



Cali Marine



MYRV



March 9, 2023

Mr. Charlton H. Bonham, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for development of a science-based plan for the California halibut fishery

Dear CDFW Director Bonham and members of the California Fish and Game Commission:

As fishing and ocean recreation businesses, we know that stewardship is key to ensuring healthy fish populations and future fishing opportunities in California.

We write to ask the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a comprehensive, science-based plan for managing the California halibut fishery. California halibut is one of the most highly sought-after fish by recreational anglers, who take more than 60,000 halibut fishing trips each year. But with high rates of bycatch, including juvenile halibut and other sensitive non-target species that are discarded dead, in the commercial set net and trawl fisheries and signs of low halibut populations in parts of its range, we need to do more to ensure this remarkable species and other species in its ecosystem thrives in the future. Please advance the following priorities for California halibut:

- Make a determination that bycatch is unacceptable in both set gillnet and bottom trawl fisheries targeting California halibut and take actions to minimize bycatch of undersized halibut and non-target species, including marine mammals, seabirds, sharks, Dungeness crab, and other finfish.
- Protect nursery habitat, such as eelgrass meadows found in bays and estuaries, that young halibut need to survive.
- Safeguard the prey that feed halibut throughout their life, such as anchovy and other vital forage species.
- Use the best available information about the halibut population to determine catch limits that prevent overfishing.

We're glad to see CDFW move forward with developing new and updated fishery management plans under the Marine Life Management Act, as well as efforts to analyze and address bycatch in the California halibut set net fishery using the bycatch inquiry. Given concerns regarding bycatch, habitat impacts, and stock status, we agree that California halibut should be a top priority for management attention and action. We look forward to CDFW's progress on this important effort.

Sincerely,

Adventure Travel Alliance
Angelerettes
Aqua Traction of San Diego
Ashes on the Sea
BD Outdoors
Bionex
Bishop Flyfishing Guide Service
Cal's 2-Speed Reel Conversions
Cali Marine
Cork hat
Crystal Creations by Linda
Custom RV
Fisherman's Landing
Gator Step
Grizzly Joes Seasoning
International Game Fish Association
Jon Pettey Custom Goldsmith
JRM Drone and Video Creations
Mr. Enterprise
Macs Sporting Goods
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McDougall Lodge
Mission FISH
Modrcx LLC
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Oceanside Senior Anglers
Oil Filter Service, Inc.
Opah Gear
Pacific Sport Fishing Alliance
Phoenix Baits
Pop Board Company
San Diego Anglers Foundation
Scales and Tales
Sea Tow
Seaforth Sportfishing
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