

SCOPING OF PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN ALLOCATION CHANGES

Council Operating Procedure (COP) 9 anticipates that at each September meeting, the Council will consider proposed changes to the annual Pacific halibut regulations and the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A (Agenda Item G.1, Attachments 1 and 2). The proposed changes are most often related to recreational season structures (e.g., opening dates, days per week, early season/late season ratios, and port/area sharing) as well as minor allocation changes among areas or gear groups. According to the COP, more substantive changes to allocations require a three meeting process. The Council requested Agenda Item G.1 be scheduled in June 2017 to scope the potential for greater allocation changes for future CSPs than could be accomplished in the standard two meeting process.

Over the past few years, the Council has implemented changes to the CSP in response to recent high recreational harvests of Pacific halibut off southern Oregon and northern California. The allocation changes have been intended to provide a greater recreational allocation for California, in response to new information indicating a higher abundance of Pacific halibut and greater fishery interest in this area than when the CSP was originally adopted.

In 2014, changes included dividing the South of Humbug Mountain subarea into two new subareas by establishing a new management line at the Oregon/California border, creating separate Oregon and California recreational subareas with their own CSP allocations. The new Southern Oregon subarea, between Humbug Mountain and the Oregon/California border, received a small allocation from the Oregon Central Coast subarea. The California recreational subarea was provided a one percent allocation, which was accommodated by reducing the Oregon recreational subarea allocation. In 2015, the California recreational subarea allocation was increased from one to four percent of the non-tribal allocation by implementing a one percent reduction for the Washington recreational, Oregon recreational, and commercial sectors.

During the development of the 2016 CSP, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) recommended an alternative be analyzed that would increase the California recreational subarea allocation from four to six percent by equally reducing the Washington and Oregon recreational subarea allocations ([Agenda Item I.1.a, Supplemental GAP Report, September 2015](#)). A motion was made to forward the GAP proposal for public review and analysis; however the motion failed due to the lack of time for analysis and to receive adequate public input between the September and November Council meetings. Additionally, there was interest in expanding the range of alternatives to consider reductions from other CSP sectors to provide for an increased California recreational subarea allocation.

The Council also requested additional information on the spatial distribution of the Pacific halibut exploitable biomass in Area 2A from the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). The IPHC has provided survey data from Area 2A stratified by state boundaries as well as biomass estimates with estimates of uncertainty at smaller spatial scales than IPHC regulatory area (Agenda Item G.1.a, IPHC Letter).

In November 2016, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) stated they would also be interested in considering whether revisions to the sablefish incidental allocation are warranted ([Agenda Item E.1.a, Supplemental WDFW Report, November 2016](#)). The Area 2A TAC has accommodated incidental catch of halibut in the primary sablefish fishery in all years, except 2010 and 2011, since changes to the CSP were implemented in 2001. During this same period, there has also been a significant increase in effort in the Washington recreational fishery, resulting in early quota attainment and shortened seasons. WDFW stated their expectation that any changes to the sablefish incidental allocation would shift back to the Washington recreational fishery, given that the sablefish incidental allocation came from the Washington sport allocation.

Under this agenda item, the Council should identify the allocation issues to be addressed for future CSPs and provide guidance on developing a range of alternatives for analysis. The Council is scheduled to adopt for public review proposed changes to the 2018 CSP at their September 2017 meeting with final action scheduled for the November 2017 Council meeting.

Council Action:

Review IPHC Report and provide guidance on developing a range of alternatives for future Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan changes.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 1: 2017 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A.
2. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 2: Visual Representation of the 2017 Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan for Pacific Halibut.
3. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 3: Historical Catch Sharing Plan Allocations and Catch.
4. Agenda Item G.1.a, IPHC Letter: Council Request for IPHC Regulatory Area 2A Spatial Data for Pacific Halibut.
5. Agenda Item G.1.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

G.1 Scoping of Catch Sharing Plan Changes and International Pacific Halibut

Commission (IPHC) Data Request Report

Kelly Ames

- a. IPHC Report Steve Keith, Jamie Goen, Ray Webster
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Review IPHC Report and Provide Guidance on Developing a Range of Alternatives for Future Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan Changes

PFMC
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