

the release policy makes it difficult to evaluate who will be in the selection pool in a given period. The Committee discussed using a registration system, whereby vessels would notify the agency when they intended to fish, but also reiterated earlier discussions about shortfalls in the reliability of such a system.

The OAC also makes the following comments and recommendations on other aspects of the ADP. **Overall, the majority of the OAC supports the 2014 ADP, while continuing to support the need to improve some aspects of the restructured observer program.** One committee member conveyed they do not support the 2014 ADP because the sampling fraction problem in the vessel selection pool is not being addressed adequately.

The OAC discussed the vessel selection sampling plan for 2014, especially in relation to the difference in anticipated versus actual sampling rate in the vessel selection pool. The agency reported that they will likely only achieve about half of the observed trips that they were hoping for in the vessel selection pool for 2013, even though they are over-selecting vessels for coverage in each period. **The OAC recognizes that the actual sampling rate in the vessel selection pool is a concern.** Members of the Committee offered various suggestions for addressing this issue, both immediately (for 2014) or on a longer term basis. For example, all fixed gear boats could be moved into the vessel selection category, which would address data and fairness issues with having only a few boats (that can accommodate an observer) in the current vessel selection pool representing a very large portion of the data collected. Another solution would be to provide an electronic monitoring alternative in the vessel selection pool, either through the NMFS pilot program, or through an experimental fishing permit if developed and approved. Rescinding the conditional release policy could also address this issue, and perhaps a vessel registration system would help, if designed to provide reliable data. The OAC also discussed whether registration for State water fisheries would provide an additional information source for when and where vessels may be fishing.

The OAC endorses the alternative salmon genetic sampling approach that is incorporated in the 2014 ADP. The Committee discussion noted that the new approach probably results in better data, although missing catch from tender deliveries continues to be a problem (see discussion above). A member of the Committee noted that once the non-pollock trawl regulations for full retention of Chinook salmon go into effect, the Council may want to reconsider sampling practices on non-pollock trawl vessels with full observer coverage, so that all Chinook salmon that are encountered are sampled.

Another issue discussed by the OAC relates to the process for making changes to the ADP. There is not much time between the June meeting (where the program review is presented) and the October meeting (for which the draft ADP is prepared) for the agency to respond with detailed evaluations of any Council recommendations. The OAC chair and the agency both noted that this is the first time we are engaging in this process. In order to improve the agency's ability to respond accurately to Council intent, the chair identified the importance of ensuring that the language of OAC recommendations and Council motions is clear. There was additional comment about whether the focus of the Observer Science Committee (OSC), as a science group, is by nature too narrow and not capable of providing a more balanced review of social and economic factors that proposed changes to the ADP are intended to address. It was suggested that the process should be modified to allow a more balanced review of requests.

Other issues

Voluntary observer coverage for clean up IFQ trips involving multiple regulatory areas

The OAC discussed the need for a regulatory amendment to address a NMFS IFQ regulation that prohibits a vessel from having more IFQ species onboard than the IFQ holder has remaining quota for in a single regulatory area, unless an observer is onboard. Under the old program, in order to avoid having to

make multiple trips (and engendering prohibitive costs) to conduct clean up fisheries in multiple regulatory areas, a vessel could choose to pay for an observer to come on the trip. This self-selection of observer coverage is not allowed under the restructured program, so if a vessel doesn't get selected for observer coverage, it is unable to fish its remaining quota amounts in multiple regulatory areas on a single trip. The Committee's discussion noted that the observer is primarily a compliance agent in this instance, so other compliance solutions might more appropriately and inexpensively meet this need. For example, the OAC learned that under the IPHC regulations in Area 4A-B-C-D, a vessel can choose to either carry an observer or use VMS in such instances, as long as catch from each regulatory area is clearly distinguishable (e.g., fin clips, colored bands tied around the fish, or fish stored in different bins or holds). **The OAC recommends that this issue be added to this list of potential regulatory amendments in the Council-tasked discussion paper, for further scoping and action.** The Committee notes, however, that this may in fact be as much an issue for the IFQ Implementation Committee, as an observer issue.

NMFS letter on 2014 EM pilot program

The Committee had many questions about NMFS' proposal for moving 14 vessels that participate in the 2014 EM pilot program into the zero selection pool. On learning that many of the details of this proposal remain undetermined, and that the agency is looking to the Council for guidance, **the OAC offers the following comments.**

- Noting the Council's existing priority for developing EM is the 40-57.5' fleet that is not restricted by PSC limits, these vessels should be the first priority for the 2014 pilot program. Secondary priorities can be determined by seeing how other fleets would match against pilot program monitoring objectives.
- Focus on vessels that have already been released from the requirement to have a human observer, or go back to the Council's April 2012 comment letter that linked the release from coverage after random selection to the offer of an EM unit. In this way, the EM program would provide data on vessels that would not otherwise be in the program, rather than reducing the pool of vessels that would otherwise have coverage.
- Get as much utility from the camera units during the year as possible, including deployment on multiple vessels. For example, consider deploying in the small boat Pacific cod A season, until vessels switch to salmon fishing. Need to clarify whether only the 14 vessels identified at the beginning of the year will be placed in the zero selection category, or whether that applies to any vessel on which the cameras are placed during the year.
- Be transparent about the objectives of the 2014 EM pilot program, as a way to determine which are the best vessels to participate. For example, is the objective to observe a vessel that is spending most of its time fishing, in order to assess how a lot of data can be processed; to see how easily (or not) cameras can be transferred among vessels; or to see how physically robust the camera systems are when they are used throughout the year in different weather conditions. Prioritize cameras for those vessels whose fishing characteristics are most likely to achieve the stated objectives.

§ 679.7 Prohibitions

the CDQ group's PSQ for *C. bairdi* Tanner crab in Zone 2 is attained.

(C) COBLZ. For the operator of a vessel, to use trawl gear to harvest groundfish CDQ in the *C. opilio* Bycatch Limitation Zone after the CDQ group's PSQ for *C. opilio* Tanner crab is attained.

(ii) Salmon

(A) Discard of salmon. For any person, to discard salmon from a catcher vessel, catcher/processor, mothership, shoreside processor, or SFP or transfer or process any salmon under the PSD Program at § 679.26, if the salmon were taken incidental to a directed fishery for pollock CDQ in the Bering Sea, until the number of salmon has been determined by an observer and the collection of scientific data or biological samples from the salmon has been completed.

(B) Non-Chinook salmon. For the operator of a vessel, to use trawl gear to harvest pollock CDQ in the Chum Salmon Savings Area between September 1 and October 14 after the CDQ group's non-Chinook salmon PSQ is attained, unless the vessel is participating in a non-Chinook salmon bycatch reduction ICA under § 679.21(g).

(C) Chinook salmon.

(1) Overages of Chinook salmon PSC allocations. For a CDQ group, to exceed a Chinook salmon PSC allocation issued under § 679.21(f) as of June 25 for the A season allocation and as of December 1 for the B season allocation.

(2) For the operator of a catcher vessel or catcher/processor, to start a new fishing trip for pollock CDQ in the BS in the A season or in the B season, if the CDQ group for which the vessel is fishing has exceeded its Chinook salmon PSC allocation issued under § 679.21(f) for that season.

(3) For the operator of a catcher/processor or mothership, to catch or process pollock CDQ in the BS without complying with the applicable requirements of § 679.28(j).

(4) For the operator of a catcher/processor or a mothership, to begin sorting catch from a haul from a directed fishery for pollock CDQ in the BS before the observer has completed counting the salmon and collecting scientific data or biological samples from the previous haul.

(5) For the operator of a catcher vessel, to deliver pollock CDQ to a shoreside processor or stationary floating processor that does not have a catch monitoring and control plan approved under § 679.28(g).

(6) For the manager of a shoreside processor or stationary floating processor, to begin sorting a pollock CDQ offload before the observer has completed the count of salmon and the collection of scientific data or biological samples from the previous offload.

(6) For a CDQ group, exceed a seasonal allowance of Pacific cod under § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B).

(7) For a CDQ group, exceed a seasonal allowance of Atka mackerel under § 679.20(a)(8)(ii).

(e) [Reserved]

(f) IFQ fisheries.

(1) Fail to submit, or submit inaccurate information on, any report, application, or statement required under this part.

(2) Intentionally submit false information on any report, application, or statement required under this part.

(3) (i) Halibut.

(A) Retain halibut caught with fixed gear without a valid IFQ permit, and if using a hired master, without an IFQ hired master permit in the name of an individual aboard.

(B) Retain halibut caught with fixed gear without a valid CDQ permit and without a CDQ hired master permit in the name of an individual aboard.

(ii) Sablefish. Retain sablefish caught with fixed gear without a valid IFQ permit, and if using a hired master, without an IFQ hired master permit in the name of an individual aboard, unless fishing on behalf of a CDQ group.

(4) Except as provided in § 679.40(d), retain IFQ or CDQ halibut or IFQ or CDQ sablefish on a vessel in excess of the total amount of unharvested IFQ or CDQ, applicable to the vessel category and IFQ or CDQ regulatory area(s) in which the vessel is deploying fixed gear, and that is currently held by all IFQ or CDQ permit holders aboard the vessel, unless the vessel has

→ 10% adjustment policy

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§ 679.7 Prohibitions

an observer aboard under subpart E of this part and maintains the applicable daily fishing log prescribed in the annual management measures published in the *Federal Register* pursuant to § 300.62 of this title and § 679.5.

(5) Possess, buy, sell, or transport IFQ or CDQ halibut or IFQ sablefish harvested or landed in violation of any provision of this part.

(6) Landing.

(i) IFQ permit or IFQ hired master permit. Make an IFQ landing without an IFQ permit or IFQ hired master permit, as appropriate, in the name of the individual making the landing.

(ii) Hired master, CDQ. Make a CDQ halibut landing without a CDQ hired master permit listing the name of the hired master.

(iii) Hired master, CDQ halibut. Make a CDQ halibut landing without a CDQ hired master permit listing the name of the hired master.

(7) Possess on a vessel or land IFQ sablefish concurrently with non-IFQ sablefish, except that CDQ

sablefish may be possessed on a vessel and landed concurrently with IFQ sablefish.

(8) Discard.

(i) In the GOA.

(A) Rockfish that are taken when IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish are on board unless rockfish are required to be discarded under subpart B of this part.

(B) Pacific cod that are taken when IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish are on board unless Pacific cod are required to be discarded under subpart B of this part, or Pacific cod are not authorized to be retained under subpart A of this part.

(ii) In the BSAI.

(A) Rockfish that are taken when IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish are on board unless rockfish are required to be discarded under subpart B of this part.

(B) Pacific cod that are taken when IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish are on board according to the following table:

If the vessel operator...	Then...
(1) has an LLP groundfish license with a Pacific cod endorsement that meets the requirements of § 679.4(k)(9)	Pacific cod must not be discarded unless Pacific cod are required to be discarded under subpart B of this part, or Pacific cod are not authorized to be retained under subpart A of this part
(2) does not have an LLP groundfish license with a Pacific cod endorsement that meets the requirements of § 679.4(k)(9).	Pacific cod must not be discarded up to the retainable amount specified in Table 11 of this part unless Pacific cod are required to be discarded under subpart B of this part, or Pacific cod are not authorized to be retained under subpart A of this part.

(iii) In the waters within the State of Alaska:

(A) Rockfish that are taken when IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish are on board unless rockfish are required to be discarded by the laws of the State of Alaska.

(B) Pacific cod that are taken when IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish are on board unless Pacific cod are required to be discarded by the laws of the State of Alaska.

(9) Harvest on any vessel more IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish than are authorized under § 679.42.

(10) Make an IFQ halibut, IFQ sablefish, or CDQ halibut landing other than directly to (or by) a Registered Buyer.

(11) Discard halibut or sablefish caught with fixed gear from any catcher vessel when any IFQ permit holder aboard holds unused halibut or sablefish IFQ for that vessel category and the IFQ regulatory area in which the vessel is operating, unless:

(i) Discard of halibut is required as prescribed in the annual management measures published in the *Federal Register* pursuant to § 300.62 of chapter III of this title;

(11) A copy of the fish tickets or catch reports referred to in paragraphs (5), (6), and (9) shall be:

(a) retained by the person making them for a period of three years from the date the fish tickets or catch reports are made; and

(b) open to inspection by an authorized officer or any authorized representative of the Commission.

(12) No person shall possess any halibut taken or retained in contravention of these Regulations.

(13) When halibut are landed to other than a commercial fish processor, the records required by paragraph (6) shall be maintained by the operator of the vessel from which that halibut was caught, in compliance with paragraph (11).

(14) No person shall tag halibut unless the tagging is authorized by IPHC permit or by a Federal or State agency.

18. Fishing Multiple Regulatory Areas

(1) Except as provided in this section, no person shall possess at the same time on board a vessel halibut caught in more than one regulatory area.

(2) Halibut caught in more than one of the Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, or 3B may be possessed on board a vessel at the same time, provided the operator of the vessel:

(a) has a NMFS-certified observer on board when required by NMFS regulations⁵ published at 50 CFR 679.7(f)(4); and

(b) can identify the regulatory area in which each halibut on board was caught by separating halibut from different areas in the hold, tagging halibut, or by other means.

(3) Halibut caught in more than one of the Regulatory Areas 4A, 4B, 4C, or 4D may be possessed on board a vessel at the same time, provided the operator of the vessel:

(a) has a NMFS-certified observer on board the vessel as required by NMFS regulations published at 50 CFR 679.7(f)(4); or has an operational VMS on board actively transmitting in all regulatory areas fished and does not possess at any time more halibut on board the vessel than the IFQ permit holders on board the vessel have cumulatively available for any single Area 4 regulatory area fished; and

(b) can identify the regulatory area in which each halibut on board was caught by separating halibut from different areas in the hold, tagging halibut, or by other means.

⁵ Without an observer, a vessel cannot have on board more halibut than the IFQ for the area that is being fished, even if some of the catch occurred earlier in a different area.

(4) If halibut from Area 4 are on board the vessel, the vessel can have halibut caught in Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, and 3B on board if in compliance with paragraph (2).

19. Fishing Gear

(1) No person shall fish for halibut using any gear other than hook and line gear, except that vessels licensed to catch sablefish in Area 2B using sablefish trap gear as defined in the Condition of Sablefish Licence can retain halibut caught as bycatch under regulations promulgated by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

(2) No person shall possess halibut taken with any gear other than hook and line gear, except that vessels licensed to catch sablefish in Area 2B using sablefish trap gear as defined by the Condition of Sablefish Licence can retain halibut caught as bycatch under regulations promulgated by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

(3) No person shall possess halibut while on board a vessel carrying any trawl nets or fishing pots capable of catching halibut, except that in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, or 4E, halibut heads, skin, entrails, bones or fins for use as bait may be possessed on board a vessel carrying pots capable of catching halibut, provided that a receipt documenting purchase or transfer of these halibut parts is on board the vessel.

(4) All setline or skate marker buoys carried on board or used by any United States vessel used for halibut fishing shall be marked with one of the following:

(a) the vessel's State license number; or

(b) the vessel's registration number.

(5) The markings specified in paragraph (4) shall be in characters at least four inches in height and one-half inch in width in a contrasting color visible above the water and shall be maintained in legible condition.

(6) All setline or skate marker buoys carried on board or used by a Canadian vessel used for halibut fishing shall be:

(a) floating and visible on the surface of the water; and

(b) legibly marked with the identification plate number of the vessel engaged in commercial fishing from which that setline is being operated.

(7) No person on board a vessel used to fish for any species of fish anywhere in Area 2A during the 72-hour period immediately before the fishing period for the directed commercial halibut fishery shall catch or possess halibut anywhere in those waters during that

halibut fishing period unless, prior to the start of the halibut fishing period, the vessel has removed its gear from the water and has either:

(a) made a landing and completely offloaded its catch of other fish; or

(b) submitted to a hold inspection by an authorized officer.

(8) No vessel used to fish for any species of fish anywhere in Area 2A during the 72-hour period immediately before the fishing period for the directed halibut commercial fishery may be used to catch or possess halibut anywhere in those waters during that halibut fishing period unless, prior to the start of the halibut fishing period, the vessel has removed its gear from the water and has either:

(a) made a landing and completely offloaded its catch of other fish; or

(b) submitted to a hold inspection by an authorized officer.

(9) No person on board a vessel from which setline gear was used to fish for any species of fish anywhere in Areas 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, or 4E during the 72-hour period immediately before the opening of the halibut fishing season shall catch or possess halibut anywhere in those areas until the vessel has removed all of its setline gear from the water and has either:

(a) made a landing and completely offloaded its entire catch of other fish; or

(b) submitted to a hold inspection by an authorized officer.

(10) No vessel from which setline gear was used to fish for any species of fish anywhere in Areas 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, or 4E during the 72-hour period immediately before the opening of the halibut fishing season may be used to catch or possess halibut anywhere in those areas until the vessel has removed all of its setline gear from the water and has either:

(a) made a landing and completely offloaded its entire catch of other fish; or

(b) submitted to a hold inspection by an authorized officer.

(11) Notwithstanding any other provision in these Regulations, a person may retain, possess and dispose of halibut taken with trawl gear only as authorized by Prohibited Species Donation regulations of NMFS.

20. Supervision of Unloading and Weighing

The unloading and weighing of halibut may be subject to the supervision of authorized officers to assure the fulfillment of the provisions of these Regulations.

the mouth closed, to the extreme end of the middle of the tail, as illustrated in Figure 2; or

(b) with the head removed, is less than 24 inches (61.0 cm) as measured from the base of the pectoral fin at its most anterior point to the extreme end of the middle of the tail, as illustrated in Figure 2.

(2) No person on board a vessel fishing for, or tendering, halibut caught in Area 2A shall possess any halibut that has had its head removed.

14. Careful Release of Halibut

(1) All halibut that are caught and are not retained shall be immediately released outboard of the roller and returned to the sea with a minimum of injury by:

(a) hook straightening;

(b) cutting the gangion near the hook; or

(c) carefully removing the hook by twisting it from the halibut with a gaff.

(2) Except that paragraph (1) shall not prohibit the possession of halibut on board a vessel that has been brought aboard to be measured to determine if the minimum size limit of the halibut is met and, if sublegal-sized, is promptly returned to the sea with a minimum of injury.

15. Vessel Clearance in Area 4

(1) The operator of any vessel that fishes for halibut in Areas 4A, 4B, 4C, or 4D must obtain a vessel clearance before fishing in any of these areas, and before the landing of any halibut caught in any of these areas, unless specifically exempted in paragraphs (10), (13), (14), (15), or (16).

(2) An operator obtaining a vessel clearance required by paragraph (1) must obtain the clearance in person from the authorized clearance personnel and sign the IPHC form documenting that a clearance was obtained, except that when the clearance is obtained via VHF radio referred to in paragraphs (5), (8), and (9), the authorized clearance personnel must sign the IPHC form documenting that the clearance was obtained.

(3) The vessel clearance required under paragraph (1) prior to fishing in Area 4A may be obtained only at Nazan Bay on Atka Island, Dutch Harbor or Akutan, Alaska, from an authorized officer of the United States, a representative of the Commission, or a designated fish processor.

(4) The vessel clearance required under paragraph (1) prior to fishing in Area 4B may only be obtained at Nazan Bay on Atka Island or Adak, Alaska, from an authorized officer of the United States, a representative of the

Commission, or a designated fish processor.

(5) The vessel clearance required under paragraph (1) prior to fishing in Area 4C or 4D may be obtained only at St. Paul or St. George, Alaska, from an authorized officer of the United States, a representative of the Commission, or a designated fish processor by VHF radio and allowing the person contacted to confirm visually the identity of the vessel.

(6) The vessel operator shall specify the specific regulatory area in which fishing will take place.

(7) Before unloading any halibut caught in Area 4A, a vessel operator may obtain the clearance required under paragraph (1) only in Dutch Harbor or Akutan, Alaska, by contacting an authorized officer of the United States, a representative of the Commission, or a designated fish processor.

(8) Before unloading any halibut caught in Area 4B, a vessel operator may obtain the clearance required under paragraph (1) only in Nazan Bay on Atka Island or Adak, by contacting an authorized officer of the United States, a representative of the Commission, or a designated fish processor by VHF radio or in person.

(9) Before unloading any halibut caught in Area 4C and 4D, a vessel operator may obtain the clearance required under paragraph (1) only in St. Paul, St. George, Dutch Harbor, or Akutan, Alaska, either in person or by contacting an authorized officer of the United States, a representative of the Commission, or a designated fish processor. The clearances obtained in St. Paul or St. George, Alaska, can be obtained by VHF radio and allowing the person contacted to confirm visually the identity of the vessel.

(10) Any vessel operator who complies with the requirements in section 18 for possessing halibut on board a vessel that was caught in more than one regulatory area in Area 4 is exempt from the clearance requirements of paragraph (1) of this section, provided that:

(a) the operator of the vessel obtains a vessel clearance prior to fishing in Area 4 in either Dutch Harbor, Akutan, St. Paul, St. George, Adak, or Nazan Bay on Atka Island by contacting an authorized officer of the United States, a representative of the Commission, or a designated fish processor. The clearance obtained in St. Paul, St. George, Adak, or Nazan Bay on Atka Island can be obtained by VHF radio and allowing the person contacted to confirm visually the identity of the vessel. This clearance will list the areas in which the vessel will fish; and

(b) before unloading any halibut from Area 4, the vessel operator obtains a vessel clearance from Dutch Harbor, Akutan, St. Paul, St. George, Adak, or Nazan Bay on Atka Island by contacting an authorized officer of the United States, a representative of the Commission, or a designated fish processor. The clearance obtained in St. Paul or St. George can be obtained by VHF radio and allowing the person contacted to confirm visually the identity of the vessel. The clearance obtained in Adak or Nazan Bay on Atka Island can be obtained by VHF radio.

(11) Vessel clearances shall be obtained between 0600 and 1800 hours, local time.

(12) No halibut shall be on board the vessel at the time of the clearances required prior to fishing in Area 4.

(13) Any vessel that is used to fish for halibut only in Area 4A and lands its total annual halibut catch at a port within Area 4A is exempt from the clearance requirements of paragraph (1).

(14) Any vessel that is used to fish for halibut only in Area 4B and lands its total annual halibut catch at a port within Area 4B is exempt from the clearance requirements of paragraph (1).

(15) Any vessel that is used to fish for halibut only in Area 4C or 4D or 4E and lands its total annual halibut catch at a port within Area 4C, 4D, 4E, or the closed area defined in section 10, is exempt from the clearance requirements of paragraph (1).

(16) Any vessel that carries a transmitting VMS transmitter while fishing for halibut in Area 4A, 4B, 4C, or 4D and until all halibut caught in any of these areas is landed, is exempt from the clearance requirements of paragraph (1) of this section, provided that:

(a) the operator of the vessel complies with NMFS' vessel monitoring system regulations published at 50 CFR 679.28(f)(3), (4) and (5); and

(b) the operator of the vessel notifies NOAA Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement at 800-304-4846 (select option 1 to speak to an Enforcement Data Clerk) between the hours of 0600 and 0000 (midnight) local time within 72 hours before fishing for halibut in Area 4A, 4B, 4C, or 4D and receives a VMS confirmation number.

16. Logs

(1) The operator of any U.S. vessel fishing for halibut that has an overall length of 26 feet (7.9 meters) or greater shall maintain an accurate log of halibut fishing operations. The operator of a vessel fishing in waters in and off Alaska must use one of the following logbooks: the Groundfish/IFQ Daily Fishing Longline and Pot Gear Logbook