

**NMFS UPDATE ON 2003 PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) held its annual meeting January 21-24, 2003, in Victoria, British Columbia. At that meeting, the IPHC set an Area 2A (waters off Washington, Oregon, and California) total allowable catch (TAC) of 1,310,000 lb, which is the same as the 2002 TAC for Area 2A. On February 6, 2003 (68 FR 6103), NMFS published a proposed rule to implement the 2003 TAC and the Council's recommended changes to the Catch Sharing Plan (Exhibit F.1, Attachment 2). In November 2002, the Council recommended: allocating catch in the North Washington Coast subarea such that 72% of the allocation for that sub-area is available to a May fishery and 28% to a late June fishery; allowing more flexible inseason management for both Oregon and Washington sport halibut fisheries; prohibiting recreational fishing within the Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation area; and prohibiting directed non-treaty halibut fishing within the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area. NMFS expects that rule to be finalized by March 1, 2003, the start of the Area 2A treaty tribes commercial fisheries and the commercial fisheries off Canada and Alaska.

<b>Area 2A TAC Comparison, 2002 &amp; 2003 (in pounds)</b>		
	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Treaty Tribes	483,500	483,500
Commercial	467,500	456,500
Ceremonial & Subsistence	16,000	27,000
Non-Treaty	826,500	826,500
Commercial	350,389	332,000
Salmon Troll Incidental	39,300	39,300
Directed	222,700	222,700
Sablefish Incidental	88,389	70,000
Recreational	476,110	494,500
WA Sport	214,110	232,499
OR/CA Sport	262,000	262,000
WA Inside Waters	57,393	63,278
WA North Coast	108,030	113,915
WA South Coast	42,739	48,623
Columbia River	11,188	11,923
OR Central, Inside 30 ftm	19,797	19,797
OR North Central (May)	156,835	156,835
OR South Central (May)	14,609	14,609
OR Central, August	57,660	57,660
South of Humbug Mt.	7,860	7,860
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,310,000</b>	<b>1,310,000</b>