

The Wheel Watch

a newsletter of the

Fishing Vessel Owners' Association
 Room 232, West Wall Bldg., 4005 - 20th Ave. West
 Seattle, WA 98199-1290
 Phone: (206) 284-4720 / 283-7735
 Fax: (206) 283-3341
 Website: www.fvoa.org

Robert D. Alverson
 Manager

Katie Harris
 Executive Assistant

Vol. XXXVI No. 4
 2021

December

Sustaining Sponsors

<i>Alaska Glacier Seafoods, Inc.</i>	<i>Alaskan Observers, Inc.</i>	<i>Ballard Oil</i>
<i>Banner Bank</i>	<i>Bellingham Cold Storage Co.</i>	<i>Columbia State Bank</i>
<i>Covich & Williams, Inc.</i>	<i>Cummins Sales and Service</i>	<i>Dana F. Besecker Co., Inc.</i>
<i>Dock Street Brokers</i>	<i>Dungeness Gear Works, Inc.</i>	<i>Echo Belle, Inc.</i>
<i>Fishermen's News</i>	<i>Fishing Vessel Owners/Marine Ways</i>	<i>Gardner Boat Repair Inc.</i>
<i>Haines Packing Company</i>	<i>Harrigan, Leyh, Farmer, Thomsen LLP</i>	<i>Haven Boatworks, LLC</i>
<i>Hingston, Miller, Hingston P.L.L.C.</i>	<i>Icicle Seafoods, Inc.</i>	<i>JK Fabrication</i>
<i>LFS, Inc.</i>	<i>Mac's Ballard Upholstery</i>	<i>Marine Resources Consultants</i>
<i>Mountain Pacific Bank</i>	<i>Westward Seafoods, Inc.</i>	<i>North American Fishing Supplies, Inc.</i>
<i>Northport Fisheries, Inc.</i>	<i>Northwest Electric Corp</i>	<i>Northwest Farm Credit Services</i>
<i>Ocean Beauty Seafoods LLC</i>	<i>Offshore Systems, Inc.</i>	<i>Parker Smith & Feek</i>
<i>Peoples Bank</i>	<i>The Permit Master</i>	<i>Petro Marine Services Petro 49</i>
<i>Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-op</i>	<i>Puget Sound Hydraulics Inc.</i>	<i>Resurrection Bay Seafoods LLC</i>
<i>Satellite Technical Services</i>	<i>Seafreeze/CityIce Cold Storage</i>	<i>Seattle Marine & Fishing Supply</i>
<i>Sitka Sound Seafood & Alaska Pacific Seafoods</i>	<i>Joe Sullivan Law Office PLLC</i>	<i>Taku Fisheries</i>
<i>Trident Seafoods</i>	<i>Unisea, Inc.</i>	<i>Vigor Industrial LLC</i>
<i>Yakutat Seafoods</i>		

Thank you for your support

Dear Members,

The following newsletter will review the actions of the November Pacific Council meeting, the December North Pacific Council Meeting, preliminary halibut recommendations from IPHC and stock reports on sablefish and halibut.

****NPFMC****

Abundance Based Management (ABM)

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council voted to amend the current Bering Sea halibut PSC limit for the Amendment 80 Trawl Fleet. This fleet targets yellow fin sole and other flatfish in the BSAI. The Council on an 8 to 3 vote recommend the following action. The new PSC limit will move up and down depending on the NMFS trawl survey and IPHC setline survey. The current PSC limit was a static 1745 MT regardless of abundance of halibut. The current surveys that determine halibut abundance are both listed as low and low, so the new PSC would be 1309 MT. See below.

**Council Motion
C2 Halibut ABM
December 13, 2021**

The Council recommends the following preferred alternative. PSC limit is determined annually based on the most recent survey values. In the case of mid-year implementation, the PSC limit should be set using the most recent survey index values and applied to the lookup table in the preferred alternative.

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,745 mt (current limit)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,571 mt (10% below current)
	Low 6,000-7,999	1,309 mt (25% below current)	1,396 mt (20% below current)
	Very Low	1,134 mt	1,134 mt
	< 6,000	(35% below current)	(35% below current)

The current PSC CAP for the Amendment 80 fleet is 1745 MT. The amendment 80 fleet has been operating at a mortality of about 1100 MT of halibut during 2020 and 2021. Had they actually hit their PSC CAP it would have added 645 MT or 1,319,000 lbs. of additional halibut mortality. This likely would close all directed halibut fishing in area 4CDE for 2022. The 2022 halibut harvest in 4CDE is forecasted to be only 1,160,000 pounds. The new PSC CAP levels will keep the Amendment 80 fleet near to their actual needs.

The table below shows the trawl and setline index of Bering Sea halibut from 2010 to 2021. The set line survey is a good indicator of spawning size halibut while the trawl survey depicts smaller size halibut. Both surveys have shown a slow degradation of the halibut resource since 2010 in the BSAI.

Year	Longline Index	Status	Trawl Index	Status
2010	9,271	Medium	195,535	High
2011	8,896	Medium	186,666	High
2012	8,539	Medium	189,000	High
2013	8,133	Medium	183,989	High
2014	8,173	Medium	171,427	High
2015	8,385	Medium	172,237	High
2016	8,134	Medium	153,704	High
2017	7,583	Low	126,684	Low
2018	7,228	Low	125,957	Low
2019	7,104	Low	113,855	Low
2021	6,900	Low	131,000	Low

Sablefish

The long line survey abundance index, relative population numbers (RPN) increased 9% in 2021, following a 32% increase in 2020. The trawl index has increased five-fold since 2013, with a 40% increase from 2019 to 2021. The 2014 year class is lower than previously modeled, but still twice the size of mean recruitment. The 2016 year class is the largest on record and seems to have stabilized at a high number. Sablefish biomass has increased 35%. The 2014 year class makes up over half of the 2022 spawning biomass. The lack of fish greater than 10 years of age in the spawning biomass is a concern. The overall biomass is tilted to younger fish. The 2018 year class appears to be high and the 2019 year class based on an Alaska survey appears to be large.

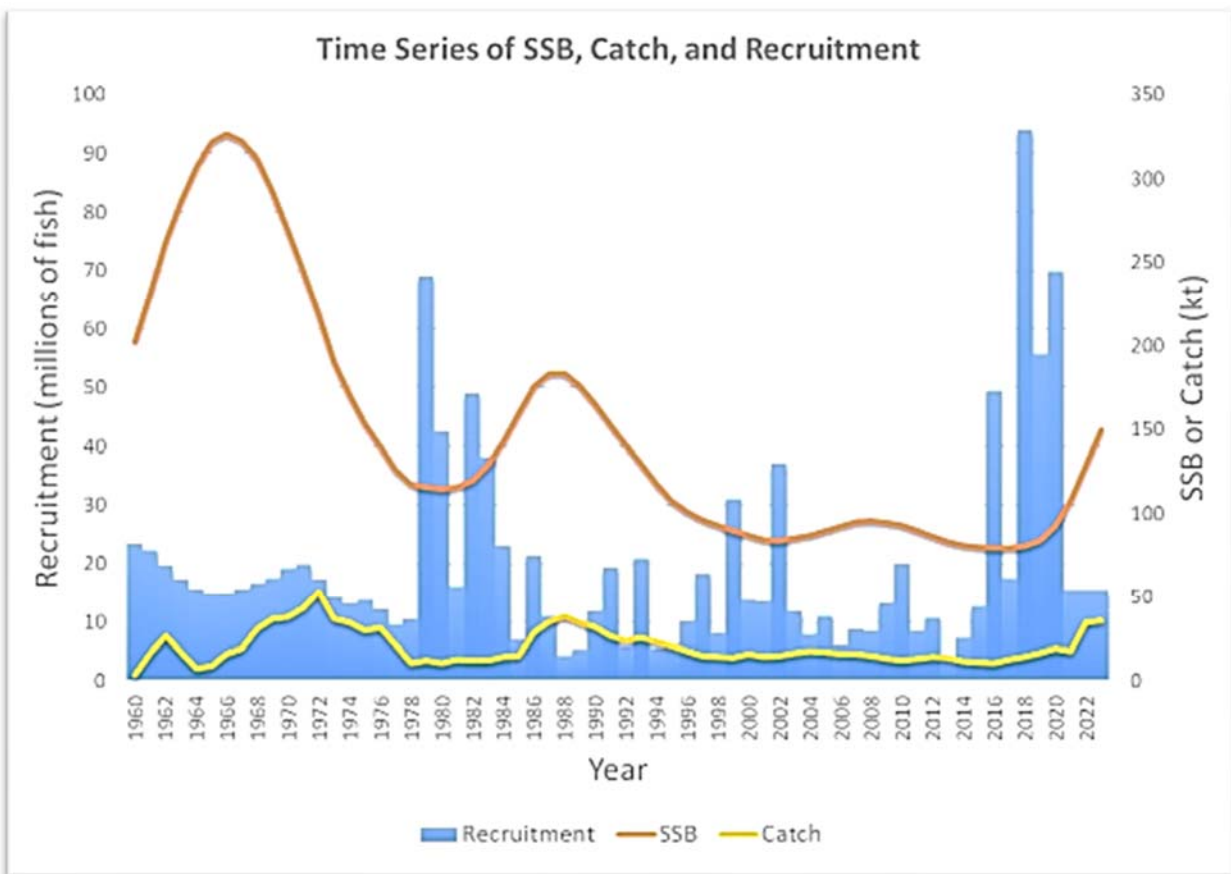
Below are the approved sablefish harvest limits for 2022 and projected for 2023, ABC will equal TAC (Total Allowable Catch).

Final Whale Adjusted Catch Tables by Region.

Year	2021				2022*		2023*	
Region	OFL _w	ABC _w	TAC	Catch**	OFL _w	ABC _w ***	OFL _w	ABC _w ***
BS	--	3,396	3,396	3,667	--	5,264	--	6,529
AI	--	4,717	4,717	1,359	--	6,463	--	7,786
GOA	--	21,475	17,992	12,919	--	22,794	--	22,003
WGOA	--	3,224	2,428	1,609	--	3,727	--	3,951
CGOA	--	9,527	8,056	5,868	--	9,965	--	9,495
***WYAK	--	3,451	2,929	2,156	--	3,437	--	3,159
***EY/SEO	--	5,273	4,579	3,286	--	5,665	--	5,398
Total	60,426 ^c	29,588 ^d	26,105	17,945	40,432	34,521	42,520	36,318

Last year in 2021, the Council set the TAC less than the ABC. In 2022, the TAC will be equal to the ABC. This will result in the follow ups BS ↑ 55%; AL ↑ 37%; GOA ↑ 26%; WGOA ↑ 55%; CGOA ↑ 23%; WYAK ↑ 17%; EY/SE ↑ 23%.

The following table shows spawning biomass, catch and recruitment.



The following graphics depict the relative sablefish population numbers in the GOA.

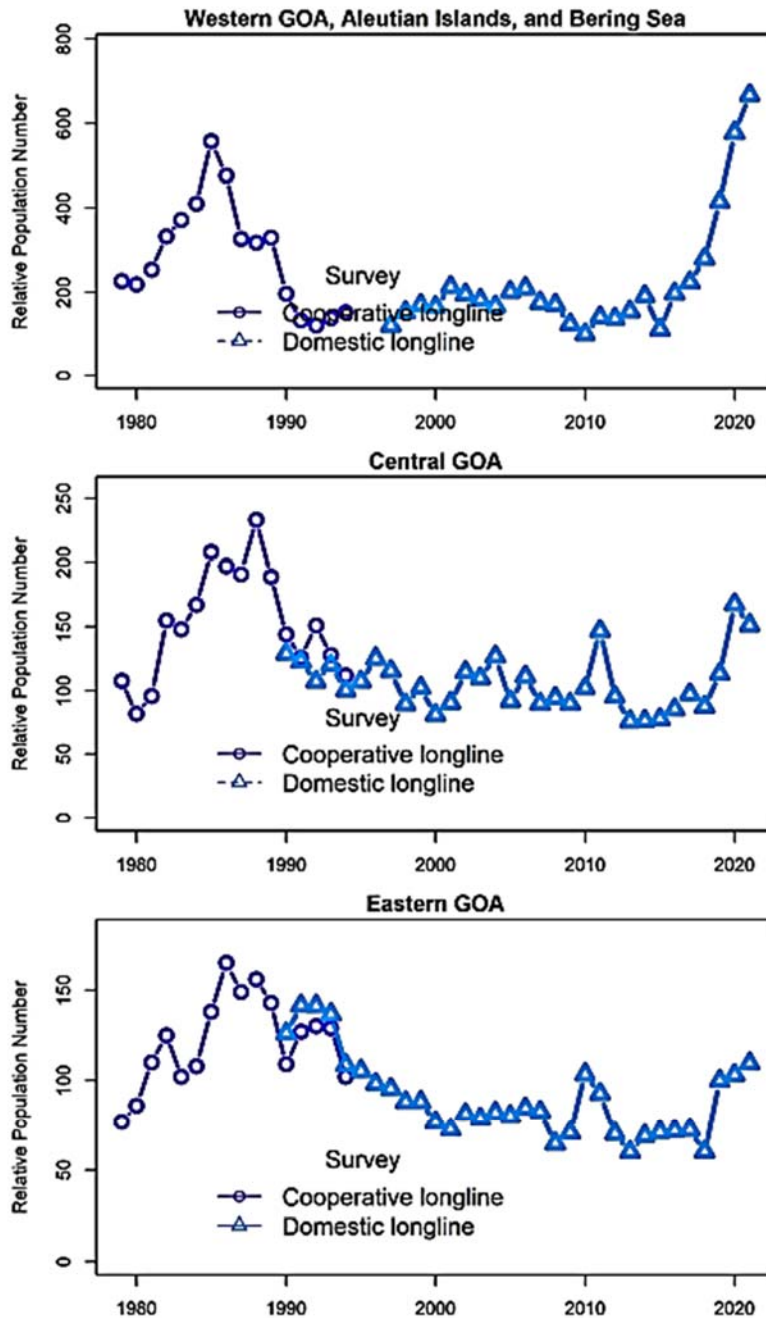


Figure 3.7. Relative abundance (numbers in 1000s) by region and survey. The Bering Sea, Aleutians Islands, and western Gulf of Alaska regions are combined in the first panel. The two surveys are the Japan-U.S. cooperative longline survey and the domestic (U.S.) longline survey. The values for the U.S. survey were adjusted to account for the higher efficiency of the U.S. survey gear.

Observer Program

The fleets in the partial coverage fleet will be observed at the following rates in 2022: hook and line 19%; pots 17%; trawl 30%; trawl with EM 100%. The number of trips expected to be observed are: hooking line = 320, pots = 168, trawl = 197. The NMFS uses the observer company AIS for its observers and the expected daily rate for an observer is \$1529 a day. The rate, if you just go out and shop for yourself is \$575-\$625 per day. This leads to lower observer rates and gross inefficiencies in the program. FVOA is trying to allow the fleet to interface with observer companies and get reimbursed for the NMFS at the end of the year.

The next NPFMC meetings are on January 31- February 8, 2022 and they will be held virtually. The next meeting will be held April 4-12, 2022 and will be in-person in Anchorage. This is an important meeting as the council will take up the IFQ\sablefish pot omnibus amendments that we have been working on.

****IPHC****

The proposed preliminary halibut TCEY's for 2022 are seen in the table to the right.

Area	% change
2B ↑	+8%
2C ↓	-18%
3A ↑	+1%
3B ↑	+90%
4A ↑	+6%
4B ↑	+28%
4CDE ↓	-20%

I am surprised that 4A and 4B would show signs of up with the poor industry WPUE and the surveys. In the table below, you can see what the Commission staff has proposed and what has been adapted over the last three years. 3B up 90%, well that is not a done deal.

Reference TCEYs

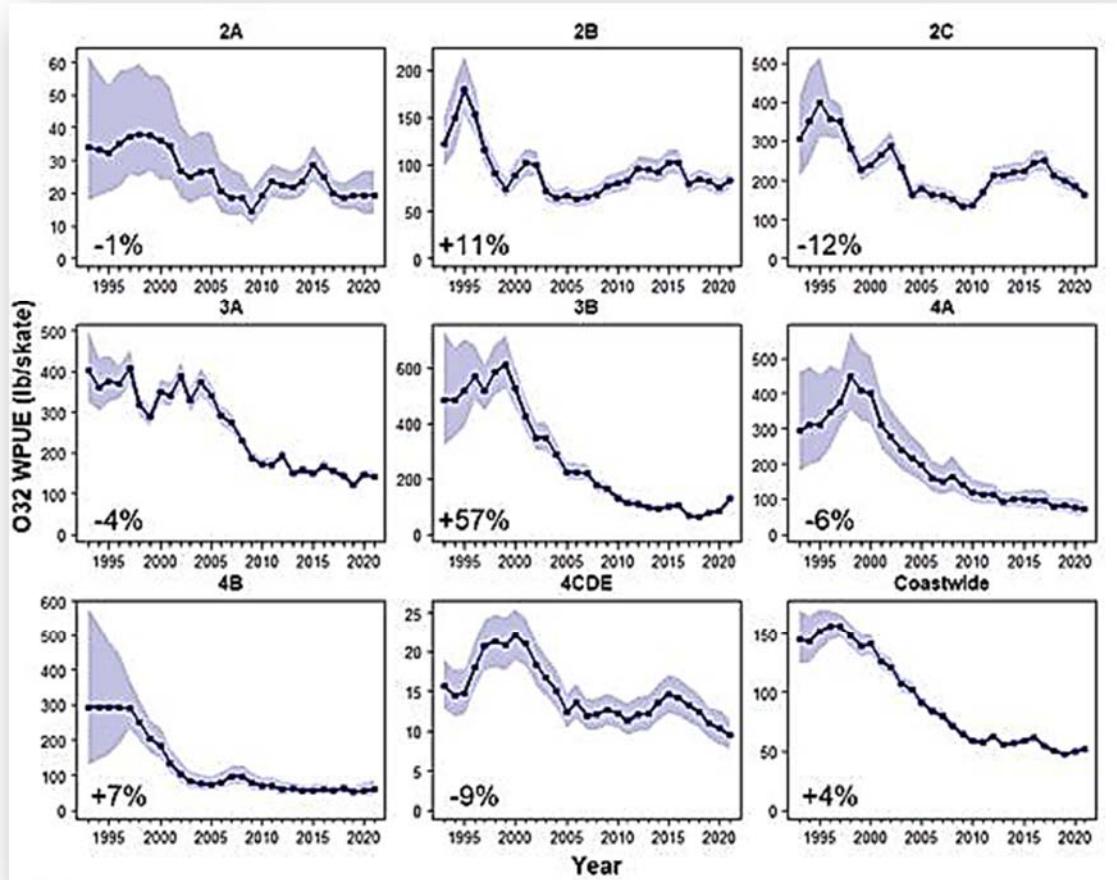
	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4CDE	Total
2019	0.78	4.91	6.26	16.35	2.97	2.21	1.95	4.59	40.00
2020	1.65	5.80	4.97	9.80	2.94	2.26	1.27	3.22	31.90
2021	1.65	7.00	5.16	14.12	3.12	2.51	1.47	3.98	39.00
2022	1.65	7.56	4.75	14.19	5.94	2.18	1.80	3.15	41.22

Adopted TCEYs

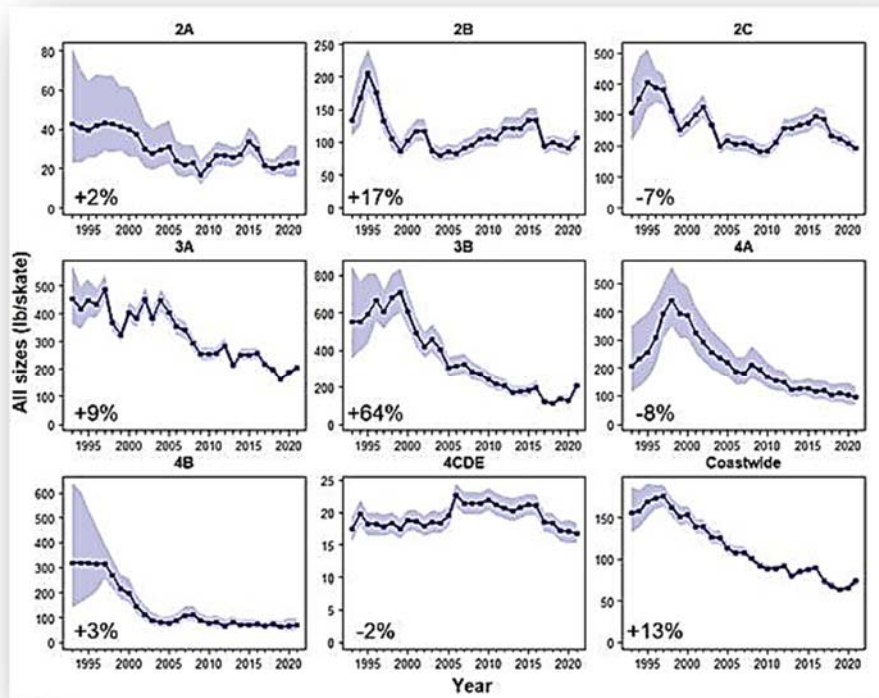
2019	1.65	6.83	6.34	13.50	2.90	1.94	1.45	4.00	38.61
2020	1.65	6.83	5.85	12.20	3.12	1.75	1.31	3.90	36.60
2021	1.65	7.00	5.80	14.00	3.12	2.05	1.40	3.98	39.00



Below are the graphics for numbers of fish seen in the setline survey and WPUE. Numbers look much better. We are told they represent the 2012 year class. It is stronger than previously believed. It is 19% recruited to the commercial fishing. So these fish are just under or over 32 inches. WPUE was up in 3B and in 2B, but down in 3A, 4A, and 4 CDE, this is a concern. Coast wide WPUE is up based on the strength of 3B and 2B.



The graphics below indicate number of fish in the survey. These numbers suggest some optimism for the future.



****PFMC****

In 2020, the following annual limits will be in effect for the tiered sablefish fishery:

- Tier 1: 55,858 pounds**
- Tier 2: 25,390 pounds**
- Tier 3: 14,509 pounds**

The Pacific Council sets harvest limits for sablefish in two year increments. The 2021 and 2022 ABC's were 8,791 MT and 8,375 MT. The harvest specification for 2021-22 were 7,405 MT and 7055 MT respectively. The reason 2022 dropped was because of assumed natural mortality with only assuming an average year class. The 2023 and 2024 ABC's will be determined in April or June of 2022 and will reflect new-year class strengths, particularly for the 2016 year class. The Council will choose annual catch limits, based on harvest manage rules of conservation. The range of catch limits for 2023- 2024 are as follows:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
▪ P*. 35	9,412 MT	8,604 MT
▪ P*. 40	10,107 MT	9,252 MT
▪ P*. 45	10,825 MT	9,923 MT

I will predict the harvest specifications for 2023 and 2024 will be a P* 40. This will result in a 35% increase in the harvest of sablefish beginning in 2023. The 2024 year will drop a little due to assumed national mortality and average year class assumption.

A longer term projection of harvest limits are as follows, assuming a P*. 40 rule. Again, the numbers get lower because no new- year class strength is being assumed.

2023	10,107 MT	2026	8421 MT
2024	9252 MT	2027	8282 MT
2025	8722 MT	2028	8218 MT

Abundance is projected to increase and the spawning output is projected to be above the target level in 2021. This trend is driven in part, but highly uncertain, size of the 2016 year class.

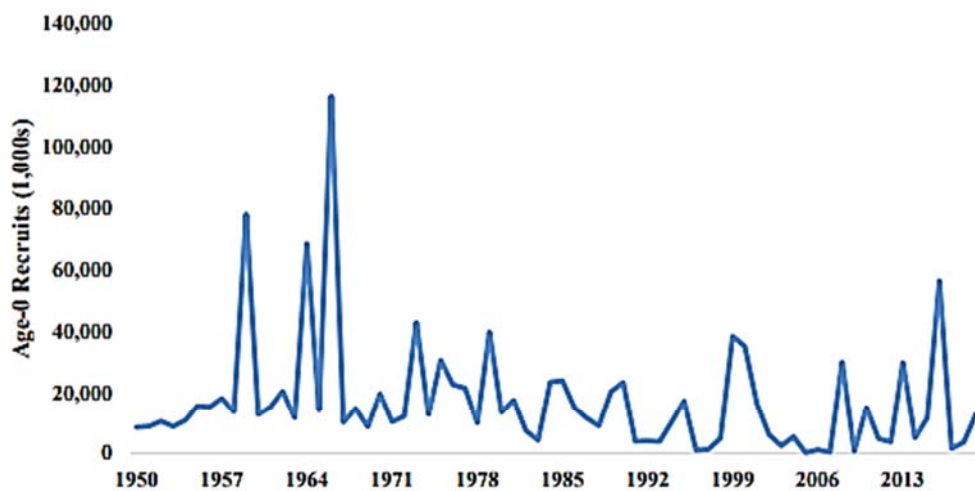


Figure 2-51. Estimated sablefish recruitments, 1950-2019.

Center for Biodiversity Diversity (CBD)

The CBD has threatened a lawsuit requiring all pot fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California to use pop-up gear at the ends of black cod pot gear or for each pot in the Dungeness fishery. This threat is based on their concerns for humpback whales, which have been increasing in population size at a rate of 7% to 10% per year.

The CBD has now dropped their lawsuit challenge, but have petitioned NMFS/NOAA for a regulation rule that would require all pot operations in the United States to transition to pop-up gear in the next five years. This would include operations off Alaska as well as the East Coast. We

have asked NMFS what this petition for a regulation change might entail. It is too early to know with what or how NMFS/NOAA will respond. They say they have never received a request like this.

****Second Watch****

AIS

Last month, FVOA sponsored a Zoom meeting with the FCC. The Federal Communications Commission is in the middle of rule-making changes to allow fixed gear operations to use AIS to mark their gear. They did not tip their hand on how they would rule and they are not under a time commitment to finalize a decision. We had fixed gear representatives from Newport, Oregon, throughout Washington, and Petersburg Alaska who expressed comments to the FCC. We are in wait-and-see mode.

Intrafish

Norway hopes to regain their Marine Stewardship Council eco-label for off-shore cod fishing by 2023. They were told this fishery should shut down due to depletion of the resource, which is within 12 miles of Norway's coast line. It is hard to sell fish in the EU without the MSC label.

Center for Biodiversity Diversity (CBD)

The CBD has petitioned NMFS/NOAA to require all US pot fisheries to transition in five years to rope-less gear (no buoy line).

My understanding is that they are seeking a regulation from NMFS requiring rope-less gear for all fisheries identified as category I or II Fisheries under the MMPA. By my account that would be the following CA, OR and or WA Fisheries: CA stripe shrimp pot; CA spiny lobster; CA spot prawn pot, CA Dungeness crab pot, OR Dungeness crab pot, WA/OR/CA sablefish pot, WA coastal Dungeness crab pot. - NMFS

It would also include all pot fisheries off Alaska and the East Coast. FVOA is monitoring this an engaged with NMFS -Seattle.

****Next meetings****

- *IPHC: January, set seasons and harvest levels*
- *NPFMC: January- February, nothing important to us- yay!*
- *PFMC: March, gear switching update, comments on 5 year review of tiered program*
- *NPFMC: April, final action on 6 sablefish amendments*

****Calendar of Events****

<i>International Pacific Halibut Commission Annual Meeting</i>	<i>January 24-28, 2022</i>	<i>Virtual Meeting</i>
<i>North Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting</i>	<i>February 7-11, 2022</i>	<i>Virtual Meeting</i>
<i>Pacific Fishery Management Council</i>	<i>March 8-14, 2022</i>	<i>In-person San Jose, CA</i>



Beer battered halibut tacos made by Katie and her cooking club, made with fish caught on the F/V Sunward!

Directions:

In a medium bowl, whisk together 1 cup of the flour with the salt and beer until a smooth batter forms. In a medium Dutch oven, heat 2 inches of oil to 375°. Sprinkle the remaining flour over halibut cut into 4 by 1 inch strips and toss to coat. One at a time, dip the strips into the batter, and gently drop them into the fryer. Fry, being careful not to crowd, until golden brown and cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer each piece of halibut to baking rack, and season with salt. Repeat the frying process in batches until all the halibut is fried. Assemble the tacos: Lay out the warmed corn tortilla and top each with 1 to 2 pieces of halibut, depending on the size. Top with red cabbage, red onion, pico de gallo and drizzle with some chipotle mayo or cilantro lime crema. Serve with lime wedges.

Chipotle mayo recipe

Ingredients:


- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- One 7-ounce can chipotle chiles in adobo
- Kosher salt, to taste

Cilantro lime crema

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup chopped cilantro
- 2 limes, zested and juiced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Kosher salt, to taste


Directions for both recipes: In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend on low until smooth.




F/V Northwestern

VESSEL LOANS
MARITIME RELATED BUSINESS LOANS
QUOTA/PERMIT LOANS


206.397.3110 | 2244 NW 56th St., Seattle, WA 98107



MOUNTAIN PACIFIC
bank
Keeping it local



Member FDIC



Northwest
FARM CREDIT SERVICES

Your trusted source.

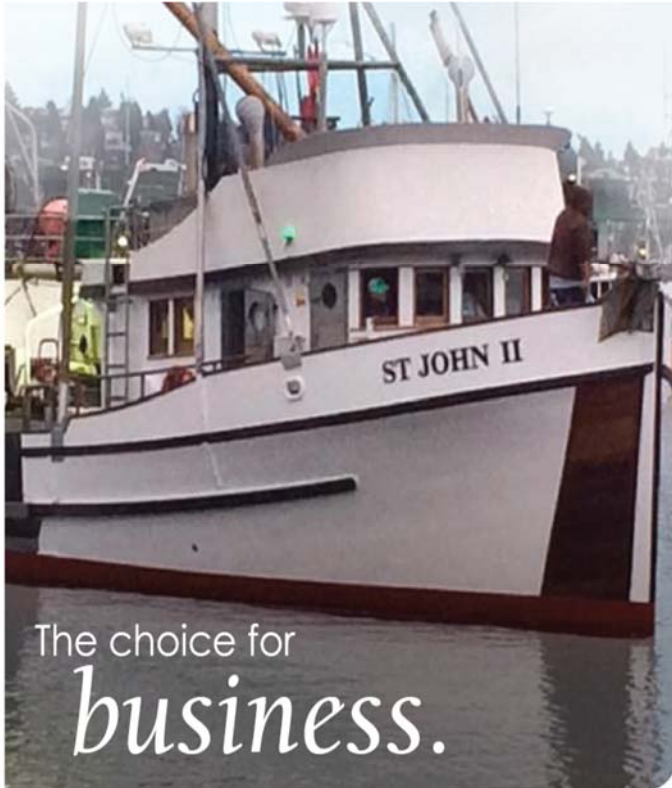
We support fisheries and agriculture with reliable, consistent credit and financial services, today and tomorrow.

- Vessels
- Quotas
- Operating Lines of Credit

206.691.2000 | northwestfcs.com/fisheries

Here to Help You Grow™

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
*Served through Northwest Farm Credit Services Insurance Agency.



The choice for
business.

Boat Loans
Quota Loans
Permit Loans
Maritime Financing

**Ballard Commercial
Banking Center**

5600 24th Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98107
(206) 790-2742

Member FDIC

Peoples Bank
A higher level of service.

peoplesbank-wa.com



Satellite Technical Services
Connecting Fishermen with Markets!

www.satellitealaska.com

Phone: (206) 321-6896

"Proud supporter of FVOA"

***HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY
HOLIDAY SEASON!***



Jack McHenry and Jim Johansen on the F/V Seymour

