

COUNCIL NEWS BRIEF EXCERPT

Proposed Changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan

At its September meeting, the Council moved to collect public comment on five proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for 2002 addressing **recreational** fisheries:

- 1) Separate the Puget Sound sub-area into two regions and provide different season dates for the two regions. Halibut in Puget Sound migrate from the eastern Sound to the western Sound and Straits of Juan de Fuca in April. The current opening date in May precludes access to halibut by East Sound anglers. By dividing the Puget Sound sub-area into an east and west region and providing an earlier opening date for the East Sound region, East Sound anglers would have increased opportunity to harvest a portion of the sub-area allocation.
- 2) Change the Oregon on-land possession limit from one halibut to two halibut. This would be consistent with possession limits for most other species in Oregon and with the Pacific halibut possession limit in Washington.
- 3) Change the opening date from May 1 to June 15 for the Cape Falcon to Leadbetter Point sub-area. The delay is intended to shift the character of the fishery from a target halibut fishery to an incidental take associated with the salmon fishery. The shift would also increase the proportion of landings in Oregon ports, which only received 10% of the landings in 2001.
- 1) Reallocate the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain sub-area all-depth quota by allocating 50% to 65% of the all-depth quota in May for charter vessels with International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) licenses and 35% to 50% in August for privately owned vessels without IPHC licenses. Because the IPHC only licenses charter vessels, this proposal is intended to shift allocation from the private boat fishery to the charter boat fishery as anglers fishing off private vessels are presently landing over 50% of the quota. The advantage to private boat anglers is their fishery would occur later in the season when weather conditions are generally more favorable.
- 5) Divide the Cape Falcon to Leadbetter Point sub-area quota into separate Washington and Oregon sub-quotas. The intent is to distribute landings more equitably between ports in the two states, based on contributions to the quota. In 2001, Oregon contributed over 40% of the poundage to the sub-area quota, but only accounted for about 10% of the landings.

Written comments on the proposed changes received at the Council office by October 23, 2001 will be included in the materials distributed to the Council for consideration at the November Council meeting. **Comments received by October 12** will be mailed to Council members prior to the meeting. After October 23 it is the submitter's responsibility to provide Council staff with an adequate number of copies to assure coverage of the Council (a minimum of 40 copies). Each copy must include the Agenda Item Topic Number in the upper right hand corner of the front page. The Council will adopt final recommendations to the IPHC for changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan at that meeting.