

INCIDENTAL PACIFIC HALIBUT HARVEST RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PRIMARY, LIMITED ENTRY
LONGLINE SABLEFISH FISHERY NORTH OF POINT CHEHALIS, WASHINGTON

Situation: For the first time, the total Area 2A halibut quota is large enough this year (over 900,000 pounds) to provide for an incidental halibut harvest in the commercial, longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington. This incidental fishery is allocated that portion of the Washington sport allocation in excess of 214,110 pounds, provided a minimum of 10,000 pounds is available. For 2001, the available incidental harvest amounts to 47,946 pounds.

At the April meeting, the Council adopted framework regulations that allow annual landing restrictions to be implemented. The intent of the framework regulations was to ensure the halibut landings are incidental and reflect a halibut-to-sablefish retention ratio similar to an expected encounter ratio in the fishery.

For 2001, the Council adopted three proposed regulatory approaches at its April meeting and solicited public review:

- Approach 1: Halibut retention limit based on a ratio of halibut pounds to sablefish pounds.
- Approach 2: Halibut retention limit based on a ratio of the number of halibut per pounds of sablefish.
- Approach 3: The same as Approach 2 with the addition of a season cumulative limit on the total halibut retained. The season cumulative limit for halibut would be based on the total pounds of sablefish a vessel may land under the tier limits of associated permits.

The objectives for the annual landing restrictions are to reach the halibut allocation at about the same time as the sablefish season ends, and to ensure an equitable sharing of the halibut landings among the fishers. Some issues relevant to the Council's decision are: incentives to highgrade for large halibut, ability to accurately estimate the weight of halibut and sablefish at sea, choosing total pounds or number of halibut for the season cumulative limit under Approach 3, and the relative difficulty of inseason and postseason enforcement.

The Council will hear comments from the states, advisory bodies and the public.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt for implementation by the National Marine Fisheries Service, incidental halibut landing restrictions for the 2001, primary, limited entry longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington. (MOTIONS MUST BE VISIBLE IN WRITING PRIOR TO VOTE.)**

Reference Materials:

1. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Comments on the Proposed 2001 Management Restrictions for the Incidental Halibut Catch in the Sablefish Fishery, from April 2001 briefing book (Exhibit C.8, Attachment 1, June 2001).

PFMC
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