

REPORT ON THE 2019 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A (10/17/2019)

The 2019 Area 2A Pacific halibut (halibut) total allowable catch (TAC) of 1,500,000 pounds was allocated according to the 2019 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A as follows:

Treaty Tribes	525,000 (35%)
Non-Tribal Total	975,000 (65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	299,325
Washington Sport	347,100
Oregon Sport	289,575
California Sport	39,000

All catch estimates in this report are preliminary, as some fisheries are ongoing and others have not had final data reconciliation. All weights in this report are net weight (gutted, head-off, and without ice and slime), unless otherwise noted. The structure of each fishery and the resulting harvests are described below.

**TOTAL TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL FISHERIES**

Best estimates of halibut catch for Area 2A indicate harvest of 815,199 pounds of the non-tribal total quota and 494,568 pounds of the tribal quota, with a total preliminary harvest estimate of 1,309,767 pounds, or 87%, of the 1,500,000 pound TAC. A summary of all Area 2A quotas and preliminary harvest estimates for 2019 is attached in Table 2 on the last page of this document.

**NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**

A quota of 299,325 pounds (30.7% of the non-tribal share) was allocated to two fishery components:

- 1) a directed longline fishery targeting halibut south of Point Chehalis, WA; and
- 2) an incidental catch fishery during the salmon troll fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California.

An additional 70,000 pounds 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 taken from the portion of the Washington sport allocation that is above 214,110 pounds, as long as the amount is at least 10,000 pounds.

*Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery*

A quota of 44,899 pounds 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.

- Halibut retention was permitted in the salmon troll fisheries beginning May 1, with the following ratio: one halibut (minimum 32 inches) per two Chinook salmon landed by a salmon troller, except that one halibut could be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut could be landed per trip.
- On July 1, the landing limit was revised to one Pacific halibut per two Chinook salmon, except one Pacific halibut may be possessed or landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 15 halibut may be possessed or landed per trip. The landing limit was lowered from 15 to four halibut per vessel per trip on July 19, and further reduced on July 27 from four to two halibut per vessel per trip.
- The fishery is estimated to have taken 43,394 pounds. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.

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.

*Directed fishery targeting halibut*

A quota of 254,426 pounds (85% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the directed longline fishery targeting 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 of the closed area is defined by a line approximating the 100 fm depth contour. The eastern boundary of the closed area 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 26. In 2019, the fishery was open for three fishing periods on June 26, July 10, and July 24. 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 Table 1. 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.

*Table 1. 2019 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-on with ice and slime, in pounds per vessel) by vessel size.*

Vessel Class/Size (ft)		June 26 and July 10	July 24
0-25	A	4,525	2,300
26-30	B	4,525	2,300
31-35	C	4,525	2,300
36-40	D	6,820	2,300
41-45	E	6,820	2,300
46-50	F	9,090	2,300
51-55	G	9,090	2,300
56+	H	10,225	2,300

- The June 26, July 10 and 24 directed commercial open periods resulted in a catch of approximately 264,000 pounds. IPHC announced closure of the directed fishery on July 31, 2019. Final catch amounts will be available in 2020.

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

A quota of 70,000 pounds 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 200 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the landing limit ratio. Effective August 2, the landing limit was revised to 250 pounds dressed weight of halibut for every 1,000 lb dressed weight of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the 250 lb per 1,000 lb ratio per landing.

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 October 15, this fishery is projected to have landed 64,002 pounds, with 5,998 pounds remaining. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing. The fishery closes October 31.

**SPORT FISHERIES (NON-TRIBAL)**

675,675 pounds were allocated between sport fisheries in Washington (35.6% of non-tribal share, minus 70,000 pounds 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 six 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 77,550 pounds (23.5% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 pounds). The fishing season in Puget Sound was open 18 days: May 2, 4, 9, 11, 18, 24, 26, 30, and June 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, and 27-29. The fishery closed after June 29 due to budget constraints with WDFW's intensive port sampling program.

- The estimated total catch in this area is 38,082 pounds, which is 39,468 pounds under the quota.

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

The coastal area off Cape Flattery to Queets River was allocated 128,187 pounds (62.2% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,945 and 224,110 pounds). The fishery was open for 15 days (May 2, 4, 9, 11, 18, 24, 26, June 6, 8, 15, 20, 22, and 27-29). 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 141,607 pounds, which is 13,420 pounds over the quota.

*Washington South Coast Subarea (landings in Westport)*

The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 62,896 pounds (12.3% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington sport fishery and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 pounds). In 2019, this subarea operated with an all-depth fishery as the primary fishery, with plans to conduct a nearshore fishery if sufficient quota remained upon conclusion of the all-depth fishery. The nearshore fishery was not open in 2019, as the all-depth fishery attained the quota during May and June. The all-depth fishery was open nine days (May 2, 5, 9, 12, 24, June 6, 20, 28, and 29).

- The all-depth fishery estimated catch is 74,801 pounds which is 11,905 pounds over the quota.

*Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon)*

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 15,127 pounds, consisting of 2.0% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 4.0% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 pounds, and 2.3% of the Oregon sport allocation. The fishery operates with an all-depth and nearshore fishery. The nearshore fishery is allocated 500 pounds 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 May 2, 5, 9, 12, 24, 26, June 20, and 28. The nearshore fishery opened May 6 Monday –Wednesday, and opened seven days per week effective June 6.

- The all-depth fishery estimated catch is 17,039 pounds which is 2,412 pounds over the subarea quota. The nearshore estimated catch is 219 pounds, with 281 pounds remaining. The nearshore fishery closed September 30.

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

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 272,592 pounds (93.79% of the Oregon sport allocation).

Three seasons occurred in this subarea, with separate allocations:

- a restricted depth nearshore (inside 40-fathom) fishery, opened June 1, seven days a week;
  - The inside 40-fathom fishery has an estimated catch of 14,530 pounds, which is 18,061 pounds under the allocation. This fishery is ongoing through October 31, and catch is still accruing.
- a fixed Spring season in all depths that was open on May 9-11, 16-18, 23-25, May 30-June 1, 6-8, 20-22, and July 4-6, and 18-20;
  - The Spring all-depth fishery resulted in an estimated catch of 89,062 pounds, which is 82,041 pounds under the spring allocation.
- a Summer season in all depths that was open every Friday and Saturday starting August 2, and increased open days to Friday through Sunday starting September 8. The fishery is scheduled to be open every Friday through Sunday until October 31 or until no quota remains.
  - The summer all-depth fishery has an estimated catch of 46,979 pounds, which is 20,919 pounds under the summer allocation. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.
- On August 22, the bag limit increased from one to two fish in all Oregon subareas.

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

This sport fishery was allocated 11,322 pounds (3.9% of the Oregon sport fishery allocation minus the Oregon contribution to the Columbia River subarea). This area has a pre-set season of 7 days per week from May 1 to October 31.

- This fishery has estimated catch of 3,632 pounds, which is 7,690 pounds under the quota. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.
- On August 22, the bag limit increased from one to two fish in all Oregon subareas.

*California (Off the California Coast)*

This sport fishery was allocated 39,000 pounds (4.0% of the non-tribal share). The fishery is open May 1- October 31, or until no quota remains.

- This fishery has an estimated catch of 17,852 pounds. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.

**TRIBAL FISHERIES**

525,000 pounds (35% of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 28,000 pounds would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 497,000 pounds were allocated to the commercial fishery.

- The unrestricted fishery was open 55 hours for each tribe between March 15 and May 15. The unrestricted fishery landed 374,801 pounds.
- The first restricted fishery was open 84 hours for each tribe between March 15 and May 15. The first restricted fishery landed 49,456 pounds.
- The second restricted fishery was open 72 hours for each tribe between May 20 and June 5. The second restricted fishery landed 68,199 pounds.
- The late fishery was open between June 11 and July 24. This fishery landed 2,112 pounds.
- The total landings for all tribal fisheries is 494,568 pounds, which is 2,432 pounds under the tribal commercial allocation. The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and catch estimates will be reported by the tribes in January 2020.

*Table 2. Summary of all Area 2A quotas and preliminary 2019 harvest estimates, updated with fishery information reported to NMFS through 10/16/19.*

2019 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds)			2019 Quota		% Quota taken
<b>Tribal</b>			525,000	494,568	94.2
Tribal	C&S		28,000	-	0.0
Tribal	Comm		497,000	494,568	* 99.5
<b>Non-Tribal</b>			975,000	815,199	83.6
<b>Commercial</b>			299,325	307,394	102.7
Commercial	Directed		254,426	264,000	* 103.8
Commercial	Incid. Salmon Troll		44,899	43,394	96.6
<b>WA Sport</b>			347,100	318,492	91.8
WA Sport	Incid. Sable		70,000	64,002	91.4
WA Sport	Puget Sound		77,550	38,082	* 49.1
WA Sport	North Coast		128,187	141,607	* 110.5
WA Sport	South Coast		62,896	74,801	* 118.9
WA/OR	Columbia River	All-Depth	14,627	17,039	* 116.5
WA/OR	Columbia River	Nearshore	500	219	* 43.8
<b>OR Sport</b>			289,575	154,203	53.3
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Spring all-depth	171,103	89,062	* 52.1
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Summer all-depth	67,898	46,979	69.2
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Nearshore	32,591	14,530	44.6
OR Sport	Southern OR		11,322	3,632	32.1
CA Sport			39,000	17,852	45.8
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>1,309,767</b>	<b>87.3</b>
* Fishery closed for the season					