

PROCESSOR ADVISORY GROUP

January 15, 2008

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

CHAIR: Joe Kyle, APICDA J/V, United States

VICE-CHAIR: Brad Mirau, Aero Trading, Canada

The Processor's Advisory Group meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m. by Joe Kyle. Attendees introduced themselves. Fifteen companies with 23 representatives attended the PAG meetings this year, representing a majority of halibut bought and processed in Alaska, British Columbia, Oregon and Washington.

It was moved and seconded to name Joe Kyle as Chairman and Brad Mirau as Vice Chairman. The motion was passed unanimously.

Before staff and industry proposals were discussed, a final review of the updated PAG Policy and Statement of Mission was made. This mission statement defines the PAG's role to the IPHC and within the industry. The changes approved at this meeting reflect current operations and the mission of PAG more accurately. We respectfully submit this document to the IPHC for the Commission's acceptance.

The PAG affirms its support for the coast-wide assessment process and the staff's recommendation on harvest rates. However, given the shift from the closed area assessment to a coast-wide assessment, the PAG believes a revision to the "fast down" approach is appropriate for this year.

Therefore, the PAG supports a shift from the "fast down, slow up" policy for this year that applies a 33% step down rather than the traditional 50% step down, resulting in the following catch recommendations.

CATCH LIMITS

Area	2A	1.10
	2B	9.20
	2C	6.98
	3A	24.88
	3B	10.90

4A	3.10
4B	1.86
4CDE	<u>3.96</u>
TOTAL	61.99

SEASON DATES

The PAG recommends a March 15—October 31, 2008 season and reiterates our long-held preference for an opening date on a Saturday or Sunday. The importance of a Saturday or Sunday opening puts halibut in the market for midweek sales and promotions. The full moon on the 7th and massive tides building on the 8th support a later opening. Research has underscored observations from Alaska and B.C. that there are some halibut still spawning during that time.

The PAG supported an opening date of March 15 by a 9-4 vote. The minority, all from SE Alaska, supported an earlier date of March 8 to take advantage of the Lenten season and to have product in the plants before the herring season opens.

Catch-sharing plans: Area 2A and 4CDE

The PAG supports this proposal.

Revise Area 2A vessel license application requirement

The PAG supports this proposal.

Further define net weight in PIHC regulations

The PAG supports this proposal.

Determining the minimum size of sport caught halibut in Alaska

The PAG supports this proposal.

Defining the acceptable log books used by U.S. commercial fishing vessel operators.

The PAG supports this proposal.

INDUSTRY PROPOSALS

1. Prohibit tagging of halibut except by IPHC or appropriate state/provincial government agency.

PAG supports the prohibition of all tagging of live halibut except under the auspices of the commission.

2. Shellfish pots on board.

PAG has no position.

3. 100% VMS coverage for commercial halibut/sablefish

PAG opposes this proposal.

4. Combine area 4 fish with VMS

PAG has no position on this proposal.

5. Pot retention of halibut in the Bering Sea.

PAG strongly opposes this proposal.

6. Alaska halibut season opening date.

PAG is interested in the merits of a three year, predictable opening date. However, PAG opposes this proposal due to our position supporting a March 15 opening date in 2008.

7. Prohibit the use of electric or hydraulic reels when sport fishing for halibut.

PAG takes no position.

8. Commercial Size limit reduction.

PAG opposes lowering the minimum size at this time. While we currently have no reason to see the size limit lowered, we encourage the commission staff to explore the feasibility of harvesting smaller fish in the future.

9. Earlier start date for open access to halibut off Washington, Oregon, and California.

PAG endorsed the catch-sharing plan for Area 2A. This proposal is moot.

10. Alaska halibut season opening date, prohibit the use of electric reels when sport fishing for halibut, and 100% VMS coverage for commercial halibut/sablefish.

PAG has no position.

11. April 1 – November 15, 2008 season; accounting of removals by all user groups.

PAG has no position.

12. Allow Pacific whiting shoreside vessels to retain pacific halibut until offloading.

PAG opposes this proposal.

Halibut By-catch Issue

PAG also supports and volunteers to work with IPHC to organize a series of workshops with the conference board, other government regulatory agencies and other fisheries representatives to:

1. determine responsible levels of halibut by-catch by fishery;
2. design and implement halibut by-catch reduction strategies;
3. eliminate the discarding of dead and moribund halibut at sea, while protecting existing markets for the directed hook and line fisheries.

The PAG adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

PAG Attendees 2008

United States

Canada

United States	Canada
APICDA Joint Ventures	Aero Trading
Arrowac Fisheries Inc.	FAS Seafood Producers
Bellingham Cold Storage	SM Products (BC) Ltd.
Dana F. Besecker Co., Inc.	
Fisherman's Advisory Committee	
Icicle Seafoods	
Island Seafoods	
North Pacific Seafoods	
Northport Fisheries	
Peter Pan Seafoods	
Seafood Producers Coop	
Trident Seafoods	