

Harvest Day/Trip Management Tool

Reductions in effort are going to be necessary in years of low abundance or allocations in order to be able to offer clients a reasonable bag limit our industry can market. The “Harvest Day / Trip” tool is an alternative to less desirable options such as a fixed season length or in-season closures.

This tool would be used with a “1 fish of any size” daily bag limit in order to preserve client expectation and past practice of being able to retain a large or trophy fish, provide and sustain industry marketability while achieving the goal of staying within the charter allocation. This concept could be used in conjunction with other tools to constrain harvest in years of extremely low allocation while still allowing clients a chance to retain a large or trophy fish. This approach offers something that is not possible under a maximum size restriction such as the 37 inch rule used in 2011.

Concept

A pre-determined number of “Harvest Days/Trips” would be assigned to each valid charter halibut permit (CHP) each season.

Each CHP would be issued an equal number of Harvest Days/Trips. (Determined by the number of valid permits and current season allocation, ADF&G, NMFS & IPHC) The number of Harvest Days/Trips allocated would be based on assumption of total usage of those Harvest Days/Trips using average harvest rates, sizes and clients per trip from the previous season.

Example; each CHP is valid for 45 Harvest Days/Trips (per permit) for the upcoming season. The operator can then retain halibut for that number of days/trips during that season. The operator could use the assigned Harvest Days/Trips at any time during the year. If the operator retained even a single halibut on any given day/trip, it would constitute a Harvest Day/Trip used. Once an operator has used all of the assigned Harvest Days/Trips for that permit, the permit is no longer valid for that year.

Permit stacking would be allowed (by purchase or lease) in order to increase the number of Harvest Days/Trips per vessel (permit stacking is already allowed in the CHP program however, it would require more flexibility to allow grandfathered businesses the ability to stack permits or at least stack the Harvest Days/Trips associated with those permits)

Those vessels wishing to make multiple trips in a single day can do so by using a Harvest Day/Trip for each trip. (Maintaining current business practices)

Easily enforceable, the number of Harvest Days/Trips each permit has been used is determined by the vessel logbook / logbooks (a numbered stamp could also be issued which would be attached to the corresponding logbook page)

Advantages:

Maintains industry marketability by continuing to offer the chance to retain a large or trophy fish preserving client expectation and past practices.

Reduces charter harvest to the allocation/GHL by adjusting the number of days/trips each permit could harvest fish each season.

This approach could be used in conjunction with other management measures but the goal is to retain the client ability to retain a large or trophy fish.

Allows individual operators flexibility to acquire more harvest days/trips through purchase or lease of additional permits to satisfy individual business demands.(the ability to fish every day under a maximum size limit is resulting in lost clientele and fewer trips than under previous regulations. Having an unlimited season you can fish means nothing if clients are unwilling to book trips because of restrictive bag limits)

Fleet consolidation as marginal operators sell or lease permits to businesses needing more harvest opportunity than a single CHP endorsement allowed. May slow the turnover within and new entry into our industry reducing over capitalization.

Possibly reducing latent seat (effort) capacity by unused Harvest Days/Trips. Example; each CHP is good for 45 harvest days/trips. An operator needs the ability to retain fish for 60 days in the upcoming season so he leases an additional permit but only uses 15 days from that second permit, leaving 30 harvest days/trips unused.

More acceptable and workable than the GAF leasing option currently in the proposed CSP. Instead of leasing more fish from the commercial sector, we would lease or purchase more fishing time from our own sector. Would reduce the need for the GAF leasing program as well as reducing the need to buy quota to put into a common pool (CATCH)

CHPs should hold their value even if the allocation goes down

It is simple

Disadvantages:

Not knowing how many harvest days/trips each CHP represents until IPHC sets yearly TAC (This will probably be the same for any abundance based approach)

There will be a burden to annually determine the correct number of Harvest Days/Trips to assign to each permit.

Increased costs of leasing or purchasing additional permits to satisfy individual business demand if needed in years of low allocation.

Potentially increases CHP value making it more expensive for new entrants.

Potentially modifying current business practice of retaining incidental harvest of halibut while targeting other species (would an operator want to use a Harvest Day/Trip to allow retention of incidentally caught halibut while salmon fishing?).