

14 Consolidation of Permit holders on Fishing Operations

The sablefish IFQ program was expected to reduce the number of fishing operations. Reducing the number of fishing operations can result in more fishing time and greater harvests for the remaining operations. A reduction in the number of fishing operations can also reduce total harvesting costs and increase the net economic value that can be generated by the fishery.

The consolidation of QS holdings is one way that the number of fishing operations is reduced under the IFQ program. This topic was examined in previous chapters. Reductions can also occur on a seasonal basis when IFQ holders combine to fish their IFQ holdings from a single vessel. This chapter examines participation by multiple permit holders upon a single vessel.

Table 14-1 examines harvest and participation by persons and vessels over the 1991 to 2011 time period for *catcher vessels* only. Catcher vessels were chosen because data on CFEC permit holders with landings over the 1991 to 1994 time period were only consistently available for catcher vessels. A “catcher vessel only” subset of observations provided a means to compare average permit holders per vessel prior to the IFQ program with average permit holders per vessel under the IFQ program. The table shows the annual harvest, the number of unique persons and vessels with landings, the number of landing days by persons and vessels, the average number of pounds landed per person and vessel, and the ratio of the number of persons with landings to the number of vessels with landings.

Since 1990, ADF&G fish tickets have not captured all the data on the sablefish catch. Some of the catch from catcher/processors in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is only recorded on NMFS’s Weekly Production Reports (WPRs). Weekly Production Reports did not collect information on the CFEC permit holders involved in the landings over the 1991 to 1994 period.

To create a file of catcher vessels only, sablefish catcher/processor activity from 1991 to 1994 was identified on WPRs, and any corresponding activity on these vessels that had been recorded on ADF&G fish tickets was identified and eliminated. Counts of persons with landings are counts of unique CFEC permit holders with landings.

NMFS-RAM catch data were used for 1995 through 2011. These data were made consistent with 1991 to 1994 data by identifying catcher/processor harvest data and eliminating those from the NMFS-RAM catch file. Catcher/processors were identified using a combination of the NMFS-RAM Registered Buyer file, the ADF&G Intent to Operate file, and ADF&G fish tickets.⁶⁴ The remaining vessels on the NMFS-RAM file were identified as the catcher vessels for Table 14-1. As a result of this methodology,

⁶⁴ See Appendix III for more specific details on using these files to create the data set.

the 1995 to 2011 harvest by catcher vessels in Table 14-1 will differ somewhat from the 1995 to 2011 data on catcher vessels presented in Table 14-2.⁶⁵

For the 1995 to 2011 period, the counts of persons with landings represent IFQ permit holders with landings as identified on the NMFS-RAM catch data. The reader should be aware that these counts may not be strictly comparable to counts of persons with landings over the 1991 to 1994 time period based upon CFEC permit holders.

The harvest in Table 14-1 includes commercial harvests only in the fixed gear sablefish fisheries. Small amounts of non-commercial catch have been excluded. CDQ harvests from 1995 to 2011 also have been excluded.

Table 14-1 indicates that in all areas the ratio of the number of unique persons with landings to the number of unique vessels with landings rose in 1995 over the 1991-1994 average. This provides some evidence that the practice of multiple persons recording landings off a single vessel has increased since inception of the program. Through 2011, this ratio has remained above the 1991-1994 average in all areas.

Table 14-2 examines 1995 to 2011 sablefish commercial harvests by area and vessel category. This table assigns harvest to a vessel category using the QS/IFQ type used to make landings. The table includes freezer-processors; and as noted above, the catcher vessel data differ somewhat from Table 14-1 due to the different data methodologies used. Again, CDQ harvests have been excluded.

Table 14-2 shows total and mean harvests, as well as the number of persons who recorded landings. The percent of the total area harvest attributed to each vessel category is given and the percent of total persons with landings in each vessel category also is shown.

Note that some persons have landings in more than one vessel category in an area; therefore, the sum of persons with landings in each vessel category is greater than the overall unique number of persons with landings shown in Table 14-1.

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⁶⁵ There is no requirement under the sablefish IFQ program for a person with harvester/processor (freezer) vessel QS to freeze or process the person's sablefish harvest. In some cases, freezer vessel catch was landed unfrozen to a floating processor or shore-based processor using freezer vessel IFQ. In Table 14-1, this catch is often counted as catcher vessel catch if the vessel was not otherwise identified as a catcher processor. In Table 14-2 the catch was assigned to freezer-processor vessels based upon the type of QS/IFQ used. Thus the catcher vessel catch in Table 14-2 is slightly different than that reported in Table 14-1.