

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED
CHANGES TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN
FOR THE 2006 FISHERY**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) held three public meetings to discuss proposed changes to the 2006 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for fisheries off Oregon. The meetings occurred on October 17, 18, and 19 in Salem, Newport and Brookings, respectively. The ODFW also met with their Sport Advisory Committee on October 20 to discuss the results of the public meetings and solicit their recommendations. Based on the comments from these meetings, and other public input, the ODFW recommends the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) approve the following proposed changes to the CSP for the 2006 fishery.

Recommended Changes

Central Coast Subarea (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt.)

2nd fish in daily bag limit

After the Labor Day weekend the IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW will consult to determine whether increasing the daily bag limit in the central Oregon coast subarea is warranted with the goal of harvesting the entire season quota by September 30. If the quota is not attained by September 30, the season will remain open, maintaining the bag limit in effect at that time, through October 31 or quota attainment, whichever occurs first.

Rationale – The 2nd fish in the daily bag limit after Labor Day weekend is intended to help assure the entire catch limit is harvested, which has not occurred in recent years.

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Pt. to Cape Falcon)

Allocation and split season structuring

Increase the allocation to this subarea to 5.0% of the Oregon/California sport allocation. Provide for the possibility of a split season, with the primary (early) season having the traditional structure, and the secondary (late) season(s) (if any) managed under separate quotas in the Washington and Oregon portions of the subarea.

Description – The initial allocation for this subarea is 2.0 percent of the first 130,845 lbs (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 4.0 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lbs (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lbs (101.7 mt) (except for that provided to the fixed gear sablefish fishery), and 5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation. The primary season is allocated the full amount of the Washington contribution and, from the Oregon-California sport allocation, the number of pounds equal to the Washington contribution. The primary season would open May 1 and continue 7 days per week until the allocation for the primary season has been taken, or July 20, whichever is earlier. The secondary season(s) (if any) will reopen the first Friday in August, by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.

The secondary seasons will be managed under separate quotas for Oregon ports and Washington ports. The Oregon ports in the area from Cape Falcon north to the Washington/Oregon border would be allocated 50 percent of the remaining allocation from the primary season, plus the difference between the Oregon contribution to the primary season and 5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation, plus any additional quota transferred from other Oregon subareas. The Oregon ports north of Cape Falcon will remain open three days per week (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) until the Oregon secondary season allocation has been taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier. The Washington ports between the Oregon/Washington border and Leadbetter Point, WA would be allocated the remaining 50 percent of the primary season allocation, plus any additional quota transferred from other Washington subareas. The Washington ports south of Leadbetter Point would remain open three days per week (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) until the Washington secondary season allocation has been taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier. Subsequent to the closure of a secondary season, if there was insufficient quota remaining for another fishing day, then any remaining quota could be transferred inseason to another Washington and/or Oregon subarea by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. Any remaining quota would be transferred to each state in proportion to its contribution.

Rationale – To provide additional opportunity in the Columbia River subarea and maintaining benefits proportional to the respective states' quota contribution to the subarea quota.

Oregon Statewide

Increase the possession limit on land in Oregon from two daily limits to three daily limits.

Rationale: Allowing a possession limit on land of three daily limits allows the angler to fish all three open days during all-depth weeks in the central coast subarea and legally transport the fish on land.

Proposals not Supported

Central Coast Subarea consecutive week fisheries and all-depth allocation change

The proposals to structure all open periods on consecutive weeks and change the allocation between the Spring and Summer all-depth fisheries is not recommended. Public reaction was mixed on these issues. Several participants commented that they liked the way the 2005 fishery progressed providing opportunity from May through October and would not make these changes at this time. Some proposed the alternative of not closing weeks during low tide series, which is optional in the existing CSP.

Groundfish retention on directed Pacific halibut trips

Both the public and ODFW are concerned over the incidence of both yelloweye rockfish and canary rockfish bycatch on halibut directed trips. Considering the limited available bycatch impacts of these two species to the recreational fishery the ODFW recommends continuing the prohibition to groundfish retention, except sablefish, in Pacific halibut fishery north of Humbug Mt.