Certified Seafood International (CSI) Fisheries Certification Program

U.S. Alaska Pacific Halibut and Sablefish Commercial Fisheries

Surveillance Report

Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)	Global Trust Certification Ltd, an NSF company (GTC-NSF)
Assessment team	Lead Assessor, Deirdre Hoare Assessor, Dr. Robert Leaf
Fishery client	Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation
Assessment Type	Surveillance Audit No. 3
Date	30 September 2026

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

1. Contents

1. Contents 2
1.1. List of Tables 3
2. Glossary 4
3. Executive Summary 6
3.1. Assessment Team Details 7
3.2. Details of Applicable CSI Documents 7
4. Client contact details 9
5. Unit(s) of Certification 10
5.1. Unit(s) of Certification 10
5.2. Changes to the Unit(s) of Certification (if any) 10
6. Summary of site visits and/or consultation meetings 11
7. Summary findings 12
7.1. Update on topics that trigger immediate failure 12
7.2. Changes in the management regime and processes 12
7.3. Changes to the organizational responsibility of the main management agencies 17
7.4. New information on the status of stocks 17
7.5. Update on fishery catches 19
7.6. Significant changes in the ecosystem effects of the fishery 20
7.7. Violations and enforcement information 25
7.8. Other information that may affect the outcome of certification 29
7.8.1. Section A: The Fisheries Management System 30
7.8.1.1. Fundamental Clause 1. Structured and legally mandated management system 30
7.8.1.2. Fundamental Clause 2. Coastal area management frameworks 33
7.8.1.3. Fundamental Clause 3. Management objectives and plan 35
7.8.2. Section B: Science & Stock Assessment Activities, and the Precautionary Approach 36
7.8.2.1. Fundamental Clause 4. Fishery data 36
7.8.2.2. Fundamental Clause 5. Stock assessment 42
7.8.2.3. Fundamental Clause 6. Biological reference points and harvest control rule 47
7.8.2.4. Fundamental Clause 7. Precautionary approach 50
7.8.3. Section C: Management Measures, Implementation, Monitoring, and Control 54
7.8.3.1. Fundamental Clause 8. Management measures 54
7.8.3.2. Fundamental Clause 9. Appropriate standards of fishers' competence 60
7.8.3.3. Fundamental Clause 10. Effective legal and administrative framework 61
7.8.3.4. Fundamental Clause 11. Framework for sanctions 63
7.8.4. Section D: Serious Impacts of the Fishery on the Ecosystem 64
7.8.4.1. Fundamental Clause 12. Impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem 64
8. Update on compliance and progress with non-conformances and agreed action plans 78
8.1.1. Closed non-conformances 78
8.1.2. Progress against open non-conformances 78
8.1.3. New non-conformances 78
8.1.4. New or revised corrective action plans 78
8.1.5. Proposed surveillance activities 78
9. Recommendations for continued certification 79
9.1. Certification Recommendation 79
10. References 80
11. Appendices 84
11.1. Appendix 1 – Assessment Team Bios 84
11.1.1. Assessment Team Bios 84

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

1.1. List of Tables

Table 1. Relevant program documents, including applicable versions and their usage. 7
Table 2. Client details and key contact information. 9
Table 3. Unit(s) of Certification. 10
Table 4. Summary of site visits and/or consultation meetings. 11
Table 5 Sablefish Pot bycatch report – 2025 BSAI pot fisheries Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report 21
Table 6 Halibut Longline bycatch report – 2025 BSAI longline fisheries Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report 21
Table 7 Sablefish Longline bycatch report – 2025 BSAI longline fisheries. Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report 22
Table 8 Sablefish pot bycatch report – 2025 BSAI pot fisheries. Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report 22
Table 9 Halibut Longline bycatch report – 2025 BSAI longline fisheries. Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report 22
Table 10. Number of Vessel Boardings in 2025 Source: (NOAA, 2026) 26
Table 11. Alaska Halibut Violations for 2025 Source: (NOAA, 2026) 26
Table 12. 2025 Geographic Distribution of Boardings on Vessels Targeting Halibut. (Source: NOAA, 2026) 28
Table 13. 2024 Boardings and Violations Summaries by Industry Sector(Source:NOAA,2026) 28

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

2. Glossary

Acronym	Full Name
AAF	Areas as Fleets
AAV	Average Annual Variability
ABC	Allowable Biological Catch
ABOF	Alaska Board of Fisheries
ACOR	Alaska Coastal Observations and Research
ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADFDF	Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation
ADFG	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ADP	Annual Deployment Plan
ADPS	Alaska Department of Public Safety
AHO	Annual Harvest Objective
AKFIN	Alaska Fisheries Information Network
ASMI	Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
AWT	Alaska Wildlife Troopers
BSAI	Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
BSFEP	Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan
CARE	Committee for Age Reading Experts
CCCBAMS	Council Coordinating Committee Area-Based Management Subcommittee
CCTF	Climate Change Task Force
CDQ	Community Development Quota
CFEC	Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort
CQE	Community Quota Entity
CSC	Certified Seafood Collaborative
CSP	Catch Sharing Plan
DFG	Derelict Fishing Gear
DMR	Discard Mortality Rate (Halibut)
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EM	Electronic Monitoring
ENGOs	environmental non-governmental organizations
ER	Electronic Reporting
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FC	Fundamental Clause
FDA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
FFP	Federal Fisheries Permit
FISS	Fishery-Independent Setline Survey
FMP	Fishery Management Plan
FY	Fiscal Year
GOA	Gulf of Alaska
HAL	Hook-and-line
HCRs	Harvest Control Rules
HSP	Harvest Strategy Policy
IFQ	Individual Fishing Quota
IPHC	International Pacific Halibut Commission
JEA	Joint Enforcement Agreement

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

MCS	Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance
MEY	Maximum Economic Yield
MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Act
MSAB	Management Strategy Advisory Board
MSCFMA	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation
MSL	Minimum Size Limit
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
NIH	U.S. National Institute of Health
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOAA - OLE	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office Law Enforcement
NPFMC	North Pacific Fishery Management Council
NPOP	North Pacific Observer Program
NPUE	Numbers Per Unit Effort
NSEI	Northern Southeast Inside
OFL	Overfishing Level
OLE	Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA)
OM	Operating Model
PacFIN	Pacific Fisheries Information Network
PDO	Pacific Decadal Oscillation
PSC	Prohibited Species Catch
PSEIS	Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
PSTAT	Pacific Sablefish Transboundary Assessment Team
RAB	Research Advisory Board
RFM	Responsible Fisheries Management (Scheme)
SBLIM	Spawning Biomass Limit
SCAA	Statistical Catch-At-Age
SEIS	Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
SIR	Supplementary Information Report
SPR	Spawning Potential Ratio
SRB	Scientific Review Board
SSC	Scientific and Statistical Committee
SSEI	Southern Southeast Inside
SST	Sea Surface Temperature
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TCEY	Total Catch Equivalent Yield
TSC	Technical Subcommittee of the Canada-U.S. Groundfish Committee (TSC)
U32	Pacific halibut less than 32″ (81.3 cm) in fork length
UoC	Unit of Certification
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WPUE	Weight Per Unit of Effort

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

3. Executive Summary

This Surveillance Report documents the 3rd surveillance assessment of the 1st cycle of recertification for the U.S. Alaska Pacific Halibut and Alaska Pacific Sablefish (Black cod) Commercial Fisheries (200nm EEZ) and presents the recommendation of the Assessment Team for continued CSI Certification.

The Alaska Pacific Halibut Commercial Fishery (200nm EEZ) and the Alaska Pacific Sablefish (Black cod) Commercial Fishery (200nm EEZ) were reassessed and recertified against the requirements of the RFM Certification Program on May 30, 2023. The request for reassessment was made by Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, and was conducted by Global Trust Certification Ltd. The Alaska Pacific Halibut Commercial Fishery (200nm EEZ) was originally certified on 23rd April 2011, and recertified 9th January 2017. The Alaska Pacific Sablefish (Black cod) Commercial Fishery was originally certified originally certified on 11th October 2011, and recertified 9th January 2017.

This Surveillance Report documents the assessment results for the continued certification of the above fisheries to the Certified Seafood International (CSI) Certification Program. This is a voluntary program that has been supported by the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) previously and now by Certified Seafood International who wish to provide an independent third-party certification that can be used to verify that these fisheries are responsibly managed.

The assessment was conducted according to the procedures of the Certified Seafood International certification program using the fundamental clauses of the Certified Seafood International Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) standard 2.2 (October 2024) in accordance with ISO 17065 accredited certification procedures.

The assessment is based on four major components of responsible management derived from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995) and Guidelines for the Eco-labelling of products from marine capture fisheries (2009); including:

Section A. The Fisheries Management System
Section B. Science and Stock Assessment Activities and The Precautionary Approach
Section C. Management Measures and Implementation, Monitoring and Control
Section D. Serious Impacts of the Fishery on the Ecosystem

These four major components are supported by 12 fundamental clauses (+ 1 in case of enhanced fisheries) that guide the CSI Certification Program surveillance assessment.

The surveillance process included a desktop review of relevant new documentary information including but not limited to: the most current fishery assessment and stock evaluation reports; Groundfish Plan Team reports and meeting minutes; Council publications; relevant scientific publications; ecosystem status reports; fishery management plans and amendments thereof; changes to state and federal regulations; fishery enforcement statistics; environmental impact statements; marine mammal stock assessments; and strategic plans (see Section 10 - References for a more complete listing of documents reviewed).
The surveillance process also included substantive meetings with representatives from each of the key fishery management agencies charged with management of the AK Pacific halibut and AK sablefish commercial fisheries. Assessment team meetings included: International Pacific Halibut

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

Commission (IPHC), North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC); Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG); Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AKFSC-Seattle); and NOAA National Marine Fisheries Alaska Regional Office (NOAA Regional). The assessment team also met with the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) fishery client and certificate holder. All meetings were held remotely via videoconferencing. A summary of the site meetings is presented in Section 6. Assessors included both externally contracted fishery experts and Global Trust internal staff.

As described more fully in the following report sections, the assessment team did note some minor changes to the fishery management system. However, none of these changes were seen to undermine continued compliance with the fishery management system for AK Pacific halibut and AK sablefish commercial fisheries with requirements of the CSI RFM Standard.

3.2. Summary of main findings.

The Audit team has determined that the U.S. Alaska Pacific Halibut and Alaska Pacific Sablefish (Black cod) Commercial Fisheries, operated within the defined Alaskan UoCs, remained in compliance with the CSI RFM Fishery Standard's v 2.2 Fundamental Clauses for the Fisheries Management System component (Clauses 1, 2, and 3), Science & Stock Assessment Activities, and the Precautionary Approach component (Clauses, 4, 5, 6, 7), Monitoring and Control component (Clauses 8, 9, 10 and 11) and Serious Impacts of the Fishery on the Ecosystem component (Clauses 12). No evidence exists to indicate that non-conformance situations arose during the 3rd Surveillance audit.

3.3. Recommendation with respect to continuing Certification.

Following this 3rd Surveillance Assessment, the assessment team recommends that continued Certification under the CSI Certification Program is maintained for the management system of the applicant fishery, the US Alaska Pacific Halibut commercial fishery, under international (IPHC), federal (NMFS/NPFMC) and state (ADFG) management, fished with benthic longline (within Alaska's 200 nm EEZ).

Following this 3rd Surveillance Assessment, the assessment team recommends that continued Certification under the CSI Certification Program is maintained for the management system of the applicant fishery, the US Alaska Sablefish commercial fishery, under federal (NMFS/NPFMC) and state (ADFG) management, fished with benthic longline, pots and bottom trawl (within Alaska's 200 nm EEZ).

3.1. Assessment Team Details

The Assessment Team for this assessment was as follows; further details are provided in Appendix 1):

- Deirdre Hoare – Lead Assessor, Responsible for Fundamental Clauses 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12.
- Dr. Robert Leaf – Assessor 1, Responsible for Fundamental Clauses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

3.2. Details of Applicable CSI Documents

This assessment was conducted according to the relevant program documents outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Relevant program documents, including applicable versions and their usage.

Scheme	Certified Seafood International (CSI) Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM)

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

	Fisheries Certification Program	
Document title	**Version**	**Usage**
Certified Seafood International (CSI) Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Fisheries Standard	Version 2.2	Standard
Guidance to Performance Evaluation for the Certification of Wild Capture and Enhanced Fisheries	Version 2.2	Guidance
Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Program's Data Deficient Framework (DDF)	Version 2.0	Guidance

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

4. Client contact details

Table 2. Client details and key contact information.		
Applicant Information		
Organization/Company Name:		Alaska Fisheries Development
Address:	Street:	PO Box 2205
	City:	Juneau
	State:	Alaska
	Country:	USA
	Zip code	99802
Applicant Key Contact Information		
Name:		Kristy Clement
Position:		Chief Executive Officer
E-mail:		kclement@afdf.org

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

5. Unit(s) of Certification

5.1. Unit(s) of Certification

The Units of Certification (i.e., what is covered by the certificate) are as described in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Unit(s) of Certification.

Unit of Certification 1 (of 2)		
Species:	Common name:	Sablefish (Black cod)
	Latin name:	*Anoplopoma fimbria*
Geographical area:		U.S. Federal and State fisheries within the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands
Stock(s):		Eastern Pacific
Management system:		U.S. Federal and State fisheries within the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands managed by: ▪ National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) ▪ North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) ▪ Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) and Board of Fisheries (BOF)
Fishing gear/method:		Unique to each UoC
UoC 1		Benthic longline
UoC 2		Pots
UoC 3		Bottom trawl
All eligible fishery participants:		Eligible fishery participants are defined by membership of the client group.

Unit of Certification 2 (of 2)		
Species:	Common name:	Pacific halibut
	Latin name:	*Hippoglossus stenolepis*
Geographical area:		U.S. Federal and State fisheries within the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands
Stock(s):		Eastern Pacific
Management system:		U.S. Federal and State fisheries within the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands managed by: ▪ International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) ▪ National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) ▪ North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) ▪ Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) and Board of Fisheries (BOF)
Fishing gear/method:		Unique to each UoC
UoC 1		Benthic longline
UoC 2		Pots
UoC 3		Troll
All eligible fishery participants:		Eligible fishery participants are defined by membership of the client group.

5.2. Changes to the Unit(s) of Certification (if any)

There have not been any changes to the Units of Certification for the 3rd surveillance audit.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

6. Summary of site visits and/or consultation meetings

Desktop reviews are the preferred assessment vehicle within the CSI program. In general, on-site/off-site audits are required only if the Certification Body deems that a desktop review may be inadequate for determining whether the fishery is continuing to comply with the CSI RFM Fishery Standard, based on the performance of the fishery, status of non-conformances and related corrective actions.

Table 4. Summary of site visits and/or consultation meetings.

Meeting Date and Location	Personnel	Areas of discussion
Date: 07/13/2026 Location: Virtual via Teams	AFDF: Kristy Clement, Sydney Almgren Assessment Team Members: Deirdre Hoare, Lead Assessor Robert Leaf, Assessor	Topics Discussed: ▪ Introduction of team, roles, and responsibilities ▪ Introduction of meeting attendees ▪ Screen shot/sign-in sheet for attendance ▪ Confirm fishery is in scope A – Fishery management system ▪ Halibut -Charter sector / unguided recreational boats ▪ Halibut stamp ▪ Sablefish- minimum size release rule ▪ Groundfish Management Plan Review ▪ Statewide commercial groundfish regulations (2025–26) ▪ Harvest Control Rules – Sablefish B – Science and Stock assessment ▪ Stock Status, Economic, and Social Aspects C – Management measures, implementation, monitoring, control ▪ Prosecutions and Compliance / Observer Program D – Serious impacts on ecosystem ▪ Discard Mortality – Halibut and sablefish ▪ Marine Mammals and Seabirds ▪ Lost Gear / Ghost Fishing Evidence presented: Summary received in July ▪ Traceability requirements

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

7. Summary findings

Surveillance audits are summary audits intended to evaluate continued compliance with the CSI RFM Fishery Standard. Each aspect of the fishery they are intended to focus on is addressed below.

7.1. Update on topics that trigger immediate failure

The following fisheries management issues cause a fishery to immediately fail RFM assessment:

- Dynamiting, poisoning, and other comparable destructive fishing practices.
- Significant illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the country jurisdiction.
- Shark finning.
- Slavery and slave labor on board fishing vessels.
- Any significant lack of compliance with the requirements of an international fisheries agreement to which the U.S. is signatory. A fishery will have to be formally cited by the International Governing body that has competence with the international Treaty in question, and that the US has been notified of that citation of non-compliance.

The Assessment Team has, as part of this surveillance, carried out a review of any new evidence with respect to these issues and found no evidence that any of the above issues are occurring/describe any issues identified and the consequences for the fishery.

7.2. Changes in the management regime and processes

Funding and changes in federal priorities

The audit team requested an update regarding any changes to the fishery management system resulting from the 2025 federal government shutdown and broader changes in federal funding priorities.

In April 2025, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) noted that reductions and uncertainty in federal funding for surveys and personnel could have substantive impacts on the information and data produced through Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) survey programmes. The SSC emphasized the importance of identifying priority surveys and maintaining monitoring programmes for vulnerable stocks and species of management concern. AFSC surveys, observer programmes, ecosystem monitoring, and stock assessment processes provide essential scientific information used by both the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and NOAA Fisheries.[1,2]
The federal government shutdown and lapse in appropriations between 1 October and 12 November 2025 affected several NOAA Fisheries and Council activities. According to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, federal stock assessment authors were unable to complete several planned groundfish assessments, resulting in cancellation of November 2025 Groundfish Plan Team meetings and delays in the preparation of Ecosystem Status Reports, economic and community indicator reports, and year-end in-season management reports. To address these disruptions, the Council worked with NOAA Fisheries and the SSC to ensure that harvest

[1] https://apps-afsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/Plan_Team/2021/GOAshortraker.pdf
[2] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/car161_rockfish2025.html

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

specification decisions remained consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, including National Standard 2 requirements regarding the use of the best scientific information available.[3]
NOAA Fisheries similarly reported that most Alaska Region personnel were furloughed during the shutdown period, although staff continued to perform activities considered essential or supported through alternative funding sources. These activities included monitoring fisheries to prevent catch limits from being exceeded, issuing quota allocations, processing Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) transfers, maintaining information technology systems, and conducting selected ESA consultations. These functions were directly relevant to the continued management of the halibut and sablefish IFQ fisheries.[4]
Despite these temporary disruptions, core monitoring and management systems for halibut and sablefish remained operational. The North Pacific Observer Program continued to provide catch, bycatch, protected-species interaction, and biological sampling information that supports stock assessments, ecosystem monitoring, and in-season management. Observer coverage and electronic monitoring programmes remain fundamental components of NOAA Fisheries' monitoring framework.[5,6]
For sablefish, the most significant management consequence of the shutdown was the inability to complete some scheduled stock assessments and ecosystem reports. In many cases, management bodies relied on previously completed assessments and existing harvest control rules to support 2026–2027 specifications. For halibut, the independent assessment and management processes administered by the International Pacific Halibut Commission continued to provide an additional source of stock monitoring and scientific review, reducing the risk that temporary interruptions in federal groundfish assessment activities would affect stock conservation outcomes.
As of 2026, neither NOAA Fisheries nor the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has identified evidence that the 2025 shutdown created long-term adverse consequences for the management of the Alaska halibut or sablefish fisheries. Management, observer coverage, quota administration, protected-species monitoring, ecosystem assessments, and stock assessment programmes continue to operate within established scientific and regulatory frameworks. The principal impact appears to have been delays in assessment, reporting, and advisory processes rather than fundamental changes to management objectives or conservation measures.[7,8,9]

Management
Since 2025, the management regimes for Alaska's commercial Pacific halibut and sablefish fisheries have remained unchanged. In 2024 the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) fisheries for both species began to allow for the careful release of small, low-value fish in certain situations.

- Provisions for careful release of halibut continue to be included in IPHC regulations through 2025–2026.[10]
- Overall, since January 2025, management changes have focused on annual measures (catch limits, season dates, allocations), not major policy redesign.[11]

[3] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-04-18/html/2025-06761.htm
[4] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-04-18/html/2025-06761.htm
[5] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-02/BSAI-Inseason-Report-akro-2025.pdf
[6] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/car161_rockfish2025.html
[7] https://apps-afsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/Plan_Team/2021/GOAshortraker.pdf
[8] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-02/BSAI-Inseason-Report-akro-2025.pdf
[9] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/car161_rockfish2025.html
[10] https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2026/02/IPHC-Fishery-Regulations-2026-4-Feb-2026.pdf
[11] 2025-04406.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

- April 2025 – NPFMC recommended allowing CVs in fixed gear IFQ/CDQ in BSAI and GOA to release small sablefish under 22 inches[12]

Alaska Pacific Halibut commercial fisheries (Since 2025)[13]

Management changes for the commercial Pacific halibut fishery have focused on operational adjustments and accounting for halibut bycatch in other groundfish fisheries. Key updates include:

- **Abundance-based bycatch limits**: New regulations, effective January 1, 2024, set the halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for the Bering Sea's Amendment 80 fisheries based on the most recent International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) survey data[14]. This replaces the previous static limit of 1,745 metric tons with an annual, abundance-driven calculation[15] remains valid for 2025, with the limit set as is 1,309mt.
- **Catch Limits Reduced (2026):**
- Coastwide catch limits declined slightly by approximately 1.3% from 2025, representing a continuation of the substantial reductions implemented in previous years rather than a new major cut.[16,17]
- U.S. catch limits (including Alaska) were held at roughly the same level as 2025**,** while Canada (Area 2B) experienced a 7.2% reduction.[18]
- **Revised opening time (since 2024):** The IPHC changed the commercial fishery opening time from noon to 6:00 a.m. Alaska local time, effective in 2024. This earlier opening time was retained in 2025 (e.g. March 20, 2025 at 06:00), reflecting positive industry feedback and improved operational efficiency.
- **Logbook requirements**: The 2024 updates remained in force in 2025. Fishermen must record their location using latitude and longitude and submit logs to the IPHC within 30 days of the season's end if they were not collected earlier.
- The 2026 Federal Register rule explicitly states that no new recordkeeping requirements were introduced beyond existing rules.[19]
- **Annual Harvest Specifications:** Updated for 2025 as part of the standard annual process, with NMFS finalising catch limits and halibut PSC limits for groundfish fisheries for the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands including total allowable catch (TAC) and halibut PSC limits.[20,21]
- **Rebuilding Plan Proposal:** The proposed spatially explicit control rule has not been adopted; however, related work continued in 2025 through development of a broader Harvest Strategy Policy and Management Strategy Evaluation processes.[22] In 2025, progress instead focused on:
    - Development of a Harvest Strategy Policy (HSP)

[12] C2 MOTION
[13] Federal Register :: Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plan; 2025 Annual Management Measures
[14] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/18/2024-05481/pacific-halibut-fisheries-catch-sharing-plan-2024-annual-management-measures
[15] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/11/2024-05093/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-bering-sea-and-aleutian-islands-final-2024-and#:~:text=in%20the%20Al.-,Halibut%20Abundance%20Based%20Management%20for%20the%20Amendment%2080%20Program%20PSC,regulations%20effective%20January%201%2C%202024.
[16] IPHC-2026-MR-001 Outcomes of the 102nd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM102) - IPHC
[17] SeafoodNews.com: IPHC Lowers Pacific Halibut Quota in Canada, Maintains Low Levels in US for 2026
[18] Federal Register :: Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plan; 2026 Annual Management Measures
[19] Federal Register :: Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plan; 2026 Annual Management Measures
[20] 2025-2026 Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications | NOAA Fisheries
[21] 2025-04371.pdf
[22] IPHC-2025-AM101-PropC4-Pacific-halibut-Rebuilding-Plan.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

  - Continued Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) work
  - Exploration of biomass thresholds and reference points [23]
- December 2025 – IPHC and NPFMC had discussion on how to define unguided recreational boats, which have increased halibut harvest in recent years, particularly in SE AK. The increase in harvest may become an issue for allocations. (Client comment)
- January 2026 – In SE and southcentral AK, charter vessels for halibut are required to purchase a halibut stamp for each day fished in order to retain fish caught. Stamps funds benefit the Recreational Quota Entity, which will purchase quota shares from the commercial fishery for charter vessels. The final ruling was effective Jan 1 2026.[24]

Alaska Sablefish commercial fisheries (since 2025)

Management of the Alaska sablefish (black cod) fishery since 2025 focused on improving fishery efficiency, responding to strong recruitment of small fish, refining operational regulations, and maintaining sustainable harvest levels through adaptive management.

Careful release of small sablefish[25]:

- In April 2025, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) recommended a regulatory amendment allowing catcher vessels (CVs) participating in the fixed-gear IFQ and CDQ fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) to carefully release sablefish smaller than 22 inches. The action was developed in response to the abundance of small, low-value sablefish resulting from several strong year classes and is intended to improve economic efficiency while allowing smaller fish to contribute to future stock biomass.[26]

Southeast Alaska Management Plan Updates

- The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) published the 2025 Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) Subdistrict Sablefish Management Plan and Stock Assessment[27] and 2025 Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) Subdistrict Sablefish Management Plan and Stock Assessment[28], which incorporated several regulatory changes that became effective in June 2025.
- New requirements included:
  - Additional logbook requirements for vessels fishing for groundfish with longline and pot gear.
  - A reduction in the minimum inside diameter of circular escape rings in sablefish pots from 3.75 inches to 3.5 inches.
  - A prohibition on vessels or permit holders participating in the NSEI commercial sablefish fishery operating commercial, subsistence, sport, or personal-use halibut or groundfish gear in state internal waters during the 72 hours before the fishery opens, during the fishery, and for 72 hours after it closes, unless specified exemptions are met.

[23] IPHC HSP
[24] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/07/07/2025-12558/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-pacific-halibut-recreational-quota-entity
[25] https://www.npfmc.org/april-2025-newsletter/
[26] PowerPoint Presentation
[27] 2025 Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish management plan and stock assessment.
[28] 2025 Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish fishery management plan.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

- These measures were intended to improve fishery monitoring, gear standardization, and management of fishing activity associated with the limited-entry Southeast Alaska sablefish fisheries.

Annual Harvest Specifications[29]:

- NMFS published final harvest specifications for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries for 2025–2026 and 2026–2027, establishing annual overfishing limits (OFLs), acceptable biological catches (ABCs), and total allowable catches (TACs) for sablefish and other groundfish stocks. [30]
- Harvest specifications continued to be based on annual stock assessments and Council recommendations designed to maintain sustainable exploitation rates.[31]

Season coordination:

- Sablefish IFQ and CDQ fisheries continued to be coordinated with the Pacific halibut IFQ/CDQ fishery through matching season dates. For 2026, the sablefish season opened on 26 March and closed on 7 December, consistent with the dates adopted by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). [32, 33]
- Opening and closing times, however, remained different. The sablefish fishery continued to open and close at 1200 hours Alaska local time, while the halibut fishery opened at 0600 hours and closed at 2359 hours.[34,35]
- In 2025, the NPFMC Advisory Panel recommended development of a regulatory amendment to align these opening and closing times, demonstrating ongoing efforts to improve compatibility between the co-managed fisheries. [36,37]

Removal of Dungeness Crab Fishery Restrictions

- In July 2025, the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) removed restrictions in Registration Area J that previously prevented sablefish fishermen from participating in the Dungeness crab fishery if they had fished with commercial pot gear within 14 days prior to the opening of the crab fishery (5 AAC 32.053(b)-(d)).
- This amendment increased operational flexibility for fishermen participating in multiple fisheries and removed an administrative constraint that was no longer considered necessary.

Management Adjustments

- The 2026 ABC decreased slightly to 47,008 t, but utilization remains low (~50% in 2024).
- Sablefish continued to be managed using a survey-based apportionment approach that allocates harvest opportunities among management areas using a five-year moving

[29] 2025-04371.pdf
[30] Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications for 2026-2027 | NOAA Fisheries
[31] 2025-04371.pdf
[32] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/ib-26-15-nmfs-announces-2026-season-opening-and-closure-sablefish-fixed-gear-fisheries
[33] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/03/26/2026-05858/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-sablefish-managed-under-the-individual-fishing
[34] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/ib-26-15-nmfs-announces-2026-season-opening-and-closure-sablefish-fixed-gear-fisheries
[35] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/03/26/2026-05858/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-sablefish-managed-under-the-individual-fishing
[36] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/ib-26-15-nmfs-announces-2026-season-opening-and-closure-sablefish-fixed-gear-fisheries
[37] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/03/26/2026-05858/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-sablefish-managed-under-the-individual-fishing

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

average of biomass estimates. This approach allows regional allocations to adapt to shifts in stock distribution.[38]

- Stock assessments during 2025–2026 continued to indicate strong recruitment from recent year classes and increasing biomass estimates in several regions, while fishery managers noted that harvest utilization remained below available catch limits in some sectors.[39]

Research Related to Management

- Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) work continued to assess the performance of the current sablefish harvest control rule (F40%) under a range of recruitment and environmental scenarios. This work supports ongoing evaluation of the robustness of the management framework and informs future harvest strategy development.

7.3. Changes to the organizational responsibility of the main management agencies

There have been no material changes in the institutional framework or organizational responsibilities of the principal agencies involved in the management of the Alaska Pacific halibut and Alaska sablefish commercial fisheries since 2025. Management responsibilities continue to be shared among the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), with each organization retaining its established roles in stock assessment, harvest specification development, regulatory implementation, and fishery monitoring. No significant transfers of authority, restructuring of management responsibilities, or creation of new management bodies affecting these fisheries were identified during 2025–2026.

7.4. New information on the status of stocks

Pacific Halibut

The IPHC completed a full stock assessment at the end of 2025 (IPHC-2026-SA-01), incorporating final 2024 information and all available 2025 fishery-dependent and fishery-independent inputs, with late-season fishery totals refreshed in November. The assessment re-examined its data sources and structural choices — a new Stock Synthesis version, an updated Pacific Decadal Oscillation index, a maturity ogive revised from histology, and retuned male selectivity — while retaining the 2022 ensemble structure and natural-mortality configuration.

Survey and fishery signals in 2025 were mixed. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) numbers per unit effort (NPUE) declined about 2% coastwide (Region 2 down 16%, Region 4 up 7%), legal-size (O32) weight per unit effort was unchanged, and preliminary commercial logbook catch rates declined about 1%. Total mortality from all sources in 2025 was approximately 28.8 million pounds (~13,100 t), the lowest in a century and down about 12% from 2024; non-directed discard mortality was ~4.6 Mlb (~2,100 t, up 6% and the highest since 2019) and recreational mortality was ~5.7 Mlb (~2,600 t, down 10%). Recruitment continues to be shaped by the 2012, 2016, and 2017 year-classes, which now dominate fishery and survey catches but are only near average in strength relative to the preceding 15 years, and well below the large 1999 and 2005 cohorts.

[38] IB 26-15: NMFS Announces the 2026 Season Opening and Closure of the Sablefish Fixed Gear Fisheries | NOAA Fisheries

[39] Federal Register :: Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Sablefish Managed Under the Individual Fishing Quota Program

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

Spawning biomass at the start of 2026 was estimated at approximately 166 million pounds (~75,300 t), or about 38% of unfished biomass — slightly improved from about 36% in the prior year. The estimated probability of being below the SB30% trigger was about 28%, and about 1% for SB20%. Projections indicate elevated risk of further decline at higher catch levels. At its 102nd Annual Meeting (January 2026), the Commission retained the interim management procedure, the SPR-based reference fishing intensity of F43%, and the biomass triggers at SB30% and SB20%; no changes to reference points or to the harvest control rule were adopted. Roozee et al. (2026) attribute the pace of full harvest-strategy adoption to institutional and governance factors rather than technical readiness. Flanigan et al. (2025) further characterize seasonal halibut movements at the northern range edge, complementing existing movement and stock-structure research.

Alaska Pacific Sablefish

No new federal sablefish assessment was produced in 2025. Owing to the federal government shutdown, no 2025 SAFE report was completed, and the 2024 SAFE assessment (Goethel and Cheng 2024) remains the most recent basis for management. That assessment projects female spawning biomass of approximately 219,700 t, about 73% of unfished B100%, well above the B35% threshold that defines an overfished state; the stock is therefore neither overfished nor subject to overfishing. Sablefish remain under Tier 3 of the NPFMC harvest control rule, with a B40% MSY proxy of 121,069 t, 2025 reference points of FOFL = 0.102 and FABC = 0.087, an author-recommended ABC of 50,111 t and an OFL of 58,532 t. Recent utilization has run well below ABC, further reducing short-term risk. A full operational assessment is scheduled for November 2026. A Center for Independent Experts (CIE) peer review of the sablefish assessment was conducted 16–18 June 2026, with reviewer reports pending at the time of this surveillance audit. ADF&G published updated Northern (NSEI) and Southern (SSEI) Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish management plans and stock assessments in July 2025. In NSEI, the 2025 annual harvest objective increased to 1,789,671 round pounds, allocated among 73 permits, with the 2022 mark-recapture abundance index (3.14 million fish) the highest on record and recent recruitment continuing to drive biomass increases. In SSEI, the 2025 annual harvest objective was unchanged at 643,360 round pounds among 21 permit holders; longline survey CPUE declined 21% from 2023 to 2024 though it remains above the 10-year mean, while pot fishery CPUE rose 1%. In the Aleutian Islands state-waters fishery, the 2026 guideline harvest level is 2,696,000 round pounds, set at 5% of the combined federal Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands sablefish ABC.

New scientific advice includes a management strategy evaluation of alternative harvest control rules (Zahner et al. 2025), and an accompanying NPFMC harvest control rule discussion paper, which found that harvest-control-rule changes are warranted given large recruitment-driven swings in productivity and recommended a hybrid "slow-up, fast-down" stability constraint. As of June 2026 no new harvest control rule had been adopted for management. Cheng et al. (2025) report that the exceptionally large post-2014 year classes can induce density-dependent reductions in growth with implications for assessment, and Kapur et al. (2024, 2025) document substantial transboundary movement of Northeast Pacific sablefish.

None of this new information alters the conformance of either fishery with the CSI RFM Fishery Standard. Both stocks continue to be assessed against explicit, peer-reviewed reference points; neither is overfished nor subject to overfishing; and no changes to reference points or harvest control rules were adopted during the surveillance period. The two matters warranting continued monitoring are the declining halibut biomass trajectory relative to the SB30% trigger, and the absence of a 2025 federal sablefish assessment and longline survey continuity, both of which are addressed by the scheduled November 2026 operational assessment and the pending CIE review.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

7.5. Update on fishery catches

Pacific Halibut

Coastwide commercial landings (including research removals) in 2025 were approximately 16.7 million pounds (~7,600 t), down 16% from 2024. This continues the downward trend since 2017, driven by successive reductions in mortality limits rather than by any change in fishery participation or reporting. Landings continue to be recorded by Regulatory Area through fish tickets, a series fully delineated by area since 1981.

Total mortality from all sources in 2025 was approximately 28.8 million pounds (~13,100 t), down about 12% from 2024 and the lowest in a century. Within that total, non-directed discard mortality was approximately 4.6 million pounds (~2,100 t), up 6% and the highest since 2019, while recreational mortality was approximately 5.7 million pounds (~2,600 t), down 10%. Preliminary mortality estimates show that most Regulatory Areas harvested less than their allocated limits. In Area 2B, 2025 mortality was approximately 5.18 million pounds against a limit of 5.45 million pounds (95% attainment), and Area 4A harvested approximately 77% of its limit; Area 2C slightly exceeded its limit at approximately 104%. Recreational removals declined slightly overall, with variation by state: Washington attained approximately 100% of its allocation, Oregon approximately 60%, and California approximately 49%. For 2026, Commissioners reduced coastwide mortality limits by 1.3%, setting a coastwide Total Constant Exploitation Yield of 29.33 million pounds to align with continued low productivity and the Commission's risk objectives.

Alaska Pacific Sablefish

Commercial landings continue to be reported through the ADF&G eLandings system, which feeds the NMFS Catch Accounting System and is compiled by the Alaska Fisheries Information Network. Because no 2025 SAFE report was completed owing to the federal government shutdown, no updated federal catch time series was published during the surveillance period; the 2024 assessment (Goethel and Cheng 2024) remains the most recent compilation of federal removals. Harvest continues to run well below available catch limits. Utilization was approximately 50% of ABC in 2024, and the 2026 ABC decreased slightly to 47,008 t from the 2025 author-recommended ABC of 50,111 t. Persistent under-utilization reflects market conditions rather than availability: stakeholder consultation (AFDF, July 2026) confirmed that sablefish stocks are healthy but ex-vessel prices are at record lows, whereas halibut quotas have declined even as ex-vessel prices have risen. The composition of the catch continues to shift toward pot gear, which has accounted for more than 80% of the fixed-gear sablefish catch since 2022, primarily because it reduces whale interactions. Whale depredation remains a source of mortality generally below 1,000 t annually and is held constant at 2022 levels in the assessment. Discard mortality rates were unchanged during the period, at 25% for sablefish caught in the halibut fishery prior to 15 August and 16% for sablefish released in other fisheries. The 2026 sablefish IFQ and CDQ season ran from 26 March to 7 December, matching the halibut season dates. State-managed removals were as follows. In the Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict, the 2025 annual harvest objective was 1,789,671 round pounds allocated among 73 permits at an equal quota share of 24,516 round pounds, up 16% from 2024. In the Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict, the 2025 annual harvest objective was unchanged at 643,360 round pounds allocated among 21 valid permit holders at an equal quota share of 30,636 round pounds; SSEI longline survey CPUE declined 21% from 2023 to 2024 while pot fishery CPUE rose 1%. In the Aleutian Islands state-waters fishery, the 2026 guideline harvest level is 2,696,000 round pounds, set at 5% of the combined federal Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands ABC. Removals from minor state-managed fisheries

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

remain approximately 1% of total catch, and non-directed removals have remained below 1% of ABC since 2006.

Catches in both fisheries during the surveillance period remained within, and in the case of sablefish substantially below, the limits set by the applicable harvest control rules. The single exception was IPHC Regulatory Area 2C, where 2025 mortality reached approximately 104% of the area limit; this is within the range managed through the IPHC's annual limit-setting process and does not represent a departure from the management framework. Catch monitoring, reporting, and accounting systems were unchanged during the period, and no new catch-related issues affecting conformance with the CSI RFM Fishery Standard were identified.

7.6. Significant changes in the ecosystem effects of the fishery

No significant changes in the ecosystem effects of the Alaska Pacific halibut and sablefish fisheries have been identified since the last surveillance. The fisheries continue to operate primarily using fixed longline and pot gear, and there have been no reported changes in fishing practices, fleet behaviour, or management arrangements that would be expected to materially alter impacts on bycatch species, endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species, benthic habitats, or ecosystem function.

Bycatch and Discards

- Information on halibut mortality estimates by regulatory area and fishery sector through November 2025 has been compiled by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and continues to support monitoring of discard mortality and total fishery removals. No evidence was identified indicating a significant increase in discard mortality in the directed halibut or sablefish fisheries.[40]
- In April 2025, the NPFMC recommended a regulatory amendment allowing fixed-gear IFQ and CDQ catcher vessels in the GOA and BSAI to carefully release sablefish less than 22 inches in length. This measure was introduced in response to strong recruitment of small sablefish and low market values for these fish. NMPS is in the rulemaking development phase of this. If implemented, the measure would be expected to reduce retention of low-value fish and may reduce discard mortality relative to compulsory retention requirements.[41]
- Statewide bycatch indicators also remain favourable. According to the February 2026 NPFMC bycatch update, Alaska-wide bycatch rates in 2025 were at record low levels (Table 5 -Table 9). No information was identified suggesting a deterioration in bycatch performance for the halibut or sablefish fisheries.

[40] IPHC-2025-IM101-07-Rev_1-Fisheries-Data-Overview-2025.pdf

[41] https://www.npfmc.org/april-2025-newsletter/

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

Table 5 Sablefish Pot bycatch report – 2025 BSAI pot fisheries Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report

Sablefish Pot (Total Catch = 1,902)

Species	Tons	% of Total Catch
Arrowtooth Fl.	33	1.74%
Misc crabs	11	0.58%
Giant Grenadier	10	0.53%
Kamchatka Flounder	4	0.21%
Sablefish	3	0.16%
Octopus sp.	3	0.16%
Pacific Halibut	2	0.11%
Greenland Turbot	1	0.05%
Tanner Crab	1	0.05%
Skate sp.	1	0.05%
Total Discard	**70**	**3.68%**

Table 6 Halibut Longline bycatch report – 2025 BSAI longline fisheries Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report

Halibut Longline (Total Catch = 785)

Species	Tons	% of Total Catch
Sculpin sp.	79	10.06%
Skate sp.	55	7.01%
Pacific Cod	32	4.08%
Pacific Halibut	23	2.93%
Shark	15	1.91%
Sablefish	8	1.02%
Misc fish	4	0.51%
Arrowtooth Fl.	2	0.25%
Sea star	2	0.25%
Greenland Turbot	1	0.13%
Total Discard	**229**	**29.17%**

BSAI Halibut Longline had the lowest bycatch rate on record – 52% year over year decline in total catch. Annual average skate discards from 2020 to 2024 were 373 tons. Annual average sculpin discards from 2020 to 2024 was 343 tons. BSAI Sablefish Longline total catch was less then 100 tons in 2025 – not included

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

Table 7 Sablefish Longline bycatch report – 2025 GOA longline fisheries. Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report

Sablefish Longline (Total Catch = 4,052)

Species	Tons	% of Total Catch
Shark sp.	365	9.0%
Sablefish	250	6.2%
Skate sp.	90	2.2%
Skate, Longnose	58	1.4%
Pacific Cod	42	1.0%
Arrowtooth Fl.	16	0.4%
Misc fish	14	0.3%
Thornyhead Rockfish	12	0.3%
Deep Water Flatfish	11	0.3%
Rougheye Rockfish	7	0.2%
Total Discard	**893**	**22.0%**

Table 8 Sablefish pot bycatch report – 2025 GOA pot fisheries. Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report

Sablefish Pot (Total Catch = 15,137)

Species	Tons	% of Total Catch
Sablefish	357	2.4%
Arrowtooth Fl.	83	0.5%
Giant Grenadier	18	0.1%
Pacific Halibut	13	0.1%
Octopus sp.	8	0.1%
Golden King Crab	8	0.1%
Misc crabs	3	0.0%
Rattail Grenadier	3	0.0%
Sea star	2	0.0%
Deep Water Flatfish	2	0.0%
Total Discard	**504**	**3.3%**

Table 9 Halibut Longline bycatch report – 2025 GOA longline fisheries. Source: NPFMC February 2026 Bycatch Report

Halibut Longline (Total Catch = 13,257)

Species	Tons	% of Total Catch
Shark sp.	1,626	12.3%
Skate, Longnose	1,026	7.7%
Pacific Halibut	778	5.9%
Pacific Cod	773	5.8%

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

Species	Tons	% of Total Catch
Skate, Big	547	4.1%
Skate sp.	359	2.7%
Misc fish	352	2.7%
Sablefish	337	2.5%
Sculpin sp.	229	1.7%
Arrowtooth Fl.	134	1.0%
Total Discard	**6,526**	**49.2%**

GOA Sablefish Longline had the lowest bycatch rate on record. Annual average giant grenadier discards for 2015 to 2024 was 2,823 tons, and 2 tons were discarded in 2025, representing a downward trend coinciding with increase in sablefish pot usage.

- Observer and electronic monitoring programs continue to provide bycatch information for longline and pot sectors. No new evidence was identified that would indicate a substantial change in bycatch species composition or levels of prohibited species catch within the certified fisheries since 2025.
- Overall, for all federal fisheries off Alaska, 4,161 trips (47%) and 303 vessels (35% of total) were monitored by either an observer or EM system in 2025.[42]
- The Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) was established by Governor Dunleavy in 2021 and sunset in November 2022.[43] The top research priority for halibut was to investigate ways to improve estimates of total removals and discard mortality.
- The Bycatch Advisory Council (BAC) which was established when the ABRT was formed and will sunset in December 2026. The BAC's most recent meeting was May 2026, but minutes are not yet available. The council held three meetings in 2025 and compiled an annual progress report.[44] In 2025, the BAC recommended additional studies for size limits and trade-offs for halibut. There are two halibut specific items on the council's priority list that have not been implemented yet: (1) studying impacts of fish gear types on halibut habitat and (2) developing an abundance-based management program for halibut bycatch in the GOA to address bycatch during biomass fluctuations.
- Sablefish are not mentioned explicitly by either the ABRT of BAC.
- Senator Sullivan introduced the Bycatch Reduction Act recently at the end of June 2026, which would establish a Bycatch Reduction Task Force made up of Alaskans.

ETP Species Interactions

- No significant changes in interactions with marine mammals, seabirds, or other ETP species were identified during 2025–2026.
- There were no takes of short-tailed albatross in the commercial Pacific halibut fishery off Alaska in 2025. Existing seabird avoidance and mitigation measures remain in place; this

[42] North Pacific Observer Program 2025 Annual Report
[43] https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/fishing/PDFs/bycatchtaskforce/abrt_final_report.pdf
[44] https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/fishing/PDFs/bycatchtaskforce/092325_bac_progress_report.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

includes the use of streamer lines as prescribed at 50 CFR 679.24(e). Given the lack of takes, these avoidance and minimization measures continue to be effective.[45]

- Research efforts continued to focus on reducing whale depredation and improving understanding of interactions between fishing gear and marine mammals, particularly in relation to sperm whales and killer whales that interact with longline fisheries. The IPHC secretariat has been investigating gear-based approaches to catch protection as a means for minimizing whale depredation in the Pacific halibut and other longline fisheries with funding from NOAA's Bycatch Research and Engineering Program (BREP) (NOAA Awards NA21NMF4720534 and NA23NMF4720414; Appendix IV). The results and outcomes of the initial pilot phase of this project indicated that the underwater shuttle was a safe and effective catch protection device which entrained comparable quantities, sizes, and species of fish as the control gear. The second phase of this project took place in May 2025 in IPHC Regulatory Area 4A aboard a chartered commercial fishing vessel. This involved refining effective methods related to the deployment and use of the underwater shuttle and conducting tests in the presence of orcas to demonstrate the efficacy and safety of the gear. Eighteen sets were successfully completed, generating 15 sets of shuttle and control catch comparison data along with close to 80 hours of underwater footage combined (control, shuttle exterior, shuttle interior). Depredating orcas were present at 6 of the paired sets.[46]
- Overall, the available evidence suggests that ETP species impacts remain at levels comparable to those considered during the previous assessment and that mitigation and monitoring programs continue to operate effectively.

Habitat Effects

- No significant changes in habitat impacts were identified.
- The fisheries continue to operate primarily with fixed longline and pot gear, both of which are generally associated with relatively limited seabed contact compared with mobile bottom-contact gears. No new habitat closures, habitat protection measures, or changes in gear deployment were introduced during 2025–2026 that would materially alter the fishery's habitat footprint.
- The Alaska Bycatch Advisory Council identified research into the effects of different fishing gear types on halibut habitat as a continuing priority; however, this work has not yet resulted in changes to management measures.

Pot Gear and Ghost Fishing

Pot gear use has increased in some sablefish fisheries, and several management changes were introduced during 2025. In Southeast Alaska, the minimum inside diameter of circular escape rings in sablefish pots was reduced from 3.75 inches to 3.5 inches. This amendment was intended to refine gear performance and fishery operations.[47,48]

No new studies were identified since 2025 that indicate an increase in ghost fishing impacts from lost sablefish or halibut pots. Research published in recent years continues to suggest that pot gear may have lower bycatch rates than traditional longline gear in some situations, although

[45] Seabird Bycatch
[46] IPHC-2026-AM102-14-Report-on-research-activities-2.pdf
[47] 2025 Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish management plan and stock assessment.
[48] 2025 Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict Sablefish Management Plan and Stock Assessment

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

information remains limited regarding pot selectivity, escape-ring performance, and the long-term consequences of pot loss.

Ecosystem Monitoring and Research

- Management agencies continue to support ecosystem monitoring and fisheries research. The 2024 Alaska Sablefish Report Card identified ecosystem monitoring priorities and ongoing evaluation of environmental and socioeconomic indicators relevant to the fishery. Eg. 13) Expand the spatial model into a full life cycle model that incorporates larval individual-based modeling outputs to inform connectivity during early life history stages and ecosystem drivers of settlement success (work starting in 2025; led by Samara Nehemiah, UAF).[49]
- The Alaska Bycatch Advisory Council continued its work through 2025 and 2026, including review of bycatch-related research priorities and recommendations for improved understanding of halibut removals and discard mortality.[50] While several recommendations remain under consideration, no significant ecosystem-related management changes have yet resulted from this process.

Spatial Management
No new spatial closures or area restrictions affecting the certified halibut and sablefish fisheries in Alaska state waters were identified during 2025–2026.

7.7. Violations and enforcement information

On July 08, 2026, Global Trust contacted NOAA OLE Alaska Enforcement Division. Alex Perry, the Compliance Analyst Liaison reported that in calendar year 2025, OLE conducted 446 boardings of Commercial IFQ Halibut and or Sablefish vessels. Across the fleet, OLE created 2,239 total incidents in its Electronic Case Management System (ECMS), of which IFQ Halibut/Sablefish accounted for 645 and 435 total potential violations were detected in these fisheries. 14 incidents remain open with a status of "investigation ongoing."

The most commonly detected violation types included:

- IFQ overages over 10%;
- Recordkeeping and reporting violations (fail to submit timely/submit a Prior Notice Of Landing [PNOL], Landing Report, Logbook, PTR, or Production Reports);
- Gear marking violations;
- Failure to release undersized halibut with a minimum of injury by allowing fish to hit the crucifier, remain on deck for a prolonged period of time, and other mishandling issues;
- Fishing in a closed area;
- Hired master and permit holder violations;
- Vessel cap overages;
- Failure to maintain operable VMS;
- Misreporting IFQ area fished or fishing in an area with no IFQ available;
- Fishing without an FFP;
- personal use fish without provenance;

[49] Sablefish.pdf
[50] Bycatch Advisory Council Progress Report

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

- Class D vessel size limit violations (vessels over 36 ft. LOA fishing D class quota);
- Discarding sablefish when quota available.

NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement - Alaska Enforcement Division (NOAA, 2026)

Patrol and Boardings

In 2025, AKD personnel spent over 7125 hours conducting patrols to deter potential violators, monitor fishing and other marine activities, detect violations, provide compliance assistance, and provide outreach and education to halibut fishery participants. OLE boarded 1025 vessels with 656 of those boardings being related to halibut.

Table 10. Number of Vessel Boardings in 2025 Source: (NOAA, 2026)

2025	
Categories	**Vessel Boardings**
Subsistence Halibut	29
Commercial Halibut	309
Charter Halibut	218
Sport Halibut	100
Total	**656**

Incidents

In 2025, AKD opened 1020 halibut-related incidents, including outreach, vessel boardings, dockside monitoring, and compliance assistance. Of those incidents; agents and officers identified 486 halibut-related violations, which were resolved by the following action levels in order from least to most punitive: Fix-it≤ Compliance Assistance< Written Warning< Summary Settlement< Notice of Violation Assessment (NOVA).

Table 11. Alaska Halibut Violations for 2025 Source: (NOAA, 2026)

Categories	2025
Subsistence Halibut	15
Commercial Halibut	333
Charter Halibut	95
Sport Halibut	28
Commercial Groundfish Involving Halibut	15
Total	**486**

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

2025 Halibut-Related Violations documented by NOAA in Alaska:

15 Subsistence halibut fishing violations; most common violations included:
• Unqualified persons applied for a SHARC
• Subsistence halibut with sport-caught halibut.
• Subsistence halibut fishing without a SHARC
• Exceeding hook limit
• Gear marking

333 Commercial IFQ/CDQ halibut violations; most common violations included:
• IFQ halibut overages greater than 10%
• Recordkeeping and reporting violations (fail to submit timely/ submit a Prior Notice Of Landing (PNOL), Landing Report, Logbook, PTR, or Production Reports)
• Gear marking violations
• Failure to release undersized halibut with a minimum of injury by allowing fish to hit the crucifier, remain on deck for a prolonged period of time, and other mishandling issues.
• Fishing in a closed area
• Hired master and permit holder violations
• Vessel cap overages
• Misreporting IFQ area fished or fishing in an area with no IFQ available
• Fishing without an FFP
• Unreported halibut found after offloads.
• Class D vessel size limit violations (vessels over 36 ft. LOA fishing D class quota).

15 Commercial groundfish violations involving halibut; most common violations included:
• Failure to carefully release halibut or allow halibut to contact a crucifier or hook stripper
• Halibut fillets possessed by non-IFQ vessels without documentation of purchase or harvest
• Puncture halibut with a gaff or other device

28 Sport halibut violations; most common violations included:
• Sale or attempted sale of sport-caught halibut
• Exceeding bag and/or possession limits
• Filleting, mutilating or skinning halibut onboard a vessel, other than 2 ventral pieces, 2 dorsal pieces, and 2 cheek pieces, with a patch of skin on each piece, naturally attached
• Sport-caught halibut onboard with commercial caught salmon

95 Charter halibut fishing violations; most common violations included:
• Failure to report GAF in the required time period or submitting inaccurate information
• Logbook violations
• Unreported halibut
• Illegal guiding - no CHP or Guide permits
• Filleting, mutilating or skinning halibut onboard a vessel, other than 2 ventral pieces, 2 dorsal pieces, and 2 cheek pieces, with a patch of skin on each piece, naturally attached
• Exceeding bag limit, possession limit, size limits, or annual limits
• Charter fish without a CHP/without an original copy of CHP

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

• Halibut retained not within slot limit size

US Coastguard
Halibut Enforcement (NOAA, 2026)
In Calendar Year 2025, the USCG distributed its enforcement assets throughout the Alaska IPHC Areas, with boarding numbers listed in Table 12. The USCG's enforcement focus is to protect the resource in accordance with the Fishery Management Plan, to ensure equal economic opportunity for all participants, and to ensure safety of life at sea.

Table 12. 2025 Geographic Distribution of Boardings on Vessels Targeting Halibut. (Source: NOAA, 2026)

IPHC Area	2025 Boardings
2C	110
3A	27
3B	0
4A	4
4B	1
4C	2
4D	0
4E	0
Total	144

Violations and Enforcement Summary

In 2024, USCG assets boarded a total of 144 vessels and detected 4 violations on 4 vessels. The USCG documented these violations and referred them to NOAA OLE or Alaska Wildlife Troopers for final action as appropriate. Table 13 shows at-sea boardings and violations in 2025.

Table 13. 2024 Boardings and Violations Summaries by Industry Sector(Source:NOAA,2026)

2025 Boardings/Violations	
Total At-Sea Boardings	144
Commercial	29
Charter	24
Recreational/Subsistence	91
Fisheries Violations	4
Commercial	3
Charter	0
Recreational/Subsistence	1
Fisheries Compliance Rates	97.2%
Commercial	89.7%
Charter	100%
Recreational/Subsistence	98.9%

In Area 2C:

- One commercial vessel was cited for not having an IFQ Halibut Permit onboard as required.
- One recreational vessel was cited for processing (filleting) halibut onboard beyond that allowed by IPHC Regulations.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

In Area 4B:

- One commercial vessel was cited for failure to retain incidental rockfish as required while fishing for halibut.

In Area 4C:

- One commercial vessel was cited for failure to have SAG onboard or use it while deploying gear as required.

The USCG transferred detected violations to NOAA OLE for disposition, and outcomes included compliance assistance, summary settlements, or catch seizures.

In addition to the IPHC violations summarized in Table 13, USCG assets documented 10 safety violations on 9 vessels including insufficient fire extinguishers (1), expired visual distress signals (9).

Sablefish Updates

NOAA OLE

In calendar year 2025, NOAA Fisheries' Alaska Enforcement Division reported a small number of compliance cases relevant to the halibut and sablefish IFQ fisheries. The most notable sablefish-specific enforcement action involved the F/V *Northern Endurance*, which was charged with discarding IFQ sablefish, failing to report discards, and failing to submit required logbooks, resulting in a $16,500 Notice of Violation and Assessment. NOAA also reported several recordkeeping, reporting, gear-marking, permit, and IFQ compliance violations identified during routine inspections of IFQ vessels. These cases appear to be isolated enforcement matters and do not indicate systemic compliance concerns within the sablefish fishery.[51,52,53]

Alaska Division of Wildlife Troopers

On July 8,2026 Global Trust contacted Alaska Division of Wildlife Troopers for information on law enforcement related to sablefish in Alaska's State waters. Captain Derek DeGraaf reported that the Alaska Division of Wildlife Troopers (AWT) continued to enforce sablefish regulations in Alaska state waters during 2025 and remained responsible for compliance with state fishery regulations and closure areas. State agencies issued reminders regarding prohibitions on IFQ sablefish fishing in designated state waters and maintained enforcement reporting mechanisms through local AWT offices and groundfish hotlines. No publicly reported 2025 AWT enforcement cases involving sablefish were identified during this review, although enforcement oversight and compliance activities remained in place.[54,55]

7.8. Other information that may affect the outcome of certification

No other information that may affect the outcome of certification was found during this surveillance assessment.

[51] https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/Civil-Administrative-Enforcement-Actions-for-June-2025 %281%29.pdf
[52] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=ddaf96fe-32fc-4b14-a044-9cf3cd5f4b51.pdf&fileName=B5%20NOAA%20OLE%20Report.pdf
[53] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=30e43ba7-de7c-493e-8ffb-60c5ba2f1e62.pdf&fileName=B5%20NOAA%20Enforcement%20Report.pdf
[54] https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1658750268.pdf
[55] https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=enforcement.main

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

7.8.1. Section A: The Fisheries Management System

7.8.1.1. Fundamental Clause 1. Structured and legally mandated management system

1.	**There shall be a structured and legally mandated management system based upon and respecting international, State, and local fishery laws, for the responsible utilization of the stock under consideration and conservation of the marine environment.**
Summary of relevant changes:	SC 1.3 Where transboundary, shared, straddling, highly migratory, or high seas stocks are exploited by two or more States (neighboring or not), the applicant and appropriate management organizations concerned shall cooperate and take part in the formal fishery commission or arrangements appointed to ensure effective conservation and management of the stock(s) in question and their environment SC 1.3.1 Conservation and management measures established for the stock under consideration within the jurisdiction of the relevant States for transboundary, shared, straddling, highly migratory, or high seas stocks, shall be compatible in a manner consistent with the rights, competence, and interests of the States concerned. **Halibut Updates:** For Pacific Halibut, which is a transboundary, highly migratory stock, the requirement for cooperation (1.3) is met through mandatory participation in the IPHC. The IPHC recommended an overall fishing period for the directed commercial halibut fisheries from March 26 to December 7, 2026[56].The US domestic management actions (NPFMC/NOAA) for 2026 implement the IPHC-mandated TCEY recommendations[57], ensuring conservation and management measures are compatible across the US and Canada jurisdictions (1.3.1). **Sablefish Updates:** Evidence of continuous improvement in fishery compatibility arrangements is provided by the NPFMC Advisory Panel's 2025 recommendation to develop a regulatory amendment aligning the daily opening and closing times of the Sablefish IFQ/CDQ fishery with those established by the IPHC for the Pacific halibut fishery. While differing opening and closing times remained in place during the 2026 season, the initiative reflects active consideration of measures to enhance consistency between the two co-managed fisheries, reduce operational inefficiencies, and simplify regulatory administration for participants harvesting both species. The proposal demonstrates an ongoing commitment to refining management arrangements where opportunities for improved compatibility are identified.[58,59] SC 1.5 The applicant's fishery management system, when appropriate for the stock under consideration, shall actively foster cooperation between States with regard to (1) information gathering and exchange, (2) fisheries research, (3) fisheries management, and (4) fisheries development Although Pacific Halibut and Sablefish are managed under separate legislative frameworks (IPHC convention and MSA, respectively), the fixed-gear fleets that prosecute both fisheries continue to benefit from close coordination between management authorities in 2026. Coordinated season structures, regulatory alignment where practicable, and ongoing communication among agencies help reduce

[56] IPHC-2026-AM102-R-Report-of-the-AM102.pdf
[57] Federal Register :: Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plan; 2026 Annual Management Measures
[58] IB 26-15: NMFS Announces the 2026 Season Opening and Closure of the Sablefish Fixed Gear Fisheries | NOAA Fisheries
[59] Federal Register :: Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Sablefish Managed Under the Individual Fishing Quota Program

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

1.	There shall be a structured and legally mandated management system based upon and respecting international, State, and local fishery laws, for the responsible utilization of the stock under consideration and conservation of the marine environment.

operational complexity for industry participants, improve compliance and enforcement efficiency, and support management consistency across overlapping fisheries. This reflects a broader effort to maximize compatibility of management measures beyond the setting of harvest limits (PI 1.3.1).
The management framework also actively fosters interstate and international cooperation (SC 1.5) through the routine exchange of fisheries-dependent and fisheries-independent data, collaborative scientific research, and coordinated stock assessment processes. Such cooperation is formalized through IPHC scientific and technical working groups, engagement between IPHC, NOAA Fisheries, and regional fishery management bodies, and the public dissemination of stock assessment documents, data reports, and management advice. These mechanisms facilitate the sharing of information, support joint research initiatives, promote coordinated fisheries management, and contribute to the sustainable development of both fisheries. (e.g., IPHC data overview and stock assessment reports[60]).

SC 1.6 A fishery management organization and sub-regional or regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements, as appropriate, shall agree on the means by which the activities of such organizations and arrangements will be financed, bearing in mind, inter alia, the relative benefits derived from the fishery and the differing capacities of States to provide financial and other contributions. Where appropriate, and when possible, such organizations and arrangements shall aim to recover the costs of fisheries conservation, management, and research.

Most NMFS staff in the Alaska region were furloughed for all of October and early November 2025. Critical services were maintained, e.g., monitoring and managing fisheries to avoid exceeding catch limits, issuing quota so the Bering Sea crab fisheries could open, processing IFQ transfers and related transactions, monitoring the security of our IT systems, and completing Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultations. The NPFMC has had to shift meetings to an online-only format due to reduced federal travel/operational grants and the threat of government shutdowns. The Executive Director of the Council reported at the December 2025 meeting that "Federal stock assessment authors did not have the time to complete new groundfish assessments as planned, and as a result, the Council's Groundfish Plan Teams did not convene in November to review stock assessments and provide their recommendations on harvest specifications. Additionally, the preparation of other contextual information typically presented in support of groundfish specifications has been delayed, including the year-end in-season management reports, ecosystem status reports, and economic and community indicator reports. In response, Council staff have worked with NMFS, SSC, and Council leadership to identify what information is available this year, and to explain the process for how to apply available information for final 2026-2027 groundfish specification decisions in a manner that remains consistent with the typical Council process, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), including National Standard 2, as well as the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and other federal requirements."

SC 1.7 Within the fishery management system, procedures shall be in place to keep the efficacy of current conservation and management measures and their possible

[60] IPHC-2026-SA-01.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

1.	There shall be a structured and legally mandated management system based upon and respecting international, State, and local fishery laws, for the responsible utilization of the stock under consideration and conservation of the marine environment.
	interactions under continuous review, and to revise or abolish them in the light of new information SC 1.8 The management arrangements and decision-making processes for the fishery shall be organized in a transparent manner. **Pacific Halibut updates:** The Pacific Halibut management system continues to demonstrate compliance with SC 1.7 through the annual review and adjustment of harvest measures based on the best available scientific information[61]. Transparency requirements under SC 1.8 are met through the IPHC's open governance structure and NOAA's public rulemaking processes. Stock assessment reports, scientific analyses, meeting agendas, regulatory proposals, and catch limit decisions are publicly available through IPHC and NOAA Fisheries websites[62]. Public meetings, consultation processes, and the publication of final regulatory actions ensure that management arrangements and decision-making processes remain transparent and accessible to stakeholders. **Sablefish updates;** The final 2026/2027 Harvest Specifications explicitly link to the goals of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish[63] , ensuring the efficacy of current conservation and management measures (1.7) is under continuous review. Transparency (1.8) is rigorously maintained via public domain access to management documents, meeting motions, and draft rules, such as those published in the NPFMC June 2026 newsletter concerning gear innovation research[64] No updates noted for Sub-clauses (SC 1.4., 1.4.1, SC 1.6, SC 1.6.1) The following Supporting clauses are not applicable (SC 1.9)
References:	NPFMC, 2025d. Executive Director's Report, December 2025 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council Meeting https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=1332a7a8-6f75-47aa-b13d7ba34668811b.pdf&fileName=B1%20Executive%20Director%20Report.pdf US Department of Commerce, 2025. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Management Report https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=33937b7c-8e8a-40a5-903e4871b529f7ca.pdf&fileName=B2%20NMFS%20Report.pdf
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fisheries Standard**

[61] Federal Register :: Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands; 2026 and 2027 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish
[62] Federal Register :: Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plan; 2026 Annual Management Measures
[63] Federal Register :: Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands; 2026 and 2027 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish
[64] June 2026 Newsletter | North Pacific Fishery Management Council

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

7.8.1.2. Fundamental Clause 2. Coastal area management frameworks

2. Management organizations shall participate in coastal area management, decision-making processes and activities related to the fishery and its users, supporting sustainable and integrated resource use, and conflict avoidance.

Summary of relevant changes:

SC 2.1.1 States shall establish mechanisms for cooperation and coordination in planning, development, conservation, and management of coastal areas.
SC 2.1.2 The fisheries management organization shall ensure that the authority or authorities representing the fisheries sector and fishing communities in the coastal management process have the appropriate technical capacities and financial resources.

Halibut and Sablefish

Alaska continues to maintain well-established mechanisms for cooperation and coordination in the planning, conservation, and management of coastal and marine resources, consistent with SC 2.1.1.

The IFQ program, implemented in 1995, includes the establishment of Community Quota Entities (CQE), which act as mechanisms to secure harvest opportunities for Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands coastal communities highly dependent on these resources[65]. The maintenance of the CDQ program also allocates quotas directly to qualifying Western Alaska communities, ensuring resource benefits are distributed[66]. The NPFMC has also continued its ecosystem-based fisheries management and climate resilience initiatives, including ongoing Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)[67] review activities and Ecosystem Committee work, which further support integrated coastal and marine resource planning.

The fisheries management organizations—specifically the NPFMC and NOAA Fisheries—employ dedicated scientific and technical staff and rely on input from specialized bodies like the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Plan Teams to ensure that the authorities representing the fisheries sector possess the appropriate technical capacities (2.1.2). The scheduled NPFMC Plan Team meetings (e.g., January 2026 Groundfish Plan Teams) confirm the continuous functioning of this institutional framework[68].

There have been no major changes to the underlying legal or institutional framework since 2024. However, the continuation of Council committees, annual stock assessment processes, harvest specification reviews, EFH consultations, and ecosystem planning activities indicates that the mechanisms and capacities required under SC 2.1.1 and SC 2.1.2 remain fully operational in 2026.

SC 2.2 Representatives of the fisheries sector and fishing communities shall be consulted in the decision-making processes involving activities related to coastal area management planning and development. The public, as well as others affected, shall also be kept aware of the need for protection and management of coastal resources, and shall participate in the coastal management process.

Overall, no major statutory or institutional changes have occurred since 2024. However, the continued operation of the Council's public process, IFQ Committee, Ecosystem Committee, Plan Teams, IPHC consultation framework, and NOAA regulatory review procedures demonstrates that representatives of the fisheries sector, fishing communities, and other affected stakeholders continue to be actively

[65] https://www.npfmc.org/fisheries-issues/catch-shares-allocations/ifq/
[66] Federal Register :: Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plan; 2026 Annual Management Measures
[67] Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in Alaska | NOAA Fisheries
[68] NPFMC Meetings

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

2. Management organizations shall participate in coastal area management, decision-making processes and activities related to the fishery and its users, supporting sustainable and integrated resource use, and conflict avoidance.

consulted and engaged in coastal resource management and fisheries decision-making during 2026.[69,70,71]

2.4 States' fisheries management organizations and sub-regional or regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements shall give due publicity to conservation and management measures and ensure that laws, regulations, and other legal rules governing their implementation are effectively disseminated. The bases and purposes of such measures shall be explained to users of the resource in order to facilitate their application and thus gain increased support in the implementation of such measures.
2.5 The economic, social, and cultural value of coastal resources shall be assessed by the appropriate fisheries management organization in order to assist decision making on their allocation and use.
2.6 States shall cooperate to support and improve coastal area management, and in accordance with capacities, measures shall be taken to establish or promote (1) systems for research and monitoring of the coastal environment, and (2) multidisciplinary research of the coastal area using physical, chemical, biological, economic, social, legal, and institutional capabilities.

Programmatic Evaluation and Climate Resilience Planning

As reported during previous audits, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) initiated a Programmatic Evaluation in 2023 to review management policies, goals, and objectives across federally managed fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The objective was to assess whether the Council's management framework remains suitable for addressing future challenges, including climate change and other ecosystem-related risks.

During 2025, the Council reconsidered the future of the Programmatic Evaluation in light of changing federal priorities, funding uncertainty, staff capacity limitations, and broader regulatory developments. In October 2025, the Council formally decided not to take further action on the Programmatic Evaluation at that time and instead supported reinstating the triennial comprehensive review of Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) objectives as its primary adaptive-management mechanism. The Council noted that this recurring review process would continue to provide opportunities to evaluate management performance, assess progress toward FMP goals and objectives, and consider modifications to policy guidance where appropriate.[72]

Inflation Reduction Act Funding

At the October and December 2025 Council meetings, it was confirmed that the Council had received approximately $2.6 million in Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding from NOAA Fisheries to support climate resilience planning activities through 2027. Following the decision to discontinue the Programmatic Evaluation process, the Council revised its workplan to continue achieving the original climate-related objectives through alternative mechanisms. These objectives remain:

- Development of climate-resilient management approaches;
- Continued integration of Local Knowledge and Traditional Knowledge;

[69] April 2025 Newsletter | North Pacific Fishery Management Council
[70] North Pacific Fishery Management Council - Managing Our Nation's Fisheries Off The Coast Of Alaska
[71] Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Program | North Pacific Fishery Management Council
[72] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=59c4a937-fa51-42b4-a781-b6285a0c77c4.pdf&fileName=MOTION%20D4%20Programmatic%20Evaluation.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

2.	Management organizations shall participate in coastal area management, decision-making processes and activities related to the fishery and its users, supporting sustainable and integrated resource use, and conflict avoidance.
	• Improved consideration of uncertainty and risk in harvest specifications.[73,74] **Climate Resilience Workplan and Ecosystem Committee** A significant development in 2025 was the implementation of a Climate Resilience Workplan, which focuses on identifying practical opportunities to incorporate climate science into fisheries management and decision-making. The Council also reconstituted its Ecosystem Committee with updated terms of reference and membership to support climate resilience planning, ecosystem-based management, and integration of emerging scientific information. Additional work is underway to improve communication and outreach materials related to climate risks, uncertainty, and management responses.[75,76] Clause 2.3, 2.7 No relevant changes were reported.
References:	See footnotes
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fisheries Standard**

7.8.1.3. Fundamental Clause 3. Management objectives and plan

3.	Management objectives shall be implemented through management rules and actions formulated in a plan or other framework.
Summary of relevant changes:	SC 3.1.2 There shall be management objectives seeking to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on the stock under consideration's essential habitats, and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the unit of certification's fishing gear. The 2024 EFH amendments remain in effect, and no major new habitat closures or critical habitat designations affecting the Pacific Halibut or Sablefish fisheries were implemented during 2025–2026. A significant development supporting SC 3.1.2 occurred through the Council's continued effort to improve the scientific basis for habitat management decisions. In 2025, the NPFMC directed that newly developed information on fishing-gear bottom-contact estimates be incorporated into the Alaska Fishing Effects model. This work is intended to improve estimates of habitat disturbance from fishing activities and strengthen the scientific foundation for future habitat management decisions. The updated model is expected to support evaluation of potential management measures, gear performance standards, and habitat conservation options as the Council continues its review of fishing effects and habitat protections. This represents a proactive and adaptive approach to achieving habitat conservation objectives by ensuring that management decisions are informed by the best available scientific information.[77]

[73] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=c0581b2b-73ea-41f0-b45b-d58907e78710.pdf&fileName=PPT%20E%20IRA%20Timeline%20Update_AP_Council.pdf
[74] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=c9c7f7db-3acf-4313-b2ba-29711c4acc63.pdf&fileName=E%20IRA%20Funding%20Timeline%20Update.pdf
[75] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=c0581b2b-73ea-41f0-b45b-d58907e78710.pdf&fileName=PPT%20E%20IRA%20Timeline%20Update_AP_Council.pdf
[76] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=c9c7f7db-3acf-4313-b2ba-29711c4acc63.pdf&fileName=E%20IRA%20Funding%20Timeline%20Update.pdf
[77] June 2026 Newsletter | North Pacific Fishery Management Council

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

3. Management objectives shall be implemented through management rules and actions formulated in a plan or other framework.	
	SC 3.2.4 Biodiversity of aquatic ecosystems shall be conserved and ETP species shall be protected. Where relevant, there shall be pertinent objectives, and as necessary, management measures Protection of biodiversity (3.2.4) is further implemented through the annual setting of Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for Halibut in the non-trawl fisheries[78] and strict legal penalties for interactions with protected species. No relevant changes were reported on supporting clauses (SC3.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.3, 3.2.1, 3.2.2,SC3.2.3)
References:	
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fisheries Standard**

7.8.2. Section B: Science & Stock Assessment Activities, and the Precautionary Approach

7.8.2.1. Fundamental Clause 4. Fishery data

4. There shall be effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis systems for stock management purposes.	
Summary of relevant changes:	The following supporting clauses are relevant: Clause 4.1.1: Timely, complete, and reliable catch/effort statistics are compiled to international standards, updated and verified; research results inform objectives, reference points, and performance criteria, and analyses are disseminated for conservation and management. Clause 4.2: An observer scheme is established to collect accurate data for research and to support compliance. Clause 4.2.1: Observer programs are sufficient to provide quantitative estimates of total catch, discards, and incidental takes. Clause 4.3: Data are compiled and made available in a timely, agreed format consistent with confidentiality. Clause 4.4: States stimulate the research required to support fish-as-food policies. Clause 4.5: Economic, social, marketing, and institutional information is collected and analyzed with comparable time series to support monitoring and policy. Clause 4.6: Traditional fisheries knowledge and technologies are investigated and documented to assess applicability to sustainable management. Clause 4.7: Scientific research conducted in another State's waters complies with that State's laws and international law. **Pacific Halibut** The most recent stock assessment was finalized at the end of 2025 by the International

[78] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/2025-2026-alaska-groundfish-harvest-specifications

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

4. There shall be effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis systems for stock management purposes.

Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) [IPHC-2026-SA-01]. Fishery removals and mortality used in this statistical assessment are compiled from multiple, quality-controlled sources and undergo regular internal IPHC and external peer review; the 2025 assessment (a full assessment) retained the 2022 ensemble structure, applied an ensemble of long/short time-series models, and documented data quality, uncertainty, and indices (e.g., Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) numbers per unit effort (NPUE)/weight per unit effort (WPUE), commercial WPUE). The 2025 modelled FISS NPUE decreased 2% from 2024 while the O32 WPUE was unchanged (remaining at its lowest levels since the early 1990s), and commercial WPUE decreased 1% coastwide, reflecting mixed size-at-age trends and shifting cohort dominance (2016 and 2017 year classes). In-season and strategic risk controls for 2026 explicitly bracketed status-quo and ±5–25% alternatives; Commissioners ultimately reduced coastwide mortality limits by 1.3% for 2026 (a coastwide Total Constant Exploitation Yield (TCEY) of 29.33 million pounds) to align with continued low productivity and risk objectives.

Fishery-independent data in 2025 followed the optimized "revenue-positive" FISS design endorsed in February 2024. Subareas were sampled within IPHC Regulatory Areas 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, and 4B (Areas 4CDE were not part of the 2025 design). Of 523 planned stations, 497 (95%) were effectively sampled; four planned stations were not completed (one within the Hecate MPA, one blocked by ice off Yakutat, and two removed during planning), and 22 stations were deemed ineffective, chiefly due to whale depredation. Seven chartered longline vessels (three Canadian and four U.S.) completed 33 trips and 271 charter days; otoliths were removed from 5,670 fish, and ~119 t of halibut, 28 t of Pacific cod, and 24 t of rockfish were landed under retain-for-sale protocols (IPHC-2026-AM102-08). The IPHC continued integrating snap gear into survey tenders to maintain survey–fishery comparability, and individual weights have been collected coastwide since 2019 to improve WPUE and weight-at-age estimates. Although the FISS footprint has been reduced since 2023 due to survey cost economics, it continues to sample all biological regions, and model-based methods are being developed to produce coastwide indices.

Fishery-dependent data in 2025 included commercial fishery records, port sampling, and discard mortality estimation. Historical data series remain consistent: reported landings began in 1888, landings from 1935–1980 are aggregated, and since 1981 records have been fully delineated by Regulatory Area via fish tickets. Coastwide fishery landings increased between 2014 and 2017, the first sustained increases since 2003, but declined thereafter through 2025 in response to reduced mortality limits; 2025 coastwide commercial landings (including research) were approximately 16.7 million pounds (~7,600 t), down 16% from 2024. Ports such as Dutch Harbor, Homer, and Juneau had sampling rates of 1–7.5%, depending on area and fishery type, with age subsample targets of ~500–750 fish in Areas 2A–3C and up to 1,500 fish in Areas 4A–4E. Preliminary mortality estimates showed most Regulatory Areas harvested less than their allocated limits; for example, in Area 2B, 2025 mortality was ~5.18 million pounds out of a limit of 5.45 million (95%), while Area 4A harvested ~77% of its limit; Area 2C slightly exceeded its limit (~104%). Recreational removals declined slightly in 2025, with variation by state; Washington attained ~100% of its allocation, while Oregon (~60%) and California (~49%) attained lower percentages. These removals are informed by bag limits, gear restrictions, and NOAA-published season regulations. Discard viability sampling by the Alaska Observer Program increased sample sizes,

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

4. There shall be effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis systems for stock management purposes.

and updated two-year DMRs are scheduled for Council review as part of the biennial process.

Data governance, QA/QC, and review remain integral to the Pacific Halibut process. IPHC's production, maintenance, update, and verification of statistical data are documented in the annual assessment and supporting technical papers, with explicit terms of reference to evaluate availability, quality, and adequacy. Peer review of data quality is a standard feature of the process, ensuring data sufficiency for management. IPHC has also developed minimum data collection standards for observer programs to ensure training, QAQC, and statistically robust methods. Studies of discard mortality and viability (Loher et al. 2021, Kaimmer et al. 1998, Trumble et al. 1999, Rose et al. 2019, Davis and Olla 2000, Richards et al. 1995) continue to inform discard mortality rate (DMR) estimation. Longline and pot gear generally result in fewer injuries and better condition at release than trawl capture, though careful release methods remain critical; these findings are incorporated into observer programs to improve mortality estimation. Observer coverage on vessels greater than 40 ft is considered representative of overall fleet activity, with overlap in fishing areas with the <40 ft fleet. IPHC's collaboration with NOAA Fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS) ensures observer data feed into quota monitoring, stock assessments, and bycatch mitigation. For Pacific halibut, NMFS reported no changes in discard monitoring during the current surveillance period; observer, catch, and bycatch data continue to be compiled and published through the NOAA Fisheries Catch and Landings Reports for Alaska (Catch and Landings Reports).

Alaska Pacific Sablefish

The most recent sablefish stock assessment, with terminal year 2024, documents all fishery-independent and fishery-dependent data collection activity. The 2021 benchmark assessment remains the last full benchmark, with 2024 representing an update that incorporated new time series data and ageing results. The assessment includes all sources of catch, including landings and bycatch (assumed at 100% mortality) as well as removals from minor state-managed fisheries in the northern Gulf of Alaska and Aleutian Islands, which averaged ~180 t annually from 1995–1998, or ~1% of the total catch. Catches from state areas with their own assessments and guideline harvest levels (Prince William Sound, Chatham Strait) are not included. Historical catches prior to 1993 were adjusted using Japanese import records and discard estimates from 1994–1997. Research catches of sablefish, recorded since 2009, remain important, including removals from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) longline survey funded by catch sales. Additional removals come from bottom trawl surveys and IPHC longline surveys. State-managed sport fishery catches have been increasing, though non-directed removals have remained below 1% of acceptable biological catch (ABC) since 2006. A 2025 sablefish stock assessment was not completed owing to the federal government shutdown, so the 2024 assessment (Goethel and Cheng 2024) remains the most recent; a full operational assessment is scheduled for November 2026, and a Center for Independent Experts (CIE) peer review of the assessment was conducted 16–18 June 2026, with reviewer reports pending (2026 Sablefish CIE materials). State-managed sablefish data activity continued during the period, with ADF&G publishing updated Northern (NSEI) and Southern (SSEI) Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish management plans and stock assessments in July 2025.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

4. There shall be effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis systems for stock management purposes.

Fishery-independent data. In 2024, no NOAA domestic longline survey was conducted due to the cost-recovery nature of the program; the most recent survey data are from 2023. Relative population numbers (RPN) indices from the 2023 survey represented some of the highest in the series, though declines were observed in the western Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea (BS). The GOA trawl survey index, which reached its lowest point in 2013 before quadrupling through 2021, declined by ~50% in 2023. No trawl survey occurred in 2024, as it was an off year. Data input changes for the 2024 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) were limited to updating existing series, with no new survey or catch per unit effort (CPUE) indices, as CPUE data are no longer available. Otolith ageing from the 2023 survey, completed in 2024, added ~1,000 additional age samples, though coverage was slightly reduced due to high demand across species. The revised cost-recovery survey design (Gulf of Alaska–only, with the juvenile index discontinued) initiated in 2025 remains in place, with the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands sampled in 2026, and time-series continuity is being maintained.

Fishery-dependent data. Commercial fishery landings continue to be reported via the eLandings system required by ADF&G, which feeds into the NMFS Catch Accounting System (CAS) and is compiled by Alaska Fisheries Information Network (AKFIN). Since June 27, 2025, ADF&G logbooks have required longline and pot vessels to provide more detailed information, including gear deployment, geographic coordinates, fishing depth, retained and released catch, bycatch, and tag data. These logbooks improve the granularity of commercial fishery data while maintaining the broader monitoring framework of observers, electronic monitoring, and discard mortality estimation. Discard monitoring methods remain consistent, with discard mortality rates continuing at 25% for sablefish caught in the halibut fishery prior to August 15 and 16% for sablefish released in other fisheries.

Depredation and monitoring programs. Whale depredation continues to be a source of sablefish mortality, generally <1,000 t annually. Killer whale depredation is more common in the western GOA, while sperm whale depredation occurs more in central and eastern GOA. Since 2023, depredation estimates in the assessment have been held constant at 2022 levels. Pot gear continues to expand as a preferred method due to reduced whale interactions, accounting for more than 80% of the fixed-gear sablefish catch since 2022 (2025 Black Cod Almanac). Observer and electronic monitoring (EM) program structures remained unchanged in 2024, with the last significant updates occurring in 2021. No new information on seabird mortality or bycatch composition was reported in 2024, though a five-year review of sablefish data systems is scheduled for the October 2026 Council meeting. For the current period, managers reported no change in how electronic-monitoring data are analyzed (detailed EM and observer-coverage matters are handled by the AFSC Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis program), and fewer depredation-specific research studies in recent years, consistent with the shift to pot gear; observer data continue to record whale interactions, and no new mitigation findings were reported. Peer-reviewed studies quantify these effects: killer whale depredation reduces catch rates substantially more than sperm whale depredation (Peterson and Hanselman 2017), and correcting the longline-survey index for sperm whale depredation is necessary to avoid biasing the sablefish abundance signal (Hanselman et al. 2018).

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

4.	There shall be effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis systems for stock management purposes.
	Data governance, QA/QC, and review. Overall, 2024 sablefish data collection was characterized by continuity in monitoring approaches—observer coverage, EM, discard mortality estimation—combined with incremental improvements in logbook reporting. The production, maintenance, update, and verification of statistical data are conducted with rigorous oversight and quality control. These data, summarized in reports and executive summaries, are provided to managers and stock assessment scientists, with confidentiality protections for certain vessel-level or individual data in accordance with NMFS policies and Alaska statutes. The Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) manages ADF&G fish ticket records, which are confidential for 45 years under state law. For the current surveillance period, NMFS and ADF&G reported no significant changes to Alaska sablefish catch statistics and no change in the level of detail collected and reported. Both fisheries demonstrate that timely, reliable, and complete statistics are compiled and maintained to applicable international standards and practices. These are vetted through substantial peer review and presented in public forums, ensuring transparency and adequacy for management. For both Pacific Halibut and Alaska Pacific Sablefish, no new evidence was identified of research specifically undertaken to support fish as food beyond economic and social reporting and marketing work conducted by Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) and related institutions. Stakeholder consultation (AFDF, July 2026) noted the socioeconomic context: sablefish stocks are healthy but ex-vessel prices are at record lows, while halibut quotas have declined even as ex-vessel prices have risen. For both Pacific Halibut and Alaska Pacific Sablefish, the assessment team found no evidence of new initiatives under Clauses 4.5–4.7 (socioeconomic information, traditional fisheries knowledge, and research in another State's waters) in 2025. For halibut, indigenous, ceremonial, and subsistence fisheries remain documented, with management integrated into IPHC and NOAA processes; practices are long-established, with tribal treaty rights in Washington, First Nations FSC fisheries in British Columbia, and federal subsistence fisheries in Alaska, all reported in assessment documentation and compliant with regulatory frameworks. Subsistence removals are reported through SHARC permits and documented by IPHC, but no new initiatives were introduced in 2025. For sablefish, small-scale, recreational, personal use, or subsistence fisheries are minimal, and their documentation is well established in assessments and Alaska Board of Fisheries regulations (2012 and 2015) requiring permits and defining limits. These fisheries are primarily large-scale, with small-scale removals documented but minor relative to overall catch, and no new initiatives were reported in 2025. For both stocks, scientific research is conducted in U.S. and Canadian waters under established laws and conventions, with IPHC setline surveys and NMFS/ADF&G programs providing consistent inputs. Survey activities remain compliant with U.S. and Canadian regulations, and there is clear evidence that all scientific research is conducted within applicable legal frameworks. Overall, the assessments substantiate that documentation of traditional knowledge, subsistence, and small-scale fisheries exists and is integrated into management, but no new programs or initiatives were identified by the assessment team. The following supporting clauses were determined to be not relevant for the fisheries under examination:

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

4.	There shall be effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis systems for stock management purposes.
	Clause 4.1.2 (use of generic evidence) — stock-specific data are comprehensive; the clause was therefore scored in full conformance as not applicable. Clause 4.8 (uniform high-seas research guidelines) — these fisheries have no high-seas activities. Clause 4.9 (building research capacity in developing countries) — operations are limited to the U.S. and Canada. Clause 4.10 (support for research on previously unfished or lightly fished stocks) — these fisheries are fully developed. Clause 4.11 (international support to States, especially developing, least-developed, or small island States) — operations are limited to the U.S. and Canada.
References:	Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Requesting Information, Commercial Fish Ticket and COAR Data. https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.requests Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. https://www.alaskaseafood.org/industry/quality/ Cahalan, J., & Gasper, J. 2022. The Commercial Size Limit for the Pacific Halibut Fishery off Alaska and Its Relationship to Observer-Derived Estimates of At-Sea Discard. NOAA Fisheries. doi:10.25923/8XHP-7Q20 Fissel, B., Dalton, M., Garber-Yonts, B., Haynie, A., Kasperski, S., Lee, J., Lew, D., Seung, C., Sparks, K., Szymkowiak, M., & Wise, S. 2021. Economic Status Report of the Groundfish Fisheries off Alaska, 2019. NOAA Fisheries. Goethel, D. R., & Cheng, M. L. 2024. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska, 2024. North Pacific Fishery Management Council SAFE Report. Goethel, D. R., Cheng, M. L., Echave, K. B., Marsh, C., Rodgveller, C. J., Shotwell, K., et al. 2023. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska. NOAA Fisheries. Goethel, D. R., Hanselman, D. H., Rodgveller, C. J., Echave, K. B., Williams, B. C., Shotwell, S. K., et al. 2021. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska. Hanselman, D. H., Pyper, B. J., & Peterson, M. J. 2018. Sperm whale depredation on longline surveys and implications for the assessment of Alaska sablefish. Fisheries Research, 200, 75-83. doi:10.1016/j.fishres.2017.12.017 IPHC. 2020. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey – Regulatory Area 2A Rockfish Tag Numbers, IPHC-2020-FISS-CA-2A. IPHC. 2023. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey Hook Adjustment Factors, IPHC-2023-FISS-HADJ. IPHC. 2023. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey Seabird Observations, IPHC-2023-FISS-SBD-000. IPHC. 2025. Draft Interim Harvest Strategy Policy. International Pacific Halibut Commission, IPHC-2025-MSAB021-09, 21 pp. IPHC. 2025. Report on Current and Future Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Activities. International Pacific Halibut Commission, IPHC-2025-SRB026-06, 27 pp. IPHC. 2025. Stock Assessment of Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis), 2025. International Pacific Halibut Commission, IPHC-2025-SA-01, 126 pp. IPHC. 2026. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS): design and implementation in 2025. International Pacific Halibut Commission, IPHC-2026-AM102-08. IPHC. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS). Kodiak Seafood and Marine Science Center. https://alaskaseagrant.org/about/kodiak-seafood-and-marine-science-center/

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

4. There shall be effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis systems for stock management purposes.	
	Kroetz, K., Reimer, M. N., Sanchirico, J. N., Lew, D. K., & Huetteman, J. 2019. Defining the economic scope for ecosystem-based fishery management. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116(10), 4188–4193. Matulich, S. C., & Clark, M. L. 2003. North Pacific Halibut and Sablefish IFQ Policy Design: Quantifying the Impacts on Processors. Marine Resource Economics. NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Office. 2023. Annual Deployment Plan for Observers and Electronic Monitoring in the Groundfish and Halibut Fisheries off Alaska. Peterson, M. J., & Hanselman, D. 2017. Sablefish mortality associated with whale depredation in Alaska. ICES Journal of Marine Science, 74(5), 1382-1394. doi:10.1093/icesjms/fsw239 Ryall, P., Kurland, J., Davis, N., Alverson, R., Degreef, P., Yamada, R., et al. 2024. IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey Sampling Manual, IPHC-2024-VSM01. International Pacific Halibut Commission. Shotwell, K., Echave, K., Ferriss, B., Goethel, D., Lunsford, C., Oke, K., Siddon, E., et al. 2023. Appendix 3C. Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska – Report Card. Soderlund, E., Randolph, D. L., & Dykstra, S. C. 2012. Technical Report No. 58: IPHC Setline Charters 1963 through 2003. International Pacific Halibut Commission. Steward, I., & Hicks, A. 2024. Assessment of the Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) stock at the end of 2023. International Pacific Halibut Commission. Wilson, D., & Jannot, J. 2022. Minimum Data Collection Standards for Pacific Halibut by Scientific Observer Programs. SPRFMO. Zolotov, A. O. 2022. The Long-Term Dynamics of Sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria) Stocks in the Western Bering Sea and Prospects for Their Commercial Exploitation. Russian Journal of Marine Biology, 47(7), 563–582.
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fisheries Standard**

7.8.2.2. Fundamental Clause 5. Stock assessment

5. There shall be regular stock assessment activities appropriate for the fishery, its range, the species biology, and the ecosystem, undertaken in accordance with acknowledged scientific standards to support its optimum utilization.	
Summary of relevant changes:	The following supporting clauses are relevant: Clause 5.1: an institutional framework is established to determine applied research needs and how they are used for fishery management. Clause 5.1.2: management ensures research across biology, ecology, technology, environmental science, economics, and enhancement, with timely dissemination and provision of facilities, training, and staffing. Clause 5.2: research capacity is in place to monitor climate and environmental effects, stock status, and ecosystem impacts from fishing, pollution, or habitat alteration. Clause 5.3: organizations cooperate internationally to encourage research for optimum utilization.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

5. There shall be regular stock assessment activities appropriate for the fishery, its range, the species biology, and the ecosystem, undertaken in accordance with acknowledged scientific standards to support its optimum utilization.

Clause 5.4: collaborative technical and research programs with other States improve understanding of transboundary, shared, straddling, highly migratory, and high-seas stocks.
Clause 5.5: research data are analyzed and published with appropriate respect for confidentiality.

Pacific Halibut
Institutional framework and assessment cycle. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) maintains a mature institutional framework (Supporting Clause 5.1) in which an ensemble Stock Synthesis assessment is updated annually and fully rebuilt on a ~3-year cycle, with methods and inputs reviewed twice yearly by an independent Scientific Review Board and documented for the Commission (AM102) (regularity, peer review, acknowledged standards). The 2025 full assessment (IPHC-2026-SA-01) incorporated final 2024 information and all available 2025 fishery-dependent and -independent inputs, with late-season fishery totals refreshed in November; the 2025 assessment re-examined its data sources and structural choices (a new Stock Synthesis version, an updated Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) index, a maturity ogive revised from histology, and retuned male selectivity) while retaining the 2022 ensemble structure and natural-mortality configuration.

Removals and mortality accounting. The assessment explicitly compiles and analyzes all significant sources of removals and mortality (Supporting Clause 4.1): directed commercial landings and discards, non-directed discard mortality (bycatch), recreational and subsistence harvests, and research removals. For 2025 the IPHC estimated total mortality at ~28.8 million pounds (Mlb; ~13,100 t), the lowest in a century and down 12% from 2024, with non-directed discard mortality ~4.6 Mlb (~2,100 t; up 6% and the highest since 2019) and recreational mortality ~5.7 Mlb (~2,600 t; down 10%).

Assessment inputs and outputs. These statistics were integrated with modelled Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) indices (NPUE down ~2% coastwide — Region 2 down 16%, Region 4 up 7%; O32 weight per unit effort (WPUE) unchanged) and preliminary logbook WPUE (down ~1% coastwide), together with current length- and age-composition, to estimate spawning biomass at the start of 2026 of ~166 Mlb (~75,300 t) and relative SB ≈38%—all within the IPHC's risk-based harvest decision framework using reference spawning potential ratio (SPR) of F43% and biomass triggers (SB30%, SB20%).

Evidence of conformance. This evidence is timely, verified, and contains regularly updated statistics consistent with international practice, robust observer/logbook and survey programs that quantify total catch and discards, and a management body that compiles and disseminates data while honoring confidentiality constraints. The assessment explicitly notes the role of economic and ecosystem information (e.g., fishery performance indicators, stock condition via WPUE, and projections conditioned on catch sharing plans), demonstrating that socioeconomic knowledge is considered alongside biology for policy formulation (Supporting Clause 4.5). Where stock-specific information is uncertain, the ensemble spans alternative hypotheses (e.g., natural mortality and environmental recruitment effects), aligning with the allowance for generic evidence under appropriate risk (Supporting Clause 4.1.2). Overall, the 2025

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

5. There shall be regular stock assessment activities appropriate for the fishery, its range, the species biology, and the ecosystem, undertaken in accordance with acknowledged scientific standards to support its optimum utilization.

assessment demonstrates regular, standards-based activities, with results and risks used directly to support optimum utilization in 2026.

Research and monitoring priorities. The IPHC sets these out in its 5-Year Program of Integrated Research and Monitoring, 2022–2026 (IPHC-2023-5YPIRM), which defines objectives across stock assessment, management strategy evaluation, biology and ecology, and data programs and calls for new collaborative agreements and international engagement (e.g., with DFO, NOAA/NOAA Fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS), ADF&G, and western Pacific halibut agencies), consistent with Supporting Clauses 5.1, 5.3, and 5.4. Movement and stock-structure research continues to inform the assessment: coastwide tagging has shown that ontogenetic migration continues into larger, older fish (Webster et al. 2013), while satellite and archival tagging document regionally distinct movement contingents in the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (Loher 2022) and characterize seasonal movements at the northern range edge (Flanigan et al. 2025).

Alaska Pacific Sablefish

Institutional framework and assessment cycle. NOAA Fisheries (AFSC) and the NPFMC provide the institutional framework to determine applied research needs and to execute, peer-review, and publish the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) assessment annually. The 2024 update retained the author-recommended 2023 model (23.5) without methodological changes, added 2023 fishery lengths/ages and finalized 2023 catch, and included preliminary 2024 catch and constant (2022-level) whale-depredation adjustments. Although the cost-recovery longline survey did not occur in 2024 (first gap since 1979), the assessment updated all available time series (fishery catch and composition, trawl survey through 2023) and transparently documented data limitations and diagnostic performance, keeping risk at non-elevated levels.

Removals and mortality accounting. Consistent with Supporting Clause 4.1, all significant removals are accounted for (landings, discards/bycatch at 100% mortality for accounting, non-commercial removals, research catch), together with explicit adjustments for killer and sperm whale depredation. Data are compiled, QA/QC-ed, and made accessible through SAFE documentation and repositories, respecting confidentiality (Supporting Clauses 4.1.1 and 4.3). Observer and electronic monitoring programs (and survey designs) quantify total catch, discards, and incidentals (Supporting Clauses 4.2, 4.2.1), while socioeconomic and fishery-performance information (e.g., quota under-utilization averaging ~71% over the past three years, rapid gear shifts to pots, market effects) is synthesized in the Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile to inform policy (Supporting Clause 4.5).

Assessment outputs and stock status. The 2024 assessment estimates total biomass ~705 kt (age-2+), spawning stock biomass (SSB) ~191 kt (≈63% of B100) and Tier 3a status with a 2025 maximum permissible ABCw of 50,111 t and OFLw of 58,532 t; projections indicate the stock is not overfished nor subject to overfishing, with continued rebuilding of age structure from strong 2014–2019 cohorts.

Treatment of the 2024 survey gap. In the absence of new 2024 survey indices, the assessment neither introduced generic stand-ins nor changed control rules; rather, it

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

5.	There shall be regular stock assessment activities appropriate for the fishery, its range, the species biology, and the ecosystem, undertaken in accordance with acknowledged scientific standards to support its optimum utilization.
	documented uncertainty, held certain inputs constant per Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) guidance, and pointed to planned full-assessment improvements (e.g., sex-disaggregated ageing)—all consistent with acknowledged scientific standards and with the allowance for carefully conditioned evidence when stock-specific inputs are temporarily unavailable. These regular, transparent activities support optimum utilization in 2025 and 2026 via Tier 3a harvest control rules and area apportionment unchanged from 2023 in light of the 2024 survey gap. **Research and monitoring priorities.** Ongoing sablefish research and monitoring support this framework: NMFS conducts an annual longline survey and a triennial Gulf of Alaska trawl survey, while ADF&G runs annual longline surveys in Chatham (NSEI) and Clarence (SSEI) Straits and an annual Chatham Strait mark-recapture study; cooperative and transboundary work includes a NMFS sablefish migration model spanning federal, state, and Canadian waters, ADF&G acoustic-tagging pilots in Chatham Strait, and sperm-whale interaction research to reduce depredation (ADF&G Sablefish Management and Research), consistent with Supporting Clauses 5.1, 5.3, and 5.4. Recent peer-reviewed analyses further inform the assessment: Cheng et al. (2025) show that the exceptionally large post-2014 year classes can induce density-dependent reductions in growth with implications for assessment; Cheng et al. (2024) demonstrate the value of explicitly modeling the rapidly developing pot fishery; and Kapur et al. (2024), Kapur et al. (2025) document substantial transboundary movement of Northeast Pacific sablefish, underscoring the connectedness of the stock across U.S. and Canadian waters. **CY 2025 surveillance update.** No new federal sablefish assessment was produced in 2025; owing to the federal government shutdown no 2025 SAFE report was completed, so the 2024 SAFE assessment (Goethel and Cheng 2024) remains the most recent. A full operational assessment is scheduled for November 2026, and a Center for Independent Experts (CIE) peer review of the sablefish assessment was conducted 16–18 June 2026 (2026 Sablefish CIE materials), with reviewer reports pending. ADF&G published updated Northern (NSEI 2025) and Southern (SSEI 2025) Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish management plans and stock assessments in July 2025. The following supporting clause was determined to be not relevant for the fisheries under examination: Clause 5.1.1 (use of less-elaborate methods for small-scale or low-value fisheries requiring extra precaution) — these fisheries are data-rich and neither small-scale nor low-value.
References:	Alaska Fisheries Information Network (AKFIN). https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/inport/organization/AKFIN Cahalan, J., Gasper, J., & Mondragon, J. 2014. Catch Sampling and Estimation in the Federal Groundfish Fisheries off Alaska, 2015 Edition. NOAA Fisheries. Cheng, M. L. H., Goethel, D. R., & Cunningham, C. J. 2024. Addressing complex fleet structure in fishery stock assessment models: Accounting for a rapidly developing pot fishery for Alaska sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria). Fisheries Research, 271, 106917. doi:10.1016/j.fishres.2023.106917 Cheng, M. L. H., Goethel, D. R., Hulson, P.-J. F., Echave, K. B., & Cunningham, C. J. 2025. "Slim pickings?": Extreme large recruitment events may induce density-

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

5. There shall be regular stock assessment activities appropriate for the fishery, its range, the species biology, and the ecosystem, undertaken in accordance with acknowledged scientific standards to support its optimum utilization.

dependent reductions in growth for Alaska sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria) with implications for stock assessment. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 82, 1-13. doi:10.1139/cjfas-2024-0228
eLandings. Alaska Interagency Electronic Reporting System. https://elandings.alaska.gov/
Flanigan, A. J., Nielsen, J. K., Loher, T., & Seitz, A. C. 2025. Characterizing seasonal movements and environmental conditions of Pacific halibut in the northern Bering Sea. Environmental Biology of Fishes, 108(10), 1441-1462. doi:10.1007/s10641-025-01735-2
Goethel, D. R., Cheng, M. L., Echave, K. B., Marsh, C., Rodgveller, C. J., Shotwell, K., et al. 2023. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska. NOAA Fisheries.
Goethel, D. R., Hanselman, D. H., Rodgveller, C. J., Echave, K. B., Williams, B. C., Shotwell, S. K., et al. 2021. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska.
IPHC. 2023. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey Seabird Observations, IPHC-2023-FISS-SBD-000.
IPHC. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS).
Kapur, M. S., Haltuch, M. A., Connors, B., Berger, A., Holt, K., Marshall, K., & Punt, A. E. 2024. Range-wide contrast in management outcomes for transboundary Northeast Pacific sablefish. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 81(7), 810-827. doi:10.1139/cjfas-2024-0008
Kapur, M., Rogers, L., Goethel, D. R., Cheng, M. L. H., Hanselman, D., Echave, K., Haltuch, M. A., Holt, K. R., English, P., Berger, A. M., & Connors, B. 2025. Hidden Markov mark-recapture modeling highlights transboundary exchange for northeast Pacific sablefish. Fisheries Research, 289, 107498. doi:10.1016/j.fishres.2025.107498
Loher, T. 2022. Dispersal and seasonal movements of Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) in the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, as inferred from satellite-transmitting archival tags. Animal Biotelemetry, 10(1), 18. doi:10.1186/s40317-022-00288-w
NOAA Fisheries. Alaska Catch Accounting System. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/sustainable-fisheries/alaska-catch-accounting-system
NOAA Fisheries. Electronic Reporting in Alaska Fisheries. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/resources-fishing/electronic-reporting-alaska-fisheries
NOAA. NAO 216-100: Protection of Confidential Fisheries Statistics. https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-216-100-protection-of-confidential-fisheries-statisticsRyall, P., Kurland, J., Davis, N., Alverson, R., Degreef, P., Yamada, R., et al. 2024. IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey Sampling Manual, IPHC-2024-VSM01. International Pacific Halibut Commission.
Shotwell, K., Echave, K., Ferriss, B., Goethel, D., Lunsford, C., Oke, K., Siddon, E., et al. 2023. Appendix 3C. Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska – Report Card.
Soderlund, E., Randolph, D. L., & Dykstra, S. C. 2012. Technical Report No. 58: IPHC Setline Charters 1963 through 2003. International Pacific Halibut Commission.
Steward, I., & Hicks, A. 2024. Assessment of the Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) stock at the end of 2023. International Pacific Halibut Commission.
Webster, R. A., Clark, W. G., Leaman, B. M., & Forsberg, J. E. 2013. Pacific halibut on the move: a renewed understanding of adult migration from a coastwide tagging study. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 70(4), 642-653. doi:10.1139/cjfas-2012-0371

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

5.	There shall be regular stock assessment activities appropriate for the fishery, its range, the species biology, and the ecosystem, undertaken in accordance with acknowledged scientific standards to support its optimum utilization.
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fisheries Standard**

7.8.2.3. Fundamental Clause 6. Biological reference points and harvest control rule

6.	The current state of the stock shall be defined in relation to reference points, relevant proxies, or verifiable substitutes that allow effective management objectives and targets to be set. Remedial actions shall be available and taken where reference points or other suitable proxies are approached or exceeded.
Summary of relevant changes:	The following supporting clauses are relevant: Clause 6.1: safe target reference points (or proxies) are established and aligned with maximum sustainable yield (MSY) or suitable lower fishing mortality when appropriate. Clause 6.2: scientifically based limit reference points are set and paired with measures to prevent exceeding them. Clause 6.3: data and assessment procedures are in place to measure stock status against those reference points and adjust fishing levels accordingly. Clause 6.4: pre-agreed management actions and contingency plans are triggered if reference points are exceeded. Clause 6.5: measures exist to identify/protect depleted or threatened stocks and to restore critical resources and habitats. **Pacific Halibut** **Assessment basis and harvest policy.** Full, age-structured, statistical stock assessments are conducted annually, and fisheries management and conservation are based on precautionary and ecosystem-based approaches, including the use of reference points for spawning biomass and harvest rate. Since 1985, the IPHC followed a constant harvest rate policy to determine annual available yield, termed the Constant Exploitation Yield (CEY). A biological target level for total removals from each regulatory area is calculated yearly by applying a fixed area-specific harvest rate to the estimate of exploitable biomass in each IPHC regulatory area. The apportionment percentages and the target harvest rates for each regulatory area together result in a target distribution for the annual Total Constant Exploitation Yield (TCEY). The scale of this distribution is based on the estimate of the coastwide exploitable biomass at the beginning of year t+1 from the stock assessment in year t. **Reference points and stock status.** The IPHC's current interim management procedure specifies a reference level of fishing intensity of F43%, based on the Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR), with biomass-based triggers at SB30% and SB20%. At the start of 2026, spawning biomass was estimated at ~166 million pounds (~75,300 t), about 38% of unfished levels. The probability of being below the SB30% trigger was about 28%, and about 1% for SB20%. These values are slightly improved from the prior year, where relative SB was estimated near 36% of unfished. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) data showed mixed signals in 2025, with a 2% decline in numbers per unit effort (NPUE) and legal-size (O32) weight per unit effort

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

6.	**The current state of the stock shall be defined in relation to reference points, relevant proxies, or verifiable substitutes that allow effective management objectives and targets to be set. Remedial actions shall be available and taken where reference points or other suitable proxies are approached or exceeded.**

(WPUE) unchanged, while fishery-dependent commercial logbooks indicated a ~1% decline in catch per unit effort (CPUE). These mixed signals underscore the sensitivity of the assessment to both survey and fishery data.

Mortality, recruitment, and risk. Total mortality from all sources in 2025 decreased about 12% from 2024 to ~28.8 million pounds, the lowest level in a century. Recruitment continues to be shaped by the 2012, 2016, and 2017 cohorts, which are near average in strength but smaller than the earlier dominant year classes. Two long-term models continue to provide contrasting views of current stock size relative to historical lows, reflecting uncertainties in pre-1970s data. Projections in the 2025 assessment suggest elevated risk of further stock decline at higher catch levels, making the precautionary harvest control rules essential to keep exploitation aligned with reference points. Although the technical tools for a full harvest strategy are in place, the IPHC continues to operate under this interim management procedure; Roozee et al. (2026) attribute the pace of full harvest-strategy adoption to institutional and governance factors rather than technical readiness.

CY 2025 surveillance update. The IPHC end-of-2025 assessment (IPHC-2026-SA-01) and 102nd Annual Meeting (January 2026) retained the interim harvest strategy policy, the SPR-based reference fishing intensity (F43%), and the biomass triggers at SB30% and SB20%; no changes to the reference points or harvest control rule were adopted.

Alaska Pacific Sablefish

Overfishing status. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act, the Secretary of Commerce is required to report annually on the status of each U.S. fishery with respect to overfishing. The official catch for 2022 was 26,900 t, well below the overfishing limit (OFL) of 34,500 t, confirming that the stock was not subject to overfishing. In more recent assessments, sablefish spawning stock biomass has continued to improve. The 2024 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report (the most recent; no assessment was completed in 2025) projects female spawning biomass at ~219,700 t, or about 73% of unfished B100%, placing the stock well above the B35% threshold that defines an overfished state. This means sablefish are neither overfished nor approaching that condition.

Tier 3 reference points and specifications. Sablefish remain under Tier 3 of the NPFMC harvest control rule, which uses B40% as the MSY proxy. The updated point estimate of B40% is 121,069 t. The 2025 reference points set FOFL = 0.102 and FABC = 0.087, leading to an author-recommended acceptable biological catch (ABC) of 50,111 t (after whale depredation adjustments) and an OFL of 58,532 t. These values are higher than in 2024, reflecting the strong biomass trajectory of the stock. Utilization in recent years has been well below ABC, further reducing short-term risk. The assessment in 2024 did not involve methodological changes—Model 23.5 was retained—but data were updated with 2023 catches, length and age compositions, and survey indices. The NOAA longline survey did not occur in 2024 due to cost-recovery limits, and the trawl survey was off-year, so apportionment relied on the five-year

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

6. The current state of the stock shall be defined in relation to reference points, relevant proxies, or verifiable substitutes that allow effective management objectives and targets to be set. Remedial actions shall be available and taken where reference points or other suitable proxies are approached or exceeded.	
	average. Even with fewer indices, model projections remained robust and continue to indicate a healthy stock condition. **CY 2025 surveillance update.** The NPFMC Tier 3 harvest control rule and B40% MSY proxy were unchanged during the period. A management strategy evaluation of alternative harvest control rules (Zahner et al. 2025, cjfas-2025-0115) and an NPFMC harvest control rule (HCR) discussion paper were presented for information in 2026. That study found harvest-control-rule changes are warranted for sablefish given large recruitment-driven swings in productivity and recommended a hybrid "slow-up, fast-down" stability constraint (NPFMC HCR discussion paper). As of June 2026 no new harvest control rule had been adopted for management, and because no 2025 federal SAFE assessment was completed the reference points remain those of the 2024 assessment. **State-managed fisheries.** For state-managed sablefish fisheries, such as those in Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and the Aleutian Islands, guideline harvest levels (GHLs) are derived from NOAA Fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS) assessment data, historical effort and catch, and yield-per-unit-area models. In the Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) Subdistrict, the 2025 annual harvest objective (AHO) was unchanged from 2024 at 643,360 round pounds, allocated among 21 valid permit holders (down from 22) at an equal quota share of 30,636 pounds (SSEI 2025). Adjustments to individual quota shares continue to be made for over- or underages from prior years. ADF&G bases these harvest objectives on fishery CPUE, biological data, and stock trends in adjacent areas. SSEI longline survey CPUE declined 21% from 2023 to 2024 (though still above the 10-year mean), while pot fishery CPUE rose 1%; the longline fishery CPUE remains confidential. The absence of older, larger fish, particularly fecund females, remains a concern, though strong recruitment from the 2014–2021 year classes (which make up over 81% of projected 2025 spawning stock biomass) is promising for future spawning potential. In the Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) Subdistrict, the 2025 AHO increased to 1,789,671 round pounds (from a 2025 ABC of 2,080,436 round pounds, up 15% from 2024), allocated among 73 permits at an equal quota share of 24,516 round pounds (up 16%); the 2022 mark-recapture abundance index (3.14 million fish) was the highest on record, and recent recruitment (2013–2020 year classes, dominated by the strong 2016 class) continues to drive biomass increases (NSEI 2025). In the Aleutian Islands state-waters fishery, the 2026 guideline harvest level is 2,696,000 round pounds, set at 5% of the combined federal Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands sablefish ABC (AI 2026 FMP). **Evidence of conformance.** For both halibut and sablefish, reference points are clearly defined and aligned with MSY or suitable proxies, with precautionary buffers built in. The IPHC uses SB20% and SB30% thresholds to control fishing mortality, while the NPFMC's Tier 3 harvest control rule for sablefish ties reference points directly to B40%. Both systems are tested through simulation and peer review, and both have demonstrated responsive management when stocks approach trigger points. In both cases, 2024 did not involve structural model changes—only updated data streams—but the 2025 outcomes highlight diverging trajectories: halibut biomass showing signals of decline, and sablefish biomass remaining strong and above targets.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

6.	**The current state of the stock shall be defined in relation to reference points, relevant proxies, or verifiable substitutes that allow effective management objectives and targets to be set. Remedial actions shall be available and taken where reference points or other suitable proxies are approached or exceeded.**
References:	Alaska Department of Fish and Game. 2025. Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (NSEI) sablefish management plan and stock assessment, July 2025. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. 2025. Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (SSEI) sablefish management plan and stock assessment, July 2025. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. 2026. Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery management plan. Goethel, D. R., & Cheng, M. L. 2024. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska, 2024. North Pacific Fishery Management Council SAFE Report. IPHC. 2026. Report of the 102nd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM102), January 2026. International Pacific Halibut Commission. IPHC. 2026. Stock Assessment of Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) at the end of 2025. International Pacific Halibut Commission, IPHC-2026-SA-01. North Pacific Fishery Management Council. 2026. Sablefish harvest control rule (HCR) discussion paper. Roozee, E., Temby, O., & Hickey, G. M. 2026. Why technical readiness is not enough: Institutional barriers to full harvest strategy adoption in the International Pacific Halibut Commission. Fisheries Research, 300, 107788. Zahner et al. 2025. Management strategy evaluation of alternative harvest control rules for Alaska sablefish. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, cjfas-2025-0115. [author list and title to be confirmed] doi:10.1016/j.fishres.2026.107788
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fisheries Standard**

7.8.2.4. Fundamental Clause 7. Precautionary approach

7.	**Management actions and measures for the conservation of stock and the ecosystem shall be based on the precautionary approach. Where information is deficient a suitable method using risk management shall be adopted to consider uncertainty.**
Summary of relevant changes:	The following supporting clauses are relevant: Clause 7.1 — both fisheries apply explicit precautionary harvest procedures with biomass triggers and risk-based decision tools. Clause 7.1.1 — management explicitly considers uncertainties (stock productivity, reference points, bycatch, ecosystem and socioeconomic factors). **Pacific Halibut** **Precautionary triggers and stock status.** The IPHC interim management procedure applies explicit precautionary triggers at 30% of unfished spawning biomass and a limit reference point at 20%, where directed fishing is closed. The 2025 stock assessment indicates spawning biomass at the start of 2026 of ~166 million pounds (~75,300 t), corresponding to about 38% of unfished levels, which remains safely above these thresholds. Relative spawning biomass increased modestly compared with the prior-year estimate and continues to track higher than the long-term low

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

7.	Management actions and measures for the conservation of stock and the ecosystem shall be based on the precautionary approach. Where information is deficient a suitable method using risk management shall be adopted to consider uncertainty.

observed in the 1970s, though the exact scaling depends on whether the coastwide or areas-as-fleets model is emphasized.

Assessment ensemble and decision tables. The assessment is based on an ensemble of four age-structured models in Stock Synthesis, integrating both fishery-independent data from the annual Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) setline survey and fishery-dependent information such as commercial logbooks, length and age compositions, and bycatch estimates. The 2025 assessment was a full assessment that retained the 2022 ensemble structure, incorporating new 2025 FISS results and commercial catch per unit effort (CPUE) data. Legal-size weight per unit effort (WPUE) from the survey was unchanged from 2024, and commercial CPUE decreased about 1%, while overall fishing mortality (all sources) declined about 12%. Decision tables quantify the probability of breaching the SB30% trigger under alternative harvest levels, which provides transparency and risk-based guidance for managers when setting the Total Constant Exploitation Yield (TCEY) each year.

Consultation and treatment of uncertainty. Meetings with IPHC staff confirmed that these reference points and procedures remain robust, with no new changes to the harvest policy introduced in 2025. The management procedure continues to be applied consistently, and uncertainty in longer-term historical scaling is acknowledged, particularly in differences between coastwide and area-specific models. Managers noted that while these uncertainties persist, they are explicitly considered in risk evaluation and decision-making each year. IPHC's 5-Year Program of Integrated Research and Monitoring, 2022–2026 (IPHC-2023-5YPIRM) reinforces this precautionary basis, prioritizing the characterization of uncertainty in stock advice and the evaluation of risk trade-offs through the assessment ensemble and the management strategy evaluation.

CY 2025 surveillance update. The precautionary triggers (SB30% reference, SB20% limit) and risk-based decision-table approach were retained in the IPHC end-of-2025 assessment and 2026 management measures adopted at the 102nd Annual Meeting (January 2026, AM102 report); the interim harvest strategy policy and reference points were unchanged.

Alaska Pacific Sablefish
Tier 3 framework and reference points. Sablefish are managed under Tier 3 of the NPFMC control rule, where B40% serves as the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) proxy and the stock is categorized into sub-tiers depending on current spawning biomass levels. The 2024 stock assessment (the most recent; no 2025 assessment was completed owing to the federal government shutdown) retained Model 23.5 without methodological changes, updating inputs with 2023 final catches, preliminary 2024 catches, age and length compositions, and whale depredation adjustments. Female spawning biomass for 2025 is projected at ~219,714 t, about 73% of unfished B100% (302,672 t), well above the B35% threshold for being considered overfished. This places sablefish in Tier 3a, with point estimates of F40% = 0.087 and F35% = 0.102. These translate into a 2025 acceptable biological catch (ABC) of ~50,111 t and an overfishing limit (OFL) of ~58,532 t after whale adjustments.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

7.	Management actions and measures for the conservation of stock and the ecosystem shall be based on the precautionary approach. Where information is deficient a suitable method using risk management shall be adopted to consider uncertainty.
	Stock status and risk tables. The assessment concluded that sablefish are not overfished, not experiencing overfishing, and not approaching an overfished state. Recruitment continues to benefit from strong 2014, 2016, 2017, and 2018 cohorts, which have been observed in multiple surveys and fisheries. However, there are ongoing concerns regarding truncated age structure, particularly the lack of older, large females in the population. This has been highlighted in Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)-required risk tables, which capture potential issues related to model assumptions, environmental influences, and fishery performance. Most risk factors for sablefish remain at "level 1 – normal," though population dynamics were rated "level 2 – increased concern" due to uncertainty in the magnitude and survival of recent strong cohorts. **Data gaps and adaptive measures.** The 2024 NOAA longline survey was suspended due to cost-recovery issues, which reduced availability of fishery-independent indices. Managers relied more heavily on trawl survey data (conducted on a biennial basis) and fishery CPUE to inform the assessment. State-managed fisheries (SSEI, Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI), Prince William Sound (PWS), Cook Inlet, and Aleutian Islands) continue to use guideline harvest limits informed by CPUE, tagging, and biological data, with adjustments to gear regulations aimed at mitigating whale depredation and reducing bycatch. In April 2025, the Council took final action on a rule to allow release of small (<22-inch) sablefish under the fixed-gear Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)/Community Development Quota (CDQ) program (with NOAA Fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS) in rulemaking), which may change discard patterns and be incorporated into future assessments. **Evidence of conformance.** Overall, the evidence shows that sablefish remain well above limit reference points, assessments continue to incorporate a wide array of biological and fishery data, and management adjustments are being made as needed to address uncertainties such as whale depredation and truncated age structure. **CY 2025 surveillance update.** The precautionary Tier 3 framework and risk-table process were retained; because no 2025 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) assessment was completed (federal government shutdown), the 2024 assessment reference points remain operative pending the November 2026 operational assessment. The Council took final action on the small-sablefish (<22-inch) release measure in April 2025 (NMFS in rulemaking; a discard mortality rate for small sablefish would be set annually on implementation), and state regulations effective June 2025 added logbook requirements and reduced the sablefish-pot escape-ring inside diameter from 3.75 to 3.5 inches. The following supporting clauses were determined to be not relevant for the fisheries under examination: Clause 7.1.2 — the fisheries are data-rich with mature, annually updated assessments, so they are not operating in the absence of adequate information. Clause 7.2 — the fisheries are long-established rather than new or exploratory.
References:	Cahalan, J., & Gasper, J. 2022. The Commercial Size Limit for the Pacific Halibut Fishery off Alaska and Its Relationship to Observer-Derived Estimates of At-Sea Discard. NOAA Fisheries. doi:10.25923/8XHP-7Q20

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

7.	Management actions and measures for the conservation of stock and the ecosystem shall be based on the precautionary approach. Where information is deficient a suitable method using risk management shall be adopted to consider uncertainty.

eLandings. Alaska Interagency Electronic Reporting System. https://elandings.alaska.gov/
Goethel, D. R., & Cheng, M. L. 2024. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska, 2024. North Pacific Fishery Management Council SAFE Report.
Goethel, D. R., Cheng, M. L., Echave, K. B., Marsh, C., Rodgveller, C. J., Shotwell, K., et al. 2023. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska. NOAA Fisheries.
Goethel, D. R., Hanselman, D. H., Rodgveller, C. J., Echave, K. B., Williams, B. C., Shotwell, S. K., et al. 2021. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska.
IPHC. 2020. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey – Regulatory Area 2A Rockfish Tag Numbers, IPHC-2020-FISS-CA-2A.
IPHC. 2023. 5-Year Program of Integrated Research and Monitoring, 2022–2026. International Pacific Halibut Commission, IPHC-2023-5YPIRM.
IPHC. 2023. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey Hook Adjustment Factors, IPHC-2023-FISS-HADJ.
IPHC. 2026. Report of the 102nd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM102), January 2026. International Pacific Halibut Commission.
IPHC. 2026. Stock Assessment of Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) at the end of 2025. International Pacific Halibut Commission, IPHC-2026-SA-01.
IPHC. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS).
NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Office. 2023. Annual Deployment Plan for Observers and Electronic Monitoring in the Groundfish and Halibut Fisheries off Alaska.
NOAA Fisheries. Alaska Catch Accounting System. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/sustainable-fisheries/alaska-catch-accounting-system
NOAA Fisheries. Electronic Reporting in Alaska Fisheries. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/resources-fishing/electronic-reporting-alaska-fisheries
NOAA. NAO 216-100: Protection of Confidential Fisheries Statistics. https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-216-100-protection-of-confidential-fisheries-statistics
Shotwell, K., Echave, K., Ferriss, B., Goethel, D., Lunsford, C., Oke, K., Siddon, E., et al. 2023. Appendix 3C. Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska – Report Card.
Steward, I., & Hicks, A. 2024. Assessment of the Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) stock at the end of 2023. International Pacific Halibut Commission.
Wilson, D., & Jannot, J. 2022. Minimum Data Collection Standards for Pacific Halibut by Scientific Observer Programs. SPRFMO.

Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	The fishery continues to meet the requirements of Fundamental Clause 7 of the CSI Fishery RFM Standard.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

7.8.3. Section C: Management Measures, Implementation, Monitoring, and Control

7.8.3.1. Fundamental Clause 8. Management measures

8.	**Management shall adopt and implement effective management measures designed to maintain stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields, including harvest control rules and technical measures applicable to sustainable utilization of the fishery, and based upon verifiable evidence and advice from available objective scientific and traditional sources.**
Summary of relevant changes:	The following supporting clauses are relevant: Clause 8.1: conservation and management measures are designed for long-term sustainability and optimum utilization using verifiable scientific and traditional knowledge. Clause 8.1.1: alternative measures are evaluated for cost-effectiveness and social impact. Clause 8.1.2: bycatch and discards are actively managed and reduced consistent with the precautionary approach and best available science. Clause 8.2: destructive practices such as dynamiting and poisoning are prohibited. Clause 8.3: domestic stakeholders—including indigenous communities—are identified and consulted in decisions. Clause 8.4: fleet capacity is measured, monitored, and reduced when necessary through limited access/Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) systems and maintained authorizations. Clause 8.4.1: studies are promoted to understand costs, benefits, and effects of rationalization and excess effort. Clause 8.5: technical measures on size, gear, seasons/areas, and protection of juveniles/spawners are applied. Clause 8.5.1: measures minimize catch, waste, and discards of non-targets and reduce impacts on associated, dependent, and endangered species. Clause 8.6: gear is marked per law so owners can be identified. Clause 8.7: agencies and industry develop, implement, and use selective, environmentally safe, cost-effective gear and techniques to minimize waste and bycatch. Clause 8.8: technologies and operating methods are applied to minimize gear loss, ghost-fishing, pollution, and waste. Clause 8.9: the intent of selectivity/impact regulations is not circumvented and new requirements are broadly communicated. Clause 8.11: international cooperation on gear selectivity, methods, dissemination, and technology transfer is encouraged (e.g., through the IPHC). Clause 8.12: managers and institutions collaborate on standard methodologies for research into gear selectivity, fishing strategies, and species–gear interactions to inform decisions and reduce non-utilized catch. **Pacific Halibut** **Assessment basis.** The Pacific halibut fishery continues to be assessed annually with a full, age-structured, statistical model ensemble using Stock Synthesis. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) maintains an ensemble of four equally weighted models—long and short time series, each

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

8.	**Management shall adopt and implement effective management measures designed to maintain stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields, including harvest control rules and technical measures applicable to sustainable utilization of the fishery, and based upon verifiable evidence and advice from available objective scientific and traditional sources.**

configured in coastwide and disaggregated forms—so that alternative hypotheses about mortality, recruitment, and environmental drivers are explicitly carried into the assessment outcomes. This ensemble approach provides a robust distribution of uncertainty and helps ensure that management advice incorporates a wide range of structural assumptions.

Harvest control rules. Since 1985, the IPHC has managed harvests through a constant exploitation yield framework, which has been refined into the interim management procedure in recent years. The procedure specifies a reference fishing intensity of F43%, which corresponds to reducing lifetime spawning output per recruit to 43% of the unfished level. The harvest control rules include biomass triggers: if spawning biomass falls to SB30%, the reference fishing intensity is reduced, and at SB20% all directed fishing is halted. These thresholds ensure precautionary management in line with international best practices.

Stock status. At the start of 2026, spawning biomass was estimated at about 166 million pounds (75,300 t), up from about 153 million pounds at the start of 2024. This equates to approximately 38% of unfished levels (95% credible interval: 21-57%). The probability of being below the SB30% trigger is ~28%, while the probability of being below SB20% is ~1%. Although halibut biomass has remained relatively stable, this continues to place the stock near a threshold where caution is warranted.

Survey and fishery indices. Survey and fishery indices provide mixed signals. The modelled coastwide Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) numbers per unit effort (NPUE) decreased 2% from 2024 to 2025, while the FISS weight-per-unit-effort of legal-size fish (O32 WPUE) was unchanged, remaining at its lowest levels since the early 1990s. Preliminary commercial logbook catch per unit effort (CPUE) fell about 1% from 2024. The downward revisions to logbook data also reduced the estimated scale of stock biomass relative to previous assessments. Fishing mortality from all sources decreased 12% from 2024, with total mortality in 2025 estimated at 28.8 million pounds (13,100 t), which represents the lowest annual removal in the past century.

Recruitment and projected risk. Biological sampling indicates a continued shift away from the once-dominant 2005 year-class, toward the 2012, 2016, and 2017 cohorts, which are now the important contributors to the fishery. Both are considered average-strength cohorts compared to the strong recruitment events of the late 1990s and early 2000s, and recruitment since 2006 has generally been weaker than in those earlier decades. The projections associated with the adopted 2026 mortality limits correspond to about a 14% probability of stock decline through 2027 (and 17% through 2029). This

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

8.	**Management shall adopt and implement effective management measures designed to maintain stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields, including harvest control rules and technical measures applicable to sustainable utilization of the fishery, and based upon verifiable evidence and advice from available objective scientific and traditional sources.**

highlights the continued importance of precautionary harvest strategies, adaptive management, and maintaining strong stock assessment practices to avoid breaching biological reference points.

Alaska Pacific Sablefish

Assessment basis and harvest control rule. Sablefish, managed federally under the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC), was last assessed in 2024; no 2025 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) assessment was completed owing to the federal government shutdown, with a full operational assessment scheduled for November 2026. Sablefish remain classified under Tier 3 of the NPFMC harvest control rule, targeting B40% as the spawning biomass proxy. The 2024 SAFE assessment (model 23.5) was carried forward from 2023 with updated data streams but no methodological changes. The model incorporated finalized 2023 catch, preliminary 2024 catch, and new length and age compositions. However, the 2024 NOAA longline survey was canceled for the first time in more than 40 years due to poor market conditions, and the Gulf of Alaska trawl survey was in its off-year, which increased overall uncertainty.

Stock status and specifications. Despite those gaps, the model shows sablefish biomass remains high. Total biomass reached ~705,000 t in 2024, tripling from a 2015 low of 234,000 t, while spawning biomass doubled from 83,000 t in 2018 to 191,000 t in 2024. The 2025 projected female spawning stock biomass is 219,714 t, equivalent to ~73% of unfished levels (B100% ≈ 302,672 t). This places sablefish in Tier 3a, with FABC = 0.087. The 2025 maximum permissible acceptable biological catch (ABC) is 50,283 t, reduced to 50,111 t after whale depredation adjustments, while the overfishing limit (OFL) is 58,731 t (OFLw = 58,532 t). These values reflect the strong position of the stock in biomass terms.

Recruitment and age structure. Recruitment dynamics are encouraging but concentrated. Strong year classes from 2014 through 2018 now dominate the population, with the 2014 cohort estimated to be 90% mature at age 10 and the 2016 cohort 67% mature at age 8. Together, these cohorts comprise more than 80% of the projected 2025 spawning stock biomass, but the overall age structure is truncated, with relatively few older fish in the stock. The 2022 cohort also shows indications of strength, which may further reinforce spawning potential in coming years. Projections indicate spawning biomass will continue increasing into 2026.

Utilization and market conditions. Catch levels have been well below ABC in recent years, averaging about 71% utilization, and in 2024 projected to be under 50%. This shortfall is primarily due to weak market demand, a shift in

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

8.	**Management shall adopt and implement effective management measures designed to maintain stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields, including harvest control rules and technical measures applicable to sustainable utilization of the fishery, and based upon verifiable evidence and advice from available objective scientific and traditional sources.**

fishing methods from longline to pot gear, and the influx of small, low-value fish. Fishermen and managers alike have expressed concern over market conditions, and management strategy evaluations are underway to consider alternative harvest control rules that can stabilize age structure and market outcomes while retaining precautionary reference points. Overall, sablefish are not overfished, overfishing is not occurring, and the stock is not approaching an overfished state. The biomass trajectory remains upward, though the heavy dependence on just a few cohorts emphasizes the need for careful monitoring.

State-managed inside fisheries. In addition to the federally managed EEZ fishery, three state-managed inside sablefish fisheries—Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI), Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI), and Prince William Sound (PWS)—are assessed independently. These fisheries operate under separate harvest control rules, relying on survey indices, mark–recapture biomass estimates, and age and length data rather than being directly linked to the federal assessment.

In NSEI, management relies on mark–recapture biomass estimates and applies a fixed harvest rate. The 2025 annual harvest objective (AHO) is set at 1,789,671 lb, up about 16% from 2024 on a 15% increase in ABC, reflecting continued growth of recent year classes (NSEI 2025). Survey and fishery data indicate that recruitment of small sablefish has been strong in recent years, aligning with the trends identified in the federal assessment.

In SSEI, the fishery is managed with greater precaution due to its smaller biomass and greater variability. The 2025 annual harvest objective (AHO) is set at 643,360 lb, also unchanged from 2024 (SSEI 2025). Management is informed by survey catch-per-unit-effort and biological sampling, which suggest stable trends, although growth rates of sablefish in SSEI remain lower than those observed in NSEI.

In Prince William Sound, management applies a fixed guideline harvest level (GHL) approach based on longline survey indices. The 2026 PWS sablefish GHL is 261,000 lb, down about 1% from 2025 (ADF&G 2026 PWS/CI groundfish outlook). Biological sampling indicates that the strong 2014–2016 cohorts observed in federal waters are also contributing significantly in PWS.

Across all three state-managed inside fisheries, exploitation rates are highly conservative, generally below 5% of estimated biomass. The harvest control rules are explicitly designed to protect spawning biomass and to buffer against environmental or recruitment variability. Managers continue to report an influx of small sablefish into survey catches, consistent with federal observations,

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

8.	**Management shall adopt and implement effective management measures designed to maintain stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields, including harvest control rules and technical measures applicable to sustainable utilization of the fishery, and based upon verifiable evidence and advice from available objective scientific and traditional sources.**

but also note that the influx of small fish has presented ongoing economic challenges due to lower market value.

Evidence of conformance. Taken together, the Pacific halibut and sablefish stocks remain under active, precautionary management that relies on extensive stock assessment activities appropriate to the fisheries, their biology, and their ecosystems. The halibut assessment indicates stability but with continued risks of crossing biological reference thresholds, underscoring the need for adaptive management. The sablefish assessment reflects a stock that has recovered strongly in terms of biomass, supported by several recent strong year classes, but still dependent on limited cohorts and subject to market and operational challenges. The state-managed inside fisheries reinforce this picture, with conservative management measures that align with federal precautionary frameworks while responding to local biological and economic conditions.

CY 2025-2026 surveillance update: NOAA Fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS) reported no changes to the core management measures, gear regulations, discard monitoring, or fleet-capacity provisions for either fishery during the period. Regulatory actions in progress include Area 4 halibut IFQ vessel use caps (Council final action April 2025; NMFS proposed rule in development) and a measure to allow release of small (<22-inch) sablefish by fixed-gear IFQ/Community Development Quota (CDQ) catcher vessels in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) (Council final action April 2025; NMFS in rulemaking). BSAI halibut abundance-based management (ABM) remains in effect (Amendment 123, January 2024, NOAA ABM). The second IFQ Program Review was published in July 2025, with the next review scheduled for 2032 (IFQ Program Review). At the state level, regulations effective June 2025 for the NSEI and SSEI subdistricts added logbook requirements and reduced the minimum sablefish-pot escape-ring inside diameter from 3.75 to 3.5 inches; the 2025 SSEI annual harvest objective was unchanged at 643,360 lb while the NSEI objective rose ~16% to 1,789,671 lb, and the PWS 2025 GHL was 134,000 lb. Annual Pacific halibut catch-sharing-plan measures were issued for 2025 (2025 CSP) and 2026 (2026 CSP).

The following supporting clauses were determined to be not relevant for the fisheries under examination:
Clause 8.10 (impact assessment before commercial-scale introduction of new gear) — no new gear has been introduced in the last three years.
Clause 8.13 (policies for artificial structures/reefs), because these are not enhanced fisheries and artificial structures are not applicable.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

8.	**Management shall adopt and implement effective management measures designed to maintain stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields, including harvest control rules and technical measures applicable to sustainable utilization of the fishery, and based upon verifiable evidence and advice from available objective scientific and traditional sources.**
References:	Alaska Department of Fish and Game. 2025. Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (NSEI) sablefish management plan and stock assessment, July 2025. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. 2025. Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (SSEI) sablefish management plan and stock assessment, July 2025. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. 2026. Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet groundfish fishery outlook, 2026. Cahalan, J., & Gasper, J. 2022. The Commercial Size Limit for the Pacific Halibut Fishery off Alaska and Its Relationship to Observer-Derived Estimates of At-Sea Discard. NOAA Fisheries. doi:10.25923/8XHP-7Q20 eLandings. Alaska Interagency Electronic Reporting System. https://elandings.alaska.gov/ Goethel, D. R., & Cheng, M. L. 2024. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska, 2024. North Pacific Fishery Management Council SAFE Report. Goethel, D. R., Cheng, M. L., Echave, K. B., Marsh, C., Rodgveller, C. J., Shotwell, K., et al. 2023. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska. NOAA Fisheries. Goethel, D. R., Hanselman, D. H., Rodgveller, C. J., Echave, K. B., Williams, B. C., Shotwell, S. K., et al. 2021. Assessment of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska. IPHC. 2020. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey – Regulatory Area 2A Rockfish Tag Numbers, IPHC-2020-FISS-CA-2A. IPHC. 2023. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey Hook Adjustment Factors, IPHC-2023-FISS-HADJ. IPHC. 2025. Pacific halibut catch sharing plan measures, 2025. International Pacific Halibut Commission. IPHC. 2026. Pacific halibut catch sharing plan measures, 2026. International Pacific Halibut Commission. IPHC. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS). NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Office. 2023. Annual Deployment Plan for Observers and Electronic Monitoring in the Groundfish and Halibut Fisheries off Alaska. NOAA Fisheries. Alaska Catch Accounting System. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/sustainable-fisheries/alaska-catch-accounting-system NOAA Fisheries. Electronic Reporting in Alaska Fisheries. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/resources-fishing/electronic-reporting-alaska-fisheries NOAA. NAO 216-100: Protection of Confidential Fisheries Statistics. https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-216-100-protection-of-confidential-fisheries-statistics

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

8.	**Management shall adopt and implement effective management measures designed to maintain stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields, including harvest control rules and technical measures applicable to sustainable utilization of the fishery, and based upon verifiable evidence and advice from available objective scientific and traditional sources.**
	Shotwell, K., Echave, K., Ferriss, B., Goethel, D., Lunsford, C., Oke, K., Siddon, E., et al. 2023. Appendix 3C. Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile of the Sablefish Stock in Alaska – Report Card. Steward, I., & Hicks, A. 2024. Assessment of the Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) stock at the end of 2023. International Pacific Halibut Commission. Wilson, D., & Jannot, J. 2022. Minimum Data Collection Standards for Pacific Halibut by Scientific Observer Programs. SPRFMO.
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of Fundamental Clause 8 of the CSI Fishery RFM Standard.**

7.8.3.2. Fundamental Clause 9. Appropriate standards of fishers' competence

9.	**Fishing operations shall be carried out by fishers with appropriate standards of competence in accordance with international standards, guidelines and regulations.**
Summary of relevant changes:	SC 9.1 States shall advance, through education and training programs, the education and skills of fishers and, where appropriate, their professional qualifications. Such programs shall take into account agreed international standards and guidelines. Participation in these fisheries continues to require compliance with existing federal and state permitting requirements under the IFQ and CDQ programs, while vessel operators remain subject to applicable U.S. Coast Guard safety requirements and other general fisheries regulations. The North Pacific Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) continued to offer fisheries science and management workshops during 2025–2026. These workshops are specifically designed to educate commercial, recreational, charter, and subsistence fishermen on stock assessment science, ecosystem management, fisheries laws, Council decision-making processes, scientific uncertainty, and effective participation in management forums. The 2026 North Pacific MREP workshop in Juneau[79] demonstrates continued investment in fisher education and engagement with fisheries governance. SC 9.2 States, with the assistance of relevant international organizations, shall endeavour to ensure, through education and training, that all those engaged in fishing operations be given information on the most important provisions of the FAO CCRF (1995), as well as provisions of relevant international conventions and applicable environmental and other standards that are essential to ensure responsible fishing operations.

[79] MREP 2026 Flyer

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

9.	Fishing operations shall be carried out by fishers with appropriate standards of competence in accordance with international standards, guidelines and regulations.
	Overall, there have been no substantive changes to the institutional framework supporting SC 9.2 since 2024. Nevertheless, ongoing regulatory outreach, annual permit-holder communications, public management processes, MREP training opportunities, and continued attention to responsible fish handling and release practices provide evidence that fishery participants continue to receive information relevant to conservation, environmental stewardship, and responsible fishing operations in 2026.[80,81] SC 9.3 The fishery management organization shall, as appropriate, maintain records of fishers which shall, whenever possible, contain information on their service and qualifications, including certificates of competency, in accordance with their State's laws. No substantive changes. The existing IFQ/CDQ permitting and reporting systems, eFISH database, quota tracking mechanisms, and associated compliance records continue to meet the requirements of SC 9.3, with routine administrative updates but no new fisher qualification or certification programs introduced during the period.
References:	See footnotes
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fishery Standard**

7.8.3.3. Fundamental Clause 10. Effective legal and administrative framework

10.	An effective legal and administrative framework shall be established, and compliance ensured, through effective mechanisms for monitoring, surveillance, control, and enforcement for all fishing activities within the jurisdiction.
Summary of relevant changes:	The following supporting clauses are relevant: Clause 10.1: effective mechanisms shall be established for fisheries monitoring, surveillance, control, and enforcement (MCS&E), including, where appropriate, observer programs, inspection schemes, and vessel monitoring systems, to ensure compliance with the fishery's conservation and management measures. Clause 10.2: fishing vessels shall not be allowed to operate on the stock without specific authorization. **Legal and jurisdictional framework.** The Alaska Pacific halibut and sablefish fisheries operate within a mature, multi-jurisdictional framework. In federal waters the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and its ten National Standards govern management through the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) and NOAA Fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS) (NMFS); Pacific halibut is additionally managed under the U.S.-Canada Convention through the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and implemented domestically under the Northern Pacific Halibut Act. The State of Alaska (ADF&G and the Board of Fisheries) manages fisheries in state waters. Access is controlled through the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and Community Development

[80] https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=c4a5f6a945364efe8994851d44dd7de0

[81] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/18/2025-04371/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-gulf-of-alaska-final-2025-and-2026-harvest

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

10.	An effective legal and administrative framework shall be established, and compliance ensured, through effective mechanisms for monitoring, surveillance, control, and enforcement for all fishing activities within the jurisdiction.

Quota (CDQ) programs, with monitoring by the North Pacific Observer Program, electronic monitoring, and vessel monitoring systems (VMS).

Monitoring, control, surveillance, and authorization. Consistent with Supporting Clause 10.1, monitoring, control, surveillance, and enforcement are delivered cooperatively by NMFS's Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Alaska Department of Public Safety's Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT), formalized through a Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) under which federally deputized Wildlife Troopers extend federal fisheries enforcement (under the MSA, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Lacey Act, and Northern Pacific Halibut Act) across state and federal waters; the AWT enforces halibut and state-waters regulations, and all halibut landings are reported through the mandatory NMFS e-landings system. Consistent with Supporting Clause 10.2, participation is authorization-based — a Federal Fisheries Permit (and, for shoreside processors, a Federal Processor Permit), applicable state landing permits, and federal Limited Entry (IFQ/CDQ) permits are required to fish or process these species - and fishing without a valid permit is an enforceable violation.
Changes during the surveillance period. For the current surveillance period, NMFS reported no new changes to the operationalization of the ten National Standards under the MSA and no adjustments to the Electronic Technology Implementation Plan or to VMS requirements in Alaska in 2025. Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) halibut abundance-based management (ABM) remains in effect (Amendment 123, January 2024, NOAA ABM). The second IFQ Program Review was published in July 2025, with the next review scheduled for 2032 (IFQ Program Review). Environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act is maintained through the groundfish Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS, 2007), updated via a Supplementary Information Report at each annual harvest-specifications cycle (Alaska groundfish harvest-specifications EIS), with the most recent halibut-related EIS accompanying Amendment 123.

Enforcement activity and outcomes. Compliance is ensured through the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), operating under a cooperative/joint enforcement program with the State of Alaska and the U.S. Coast Guard. For calendar year 2025, OLE conducted 446 boardings of commercial IFQ halibut and/or sablefish vessels. Of 2,239 total incidents recorded in the Electronic Case Management System (ECMS), 645 involved the IFQ halibut/sablefish fisheries, and 435 potential violations were detected, of which 14 remained open with a status of "investigation ongoing." The most commonly detected violation types included IFQ overages exceeding 10%; recordkeeping and reporting violations; gear-marking violations; failure to release undersized halibut with minimum injury; fishing in closed areas; hired-master and permit-holder violations; vessel-cap overages; failure to maintain operable VMS; misreporting the IFQ area fished; fishing without a Federal Fisheries Permit; and Class D vessel size-limit violations. Enforcement outcomes during the period included the late-2025 conviction of a halibut IFQ fisherman in a ghost-fishing scheme (National Fisherman, 2025). These data indicate that the legal and administrative framework remains effective and that compliance is actively monitored and enforced.

The following supporting clauses were determined to be not relevant for the fisheries under examination:

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

10.	An effective legal and administrative framework shall be established, and compliance ensured, through effective mechanisms for monitoring, surveillance, control, and enforcement for all fishing activities within the jurisdiction.
	Clauses 10.3 and 10.3.1 (cooperation on monitoring, control, surveillance, and enforcement, and measures against vessels flying the flag of non-members or non-participants, in waters outside the State's jurisdiction), because neither fishery occurs beyond the U.S. EEZ. Clauses 10.4 and 10.4.1 (flag-State certificates of registry and internationally recognizable vessel marking for high-seas or other-State fishing), because no foreign vessels are licensed to fish within the U.S. EEZ and U.S. vessels do not fish on the high seas or in another State's EEZ.
References:	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and National Standards (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.). National Fisherman. 2025. Halibut IFQ fisherman convicted in ghost-fishing scheme. NOAA Fisheries. 2007. Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, updated annually by Supplementary Information Report. NOAA Fisheries. BSAI Halibut Abundance-Based Management (Amendment 123). fisheries.noaa.gov North Pacific Fishery Management Council. 2025. 2025 Observer Program Annual Report. North Pacific Fishery Management Council. 2025. Halibut IFQ Program Review (published July 2025). Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982 (16 U.S.C. 773 et seq.). Perry, A. 2026. NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, Alaska Division — CY2025 enforcement statistics (personal communication).
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of Fundamental Clause 10 of the CSI RFM Fishery Standard.**

7.8.3.4. Fundamental Clause 11. Framework for sanctions

11.	There shall be a framework for sanctions for violations and illegal activities of adequate severity to support compliance and discourage violations.
Summary of relevant changes:	SC 11.1 State laws of adequate severity shall be in place that provide for effective sanctions. SC 11.2 Sanctions applicable to violations and illegal activities shall be adequate in severity to be effective in securing compliance and discouraging violations wherever they occur. Sanctions shall also be in force to affect authorization to fish and/or to serve as masters or officers of a fishing vessel in the event of non-compliance with conservation and management measures. No substantive changes have occurred in the legal enforcement framework since 2025. Nevertheless, recent criminal prosecutions and ongoing enforcement activities

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

11.	There shall be a framework for sanctions for violations and illegal activities of adequate severity to support compliance and discourage violations.
	provide strong evidence that sanctions remain adequate in severity to secure compliance, discourage illegal activity, and affect fishing privileges where warranted, consistent with the requirements of SC 11.1 and SC 11.2.[82,83] **Halibut/Sablefish** U.S. laws (Magnuson-Stevens Act, Northern Pacific Halibut Act) already provide penalties for violations. No new penal statutes were passed. NOAA's Civil Administrative Penalty policy still applies to halibut/sablefish offenses. Enforcement reports from 2024–25[84] show continued use of these authorities (e.g. penalties for illegal charter fishing or possession), but no changes in the sanction framework itself. SC 11.3 Fisheries management organizations shall ensure that sanctions for IUU fishing by vessels and, to the greatest extent possible, nationals under its jurisdiction are of sufficient severity to effectively prevent, deter, and eliminate IUU fishing and to deprive offenders of the benefits accruing from such fishing. No significant changes relating to IUU fishing, compliance arrangements, or sanctioning mechanisms affecting the Alaska halibut and sablefish fisheries were identified during 2025. The existing enforcement and monitoring framework remained operational, and no fishery-specific IUU incidents were identified from publicly available NOAA enforcement information.[85,86] The following Supporting clauses are not applicable. Clause 11.4
References:	See footnotes
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fishery Standard**

7.8.4. Section D: Serious Impacts of the Fishery on the Ecosystem

7.8.4.1. Fundamental Clause 12. Impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem

12.	Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.
Summary of relevant changes:	SC 12.1 The fishery management organization shall assess the impacts of environmental factors on target stocks and associated or dependent species in the same ecosystem, and the relationship among the populations in the ecosystem

[82] District of Alaska | Commercial fisherman sentenced to 6 months in prison for falsifying fishing records and taking an endangered sperm whale | United States Department of Justice
[83] NOAA OLE Report DEC 2025
[84] NOAA OLE Report DEC 2025
[85] NOAA OLE Report DEC 2025
[86] Enforcement Charging Information | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.

12.3 The role of the stock under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species11 in the ecosystem, management objectives and measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

12.4 There shall be outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives seeking to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators resulting from the unit of certification fishing on a stock under consideration that is a key prey species

NOAA, NOAA Fisheries (NMFS), the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) continue to maintain extensive monitoring and research programs that evaluate the effects of environmental variability on Alaska marine ecosystems and commercially important species, including Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) and sablefish (*Anoplopoma fimbria*). These programs collect and integrate information on ocean temperature, sea ice, ocean circulation, plankton productivity, forage species abundance, fish population dynamics, seabirds, marine mammals, and broader ecosystem processes to support ecosystem-based fisheries management.[87,88,89]

For sablefish, environmental and socioeconomic information is incorporated directly into stock assessment through the Alaska Sablefish Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile (ESP), which evaluates ecosystem indicators relevant to all life stages, including ocean temperatures, primary productivity, zooplankton communities, juvenile abundance, prey availability, and adult condition. These ecosystem indicators provide context for stock assessment results and help identify environmental drivers affecting recruitment, growth, and productivity. Recent assessments have concluded that ecosystem conditions remain consistent with a **Level 1 ("no concern")** rating for the Alaska sablefish stock, indicating no evidence that environmental conditions currently pose a significant risk to stock sustainability. [90,91]

For Pacific halibut, the IPHC's Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Program continues to investigate the effects of environmental variability on stock productivity, recruitment, growth, distribution, mortality, and reproductive potential. Environmental

[87] https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2025/09/IPHC-2025-IM101-01-Agenda-and-schedule-v3-Sept-2025.pdf
[88] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/21/2025-04803/pacific-halibut-fisheries-catch-sharing-plan-2025-annual-management-measures
[89] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=2e7d78fc-43a6-4034-8a24-2fa763deef3a.pdf&fileName=Sablefish_appD.pdf
[90] https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2026/05/IPHC-2026-MSAB022-07-ppt-MSE-Program-of-Work.pdf
[91] https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2026/05/IPHC-2026-SRB028-08-ppt-MSE-update.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.

factors are incorporated into the IPHC stock assessment and Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) framework through analyses of productivity regimes, oceanographic variability, and long-term climate indicators such as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO). Recent MSE evaluations have demonstrated that environmental conditions can substantially influence stock productivity and long-term yield, reinforcing the importance of incorporating ecosystem variability into harvest strategy development.[92,93,94]

The annual Alaska Marine Ecosystem Status Reports (ESRs) produced by NOAA Fisheries remain a central component of ecosystem-based management. These reports synthesize information on climate, oceanography, lower trophic levels, fish populations, marine mammals, seabirds, and fisheries interactions for the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), Eastern Bering Sea (EBS), and Aleutian Islands (AI). Ecosystem Status Reports and stock-specific Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profiles are routinely reviewed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Groundfish Plan Teams and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and are used to inform Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) and Total Allowable Catch (TAC) recommendations.[95,96]

During 2025, ecosystem monitoring documented generally warm conditions across much of Alaska's marine environment. A strong Aleutian Low contributed to elevated ocean temperatures, reduced sea-ice extent in parts of the Bering Sea, increased shelf circulation, and changes in plankton communities and food-web dynamics. Scientists noted that conditions in parts of the Gulf of Alaska resembled previous marine heatwave years, highlighting the continuing importance of climate variability as a driver of ecosystem productivity and fish population dynamics.[97,98]

In support of ecosystem-based fisheries management, NMFS and IPHC continue to evaluate linkages among environmental conditions, prey availability, predator populations, and commercial fish stocks using ecosystem modelling and multidisciplinary research programmes. These analyses provide insight into the effects of changing oceanographic conditions on recruitment, growth, distribution, and productivity of halibut, sablefish, and other managed species. The information is

[92] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=2e7d78fc-43a6-4034-8a24-2fa763deef3a.pdf&fileName=Sablefish_appD.pdf
[93] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=14fceb11-b8f2-473c-9f6c-b647b9188b7d.pdf&fileName=ESR%20Presentation.pdf
[94] https://apps-afsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/refm/reem/ecoweb/Index.php?ID=9
[95] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/21/2025-04803/pacific-halibut-fisheries-catch-sharing-plan-2025-annual-management-measures
[96] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-03-21/html/2025-04803.htm
[97] https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2025/11/IPHC-2025-IM101-02-List-of-Documents-v10-Nov-2025.pdf
[98] https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2025/10/IPHC-2025-IM101-05-IRMP.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.

routinely presented to Council advisory bodies and incorporated into harvest specification discussions. [99,100]

The catch-setting process for Alaska fisheries continues to apply a precautionary approach. Ecosystem indicators reviewed by assessment scientists and management bodies include measures of primary productivity, forage availability, fish condition, seabird productivity, marine mammal abundance, and climate conditions. Indicators relating to marine predators such as northern fur seals and Steller sea lions are monitored through ecosystem programmes and are considered alongside statutory requirements under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA). [101,102]

Overall, the management systems for Pacific halibut and sablefish continue to rely on a comprehensive ecosystem monitoring framework. Environmental information is routinely incorporated into stock assessments, ecosystem reviews, management strategy evaluations, and harvest specification decisions. While recent years have been characterized by continued climate variability and warming ocean conditions, no ecosystem-related developments have been identified that fundamentally alter the management approach for either Pacific halibut or sablefish. Instead, ongoing monitoring, research, and ecosystem-based management continue to provide the scientific basis for precautionary management of these fisheries.[103,104,105]

- 2025 Ecosystem Status Report - Aleutian Islands - Not Updated in 2025
- 2025 Ecosystem Status Report - Eastern Bering Sea - Not Updated in 2025

12.2 The most probable adverse impacts from human activities, including fishery effects on the ecosystem/environment, shall be assessed and, where appropriate, addressed and or/corrected, taking into account available scientific information and local knowledge. This may take the form of an immediate management response or a further analysis of the identified risk. In this context, full consideration should be given to the special circumstances and requirements in developing fisheries, including financial and technical assistance, technology transfer, training, and scientific cooperation. In the absence of specific information on the ecosystem impacts of fishing on the unit of certification, generic evidence based on similar fishery situations

[99] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=2e7d78fc-43a6-4034-8a24-2fa763deef3a.pdf&fileName=Sablefish_appD.pdf
[100] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/21/2025-04803/pacific-halibut-fisheries-catch-sharing-plan-2025-annual-management-measures
[101] https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2025/11/IPHC-2025-IM101-01-Agenda-and-schedule-v13-Nov-2025.pdf
[102] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/21/2025-04803/pacific-halibut-fisheries-catch-sharing-plan-2025-annual-management-measures
[103] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=2e7d78fc-43a6-4034-8a24-2fa763deef3a.pdf&fileName=Sablefish_appD.pdf
[104] https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2026/05/IPHC-2026-MSAB022-07-ppt-MSE-Program-of-Work.pdf
[105] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/21/2025-04803/pacific-halibut-fisheries-catch-sharing-plan-2025-annual-management-measures

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.

can be used for fisheries with low risk of severe adverse impact. However, the greater the risk, the more specific evidence shall be necessary to ascertain the adequacy of mitigation measures.

MAIN SPECIES on Pot fishery targeting Halibut and Sablefish
There were no main species in the Pot fishery targeting Halibut and Sablefish

BSAI Longnose Skate, GoA Longnose Skate

No new assessment information became available for Longnose Skate in 2025 due to the federal government shutdown. Existing assessment results and harvest specifications were largely rolled forward, and no evidence was identified indicating that the BSAI or GOA Longnose Skate stocks are overfished or experiencing overfishing. Management continues under the Tier 5 assessment framework and precautionary harvest specifications.[106, 107]

BSAI and GoA Big Skate

No significant new information became available for Big Skate in either the BSAI or GOA during 2025. Due to the federal government shutdown, no new full stock assessment was completed and existing assessment results were largely rolled forward for harvest specification purposes. Big Skate continued to be managed under Tier 5 in both regions, and no evidence was identified indicating that the stocks are overfished or subject to overfishing. No substantial changes in biomass trends, assessment methodology, or stock status were reported during the 2025 management cycle.[108, 109, 110]

Pacific cod – Bearing Sea, GoA and Aleutian Islands

No significant change in stock status occurred during 2025 for Eastern Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska, or Aleutian Islands Pacific cod. All three stocks remained not overfished and not subject to overfishing. EBS and GOA Pacific cod continued to be managed under Tier 3b, while AI Pacific cod continued under the newly adopted Tier 3 age-structured assessment framework. Ecosystem concerns associated with warming conditions and reduced productivity remain an important source of uncertainty, particularly for EBS and GOA stocks, but did not result in changes to stock status determinations or require additional precautionary reductions to harvest specifications.[111]

[106] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=067b9b7c-fe62-439c-8e89-62a483c67924.pdf&fileName=PPT%20C4C5%20Groundfish%20Harvest%20Specs.pdf
[107] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/2025-2026-alaska-groundfish-harvest-specifications
[108] https://afsc-assessments.github.io/safe_audit/
[109] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=1be83f22-d976-4574-baf9-b6941bb058fb.pdf&fileName=C5%20Action%20Memo.pdf
[110] https://apps-afsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/Plan_Team/2023/GOAskate.pdf
[111] Stock SMART

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.

Shortraker Rockfish -BSAI, GOA, or Aleutian Islands

No new assessment was completed in late 2025 because of the federal government shutdown and interruption to the normal SAFE process. Therefore, the 2024 assessment results remained the basis for the 2026 harvest specifications.[112,113]

No significant change in biological stock status occurred for BSAI, GOA, or Aleutian Islands shortraker rockfish during 2025. BSAI shortraker rockfish continued to be managed under Tier 5 based on the 2024 assessment, with biomass estimates remaining lower than previous years but sufficient to support current harvest levels. GOA shortraker rockfish remained stable and not overfished, although an in-season closure was implemented in the Central GOA after the 2025 TAC was reached. No new benchmark assessments were completed during the 2025 shutdown-affected assessment cycle.[114,115,116]

BSAI Thornyhead Rockfish (Other Rockfish Complex)

No new full assessment was completed in 2025. The BSAI Thornyhead Rockfish complex continues to be managed under Tier 5 using the 2024 assessment results. Biomass estimates remain relatively stable, the stock is not subject to overfishing, and catch remains within management limits. Although the Aleutian Islands "Other Rockfish" TAC was reached in 2025, resulting in an in-season retention closure, there is no evidence of a change in thornyhead stock status.[117,118,119]

GOA Thornyhead Rockfish

No new assessment was completed during the 2025 cycle and the 2024 assessment results were rolled forward. The GOA Thornyhead Rockfish complex remains managed under Tier 5 with an ABC of 1,338 t and an OFL of 1,784 t. The stock remains not overfished and not subject to overfishing, and catches in 2025 remained well below harvest limits. [120,121]

[112] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/2025-2026-alaska-groundfish-harvest-specifications
[113] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-03-18/pdf/2025-04406.pdf
[114] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=35d1918f-7ab2-4b2b-b1f2-79ac64ee5208.pdf&fileName=BSAI%20shortraker%20rockfish%202024.pdf
[115] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/18/2025-06761/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-shortraker-rockfish-in-the-central-regulatory
[116] https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-06761.pdf
[117] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/GOAthorny.pdf
[118] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/09/29/2025-18896/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-other-rockfish-in-the-aleutian-islands-subarea
[119] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=f28fcd6a-98c5-43d4-bc05-86770af8daa2.pdf&fileName=B2%20NMFS%20Inseason%20Report.pdf
[120] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/GOAthorny.pdf
[121] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=5330ccb5-8af2-4df5-b3e2-41d2c98ddda3.pdf&fileName=GOAthorny.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.	
	Arrowtooth Flounder – Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) **1. Spawning Biomass and Stock Trends** No new stock assessment was conducted in 2025 due to the lapse in Congressional appropriations and resulting government shutdown. The most recent assessment information therefore continued to be based on the 2024 harvest projection update and the underlying 2022/2023 assessment model. Catch data were updated through November 2025 and incorporated into SAFE catch reports.[122] Available information indicates that stock biomass remains stable and catches remain relatively low compared with harvest limits. No new survey biomass estimates or major revisions to stock dynamics were introduced during 2025.[123,124] **2. Tier Determination and ABC/OFL** Arrowtooth flounder in the BSAI continues to be managed as a Tier 3a stock using a statistical age-structured assessment model. Because no new assessment was completed in 2025, specifications were rolled forward from previous analyses. The 2025 ABC was 88,683 t and the OFL was 104,428 t. For 2026–2027, the ABC and OFL were rolled over at 87,035 t and 102,472 t respectively pending the next full assessment.[125,126] **3. Assessment of Status** The stock remains not overfished and not subject to overfishing. Reported catches in 2025 (approximately 9,000 t through November) remained well below the TAC of 14,000 t, indicating low exploitation relative to available harvest levels. No new concerns regarding stock status were identified.[127,128] **Arrowtooth Flounder – Gulf of Alaska (GOA)** **1. Spawning Biomass and Stock Trends** The 2024 assessment was an off-cycle harvest projection using the 2021 assessment as its base. In 2025, assessment scientists undertook a comprehensive data review in preparation for the next full assessment. New information incorporated included updated catch data, fishery length compositions, survey biomass estimates, age compositions, growth information, and weight-at-age data. Researchers also removed

[122] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIatf.pdf
[123] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIatf.pdf
[124] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=66f1c147-71a7-4ce6-b916-3551371cedc6.pdf&fileName=bsai_atf_2024HP.pdf
[125] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIatf.pdf
[126] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-03-18/pdf/2025-04406.pdf
[127] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIatf.pdf
[128] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/arrowtooth-flounder/resources

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.	
	lower-confidence historical observations and updated several key biological inputs.[129,130] The updated analyses continued to show recruitment declining from the exceptionally strong recruitment period of the early 2000s, although the 2017 year class remained above average. Scientists also began developing an Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile (ESP) to better evaluate potential environmental influences on recruitment and stock dynamics. [131] **2. Tier Determination and ABC/OFL** Arrowtooth flounder in the GOA continues to be managed under Tier 3a. No new harvest control rule changes or biological reference point revisions were implemented during 2025. Harvest specifications continued to be based on the existing assessment framework pending completion of the next full assessment. [132,133] In preparation for future assessments, scientists evaluated updated modelling approaches, including a TMB-based version of the assessment model and incorporation of ecological processes such as cannibalism and trophic interactions through the Rceattle modelling framework. [134] **3. Assessment of Status** The GOA stock remains not overfished and not subject to overfishing. Catch levels remain below ABC limits and no evidence of overfishing or stock depletion was identified in the 2025 review process.[135, 136] However, assessment scientists continued to investigate declining recruitment trends and potential environmental drivers affecting stock productivity. These topics are expected to be examined further in future benchmark assessments and associated ecosystem analyses. [137] **Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish Complex – BSAI**

[129] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=f4b7b0f4-b633-45c1-ba1a-6482f500a6cf.pdf&fileName=GOA%20ATF_updated.pdf
[130] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=bf2215de-66d3-4c55-ae06-ee68c0a7f75d.pdf&fileName=GOA%20ATF%20and%20ESP%20pres%20updated.pdf
[131] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=bf2215de-66d3-4c55-ae06-ee68c0a7f75d.pdf&fileName=GOA%20ATF%20and%20ESP%20pres%20updated.pdf
[132] https://apps-st.fisheries.noaa.gov/sis/docServlet?fileAction=download&fileId=10288
[133] https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-04371.pdf
[134] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=bf2215de-66d3-4c55-ae06-ee68c0a7f75d.pdf&fileName=GOA%20ATF%20and%20ESP%20pres%20updated.pdf
[135] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/arrowtooth-flounder/resources
[136] https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-04371.pdf
[137] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=bf2215de-66d3-4c55-ae06-ee68c0a7f75d.pdf&fileName=GOA%20ATF%20and%20ESP%20pres%20updated.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12.	**Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.**

1. Spawning Biomass and Stock Trends

The most recent full assessment remained the 2024 assessment. No new stock assessment was conducted in 2025 because the lapse in Congressional appropriations and resulting U.S. government shutdown prevented completion of many planned stock assessments. Consequently, biological reference points and stock status estimates from the 2024 assessment were rolled forward for the 2026–2027 harvest specification process. Catch information was updated through November 2025 and incorporated into catch reports.[138]

2. Tier Determination and ABC/OFL

The stock continued to be managed under **Tier 3**. Because no new assessment was completed in 2025, harvest specifications were based largely on the results of the 2024 assessment, with updated catch data incorporated through the annual SAFE catch report process. For 2026 and 2027, the ABC was rolled over at 766 t and the OFL at 902 t pending a scheduled reassessment in 2026.[139]

During 2025, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council also reviewed accountability measures (AMs) for the stock because the BSAI Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish Complex ACL had been exceeded in three of the previous four years. The Council evaluated potential management responses, including spatial closures, seasonal closures, modified in-season management measures, and TAC adjustments in fisheries that catch the complex.[140]

3. Assessment of Status

The stock remained not overfished and not subject to overfishing. However, management concern increased because catches continued to approach or exceed management limits in some areas. In September 2025, NMFS prohibited retention of Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish in the Central and Western Aleutian Islands after the area-specific TAC was reached, in order to prevent overharvest of the stock allocation.[141,142]

[138] BSAI Blackspotted and rougheye rockfish
[139] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIbsre.pdf
[140] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=ef8795f4-fd44-4d8f-ac47-c5275fb8a45d.pdf&fileName=PPT%20C5d%20BSAI%20BSRE%20Council.pdf
[141] https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-17771.pdf
[142] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/09/15/2025-17771/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-blackspotted-and-rougheye-rockfish-in-the

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.	
	Although no new biological concerns regarding stock status were identified in 2025, uncertainty regarding stock distribution, catch accounting, and recent ACL overages remained the focus of Council discussions and accountability measure reviews. [143] **Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish Complex – GOA** **1. Spawning Biomass and Stock Trends** No new full assessment was conducted in 2025. Due to the federal government shutdown and resulting disruption to the groundfish assessment process, many stock assessments, including those for GOA rockfish stocks, were not updated as originally planned. Accordingly, the most recent GOA Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish assessment information remained based on the 2023 full assessment and 2024 projection update. [144] Available catch information did not indicate any major changes in stock trajectory, and there was no evidence of a significant decline in stock status during 2025. [145] **2. Tier Determination and ABC/OFL** The GOA stock continued to be managed under **Tier 3**. The precautionary harvest strategy adopted in previous assessment cycles remained in place. No major revisions to biological reference points or harvest control rules occurred during 2025 as a consequence of the absence of a new full assessment. [146] **3. Assessment of Status** The stock continued to be considered **not overfished and not subject to overfishing**. The concerns identified in the previous assessment regarding assessment uncertainty and population dynamics remained relevant, and the precautionary ABC reductions applied in recent years continued to provide a buffer against uncertainty. No new information available in 2025 altered this conclusion.[147] SC 12.2.4 The fishery management organization shall consider the most probable adverse impacts of the unit of certification on ETP species (Appendix 1, Part 4 and 7), by assessing and, where appropriate, addressing and or/correcting them, taking into account the best scientific evidence available and local knowledge. SC 12.2.5 There shall be outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives seeking to ensure that ETP species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification and any associated enhanced

[143] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=ef8795f4-fd44-4d8f-ac47-c5275fb8a45d.pdf&fileName=PPT%20C5d%20BSAI%20BSRE%20Council.pdf
[144] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIbsre.pdf
[145] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIbsre.pdf
[146] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIbsre.pdf
[147] https://files.npfmc.org/SAFE/2025/BSAIbsre.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.	
	fishery activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible. There continues to be a process in place for the development of management objectives to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts from interactions with the unit of certification. The endangered species inhabiting the BSAI, GOA and Aleutian Islands are primarily under the responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for seabird species and NOAA Fisheries for other protected species. For these fisheries, these are primarily marine mammals. Annually, NOAA Fisheries categorizes all U.S. commercial fisheries under the MMPA's List of Fisheries according to the levels of marine mammal mortality and serious injury (https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/list-fisheries-summary-tables). (Note that the List of Fisheries was not updated in late 2025 or early 2026 due to the U.S. government shutdown.) Category III fisheries interact with marine mammal stocks with annual mortality and serious injury ≤1% of the marine mammal's potential biological removal (PBR) level and total fishery-related mortality <10% of PBR. Any fishery in Category III is considered to have achieved the target level of mortality and serious injury. Category II fisheries have a level of mortality and serious injury that is >1% but is <50% of the stocks' PBR level, if total fishery related mortality is ≥10% of the PBR. Category I fisheries have frequent mortality and serious injury of marine mammal resulting in annual mortality ≥50% of PBR. The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands halibut and sablefish longline fisheries and the Gulf of Alaska halibut longline fishery continue to be classified as Category III fisheries under the MMPA, indicating a remote likelihood of incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals. The Gulf of Alaska sablefish longline fishery continues to be classified as Category II because of documented interactions with North Pacific sperm whales and associated mortality estimates exceeding the threshold for Category III classification. This classification remains unchanged in the current reporting cycle.[148,149] **Seabird Outcome Indicators** The most recent Alaska Groundfish and Halibut Seabird Working Group report, presented in 2025, reviewed estimated seabird bycatch for both 2023 and 2024. Estimated total seabird bycatch in Alaska groundfish and halibut fisheries was **4,560 birds in 2023** and **6,048 birds in 2024**. Despite this increase, bycatch remained dominated by common species such as northern fulmars, gulls, and shearwaters rather than ESA-listed species. [150] Importantly, no takes of **spectacled eiders** or **Alaska-breeding Steller's eiders** were reported in either 2023 or 2024. Additionally, there were **no reported takes of short-tailed albatross in 2024**, following two estimated takes in 2023. NMFS reported that

[148] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports
[149] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports-region
[150] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=d86b0802-3c69-4520-9f59-68db6294159c.pdf&fileName=B2%20Seabird%20Working%20Group%20Report.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.	
	none of the incidental take limits established under the 2021 Biological Opinion for ESA-listed seabirds had been exceeded.[151,152] The continued use of seabird avoidance measures, including streamer lines, offal management requirements, and night setting requirements where applicable, remains an important mitigation tool. The increasing adoption of sablefish pot gear also continues to reduce seabird exposure because pot fisheries have substantially lower seabird interaction rates than hook-and-line fisheries. [153,154] **Ecosystem Status Indicators** The Alaska Ecosystem Status Reports (ESRs) continue to provide additional outcome indicators for ETP species. ESR metrics include abundance, reproductive success, and population trends for Steller sea lions, northern fur seals, harbour seals, ice seals, bowhead whales, and seabirds. These indicators are reviewed annually by stock assessment scientists, Plan Teams, and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to identify potential ecosystem-level concerns affecting protected species. [155] **2025–2026 Conclusion** The available evidence indicates that management authorities continue to assess and address the most likely adverse impacts of the halibut and sablefish fisheries on ETP species through observer programmes, SARs, Biological Opinions, seabird bycatch monitoring, and ecosystem assessments. Current outcome indicators show: • Marine mammal mortality remains within the MMPA monitoring and classification framework. [156,157] • The BSAI halibut and sablefish fisheries and GOA halibut fishery remain Category III fisheries under the MMPA. [158,159] • The GOA sablefish longline fishery remains Category II because of sperm whale interactions. [160,161] • No ESA-listed eider interactions were reported in 2023 or 2024. [162] • No short-tailed albatross takes were reported in 2024, and ESA incidental take limits were not exceeded.[163,164]

[151] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=d86b0802-3c69-4520-9f59-68db6294159c.pdf&fileName=B2%20Seabird%20Working%20Group%20Report.pdf
[152] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-bycatch-alaska
[153] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-bycatch-alaska
[154] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=d86b0802-3c69-4520-9f59-68db6294159c.pdf&fileName=B2%20Seabird%20Working%20Group%20Report.pdf
[155] https://storage.googleapis.com/dxhxypawgqxoye/rockfish-regulations-bc.html
[156] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports
[157] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports-region
[158] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports
[159] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports-region
[160] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports
[161] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports-region
[162] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=d86b0802-3c69-4520-9f59-68db6294159c.pdf&fileName=B2%20Seabird%20Working%20Group%20Report.pdf
[163] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=d86b0802-3c69-4520-9f59-68db6294159c.pdf&fileName=B2%20Seabird%20Working%20Group%20Report.pdf
[164] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-bycatch-alaska

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.

- Ecosystem and protected species indicators continue to be reviewed annually and incorporated into management advice.[165]
- Overall, there remains no evidence that the Alaska halibut and sablefish fisheries are causing recruitment overfishing, irreversible impacts, or population-level adverse effects on ESA-listed seabirds, marine mammals, or other protected species. Existing monitoring, mitigation, and legal protections continue to provide robust outcome indicators consistent with the objectives of SC 12.2.4 and SC 12.2.5. [166,167,168]

For **CSI 12.2.6, 12.2.7, 12.2.8 and 12.7 (habitats and ecosystem impacts)**,

Since the 2023 Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) review, no new information has emerged indicating significant habitat impacts associated with the Alaska halibut or sablefish fisheries. The Council continued implementation of the revised EFH provisions adopted following the five-year EFH review. In 2025, the Council considered recommendations from the Unobserved Fishing Mortality Working Group and expanded work under its Pelagic Trawl Gear Innovation Initiative to improve estimates of bottom contact, habitat impacts, and potential unobserved mortality. These efforts are primarily focused on trawl fisheries and Bristol Bay red king crab conservation, rather than the halibut and sablefish fisheries. No evidence was identified indicating significant adverse habitat impacts from halibut or sablefish longline and pot fisheries, and no additional habitat management measures specific to these fisheries were required during 2025–2026. Bait used in the fisheries continues to consist primarily of sardines, herring, and *Illex* squid, none of which are ETP species. [169,170,171]

Clauses 12.2.9, 12.2.10, and 12.2.11 (Management measures, implementation, monitoring and response to ecosystem impacts)

In 2025–2026, NOAA Fisheries and the NPFMC continued to implement ecosystem-based fisheries management through annual stock assessments, Ecosystem Status Reports, Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profiles, protected-species monitoring programmes, and observer-based monitoring.
These specifically include marine mammals, seabirds, prohibited species, target and bycatch species, EFH, HAPCs, and food-web effects. Also, ongoing monitoring and ecosystem modelling are in place to meet the overarching objective of effective ecosystem-based management.[172]

[165] https://storage.googleapis.com/dxhxypawgqxoye/rockfish-regulations-bc.html
[166] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=d86b0802-3c69-4520-9f59-68db6294159c.pdf&fileName=B2%20Seabird%20Working%20Group%20Report.pdf
[167] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports
[168] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-bycatch-alaska
[169] https://www.npfmc.org/pelagic-trawl-gear-research-summaries/
[170] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=8dc8f761-36f3-48a2-ab71-320ffd4b51c1.pdf&fileName=C3%20DRAFT%20MOTION%20Pelagic%20Trawl%20Gear%20Innovation.pdf
[171] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=ef909bbb-7b45-4f06-b6f9-51e932f143db.pdf&fileName=PPT_UFMWG%20.pdf
[172] Observer Program Report Action Memo

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.	
	Clause 12.5 (Waste disposal and pollution) All fishing vessels operating in federal waters are required to comply with MARPOL Annex V, which specifically prohibits the at-sea disposal of all plastics. Vessels operating in the North Pacific therefore have three options: 1) non-plastics can be disposed of at sea within the legal restrictions, 2) they can incinerate wastes onboard the vessel, or 3) they can hold the wastes for shoreside disposal at port. Vessels are required to post oil pollution and garbage placards; have a written solid waste management plan that describes procedures for collecting, processing, storing, and discharging garbage; and have a designated person in charge of carrying out the plan. No significant regulatory changes affecting MARPOL Annex V compliance for Alaska halibut and sablefish vessels were identified during 2025–2026. Existing waste-management requirements remain in place. No new issues relating to waste disposal or marine pollution associated with these fisheries were identified. [173,174] Clause 12.6 (Research and use of best scientific information available) The continued operation and expansion of the **North Pacific Observer Program**, remains one of the principal scientific information sources for halibut and sablefish assessments and ecosystem monitoring. NOAA continues to deploy observers and electronic monitoring systems throughout North Pacific groundfish and halibut fisheries, and the 2025 Observer Program Annual Report confirmed continued monitoring, quality assurance, and support for stock assessments, bycatch monitoring, ecosystem studies, and protected-species monitoring. [175,176,177] Additionally: • NOAA Fisheries continues to use annual deployment plans for observers and electronic monitoring in Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries. [178,179] • The Council continues to support ecosystem research, pelagic trawl gear innovation research, habitat-impact research, protected-species research, and climate-related ecosystem analyses. [180,181] • Industry participation in research remains evident through electronic monitoring developments, gear innovation initiatives, cooperative research projects, and ecosystem studies.[182,183]

[173] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/tags/north-pacific-observer-program
[174] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/fisheries-observers/north-pacific-observer-program
[175] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=250f4b42-d72d-4a11-8d6d-cd5ac4e3da7e.pdf&fileName=2025%20Observer%20Program%20Annual%20Report-508.pdf
[176] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/fisheries-observers/north-pacific-observer-program
[177] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=cb2c1c9a-7f4a-4215-8436-89ac53c3eab1.pdf&fileName=C1%20Action%20Memo.pdf
[178] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/tags/north-pacific-observer-program
[179] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=250f4b42-d72d-4a11-8d6d-cd5ac4e3da7e.pdf&fileName=2025%20Observer%20Program%20Annual%20Report-508.pdf
[180] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-02/BSAI-Inseason-Report-akro-2025.pdf
[181] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/car161_rockfish2025.html
[182] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-02/BSAI-Inseason-Report-akro-2025.pdf
[183] https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=cb2c1c9a-7f4a-4215-8436-89ac53c3eab1.pdf&fileName=C1%20Action%20Memo.pdf

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

12. Considerations of fishery interactions and effects on the ecosystem shall be based on the best scientific evidence available, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk assessment-based management approach for determining most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.	
References:	See footnotes
Statement of consistency to the CSI RFM Fishery Standard	**The fishery continues to meet the requirements of this Fundamental Clause of the CSI RFM Fishery Standard**

8. Update on compliance and progress with non-conformances and agreed action plans

There are no closed non- conformances

8.1.1. Closed non-conformances

There are no closed non- conformances

8.1.2. Progress against open non-conformances

There are no open non-conformances

8.1.3. New non-conformances

There are no new non-conformances

8.1.4. New or revised corrective action plans

There are no new corrective action plans or pre-existing plans that have been revised as well as Client-signed acceptance of the action plan.

8.1.5. Proposed surveillance activities

This fishery will be assessed again on the 4th surveillance.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

9. Recommendations for continued certification

No recommendations were added.

9.1. Certification Recommendation

Following this surveillance audit, the Assessment Team recommends that the fishery, the U.S. Alaska Pacific Halibut commercial fishery, under international (IPHC), federal (NMFS/NPFMC) and state (ADFG) management, fished with benthic longline, pots and troll (within Alaska's 200 nm EEZ) fishery be awarded continuing certification under the Certified Seafood International Certification Program.

Following this surveillance audit, the Assessment Team recommends that the fishery, the U.S. Alaska Sablefish commercial fishery, under federal (NMFS/NPFMC) and state (ADFG) management, fished with benthic longline, pots and trawl (within Alaska's 200 nm EEZ) be awarded continuing certification under the Certified Seafood International Certification Program.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

10. References

Alaska Department of Fish and Game. (2025). Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (NSEI) sablefish management plan and stock assessment.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game. (2025). Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (SSEI) sablefish management plan and stock assessment.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game. (2026). Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery management plan.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game. (2026). Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet groundfish fishery outlook, 2026.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game. (n.d.). Requesting information, commercial fish ticket and COAR data. https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.requests

Alaska Fisheries Information Network. (n.d.). Alaska Fisheries Information Network (AKFIN). https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/inport/organization/AKFIN

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. (n.d.). Quality and handling resources. https://www.alaskaseafood.org/industry/quality/

Cahalan, J., & Gasper, J. (2022). The commercial size limit for the Pacific halibut fishery off Alaska and its relationship to observer-derived estimates of at-sea discard. NOAA Fisheries. https://doi.org/10.25923/8XHP-7Q20

Cahalan, J., Gasper, J., & Mondragon, J. (2014). Catch sampling and estimation in the federal groundfish fisheries off Alaska (2015 ed.). NOAA Fisheries.

Cheng, M. L. H., Goethel, D. R., & Cunningham, C. J. (2024). Addressing complex fleet structure in fishery stock assessment models: Accounting for a rapidly developing pot fishery for Alaska sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria). Fisheries Research, 271, 106917. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2023.106917

Cheng, M. L. H., Goethel, D. R., Hulson, P.-J. F., Echave, K. B., & Cunningham, C. J. (2025). “Slim pickings?”: Extreme large recruitment events may induce density-dependent reductions in growth for Alaska sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria) with implications for stock assessment. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 82, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2024-0228

eLandings. (n.d.). Alaska interagency electronic reporting system. https://elandings.alaska.gov/

Federal Register. (2024). Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications.

Federal Register. (2025). Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Gulf of Alaska final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications (Document No. 2025-04371).

Federal Register. (2025). Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands; 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for groundfish (Document No. 2025-04406).

Federal Register. (2025). Pacific halibut fisheries; catch sharing plan; 2025 annual management measures (Document No. 2025-04803).

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

Federal Register. (2025). Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; shortraker rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (Document No. 2025-06761).

Federal Register. (2025). Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; blackspotted and rougheye rockfish in the Aleutian Islands (Document No. 2025-17771).

Federal Register. (2025). Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Pacific halibut recreational quota entity program.

Federal Register. (2025). Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; other rockfish in the Aleutian Islands subarea.

Federal Register. (2026). Pacific halibut fisheries; catch sharing plan; 2026 annual management measures.

Federal Register. (2026). Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; sablefish managed under the individual fishing quota program (Document No. 2026-05858).

Fissel, B., Dalton, M., Garber-Yonts, B., Haynie, A., Kasperski, S., Lee, J., Lew, D., Seung, C., Sparks, K., Szymkowiak, M., & Wise, S. (2021). Economic status report of the groundfish fisheries off Alaska, 2019. NOAA Fisheries.

Flanigan, A. J., Nielsen, J. K., Loher, T., & Seitz, A. C. (2025). Characterizing seasonal movements and environmental conditions of Pacific halibut in the northern Bering Sea. Environmental Biology of Fishes, 108(10), 1441-1462. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10641-025-01735-2

Goethel, D. R., & Cheng, M. L. (2024). Assessment of the sablefish stock in Alaska, 2024. North Pacific Fishery Management Council SAFE Report.

Goethel, D. R., Cheng, M. L., Echave, K. B., Marsh, C., Rodgveller, C. J., Shotwell, K., et al. (2023). Assessment of the sablefish stock in Alaska. NOAA Fisheries.

Goethel, D. R., Hanselman, D. H., Rodgveller, C. J., Echave, K. B., Williams, B. C., Shotwell, S. K., et al. (2021). Assessment of the sablefish stock in Alaska.

Hanselman, D. H., Pyper, B. J., & Peterson, M. J. (2018). Sperm whale depredation on longline surveys and implications for the assessment of Alaska sablefish. Fisheries Research, 200, 75-83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2017.12.017

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2020). Fishery-independent setline survey: Regulatory Area 2A rockfish tag numbers (IPHC-2020-FISS-CA-2A).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2023). Five-year program of integrated research and monitoring, 2022-2026 (IPHC-2023-5YPIRM).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2023). Fishery-independent setline survey hook adjustment factors (IPHC-2023-FISS-HADJ).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2023). Fishery-independent setline survey seabird observations (IPHC-2023-FISS-SBD-000).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2024). IPHC fishery-independent setline survey sampling manual (IPHC-2024-VSM01).

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2025). Draft interim harvest strategy policy (IPHC-2025-MSAB021-09).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2025). Pacific halibut catch sharing plan measures, 2025.

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2025). Report on current and future biological and ecosystem science research activities (IPHC-2025-SRB026-06).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2025). Stock assessment of Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis), 2025 (IPHC-2025-SA-01).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2026). Fishery regulations 2026.

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2026). Fishery-independent setline survey: Design and implementation in 2025 (IPHC-2026-AM102-08).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2026). Outcomes of the 102nd session of the International Pacific Halibut Commission annual meeting (IPHC-2026-MR-001).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2026). Pacific halibut catch sharing plan measures, 2026.

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2026). Report of the 102nd session of the International Pacific Halibut Commission annual meeting (IPHC-2026-AM102-R).

International Pacific Halibut Commission. (2026). Stock assessment of Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) at the end of 2025 (IPHC-2026-SA-01).

Kapur, M., Rogers, L., Goethel, D. R., Cheng, M. L. H., Hanselman, D., Echave, K., Haltuch, M. A., Holt, K. R., English, P., Berger, A. M., & Connors, B. (2025). Hidden Markov mark-recapture modeling highlights transboundary exchange for northeast Pacific sablefish. Fisheries Research, 289, 107498. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2025.107498

Kapur, M. S., Haltuch, M. A., Connors, B., Berger, A., Holt, K., Marshall, K., & Punt, A. E. (2024). Range-wide contrast in management outcomes for transboundary northeast Pacific sablefish. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 81(7), 810-827. https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2024-0008

Kodiak Seafood and Marine Science Center. (n.d.). Kodiak Seafood and Marine Science Center. https://alaskaseagrant.org/about/kodiak-seafood-and-marine-science-center/

Kroetz, K., Reimer, M. N., Sanchirico, J. N., Lew, D. K., & Huetteman, J. (2019). Defining the economic scope for ecosystem-based fishery management. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116(10), 4188-4193.

Loher, T. (2022). Dispersal and seasonal movements of Pacific halibut (Hippoglossus stenolepis) in the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, as inferred from satellite-transmitting archival tags. Animal Biotelemetry, 10(1), 18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40317-022-00288-w

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1801 et seq.

Matulich, S. C., & Clark, M. L. (2003). North Pacific halibut and sablefish IFQ policy design: Quantifying the impacts on processors. Marine Resource Economics.

National Fisherman. (2025). Halibut IFQ fisherman convicted in ghost-fishing scheme.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2025). Civil administrative enforcement actions for June 2025.

NOAA, 2026. National Report: United States of America. IPHC-2026-AM102-NR01 Rev_1. Prepared for the 102nd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting. [pdf] Seattle: International Pacific Halibut Commission. Available at: https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2026/01/IPHC-2026-AM102-NR02-Rev_1-USA.pdf

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (n.d.). NAO 216-100: Protection of confidential fisheries statistics. https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-216-100-protection-of-confidential-fisheries-statistics

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement. (2025). NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and enforcement reports for Alaska fisheries.

NOAA Fisheries. (2007). Alaska groundfish harvest specifications programmatic environmental impact statement.

NOAA Fisheries. (n.d.). Alaska catch accounting system. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/sustainable-fisheries/alaska-catch-accounting-system

NOAA Fisheries. (n.d.). BSAI halibut abundance-based management (Amendment 123).

NOAA Fisheries. (n.d.). Electronic reporting in Alaska fisheries. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/resources-fishing/electronic-reporting-alaska-fisheries

NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Office. (2023). Annual deployment plan for observers and electronic monitoring in the groundfish and halibut fisheries off Alaska.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council. (2025). April 2025 newsletter.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council. (2025). Halibut IFQ program review.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council. (2025). Observer program annual report.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council. (2026). June 2026 newsletter.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council. (2026). Sablefish harvest control rule discussion paper.

Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982, 16 U.S.C. § 773 et seq.

Peterson, M. J., & Hanselman, D. (2017). Sablefish mortality associated with whale depredation in Alaska. ICES Journal of Marine Science, 74(5), 1382-1394. https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsw239

Roozee, E., Temby, O., & Hickey, G. M. (2026). Why technical readiness is not enough: Institutional barriers to full harvest strategy adoption in the International Pacific Halibut Commission. Fisheries Research, 300, 107788.

Shotwell, K., Echave, K., Ferriss, B., Goethel, D., Lunsford, C., Oke, K., Siddon, E., et al. (2023). Appendix 3C. Ecosystem and socioeconomic profile of the sablefish stock in Alaska: Report card.

Soderlund, E., Randolph, D. L., & Dykstra, S. C. (2012). Technical report no. 58: IPHC setline charters 1963 through 2003. International Pacific Halibut Commission.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

Stewart, I., & Hicks, A. (2024). Assessment of the Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis)* stock at the end of 2023. International Pacific Halibut Commission.

U.S. Department of Justice. (2025). Commercial fisherman sentenced to six months in prison for falsifying fishing records and taking an endangered sperm whale.

Webster, R. A., Clark, W. G., Leaman, B. M., & Forsberg, J. E. (2013). Pacific halibut on the move: A renewed understanding of adult migration from a coastwide tagging study. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 70(4), 642-653. https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2012-0371

Wilson, D., & Jannot, J. (2022). Minimum data collection standards for Pacific halibut by scientific observer programs. SPRFMO.

Zahner, et al. (2025). Management strategy evaluation of alternative harvest control rules for Alaska sablefish. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. [Complete citation to be confirmed.]

Zolotov, A. O. (2022). The long-term dynamics of sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria) stocks in the Western Bering Sea and prospects for their commercial exploitation. Russian Journal of Marine Biology, 47(7), 563-582.

11. Appendices

11.1. Appendix 1 – Assessment Team Bios

11.1.1. Assessment Team Bios

Based on the technical expertise required to carry out this assessment, an Assessment Team was selected as follows.

Deirdre Hoare, Lead Assessor

Deirdre Hoare is a fisheries scientist with over 15 years of experience in a wide range of projects associated with fisheries stock assessment and ecosystem impacts of fisheries. She is an ISO19011 Certified Lead Auditor and CSI and MSC approved Fisheries Team Leader for NSF. Deirdre has a BSc and MSc in Marine Zoology from University College Galway. Until recently Deirdre worked as an independent MSC Principle 2 expert on many different fisheries in Europe, Greenland, North America and Asia. Principle 2 focuses on the effects of the fishery on associated species of fish and interactions with seabirds, marine mammals, and the benthic ecology. Prior to this, she held the position of Fishery Science Manager at MarinTrust, working on reduction fishery sustainability. Before this, she worked North-western Waters Advisory Council as an Executive Assistant. This involved working on multidisciplinary and multilingual teams to consult with stakeholders, gather evidence, and produce substantial reports and proposals for the European Commission. As a Fisheries Assessment Analyst and a Scientific and Technical Officer for the Marine Institute in Ireland, she was involved in fisheries research and stock assessment for ICES working groups. As well as having worked as a researcher, she completed many trips on commercial fishing vessels as a scientific observer in the NAFO area, Northwest Atlantic, and Irish Coast.

Dr. Robert Leaf, Assessor 1

Dr. Robert Leaf has 20 years of experience working in the field of natural resource management of fin and shellfish. He specializes in the evaluation of management strategies of harvested

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.

species and the identification of environmental drivers that impact their population dynamics. Dr. Leaf received his master's degree in marine science at Moss Landing Marine Laboratories and his PhD in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences from Virginia Polytechnic and State Institute. His last professional post was as a post-doc under Dr. Kevin Friedland at the Northeast Fishery Science Center's Narragansett Laboratory. There, he worked on understanding the impact of environmental conditions on fish stock productivity and recruitment. He has worked in the Gulf of Mexico for the last three years working on fish stock assessment of commercially and recreationally important species in that area. Dr. Leaf is a member of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Red Drum working group and NOAA's Marine Fisheries and Climate Taskforce. He currently supervises four master's level students working on various state and federally managed fish stocks.

This is a confidential document and may be reproduced only with the permission of GTC.