

REPORT ON THE 2021 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A (10/15/2021)

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 Recreational	349,414 lb
Oregon Recreational	291,506 lb
California Recreational	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 719,560 pounds of the non-tribal total quota and 488,273 pounds of the tribal quota, with a total preliminary harvest estimate of 1,207,833 pounds, or 80%, 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 246,180 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 174,792 pounds.
- The total landings for all tribal fisheries is 488,273 pounds, which is 1,251 pounds over 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 recreational 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 18,562 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.).

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 242,997 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 October 13, this fishery is projected to have landed 47,692 pounds, with 22,308 pounds remaining. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.

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 recreational fishery, and 32% of the Washington recreational 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, 24-26; August 19-21, 26-28; September 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, and 23-24.

- The estimated total catch in this area is 54,955 pounds, which is 23,336 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 recreational fishery, and 32% of the Washington recreational 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, 26; August 19-21, 26-28; September 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, and 23-24. The "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA, southwest of Cape Flattery, was closed to recreational halibut fishing.

- The estimated total catch for this area is 84,759 pounds, which is 44,169 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 recreational fishery and 32% of the Washington recreational 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, 24; August 27 and September 24.

- The all-depth fishery estimated catch is 90,626 pounds which is 26,990 pounds over the quota.

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon)

This recreational fishery subarea was allocated 18,662 pounds, consisting of 2.0% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington recreational fishery, and 4.0% of the Washington recreational allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 pounds, 2.3% of the Oregon recreational 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, 24; August 27 and September 24. The nearshore fishery was open May 10, Monday – Wednesday each week until June 24.
- The all-depth fishery estimated catch is 21,477 pounds which is 2,815 pounds over the combined subarea quota.

Oregon Central Coast Subarea (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain)

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

Three seasons occurred in this subarea, and harvest in these areas is summarized below.

- A restricted depth nearshore (inside 40-fathom) fishery, opened May 1, seven days a week, until September 13, when the all-depth fishery opened 7 days per week.
 - The inside 40-fathom fishery has an estimated catch of 10,982 pounds, which is 21,826 pounds under the allocation.
- 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;
 - The Spring all-depth fishery resulted in an estimated catch of 69,795 pounds, which is 102,449 pounds under the spring allocation. The remaining quota will shift to other fisheries as needed.
- a Summer season in all depths that was open August 5-7, and every Thursday through Saturday through September 12. Beginning September 13, this fishery opened 7 days per week until the quota is taken or October 31. In addition, the daily bag limit was increased from one to two fish on September 13.
 - The Summer all-depth fishery has an estimated catch of 41,523 pounds, which is 26,828 pounds under the allocation. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.

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

This recreational fishery was allocated 8,000 pounds (3.9% of the Oregon recreational 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. Beginning September 13, the daily bag limit was increased from one to two fish.

- This fishery has estimated catch of 5,699 pounds, which is 2,301 pounds under the quota. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.

California (Off the California Coast)

This recreational fishery was allocated 39,260 pounds (4.0% of the non-tribal share). The fishery was open May 1- June 30, and reopened September 3. This fishery is ongoing and catch is still accruing.

- The fishery has an estimated catch of 30,494 pounds which is 8,766 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 10/15/21.

2021 Area 2A catch limits and catch (in pounds)			2021 Quota		% Quota taken
Tribal			528,500	485,537	91.9
Tribal	Ceremonial & Subsistence		41,478	-	0.0
Tribal	Commercial		487,022	485,896	* 99.8
Non-Tribal			981,500	602,825	61.4
Commercial			301,321	244,302	81.1
Commercial	Directed		256,122	242,997	* 94.9
Commercial	Incid. Salmon Troll		45,198	18,562	41.1
WA Rec.			349,414	210,690	60.3
WA Rec.	Incid. Sablefish		70,000	47,692	68.1
WA Rec.	Puget Sound		78,291	48,491	* 61.9
WA Rec.	North Coast		128,928	56,558	* 43.9
WA Rec.	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 Rec.			291,506	95,987	32.9
OR Rec.	Central OR Coast	Spring all-depth	172,244	69,695	* 40.5
OR Rec.	Central OR Coast	Summer all-depth	68,351	41,523	60.8
OR Rec.	Central OR Coast	Nearshore	32,808	10,982	33.5
OR Rec.	Southern OR		8,000	5,699	71.2
CA Rec.			39,260	30,494	77.7
Total			1,510,000	1,207,833	80.0

* 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.

	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>
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 ^{a/}	90 ^{a/}
Number of landings	184	130	223 ^{a/}	270 ^{a/}
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.