

VISITOR FISHING EFFECT ON FISH ALLOCATIONS

On May 1, there was a handout addressing the question “What is the effect of visitor fishing on fish allocations in the Sitka area?” Here is another way to look at it.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission accounts for all removals (mortality) on a regional basis, and determines a total allowable catch. Removals in Alaska, include Directed Longline, Longline Sublegal Mortality, Longline Personal Use, Longline Wastage (lost gear), Trawl Bycatch, Guided Sport, Unguided Sport and Subsistence. See bar graph.

Longliners are given the opportunity to harvest and sell a public resource, after the other deductions are made. In effect, because commercial bycatch and wastage remains high, and the recreational angler has increasingly elected to harvest a public resource, for themselves, the directed longline allocation has lessened.

If there were no charter boats or nonresident anglers fishing in Sitka, the amount of halibut attributed to the guided sport harvest in 2004, would have been allowed to be caught by the longline fleet. The halibut would not have been left in the water. The IPHC would have attempted to have 83.418 million pounds of halibut removed, by whatever legal means possible. This scenario also applies to the State management of yelloweye rockfish and lingcod.