

Joint NPFMC / IPHC Meeting

June 7, 2017, Juneau, AK

Agenda Item 4: Progress reports On Council Research and Management Priorities

4f. Annual research priorities related to halibut

The Council is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act to annually submit a list of five-year research priorities. This list is developed through review by the Council's Plan Teams (groundfish, crab, and scallop Plan Teams) and the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The Council provides final approval of these research priorities each June and submits them to NOAA Fisheries, as well as to numerous research and academic institutions throughout the Nation (including Universities engaged in North Pacific research, the IPHC, and entities such as the North Pacific Research Board). The five-year research priorities are divided among four categories:

1. **CRITICAL ONGOING MONITORING** – Ongoing surveys that support essential management functions, cannot likely be achieved by other means, or is required by regulation;
2. **URGENT** – time-limited projects essential for compliance with federal requirements or necessary to decision making;
3. **IMPORTANT** – provide information to support near-term management goals; and,
4. **STRATEGIC** – research not associated with an immediate need or near-term Council action, but that is valuable or supports long-term needs.

Some of the Council's research priorities from 2016 (see https://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/resources/NPFMC_Research_Priorities_2017-2021.pdf) are directly or indirectly associated with the biology or management of the halibut resource, including the following:

- #211 - Benefits and costs of directed halibut catch and halibut PSC utilization - URGENT
- #235 – Investigate gear modifications and changes in fishing practices to reduce bycatch – URGENT
- #385 – Study Pacific halibut PSC, bycatch, and discard behavior in fisheries – URGENT
- #388 – Study temporal and spatial patterns in size-at-age of Pacific halibut – URGENT
- #491 – Assess dependence and impacts of halibut management actions on communities – URGENT
- #492 – Investigate factors underlying fishery responses to halibut PSC caps – URGENT
- #493 – Examine the relative importance of historical closed areas near the Pribilof Islands as juvenile halibut nursery habitat relative to other regions coast-wide – URGENT
- #182 – Evaluate current and alternative Council PSC/bycatch reduction initiatives – IMPORTANT
- #209 – Investigate factors affecting the guided angler sector of the halibut fishery – IMPORTANT
- #387 – Determine effects of migration on Pacific halibut population/management – IMPORTANT
- #389 – Investigate ecosystem effects and inter-species interactions of halibut – IMPORTANT
- #386 – Investigate long-term effects of fishing on Pacific halibut – STRATEGIC

At this June 2017 Meeting, the Council will approve its research needs for the next 5 years. The IPHC may wish to weigh in on the relative importance of existing list of halibut related research, or suggest additional research items for Council to consider.

The Halibut Management Framework identifies the Council's halibut research priorities listed above, as well as past, current, and future AFSC and IPHC research related to halibut.