

INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

**MINUTES
OF THE
SEVENTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING
Victoria, British Columbia
January 27-30, 1997**

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PARTICIPANTS

Commissioners and Advisors:

Richard Beamish - Chair
Steven Pennoyer - Vice-chair
Gregg Best
Ralph Hoard
Kris Norosz
Brian VanDorp
Bruce Leaman - Canadian Advisor
Loh Lee Low - U.S. Advisor

Staff:

Donald McCaughran - Director
Stephen Hoag - Assistant Director
Calvin Blood
William Clark
Joan Forsberg
Tracee Geernaert
Heather Gilroy
Stephen Kaimmer
Gerald Lariviere
Michael Larsen
Ana Parma
Lauri Sadorus
Phyllis Severeid
Patrick Sullivan
Robert Trumble
Gregg Williams

SUMMARY OF MAJOR DECISIONS:

RECOMMENDED REGULATIONS:

- 1) Catch limits as follows: Area 2A (700,000 pounds); Area 2B (12,500,000 pounds); Area 2C (10,000,000 pounds); Area 3A (25,000,000 pounds); Area 3B (9,000,000 pounds); Area 4A (2,940,000 pounds); Area 4B (3,480,000 pounds); Area 4C (1,160,000 pounds); Area 4D (1,160,000 pounds); Area 4E (260,000 pounds).
- 2) The Area 2A catch sharing plan as specified by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Sub-total allowable catches as follows: Commercial (144,235 pounds); Treaty Indian directed (245,000 pounds); Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (15,000 pounds). Sport north of Columbia River (166,530 pounds); Sport south of Columbia River (144,235 pounds).
- 3) Season dates as follows: Area 2A directed - 7/8, 7/22, 8/5, 8/19,9/2, 9/16 (all 10 hour periods); Area 2A treaty - 3/15 through 11/15; Area 2B, 2C, 3, and 4 - 3/15 through 11/15.
- 4) Discontinue IPHC licensing of commercial vessels in Alaska.
- 5) The IPHC will implement an official logbook for 1998.
- 6) Vessels are allowed to combine Area 4 IFQ trips with Area 3 or 2C provided fish are kept separate in the hold and an observer is aboard.

ADMINISTRATIVE

- 1) The 1996 Annual Meeting minutes were approved.
- 2) The 1996 Interim Meeting minutes were approved.
- 3) Dorfsman and Company were approved as auditors.
- 4) Annual Meeting 1998 will be held in Anchorage, Alaska from January 26 - 29.
- 5) Interim Meeting 1997 will be held in Seattle, Washington from November 18 - 19.
- 6) Chair for 1998 will be Mr. Pennoyer and Vice-chair will be Dr. Beamish.

**SUMMARY OF MINUTES
IPHC ANNUAL MEETING
January 27 - 30, 1997**

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION - MONDAY, JANUARY 27

Chair Dr. Richard Beamish opened the 73rd Annual Meeting.

Discussion regarding the agenda for the public session was opened. Assistant Director Stephen Hoag noted that Mr. Mark Lundsten of the Seattle Fishing Vessel Owner's Association and Mr. Thorn Smith of the North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association requested that they be allowed to make a short presentation at the public session regarding the capture of seabirds in the halibut fishery. Vice-chair Steven Pennoyer reviewed the U.S. Endangered Species Act and noted that all fisheries in the North Pacific now have seabird regulations except the halibut fishery. However, this is likely to change when the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) considers the issue in February. Following further discussion, it was agreed to allow the presentation. Mr. Pennoyer agreed to be the Commission spokesperson on the issue if the need arose.

The agenda for the remaining sessions was discussed. The five-year plan for research was added. Ms. Kris Norosz asked that the "chalky" halibut issue be discussed. Director Donald McCaughran noted that research to date deals mostly with why the fish is chalky and not how to detect it. Chalkiness is the result of a biochemical reaction which changes the pH of the fish and is usually due to stress and warmer temperatures. Mr. Hoag added that the staff could possibly do some preliminary experiments during the stock assessment survey this summer.

The following administrative action was taken:

- 1) The 1996 Annual Meeting minutes were approved.
- 2) The 1996 Interim Meeting minutes were approved.
- 3) Dorfsman and Company were approved as auditors.

There was a short discussion regarding the location for the 1998 Annual Meeting. No decision was made at this time pending more information on costs for Alaskan locations.

Mr. Ralph Hoard presented a review of the Finance and Administration (F & A) Committee meeting in regard to research funding, and noted that funding for the halibut culture project is still undecided pending further consideration by the Commission. Mr. Gregg Best commented that industry may have research proposals which should be considered before approving the report. There were no decisions made at this time.

Mr. Pennoyer added "personal use" to the discussion items, noting that the NPFMC will be considering the issue in the near future as well.

PUBLIC SESSION - MONDAY, JANUARY 27

Dr. Beamish opened the session by welcoming the attendees. He praised the Commission process and its leadership in fishery management. Following an introduction of commissioners and advisors, he announced that Mr. Rodney Pierce will be replacing Mr. Brian VanDorp at the 1998 Annual Meeting. In addition, Dr. McCaughran will be retiring this year.

Staff presentations commenced as follows. Ms. Heather Gilroy presented *Total removals of Pacific halibut in 1996*. Dr. Patrick Sullivan presented *Population assessment, 1996*. Dr. Ana Parma presented *Evaluation of alternative harvest rates for Pacific halibut*. Dr. William Clark presented *Treatment of bycatch in staff quota recommendations*.

Following a break, Mr. Hoag presented *Staff regulatory proposals: 1997*.

Dr. McCaughran commented that there are a number of factors which are considered in the stock assessment followed by staff consensus on quota recommendations. He continued that the IPHC assessment is one of the most complex in the world and the changes which were included this year will have to stand the test of time. The staff is prepared to conduct a complete set of surveys each year for the next five years which will provide information on relative distribution among areas needed for the assessment.

Mr. Thorn Smith from the North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association, made a presentation regarding the capture of short-tailed albatross in the halibut fishery. Following a review of the new regulations for the groundfish fishery off Alaska, Mr. Smith noted several ways to deal with the problem and encouraged fishers to experiment with different methods.

Mr. Mark Lundsten, *F/V Masonic*, presented his views on experience with short-tailed albatross interactions. He pointed out that closing down a fishery is not within NPFMC jurisdiction because it falls under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), but the NPFMC can require new regulations. He noted that his vessel has towed bags while setting for a number of years and they have proven effective at scaring most birds. There will be a brochure sent to all IFQ holders in March outlining the regulations and consequences. [*In complying with the ESA, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) can close a fishery if the incidental take limit established under Section 7 of the ESA is exceeded.*]

Following a break for lunch the floor was opened for questions and comments from the public, which included the following:

- 1) There was concern that the weight-at-age discrepancy was not detected in a timely manner. Dr. Sullivan explained that the trend has been followed for some time, but the staff needed surveys to confirm.
- 2) There was concern over the consequences of leaving too much fish on the grounds since the assessment indicates a large increase in biomass. Dr. McCaughran responded that the amount of halibut on the grounds is the same this year as last year, however only the assessment has changed.

- 3) Questions arose regarding staff quota recommendations, and Dr. McCaughran noted that staff based its recommendations on conservation and not economics.
- 4) There was a suggestion that the smaller weight-at-age could indicate a problem with the halibut food supply. Dr. McCaughran concurred, but added that there is no way of testing that hypothesis at this time, but this shift has apparently happened earlier in the century.
- 5) There was concern on the issue of reduced fecundity of smaller fish versus larger fish. Dr. McCaughran noted that the staff has dealt with the problem through a reduced exploitation rate.
- 6) Concern was expressed over accountability of removals. Dr. McCaughran responded that removals are well accounted for with some minor exceptions.
- 7) The Halibut Association of North America (HANA) issued a statement noting a number of concerns. First, “chalky” halibut is more of a problem now than in the past since there is a larger fresh market. A non-scientific survey conducted by HANA involving a 50% participation rate, accounted for 90,000 pounds of “chalky” halibut. Processors are eager to see the IPHC involved in the issue.

Secondly, the staff proposal to discontinue licensing off Alaska should be reconsidered for sport charter boats. There is concern that charter boat catch statistics are not as good as they should be and so discontinuing licensing would be a step in the wrong direction. HANA would like to see the IPHC become more involved in the gathering of this information.

Third, HANA was surprised to learn that the IPHC has been involved in an aquaculture project. The farm raising of salmon was a disaster to the market and participation in this project should be reconsidered. The public should be kept better informed and should be included in research decisions.

Dr. McCaughran responded that the charter statistics are obtained through the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the staff feels that they are adequate. Regarding halibut culture, he reassured that this was an early life history project and the IPHC has no interest in commercial production of halibut.

- 8) The Commission was asked to consider increased bag limits for sport fishers since the quota has increased substantially.

Ms. Norosz noted that comments regarding research projects were welcomed from the public.

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION - MONDAY, JANUARY 27

The session opened with a review of the agenda. It was decided to add discussion of sea-birds in the halibut fishery and of the personal use fishery in Alaska. Mr. Pennoyer informed the Commission that the U.S. government is attempting to legalize the personal use fishery that is already taking place.

Discussion was opened regarding the new stock assessment and the staff proposed catch limits. Dr. Sullivan made a number of points regarding interpretation of the assessment. He indicated that sublegal wastage should have been dealt with the same way as sublegal bycatch for this assessment. The mistake was found too late for this meeting, but the overall effect on the assessment is minimal. He also explained that recruitment in the IPHC Annual Meeting handout figures indicates total biomass of 8-year-olds, and does not necessarily reflect actual recruitment

to the fishery. He cautioned that Area 3B and 4 assessments are unstable due to lack of information.

Following further confirmation of details, Dr. Sullivan explained that Area 2C survey CPUE was high, but there is not a long time-series for reference. Since the outside stations were chosen following a design that was consistent with the old one, only those data points were used in the assessment.

Dr. McCaughran noted that the staff was conservative in all areas when recommending catch limits. However, in areas where confidence in the assessment was high, the catch limit recommendation was closer to the CEY, and in areas with low confidence, such as Area 4, the staff was more conservative. No decision was made at this time.

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION - TUESDAY, JANUARY 28

Funding of the early life history project was opened for discussion. Dr. McCaughran and Dr. Trumble explained that there are currently 72 fish in captivity. The project has not yet been successful in taking larvae past yolk-sac absorption. The goal is to harvest larvae through all stages including independent feeding to study otolith micro-structure in relation to environmental variability. In the long term, this information could be used in larger environmental projects. Setup will begin in 1997 with results beginning in 1998. Progress in this first two years of the project will indicate whether to proceed further.

Dr. McCaughran confirmed that funding for the project from the IPHC in the past has been for fish collection and purchasing of materials. The project's Saltonstall/Kennedy funding has expired and it now needs additional support from the IPHC to continue. There was extensive discussion regarding how this information might be used in the long term as well as concern from the commissioners that this project has been underway for some time without success of raising halibut to metamorphosis.

Mr. Hoard noted that \$50,000 had been set aside during the F & A Committee meeting in November of last year. Dr. McCaughran argued that \$50,000 would barely cover the lead scientist's salary, and more extensive funding is needed. There was lengthy discussion of all aspects of the project and the funding needed. The commissioners concurred that funding should not be discontinued without warning as there is an obligation to the lead scientist. However, Dr. Beamish noted that he is prepared to support the project for one year. If larvae have not been successfully raised past the yolk-sac stage by the autumn research presentation to the Commission, then there will be no more funding. Mr. Pennoyer concurred with a one-year support pending results. There was some discussion of level of funding, but it was left undecided pending further comment by the advisory groups.

Following a short break, discussion of the five-year research plan was opened. The Commission confirmed that staff would present a progress report of research projects in the autumn of each year before the F & A Committee meeting. The meeting will be a half day and open to the public. Ms. Norosz suggested an accounting of research goals and accomplishments each year. There

was discussion as to whether the five-year plan referred to surveys only. It was agreed that priorities change and thus the research focus could change. However, the five-year plan will be a continuous revolving schedule which includes each research project with projected ending date and total funding needed.

The Commission agreed that it was committing the staff to do five years of extensive stock assessment surveys in all areas. Mr. Hoag noted that tasking groups have already been organized and work is well underway for the 1997 season. There was some discussion of survey cost. Mr. Pennoyer commented that the budget indicates a surplus of survey funds at the conclusion of the five years. Dr. Beamish reminded the Commission that funding by the governments and survey revenues can change. Mr. Gerald Lariviere was asked to make a separate accounting of surveys in the annual budget.

During further discussion of the surveys, Mr. Hoard asked that survey trips be spread out to as many ports as possible. Mr. Hoag commented that time constraints usually require that the closest port be used. Dr. Beamish suggested that oceanographic data be collected since a five-year time series of the area could be valuable. There was no decision made on that issue.

There was some discussion of the role of the advisory groups in research. It was agreed that the groups would be asked to suggest new projects as well as comment on projects already underway during their presentations to the Commission at the Annual Meeting. It was also agreed to include a summary of research in the Annual Meeting handout.

Mr. Frank Warrens, Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), presented the Area 2A bycatch report. He indicated that a video describing methods of reducing halibut bycatch mortality has been distributed to industry. Also underway are: 1) efforts to interview fishers regarding the effectiveness of the video; 2) voluntary fish excluder devices in the shrimp fishery; 3) lab survival studies in Newport, Oregon; 4) entry of trawl fishery logbook data for bycatch estimation; and 5) a voluntary observer program. In addition, the trawl limited entry program has decreased licenses to under 300.

There was some clarification of the measures being taken and Mr. Warrens noted that Area 2A bycatch statistics are based on logbook data from 1985-1987. Funding problems have delayed analysis of more recent data. The Commission suggested that Mr. Warrens submit a proposal to them for funding to help stimulate the observer program. This proposal would then be considered for the 1998 season. Mr. Hoard suggested that Commission staff could help with the analysis of logbook data.

Mr. Pennoyer presented a report on Alaskan bycatch measures. He reported that the Vessel Incentive Program has been difficult. Also, many of the measures used were developed in a time of declining stocks of halibut. However, since that is no longer the case, there is additional pressure to the system to keep bycatch rates low as well as to raise VIP rates or fishery caps. The reauthorization of the Magnuson Act will allow managers to move towards new methods of handling bycatch, such as vessel bycatch accounts (VBA). He added that a Canadian report regarding their success in lowering bycatch will be heard at the February NPFMC meeting and

this may inspire them to begin the process towards VBAs. There is support for VBAs from industry, but varying opinions on how to implement it, since it is seen as an allocation of groundfish.

It was proposed that the NPFMC and the Commission meet jointly to discuss bycatch on April 15. There was no decision made at this time.

There was some discussion of the Alaskan observer program. Mr. Pennoyer noted that many problems arise because observers work for private contractors and not directly for the government. Following some further discussion, Dr. Beamish commented that the Canadian delegation would like a U.S. bycatch reduction plan. Mr. Pennoyer responded that further reduction will be unlikely without the VBA program. It was agreed that further discussion would take place following the joint IPHC/NPFMC meeting in April.

Mr. Barry Ackerman presented the status of Canadian bycatch reduction and management. He noted that individual accountability has changed the behavior of fishers, for example, shorter exploratory tows. In 1997, only one vessel exceeded the cap and was removed from the area. Bycatch was low this year also because the Pacific cod fishery was closed. As that fishery increases, so will bycatch, although the total should still be under the goal of one million pounds. Details of the program were discussed.

Following a break for lunch, Dr. Trumble presented a review of the Northwest Food Strategies (NFS) program to process up to 50,000 pounds of bycatch for foodbanks in 1996. There were difficulties with the program due to NMFS regulations regarding seizure of fish at the dock. Following a meeting with NOAA General Counsel and NFS representative, Mr. Tuck Donnelly, Dr. Trumble proposed that NFS apply for an experimental fishery permit and a distribution permit. The proposal for the experimental fishery permit could be written by Dr. Trumble and Mr. Donnelly and would include the conditions in which the Commission approved the program at the 1996 Annual Meeting. The Commission agreed to accept the proposal pending approval of the wording which would be discussed in April.

Discussion was opened regarding the Commission director replacement. Dr. McCaughran agreed to send all applications to the commissioners two weeks following the closing date. The Commission agreed that Mr. Pennoyer, Dr. Beamish, and Dr. McCaughran would meet on March 6 in Seattle and develop a short-list of five to six applicants. Interviews will be scheduled in April and May with an announcement in June.

The industry proposal to increase bag and possession limits in the Alaskan sport fishery was discussed. It was agreed that these issues may be allocative since the recommendation may not be based on biological reasons, and is therefore a matter for the NPFMC to consider. There was some clarification of proper procedure and it was decided that once the NPFMC has made a decision, the Commission will need to approve it.

Dr. Beamish presented a brief review of the Canadian sport fishery.

**JOINT IPHC/CONFERENCE BOARD/PROCESSOR ADVISORY GROUP MEETING -
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29**

Conference Board Chair, Mr. John Secord, presented the meeting minutes (Appendix I). He confirmed that discussion regarding splitting Area 4B was tabled until next year. He also commented that there was a wide range of feelings regarding the sport bag and possession limits in each country. He noted that the recommendation to lower possession limits in the Area 2B sport fishery was driven by the fact that there was failure in 1996 to obtain adequate catch statistics from the sport fishery.

Conference Board Vice-chair, Mr. Robert Alverson, commented that the issue of observer coverage on small vessels is an ongoing debate. The Conference Board is recommending no change in observer coverage at this time.

Processor Advisory Group Chair, Mr. Brian Bigler, presented the meeting minutes (Appendix II). He stressed that local depletion issues should be taken into consideration in Area 4. He also noted concern by PAG regarding “chalky” halibut, noting that it resulted in a one-half million dollar loss in 1996. There was a short discussion regarding “chalky” fish. Mr. Bigler noted that PAG would like to see the IPHC become involved in a project to detect these fish on the dock.

Dr. Beamish opened the floor to general discussion. Mr. Best commented that alternative sites are being considered for the 1998 Annual Meeting, but there was no response from the Conference Board or PAG.

The following general comments were made: 1) there was a suggestion to give “chalky” halibut to the Pacific Biological Station for study; 2) there was a comment that improper procedure may have been used in the Conference Board deliberations of the Canadian sport fish issue; 3) several participants urged the Commission to take a stand on the sport fish issues, and there was one request to send a letter regarding poor sport fish reporting to Alaska State Senator Halford; 4) there was concern that the Commission is not taking local depletion seriously.

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29

The session opened with clarification of Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska observer requirements when fishing in multiple areas. It was confirmed that the requirements for each major area need to be made consistent before fishing the two areas in the same trip is possible.

The Commission reviewed the Conference Board report. There was some discussion concerning sending Erik Wickham to attend the NPFMC meeting in February. It was noted that a funding procedure is not yet in place within the Conference Board. Mr. Pennoyer commented that he would support funding Mr. Wickham’s travel expenses if it was agreed that he could help move along the bycatch deliberations within the NPFMC. He expressed his frustration in the lack of a mechanism to deal with harvesting groundfish while lowering bycatch. The Commission agreed to fund Mr. Wickham’s appearance to testify to the NPFMC. Ms. Jane DiCosimo, NPFMC staff, was asked to schedule him for the bycatch portion of the meeting.

Sport fish possession limits were discussed. Dr. McCaughran noted that there is some concern if the NPFMC decides to increase possession limits, that the CEY will be exceeded this year. There was confusion as to why the Conference Board asked to refer U.S. possession limit regulations to the NPFMC, but referred Canadian possession limit regulations to the Commission. It was agreed to ask Mr. Secord in a later session why the Conference Board made the distinction.

Both Mr. Best and Ms. Norosz noted that individual advisory group participants had commented that their views were not reflected in the minutes. Fishers were proposing that they be included when designing the surveys to insure proper accounting of fish. Mr. Hoag assured the Commission that fishers are involved in the process.

Local depletion was discussed. Mr. Hoag commented that it is possible although difficult to test and should possibly be considered as the catch limits increase.

Mr. Best asked that a statement be issued by staff at the public meeting on Thursday regarding surveys. Fishers should be made to realize that it is everyone's responsibility to insure accurate surveys and adequate survey vessels.

The Commission discussed and agreed that at future Annual Meetings the two advisory groups should meet prior to the joint session with the Commission. It was suggested to schedule a session for the 1998 meeting.

The PAG report was reviewed. Ms. Norosz noted that the survey for "chalky" halibut included only HANA members and had a 50% return rate. Therefore, the 90,000 pounds quoted as being "chalky" is most likely a low estimate. Following a short discussion, no decisions were made at this time.

The regulations which needed approval were reviewed. Dr. McCaughran confirmed that the Commission needs to approve quotas as well as the council catch sharing plans for Areas 2A and 4.

Mr. Hoard proposed that the catch limit's be approved at a level 75-80% of staff recommendations. Dr. McCaughran commented that the staff figures are already conservative, although Area 2A is uncertain. Mr. Pennoyer added that the increase seems large, but since the proposed harvest rate is 20%, it seems low enough. Mr. Hoard expressed concern regarding the migration of fish between Area 2A and 2B. Dr. Sullivan commented that the stocks are considered mixed and are managed together in the assessment. Mr. Pennoyer commented that the mixing of fish between the two countries makes management especially difficult. There was significant discussion.

Ms. Norosz noted concern that the percentage of the CEY used in catch limit recommendations is similar in all areas excluding Area 2C. She expressed concern that fishers have been trying to be conservative and a stock crash would be unfortunate. Dr. Parma and Dr. McCaughran commented that the estimates in that area had not measured as much as in other areas because

only one survey was conducted there in 1996 and while that survey showed high catch rates, commercial CPUE was in decline. As more surveys are done, they will bear more weight.

Following further clarification of the stock assessment, the Commission acknowledged that Mr. Hoard's suggestion held merit. Mr. Pennoyer asked that a statement be made at the public session noting the length at which the Commission considered the various proposals, and that the catch limit decision is not made lightly.

Following a break for lunch, Mr. Pennoyer stated that the U.S. will not agree to change the funding formula for the Commission at this time. The U.S. believes that the changes that have been proposed are not in the best interest of the Commission. Hence, the funding formula of 50/50 will be maintained.

Mr. Hoard presented a review of the F & A Committee report. The Commission voted to approve the 1995/96 financial report. Mr. Hoard noted that a new phone system was approved in November and has now been installed.

The 1996/97 budget was presented reflecting the change of funding to \$50,000 for the early life history project as discussed earlier in the meeting. Following further discussion of the project, Dr. Beamish proposed that funding be approved for one year at \$50,000. If the project has not been successful by July of 1997, then funding will be discontinued. If the project is successful, a total of \$25,000 can be moved from the 1998 budget for a total 1997 funding of \$75,000. The Commission agreed to this proposal and approved the 1996/97 budget at it was presented.

Following a short discussion, the budget for 1997/98 was approved provided that the \$25,000 possibly earmarked for the early life history project was removed from the research budget. The staff proposal for a new vehicle was discussed. The Commission agreed to allow up to \$20,000 to be spent on a new vehicle.

The 1998/99 budget was discussed briefly. Dr. Beamish reiterated that Canada still wishes to renegotiate the funding formula, and therefore cannot vote on future budgets. Mr. Pennoyer concurred and the budget was tentatively approved with the understanding that the funding formula will require further discussion between the governments.

The Commission approved the addition of the F & A Committee to the Financial Regulations in Section 3.6 b.

Mr. Hoag began a review of the items which the Commission would be voting on the following day.

The PAG concern regarding "chalky" halibut was discussed. Dr. Trumble noted that PAG agreed to form a group to construct a questionnaire that will confirm the extent of "chalky" fish. The staff has also agreed to incorporate some handling studies into this year's surveys to simulate the condition and its causes.

The PAG recommendation for a 30-day opening for Area 2A was rejected.

The proposal for an IPHC official logbook for IFQ vessels in Alaska was discussed at length. Mr. Hoag noted that the staff has been working with NMFS to establish a joint logbook, but the efforts have been unsuccessful. Therefore, the staff would like to initiate an independent logbook funded by the IPHC. Mr. Best noted that an official logbook has been a requirement in Canada since the inception of the IVQ program and is funded by fishers. Mr. Pennoyer commented that the joint efforts were unsuccessful due to confidentiality issues which are stipulated by U.S. law. Mr. Pollard suggested renewing discussions since there have been recent changes in the Magnuson-Stevens Act that may remove the obstacles. Mr. Hoag commented that the staff could delay printing of the books until this summer, but no later if they are to be in place by the 1998 season. Therefore, tentative approval is needed this year to proceed, but a regulatory action will be required at the 1998 Annual Meeting. Approval was given to proceed.

It was suggested that all vessels including those under 26 feet fill out logbooks. Following a discussion, no decision was made.

The Commission discussed regulation wording changes as follows: 1) Change “accept and weigh” in Section 16(3) to “weigh and record”; and 2) strike “change from other records” in Section 15(2)a.

The issue of fishing in multiple areas in Area 4 and the Gulf was discussed. It was confirmed that the current regulations prohibit fishing in both areas during a single trip. However, fishing within Area 4 or within Area 2C, 3A, and 3B is allowed provided the stated requirements in Sections 17(2) and 17(3) of the 1996 IPHC Regulations are met. Area 4 is different than the Gulf areas because there are clearance requirements in addition to multiple regulatory area requirements. Following further discussion, it was determined that regulations need to be modified to allow fishing in both areas while maintaining the section 17 requirements of observer presence and separation of fish in the hold. However, because Area 4 clearance requirements stipulate that the hold be empty when clearing into an area, vessels will be able to fish in Area 4 and then move to an area in the Gulf, but not vice versa. The staff was asked to meet with NOAA General Counsel to develop appropriate wording.

Following a break, the Commission approved an exemption for vessels under 26 feet from logbook requirements. Mr. Best suggested that the requirement to fill out logbooks within 24 hours of fishing be stressed.

The sport possession limit issue was revisited. It was agreed to present a statement at the public session on Thursday that the Commission is interested only in total removals from an area and therefore all allocation issues should be left to the individual governments. However, these removals cannot interfere with the collection of data or Commission regulations. It was agreed that along with public proposals on the sport fish issue, a letter will be addressed to the NPFMC outlining fisher’s concerns as well as the Commission concern that an increased bag or possession limit could result in exceeding the CEY for 1997.

Regarding the issue of personal use/subsistence, Mr. Pollard reported that the Halibut Convention does not prohibit the development of a fishery other than sport and commercial. As long as the personal use/subsistence regulations do not interfere with IPHC regulations or present a conservation problem, the individual countries can legalize these fisheries. Ms. DiCosimo commented that the NPFMC has not yet deemed the subsistence fishery as “native only” so it could include other user groups. It was agreed that the public proposals regarding personal use/subsistence will be forwarded to the governments.

The Canadian sport fish accounting issue was discussed at length. It was noted that receiving estimates on a “real time” basis is difficult at this stage, but DFO has been working with other parties to establish an accurate accounting system. It was agreed to leave the bag and possession limits the same as in 1996 and to issue a statement at the public session on Thursday explaining the Commission’s reasoning.

The proposal to create a size limit for the sport fishery in Alaska was discussed. It was agreed that staff would do a general analysis of size limits and the biological ramifications and report the results at the 1998 Annual Meeting.

The PAG proposal concerning weighmasters was discussed. The Commission agreed to forward the proposal to the NPFMC. Additionally, because this deals with accounting of IFQ fish in Alaska, the Commission instructed the staff to monitor the accuracy of the present system in 1997 with a report to be presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting.

The sea-bird issue was discussed briefly. The Commission agreed to forward the Conference Board statement to the NPFMC as well as issue a statement recommending that the U.S. adopt the sea-bird regulations. There was some concern over whether skiff fishers would be included in the regulations, and it was agreed to leave the details to the NPFMC.

Following a brief discussion of the public session format, the location for the 1998 Annual Meeting was discussed. The Commission agreed that Anchorage will be considered pending the availability of lodging.

The Commission agreed that the IPHC Interim Meeting will take place November 18-19 in Seattle. The IPHC/NPFMC joint bycatch meeting will be scheduled for April 15 in Anchorage.

The issue of localized depletion was discussed at length. Although several commissioners expressed concern over the issue, Dr. McCaughran commented that based on past IPHC studies, it is most likely not a danger to the stocks. A staff experiment would involve closing an area to the public for one year and that is most likely unacceptable to fishers. Dr. Trumble suggested that smaller scale programs can be worked out through the council process. No decision was made at this time.

Concerning sport charter vessel service minimum requirements, Mr. Doug Vincent-Lang noted that a letter in support of the requirements from the IPHC to the Alaska State Senate would be helpful. Ms. Norosz agreed to work with Dr. McCaughran on constructing the letter.

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION - THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

The agenda for the public session and statements to be made were reviewed. Dr. Trumble noted that the Northwest Food Strategies food bank issue will also be presented to the NPFMC, and could be in place in time for pollock “B” season.

Mr. Pennoyer confirmed that the Commission has decided to encourage VBA development by the NPFMC and to forward PAG comments to the NPFMC concerning VBAs.

Mr. Ackerman presented a report concerning the recent challenge to the Canadian IQ system. There could be possible ramifications from the challenge including invalidating the current program. The case is currently in the appeal process, but it could last a year or longer.

Ms. Norosz distributed Alaska State Senate Bill 19 concerning sport fish statistics. Mr. Pennoyer was concerned that the Commission may not necessarily support all the details. The Commission agreed that Dr. McCaughran will draft a letter in support of the concept, to be reviewed by Mr. Pennoyer and Dr. Beamish, then distributed to all commissioners. Following discussion of details, it was confirmed that this will allow for collection of sport fishing information and a requirement that fishers divulge the information. Limited entry to the sport charter fishery is impossible without a State of Alaska constitutional amendment.

PUBLIC SESSION - THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

Dr. Beamish welcomed the attendees. Mr. Pennoyer stated that this is a challenging year and it is fortunate for everyone that the halibut stocks have started increasing again. The Commission is committed to a conservative approach and as a result have discussed the stock assessment issue at length with the IPHC staff. Dr. Beamish added that the staff are leaders in the stock assessment venue.

The Commission approved the following items:

1) Catch limits as follows: Area 2A (700,000 pounds); Area 2B (12,500,000 pounds); Area 2C (10,000,000 pounds); Area 3A (25,000,000 pounds); Area 3B (9,000,000 pounds); Area 4A (2,940,000 pounds); Area 4B (3,480,000 pounds); Area 4C (1,160,000 pounds); Area 4D (1,160,000 pounds); Area 4E (260,000 pounds).

2) The Area 2A catch sharing plan as specified by the PFMC. Sub-total allowable catches as follows: Commercial (144,235 pounds); Treaty Indian directed (245,000 pounds); Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (15,000 pounds). Sport north of Columbia River (166,530 pounds); Sport south of Columbia River (144,235 pounds).

3) Season dates as follows: Area 2A directed - 7/8, 7/22, 8/5, 8/19,9/2, 9/16 (all 10 hour periods); Area 2A treaty - 3/15 through 11/15; Area 2B, 2C, 3, and 4 - 3/15 through 11/15.

4) Discontinue IPHC licensing of commercial vessels in Alaska.

5) The IPHC will implement an official logbook for 1998.

6) Vessels are allowed to combine Area 4 IFQ trips with Area 3 or 2C provided fish are kept separate in the hold and an observer is aboard.

7) Chair for 1998 will be Mr. Pennoyer and Vice-chair will be Dr. Beamish.

Mr. Pennoyer stated the sport fish subsistence proposals including the Valdez Charter Boat Association proposal will be forwarded to the NPFMC and the governments along with the following statement made by Mr. Pennoyer:

We concluded that internal domestic allocative decisions should be left to the two governments with the proviso that any allocation scheme adopted be monitorable, manageable, and that IPHC quotas by area and year not be exceeded. Specifically, the Commission reviewed requests for sport fish bag increases in Alaska and changes in 2A and 2B. Obviously there is no biological reason in our current stock assessment to limit these harvests given the apparent status of the stock over what we thought it was last year. Nevertheless, internal allocation in both countries should be a decision of the political process in each country. Accordingly, we will refer the sport fishing proposals to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and the DFO, respectively for their consideration. We understand that the North Pacific Council is considering regulations dealing with harvest of halibut for personal use that's outside of the sport harvest regulations. Again, the IPHC considers this a domestic allocation issue and believes it is appropriate that the North Pacific Council deal with it. We understand that the U.S. has a legal opinion that identifies the potential personal use to be allowed under the treaty. This opinion will be provided to the government of Canada for their consideration and review. The IPHC is concerned that any domestic process allow for the IPHC review of any changes in allocation that could result in a significant change in removals such that the CEYs might be exceeded in any year. As an example, right now we are deducting the prior year's sport catch among other things from the CEY to derive and out of the bottom of that falls out the setline commercial quota. Sport catches are not restricted in Alaska in total and any measure which could significantly increase that catch would not be accounted for until the following year. Rather than exceed the CEY in this year, it would be preferable for the Commission to be able to take the predicative effect of any increase into account prior to setting its annual quota.

Mr. Pennoyer explained that the Commission is going to propose that the domestic processes happen in such a way and such timing that this Commission gets to consider any change in setting its annual CEY. Dr. Beamish added that "domestic processes" includes both Canada and the U.S.

The Commission announced that the following actions will be taken:

1) The staff will be reevaluating the size limit this year and report back in 1998.

2) The Commission cannot endorse the weighmaster program unconditionally but advocates any program which improves accounting of fish. The staff will monitor the current program in 1997.

- 3) The staff will conduct experiments aboard the survey vessels this summer in relation to “chalky” halibut. Also, processors have agreed to improve the accounting of chalkiness by documenting customer complaints and tracking fish.
- 4) A letter regarding the capture of short-tailed albatross will be forwarded to the NPFMC with support from the Commission for bird-scaring regulations.
- 5) The Northwest Food Strategies project will go forward this year, with some revisions that will enable the project to meet regulatory restrictions.
- 6) The Commission will meet jointly with the NPFMC on April 15 regarding bycatch, and the public is welcome to attend. The VBA program is the most positive method on the horizon to accomplish lowering the bycatch in the U.S., and the NPFMC will be urged to develop the system. However, PAG comments regarding the issue will also be forwarded. Dr. Beamish commented that the hardship on some fishers in any program is recognized.
- 7) The Commission agreed to support Erik Wickham in addressing the NPFMC at their February meeting on behalf of the bycatch issue.
- 8) The 1998 Annual Meeting will take place in Anchorage, Alaska from January 26 - 29.
- 9) A joint Conference Board/PAG meeting will be added to the Annual Meeting agenda starting in 1998.

Dr. Beamish acknowledged that the early life history research project is unpopular and noted that the Commission plans to fund the project for one year. Future funding is dependent on whether results are achieved.

Ms. Norosz announced that the Commission will conduct a review of research each year and urged the public to attend. This is part of the five-year plan concept that the Commission has developed at this meeting. Mr. Best added that the Commission has committed the staff to five years of intensive surveys, and urged fishers to actively participate.

Dr. Beamish announced that Mr. VanDorp will be replaced as Commissioner by Mr. Rodney Pierce. He added that Dr. McCaughran and Ms. Phyllis Severeid are expected to retire in 1998.

Dr. Beamish commented that in 1997, the 60/40 split in Area 2 was not achieved but was closer than in recent years. Although the stock does not always comply, this year shows that the split has some biological validity.

Mr. Best complimented the advisory groups on their hard work. Dr. McCaughran added that the staff is pleased with the outcome of the meeting, and that the added input of PAG this year was an asset to the process.

Dr. Beamish thanked everyone for their participation. Meeting adjourned.

Steven Pennoyer, Chairman

Participants

Name	Affiliation	City, State/Province
Chris Acheson	Pacific Blackcod Assn.	Ganges, B.C.
Barry Ackerman	DFO	Vancouver, B.C.
Ragnar Alstrom	Yukon Delta Fish Dev. Corp.	Alakanuk, AK
Bob Alverson	FVOA	Seattle, WA
Sandy Argue	DFO	Vancouver, B.C.
Greg Bargmann	WDF&W	Olympia, WA
Will Beattie	NW Indian Fisheries Comm.	Olympia, WA
Dean Beers	ADF&G	Juneau, AK
Don Beeson	Icicle Seafoods	Homer, AK
Anne Best	Pacific Longline Fish. Assn.	Comox, B.C.
Brian Bigler	HANA	Seattle, WA
Tom Boehm	Canadian Consul General	Seattle, WA
Pamela Botnen	TRFC	Chimacum, WA
Craig Bowhay	NWIFC	Forks, WA
David Brindle	Fisherman	Seward, AK
Wilbur Brown, Sr.	Kake Fisheries	Kake, AK
John Bruce	Deep Sea Fisherman's Union	Kingston, WA
Alexander Bychkov	PICES Secretariat	Victoria, B.C.
Mark Callahan	Icicle Seafoods	Seattle, WA
Corrie Campbell	B.C. Ministry	Victoria, B.C.
Mark Cedergreen	Westport Charterboat Assn.	Westport, WA
Billy Charles	Yukon Delta Fish Dev. Corp.	Enunonak, AK
Jeff Chase	USCG	Kodiak, AK
Neal Coenen	ODF&W	Newport, OR
Tom Cole	SFAB/ACS Victoria	Victoria, B.C.
Leroy Cossette	AK Draggers Assn.	Kodiak, AK
Bill DeGreef	PCFVOG, NTA, CFIC	North Saanich, B.C.
Peter DeGreef	PCFVOG	Victoria, B.C.
Jane DiCosimo	NPFMC	Anchorage, AK
George Dirks	Atka Fisherman's Assoc.	Atka, AK
Ludger Dochtermann	UFMA	Kodiak, AK
Ken Dole	Waterfall Resort	Ketchikan, AK
Helen Dunn	Pacheedaht First Nation	Port Renfrow, B.C.
Phillip Edgar	Ditidaht Fisheries	Nitinaht Lake, B.C.
Carl Edgar, Sr.	Ditidant Council	Nitinaht Lake, B.C.
Mel Erickson	Deep Creek Charterboat Assn.	Ninilchik, AK
Lt. Paul Flynn	USCG	Juneau, AK
Bert Foulds	DFO	Ottawa, ONT
Chris Franklin	Commercial fisherman	Ward Cove, AK
Marvin Gjerde	FVOA	Seattle, WA
Edwin Glotfelty	Yukon Delta Fish Dev. Corp.	Seward, AK
Art Goddard	Canadian Consulate	Seattle, WA
Victor Golodoff	Atka Fisherman's Assoc.	Atka, AK
John Goodhand	Valdez Charterboat Assn.	Valdez, AK
Keith Greba	Sitka Charterboat Oper Assn.	Sitka, AK

Jeff Green	YKI Fisheries Inc.	Yakutat, AK
Dan Greene	Makah Fisheries Mgt.	Neah Bay, WA
Shari Gross	HANA	Seattle, WA
Morris Haldane	Prince Rupert NBHB Local	Prince Rupert, B.C.
Peter Hancock	Annieville Halibut Assn.	Vancouver, B.C.
Peter Hanson	WA State Charterboat Assn.	Neah Bay, WA
Terry Henshaw	Annieville Halibut Assn.	Delta, B.C.
Jude Henzler	Bering Sea Fisherman's Assn.	Anchorage, AK
Dennis Hicks	ALFA	Sitka, AK
William Hines	NMFS	Juneau, AK
David Hogan	U.S. Dept. of State	Washington, D.C.
Ruel Holmberg Sr.	Aleutian Corp.	Sand Point, AK
LCDR N.T. Hunnings	USCG	Juneau, AK
Lorne Iverson	BC Halibut Lonliner's Assn.	Vancouver, B.C.
Roy Jack	Pacheedaht First Nation	Port Renfrow, B.C.
Cydrick Jager		Coquitlam, B.C.
Ken Jenkins	SFAB	Port Hardy, B.C.
Steve Joner	Makah Fisheries Mgt.	Neah Bay, WA
Jeff Jones	Pacheedaht Fisheries Council	Port Renfrow, B.C.
Dave Keeling	PCFVOG	Nanaimo, B.C.
Daniel Kelliher	Kelliher Fish Co.	Edmonds, WA
Patrick Kelly	Norton Sound Seafoods	Anchorage, AK
John Kingeter	NMFS	Juneau, AK
Linda Kozak	Kodiak Vessel Owners	Kodiak, AK
Earl Krygier	ADF&G	Juneau, AK
Joe Kyle	APICDA	Juneau, AK
Jim Lane	Nov-chah-nulth Tribal Council	Port Alberni, B.C.
Arne Lee	FVOA	Poulsbo, WA
Phillip Lestenkof	Fisherman	St. Paul Is., AK
Denby Lloyd	Aleutians East Borough	Anchorage, AK
Jim Lone	WA Rec. Fish. Industry Assn.	Seattle, WA
Loh-Lee Low	NMFS/AFSC	Seattle, WA
Mark Lundsten	FVOA	Seattle, WA
Joe Macinko	Kodiak Longliner's Assn.	Kodiak, AK
Ron Malcolm	Pacific Longline Assn.	Vancouver, B.C.
Bruce McDonald	DFO enforcement	Nanaimo, B.C.
Barry McGregor	JLW Fisheries Ltd.	Richmond, B.C.
Janice McGregor	JLW Fisheries Ltd.	Richmond, B.C.
Steve Meadows	Quileute Tribe	LaPush, WA
Carl Merculief	CBSFA	St. Paul Is., AK
Chris Merculief	Fisherman	St. George, AK
Scott Meyer	ADF&G	Homer, AK
Norm Moffat	Annieville Halibut Assn.	Vancouver, B.C.
Chris Mohr	Sekiu Chamber of Commerce	Sekiu, WA
Grn Moscatello	USCG	Kodiak, AK
Yorn Nordmann	S.M. Products	Delta, B.C.
Luise Norman	UFAWU	Errington, B.C.
Bill Otway	DFO	Port Coquitlam, B.C.
Marc Pakenham	DFO - Coast Guard	Victoria, B.C.

Robert Paoli	Deep Sea Fisherman's Union	Seattle, WA
Tom Pearson	PLFA	Comox, B.C.
Ed Pedersen	Annieville Halibut Assn.	Delta, B.C.
Ren Pennington	Big Salmon Resort	Neah Bay, WA
Keith Peters	SPC	Bellingham, WA
Curt Peterson	IFQ Broker	Bellevue, WA
Rod Pierce	HAB	Courtney, B.C.
Jon Pollard	NOAA	Juneau, AK
David Pruden	PLFA	Comox, B.C.
David Reid		Gabriola, B.C.
Ken Roeske	DFO	Ottawa, ONT
Rusty Roessler	Pelican Seafoods	Pelican, AK
Walter Sargent	UFMA	Kodiak, AK
Aaron Sarna	DFO	Ottawa, ONT
Drew Scalzi	NPFA	Homer, AK
Joe Scordino	NMFS	Seattle, WA
John Secord	FVOA of B.C.	Vancouver, B.C.
Ralph Shaw	Sport Fish Advisory Board	Courtenay, B.C.
Irine Shestakove	NPAFC	Vancouver, B.C.
Phil Smith	NMFS/RAM Division	Juneau, AK
Thorn Smith	NPFVOA	Seattle, WA
Ron Soule	NorQuest Seafoods	Seattle, WA
Bob Steinbock	DFO	Ottawa, ONT
CDR R. Stevens	USCG	Seattle, WA
Bob Strom	Pacific Troller Assn.	Victoria, B.C.
Gregg Thompson	Deep Sea Fisherman's Union	Seattle, WA
Blake Tipton	S.M. Products	Delta, B.C.
Dick Tremaine	Central Bering Sea Fish. Assn.	Anchorage, AK
Moses Tulin	CVFC	Chevak, AK
Doug Vincent-Lang	ADF&G	Anchorage, AK
John Vostinak	OR Coast Charterboat Assn.	Newport, OR
Roz Vostinak	OR Coast Charterboat Assn.	Newport, OR
Robert Ward	Homer Charterboat Assn.	Homer, AK
Carol Warrens	Recreational fisher	Portland, OR
Frank Warrens	PFMC	Portland, OR
Stan Weikal	Pacific Fixed Gear Assn.	Seattle, WA
K. Whittaker	Kake Tribal Corp.	Kake, AK
John Wilks	NPHFA	Qualicum Beach, WA
Gary Williamson	PCFVOG	Vancouver, B.C.
John Woodruff	Icicle Seafoods	Seattle, WA
Jon Zuck	Norton Sound Econ. Dev. Corp.	Anchorage, AK
