

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2025 CATCH SHARING PLAN AND ANNUAL REGULATIONS – PRELIMINARY

Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) Changes

Referencing the [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife \(ODFW\) Report 1](#), [Supplemental Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife \(WDFW\) Report 1](#), and [Supplemental California Department of Fish and Wildlife \(CDFW\) Report 1](#) regarding changes to the CSP, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) agrees with these reports.

Area 2A Commercial Discard Mortality Estimate Calculation

The GAP appreciates the information supplied by the International Pacific Halibut Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in [Supplemental NMFS Report 1](#) on the commercial discard mortality estimate per our request in March 2024 ([Agenda Item G.1.c, Supplemental GAP Report 1](#)). We also support the CDFW requests in Supplemental CDFW Report 1 for additional information on the commercial discard mortality estimate calculation.

2025 Non-Tribal Directed Commercial Halibut Season Regulations

The GAP had a robust discussion about the state of the directed commercial fishery as NMFS continues to determine the best way to manage the fishery. Five three-day openings were allowed this year in the directed fishery, but that was in part due to low vessel limits for the first two periods and then static limits for all vessels for the last three periods.

Fishermen on the GAP reported a lot of consternation among the fleet this year. The five openers were just one issue. The sablefish market was not favorable, and sablefish is commonly caught at the same time/trip as halibut. Weather conditions made it difficult for fishermen in some parts of the coast to participate in the directed fishery at various times. The availability of halibut was also spotty this year. Fishermen were also frustrated at having to wait three or four weeks for subsequent openers.

Halibut fishermen have noted they appreciate the openers every two weeks and also appreciate NMFS noticing the first two openers at once. One potential solution for attaining the halibut quota could be to notice the dates of the first three openings and increase the vessel limits to ensure the directed commercial fishery quota would be obtained during the first two, or if necessary, three, periods. The GAP also recommends consistency between openers after the first two fishing periods. Additionally, the GAP suggests that directed halibut landings be required to be on electronic fish tickets to facilitate landings data so that NMFS can expedite notices related to vessel limits and subsequent fishing periods.

Looking to the 2026 season and beyond, GAP members recommend analysis and consideration of longer fishing periods that would more align with a groundfish trip limit structure (e.g., a monthly or bimonthly limit for a single period), moving to an incidental limit for the tier fishery south of Pt. Chehalis or other fishery management structures that would change the current derby structure.

It would be helpful for marketing. It would also be safer for fishermen because they could choose their fishing time(s) based on better weather and increase fishermen's flexibility in making business decisions.

PFMC
09/19/24