Submitted Questions and Comments
California Halibut 2020 Stock Assessment & Peer Review: Public Sharing Webinar
October 28, 2020 | 10AM - 12PM (PT)

The following questions were submitted via the Q&A or chat tools in Zoom during the webinar. Questions and comments are anonymous unless consent was given by the participant during the webinar to include the participant's name. Timestamps for the webinar recording are included after questions that were addressed by the Project Team to help readers of this document easily locate the responses. Due to time constraints, not all questions submitted by participants were read out loud and addressed by the Project Team. Please note that the questions and comments below appear exactly as they were submitted- no modifications have been made.

Please contact Anthony Rogers, Strategy Director, at anthony.rogers@oceansciencetrust.org with questions or needs related to the peer review process or webinar. Kirsten Ramey, Environmental Program Manager, at kirsten.ramey@wildlife.ca.gov is the appropriate contact person with questions or concerns related to the California Halibut scaled management process. Visit the California Halibut Stock Assessment Scientific Peer Review webpage for access to webinar materials.

Questions & Comments - Submitted & Answered

Timestamp for recorded answer in ( ), if applicable

- What is the evidence for two stocks and does the southern stock extend into Mexico? How is the population in Mexico considered in this assessment? (1:07:00)
- For the southern stock did you look at the imports from Mexico or their catch? (1:07:00)
- Does spawning occur in the Bays as well as ocean near shore areas? (1:09:42)
- *Comment:* Cheryl Barnes MS thesis at Moss Landing Marine Labs showed spawning occurring in the ocean in central California. (1:12:41)
- Would it be advisable to separate the two areas of biomass into at least 3 being a boundary created at Point San Pedro? or Santa Cruz in order to tease out more specific data. (1:10:42 and 1:14:00)
- How do you account for discard mortality in both the commercial and recreational sectors? -Tom Marking Northern Calif. (1:17:02)
- The federal stock assessment peer review process provides transparency to the public by distributing draft assessments to the public before the review and allowing public participation in the STAR [Stock Assessment Review] panel. Why is this process differing in terms of transparency and public access? (1:20:11)

- For halibut mortality by hook and line are you referring to Travis Tanaka's study done in the SF bay? Also note that hook and line methods are not all the same. There are several such as live bait and wire line. Hooking mortality is different in each case. More data definition is needed to determine the actual mortality by gear type perhaps. (1:23:59)
- Thank you for the information you are sharing. When and how will social scientific information about the CA halibut fishery be incorporated into the MSE and other parts of the management process? (1:34:17)
- How do the current MPA's play a part in the management strategy? (1:36:10)
- Just a quick clarifying question about the ESR [Enhanced Status Report] process. Did I hear correctly that the results of the MSE [Management Strategy Evaluation] would be incorporated in the ESR? If so, is the MSE something that will be completed by early 2021? -Gilly Lyons (1:37:00)
- Will the FMP [Fishery Management Plan] only cover halibut as the target species or will the fishery be recognized as a multi-species fishery? (1:38:30)
- How will you be contacting stakeholders for inclusion in the process? (1:42:20)
- Who is the contractor developing the MSE tool? (1:43:41)
- Have the objectives of the MSE process been defined, how were those obtained and are they listed in any document for review? -Tom Marking Northern CA For reference, I have been on an IPHC [International Pacific Halibut Commission]] MSE committee for Pacific halibut for 8 years, and are just now completing that document for review. (1:45:00)
- Would it be possible with existing data to assess California halibut as a single statewide stock? Did the review panel consider the pros and cons of this approach?
    - The panel discussed the STAT's [Stock Assessment Team] choice of model structure early in the review process. The STAT's decision to use two separate models was based on regional differences in exploitation history, management, growth, maturation, and data availability. Each of these has different implications, but as an example, a model based on a single, statewide stock would implicitly assume that the impacts of large landings in Southern California during the early 1900s would have an equal effect on the status and abundance of halibut in central and northern CA. Also, differences in growth suggest that the productivity of halibut differs by region. In other words, the resilience of the stock to fishing pressure appears to vary by region. In the panel's view, the use of two models allowed the STAT to better account for these regional differences.
- What did the Review Panel recommend is the best available science for managing the Northern stock?
    - CDFW's decision on how they intend to manage either stock (northern or southern) is still pending, so it isn't possible at this time for the panel to

recommend the best available science for management. Based on the limitations identified for the northern model, the panel could not recommend that it be used for management at this time, and gave several recommendations to improve the assessment (e.g. reconstruction of historical catches).

Questions & Comments- Submitted & Outstanding Due to Time Constraints

- Existing landings data suggest that the population size was greater in the early 1900s, prior to the period modeled in this assessment. Estimating current stock status based on reference points from the 1970s or 80s, when we know the population was already impacted, is thus problematic. Given existing data limitations, what steps could be taken to reconstruct population estimates from the 1920s-1940s, and can those estimates be used to inform current stock status?
- Federal ground fish stock assessments typically allow estimates of overfishing limits, acceptable biological catch, and annual catch limits, each expressed in absolute biomass. Why is the southern model unable to produce reliable absolute estimates of these standard reference points?