



C2 BSAI Halibut Abundance-based Management (ABM) PSC Limits – Final Action

December 2021 Council Meeting

Action Memo

- Council Staff: Dr. Diana Stram, Anna Henry
- Other Presenters: Dr. Mike Downs (Wislow Research Associates);
Dr. Anne Marie Eich (NMFS); Bridget Mansfield (NMFS); Glenn Merrill (NMFS) Dr. Allan Hicks (IPHC);
Darrell Brannan (Brannan and Associates)
- Action Required: 1. Review the Draft EIS analysis and the NMFS comment summary report
2. Select a preferred alternative

BACKGROUND

The Council will review the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the BSAI Halibut ABM PSC limit management action and make a final recommendation. This document analyzes a proposed management measure to link the Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for the Amendment 80 commercial groundfish trawl sector in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) to halibut abundance. The objective of linking the PSC limit to abundance is to minimize halibut PSC to the extent practicable under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) National Standard 9 and to achieve optimum yield in the BSAI groundfish fisheries on a continuing basis under MSA National Standard 1. The action should provide incentives for the Amendment 80 sector to minimize halibut mortality at all times. Achievement of the objectives could result in additional harvest opportunities for the commercial halibut fishery.

A DEIS provides assessments of the environmental impacts of an action and its reasonable alternatives as well as the economic benefits and costs of the action alternatives and their distribution. This DEIS addresses the statutory requirements of the MSA, the National Environmental Policy Act, and Presidential Executive Order 12866. A public comment period on the draft EIS was open from September 13 – October 25, 2021, and NMFS has prepared a summary of comments submitted during that time.

Information posted to the Council's agenda includes the DEIS, a link to all comments submitted on the DEIS during the public comment period, a Comment Summary report of these comments prepared by the staff of the NMFS and a supplementary document updating with 2021 data the tables of values for the NMFS eastern Bering Sea (EBS) trawl survey and IPHC set line survey from 1998-2021. At this meeting the Council will take final action to review the analysis and select a preferred alternative (PA).