

## ENFORCEMENT CONSULTANTS REPORT ON PACIFIC HALIBUT 2024 CATCH SHARING PLAN AND REGULATIONS

The Enforcement Consultants (EC) have reviewed reports associated with Agenda Item G.1 Pacific Halibut 2024 Catch Sharing Plan and regulations and have the following comments:

The EC has made prior statements on this topic, [F.3.a, Supplemental EC Report 1](#) at the November 2019 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting, [E.2.a, Supplemental EC Report 1](#) at the September 2022 Council meeting [E.1.a, Supplemental EC Report 1](#) at the June 2023 Council meeting and Agenda Item [D.1.a, Supplemental EC Report 1](#) at the September 2023 Council meeting.

The EC continues to recommend moving forward with the three regulatory items included in [G.1, Supplemental Attachment 6: Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan: Proposed changes to Regulatory Items](#):

Vessel Monitoring System (VMS): The EC recommends the adoption of Option 1: Require all vessels participating in the non-tribal commercial directed halibut fishery to carry VMS, both with and without groundfish onboard, and implement any regulations associated with VMS requirements as described in the federal Groundfish regulations at [50 CFR Part 660.14](#). As stated, prior, the EC is concerned with the ability to enforce closed area regulations on directed commercial halibut vessels that do not carry VMS. Currently, monitoring activity in closed areas is only possible by on-scene enforcement assets. Identifying vessels and determining whether or not gear was illegally set in a closed area is extremely difficult to detect due to the large area, limited number of patrol assets, and the vessel's ability to set and recover gear undetected at night or during periods of reduced visibility. The EC requests the 15-minute ping rate for consistency purposes with the groundfish requirements.

Fish receiving ticket forms: The EC recommends the adoption of Option 1: Require all non-tribal commercial fish receiving tickets to report the pounds AND number of individual fish for halibut landings. The individual number of fish is helpful to both enforcement and fish managers regardless if it is a ratio or vessel limit. The EC believes this requirement would not create an undue burden upon fishermen, many of whom are already keeping track of individual halibut retained to assist them in tracking how many pounds of halibut they have aboard on any one trip.

Currently in Washington, individual halibut numbers are only required to be recorded on fish receiving tickets when landed as part of an incidental catch allowance or fisheries with catch ratio restrictions. Oregon only requires the number of halibut recorded on fish receiving tickets in the incidental salmon troll fishery. California does not require the individual number of halibut to be recorded on fish receiving tickets.

Seabird Avoidance Gear: The EC recommends the adoption of Option 1: Require vessels participating in the non-tribal commercial directed halibut fishery to deploy streamer lines, when the rules governing the use of seabird avoidance gear in the Pacific Groundfish Fishery are met (vessel length, time, gear, area, etc.) Currently, only those retaining groundfish are required to

deploy Seabird Avoidance Gear. The same fishing gear is being used during the directed halibut fishery, whether you are only retaining halibut or mixing halibut and groundfish. Having vessels alongside one another in this derby fishery adds enforcement challenges when one vessel is deploying the seabird avoidance gear and the other one is not. Enforcement has cited several vessels each of the past three years for non-compliance with seabird avoidance gear requirements during the directed commercial halibut fishery and continues to inform fishers of this requirement in a pre-season web-story. Requiring everyone to conduct business the same way will likely improve compliance.

The EC also reviewed [G.1.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 1](#), regarding the proposed New Management Line at Pt. Arena, and does not have any concerns related to the proposal.

PFMC  
11/04/23