

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

Regulations governing incidental harvest of halibut in the salmon troll fishery and primary fixed gear fishery for sablefish north of Point Chehalis require the Council to adopt halibut landing restrictions to allow incidental harvest while assuring quotas are not exceeded.

Salmon Troll Fishery

The 2019 Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A allocates 15 percent of the non-Indian commercial halibut allocation to the salmon troll fishery as incidental catch. The primary management objective outlined in the CSP is to harvest the incidental quota during the April through June salmon troll fishery, with a secondary objective to harvest any remaining quota from July through the remainder of the salmon troll fishery. The Council has successfully used landing ratios and a total trip limit to ensure a manageable progression of the fishery in past years. A summary of management information for the incidental halibut fishery since the initial season in 1995 is provided in Agenda Item H.2, Attachment 1.

Current regulations provide for Pacific halibut retention from April 1-30, 2019, if the pre-May 1 salmon troll fisheries occur. The landing ratio would be the same as those adopted pre-season in 2018, which was no more than one halibut per two Chinook, except one halibut may be possessed or landed without meeting the ratio requirement and no more than 25 halibut may be landed per trip. Under this agenda item, the Council should confirm or make recommendations to modify the April 2019 retention limits.

Further, under this agenda item, the Council should adopt for public review a range of halibut landing restrictions for the salmon troll fishery from May 1, 2019, until the end of the 2019 salmon troll fishery season, and for the salmon troll fishery during April 1-30, 2020. Such restrictions should comport with the 2019 salmon management alternatives and the early season (pre-May 1) fisheries in 2020. The Council is scheduled to take final action on these limits at the April Council meeting.

Primary Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

The total Area 2A halibut quota is large enough this year to provide for incidental halibut harvest in the primary fixed gear fishery for sablefish north of Point Chehalis. This incidental fishery is allocated that portion of the Washington sport allocation in excess of 214,110 pounds, provided a minimum of 10,000 pounds is available, up to 50,000 pounds of halibut, unless the Area 2A total allowable catch is 1,500,000 pounds or more, then the maximum allocation is 70,000 pounds. The objectives for the annual landing restrictions are to attain the halibut allocation at about the same time as the end of the primary sablefish season (October 31) and to ensure an equitable sharing of the halibut landings among the fishers. In past years, the Council has successfully used landing restrictions to maintain the harvest within the allocation. A summary of management information for the incidental halibut fishery since the initial season in 2001 is

provided in Agenda Item H.2, Attachment 1. Until revised, Pacific halibut may be retained when the Sablefish fishery begins scheduled for April 1, 2019. The incidental landing limits allowed would be consistent with those in place when the fishery last closed in 2018, which was a landing ratio of 200 pounds dressed weight of halibut for every 1,000 pounds dressed weight of sablefish landed, and up to two additional halibut in excess of the 200-pounds-per-1,000-pound ratio per landing. Under this agenda item, the Council should confirm or make recommendations to modify the incidental landing limits for the primary sablefish north of Point Chehalis from April 1 to October 31, 2019.

Council Action:

- 1. Recommend inseason changes to April 2019 (pre-May 1 fisheries) retention limits in the salmon troll fishery, as necessary.**
- 2. Adopt for public review a range of options for halibut landing restrictions in the 2019 salmon troll fishery beginning May 1, and for April 1-30, 2020.**
- 3. Adopt final halibut landing restrictions for the fixed gear sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis from April 1 to October 31, 2019.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.2, Attachment 1: Summary of Pacific Halibut Incidental Catch Management.

Agenda Order:

- H.2 Incidental Catch Recommendations: Options for the Salmon Troll and
Final Recommendations for Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries Robin Ehlke
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Recommend Inseason Changes to April 2019 Halibut Retention Limits in the Salmon Troll Fishery, as Necessary; Adopt Public Review Options for Retention in 2019 and April 2020 Salmon Troll Fishery; and Adopt Final Retention Limits for 2019 Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery

PFMC
02/11/19