

2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT REGULATIONS

Each September meeting, the Council considers proposed changes to the Pacific halibut regulations. The purpose of this consideration is for adjustments in the annual regulations (primarily in the recreational fishery) or the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A (Agenda Item K.1.a, Attachment 1) and can include minor changes in catch allocation among areas or gear groups. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) prepared a report on the progress to date of the 2014 Pacific halibut fisheries in Area 2A (Agenda Item K.1.b, NMFS Report).

Public meetings were held to solicit proposed changes to the CSP and to present agency staff proposals for public comment. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) held a public meeting on August 8 in Montesano. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) held public meetings on August 5 in Brookings, August 6 in North Bend, and August 11 in Newport. Recommendations resulting from the meetings are included in the reference materials (Agenda Items K.1.b, WDFW Report and K.1.b, ODFW Report).

Starting in 2014, in response to recent high harvests of Pacific halibut off Southern Oregon and Northern California, the Council established a new management line at the Oregon/California border. The new management line resulted in separate Oregon and California subareas with area-specific CSP allocations and management measures (Agenda Item K.1.a, Attachment 1). Under Agenda Item K.1, the Council should consider whether additional changes to the 2A CSP allocations are necessary and whether adjustments to management measures are necessary to comply with allocation provisions of the CSP. A tri-state report was submitted that provides a range of alternatives for increasing the California sport allocation while reducing the commercial fishery allocation (Agenda Item K.1.b, Tri-State Report).

The Council is scheduled to take final action on proposed changes for the 2015 Area 2A halibut fisheries at the November 2014 Council meeting.

Council Action:

1. Adopt for public review proposed changes for the 2015 Pacific halibut CSP, as necessary.
2. Adopt for public review proposed changes for the 2015 annual fishery regulations, as necessary.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item K.1.a, Attachment 1: 2014 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A.
2. Agenda Item K.1.b, NMFS Report: Report on the 2014 Pacific Halibut Fisheries in Area 2A.
3. Agenda Item K.1.b, NMFS Report 2: NMFS Proposed Changes to Federal Regulations and 2015 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A.
4. Agenda Item K.1.b, WDFW Report: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Proposed Changes to the Catch Sharing Plan and 2015 Annual Regulations.
5. Agenda Item K.1.b, ODFW Report: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Proposed Changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for the 2015 Fishery.

6. Agenda Item K.1.b, Tri-State Report: California, Oregon, and Washington Report on Changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for 2015.
7. Agenda Item K.1.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kelly Ames
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt for Public Review Proposed Changes for the 2015 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Fishing Regulations

PFMC
08/18/14

2014 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 four shares, with the Washington sport fishery (north of the Columbia River) receiving 36.6 percent, the Oregon sport fishery receiving 30.7 percent, the California sport fishery receiving 1.0 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 April-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 April-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 April-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. Unless otherwise required by IPHC regulations, commercial fishers must obtain an individual vessel license for each commercial fishery: (1) to operate in the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A; or (2) to retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA; or (3) to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery. Commercial fishers wishing to operate in both the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A and/or retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA may not obtain a vessel license to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll season. Commercial fishers operating in the directed halibut fishery must send their vessel 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 vessel license to fish for halibut in Area 2A. Unless otherwise required by IPHC regulations, commercial fishers operating in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA who seek to retain incidentally caught halibut must

send their vessel license application to the IPHC postmarked no later than March 15, or the first weekday following March 15, if March 15 falls on a weekend, in order to obtain a vessel license to retain incidentally caught halibut in Area 2A. Unless otherwise required by IPHC regulations, commercial fishers operating in the salmon troll fishery who seek to retain incidentally caught halibut must send their vessel license application to the IPHC postmarked no later than March 15, or the first weekday following March 15, if March 15 falls on a weekend, in order to obtain a vessel license to retain incidentally caught halibut in Area 2A. Fishing vessels licensed by IPHC to fish commercially in Area 2A are prohibited from operating in the sport fisheries in Area 2A.

(f) SPORT FISHERIES

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

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

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

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 23.5 percent of the first 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 lb (59.4 mt) and 224,110 lb (101.7 mt) (except as provided in section (e)(3) of this Plan). This subarea is defined as all U.S. waters east of the mouth of the Sekiu River, as defined by a line extending from 48°17.30' N. lat., 124°23.70' W. long. north to 48°24.10' N. lat., 124°23.70' W. long., including Puget Sound. The structuring objective for this subarea is to provide a stable sport fishing opportunity and maximize the season length. To that end, the Puget Sound subarea may be divided into two regions with separate seasons to achieve a fair harvest opportunity within the subarea. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, fixed seasons, which may vary and apply to different regions within the subarea, will be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the quota. Inseason adjustments may be made, and estimates of actual catch will be made postseason. The fishery will open in April or May and continue until a date established preseason (and published in the sport fishery regulations) when the quota is predicted to be taken, or until September 30, whichever is earlier. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will 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 for two weeks, with a quota management closure scheduled for the third week. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen on the following Thursday or Saturday. Any openings after the quota management closure will be scheduled to allow adequate public notice of any inseason action before each opening.

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 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, 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. 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 an amount equal to the contribution from the Washington sport allocation from the Oregon sport allocation. 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 Columbia River subarea seasons are as follows:

- a.** A nearshore fishery is allocated 10 percent or 1,500 pounds of the Columbia River subarea allocation, whichever is less, to allow incidental halibut retention on groundfish trips in the area shoreward of the boundary line approximating the 30 fathom (55 m) depth contour extending from Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38.17' N. lat., 124°15.88' W. long.) to the Washington-Oregon border (46°16.00' N. lat., 124°15.88' W. long.) and from there, connecting to the boundary line approximating the 40 fathom (73 m) depth contour in Oregon. Coordinates will be specifically defined at 50 CFR 660.71 through 660.74. The nearshore fishery will be open Monday through Wednesday following the opening of the early season all-depth fishery, until the nearshore allocation is taken or September 30, whichever is earlier. Taking, retaining, possessing or landing halibut on groundfish trips is only allowed in the nearshore area on days not open to all-depth Pacific halibut fisheries. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit.
- b.** The remaining Columbia River subarea allocation will be allocated such that 80 percent is reserved for an early season all-depth fishery beginning in May

and 20 percent reserved for a late season all-depth fishery beginning in August. The early season all-depth fishery will open on the first Thursday in May or May 1 if it is a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, 4 days per week, Thursday through Sunday until the early season portion of the subarea allocation is taken. The fishery will reopen for the late season all-depth fishery on the first Thursday in August and continue 4 days per week, Thursday-Sunday until the remainder of the subarea quota has been taken, or until September 30, whichever is earlier. The early and late seasons will run continuously, unless closed due to quota attainment. Any remaining early season all depth quota will automatically be available to the late season all-depth fishery. Subsequent to the 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 the Oregon sport allocation minus any amount of pounds needed to contribute to the Oregon portion of the Columbia River subarea quota. If the overall 2A TAC is 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt) or greater, 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, and provide a period of fishing opportunity in the summer for nearshore waters. If the overall 2A TAC is less than 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt), the structuring objectives for this subarea are to provide a period of fishing opportunity beginning in Spring in productive deeper water areas along the coast, and provide a period of fishing opportunity in nearshore waters. 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 based on need, determined via joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS and ODFW. If the 2A TAC exceeds 700,000 pounds, 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 input process 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 (nearshore fishery) opens July 1, 7 days per week, only in waters inside the 40-fathom (73 m) curve. The fishery continues until the subquota is taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier and is allocated 12 percent of the subarea quota if the 2A TAC is above 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt) or greater or 25 percent of the subarea quota if the 2A TAC is less than 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt). 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 (Spring fishery) is an all-depth fishery with two potential openings and is allocated 61 percent of the subarea quota if the TAC is 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt) or greater, or 73 percent of the subarea quota if the subarea if the 2A TAC is less than 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt). 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 if the 2A TAC is 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt) or greater. If the 2A TAC is less than 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt) the fishery will continue until there is

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

C. The last season (summer fishery) is an all-depth fishery that begins on the first Friday in August and is allocated 25 percent of the subarea quota if the 2A TAC is 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt) or greater. If the 2A TAC is less than 700,000 pounds (317.5 mt) then 0 percent of the subarea quota will be allocated to this season. 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) Southern Oregon Subarea

This sport fishery is allocated 2.0 percent of the Oregon Central Coast Subarea allocation. This area is defined as the area south of Humbug Mountain, OR (42° 40.50' N. lat.) to the Oregon/California Border (42° 00.00' N. lat.). This fishery will open May 1, seven days per week until the subquota is taken or October 31, whichever is earlier. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person with no size limit.

(vii) California subarea.

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 1.0 percent of the non-Indian allocation—This area is defined as the area south of the Oregon/California Border (42° 00.00' N. lat.), including all California waters. The structuring objective for this subarea is to provide anglers the opportunity to fish in a fixed season that is open from May 1 through July 31 and September 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 seasonal catch; 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.

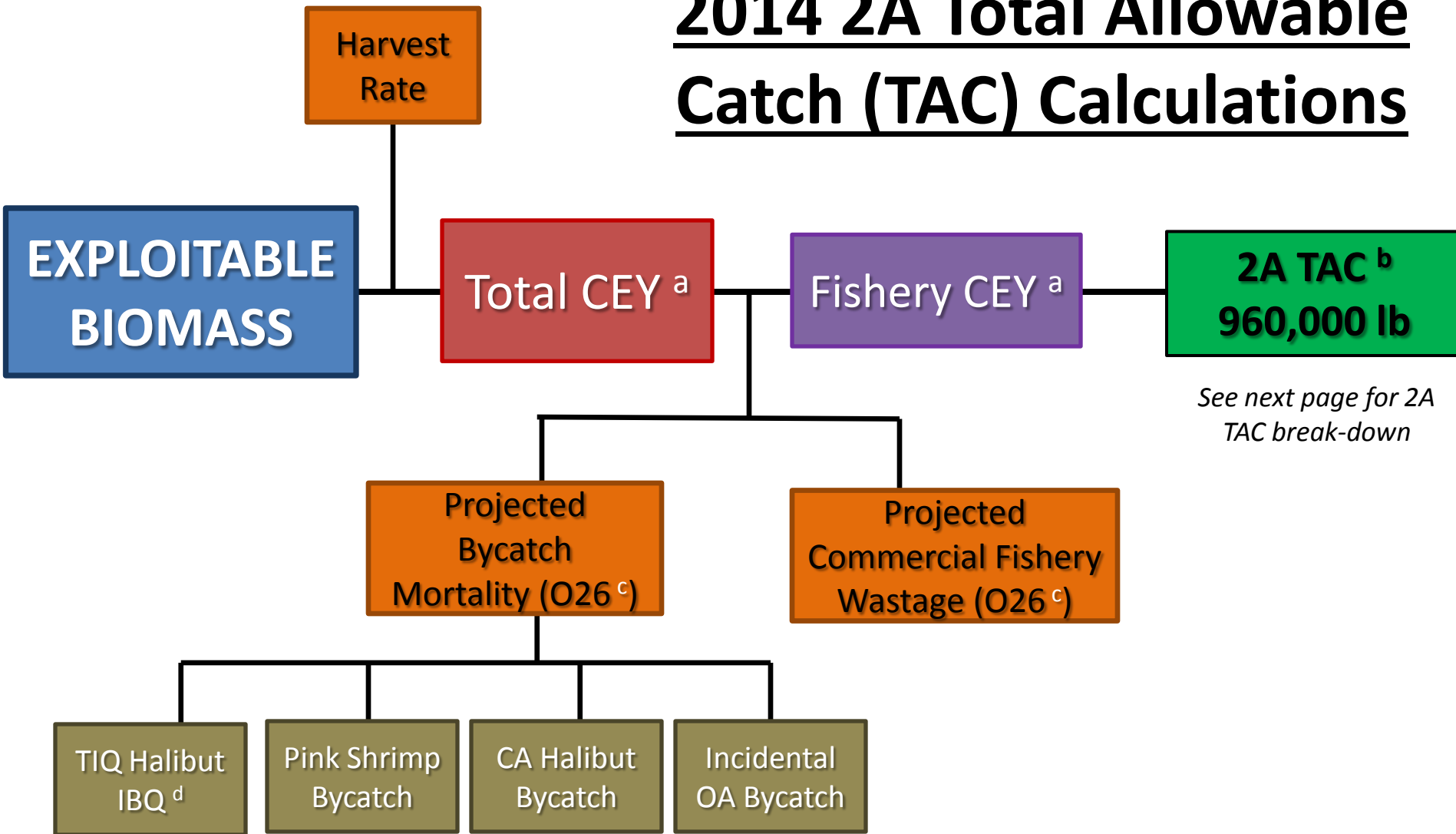
Sources:

<i>77 FR 16740 (March 22, 2012)</i>	<i>73 FR 12280 (March 7, 2008)</i>	<i>60 FR 14651 (March 20, 1995)</i>
<i>76 FR 14300 (March 16, 2011)</i>	<i>72 FR 11792 (March 14, 2007)</i>	<i>59 FR 22522 (May 2, 1994)</i>
<i>75 FR 13024 (March 18, 2010)</i>	<i>71 FR 10850 (March 3, 2006)</i>	<i>58 FR 17791 (April 6, 1993)</i>
<i>74 FR 11681 (March 19, 2009)</i>	<i>70 FR 20304 (April 19, 2005)</i>	
	<i>69 FR 24524 (May 4, 2004)</i>	
	<i>68 FR 10989 (March 7, 2003)</i>	
	<i>67 FR 12885 (March 20, 2002)</i>	
	<i>66 FR 15801 (March 21, 2001)</i>	
	<i>65 FR 14909 (March 20, 2000)</i>	
	<i>64 FR 13519 (March 19, 1999)</i>	
	<i>63 FR 13000 (March 17, 1998)</i>	
	<i>62 FR 12759 (March 18, 1997)</i>	
	<i>61 FR 11337 (March 20, 1996)</i>	

VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE
2014 AREA 2A CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR PACIFIC HALIBUT

The following attachment contains a visual representation of the 2014 Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Pacific Halibut, which was developed by agency staff. The diagram is an interpretation only and the Federal regulations and CSP should be relied upon for the official record.

2014 2A Total Allowable Catch (TAC) Calculations



*See next page for 2A
TAC break-down*

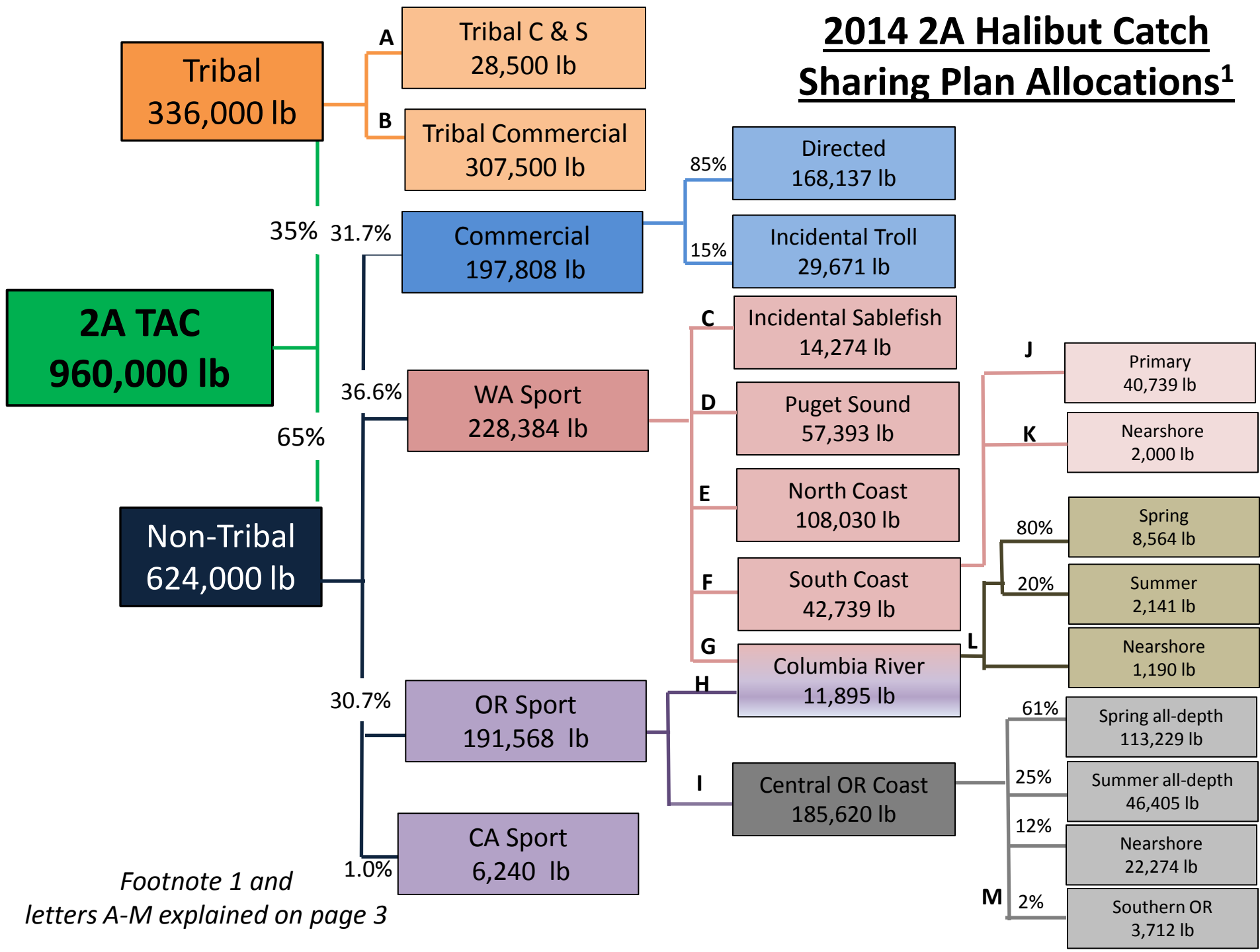
^a CEY = Constant Exploitable Yield

^b TAC = Total Allowable Catch

^c O26 = includes halibut 26 inches and over in total length

^d The IBQ amount is 130,000 lb legal-size (net weight) halibut through 2014, reduced to 100,000 lb in 2015 (50 CFR 660, Subpart C §660.55 dated August 13, 2013, page 86)

2014 2A Halibut Catch Sharing Plan Allocations¹



Legend

1. IPHC regulations which are published in 79 FR 13906 include: Area 2A catch limit (960,000 lb), Non-treaty directed commercial S. of Pt. Chehalis (168,137 lb), Non-treaty incidental catch salmon troll fishery (29,671 lb), Non-treaty incidental catch sablefish fishery N. of Pt. Chehalis (14,274 lb), Treaty Indian commercial (307,500 lb), Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (28,500 lb), Sport – N. of Columbia River (214,110 lb), Sport – S. of Columbia River (197,808 lb)
 - A. Previous year's catch estimate
 - B. Tribal allocation minus the Ceremonial and Subsistence estimate
 - C. Incidental halibut in the sablefish fishery - If 2A TAC is > 900,000 lb then the primary sablefish fishery N. of Pt. Chehalis will be allocated the WA sport allocation that is in excess of 214,110 lb. If the amount above 214,110 lb is < 10,000 lb or greater than 70,000 lb, the excess will be allocated back to the WA sport areas.
 - D. WA-Puget Sound
23.5% of the first 130,845 lb allocated to WA sport plus, 32% of the WA sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 lb
 - E. WA-North Coast
62.2% of the first 130,845 lb allocated to WA sport plus, 32% of the WA sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 lb
 - F. WA-South Coast
12.3% of the first 130,845 lb allocated to WA sport plus, 32% of the WA sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 lb
 - G. WA-Columbia River
2% of the first 130,845 lb allocated to WA sport plus, 4% of the WA sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 lb. The amount was 5,947.5 lbs in 2014.
 - H. OR-Columbia River - equivalent to what WA contributes (5,947.5 lb)
 - I. OR-Central Coast and Southern Oregon - OR Sport Allocation minus contribution to Columbia River
 - J. WA-South coast allocation minus what is reserved for the nearshore
 - K. 10% or 2,000 lb, whichever is less is reserved for a nearshore fishery
 - L. 10% or 1,500 lb, whichever is less is reserved for a nearshore fishery, the remainder to the all-depth seasons
 - M. 2% of the Central Oregon Coast allocation is deducted from the spring all-depth allocation and set-aside for the Southern Oregon Subarea

REPORT ON THE 2014 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A
(8/12/2014)

The 2014 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 960,000 lbs. set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as follows:

Treaty Tribes	336,000 lbs. (35%)
Non-Tribal Total	624,000 lbs. (65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	197,808 lbs.
Washington Sport	214,110 lbs.
Oregon Sport	191,568 lbs.
California Sport	6,240 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 quota of 197,808 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. An additional 14,274 lbs. were allocated to an incidental catch fishery in the sablefish primary fishery for vessels using longline gear north of Point Chehalis, WA. This allowance for the sablefish primary fishery is only available in years when the overall Area 2A TAC exceeds 900,000 lbs. and is taken from the portion of the Washington sport allocation that is above 214,110, as long as the amount is at least 10,000 lbs.

Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery

A quota of 29,671 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.

The final catch ratio established by the Council was one halibut (minimum 32 inches) per four Chinook landed by a salmon troller, except that one halibut could be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 12 halibut could be landed per open period. Fishing with salmon troll gear is prohibited within the Salmon Troll Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) off the northern Washington Coast. Additionally, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by salmon trollers.

- Halibut retention was permitted in the salmon troll fisheries on April 1, 2014, with the following ratio: 1 halibut per each 4 Chinook, except that 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 12 halibut may be possessed or landed per trip.
- Beginning May 30, the ratio was changed to 1 halibut per trip.
- Beginning July 25, the ratio was changed to 1 halibut per each 4 Chinook, except that 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 3 halibut may be possessed or landed per trip.

- Beginning August 8, the ratio was changed to 1 halibut per each 4 Chinook, except 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 7 halibut may be possessed or landed per trip.
- As of July 11, 26,000 lbs. were landed.

Directed fishery targeting on halibut

A quota of 168,137 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; 46°53.30' N. lat.). In addition, there are closed areas along the coast defined by depth contours. Between the U.S./Canada border and 40°10' N. lat. the western boundary is defined by a line approximating the 100 fm depth contour. The eastern boundary is defined as follows: Between 46°16' N. lat. and 43°00' N. lat., the boundary is the line approximating the 30 fm depth contour. Between 43°00' N. lat. and 42°00' N. lat. the boundary is the line approximating the 20 fm depth contour. And between 42°00' N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. the boundary is the 20 fm depth contour. One-day fishing periods of 10 hours in duration were scheduled every other week by the IPHC starting June 25, 2014. 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 as incidental catch in the salmon troll fishery, nor operate in the recreational fishery.

2014 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-off without ice and slime in pounds) by vessel size.

Vessel Class/Size	June 26 Opening	July 9 Opening
A 0 - 25 ft.	755 lbs	200 lbs
B 26 - 30 ft.	945 lbs	210 lbs
C 31 - 35 ft.	1,510 lbs	353 lbs
D 36 - 40 ft.	4,165 lbs	925 lbs
E 41 - 45 ft.	4,480 lbs	995 lbs
F 46 - 50 ft.	5,365 lbs	1,190 lbs
G 51 - 55 ft.	5,985 lbs	1,330 lbs
H 56+ ft.	9,000 lbs	2,000 lbs

- The June 26 and July 9 directed commercial open periods resulted in a catch of about 164,000 lbs, leaving approximately 4,000 lbs.
- The 4,000 lbs remaining was made available to the salmon troll fishery because it was not enough quota for another directed commercial fishing period.

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

A quota of 14,274 lbs was allocated to the limited entry sablefish primary fishery in Area 2A as an incidental catch during longline sablefish operations north of Point Chehalis, WA. The sablefish primary season is open from April 1 to October 31, although incidental halibut retention was not permitted until April 8. Vessels with a groundfish limited entry permit endorsed for both longline gear and with a

sablefish tier are permitted to retain up to 75 lbs (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 lbs (dressed weight) of sablefish and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the landing limit ratio. The fishery is confined to an area seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour. Fishing is also prohibited in the North Coast Commercial YRCA, an area off the northern Washington coast. In addition, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by commercial longline sablefish fishermen.

- Through July 3, 2014, this fishery is estimated to have taken 6,129 lbs.

SPORT FISHERIES (Non-tribal)

426,192 lbs were allocated between sport fisheries in Washington (36.6% of non-tribal share), Oregon (30.7% of the non-tribal share), California (1.0% of the non-tribal share). The allocations were further subdivided as quotas among seven geographic subareas as described below. Unless otherwise noted the daily bag limit in all subareas was one halibut of any size, per person, per day.

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

This area was allocated 57,393 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 fishing season in eastern Puget Sound (east of Low Point or 123°49.50' W. long.) was open May 17 (Saturday); May 22-25 (Thursday through Sunday); May 29-31 (Thursday through Saturday); and Saturday, June 7. The fishing season in western Puget Sound (west of low Point) was open May 22-25 (Thursday through Sunday); May 29-31 (Thursday through Saturday); and Saturday, June 7.

- The estimates for total catch in this area are not yet available.

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

The coastal area off Cape Flattery to Queets River was allocated 108,030 lbs. (62.2% 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 was open for four days (May 15, 17, 22, and 24). The "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA, southwest of Cape Flattery, was closed to sport halibut fishing.

- The estimated total catch for this area is 112,002 lbs., which is 3,972 lbs. over the quota.

Washington South Coast Subarea (landings in Westport)

The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 42,739 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). This subarea operates with a primary fishery and a nearshore fishery. The primary fishery was open May 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, and closed after the 18th. The nearshore fishery was open everyday between May 4 and 21.

The nearshore fishery occurred 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. The south coast subarea quota was allocated as follows: 2,000 lbs to the nearshore fishery and the remaining 40,739 lbs to the primary fishery.

- The estimated total catch for this area is 45,903 lbs, which is 3,164 lbs over the quota.

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon)

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 11,895 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 14,274 lbs, (which is the amount allocated to incidental take in the sablefish primary

fishery), and an equal amount from the Oregon sport allocation. The 2014 fishery included a new nearshore fishery in this subarea.

The all depth early fishery opened May 1 and is currently open through September 30, 2014, or until the quota is attained.

- The early fishery was open May 1 to July 27 with an estimated catch of 8,290 lbs.
- Catch during the early season resulted in underage of 274 lbs, which was added to the late season quota, for a revised late season quota of 2,415 lbs.
- The late season fishery opened August 1 and continues until September 30.
- Through August 3 the estimated late season total catch is 0 lbs.
- The nearshore fishery opened on May 5, as of August 11, the estimated catch is 143 lbs.

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

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 185,621 lbs (Oregon sport fishery allocation minus the Oregon contribution to the Columbia River subarea).

Three seasons were set for this subarea: 1) a restricted depth (inside 40-fm) fishery commenced on July 1 and continues 7 days a week; 2) a fixed Spring season in all depths that was open on May 8-10, 22-24, May 26-June 1, June 5-7, June 12-14, and; 3) a Summer season in all depths that was open on August 1-2, and scheduled for a second opening August 15-16.

- The inside 40-fathom fishery is currently open, as of August 3, the estimated catch is 9,508 lbs.
- The fixed Spring all-depth season resulted in an estimated catch of 106,783 lbs.
- The Summer all-depth fishery is scheduled for one more open period on August 15 and 16.

Southern Oregon (Humbug Mountain to the OR/CA Border)

This sport fishery was allocated 3,712 lbs. (2.0% of the Oregon Central Coast quota). This area had a pre-set season of 7 days per week from May 1 to October 31.

- This season is scheduled to remain open through October 31.
- Catch through August 3 is estimated to be 2,650 lbs.

California (Off the California Coast)

This sport fishery was allocated 6,240 lbs. (1% of the Area 2A non-tribal share).

- This season was open May 1-July 31, seven days per week, and is scheduled to be open September 1 through October 31, 7 days per week.
- This fishery is ongoing, however catch estimates through May are 4,795 lbs.

TRIBAL FISHERIES

336,000 lbs (35% of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 28,500 lbs would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 307,500 lbs were allocated to the commercial fishery. The 2014 management plan was based on a court-order, to use the 2000 season plan, updated to reflect the current allocation and management measures. It contains provisions for both unrestricted fisheries with no landing limits and restricted fisheries with limits as well as a late season or mop-up fishery that can be set up to have no landing limits or with limits, toward the end of the season.

The unrestricted fishery was open March 11-13 (48 hours). The unrestricted fishery landed 227, 905 lbs in 349 landings.

The restricted fishery had two openers. The first was open March 20-21 for 30 hours, with a 500 lbs/vessel/day limit. This open period resulted in catch of 58,442 lbs in 222 landings. The second (late season) fishery was open on May 8 for 10 hours with a landings limit of 400 lbs/vessel/day. This open

period resulted in catch of 22,571 lbs in 78 landings.

The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and tribal estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2015.

Fishery	Dates Held	Pounds Landed	# of Landings
Unrestricted	March 11-13 (48 hr.)	227,905 lbs	349 landings
Restricted, 500 lbs/vessel/day	March 20-21 (30 hrs)	58,442 lbs	259 landings
Late Season (Mop Up)	May 8 (10 hrs)	22,571 lbs	78 landings
Total		308,919 lbs	649 landings

2014 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds)			(Preliminary data as of 8/11/2014)		
	Quota	Inseason Revised Quota	Catch		% of Quota Taken
TRIBAL INDIAN	336,000		308,919		91.9
Commercial	307,500		308,919		100.5
Ceremonial and Subsistence	28,500			%	0.0
NON-TRIBAL	624,000		499,605		80.1
COMMERCIAL	197,808		183,310		92.7
Troll	29,671	33,671	26,000	%	77.2
Sablefish incidental	14,274		6,129	%	42.9
Directed	168,137		151,181		89.9
SPORT	417,573		307,862		73.7
WA Sport	214,110		157,905		73.7
OR Sport	191,568		141,524		73.9
CA Sport	6,240			%	0.0
WA Inside Waters	57,393			*	0.0
WA North Coast	108,030		112,002		103.7
WA South Coast	42,739		45,903		107.4
Columbia River	11,895		8,433	%	70.9
Early Season	8,564		8,290		96.8
Late Season	2,141	2,415	0	%	0.0
Nearshore	1,190		143	%	12.0
OR Central Coast	185,621		134,079		72.2
Inside 40 fathoms	22,274		9,508		42.7
Spring (May-July)	113,229		106,783		94.3
Summer (August- October)	46,405		17,788	%	38.3
Southern Oregon	3,712		2,650	%	71.4
California	6,240		4,795	%	76.8
TOTAL	960,000		808,524		84.2
* Complete data not available					
% This fishery is ongoing					

NMFS PROPOSED CHANGES TO FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND
2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR AREA 2A

NMFS is proposing changes to the 2015 Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and the codified regulations at §300.63.

The proposed changes to the catch sharing plan are as follows:

1. Amend language for the directed commercial fishery to allow earlier transfer of unused quota to the salmon troll fishery. Current language refers to the “fall salmon troll fisheries”. However, salmon regulations do not have a defined “fall” fishery. The goal of this change is to allow flexibility for inseason transfer of the unused portion of the directed commercial halibut allocation.
2. Update all references to Northwest Region and Northwest Administrator to West Coast Region and West Coast Administrator due to the recent merger and name change for the Region.

The proposed changes to the codified regulations at 50 CFR 300.63 are as follows:

1. Update all references to Northwest Region and Administrator to West Coast Region and West Coast Administrator due to recent merger and name change for the Region.

Finally, NMFS received a request from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to add California Department of Fish and Wildlife to the definition of “authorized officer” in the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) regulations to allow CDFW staff to enforce Pacific halibut regulations. This request was forwarded to the IPHC and will be included in the 2015 regulation changes but does not require changes to the CSP or to Federal Regulations because the CSP and Federal Regulations rely on the IPHC regulation definition of “authorized officer”.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2015 FISHERY

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) solicited public input via e-mail, phone, and public meetings to discuss proposed changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for fisheries off of Oregon in 2015. The public meetings occurred on August 5 in Brookings, August 6 in North Bend (Coos Bay), and August 11 in Newport, which also was available as a webinar. Based on public input, ODFW recommends the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council) approve the following alternatives for public review:

Allocations

Oregon Subarea Allocations

Currently, Oregon contributes an amount equal to the Washington contribution to the Columbia River Subarea, and the newly created Southern Oregon Subarea is allocated 2 percent of the Central Oregon Coast Subarea allocation, taken from the spring all-depth allocation. Based on recent changes in the fisheries in the Oregon subareas, ODFW is proposing modifying the allocations to the three Oregon Subareas.

Alternatives

No Action: Oregon contributes an amount to the Columbia River Subarea equivalent to the Washington contribution. The remainder of the Oregon allocation goes to the Central Oregon Subarea which is then split 61 percent to the Central Coast spring all-depth, 25 percent to the summer all-depth, 12 percent to the nearshore, and two percent to the Southern Oregon Subarea

Alternative 1: Oregon contributes an amount to the Columbia River Subarea equal to 75 percent of the Washington contribution. The remainder is allocated 96 percent to the Central Oregon Subarea and four percent to the Southern Oregon Subarea. The Central Oregon Subarea is then split 63 percent to the spring all-depth, 25 percent to the summer all-depth, and 12 percent to the nearshore.

Alternative 2: Oregon contributes an amount to the Columbia River Subarea equal to 50 percent of the Washington contribution. The remainder is allocated 96 percent to the Central Oregon Subarea and four percent to the Southern Oregon Subarea. The Central Oregon Subarea is then split 63 percent to the spring all-depth, 25 percent to the summer all-depth, and 12 percent to the nearshore.

	No Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Columbia River	equal to WA contribution	75% of WA contribution	50% of WA contribution
Central Oregon Coast		96%	96%
Spring All-Depth	61%	63%	63%
Summer All-Depth	25%	25%	25%
Nearshore	12%	12%	12%
Southern Oregon	2%	4%	4%

shaded cells are percentages of the Central Oregon Coast Allocation

Rationale

Currently 50 percent of the Columbia River Subarea allocation comes from the overall Oregon sport allocation. However, landings into Oregon account for less than 35 percent of the total landings into that subarea annually. Additionally, in recent years, there has been little effort or landings after mid-July, leaving 2,500 to 3,500 pounds un-harvested.

Beginning in 2010, catch and landings in the Oregon portion of the former South of Humbug Subarea began increasing. In 2014 the South of Humbug Subarea was separated creating the Southern Oregon Subarea (Humbug Mountain to the OR/CA Border) and the California Subarea, with the South of Humbug allocation going to the California Subarea. To accommodate the new subarea in Oregon, two percent of the Central Coast spring all-depth allocation was set-aside for the Southern Oregon Subarea. The small allocation to the Southern Oregon Subarea was seen as a first step, to get the season framework in place.

Lowering the Oregon contribution to the Columbia River Subarea and modifying the allocation to the other subareas should allow the opportunity to more fully utilize the Oregon Sport quota. The additional quota for the Southern Oregon Subarea will then partially come from the quota returned from the Columbia River, and partially from the overall Central Coast quota, instead of solely from the Central Coast spring all-depth quota (i.e. everyone contributes a little bit).

Management Measures

Columbia River and Central Oregon Coast Subareas

Retention of Other Species

Current rules prohibit retention of groundfish species except for Pacific cod and Sablefish during all-depth halibut days for the Central Coast and Columbia River Sub-areas. The purpose of the rule is to reduce yelloweye rockfish discard mortality from the all-depth halibut fisheries. If halibut anglers were permitted to retain groundfish associated with deep reef habitats (e.g., lingcod and shelf rockfish species), they would be expected to intentionally target deep reefs in order to catch these groundfish species during their halibut trip, which would consequently increase yelloweye rockfish discard mortality.

Since the Oregon recreational fisheries currently catch at or near their entire harvest guideline for yelloweye rockfish each year, any additional mortality of yelloweye rockfish from the halibut fisheries would have to come at the expense of greater restrictions or closures elsewhere to the recreational halibut and groundfish fisheries. As such, ODFW has been extremely precautionary regarding take of non-halibut species during all-depth halibut days, limiting take to only species that are not associated with deep reef habitat (i.e., tuna, salmon, sablefish, and Pacific cod).

However, the current rule, which restricts take of all groundfish except sablefish and Pacific cod during all-depth fisheries, also excludes halibut anglers from retaining bycatch of groundfish species that have healthy populations and are not associated with deep reef habitat (e.g., flatfish species). Since the purpose of this rule is to dissuade targeting of deep reefs, modifying the current rule to prohibit groundfish species associated with deep reef habitats, namely lingcod and rockfish species, would increase harvest opportunities with little risk of increasing yelloweye rockfish discard mortality.

Alternatives

Status Quo: During all-depth Pacific halibut days, most species may not be taken along with Pacific halibut except for salmon, sablefish, Pacific Cod, tuna, and offshore pelagic species

Alternative 1: All groundfish, with the exception of rockfish and lingcod are allowed to be retained during all-depth halibut days

Alternative 2: Expand the status quo alternative to also include flatfish species

Rationale

Yelloweye rockfish discard mortality is expected to be the same for all alternatives because all prohibit the take of deep reef associated groundfish (i.e., rockfish species and lingcod), thereby reducing the incentive for halibut anglers to target groundfish over deep reefs before or after halibut fishing.

In terms of increasing the list of allowable species, alternative one is the least restrictive because it allows all groundfish (where legal) except for those associated with deep reefs, whereas alternative three only expands the current list to include flatfish. However, the only practical difference between alternatives one and two, upon examination of groundfish bycatch species encountered in the halibut fishery (Figure 1), is that alternative one would allow anglers to keep spiny dogfish and flatfish, whereas they would not be allowed to keep spiny dogfish with alternative two.

In terms of rule complexity, alternative one is simpler than the other alternatives. While all alternatives are written to accomplish the same goal (i.e., preventing overfished species bycatch), status quo and alternative two requires an entire paragraph, whereas alternative one needs a single sentence. Further, the language of alternative one is more positive (i.e., “everything is open except...”) compared to the other alternatives (i.e., “everything is closed, except...”).

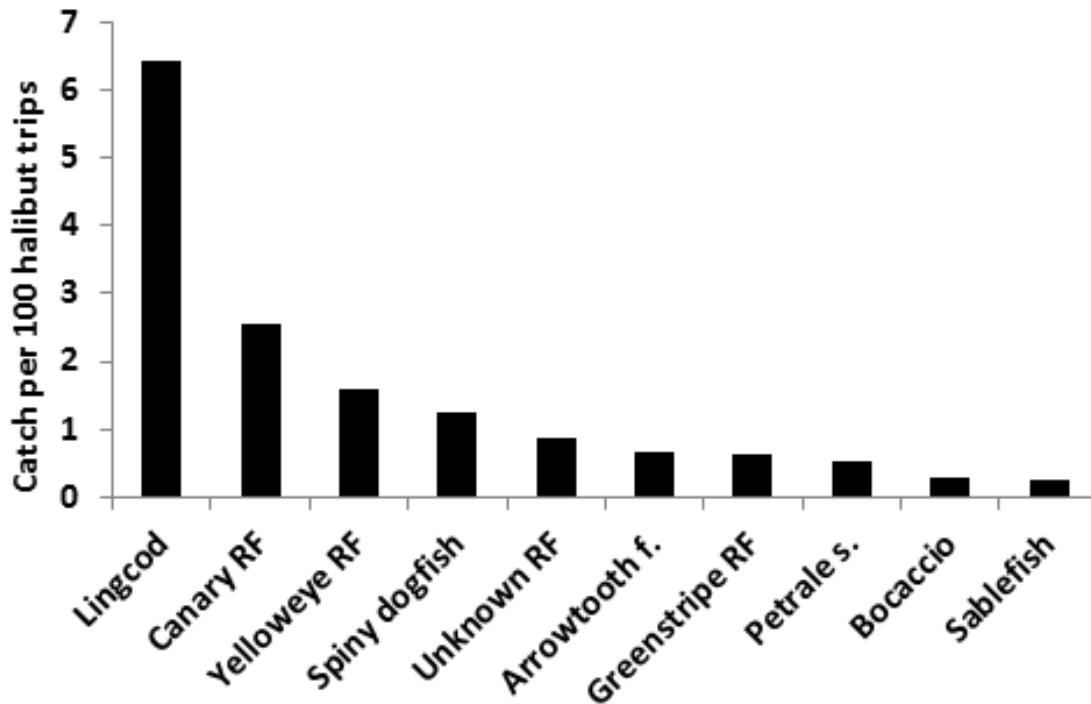


Figure 1: Groundfish species incidentally encountered in Oregon all-depth halibut fisheries, ranked in order from highest to lowest encounter rates.

Columbia River Subarea

No recommendations were received for any changes to the management of the Columbia River Subarea. However, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) informed ODFW that they had received several proposals for this area, and would be submitting them in a state report. The two states will work jointly between September and November to get public input on any proposals forwarded by the Council.

Central Coast Subarea

All-Depth Seasons

The Central Oregon Coast Subarea all-depth fishery is currently broken into a spring and a summer season. During the public meeting process, a proposal was received to combine the spring and summer quotas into one all-depth quota that would open the first Friday in May and run Friday and Saturday every other week until the entire all-depth quota is attained. A minor change to that proposal was also suggested, rather than beginning the season on the first Friday in May, beginning it on the first Friday in May that avoids coincidence of open days with large negative tides.

Alternatives

No Action: Spring all-depth season opens 2nd Thursday in May, three days per week (Thursday –Saturday), until quota caught. Weeks can be skipped due to adverse tides.

Summer all-depth season opens first Friday in August, two days per week (Friday and Saturday) every other week until quota is attained.

Alternative 1a: Combine the spring and summer all-depth quotas/seasons, open May 1 every other Friday and Saturday until the entire all-depth quota has been attained.

Alternative 1b: The same as Alternative 1a, except begin on the first weekend in May, that avoids open dates which align with large negative tides, especially in the spring.

Rationale

As the halibut fishery developed, season lengths became shorter, with few halibut fishing opportunities later in the summer (i.e., August). The all-depth season was separated into Spring and Summer seasons to ensure quota and open days were available later in the summer (August). Anglers requested the summer season due to generally better weather conditions later in the summer and because school is out and more families take vacations in August than in May. The intended goal of Alternative 1 is to continue to spread the halibut opportunities out, as well as provide some consistency for planning. By reducing the number of days open in the early part of the season, it is thought that the quota will extend longer into June or July. Increasing the quota by combining the spring and summer portions should also allow the season to extend longer.

During 2013 and 2014, during spring all-depth openings, approximately 25 percent of the total effort occurred on Thursdays, 32 percent on Fridays, and 43 percent on Saturdays. Eliminating Thursdays as open days will shift some of that effort to Friday and/or Saturday, but some of that effort will not occur. The reduction in effort (boat or angler trips) each opening is intended to allow for more openings spread out through the season.

The albacore tuna sport fishery off of Oregon has exploded in popularity since 2007. Tuna often become available off of Oregon sometime in July, and anglers turn their attention to tuna. Additionally in good salmon years, such as 2014, anglers also turn their attention to coho salmon fishing in July. Therefore some anglers have expressed the desire to have halibut opportunities prior to salmon and tuna. Prior to this year, ODFW had been hearing that many anglers had wanted more quota moved to the summer all-depth season to allow for more fishing in the late summer, which was not raised this year.

Southern Oregon Subarea

Season Start Date

The Southern Oregon Subarea is currently open May 1, seven days per week until the quota is attained. At the Brookings public meeting, there was some discussion about changing the start date to later in the year.

Alternatives

No Action: open May 1, seven days per week until the quota is attained

Alternative 1: open June 1, seven days per week until the quota is attained

Alternative 2: open July 1, seven days per week until the quota is attained

Rationale

The Southern Oregon Subarea season currently opens May 1 until October 31 or the quota is attained. If effort and catches are high early in the season, which is highly dependent on salmon opportunities and local current conditions, the quota could be caught by mid-summer. The Southern Oregon Subarea is somewhat opposite of the other Oregon subareas in that salmon opportunities are more available in the late spring and early summer, with little in the late summer. Changing the starting date is intended to ensure a greater chance of having halibut fishing opportunities later in the summer, when salmon fishing dies off. In 2014, the fishery opened May 1, and has attained 73 percent of the 3,712 pound quota (2,713 pounds) through August 10.

Additional Proposals

Additional proposals received from the public but not forwarded for consideration are included in the Appendix.

Catch Sharing Plan Language

Due to the range of alternatives presented above, ODFW does not have proposed changes to the language in the Catch Sharing Plan for 2015 for the above items. As the range of alternatives is finalized, ODFW will provide draft language revisions to the Catch Sharing Plan, in consultation with staff at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region.

Appendix: Additional Proposals Received but not Forwarded for Consideration at this Time

Issue Tags for Individual Pacific Halibut, Similar to Big Game Tags

Comments were received to issue tags for individual Pacific halibut, based on a lottery draw, in a manner similar to the management of big game hunting. In other words, to change the recreational halibut fishery from open access to a limited permit fishery. By converting to tag based management, anglers believe they would have greater flexibility regarding when they choose to fish for halibut, which might increase safety and alleviate the derby mentality.

While ODFW acknowledges there could be advantages to a tag based system there would be numerous issues that would have to be resolved in order convert to a tag based system. First, issuing tags similar to big game hunting tags, rather than the current combined angler tag would have to be approved by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Oregon Legislature. It is not something that can be changed through the annual halibut catch sharing plan process. Second, unlike salmon, or big game, halibut is managed in pounds of net weight not number of fish. Determining the correct number of tags to issue will be highly dependent on projecting the average weight of landed fish, and would likely need to include buffers to prevent exceedance of the quota. Regardless of the pros and cons of changing the tag system, this is an issue that is under the sole jurisdiction of the State of Oregon and is not applicable to the current decision making process.

Change the Central Coast Subarea Spring All-Depth Open Dates from Thursday-Saturday to Friday-Sunday

Modifying the days of the week open for the Central Coast subarea spring all-depth season is requested by several anglers each year. This year it was discussed at length with those in attendance at the public meetings. Some anglers believe that a Friday-Sunday opening would allow more people with regular work schedules to participate in the fishery for more than one day each opening, without having to take time off of work. This may allow those anglers that are able to fish multiple days per weekend but cannot take weekdays off to more efficiently harvest their allowed halibut. Additionally the Thursday-Saturday opening is seen by some as a bias towards anglers fishing off of charter boats.

The discussion at the meeting primarily focused on what changing the days of the week might do to the overall season length, both in terms of the number of open periods as well as the total number of days that will be open. Exchanging Sunday for Thursday will not only shift the Thursday effort to Sunday; it has the potential to increase the effort on both Saturday and Sunday, the highest angler effort days for all fisheries combined. Some in anglers at the meeting estimated that changing to a Friday-Sunday opening would cut the number of open days for the spring fishery in half.

While ODFW believes that there is merit in providing for efficiency in recreational fisheries, the costs of this proposal in terms of fewer open days per year outweigh the benefits of improved efficiency. Fewer open days per year would disadvantage those anglers who may not be able to participate in the fishery on a presumably small number of open days due to, for example, family or work commitments. Therefore, at this time ODFW is not forwarding this modification to the open days of the week for the spring all-depth season.

Combine the Central Coast Subarea All-Depth and Nearshore Quotas into One Season Open May 1, Seven Days per Week

ODFW received a proposal at one of the public meetings to combine the Central Oregon Coast all-depth and nearshore quotas into one quota/season that would open on May 1, seven days per week, until the quota was attained. This fishery would be open to all-depths. The intent of this proposal was to allow anglers to fish for halibut whenever and wherever they chose, hopefully eliminating the current “derby mentality”. The proposer believed that if this were the case, anglers may not rush out to catch their halibut, sometimes in less than favorable weather conditions.

ODFW is not supportive of this idea at this time. In recent years many anglers have expressed the desire to keep the nearshore and all-depth fisheries separate, including repeated requests to add additional quota to the nearshore fishery. Many anglers are in favor of having halibut opportunities spread throughout the summer, to better accommodate weather, as well as individual anglers schedules.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES
TO THE 2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) held one public meeting and one teleconference to discuss Pacific halibut management and possible changes to the 2015 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP). The attendees represented a variety of interests and shared their concerns regarding the future of management. After consideration of those discussions, CDFW is not proposing any changes to the 2015 recreational management measures for the California subarea (as outlined in the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP)) beyond the proposed alternatives presented in the Tri-State Report (Agenda Item K.1.b, September 2015).

On June 2, 2014, CDFW conducted a public meeting in Eureka, California to inform interested parties of the 2014 2A Total Allowable Catch determined at the International Pacific Halibut Commission's (IPHC) Annual Meeting and to discuss possible management alternatives to the August closure for the 2015 recreational fishery in the California subarea. More than thirty constituents attended the meeting representing recreational private skiff anglers, recreational charter vessel owners/operators, the commercial fishery, researchers, a state legislative officer and other interested members of the public. The greatest areas of interest were the continuation and expansion of the IPHC research survey off California with additional stations, and a more equitable allocation for the California Subarea.

The greatest area of concern expressed by the public was the potential need to maintain the reduced fishing season for Pacific halibut in 2015 (i.e., the August closure) despite the 2013 IPHC research survey results demonstrating a measurable increase in the apportionment for Area 2A with the inclusion of California stations into the stock assessment. Anglers expressed frustration with the idea that opportunities might be reduced further even without a more fair allocation to the state and in light of the survey results. Stakeholders expressed their expectations that the 2013 survey results would be used in crafting the 2015 CSP. Stakeholders also reiterated their position that the California portion of the Pacific halibut stock was thriving given the recent increases in catch, including catch of large fish, off the California coast, which is supported by the research survey results. The public felt strongly that there should not be any additional constraints off California until Council members have a rigorous science-based discussion to formally allocate California a fair and equitable portion of Pacific halibut. They also expressed significant concern that the August closure would have a substantial impact on the North Coast economy, and any additional actions would further impact the economy. They expressed concern that to do so without any information demonstrating a conservation need was not acceptable. If in the event

further reduction was needed, there was no agreement on whether expanding the August block closure or choosing an alternative action (i.e., closed days of the week) was preferable.

On September 2, 2014 CDFW held a teleconference with more than fifteen constituents participating. The purpose was to receive input on the impacts of the August closure, discuss proposed management measures for 2015, and specifically, to discuss the Tri-State Report (Agenda item K.1.b, September 2014). Stakeholders reported measurable lost opportunities and revenues from the 2014 August closure. Specifically, they noted fewer anglers coming from outside the immediate coastal areas, suggesting that out-of-town fishermen chose not to visit the area in August at all rather than shift fishing effort to species other than Pacific halibut.. The August closure also impacted bait/tackle business and charter operations. The port of Trinidad was severely impacted—the Trinidad Rancheria reported an overall 43 percent decrease in revenue from August 2013 to August 2014.

Call participants reiterated their lack of support for continuing the August closure, or any additional management measures to restrict the fishery for 2015. Their concerns were partly based on the impacts of the August closure, and also in light of the limited information on 2014 recreational catches so far in California and limited progress on allocation. In fact, they questioned the need to continue the full closure of August in 2015 in light of the suggestion from the IPHC survey that 14 percent of the survey take could be attributed to California waters.

During the call, the CDFW staff also discussed the proposed alternatives for allocation changes in the September Tri-State report. Most constituents recognized the challenge of fairly and equitably modifying the current allocations and expressed appreciation for the efforts by the three states to take this step to increase the allocation for the California subarea. However, all participants expressed frustration that the proposed alternatives still do not provide the California Subarea with an amount of Pacific halibut they considered appropriate relative to the apparent local abundance. Almost none of the participants were supportive of any of the report alternatives. Several individuals proposed that a more appropriate allocation percentage for the California Subarea should be seven percent of the non-tribal allocation, or approximately 50,000 net pounds. Stakeholders did not propose which sectors would take reductions in order to accommodate this California Subarea increase.

CDFW supports the alternatives designed for 2015 to provide a greater allocation to the California subarea as described in the Tri-State report (September PFMC, Agenda Item K.1.b). CDFW views the progress towards achieving a fully equitable allocation as a successive, step-wise process, which is partly dependent on continued International

Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) research surveys in California waters. CDFW also acknowledges that the first step was taken in 2014, when the month of August was closed in order to reduce catches in light of recent expansions of catch of California. CDFW looks forward to future discussions regarding allocation that consider what California is contributing towards the overall Area 2A biomass.

In response to a CDFW survey over the summer, stakeholders also proposed a punch card system whereby each angler is allowed a pre-determined number of Pacific halibut to take during the fishing season. However, CDFW determined it is not feasible to implement such a system at this time for a variety of administrative and programmatic constraints. Further, CDFW believes that the current recreational catch survey program is adequate to estimate take of Pacific halibut off California, and a punch card reporting system would not add substantial new information on catch.

The CDFW would like to extend our continued appreciation to the IPHC for a second year of conducting the research survey off California, and coordination with CDFW staff on the state permitting processes required to conduct scientific research in California waters. The CDFW is fully supportive of future survey efforts off California to better understand the full status of the stock, and as a mechanism to inform future Council discussions on allocation.

THE ENFORCEMENT CONSULTANTS REPORT ON
THE 2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND REGULATIONS

The Enforcement Consultants (EC) has reviewed the documents associated with Agenda Item K.1.b, Pacific Halibut Regulations and have the following comments.

Washington and Oregon share the Columbia River Subarea with recreational anglers fishing both sides of the state line and landing at ports in both states. Many of the regulations are aligned between states allowing for consistent enforcement.

Currently, Oregon and Washington allow retention of Pacific halibut during recreational nearshore bottomfish fisheries during days open to the nearshore fishery. Both states also have all depth-directed Pacific halibut fisheries four days a week, during which only sablefish, Pacific cod, and most other offshore pelagic species are allowed to be retained while Pacific halibut are onboard. This management scheme has been suitable for enforcement of regulations both at sea and dockside.

Presently, nearshore regulations allow for retention of Pacific halibut from Monday through Wednesday. A proposed change in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report would expand retention of Pacific halibut during the nearshore fishery to Monday through Friday, creating two days of overlap between nearshore and all depth fisheries.

Recommendation:

It is the opinion of the EC that overlapping days adds complexity to the regulations, which would cause confusion for some anglers and would be difficult to enforce. The EC recommends maintaining separation of the nearshore and all depth Pacific halibut fisheries.

Regardless, the EC believes Washington and Oregon regulations, specific to the Columbia River Subarea, should remain consistent.

PFMC
09/16/14

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND REGULATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from Ms. Lynn Mattes, Ms. Kelly Ames, Ms. Heather Reed, and Ms. Marci Yaremko regarding Pacific Halibut regulation proposals for 2015. Our purpose here is to advise the Council regarding potential catch sharing alternatives to be sent out for public hearing following this meeting. 2015 Halibut regulations will then be finalized at the November Council meeting.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CATCH SHARING PLAN (CSP) (Agenda Item K.1.b, NMFS Report 2)

The GAP supports NMFS proposed changes to the CSP and the codified regulations.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CSP (Agenda Item K.1.b, WDFW Report)

The GAP supports sending the Washington proposed alternatives to the CSP out to public hearing.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (ODFW) PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CSP (Agenda Item K.1.b – ODFW Report)

The GAP supports sending the Oregon proposed alternatives to the CSP out to public hearing.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (CDFW)/ODFW/WDFW REPORT ON CHANGES TO THE HALIBUT CSP FOR 2015 (Agenda Item K.1.b – CDFW/ODFW/WDFW Report)

BACKGROUND

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) manages the Pacific Halibut resource. The IPHC was formed 90 years ago by a treaty between the United States and Canada and covers the North Pacific range of the stock from the Bering Sea to California. There are 8 major catch areas throughout the range. Each year IPHC conducts the science and determines an overall value for biomass. A value for Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is determined and then apportioned to each of the eight catch areas in a manner partially related to the biomass contribution of each area to the whole. This process is concluded in January of each year.

Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, and California) is the southernmost management area under IPHC. Once IPHC has determined the annual harvest TAC for the area it is the responsibility of the Pacific Council to allocate the harvest between sub-areas and user groups. The Council

allocates according to a catch-sharing plan (CSP). The Council and Halibut stakeholders through a public process developed the CSP 25 years ago. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has no authority to modify the annual TAC that is assigned to 2A. The Council has the statutory responsibility to allocate, monitor, and regulate halibut between users in a manner that stays within the value of the TAC assigned to 2A by IPHC.

CURRENT SITUATION

Recently, a fishery has developed in the Southern Oregon-Northern California sub-area that significantly exceeds the amount previously allocated to this area. IPHC subsequently agreed to survey the northern California area in an effort to determine biomass that could sustain additional harvest in 2A. Currently there have been data attained for only one year.

Last year the Council allocated the Southern Oregon/Northern California portion of the 2A TAC solely to California. This amounted to 1 percentage point of the non-Tribal quota (6,240 pounds). The California season set for 2014 encompassed May through October, 7 days per week, with the exception that the month of August was closed. Per NMFS (Agenda Item K.1.b, NMFS report) California caught 77% of this amount in May of 2014. During the GMT report to the GAP, CDFW informed us that the subsequent June-July catch may be in excess of 20,000 lbs.

In its deliberations the Council should consider adjusting the CSP to accommodate some greater level of catch in California. A proposal to change the CSP has been submitted by Washington, Oregon, and California (Agenda Item K.1.b, CDFW/ODFW/WDFW Report). A suite of alternatives will be adopted by the Council at this meeting and subsequently sent out to public hearing prior to choosing a final change to the CSP at the November Council meeting.

The GAP believes that the alternatives listed in the CA/OR/WA report are too narrow in scope regarding where additional allocation would come from. In the interest of fairness to users who currently are assigned shares of the 2A TAC, we believe there should be a broader set for the Council to choose from. The Treaty Tribes are allocated 35% of the 2A TAC. The Council has no authority to change that value. The remaining portion, 65%, is divided into three major groupings: Washington Sport, Oregon Sport, and Commercial. Any additional allocation to California would come out of the non-Treaty 65%. The current States proposal provides this almost exclusively out of the Commercial share.

An additional issue, critical to the success of any TAC/quota management system, is the ability of the managers to monitor the progress of TAC attainment in real time in-season. Washington and Oregon have this system and are able to know within a matter of a few days what catch levels are and to appropriately close fisheries when sub-area/user quotas are met. **The GAP believes that California has the responsibility to provide timely monitoring and reporting of progress in-season, and to manage the fishery in a manner that the California quota is not exceeded.**

GAP RECOMMENDATIONS

Status Quo: Allocation as described in the 2014 Catch Sharing Plan, which specifies that 65 percent of the Area 2A Total Allowable Catch (2A TAC) is allocated to non-tribal fisheries; the non-tribal fisheries then share that amount as follows:

WA Sport	36.6%
OR Sport	30.7%
CA Sport	1.0%
Commercial	31.7%

GAP Alternative 1: Maintain allocations as described in the CSP, except increase the California sport share to three percent on 2A TAC's less than one million pounds and four percent on the portion of 2A TAC's over one million pounds for 2A TAC's above 1 million. The increase would come equally out of each of the 3 major non-Treaty groups. New non-treaty fishery shares would be:

	<u>2A TAC < 1 million pounds</u>	<u>Portion of 2A TC > 1 million pounds</u>
WA Sport	35.93%	35.6%
OR Sport	30.03%	29.7%
CA Sport	3.0%	4.0%
Commercial	31.03%	30.7%

GAP Alternative 2: Same as GAP Alternative 1 except increase the California sport share to four percent on 2A TAC's less than one million pounds and five percent on the portion of 2A TAC's over one million pounds for 2A TAC's above 1 million. The increase would come equally out of each of the 3 major non-Treaty groups. New non-treaty fishery shares would be:

	<u>2A TAC < 1 million pounds</u>	<u>Portion of 2A TC > 1 million pounds</u>
WA Sport	35.6%	35.27%
OR Sport	29.7%	29.37%
CA Sport	4.0%	5.0%
Commercial	30.7%	30.37%

GAP Alternative 3: Same as GAP Alternative 1 except increase the California sport share to five percent on 2A TAC's less than one million pounds and six percent on the portion of 2A TAC's over one million pounds for 2A TAC's above 1 million. The increase would come equally out of each of the 3 major non-Treaty groups. New non-treaty fishery shares would be:

	<u>2A TAC < 1 million pounds</u>	<u>Portion of 2A TC > 1 million pounds</u>
WA Sport	35.27%	34.93%
OR Sport	29.37%	29.03%
CA Sport	5.0%	6.0%
Commercial	30.37%	30.03%

GAP Alternative 4: Include a maximum catch limit on the California sport allocation of 50,000 pounds in an effort to not strand pounds. Any poundage calculated for California in excess of 50,000 pounds in any of the above three alternatives would remain in the Washington Sport, Oregon Sport, and Commercial fisheries in proportion to their respective shares.

PFMC
09/16/14

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INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY A CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Agenda Item K.1.b
Supplemental IPHC Report
September 2014

September 8, 2014

Ms. Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

RE: Agenda Item K.1: 2015 Pacific Halibut Regulations

Dear Chair Lowman:

The staff of International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) notes the Council's upcoming actions regarding proposed changes to Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP). We have the following comments for your consideration.

1. The IPHC staff supports recommending to the IPHC Commission that California Department of Fish and Wildlife be added to the definition of "authorized officer" in IPHC regulations.
2. Estimates of halibut abundance on scales smaller than IPHC regulatory areas can vary substantially. The IPHC's standardized 10 nmi survey grid is designed to sample efficiently, and at the same rate, across a broad range of depth and habitats. However, this sampling approach is not appropriate for estimating abundance at fine spatial scales, where catch rates can be greatly influenced by only a small number of stations, or the exact locations of those stations. The relative variation in the annual Area 2A survey index of abundance has averaged approximately double that of other areas. The IPHC has also observed greater interannual variability at the extremes of the halibut stock's geographical range, such as in Areas 2A and 4D. Figure 1 shows variation in survey catch rates for IPHC survey sub-areas of Area 2A over the 2004-2013 period; it is apparent in this figure that these sub-areas vary substantially and not in concert within a given year. This variation is the primary reason that the Commission does not recommend the use of survey estimates for sub-area understanding of interannual changes in halibut abundance at a fine spatial scale.
3. After discussions with the Council and stakeholders, the IPHC expanded its survey area in 2013 to include waters off northern California (to 40° N). Catch-rates in this area were lower than those in southern Oregon and close to the mean rates observed across all stations in Area 2A and those in Washington/northern Oregon waters (Figure 1). As noted in the public comments, the FCEY for 2014 (based on current IPHC harvest policy) was estimated at 0.72 Mlb, compared to a 0.62 Mlb FCEY for Area 2A when the expanded survey area was not included. We would like to point out this was not a change in the estimated stock size (the total stock size actually decreased from 2013 to 2014) but represents the assignment of a bigger 'slice' of the coastwide pie for Area 2A. Because

of the movement of halibut, the stock must be considered as a coastwide entity and the densities of fish in all areas affect the availability of fish across the entire stock range. Specifically, we estimated, based on the expanded survey, that a greater proportion of the coastwide stock (2.4%) was present in 2A in 2013 relative to what we would have estimated (2.1%) without that survey.

The increase in FCEY came from commensurate reductions in all other areas, in proportion to their estimated stock size (e.g., Area 3A was 0.04 Mlb lower), rather than a unique increase in Area 2A. All the fish available for harvest, based on the current harvest policy and the other removals not included in the FCEYs, were fully accounted for in the FCEYs across all areas in both cases. It is worth noting that the Commission adopted a 0.96 Mlb FCEY for 2A - substantially more than the current harvest policy estimate, and a greater fraction of the total TCEY than indicated by survey-based apportionment, even after accounting for the removals being set above the current harvest policy at the coastwide level.

4. The IPHC further extended the survey area in 2014 to include waters to 39°N. Apportionment calculations for this year's process will account for the additional area surveyed, and the results will depend on the final estimated catch-rates for all regions within 2A.

We appreciate the work of the Council and state agencies in initially addressing the management of halibut in the South of Humbug Mountain Subarea. We are concerned that all parties adhere to the provisions of the CSP for Area 2A in order to achieve the Commission's management goals for this area, and urge the Council to enact measures that will bring the California sport catch into compliance with the CSP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Leaman", with a stylized, flowing script.

Bruce M. Leaman
Executive Director

cc: IPHC Commissioners

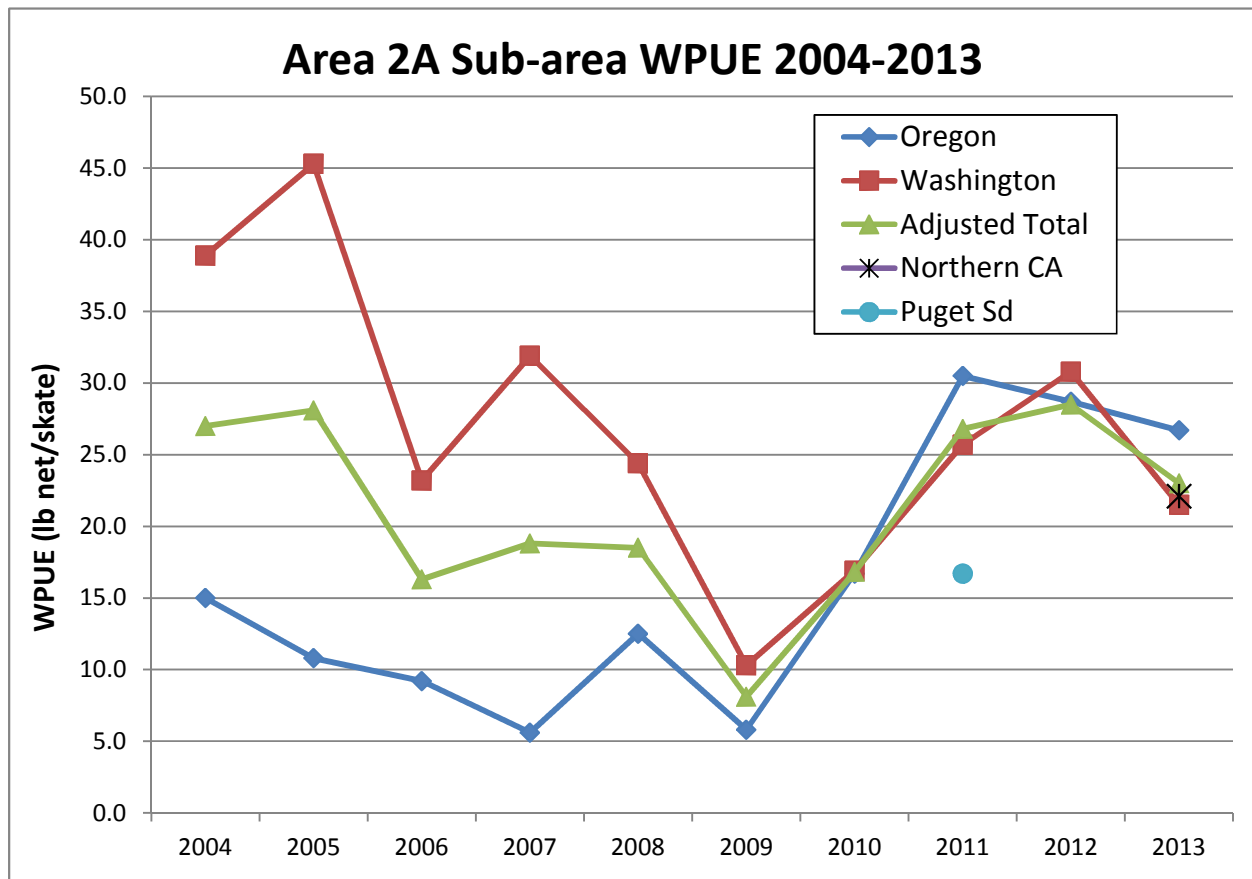


Figure 1. IPHC survey catch rates (WPUE, lb/skate) by sub-areas within IPHC Regulatory Area 2A, 2004-2013.

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN AND REGULATIONS

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) met in a joint session with the ad hoc Lower Columbia River Natural Coho Workgroup (LRC Workgroup) in Portland, Oregon on September 3rd and appreciates the presentation by Ms. Kelly Ames on this matter. The SAS offers the following comments on the proposals being considered for 2015.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report (Agenda Item K.1.b, WDFW Report)

The SAS reviewed and is supportive of the proposed season changes to the Columbia River Subarea. The SAS felt that the reduced nearshore allocation under the proposal was adequate for this fishery, even with the revised season structure and additional days open per week.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Report (Agenda Item K.1.b, ODFW Report)

Oregon Subarea Allocations

SAS opinions on the proposed modifications to the Oregon Subarea allocations was mixed with the majority of members in opposition. The proposal would reallocate fish from the Columbia River to the Central and Southern Oregon Subareas. Part of the SAS opposition stems from the assumption that only 35 percent of the landings in the Columbia River Subarea are landed in Oregon even though Oregon contributes 50 percent of the allocation. The SAS notes that the Subarea operates as a single fishery with Oregon boats landing in Washington and vice-versa. Therefore, port of landing is not necessarily a good indication of landings by State. The SAS felt that an alternative that rolled any uncaught allocation from the Columbia River Subarea to the Southern Oregon Subarea would be preferable.

Columbia River and Central Oregon Coast Subarea - Retention of Other Species

The SAS encourages changes to management measures regarding the retention of other species and supports Alternative 1: *All groundfish, with the exception of rockfish and lingcod are allowed to be retained during all-depth halibut days.* The SAS believes that this regulatory change would allow greater opportunity for harvestable species and reduce discards while staying within overfished species limits (particularly yelloweye rockfish).

Southern Oregon Subarea Season Start Date

The SAS supports modifying the season start date in this subarea and supports Alternative 1: *Open June 1, seven days per week until the quota is attained.* The weather in May in this area is often uncondusive to halibut fishing, and pushing the start date later in the season would be helpful in years there are summertime closures in the recreational salmon fishery.

California, Oregon, and Washington Report (Agenda Item K.1.b, Tri-State Report)

The SAS understands the desire to consider a reallocation to the California sport fishery, but does not support the proposed alternatives, all of which reallocate fish only from the commercial sector. If a reallocation to the California sport fishery occurs, the SAS feels the reallocation should come from all non-treaty fishery sectors, not just the commercial sector.

Additionally, the SAS strongly encouraged improved monitoring and management of the California sport fishery so that the fishery in California could be managed on an inseason basis, as occurs in Oregon and Washington, with timely catch updates and management actions that keep the fishery within its allocation.

PFMC

09/11/14

CALIFORNIA, OREGON, AND WASHINGTON REPORT ON CHANGES TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR 2015

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) propose the following alternatives for changes to allocations in the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP). The three states have continued to discuss allocation issues, especially concerning quota for the California Subarea. These discussions build off of previous work undertaken by the South of Humbug Workgroup and Policy group, and the Council's annual CSP process.

Beginning in 2014 the former South of Humbug Mountain Subarea was split into the Southern Oregon (Humbug Mountain to the OR/CA border) and California Subareas. The South of Humbug Mountain Subarea quota (in 2013, 2 percent of the Oregon/California quota) was allocated to the California Subarea which equated to 1 percent of the non-tribal quota. This was intended to be a first step in providing quota for this new area, with discussions to continue during 2014 in preparation for 2015 modifications to the CSP.

Below are alternatives proposed for public review developed by the three state agencies:

Status Quo: Allocation as described in 2014 Catch Sharing Plan, which specifies that 65 percent of the Area 2A Total Allowable Catch (2A TAC) allocated to non-tribal fisheries; the non-tribal fisheries then share that amount as follows:

WA Sport:	36.6%
OR Sport:	30.7%
CA Sport:	1.0%
Commercial:	31.7%

Alternative 1: Maintain allocations as described in the CSP, except increase the California sport allocation by an additional two percent, which would be transferred from the non-tribal commercial fishery share. New non-tribal fishery shares would be:

WA Sport:	36.6%
OR Sport:	30.7%
CA Sport:	3.0%
Commercial:	29.7%

Alternative 2, Option A: Same allocations as described in Alternative 1 when the 2A TAC is one million pounds or less. When the 2A TAC is above one million pounds, the California sport allocation would increase by an additional one percent, which would be transferred from the non-tribal commercial fishery share. New non-tribal fishery shares would be:

	<u>2A TAC ≤ 1 million lbs.</u>	<u>2A TAC > 1 million lbs.</u>
WA Sport:	36.6%	36.6%
OR Sport:	30.7%	30.7%
CA Sport:	3.0%	4.0%
Commercial:	29.7%	28.7%

Alternative 2, Option B: Same allocations as described in Alternative 1 when the 2A TAC is one million pounds or less. When the 2A TAC is greater than one million pounds, the first one million pounds of the 2A TAC shall be distributed according to the Alternative 1 allocations. For the portion of the 2A TAC that exceeds one million pounds, the California sport allocation would increase to 30-50 percent of the non-tribal share, and allocation percentages for the other sectors would be reduced to remain proportional to the status quo non-tribal shares. New non-tribal fishery shares would be:

	<u>2A TAC ≤ 1 million lbs.</u>	<u>Portion of 2A TAC > 1 million lbs.</u>
WA Sport:	36.6%	18.5-25.9%
OR Sport:	30.7%	15.5-21.7%
CA Sport:	3.0%	30-50%
Commercial:	29.7%	16-22.4%

As an example, if the 2A TAC were 1.1 million pounds, the non-tribal share of the first one million pounds would be allocated under Alternative 1 percentages. The non-tribal share of the additional 0.1 million pounds would total 65,000 pounds. This amount would then be allocated 19,500-32,500 pounds to the CA sport fishery, with the remaining 32,500-45,500 pounds allocated proportionally to the other non-tribal sectors.

Alternative 3: Include a maximum limit on the California sport allocation of 75,000 pounds, in an effort to not strand pounds. This Alternative may be combined with Alternatives 1, 2A, or 2B. For example, under Alternative 2A, when the 2A TAC is above one million pounds, the California sport allocation would increase by an additional one percent, which would be transferred from the non-tribal commercial fishery share, up to a maximum of 75,000 pounds. Any amount above 75,000 pounds would remain in the non-tribal commercial fishery share.

Catch Sharing Plan Language

Given the range of alternatives, proposed CSP language has not been developed yet. Depending on which alternative(s) are forwarded by the Council, staff from the three state agencies will work with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region (WCR) staff to develop draft CSP language for the November meeting.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CATCH SHARING PLAN AND 2015 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 (CSP) for 2015, in Montesano, on August 8, 2014. A couple of stakeholders representing Washington's coastal recreational halibut fisheries attended the meeting and provided their input on potential changes to the CSP.

Stakeholders from the Washington portion of the Columbia River subarea, which includes Ilwaco and Chinook, proposed changes that are addressed in detail below. There were no proposed changes to the CSP for the North Coast or South Coast subareas.

WDFW recommends approving the following changes to the 2015 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan CSP for Area 2A, section (f) SPORT FISHERIES, for public review. We do note that stakeholder attendance was very low at our meeting and hope that sending these proposed changes out for review will elicit additional public input and comment.

Proposed Season Changes to the Columbia River Subarea:

1. Reduce the nearshore set aside from 1,500 pounds to 500 pounds.

Rationale: The amount of halibut caught in the nearshore fishery has been very low in 2014. This change would maintain the nearshore set aside at an amount that would accommodate catches in the nearshore area on days when the all-depth fishery is closed.

2. Retain the current opening date and manage the fishery to one season (i.e., remove the split season structure that splits the subarea quota between the early (80 percent) and late seasons (20 percent).

Rationale: Since 2008, fishing effort has significantly declined during the late season off Washington and Oregon. Managing to one season in the early period will ensure the quota is available during the peak of halibut fishing effort and allow the all-depth fishery to continue uninterrupted.

3. Increase the number of days that the nearshore area is open from Monday through Wednesday to Monday through Friday. This would include two days of overlap (Thursday and Friday) between the nearshore and all-depth fisheries.

Rationale: Currently, on days that the nearshore is open (Monday-Wednesday) anglers may retain all groundfish, including lingcod, with halibut onboard. On all-depth days (Thursday-Sunday), anglers may not retain any groundfish, except Pacific cod and sablefish, with halibut onboard regardless of area fished (i.e., nearshore or offshore). One previously stated reason for restricting the nearshore opportunity to Monday-Wednesday only is that enforcement of differing regulations between the nearshore and offshore areas would need to occur at sea. However, enforcement to ensure anglers are not fishing

seaward of the nearshore area on Monday-Wednesday to target halibut also needs to occur at sea, and we note that all three states have recreational groundfish fisheries with area and depth restrictions with effective enforcement. That being said, we are proposing to extend the nearshore opportunity during the two remaining weekdays as effort, in general, tends to be lower than on weekends.

We note that there may be concerns about yelloweye rockfish bycatch associated with anglers targeting lingcod; however, we believe this is more likely in the offshore area (i.e., seaward of 30 fathoms). We have heard that some anglers may have found areas to target lingcod without yelloweye bycatch in the nearshore area. We would also note that yelloweye rockfish released with a descending device at 30 fathoms or less have a much higher survival rate, so this could result in reduced yelloweye rockfish bycatch if lingcod-targeted effort shifted from the offshore to the nearshore area.

A draft of how these changes, if adopted, may be incorporated into the CSP language is on the following page.

Alternatives Considered, But Rejected For Further Analysis:

Stakeholders from the Columbia River subarea also proposed allowing lingcod retention with halibut onboard in the offshore area during the all-depth season. However, as mentioned above, we are concerned that allowing lingcod retention in the offshore area would likely result in increased encounters with yelloweye rockfish, and that the survivability of released rockfish at depths greater than 30 fathoms would be higher.

Draft Suggested Changes to Catch Sharing Plan Language:

(f) (1) (iv) Columbia River subarea.

...The Columbia River subarea seasons are as follows:

A nearshore fishery is allocated ~~10 percent or 1,500-500~~ pounds of the Columbia River subarea allocation, ~~whichever is less,~~ to allow ~~incidental~~ halibut retention on groundfish trips in the area shoreward of the boundary line approximating the 30 fathom (55 m) depth contour extending from Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38.17' N. lat., 124°15.88' W. long.) to the Washington-Oregon border (46°16.00' N. lat., 124°15.88' W. long.) and from there, connecting to the boundary line approximating the 40 fathom (73 m) depth contour in Oregon. Coordinates will be specifically defined at 50 CFR 660.71 through 660.74. The nearshore fishery will be open Monday through ~~Wednesday-Friday~~ following the opening of the ~~early season~~ all-depth fishery, until the nearshore allocation is taken or September 30, whichever is earlier. Taking, retaining, possessing or landing halibut on groundfish trips is ~~only~~ allowed in the nearshore area, except on Saturday and Sunday on days not open to all-depth Pacific halibut fisheries. The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit.

The remaining Columbia River subarea allocation will be allocated ~~such that 80 percent is reserved for an early season to the~~ all-depth fishery beginning in May ~~and 20 percent reserved for a late season all-depth fishery beginning in August.~~ The ~~early season~~ all-depth fishery will open on the first Thursday in May or May 1 if it is a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, 4 days per week, Thursday through Sunday until the ~~early season portion of the subarea allocation is taken. The fishery will reopen for the late season all-depth fishery on the first Thursday in August and continue 4 days per week, Thursday-Sunday until the~~ remainder of the subarea quota has been taken, or until September 30, whichever is earlier. ~~The early and late seasons will run continuously, unless closed due to quota attainment. Any remaining early season all depth quota will automatically be available to the late season all depth fishery.~~ Subsequent to the 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.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Frank Galusha** <frank@myoutdoorbuddy.com>

Date: Wed, Jul 30, 2014 at 4:33 PM

Subject: K-1 Halibut CSP

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Cc: 'director@wildlife.ca.gov.'

Dear Sirs:

Please consider the plight of the communities of Eureka, Shelter Cove, Fort Bragg, Trinidad and Crescent City (and many more even smaller towns) before considering any type of restrictions or closures on Pacific Halibut sports fishing in 2015 and beyond off the northern California coast. This year's closure in August is going to punish all businesses in this region and I believe it was totally unfair. Please do not inflict further harm on these business owners and the sports angler. We are already severely limited by the weather off the coast, which prevents so much fishing already – and only a tiny portion of the fishing territory is ever fished. At this time we can only harvest 1% of the non-tribal allocation, even though we contribute 14% of the available biomass. This is unacceptable and is punitive to the above ports, anglers and charter businesses, all of whom are suffering a serious economic loss due to this action. This allocation is unprecedented considering the science available. We should be getting more allocation and time, not a loss of opportunity and economic loss.

Thank you,

Frank Galusha, Editor/Publisher

MyOutdoorBuddy.com

2014 Award Winning Outdoor Website

[530-215-3487](tel:530-215-3487)

From: **Craig** <wecanbclose@hotmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jul 31, 2014 at 12:35 PM

Subject: Pacific halibut Season

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

To the Powers that Be,

I'm ashamed to say I'm 58 years old and have never voted or written a letter like this before. Fourteen months ago I found out that I had Renal cancer had my kidney removed, but it had metastasized to my lungs and was told I had 12-14 months to live and I would like to try to make a difference even though the odds are won't be here to see any change. This last statement is a little misleading as I feel fine with no symptoms, no anxiety, and I recently sailed solo down the coast to Humboldt Bay (where I was born and raised) as my way of giving the bird to the Doctor that suggested I do nothing--call hospice and go home and die. Last season I was in and out of the emergency room and couldn't even think about fishing until I got my kidney removed at Stanford University. I lived vicariously through the fishing posts on HumboldtTuna.com. I think part of the reason for my staying healthy was to get down here and catch a couple halibut and was rewarded with 2 small halibut in about 1/12 hours of fishing. The 1st I was able to contribute to my ailing dad's 85 b-day party.

I think I have a unique perspective on these halibut season as I spent most of the last 4 years living on my boat in the San Juan Islands--Puget Sound Washington and then spent this last winter and part of the season in Newport Oregon before returning to my home port of Humboldt Bay. I was born and raised in Humboldt County in Northern California--lived in Oregon for 20 years and Washington for 3 years. A couple month ago while I was in Newport there was a couple of charter boats on my dock and they had the most halibut I have ever seen in person--although they were all small ones. I commented to the Captain that I had read they had been catching some bigger one back in Northern California. He flew into a rage and said soon they would cut our halibut way back in a very angry voice. Since he said that I've read that Newport gets a huge percentage of the Halibut quota compared to ours down here with our way smaller take. The next day I again saw the most halibut I have ever seen at one time scattered across my dock waiting to get cleaned. I think I read the Newport area gets the largest quota of Halibut o the West Coast and I thought how selfish and how political this was right there.

We get the short end of the stick up here in Northern California coast as we get out water sucked out of the Trintity -Klamath Rivers systems as well as the Eel River. I've watched as are water (that our salmon so badly needed) be diverted to more central parts of California where rich influential people used it to grow grapes to make wine as thousands of out salmon died in the Klamath (saw it and I puked) and other fish kills happen every year as our water is diverted. I just read the Feds will continue to divert water out of the Klamath Trinity River system this year until they see dead fish----Crazy--then it's to late. A few of our rivers were great salmon fishing as a kid like the Mad and Eel Rivers that you can no longer fish for salmon. Even though I don't think I was the Northern Californians fault for the Depleted runs after the fish kill--I supported the short season closures for the fish. Unlike Oregon and Washington we no longer have a season for silver salmon either---now they want our share of halibut too. I'm sure you know the numbers.

I had my 40th year High School reunion in Arcata, California last weekend and It showed me how bad the economy really is here. Most that stayed no longer had jobs as our local Timber resources were sucked away from a Huge Texan corporation that did even more damage on our rivers. Some no longer even bother to look for work. Class mates that moved seemed way more happy and successful in their lives.

Please don't let them take our fish and water-----and give us our" fair" share of Halibut and let us save some of our economy.

Craig Bottemiller

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Josh Auckland** <joshuaauckland@suddenlink.net>

Date: Sun, Aug 3, 2014 at 11:31 AM

Subject: Halibut

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Ca should receive a larger allocation for sport caught halibut. We are furious that we are losing our halibut fishing. We have the fish and the scientific data to support a full season. It's bullshit that we are being squeezed out politically. I think it shows a very bad example to our youth, that the government fisheries management is corrupt. This kind of corruption is what will lead to poaching and an overall distrust in the system.
Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bob Pagliuco** <sheggyboy@aol.com>

Date: Sun, Aug 3, 2014 at 10:30 PM

Subject: CA Pacific Halibut Allocation and Regulations

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Cc: director@wildlife.ca.gov, Caroline.McKnight@wildlife.ca.gov, Marci.Yaremko@wildlife.ca.gov

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to bring your attention to a troubling set of issues regarding the pacific halibut fishery in CA. I object to any further closures in CA for the 2015 year, I suggest that we lift the August closure in CA, and request consideration of an increased allocation for CA. The 2013 halibut survey done by the IPHC demonstrated that CA has 100,000 lbs of halibut biomass that can be harvested. Unfortunately for us, all but 6,000 lbs is reserved for WA and OR, who refuse to shift allocation to CA. This is strictly a political decision, with the best available science being ignored. Our 6,240 lbs is only 0.62% of the total 2A allocation of 960,000 lbs (=1% of the non-tribal allocation). The 2013 IPHC halibut survey showed 720,000 lbs for exploitable biomass of which CA contributes 13.8% of this amount. In addition, the IPHC is giving the 2A area an additional 240,000 lbs above this amount, and every ounce of that additional poundage is going to WA and OR and not CA where it belongs. This is not fair given what CA has brought to the table as a result of last year's halibut survey.

Once again, I object to any further closures in CA for the 2015 year, I suggest that we lift the August closure in CA, and request consideration of an increased allocation for CA. I believe we are being treated unfairly. As it stands, we can only harvest 1% of the non-tribal allocation, even though we contribute 14% of the available biomass to the halibut fishery. This is unacceptable and is punitive to CA ports, anglers and Charter businesses. We are suffering a serious economic loss due to this action. This allocation is unprecedented considering the science available. We should be getting more allocation and time, not a loss of opportunity and economic loss. Please consider this logic at your next meeting in Spokane next month.

Sincerely,

Bob Pagliuco

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ross Taylor** <rossntaylor@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Mon, Aug 4, 2014 at 3:36 PM

Subject: Pacific Halibut - CA closure

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>, "director@wildlife.ca.gov" <director@wildlife.ca.gov>

Hi there:

I live in Humboldt County and work as a consulting fisheries biologist primarily on salmon and steelhead/fish passage issues. I also sport-fish in the ocean and have run boats out of Trinidad and Eureka since the late 1980's. Over the past 5-10 years, the Pacific halibut fishery has exploded, each year there seems to be more fish, and more fish over 50lbs. I am very concerned about this year's August closure and the potential for additional future closures and restrictions. I am in full support of the content in the following paragraph that was provided on our local fishing forum. Please consider the science and allow northern CA anglers to have their fair share of the allocation, not a few crumbs off of OR and WA generous allocations.

"Pacific Halibut fishing will be closed for the entire month of August. This action was taken by the PFMC last fall to reduce the harvest in CA waters. It is likely, that at the PFMC September meeting in Spokane, WA next month, further closures may be introduced. As marine anglers, we believe this is unwarranted and unfair. The 2013 halibut survey done by the IPHC demonstrated that CA has 100,000 lbs of halibut biomass that can be harvested. Unfortunately for us, all but 6,000 lbs is reserved for WA and OR, who refuse to shift allocation to CA. This is strictly a political decision, with the best available science being ignored. Your prompt attention is needed to send letters to the PFMC by August 15 11:59pm on this issue. Clearly state your objection to any further closures in CA for the 2015 year and request consideration of an increased allocation for CA. I believe we are being treated unfairly. Stress we can only harvest 1% of the non-tribal allocation, even though we contribute 14 % of the available biomass. This is unacceptable and is punitive to CA ports, anglers and Charter businesses. We are suffering a serious economic loss due to this action. This allocation is unprecedented considering the science available. We should be getting more allocation and time, not a loss of opportunity and economic loss."

Ross Taylor, MS and AFS Certified Fisheries Professional #3438, [707-839-5022](tel:707-839-5022)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Lonnie Dollarhide** <flatwater3@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, Aug 4, 2014 at 6:01 PM

Subject: North Coast Pacific Halibut

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

My name is Lonnie Dollarhide, I'm a ocean sports fishermen out of Humboldt Bay Eureka California and a Halibut fishermen. I strongly feel the new regs we haft to now follow are totally wrong. The survey the IPHC did last year shows their are more Halibut along the North Coast than thought. The science proves this. As you well know, were in a catch share program with Washington and Oregon and their is no sharing with California. The allocation for California is wrong. We deserve more of the pie. We as fishermen want August back. We loose so many days as it is during the season due to the weather here along the North Coast. With the salmon now on the decline were going to be really pressed to fish for some thing. The economic impact with a reduction on Pacific Halibut will have a rippling effect thru out the North Coast as well. Once again the science proves theirs plenty of Halibut to go around equally.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jeff Mostovoy** <jjmostovoy@icloud.com>

Date: Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 1:53 PM

Subject: PFMC CA Halibut closure

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

PFMC HALIBUT CLOSURE

As a lifetime California resident I am writing you to ask that you consider doing the right thing concerning the closure and allocations of pacific halibut in California waters. It is my understanding that at the PMFC September meeting in Spokane, further closures may be introduced for our California waters. I want you to understand that fellow fishermen, including myself, think that the August closure we are experiencing now is ridiculous.

The 2013 halibut survey done by the IPHC demonstrated that the state of California has an estimated 100,000 pounds of halibut biomass that can be harvested. Unfortunately, California keeps only 6,000 pounds of the 100,000 harvested. This means that the rest of the harvest goes between Oregon and Washington, both of which refuse to shift allocation to California.

It is obvious that these decisions are strictly political, while the best available science is being ignored. Studies show that California's 6,240 pounds of halibut is only 0.62% of the total 2A allocation of 960,000 pounds, this is equal to 1% of the non-tribal allocation. The scientific survey consisted of 720,000 pounds of exploitable biomass; California contributes 13.8% of this amount. In addition, the IPHC is giving the 2A area an additional 240,000 pounds above this amount. Every ounce of the additional biomass is going to Oregon and Washington. This is unacceptable and devastating to California ports, anglers, and charter businesses.

California is suffering serious economic loss due to the August closure, and this not mentioning what other closures could do. The science and numbers behind this discussion should out rule self-serving political interests. There should be no further considerations of halibut closures in

California until the catch sharing plan is torn apart and redistributed based on science and not politics. I believe that the August closure should be lifted for 2015.

Thanks, Jeff Mostovoy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <7074984954@vtext.com>

Date: Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 1:32 PM

Subject: We want to fish halibut in august

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

We want to fish halibut in august

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Cookiemn58@GMail.com** <cookiemn58@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Aug 7, 2014 at 9:56 AM

Subject: Pacific Halibut Closure Eureka California

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Hello,

Please revisit your allocations for this area.

The August closure is not warranted.

This is having a negative impact on our local economy as well.

Thank you,

Michael Lublin

P. O. Box 6130

Eureka, Calif.

95502

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jake Mitchell** <seahawksportfishing@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Aug 7, 2014 at 10:34 AM

Subject: Agenda item K1

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

I'm a six pack charter operator out of shelter cove CA writing in regards to the recent halibut closure, and the discussion of possibly more closures. My business has already taken a significant financial impact with the August closure and any more closures would make a huge negative impact on my business. It seems that there are plenty of halibut off of our coast and I think recent studies would indicate the same. I think it's time that we get what's fair as far as the allocation goes.

Thank you for your time

Jake Mithell

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mike** <mike@humboldtinvestigations.com>

Date: Thu, Aug 7, 2014 at 4:36 PM

Subject: Halibut Closure

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Why close Halibut in California? They are not targeted by many and there just can't be much of an impact. The closure has eliminated one option for my kind who do not fish Salmon.

Best Regards,
Mike Hart
Fort Bragg, CA

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Tim Bertolini** <ttimber20@charter.net>

Date: Thu, Aug 7, 2014 at 4:48 PM

Subject: Halibut august closure

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Hi, Thanks for considering my comments. I'm a working person 5 days a week and enjoy fishing on the weekend when the weather permits. We usually get better weather in August, so this closure cuts in to our opportunity to fish for halibut. Regarding agenda item K1, the surveys taken off CA coast has shown we have a healthy stock in our waters. But yet our opportunities are cut. We have miles of coastal waters that never gets fished, it seems to me there is very little pressure on halibut. If you could show me where we are depleting the halibut stock I would agree with the august closure, but I doubt we are. Thank you Tim

From: **Fred Johansen** <fredjohansen28@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Aug 8, 2014 at 9:16 AM

Subject: August Closure of California coast Halibut, Agenda Item K1

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Dear committee,

The August closure of the halibut season has directly affected my family and friends. I own an 18 ft. boat. We have the second most dangerous bar on the west coast to cross and arguably the worst weather. I don't fish the ocean when the swells are over 6 ft. and or the wind is above 10 mph. We have had about 15 days this year to fish halibut and or salmon due to the ocean conditions. To close the season for a month means that I'll only get one to three days that we could fish for halibut. Our area has now discovered this fishery and within three years of the commissions discovery of our successful fishery we're having it shut down for a month? The commission is just now discovering that our halibut stocks are more healthy than those of even Alaska. Please allow us to fish!

Thanks for all you do to protect our fish stocks.
Fred Johansen with family and friends,

fredjohansen28@gmail.com
[1-707-822-0769](tel:1-707-822-0769)

2295 Ross Street,
Arcata, CA., 95521

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Will Bouterse** <wbouterse@yahoo.com>
Date: Fri, Aug 8, 2014 at 1:36 PM
Subject:
To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am unhappy with the closure of recreational halibut fishing for the month of august off the coast of eureka CA. I believe that we are entitled to a larger share of the pie. thank you for your concern in this matter as it means alot to many local people hear on the north coast.

Willem Bouterse

From: **Larry De Ridder** <clderidder@hotmail.com>
Date: Fri, Aug 8, 2014 at 11:09 PM
Subject: Halibut quotas item K1
To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Dear Sirs:

I recognize that the politics of fishing can be messy, but it doesn't have to be completely illogical. In California our stock of Pacific Halibut is higher than previously believed, and clearly much improved over what existed only a few years ago. Thus, further restricting California catch opportunities makes no scientific sense. In addition, given the incredibly tiny portion of the overall catch which comes from California our impact on the overall population, regardless of how much is caught here, it trivial. Please stop and realize that while it may seem contradictory to increase the California sport catch limit at the same time other areas are being reduced, the underlying biology supports that course of action.

Thank you for your time,

Larry De Ridder
4886 Walnut Dr.
Eureka, CA 95503

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Pamlyn** <minnowpaws@suddenlink.net>

Date: Sat, Aug 9, 2014 at 10:02 AM

Subject: Halibut impact on Humboldt County

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Thank you for reading this.

Our local economy has been depleted by cuts to the timber industry. Uncommon to popular belief, the pot industry does not sustain Humboldt County. In fact, most of us don't want it at all.

What we have left is our beautiful ocean and beaches. People travel far and wide to come to our area to fish and behold the beauty of our oceans and forests. Our fishing is legendary and our fleet is a family that not only watch out for each other but the ocean as well. The summer months bring people to our area to fish for Halibut, Salmon and bottom fish. There are limits for each of these that we stick to. Most anglers would not even think of keeping a small halibut and so there are rules that we impose on ourselves. If you have noticed the count, there are plenty of halibut and to close our season for the month of August hurts not only those who fish, but the other business's that depend on the tourists that our fishing industry brings to Humboldt County.

Please consider all our information and re-open our halibut season. We all understand that our fish are a treasured resource and must be managed. But lets be realistic as well. It is simply put- not fair for Humboldt County to be dinged for the actions we have no part in. Thank you-

Respectfully,

Pamlyn Millsap

[\(707\) 599-7593](tel:(707)599-7593)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jim Yarnall** <jimyarnall@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Aug 11, 2014 at 8:43 PM

Subject: K 1 Pacific Halibut

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

August 10, 2014

Madame Chair and Council Members,

I am a recreational angler from Eureka, CA who fishes for Pacific halibut in northern California. I am advocating that you increase California's share of the 2A quota.

The current catch sharing plan allocating halibut to various sectors with the 2A zone was finalized in the early 1990's. At that time there was not an active recreational halibut fishery within California and southern Oregon so the South of Humbug zone was given a token 1% of

the 2A allocation, although historically Eureka had Pacific halibut landings approaching 500,000# annually after World War II. During 2008-2010 salmon numbers were depressed and recreational anglers began to develop a successful halibut fishery and the northcoast became an anglers' destination for halibut within California. South of Humboldt anglers soon exceeded their 1% allocation of approximately 6,000#.

Last year the Council took action to separate California and Southern Oregon so each state could manage their own allocation and the month of August was closed in California to reduce California's catch close to 50%. Also during the summer of 2013 the IPHC conducted its first survey in northern California with the catch rates just below those of Oregon and Washington. As a result of these survey results the IPHC added 100,000# to the 2A quota. However due to the current catch sharing plan California's allocation will not increase significantly.

With California contributing 100,000 additional pounds to the 2A total quota it is time for the Council to allocate California an equitable share of this prized resource. For the first time there is a science based means to distribute halibut between the states. This is not a resource conservation issue but rather a resource allocation issue. I implore the Council to take the tough but correct path and allocate fish based upon the IPHC survey results. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jim Yarnall
6308 Eggert Road
Eureka, CA 95503
[707-443-2496](tel:707-443-2496)

From: **Mike** <mike@humboldtinvestigations.com>
Date: Thu, Aug 7, 2014 at 4:36 PM
Subject: Halibut Closure
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Why close Halibut in California? They are not targeted by many and there just can't be much of an impact. The closure has eliminated one option for my kind who do not fish Salmon.

Best Regards,

Mike Hart
Fort Bragg, CA

From: **gregs mac** <travelin4fun2u@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Aug 12, 2014 at 1:11 PM
Subject: Halibut Closure
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

To PFMC,

I'm writing to voice my objection to any continuation or added closure to the recreational Pacific Halibut fishery in California. The future of sport fishing in general is in dire straits in California.

Our politicians have sold us out with the continued pumping of water from the Delta to support Mr. Resnick's water piracy business at the cost of the wild Sacramento Salmon. Then they implemented the MLPA's another political farce that was illegally forced down our throats. Now you want to take away our small halibut fishery while Oregon and Washington do nothing.

Perhaps you should just shut down all fishing in California, stop hunting and take all guns away too! Abolish California Fish & Game and give our politicians a raise with that money. You could make owning a fishing boat a felony in California thus wipe out a few million more jobs but hey we would have farms in the desert of the central valley for the campaign contributing cooperations. After all that is what this nation has boiled down to, isn't it?

I realize this sounds very bitter and is sarcastic but it's not that far from the path we are heading down. We that enjoy the outdoors and enjoy sport fishing need to be heard and maybe at least one out of a hundred times have just one thing to say.

We can't even release water to save salmon in our rivers up north but we can be sure Mr. Resnick gets our water so he can profit. Just how much money does he need anyway? Better still just give it all to him along with Social Security and your wages as well. Hell takes it because it has become the way things work in this country once was biased on being for the people is now for the politician and the greedy rich.

We're only asking for 30 days that we can fish out of an already short season.

Greg Mariano

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Colum Coyne** <columcoyne@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Aug 13, 2014 at 10:36 AM
Subject: Halibut
To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Cc: "director@wildlife.ca.gov" <director@wildlife.ca.gov>

People,

Why are you guys so unimaginative? How about a punch card system for sport Halibut? You know the small number of sport boats in northern Ca. Is not going

to seriously impact the resource. Five fish per year sounds reasonable to me, what do you think?

Colum Coyne. Humboldt Co. Ca. angler

From: **Trever Parker** <taparker76@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Aug 14, 2014 at 11:41 AM

Subject: Pacific Halibut Area 2A Allocation

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my objection to any further closures of the Pacific Halibut season in California. As a marine angler, I believe any closures are unwarranted and unfair. California's 6,240 lbs allocation is only 0.62% of the total Area 2A allocation of 960,000 lbs (=1% of the non-tribal allocation). The scientific survey by the IPHC in 2013 showed there was 720,000 lbs for exploitable biomass, of which northern California contributes 13.8% of this amount, or approximately 100,000 lbs. In addition, the IPHC is giving the 2A area an additional 240,000 lbs above this amount, and every ounce of that additional poundage is going to WA and OR.

I understand that WA and OR only get a season that is a few days long. However, they have millions of people on Puget Sound and other areas, while northern California's few ports are rural, isolated and prone to rough weather with perhaps a few thousand of anglers fishing our waters for halibut. Recreational fishing is hugely important to our economy, particularly in years with low salmon numbers, which we will be facing with the ongoing drought. This has become a political scheme of self-serving interests, while true management has to be scientifically based.

I do not support the block closure of August or any alternate block closures or weekly closures, because CA anglers only harvested approximately 25% of the amount that the IPHC deemed to be harvestable in CA waters when the season was open May 1 – October 31. Based on the best available science, there is absolutely no good reason that CA anglers shouldn't be allowed to continue harvesting at least the 25,000 pounds a year that we have been catching when the IPHC says that CA waters hold 100,000 pounds of harvestable fish. CA anglers deserve access to 100% of the halibut that CA waters contribute to the Area 2A TAC and PFMC should focus efforts on obtaining a reasonable allocation for CA rather than preparing for continued and/or additional season closures. It makes no ecological sense to allocate the CA biomass to OR and WA; they are not catching CA fish, so they will be overharvesting their own populations if they are given that allocation.

From a fisheries management standpoint, the fair way to bring CA into the Pacific halibut management process is to:

- 1) Continue to conduct the IPHC stock assessment survey in CA waters
- 2) Calculate an estimate of biomass in CA waters

- 3) Allocate to CA whatever portion of that biomass is deemed to be harvestable by the IPHC.
- 4) Implement season length and bag limit regulations designed to keep CA within its new allocation.

My suggestion is that OR and WA continue to harvest the same amount of fish that they would have been able to harvest before CA was part of the process. I suggest that CA enter the process by taking an allocation equal to its contribution to the Area 2A TAC. This will leave OR and WA harvest rates unaffected by the new addition of CA to the process and avoid unraveling the Catch Sharing Plan. This can be accomplished by adjusting the percentage allocations to all other sectors downward to match the number of pounds that would have been received without CA's contribution to the area 2A TAC. Also, CA should be exempt from the 35% tribal take for Area 2A because CA waters are outside of the tribal halibut harvest area.

To reiterate, the 2013 halibut survey done by the IPHC demonstrated that CA has 100,000 lbs of halibut biomass that can be harvested. All but 6,000 lbs is reserved for WA and OR, who refuse to shift allocation to CA. This is strictly a political decision, with the best available science being ignored. We can only harvest 1% of the non-tribal allocation, even though we contribute 14 % of the available biomass. This is unacceptable and is punitive to CA ports, anglers and Charter businesses. We are suffering a serious economic loss due to this action. This allocation is unprecedented and unacceptable considering the science available. The PFMC needs to stand up to the political interests and manage the stock based on science as is required by law. Please keep in mind that CA anglers don't want to take a single pound of fish away from OR and WA, only harvest the amount of fish that the new CA portion of the IPHC survey added to the Area 2A TAC.

Sincerely,
Trevor Parker
Arcata, CA

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mark & Linda** <onokai@suddenlink.net>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 12:00 AM

Subject: California allocation limits

To: Marci.Yaremko@wildlife.ca.gov, pfmc.comments@noaa.gov, director@wildlife.ca.gov

I am concerned that our state has such a low allocation limit on Halibut 1% seems pit fit small would you not agree?

How about the August 2015 closure be outright lifted for our 1%. This makes no sense in any real world science. 1% is not even a make on the biomass.

This all seems to be politics not science and in very small amounts of fish .

Please reconsider this goofball idea and give us our fish rights back as the halibut survey shows we have way more fish than we take by a longshot. The one month summer closure prevents almost nothing except its our only good weather month to get out on the ocean,

Mark Cortright
212 Liscom Hill Road
McKinleyvilleCa,95519

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Marc Schmidt** <coastlinecharters@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 7:37 AM

Subject: Public comment - Pacific Halibut Allocation and Season from a CA charter boat captain

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov, director@wildlife.ca.gov

I run a 6 pack charter boat out of Eureka, CA as well as pull a directed halibut permit for my commercial boat every year. Our current allocation for sport caught Pacific Halibut (PH) is remnant of a day when no one fished for them. Fast forward to the present, things are much different than when the quota was split up and no one in CA had interest in them. Last years PH survey off our coast shows that there are 100k lbs of fish available to be caught. That is what the science shows, not just a made up number. We in CA are also stuck with diminishing salmon stocks and seasons because of the water management decisions that we have no control over. We rely on PH as a backup fishery when our seasons are drastically cut back and there is much interest from our cliental to fish for them day in and day out through the season when weather allows. With the possibility to catch a 80 or 100 lbs fish on the next bite, many people are drawn to our community to come fishing. It is those people that come to fish with us that provide the money to keep us in business.

Please consider our low population and long travel from any significant city and that the weather keeps us off the halibut grounds much of the season as you decide our future as a fishing port. Commercial catch of PH is usually less than 10 fish for CA as a whole, often no fish at all as weather often does not let us out on the only one or 2 derby style season dates each year. I would recommend having an small yet significant quota available for those years that allow us to fish the commercial halibut days and room for more boats to enter the fishery as we have healthy populations in CA.

I have only 1 charter booked in the next 2 weeks till the end of Aug and it is for tuna which are often rescheduled due to weather. I have missed many of the halibut cliental for this time of year as salmon usually slows down this time of year and we shift our effort to halibut, but with no season I am sitting at home with no work. I know my income for the year would be better to get my family through the non fishing season with a few more halibut charters this month. I am not providing for my family as well as I should because of an artificially cut back season, that was done so with no sound scientific data. You better believe that makes us upset. We also contribute 14% to the 2A quota yet our allocation is only 1%, this is unacceptable. We as fishermen understand that the Magnuson-Stevenson says that this fishery needs to be managed based on the best available science. We are going to ensure that we are allowed a reasonable allocation for CA based on the latest science as soon as possible. The easiest way for that to happen will be through an increase in our quota made by the council. Last years survey data is it and it show 100k lbs for us to catch.

I respectfully request the commission to increase our allocation to at least 50k lbs of PH for the CA quota and reinstate our historic season of May 1st - October 31st with no August closure for the 2015 fishing season and onward until there can be 3 years of survey data collected and then allocations can be reassessed based on what that shows as the best available science at that time. I feel this years survey will show even more available PH than last years as we have seen some of the best fishing for PH. I have seen here this year and they are showing in salmon catches in less than 100 feet of water which has rarely happened in past years. One more benefit of a 50k to 75k lbs allocation would be a case study that would show fishing effort at less than the available harvestable population for an area, which could be tracked in regard to age and size for the area and show it's response to fishing under the available biomass. I think this data will become important in future management in this fishery as the fish continue to get smaller in other areas than CA, which may suggest that they may be overfishing the stocks by using CA quota to allow them to harvest more than they should to keep a fishery for the future generations. Thank you for your consideration of the 2015 allotment and season for CA Pacific Halibut fishermen and their families.

Sincerely,

Marc Schmidt
Coastline Charters
Eureka, CA

Ms. Lowman, Council Chair and Council Members

Re: K.1. Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP)

The core of this issue is the 1% of non-tribal halibut allocation granted to California, the results of the IPHC survey in 2013, and the ongoing concern over the Council to restrict the harvest in CA to keep within this insignificant allocation of 200 fish annually. To this end, hundreds of hours of time have been spent by the Council, Staff and public meetings to address this contentious political decision. We all agree that the IPHC sets the 2A sector allocation each year, and the PFMC then distributes this amount within the three Pacific States. On the former we accept the results, on the latter we strongly disagree. While the IPHC is not bound by the MSA, it can certainly be debated that the distribution within the three states is bound by the MSA. I support that contention.

In 2013 the Council took action to close August for CA since there was great concern that we have been averaging about 25,000 lbs per year for the last five years. The IPHC survey results of 100,000 lbs of exploitable biomass was not known at the time of this decision in November of 2013. We appreciate the IPHC effort to help us better define the available harvest potential in CA, but we question why there is further ongoing effort to restrict us to the 1% allocation when the survey demonstrates CA is generating 13.8% of the 2A exploitable biomass. The MSA is very specific in advising the Council to be fair in its distribution of fish to the various industry and states and to use the "best science available" to make their decision. We are concerned that the survey results continue to be pushed aside, and the emphasis is on further "Management Controls" to restrict CA to the 200 fish (6,240 lb) allocation we have at present.

A parallel concern is the amount of by-catch kill that has been allowed by all the Regulatory bodies over the past several decades. A report was presented to the Council by NMFS on by-catch from 2002-2009 (Agenda Item D.2b, NMFS Report, September 2010) that was very descriptive of the discard mortality by all the industry sectors. In short, over 550,000 lbs of mortality was recorded in 2009 by the Trawl Industry alone, and that has probably been occurring for the last decade or two. Now that the population biomass is falling, the pressure is on the Regulatory Agencies to try to catch up with the facts of smaller size at age fish, fewer of them, and falling recruitment. To that end, the recreational fisherman is now being denied time and access from catching a tiny portion of the available fish in our region after decades of by-catch kill has been ignored and tolerated. To add injury to insult, we are being told we are exceeding our meager allotment.

Currently, we are in a closure period during August, and as predicted, the salmon fishing has fallen off dramatically and charter operators are seeing large scale cancellations of trips due to the scarcity of salmon. Two of the four small ports in Northern CA are already being economically harmed at the writing of this letter. This will only get worse as the drought kills both salmon adults and juveniles this fall and next spring. Further Management Controls on the halibut fishery will only serve to exacerbate this economic loss.

We respectfully request the following:

1. Grant CA an allocation of 50,000 lbs for the 2015 year.
2. Commission the GMT and the Advisory Bodies to develop a few science based CSP scenarios that can be presented to the Council for action in 2015.
3. Remove the August closure and delay and further Management Actions until the CSP is adequately addressed.

In conclusion, we believe it is both appropriate and timely to reconsider a CSP that is equitable to all the Pacific States and in conformance with the MSA. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council on this item that is of critical importance to us in CA for socio-economic and "access to the fishery concerns".

Respectfully,

Tom Marking, CA GAP Sports Fishing Representative

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **longfish** <longfish@humboldt1.com>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 9:33 AM

Subject: Pacific halibut public comment

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov, director@wildlife.ca.gov

Hi there, please do not consider any further Pacific halibut closures in Northern California. We are working hard to show that we have a sustainable population of Pacific halibut and that resource is economically very important to our region.

We believe one fish per angler per day from May to October will not negatively affect our Pacific halibut stocks. Our region is highly dependent on tourism and recreation of which Pacific halibut is a large part. The catch data we collected and the economic data we are currently collecting will illustrate our view and we will be ready to present our case by the November meetings. Please do not decide on any closures until then. We need to find a way to amend our total allowable catch to a number more appropriate to our recreational needs and our large population of Pacific halibut. Thank you,

Casey Allen

Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Dan Diemer** <ddiemer@cityofarcata.org>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 9:53 AM

Subject: August Halibut Fishing

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>, "director@wildlife.ca.gov" <director@wildlife.ca.gov>

Please reconsider the Aug closure with a minimum 50k lbs allotment for the season. It would be appreciated to establish limits on reasonable scientifically based quota. We can only harvest 1% of the non-tribal allocation, even though we contribute 14 % of the available biomass. This appears punitive to CA ports, anglers and Charter businesses. We are suffering a serious economic loss due to this action. This allocation is unprecedented considering the science available. We should be getting more allocation and time, not a loss of opportunity and economic loss. I object to any further closures in CA for the 2015 year and request consideration of an increased allocation for CA.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dan Diemer, Superintendent of Parks/Facilities

City Of Arcata

736 F St. Arcata, CA. 95521

[707-825-2213](tel:707-825-2213)

[707-825-2119](tel:707-825-2119) fax

ddiemer@cityofarcata.org

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **John Lanz** <jrlanz@att.net>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 10:15 AM

Subject: Pacific Halibut in California

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Dear Sirs

I am writing you because I do not think the

Aug closure is not needed and we want at least 50k lbs while you figure out how to give us a reasonable scientifically based quota.

Thank you, John Lanz

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Red and Nancy Jioras** <rednan1@suddenlink.net>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 11:05 AM

Subject: Pacific Halibut

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Until 5 years ago, even though Northern California had a history of commercial halibut fishing during WW II, California pacific halibut fishery has been ignored throughout the implementation of the International Pacific Halibut Committee's (IPHC) catch sharing plan. I'm sure the issue of why California has been ignored can be debated for long hours, but arguing the past is non-productive.

In the last five years, California anglers have proven that there is truly a viable pacific halibut fishery and we have awakened not only the interest of the California Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), but also the IPHC. IN 2013, the IPHC finally took enough interest to do a catch survey in northern California and found an additional 100,000 pounds of catchable biomass, increasing the catchable amount of fish for all the other lower US state by approximately 14% while California anglers are still held to 1% of the overall catchable pacific halibut. New science should bring about **NEW SOLUTIONS** to old problems.

California anglers have been told that the IPHC is going to increase the areas sampled in northern California in 2014. Expecting the new sampling areas will again increase the amount of catchable Pacific Halibut biomass, California is going to still be held to 1% of the increase. This is **NOT SCIENCE**, it is political expediency. California anglers have fished Pacific Halibut since the 1940s and we still have a large biomass that has a larger average weight than that of Alaska. Should California receive 2-3% more of the biomass, it would more closely reflect our catch numbers and still be far below what California contributes to the overall catch sharing plan.

The problem, as I understand it, comes in the timing of IPHC'S allocation of the amount of Pacific Halibut to be caught in California to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) and the release of data found by the 2014 samplings in California waters. Even though the PFMC is bound by the poundage dictated by the IPHC when it comes to Pacific Halibut, the responsibility lays squarely on the shoulders of the IPHC to recommend a catch rate more in line with what California contributes to this resource.

I understand the PFMC meets in September to make recommendations to the CDFW for Pacific Halibut. This year, 2013, the month of August was closed for Pacific Halibut to help comply with the 1% allowable catch. The sampling in 2013 was completed in July, but data was not released until December, long after the PFMC made it's recommendation to the CFDW. If the

IPHC knows the figures for California before the September meeting of the PFMCC, California's allotment should be adjusted to reflect this new data or PFMCC should advise the CDFW to change the Pacific Halibut regulations when new data is available.

Fishery science should not be clouded with political correctness. When new science is available, concepts and allocation should be changed to reflect the data. California has shown that it is strong contributor in the Pacific Halibut fishery. It is time to welcome us, not just to sit and listen, but to have a strong voice and show that we have a resource that will benefit everyone.

Please allow us to catch our share.

COMMISSIONERS

1st Division

Aaron Newman

2nd Division

Greg Dale

3rd Division

Mike Wilson

4th Division

Richard Marks

5th Division

Patrick Higgins

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

(707) 443-0801

P.O. Box 1030

Eureka, California 95502-1030



August 14, 2014

Dorothy Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Re: Pacific Halibut Management in the California North Coast Region

Dear Chair Lowman,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on management of Pacific halibut in the northern California region. I am offering comments to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) on behalf of the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District Commission (Harbor District). Our Harbor District operates the Woodley Island Marina in Eureka, California, which is the home to many commercial and sport fishing craft. Also, thriving fisheries are an important economic under-pinning of the North Coast region. Our Commission and other governments of the region are concerned that our access to Pacific halibut is being unnecessarily constrained when scientific data that is being collected through a local collaborative effort, and by surveys conducted by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), show we have a robust population.

Although the North Coast region is grateful that we have recently been granted a California management zone and that we no longer have to share the 6,000 pound quota with Oregon sport fishermen south of Port Orford, we feel that the quota does not reflect stock abundance and will be pursuing a quota with the IPHC of 40,000 pounds. The August 2014 closure of the North Coast we are currently enduring is scientifically unjustified and not based on sound fisheries management principals. We ask that the PFMC extend the 2015 season from May 10 to October 1 and we will be making a similar request to the IPHC.

The Pacific halibut allocation for California and southern Oregon at the IPHC level was set at a time when our stocks were severely depleted by historic directed fisheries and on-going bi-catch in trawl fisheries. Since that time there has been very little commercial take of Pacific halibut and bi-catch has been greatly reduced because of the buy-back program for the trawl fleet. The trawl fisheries used to bring landings in the tens of millions of pounds into Eureka and other North Coast ports and the loss of these fisheries to the region's economy is substantial. A silver

lining is the rebound of the Pacific halibut, but because of the outmoded allocation that doesn't factor in current scientific data; we are deprived of full access for our sport fishery.

The Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, California Sea Grant, and Humboldt State University (HSU) collaborated in a 2013 study that analyzed 270 Pacific halibut caught by North Coast anglers and used IPHC protocols to determine size and age of the catch. HSU graduate student Liz Perkins (2014) summarized her findings as follows:

"I compared my data to data collected during the 2013 International Pacific Halibut Commission stock assessment setline surveys to show differences in length at age, and age and length at maturation (IPHC 2013)..... I have found that the Pacific halibut in this area are considerably longer at most ages than those caught in more northern waters.

These finding are pertinent and interesting because the IPHC has found that Pacific halibut size at age has been declining over the last decade or more (Stewart and Martell 2014). This decline in size at age contributes to recent stock declines (Stewart and Martell 2014). It appears, however, that size at age of the local Pacific halibut stock may be more stable. *These preliminary findings suggest that productivity of Pacific halibut in Northern California must be considerably greater than in more northern waters."*

The preliminary northern California IPHC results from 2013 are consistent with the findings of HSU (Perkins 2014).

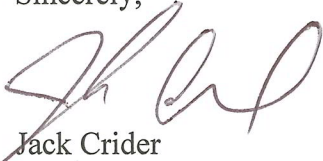
We understand the history of Pacific halibut management and the current impediments at the IPHC to increasing our quota. We are empathetic to fishermen in more northern waters where stock productivity is declining. However, our region is economically depressed and this fishery is of inordinate importance for supporting a vital sports fishing industry. Our charter guides need full access to Pacific halibut and our healthy rockfish stocks in order to maintain viability, when salmon populations cycle down and access is limited.

The Harbor District works cooperatively with a consortium of local governments and other harbor districts from Crescent City to Fort Bragg as the North Coast Local Agency Coastal Coordination Committee and we share a vision of having a strategic partnership in management of fisheries resources going forward. You will likely be hearing from them as well. North Coast near-shore ocean environments have not been despoiled and are not over-fished. Governments and residents of the region wish to become co-managers to maintain our fish stocks for sustenance and future generations.

We will continue to collect data to support our case and to work with PFMC and IPHC for the modest, but vitally needed increase in access to our robust Pacific halibut stock that will not

significantly impact fish available to more northern fisheries. We look forward to working with you collaboratively to achieve wise and sustainable management of Pacific halibut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jack Crider', written over a horizontal line.

Jack Crider
Chief Executive Officer

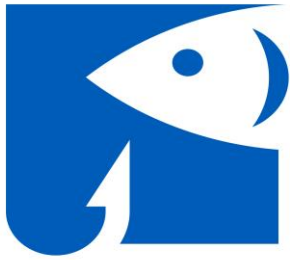
CC: Martha McClure, Mike Sullivan, Charles Helms, Julie Fulkerson, Jackie Hostler, Ryan Sundberg, Virginia Bass, Phillip Young, Dan Gjerde, Carre Brown, Linda Ruffy, Doug Hammerstrom, Kevin Michael, James Burns

Reference

International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). 2013b. Setline survey raw data. Int. Pac. Hal. Comm. Seattle, WA.

Perkins, L. 2014. Local Pacific Halibut Age, Growth, and Maturation Study. Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers Newsletter, Winter 2014. P 4-9.

Stewart, I. J., and S. Martell. 2014. Assessment of the Pacific halibut stock at the end of 2013. Int. Pac. Halibut Comm. Report of Assessment and Research Activities 2013: 169-196.



Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers Inc.

P.O. Box 6191, Eureka, CA 95502

Phone: (707) 444-3918 Cell (707) 834-4100

Email: hasa6191@gmail.com

FEIN #61-1575751

August 11, 2014

Pacific Fishery Management Council
Dorothy Lowman, Chair
7700NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

RE: Pacific Halibut, Agenda Item K.1

Dear Chair Lowman and Council Members:

The Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc. (HASA) has discussed the Pacific Halibut issue at great length. Last year, the Council took steps to separate area 2A at the California/Oregon border, and due to a favorable IPHC stock survey, California added 100,000 pounds to the quota that is currently being shared within 2A. We are requesting that the Council increase the Area 2A quota for California, as the data suggests we have a sustainable fishery and because the fishery for Pacific Halibut has become a valuable economic asset to our area. We are currently conducting a socio-economic survey to assist our organization with this matter and will forward the results in the Fall 2014.

We appreciate the opportunity for providing public input on this matter, and do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any additional information.

Sincerely,

Cliff Hart, President
Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc.



Chuck Tracy - NOAA Affiliate <chuck.tracy@noaa.gov>

Fwd: California Pacific Halibut season and harvest allocation

1 message

PFMC Comments - NOAA Service Account <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Mon, Aug 18, 2014 at 8:40 AM

To: Chuck Tracy - NOAA Affiliate <chuck.tracy@noaa.gov>

Cc: Kelly Ames - NOAA Affiliate <kelly.ames@noaa.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **robert bray** <robpbray@hotmail.com>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 11:27 PM

Subject: California Pacific Halibut season and harvest allocation

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>, "director@wildlife.ca.gov" <director@wildlife.ca.gov>

To whom it may concern:

I am a sport fisherman and mainly fish from a kayak, but occasionally from a boat. One of my favorite fisheries Pacific Halibut was shut down this year in August for no good reason. It has hurt are small community financially and it isn't necessary. California has not had any strong representation in the IPHC meeting thus we have received 1% or less of the harvest allocation which is unacceptable. Last year a survey was performed that showed 100,00 lbs of exploitable harvest of pacific halibut. There are many deep canyons of which some receive little pressure from sports fisherman and now that we don't have drag boats in our area of Northern California the pacific halibut population is abundant and growing. There is some data that suggests that pacific halibut are spawning off the Northern California coast and the habitat off the coast of Humboldt is suitable for halibut reproduction. Our average catch is larger than ones caught in Oregon and Washington. Another survey is supposed to take place this year in new areas that have never been surveyed for pacific halibut. I believe this survey will show data that will support that the halibut population in California is very healthy thus not needing an August closure nor such a negligible harvest allocation. The effects of the halibut closure are going to have even a larger effect in the years to come when salmon seasons are shortened or closed all together. This year the August halibut closure has hit the charter fleet hard especially since the salmon season has slowed a lot and halibut trips are usually booked for August. I personally am upset about the August closure because it is the better month for me to target pacific halibut because of the flat weather. I usually have to go 6-7 miles offshore in my kayak to catch a pacific halibut which makes it a challenging fish to catch. I plan on doing guided kayak trips to target pacific halibut, but it wouldn't be very productive if August or more was closed. Please use science and data to determine our halibut harvest allocation and not politics and greed.

Sincerely,

Robert Bray

A concerned kayak fisherman

--

Thank you for your comments to the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Your comments have been received and will be forwarded to the appropriate staff member for processing.

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101

8/18/2014

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Mail - Fwd: California Pacific Halibut season and harvest allocation

Portland, OR 97220

Phone: [503-820-2280](tel:503-820-2280)

Toll Free: [1-866-806-7204](tel:1-866-806-7204)

Fax: [503-820-2299](tel:503-820-2299)

Twitter: <http://Twitter.com/PacificCouncil>



Chuck Tracy - NOAA Affiliate <chuck.tracy@noaa.gov>

Fwd: Halibut CSP K.1

1 message

PFMC Comments - NOAA Service Account <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Mon, Aug 18, 2014 at 8:38 AM

To: Chuck Tracy - NOAA Affiliate <chuck.tracy@noaa.gov>

Cc: Kelly Ames - NOAA Affiliate <kelly.ames@noaa.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Tom & Mary Marking** <tmmarking@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Aug 15, 2014 at 8:35 PM

Subject: Halibut CSP K.1

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Ms. Lowman, Council Chair, and Council Members

The results of the 2013 IPHC survey in California waters supports the fact that California has a healthy halibut biomass. California contributed 13.89% of the total biomass of the 2A zone not including the 230,000 pounds additional that the IPHC give the 2A zone in 2014. It is now time for the PFMC to adjust the catch sharing plan based on this survey, THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE, and give California it's fair and equitable share of the 2A halibut quota.

Some council members have voiced the criticism that California did not participate in the CSP in the past and it is inappropriate now to expect the CSP to be amended on the basis of one survey. The assumption being that California officials should have participated in the discussions and got their fair share of allotment. At the time the catch sharing plan was developed California had limited harvest by commercial or recreational halibut fisheries. California had a major halibut commercial fisheries prior to World War II but overfishing and increased bycatch eliminated that fisheries. That changed when the RCA's were established and bycatch was tracked. The population is rebuilding as trawl bycatch is being reduced. The result of the 2013 survey, suggests California should get a much larger share of the halibut allotment.

The second comment that has been made these last few years is that California has a 6 month season (5 months now) and Oregon and Washington have a very short season with some areas having only 2 days. The halibut allotment should not be based on how long it takes to catch the allotment but rather on survey results. Just because the halibut fishing grounds in Northern California does not have millions of people living within two hours or less doesn't mean California should get less fish than the survey indicates.

California added 13.89% to the 2A biomass but only are allowed to harvest .62% of the biomass. California should have a allotment of at least 40,00 pounds for 2015 until a fair Catch Sharing Plan can be development.

Mary Marking

--

Thank you for your comments to the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Your comments have been received and will be forwarded to the appropriate staff member for processing.

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220
Phone: [503-820-2280](tel:503-820-2280)

8/18/2014

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Mail - Fwd: Halibut CSP K.1

Toll Free: [1-866-806-7204](tel:1-866-806-7204)

Fax: [503-820-2299](tel:503-820-2299)

Twitter: <http://Twitter.com/PacificCouncil>

PFMC Members: Please hear the cry for help from California in regards to the Pacific halibut allocations for 2015. AS per the Magnuson Stevens Act, and NOAA Technical Memo from 2012 on Fishery Allocations under the MSA... the allocation for California that is being proposed is neither "efficient" nor "fair" (the two guiding principles from NOAA's 2012 document).

An International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) survey was completed off the coast of California in 2013, which revealed there were 100,000 pounds of "exploitable biomass" off the CA coast. Of the available 100,000 pounds off our coast- Californian's can only harvest 6,240 pounds (the rest is consumed by Oregon and Washington). California has had <1% of the total allocation for many decades... meanwhile Oregon and Washington have enjoyed 30 and 37% (respectively) of the total allocation. **THIS IS NOT FAIR!** California contributes lots of fish to the total allocation, but only gets 1% (and will only get a maximum of 3% in 2015 based on the three options being presented).

Fishery allocations are supposed to be "efficient" and "fair" as noted above as per the MSA. This 3% allocation is not fair in any way. The 3% allocation is completely arbitrary and capricious. The best available science (IPHC 2013 survey) indicates that there is 100,000 pounds of halibut available for harvest off California... but those fish will be harvested in Oregon and Washington instead.

California deserves an allocation that is at least 50% of the available biomass in our waters (~50,000 pounds). California is being robbed by Oregon and Washington.... and it appears that the CDFW is not listening to us during all of the meetings and phone calls we have had. Some quick calculations reveal the disparity, inequality, and total lack of "fairness" in this allocation. Whether you look at the number of pounds of halibut per person... pounds of halibut allocated per mile of coastline... pounds of halibut allocated per licensed angler.... California is only getting a fraction of what it should be getting. California brings lots of fish to the table... and its only fair that we get to harvest these fish, instead of other states.

PLEASE help rectify the arbitrary and capricious allocations being proposed for 2015. Please rely on the best available science (IPHC 2013 survey). Please adhere to the NOAA 2012 guidance for "fair" and "efficient" fishery allocations. Please consider a 50,000 pound allocation for our area (which still provides 50,000 pounds of allocation to the other stakeholders). Help bring California out from under the bus.

Thank you,
Matt Goldsworthy
1358 School Road
McKinleyville, CA 95519
(707) 357-1338 (cell)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Cookiemn58@GMail.com <cookiemn58@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2014 at 5:08 PM

Subject: Pacific Halibut Eureka California

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

I respectfully ask to bring a 7% option up for consideration.

Thank you,

Michael Lublin

P.O. Box 6130

Eureka, Calif.

95502

707-498-8652

cookiemn58@gmail.com

From: Charlie Holthaus <cwhwts@suddenlinkmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2014 at 6:09 PM

Subject: Comments about CA Halibut Allocation

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Hi My name is Charlie Holthaus and I live in the Eureka, California area. After learning of the 2013 pacific halibut survey results conducted off the Northern California Coast it has become apparent that California's quota allocation is far less than our local fishery can support. I am writing you today to request that you consider increasing California's allocation to a level that is appropriate for the increased biomass that became available as a result of the 2013 survey results. I cannot understand that one year after learning that California has significantly more biomass than previously thought, the sport fishermen are facing drastic season reductions and closures. There are no biological reasonings to restrict our fishery any further at this point in time and the California anglers deserve a fair share of the harvest allocations. A 3% allocation for California is insulting. I urge you to increase the allocation to a level that fits with our harvest potential. Losing the month of August this year has caused significant economic hardship on many of our local businesses and personally has kept me from fishing the saltwater this past August.

Sincerely,

Charlie Holthaus

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Lonnie Dollarhide <flatwater3@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2014 at 6:47 PM

Subject: North Coast Pacific Halibut

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

My name is Lonnie Dollarhide, I'm a rec fishermen out of Humboldt Bay Eureka CA. I'm a Pacific Halibut fishermen and feel we should be allocated 7% of the allocation instead of the 3 %. The last two surveys clearly shows there are more Halibut along the North coast than thought to be. We are not hurting the resources one bit, Were in a catch share program with OR/WA and no sharing on their part, were asking for 50,000 pounds, this is not unfeasible. No doubt this is a tough issue for all involved, were just asking for our fare share, thank you.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tom Giusti <tgiust@icloud.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2014 at 7:44 PM

Subject: Halibut allocations

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

I am writing to bring your attention to a troubling set of issues regarding the pacific halibut fishery in CA. I object to any further closures in CA for the 2015 year, I suggest that we lift the August closure in CA, and request consideration of an increased allocation for CA. The 2013 halibut survey done by the IPHC demonstrated that CA has 100,000 lbs of halibut biomass that can be harvested. Unfortunately for us, all but 6,000 lbs is reserved for WA and OR, who refuse to shift allocation to CA. This is strictly a political decision, with the best available science being ignored. Our 6,240 lbs is only 0.62% of the total 2A allocation of 960,000 lbs (=1% of the non-tribal allocation). The 2013 IPHC halibut survey showed 720,000 lbs for exploitable biomass of which CA contributes 13.8% of this amount. In addition, the IPHC is giving the 2A area an additional 240,000 lbs above this amount, and every ounce of that additional poundage is going to WA and OR and not CA where it belongs. This is not fair given what CA has brought to the table as a result of last year's halibut survey. I have a very strong feeling that the 2014 survey that has just been completed will find almost double last years' amount and CA will add even more exploitable biomass to the 2A table.

Here are some more numbers to think about:

2013 halibut survey results showed an average of:

CA - 126 lbs per station - or 30%

WA - 128 lbs per station - or 30%

OR - 166 lbs per station - or 40%

Current allocation:

CA Sport: 1.0%

WA Sport: 36.6%
OR Sport: 30.7%
Commercial: 31.7%

These numbers show that our allocation is way out of line with the policies, procedures, and practices that were developed as part of the MSA to ensure fair catch allocations. Our allocation is entirely arbitrary and capricious and obviously not based on the best available science (which is the 2013 survey data). Instead, the 2013 survey data is being used to increase/maintain OR/WA allocations. CA is essentially acting as a marine reserve to ensure OR/WA fisheries continue at the current rate. Based on the 2013 survey results, we should divide up the pie based on the available biomass in each state. Since OR and WA has more than an order of magnitude more sampling sites than CA does, I think it would be reasonable to use the "average lbs/station" metric. This logic would provide a scientific-based allocation and would allow 30% of the 2015 fish go to WA, 30% of the fish to go to CA, and 40% of the fish to go to OR. The commercial allocation for each state can be carved off of each state's allocation.

Once again, I object to any further closures in CA for the 2015 year, I suggest that we lift the August closure in CA, and request consideration of an increased allocation for CA. I believe we are being treated unfairly. As it stands, we can only harvest 1% of the non-tribal allocation, even though we contribute 14% of the available biomass to the halibut fishery. This is unacceptable and is punitive to CA ports, anglers and Charter businesses. We are suffering a serious economic loss due to this action. This allocation is unprecedented considering the science available. We should be getting more allocation and time, not a loss of opportunity and economic loss. Please consider this logic at your next meeting and propose a more reasonable and science based alternative for the Commission to consider and vote on.

Tom Giusti
Eureka, CA

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Marc Schmidt <coastlinecharters@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2014 at 8:53 PM

Subject: K. Pacific Halibut Management - comments on CA allocation

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Council Member,

I am a charter boat operator in Eureka, CA that is dramatically affected by your decision and vote for the upcoming year regulations. I, as well as every biologist, client, and angler in CA that I have talked with concerning this topic feel the proposed CA pacific halibut allocations are way off the mark. We the anglers in CA that the regulations affect thought were going into 2015 lawmaking process using the best available science. That is the 2013 longline survey that showed we have 100k lbs of halibut available and included in the 2A regions quota. This is however being completely ignored despite very healthy populations sampled off our coast. We are confident that this years (2014) data will show an even greater number of lbs on the same

stations from last year and more lbs will be found in new station locations that were added this year.

CA DFW has worked in closed sessions with the other state reps and has no indication of using angler input in crafting a reasonable science based season. We would like to see a halfway reasonable season for CA and the reimplementation of August as it is a very large economic burden to many businesses in northern CA. A reasonable allocation would be 7% which should be about 50k lbs which would be supported by fishing no more than half of the available halibut off the CA coast.

The proposed season options are not scientifically based and are arbitrary and capricious. Please consider a 7% allocation for CA if and when it is brought up by a CA council representative as a proposal to go forward in the process.

Respectfully,

Marc Schmidt
Coastline Charters

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Dave Parker <Dave@parkerpacificinc.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2014 at 9:02 PM

Subject: California sport halibut allocation

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

My name is Dave Parker. I own and operate two salmon trollers Katy J and the Kathy Ann. I also own and operate with my daughter Kona Pacific a fish buying entity. It has come to my attention that California has requested allocation be taken from sport and commercial interests in 2A . I would think that making the overall quota larger by surveying the grounds California is fishing on is a viable solution. I am strongly opposed to any allocation being taken from the commercial TAC.

Sincerely,

Dave Parker

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Caleb Pedersen <caleb@harvesterscatch.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2014 at 11:43 PM

Subject: Opposed to further increases of Halibut Fishery in CA without further investigation

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Hi,

As commercial fishermen, we count on our halibut harvest to account for a significant portion of our sales. While we understand the desire in California to increase the harvest limits, we cannot support a transfer of catch limit in this manner. Instead we would ask that California perform a study and investigate the number of halibut in their waters and verify whether or not their fishery could support a harvest increase.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind Regards,
Jeff & Caleb Pedersen
F/V Harvester

----- Forwarded message -----

From: cindyto <cindyto@q.com>

Date: Thu, Sep 4, 2014 at 7:04 AM

Subject: K.1.b tr-istate report

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Madame Chair and Council members

I do not feel that it is fair to move halibut quota from the commercial side to the sport side. I feel that the SAS and GAP should have been consulted before bring this forward.

Thank you
Jim Olson
Washington troll SAS member

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Steve Wilson <jamesislandfish@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2014 at 8:04 PM

Subject: Halibut sport allocation

To: "pfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Cc: "Mike.Burner@noaa.gov" <Mike.Burner@noaa.gov>

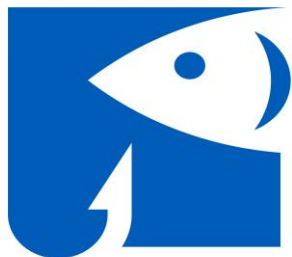
My name is Steve Wilson and I own and operate the Washington commercial salmon troller Deep Threat. I also own the company James Island Fish through which I market my own catch.

I am against the position that a California sport halibut quota be shared by both sport and commercial interests. I think that any changes in regional sport halibut opportunities be made within the sport halibut allocation.

During the March and April 2014 PFMC meetings, the SAS had several discussions about increasing commercial halibut harvest opportunities for Oregon and California and I believe this was done within the commercial side by adjusting catch limits and ratios. The same discussions should occur in the sport fishing side.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely, Steve Wilson



Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers Inc.

P.O. Box 6191, Eureka, CA 95502

Email: hasa6191@gmail.com

FEIN #61-1575751

September 3, 2014

Pacific Fishery Management Council
Dorothy Lowman, Chair
7700NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

RE: Pacific Halibut, Agenda Item K.1

Dear Chair Lowman and Council Members:

The Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc. (HASA) previously submitted public comment on August 11, 2014, but in light of the September 2014 Tri-State report, we would like to provide additional input. HASA has reviewed the results of the 2013 IPHC survey data for Area 2A and other recent studies of northern California Pacific Halibut, solicited and received input from HASA membership, and the HASA Board of Directors provides the following supplemental comments pertinent to the 2015 Alternatives:

1. California Pacific halibut allocation should be based on recent production estimates from California (>100,000 lbs based on the results of the 2013 IPHC Research Survey). Section 301(a)(4) of the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) states “*Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different States. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various United States fishermen, such allocation shall be (A) fair and equitable to all such fishermen; (B) reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and (C) carried out in such manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of such privileges*”. While the increase from 6,400 lbs to 18,500 lbs is a step in the right direction, based on the 2013 IPHC survey data, all three alternatives are still an unequitable allocation to California sportfishers. As shown in the following table, California has approximately 2.5 times the licensed anglers as the other states, yet only receives 3-4% of what a Washington or Oregon angler is allowed.

State	% of non-tribal harvest	Allocation (pounds)	% of California to other states	2013 Fishing licenses	Proportion of California to other states	Pounds per license	% of California to other states
California	3%	18,500		1,600,054		0.0116	
Oregon	30.33%	185,700	9.96%	612,333	2.61X	0.3032	3.81%
Washington	36.33%	222,400	8.31%	651,222	2.46X	0.3416	3.38%
OR/WA commercial	30.32%	185,600	9.96%				

2. HASA has taken a leadership role on assessing the economic impacts of the August 2014 block closure, as well as financially supporting scientific studies to better inform fisheries managers on Pacific halibut production and population dynamics. The socio-economic impacts of the August 2014 block closure are substantial to HASA membership, other recreational sportfishers, and businesses on the north coast of California.
3. Consistent with Section 301(a)(2) of the MSA, HASA supports a science-based approach to develop solutions that remedy this unequitable allocation, including using 2013 IPHC survey data and other scientific information on Pacific halibut production and population dynamics.
4. Based on the results of the 2013 IPHC survey and other scientific information available, HASA does not support additional halibut season restrictions. As shown in the above table, there is inequity in the allocation distribution, and future increases in allocation should reflect 30 – 50% as suggested in Alternative 2 Option B.

Therefore, HASA does not support any of the Tri-State report Alternatives for the above reasons. California is producing greater numbers of Pacific Halibut based on the 2013 IPHC surveys, and HASA would like to continue working with CDFW and PFMC in 2014/2015 to develop a more equitable, longer-term, science-based solution to Pacific halibut allocation.

We appreciate the opportunity for providing public input on this very important matter, and do not hesitate to contact me at (707) 845-4106 if you would like any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cliff Hart".

Cliff Hart, President
Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc.



CITY OF EUREKA

531 K Street • Eureka, California 95501-1146

CITY MANAGER

• (707) 441-4144
fax (707) 441-4138

August 26, 2014

RECEIVED

Dorothy Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

SEP 3 2014

PFMC

Re: Pacific Halibut Management in the California North Coast Region

Dear Chair Lowman,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on management of Pacific halibut in the northern California region. I am offering comments to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) on behalf of the City of Eureka. We are commenting because of the extremely important role fisheries play for North Coast California economies and because of the importance of access to near shore ocean fisheries for our quality of life.

Local anglers, California Sea Grant, and Humboldt State University have provided data that shows our Pacific halibut have some of the best size at age of any West Coast stock. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) also carried out studies in the same region in 2013 and they had similar findings.

The August 2014 closure of the North Coast we are currently enduring is scientifically unjustified and not based on the best available science. Our 6,000 pound quota was set at a time of low abundance and we need an increased allocation to reflect this new scientific information.

We ask that the PFMC extend the 2015 season from May 10 to October 1. We will be making similar request to the IPHC, because such access will not significantly impact fish available to more northern fisheries. Therefore, we should be able to continue to fish at current levels until reallocation of our catch share is formally revisited.

We look forward to working with you collaboratively to achieve wise and sustainable management of Pacific halibut.

Sincerely,

Greg Sparks, City Manager

cc; Jack Crider, Harbor District
Lisa Shikany, City of Eureka, Principal/Environmental Planner
City Mayor/ Council, City of Eureka



City of Trinidad RECEIVED

August 26, 2014

Dorothy Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

SEP 3 2014

PFMC

Re: Pacific Halibut Management in the California North Coast Region

Dear Chair Lowman,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on management of Pacific halibut in the northern California region. I am offering comments to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) on behalf of the City of Trinidad. We are commenting because of the extremely important role fisheries play for North Coast California economies and because of the importance of access to near shore ocean fisheries for our quality of life.

Local anglers, California Sea Grant, and Humboldt State University have provided data that shows our Pacific halibut have some of the best size at age of any West Coast stock. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) also carried out studies in the same region in 2013 and they had similar findings.

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We look forward to working with you collaboratively to achieve wise and sustainable management of Pacific halibut.

Sincerely,

Julie Fulkerson, Mayor
City of Trinidad

Ilwaco Charter Association

P. O. Box 9
Ilwaco, WA 98624

September 12, 2014

To: PFMC
From: Ilwaco Charter Association
Re: September PFMC / Halibut Agenda Item K.1.b

We support the WDFW proposals for the Columbia River recreational halibut fishery as shown in Agenda Item K.1.b "WDFW Report".

With regard to the ODFW proposals for the Columbia River recreational halibut fishery, Agenda Item K.1.b "ODFW Report", we can support the no action and Alternative 1 alternatives. We believe that Alternative 2 has the potential to severely impact our fishery. We would also note that although in excess of 65% of the CR halibut landings are in Washington ports, there are a substantial amount of Oregon anglers that fish out of Washington ports due to their closer proximity to the halibut grounds. We believe that should be considered prior to making a major shift in allocation.

Finally, we are opposed to allocating a major amount of halibut to the new California sub-area. Every fishery in Area 2A is experiencing far fewer fishing days than currently being allowed in Northern California. Allocating a large share to this area, particularly when California doesn't monitor in a timely fashion in-season, is both unworkable and unfair.

Respectfully yours,

Butch Smith
President, ICA