

PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Alaska

GRANT NO.: F-10-33

GRANT TITLE: Sport Fish Investigations in Alaska

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

STUDY NO. AND TITLE: RT-14 Statewide Bottomfish Technical Services

STUDY OBJECTIVES:

1. Manage the exchange of data and information on the sport halibut and groundfish fisheries between the Sport Fish Division and federal agencies, including the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). This may include analysis, reporting, and presentation of other fishery data; provision of technical assistance to federal staff analysts; and analysis and review of federal proposed rules.
2. Provide technical support for sport halibut and groundfish research and management programs in Sport Fish Division, such that the planning, implementation, and reporting of these programs are achieved in compliance with Federal Assistance contract requirements.
3. Develop improved methods of assessing halibut and groundfish harvest and abundance. Analyze data collected by selected projects and provide interpretation and recommendations to project leaders and policymakers.
4. Manage and coordinate sharing of information on sport halibut and groundfish fisheries between the Sport Fish, Subsistence, and Commercial Fisheries Divisions of ADF&G, the Alaska Board of Fisheries, and the public.

RESULTS/DISCUSSIONS:

Objective 1

Attended meetings of the NPFMC and its Charter Halibut Management Committee. Analyzed management alternatives for the 2018 charter fishery and presented them to the NPFMC.

Estimated sport halibut harvest and discard mortality and made projections of current year harvest. Provided this information in a letter to the IPHC for use in the annual halibut stock assessment.

Attended the IPHC annual meeting, presented Alaska sport halibut harvest estimates, and answered questions from IPHC Commissioners, agency staff, and stakeholders. Wrote a summary of the meeting discussions and results and distributed to ADF&G staff.

Continued work on a halibut management strategy evaluation as a member of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board.

Provided updated estimates of age composition of the sport halibut harvest in the central Gulf of Alaska to the IPHC for stock assessment purposes.

Assisted NPFMC staff by reviewing discussion papers on leasing of charter halibut permits, annual renewal of charter halibut permits and self-guided halibut sport fishing.

Assisted NMFS staff by reviewing a report on leasing of commercial halibut quota by charter operators for use in the guided fishery in 2018, and reviewing draft IPHC annual management measures for 2018 to be published in the federal register.

Estimated 2016 recreational harvest, by NMFS reporting area, of all state-managed species covered under the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (cod, sablefish, sharks, rockfishes). Provided estimates to NMFS for compliance with Annual Catch Limit requirements. Also provided detailed information on sharks to the federal assessment author.

Reviewed and edited sections of ADF&G staff contributions to the federal demersal shelf rockfish stock assessment.

Coordinated Division of Sport Fish updates to descriptions of state research and management of halibut and groundfish for the annual report of the Technical Subcommittee of the Canada-U.S. Groundfish Committee.

Objective 2

Developed procedures to integrate creel sampling data and logbook data to apportion harvest to management areas.

Conducted analysis of representative sampling of charter businesses and vessels in Southcentral Alaska in 2017 and shared code with staff for future analyses.

Provided technical analysis and advice to staff and comments on proposals regarding mandatory use of deepwater release devices and mandatory retention requirements for nonpelagic rockfish.

Provided technical advice to staff on estimation of sport sablefish harvest in Chatham Strait in Southeast Alaska. Worked with project biometrician to improve estimation procedures.

Reviewed 2016 Statewide Harvest Survey preliminary estimates of halibut and state-managed groundfish species.

Participated in meetings of a committee in the process of developing electronic logbooks for the Alaska guide industry.

Objective 3

Provided technical advice and assisted staff to improve research procedures and fisheries benefits of deepwater release of rockfishes that are susceptible to barotrauma.

Developed models to evaluate spawning potential ratio for black and yelloweye rockfish in Alaska as a potential improved method to develop management strategies for these two species.

Collected and reviewed literature on recent developments in assessment and harvest policies for data-poor fisheries as potential tools to improve and interpret fisheries assessment data to inform fisheries management.

Objective 4

Updated sport harvest data for black rockfish to a Division of Commercial Fisheries biometrician for inclusion in a stock assessment model.

Coordinated and fulfilled numerous other data requests for sport halibut and groundfish fishery information from agencies, students, and other stakeholders.

FINAL REPORT STATUS:

This report constitutes the final report for this study.

PREPARED BY: Scott C. Meyer, Sarah Webster **DATE:** September 4, 2018