Sablefish DMR

Groundfish Plan Teams, November 2026

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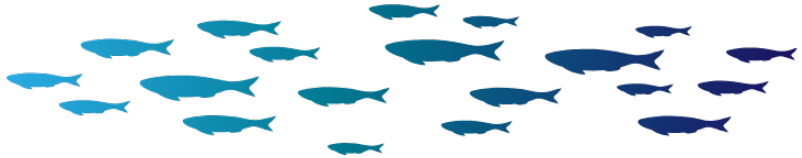



Background

- April 2025: Council took final action to allow sablefish IFQ/CDQ harvesters using fixed gear to carefully release small (<22 inch or 56cm) sablefish.
  - addtl DMR info Feb 2024 Section 3, Sept 2018 Section 2.4
- "Require retention of sablefish 22 inches total body length or longer (provides for *voluntary release* of sablefish under 22 inches total body length)."
- Clarified fixed gear CPs fishing sablefish IFQ and CDQ allowed to discard sablefish of any size
- Includes careful release requirements
- DMR would be recommended by the SSC through groundfish harvest specs process

Groundfish Plan Team meeting

- **Lay groundwork for new PT item at upcoming meetings**
- **Seeking feedback on potential DMR proxy value for first year**
- **What information is helpful for future years?**

DMR Considerations

- Limited information; No studies on DMR specific to Alaska sablefish IFQ fishery
- 1 average fleet-wide DMR (pot, H&L, CP, CV)
- For Council analysis, SSC provided input on plausible range of DMRs: 12%, 20%, 35%

Sablefish DMRs in other regions/fisheries, relevant studies

DMR	Origin, Methods	Gear	Assumptions/ Caveats
12%	Stachura et al. (2012), Sablefish tag recovery study	H&L	minor hooking injuries, based on 96.5% survival for halibut, carefully released on survey platform
15%	DFO	Pot (trap)	15% DMR assumed for sub-legals in stock assessment 9% applied inseason for legal sized
16%	ADFG, proxy	H&L and pot	SCAA model applies 16% longline discard mortality proxy. same as halibut DMR in Gilroy and Stewart (2013)
20%	**PFMC: West Coast Groundfish Mgmt Team, SSC**	**H&L and pot**	**Based on existing literature** **Also use age 0 sablefish 100% mortality(<28cm for inseason accounting)**
30%	DFO	H&L	30% DMR assumed for sub-legals in stock assessment 15% applied inseason for legal sized
35%	NPFMC analysis (1987)	Fixed gear	DMR assumed for 1987 NPFMC analysis pre-IFQ