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Subject: Draft Groundfish Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for review

Dear Chief and Council, Tribal Councils, and Aboriginal organizations,

The Groundfish Management Unit has prepared a draft Pacific Region Groundfish Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for the 2019/20 fishing season. We invite your input to this draft IFMP. The updated draft IFMP has now been posted to an ftp site and is available for review at the address listed below.

The purpose of the IFMP is to identify the main goals and requirements for groundfish fisheries in the Pacific region, as well as the management measures that will be used to achieve these objectives. This document also serves to communicate the basic information on the fishery and its management to DFO staff, legislated co-management boards, First Nations, and other stakeholders. The IFMP provides a common understanding of the basic “rules” for the sustainable management of the fisheries resource.

Notable changes in the draft IFMP are summarized below and highlighted in yellow in the document. Updates include:

1. Section 2 identifies updated groundfish management priorities;
2. Section 3 identifies 2017 and 2018 groundfish stock assessments and new harvest advice;
3. Several parts of section 4 have updated economic information where available; and
4. Section 5.2 and appendix 10 describe processes underway to support Canada’s marine and coastal areas conservation mandate.

“Use of fish” allocations have also been proposed to support several groundfish science projects. The proposed allocations and the projects they support are consistent with allocations and projects in previous years. They include:

- 27.2 tonnes of Halibut from the commercial TAC to support the outside longline synoptic survey and biosampling on the International Pacific Halibut

Commission survey, plus varying amounts of rockfish species from commercial TACs to cover forecasted catch on the surveys;

- 60 tonnes of Sablefish from the Commercial TAC to support the Sablefish trap survey; and
- Approximately 200 tonnes of numerous species (primarily rockfishes and flatfishes) to support the Queen Charlotte Sound groundfish trawl synoptic survey.

There are several processes planned or underway that may introduce additional changes to the commercial harvest plan appendices of the IFMP in the coming months. Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for Pacific Hake and Pacific Halibut will be determined through the international treaty processes for each of these species. Information on public meetings for these species can be found online for the Halibut fishery at: <http://www.iphc.int/> and for the Hake fishery at: http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/management/whiting/pacific_whiting_treaty.html.

The Department is also receiving updated scientific harvest advice for Sablefish, which may inform commercial TAC and/or management changes for the coming year. This updated science advice will be discussed through groundfish advisory processes as part of the Department's work to finalise consultations on the commercial harvest plan appendices of the IFMP. Advisory processes are open to observers from the public and information about their meeting dates can be found online: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/ground-fond/index-eng.html>

The Department is interested in feedback on the draft IFMP. The draft IFMP is available at the following ftp site: <ftp://ftp1.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/KeizerA/>.

Please provide comments by January 8, 2019 by email to FisheriesManagement.XPAC@dfo-mpo.gc.ca. The Department will revise the IFMP based on the input received during the review period before preparing the IFMP for final departmental approval and implementation on February 21, 2019.

I look forward to your input on the draft IFMP. Please contact me if you have any questions or wish to further discuss this draft.

Sincerely,



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