

INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

Regulations governing the incidental harvest of halibut in the non-Indian commercial troll salmon fishery and the primary, limited entry longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis require the Council to adopt recommended halibut landing restrictions to allow incidental harvest while assuring the quotas are not exceeded. At the March meeting, the Council adopted options for both the salmon troll fishery and the sablefish fishery for public review. Options within the salmon fisheries include designating the “C-shaped” yelloweye rockfish conservation area as an area to be avoided on a voluntary basis to provide protection of yelloweye rockfish.

Salmon Troll Fishery

The Council adopted public review options for landing restrictions for Pacific halibut caught incidentally in the May/June troll season as follows:

- Option 1: Status quo – Beginning May 1, license holders may land no more than 1 halibut per each 3 Chinook, except 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut may be landed per open period (north of Cape Falcon) or per trip (south of Cape Falcon). Halibut retained must be no less than 32 inches in total length (with head on).
- Option 2: Beginning May 1, license holders may land no more than 1 halibut per each 2 Chinook, except 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut may be landed per open period (north of Cape Falcon) or per trip (south of Cape Falcon). Halibut retained must be no less than 32 inches in total length (with head on).
- Option 1a or 2a: In combination with either Option 1 or 2 above, designate the “C-shaped” yelloweye rockfish conservation area, as defined in the Pacific Council Halibut Catch Sharing Plan in the North Coast subarea (Washington Marine Areas 3 and 4), as an area to be avoided for salmon troll fishing to provide protection of yelloweye rockfish.

The primary objective for the annual landing restrictions is to harvest the incidental halibut quota in the May/June salmon troll fishery, and a secondary objective is to harvest any remaining quota during July through the end of the salmon season.

Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The Council adopted three public review options for landing limits on incidental halibut harvest in the fixed gear primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis:

- Option 1: Status Quo – Beginning May 1, restrict incidental halibut landings to 100 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the 100 pounds per 1,000-pound ratio per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.
- Option 2: Beginning May 1, restrict incidental halibut landings to 80 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the 80 pounds per 1,000-pound ratio per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.
- Option 3: Beginning May 1, restrict incidental halibut landings to 150 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the 150 pounds per 1,000-pound ratio per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.

The objectives for the annual landing restrictions are to reach the halibut allocation at about the same time as the sablefish season ends and to ensure an equitable sharing of the halibut landings among the fishers.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt incidental halibut landing restrictions for implementation by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the 2008 commercial troll salmon fishery.**
- 2. Adopt incidental halibut landing restrictions for implementation by the National Marine Fisheries Service in the 2008, primary, limited entry longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington.**

Reference Materials:

None.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. State, Tribal, and Federal Agency Recommendations
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Annual Incidental Halibut Harvest Restrictions

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