



C3 Charter Halibut Management Measures

December 2019 Council Meeting

Action Memo

- Council Staff: Steve MacLean
- Other Presenters: Sarah Webster (ADF&G)
- Action Required:
 1. Review ADF&G analysis of proposed measures
 2. Review Charter Halibut Management Committee minutes
 3. Identify preferred management measures for 2020

Background

The Charter Halibut Management Committee met in October 2019 to identify potential management measures for implementation in 2020. The committee requested analysis by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Sport Fish to determine which measures are likely to keep the charter sector within their allocation. The analysis will be presented to the Charter Halibut Management Committee at their meeting on December 3, 2019, and to the Council, by Ms. Sarah Webster, ADF&G Division of Sport Fish. Minutes from the Charter Halibut Management Committee will be prepared and presented to the Council at this meeting. Based on the information presented, the Council will recommend management measures for the Charter Halibut Sector in IPHC areas 2C and 3A for implementation in 2019.

The goal of the management measures is to keep the charter halibut harvest in Areas 2C and 3A within their allocation according to the halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP). Since implementation in 2014, the charter fisheries in Areas 2C and 3A have had mixed results maintaining their catch within their area allocations (Table 1).

Table 1. Performance of charter halibut management measures recommended annually by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council since 2014 (2019 preliminary estimates in bold italics)

Area	Year	Management measure	Allocation ^a	Removals ^a	Overage	% overage
2C	2014	1 Fish: U44-O76 Rev. Slot	0.761	0.827	0.066	9%
	2015	1 Fish: U42-O80 Rev. Slot	0.851	0.814	-0.037	-4%
	2016	1 Fish: U43-O80 Rev. Slot	0.906	0.839	-0.067	-7%
	2017	1 Fish: U44-O80 Rev. Slot	0.915	0.943	0.028	3%
	2018	1 Fish: U38-O80 Rev. Slot	0.810	0.716	-0.094	-12%
	2019	1 Fish: U38-O80 Rev. Slot	0.820	0.665	-0.155	-19%
3A	2014	2 Fish, one ≤ 29", one trip/day	1.782	2.068	0.286	16%
	2015	2 Fish, one ≤ 29", Thurs. closed Jun 15-Aug 31, Annual limit 5 halibut, one trip/day	1.890	2.094	0.204	11%
	2016	2 Fish, one ≤ 28", Wed. closed all year, annual limit 4 halibut, one trip/day	1.814	2.021	0.207	11%
	2017	2 Fish, one ≤ 28", Wed. closed all year, three Thurs. closed, annual limit 4 halibut, one trip/day	1.890	2.089	0.199	11%
	2018	2 Fish, one ≤ 28", Wed. closed all year, six Thurs. closed, annual limit 4 halibut, one trip/day	1.790	1.886	0.096	5%
	2019	2 Fish, one ≤ 28", Wed. closed all year, six Thurs. closed, annual limit 4 halibut, one trip/day	1.890	2.012	0.122	6%

^a Million Pounds

Area 2C charter fisheries have been over their allocation by as much as 9%, and below their allocation by as much as 19% (estimated for 2019). In every year since 2014, however, Area 3A has been over their allocation, ranging from 6% - 16%. When the Catch Sharing Plan was adopted by the Council in 2012, the Council recognized that management measures are imprecise, and a small variance can be expected to occur around the target allocation. The Council's expectation was that the variances above and below the allocation would balance over time.

The measures requested by the Charter Halibut Management Committee for analysis are shown below.

Area 2C Potential Management Measures

The Charter Halibut Management Committee requested the following management measures for analysis in Area 2C with the following status quo regulations (unless noted): one-fish daily bag limit, retained halibut must be less than or equal to 38 inches or greater than or equal to 80 inches in length (reverse slot limit):

1. Status quo
2. Reverse slot limit (U35-50: O50-80), with an annual limit of 1-4 halibut.
3. Reverse slot limit with a lower limit from 35-50" and an upper limit of 80", and 1-17 Wednesdays or Sundays closed through the season, or a Wednesday or Sunday closure for the entire year.
4. Reverse slot limit with a lower limit from 35-50" and an upper limit of 80" with an annual limit of 3-4 halibut, and 1-17 Wednesdays or Sundays closed through the season, or a Wednesday or Sunday closure for the whole season.
5. Reverse slot limit with a lower limit from 40-50" and an upper limit of 80" before July 1, and a reverse slot limit with a lower limit from 35-50" and an upper limit of 80" beginning July 1, July 15, or August 1.

On November 19 2019, ADF&G biologists informed the committee that area 2C alternative 5 above, the "switch" analysis, would not provide reasonably accurate harvest estimates with the data that are available. Good data are integral to a robust analysis, and biologists did not feel that they would have the ability to predict the impact of those requested measures. Therefore, the analysis was curtailed and is not considered for implementation in 2020.

Area 3A Potential Management Measures

The Charter Halibut Management Committee requested the following management measures for analysis in Area 3A with the following status quo regulations (unless noted): a two-fish bag limit, 28-inch maximum size limit on one fish, 4-fish annual limit, one vessel-trip per permit per day, Wednesday charter halibut closure, closure of halibut fishing on six Tuesdays from mid-July through mid-August:

1. Status quo,
2. Opening of all Tuesdays and some Wednesdays during the season,
3. Fewer or additional Tuesday closures during the season.