

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
PREFERRED GROUND FISH OPTIONS FOR 2003

Recreational Fisheries

Bottomfish

A recreational groundfish bag limit of 15 groundfish, including rockfish and lingcod, open year-round (except lingcod). The following sublimits apply: 10 aggregate rockfish which includes a sublimit of 2 canary and no retention of yelloweye rockfish; 2 lingcod with 24-inch minimum size limit, lingcod season open Mar 16-Oct 15.

Halibut

Will propose changes to Halibut Catch Sharing plan to be approved for public review, including:

- Allow recreational halibut fishing inside "hotspot" in North Coast subarea
- Modify closed Yelloweye Conservation Area ("L" shaped area)
- Allow flexibility to open North Coast subarea on a date between May 1-15

Close recreational halibut fishery outside of a line approximating 25 fathoms–latitude/longitude waypoints to be defined–by subarea, if the yelloweye rockfish catch projected for that subarea is approached or exceeded.

Salmon

WDFW is not recommending any changes to the Washington recreational salmon fishery relative to groundfish management.

Commercial Fisheries

Commercial Groundfish (LE & OA)

- Implement depth closures for the trawl fishery seasonally to protect canary rockfish.
- Close fixed gear fishery inside a line approximating 100 fathoms to provide protection for yelloweye.
- Allow midwater trawl fishery for yellowtail and widow rockfish subject to time/area restrictions.
- Allow midwater trawl fishery for whiting subject to time/area restrictions.

Halibut Retention in Sablefish Fishery North of Pt. Chehalis

Allow halibut retention in sablefish fishery North of Pt. Chehalis, subject to a landing ratio. Fixed gear sablefish fishery would be closed inside a line approximating 100 fms to protect yelloweye rockfish.

Halibut South of Pt. Chehalis

Close directed halibut fishery in the area inside 100 fathoms.

Pink Shrimp Fishery

Require excluders in the pink shrimp fishery.

Salmon Troll

Gear modifications (e.g., prohibit placement of any hook within 4 fathoms (24') of the weight used on each mainline deployed).