



Greetings from the SFAB Halibut Committee:

Attached you will find a set of options for halibut management measures for your consideration for the 2019 season.

We understand that it is difficult to pick a specific option without a confirmed TAC, so have provided 3 potential TAC scenarios that you can weigh against the predicted catch for each option. It is also difficult to predict exactly where Canada is likely to end up as a result of the IPHC process, but we are reasonably confident that the TAC options as presented will cover the most likely outcome.

Please note that at this time there is not a high degree of confidence that a 5% increase in the TAC will occur, but this scenario has been provided as context for you rather than as a goal to base recommendations on.

Based on feedback received during the 2017 and 2018 SFAB halibut process, information that the committee will find really valuable during our deliberations is:

- Do you prefer 1 per day and 1 in possession or 1 per day and 2 in possession? The options tables outline the increases in size that are associated with removing the second fish from a possession limit. If an option doesn't appear in the table it is because the predicted catch exceeds any of the three TAC options outlined above.
- What are your preferences in terms of season length? Is a full season important to you or are you satisfied with a shorter season and the potential to catch larger fish?
- Any other suggestions?

You may choose to vote on an option to recommend as a committee. If you choose to do so, for transparency's sake, please make sure you record the vote. It would be helpful also to indicate the "primary" vs "secondary" nature of the vote keeping in mind that a primary angler is one who doesn't make a significant portion of their annual income directly from the fishery whereas a secondary person is someone who does.

We appreciate that the options tables are complicated and incorporate a lot of information, but they do reflect the suite of options and variables we consider in our decision-making process in February.

To help you interpret the tables:

Each row represents a specific option. The various management measures, season lengths, TAC's, estimated catch and uncertainty risks are provided in the columns.

For example, the first option, “New 1” would provide a daily bag limit of 1 fish and a possession limit of 2 fish. The annual limit would be 6. The maximum size of the first fish in the possession limit would be 102 cm and the second fish 83 cm.

The 2018 TAC is 927, 990 lbs and the next 3 columns indicate what that TAC would be at plus 5%, minus 10% and minus 20%. The 2018 Modelled (forecasted catch) column indicates what the model predicts the catch would be. In this case, New 1 is predicted to produce a catch of 731,791lbs. The next column shows the difference between the predicted catch and the TAC, in this case it is 196,199 lbs under the TAC. If there is a minus sign in front of the number in this or any of next 3 columns it indicates an overage of that amount. The next 3 columns demonstrate the modelled difference in catch vs TAC at the 3 different levels of potential TAC outlined above.

Under “Additional Considerations” we look at potential catch savings associated with delayed openings. Given the high degree of uncertainty associated with potential shifts in effort that will occur as a result of delayed openings it is not reasonable to assume that 100% of the catch for that month will be saved by closing that month. We have allocated a 50% catch savings in each month associated with a delayed opening. Please consider discussing this at your meeting and provide advice as to what you think the catch savings might be. Note that you need to take the catch associated with the delayed opening of any option and subtract it from a given TAC to come up with a difference either positive or negative.

There are many unforeseen factors that influence the halibut fishery each season such as weather trends, changes in average size and abundance, and availability of other species. These factors all influence the potential catch and effort associated with the halibut fishery and therefore represent additional uncertainty and risk associated with the modelled catch prediction. To acknowledge these unmeasurable and unpredictable variables, in the “Uncertainty\Risks” Column we have provide a 5% and 10% risk that you can add on to whatever catch you choose to account for this uncertainty.

Please note that in the last 6 Combo options that summer is the months of June, July and August and the shoulders are March – May and Sept – Dec.

The “d w 15% reduction” options indicate that a 15% reduction in catch has been applied by removing the second fish in the possession limit. Please note that the IARC survey has provided additional information that will better inform the potential catch savings, but due to the timing of the arrival of that information we won’t be able to do thorough analysis in time for the local SFAC meeting cycle. The modelled catch for these options may change as a result of this data but we can’t predict at this time if it will increase or decrease and by how much. We will have this new data incorporated in the options tables for the February decision making process.

We hope this helps, and if you have additional questions please refer to your local SFAC chair for assistance.

Thanks again for your interest in the halibut fishery and we look forward to receiving your input.

Martin Paish  
Chair, SFAB Halibut Committee