

The Wheel Watch

a newsletter of the

Fishing Vessel Owners' Association
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Thank you for your support!

Dear Longliner:

This newsletter will bring you up-to-speed on the recent Halibut Commission meeting and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting held in Seattle.

IPHC

The 91st meeting of the IPHC was held in Vancouver, B.C. It was one of the most well attended meetings in recent memory. There were several political factors influencing attendance. In the southern area of 2A, California has become interested in sports halibut. Apparently halibut have moved south to just above San Francisco and the Pacific Council awarded this southern area approximately 21,000 pounds for sports fishing. To insure status quo harvest opportunities, 6 representatives from California came to the meeting along with other charter/sports interests from 2A including 11 of the tribal nations of Washington. In the northern most area of 4CDE, the Commission was looking at another 70% reduction due to higher bycatch rates in the trawl fleet. The Commission received an unprecedented letter from the Administrator of NOAA that encouraged a status quo harvest and help through NOAA should the NPFMC fail to take action to reduce halibut bycatch in the Bering Sea.

The Halibut Commission approved an opening date of Saturday, March 14th and a closing date of Saturday, November 7th. The following catch limits were approved.

Area	2014 Catch Limits	2015 Blue Line with correct bycatch numbers	2015 Adopted Limits	Percent increase/decrease over 2014
2A	.960	.750	.970	+
2B	6.85	4.96	7.038	+2.74
2C	4.16	4.30	4.65	+11.77
3A	9.43	10.10	10.10	+7.1
3B	2.84	2.46	2.65	-6.7
4A	.85	1.39	1.39	+63.5
4B	1.14	.73	1.14	Same
4CDE	1.29	.52	1.285	Same
Totals	27,520,000	25.02	29.223	+6.17%

In area 2A, the first commercial fishing south of Point Chehalis will open June 24th for 10 hours. **Be sure to get your IPHC permit to fish in Area 2A, otherwise you will not be able to retain halibut.**

Size limit change from 32" to 30" did not occur. It was reviewed and will be brought back to the Commission in 2016 for reconsideration.

Median Population (Mlb)
(based on Spawning Potential Ratio)
from 2014 assessment.

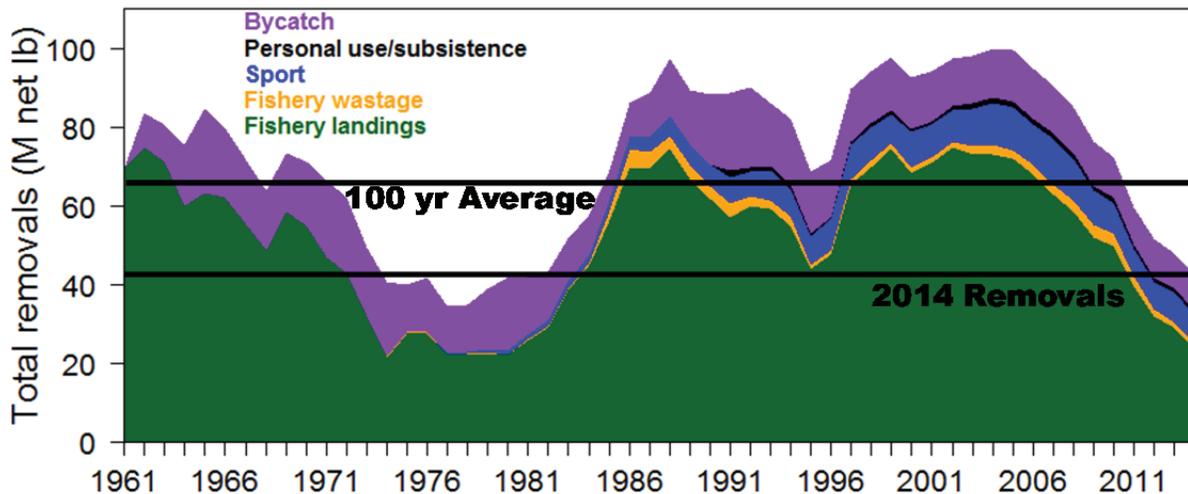
Year	Spawning Biomass	Exploitable Biomass
2010	197.8	186.4
2011	195.3	175.6
2012	197.2	169.2
2013	203.9	168.8
2014	208.5	169.7

2015	215.1	180.6
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Year	Commercial Landings	Commercial Wastage	Bycatch	Sport	Personal Use	Total
2010	49.72	3.21	10.35	7.85	1.24	72.36
2011	39.51	2.46	9.42	7.10	1.14	59.64
2012	31.99	1.67	10.10	6.77	1.14	51.67
2013	29.04	1.43	8.84	7.59	1.14	48.04
2014	23.69	1.29	9.32	7.08	1.14	42.51

Commercial WPUE

Year	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4C	4D	Total
2010	149	222	158	285	173	182	142	82	188	204
2011	92	240	175	280	140	189	165	75	166	198
2012	102	248	207	263	133	194	149	60	155	195
2013	110	246	195	238	112	160	127	56	157	179
2014	109	286	228	230	99	132	168	60	167	185



Total halibut removals by source since 1961

With regard to Area 4CDE, the Assistant Administrator of Fisheries of NOAA, Eileen Sobeck, wrote:

“Finally, NMFS and the Council are committed to reducing halibut bycatch in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska in the near future. As you know, the Council is scheduled to take final action in June 2015 to recommend measures to reduce halibut bycatch limits in the BSAI. NMFS strongly supports the Council’s efforts. Any measures that the Council recommends in June 2015 could be implemented by NMFS during 2016. NMFS is also committed to developing measures that reduce halibut bycatch if the Council fails to develop and submit a fishery management plan amendment in a reasonable period of time under the authority of section 304(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 16 U.S.C. 1854(c).”

“Given the importance of the halibut fishery to participants and communities in Area 4CDE, the ongoing efforts to minimize halibut bycatch in 2015, and the anticipated action by the Council to reduce halibut bycatch limits, I urge the IPHC to consider recommending catch limits that provide adequate harvest opportunity for the directed fishery in Area 4CDE.”

****North Pacific Council****

Seattle Meeting, February 2-10, 2015: The big issue before the Council for us was a joint meeting with the IPHC and the Council’s initial review of “halibut bycatch” reductions in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. I want to thank the many FVOA members and their crews for turning out and testifying. The Council took the following action to analyze between now and their June meeting which is scheduled as a final action for this agenda item. The June meeting is set for Sitka, Alaska.

The Council passed the following action to be analyzed for final action.

The specific options to be considered are:

Reduce halibut prohibited species catch, or PSC, the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands trawl limited access sector by 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, 35 percent, 40 percent, 45 percent, or 50 percent.

Reduce halibut PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector by Suboption one: Reducing halibut PSC to Amendment 80 cooperatives by 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, 35 percent, 40 percent, 45 percent, or 50 percent

Suboption two: Reducing halibut PSC to the Amendment 80 limited access by: 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, 35 percent, 40 percent, 45 percent, 50 percent, or 60 percent

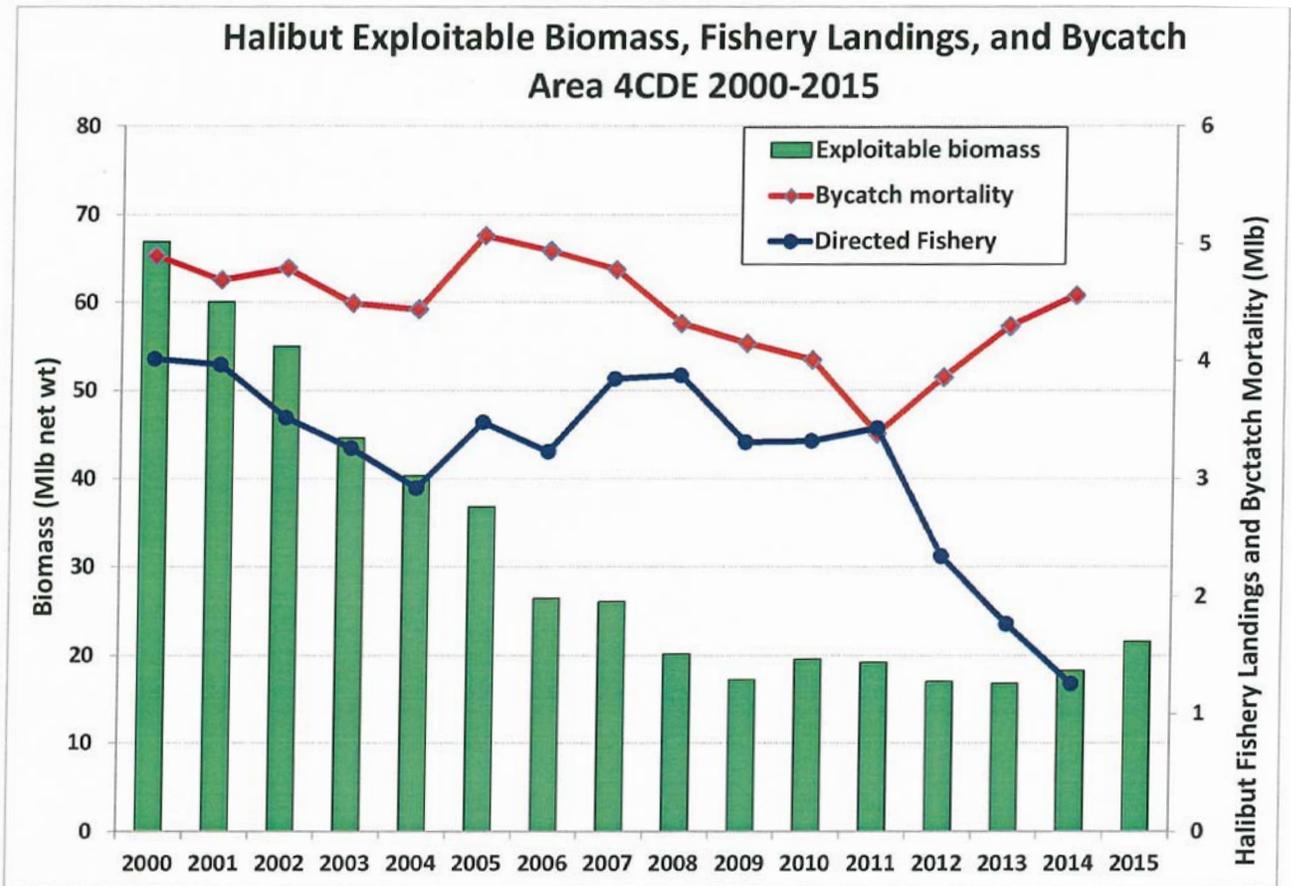
Reduce halibut PSC limit for Pacific cod hook and line catcher vessels by 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, 35 percent, 40 percent, 45 percent, or 50 percent

Reduce CDQ halibut prohibited species quota by 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, 35 percent, 40 percent, 45 percent, or 50 percent

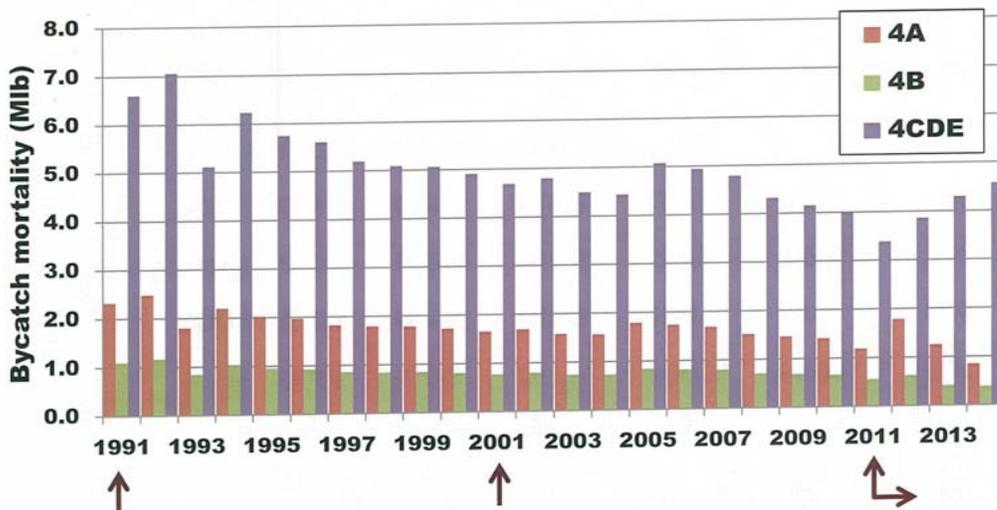
Reduce halibut PSC limit for other non-trawl (i.e. hook and line catcher vessels and catcher processors targeting anything except Pacific cod or sablefish) by 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, 35 percent, 40 percent, 45 percent, or 50 percent.

Pots for Sablefish. Final action is scheduled for the April meeting in Anchorage.

Council member John Henderschedt has resigned as a Washington state appointee to the Council. Governor Inslee has put forward three names to replace John. Governor Inslee put forward Mr. Kenny Down as his preferred candidate who has been working with Blue North Fisheries. FVOA has endorsed Mr. Down’s candidacy.



Bycatch summary since 1991: Area 4



**Pacific Council (PFMC) **

Preliminary Preferred 2015 & 2016 Annual Catch Limits (ACL). These harvest levels were confirmed at the November meeting in Los Angeles.

	2014	2015	2016
Sablefish North of 36°	4349	4793 ↑10%	5241 ↑9%
Sablefish South of 36°	1560	1719 ↑10%	1880 ↑9%

Projected Sablefish Tier Harvest Limits	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
2015	41,175	18,716	10,695
2016	45,053	20,479	11,702

*17% of the sablefish caught are anticipated to be discarded and 20% are expected to die. Quotas have been reduced based on this.

If you intend to either participate in the 10 hour directed halibut fishery, June 24th off Oregon or in the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, you need to get your **IPHC Annual Permit**.

Second Watch

Icicle Seafoods, a long-time important buyer and marketer of halibut and sablefish, announced that it was up for sale. It was unclear at the time of the newsletter what might happen with their Seward plant.

State of Washington will have a new fishery director, Dr. Jim Unsworth, who has been a deputy director of the Idaho Department of Fish & Game. He will replace Phil Anderson.

Derelict Vessel Act. This was provided to us by sustaining member, Paul Anderson, attorney. His phone number is (206) 467-0237.

In 2014, the Washington legislature adopted the Derelict Vessels Act. The Act affects members of the Cargo Reserve and of the Association who own vessels older than 40 years which are longer than 65 feet.

- The Act requires the purchaser or recipient of any such vessel to purchase a marine liability and pollution insurance policy and provide a copy of the policy to the seller and to the Washington Department of Revenue.
- The Act requires the seller or transferor of such a vessel to make sure that the purchaser or recipient has, **prior to the transfer of title**, acquired the marine liability and pollution insurance policy.
- The Act also requires the seller to obtain a marine condition and valuation survey **prior to the transfer of the title**. The survey report must be provided to the purchaser and to the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

- If the seller fails to verify that the purchaser has acquired the marine liability and pollution insurance policy or fails to conduct the condition and valuation survey prior to the sale and if the vessel is later abandoned or declared a derelict vessel, the Act requires the seller to reimburse a public agency for the costs of removing and disposing of the vessel.
- The Act does not provide a time limit between the date of the vessel sale and the date of vessel removal. A seller might be held liable for the removal and disposal costs of an abandoned vessel even 20 years after the sale date if the seller failed to comply with the Act.

Other provisions of the Act might apply to the sale of a vessel older than 40 years and longer than 65 feet. If you intend to sell such a vessel, you should review the statutes and seek the advice of your attorney.

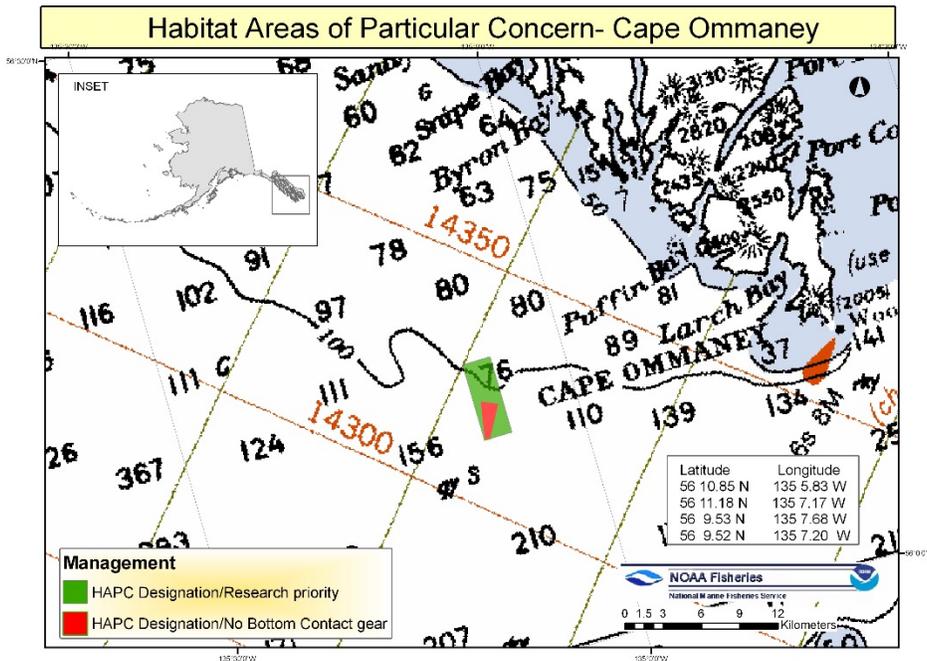
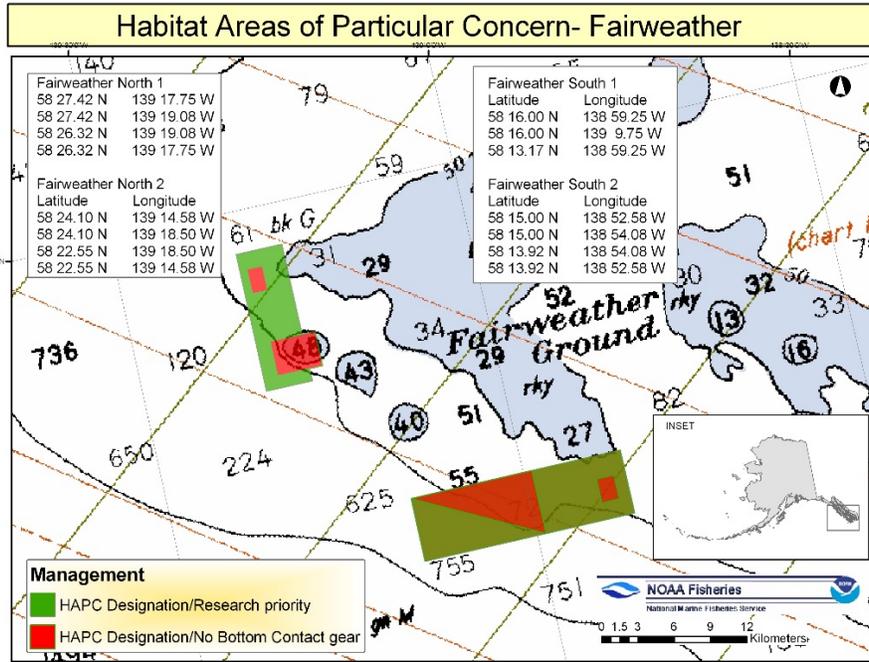
Blessing of the Fleet. The Blessing will be held on **Sunday, March 15, 2015** at the Memorial at Fishermen's Terminal. We are looking for a boat to bless so if you are interested, please contact Carol at the FVOA office.

First Aid & CPR: Washington Sea-Grant is offering the following First Aid & CPR classes on the following dates: **Thursday, February 19th** and **Monday, March 23, 2015**. Classes run from 8 am to 5 pm and are held at the Nordby Center at Fishermen's Terminal in Seattle. Please contact Sarah Fisksen at (206) 543-1225 to sign up for these classes.



The Resolute is owned by Steve Lindahl (S&R Fisheries, Inc.) The boat was built in 1924 and is still active in the Halibut/Blackcod fisheries.

Closed Areas to Remember. The following closed coral gardens are near the Fairweather grounds and Cape Ommaney. You can get fined a large amount of money if you happen to drop your gear unintentionally in one of these areas.



****Calendar of Events****

February 17, 2015	MSR Annual Meeting	Palisade Restaurant, Seattle
February 19, 2015 Sponsored by Sea-Grant	First Aid/CPR 8-5	Nordby Center, Fish. Terminal, Seattle, WA
March 6-11, 2015	PFMC Meeting	Hilton Vancouver Vancouver, WA
March 15, 2015	Blessing of the Fleet 2 pm	Fishermen's Memorial Fishermen's Terminal, Seattle
March 23, 2015 Sponsored by Sea-Grant	First Aid/CPR 8-5	Nordby Center, Fish. Terminal, Seattle, WA
April 6-14, 2015	NPFMC Meeting	Anchorage Hilton Anchorage, AK
April 10-15, 2015	PFMC Meeting	Doubletree Hilton Sonoma Sonoma, CA
June 1-9, 2015	NPFMC Meeting	Sitka, AK
June 11-17, 2015	PFMC Meeting	Doubletree by Hilton Spokane, WA
September 11-16, 2015	PFMC Meeting	Doubletree by Hilton Sacramento, CA
October 5-13, 2015	NPFMC Meeting	Anchorage Hilton Anchorage, AK
November 14-19, 2015	PFMC Meeting	Hyatt Regency Orange Co. Garden Grove, CA
November 26-27, 2015	Thanksgiving Holidays	Office closed
December 7-15, 2015	NPFMC Meeting	Anchorage Hilton Anchorage, AK
December 24-25, 2015	Christmas Holidays	Office closed



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