

**RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH
SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2002 OREGON RECREATIONAL FISHERY**

At their September 2001 meeting, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council adopted three issues for public review that could change the way the Oregon recreational fishery for Pacific halibut is conducted in 2002. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife conducted public meetings in North Bend, Newport, and Tillamook. In addition, a web survey was utilized to gather public opinion. The results of the survey and meetings were presented to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission at their October 19, 2001 meeting. A description of the proposal, summary of public comment, and Oregon recommendation are presented below for each issue.

1. Possession Limit

Proposal

Increase the possession limit on land to two daily bags, but only one daily bag may be possessed on the vessel. This would allow the angler to transport up to two fish on land.

Public Comment

Widespread support was expressed for increasing the possession limit on land to two daily bags.

Recommendation

Oregon recommends increasing the possession limit on land to two daily bags, but only one daily bag may be possessed on the vessel.

2. Management of the Cape Falcon, Oregon to Leadbetter Point, Washington sub-area fishery.

Proposal

Either open the Cape Falcon, Oregon to Leadbetter Point, Washington fishery annually on June 15 or split the quota for this sub-area into two quotas, one for Washington and one for Oregon.

For 2001, the fishery opened May 1 and closed June 14. The short season was due to charter boats out of Ilwaco, Washington targeting halibut. Oregon contributed over forty percent of the sub-area quota, while Washington contributed the remaining portion. Yet landings into Oregon were estimated to have been slightly more than ten percent of the total landings for this sub-area.

Public Comment

The June 15 opening date was not supported by the public. Although a separate Oregon quota was supported on the web survey, it was not supported at the public meetings. At the public meetings it was learned that additional charter operators from Oregon plan to participate in the 2002 directed halibut fishery.

Recommendation

Oregon recommends status quo management of a May 1 opener and not establishing separate quotas for Oregon and Washington at this time. Oregon will further evaluate this issue after sampling the fishery in 2002.

3. Management of the central Oregon sub-area fishery.

Proposal

Reallocate the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain all-depth quota by allocating fifty to sixty-five percent of the all-depth quota to the May fishery for vessels that hold International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) licenses. The remaining thirty-five to fifty percent of the all-depth quota would be allocated to private vessel owners who do not have IPHC licenses. This fishery would occur in August when the weather is generally more favorable for smaller vessels. IPHC license holders will not be allowed to fish in the August all-depth fishery.

Because the IPHC only licenses charter vessels, this proposal would shift allocation from the private boat fishery to the charter boat fishery, as anglers fishing off private vessels are presently landing 60% of the quota. The advantage to private boat anglers is that their fishery would occur later in the season when weather conditions are generally more favorable.

Public Comment

Public input from both private and charter boat anglers slightly favored status quo management. Concern was expressed at the public meetings over the precedent of fracturing the recreational fishery.

Recommendation

Oregon recommends status quo management of not setting separate fisheries for charter versus private boat anglers.