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AGENDA B-5
FEBRUARY 2002

INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY A CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA

AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DIRECTOR
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January 29, 2002

Mr. Chris Oliver, A/Executive Director
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Dear Chris:

I wish to respond to the items raised in Clarence's letter of December 14, 2001, concerning GHL, subsistence, discard mortality rates, and Area 4D/E CDQ harvests. I will also be happy to review these elements and other results of the Commission's 2002 Annual Meeting with the Council at your February meeting.

1. **Commercial setline and guided sport GHL calculations.** The Commission reviewed the recommendations on catch limits from staff and industry. The attached table shows the catch limits adopted by the Commission for the 2002 halibut fisheries. Prior to making its recommendations, the staff reviewed the estimates of constant exploitation yield (CEY) and determined that the estimated charter recreational catches of halibut for 2001 did not exceed the GHL levels as they are currently stated by NMFS. The 2001 estimates of charter catches (0.93 million lbs. (Mlb) and 2.95 Mlb in Areas 2C and 3A, respectively) were the values used for the calculations pertaining to 2002. Since the estimated GHL values (1.432 Mlb and 3.650 Mlb in Areas 2C and 3A, respectively) are higher than the estimated catches, no restrictions on the charter catch would be contemplated by the GHL rule for 2002.
2. **Subsistence.** To facilitate the Council's and NMFS' rule-making for subsistence, the Commission adopted new regulations defining commercial and sport fishing, that separates those two activities from customary and traditional fishing, including a season length for customary and traditional fishing (attached). The Commission's regulations specify that these revised definitions will only take effect when NMFS approves the customary and traditional (i.e., subsistence) proposals.
3. **Halibut discard mortality rates.** The staff has had some initial discussions with smaller-vessel Pacific cod harvesters concerning the discard mortality rate (DMR) applied in this fishery. We have indicated that past revisions to this rate were based on new observer data and such data would be required for revisions on DMRs for this class of harvester. We have

also indicated that whatever direction this sector pursues, the data collection process, analysis, and results must be reviewed and approved by the Council's SSC.

4. *Area 4D/E CDQ harvest.* The Commission passed regulations permitting retention of sublegal halibut for personal use in 4E CDQ fisheries, with annual reporting requirements to the Commission, only for vessels that land all of their catch in Area 4E. This permission was also extended to Area 4D CDQ fisheries for vessels similarly landing all of their catch in either Areas 4D or 4E. The sunset provision of this regulation was removed but the regulation will be reviewed at the end of 2002, to ensure it is necessary once subsistence accounting is implemented. The other provisions enacted by Council concerning trip limits and Area 4D/E CDQ quota transfer do not conflict with Commission regulations or management since the Commission manages Areas 4C/D/E as a unit stock.

Gregg Williams and I will be attending the February meeting and making a brief presentation to your Wednesday session.

Sincerely,



for

Bruce M. Leaman
Executive Director

Encl.

2002 Adopted Catch Limits

Regulatory Area	Millions of Pounds			Adopted by IPHC
	IPHC Staff	Conference Board	Processors	
2A*	1.31	1.31	1.31	1.31
2B	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75
2C	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50
3A	22.63	22.63	22.63	22.63
3B	17.13	17.13	17.13	17.13
4A	4.97	4.97	4.97	4.97
4B	3.44	4.20	4.03	4.18
4CDE Total	4.45	5.00	4.45	4.45
TOTAL	74.18	75.49	74.77	74.92

Changes to IPHC regulations (underlined)

“commercial fishing” means fishing, other than customary and traditional fishing as referred to in Section 23, the resulting catch of which is sold or bartered; or intended to be sold or bartered;

“sport fishing” means all fishing other than commercial fishing; and treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence fishing as referred to in Section 22; and customary and traditional fishing as referred to in Section 23;

Section 23. Customary and Traditional Fishing in Alaska

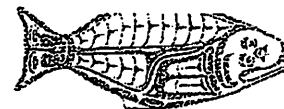
1. Customary and traditional fishing for halibut in Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E shall be regulated pursuant to regulations promulgated by the National Marine Fisheries Service and published in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 300.

2. Customary and traditional fishing for halibut is authorized from January 1 through December 31. (staff suggested dates)

IPHC regulations will clarify that new Section 23 and the revisions to the definitions of commercial fishing and sport fishing only take effect if and when NMFS approves the customary and traditional fishery proposal.

News Release

AGENDA B-5
FEBRUARY 2002



January 28, 2002

P.O. BOX 95009, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98145-2009

HALIBUT COMMISSION COMPLETES 2002 ANNUAL MEETING

The International Pacific Halibut Commission completed its 78th Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, with Dr. James Balsiger of Juneau, Alaska presiding as Chairman. The Commission is recommending to the governments of Canada and the United States catch limits for 2002 totaling 74,920,000 pounds, compared to 73,180,000 pounds in 2001.

The Commission staff reported on the assessment of the Pacific halibut stock in 2001. The major changes in the assessment this year were: a separate treatment of Areas 2A and 2B in the assessment, whereas they had been previously combined; the incorporation of additional survey information in Areas 2C and 3A; and, a revision in the estimate of halibut habitat in all areas. The separation of Areas 2A and 2B and some computational changes resulted in increased estimates of exploitable biomass in both areas. Exploitable biomass was estimated to be slightly lower in Area 2C and slightly higher in Area 3A as a result of these changes. Revisions of halibut habitat based on bottom areas were completed for all regulatory areas but the effect was minor, except in Area 4B, where the change resulted in an approximate 30% decrease in habitat. The total halibut stock is declining slowly due to lower recruitment associated with environmental conditions unfavourable to halibut recruitment. However, the halibut biomass is still above the long-term average level and is expected to remain above this level for the next several years.

Seasons and Catch Limits

The Commission received regulatory proposals for 2002 from the scientific staff, Canadian and United States harvesters and processors, and other fishery agencies. The Commission will recommend to the governments the following catch limits for 2002 in Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington), Area 2B (British Columbia), Area 2C (southeastern Alaska), Area 3A (central Gulf), Area 3B (western Gulf), Area 4A (eastern Aleutians), Area 4B (western Aleutians), Area 4C (Pribilof Islands), Area 4D (northwestern Bering Sea), and Area 4E (Bering Sea flats):

2002 Catch Limits

Area	Catch Limit (pounds)
2A Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Point Chehalis)	222,700
2A Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll	39,300
2A Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish longline fishery (north of Point Chehalis)	88,389
2A Treaty Indian commercial	467,500
2A Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	16,000
2A Sport - North of Columbia River	214,110
<u>2A Sport - South of Columbia River</u>	<u>262,001</u>
Area 2A total	1,310,000
2B	11,750,000
2C	8,500,000
3A	22,630,000
3B	17,130,000
4A	4,970,000
4B	4,180,000
4C	2,030,000
4D	2,030,000
<u>4E</u>	<u>390,000</u>
<u>Area 4 total</u>	<u>13,600,000</u>
Total	74,920,000

The catch limits for Regulatory Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E reflect the catch-sharing plan implemented by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC). The NPFMC catch-sharing plan in Area 4 allows the Commission to set biologically-based catch limits for Areas 4A, 4B, and a combined Area 4C-D-E. The catch-sharing plan allows Area 4D Community Development Quota (CDQ) harvest to be taken in Area 4E. The requirements for fishing Area 4D CDQ in Area 4E will be part of regulations promulgated by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The catch-sharing plan implemented by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) for Area 2A was adopted by the Commission and is reflected in the catch limits adopted for the Area 2A fisheries. Fishing dates for an incidental commercial halibut fishery concurrent with salmon troll fishing seasons in Area 2A and the incidental commercial halibut fishery during the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis will be established under United States domestic regulations established by NMFS. The remainder of the Area 2A catch-sharing plan, including sport fishing seasons, will be determined under regulations promulgated by NMFS.

In Area 2A, seven 10-hour fishing periods for the non-treaty directed commercial fishery are recommended: June 26, July 10, July 24, August 7, August 21, September 4, and September 18. All fishing periods will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 6:00 p.m. local time, and will be further restricted by fishing period limits announced at a later date.

The staff reported to the Commission on its further investigation of the issues associated with an extended halibut fishing season. The report concluded that winter fisheries would likely result in altered biomass distribution by regulatory area compared with that resulting from present fisheries. Although the staff believes that the stock could be assessed and conservation assured when dealing with such an alteration, significant impacts on data capture programs, quota share management, as well as management and enforcement costs were identified. The Commission conducted extensive discussions on the season extension issue and received several industry proposals and public testimony. The Commission directed the staff to continue its investigation and broaden the scope to include consideration of multiple-year averaging for catch limits, alternate management frameworks, and the catch of halibut in other fisheries. The Commission made only slight changes to the existing season to accommodate market opportunities.

Therefore, the treaty Indian commercial fishery in Area 2A, the Canadian Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fishery in Area 2B, and the United States Individual Fishing Quota (IVQ) fisheries in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E will all commence at 12 noon local time on March 18 and terminate at 12 noon local time on November 18.

Regulatory Changes and Issues

The Commission approved revising the current definition of illegal possession of halibut from a person "knowingly" in possession of halibut taken in contravention of regulations to a person in contravention of IPHC regulations. A person is not required to know that they are in contravention of the regulations to be in illegal possession of halibut.

The Commission adopted regulations recognizing the customary and traditional use of halibut for subsistence fishing for Alaska. The specific regulations on gear, eligibility, daily bag limits, permitting and recording for this fishery will be promulgated by NMFS. Although the Commission authorized a season of January 1 to December 31 for this fishery, the revision to the IPHC regulations will take effect only if and when the customary and traditional fishery proposal is approved by the U.S. government.

In Alaska, the regulations will be changed to allow fishing vessels carrying crab pots to use halibut heads and carcasses as bait, provided they have documentation of legal purchase or documentation of legally acquiring the bait.

The Commission re-authorized the regulations allowing CDQ harvesters in Area 4E to retain undersized halibut caught with commercial gear for personal use (not to sell or barter the halibut). The regulation was expanded to include Area 4D CDQ vessels that land all of their catch in Area 4E or Area 4D. The regulations again require the manager of each of the authorized CDQ organizations that allows persons to harvest halibut in Area 4D and 4E CDQ

fisheries to report annually the total number and weight of undersized halibut to the Commission. The report must include the methodology on how the data were collected and be received by IPHC prior to December 1.

Regulations were adopted to specify which commercial fishing regulations apply to the commercial treaty Indian fishery in Area 2A-1. The commercial fishing regulations that will apply are as follows: size limit, careful release of halibut, logs, receipt and possession of halibut, and fishing gear (except that the 72-hour fishing restriction preceding the halibut fishing period shall not apply).

The regulations were not changed to allow vessel monitoring systems or transponders in place of Area 4 clearance procedures. However, NMFS Enforcement will work with harvesters to provide waivers to clearance procedures if the vessel has the appropriate vessel monitoring systems in place. For further information on waivers, contact NMFS Enforcement in Juneau (907) 586-7200.

Other Actions

An industry proposal requested Staff assistance in implementing a web-based registry for chalky fish occurrence and the Commission directed the staff to undertake this work.

The Commission notes that halibut bycatch mortality in non-target fisheries was reduced slightly in 2001, continuing the trend initiated by the 1991 Commission agreement to achieve lower bycatch mortality levels. However, the Commission believes that progress on further reductions on bycatch mortality is desirable and that current levels of mortality reduce yield to the directed halibut fisheries. The Commission will continue to work with agencies of the two governments to achieve reductions in halibut bycatch mortality.

The Commission received several proposals from its Conference Board concerning restrictions on or banning of halibut aquaculture-related activities. Such restrictions are not part of the Commission's mandate or jurisdiction and support for aquaculture in general is a policy of the Canadian government. The Commission took no action on most of these proposals with the exception of publishing annual reports on halibut aquaculture activities by the two governments on the Commission's web page. In addition, the staff was directed to form a small interagency committee to monitor halibut aquaculture development and advise the Commission on potential negative impacts on the wild halibut resource or its management.

The Commission staff had proposed an extensive tagging program for 2002 employing passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags. However, the staff reported that technical evaluation of tagging procedures, location, and detection had not progressed to its satisfaction and the program will be postponed to 2003 while further research is completed. The Commission also directed the staff to complete a peer review of the project during 2002.

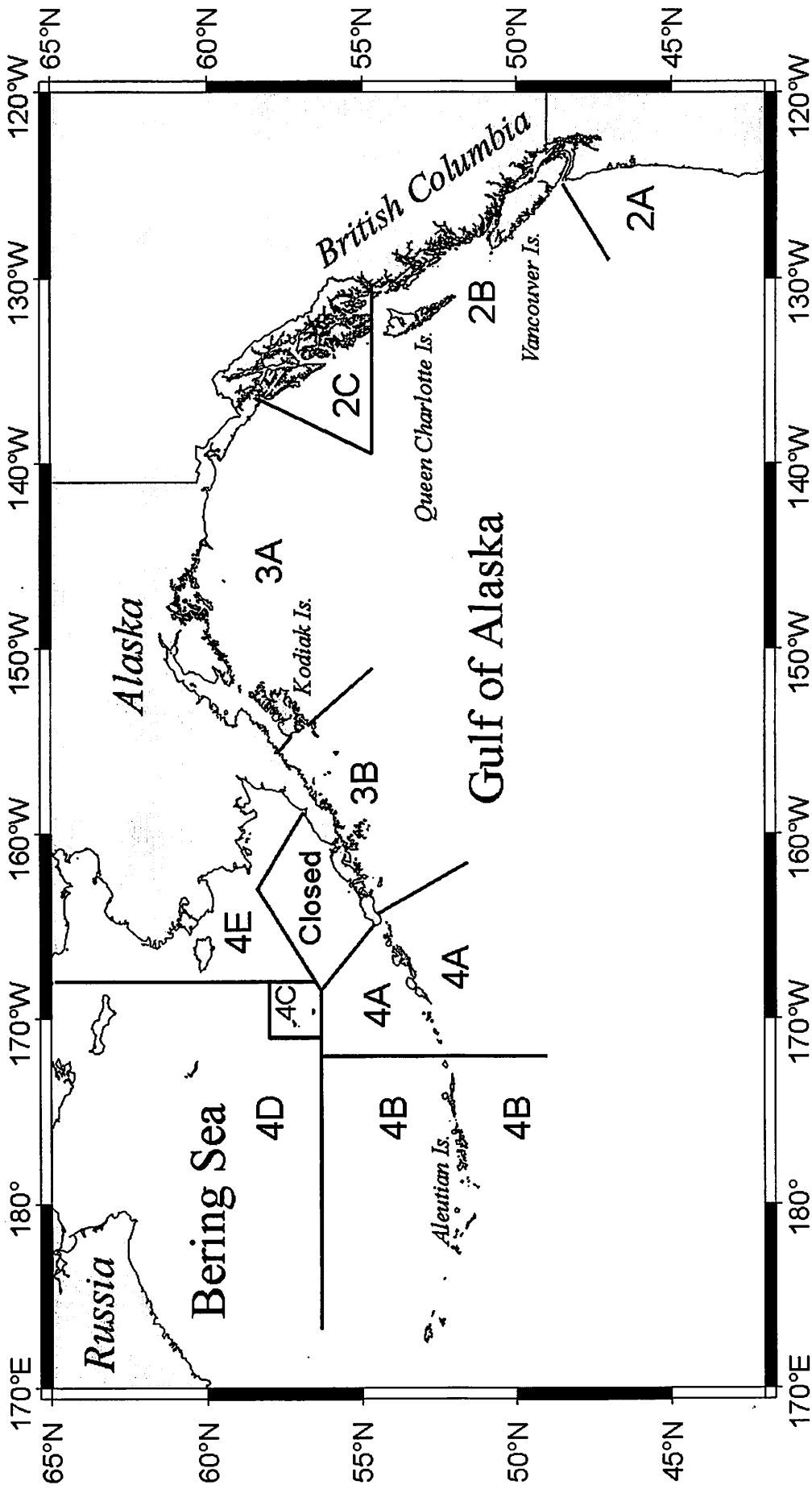
The recommended regulations for the 2002 halibut fishery will become official as soon as they are approved by the Canadian and United States Governments. The Commission will publish and distribute regulation pamphlets.

The next Annual Meeting of the Commission will be held in Victoria, B.C. from January 21 to 24, 2003. The Canadian Government commissioner, Dr. Richard Beamish, was elected Chairman for the coming year. The United States Government commissioner, Dr. James Balsiger, was elected as Vice Chairman. Other Canadian commissioners are Clifford Atleo and John Secord. The other United States commissioners are Ralph Hoard and Andrew Scalzi. Dr. Bruce Leaman is the Executive Director of the Commission.

- END -

Bruce M. Leaman, Executive Director
Phone: (206) 634-1838
Web: www.iphc.washington.edu

IPHC 78th Annual Meeting Results



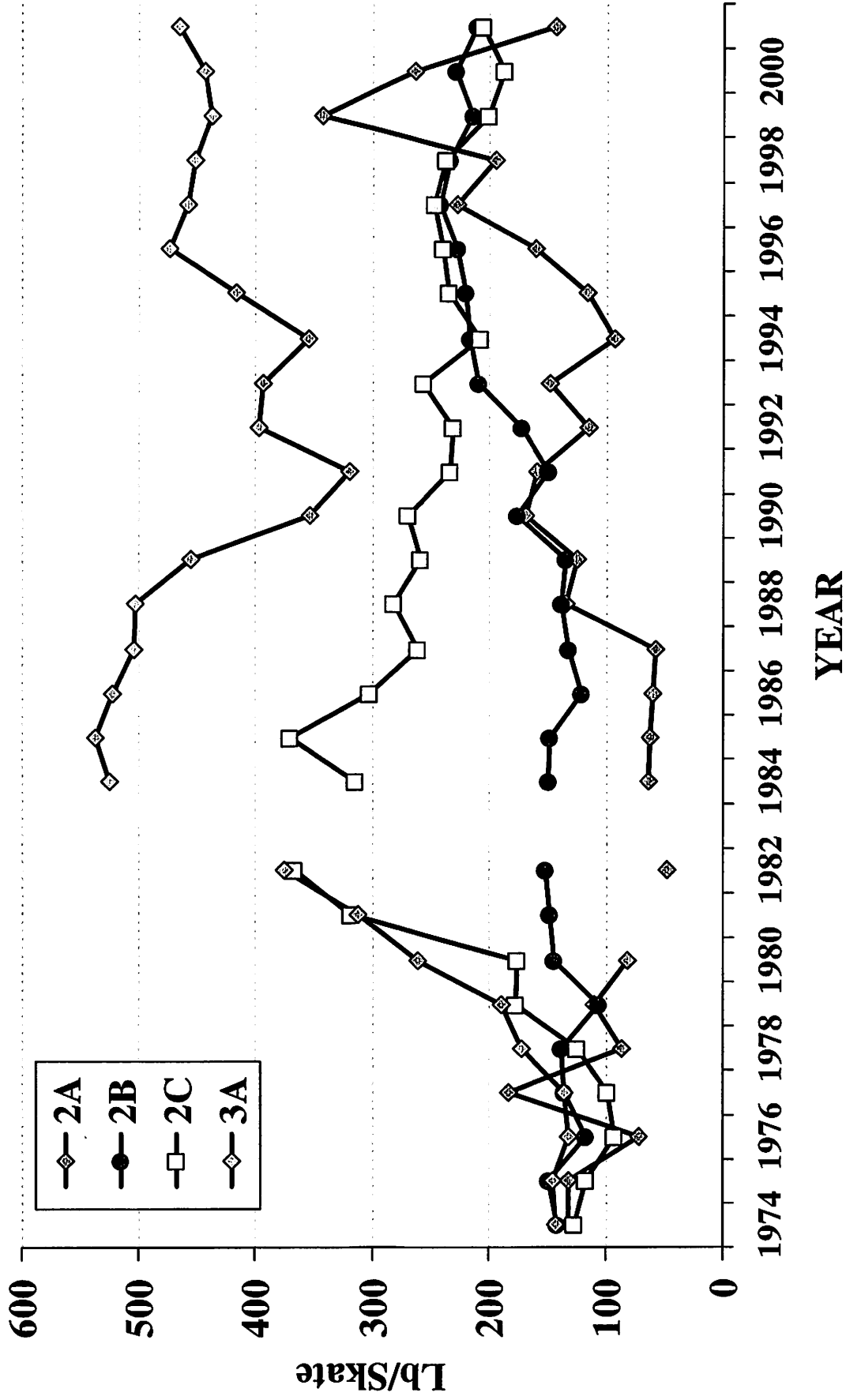
Stock Condition Indicators

- **Analytic model fit to Areas 2B-3A data very good**
- **Commercial CPUE declining slowly or stable in southern and central part of range; dropping in western areas**
- **Survey CPUE stable or increasing in southern part of range; dropping in central and western portions**

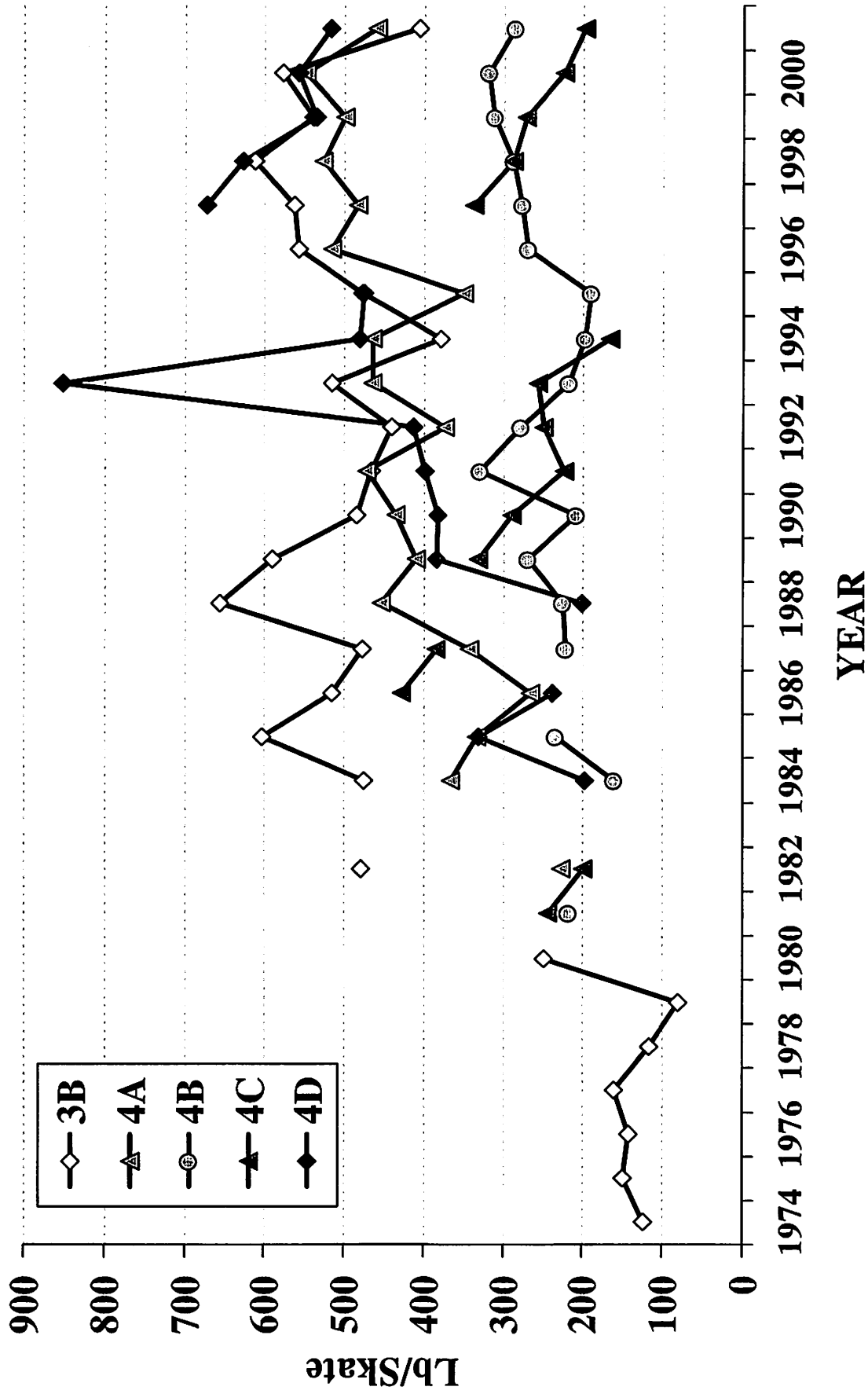
Stock Condition Indicators

- **Recruitment declining; possibly strong 1994 cohort on horizon**
- **Total biomass declining but still above historical average**

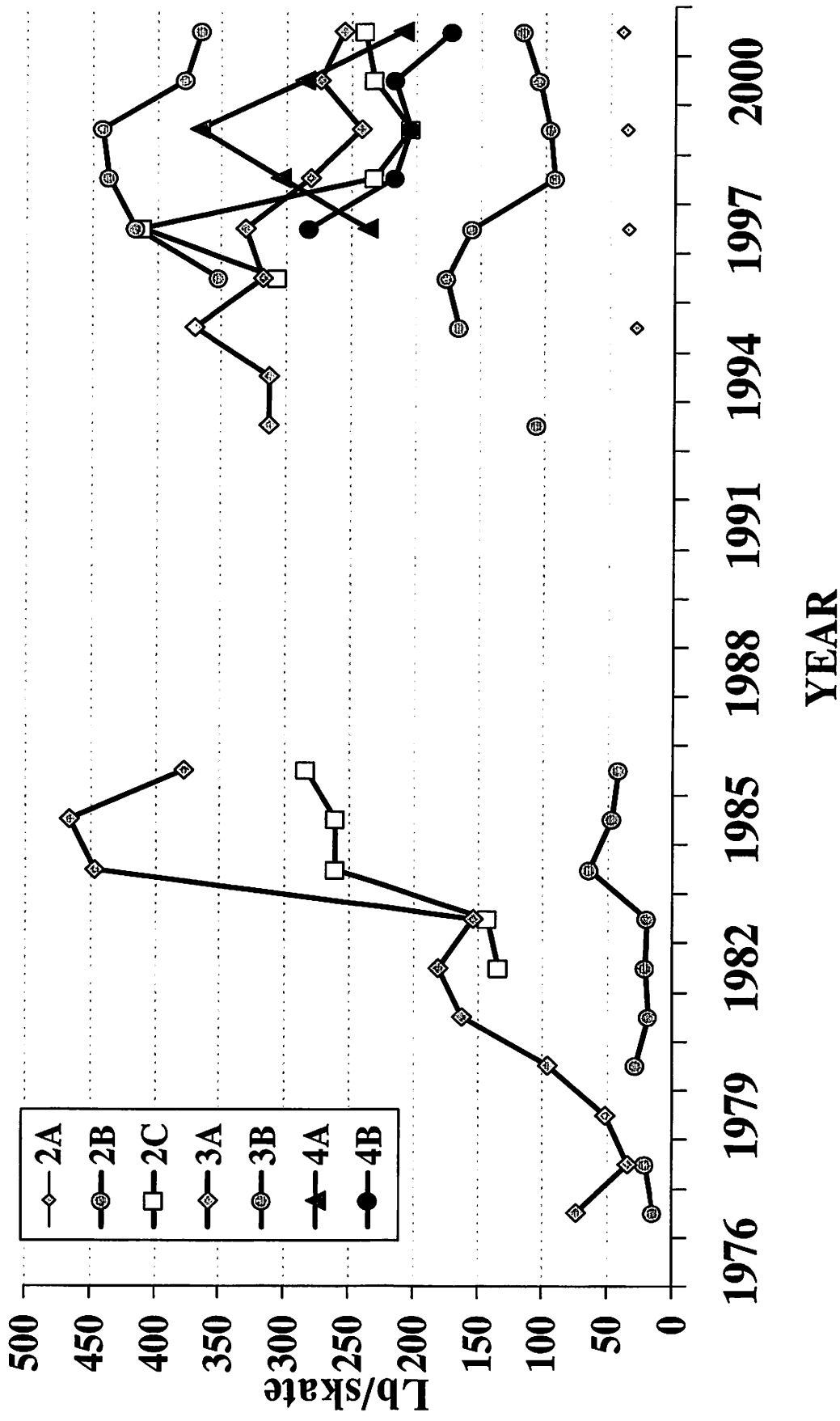
Commercial CPUE - Assessment Series



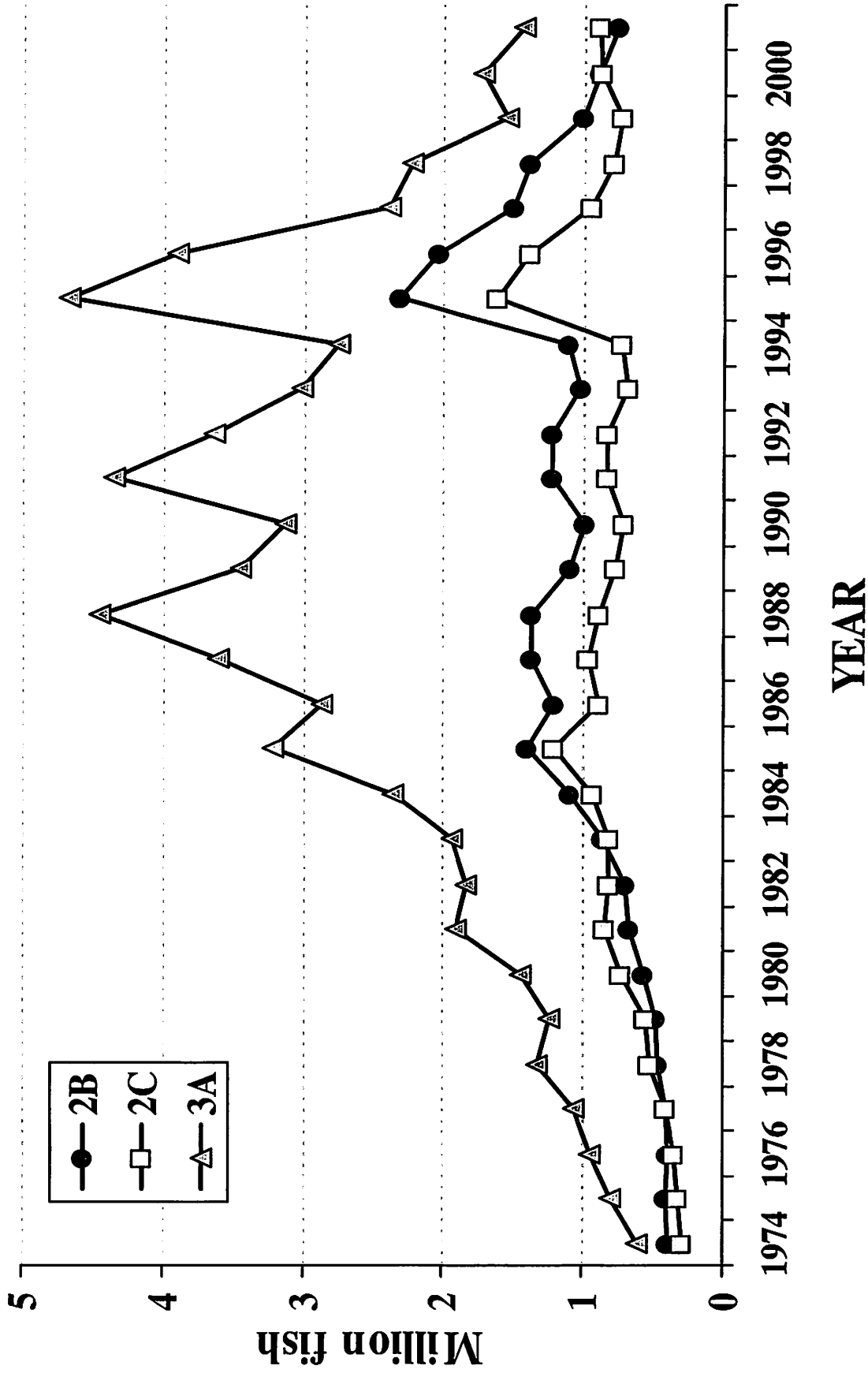
Commercial CPUE - Assessment Series



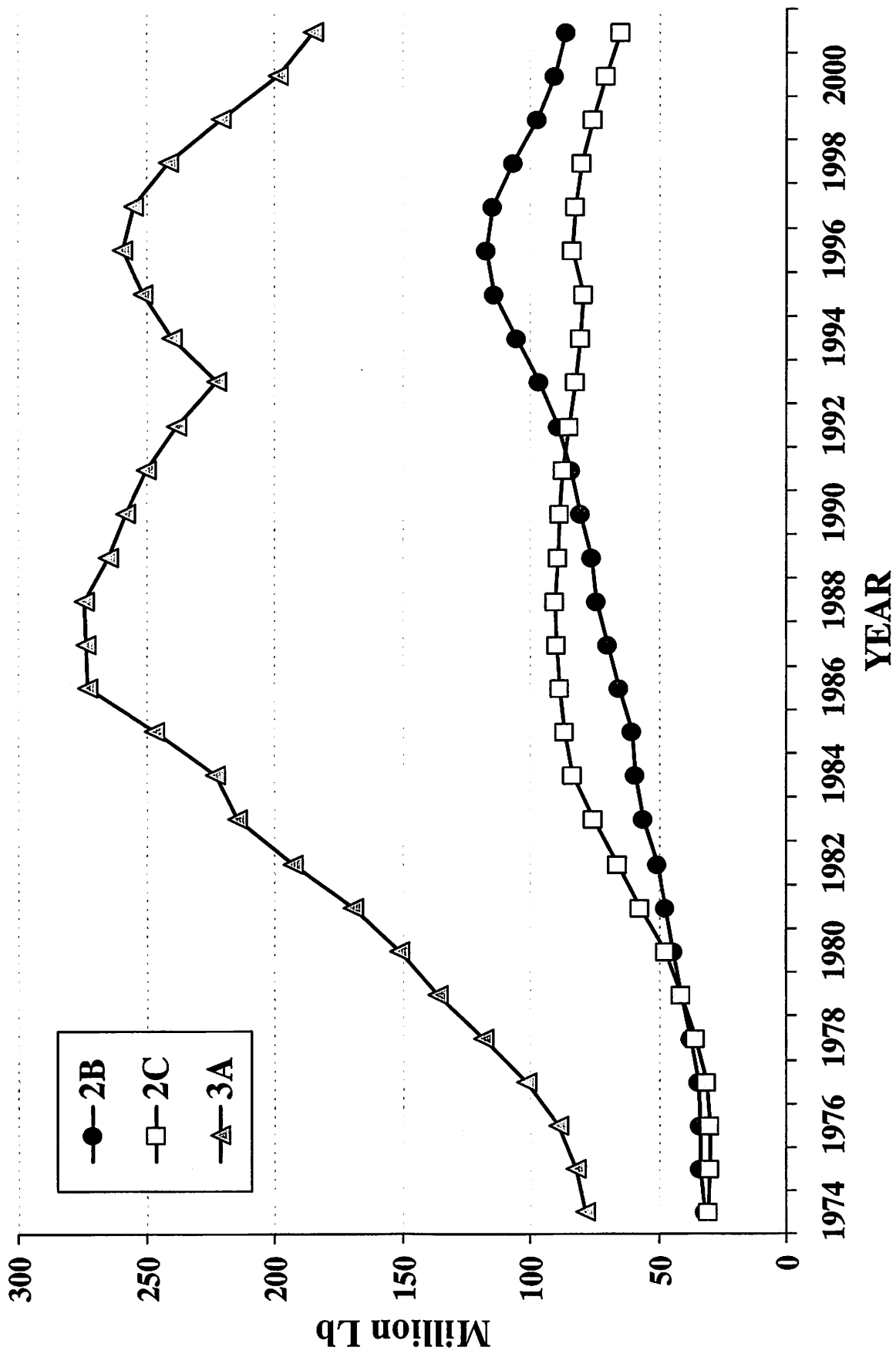
Survey CPUE - Assessment Series



Recruitment (Age 8)



Total Biomass (Age 8+)



Estimated total CEY and setline CEY in 2002

Area	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4CDE	Total
2001 catch limit	1.14*	10.51	8.78	21.89	16.53	4.97	4.91	4.45	73.18
2001 exploitable biomass	7.44	60.18	56.00	139.00	130.66	52.82	51.43	51.43	548.96
2002 exploitable biomass	9.25	66.10	53.30	154.80	145.50	63.50	38.70	72.80	603.95
Total CEY at 20%	1.85	13.22	10.66	30.96	29.10	12.70	7.74	14.55	120.79
Sport catch	----	1.02	1.73	5.02	0.01	0.08	0.00	0.00	7.86
Legal-sized bycatch	0.54	0.11	0.22	1.70	0.48	0.54	0.20	2.64	6.43
Legal-sized wastage	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.23
Personal use	----	0.30	0.17	0.07	0.02	0.09	0.00	0.08	0.73
Total	0.54*	1.47	2.16	6.82	0.54	0.74	0.23	2.75	15.25
2002 Setline CEY	1.31*	11.75	8.50	24.14	28.56	11.96	7.51	11.81	105.54

* In Area 2A, Catch limit and setline CEY includes sport catch and treaty Indian catch

Catch Limit Concerns

- **Calculated catch limits in Areas 3B and 4 influenced by changes in Area 3A, rather than events in 3B and 4 where CPUE is declining**
- **Total biomass declining; recent recruitments are lower than 1980s and 1990s**
- **Environment has moved to conditions unfavourable to halibut recruitment**
- **Evaluating harvest policy with view to longer term stability**

Yield Recommendations

Regulatory Area	Millions of Pounds			
	2001 Setline CEY	2001 Setline Quota	2002 Setline CEY	2002 Setline Recommendation
2A*	1.12	1.14	1.31	1.31
2B	10.51	10.51	11.75	11.75
2C	8.78	8.78	8.50	8.50
3A	21.89	21.89	24.14	22.63
3B	25.46	16.53	28.56	17.13
4A	9.82	4.97	11.96	4.97
4B	10.06	4.91	7.51	3.44
4CDE	7.63	4.45	11.81	4.45
TOTAL	95.27	73.18	105.52	74.18

*Includes sport, tribal and commercial fisheries

2002 setline recommendation for Area 3B

- **Area 3B bottom area as proportion of Area 3A bottom area = 0.61**
- **Area 3A 2002 total CEY = 30.96**
- **Area 3B 2002 total CEY = $0.61 * 30.96 = 18.89$**
- **Other removals in Area 3B = 0.54**
- **Area 3B setline CEY = $18.89 - 0.54 = 18.35$**
- **Area 3B 2001 setline catch limit = 16.53**
- **Area 3B 2002 setline recommendation = $16.53 + 0.33(18.35 - 16.53) = 17.13$**

Yield Recommendations

Regulatory Area	Millions of Pounds			
	2001 Setline CEY	2001 Setline Catch limit	2002 Setline CEY	2002 Setline Recommendation
2A*	1.12	1.14	1.31	1.31
2B	10.51	10.51	11.75	11.75
2C	8.78	8.78	8.50	8.50
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3B	25.46	16.53	28.56	17.13
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4CDE	7.63	4.45	11.81	4.45
TOTAL	95.27	73.18	105.52	74.18

*Includes sport, tribal and commercial fisheries

2002 Adopted Limits

Regulatory Area	Millions of Pounds			
	IPHC Staff Recomm	Conf Bd Recomm	Processor Recomm	IPHC Adopted
2A*	1.31	1.31	1.31	1.31
2B	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75
2C	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50
3A	22.63	22.63	22.63	22.63
3B	17.13	17.13	17.13	17.13
4A	4.97	4.97	4.97	4.97
4B	3.44	4.20	4.03	4.18
4CDE	4.45	5.00	4.45	4.45
TOTAL	74.18	75.49	74.77	74.92

*Includes sport, tribal and commercial fisheries

CEY Estimates & Recommended Catch Limits

	Area	
	2C	3A
2001 Total CEY at 20%	11.20	27.80
2001 Guided sport catch	0.93	2.95
2001 Setline quota	8.78	21.89
2001 Commercial landings	8.40	21.94
2002 Total CEY at 20%	10.66	30.96
Charter GHL	1.43	3.65
2002 Recommended Setline Catch Limit	8.50	22.63
Guided Sport Catch as percent of		
2002 Setline Quota + 2001 Guided Sport Catch	9.86%	11.53%

Miscellaneous Regulatory Actions

Fishing periods and catch sharing

- **March 18 - November 18 except in 2A; note market issue re opening date**
- **In 2A, as 2001, a series of 10-h periods**
- **Endorse Management Councils' catch sharing plans**

License requirements

- **Retain in 2A to assist Pacific Council & IPHC in setting limits**

Miscellaneous Regulatory Actions

Subsistence definition and season

- **Subsistence wording to permit NMFS definition of subsistence for Alaska**
- **Recommend January 1-December 31 season after NMFS regulations in place**

Treaty Indian commercial fisheries

- **Commercial regulations apply to treaty Indian commercial fisheries (except 72-h rule)**

Miscellaneous Regulatory Actions

Use of halibut as crab pot bait

- **For Alaska, permit possession of halibut heads and frames aboard crab pot boats if they have documentation of legal purchase**

Sublegals in Area 4D and 4E CDQ fisheries

- **Permit Area 4E CDQ vessels to retain sublegals, with reporting to IPHC; similar provision added for Area 4D local CDQ vessels**

Miscellaneous Actions

Chalky fish

- **Staff to work with industry in setting up on-line registry for time and place of chalky occurrence**

Season extension

- **Staff to continue study with broader scope including multi-year quotas and other management measures**

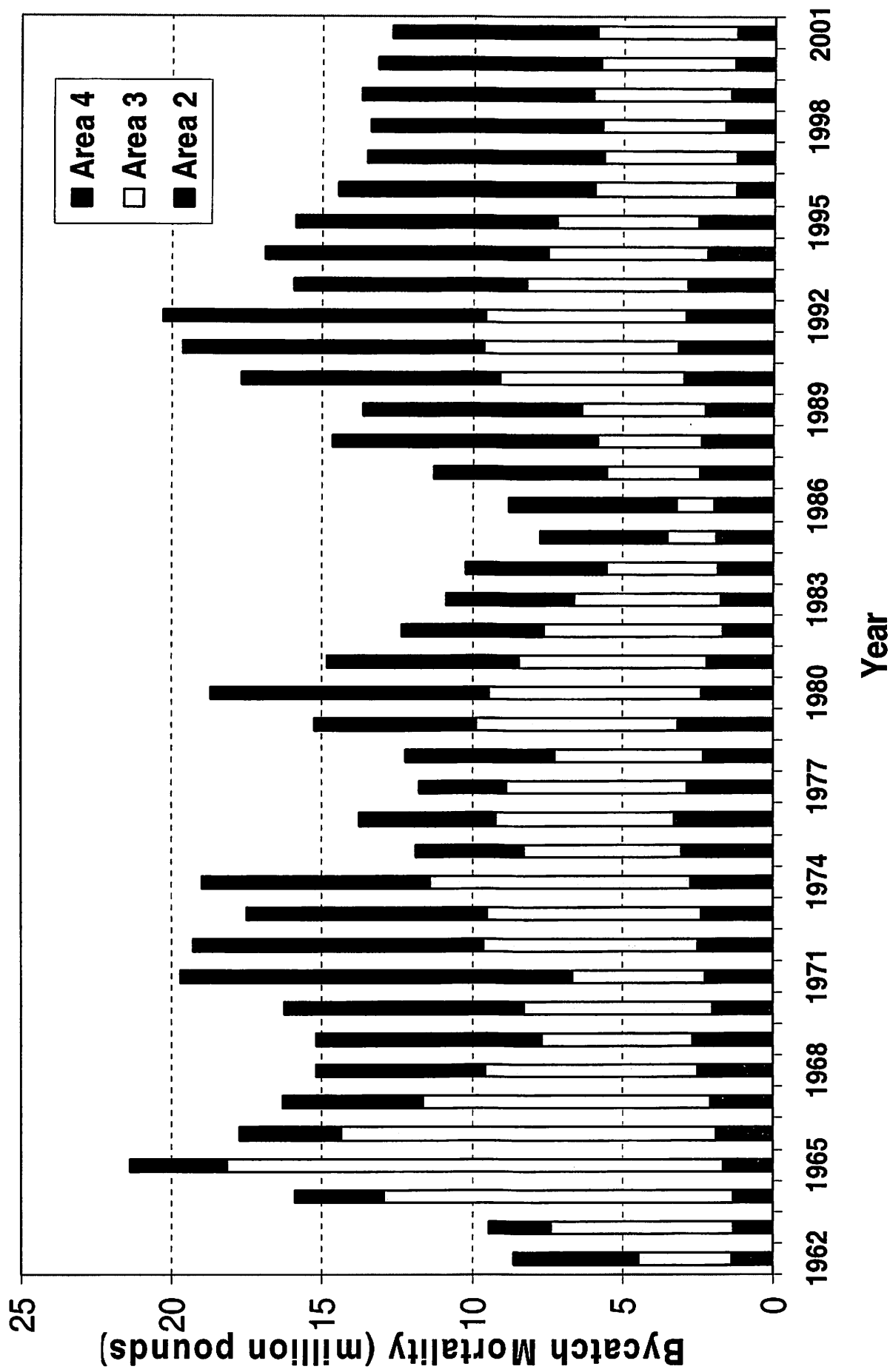
Miscellaneous Actions

Halibut aquaculture

- **Staff to establish small inter-agency committee to advise the Commission on progress of aquaculture and any potential negative effects on wild stocks or halibut fishery management**

Bycatch mortality

- **Commission remains concerned that although bycatch reduced slightly in 2001, high bycatch mortality continues to remove yield from the directed halibut fisheries**



Miscellaneous Actions

Officers for 2002

- **Chair: Dr. Richard Beamish**
- **Vice-Chair: Dr. James Balsiger**

2003 Annual meeting

- **January 21-24, 2003 in Victoria, B.C.,
Canada**