



Advisory Panel MINUTES

January 28-30, at the Renaissance hotel in Seattle, WA

The Advisory Panel met Tuesday, January 28, through Thursday, January 30, 2020, in the North/West room in Seattle, Washington. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent members are ~~stricken~~):

Christiansen, Ruth (Co-Vice Chair)	Kauffman, Jeff	Stevens, Ben
Curran, Tori	Kavanaugh, Julie	Upton, Matt (Co-Vice Chair)
Donich, Daniel	Lowenberg, Craig	Vanderhoeven, Anne
Drobnic, Angel (Chair)	Mann, Heather	Velsko, Erik
Gruver, John	O'Connor, Jamie	Weiss, Ernie
Gudmundsson, Gretar	O'Donnell, Paddy	Wilt, Sinclair
Hayden, Natasha	Peterson, Joel	
Johnson, Jim	Scoblic, John	

The AP approved the minutes from the December 2019 meeting.

C1 Charter Halibut in 3A

AP Motion

The AP recommends the Council make the following recommendations for Area 3A charter halibut allocations, as provided by the Charter Halibut Management Committee:

- For all allocations, unless otherwise specified: a daily bag limit of 2 halibut; an annual limit of 4 halibut per charter angler; Wednesdays closed to halibut retention all year; 1 trip per halibut charter vessel per day; and 1 trip per charter halibut permit per day.
- If the allocation is less than 2.014 M/lbs but greater than or equal to 1.695 M/lb: a daily bag limit of 2 halibut with one fish of any size and one fish less than or equal to 26 inches; adjust the number of Tuesdays closed to halibut retention such that the projected removals achieve the allocation (Table 1, page 15 of the Supplemental Analysis; the Tuesdays closed to halibut retention are specified in Table 22, pg. 38 of the December 3 analysis).
- If the allocation is less than 1.695 M/lb but greater than or equal to 1.588 M/lb. (proposed to achieve allocation for status quo TCEY = 1.66 M/lb.): a daily bag limit of 2 halibut with one fish of any size and one fish less than or equal to 26 inches; all Tuesdays closed to halibut retention; adjust the number of Thursdays closed to halibut retention to a maximum of four Thursday closures such that the projected removals achieve the allocation (Table 5, page 19 of the January 23 Supplemental Analysis; Thursdays closed to halibut retention are specified in Table 4; page 18 of the Supplemental Analysis).
- If the allocation is less than 1.588 M/lb (proposed to achieve allocation between 1.588 M/lb. and reference TCEY = 1.24 M/lb.): all Tuesdays are closed to halibut retention; a daily bag limit of 1 halibut, with a reverse (protected) slot limit; the upper limit of the reverse slot limit is fixed at 80 inches and the lower end of the reverse slot limit is adjusted such that the projected removals

achieve the allocation, beginning at 58 inches (Appendix Table A5-o, page 75, last column, of the Supplemental Analysis).

The AP also recommends to the Council the clarifying notes to Area 2C management measures that accompany IPHC Proposal B-1 for the 2020 Annual IPHC Meeting (IPHC-2020-AM096-PropB1). The notes read as follows.

1. If the Area 2C catch limit is from 0.772 to 1.001 million pounds, it is the intention of the NPFMC to maintain an upper size limit of halibut at O80 and a lower size limit of halibut at or above U40. If possible, under the catch limit, the U40 size limit will be adjusted upward until the catch limit is achieved (Table 6 of the analysis).
2. If the catch limit in Area 2C is from 0.658 to 0.771 million pounds, the NPFMC recommends maintaining the U40/O80 size limit, then progressively reducing the number of days when halibut may be retained by establishing closures on Wednesdays, beginning on 9 September and working consecutively toward the beginning of the season with a maximum of all Wednesdays closed (Table 10-A1 of the analysis).
3. If the catch limit in Area 2C is from 0.646 to 0.656 million pounds, the NPFMC recommends a U40/O80 size limit, an annual limit of 4 halibut for all charter anglers, and a closure of between fourteen and all Wednesdays, beginning on 9 September and working consecutively toward the beginning of the season (Table 14-A1 of the analysis).
4. If the catch limit in Area 2C is from 0.636 to 0.645 million pounds, the NPFMC recommends a U41/O80 size limit, an annual limit of 3 halibut for all charter anglers, and a closure of between fourteen and all Wednesdays, beginning on 9 September and working consecutively toward the beginning of the season (Table 16-A1 of the analysis). If the catch limit in Area 2C is from 0.615 to 0.636 million pounds, the NPFMC recommends a U40/O80 size limit, an annual limit of 3 halibut for all charter anglers, and a closure of between thirteen and all Wednesdays, beginning on 9 September and working consecutively toward the beginning of the season (Table 16-A1 of the analysis).
5. If the catch limit in Area 2C is less than 0.615 million pounds, the NPFMC recommends a closure of all Wednesdays for the entire season, an annual limit of 3 halibut for all charter anglers, and an adjustment of the lower size limit until the catch limit is achieved. The expected harvest under these measures with a lower size limit of U39 is 0.599 million pounds (Table 16-A1 of the analysis).

Motion passed 20-0

Rationale:

- *The Area 3A allocation recommendations are intended to meet mandated IPHC harvest levels and are the result of unprecedented outreach and deliberation amongst many charter operators and Charter Committee members from coastal communities all over Alaska.*
- *In considering Charter Halibut Measures, it is important to assess the challenges being faced by the sector, which are encapsulated in the following statements by Area 3A and 2C charter halibut representatives:*

For 3A: "In the eyes of the Charter Halibut Committee and a majority of the charter industry we view the one halibut reverse slot limit as the "nuclear option" that would have disastrous consequences to the 3A charter industry and coastal communities in Southcentral Alaska. Therefore, though we have made recommendations below this level to fulfill our obligation as a committee, we cannot willingly accept a harvest below 1.588 m/lb. We have heard from many local businesses that closing the halibut fishery beyond 2 days per week or instituting an entirely new management scenario (e.g., reverse slot limit) will

force closures of some charter businesses as well as starving many support related businesses such as launch services, restaurants, processors, boat repair facilities, and others.”

For Area 2C: “Area 2C representatives of the committee note that, especially under low abundance, CSP sport allocations do not adequately fund the 2C charter industry. Halibut are essential to the fishing opportunity Southeast businesses offer to attract and keep customers. As a direct result of restrictive guided halibut limits, 2C operators are now losing repeat business and struggling to interest new business. Effects are magnified in front season bookings, where halibut are one of few target fish available. Southeast guided anglers are now reduced to one halibut per day under 38” and face season-long Wednesday closures combined with annual limits to maintain a similar size fish for 2020. The 2C reverse slot has led to an average charter halibut of 31” (9.6 net pounds)- an inch below the legal-sized retainable fish in the commercial fleet. It has also triggered a spike in releases, resulting in deductions in allocation up to 8% or 60,000 pounds (3A release mortality runs 1%). Council review of the CSP is scheduled for 2021. We ask Council members to reexamine allocative relationships between sectors, especially with respect to viability thresholds of the charter fleet at low abundance. The RQE offers no immediate allocation relief, and at best, slow recovery over an extended period when finally implemented.”

C2 NSRKC Specs

AP Motion

The AP acknowledges receipt of the January 2020 Crab Plan Team Report and recommends the Council approve the OFL and ABC for NSRKC as recommended by the SSC.

Motion passed 21-0

Rationale:

- The AP appreciates the effort and work-product provided by the CPT and SSC.
- The increased ABC buffer is responsive to concerns regarding the current status of the stock as provided in public testimony and noted by the SSC.

C3 CGOA Rockfish

AP Motion

The AP recommends that the Council take final action at this meeting and select alternative 2 as the preferred alternative to reauthorize the Rockfish Program (RP) with the existing management framework and make the following regulatory changes under the elements and options (**bold**):

Element 1: Modify regulations at 679.80 (a) (2) to specify the duration of the program.

Option 1: Remove the sunset.

Option 2: Replace with new sunset date (10-20 years).

Element 2: Reallocate unharvested RP Pacific cod from RP cooperatives to open access fisheries after the RP fisheries close on November 15th. The Regional Administrator would consider a

reallocation of the projected unused allocation ²first to the CV pot, jig, and hook-and-line sectors, and then to other open access fisheries, then any additional reallocations according to regulations at 679.20 (a) (12) (ii).

Element 3: Exempt crab program sideboard limits for vessels when fishing in the RP.

Element 4: Require annual NMFS cost recovery reports in regulations.

Element 5: Clarify regulations at 679.5 (r) (10) to specify that only shoreside processors receiving RP Cooperative Quota (CQ) must submit the Rockfish Ex-vessel Volume and Value Report.

Element 6: Remove the regulations in 679.5 (r) (6) (iii) (B) requiring that an annual RP cooperative report be submitted to NMFS. The Council may request that the RP cooperatives voluntarily provide annual reports to the Council.

Element 7: Revise 679.5 (r) (6) (iii) (D) to replace “any action” with “any civil action”.

Element 8: Revise 679.81 (i) (D) (3) to remove requirements for a Fishing Plan to be submitted with a cooperative application for CQ.

Element 9: Revise 679.84 (f) (1) to exempt shoreside processors under the RP from the requirement to provide an observer work station and observer communication described at 679.28 (g) (7) (vii) and (viii).

Element 10: Allow NMFS to reallocate unused rockfish ICAs to RP cooperatives.

Element 11: Clarify regulations regarding accounting for inseason use caps to specify that any transfer of unused rockfish ICAs and CP CQ to CV cooperatives does not apply to CV ownership, cooperative, harvester CQ, or shoreside processor CQ use caps.

Element 12: Modify cooperative check-in times from 48 to 24 hours.

¹**Element 13: Remove CP sideboard limits in the WGOA rockfish fisheries in 679.82 (e) (4).**

Element 14: Modify regulations at 679.23 (h) (1) by removing the 3-day stand down for CVs that fish for groundfish in the BSAI while pollock or Pacific cod is open to directed fishing in the BSAI from the GOA stand down if they check into the RP and fish in the CGOA RP.

Amendment¹ (to remove element 13 from the recommendations) failed 4-17

Amendment² (to include underlined text in Element 2) passed 11-9

Motion as amended passed 20-1

Rationale for Motion:

- *The Rockfish Program has been a success. There have been improvements in safety, ex-vessel value, product utilization, and bycatch management and there has been no public comment to indicate that the program is not working, that the National Standards are not being met, or that the program is not meeting its stated objectives. Reauthorizing the program will allow the benefits to keep accruing to harvesters, processors, the resources, the community, the state of Alaska, and the nation. There is urgency to take final action at this meeting to ensure the program does not end with the original sunset date.*
- *The analysts have concluded that the Council’s PPA, as well as the two new elements under consideration, do not jeopardize the continued participation of any fishing community under this program. The elements included under the recommended PA are looking to increase efficiency, eliminate unnecessary regulations and provide flexibility in how the fishery is prosecuted.*
- *Regarding Element 1, the MSA requires a periodic review of all LAPP programs. Additionally, managers and stakeholders can initiate a check-in or request a change to the program at any time based on compelling evidence to do so. As such, retaining the sunset date offers no practical*

benefit to the program or its participants. A sunset date undermines the success of the program by introducing unnecessary uncertainty and unpredictability. A sunset date also increases the costs of managing the program both from a financial and human resources perspective due to the considerable time and expense associated with reauthorizing the program, which would be in addition to those associated with the MSA-required program reviews. National Standard 7 requires that management measures minimize costs and avoid unnecessary duplication and retaining the sunset date violates this Standard.

- *Element 4 ensures that NMFS will provide a cost recovery report. Transparency in costs of management is critical for all stakeholders and managers and enshrining this component of the program helps achieve National Standard 7 requirements.*
- *Elements 5, 6, 8 and 9 are housekeeping components that streamline the program by reducing redundancies and expense and eliminating processes that are not required or necessary for the program. Element 6 was reworked to absorb element 7 so that inclusion of Element 7 is not a necessary part of the recommended PA.*
- *Element 10 meets National Standard 1 by reallocating unused rockfish, at NMFS discretion, to limited entry fisheries and ensuring full utilization and achievement of Optimum Yield. The suboption is not included based on public comment indicating that the amount is taken off the top and not from one sector therefore when the fish is reallocated back to the sectors, it should be done so with an equal opportunity to the other sectors.*
- *Element 11 benefits NMFS staff and the CV sector and adjusts regulations to better meet the original intent of how CV ownership and use caps are determined. Element 12 was requested by the industry and changes cooperative check-in times, which improves flexibility and efficiency in the program.*
- *Element 14 again provides flexibility and efficiency in prosecuting fisheries by eliminating the 3-day stand down period for vessels leaving the BS and checking in to the rockfish program. The analysis shows there is no detrimental impact on CVs in the program.*
- *While supporting the overall reauthorization of the Rockfish Program, some concern was voiced regarding future lost opportunity for independent open access catcher vessels fishing in the Western Gulf once the Amendment 80 Sideboards are dropped as well as with the loss of the sunset date. It will be important to evaluate any potential changes or unintended consequences related to these two elements during the required periodic program reviews.*

Rationale in Support of Amendment 1:

- *The Rockfish Program CP sideboard limits for the WGOA act to protect opportunity for CVs as there is no division of TAC between CV and CP.*
- *While WGOA fishermen have not historically participated in this fishery because it occurs when the local boats are fishing salmon, these fishermen hope to maintain potential future opportunity for participation especially under a changing environment.*
- *While the removal of the WGOA sideboards may create economic efficiencies for Am 80 CPs, they are not necessary for these vessels to prosecute their fisheries. Sideboards are an accepted component of rationalized fisheries and their removal could erode trust in the management process.*

Rationale Against Amendment 1:

- *Under Element 13 in the proposed PA, the reasons that the WGOA sideboards were initially implemented no longer exist (protect Amendment 80 from Amendment 80). In order to improve efficiency and flexibility for the CP fleet, it makes sense to eliminate these unnecessary operational hurdles. Stakeholder comment indicated that increasing efficiency not only benefits*

fishing operations, but can also provide conservation benefits for the resource as well. The more efficient these operations are, the better for the vessel, the crew, other sectors participating in the Gulf, and the environment.

- *Under Element 13 in the proposed PA, CVs will continue to have the same level of opportunity to participate based on their individual fishing plans and choices. This opportunity is not diminished or negatively impacted under this action. As such, it is important to recognize the improved efficiency and flexibility that will be gained.*

Rationale in Support of Amendment 2:

- *Element 2 of the PPA identified by the Council in Dec 2019 intended to allocate unharvested RP Pacific cod from RP cooperatives to the directed fixed gear fishery at the close of the rockfish season. The main motion as proposed reallocated rollover quota to all open access sectors, including the trawl sector for bycatch use. This changes the original intent of the Council's PPA under Element 2 as it did not clarify criteria for allocation or how to determine which sector needs are met. This change to Element 2 from the Council's PPA lacks analysis, due to pending final action, to inform what the potential outcomes or implications of the modified language would be.*
- *The amendment Element 2 is intended to reflect the original intent to allocate unharvested Pacific cod first to the open access fixed gear CV pot, jig, and hook & line sectors and then providing additional opportunity to all other open access fisheries, including trawl. This amendment provides the opportunity sought in the overall main motion while maintaining the original intent of the Council's PPA under Element 2 for the directed fishery.*

Rationale Against Amendment 2:

- *The modified language in Element 2 of the original proposed preliminary alternative provides NMFS with the authority to reallocate unused quota pounds to open sectors that are able to utilize the reallocation, at their discretion based on the best information they have via conversations with those sectors, which helps to achieve Optimum Yield and meet National Standard 1. It is unnecessary to codify a reallocative priority of fixed gear with trawl allocated cod. Understanding that this has been general practice for NMFS with their knowledge and discretion, it does not need to be codified in regulation.*
- *In 2018, Pacific cod went on PSC status in October and had to be discarded. Flexibility is needed to allow cod from the Rockfish Program to be reallocated to the flatfish fishery, as deemed warranted by the Agency, in order to avoid this type of situation in the future and to continue the halibut bycatch benefits that have been realized under the Rockfish Program.*

C4 EDR Reg Changes

AP Motion

The AP recommends the Council suspend the EDR requirement for GOA Trawl fisheries and delay further action on this agenda item until the SSPT and Council have reviewed the other package of potential changes to the EDR program (Issue 2).

Motion passed 22-0

Rationale:

- *As the GOA Trawl Bycatch Management package is not a current priority (or anticipated to be a future priority), the initial intent for implementing the GOA trawl EDRs is no longer applicable. The Council and NMFS retain the authority to bring this data collection back if the GOA Trawl*

Bycatch Management package gets reinitiated, or if through the SSPT process, specific reasons are identified for its continued necessity.

- *Even if the Council were to recommend terminating the GOA EDRs at this meeting, the likelihood of implementation of that action is approximately two years, which would result in about six years of GOA trawl baseline data that would be available.*
- *There are expenses, both financially and with human resources, associated with the continued collection of GOA trawl EDR data without an identified benefit. Critical funding scenarios currently being faced by the Agency require careful consideration of the trade-offs associated with this effort.*
- *Original bifurcation of the EDR agenda item was done because of issues associated with costs of the audits. However, those initial concerns associated with the cost of EDR audits have been addressed by the Agency through the suspension of those audits.*
- *The SSPT has already been tasked with considering potential changes to the EDR program, including the “need and utility of the data”, so it makes more sense to consider any and all changes to the various EDR collection programs in a holistic manner instead of piecemeal fashion.*

C5 Sculpin/Squid

AP Motion

The AP recommends the Council release the RIR for final review keeping Alternative 2 as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA).

Motion passed 22-0

Rationale:

- *This action is the result of a previous Council action that was implemented incorrectly during rulemaking, which resulted in regulation that was inconsistent with the intent of the Council’s final action at that time. This action is simply intended to correct that rulemaking.*
- *Regarding squid, there was previously a full analysis that showed squid met all of the criteria to be an Ecosystem Component species and at that time, the Council chose a preferred alternative that allowed production of retained squid (up to the 20% MRA) consistent with past practice, which included processing product forms other than meal.*
- *Nothing in the proposed action or PPA changes the fact that targeting of squid and sculpins will continue to be prohibited and that these two species will continue to be monitored for trends like any Ecosystem Component species.*
- *There is a direct benefit of this action to those fleets (longline and pot) that use bait for their fisheries. It is best to use squid bycatch for the benefit of those sectors instead of being forced to import product from other places (i.e., Argentina), which has a greater environmental impact.*

D1 Partial Coverage EFF

AP Motion

The AP recommends the Council support the cost efficiency recommendations and tasking provided by the PCFMAC. The three items prioritized for tasking are:

- To continue the ongoing work on the pelagic trawl EM EFP.
- To initiate an evaluation of how to integrate EM into the overall monitoring of fixed gear, and specifically, to determine the level of observer coverage needed to inform fixed gear EM to obtain average weight data for discards and biological samples. The evaluation should also explore existing data sources as an alternative to a higher observer coverage rate.
- To initiate an evaluation of changes to the zero-selection pool to meet both data needs and improve cost efficiencies for the draft 2021 ADP.

Motion passed 21-0

Rationale in Support of Motion:

- *This motion is simply directed at moving the PCFMAC recommendations forward, which identify three points of focus and prioritization for improving cost efficiencies in the partial coverage observer category.*
- *The pelagic trawl EM EFP is currently moving forward and should continue to be a major focus of the Council as this EFP develops.*
- *Integration of EM into overall fixed gear monitoring for average weight data of discards and biological samples is paramount to the utility and usefulness of fixed gear EM information. The Work Plan outlines some of these specific items in Section 2.2 and it is important to see an evaluation of options such as survey data as an alternative to higher coverage rates since these may be a potentially faster and cheaper solution than setting up a shoreside sampling program for fixed gear.*
- *Evaluation of changes to the zero-selection pool is warranted because of the potential cost savings as well as the realization that some of the data coming from vessels that are currently in the zero coverage pool that could potentially be in the partial coverage category (i.e., evaluation of length-based requirement vs. number of trips taken by a vessel).*

D2 SBRM Report

AP Motion

The AP recommends the Council consider the following ways to improve FMP compliance with the SBRM guidance:

- The BSAI Crab FMP does not explicitly identify a SBRM, though elements of the SBRM are included in the FMP. An amendment which explicitly identifies the SBRM and explains how it meets the purpose of a SBRM is recommended for the BSAI Crab FMP. This could occur through a new amendment or be incorporated with the next FMP amendment as long as it is prior to the February 2022 deadline.
- The Scallop FMP does not explicitly reference SBRM, though elements of the SBRM are included in the FMP. An amendment which explicitly identifies the SBRM and explains how it meets the purpose of a SBRM is recommended for the Scallop FMP. This could occur through a

new amendment or be incorporated with the next FMP amendment as long as it is prior to the February 2022 deadline.

- As the Salmon FMP undergoes development, revisions, and amendments, it is recommended that the SBRM is explicitly identified in the FMP.

Motion passed 22-0

Rationale in Support of Motion:

- *This motion directly reflects staff recommendations as presented in the SBRM Report. The BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs are not included as their SBRM elements are sufficient to meet the National Guidance. The Arctic FMP is not included as it does not authorize fishing at this time.*

D3 BSFEP Action Modules

AP Motion

The AP appreciates the significant amount of work done by staff and the Climate Change and LK/TK/Subsistence Taskforces. The AP supports the proposed workplans and recommends the Council direct the Taskforces to proceed as described in the workplans and as recommended by the SSC and Ecosystem Committee.

Motion passed 21-0

Rationale:

- *These action modules are timely in light of the rapid changes occurring in the Bering Sea and the associated impacts to fishing and indigenous communities, which are already feeling the impacts of warming regionally, with shifts in species distributions and unpredictable fish stock responses.*
- *The TK/LK/Subsistence Module will “develop protocols for using LK and TK in management and understanding impacts of Council decisions on subsistence resources” and represents an important step to better integrate multiple ways of knowing and native Alaskan voices in the Council management process.*
- *Similarly, the Climate Change Module will propose pathways for integration of information related to the changes being experienced and will identify species and communities most vulnerable to changing conditions and make recommendations relating to resilience and adaptation.*
- *These action modules are important steps forward and substantial progress has been made by both Taskforces in their first official meetings. This work will benefit the Council and the region in leading the field in adaptive fisheries management and Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management.*

D4 Halibut ABM

AP Motion

As an overall simplification measure, the AP recommends that the Council **reduce the number of alternatives to four** in addition to the status quo:

1. The directed halibut alternative from the coalition (current Alternative 3.3a);
2. The FVOA proposal (current Alternative 2.4 as modified by FVOA);
3. A trawl sector proposal; and
4. The freezer longline proposal (Alternative current 3.2).

Option: combine the two directed halibut alternatives.

Index (for Alternative 3.3a)

The AP recommends that the Council further simplify the action by using one index for the directed halibut users alternative (current Alternative 3.3a): the setline survey.

Option: use the Bering Sea halibut stock assessment as the single index.

Elements (for Alternative 3.3a)

In the directed halibut users alternative, Elements 1, 2, 3 and 6 remain the same. Elements 4 and 5 (which apply to the use of the secondary index) are removed.

New Element: Protect halibut stocks at low levels of abundance (can be applied to any of the four alternatives)

When the coastwide spawning biomass falls below B30, multiply PSC limit by B/B30

²Look at mechanisms to have PSC reductions stay in the water, or some portion.

⁴New Element: Establish an abundance-based O26 performance standard that is 35% below the annual PSC cap (can be applied to any of the four alternatives).

- Performance standard does not trigger in-season fishery closure
- **³Only the bycatch of O26 halibut counts toward the performance standard.**
- If reached or exceeded, industry provides details to Council of voluntary measures that will be implemented by the fleet in the following year to reduce bycatch
- If exceeded in three straight years or more than 2 out of 5 years, PSC cap reduced by 10%
- Cap restored to initial level if fleet adheres to performance standard 3 out of 5 years or 3 straight years

Amendment¹ (to remove the word 'O26' as well as listed bullets from new element) failed 9-12

Amendment² passed 15-7

Amendment³ passed 22-0

Motion as amended passed 14-8

Rationale in Support of Main Motion as Amended:

- *This motion is in direct response to the Council's request for stakeholders to provide input on additional management alternatives that serve to streamline the action and meet the Council's objectives to establish abundance-based PSC limits that minimize halibut PSC to the extent practicable, and aid the directed halibut fisheries at low levels of abundance. This motion is responsive to public comment, incorporates all changes proposed, drops alternatives that are no longer relevant and/or do not meet Council objectives.*

- *Public input from several stakeholder groups was provided with these groups proposing specific changes to the original modeling alternatives. This motion proposes to move those changes forward (industry alternatives 2.4, 3.2, 3.3a) along with the Status Quo alternative and whatever alternative is preferred by the trawl industry.*
- *Alternative 3.3a originally used the setline survey as the primary index and the trawl survey as the secondary index. The trawl survey was included as a secondary index to modify PSC cap when abundance of U26 fish changed significantly, since U26 fish are a small component of the setline survey. However, since the trawl survey index is based on pounds, not numbers of fish, the trawl survey does a poor job of capturing the changes in U26 abundance. The setline survey tracks the abundance relative to meeting the Council’s goal of “providing for a directed fishery,” hence is the appropriate index on which to base further analysis. Using one index greatly simplifies the analysis and action and removes the need for Elements 4 and 5. With the removal of the secondary index from the directed halibut coalition alternative, the two directed halibut alternatives are almost identical (2.4 and 3.3a).*
- *The new element for protecting halibut stocks at low levels of abundance, the action requires an additional element that would have a direct effect on the control rule in response to low halibut abundance. The slope of the control rule would decline more steeply when the halibut biomass falls below B30. This corresponds to the harvest policy for Council-managed groundfish species and also corresponds to biological benchmarks identified by the IPHC.*
- *The new element for an O26 performance standard is necessary because the O26 component of halibut bycatch is deducted in the area where that bycatch occurs, therefore it directly reduces the halibut available to the directed fishery. Public testimony emphasized that the directed fishery in St. Paul is in real danger of being eliminated, and this year it may be only 16% of the mortality in their area. This performance standard, or incentive program, will incentivize bycatch reductions “to the extent practicable”, particularly of the O26 component, and promote opportunity for the directed fishery without overly restricting the groundfish fisheries.*

Rationale Against Main Motion as Amended:

- *Acknowledging that Council direction was conflicting by asking stakeholders for recommendations on ways to simplify the action while also asking for new ideas, and that stakeholders did actively respond to this request, the addition of the two new elements to the overall package will complicate the analysis and potentially slow down the adoption and implementation of an abundance-based management program. This comes at a time when directed fishery users are asking for a workable program as soon as possible due to the condition of the halibut stock. While the Amendment 91 Chinook salmon performance standard can serve as a model upon which to formulate a halibut performance standard, the development of that performance standard was not a simple task and involved significant stakeholder involvement, staff resources, and lengthy analytical documents. It would be more prudent to bifurcate responses to the Council’s request by exploring the new elements separate (i.e., initiate a new discussion paper) from the current suite of ABM alternatives and analysis.*

Rationale Against (failed) Amendment 1:

- *Removing the reference to O26 halibut is not responsive to the purpose of the new element for providing for a directed fishery since O26 halibut are the component of the population important to directed fishery.*

Rationale in Support of (failed) Amendment 1:

- *A performance standard 35% below the PSC cap results in a de facto lower PSC cap that is also structured to stair step down even further when combined with the other elements of the action.*

- *In 2018, the Council previously considered an O26 focused performance standard but the idea was not carried forward because of the multiple concerns associated with length data and enforcement limitations.*
- *The concept of a performance standard should be explored more generally at this time, without automatic prescriptive reductions, in order to better understand the mechanics and execution of how such a performance standard would function and the impact such a performance standard would have upon the PSC users.*

Rationale in Support of Amendment 2:

- *Currently any reductions in halibut PSC amounts become available to the directed fishery (reallocating O26 mortality as part of the FCEY) via the IPHC process. Because the conservation of halibut (protection of SSB) is one of the goals of the halibut ABM action, it is important to consider mechanisms to have at least some portion of PSC reductions stay in the water to help with conservation at low levels of halibut abundance (in addition to the percentage of PSC reduction that is U26).*
- *In previous years, at times the IPHC has set the TCEY higher than the policy reference levels (for reasons that are not always transparent). In these situations, any conservation goals for this Council action may not be achieved if there is not some mechanism developed to ensure that reductions in halibut PSC remain in the water for the future benefit of the stock and all user groups. In this way, a clearer distinction and understanding can be drawn between allocation (providing for a directed fishery) and conservation (protection of SSB) goals, which is necessary for this action given some of its competing objectives.*

Rationale Against Amendment 2:

- *The U26 component of any reduction in PSC mortality is already left in the water, serving a conservation purpose. The IPHC ramps down the harvest rate for the directed fleet when the stock is below B30, leaving additional fish in the water in times of extremely low abundance.*
- *Providing for a directed fishery is a Council objective and O26 bycatch savings would help restore equity among user groups and help maintain viable catch levels in Area 4CDE.*

Rationale in Support of Amendment 3:

- *This additional bullet was included to better clarify the intent of the new performance standard element.*

D5 Crab eLogbooks

AP Motion

The AP recommends the Council suspend work on the development of eLogbooks while industry explores more cost-effective third party options.

Motion passed 22-0

Rationale:

- *This motion is intended to table Council work on this issue while industry explores other third-party options. The Council cost analysis for eLogbooks looks at the costs to the agencies (ADF&G and NMFS) and to PSMFC, but does not explore other, potentially cheaper, third party options. Additionally, NMFS would likely charge the cost of eLogbooks to industry through cost recovery.*

- *The agencies do not have existing resources to implement eLogbooks. They have also indicated that they only use the existing paper logbook data peripherally.*
- *Public testimony indicated that the crab industry is interested in an eLogbook, but only if it is useful to their fleet, if it is cost-effective, and if it is voluntary.*
- *Ownership and stakeholder involvement from the beginning in the development of an eLogbook is critically important to its successful implementation and use.*
- *While no timeframe is specified as part of this motion, it is the intent of the crab industry to bring this issue back when they have developed a workable package in cooperation with the agencies.*

D6 SSPT Report

Staff presented the SSPT report and the AP took no action on this item.

E Staff Tasking

Staff presented the Staff Tasking reports and the AP took no actions at this meeting.