

Alaska Cooperative Progress Report on the Incidental Catch of Pacific Halibut

Representatives of the six BSAI groundfish sectors (American Fisheries Act (AFA) Catcher/Processor, AFA Catcher Vessel, AFA mothership, Amendment 80, Freezer Longline Cooperative, and Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ)) indicated their willingness to voluntarily provide additional information to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council as requested, because the information is seen as an important component of reducing Pacific halibut incidental catch. The new, voluntary information is expected to provide the fleet with more flexibility to adapt fishing operations to changing environmental and market conditions than would result from placing the information as a regulatory requirement.

In addition to providing the BSAI Halibut PSC Progress Report, Amendment 80 cooperatives are requested to provide a 2016 Halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) management plan at the December 2015 Council meeting. Since 2011, all vessels and companies participating in the Amendment 80 sector have been affiliated with one of two Amendment 80 cooperatives, the Alaska Seafood Cooperative or the Alaska Groundfish Cooperative. The plans should be designed not just to accommodate the revised hard caps, but to bring savings to levels below the hard cap.

BSAI Halibut PSC Progress Report	
Time per response = 40 hr	
Information expected	
Development of effective and verifiable measures for halibut avoidance	
Individual accountability	
Use of incentives to reduce incidental catch of halibut in the groundfish fisheries	
Amendment 80 Halibut PSC Management Plan	
Time per response = 12 hr	
Information expected	
Amendment 80 Halibut PSC Management Plan	
Halibut avoidance practices on the grounds	
Increased communication between participating harvesters	
Sharing data for performance tracking	
Use and development of excluders	
Deck sorting	
Performance measurement and assessment at the boat and company level	
Incentives for continuous efforts to minimize bycatch	
Consequences for substandard performance	

Time limits and submittal.

December 2015 Council meeting by electronic or paper submittal.

PUBLIC REPORTING BURDEN STATEMENT

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours per response and 12 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Before completing this form please note the following: 1) NMFS may not conduct or sponsor this information request, and you are not required to respond to this information request, unless the form displays a currently valid OMB control number; 2) this information is used to manage commercial fishing effort in the GOA and BSAI under 50 CFR 679; 3) Responses to this information request are not confidential.