

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2010 FISHERY

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) held two public meetings to discuss proposed changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for fisheries off Oregon in 2010. The first meeting occurred on August 17, 2009 in Astoria and the second on August 19, 2009 in Newport. Based on the meeting comments, and other public input, ODFW recommends the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) approve the following proposals for additional public review.

Columbia River Subarea

Allocate up to 1,000 pounds from the existing Columbia River subarea allocation for a nearshore fishery inside the 40-fathom line for the area from Leadbetter Pt., Washington to Cape Falcon, Oregon.

Rationale: For 2009 the Council adopted a proposal for review that would have allowed take of halibut in the nearshore fishery between Cape Falcon and the Columbia River under the current fishery structure in place for the inside 40-fathom fishery south of Cape Falcon. Under the proposal the fishery would have been open from Humbug Mt. to the Columbia River and catch would have counted toward the Oregon central coast subarea allocation. The intent of the proposal was primarily to allow the retention of halibut caught incidentally in the nearshore groundfish fishery north of Cape Falcon. Due to unresolved enforcement and landing issues this proposal was not recommended for 2009. Anglers remain interested in that opportunity and the proposal is revised based on utilizing existing allocation to the Columbia River subarea.

Central Coast Subarea

Adjust the number of open days per week in the summer all-depth fishery from three to two days.

Rationale: In 2009 the harvest during the August 7-9 three day all-depth opening exceeded the remaining sub-area quota, requiring closure of both the all-depth fishery and the inside 40-fathom fishery. Reducing the summer all-depth fishery from three to two day openers is intended to extend the duration of the all-depth fishery and help prevent the same situation from occurring in 2010.

Other Suggestions Received

There were several other suggestions received that ODFW is not proposing for further public comment at this time. Below is a summary of these recommendations:

1. Combine the Oregon portion of Columbia River subarea with the central coast subarea.
2. Reinstate the Florence north jetty boundary so as to split the central coast into north-central and south-central sub-areas as occurred several years ago.
3. Increase allocation to the Columbia River subarea.
4. Adjust the allocation of halibut between the spring all-depth, summer all-depth and inside 40-fathom nearshore fishery so as to shift catch to later in the season. One example was a 50/50 split between the spring and summer all-depth quota.
5. Adopt a lottery based tag system.
6. Allow retention of lingcod.
7. Allow retention of rockfish.