

**Charter Management Implementation Committee Report
December 9, 2013
Anchorage Alaska**

The meeting convened at 1 pm.

Committee: Daniel Donich, Steve Zernia, Kent Huff, Stan Malcom, Andy Mezirow, Richard Yamada, Ken Dole, and Seth Bone (by phone). New members Daniel Donich and Steve Zernia were welcomed. Chair Ed Dersham was unable to attend. Chris Oliver acted as Chair.

Council: Bill Tweit

NPFMC Staff: Jane DiCosimo

NOAA SF: Rachel Baker, Julie Scheurer, Glenn Merrill

NOAA OLE: Matt Brown, Kevin Heck

USCG: Anthony Kenne

IPHC: Gregg Williams, Heather Gilroy

ADF&G: Scott Meyer, Bob Powers, Barbi Failor, Charlie Swanton, Nicole Kimball, Al Cain

DPS: Will Ellis

Public: Heath Hilyard, Tom Gemmell, Joel Hanson, Melvin Grove, Peggy Parker

Agency updates

Glenn Merrill, NMFS, reported that the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) was approved by the Secretary and would be effective on January 13, 2014. Gregg Williams, IPHC, updated the committee on reports to be provided during the Council meeting, and on the status of the halibut stock and harvest advice following presentations to the IPHC the previous week. The results of the 2013 stock assessment indicate that the Pacific halibut stock has been declining continuously over much of the last decade as a result of decreasing size-at-age, as well as recruitment strengths that are much smaller than those observed through the 1980s and 1990s. The blue line FCEYS for 2014 are 4.16 million lb in Area 2C and 9.43 million lb in Area 3A. Under the CSP the charter allocations would be 760,000 lb in Area 2C and 1.78 million lb in Area 3A.

Matt Brown reported NMFS OLE enforcement concerns regarding the potential management measure of an annual limit; these concerns are detailed in the OLE letter to the Council, dated December 3, 2013. Several State of Alaska management and enforcement personnel addressed logbook data availability, post season audit capability, compliance with annual limits in other state managed fisheries, harvest card requirements and enforcement for those anglers who are not required to acquire State sport or personal use licenses. Youth anglers are the only sector of anglers that are not required to have a sport fishing license (5-6 percent of total anglers) that are not able to be tracked post season for compliance. Reducing the time lag in making State data available to OLE could mitigate some enforcement concerns related to enforcement of annual limits. The committee acknowledged OLE enforcement concerns but supported use of annual limits in the charter halibut fisheries, if it was determined to best achieve policy goals.

Review of Analysis

At its October 2013 meeting, the committee requested analysis of projected charter yield under the following measures for Area 2C:

1. One-fish bag limit and U45-O68 reverse slot limit (status quo),
2. One-fish bag limit with maximum size limit,
3. One-fish bag limit and annual limit combined with a maximum size limit.
4. One-fish bag limit, and annual limit combined with a reverse slot limit,

Similarly, the committee requested the following analyses for Area 3A:

1. Two-fish bag limit, no size limit (status quo),

2. Two-fish bag limit with a maximum size limit on the second fish (one fish any size),
3. Two-fish bag limit (any size) with annual limit,
4. Two-fish bag limit (any size) and prohibit harvest by skipper and crew (default under CSP),
5. Two-fish bag limit (any size) combined with vessel trip limit of one trip per day.

Scott Meyer summarized the ADF&G analysis and answered questions. There was a brief discussion of differences between SWHS and logbooks. Scott reported on an improved methodology for the reverse slot limit that accounts for overestimates of charter removals by about 11 percent using the previous method.

Two points on annual limits:

1. Calculation of the percent reduction by subarea underestimates the effect compared to examining it by area.
2. Annual limits could increase average weight although it was not assumed for the analysis.

Steve Zernia noted behavioral impacts are not assessed. These would occur after the fact.

Recommendations for 2014 management measures

Area 3A Using the IPHC “blue line” of 1.78 million lb as a reference point, **2 fish per person per day, 1 of which is ≤ 30 inches AND 1 trip per permit per calendar day**, would meet a projected target of 1.806 million lb.

If the charter allocation is sufficiently higher than the “blue line” to remove the trip limit: **2 fish, one of which is ≤ 30 inches** (only).

As needed, the size of the second fish may be adjusted to meet policy goals.

The committee’s rationale for implementation of its recommendations for Area 3A was that the combination of the above management measures would result in a projected 2014 harvest of 1.806 million lb, which was very close to the allocation target of 1.78 million lb. The harvest associated with the maximum size limit is 2.053 million lb minus the trip limit reduction of 246,128 lb = 1.806 million lb. The trip limit reduction is based on a 2012 estimate that > 1 trip per day accounted for 19,534 fish X 12.6 lb average weight (from Tables 12 and 15). The committee assumption that the trip limit would have the full estimated (9.8%) effect is based on 2012 data. Harvest attributed to the second trip has increased each year for several years.

Area 2C Using the IPHC “blue line” as a reference point: **U44O76** is set to reach the 760,000 lb target assuming the 11% overestimation of removals. The upper limit provides an opportunity for a trophy fish, with the 44 inch limit meeting the charter harvest limit while staying similar to the management measure implemented for the last two years.

As needed, the size of the lower limit would be adjusted up one inch and the upper limit would be reduced to meet policy goals.

The committee’s rationale for implementation of its recommendations for Area 2C was to stay as consistent as possible with the current management measure (U45O68) as possible to maintain consistency and public understanding of the 2014 limit. While the recommended measure would result in a harvest of 839,000 lb, the ADF&G analysis documented overestimates of its projection methodology of 11 percent from implementation of the reverse slot limit in 2012 and 2103. The committee recommendation uses the adjusted methodology in the analysis as the best available data for an adjusted target of 747,000 lb (= 839,000 lb X 89%). The committee noted that the upper limit of 76 inches would be rare, but would allow the angler an opportunity to land a trophy fish.

Andy Mezirow (Area 3A) and Richard Yamada (Area 2C) will assist Council staff with presenting committee recommendations during the meetings of the Advisory Panel and Council.

Adjourn The committee adjourned at 4:30 pm.