

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES
TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2010 FISHERY

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) solicited public comment on the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) approved proposals for changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for sport fisheries off Oregon in 2010. ODFW published a news release on October 1, 2009 asking the public to provide comments by October 12, 2009 via phone, e-mail or fax.

Proposed Changes to the CSP:

Columbia River Subarea – *No proposed changes*

Central Coast Subarea – *adjust the summer all-depth fishery from three days per week to two*

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

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.

Of the 26 comments received by ODFW, 36% preferred a status quo fishery, while 64% preferred a 2-day per week fishery. If the season were to be adjusted to a 2-day per week fishery, 45% preferred Friday and Saturday while 55% preferred a Saturday and Sunday opening.

South of Humbug Subarea—*no proposed changes*

ODFW proposed changes to the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP)

If the Council chose to adjust the Central Oregon all-depth summer fishery to 2 days per week, and *if* those 2 days were Saturday and Sunday, the proposed changes to the CSP are below, shown in bold and are underlined.

(v) Oregon central coast subarea.

This subarea extends from Cape Falcon (45°46.00' N. lat.) to Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42°40.50' N. lat.) and is allocated 92.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation minus any amount of pounds needed to contribute to the Oregon portion of the Columbia River subarea quota. The structuring objectives for this subarea are to provide two periods of fishing opportunity in Spring and in Summer in productive deeper water areas along the coast, principally for charter boat and larger private boat anglers, and provide a period of fishing

opportunity in the summer for nearshore waters for small boat anglers. Any poundage remaining unharvested in the Spring all-depth subquota will be added to the Summer all-depth sub-quota. Any poundage that is not needed to extend the inside 40-fathom (73 m) fishery through October 31 will be added to the Summer all-depth season if it can be used, and any poundage remaining unharvested from the Summer all-depth fishery will be added to the inside 40-fathom (73 m) fishery subquota, if it can be used. If inseason it is determined via joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS and ODFW, that the combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) fisheries will not harvest the entire quota to the subarea, quota may be transferred inseason to another subarea south of Leadbetter Point, WA by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, unless otherwise specified, with no size limit. During days open to all-depth halibut fishing, no groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except sablefish and Pacific cod when allowed by groundfish regulations, if halibut are on board the vessel.

Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within the Stonewall Bank YRCA. The Stonewall Bank YRCA is an area off central Oregon, near Stonewall Bank, and is defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for the Stonewall Bank YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.390 and will be specifically defined annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

ODFW will sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to develop recommendations to NMFS on the open dates for each season each year. The three seasons for this subarea are as follows.

A. The first season opens on May 1, only in waters inside the 40-fathom (73 m) curve, and continues daily until the subquota (8 percent of the subarea quota) is taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier. Any overage in the all-depth fisheries would not affect achievement of allocation set aside for the inside 40-fathom (73 m) curve fishery.

B. The second season is an all-depth fishery with two potential openings and is allocated 69 percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates will be established preseason for the first Spring opening and will not be modified inseason except if the combined Oregon all-depth Spring and Summer season total quotas are estimated to be achieved. Recent year catch rates will be used as a guideline for estimating the catch rate for the Spring fishery each year. The number of fixed season days established will be based on the projected catch per day with the intent of not exceeding the subarea subquota for this season. The first opening will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday) if the season is for 4 or fewer fishing days. The fishery will be structured for 3 days per week (Thursday through Saturday) if the season is for 5 or more fishing days. The fixed season dates will occur in consecutive weeks starting the second Thursday in May (if the season is 5 or more fishing days) or second Friday in May (if the season is 4 or fewer fishing days), with possible exceptions to avoid adverse tidal conditions. If, following the “fixed” dates, quota for this season remains unharvested, a second opening will be held. If it is determined appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS and ODFW, fishing may be allowed on one or more additional days. Notice of the opening(s) will be announced by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. The fishery will be

open every week on Thursday through Saturday except that week(s) may be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open Thursdays through Saturdays will be identified preseason. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing or July 31, whichever is earlier. C. The last season is an all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August and is allocated 23 percent of the subarea quota. The fishery will be structured to be open every other week on **Friday Saturday and through** Sunday except that week(s) may be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen for another fishing day or October 31, whichever is earlier. The potential open **Friday Saturday and through** Sunday will be identified preseason. If after the first scheduled open period, the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) quotas) is 60,000 lb (27.2 mt) or more, the fishery will re-open on every **Friday Saturday and through** Sunday (versus every other **Friday Saturday and through** Sunday), if determined to be appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW. The inseason action will be announced by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. If after the Labor Day weekend, the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) quotas) is 30,000 lb (13.6 mt) or more and the fishery is not already open every **Friday Saturday and through** Sunday, the fishery will re-open on every **Friday Saturday and through** Sunday (versus every other **Friday Saturday and through** Sunday), if determined to be appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW. After the Labor Day weekend, the IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW will consult to determine whether increasing the Oregon Central Coast bag limit to two fish is warranted with the intent that the quota for the subarea is taken by September 30. If the quota is not taken by September 30, the season will remain open, maintaining the bag limit in effect at that time, through October 31 or quota attainment, whichever is earlier. The inseason action will be announced by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.