

# The Wheel Watch

*a newsletter of the*

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

Robert D. Alverson  
 Manager

Carol M. Batteen  
 Executive Assistant

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**Thank you for your support!**

Dear Longliner:

Have a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year! The following will bring you up-to-date on issues before the NPFMC, PFMC, IPHC, Washington, D.C., and Markets.

**\*\*IPHC\*\***

Below is the matrix of how the IPHC came up with the 2013 harvest limit recommendations. The proposed 22.70 million pound harvest limit is a 30% overall reduction in all quotas. However, up to 66% reductions are proposed in the Bering Sea & Aleutians and a 46% reduction in the South Peninsula districts of 3B and 4A.

**2013 “Blue line” Apportionment Results**

	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4CDE	Total
Exploitable biomass (millions lb)	3.81	24.54	23.28	70.38	26.02	11.97	6.75	19.74	186.49
Percent of total	2.0%	13.2%	12.5%	37.7%	14.0%	6.4%	3.6%	10.6%	100.0%
Harvest Rate	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	16.1%	16.1%	16.1%	16.1%	19.6%
Total CEY (millions lb)	0.82	5.28	5.00	15.13	4.20	1.93	1.09	3.18	36.63
O26 Other removals (millions lb)	0.11	0.69	1.89	5.89	1.46	1.08	0.47	2.33	13.93
Fishery CEY (millions lb)	0.71	4.58	3.12	9.24	2.73	0.85	0.62	0.85	22.70
	↓35%	↑19%	↓22%	↓46%	↓46%	↓67%	↓66%	↓30%	

For the last 8 years the Commission has forecast with their retrospective analysis that eventually there would be an upward trend to the halibut resource. They have explained for over 8 years that the reason this up-trend has not taken place earlier is due to size at age being reduced. It now appears the IPHC over estimated these year classes which has resulted in almost a decade of over prescribed harvest limits. In order to correct for these misinterpretations of the resource, radical reductions are now proposed. The analysis states as follows:

**“The retrospective pattern seen in recent assessments was a direct result of transient over estimation of incoming year class strengths.”**

With the past errors now being corrected, the IPHC now states,

**“This change to the assessment model resulted in a much more pronounced decline in the estimated stock trend in recent years, a large reduction in the scale of current population estimates, but also a decrease in the average level of productivity.”**

Below, the blue line corrects the IPHC previous expectations.

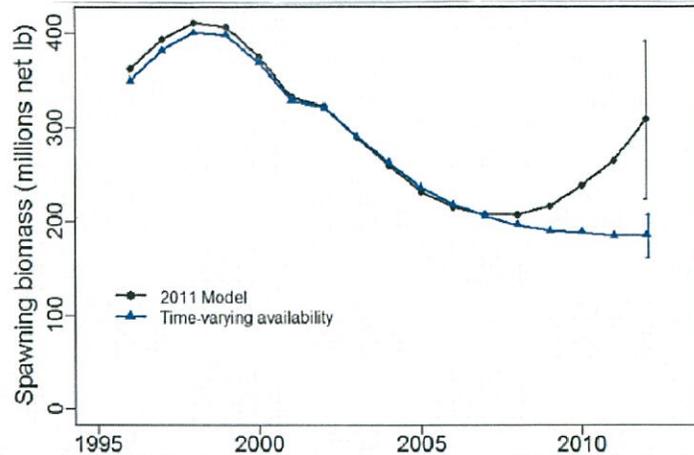


Figure 3. Comparison of the 2011 and revised stock assessment models using data updated through 2011.

Below 8-year-old year classes have been recalculated. Once the IPHC believed these year classes were much more robust. We have 5 years of below average recruitment, 2001-2005.

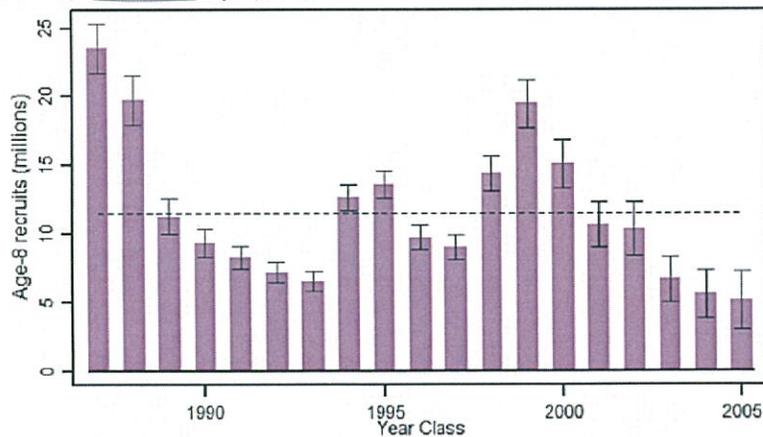
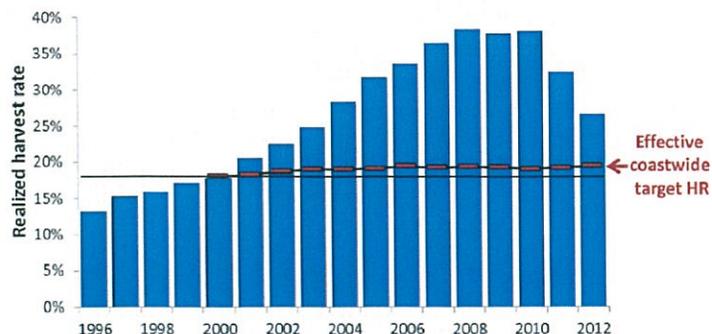


Figure 4. Trend in age-8 recruitment strengths estimated in the 2012 stock assessment.

The chart below shows the harvest rate that the Commission now believes should have been used between the years 2000 to 2012. As you can see, the harvest levels for a decade exceeded the target coastwide harvest rate.

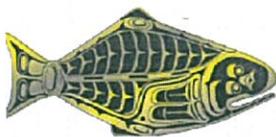
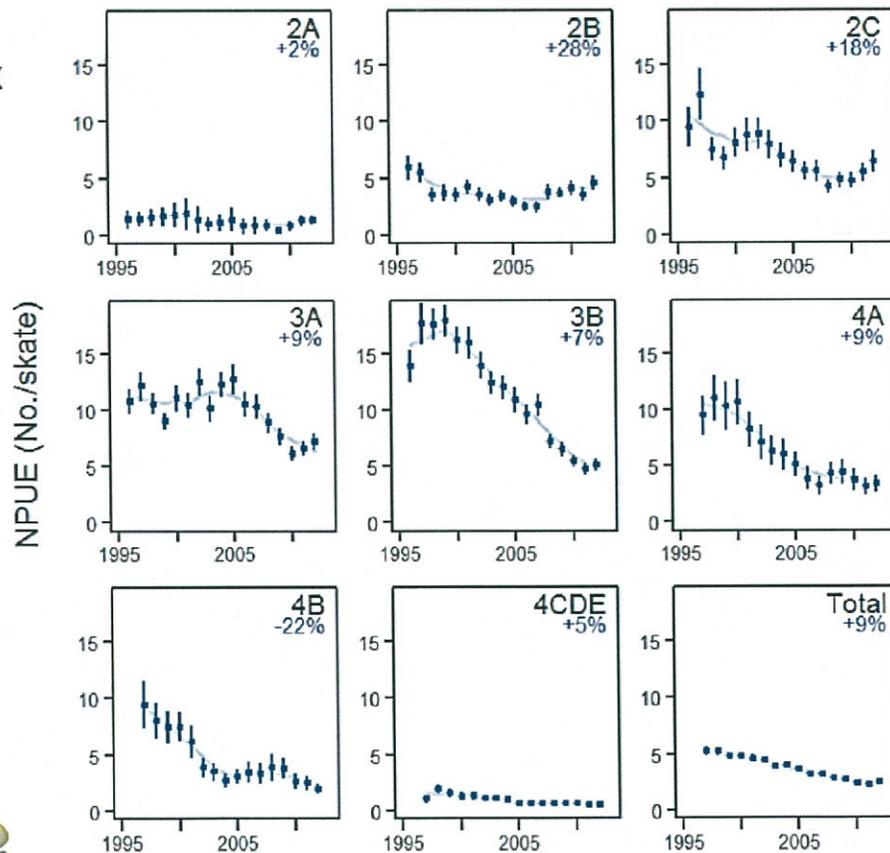
Results



The question now is have we hit bottom? The Commission has several indexes for abundance. There are some hopeful signs. Area 2B, 2C, 3A, and 3B showed nearly double digit improvement in weight per unit of effort (WPUE). Seven of the eight areas showed improvement in numbers per unit of effort (NPUE).

	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4CDE
Survey NPUE	+2%	+28%	+18%	+9%	+7%	+9%	-22%	+5%
Survey WPUE	+6%	+30%	+18%	+14%	+9%	+9%	-29%	+12%
Logbooks WPUE	+30%	+8%	+19%	-4%	-5%	+1%	-6%	-20%

Survey:  
NPUE index



Slide - 30

**“Despite reductions in harvest levels in 2011 and 2012, the assessment estimates that, in retrospect, harvest rates have been well above the coastwide levels implied by the current harvest policy. This was due to both the over estimation of biomass arising from the retrospective problem.”** The recent trends of below-average recruitment and decreasing size and age have been an important contributing factor in the overall stock decline. **“Given recent poor recruitment, declines in spawning biomass are projected to be very likely over a three-year projection, with a probability of 41% in the absence of harvest, increasing rapidly to 95-99% over the alternatives considered (column f).”** ....IPHC

I find these proposed cuts very disturbing but reflecting a truer state of nature of the resource trend than what IPHC and NMFS respectively have suggested over the last several years. FVOA has

annually asked IPHC, "are those juveniles really there?" and the answer from IPHC has been yes they are. The science relative to the juvenile abundance was interpreted incorrectly and higher harvest limits were recommended than what should have been for 8 consecutive years. **This scientific error now results in a \$60 million reduction to the fishermen in lost wages; a \$250 million loss in asset value of halibut IFQs; and puts the industry with a greater burden of rebuilding the resource.**

Two of the lead scientists at IPHC have been replaced. Dr. Ian Stuart is the new lead scientist. He comes from NMFS in the Pacific Council arena. He has been the sablefish assessment author there and I personally have a great deal of faith in him. He is attempting to correct misapplied science at IPHC. We need to be engaged more than ever as an organization especially with regard to the observer program and bycatch issues affecting the halibut resource.

## **\*\*North Pacific Council\*\***

### **Hallbut/Sablefish IFQ Actions.**

**12/20 Hired Skipper:** This proposed action was published as a proposed rule. It affects initial recipients in that in order to have your quota fished on another vessel you must have a 20% ownership listed with the U.S. Coast Guard for 12 months prior to fishing. FVOA and the Kodiak Vessel Owners have sent letters pointing out how dysfunctional this action is. We expect it to be approved as a final rule for the 2013 season. This will slow up initial recipients' ability to move quota from vessel to vessel.

**Initial Recipient Control Date:** This action has been submitted to the NMFS office in Juneau. This proposed rule was voted on in 2011 and back dated to February 10, 2010. The nature of this proposed rule is 'if initial recipients bought new quota after February 10, 2010, they must be on the vessel in order to fish that new quota.' If the initial quota holder is a corporation, it is not clear how that will be handled. We will find out this when the rule is published.

**GOA - Halibut PSC Limit:** The Council voted in June to reduce the trawl halibut cap in the GOA by 15%. This has been submitted to NMFS with adoption likely in 2014.

**Hallbut Catch share Plan:** The council took final action in October to give the Charter operations 3.5% more quota in 3A (a total of 18%) when harvest limits are low. The allocation slides back to 14% when harvest limits go over 20 million in 3A. That would be nice.

**Retention of Halibut In Sablefish Pots In 4A:** North of the Peninsula. The Council sent this back for more study.

**Allow Pots for GOA Directed Sablefish.** The Council put this on hold to see what types of issues come forward from the research paper on pots in 4A for incidental halibut caught.

**Unharvested Halibut In 4C:** This proposal was to increase the ownership cap of halibut in Area 4. The Council took no action. The interest in this proposal has been withdrawn.

**Increase A Share CAPs on Sablefish:** This would be the next item to move forward.

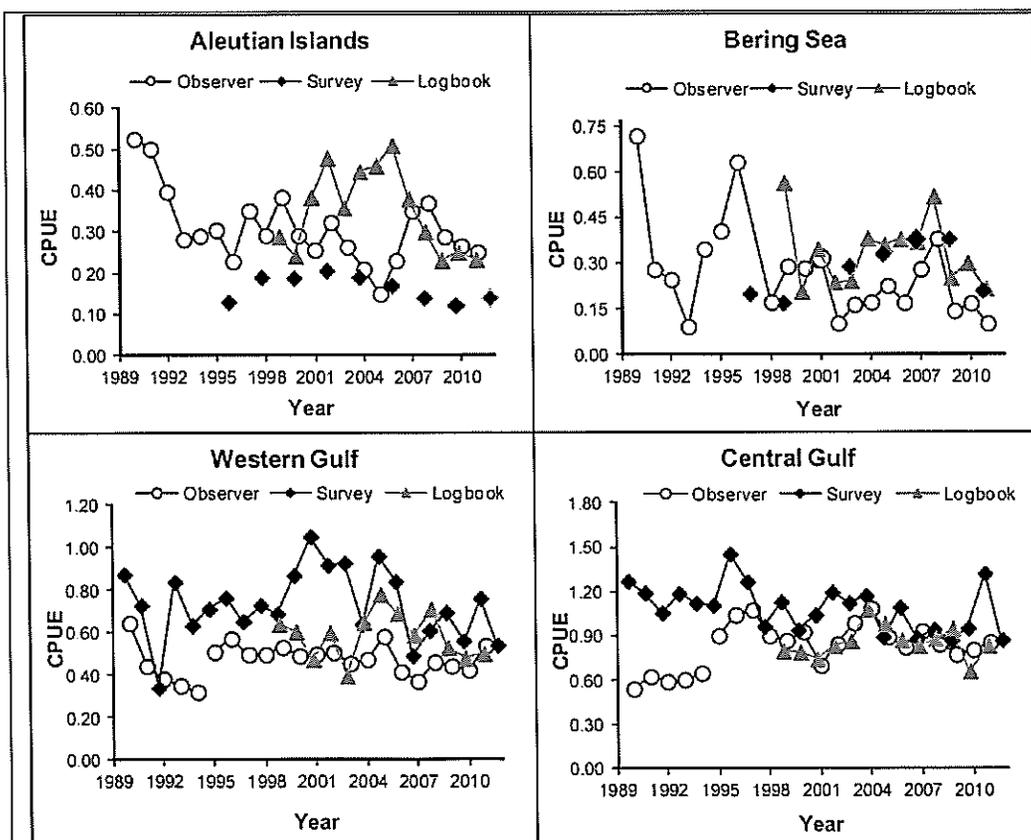
**Sablefish Harvest Limits:**

Apportionments are based on survey and fishery information	2012 ABC Percent	2012 Survey RPW	2011 Fishery RPW	2013 ABC Percent	2012 ABC	2013 ABC	Change
Total					17,240	16,230	-6%
Bering Sea	13%	5%	9%	10%	2,230	1,580	-29%
Aleutians	12%	15%	13%	13%	2,050	2,140	4%
Gulf of Alaska	75%	79%	78%	77%	12,960	12,510	-4%
Western	14%	15%	13%	14%	1,780	1,750	-1%
Central	44%	46%	40%	44%	5,760	5,540	-4%
W. Yakutat*	16%	12%	17%	15%	2,080	1,860	-11%
E. Yakutat / Southeast*	26%	27%	30%	27%	3,350	3,360	0%

\*After the adjustment for the 95:5 hook-and-line:trawl split in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska, the 2013 ABC for West Yakutat is 2,030 t and for East Yakutat/Southeast is 3,190 t. This adjustment projected to 2014 is 1,902 t for W. Yakutat and 2,993 t for E. Yakutat/Southeast.

**Projected 2013 spawning biomass is 37% of unfished spawning biomass.** Spawning biomass has increased from a low of 30% of unfished biomass in 2002 to 37% projected for 2013. The 1997 year class has been an important contributor to the population but has been reduced and should comprise less than 10% of the 2013 spawning biomass. The 2000 year class is still the largest contributor, with 20% of the spawning biomass in 2013. The 2008 year class is beginning to show signs of strength and will comprise 5% of spawning biomass in 2013 even though it is only 40% mature.

Last year there was good news in that the CPUE was up nicely in the Western Gulf and Central Gulf. However, the survey produced lower numbers in the Bering Sea, Western Gulf, Central Gulf, West Yakutat for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row and perhaps status quo in SE.



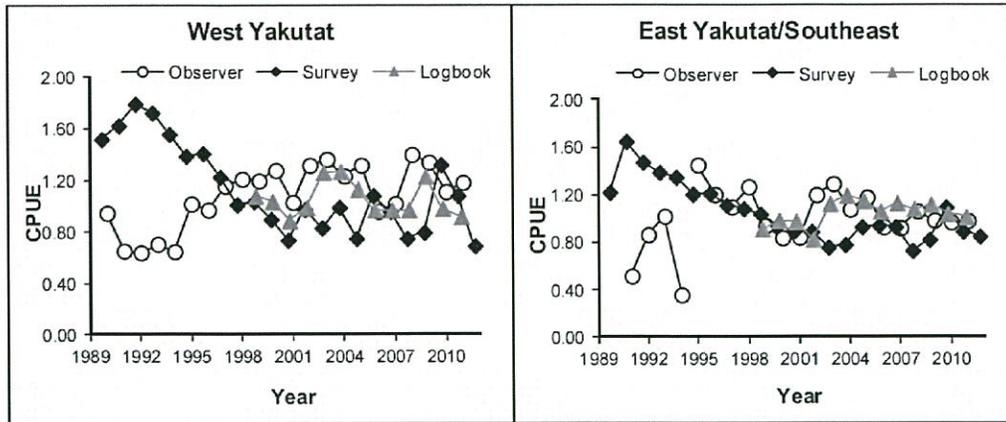


Figure 3.5. Average fishery catch rate (pounds/hook) by region and data source for longline survey and fishery data. The fishery switched from open-access to individual quota management in 1995.

Year class strength always drives the stock assessment projections. The 2008 year class looks good with only 40% of it recruited to the fishery to date. However, we have not had a bumper recruit class in some time. We are hopeful that the 2010 year class will be good.

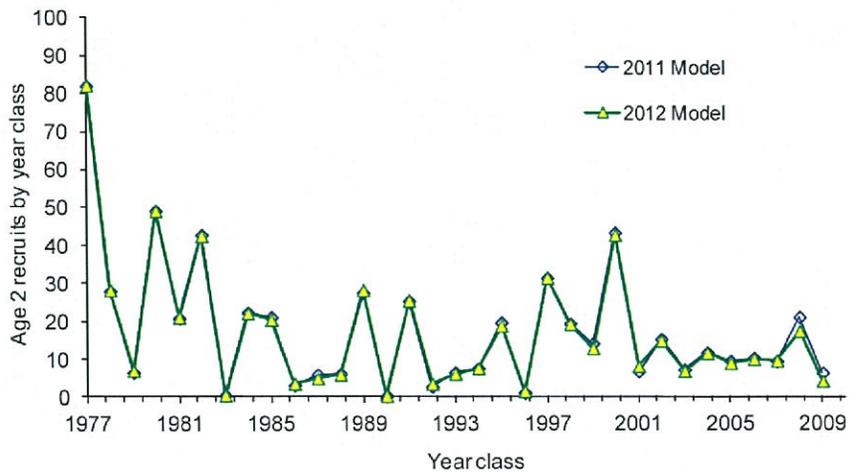
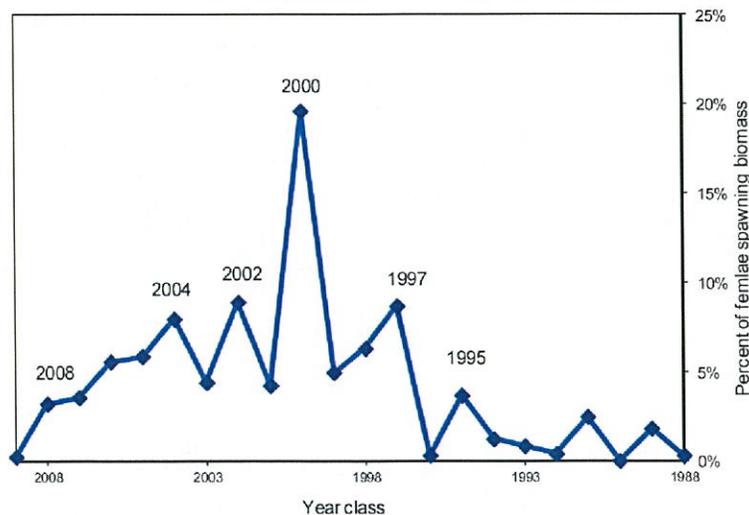


Figure 3.14a. Estimated recruitment (number at age 2, millions) versus year for 2011 and 2012 models.

This chart shows how much of each year class makes up your landings. The 2000 year class still dominates.



**Charter Harvest Amount for 2012:**

Preliminary estimates of the 2012 sport halibut harvest (numbers of fish), average net weight (pounds), and harvest biomass (millions of pounds net weight) in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, and 4. NA indicates no estimate is available.

IPHC Area	Sector	Harvest (no. of fish)	Average Net WT. (lb)	Yield (M lb)	95% CI for Yield (M lb)
Area 2C	Charter	44,311	14.6	0.645	0.482 - 0.808
	Noncharter	44,203	17.2	0.761	0.486 - 1.035
	Total	88,514	15.9	1.405	1.086 - 1.725
Area 3A	Charter	178,268	13.3	2.375	2.060 - 2.690
	Noncharter	131,104	11.9	1.563	1.281 - 1.845
	Total	309,372	12.7	3.938	3.515 - 4.361

The recent action on the allocation between charter and commercial was very important as most of the charter catch reduction over the last few years has been due to the recession and not due to any direct regulatory action in Area 3A. Area 2 did go to a 1 fish bag limit.

**Observers:** Deployment for vessels over 57.5 feet and under 57.5 to 40 feet will begin January 1, 2013. There has been a request for relaxing the requirements for vessels <57.5 feet. Senator Begich, Murkowski and Congressman Young sent the Council a letter asking for faster usage of Electronic Monitoring options and specifically asked "we request observers not be deployed to the vessel selected pool (<57.5') until EM is available." I think NMFS may back off some on the <57.5 deployment but last I heard at the Council, it was full ahead for deployment.

One bothersome design feature is, if you deliver to a tender, you could deliver all your trips to a tender and as long as you do not deliver to a dock, you can extend your trip and avoid coverage. FVOA sees this as a flaw but that is the way the program is being enforced, at least for now.

**Seabirds – Good News:** The observers spot check for correct deployment of tory lines. Here are their results.

Summary of seabird avoidance measures used in 2011 by demersal groundfish longline catcher-processor (CP) and catcher (CV) vessels in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI), and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Regions of Alaskan waters. Information was collected by NMFS-Certified groundfish observers while on board vessels. Observers spot-checked for avoidance gear during sets but did not monitor the entire setting process.

Use of Streamer Lines in Examined sets

Region	Vessel Type	Total Sets	Sets not Checked	Sets Checked	% sets checked	Paired Streamer	Single Streamers	No Streamers	% Paired or Single
BSAI	CV	134	27	107	79.9	95	11	1	99.1
BSAI	CP	14,243	6,321	7,922	55.6	7,318	396	208	97.4
GOA	CV	858	323	535	62.4	517	17	1	99.8
BOA	CP	2,205	1,174	1,031	46.8	901	115	15	98.5
Total		17,440	7,845	9,595	55.0	8,831	539	225	97.7

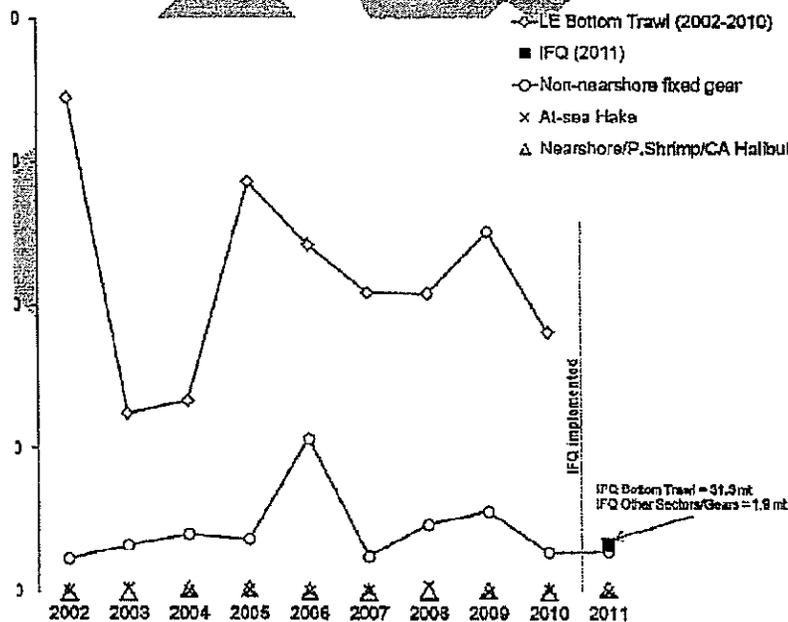
## \*\*Pacific Council\*\*

**Hallbut - 2A:** The 2012 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 989,000 lbs set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as sub-TACs as follows:

Treaty Tribes	346,150 lbs (35%)
Non-Tribal Total	642,850 lbs (65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	203,783 lbs
Washington Sport	214,110 lbs.
Oregon California Sport	203,783 lbs.

The Pacific Council's new Trawl ITQ program is finishing its second season. They treat the bycatch with an Individual Bycatch Quota (IBQ). Each vessel received an historic allocation of non-retainable halibut bycatch. The trawl fleet with 100% observer coverage must stop their fishing operations if they exceed their IBQ. This has resulted in a significant drop in their overall bycatch of 200 tons in 2010 to less than 50 tons for 2011. Perhaps this is an answer for the Gulf of Alaska.

**ES1.** Total estimated P. halibut discard mortality (metric tons) for 2002-2011 from all observed by the NWFSC Groundfish Observer Program. Estimates are not included for and years where there were insufficient observer data.



## \*\*Washington, D.C.\*\*

**A government that robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul. ...George Bernard Shaw**

**NOAA:** The head of NOAA, Dr. Jane Lubchenco, has announced that she will be stepping down. This leaves the Commerce Department looking for a Secretary of Commerce as well as an Undersecretary of NOAA. With unemployment at 7.7%, they will likely find replacements.

**Coast Guard Bill Passes the Senate:** The Senate adopted the house language for a one-year exemption from the permitting requirements under the Clean Water Act for all commercial fishing

vessels and work boats under 79' in length. This was being administered by EPA. We will need to seek a permanent exemption but this is an important step thanks to Senator Cantwell and Cong. Doc Hastings.

Additionally, the Senate version of the Coast Guard bill extends the two year vessel inspection requirements to 5 years. When you get your next safety inspection, it will likely be good for 5 years. As of October of this year, the USCG requires that all fishing vessels traveling outside 3 miles will need the safety inspection.

**CDQ's:** Coastal Villages CDQ has suggested that federal legislation be enacted granting them more Bering Sea quota from rival CDQs. Some believe this is a tactic to grow the CDQ allocation at everyone else's expense. I doubt if they will take quota from each other.

**Magnuson Act Amendment Process:** Starts in the next Congress 2013-2014.

## **\*\*Second Watch\*\***

**Rock fish Pilot Lawsuit:** Certain Alaska processors sued over the Rock fish pilot program, which is an IFQ format. The complaint by processors was based on a lack of forced landing requirements to processors by the historic Rockfish catcher vessels. The Court dismissed the case largely on technical grounds and really did not discuss the economic concerns. The price of Rock fish has tripled since the program began and the processors were claiming economic hardship.

**2 Lodge Owners Plead on Falsifying Residency:** Two Sitka lodge owners were fined and given suspended jail sentences on their guilty pleas to charges that they claimed to be Alaska residents for sports fishing licenses while they were actually residents of other states. One was trying to be an IPHC Commissioner.

**From Alaska Dispatch - November 15, 2012:** "Bad-boy commercial fisherman Freddie Joe Hankins won't have to wear an ankle bracelet, but he will be electronically monitored when fishing off Alaska for the next several years".

"U.S. District Court Judge H. Russel Holland on Thursday ordered that for three years the fishing activities of the 47-year-old Oregon man be recorded by the federal, electronic Vessel Monitoring System. Hankins was also ordered to pay a \$25,000 fine and a \$75,000 fine for illegally catching 31,000 pounds of halibut he sold in Kodiak in 2007."

**Seafood.com News [The Cordova Times] November 5, 2012:** the Freezer Longline Coalition has hired Chad See, a federal policy professional, as its executive director, filling the vacancy left when Kenny Down left to become the new president and chief executive officer of Blue North Fisheries, Inc. Congratulations to both Chad and Kenny.

## **\*\*Markets\*\***

***"If you owe the bank \$100, that's your problem. If you owe the bank \$100 million, that's the bank's problem." ...J. Paul Getty***

**Halibut.** The Halibut Association of North America has indicated that they would like an April 6<sup>th</sup> opener in 2013. I have heard from some of the buyers of frozen inventory problems and perhaps fish still not sold from 2011. The fleet did catch 97% of all proposed harvest for 2012. The 30% reduction in quota next year should help current inventories. Additionally, the areas to the west, 3B, 4A, and 4CDE with 46% to 66% reduction will likely leave frozen inventories short following the 2013 season as those areas harvests make up the highest percentage of frozen inventories and

they will be reduced the most in 2013.

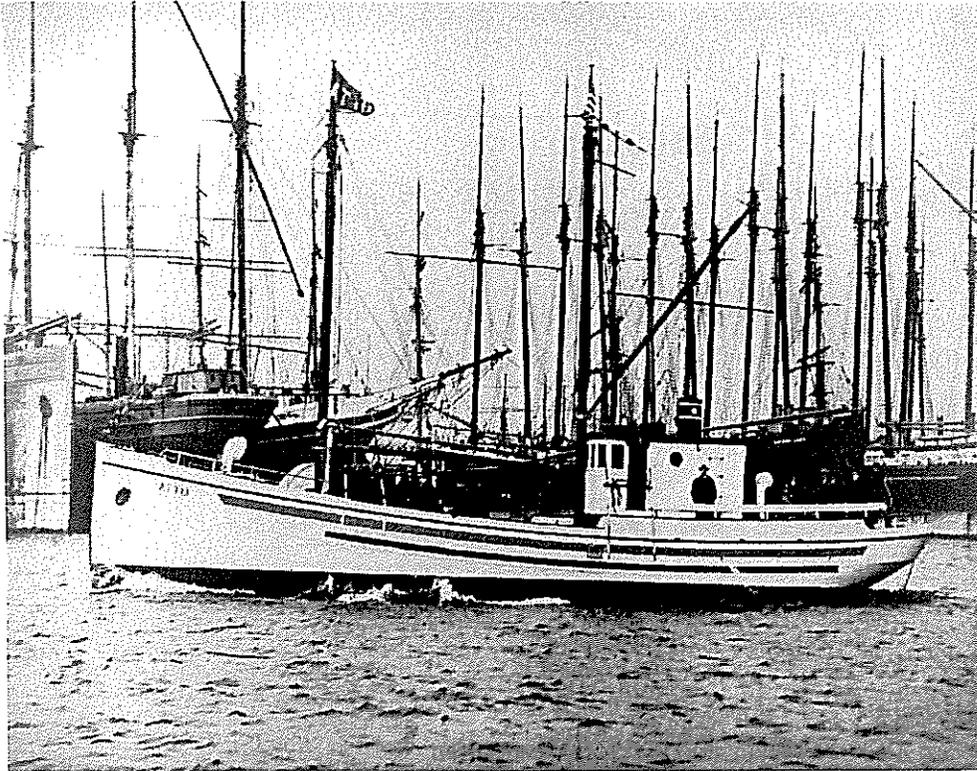
Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings						
For Fishing Year 2012						
Area	Species	Vessel Landings	Total Catch Pounds	Allocation Pounds	TAC Remaining Pounds	Percent Landed
2C	halibut	1,220	2,527,098	2,624,000	96,902	96
3A	halibut	1,818	11,688,097	11,918,000	229,903	98
3B	halibut	622	4,990,671	5,070,000	79,329	98
4A	halibut	202	1,544,024	1,567,000	22,976	99
4B	halibut	128	1,370,408	1,495,200	124,792	92
4C/4D	halibut	92	1,207,051	1,328,827	121,776	91
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,082</b>	<b>23,327,349</b>	<b>24,003,027</b>	<b>675,678</b>	<b>97</b>

**Sablefish:** Markets were a little weaker in 2012. The yen vs. the dollar weakened a little. The Japanese seemed to have properly priced small sablefish and that has stabilized the market. Local buyers have made new markets domestically. Look for sablefish at Outback, Bonefish and other Northwest restaurants. The Pacific Council's sablefish quota will be 25% reduced in 2013 which should strengthen prices.

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings						
For Fishing Year 2012						
					TAC	
AI	sablefish	109	1,806,117	2,710,776	904,659	67
BS	sablefish	158	1,057,310	1,966,503	909,193	54
CG	sablefish	656	9,762,447	10,158,797	396,350	96
SE	sablefish	608	6,878,168	6,995,196	117,028	98
WG	sablefish	202	2,806,219	3,139,350	333,131	89
WY	sablefish	236	4,237,514	4,356,290	118,776	97
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,969</b>	<b>26,547,775</b>	<b>29,326,912</b>	<b>2,779,137</b>	<b>91</b>

## **\*\*Centennial Celebration\*\***

The Fishing Vessel Owners' Association will be celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> year of representing longline fishermen in 2014. The picture below is the halibut schooner **Attu** sailing on Lake Union with the moth-balled Pacific sailing fleet in the background. ...Circa 1920's



Halibut Fares in Seattle – October 1913 ...from Pacific Fisherman

Orient	60,000 lbs @ 8-3/4 cents
Seymour	40,000 lbs @ 7-1/2 cents
Tordenskjold	70,000 lbs @ 7-1/4 cents
Pacific	20,000 lbs @ 7-1/2 cents
Tom & Al	110,000 lbs @ 5 cents
Panama	40,000 lbs @ 7-1/2 cents
Sumner	50,000 lbs @ 7-1/2 cents
Albatross	43,000 lbs @ 7-1/2 cents
Ommaney	70,000 lbs @ 7-1/2 cents
Decorah	50,000 lbs @ 6 cents

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### \*\*Calendar of Events\*\*

<b>December 24-26, 2012</b>	Christmas Holiday	Office Closed
<b>December 31-Jan. 1, 2013</b>	New Year's Holiday	Office Closed
<b>January 21-25, 2013</b>	IPHC Annual Meeting	Fairmont Empress Victoria, BC.
<b>Week of February 4, 2013</b>	NPFMC Meeting	Portland, OR
<b>March 6-11, 2013</b> Advisory Bodies may begin Tues., March 5	PFMC Meeting	Hotel Murano Tacoma, WA
<b>Week of April 1, 2013</b>	NPFMC Meeting	Anchorage Hilton Anchorage, AK
<b>April 6-11, 2013</b> Advisory Bodies may begin Fri, April 5	PFMC Meeting	Hyatt Regency SF Airport Burlingame, CA
<b>June 3-11, 2013</b>	NPFMC Meeting	???



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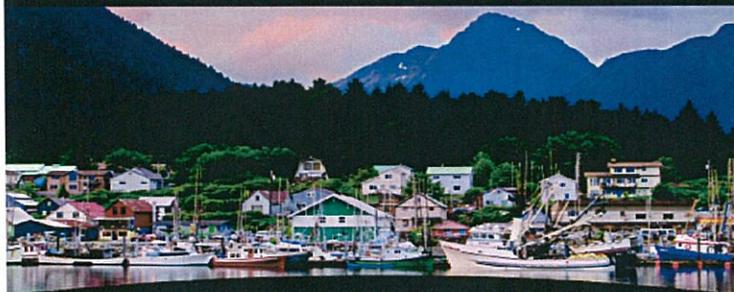
(206) 790-2742

[carnesen@mountainpacificbank.com](mailto:carnesen@mountainpacificbank.com)



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## Financing Commercial Fishermen



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- Marketing
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**Northwest**  
FARM CREDIT SERVICES

Fisheries Team – 800.372.0112

[fisheries@farm-credit.com](mailto:fisheries@farm-credit.com)

