



IPHC Fishery Regulations:

Recreational (Sport) Fishing for Pacific Halibut—IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E (Sect. 28)

(Charter management measures in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A)

SUBMITTED BY: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (NOAA-FISHERIES) (13 DECEMBER 2023 & 21 JANUARY 2024)

Directed Commercial Recreational Subsistence Non-directed commercial All
All Regulatory Areas All Alaska Regulatory Areas All U.S. Regulatory Areas
2A 2B 2C 3A 3B 4A 4B 4C 4D 4E

PURPOSE

To propose charter management measures in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A reflective of mortality limits adopted by the IPHC and resulting allocations under the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The NPFMC recommended management measures for guided recreational (sport) Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A for application in 2024. The purpose of the management measures is to achieve the Pacific halibut charter allocation under the NPFMC Halibut Catch Sharing Plan. NPFMC selected these management measures at its December 2023 meeting, following a review of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) [Analysis of Management Options for the Area 2C and 3A Charter Halibut Fisheries for 2024](#) (ADF&G analysis) and after receiving input from the NPFMC Charter Halibut Management Committee, which is comprised of stakeholder representatives from both IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A.

The proposed annual management measures for 2024 are as follows:

IPHC Area 2C

Management measures for all allocations shown below include a daily bag limit of one Pacific halibut, and a reverse slot size limit where the upper limit is fixed at O80 (*i.e.*, Pacific halibut 80 inches or over in length may be retained).

- 1) If the allocation is equal to or greater than 0.943 Mlb:
 - Begin with a lower size limit of U40 (*i.e.*, retained Pacific halibut must be under or equal to 40 inches in length) and increase this limit until the allocation is reached, as indicated in [Table 2C.4 \(page 20\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.
- 2) If the allocation is less than 0.943 Mlb but greater than or equal to 0.863 Mlb:

- To remain within the allocation, implement a lower size limit of U40 and close consecutive Fridays as needed from the end of the season, but extending no earlier than July 12th, as indicated in [Table 2C.4 \(page 20\)](#) in combination with [Table 2C.5f \(page 26\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.
- 3) If the allocation is less than 0.863 Mlb but greater than or equal to 0.798 Mlb:
 - Change from a U40 lower size limit to a U36 lower size limit on July 15, and close consecutive Fridays as needed from the end of the season to remain within allocation, but extending no earlier than July 12th, as indicated in [Table 2C.6 \(page 28\)](#) in combination with [Table 2C.5f \(page 26\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.
 - 4) If the allocation is less than 0.798 Mlb but greater than or equal to 0.766 Mlb:
 - The lower size limit is U37, and close consecutive Fridays as needed from the end of the season, to remain within allocation but extending no earlier than July 12th, as indicated in [Table 2C.5f \(page 26\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.
 - 5) If the allocation is less than .766 Mlb but greater than or equal to .738 Mlb:
 - The lower size limit is U36, and close consecutive Fridays as needed from the end of the season, to remain within allocation but extending no earlier than July 12th, as indicated in [Table 2C.5f \(page 26\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.
 - 6) If the allocation is less than .738 Mlb but greater than or equal to .697 Mlb:
 - The lower size limit is U35, and close consecutive Fridays as needed from the end of the season, to remain within allocation but extending no earlier than July 12th, as indicated in [Table 2C.5f \(page 26\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.
 - 7) If the allocation is less than .697 Mlb but greater than or equal to .669 Mlb:
 - The lower size limit is U34, and close consecutive Fridays as needed from the end of the season, to remain within allocation but extending no earlier than July 12th, as indicated in [Table 2C.5f \(page 26\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.

IPHC Area 3A

Management measures for all allocations shown below include, unless otherwise specified, a daily bag limit of two halibut; one fish of any size and one fish with a maximum size limit; one trip per charter vessel per day with retention of Pacific halibut; one trip per charter halibut permit (CHP) per day; and all Wednesdays closed to halibut retention.

- 1) If the allocation is greater than or equal to 1.880Mlb:
 - The size of the second fish shall range from 28 inches up to 32 inches, until the projected charter harvest removals meet the allocation, as indicated in [Table 3A.11 \(page 33\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis
- 2) If the allocation is less than 1.880 Mlb, but greater than or equal to 1.590 Mlb:
 - In addition to all closed Wednesdays and a second halibut 28 inches or less, close as many Tuesdays as needed to keep the charter harvest removals within the Area 3A allocation, as indicated in [Table 3A.10 \(page 32\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.
- 3) If the allocation is less than 1.590 Mlb but greater than or equal to 1.513 Mlb:

- In addition to closing all Tuesdays and Wednesdays, lower the size of the second fish to as low as 26 inches, until the projected charter harvest removals meet the allocation, as indicated in [Table 3A.11.\(page 33\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.

4) If the allocation is less than 1.513 MIb:

- In addition to the Wednesday closures and 26-inch size limit, implement a 4-fish annual limit of Pacific halibut, and implement the number of closed Tuesdays necessary to achieve the allocation, as indicated in [Table 3A.14 \(page 36\)](#) of the ADF&G analysis.

Revision includes a minor clarifying modifications to footnote 9 in the same Section of IPHC Fishery Regulations (Sect. 28). The suggested text is provided in [Appendix A](#).

Supporting information

The December 2023 NPFMC final motion for Charter Halibut Management Measures, the minutes of the December 2023 NPFMC Charter Halibut Management Committee, and the ADF&G analysis are available on the NPFMC website at: <https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/3019> (see Agenda Item C7, 2024 Charter Halibut Management Measures – Final Action).

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Commission:

- 1) **NOTE** regulatory proposal IPHC-2024-AM100-PropB1 Rev_1, which proposes charter management measures in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A reflective of mortality limits adopted by the IPHC and resulting allocations under the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan.

APPENDICES

[Appendix A](#): Suggested Regulatory Language.

APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED REGULATORY LANGUAGE

28. Recreational (Sport) Fishing for Pacific Halibut—IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E

- (1) In Convention waters in and off Alaska:^{8,9}
[...]
- (2) For guided recreational (sport) fishing (as referred to in 50 CFR 300.65) in IPHC Regulatory Area 2C:
- (a) no person on board a charter vessel (as referred to in 50 CFR 300.65) shall catch and retain more than one Pacific halibut per calendar day; and [omit this “and” if paragraph 2(c) is added to this Section as described below]
 - (b) no person on board a charter vessel (as referred to in 50 CFR 300.65) shall catch and retain any Pacific halibut that with head on is greater than **40 inches (101.6 cm) and less than 80 inches (203.2 cm)** [as described above, the lower size limit may be adjusted to meet the 2024 Area 2C charter harvest allocation] as measured in a straight line, passing over the pectoral fin from the tip of the lower jaw with mouth closed, to the extreme end of the middle of the tail; and [omit this “and” and end this paragraph with a period (rather than a semicolon) unless a paragraph 2(c) is added to this Section as described below]
 - (c) [as described above, this section may be added according to the progressive management measures described in the NPFMC recommendation] **no person on board a charter vessel may catch and retain Pacific halibut on the following Fridays:** [a list of dates of 2024 Fridays would follow].
- (3) For guided recreational (sport) fishing (as referred to in 50 CFR 300.65) in IPHC Regulatory Area 3A:
- (a) no person on board a charter vessel (as referred to in 50 CFR 300.65) shall catch and retain more than two Pacific halibut per calendar day;
 - (b) at least one of the retained Pacific halibut must have a head-on length of no more than **28 inches (71.1 cm)** [as described above, the size limit may be adjusted to meet the 2024 harvest allocation in Area 3A] as measured in a straight line, passing over the pectoral fin from the tip of the lower jaw with mouth closed, to the extreme end of the middle of the tail. If a person sport fishing on a charter vessel in IPHC Regulatory Area 3A retains only one Pacific halibut in a calendar day, that Pacific halibut may be of any length;
 - (c) a “charter halibut permit” (as referred to in 50 CFR 300.67) may only be used for one charter vessel fishing trip in which Pacific halibut are caught and retained per calendar day. A charter vessel fishing trip is defined at 50 CFR 300.61 as the time period between the first deployment of fishing gear into the water by a charter vessel angler (as defined at 50 CFR 300.61) and the offloading of one or more charter vessel anglers or any Pacific halibut from that vessel. For purposes of this trip limit, a charter vessel fishing trip ends at 2359 (Alaska local time) on the same calendar day that the fishing trip began, or when any anglers or Pacific halibut are offloaded, whichever comes first;
 - (d) a charter vessel on which one or more anglers catch and retain Pacific halibut may only make one charter vessel fishing trip per calendar day. A charter vessel fishing trip is defined at 50 CFR 300.61 as the time period between the first deployment of fishing gear into the water by a charter vessel angler (as defined at 50 CFR 300.61) and the offloading of one or more charter vessel anglers or any Pacific halibut from that vessel. For purposes of this trip limit, a charter vessel fishing trip ends at 2359 (Alaska local time) on the same calendar day that the fishing trip began, or when any anglers or Pacific halibut are offloaded, whichever comes first; and [omit this “and” if a section 3(f) is added as described below]
 - (e) **no person on board a charter vessel may catch and retain Pacific halibut on any Wednesday, or on the following Tuesdays in 2024:** [as described above, if Tuesday closures are also necessary to meet the 2024 harvest allocation in Area 3A, a list of dates of Tuesday closures to Pacific halibut retention would follow]; and [omit this “and” and end this paragraph with a period (rather than a semicolon) unless a paragraph 3(f) is added to this Section as described below]
 - (f) **charter vessel anglers may catch and retain no more than four (4) Pacific halibut per calendar year on board charter vessels in IPHC Regulatory Area 3A. This annual limit triggers paragraph 1(h) of this Section. Pacific halibut that are retained as GAF, retained while on a charter vessel fishing trip in other Commission regulatory areas, or retained while fishing without the services of a guide do not accrue toward the 4-fish annual limit** [as described above, an annual limit of 4 fish may be added if it is necessary to meet the 2024 harvest allocation in Area 3A].

⁸ NOAA Fisheries could implement more restrictive regulations for the recreational (sport) fishery or components of it, therefore, anglers are advised to check the current Federal or State regulations prior to fishing.

⁹ ~~Charter vessels are prohibited from harvesting Pacific halibut in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A during one charter vessel fishing trip under regulations promulgated by NOAA Fisheries at 50 CFR 300.66.~~ Under regulations promulgated by NOAA Fisheries at 50 CFR 300.66(u), it is unlawful for any person to be a charter vessel guide of a charter vessel on which one or more charter vessel anglers are catching and retaining halibut in both IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A during one charter vessel fishing trip.