

## **Non-Indian Directed Pacific Halibut Fishery Management - Scoping Exercise**

During the Council discussions on Pacific halibut at the September 2017 meeting, Council staff was tasked with outlining three potential levels of Council engagement in the management of the non-Indian commercial directed halibut fishery. These levels, or thresholds, were first described by the Council chair, and Council staff was asked to provide the concept in tabular form. As a result, a scoping matrix (Table 1) was developed to illustrate change from status quo in Council and agency workload and responsibility. In addition, Council staff has identified where a specific fishery structure might fall under the three levels (Table 2), given the discussions on the current fishery structure of the non-Indian commercial directed halibut fishery.

This scoping exercise includes hypothetical scenarios that should not be considered actual intent. Because it is difficult to summarize complex topics in a simple manner, not every scenario is outlined in this matrix. While there are various aspects at each level that could be expanded on in detail, in order to keep the task manageable, staff focused on providing just a brief overview. The intention of the exercise is to simply prompt discussion and offer a visual context to theoretical concepts.

Table 1 includes three levels of potential engagement and task sharing, the first level being status quo. The following text attempts to describe in greater detail the different aspects of each level. At all levels described, the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) would continue to establish the overall total allowable catch (TAC) level that is apportioned according to the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP).

Level 1 represents Status Quo. No change to the current framework of tasks, roles, and responsibilities of the entities involved.

Level 2 encompasses a moderate change in management roles/responsibilities for most entities involved. Changes to the framework of the CSP could occur at this level, but may not be necessary. Potential change under this level varies from relatively modest to more complex. For example, one possible scenario would be to increase Council involvement in recommending regulations (season lengths, vessel limits, etc.) to IPHC. Another possible, and more complex, scenario would be the change in management roles/responsibilities if the fishery moved from a directed halibut fishery to an incidental halibut fishery. Because the structure of Council involvement and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regulatory processes is already established in fisheries that incidentally harvest halibut (Sablefish, salmon troll), Level 2 seems appropriate for this scenario (in terms of management tasks) since the pathway is relatively known. Dependent on the changes considered, a gradual transition to Level 2 could potentially occur over the course of a two- to three-year period. Level 2 could also be an adaptive management tool to transition to Level 3, or to phase in changes within Level 2. Moderate development and implementation costs, and modest to moderate on-going maintenance costs could be expected at this level.

Level 3 would assume major shifts in roles and responsibilities for the entities involved. At this level, the Council and NMFS could assume the lead in developing the preseason plan and structure

of the fishery, with increased involvement from the States (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife). Detailed plans would be forwarded to IPHC for approval. NMFS would issue the licenses and implement the fishery, including inseason management (similar to salmon troll process). The CSP would be amended to include the details of any new management structure, which would likely shift the major workload away from IPHC and towards the Council, NMFS and the States. If necessary, current Council and IPHC schedules may have to be adjusted to account for a new halibut management process. Dependent on the changes considered, a gradual transition to Level 3 (perhaps from Level 2) could potentially occur over the course of a three- to five-year period. Development, implementation and on-going maintenance costs associated with this level are assumed to be high, especially at the development and initial implementation phase.

Table 2 is provided to help illustrate where certain types of fishery, or fishery changes, may fall relative to three management levels described.

**Table 1. Scoping Matrix - Management Scenarios for the Non-Indian Directed Commercial Pacific Halibut Fishery**

Level	Description	Work Load	Time Demand/ Time Frame	Comment
Level 1 Status Quo	<b>IPHC</b> lead in fishery management.	<b>IPHC</b> : establishes TAC; issues vessel licenses, identifies vessel classes, vessel limits, fishing periods, conducts biological sampling, data collection & compilation, develops fishery regulations for implementation by <b>NMFS</b> . <b>Council</b> facilitates preseason public process of developing Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and recommending annual regulations for the upcoming year. <b>NMFS</b> implements CSP/ updates regulations compliant with all applicable laws. Coordinates observer coverage with West Coast Groundfish Observer program. <b>States</b> monitor fisheries and report landings.	Status Quo <b>Council</b> moderate time demand preseason. <b>IPHC</b> high time demand throughout. <b>States</b> high time demand inseason. <b>NMFS</b> moderate time demand preseason and inseason.	Status Quo. Standard Council schedule for Halibut is Sept. and Nov., and sometimes June. Season setting process consistent with Council Operating Procedure (COP). 9
Level 2 Moderate change from Status Quo. (Greater change if include the standard workload for <b>Council</b> and <b>States</b> involvement, and <b>NMFS</b> regulatory process used in incidental retention fisheries).	<b>Council</b> to provide greater guidance and recommendations to <b>IPHC</b> if no change fishery structure. General framework of CSP intact, with level of revision dependent on level of fishery change. More variability in change at this level.	If changes are moderate: <b>IPHC</b> : no change in Status Quo. <b>Council</b> works with <b>NMFS</b> to develop vessel classes, vessel limits and fishing periods preseason and inseason for recommendation to <b>IPHC</b> . <b>States</b> : no change in Status Quo, unless want more involvement in developing annual fishery structure, or take over biological sampling.  If current fishery structure to change from direct to incidental, <b>NMFS</b> take lead for regulations and inseason management, entities follow established pattern of tasks as in other incidental halibut fisheries.	<b>IPHC</b> time: No change if fishery structure is status quo. <b>States</b> time: no change or slight increase. <b>Council</b> time: increase. <b>NMFS</b> time increase. <i>TIMEFRAME- gradual transition potentially over two or three year period.</i>	Change anticipated in <b>Council</b> process and entity workload, but would depend on level of change in current fishery structure. May require change in management schedule (COP 9). Moderate development and implementation costs, and modest to moderate ongoing maintenance costs.
Level 3 Major Change from Status Quo. (Equivalent to FMP amendment to develop programs in terms of workload /process).	<b>Council</b> takes lead in fishery management: CSP modified to include detailed framework for fishery and role/responsibilities. Forward plans to <b>IPHC</b> for approval.	<b>NMFS</b> issues licenses. <b>Council</b> , <b>NMFS</b> develop preseason plan for fishery season structure. <b>NMFS</b> implements fishery, inseason management. <b>States</b> monitor fisheries and report landings, potentially including biological sampling.	<b>IPHC</b> time: decrease. <b>States</b> time: increase; outreach to develop recommendations. <b>Council</b> time: increase. <b>NMFS</b> time: increase. <i>TIMEFRAME- transition potentially over 3-5 year period, perhaps graduating from Level 2.</i>	Substantial changes for all entities. May require a change in COP 9 <b>Council</b> could consider a Halibut Management team or Technical Committee, or increase GAP/GMT membership to account for additional workload. High implementation and on-going maintenance costs.

<b>Table 2. Levels and Fishery</b>	
Level	Fishery type or change
Level 1	Status Quo
Level 2	Longer fishing periods Incidental retention fisheries
Level 3	Limited Entry Quota system (example: fishing quota for individual vessels or operators)

PFMC  
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