

IPHC Catch Limit Comment Form

Comment on Regulatory Area: 2A/2B/2C/3A/3B/4A/4B/4CDE Year: 2006 _____
 (Circle all that apply)

Submission Information (Please print or type)

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Signature: 

1. What is your recommended catch limit or proposal?

I am proposing a 5.4% reduction in the catch limit going from the recommended 13,220,000 pounds to 12,500,000 pounds resulting in an 11,000,000 Commercial Catch Limit and a 1,500,000 Recreational Catch Ceiling.

2. What is the supporting information for this recommendation (e.g., catch rates, biomass trends, recruitment, etc.)? Please be specific where possible.

Commercial CPUE has declined to it's lowest level since 1993, as has Setline Survey CPUE. Concern over inshore rockfish has caused changes in fleet behavior with vessels shifting to less productive ground in the summer to avoid rockfish with resulting lower CPUE. While more halibut are being caught on a small number of "hot spots" at the beginning and end of the season. The high CPUE in these areas may somehow distort what the true picture of CPUE for BC is.

The mean age of halibut in 2B has also declined to the levels of the mid 1990's, while the exploitable biomass has remained roughly the same.

In at least one of the "hot spots", where a fair amount of fishing occurs, encounters with sublegals is in the range of 1 to 1 or more for every legal fish taken. How does this compare with the rate of encounters on the Setline Surveys and may this result in an underestimation of sublegal mortality in the commercial fishery?

It is thought by some that recreational catch estimates may be on the low side, as observations by people watching on the dock indicate that large numbers of recreationally caught halibut are being landed.

Ocean conditions have been abnormal over the last year, with poor showing of fish in some areas where in the past they have been more abundant. The abnormal ocean conditions may have adverse effects on the stock in the future.

A number of indicators are saying that fish may not be as abundant as the IPHC Stock Assessment Process indicates and that in Area 2B ocean conditions were different this year. Following the principle of precautionary management, when all the signs do not point in the same direction, a cautious approach may be warranted.

Please attach any other supporting materials. All items submitted by December 31, 2004 will be considered at the IPHC Annual Meeting. *Remember to include contact information and signature.*