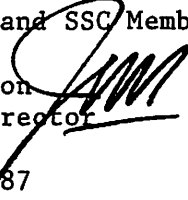


M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, AP and SSC Members

FROM: Jim H. Branson   
Executive Director

DATE: March 12, 1987

SUBJECT: Halibut Management

ACTION REQUIRED

Information only.

BACKGROUND

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) met in Vancouver January 26-29 to adopt regulations for the 1987 season. Attachment A is a summary of the regulatory regime the Commission has recommended to the governments of Canada and the U.S.

At its January meeting, the Council was approached by fishermen from Atka, Dillingham, and Southcentral Alaska to support proposals calling for the IPHC to, respectively, create Area 4F around Atka with a quota of 400,000 lbs, create Area 4G within Bristol Bay with a quota of 500,000 lbs., and implement a system of mandatory hold inspections prior to and after each halibut opening. The Council took the following action with respect to those proposals:

Atka Proposal - To aid the fishermen of Atka in achieving reasonable access to the halibut resource in Area 4B, the Council recommended that the IPHC manage the halibut stocks in Areas 4A and 4B as discrete stocks. Additionally, the Council recommended that the Halibut Commission's Conference Board give consideration to adopting an opening scheme for Area 4B similar to those in effect in Areas 4C and 4E (i.e., one day on/one day off, or two days on/one day off).

Bristol Bay Proposal - Since the main aspect of the proposed opening of the nursery area to commercial fishing was the biological impact such an action would have on the juvenile stocks in the area, the Council decided the matter properly fell within the sole jurisdiction of the IPHC.

Hold Inspections - The Council encouraged the IPHC to explore all methods to minimize unlawful fishing, including preseason hold inspections.

The Commission did not adopt an opening scheme for Area 4B similar to those in effect in Areas 4C and 4E. Also, the Commission decided that the stocks in Areas 4A and 4B should be managed as a unit rather than discrete stocks. Rather than opening the nursery area to a commercial fishery, the Commission decided to conduct scientific surveys in Bristol Bay to determine whether the stocks in that area could support a commercial fishery. Because of a lack of necessary funding, the Commission decided against mandatory preseason hold inspections.

# Information Bulletin



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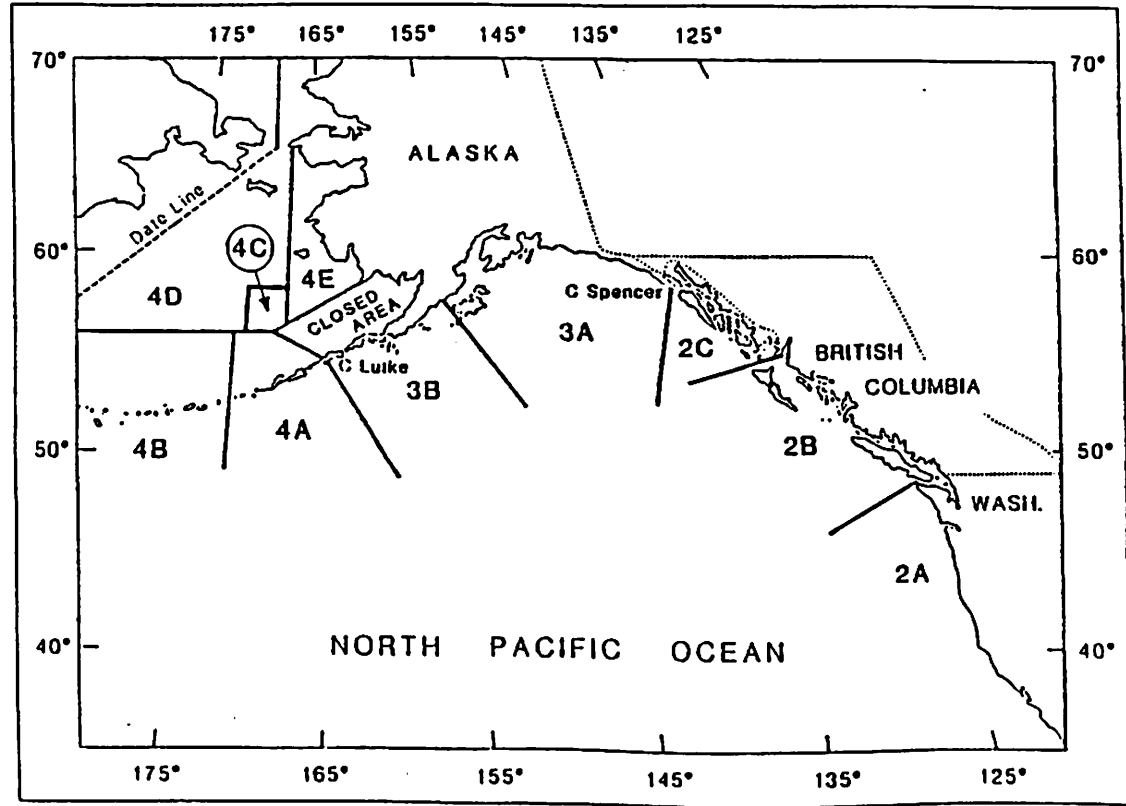
## COMMERCIAL HALIBUT REGULATIONS FOR 1987

The International Pacific Halibut Commission is recommending to the governments of Canada and the United States the following regulations for the halibut fishery for 1987. These regulations must be approved by both governments before they become effective.

This bulletin is intended for information purposes only and is not a substitute for the detailed regulation pamphlet which will be printed and distributed as soon as the regulations have been approved by both governments.

### Regulatory Areas

The Commission recommends regulatory boundaries as shown in the figure below. The only change from 1986 is the relocation of the western boundary line of Area 4C at 171°00'00"W.



Catch Limits

The Commission recommends a catch limit (in millions of pounds) for each regulatory area as shown in the table below. The Commission regards these as upper limits of allowable catch. An area will reopen only if enough catch limit remains to allow a full fishing day. Further, the Commission does not regard Areas 3A and 3B, or Areas 4A and 4B, as separate areas. The Area 3A-3B and Area 4A-4B fishing seasons will be closed if the respective combined catch limits are taken.

Area	Catch Limit	Area	Catch Limit	Area	Catch Limit
2A	0.55	3A	31.0	4A	1.75
2B	11.5	3B	9.5	4B	1.75
2C	11.5			4C	0.6
				4D	0.6
				4E	.075

Fishing Seasons

The Commission recommends commercial halibut fishing seasons consisting of a succession of open and closed periods as shown in the table below, or until the respective catch limits are taken. Fishing periods in Areas 2A and 2B will open and close at 12 noon Pacific Daylight Time. All other Areas will open and close at 12 noon Alaska Daylight Time.

2A	2B**	2C ***	3A-3B	4A	4B	4D
7/10-7/22	5/02-5/10	5/04-5/05	5/04-5/05	5/04-5/05	5/04-5/05	8/13-8/20
8/05-8/17	* -6/21	6/01-6/03	6/01-6/02	6/01-6/02	6/01-6/02	9/15- *
9/12-9/24	* -8/25	9/02-9/03	9/02-9/03	8/15-8/17	8/15-8/19	
		9/30- *	9/30- *	9/02-9/03	9/02-9/03	
				9/15- *	9/15- *	
4C				4E		
6/21-6/22	7/23-7/24	8/24-8/25	9/27-9/28	6/01-6/03	7/22-7/24	9/11-9/13
6/23-6/24	7/25-7/26	8/26-8/27	9/29-9/30	6/04-6/06	7/25-7/27	9/14-9/16
6/25-6/26	7/27-7/28	8/28-8/29	10/01-10/02	6/07-6/09	7/28-7/30	9/17-9/19
6/27-6/28	7/29-7/30	8/30-8/31	10/03-10/04	6/10-6/12	7/31-8/02	9/20-9/22
6/29-6/30	7/31-8/01	9/01-9/02	10/05-10/06	6/13-6/15	8/03-8/05	9/23-9/25
7/01-7/02	8/02-8/03	9/03-9/04	10/07-10/08	6/16-6/18	8/06-8/08	9/26-9/28
7/03-7/04	8/04-8/05	9/05-9/06	10/09-10/10	6/19-6/21	8/09-8/11	9/29-10/01
7/05-7/06	8/06-8/07	9/07-9/08	10/11-10/12	6/22-6/24	8/12-8/14	10/02-10/04
7/07-7/08	8/08-8/09	9/09-9/10	10/13-10/14	6/25-6/27	8/15-8/17	10/05-10/07
7/09-7/10	8/10-8/11	9/11-9/12	10/15-10/16	6/28-6/30	8/18-8/20	10/08-10/10
7/11-7/12	8/12-8/13	9/13-9/14	10/17-10/18	7/01-7/03	8/21-8/23	10/11-10/13
7/13-7/14	8/14-8/15	9/15-9/16	10/19-10/20	7/04-7/06	8/24-8/26	10/14-10/16
7/15-7/16	8/16-8/17	9/17-9/18	10/21-10/22	7/07-7/09	8/27-8/29	10/17-10/19
7/17-7/18	8/18-8/19	9/19-9/20	10/23-10/24	7/10-7/12	8/30-9/01	10/20-10/22
7/19-7/20	8/20-8/21	9/21-9/22	10/25-10/26	7/13-7/15	9/02-9/04	10/23-10/25
7/21-7/22	8/22-8/23	9/23-9/24	10/27-10/28	7/16-7/18	9/05-9/07	10/26-10/28
		9/25-9/26	10/29-10/30	7/19-7/21	9/08-9/10	10/29-10/31

\* Date to be announced by the Commission.  
 \*\* The length of the June opening in Area 2B will be determined based on catch limit of 10 million pounds. The remaining catch limit of 1.5 million pounds will be reserved for the August opening.  
 \*\*\* The June opening in Area 2C may be reduced to 1 day to allow for a September opening.

## Clearances

The Commission recommends again in 1987 that vessels fishing in Area 4 be required to obtain a clearance and hold inspection at Dutch Harbor or Akutan, Alaska, no more than 5 days prior to the opening date for the area to be fished, and no more than 5 days after the area has closed. Clearances will be available from fishery officers between 0600 and 1800 hours local time. Vessels obtaining a clearance to fish in Areas 4C or 4E will not be given a clearance to fish in any other area on the same trip.

## Trip Limits

Vessels fishing in Area 4C will be restricted to a trip limit of 10,000 pounds of halibut per fishing period until 40 per cent (240,000 pounds) of the Area 4C catch limit is attained.

## Layup Period

Vessels intending to fish during a halibut fishing season in any area, except Areas 4C or 4E, may not have setline gear in the water during the 72-hour period immediately before the opening of that halibut fishing season.

## Halibut Licenses

All vessels that fish for halibut for commercial purposes in 1987 must have a valid halibut license issued by the Commission in 1987. This provision also applies to sport charter vessels. Halibut license applications have been mailed to all holders of 1986 commercial halibut licenses that landed halibut during the 1986 fishery. Halibut license applications are available from fishery officers and from the Commission. Completed applications must be mailed to the Commission, and a halibut license will be returned to the applicant by mail. Applications must be completed in full or they will be returned for missing information. There is no charge for halibut licenses. The IPHC halibut license must be on board the vessel in order to legally fish for halibut. Regulations in 1987 also state a halibut license may be revoked as a penalty for violations.

## Fish Tickets

The IPHC halibut license number must appear on all fish tickets showing purchase and receipt of halibut. It is illegal to enter a Halibut Commission license number on a State or Provincial fish ticket for any vessel other than the vessel actually used in catching the halibut reported thereon.

## Log Records

Vessel log records must be retained on the vessel for five days after halibut are off-loaded.

### Crucifiers

Acting on a recommendation from the fishing industry, the commissioners have decided that automated hook extractors, commonly known as "crucifiers", are banned from use in halibut fishing in 1987. This apparatus may not be on board vessels while engaged in fishing for halibut. The Commission's decision was based on concern for the treatment of halibut below the legal size limit. The Commission recognizes, however, that poor treatment of sublegal halibut is not restricted to vessels using automated hook extractors, and encourages all fishermen to use care when releasing small fish.

### Other Commercial Regulations

Other regulations, such as the size limit, gear restrictions and closed areas will be the same as in 1986.

### Sport Regulations

Sport fishing in Washington, Oregon and California will be allowed from February 1 to September 30 with a minimum size limit of 30 inches in effect. Sport fishing in British Columbia and Alaska will be allowed from February 1 to December 31, with no minimum size limit. A two fish daily catch and possession limit will apply to all areas. Regulations in 1987 also state that it is illegal to fillet or disfigure a halibut in any manner that prevents the determination of a minimum size limit, or the number of fish caught. Also, sport-caught halibut cannot be sold or bartered.

### Management Problems

There are at least two major problems within the halibut industry. The first is the deteriorating quality of scientific data. Some vessels no longer keep detailed records of their fishing activities and in some cases, may falsify their records when engaging in illegal or unethical activities. A second problem is increased wastage within the longline fishery as a result of (1) prospecting prior to the fishing season (2) lost or abandoned gear and (3) poor handling of sublegal fish. Both problems are serious and may force the Commission to reduce catch limits below potential harvest levels to ensure against over exploitation of the resource. The Commission requests cooperation and assistance from the industry in solving these problems.