

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2016 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND REGULATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) has reviewed the briefing book materials regarding Pacific Halibut regulation proposals for 2016. Our purpose here is to advise the Council regarding potential catch sharing alternatives to be sent out for public hearing following this meeting. 2016 Halibut regulations will then be finalized at the November Council meeting.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CATCH SHARING PLAN (CSP)

(Agenda Item I.1.a, NMFS Report 2)

The GAP supports NMFS proposed changes to the CSP and the codified regulations.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CSP

(Agenda Item I.1.a, WDFW Report)

The GAP supports sending the Washington proposed alternatives to the CSP out to public hearing.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (ODFW) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CSP

(Agenda Item I.1.a, ODFW Report)

The GAP supports sending the Oregon proposed alternatives to the CSP out to public hearing.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (CDFW) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CSP

(Agenda Item I.1.a, CDFW Report 1 and Supplemental CDFW Report 2)

The GAP supports sending the California proposed alternatives to the CSP out to the public hearing.

CURRENT SITUATION

The current CSP allocations and harvest values for 2015 are as described in NMFS Agenda Item I.1.a Report 1.

The Council adjusted the CSP in 2014 wherein California received an increase from 1% to 4% of the non-tribal portion of the 2A total allowable catch (TAC). This action was, in part, from the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) survey assessments in the prior years demonstrating the California had about 93,500 lbs of exploitable biomass available, while their portion for harvest was only about 6,000 lbs. In order to help correct this disparity of allocation, the Council agreed to a step wise modification of the CSP. This was considered an interim step to provide more fairness in the allocation within the recreational sectors between the Pacific States. Of concern to the Council and the GAP, was that California was to implement an In-Season Management Scenario whereupon they would be managed to not exceed their allocation of 25,220 lbs for the 2015 year. That concern was met by CDFW and resulted in a closure of the Pacific Halibut Fishery on August 12, 2015.

As a second step to this process, California is currently proposing an Option to increase the California allocation of the non-tribal 2A TAC to 6% from the current 4%. The 2% would currently amount to about 12,000 additional pounds. This proposal would require a 1% reduction from each of the Oregon and Washington recreational sectors.

GAP RECOMMENDATIONS

Status Quo: Allocation as described in the 2015 Catch Sharing Plan, which specifies that 65 percent of the Area 2A Total Allowable Catch (2A TAC) is allocated to non-tribal fisheries; the non-tribal fisheries then share that amount as follows:

WA Sport	35.6%
OR Sport	29.7%
CA Sport	4.0%
Commercial	30.7%

GAP Alternative 1: Maintain allocations as described in the CSP, except increase the California sport share to six percent of 2A TAC's non tribal fisheries portion. The increase would come equally out of each of the 2 other States sport fisheries non-treaty groups. New non-treaty fishery shares would be:

WA Sport	34.6%
OR Sport	28.7%
CA Sport	6.0%
Commercial	30.7%

PFMC
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