

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2005 FISHERY

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) held three public meetings in October 2004 to discuss proposed changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for the 2005 Oregon recreational fishery approved by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC). The meetings occurred in Astoria, Newport and North Bend. Based on the meeting comments, and other public input, the ODFW recommendations are presented below for each issue.

Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. All-Depth Recreational Fishery

Spring Fishery (May-July)

1. Add Thursdays to all openings during the Spring fishery

Presently the fishery opens as a Thursday-Saturday fishery during the "fixed dates" and then reopens every other week as a Friday-Saturday fishery until the quota is taken (with exceptions to avoid adverse low tidal conditions). Adding a third day (Thursday) to scheduled openers (Friday-Saturday) will lessen the likelihood that poor weather and ocean conditions would prevent fishing opportunity during scheduled open periods. This proposal was widely supported at all meetings.

Summer Fishery (August-October)

2. Add Sundays to all openings during the Summer fishery

Adding a third day to scheduled openers (Friday-Sunday) will lessen the likelihood that poor weather and ocean conditions would prevent fishing opportunity during scheduled open periods. Presently the fishery open periods are Friday-Saturday. This proposal was widely supported at all meetings.

3. Do not add a second halibut to the daily bag limit

Meeting participants indicated concern that a one-fish bag limit during the Spring fishery and a two-fish bag limit during the Summer fishery would result in a substantial effort shift from the Spring fishery to the Summer fishery.

4. Adopt an automatic inseason action process to add more angler opportunity to harvest entire season sub-area quota

Meetings participants at both the Newport and North Bend meetings, both located in the affected area, widely supported the following actions:

- a) If after the first scheduled open period of the Summer fishery (the first period starts the first Friday in August) the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom quotas) is 60,000 pounds or more, the fishery automatically re-opens

on every Friday-Sunday (versus every other weekend). Any excess quota projected to remain after the needs of the inside 40-fathom fishery (scheduled May-October) are met would be transferred into the remaining all-depth quota. This assumes a 2-fish bag limit is not adopted for the Summer fishery.

b) If after the third scheduled open period of the Summer fishery (the third period starts Friday of Labor Day weekend) the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom quotas) is 30,000 pounds or more, the fishery automatically re-opens on every Friday-Sunday. Under this provision, the bag limit would be 2 fish with no minimum length. Any excess quota projected to remain after the needs of the inside 40-fathom fishery (scheduled May-October) are met would be transferred into the remaining all-depth quota.

Actions under 4a and 4b will be announced by the National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.

Spring Fishery (May-July) and Summer Fishery (August-October)

5. Adopt a “yelloweye rockfish conservation” closure area located on Stonewall Banks

Support for the adoption of the Stonewall Banks “yelloweye rockfish conservation” area were mixed at both the Astoria and Newport meetings and supported at the North Bend meeting.

The incidental catch of yelloweye rockfish in the all-depth halibut fishery was a concern in 2004 and higher than expected pre-season. Much of the impact is reported to have occurred in the area designated at Stonewall Banks, encompassing the “high spots” (such as shown on the attached map). Stonewall Banks is an area approximately 15 miles offshore of Newport and is a popular halibut area for private boat anglers with small to mid-size boats.

This designated area would be closed to halibut fishing on all-depth halibut days to reduce impacts on species of concern, especially yelloweye and canary rockfishes, while allowing access to productive halibut areas around Stonewall Banks. The yelloweye rockfish conservation area is defined by the following coordinates in the order listed:

W. Longitude	N. Latitude
1. -124.41536485300	44.62426583040
2. -124.39379068200	44.62426583040
3. -124.36332320644	44.47853525271
4. -124.40169956970	44.47853525271
5. -124.42456903100	44.52374533330

Leadbetter Pt., Washington to Cape Falcon, OR Sub-Area Recreational Fishery

6. Split the subarea quota at the Washington/Oregon border and Increase allocation to the Oregon side of the Columbia River sub-area

This proposal was supported by participants at both the Astoria and Newport meetings, and not supported at the North Bend meeting.

The Columbia River sub-area quota would be split at the Oregon/Washington border. Halibut landed into each state’s ports will be attributed to that state’s quota. When a state’s quota was attained, halibut landings will be prohibited into that state’s ports. The allocation to the Oregon ports quota will increase from 2 percent to 4 percent of the total Oregon/California recreational allocation. This will reduce the quota in the Central Oregon sub-area from 95 to 93 percent. The

purpose of the increase is to provide additional opportunity to anglers on the Oregon side of the Columbia River sub-area.

Sub-areas south of Leadbetter Pt., Washington

7. No minimum length requirement

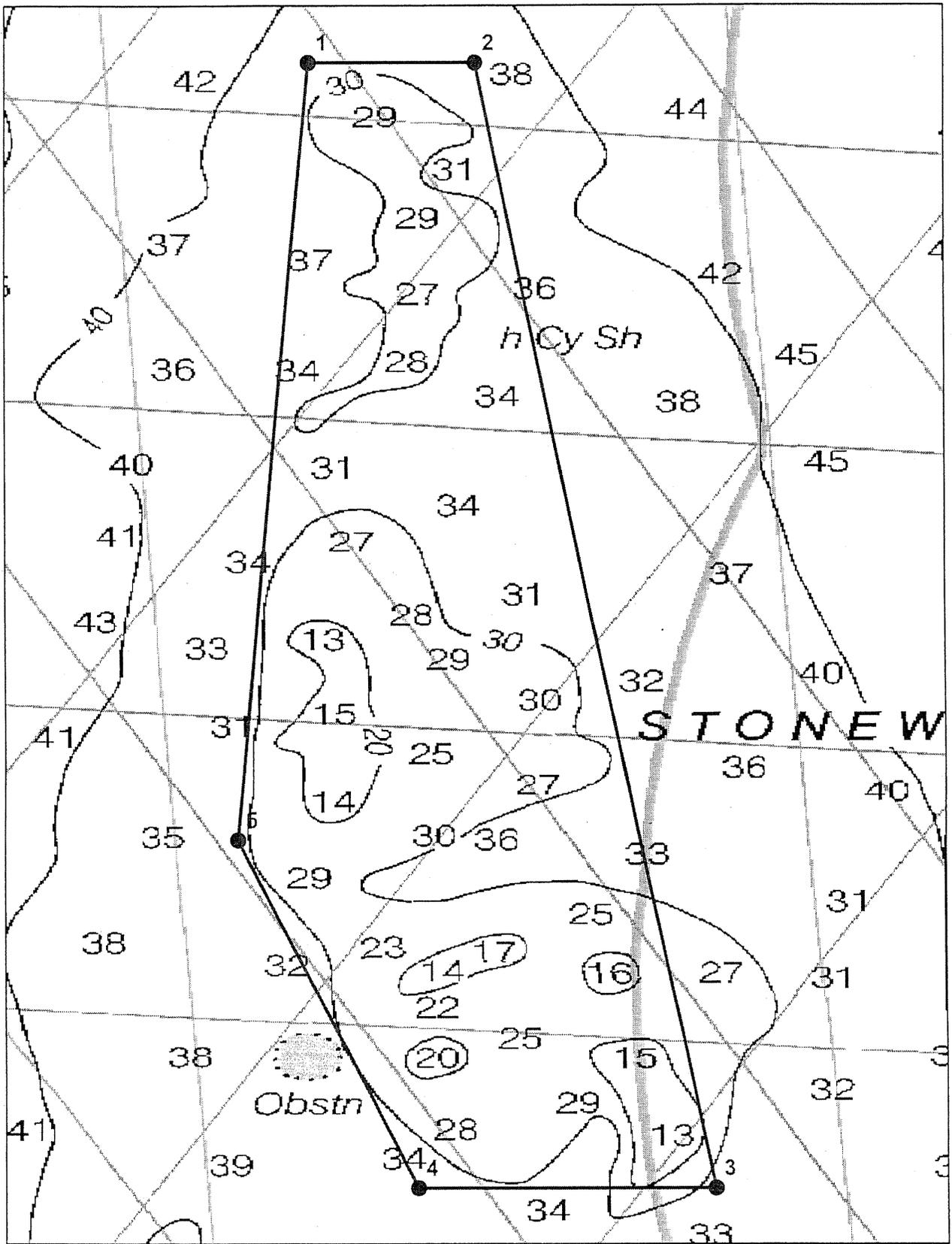
Meeting participants from south of Cape Falcon recommended retaining the status quo minimum length requirement, while participants north of Cape Falcon preferred requiring no minimum length. Eliminating the minimum length requirement should reduce the number of halibut released and time on the water thus reducing bycatch of groundfish species.

8. No groundfish retention except sablefish allowed during the all-depth fishery if halibut are on-board the vessel except south of Humbug Mt.

There was mixed support for this proposal at the public meetings. Requiring non-retention of groundfish species during the all-depth Pacific halibut fishery would discourage targeting of overfished species and other species with harvest limitations (e.g., black rockfish). Sablefish are taken incidentally while targeting halibut. Eliminating groundfish retention, other than sablefish, would also allow dockside enforcement during June through September when groundfish is closed outside of 40-fathoms. Allowing sablefish retention during the July through September period would require an inseason change to the groundfish regulations.

9. Simplify inseason actions to transfer unused quota between subareas

This issue reflects a technical change to implement a previously adopted procedure. Add the following language to the CSP in the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. subarea section (f)(v): If inseason it is determined that the combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom fisheries will not harvest the entire annual allocation to the subarea, quota may be transferred inseason to another subarea south of Leadbetter Point by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. Under this proposal filing of a federal register notice will not be required. This proposal results from a failed attempt in mid-September 2004 to transfer quota to the Columbia River subarea to reopen the sport fishery inseason when it was determined that the entire allocation to the Oregon central coast subarea would not be harvested before the scheduled fishery closure. NMFS determined that the language in the CSP under Flexible inseason management provisions (f)(5)(i)(D) was not sufficient, without additional language under the (f)(v) Oregon central coast subarea section, to transfer quota without first filing under the federal register process. At that time there was not sufficient time to file prior to the scheduled closing date of the Columbia River subarea fishery.



2005 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR SOUTH OF LEADBETTER POINT

(iv) Columbia River subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 2.0 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 4 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea also is allocated ~~2.0~~ 4.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation. This subarea is defined as waters south of Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38'10" N. lat.) and north of Cape Falcon, OR (45°46'00" N. lat.). *Halibut landed into each state's ports will be attributed to that state's quota. When a state's quota is attained, halibut landings will be prohibited into that state's ports.* The fishery will open on May 1, and continue 7 days per week until ~~the subquota~~ *each state's quota* is estimated to have been taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier. Subsequent to this a closure in either state, if there is insufficient quota remaining in the Columbia River subarea for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington and/or Oregon subarea by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. *Any remaining state's quota would be transferred to that state. The Washington proportion as set preseason would be transferred to another Washington subarea, and the Oregon proportion as set preseason would be transferred to another Oregon subarea.* The daily bag limit is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in one halibut with no minimum length.

(v) Oregon central coast subarea.

This subarea extends from Cape Falcon (45°46'00" N. lat.) to Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42°40'30" N. lat.) and is allocated ~~95.0~~ 93.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation. The structuring objectives for this subarea are to provide two periods of fishing opportunity in Spring and in Summer in productive deeper water areas along the coast, principally for charterboat and larger private boat anglers, and provide a period of fishing opportunity in the summer for nearshore waters for small boat anglers. Fixed season dates will be established preseason for the Spring opening and will not be modified inseason except that the Spring opening may be modified inseason if the combined Oregon all-depth Spring and Summer season total quotas are estimated to be achieved. Recent year catch rates will be used as a guideline for estimating the catch rate for the Spring fishery each year. The number of fixed season days established will be based on the projected catch per day with the intent of not exceeding the subarea season quota. ODFW will monitor landings and provide a post-season estimate of catch within one week of the end of the fixed season. If sufficient catch remains for an additional day of fishing after the Spring season, openings will be provided if possible in May - July. Potential open dates for both the Spring (May - July) and Summer (August - October) seasons will be announced preseason. If a decision is made inseason to allow fishing on one or more additional days, notice of the opening will be announced on the NMFS hotline (206) 526-6667 or (800) 662-9825. No all-depth halibut fishing will be allowed

on the additional dates unless the opening date has been announced on the NMFS hotline. Any poundage remaining unharvested in the Spring all-depth subquota will be added to the Summer all-depth sub-quota. Any poundage that is not needed to extend the inside 40-fathom fishery through to October 31 will be added to the Summer all-depth season if it can be used, and any poundage remaining unharvested from the Summer all-depth fishery will be added to the inside 40-fathom fishery subquota *if it can be used*. The daily bag limit for all seasons is ~~the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in one halibut with no minimum length~~. ODFW will sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to develop recommendations to NMFS on the open dates for each season each year. The three seasons for this subarea are as follows.

A. The first season opens on May 1, only in waters inside the 40-fathom (73 m) curve, and continues daily until the subquota (8 percent of the subarea quota) is taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier. Poundage that is estimated to be above the amount needed to keep this season open through October 31 will be transferred to the Summer all-depth fishery if it can be used. Any overage in the all-depth fisheries would not affect achievement of allocation set aside for the inside 40-fathom curve fishery. *No groundfish retention except sablefish allowed if halibut are on-board the vessel during days open to all-depth fishing.*

B. The second season is an all-depth fishery with two potential openings. The first opening begins on the second Thursday in May (if the season is 5 or more fishing days) or the second Friday in May (if the season is 4 or fewer fishing days) and is allocated 69 percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates for the first opening will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota for this season. The first opening will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday) if the season is for 4 or fewer fishing days. The fishery will be structured for 3 days per week (Thursday through Saturday) if the season is for 5 or more fishing days. The fixed season dates will be established preseason and will occur in consecutive weeks starting the second Thursday in May (if the season is 5 or more fishing days) or second Friday in May (if the season is 4 or fewer fishing days), with exceptions to avoid adverse tidal conditions. If, following the "fixed" dates, quota for this season remains unharvested, a second opening will be held. The fishery will be open every other week on ~~Friday and Thursday~~ *through Saturday* except that week(s) could be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open ~~Fridays and Thursdays~~ *through Saturdays* will be identified preseason. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing or July 31, whichever occurs first. Any remaining quota will be added to the Summer quota. No inseason adjustments will be made to the established fixed season unless the combined Oregon all-depth Spring and Summer season total subquotas are estimated to be achieved. *No groundfish retention allowed except sablefish if halibut are on-board the vessel. A yelloweye rockfish conservation area that is closed to recreational halibut fishing is defined by the following coordinates in the order listed:*

	<i>W. Longitude</i>	<i>N. Latitude</i>
1.	-124.41536485300	44.62426583040
2.	-124.39379068200	44.62426583040
3.	-124.36332320644	44.47853525271
4.	-124.40169956970	44.47853525271
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C. The last season is an all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August and is allocated 23 percent of the subarea quota. The fishery will be structured to be open every other week on Friday ~~and Saturday~~ *through Sunday* except that week(s) could be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open Fridays ~~and Saturdays~~ *through Sundays* will be identified preseason. *If after the first scheduled open period the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom quotas) is 60,000 pounds or more, the fishery automatically re-opens on every Friday-Sunday (versus every other weekend). Any excess quota projected to remain after the needs of the inside 40-fathom fishery (scheduled May-October) are met would be transferred into the remaining all-depth quota. The inseason action will be announced by the National Marine Fishery Service via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. If after the third scheduled open period the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom quotas) is 30,000 pounds or more, the fishery automatically re-opens on every Friday-Sunday. Under this provision, the bag limit would be 2 fish no minimum length. Any excess quota projected to remain after the needs of the inside 40-fathom fishery (scheduled May-October) are met would be transferred into the remaining all-depth quota. The inseason action will be announced by the National Marine Fishery Service via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.* The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing or October 31, whichever occurs first. Any remaining quota will be transferred to the fishery inside the 40-fathom (73 m) curve *if needed. If inseason it is determined that the combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom fisheries will not harvest the entire annual allocation to the subarea, quota may be transferred inseason to another subarea south of Leadbetter Point by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. No groundfish retention allowed except sablefish if halibut are on-board the vessel. A yelloweye rockfish conservation area that is closed to recreational halibut fishing is defined by the following coordinates in the order listed:*

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(vi) South of Humbug Mountain subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 3.0 percent of the Oregon/California subquota, which is approximately 0.62 percent of the Area 2A TAC. This area is defined as the area south of Humbug Mountain, OR (42°40'30" N. lat.), including California waters. The structuring objective for this subarea is to provide anglers the opportunity to fish in a continuous, fixed season that is open from May 1 through October 31. The daily bag limit is ~~the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater~~ *is one fish with no minimum length*. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, a fixed season will be established preseason by NMFS based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota; no inseason adjustments will be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made post season.