

REPORT ON THE 2015 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A

(10/16/2015)

The 2015 Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC) of 970,000 lbs. set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) was allocated as follows:

Treaty Tribes	339,500 lbs. (35%)
Non-Tribal Total	630,500 lbs. (65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	193,564 lbs.
Washington Sport	214,110 lbs.
Oregon Sport	187,259 lbs.
California Sport	25,220 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 193,564 lbs. (30.7% 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 10,348 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 29,035 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 initial 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 beginning April 1, 2015, 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.
- On August 7, the ratio was modified to be 1 halibut per each 4 Chinook, except that 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 2 halibut may be possessed or landed per trip.
 - Due to projected quota attainment incidental halibut retention was closed on August 20, 2015.
 - The fishery is estimated to have taken 28,989 lbs.

Directed fishery targeting on halibut

A quota of 164,529 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 the U.S./Canada border and 46°16' N. lat., the boundary is the shoreline. Between 46°16' N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. the boundary is the 30 fm depth contour. One-day fishing periods of 10 hours in duration were scheduled every other week by the IPHC starting June 24, 2015. In 2015, the fishery was open for two fishing periods on June 24 and July 8. 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.

2015 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-off without ice and slime in pounds) by vessel size.

Vessel Class/Size	June 24 Opening	July 8 Opening
A 0 - 25 ft.	755 lbs	505 lbs
B 26 - 30 ft.	945 lbs	630 lbs
C 31 - 35 ft.	1,510 lbs	1,010 lbs
D 36 - 40 ft.	4,165 lbs	2,780 lbs
E 41 - 45 ft.	4,480 lbs	2,990 lbs
F 46 - 50 ft.	5,365 lbs	3,575 lbs
G 51 - 55 ft.	5,985 lbs	3,990 lbs
H 56+ ft.	9,000 lbs	6,000 lbs

- The June 24 and July 8 directed commercial open periods resulted in a catch of approximately 180,400 lbs, final estimates will be available in 2016.

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

A quota of 10,348 lbs was allocated to the primary sablefish fishery in Area 2A as incidental catch north of Point Chehalis, WA. This incidental fishery is only available to vessels with a groundfish limited entry permit endorsed for longline gear with a sablefish tier limit and with an IPHC license. Beginning April 1 the incidental landing limit was 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 was confined to an area seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour. Fishing was 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 August 8, 2015, approximately 7,800 lbs of halibut have been landed.

- Due to projected quota attainment incidental halibut retention in the sablefish fishery was closed on September 1, 2015.
- The estimates for total catch in this area are not yet available.

SPORT FISHERIES (Non-tribal)

426,588 lbs were allocated between sport fisheries in Washington (35.6% of non-tribal share, minus 10,348 lbs allocated to the incidental catch in the sablefish primary fishery), Oregon (29.7% of the non-tribal share), and California (4.0% 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 Strait 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 8, 9, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, and 30. The fishing season in western Puget Sound (west of low Point) was open May 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, and 30.

- 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 130,945 lbs. and 224,110 lbs.). The fishery was open for three days (May 14, 16, and 23), and closed after May 23 because the remaining quota was not enough for the fishery to be open for further 2 day open periods. 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 94,698 lbs., which is 13,332 lbs. under 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 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 primary fishery was open four days on May 3, 5, 10, and 12. The nearshore fishery was open everyday between May 4 and July 19.

- The primary fishery estimated catch is 38,914 lbs. which is 1,825 lbs. under the quota.
- This amount was transferred to the nearshore area for a revised nearshore quota of 3,825 lbs.
- The nearshore fishery estimated catch is 3,819 lbs., which is 6 lbs. under the revised nearshore quota.
- The estimated total catch for this area is 42,733 lbs., 6 lbs. under the quota.

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon)

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 10,254 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 10,348 lbs., (which is the amount allocated to incidental take in the sablefish primary fishery), and 2.3% of the Oregon sport allocation. The fishery operates with an all depth and nearshore fishery. The nearshore fishery is allocated 500 lbs. to accommodate incidental halibut retention during groundfish fishing when the all depth halibut fishery in this area is closed. The all depth fishery was open from May 1 to June 2. The nearshore fishery opened May 4 and continued 3 days per week (Monday – Wednesday) through September 30.

- The all depth fishery estimated catch is 9,150 lbs. which is 604 lbs. under the quota.
- This amount was transferred to the nearshore fishery for a revised nearshore quota of 1,104 lbs.
- Through September 30, the nearshore fishery estimated catch is 190 lbs.
- The estimated total catch for this area is 9,340 lbs., 914 lbs. under the quota.

Oregon Central Coast Subarea (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain)

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 175,633 lbs (96% of the Oregon sport allocation).

Three seasons were set for this subarea: 1) a restricted depth (inside 40-fm) fishery, open July 1-October 31, 7 days a week; 2) a fixed Spring season in all depths that was open on May 14-16, 28-30, June 11-13, and 25-27; a Summer season in all depths that was open August 7-8, 21-22, September 4-5, 18-19, and October 2-3.

- The inside 40-fathom fishery is ongoing, and through October 4, the estimated catch is 23,164 lbs.
- The Spring all-depth fishery resulted in an estimated catch of 109,163 lbs, which is 1,486 lbs. under the Spring allocation.
- The Summer all-depth fishery resulted in an estimated catch of 38,856 lbs, which is 3,539 lbs. under the revised allocation of 42,394 lbs.

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

This sport fishery was allocated 7,318 lbs. (4.0% of the Oregon sport fishery allocation minus the Oregon contribution to the Columbia River subarea). This area had a pre-set season of 7 days per week from May 1 to October 31.

- This fishery is ongoing.
- Through September 28 the estimated catch is 2,581 lbs.

California (Off the California Coast)

This sport fishery was allocated 25,220 lbs. (4% of the non-tribal share). The fishery was open May 1-15, June 1-15, July 1-15, and August 1-12. The fishery was closed on August 12 because catch projections through August 9 indicated that 77% of the quota had been taken. The remaining quota was not sufficient to allow fishing past August 12.

- Through August 9, 2015, the catch projection for this area is 22,740 lbs.
- The final estimates for total catch in this area were not available at the time of this report.

TRIBAL FISHERIES

339,500 lbs (35% of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 31,800 lbs would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 307,700 lbs were allocated to the commercial fishery. The 2015 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 16-18 (48 hours). The unrestricted fishery landed 238,189 lbs. in 345 landings.

The restricted fishery was open April 1-2 (30 hours), with a 500 lbs./vessel/day limit. The restricted fishery landed 77,484 lbs. in 264 landings.

Therefore the total landings for both fisheries is 315,506 lbs., which is 7,973 lbs. over the tribal commercial allocation. The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and tribal estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2016.

2015 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds)		(Preliminary data as of 10/16/2015)			
	Quota	Inseason Revised Quota	Catch		% of Quota Taken
TRIBAL INDIAN	339,500		315,506		92.9
Commercial	307,700		315,506		102.5
Ceremonial and Subsistence	31,800			%	0.0
NON-TRIBAL	630,500		562,004		89.1
COMMERCIAL	203,912		209,389	^	102.7
Troll	29,035		28,989		99.8
Sablefish incidental	10,348		7,800	*	75.4
Directed	164,529		180,400		109.6
SPORT	426,588		343,275		80.5
WA Sport	214,110		137,431		64.2
OR Sport	187,259		173,764		92.8
CA Sport	25,220		22,740	%	90.2
WA Inside Waters	57,393			*	0.0
WA North Coast	108,030		94,698		87.7
WA South Coast	42,739		42,733		100.0
Columbia River	10,254		9,340		91.1
All Depth	9,754		9,150		93.8
Nearshore	500	1,104	190		17.2
OR Central Coast	175,633		171,183		97.5
Inside 40 fathoms	21,076	24,076	23,164	%	96.2
Spring (May-July)	110,649		109,163		98.7
Summer (August- October)	43,908	42,394	38,856		88.5
Southern Oregon	7,318		2,581		35.3
California	25,220		22,740	*	90.2
TOTAL	970,000		877,510		90.5
* Complete data not available					
% This fishery is ongoing					
^ Quota listed here includes the 10,348 lbs allocated to the sablefish primary fishery, which comes from the Washington sport allocation not a commercial allocation.					