

2012 PACIFIC HALIBUT REGULATIONS

Under its standard process, the Council solicits proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) (Agenda Item D.1.a, Attachment 1) at its September meeting and adopts any changes in November after reviewing public and agency comments. Generally, changes are limited to adjustments in the annual regulations and minor modifications to the CSP. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has prepared an inseason update on 2011 halibut catch in Area 2A with the assistance of state and tribal managers to provide perspective on the performance of the current CSP (Agenda Item D.1.b, NMFS Report).

For the 2012 season, the Council is considering changes to the management of recreational fisheries in Washington, Oregon, and California. The proposed changes resulted from recommendations provided by the Washington and Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW and ODFW, respectively) after holding public meetings, from the International Pacific Halibut Commission, and from Council discussion and public testimony received at the September 2011 Council meeting.

The Council solicited public input on the changes on its website and in the Council Newsletter article from October 2011 (Agenda Item d.1.a, Attachment 2). ODFW and WDFW also solicited public input, including public hearings on September 26-30, and subsequently prepared agency recommendations for regulatory changes in 2012 (Agenda Item D.1.b, ODFW Report and Agenda Item D.1.b, WDFW Report).

Based on the input received since the September 2011 Council meeting, the Council will take final action on regulatory changes in the halibut fishery at this meeting.

Council Action:

- 1. Within the scope of the September 2011 proposals (D.1.a, Attachment 2) and public input, adopt Council recommendations for implementing proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and annual regulations for 2012.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.1.a, Attachment 1: 2011 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan For Area 2A.
2. Agenda Item D.1.a, Attachment 2: Fall 2011 Newsletter Excerpt.
3. Agenda Item D.1.b, NMFS Report: Report on the 2011 Pacific Halibut Fisheries in Area 2A.
4. Agenda Item D.1.b, ODFW Report: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Proposed Changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for the 2012 Fishery.
5. Agenda Item D.1.b, WDFW Report: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Proposed Changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and 2012 Annual Regulations.
6. Agenda Item D.1.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Proposed Changes to the 2012 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Fishery Regulations.

Chuck Tracy

PFMC

10/13/11

2011 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

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*.

(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

Thirty-five percent of the Area 2A TAC is allocated to 13 treaty Indian tribes in subarea 2A-1, which includes that portion of Area 2A north of Point Chehalis, WA (46°53.30' 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 season dates will be set within the season dates determined by the IPHC and implemented in IPHC regulations. The tribal commercial fishery will close when the subquota is taken. 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 remainder of the 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 until the end of the season date for commercial halibut fishing determined by the IPHC and implemented in IPHC regulation. 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. Halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery will be allowed after June only if the 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.
 - (v) Under the Pacific Coast groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.330, fishing with salmon troll gear is prohibited within the Salmon Troll Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA). The Salmon Troll YRCA is an area off the northern Washington coast and is defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for the Salmon Troll YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70(c) and in salmon regulations at 50 CFR 660.405(c).
- (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°53.30' N. lat.). This fishery may also be managed with closed areas designed to protect overfished groundfish species. Any such closed areas will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register* and the

coordinates will be specifically defined at 50 CFR 660.71 through 660.74. 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.

Under Pacific Coast groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.230, fishing with limited entry fixed gear is prohibited within the North Coast Commercial Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) and the Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA). The North Coast Commercial Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area YRCA is an area off the northern Washington coast, overlapping the northern part of North Coast Recreational YRCA. The Non-Trawl RCA is an area off the Washington coast. These closed areas are defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for the North Coast Commercial YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70(b). Coordinates for the Non-Trawl RCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.73.

(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 six geographic subareas.

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

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

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 23.5 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea is defined as all U.S. waters east of the mouth of the Sekiu River, as defined by a line extending from 48°17.30' N. lat., 124°23.70' W. long. north to 48°24.10' N. lat., 124°23.70' W. long., including Puget Sound. The structuring objective for this subarea is to provide a stable sport fishing opportunity and maximize the season length. To that end, the Puget Sound subarea may be divided into two regions with separate seasons to achieve a fair harvest opportunity within the subarea. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, fixed seasons, which may vary and apply to different regions within the subarea, will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the quota. Inseason adjustments may be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made postseason. The fishery will open in April or May and continue until a date established preseason (and published in the sport fishery regulations) when the quota is predicted to be taken, or until September 30, whichever is earlier. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will 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°31.70' N. lat.). The management objective for this subarea is to provide a quality recreational fishing opportunity during May and June. The fishery will open on the first Thursday between May 9 and 15, and continue 2 days per week (Thursday and Saturday) in May as scheduled pre-season, unless there is a quota management closure. If there is no quota management closure in May, the fishery will reopen on the first Thursday in June as an all depth fishery on Thursdays and Saturdays as long as sufficient quota remains. This schedule allows adequate public notice of any inseason action before each Thursday opening. If there is not sufficient quota for an all-depth day, the fishery would reopen in the nearshore areas described below:

- A. WDFW Marine Catch Area 4B, which is all waters west of the Sekiu River mouth, 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., to the Bonilla-Tatoosh line, as defined by a line connecting the light on Tatoosh Island, WA, with the light on Bonilla Point on Vancouver Island, British Columbia (at 48°35.73' N. lat., 124°43.00' W. long.) south of the International Boundary between the U.S. and Canada (at 48°29.62' N. lat., 124°43.55' W. long.), and north of the point where that line intersects with the boundary of the U.S. territorial sea.
- B. Shoreward of the recreational halibut 30-fm boundary line, a modified line approximating the 30 fm depth contour from the Bonilla-Tatoosh line south to the Queets River. Coordinates for the closed area will be specifically defined annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

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 the nearshore areas 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.

Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within the North Coast Recreational Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA). The North Coast Recreational YRCA is a C-shaped area off the northern Washington coast

and is defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for the North Coast Recreational YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70(a) and will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

(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°31.70' N. lat.) and north of Leadbetter Point (46°38.17' N. lat.). The structuring objective for this subarea is to maximize the season length, while maintaining a quality fishing experience. The south coast subarea quota will be allocated as follows: 10% or 2,000 pounds, whichever is less, will be set aside for the nearshore fishery with the remaining amount allocated to the primary fishery. During days open to the primary fishery and seaward of the 30-fm line lingcod may be taken, retained and possessed, when allowed by groundfish regulations. The fishery will open on the first Sunday in May. The primary fishery will be open two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday, in all areas, except where prohibited. During the fourth week in May, the primary fishery will be open on Sundays only. Beginning the following week, the fishery would continue two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday, until the quota for the primary fishery season is reached or September 30, whichever is earlier. If there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen the primary fishery for another fishing day, the remaining primary fishery quota will be added to the nearshore quota. The nearshore fishery takes place, in the area from 47°31.70' N. lat. south to 46°58.00' N. lat. and east of a boundary line approximating the 30 fathom depth contour as defined by the following coordinates:

47°31.70' N.lat, 124°37.03' W. long;
47°25.67' N. lat, 124°34.79' W. long;
47°12.82' N. lat, 124°29.12' W. long;
46°58.00' N. lat, 124°24.24' W. long.

During the primary season the nearshore fishery will be open seven days per week. Subsequent to the closure of the primary fishery, the nearshore fishery will continue seven days per week until the remaining quota is projected to be taken. If the fishery is closed prior to September 30, and there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen the nearshore areas 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.

Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within two YRCA's off Washington's southern coast. The South Coast Recreational YRCA and the

Westport Offshore YRCA are defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for these Recreational YRCAs are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70 (d) and (e) and will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

(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 4.0 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 also allocated 5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation or an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation, whichever is greater. This subarea is defined as waters south of Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38.17' N. lat.) and north of Cape Falcon, OR (45°46.00' N. lat.). The fishery will open on the first Thursday in May or May 1 if it is a Friday or Saturday, 3 days per week, Thursday through Saturday until 70 percent of the subarea allocation is taken or until the third Sunday in July, whichever is earlier. The fishery will reopen on the first Friday in August and continue 3 days per week, Friday-Sunday until the remainder of the subarea quota has been taken, or until 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. Any remaining quota would be transferred to each state in proportion to its contribution. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit. No groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except sablefish and Pacific cod when allowed by groundfish regulations, if halibut are on board the vessel.

(v) Oregon central coast subarea.

This subarea extends from Cape Falcon (45°46.00' N. lat.) to Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42°40.50' N. lat.) and is allocated 92.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation minus any amount of pounds needed to contribute to the Oregon portion of the Columbia River subarea quota. 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. 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 (73 m) fishery through 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 (73 m) fishery subquota, if it can be used. If inseason it is determined via

joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS and ODFW, that the combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) fisheries will not harvest the entire quota to the subarea, quota may be transferred inseason to another subarea south of Leadbetter Point, WA by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, unless otherwise specified, with no size limit. During days open to all-depth halibut fishing, no groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except sablefish and Pacific cod when allowed by groundfish regulations, if halibut are on board the vessel.

Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within the Stonewall Bank YRCA. The Stonewall Bank YRCA is an area off central Oregon, near Stonewall Bank, and is defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for the Stonewall Bank YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70 (f) and will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

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. Any overage in the all-depth fisheries would not affect achievement of allocation set aside for the inside 40-fathom (73 m) curve fishery.

B. The second season is an all-depth fishery with two potential openings and is allocated 67 percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates will be established preseason for the first Spring opening and will not be modified inseason except 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 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 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 possible exceptions to avoid adverse tidal conditions. If, following the “fixed” dates, quota for this season remains unharvested, a second opening will be held. If it is determined appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS and ODFW, fishing may be allowed on one or more additional days. Notice of the opening(s) will be announced by NMFS via an update to the

recreational halibut hotline. The fishery will be open every other week on Thursday through Saturday except that week(s) may be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open Thursdays through Saturdays will be identified preseason. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing or July 31, whichever is earlier.

C. The last season is an all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August and is allocated 25 percent of the subarea quota. The fishery will be structured to be open every other week on Friday and Saturday except that week(s) may be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen for another fishing day or October 31, whichever is earlier. The potential open Fridays and Saturdays will be identified preseason. If after the first scheduled open period, the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) quotas) is 60,000 lb (27.2 mt) or more, the fishery will re-open on every Friday and Saturday (versus every other Friday and Saturday), if determined to be appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW. The inseason action will be announced by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. If after the Labor Day weekend, the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) quotas) is 30,000 lb (13.6 mt) or more and the fishery is not already open every Friday and Saturday, the fishery will re-open on every Friday and Saturday (versus every other Friday and Saturday), if determined to be appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW. After the Labor Day weekend, the IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW will consult to determine whether increasing the Oregon Central Coast bag limit to two fish is warranted with the intent that the quota for the subarea is taken by September 30. If the quota is not taken by September 30, the season will remain open, maintaining the bag limit in effect at that time, through October 31 or quota attainment, whichever is earlier. The inseason action will be announced by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.

(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°40.50' 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 one halibut per person, with no size limit. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, a fixed season will be established preseason by NMFS based on projected catch per day and

number of days to achievement of the subquota; no inseason adjustments will be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made post season.

- (2) Port of landing management. All sport fishing in Area 2A will be managed on a "port of landing" basis, whereby any halibut landed into a port will count toward the quota for the subarea in which that port is located, and the regulations governing the subarea of landing apply, regardless of the specific area of catch.
- (3) Possession limits. The sport possession limit on land in Washington is two daily bag limits, regardless of condition, but only one daily bag limit may be possessed on the vessel. The sport possession limit on land in Oregon is three daily bag limits, regardless of condition, but only one daily bag limit may be possessed on the vessel. The sport possession limit on land in California and on the vessel is one daily bag limit, regardless of condition.
- (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.
- (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:

75 FR 13024 (March 18, 2010)	73 FR 12280 (March 7, 2008)
74 FR 11681 (March 19, 2009)	72 FR 11792 (March 14, 2007)
	71 FR 10850 (March 3, 2006)
	70 FR 20304 (April 19, 2005)
	69 FR 24524 (May 4, 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)

FALL 2011 NEWSLETTER EXCERPT

Changes to Catch Sharing Plan

Each September, the Council considers proposed changes to the halibut regulations in order to adjust regulations for the Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan. The Council may also make changes in catch allocation among areas or gear groups.

Both Washington's and Oregon's Departments of Fish and Wildlife held public meetings in August to solicit proposed changes to the Catch Sharing Plan. Recommendations resulting from the meetings were presented for review at the September Council meeting. The Council adopted for public review the following proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and 2012 regulations:

Washington South Coast Sub-Area Alternatives

Revise the primary season opening date

1. Status Quo: The fishery will open the first Sunday in May 1 and continue two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday until the fourth week in May, when the primary fishery will be open on Sunday only. Beginning the following week, the fishery would continue two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday, until the quota for the primary fishery season is reached or September 30, whichever is earlier.
2. The fishery will open on May 1 (regardless of the day of the week) and continue two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday.
3. The fishery would open on the first Sunday in May and remain open for three consecutive Sundays and Tuesdays before the management closure. Following the management closure, if there is sufficient quota the fishery would re-open.

Revise the amount of nearshore set aside.

1. Status Quo: The south coast subarea quota will be allocated as follows: 10% or 2,000 pounds, whichever is less, will be set aside for the nearshore fishery with the remaining amount allocated to the primary fishery.
2. The south coast sub-area quota will be allocated as follows: 10% or 4,000 pounds, whichever is less, for the nearshore fishery with the remaining amount allocated to the primary fishery.

Columbia River Sub-Area

Revise the amount of late season set aside.

1. Status quo: The Columbia River sub-area will be allocated as follows: 30 percent of the sub-area allocation will be set aside for a late season fishery with 70 percent allocated to the early fishery.
2. The Columbia River sub-area will be allocated as follows: 20 percent of the sub-area allocation will be set aside for a late season fishery with 80 percent allocated to the early fishery.
3. The late season set aside will be 20 percent or 3,000 pounds of the sub-area allocation, whichever is less, with the remaining amount allocated to the early fishery.

Revise the Early Season opening date and the days of the week opening date.

1. Status Quo: The early season fishery will open on the first Thursday in May or May 1 if it is a Friday or Saturday, 3 days per week, Thursday through Saturday. The late season fishery will open on the first Friday in August and continue three days per week, Friday-Sunday.
2. The early season fishery will be open four days per week Wednesday through Saturday. The late season will continue to be open three days per week, Friday through Saturday.

Revise the contribution to the subarea allocation from the Oregon/California sport allocation.

1. Status Quo: This subarea is also allocated 5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation or an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation, whichever is greater.
2. This subarea is allocated from the Oregon/California sport allocation an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation.

Oregon Central Coast Sub-area

Revise Season Allocation Alternatives

1. Status quo: Nearshore = 8%; spring all-depth = 67%; summer all-depth = 25%
2. Increase the nearshore quota
 - a. Nearshore = 12%; spring all-depth = 63%; summer all-depth = 25%
 - b. Nearshore = 15%; spring all-depth = 60%; summer all-depth = 25%
3. Allow flexibility in inseason shifts of quota between the all-depth fisheries and the nearshore fishery

Revise Nearshore season structure alternatives

1. Status quo (no action)—opens May 1, seven days per week until the earlier of quota attained or October 31
2. Open something less than seven days per week:
 - a. Three days per week (Thursday-Saturday)
 - b. Three days per week (Friday-Sunday)
 - c. Three days per week until July 4, if enough quota remains then open seven days per week
 - d. Five days per week, including at least one weekend day.

South of Humbug Mt. Subarea Alternatives

1. Status quo (no action)—opens May 1, seven days per week until October 31
2. Opens May 1 through the earlier of October 31 or projected attainment of the subarea catch limit.
3. Fixed seasons established preseason based on allocation and expected catch per day, starting no earlier than May 1 and ending no later than October 31.

ODFW will host public hearings to receive public comment on proposed changes. Dates and locations for the meetings are:

- Astoria—Monday, Sept. 26, 2011 at 7 pm at the Holiday Inn Express, 204 West Marine Drive
- Newport--Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 7 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Express (south of the bridge), 135 SE 32nd.
- Brookings—Wednesday, Sept. 28 at 7 p.m., at the Best Western Beach Front Inn, 16008 Boat Basin Drive.
- Coos Bay—Thursday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m. at the Red Lion Hotel, 1313 N Bayshore Drive, Coos Bay

In addition, ODFW has set up two web-based survey tools to get angler input on several proposals for the 2012 halibut fisheries:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2011/september/092611b.asp>

WDFW will host a public hearing to receive public comment on proposed changes in Montesano on Friday, September 30, 2011 at 9 a.m. at the WDFW Region 6 office, 48 Devonshire Rd.

The Council will also accept public comment on the proposed changes. Comments can be submitted to:

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384
Fax: 503-820-2299
Email: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

The Council will take final action on the proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for 2012 at its November 2011 meeting in Costa Mesa, California. Comments received at the Council office prior to October 13, along with summaries of the public hearings hosted by WDFW and ODFW, will be included in the briefing materials for the November Council meeting.

PFMC
10/13/11

REPORT ON THE 2011 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A
(10/13/2011)

The 2011 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 910,000 lbs set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as sub-TACs as follows:

Treaty Tribes	318,500 lbs (35%)
Non-Tribal Total	591,500 lbs (65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	187,506 lbs
Washington Sport	216,489 lbs
Oregon/California Sport	187,506 lbs

All weights in this report are net weight (gutted, head-off, and without ice and slime.) The structure of each fishery and the resulting harvests are described below. Refer to the table at the end of this report for the catches by the tribal, commercial and recreational fisheries.

NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

A sub-TAC of 187,506 lbs (31.7% of the non-tribal share) was allocated to two fishery components: 1) a directed longline fishery targeting on halibut south of Point Chehalis, WA; and 2) an incidental catch fishery during the salmon troll fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California. According to the Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan (CSP), incidental halibut retention is allowed in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis, WA when the 2A TAC is above 900,000 lbs and the Washington sport allocation is above 224,110 lbs. Because the overall TAC was 910,000 lbs resulting in a Washington Sport allocation less than 224,110 lbs no halibut retention was allowed in the primary directed sablefish fishery.

Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery

A quota of 28,126 lbs of Pacific halibut (15% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the non-tribal commercial salmon troll fishery in Area 2A as incidental catch during salmon troll fisheries. According to the Catch Sharing Plan, the primary management objective for this fishery is to harvest the troll quota as an incidental catch during the May/June salmon troll fishery. If any of the allocation for this fishery remains after June 30, the fishery may continue to retain incidentally caught halibut in the salmon troll fisheries until the quota is taken. The final catch ratio established preseason by the Council at the April meeting was one halibut (minimum 32 inches) 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 open period. Effective July 29, 2011, the landing restrictions for halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery were changed to one halibut per 7 consecutive day period (Friday-Thursday). Fishing with salmon troll gear is prohibited within the Salmon Troll Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) off the northern Washington Coast. Additionally, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by salmon trollers.

- Halibut retention was permitted in the salmon troll fisheries beginning May 1. As of October 13, 2011 approximately 26,172 lbs have been landed.

Directed fishery targeting on halibut

A quota of 159,380 lbs (85% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the directed longline fishery targeting on halibut in southern Washington, Oregon, and California. The fishery was confined to the area south of Subarea 2A-1 (south of Point Chehalis, WA; 46E53.30' N. lat.). In addition, between 46E53.30' N. lat. and 46E16' N. lat., the fishery was confined to an area seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour and, between 46E16' N. lat. and 40E10' N. lat., to an area shoreward of a boundary line approximating the 30-fm depth contour and seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour. One-day fishing periods of 10 hours in duration were scheduled every other week by the IPHC starting June 29, 2011. A 32 inch minimum size limit with the head on was in effect for all openings. Vessel landing limits per fishing period based on vessel length were imposed by IPHC during all openings as shown in the following table. Vessels choosing to operate in this fishery could not land halibut in the incidental catch salmon troll fishery, nor operate in the recreational fishery.

2011 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-off without ice and slime in pounds) by vessel size.

Vessel Class/Size	June 29 Opening	July 13 Opening
A 0 - 25 ft.	840 lbs	420 lbs
B 26 - 30 ft.	1050 lbs	525 lbs
C 31 - 35 ft.	1,680 lbs	840 lbs
D 36 - 40 ft.	4,630 lbs	2,315 lbs
E 41 - 45 ft.	4,980 lbs	2,490 lbs
F 46 - 50 ft.	5,960 lbs	2,980 lbs
G 51 - 55 ft.	6,650 lbs	3,325 lbs
H 56+ ft.	10,000 lbs	5,000 lbs

- The June 29 directed commercial fishery resulted in a catch of about 98,900 lbs, leaving approximately 60,480 lbs.
- The July 13 directed commercial opening resulted in an approximate catch of 69,400 lbs. The fishery closed following the July 13th opening.

SPORT FISHERIES (Non-tribal)

A sub-TAC of 403,995 (68.3% of non-tribal share) was allocated between sport fisheries in the Washington area (36.6%) and Oregon/California (31.7%). The allocations were further subdivided as quotas among seven geographic subareas as described below.

Washington Inside Waters Subarea (Puget Sound and Straits of Juan de Fuca).

This area was allocated 58,155 lbs (23.5% of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 lbs). 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 Puget Sound eastern sub-area, east of Low Point, was open May 5-29, 3 days per week (Thursday-Saturday). The Puget Sound western sub-area, west of Low Point, was open May 26-June 18, 3 days per week (Thursday-Saturday). Both regions were open 4 days per week (Thursday-Sunday) on Memorial Day weekend. The daily bag limit was 1 halibut of any size per day per person.

- Landings for this fishery are not yet available.

Northern Washington Coastal Waters Subarea (landings in Neah Bay and La Push).

The coastal area off Cape Flattery to Queets River was allocated 108,792 lbs (62.2% of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,945 lbs and 224,110 lbs). The fishery opened May 12 and continued 2 days per week (Thursday and Saturday) through May 21, then reopened on June 2, 4, 16 and 30, 2011. The "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA, southwest of Cape Flattery, was closed to sport halibut fishing. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- This two-day per week fishery opened May 12 through 21 and again June 2, 4, 16 and 30, with an estimated total catch of 103,741 lbs.

Washington South Coast Subarea (landings in Westport)

The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 43,500 lbs (12.3 % of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 lbs). The fishery opened May 1, 2 days per week (Sunday and Tuesday) until May 17. Beginning on May 22 the primary fishery was open Sunday only.

The fishery was also open 7 days per week in waters between the Queets River and 47°25.00' N. lat. south to 46°58.00' N. lat., and east of 124°30.00' W. long. (northern nearshore fishery). The south coast subarea quota was allocated as follows: 2,000 lbs to the nearshore fishery and the remaining lbs (41,500 lbs) to the primary fishery. The primary fishery closed on May 22, 2011. Following this closure, the remaining 1,129 lbs were added to the nearshore quota. An additional 1,500 lbs was transferred to the northern nearshore area from the North Coast subarea resulting in adjusted nearshore quota of 4,629 lbs. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- The primary season was open from May 2 through May 23 with an estimated catch of 40,371 lbs.
- The northern nearshore area was open May 3 through July 31 with an estimated total catch of 4,729 lbs

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon)

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 15,418 lbs, consisting of 2.0% of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 4.0% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lbs and 224,110 lbs (minus the pounds needed for the incidental sablefish fishery, which did not occur in 2011), and 5.0% of the Oregon/California sport allocation or an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation, whichever is greater. The fishery opened May 5 and continued 3 days per week until June 4, 2011. The fishery reopened on August 5 and continued 3 days per week (Friday through Sunday) through September 30, 2011. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person.

- The early fishery was open May 1 to June 4 with an estimated catch of 8,783 lbs.
- Catch during the early season resulted in underage of 2,010 lbs, which was added to the late season quota.
- The late season fishery was open August 5-September 30, with an estimated catch of 2,496 lbs, resulting in an underage of 4,139 lbs.

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

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 172,505 lbs (92% of the Oregon/California sport allocation).

Three seasons were set for this subarea: 1) a restricted depth (inside 40-fm) fishery commenced on May 1 and continued 7 days a week until October 31 or until the allocation was reached; 2) a fixed Spring season in all depths that was open on May 12-14, 26-28, June 2-4, 9-11, with a catch allocation of 115,578 lbs (the Spring season was to reopen for additional days if quota remains), and; 3) a Summer season in all depths that was scheduled to be open on August 5, 6, 19, 20, and September 2, 3, 16, 17, 30, October 1, 14, 15, 28, 29. The daily bag limit was one halibut of any size per person, unless otherwise specified.

- The inside 40-fathom fishery was open May 1 through July 6 and is estimated to have taken 15,908 lbs.
- The inside 40-fathom fishery reopened August 13 and is currently open. Estimated catch through October 2 is 8,489 lbs.
- The fixed Spring all-depth season was open May 13 through June 25, and is estimated to have taken 114,752 lbs. The underage of 826 lbs was added to the pounds available to the Summer all-depth fishery.
- The initial Summer all-depth season quota of 43,126 lbs was revised by the 826 lbs underage from the Spring fishery and the 2,108 lbs overage from the early part of the Nearshore fishery. As a result, 41,843 lbs was initially available to the Summer all-depth fishery. The Summer all-depth fishery was open August 5-6 (Friday-Saturday) and resulted in an estimated catch of 30,807 lbs. The fishery was closed on August 7.
- The remaining 11,037 lbs were added to the nearshore fishery quota resulting in a revised nearshore quote of 24,837 lbs. (the initial 13,800 lbs. plus the 11,037 from the Summer all-depth rollover). The nearshore fishery is still open at the briefing book deadline and is expected to remain open until October 31.

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

This sport fishery was allocated 5,625 lbs (3.0% of the Oregon/California quota). This area had a pre-set season of 7 days per week from May 1 to October 31 and a daily bag limit of one halibut of any size per person.

- This season is scheduled to remain open through October 31. No total catch estimates are available for this fishery.

TRIBAL FISHERIES

A sub-TAC of 318,500 lbs (35% of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 25,300 lbs would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 293,200 lbs were allocated to the commercial fishery. The 2011 management plan was based on a previous court-ordered plan, originally in place during the 2000 season, updated to reflect the current allocation. It contains provisions for both unrestricted fisheries with no landing limits and restricted fisheries with limits as well as a mop-up fishery toward the end of the season.

The unrestricted fishery began at noon on March 20 and lasted 48 hours. There were a total of 148,646 lbs taken in 243 landings during the unrestricted fishery.

There were also a number of restricted fisheries openers between March 12 and March 28. These were managed with limits, typically 500 lbs/vessel/day. The sum of all restricted fisheries landings was 63,366 lbs and 232 landings.

A mop-up fishery took place beginning at noon May 1 and continuing for 19 hours. The fishery landed 116,905 lbs in 120 landings.

In all, treaty tribal fisheries harvested 328,916 lbs in 595 landings. This was an overage of 35,716 lbs above the commercial allocation. The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and tribal estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2011.

Fishery	Dates Held	Pounds Landed	# of Landings
Unrestricted	March 20	148,646 lbs	243 landings
Restricted, 500 lbs/vessel/day	March 12 - March 28	63,366 lbs	232 landings
Mop Up	May 1	115,905 lbs	120 landings
Total		328,916 lbs	595 landings

2011 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds)

	Quota	Inseason Revised Quota		Catch		% of Quota Taken
TRIBAL INDIAN	318,500			354,216		111.2
Commercial	293,200			328,916		112.2
Ceremonial and Subsistence	25,300			25,300	%	100.0
NON-TRIBAL	591,500			540,861		91.4
COMMERCIAL	187,506			193,883		103.4
Troll	28,126			25,753		91.6
Directed	159,380			168,130		105.5
SPORT	419,412			335,700		80.0
WA Sport	216,489			148,841		68.8
OR/CA Sport	187,506			175,581		93.6
WA Inside Waters	58,155				^	0.0
WA North Coast	108,792			103,741		95.4
WA South Coast	43,500	46,129		45,100		97.8
Columbia River	15,418			11,278		73.1
Early Season	10,793			8,782		81.4
Late Season	4,625	6,635		2,496		37.6
OR Central Coast	187,506			169,956		90.6
Inside 40 fathoms	13,800	26,945		24,397	%	90.5
Spring (May-June)	115,578			114,752		99.3
Summer (August- October)	43,126	41,843		30,807		73.6
OR S. of Humbug/CA	5,625			5,625	\$	100.0
TOTAL	910,000			895,077		98.4

\$ Assumed

^ Landings for this fishery are not yet available.

% This fishery is ongoing

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2012 FISHERY

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) solicited public comment on the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) approved proposals for changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for sport fisheries off Oregon in 2012. ODFW published two news releases on September 19 and 26, 2011 announcing public meetings and asking the public to provide comments by October 4, 2011.

ODFW hosted public meetings in Astoria (Sept. 26), Newport (Sept. 27), Brookings (Sept. 28), and Coos Bay (Sept. 29). Public meetings had typically only been held in Newport and Astoria; however, since there were proposed changes to all three halibut subareas off Oregon, additional meeting locations were added. Additionally, ODFW used an online survey for the first time to garner input from people who could not attend public meetings in person, but still wanted to provide input. A total of 89 people responded to the online survey during the comment period. To reduce the possibility of survey manipulation, responses were limited to one per I.P. address (unique number assigned to computers connected to the internet). Input was focused on the specific items put forward by the PFMC in September, with some additional input on things to look at for the future.

Proposed Changes to the CSP:

Columbia River Subarea

Change the spring vs. summer allocation split from 70%:30% to 80%:20%

The summer fishery has left approximately 2,000-3,000 lbs. of halibut un-harvested during each of the previous three years, while the spring fishery has closed early due to attainment of quota two of the last three years; therefore, increasing the spring quota percentage from 70% to 80% of the total subarea quota, to allow the spring fishery to proceed longer into the allowable season was proposed in a report by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Participants at public meetings felt this decision should be made by anglers from the Columbia River Subarea, as it does not have much effect on the other subareas. Unfortunately, halibut anglers who participate primarily from the Columbia River Subarea did not attend any of the public meetings, including the one in Astoria. Of the online survey participants, 87% recommended leaving the allocation between seasons status quo.

Change the Oregon contribution to the Columbia River Subarea quota from 5% of the OR/CA total to an amount that is equal to what Washington contributes on an annual basis.

During the past three years, approximately 40% of the landings from this subarea have been into Oregon ports, while Oregon has contributed approximately 60% of the subarea quota. Therefore, nearly all participants from the public meetings want Oregon to reduce its contribution to match Washington's contribution to the subarea, and return that quota to be distributed among the other Oregon subareas/fisheries. Online survey participants slightly favored no change (53.7%).

The overall Columbia River Subarea quota will decrease if both states give equal quota. Had this occurred the past three years, then the Columbia River Subarea quota would have decreased by greater than 3,000 lbs. per year (Table 1).

Table 1. Reduction in Columbia River Subarea quota that would have occurred if state contributions had been equal (OR 50%) instead of status quo (OR SQ).

Year	By State (OR SQ)		Total OR (SQ)	Total OR 50%	Difference
	WA	OR			
2011	6,043	9,375	15,418	12,086	-3,332
2010	5,091	8,345	13,436	10,182	-3,254
2009	5,948	9,787	15,735	11,896	-3,839

Projected season lengths for both the spring and summer fishery were modeled for the four proposed quota alternatives (Table 2), (1) 70% spring; equal state contributions (70% (OR 50%)), (2) 70% spring; status quo state contributions (70% (OR SQ)), (3) 80% spring; equal state contributions (80% (OR 50%)), and (4) 80% spring; status quo state contributions (80%; OR SQ)). Season length was projected for each quota alternative by determining when the cumulative harvest catch curve would have reached the quota (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Table 2. Projected season lengths (in weeks) for the spring and summer Columbia River Subarea halibut seasons for the four quota alternatives (see above text), 2009-2011. The percentage before the parentheses is the subarea quota allocation to the season and the percentage within the parentheses is the amount of quota contributed by states (OR 50% = proposed equal contributions; OR SQ = status quo state contributions).

Projected <u>Spring</u> weeks (max 11)				
Year	70% (OR 50%)	80% (OR 50%)	70% (OR SQ)	80% (OR SQ)
2011	4.5	6	8	11
2010	5	8	11	11
2009	4	4.5	5	5.5

Projected <u>Summer</u> weeks (max 9)				
Year	70% (OR 50%)	80% (OR 50%)	70% (OR SQ)	80% (OR SQ)
2011	9	4	9	9
2010	9	4	9	9
2009	9	9	9	9

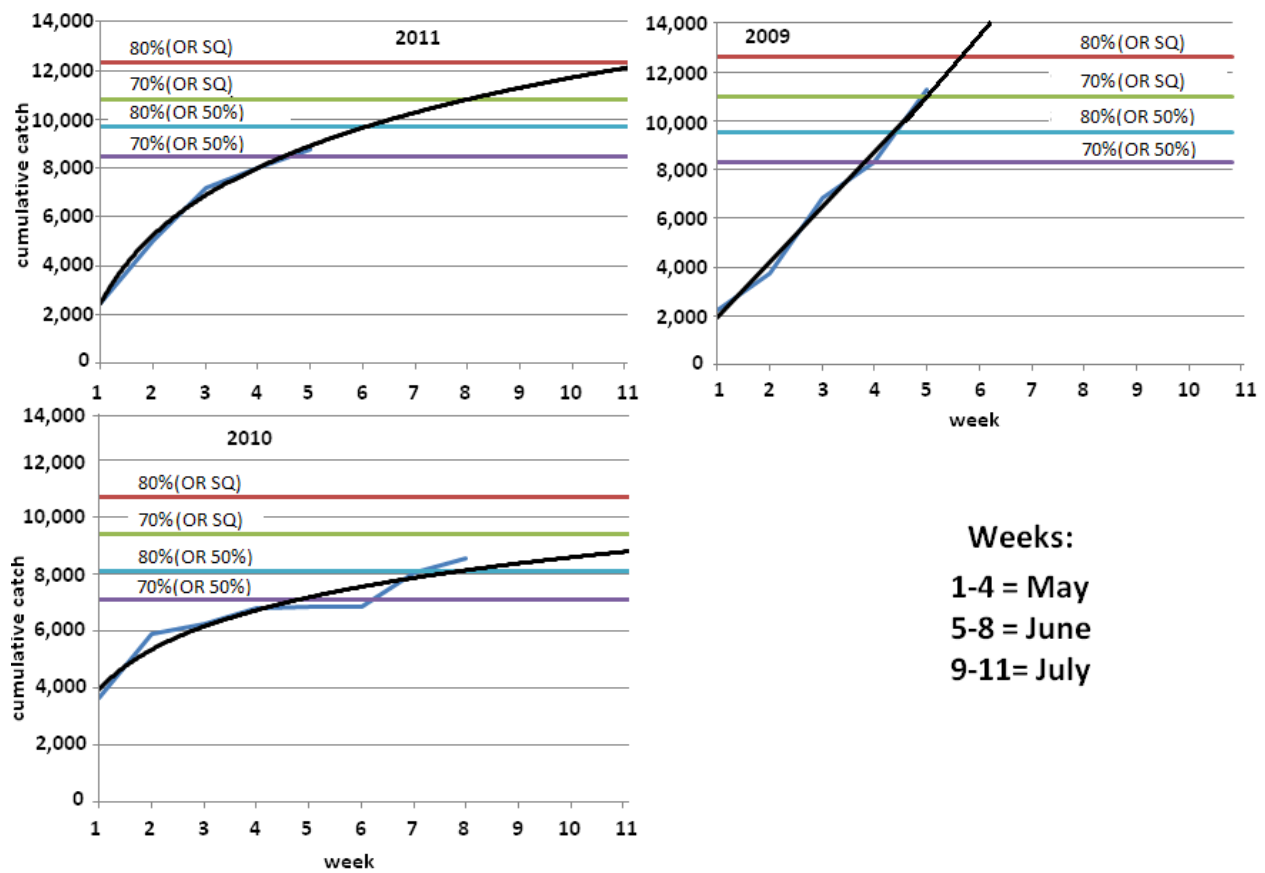


Figure 1. Projected season lengths in weeks for the spring Columbia River Subarea halibut seasons for the four quota alternatives (see above text), 2009-2011. The percentage before the parentheses is the subarea quota allocation to the season and the percentage within the parentheses is the amount of quota contributed by states (OR 50% = proposed equal contributions; OR SQ = status quo state contributions). Season length is determined at the intersection of the projected cumulative harvest line (black projection line overlaid on blue actual line) and the quota for each alternative.

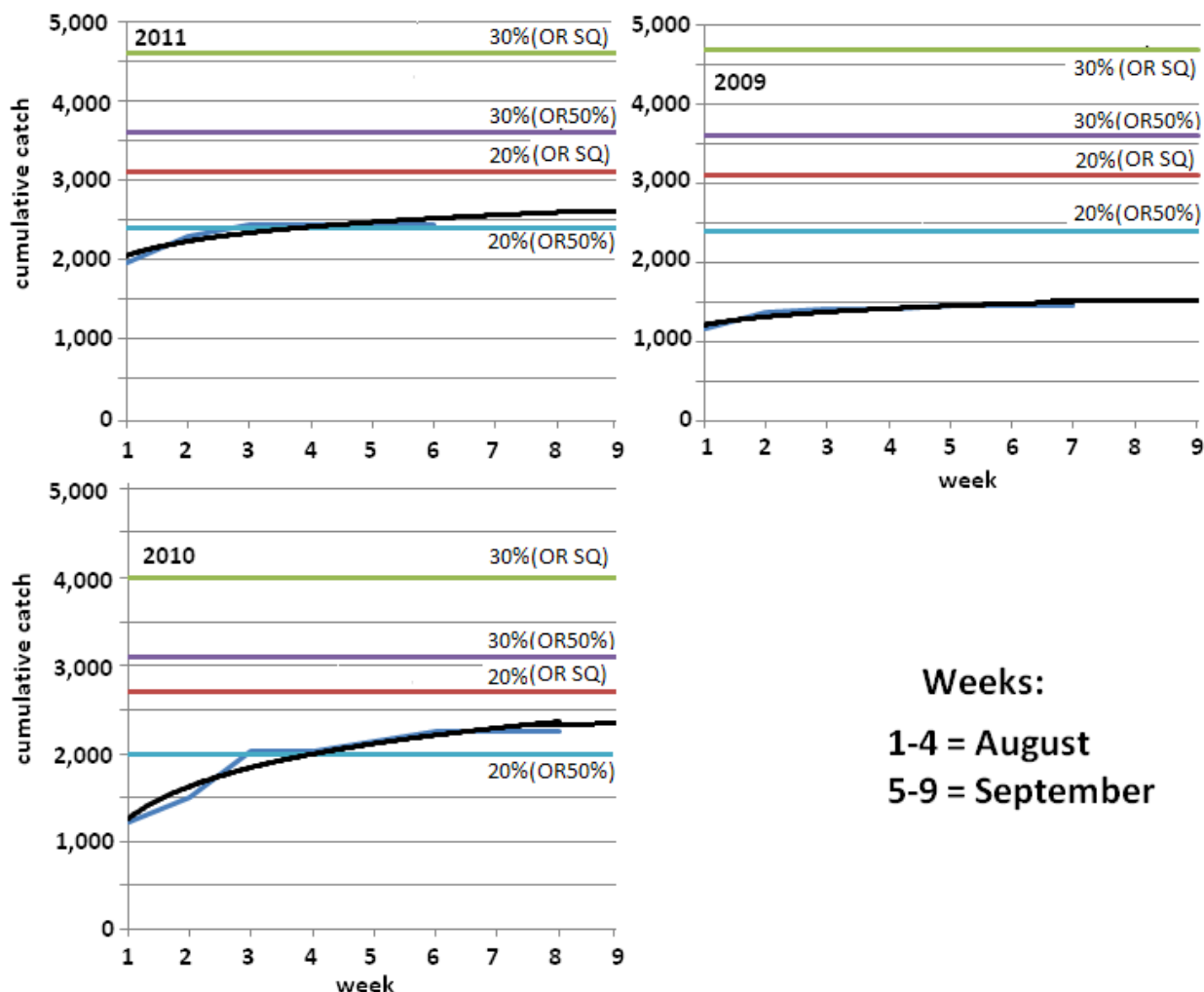


Figure 2. Projected season lengths in weeks for the summer Columbia River Subarea halibut seasons for the four quota alternatives (see above text), 2009-2011. The percentage before the parentheses is the subarea quota allocation to the season and the percentage within the parentheses is the amount of quota contributed by states (OR 50% = proposed equal contributions; OR SQ = status quo state contributions). Season length is determined at the intersection of the projected cumulative harvest line (black projection line overlaid on blue actual line) and the quota for each alternative.

The summer fishery would have lasted the entire season (nine weeks) during 2009-2011 for all quota alternatives except for 20% (OR 50%), when the season would have been reduced from nine to four weeks during 2010 and 2011.

The length of the spring fishery would have been much more affected by the quota alternatives than the summer fishery. If state contributions were equal (OR 50%), then the season length would have been reduced from the status quo (70% (OR SQ) season length if the spring fishery received either 70% or 80% of the subarea quota. If state contributions were status quo (OR SQ), then the season length would have been extended with 80% of the subarea quota instead of 70% (status quo).

Central Coast Subarea

Increase the nearshore halibut fishery season length by transferring spring all-depth quota to the nearshore fishery increasing the nearshore quota from 8% to 12% or 15% (transfer from the spring all-depth fishery)

Substantial increases in nearshore halibut (inside 40 fm) fishery effort have caused the fishery to close in July the past two years (scheduled May 1-Oct. 31 season). The majority of anglers who provided input to ODFW want to extend the length of the nearshore halibut season by transferring quota to the nearshore fishery from the all-depth halibut seasons and/or by reducing the open days per week. The nearshore halibut fishery was originally designed to be a “guaranteed” fishery open throughout the season.

Any transfer of quota should come from the spring all-depth fishery because the summer all-depth fishery has only lasted two days (one open period) the last two years, with its current quota percentage and recent trends in angler effort. The vast majority of private anglers (non-charter) at public meetings and survey participants (69%) supported transferring spring all-depth quota to the nearshore fishery. Of private anglers desiring quota transfer to the nearshore fishery, the majority preferred increasing the nearshore quota from 8% to 15% (72% of survey participants) instead of to 12%.

If the nearshore halibut fishery continues to grow at the same annual rate (slope of cumulative catch curves) that has occurred since 2009 and the 2012 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is similar to the 2011 TAC, the 2012 season would be expected to close in early June with status quo quota (8%; Figure 3). The season would be expected to last until early July with 12% quota and until late July with 15%. Although increasing the nearshore quota may extend the season length during 2012, as desired by anglers, continuation of the growth in effort and harvest rates in this fishery would result in additional reductions in season lengths in future years.

Charter captains that attended the public meetings, or otherwise contacted ODFW, acknowledge the value of the nearshore fishery to private anglers; because of this they are generally supportive of transferring quota to the nearshore fishery as long as impacts to the number of fixed open days in the spring all-depth fishery are minimized. Most charter captains stated that they do not sell trips for, or target, the nearshore halibut fishery because catch rates are too low, and that their operations are much more dependent on the spring all-depth fishery because there is little else to fish for in May and June when the spring all-depth fishery occurs. The spring all-depth season was open for 15 days in 2011 (7,650 lbs. per day average harvest). An increase in the nearshore fishery quota from 8% to 15% would have reduced the spring all-depth quota by approximately 13,500 lbs., potentially decreasing the spring all-depth season by two days (given the 2011 catch rate).

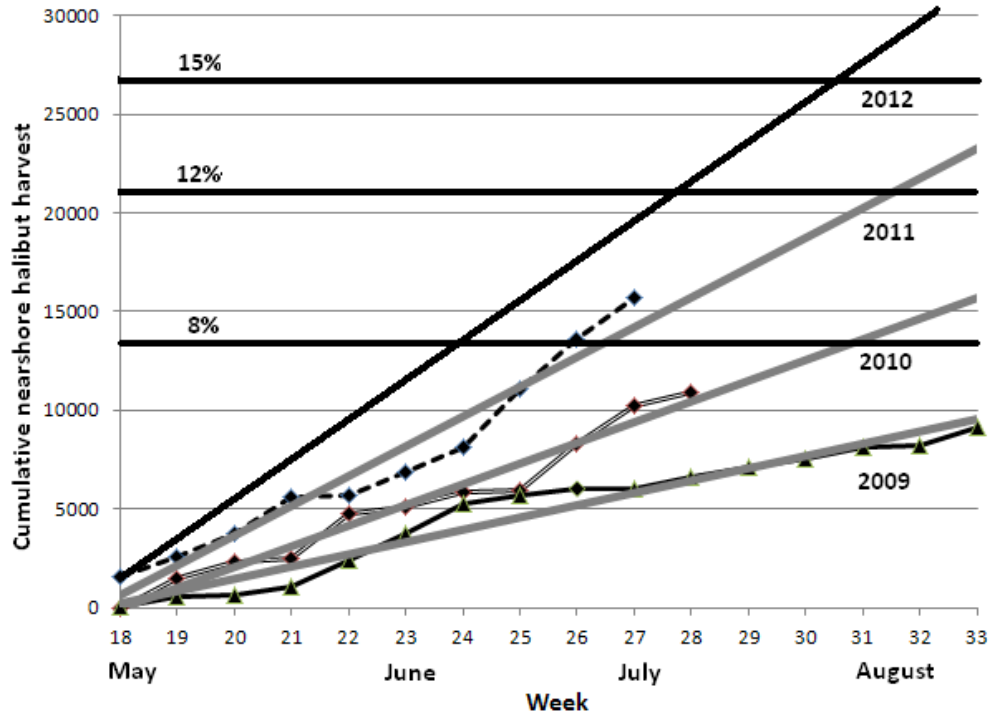


Figure 3. Projected season lengths for the 2012 nearshore halibut fishery for each quota alternative (8% status quo; 12% proposed; 15% proposed) if annual growth in the fishery since 2009 continues (increase in slopes of cumulative catches) and the 2A TAC is the same as 2011 (910,000 lbs). Season lengths are below the intersections of the projected 2012 cumulative catch curve (black diagonal line) and the horizontal lines of the quota alternatives.

Reduce the open days per week in the nearshore fishery from seven days per week

The popularity of the nearshore fishery is that there are fishing opportunities seven days per week, and anglers do not have to go 15-30 miles offshore to catch halibut. It tends to be a more family friendly fishery, as it is targeted closer to shore and ports. It also allows anglers flexibility in dealing with weather, work and school schedules, mechanical issues and other opportunities.

Reducing the number of open days per week would be expected to increase the length of the nearshore season, but the increase would be difficult to project because weekly angler effort could become more concentrated during open days, leading to less than expected reductions in weekly effort.

The feedback ODFW received on the number of days per week to be open was pretty evenly split between the alternatives (seven, five, or several three day alternatives); no clear recommendation emerged from the public input.

Allow flexibility inseason in shifting quota between the spring all-depth, summer all-depth and nearshore fisheries.

The vast majority of input from public meetings and surveys (95.3%) favored allowing additional flexibility in inseason shifts of quota between the all-depth and nearshore fisheries. This flexibility could reduce the chance of having an inseason closure of the nearshore fishery,

followed by a re-opening of the nearshore fishery after completion of the summer all-depth fishery (as occurred in 2011). Closing and re-opening a fishery in the same year, when it can be avoided, causes unnecessary strain and confusion on anglers, enforcement, and others.

South of Humbug Subarea

Adjust the season structure of the South of Humbug Subarea

The South of Humbug subarea was estimated to have exceeded its quota prior to October 31 for the first time in 2011; however, language in the CSP precludes closing the fishery inseason, regardless of harvest, due to difficulty in tracking this fishery inseason. In response to a letter of concern by the International Pacific Halibut Commission at the September PFMC meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the PFMC considered changing CSP language to either allow inseason closure if data becomes available that indicates that the quota has been attained or have fixed season length based on weekly or monthly harvest projections and the TAC for that year.

Halibut anglers that fish the South of Humbug subarea halibut fishery favored the status quo alternative because the proposed alternatives have the potential to reduce their season length. Halibut anglers in this area were concerned that fisheries managers are being reactionary to one year worth of data. They were concerned that effort, catch rates and harvest in 2011 might be an anomaly, due to a variety of reasons. They prefer to leave this fishery status quo for 2012, to see if the fishery goes back to “normal”.

ODFW will provide proposed changes to the Catch Sharing Plan (SCP) language in a supplemental report at the November PFMC meeting.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2012 FISHERY

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) reviewed recreational fishery data on Pacific halibut in California in consideration of possible changes to the catch sharing plan for the 2012 fishery. The following report summarizes the recreational fishery for Pacific halibut in California, California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) data and methods, and CDFG's understanding of the south of Humbug Mountain allocation based on the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) stock assessment.

The Recreational Fishery in California

The recreational fishery for Pacific halibut is currently open from May through October, and generally operates offshore in deeper depths (~200 ft). The primary effort in this fishery occurs in Humboldt County and a small amount occurs in Del Norte and Mendocino counties. In California, fishing activity for Pacific halibut cannot co-occur with groundfish fishing because state and federal regulations (fishery depth constraints, transit and fish onboard provisions) do not authorize take or retention of groundfish at these depths during the open groundfish seasons in northern California. However, anglers can target Pacific halibut first, and then move to shallower waters and fish for groundfish. Alternatively, anglers can target both salmon and Pacific halibut in the same fishing areas, though when targeting Pacific halibut, anglers use gear specifically selected for such a purpose.

CRFS Data and Methods

The Pacific halibut fishery is routinely sampled during the open season from May 1- October 31 as part of the state's comprehensive CRFS sampling efforts. About 80-90 percent of the sampled Pacific halibut catch is taken by anglers fishing on private boats, with the remainder taken by anglers fishing on commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFVs)¹.

In Humboldt, Del Norte and Mendocino counties, approximately 20 percent of the private boat trips originating from launch ramps are sampled per month. CDFG has high confidence in the CRFS sample data because of these high coverage rates, and because Pacific halibut is a unique species easily identified by both samplers and anglers.

Based on data from 2004 to 2010, the number of Pacific halibut caught off California appears to have increased in recent years. The number of Pacific halibut examined by CRFS samplers has increased (Table 1), the number of anglers reporting Pacific halibut as their primary target during CRFS field sampling has increased (Table 1), CPFV log book data show a trend of increased catches, and anecdotal information also suggests that interest in targeting Pacific halibut has expanded in recent years, possibly due to reduced opportunities for groundfish and salmon.

¹ CPFVs targeting Pacific halibut are required to carry a permit issued by the IPHC; however there is no requirement to submit catch information to IPHC.

Table 1. Number of examined Pacific halibut and number of anglers reporting Pacific halibut as their primary target in California from 2004 to 2010 (CRFS data extracts).

Year	Pacific Halibut Examined by CRFS Samplers	Anglers Reporting Pacific Halibut as Primary Target
2004	3	12
2005	10	45
2006	65	180
2007	91	153
2008	236	576
2009	459	1,167
2010	247	616

Although catches have increased in recent years, CDFG recognizes that any total catch estimate provided by the state could significantly influence catch sharing discussions this year and in future years if California catches are to be considered in the mix. CDFG's initial review of the available data suggests that more work is needed to resolve questions surrounding effort estimates and expansions, length/weight conversions, and other data-related factors that might influence the outcome of a total recreational catch estimate before finalizing our estimation methodology for this species.

IPHC Stock Assessment – Area 2A and PFMC Catch Sharing Plan (CSP)

The IPHC setline survey does not extend into California waters (i.e., south of 42° N latitude); therefore the quantity and quality of California data informing the assessment and the Area 2A allocation is unknown².

It is CDFG's understanding that annual CSPs were developed beginning in 1988 and a long-term catch sharing plan was recommended by PFMC and implemented by NMFS in 1995. At this time, CDFG has not been able to ascertain what data was used to inform the current CSP and in particular, the allocation south of Humbug Mountain.

Role of California Recreational Catches in Overall Pacific Halibut Management

Recreational catches for Pacific halibut in California have been treated equivalent to an “off-the-top” incidental set-aside in the groundfish fishery. Neither IPHC nor the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) has ever requested that CDFG provide its estimate of recreational Pacific halibut catch for purposes of catch tracking or for management. Of note, the only previous management interest in California's recreational fishery was in 2005 when it was requested that the season be extended by one month and the size limit removed, for consistency with other regulations on Pacific halibut beyond California.

Additionally, CDFG does not have any information from the IPHC indicating an intention that the recreational allocation south of Humbug Mountain was to be treated as a hard cap on landings. The IPHC public comment letter submitted in September 2011 (Agenda Item I.1.b,

² CDFG staff attempted to contact the stock assessment author and other IPHC staff to better understand how California's contribution to Area 2A is calculated. IPHC responded that it would be providing follow-up information to the PFMC.

IPHC Report) also does not provide any additional clarification or explicit detail on how to treat the allocation south of Humbug Mountain.

As recreational management for Pacific halibut off California has never been impacted by the catch sharing plan, CDFG has not participated in any discussions with NMFS or other states, nor held public meetings to solicit input from stakeholders regarding the current catch sharing plan.

Future Steps

CDFG has plans in place to improve data collection and tabulation methodologies in 2012 to enhance our ability to estimate the number of trips where Pacific halibut are specifically targeted. In addition, CDFG will continue to have further discussions with IPHC, NMFS, other states, and California constituents to help inform future management of Pacific halibut.

Recommendation:

CDFG recommends maintaining the status quo catch sharing plan for the 2012 fishery based on the following:

- CDFG has not finalized its estimate of recreational Pacific halibut catch in California.
- Data used to inform the stock assessment and the allocation south of Humbug Mountain needs to be more thoroughly investigated to ensure that it is appropriate, accurate, and valid before it is used for management in the California recreational fishery.
- CDFG has never been formally asked to provide catch estimates for management purposes or for total catch accounting by any agency.
- There is no documentation from IPHC outlining the explicit treatment of the allocation south of Humbug Mountain and whether it should be treated as a hard cap.

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2012 PACIFIC HALIBUT REGULATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) considered proposed alternatives submitted by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to the Pacific halibut catch sharing plan and the current regulations for the halibut fishery in IPHC area 2A. A presentation was given to GAP members by representatives from ODFW and WDFW.

GAP Recommendations:

The GAP supports the recommended alternatives in the ODFW and WDFW Reports contained within Agenda Item D.1.b. with one exception concerning the Oregon Central Coast Subarea. The GAP believes that an increased transfer of quota to the nearshore from 8 to 12 percent may be excessive to meet the requirements when the new flexibility is added to the picture. If the transfer amount were to be reduced to 10 percent along with ability to transfer quota from spring fishery the GAP believes that the seasons could be completed successfully with less risk of having stranded quota at season end. For 2011 an estimated 2000 pounds will be unharvested. The spring all depth fishery which is structured to have fixed days followed by makeup days could be set allowing charter operators to confidently book trips. Any makeup days needed for fixed day non realization due to adverse weather could then be considered for transfer as those days would be less likely to have advance bookings by charter operations.

For the South of Humbug Subarea the GAP supports a status quo for 2012 as described in the IPHC letter dated October 28, 2011 by Bruce Leaman, PhD. The support also includes resolution during 2012 of issues involving northern California pacific halibut. These issues include development of assessment/apportionment, and a monitoring and management framework. It is also recommended that the Council request of the IPHC to implement survey methods in northern California to better inform stock status in that area.

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INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY A CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA

AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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October 28, 2011

Mr. Dan Wolford, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 N.E. Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Re: Agenda Item D.1 – Pacific Halibut Management

Dear Chairman Wolford:

Our August 25, 2011 letter to the Council regarding sport fishery management for the South of Humbug Mtn. area has raised several management and assessment issues for which we would like to provide comment and recommendation to the Pacific Council.

West coast halibut assessment/apportionment – The halibut assessment is a coastwide model, using fishery and survey data as primary inputs. The Area 2A assessment survey, which began in 1995, operates in a systematic 10 x 10 nm grid design and ranges from the US/Canada border south to 42° North, i.e., the OR/CA border. When the current halibut survey was designed, we stopped at 42° North because at the time the reported commercial landings of Pacific halibut in California waters had been very minor (generally <500 lbs. annually). When we compute the relative distribution of biomass, we use bottom area (between 0 and 400 fathoms) and the Area 2A bottom area calculation only includes the area off Washington and Oregon. This bottom area is used to weight the survey index of abundance: mean weight per unit effort (WPUE) of halibut over 32 inches in length, (i.e., the legal commercial size limit) for Area 2A to derive the apportionment percentage of coastwide biomass in Area 2A. This year is the first time we have heard of any potentially significant Pacific halibut catches in California waters. In order to include CA into the biomass assessment and apportionment, we would need some measure of halibut density equivalent to what we obtain from our survey and determine how much bottom area should be reasonably included in such a calculation. Both of those estimates could be made but would require some research and discussion of the most appropriate methodology to use. We have several suggestions in this regard and are open to working with the Council and appropriate industry representatives to identify that methodology.

South of Humbug Mtn. fishery options for 2012 – The Council has offered two options in addition to status quo for this area for 2012. We appreciate the Council's recognition of the issues we raised in our earlier comment letter. From a policy perspective, we believe it is unacceptable to allow fishing to continue when a catch limit has been reached. However, we also recognize the need to resolve the assessment/apportionment issues as well as the appropriate

monitoring and management framework for sport fishery in this area, including CA waters. The IPHC staff would support a no action/status quo decision for 2012 if the Council will also support initiatives to address the foregoing issues so that an appropriate management decision can be made next fall.

Gregg Williams of the IPHC staff will be attending the Council meeting and can address questions on the Commission's perspective which may arise in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Leaman", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bruce M. Leaman, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: IPHC Commissioners

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE 2012
PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN LANGUAGE

(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 4.0 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 also allocated ~~5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation or~~ an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation ~~[from the Oregon/California sport allocation,] whichever is greater.~~ This subarea is defined as waters south of Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38.17' N. lat.) and north of Cape Falcon, OR (45°46.00' N. lat.). The fishery will open on the first Thursday in May or May 1 if it is a Friday or Saturday, 3 days per week, Thursday through Saturday until ~~[80] 70~~ percent of the subarea allocation is taken or until the third Sunday in July, whichever is earlier. The fishery will reopen on the first Friday in August and continue 3 days per week, Friday-Sunday until the remainder of the subarea quota has been taken, or until 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. Any remaining quota would be transferred to each state in proportion to its contribution. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit. No groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except sablefish and Pacific cod when allowed by groundfish regulations, if halibut are on board the vessel.

(v) Oregon central coast subarea.

This subarea extends from Cape Falcon (45°46.00' N. lat.) to Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42°40.50' N. lat.) and is allocated 92.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation minus any amount of pounds needed to contribute to the Oregon portion of the Columbia River subarea quota. 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. Any poundage remaining unharvested in the Spring all-depth subquota will be added to ~~[either] the Summer all-depth sub-quota [or the nearshore subquota as determined through the flexible inseason management process set forth in section 5 of this plan.] Any poundage that is not needed to extend the inside 40-fathom (73 m) fishery through 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 (73 m) fishery subquota, if it can be used.~~ If inseason it is determined via joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS and ODFW, that

the combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) fisheries will not harvest the entire quota to the subarea, quota may be transferred inseason to another subarea south of Leadbetter Point, WA by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, unless otherwise specified, with no size limit. During days open to all-depth halibut fishing, no groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except sablefish and Pacific cod when allowed by groundfish regulations, if halibut are on board the vessel.

Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within the Stonewall Bank YRCA. The Stonewall Bank YRCA is an area off central Oregon, near Stonewall Bank, and is defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates.

Coordinates for the Stonewall Bank YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70 (f) and will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

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 ([12] 8 percent of the subarea quota) is taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier. Any overage in the all-depth fisheries would not affect achievement of allocation set aside for the inside 40-fathom (73 m) curve fishery.

B. The second season is an all-depth fishery with two potential openings and is allocated ~~67~~ [63] percent of the subarea quota. Fixed season dates will be established preseason for the first Spring opening and will not be modified inseason except 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 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 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 possible exceptions to avoid adverse tidal conditions. If, following the “fixed” dates, quota for this season remains unharvested, a second opening will be held. If it is determined appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS and ODFW, fishing may be allowed on one or more additional days. Notice of the opening(s) will be announced by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. The fishery will be open every other week on Thursday through Saturday except that week(s) may be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The potential open Thursdays through Saturdays will be identified preseason. The fishery will continue until

there is insufficient quota for an additional day of fishing or July 31, whichever is earlier.

C. The last season is an all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August and is allocated 25 percent of the subarea quota. The fishery will be structured to be open every other week on Friday and Saturday except that week(s) may be skipped to avoid adverse tidal conditions. The fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen for another fishing day or October 31, whichever is earlier. The potential open Fridays and Saturdays will be identified preseason. If after the first scheduled open period, the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) quotas) is 60,000 lb (27.2 mt) or more, the fishery will re-open on every Friday and Saturday (versus every other Friday and Saturday), if determined to be appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW. The inseason action will be announced by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline. If after the Labor Day weekend, the remaining Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain entire season quota (combined all-depth and inside 40-fathom (73 m) quotas) is 30,000 lb (13.6 mt) or more and the fishery is not already open every Friday and Saturday, the fishery will re-open on every Friday and Saturday (versus every other Friday and Saturday), if determined to be appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW. After the Labor Day weekend, the IPHC, NMFS, and ODFW will consult to determine whether increasing the Oregon Central Coast bag limit to two fish is warranted with the intent that the quota for the subarea is taken by September 30. If the quota is not taken by September 30, the season will remain open, maintaining the bag limit in effect at that time, through October 31 or quota attainment, whichever is earlier. The inseason action will be announced by NMFS via an update to the recreational halibut hotline.

(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°40.50' 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 one halibut per person, with no size limit. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, a fixed season will be established preseason by NMFS based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota; no inseason adjustments will be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made post season.

- (2) Port of landing management. All sport fishing in Area 2A will be managed on a "port of landing" basis, whereby any halibut landed into a port will count toward the quota for the subarea in which that port is located, and the regulations governing the subarea of landing apply, regardless of the specific area of catch.
- (3) Possession limits. The sport possession limit on land in Washington is two daily bag limits, regardless of condition, but only one daily bag limit may be possessed on the

vessel. The sport possession limit on land in Oregon is three daily bag limits, regardless of condition, but only one daily bag limit may be possessed on the vessel. The sport possession limit on land in California and on the vessel is one daily bag limit, regardless of condition.

- (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.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED
CHANGES TO THE AREA 2A PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN
AND 2012 ANNUAL REGULATIONS

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) held a recreational halibut meeting to discuss proposed changes to the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Catch Sharing Plan for 2012, in Montesano, on September 30, 2012.

Based on input we received, we recommend the following changes to the Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan for 2012, section (f) SPORT FISHERIES (see below). These changes are consistent with those adopted by the Council for public review.

South Coast Sub-Area

For this sub-area implement the following changes:

- 1) Open the fishery on the first Sunday in May (status quo) and remain open for three consecutive Sundays and Tuesdays. The primary fishery would be closed the following week to tally the catch and provide sufficient notice of additional openings. This assumes the overall quota remains relatively the same and that effort does not change from recent levels. The proposed management closure may occur earlier if the sub area primary quota is projected to be obtained sooner than expected. The fishery would re-open the following Sunday or Tuesday (or both) depending on the quota available. The other season structure and fishing regulations including the set aside amount for the nearshore fishery for this sub area will remain the same.

Rationale:

This change maintains the status quo opening date and attempts to preserve the status quo number of open days prior to a management closure that would allow for catch accounting. If sufficient quota is available following the management closure the fishery would re-open and continue the Sunday, Tuesday structure until the quota was achieved.

The timing of the management closure assumes the overall quota remains relatively the same and that effort does not change from recent levels. If necessary, the proposed management closure may occur earlier if the sub area primary quota is projected to be obtained sooner than expected.

The nearshore set aside allows anglers to retain halibut caught incidentally when fishing for bottomfish in the nearshore area. Maintaining the status quo set aside for the nearshore area would continue to allow retention of incidental halibut catch without compromising fishing opportunity during the primary season.

Columbia River Sub-Area

For this sub-area implement the following changes:

- 1) Revise the amount of late season set aside such that the Columbia River sub-area will be allocated as follows: 20 percent of the sub-area allocation will be set aside for a late

season fishery with 80 percent allocated to the early fishery. No changes to the days of the week that would be open during the early season which, under status quo regulations, would be three days per week, Thursday through Saturday. The late season will continue to be open three days per week, Friday through Saturday. WDFW supports allocating 80% of the sub-area quota to the early season and 20% to the late season under both the status quo contribution structure and the option that would reduce the Oregon contribution such that it is equal to the Washington contribution.

Rationale:

Since 2008, less than 20 percent of the late season quota has been harvested compared to the 30 percent that was set aside pre season. Revising the set aside amount to 20 percent of the sub area quota maintains a late season fishery for Oregon fishermen in a manner that is reflective of the change in fishing effort and maximizes access to the overall sub area quota. An 80/20, early/late quota split under the status quo contribution from each state results in full achievement of the sub area quota and provides fishing opportunity in the spring when the effort by both Washington and Oregon anglers is higher.

If the Council decides to reduce the Oregon contribution to the sub area quota to an amount equal to Washington (i.e. 50/50), then WDFW would still support the 80/20 early/late quota split because it would result in fishing seasons as close to status quo as possible.

To illustrate the potential effects of the various quota contribution and early/late split options we used the average catch from the three most recent seasons (2009-2011) and the 2011 quota to estimate the season length under the different scenarios (Table 1). The early season would be most impacted under Option 3. Under this scenario the early season would be reduced from 5.5 weeks to 4.3 weeks, the late season would not be impacted. Option 4 would potentially reduce the early season by less than one week but could reduce the late season from nine to six weeks. Additional fishing opportunity could potentially be added to the early season under Option 2 with only a slight reduction in fishing opportunity during the late season.

Table 1. The expected number of days that would be open under the different options using the 2011 quota and the average daily catch from 2009-2011.

Early Season				Late Season			
Option	Contribution-Split	Quota	Weeks	Option	Contribution-Split	Quota	Weeks
1 (SQ)	status quo- 70%	10,793	5.5	1 (SQ)	status quo- 30%	4,625	9
2	status quo- 80%	12,334	6.3	2	status quo- 20%	3,084	8
3	50/50- 70%	8,460	4.3	3	50/50- 30%	3,626	9
4	50/50- 80%	9,669	4.9	4	50/50- 20%	2,417	6

Proposed Modifications to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan Language

(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 six geographic subareas.

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

(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°31.70' N. lat.) and north of Leadbetter Point (46°38.17' N. lat.). The structuring objective for this subarea is to maximize the season length, while maintaining a quality fishing experience. The south coast subarea quota will be allocated as follows: 10% or 2,000 pounds, whichever is less, will be set aside for the nearshore fishery with the remaining amount allocated to the primary fishery. During days open to the primary fishery and seaward of the 30-fm line lingcod may be taken, retained and possessed, when allowed by groundfish regulations. The fishery will open on the first Sunday in May. The primary fishery will be open two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday in all areas, except where prohibited, and will remain open for three consecutive Sundays and -Tuesdays before a management closure the following week to tally the catch. If the primary quota is projected to be obtained sooner than expected the management closure may occur earlier. During the fourth week in May, the primary fishery will be open on Sundays only. Beginning the following week, If there is sufficient quota remaining following the management closure the fishery would continue two days per week, Sunday and/or Tuesday, until the quota for the primary fishery season is reached or September 30, whichever is earlier. If there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen the primary fishery for another fishing day, the remaining primary fishery quota will be added to the nearshore quota. The nearshore fishery takes place, in the area from 47°31.70' N. lat. south to 46°58.00' N. lat. and east of a boundary line approximating the 30 fathom depth contour as defined by the following coordinates:

47°31.70' N.lat, 124°37.03' W. long;
47°25.67' N. lat, 124°34.79' W. long;
47°12.82' N. lat, 124°29.12' W. long;
46°58.00' N. lat, 124°24.24' W. long.

During the primary season the nearshore fishery will be open seven days per week. Subsequent to the closure of the primary fishery, the nearshore fishery will

continue seven days per week until the remaining quota is projected to be taken. If the fishery is closed prior to September 30, and there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen the nearshore areas 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.

Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within two YRCA's off Washington's southern coast. The South Coast Recreational YRCA and the Westport Offshore YRCA are defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for these Recreational YRCAs are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70 (d) and (e) and will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

(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 4.0 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 also allocated 5.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation or an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation, whichever is greater. This subarea is defined as waters south of Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38.17' N. lat.) and north of Cape Falcon, OR (45°46.00' N. lat.). The fishery will open on the first Thursday in May or May 1 if it is a Friday or Saturday, 3 days per week, Thursday through Saturday until ~~70~~⁸⁰ percent of the subarea allocation is taken or until the third Sunday in July, whichever is earlier. The fishery will reopen on the first Friday in August and continue 3 days per week, Friday-Sunday until the remainder of the subarea quota has been taken, or until 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. Any remaining quota would be transferred to each state in proportion to its contribution. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit. No groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except sablefish and Pacific cod when allowed by groundfish regulations, if halibut are onboard the vessel.

Subject: Fwd: Area 2A Pacific Halibut for California
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Wed, 05 Oct 2011 11:15:36 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject:Area 2A Pacific Halibut for California
Date:Wed, 05 Oct 2011 11:13:18 -0700
From:Tim <reelsteel@humboldt1.com>
To:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov
CC:Jimmy.Smith@co.humboldt.ca.us, Flatland@mcn.org, mvojkovich@dfg.ca.gov, Jim Yarnall
<j.yarnall@sbcglobal.net>

Dear PFMC, Due largely to an apparent increase in abundance, the recreational catch of Pacific Halibut has increased in California. This may be due to increased regulations and a decrease in effort of the trawl fishery in Northern California resulting in a lower commercial bycatch. Whatever the reason, there appears to be more Pacific Halibut in Northern California waters than in the last 30 years. The recreational allocation for Southern Oregon and Northern California is very low. Too low. In fact, it is lower than the allowable bycatch for yelloweye rockfish in California. I understand that there is a lot of competition for halibut allocation for all sectors but the current allocation for Southern 2A recreation is completely inequitable. Please adjust the allocation from 5,625# to 10% of area 2A allowable catch. Sincerely, Tim Klassen Eureka Ca ph 707-499-5509

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

Subject:Item D.1.c recommendation to limit recreational Pacific Halibut quota in California

Date:Wed, 12 Oct 2011 00:44:54 -0700 (PDT)

From:Robert Reed <n6hgg@yahoo.com>

To:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Item D.1.c

October 12, 2011

Robert Reed
232 Warren Creek Road
Arcata, California
95521

Don McIsaac, Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Mr. McIsaac,

It came to my attention that the PFMC is entertaining a recommendation to close the Pacific Halibut recreational fishing season when a 2625 pound quota is met. This recommendation should be reconsidered for several reasons.

First, the council could to a better job disseminating an intent such as this to the public in an economic region such as ours on the North Coast of California. Changes to a fishing season such as this may seem a small item in your large picture view, but they are a very big deal to businesses in an area such as ours. Lack of information made available to these businesses does a disservice to them. Please do a better job of letting them know in a timely fashion, and in a more obvious way so that they can respond.

Secondly, the far reaching negative economic impact of this new restriction deserves further study. Early season closure recommendations shoots our state and local tax revenue efforts in the foot. Such a restriction will lead to very early closure of the fishery in our area and will severely impact tax revenues generated from the sales of fuels, equipment, lodging, food, charter fishing trips and other items needed for the activity. This recommendation appears to the outside observer to have not been completely thought through to its final conclusion of negative economic impacts and its contribution to continuing government and private sector job losses.

Leaving the season at it now exists will benefit tax revenues such that the revenues collected by leaving the season as it is, could fund further, more scientific studies and assist in helping enable new law enforcement strategies to enforce new limits to this fishery if the studies say it is really needed. Closure now is premature at best.

Please reconsider this economically detrimental recommendation and leave the season as it has existed for some time so that tax revenues will not be negatively impacted.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,
Robert Reed
Arcata, California
Humboldt Bay

Subject: Fwd: Halibut
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 11:00:10 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject:Halibut
Date:Thu, 13 Oct 2011 05:32:59 -0700 (PDT)
From:Lonnie Dollarhide <flatwater1@yahoo.com>
Reply-To:Lonnie Dollarhide <flatwater1@yahoo.com>
To:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Hello Mr. McI, my name is Lonnie Dollarhide, I'm a sports fisherman form Humboldt Bay, Eureka California. I'm very concerned about what NOAA wants to do to our Halibut fishing here on the North Coast. The numbers that have been put out by the PFMC r so wrong. I follow the catch of all species on a daily basis during the fishing season. Their is no way possible those numbers r true on the Halibut. We around Humboldt Bay feel their should be no changes what so ever to our season on Pacific Halibut. Their is no way we r hurting this fisheries. I feel their should be a little more study on this before any if at all any action is taken, thanks, Lonnie Dollarhide.

Subject: Fwd: Halibut Allocations
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 11:00:31 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: Halibut Allocations
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 09:48:25 -0700
From: tim machado <collym3@gmail.com>
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Item D.1.c

Mr. Don McIsaac

I am a northern California, southern Oregon sport fisherman. Recently I was made aware that restrictions on the sport take of Pacific halibut in this area were to be considered by the PFMC. In the recent decade, halibut fishing has become an important component of our sport fishing effort and the local economies. Increased effort has occurred mostly as halibut availability has increased, while wasteful nearshore trawling bycatch has decreased. As past allocation strategies seem to have factored this bycatch waste into overall halibut harvest, it would seem rational that a new allocation would make these fish available for the beneficial use and harvest by sport fishermen. Further restricting the small sport sector take in this extreme southern part of the halibut habitat makes no scientific or political sense.

Respectfully,
Timothy

Machado

HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS, INC.

October 13, 2011

D.1.c

Mr. Don McIsaac, Executive Director
Public Comment – Pacific Halibut – D.1.c

Dear Mr. McIsaac,

As president of Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers or HASA, a non-profit organization representing recreational anglers in Humboldt and Del Norte counties promoting wise resource stewardship and recreational fishing opportunities, I urge you to not to make changes to the recreational Pacific halibut season in Area 2A.

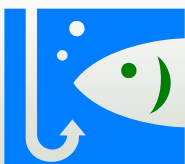
Within the last five years this fishery has developed into an important supplemental fishery providing anglers, charter boat operators and fishing related businesses a needed economic boost especially during the 2008 & 2009 seasons when salmon fishing was either closed or severely restricted.

The decision to potentially reduce fishing opportunity or recreational harvest in northern California should not be taken lightly and should be based upon accurate and timely scientific data. With the decrease in shallow water trawl fisheries the Pacific halibut numbers have greatly rebounded providing an abundance not previously seen in recent history. The Area 2A recreational catch is almost insignificant when compared to the total catch in the eastern Pacific Ocean. One should also examine how historically the allocations were given to each area and perhaps revisit these allocations based upon number of miles of habitat and population density. Perhaps additional pounds of fish could be allocated to Area 2A from the reduced bycatch from the trawl fishery.

I urge the PFMC carefully consider this issue and not make any changes until historical allocations are revisited and any change is supported by recent scientific data.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Yarnall, President
Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers



P.O. BOX 6191
EUREKA, CA. 95502

E-MAIL hasa6191@gmail.com

WEB SITE www.humboldtuna.com

The Council received 3 letters
substantively identical to this.

Subject: Fwd: Item D.1.c
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 11:00:46 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: Item D.1.c
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 17:26:39 +0000
From: Jan Z <blackorp@hotmail.com>
To: PFMC Comments <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Item D.1.c

Mr. Don McIsaac, Executive Director PFMC:

I am a member of the Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers (HASA), a non-profit association of sport fishermen based primarily in coastal Northern California. In part our Charter specifically states that we "advocate reasonable and rational sport fishing seasons and regulations...and promote sustainable stewardship of the resource."

I hope that both scientists and politicians would agree with those sentiments. I believe that it is in the best interests of all parties concerned to have a solid scientific basis for the regulations we adopt, and a general sense of fairness regarding any limitations imposed.

At present I am unaware of any recent population dynamics studies concerning Pacific halibut in our region which suggest sport harvest levels here are endangering the species. Without adequate scientific information any dramatic changes in policy or procedure seem premature.

On a purely political level, it seems strange to me that there is a sudden demand to "do something" about a perceived danger to the halibut population from sport fishermen in Northern California. The data I've seen indicates that many times the current harvest levels in this region would have a trivial impact on the halibut biomass. I would suggest that even the mildest percentage reduction in by catch waste in other harvest sectors would have a substantially greater beneficial impact on the species than further restricting this tiny sport sector.

Separately, I would appreciate some historical context explaining how the current division of overall harvest was set. It seems likely that the dynamics

which led to the current division of harvest quotas may have changed in the years since the existing formula was adopted. If so, then perhaps the overall formula should be reevaluated.

I respectfully request that a decision to further restrict halibut harvest levels in Northern California, which would adversely impact our local economy but have no measurable impact on the species, should be delayed till we fully understand the scientific and political basis for said decision.

Jan N Zeiters
1867 William Ct
McKinleyville Ca
95519

CC: Bruce Leaman IPHC

Subject: Fwd: Pacific Halibut issue D.1.c
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 11:39:27 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: Pacific Halibut issue D.1.c
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 11:04:15 -0700
From: Mike Hart <mike@humboldtinvestigations.com>
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Mr. McIssac:

I find it hard to believe that closing Pacific Halibut fishing is being considered. Here we go again with another "endangered species" ploy to close a fishery when I bet there is no research or evidence to support such action. I smell a model that somebody has developed without any real facts. In reality, the Pacific Halibut in our region have been found to be plentiful and abundant. My wife accidentally caught this Halibut while rockfishing with a red jig in 80 foot of water depth! What gives? This is absolutely crazy!

Mike Hart

— My Pictures 2082.JPG —



Public Comment D.1.c.

Proposed Halibut Catch Sharing Plans Changes for 2012

Dear Dr. McIsaac, Chairman Wolford and Council:

I am writing this on behalf of the recreational anglers in the Northern California area from Point Arena to the Oregon Border. I am a Board Member of the Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers with a membership of about 500 local anglers. In addition, I am a member of the GAP, serving as the CA Sportfishing Representative.

To the point, we are asking the Council to maintain the status quo in halibut regulations for the 2012 season and not to shut down the season should our meager 5625 pound allocation of halibut be attained by dock sampler estimations.

We understand that the Council is reacting to an August letter from the IPHC expressing concern that it appears that the area south of Humbug Mt. in Oregon has exceeded the allocation for the 2011 year and that CA has not yet reported. RecFin data shows only 21 fish of 12.1 kg average caught in southern Oregon, so we are puzzled over their concern. However, we acknowledge that CA has shown significant increases over the past several years in halibut effort and landings. There are several reasons for this:

1. There was no salmon season in 2008, a ten day salmon season in 2009 and a very poor salmon season in 2010.
2. The halibut season was extended for an additional month in 2008 and the 32" size limit was removed.
3. In 2008 our rockfish season was cut from 4 to 2 months by emergency action due to concern over yelloweye bycatch.
4. RCA restrictions for bottom trawl in our area have witnessed the halibut population numbers increasing in our area as the fish move back up the slope to the inshore waters. We catch most of our fish in 350' or water or less while avoiding rocky areas.

All these factors have led to effort shift and more catch success. For three years, without halibut to target we would have had almost no fishing opportunity. The effort shift back to salmon and a subsequent reduced halibut catch for 2011 is illustrated in the RecFin data. (We are about a quarter of the landing seen in 2008.) While these numbers may be over the 0.62% allocation of the 2A area, it is statistically insignificant. Indeed, when compared with the millions of pounds of trawl bycatch mortality as documented in the IPHC 2010 Halibut Assessment, our effect of the exploitable biomass is imperceptible, a mere 0.0014% of the exploitable biomass. It begs the question of fairness and equity.

Halibut has been a welcome relief to recreational and charter fisherman at a time when salmon opportunity was nearly eliminated. Halibut has sustained our three Charter

Vessels for about 40% of their business and provided relief for our many fishing related businesses. While salmon is the major draw, halibut helps to lessen the impact when salmon seasons are restricted. We have voluntarily restricted our effort in rockfish areas in the Cape Mendocino region over yelloweye concerns. Should we dare to attempt to fish the healthy lingcod regions in deeper waters we risk taking yelloweye, so we avoid them. The low YE bycatch this year substantiates this effort. We feel we are being penalized in every fishery we attempt with severe economic consequences.

The halibut fishery is healthy and not overfished, albeit the biomass is reducing in recent years. Much of the cause may be natural from smaller size fish per age class due to competition and ocean conditions. The southern 2A region has been allocated a pittance of the 910,000 pounds in comparison with our area and fishery population. The IPHC states the entire 2A region is less than 1% of the biomass of the entire fishery and we are 0.62% of that 1%. To state that we have any measurable effect on the population is beyond credulity. This is a regulatory issue and not one of biology. The 2011 allocation for the entire fishery is only slightly over 13% of the exploitable biomass as stated by the IPHC, when 20% is generally allowed. We also have 5% of our tiny portion allocated back to the Columbia River subarea if we understand that correctly.

The M-S Act speaks plainly to provide direction to the Council in making management decisions in situations like this when Conservation measures have major economic impacts on small communities. Conservation goal #3, Economic Goal #6 & 7, and Social Factors #15, 16 and 17 speak directly to aggressive rebuilding plans. We are an area with over 14% unemployment, our fishing and forestry resource economies are but a fraction of what they were twenty years ago. Our commercial fleet has been reduced to 10% of its former numbers in the 1980's. Resource businesses that provided two-thirds of our employment are now down to less than 30%. More data would just belabor the issue. To shut down our halibut season when only 230 fish are caught below Humbug Mt. will create severe economic loss with no measurable effect on the halibut biomass.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the council maintain the season from May 1 through October 31 for the 2012 season. Over the coming year, if the Council feels the need to make changes than many other options should be considered over just shutting down the season. Size limitations, allocations, a punch card fishery limiting the catch per person per year, or other management measures could be explored. We believe it is premature to take any action from the "status quo" at this point.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council.

Tom Marking
Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, GAP sports fishing representative
1456 Whitmire Avenue
McKinleyville, CA 95519

COMMISSIONERS

1st Division
R. Pellegrini
2nd Division
R.L. Curless
3rd Division
M. Wilson
4th Division
R. Marks
5th Division
P.T. Higgins

**HUMBOLDT BAY
HARBOR, RECREATION, AND CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

(707) 443-0801
P.O. Box 1030
Eureka, California 95502-1030



Agenda Item D.1.c
November 2011

October 13, 2011

Dr. Donald O. McIsaac
Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Re: Agenda Item D.1 – 2012 Pacific Halibut Regulations, Nov. 2011 PFMC Meeting

Dear Mr. McIsaac:

The staff of the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District (HBHRCD) has become aware that the Council is considering modifying the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan to allow sport fishery closure in the South of Humboldt Mountain subarea when available information indicates that the subarea catch limit has been reached. This change in regulations may potentially have large economic consequences in our region due to loss of opportunity. While the HBHRCD is in full support of science based management decisions that protect and conserve fisheries resources, it is clear that in this instance there is currently insufficient information available to appropriately implement the proposed management changes due to lack of an existing measure of population abundance from which a valid catch limit metric can be drawn.

Very little fundamental information regarding stock characteristics and abundance of Pacific Halibut in the South of Humboldt Mountain subarea currently exists due to the fact that the extensive International Pacific Halibut Commission's annual stock assessment survey does not include waters south of the California-Oregon border. As a result, the subarea has historically been allocated a very small fraction (%0.62) of the Total Allowable Catch for Area 2A based solely on the amount of suitable habitat. This perfunctory method of harvest allocation does not consider the actual abundance of Pacific Halibut on the grounds and is therefore inadequate for use as means of generating a prudent catch limit.

The HBHRCD has the capacity and expertise to conduct the biological sampling required to provide an estimate of abundance that can be used to generate a well informed catch limit for the region. Our staff is currently seeking funding to support a two year Pacific Halibut stock assessment survey in northern California waters identical to that conducted by the IPHC throughout the rest of species' geographic range. It is the recommendation of the HBHRCD that

Letter to Dr. Donald O. McIsaac

October 13, 2011

Page 2

the Council suspend the effort to allow sport fishery closure when the subarea catch limit has been reached until our survey is complete and a science based catch limit is provided. In the interim, we recommend a season closing date of September 30, rather than October 31, so as to avoid potential gross overharvest of the resource.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mike Wilson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Mike Wilson
President, Board of Commissioners

c: Board of Commissioners

Subject: Fwd: 2012 Area 2a Halibut Regulations
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Fri, 14 Oct 2011 07:58:48 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: 2012 Area 2a Halibut Regulations
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 17:54:22 -0700
From: Dick Woolsey <dwoolz@sbcglobal.net>
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Mr. Don McIsaac, Executive Director
Public Comment – Pacific Halibut – D.1.c

Dear Mr. McIsaac,

It has come to my attention that the PFMC is considering action at the November meeting that could significantly reduce the 2012 Pacific Halibut recreational season from Humboldt Mt. south into California. One scenario has the season being closed after only 2625 lbs. of halibut are caught. If the fish averaged 25 lbs. this would only be 105 fish for the entire area.

This fishery has developed into an important supplemental fishery providing anglers, charter boat operators and fishing related businesses a needed economic boost. This was especially true during the 2008 & 2009 seasons when salmon fishing was either closed or severely restricted. Any reduction in the season would severely impact the already struggling local economy.

The decision to potentially reduce fishing opportunity or recreational harvest in northern California should not be taken lightly and should be based upon accurate and timely scientific data. It should also be examined how the allocations were assigned to each area, and perhaps these allocations should be revisited based upon number of miles of habitat and population densities. Perhaps additional pounds of fish could be allocated to Area 2A from the reduced bycatch from the trawl fishery. Also, because of the reduced bycatch within the trawl fishery, the numbers of Pacific Halibut seems to have increased significantly.

The Area 2A recreational catch is almost insignificant when compared to the total catch in the eastern Pacific Ocean so I urge the PFMC to carefully consider this issue and not make any changes until historical allocations are revisited and until changes can be supported by recent scientific data.

Respectfully submitted,
Dick Woolsey

Subject: Fwd: Pacific Halibut issue D.1.c
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Fri, 14 Oct 2011 08:00:52 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: Pacific Halibut issue D.1.c
Date: Thu, 13 Oct 2011 20:19:03 -0700 (PDT)
From: Michael and Tami Davies-Hughes <michaeltami@yahoo.com>
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Dear Mr. Don McIsaac:

Re: Item #D.1.c (Pacific Halibut closure)

I am a member of the Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers (HASA), a non-profit association of sport fishermen based primarily in coastal Northern California. In part our Charter specifically states that we "advocate reasonable and rational sport fishing seasons and regulations...and promote sustainable stewardship of the resource." I hope that both scientists and politicians would agree with those sentiments.

I believe that it is in the best interests of all parties concerned to have a solid scientific basis for the regulations we adopt, and a general sense of fairness regarding any limitations imposed. At present I am unaware of any recent population dynamics studies concerning pacific halibut in our region which suggest sport harvest levels here are endangering the species. Without adequate scientific information any dramatic changes in policy or procedure seem premature.

Also, the current division of harvest quotas seems skewed and us in Northern California should get our own share of fish. The overall formula should be reevaluated.

As a sportfisherman in Northern California, I cannot verify the numbers of Pacific Halibut that have been reported to have been caught in our area. This number of fish guesstimated seems highly inflated. If such a decision to further restrict halibut harvest levels is put in place, this will adversely impact our local economy AND have no measurable impact on the species. This issue should be delayed until we understand the scientific and political basis for this decision.
Thanks for your consideration,

Michael Davies-Hughes
460 Redmond Road
Eureka, CA 95503

Subject: Fwd: Humboldt area halibut
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Fri, 14 Oct 2011 08:00:33 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: Humboldt area halibut
Date: Fri, 14 Oct 2011 04:17:17 -0700 (PDT)
From: jon fini <d.fini@sbcglobal.net>
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

The halibut fishing here in Northern California has been getting better every year since the restrictions were placed on the drag fishing. With the obvious increase in fish populations and the limit set at one per day, it should be clear that the sport fishery is sustainable as it stands. There is no good science to change course and a derby style sport fishery will unfairly hinder those who work full time jobs and those who have smaller boats that are limited by ocean conditions.

Thank you, Jon Fini

Subject: Fwd: Halibut regs 2A
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Fri, 14 Oct 2011 08:00:20 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: Halibut regs 2A
Date: Fri, 14 Oct 2011 07:22:00 -0700
From: m-morris <m-morris@suddenlink.net>
Reply-To: m-morris <m-morris@suddenlink.net>
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

October 14, 2011

Mr. Don McIsaac, Executive Director
Public Comment – Pacific Halibut – D.1.c

Dear Mr. McIsaac,

As a recreational angler in Humboldt and Del Norte counties I promote wise resource stewardship and recreational fishing opportunities, I urge you to not to make changes to the recreational Pacific halibut season in Area 2A.

Within the last five years this fishery has developed into an important supplemental fishery providing anglers, charter boat operators and fishing related businesses a needed economic boost especially during the 2008 & 2009 seasons when salmon fishing was either closed or severely restricted.

The decision to potentially reduce fishing opportunity or recreational harvest in northern California should not be taken lightly and should be based upon accurate and timely scientific data. With the decrease in shallow water trawl fisheries the Pacific halibut numbers have greatly rebounded providing an abundance not previously seen in recent history. The Area 2A recreational catch is almost insignificant when compared to the total catch in the eastern Pacific Ocean. One should also examine how historically the allocations were given to each area and perhaps revisit these allocations based upon number of miles of habitat and population density. Perhaps additional pounds of fish could be allocated to Area 2A from the reduced bycatch from the trawl fishery.

I urge the PFMC carefully consider this issue and not make any changes until historical allocations are revisited and any change is supported by recent scientific data.

Thank you;

Gene Morris
3967 V St
Eureka, Ca. 95503

707-444-3918

Subject: Fwd: Quota for Pacific Halibut for Northern California
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Wed, 19 Oct 2011 10:44:35 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

Supplemental Public Comment 2
November 2011

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

Subject:Quota for Pacific Halibut for Northern California
Date:Fri, 14 Oct 2011 16:21:41 -0700 (PDT)
From:Steve Haines <redrider62@yahoo.com>
Reply-To:Steve Haines <redrider62@yahoo.com>
To:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Mr. McIsaac Executive Director:

D.i.c.

I respectfully request that a decision to further restrict Pacific Halibut harvest levels for recreational anglers in Northern California be delayed until we fully understand the scientific basis for this drastic decision to limit our catch to 5625 lbs. A decision of this caliber will financially impact our local economy and we are sure that there are far more halibut off shore then your statistics are showing.

Sincerely

Steve A. Haines

Subject: Fwd: Item D.1.c
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Wed, 19 Oct 2011 10:44:52 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: Item D.1.c
Date: Tue, 18 Oct 2011 21:38:08 -0700
From: Ron Fleshman <oceangrove@suddenlink.net>
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Item D.1.c

Dear Sirs:

I am a member of the Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers (HASA), a non-profit association of sport fishermen based primarily in coastal Northern California. In part our Charter specifically states that we "advocate reasonable and rational sport fishing seasons and regulations...and promote sustainable stewardship of the resource." I hope that both scientists and politicians would agree with those sentiments. I believe that it is in the best interests of all parties concerned to have a solid scientific basis for the regulations we adopt, and a general sense of fairness regarding any limitations imposed. At present I am unaware of any recent population dynamics studies concerning pacific halibut in our region which suggest sport harvest levels here are endangering the species. Without adequate scientific information any dramatic changes in policy or procedure seem premature. On a purely political level, it seems strange to me that there is a sudden demand to "do something" about a perceived danger to the halibut population from sport fishermen in Northern California. The data I've seen indicates that many times the current harvest levels in this region would have a trivial impact on the halibut biomass. I would suggest that even the mildest percentage reduction in bycatch waste in other harvest sectors would have a substantially greater beneficial impact on the species than further restricting this tiny sport sector.

Separately, I would appreciate some historical context explaining how the current division of overall harvest was set. It seems likely that the dynamics which led to the current division of harvest quotas may have changed in the years since the existing formula was adopted. If so, then perhaps the overall formula should be reevaluated.

I respectfully request that a decision to further restrict halibut harvest levels in Northern California, which would adversely impact our local economy but have no measurable impact on the species, should be delayed till we fully understand the scientific and political basis for said decision.

Ron & Terry Fleshman
Ocean Grove Lodge
480 Patricks Point Dr
Trinidad, CA 95570
(707) 677-3543

Trinidad: a drinking village with a fishing problem

<http://pages.suddenlink.net/oceangrove>

Subject: Fwd: Halibut regs for 2012
From: "pfmc.comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Fri, 21 Oct 2011 08:35:15 -0700
To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov>

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

Subject: Halibut regs for 2012
Date: Thu, 20 Oct 2011 16:50:55 -0700
From: Fred Johansen <fredjohansen28@gmail.com>
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Dear Committee,

Please change the reg next year to allow a much larger halibut sport catch. With one charter catching that much out of Humboldt Bay this year and a sportfishing industry that has taken off in the last few years we sports fishermen need an expanded catch quota. Being able to fish halibut and salmon keeps most of us sports fishermen interested in fishing offshore from Humboldt County.

I have been fishing halibut for the last three years mostly due to the fact it was the only fishery available to fish during what used to be our local salmon season. I have spent on average three hundred dollars for just gear during the last three years. This is just rods, line, reels and terminal tackle. Everyone in my family - the four of us fishermen have been out in my boat and caught at least one halibut. This doesn't count their money spent traveling from San Luis Obispo, Larkspur or locally. I probably would have sold my boat that I spent 15,000 + dollars on to make it capable of fishing in our new fishing conditions.

Growing up in Eureka and fishing out of Humboldt Bay we only fished out to 2 miles and never more than five miles from the entrance to the bay, but now we consistently fish out to five miles off shore. This season we fished over 10 miles north and south of the entrance. Now almost every new boat is capable of traveling down to the cape and back for a good day of fishing. With good days of as many as 100 boats offshore from Eureka that would be a big total of boats that average over 40,000 dollars per boat and 5,000 dollars in fishing gear. Many of these boats come from the central valley - you can see them traveling 299 every weekend - and from south of Eureka. I'm sure after fishing this season that there must be at least 200 boats fishing that are local to Humboldt County.

I'm not going to try to estimate the money that comes into our local economy from sports fishing but having a halibut season that runs concurrently with salmon and rockfish is bringing a good amount of money to Humboldt County. For fishermen to travel to Humboldt County they need to have several options. If the sea conditions are bad or the bite is off for one species it gives us a chance to still fish. We're losing some valuable fishing areas this next year due to the MPLA, please

don't allow our halibut season to be closed down. Give us a quota of halibut so that we'll be able to fish during the entire salmon season.

Thanks, Fred Johansen

2295 Ross Street

Arcata, CA., 95521

fredjohansen28@gmail.com

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OCT 24 2011

PFMC

October 12, 2011

Jeff Coontz
2765 Dunbar Ct.
Arcata, California 95521

Don McIsaac, Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Mr. McIsaac,

It came to my attention that the PFMC is entertaining a recommendation to close the Pacific Halibut recreational fishing season when a 2625 pound quota is met. This recommendation should be reconsidered for several reasons.

First, the council could do a better job disseminating an intent such as this to the public in an economic region such as ours on the North Coast of California. Changes to a fishing season such as this may seem a small item in your large picture view, but they are a very big deal to businesses in an area such as ours. Lack of information made available to these businesses does a disservice to them. Please do a better job of letting them know in a timely fashion, and in a more obvious way so that they can respond.

Secondly, the far reaching negative economic impact of this new restriction deserves further study. Early season closure recommendations shoots our state and local tax revenue efforts in the foot. Such a restriction will lead to very early closure of the fishery in our area and will severely impact tax revenues generated from the sales of fuels, equipment, lodging, food, charter fishing trips and other items needed for the activity. This recommendation appears to the outside observer to have not been completely thought through to its final conclusion of negative economic impacts and its contribution to continuing government and private sector job losses.

Leaving the season as it now exists will benefit tax revenues such that the revenues collected by leaving the season as it is, could fund further, more scientific studies and assist in helping enable new law enforcement strategies to enforce new limits to this fishery if the studies say it is really needed. Closure now is premature at best.

Please reconsider this economically detrimental recommendation and leave the season as it has existed for some time so that tax revenues will not be negatively impacted.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,



Jeff Coontz
Arcata, California
Humboldt Bay