

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON THE  
2021 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A (8/13/2021)

The 2021 Area 2A Pacific halibut (halibut) catch limit of 1,510,000 pounds was allocated according to the 2021 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A as follows:

Treaty Tribes	528,500 lb (35%)
Non-Tribal Total	981,500 lb (65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	301,321 lb
Washington Sport	349,414 lb
Oregon Sport	291,506 lb
California Sport	39,260 lb

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 603,938 pounds of the non-tribal total quota and 485,537 pounds of the tribal quota, with a total preliminary harvest estimate of 1,089,475 pounds, or 72%, of the 1,510,000 pound catch limit. A summary of all Area 2A quotas and preliminary harvest estimates for 2021 is attached in Table 2 on the last page of this document.

TRIBAL FISHERIES

528,500 pounds (35% of the Area 2A catch limit) was allocated to tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 41,478 pounds would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 487,022 pounds were allocated to the commercial fishery.

- The unrestricted fishery was open 55 hours for each tribe between March 6 and May 16. The unrestricted fishery landed 244,824 pounds.
- The restricted fishery was open between March 6 and May 16. The restricted fishery landed 67,301 pounds.
- The late fishery was open May 19-June 20 and landed 173,412 pounds.
- The total landings for all tribal fisheries is 485,537 pounds, which is 1,485 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 2022.

## NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

A quota of 301,321 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 45,198 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 April 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 fishery was extended at the same ratio and landing limit.
- The fishery is estimated to have taken 12,879 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 256,122 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 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. Fishing periods were 58 hours in duration every other week, starting Tuesday, June 22. In 2021, the fishery was open for three fishing periods: June 22-24, July 6-8, and July 20-22. 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.** 2021 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-on with ice and slime, in pounds per vessel) by vessel size.

Vessel Class/Size (ft)		Jun 22-24	Jul 6-8	Jul 20-22
0-25	A	2,263	2,263	2,263
26-30	B	2,263	2,263	2,263
31-35	C	2,263	2,263	2,263
36-40	D	3,410	3,410	3,410
41-45	E	3,410	3,410	3,410
46-50	F	4,545	4,545	4,545
51-55	G	4,545	4,545	4,545
56+	H	5,113	5,113	5,113

- The three directed commercial open periods resulted in a catch of approximately 231,423 pounds. Final catch amounts will be available in 2022.

*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.

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.

- Starting April 1, the incidental landing limit was 250 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 June 1, the incidental landing limit was revised to 225 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.
- Through August 13, this fishery is projected to have landed 25,712 pounds, with 44,288 pounds remaining. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing. The fishery closes October 31.

**RECREATIONAL FISHERIES (NON-TRIBAL)**

610,180 pounds were allocated between recreational 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 78,291 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 fishery in Puget Sound was open April 22-24, April 29-May 1; May 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, 28-30; June 3-5, 10-12, 17-19, and 24-26. The fishery is scheduled to reopen August 19-21, 26-28; September 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, and 23-24, or until there is no quota remaining.

- The estimated total catch in this area is 48,491 pounds, which is 29,800 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 128,928 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 May 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 28, 30; June 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, and 26, and is scheduled to be open August 19-21, 26-28; September 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, and 23-24, or until there is no quota remaining. 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 56,558 pounds, which is 72,370 pounds under the quota.

*Washington South Coast Subarea (landings in Westport)*

The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 63,636 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). The all-depth fishery was open May 6, 9, 13, 16, 20, 23, 27; June 17, 20, and 24.

- The all-depth fishery estimated catch is 79,929 pounds which is 16,293 pounds over the quota.

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

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 18,662 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, 2.3% of the Oregon sport allocation, and any quota over 8,000 pounds in the Southern Oregon subarea. 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 6, 9, 13, 16, 20, 23, 27; June 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 20, and 24. The nearshore fishery opened May 10, Monday –Wednesday each week until June 24.
- The all-depth fishery estimated catch is 18,922 pounds which is 260 pounds over the combined subarea quota.

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

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 273,403 pounds (93.79% of the Oregon sport allocation).

Three seasons occurred in this subarea:

1. a restricted depth nearshore (inside 40-fathom) fishery, opened May 1, seven days a week;
2. a fixed Spring season in all depths that was open on May 13-15, 20-22; June 3-5, 10-12, 17-19; and July 1-3, 15-17 and 29-31;
3. a Summer season in all depths that was open August 5-7, and is scheduled to be open every Thursday through Saturday until October 31 or until no quota remains.

Harvest in this subarea in these seasons is summarized in the bullets below.

- The Spring all-depth fishery resulted in an estimated catch of 69,811 pounds, which is 102,433 pounds under the spring allocation. The remaining quota will shift to other fisheries as needed.
- The Summer all-depth fishery has an estimated catch of 13,125 pounds, which is 55,226 pounds under the allocation. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.
- The inside 40-fathom fishery has an estimated catch of 9,898 pounds, which is 22,910 pounds under the allocation. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.

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

This sport fishery was allocated 8,000 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 2,459 pounds, which is 5,541 pounds under the quota. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.

*California (Off the California Coast)*

This sport fishery was allocated 39,260 pounds (4.0% of the non-tribal share). The fishery was open May 1- June 30, and closed after the quota was estimated to be taken.

- The fishery has an estimated catch of 34,037 pounds which is 5,223 pounds under the quota.

**Table 2.** Summary of all Area 2A quotas and preliminary 2021 harvest estimates, updated with fishery information reported to NMFS through 8/13/21.

2021 Area 2A catch limits and catch (in pounds)			2021 Quota		% Quota taken
Tribal			528,500	485,537	91.9
Tribal	C&S		32,200	-	0.0
Tribal	Comm		487,022	485,537	* 99.7
Non-Tribal			981,500	602,825	61.4
Commercial			301,321	244,302	81.1
Commercial	Directed		256,122	231,423	* 90.4
Commercial	Incid. Salmon Troll		45,198	12,879	28.5
WA Sport			349,414	210,690	60.3
WA Sport	Incid. Sable		70,000	25,712	36.7
WA Sport	Puget Sound		78,291	48,491	61.9
WA Sport	North Coast		128,928	56,558	43.9
WA Sport	South Coast		63,636	79,929	* 125.6
WA/OR	Columbia River	All-Depth	18,162	18,922	* 104.2
WA/OR	Columbia River	Nearshore	500	-	* 0.0
OR Sport			291,506	95,987	32.9
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Spring all-depth	172,244	69,811	* 40.5
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Summer all-depth	68,351	13,125	19.2
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Nearshore	32,808	10,034	30.6
OR Sport	Southern OR		8,000	3,018	37.7
CA Sport			39,260	34,037	* 86.7
Total			1,510,000	1,089,475	72.2

\* Fishery closed for the season

At the November 2020 meeting, the Council requested NMFS provide an update on yelloweye rockfish bycatch occurring in the directed commercial fishery. NMFS obtained the most recent data from the NWFSC and presents it in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Comparison of 2017-2020 non-tribal directed commercial Pacific halibut fisheries and yelloweye rockfish bycatch.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Dir. Comm. catch limit (pounds)	225,591	201,845	254,426	254,426
Length of openers	10 hrs	10 hrs	10 hrs	58 hrs
Number of openers	3	3	3	5
Number of participants	86	66	102 <sup>a/</sup>	90 <sup>a/</sup>
Number of landings	184	130	223 <sup>a/</sup>	270 <sup>a/</sup>
Percent observer coverage	8	24	13	3
Estimated yelloweye bycatch (mt)	0.67	0.01	7.37	2.62

a/ These numbers are draft and may change in later reports.