

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INCIDENTAL CATCH
REGULATIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES.

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the proposed management measures to provide for the incidental take of Pacific halibut in the salmon troll fishery and the primary sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis, Washington and has the following comments.

Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

In reviewing the catch summary for halibut bycatch provisions in the sablefish fishery, the GMT believes that the status quo provision of 100 pounds of halibut (dressed) per 1,000 pounds of sablefish (dressed) does a reasonable job of providing for incidentally taken halibut, sustaining the opportunity to do so across the April through October period of the fishery, and remaining within the 70,000 pound halibut allocation provided to the sablefish fishery.

Salmon Troll Fishery

Relative to the options adopted by the Council in March, the GMT has some concerns about changing the status quo allowable take of halibut in the salmon troll fishery from one halibut per three Chinook to one halibut per two Chinook, as proposed in Option 1b, Agenda Item D.1. The Team is concerned that this change could result in increased halibut targeting by some salmon trollers in order to achieve the increased allowance. Since the salmon troll fishery is not subject to the 100-fathom non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) in place to protect yelloweye, the GMT believes that this potential increase in halibut targeting could result in an increased take of yelloweye rockfish for which we have not accounted in the scorecard. Data collected from the Washington salmon troll fishery over the past three years indicate that the one-to-three halibut-to-Chinook ratio in the current regulation comfortably accommodates the incidental halibut catch that might occur in the fishery.

PFMC
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