

FALL 2008 NEWSLETTER EXCERPT

**Proposed Changes to Catch Sharing Plan and 2008 Annual Regulations**

At its September 2008 meeting, the Council adopted several proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific halibut catch sharing plan for public review. The proposals affect Washington and Oregon sport fisheries. Final adoption of the proposed changes will take place at the Council's November 2008 meeting in San Diego. Comments on the proposals should be received by October 15, 2008, and can be emailed to [pfmc.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov), faxed (503-820-2299), or mailed to the Council office. Comments will also be taken at the Council meeting in San Diego. Additional details on the following proposals, including state sponsored public hearings, are available on the following web sites:

WDFW: [www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/);

ODFW: [www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/management/index.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/management/index.asp)

**Washington North Coast Subarea**

- a) Remove the provision to divide the subarea quota between May and June;
- b) Restructure the season from three staggered days per week (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) to two staggered days per week (Thursday and Saturday); and
- c) Change the re-opening date in June from the first Tuesday after June 16 to the first Thursday in June.

**Washington South Coast Subarea**

- a) As an option, specify that the nearshore set-aside would be 10 percent of the subquota, or 2,000 pounds, whichever is less;
- b) Starting the third week in May the primary fishery will only be open on Sundays until the quota for the offshore season is reached;
- c) Specify that the season will be open in the nearshore areas on Thursday through Saturday during the primary season and Thursday through Sunday after the primary season; and
- d) Specify that, in addition to the South Coast Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA), recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited in the Westport Offshore YRCA.

**Columbia River Subarea**

- a) Change the structuring of the spring fishery from seven days per week to every Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The purpose of the change is to extend the duration of the spring season. Open days on Thursday, Friday and Saturday were suggested by the public as salmon seasons are often closed on Fridays and Saturdays; and

b) Open the area south of the Columbia River inside 40-fathoms to halibut retention when the inside 40-fathom fishery is open off central Oregon. See item b) under the Central Coast Subarea for more details.

### **Oregon Central Coast Subarea**

a) In the spring all-depth fishery, allow fishing on every Thursday, Friday and Saturday if pounds remain after the “fixed days”. Presently the CSP allows fishing only on every other Thursday, Friday and Saturday after the “fixed days”. The spring quota has not been taken in the last two years and poundage was rolled into the summer fishery. Opening the fishery every weekend allows more opportunity to harvest the spring quota and would also simplify the regulations; and

b) Extend the open area of the inside 40-fathom fishery north from Cape Falcon to the Columbia River. Under existing regulations, halibut caught incidentally in the nearshore groundfish fishery north of Cape Falcon must be released.

### **Oregon Coast North of Humbug Mountain (Columbia River and Central Coast Subareas)**

Allow retention of lingcod and Pacific cod with a halibut on the vessel during all-depth openings. Current language specifies that all groundfish, except sablefish (and Pacific cod north of Cape Falcon), cannot be retained with a halibut on the vessel during all-depth openings. This regulation has resulted in anglers discarding lingcod, which are often caught incidentally while targeting halibut. Allowing the retention of lingcod would not be a lingcod conservation issue as their status is considered healthy. Although Pacific cod are rarely encountered south of Cape Falcon, allowing retention in the central coast fishery helps to simplify regulations as the groundfish species allowed in the halibut fishery north and south of Cape Falcon would be the same.

The Council also directed that an Informational Report during 2009 be developed to investigate the issue of halibut bycatch in fixed gear sablefish fisheries for the purposes of bycatch accounting and the possibility of allowing incidental halibut retention south of Point Chehalis.