

Halibut Limits for Southcentral (Homer area)

The Catch Sharing Plan still under review. Due to the enormous amount of comments that poured in during the comment period, which NMFS will have to answer, there is no way NMFS would be able to remain on schedule for a 2012 implementation date. Halibut management will have to revert back to what was in place in 2011 and that was management under the GHL (Guideline Harvest Level). Area 3A, south central, will have a reprieve for another year and will be able to fish under a two fish per day of any size. Area 2C will have to fight for a larger fish than 37", which resulted in a harvest in 2011 close to 40% below the recommended GHL.

This is not over yet! They are still considering the Catch Sharing Plan for the future and are always trying to come up with ways of restricting the sport fishermen in Alaska because we are the least organized and have the least amount of representation on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council that makes these decisions.

For information go to the Alaska Charter Association at www.alaskacharter.org/

Bycatch

(the non-targeted fish caught & thrown over the side) What a Waste!

The Ground fish trawl fleet drags a huge weighted net on the ocean floor or mid-water and to scrape up **everything** destroying the habitat as they go, then picks out the one species of fish they can keep and throws the rest over the side. The total halibut bycatch for 2010 was 11,433,055 million pounds of dead fish (mostly by the trawl fisheries) and the average fish caught is 5 lbs. If you'd like to see a 4 minute video of Halibut by catch check out:

<http://www.tholepin.blogspot.com/2009/10/filthy-video-of-halibut-waste.html>

In June of this year the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council will be making the decision to implement a 5%, 10% or 15% reduction of Halibut by-catch to the commercial ground fish fleet (trawlers) in the Gulf of Alaska. Unfortunately, they probably won't even implement it until 2014. In May we will need as many letters to the people below to show that we would like at least a 15% reduction of the 2000 metric tons of Halibut by-catch currently allowed in the Gulf of Alaska. You can read more about it at

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/PDFdocuments/newsletters/news212.pdf>

The Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans for the Canadian Fisheries has a most effective program and has drastically reduced the amount of bycatch since 1997 by using 100% Observer coverage and Individual Bycatch Quota. It would be a great model for the future of Alaskan Fisheries if the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council would consider it.

A good article concerning the halibut in stocks from the Gulf of Alaska is

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/should-alaska-have-protected-halibut-nursery-waters>

People to write letters to:

Members of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council-

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/membership/council-members.html>

Dr. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA Chief Administrator- jane.lubchenco@noaa.gov, Fax (202) 408-9674

Eric Schwaab, Assistant Administrator of Fisheries- eric.schwaab@noaa.gov, (301) 713-2239 x 195

Alaska Governor Sean Parnell, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Mark Begich, Rep. Don Young

The contact information for these four can be found on www.electedlist.com/Alaska.html

Secretary of Commerce John E. Bryson- TheSec@doc.gov (202) 482-2000