

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES  
TO THE 2016 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has just completed its first year of in-season tracking and monitoring within the newly structured open/closed fishing periods<sup>1</sup>. CDFW received feedback that the 2015 season structure has been advantageous for planning purposes and provides easy dates for anglers to remember. Conversely, there have been concerns about the inflexible nature of the closure periods relative to when good weather and fishing opportunities are available.

CDFW plans to continue developing its in-season management expertise for Pacific halibut and further refine the tracking and catch projection process, while building long term stability in the California recreational fishery. As a result, CDFW intends to maintain the current season structure and in-season monitoring and management process with defined open and closed fishing periods between May and October, and closure in-season upon projected attainment of the California quota in 2016. Consequently, CDFW is not proposing any changes to the 2016 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) language at this time.

Following the determination of the 2016 Area 2A TAC and California quota amount, CDFW will conduct outreach with California constituents in early February 2016 to discuss open fishing season dates. Based on this input, CDFW will formulate a recommendation to NMFS on the desired 2016 season dates in time for inclusion in the Final Rule. CDFW encourages all interested parties to continue providing feedback on the 2015 season in preparation for the 2016 season structure development.

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<sup>1</sup> See CDFW Supplemental Report on the 2015 Sport Pacific Halibut Fishery, September 2015