

## INCIDENTAL CATCH RECOMMENDATIONS: OPTIONS FOR THE SALMON TROLL AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

Regulations governing incidental harvest of Pacific halibut (halibut) in the salmon troll fishery and primary fixed gear fishery for sablefish north of Point Chehalis require the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) to adopt halibut landing restrictions to allow incidental harvest.

Landings restrictions are meant to ensure incidental harvest rates are appropriate, do not encourage targeted fishing on halibut, ensure an equitable sharing of the halibut landings among fishers, and keep fisheries within their allocations. In past years, the Council has successfully used landing restrictions to do so. A summary of management information for the incidental halibut fisheries is provided under this agenda item as Attachment 1.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has been issuing permits for Area 2A halibut fisheries (recreational charter, directed commercial, incidental salmon troll, and incidental longline sablefish) since 2023. Application submission requirements and deadlines can be found on the NMFS webpage for [Pacific Halibut Permits](#). For 2025, application deadlines for incidental harvest is March 1, the same as in past years.

### Salmon Troll Fishery

The [Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan](#) (CSP) for Area 2A allocates 15 percent of the non-tribal commercial halibut quota to the salmon troll fishery for incidental catch. The primary goal is to harvest this quota from April–June, with a secondary objective of catching any remaining quota from July onwards.

Unless revised, the incidental halibut landing rules from the prior year will apply when the retention season opens in April. The 2024 regulations allowed one halibut per two Chinook, with one halibut permitted without meeting this ratio (1 + 1 per each 2) and a 35-halibut trip limit.

The Council should confirm or make inseason adjustments to these limits for April 1–May 15, 2025, which will remain in place unless new limits are adopted for the 2025 salmon season (beginning May 16, 2025). The Council should also adopt, for public review, a range of incidental halibut landing restrictions for the commercial salmon troll fishery beginning May 16, 2025, and continuing April 1-May 15, 2026. Such restrictions should align with the salmon management alternatives during the same timeframes. The Council is scheduled to take final action in April 2025.

### Primary Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The Pacific Halibut CSP allocates a portion of the Washington sport allocation in excess of 214,110 pounds to the primary fixed gear fishery for sablefish north of Point Chehalis if a minimum of 10,000 pounds is available. If this criterion is met, the primary sablefish fishery allocation is:

- up to 50,000 pounds if the Area 2A fishery constant exploitation yield (FCEY) is less than 1,500,000 pounds; or
- 70,000 pounds if the Area 2A FCEY is 1,500,000 pounds or more.

In 2025, the FCEY is 1,530,000 pounds, therefore the fishery is allocated 70,000 pounds.

The annual landing restrictions aim to align halibut catch with the end of the primary sablefish season or when halibut retention closes for all commercial halibut fishing under International Pacific Halibut Commission regulations (December 7, 2025).

Unless revised, halibut may be retained when the sablefish fishery opens on April 1, 2025, with incidental landing limits set to match those in place when the 2024 season closed: a ratio of 150 pounds of halibut per 1,000 pounds of dressed sablefish, plus two additional halibut (2 + 150 lbs. per 1,000 lbs.). The Council should confirm or recommend adjustments to these limits for the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis starting in April 2025.

**Council Tasks:**

- 1. Recommend inseason changes to halibut landing restrictions in the salmon troll fishery during April 1-May 15, 2025, as necessary.**
- 2. Adopt for public review a range of options for halibut landing restrictions in the salmon troll fishery beginning May 16, 2025, and for April 1-May 15, 2026.**
- 3. Adopt final halibut landing restrictions for the fixed gear sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis for the 2025 season beginning April 1.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item C.2, Attachment 1: Summary of Pacific Halibut Incidental Catch Management.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

**Agenda Order:**

- C.2 Incidental Catch Recommendations: Options for the Salmon Troll and Angela Forristall  
Final recommendations for Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Recommend Inseason Changes to April/May 2025 Retention Limits in the Salmon Troll Fishery, as Necessary; Adopt Options for Public Review on Retention in 2025 and April/May 2026 Salmon Troll Fishery; Adopt Final Retention Limits for 2025 Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery

PFMC  
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