

## **Agenda Item D3: Unguided Halibut Rental Vessels, Council Motion October 8, 2018**

The Council adopts the following purpose and need statement and suite of alternatives for initial review.

### **Purpose and Need**

Over the past six years, declining trends in halibut abundance and the proportionate reductions in guided sport bag limits may incentivize sport fishing businesses to offer non-guided vessel rentals and assisted unguided fishing experiences. This shift appears to be contributing to a proportional increase in unguided sport harvest in IPHC Areas 2C and 3A. Because unguided sport harvest is deducted from the total allowable catch of halibut before the guided sport and commercial allocations are set, the growth in unguided halibut harvest could result in a reallocation of halibut from the guided sport and commercial sectors to the unguided sport sector. To provide a measure of stability in the future to the halibut charter and commercial sectors, the Council is considering management strategies for the unguided halibut sport sector that will require registration for vessels offering non-guided vessel rentals and apply charter halibut bag and size limits when halibut is retained on non-guided vessel rentals. Registration and consistent management measures between charter and non-guided vessel rentals would ensure appropriate accounting of sport halibut catch and reduce incentives for shifting harvest patterns that could reduce allocations to the charter and commercial sectors. This proposed action is not intended to modify regulations for fishing on private boats.

**Alternatives** (more than one action alternative may be chosen)

**Alternative 1:** No Action (Status quo)

**Alternative 2:** Require registration for non-guided vessel rental vessels

Require registration for non-guided motor vessels that operate in IPHC Areas 2C and 3A that are used to retain recreationally harvested halibut and that are rented for compensation. This registration would apply to all vessels used to provide access to the halibut resource for compensation, including but not limited to unguided rental boats, mother ships, bare boat charters, fishing clubs, time shares and all other means whereby compensation is exchanged for access to the halibut resource.

Element 1: Apply the registration requirements:

Suboption 1: IPHC regulatory area 2C and 3A

Suboption 2: Only IPHC regulatory 2C

Element 2: Require non-guided rental vessel registration:

Suboption 1: Annually renewal

Suboption 2: Every 3 years

Suboption 3: Every 5 years

**Alternative 3:** Align bag limits between charter anglers and anglers on non-guided rental vessels

Apply the same daily bag limit or size limit to anglers that apply to charter anglers under the Catch Sharing Plan.

Suboption: Provide an exemption to aligning bag and size limits to MWR vessels

The analysis should describe:

- (1) The potential definitions for non-guided rental vessels and the ability to reliably identify those vessels;
- (2) The potential authority and methods for registering non-guided vessels either by NMFS or the State of Alaska; and
- (3) Methods for accounting for halibut harvested by non-guided vessel anglers using either the State of Alaska Statewide Harvest Survey, or through the State of Alaska Saltwater Logbook;