

## **OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE PROPOSALS FOR MODIFYING THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2002 OREGON FISHERY**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) proposes three changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for the 2003 fishery.

1. Flexible inseason management provision

The ODFW proposes increased flexibility to move recreational fishery quota between subareas. During 2002 it appears that the catch limit for the central Oregon area will not be entirely taken. At the same time the subarea off the Columbia River area, which closed May 25, could have used additional poundage to access their remaining poundage of over fourteen hundred pounds. Yet, there is no flexibility within the Catch Sharing Plan to move poundage between sub-areas south of Cape Falcon. This flexibility is only provided for the area north of Cape Falcon.

Another example of the need for flexibility to move poundage between subareas has occurred during the spring all-depth fishery between the north central and south central subareas off Oregon. These fisheries are managed under the fixed day approach. On occasion, during the preseason process to set the number of fixed days, the projected quota for one sub-area is slightly insufficient to allow the same number of fixed days as the other subarea. At the same time the second subarea appears to have excess poundage. These subareas are combined for the summer fishery with the overall objective of equal number of total season days for both subareas. The reason the overall central coast area is split into two subareas during the spring fishery is due to more adverse ocean and bar crossing conditions in the south central subarea. Often the north central subarea is able to fish on a given fixed spring day, while the south central area is not due to adverse weather and/or bar conditions.

Proposal: If either the Columbia River or central Oregon coast sport fishery subareas are not projected to utilize their respective quotas by the season ending date, NMFS may take inseason action to transfer any projected unused quota from one subarea to the other. Additionally before the Spring fishery, NMFS may transfer quota between the north central and south central Oregon sport fishery subareas to meet the objective of setting equal number of fixed fishing days for the spring fishery.

2. Extend the recreational fishery season south of Cape Falcon

The ODFW proposes extending the duration of the south of Cape Falcon recreational season to the end of October. During 2002 it appears that the catch limit for the central Oregon area will not be entirely taken. If the fishery ending date had been October 31, it would allow opening additional days to take the available poundage remaining after the May through September fishery.

Proposal: Extend the recreational fishery season for all subareas south of Cape Falcon, both the all-depth and 30-fathom fishery, through October 31.

3. Change the wording in the catch sharing plan for the Oregon north central and south central subareas from May to Spring and August to Summer and define the spring and summer fishery periods.

The ODFW proposes to better define the spring and summer fisheries off central Oregon. The catch sharing plan refers to May and August for fisheries that often extend over more than one month.

Proposal: Change the wording in the catch sharing plan for the Oregon north central and south central subareas from May to Spring and from August to Summer. Furthermore, define the Spring season to cover the May through July period and Summer season to cover the period August through October period (or through September if proposal 2 is not adopted).