

**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
SUMMARY OF GROUND FISH PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife attended and sponsored a series of public meetings to solicit input from and share information with stakeholders primarily regarding inseason groundfish management measures, proposed management measures and exempted fisheries (EFPs) for 2003, and the status of yelloweye rockfish.

Date	Location	Attendees	Discussion Topics
Aug 6	Port of Ilwaco meeting	~ 30 fishing interests (5 comm/25 rec)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Council process • Groundfish fisheries mgmt • Status of yelloweye rockfish
Aug 15	Forks City Council meeting	~ 20 rec fishing interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Council process • Groundfish fisheries mgmt • Status of yelloweye rockfish
Aug 16	WDFW - Olympia	3 comm/4 rec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundfish fisheries mgmt • Proposed mgmt options for 03 • Status of yelloweye rockfish
Aug 21	WDFW - Olympia	~ 20 comm fishing interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFP proposals for 2003 • Status of yelloweye rockfish/STAR Panel mtg results • Proposed mgmt options for 03
Aug 23	WDFW - Montesano	4 comm fishing interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed pollock EFP for 2003 • Inseason mgmt measures • Proposed mgmt options for 03
Sept 5	WDFW - Olympia	5 comm/5 rec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of Allocation Committee mtg • Proposed mgmt options for 03 • WDFW EFP proposals for 03 • Proposed changes to Halibut Catch Sharing Plan

Discussion Summary

One of the key issues of concern among recreational fishers was the status of yelloweye rockfish and its potential impact upon the halibut fishery and other recreational groundfish opportunities. WDFW staff provided information on the status of yelloweye rockfish, the results of the new stock assessment, and efforts to collect additional data from the yelloweye taken in the International Pacific Halibut Commission setline survey and through a submersible survey off the Washington coast. Recreational fishing interests provided WDFW staff with information regarding areas where halibut fishing could be allowed with minimal yelloweye catch in the event that such areas would be needed as a management tool. They also proposed extending the current Yelloweye Conservation Area for recreational groundfish and halibut fisheries.

Discussion with commercial fishers focused primarily upon the optimum yields and harvest guidelines for 2003 and the depth-based management measures being proposed to achieve them. We received comments on the latitude and longitude waypoints which would be used to implement the depth closures, and how those closures would affect various fishing opportunities for both trawl and fixed gear fisheries. We also engaged in considerable discussion with both trawl and line gear fishers concerning possible EFPs that could be conducted in 2003.

Our final meeting with commercial and recreational fishers on September 5 focused primarily on identifying preferred management measures for 2003, based on the results of the Allocation Committee meeting and the new stock assessment for yelloweye rockfish.