

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:

Today, we write to ask that you develop a comprehensive plan for sustainably managing the California halibut fishery with an eye toward the future. California halibut is one of the most highly sought-after fish for sport anglers throughout the state, who take more than 60,000 halibut fishing trips per year. But with high rates of bycatch in the commercial set net and trawl fisheries and signs of low populations in parts of its range, we need to do more to ensure this important species thrives in the future.

We ask that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife advance the following priorities for California halibut:

- Minimize bycatch of undersized halibut and non-target species, including seabirds, sharks, Dungeness crab, and other finfish in both the set gillnet and bottom trawl fisheries.
- Protect the 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 cycle, such as anchovy and other vital forage species.
- Identify science-based catch limits that prevent overfishing by reflecting the current size of the CA halibut population.

As recreational anglers, we know that science-based stewardship is key to ensuring a sustainable future for California's fisheries. That's why 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 bycatch in the California halibut set net fishery. We agree that the Department should prioritize those fisheries with the greatest concerns regarding bycatch, habitat impacts, and stock status – and that California halibut should be a key focus of management attention and action.

We look forward to CDFW's progress on this important effort. Thank you for your work to conserve and manage California's invaluable fish populations.

Sincerely,

Aaron Snyder, Carlsbad
Aaron Anaya, Valley Center
Adam Juarez, La Jolla
Adam Snyder, Oceanside
Adan Hernandez, Los Angeles
Albert Udan, Chula vista
Alexandra Castaneda, Oceanside
Alice Kulikowski, San Diego
Alisa Pyatt, Santee
Allura Garis, San Diego
Amber Daugherty, San Diego
Ana Kassir, Encino
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Anibal Ruiz, San Diego
Anna Parsons, Los Angeles
Anthenna Finney, Wildomar
Barry Tilley, Spring Valley
Bill O'Connell, Carlsbad
Blakely Sanford, Encinitas
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David Duran, Escondido
David Lopez, El Centro
David Wong, Oceanside
Dean Sipes, Jamul
Denise Richard, Encino
Dennis Sweeney, Lemon Grove
Don Salveson, Woodland Hills
Ed McIntyre, Santee
Eduardo Reyes, Rialto
Elias Lorenzo, Escondido
Elliott Duenas, San Diego
Erik Ratliff, San Diego
Eve Gerdes, Corona
Felipe Gomez, Imperial beach
Floyd Sparks, Encinitas
Fred Phillippi, San Diego
Gary Pineda-Reyes, Encinitas
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