

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND REGULATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from Ms. Lynn Mattes, Ms. Kelly Ames, Ms. Heather Reed, and Ms. Marci Yaremko regarding Pacific Halibut regulation proposals for 2015. Our purpose here is to advise the Council regarding potential catch sharing alternatives to be sent out for public hearing following this meeting. 2015 Halibut regulations will then be finalized at the November Council meeting.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CATCH SHARING PLAN (CSP) (Agenda Item K.1.b, NMFS Report 2)

The GAP supports NMFS proposed changes to the CSP and the codified regulations.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CSP (Agenda Item K.1.b, WDFW Report)

The GAP supports sending the Washington proposed alternatives to the CSP out to public hearing.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (ODFW) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CSP (Agenda Item K.1.b – ODFW Report)

The GAP supports sending the Oregon proposed alternatives to the CSP out to public hearing.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (CDFW)/ODFW/WDFW REPORT ON CHANGES TO THE HALIBUT CSP FOR 2015 (Agenda Item K.1.b – CDFW/ODFW/WDFW Report)

BACKGROUND

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) manages the Pacific Halibut resource. The IPHC was formed 90 years ago by a treaty between the United States and Canada and covers the North Pacific range of the stock from the Bering Sea to California. There are 8 major catch areas throughout the range. Each year IPHC conducts the science and determines an overall value for biomass. A value for Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is determined and then apportioned to each of the eight catch areas in a manner partially related to the biomass contribution of each area to the whole. This process is concluded in January of each year.

Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, and California) is the southernmost management area under IPHC. Once IPHC has determined the annual harvest TAC for the area it is the responsibility of the Pacific Council to allocate the harvest between sub-areas and user groups. The Council

allocates according to a catch-sharing plan (CSP). The Council and Halibut stakeholders through a public process developed the CSP 25 years ago. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has no authority to modify the annual TAC that is assigned to 2A. The Council has the statutory responsibility to allocate, monitor, and regulate halibut between users in a manner that stays within the value of the TAC assigned to 2A by IPHC.

CURRENT SITUATION

Recently, a fishery has developed in the Southern Oregon-Northern California sub-area that significantly exceeds the amount previously allocated to this area. IPHC subsequently agreed to survey the northern California area in an effort to determine biomass that could sustain additional harvest in 2A. Currently there have been data attained for only one year.

Last year the Council allocated the Southern Oregon/Northern California portion of the 2A TAC solely to California. This amounted to 1 percentage point of the non-Tribal quota (6,240 pounds). The California season set for 2014 encompassed May through October, 7 days per week, with the exception that the month of August was closed. Per NMFS (Agenda Item K.1.b, NMFS report) California caught 77% of this amount in May of 2014. During the GMT report to the GAP, CDFW informed us that the subsequent June-July catch may be in excess of 20,000 lbs.

In its deliberations the Council should consider adjusting the CSP to accommodate some greater level of catch in California. A proposal to change the CSP has been submitted by Washington, Oregon, and California (Agenda Item K.1.b, CDFW/ODFW/WDFW Report). A suite of alternatives will be adopted by the Council at this meeting and subsequently sent out to public hearing prior to choosing a final change to the CSP at the November Council meeting.

The GAP believes that the alternatives listed in the CA/OR/WA report are too narrow in scope regarding where additional allocation would come from. In the interest of fairness to users who currently are assigned shares of the 2A TAC, we believe there should be a broader set for the Council to choose from. The Treaty Tribes are allocated 35% of the 2A TAC. The Council has no authority to change that value. The remaining portion, 65%, is divided into three major groupings: Washington Sport, Oregon Sport, and Commercial. Any additional allocation to California would come out of the non-Treaty 65%. The current States proposal provides this almost exclusively out of the Commercial share.

An additional issue, critical to the success of any TAC/quota management system, is the ability of the managers to monitor the progress of TAC attainment in real time in-season. Washington and Oregon have this system and are able to know within a matter of a few days what catch levels are and to appropriately close fisheries when sub-area/user quotas are met. **The GAP believes that California has the responsibility to provide timely monitoring and reporting of progress in-season, and to manage the fishery in a manner that the California quota is not exceeded.**

GAP RECOMMENDATIONS

Status Quo: Allocation as described in the 2014 Catch Sharing Plan, which specifies that 65 percent of the Area 2A Total Allowable Catch (2A TAC) is allocated to non-tribal fisheries; the non-tribal fisheries then share that amount as follows:

WA Sport	36.6%
OR Sport	30.7%
CA Sport	1.0%
Commercial	31.7%

GAP Alternative 1: Maintain allocations as described in the CSP, except increase the California sport share to three percent on 2A TAC's less than one million pounds and four percent on the portion of 2A TAC's over one million pounds for 2A TAC's above 1 million. The increase would come equally out of each of the 3 major non-Treaty groups. New non-treaty fishery shares would be:

	<u>2A TAC < 1 million pounds</u>	<u>Portion of 2A TC > 1 million pounds</u>
WA Sport	35.93%	35.6%
OR Sport	30.03%	29.7%
CA Sport	3.0%	4.0%
Commercial	31.03%	30.7%

GAP Alternative 2: Same as GAP Alternative 1 except increase the California sport share to four percent on 2A TAC's less than one million pounds and five percent on the portion of 2A TAC's over one million pounds for 2A TAC's above 1 million. The increase would come equally out of each of the 3 major non-Treaty groups. New non-treaty fishery shares would be:

	<u>2A TAC < 1 million pounds</u>	<u>Portion of 2A TC > 1 million pounds</u>
WA Sport	35.6%	35.27%
OR Sport	29.7%	29.37%
CA Sport	4.0%	5.0%
Commercial	30.7%	30.37%

GAP Alternative 3: Same as GAP Alternative 1 except increase the California sport share to five percent on 2A TAC's less than one million pounds and six percent on the portion of 2A TAC's over one million pounds for 2A TAC's above 1 million. The increase would come equally out of each of the 3 major non-Treaty groups. New non-treaty fishery shares would be:

	<u>2A TAC < 1 million pounds</u>	<u>Portion of 2A TC > 1 million pounds</u>
WA Sport	35.27%	34.93%
OR Sport	29.37%	29.03%
CA Sport	5.0%	6.0%
Commercial	30.37%	30.03%

GAP Alternative 4: Include a maximum catch limit on the California sport allocation of 50,000 pounds in an effort to not strand pounds. Any poundage calculated for California in excess of 50,000 pounds in any of the above three alternatives would remain in the Washington Sport, Oregon Sport, and Commercial fisheries in proportion to their respective shares.

PFMC
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