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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Mail - Fwd: Adjusting the sport halibut season structure in Washington Waters



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

Fwd: Adjusting the sport halibut season structure in Washington Waters

1 message

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

Thu, Apr 2, 2015 at 3:43 PM

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

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

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

From: **Dave Croonquist** <dcroonquist@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Apr 2, 2015 at 3:35 PM

Subject: Adjusting the sport halibut season structure in Washington Waters

To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Cc: "Culver, Michele K (DFW)" <Michele.Culver@dfw.wa.gov>, "Reed, Heather J (DFW)" <Heather.Reed@dfw.wa.gov>, "Unsworth, James W (DFW)" <Jim.Unsworth@dfw.wa.gov>, Sarah Williams - NOAA Federal <sarah.williams@noaa.gov>, kelly.ames@noaa.gov

Good afternoon, PFMC Commissioners

I just learned of the opportunity for supplemental public comments to be submitted to the PFMC process from Mr. Kelly Ames yesterday. I apologize for the late arrival of this supplemental request.

There are serious concerns over the safety of recreational halibut fishing in Washington waters. Over the 10 years we've gone from 80+ days available to fish for halibut down to 11 days in the Puget Sound halibut fishery (MA 5,6,7,8-1, 8-2,9, and 10). Our ocean fishery lasts an average of 4 days out of the Washington coastal ports (MA 1,2,3, and 4). The dates are set and we're at the mercy of the tides and weather.

Last year, two halibut fishers were lost off the West side of Whidbey island when their vessels (kayaks) capsized in poor sea and weather conditions. Another boat sank near Dungeness Bay. We've had boats go down during the ocean fisheries, too. We have gone from a fairly orderly fishery to a full-on derby mentality – upwards of 200+ vessels are being launched and retrieved each day just in WDFW Marine Area 6 from each of the three main public access points in Clallam County. Similar scenes are found at the launch sites in the Puget Sound fishery. La Push and Neah Bay are ocean halibut ports in MAs 3 and 4. They, too, experience similar traffic loads and their facilities can be very troublesome in heavy weather conditions.

We have been in discussion with Michele Culver and Heather Reed, WDFW staff, for a few years about trying to re-structure our season to help spread the pressure out and allow for a fishery when sea conditions and opportunity to take halibut are more favorable. We have a meeting coming up with them, probably in May, to discuss our proposals for a season structure and a discussion about annual limits. A more detailed presentation will be available for the PFMC at the September meeting following our meetings with WDFW staff over the next few months.

We look forward to working with PFMC, IPHC, and WDFW to re-establish a safe fishery for our recreational fleet that will be suitable to fishing within the IPHC management guidelines in the coming months with a hoped for

change starting in 2016.

Thank you.

Dave Croonquist

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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

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