

## FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER EXCERPT

### **Proposed Changes to 2010 Annual Regulations**

At its September 2009 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 2009 meeting in Costa Mesa, California. Comments on the proposals should be received by October 14, 2009, and can be emailed to [pfmc.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov), faxed (503-820-2299), or mailed to the Council office (7700 NE Ambassador Place, Ste 101, Portland, Oregon, 97220-1384). Comments will also be taken at the Council meeting in Costa Mesa. Additional detail on the substance and rationale for the following proposals 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)

Proposals include:

#### **Washington South Coast Sub-area**

- Continue the Sunday, Tuesday primary season structure through the third week in May. For the fourth week in May, the primary fishery will be open on Sunday only. Beginning the following week, the fishery would resume the Sunday, Tuesday structure until the primary season quota is attained.

Revising the days open per week would balance the harvest opportunity between those who like to fish on weekends and those who like to fish weekdays. Having the fourth week open only on Sunday would allow WDFW to tally the catch and provide sufficient notice of a reopener the following week, if quota is available.

- Specify that the season will be open in the nearshore area seven days per week.

Increasing the number of days that the nearshore fishery is open during the primary season and after the offshore quota is reached would allow better access to the set aside quota and reduce the amount of incidentally caught halibut that would otherwise be discarded.

- Revise the nearshore area to align the northern and western boundaries with the line approximating the 30-fm depth restriction.

Currently, the nearshore boundary and the 30-fm line overlap. Aligning the nearshore boundary with the 30-fm line would promote ease of compliance and enforcement. There don't appear to be target areas for halibut within the revised boundaries, so this area would remain an incidental retention opportunity for halibut.

- On days that the primary halibut season is open, allow the retention of lingcod seaward of the 30-fm line.

The 30-fm restriction is in place primarily for the protection of yelloweye rockfish; however, during days that the primary halibut season is open, anglers are required to discard lingcod caught while targeting halibut offshore without encountering yelloweye rockfish. Those same anglers then moved shoreward of 30 fms only to catch smaller lingcod or no lingcod at all. WDFW accounts for incidental yelloweye catches associated with the halibut fishery under current management and this change is not expected to increase yelloweye harvest above current estimates. In any event, WDFW will monitor Washington's yelloweye harvest, and will take inseason action as appropriate to ensure our harvest target is not exceeded.

### **Oregon Central Coast Subarea**

- Adjust the number of open days per week in the summer all-depth fishery from three to two days.

In 2009 the harvest during the August 7-9 three day all-depth opening exceeded the remaining sub-area quota, requiring closure of both the all-depth fishery and the inside 40-fathom fishery. Reducing the summer all-depth fishery from three to two day openers is intended to extend the duration of the all-depth fishery and help prevent the same situation from occurring in 2010.