

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.

The biomass apportionment workshop was held September 4, 2008 in Bellevue, Washington and was attended by staff from the various Area 2A agencies, tribes, and fishing interests. The IPHC staff has released a summary of the workshop (Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 1). The summary, as well as presentations, comments and questions, and other relevant materials from the workshop are available on the IPHC website at:

<http://www.iphc.washington.edu/halcom/meetings/workshop2008/baw2008.htm>.

A Halibut Managers Workgroup (HMW) met on October 6, 2008, with IPHC staff to explore technical questions about the stock assessment and apportionment methodology. As a result of the workshop and subsequent meeting with IPHC staff, the HMW will report to the Council on their discussions and potential approaches for catch apportionment among IPHC regulatory areas. The Council should provide guidance for approaching catch apportionment at the IPHC Interim and Annual meetings in November 2008 and January 2009, respectively.

A summary of recent apportionment by catch area, including by-catch, is presented in Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 2.

Council Action:

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

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 1: IPHC Apportionment Workshop Summary.
2. Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 2: Legal Sized Halibut Removals Allocated to IPHC Catch Areas

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Chuck Tracy
- b. Reports and Comments of Agencies and Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Recommendations to International Pacific Halibut Commission

PFMC
10/16/08