

SEWARD TIER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Seward Tier Management Plan (STMP): Establishment of a tier rated system that would rate charter vessels based on historic participation. This system would establish both regulations and seasonal limitations for vessels that fall into either of the Tier I or Tier II categories. The STMP is not an allocation of fish, but instead it is a predetermined allocation of regulatory management measures to keep the fleet at or below the established GHL. This STMP is designed to be used in conjunction with a Federal moratorium on the halibut charter fleet.

VESSEL TIER SYSTEM

The STMP would regulate each charter participant according to their historic participation. In order to remain under the constraints of the GHL, the priority of the tier system should be designed in such a manner as to protect participation of all charter participants by spreading the effects of regulatory measures into varying degrees.

Therefore, Tier I vessels would have imposed on them regulatory criteria different from Tier II vessels. Regulations would trickle down within the system from Tier I to Tier II participants. These regulations will be designed to parallel the rise and/or fall of the abundance the halibut biomass and in turn the TAC. Obviously, the goal is to stay at or below the GHL during any given season and in doing so, allow all tier rated vessels to enjoy an established, pre-determined season.

TIER RANKING CRITERIA

Tier I: Vessels involved in the fishery for any of the last 5 years and must at least include the 2005 season.

Tier II: Vessels, which engaged in the fishery for greater than the last 5 years and must include the 2005 season.

TIER RATED VESSELS AND THE GHL

The Tier I, and II vessels share an equal regulatory response as the first line of defense if the GHL is breached. Action to repair the breach will befall the industry during the following season. The regulatory responses will be pre-determined and the degree of the regulatory measure will be based on the degree of the GHL breach.

Example: If the GHL is breached by 10% during any given season, both tier groups will have regulations enforced the following season to “make good” on the breach. For instance, no captain or crew fish the following season.

If the GHL is breached by 15% during any given season then, both tier groups will have additional regulations to be enforced. An example may be: No captain and crew fish and an addition regulation of a 6 fish annual bag limit.

In the proceeding examples, please note that both Tier groups are providing necessary management measures to correct the breach. If either of the aforementioned, “shared” regulatory responses proves inadequate to resolve the GHL breach, then the Tier groups will have to start shaving days off of their season. (See following example)

Example: The GHL has been breached by 25% during the 2006 season. In 2007 the following regulations will take affect:

Tier I & II: No Capt. & Crew Fish

Tier I & II: 6 Fish Annual bag limit

Tier I: Excluded from fishing for halibut the last 7 days of August.

In this example, Tier I is called upon first, to sacrifice days off of their peak season. The system will be designed to establish worse case scenarios for all possible GHL breaches on a percentage basis. Another example might be that a 35% breach is encountered. In this case a more stringent measure will need to be enforced. Here you may see Tier I give up 14 days in August and Tier II kick in with an additional 7 days of their August season.

Of course, these are worse case scenarios, and this is just a model. With proper management hopefully, we will never reach the point where days need to be sacrificed. As things stand right now, our first two lines of GHL defense of giving up captain and crew fish and a seasonal bag limit of 6 fish should prove to be an adequate enough response.

Those measures alone should prove to keep the fleet in check. However, the GHL is linked to abundance and in the event abundance declines, we may have to call upon one or both of the Tier groups to ante up.

Despite the fact that days may need to be sacrificed by either of these tier groups, this doesn't mean that all sport-fishing efforts are halted. This only means that these vessels will not engage in halibut charters during their perspective season closures.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement of the STMP is simple. Each Tier rated vessel will receive a decal. Tier I a silver and Tier II a gold. If there were to be a seasonal closure on either Tier rated group, enforcement would be as simple as looking at the onboard decal and how its' color corresponds to the seasonal closure.

BANKING UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE GHL

The aforementioned system addresses penalties that are imposed against the fleet in the event that the GHL is breached. However, rewards should be built into the system if the industry stays below the GHL.

If charter fishing effort falls below the GHL during a given season then, rises above the GHL during the following season, a credit of sorts should be rewarded to the fleet to soften their exposure to the regulatory response that is imposed on them the following season. Similar to commercial IFQ rewards.

The STMP has the following benefits:

- 1) No immediate financial harm will be realized by any existing charter business
- 2) No burden of future expense to continue fishing in times of lower abundance
- 3) By sharing the regulatory responsibility in the manner suggested, there is some reward to the participants with a longer fishing history. Yet new entrants are not penalized to a point of jeopardizing their business
- 4) STMP provides a road map for future business models. Actions will be taken well in advance of the season, so alternatives for operation can be planned for.

- 5) Measures will keep the charter fleet within the GHL, eliminating any conflict with the commercial sector
- 6) There will be little expense to implement and enforce such a plan
- 7) This plan will not redirect the entire fleet to target other species
- 8) This plan will allow local economies to continue to reap the rewards of the charter industry
- 9) The STMP will provide maximum public access in times of lower abundance