

2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND REGULATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) heard from Sarah Williams, Lynn Mattes, Heather Reed, and Deb Wilson-Vandenberg.

The GAP reviewed the current situation regarding Halibut management in area 2A and has the following concerns and recommendations:

First, we note that the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) has the ultimate authority to manage Halibut in the North Pacific. Annually IPHC apportions harvest to the various fishing areas/sectors in a manner consistent with past policy. Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, and California) has the least Halibut biomass in the North Pacific (2-3 percent of the total). In recent years, 2A has been allocated halibut at the higher end of the acceptable range of TAC. It is of vital importance that all states and tribes adhere to the historical 2A management standards. If not, the overall 2A harvest allocation could be jeopardized. A substantial loss of quota would severely impact all of our fisheries.

Second, 2A Halibut harvest management has been delegated from IPHC to the Pacific Council by a Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) that has been in place for over 20 years. All subareas in 2A, with the exception of Puget Sound and California, are managed in real time, in-season, to stay within our overall allocation. The Puget Sound recreational fishery has been managed by season length based on previous years' average daily catches. Their season structure has been shortened from around 80 days down to the current 8 days over the past decade in order to maintain compliance with their sub-area quota. With the exception of California, all other fisheries in 2A are managed in-season, and some are experiencing season lengths measured in very few days rather than the weeks or months that had been the case in years past.

The GAP is very concerned that continued state overages with respect to the allocation assigned by the CSP will jeopardize harvest levels throughout 2A, and that could result in serious economic loss to all 2A halibut fisheries. Washington and Oregon harvest sectors are willing to sacrifice enough quota pounds to accommodate a reasonable quota for California but only on the condition that the California fishery be managed to stay within its allocation.

The GAP wishes to note that the duration of the halibut catch sharing plan is for one year, and subject to revision in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) Allocate 4 percentage points of the total non-Tribal allocation of the 2A TAC to California. This would be a modified Alternative 4. The percentage for greater than 1 million pounds is eliminated. The resulting percentages would be:

WA Sport	35.6	
OR Sport	29.7	
CA	Sport	4.0

Commercial 30.7
Total 100

This California percentage is funded equally from each of the other three sectors (Oregon recreational, Washington recreational, and commercial). This amount reflects recent landings in California.

2) Manage the California sector by using the in-season monitoring plan outlined in supplemental CDFW Report 2. This action would include the authority of California Department of Fish and Wildlife/National Marine Fisheries Service to close the season when the prescribed quota is reached.

The GAP also heard from both Washington and Oregon Halibut managers. The GAP supports the changes proposed for their in-state fisheries. (Supplemental WDFW Report 3, ODFW Report).

PFMC
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