

ADOPT FINAL 2004 INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

Situation: Regulations governing the incidental harvest of halibut in the non-Indian commercial troll salmon fishery and the primary, limited entry longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis require the Council to adopt recommended halibut landing restrictions to allow incidental harvest while assuring the quotas are not exceeded. At the March meeting, the Council adopted options for both the salmon troll fishery and the sablefish fishery for public review. Options within the salmon fisheries include designating the "C-shaped" yelloweye rockfish conservation area as an area to be avoided on a voluntary basis to provide protection of yelloweye rockfish.

Salmon Troll Fishery

The Council adopted two public review options for landing restrictions for Pacific halibut caught incidentally in the May/June troll season:

- Option 1a: Status quo - License holders may land no more than 1 halibut per each 3 chinook, except 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut may be landed per trip. Halibut retained must be no less than 32 inches in total length (with head on).
- Option 1b: License holders may land no more than 1 halibut per each 3 chinook, except 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 25 halibut may be landed per trip. Halibut retained must be no less than 32 inches in total length (with head on).
- Option 2: In combination with either Option 1 or 2 above, designate the "C-shaped" yelloweye rockfish conservation area, as defined in the Pacific Council Halibut Catch Sharing Plan in the North Coast subarea (WA marine area 3), as an area to be avoided for salmon troll fishing to provide protection of yelloweye rockfish.

The primary objective for the annual landing restrictions is to harvest the incidental halibut quota in the May/June salmon troll fishery, and a secondary objective is to harvest any remaining quota during July through September.

Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The Council adopted two public review options for landing limits on incidental halibut harvest in the fixed gear primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis:

- Option 1: Status Quo - Restrict incidental halibut landings to 150 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the 150 pounds per 1,000 pound ratio per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.

Option 2: Restrict incidental halibut landings to 100 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the 100 pounds per 1,000-pound ratio per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.

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.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt for implementation by the National Marine Fisheries Service, incidental halibut landing restrictions for the 2004, commercial troll salmon fishery. (*MOTIONS MUST BE VISIBLE IN WRITING PRIOR TO VOTE.*)**
- 2. Adopt for implementation by the National Marine Fisheries Service, incidental halibut landing restrictions for the 2004, primary, limited entry longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington. (*MOTIONS MUST BE VISIBLE IN WRITING PRIOR TO VOTE.*)**

Reference Materials:

None.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Recommendations of the States, Tribes, and Federal Agencies
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Annual Incidental Halibut Harvest Restrictions

Chuck Tracy

PFMC
03/19/04

TRIBAL COMMENTS

Mr. Chairman,

I would just like to reiterate that the tribes have expressed concern for the bycatch discard mortality of halibut for many years now.

I continue to support this proposed action to allocate incidental halibut to the non-treaty sablefish fishery because it is a step in the right direction of eliminating discard mortality.

I also support the allowance of halibut caught incidentally in the salmon troll fishery to be landed and counted in the non-Indian commercial halibut allocation as it was in 2003.

Thank you.