

TRANSITION OF AREA 2A FISHERY MANAGEMENT – FINAL ACTION

The Area 2A Non-Indian Commercial Directed Pacific Halibut Fishery (directed fishery) structure has been a topic of discussion between the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) over the past few years, and in 2019, the Council agreed to move forward with the transition of management authority of this fishery from IPHC to the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Recognizing that the transition process would take some time and require collaboration, the Council committed to work closely with IPHC and stakeholders.

Some 2019 highlights related to work on this topic to help inform the Council include a [scoping report](#) provided in April that outlined tasks and considerations that may need to be addressed as part of a transition plan, and a second [report](#) in June focused on transition timing and licensing of the fishery. Also at the June meeting, the Council confirmed its intent to begin the transition process, and approved a [list of actions](#) and steps to take in preparation for the transition. In September, the Council sent a [letter to IPHC](#) outlining its plans to pursue the transition of management responsibility for the directed fishery, and utilized the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) process (September/November) to recommend the season structure of the directed fishery for IPHC consideration during the transition period. In November, the Council discussed the [NMFS report](#) on the process and workload for the management transition, and directed the Project Team (NMFS and Council staff) to provide a report outlining a range of alternatives for the successful transfer of management responsibilities for the directed fishery at the March 2020 Council meeting. The Council also identified a three-meeting process to solicit industry input and public comment as this topic progresses during the course of 2020 which included March (range of alternatives), September (preliminary preferred alternatives), and November (final preferred alternatives).

At its March 2020 meeting, the Council discussed the [report](#) provided by the Project Team, and adopted the range of alternatives provided with suggested edits. In September 2020, the Project Team's report to the Council included an updated range of alternatives. Based on that report the Council adopted the following as preliminary preferred alternatives (PPAs) for public review:

1. 4.1.2 - Alternative 2: Consider the directed fishery framework during the CSP process in September and November, including any guidance for vessel limits and inseason changes for NMFS implementation.
2. 4.2.1 Alternative 2: Issue permits for all Area 2A halibut non-Indian fisheries (commercial directed, incidental salmon troll, incidental sablefish, and recreational charter).
3. 4.2.2 Alternative 2: Allow NMFS to determine the appropriate application deadlines for all commercial halibut applications, set to coincide with Council meetings and NMFS processing time.
4. 4.2.5 Alternative 1: Status quo (revised). Require proof of permit to be onboard fishing vessel and made readily available upon request, regardless of the type of permit (e.g., paper or electronic). NMFS to provide access to permit in a printable format or send paper copy directly to the participant.

Attachment 1 provides the updated range of alternatives with the PPAs highlighted in bold to assist the Council in its decision-making process.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt Final Preferred Alternatives for Transitioning Area 2A Management from the International Pacific Halibut Commission to the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Pacific Fishery Management Council.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.2, Attachment 1: Updated Range of Alternatives for the Proposed Transfer of Management Responsibilities for Area 2A Pacific Halibut Fisheries with Focus on the Non-Indian Directed Commercial Fishery.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only (see [e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- E.2 Transition of Area 2A Fishery Management – Final Action Robin Ehlke
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Preferred Alternatives for Transitioning Area 2A Management from the International Pacific Halibut Commission to the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Pacific Fishery Management Council

PFMC
10/19/20