

PROCESSOR ADVISORY GROUP

January 22, 2001

SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Chairs: Monday, January 22, 2001: Bill Kelliher: Kelliher Fish Co., Washington
Tuesday, January 23, 2001: Blake Tipton, S.M. Products, and British Columbia
Vice Chair: Tuesday: Bill Kelliher

CATCH LIMITS

Area 2A	0.83
Area 2B	10.60
Area 2C	8.78
Area 3A	21.89
Area 3B	18.50
Area 4A	5.47
Area 4B	5.40
<u>Area 4CDE</u>	<u>5.12</u>
TOTAL	76.59

Rationale for Adjusting IPHC Recommended Catch Limits

Area 2A: PAG recommends reverting back to the year 2000 quota in Area 2A because of the poor quality of the fish landed during the commercial openings

Area 2B: The PAG voted to support the year 2000 quota until the IPHC gathers more data about the halibut migration patterns.

Area 4: The numbers the IPHC came up with are questionable. Reports from the grounds, including the IPHC test fishery, and commercial CPUEs show robust and even increasing halibut stocks. Additionally, the trawl bycatch levels have declined and those savings should be added to the areas in which the trawl fisheries occurred.

FISHING PERIOD

The PAG endorses the IPHC's recommendation for season dates of March 15 – November 15 in 2001. However, in the future, PAG asks the IPHC to consider opening the seasons on the second Monday in March because it will give industry a full week to market the product in time for the first weekend following the opening.

INDUSTRY PROPOSALS

PERSONAL USE FILETTING

PAG does not view this as a processor issue and did not take a position on the matter.

PRE-TRIP CHECK-OUT

The U.S. industry would benefit greatly from daily information about fleet activity on the fishing grounds just as is currently made available in Canada. The PAG recommends the IPHC establish a voluntary reporting program in cooperation with the RAM Division. Vessels would be asked to check out with NMFS before heading for the grounds and RAM would post the activity on their web site.

AREA 3B CHECK-IN

PAG took no action because the proposer worked out the situation with the NMFS Enforcement Division.

ENABLE LIVE HALIBUT LANDINGS

Regarding the proposal to land live halibut landings, the issue is one of fairness. Currently, one country is allowed to deliver live and the other is not. This creates an inequity in terms of access to the market. The PAG can go along with live deliveries provided both countries treat the issue the same way. The PAG continues to oppose the live penning and aquaculture of halibut.

RESTRICT AREA 2C COMMERCIAL FISHING WITHIN 2.5 nm LIMIT

PAG recommends the IPHC oppose this proposal. The archipelago in Area 2C makes it difficult or impossible for small boats to travel far to the fishing grounds.

AGENCY PROPOSALS

ADF&G LOGBOOKS

PAG supports the proposal

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

CHALKY HALIBUT

Chalkiness in fresh halibut has perhaps been the processing industry's most pressing problem. PAG appreciates the effort and energy the IPHC staff has applied to the chalky halibut issue. At this point, it seems the industry is on the verge of being able to detect chalkiness based on the pH levels at the point of capture and/or initial sale and should be able to be very specific about when and where chalkiness occurs. While there is still a lot to be done to solve this problem, we recognize the progress that has been made and appreciate IPHC's continuing support.

The PAG recommends the IPHC make a portion of its web site available for posting data on chalky halibut. The data would come from buyers and/or fishermen who experience incidences of chalky fish and would allow for data about chalkiness to be passed to others so they can avoid areas experiencing a high chalky rate. This would be a voluntary program.

HALIBUT BYCATCH

The PAG recognizes that bycatch removals of halibut declined in 2000 and appreciates the efforts that the industry has undertaken to achieve this. The PAG looks forward to a continuation of this trend.

