

# NMFS UPDATE ON 2002 PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) held its annual meeting January 22-25, 2002, in Seattle. At that meeting, the IPHC set an Area 2A (waters off Washington, Oregon, and California) of 1,310,000 lb, a 13% increase over the 2001 TAC. On February 11, 2002 (67 FR 6220,) NMFS published a proposed rule to implement the 2002 TAC and the Council's recommended changes to the Catch Sharing Plan. In November 2001, the Council had recommended separating the Washington Inside Waters sub-area into two regions with two separate season start dates and recommended allowing Oregon anglers to retain up to two halibut on land. NMFS expects that rule to be finalized by March 18, 2002, the start of the Area 2A treaty tribes commercial fisheries and the commercial fisheries off Canada and Alaska.

Area 2A TAC Comparison, 2001 & 2002 (in pounds)		
	2001	2002
Treaty Tribes	424,000	483,500
Commercial	406,500	16,000
Ceremonial & Subsistence	17,500	467,500
Non-Treaty	716,000	826,500
Commercial	274,918	262,000
Salmon Troll Incidental	34,046	39,300
Directed	192,926	222,700
Sablefish Incidental	47,946	88,389
Recreational	441,802	476,110
WA Sport	214,110	214,110
OR/CA Sport	226,972	262,000
WA Inside Waters	57,393	57,393
WA North Coast	108,030	108,030
WA South Coast	42,739	42,739
Columbia River	10,487	11,188
OR Central, Inside 30 ftm	17,150	19,797
OR North Central (May)	135,866	156,835
OR South Central (May)	12,656	14,609
OR Central, August	49,951	57,660
South of Humbug Mt.	6,809	7,860
TOTAL	1,140,000	1,310,000

## NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT

**Situation:** The National Marine Fisheries Service will report on the proposed rule implementing the Council's changes to the 2002 halibut catch sharing plan and recreational fishery regulations. The proposed changes for 2002 are relatively minor and relate to adjustments to the Puget Sound Subarea season and the on-land possession limit in Oregon.

**Council Task:**

**Receive information for discussion.**

Reference Materials: None.

Agenda Order:

- a. Status of Council Management Measure Recommendations for 2002
- b. Council Discussion

Yvonne de Reynier

PPMC  
02/21/02

REPORT ON  
INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON  
JANUARY 22 - 25, 2002

January 22<sup>nd</sup> was primarily devoted to International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) staff presentations to the Commissioners and the public on the following items:

- The Pacific halibut fishery in 2001
- Chalky halibut research
- Tagging of Pacific halibut to determine distribution and recruitment patterns
- Season extension (12 months) reports
- Evaluation of alternate harvest rates
- Summary of the 2001 stock assessment
- Staff regulatory proposals for 2002

The afternoon of January 22<sup>nd</sup> and the day of January 23<sup>rd</sup> included meetings of the Conference Board (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 2) and Processor Advisory Group (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 3). Additionally, Area 2A participants had an opportunity to provide information to the Commissioners in the administrative sessions.

Mr. Phil Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, made a presentation to the Commissioners on the following items:

- Washington's recreational fishery in 2001
- Puget Sound recreational catch estimate
- Canadian halibut landed into Neah Bay
- Incidental halibut catch in the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington

Many of the Area 2A participants spoke with U.S. Commissioners about the manner in which Area 2A estimated legal size halibut bycatch mortality was calculated.

Participants came to the meeting expecting the legal size bycatch mortality for Area 2A to be 220,000 pounds (Scientific and Statistical Committee Report 9/01). On the first day of the meeting, the IPHC technical documents indicated 540,000 pounds was the deduction from the allowable catch in 2002, and bycatch estimates from the previous six years had been revised. Participants found themselves in a reactive mode on an important issue.

The reason given by the Commission as to the discrepancy between the estimates of bycatch, was there were problems with the technical information provided to the Commission by the National Marine Fisheries Service Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NMFS -NWFSC); and efforts to reconcile the difficulties proved fruitless, as repeated attempts to contact NMFS-NWFSC staff by phone and email were not returned or answered. As time ran out on the deadline, Commission staff were left to use the only number they could replicate: their estimate of 540,000 pounds. Further, no one alerted anyone in the Area 2A delegation the problem of this gap existed.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council will forward a letter to IPHC and NMFS-NWFSC describing a procedure to avoid a similar problem in the future.

The 2002 catch limits and regulatory changes are in Exhibit E.2, Attachment 4.

Area 2A participating entities:

Makah Tribal Council  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
Quilute Indian Nation  
Quinault Indian Nation  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Washington Recreational Fishing Industry Association  
Washington Trollers  
Westport Charter Boat Association

PFMC  
02/05/02

# Conference Board Report 78<sup>th</sup> IPHC Annual Meeting January 22-25, 2002, Seattle, WA

## Attendance:

United States	Canada
Aleut Corporation	Annieville Halibut Association
Area 3B/4A False Pass	BC Aboriginal Fisheries Commission
Atka Fishermen's Association	Canadian Sablefish Association
Bristol Bay Drift Net Association	Dididaht First Nation
Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp	Halibut Advisory Board
Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association	Hesquiat First Nation
Concerned Area M Fishermen	Northern Halibut Producers Association
Deep Sea Fishermen's Union of the Pacific	North Pacific Halibut Fisherman's Association
Fishing Vessel Owners Association	Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council
Kachemak Bay Fisheries Association	Pacific Coast Fishing Vessel Owners Guild
Kodiak Longliners Association	Pacific Longline Fisherman's Association
Kodiak Vessel Owners Association	Steveston Halibut Association
North Pacific Fisheries Association	Ucluelet First Nation
Norton Sound Economic Development Association	
Petersburg Vessel Owners Association	
St. George Fishermen's Association	
St. Paul Fishermen's Association	
Seafood Producers Coop	
United Fishermen's Marketing Association	
Washington Recreational Fishing Industry Association	
Washington Treaty Tribes	
Westport Charter Boat Association	
Washington Troller's Association	
Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association	

## REVIEW CONFERENCE BOARD VOTING ROSTER

Two new organizations were accredited. The Hesquiat Tribe was accredited for Canada and the Washington Trollers were accredited for the United States.

## SELECT CHAIRPERSONS FROM CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

On the United States side, Robert Alverson was selected as chair.  
On the Canadian side, Chris Sporer was selected as co-chair.

## CONFERENCE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS TO IPHC

### A. Review areas

The Conference Board has no recommendations for new or altered IPHC areas.

## **B. Season date recommendations for all areas**

The conference board discussed extending the commercial halibut season.

A motion was passed for the 2002 fishing season to close on December 1, 2002. The conference board requests that the next IPHC annual meeting be scheduled for the first week of January, 2003, as the conference board requests that the 2003 season begin March 1.

## **C. Catch limit recommendations all areas**

The Conference Board recommends the following harvest levels for the 2002 fishing season:

2A	1.31 million pounds (staff recommendation)
2B	11.75 million pounds (staff recommendation)
2C	8.5 million pounds (staff recommendation)
3A	22.63 million pounds (staff recommendation)
3B	17.13 million pounds (staff recommendation)
4A	4.97 million pounds (staff recommendation)
4B	4.2 million pounds
4CDE	5.0 million pounds

**Total: 75.49 million pounds**

Conference Board comments:

### *Area 3B.*

There were two organizations of the Conference Board that supported keeping the harvest level the same as in 2001 (16.53 million pounds). All other organizations supported the staff recommendation of 17.1 million pounds. The arguments that support the staff recommendation include (1) CEY level of 28.56 million pounds of which the proposed harvest is more than 10 million pounds less than the current CEY. (2) Commercial CPUE levels remain relatively high continuing at over 400 pounds per skate. Those concerned about the staff recommendation noted a discrepancy between the survey CPUE and the commercial CPUE. The commercial CPUE dropped 29% in 2001. Additionally, it was pointed out that harvest levels in 3B had been continuously on the rise and that it was perhaps time to take a pause with regards to any increases in this area.

#### *Area 4B.*

The Conference Board recommends a two-year phase-in for the decrease proposed by the staff. The Conference Board's recommendation of 4.2 million pounds reflects a fifty percent reduction of the staff's recommended decrease of 1.47 million pounds. The Conference Board believes that the change in habitat methodology in determining the harvest level in this area needs further surveys to confirm its validity. This phase-in addresses economic issues within Area 4B and will allow an additional year of survey work to confirm any needed decrease in the harvest in 4B.

There was concern expressed that the survey time frame from June to August in the Aleutian Islands area needs further consideration. The concern is that the month of June, due to water temperatures, can push the fish to deeper areas than the survey covers. The staff might consider a July time frame for surveying the Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea when the fish are generally above 200 fathoms.

There were some members of the Conference Board who spoke to their specific lower CPUEs in 4B and were concerned that the cut in quota was justified.

#### *Area 4CDE.*

The Conference Board recommends that the harvest level be increased approximately ten percent over the staff recommendation. The Conference Board notes that the CEY in this area is up twenty percent over last year. The CEY is 11.81 million pounds and the Conference Board proposal of 5 million pounds is less than fifty percent of what the staff suggests is the upper-end potential. Increases in other areas have been based on taking one-third of the staff's new CEY if greater than the preceding year's harvest level and adding it to the new year's quota. This policy is not being followed in Area 4CDE. The Conference Board proposal is 1.5 million pounds less than the procedure used in Area 3B and 3A for increasing quotas. The procedure for increasing quotas in 3A and 3B would net a two million pound increase in 4CDE and the Conference Board proposal is for approximately half a million pound increase. The commercial CPUE in 4D remains extremely high, which is 517 pounds per skate. Last year the Conference Board recommended a higher quota based on an increasing CEY, but this recommendation was not accepted by the Commission. The CEY has increased again in 2002. There were Conference Board members that were opposed to this recommendation as the quota numbers still appear to be soft and the methodology of using a habitat formula for population estimates is still being developed.

#### **D. Staff proposals for changes to IPHC regulations (page 100, blue book)**

1. Catch sharing proposal. The Conference Board unanimously recommends the proposal, as presented in the blue book.
2. Subsistence regulations for Alaska. The Conference Board recommends that the Commission recognize subsistence fishing in Alaska.

3. Illegal possession of halibut. The Conference Board accepts the recommended staff changes. There was one delegate in opposition.
4. Legal purchase of halibut for bait. The Conference Board recommends acceptance of this item, however, they had two issues of concern. The first concern is for crab vessels that may be leaving the Seattle area with no crab pots on board but halibut heads to be used as bait in their freezers, and the second concern is for IFQ halibut fishermen who may save the heads of their fish for crab fishing and keep the heads in a freezer on their boat. The NMFS enforcement representative indicated that these two issues could be taken into consideration in drafting their regulations.
5. Retention of sub-legal halibut for subsistence use in 4D and 4E. The Conference Board recommends approval of this proposal. A representative from 4C indicated a request that Area 4C be included in this proposal; however, this is not part of the Conference Board recommendation.
6. Commercial treaty fishing. The Conference Board unanimously agrees with the changes proposed by the staff.

**E. Industry proposals for changes to IPHC regulations**

1. Clearing for Area 4. The Conference Board requests that the commissioners provide in their regulations that the use of a vessel monitoring system (VMS) will satisfy the requirement to physically clear in and out of Area 4.
2. April opening. The Conference Board did not support this recommendation. There was only one in favor. The Conference Board recommendation on fishery openings and closures is discussed under season date recommendations.
3. Bycatch in the longline fishery. The Conference Board recommends the IPHC Commissioners request the NPFMC and DFO develop a discussion paper, to be presented at next year's annual meeting, to allow the retention of halibut by IFQ/CDQ/IVQ fishers in directed fixed gear fisheries, where applicable. The discussion paper may include the impacts on Alaska longline P-COD, Turbot, DSR, and troll salmon. In addition, it should address Canadian sablefish and dogfish fixed gear operations. The focus of this is to have fresh fish on the market to better serve the consumer and to minimize discard mortality. The motion carried, but two groups were in opposition.
4. Chalky fish report. The Conference Board recommends support for this proposal. There was one delegate in opposition who expressed concerns that there was no control standard for reporting of chalky fish and there is some question as to whether fish that are chalky and going into the frozen market really reflect an economic problem for the industry.



5. Bycatch of halibut. The Conference Board dealt with this under Proposal C. We would like to bring to the attention of the Commissioners that the Brindle Proposal does not specify that the bycatch would be delivered by only those who hold IFQ halibut.
6. Area 4 check in. This was addressed under Item A.
7. This proposal was withdrawn as it was addressed under harvest limits.
8. This proposal was withdrawn as it was addressed under harvest limits.
9. This proposal was withdrawn as it was addressed under harvest limits.
10. Bait type and gear type requirement. The Conference Board investigated this proposal with Commission staff and the owner of the vessel involved in the survey. It was determined that the statements presented in this proposal were inaccurate and the survey was conducted with standard gear and bait.
11. This proposal was withdrawn as it was addressed under harvest limits.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **1. Eco-Labeling**

The Conference Board reviewed the attempt by the harvesters to acquire an eco-label for Pacific halibut. The Conference Board continues to support this effort. It has been determined that the cost of acquiring an eco-label through the Marine Stewardship Council may cost eighty thousand dollars for Alaska halibut and an additional thirty thousand dollars for Canadian halibut. The Conference Board would be pleased should the Commissioners choose to fund this initiative, or identify means for the industry to acquire funding.

### **2. Aquaculture**

It was the understanding of the Conference Board from last year that the Commissioners were to present a report on the plans of the respective governments for the development of halibut aquaculture in Canada and the United States. It would be appreciated if the Commissioners could put this on the 2003 agenda for discussion, as a presentation to the harvesters.

The Conference Board recommends with one in opposition the following separate motions:

- i. That the IPHC recommend to the governments of Canada and the United States that the development and expansion of halibut aquaculture be stopped until research has been conducted and analysed regarding the impacts of halibut aquaculture on the

environment (i.e. pollution, oxygen depletion, chemical and antibiotic discharge), wild stocks (i.e. pathogens transfer and genetic diversity), and the commercial fishing industry (from biological, health, environmental, and economic impacts).

- ii. That the IPHC shall be the primary organization of the Canadian and United States governments for assessing the various impacts of halibut aquaculture on the wild halibut stocks.
- iii. The IPHC shall not allow Pacific halibut or Pacific halibut eggs to be used in aquaculture in any way. That the IPHC ensure that its resources, expertise, facilities, and staff not be employed or made available in any way to support the advancement of commercial aquaculture.
- iv. That the IPHC recommend to the governments of Canada and the United States that the practice of open netcage aquaculture or penning of wild halibut should be banned due to risks of escapes, pathogen transfer, algae blooms, pollution, and discharge of drugs and chemicals into the marine environment.
- v. That the IPHC recommend to the governments of Canada and the United States that the use of Atlantic halibut for aquaculture purposes be prohibited in the Pacific waters of North America.
- vi. That the IPHC take a position opposing research on and the use of genetically modified organisms to advance aquaculture.
- vii. Commissioners Beamish and Balsiger give the Conference Board a report on the plans of the respective governments for the development of halibut aquaculture in Canada and the US.

### **3. Multi-Year Quotas**

The Conference Board unanimously supports the IPHC in its move towards investigating a multi-year strategy for setting harvest levels.

### **4. Bycatch**

The Canadian delegates expressed concern with bycatch mortalities (mainly in the bottom trawl fisheries in the Bering Seas, e.g., rock sole, yellowfin sole, codfishes) and their potential impacts on Canadian halibut stocks. The Conference Board asked the Commission to re-examine the relative effects of bycatch mortality on all areas (adjacent or downstream) for discussion for the 2003 meeting. The motion was passed with no opposition.

Additionally, the Conference Board would like the blue book to include the bycatch of sub-legal and legal halibut in numbers of fish by area as well as weight.

The Conference Board reiterates its 2001 comments, which are as follows:

- a) "The Commission write a letter to the U.S. State Department endorsing Individual Bycatch Quotas (IBQ) for halibut for the US trawl fleet as IBQs would allow NPFMC/NMFS to reduce halibut bycatch from happening and permit the US to live up to the commitments made under bilateral agreement with Canada."
- b) "The Canadian government send a letter to the US government requesting the US government take action to deal with the halibut bycatch issue and live up to commitments made in a bilateral agreement with Canada and allow for the changes necessary to reduce bycatch to the agreed level."

## **5. Miscellaneous**

It would be helpful for the Conference Board if the staff could provide the following information in spreadsheet format. The information that is requested would include, for the last five years, by regulatory area: commercial quota set; commercial quota harvested; percentage of quota harvested; setline CEY; and, CPUE (commercial and survey).



**PROCESSOR ADVISORY GROUP**

**January 22, 2002**

**SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING REPORT**

**CHAIR:** John Woodruff, Icicle Seafoods, Inc., U.S.  
**VICE CHAIR:** Blake Tipton, S.M. Products, Canada

**CATCH LIMITS**

Area 2A	1.31
Area 2B	11.75
Area 2C	8.50
Area 3A	22.63
Area 3B	17.13
Area 4A	4.97
Area 4B	4.03
Area 4CDE	4.45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74.77</b>

With the exception of Area 4B, the PAG supports the staff's recommendations for the 2002 catch limits. With respect to Area 4B, however, the PAG believes the total removal percentage should be 11 percent of the exploitable biomass. This includes the commercial catch as well as all other removals. This 11% figure is well under the 20% exploitation rate that was typically applied in Areas 2B, 2C and 3A and is under the total removal rate in Area 3B. We understand this 20% exploitation rate to be conservative. Yet, the staff's proposed quota for Area 4B is for a removal rate of 8.9% of the exploitable biomass, which we believe, puts us in a world of caution on top of caution.

At the same time, the PAG believes that, in no case in Area 4, should the quota for 2002 exceed the quotas in 2001. This adds an additional layer of conservatism to our approach.

The IPHC should continue to develop the methodology used by staff in assessing the halibut resource and use a reasonably conservative and consistent approach when setting area quotas.

**FISHING PERIOD**

The PAG reported at the IPHC's Annual Meeting last year that, assuming eight-month seasons, it supports routinely opening the seasons at noon on the Sundays closest to March 15. Fridays are generally difficult openings for market reasons, with Sunday

being more ideal because the halibut will hit the market by Wednesdays and weekend shoppers. Again, the PAG reports that opening the season on Sundays will maximize the opportunities for the first fish by getting it to the market with the best possible timing.

Accordingly, the PAG endorses opening the 2002 season on Sunday, March 17. Because the derby mentality remains at play at the openings, Sunday openings will also minimize costs for companies that don't then yet normally operate on Saturday and Sunday. We again respectfully request the IPHC's commissioners to consider these factors when setting the opening date for 2002 and future years.

The PAG asks the IPHC to return to the custom of including tide tables in future Blue Books.

**EXTENDING SEASONS:** If the IPHC considers extending the season in 2002 or future years, PAG supports extensions closer to current March openings rather than the November closure. The reasons for this are: greater incidence of chalk in November and increased consumer interest in turkey and other traditional Thanksgiving and Christmas fare.

The PIT and PSTATS tag studies will produce some important information about migration patterns and percentage changes between areas that will be useful in determining the feasibility of longer seasons. Therefore, the PAG requests that the IPHC work closely with HANA to also develop a thoughtful and comprehensive analysis from processors about the impacts that extending seasons might have on the markets, and develop a list of issues that includes the pros and cons of each.

The PAG encourages the IPHC to continue to expand its PSTATS study of spawning grounds fidelity and spatial population structures of North Pacific halibut in all areas, but especially Area 2B along the coast of British Columbia.

## **REGULATORY PROPOSALS**

### **IPHC**

- A. **Catch Sharing Plan:** The PAG concurs with the IPHC staff recommendation
- B. **Subsistence:** The concept looks good. The PAG wishes you luck in this seemingly simple endeavor of defining "subsistence".
- C. **BAIT:** We concur with the NMFS enforcement's request to revise the regulations to allow the crab fishery to use halibut heads or carcasses as bait, providing there is documentation to prove the bait was purchased legally

**D. AREA 4 Sub-Legals:** We concur with the NMFS and IPHC staff recommendations for retention of sub legals for personal use in Areas 4D and 4E.

## **INDUSTRY**

**A./F. Vessel Monitoring System:** The PAG supports the use of a VMS system as a substitute for checking in and out of Area 4. A VMS system should be an option for anyone wanting to use it.

**C./E. Bycatch Out of Season:** The PAG does not support either regulatory proposal that would allow halibut to be retained and sold out of season. The concern is that fishing effort will rise dramatically, bycatch mortality would go up, and the same provisions would have to be applied coastwise. Hedges against farm-raised halibut are better applied to extending the season at the opening end as explained above, rather than as proposed.

## **CHALKY HALIBUT**

Chalky halibut continues as the processing sector's most pressing problem. The PAG appreciates the extraordinary efforts and energy that the IPHC staff has applied to the matter and to working with processors to better understand the condition. We encourage the IPHC to now work with industry to advance our understanding of the physiology behind chalkiness in hopes that we can ultimately prevent or control the condition's development. Also toward this end, we ask the IPHC to establish a database and collect information about chalky fish, especially the areas and times of year of high incidence. This database needs to be maintained and made available in real time and posted on the web so fishermen can reduce fishing efforts when appropriate.

## **BYCATCH**

The bycatch of halibut coastwise is about ten percent of the commercial halibut quota. While the bycatch levels coastwise have declined since 1990, we note from the table on page 89 of the Blue Book that catch levels in certain areas increased last year. Specifically, bycatch was down in Area 2, but increased slightly in Areas 3A and 4. The PAG wants to reiterate the importance of maintaining efforts to reduce bycatch mortality coastwise and asks the IPHC to continue to pressure on industry and government agencies to reduce it further.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENT**

The PAG supports the IPHC's research program for 2002. The PAG is disappointed that the PIT tag study cannot proceed as planned for 2002. We are very supportive of the study and recognize that the data it produces will give us a much better understanding of the resource and biomass in areas west of 3A. We encourage the IPHC to move forward with all due speed.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Aleut Enterprise Corp.  
APICDA/Atka Pride Seafoods  
Halibut Association of North America  
Icicle Seafoods  
Peter Pan Seafoods  
Seafresh/Wards Cove Packing Co.  
S.M. Products



# INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

## *News Release*

January 28, 2002

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P.O. BOX 95009, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98145-2009

### HALIBUT COMMISSION COMPLETES 2002 ANNUAL MEETING

The International Pacific Halibut Commission completed its 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, with Dr. James Balsiger of Juneau, Alaska presiding as Chairman. The Commission is recommending to the governments of Canada and the United States catch limits for 2002 totaling 74,920,000 pounds, compared to 73,180,000 pounds in 2001.

The Commission staff reported on the assessment of the Pacific halibut stock in 2001. The major changes in the assessment this year were: a separate treatment of Areas 2A and 2B in the assessment, whereas they had been previously combined; the incorporation of additional survey information in Areas 2C and 3A; and, a revision in the estimate of halibut habitat in all areas. The separation of Areas 2A and 2B and some computational changes resulted in increased estimates of exploitable biomass in both areas. Exploitable biomass was estimated to be slightly lower in Area 2C and slightly higher in Area 3A as a result of these changes. Revisions of halibut habitat based on bottom areas were completed for all regulatory areas but the effect was minor, except in Area 4B, where the change resulted in an approximate 30% decrease in habitat. The total halibut stock is declining slowly due to lower recruitment associated with environmental conditions unfavourable to halibut recruitment. However, the halibut biomass is still above the long-term average level and is expected to remain above this level for the next several years.

#### Seasons and Catch Limits

The Commission received regulatory proposals for 2002 from the scientific staff, Canadian and United States harvesters and processors, and other fishery agencies. The Commission will recommend to the governments the following catch limits for 2002 in Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington), Area 2B (British Columbia), Area 2C (southeastern Alaska), Area 3A (central Gulf), Area 3B (western Gulf), Area 4A (eastern Aleutians), Area 4B (western Aleutians), Area 4C (Pribilof Islands), Area 4D (northwestern Bering Sea), and Area 4E (Bering Sea flats):

## 2002 Catch Limits

Area	Catch Limit (pounds)
2A Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Point Chehalis)	222,700
2A Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll	39,300
2A Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish longline fishery (north of Point Chehalis)	88,389
2A Treaty Indian commercial	467,500
2A Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	16,000
2A Sport - North of Columbia River	214,110
<u>2A Sport - South of Columbia River</u>	<u>262,001</u>
Area 2A total	1,310,000
2B	11,750,000
2C	8,500,000
3A	22,630,000
3B	17,130,000
4A	4,970,000
4B	4,180,000
4C	2,030,000
4D	2,030,000
<u>4E</u>	<u>390,000</u>
<u>Area 4 total</u>	<u>13,600,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>74,920,000</b>

The catch limits for Regulatory Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E reflect the catch-sharing plan implemented by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC). The NPFMC catch-sharing plan in Area 4 allows the Commission to set biologically-based catch limits for Areas 4A, 4B, and a combined Area 4C-D-E. The catch-sharing plan allows Area 4D Community Development Quota (CDQ) harvest to be taken in Area 4E. The requirements for fishing Area 4D CDQ in Area 4E will be part of regulations promulgated by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The catch-sharing plan implemented by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) for Area 2A was adopted by the Commission and is reflected in the catch limits adopted for the Area 2A fisheries. Fishing dates for an incidental commercial halibut fishery concurrent with salmon troll fishing seasons in Area 2A and the incidental commercial halibut fishery during the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis will be established under United States domestic regulations established by NMFS. The remainder of the Area 2A catch-sharing plan, including sport fishing seasons, will be determined under regulations promulgated by NMFS.

In Area 2A, seven 10-hour fishing periods for the non-treaty directed commercial fishery are recommended: June 26, July 10, July 24, August 7, August 21, September 4, and September 18. All fishing periods will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 6:00 p.m. local time, and will be further restricted by fishing period limits announced at a later date.

The staff reported to the Commission on its further investigation of the issues associated with an extended halibut fishing season. The report concluded that winter fisheries would likely result in altered biomass distribution by regulatory area compared with that resulting from present fisheries. Although the staff believes that the stock could be assessed and conservation assured when dealing with such an alteration, significant impacts on data capture programs, quota share management, as well as management and enforcement costs were identified. The Commission conducted extensive discussions on the season extension issue and received several industry proposals and public testimony. The Commission directed the staff to continue its investigation and broaden the scope to include consideration of multiple-year averaging for catch limits, alternate management frameworks, and the catch of halibut in other fisheries. The Commission made only slight changes to the existing season to accommodate market opportunities.

Therefore, the treaty Indian commercial fishery in Area 2A, the Canadian Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fishery in Area 2B, and the United States Individual Fishing Quota (IVQ) fisheries in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E will all commence at 12 noon local time on March 18 and terminate at 12 noon local time on November 18.

#### Regulatory Changes and Issues

The Commission approved revising the current definition of illegal possession of halibut from a person "knowingly" in possession of halibut taken in contravention of regulations to a person in contravention of IPHC regulations. A person is not required to know that they are in contravention of the regulations to be in illegal possession of halibut.

The Commission adopted regulations recognizing the customary and traditional use of halibut for subsistence fishing for Alaska. The specific regulations on gear, eligibility, daily bag limits, permitting and recording for this fishery will be promulgated by NMFS. Although the Commission authorized a season of January 1 to December 31 for this fishery, the revision to the IPHC regulations will take effect only if and when the customary and traditional fishery proposal is approved by the U.S. government.

In Alaska, the regulations will be changed to allow fishing vessels carrying crab pots to use halibut heads and carcasses as bait, provided they have documentation of legal purchase or documentation of legally acquiring the bait.

The Commission re-authorized the regulations allowing CDQ harvesters in Area 4E to retain undersized halibut caught with commercial gear for personal use (not to sell or barter the halibut). The regulation was expanded to include Area 4D CDQ vessels that land all of their catch in Area 4E or Area 4D. The regulations again require the manager of each of the authorized CDQ organizations that allows persons to harvest halibut in Area 4D and 4E CDQ

fisheries to report annually the total number and weight of undersized halibut to the Commission. The report must include the methodology on how the data were collected and be received by IPHC prior to December 1.

Regulations were adopted to specify which commercial fishing regulations apply to the commercial treaty Indian fishery in Area 2A-1. The commercial fishing regulations that will apply are as follows: size limit, careful release of halibut, logs, receipt and possession of halibut, and fishing gear (except that the 72-hour fishing restriction preceding the halibut fishing period shall not apply).

The regulations were not changed to allow vessel monitoring systems or transponders in place of Area 4 clearance procedures. However, NMFS Enforcement will work with harvesters to provide waivers to clearance procedures if the vessel has the appropriate vessel monitoring systems in place. For further information on waivers, contact NMFS Enforcement in Juneau (907) 586-7200.

#### Other Actions

An industry proposal requested Staff assistance in implementing a web-based registry for chalky fish occurrence and the Commission directed the staff to undertake this work.

The Commission notes that halibut bycatch mortality in non-target fisheries was reduced slightly in 2001, continuing the trend initiated by the 1991 Commission agreement to achieve lower bycatch mortality levels. However, the Commission believes that progress on further reductions on bycatch mortality is desirable and that current levels of mortality reduce yield to the directed halibut fisheries. The Commission will continue to work with agencies of the two governments to achieve reductions in halibut bycatch mortality.

The Commission received several proposals from its Conference Board concerning restrictions on or banning of halibut aquaculture-related activities. Such restrictions are not part of the Commission's mandate or jurisdiction and support for aquaculture in general is a policy of the Canadian government. The Commission took no action on most to these proposals with the exception of publishing annual reports on halibut aquaculture activities by the two governments on the Commission's web page. In addition, the staff was directed to form a small interagency committee to monitor halibut aquaculture development and advise the Commission on potential negative impacts on the wild halibut resource or its management.

The Commission staff had proposed an extensive tagging program for 2002 employing passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags. However, the staff reported that technical evaluation of tagging procedures, location, and detection had not progressed to its satisfaction and the program will be postponed to 2003 while further research is completed. The Commission also directed the staff to complete a peer review of the project during 2002.

The recommended regulations for the 2002 halibut fishery will become official as soon as they are approved by the Canadian and United States Governments. The Commission will publish and distribute regulation pamphlets.

The next Annual Meeting of the Commission will be held in Victoria, B.C. from January 21 to 24, 2003. The Canadian Government commissioner, Dr. Richard Beamish, was elected Chairman for the coming year. The United States Government commissioner, Dr. James Balsiger, was elected as Vice Chairman. Other Canadian commissioners are Clifford Atleo and John Secord. The other United States commissioners are Ralph Hoard and Andrew Scalzi. Dr. Bruce Leaman is the Executive Director of the Commission.

- END -

Bruce M. Leaman, Executive Director

Phone: (206) 634-1838

Web: [www.iphc.washington.edu](http://www.iphc.washington.edu)



## **PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

**7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384**

*CHAIRMAN  
Hans Radtke*

*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Donald O. McIsaac*

**Telephone: 503-326-6352  
Fax: 503-326-6831  
[www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)**

February 1, 2002

Dr. Bruce Leaman, Director  
International Pacific Halibut Commission  
PO Box 95009  
Seattle, WA 98145-2009

Dear Bruce:

Let me begin by complimenting you on another excellently run annual meeting. The meeting materials were obviously prepared under high quality standards, your staff were very professional and helpful, and the meeting in general showed considerable attention to the details that display quality. Also, we appreciated your reservation of a breakout room during the week for use by groups such as our Area 2A delegation.

The primary purpose of this letter is to express concern about the confusion surrounding the estimate of bycatch mortality for Area 2A and the impacts this confusion had to the 2002 allowable catch. It is now apparent the basis for this problem was in the area of communication, as opposed to a serious analytical or policy dispute. We would like to take this early opportunity to do what is possible to eliminate any chance of repeating this problem next year. Please consider the content of this letter in its intended spirit of constructively improving communication.

We came to the annual meeting with the strong expectation the bycatch mortality estimate for Area 2A was 220,000 pounds. On the first day of the meeting, we were quite surprised to see 540,000 pounds listed in the Commission technical documents as the deduction from the allowable catch in 2002, and the bycatch estimates from the previous 6 years had been revised. Advance calls to the Commission office about possible Area 2A issues and expectations resulted in no mention of this significant discrepancy between what was forwarded to the Commission office last fall and what would be used as the basis of deliberations at the annual meeting. Even a coordination conference call the week before the meeting between many of the Area 2A delegation participants yielded no indication of what we saw on the first day of the meeting. We found ourselves quite suddenly in a reactive mode on an important issue. As you know, we left the meeting with a total allowable catch 320,000 pounds less than what we expected when we arrived at the meeting.

The impacts of a loss of 320,000 pounds to our small allowable catch are significant. In numerical terms, it would have increased the yield limit 24% over the amount now to be allocated between the Area 2A sectors. As an example of importance, Oregon sport charters now receive \$150 from anglers for the chance to catch an average 25 pound net weight dressed halibut.

Dr. Bruce Leaman  
February 1, 2002  
Page 2

We will attempt to do several things to try to prevent re-occurrence of this problem next year. I have attached a letter to Dr. Usha Varanasi suggesting several measures to improve communication on the transmittal of information used to develop the allowable catch for Area 2A.

From your perspective, we simply ask you and your staff be aware of our concern and communicate directly with us should any such problems develop in the future. In the instance there is a discrepancy that develops between what is transmitted to the Commission and what will be used at the annual meeting, please alert both me and the southern U.S. principal involved of the situation. Using the communication vehicles available at the Pacific Council office, I will be able to notify the other members of the southern U.S. delegation. Hopefully, we will have the opportunity for a timely response.

Should you have any questions on our request or intent in this matter, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Sincerely,

A black and white image of a handwritten signature, which appears to be "Don Bodenmiller", written in a cursive style.

Executive Director

DOM:kla

Enclosure

c: Mr. Bob Alverson  
Mr. Phil Anderson  
Mr. Jim Balsiger  
Mr. Don Bodenmiller  
Mr. Burnie Bohn  
Ms. Yvonne de Reynier  
Mr. Ralph Hoard  
Mr. Steve Joner  
Mr. Jim Lone  
Dr. Rick Methot  
Mr. Mel Moon  
Mr. Bill Robinson  
Ms. Michele Robinson  
Dr. Usha Varanasi  
Mr. John Wallace



**PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*  
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February 1, 2002

Dr. Usha Varanasi  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Northwest Fisheries Science Center  
2725 Montlake Blvd. E.  
Seattle, WA 98112

Dear Usha:

A situation arose at the most recent International Pacific Halibut Commission (Commission) annual meeting that illustrated an opportunity to improve communication between the parties south of the Canadian border involved in managing the halibut resource in Area 2A. The purpose of this letter is to suggest mechanisms that can prevent the kind of problem experienced at the annual meeting this year from re-occurring in the future.

We came to the annual meeting with the strong expectation that the bycatch mortality estimate for Area 2A was 220,000 pounds. On the first day of the meeting, we were quite surprised to see 540,000 pounds listed in the Commission's technical documents as the deduction from the allowable catch in 2002, and the bycatch estimates from the previous six years had been revised. Even a coordination conference call the week before the meeting between many of the Area 2A delegation participants yielded no indication of what we saw on the first day of the meeting. We found ourselves quite suddenly in a reactive mode on an important issue. As a consequence, we left the meeting with a total allowable catch 320,000 pounds less than what we expected when we arrived at the meeting.

The impacts of a loss of 320,000 pounds to our small allowable catch are significant. In numerical terms, it would have increased the yield limit 24% over the amount now to be allocated between the Area 2A sectors. As an example of importance, Oregon sport charters now receive \$150 from anglers for the chance to catch an average 25-pound dressed halibut.

The reason given by the Commission as to the discrepancy between the estimates of bycatch was there were difficulties in the technical information provided to the Commission by the NMFS NWFSC, and that efforts to reconcile the difficulties proved fruitless, as repeated attempts to contact NWFSC staff by phone and email were not returned or answered. As time ran out on the deadline, Commission staff were left to use the only number they could replicate, their estimate of 540,000 pounds. Further, no one alerted anyone in the southern U.S. delegation the problem of this gap existed; even staff within NMFS at the NWR working on Pacific halibut fishery management were not aware of the situation.

Dr. Usha Varanasi

February 1, 2002

Page 2

To prevent such an occurrence from repeating itself, we suggest the following:

- Transmit the essential information to the Commission formally by letter, with copies to the southern U.S. principals.
- Ask in the letter for a response if any difficulties or discrepancies develop in the use of the information.
- Alert your staff to the situation that occurred this year and ask that they inform you as quickly as possible of any significant issues that could make the kind of difference in the fishery experienced this year.
- Notify the principals in the Area 2A delegation as to any such significant problems so as to facilitate a timely response, or preparation for negotiation at the next annual meeting.

On behalf of those at the 2002 annual meeting, let me express appreciation for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular box containing a white, handwritten signature in cursive script.

Executive Director

c: Mr. Ralph Hoard  
Mr. Jim Lone  
Mr. Phil Anderson  
Mr. Burnie Bohn  
Mr. Don Bodenmiller  
Ms. Michele Robinson  
Mr. Bob Alverson  
Dr. Jim Balsiger  
Ms. Yvonne de Reynier  
Dr. Bruce Leaman  
Mr. John Wallace  
Dr. Rick Methot  
Mr. Bill Robinson  
Mr. Steve Joner  
Mr. Mel Moon

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FEB 19 2002

PFMC



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northwest Fisheries Science Center  
2725 Montlake Boulevard East  
Seattle, WA 98112-2097

February 13, 2002

Dr. D. O. McIsaac  
Executive Director  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200  
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Dear Don:

The situation regarding halibut bycatch calculation is quite unfortunate, and I completely agree that we need communication guidelines that will prevent a recurrence.

My understanding is that this was not a new analysis. The analysis was reported in the 2000 document. There was no new analysis in 2001 and the 2001 document included the previous section unchanged. The PFMC and SSC reviewed and approved the document in September 2001. I am quite disappointed that staff-to-staff contact between International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) during the months prior to the IPHC meeting neither resolved the discrepancy nor elevated the situation to a higher level in each organization. We also were unaware that an alternative calculation would be presented by the IPHC staff, and were unaware that a technical error existed in the NMFS calculation. As you know, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center underwent some changes in personnel in our Fishery Resource Analysis and Monitoring Division. This transition in staff involved in the calculations and documents contributed to this problem being undetected and unreported.

Your suggestions for improved communication are good. In fact, NMFS technical staff have already met with IPHC staff and identified the source of the technical error. A revised document will be developed by April 1 for the record. In addition, I recommend that we clarify the role of the Council's SSC in reviewing draft documents before they are transmitted to the IPHC.

After discussion with the IPHC, my senior managers have agreed to set a formal schedule and protocol for transmittal of the bycatch information. For 2002, we propose to update the current analysis during summer 2002, transmit the draft document to IPHC staff and to the Council for SSC review at the September meeting, and finalize the document based upon written comments from IPHC and the Council. The document will be transmitted to IPHC by Oct. 15 in time for their Nov. 1 assessment update. We will keep the southern U.S. principals informed as this progresses. The

new NMFS observer data will not contain a complete year of coverage in time for the 2002 bycatch update. We plan to develop the bycatch report for 2003 and beyond on the basis of the new observer data.

At present, Dr. Elizabeth Clarke, our Division Director of FRAM, is the point of contact for any unresolved groundfish science issues. As her groundfish analysis program becomes more fully developed this spring, she expects to designate a point of contact for all of our bycatch analyses to assist her in assuring that this year's situation does not re-occur.

Very truly yours,



Usha Varanasi, Ph.D.  
Science and Research Director  
Northwest Fisheries Science Center

/c

cc: Mr. Ralph Hoard  
Mr. Jim Lone  
Mr. Phil Anderson  
Mr. Burnie Bohn  
Mr. Don Bodenmiller  
Ms. Michele Robinson  
Mr. Bob Alverson  
Dr. James Balsiger  
Ms. Yvonne De Reynier  
Dr. Bruce Leaman  
Mr. John Wallace  
Dr. Richard Methot  
Dr. Elizabeth Clarke  
Mr. Bill Robinson  
Mr. Steve Joner  
Mr. Mel Moon

## REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING

Situation: Mr. Jim Lone and Executive Director Dr. Don McIsaac attended the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) meeting in January which set the overall halibut harvest levels for 2002, including that for Area 2A. Mr. Lone has submitted a brief summary of the results of the meeting (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 1).

### **Council Task:**

#### **1. Receive information for discussion.**

#### Reference Materials:

1. Report on International Pacific Halibut Commission Annual Meeting (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 1).
2. Conference Board Report 78<sup>th</sup> IPHC Annual Meeting (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 2).
3. Processor Advisory Group Seventh Annual Meeting Report (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 3).
4. International Pacific Halibut Commission News Release (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 4).
5. Letter to Bruce Leaman, IPHC Executive Director from Don McIsaac (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 5)
6. Letter to Usha Varanasi, NMFS NWFSC from Don McIsaac (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 6)
7. Letter to Don McIsaac from Usha Varanasi, NMFS NWFSC Director (Exhibit E.2, Attachment 7)

#### Agenda Order:

2. Report on IPHC Annual Meeting

Jim Lone

PPMC  
02/27/02

# INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS:  
JAMES BALSIGER  
JUNEAU, AK  
RICHARD J. BEAMISH  
NANAIMO, B.C.  
RALPH G. HOARD  
SEATTLE, WA  
KATHLEEN PEARSON  
SKIDEGATE, HAIDA GWAII  
ANDREW SCALZI  
HOMER, AK  
JOHN SECORD  
VANCOUVER, B.C.

ESTABLISHED BY A CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA  
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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February 25, 2002

FEB 28 2002

Dr. Donald O. McIsaac  
Executive Director  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200  
Portland, OR 97220-1384

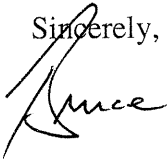
Dear Don:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Area 2A halibut bycatch mortality estimate used in the calculation of the 2002 recommended catch limits for this area. I agree that we need to ensure that we do not have the breakdown in communication seen this year. Certainly, we should have informed you of the estimate that the Commission would be using when we made the revision to the number supplied to us by NMFS. We were under considerable time pressure to get the estimate into the stock assessment process and were unable to resolve the discrepancy with NMFS staff. Prior to the meeting, when I spoke with Jim and yourself, I was not aware of the discrepancy.

Your letter indicated that this issue was primarily one of communication rather analytical. Probably you and I regard the communication issue as the one of greatest importance over the long term but, in this case, there is also an analytical issue. My understanding is that the technical staffs have met to examine this issue and identified the estimation error in the original document. This error was apparently also made for the previous year's calculations in the NMFS document. I understand the new stratified estimate of legal-sized bycatch mortality from NMFS is now close to the unstratified estimate produced by our staff from the raw data, and I am confident that our staffs can resolve the remaining discrepancy to everyone's satisfaction.

I agree with both your suggestions and those in Dr. Varanasi's letter concerning procedures to avoid such occurrences in the future. While errors can happen in the best of programs, (we have had our share!), our inter-agency communications should not contribute to them. We are developing a more formal checklist system within our shop to ensure that this year's events do not re-occur, and I believe we are all committed to that goal. I appreciate both your and Dr. Varanasi's positive approach to this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce", written in dark ink.

Bruce M. Leaman  
Executive Director

cc: Dr. Usha Varanasi  
Dr. Jim Balsiger  
Mr. Ralph Hoard  
Ms. Yvonne de Reynier  
Mr. Phil Anderson  
Mr. Don Bodenmiller

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) PROPOSED 2002  
INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL FISHERY

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is proposing options for 2002 incidental catch regulations for the salmon troll fishery as part of the Salmon Advisory Subpanel Initial Salmon Management Options for 2002 Non-Indian Ocean Fisheries (Exhibit B.5.h.).

In addition, WDFW is proposing the following option which may be combined with any of the salmon regulatory options:

Close the halibut "hotspot" area as defined in the Pacific Council Halibut Catch Sharing Plan in the North Coast subarea (WA Marine Area 3), and extend the closure south to 48°00'00"N latitude, for protection of yelloweye rockfish areas.



WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) PROPOSED 2002  
INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS FOR THE FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERY

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is proposing the following options for 2002 incidental catch regulations for the fixed gear sablefish fishery North of Point Chehalis:

**Option 1a**

Restrict incidental halibut landings to 80 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed, and up to two additional halibut in excess of the 80 pounds per 1,000 pound ratio per landing.

**Option 1b**

Restrict incidental halibut landings to 200 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed, and up to two additional halibut in excess of the 200 pounds per 1,000 pound ratio per landing.

**Option 2**

Restrict the incidental halibut landings to a trip limit of 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut.

**Option 3**

Close the halibut "hotspot" area as defined in the Pacific Council Halibut Catch Sharing Plan in the North Coast subarea (WA Marine Area 3), and extend the closure south to 48°00'00"N latitude, for protection of yelloweye rockfish areas.

NOTE: Options 2 and 3 may be combined with either Option 1a or 1b.

Under any selected option, halibut retention in the sablefish fishery would begin on May 1, after the IPHC licensing application period is concluded.

## INCIDENTAL HALIBUT CATCH IN THE SABLEFISH FISHERY NORTH OF POINT CHEHALIS

The 2A Halibut Catch Sharing Plan provides for the following take of halibut in the non-trawl sablefish fishery:

“ If the Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) is greater than 900,000 pounds (408.2 mt), the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis will be allocated the Washington sport allocation that is in excess of 214,110 pounds (97.1 mt), provided a minimum of 10,000 pounds (4.5 mt) is available (i.e., the Washington sport allocation is 224,110 pounds (101.7 mt) or greater). If the amount above 214,110 pounds (97.1 mt) is less than 10,000 pounds (4.5 mt), then the excess will be allocated to the Washington sport subareas according to section (f) of this Plan.”

Following this formula, the TAC in 2001 provided for an allowable halibut harvest of 47,946 pounds in the primary sablefish fishery. In order to equitably distribute this harvest opportunity among the fishing fleet, the Council considered the number of vessels that obtained licenses with IPHC to land halibut in the primary sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis Washington. Each sablefish permit has a seasonal cumulative cap at one of three “tier” levels based upon catch history. Given the extended length of the sablefish season in 2001, it was expected all vessels would be successful in taking their tier allowance. The tier allowances for all vessels licensed with IPHC to land halibut in the sablefish fishery was summed to obtain an estimate of sablefish catch for the season; this catch was then divided by the halibut available to the fishery to obtain a ratio of halibut to sablefish. This ratio expressed in the form of a regulation allowed for the harvest of 80 pounds of halibut for every 1,000 pounds of sablefish. Fishers were also allowed up to two additional halibut per fishing trip to provide some flexibility in complying with the regulation. Additionally, each fisher had a total seasonal limit on halibut catch of 2,850 pounds, 1,300 pounds, and 750 pounds for sablefish tiers 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

The 2001 catch of halibut in the sablefish fishery was 26,945 pounds, only 56% of the amount available to the fishery. The primary reason for this was that only 31 of the 86 vessels that obtained licenses to participate in the fishery actually did so. Even though some non-participation by licensed vessels was anticipated, the large number who didn't fish greatly affected the formula employed to calculate the halibut to sablefish ratio in the adopted regulations.

Since the amount of halibut available to the fishery in 2002 (88,389 pounds) is almost double the amount available in 2001 (and over three times the actual landings), a higher halibut/sablefish ratio should be adopted. Calculating this ratio based upon IPHC licensees wasn't greatly informative in 2001; establishing a 2002 ratio based upon actual fishery performance in 2001 seems more practical. **A limit of 200 pounds of halibut per 1,000 pounds of sablefish** seems much more likely to achieve the harvest target, while retaining some level of precaution for additional fishing effort north of Pt. Chehalis due to increased halibut opportunity. The halibut catch would be monitored inseason and retention prohibited at such time the quota was determined to be achieved. The provision for two additional halibut per trip should remain. The Council may wish to consider a per-trip limit on halibut in addition to the ratio to sablefish in order to spread the landings out through the fishery and provide opportunity for vessels fishing their sablefish tier allowance late in the season during this year's extended primary fishery.

Vessels will still be required to obtain IPHC licenses to land halibut associated with the sablefish fishery. The primary sablefish fishery began in August in 2001 and is scheduled to begin in April of 2002. The IPHC licensing period doesn't conclude until the end of April. It may, therefore, be more feasible to allow retention of halibut in the sablefish fishery beginning in May after the IPHC annual licensing cycle is completed.

PPMC  
02/27/02

**TRIBAL COMMENTS**

Mr. Chairman,

I would just like to reiterate that the tribes have expressed concern for the by-catch discard mortality of halibut for many years now.

I continue to support this proposed action to allocate incidental halibut to the non-treaty sablefish fishery because it is a step in the right direction of eliminating discard mortality.

I also support the allowance of halibut caught incidentally in the salmon troll fishery to be landed and counted in the non-Indian commercial halibut allocation as it was in 2001.

Thank you.

Jim Harp

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL COMMENTS ON  
PROPOSED 2002 INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED  
GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel recommends status quo for incidental halibut retention in the 2002 salmon troll season.

PPMC  
03/13/02

## PROPOSED 2002 INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

Situation: Regulations governing the incidental harvest of halibut in the salmon troll fishery and the commercial sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis require the Council to adopt recommended halibut landing restrictions to allow incidental harvest while assuring the quotas are not exceeded.

### Salmon Troll Fishery

The halibut regulations allocate 15% of the non-Indian commercial halibut allocation in Area 2A to the salmon troll fishery as an incidental catch during May and June (with provision for additional harvest from July through September if sufficient quota remains). A change in the regulations in 2001 directs that the primary management objective is to harvest the incidental quota in the May/June salmon troll fishery, and a secondary objective is to harvest any remaining quota during July through September.

The table below provides the number of licenses, allocation, harvest, and landing restrictions for the incidental halibut fishery since the initial season in 1995. The Council has successfully used landing ratios and a total trip limit to assure a manageable progression of the fishery in past years.

Incidental Halibut Management in Area 2A Salmon Troll Fishery

Year	Licenses Issued <sup>1/</sup>					Pounds of Halibut			Restriction	
	WA	OR	CA	AK-2A	Total	Allocation	May-June Harvest	Total Harvest	Halibut per Chinook	Trip Limit
1995	14	104	2	5	125	16,068	2,125	2,125	1 per each 20	none
1996	22	82	5	14	123	16,068	9,521	9,521	1 + 1 per each 15	20
1997	59	187	10	19	275	21,635	17,570	17,570	1 + 1 per each 10	20
1998	44	188	15	18	265	25,344	9,123	13,124	1 + 1 per each 8	25
1999	54	193	12	25	284	23,490	9,955	9,955	1 + 1 per each 5	35
2000	49	154	8	24	235	24,464	20,925	22,350	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2001	63	232	13	37	347	34,046	-	34,324	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2002	-	-	-	-	-	39,300	-	-	-	-

a/ Licenses are issued by vessel number in the following order: AK, WA, OR, CA (i.e., if a vessel has both Alaska and Washington vessel numbers, the license would be issued to the Alaska vessel number).

### Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The total Area 2A halibut quota is large enough this year (over 900,000 pounds) to provide for an incidental halibut harvest in the commercial sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis. This incidental fishery is allocated that portion of the Washington sport allocation in excess of 214,110 pounds, provided a minimum of 10,000 pounds is available. For 2002, the available incidental harvest amounts to 88,389 pounds. The Council will need to consider landing or other restrictions necessary to manage this fishery within its quota.

In 2001, the first year this fishery was prosecuted, the allocation was 47,946 pounds of halibut. The season opened on August 15 and closed October 31. Regulations restricted incidental halibut landings to 80 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to two additional halibut in excess of the 80 pounds per 1,000 pound ratio per landing. In addition, season landing restrictions were placed on each vessel based on the tier of the permit held when they applied for their International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) license. Final landings for this fishery were 26,945 pounds.

Several factors are different this year than in 2001, which will require a different approach to managing the incidental catch of halibut: the sablefish fishery will be ongoing before the deadline for applying for an IPHC license; sablefish permits will have already been stacked on vessels prior to the start of the season and prior to application for IPHC licenses, and; a much longer season is expected for 2002. In addition, the number of IPHC license holders that fished north of Point Chehalis and landed halibut in 2001 was considerably less than those eligible to do so. It is possible the halibut quota will be reached before the end of the sablefish season and inseason action will be required to halt halibut retention.

Landing restrictions for 2002 could take several forms, including:

1. Equal incidental poundage or numbers of halibut distributed among all the vessels with appropriate licenses operating north of Point Chehalis.
2. Equal incidental poundage or numbers of halibut distributed among all the permits attached to vessels with appropriate licenses operating north of Point Chehalis.
3. Incidental halibut poundage or numbers distributed on the basis of vessel length as in the directed halibut fishery.
4. A simple ratio of halibut to sablefish landed by vessels with appropriate licenses operating north of Point Chehalis similar to the salmon troll regulations.

Because of the overlap between the IPHC application period and the start of the sablefish fishery, the estimate of anticipated effort that would go into a ratio type regulation may need to be delayed until the IPHC application period ends. Therefore, the Council should also consider the appropriate date to begin allowing retention of halibut.

**Council Action:**

- Adopt a range of landing restrictions for halibut caught incidentally in the May/June troll season to match with the troll salmon management options and assure a reasonable utilization of the incidental catch while not exceeding the quota.
- Identify options for landing limits or other restrictions for incidental halibut harvest in the commercial sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis.

**Reference Materials:**

1. Incidental Halibut Catch in the Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis (Exhibit E.3.c, WDFW Proposal).

**Agenda Order:**

- a. Agendum Overview
  - b. State Proposals for the Salmon Troll Fishery
  - c. State Proposals for the Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery
  - d. Tribal Comments
  - e. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
  - f. Public Comment
  - g. **Council Action:** Adopt Proposed 2002 Incidental Halibut Catch Regulations
- Chuck Tracy
- Jim Harp

**Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan Consistency Analysis**

The groundfish strategic plan calls for minimizing discarded bycatch. The sablefish fishery prior to 2001 discarded halibut, alive or dead, due to low halibut quota levels. Retaining halibut is consistent with minimizing discarded dead halibut bycatch.