

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2019 CATCH SHARING PLAN AND ANNUAL REGULATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Panel (GAP) received reports and recommendations from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). The GAP is supportive of the recommended proposed changes provided by ODFW and WDFW, which address sport fishing seasons in the Columbia River subarea.

The GAP was informed from the NMFS presentation that the sablefish fishery tiered program that operates to the north of Pt. Chehalis and is currently allowed 160 lbs. (dressed weight) of halibut to be delivered with 1,000 lbs. of dressed sablefish, plus two additional halibut, has landed about 20,000 pounds of halibut. The allocation for this fishery is 50,000 pounds of halibut. The GAP recommends that the Council advise NMFS that this ratio should be increased in order to harvest the assigned allocation. The GAP recommends consideration of 200 pounds per 1000 lbs. of dressed sablefish plus up to two additional halibut, with a targeted implementation date of October 1.

In addition, the GAP was presented with several potential options for conducting the non-tribal directed commercial fishery for halibut by IPHC staff. The IPHC Staff proposed options included analysis of a 2-day, 5-day, 10-day and 20-day fishery instead of the current 10-hour openings for the fishery. The GAP members would like IPHC to have these options sent out to the current license holders that have participated in this fishery for their comments. The GAP was informed the longer season options would be presented to the IPHC Commissioners initially at their interim meeting in November, and that the proposals would be submitted in time for review at the November Council meeting. The IPHC Commissioners could take affirmative action to change the fishery at their annual meeting in late January. The GAP recommends that the Council's Halibut Advisers who attend the annual IPHC meeting be prepared to offer comments on this issue at that time.

The GAP reviewed the IPHC options that extend the 10-hour derby fishery. The IPHC slide number 5 looks at 5-day and 10-day options. The GAP recommends that IPHC analyze 2-day, 3-day, 5-day, and 10 days, as options to replace the current 10-hour opening.