

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC
HALIBUT COMMISSION REPORT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) appreciates the presentation from Pacific Fishery Management Council staff officer Ms. Robin Ehlke and is grateful the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) agreed to the Makah Tribe's regulatory proposal of a total constant exploitable yield (TCEY) for 2024 of 1.65 million pounds for Area 2A. The corresponding fishery constant exploitable yield (FCEY) was set at 1.47 million pounds, lower than the 2023 FCEY of 1.52 million pounds, largely due to an increase in directed discard mortality. While the GAP understands the IPHC did not agree to a long-term agreement for a TCEY of 1.65 million pounds for Area 2A, the GAP also appreciates the Makah Tribe's continued proposals for a consistent Area 2A floor to keep the fisheries comparatively stable from one year to the next.

The GAP voiced concerns about the difference between the 2023 commercial discard mortality of 50,000 lbs ([Table 5 of 2023 IPHC Report](#) includes all discard mortality estimated due to the 32" minimum size limit, lost gear, and legal-sized discards associated with quota attainment) and the estimate assumed for 2024 of 110,000 lbs ([Table 6 of the 2024 IPHC Report](#)). This increase in assumed discard mortality results in a lower FCEY. However, there is no clear reason why or explanation of how those discard mortality rates were derived, which is concerning. NMFS representatives, in discussions with the GAP, said the agency would look into the reporting of halibut discard mortality. We are interested in hearing more about this at a future meeting.

PFMC
03/07/24