

PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH APPORTIONMENT METHODOLOGY

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) adopted a coastwide approach to assessing the Pacific halibut stock abundance at its 2008 Annual Meeting. The IPHC staff recommended that the total allowable catch of halibut based on the coastwide assessment be apportioned into IPHC regulatory areas using a constant exploitation rate applied to data from the fishery-independent IPHC setline stock assessment survey and estimates of bottom area from each regulatory area. The resultant allocation to Area 2A was a substantial reduction from recent years. However, at the 2008 Annual Meeting, the IPHC Commissioners deferred adoption of the new apportionment approach until IPHC staff had conducted a workshop to further explore the basis and implications of the new approach (Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 1).

The biomass apportionment workshop was September 4, 2008 in Bellevue, Washington and was attended by staff from the various Area 2A agencies, tribes and fishing interests. At the workshop, presentations of the methodology used in apportionment by catch area were made to a cross-section of attendees with science, policy, and industry backgrounds. An independent scientist chaired the workshop. The IPHC staff will release a summary of the workshop after the September Council meeting.

A Halibut Managers Workgroup (HMW) consisting of State, Tribal, and Federal managers, and industry representatives met twice over the summer to discuss implications of the IPHC staff proposed apportionment methodology and to consider other possible approaches that could be presented to the IPHC. The HMW considered area apportionment to be primarily a policy issue, and was prepared to explore various policy approaches with the intent of having IPHC staff provide analysis of the various policies at the apportionment workshop. Unfortunately, the IPHC staff structured the biomass workshop as a scientific approach for implementing one policy - the constant exploitation yield policy - which apportions total allowable catch (TAC) among catch areas by applying a uniform exploitation rate to the estimated exploitable biomass in a given catch area. As a result, the workgroup decided to continue their discussions after the workshop with the intent of presenting alternative approaches to catch apportionment at the IPHC Interim and Annual meetings in November 2008 and January 2009, respectively. The HMW is scheduled to meet Monday, September 8, 2008 at the Council meeting.

A summary of recent apportionment by catch area, including by-catch, is presented below for reference.

Legal sized halibut removals (net weight pounds) allocated to IPHC catch areas.

	Catch Area								Total
	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4CDE	
2008									
TAC ^{a/}	1.22	9.00	6.21	24.22	10.90	3.10	1.86	3.89	60.40
bycatch etc. ^{b/}	0.29	0.47	3.36	6.47	0.53	0.75	0.33	2.01	14.21
Total	1.51	9.47	9.57	30.69	11.43	3.85	2.19	5.90	74.61
Percent	2.0%	12.7%	12.8%	41.1%	15.3%	5.2%	2.9%	7.9%	100.0%
2007									
TAC ^{a/}	1.34	11.47	8.51	26.20	9.22	2.89	1.44	4.10	65.17
bycatch etc. ^{b/}	0.27	0.53	3.79	7.89	0.43	0.57	0.29	2.30	16.07
Total	1.61	12.00	12.30	34.09	9.65	3.46	1.73	6.40	81.24
Percent	2.0%	14.8%	15.1%	42.0%	11.9%	4.3%	2.1%	7.9%	100.0%
2006									
TAC ^{a/}	1.38	13.22	10.63	25.20	10.86	3.35	1.67	3.55	69.86
bycatch etc. ^{b/}	0.22	0.53	3.40	7.24	0.43	0.55	0.28	2.29	14.94
Total	1.60	13.75	14.03	32.44	11.29	3.90	1.95	5.84	84.80
Percent	1.9%	16.2%	16.5%	38.3%	13.3%	4.6%	2.3%	6.9%	100.0%
2005									
TAC ^{a/}	1.33	13.25	10.93	25.47	13.15	3.44	2.26	3.99	73.82
bycatch etc. ^{b/}	0.39	0.44	3.12	6.61	0.46	0.58	0.29	2.01	13.90
Total	1.72	13.69	14.05	32.08	13.61	4.02	2.55	6.00	87.72
Percent	2.0%	15.6%	16.0%	36.6%	15.5%	4.6%	2.9%	6.8%	100.0%
2004									
TAC ^{a/}	1.48	13.80	10.50	25.06	15.60	3.47	2.81	3.79	76.51
bycatch etc. ^{b/}	0.30	0.47	2.97	6.52	0.65	0.73	0.19	2.57	14.40
Total	1.78	14.27	13.47	31.58	16.25	4.20	3.00	6.36	90.91
Percent	2.0%	15.7%	14.8%	34.7%	17.9%	4.6%	3.3%	7.0%	100.0%
2004-2008 Average									
TAC ^{a/}	1.35	12.15	9.36	25.23	11.95	3.25	2.01	3.86	69.15
bycatch etc. ^{b/}	0.29	0.49	3.33	6.95	0.50	0.64	0.28	2.24	14.70
Total	1.64	12.64	12.68	32.18	12.45	3.89	2.28	6.10	83.86
Percent	2.0%	15.1%	15.1%	38.4%	14.8%	4.6%	2.7%	7.3%	100.0%

a/ Includes sport catch for Areas 2A and 2B.

b/ Includes legal sized bycatch, wastage, personal use, and sport catch, except that sport catch for Areas 2A and 2B are included in the TAC.

Council Action:

1. **Discuss scientific and policy bases for area apportionment.**
2. **Provide guidance to the Halibut Managers Workgroup for developing recommendations to U.S. Commissioners on the IPHC for catch area apportionment.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 1; IPHC News Release.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Recommendations to IPHC

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