

2023 COMMERCIAL-DIRECTED FISHERY REGULATIONS – FINAL ACTION  
PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO THE  
PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN

The following proposed administrative changes reflect the transfer of management from the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the non-tribal directed commercial halibut fishery and the change in permit application deadlines announced by NMFS. The [proposed rule](#) that described these changes was provided to the Council in September 2022.

**5.0 NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**

5.1 Allocation

The non-tribal commercial fishery is allocated 30.7 percent of the non-tribal share of the Area 2A FCEY, which is approximately 19.9 percent of the total Area 2A FCEY. In addition, a portion of the Washington sport allocation may be used for the incidental catch of halibut in a commercial sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA, if the Washington sport allocation exceeds a specific level as described in section 5.8.

5.2 Area description

Within the waters of Area 2A, but may be restricted due to fishery boundaries and conservation areas.

5.3 General fishery description

Halibut may be retained from three commercial fishery structures: (1) directed halibut fishery, (2) incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery, and (3) incidental halibut catch in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA.

5.4 Participants

Commercial fishers must choose either (1) to operate in the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A and/or retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA; or (2) to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery.

Commercial fishers wishing to operate in both the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A and/or retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA, may not obtain a vessel license to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll season.

A salmon troller may retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery or participate in the directed commercial fishery targeting halibut, but not in both.

## 5.5 Commercial license restrictions/declarations.

Unless otherwise required by ~~IPHC~~ [NMFS](#) regulations, commercial fishers must obtain an individual vessel license: (1) to operate in the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A; or (2) to retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA; or (3) to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery. The deadlines for [digital submitting-submission of](#) license applications ~~to IPHC~~ are available on the ~~IPHC~~ [NMFS](#) website, and provided below.

Commercial fishers operating in the directed halibut fishery must ~~send~~ [submit](#) their vessel license application to ~~the IPHC postmarked~~ [NMFS](#) no later than ~~February 15~~ [April 30, or the first weekday in May, if April 30 falls on a weekend.](#)

~~Unless otherwise required by IPHC regulations,~~ [C](#) commercial fishers operating in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA, who seek to retain incidentally caught halibut must ~~send~~ [submit](#) their vessel license application to [NMFS no later than March 1, the IPHC postmarked no later than May 29, or the first weekday following May 29, if May 29 falls on a weekend.](#)

Commercial fishers operating in the salmon troll fishery who seek to retain incidentally caught halibut must ~~send~~ [submit](#) their vessel license application to [NMFS no later than March 1](#) ~~the IPHC postmarked no later than March 15, or the first weekday following March 15, if March 15 falls on a weekend.~~

Fishing vessels licensed by IPHC to fish commercially in Area 2A are prohibited from operating in the sport fisheries in Area 2A.

## 5.6 Directed Halibut Fishery

### 5.6.1 Sub allocation

Eighty-five percent of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation is allocated to the directed fishery targeting halibut (e.g., longline fishery). The allocation for this directed fishery is approximately 17.0 percent of the Area 2A FCEY.

### 5.6.2 Geographic area

Confined to the area south of Subarea 2A-1 (south of Point Chehalis, WA; 46°53.30' N. lat.), to include southern Washington, Oregon, and California.

### 5.6.3 Management objective

~~The o~~ [Opening date\(s\), duration, and vessel trip limits will be determined by the IPHC and implemented in IPHC](#) [determined by NMFS and implemented in Federal](#) regulations as necessary to ensure that the quota for the non-tribal commercial fisheries is not exceeded.

### 5.6.4 Season structure

This fishery typically opens in June with a season structure; vessel trip limits based on vessel size and the sub-allocation are used to moderate catch. [In recent years, the season has been a series of three-day openings, beginning at 8 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday in June and ending at 6](#)

p.m. on the Thursday of that week. It is likely that one or two periods will be set initially, and additional openings may be set through inseason action if enough of the subquota remains.

#### 5.6.5 *Landing restrictions*

Determined annually by ~~IPHC~~NMFS, typically expressed as a vessel trip limit.

#### 5.6.6 *Inseason adjustments*

If NMFS determines enough of the subquota remains after the conclusion of the initial fishing period(s), then NMFS may set additional three-day openings to occur every other week, or as soon as practicable, Tuesday through Thursday, until the directed fishery allocation is obtained.

If ~~the IPHC~~NMFS determines that poundage remaining in the subquota for directed fishery is insufficient to allow an additional day, then the remaining halibut will be made available for incidental catch of halibut in the salmon troll fisheries (independent of the incidental harvest allocation).

#### 5.6.7 *Groundfish regulations*

None specified in this document.

#### 5.6.8 *Closed areas*

This fishery may also be managed with closed areas designed to protect overfished groundfish species. Any such closed areas will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the Federal Register and the coordinates will be specifically defined at 50 CFR 660.71 through 660.74.

PFMC

11/03/22