

## **C-4 Halibut Management Framework**

The Council amends the Halibut Management Framework, tasks workgroups, and makes additional requests and direction pursuant to the comments and suggestions recommended by the SSC:

### **Framework Additions/Clarifications:**

- Modify the research area regarding impacts of short term, medium term, and long term changes in the environment to include a broader range of factors potentially affecting changes in size-at-age such as: prey abundance, competition with other species, fishing, and other factors. This priority should be added to the list of identified research priorities (page 7).
- Include a listing of IPHC and University studies to Attachment 3 (ongoing and future research related to halibut).
- Include both biomass and abundance information in the framework and note that both should be included in future PSC analyses.
- Modify the Discard Mortality Rate Research Priority to include also:
  - Efforts to assess discard mortality rates in situ, including evaluation of sample sizes, data collection and the use of advanced technology,
  - Work to evaluate methods to reduce discard mortality (e.g. excluders, deck-sorting),
  - Efforts to improve information about what is actually being discarded in all fisheries [size, sex, age, maturity, release mortality rates (e.g. sport fishery), etc].

### **Tasking for DMR and ABM working groups:**

- The Council tasks the Abundance-Based Methods and DMR working groups to collaborate with the AFSC Multi-Species Technical modeling team to assess and make recommendations regarding the use of the model in the Council's halibut bycatch management.

### **Other requests:**

The Council requests that the IPHC provide a conceptual model of the stock assessment workflow with explanations of how information about migration, natural mortality, size/weight at age, and DMRs are parameterized or influence the assessment.

The Council encourages industry to work with the AFSC or other appropriate agencies/organizations to consider development of collaborative research and tagging programs (i.e. wire, PIT or CWT) which could produce important information on halibut movement and the relationship between viability and discard mortality in the near-term.

The Council directs staff to discuss potential options for examining human dimensions for inclusion in the SAFE documents pursuant to the SSC comments.

The Council acknowledges the SSC statement regarding how difficult it is to estimate age-specific natural mortality rates, and that this research priority may not be cost effective, prudent, or appropriate to pursue.