

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED  
CHANGES TO CATCH SHARING PLAN  
AND 2010 ANNUAL REGULATIONS

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) held a recreational halibut meeting to discuss proposed changes to the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Catch Sharing Plan for 2010, in Montesano, on October 21, 2009.

Based on the public input we received, we would recommend the following changes to the 2010 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A, section (f) SPORT FISHERIES. These changes are consistent with those adopted by the Council for public review in September with one addition noted in italics.

**Washington South Coast Sub-area**

For this area, implement the following changes:

- a) 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.
- b) Specify that the season will be open in the nearshore area seven days per week.
- c) Revise the nearshore area to align the northern and western boundaries with the line approximating the 30-fm depth restriction.
- d) On days that the primary halibut season is open, allow the retention of lingcod seaward of the 30-fm line. *Specify that once a boat has reached its limit of halibut, anglers onboard cannot fish for or retain any fish seaward of the 30-fm line.*

**Rationale:**

- a) Revising the days open per week balances 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 allows us to tally the catch and provide sufficient notice of a reopener the following week, if quota is available.
- b) Increasing the number of days that the nearshore fishery is open during the primary season and after the offshore quota is reached will allow better access to the set aside quota and reduce the amount of incidentally caught halibut that would otherwise be discarded.

- c) Currently, the nearshore boundary and the 30-fm line overlap (see Figure 1). Aligning the nearshore boundary with the 30-fm line (Figure 2) would promote ease of compliance and enforcement. In talking with charter operators who fish in the nearshore area targeting bottomfish, there are no “targetable” areas for halibut within the revised area, so this would remain an incidental retention opportunity.
- d) 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 have been forced 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.

The additional language was proposed at the September meeting by members of the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel and vetted through WDFW enforcement. Essentially, through state regulations, WDFW will specify that once a boat has reached its limit of halibut, anglers onboard the boat must cease fishing until the boat is shoreward of the 30-fm line. This will allow anglers to retain lingcod caught incidentally while targeting halibut, but will help ensure that anglers do not target lingcod once they have caught their halibut.

Figure 1. Current configuration.

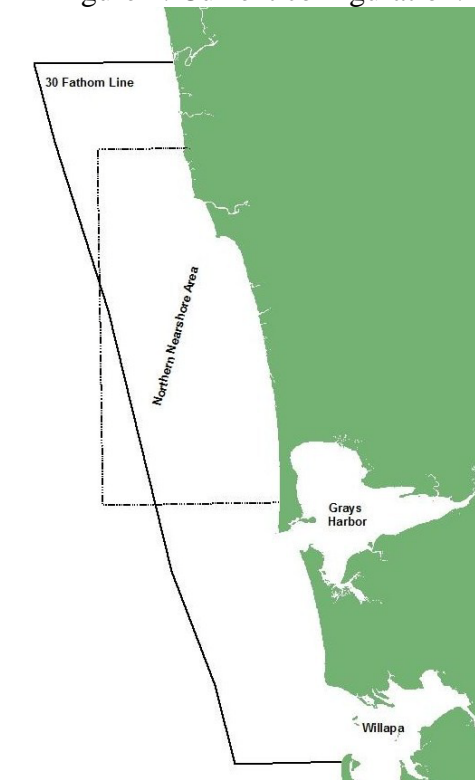


Figure 2. Proposed configuration.

