – **Funding cap: $300,000**): Five responsive proposals were submitted to this section of the RFP with requests for almost three times the amount of funds allotted to this category. The panel recommended funding one proposal for $251,599. Two proposals were placed in Tier 2 for an additional $321,991.

Fish Habitat (Section 1b – **Funding cap: $350,000**): Four proposals were submitted to this section of the RFP with a total request for funding of $650,190. The panel recommended one proposal as Tier 1 for $231,460. One proposal was placed in the Tier 2 for $35,817.

Fish and Invertebrates (section 1c – **Funding cap: $800,000**): Requests for more than $2.8M were received under this category. The panel recommended funding four proposals for $703,013, including one with a severely reduced amount. Another five proposals totaling over $1.14 million were recommended as Tier 2.

Marine Mammals (section 1d – **Funding cap: $400,000**): Although 10 proposals were received under this category, the panel recommended funding for only one proposal totaling $80,000, remaining substantially under the section target of $400,000. Two proposals were placed in Tier 2 for an additional $393,370.

Seabirds (section 1e – **Funding cap: $350,000**): The panel recommended one seabird proposals totaling $188,265, again remaining substantially under the section target of $350,000 Two proposals were placed in Tier 2 for an additional $359,807.

Marine Diseases (section 1f – **Funding cap: $100,000**): This category, new to the RFP, was highly competitive with 7 proposals being submitted for almost six times the amount of funding available. The panel recommended funding three of the proposals for a total of $229,113, exceeding the funding cap. One proposal was placed in Tier 2 for $99,879. Because several of the other sections did not received high quality proposals, the Panel decided not to try and adjust this particular section down, as the funding target overall was still met and the quality of proposals in this category was high.

Local and Traditional Knowledge (section 2 – **Funding cap: $100,000**): Only one proposal was received under this category. The panel evaluated this proposal and recommended funding for $99,923.

OSRI-NPRB Collaboration (section 3 – **Funding cap: $200,000 ($100,000 from NPRB)**): Two proposals were submitted under the OSRI-NPRB collaboration section of the RFP. These proposals were evaluated by both the NPRB and the OSRI science panels. Independently, both panels concluded that neither proposal should be recommended for funding and both were placed in the Tier 3 – should not fund category.

Cooperative Research with Industry (section 4 – **Funding cap: $600,000**): Five proposals were submitted under this category. The panel recommended funding three proposals for $452,452, staying substantially under the section target of $600,000. No proposals were placed in Tier 2.

Community Involvement (section 5 – **Funding cap: $100,000**): Four proposals were submitted under this RFP category. The panel recommended funding two of these proposals for a total of $148,917, exceeding the funding cap. A third proposal was rated as Tier 2 for an additional $38,226. Because several of the other sections did not received high quality proposals, the Panel decided not to try and adjust this particular section down, as the funding target overall was still met, and the quality of proposals in this category was high.

Aleutian Islands (section 6 – **Funding cap: $300,000**): Five proposals were received under this category requesting over $1.2 million in funding. The panel recommended funding two proposals totaling $553,010, exceeding the funding cap of $300,000. No proposals were placed in Tier 2. Because several of the other sections did not received high quality proposals, the Panel decided not to try and adjust this particular section down, as the funding target overall was still met, and the quality of proposals in this category was high.

Technology Development (section 7 – **Funding cap: $100,000**): This section, also new to the RFP, was highly competitive with 8 proposals being submitted to this category requesting funds more than six times the amount available under the funding cap. The panel recommended funding five proposals for a total of $353,035, exceeding the funding cap of $100,000. No proposals were placed in Tier 2. Because several of the other sections did not received high quality proposals, the Panel decided not to try and adjust this particular section down, as the funding target overall was still met, and the quality of proposals in this category was high.

Ecosystem indicators and data rescue (section 8 – **Funding cap: $100,000**): Three proposals were received under this RFP category requesting funding of $221,022. The panel recommended funding two proposals for $121,024, slightly exceeding the funding cap of $100,000. No proposals were placed in the Tier 2 category.

3. Integrated Ecosystem Research Programs

Staff updated the Science Panel on the status of both the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska IERPs.

4. Graduate Student Research Award

Twenty-seven applications were received in response to the NPRB 2009 Graduate Student Research Award solicitation. Two applications were subsequently disqualified because they exceeded the research plan page limitation. The science panel reviewed the remaining 25 applications. Each panel member conducted a primary or secondary review of 3-4 proposals, and rated the proposals as poor, fair, good, very good or excellent. The two members presented their findings to the full Panel which then proceeded to develop award recommendations for the Board. Science Panel conflict of interest procedures were reviewed and followed during this process.

This was the first time that all Science Panel members were involved in the reviews of these student proposals. Recognizing that the aim of these awards is to foster new marine scientists in the areas of interest of the Board, the Panel set up a process slightly different from the regular proposals, as follows: As a first criterion, the Science Panel decided to consider just applications which received at least one “Very Good” or “Excellent” ranking from the primary or secondary panel reviewer. This narrowed the field down to 15 applicants. The Panel then chose to give a score of 1-5 (5 being the best) for proposal merit and for student qualification, recognizing that for these graduate awards, all

things begin equal, student qualification and potential should be deemed more important that the scientific merit of the proposal.

Given that 2 of the 5 awards be given to each degree level (master's and Ph.D.), with the 5th award being a wild card, and based on the above ranking system, the Science Panel recommended awarding the 2009 GSRA to:

Helen Esch, Ph.D. student at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Project: Monitoring marine mammal occurrence in the Bering Sea using passive acoustics.

Jodi Pirtle, Ph.D. student at University of Alaska Fairbanks. Project: Nursery Habitat, Predation, and Survival of Early Benthic Phase Red King Crab (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*).

Nathan Jones, MSc student at Moss Landing Marine Lab, San Jose State University. Project: Foraging dynamics of Thick-billed Murres in the Bering Sea.

Rachael Orben, MSc student at Oregon State University. Project: Winter distribution and ecology of Black-legged Kittiwakes and Thick-billed Murres breeding at three Bering Sea colonies with differing population trends.

Megan Winton, MSc student at Moss Landing Marine Lab, California State University. Project: Age, growth, and demography of the roughtail skate, *Bathyraja trachura*, from the eastern Bering Sea, with a revised model from the west coast of the United States using histology.

The panel also recommended that the Board could consider a sixth GSRA this year, considering that the regular RFP recommendation came in well below the target funding amount, and there were many high quality student applications. If available, this sixth award was recommended to go to MSc. student Jill-Marie Seymour from University of Alaska Fairbanks whose project was entitled: Pacific Walrus Feeding Ecology and Possible Links to Trichinellosis.

5. Other Matters

The Science Panel's meeting schedule was reviewed for the remainder of 2009. Dates were confirmed for the May 2009 meeting which will be held on May 19th in Seattle. Meeting place and hotel accommodations are still being confirmed for that meeting. The Science Panel will meet August 25-27, 2009 in Anchorage to develop the 2010 RFP. The Panel will also meet in November to review full proposals and develop the full GOA IERP. This meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place in Seattle, November 17-19, 2009.