

C8 Halibut Management Framework **Council motion December 14, 2015**

The Council's halibut management framework is a strategic planning document intended to inform and guide the Council in achieving halibut management objectives. As with other strategic planning documents, the halibut management framework can be revised in the future as needed to help guide the Council. The Council requests the following revisions to the halibut management framework.

1. Halibut Framework Objectives

The Council requests that staff incorporate the following objectives in the framework and as appropriate in ongoing BSAI and GOA management actions considered by the Council.

- Manage halibut bycatch in the groundfish fisheries and harvests in the commercial, guided and non-guided recreational, and subsistence fisheries consistent with the Council's MSA conservation objectives.
- Manage halibut bycatch to balance the objectives of directed users and bycatch users in both the BSAI and the GOA.
- Pursue an abundance based approach to managing halibut bycatch and directed harvests in coordination with the IPHC.
- Provide for the sustained participation of historic participants and fishery dependent communities.
- Maintain monitoring and catch accounting programs for halibut users in the BSAI and GOA in order to provide the data necessary for management needs.

2. Research issues

The Council requests the SSC review research topics identified in the research section of the halibut framework in order for the Council to identify priorities. The Council identifies the following research as preliminary priorities:

- Development of the technical methods to index PSC limits to halibut abundance.
- Natural mortality variability with age/size/density to understand the effects of bycatch, wastage, and discards on the spawning biomass.
- Migration of halibut between areas and associated implications for management decisions.
- Discard mortality rates in all fisheries, as well as overall bycatch estimation in all fisheries.
- An integrated decision-making framework that addresses biological, economic, and social issues.
- Evaluation of potential ecosystem-level impacts of alternative methods to index halibut PSC limits based on yield or spawning potential.

3. Coordination and communication with the IPHC

The Council identifies the following actions as important steps to strengthen communications and coordination with the IPHC, to be incorporated into the halibut framework.

- Identify a dedicated staff member to coordinate halibut management issues and liaise with the IPHC.
- Identify Council meetings when updates from the IPHC are the most appropriate and necessary.
- Periodically review the halibut framework at the Council (e.g., target annually).
- Form a Council committee comprised of the three US Commissioners and three Council members, for the purpose described in the December 2015 draft framework.
- The Council requests the IPHC make a presentation to the Council on the Commission's MSE process and progress to date.
- Pursue formation of a joint Council/IPHC committee comprised of IPHC Commissioners and Council members to pursue issues raised in the framework.