


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, AP, and SSC Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke 
Executive Director

DATE: April 7, 1989

SUBJECT: Halibut Management

ACTION REQUIRED

- A. Ensure that all halibut IFQ and license management options are present and considered.
- B. Refine halibut longline IFQ and license limitation options for further analysis.

BACKGROUND

The process of setting out all halibut limited access management options and then reducing some from further consideration should follow the same procedure the Council followed with sablefish. The final analysis of halibut alternatives is scheduled to begin after the September Council meeting. Several written public comments have dealt specifically with halibut and are summarized in item C-5(d)(1) as are some of the testimony from the scoping meetings.

The Committee has made recommendations to the Council, item C-5(d)(2) for IFQs and item C-5(d)(3) for licenses. The Committee recognized that the sablefish and halibut fisheries are similar in terms of gear, vessels, crew, and grounds. Therefore, in an effort to standardize the proposed alternatives by gear group, the Committee has proposed halibut alternatives that are almost identical to the sablefish alternatives.

Only two points are different between the sablefish and halibut alternatives: management areas and, for licenses, vessel sizes. IFQs would be specific by IPHC management area: 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E. Likewise, license areas would be either all eight areas individually or combined into four areas: 2C, 3A, and 3B; 4A, 4B, and 4D; 4C; and 4E. Some of the Committee pointed out that management by IPHC area may become an administrative burden. For licenses based on vessel size, the IPHC vessel size categories are added as an alternative. Public comment is requested on which of these or some other grouping would be most appropriate and uniform for both sablefish and halibut fisheries.

Written Comments and Testimony
Related Specifically to Halibut Management

The comments received by the Council since the January Council meeting directly concerning halibut are summarized below. Written comments can be found in numerical order in the appropriate section of the supplement comment package provided.

21. Bob Allen, Allen Marine Ways - The halibut fishery should be managed as a sustained yield, year- round fishery. This could be accomplished by limiting every vessel to a set number of skates and hooks. An in-depth proposal for such a system was submitted.
22. Andy Golia, Dillingham - Bristol Bay residents are requesting a commercial test fishery for halibut in the local area. A proposal previously presented to the Halibut Commission was submitted.
23. Thomas Hoffman, Booth Fisheries - Concerning halibut, if IFQs are used they should be allocated by month to ensure continued fresh supply. This allocation should be bell curved to allow for most to be caught in the summer fishing months. The current system forces fishermen to fish in bad weather, wastes fish (an estimated 25% of the allowable catch due to cut gear and poor handling), unnecessary quality degradation, lack of fresh supply, economic inefficiency, and bycatch problems with other longline species.
24. Jack Keane, Bristol Bay Driftnetter's Assoc. - For halibut, will those who have fished before the cut-off date receive points for additional fishing?
25. Jack Polster, Homer - Comments concern a view from 1992 looking back at the problems that drove the halibut fishery to a property rights fishery.
26. John Rowley and Tom Hoffman, FISH - They support the concept of IFQs as the best, most equitable solution to the complex issues.

The following summarizes the testimony received during the scoping process directed specifically to halibut management.

Tom Hoffman, wholesaler - Seattle meeting - A new organization named FISH (Finding Intelligent Solutions for Halibut) has six points of frustration for halibut: 1) 24 hour derby can result in loss of life, 2) waste of fish with cut gear and rotting fish left unprocessed, 3) quality is poor with some not bled and gutted for a long time and processors and transporters can not handle peak loads, 4) fresh fish receive highest price and this can not happen with halibut under current management, 5) economic inefficiencies of system are obvious, 6) halibut bycatch problems in other fisheries. Sixty million pounds of fresh halibut could be sold in 6 months, the demand on the east coast is tremendous as is that in California. Now fluke is sold instead of halibut for this demand.

Andy Golia - Dillingham meeting - A small allocation of halibut from the closed area is needed for local fishermen. There is a sense of frustration with the closure because fishermen cannot develop a participation history for any future controlled access scheme.

Val Angason - Dillingham meeting - Opposed to controlled access. Want to develop local cod, halibut, and flatfish fisheries. Wants IPHC to readdress issue of opening up Bristol Bay.

Gary Carls - Dillingham meeting - Need to fish halibut in the nursery area so that they can develop a record for future controlled access. They need markets and small boat trawls for other fisheries.

Kevin O'Leary, owner - Kodiak meeting - The Council should consider a limit on the amount of time it spends talking controlled access since it is the same issues raised each time. It keeps coming up because the government is looking for revenues. The halibut fishery could be spread out but as long as controlled access is under discussion the fishery is rigged to fail to force the issue.

Michelle Weekly, owner - Kodiak meeting - Halibut is a way to get extra money and any allocations under IFQs would be too little for a large boat. Likes open access.

Bob Allen, Allen Marine Works - Sitka meeting - Should limit halibut by number of skates and hooks per vessel. Management should be on a real time basis. Require herring for bait so that herring carcasses are used. He submitted a proposal for a limited gear fishery.

Charles Wilbur, crewman - Sitka meeting - Difficult to talk about limited access with non-local fleet ready to harvest herring. Limited access would not give crewmen consideration and they would be cut out of a chance to become skipper. With halibut, one day to fish is better than no days to fish.

Ann Rold, owner - Sitka meeting - Concerned about the viability of small fishermen competing. Regulating catch by size of boat discriminates against small fishermen. The New Zealand experience where small boats got out of the fishery is disturbing because it could happen here. During halibut season fishermen make themselves go out in bad weather. More boats are lost and accidents happen in this system. Supports licenses a bit but perhaps a color coded permit card system.