

DRAFT Meeting Summary

NPFMC/IPHC

February 5, 2015, Seattle WA

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (Commission) met jointly from 10 am to 5:30 pm. Presentations were received on the following:

- History of Council, NMFS, and Commission interactions
- Respective management authorities and applicable laws
- Reconciliation of bycatch estimates for use in stock assessment and FCEY determinations
- Improving estimates of discard mortalities and discard mortality rates (DMRs) in various fisheries, including directed halibut fisheries
- IPHC total mortality accounting framework
- The Council's BSAI halibut bycatch reduction package
- Issues and approaches relative to potential establishment of abundance-based PSC limits
- Areas of mutual interest in research and facilitation of management

Public comment was received from 32 members of the public.

A joint discussion among Council and Commission members identified the following issues for further consideration, including information requests to facilitate further collaboration between the Council and Commission:

1. The need to review and update DMRs for all fisheries, including development of a table which summarizes current DMRs, how the rates were derived for each fishery, and the level of 'certainty' (if possible) associated with each DMR.
2. Recognizing that the Commission has its own scientific review process, the Council expressed a desire for the Council's SSC to review ongoing research by the IPHC under an NPRB grant, and for the SSC to review (when appropriate) the ongoing development of the Commission's total mortality accounting approach (including the application of Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) and associated management implications).
3. Both bodies recognize that there are potential benefits to abundance-based management of all removals from the halibut stock and supported continued investigation of this approach.
4. The need to further reconcile bycatch and wastage accounting and calculation between the Commission and NMFS, and identify any implications for setting TCEY.
5. Further information on the IPHC 'closed area', including implications with regard to potential changes in that closed area (i.e., area allocations, access to the area, and associated changes to existing catch share plans).

6. The need to address the ‘tendering’ issue in the GOA as it relates to application of observer coverage.
7. The need to further refine a common understanding of science and process, as well as a common vocabulary (for example, Blue Line vs ABC).
8. A recognition that, subject to stock conservation, it is a domestic choice of how to allocate available halibut in each country’s waters.,
9. A coordinated prioritization of research in areas of mutual concern.
10. A recognition of the potential benefits of IBQ type management programs for effecting bycatch reductions.
11. A lack of understanding of migration of halibut makes it difficult to determine the extent to which bycatch is an allocation vs conservation issue, and determine the relative impacts across all management areas (and the desire to prioritize migration research).
12. The importance of the Council’s BSAI bycatch decision (this year) relative to the Commission’s decisions in 2016.
13. Potential Council review of its management objectives relative to the directed halibut fisheries.
14. Reconciliation of survey information for Area 4B relative to observations from fishermen.
15. Potential development of monitoring standards for all fisheries, including directed halibut fisheries.
16. Recognition of the potential disparities between the fishery and management contexts when making comparisons to bycatch reductions in Area 2B and U.S. west coast fisheries (apples and oranges) relative to managing expectations (a discussion paper providing appropriate context for comparisons might be useful)
17. Development of a more formal meeting schedule, or possible Joint Protocol, between the Council and the Commission.
18. Potential direction to staff and/or Plan Teams to effect the issues listed above.