

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

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) met in a joint session with the ad hoc Lower Columbia River Natural Coho Workgroup (LRC Workgroup) in Portland, Oregon on September 3rd and appreciates the presentation by Ms. Kelly Ames on this matter. The SAS offers the following comments on the proposals being considered for 2015.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report (Agenda Item K.1.b, WDFW Report)

The SAS reviewed and is supportive of the proposed season changes to the Columbia River Subarea. The SAS felt that the reduced nearshore allocation under the proposal was adequate for this fishery, even with the revised season structure and additional days open per week.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Report (Agenda Item K.1.b, ODFW Report)

Oregon Subarea Allocations

SAS opinions on the proposed modifications to the Oregon Subarea allocations was mixed with the majority of members in opposition. The proposal would reallocate fish from the Columbia River to the Central and Southern Oregon Subareas. Part of the SAS opposition stems from the assumption that only 35 percent of the landings in the Columbia River Subarea are landed in Oregon even though Oregon contributes 50 percent of the allocation. The SAS notes that the Subarea operates as a single fishery with Oregon boats landing in Washington and vice-versa. Therefore, port of landing is not necessarily a good indication of landings by State. The SAS felt that an alternative that rolled any uncaught allocation from the Columbia River Subarea to the Southern Oregon Subarea would be preferable.

Columbia River and Central Oregon Coast Subarea - Retention of Other Species

The SAS encourages changes to management measures regarding the retention of other species and supports Alternative 1: *All groundfish, with the exception of rockfish and lingcod are allowed to be retained during all-depth halibut days.* The SAS believes that this regulatory change would allow greater opportunity for harvestable species and reduce discards while staying within overfished species limits (particularly yelloweye rockfish).

Southern Oregon Subarea Season Start Date

The SAS supports modifying the season start date in this subarea and supports Alternative 1: *Open June 1, seven days per week until the quota is attained.* The weather in May in this area is often uncondusive to halibut fishing, and pushing the start date later in the season would be helpful in years there are summertime closures in the recreational salmon fishery.

California, Oregon, and Washington Report (Agenda Item K.1.b, Tri-State Report)

The SAS understands the desire to consider a reallocation to the California sport fishery, but does not support the proposed alternatives, all of which reallocate fish only from the commercial sector. If a reallocation to the California sport fishery occurs, the SAS feels the reallocation should come from all non-treaty fishery sectors, not just the commercial sector.

Additionally, the SAS strongly encouraged improved monitoring and management of the California sport fishery so that the fishery in California could be managed on an inseason basis, as occurs in Oregon and Washington, with timely catch updates and management actions that keep the fishery within its allocation.

PFMC
09/11/14