

FINAL 2016 CATCH SHARING PLAN AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES AND
PRELIMINARY SABLEFISH FISHERY INCIDENTAL LANDING REGULATIONS

As described in Council Operating Procedure 9, the Council solicits proposed changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A (CSP) (Agenda Item J.1, Attachments 1 and 2) and annual fishery regulations at its September meeting. At the November meeting, the Council is scheduled to take final action, after reviewing public and agency comments.

At the September 2015 meeting, the Council forwarded for public review proposed changes and processes for establishing the 2016 CSP and annual fishing regulations as described in the National Marine Fisheries Service report (NMFS; [Agenda Item I.1.a, NMFS Report 2, September 2015](#)), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report (WDFW; [Agenda Item I.1.a, WDFW Report, September 2015](#)), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife report (ODFW; [Agenda Item I.1.a, ODFW Report, September 2015](#)), and both reports provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW; [Agenda Items I.1.a, CDFW Report 1 and Report 2](#)).

WDFW and ODFW solicited public input and subsequently prepared agency recommendations for Council consideration (Agenda Item J.1.a, WDFW Report and Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental ODFW Report). NMFS is expected to provide a supplemental report recommending changes to the 2016 CSP and annual fishing regulations. NMFS has provided information on catch of Pacific halibut in 2015 (Agenda Item J.1.a, NMFS Report) and CDFW is expected to provide a report specific to the 2015 California recreational fishery (Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental CDFW Report). The Council should consider the available information, as well as any advisory body and public comment, and adopt the final 2016 CSP and annual fishery regulations.

Preliminary Sablefish Fishery Incidental Landing Regulations

When the appropriate criteria are met, the CSP establishes an allocation to provide for halibut retention in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington (Agenda Item J.1, Attachment 1). The Council recommends landing restrictions at its spring public meeting each year to control the amount of halibut caught incidentally in this fishery, based on the amount of the allocation and other pertinent factors. The incidental fishery regulations are published in both the halibut and groundfish regulations and, as such, prohibiting retention when the quota has been attained requires both a halibut and a groundfish inseason action. While a halibut inseason action can be done quickly, groundfish inseason actions require a Council meeting and a *Federal Register* notice to become effective. The Council requested NMFS bring forward an option to prohibit retention faster to ensure the quota is not exceeded. As discussed at the September Council meeting, one option would be to provide NMFS the automatic action authority to prohibit retention when the halibut quota for this fishery is reached or projected to be reached ([Agenda Item I.1.a, NMFS Report 2, September 2015](#)). NMFS is expected to provide a supplemental report further detailing the process for Council consideration. After reviewing the relevant materials, the Council should select a preliminary preferred alternative for public review.

Council Action:

1. Adopt final changes for the 2016 Pacific halibut CSP, as necessary.
2. Adopt final changes for the 2016 annual fishery regulations, as necessary.
3. Select a preliminary preferred alternative for prohibiting retention of halibut in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington when the quota has been attained.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.1, Attachment 1: 2015 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A.
2. Agenda Item J.1, Attachment 2: Visual Representation of the 2015 Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan for Pacific Halibut.
3. Agenda Item J.1.a, WDFW Report: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Proposed Changes to the Catch Sharing Plan and 2016 Annual Regulations.
4. Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental ODFW Report: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Proposed Changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for the 2016 Fishery.
5. Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental CDFW Report: California Department of Fish and Wildlife Informational Report on Recreational Pacific Halibut Catches in 2015.
6. Agenda Item J.1.a, NMFS Report 1: Report on the 2015 Pacific Halibut Fisheries in Area 2A.
7. Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 2: NMFS Recommended changes to Federal regulations and 2016 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A.

Agenda Order:

- J.1 Final 2016 Catch Sharing Plan and Management Measures and Preliminary Sablefish Fishery Incidental Landing Regulations Kelly Ames
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Changes to the 2016 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Fishery Regulations; Select Preliminary Preferred Alternative for Sablefish Fishery Incidental Landing Regulations

PFMC
10/21/15