

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
REVIEW OF PACIFIC HALIBUT BYCATCH ESTIMATES FOR USE BY THE
INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) heard a presentation from Dr. Jim Hastie concerning the 2003 estimate of Pacific halibut bycatch in groundfish trawl fisheries in the International Pacific Halibut Catch Area 2A (Exhibit F.3.a., Agendum Overview, September 2004). The estimate of halibut bycatch is based on an update of the model used to estimate 2002 bycatch. Observed bycatch and associated mortality from the Oregon exempted fishing permit (EFP) fishery were incorporated as a census, and bycatch from other trawl fisheries were estimated using the model. Halibut bycatch rates from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program during September 2002 through August 2003 were stratified by season, depth, latitude and amount of arrowtooth catch, and then multiplied by the amount of effort by stratum from the trawl logbooks. Boundaries for depth strata were changed compared to previous analyses to match the Rockfish Conservation Area boundaries that were in place during 2003.

In Council-managed fisheries, the total Pacific halibut bycatch in bottom trawl fisheries dropped by 9.8% compared to 2002. When the data become available, the SSC suggests that the Council consider exploring the use of observer data to estimate halibut bycatch in other Council-managed fisheries. Also, the SSC requested that future analyses include variance estimates for total bycatch.

The SSC reviewed these new results and endorses their use in estimating the impacts of Council-managed fisheries on the Pacific halibut stock.

PFMC
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