

## REPORT ON THE 2005 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A

The 2005 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 1,330,000 lb set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as sub-TACs as follows:

Treaty Tribes	490,500 lb (35.0% + 25,000 lb)
Non-Tribal Total	839,500 lb (65.0% - 25,000 lb)
Non-Tribal Commercial	336,122 lb (includes incidental sablefish)
Washington Sport	237,257 lb
Oregon/California Sport	266,122 lb

The structure of each fishery and the resulting harvests are described below.

### **NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**

A sub-TAC of 266,122 lb (31.7% of the non-tribal share) was allocated to two fishery components: 1) a directed longline fishery targeting on halibut south of Point Chehalis, WA; and 2) an incidental catch fishery during the salmon troll fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California. An additional 70,000 lb was allocated to an incidental catch fishery for limited entry, sablefish-endorsed vessels operating with longline gear north of Pt. Chehalis, WA. This allowance for the tiered sablefish fishery is only available in years when the overall Area 2A TAC exceeds 900,000 lb.

**Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery** A quota of 39,918 lb (15% of the non-Indian commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the salmon troll fishery in Area 2A as an incidental catch during chinook fisheries. According to the Catch Sharing Plan, the primary management objective for this fishery is to harvest the troll quota as an incidental catch during the May/June salmon troll fishery. If any of the allocation for this fishery remains after June 30, the fishery may continue to retain incidentally caught halibut in the July through September salmon troll fisheries until the quota is taken, or until the overall non-tribal commercial catch limit is taken. The final catch ratio established preseason by the Council at the April meeting was one halibut (minimum 32") per three chinook landed by a salmon troller, except that one halibut could be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut could be landed per trip.

- Halibut retention was permitted in the salmon troll fisheries from May 1 through August 7, 2005. Of the halibut taken in the salmon troll fisheries, 9,759 lb were landed in Oregon and 32,351 lb were landed in Washington for a total of 42,110 lb (5.4% over quota.)
- **Directed fishery targeting on halibut** A quota of 226,203 lb (85% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the directed longline fishery targeting on halibut in southern Washington, Oregon, and California. The fishery was confined to the area south of Subarea 2A-1 (south of Point Chehalis, WA; 46° 53'18" N. lat.). One-day fishing periods of 10 hours in duration were scheduled by the IPHC for June 29, July 13,

July 27, August 10, August 24, September 14, and September 28. A 32" minimum size limit was in effect for all openings. Vessel landing limits per fishing period based on vessel length were imposed by IPHC during all openings as shown in the following table. Vessels choosing to operate in this fishery could not land halibut in the incidental catch salmon troll fishery, nor operate in the recreational fishery.

**Fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-off in pounds) by vessel size.**

Vessel Class/Size	6/29/05 Opening	7/13/05 Opening	7/27/05 Opening	8/10/05 Opening
A 0 - 25 ft.	755 lb	755 lb	670 lb	325 lb
B 26 - 30 ft.	945 lb	945 lb	840 lb	420 lb
C 31 - 35 ft.	1,510 lb	1,510 lb	1,345 lb	670 lb
D 36 - 40 ft.	4,165 lb	4,165 lb	3,705 lb	1,850 lb
E 41 - 45 ft.	4,480 lb	4,480 lb	3,985 lb	1,990 lb
F 46 - 50 ft.	5,365 lb	5,365 lb	4,770 lb	2,385 lb
G 51 - 55 ft.	5,985 lb	5,985 lb	5,320 lb	2,660 lb
H 56+ ft.	9,000 lb	9,000 lb	8,000 lb	4,000 lb

- The June 29 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 90,000 lb, leaving 136,203 lb for later openings.
- The July 13 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 68,000 lb, leaving 68,203 lb for later openings.
- The July 27 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 38,000 lb, leaving 30,203 lb for later openings.
- The August 10 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 40,000 lb, exceeding the quota by 9,797 lb.

**Incidental halibut catch in the primary sablefish longline fishery north of Point Chehalis**

A quota of 70,000 lb was allocated to the limited entry primary sablefish fishery in Area 2A as an incidental catch during longline sablefish operations north of Point Chehalis, WA. The primary sablefish season began on April 1, 2005, and closes October 31, 2005, although incidental halibut retention was not available until May 1. Properly licensed vessels could retain

up to 100 lb of dressed weight (headed-and gutted) halibut per 1,000 lb of dressed weight sablefish, plus up to two additional halibut per fishing trip. Each vessel was allowed to retain up to a total cumulative limit of halibut that was based on the amount of primary season sablefish available to that vessel when the vessel applied for a 2005 IPHC license. Incidental halibut landings in the primary sablefish fishery through October 7, 2005 were 67,500 lb.

**SPORT FISHERIES (Non-tribal).**

A sub-TAC of 503,379 lb (68.3% of non-tribal share) was allocated between sport fisheries in the Washington area (48.5%) and Oregon/California (51.5%). The allocations were further subdivided as quotas among seven geographic subareas as described below.

**Washington Inside Waters Subarea** (Puget Sound and Straits of Juan de Fuca). This area was allocated 64,800 lb (27.2% of the Washington sport allocation). Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, a fixed season was established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achieve the sub-quota. The Eastern Region (East of Low Point) opened on April 14 and continued through June 20, 5 days per week (closed Tuesday and Wednesday). The Western Region opened on May 26 and continued through July 31, 5 days per week. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person. Landings data from this fishery are not yet available.

**Northern Washington Coastal Waters Subarea** (landings in Neah Bay and La Push). The coastal area off Cape Flattery to Queets River was allocated 115,437 lb (49.0% of the Washington sport allocation). The fishery was divided into two seasons with 32,322 lb set aside for the second season. The fishery was to open May 10 and continue 5 days per week (closed Sunday and Monday) until 83,115 lb were estimated to have been taken. The second season was to open in the week of June 16 and continue 5 days per week (closed Sunday and Monday) until the entire quota for this subarea was estimated to be taken. The Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area is located within this subarea, southwest of Cape Flattery, and was closed to halibut fishing. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- The fishery opened May 10 and continued 5 days a week, until May 18, when 76,967 lb were estimated to have been taken. The remaining quota for the May season, 6,148 lb, was not enough to continue the 5 day per week fishery; this remaining quota was transferred to the June season.
- The season re-opened on Thursday June 16<sup>th</sup> and Saturday June 18<sup>th</sup>, during which 31,182 lb were taken, for a season total of 108,149 lb, leaving approximately 7,288 lb in the subarea quota.

**Washington South Coast Subarea** (landings in Westport). The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 50,146 lb (21% of the Washington sport allocation). The fishery was to open on May 1 and continue 5 days per week (closed Friday and Saturday) offshore, until the quota was taken. An inshore fishery was also to open May 1 and continue 7 days per week in waters between the Queets River and 47° 00'00" N. lat., and east of 124° 40'00" W. long. through the closure of the offshore fishery until either the subarea quota were estimated to have

been taken, or until September 30, whichever occurred first. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- The 5 day per week offshore fishery and the 7 day per week inshore fishery opened on May 1<sup>st</sup> and remained open until May 30<sup>th</sup>. The total catch for this subarea was 54,549 lb, exceeding the quota by 4,403 lb (8.8% overage.)
- NMFS, WDFW, and IPHC met to discuss an inseason transfer of quota between Washington's coastal sub-areas. It was decided that a portion of the remaining Washington recreational quota (from the north coast) could be used to accommodate incidental catches of halibut in the northern nearshore area of the south coast on Fridays and Saturdays, when bottomfish fishing is open, and salmon is closed. This action was taken inseason, effective July 15.
- Effective August 5, WDFW took inseason action to close its sport bottomfish and halibut fisheries seaward of 30 fm to reduce the bycatch rate of canary rockfish. As such, the northern nearshore area in the south coast was also closed seaward of a line approximating the 30-fm depth contour.
- Through September 30<sup>th</sup>, an additional 1,000 lb of halibut were landed from the northern nearshore area. The fishery closed on September 30<sup>th</sup>, in accordance with the Catch Sharing Plan.

**Columbia River Subarea** (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon). This sport fishery subarea was allocated 13,747 lb, consisting of 2.7% of the Washington sport allocation plus an equivalent weight of halibut from the Oregon/California sport allocation. The fishery was to open May 1 and continue 7 days per week until September 30 or until the quota has been taken. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- This 7 day per week fishery began on May 1<sup>st</sup> and closed on June 12<sup>th</sup> with a total catch of 14,521 lb (5.6% over initial quota).
- Washington subsequently transferred 400 lb from to this subarea and Oregon subsequently transferred 6,000 lb to this subarea. The fishery reopened September 15-30, closing with a total catch of 15,031 lb.

**Oregon Central Coast Subarea** (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain). This sport fishery subarea was allocated 251,264 lb (95% of the Oregon/California sport allocation less the amount needed to set Oregon's contribution to the Columbia River Area equal to Washington's contribution, by weight).

Three seasons were set for this subarea: 1) a restricted depth (inside 40 fathoms) fishery to commence on May 1 and continue every day until the nearshore sub-quota of 20,101 lb were estimated to have been taken; 2) a fixed Spring season in all depths that was to open on May 12-14, 19-21, and 27-29, and June 2-4, and 9-11 with a catch allocation of 173,372 lb, and; 3) a Summer season in all depths that began on August 5-7 and which was to continue on as many weekends as possible until the total Spring-Summer quotas of 231,163 lb have been taken or until October 31, whichever is earlier. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per

person.

- The inside 40-fathom fishery opened on May 1 and is scheduled to close October 31. As of August 7<sup>th</sup>, 4,701 lb of halibut had been taken in the inside 40-fathom fishery.
- The first fixed all-depth season in May-June, held May 12-14, 19-21, and 27-29, and June 2-4, and 9-11, had a total catch of 132,605 lb, which left enough halibut in the quota to allow openings on June 30-July 2, July 14-16, and July 28-30. During these nine additional all-depth fishery days, an additional 32,364 lb were taken, leaving 8,133 lb in the Spring quota. This remaining poundage was made available to the Summer all-depth fishery.
- The initial Summer all-depth season quota of 57,791 lb was supplemented by the 8,133 lb remaining from the Spring fishery. As a result of this additional poundage, 65,924 lb was initially available to the Summer all-depth fishery. The Summer all-depth fishery opened on August 5-7 (Friday-Sunday). Following that opening's catch of 10,121 lb, NMFS, ODFW, and IPHC conferred inseason and took action to provide more fishing opportunity in this sub-area. The agencies agreed to transfer 10,000 lb from the nearshore fishery's quota, leaving 65,803 lb for the remainder of the all-depth Summer season. Beginning August 12<sup>th</sup>, the fishery has been open every Friday-Sunday with a one-fish bag limit.
- On September 12<sup>th</sup>, NMFS, ODFW, and IPHC conferred on whether there would be enough quota to both keep the Central Coast subarea open and move halibut quota into the Columbia River subarea for a second season in that subarea. At that time an additional 45,742 pounds had been harvested, leaving 20,061 pounds remaining in the quota. The agencies agreed to transfer 6,000 lb to the Columbia River subarea, leaving 14,061 lb of halibut quota for the remainder of the all-depth Summer season. Through October 9, 5,675 lb remain in this subarea's quota. The season continues until the earliest of quota attainment or October 31, whichever occurs first.

**South of Humbug Mountain, Oregon and off the California Coast Subarea** This sport fishery was allocated 7,984 lb (3.0% of the Oregon/California quota). This area had a pre-set season of 7 days per week from May 1 to October 31 and a daily bag limit of one halibut of any size per person.

- This season is scheduled to remain open through October 31. No catch estimates are available for this fishery, but it is unlikely that this subarea quota will be taken.

### **TRIBAL FISHERIES**

A sub-TAC of 490,500 lb (35% + 25,000 lb of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to Tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 38,000 lb would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 452,500 lb was allocated to the commercial fishery. The

2005 management plan was essentially identical to the new management plan that the tribes had agreed to for their 2004 fisheries. This plan divides the fisheries into “separately managed” fisheries and “joint restricted” fisheries.

For the separately managed fisheries, a tribe or group of tribes was allocated a certain percentage of the TAC that could be harvested any time between noon on February 27 and noon on July 30. Collectively, the separately managed fisheries accounted for 75% of the Tribal Commercial TAC. The separately managed fisheries landed 343,238 lbs in 462 landings (out of 339,375 lbs expected).

The remaining 25% of the TAC was open to all parties in the “joint restricted” fishery that was managed to last at least 40 days. The joint restricted fishery opened at noon March 21 with a 500-lb/vessel/day limit. Due to lower than expected effort, the fishery was extended after the scheduled closure on April 30<sup>th</sup> at noon. The first extension was from noon May 4<sup>th</sup> to midnight May 24<sup>th</sup>. A second extension to harvest the remaining available poundage lasted from noon May 31<sup>st</sup> to noon June 6<sup>th</sup>. The joint restricted fishery landed 109,474 lb in 434 landings (out of 113,125 lb expected). The total commercial catch in 2005 was 452,712 lb – an overage of 212 lb for the Tribal Commercial TAC.

Fishery	Dates Held	Pounds Landed	# of Landings
Separately Managed	February 27 - July 30	343,238 lb	462 landings
Restricted, 250-500 lb/vessel/day	March 21 – June 6	109,474 lb	434 landings
Total		452,712 lb	89 landings

The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and tribal estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2006.

2004 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds)					
	Quota	Inseason Revised Quota		Catch	Over/Under
TRIBAL INDIAN	490,500			490,712*	0.04%
Commercial	452,500			452,712	0.05%
Ceremonial & Subsistence	38,000			38,000*	
NON-TRIBAL	839,500			832,060	-0.9
COMMERCIAL	336,124			345,610♠	2.8%
Troll	39,918			42,110	5.4%
Directed	226,203			236,000	4.3%
Sablefish Incidental	70,000			67,500♠	
SPORT	503,379			486,450♠	-3.4%
WA Sport	237,257			236,013♠	--
OR/CA Sport	266,122			250,437♠	-5.9%
WA Inside Waters	64,800			64,800♠	
WA North Coast	115,437			108,149	-6.3%
WA South Coast	50,146	57,034♦		55,549	-2.6% of revised
Col River Area	13,747	20,147★		15,031	-25.6% of revised
OR Central Coast	251,264				
Inside 40 fathoms	20,101	10,101★		5,450♠	-46% of revised
Spring (May-July)	173,372	165,239		165,239	--
Summer (August-October)	57,791	69,924★		64,249♠	-8.1 of revised
OR S. of Humbug/CA	7,984			7,984♠	
TOTAL	1,330,000			1,322,772	-0.5%

\*Assumed. Estimate of amount of halibut taken in ceremonial and subsistence fisheries is not available until after December 31.

♦ Washington's North Coast subarea closed with 7,288 lb remaining in its quota. Of that amount, 400 lb were transferred to the Columbia River area to cover the Washington portion of that subarea's overage. The remaining 6,888 lb were transferred to the South Coast subarea to cover a 4,403 lb overage from that subarea's all depth fishery and to allow the nearshore area fishery to continue through the remainder of the fishing season.

★ Oregon's Central Coast spring all-depth fishery underage of 8,373 lb, plus 10,000 lb from the inside 40-fm fishery were transferred to the summer all-depth fishery, increasing that quota to 76,164 lb. In September, 6,000 lb were transferred from Oregon's Central Coast subarea to the Columbia River subarea.

♠Data from these fisheries not complete at the time of the briefing book deadline. Updates will be provided at the Council meeting, if available