

**National Marine Fisheries Service Report:
Recommendations on Pacific Halibut Workshop Timing and Scope**

The Area 2A Pacific halibut fisheries have unique management and enforcement challenges. These challenges have become increasingly time and energy-intensive for all management partners, without a clear understanding of how the components of the management framework aid or hinder us in addressing these challenges. During the annual proceedings to develop the 2019 management measures for the halibut fishery, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Council, the states, and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) agreed to a workshop to examine opportunities for improvement in our Area 2A halibut fisheries.

Timing

Preliminary discussions with West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) staff suggest 2018 observer data for the directed halibut fishery may be preliminarily available in May, and could be available in a more final version in July. We recommend workshop timing that would allow for the availability of that data, as well as any other data and analyses that may be required to support topics identified in the workshop scope. We also recommend workshop timing that allows for a presentation of a summary of the workshop proceedings and outcomes at the September Council meeting, as well as at the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) interim meeting in November. With these two constraints, we recommend a workshop occur in June or July 2019.

Scope

We recommend that the scope of the workshop should include the items outlined in the Council's letter to the IPHC in November 2018 ([Agenda Item H.1 Attachment 2](#)), which were outlined relative to potential impacts of a longer directed commercial fishery on:

- Changes in bycatch
- Collection of data by WCGOP
- Economic viability of the fishery
- Enforcement of the fishery regulations
- Timing of the fishery
- Interplay with the recreational fishery

In addition to the analyses of potential changes to the length of the directed commercial fishery, it would be beneficial to discuss:

- Management, enforcement authority, and roles in the management process between NMFS, the Tribes, the states, the Council, and the IPHC;
- Halibut management through the Council and advisory body process;
- Potential efficiencies in the annual rulemaking process for updating the Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan.

Because these broader topics are relevant to all of the non-tribal Area 2A halibut fisheries, we do not recommend restricting the scope of the workshop to the directed commercial fishery. Discussing the recreational and incidental halibut fisheries will allow for holistic discussions on the overall non-tribal halibut management paradigm. We welcome additional input from the Council and our management partners on the workshop scope.

Workload

The workload for the workshop includes: 1) planning, facilitation, and outreach; 2) developing analyses to support the workshop discussions; and 3) summarizing the workshop results.

We ask for staff support from the Council and our management partners to identify staff to contribute to this workload leading up to and following a workshop. We recommend that leadership from the management partners work quickly after the Council meeting to develop a plan to execute the workshop and to ensure proper distribution of the workload and accountability for workshop preparations. We have outlined our staff availability to contribute to each component below.

Task	NMFS capacity
Workshop Planning, Facilitation, and Outreach	Coordinate with others to determine venue and workshop structure, procure NOAA facilitator, if desired, moderate workshop discussions
Development of analyses to support workshop discussions	See appended preliminary list of tasks
Summarizing workshop results	Participate in development of summary report with Council, state, and/or GMT staff

Potential information helpful to a workshop (dependent on scope) and potential workload distribution:

- Fleet characteristics (who’s participating in directed vs. incidental fisheries, vessel size, participation in other fisheries, etc.) [TBD – Council/State/GMT/NMFS/WCGOP staff]
- Overview of management structure [NMFS staff]
- Catch in all 2A fisheries over the last few years [Compiled from IPHC reports]
- Overview on bycatch of groundfish in halibut fishery and halibut bycatch in groundfish fishery [WCGOP]
 - Limited projections about how bycatch could change if halibut season structure was changed [WCGOP]
 - Discussion of how observer coverage and biological sampling would potentially change under longer commercial seasons [WCGOP]
- Overview of gear conflicts/season timing between commercial and recreational fisheries [TBD – State/GMT staff]

- Revenue from directed and incidental fisheries [TBD – State/GMT staff]
 - IOPAC model output for jobs and income impacts of directed and incidental fisheries [TBD – NWFSC/GMT staff]
- Angler trip numbers by state where we have them [State staff]
- Enforcement data summary [NMFS Office of Law Enforcement; State enforcement partners]
- Coast Guard data summary [Coast Guard]