



*Wild, Natural & Sustainable*

Halibut/Sablefish Committee

Monday, October 28, 2015

Beginning 1:30pm

Resolution Room, Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage, AK

Dial-In Information

Call in number: 800-315-6338

Alternate Call in number: 1-913-904-9376

Access Code: 60778

*Draft minutes*

## I. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 by Chair Peggy Parker.

**Members present:** Peggy Parker, William Sullivan, John Jensen, Mark Callahan, Bob Barnett, Carina Nichols

**Absent:** William Rogers, Joe Childers

Quorum was met.

**Others present:** Kendall Whitney (Seafood Producers Cooperative), Jane Yao (ASMI China), Jim and Rhonda Hubbard (Kruzof Fisheries LLC), Matt Heres (Revelry Group), Jessie Keplinger (Icicle Seafoods, Inc.), Leah Krafft (ASMI), Kate Krane (Edelman), Michael Kohan (ASMI), Matthew Arnoldt (ASMI), Stefanie Mirseans (Trident Seafoods), Jeremy Woodrow (ASMI), Jack Schulties (ASMI Board), Alexa Tonkovich (ASMI), Arianna Elnes (ASMI)

## II. Approval of Agenda

- A. The agenda was amended to add "Whale Depredation" to Old Business

**A motion was made by Jensen, seconded by Barnett to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

III. Approval of minutes from Friday, November 24, 2017

- A. Under Public Comment, item 'b,' the discussion of stock assessment was regarding sablefish, not halibut.
- B. Under Old Business, item 'a,' it was added that the discussion on chalk in halibut included mitigating chalk with harvesters and processors.
- C. Under New Business, item 'a,' it was specified that the discussion around farmed fish competition was concerning farmed halibut.
- D. Under New Business, item 'c,' it was specified that the huge recruitment event was for 2014 *sablefish*, and corrected that the council would set the ABC, then the TAC.
- E. Minor grammatical/spelling edits were made throughout the minutes for clarity.

**A motion was made by Jensen, seconded by Barnett to pass the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

IV. Public Comment

- A. Introductions were made.
- B. There was no public comment.

V. Old Business

A. Chalky Halibut Update

- Parker reported from the International Pacific Halibut Commission that while at the Management Strategy Evaluation Advisory Board Committee meeting she talked to Executive Director Dave Wilson. He is working on a survey to send to all processors on the West Coast to gather information on the incidents of chalk throughout the season. There will be an announcement once it's ready to roll out.
- Parker also noted she had talked to a Canadian member at IPHC about chalky halibut. He

recommended the Halibut-Sablefish committee discuss ways of equipping and educating people behind the fish counter with a chalk chart, as customers use chalk to get a discount at the counter.

- A consensus was reached that there are two avenues of tackling the issue of chalky halibut:
  - Avoidance
  - Consumer/customer education
- It was recommended that ASMI work with IPHC to find a solution.

#### B. Whale Depredation

- Sullivan discussed that this is becoming a big, worldwide problem. He mentioned that in Norway, there is a new product called SAGO (Sorry Amigo Game Over), which is a device that prevents whales from hitting the line. The inventors are interested in coming to Alaska to try it out.
- Carina gave an update on a team of sperm whale researchers who have identified a core group of whales in Southeast Alaska which depredate. They have been trying to let people know but that program is currently unfunded.
- Sablefish are impacted by whale depredation. It was mentioned that the whales are starting to hit the halibut now, too.

### VI. New Business:

#### C. East Coast Halibut

- Callahan explained that halibut on the East Coast is not IFQ regulated. It is a different, directed, socialized fishery without closures.
- Much of this halibut is going into Boston and New York City.
- The prices of Atlantic halibut compete with Alaska halibut and Atlantic halibut prices drop very low in the winter, when Alaska halibut is out of season.

#### D. Russian Halibut

- Jensen brought up that there is also competition from Russian halibut, which is about to be MSC certified.

- There was discussion about what ASMI could do to make fishermen more aware of what is going on in other fisheries. There were suggestions of sharing articles on fishery topics and Tradex videos, and asking McDowell group to give numbers on other fisheries.
- E. Seafood Watch App
  - Halibut is flagged as red in the Seafood Watch app. Alexa responded that ASMI is aware and has a task force addressing Monterey Bay.
- F. Small Sablefish
  - There are a lot of small sablefish right now, but no market for them.
- G. Update on International Pacific Halibut Commission
  - Parker gave an overview of the IFPC meeting
  - For ASMI purposes, halibut will not have low prices, nor will there be high volume.
  - With competition from Atlantic and Russian halibut, ASMI should focus on hanging onto markets

## VII. Key Questions

### 1. What concerns or marketing needs, specific to your species, would you like ASMI Operational Committees to discuss and/or address? Are there areas of need with which ASMI can assist?

Yes, the Domestic Marketing Committee can help maintain diminishing market share on the East Coast, where there is a growing supply of fresh Atlantic halibut. The Domestic Program is encouraged to continue to emphasize Alaska halibut when promoting Pacific halibut, especially for fresh sales. Two distinct benefits Alaska halibut has over Atlantic halibut are:

- Sustainability, achieved in part by closing the season during halibut's spawning period from November to March, while the Canadian fishery is year-round.
- Pacific halibut has also never been overfished in the IPHC's 94 years of management, while Canadian halibut is recovering from two separate periods of overfishing the last 50 years.

**2. What have been the impacts (so far) of the U.S./China trade dispute and subsequent tariffs on your species groups? Have there been shifts (product form, processing location, new markets) that ASMI should be aware of? Are there opportunities you would like to see explored by Operational Committees/Programs?**

Alaska halibut and sablefish have been heavily impacted by the tariffs so far.

**3. Do you have any overall industry concerns that should be brought to the Committee Chairs meeting for them to discuss and carry forward to the ASMI Board of Directors?**

Yes, we would like to ask the Technical Committee to help on two broad areas:

- Addressing perception of chalk among members of the supply chain and
- Working on technical ways to reduce the incidence of chalk.

Our priority would be to focus on the former, addressing perception issues among distributors and industry buyers, including education about chalk in halibut and ways to use the product with varying degrees of chalk.

Finally, we would like the Communications Committee to be aware of the competition our product is facing from Atlantic and now Russian halibut to our entire U.S. market. The Russian halibut will likely be MSC certified later this year or early next.

**4. What trends or opportunities can you identify that ASMI Programs can capitalize on?**

Social media, as the programs already have. Specifically, the technical videos showing quality handling practices and perhaps preventative chalky halibut practices, for longline and pot-caught halibut would be good for social media.

VIII. Good of the order

No comments were made.

IX. Adjourn

**Motion was made by Parker motioned, seconded by Jensen to adjourn.  
The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30.