GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2026 COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL CATCH SHARING PLAN AND ANNUAL REGULATIONS – FINAL ACTION

Sport Fisheries

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) supports the recommended changes to the Pacific halibut sport regulations presented in Agenda Item H.1, Supplemental Attachment 3, November 2025, which includes the proposed changes in the supplemental reports from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The GAP acknowledges the work done by the state agencies in communicating with the recreational fishery constituents and supports the changes recommended by ODFW and WDFW.

While California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) did not provide a state report at this meeting, there is a proposed change in the catch sharing plan (CSP) that reflects the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) motion in September (September 2025 Decision Summary Document) to change the start date for California sport fisheries. The GAP recommends the Pacific halibut regulations in California remain status quo with the following exception: Change the season start date from May 1 to April 1 (or as early as practical). This change will allow for more complete utilization of the quota and provide additional opportunity for anglers.

The GAP also notes and appreciates the coordination that took place between the state agencies and National Marine Fisheries Service inseason that resulted in the flexibility to transfer unused quota to the Columbia River area that allowed the fishery to remain open.

Non-Tribal Directed Commercial Fishery

The GAP recommends the *status quo* season structure for the directed commercial fishery in 2026, as described in Section 5.6.4 of the current CSP. Participants reported the changes made by the Council last year for the 2025 fishery worked well and support the same management regime for 2026.

The GAP continues to support looking at a way to delay the permit application date to allow participants to choose whether to participate in the salmon troll or directed halibut fishery depending on the opportunities available that year. Frequently, the decisions on salmon seasons are not finalized until the April Council meeting.

PFMC
11/15/25