

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON ANNUAL REGULATIONS AND 2A CATCH SHARING PLAN CHANGES – FINAL ACTION

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) heard reports from Ms. Robin Ehlke, Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) Salmon and Halibut Staff Officer; Ms. Kathryn Blair, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); Ms. Heather Reed, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); Ms. Lynn Mattes, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW); Ms. Caroline McKnight, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW); and Mr. Steve Keith, International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), regarding regulation proposals for catch sharing plan changes and/or season changes in 2019. WDFW ([Supplemental WDFW Report 1](#)), ODFW ([Supplemental ODFW Report 1](#)) and the IPHC ([Supplemental IPHC Report 1](#)) submitted reports detailing those proposed changes.

Mr. Steve Joner, tribal representative on the GAP, also discussed a [tribal regulatory proposal to the IPHC](#) dated Oct. 26, 2018. The proposal provides rationale to adopt a TCEY for Area 2A that supports a floor level FCEY of 1.5 million pounds. This would reduce the variability and uncertainty for all 2A fisheries.

Upon review of the three written reports from the government entities and the tribal proposal to the IPHC, the GAP suggests:

- the Council adopt the recommendations contained within those documents regarding the recreational seasons (ODFW, WDFW);
- continue the analysis of season changes in the directed commercial (derby) fishery (IPHC); and
- the Council support the tribal proposal to the IPHC about a minimum floor of 1.5 million pounds in Area 2A.

With respect to the commercial halibut fishery, the GAP suggests the IPHC, Council and NMFS also consider the option of an incidental commercial halibut fishery to the fixed gear sablefish fisheries in Area 2A – similar to the halibut incidental fishery in the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis. This option is suggested if the IPHC does not move forward with a 5-, 10- or 20-day season as discussed in or inferred from its report. The GAP supported analysis of this option in our [June 2017 Report](#).

The 100-fathom rockfish conservation area (RCA) line constricts the directed fishery, making it difficult for many fishermen to participate. Fishermen usually participate in the directed halibut derby with the understanding they will also fish for sablefish, whether in the fixed gear tiered fishery, the daily trip limit (DTL) fishery or open access. Furthermore, most of the halibut permits do not harvest the full halibut quota allocated to each permit. An incidental halibut fishery could be more effective in making the fishery economically viable.

The GAP notes that all the options are designed to decrease the regulatory discards and reduce competition on the limited areas outside of the current RCA.