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SPORT FISHING BUSINESS AND GUIDE LOGBOOK USE SUMMARY

Prepared by ADF&G Sport Fish Division

All salt water sport fishing businesses and guides are required by regulation to complete logbooks. ADF&G administers a program to implement the logbook requirements. Logbook data has been collected by the department from salt water sport fishing businesses and guides since 1998, logbook data was collected by the department from freshwater businesses and guides from 2005–2018. The department summarizes and presents logbook data on guided effort and harvest in an annual comprehensive Fishery Data Series report. Logbook data applicable to specific fisheries and fishery issues is also summarized and presented in many sport fish annual management reports. These reports are publicly available on the department's web site. The purpose of this document is to summarize the uses of logbook data.

Logbooks provide valuable information used by the department and other entities for a variety of purposes. Logbook data provides the only comprehensive accounting of businesses and guides operating in Alaska's sport fisheries. For some sport fisheries, logbooks provide the only sport fishing effort and harvest information available; logbook data is an important source of information for smaller, more remote fisheries or guide businesses where department creel surveys do not capture fishing effort and harvest. For fisheries where other programs also provide estimates of fishing effort and harvest, logbooks provide the first available inseason and postseason data and the only fishery data available prior to the next season; this is important for many king salmon and groundfish fisheries. In all cases, logbooks provide more specific information on businesses, guides, anglers, time, area, and species kept and released compared to other sources of fishery information.

Logbook data is used in the following activities:

Fishery Monitoring - Area and regional fishery managers review logbook submissions inseason and logbook summaries postseason to monitor and track trends in fishery effort and harvest generally, and more specifically in response to changes in regulations, abundance or species distribution, emergency orders and participation. General monitoring results are used to determine if inseason and/or postseason regulatory changes are necessary and/or new research projects are needed.

Pacific Salmon Treaty - Alaska has an obligation to not exceed an annual all-gear Chinook salmon catch limit as determined by the Pacific Salmon Commission. Part and parcel to this is the need to accurately and precisely estimate the total harvest of Chinook salmon in the various U.S. fisheries operating in Southeast Alaska, the northern most extent of the geographic scope of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. For the sport fishery, the logbook program combined with the Marine Harvest Study (Southeast Alaska dockside sampling) and Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) program are the tools necessary to estimate the annual sport harvest of Chinook salmon in Southeast Alaska. Strategically integrated, these programs also facilitate inseason management and the ability to stay within the domestic sport fishery allocation determined through the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) process. Recent negotiations of the treaty have further emphasized the need to monitor harvests inseason in addition to final postseason estimates. The logbook program is vital to this need.

Halibut Management - Reporting of guided marine fishery catch data in logbooks has been required since 1998. Halibut harvest and release information was collected from 1998 to 2001, and from 2006 to the present. The types and amounts of data collected have changed over the years, reflecting evolution in regulation of the guide industry as well as changes in information needs for

management. The most significant change occurred in 2006, when the logbook was structured to collect angler license information and catch by individual angler for each trip. This increased the precision and utility of logbook information. Other improvements were made at this time to increase data accuracy and reduce the frequency of missing data. The use of logbook data for monitoring and management of the halibut fishery increased dramatically after 2006. The salt water logbook is now the preferred data source for estimating charter harvest and discard mortality for management of the charter sector under annual catch limits. These data are used in multiple summaries and analyses provided to the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

NOAA Salt water Registry - Alaska has an exemption from the NOAA salt water registry due to the department's SWHS, port sampling, and salt water vessel registration programs in the NMFS Alaska Region. However, NOAA Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) also recognizes that logbook harvest data used to manage some fisheries in Alaska (i.e., charter halibut, Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR) in SEAK) are required to properly manage recreational fisheries in Alaska that are under their jurisdiction. The exemption documents lay this out by naming the fisheries for which average weight (port sampling) and harvest data (logbook and SWHS) are needed. Without the state exemption, guide businesses and anglers that participate in salt water fisheries would likely be required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act to register with NMFS and pay a registration fee.

Emergency Orders - The department uses logbook data in making pre- and inseason management decisions and issuing emergency orders. Logbook data is often used for this purpose, including the justification of emergency orders, with other information such as salmon escapement data. Below are examples of inseason fishery management decisions for which logbook data provides key information and rationale.

- Southeast Alaska nonpelagic rockfish bag and annual limits and location and lengths of inseason closures.
- Southeast Alaska regional and area-specific king salmon bag and annual limits and length of closure period to nonresident anglers.
- Southeast Alaska regional and area-specific lingcod bag and annual limits.

Alaska Board of Fisheries Process - The department and the board use logbook data in the board process. Fishery managers use the catch, harvest and effort data in preparation for each board meeting. The data is used to assess proposal effects, describe fishery trends and characteristics, and develop department positions on proposals. Logbook information is referenced in formal staff comments and presented in tables and figures. The board uses the information at their discretion when considering and acting on proposals.

Advisory Committees - Logbook data is used by the department in preparation for and during Advisory Committee meetings, which in some form, are similar to board meetings. In addition, fishery managers develop data summaries of the catch, harvest and effort data for use by the advisory committees in developing proposals and in developing their comments and positions on proposals submitted to the board.

External Communication - Logbook information is used to address, respond to, and inform a variety of issues, concerns, assertions, and questions raised by members of the public.

Statewide Harvest Survey Estimate Verification - The SWHS program uses logbook data on an annual basis to help clarify incomplete SWHS survey responses during data entry and cleaning phases.

This includes verifying data such as:

- Locations fished by survey respondents
- Effort (days fished)
- Presence of major species (salmon species and groundfish)
- Timing of effort/catch/harvest (early vs. late runs)

Logbook data increases the number of complete survey records in our annual SWHS database and allows the program to provide more accurate estimates of effort, catch and harvest.

In combination with annual staff review of specific estimates and formal comparisons of SWHS estimates to onsite creel surveys done on a periodic basis, logbook data gives the department the ability to assess the relative accuracy of the SWHS data in a cost-effective manner. As a mandatory reporting system for guided effort and harvest, the logbook program provides independent estimates of guided effort, catch and harvest. This provides staff with the ability to conduct informal comparisons to SWHS guided effort, catch, and harvest as SWHS estimates are developed.

Fishery Disaster Declaration - Data from the SWHS (unguided fishing data) and fresh- and salt water logbook program (guided fishing data) was provided to Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCED) for use in preparing an economic analysis related to the 2012 fishery disaster declaration. These data were used estimate the economic impacts sustained by sport fishing-related businesses in 2012 as a result of the declining Chinook salmon runs. The analysis was presented in a report titled: "Estimated Economic Impacts of the 2012 Chinook Salmon Sport Fishing Restrictions in the Cook Inlet Region; Cook Inlet Kenai Peninsula Freshwater, Cook Inlet Salt Water and Northern Cook Inlet Fresh Water Recreational Fisheries," prepared by DCED and ADF&G. Logbook data will continue to be of use in disaster declarations to come.

Federal Subsistence Board process - Logbook data has been used to characterize guided effort and harvest in response to questions and representations by individuals participating in the Federal Subsistence Board process. In Southeast Alaska, logbook information documents the sport harvest of steelhead, trout and sockeye salmon. This information has also been presented in department comments on Federal regulatory proposals.

Land use planning and permitting - Used in providing analysis/comments on US Forest Service guide use and land management planning decisions. The USFS has prepared Environmental Impact Statements to allocate a portion of the overall visitor capacity to outfitter and guide use within the ranger districts of the Tongass National Forest. The department used logbook information to portray use patterns and assess the effects of proposed allocations and land use decisions.

Operational Planning - Logbook data is used by department biologists to plan fishery research and monitoring projects. For example, in the Kodiak marine sport fishery dockside sampling program, logbook statistics are the only source of information on specific timing of the sport fishery. Logbook data is used to identify the seasonal sampling schedule, including the employment period for the sampler. The logbook harvest by salmon statistical area is also used to determine where to concentrate (and subsequently cross-reference) sampling efforts.

In summary, the logbook program and associated data have become integral to sport fishery management in Alaska and have grown in value with each additional year. Management of the halibut fishery depends on logbook data collected by the state and the logbook program is critical to maintaining the state's exemption from the NOAA salt water registry. Logbook data is used in fishery management decision-making, including regulatory decisions made by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, and inseason emergency orders issued by the department. It also provides basic fishery data for use in other important activities including fishery monitoring, project and land use planning, permitting, and external correspondence, among. In several cases, logbook data provides the only information existing on fishing effort and harvest, and in all cases, it provides some of the most specific data available. That information now provides an informed basis from which decisions can be made. Its value will continue to grow as the time series expands and once data becomes available sooner inseason with the electronic reporting requirement, which will go into effect for the 2021 fishing season.