


FAX - 206-632-2983 - 15 PAGES

IPHC Catch Limit Comment Form

Comment on Regulatory Area: 2A/2B/3A/3B/4A/4B/4CDE Year: 2008
(Circle all that apply)

AND GENERAL HARVEST STRATEGY

Submission Information (Please print or type)

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1. What is your recommended catch limit or proposal?

STRAWMAN ON PAGE 2

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

ATTACHED IS ONE TABLE AND ELEVEN FIGURES

Please attach any other supporting materials. All items submitted by December 31, 2007 will be considered at the IPHC Annual Meeting. *Remember to include contact information and signature.*

December 31, 2007

TO: IPHC
FROM: G. Merrigan, 2C IFQ holder
SUBJECT: 2008 Catch limit recommendations

In the world of stock assessment there are surveys, commercial catch information, and models. Fishermen understand surveys and commercial CPUE but have less understanding of the murky world of models. Usually models are accepted (by the fishing fleet) when the model follows and tracks what is being experienced on the fishing grounds – CPUE. Also given the relatively long life span of a halibut, longliners have an expectation of gradual changes in abundance

However, in the last decade, most of the significant proposed changes in catch limits have been due to changes in methodology rather than change in abundance: 1.) change in estimate of natural mortality, 2.) change due to bait study, 3.) change in harvest strategy (constant catch), and 4.) now a change in the closed area to the coastwide assessment along with new target harvest rates and area apportionments.

What is hard to understand now is the large difference and disconnect between the proposed recommendations and decline in recent CPUEs (both survey and commercial). While the overall trend is declining CPUEs, the magnitude of reduction in catch limits seems disproportional to the decline in CPUE in some areas. The proposed reductions in Area 2 seem overly large as compared to change in CPUE. Conversely, the increases (or the magnitude thereof) in Area 3B, and Area 4 seem overly large when compared to recent trends in CPUE.

Attached are one table and eleven figures – which mostly point out the disconnect between the proposed recommendations and CPUE.

Table 1: Comparison of past and proposed catch limits and CPUE.

Figure 1: Survey CPUE by Area, 1997-2007

Figure 2: Commercial CPUE by Area, 1997-2007

Figure 3: Comparison of 2C (proposed CEY decrease) to 3B, 4A, 4B (proposed CEY increase)

Figure 4: 2B – CEY and CPUE

Figure 5: 2C – CEY and CPUE

Figure 6: 3A – CEY and CPUE

Figure 7: 3B – CEY and CPUE

Figure 8: 4A – CEY and CPUE

Figure 9: 4B – CEY and CPUE

Figure 10: 4C – CEY and CPUE

Figure 11: 4D – CEY and CPUE

In making catch recommendations, the IPHC is tasked with trying to balance out the conflicting needs to:

- 1.) achieve appropriate harvest rates
- 2.) consider survey abundance
- 3.) consider biomass trends
- 4.) consider migration patterns
- 5.) consider success in commercial harvest (CPUE).

These considerations result in a tug of war between the areas – particularly when considering the tagging/migration studies and apportionment thereof.

Strawman:

2A = staff recommendation = 1.0 m lbs.

2B = -15% cut from 2007 = 9.75 m lbs (in order to get closer to appropriate harvest rate).

2C = -15% cut from 2007 = 7.23 m lbs (in order to get closer to appropriate harvest rate).

3A = -7.5% cut from 2007 = 24.24 m lbs (similar to staff recommendation) (-9% decrease in survey CPUE and no change in commercial CPUE in 2007)

3B = No change from 2007 = 9.22 m lbs (5.5% increase in survey CPUE and -13% decrease in commercial CPUE in 2007).

4A = -15% cut from 2007 = 2.46 m lbs. (decrease in survey CPUE -22% and decrease in commercial CPUE - 17% in 2007)

4B = +5% increase from 2007 = 1.51 m lbs (decrease in survey CPUE -8.5% and increase in commercial CPUE +5.5% in 2007)

4CDE = - 10% cut from 2007 = 3.69 (similar to staff proposal) (decrease in survey CPUE in 2007 -9.5% and decrease in commercial CPUE -15% in 2007.)

Total = 59.1 m lbs (or 140,000 lbs less than staff recommendation).

Table 2

Comparison of Past and Proposed Fishery Catch Limits and CPUE

Area	2007 Catch Limit	2008 Staff Coast-wide	% change 07 to 08	2008 Closed Area	% change 07 to 08	Survey CPUE: 06 to 07	Commercial CPUE: 06 to 07	Survey CPUE: 07 compared to 04-06 avg.	Commercial CPUE: 07 compared to 04-06 avg.
2A	1.34	1.00	-25%	0.99	-26%				
2B	11.47	8.06	-30%	9.2	-20%	-3.5%	-15%	-21%	-16%
2C	8.51	6.21	-27%	7.86	-7.6%	-3.0%	-6.0%	-14%	-20%
3A	26.20	24.22	-7.5%	26.5	+1.2%	-9.0%	0.0%	-18%	-8%
3B	9.22	10.90	+18%	9.57	+3.8%	+5.5%	-13%	-6%	-15%
4A	2.89	3.10	+7.3%	2.17	-25%	-22%	-17%	-39%	-27%
4B	1.44	1.86	+29%	1.55	+7.6%	-8.5%	+5.5%	+3.0%	+5.0%
4CDE	4.10	3.89	-5.1%	4.66	+14%	-9.5%	-15%	-35%	-35%
Total	65.17	59.24	-9.1%	62.5	-4.1%				

Note 1: values in bold represent an increase

Note 2: For Area 4CDE survey CPUE, only survey CPUE from Area 4D is available.

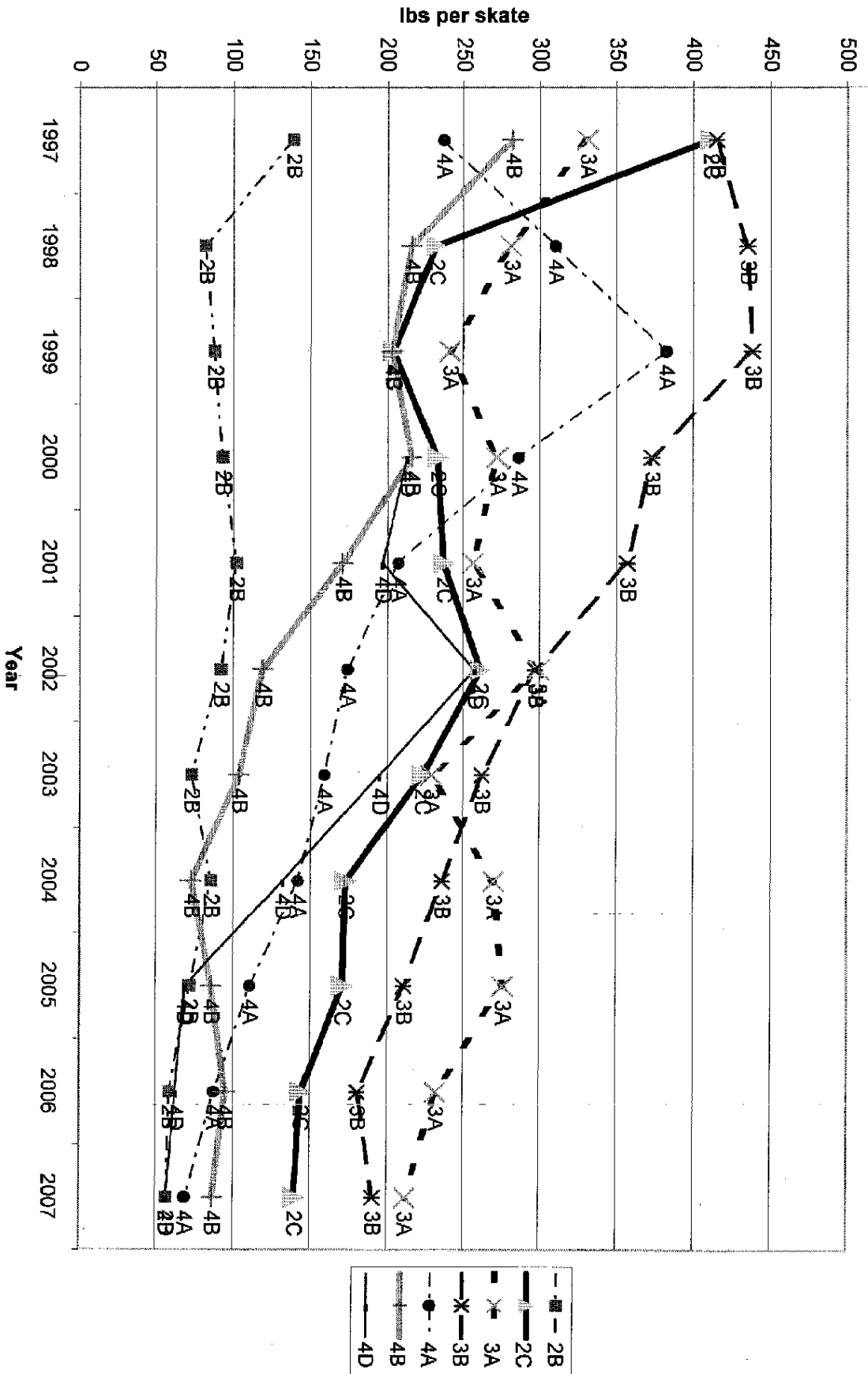
Note 3: For Area 4CDE commercial CPUE, Area 4C and 4D are averaged together.

- 2008 Staff recommendation proposes increases in 3B (+18%), 4A (+7.3%), and 4B (+29%) – despite a decline in survey CPUE (06 to 07) in all areas except 3B (+5.5%) and a decline in commercial CPUE (06 to 07) in all areas except 4B (+5.5%).
- All areas have a decline in survey 2007 CPUE when compared to the previous three year average (04-06), except Area 4B (+3.0%).
- All areas have a decline in commercial 2007 CPUE when compared to the previous three year average (04-06) except Area 4B (+5.0%).
- The proposed staff recommendations do not seem to bear much relation with survey and commercial CPUE.
- Area 4B was previously identified as being of particular concern by IPHC staff in a separate chapter in the 2006 bluebook (“Area 4B population decline – should yield be lowered?”)

Table 1

FIG 1

Survey CPUE by Area, 1997 - 2007



Plc 2

Commercial CPUE by Area, 1997-2007

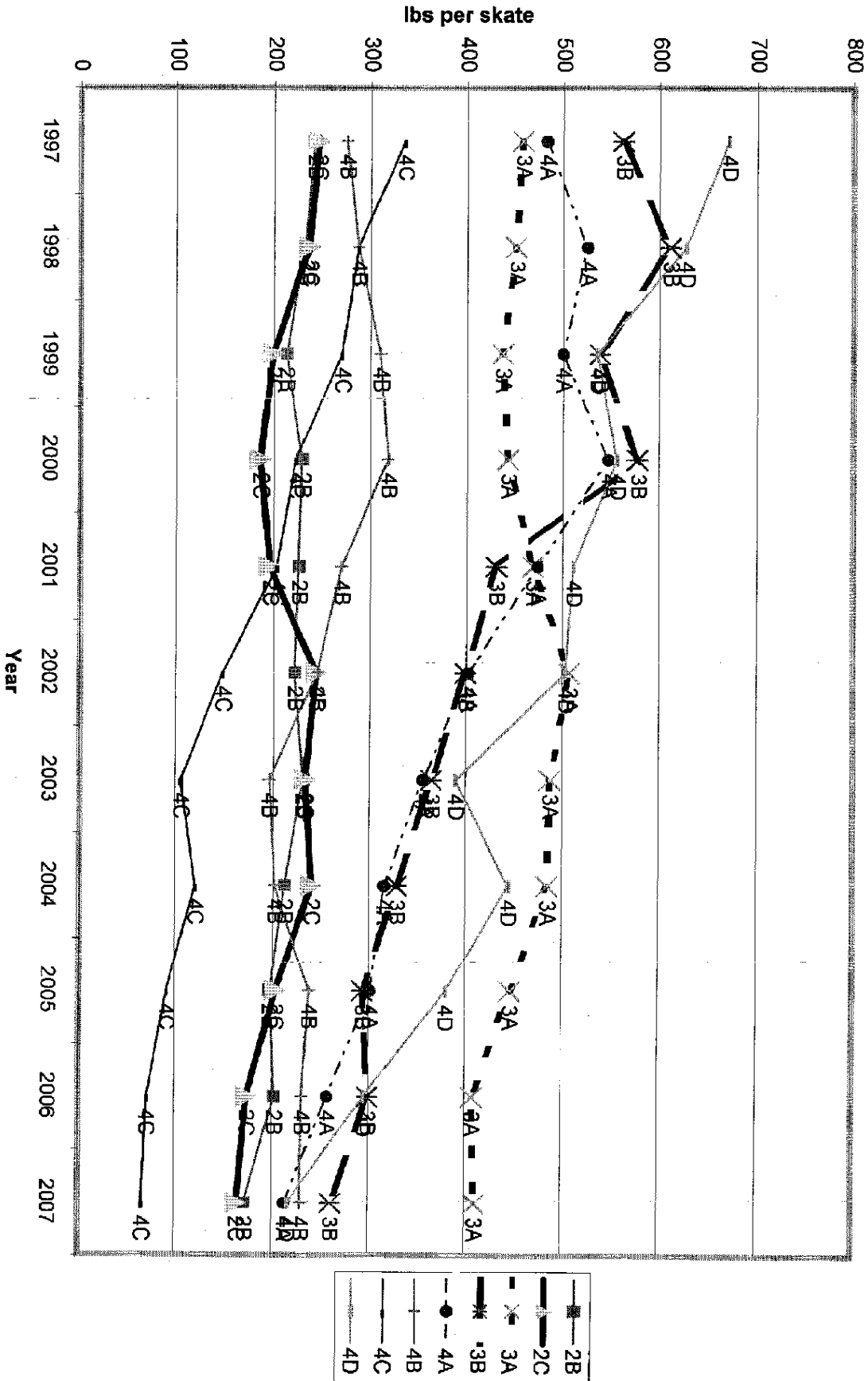


Fig 3

Comparison of Survey CPUE of 2C (proposed CEY decrease) to 3B, 4A, 4B (proposed CEY increase)

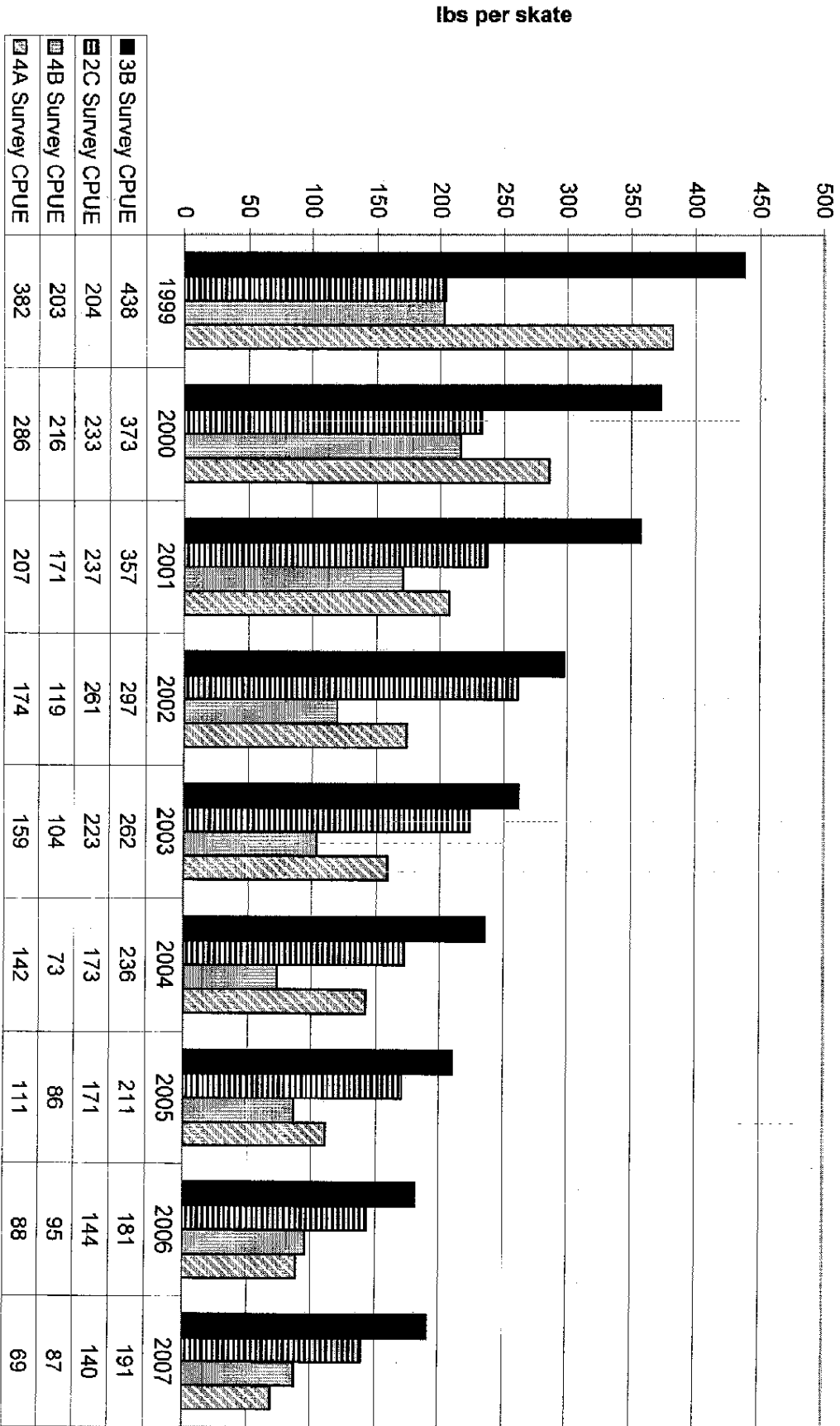
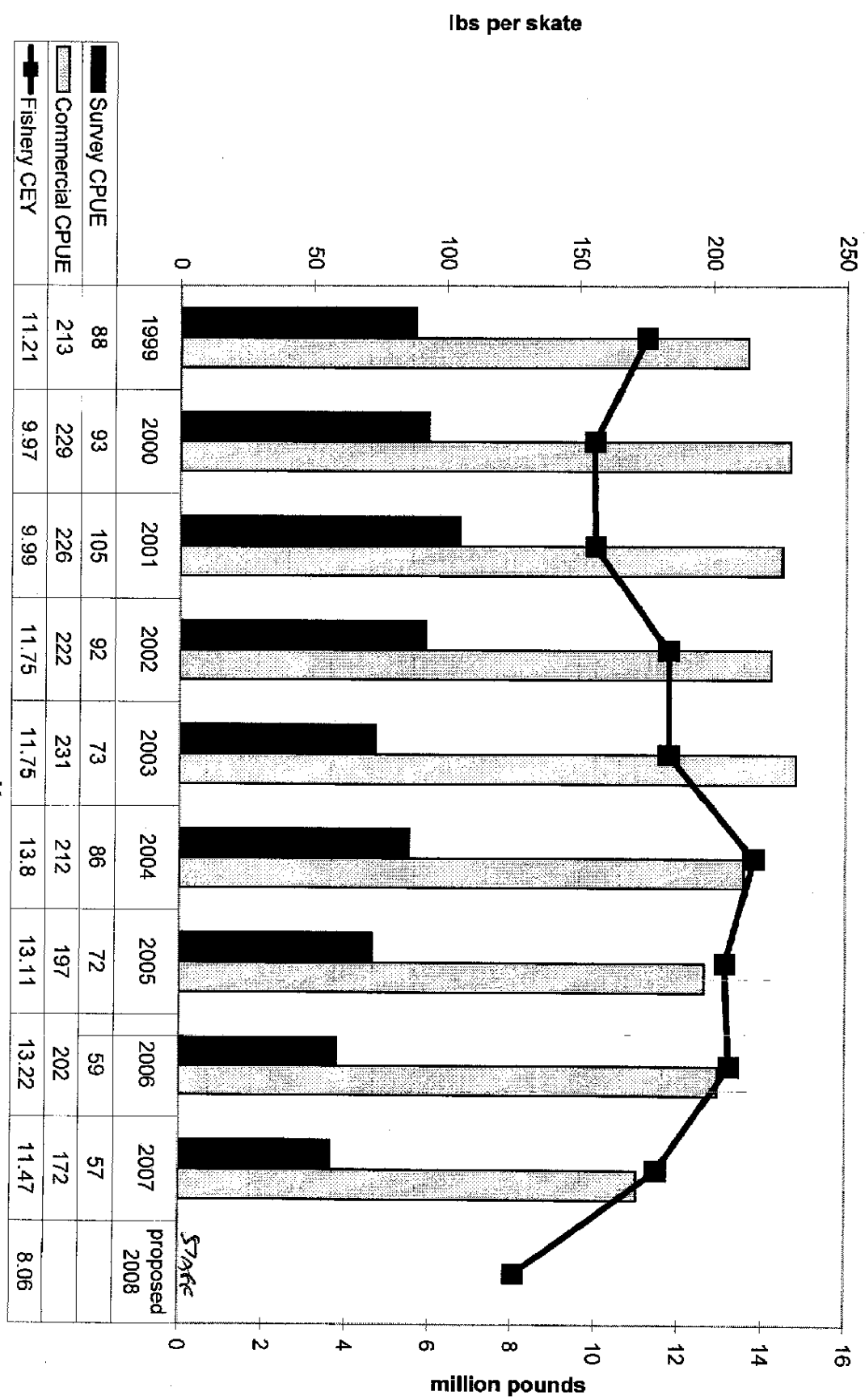


Fig 4

Chart3

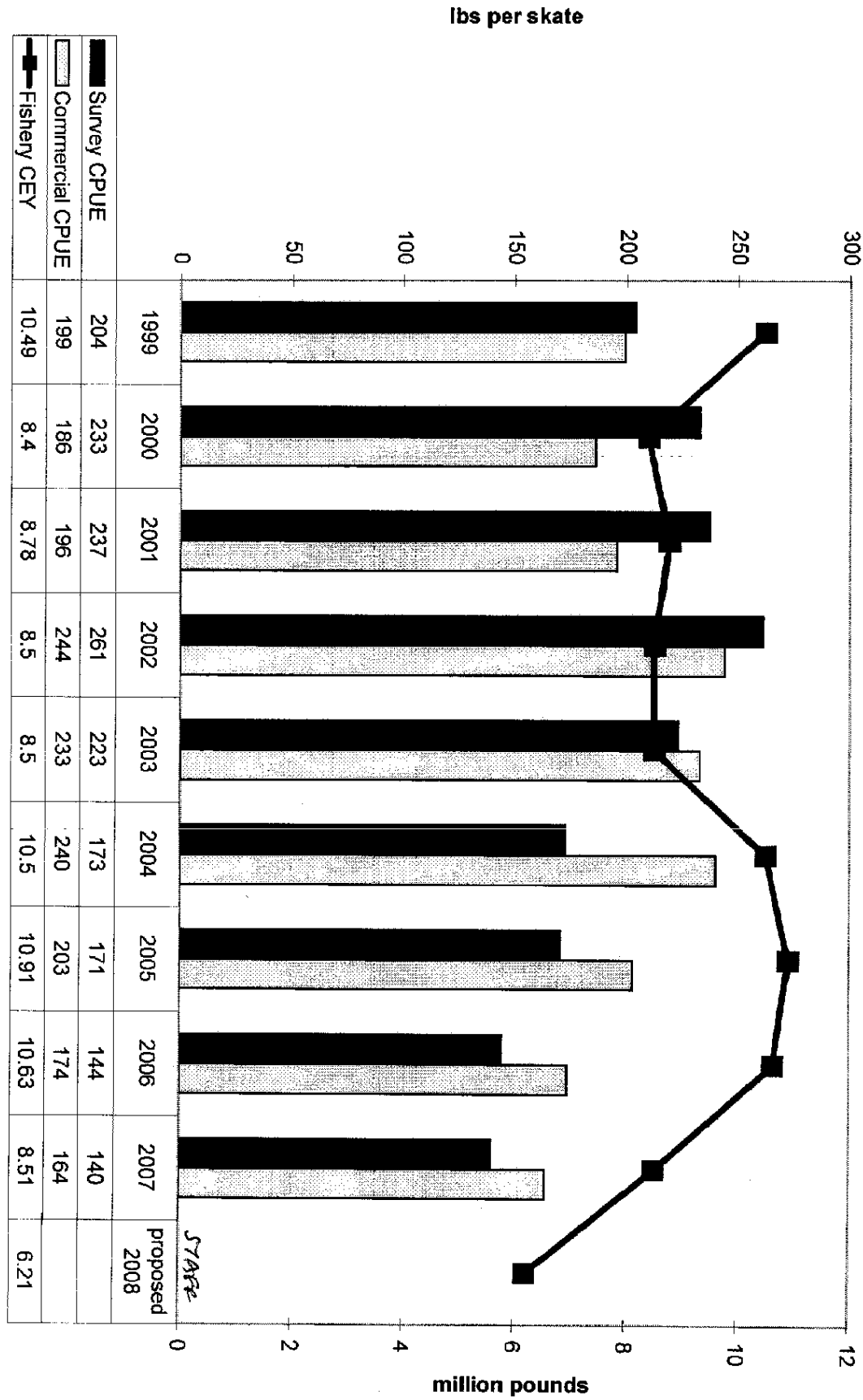
2B: CEY and CPUE



File 5

Chart3

2C: CEY and CPUE



File 6

Chart3

3A: CEY and CPUE

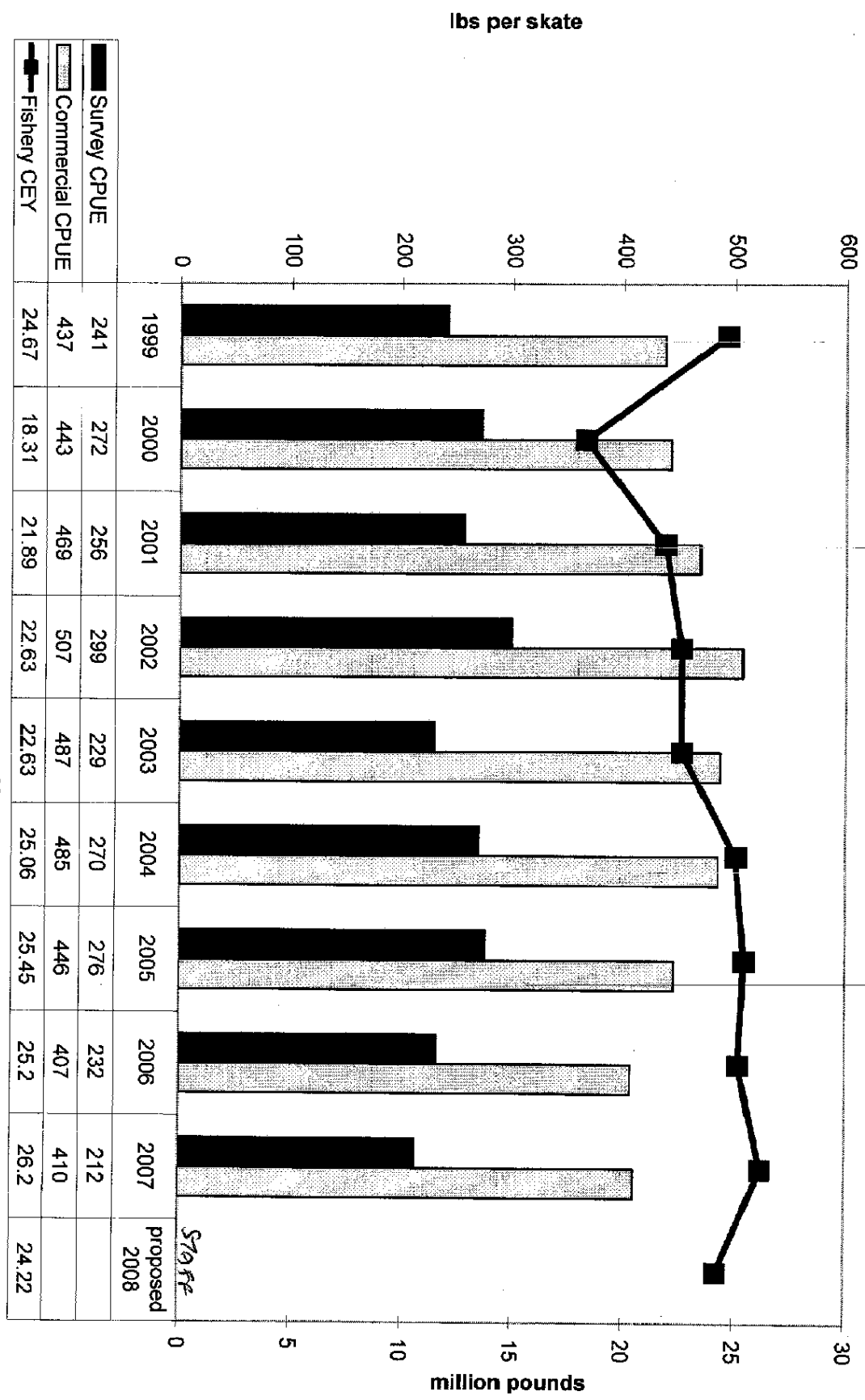


Fig 7

Chart3

3B: CEY and CPUE

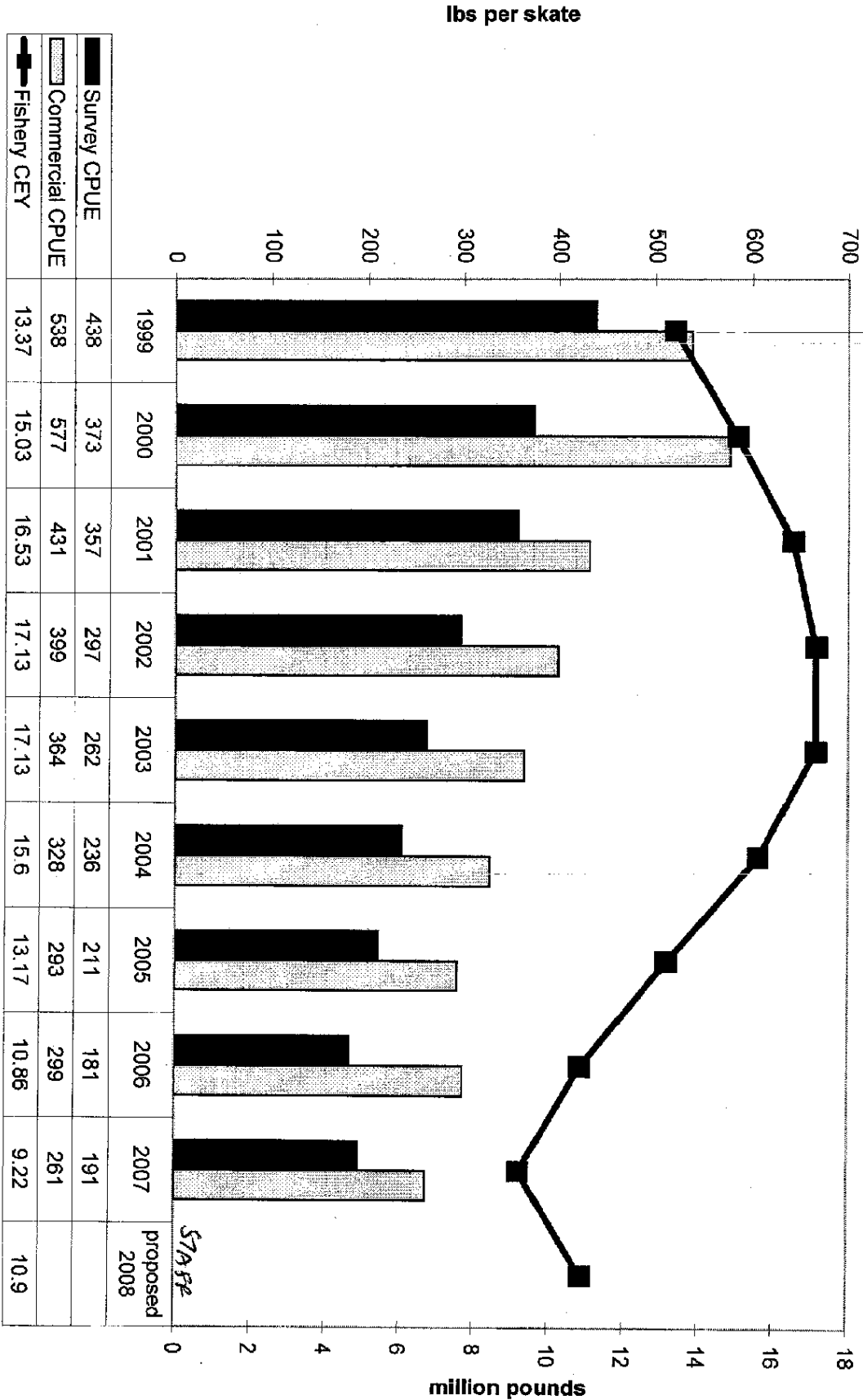


Fig 8

Chart2

4A: CEY and CPUE

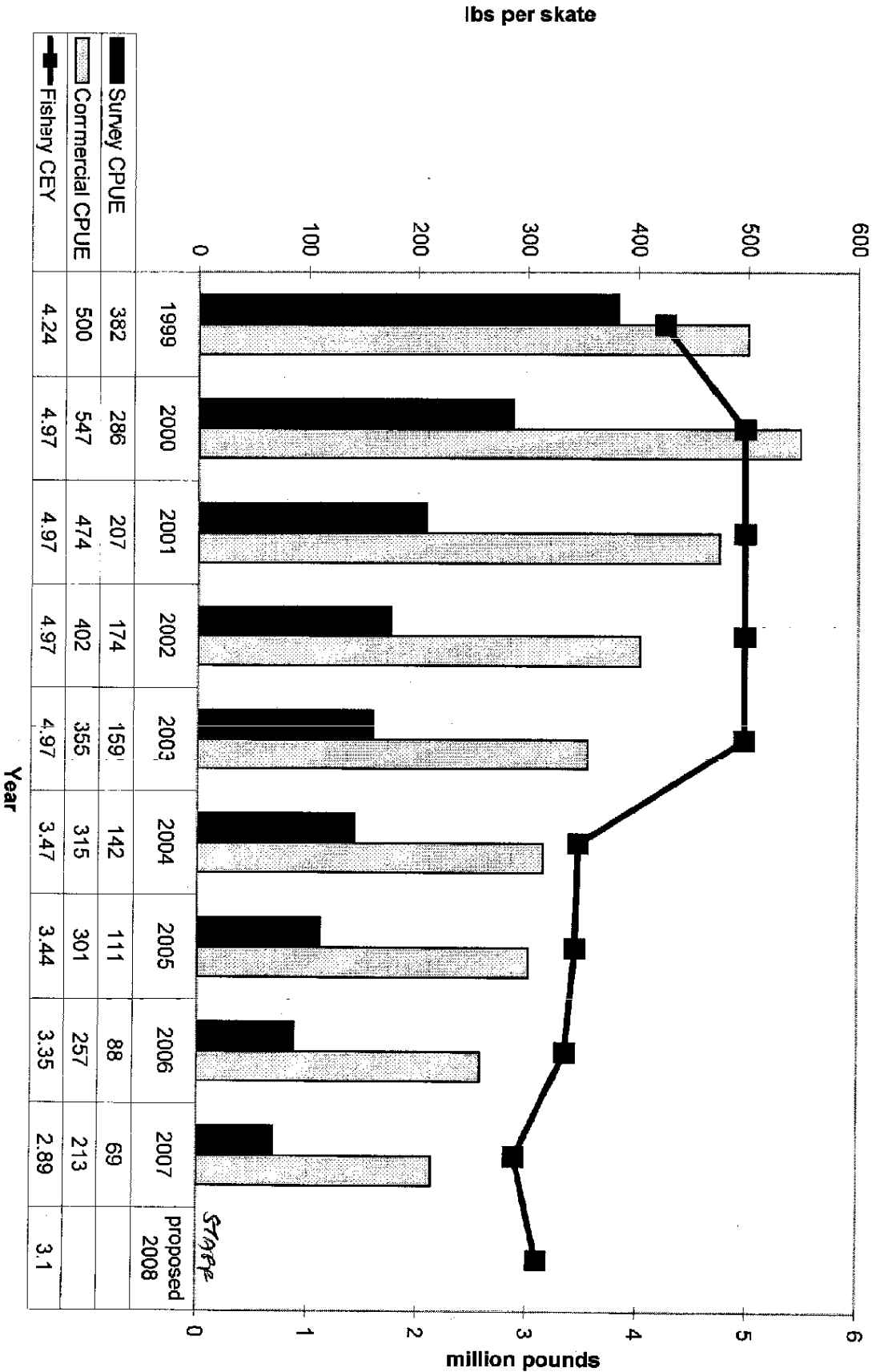
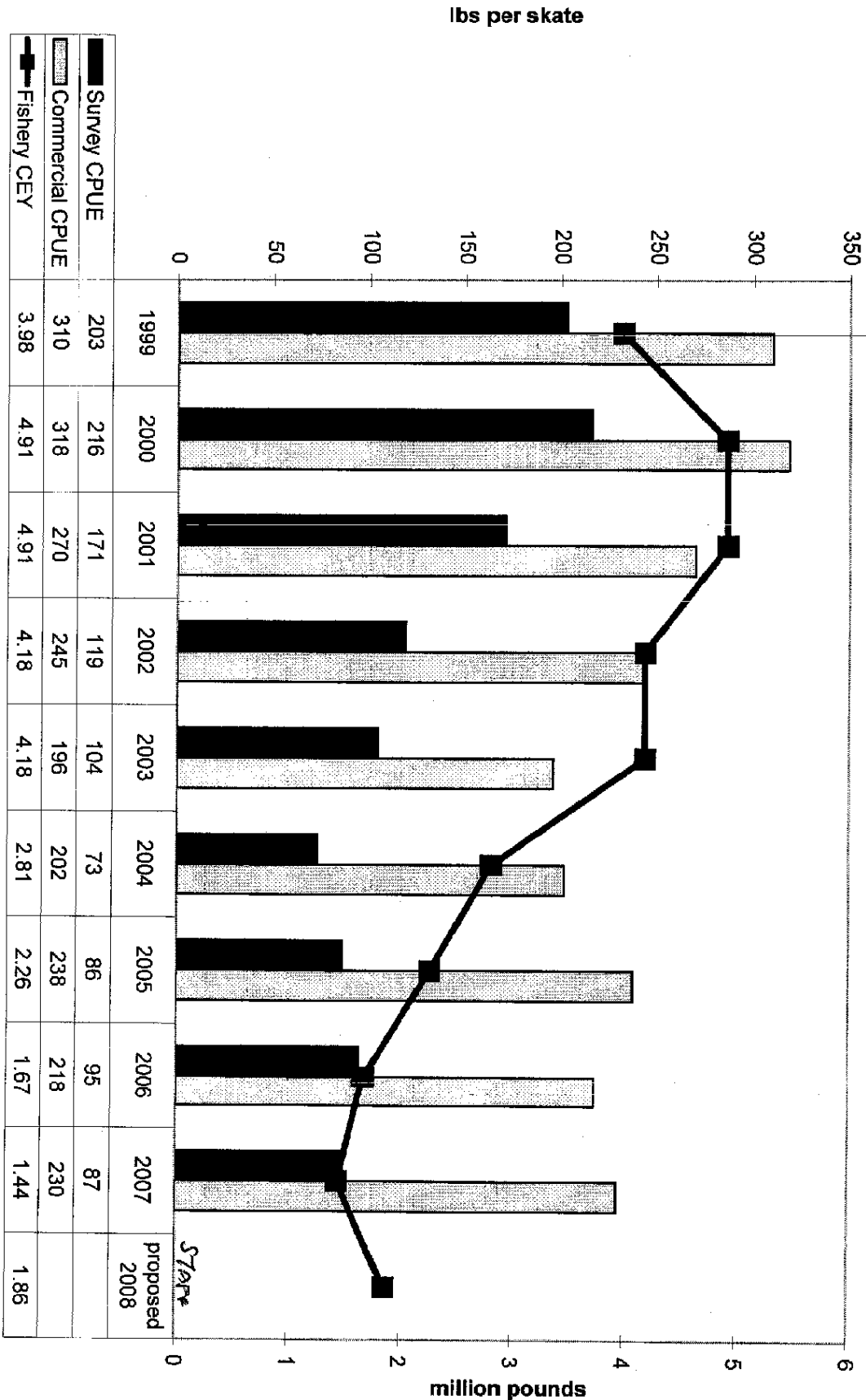


Fig 2

Chart2

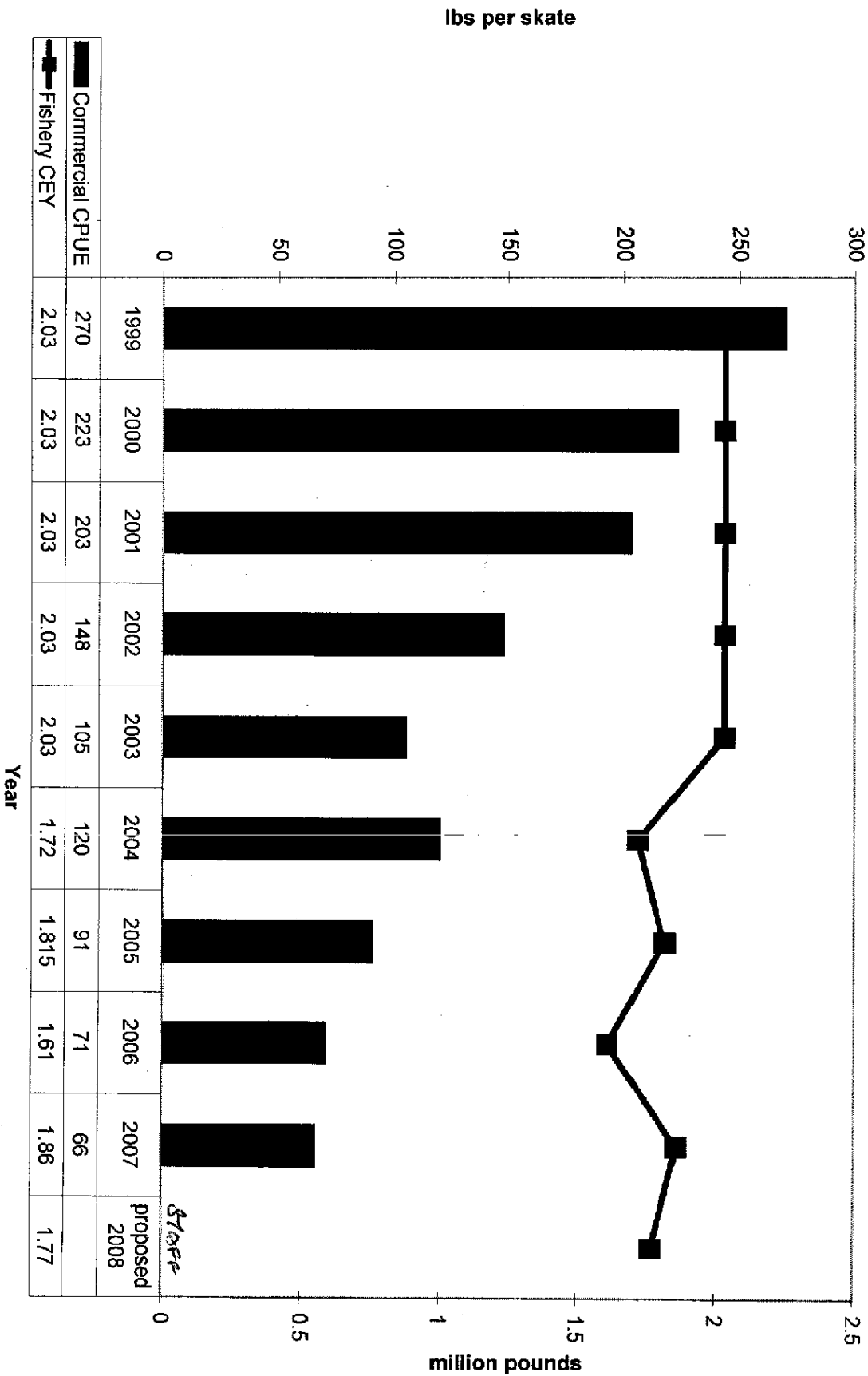
4B: CEY and CPUE



File 10

Chart2

4C: CEY and CPUE



File H

Chart2

4D: CEY and CPUE

