

COMMERCIAL FISHERY REGULATION CHANGES: VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS,  
SEABIRD AVOIDANCE, AND CATCH REPORTING – RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES,  
PRELIMINARY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) completed the transfer of management authority of commercial fisheries and licensing of commercial and charter vessels from the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) in 2022. As the management transfer process was underway, the Enforcement Consultants (EC) provided the Council with recommendations to consider that would improve enforcement operations during the non-Tribal directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery (DC halibut fishery). The EC provided reports to the Council on these recommendations in November 2019 ([Agenda Item F.2.a, Supplemental EC Report 1](#)) and September 2022 ([Agenda Item E.2.a, Supplemental EC Report 1](#)).

In June 2023, the Council reviewed a scoping report ([Agenda Item E.1, Attachment 1](#)) on potential changes to the Pacific halibut catch sharing plan and DC halibut fishery regulations, which included three of the EC's previous recommendations:

- (1) requiring all vessels participating in the DC halibut fishery to carry a vessel monitoring system (VMS) unit;
- (2) requiring all vessels in the DC halibut fishery using bottom longline gear to use seabird avoidance gear; and
- (3) revising fish receiving ticket requirements to specify both the pounds and number (count) of Pacific halibut landed by vessels participating in the DC halibut fishery are recorded.

Regarding action item 3, previous EC recommendations included requiring both pounds and number (count) of Pacific halibut be recorded for landings from the salmon troll and primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis as well as for the DC halibut fishery. However, upon further review it has been determined that, between state and Federal regulations, this is already required. Therefore, action 3 would only require modifications to reporting requirements for landings of Pacific halibut in the DC halibut fishery.

At its September 2023 meeting, the Council reviewed additional information ([Agenda Item D.1, Attachment 6](#)) on these three items and adopted them for public review (see September 2023 [Decision Summary Document](#)). In November 2023, the Council again discussed the three EC recommendations and offered guidance that additional work should be completed for review at a future meeting.

At this meeting, the Council should consider the information provided in Attachment 1 as well as any advisory body or public comments and adopt a range of alternatives and preliminary preferred alternatives. The Council should also consider the questions posed by staff in Supplemental Attachment 1 and provide additional guidance.

**Council Action:**

- 1. Review and discuss the information provided in Attachment 1.**

2. **Adopt a range of alternatives and preliminary preferred alternatives for VMS, seabird avoidance measures, and catch reporting.**
3. **Provide guidance to staff on proposed clarifications and questions as described in Supplemental Attachment 2.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 1: Draft Initial Regulatory Impact Review/Regulatory Flexibility Act/Halibuts Act Document (***Electronic Only***).
2. *Agenda Item F.2, Supplemental Attachment 2: Alternatives Summary.*
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only (see [e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.2 Commercial Fishery Regulatory Changes: Vessel Monitoring Systems, Seabird Avoidance, and Catch Reporting—Range of Alternatives Angela Forristall
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Adopt a Range of Commercial Fishery Regulation Alternatives and Preliminary Preferred Alternative

PFMC  
08/26/24