

# Processor Advisory Group

January 18, 2006

## Eleventh Annual Meeting Report

**CHAIR** Joe Kyle, Atka Pride Seafoods, U.S.  
**VICE CHAIR** Blake Tipton, S.M. Products (B.C.) Ltd., Canada

The Processors Advisory Group meeting was called to order at 2:40 p.m., January 17, 2006 by Joe Kyle, who was elected chair of the meeting and Blake Tipton as vice-chair. Twelve companies attended the PAG meetings this year, representing a majority of halibut bought and processed in Alaska, British Columbia, and Washington.

### CATCH LIMITS

It was moved by John Woodruff, seconded by David Brindle, and agreed unanimously to accept staff recommendations for catch limits with the following exceptions and comments.

Area 2A – 1.38

Area 2-B – Staff recommendation is 13.22 million pounds. The PAG, however, supports a recommendation of 12.5 million pounds. This supports the conservative recommendation made by John Secord (former IPHC Commissioner), recognizing his expertise, commitment to conservation, and track record of having the best interests of the industry at heart. The PAG is concerned because of the anecdotal evidence it heard regarding changes in commercial CPUE in the northern area of 2B.

Area 2C – 10.63

Area 3A – 25.2

Area 3B – 10.86

Area 4A – 3.35

Area 4B – 1.67:

The PAG recognizes there is conflicting evidence regarding the health of the resource in Area 4B. Because we believe area 4B is physically different from the rest of the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea, we recommend

a very conservative approach to harvest be taken. We further recommend the IPHC staff continue to work on resolving the disparate information in the traditional data and the PIT tags. Until this is clear, however, we concur with the staff's conservative approach. We heard the anecdotal evidence of good CPUE's in localized areas of 4B but we also heard evidence of poor fishing. Further, since the extrapolation of the PIT tag data in some of the westward areas is so far off the traditional data, it's difficult for the PAG to embrace it without the staff's endorsement.

#### Area 4 CDE – 3.55

We have the same concerns about the conflicting lines of evidence between traditional data and PIT tag data. Therefore, we concur with the staff recommendations. The PAG also has concerns about dropping the exploitation rate in areas 4CDE to 15% and would hope the Commission would move back to the 20% level should the PIT tag data prove more reliable.

#### **SEASON DATES:**

The PAG recommends a February 26 – November 15, 2006 season. These dates will continue to be consistent with recent and past practices. The market has come to rely on the fish coming to market at that time; this year that happens to coincide with the Lenten season. This also conforms to the policy of a Sunday opening date, which the PAG strongly endorses.

#### **STAFF REGULATORY PROPOSALS:**

**Catch sharing plans: Area 2A and 4DCE.**

The PAG supports this proposal.

#### **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE IPHC REGULATIONS:**

**Change sport fishing possession limits in WA, OR, and CA.**

The PAG supports this proposal.

**Record whether the weight is head-on or head-off on state fish tickets for Area 2A commercial landings.**

The PAG supports this proposal.

**Recognition in IPHC regulations of the First Nation's food fishery in Area 2B.**

The PAG supports this proposal.

**Change logbook requirements for British Columbia.**

The PAG supports this proposal.

**Permit the Interagency Electronic Report System application, eLandings, to be used for Alaska commercial landings.**

The PAG heartily supports this proposal.

**Remove the regulation that requires vessel operators to record personal use halibut in logbooks.**

The PAG supports this proposal.

**Define net weight in PIHC regulations.**

The PAG supports this proposal.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS BY INDUSTRY**

### **1. Allow live halibut deliveries.**

The PAG opposes this proposal. It was unclear what the ultimate purpose of this proposal is and the PAG foresees several potential pitfalls, i.e. accurate IFQ weights, on-grounds discharging of dead fish, quality or chalkiness, Alaska regulations, potential penning issues, etc.

### **2. Set legal size limit of halibut throughout commercial, sport, and sport charter fisheries.**

The PAG is in favor of a universal size limit for all users. We recognize the IPHC may not have the jurisdiction to regulate this, but we support any effort toward a universal size limit.

### **3. Allow the use of Electronic Logbooks in U.S. and Canada.**

The PAG has no comment and leaves this up to the judgment of the staff.

### **4. In AK, allow IFQ halibut catch to be landed at ADF&G/NMFS accredited floating processors operating Area 4.**

The PAG has no comment on this proposal based on our understanding that this is legal already.

### **5. For one year in AK, require IFQ holders to record dogfish bycatch in their logbooks by set.**

The PAG has no comment on this proposal.

### **6. Allow proxy fishing in the sport fishery which allows defined sport fishers to catch additional halibut over the daily allowance. (Four proposals)**

The PAG strongly opposes this proposal due to the extreme burdens on enforcement, monitoring, and administrative entities, as well as the potential for abuse. In addition, no other regulatory agency allows proxy fishing for halibut.

**7. Allow the skippers of IPHC charters in Area 4 discretion in setting and hauling when encountering whales.**

The PAG has no comment.

**8. There are three parts to the proposal including having a commercial fishing season length of April 1, 2006 to November 15, 2006; ease the catch limits by 10%; and allow a limited winter fishery to get data from tags on migration patters.**

The PAG is opposed.

**9. Season start date should be March 15.**

The PAG is opposed.

**PAG STRUCTURE**

The PAG plans to update the PAG Policy Statement, Operational Structure and Statement of Mission.

The PAG wants to express our appreciation to the IPHC staff members and DFO, USCG, and NOAA Fisheries Enforcement representatives who provided additional information and helped us with our deliberations.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

## Industry Participants

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| Arrowac Fisheries, Inc.  |
| Atka Pride Seafoods      |
| Bellingham Cold Storage  |
| Dana F. Besecker Co.     |
| Icicle Seafoods          |
| NorQuest Seafoods        |
| Northport Fisheries      |
| Pacific Star Seafoods    |
| Peter Pan Seafoods       |
| S.M. Products (B.C.) LTD |
| Seafood Producers Coop   |
| Trident Seafoods         |