

Mr. John DeVore
Groundfish Staff Officer
Pacific Fisheries Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Mr. DeVore:

I am writing on behalf of myself, friends and acquaintances that are concerned with the current rule regarding the retention of groundfish, except sablefish, with a halibut onboard during those days open to all-depth Pacific halibut fishing. We feel that this rule is too restrictive for small <40 fathom boaters with incidental catches of halibut.

I have lived on the Oregon Coast for 43 years and since that time I have sport fished on my own small boat predominantly out of Garibaldi and Astoria. I love to fish for rock fish and occasionally catch a halibut within the 40 fathom curve.

I do support the work of the council and other groups and individuals that seek to provide a strong fishery. Restricting all harvesting of certain species and limiting catches for others will help assure this. On the other hand, I feel I must speak out against what I see as a too heavy handed and law enforcement oriented approach that chips away at my already low odds of catching that occasional inside 40 fathom halibut.

I do not agree that for three days out of the week the inability of the <40 fathom sport fisherman to retain a halibut along with his lingcod and black sea bass is likely to occur until the end of October. These days are probably the most accessible fishing days to the recreational boater.

We understand that we now have the ability to catch and retain these inshore halibut but we most always have a lingcod and some black sea bass on board already. We purchase and support the halibut tag system but are now obliged to toss this prize catch back or face the moral dilemma of choosing.

I do not ask to abolish what others have worked hard to do but rather alter the rule to keep the incidental halibut catch a viable opportunity for the inshore fisherman throughout the season.

If the goal is to reduce catch of ground fish when returning from >40 fathom halibut areas, then just restrict those boats with more than one or two halibut on board from taking other ground fish. The largest impact comes from the charter and larger sport boats with more than one or two persons aboard.

In closing, I recommend the council makes changes to the halibut/ground fish

retention rule for the 2006 season in order to allow the retention of at least one halibut onboard along with the other ground fish during the all-depth halibut season.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Gary Baker
6315 Seattle Street
Bay City, Oregon

Subject: Halibut/groundfish retention rules
From: "SMITH Clint J" <CSMITH@ODF.STATE.OR.US>
Date: Wed, 31 Aug 2005 06:47:51 -0700
To: <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>
CC: "Langer's" <ahabshse@oregoncoast.com>, "BAKER, Gary" <GBAKER@ODF.STATE.OR.US>

Dear Mr. Tracy,

Steve Langer shared the attached letter with me, and I am writing to express my concurrence and support for the concept expressed in the letter.

I am a wildlife biologist with the Oregon Department of Forestry. I personally and professionally support the wise use and conservation of all our natural resources. Our concern with this issue is that small craft owners are being penalized on the all-depth halibut retention days. With an increasing number of all-depth openings, this penalty is increasing to a level that causes us concern. The chances of catching a near-shore halibut in the Tillamook area are relatively low. Frequently this occurs while targeting other bottomfish. The number of halibut caught by near shore anglers usually is very low, usually <1 per year.

We would appreciate consideration of a rule modification that would allow retention of groundfish while retaining a single incidental halibut per boat in the near-shore fishery. Boats targeting offshore halibut would not be affected by this rule, because they almost always retain more than 1 halibut per boat per trip.

Thank you for considering this proposal.

Clint Smith
6800 Alderbrook Rd.
Tillamook, OR
97141
503-842-3507