Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Pacific Halibut Subsistence Report

DATE: 14 DECEMBER 2018

CONTRACTING PARTY: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AGENCY:
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
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FISHERY SECTOR
Subsistence

IPHC REGULATORY AREAS
IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3, and 4 (USA: Alaska)

DISCUSSION
The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) estimates subsistence Pacific halibut harvests in Alaska under contract to NOAA Fisheries. These estimates, and the surveys on which they are based, are funded for completion every other year. The most recent survey and estimate were for subsistence fishing in 2016, and those results were presented at the 94th IPHC Annual Meeting (AM094) in January 2018. The next estimate will be based on a survey of subsistence fishing during 2018. The ADFG analysis of that survey will be completed during 2019, and presented at the 96th IPHC Annual Meeting (AM096) in January 2020.

The material included in Appendix I is the most recent estimate of subsistence fishing in Alaska (from 2016), which was presented at the 94th IPHC Annual Meeting (AM094) as paper IPHC-2018-AM094-AR15.

RECOMMENDATION
That the Commission:

1) NOTE paper IPHC-2019-AM095-AR15, which provided a copy of the most recent subsistence report from ADFG for the Commission’s consideration.

APPENDICES

Appendix I
Subsistence Harvests of Pacific Halibut in Alaska, 2016
Subsistence Harvests of Pacific Halibut in Alaska, 2016

Division of Subsistence
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Presentation to the
International Pacific Halibut Commission

Portland, OR
January 2018
Project funded through a grant from the National Marine Fisheries Service:
No. NA16NMF4370166

For the full study findings, see:
Project Background

- New subsistence regulations in effect May 2003
- 118 communities and 123 tribes eligible, plus residents of designated rural areas
- Registration requirement (SHARC)
- Regulations have provision for collecting harvest data
- This report covers the 12th year of the harvest assessment program (harvests in 2016)
- Due to funding constraints, the project did not document 2013 or 2015 harvests and will not document 2017 harvests
- If funding available, could continue for 2018
Methods

• Mailed survey is primary data collection method; response voluntary
• Mailed to all persons holding SHARCds during 2016: 8,779
• Three rounds of mailings
• Supplemented by contacts & interviews in 5 communities in southeast and western AK
• Harvests of some non-SHARC holders (146) included in estimates
• Total target group = 8,925 potential fishers
Sample Achievement for 2016

- 5,862 surveys returned, of 8,925 potential fishers
- Sampling fraction of 66%
- High rates of return achieved in most larger communities with the most SHARCs issued
Study Findings: Halibut 2016

• Estimated number of **subsistence fishers** = 4,408
• Estimated subsistence harvest = **36,815 halibut**
• Estimated subsistence harvest = **727,178 lbs net weight** (= 75% of round weight) (19.8 lbs/fish)
• **60% of harvest occurred in Area 2C** (SE Alaska), 31% in Area 3A (SC Alaska), & 6% in Area 4E (East Bering Sea Coast)
• 75% of harvest taken with setline gear; 25% with hand-operated gear

12-year average = 5,166 fishers

[Bar chart showing estimated subsistence harvests of halibut from 2003 to 2016, with bars indicating pounds net weight for each year.]

- 2003: 23.7
- 2004: 22.8
- 2005: 21.1
- 2006: 20.8
- 2007: 19.2
- 2008: 18.2
- 2009: 19.0
- 2010: 18.4
- 2011: 18.3
- 2012: 18.5
- 2014: 18.7
- 2016: 19.8
Percentage of Subsistence Halibut Harvest by Regulatory Area Fished, 2016

Area 4B-West Aleutians 0.6%
Area 4A-East Aleutians <0.1%
Area 3B-AK Peninsula 2.0%
Area 3A-Southcentral 30.6%
Area 4C-Pribilofs 0.6%
Area 4D-Central Bering Sea 0%
Area 4E-East Bering Sea Coast 5.7%
Area 2C-Southeast 60.0%

N=727,178 pounds net weight

- Area 2C
- Area 3A
- Area 4E
- Other


Graph showing the estimated subsistence harvests of halibut for the specified areas and years.
Halibut Removals, Alaska, 2016

- Subsistence harvests by area ranged from 6.4% in Area 2C to 0.4% in Area 3B
Conclusions: Harvest Survey, 2016

• Overall, 2016 harvest survey was a success: good response rates and overall reliable harvest estimates
• Can discern some general patterns in the fishery since the new regulations came into effect
• Reasons for overall decline in harvests likely complex and require further investigation
• Concerns about nonrenewal of SHARCIs, especially in certain regulatory areas
• Need to supplement mailed SHARC survey with in-person survey in portions of Area 4
• Recommendation to continue harvest monitoring
For More Information

- Division of Subsistence Website: [www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us](http://www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us) and go to publications for final report
- Or: call us at 907-465-4147, or 465-3617, or 267-2353
- Or write: ADF&G, Division of Subsistence, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK, 99518
- Or contact NMFS at: 1-800-304-4846 (option 2) or [www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/subsistence/halibut.htm](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/subsistence/halibut.htm)