

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) requires that fishers apply for licenses in advance of participating in commercial halibut fisheries in area 2A. This year, IPHC added a provision that fishers also indicate on their license application whether they intended to fish north of Point Chehalis, Washington during the primary sablefish fishery and retain incidental halibut as provided for in the Council's halibut catch sharing plan. The deadline for IPHC licenses has passed and the results of the applications are contained in the table below.

Halibut Quota Pounds	47,946			
Dressed Sablefish/Tier	35,444	16,111	9,206	60,761
		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
				Total
IPHC Licenses Sablefish Pounds	354,440	193,331	322,218	869,989
Halibut Allowance Pounds	27,969	12,713	7,265	47,946
Pounds Halibut per 1,000 Pounds Sablefish				55
Pounds Halibut/Tier	1,949	886	506	
IPHC Licenses (WA only) Sablefish Pounds	177,220	144,998	128,887	451,105
Halibut Allowance pounds	27,969	12,713	7,265	47,946
Pounds Halibut per 1,000 Pounds Sablefish				106
Lbs Halibut/Tier	3,757	1,708	976	

This information can be used to calculate a ratio of pounds of incidental halibut to anticipated catch of sablefish. If we are to assume that all fishers who indicated on their IPHC license an intent to participate in the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis do indeed take all their sablefish in that area, then the ratio of halibut to sablefish would be 55 pounds of halibut per every 1,000 pounds of dressed sablefish. Since there is no cost or penalty associated with indicating an intent to retain incidental halibut north of Point Chehalis on the IPHC license, it is possible some fishers may have obtained the license merely to keep their options open. The above table also presents the anticipated sablefish catch for only Washington fishers obtaining an IPHC license to provide some insight into what might be expected in a traditional primary sablefish fishery; however, the extended period of the season this year will provide fishers with more opportunity to fish further from their home port.

The range between using either source of license information varies from 55 pounds to 106 pounds of halibut per 1,000 pounds of dressed sablefish. Additionally, the table shows for both license groups the amount of halibut that could be retained, by tier, if vessels were to land all of the incidental halibut their sablefish tier would allow.

Another issue that could possibly affect estimates of anticipated incidental halibut is the provision for permit stacking. For example, if a vessel licensed to land halibut north of Point Chehalis were to stack a permit from a vessel which was not licensed, the catch of the latter vessel would not be included in the above calculations.

In setting an appropriate ratio of halibut to sablefish, we are attempting to meet three goals: achieving the halibut allocation; avoid exceeding that allocation; and implementing a ratio that will result in the fishery

occurring at a pace that would allow us to monitor the catch and close the incidental halibut fishery with adequate notification to the fleet.

The State of Washington proposes the following landing restrictions for incidentally caught halibut in the 2001 primary limited entry longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington:

Properly licensed vessels may return and land 80 pounds (round weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (round weight) of sablefish landed and up to two additional halibut in excess of the 80 pounds per 1,000 pound ratio per landing. Each properly licensed vessel is restricted to a season cumulative landing limit of :

Tier 1: 2,850 pounds (round weight) of halibut

Tier 2: 1,300 pounds (round weight) of halibut

Tier 3: 750 pounds (round weight) of halibut

PFMC
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