

## HALIBUT

### Changes to Catch Sharing Plan

Each September, the Council considers proposed changes to the halibut regulations in order to adjust regulations for the Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan. The Council may also make changes in catch allocation among areas or gear groups.

Both Washington's and Oregon's Departments of Fish and Wildlife held public meetings in August to solicit proposed changes to the Catch Sharing Plan. Recommendations resulting from the meetings were presented for review at the September Council meeting. The Council adopted for public review the following proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and 2012 regulations:

### Washington South Coast Sub-Area Alternatives

#### *Revise the primary season opening date*

1. Status Quo: The fishery will open the first Sunday in May 1 and continue two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday until the fourth week in May, when the primary fishery will be open on Sunday only. Beginning the following week, the fishery would continue two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday, until the quota for the primary fishery season is reached or September 30, whichever is earlier.
2. The fishery will open on May 1 (regardless of the day of the week) and continue two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday.
3. The fishery would open on the first Sunday in May and remain open for three consecutive Sundays and Tuesdays before the management closure. Following the management closure, if there is sufficient quota the fishery would re-open.

#### *Revise the amount of nearshore set aside.*

1. Status Quo: The south coast subarea quota will be allocated as follows: 10% or 2,000 pounds, whichever is less, will be set aside for the nearshore fishery with the remaining amount allocated to the primary fishery.
2. The south coast sub-area quota will be allocated as follows: 10% or 4,000 pounds, whichever is less, for the nearshore fishery with the remaining amount allocated to the primary fishery.

### Columbia River Sub-Area

#### *Revise the amount of late season set aside.*

1. Status quo: The Columbia River sub-area will be allocated as follows: 30 percent of the sub-area allocation will be set aside for a late season fishery with 70 percent allocated to the early fishery.
2. The Columbia River sub-area will be allocated as follows: 20 percent of the sub-area allocation will be set aside for a late season fishery with 80 percent allocated to the early fishery.
3. The late season set aside will be 20 percent or 3,000 pounds of the sub-area allocation, whichever is less, with the remaining amount allocated to the early fishery.

### ***Revise the Early Season opening date and the days of the week opening date.***

1. Status Quo: The early season fishery will open on the first Thursday in May or May 1 if it is a Friday or Saturday, 3 days per week, Thursday through Saturday. The late season fishery will open on the first Friday in August and continue three days per week, Friday-Sunday.
2. The early season fishery will be open four days per week Wednesday through Saturday. The late season will continue to be open three days per week, Friday through Saturday.

### ***Revise the contribution to the subarea allocation from the Oregon/California sport allocation.***

1. Status Quo: This subarea is also allocated 5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation or an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation, whichever is greater.
2. This subarea is allocated from the Oregon/California sport allocation an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation.

### **Oregon Central Coast Sub-area**

#### ***Revise Season Allocation Alternatives***

1. Status quo: Nearshore = 8%; spring all-depth = 67%; summer all-depth = 25%
2. Increase the nearshore quota
  - a. Nearshore = 12%; spring all-depth = 63%; summer all-depth = 25%
  - b. Nearshore = 15%; spring all-depth = 60%; summer all-depth = 25%
3. Allow flexibility in inseason shifts of quota between the all-depth fisheries and the nearshore fishery

#### ***Revise Nearshore season structure alternatives***

1. Status quo (no action)—opens May 1, seven days per week until the earlier of quota attained or October 31
2. Open something less than seven days per week:
  - a. Three days per week (Thursday-Saturday)
  - b. Three days per week (Friday-Sunday)
  - c. Three days per week until July 4, if enough quota remains then open seven days per week
  - d. Five days per week, including at least one weekend day.

#### ***South of Humbug Mt. Subarea Alternatives***

1. Status quo (no action)—opens May 1, seven days per week until October 31
2. Opens May 1 through the earlier of October 31 or projected attainment of the subarea catch limit.
3. Fixed seasons established preseason based on allocation and expected catch per day, starting no earlier than May 1 and ending no later than October 31.

ODFW will host public hearings to receive public comment on proposed changes. Dates and locations for the meetings are:

- Astoria—Monday, Sept. 26, 2011 at 7 pm at the Holiday Inn Express, 204 West Marine Drive
- Newport--Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 7 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Express (south of the bridge), 135 SE 32nd.
- Brookings—Wednesday, Sept. 28 at 7 p.m., at the Best Western Beach Front Inn, 16008 Boat Basin Drive.
- Coos Bay—Thursday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m. at the Red Lion Hotel, 1313 N Bayshore Drive, Coos Bay

In addition, ODFW has set up two web-based survey tools to get angler input on several proposals for the 2012 halibut fisheries:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2011/september/092611b.asp>

WDFW will host a public hearing to receive public comment on proposed changes in Montesano on Friday, September 30, 2011 at 9 a.m. at the WDFW Region 6 office, 48 Devonshire Rd.

The Council will also accept public comment on the proposed changes. Comments can be submitted to:

Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384  
Fax: 503-820-2299  
Email: [pfmc.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov)

The Council will take final action on the proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for 2012 at its November 2011 meeting in Costa Mesa, California. Comments received at the Council office prior to October 13, along with summaries of the public hearings hosted by WDFW and ODFW, will be included in the briefing materials for the November Council meeting.

### **Estimated Pacific Halibut Bycatch for the 2012 Groundfish Fisheries**

The Council considered ways to estimate Pacific halibut bycatch in groundfish fisheries, and considered possible changes to halibut allocation for bycatch and catch sharing in groundfish fisheries.

NMFS briefed the Council on bycatch estimates for Pacific halibut in Council-area groundfish trawl and fixed gear fisheries in 2010. This report included information from the groundfish observer program. NMFS will provide this information to the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) for use in conducting the Pacific halibut stock assessment.

The Council also discussed groundfish trawl bycatch of Pacific halibut that the IPHC would use to establish the 2012 halibut total allowable catch. After affirming the ten percent carry-over provision of Pacific halibut individual bycatch quota in groundfish trawl fisheries, the Council

will recommend IPHC use 130,000 pounds as the estimated bycatch mortality of Pacific halibut in Area 2A groundfish trawl fisheries when determining Area 2A total allowable catch in 2012.