

2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND REGULATIONS

As described in Council Operating Procedure 9, the Council solicits proposed changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A (CSP) (Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachments 1 and 2) and annual fishery regulations at its September meeting. At the November meeting, the Council is scheduled to take final action, after reviewing public and agency comments.

At the September 2014 meeting, the Council adopted for public review a range of non-treaty commercial and recreational allocations for the 2015 CSP and annual fishery regulations (Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 3). The allocation alternatives are intended to provide a greater recreational allocation for the California subarea, in response to new information indicating a higher abundance of Pacific Halibut and greater fishery interest in this area than when the CSP was originally adopted. The Council also adopted for public review a range of 2015 recreational fishery options for Washington, Oregon, and California.

As a first step in addressing the recent high harvests of Pacific halibut off Southern Oregon and Northern California, the 2014 CSP established a new management line at the Oregon/California border. The new line resulted in separate Oregon and California subareas with area-specific CSP allocations and management measures (Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachments 1 and 2). The 2014 allocations and management measures in California were intended to reduce recreational harvest of Pacific halibut by 40 to 60 percent of the average harvest from 2008-2012, approximately 9,000 to 13,000 pounds (see the [November 2013 Council meeting minutes](#)). The expectation of catch for 2014, based on the adopted season structure for California, was approximately 14,000 pounds. Preliminary catch data through July 2014, as discussed at the September Council meeting, is approximately 28,000 pounds. As a result, the Council adopted for public review options for more restrictive season structures for California in 2015.

Under Agenda Item G.1, the Council should adopt final 2015 CSP allocations and fishery regulations from the range adopted at the September Council meeting. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will provide an analysis of the allocation alternatives (Agenda Item G.1.b, Supplemental NMFS Report 1) and the 2014 Environmental Assessment, which evaluates the continuing implementation of the CSP in Area 2A (Agenda Item G.1.b, NMFS Report 2, electronic only). NMFS also recommended minor changes to the 2015 CSP and regulations (Agenda Item G.1.b, NMFS Report 3) and provided a report on catches in the 2014 Pacific halibut fisheries (Agenda Item G.1.b, NMFS Report 4).

Public input on the allocation and recreational fishery options was solicited in a Council Newsletter article from September 2014 and on a website blog (Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 3). Public comments received by the advance briefing book deadline are included in the reference materials. The Washington and Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW and ODFW, respectively) also solicited public input and subsequently prepared agency recommendations for Council consideration (Agenda Item G.1.b, WDFW Report and Agenda Item G.1.b, ODFW Report).

Council Action:

1. Adopt final proposed changes for the 2015 Pacific halibut CSP, as necessary.
2. Adopt final proposed changes for the 2015 annual fishery regulations, as necessary.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 1: 2014 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A.
2. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 2: Visual Representation of the 2014 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A.
3. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 3: Council Blog Summarizing Proposed Changes to the 2015 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Fishery Regulations.
4. Agenda Item G.1.b, Supplemental NMFS Report 1: National Marine Fisheries Service Report on Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan Changes for 2015.
5. Agenda Item G.1.b, NMFS Report 2: Environmental Assessment and Regulatory Impact Review of Continuing Implementation of the Catch Sharing Plan for Pacific Halibut in Area 2A, 2014-2016 (**electronic only**).
6. Agenda Item G.1.b, NMFS Report 3: NMFS recommended changes for Catch Sharing Plan and Regulation changes for 2015.
7. Agenda Item G.1.b, NMFS Report 4: Report on the 2014 Pacific Halibut Fisheries in Area 2A.
8. Agenda Item G.1.b, WDFW Report: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Proposed Changes to the Catch Sharing Plan and 2015 Annual Regulations.
9. Agenda Item G.1.b, WDFW Report 2: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan Changes.
10. Agenda Item G.1.b, ODFW Report: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Proposed Changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for the 2015 Fishery.
11. Agenda Item G.1.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kelly Ames
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Changes to the 2015 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Fishery Regulations

PFMC
10/23/14