US Halibut Fishery

2008 Annual Surveillance Report As Required Under the Marine Stewardship Council Program

Prepared for: Eat on The Wild Side and Fishing Vessels Owners Association

Prepared by: Chet Chaffee, Ph.D., Scientific Certification Systems 2008

General Information

Certified Fishery	US Halibut Fishery	United States
Fishery Agency	NOAA Fisheries,	United States
	International Pacific Halibut	
	Commission	
Species	Hippoglossus stenolepis	
MSC Registration	SCS-MFCP-F-0071	
No.		
Certification Date	18 April 2006	
Certification	18 April 2011	
Expiration Date		
Certification Body	Scientific Certification	2200 Powell St., Suite
	Systems, Inc. (SCS)	725, Emeryville, CA
		94608
Certificate Holder	Eat on The Wild Side	Room 232
		4005 20 th Ave. West
		Seattle, WA 98199
Surveillance Team	Chet Chaffee, Ph.D.	Project Leader
	(SCS)	
Surveillance Stage	Annual Surveillance	2008

Preface

All facts in this report were provided to SCS by Eat on The Wild Side (ETWS) and Fishing Vessels Owners Association. However, the interpretation, opinions, and assertions made in this report as to the compliance of the fishery with MSC requirements are the sole responsibility of Scientific Certification Systems, Inc.

Executive Summary

This is the 2nd Annual Surveillance Report (2008) prepared by SCS to meet the requirements of the MSC for annual audits of certified fisheries. It is SCS's view that the US halibut fishery continues to meet the standards of the MSC and to comply with the 'Requirements for Continued Certification'. SCS recommends the continued use of the MSC certificate through to the next annual surveillance audit with no additional corrective action requests other than those still outstanding from the original assessment.

Background

The halibut fishery off the North Pacific coast of the United States was originally certified on 18 April 2006 by Scientific Certification Systems, Inc. The requirements of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) are that each certified fishery must undergo at a minimum an annual surveillance to ensure the basis of certification is still in place and that the fishery is meeting any conditional requirements from the original certification. Should a fishery fail the surveillance audit, and cannot address identified deficiencies in a reasonable period of time, then the use of the certificate and the MSC logo can be revoked by the certifier.

This report represents the second annual surveillance since the fishery was certified. The issues for the certifier are whether the fishery has sufficiently acted on the required conditions set forth in the original certification report, and whether a random check on the performance of the fishery verifies continued compliance with the MSC standards.

Annual Surveillance

The annual surveillance audit process (as always) is comprised of four general parts:

1. The certification body provides questions around areas of inquiry to determine if the fishery is maintaining the level of management observed during the original certification. In addition, the surveillance team requires that the client provide evidence that the fishery management system has taken the necessary actions to meet all conditions placed on the fishery during the initial certification assessment or any previous surveillance audits.

2. The surveillance/assessment team meets with the client fishery to allow the client to present the information gathered in answer to the questions asked by the surveillance team. The surveillance team can then ask questions about the information provided to ensure its full understanding of how well the fishery management system is functioning and if the fishery management system is continuing to meet the MSC standards.

3. The surveillance team presents its findings to the client fishery at the end of the site visit. The results outline the assessment team's understanding of the information presented and its conclusion regarding the fishery management system's continued compliance with MSC standards. Where indicated, the surveillance team may provide the client fishery with additional time to supplement the information provided if the surveillance team finds that there are still issues requiring clarification.

4. Where appropriate, the client fishery submits final information to the surveillance/assessment team for consideration in the surveillance findings and report. The surveillance team then reviews the final information and submits a final report to the client fishery and the MSC for posting on the MSC website. If there are continued compliance concerns, these are presented as non-conformances that require further action and audits as specified in the surveillance report.

Surveillance

The surveillance audit for 2008 comprised 3 parts:

1. An exchange of information indicating to the client the areas of inquiry by SCS for the surveillance audit. SCS provided a list of questions to the client.

2. A meeting by teleconference with the client. This meeting was to discuss the questions put forth by SCS.

3. An exchange of documents from the client to SCS, in follow up to inquiries made during the meeting.

Results

Data Submitted to Assessment Team

ETWS answered questions put forward by SCS both in discussion and in the form of submitted documents. The documents compiled and submitted to SCS are:

- IPHC Report of Assessment and Research Activities 2007. International Pacific Halibut Commission 2008.
 - o IPHC Research Program: Review of 2007 Projects and Proposals for 2008
 - 2007 commercial fishery and regulation changes Heather L. Gilroy, Lara M. Hutton, and Kirsten A. Gravel
 - o 2007 sport fishery Calvin L. Blood
 - Wastage of legal-sized halibut in the 2007 Pacific halibut fishery Heather L. Gilroy
 - Re-estimation of sublegal discard mortality in the halibut fishery Heather L. Gilroy and William G. Clark
 - The personal use harvest of Pacific halibut in 2006 Gregg H. Williams
 - Retention of sublegal halibut in the Area 4D/4E CDQ fishery: 2007 harvests - Gregg H. Williams
 - o Commercial catch sampling Lara M. Hutton and Kirsten A. Gravel
 - Age distribution of the commercial halibut catch for 2007 Joan E. Forsberg
 - International Pacific Halibut Commission Stock Assessment Workshop -IPHC staff

- Report on the 2006 Assessment and Harvest Policy of the International Pacific Halibut Commission RICC Francis
- UM Independent System for Peer Reviews Consultant Report on: International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) stock assessment and harvest policy review - Paul A. Medley
- Staff response to the CIE reviewers' reports William G. Clark, Steven R. Hare, and Raymond A. Webster
- Assessment of the Pacific halibut stock at the end of 2007 William G. Clark and Steven R. Hare
- o Effect of station depth distribution on survey CPUE William G. Clark
- o Effect of hook competition on survey CPUE William G. Clark
- Effect of migration on achievement of proportional harvest under a system of survey apportionment of total catch William G. Clark
- Comparison of setline and trawl survey catch rates in different areas -William G. Clark
- Questions about fishery-survey interactions Raymond A. Webster and William G. Clark
- Modeling migration distance using the IPHC PIT tag-recovery data -Raymond A. Webster, William G. Clark and Joan Forsberg
- o Analysis of PIT tag recoveries through 2007 Raymond A. Webster
- 2007 IPHC harvest policy analysis: past, present, and future considerations - Steven R. Hare and William G. Clark
- New estimates of bottom area in IPHC regulatory areas Steven R. Hare
- Examination of genetic population structure in spawning adults of Pacific halibut: laboratory and field work completed in 2007 - Lorenz Hauser, Timothy Loher, James Rhydderch and Lyndsay Newton
- Oceanographic monitoring on the IPHC setline survey in 2007 Lauri L. Sadorus and Steven R. Hare
- Estimating halibut hooking success using DIDSON sonar Stephen M. Kaimmer and Stephen Wischniowski
- 2007 hook size and spacing experiment Stephen M. Kaimmer and Bruce M. Leaman
- o 2007 dogfish mischmetal experiments Steve Kaimmer and Alan Stoner
- Homogeneity test for the Pacific sleeper shark (Somniosus pacificus): Project update - Stephen Wischniowski, Trent Garner, Caroline Cameron
- Portside and survey vessel sampling for recovered PIT tags in Pacific halibut Joan E. Forsberg
- Tagging studies Joan E. Forsberg
- Characterization of seasonal onshore-offshore migration timing, and active spawning depth and period of Gulf of Alaska halibut, with evidence of possible skipped spawning - Timothy Loher
- Early-spring dispersion of halibut from Areas 2A and 2B, evaluated via Pop-up Archival Transmitting (PAT) tags - Timothy Loher and Calvin Blood

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- Assessing seasonal migration and putative spawning location of adult Pacific halibut in the southeast Bering Sea using Pop-up Archival Transmitting (PAT) tags - Timothy Loher and Andy Seitz
- Use of archival tags to study migration and behavior of male and prerecruit Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*): phase I, development of surgical techniques - Timothy Loher and Renee Rensmeyer
- 2007 standardized stock assessment survey Eric Soderlund, Claude L. Dykstra, Tracee Geernaert, Erica Anderson, and Aaron M. Ranta
- Prior hook injuries: results from the 2007 IPHC SSA and NMFS surveys Stephen M. Kaimmer and Richard C. Leickly
- Age distribution of Pacific halibut in the 2007 IPHC stock assessment setline survey Joan E. Forsberg
- Cruise report for the 2007 NMFS Bering Sea trawl survey Lauri L. Sadorus and Robert Lauth
- Size and age composition of Pacific halibut in NMFS Bering Sea shelf trawl surveys Lauri Sadorus, Robert Lauth, and Aaron M. Ranta
- Cruise report for the 2007 NMFS Gulf of Alaska trawl survey Lauri L. Sadorus and Mark E. Wilkins
- Abundance, distribution, and age composition of the Pacific halibut as estimated by the NMFS Gulf of Alaska trawl survey - Lauri L. Sadorus, Mark E. Wilkins, and Aaron M. Ranta
- Using otolith chemistry to determine halibut nursery origin: progress in 2007 - Timothy Loher and Stephen Wischniowski
- Detecting, interpreting, and measuring false annuli in Pacific halibut ages one to four from the Bering Sea - Stephen Wischniowski and Timothy Loher
- Technique development for age determination of the Pacific sleeper shark (*Somniosus pacificus*) Stephen Wischniowski
- Council Motion Seabird Deterrence in IPHC Area 4E, June 1008
- Appendix C Ecosystem Considerations for 2008.

1. Stock Status and Harvest Rate Policy

The first two questions raised by SCS in the surveillance audit are whether the monitoring and assessment to determine the status of the stocks are still being conducted consistent to what was provided to the assessment team in the original assessment, and whether the status of the stock was still consistent with pre-determined reference points.

The indicators in the original assessment that cover monitoring and the status of the stock were 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.4, 1.1.1.5, 1.1.1.6, 1.1.2.1, and 1.1.2.2, 1.1.2.3, 1.1.2.4, 1.1.2.6, 1.1.3.1, 1.1.3.2, 1.1.5.1, 1.1.5.2, 1.1.5.3, 1.1.5.4, 1.1.5.5, 1.1.6.1, and 1.1.6.2.

The IPHC Report on Research and Assessment for 2007 (2008) notes, that a number of important issues have been raised and addressed as part of the process for assessing the

current status of the halibut stock. The annual stock assessments continue to be conducted using data collected annually by IPHC using the same protocols as in previous years. This maintains the long-term sampling program allowing comparable results from year to year. In addition to the normal surveys, IPHC takes on some additional data collection efforts beyond those for stock assessment where feasible. These included some tagging studies, otolith collection, water sampling, and bycatch data collection.

According to a report on the Annual Meeting of the Halibut Commission (2008), the recommended catch limits for 2008 are 60,400,000 pounds, a 7.3% decrease from the 2007 catch limit of 65,170,000 pounds. These estimates are based on a coastwide stock assessment, which is a different approach than from previous years. Specifically, the summary states:

"The Commission staff reported on the 2007 Pacific halibut stock assessment which implemented a coastwide estimation of biomass, compared with previous assessments which assessed stock biomass for each individual IPHC regulatory area. This approach was introduced for the 2006 stock assessment but not endorsed by the Commission at its 2007 Annual Meeting. Following a June 2007 stock assessment workshop and external peer review of the assessment, the Commission and its advisory bodies endorsed the coastwide approach to the assessment of halibut stock abundance at the 2008 Annual Meeting. While the staff catch limit recommendations, arising from IPHC survey-based apportionment of the coastwide biomass estimated were accepted for most areas, the Commission requested additional investigation of apportionment methods during 2008."

Hare, S.R. and W. G. Clark (2008) discuss the revised stock assessment processes and the effect on the resulting harvest policy. The report states:

"Two minimum spawning biomass limits are established, one for the long-term simulations and one for the coastwide stock. For the simulations, as has been custom in developing the harvest policy, areas 2B/2C/3A are combined. The purpose of establishing a coastwide limit is twofold: it establishes the level of the current biomass in relation to an unfished state and it establishes the point at which more conservative actions should be taken (i.e., lowering of the target harvest rate). Multiplying the low productivity period average recruitment value of 4.13 million age-six recruits by the SBR with no fishing gives an estimate, for areas 2B/2C/3A, of 489 million pounds for Bunfi shed.

The minimum spawning biomass limit for the coastwide stock is established in the following manner. For Areas 2B, 2C, and 3A the historical minimum observed spawning biomass (as estimated in the closed area assessments) is 63.7 million pounds. Based on the unfished biomass calculations described above, the historical minimum observed spawning biomass is 13% of unfished spawning biomass (B₁₃). As noted earlier, a cornerstone of the IPHC harvest policy has been to prevent spawning biomass from falling below the historical minimum and, in reality, to avoid even getting very close to that level. The reasoning for this has been that we can have some confidence that the stock can be (and has been) rebuilt from that level of spawning biomass but we have no experience with stock dynamics at a lower level. For the harvest rate simulations, we set

the minimum biomass limit at 20% (rather than 13%) of Bunfi shed. This reflects both an extra layer of conservation and recognizes the recent finding that ongoing migration beyond age eight implies that the minimum observed biomass that produced the large recruitments of the 1970's was likely somewhat larger than 63.7 million pounds, due to immigration from outside the 2B/2C/3A areas. The biomass threshold reference point, i.e., the point at which the harvest rate begins to be set lower than the target harvest rate, is set somewhere higher than B₂₀.

For the coastwide stock, we leverage data from 2B/2C/3A to compute B_{unfi shed} and B₂₀ and then determine the current status of the coastwide spawning biomass. From the coastwide assessment, we have recruitment estimates for the period 1996-2007. Because there is substantial uncertainty in the most recent estimates, we use the 1996-2003 data which gives an average of 19.86 million age-six recruits. These recruits are from a productive regime. Using the ratio from areas 2B/2C/3A where recruitment in an unproductive regime is approximately 32% of the average in a productive regime, we estimate that average coastwide recruitment in an unproductive regime would be 6.31 million age-six recruits. Multiplying this number by the SBR (in the absence of fishing) value of 118.5 lbs results in a B_{unfi shed} value of 748 million pounds. <u>B₂₀ is 150 million pounds and the most recent assessment estimate of current spawning biomass (B_{current}) is 300 million pounds which translates to a value of B₄₀. This level of spawning biomass is very similar to target values set for many groundfish stocks in Alaska."</u>

In summary, the report states: "The determination that $B_{current}$ is well above B_{20} defines the halibut stock, on a coastwide basis, to be well above the minimum reference points, and therefore not in a region of added concern.

2. Ecosystem Impacts from Fishing

SCS asked for evidence that the fishery management system is still functioning to keep ecosystem based impacts from fishing at acceptable levels.

The indicators in the original assessment that cover ecosystem impacts were 2.1.1.1, 2.1.1.2, 2.1.2.1, 2.1.2.2, 2.1.3.1, 2.1.3.2, 2.1.3.3, 2.1.5.1, 2.1.5.2, 2.1.5.3, 2.2.1.1, 2.2.1.2, 2.2.2.1, 2.2.3.1, 2.2.5.1, and 2.2.5.2.

The same programs are in place as during the initial assessment. Bycatch continues to be reported, as does lost gear, but there is still little observer coverage to provide independent validation. National Marine Fisheries Service continues to build and improve on its ecosystems modelling, including the ecosystem that includes halibut.

The deployment of seabird avoidance devices continued to be studied and discussed. As we pointed out last year in the 2007 Surveillance report, the updated compilation on seabird bycatch in Alaskan groundfish fisheries (1993-2004) showed a significant decrease in seabird bycatch across all groundfish fisheries. Based on this information, the

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management of seabird bycatch has been modified. Deployment of bycatch avoidance devices is no longer required in inshore areas where no significant seabird bycatch is occurring.

Also, ecosystem modeling of the Bering sea ecosystem has continued at the National Marine Fisheries Research Center in Seattle, Washington, USA. According to the report titled Ecosystem Considerations (Aydin, K. et al. 2008), the modeling work is being conducted for the following reasons:

"The primary intent of this assessment is to summarize and synthesize historical climate and fishing effects on the shelf and slope regions of the eastern Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska from an ecosystem perspective and to provide an assessment of the possible future effects of climate and fishing on ecosystem structure and function. The Ecosystem Considerations section of the Groundfish SAFE provides the historical perspective of status and trends of ecosystem components and ecosystem-level attributes using an indicator approach. For the purposes of management, this information must be synthesized to provide a coherent view of ecosystems effects in order to clearly recommend precautionary thresholds, if any, required to protect ecosystem integrity. To this end, the assessment summarizes recent trends by distinct ecosystem properties that require consideration (Table 1).

The eventual goal of synthesis is to provide succinct indices of current ecosystem conditions reflecting these ecosystem properties. In order to perform this synthesis, a blend of data analysis and modeling will need to be employed to place measures of current ecosystem states in the context of history and past and future climate. In this year's assessment, an extended analysis of **forage production and predation vs. fishing mortality** combines model results with data; it is the intent that in successive years, different focus areas will be used to develop a set of indices that can be used to clearly communicate ecosystem status and the direction of future interactions."

According to the authors, the ecosystem continues to be in balance. The authors specifically report:

"Another index that has been suggested as a measure of overall top-down control of the ecosystem due to fishing is the trophic level of the fishery; in particular, the notion of "fishing down the food web" has been popularized in recent years. The trophic level of the catch and the Fishery in Balance (FIB) indices have been monitored in the BS, AI, and GOA ecosystems to determine if fisheries have been "fishing-down" the food web by removing top-level predators and subsequently targeting lower trophic level prey. The FIB index was developed by Pauly et al. (2000) to ascertain whether trophic level catch trends are a reflection of deliberate choice or of a fishing-down the food web effect. This index declines only when catches do not increase as expected when moving down the food web (i.e., lower trophic levels are more biologically productive), relative to an initial baseline year. Although there has been a general increase in the amount of catch since the late 1960s in all three areas of Alaska, the trophic level of the catch has been high and relatively stable over the last 25 years (Figure 109). Unlike other regions in which this

Based on the evidence presented, SCS is satisfied that the same level of work, or greater, is still occurring within the halibut fishery by Alaska, Washington, and Oregon. In addition, the work that has been completed suggests strongly that the fishing of halibut and other groundfish species is not having severe or irreversible impacts on the associated target species or associated ecosystem, a measure that the MSC's new Fisheries Assessment Methodology requires to assess the importance of ecosystem impacts in specific fisheries under assessment.

3. Management and Regulation

SCS asked for evidence that the fishery management system is still functioning at the same levels that it was during the initial certification. SCS also asked about any pending litigation, and changes in enforcement.

SCS was told that new regulations are being proposed for apportioning catch by area (see above under harvest policy changes), and for revision of seabird avoidance measures.

SCS was instructed that there have been no changes in enforcement and compliance.

Progress on Conditions for Continued Certification

In addition to the random audit of the management system, SCS checked on the progress toward completing the Action Plan for meeting the Conditions for Continued Certification as stated in the original assessment Report. The table below shows each performance indicator that received a Condition for not scoring at least 80, the 80 Scoring Guidepost that is required to be met by addressing the Condition, and the progress that has been made toward meeting each Condition.

Performance	Indicator Language	Condition	Action Plan	Progress in 2007
Indicator				-
2.1.2.1	Performance Indicator	Establish a scientifically	Increasing Observer	In addition to the
	Information is available on	defensible and comprehensive	Coverage	studies funded and
	the nature and extent of the	monitoring and reporting		conducted under the
	by-catch (capture of non-	system for bycatch and	It is clear that as the client	auspices of the client,
	target species).	discards taken directly from	for this assessment,	the client has also
		the halibut fishery. For	F.V.O.A. has limited	agreed and is
	80 Scoring Guidepost	example, this could be	capacity to institute a	participating with
	• Quantitative information	accomplished by extension of	fishery-wide program to	NMFS on trialing
	is available on	the existing observer program	monitor and record	video surveillance on
	significant by-catch.	to cover a proportion of	bycatch in the halibut	board its vessels. This
	• If obtained by sampling,	halibut vessels, or by	fishery. This can only be	trial is to determine if
	this is adequate to	development of electronic	accomplished through the	the same video
	produce accurate data.	monitoring such as video to	auspices of the NMFS	monitoring
	•	record catch and identify	through regulation.	incorporated in the BC
		bycatch animals, if that can be	However, F.V.O.A. as the	halibut fishery can be
		shown to be suitably effective	client for this assessment	successfully deployed
		(McElderry et al. 2003).	is able to take steps in the	in the US halibut
			direction of increasing	fishery. According to
			monitoring and analysis of	the colient, it is
			bycatch in the halibut	necessary to conduct
			fishery through data	these additional trials
			collection on its member	due to potential
			vessels by promoting	differences in US
			certain choices in fishing	vessels and in areas
			practice. In addition,	fished.
			F.V.O.A. will require that	
			any other vessels that join	

	the MSC program and	Progress to date meets
	contract to use the MSC	the expectation of the
	certification will take the	Action Plan and
	same steps as F.V.O.A.	continues to show
	members. These activities	progress toward
	taken together will	meeting the ultimate
	improve the general	objective of the
	understanding of bycatch	Condition. Having
	taken during halibut	said this, SCS as the
	fishing as well as the	CB of record is
	effectiveness of tori lines	concerned that
	in mitigating seabird	progress toward better
	bycatch.	observer coverage is
		moving slowly and
	The client proposes the	will be reviewing
	following actions in order	progress on this
	to address the need for	condition for the next
	representative data on	annual surveillance
	bycatch in the halibut	with an eye toward
	fishery.	seeing significant
	Currently, under the	additional progress
	NPFMC observer	over the next 6-12
	program, there is some	months.
	level of coverage of the	
	directed halibut fleet. First,	
	whenever a directed	
	halibut fisher chooses to	
	fish in more than one	
	IPHC area during a single	
	trip they are required to	
	carry an observer; second,	

	sablefish fishers who own	
	halibut IFQ can retain all	
	halibut caught while	
	targeting sablefish; any	
	such catch taken on a hau	
	normally scheduled for	
	sampling by an observer	
	would be recorded; and	
	third, sablefish fishers wh)
	own halibut IFQ, fishing	
	with an observer on board	,
	can make a "directed"	
	halibut set during what	
	might otherwise be	
	considered a sablefish trip	
	In each of these	
	circumstances there can b	ć
	an observer record of the	
	catch, complete with	
	information on the	
	attendant bycatch. Data	
	from any such hauls are in	
	the observer database and	
	have and do contribute to	
	ongoing analyses	
	conducted by various	
	researchers. However, no	
	one has addressed the	
	question, "What fraction	
	of all sampled hauls show	
	retained halibut catch?";	

	or, "What species were	
	taken as bycatch on those	
	hauls with retained halibut	
	catch?" The Client will	
	work with analysts at the	
	NMFS and/or IPHC to	
	initiate a study within six	
	months after certification	
	that provides a base line of	
	existing directed halibut	
	catch and attendant	
	bycatch information	
	currently contained in	
	North Pacific observer	
	program database. The	
	study will be completed	
	and made publicly	
	available by April 30,	
	2007.	
	The client will encourage	
	additional observer	
	coverage of its member	
	vessels involved in the	
	directed halibut fishery by	
	encouraging split trips of	
	halibut and sablefish when	
	an observer is available	
	under the existing North	
	Pacific observer program.	
	This would enhance any	

	existing database relative	
	to the halibut fishery.	
	-	
	The International Pacific	
	halibut Commission is	
	requesting funding for 50	
	video cameras to be placed	
	on the United States	
	halibut fleet for	
	observation purposes. This	
	could be a pilot project to	
	initiate a video observer	
	program in this fishery.	
	The client will assist the	
	Halibut Commission in	
	obtaining funding and with	
	deployment of the	
	hardware to vessels once	
	funding has been provided.	
	The client has been	
	involved in helping	
	comment on the ongoing	
	amendments to the North	
	Pacific observer program.	
	These amendments contain	
	options that would	
	incorporate observer	
	coverage on the directed	
	halibut fleet. The client	
	has recently been	

			appointed to the observer committee and will work towards a balanced observer program that includes coverage in the directed halibut fleet.	
			There are several areas where funding may be acquired that could be used to employ a video surveillance or partial on- board observer program in the halibut fishery.	
			Currently, the halibut fleet pays a fee that has become surplus within NMFS. We will seek the use of these funds to be used in the directed halibut fishery for observer purposes, either as a stand alone program or as matching funds to supplement any new programs in the North Pacific.	
2.1.2.2	Performance Indicator	Same as 2.1.2.1	Same as above.	Same as above.
	Information is available on the extent of discards (the			

	proportion of the catch not landed) <u>80 Scoring Guidepost</u>			
	Information is available to allow reliable estimates of discard to be calculated and interpreted.			
2.1.5.3	 <u>Performance Indicator</u> The impacts on ecosystem structure and function from removal of non-target stocks are held below unacceptable levels. <u>80 Scoring Guidepost</u> Assessments are made of consequences of current levels of removal of non-target species. These suggest no unacceptable impacts of the fishery on ecological systems. 	Same as 2.1.2.1	Same as above.	Same as above.
2.2.1.2	Performance Indicator Performance Indicator	Same as 2.1.2.1	Same as above.	Same as above.

	The interactions of the fishery with listed and protected species are known. 80 Scoring Guidepost Quantitative estimates are made of the effects of interactions directly related to the fishery.			
2 2.1.3	Performance IndicatorThe level of interaction known to pose an unacceptable risk to such species is known, and 	Same as 2.1.2.1	Same as above.	Same as above.
2.2.2.1	Performance IndicatorIn the case of threatened orendangeredspecies,	Same as 2.1.2.1 In addition, the fishery must provide evidence that it takes	Same as above.	Same as above.

	 management objectives are set in terms of impact identification and avoidance/reduction. <u>80 Scoring Guidepost</u> Management objectives are set to detect and reduce impacts on threatened and endangered species. These are designed to adequately protect aspects of the ecosystem within main fishing areas, considered to be of high conservation importance 	any data gathered into consideration in analyzing the effects of the fishery on the ecosystem and takes steps, where necessary, to mitigate risks to any organisms in the bycatch of the halibut fishery that are deemed to need it.		
3.1.1.3	Performance Indicator The management system incorporates and applies an effective strategy to manage ecological impacts of fishing. [Relates to MSC Criteria 3.2, 3.7, 3.9, 3.10] 80 Scoring Guidepost	Strategies for managing the ecological impacts of the halibut fishery should be developed in a manner that is consistent with objectives 24, 25, 26, 27, and 29 of the amended Groundfish FMPs for GOA and BSAI. In addition, the same	With respect to Condition 3 above and specifically to compliance with management objectives 24-27 and 29 of the amended Groundfish FMPs, we propose the following: Avoid Impacts to	The client's actions to support additional studies on seabird avoidance has resulted in management changes with regard to deployment of these devices. Studies were able to show that certain nearshore areas
	<u></u>	condition that applies to 2.1.2.1 is appropriate –	Seabirds and Marine Mammals (FMP	did not have significant seabird

•	Assessments (empirical or other) of likely	scientifically defensible monitoring and reporting of	management objectives 24-25):	bycatch issues, and therefore deployment
	significant ecological	bycatch and discards must be		of avoidance devices
	impacts of fishing are	established.	The clients will work with	can be relaxed without
	undertaken on a regular		the NMFS and USFWS to	significant harm to
	basis.		improve bird avoidance	seabirds in these
•	Where assessments		tactics when possible. The	fishing areas. This
	demonstrate possible		current bird avoidance	meets the intent of the
	ecological impacts, the		regulations were	Condition, which is to
	management plan		developed in part based on	develop improved
	explicitly takes such		experiments conducted on	management measures
	impacts into account.		vessels from the F.V.O.A.	for reducing seabird
•	The regulation of the		and manned by D.S.F.U.	bycatch.
	fishery to manage		with the University of	
	ecological impacts of		Washington. The results of	No specific activities
	fishing is precautionary.		the experiment were the	were highlighted over
•	Where appropriate, the		adoption of bird avoidance	the past year that
	plan includes control		devices called 'tori lines'	specifically address
	mechanisms to		that, according to the	habitat issues. FVOA
	minimize impacts.		studies done by the	is still committed to
			University of Washington,	supporting habitat
			can reduce bird	research and closed
			interactions by 90%.	areas where sensitive
			In addition the immediate	habitats are at risk, but
			In addition, the improved	no information was
			coverage of bycatch and	the surrecillance and it
			seabird interactions	in 2008. This formers
			halp indicate what	III 2008. THIS IOTHIS a
			atratacias may be	minor concern by SCS,
			strategies may be	which requires that the
			necessary to minit impacts	chem (FVOA) provide

	to seabirds and	marine additional data to SCS
	mammals.	over the next 3 months
		to show progress on
	Reduce and Av	this condition.
	Impacts to Hat	oitat:
	(FMP manager	nent
	objectives 26	27. and
	29)	,
	,	
	As the client, F.	V.O.A. has
	certain limits to	its ability
	to identify and c	lesignate
	essential fish ha	bitat.
	Again, the funct	ion of
	identifying and	
	designating esse	ential fish
	habitat is genera	lly the
	prerogative of the	ne
	government. Th	e client has
	participated in t	he debates,
	regulatory proce	ess, and
	habitat impact a	nalysis
	relative to essen	tial fish
	habitat (EFH), h	abitat of
	particular conce	rn
	(HAPC), and m	arine
	protected areas.	The
	NPFMC will ad	dress most
	of these issues of	once every
	five (5) years th	rough its
	EFH and HAPC	process.

			The client will be supportive of research programs that identify baseline habitat information and mapping. The client will also be supportive of the designation of test areas to be examined as potential protected areas such as the NPFMC has already set up in the Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska.	
3.1.1.5	 Performance Indicator There is an adequately funded research strategy to support the harvest strategy and to address information needed to support the identification and mitigation of ecosystem impacts. [Relates to MSC Criterion 3. 8] 80 Scoring Guidepost The management system includes a stable, well-led, diverse and objective research 	Same as for 3.1.1.3 and 2.1.2.1.	Same as above.	Same as above.

	planning organization.		
•	There is regular		
	agreement between		
	fishery managers and		
	research scientists on		
	near term research needs		
	and priorities in the		
	fishery.		
•	There are documented		
	short-term research		
	plans developed with		
	advice from with		
	stakeholders and		
	external experts.		
•	Funding for research is		
	adequate to address		
	major short-term gaps in		
	knowledge but		
	inadequate for in-depth		
	long-term research.		
•	Funding is adjusted to		
	meet requirements of		
	newly identified		
	research priorities.		
•	Funding is predictable		
	over long-enough time		
	scale to allow continuity		
	of all major stock		
	assessment and		
	ecological interactions		

	research programs.			
3.2.2.2	 Performance Indicator The management system accounts for catch of non-target species. [Relates to MSC Criteria 3.10, 3.17] 80 Scoring Guidepost The management system requires reliable, timely monitoring of and accounting for catch of non-target species and use or discard of that catch throughout all significant components of the fishery. Measures taken substantially reduce the capture of non-target species. 	Same as for Indicators 2.1.2.1 and 3.1.1.3	Same as above.	Same as above.
3.2.4.1	Performance Indicator The management system has procedures to measure and record and independently evaluates all	Same as for Indicator 2.1.2.1	Same as above.	Same as above.

aspects of the fishery to provide a basis for assessments of stocks and program performance.[<i>Relates to</i> <i>MSC Criterion 3.10, 3.11,</i> <i>3.17</i>] 80 Scoring Guidepost		
 The management system has a comprehensive monitoring program. The monitoring programs established in the fishery have been subject to outside review and comment. The results of monitoring efforts are compiled, analyzed, and disseminated to fishery managers such that management and research efforts can be informed as to needed improvements in a timely manner. 		

2008

Summary

SCS finds that the halibut fishery management system is still in general compliance with the MSC standard and that the certificate for the fishery should be maintained.

One minor non-conformance is raised with regard to showing adequate progress against the condition to mitigate impacts of fishing on habitats. SCS requires that the client (FVOA) provide additional information on all activities that are being conducted to understand and mitigate impacts on habitats in the areas of the halibut fishery.