

## REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION MEETING

The 2010 Annual Meeting of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was held in Seattle, WA January 26-29, 2010. The most significant outcome of the meeting was setting the 2010 harvest levels (Agenda Item F.1.a, Attachment 1), which involved discussions of how to apportion the total allowable catch (TAC) among the various catch areas. The Area 2A TAC was down from 0.95 million pounds in 2009 to 0.81 million pounds in 2010 (Agenda Item F.1.a, Attachment 2).

Ms. Michele Culver, Council representative to the IPHC, attended the annual meeting, along with numerous other interested parties from Area 2A. Ms. Culver has provided a brief summary of the results of the meeting (Agenda Item F.1.b, Meeting Summary).

### **Council Task:**

#### **1. Discuss information relative to Area 2A halibut fisheries.**

#### Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.1.a, Attachment 1: IPHC News Release.
2. Agenda Item F.1.a, Attachment 2: 2010 Area 2A Pacific Halibut Allocations.
3. Agenda Item F.1.b, Meeting Summary: Summary of International Pacific Halibut Commission Meeting.

#### Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Meeting Summary
- c. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. Council Discussion

Chuck Tracy  
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PFMC  
02/17/10



## *News Release*

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

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### **HALIBUT COMMISSION COMPLETES 2010 ANNUAL MEETING**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its Eighty-sixth Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA, with Dr. James W. Balsiger of Juneau AK presiding as Chair. The Commission is recommending to the governments of Canada and the United States catch limits for 2010 totaling 50,670,000 pounds, a 6.4% decrease from the 2009 catch limit of 54,080,000 pounds.

The Commission staff reported on the 2009 Pacific halibut stock assessment which implemented a coastwide estimation of biomass, with apportionment to regulatory biomass based on the data from the annual Commission assessment survey. For 2010, the Commission staff recommended a 20% harvest rate for use in Areas 2A through 3A. The Commission staff expressed concern over continued declining catch rates in Area 3B and recommended a reduction of the harvest rate for this area to 15%, similar to that used for the Bering Sea (Areas 4A, 4B, and 4CDE). Catch limits adopted for 2010 were lower for most regulatory areas except Areas 4B and 4CDE, for which the recommended catch limits increased approximately 15 and 3 percent, respectively. Decreased catch limits reflect stock biomass declines as the exceptionally strong 1987 and 1988 year classes pass out of the fishery. Recruitment from the 1999 and 2000 year classes is estimated to be above average but the lower growth rates of fish in recent years means that these year classes are recruiting to the exploitable stock very slowly.

#### **Seasons and Catch Limits**

The Commission received regulatory proposals for 2010 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 2010 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):

## 2010 Catch Limits

<b>Regulatory Area</b>	<b>Catch Limit (pounds)</b>
Area 2A	
Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Pt. Chehalis)	141,865
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	25,035
Treaty Indian commercial	253,072
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	30,428
Sport – North of Columbia River	192,699
<u>Sport – South of Columbia River</u>	<u>166,901</u>
Area 2A total	810,000
Area 2B (includes sport catch allocation)	7,500,000
Area 2C	4,400,000
Area 3A	19,990,000
Area 3B	9,900,000
Area 4A	2,330,000
Area 4B	2,160,000
Area 4C	1,625,000
Area 4D	1,625,000
<u>Area 4E</u>	<u>330,000</u>
Area 4 total	8,070,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,670,000</b>

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO) will allocate the Area 2B catch limit between sport and commercial fisheries.

The IPHC sets biologically-based catch limits for Areas 4A, 4B, and a combined Area 4CDE. 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 catch-sharing plan allows Area 4D Community Development Quota (CDQ) harvest to be taken in Area 4E and Area 4C Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and CDQ to be fished in Area 4D.

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. Due to the mechanisms in the PFMC catch-sharing plan and the adopted total Area 2A catch limit there will not be a non-treaty incidental halibut fishery during the limited entry sablefish longline fishery. The IPHC licensing regulations will be amended to reflect this change.

The Commission surveyed the Area 2A directed commercial/incidental halibut fishery license holders for their preferred starting date for the directed commercial fishery. There was a range of views on starting dates with most harvesters supporting opening during June and largest proportion favored June 30. In Area 2A, seven 10-hour fishing periods for the non-treaty directed commercial fishery are recommended: June 30, July 14, July 28, August 11, August 25, September 8, September 22, 2010.

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.

Area 2A fishing dates for an incidental commercial halibut fishery concurrent with salmon troll fishing seasons will be established under United States domestic regulations by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The remainder of the Area 2A catch-sharing plan, including sport fishing seasons and depth restrictions, will be determined under regulations promulgated by NMFS. For further information of the depth restrictions in the commercial directed halibut fishery, and the sport fisheries, call the NMFS hotline (1-800-662-9825).

After reviewing staff information and proposals from the harvesting and processing sector, the Commission approved a season opening date of March 6 for the U.S. and Canadian Individual Quota fisheries, and Treaty tribal fisheries in Area 2A. The Saturday opening date is to facilitate marketing. Therefore, seasons will commence at 12 noon local time on March 6 and terminate at 12 noon local time on November 15, 2010 for the following fisheries and areas: the Canadian Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fishery in Area 2B, and the United States IFQ and CDQ fisheries in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E. All Area 2A commercial fishing including the treaty Indian commercial fishery will fall within March 6 – November 15, 2010.

### Regulatory Changes and Issues

The Commission approved changing the Area 2A IPHC license requirements to stipulate that persons fishing in Subarea 2A-1 as members of U.S. treaty Indian tribes are not required to have an IPHC vessel license. The tribal fisheries have their own licensing requirements and IPHC does not therefore require that tribal vessels to be licensed.

IPHC regulations had required that a vessel number be recorded on state fish tickets. The Commission changed this regulation to reflect that the vessel number is the state, federal, or tribal vessel number (i.e., not the IPHC vessel number). In addition, the Commission approved that Washington tribal tickets could be used when permitted by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and that the same IPHC regulations that applied to State fish tickets would apply to tribal tickets.

The Commission deleted an obsolete regulation that the IPHC license number be recorded on State fish tickets. This regulation was removed as Area 2A is the only area that IPHC licenses are required and the IPHC number is not currently recorded or needed on State fish tickets.

The Commission approved updating the Cape Spencer Light coordinates to the 2009 U.S. Coast Guard Light List (changed from the 2003 U.S. Coast Guard Light List of 58°11'54"N, 136°38'24"W) to 58°11'56"N, 136°38'26"W.

### Other Actions

The catch in sport fisheries and enforcement of sport fishing regulations, particularly for charter vessels, were discussed at length. There was support in concept for the development of a harvest tag or ticket for improved data collection in all recreational halibut fisheries in Alaska and for accurate and

timely accounting. The Commission will send letters to the NPFMC and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game acknowledging this support.

The Commission received an industry proposal to change the Alaska sport fishing filleting requirements. Although the Commission took no action to change the regulations for 2010 they did direct the staff to form an industry and agency work group to review the regulations to determine if a regulation proposal could be developed for next year that met enforcement needs and assisted the industry.

The Commission and advisory boards discussed halibut bycatch management. The staff was asked to reconvene the Bycatch Work Group, that had met in 1991, to examine how impacts of bycatch can best be incorporated into halibut assessment and management, as well as to review progress on bycatch reduction and the target levels for reduction identified in 1991.

The Commission expressed its desire to see implementation of effective management measures for the Alaskan sport charter fishery, in consideration of the Guideline Harvest Level of 788,000 pounds defined for this fishery. The Commission will therefore monitor the implementation of the NMFS proposed catch-sharing plan and has directed its staff to develop alternative control measures for consideration at the Commission's 2011 meeting, should the catch-sharing plan not be implemented in a timely manner.

The Commission honoured Mr. Parker McLelland of Port Townsend, WA and Mr. Ryder Whitmire of Anchorage AK as the seventh and eighth recipients of the IPHC Merit Scholarship. Both individuals were unable to attend the meeting due to class requirements but were previously presented with the scholarships of \$2,000 (U.S.). The Commissioners expressed their continued support for the scholarship program and commended the Scholarship Committee for their efforts in assessing the candidates.

The recommended regulations for the 2010 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.

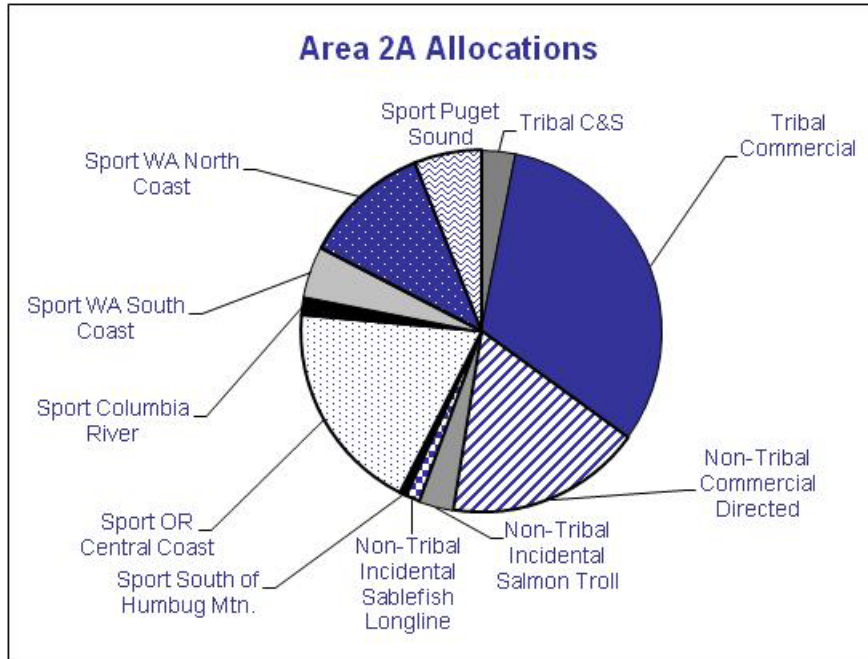
The next Annual Meeting of the Commission is planned for Victoria B.C. from January 25-28, 2011. The Canadian Government Commissioner, Dr. Laura J. Richards, of Nanaimo B.C., was elected Chair. The United States Government Commissioner, Dr. James W. Balsiger, of Juneau AK, was elected Vice-Chair for the coming year. Other Canadian Commissioners are Larry Johnson (Parksville, B.C.) and Gary Robinson (Vancouver, B.C.). The other United States Commissioners are Ralph Hoard (Seattle, WA) and Phillip Lestenkof (St. Paul, AK). Dr. Bruce M. Leaman is the Executive Director of the Commission.

**- END -**

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2010 AREA 2A PACIFIC HALIBUT ALLOCATIONS

Fishery	
Tribal C&S	30,428
Tribal Commercial	253,072
Non-Tribal Commercial Directed	141,865
Non-Tribal Incidental Salmon Troll	25,035
Non-Tribal Incidental Sablefish Longline	0
Sport South of Humbug Mtn.	5,007
Sport OR Central Coast	153,548
Sport Columbia River	13,436
Sport WA South Coast	35,887
Sport WA North Coast	101,179
Sport Puget Sound	50,542
<b>Total</b>	<b>810,000</b>



## SUMMARY OF INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION MEETING

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) held their annual meeting the week of January 25, 2010, in Seattle, Washington. The meeting was attended by Area 2A managers, including representatives from the tribes, National Marine Fisheries Service, Washington and Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife, and a few 2A commercial harvesters and recreational anglers.

Prior to the annual meeting, IPHC staff developed recommended quotas for all regulatory areas using the coastwide assessment and a revised apportionment methodology, which produced a quota for Area 2A of 760,000 lbs and a coastwide quota of 48.7 million lbs.

### Adjustment Factors

A key change to the 2009 stock assessment was the consideration of adjustment factors in the apportionment calculations. Adjustment factors were applied to account for the timing of the fishery relative to the timing of the survey, the competition of other species for survey baits, and depth stratification. In Area 2A, the survey takes place in late summer after 75-85 percent of the directed commercial harvest has occurred, which could significantly affect survey results. With regard to the hook competition, areas where the number of baits returning is greater than the coastwide average have higher catchability and areas with fewer baits returning have lower catchability. An examination of the survey data for the 2007-2009 period indicates fewer baits returning than the coastwide average, indicating lower catchability for Area 2A. The application of both of these factors influenced the 2A constant exploitation yield (CEY) in a positive direction. The depth stratification correction factor had a minimal effect on the Area 2A CEY, and was not recommended by IPHC staff.

### Advisory Board Recommendations

Similar to the approach taken in 2009, Area 2A fishery representatives recommended to the Conference Board (an advisory body consisting of harvesters) that the Area 2A quota be reduced consistent with the coastwide reduction of approximately 10 percent, from 950,000 lbs (the 2009 catch limit) to 860,000 lbs, rather than 760,000 lbs. as recommended by IPHC staff. The Conference Board approved this recommendation. However, again similar to 2009, the Processor Advisory Group (a second advisory group comprised of individuals who participate in the processing of Pacific halibut) took a different approach and suggested a 2A quota of 810,000 lbs.

### IPHC Action

IPHC took into consideration the decline in overall exploitable biomass and the desire to reduce the harvest rate to 20 percent for Areas 2A through 3A and to 15 percent in Areas 3B and 4, and adopted a quota of 810,000 lbs for Area 2A, and a coastwide quota of 50.67 million lbs.

According to the provisions in the Catch Sharing Plan, the reduced quota in 2A would not provide an opportunity for incidental halibut retention in the primary sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis in 2010. The Commission approved the Council's Catch Sharing Plan and adopted

other regulations regarding the commercial and tribal fisheries in Area 2A, including season dates and fish ticket requirements. Details can be found on the IPHC website. The Commission also instructed IPHC staff to conduct a survey review and consider expansion of the Area 2A survey, which may include waters inside Puget Sound. The intent is to improve the survey and the understanding of stock distribution among regulatory areas as soon as possible.

### Bycatch

The Commissioners and advisory boards also discussed halibut bycatch management, and the staff was asked to reconvene the Bycatch Work Group to explore how to incorporate bycatch impacts into the halibut assessment and management, as well as to review progress on bycatch reduction and the target levels for reductions identified in 1991. It would be important for the Area 2A halibut managers to monitor those discussions.

### Other Removals (Bycatch) for 2A

Another topic of discussion for 2A managers was the calculation of the “other removals,” which includes the halibut bycatch in non-directed West Coast fisheries. Based on the assessment and the apportionment method, a total CEY is calculated for each area. The “other removals” are subtracted from the total CEY to produce the fishery CEY, which forms the basis for the total allowable catch, or quota.

For 2A, IPHC staff calculated the “other removals” by adding the estimated trawl bycatch of legal-sized halibut from the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) report to an estimate for the fixed gear and pink shrimp trawl fisheries. The NWFSC’s fixed gear report does not apply a legal-sized/sublegal ratio to the total estimate, so IPHC applied the trawl ratio to calculate the amount of legal-sized fish in the fixed gear fishery. 2A fishery managers are unsure whether this is an appropriate proxy to use, given the differences in gear selectivity and location of the fisheries. In addition, the pink shrimp trawl estimate of 25,000 lbs was provided by Bob Hannah, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, in 1999, prior to the mandated use of bycatch reduction devices beginning in 2003. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff will be examining halibut bycatch in the pink shrimp fishery since 2003 and provide an updated estimate to IPHC for use in their 2010 assessment.

The Council may wish to consider requesting the Groundfish Management Team recalculate an estimate of halibut bycatch for the trawl and fixed gear fisheries, which could be provided to IPHC for their use in the 2010 assessment. This could be transmitted to IPHC in the Council’s letter in September when forwarding the latest NWFSC reports for trawl and fixed gear bycatch.

PFMC  
02/16/10



## INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS IN THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

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

### **Salmon Troll Fishery**

The halibut regulations allocate 15 percent of the non-Indian commercial halibut allocation in Area 2A to the salmon troll fishery as an incidental catch. Regulations (beginning in 2001) direct that the primary management objective is to harvest the incidental quota in the May/June salmon troll fishery with a secondary objective to harvest any remaining quota during July through September. The Council has successfully used landing ratios and a total trip limit to assure a manageable progression of the fishery in past years. A summary of management information for the incidental halibut fishery since the initial season in 1995 is provided in Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1.

### **Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis**

The total Area 2A halibut quota is too low (less than 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, up to a maximum of 70,000 pounds. In 2010 the total Area 2A halibut quota is only 810,000 pounds. A summary of management information for the incidental halibut fishery since the initial season in 2001 is provided in Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1.

### **Council Action:**

- 1. Adopt for public review a range of landing restrictions for halibut caught incidentally in the non-Indian commercial troll season that comports with the troll salmon management options, and assures a reasonable utilization of the incidental catch while not exceeding the quota.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1: Summary of Pacific Halibut Incidental Catch Management.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Public Review Options for 2010

Chuck Tracy

PFMC  
02/16/10

## SUMMARY OF PACIFIC HALIBUT INCIDENTAL CATCH MANAGEMENT

### **Salmon Troll Fishery**

The table below provides the number of licenses, allocation, harvest, and landing restrictions for the incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery since the initial season in 1995.

Incidental Halibut Management in Area 2A Salmon Troll Fishery.

Year	Licenses Issued					Pounds of Halibut		Restriction	
	WA	OR	CA	AK-2A	Total	Allocation	Total Harvest	Halibut per Chinook	Trip Limit
1995	14	104	2	5	125	16,068	2,125	1 per each 20	None
1996	22	82	5	14	123	16,068	9,521	1 + 1 per each 15	20
1997	59	187	10	19	275	21,635	17,570	1 + 1 per each 10	20
1998	44	188	15	18	265	25,344	13,124	1 + 1 per each 8	25
1999	54	193	12	25	284	23,490	9,955	1 + 1 per each 5	35
2000	49	154	8	24	235	24,464	22,350	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2001	63	232	13	37	347	34,046	34,100	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2002	60	223	7	41	331	39,300	41,000	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2003	60	209	10	44	323	39,300	41,917	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2004	74	212	11	47	344	44,554	42,798	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2005	79	249	12	52	392	39,918	42,187	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2006	54	138	6	26	224	41,464	34,354	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2007	62	188	17	25	292	43,667 <sup>a/</sup>	24,126	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2008	55	60	4	16	135	37,707	16,685	1 + 1 per each 2	35
2009	65	49	4	14	132	29,362	11,310	1 + 1 per each 2	35
2010	-	-	-	-	-	25,035	-	-	-

a/ 40,227 preseason allocation plus 3,440 transferred inseason from directed halibut fishery.

## Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The table below provides the allocation, total harvest, landing restrictions, and season dates for the incidental halibut catch in the fixed-gear sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis since the initial season began in 2001.

Incidental Halibut Management in the Area 2A Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis, Washington.

Year	Pounds of Halibut		Restrictions	
	Allocation	Total Harvest	Halibut per Sablefish (dressed weight)	Season Dates
2001	47,946	26,945	2+80 lb per 1,000 lb	Aug. 15-Oct. 31
2002	88,389	66,599	2+150 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2003	70,000	65,325	2+150 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2004	70,000	67,837	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2005	70,000	68,013	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 23
2006	70,000	64,624	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2007	70,000	45,780	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2008	70,000	39,729	2+100 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct. 31
2009	11,895	5,415	100 lb per trip	May 1-Oct. 31-
2010	0	-	-	-

PFMC  
02/3/10

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS IN THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR  
SABLEFISH FISHERIES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) considered the overall situation for the salmon troll fishery, noting that the situation remains similar in 2010. The GAP recommends adopting the status quo regulations as used in 2009.

PFMC  
03/07/10

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS IN THE  
SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS), after reviewing the potential troll salmon seasons for 2010, recommends adopting the status quo regulations as used in 2009. The SAS also includes a second option for consideration.

Option 2: 1 + 1 Halibut per each 3 Chinook, with a cap of 35.

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03/07/10