

SCOPING REPORT -
TOPICS FOR POTENTIAL CHANGE TO THE
PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND
NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL HALIBUT FISHERY
REGULATIONS

June 2023



Prepared by Pacific Fishery Management Council Staff, with input from National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Departments of Washington, Oregon & California

Things to consider as we work through this agenda item



What items warrant further investigation



What additional info is needed and who will provide the data



What is the process and timeline for completing the task

Highlights



Discussed potential changes at the Sept. & Nov 2022, and April 2023 Council meetings



Enforcement Consultant's report recommended regulation changes



CDFW and GAP reports discussed improving opportunity for CA sport fishery



Scoping report outlines topics, general information, and knowledge/data gaps

3.1 Enforcement

Consultants suggested regulatory changes

Three items to address:

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3.1.1. Vessel Monitoring System



3.1.2. Logbooks



3.1.3 Seabird avoidance measures

3.1.1 Vessel Monitoring System

Require vessels to carry VMS when fishing in any non-tribal commercial halibut fishery

p. 4-6, Tables 1-2, Appendix A



Fishery affected:

- 1.) Directed fishery S. of Pt. Chehalis
- 2.) Incidental Salmon Troll
- 3.) Incidental Sablefish N. of Pt. Chehalis



Actively fished permits w/o VMS (2017-21)

- 1.) Directed – 16
- 2.) Salmon Troll – 117
- 3.) Sablefish - NA



More info needed

- Reason for EC request,
- Magnitude of issue,
- Cost/benefit considerations

3.1.2 Logbooks

Remove the logbook exemption for incidental Pacific halibut fishing during the commercial salmon troll season

p. 6-7, Appendix B



Fishery affected:
Incidental Salmon Troll,
Vessels affected:
117 unique vessels (2017-2021)



Vessels \geq 26 ft. required to have logbook
Reasons for logbook requirements vary-
catch and release data, economic info,
fishery effort, stock assessments, etc.



More info needed:

- Reason for EC request
- Magnitude of issue
- Do data gap exists w/o the logbook
- Cost/benefit considerations

3.1.3 Seabird avoidance measures

Seabird avoidance gear be required when participating in the non-tribal directed-commercial halibut fishery, regardless of whether a vessel retains groundfish or not

p. 7-8, Table 2



Fishery affected:
Directed commercial fishery
Vessels affected:
11 unique vessels (2017-2021)



Vessels \geq 26 ft. using bottom longline gear north of 36 N Lat.
Streamers required or, set at night
Includes LEFG, OA, Shorebased IFQ



More info needed:
- Reason for EC request
- Magnitude of issue
- Cost/benefit considerations

3.2 CPS and Area 2A utilization

1. Consider investigating ways to better utilize the full Area 2A allocation
2. Consider investigating ways to provide more opportunity for CA sport

p. 8, Appendix C, Supp ATT 2



Utilization of Area 2A allocation
Non-tribal fisheries use 85% of FCEY on average during 2017-2022



CA Sport fishery - Council discussions with CDFW & GAP included looking for ways to provide more opportunity to that fishery



Identify a process and timeline to address each topic as appropriate

Area 2A Utilization

Area 2A allotment is a small portion (5%) of total IPHC catch limit

Area 2A allotment is fully prescribed: 35% tribal, 65% non-tribal

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Non-tribal allocation shared between commercial (31%) and sport (69%)



Commercial quota shared:
Directed Commercial (85%)
Salmon troll incidental (15%)



Sport share includes:
WA – 35% w incid sablefish
OR – 30%
CA – 4%

Area 2A Utilization

2017-2022 non-Tribal
Report Card:

Average 85% taken
range 75%-97%

Supp. Attachment 2



Commercial - 94% overall
Directed – 99%
Salmon troll – 75%
Sablefish – 89%



Sport – 80% overall
WA – 86%
OR – 69%
CA – 98%



Non-Tribal allocation
85% overall
range 75% - 97%

Catch Sharing Plan

Guides Pacific Halibut fisheries by prescribing an allocation formula and a general season structure



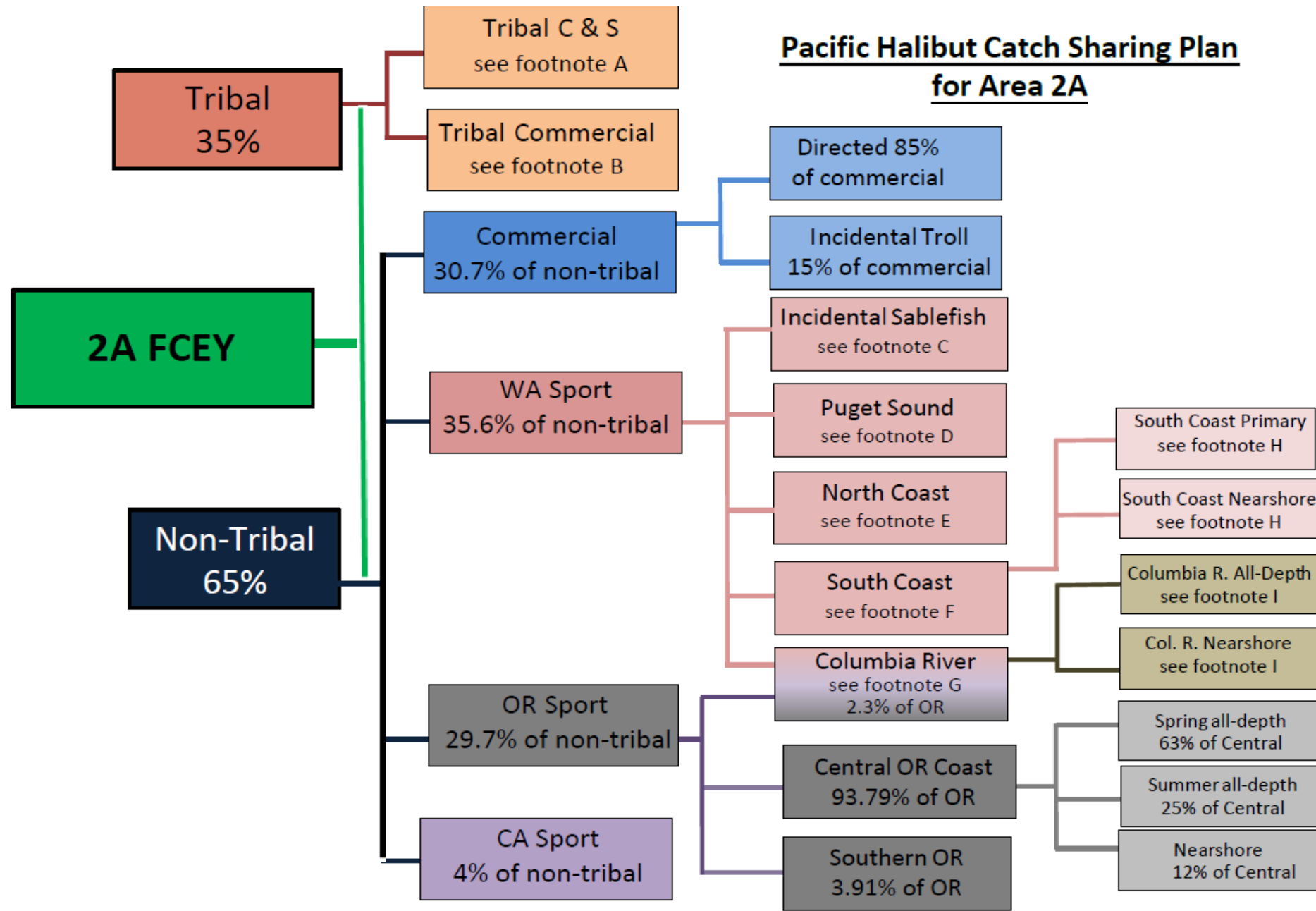
Allocation framework for tribal, non-tribal commercial, WA sport, OR sport and CA sport



Allocations may be changed if new info shows its necessary and/or Council takes action to 'reconsider its allocation recommendations'



Subquotas in place to ensure any over/under from one group does not affect another group



Area 2A Utilization

Sharing strategies currently in the CSP

not a lot of flexibility described in the plan to transfer quota between larger sectors (state-state, sport to comm)



Commercial - directed fishery balance can be transferred to salmon troll



Sport – flexibility in season to transfer quota between subareas in the same state



No sport subquota transfers between states described in CSP
One type of commercial quota transfer described in CSP

3.3 Other Considerations

Topics that came up to potentially address in the future

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3.3.1 Permit Application Deadlines



3.3.2 Types of Multiple Permits Allowed



3.3.3 Limited Access Directed Fishery

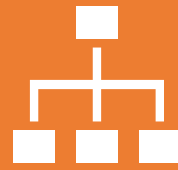
3.3.1

Permit Application Deadline Flexibility

Deadlines earlier with
transfer of management

Salmon seasons unknown
in February & early March

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Affects mainly Salmon Troll
participants due to uncertainty in troll
season and timing of deadlines

Feb. 15 Directed (was April 30 + sablefish)

Mar. 1 Incidental (was March 31 for troll)

-Can the new dates be flexible?

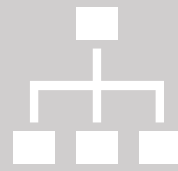
-Can changes be made prior to issue?

-Economic issue for participants - must
choose between directed or incid. troll

3.3.2 Flexibility in the rules to allow for multiple types of Permits

“A vessel may hold a permit in both the directed and incidental sablefish fisheries, but no other combination of Pacific halibut permits may be held.”

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Affects mainly Salmon Troll participants due to uncertainty in troll season

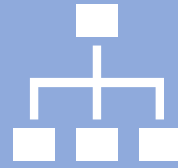
DC permit foregone (Feb 15) if planning on incidental salmon troll permit (March 1), troll season unknown

Flexibility in rules for types of permits, declarations, could benefit fishers

Number of permits for DC used to determine vessel landing limits, could impact harvest estimates

3.3.3. Limited Access in Directed Fishery

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Fishery Structure for Directed Fishery

Interest remains from industry for discussion of fishery structure (IFQ, Limited Access, etc.)

- IPHC transfer complete – NMFS need a few years still to refine process/logistics
- Future topic for consideration

4.0 Potential Pathways Forward

Each topic likely has its own process and timeline to complete

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Regulatory Item – likely take some time to collect and assess data, and then go through regulatory process for items that warrant change



CSP Item –investigating CSP flexibility in accessing ‘stranded’ quota likely a quicker route than investigating an allocation shift between sectors/states

4.1 Regulatory Items

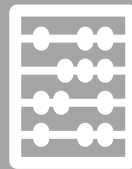
Knowledge and data gaps.

Once info available identify viable items, assign tasks, set timeline

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Request EC report to define each issue and magnitude of problem



Request reports from State/NMFS with current regulations, vessels effected, and any historic context



Request prelim. cost to participants, NMFS, States, OLE

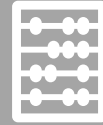
4.2 CSP Items

collect data, assign tasks, set timeline

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Request report from each coastal state on sport fishery details (2017-2022)



Request a NMFS report on Area 2A fishery allocation data (2017-2022)



Request a tri-state report with ideas/options for potential CSP changes, if needed



Consider an ad-hoc workgroup or informal task force to compile data and provide ideas

5.0 Workload and Process Considerations

Stepwise process;
each topic unique and
will likely have its own
process and timeline;
more info needed

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Clearly define issue and need for change



Collect baseline data to help guide decisions



Select where to focus, identify process



Set Timeline - likely different for each topic



Consider workload and staffing



May need to prioritize due to workload

Recap



Regulations –what are the magnitude of the issue & potential cost/benefit for change



CSP – consider investigating ways to better utilize the Area 2A non-tribal allocation



CSP – consider investigating ways to provide more opportunity for the CA sport fishery



Process and timeline likely different for each topic

Council Tasks



Discuss and provide guidance of specific items to move forward for potential change to the CSP



Discuss and provide guidance of specific items to move forward for potential change to non-tribal commercial halibut regulations



Provide guidance on process and timeline