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# D2 IFQ COMMITTEE REPORT

SAM CUNNINGHAM, JUNE 2022



# STAFF PRESENTATIONS

- 2022 Emergency Rule Requests
  - IFQ Temporary Transfers ([denied](#))  
Halibut Area 4 Vessel Use Caps ([FR published June 6](#))
  - NMFS updates and FAQ [webpage](#)
- IFQ Omnibus Implementation ([PR Fall 2022](#); [FR Spring 2023](#))
- Halibut RQE Funding & Catch Sharing Plan Reallocation ([on hold](#))
- Medical Transfer Provision Waivers for 2020-2022 ([NMFS action](#))
- Halibut Area 4 Vessel Use Cap Amendment ([April 2022 proposal](#))
- IFQ Task List ([March 2022](#))



# DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

## Small Sablefish Release

The Committee recommends that the Council put the small sablefish release initial review on the agenda for action at a future meeting and noted that it is a priority for the Committee and the industry

- Presuming low mortality of released sablefish
- Maximize value of the resource
- Not supportive of a minimum size limit



# DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

## Area 4 Halibut Vessel Use Cap

The Committee recommends that the Council initiate an analysis of modified vessel use caps for Area 4 halibut IFQ, with several options suggested

- Rationale:
  - Vessel/crew/processing availability
  - Vessel cap low relative to historical levels
  - Higher costs, lower ex-vessel prices in Area 4
  - Logistical impacts of COVID greater in Area 4
  - Need for longer trips, or larger-vessel trips farther from remote communities
  - Would improve CDQ harvest and entry-level opportunity
- “Analysis” RE: targeting 2024 implementation
- Review any action “within 3-5 years”
- Separate the issue of “treating 4B CQE like CDQ”



# DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

## Area 4 Halibut Vessel Use Cap

The Committee recommends that the Council initiate an analysis of modified vessel use caps for Area 4 halibut IFQ, with several options suggested

- Proposed options:
  1. Area 4 cap = 4% to 6% of 4ABCD IFQ catch limit
  2. Area 4 cap = “coastwide cap” + 50%
  3. A separate vessel cap for fishing in Area 4
- Questions
  - How to implement caps for vessels that fish inside/outside Area 4?
  - Are the issues triggering the proposals permanent?
  - 4ABCD vs. 4CD?
- Priority: regulations should not dictate “sequence” of fishing by area

} Requires rules about Area 4 vs. non-Area 4 catch



# DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

## Medical Transfer Limitation

The Committee recommends that NMFS proceed with the regulatory package, as proposed, to specify that medical transfers in 2020 and 2021 do not count against IFQ Program limit on the use of medical transfers

- Generally supportive of including 2022 but not unanimous
- Cited possible confusion about using medical transfers or emergency rule provisions during COVID years
  - Noted that medical transfer provision was modified in March 2020
- Acknowledge that many businesses are in full operation in 2022, but that many individuals continue to have health concerns



# OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED

## **Allow onboard processing of sablefish B&C shares**

- Supported but did not prioritize
- Tool for operators seeing high catch limits and limited processor availability
- Direct-marketing benefits the Alaska seafood brand
- May detract from IFQ Prog. objective of landing fish shoreside

## **Dividing QS blocks**

- Example of a previous proposal that could help new entrants
- Block regulations based on old QS/IFQ ratios
- Access and intergenerational transfer issues could be highlighted in 2023 IFQ Program Review



# OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED

## **Extend sablefish season**

- Large quotas to catch; increase fresh market opportunities
- Low crab quotas → IFQ/crab vessels don't need to start as early
- Other factors affect timing of fishing: processors willing to buy; other fisheries; weather
- Implications for NMFS RAM, cost recovery
- Questions: Biol. effect of fishing on spawners? fish quality? creates halibut regulatory discards?

## **Medical transfers for individuals who can hire a skipper**

- Circumstances where IFQ stranded because skipper/vessel not available but initial issue & vessel owner is not eligible to use med. transfer provision



# OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED

## **Access to offloads and grading**

- Reduced access to plants under COVID protocols
- Seeking access to hanging weights or round weights, at least

## **Full retention of sablefish**

- IFQ holders retain sablefish in PCod pots
- Anecdotes of more sablefish showing up in PCod pots than in the past
- Other factors that prevent IFQ retention: delivery to tenders; delivery to shoreplant at night



# AP MOTIONS

- 1. Analyze Modification of Halibut Vessel Use Cap in Area 4**
  - Options that allow additional caps space in 4ABCD or 4BCD
  - Similarly increase the amount of Area 4B CQE-derived IFQ that can be harvested on a vessel
  - Review any action 3 years after implementation
- 2. Schedule next Initial Review of Small Sablefish Release**

