

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL COMMENTS ON
INCIDENTAL PACIFIC HALIBUT HARVEST RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PRIMARY, LIMITED ENTRY
LONGLINE SABLEFISH FISHERY NORTH OF POINT CHEHALIS, WASHINGTON

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the option paper presented by Council staff. The GAP believes a modified Approach 3 makes the most sense. The modification consists of using a ratio of halibut pounds to sablefish pounds rather than halibut numbers to sablefish pounds, and establishing a cumulative limit on total halibut pounds retained. This approach will better prevent highgrading and discarding.

GAP members expressed concern that fisheries be monitored carefully so that the incidental harvest amount is not exceeded. Excess harvest could result in reductions to the directed commercial halibut fishery in area 2A, which is of significant economic importance to the communities in that area.

Finally, the GAP had a lengthy discussion on the issue of incidental halibut take by all fisheries. Addressing incidental take, accounting for discards, and allowing retention of fish that would otherwise be discarded are all topics that need to be considered by the Council and the International Pacific Halibut Commission. The GAP urges the Council to include these issues on the next halibut management cycle.

PFMC
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