

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
December 6-9, 2022 - Anchorage, AK

E Staff Tasking

Motion 1

The AP recommends the *Council ask staff to* revise the small sablefish release document to include, as appropriate, the analysis provided by Dr. Knuckey and the added uncertainty associated with allowing the release of small sablefish in the context of existing uncertainty in the stock assessment process.

Motion passed 14-0

Rationale in Favor of Motion

- *Public comment and testimony indicated that this remains a high priority item for the fixed gear industry. The proposed alternative in the staff tasking memo regarding the use of escape rings as a mechanism for replacing small sablefish release does not respond to the needs in the directed fishery. Not all vessels are utilizing pots at this time and the majority of vessels using pots are already utilizing escape rings for this exact purpose.*
- *The AP recognizes that staff has to prioritize its time and the assessment of Council projects indicates that this is a low priority item that could require considerable staff time and effort to come up with DMRs for sablefish. However, the statewater sablefish fisheries in Alaska as well as in British Columbia and on the West coast have provisions for small sablefish release. These fisheries utilize DMR data to estimate discard mortality in their current fisheries. It is recommended that NMFS work with state agencies to alleviate the effort needed to collect and analyze this data*
- *There is a conservation component of releasing small sablefish by allowing the juvenile fish to reach a meaningful age of maturity to contribute to the spawning stock biomass.*

Motion 2

The AP recommends that the Council prioritize the analysis of the regulation for the C-share participation requirements that was passed as an emergency rule and will expire before the next IFQ issuance, at which time many crew may lose their QS.

Motion passed 16-0

Rationale in Favor of Motion

- *The current small TACs for most of the crab fisheries have reduced the number of vessels harvesting resulting in less capacity for crew participation. Because of this reduced fishery participation, C-Share participation/landing requirements are not being met by many C-Share holders.*
- *There is a discrepancy on the timing of the requirement and the issuance of the QS that does not line up with the recent emergency rule request. Time is of the essence in this issue as each year passes and more C-Share holders could potentially lose some part or all of their QS if they are unable to make a landing.*

Motion 3

The AP recommends the Council ask staff to initiate a discussion paper exploring the removals and impacts of halibut mortality in IPHC areas 2C & 3A in the unguided rental boat sector.

Motion passed 16-0

Rationale in Favor of Motion

- *Public testimony expressed concern around halibut removals from the unguided rental boat sector that are not currently subjected to the same bag limits as the charter sector nor is effective catch accounting being considered in their total removals. Most of these vessels are outfitted as a charter vessel and instructed and led as a charter vessel but without the actual guide on board. In effect this has created a bit of a loophole around annual/daily bag limits, logbook reporting, and size restrictions that are placed on the guided sector to manage and inform the halibut resource.*
- *Halibut stocks across most IPHC areas, but especially in 2C and 3A, have and will continue to experience declines and it is important that the impacts of this sector in regards to removals, and discard mortality as well as impacts to communities and competing industries, are examined and properly accounted for in future management. The current survey mechanism for counting these removals, the Creel Survey, has been defunded and is unable to be physically present in the remote regions and communities where this is occurring.*
- *The unguided sector is also growing in scope and size as many charter operators are offering this as an alternative to guided fishing. Overall it is most important that all impacts and removals to this important resource be properly documented and considered in future management.*

Motion 4

Move to approve the AP minutes from the October 2022 Meeting.

Motions passed 16-0