

SCOPING TOPICS FOR THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS CHANGES

Under this agenda item, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will scope potential changes to Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and to regulations governing non-Tribal commercial halibut fisheries. Topics identified under this scoping process will likely fit into two bins – those that can be addressed in the short-term through the annual process and implemented for the next season (2024), and those topics which require additional analysis or considerations and will take longer to address, and likely not be resolved in time for the 2024 season. The following is a summary of Council discussion on the subject, noting that additional topics may be identified as this process develops.

At their September 2022 meeting, the Council considered 2023 fishery regulations for the non-tribal directed commercial halibut fishery. As part of the discussion, the Enforcement Consultants (EC) provided a [report](#) (Agenda Item E.2.a) which included recommended changes to a few regulations that would affect various non-tribal commercial halibut fisheries, not just the directed commercial fishery. The same items listed were also included in the 2019 Agenda Item F.3.a, Supplemental EC [Report](#) when halibut management was transitioning from International Pacific Halibut Commission to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Council. The Council also discussed the possibility of considering major changes to the CSP given the uncertainty at the time of the Area 2A total catch exploitation yield (TCEY) for 2023 and beyond.

At the November 2022 Council meeting, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provided a [report](#) on the 2022 recreational Pacific halibut fishery off the California Coast. The CDFW report also included a summary of the recreational fishery since 2015 when active quota management of the fishery began. The Groundfish Advisory Panel (GAP) provided a [report](#) that noted the CDFW report and supported changes to the CSP that would ‘maximize’ California recreational halibut fishery opportunities and asked that the process begin in June 2023 so that potential changes could be in effect by 2024.

The Council agreed to discuss potential changes to commercial regulations described in the EC report, and potential changes to the CSP based on input from Council members and the GAP, which mainly focused on full utilization of the Area 2A TCEY. The Council added agenda items to the year-at-a glance calendar (June, September, and November) to provide a process to address these topics.

Council Operating Procedure ([COP](#)) [9](#), [Schedule 4](#) describes the annual management cycle and activities related to Pacific halibut management. This cycle begins in September of the current year and concludes with implementation of changes by April of the following year. It is likely the proposed regulatory changes would take longer to fully address and implement within the typical halibut management cycle as described in COP 9. Changes to the CSP are typically done within a two-meeting cycle (September and November); however, shifts in allocation between states and/or sectors could require more time to analyze potential impacts and garner stakeholder and public input.

The scoping report under this agenda item attempts to outline potential topics for discussion relative to halibut management policies. The goal of the report is to help define or clarify the issues raised and provide a sense of the magnitude of the issue so that the Council can develop a process and timeline to fully address the issues as needed.

Council Action:

1. **Discuss and provide guidance on specific items to move forward for potential change to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan.**
2. **Discuss and provide guidance on specific items to move forward for potential change to regulations that pertain to non-tribal commercial fisheries that retain Pacific halibut.**
3. **Provide guidance on the process and timeline.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.1, Attachment 1: Scoping Topics for Potential Changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and Non-Tribal Commercial Regulations.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

E.1 Scoping Topics for Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and Regulation Changes

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- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Identify Issues to be Addressed and Provide Guidance on Process and Timeline

PFMC
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