

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2023 COMMERCIAL-
DIRECTED FISHERY REGULATIONS – FINAL ACTION

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received an update about the Commercial Directed Halibut fishery for 2023 from Ms. Robin Ehlke, Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff officer, and Ms. Lynn Mattes, from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and offers the following comments/suggestions.

In September, the GAP recommended analysis of the 2022 commercial directed regulations, under management of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), being implemented for the 2023 fishing season, under National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) management, with no changes. That analysis has been completed and the GAP members are not aware of any suggested changes from the public to this recommendation. As noted in our [September 2022 GAP report regarding the 2023 season](#), the GAP supports the continuation of the current regulations for this fishery for the 2023 fishing season.

For reference, those options include three-day openers that run from 8 a.m. Tuesday to 6 p.m. Thursday and openers set every two weeks. The GAP acknowledges that vessel limits for the third and subsequent openers may differ from IPHC-managed limits, as necessary. As noted in September, the three-day openings provide flexibility and improve safety. The recent shift to a Tuesday-Thursday opener also provides benefits to fishermen and buyers.

The GAP reiterates the need for certainty in regulations – as much as possible – regarding vessel limits and subsequent openers. This allows fishermen to maximize their business opportunities regarding halibut and other fisheries. In contrast, the uncertainty of vessel limits and three-day openings beyond the first two openers could negatively affect fishermen’s plans. For example, some may opt to switch their deck gear or equipment to participate in a different fishery or make other business decisions that would pre-empt their return to halibut fishing if the openers were set more than two weeks apart.

Furthermore, the GAP suggests the addition of halibut to the electronic logbook being developed for the non-trawl groundfish fishery. This would make more information available to NMFS for better management of the fishery in real time.

The GAP thanks Ms. Ehlke and Ms. Mattes for their continued assistance to the GAP regarding halibut agenda items.

PFMC
11/02/22