

**North Pacific Fishery Management Committee
Charter Halibut Management Committee
December 4, 2017
DRAFT MINUTES**

2018 Charter Halibut Management Measures

Mr. Scott Meyer (ADF&G) presented the results of the analysis of management measures for charter halibut fisheries in Areas 2C and 3A for 2018. After review and discussion of the analysis and public comment, the committee recommended the following management measures:

In Area 2C

- **If the allocation is 0.69 Mlb: U35:080 no annual limit.**
- **If the allocation is less than 0.69 Mlb: 4 fish annual limit, U35:080, and if necessary 3 fish annual limit, U35:080.**
- **If the allocation is greater than 0.69 Mlb: no annual limit, increase lower slot limit as allowed to stay in allocation.**

In Area 3A

- **Status quo measures include two fish bag limit, including one fish any size and 28" max size limit on one fish, 4 fish annual limit, one trip per CHP per day, one trip per vessel per day, Wednesdays closed all year, 3 Tuesdays closed between July 24 and August 7.**
- **If the allocation is 1.70 Mlb: status quo measures plus close 7 additional Tuesdays as per table 11 (June 19-Aug 21).**
- **If the allocation is greater than or less than 1.70 Mlb, adjust Tuesday closures up or down to remain within the allocation.**

C2 – Charter Halibut Permits: Latent Capacity and RQE Use Caps

Ms. Sarah Marrinan provided an overview of two discussion papers addressing charter halibut permit latency and RQE permit ownership caps. Public comment was provided by Tim Cashman, Mel Erikson, Greg Setter, Mel Grove, Ben Martin, Martin Spargo, Chance Miller, and Natasha Hayden.

CHP Latency

During committee discussion on CHP latency, committee members expressed their support for efforts to address permit latency, but expressed concern about using controls of permit latency to reduce harvest. One member expressed that the original purpose of the CHP system was to reduce the number of boats on popular fishing grounds, and suggested that analysis should evaluate whether that goal has been met. Other committee members expressed concern about the effects of efforts to reduce permit latency may have on CQE permits or US Military Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) permits. After discussion **the committee recommended that the Council task staff with an expanded discussion paper that addresses concerns from the committee discussion, and public and written testimony. Specifically, the expanded discussion paper should:**

1. **Consider additional tiers to optimize latency reduction,**

2. Consider use of Angler Days to evaluate permit use,
3. Consider ways to address recently purchased permits that may not have appropriate use history,
4. Consider actions that make substantial reductions in latency,
5. Consider CQE and MWR permits,
6. Address captain and crew endorsements on permits,
7. Consider whether the program should be permanent or temporary, or linked to halibut abundance,
8. Consider “full use” of permits at something other than 100 days (suggested 80 days),
9. Consider whether permits could be stacked or transferred,
10. Examine rural permit usage on Kodiak Island.
11. Consider the intent of the CHP and if this program has been successful
12. Incorporate data from 2017, if possible
13. Consider the definition of ‘halibut trip’

RQE Ownership Caps

During committee discussion, some committee members expressed support for allowing the RQE to purchase up to 30% of available permits in each area, while other committee members suggested that the issue should be tabled until after the RQE is active. After discussion, **the committee recommended tabling the issue until after the RQE is active, and recommended that the issue be addressed in a timely manner after that.**

C3 – Self-Guided Halibut Rental Boats

Steve MacLean presented a discussion paper summarizing considerations for developing a registry to track boats available for rent for anglers in IPHC Areas 2C and 3A to harvest halibut without assistance of a registered guide. Public comment was provided by Tim Cashman, Chance Miller, Steve Babinec Natasha Hayden, Jim Martin, and Tom Gemmell.

During committee discussion, committee members asked what the intention would be for a registry, and questioned whether a registry would eventually lead to action to regulate self-guided anglers. There was a question about where the harvest from self-guided anglers would be allocated, to the guided sector or some other sector? Some committee members noted an increase in the number of rental skiffs available in their communities in the last few years, and suggested that harvest from these operations has increased dramatically. Other committee members noted that success from self-guided anglers is lower than for guided anglers, and suggested that the halibut harvest from self-guided anglers is not substantial, and they tend to catch more salmon and rockfish.

Committee members generally agreed that obtaining data on the halibut harvest from self-guided rental boats is desirable. There were some questions about whether a registry of rental boats is necessary to obtain those data, or whether changes or additions to the statewide harvest survey could allow those data to be collected. Mr. Meyer noted that unguided halibut harvest is being estimated. He noted that in Southeast Alaska, there was some increase in unguided harvest after 2011, but the level has been generally stable since 2013. Additionally, the non-resident portion of the unguided harvest (those most likely to be renting boats) has also been stable for the last 3-4 years.

After public comment and discussion, **the committee recommended that the council request an expanded discussion paper to further examine ways to develop a registration for self-guided halibut rental boats. The expanded discussion paper should address:**

- 1. Whether the State of Alaska or NMFS would administer the registration program.**
- 2. Which vessels would need to register.**
- 3. Whether the registration would be annual or valid for some number of years.**
- 4. The information that would be required in a registration.**
- 5. How registered vessels would be identified.**
- 6. Whether a registration fee should be levied.**
- 7. How to address vessels that are used as charters for some trips and rentals for others.**

Additional issues

IPHC Proposal

The committee reviewed IPHC proposal IPHC-2017-IM093-PropC3 and recommended that the not address this proposal until after the 2018 IPHC annual meeting.

CSP Review

The committee reviewed letters from the Alaska Charter Association and the Southeast Alaska Guides Organization that recommend that the Council initiate review of the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) before the scheduled review in 2021. **The committee recommends that the Council schedule a review of the CSP before the scheduled review in 2021.**



December 4, 2017

Chairman Dan Hull
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501
Npfmc.comments@noaa.gov
RE: Catch Share Plan Allocation Review

Dear Chairman Hull,

The Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO) is a non-profit dedicated to the sustainability of the guided sport fishing industry in Southeast Alaska. We work to promote the tradition of sport fishing in Southeast Alaska through reasonable regulations that ensure the long-term sustainability of our members' businesses and fish resources. SEAGO is writing to request that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) initiate an allocation review for Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A Catch Share Plan (CSP) earlier than the scheduled review in 2021. The CSP allocation is not appropriate under the current circumstances.

The 2018 draft catch tables released by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) propose a reduction in catch limits which will have long-term negative consequences to our industry in Southeast. SEAGO members feel strongly that allocations should shift in favor of the recreational sector in times of low abundance and vice versa in times of high abundance. Achieving optimal halibut yield (MSA National Standard 1) and economic efficiency (MSA National Standard 8) are only possible if recreational angler access in Alaska is competitive with other national and international recreational fishing destinations.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Samantha Weinstein
Executive Director, SEAGO
Samantha@seagoalaska.org



P.O. Box 478 • Homer • Alaska • 99603

To Preserve and Protect the Rights and Resources of Alaska's Sport Fishermen

December 5, 2017

Chairman Dan Hull
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Chairman Hull,

The Alaska Charter Association (ACA) that represents over 250 charter vessels and businesses throughout Alaska, would like the Council to initiate under the guidance of NMFS Policy Directive dated February 23, 2017, Fisheries Allocation Review Policy, an allocation review of the NMFS Catch Sharing Plan for Regulatory Area's 2C and 3A. We understand that this review was scheduled to take place in 2021, but due to recent IPHC stock assessments released at their Interim meeting, the charter sector is looking at reductions in bag limits that will have long term negative consequences for our industry. The ACA feels strongly that allocations should shift to the recreational sector in times of low abundance, and provide an economic optimal yield in the fishery as described in National Standards One in MSA. This can only occur if access to guided anglers in Alaska can be competitive with other recreational fishing destinations nationally and internationally.

Thank you in advance for this consideration at your upcoming Council meeting.

Sincerely,

Richard Yamada, President
Alaska Charter Association