

To: North Pacific Fishery Management Council

From: Judy Brakel Box 94, Gustavus, AK 99826 phone 907-697-2287 [judybrakel@gmail.com](mailto:judybrakel@gmail.com)

Date: Nov. 30, 2015

Re: Agenda Item **C5, Charter Halibut Measures 2016**, Dec. 2015 meeting

I would like to see the “closed slot limit” pattern of size regulation in Halibut Area 2C eliminated. It exists to facilitate clients’ efforts to catch a really big halibut. It leads to a great deal of releasing fish that are not big enough, probably resulting in considerable release mortality. Large halibut are a) the most productive spawners; and b) of poor eating quality and carry a higher level of toxic contaminants.

Hopefully you have seen the brochure titled “Fishing Alaska’s Halibut” produced by our group in Gustavus. It is our attempt to positively influence the culture surrounding sport fishing of halibut, especially by providing information for non-residents who come from far away and know little about halibut and sustainable fishing. The brochure has been well-received and we will distribute it again next summer.

The reverse slot limit started in 2012 as allowing charter clients to keep halibut up to 45” and 68” and above. By 2015 it had moved to allowing retention of fish up to 42” and over 80”. Where is this headed?

**Release mortality** – With a bag limit of 1-fish/day, the perverse incentives mean that sometimes a smaller fish (within the lower limit) is kept aboard for a while and then released if a big fish is caught. The statistics show a very large quantity of released halibut in this fishery, especially in our area (Icy Strait/Cross Sound/Glacier Bay). Scott Meyer’s release mortality estimate of 6% is an in-office estimate based on no field studies and assumes best practices and may be lower than actual. Eliminating the closed slot system should reduce total release mortality.

Many guides and clients dislike the process of releasing so many fish. One commented that it seems “inhumane.”

**The lower limit could be raised** if there was no closed slot and only one size limit. It is true that a single limit will still result in considerable releases as clients strive to get a fish close to the upper limit. (Some guides have commented that by the end of the season certain size classes have been eliminated here.)

**Big old fat fecund female fish (BOFFFs) may be important to the halibut population.** True, the IPHC has said that they are not important because they are now so rare, now constituting a very small portion of the total population. But BOFFFs are fairly common in our local Icy Strait/Cross Sound/Glacier Bay area and we believe they may well be important to the persistence of this population. My comment on Agenda item C6, describes studies in Glacier Bay that suggest the possibility that local populations may be more local than is generally believed.

There is considerable scientific literature supporting the importance of BOFFs to fish populations. I've lost the citation for a recent one that indicates BOFFs are important to the recovery of a species after depletion (unless depletion is extreme) and to seeing a population through periods of environmental difficulty. Here's the cite for another paper:

**BOFFs: on the importance of conserving old-growth age structure in fishery populations**

Mark A. Hixon, Darren W Johnson, and Susan M. Sogard, ICES Journal of Marine Science, 2014, 71:2171-2185.



NPFMC comments - NOAA Service Account &lt;npfmc.comments@noaa.gov&gt;

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**Re; Further restrictions in area 3a**

2 messages

**Leslie Pemberton** <fshonnon@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 2, 2015 at 4:39 AM

To: npfmc.comments@noaa.gov

To whom it may concern,

I have been operating out of area 3a as a charter operator since the 1980's.

I would like to see no further restrictions in our area until fair sampling is addressed.

I believe the numbers of overage in our area has to do with the unbalanced sampling in our fleet.

Based on facts, the larger vessels that fillet at sea the smaller fish, never got sampled by port samplers.

We were told to put the carcasses in totes and discard of them once in port.

Not one time did a port sampler on our larger vessel and other larger vessels have their carcasses sampled.

Being these are the smaller fish I feel this created an unfair imbalance.

All of the larger vessels would fillet their smaller fish and bring in the larger fish and that is what got sampled...The larger fish.

I support status quo this season till fair sampling is in place.

We also feel that the the non transferable permits need to be used by the permit holder or or they lose it and the leasing of permits not allowed.

Also we were lead to believe that one can only own 5 chp permits and there are numerous individual that are exceeding that amount...also by leasing other permits on top of the five ownership rule.

Please take into serious consideration these issues and especially the need for fair sampling before further restrictions are implemented.

Thank you,

Capt. Leslie Pemberton  
Puffin fishing charters  
Seward, Alaska  
99664  
[1-907-278-3346](tel:1-907-278-3346)

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Sent from my iPad

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**NPFMC comments - NOAA Service Account** <npfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Wed, Dec 2, 2015 at 4:39 AM

To: fshonnon@gmail.com

Thank you for your comment. You may submit your comments for our 2015 December meeting until Tuesday December 1st.



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## Comments and Proposals for Halibut Sportfishing in Area 3A

2 messages

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**Ninilchik Saltwater Charters** <nsccharters@yahoo.com>

Fri, Nov 20, 2015 at 1:15 PM

Reply-To: Ninilchik Saltwater Charters &lt;nsccharters@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "npfmc.comments@noaa.gov" &lt;npfmc.comments@noaa.gov&gt;

James Phillips  
Ninilchik Saltwater Charters  
[907-567-3611](tel:907-567-3611)

I am Capt. James Phillips, owner of Ninilchik Saltwater Charters PO Box 39353 Ninilchik Alaska 99639. My comments are after reading countless pages of very in-depth research and reports, besides locations it is like a one size fits all scenario. This is what I would like to bring to your attention and hope you will consider in your 2016 proposals for the Guided Charter Sport Fishing. The Halibut season for Area 3A starts in March and runs thru Nov. approximately nine months. We that Charter fish in and around the Ninilchik AK 3A Area are limited to only fishing our clients from May 1st until labor day which this year was Sept 7th 2015 approximately four months or 120 days. The reason for this is Ninilchik and Anchor Point and forty miles in either direction have no access to launching our boats other than tractor launches that opens May 1st and closes Labor Day weekend. Also if the beach is to rough they will not launch our boats. As you can see we have a unique situation which including the allocations from all of Area 3A which can fish for twice as many months as we can make the playing field unbalanced. The Area where most of our fleet fishes out of Deep Creek is area 525931 which unlike other areas of 3A about the only species of fish we have to fish for is Halibut a few salmon and Gray Cod. What I would like for the Board is to consider giving us a number of days in our four month window we can fish for Halibut. Most of the other charters I have talked to would be happy with 100 days per boat out of our 120 day season. Please let me know if this proposal would be something you might consider or at least look into.

Thank You

James Phillips

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**NPFMC comments - NOAA Service Account** <npfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Fri, Nov 20, 2015 at 1:15 PM

To: nsccharters@yahoo.com

Thank you for your comment. You may submit your comments for our 2015 December meeting until Tuesday December 1st.