

REPORT ON THE 2008 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A
(10/17/08)

The 2008 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 1,220,000 lb set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as sub-TACs as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Treaty Tribes | 427,000 lb (35%) |
| Non-Tribal Total | 793,000 lb (65%) |
| Non-Tribal Commercial | 321,381 lb (includes incidental sablefish) |
| Washington Sport | 220,238 lb |
| Oregon/California Sport | 251,381 lb |

All weights in this report are net weight (gutted, head-off, and without ice and slime.) The structure of each fishery and the resulting harvests are described below.

NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

A sub-TAC of 251,381 lb (31.7% of the non-tribal share + 70,000 lb for the incidental sablefish fishery) was allocated to two fishery components: 1) a directed longline fishery targeting on halibut south of Point Chehalis, WA; and 2) an incidental catch fishery during the salmon troll fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California. An additional 70,000 lb was allocated to an incidental catch fishery for limited entry, sablefish-endorsed vessels operating with longline gear north of Pt. Chehalis, WA. This allowance for the tiered sablefish fishery is only available in years when the overall Area 2A TAC exceeds 900,000 lb.

Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery A quota of 37,707 lb of Pacific halibut (15% of the non-Indian commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the non-Indian commercial salmon troll fishery in Area 2A as an incidental catch during salmon fisheries. According to the Catch Sharing Plan, the primary management objective for this fishery is to harvest the troll quota as an incidental catch during the May/June salmon troll fishery. If any of the allocation for this fishery remains after June 30, the fishery may continue to retain incidentally caught halibut in the salmon troll fisheries until the quota is taken. The final catch ratio established preseason by the Council at the April meeting was one halibut (minimum 32") per two Chinook landed by a salmon troller, except that one halibut could be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut could be landed per open period. Fishing with salmon troll gear is prohibited within the Salmon Troll Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) off the northern Washington Coast. Additionally, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by salmon trollers.

- Halibut retention was permitted in the salmon troll fisheries beginning May 1. Of the halibut taken in the salmon troll fisheries through August 13, 7,965 lb were landed in Oregon and 13,384 lb were landed in Washington for a total of 21,349 lb.

Directed fishery targeting on halibut A quota of 213,674 lb (85% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the directed longline fishery targeting on halibut in southern Washington, Oregon, and California. The fishery was confined to the area south of Subarea 2A-1 (south of Point Chehalis, WA; 46°53.30' N. lat.). In addition, between 46°53.30' N. lat. and 46°16' N. lat., the fishery was confined to an area seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour and, between 46°16' N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat., to an area shoreward of a boundary line approximating the 30-fm depth contour and seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour. One-day fishing periods of 10 hours in duration were scheduled by the IPHC for June 11, June 25, July 9, July 23, August 6, August 20, September 3, and September 17, 2008. A 32" minimum size limit with the head on was in effect for all openings. Vessel landing limits per fishing period based on vessel length were imposed by IPHC during all openings as shown in the following table. Vessels choosing to operate in this fishery could not land halibut in the incidental catch salmon troll fishery, nor operate in the recreational fishery.

Fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-off without ice and slime in pounds) by vessel size.

| Vessel Class/Size | 6/11 & 6/25 Openings | 7/9 Opening | 7/23 Opening |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| A 0 - 25 ft. | 755 lb | 670 lb | 200 lb |
| B 26 - 30 ft. | 945 lb | 840 lb | 200 lb |
| C 31 - 35 ft. | 1,510 lb | 1,345 lb | 200 lb |
| D 36 - 40 ft. | 4,165 lb | 3,705 lb | 560 lb |
| E 41 - 45 ft. | 4,480 lb | 3,985 lb | 600 lb |
| F 46 - 50 ft. | 5,365 lb | 4,770 lb | 715 lb |
| G 51 - 55 ft. | 5,985 lb | 5,320 lb | 800 lb |
| H 56+ ft. | 9,000 lb | 8,000 lb | 1,200 lb |

- The June 11 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 68,000 lb, leaving 145,674 lb for later openings.
- The June 25 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of 73,000 lb, leaving 72,674 lb for later openings.
- The July 9 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of 57,000 lb, leaving 16,000 lb for later openings.
- The July 23 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 21,819 lb, resulting in an approximate 5,000 lb overage. The directed fishery closed on July 23 for the remainder of 2008.

Incidental halibut catch in the primary sablefish longline fishery north of Point Chehalis

A quota of 70,000 lb was allocated to the limited entry primary sablefish fishery in Area 2A as an incidental catch during longline sablefish operations north of Point Chehalis, WA. The primary sablefish season is from April 1 to October 31, although incidental halibut retention was not permitted until May 1. Properly licensed vessels were permitted to retain up to 100 lb of dressed weight (headed-and gutted) halibut per 1,000 lb of dressed weight sablefish, plus up to two additional halibut per fishing trip. The fishery is confined to an area seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour. Fishing is also prohibited in the North Coast Commercial YRCA, an area off the northern Washington coast. In addition, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by commercial longline sablefish fishermen.

- Through August 27, 2008 this fishery is estimated to have taken 24,254 lb.

SPORT FISHERIES (Non-tribal).

A sub-TAC of 471,619 lb (68.3% of non-tribal share – 70,000 lb for the incidental sablefish fishery) was allocated between sport fisheries in the Washington area (36.6%) and Oregon/California (31.7%). The allocations were further subdivided as quotas among seven geographic subareas as described below.

Washington Inside Waters Subarea (Puget Sound and Straits of Juan de Fuca). This area was allocated 59,354 lb (23.5% of the first 130,845 lb allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 lb). Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, a fixed season was established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achieve the sub-quota. The Eastern Region (East of Low Point) opened on April 10 and continued through June 13, 5 days per week (Thursday-Monday). The Western Region opened on May 22 and continued through July 21, 5 days per week (Thursday-Monday). The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- Landings data from this fishery are not yet available.

Northern Washington Coastal Waters Subarea (landings in Neah Bay and La Push). The coastal area off Cape Flattery to Queets River was allocated 109,991 lb (62.2% of the first 130,845 lb allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,945 lb and 224,100 lb). The fishery was divided into two seasons with 30,798 lb set aside for the second season. The fishery opened May 13 and continued 3 days per week (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) until 79,194 lb were estimated to have been taken. The second season was to open on June 17 and 19 in the nearshore area only and on June 21 in all waters. If insufficient quota remains to reopen the entire north coast subarea on June 24, then the nearshore area would reopen on June 24, up to four days per week (Thursday-Sunday), until the overall quota of 109,991 lb are estimated to have been taken, or until September 30, whichever is earlier. The "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA, southwest of Cape Flattery, was closed to sport halibut fishing. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- The fishery opened May 13 and continued 3 days a week, through June 14, when 64,747 lb were estimated to have been taken. The remaining quota for the May season, 7,383 lb, was not enough to continue the 3 day per week fishery; this remaining quota was transferred to the June season.
- The initial June season quota of 30,798 lb was revised to 38,181 lb. The season re-opened on June 17 and 19 in nearshore waters and June 21 in the entire subarea, during which 21,516 lb were taken. Because there was enough quota remaining to reopen the entire subarea, the season re-opened on June 28 during which 9,695 lb were taken. Not enough quota remained for an opening in the entire sub-area so the fishery was then re-opened on July 26 and August 29 in the nearshore area only. Through August 29, Washington North Coast sport fishery's June season is estimated to have taken 35,041 lb, leaving approximately 3,340 lb in the subarea quota.

Washington South Coast Subarea (landings in Westport). The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 44,700 lb (12.3 % of the first 130,845 lb allocated to the Washington sport fishery and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110). The fishery was to open on May 1 and continued 2 days per week (Sunday and Thursday) in all waters (primary fishery) the fishery would also be open 4 days per week (Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday) in waters between the Queets River and 47°25.00' N. lat. south to 46°58.00' N. lat., and east of 124°30.00' W. long. (northern nearshore fishery) during the primary season. The south coast subarea quota will be allocated as follows: 40,230 lb, 90 percent, for the primary fishery, and 4,470 lb, 10 percent, for the northern nearshore fishery, once the primary fishery has closed. The primary fishery will continue from May 1 until 40,230 lb are estimated to have been taken, or until September 30, whichever is earlier. Subsequent to this closure, if there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen the primary fishery for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be used to accommodate incidental catch in the northern nearshore area on Fridays and Saturdays, until the entire subarea quota is projected to be taken. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- The primary season was open from May 1 through June 17 and resulted in the harvest of 40,239 lbs (the nearshore area was also open during that time). There was not sufficient quota for another offshore day after June 17. 158 lbs were caught in the northern nearshore area through September 30 from June 23 through August 30 leaving 4,303 lbs remaining in the subarea quota.

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon). This sport fishery subarea was allocated 18,762 lb, consisting of 2.0 percent of the first 130,845 lb allocated to the Washington sport fishery, 4.0 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb and 224,110 lb (minus the pounds needed for the incidental sablefish fishery), and 5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation or an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation, whichever is greater. The fishery was to open May 1 and continue 7 days per week until 13,133 lb is estimated to have been taken or until July 20, whichever is earlier. The fishery was to reopen on August 1 and continue 3 days per week (Friday through Sunday) until the entire subarea quota has been taken or September 30, whichever is earlier. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- This 7 day per week fishery began on May 1 and closed on June 1 with a total catch of 15,005 lb.
- Catch during the early season resulted in 3,757 lbs remaining for the late season, due to the smaller quota the fishery reopened for 2 days, August 1 and 2 when 1,671 lb were estimated to have been taken.
- With 2,086 lb remaining in the quota, this fishery reopened for 3 days on August 22, 23 and 29 resulting in a catch of 1,043 lb, 864 lbs of the quota were leftover after accounting for 179 lbs of illegal recreational catch.

Oregon Central Coast Subarea (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain). This sport fishery subarea was allocated 231,271 lb (92% of the Oregon/California sport allocation less any amount needed to contribute to the Oregon portion of the Columbia River subarea quota).

Three seasons were set for this subarea: 1) a restricted depth (inside 40-fm) fishery to commence on May 1 and continue 7 days a week until October 31 or until the nearshore sub-quota of 18,502 lb were estimated to have been taken; 2) a fixed Spring season in all depths that was to open on May 8, 9, 10, May 15, 16, 17, May 22, 23, 24, May 29, 30, 31, and June 12, 13, 14 with a catch allocation of 159,577 lb (the Spring season was to reopen for additional days if quota remains), and; 3) a Summer season in all depths that was to open on August 1, 2, and 3, and which was to continue on as many weekends as possible until the total Spring-Summer quotas of 212,769 lb have been taken or until October 26, whichever is earlier. Additional fishing days may be opened if a certain amount of quota remained after August 3 and September 2, and/or an increase in the bag limit may be considered after September 2. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person, unless otherwise specified.

- The inside 40-fathom fishery opened May 1 and is estimated to have taken 11,610 lb through September 28, 2008.
- The fixed Spring all-depth season in May-July, was held on May 8-10, 15-17, 22-23, 29-31, June 12-14, 26-28, July 10-12 and 24-26, and had a total catch of 119,656 lb. The remaining Spring quota of 39,921 lb was added to the pounds available to the Summer all-depth fishery.
- The initial Summer all-depth season quota of 53,192 lb was revised due to the 39,921 lb remaining from the Spring fishery. As a result, 93,113 lb was initially available to the Summer all-depth fishery. The Summer all-depth fishery opened on August 1-3 (Friday-Sunday). On August 7, NMFS, ODFW, and IPHC conferred inseason and took action to provide more fishing opportunity for the Summer all-depth fishery. The agencies agreed that because the remaining quota for the combined all-depth and inside 40-fm fishery was 71,961 lb (i.e., greater than 60,000 lb after August 5, as stated in the CSP and regulations), beginning August 8, the Summer all-depth fishery opened every Friday-Sunday. On September 2, NMFS, ODFW and IPHC conferred inseason and took action to increase the daily bag limit to 2 fish. The agencies agreed that increasing the bag limit was warranted with the intent that the quota for the subarea be taken by September 30 as specified in the CSP. The fishery was open under a 2 fish daily bag limit on September 13, 14, 20, 21 and open under a 1 fish daily bag limit on September 27. This fishery closed on September 27 due to attainment of the quota. Through September 27 this fishery is estimated to have taken 93,619 lb, 506 lb over the quota.

South of Humbug Mountain, Oregon and off the California Coast Subarea This sport fishery was allocated 7,541 lb (3.0% of the Oregon/California quota). This area had a pre-set season of 7 days per week from May 1 to October 31 and a daily bag limit of one halibut of any size per person.

- This season is scheduled to remain open through October 31. No catch estimates are available for this fishery, but it is unlikely that this subarea quota will be taken.

TRIBAL FISHERIES

A sub-TAC of 427,000 lb (35% of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 30,000 lb would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 397,000 lb were allocated to the commercial fishery. The 2008 management plan was essentially identical to the management plan that the tribes have had in place since 2004. This plan divides the fisheries into “separately managed” fisheries and “joint restricted” fisheries.

For the separately managed fisheries, a tribe or group of tribes was allocated a certain percentage of the TAC that could be harvested any time between noon on March 8 and noon on July 30. Collectively, the separately managed fisheries were allocated 75% of the Tribal Commercial TAC. The fishery closed on June 3, as the separately managed fishery expected catch was attained. The separately managed fisheries landed 326,133 lbs in 385 landings (out of 297,750 lbs expected).

The remaining 25% of the TAC was open to all parties in the “joint restricted” fishery. The joint restricted fishery opened at noon March 17 with a 500-lb/vessel/day limit and closed by mutual agreement on April 15 due to an achievement in total catch in the fishery. In order to try to achieve a 40-day opportunity, the Lummi, Nooksack, Suquamish and Swinomish tribes closed their restricted fisheries on March 27. The restricted fishery was closed by all parties on May 3. The joint restricted fishery had a total catch of 100,746 lbs in 356 landings (out of 99,250 lbs expected).

| Fishery | Dates Held | Pounds Landed | # of Landings |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Separately Managed | March 8 - June 3 | 326,133 lb | 385 landings |
| Restricted, 200-500 lb/vessel/day | March 17 – April 15 | 100,746 lb | 356 landings |
| Total | | 426,879 lb | 741 landings |

The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and tribal estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2009.

| 2008 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds) | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | Quota | Inseason Revised Quota | Catch | Over (+)/Under (-) |
| TRIBAL INDIAN | 427,000 | | 456,879 | 7% |
| Commercial | 397,000 | | 426,879 | 7.5% |
| Ceremonial & Subsistence | 30,000 | | 30,000 | -- |
| NON-TRIBAL | 793,000 | | 656,096 | -17.3% |
| COMMERCIAL | 321,381 | | 258,521 ♠ | -19.5% |
| Troll | 37,707 | | 21,349 ♠ | -43.3% |
| Directed | 213,674 | | 219,819 ♠ | 2.8% |
| Sablefish Incidental | 70,000 | | 24,254 ♠ | -65.3% |
| SPORT | 471,619 | | 397,575 ♠ | -15.7% |
| WA Sport | 220,238 | | 156,943 ♠ | -28.7% |
| OR/CA Sport | 251,381 | | 240,631 | -4.3% |
| WA Inside Waters | 59,354 | | -- ♠ | -- |
| WA North Coast | 109,991 | | 106,852 ♠ | -2.8% |
| <i>May season</i> | 79,194 | | 71,811 ♠ | -9.3% |
| <i>June season</i> | 30,798 | 38,181 ♣ | 35,041 ♠ | -8.2% |
| WA South Coast | 44,700 | | 40,398 | -9.6% |
| Col River Area | 18,762 | | 17,899 ♦ | -4.6% |
| <i>Early season</i> | 13,133 | | 15,005 | +14.25% |
| <i>Late season</i> | 5,629 | 3,757 ■ | 2,894 | -22.9% |
| OR Central Coast | 231,271 | | 224,885 ♠ | -2.7% |
| <i>Inside 40 fathoms</i> | 18,502 | | 11,610 ♠ | -37.2% |
| <i>Spring (May-July)</i> | 159,577 | | 119,656 | -25.01% |
| <i>Summer (August-October)</i> | 53,192 | 93,113 ★ | 93,619 | +0.5% |
| OR S. of Humbug/CA | 7,541 | | 7,541 * | -- |
| TOTAL | 1,220,000 | | 1,112,975 | -8.77% |

* Assumed.

♣ Washington's North Coast May season fishery had 7,383 lb remaining after it was closed which was transferred to the June season, increasing the June quota to 38,181 lb.

■ The Columbia River Early season exceeded the quota by 1,972 lb which was deducted from the Late season, decreasing the Late season quota to 3,757 lb.

★ Oregon's Central Coast spring all-depth fishery had 39,921 lb remaining. This amount was transferred to the summer all-depth fishery, increasing that quota to 93,113 lb.

♠ Data from these fisheries not complete at the time of the briefing book deadline. Updates will be provided at the Council meeting, if available.

♦ Columbia River catch= 9,693 lb from WA + 8,205 lb from OR.