

Motion -- C-7 Agenda Item
Halibut Discard Mortality Rate (DMR) Methodology

The Council directs the working group to continue evaluating DMR methodology improvements in an expanded discussion paper.

1. The working group should:
 - Focus its evaluation on the alternative methods described in row 2 of Table 10 in the discussion paper.
 - Provide calculated DMRs under the status quo and the alternative methods, similar to Table 2 in the discussion paper.
 - Incorporate the SSC's comments as practical.
 - Provide an opportunity for public participation in the working group.

The Council acknowledges that the alternative DMR methodologies under consideration would continue to result in specification of DMRs through the annual harvest specifications process prior to the fishing season. These specified DMRs will be used for inseason management of halibut PSC limits in the NMFS Catch Accounting System.

2. The expanded discussion paper will be reviewed by the Groundfish Plan Teams at their September 2016 meetings.

At its October 2016 meeting, the Council will consider the expanded discussion paper, input from the Plan Teams, the SSC, AP, and public testimony in considering whether to revise the methodology for establishing DMRs for 2017/2018.

3. The Council encourages the working group to continue coordinating with the NMFS Observer Program to review the halibut viability assessment procedures to ensure that randomized sampling takes place and that sample sizes are adequate for calculating DMRs. **The Council requests the workgroup consider steps needed to evaluate the assumed 16 percent mortality rate in the directed halibut fishery.**
4. The Council encourages the working group to evaluate longer term changes to DMR calculation methods, as described in rows 3 and 4 of Table 10, as feasible and provide recommendations to the Council for continuing to improve methods for estimating halibut DMRs.