

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
2013 PACIFIC HALIBUT REGULATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) considered proposed alternatives submitted by The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to the Pacific halibut catch sharing plan and the current regulations for the halibut fishery in International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) area 2A. A presentation was given to GAP members by representatives from ODFW and WDFW.

GAP Recommendations:

The GAP supports the recommended alternatives in the ODFW and WDFW reports.

GAP Comments:

There was some confusion regarding the greater than 700,000 pound total allowable catch trigger to status quo for the Oregon central coast subarea. It is assumed by the GAP that status quo is the three day a week opening for the nearshore fishery and below 700,000 pounds would be seven days.

The GAP realizes that the proposal to align the opening dates for the salmon troll incidental halibut fishery will involve somewhat complex processes. It may not be possible to complete the process for 2013, however, the GAP recommends pursuing the changes to happen as soon as possible.

The GAP supports another proposed action to allow halibut retention beginning April 1 in the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis. The GAP discussed the suggestion by the IPHC to move the date when IPHC issues licenses to March 15. This would not be a problem for the vessel operators. Once again, the GAP prefers that the changes be in place for April 1, 2013, and if not possible, in time for the fishery in 2014.

Finally, the GAP recognizes that the proposed new format for the IPHC (Agenda Item E.1.a, Supplemental Attachment 4) could improve the process. The GAP encourages the Council to support this process and lend advice and expertise whenever possible.