

REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION MEETING

The 2013 Annual Meeting of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was held in Victoria, British Columbia, January 21-25, 2013. The most significant outcome of the meeting was setting the 2013 harvest levels (Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 1), which involved a revised stock assessment model and the estimation of the probabilities of risks and benefits involved with specific harvest choices. The Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) for Pacific halibut is 0.990 million pounds, which is very similar to the 2012 TAC (Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 2).

Ms. Gway Kirchner, Council representative to the IPHC, attended the Annual Meeting, along with numerous other interested parties from Area 2A. Ms. Kirchner has provided a brief summary of the results of the meeting for Council consideration (Agenda Item G.1.b, IPHC Meeting Summary).

Council Task:

1. Discuss information relative to Area 2A Pacific halibut fisheries.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 1: IPHC News Release.
2. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 2: 2013 Area 2A Pacific Halibut Allocations.
3. Agenda Item G.1.b, IPHC Meeting Summary: Report on the 2013 International Pacific Halibut Commission Annual Meeting.

Agenda Order:

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

Kelly Ames
Gway Kirchner

PFMC
02/07/13

INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

News Release



2320 W. COMMODORE WAY, SUITE 300, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, 98199-1287

January 28, 2013

HALIBUT COMMISSION ANNOUNCES 2013 CATCH LIMITS AND SEASONS

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its Eighty-ninth Annual Meeting in Victoria, BC on January 25th, 2013. More than 250 halibut industry stakeholders attended the meeting, with over 60 more participating in web broadcasts of the public sessions.

Catch Limits

The Commission is recommending to the governments of Canada and the United States catch limits for 2013 totaling 31,028,000 pounds, a 7.5% decrease from the 2012 catch limit of 33,540,000 pounds. The following table displays the catch limits by regulatory area.

2013 Catch Limits

Regulatory Area	Catch Limit (pounds)
Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington)	
Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Pt. Chehalis)	173,390
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	30,600
Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish fishery (north of Pt. Chehalis)	21,410
Treaty Indian commercial	314,300
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	32,200
Sport – North of Columbia River	214,110
<u>Sport – South of Columbia River</u>	<u>203,990</u>
Area 2A total	990,000
Area 2B (British Columbia) (includes sport catch allocation)	7,038,000
Area 2C (southeastern Alaska)	2,970,000
Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska)	11,030,000
Area 3B (western Gulf of Alaska)	4,290,000
Area 4A (eastern Aleutians)	1,330,000
Area 4B (western Aleutians)	1,450,000
Area 4C (Pribilof Islands)	859,000
Area 4D (northwestern Bering Sea)	859,000
Area 4E (Bering Sea flats)	<u>212,000</u>
Area 4 total	4,710,000
Total	31,028,000

Fishing Season Dates

The Commission approved a season of March 23 – November 7, 2013 for the U.S. and Canadian Individual Quota fisheries. The Treaty tribal commercial fisheries and the incidental halibut fisheries in Area 2A will occur within these dates.

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, September 18, 2013.

A subsequent News Release will publish more details of the Annual Meeting, including the regulatory and other issues decided by the Commission.

- END -

Bruce M. Leaman, Executive Director

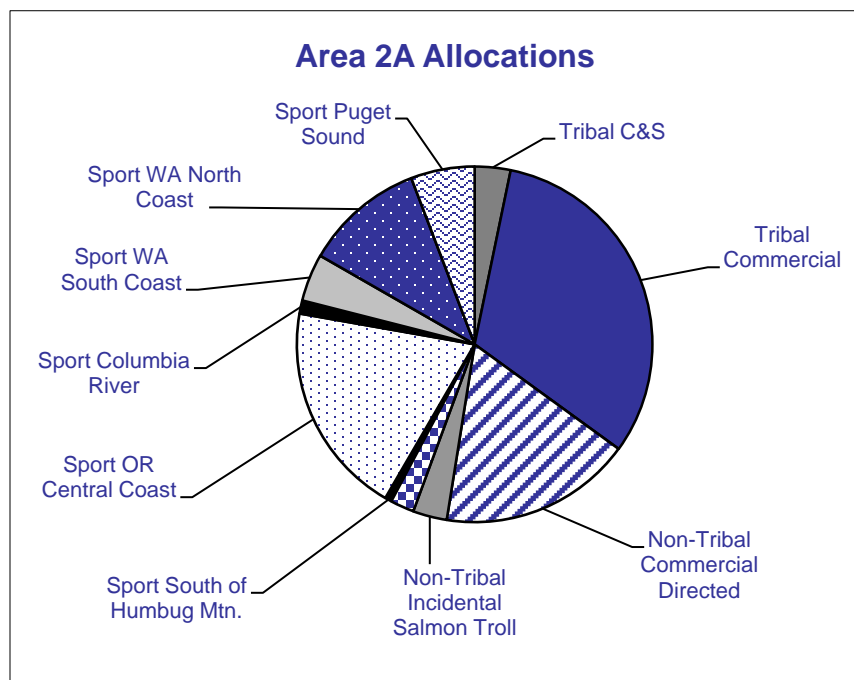
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Web: www.iphc.int

2013 AREA 2A PACIFIC HALIBUT ALLOCATIONS

Fishery	Pounds
Tribal Ceremonial and Subsistence	32,200
Tribal Commercial	314,300
Non-Tribal Commercial Directed	173,390
Non-Tribal Incidental Salmon Troll	30,600
Non-Tribal Incidental Sablefish Longline	21,410
Sport South of Humbug Mountain	6,063
Sport Oregon Central Coast	191,979
Sport Columbia River	11,895
Sport Washington South Coast	42,740
Sport Washington North Coast	108,030
Sport Puget Sound	57,393
Total	990,000



REPORT ON THE 2013 INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) held their annual meeting January 21-25, 2013 in Victoria, British Columbia. This was the first year of implementing an improved process, providing more opportunity for public input, and opening the meeting via open administrative sessions and web casting. This was thought to be a great improvement and provided increased transparency to the decision making.

Stock Assessment

The 2012 stock assessment is much improved over previous stock assessments. The retrospective bias that has been discussed previously has been remedied in the new stock assessment. Long-term changes in the distribution of stock components and a selectivity function that was too rigid were the primary contributors to the error seen in previous stock assessments. The recent large year classes that were thought to be on the brink of coming into the fisheries were not found to be realistic. This results in lower estimates of recent recruitments, stock biomass, and available yield. Overall, the outlook of the stock does not project the sharp increase seen in the last assessment and the stock trajectory is flat.

Harvest Levels

Several alternative harvest regimes, ranging between status quo catch limits and the application of existing harvest policy to the new assessment results ("Blue Line") recommendation (Table 1) were considered in detail by IPHC Commissioners. The Blue Line recommendation reflects the fishery constant exploitation yield (CEY) resulting from the current harvest rate policy applied to estimated biomass. Much of the discussion centered on respecting the current harvest policy (21.5% harvest rate for areas 2A-3A and 16.1% in areas 3B-4CDE; 19.6% coastwide) and the resultant lower catches, while lessening impacts to communities. The Conference Board (CB; the harvester advisory board) developed their recommendations to reflect the status quo in Areas 2A and 2B, the Blue Line value in Area 2C, and reductions of 7-22% from 2012 values in other areas. The Processor Advisory Group (PAG) recommended a third of the recommended reductions for areas 2A, 2B, and all of Area 4. For areas 3A and 3B, they recommended the Blue Line amount. For Area 2C, the PAG recommendation was based on the fishery CEY resulting from 45 million pounds of total mortality. The sum of the PAG's recommendations for all fishery CEYs closely matches the total resulting from 45 million pounds of total mortality (Table 8, page 121, IPHC BlueBook).

Table 1. Comparison of the 2012 catch limits, the “blue line” recommendations, the recommendations of the Conference Board and Processor Advisory Group, and the Commission adopted fishery CEY by area.

Area	2012 Catch Limit	Blue Line	Conference Board	Processor Advisory Group	IPHC Approved
2A	0.989	0.71	0.99	0.90	0.99
2B	7.038	4.58	7.04	6.22	7.04
2C	2.624	2.97	3.12	3.76	2.97
3A	11.918	9.24	11.03	9.24	11.03
3B	5.070	2.73	4.29	2.73	4.29
4A	1.567	0.85	1.33	1.33	1.33
4B	1.869	0.62	1.45	1.45	1.45
4CDE	2.465	0.85	1.93	1.93	1.93
Total	33.54	22.55	31.18	27.56	31.03

Discussion of the IPHC focused on the tradeoffs and risk to the stock of providing a step-down approach to the recommended reductions. The discussion did not focus on the validity of the stock assessment or the science, as most believed the current depiction of the stock in the new application of the assessment model is as good a depiction as we have had for a long time. The message is that the stock is in a period of decline with no near-term likely turn. While there is great need for conservation, the IPHC Commissioners also felt they could make choices that make fisheries work. The risk analysis showed that catches in one year would not have a big impact on the stock and fisheries needed the time to get ready to move into a more conservative mode as we work to improve the stock.

Management Strategy Evaluation

As discussed last year, IPHC is continuing work on a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the management of halibut coastwide. Two advisory bodies will be established: the Management Strategy Advisory Body (MSAB) and the Scientific Review Board (SRB). The MSAB will be comprised of harvesters, managers, processors, IPHC staff, commissioners, and academia with the role of defining clear objectives for the fisheries, candidate management procedures, and performance measures. Membership (ideally limited to about 15 individuals) will be determined by IPHC Commissioners from nominees provided by advisory bodies and the public. The SRB will be a much smaller board of technical experts selected by IPHC staff. This board will stand as a permanent review board for the stock assessment and other science activities. The Terms of Reference and membership of both the MSAB and the SRB will be confirmed in the near future. It is important to note that these new advisory bodies will not be replacing any of the current advisory bodies.

At this year's IPHC Annual Meeting, recommendations for members of the MSAB were requested from the CB and PAG. Both groups had difficulty identifying membership, as the structure, funding, and time commitment required are undefined. No names were submitted from the CB. Six individuals did volunteer from the PAG and those names were submitted. It is advisable for there to be representatives from Area 2A on each of the new advisory bodies.

Research

Included in the IPHC research plan for 2013 is a one-time expansion of the stock assessment survey into Northern California. This will be done to aid the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) in their work on the South of Humboldt Mountain sub-area fishery. Additionally, IPHC may undertake additional work in Puget Sound, though specific work was not included in the research plan at this meeting. Ideally, survey expansions for both areas will be updated periodically based on funding.

Catch Sharing Plan/Management Measures

The IPHC adopted the Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan without modification. The resulting allocations to fisheries/subareas are nearly identical to those in 2012.

The treaty and incidental commercial fisheries will open March 23, 2013 and run through November 7, 2013 or quota. The directed commercial fishery will open on June 26, 2013 and continue every other Wednesday through September 18, 2013 or attainment of the quota shown in table 2. Open periods will be 10 hours in length and trip limits (determined by IPHC staff) will be in effect.

Planning for 2014

Participants at the meeting talked briefly about preparing for the 2014 IPHC Annual Meeting that will be held in the Seattle area, likely during the week of January 13-17. This is one week earlier to not conflict with the Alaska Marine Science Symposium. It would be beneficial for Area 2A managers to meet in person prior to the IPHC Annual Meeting.

It is important to note that while Area 2A did not receive a reduction in allowable harvest in 2013, it is likely that cuts will come in the near future. We were given a reprieve at this meeting. As such, it would be prudent to consider potential cuts when developing Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan considerations for adoption by PFMC in September and November of this year. Considering the efficiency of each fishery and the ability to conduct existing fisheries under low harvest allowances would be reasonable, and trigger mechanisms to adjust fisheries to adopted fishery CEYs would be beneficial in the future.

IPHC 89th Annual Meeting

January 21-25, 2013 Victoria, B.C.

The research vessel *Scandia* off Vancouver Island, July 1926



The 2012 Halibut Stock Assessment

The Good:

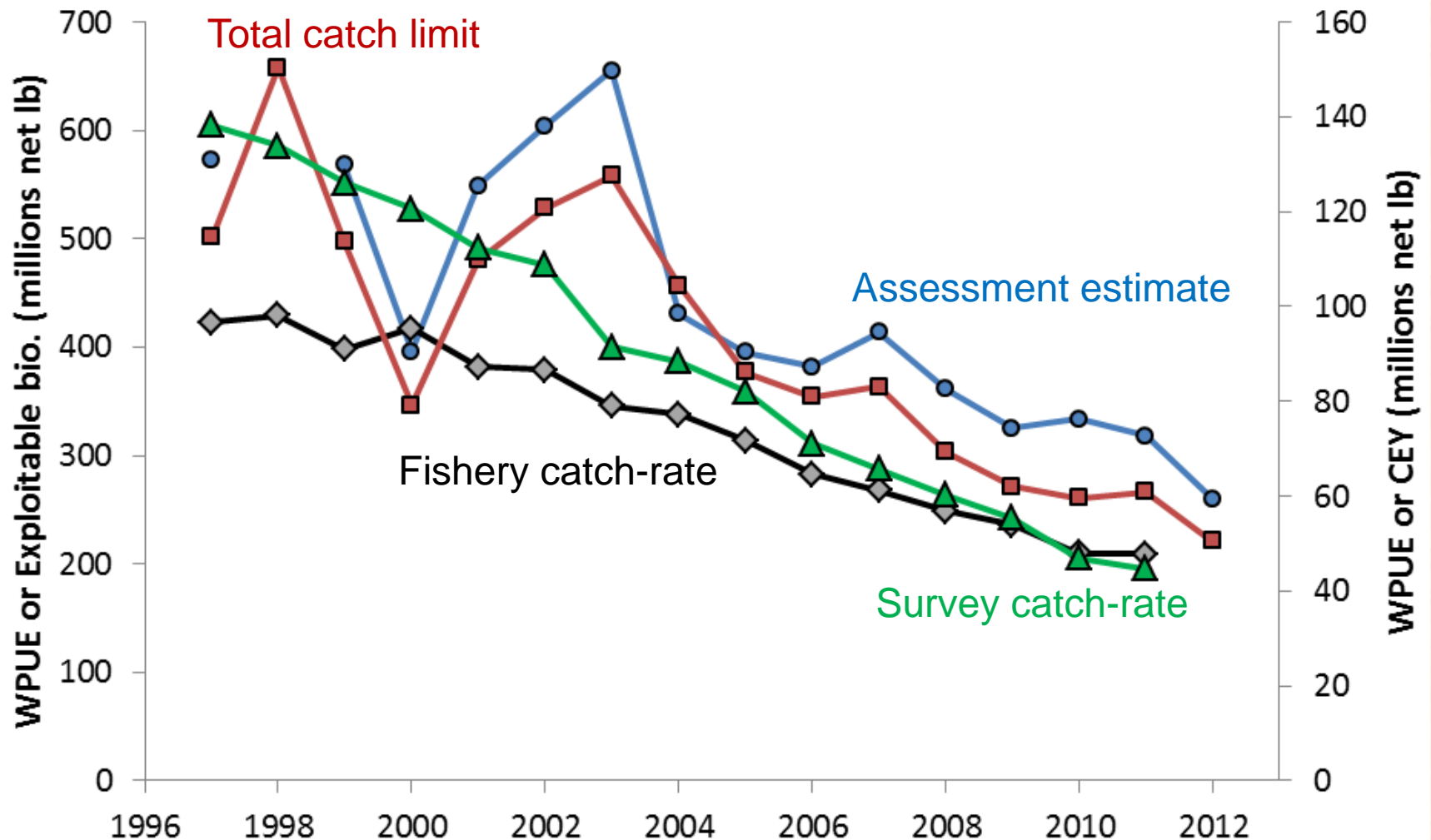
- 1) Major improvements in the stock assessment:
 - Retrospective bias has been addressed
 - Forecast methods extend recent trends in size
 - Uncertainty included via decision-making table
- 2) Small increase in 2012 coastwide survey WPUE
- 3) Stock trend estimated to be relatively stable

The Bad:

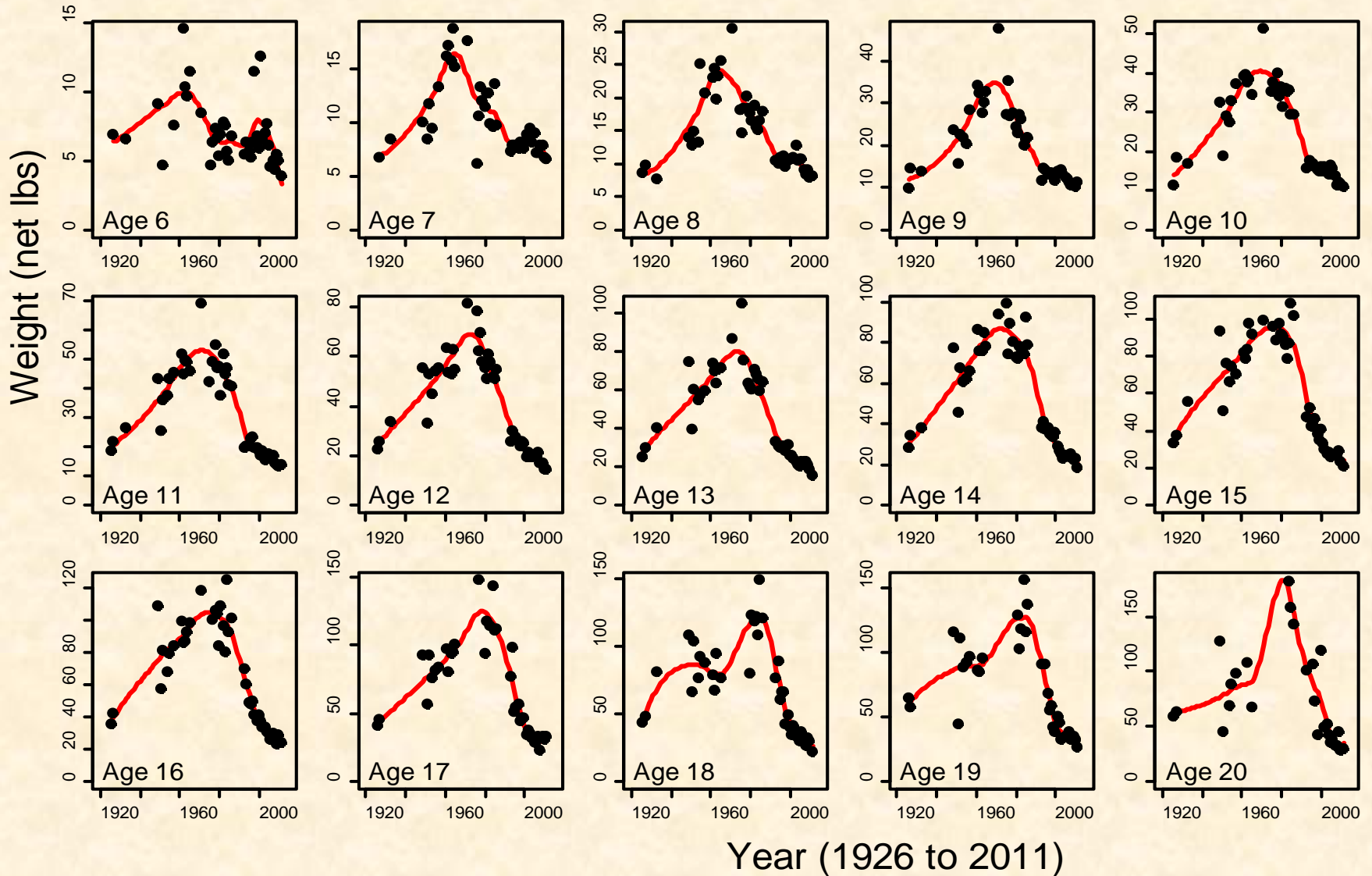
- 1) Stock estimates substantially smaller than those from the biased 2011 assessment
- 2) 2013 Blue line (current harvest policy) CEYs were ~30% less than the estimated 2012 values.



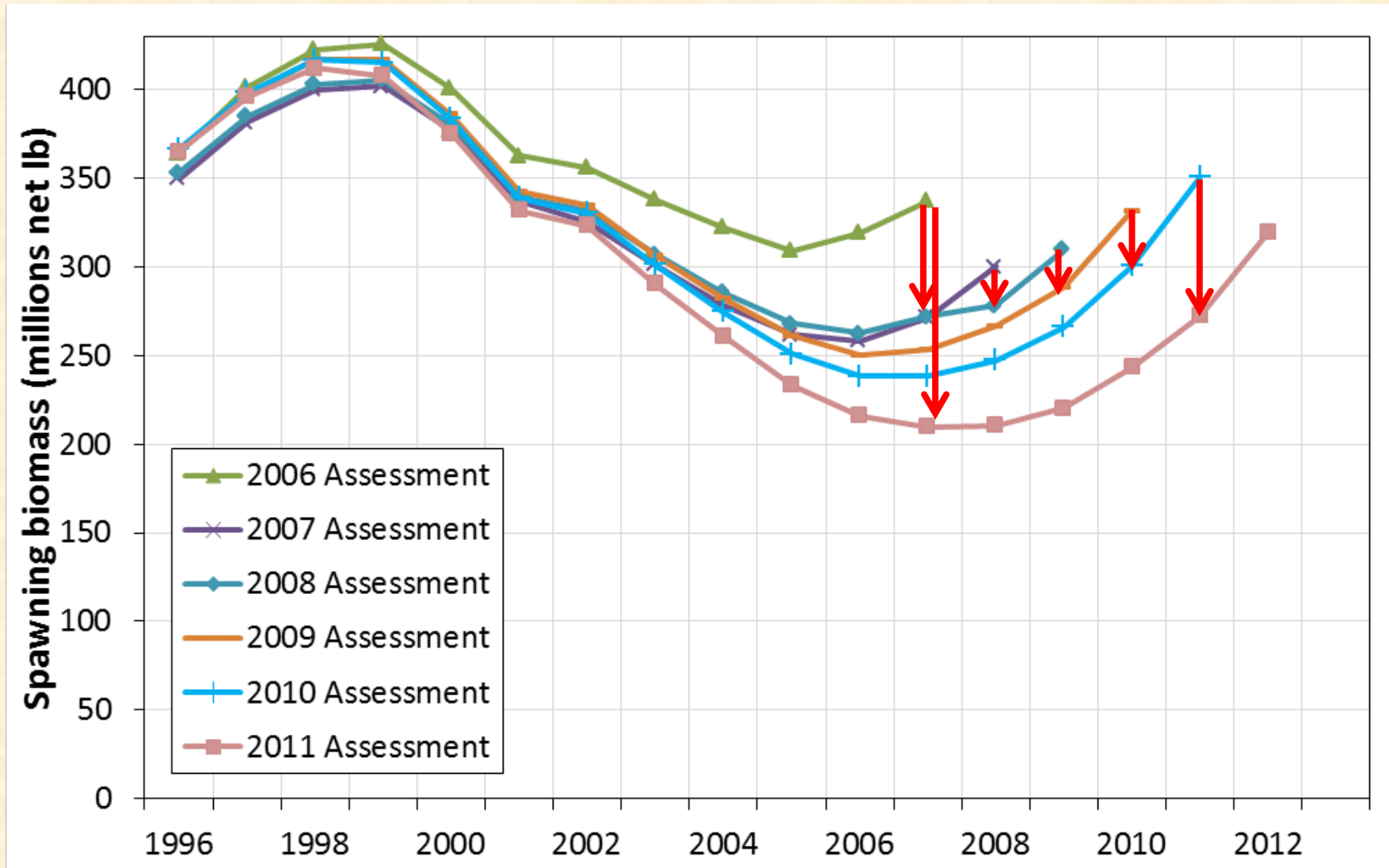
Recent trends



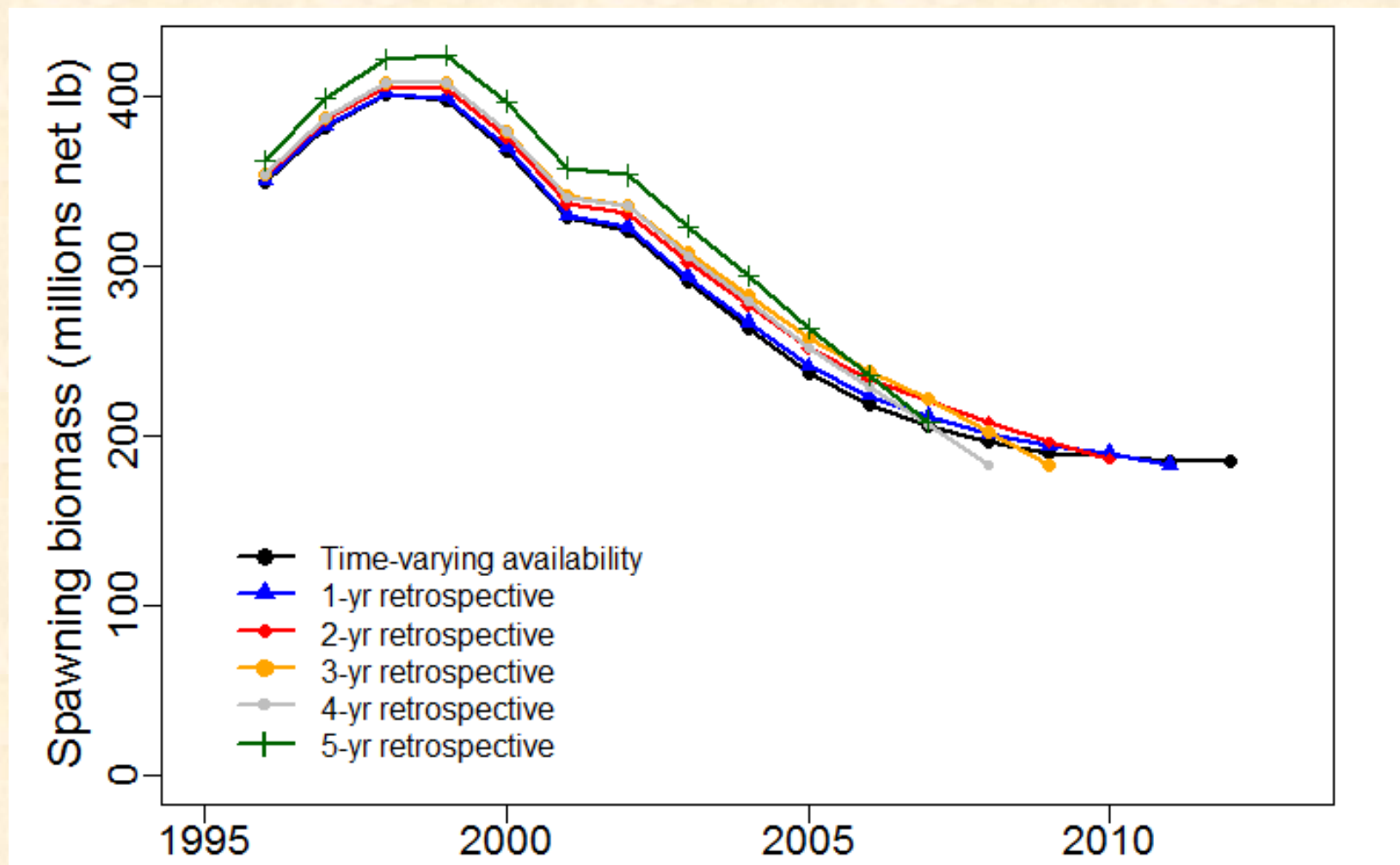
Historical weight-at-age



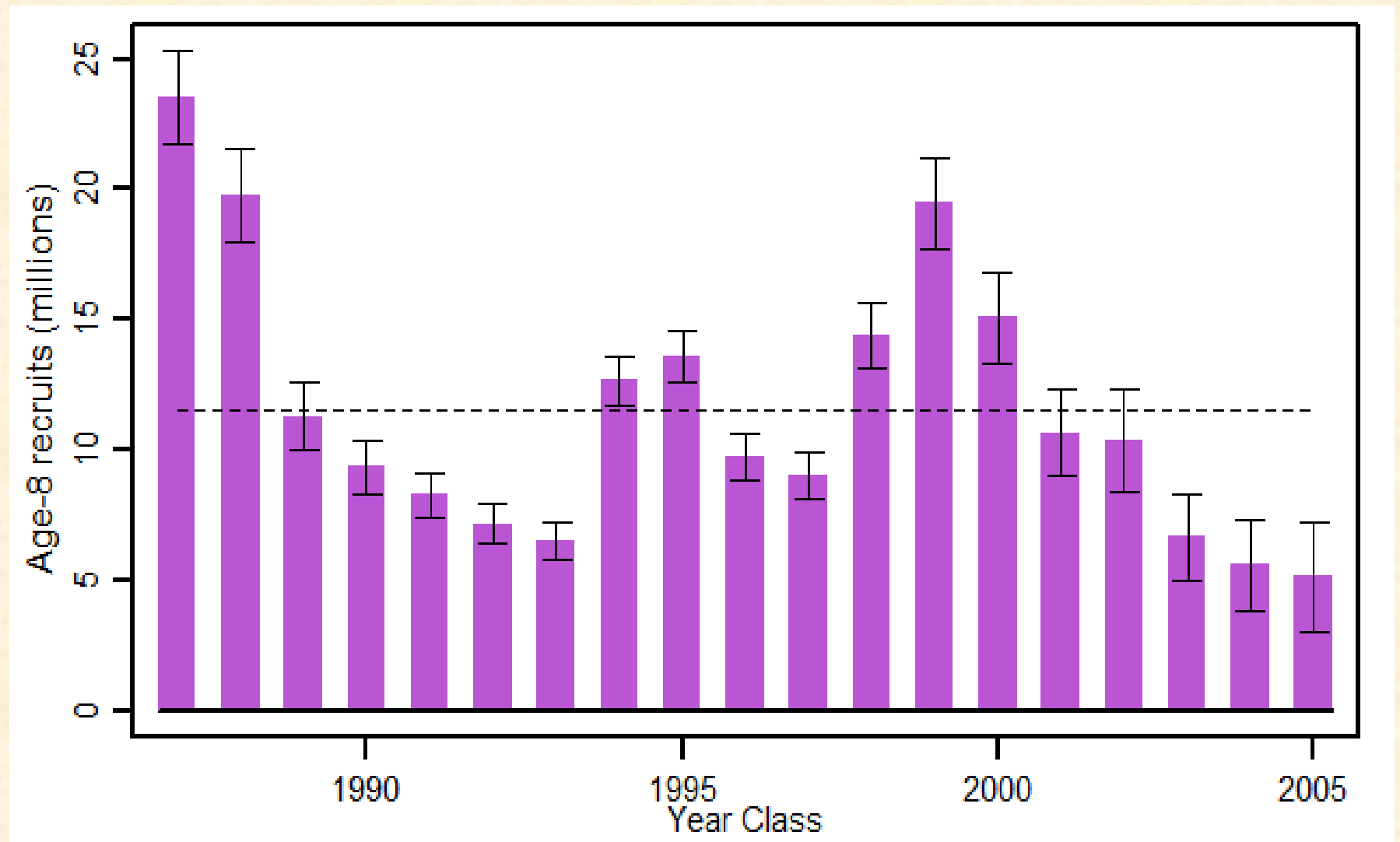
Retrospective among recent assessments



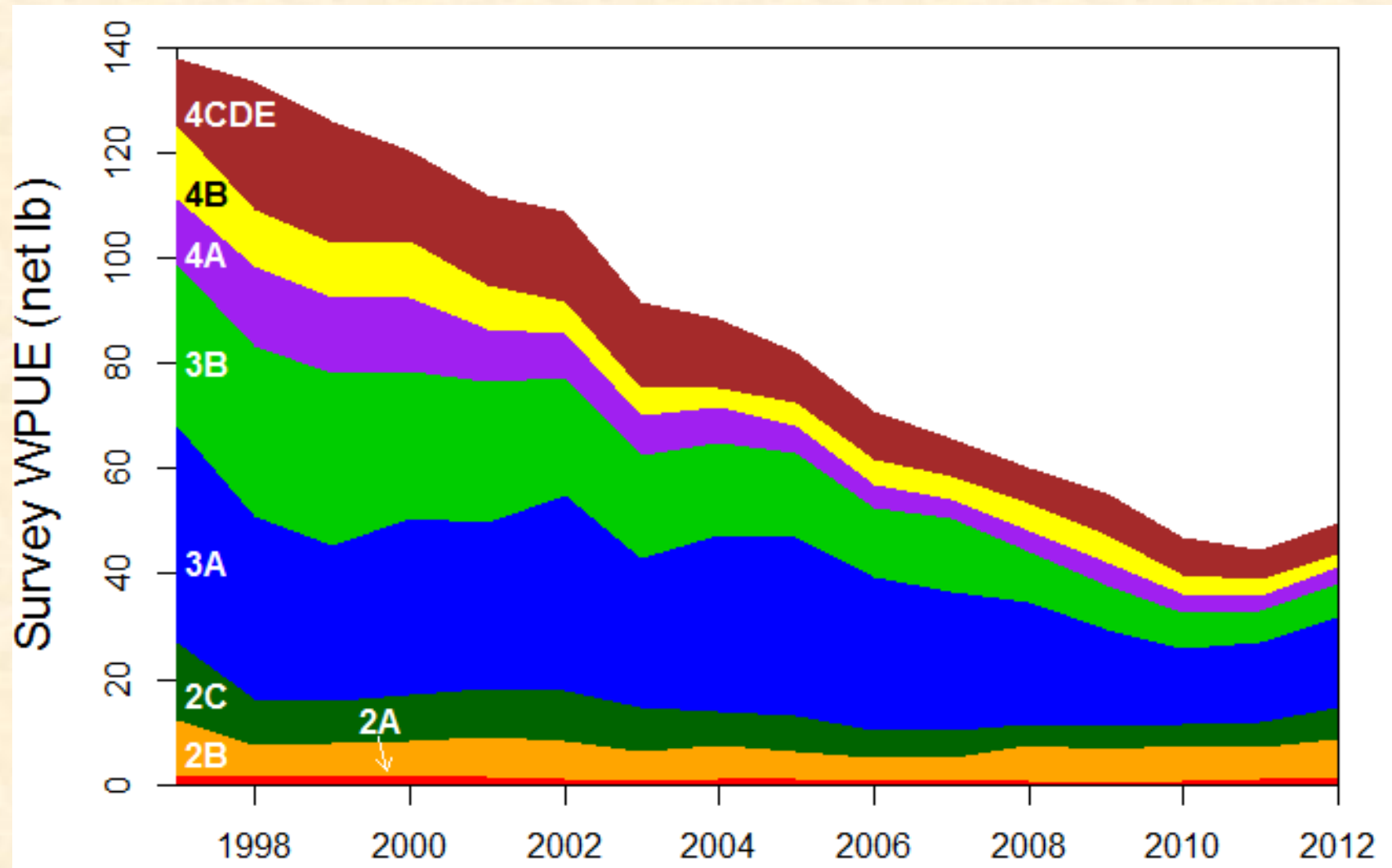
Retrospective: Solution



Results: Recruitment

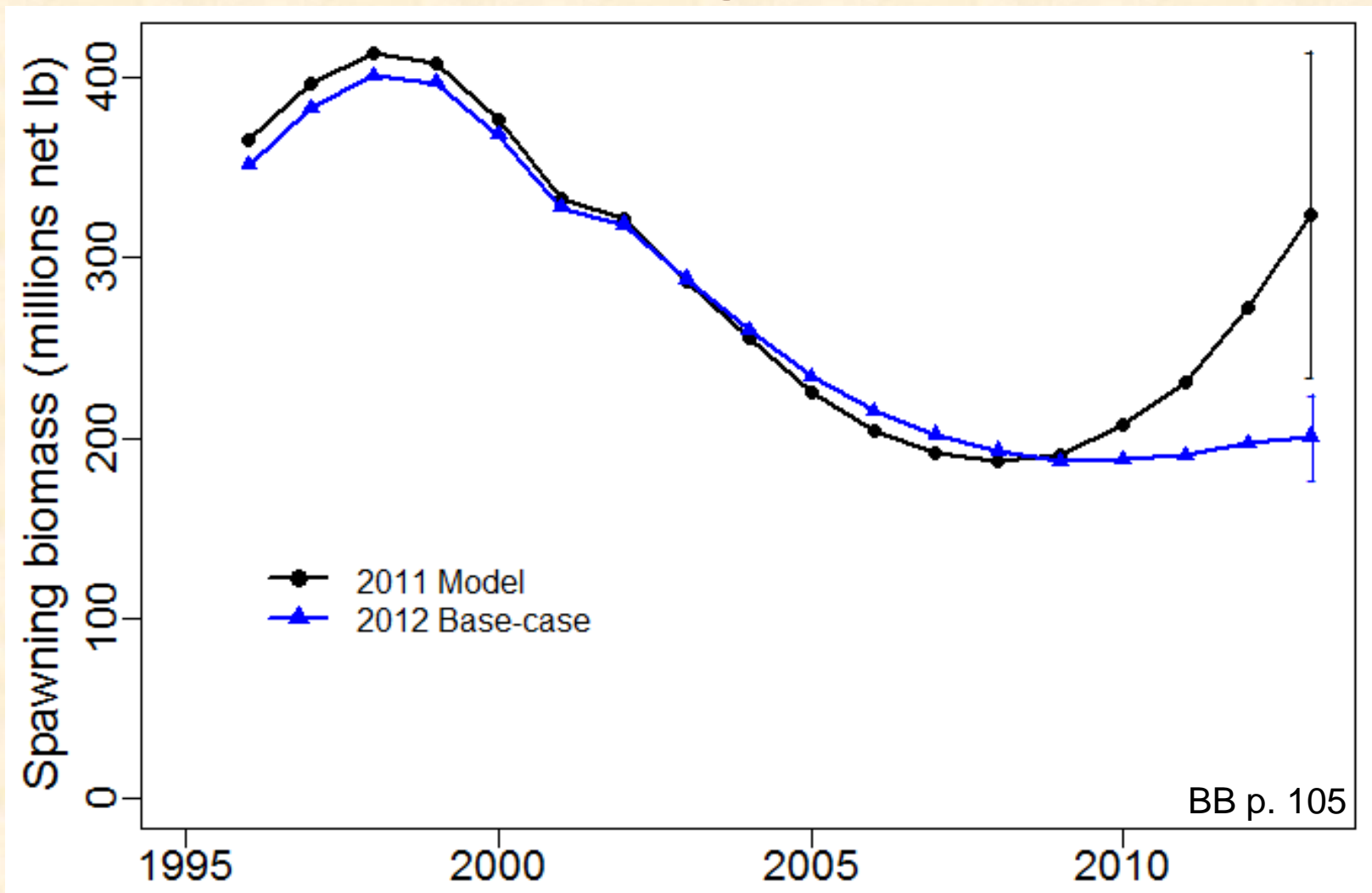


Survey: Weight-per-unit-effort (WPUE) index



Results: Comparison to the 2011 model

(Data through 2012)



Results: Bridging analysis

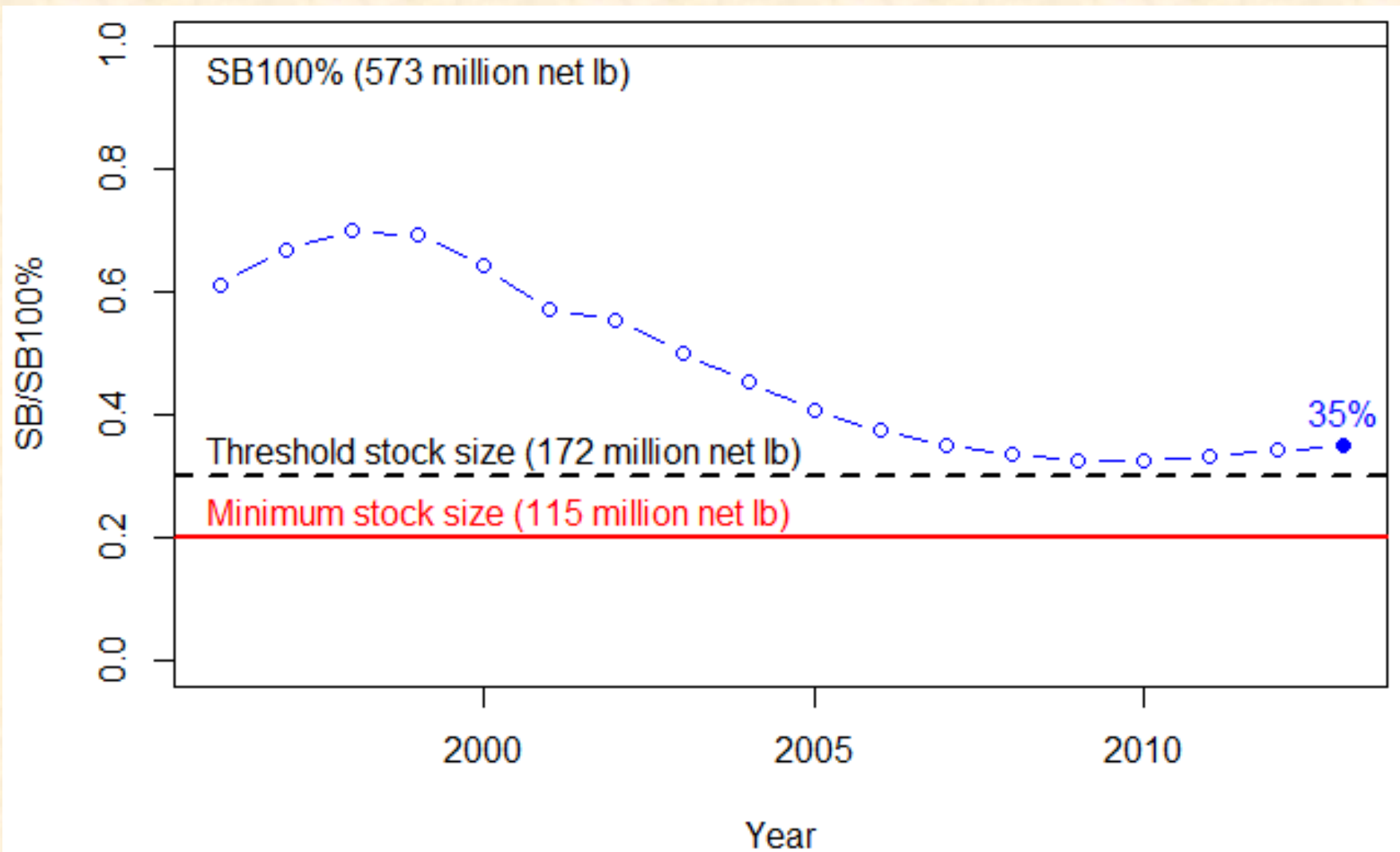
Model	2011 ("wobblesq")			2012
End year	2011	2011	2012	2012
Data finalized in:	Nov-11	Nov-12	Nov-12	Nov-12
Quantity (Biomass in millions lb)				
2012 Spawning biomass	319	309	272	197
2012 Relative spawning biomass	42%	41%	38%	34%
2013 Spawning biomass	--	--	324	201
2013 Relative spawning biomass	--	--	46%	35%
2012 Exploitable biomass	260	252	219	179 ←
2013 Exploitable biomass	--	--	258	186 ←
2012 Coastwide harvest rate	19.4%	18.9%	21.8%	26.7%

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Results:

Spawning Biomass (SB) relative to reference levels



Extended decision-making table

	Coastwide Fishery CEY (total removals) millions lb	Fishing intensity	Stock status		Stock trend			Catch trend		Effective coastwide harvest rate			
		Effective coastwide HR	Spawning biomass								Fishery CEY		
			2013	2014				2016	2014				
				is greater than target	is less than 30%	is less than 20%	is less than 2013		is 5% less than 2013		is less than 2013	is less than 2013	is 10% less than 2013
				0.0 (0.0)	0%	25%	<1%		23%		<1%	41%	0%
No removals	FCEY = 0	0.0 (16.5)	<1%	25%	<1%	76%	2%	95%	0%	0%	6.9%		
		3.4 (20.0)	<1%	25%	<1%	77%	2%	96%	<1%	<1%	8.8%		
		12.9 (30.0)	1%	25%	<1%	79%	2%	97%	1%	<1%	14.2%		
		17.7 (35.0)	23%	25%	<1%	80%	2%	97%	19%	10%	16.8%		
	Blue Line	22.7 (40.2)	50%	25%	<1%	82%	3%	97%	48%	31%	19.6%		
		27.3 (45.0)	75%	25%	<1%	83%	3%	98%	75%	64%	22.2%		
Midpoint: 2012 Limit and Blue Line FCEY		28.1 (45.9)	76%	25%	<1%	83%	3%	98%	76%	68%	22.6%		
One-third increment: 2012 and Blue Line		29.9 (47.7)	78%	25%	<1%	83%	3%	98%	79%	74%	23.7%		
	2013 adopted catch limits	31.0 (48.9)	81%	25%	<1%	84%	3%	98%	82%	76%	24.4%		
		32.1 (50.0)	84%	25%	<1%	84%	3%	98%	85%	77%	24.8%		
2012 Catch limit		33.5 (51.5)	90%	25%	<1%	84%	3%	98%	90%	79%	25.7%		
2011 Model x HR		36.2 (54.3)	97%	25%	<1%	85%	4%	98%	97%	87%	27.2%		
		41.6 (60.0)	>99%	25%	<1%	86%	4%	99%	>99%	99%	30.2%		
			a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h			



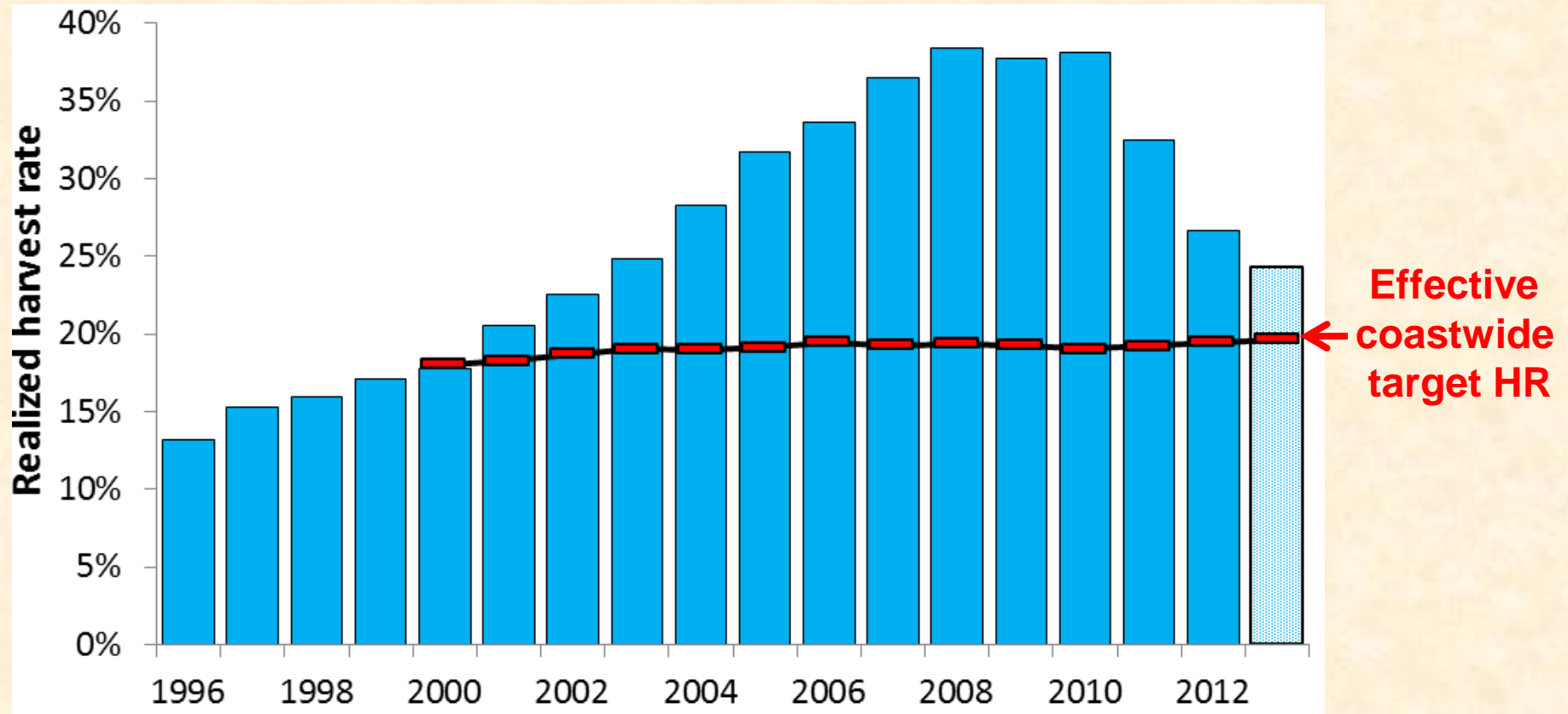
Adopted Catch Limit Apportionment

	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4CDE	Total
Exploitable biomass	3.81	24.54	23.28	70.38	26.02	11.97	6.75	19.74	186.49
Percent of total	2.0%	13.2%	12.5%	37.7%	14.0%	6.4%	3.6%	10.6%	100.0
Harvest rate (%)	29.0%	31.7%	21.6%	24.2%	22.6%	20.3%	28.6%	21.7%	24.4%
Total CEY	1.11	7.78	5.02	17.07	5.87	2.43	1.93	4.28	45.48
Other removals (O26) 26)	0.11	0.73	2.05	6.04	1.58	1.10	0.48	2.35	14.45
Catch Limits	0.99	7.04	2.97	11.03	4.29	1.33	1.45	1.93	31.03



Results:

Realized and projected Harvest Rates (HRs)



Summary

1) 2012 model:

- Fixing the retrospective bias means more reliable results
- The assessment is now consistent with observed trends in abundance

2) 2012 results:

- Stock trend estimated to be relatively stable
- Below average recent recruitment
- Continued poor size-at-age

3) 2013 Adopted coastwide catch limit 7.5% less than in 2012



IPHC Annual Meeting Decisions and Future Directions

- Seasons and regulations
- Future directions
 - Stock assessment
 - Harvest policy evaluation
 - Management Strategy Evaluation and Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB)
 - Scientific Review Board (SRB)
 - Bycatch Project Team
 - Survey – South of Humbug Mtn 2013



Management Measures

Fishing periods and catch sharing

- Commission adopted March 23 - November 7 for quota share fisheries
- Area 2A commercial and treaty Indian fisheries should fall within adopted season
- In 2A, a series of 10-h periods for the directed fishery starting June 26, at two-week intervals
- Endorsed Management Councils' catch sharing plans for Areas 2A and 4CDE
- Endorsed combined commercial/recreational catch limit for Area 2B which will be allocated to sector by DFO



Stock assessment

- Over the next year+ Dr. Stewart will be examining alternative ways of assessing the stock, using different assumptions about stock behaviour
- Will examine coastwide, implicit spatial, and explicit spatial methods
- Explore alternative selectivity functions
- Integrate other survey information and more historical data



Harvest policy evaluation

- Dr. Martell will be reviewing over the next year
- In conjunction with MSE process
- Will examine alternative assumptions about stock distribution, movement, and dynamics
- Continue to examine issues of size limits and control rules
- Size at age research continuing



Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB)

- Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) aims to evaluate candidate management procedures against a realistic background model of stock and fishery behaviour
- Identifying the candidate procedures and management objectives is a very important part of MSE
- The MSAB will help the staff in this identification and testing them against the objectives
- Relatively small group (~15) needed to commit to a process over about two years
- Expenses will be paid by the Commission
- Accepting nominations until March 15; finalize by end of March



Scientific Review Board (SRB)

- Technical team made up of experts to act as peer reviewers of Commission science
- Fixed, staggered terms
- Advises Commission on staff scientific results, research plans, and management
- Will be permanent part of IPHC process



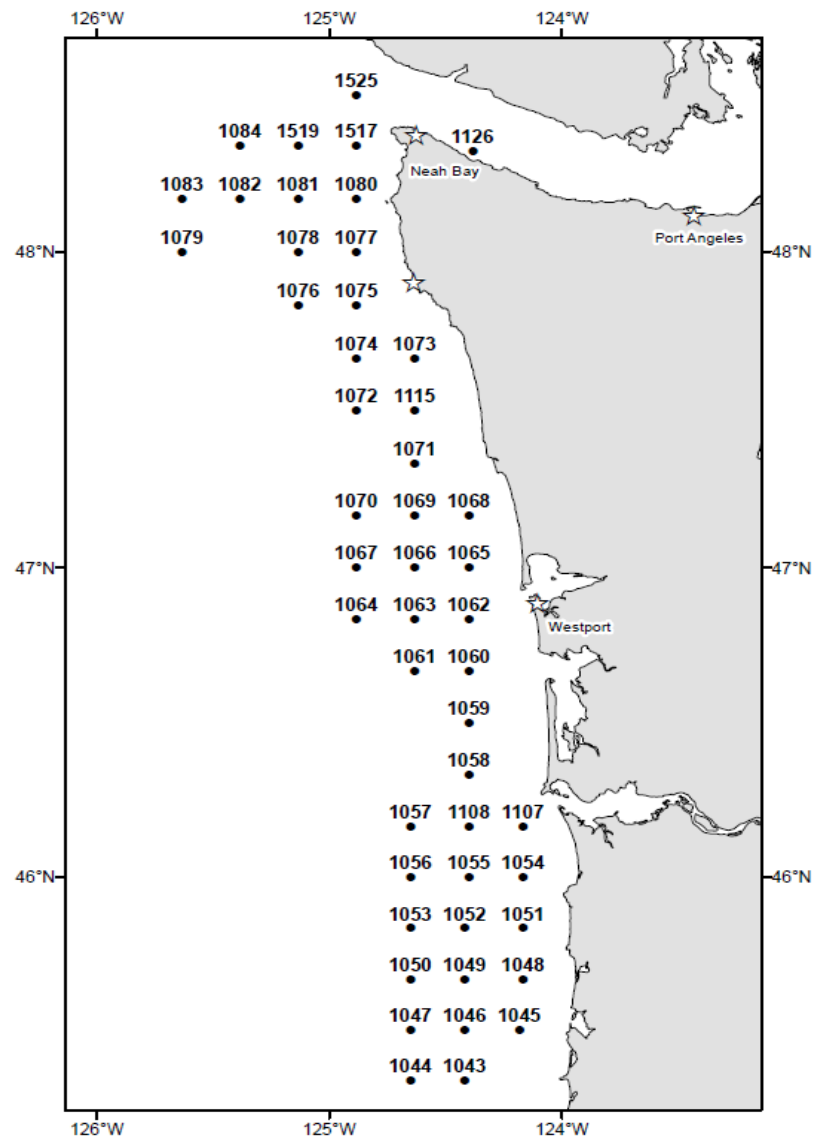
Bycatch

- Commission's Bycatch Project Team will continue its work on:
 - Quantifying bycatch
 - Documenting impacts of bycatch on the fishery and the resource
 - Exploring options to mitigate impacts
 - Identifying options to reduce bycatch
- A progress report and implementation plan from the Project Team is anticipated by mid-summer 2013

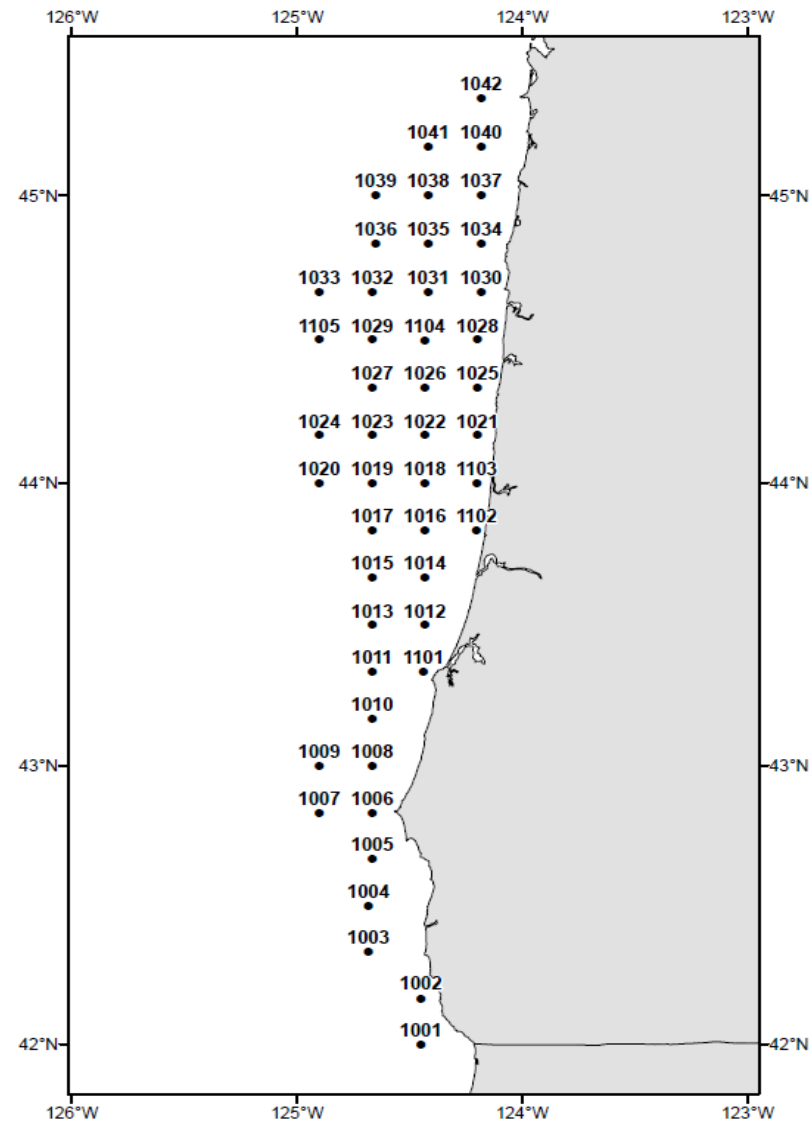


IPHC Assessment Survey

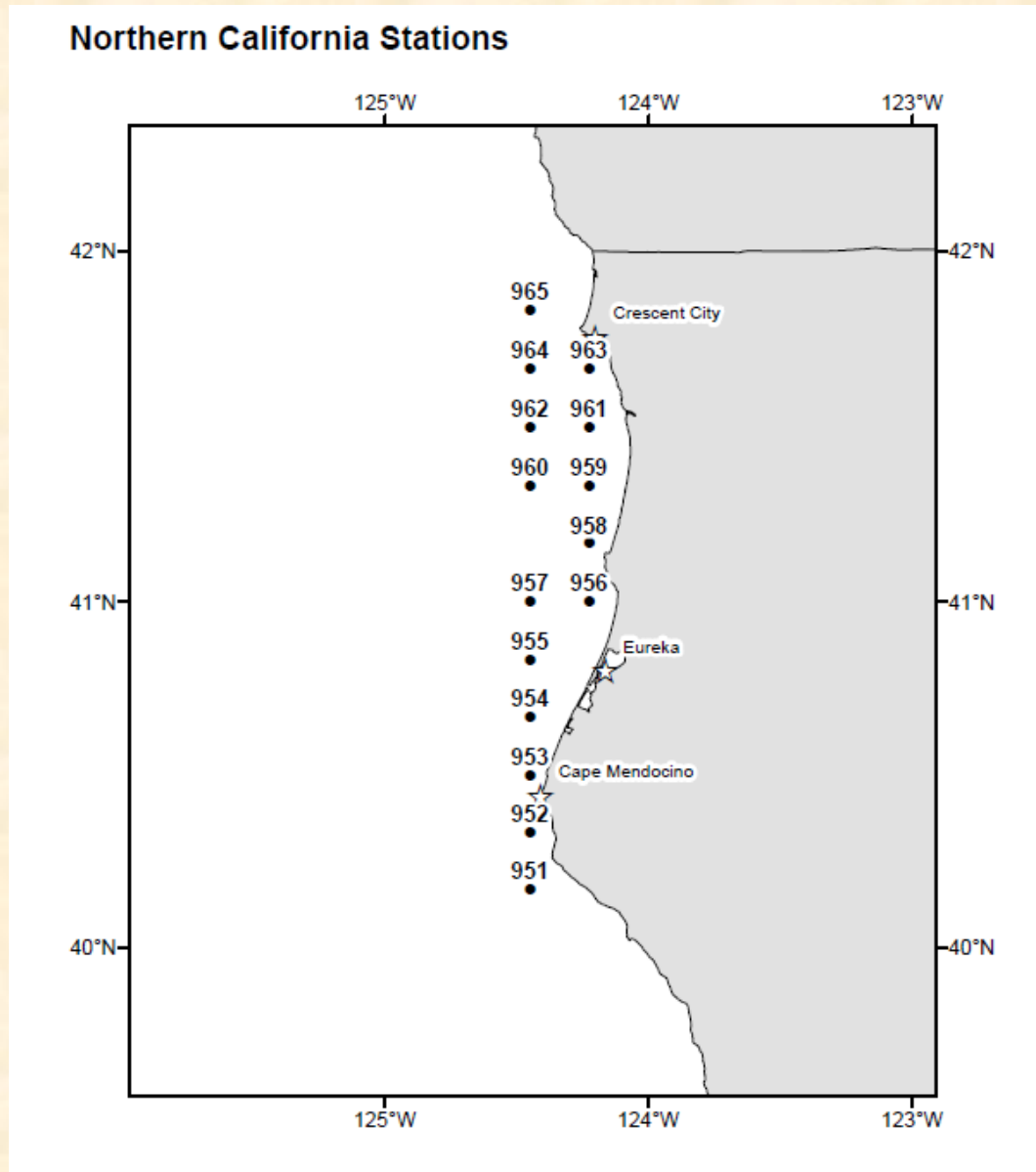
Washington Stations



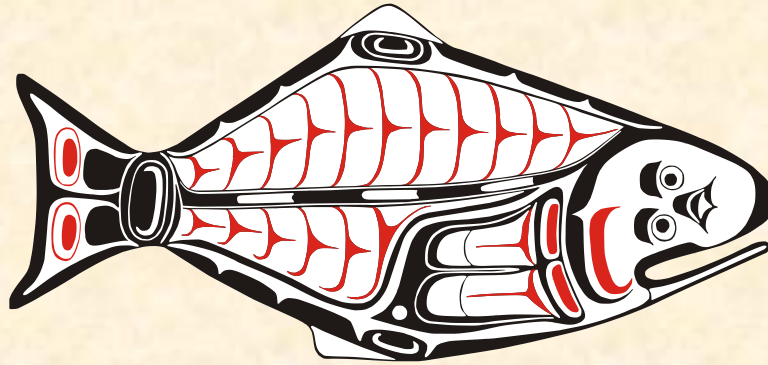
Oregon Stations



2013 Survey extension into northern California



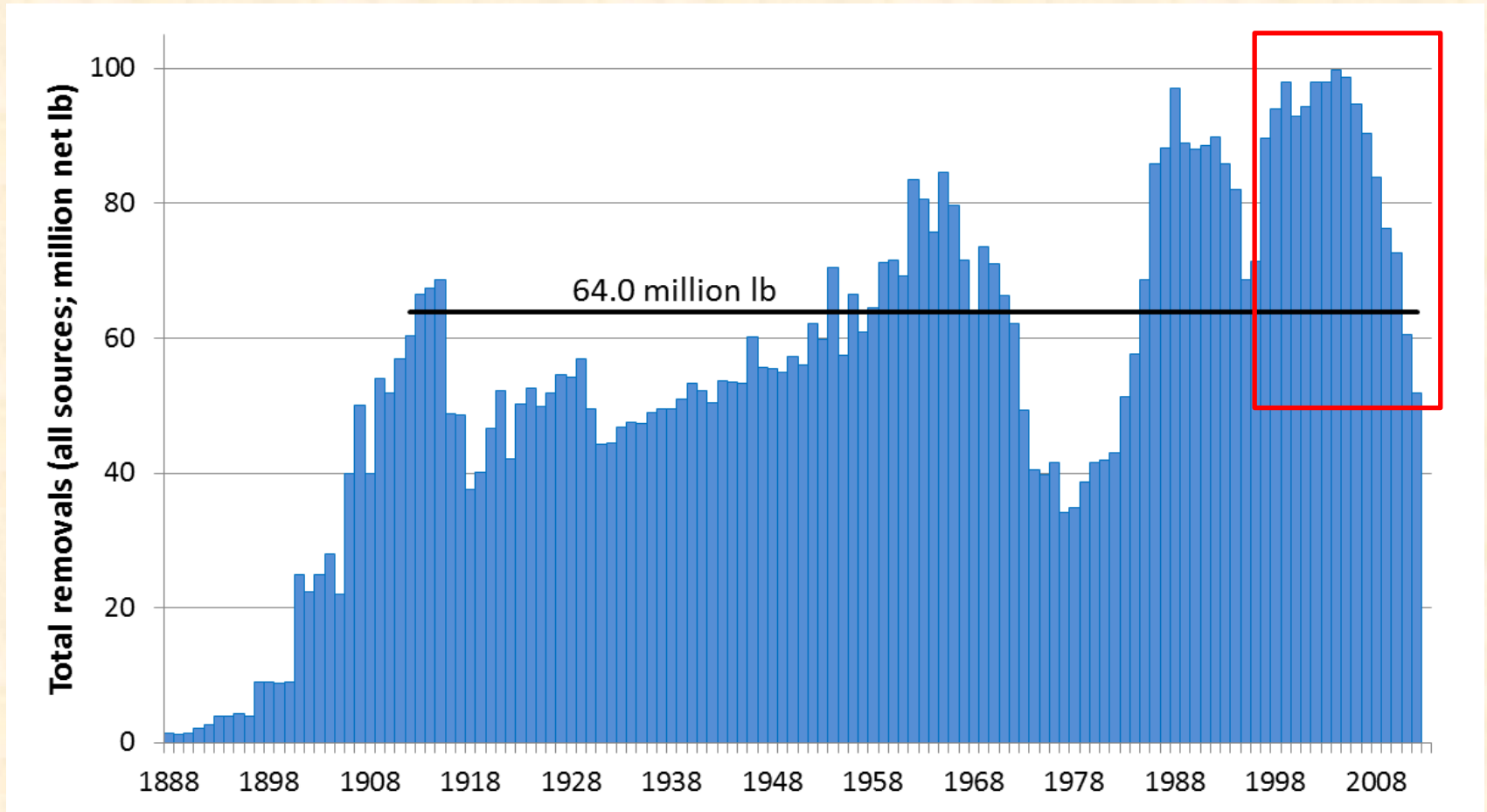
Questions?



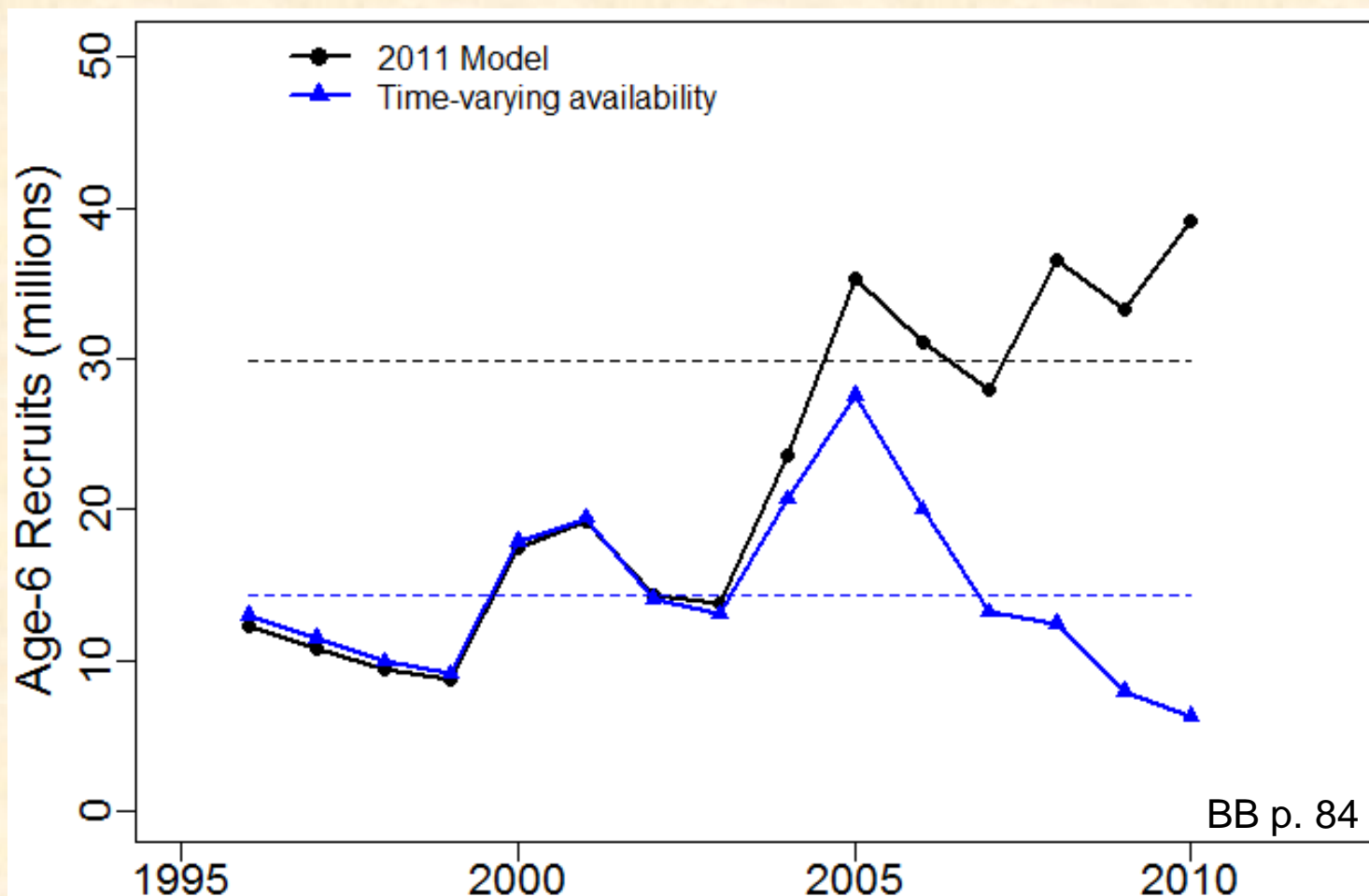


Extra Slides

Historical perspective on removals

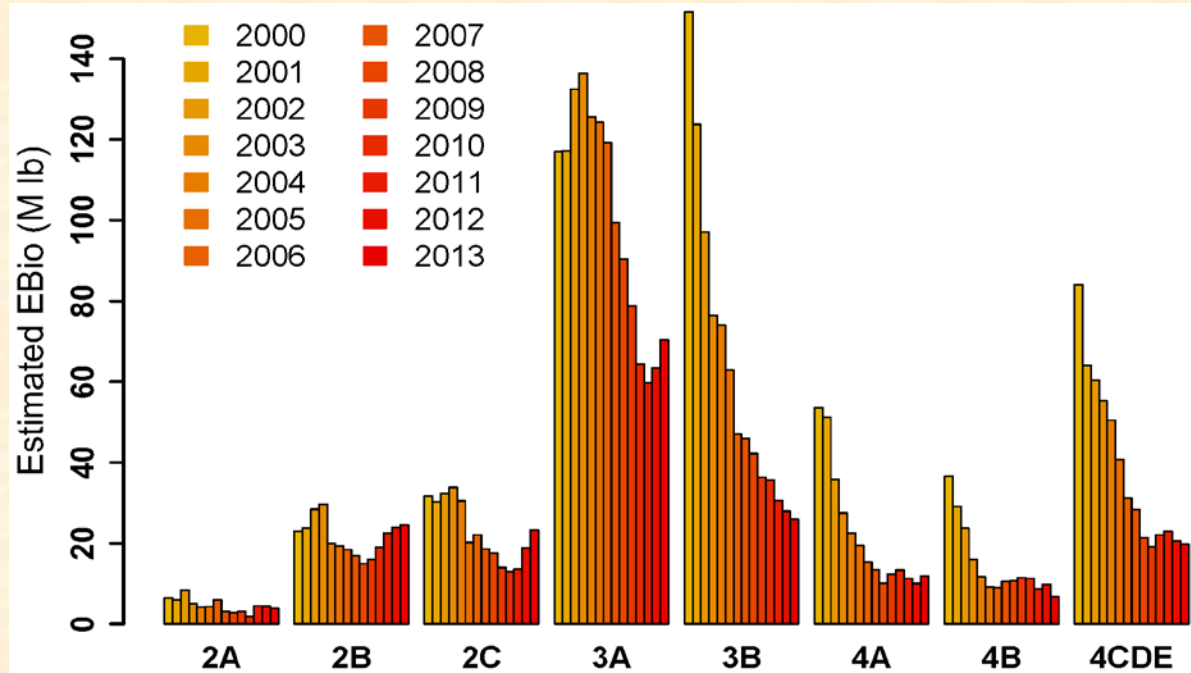


Retrospective: Solution

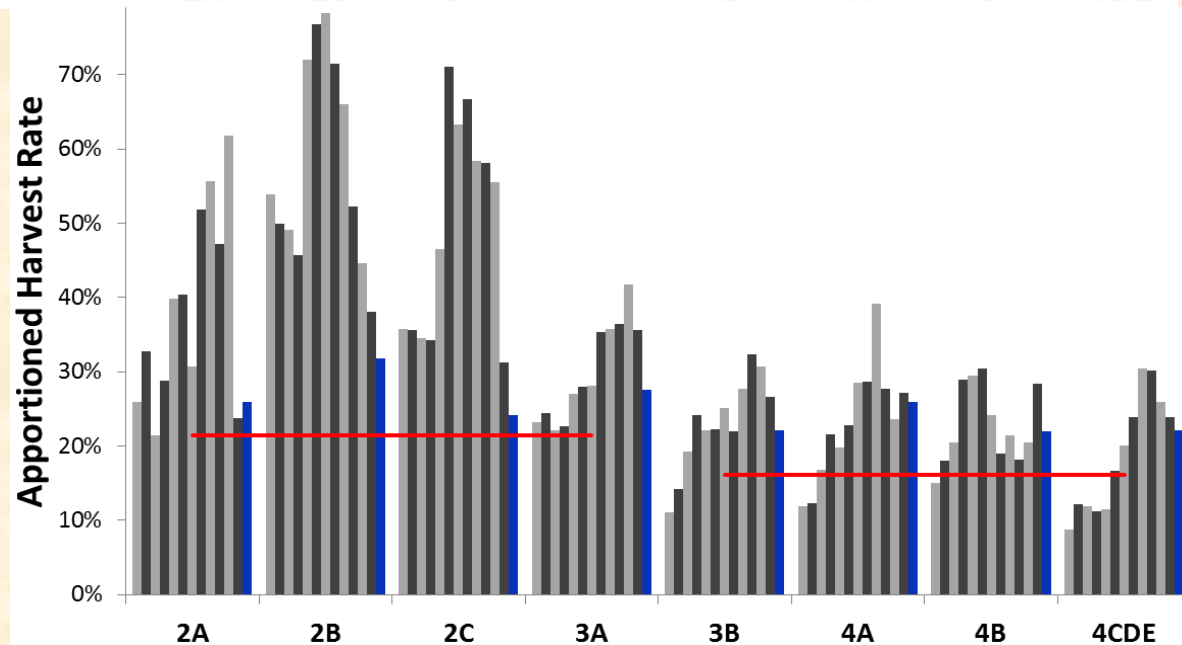


Exploitable Biomass

(based on apportioned
coastwide estimated biomass)



Harvest rates



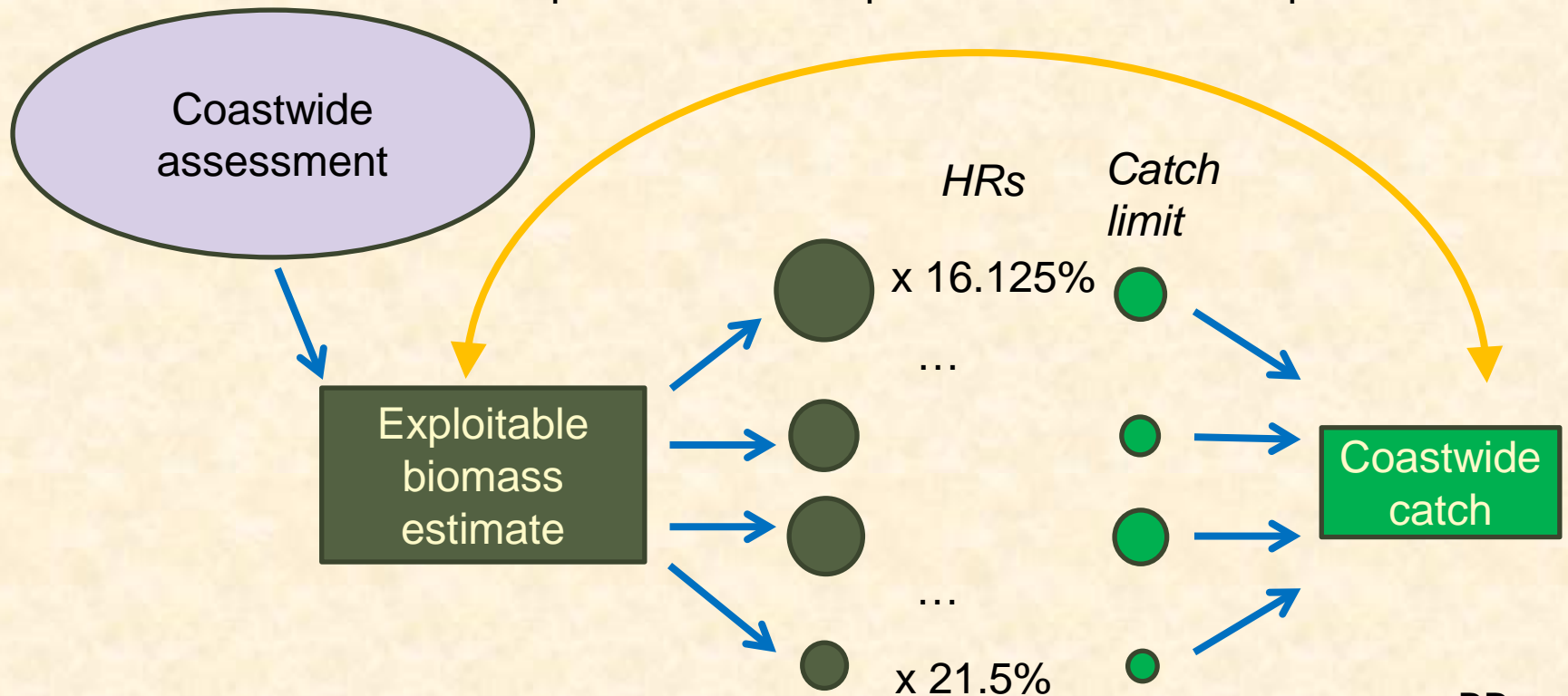
Terms: Harvest policy

Harvest Rate (HR) - fraction removed each year

Harvest rate targets - 21.5% (2A, 2B, 2C, 3A) or 16.125% (3B, 4A, 4B, 4CDE)

Effective coastwide harvest rate (ECHR) target -

Removals from areas-specific HRs compared to coastwide exploitable biomass



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Apportionment

2013 IPHC Annual Meeting

Slide 30



Regulatory Area	2012 Catch Limit	Blue Line	CB (Millions of Pounds)	PAG	IPHC Approved
2A ¹	0.989	0.71	0.99	0.90	0.99
2B ^{1,2}	7.038	4.58	7.04	6.22	7.04
2C ²	2.624	2.97	3.12	3.76	2.97
3A ²	11.918	9.24	11.03	9.24	11.03
3B	5.070	2.73	4.29	2.73	4.29
4A	1.567	0.85	1.33	1.33	1.33
4B	1.869	0.62	1.45	1.45	1.45
4CDE ³	2.465	0.85	1.93	1.93	1.93
4C ⁴	1.690	0.358	0.859	0.859	0.859
4D ⁴	1.690	0.358	0.859	0.859	0.859
4E ⁴	0.340	0.135	0.212	0.212	0.212
Total	33.540	22.550	31.180	27.560	31.028

¹ Combined sport and commercial allocation (2A includes tribal)

² Presumes adherence to sport management targets

³ Allocation for combined Areas 4C, 4D, 4E

⁴ NPFMC Plan: 4C , 4D: 46.43% of 80K less than 4CDE quota, 4E: 7.14% + 80K



Fishery limits (millions net lb)

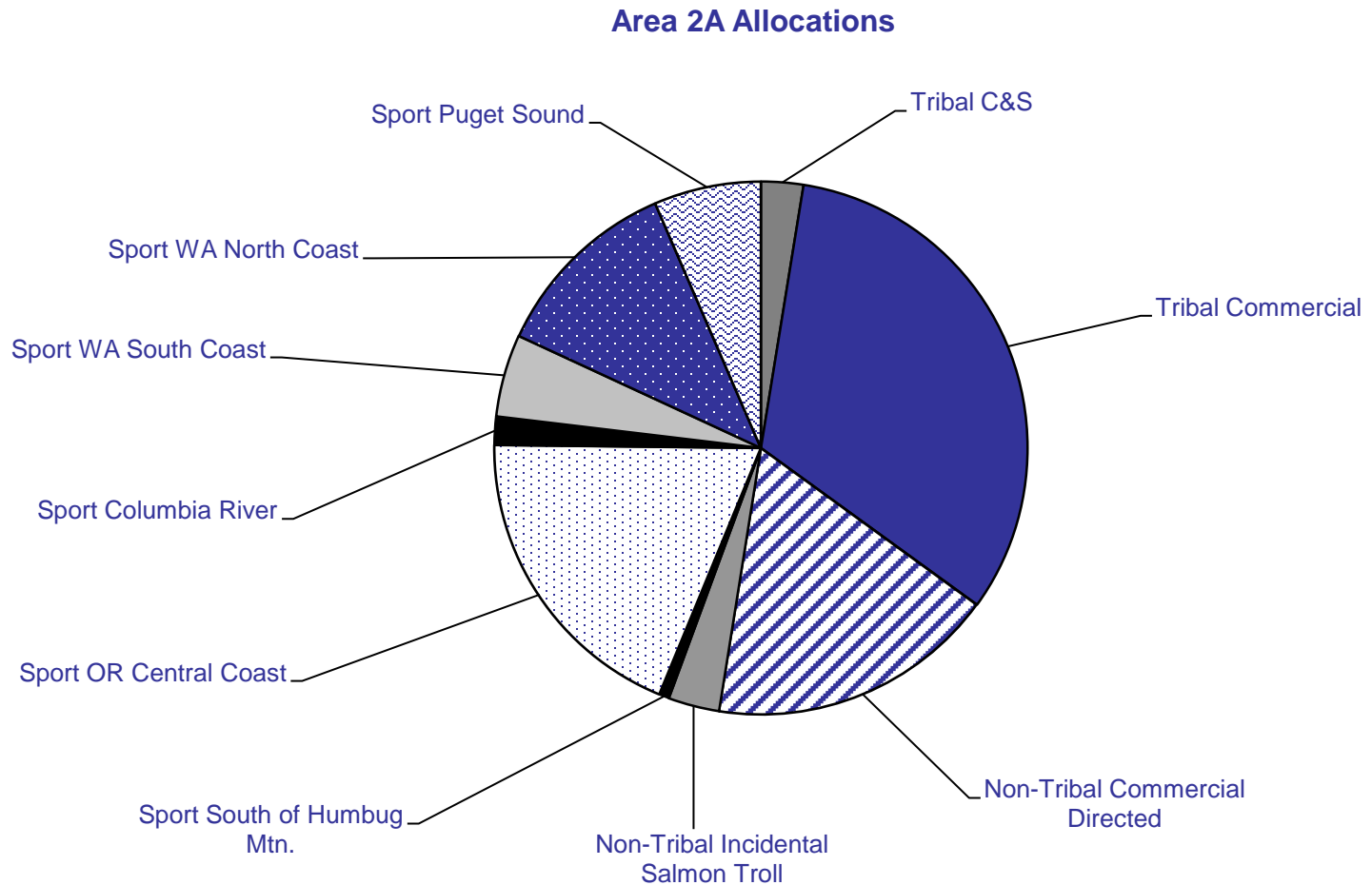
	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4CDE	Total
2012	0.99	7.04	2.62	11.92	5.07	1.57	1.87	2.47	33.54
2013	0.99	7.04	2.97	11.03	4.29	1.33	1.45	1.93	31.03

Recreational
catches
included

Charter
catches
based on
Guideline
Harvest
Levels (GHLs)
-No change from 2012-



Area 2A allocations



IPHC Assessment Survey

- A systematic, standardized design initiated in 1998
 - 10 x 10 nm grid
 - ~1,250 stations fished annually
 - 20-275 fathoms
 - Coastwide, northern Bering Sea to the OR/CA border (currently)
- Standard gear configuration is used in all areas
 - 6-8 skates of fixed-hook setline gear
 - 18-ft spacing, 100 hooks/skate, 16/0 (#3) circle hooks
- Fixed setting and hauling schedules; standardized bait
- IPHC charts commercial longline vessels, placing 1-3 staff on board to sample the catch
- Results used for stock assessment and biomass apportionment



Northern California Stations (15)

Station Number	Stat Area	North Latitude	West Longitude	Depth (F)	Purpose Code	ADFG Area	Date Fished	Skates Hauled	Halibut (lbs) ¹		Halibut (Pcs)		Bycatch (Pcs) ²		
									Legal	Sub	Legal	Sub	P. Cod	Sablefish	Rockfish
951	6	40° 10'	124° 27'	254	SG										New!
952	6	40° 20'	124° 27'	57	SG										New!
953	7	40° 30'	124° 27'	22	SG				if station is shallower than 20 fm do not fish						New!
954	7	40° 40'	124° 27'	36	SG										New!
955	7	40° 50'	124° 27'	170	SG										New!
956	7	41° 00'	124° 14'	27	SG										New!
957	7	41° 00'	124° 27'	237	SG										New!
958	7	41° 10'	124° 15'	34	SG										New!
959	7	41° 20'	124° 14'	40	SG										New!
960	7	41° 20'	124° 27'	110	SG										New!
961	8	41° 30'	124° 14'	30	SG										New!
962	8	41° 30'	124° 27'	72	SG										New!
963	8	41° 40'	124° 14'	24	SG										New!
964	8	41° 40'	124° 27'	84	SG										New!
965	8	41° 50'	124° 27'	84	SG										New!



PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT SOUTH OF HUMBUG MOUNTAIN

In response to recent unusually high harvests of Pacific halibut off Southern Oregon and Northern California, the Council initiated a process to determine how best to incorporate the area south of the Oregon/California border into the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) stock assessment, determine the effect of including that area in the Area 2A apportionment, determine if adjustments to the 2A Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) allocations are necessary and appropriate, and establish methods to manage the fishery south of Humberg Mountain to comply with allocation provisions of the CSP and the overall total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to Area 2A.

The first step in this process was to establish the Ad Hoc South of Humberg Pacific Halibut Workgroup (Workgroup) to help develop an understanding of the biological, assessment, monitoring, and allocation issues involved in the management of this area, and how they relate to Area 2A and other management areas (see [Agenda Item F.1.b, Attachment 1, September 2012](#)).

The second step was to establish the Ad Hoc South of Humberg Pacific Halibut Policy Committee (Committee) to address allocation and management issues. The Committee met December 13, 2012 and discussed policies and methods to account for Pacific halibut abundance and distribution, monitoring recreational Pacific halibut catch, and measures to reduce catch of Pacific halibut in California waters (Agenda Item G.2.b, Attachment 1). The Council should consider the report of the Committee and provide guidance as necessary.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider the report and recommendations of the South of Humberg Pacific Halibut Policy Committee on potential management issues.**
- 2. Task the South of Humberg Pacific Halibut Workgroup with providing additional analysis, as necessary.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.2.b, Attachment 1: Summary of the South of Humberg Pacific Halibut Policy Committee Meeting.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Provide Direction on Selecting Management Changes to Implement in the 2014 Recreational Fishery South of Humberg Mountain

Kelly Ames

SUMMARY OF THE SOUTH OF HUMBUG PACIFIC HALIBUT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

The South of Humberg Mountain Policy Committee, hereinafter Committee, for Pacific halibut convened on Thursday, December 13, 2012 in Portland, Oregon. The following report contains a brief overview of the meeting with a primary focus on Committee recommendations to the Council. The Council will consider the Committee's recommendations at their March 2013 meeting in Tacoma, Washington.

The meeting began with an overview of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) stock assessment methodology, presented by IPHC staff, Mr. Gregg Williams. State representatives also provided an overview of the South of Humberg Workgroup (Workgroup) Report on Biological, Monitoring, Assessment, and Apportionment Issues in Area 2A (See Agenda Item F.1.b, Attachment 1, September 2012).

Mr. Williams said the IPHC staff is recommending to the Commission that the IPHC assessment survey for Pacific halibut be extended into northern California to approximately Punta Gorda (Figure 1). The estimated cost to expand the survey by 15-17 stations is approximately \$50,000. The Committee supports the expansion of the survey into California. If the survey cannot be conducted annually, the Committee recommends IPHC develop a reasonable timeline for resurveying the area. For years in which there is no IPHC survey in California, the Committee recommends that the previous survey estimate of abundance be scaled by an appropriate metric (e.g., the southern Oregon stations, annual NMFS trawl survey, or other reliable index). This is similar to the approach used in other areas that are not regularly surveyed, such as the Puget Sound area and the Bering Sea flats.

While discussing the challenges associated with expanding the survey to include California on an annual basis, the Committee recognized that the Puget Sound area is in a similar situation. The Committee recommends IPHC develop a reasonable timeline for resurveying the Puget Sound area. If the Puget Sound and California areas cannot be surveyed in the same year, the Committee recommends that the expanded surveys are done in alternate years (i.e., rotating between the two areas).

The Committee discussed the status of the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) commercial fishery data and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) trawl survey data requests to the Northwest Fisheries Science Center. The Committee recommends prioritizing the NMFS trawl survey request such that data would be available at the IPHC Annual Meeting to inform the southern extent of the survey expansion. The Northwest Fisheries Science Center is currently exploring the feasibility of this request.

The Committee discussed potential 2014 sport fishery management measures for the South of Humberg Mountain subarea in Oregon and California to constrain catches. The Committee recommends the Workgroup estimate the amount of Pacific halibut catch that would result from the following management measures:

- Prohibiting targeting of Pacific halibut on salmon and groundfish trips
- Restricting the days of the week; include at least one weekend day
- Restricting season dates including
 - Open May through July and September through October
 - Open May through July 15 and September through October
 - Open May through June and August through September
- Examine the potential for harvest reduction of other time and area closures off California

The Committee also recommends that the Workgroup bring forward any additional management measures that could be used to reduce catch of Pacific halibut.

In closing, the Committee recommends convening in late May 2013 to review the analysis conducted by the Workgroup. Recommendations from this meeting would be brought forward for Council consideration at their September 2013 meeting in Boise, Idaho.

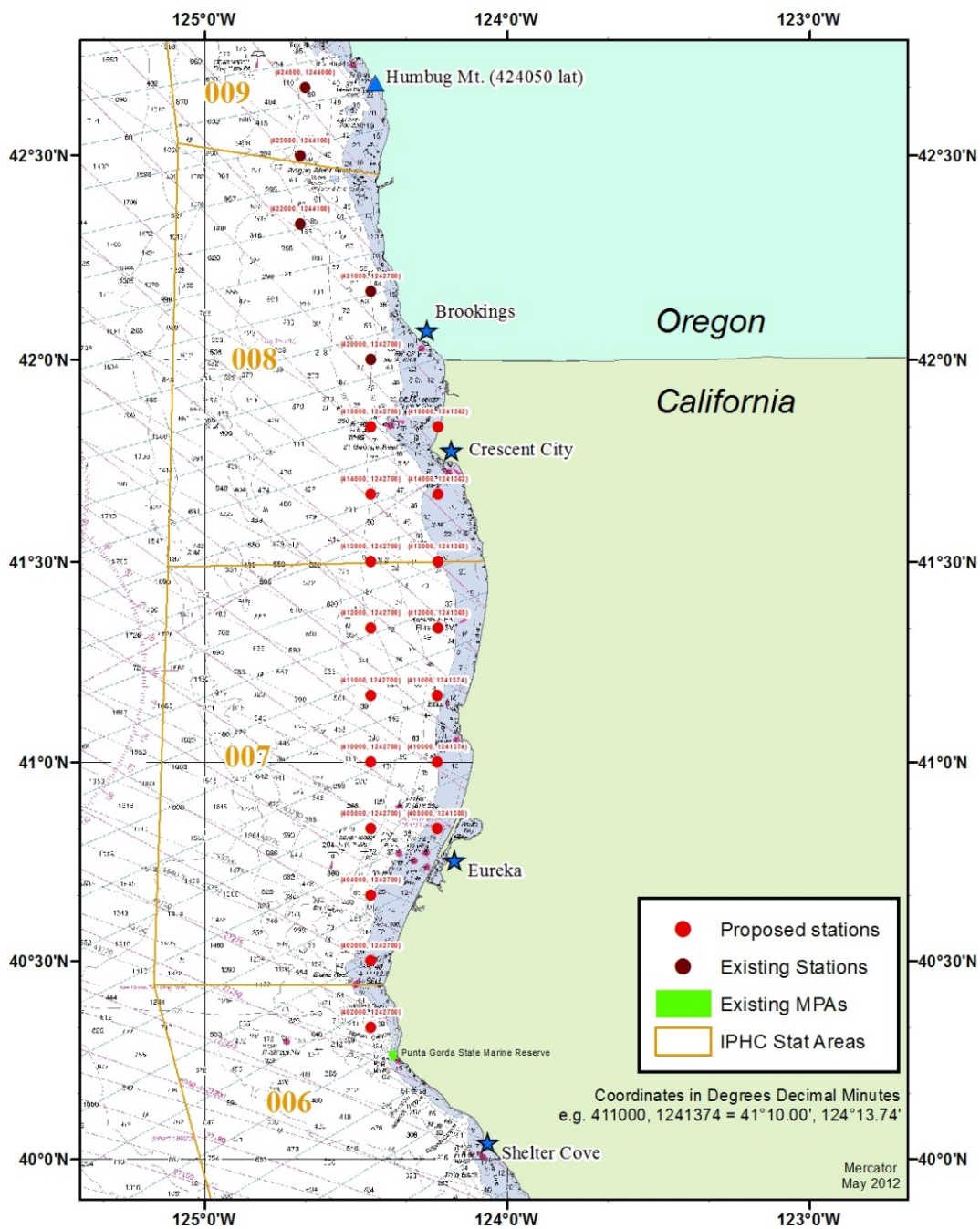


Figure 1. IPHC staff proposal to expand the Area 2A setline survey into northern California.

Attendee List

Committee Members

Ms. Michele Culver, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mr. Kevin Duffy, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Region
Ms. Marci Yaremko, California Department of Fish and Game
Mr. Stephen Williams, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mr. Gregg Williams, International Pacific Halibut Commission

Other Attendees

Ms. Kelly Ames, Council Staff
Ms. Gway Kirchner, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mr. Tim Klassen, Reel Steel Sportfishing
Mr. Dale Meyer, Arctic Storm Management Group
Ms. Lynn Mattes, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ms. Heather Reed, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mr. Chuck Tracy, Council Staff
Mr. Jim Yarnall, Humbolt Area Saltwater Anglers

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INCIDENTAL CATCH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

Regulations governing incidental harvest of halibut in the salmon troll fishery and primary 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. Beginning in 2013, the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) directs that the primary management objective is to harvest the incidental quota in the April-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 G.3.a, Attachment 1.

Primary Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The total Area 2A halibut quota is large enough this year (greater than 900,000 lbs) to provide for an incidental halibut harvest in the primary 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. The most recent year the Area 2A allocation was sufficient to provide for incidental harvest was 2012. In past years, the Council has successfully used landing restrictions to maintain the harvest within the allocation. A summary of management information for the incidental halibut fishery since the initial season in 2001 is provided in Agenda Item G.3.a, Attachment 1.

Season Dates

In the fall of 2012, the Council expressed interest in changing the date that Pacific halibut can be retained in the salmon troll and primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis from May 1 to April 1. Changing the season date for the salmon troll fishery required amending the Pacific halibut CSP, which was recommended by the Council and included in the 2013 proposed rule for the CSP ([78FR9660](#)). Procedures for implementing management measures related to an April 1 start date must also be established within the salmon and groundfish regulations during a two meeting Council process. Further, the International Pacific Halibut Commission recommended changes to the licensing process and application deadlines to accommodate the earlier start date (see [Agenda Item E.1.b, Supplemental IPHC Report, November 2012](#)). Given the necessary steps and timelines, the earliest that implementation could be accomplished is April 1, 2014. The

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has provided a report that outlines procedures for Council consideration (Agenda Item G.3.b, NMFS Report).

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) submitted a report recommending the Council consider revising the date that Pacific halibut can be retained in the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis from May 1 to April 1 as soon as possible (Agenda Item G.3.b, WDFW Report).

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 for 2013 and the early season (pre-May 1) fisheries in 2014, and assures a reasonable utilization of the incidental catch while not exceeding the quota.**
- 2. Adopt for public review a range of landing restrictions for halibut caught incidentally in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington for 2013 and 2014.**
- 3. Adopt for public review season dates for incidental halibut harvest in the commercial sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington for 2014 and beyond.**
- 4. Provide guidance, as necessary, on the recommended process for establishing landing restrictions for future years.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.3.a, Attachment 1: Summary of Pacific Halibut Incidental Catch Management.
2. Agenda Item G.3.b, NMFS Report: National Marine Fisheries Service Report on Changes to Incidental Halibut Retention in the Salmon Troll and Sablefish Primary Fisheries.
3. Agenda Item G.3.b, WDFW Report: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Incidental Catch Recommendations for the Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Public Review Options for 2013 and April 2014

Kelly Ames

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02/07/13

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 ^{a/}	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	79	125	7	22	233	25,035	28,627	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2011	77	182	26	31	316	28,126	26,172	1 + 1 per each 3	35
2012	76	172	35	28	311	30,568	35,300	1 + 1 per each 4	20
2013	-	-	-	-	-	30,600	-	-	-

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.				
Pounds of Halibut			Restrictions	
Year	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	-	-	-
2011	0	-	-	-
2012	21,173	4,400	2 + 50 lb per 1,000 lb	May 1-Oct 31
2013	21,410	-	-	-

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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON CHANGES TO INCIDENTAL HALIBUT RETENTION IN THE SALMON TROLL AND SABLEFISH PRIMARY FISHERIES

The National Marine Fisheries Service provides the following report to explain several procedural steps and issues following the Council's changes to the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) in November 2012. This document discusses the CSP, schedule, process, Council Operating Procedures (COPs), Federal regulations, and International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) licenses for halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery and sablefish primary fishery North of Pt. Chehalis, WA. While some of these items overlap there are distinct differences due to the different regulatory and Council procedures for halibut, salmon, and groundfish. Additionally, some of these changes are necessary in 2013 to allow retention of halibut in 2014 but would not need to be repeated.

1. Date change for halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery from May 1 to April 1

CSP – modified language was approved in November

The Council approved modified language to the CSP sections on incidental halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery moving the dates from May-June to April-June. This change was approved by the IPHC and will be implemented in the 2013 halibut final rule.

One additional change will be needed for the 2014 CSP to make the license deadline date earlier. IPHC will review the licensing procedure at the 2014 Annual Meeting and would likely require licenses for fishers participating in the salmon troll fishery wishing to retain halibut to have their 2014 licenses post marked in mid-March. Section (e)(4) of the CSP, which describes the commercial license dates will need to be updated with this change for 2014 and beyond. In addition, prior to the 2014 season all agency staffs should provide early notification to the fleet to ensure that they understand there has been a change to the IPHC licensing deadline dates. The IPHC does not have an appeals process, so licenses are not issued if deadlines are missed. Even with unchanged deadline dates fishers miss the deadline every year.

Council Schedule/Process/COP

Currently, COP 9, schedule 4, states that the Council will adopt, in March, a range of landing restrictions for incidental halibut harvest in the salmon troll fishery and in April adopt final recommendations. These actions would still happen as stated in the COP each year and would apply to that years salmon management measures and the next years pre-May 1 fisheries.

For the pre May 1 fisheries any landing limit adjustments, would be addressed through an inseason meeting with salmon and halibut managers and would not necessarily need to come in front of the Council. Currently, salmon and halibut inseason actions are addressed by the inseason managers, rather than the full Council.

For 2014 and beyond, the previous year's salmon regulations would permit halibut retention in the pre-May 1 salmon troll fisheries. The salmon troll fishery is evaluated each March by NMFS, Council staff, the States, and industry members, and would be modified as necessary (dates or trip limits) through a salmon and halibut inseason action.

Summary:

For the annual salmon management measures - troll season halibut/salmon ratio

- Initial ratio would go out for public comment in March with final recommendation in April to be included in that year's annual salmon management measures. This is status quo.
- The next year's pre May 1 salmon to halibut landing limit would be established in the previous year's salmon management measures and would be modified through a salmon and halibut inseason action as necessary.

Federal Regulations

Retention of halibut in the salmon troll fishery is authorized in the annual salmon management measures final rule that publishes near May 1 each year. For the 2014 pre-May 1 halibut retention, the 2013 salmon management measures will add halibut retention and landing limits to Section 1, Commercial Management Measures for Ocean Salmon Fisheries, as appropriate.

As stated above, any changes to the landing limits for the pre-May 1 salmon fishery would be implemented through a salmon and halibut inseason action and do not require a Federal Register notice.

IPHC Regulations

In order to retain halibut starting on April 1, fishermen will be required to obtain their IPHC license before the new deadline date of, likely, March 15. The deadline date will be determined at the 2014 IPHC Annual Meeting in January 2014. Currently, 2013 licenses for retaining halibut in the salmon troll fishery are due by April 1 and licenses for retaining halibut in the directed commercial or sablefish fishery are due April 30. IPHC will be changing their permit due date to mid-March for this fishery in order to process the licenses by April 1.

2. Date change for halibut retention in the sablefish primary fishery from May 1 to April 1

CSP – no changes are needed to the CSP

The CSP simply states that the Council will make final landing limit recommendations at its spring meeting. No changes are necessary at this time. As stated above, the IPHC will be amending their license due date to accommodate this change.

Council Schedule/Process/COP

Currently, landing limits in this fishery are described in COP 9, schedule 4, at the same meetings as the salmon landing limits. The March Council action is a range of landing limits and the April Council meeting is a final landing limit recommendation.

If the Council wishes to maintain a 2 meeting process for discussing the landing limits for incidental take of halibut in the sablefish primary fishery and would like to implement retention by April 1, the limits would have to be discussed earlier than March and April. There are several issues with this. In November, the IPHC has not published the preliminary TAC so any range discussed at the November Council meeting would not be based the final TAC for the year. Additionally, unlike the salmon troll fishery the halibut allocation to the sablefish fishery is not a hard allocation but a TAC level minimum pound trigger tied to the Washington sport allocation. This means in some years given a low TAC there is no allocation for this incidental take fishery. This information is not available until the IPHC recommends the final TAC at the end of January.

If the Council wishes to reduce the number of meetings where the landing limits are discussed from two to one, and discuss it at only the March meeting, that is an option that needs to be discussed. At the March meeting the Council could discuss the landing limits knowing the final TAC amount. Also, this meeting is the latest meeting the would make retention available near April 1st

NMFS Regulations

The implementation for this action is authorized through a groundfish inseason action and Federal Register notice and not simply an update to the halibut hotline. NMFS believes we can accommodate this change each year near April 1 but not by April 1 every year. Depending on the timing of the March Council meeting and the other groundfish inseason actions the inseason notice may not publish by April 1st.

IPHC Regulations

See above on license changes, the same applies to this fishery. Additionally, IPHC will be separating the licenses for participation in the directed commercial fishery and the fishery incidental to the sablefish primary fishery. However, this change will not restrict fishermen to only one of those fisheries (this does not occur often), they may still participate in both. Fishermen wishing to participate in both fisheries will need to apply for two separate licenses. The change just allows IPHC more time to process the directed fishery licenses with a later due date because that fishery does not start until late June.

Table 1. Possible Council meeting schedule and agenda item action under halibut, salmon, and groundfish agenda items.

	March 2013	April 2013	September 2013	November 2013	March 2014
Halibut Agenda Items	Council recommends range of incidental halibut landing restrictions for 2013 and 2014 salmon troll and 2013 sablefish primary fishery	Council recommends final landing restrictions for incidental halibut restrictions for 2013 and 2014 salmon troll and 2013 sablefish primary fishery	Council recommends range of 2014 CSP changes for public review	Council recommends final 2014 CSP changes	Council recommends range of incidental halibut landing restrictions for 2014 and 2015 salmon troll and 2014 sablefish primary fishery
Salmon Agenda Items	Council recommends preliminary range of salmon management measures including 2013 and 2014 halibut landing limits as decided under halibut agenda item	Council recommends final salmon management measures including 2013 and 2014 halibut landing limits as decided under halibut agenda item			Council recommends preliminary range of salmon management measures including 2014 and 2015 halibut landing limits
Groundfish Agenda Item	Range is described under Halibut agenda item	Final landing limits are included in Groundfish Inseason action, but action is taken under halibut agenda item			Final landing limits are included in Groundfish Inseason action if retention is allowed on/near April 1

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

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the information contained in Agenda Item G.3.

For the salmom troll fishery, the GAP recommends that the following options be adopted for public review:

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Status quo; | 1 + 1 per each 4 (halibut per Chinook), | 20 halibut trip limit |
| 2 | | 1 + 1 per each 5 “ “ “ , | 15 “ “ “ |
| 3 | | 1 + 1 per each 6 “ “ “ , | 10 “ “ “ |

The GAP believes that status quo should be the most liberal option offered as the total harvest was significantly over the allocation for 2012.

With the sablefish fixed gear fishery, harvestable amount of halibut is enough to allow retention in the north of Point Chehalis fishery for 2013. The GAP recommends the following options for public review:

- | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------|---------------|---|
| 1. | Status quo; | 2 + 50 lb. | per 1000 lb. | (Halibut per Sablefish, dressed weight) |
| 2. | | 2 + 75 lb. | “ “ “ “ “ “ “ | |
| 3. | | 2 + 100 lb. | “ “ “ “ “ “ “ | |

The GAP was informed by the sablefish industry representative that the 2012 halibut landings (4,400 #) was very likely to be artificially low, and should not be used as an indicator of future impacts. It was stated that nearly 50% of the incidental halibut fleet failed to apply for the halibut permits before the deadline and therefore did not participate.

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

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) recommends the following options for public review:

- Option 1: Beginning May 1, 2013, license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per each three Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 20 halibut landed per trip.
- Option 2: Beginning May 1, 2013, license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per each four Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 15 halibut landed per trip.
- Option 3: Beginning May 1, 2013, license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per each five Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 10 halibut landed per trip.

Incidental Pacific halibut catch regulations in the commercial salmon troll fishery adopted for 2013 will be in effect in April 2014 unless otherwise modified by inseason action.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON INCIDENTAL
CATCH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends revising the date that Pacific halibut can be retained in the fixed gear sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis from May 1 to April 1. We would support this change being implemented in 2013, but if that cannot happen, then in 2014.

WDFW spoke in support of this change at the September 2012 meeting when the Council was considering changes to the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Catch Sharing Plan (CSP). At the time it was pointed out that a change to the CSP was not needed since the CSP doesn't reference the specific date that halibut retention is allowed in the fixed gear sablefish fishery but that changes to the federal regulations would be needed in order for the date change to occur.

Changing the date that halibut can be retained in the fixed gear sablefish fishery from May 1 to April 1 would reduce the amount of incidentally caught halibut that would be discarded prior to May 1. Delaying the change until 2014 would give the International Pacific Halibut Commission time to make changes to their licensing process. WDFW would work with the IPHC to notify stakeholders about this change if adopted.