



Charter Halibut Management Committee

REPORT

1:00-4:00 PM | November 30, 2020 | via Online Meeting

The Charter Halibut Management Committee met at the time indicated above to develop their recommendations to the Council on 2021 charter halibut management measures in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A.

Committee Members in attendance:

Andy Mezirow, Chairman	Stan Malcolm	Richard Yamada
Steve Zernia	Kent Huff	Forrest Braden
Matt Kopec	Seth Bone	Jim Armstrong (staff)
Daniel Donich	Mike Flores	

Members absent:

Denise May

Others in attendance:

Ben Jevons	Jim Martin	Sarah Webster*
Baine Etherton	John Jensen	Shannon Gleason
Brian Ritchie	Kurt Iverson	Tom Gemmell
Doug Duncan	Mel Erickson	Tom Taube
Jim Hasbrouck	Robert Powers	

*presenter

2020 Preliminary Fishery Review

Sarah Webster of ADF&G began her presentation with a review of preliminary charter halibut fishery performance in 2020, using logbook data through August as well as dockside sampling. Area 2C charter removals were estimated to be 0.499 Milb in 2020, which was 36% below the 0.780 Milb allocation, and Area 3A charter removals were estimated to be 1.597 Milb in 2020, which was 6.6% below the 1.710 Milb allocation.

Sarah also provided annual counts for the past 10 years (2011-2020) of charter halibut businesses and vessels that reported actually harvesting halibut. This was in response to a request by the Committee for indicators of COVID impacts in 2020. Active charter business in Area 2C averaged about 250 through 2019, but were down to 191 in 2020, and vessels decreased from about 500-550 to 384. In Area 3A, businesses had been decreasing from over 300 in 2011 to 226 in 2019, and were down to 197 in 2020, while the more stable count of about 400 active vessels decreased to 337.

2021 Charter Halibut Management Measures

The majority of the presentation focused on information detailed in the ADF&G Analysis of Management Options for the Area 2C and 3A Charter Halibut Fisheries for 2021 (posted to the eAgenda as "C1 Charter Management Options Analysis"). That Analysis provides harvest estimates under a range of measures that the Committee identified at its [October 2020 meeting](#). Following the presentation by Sarah Webster the Committee provided recommendations on harvest measures for Areas 2C and 3A in 2021. The Committee recommendations are intended to achieve, but not exceed the charter halibut allocations for 2C and 3A that will be finalized by the IPHC at its annual meeting in January 2021. Since the final

allocations are not yet available, the Committee based its recommendations on allocations derived from the current IPHC stock assessment, a reference level of halibut fishing intensity, and estimated distributed halibut mortalities, as provided in the preliminary Pacific halibut stock assessment at the IPHC's November Interim 2020 meeting. For Area 2C, in 2021, the interim allocation would be 0.65 MIb (down from 0.78 MIb in 2020), and for Area 3A the interim allocation would be 1.93 MIb (up from 1.71 MIb in 2020).

Effort Adjustments

Importantly, rather than overcomplicating the analysis by attempting to integrate COVID impacts on effort at each step, 2021 harvest estimates in the ADF&G Analysis were generated using “normal”, i.e., historical, effort inputs. Subsequently, expectations about reduced effort, i.e., “COVID buffers” could be considered which would scale estimated removals for comparison with potential area allocations. Committee recommendations, therefore, consider the likely magnitude of the buffers for each area based on expected continuation of reduced public participation in charter halibut fishing in 2021.

Committee recommendations on COVID buffers also considered changes in 2020 effort that were suggested by the ADF&G Analysis. Specifically, time series of angler days from charter logbook reporting, including preliminary 2020 data suggest an overall 42.5% decrease in effort may have occurred for the two areas in 2020 (Tables 3 and 4 in the Analysis). Additionally, Appendix II compares 2020 harvests under hypothetical 10% and 40% effort reductions and observed vs forecasted 2020 harvest. That comparison suggests potential effort reductions in 2020 close to 50% (54% in 2C and 47% in 3A).

Area 2C

The Charter Halibut Management Committee recommends the following management measures for IPHC Regulatory Area 2C.

1. Apply a 35% reduction in projected removals for 2021 under a reverse slot limit in Table 6, page 26, of the analysis and use this adjusted table (below) for determining reverse slot limit harvest measures.
2. One Fish Daily Bag Limit.
3. If the Area 2C catch limit is at .65 million pounds (Reference SPR 43), reverse slot limit must be $\leq 44''$ or $\geq 80''$.
4. If Area 2C catch limit is from .651 million pounds to .751 million pounds, maintain the upper reverse slot limit at $\geq 80''$ and adjust the lower reverse slot limit upward to keep the projected harvest within the allocation.
5. If Area 2C catch limit is higher than .751 million pounds, maintain the lower reverse slot limit of $\leq 50''$ and adjust the upper reverse slot limit downward to keep the projected harvest within the allocation.

Area 2C Reference Table

Reverse Slot	Removals from Table 6 in analysis (MIb)	Removals adjusted for 35% buffer (MIb)
U44O80	0.993	0.645
U45O80	1.026	0.667
U46O80	1.048	0.681
U47O80	1.077	0.700
U48O80	1.097	0.713
U49O80	1.131	0.735
U50O80	1.155	0.751
U50O78	1.166	0.758

U50076	1.168	0.759
U50074	1.182	0.768
U50072	1.209	0.786

Area 3A

The Committee recommends that the Council approve and send on to the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) the following management measures for IPHC regulatory Area 3A.

All allocations shown below include, unless otherwise specified:

- a daily bag limit of 2 halibut;
- no annual limit per charter angler;
- Wednesdays closed to halibut retention all year;
- 1 trip per halibut charter vessel per day; and
- 1 trip per charter halibut permit per day.

If the allocation is less than 1.93Mlb (Status Quo FCEY) but greater than or equal to 1.85 Mlb:

- One fish of any size, and one fish less than or equal to 32 inches;
- All Wednesdays closed to retention of halibut, with a second fish of 32” or less, according to Table 24 in ADF&G analysis of proposed harvest regulations for 2021 to bring the projected harvest within the Area 3A allocation. Table 22 on page 45 of the ADF&G Analysis: Yield 2.470 Mlb
- Apply a 25% COVID Impact Buffer as described in Appendix A-2, 2 on page 59 in the ADF&G Analysis to achieve a yield of $2.470 \times .75 = 1.85$ Million pounds is the projected removal.

If the allocation is less than 1.85 Mlb but greater than 1.74 Mlb

- Adjust the size of the second fish, down to a minimum of 30 inches to keep the charter harvest within their allocation. Table 24B on Page 47 of the ADF&G analysis.

Summary

In providing their recommendations, the Committee discussed a wide range of issues that would affect the magnitude of COVID buffers for scaling harvest in 2021. These factors included recent increases in COVID counts, continued constraints on travel to Alaska, financial distress among potential clients, uncertain rollovers of 2020 bookings to 2021, health liability precautions, vaccine nonparticipation, and other considerations. The Committee felt that the COVID buffer reductions they are recommending (35% for Area 2C, and 25% for Area 3A) are more likely to be underestimated than overestimated, and that 2021 is more likely to resemble 2020 than a “normal” year for their businesses.

The relaxation of management measures through the emergency action in 2020 represented significant increases in potential harvest, however, realized harvest was still very low. Nevertheless, the Committee wished to express their gratitude to the Council and Agencies involved in facilitating that emergency response.

Public Comment

The Committee received public comment from Mel Erickson.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59PM.