

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
D-4 BSAI Halibut ABM
February 1, 2020

The Council requests a discussion paper to evaluate the following approaches to establish halibut PSC limits for the Amendment 80 sector.

1. Establish halibut PSC limits for the Amendment 80 sector based on a 3x3 lookup table as shown below. The index values and PSC limit values shown in the table are intended to provide a basis for the initial evaluation of the lookup table approach.

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (metric tons)		
		<i>Low</i> <i>≤129,999</i>	<i>Medium</i> <i>130,000 – 159,999</i>	<i>High</i> <i>≥160,000</i>
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	<i>High</i> <i>≥11,000</i>	Medium 1,745 (current PSC limit)	High 2,207 - 2,325 (15% above current or 2015 PSC limit)	High 2,207 - 2,325 (15% above current or 2015 PSC limit)
	<i>Medium</i> <i>8,000 – 10,999</i>	Low 1,309 - 1,483 (15-25% below current)	Medium 1,745 (current PSC limit)	Medium 1,745 (current PSC limit)
	<i>Low</i> <i>≤7,999</i>	Very Low 1,047 - 1,222 (30-40% below current)	Low 1,309 - 1,483 (15-25% below current)	Low 1,309 - 1,483 (15-25% below current)

The discussion paper should:

- Analyze IPHC setline and EBS shelf trawl survey index data to evaluate suggested breakpoints for low, medium, and high abundance and provide information on other approaches to establish breakpoints.
- Describe the process for determining and implementing PSC limits shown in the table and using the lookup table within the Council and NMFS harvest specifications processes.
- Evaluate resulting PSC limits determined by the lookup table for the Amendment 80 sector and any impact on the Area 4 directed halibut fisheries, using 2008 through 2019.

2. A performance standard to create incentives to reduce halibut PSC mortality to the extent practicable.

The annual PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector is 1,745 mt.

If Amendment 80 the sector has maintained its PSC usage to less than (option 1: 80% or option 2: 90%) of its limit in three of the preceding five years, the sector will be permitted to use up to its full limit in the coming year. If the sector does not meet this performance standard, it shall be limited to (option 1: 80% or option 2: 90%) of its limit in the following year.

The performance standard threshold will not apply if the Area 4CDE directed halibut fishery catch limit is specified at 2 million net pounds or greater.

The discussion paper should:

- Describe the process for determining and implementing the performance standard mechanism within the Council and NMFS harvest specifications processes.
- Evaluate the impacts of implementing the performance standard on the Amendment 80 groundfish fisheries and the Area 4 directed halibut fisheries relative to PSC use and directed halibut fishery harvests from 2008 through 2019.

3. Adjust the halibut PSC limit down in years of low directed halibut fishery catch limits in Area 4CDE.

The annual PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector is 1,745 mt.

If the Area 4CDE directed halibut fishery catch limit is specified at less than 1 million net pounds, the 1,745 mt halibut PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector will be reduced at a rate equal to 50 mt of halibut PSC for each 100,000 net pounds that the Area 4CDE catch limit is below 1 million net pounds.

For each metric ton reduction in the halibut PSC limit under the above provision, 1,000 net pounds of directed halibut quota in Area 4CDE will be allocated to the CDQ groups in addition to the annual CDQ allocations, prorated among the groups in proportion to the established CDQ halibut allocations.

The discussion paper should:

- Describe the process for determining and implementing the PSC limit adjustment and allocation to CDQ groups within the Council and NMFS harvest specifications processes and the IPHC process to establish directed halibut fishery catch limits.
- Evaluate resulting halibut PSC limits for the Amendment 80 sector and impact on the Area 4 CDQ and IFQ directed halibut fishery catch limits when the Area 4CDE catch limit is below 1 million net pounds. For purposes of determining impacts on the Area 4 CDQ and IFQ fisheries, assume that 60 percent of halibut PSC is O26 halibut and a round pound of halibut is 75% of the dressed weight for purposes of converting gross pounds to net pounds.