

C1 Halibut ABM

- The SSC thanks the workgroup for their work to produce the draft DEIS.
- The SSC **does not support** release of the DSEIS for public review at this time and wishes to review an updated version
- The report provides a scientific basis for designing ABM alternatives that strike a balance between the benefits of PSC and directed fishing, but highlights two **limitations of the current alternatives** in achieving the Council's goals:
 - Any differences in age/size between PSC and directed fishery catch **do not result in appreciable differences in halibut SSB** when halibut mortality is shifted from PSC to the directed fishery
 - The groundfish fleet's ability to avoid halibut is poorly related to indices of abundance

C1 Halibut ABM

- The simulation model is an **appropriate tool to evaluate trade-offs** associated with allocating different portions of the total simulated mortality between PSC and the directed fishery
- The SSC recommends the following improvements to the model:
 - **Implement a simple version of the “30:20 control rule”** to further reduce TCEY at very low levels of stock abundance as it better approximates the current IPHC management approach
 - **Incorporate inter-season variability in halibut encounters and corresponding PSC utilization rates**, because the assumption that PSC usage is a constant proportion of PSC limits is unrealistic.

C1 Halibut ABM

- Improvements (cont'd):
 - **Consider a wider range of recruitment variability**, specifically a low recruitment scenario to evaluate performance of the rules at low abundances
 - The SSC recommended other technical improvements but **no major changes** to the current simulation model
- The SSC recommends including an alternative, for comparison purposes, that allows **regulatory flexibility** for in-season adjustments /transfers between sectors, after seasonal halibut PSC encounter rates are observed