

The Fishery

Removals

2003 commercial fishery and regulation changes

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Abstract

This section presents the 2003 regulations and the results of the commercial halibut fishery. All 2003 catch and landing data are preliminary. The data sources are the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

The commercial catch and catch limits by regulatory area for 1995 through 2003 are shown in Table 1.

Regulatory areas for 2003

Regulatory areas for the 2003 commercial halibut fishery are shown in Figure 1. Boundary lines for the regulatory areas have remained the same since 1990. The southeastern flats in the Bering Sea, excluding Bristol Bay, remained closed in 2003 to all halibut fishing. A brief description of the regulatory areas for the 2003 halibut fishery follows:

- Area 2A - all waters off the coast of the states of California, Oregon, and Washington.
- Area 2B - all waters off the coast of British Columbia.
- Area 2C - all waters off the coast of Alaska, south and east of Cape Spencer.
- Area 3A - all waters between Cape Spencer and Cape Trinity, Kodiak Island.
- Area 3B - all waters between Cape Trinity and a line extending southeast from Cape Lutke, Unimak Island.
- Area 4A - all waters west of Area 3B and the Bering Sea closed area that are south of 56°20' N. and east of 172°00' W.
- Area 4B - all waters in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea west of Area 4A and south of 56°20' N.
- Area 4C - all waters in the Bering Sea north of Area 4A and the closed area that are east of longitude 171°00' W., south of latitude 58°00' N., and west of longitude 168°00' W.
- Area 4D - all waters in the Bering Sea north of Areas 4A and 4B, north and west of Area 4C, and west of longitude 168°00' W.
- Area 4E - all waters in the Bering Sea north and east of the closed area, east of Areas 4C and 4D, and south of 65°34' N.

Changes to the regulations for 2003

The regulations for the 2003 fishery were adopted at the Commission's 2003 Annual Meeting in Victoria, British Columbia and were later approved by the Canadian and United States govern-

ments with one exception. The Canadian government again specifically chose not to approve the regulation that required commercially caught halibut to have their gills and entrails removed before being offloaded from a vessel, thereby allowing the landing of live halibut caught in British Columbia waters. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) allocates halibut catch limits between user groups in Area 2A. In 2000, the courts ordered an adjustment in the halibut allocations for the years 2000 through 2007. Therefore in 2003, after the allocation percent by tribal (35%) and non-tribal (65%) was applied, 25,000 pounds of catch limit was transferred from non-tribal to tribal fisheries. The Area 2A licensing regulations have remained the same since 2000. All fishers had to choose between a commercial or sport charter license. Further, commercial fishers had to choose between a license for (1) retaining halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery, or (2) fishing in the directed commercial halibut fishery (south of Point Chehalis) and/or retaining halibut caught incidentally in the primary sablefish fishery (north of Point Chehalis). The deadline dates for mailing license applications remained the same as previous years: March 31, 2003 for the incidental halibut license for the salmon season, and April 30, 2003 for the directed commercial fishery and the incidental halibut during sablefish fishery license.

In Area 2A, the non-treaty directed commercial fishery had 10-hour fishing periods beginning at 8:00 a.m. and closing at 6:00 p.m. local time scheduled for June 25, July 9, July 23, August 6, August 20, September 3, and September 17. The fishery closed when the catch limit was taken.

At the Annual Meeting, there were extensive discussions on the season extension issue. After reviewing all of the information, the halibut season was extended by two weeks at the beginning of the season. The Canadian Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fishery in Area 2B and the United States Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) fisheries in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D commenced at 12 noon local time on March 1 and closed at 12 noon local time on November 15. The treaty Indian commercial fishery in Area 2A and the Alaskan Community Development Quota (CDQ) fisheries in Areas 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E had to occur between March 1 to November 15. The treaty Indian subsistence fishery was permitted with hook and line gear and was open from January 1 through December 31.

The Commission approved several minor clarifications to the regulations. The regulation allowing fillets from legally landed and retained fish to be “...*possessed on board a vessel in the port of landing up to 1800 hours local time on the calendar day following the offload*” was revised to state “*harvesting vessel*”. The requirement of vessel operators for retaining records was revised to reflect the defined term of “landed” rather than “delivered” halibut.

The coordinates for the Cape Spencer light used for the Area 2C-3A boundary were updated (58°11'54" N., 136°38'24" W.) to agree with the U.S. Coast Guard light list.

The Commission re-authorized the regulations allowing CDQ harvesters in Area 4E to retain undersized halibut caught with commercial gear for personal use (not to sell or barter the halibut). The regulation was expanded to include Area 4D CDQ vessels that land all of their trips in Area 4E or Area 4D. The regulations again required the manager of each of the authorized CDQ organizations that allow persons to harvest halibut in Area 4D and 4E CDQ fisheries to report the total number and weight of undersized halibut to the Commission annually. The report must include the methodology on how the data were collected and be received by IPHC prior to December 1 of the current year.

For several years, NOAA Enforcement worked with harvesters to provide waivers to Area 4 clearance requirements if the vessel had the appropriate vessel monitoring systems in place. In 2003, the regulations were amended to accommodate a NOAA Fisheries Office for Enforcement

request to allow vessel equipped with Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) or transponders to be exempted from Area 4 clearance requirements. The exemption only applied if VMS systems were installed and operating according to Enforcement's standards and conditions. There were requirements that the vessel operator call Enforcement data clerks within 72 hours before fishing and receive a confirmation number.

Regulations, catch limits, commercial catch, and seasons for the Area 2A, Metlakatla, and the Quota Share fisheries.

A detailed summary of the 2003 catch and seasons by regulatory area is provided in Table 2. Prior to 1995, the IPHC research catch was included in the commercial catch and not shown separately. For comparisons between years, total catch should be used. The following paragraphs review catch limits, commercial catch, seasons, and trends for each area.

Area 2A

Area 2A was managed to provide a total allowable catch of 1,310,000 pounds for all user groups (Table 3). The allocation between user groups was recommended to the IPHC by the PFMC, and the IPHC adopted the recommendations. The sport fishery was allocated 494,500 pounds and is discussed in another section of this Report of Assessment and Research Activities (Blood 2004). The treaty Indian fishery was allocated a total of 483,500 pounds (27,000 pounds for ceremonial and subsistence use and 456,500 pounds for their commercial fishery). The PFMC catch sharing plan stated that if the Area 2A total allocation was over 900,000 pounds, the primary limited entry longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA would be allocated part of the Washington sport allocation poundage. Therefore, there was an incidental halibut fishery during this sablefish season with a catch limit of 70,000 pounds. The remaining non-treaty commercial catch limit was 262,000 pounds with 222,700 pounds allocated to the directed fishery and 39,300 pounds to the incidental catch in the salmon troll fishery. The directed commercial fishery was restricted to waters south of Point Chehalis, WA (46°53'18"N. latitude) and the incidental halibut fishery during the sablefish season was restricted to waters north of Point Chehalis, WA (46°53'18"N. latitude) under regulations promulgated by the NMFS.

IPHC licensed sport charter and commercial vessels in Area 2A. In 2003, the IPHC issued 710 Area 2A vessel licenses: 323 licenses for the incidental commercial catch of halibut during the salmon troll fishery; 260 for the directed commercial fishery and the incidental halibut during sablefish fishery; and 127 for the sport charter fishery. There was little change in the number of licenses issued between 2002 and 2003.

In the incidental commercial halibut fishery conducted during the salmon troll season, the allowable incidental catch ratio was one halibut per three chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), and an "extra" one halibut regardless of ratio, but the total number of incidental halibut landed per vessel could not exceed 35. The ratio of halibut to number of chinook has remained the same since 2000 but had increased over the previous years, from the one to twenty ratio seen in the first year of the program (1995). There was no rollover regulation for the catch limit from the incidental troll fishery to the directed fishery in 2003. Therefore, the incidental commercial halibut fishery during the salmon season opened on May 1 and closed on August 6, two weeks earlier than in 2002. The catch was slightly over the catch limit.

The directed commercial fishery consisted of four 10-hour fishing periods with fishing period limits (Table 4). The fishing period limits by vessel class remained high for all of the openings with H-class vessels ranging from 2,500 to 5,300 pounds. The total directed commercial catch was 4% (8,300 pounds) over the catch limit.

The incidental halibut fishery during the limited-entry sablefish season opened May 1 and closed at the end of the sablefish season on October 31, 2003. The catch limit was 70,000 pounds compared to 88,389 pounds in 2002. The decrease in catch limit was due to a change in allocation between users by the PFMC. The catch was still under the catch limit (by 9%) but closer than it had been in the past.

The treaty Indian catch of 465,000 pounds was over the catch limit by less than 2%. During the unrestricted fishery, there were two fishing periods (March 1-3 and April 15-16) for a total catch of 317,000 pounds. The restricted fishery with fishing period limits of 500 pounds had a total catch of 148,000 pounds. Last year 17% of the treaty Indian commercial catch was taken during the restricted fishery compared to 32% this year.

Area 2C Metlakatla fishery

The Metlakatla Indian Community was authorized by the United States government to conduct a commercial halibut fishery within the Annette Islands Reserve. Ten 48-hour fishing periods took place between May 2 and September 29, producing a total catch of 84,072 pounds (Table 5) which was included in the Area 2C commercial catch. The catch was double last year's catch, although the total catch has varied over time from a high of 126,000 pounds in 1996 to a low of 12,000 pounds in 1998.

The Quota Share fisheries

The Quota Share (QS) fisheries of Area 2B and Alaska were open from March 1 to November 15. The following paragraphs discuss the fisheries by area and landing patterns.

Area 2B

Since 1991, an IVQ fishery has been in effect in Area 2B. The IVQ fishery allowed each vessel to catch a predetermined poundage of halibut as calculated by the DFO, based on the 11.75 million pound catch limit approved by IPHC. There was also an additional 123,531 pounds available as carryover from the underage/overage program in the 2002 fishery. The Area 2B catch of 11.68 million pounds was within 1% of the catch limit.

When the initial IVQ program was implemented in 1991, four hundred and thirty-five vessels received IVQs. Each initial IVQ was split into two shares called blocks. Starting in 1993, the blocks could be transferred between vessels but a single vessel could fish a maximum of four blocks. The fleet size decreased with the implementation of the transfer program; however, it remained at around 280 vessels from 1995 to 1998. In 1999, subject to minimum and maximum holdings, vessel owners were permitted to make unlimited permanent or temporary reallocation of halibut IVQ. Since 1999, the number of active vessels has varied from year to year, ranging between a high of 257 (in 1999) and a low of 214 (in 2002). In 2003, eight million, two hundred and nineteen thousand pounds or 70% of the catch limit was transferred between vessels, with 544,317 pounds permanently transferred between vessels.

The Native Communal Commercial Fishing Program (F licenses) had 17 active vessels in 2003 compared to 14 in 2002. Total landings, from 77 separate deliveries, amounted to 478,000

pounds, 9,000 pounds under 2002 landings.

Several small sub-areas in Area 2B were closed to halibut fishing to protect localized stocks of non-halibut species and to provide improved access to food fish for the aboriginal community.

Alaska

The IFQ halibut and sablefish fisheries have been in effect in Alaska since 1995. NMFS allocated halibut QS to recipients by IPHC regulatory area. Quota share transfers were permitted with restrictions on the amount of QS a person could hold and the amount that could be fished per vessel. In early December 2003, NMFS reported that 3,440 persons held quota shares, down from the initial 4,830 persons at the start of the program.

The total 2003 catch from the IFQ halibut fishery for the waters off of Alaska was 59.6 million pounds, 4% under the catch limit. For Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, and 4A, the commercial QS catches were within 3% of the catch limits and the Area 4B catch was within 8% of the catch limit. Since 2002, the IFQ regulations allowed 4D CDQ to be taken in Area 4E. This was not a biological concern to the IPHC because Areas 4CDE are managed as one stock. This was a change from 2001, as a NMFS enforcement waiver was given allowing CDQ from Area 4E to be taken in 4D, or 4D CDQ to be taken in Area 4E. The combined Area 4DE catch was 4% under the combined limit. Area 4C was the one area where the catch was substantially under the catch limit with less than half of the Area 4C catch limit taken. Since the implementation of the QS fishery, this area has always had catches under the catch limit, with last year's catch 40% under the limit. Area 4C catch in previous years ranged from 12%-21% under the catch limit, with the exception of 1997 when the catch was 5% under the catch limit (1.1 million pounds).

Landing patterns and highlights

The 2003 average ex-vessel price was close to \$3.00 per pound (U.S. dollars). This is higher than it has been for many years.

Homer received over 12 million pounds of halibut, or about 20% of the 59.6 million pounds of commercial Alaskan catch. Kodiak and Seward were the second largest ports, moving 12%-13% of the Alaskan commercial catch. In southeast Alaska, Sitka and Juneau each received just under three million pounds. In the Bering Sea, Adak landings were down in 2003 as they received approximately 60% (by weight) less than their previous year's landings. Only 3.0% of the QS catch was landed outside of Alaska.

A total of over 1,000 commercial trips from Area 2B was delivered into 19 different ports in 2003. However, the three ports of Prince Rupert/Port Edward, Port Hardy, and Vancouver were again the major landing locations, receiving about 88% of the Area 2B commercial catch.

The QS fishery landings were spread over nine months of the year (Table 6). Because the 2003 fishery opened roughly two weeks earlier than the start dates of the previous eight QS fishing seasons, a month-to-month comparison between years is difficult. On a straight month-to-month comparison, despite the early opening, May was the still busiest month for Alaska landings, as it has been for the last three years. May landings, however, represented only 15.8% of the 2003 total catch, which was down from 19.3% in 2002. With the increased length of the March fishing period, this month became the busiest for poundage delivered in British Columbia, where the bulk of poundage landed had previously been seen in April. Between years and within areas, Figure 2

indicates a shift in the poundage delivered from the mid-months (May-August) to the beginning and end months of the season. Comparing fishing period lengths, 8.8% of the total 2003 Alaska catch was landed in the first four weeks of the season, while 10.4% of the total catch was landed in the first four weeks of the 2002 season. Comparing B.C. landings during the first four weeks of the season, 15.1% of the total 2B catch was landed in 2003 compared to 18.5% in 2002.

The landing of live halibut from Area 2B was legally allowed by DFO. In 2003, live fish landings totaled approximately 15,000 pounds compared to a low of 7,900 pounds in 1998 and a high of 103,000 pounds in 1999. Six vessels made a total of 15 landings with live halibut and no halibut were penned.

Electronic reporting project for Alaska

Since 2002, IPHC, ADF&G, and NMFS staffs have worked with contractors hired by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to analyze and work towards developing a cooperative interagency electronic fishery information collection and management program in Alaska. The initial goal will be to develop a program for reporting groundfish and halibut landings. In 2002, two reports were completed, including a needs analysis, and a technology assessment and technological recommendation. In 2003, the interagency steering committee worked with a contractor hired by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to implement and test a technology demonstrator. The technology demonstrator evaluated actual field conditions of communications infrastructure and processor computerized reporting capabilities in Alaska. The completed report documented the measured performance and summarized processors' feedback on perceived performance.

Additionally, a facilitator was hired to conduct two meetings to present the program, and get input from the individuals outside the steering committee on their needs and the proposed program structure. The first meeting was held in October 2003 with staff from all agencies, and the facilitator will prepare a report. The second meeting will occur in 2004 with a wider interest group, including the processors. The goal is to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the Directors of the Agencies prior to the second meeting. The goal of the MOU is to ensure the individual agency's interests are protected and that the agencies are committed to work toward a cooperative electronic fishery information system. After the completion of the above projects, the next phase will be to design a prototype and test it on a small scale.

References

Blood, C. L. 2004. 2003 sport fishery. Int. Pac. Halibut Comm. Report of Assessment and Research Activities 2003: this volume.

Table 1. Commercial catch (including IPHC research catch) and catch limits of Pacific halibut by IPHC regulatory area (in thousands of pounds, net weight), 1995 - 2003.

Regulatory Area	Commercial Catch ¹								
	1995 ²	1996 ²	1997	1998 ²	1999 ²	2000 ²	2001	2002	2003 ³
2A ⁴	297	296	413	460	450	482	680	851	815
2B	9,623	9,545	12,420	13,172	12,705	10,811	10,288	12,074	11,745
2C	7,766	8,872	9,920	10,196	10,143	8,445	8,403	8,602	8,451
3A	18,336	19,693	24,628	25,698	25,316	19,288	21,541	23,131	22,683
3B	3,125	3,662	9,072	11,161	13,835	15,413	16,336	17,313	17,407
4A	1,617	1,699	2,907	3,418	4,369	5,155	5,015	5,091	4,970
4B	1,680	2,069	3,318	2,901	3,571	4,692	4,466	4,080	3,872
4C	668	680	1,117	1,256	1,762	1,737	1,647	1,210	926
4D	643	706	1,152	1,308	1,891	1,931	1,844 ⁵	1,753	1,906
4E	127	120	251	188	264	351	479 ⁵	555 ⁵	411 ⁵
Total	43,882	47,342	65,198	69,758	74,306	68,305	70,699	74,660	73,186
Regulatory Area	Commercial Catch Limits ⁶								
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
2A ⁴	278	275	374.2	440.9	412.5	468.1	681.4	817.9	817.9
2B	9,520	9,520	12,500	13,000	12,100	10,600	10,510	11,750	11,750
2C	9,000	9,000	10,000	10,500	10,490	8,400	8,780	8,500	8,500
3A	20,000	20,000	25,000	26,000	24,670	18,310	21,890	22,630	22,630
3B	3,700	3,700	9,000	11,000	13,370	15,030	16,530	17,130	17,130
4A	1,950	1,950	2,940	3,500	4,240	4,970	4,970	4,970	4,970
4B	2,310	2,310	3,480	3,500	3,980	4,910	4,910	4,180	4,180
4C	770	770	1,160	1,590	2,030	2,030	2,030	2,030	2,030
4D	770	770	1,160	1,590	2,030	2,030	2,030	2,030	2,030
4E	120	120	260	320	390	390	390	390	390
Total	48,418	48,415	65,874.2	71,440.9	73,712.6	67,138.1	72,721.4	74,427.9	74,427.9

¹ Commercial catch includes IPHC research catch and in Area 2C, the Metlakatla fishery catch.

² Poundage figures have been updated from previous publications.

³ Preliminary.

⁴ Does not include treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence fish.

⁵ Areas 4D CDQ could be fished in Area 4E by NMFS enforcement waiver (2001) and IFQ regulation (since 2002).

⁶ Additional carryover from the underage/overage plan for the QS programs not included.

Table 2. Commercial fishing periods, number of fishing days, catch limit, commercial, research and total catch (thousands of pounds, net weight) by regulatory area for the 2003 Pacific halibut commercial fishery (preliminary, November 25, 2003).

Area	Fishing Period	No. Of Days	Catch Limit	Commercial Catch	Research Catch	Total
2A treaty Indian treaty Indian total	3/1-3	2.0		150		
	4/15-16	1.5		167		
	Restricted: 3/1-31, 4/2-6			88		
	Restricted: 4/23-30			<u>60</u>		
			456.5	465		465
2A Commercial Incidental in Salmon fishery	May 1 – Aug 6		39.3	42		42
Incidental in Sablefish fishery	May 1- Oct 31		70.0	65		65
Directed	June 25 ¹	10 hrs		80		
	July 9 ¹	"		85		
	July 23 ¹	"		35		
	August 6 ¹	"		<u>31</u>		
Commercial total			222.7	231	12	243
2A Total			817.9	803	12	815
2B	3/1 – 11/15	259	11,750 ²	11,681 ³	64	11,745
2C	3/1 – 11/15	259	8,500 ⁴	8,327 ⁵	124	8,451
3A	3/1 – 11/15	259	22,630 ⁴	22,282	401	22,683
3B	3/1 – 11/15	259	17,130 ⁴	17,141	266	17,407
4A	3/1 – 11/15	259	4,970 ⁴	4,895	75	4,970
4B	3/1 – 11/15	259	4,180 ⁴	3,827	45	3,872
4C	3/1 – 11/15	259	2,030 ⁴	878	48	926
4D	3/1 – 11/15	259	2,030 ⁴	1,906 ⁶		1,906
4E	3/1 – 11/15	259	390	411 ⁶		411
Alaska Total			61,860	59,667	959	60,626
Total			74,427.5	72,151	1,035	73,186

¹ Fishing period limits by vessel class.

² An additional 123,531 pounds available as carryover from 2002.

³ Includes the pounds that were landed by Native communal commercial licenses (F licenses).

⁴ Additional net carryover pounds (thousands) from the underage/overage program were: 2C = 120; 3A = 150; 3B = 188; 4A = 53; 4B = 64; 4C = 85; 4D = 13.

⁵ Includes 84,000 pounds taken by Metlakatla Indians during additional fishing within reservation waters.

⁶ Areas 4D and 4E CDQ can be fished in either area regardless of quota share designation NMFS enforcement waiver.

Table 3. The Area 2A 2003 catch limits allocated by the Pacific Fishery Management Council catch sharing plan and preliminary catch estimates (net weight, pounds).

Area	Catch Limit	Catch
Non-treaty directed commercial	222,700	231,000
Non-treaty incidental commercial with salmon troll fishery	39,300	42,000
Non-treaty incidental commercial with sablefish fishery	70,000	65,000
Treaty Indian commercial	456,500	465,000
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence	27,000	27,000
Sport - North of Columbia River	232,499	223,000
Sport - South of Columbia River	262,101	176,000
Total allocation	1,310,000	1,229,000
IPHC research catch		12,000
Total		1,241,000

Table 4. The fishing period limits (net weight) by vessel class used in the 2003 directed commercial fishery in Area 2A.

Vessel Class		Fishing Periods (Pounds)			
Letter	Feet	June 25	July 9	July 23	August 6
A	0-25	405	445	295	210
B	26-30	505	555	370	265
C	31-35	805	890	590	420
D	36-40	2,220	2,455	1,620	1,160
E	42-45	2,390	2,640	1,745	1,245
F	46-50	2,860	3,160	2,085	1,490
G	51-55	3,190	3,525	2,330	1,665
H	56+	4,800	5,300	3,500	2,500

Table 5. Metlakatla community fishing periods, number of vessels, and preliminary halibut catch (net weight), 2003.

Fishing Period Dates	Number Of Vessels	Catch (Pounds)
May 2 - 4	3	2,177
June 7 - 9	10	4,123
June 20 - 22	12	8,372
June 4 - 6	11	4,899
July 18 - 20	16	13,639
August 1 - 3	19	15,211
August 16 - 18	19	16,082
August 30 - September 1	15	10,739
September 13 - 15	9	6,430
September 27 - 29	7	2,400
10 Fishing Periods		84,072

Table 6. The total pounds (thousands, net weight) of 2003 commercial landings (not including research or Metlakatla fishery) of Pacific halibut for Alaska¹ and British Columbia by regulatory area and month (preliminary).

Regulatory Area	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
2B	1,857	1,678	1,067	1,085	1,187	1,400	1,201	1,161	1,045	11,681
2C	1,041	1,764	1,295	1,077	837	834	697	485	213	8,243
3A	4,025	4,483	3,436	2,733	1,372	2,184	1,907	1,566	576	22,282
3B	530	1,657	3,568	3,219	1,908	2,283	2,498	1,013	465	17,141
4A	1	126	433	685	1,144	1,348	763	302	93	4,895
4B	27	54	522	749	471	1,081	487	268	168	3,827
4C	0	0	0	248	355	128	130	10	7	878
4D	0	0	80	106	467	614	424	182	33	1,906
4E	0	0	48	201	73	26	54	9	0	411
Alaska Total	5,624	8,084	9,382	9,018	6,627	8,498	6,960	3,835	1,555	59,583
Total	7,481	9,762	10,449	10,103	7,814	9,898	8,161	4,996	2,600	71,264

¹ Alaska figures are based on NMFS (RAM division) monthly catch ratios

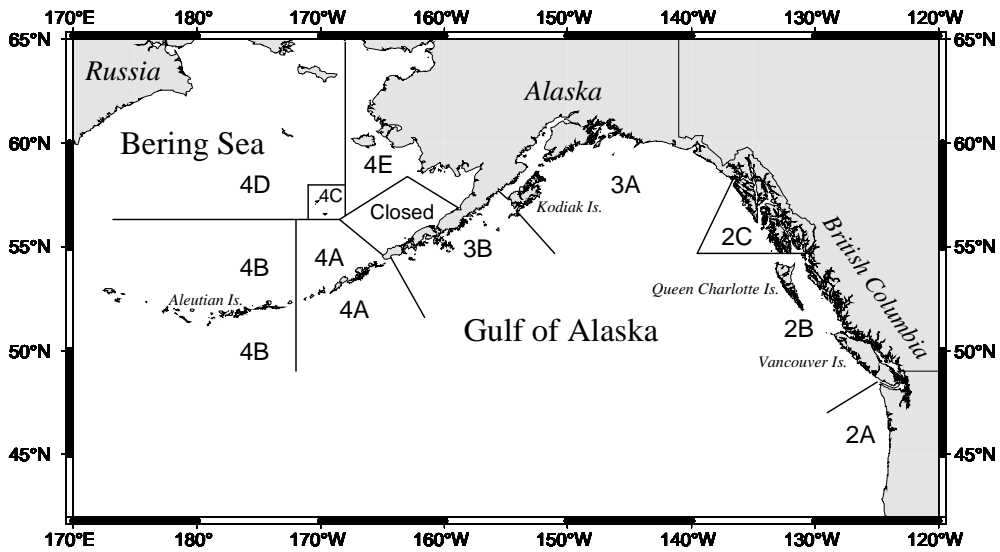


Figure 1. IPHC regulatory areas for the 2003 fishery.

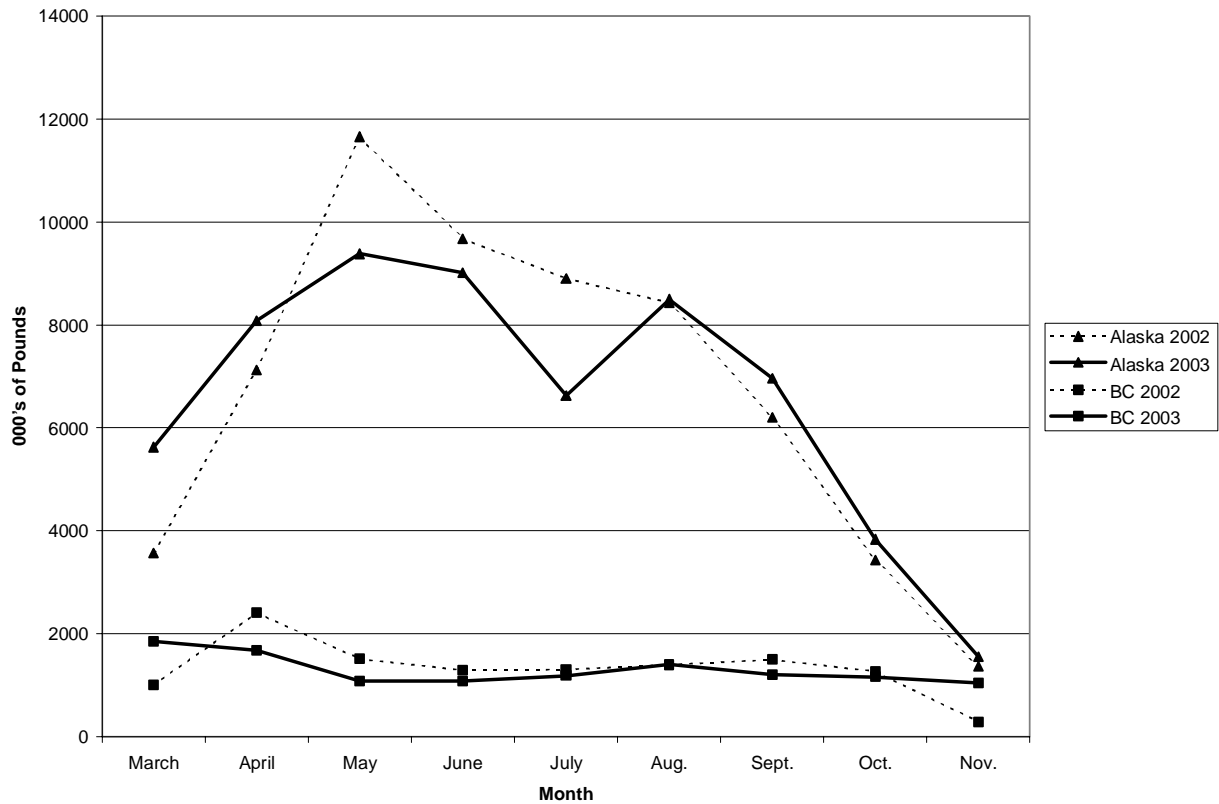


Figure 2. Total catch (net weight) for Alaska and British Columbia by month, 2002 and 2003.

2003 sport fishery

Calvin L. Blood

Abstract

Estimates of 1977-2002 Pacific halibut sport fishery landings, with projections for 2003, are summarized. Current year's harvest and catch performance for Area 2A are also reported.

Regulations

Sport fishing regulations in Alaska and British Columbia remained the same as those that were in effect in 2002. Allocative regulations for sport, commercial, and treaty Indian fisheries in Area 2A specified by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) as a Catch Sharing Plan (Plan) were adopted by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) at the 2003 IPHC Annual Meeting. In accordance with United States domestic law, the Plan was published in the Federal Register with a request for public comment. The sport fishery in Area 2A was divided into several subareas where seasons were managed by catch limits (Tables 1 and 2). Charter vessels were still required to obtain a license from the IPHC to possess halibut during open seasons. Vessels were also required to declare whether they intended to operate as a sport charter or commercial vessel. Licenses could be held for only one category. Minor modifications to the Plan were implemented to facilitate management strategies, such as an in-season expansion of open days from five to seven days per week in the Washington South Coast area and providing additional openings along the Oregon coast. Specific area-closures were also in effect to protect certain species of rockfish (*Sebastes* spp.) on sport halibut fishing grounds.

In Areas 2C and 3A news, the Secretary of Commerce implemented Guideline Harvest Levels (GHL) on September 8, 2003. The amounts (1,432,000 pounds net weight for Area 2C and 3,650,000 pounds net weight for Area 3A) equate to 13.05 and 14.11 percent, respectively, of the combined commercial and guided sport quota. Guided sport individual fishing quotas (IFQs) continue to wind their way through the regulatory process. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) staff submitted an analysis for this program in May 2003 and further reviews and analyses may be ready for Secretarial response by the end of 2003, or early 2004.

On October 27, 2003, the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) announced an allocation framework between commercial and recreational sectors in the Pacific halibut fishery. A 12 percent recreational catch "ceiling" will be allocated to the recreational sector until both parties can develop an acceptable mechanism that will allow for adjustment of the recreational share through acquisition of additional quota from the commercial sector.

Harvest estimations

The 2003 Area 2A harvest estimates for the various subareas were provided by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

from in-season creel census estimates. The exception to this was Washington Inside Waters (WIW), which was assessed by a post-season phone survey. The Area 2B harvest estimate was provided by DFO and modified by the IPHC to include the Canadian catch landed at Neah Bay, Washington. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) typically provides final harvest estimates for the previous year for Areas 2C, 3, and 4. Final harvest estimates for the previous year are also incorporated into the estimate of current year harvest. However, final 2002 Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) estimates are not yet available due to a problem caused by incomplete license data files used to draw the survey sample (Scott Meyer, ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish, 3298 Douglas Place, Homer, Alaska 99603-8027, personal communication). For this reason, the preliminary estimates provided last year for Areas 2C, 3 and 4 are reported in Table 3.

Current year projections are made annually by ADF&G staff for the IPHC, and are based on a creel survey in Area 2C, and port sampling in Area 3A. The Area 3A estimate for 2003 was based on a linear projection of halibut numbers harvested during 1997-2001 by each user group in each of six subareas. The resultant numbers were converted to pounds net weight after applying the respective 2003 average weight for each area (Table 4) (Scott Meyer, ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish, 3298 Douglas Place, Homer, Alaska 99603-8027, personal communication). Harvested biomass in Area 2C was projected differently. The projected number of fish harvested was based on a linear relationship between the SWHS and the respective combined in-season creel survey estimates for Ketchikan, Juneau, and Sitka in a given year. Current-year creel survey estimates were then applied to the relationship to generate the overall Area 2C harvest in numbers of fish. Subarea proportions from the final 2001 SWHS estimates were used to determine the overall subarea-specific harvests for the current year. The most recent charter/private proportions within each of those subarea totals were applied to determine the number of fish harvested within each user group. Average weight estimates for the current year were then applied to each of those projected harvests (by user group and port) and summed to generate the overall Area 2C projection of harvested biomass (Table 4) (Mike Jaenicke, ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish, Box 240020, Douglas, Alaska 99824-0020, personal communication). Areas 3B and 4 estimates were based on a linear projection of the 1997-2001 harvest estimated from the SWHS. The average weight from 2003 for Kodiak, the nearest sampled port, was applied to the projected numbers to convert to the estimated net harvest weight (Table 4).

Area 2A

The harvest from Area 2A in 2003 was 404,297 pounds (Table 2). This was about 18 percent under the catch limit of 494,500 pounds. The harvest estimate for WIW was 68,300 pounds, about 5,000 pounds over the 63,278 pound catch limit. The WIW season was split as it was in 2002 so that the area east of Low Point opened two weeks sooner than the area west of Low Point (Michele Robinson, WDFW, 48 Devonshire Road, Montesano, Washington 98563-9618, personal communication). Subsequently, the area east of Low Point closed two weeks earlier than the area west of Low Point. The resulting catch estimate is considerably higher than recorded last year. The Washington North Coast fishery closed only 4,177 pounds below the 113,915 pound quota. The North Coast average weight of 19.3 pounds through May was slightly lower than the 21.9 pound average weight from June but similar to the 19.8 pound average weight for the one-day August fishery. The Washington South Coast fishery, centered principally out of Westport, closed 5,370 pounds below the quota. The average weight of South Coast halibut was 17.4 pounds, lower than the 2002 estimate. Halibut fishing was open for a considerably longer period than last year because an abundant

source of salmon (*Onchorynchus* spp.) offered a more desired alternative fishery. Albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) fishing also diverted anglers away from halibut later in the season. The Columbia River area closed 1,919 pounds short of its quota but remained open through September 30. Most of this catch was attributed to the Washington fleet, primarily from Ilwaco, but there was catch taken in Oregon, as well. Pacific halibut caught in this area averaged about 20.5 pounds on the Washington side, while halibut measured in the Oregon ports weighed about a pound more. As in previous years, a very high proportion of the catch was sampled to provide the average weights for their respective areas.

As in 2002, the Oregon sport halibut fishery harvest was considerably under the overall area quota and resulted in several more open days than were expected (Don Bodenmiller, ODFW, Marine Region, 2040 SE Marine Science Drive, Newport, Oregon 97365, personal communication). Ample opportunity for salmon fishing also diverted attention from halibut angling. Quota remaining from the early season Oregon Central Coast fishery provided more fishing opportunity in August, September, and October. The overall average weight for the Oregon sport halibut fishery was 20.6 pounds in 2003, nearly the same as in 2002. The nearshore fishery also under-harvested its quota by a considerable margin, catching a mere six percent of the nearly 20,000 pounds allowed. As in Washington, a significant portion of the available harvest was measured to determine the average weight.

Area 2B

The catch in numbers of halibut for 2002 was provided to the Commission by the Pacific Region of DFO. This catch estimate is based on a methodology developed in 1998 by King and Gjernes (1999). Since average weight information is lacking from British Columbia waters, average weights compiled in adjacent areas are used to expand the catch to pounds. The catch in the northern DFO region (statistical areas 1-11) is expanded by an average weight from Area 2C (preferably the Ketchikan area) and the catch in the southern DFO region (statistical areas 12-29) is expanded by the average weight from the Neah Bay, Washington catch. The 2002 harvest for Area 2B was derived this way. The 2003 projected harvest (Table 4) was estimated by using a linear regression to predict the catch in numbers. The catch from the years 1999-2002 was summarized by DFO statistical areas 1-11 and 12-29 and extrapolated by linear regression. The resultant catch in numbers was then expanded into pounds by the aforementioned average weights from Alaska and Washington for 2003. The Commission will use average weights from British Columbia waters as soon as they are made available.

In 2003, Washington anglers caught 10,805 halibut in Canadian waters and landed them in Neah Bay, a number that is over 1,700 more than in 2002. Using the average weight of 20.3 pounds provided by WDFW, the estimated harvest is 219,666 pounds.

Area 2C

The projected 2002 harvest is estimated at 2.512 million pounds net weight (Table 3) and will be updated when final numbers become available from the SWHS. The numbers of fish harvested were identified by SWHS area and were converted to net weight using the average weight from each respective user group. Length data were gathered in Ketchikan, Craig, Petersburg/Wrangell, Sitka, and Juneau. In 2002, a catch sampling program was initiated in Gustavus so the Gustavus average weight is now applied to Glacier Bay. Haines/Skagway were not sampled for length information, so Juneau average weights have been used historically as a surrogate to project their har-

vests. The overall average weight for Area 2C in 2002 was 20.4 pounds net weight and preliminary indications showed the average net weight to be 18.3 pounds in 2003.

Area 3A

The Area 3A projected harvest biomass for 2002 is 4.511 million pounds (Table 3). As in Area 2C, when SWHS numbers become available, the catch estimate will be updated. The Area 3A harvest biomass was also estimated for each user group from numbers supplied by the SWHS and average weight generated from length data collected from the primary ports of sport landings. The sampled ports for 2003 included Yakutat, Whittier, Valdez, Seward, Homer, Deep Creek and Anchor Point beaches, and Kodiak. Care was taken to properly account for harvests by the charter, private, and military recreation camps. The average weight for 2002 was 17.4 pounds. Preliminary indications suggest the average net weight in 2003 is slightly higher at 19.3 pounds.

Areas 3B and 4

As in Areas 2C and 3A, SWHS numbers are not yet available for Area 3B and 4. When they become available, harvest figures will be updated. In 2002, we used the average weight obtained from ADF&G sport fish sampling on Kodiak Island to estimate the Areas 3B and 4 harvests in pounds. Since the average weight has apparently increased from 19.4 pounds to 22.8 pounds, the projected harvest for 2003 also shows an increase. This may or may not reflect the actual catches. Anecdotal information gleaned from sport fish publications and conversations with local charter operators suggested the average weight may be quite high in Dutch Harbor and Unalaska; therefore, the harvest in Areas 3B and 4 may be higher than reported in this document.

Near record landing

According to Anchorage Daily News outdoors reporter Craig Medred, a 420 pound halibut was caught in July near Kitoi Bay Salmon Hatchery on Afognak Island by Tony Davis, an employee of the hatchery. Mr. Davis was testing some lures of his own design when he hooked into the lunker in about 100 feet of water. For the better part of three-quarters of an hour Davis and his fishing companion were unsure of what they had tied into, but slowly with the aid of their 20-foot skiff they coaxed the large halibut off the bottom. Recognizing there was no way they could bring the halibut into the boat, they decided to tow it back to the dock and dispatch it there. Once weighed, Davis' halibut was 39 pounds shy of the 1996 world record halibut caught near Dutch Harbor by Jack Tragus.

References

King, J. R. and Gjernes, T. W. 1999. Estimate of 1998 recreational catch in British Columbia waters. Canadian Stock Assessment Secretariat Research Document 99/121.

Table 1. Fishing dates, opportunity, size limits, and bag limits for the 2003 Pacific halibut sport fishery.

Area	Fishing Dates	Fishing Days	Days Open	Size Limit	Bag Limit
2A					
WA Inside Waters (east of Low Point)	5/8-7/18	52	5 (Thur-Mon)	No	1
WA Inside Waters (Low Point to Sekiu River)	5/22-8/1	52			
WA North Coast (Sekiu River to Queets River)	5/1-5/17	20	5 (Tues-Sat)	No	1
	5/23-5/24		2(Fri-Sat)		
	6/18-6/21		4(Wed-Sat)		
	8/9		1 (Saturday)		
WA South Coast (all depths) (Queets River to Ledbetter Point)	5/1-6/26	41	5 (Sun-Thur)	No	1
	6/27-9/30	95	7		
WA South Coast (near shore)	5/1-9/30	153	7	No	1
Columbia River (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon)	5/1-9/30	153	7	First @ 32"	1
OR Central Coast (all depths) (Cape Falcon to Siuslaw River)	5/8-5/10	9	3 (Th-Sat)	First @ 32"	1
	5/15-17		3 (Th-Sat)		
	6/19-6/21		3 (Th-Sat)		
OR South Coast (all depths) (Siuslaw River to Humbug Mt.)	5/8-5/10	6	3 (Th-Sat)	First @ 32"	1
	5/15-5/17				
OR Coast (<30 fathoms)(Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain)	5/1-10/31	184	7	First @ 32"	1
OR Coast (all depths) (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain)	8/1,2,8,9,22,23,29,30	22	2 (Fri-Sat)	First @ 32"	1
	9/5,6,12,13,19,20,26,27				
	10/3,4,10,11,17,18				
OR/CA (south of Humbug Mt.)	5/1-9/30	153	7	First @ 32"	1
2B, 2C, 3 and 4	2/1-12/31	334	7	No	2

Table 2. 2003 harvest allocations and estimates (in pounds, net weight) by subarea within Regulatory Area 2A.

Subarea	Allocation	Catch Estimate	Over/Under
WA Inside Waters	63,278	68,300	+5,032
WA North Coast	113,915	109,738	-4,177
WA South Coast (all depths)	48,623	43,253	-5,370
WA South Coast (near shore)		0	0
Columbia River	11,923	10,009	-1,914
OR Central Coast (all depths)	156,835	88,384	-68,451
OR South Coast (all depths)	14,609	14,904	+295
OR Coast (<30 fathoms)	19,797	1,100	-18,697
OR Coast ¹	57,660	60,749	+3,089
OR/CA (south of Humbug Mt.)	7,860	7,860	0

¹ After accounting for underages and overages in previous openings from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain, about 125,000 pounds remained to be harvested.

Table 3. Harvest by sport fishers (millions of pounds, net weight) by IPHC regulatory area, 1977-2003.

Year	Area 2A	Area 2B	Area 2C	Area 3A	Area 3B	Area 4	Total
1977	0.013	0.008	0.072	0.196			0.289
1978	0.010	0.004	0.082	0.282			0.378
1979	0.015	0.009	0.174	0.365			0.563
1980	0.019	0.006	0.332	0.488			0.845
1981	0.019	0.012	0.318	0.751		0.012	1.112
1982	0.050	0.033	0.489	0.716		0.011	1.299
1983	0.063	0.052	0.553	0.945		0.003	1.616
1984	0.118	0.062	0.621	1.026		0.013	1.840
1985	0.193	0.262	0.682	1.210		0.008	2.355
1986	0.333	0.186	0.730	1.908		0.020	3.177
1987	0.446	0.264	0.780	1.989		0.030	3.509
1988	0.249	0.252	1.076	3.264		0.036	4.877
1989	0.327	0.318	1.559	3.005		0.024	5.233
1990	0.197	0.381	1.330	3.638		0.040	5.586
1991	0.158	0.292	1.654	4.264	0.014	0.127	6.509
1992	0.250	0.290	1.668	3.899	0.029	0.043	6.179
1993	0.246	0.328	1.811	5.265	0.018	0.057	7.725
1994	0.186	0.328	2.001	4.487	0.021	0.042	7.065
1995	0.236	0.887	1.759	4.511	0.022	0.055	7.470
1996	0.229	0.887	2.129	4.740	0.021	0.077	8.084
1997	0.355	0.887	2.172	5.514	0.028	0.069	9.025
1998	0.383	0.887	2.501	4.702	0.017	0.096	8.585
1999	0.338	0.859	1.843	4.228	0.017	0.094	7.379
2000	0.344	1.021	2.258	5.305	0.015	0.073	9.017
2001	0.446	1.015	1.925	4.675	0.016	0.029	8.106
2002 ¹	0.399	1.011	2.512	4.511	0.010	0.037	8.481
2003 ²	0.404	1.065	2.596	5.002	0.012	0.043	9.123

¹ Only Area 2A and 2B are current; all other areas are projected harvests

² Only Area 2A is current; all other areas are projected harvests

Table 4. 2003 Projections for Areas 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, and 4 sport halibut harvests.

Regulatory Area	Areas	Numbers projected	Average Weight	Net weight in pounds
2B	DFO Areas 1-11	30,349	18.3	557,034
	DFO Areas 12-29	14,198	20.3	288,645
	WDF&W Neah Bay	10,805	20.3	219,666
	Total	55,442		1,065,345
2C	Southeast Alaska	141,567	18.3	2,596,000
3A	Southcentral Alaska	259,270	19.3	5,002,000
3B	Kodiak Island West	541	22.8	12,335
4	Bering Sea/Aleutians	1,901	22.8	43,343
	Total	403,279		7,653,678

Wastage in the 2003 Pacific halibut fishery

Heather L. Gilroy

Abstract

Estimates of legal-sized halibut killed by lost and abandoned longline gear (wastage) and of sublegal-sized halibut discard mortality are presented for the 2003 commercial halibut fishery.

Overview

The removals of Pacific halibut from the population accounted for in the stock assessment include commercial and sport catch, personal use (subsistence), bycatch, and wastage. Since 1997, the commercial fishery wastage estimate included in the stock assessment has represented legal-sized removals occurring from lost or abandoned gear. The mortality of discarded sublegal halibut is accounted for when setting the exploitation rate. Prior to 1997, wastage from the mortality of discarded sublegal halibut was deducted in setting the setline constant exploitation yield (CEY). The mortality of discarded sublegal halibut is reported in this paper so there will be a record of the amount, although it will not be shown under total removals in the 2003 stock assessment tables. The 2003 data are preliminary and the 2002 data were recalculated using the final catch figures.

Wastage can also occur if more gear is set than is needed to obtain fishing period limits in Area 2A, individual vessel quota (IVQ) in Area 2B, and individual fishing quota (IFQ) and community development quota (CDQ) in the Alaska regulatory areas. In addition, halibut may occasionally be discarded at sea due to poor fish quality, which can result from sand flea, shark, or other predation. The amount of legal-sized halibut caught in excess of quota, or catch limits, and discarded at sea is recorded during logbook interviews. At this time, these amounts are reviewed and over-limit legal-sized discards are not currently included in the wastage removals.

Wastage from lost or abandoned gear

Information on the amount of gear lost or abandoned in the halibut longline fishery was collected through logbook interviews or from fishing logs received via mail. Fishery-wide estimates are extrapolated from qualified logbook catch and effort statistics to total catch values. Gear types vary considerably as to the length of skates, hook size, and hook spacing but the data are standardized and it is only this standardized gear that is used in subsequent calculations. Some log data cannot be standardized and are not used in the calculation of effective skates because there are missing data or because the gear fishes differently. With the IFQ fishery in Alaska and the Area 2A incidental catch during the sablefish longline fishery, there are mixed halibut and sablefish trips as well as trips which target sablefish and land incidentally-caught halibut. Sablefish gear is considered a non-standard halibut gear that fishes differently, and therefore is not included in the calculation.

Wastage is calculated from the ratio of effective skates lost to effective skates hauled multiplied by total catch. The calculation is done using both fixed hook and snap gear in all areas. Prior to 1998, the gear type used for the wastage calculation was the gear type used to calculate catch per unit effort (fixed hook gear was used in Alaska and a combination of fixed hook and snap gear was used in B.C. and Area 2A). The Area 2A catch includes the non-treaty directed commercial catch, treaty commercial catch, and incidental catch during the longline sablefish fishery. Wastage from lost or abandoned gear was first calculated in 1985 and the wastage estimates by regulatory area are provided in Table 1.

The 2003 ratios of effective skates lost to effective skates hauled by regulatory area are as follows: Area 2A = 0.006; Area 2B = 0.002; Area 2C = 0.004; Area 3A = 0.004; Area 3B = 0.002; and Area 4 = 0.004. Since the implementation of the quota share fisheries in 1995, the ratios have fluctuated slightly between years, but are still lower than they were during the derby fisheries. Area 3A ratio was very low (.001) from 2000 to 2002 which is why the wastage estimates were lower in those years.

Discard mortality of sublegal halibut

Discussions at the 1999 Annual Meeting resulted in changes to the calculations for estimating wastage from sublegal-sized halibut. It was suggested that the grid survey catch ratio of sublegal- to legal-sized fish did not represent that of the commercial fleet as the survey vessels catch more sublegal fish. Prior to 2000, the amount of sublegal halibut caught in the commercial fishery was estimated from the setline survey catch ratio of sublegal to legal pounds. The current method used to estimate sublegal catch by the commercial fleet is to calculate the sublegal/legal ratio from the grid survey stations that represent the highest one-third of the legal catch weight. The ratios of sublegal to legal pounds from these data were calculated from the 2003 grid survey data and are as follows: Area 2A = 0.17; Area 2B = 0.17; Area 2C = 0.08; Area 3A = 0.17; Area 3B = 0.22; and Area 4 = 0.07. These adjusted ratios are 60 to 94 percent of the ratios resulting from calculations using all stations. In comparison to the 2002 ratios, the 2003 ratios of sublegal to legal pounds were similar in the Areas 2C and 4 and increased in the other areas. The discard mortality rate that has been used since 1995 is 16 percent for all areas. This rate was originally based on the bycatch discard mortality observations of 1992 to 1993 in the Bering Sea/Aleutians sablefish hook and line fishery, where the pace is similar to that of the quota fisheries. The observer data from the 1996 and 1997 sablefish IFQ fishery also had a 16 percent discard mortality rate, confirming that this is an appropriate rate to use at this time. The 16 percent discard mortality rate has been used since 1991 for the Canadian IVQ fishery. For the 1993 and 1994 United States fisheries, a rate of 25 percent was used, based on observations from the 1992-1993 Gulf of Alaska sablefish fishery.

To calculate the pounds of sublegal-sized halibut in the commercial fishery, the ratios of sublegal halibut from the surveys were multiplied by the estimated commercial catch in each regulatory area. The resulting poundage was then multiplied by the discard mortality rate (16 percent) to obtain the estimated poundage of sublegal-sized halibut killed in the commercial fishery (Table 2).

Table 1. Estimates of legal-sized Pacific halibut, in thousands of pounds (net weight), killed by lost and abandoned longline gear in the commercial halibut fishery by IPHC regulatory area for 1985 through 2003.

Year	Regulatory Area						Total
	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4	
1985	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,600
1986	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,200
1987	3	173	368	1,580	341	257	2,722
1988	<1	49	206	1,506	122	69	1,952
1989	7	46	193	1,458	194	130	2,029
1990	15	117	327	1,110	216	238	2,023
1991	2	72	347	1,143	418	245	2,227
1992	7	53	245	643	181	126	1,255
1993	9	96	192	341	63	113	814
1994	1	69	228	845	39	107	1,289
1995	3	39	54	128	9	24	257
1996	1	29	44	177	22	74	347
1997	6	37	40	74	54	79	290
1998	1	53	41	154	56	54	359
1999	7	40	67	117	71	93	395
2000	7	28	38	21	58	69	221
2001	3	46	37	32	32	88	238
2002	5	36	26	23	34	51	175
2003 ¹	5	23	29	91	35	42	225

¹preliminary

Table 2. Estimates of sublegal-sized Pacific halibut, in thousands of pounds (net weight), killed in the commercial halibut fishery by IPHC regulatory area, 1987 to 2003.

Year	Regulatory Area						Total
	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4	
1987	12	359	160	550	246	138	1,465
1988	10	377	171	665	225	94	1,542
1989	9	296	153	604	190	99	1,351
1990	4	249	147	508	257	109	1,274
1991	10	161	130	743	298	75	1,417
1992	12	171	147	870	216	83	1,499
1993	16	238	169	739	196	78	1,436
1994	8	222	156	807	97	67	1,357
1995	3	169	75	411	50	38	746
1996	3	214	142	410	88	42	899
1997	4	338	143	670	261	168	1,584
1998	4	379	179	576	286	174	1,598
1999 ¹	2	343	165	438	264	158	1,370
2000 ¹	1	181	133	420	314	133	1,184
2001 ¹	3	247	155	390	448	184	1,427
2002 ¹	4	182	110	484	484	132	1,396
2003 ^{1,2}	9	318	101	614	608	133	1,783

¹ sublegal to legal ratio from the setline surveys from the highest one-third of the legal catch

² preliminary

Estimates of the 2003 personal use harvest

Gregg H. Williams

Abstract

Halibut is taken as a personal use harvest from several sources throughout its range. The main sources of personal use removals are the treaty Indian ceremonial & subsistence fishery in Area 2A, the native food fish fishery in Area 2B, and personal use fishing off Alaska. Estimates for 2003 total 767,000 pounds, up just slightly from 2002. The amount of sublegal halibut retained by the Areas 4D and 4E Community Development Quota fishery decreased in 2003 but this was offset by an increase in the ceremonial and subsistence allocation to the treaty tribes in Area 2A.

Introduction

The removals of Pacific halibut that are accounted for in the stock assessment include commercial and sport catch, bycatch, wastage, and personal use. Personal use includes removals from a variety of sources for which little documented data are available. Sources of personal use harvest include (1) the sanctioned First Nations food fish fishery in Canada, (2) sublegal halibut retained in Areas 4D and 4E under International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) regulations, (3) rod and reel catch not documented in the sport catch, (4) illegally-set commercial gear, (5) illegally-retained bycatch in other fisheries, and (6) ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) removals in the Area 2A treaty Indian fishery.

Reported harvests by area

The treaty Indian C&S allocation is included in the Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan. Since 1995, all take-home fish from the commercial halibut fisheries in Alaska and Canada has been included in the commercial catch and not under personal use. Table 1 presents the personal use catch estimated since 1991. A new methodology for Alaska started in 1998 (Trumble 1999).

Alaska

With the implementation of the Individual Fishery Quota (IFQ) fishery, the take-home fish or the amount recorded as “retained weight” is now accounted for as part of a person’s IFQ. Personal use fish only includes the non-commercial and non-sport halibut.

Methodology for estimating subsistence catches in Alaska was developed in 1998 by Trumble (1999), based on information gathered by household interviews and postal surveys conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). The interview and survey results were adjusted by Trumble (1999) to account for some amount of overlap in the reporting of sport fishery catches and for areas where no data were collected.

The estimate of personal use for all areas of Alaska in 2003 is 440,000 pounds (Table 1), which represents a rollover of the 2002 estimate plus the addition of sublegal halibut retained in the Area

4D/4E Community Development Quota (CDQ) fishery. Personal use has been estimated only intermittently for many areas since 1991 and for some years, individual estimates covered two or more regulatory areas. IPHC intends to rollover current estimates until new information becomes available, at which point the data shown in Table 1 will be revised.

British Columbia

In the Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fishery, take-home fish is monitored and weighed at the time of the offload by the port monitors and is therefore included as part of the vessel's quota.

The primary source of unreported personal use halibut in British Columbia is the Indian food fish fishery. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) estimates the Indian food fish catch at 300,000 pounds. Currently, IPHC receives some logbook and landing data for the Indian food fish fishery from the DFO but it does not represent the complete 300,000 pounds.

Washington, Oregon, and California

In Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, and California), the catch limit is allocated by the Pacific Fishery Management Council to directed and incidental commercial fisheries, sport fisheries, and treaty Indian fisheries operating off northwest Washington. For 2003, the treaty Indian ceremonial & subsistence fishery was allocated 27,000 pounds.

State regulations require that personal use fish from the halibut fisheries be recorded on the fish tickets. The personal use removals from the directed commercial fishery have been included in the commercial catch, which is consistent with the procedure used in the quota share fisheries.

References

Trumble, R. J. 1999. 1998 estimates of personal use. Int. Pac. Halibut Comm. Report of Assessment and Research Activities 1998:61-64.

Table 1. Estimates of pounds (thousands of pounds, net weight) of halibut used for personal or ceremonial & subsistence use.

Year	Regulatory Area						Total
	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4	
1991	10.0	50	720	-----1,000-----		230	2,010
1992	14.2	100		-----1,000-----			1,114
1993	15.8	300	108	328	59	121	932
1994	10.9	300	108	328	59	121	927
1995	14.2	300	n/a	97	37	94	542
1996	15.0	300	n/a	97	37	94	543
1997	14.8	300	n/a	97	37	94	543
1998	10.5	300	170	74	20	166	741
1999	10.5	300	170	74	20	170	745
2000	17.5	300	170	74	20	175	757
2001	16.0	300	170	74	20	192	772
2002	16.0	300	170	74	20	180	760
2003	27.0 ¹	300	170	74	20	176	767

¹Amount shown is the allocation; actual harvest figures not available at time of writing.

Retention of sublegal halibut in the Areas 4D/4E CDQ fishery: 2003 harvests

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Abstract

Since 1998, sublegal halibut (<32 inches) have been retained by the Area 4E Community Development Quota (CDQ) commercial halibut fishery, under an exemption requested by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and approved by the International Pacific Halibut Commission. The amount of retained halibut has grown from 3,590 pounds in 1998 to 30,267 in 2001. For 2003, a total of 14,341 pounds was reported by three CDQ organizations. Beginning in 2002, the retention allowance was expanded to include Area 4D for only those vessels that land all of their annual catch in Areas 4D or 4E.

Program history

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) initially approved a 2-year exemption to the retention of sublegal halibut in Area 4E at the 1998 Annual Meeting. A reporting requirement was added for the 1999 fishery. Another 2-year exemption was approved at the 2000 Annual Meeting, covering the 2000 and 2001 fishing seasons. At the 2002 Annual Meeting, IPHC agreed to extend the allowance to CDQ operations in Area 4D, and to amend the regulation to apply only to vessels that land all of their catch in Areas 4D or 4E. The staff agreed to review the regulation at the end of 2002 to see if it was still necessary under the subsistence fishery regulations being drafted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Such determination will likely wait until NMFS makes its harvest report for the 2003 subsistence fishery.

Results for 2003

Reports for 2003 were received from three organizations: Coastal Villages Regional Fund (CVRF), Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp. (BBEDC), and Norton Sound Economic Development Corp. (NSEDC). Their reports are summarized below, and the reported amount of retained sublegal halibut is shown in Table 1. Overall sublegal landings in 2003 totaled 14,341 pounds, down 22% from 2002.

Coastal Villages Regional Fund (CVRF)

The report from CVRF was received on December 5. CVRF offloading facilities kept records of the retained sublegals, and recorded landings at six of their seven offload locations. The six plants, located at Chefornek, Hooper Bay, Quinhagak, Mekoryuk, Toksook Bay, and Tununak, operated during June through August. For 2003, CVRF reported 5,034 pounds being landed, a 33%

decrease from 2002. A total of 618 halibut was counted, for an average weight of 8.2 pounds. The majority of the fish were landed at Toksook Bay and Mekoryuk.

Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC)

BBEDC’s report was received on October 14. BBEDC fishers fill out a reporting log, which includes the lengths of any retained sublegal halibut. Lengths are tabulated by BBEDC at the conclusion of the season and converted to weights from the IPHC length/weight table, and summed to estimate the total catch. As in previous years, halibut was landed by BBEDC vessels at two locations (Togiak and Egegik), and fish was also sold in “over the side” retail sales.

BBEDC reported that all but one licensed fisher had turned in their sublegal halibut report. The 46 fishermen who landed halibut in 2003 retained 743 halibut, for a total of 6,346 pounds. The fish had an average size of 8.5 pounds. The one outstanding fisher was “averaged” into the sublegal landings total based on the outstanding fisher’s total catch.

Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC)

NSEDC’s report was submitted on December 2. This was NSEDC’s second year of participation in the program, following the inclusion of Area 4D in 2002. NSEDC required their vessels to offload all halibut, legal and sublegal. The sublegal halibut were weighed then returned to the vessel. NSEDC reported 334 sublegal halibut weighing in at 3,443 pounds in head-on weight, which equates to 2,961 pounds net weight (head-off, no ice/slime). The fish had an average weight of 8.9 pounds. Fish were landed only in Nome, from July 24 through October 10.

Table 1. Reported amount (pounds, net weight) of sublegal (<32 inches, 82 cm) halibut retained by Community Development Quota programs fishing in Areas 4D and 4E.

Year	CVRF	BBEDC	NSEDC	Total
1998	900	2,690	-	3,590
1999	7,483	418	-	7,901
2000	9,618	3,772	-	13,390
2001	19,494	10,773	-	30,267
2002	7,473	6,593	4,371	18,437
2003	5,034	6,346	2,961	14,341