

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON PACIFIC HALIBUT  
BYCATCH IN INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION AREA 2A

Dr. Jim Hastie (Northwest Fisheries Science Center) briefed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on estimates of halibut bycatch for 2004 as described in the report produced by Wallace and Hastie (August 2005; D.2.a, Supplemental Attachment 1). Estimated total halibut mortalities, legal-sized halibut mortalities, and trawl effort have all declined from 1998 through 2004. The net weight of total halibut trawl-fishery bycatch mortalities in 2004 is 47% lower than in 2003. Estimated halibut bycatch and mortality in other gear types has not been updated for 2004. In previous years, bycatch estimates were derived from only a partial year of data. These previous years will be updated to reflect the entire calendar year.

The SSC again requests that 1) when the data become available, the Council should consider exploring the use of observer data to estimate halibut bycatch in other Council-managed fisheries and 2) future analyses should include variance estimates for total bycatch. Also, it would be useful to decompose bycatch rates from spatial effort shifts to better understand what drives trends in 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  
09/20/05