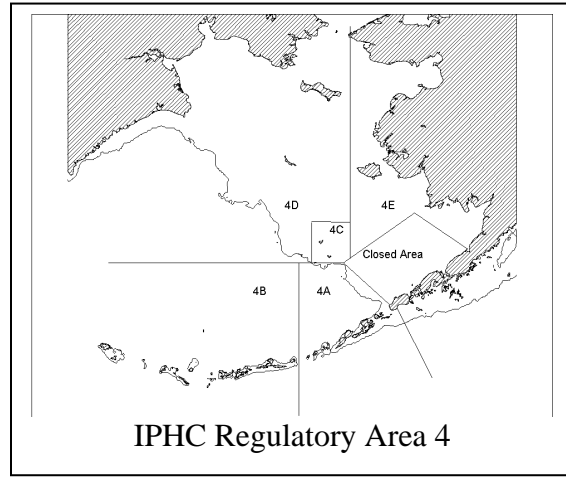


North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 4

The NPFMC developed a Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for the Pacific halibut *Hippoglossus stenolepis* in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands for allocating the Regulatory Area 4 catch limit established by the IPHC among the five subareas. This Plan was adopted by the Secretary and first implemented in 1996 (61 FR 11337, March 20, 1996) as an interim measure while the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) further evaluated a new policy of using a biomass-based method for setting catch limits for Areas 4A, 4B, and 4C-E. In 1998, the CSP was amended to remove Areas 4A and 4B to concur with the newly adopted IPHC policy of using an equal exploitation rate strategy for the halibut resource in subareas 4A and 4B where considerable stock separation occurs (63 FR 13001, March 17, 1998). However, there was no biological basis for the distribution of the catch limits among Subareas 4C, 4D, and 4E because of a lack of stock separation between them. Therefore, the IPHC recommended setting a catch limit for the combined subareas. It delayed implementation of the methodology until 1998 to allow the Council to revise the CSP.



The North Pacific Fishery Management Council identified that the historical apportionment of catch limits among Subareas 4C-E was important to achieve the socioeconomic objectives of the halibut Individual Fishing Quota and Western Alaska Community Development Quota programs, which allocate halibut among U.S. fishermen. The Halibut Act authorizes the Council to develop regulations that have allocation of harvesting privileges as the primary objective.

Catch Sharing Plan for Area 4C-E

Area	Percent of Area 4 CEY
Area 4C	Area 4C-E CEY-80,000 + 46.43%
Area 4D	Area 4C-E CEY-80,000 + 46.43%
Area 4E	80,000 + 7.14%

The revised CSP is a framework applied to the annual combined Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E catch limit established by the IPHC. A direct allocation of 80,000 lb is made to Subarea 4E in the revised CSP when the Subarea 4C-E catch limit is greater than 1,657,600 lb. The purpose was to provide CDQ fishermen in subarea 4E with additional harvesting opportunity. The entire subarea 4E catch limit is assigned to the CDQ reserve and subsequently allocated to qualifying CDQ groups. The Council identified that the subarea 4E catch limit had been unreasonably constrained in the years prior to the CSP. The remainder of the combined catch limit is allocated: 46.43 percent to both Subareas 4C and 4D and 7.14% to Subarea 4E.

Area 4C IFQ and CDQ Provision

An IFQ or CDQ holder with an allocation of Area 4C halibut IFQ and CDQ may harvest all or part of that allocation in Area 4D. This provision is based on the Council's recommendation in December 2004 to allow IFQ and CDQ fishermen in Area 4C additional halibut IFQ and CDQ harvesting opportunities. The framework that allocates the IPHC catch limits among Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E remains unchanged.

Area 4D-4E CDQ Provision

A CDQ group with an allocation of Area 4D halibut CDQ may harvest all or part of that allocation in Area 4E. This provision is based on the Council's recommendation in December 2001 to allow CDQ fishermen in Area 4E additional halibut CDQ harvesting opportunities. The framework that allocates the IPHC catch limits among Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E remains unchanged.