

REPORT ON THE 2009 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A
(8/31/09)

The 2009 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 950,000 lb set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as sub-TACs as follows:

Treaty Tribes	332,500 lb (35%)
Non-Tribal Total	617,500 lb (65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	195,478 lb (includes incidental sablefish)
Washington Sport	214,110 lb
Oregon/California Sport	195,748 lb

All weights in this report are net weight (gutted, head-off, and without ice and slime.) The structure of each fishery and the resulting harvests are described below.

NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

A sub-TAC of 195,478 lb (31.7% of the non-tribal share + 11,895 lb for the incidental sablefish fishery) 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 11,895 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 and the Washington sport allocation exceeds 224,110. This year the Washington sport allocation did not exceed 224,100 so the allocation for the incidental catch fishery for limited entry sablefish was significantly lower than in past years.

Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery

A quota of 29,362 lb of Pacific halibut (15% of the non-Indian commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the non-Indian commercial salmon troll fishery in Area 2A as incidental catch during salmon 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 salmon troll fisheries until the quota is taken. The final catch ratio established pre-season by the Council at the April meeting was one halibut (minimum 32") per two 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 open period. Fishing with salmon troll gear is prohibited within the Salmon Troll Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) off the northern Washington Coast. Additionally, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by salmon trollers.

- Halibut retention was permitted in the salmon troll fisheries beginning May 1. Of the halibut taken in the salmon troll fisheries through August 10, 10,986 lb were landed.

Directed fishery targeting on halibut

A quota of 166,385 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; 46E53.30' N. lat.). In addition, between 46E53.30' N. lat. and 46E16' N. lat., the fishery was confined to an area seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour and, between 46E16' N. lat. and 40E10' N. lat., to an area shoreward of a boundary line approximating the 30-fm depth contour and seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour. One-day fishing periods of 10 hours in duration were scheduled by the IPHC for June 24 and July 8, 2009. A 32" minimum size limit with the head on 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 without ice and slime in pounds) by vessel size.

Vessel Class/Size	6/24 Openings	7/8 Opening
A 0 - 25 ft.	755 lb	590 lb
B 26 - 30 ft.	945 lb	735 lb
C 31 - 35 ft.	1,510 lb	1,175 lb
D 36 - 40 ft.	4,165 lb	3,240 lb
E 41 - 45 ft.	4,480 lb	3,485 lb
F 46 - 50 ft.	5,365 lb	4,170 lb
G 51 - 55 ft.	5,985 lb	4,655 lb
H 56+ ft.	9,000 lb	7,000 lb

- The June 24 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 81,000 lb, leaving 85,400 lb for later openings.
- The July 8 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of 85,385 lb, closing the fishery.

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

A quota of 11,895 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 is open from April 1 to October 31, although incidental halibut retention was not permitted until May 1. Properly licensed vessels were permitted to retain up to 100 lb of dressed weight (headed-and gutted) halibut per fishing trip of dressed weight sablefish.

The fishery is confined to an area seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour. Fishing is also prohibited in the North Coast Commercial YRCA, an area off the northern Washington coast. In addition, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by commercial longline sablefish fishermen.

- Through August 20, 2009, this fishery is estimated to have taken 3,290 lb.

SPORT FISHERIES (Non-tribal).

A sub-TAC of 409,858 lb (68.3% of non-tribal share – 11,895 lb for the incidental sablefish fishery) was allocated between sport fisheries in the Washington area (36.6%) and Oregon/California (31.7%). 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 57,393 lb (23.5% of the first 130,845 lb allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 lb). 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 23 and continued through June 5, 5 days per week (Thursday-Monday). The Western Region opened on May 21 and continued through July 3, 5 days per week (Thursday-Monday). 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 108,030 lb (62.2% of the first 130,845 lb allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,945 lb and 224,110 lb). The fishery opened May 14 and continued 2 days per week (Thursday, and Saturday) through May 23, then reopened for two days per week June 4 and 6, 2009. The "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA, southwest of Cape Flattery, was closed to sport halibut fishing. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- This two-day per week fishery opened May 14 through 23 and again June 4 and 6 with an estimated catch of 102,782 pounds.

Washington South Coast Subarea (landings in Westport).

The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 42,739 lb (12.3 % of the first 130,845 lb allocated to the Washington sport fishery and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110). The fishery opened on May 3 and continued 2 days per week (Sunday and Thursday) in all waters (primary fishery) until May 17, at which time the primary fishery was then open on Sundays only. The fishery was also open 3 days per week (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) in addition to any days the primary season was open in waters between the Queets River and 47°25.00' N. lat. south to 46°58.00' N. lat., and east of 124°30.00' W. long. (northern nearshore fishery). The south coast subarea quota was allocated as follows: 2,000 lb to the nearshore fishery and the remaining pounds (40,739 lb) to the primary fishery. The primary fishery closed on June 28, 2009. Following this closure, the nearshore fishery remains open 3 days per week (Thursday –Saturday) until the entire subarea quota is taken or until September 27, whichever is earlier. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- The primary season opened May 3, two days per week (Sunday and Tuesday) through May 12, then Sundays only through June 28, 2009 with an estimated catch of 38,188 pounds.
- The northern nearshore area remains open 3 days per week (Thursday-Saturday).

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon).

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 15,735 lb, consisting of 2.0 percent of the first 130,845 lb allocated to the Washington sport fishery, 4.0 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb and 224,110 lb (minus the pounds needed for the incidental sablefish fishery), and 5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation or an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation, whichever is greater. The fishery opened May 1 and continued 3 days per week until May 29, 2009. The fishery was reopened on August 7 and continues to be open 3 days per week (Friday through Sunday) until the entire subarea quota has been taken or September 27, whichever is earlier. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- This 3 day per week fishery began on May 1 and closed on May 29 with an estimated catch of 11,267 lb.
- Catch during the early season resulted in overage of 253 lb, which reduced the late season quota to 4,468 lb. The late season fishery is currently open.

Oregon Central Coast Subarea (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain).

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 180,088 lb (92% of the Oregon/California sport allocation less any amount needed to contribute to the Oregon portion of the Columbia River subarea quota).

Three seasons were set for this subarea: 1) a restricted depth (inside 40-fm) fishery commenced on May 1 and continued 7 days a week until August 9; 2) a fixed Spring season in all depths that was open on May 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, June 4, 5, 6, 18, 19, 20 and July 2, 3, 4, with a catch allocation of 124,261 lb (the Spring season was to reopen for additional days if quota remains), and; 3) a Summer season in all depths that was open on August 7, 8, 9. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person, unless otherwise specified.

- The inside 40-fathom fishery opened May 1 and is estimated to have taken 8,227 lb through August 9, when the fishery was closed.
- The fixed Spring all-depth season was open May-July, and is estimated to have taken 122,403 lb. The remaining Spring quota of 1,858 lb was added to the pounds available to the Summer all-depth fishery.
- The initial Summer all-depth season quota of 41,420 lb was revised by the 1,858 lb remaining from the Spring fishery. As a result, 43,278 lb was initially available to the Summer all-depth fishery. The Summer all-depth fishery opened on August 7-9 (Friday-Sunday) and resulted in an estimated catch of 52,330 lb. The fishery was closed on August 9.

South of Humbug Mountain, Oregon and off the California Coast Subarea

This sport fishery was allocated 5,872 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 332,500 lb (35% of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 29,000 lb would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 303,500 lb were allocated to the commercial fishery. The 2009 management plan was essentially identical to the management plan that the tribes have had in place since 2004. 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 March 21 and noon on July 30. Collectively, the separately managed fisheries were allocated 75% of the Tribal Commercial TAC. The fishery closed on July 15, as the separately managed fishery expected catch was attained. The separately managed fisheries landed 224,455 lbs in 331 landings (out of 227,625 lbs expected).

The remaining 25% of the TAC was open to all parties in the “joint restricted” fishery. The joint restricted fishery opened at noon March 21 with a 500-lb/vessel/day limit and to last for 40 days. The last landing in this fishery was on May 9, thus comprising of an overage in catch. The restricted fishery was closed by all parties on May 9. The joint restricted fishery had a total catch of 78,932 lbs in 317 landings (out of 75,875 lbs expected).

Fishery	Dates Held	Pounds Landed	# of Landings
Separately Managed	March 8 - June 3	224,455 lb	331 landings
Restricted, 200-500 lb/vessel/day	March 17 – April 15	78,932 lb	317 landings
Total		303,386 lb	648 landings

The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and tribal estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2009.