



FISHERY REGULATION PROPOSAL 2021

TITLE: CHARTER MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN IPHC REGULATORY AREAS 2C AND 3A
(SECT. 29)

SUBMITTED BY:
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NOAA-FISHERIES
AFFILIATION: NMFS, ALASKA REGION
USA

All Regulatory Areas All Alaska Regulatory Areas All U.S. Regulatory Areas
2A 2B 2C 3A 3B 4A 4B 4C 4D 4E

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) recommended the following management measures for charter Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A for application in 2021, in order to achieve the charter Pacific halibut allocation under the NPFMC Halibut Catch Sharing Plan. These recommended management measures incorporate adjustments for an expected decline in charter fishing effort in the 2021 season.

Area 2C

Management measures for all allocations shown below include a daily bag limit of one Pacific halibut, combined with a progression of size limits in the following order:

1. If the charter catch limit is 0.650 million pounds or less: a reverse slot limit with an upper limit fixed at 80 inches or greater and a lower limit of 44 inches or less.
2. If the charter catch limit is from 0.651 million pounds to 0.786 million pounds: a reverse slot limit with upper length and lower length limits determined from the following table:

Minimum Charter Allocation (Mlb)	Reverse Slot Limit (inches)
0.667	<=45 >=80
0.681	<=46 >=80
0.700	<=47 >=80
0.713	<=48 >=80
0.735	<=49 >=80
0.751	<=50 >=80
0.758	<=50 >=78
0.759	<=50 >=76
0.768	<=50 >=74

0.786	<=50 >=72
-------	-----------

Area 3A

All allocations shown below include management measures with a daily bag limit of two Pacific halibut; no annual limit on the number of retained Pacific halibut for charter anglers; Wednesdays closed to Pacific halibut retention all year; one trip per Pacific halibut charter vessel per day; and one trip per charter Pacific halibut permit (CHP) per day.

1. If the charter allocation is less than 1.85 Mlb:

- A daily bag limit of two Pacific halibut, with one Pacific halibut of any size and a maximum size limit on the second retained Pacific halibut determined from the following table:

Minimum Charter Allocation (Mlb)	Maximum Size Limit (inches)
1.81	<= 31
1.78	<= 30

2. If the charter allocation is greater than or equal to 1.85 Mlb, but less than 1.93Mlb:

- a daily bag limit of two Pacific halibut, with one Pacific halibut of any size and a maximum size limit on the second Pacific halibut of 32 inches;

The NPFMC selected these management measures at its December 2020 meeting, following review of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) analysis of proposed management measures for 2021, and after receiving input from the Charter Halibut Management Committee, which includes stakeholder representatives from both IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A. The management measures incorporate a COVID impact buffer as described in Appendix A-2, on page 59 in the ADFG analysis. Charter Pacific halibut removal estimates for 2021 in IPHC Regulatory Area 3A are based on a projected 25 percent reduction in fishing effort relative to the status quo (i.e. 2009-2019). Charter Pacific halibut removal estimates for 2021 in IPHC Regulatory Area 2C are based on a projected 35 percent reduction in fishing effort relative to the status quo.

The December ADFG analysis is available on the NPFMC website at:

<https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=623eb128-b772-44c4-9e17-05bae8cf6919.pdf&fileName=C1%20Charter%20Management%20Options%20Analysis%20.pdf>

The December Charter Halibut Management Committee minutes are provided at [Appendix I](#) for reference.

The suggested modification to the IPHC Fishery Regulations are provided at [Appendix II](#).

APPENDIX I

Charter Halibut Management Committee Report of 30 November 2020



North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Simon Kinneen, Chair | David Witherell, Executive Director
 1007 W. 3rd Avenue, Suite 400, Anchorage, AK 99501
 Phone 907-271-2809 | www.npfmc.org

Charter Halibut Management Committee

REPORT

1:00-4:00 PM | November 30, 2020 | via Online Meeting

The Charter Halibut Management Committee met at the time indicated above to develop their recommendations to the Council on 2021 charter halibut management measures in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A.

Committee Members in attendance:

Andy Mezirow, Chairman	Stan Malcolm	Richard Yamada
Steve Zernia	Kent Huff	Forrest Braden
Matt Kopec	Seth Bone	Jim Armstrong (staff)
Daniel Donich	Mike Flores	

Members absent:

Denise May

Others in attendance:

Ben Jevons	Jim Martin	Sarah Webster*
Baine Etherton	John Jensen	Shannon Gleason
Brian Ritchie	Kurt Iverson	Tom Gemmell
Doug Duncan	Mel Erickson	Tom Taube
Jim Hasbrouck	Robert Powers	

*presenter

2020 Preliminary Fishery Review

Sarah Webster of ADF&G began her presentation with a review of preliminary charter halibut fishery performance in 2020, using logbook data through August as well as dockside sampling. Area 2C charter removals were estimated to be 0.499 Milb in 2020, which was 36% below the 0.780 Milb allocation, and Area 3A charter removals were estimated to be 1.597 Milb in 2020, which was 6.6% below the 1.710 Milb allocation.

Sarah also provided annual counts for the past 10 years (2011-2020) of charter halibut businesses and vessels that reported actually harvesting halibut. This was in response to a request by the Committee for indicators of COVID impacts in 2020. Active charter business in Area 2C averaged about 250 through 2019, but were down to 191 in 2020, and vessels decreased from about 500-550 to 384. In Area 3A, businesses had been decreasing from over 300 in 2011 to 226 in 2019, and were down to 197 in 2020, while the more stable count of about 400 active vessels decreased to 337.

2021 Charter Halibut Management Measures

The majority of the presentation focused on information detailed in the ADF&G Analysis of Management Options for the Area 2C and 3A Charter Halibut Fisheries for 2021 (posted to the eAgenda as "C1 Charter Management Options Analysis"). That Analysis provides harvest estimates under a range of measures that the Committee identified at its [October 2020 meeting](#). Following the presentation by Sarah Webster the Committee provided recommendations on harvest measures for Areas 2C and 3A in 2021. The Committee recommendations are intended to achieve, but not exceed the charter halibut allocations for 2C and 3A that will be finalized by the IPHC at its annual meeting in January 2021. Since the final

allocations are not yet available, the Committee based its recommendations on allocations derived from the current IPHC stock assessment, a reference level of halibut fishing intensity, and estimated distributed halibut mortalities, as provided in the preliminary Pacific halibut stock assessment at the IPHC's November Interim 2020 meeting. For Area 2C, in 2021, the interim allocation would be 0.65 Mlb (down from 0.78 Mlb in 2020), and for Area 3A the interim allocation would be 1.93 Mlb (up from 1.71 Mlb in 2020).

Effort Adjustments

Importantly, rather than overcomplicating the analysis by attempting to integrate COVID impacts on effort at each step, 2021 harvest estimates in the ADF&G Analysis were generated using "normal", i.e., historical, effort inputs. Subsequently, expectations about reduced effort, i.e., "COVID buffers" could be considered which would scale estimated removals for comparison with potential area allocations. Committee recommendations, therefore, consider the likely magnitude of the buffers for each area based on expected continuation of reduced public participation in charter halibut fishing in 2021.

Committee recommendations on COVID buffers also considered changes in 2020 effort that were suggested by the ADF&G Analysis. Specifically, time series of angler days from charter logbook reporting, including preliminary 2020 data suggest an overall 42.5% decrease in effort may have occurred for the two areas in 2020 (Tables 3 and 4 in the Analysis). Additionally, Appendix II compares 2020 harvests under hypothetical 10% and 40% effort reductions and observed vs forecasted 2020 harvest. That comparison suggests potential effort reductions in 2020 close to 50% (54% in 2C and 47% in 3A).

Area 2C

The Charter Halibut Management Committee recommends the following management measures for IPHC Regulatory Area 2C.

1. Apply a 35% reduction in projected removals for 2021 under a reverse slot limit in Table 6, page 26, of the analysis and use this adjusted table (below) for determining reverse slot limit harvest measures.
2. One Fish Daily Bag Limit.
3. If the Area 2C catch limit is at .65 million pounds (Reference SPR 43), reverse slot limit must be $\leq 44''$ or $\geq 80''$.
4. If Area 2C catch limit is from .651 million pounds to .751 million pounds, maintain the upper reverse slot limit at $\geq 80''$ and adjust the lower reverse slot limit upward to keep the projected harvest within the allocation.
5. If Area 2C catch limit is higher than .751 million pounds, maintain the lower reverse slot limit of $\leq 50''$ and adjust the upper reverse slot limit downward to keep the projected harvest within the allocation.

Area 2C Reference Table

Reverse Slot	Removals from Table 6 in analysis (Mlb)	Removals adjusted for 35% buffer (Mlb)
U44080	0.993	0.645
U45080	1.026	0.667
U46080	1.048	0.681
U47080	1.077	0.700
U48080	1.097	0.713
U49080	1.131	0.735
U50080	1.155	0.751
U50078	1.166	0.758

U50076	1.168	0.759
U50074	1.182	0.768
U50072	1.209	0.786

Area 3A

The Committee recommends that the Council approve and send on to the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) the following management measures for IPHC regulatory Area 3A.

All allocations shown below include, unless otherwise specified:

- a daily bag limit of 2 halibut;
- no annual limit per charter angler;
- Wednesdays closed to halibut retention all year;
- 1 trip per halibut charter vessel per day; and
- 1 trip per charter halibut permit per day.

If the allocation is less than 1.93Mlb (Status Quo FCEY) but greater than or equal to 1.85 Mlb:

- One fish of any size, and one fish less than or equal to 32 inches;
- All Wednesdays closed to retention of halibut, with a second fish of 32" or less, according to Table 24 in ADF&G analysis of proposed harvest regulations for 2021 to bring the projected harvest within the Area 3A allocation. Table 22 on page 45 of the ADF&G Analysis: Yield 2.470 Mlb
- Apply a 25% COVID Impact Buffer as described in Appendix A-2, 2 on page 59 in the ADF&G Analysis to achieve a yield of $2.470 \times .75 = 1.85$ Million pounds is the projected removal.

If the allocation is less than 1.85 Mlb but greater than 1.74 Mlb

- Adjust the size of the second fish, down to a minimum of 30 inches to keep the charter harvest within their allocation. Table 24B on Page 47 of the ADF&G analysis.

Summary

In providing their recommendations, the Committee discussed a wide range of issues that would affect the magnitude of COVID buffers for scaling harvest in 2021. These factors included recent increases in COVID counts, continued constraints on travel to Alaska, financial distress among potential clients, uncertain rollovers of 2020 bookings to 2021, health liability precautions, vaccine nonparticipation, and other considerations. The Committee felt that the COVID buffer reductions they are recommending (35% for Area 2C, and 25% for Area 3A) are more likely to be underestimated than overestimated, and that 2021 is more likely to resemble 2020 than a "normal" year for their businesses.

The relaxation of management measures through the emergency action in 2020 represented significant increases in potential harvest, however, realized harvest was still very low. Nevertheless, the Committee wished to express their gratitude to the Council and Agencies involved in facilitating that emergency response.

Public Comment

The Committee received public comment from Mel Erickson.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59PM.

APPENDIX II*Suggested Regulatory Language***29. Sport Fishing for Pacific Halibut—IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E**

- (1) ...
- (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.
 - (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 44 inches (111.8 cm) and less than 80 inches (203.2 cm) [as described above, size limits may be adjusted to meet the 2021 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.
- (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 32 inches (71.1 cm) [as described above, the size limit may be adjusted, down to a minimum of 30 inches, to meet the 2021 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.
 - (e) No person on board a charter vessel may catch and retain Pacific halibut on any Wednesday.