

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council and AP Members
FROM: Chris Oliver 
Executive Director
DATE: September 21, 2011
SUBJECT: Groundfish harvest specifications

ESTIMATED TIME 12 HOURS ALL C-2 ITEMS

ACTION REQUIRED

- (b) Initial review of analysis to reduce GOA halibut PSC limits.
- (c) Review white paper on individual bycatch quotas (IBQs).

BACKGROUND

GOA halibut PSC limits

The Council is scheduled to take an initial review of an analysis that examines proposed changes to the management of commercial groundfish fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). Prohibited species catch (PSC) limits on removals of halibut can stop fishing activity once those limits are taken. After reviewing discussion papers on this topic, the Council adopted a range of proposed reductions in April 2011 for this analysis. In addition to the No Action Alternative, the proposed alternative (Alternative 2) includes options for reductions of a) 5 percent, b) 10 percent, and c) 15 percent for the 2,000 mt trawl PSC limit and 300 mt fixed gear PSC limit. Two suboptions address effects on trawl PSC limit apportionments. In June 2011, the Council reviewed the suite of alternatives for analysis and reorganized the suboptions. The Council has noticed the public of its interest implementing the proposed action through the GOA groundfish harvest specifications process for 2012/2013. The analysis outlines an implementation plan for 2012.

During initial review of this analysis in October 2011, the Council will determine whether it has the information necessary to adopt a Preliminary Preferred Alternative; this step is necessary for selection of a Final Preferred Alternative in December 2011 and implementation in early 2012. The analysis was distributed on September 12, 2011. The executive summary is provided under Item C-2(b)(1).

Individual bycatch quota discussion paper

Over the course of the last several meetings, the Council has addressed a variety of halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) issues. Among the concerns raised by stakeholders has been the absence of individual accountability for halibut prohibited species catch and the lack of individual accountability tools for individual fishery participants. At its April 2011 meeting, in response to these concerns, the Council requested staff to prepare a discussion paper reviewing the use of individual bycatch quotas (or IBQs) in other fisheries. The discussion paper is attached as Item C-2(c)(1).