



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northwest Fisheries Science Center  
2725 Montlake Boulevard East  
Seattle, WA 98112-2097

May 21, 2009

Mr. John DeVore, Groundfish Management Team  
Pacific Fisheries Management Council  
7700 Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, OR 97220

RE: SSC Request Regarding Mortality of Pacific Halibut in the Fixed Gear Fishery

Dear Mr. DeVore,

The methods used to estimate Pacific Halibut mortality in the west coast fishery will remain largely consistent with the methods used to estimate total mortality of other west coast species. However, one aspect of the analysis that was discussed is the mortality rate applied to discarded Pacific halibut. Historically, a 25% mortality rate has been applied in west coast fixed-gear fisheries. In discussions with Mr. Gregg Williams from the IPHC, it was determined that a 16% mortality rate was more applicable to west coast fixed-gear fisheries. Therefore, moving forward, the NWFSC/FRAM will apply the 16% mortality rate to the estimated total Pacific halibut fixed-gear discard estimate. The table below illustrates the Pacific halibut total mortality since 2002 with a 25% and a 16% mortality rate.

	Discard (mt)			Landings (mt)	Total Catch (mt)	
	Estimated (mt)	25% mortality rate	16% mortality rate		Assuming 25% mortality	Assuming 16% mortality
2002	139	35	22	103	138	126
2003	225	56	36	115	171	151
2004	185	46	30	142	188	172
2005	228	57	36	147	204	184
2006	679	170	109	154	323	262
2007	170	43	27	133	176	160

If you need further information, please contact me at (206) 860-3293.

Thank you,

Janell Majewski  
Observer Program Supervisor  
Fishery Resource Analysis and Monitoring Division

