

# Charter Management Implementation Committee Report

## December 4, 2012

### Anchorage Alaska

**Committee:** Chair Ed Dersham, Gary Ault, Seth Bone, Tim Evers, Kent Huff, Stan Malcom, Andy Mezirow, Richard Yamada, Ken Dole (by phone).

**Council:** Bill Tweit

**NPFMC Staff:** Jane DiCosimo

**NOAA:** Rachel Baker, Maura Sullivan, Julie Scheurer (by phone)

**IPHC:** Gregg Williams

**ADF&G:** Scott Meyer, Barbi Failor

**Public:** Heath Hilyard, Brian Lynch, Sarah Melton

The meeting convened at 3 pm.

**Review of Analysis** Chair Ed Dersham opened the meeting with introductions. He invited committee members to pose questions to Scott Meyer on his analysis of management options for the Area 2 C and Area 3A charter halibut fisheries for 2013. Scott made three corrections to data reported in the analysis and answered questions from committee members about the analysis. Gregg Williams clarified some of the findings from the IPHC Interim Meeting. Big year classes of small halibut entering the fishery are not occurring, as had been previously believed.

Using the same size average weight of halibut in the analysis is a conservative approach. There were general questions about the data and assumptions used in the analysis. ADF&G used a new method for projecting the current year's harvest. Under the previous method, if logbook harvest increased 10% between years, then the Statewide Harvest Survey estimate for the previous year was increased by 10%. With 6 years of prior data to compare between survey instruments, ADF&G now uses a regression between the two; the methodology is described in the November 2012 letter from ADF&G to the IPHC<sup>1</sup>. It incorporates all the variability over the last six years and provides a projection with confidence intervals. The current projection methodology has resulted in much better projections. Projections should be within 5% of the final harvest estimate. Yield in Tables 4-6 of the analysis are based on estimates of average weight that are totally dependent on the 2010 size data.

Gregg concurred that the coastwide fishery constant exploitation yield (FCEY) that results in a total CEY would be about 28 Mlb (up from 22.17 Mlb) to get to the next GHl step for Area 2C. Scott reported that the next trigger of 5.841 Mlb would result in a harvest rate of 25.5%, compared to current rate of 21.5%. Jane DiCosimo suggested that the committee focus its recommendations on alternate GHls, rather than focus on potential TCEY or FCEY alternatives in the IPHC decision matrix (e.g., "blue line").

Gary Ault asked about potential Area 3A measures; he specifically referenced a limit of one trip per day using 2012 data. Scott replied that 2012 logbook data was incomplete. The analysis suggested a 6% reduction would result under a limit of one trip per day.

Andy Mezirow asked if a 6 fish annual limit would be possible. Ed responded that a one halibut annual limit exempt from a maximum length limit appears to be problematic due to the uncertainty involved. He thought an annual limit could be enforceable, based upon the state's experience with annual limits for salmon. Heath Hilyard asked if 2013 ADF&G license forms with a new field for recording the 'annual limit' fish were printed. Scott reported that some licenses were sold online without the new field. Rachel Baker noted that the 2013 logbooks would not have a specific field for anglers to mark the 'annual limit' halibut. Ed noted that instructions could be explicit to identify that halibut must be recorded on logbooks (e.g., for an annual limit of 1 fish exception to a reverse slot limit), without changing the forms. Scott said

data to determine harvest by angler would be available in logbook data to determine the compliance rate, after the fact. Enforcement can only be done at the vessel and the license would have to be used.

Projected harvest for Area 3A did not include the linear down trend in annual size and should be considered, since they more likely would get smaller. Andy suggested that the 40,000 lb buffer between the allocation and harvest from last year may suggest that regulations are not needed to be implemented, based on the extra conservatism incorporated into the methodology. Harvest was 700,000 lb under the GHL in 2011 and 40,000 lb under the 2012 GHL. No reduction appears necessary for Area 3A.

Kent Huff asked if the 6% mortality rate would be applied. Scott said no; his approach does not count discard mortality. Discard mortality would not be implemented until the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2C and Area 3A is implemented.

Heath asked if Scott's projection in Tables 4 and 5 presumed actual number of anglers. Scott said that his approach does not take number of anglers into account. The average weight results from that size limit imposed on 2010 data and multiplied by the number of fish. Effort is buried in the harvest projection. He suggested that a projection method based on effort would have to take the number of fish retained per angler into account. In 2011 the number of trips declined but harvest did not, therefore anglers were keeping more (smaller) fish each.

### **Recommendations**

Area 3A Status quo (2 fish of any size); projected harvests for 2013 are expected to not exceed the current GHL or the next step down in the GHL using the IPHC "blue line" as a reference point.

Area 2C Status quo (U45O68) under the current GHL or for the next step up in the GHL, for consistency. Limiting the number of variables that change (each year) could lead to learning more about accuracy of the projections. If the Council does not accept the committee recommendation for status quo, then the committee prefers an adjustment to the upper end of the slot (i.e., U45/O70).

### **Other issues**

- Committee members will notify the full committee as they identify potential management measures for future analyses; however no new analysis is expected prior to the committee's Fall 2013 meeting.
- Committee members recognized the effect of changes to the IPHC process for determining catch limits under the CSP, as well as the sector accountability of discard mortalities, that will be implemented under the proposed CSP. The Council process will be the same under either the GHL or proposed CSP; however the annual management measures may need to be more restrictive once the charter sector changes from fixed levels to a percentage of a combined commercial and charter catch limit.
- Committee members suggested that electronic reporting would be preferred method of accounting for removals, at least in Area 3A where there is better electronic coverage. Real time reporting may allow in-season changes to management measures, if needed. Richard Yamada reported that he submitted a proposal to develop an electronic reporting model to Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation. Heath reported that he initiated a request for electronic reporting to ADF&G.
- Richard asked whether the committee could comment to the IPHC about potential impacts of potential IPHC changes to its process overlapped with the transition to the CSP from the GHL. Ed clarified that committee recommendations would be considered by the Council to forward to the IPHC.
- The committee thanked Scott for his hard work in finalizing the analysis with the latest information from the IPHC interim meeting, which met the previous week.

**Adjourn** The Committee adjourned at 4:45 pm.