



Charter Halibut Management Committee REPORT

January 23, 2020 Teleconference

The committee met via teleconference to review the supplemental analysis of charter halibut management measures for Area 3A and to select management measures for potential application in 2020.

Committee Members in attendance:

Andy Mezirow (Chairman)	Denise May	Steve Zernia
Daniel Donich	Richard Yamada	Forrest Braden
Matt Kopec	Mike Flores	

Members absent: Kent Huff, Stan Malcolm

Others in attendance:

Steve Keith	Gabe Linneker	Ton Gemmell
Paddy O'Donnell	Tom Taube	Baine Atherton
Heather Mann	Jim Martin	Alicia Miller
Bob Candopoulos	Kurt Iverson	

Supplemental analysis of management measures for Area 3A

Sarah Webster (ADF&G) summarized the supplemental analysis of management options for the Area 3A charter halibut fisheries for 2020. In December 2019, the committee requested, and the Council authorized, analysis of additional measures for Area 3A that could achieve the reference (1.24 million pounds) or status quo (1.66 million pounds) TCEY identified by the IPHC at the interim annual meeting in November 2019. The ADF&G analyzed the following additional measures for potential implementation in Area 3A in 2020:

1. Maximum size limit of one fish combined with Tuesday closures
2. Status quo with all Tuesdays closed and additional days closed combined with maximum size limits
3. Maximum size limit on one fish combined with annual limits of 2 – 4 fish
4. Maximum size limit on one fish combined with annual limits of 2 – 3 fish and Tuesday closures
5. Reverse slot limit combined with a maximum size limit and Tuesday closures
6. Reverse slot limit combined with a maximum size limit of 26 inches and additional closure dates
7. One-fish bag limit, no size limit
8. One-fish bag limit with reverse slot limit combined with Tuesday closures
9. Status quo with all days of the week open and a season closure prior to May 16 or June 1 and after July 31

After the presentation, committee members asked clarifying questions and discussed options for recommending management measures. Mr. Steve Keith (IPHC) suggested, as normal, that the committee should recommend a range of alternatives to address the potential range of FCEY allocations that the commission might make. Committee members discussed the options for regulations, including the range

of size limits, closures on additional days of the week, adjusting the length of the charter halibut fishing season, and potentially restricting participation in charter fisheries during times of low halibut abundance to limit latent capacity in the fishery.

After discussion the following motion was made:

The 3A Charter Halibut Committee issues the following recommendation to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council:

At the Status Quo TCEY level with a charter allocation of 1.66 m/lb.

Maintain Status quo management measures except the following:

- Closure of Tuesdays all year.
- Include second fish of 26" or less.
- Closure of 1 Thursday for a total harvest of 1.666 m/lb

If the Charter allocation is less than 1.66 m/lb:

- Close additional Thursdays up to a maximum of 4 closed Thursdays on July 16, July 23, July 30, and August 6 for a total Harvest of 1.588 m/lb

If the Charter allocation is less than 1.588 m/lb:

- Include closure of all Tuesdays
- Institute a one fish bag limit with a reverse slot limit:
- U58 O80 = 1.573 m/lb
- Reduce the lower limit as necessary to achieve the harvest goal down to a max.
- U38 O80 = 1.239 m/lb

If the Charter allocation is above the Status Quo TCEY, reduce the number of closed Tuesdays to reach the corresponding allocation level. Second Halibut of 26".

After discussion the committee also approved the following statement to accompany the recommendation to the Council:

Committee Statement:

In the eyes of the Charter Halibut Committee and a majority of the charter industry we view the one halibut reverse slot limit as the "nuclear option" that would have disastrous consequences to the 3A charter industry and coastal communities in Southcentral Alaska. Therefore, though we have made recommendations below this level to fulfill our obligation as a committee, we cannot willingly accept a harvest below 1.588 m/lb. We have heard from many local businesses that closing the halibut fishery beyond 2 days per week or instituting an entirely new management scenario (e.g., reverse slot limit) will force closures of some charter businesses as well as starving many support related businesses such as launch services, restaurants, processors, boat repair facilities, and others.

Clarification of IPHC Regulatory Proposal for Area 2C

The committee reviewed NOAA's regulatory proposal for charter management measures in Area 2C to consider language suggested for Area 2C to clarify the committee's and the Council's intention for Area 2C management measures. After review, the committee concurred with NOAA's suggested regulatory language, although representatives of the Area 2C committee members expressed that they believe that the measures suggested for Area 2C are the maximum restrictions that the industry can accept.

Statement from 2C representatives

NPFMC Charter Halibut Management Committee 2C Hardship Note

Area 2C representatives of the committee note that, especially under low abundance, CSP sport allocations do not adequately fund the 2C charter industry.

Halibut are essential to the fishing opportunity Southeast businesses offer to attract and keep customers. As a direct result of restrictive guided halibut limits, 2C operators are now losing repeat business and struggling to interest new business. Effects are magnified in front season bookings, where halibut are one of few target fish available.

Southeast guided anglers are now reduced to one halibut per day under 38", and face season-long Wednesday closures combined with annual limits to maintain a similar size fish for 2020. The 2C reverse slot has led to an average charter halibut of 31" (9.6 net pounds)- an inch below the legal-sized retainable fish in the commercial fleet. It has also triggered a spike in releases, resulting in deductions in allocation up to 8% or 60,000 pounds. (3A release mortality runs 1%)

Council review of the CSP is scheduled for 2021. We ask Council members to reexamine allocative relationships between sectors, especially with respect to viability thresholds of the charter fleet at low abundance.

The RQE offers no immediate allocation relief, and at best, slow recovery over an extended period when finally implemented.

Respectfully,

2C CHMC members:

Richard Yamada, Seth Bone, Stan Malcom, Kent Huff, Forrest Braden