

INCIDENTAL 2009 CATCH REGULATIONS IN THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

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 continuing with 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 public review options for landing restrictions for Pacific halibut caught incidentally in the May/June troll season as follows:

- Option 1: Status quo – Beginning May 1, license holders may land no more than one halibut per each two Chinook, except **one** 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 2: Beginning May 1, license holders may land no more than one halibut per each two Chinook, except **three** 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 1a or 2a: 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 (Washington Marine Areas 3 and 4), 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 the end of the salmon season.

Commercial Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The Council adopted three 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 – Beginning May 1, restrict incidental halibut landings to 100 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.
- Option 2: Beginning May 1, restrict incidental halibut landings to 17 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 17 pounds per 1,000-pound ratio per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.
- Option 3: Retention of halibut is prohibited.

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 incidental halibut landing restrictions for implementation by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the 2009 commercial troll salmon fishery.**
- 2. Adopt incidental halibut landing restrictions for implementation by NMFS in the 2009, primary, limited entry longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington.**

Reference Materials:

None.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Annual Incidental Halibut Harvest Restrictions

Chuck Tracy

PFMC
03/19/09

ENFORCEMENT REPORT ON INCIDENTAL 2009 CATCH REGULATIONS IN THE
SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

Upon review of the incidental catch regulation options for the 2009 salmon troll and fixed gear sablefish fisheries by the Enforcement Consultants (EC), two concerns surfaced. As written, the situation summary Agenda Item I.1.b, halibut to salmon or halibut to sablefish ratio options could only be enforced upon offloading of the catch shoreside. The same is true with regard to total landing limits (e.g. 35 halibut landed per salmon troll trip). This approach could result in the targeting of halibut and eliminates our ability to enforce limits during an at-sea compliance boarding. If the intent is to ensure halibut catches are truly incidental to directed fishing for sablefish and salmon, it is our recommendation the words “land” or “landed” be replaced with “possession” or “possession onboard whenever you consider ratio fisheries.”

If the Council agrees that incidental halibut catch regulations should be enforced from a “possession” versus “landing” perspective, simplifying what can be possessed is valuable if at-sea enforcement is to be effective. Of the options presented for the sablefish fishery North of Point Chehalis, Option 1 is much more straightforward than Option 2. While the EC is not weighing in on the amounts of halibut that should be allowed, we do wish to point out that total pounds or number of halibut allowed is much easier to enforce at-sea than “poundage” ratios, particularly where large amounts of target fish may be concerned. For example, instead of 17 pounds of halibut per 1,000 pounds of sablefish, translate that to a set number of halibut to sablefish (preferred) or total pounds of halibut allowed in possession.

PFMC
04/06/09

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
INCIDENTAL 2009 CATCH REGULATIONS IN THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED
GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) considered regulations involving incidental halibut harvest of the above fisheries.

After consideration of the overall situation for both the salmon troll and sablefish fisheries, the GAP recommends adopting the following options.

A. Salmon troll fishery

Option #1a. (Status Quo with YRCA) No more than one halibut in possession per each two Chinook, except one halibut may be in possession without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut may be in possession and landed per trip. Halibut retained must be no less than 32 inches in length.

B. Sablefish fishery

Option #1 100# (dressed weight) of halibut in possession per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.

Salmon troll fishery rationale:

The GAP discussed the economics of the salmon fishery in favor of increasing the incidental halibut catch. On the other side some concern was expressed regarding a possible increase of impacts to species of concern such as yelloweye rockfish especially considering no vessel monitoring system requirements. A greater concern was setting a precedence of ever increasing incidental allowance perhaps reaching a condition of targeting bycatch. It was felt that bycatch reduction held a higher priority than economic opportunity.

Sablefish fishery rationale:

It was noticed by the GAP that the option listed in this agenda item as status quo is not what was in place in 2008. The status quo would be 2+100 lb per 1,000 lb. The GAP does not support the status quo as used in 2008, but does support Option #1.

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INCIDENTAL CATCH REGULATIONS
IN THE SALMON TROLL AND FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

Salmon Troll Fishery:

For the incidental halibut catch regulations in the salmon troll fishery, the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) recommends allowing a ratio of no more than one halibut per each two Chinook, except two halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut may be landed per trip. The SAS also recommends maintaining the voluntary C-shaped yelloweye rockfish conservation.

PFMC
04/06/09