

Addendum to C3 RQE Public Review Draft – Section 6.3.2 of the Environmental Analysis

Section 6.3.2 of the Public Review Draft to allow for a recreational quota entity (RQE) describes the expected environmental effects of an RQE on the halibut resource. Limited changes are expected to the halibut resource under the action alternative relative to the status quo because no combination of elements and options would influence the annual combined catch limit set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) for the charter or the commercial longline sectors. Both sectors would still be constrained by the total catch limits set for each regulatory area based on halibut abundance, and the status quo process for monitoring catch. As both types of fishing occur under the status quo, the overall footprint of the fishery and relative timing of the fisheries would be expected to remain the same, as regulations regarding seasons and gear type would be unchanged.

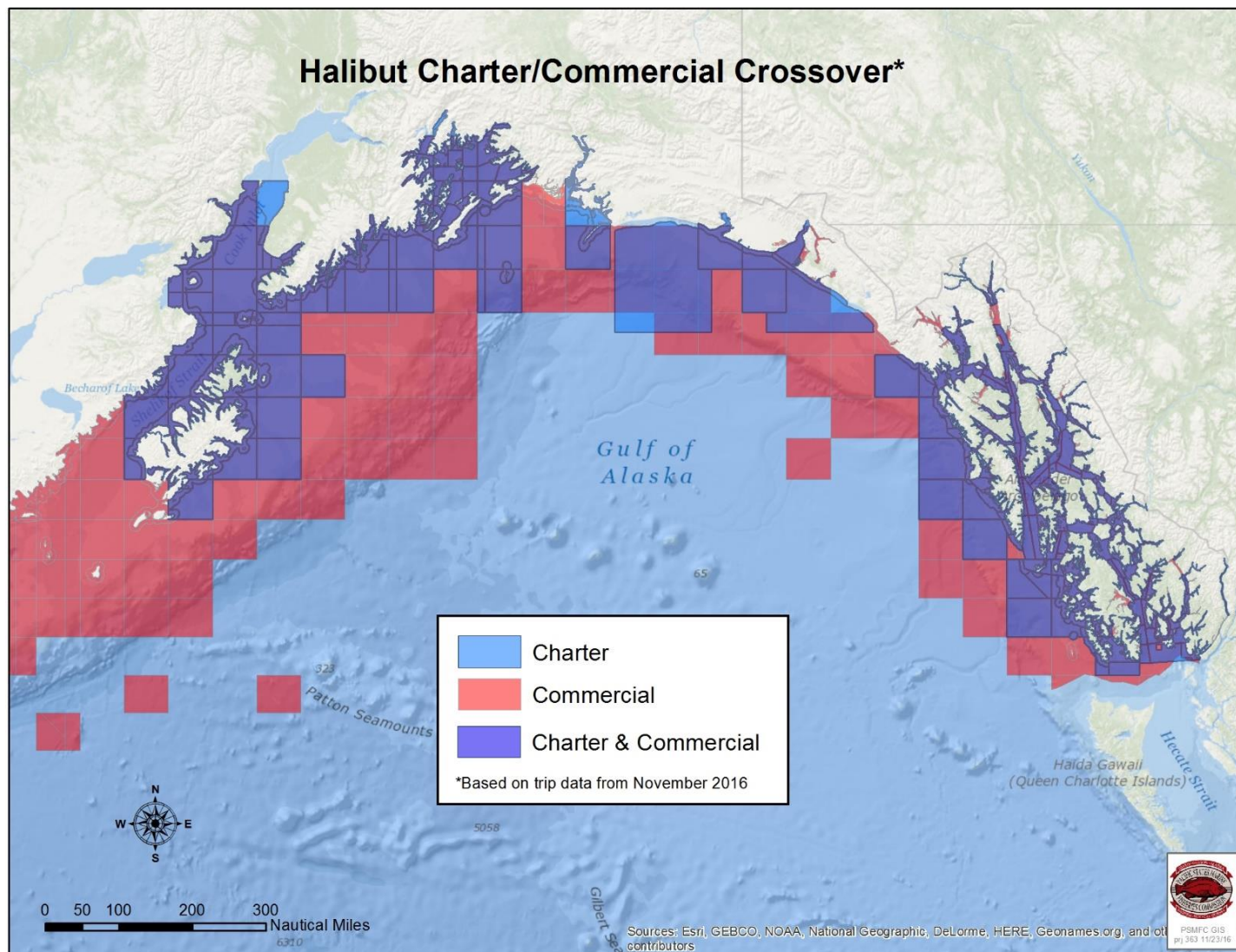
The primary change that could occur would be related to the size composition of halibut retained in the charter sector and the opportunity to shift harvest from the commercial halibut IFQ fishery in Area 2C and Area 3A to the charter halibut fishery in the corresponding IPHC area. The level of harvest intensity shifting sectors will depend on many factors, including the elements and options under the action alternative. Along with the general change in relative intensity of halibut harvest by each sector, there could be a possible change in the intensity halibut is harvested in specific locations (e.g., nearshore versus further off-shore).

Section 6.3.2 discusses how in some sub-areas, the footprint of commercial and charter halibut fisheries overlap. In particular, in areas where both sectors operate near port, harvest intensity is traded off in the same area and localized impacts may not be different from the status quo. To the extent that these operations have different footprints from each other, it is possible localized effects could be felt.

Figure 1 demonstrates the overlap of commercial and charter halibut harvesting activity by ADF&G statistical area, based on trips taken between 2013 and 2015. ADF&G stat areas represent different sizes, particularly around land mass, but the standard size “box” runs on the longitude degree/ latitude half-degree (i.e., approximately 37 miles (longitude) by 34 miles (latitude)). Figure 1 demonstrates quite a bit of overlap between the two sectors, with commercial operations extending further from shore. If stat areas were able to be shown at a more refined scale, this may illustrate more of a differentiation between areas exclusive to charter operations versus areas exclusive to commercial halibut fishing.

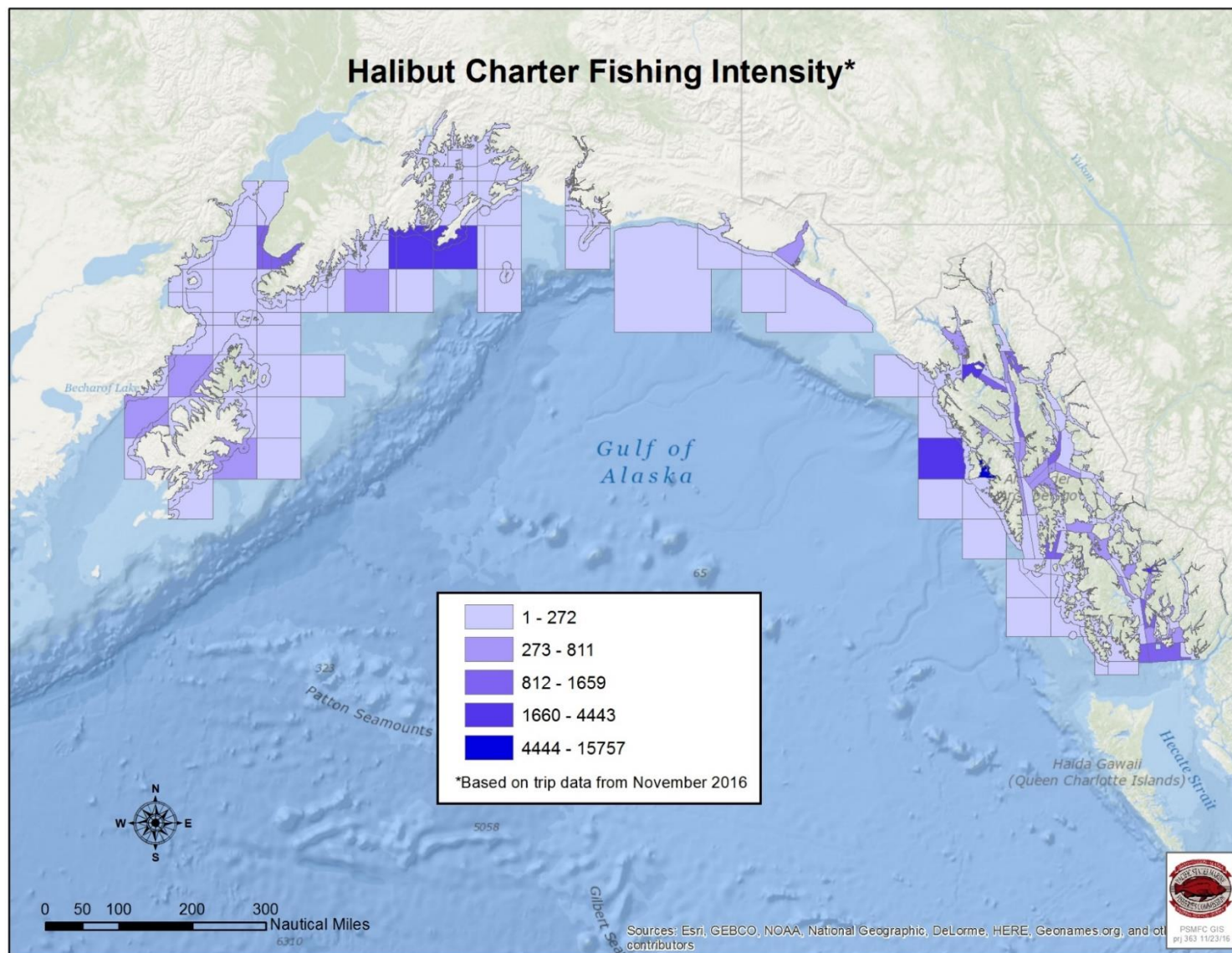
Figure 2 and Figure 3 provide a greater illustration of the spatial overlap in halibut harvest between the two sectors, by depicting the intensity in which ADF&G stat areas are prosecuted. For the charter halibut sector, this is measured in the number of trips between 2013 and 2015, and for the commercial sector this is measured by the pounds of retained catch 2013 and 2015. By comparing these two figures, it can be seen that although many ADF&G stat areas include fishing by both sectors, there is some prominent variation in the ADF&G stat areas that represent high-intensity harvest for each sector. For example, based on the 2016 season, charter halibut harvest intensity is pronounced in stat areas southeast of Seward and near Montague Island. In Southeast Alaska, high numbers of charter halibut trips occur outside of the Glacier Bay area, near Gustavus, Excursion Inlet, and Elfin Cove. Sitka and the GOA side of Chichagof and Kruzof Islands are also prominent areas for charter halibut fishing. While a moderate amount of commercial halibut fishing also occurs in nearshore areas of these regions, commercial harvest intensity is more pronounced in different stat areas than charter harvest. For example, GOA stat areas 200 miles off the eastern coast of Kodiak, and along the coast of between Yakutat and Cordova represent some of the most prominent commercial halibut harvest intensity.

Figure 1 Overlap of halibut charter and commercial harvesting activity by ADF&G stat area, 2013 through 2015



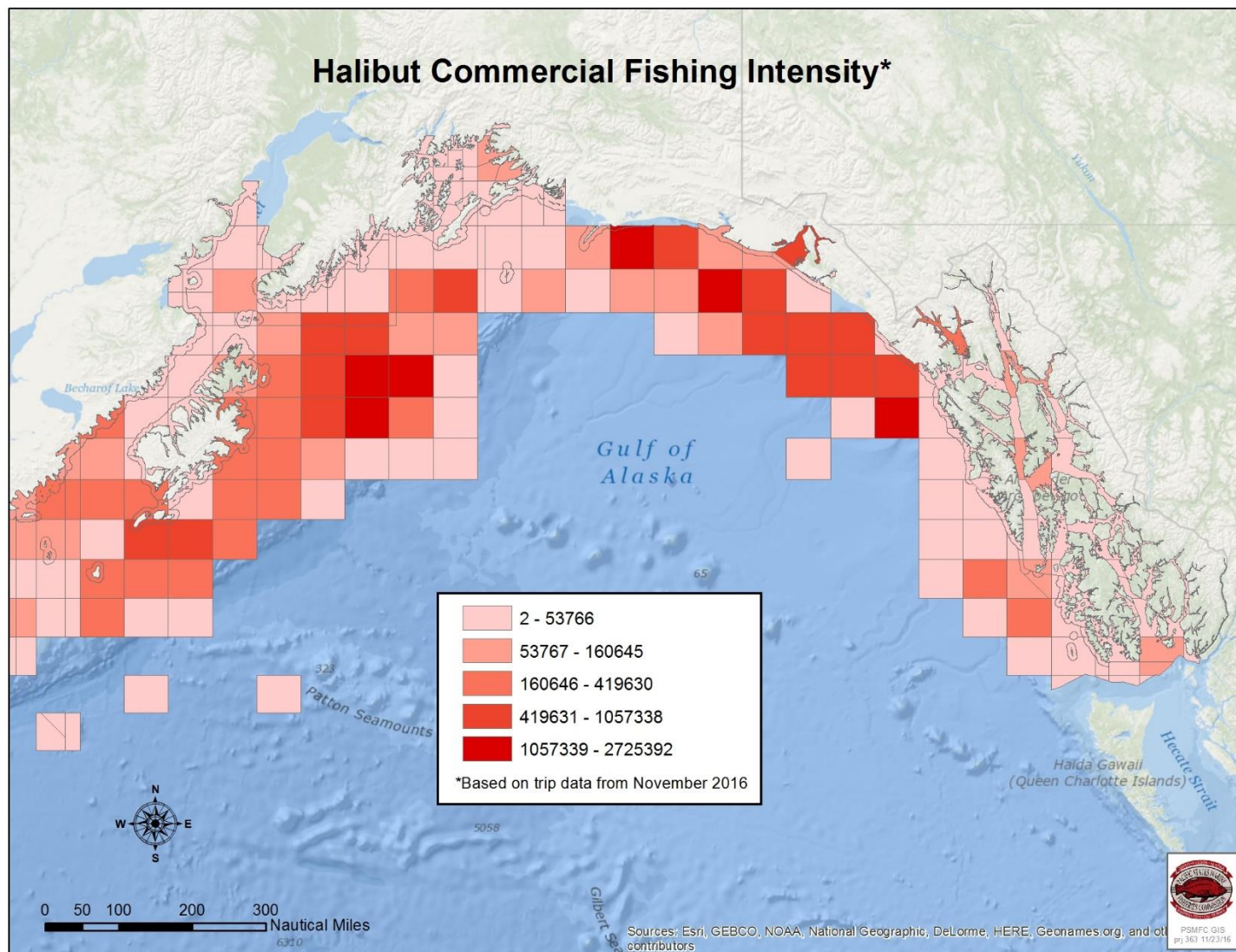
Source: Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Figure 2 Charter halibut fishing intensity (number of trips) by ADF&G stat area, 2013 through 2015



Source: Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Figure 3 Commercial halibut fishing intensity (pounds of retained catch) by ADF&G stat area, 2013 through 2015



Source: Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission