

PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERY UPDATE

The 2004 Pacific halibut season in the Council management area is winding down. After August 15, 2004, only a few fisheries remain, including incidental halibut catch in the directed longline sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington; recreational fisheries in the Oregon central coast and southern Oregon/California areas; and the tribal ceremonial and subsistence fishery.

The NMFS Report (Agendum F.1.a) provides a preliminary report summarizing the harvest in the 2004 Pacific halibut fisheries in Area 2A to date.

Council Task:

Receive and discuss information.

Reference Materials:

1. Agendum F.1.a, NMFS Report: Preliminary Report on the 2004 Pacific Halibut Fisheries in Area 2A.

Agenda Order:

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

Yvonne de Reynier

PFMC
8/28/04

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 2004 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A

The 2004 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 1,480,000 lb set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as sub-TACs as follows:

Treaty Indian	543,000 lb (35.0% + 25,000 lb)
Non-Treaty Total	937,000 lb (65.0% - 25,000 lb)
Non-Treaty Commercial	322,475 lb (includes incidental sablefish)
Washington Sport	272,942 lb
Oregon/California Sport	297,029 lb

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

NON-TREATY COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

A sub-TAC of 297,029 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 44,554 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 fisheries from May 1 through July 28/29, 2004. Of the halibut taken in the salmon troll fisheries, 18,200 lb were landed in Oregon and 24,598 lb were landed in Washington for a total of 42,798 lb (4% under quota.) Of the halibut taken in the salmon troll fisheries, 14,241 lb were landed in May, 15,049 lb were landed in June, and 13,624 lb were landed in July.

Directed fishery targeting on halibut A quota of 252,475 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 23, July 14, July 28, August 11, August 25, September 15, and September 29. 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	6/23/04 Opening	7/14/04 Opening	7/28/04 Opening	8/11/04 Opening
A 0 - 25 ft.	590 lb	590 lb	210 lb	200 lb
B 26 - 30 ft.	735 lb	735 lb	265 lb	210 lb
C 31 - 35 ft.	1,175 lb	1,175 lb	420 lb	335 lb
D 36 - 40 ft.	3,240 lb	3,240 lb	1,160 lb	925 lb
E 41 - 45 ft.	3,485 lb	3,485 lb	1,245 lb	995 lb
F 46 - 50 ft.	4,170 lb	4,170 lb	1,490 lb	1,190 lb
G 51 - 55 ft.	4,655 lb	4,655 lb	1,665 lb	1,330 lb
H 56+ ft.	7,000 lb	7,000 lb	2,500 lb	2,000 lb

- The June 23 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 110,000 lb, leaving 142,475 lb for later openings.
- The July 14 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 95,000 lb, leaving 47,475 lb for later openings.
- The July 28 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 27,000 lb, leaving 20,475 lb for later openings.
- The August 11 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 14,000 lb, leaving 6,475 lb in the quota, which was not enough fish for an additional opening.

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, 2004, and closes October 31, 2004, 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 2004 IPHC license. Incidental halibut landings in the primary sablefish fishery through August 20, 2004 were 33,831 lb.

SPORT FISHERIES (Non-treaty).

A sub-TAC of 569,971 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 76,220 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 6 and continued through July 14, 5 days per week (closed Tuesday and Wednesday). The Western Region opened on May 27 and continued through August 14, 5 days per week. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person. Catch totals from this subarea 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 126,857 lb (49.0% of the Washington sport allocation). The fishery was divided into two seasons with 35,520 lb set aside for the second season. The fishery was to open May 11 and continue 5 days per week (closed Sunday and Monday) until 91,337 lb were estimated to have been taken. The second season was to open on June 15 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 11 and continued 5 days a week, until May 20, when 74,081 lb were estimated to have been taken. The remaining quota for the May season, 17,256 lb, was not enough to continue the 5 day per week fishery, but did allow another opening on Saturday, May 29th. The total halibut taken from these openings was 80,567 lb.
- The season re-opened June 15-19, during which 43,662 lb were taken, for a total of 124,229 lb, leaving approximately 2,628 lb in the subarea quota.

Washington South Coast Subarea (landings in Westport). The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 61,565 lb (21% of the Washington sport allocation). The fishery was to open on May 2 and continue 5 days per week (closed Friday and Saturday) offshore, until the quota was taken. An inshore fishery was also to open May 2 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 2nd and remained open until July 3rd. The total catch for this subarea was 62,823 lb, exceeding the quota by 1,258 lb (2% overage.)

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon). This sport fishery subarea was allocated 14,241 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 1st and closed on July 18th with a total catch of 14,761 lb (3.7% over quota).

Oregon Central Coast Subarea (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain). This sport fishery subarea was allocated 282,178 lb (95% of the Oregon/California sport allocation).

Three seasons were set for this subarea: 1) a restricted depth (inside 30 fathoms) fishery to commence on May 1 and continue every day until the nearshore sub-quota of 22,574 lb were estimated to have been taken; 2) a fixed Spring season in all depths that was to open on May 13-15, 20-22, and 27-29, and June 10-12 with a catch allocation of 194,703 lb, and; 3) a Summer season in all depths that began on August 6-7 and which continues every other weekend until the total Spring-Summer quotas of 259,603 lb have been taken or until October 31, whichever is earlier. 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 8th, 1,514 lb of halibut had been taken in the inside 30-fathom fishery.
- The first fixed all-depth season in May-June, held May 13-15, 20-22, and 27-29, and June 10-12, had a total catch of 131,842 lb, which left enough halibut in the quota to allow openings on June 25-26 and July 10th and 24th. During these four additional all-depth fishery days, an additional 54,367 lb were taken, leaving 8,494 lb in the Spring quota. This remaining poundage was made available to the Summer all-depth fishery .

- The initial Summer all-depth season quota of 64,901 lb was supplemented by the 8,494 lb remaining from the Spring fishery. As a result of this additional poundage, 73,395 lb was available to the Summer all-depth fishery. The Summer all-depth fishery opened on August 6-7 and took 9,106 lb on those dates. The fishery will open every other weekend until the quota is taken or until October 31st, whichever is earlier.

South of Humbug Mountain, Oregon and off the California Coast Subarea This sport fishery was allocated 8,911 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 543,000 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 516,000 lb was allocated to the commercial fishery. The tribal commercial fishery was scheduled to open on February 29, 2004 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. The November 2004 Area 2A halibut fisheries report will provide detailed estimates of catch in the various restricted and unrestricted 2004 tribal commercial halibut fisheries.

The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and tribal estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2005.

2004 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds)				
	Quota	Inseason Revised Quota	Catch	Over/Under
TREATY INDIAN	543,000			
Commercial	516,000			
Ceremonial & Subsistence	27,000			
NON-TREATY	937,000			
COMMERCIAL	297,029			
Troll	44,554		42,798	-4.0%
Directed	252,475		246,000	-2.6%
Sablefish Incidental	70,000			
SPORT	569,971			
WA Sport	272,942			
OR/CA Sport	297,029			
WA Inside Waters	76,220			
WA North Coast	126,857		124,229	-2.1%
WA South Coast	61,565		62,823	2.0%
Col River Area	14,241		14,761	3.7%
OR Central Coast	282,178			
Inside 30 fathoms	22,574			
Spring (May-July)	194,703		186,209	-4.4%
Summer (August-October)	64,901	73,395 ★		
OR S. of Humbug/CA	8,911			
TOTAL	1,480,000			

★ Although the initial allocation to the August all-depth fisheries was 64,901, the quota was augmented by the underage from the May all-depth fisheries, resulting in 8,494 lb being added to the August all-depth.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CATCH SHARING PLAN AND ANNUAL
REGULATIONS

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 2004 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 2005 at the November 2004 meeting.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt, for public review, any proposed changes to season structuring and minor changes to the catch sharing plan in 2005.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agendum F.2.a, Attachment 1: 2004 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A.
2. Agendum F.2.e, Public Comment: Letter to Bruce Leaman from Mark Elliot and Response.

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
08/25/04

2004 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 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 pre-season 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 post-season. The fishery will open in April or May and continue until a date established pre-season (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 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 the first Tuesday between May 9 and 15, and continue 5 days per week (Tuesday through Saturday) until the May allocation is projected to be taken. The fishery will then reopen during the third 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" W. long. Beginning July 1, 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 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 in the Columbia River subarea for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington and/or Oregon subarea by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. The Washington proportion as set preseason would be transferred to another Washington subarea, and the Oregon proportion as set preseason would be transferred to another Oregon subarea. The daily bag limit is the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length.

(v) Oregon central coast subarea.

This subarea extends from Cape Falcon (45°46'00" N. lat.) to 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 opening and will not be modified inseason except that the Spring opening 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 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 quota. ODFW will monitor landings and provide a post-season estimate of catch within 1 week of the end of the fixed season. If sufficient catch remains for an additional day of fishing after the Spring season, openings will be provided if possible in May - July. Potential open dates for both the Spring (May - July) and Summer (August - October) 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. 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 40-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 40-fathom fishery subquota. 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 40-fathom (73 m) curve, and continues daily until the subquota (8 percent of the subarea quota) 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 inside 40-fathom curve fishery.

B. The second season is an all-depth fishery with two potential openings. The first opening begins on the second Thursday in May (if the season is 5 or more fishing days) or the second Friday in May (if the season is 4 or fewer fishing days) and is allocated 69 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 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 (if the season is 5 or more fishing days) or second Friday in May (if the season is 4 or fewer fishing days), 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 pre-season. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing or July 31, whichever occurs first. Any remaining quota will be added to the Summer quota. No in-season adjustments will be made to the established fixed season unless the combined Oregon all-depth Spring and Summer season total subquotas are estimated to be achieved.

C. The last season is an all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August and is allocated 23 percent of the subarea quota. The fishery will be structured 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 pre-season. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing or October 31, whichever occurs first. Any remaining quota will be transferred to the fishery inside the 40-fathom (73 m) curve.

(vi) 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 October 31. 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 in-season, a fixed season will be established pre-season by NMFS based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota; no in-season 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 206-526-6667 or 800-662-9825 (May through October) 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.

Sources: 69 FR ##### (March #, 2004)
 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)

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE
PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN
FOR THE 2005 FISHERY**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) held a public meeting on August 30, 2004 to discuss proposed changes to the 2004 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A. Based on the meeting comments, and other public input, the ODFW recommends the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) approve the following proposals for additional public review.

Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. All-Depth Recreational Fishery

Spring Fishery (May-July)

1. Add Thursdays to all openings during the Spring fishery

Presently the fishery opens as a Thursday-Saturday fishery during the "fixed dates" and then reopens every other week as a Friday-Saturday fishery until the quota is taken (with exceptions to avoid adverse low tidal conditions). Adding a third day (Thursday) to scheduled openers (Friday-Saturday) will lessen the likelihood that poor weather and ocean conditions would prevent fishing opportunity during scheduled open periods.

Summer Fishery (August-October)

2. Add Sundays to all openings during the Summer fishery

Adding a third day to scheduled openers (Friday-Sunday) will lessen the likelihood that poor weather and ocean conditions would prevent fishing opportunity during scheduled open periods. Presently the fishery open periods are Friday-Saturday.

3. Add a second halibut with a 32-inch minimum length to the daily bag limit

In the last few years the Summer quota has not been entirely harvested. A second fish in the bag limit would generate more angler interest.

4. Automatic inseason action to add more angler opportunity to harvest entire season sub-area quota

a) If after the first scheduled open period of the Summer fishery (the first period starts the first Friday in August) the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom quotas) is 60,000 pounds or more, the fishery automatically re-opens on every Friday-Sunday (versus every other weekend). Any excess quota projected to remain after the needs of the inside 40-fathom fishery (scheduled May-October) are met would be transferred into the remaining all-depth quota. This assumes a 2-fish bag limit is not adopted.

b) If after the third scheduled open period of the Summer fishery (the third period starts Friday of Labor Day weekend) the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom quotas) is 30,000 pounds or more, the fishery automatically re-opens on every Friday-Sunday. Under this provision, the bag limit would be 2 fish with a 32-inch minimum length. Any excess quota projected to remain after the needs of the inside 40-fathom fishery (scheduled May-October) are met would be transferred into the remaining all-depth quota.

5. Adopt a “yelloweye rockfish conservation” closure area located on Stonewall Banks

The incidental catch of yelloweye rockfish in the all-depth halibut fishery was a concern in 2004 and higher than expected preseason. Much of the impact is reported to have occurred in the area designated at Stonewall Banks, encompassing the “high spots” (such as shown on the attached map). Stonewall Banks is an area approximately 15 miles offshore of Newport and is a popular halibut area for private boat anglers with small to mid-size boats.

This designated area would be closed to halibut fishing on all-depth halibut days to reduce impacts on species of concern, especially yelloweye and canary rockfishes, while allowing access to productive halibut areas around Stonewall Banks. No groundfish retention would be allowed on halibut trips. The closed areas would be identified by lat long waypoints.

Leadbetter Pt., Washington to Cape Falcon, OR Sub-Area Recreational Fishery

6. Increase allocation to the Columbia River sub-area

The allocation to the Columbia River sub-area would be increased from 2 to 4 percent of the total Oregon/California recreational allocation. This would reduce the quota in the Central Oregon sub-area from 95 to 93 percent. This proposal assumes that an equal amount of poundage would be allocated to the Columbia River sub-area from Washington. The purpose of the increase is to provide additional angler opportunity in the Columbia River sub-area.

7. The increased allocation to the Columbia River sub-area would be split at the Oregon/Washington border. Catch would be attributed to each state’s share of the quota based on the port of landing.

The allocation to the Columbia River sub-area would be increased from 2 to 4 percent of the total Oregon/California recreational allocation. This would reduce the quota in the Central Oregon sub-area from 95 to 93 percent. This proposal assumes that the Columbia River sub-area would be split for halibut at the Oregon/Washington border. This split would not apply to other species, such as salmon. The purpose of the increase is to provide additional angler opportunity to Oregon anglers in the Columbia River sub-area.

This assumes that all halibut landed in each state’s ports within the Columbia River sub-area would be attributed to that state’s share of the quota (in which that port is located). Halibut landed in Washington ports would be counted towards the Washington share of the sub-area quota. The same would apply for Oregon. When Oregon’s share of the sub –area quota was attained, halibut landings into Oregon ports would be prohibited. This assumes that the same would apply for Washington.

All sub-areas south of Leadbetter Pt., Washington

7. Eliminate the minimum length requirement

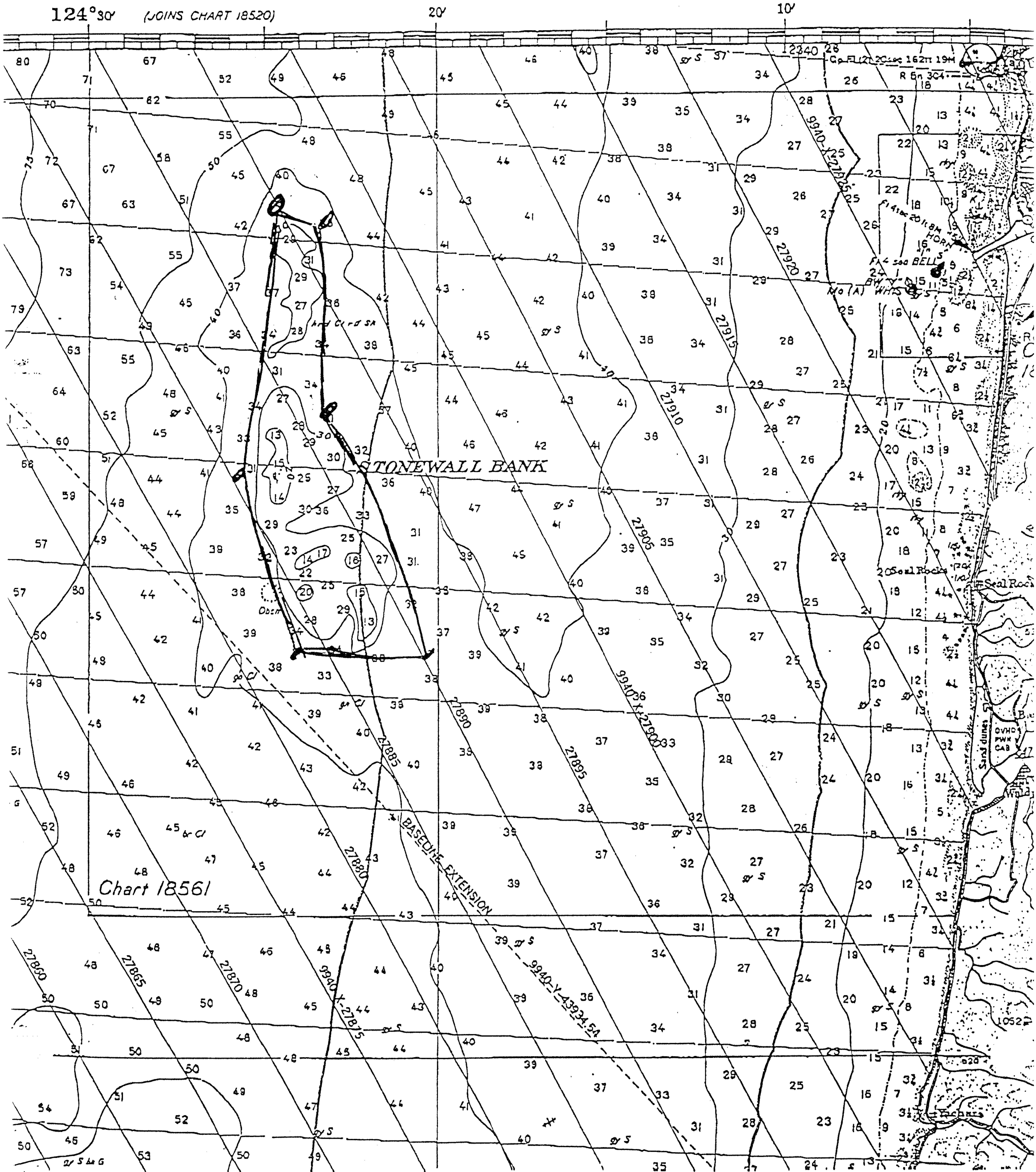
Presently the minimum length requirement is 32-inches. Eliminating the minimum length requirement for the first halibut would reduce the length of time required to catch the daily limit and allow anglers a quicker return to port (safety issue). It may also reduce mortality on species of concern, especially canary and yelloweye rockfishes.

8. No groundfish retention allowed during the all-depth fishery

This would prevent any incidental take of prohibited species during the all-depth halibut open periods.

Formerly C&GS 5802, 1st Ed., May 1917 C-1915-160

Maximum of 6 points to describe



**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE
2005 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. Changing the opening date of the north coast subarea from the first Tuesday between May 9-15 to May 1 of each year. If May 1 falls on a Sunday or Monday, then the fishery will open on the first Tuesday after May 1.

Rationale: Even though harvest rates in the north coast subarea fishery have increased significantly over the past few years, there are some people who favor moving the opening date back to May 1, which is the traditional opening date for the coastal areas. Others support the status quo opening date in mid-May in an effort to have the opportunity to fish during Memorial Day weekend. By moving the opening day to May 1, it is unlikely that the fishery would last through the end of May; however, those who favor the May 1 opening place a higher priority on fishing in early May than in late May. The Department does not have a preference at this point in the process—status quo vs. opening May 1—but does support both options being approved for public review at this time.

2. In the south coast subarea, close the fishery when 2,000 lbs are projected to remain in the subarea quota. Subsequent to this closure, the nearshore area (northern and southern areas) would reopen on Friday and Saturday only, until the remaining quota is projected to be taken.

Rationale: From 1996-2000, there was a provision in the catch sharing plan that set aside 1,000 lbs of halibut for the northern nearshore area. This was revised in 2001 to include language which provided for a nearshore fishing opportunity if quota remained that was insufficient for an offshore fishery, but sufficient for a nearshore fishery. For 2004, this language was again revised and the reference providing a specific nearshore fishing opportunity was removed. There are some people, primarily smaller boat anglers, that would like to reinstate a set aside of quota for nearshore fishing opportunity. After much discussion, it was decided that 1,000 lbs may be too small an amount to manage to (as an increase in the weekly average weight could potentially use the remaining quota). With regard to reopening on Friday and Saturday only, the Department has sampling goals that need to be met and port sampling staff are overtaxed with sampling both salmon and halibut fisheries when they are open simultaneously. As such, reopening the nearshore area on Friday and Saturday only, when salmon fishing is closed, would allow sampling

- staff to sample both fisheries without compromising the attainment of sampling goals.
3. Add a statement to the north coast and south coast subareas that sets an annual bag limit of five halibut per person, per calendar year. The Department would require its Catch Record Card (currently required in Puget Sound) to apply to the coastal marine areas for halibut as well. Recreational fishers would be required to record their catches on the Catch Record Card, which can be inspected by enforcement staff during the season and is turned in to the Department at the end of the season.

Rationale: There are many anglers who fish continuously for halibut, resulting in a significant amount of halibut being caught by a fewer amount of individuals. As the fishing effort has increased (dramatically, in some cases), halibut quotas in subareas, such as the north coast, can be attained in less than three weeks. Setting an annual limit on the number of halibut per angler would help distribute the catch among a greater number of individuals. It is thought that a limit at five halibut is a sufficient amount of halibut for an individual in a calendar year, but may be too high to have the desired effect. The intent would be to reevaluate the limit amount for future years, if this provision is adopted. The Department recognizes that there are enforcement issues which need to be addressed with this proposal as, currently, anglers can obtain a replacement Catch Record Card if the original one is lost. Department staff will work with enforcement to address how best to implement this proposal, given these challenges.

4. Add a statement to the north coast and south coast subareas that sets an annual bag limit of five halibut per person, per calendar year, with an additional weekly limit of two halibut per person, per calendar week. Again, the Department would require anglers to complete a Catch Record Card to record their halibut catch.

Rationale: This proposal further assists with achieving the objective of distributing the catch among a greater number of individuals. Having an annual limit of five halibut per person without a weekly limit may not have the desired effect as the fishery in the north coast catches its subquota within a few weeks. This proposal would also address some of the enforcement issues as there is currently a one fish daily bag limit and a two fish daily possession limit. Anglers with multiple limits in their possession must have a portion of the fish in a processed (which includes frozen) form. This proposal would limit anglers to a total of two fish in their possession per calendar week which should be easier to enforce than the current regulations.

(f) SPORT FISHERIES

(1) (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 ~~the first Tuesday between May 9 and 15~~, **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 during the third 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. **There is an additional limit of two halibut per person, per calendar week, not to exceed five halibut per person, per calendar year. Anglers are required to record their catch and submit a state Catch Record Card to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.** 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 **northern nearshore** area from Queets River south to 47°00'00" N. lat. and east of 124°40'00". ~~Beginning July 1, the halibut fishery will be open 7 days per week.~~ The fishery will continue until **2,000 lbs. are projected to remain in the quota or** September 30, ~~or until the quota is achieved,~~ whichever occurs first. Subsequent to this closure, **the northern and southern nearshore areas will reopen on Fridays and Saturdays only, until the remaining quota is projected to be taken. The southern nearshore area is defined as the area from 47°00'00" N. lat. south to Leadbetter Point (46°38'10" N. lat.) and east of 124°27'00" W. long.** 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. **There is an additional limit of two halibut per person, per calendar week, not to exceed five halibut per person, per calendar year. Anglers are required to record their catch and submit a state Catch Record Card to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.**

Comments of Jim Harp on Proposed Changes to the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan

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 2005. 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.

Mark Elliott
Open Access Fishermen
P.O. Box 612
Warrenton, OR 97146
(503) 791 - 4638

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JUN - 7 2004

I.P.H.C

Bruce Leaman
Executive Director
International Pacific Halibut Commission
P.O. Box 95009
Seattle, WA 98145-2009

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JUN 21 2004

PFMC

Dir Sir,

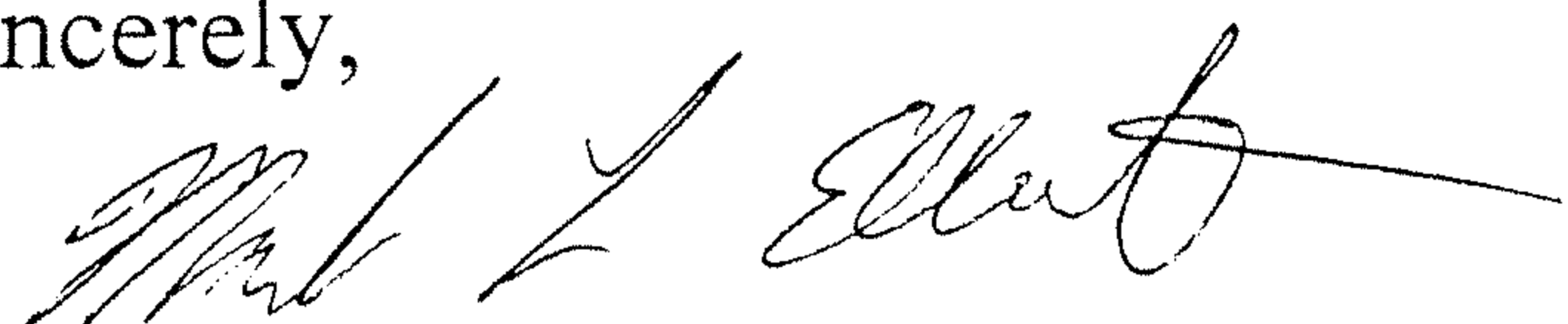
I am currently an Oregon Open Access owner/captain of the fishing vessels Dottie J, Jenny Ann and the Oomaik. I am a very active fisherman in the Astoria area. I have a troll permit on the Jenny Ann and my understanding is that we are allowed to have bi-catch of Halibut with our Troll Salmon permit. This disallows me to participate in the Halibut Derby for this particular boat.

The other two boats I own the Dottie J and the Oomaik are open access vassals only. I am not allowed any Halibut with my open access Sablefish limits, but could potentially catch Halibut as I am long lining

My proposal is that I feel that open access fishermen whose boat is too small to compete in the Halibut derby should be allowed Halibut bi-catch with our open access Sablefish. I propose a ten percent bi-catch of Halibut with our sable fish limits for June July and August only. In addition we would not qualify to be in the Halibut derby. The reason for this is that when the derby commences there are times when a small open access boat cannot leave the dock because of poor weather conditions and the larger boats that participate in the derby can. Smaller open access boats are not being represented in the halibut fishery in equal safety conditions and are unable to compete. If we had a small amount of bicatch we could provide halibut to the consumers over a longer period of time. The Halibut caught could be easily tracked through fish tickets system in each state. The bulk of the non-tribal Halibut is caught and landed off of the Oregon coast. Oregon has a very efficient fish ticket system in the tri state organization.

Please let me know if this change can be made for next year and what do I need to do to further pursue my idea. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Mark Elliott

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VANCOUVER, B.C.

INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY A CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA

AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DIRECTOR
BRUCE M. LEAMAN

P.O. BOX 95009
SEATTLE, WA 98145-2009

TELEPHONE
(206) 634-1838

FAX:
(206) 632-2983

June 15, 2004

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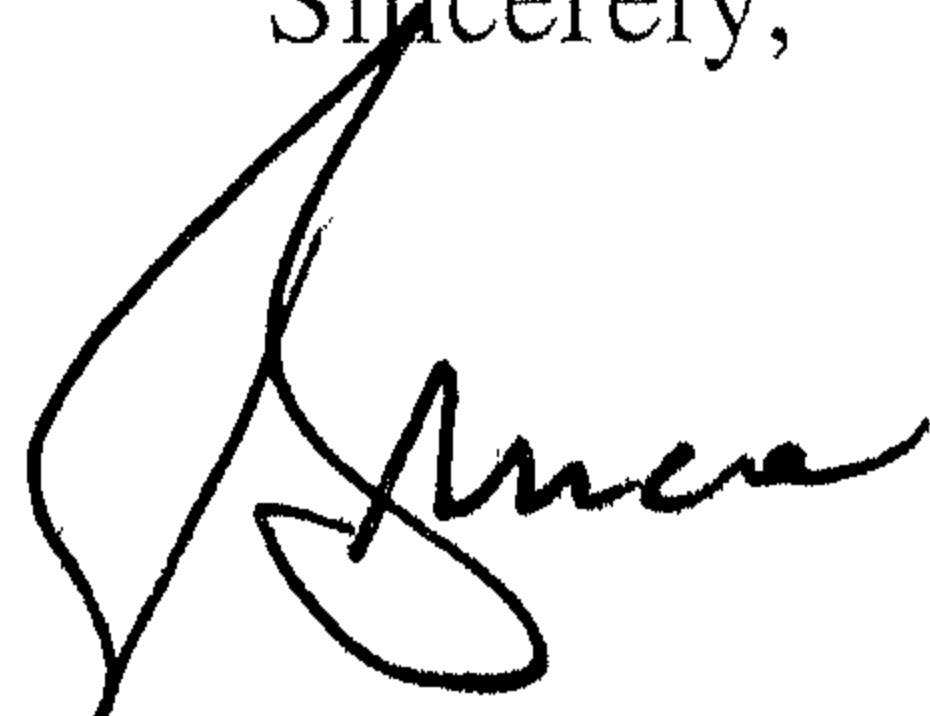
PFMC

Dr. Donald O. McIsaac
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Pl
Portland, OR 97200-1384

Dear Don,

The Commission received the enclosed proposal from Mr. Elliot to allow halibut bycatch in the open access sablefish fishery. Since the Commission does not have allocative authority among user groups, we are forwarding this proposal for your consideration. Please let me know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Bruce M. Leaman
Executive Director

Encl.

Subject: [Fwd: CR Sub-Area Halibut Quota Comments]
From: PFMC Comments <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Tue, 31 Aug 2004 08:24:06 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>
CC: John Coon <John.Coon@noaa.gov>

----- Original Message -----

Subject: CR Sub-Area Halibut Quota Comments
Date: Mon, 30 Aug 2004 21:21:37 -0700
From: Dean Ferguson <ciferguson37733@charter.net>
Reply-To: Dean Ferguson <ciferguson37733@charter.net>
To: <Don.Bodenmiller@hmsc.orst.edu>
CC: <Yeehafishing@aol.com>, "Wenger, Dick \ (WAU\)" <Dick.Wenger@gapac.com>, "Troy Kotek" <captiannocents@peoplepc.com>, "T Merriman" <tmer@masco.net>, "Steve Kotaniemi" <cedarcan@pacifier.com>, "Roger White" <white_rb@msn.com>, <rickj@clatskanie.com>, "Ray Davis" <raydavis@crpud.net>, "Pitch Pocket" <pitchpocket@hotmail.com>, <MBEATTIE12@aol.com>, <MAVERICKMAXCAT@aol.com>, "Jill Comfort" <jcomfert@hotmail.com>, "Jim Crotts" <crottsj@ml.linnbenton.edu>, "Debbie Schmidt" <schmitz@charter.net>, <front_office@psmfc.org>, <heather@iphc.washington.edu>, <cal@iphc.washington.edu>, <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Don,

I am an active sport fisherman in the Columbia River Halibut sub-area. While I am unable to attend the Halibut meeting tonight in Newport, I would like to express my disappointment this year at the early closing of the season in the CR area. Allocation in the CR area in 2002 was 6.7%, 3.9% in 2003, and 5.2% of the total Oregon allocation. In the 2A Halibut area, the CR area amounts to less than 1% of the total allocation. I would like to add the following to the public comment on the Halibut allocation:

1) The IPHC is to be complimented on the sustainability of the fishery. Many other fisheries nationwide have pointed to the IPHC as a model for their efforts.
2) I would like to see Section 25, page 9238, Feb 27, 2004 Federal Register (Flexible Inseason Management Provisions in Area 2A) to be extended to include re-allocation of un-harvested quota available into the Columbia River area. Current verbiage allows for re-allocation out of the CR area, but no verbiage exists to reallocate un-harvested halibut INTO the CR area. I would propose adding the following amendment to the current regulations:

- Section 25. Flexible Inseason Management Provisions in Area 2A:
 - (e) If any of the sport fishery subareas are not projected to utilize their respective quotas by the current season end (e.g. central/south Oregon spring Halibut

season), these quota are to be re-allocated equally amongst other sub-area.

This would require the dropping of provisions 25.1.a and 25.1.b. Again, the current provisions allow for moving the quota OUT of the CR sub-area, but there are no provisions of moving un-harvested halibut INTO the CR sub-area.

Note that provisions in Section 25 (d) are somewhat incompatible and contradictory to the current practice of "rolling" un-harvested spring halibut quota into the summer halibut quota for the central/south Oregon sub-area.

3) The 7 day a week openings in the CR sub-area should be continued due to the unreliability of the weather in this area.

Thanks for the allowing me the opportunity to provide my thoughts on the Columbia River Halibut fishery. If needed, I can provide petition signatures supporting these items. This is a critical fishery to the local economy and I believe the current practice of rolling un-caught quotas to future periods (73,395 # remained un-caught in the central/southern Oregon region was rolled forward to the summer quota) does not maximize the economic return on this valuable resource. For the current year, there is significant risk that the entire quota will not be caught which will mean economic loss to the local communities.

Thanks again for this opportunity to provide input!

Sincerely

Dean Ferguson
37733 Highway 30
Astoria, OR 97103
503-325-8474

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

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 2003 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 2003. A supplemental 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 2005 halibut fisheries (Supplemental Attachment 1).

Council Task:

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. Agendum F.3, Supplemental Attachment 1: Pacific Halibut Bycatch in IPHC Area 2A in 2003.

Agenda Order:

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

Chuck Tracy
Elizabeth Clarke

PFMC
08/28/04

Pacific Halibut Bycatch in IPHC Area 2A in the 2003 Groundfish Trawl Fishery

John Wallace
Jim Hastie

NOAA Fisheries
Northwest Fisheries Science Center
Seattle, WA

August 2004

ABSTRACT

This report updates the estimate of Pacific halibut bycatch and mortality in the bottom trawl fishery through the calendar year 2003. 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). The current report uses halibut bycatch rates observed from 01 September 2002 thru 31 August 2003 by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. These rates are stratified by season, depth, latitude, and amount of arrowtooth flounder catch, then multiplied by the amount of trawl effort in each stratum determined from Oregon and Washington trawl logbooks in 2003. Estimated halibut bycatch and mortality in other gear types has not been updated for 2003. The estimate for the 2003 bottom trawl fishery is 462,000 lbs net weight of total halibut bycatch mortality, of which 367,000 lbs is legal-sized. The net weight is 9.8 percent lower than in 2002. As in past reports, forecast of bycatch for the current year (2004) or future years is not attempted.

GROUNDFISH FISHERY BACKGROUND

Changes in the groundfish fishery and its management affect not only the amount of groundfish fishing effort, but also its geographic and temporal distribution. Since halibut bycatch rates vary among time and area strata, changes in the amount and distribution of effort will alter the amount of halibut bycatch that is estimated for the trawl fleet. Here we briefly describe the management changes that occurred in 2003.

In 2003, for the first time, the trawl fishery was managed using closed Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCA) throughout the entire year. North of 40°10' N. Lat., the closed area during the first 4 months was demarcated by lines approximating the 100 fm and 250 fm depth contours. In January 2003, new NMFS observer data from the trawl fleet were published. These data indicated higher rates of bycatch for some shelf rockfish species than had previously been assumed. As a result, the RCA was expanded shoreward from May through December in order to reduce bycatch impacts. The shoreward boundary was 50 fm in May-June and September-October, and 75 fm in July-August. The seaward boundary was set at 200 fm throughout May-December. Unexpectedly high catches of canary rockfish and lingcod reported by the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS) in the California recreational fishery led to a coast-wide closure of groundfish trawling inside 200 fm during November and December. Special areas for winter petrale fishing were designated outside of 150 fm during the first and last 2-month periods of the year. The use of small footrope gear (rollers of 8" or less) was required for all fishing shoreward of the RCA. Also, from May through October, reduced 2-month limits were implemented for flatfish, thornyheads, and sablefish when small footrope gear was used at any time during the period. This differential limit was implemented in order to reduce effort on the shelf, and in turn the bycatch of several rebuilding species.

In accordance with the rebuilding mandate for widow rockfish, no mid-water fishing for widow or yellowtail rockfish was allowed in 2003, except through a short-lived yellowtail Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) program operated by the state of Washington. As a result of changes in the ability to target these species with large footrope or mid-water gear, widow landings in 2003 were lower than 2002 by an order of magnitude, and were two orders of magnitude less than in 2001. Yellowtail landings in 2003 were less than 20 percent of the 2002 amount, and less than 10 percent of the amount landed in 2001.

Two other trawl EFPs operated throughout much of the year off Oregon and Washington. Both of these EFPs required the use of trawl gear containing modifications intended to more selectively retain flatfish. Participation in the EFPs provided fishers with access to some fishing grounds located within the RCA. Washington's EFP also provided higher trip limits for arrowtooth flounder. The reduction in the bycatch rates of most shelf rockfish species was dramatic enough that the Council voted in June 2004 to require use of selective flatfish gear shoreward of the RCA and north of 40°10' N. Lat. beginning in January 2005. Landings of arrowtooth and petrale each increased by at least 10 percent from 2002 to 2003, however, arrowtooth landings remained somewhat less than in 2001. The increases in landings of these flatfish were offset, somewhat, by reductions in the landings of nearer-shore flatfish, such as English sole and sanddabs. Landings of the deeper-water species sablefish and grenadiers were both up by more than 50 percent from 2002, while Dover sole was nearly 30 percent higher.

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, 4,816 halibut were measured by observers. 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 fm), area (five latitude ranges) and catch of arrowtooth flounder (0-20 lbs per hour and >20 lbs). 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 percent) and the percent survival (50 percent) 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.

Analysis of data collected during first year of the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP)

The WCGOP began collecting at-sea trawl discard data in September of 2001. Data collected through August 2002 were checked and evaluated in the winter of 2002. A report of findings from the first year of observation was published at the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center website in January 2003. Estimates of halibut bycatch in the 2002 trawl fishery were developed in the summer of 2003 using observer data from the first year of collection. Because observer data from the last four months of 2002 were not yet available, halibut bycatch during that period was estimated using data collected during the last four months of 2001.

A total of 2,812 observed bottom trawl tows off Washington and Oregon were included in the estimation of 2002 halibut bycatch. Methods similar to those in Pikitch (1998) were used to analyze the observer data and identify appropriate strata for bycatch estimation. The strata used to estimate 2002 halibut bycatch were: season (Jan-Aug and Sept-Dec), depth (0-100, 100-300, 300-700 fm), area (four latitude ranges) and catch of arrowtooth flounder (0-20 lbs per hour and >20 lbs). The correlation between

arrowtooth and halibut witnessed in the observer data was also confirmed by an examination of bottom trawl survey data. Bycatch rates for these strata were, in turn, applied to trawl effort summarized from logbooks, and the resulting bycatch amounts expanded to account for landings not captured in logbooks. The total estimated halibut mortality for 2002 was 512,000 net pounds, which was a 36 percent reduction from the estimate for 2001.

BYCATCH ESTIMATES FOR 2003

Analysis of data from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program's second year

The second year of data released by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) includes observations from 01 September 2002 through 31 August 2003. Because of the current unavailability of observer data from the last four months of 2003, the September-December 2002 data were included to form a 12-month bycatch data set. There were 2,770 bottom trawl tows between 48.667 and 40.667 degrees latitude (all of Washington to just north of the Oregon-California border) used for this study. An estimated total weight of 163,363 lbs of halibut was caught in those tows. The vast majority of these weights are 'actual weights' from the entire catch, i.e. not estimated or extrapolated. The number of halibut in a tow was also recorded, but those data were not used in this report. In the observer program, lengths are taken when halibut are selected as 'biological samples'. For the data used in this report, on a tow basis, halibut were selected to be a biological sample 41 percent of the time when Pacific halibut were caught in the tow. Halibut have a lower priority for biological sampling than groundfish species that have been declared overfished. Additionally, crews attempt to return halibut to the ocean as quickly as possible, in order to promote survival of the discards. As a consequence, it can be difficult for observers to obtain length measurements for all discarded halibut.

The WCGOP observed all the 2003 Oregon Flatfish Trawl EFP trips; hence the halibut discard observed during this program is a census. However, WCGOP data from September-October 2003 has not yet been released (the EFP did not operate after October). Consequently, EFP bycatch for these two months was extrapolated using the mean rate (sum of halibut weight over sum of hours) from the available EFP data and the PacFIN logbook effort (hours) from the Oregon EFP trips during those months. The total Oregon EFP bycatch (Table 6) is the sum of the September-October extrapolations and the halibut discard observed during the remainder of 2003.

For the remainder of Limited-Entry groundfish trawl activity, including the Washington Arrowtooth EFP (which was not fully observed), methods similar to those in Pikitch (1998) were used to analyze the observer data and identify appropriate strata for bycatch estimation. These strata are season (Jan-Aug and Sept-Dec), depth (0-75, 75-150, 150-250, 250-700 fm), area (four latitude ranges) and catch of arrowtooth flounder (0-20 lbs per hour and >20 lbs). Depth strata were adjusted from previous years, so as to better align with management boundaries for the RCA. Numbers of tows, halibut catches, halibut catch rates, and the proportions of legal-sized halibut (>81 cm) are listed for each of these strata in Table 3.

Bottom Trawl Effort from Logbooks

Logbook data for Oregon and Washington in 2003 were obtained from PacFIN. Since ODFW collects logbook data for only 70-80 percent of the trawl deliveries during a typical year, Oregon logbook effort (hours towed) was expanded with fish tickets by port and month, in order to avoid any potential bias created by unequal collection of logbooks in the three major ports (Astoria, Newport, and Coos Bay). WDFW's "extrapolated and expanded" trawl effort was used for Washington trips.

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. A similar 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 2003 is reported in Table 3.

Halibut bycatch for each stratum was 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 bycatch rate was used: 15.083 kg per hour for weight. This value is calculated as the unweighted average of the stratum means.

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 percent of total bycatch. The proportion of legal-sized halibut (> 81cm) is estimated from the length frequencies of halibut measured in the observer data (Table 2). The Limited Entry program and the Washington Arrowtooth EFP 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). Average proportion legal (calculated as the unweighted average of the stratum means) was used when no other estimate was available: 67.20 percent by weight. A more sophisticated approach of imputing the missing data shows that the unweighted average is more appropriate than weighting either by effort or weight. This compares favorably with an average proportion legal of 74.44 percent and weighted logbook estimate of 67 percent that were found in the EDCP data. A value of 62 percent was estimated in early studies (Williams et al., 1998) and used for 1977-1997. Since all tows that were part of the Oregon Flatfish EFP were observed, the proportion of legal-sized fish for that group was calculated separately. Within that EFP 40.7 percent of the halibut caught were of legal size.

For comparison purposes, the 2003 column totals from Table 6 are shown together with annual totals since 1998 in Table 7. Estimated mortality of all and legal-sized halibut since 1977 are listed in Tables 8 and 9, respectively. Total discard mortality of halibut during 2003 is estimated to be 9.8 percent lower than in 2002, even though the trawl effort increased by 10.6 percent. The decrease in halibut bycatch is principally due to the movement of trawl effort to deeper water where halibut bycatch is lower. However, the total amount and percentage of discard comprised by legal-sized fish increased dramatically in 2003. Nearly 70 percent of the estimated discard of legal-sized fish occurred in just three of the 64 strata used in the analysis. All three strata were for the January-August time period, the area between 47.67° and 48.67° N. lat., and depths shallower than 150 fm.

It is not possible to make a forecast for the 2004 fishery given lack of a methodology to project the distribution of effort among model strata prior to the complete availability of a year's logbook data.

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	0.04
30-35	1	0.04
35-40	2	0.07
40-45	2	0.07
45-50	6	0.22
50-55	10	0.37
55-60	50	1.84
60-65	183	6.75
65-70	395	14.56
70-75	511	18.84
75-80	444	16.37
80-85	356	13.13
85-90	241	8.89
90-95	155	5.72
95-100	117	4.31
100-105	68	2.51
105-110	61	2.25
110-115	34	1.25
115-120	16	0.59
120-125	17	0.63
125-130	19	0.70
130-135	9	0.33
135-140	5	0.18
140-145	5	0.18
145-150	1	0.04
150-155	1	0.04
155-160	0	0.00
160-165	1	0.04
165-170	0	0.00
170-175	0	0.00
175-180	0	0.00
180-185	1	0.04
Total	2712	100.00

Table 3. Numbers of tows, halibut catches, halibut catch rates and effort, by strata, observed in the bottom trawl fishery by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. The last two columns, from 2002, are for comparison purposes. (The upper limits are inclusive for all intervals; the lower limits are not.)

SEASON: JANUARY - AUGUST

Arrowtooth Catch (lbs/h)	Latitude	Depth (Fathoms)	Number of Observed Tows	Number of Tows with ≥ 1 Halibut	Wgt. (kg., rnd) Halibut per Hour	Trawl Effort (hours) from OR & WA	Proportion Legal by Weight	Number of Observed Tows 2002	Wgt. (kg., rnd) Halibut per Hour 2002
≤ 20	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 75	6	0	0.00	69		137	2.64
		75 - 150	1	1	12.48	6		39	5.28
		150 - 250	6	0	0.00	289		45	0.62
		250 - 700	109	1	0.05	4097	0.230	190	0.02
42.667 - 46.667		0 - 75	154	50	4.83	2528	0.756	447	3.33
		75 - 150	46	30	10.27	964	0.550	143	4.28
		150 - 250	78	21	2.15	2859	0.765	64	1.58
		250 - 700	282	12	0.10	9836	0.648	164	0.38
46.667 - 47.667		0 - 75	36	17	6.03	1184	0.775	211	13.45
		75 - 150	6	5	15.24	55		13	14.40
		150 - 250	44	6	1.24	701	0.000	6	1.53
		250 - 700	50	2	0.13	1331	0.925	21	0.32
47.667 - 48.667		0 - 75	105	84	25.64	3018	0.871	263	32.17
		75 - 150	29	25	26.73	991	0.763	93	61.59
		150 - 250	23	6	3.39	790	0.598	40	23.73
		250 - 700	49	4	0.45	2389	0.706	30	2.27
> 20	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 75	0	0		8		16	0.98
		75 - 150	1	1	9.50	2		11	8.31
		150 - 250	0	0		18		2	0.00
		250 - 700	0	0		7		0	
42.667 - 46.667		0 - 75	25	13	7.30	582	0.859	10	3.33
		75 - 150	54	45	10.96	1117	0.485	43	10.86
		150 - 250	78	38	2.66	2658	0.729	29	3.89
		250 - 700	59	4	0.88	1279	0.000	15	4.94
46.667 - 47.667		0 - 75	27	19	13.75	489	0.838	14	20.32
		75 - 150	12	9	137.85	106	0.780	12	11.17
		150 - 250	16	12	18.05	302	0.506	6	2.52
		250 - 700	3	1	2.37	115		2	1.94
47.667 - 48.667		0 - 75	123	121	62.37	1558	0.906	104	72.44
		75 - 150	31	25	130.67	1179	0.903	40	159.64
		150 - 250	27	18	16.78	850	0.597	89	69.46
		250 - 700	16	6	6.37	539	0.585	29	65.47

Table 3. Continued.

SEASON: SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER

Arrowtooth Catch (lbs/h)	Latitude	Depth (Fathoms)	Number of Observed Tows	Number of Tows with ≥ 1 Halibut	Wgt. (kg., rnd) Halibut per Hour	Trawl Effort (hours) from OR & WA	Proportion Legal by Weight	Number of Observed Tows 2002	Wgt. (kg., rnd) Halibut per Hour 2002
≤ 20	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 75	0	0		15		94	0.81
		75 - 150	0	0		0		20	0.31
		150 - 250	0	0		144		3	0.23
		250 - 700	5	0	0.00	1075		11	0.00
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 75	144	23	1.24	292	0.862	70	1.22
		75 - 150	15	5	1.98	68	1.000	69	4.02
		150 - 250	12	2	2.46	1368		25	4.67
		250 - 700	104	6	0.25	2510	1.000	50	0.09
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 75	9	6	3.48	68		4	0.00
		75 - 150	0	0		0		12	0.00
		150 - 250	0	0		344		0	
		250 - 700	4	0	0.00	383		3	0.00
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 75	86	40	4.02	1549		29	3.73
		75 - 150	7	1	16.96	1		25	0.44
		150 - 250	17	17	69.34	228	0.507	6	59.99
		250 - 700	16	4	0.79	545		0	
> 20	40.667 - 42.667	0 - 75	0	0		6		1	6.10
		75 - 150	0	0		0		0	
		150 - 250	0	0		19		0	
		250 - 700	0	0		35		0	
	42.667 - 46.667	0 - 75	14	7	5.48	82		3	8.17
		75 - 150	24	8	1.54	61		36	10.93
		150 - 250	2	0	0.00	2018		8	145.44
		250 - 700	2	1	3.14	528		0	
	46.667 - 47.667	0 - 75	13	10	28.20	6		0	
		75 - 150	0	0		3		0	
		150 - 250	0	0		200		0	
		250 - 700	0	0		82		0	
	47.667 - 48.667	0 - 75	0	0		93		2	199.06
		75 - 150	4	2	2.14	3		6	2.38
		150 - 250	11	11	48.72	607		7	65.47
		250 - 700	1	1	5.99	166		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. Halibut bycatch and mortality in the Oregon and Washington bottom trawl fisheries for groundfish off the west coast. The 2003 Oregon Flatfish Trawl EFP is a census. The Limited Entry and Washington Arrowtooth EFP data are estimated from bycatch rates observed by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program and applied to annual total groundfish bottom trawl effort (Table 3).

Program	Trawl Effort (hours)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (kg., round)	Estimated Halibut Bycatch (lbs, net)	Estimated Total Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)	Estimated Legal-Sized Halibut Mortality (lbs, net)
Oregon Flatfish Trawl EFP	3,926	16,808	27,797	13,899	5,654
Limited Entry & Washington Arrowtooth EFP	54,413	541,736	895,896	447,948	361,091
Total	58,339	558,544	923,693	461,847	366,745

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 7. Halibut bycatch and mortality in the Oregon and Washington bottom trawl fisheries for groundfish off the west coast. The new 2003 data are estimated from bycatch rates observed by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program and applied to annual total groundfish bottom trawl effort (Table 3). All estimates in this table (except the last column) are derived from a sum over strata cells; see the text for details.

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)	Estimated Legal-Sized divided by Total Halibut Mortality
1998	92,294	164,961	1,259,374	2,082,690	1,041,345	691,755	0.6643
1999	81,420	147,995	1,144,236	1,892,280	946,140	638,091	0.6744
2000	70,363	122,234	944,120	1,561,338	780,669	523,097	0.6701
2001	67,199	124,969	962,348	1,591,482	795,741	532,912	0.6697
2002	52,168	NA	618,913	1,023,527	511,764	286,221	0.5593
2003	58,339	NA	558,544	923,693	461,847	366,745	0.7941

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	---	---	---
2003	---	462	---	---	---

Note: Bycatch mortality by groundfish trawls in 1998-2003 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	---	---	---
2003	---	367	---	---	---

Note: Bycatch mortality by groundfish trawls in 1998-2003 does not include fisheries off California. Bycatch mortality by shrimp trawls in 1998 does not include fisheries off California and Washington.

Pacific Halibut Bycatch in IPHC Area 2A in the 2003 Groundfish Trawl Fishery

by

**John Wallace
Jim Hastie**

NOAA – NW Fisheries Science Center

Overview

- Update of model used to estimate halibut bycatch in the 2002 fishery.
- For most tows, average bycatch rates were calculated for each of 64 strata, using observer data from September 2002 through August 2003.
- All Oregon Selective Flatfish EFP tows were observed.
 - Halibut bycatch in those tows summed separately.
 - That bycatch was not included in calculating rates applied to other tows.

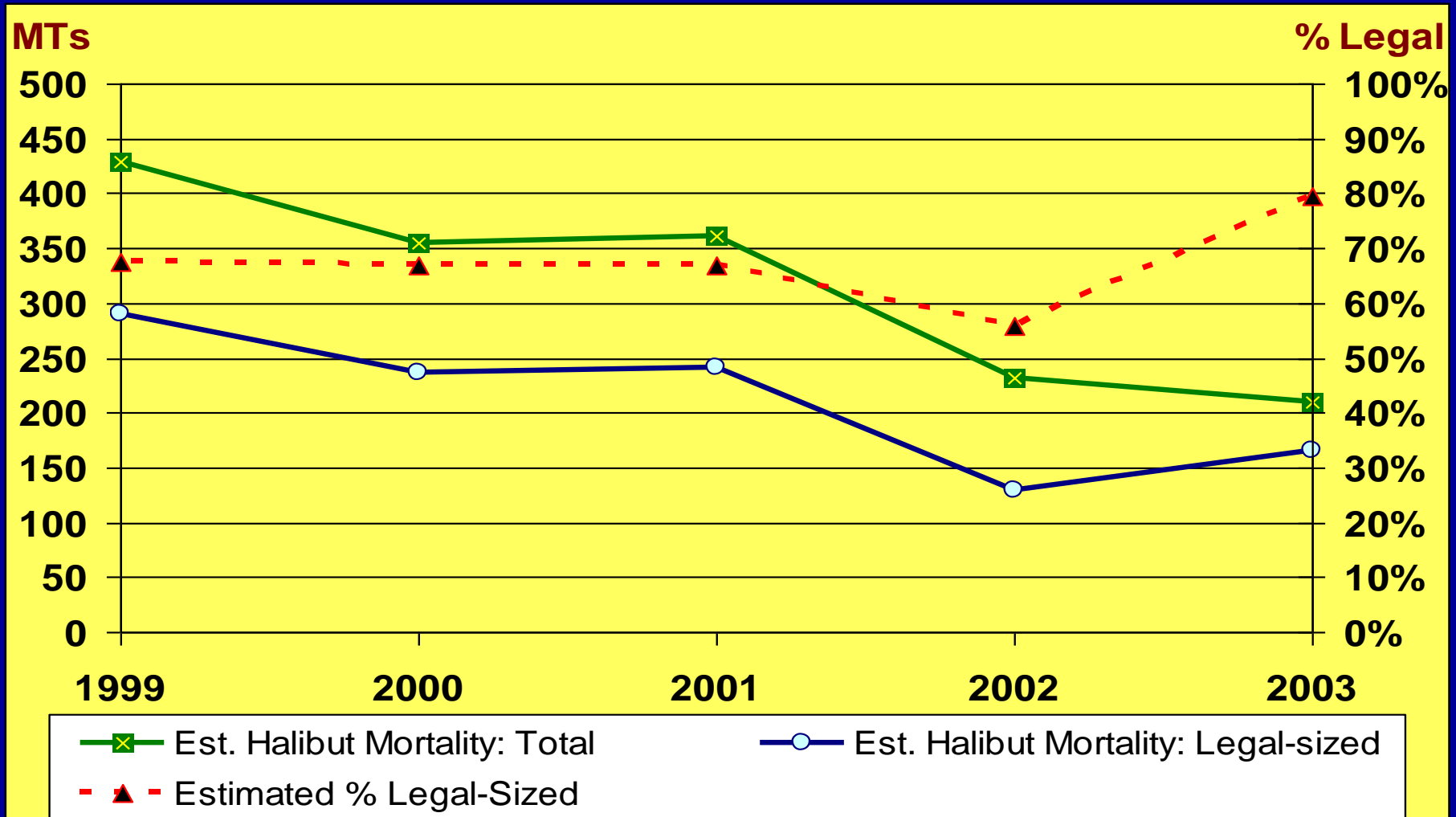
Stratification used in analysis

- **Season** (Jan-Aug and Sept-Dec).
- **Depth** (0-75, 75-150, 150-250, 250-700 fm).
 - adjusted to capture RCA boundaries
- **Arrowtooth catch rate** (0-20 and >20 lb/hour).

2003 logbook data used to distribute trawl hours among strata.

Ratio of 2003 fishticket and retained logbook groundfish tonnage used to expand logbook results.

Overall and legal-sized halibut bycatch mortality in the 1999-2003 shoreside groundfish fisheries



70% of the estimated discard tonnage of legal-sized halibut occurred in 3 of the 64 strata

- All 3 occurred in:
 - January – August time period
 - 47.67° - 48.67° N. Lat.
 - depths shallower than 150 fm
- 2 of the 3 strata had more than 20 lb of arrowtooth per hour
- The 3rd stratum had less than 20 lb of arrowtooth per hour

Summary

- Overall halibut bycatch mortality continued to decline in 2003 (roughly half of the amount in 1999).
- Rather large increase in the rate at which legal-sized halibut were encountered off northern Washington in depths shallower than 150 fm.

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

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) heard a presentation from Dr. Jim Hastie concerning the 2003 estimate of Pacific halibut bycatch in groundfish trawl fisheries in the International Pacific Halibut Catch Area 2A (Exhibit F.3.a., Agendum Overview, September 2004). The estimate of halibut bycatch is based on an update of the model used to estimate 2002 bycatch. Observed bycatch and associated mortality from the Oregon exempted fishing permit (EFP) fishery were incorporated as a census, and bycatch from other trawl fisheries were estimated using the model. Halibut bycatch rates from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program during September 2002 through August 2003 were stratified by season, depth, latitude and amount of arrowtooth catch, and then multiplied by the amount of effort by stratum from the trawl logbooks. Boundaries for depth strata were changed compared to previous analyses to match the Rockfish Conservation Area boundaries that were in place during 2003.

In Council-managed fisheries, the total Pacific halibut bycatch in bottom trawl fisheries dropped by 9.8% compared to 2002. When the data become available, the SSC suggests that the Council consider exploring the use of observer data to estimate halibut bycatch in other Council-managed fisheries. Also, the SSC requested that future analyses include variance estimates for total bycatch.

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

PFMC
09/15/04