

## **Pacific Halibut Bycatch in IPHC Area 2A in 2002**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This report updates the estimate of Pacific halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fishery through the calendar year 2002. The estimate of halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fishery is based upon the method developed in the report for 1999 (Wallace, 2000). This report uses halibut bycatch rates observed from 31 August 2001 thru 28 August 2002 in the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. These rates are stratified by season, depth, latitude, and level of arrowtooth flounder catch, then multiplied by the amount of trawl effort in each stratum determined from Oregon and Washington trawl logbooks in 2002. Estimated halibut bycatch and mortality in other gear types has not been updated for 2002. The estimate for the 2002 bottom trawl fishery is 512,000 lbs net weight of total halibut bycatch mortality of which 286,000 lbs is legal-sized. The net weight is 64% lower than in 2001. As in past reports, forecast of bycatch for the current year (2003) or future years is not attempted.

## **GROUNDFISH FISHERY BACKGROUND**

Changes in the groundfish fishery and its management affect the amount of groundfish fishing effort and the geographic and temporal distribution of this effort. These changes will affect the calculated halibut bycatch amount because of the differences in bycatch rate between the various time and area strata. Here we briefly describe the management changes that occurred in 2002.

The 2002 season was characterized by continued and expanded limitations on fishing opportunities for many groundfish species, in an effort to promote rebuilding of numerous species that have been declared overfished. As in 2001, the use of small footrope gear (rollers of 8" or less) was required for trips that land any shelf or nearshore rockfish species, and only minimal bycatch allowances were provided for landings of minor rockfish species. In order to reduce bycatch of darkblotched rockfish, trawling north of 40°10' N. lat. was prohibited inside of 250 fm during September, and re-opened inside of 100 fm for October through December. During this period, a differential (lower) trip limit was specified for Dover sole if small footrope gear was used by a vessel at any time during a 2-month cumulative period.

The flatfish bycatch allowance for yellowtail rockfish was continued, but mid-water opportunities for widow and yellowtail rockfish were provided only during the last two months of 2002, leading to a substantial reduction in the landings of both species from previous years. Landings of Dover sole in Oregon and Washington during 2002 fell by 28% from 2001 and 41% from 2000. Similarly, landings of arrowtooth flounder were off by 16% from 2001 and 36% from 2000. Landings of other flatfish species, combined, increased by 21% from 2001, driven by higher landings of near-shore species.

## **HISTORICAL BYCATCH ESTIMATES**

### Bottom Trawl Fishery for Groundfish

Estimated bycatch and mortality of halibut in 1987, 1992, and 1995 are summarized in Table 1. As described by Williams, et al. (1998), these halibut bycatch and mortality estimates were based upon catch rates observed during a voluntary fisheries observer program conducted during the late 1980s. Approximately 1,062 tows by bottom trawl fisheries off Oregon and Washington were observed during 1985-1987. An additional 65 tows were observed off California during 1988-1990. Catch rates were stratified by fishing strategy, depth, season, and area as described by Pikitch, et al. (1998).

### Analysis of Enhanced Data Collection Program

From November 1995 through December 1998, observers quantified halibut catches on the west coast bottom trawl fisheries during the Enhanced Data Collection Program (EDCP). In addition, skippers participating in the EDCP filled out enhanced logbooks on which aggregate halibut catch information was recorded. During the program, when no observer was onboard, skippers continued to fill out the enhanced logbooks.

In the 1,825 EDCP tows from both Washington and Oregon, an estimated 11,434 halibut were caught. However, using only observed EDCP tows with complete strata information (see below), 4,816 halibut were measured by observers. The length frequency breakdown of these halibut can be seen in Table 2. Washington records in the EDCP data include individual lengths, but no individual weights. Also, since there were also some anomalies in the Oregon state landings of individual weights the 'net pounds per length interval' information in Table 2 is from a length-weight relationship for Pacific halibut (IPHC, personal communication).

Wallace (2000) used similar methods to those in Pikitch (1998) to analyze the EDCP data and identify appropriate strata for bycatch estimation. These strata are season (Jan-Aug and Sept-Dec), depth (0-100, 100-300, 300-700 fathoms), area (five latitude ranges) and catch of arrowtooth flounder (0-20 lbs per hour and >20 lbs). Numbers of tows, halibut catches, halibut catch rates, and proportion of legal-sized halibut (>81 cm) are given for each of these strata in Table 3. These methods and preliminary results were reviewed and approved by the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee during the June and September 2000 meetings.

#### Shrimp Trawl

Halibut bycatch in shrimp trawls in 1987, 1992, and 1995 was reported by Williams, et al (1998) and are presented in Table 4. For 1998, Bob Hannah (ODFW, personal communication) produced estimates of halibut bycatch in Oregon shrimp trawls for PSMFC Areas 2B-3C (Table 5). He used three data sources: 1) bycatch rates observed during 128 tows by Pikitch, et al., during 1985-87; 2) control net catch rates from 166 tows observed by Hannah, et al.; and 3) data compiled from shrimp fishing trips observed during 1996-99 by the EDCP, combined with control net catches from ODFW research charters during the same time period (for a total of 203 observed tows). The approximate number of tows in the 1998 Oregon shrimp fishery was over 10,000. The halibut bycatch estimates for this fishery are based on expanding the encounter rates (pounds of halibut per single-rig equivalent hour (sreh)) by the effort expended by vessels landing shrimp in Oregon ports only. The estimates are not stratified by depth because the depth range of the shrimp fishery is very restricted and the amount of data is very limited. The percent legal-sized (62%) and the percent survival (50%) was assumed to be the same as in the bottom trawl fishery. Given the range of estimates and the data limitations, Hannah estimates that the 1998 bycatch mortality of legal-sized halibut from Oregon is about 16,000 lbs, net weight and about 25,000 lbs. round weight. Halibut bycatch from vessels landing shrimp into Washington and California ports is not included.

### **UPDATED BYCATCH ESTIMATES FOR 2002**

#### Analysis of the First Year's data from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program

The first year of observer collected data released by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program is from 31 August 2001 thru 28 August 2002. There were 2,812 bottom trawl tows between 40.667 and 48.667 degrees latitude (all of Washington to just north of the Oregon-California border) used for this study. An estimated total weight of 260,242 lbs of halibut were caught in those tows. The vast majority of these weights are from the entire catch, i.e. not extrapolated. However, the weight method varies and includes visual estimates. The number of halibut in a tow was also recorded, but that data was received too late to be included in this report. In the observer program, halibut lengths are taken when fish are selected as 'biological samples'. On a tow basis, halibut were selected to be a biological sample 33% of the time when Pacific halibut were caught in the tow.

Wallace (2000) used similar methods to those in Pikitch (1998) to analyze the observer data and identify appropriate strata for bycatch estimation. These strata are season (Jan-Aug and Sept-Dec), depth (0-100, 100-300, 300-700 fathoms), area (four latitude ranges) and catch of arrowtooth flounder (0-20 lbs per hour and >20 lbs). Numbers of tows, halibut catches, halibut catch rates, and proportion of legal-sized halibut (>81 cm) are given for each of these strata in Table 3. These methods and preliminary results were reviewed and approved by the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee during the June and September 2000 meetings.

### Bottom Trawl Effort from Logbooks

Logbook data for Oregon and Washington in 2002 were obtained from PacFIN. Trawl effort from logbooks was accumulated into each of the strata identified in the analysis of the new observer data. Port and Month were added as factors for Oregon logbooks to avoid any potential bias created by unequal collection of logbooks in the three major ports (Astoria, Newport, and Coos Bay). ODFW collects logbook data for 70-80% of the trawl deliveries during a typical year, thus the need to avoid collection bias.

Total trawl effort (hours) for the entire Oregon fleet was based on expanding the groundfish catch in logbook data by the total groundfish catch reported on fish tickets, as follows. Expansion ratios, by port and month, were derived by dividing aggregate catch on fish tickets by aggregate catch in the logbook data. These expansion ratios were applied to the tow effort (hours) to arrive at the expanded effort for Oregon's trawl fleet. The expanded effort was then combined into the strata based on the observer data analysis.

Such an effort expansion was not conducted for the Washington fleet because WDFW expands their effort, so total fleet effort is equal to reported logbook effort. The total fleet effort for each stratum in 2002 is reported in Table 6.

Halibut bycatch for each stratum is estimated by multiplying total (expanded) effort by the halibut bycatch rate for that stratum. Bycatch by the bottom trawl fleet is estimated by summing across strata. If there was effort within a strata, but no observer tows, the coast wide average<sup>1</sup> bycatch rate was used: 15.777 kg per hour for weight.

As in earlier years, half of the released halibut are assumed to survive capture (Gregg Williams, IPHC, personal communication). Therefore, bycatch mortality of halibut is assumed to be 50% of total bycatch. The proportion of legal-sized halibut (> 81cm) is estimated from the length frequencies of halibut measured in the observer data. Measurements of fish lengths were converted to fish weight based on a length-weight relationship for Pacific halibut (IPHC, personal communication), and the proportion of legal-sized fish (by weight) was computed for each stratum (Table 3). The coastwide average<sup>1</sup> proportion legal was used when no other estimate was available: 81.96% by weight.

Updated results for 2002 are presented in Table 7 and added to the long-term time series in Tables 8 and 9. Total discard mortality of halibut during 2002 is estimated to be 36% lower than in 2001. This decrease is largely due to the reduction in trawl effort (22%), but also to new restrictions on fishing locations and the inclusion of new observer bycatch data.

It is not possible to make a forecast for the 2003 fishery given lack of a methodology to project the distribution of effort prior to availability of the entire year's logbook data.

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<sup>1</sup>Calculated as the unweighted average of the stratum means. This value (82%) is considerably higher than the coastwide average where the strata means are weighted by the poundage in each strata (56%).

## REFERENCES

- Pikitch, E.K., Wallace, J.R., Babcock, E.A., Erickson, D.L., Saelens, M., and Oddsson, G. (1998) Pacific halibut bycatch in the Washington, Oregon, and California groundfish and shrimp trawl fisheries. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*. Volume 18, pp. 569-586.
- Wallace, J.R. (2000) Unpublished report. Pacific halibut discard in the EDCP Observer Program. June 2000. 18 pg.
- Williams, G. H., G. Stauffer, H. Weeks, M. Saelens, J. Scordino, D. Bodenmiller, and T. Northup (1998). Pacific halibut bycatch in Area 2A: Bycatch rates and current estimates of bycatch mortality. *Int. Pac. Halibut Comm. Rep. of Assess. and Res. Activ.* 1998: 269-282.

Table 1. Halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fisheries for groundfish off the west coast, estimated from Pikitch et al., (1998) and reported by Williams et al., (1998).

Year	Trawl Effort (hours)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (numbers)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (kg., round)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (lbs, net)	Estimated Total Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)	Estimated Legal-Sized Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)
1987	135,075	78,765	372,911	616,702	308,351	191,178
1992	182,155	89,756	465,595	769,979	384,989	238,693
1995	72,295	113,702	663,262	1,096,870	548,435	340,030

**Note:** For 1995, bycatch estimates for Areas 1B-2A off California are not included. Mortality estimated at 50% of bycatch. Legal-sized mortality (>81 cm) estimated at 62%, by weight, of total mortality. 1 kg, round = 1.65375 lbs, net weight.

Table 2. Length frequency for Pacific halibut from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program data. (The upper limits on the length intervals are inclusive, the lower limits are not.)

Length Interval (cm)	Length Freq.	Percent Length Freq.
25-30	1	0.05
30-35	1	0.05
35-40	0	0.00
40-45	4	0.21
45-50	7	0.37
50-55	15	0.80
55-60	73	3.88
60-65	188	9.99
65-70	321	17.06
70-75	302	16.05
75-80	207	11.00
80-85	160	8.50
85-90	116	6.16
90-95	116	6.16
95-100	92	4.89
100-105	74	3.93
105-110	69	3.67
110-115	43	2.28
115-120	32	1.70
120-125	20	1.06
125-130	15	0.80
130-135	17	0.90
135-140	5	0.27
140-145	2	0.11
145-150	1	0.05
150-155	0	0.00
155-160	0	0.00
160-165	0	0.00
165-170	1	0.05
Total	1882	100.00

Table 3. Numbers of tows, halibut catches, and halibut catch rates, by strata, observed in the bottom trawl fishery by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. Where the strata are the same, the last column shows the 2001 halibut catch rates for comparison purposes. (The upper limits on all intervals are inclusive, the lower limits are not.)

**SEASON: JANUARY - AUGUST**

Arrow-tooth Catch (lbs/h)	Latitude	Depth (Fathoms)	Number of Observed Tows	Number of Tows with $\geq 1$ Halibut	Wgt. (kg., rnd) Halibut per Hour	Proportion Legal by Weight	2001 Wgt. (kg., rnd) Halibut per Hour
$\leq 20$	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 100	155	41	3.59	0.873	
		100 - 300	110	12	0.50	0.928	
		300 - 700	146	1	0.01	1.000	
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 100	533	214	3.52	0.756	5.25
		100 - 300	168	60	2.23	0.949	8.12
		300 - 700	117	2	0.08	0.921	0.03
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 100	217	153	13.70	0.500	32.65
		100 - 300	16	11	3.99	1.000	6.47
		300 - 700	18	2	0.10	1.000	0.11
$> 20$	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 100	343	266	41.02	0.319	16.41
		100 - 300	63	51	20.13	0.811	26.71
		300 - 700	20	2	0.14	1.000	4.05
	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 100	21	7	3.02	0.936	
		100 - 300	8	2	5.68	0.950	
		300 - 700	0	0			
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 100	38	20	7.61	0.889	14.15
		100 - 300	59	28	5.75	0.944	13.07
		300 - 700	0	0			1.10
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 100	21	15	19.39	0.573	21.24
		100 - 300	13	7	3.58	0.972	70.71
		300 - 700	0	0			7.00
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 100	140	132	96.54	0.263	68.60
		100 - 300	111	100	73.91	0.825	114.68
		300 - 700	11	6	12.44	0.901	

Table 3. Continued.

SEASON: SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER

Arrow-tooth Catch (lbs/h)	Latitude	Depth (Fathoms)	Number of Observed Tows	Number of Tows with $\geq 1$ Halibut	Wgt. (kg., rnd) Halibut per Hour	Proportion Legal by Weight	2001 Wgt. (kg., rnd) Halibut per Hour
$\leq 20$	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 100	105	14	0.78	1.000	
		100 - 300	13	2	0.21		
		300 - 700	10	0	0.00		
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 100	119	38	2.60		2.48
		100 - 300	49	25	3.63		12.48
		300 - 700	46	0	0.00		0.04
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 100	16	0	0.00		7.02
		100 - 300	0	0	15.78		3.03
		300 - 700	3	0	0.00		0.46
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 100	54	9	2.02	0.540	18.68
		100 - 300	6	5	59.99		36.85
		300 - 700	0	0			3.73
$> 20$	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 100	1	1	6.10		
		100 - 300	0	0	15.78		
		300 - 700	0	0			
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 100	24	14	7.46		1.89
		100 - 300	23	15	67.69		8.00
		300 - 700	0	0			
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 100	0	0			2.97
		100 - 300	0	0			
		300 - 700	0	0			
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 100	6	3	48.56		14.75
		100 - 300	9	6	51.99		
		300 - 700	0	0			

Table 4. Halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fishery for pink shrimp off the west coast, reported by Williams et al. (1998).

Year	Trawl Effort (hours)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (numbers)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (kg., round)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (lbs, net)	Estimated Total Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)	Legal-sized Bycatch Mortality (lbs, net)
1987	193,69	20,536	98,983	163,693	81,847	50,745
1992	107,01	10,244	51,671	85,450	42,725	26,490
1995	----	----	----	100,000	50,000	31,000

**Note:** For 1995, bycatch estimates for Areas 1B-2A off California are not included. Mortality estimated at 50% of bycatch. Proportion of legal-sized mortality (>81 cm) is assumed to be 62% by weight. 1 kg, round = 1.65375 lbs, net weight.

Table 5. Estimated 1998 halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fishery for pink shrimp (landings into Oregon ports only). (Bob Hannah, personal communication, October 8, 1999 memo). The data sources numbered 1-3 are described in the text.

Data Source	Single-rig Equivalent Hours (sreh) Observed	Bycatch Rate (lbs/sreh)	Fishing Effort (sreh) in Oregon Landings	Bycatch Estimate (kg., round)	Bycatch Mortality (lbs, net)	Legal-sized Bycatch Mortality (lbs, net)
1 - Pikitch	---	1.22	34,543	19,155	15,839	9,820
2 - Hannah	236.5	2.60	34,543	40,824	33,756	20,929
3 - EDCP	551.1	2.12	34,543	33,287	27,524	17,065

**Note:** Mortality estimated at 50% of bycatch. Proportion of legal-sized mortality (>81 cm) is assumed to be 62% by weight, as in the bottom trawl fishery. 1 kg, round = 1.65375 pounds, net weight.

Note: The first column labeled '2002' is for January-August, the second is for September-December.

Note: The first column labeled '2002' is for January-August, the second is for September-December.

Table 7. Halibut bycatch and mortality in the Oregon and Washington bottom trawl fisheries for groundfish off the west coast. The new 2002 data are estimated from bycatch rates (Table 3) observed by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program and applied to annual total groundfish bottom trawl effort (Table 6).

Year	Trawl Effort (hours)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (numbers)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (kg., round)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (lbs, net)	Est. Total Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)	Estimated Legal-Sized Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)
1998	92,294	164,961	1,259,374	2,082,690	1,041,345	691,755
1999	81,420	147,995	1,144,236	1,892,280	946,140	638,091
2000	70,363	122,234	944,120	1,561,338	780,669	523,097
2001	67,199	124,969	962,348	1,591,482	795,741	532,912
2002	52,168	NA	618,913	1,023,527	511,764	286,221

Note: Halibut bycatch by California bottom trawl fishery is not included. Mortality estimated at 50% of bycatch. Proportion of legal-sized mortality (>81 cm) estimated from length frequencies of fish measured by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. 1 kg, round = 1.65375 pounds, net weight.

Table 8. Summary of total estimated bycatch mortality of Pacific halibut, in thousands of pounds, net weight, by fishery in 2A. Bycatch mortality estimates for 1977-1997 are reported from Table 6 in Williams, et al. 1998.

Year	Foreign, JV & Catcher-Proc.	Groundfish Trawls	Shrimp Trawls	Hook & Line	TOTAL
1977	3	308	82	16	409
1978	2	308	82	16	408
1979	1	308	82	16	407
1980	1	308	82	16	407
1981	Trace	308	82	16	406
1982	Trace	308	82	16	406
1983	1	308	82	16	407
1984	Trace	308	82	16	406
1985	Trace	308	82	16	406
1986	1	308	82	16	407
1987	1	308	82	16	407
1988	1	308	82	16	407
1989	2	308	82	16	408
1990	2	308	82	16	408
1991	2	308	82	16	408
1992	0	385	43	16	444
1993	0	385	43	16	444
1994	0	385	43	16	444
1995	0	548	50	16	614
1996	0	548	50	16	614
1997	0	548	50	16	614
1998	0	1,041	25	---	---
1999	---	946	---	---	---
2000	---	781	---	---	---
2001	---	796	---	---	---
2002	---	512	---	---	---

**Note:** Bycatch mortality by groundfish trawls in 1998-2002 does not include fisheries off California. Bycatch mortality by shrimp trawls in 1998 does not include fisheries off California and Washington.

Table 9. Summary of estimated mortality of legal-sized Pacific halibut, in thousands of pounds, net weight, by fishery in 2A. The bycatch mortality estimate for legal-sized halibut for 2002 is from this report. (Sums across fisheries may not always equal the TOTAL due to rounding.)

Year	Foreign, JV & Catcher- Proc.	Groundfish Trawls	Shrimp Trawls	Hook & Line	TOTAL
1977	2	191	51	10	254
1978	1	191	51	10	253
1979	0.6	191	51	10	252
1980	0.6	191	51	10	252
1981	Trace	191	51	10	252
1982	Trace	191	51	10	252
1983	0.6	191	51	10	252
1984	Trace	191	51	10	252
1985	Trace	191	51	10	252
1986	0.6	191	51	10	252
1987	0.6	191	51	10	252
1988	0.6	191	51	10	252
1989	1	191	51	10	253
1990	1	191	51	10	253
1991	1	191	51	10	253
1992	0	239	27	10	275
1993	0	239	27	10	275
1994	0	239	27	10	275
1995	0	340	31	10	381
1996	0	340	31	10	381
1997	0	340	31	10	381
1998	0	692	16	---	---
1999	---	638	---	---	---
2000	---	523	---	---	---
2001	---	533	---	---	---
2002	---	286	---	---	---

Note: Bycatch mortality by groundfish trawls in 1998-2002 does not include fisheries off California. Bycatch mortality by shrimp trawls in 1998 does not include fisheries off California and Washington.

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON  
STATUS OF PACIFIC HALIBUT BYCATCH ESTIMATES FOR USE BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received an update from Ms. Yvonne de Reynier on halibut bycatch estimation.

The GAP notes that NMFS is updating the halibut bycatch model with new information from the trawl fishery. Since the trawl fishery is constantly changing and being moved out of halibut areas, the model should continue to be updated to ensure accurate halibut bycatch estimates.

PFMC  
09/11/03

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
STATUS OF PACIFIC HALIBUT BYCATCH ESTIMATES FOR USE BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) heard a presentation from Mr. John Wallace concerning the 2002 estimate of Pacific halibut bycatch in groundfish trawl fisheries in the International Pacific Halibut Catch Area 2A (Exhibit G.2, Situation Summary, September 2003).

For the first time, the estimate of halibut bycatch is based on bycatch rates obtained from the groundfish observer program (data from September 2001 -- August 2002). Previously Area 2A Pacific halibut bycatch in the groundfish fishery was calculated using information from the Enhanced Data Collection Program (EDCP).

The new analysis indicates a substantial drop in Pacific halibut bycatch mortality in Council-managed fisheries. Results show a 36% reduction in the total estimated bycatch mortality from 2001 to 2002 (796,000 pounds to 512,000 pounds). This drop is due to the combined effects of (1) generally lower observed halibut bycatch rates in the observer data in comparison with the EDCP data, and (2) a drop in trawling effort and/or a change in its spatial distribution.

The SSC reviewed these new results and endorses their use in estimating the impacts of Council-managed fisheries on the Pacific halibut stock.

PFMC  
09/10/03

STATUS OF PACIFIC HALIBUT BYCATCH ESTIMATES FOR USE BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

Situation: Dr. Elizabeth Clarke, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), will brief the Council on the status of bycatch estimates for Pacific halibut in the Council-area groundfish trawl fishery.

The halibut bycatch estimates for the 2002 groundfish trawl fishery in International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Area 2A waters include information from the groundfish observer program and effects of the groundfish area closures in 2002. A report was provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) for review with the intent of providing estimates to the IPHC to use in establishing the 2004 halibut fisheries (Attachment 1).

**Council Action:**

- 1. Utilizing input from the SSC, provide any needed Council guidance to the completion of the bycatch assessment and its transmittal to the IPHC.**

Reference Materials:

1. Pacific Halibut Bycatch in IPHC Area 2A in 2002 (Exhibit G.2, Attachment 1).

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. NMFS Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Provide Guidance on Bycatch Estimation Issues

Chuck Tracy  
Elizabeth Clarke

PPMC  
08/26/03

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## **GROUNDFISH FISHERY BACKGROUND**

Changes in the groundfish fishery and its management affect the amount of groundfish fishing effort and the geographic and temporal distribution of this effort. These changes will affect the calculated halibut bycatch amount because of the differences in bycatch rate between the various time and area strata. Here we briefly describe the management changes that occurred in 2002.

The 2002 season was characterized by continued and expanded limitations on fishing opportunities for many groundfish species, in an effort to promote rebuilding of numerous species that have been declared overfished. As in 2001, the use of small footrope gear (rollers of 8" or less) was required for trips that land any shelf or nearshore rockfish species, and only minimal bycatch allowances were provided for landings minor rockfish species. In order to reduce bycatch of darkblotched rockfish, trawling north of 40°10' N. lat. was prohibited inside of 250 fm during September, and re-opened inside of 100 fm for October through December. During this period, a differential (lower) trip limit was specified for Dover sole if small footrope gear was used by a vessel at any time during a 2-month cumulative period.

The flatfish bycatch allowance for yellowtail rockfish was continued, but mid-water opportunities for widow and yellowtail rockfish were provided only during the last two months of 2002, leading to a substantial reduction in the landings of both species from previous years. Landings of Dover sole in Oregon and Washington during 2002 fell by 28% from 2001 and 41% from 2000. Similarly, landings of arrowtooth flounder were off by 16% from 2001 and 36% from 2000. Landings of other flatfish species, combined, increased by 21% from 2001, driven by higher landings of near-shore species.

## **HISTORICAL BYCATCH ESTIMATES**

### Bottom Trawl Fishery for Groundfish

Estimated bycatch and mortality of halibut in 1987, 1992, and 1995 are summarized in Table 1. As described by Williams, et al. (1998), these halibut bycatch and mortality estimates were based upon catch rates observed during a voluntary fisheries observer program conducted during the late 1980s. Approximately 1,062 tows by bottom trawl fisheries off Oregon and Washington were observed during 1985-1987. An additional 65 tows were observed off California during 1988-1990. Catch rates were stratified by fishing strategy, depth, season, and area as described by Pikitch, et al. (1998).

### Analysis of Enhanced Data Collection Program

From November 1995 through December 1998, observers quantified halibut catches on the west coast bottom trawl fisheries during the Enhanced Data Collection Program (EDCP). In addition, skippers participating in the EDCP filled out enhanced logbooks on which aggregate halibut catch information was recorded. During the program, when no observer was onboard, skippers continued to fill out the enhanced logbooks.

In the 1,825 EDCP tows from both Washington and Oregon, an estimated 11,434 halibut were caught. However, using only observed EDCP tows with complete strata information (see below), 4,816 halibut were measured by observers. The length frequency breakdown of these halibut can be seen in Table 2. Washington records in the EDCP data include individual lengths, but no individual weights. Also, since there were also some anomalies in the Oregon state landings of individual weights the 'net pounds per length interval' information in Table 2 is from a length-weight relationship for Pacific halibut (IPHC, personal communication).

Wallace (2000) used similar methods to those in Pikitch (1998) to analyze the EDCP data and identify appropriate strata for bycatch estimation. These strata are season (Jan-Aug and Sept-Dec), depth (0-100, 100-300, 300-700 fathoms), area (five latitude ranges) and catch of arrowtooth flounder (0-20 lbs per hour and >20 lbs). Numbers of tows, halibut catches, halibut catch rates, and proportion of legal-sized

halibut (>81 cm) are given for each of these strata in Table 3. These methods and preliminary results were reviewed and approved by the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee during the June and September 2000 meetings.

#### Shrimp Trawl

Halibut bycatch in shrimp trawls in 1987, 1992, and 1995 was reported by Williams, et al (1998) and are presented in Table 4. For 1998, Bob Hannah (ODFW, personal communication) produced estimates of halibut bycatch in Oregon shrimp trawls for PSMFC Areas 2B-3C (Table 5). He used three data sources: 1) bycatch rates observed during 128 tows by Pikitch, et al., during 1985-87; 2) control net catch rates from 166 tows observed by Hannah, et al.; and 3) data compiled from shrimp fishing trips observed during 1996-99 by the EDCP, combined with control net catches from ODFW research charters during the same time period (for a total of 203 observed tows). The approximate number of tows in the 1998 Oregon shrimp fishery was over 10,000. The halibut bycatch estimates for this fishery are based on expanding the encounter rates (pounds of halibut per single-rig equivalent hour (sreh)) by the effort expended by vessels landing shrimp in Oregon ports only. The estimates are not stratified by depth because the depth range of the shrimp fishery is very restricted and the amount of data is very limited. The percent legal-sized (62%) and the percent survival (50%) was assumed to be the same as in the bottom trawl fishery. Given the range of estimates and the data limitations, Hannah estimates that the 1998 bycatch mortality of legal-sized halibut from Oregon is about 16,000 lbs, net weight and about 25,000 lbs. round weight. Halibut bycatch from vessels landing shrimp into Washington and California ports is not included.

### **UPDATED BYCATCH ESTIMATES FOR 2002**

#### Analysis of the First Year's data from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program

The first year of observer collected data released by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program is from 31 August 2001 thru 28 August 2002. There were 2,812 bottom trawl tows between 40.667 and 48.667 degrees latitude (all of Washington to just north of the Oregon-California border) used for this study. An estimated total weight of 260,242 lbs of halibut were caught in those tows. The vast majority of these weights are from the entire catch, i.e. not extrapolated. However, the weight method varies and includes visual estimates. The number of halibut in a tow was also recorded, but that data was received too late to be included in this report. In the observer program, halibut lengths are taken when fish are selected as 'biological samples'. On a tow basis, halibut were selected to be a biological sample 33% of the time when Pacific halibut were caught in the tow.

Wallace (2000) used similar methods to those in Pikitch (1998) to analyze the observer data and identify appropriate strata for bycatch estimation. These strata are season (Jan-Aug and Sept-Dec), depth (0-100, 100-300, 300-700 fathoms), area (four latitude ranges) and catch of arrowtooth flounder (0-20 lbs per hour and >20 lbs). Numbers of tows, halibut catches, halibut catch rates, and proportion of legal-sized halibut (>81 cm) are given for each of these strata in Table 3. These methods and preliminary results were reviewed and approved by the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee during the June and September 2000 meetings.

#### Bottom Trawl Effort from Logbooks

Logbook data for Oregon and Washington in 2002 were obtained from PacFIN. Trawl effort from logbooks was accumulated into each of the strata identified in the analysis of the new observer data. Port and Month were added as factors for Oregon logbooks to avoid any potential bias created by unequal collection of logbooks in the three major ports (Astoria, Newport, and Coos Bay). ODFW collects logbook data for 70-80% of the trawl deliveries during a typical year, thus the need to avoid collection bias.

Total trawl effort (hours) for the entire Oregon fleet was based on expanding the groundfish catch in logbook data by the total groundfish catch reported on fish tickets, as follows. Expansion ratios, by port and month, were derived by dividing aggregate catch on fish tickets by aggregate catch in the logbook data. These expansion ratios were applied to the tow effort (hours) to arrive at the expanded effort for Oregon's trawl fleet. The expanded effort was then combined into the strata based on the observer data analysis.

Such an effort expansion was not conducted for the Washington fleet because WDFW expands their effort, so total fleet effort is equal to reported logbook effort. The total fleet effort for each stratum in 2002 is reported in Table 6.

Halibut bycatch for each stratum is estimated by multiplying total (expanded) effort by the halibut bycatch rate for that stratum. Bycatch by the bottom trawl fleet is estimated by summing across strata. If there was effort within a strata, but no observer tows, the coast wide average<sup>1</sup> bycatch rate was used: 15.777 kg per hour for weight.

As in earlier years, half of the released halibut are assumed to survive capture (Gregg Williams, IPHC, personal communication). Therefore, bycatch mortality of halibut is assumed to be 50% of total bycatch. The proportion of legal-sized halibut (> 81cm) is estimated from the length frequencies of halibut measured in the observer data. Measurements of fish lengths were converted to fish weight based on a length-weight relationship for Pacific halibut (IPHC, personal communication), and the proportion of legal-sized fish (by weight) was computed for each stratum (Table 3). The coastwide average<sup>1</sup> proportion legal was used when no other estimate was available: 81.96% by weight.

Updated results for 2002 are presented in Table 7 and added to the long-term time series in Tables 8 and 9. Total discard mortality of halibut during 2002 is estimated to be 36% lower than in 2001. This decrease is largely due to the reduction in trawl effort (22%), but also to new restrictions on fishing locations and the inclusion of new observer bycatch data.

It is not possible to make a forecast for the 2003 fishery given lack of a methodology to project the distribution of effort prior to availability of the entire year's logbook data.

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<sup>1</sup>Calculated as the unweighted average of the stratum means. This value (82%) is considerably higher than the coastwide average where the strata means are weighted by the poundage in each strata (56%).

## REFERENCES

- Pikitch, E.K., Wallace, J.R., Babcock, E.A., Erickson, D.L., Saelens, M., and Oddsson, G. (1998) Pacific halibut bycatch in the Washington, Oregon, and California groundfish and shrimp trawl fisheries. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*. Volume 18, pp. 569-586.
- Wallace, J.R. (2000) Unpublished report. Pacific halibut discard in the EDCP Observer Program. June 2000. 18 pg.
- Williams, G. H., G. Stauffer, H. Weeks, M. Saelens, J. Scordino, D. Bodenmiller, and T. Northup (1998). Pacific halibut bycatch in Area 2A: Bycatch rates and current estimates of bycatch mortality. *Int. Pac. Halibut Comm. Rep. of Assess. and Res. Activ.* 1998: 269-282.

Table 1. Halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fisheries for groundfish off the west coast, estimated from Pikitch et al., (1998) and reported by Williams et al., (1998).

Year	Trawl Effort (hours)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (numbers)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (kg., round)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (lbs, net)	Estimated Total Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)	Estimated Legal-Sized Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)
1987	135,075	78,765	372,911	616,702	308,351	191,178
1992	182,155	89,756	465,595	769,979	384,989	238,693
1995	72,295	113,702	663,262	1,096,870	548,435	340,030

**Note:** For 1995, bycatch estimates for Areas 1B-2A off California are not included. Mortality estimated at 50% of bycatch. Legal-sized mortality (>81 cm) estimated at 62%, by weight, of total mortality. 1 kg, round = 1.65375 lbs, net weight.

Table 2. Length frequency for Pacific halibut from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program data.  
(The upper limits on the length intervals are inclusive, the lower limits are not.)

Length Interval (cm)	Length Freq.	Percent Length Freq.
25-30	1	0.05
30-35	1	0.05
35-40	0	0.00
40-45	4	0.21
45-50	7	0.37
50-55	15	0.80
55-60	73	3.88
60-65	188	9.99
65-70	321	17.06
70-75	302	16.05
75-80	207	11.00
80-85	160	8.50
85-90	116	6.16
90-95	116	6.16
95-100	92	4.89
100-105	74	3.93
105-110	69	3.67
110-115	43	2.28
115-120	32	1.70
120-125	20	1.06
125-130	15	0.80
130-135	17	0.90
135-140	5	0.27
140-145	2	0.11
145-150	1	0.05
150-155	0	0.00
155-160	0	0.00
160-165	0	0.00
165-170	1	0.05
Total	1882	100.00

Table 3. Numbers of tows, halibut catches, and halibut catch rates, by strata, observed in the bottom trawl fishery by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. Where the strata are the same, the last column shows the 2001 halibut catch rates for comparison purposes. (The upper limits on all intervals are inclusive, the lower limits are not.)

**SEASON: JANUARY - AUGUST**

Arrow-tooth Catch (lbs/h)	Latitude	Depth (Fathoms)	Number of Observed Tows	Number of Tows with $\geq 1$ Halibut	Wgt. (kg., md) Halibut per Hour	Proportion Legal by Weight	2001 Wgt. (kg., md) Halibut per Hour
< 20	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 100	155	41	3.59	0.873	
		100 - 300	110	12	0.50	0.928	
		300 - 700	146	1	0.01	1.000	
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 100	533	214	3.52	0.756	5.25
		100 - 300	168	60	2.23	0.949	8.12
		300 - 700	117	2	0.08	0.921	0.03
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 100	217	153	13.70	0.500	32.65
		100 - 300	16	11	3.99	1.000	6.47
		300 - 700	18	2	0.10	1.000	0.11
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 100	343	266	41.02	0.319	16.41
		100 - 300	63	51	20.13	0.811	26.71
		300 - 700	20	2	0.14	1.000	4.05
> 20	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 100	21	7	3.02	0.936	
		100 - 300	8	2	5.68	0.950	
		300 - 700	0	0			
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 100	38	20	7.61	0.889	14.15
		100 - 300	59	28	5.75	0.944	13.07
		300 - 700	0	0			1.10
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 100	21	15	19.39	0.573	21.24
		100 - 300	13	7	3.58	0.972	70.71
		300 - 700	0	0			7.00
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 100	140	132	96.54	0.263	68.60
		100 - 300	111	100	73.91	0.825	114.68
		300 - 700	11	6	12.44	0.901	

Table 3. Continued.

SEASON: SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER

Arrow-tooth Catch (lbs/h)	Latitude	Depth (Fathoms)	Number of Observed Tows	Number of Tows with $\geq 1$ Halibut	Wgt. (kg., md) Halibut per Hour	Proportion Legal by Weight	2001 Wgt. (kg., md) Halibut per Hour
< 20	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 100	105	14	0.78	1.000	
		100 - 300	13	2	0.21		
		300 - 700	10	0	0.00		
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 100	119	38	2.60		2.48
		100 - 300	49	25	3.63		12.48
		300 - 700	46	0	0.00		0.04
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 100	16	0	0.00		7.02
		100 - 300	0	0	15.78		3.03
		300 - 700	3	0	0.00		0.46
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 100	54	9	2.02	0.540	18.68
		100 - 300	6	5	59.99		36.85
		300 - 700	0	0			3.73
> 20	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 100	1	1	6.10		
		100 - 300	0	0	15.78		
		300 - 700	0	0			
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 100	24	14	7.46		1.89
		100 - 300	23	15	67.69		8.00
		300 - 700	0	0			
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 100	0	0			2.97
		100 - 300	0	0			
		300 - 700	0	0			
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 100	6	3	48.56		14.75
		100 - 300	9	6	51.99		
		300 - 700	0	0			

Table 4. Halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fishery for pink shrimp off the west coast, reported by Williams et al. (1998).

Year	Trawl Effort (hours)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (numbers)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (kg., round)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (lbs, net)	Estimated Total Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)	Legal-sized Bycatch Mortality (lbs, net)
1987	193,694	20,536	98,983	163,693	81,847	50,745
1992	107,015	10,244	51,671	85,450	42,725	26,490
1995	----	----	----	100,000	50,000	31,000

**Note:** For 1995, bycatch estimates for Areas 1B-2A off California are not included. Mortality estimated at 50% of bycatch. Proportion of legal-sized mortality (>81 cm) is assumed to be 62% by weight. 1 kg, round = 1.65375 lbs, net weight.

Table 5. Estimated 1998 halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fishery for pink shrimp (landings into Oregon ports only). (Bob Hannah, personal communication, October 8, 1999 memo). The data sources numbered 1-3 are described in the text.

Data Source	Single-rig Equivalent Hours (sreh) Observed	Bycatch Rate (lbs/sreh)	Fishing Effort (sreh) in Oregon Landings	Bycatch Estimate (kg., round)	Bycatch Mortality (lbs, net)	Legal-sized Bycatch Mortality (lbs, net)
1 - Pikitch	---	1.22	34,543	19,155	15,839	9,820
2 - Hannah	236.5	2.60	34,543	40,824	33,756	20,929
3 - EDCP	551.1	2.12	34,543	33,287	27,524	17,065

**Note:** Mortality estimated at 50% of bycatch. Proportion of legal-sized mortality (>81 cm) is assumed to be 62% by weight, as in the bottom trawl fishery. 1 kg, round = 1.65375 pounds, net weight.

Table 6. Trawl effort (hours) from Oregon and Washington logbook data for catch of arrowtooth flounder less than or equal to 20 lbs per hour. (The upper limits on the all intervals are inclusive, the lower limits are not.)

Latitude	Depth	2002	2002
40.667- 42.667	(0-100]	409	29
40.667- 42.667	100-300	568	197
40.667- 42.667	300-700	2439	1498
42.667- 46.667	0-100	6828	1717
42.667- 46.667	100-300	6375	1275
42.667- 46.667	300-700	7543	3604
46.667- 47.667	0-100	1581	320
46.667- 47.667	100-300	584	68
46.667- 47.667	300-700	1262	507
47.667- 48.667	0-100	1733	690
47.667- 48.667	100-300	720	336
47.667- 48.667	300-700	1050	604

Note: The first column labeled '2002' is for January-August, the second is for September-December.

Table 6. (Continued.) Trawl effort (hours) from Oregon and Washington logbook data for catch of arrowtooth flounder greater than 20 lbs per hour. (The upper limits on the all intervals are inclusive, the lower limits are not.)

Latitude	Depth	2002	2002
40.667- 42.667	0-100	14	52
40.667- 42.667	100-300	45	0
40.667- 42.667	300-700	0	0
42.667- 46.667	0-100	711	1038
42.667- 46.667	100-300	2397	167
42.667- 46.667	300-700	160	35
46.667- 47.667	0-100	568	179
46.667- 47.667	100-300	329	14
46.667- 47.667	300-700	15	0
47.667- 48.667	0-100	2224	72
47.667- 48.667	100-300	1912	163
47.667- 48.667	300-700	135	0

Note: The first column labeled '2002' is for January-August, the second is for September-December.

Table 7. Halibut bycatch and mortality in the Oregon and Washington bottom trawl fisheries for groundfish off the west coast. The new 2002 data are estimated from bycatch rates (Table 3) observed by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program and applied to annual total groundfish bottom trawl effort (Table 6).

Year	Trawl Effort (hours)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (numbers)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (kg., round)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (lbs, net)	Est. Total Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)	Estimated Legal-Sized Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)
1998	92,294	164,961	1,259,374	2,082,690	1,041,345	691,755
1999	81,420	147,995	1,144,236	1,892,280	946,140	638,091
2000	70,363	122,234	944,120	1,561,338	780,669	523,097
2001	67,199	124,969	962,348	1,591,482	795,741	532,912
2002	52,168	NA	618,913	1,023,527	511,764	286,221

Note: Halibut bycatch by California bottom trawl fishery is not included. Mortality estimated at 50% of bycatch. Proportion of legal-sized mortality (>81 cm) estimated from length frequencies of fish measured by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. 1 kg, round = 1.65375 pounds, net weight.

Table 8. Summary of total estimated bycatch mortality of Pacific halibut, in thousands of pounds, net weight, by fishery in 2A. Bycatch mortality estimates for 1977-1997 are reported from Table 6 in Williams, et al. 1998.

Year	Foreign, JV & Catcher-Proc.	Groundfish Trawls	Shrimp Trawls	Hook & Line	TOTAL
1977	3	308	82	16	409
1978	2	308	82	16	408
1979	1	308	82	16	407
1980	1	308	82	16	407
1981	Trace	308	82	16	406
1982	Trace	308	82	16	406
1983	1	308	82	16	407
1984	Trace	308	82	16	406
1985	Trace	308	82	16	406
1986	1	308	82	16	407
1987	1	308	82	16	407
1988	1	308	82	16	407
1989	2	308	82	16	408
1990	2	308	82	16	408
1991	2	308	82	16	408
1992	0	385	43	16	444
1993	0	385	43	16	444
1994	0	385	43	16	444
1995	0	548	50	16	614
1996	0	548	50	16	614
1997	0	548	50	16	614
1998	0	1,041	25	---	---
1999	---	946	---	---	---
2000	---	781	---	---	---
2001	---	796	---	---	---
2002	---	512	---	---	---

**Note:** Bycatch mortality by groundfish trawls in 1998-2002 does not include fisheries off California. Bycatch mortality by shrimp trawls in 1998 does not include fisheries off California and Washington.

Table 9. Summary of estimated mortality of legal-sized Pacific halibut, in thousands of pounds, net weight, by fishery in 2A. The bycatch mortality estimate for legal-sized halibut for 2002 is from this report. (Sums across fisheries may not always equal the TOTAL due to rounding.)

Year	Foreign, JV & Catcher- Proc.	Groundfish Trawls	Shrimp Trawls	Hook & Line	TOTAL
1977	2	191	51	10	254
1978	1	191	51	10	253
1979	0.6	191	51	10	252
1980	0.6	191	51	10	252
1981	Trace	191	51	10	252
1982	Trace	191	51	10	252
1983	0.6	191	51	10	252
1984	Trace	191	51	10	252
1985	Trace	191	51	10	252
1986	0.6	191	51	10	252
1987	0.6	191	51	10	252
1988	0.6	191	51	10	252
1989	1	191	51	10	253
1990	1	191	51	10	253
1991	1	191	51	10	253
1992	0	239	27	10	275
1993	0	239	27	10	275
1994	0	239	27	10	275
1995	0	340	31	10	381
1996	0	340	31	10	381
1997	0	340	31	10	381
1998	0	692	16	---	---
1999	---	638	---	---	---
2000	---	523	---	---	---
2001	---	533	---	---	---
2002	---	286	---	---	---

Note: Bycatch mortality by groundfish trawls in 1998-2002 does not include fisheries off California. Bycatch mortality by shrimp trawls in 1998 does not include fisheries off California and Washington.

## STATUS OF 2003 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES

Situation: The 2003 Pacific halibut season in the Council management area is winding down. After August 15, 2003, only a few fisheries remain, including incidental halibut catch in the directed longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington, recreational fisheries in the Washington south coast, Columbia River, Oregon central coast, and southern Oregon/California areas, and the tribal Ceremonial and Subsistence fishery.

The NMFS Report (Exhibit G.1.a) provides a preliminary report summarizing the harvest in the 2003 Pacific halibut fisheries in Area 2A to date.

### **Council Task:**

#### **1. Receive and discuss information.**

#### Reference Materials:

1. Preliminary Report on the 2003 Pacific Halibut Fisheries in Area 2A (Exhibit G.1.a, NMFS Report).

#### Agenda Order:

- a. NMFS Report
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. Council Discussion

Yvonne de Reynier

PFMC  
08/21/03

## REPORT ON THE 2003 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A

The 2003 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 1,310,000 lb set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as sub-TACs as follows:

Treaty Indian	483,500 lb (35.0% + 25,000 lb)
Non-Treaty Total	826,500 lb (65.0% - 25,000 lb)
Non-Treaty Commercial	332,001 lb (includes incidental sablefish)
Washington Sport	232,499 lb
Oregon/California Sport	262,001 lb

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

### **NON-TREATY COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**

A sub-TAC of 262,001 lb (31.7% of the non-treaty 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 39,300 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-treaty 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 fishery from May 1 through August 6, 2003. Of the halibut taken in the salmon troll fisheries 3,325 lb were landed in Oregon (3,100 in May/June and 225 in July/August) and 38,592 lb were landed in Washington (20,196 in May/June and 18,392 in July/August,) for a total of 41,917 lb (6.7% under quota.)

**Directed fishery targeting on halibut** A quota of 222,700 lb (85% of the non-treaty 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 25, July 9, July 23, August 6, August 20, and September 3. 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	6/25/03 Opening	7/9/03 Opening	7/23/03 Opening	8/6/03 Opening
A 0 - 25 ft.	405 lb	445 lb	295 lb	210 lb
B 26 - 30 ft.	505 lb	555 lb	370 lb	265 lb
C 31 - 35 ft.	805 lb	890 lb	590 lb	420 lb
D 36 - 40 ft.	2,220 lb	2,455 lb	1,620 lb	1,160 lb
E 41 - 45 ft.	2,390 lb	2,640 lb	1,745 lb	1,245 lb
F 46 - 50 ft.	2,860 lb	3,160 lb	2,085 lb	1,490 lb
G 51 - 55 ft.	3,190 lb	3,525 lb	2,330 lb	1,665 lb
H 56+ ft.	4,800 lb	5,300 lb	3,500 lb	2,500 lb

- The June 25 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 80,000 lb, leaving 142,700 lb for later openings.
- The July 9 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 85,000 lb, leaving 57,700 lb for later openings.
- The July 23 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 35,000 lb, leaving 22,700 lb for later openings.
- The August 6 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 31,000 lb, exceeding the fishery's quota by 3.7%. The directed fishery is closed for the remainder of 2003.

**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, 2003, and closes October 31, 2003, although incidental halibut retention was not available until May 1. Properly licensed vessels could retain up to 150 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 2002 IPHC license. Incidental halibut landings in the primary sablefish fishery through August 8, 2003 were 40,949 lb.

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

A sub-TAC of 476,111 lb (68.3% of non-treaty 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 63,278 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 May 8 and continued through July 18, 5 days per week (closed Tuesday and Wednesday). The Western Region opened on May 22 and continued through August 1, 5 days per week. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person. Catch totals from this sub-area 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 113,915 lb (49.0% of the Washington sport allocation). The fishery was divided into two seasons with 31,896 lb set aside for the second season. The fishery was to open May 1 and continue 5 days per week (closed Sunday and Monday) until 82,019 lb were estimated to have been taken. The second season was to open on June 18 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 1 and continued 5 days a week, until May 17, when 67,704 lb was estimated to have been taken. The remaining quota for the May season, 14,315 lb, was not enough to continue the 5 day per week fishery, but did allow another May opening on May 23 and 24 (Friday-Saturday). The total halibut taken from these two openings was 82,061 lb.
- The season re-opened June 18-21, during which 20,200 lb were taken, for a total of 102,261 lb, leaving approximately 11,654 lb in the subarea quota.

- The halibut remaining in the quota was estimated to be enough for another day of North Coast fishing. The season re-opened on August 9, when an additional 7,477 lb was taken. The fishery was closed with 4,177 lb remaining in the quota (3.7% under quota.)

**Washington South Coast Subarea** (landings in Westport). The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 48,623 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. This fishery was modified inseason to provide a 7 day per week fishery in all areas, beginning June 27, responding to greater angler interest in salmon fishing and low halibut catch rates. The subarea remains open as of August 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Columbia River Subarea** (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon). This sport fishery subarea was allocated 11,923 lb, consisting of 2.7% of the Washington sport allocation plus 2.0% of 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 is the first halibut taken of 32 inches or greater in length.

- This 7 day per week fishery began on May 1 and remains open as of August 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Oregon North Central and South Central Coast Subareas** (Cape Falcon to the Siuslaw River and the Siuslaw River to Humbug Mountain). These two sport fishery subareas have traditionally been managed as a single unit with separate allocations for the May all-depth fishery. The North Central Coast subarea was allocated 230,639 (88.03% of the Oregon/California sport allocation) and the South Central Subarea was allocated 18,261 lb (6.97% of the Oregon/California sport allocation).

Three seasons were set for these combined subareas: 1) a restricted depth (inside 30 fathoms) fishery to commence on May 1 and continue every day until the combined North Central and South Central nearshore sub-quota of 19,797 lb was estimated to have been taken; 2) a fixed May season in all depths that was to open on May 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, and 17, with catch allocations of 156,835 lb in the North Central Subarea and 14,609 lb in the South Central Subarea, and; 3) a fixed August season in all depths from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain on August 2 and/or 3, or until the combined all-depth subquotas for Oregon south of Cape Falcon totaling 229,103 lb were estimated to have been taken. The daily bag limit was the first halibut taken of 32 inches or greater in length.

- The inside 30-fathom fishery opened on May 1 and is scheduled to close September 30. As of August 10, 805 lb of halibut had been taken in the inside 30-fathom fishery.
- The first fixed all-depth season in May, held May 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, and 17, had a total catch of 51,377 lb in the North and 14,904 in the South, which left enough halibut in the North Central Coast quota to allow openings on additional days during the May-June period. The all-depth season re-opened on the following pre-scheduled days: June 19, 20, and 21. During these three all-depth days in June, the North Central fisheries took an additional 37,008 lb, leaving 68,450 lb in the May-June all-depth quota. This remaining poundage was made available to the August-September all-depth fishery .
- The August all-depth season draws on the combined quotas of the Oregon north central and south central fisheries. The initial 57,660 lb available to this fishery was supplemented by the 68,155 lb underage from the May-June all-depth fisheries. As a result of this revision, 125,815 lb was available to the August 1, 2, 8 and 9 all-depth fishery. The combined central coast fisheries took 38,928 lb during those open days, which was far enough below the available quota amount to allow additional opening days in August and September. The all-depth season re-opened on August 22 and 23.

**South of Humbug Mountain, Oregon and off the California Coast Subarea** This sport fishery was allocated 6,809 lb (3.0% of the Oregon/California quota). This area had a pre-set season of 7 days per week from May 1 to September 30 and a bag limit of the first halibut taken of 32 inches or greater in length.

- This season is scheduled to remain open through September 30. No catch estimates are available for this fishery, but it is very unlikely that this subarea quota will be taken.

### **TRIBAL FISHERIES**

A sub-TAC of 483,500 lb (35% + 25,000 lb of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to Tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 27,000 lb would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 456,500 lb was allocated to the commercial fishery. The tribal commercial fishery was scheduled to open on March 1, 2003 pursuant to regulations adopted by the IPHC and continue until the tribal commercial subquota was reached. The tribal C&S fishery was scheduled to run throughout the year.

The tribal commercial halibut allocation is divided so that approximately 80-85% of the allocation is taken in brief, open competition derbies, in which vessels from all halibut tribes compete against each other for landings. In addition to these unrestricted openings, 15-20% of the commercial allocation is reserved for “restricted” fisheries, in which participating vessels from all halibut tribes are restricted to a per vessel and per day poundage limit for halibut (500 lb per vessel/day for 2003 restricted fisheries.)

Fishery	Dates Held	Pounds Landed	# of Landings
Unrestricted, 48-hour	March 1-3	150,199 lb	47 landings
Restricted, 500 lb/vessel/day	March 1- March 31, April 2-6	88,160 lb	252 landings
Unrestricted, 36-hour	April 15-16	166,442 lb	39 landings
Restricted, 500 lb/vessel/day	April 23-April 30	59,975 lb	157 landings
Total		464,776 lb	495 landings

The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and tribal estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2004.

2003 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds)				
	Quota	Inseason Revised Quota	Catch	Over/Under
TREATY INDIAN	483,500			
Commercial	456,500		464,776	1.8%
Ceremonial & Subsistence	27,000			
NON-TREATY	826,500			
COMMERCIAL	332,000			
Troll	39,300		41,917	6.7%
Directed	222,700		231,000	3.7%
Sablefish Incidental	70,000			
SPORT	494,500			
WA Sport	232,499			
OR/CA Sport	262,001			
WA Inside Waters	63,278			
WA North Coast	113,915		109,738	-3.7%
WA South Coast	48,623			
Col River Area	11,923			
OR Central Coast	248,901			
Inside 30 fathoms (all areas)	19,797			
Spring (North Central Coast)	156,835	156,835	88,385	-43.6%
Spring (South Central Coast)	14,609	14,609	14,904	2.0%
Summer (all areas)	57,660	125,815 ★		
OR S. of Humbug/CA	7,860		7,860 (est.)	
TOTAL	1,310,000			

★ Although the initial allocation to the August all-depth fisheries was 57,660, the quota was augmented by the underage from the May all-depth fisheries, resulting in 68,155 lb being added to the August all-depth.

## 2003 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR AREA 2A

### (a) FRAMEWORK

This Plan constitutes a framework that shall be applied to the annual Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) approved by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) each January. The framework shall be implemented in both IPHC regulations and domestic regulations (implemented by NMFS) as published in the *Federal Register*.

### (b) ALLOCATIONS

(1) Except as provided below under (b)(2), this Plan allocates 35 percent of the Area 2A TAC to U.S. treaty Indian tribes in the State of Washington in subarea 2A-1, and 65 percent to non-Indian fisheries in Area 2A. The allocation to non-Indian fisheries is divided into three shares, with the Washington sport fishery (north of the Columbia River) receiving 36.6 percent, the Oregon/California sport fishery receiving 31.7 percent, and the commercial fishery receiving 31.7 percent. Allocations within the non-Indian commercial and sport fisheries are described in sections (e) and (f) of this Plan. These allocations may be changed if new information becomes available that indicates a change is necessary and/or the Pacific Fishery Management Council takes action to reconsider its allocation recommendations. Such changes will be made after appropriate rulemaking is completed and published in the *Federal Register*.

(2) To meet the requirements of U.S. District Court Stipulation and Order (*U.S., et al. v. State of Washington, et al.* Case No. 9213 Phase I, Subproceeding No. 92-1, Stipulation and Order, July 7, 1999), 25,000 lb (11.3 mt) dressed weight of halibut will be transferred from the non-treaty Area 2A halibut allocation to the treaty allocation in Area 2A-1 each year for eight years commencing in the year 2000 and ending in the year 2007, for a total transfer of 200,000 lb (90.7 mt). To accelerate the total transfer, more than 25,000 lb (11.3 mt) may be transferred in any year upon prior written agreement of the parties to the stipulation.

### (c) SUBQUOTAS

The allocations in this Plan are distributed as subquotas to ensure that any overage or underage by any one group will not affect achievement of an allocation set aside for another group. The specific allocative measures in the treaty Indian, non-Indian commercial, and non-Indian sport fisheries in Area 2A are described in paragraphs (d) through (f) of this Plan.

### (d) TREATY INDIAN FISHERIES

Except as provided above in (b)(2), thirty-five percent of the Area 2A TAC is allocated to 12 treaty Indian tribes in subarea 2A-1, which includes that portion of Area 2A north of Point Chehalis, WA

(46°53'18" N. lat.) and east of 125°44'00" W. long. The treaty Indian allocation is to provide for a tribal commercial fishery and a ceremonial and subsistence fishery. These two fisheries are managed separately; any overages in the commercial fishery do not affect the ceremonial and subsistence fishery. The commercial fishery is managed to achieve an established subquota, while the ceremonial and subsistence fishery is managed for a year-round season. The tribes will estimate the ceremonial and subsistence harvest expectations in January of each year, and the remainder of the allocation will be for the tribal commercial fishery.

- (1) The tribal ceremonial and subsistence fishery begins on January 1 and continues through December 31. No size or bag limits will apply to the ceremonial and subsistence fishery, except that when the tribal commercial fishery is closed, treaty Indians may take and retain not more than two halibut per day per person for subsistence purposes. Ceremonial fisheries shall be managed by tribal regulations promulgated inseason to meet the needs of specific ceremonial events. Halibut taken for ceremonial and subsistence purposes may not be offered for sale or sold.
- (2) The tribal commercial fishery begins between March 1 and April 1 and continues through November 15 or until the tribal commercial subquota is taken, whichever is earlier. Any halibut sold by treaty Indians during the commercial fishing season must comply with IPHC regulations on size limits for the non-Indian fishery.

#### (e) NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

The non-Indian commercial fishery is allocated 31.7 percent of the non-Indian share of the Area 2A TAC for a directed halibut fishery and an incidental catch fishery during the salmon troll fishery. The non-Indian commercial allocation is approximately 20.6 percent of the Area 2A TAC. Incidental catch of halibut in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA will be authorized if the Washington sport allocation exceeds 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) as described in section (e)(3) of this Plan. The structuring and management of these three fisheries is as follows.

##### (1) Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery.

Fifteen percent of the non-Indian commercial fishery allocation is allocated to the salmon troll fishery in Area 2A as an incidental catch during salmon fisheries. The quota for this incidental catch fishery is approximately 3.1 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The primary management objective for this fishery is to harvest the troll quota as an incidental catch during the May/June salmon troll fishery. The secondary management objective is to harvest the remaining troll quota as an incidental catch during the July through September salmon troll fishery.

- (i) The Council will recommend landing restrictions at its spring public meeting each year to control the amount of halibut caught incidentally in the troll fishery. The landing restrictions will be based on the number of incidental harvest license applications submitted to the IPHC, halibut catch rates, the amount of allocation, and other pertinent

factors, and may include catch or landing ratios, landing limits, or other means to control the rate of halibut harvest. NMFS will publish the landing restrictions annually in the *Federal Register*, along with the salmon management measures.

(ii) Inseason adjustments to the incidental halibut catch fishery.

(A) NMFS may make inseason adjustments to the landing restrictions, if requested by the Council Chairman, as necessary to assure that the incidental harvest rate is appropriate for salmon and halibut availability, does not encourage target fishing on halibut, and does not increase the likelihood of exceeding the quota for this fishery. In determining whether to make such inseason adjustments, NMFS will consult with the applicable state representative(s), a representative of the Council's Salmon Advisory Sub-Panel, and Council staff.

(B) Notice and effectiveness of inseason adjustments will be made by NMFS in accordance with paragraph (f)(5) of this Plan.

(iii) If the overall quota for the non-Indian, incidental commercial troll fishery has not been harvested by salmon trollers during the May/June fishery, additional landings of halibut caught incidentally during salmon troll fisheries will be allowed in July and will continue until the amount of halibut that was initially available as quota for the troll fishery is taken or the overall non-Indian commercial quota is estimated to have been achieved by the IPHC. Landing restrictions implemented for the May/June salmon troll fishery will apply for as long as this fishery is open. Notice of the July opening of this fishery will be announced on the NMFS hotline (206) 526-6667 or (800) 662-9825. No halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery will be allowed in July unless the July opening has been announced on the NMFS hotline.

(iv) A salmon troller may participate in this fishery or in the directed commercial fishery targeting halibut, but not in both.

(2) Directed fishery targeting halibut.

Eighty-five percent of the non-Indian commercial fishery allocation is allocated to the directed fishery targeting halibut (e.g., longline fishery) in southern Washington, Oregon, and California. The allocation for this directed catch fishery is approximately 17.5 percent of the Area 2A TAC. This fishery is confined to the area south of Subarea 2A-1 (south of Point Chehalis, WA; 46°53'18" N. lat.). This fishery may also be managed with closed areas designed to protect overfished groundfish species. Any such closed areas will be described annually in federal halibut regulations and published in the *Federal Register*. The commercial fishery opening date(s), duration, and vessel trip limits, as necessary to ensure that the quota for the non-Indian commercial fisheries is not exceeded, will be determined by the IPHC and implemented in IPHC regulations. If the IPHC determines that poundage remaining in the quota for the non-

Indian commercial fisheries is insufficient to allow an additional day of directed halibut fishing, the remaining halibut will be made available for incidental catch of halibut in the fall salmon troll fisheries (independent of the incidental harvest allocation).

(3) Incidental catch in the sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis.

If the Area 2A TAC is greater than 900,000 lb (408.2 mt), the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis will be allocated the Washington sport allocation that is in excess of 214,110 lb (97.1 mt), provided a minimum of 10,000 lb (4.5 mt) is available (i.e., the Washington sport allocation is 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) or greater). If the amount above 214,110 lb (97.1 mt) is less than 10,000 lb (4.5 mt), then the excess will be allocated to the Washington sport subareas according to section (f) of this Plan. The amount of halibut allocated to the sablefish fishery will be shared as follows: up to 70,000 lb of halibut to the primary sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis. Any remaining allocation will be distributed to the Washington sport fishery among the four subareas according to the sharing described in the Plan, Section (f)(1).

The Council will recommend landing restrictions at its spring public meeting each year to control the amount of halibut caught incidentally in this fishery. The landing restrictions will be based on the amount of the allocation and other pertinent factors, and may include catch or landing ratios, landing limits, or other means to control the rate of halibut landings. NMFS will publish the landing restrictions annually in the Federal Register.

(4) Commercial license restrictions/declarations.

Commercial fishers must choose either (1) to operate in the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A and/or retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA or (2) to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery. Commercial fishers operating in the directed halibut fishery and/or retaining halibut incidentally caught in the primary directed sablefish fishery must send their license application to the IPHC postmarked no later than April 30, or the first weekday in May, if April 30 falls on a weekend, in order to obtain a license to fish for halibut in Area 2A. Commercial fishers operating in the salmon troll fishery who seek to retain incidentally caught halibut must send their application for a license to the IPHC for the incidental catch of halibut in Area 2A postmarked no later than March 31, or the first weekday in April, if March 31 falls on a weekend. Fishing vessels licensed by IPHC to fish commercially in Area 2A are prohibited from operating in the sport fisheries in Area 2A.

(f) SPORT FISHERIES

The non-Indian sport fisheries are allocated 68.3 percent of the non-Indian share, which is approximately 44.4 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The allocation is further divided as subquotas among seven geographic subareas.

- (1) Subarea management. The sport fishery is divided into seven sport fishery subareas, each having separate allocations and management measures as follows.

(i) Washington inside waters (Puget Sound) subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 23.5 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea is defined as all U.S. waters east of the mouth of the Sekiu River, as defined by a line extending from 48°17'30" N. lat., 124°23'70" W. long. north to 48°24'10" N. lat., 124°23'70" W. long., including Puget Sound. The structuring objective for this subarea is to provide a stable sport fishing opportunity and maximize the season length. To that end, the Puget Sound subarea may be divided into two regions with separate seasons to achieve a fair harvest opportunity within the subarea. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, fixed seasons, which may vary and apply to different regions within the subarea, will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the quota. Inseason adjustments may be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made postseason. The fishery will open in April or May and continue until a date established preseason (and published in the sport fishery regulations) when the quota is predicted to be taken, or until September 30, whichever is earlier. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to develop recommendations to NMFS on the opening date and weekly structure of the fishery each year. The daily bag limit is one fish per person, with no size limit.

(ii) Washington north coast subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 62.2 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea is defined as all U.S. waters west of the mouth of the Sekiu River, as defined above in paragraph (f)(1)(i), and north of the Queets River (47°31'42" N. lat.). The management objective for this subarea is to provide a quality recreational fishing opportunity during May and the latter part of June. To meet this objective, the north coast subarea quota will be allocated as follows: 72% for the month of May and 28% for the latter part of June. The fishery will open on May 1, and continue 5 days per week (Tuesday through Saturday) until the May allocation is projected to be taken. If May 1 falls on a Sunday or Monday, the fishery will open on the following Tuesday. The fishery will then reopen on the third Wednesday in June and continue until the remaining quota is projected to be taken, 5 days per week (Tuesday through Saturday.) No sport fishing for halibut is allowed after September 30. The daily bag limit in all fisheries is one halibut per person with no size limit. A "C-shaped" yelloweye rockfish conservation area that is closed to recreational groundfish and halibut fishing is defined by the following coordinates in the order listed:

48°18' N. lat.; 125°18' W. long.;  
48°18' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;  
48°11' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;  
48°11' N. lat.; 125°11' W. long.;  
48°04' N. lat.; 125°11' W. long.;  
48°04' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;  
48°00' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;  
48°00' N. lat.; 125°18' W. long.;  
and connecting back to 48°18' N. lat.; 125°18' W. long.

(iii) Washington south coast subarea.

This sport fishery is allocated 12.3 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea is defined as waters south of the Queets River (47°31'42" N. lat.) and north of Leadbetter Point (46°38'10" N. lat.). The structuring objective for this subarea is to maximize the season length, while maintaining a quality fishing experience. The fishery will open on May 1. If May 1 falls on a Friday or Saturday, the fishery will open on the following Sunday. The fishery will be open Sunday through Thursday in all areas, except where prohibited, and the fishery will be open 7 days per week in the area from Queets River south to 47°00'00" N. lat. and east of 124°40'00". The fishery will continue until September 30, or until the quota is achieved, whichever occurs first. Subsequent to this closure, if any remaining quota is insufficient for an offshore fishery, but is sufficient for a nearshore fishery, the area from the Queets River south to 47°00'00" N. lat. and east of 124°40'00" W. long. will reopen for 7 days per week until either the remaining subarea quota is estimated to have been taken and the season is closed by the IPHC, or until September 30, whichever occurs first. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit.

(iv) Columbia River subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 2.0 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 4 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea also is allocated 2.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation. This subarea is defined as waters south of Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38'10" N. lat.) and north of Cape Falcon, OR (45°46'00" N. lat.). The fishery will open on May 1, and continue 7 days per week until the subquota is estimated to have been taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier. The daily bag limit is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length.

(v) Oregon north central coast subarea.

If the Area 2A TAC is 388,350 lb (176.2 mt) and greater, this subarea extends from Cape Falcon to the Siuslaw River at the Florence north jetty (44°01'08" N. lat.) and is allocated 88.03 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation, which is approximately 18.13 percent of the Area 2A TAC. If the Area 2A TAC is less than 388,350 lb (176.2 mt), this subarea extends from Cape Falcon to the Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42°40'30" N. lat.) and is allocated 95.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation. The structuring objectives for this subarea are to provide two periods of fishing opportunity in Spring and in Summer in productive deeper water areas along the coast, principally for charterboat and larger private boat anglers, and provide a period of fishing opportunity in the summer for nearshore waters for small boat anglers. Fixed season dates will be established preseason for the Spring and Summer openings and will not be modified inseason except that the Summer openings may be modified inseason if the combined Oregon all-depth quotas are estimated to be achieved. Recent year catch rates will be used as a guideline for estimating the catch rate for the Spring and Summer fisheries each year. The number of fixed season days established will be based on the projected catch per day with the intent of not exceeding the subarea season subquotas. ODFW will monitor landings and provide a post-season estimate of catch within 2 weeks of the end of the fixed season. If sufficient catch remains for an additional day of fishing after the Spring season or the Summer season, openings will be provided if possible in May - July and August -October respectively. Potential additional open dates for both the Spring and Summer seasons will be announced preseason. If a decision is made inseason to allow fishing on one or more additional days, notice of the opening will be announced on the NMFS hotline (206) 526-6667 or (800) 662-9825. No all-depth halibut fishing will be allowed on the additional dates unless the opening date has been announced on the NMFS hotline. If pre-season catch and effort estimates determine catch rates and quotas allocated to the Oregon North Coast and South Coast subareas will result in Spring seasons of differing durations, quota may be shifted pre-season to ensure that the two subareas have the same number of fixed season days. Any poundage remaining unharvested in the Spring all-depth subquota will be added to the Summer all-depth sub-quota. Any poundage that is not needed to extend the inside 30-fathom fishery through to October 31 will be added to the Summer all-depth season if it can be used, and any poundage remaining unharvested from the Summer all-depth fishery will be added to the inside 30-fathom fishery subquotas. The daily bag limit for all seasons is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length. ODFW will sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to develop recommendations to NMFS on the open dates for each season each year. The three seasons for this subarea are as follows.

- A. The first season opens on May 1, only in waters inside the 30-fathom (55 m) curve, and continues daily until the combined subquotas for the north central and south central inside 30-fathom fisheries (7 percent of the north central subarea quota plus 20 percent of the south central subarea quota) are taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier. Poundage that is estimated to be above the amount needed to keep this season open through October 31 will be transferred to the Summer all-depth fishery if it can be used. Any overage in the all-depth fisheries would not affect achievement of allocation set aside for the inside 30-fathom curve fishery.

B. The second season is an all-depth fishery that begins on the second Thursday in May and is allocated 68 percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota for this season. No inseason adjustments will be made, except that additional opening days (established preseason) may be allowed if any quota for this season remains unharvested. The fishery will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday) if the season is for 4 or fewer fishing days. The fishery will be structured for 3 days per week (Thursday through Saturday) if the season is for 5 or more fishing days.

C. The last season is a coastwide (Cape Falcon, Oregon to Humbug Mountain, Oregon) all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August and is allocated 25 percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the combined Oregon all-depth quotas for the Central and South Oregon Coast subareas. The fishery will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday). No inseason adjustments will be made (unless the combined Oregon all-depth quotas are estimated to be achieved), except that additional opening days may be allowed if quota remains unharvested. If quota remains unharvested, but is insufficient for one day of an all-depth fishery, that additional quota will be transferred to the fisheries inside the 30-fathom (55 m) curve.

(vi) Oregon south central coast subarea.

If the Area 2A TAC is 388,350 lb (176.2 mt) and greater, this subarea extends from the Siuslaw River at the Florence north jetty (44°01'08" N. lat.) to Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42°40'30" N. lat.) and is allocated 6.97 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation, which is approximately 1.43 percent of the Area 2A TAC. If the Area 2A TAC is less than 388,350 lb (176.2 mt), this subarea will be included in the Oregon Central Coast subarea. The structuring objective for this subarea is to create a south coast management zone that has the same objectives as the Oregon central coast subarea and is designed to accommodate the needs of both charterboat and private boat anglers in the south coast subarea where weather and bar crossing conditions very often do not allow scheduled fishing trips. Fixed season dates will be established preseason for the Spring and Summer openings and will not be modified inseason except that the Summer openings may be modified inseason if the combined Oregon all-depth quotas are estimated to be achieved. Recent year catch rates will be used as a guideline for estimating the catch rate for the Spring and Summer fishery each year. The number of fixed season days established will be based on the projected catch per day with the intent of not exceeding the subarea season subquotas. ODFW will monitor landings and provide a post-season estimate of catch within 2 weeks of the end of the fixed season. If sufficient quota remains for an additional day of fishing after the Spring season or the Summer season, openings will be provided if possible in May -

July and August -October respectively. Potential additional open dates for both the Spring and Summer seasons will be announced preseason. If a decision is made inseason to allow fishing on one or more additional days, notice of the opening will be announced on the NMFS hotline (206) 526-6667 or (800) 662-9825. No all-depth halibut fishing will be allowed on the additional dates unless the opening date has been announced on the NMFS hotline. If pre-season catch and effort estimates determine catch rates and quotas allocated to the Oregon North Coast and South Coast subareas will result in Spring seasons of differing durations, quota may be shifted pre- season to ensure that the two subareas have the same number of fixed season days. Any poundage remaining unharvested in the Spring all-depth subquota will be added to the Summer all-depth sub-quota. Any poundage that is not needed to extend the inside 30-fathom fishery through to October 31 will be added to the Summer all-depth season if it can be used, and any poundage remaining unharvested from the August all-depth fishery will be added to the inside 30-fathom fishery subquotas. The daily bag limit for all seasons is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length. ODFW will sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to develop recommendations to NMFS on the open dates for each season each year. The three seasons for this subarea are as follows.

A. The first season opens on May 1, only in waters inside the 30-fathom (55 m) curve, and continues daily until the combined subquotas for the north central and south central inside 30-fathom fisheries (7 percent of the north central subarea quota plus 20 percent of the south central subarea quota) are taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier. Poundage that is estimated to be above the amount needed to keep this season open through October 31 will be transferred to the Summer all-depth fishery if it can be utilized. Any overage in the all-depth fisheries would not affect achievement of allocation set aside for the inside 30-fathom curve fishery.

B. The second season is an all-depth fishery that begins on the second Thursday in May and is allocated 80 percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota for this season. No inseason adjustments will be made, except that additional opening days (established preseason) may be allowed if any quota for this season remains unharvested. The fishery will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday) if the season is for 4 or fewer fishing days. The fishery will be structured for 3 days per week (Thursday through Saturday) if the season is for 5 or more fishing days.

C. The last season is a coastwide (Cape Falcon, OR to Humbug Mountain, OR) all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August. Fixed season dates will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the combined Oregon all-depth quotas for the Central and South Oregon Coast subareas. The fishery will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday

and Saturday). No inseason adjustments will be made (unless the combined Oregon all-depth quotas are estimated to be achieved), except that additional opening days may be allowed if quota remains unharvested. If quota remains unharvested, but is insufficient for one day of an all-depth fishery, that additional quota will be transferred to the fisheries inside the 30 fathom (55 m) curve.

(vii) South of Humbug Mountain subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 3.0 percent of the Oregon/California subquota, which is approximately 0.62 percent of the Area 2A TAC. This area is defined as the area south of Humbug Mountain, OR (42°40'30" N. lat.), including California waters. The structuring objective for this subarea is to provide anglers the opportunity to fish in a continuous, fixed season that is open from May 1 through September 30. The daily bag limit is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, a fixed season will be established preseason by NMFS based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota; no inseason adjustments will be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made post season.

- (2) Port of landing management. All sport fishing in Area 2A will be managed on a "port of landing" basis, whereby any halibut landed into a port will count toward the quota for the subarea in which that port is located, and the regulations governing the subarea of landing apply, regardless of the specific area of catch.
- (3) Possession limits. The sport possession limit on land is two daily bag limits, regardless of condition, but only one daily bag limit may be possessed on the vessel.
- (4) Ban on sport vessels in the commercial fishery. Vessels operating in the sport fishery for halibut in Area 2A are prohibited from operating in the commercial halibut fishery in Area 2A. Sport fishers and charterboat operators must determine, prior to May 1 of each year, whether they will operate in the commercial halibut fisheries in Area 2A which requires a commercial fishing license from the IPHC. Sport fishing for halibut in Area 2A is prohibited from a vessel licensed to fish commercially for halibut in Area 2A.
- (5) Flexible inseason management provisions.
  - (i) The Regional Administrator, NMFS Northwest Region, after consultation with the Chairman of the Pacific Fishery Management Council, the IPHC Executive Director, and the Fisheries Director(s) of the affected state(s), or their designees, is authorized to modify regulations during the season after making the following determinations.
    - (A) The action is necessary to allow allocation objectives to be met.
    - (B) The action will not result in exceeding the catch limit for the area.

- (C) If any of the sport fishery subareas north of Cape Falcon, OR are not projected to utilize their respective quotas by September 30, NMFS may take inseason action to transfer any projected unused quota to another Washington sport subarea.
  - (D) If any of the sport fishery subareas south of Leadbetter Point, WA are not projected to utilize their respective quotas by their season ending dates, NMFS may take inseason action to transfer any projected unused quota to another Oregon sport subarea.
- (ii) Flexible inseason management provisions include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (A) Modification of sport fishing periods;
  - (B) Modification of sport fishing bag limits;
  - (C) Modification of sport fishing size limits;
  - (D) Modification of sport fishing days per calendar week; and
  - (E) Modification of subarea quotas north of Cape Falcon, OR.
- (iii) Notice procedures.
- (A) Inseason actions taken by NMFS will be published in the *Federal Register*.
  - (B) Actual notice of inseason management actions will be provided by a telephone hotline administered by the Northwest Region, NMFS, at 800-662-9825 (May through September) and by U.S. Coast Guard broadcasts. These broadcasts are announced on Channel 16 VHF-FM and 2182 kHz at frequent intervals. The announcements designate the channel or frequency over which the notice to mariners will be immediately broadcast. Since provisions of these regulations may be altered by inseason actions, sport fishermen should monitor either the telephone hotline or U.S. Coast Guard broadcasts for current information for the area in which they are fishing.
- (iv) Effective dates.
- (A) Inseason actions will be effective on the date specified in the Federal Register notice or at the time that the action is filed for public inspection with the Office of the Federal Register, whichever is later.
  - (B) If time allows, NMFS will invite public comment prior to the effective date of

any inseason action filed with the *Federal Register*. If the Regional Administrator determines, for good cause, that an inseason action must be filed without affording a prior opportunity for public comment, public comments will be received for a period of 15 days after of the action in the *Federal Register*.

(C) Inseason actions will remain in effect until the stated expiration date or until rescinded, modified, or superseded. However, no inseason action has any effect beyond the end of the calendar year in which it is issued.

(v) Availability of data. The Regional Administrator will compile, in aggregate form, all data and other information relevant to the action being taken and will make them available for public review during normal office hours at the Northwest Regional Office, NMFS, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA.

(6) Sport fishery closure provisions.

The IPHC shall determine and announce closing dates to the public for any subarea in which a subquota is estimated to have been taken. When the IPHC has determined that a subquota has been taken, and has announced a date on which the season will close, no person shall sport fish for halibut in that area after that date for the rest of the year, unless a reopening of that area for sport halibut fishing is scheduled by NMFS as an inseason action, or announced by the IPHC.

(g) PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Each year, NMFS will publish a proposed rule with any regulatory modifications necessary to implement the Plan for the following year, with a request for public comments. The comment period will extend until after the IPHC annual meeting, so that the public will have the opportunity to consider the final Area 2A TAC before submitting comments. After the Area 2A TAC is known, and after NMFS reviews public comments, NMFS will implement final rules governing the sport fisheries. The final ratio of halibut to chinook to be allowed as incidental catch in the salmon troll fishery will be published with the annual salmon management measures.

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Sources: 68 FR 10989 (March 7, 2003)  
67 FR 12885 (March 20, 2002)  
66 FR 15801 (March 21, 2001)  
65 FR 14909 (March 20, 2000)  
64 FR 13519 (March 19, 1999)  
63 FR 13000 (March 17, 1998)  
62 FR 12759 (March 18, 1997)  
61 FR 11337 (March 20, 1996)  
60 FR 14651 (March 20, 1995)  
59 FR 22522 (May 2, 1994)  
58 FR 17791 (April 6, 1993)

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CATCH SHARING PLAN AND ANNUAL REGULATIONS

Situation: Each September meeting, the Council considers proposed changes to the halibut regulations. The purpose of this consideration is for relatively minor adjustments in the annual regulations (primarily in the recreational fishery) or catch sharing plan, not major changes in catch allocation among areas or gear groups.

Attachment 1 contains the current catch sharing plan. The plan includes the equitable adjustment agreement, first implemented in 2000, which transfers 25,000 pounds dressed weight of halibut from the standard non-treaty allocation to the treaty Indian allocation. This transfer is to occur each year for eight years (2000 through 2007).

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife normally hold public meetings prior to the September 2003 Council meeting to consider changes in the halibut regulations. Any recommendations resulting from these meetings will be presented for review at the September Council meeting. The Council will take final action on proposed changes for 2004 at the November 2003 meeting.

### Council Action:

1. **Adopt, for public review, any proposed changes to season structuring and minor changes to the catch sharing plan in 2004.**

### Reference Materials:

1. 2003 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A (Exhibit G.3, Attachment 1).

### Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. State Proposals
- c. Tribal Comments
- d. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- e. Public Comment
- f. **Council Action:** Adopt Proposed Changes for Public Review

Chuck Tracy  
WDFW/ODFW  
Jim Harp

PFMC  
08/21/03

## **OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE PROPOSALS FOR MODIFYING THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2004 OREGON FISHERY**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife held a public meeting on September 3, 2003 to discuss proposed changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Oregon fisheries. Based on the meeting comments, and other public input, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) consider adopting the following options for additional public comment.

1. Increased flexibility in adopting the Spring and Summer all-depth open dates from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain.

The Spring fishery (May through July) would continue to be managed under the "fixed day" concept. The "fixed" days will continue to occur on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The fixed season dates will be established preseason and will occur in consecutive weeks starting the second Thursday in May, with exceptions to avoid adverse tidal conditions. If, following the "fixed" dates, quota for this season remains unharvested, a second opening will be held. The fishery will be open every other week on Friday and Saturday except that week(s) could be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open Fridays and Saturdays will be identified preseason. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing. Any remaining quota will be added to the Summer quota.

The Summer fishery (August through October) would no longer be managed under the "fixed day" concept. The fishery will continue to be structured for Friday and Saturday openers, and will open on the first Friday in August. The fishery will be open every other week on Friday and Saturday except that week(s) could be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open Fridays and Saturdays will be identified preseason. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing. Any remaining quota will be transferred to the nearshore fishery (presently inside the 30-fathom curve).

Rationale: During both 2002 and 2003 insufficient "back-up" dates were established preseason and quota was left unharvested in 2002 and is likely to be left unharvested in 2003. Many factors contributed to this situation, including improved salmon fishing opportunity, and adverse weather during the Spring "fixed day" fishery. This proposal adds potential open days to avoid this situation in 2004.

2. Nearshore fishery depth limit

If the recreational groundfish fishery is constrained to depths within the 40-fathom curve or shallower, the outside depth of the nearshore Pacific halibut fishery, presently open inside the 30-fathom curve, would be adjusted to match the outside depth closure of the groundfish fishery.

Rationale: Enforcement

3. Nearshore fishery retention of Pacific halibut

It would be illegal to have Pacific halibut taken in the nearshore fishery (presently constrained to inside the 30-fathom curve) on board a vessel that is outside the open area.

Rationale: Enforcement

4. Combine central coast subareas during the Spring all-depth fishery

Combine the two sub-areas in the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain area during the Spring all-depth fishery.

Rationale: If the proposal to increase flexibility to the central coast all-depth fisheries is adopted (proposal 1), participants at the public meeting suggested that having a separate sub-area from the Florence north jetty to Humbug Mountain was not necessary.

5. Extend duration of South of Humbug Mountain fishery

Last year the Council adopted an October 31 ending date for the fisheries south of Cape Falcon. In the Federal Register, the area south of Humbug Mountain was not included in the season extension.

Rationale: Housekeeping

## 2003 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR OREGON SOUTH OF CAPE FALCON

### (v) Oregon north central coast subarea.

~~If the Area 2A TAC is 388,350 lb (176.2 mt) and greater, T~~this subarea extends from Cape Falcon to the Siuslaw River at the Florence north jetty (44°01'08" N. lat.) and is allocated 88.03 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation, which is approximately 18.13 percent of the Area 2A TAC. ~~If the Area 2A TAC is less than 388,350 lb (176.2 mt), this subarea extends from Cape Falcon to the Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42°40'30" N. lat.) and is allocated 95.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation. The structuring objectives for this subarea are to provide two periods of fishing opportunity in Spring and in Summer in productive deeper water areas along the coast, principally for charterboat and larger private boat anglers, and provide a period of fishing opportunity in the Summer for nearshore waters for small boat anglers. Fixed season dates will be established preseason for the Spring and Summer openings and will not be modified inseason except that the Summer-Spring openings may be modified inseason if the combined Oregon all-depth Spring and Summer season total quotas are estimated to be achieved. Recent year catch rates will be used as a guideline for estimating the catch rate for the Spring and Summer fisheries each year. The number of fixed season days established will be based on the projected catch per day with the intent of not exceeding the subarea season subquotas. ODFW will monitor landings and provide a post-season estimate of catch within 12 weeks of the end of the fixed season. If sufficient catch remains for an additional day of fishing after the Spring season or the Summer season, openings will be provided if possible in May - July and August - October respectively. Potential additional open dates for both the Spring and Summer seasons will be announced preseason. If a decision is made inseason to allow fishing on one or more additional days, notice of the opening will be announced on the NMFS hotline (206) 526-6667 or (800) 662-9825. No all-depth halibut fishing will be allowed on the additional dates unless the opening date has been announced on the NMFS hotline. If pre-season catch and effort estimates determine catch rates and quotas allocated to the Oregon North Coast and South Coast subareas will result in Spring seasons of differing durations, quota may be shifted pre-season to ensure that the two subareas have the same number of fixed season days. Any poundage remaining unharvested in the Spring all-depth subquota will be added to the Summer all-depth sub-quota. Any poundage that is not needed to extend the nearshore inside 30 fathom fishery through to October 31 will be added to the Summer all-depth season if it can be used, and any poundage remaining unharvested from the Summer all-depth fishery will be added to the nearshore inside 30 fathom fishery subquotas. The daily bag limit for all seasons is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length. ODFW will sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to develop recommendations to NMFS on the open dates for each season each year. The three seasons for this subarea are as follows.~~

A. The first season opens on May 1, only in waters inside the 30-fathom (55 m) curve or waters inside of any depth closure for groundfish fisheries out to the 40-fathom curve, and continues daily until the subquota (8% of sub-area quota) combined subquotas for the north central and south central inside 30 fathom fisheries (7 percent of the north central subarea quota plus 20 percent of the south central subarea quota) are is taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier. Poundage that is estimated to be above the amount needed to keep this season open through October 31 will be transferred to the Summer all-depth fishery if it can be used. Any overage in the all-depth fisheries would not affect achievement of allocation set aside for the *nearshore inside 30-fathom curve* fishery.

B. The second season is an all-depth fishery *with two potential openings. The first opening that* begins on the second Thursday in May and is allocated 75 ~~68~~ percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates *for the first opening* will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota for this season. The *first opening fishery* will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday) if the season is for 4 or fewer fishing days. The fishery will be structured for 3 days per week (Thursday through Saturday) if the season is for 5 or more fishing days. *The fixed season dates will be established preseason and will occur in consecutive weeks starting the second Thursday in May, with exceptions to avoid adverse tidal conditions. If, following the "fixed" dates, quota for this season remains unharvested, a second opening will be held. The fishery will be open every other week on Friday and Saturday except that week(s) could be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open Fridays and Saturdays will be identified preseason. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing. Any remaining quota will be added to the Summer quota. No inseason adjustments will be made to the established fixed season, except that additional opening days (established preseason) may be allowed if any quota for this season remains unharvested.*

C. The last season is a coastwide (Cape Falcon, Oregon to Humbug Mountain, Oregon) all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August and is allocated 25 percent of the subarea quota. ~~Fixed season dates will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the combined Oregon all depth quotas for the Central and South Oregon Coast subareas. The fishery will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday). to be open every other week on Friday and Saturday except that week(s) could be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open Fridays and Saturdays will be identified preseason. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing. No inseason adjustments will be made (unless the combined Oregon all depth quotas are estimated to be achieved), except that additional opening days may be allowed if quota remains unharvested. If quota remains unharvested, but is insufficient for one day of an all depth fishery, that~~ Any remaining additional quota will be

transferred to the *nearshore* fishery inside the 30-fathom (55-m) curve.

(vi) ~~Oregon south-central coast subarea.~~

If the Area 2A TAC is 388,350 lb (176.2 mt) and greater, this subarea extends from the Siuslaw River at the Florence north jetty (44°01'08" N. lat.) to Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42°40'30" N. lat.) and is allocated 6.97 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation, which is approximately 1.43 percent of the Area 2A TAC. If the Area 2A TAC is less than 388,350 lb (176.2 mt), this subarea will be included in the Oregon Central Coast subarea. The structuring objective for this subarea is to create a south coast management zone that has the same objectives as the Oregon central coast subarea and is designed to accommodate the needs of both charterboat and private boat anglers in the south coast subarea where weather and bar crossing conditions very often do not allow scheduled fishing trips. Fixed season dates will be established preseason for the Spring and Summer openings and will not be modified inseason except that the Summer openings may be modified inseason if the combined Oregon all-depth quotas are estimated to be achieved. Recent year catch rates will be used as a guideline for estimating the catch rate for the Spring and Summer fishery each year. The number of fixed season days established will be based on the projected catch per day with the intent of not exceeding the subarea season subquotas. ODFW will monitor landings and provide a post-season estimate of catch within 2 weeks of the end of the fixed season. If sufficient quota remains for an additional day of fishing after the Spring season or the Summer season, openings will be provided if possible in May, July and August, October respectively. Potential additional open dates for both the Spring and Summer seasons will be announced preseason. If a decision is made inseason to allow fishing on one or more additional days, notice of the opening will be announced on the NMFS hotline (206) 526-6667 or (800) 662-9825. No all-depth halibut fishing will be allowed on the additional dates unless the opening date has been announced on the NMFS hotline. If pre-season catch and effort estimates determine catch rates and quotas allocated to the Oregon North Coast and South Coast subareas will result in Spring seasons of differing durations, quota may be shifted pre-season to ensure that the two subareas have the same number of fixed season days. Any poundage remaining unharvested in the Spring all-depth subquota will be added to the Summer all-depth sub-quota. Any poundage that is not needed to extend the inside 30-fathom fishery through to October 31 will be added to the Summer all-depth season if it can be used, and any poundage remaining unharvested from the August all-depth fishery will be added to the inside 30-fathom fishery subquotas. The daily bag limit for all seasons is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length. ODFW will sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to develop recommendations to NMFS on the open dates for each season each year. The three seasons for this subarea are as follows:

~~A. The first season opens on May 1, only in waters inside the 30 fathom (55 m) curve, and continues daily until the combined subquotas for the north central and south central inside 30 fathom fisheries (7 percent of the north central subarea quota plus 20 percent of the south central subarea quota) are taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier. Poundage that is estimated to be above the amount needed to keep this season open through October 31 will be transferred to the Summer all depth fishery if it can be utilized. Any overage in the all depth fisheries would not affect achievement of allocation set aside for the inside 30 fathom curve fishery.~~

~~B. The second season is an all depth fishery that begins on the second Thursday in May and is allocated 80 percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota for this season. No inseason adjustments will be made, except that additional opening days (established preseason) may be allowed if any quota for this season remains unharvested. The fishery will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday) if the season is for 4 or fewer fishing days. The fishery will be structured for 3 days per week (Thursday through Saturday) if the season is for 5 or more fishing days.~~

~~C. The last season is a coastwide (Cape Falcon, OR to Humbug Mountain, OR) all depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August. Fixed season dates will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the combined Oregon all depth quotas for the Central and South Oregon Coast subareas. The fishery will be structured for 2 days per week (Friday and Saturday). No inseason adjustments will be made (unless the combined Oregon all depth quotas are estimated to be achieved), except that additional opening days may be allowed if quota remains unharvested. If quota remains unharvested, but is insufficient for one day of an all depth fishery, that additional quota will be transferred to the fisheries inside the 30 fathom (55 m) curve.~~

(vi)(vii) South of Humbug Mountain subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 3.0 percent of the Oregon/California subquota, which is approximately 0.62 percent of the Area 2A TAC. This area is defined as the area south of Humbug Mountain, OR (42°40'30" N. lat.), including California waters. The structuring objective for this subarea is to provide anglers the opportunity to fish in a continuous, fixed season that is open from May 1 through September 30. The daily bag limit is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, a fixed season will be established preseason by NMFS based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota; no inseason adjustments will be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made post season.

**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE 2004 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is proposing several changes to the 2004 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A to be approved for public review. Attached is a strikeout/underlined version of the proposed changes to the current Catch Sharing Plan language. The changes include:

1. Removing the requirement to “sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting” to develop the season structure for the Puget Sound recreational fishery.

Rationale: In the past, we have held public meetings to discuss the Puget Sound season structure (e.g., opening dates, season length) following the IPHC annual meeting. However, we reached agreement with our constituents who participate in the Puget Sound sport halibut fishery to keep the current regulations in place for a few years to evaluate their effectiveness. As such, there have not been any proposed changes to the season structure in recent years, nor any issues identified for discussion. Therefore, we wanted to remove the requirement to have an annual meeting in the absence of issues for discussion. We set the seasons following the IPHC annual meeting, using the approach that has been agreed upon, and communicate with our Puget Sound sport anglers via mail and e-mail. We then provide a public comment period following this notification prior to adopting the regulations for the seasons. If there are issues that need to be discussed prior to setting the annual seasons, then we would schedule a public meeting at that time. We also have an annual public process to review all Department sportfishing rules and consider regulatory changes at the end of every calendar year.

2. Change the opening date of the north coast subarea fishery from May 1 to May 15.

Rationale: Harvest rates in the north coast subarea fishery has increased significantly over the past few years such that the May quota can be achieved within a few weeks. We have received information from participants that the weather tends to be more favorable toward the end of May, and that some people would like to have the opportunity to fish during Memorial Day weekend (an opportunity that has not been available recently). By moving the opening day to May 15, it would increase the likelihood that the fishery could last through the end of May.

3. Change the opening date of the north coast area June fishery from the third Wednesday in June to “during the third week of June.”

Rationale: The north coast subarea was open June 18-21 this year, and harvest rates were less-than-expected as the result of poor tide conditions. Keeping the June opening to the third week of June would be consistent with the original intent of having a June fishery,

while removing the requirement to open on Wednesday would allow us the flexibility to choose a date inseason. This would allow us to review tidal information prior to setting a date.

4. Add a statement to the north coast, south coast, and Columbia River subareas that, subsequent to a closure prior to September 30, if there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen that given subarea for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington coastal subarea by National Marine Fisheries Service via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.

Rationale: Subarea fisheries are closed in advance when quotas are projected to be attained. While we try to achieve each subarea's respective quota without exceeding it, we are often off the mark with harvest projections as a result of poor weather conditions or changes in effort. Additionally, depending on the subarea, there may be some quota remaining, but it is not sufficient to reopen the fishery for another day. By allowing the transfer of the quota remaining from a subarea that has closed to another subarea, we can better achieve the overall recreational quota without impacting the subarea we would be transferring from.

5. For the south coast subarea, have an automatic switch from a five-day/week fishery to a seven-day/week fishery beginning on the opening day of the coastal recreational salmon season.

Rationale: There have been significant coastal salmon recreational fishing opportunities over the past few years during the latter portion of the halibut season. Typically, the south coast halibut season is a five-day/week fishery (closed Fridays and Saturdays); however, the salmon season in the south coast area is also a five-day/week fishery (closed Fridays and Saturdays). Once the salmon season is open, most charter operations choose to target salmon, rather than halibut, during the weekdays. This change would allow anglers to take halibut trips on weekends (when the salmon fishery is closed), which would help the subarea to achieve its halibut quota. Keeping the halibut fishery open during the weekdays just adds more fishing opportunity, even though the catch during the week is relatively small.

The halibut sport fishery in this subarea begins on May 1, while the sport salmon season generally begins on or about July 1. (Note: In 2003, it opened in mid-June, but in other recent years, it has opened as late as mid-July.) Therefore, fishery participants in this area may expect a five-day/week fishery for the first two months of the halibut season, followed by a seven-day/week fishery through the remainder of the season. The opening day of the salmon season is set during the annual North of Falcon process which is finalized in April.

(f) SPORT FISHERIES

(1) (i) Washington inside waters (Puget Sound) subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 23.5 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea is defined as all U.S. waters east of the mouth of the Sekiu River, as defined by a line extending from 48°17'30" N. lat., 124°23'70" W. long. north to 48°24'10" N. lat., 124°23'70" W. long., including Puget Sound. The structuring objective for this subarea is to provide a stable sport fishing opportunity and maximize the season length. To that end, the Puget Sound subarea may be divided into two regions with separate seasons to achieve a fair harvest opportunity within the subarea. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, fixed seasons, which may vary and apply to different regions within the subarea, will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the quota. Inseason adjustments may be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made postseason. The fishery will open in April or May and continue until a date established preseason (and published in the sport fishery regulations) when the quota is predicted to be taken, or until September 30, whichever is earlier. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will ~~sponsor a public workshop shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to~~ develop recommendations to NMFS on the opening date and weekly structure of the fishery each year. The daily bag limit is one fish per person, with no size limit.

(ii) Washington north coast subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 62.2 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea is defined as all U.S. waters west of the mouth of the Sekiu River, as defined above in paragraph (f)(1)(i), and north of the Queets River (47°31'42" N. lat.). The management objective for this subarea is to provide a quality recreational fishing opportunity during May and the latter part of June. To meet this objective, the north coast subarea quota will be allocated as follows: 72% for the month of May and 28% for the latter part of June. The fishery will open on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and continue 5 days per week (Tuesday through Saturday) until the May allocation is projected to be taken. If May 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a Sunday or Monday, the fishery will open on the following Tuesday. The fishery will then reopen ~~on~~ **during** the third ~~Wednesday~~ **week** in June and continue until the remaining quota is projected to be taken, 5 days per week (Tuesday through Saturday.) No sport fishing for halibut is allowed after September 30. **If the fishery is closed prior to September 30, and there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen this subarea for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington coastal subarea by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.** The daily bag limit in all fisheries is one halibut per person with no size limit. A "C-shaped" yelloweye rockfish conservation area that is closed to recreational groundfish and halibut fishing is defined by the following coordinates in the order listed:

48°18' N. lat.; 125°18' W. long.;  
48°18' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;  
48°11' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;  
48°11' N. lat.; 125°11' W. long.;  
48°04' N. lat.; 125°11' W. long.;  
48°04' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;  
48°00' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;  
48°00' N. lat.; 125°18' W. long.;  
and connecting back to 48°18' N. lat.; 125°18' W. long.

(iii) Washington south coast subarea.

This sport fishery is allocated 12.3 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea is defined as waters south of the Queets River (47°31'42" N. lat.) and north of Leadbetter Point (46°38'10" N. lat.). The structuring objective for this subarea is to maximize the season length, while maintaining a quality fishing experience. The fishery will open on May 1. If May 1 falls on a Friday or Saturday, the fishery will open on the following Sunday. The fishery will be open Sunday through Thursday in all areas, except where prohibited, and the fishery will be open 7 days per week in the area from Queets River south to 47°00'00" N. lat. and east of 124°40'00". **Beginning on the opening day of the coastal recreational salmon season, the halibut fishery will be open 7 days per week.** The fishery will continue until September 30, or until the quota is achieved, whichever occurs first. Subsequent to this closure, ~~if any remaining quota is insufficient for an offshore fishery, but is sufficient for a nearshore fishery, the area from the Queets River south to 47°00'00" N. lat. and east of 124°40'00" W. long. will reopen for 7 days per week until either the remaining subarea quota is estimated to have been taken and the season is closed by the IPHC, or until September 30, whichever occurs first.~~ **if there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen this subarea for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington coastal subarea by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.** The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit.

(iv) Columbia River subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 2.0 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 4 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea also is allocated 2.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation. This subarea is defined as waters south of Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38'10" N. lat.) and north of Cape Falcon, OR (45°46'00" N. lat.). The fishery will open on May 1, and continue 7 days per week until the subquota is estimated to have been taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier. **Subsequent to this closure, if there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen this subarea for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington coastal subarea by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.** The daily bag limit is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length.

TRIBAL COMMENTS ON  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CATCH SHARING PLAN AND  
ANNUAL REGULATIONS

Mr, Chairman, I would just like to offer a very brief comment on the catch sharing plan for halibut. The tribes propose no changes to the catch sharing plan as it relates to the Treaty Indian allocation of halibut for 2004. That allocation would remain at 35% of the Area 2A TAC, plus the 25,000 lb. adjustment, as specified in the Stipulation and Order of the U.S. District Court.