

**D-2 Sablefish Release
Council Motion
December 9, 2019**

The Council adopts the following purpose and need statement and alternative for analysis.

Purpose and Need

Large year classes of sablefish result in significant catches of small sablefish in the IFQ fixed gear fisheries. Small sablefish have low commercial value and current regulations require IFQ holders to retain all sablefish. Available data suggest that survival rates for carefully released sablefish are high. Operational flexibility to carefully release sablefish may increase the value of the commercial harvest and allow small fish to contribute to the overall biomass.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: Allow voluntary careful release of sablefish in the IFQ fishery

Element 1: DMRs

Apply a DMR to discarded sablefish of:

- a. 5%
- b. 12%
- c. 16%
- d. 20%

Sub-option: Select different DMRs for pot gear and hook and line gear

Element 2: Catch Accounting

Option 1: Sablefish discards will be estimated using observer and EM data with a DMR applied annually as part of the specifications process.

Option 2: Sablefish discards will be estimated pre-season based on AFSC longline survey encounter rates of sub-three pound sablefish with the DMR applied annually as part of the specifications process.

Element 3: Discard Mortality Accounting

Sablefish discard mortality associated with the IFQ fishery will be accounted for in the stock assessment. The analysis should describe the potential implications of voluntary discards on the sablefish stock assessment and specifications process.

Element 4: Monitoring and Enforcement

The analysis should describe potential monitoring and enforcement provisions that could improve estimates of voluntary and regulatory discards.