

REPORT ON THE 2023 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A (8/8/2023)

The 2023 Area 2A Pacific halibut (halibut) catch limit of 1,520,000 pounds is divided according to the 2023 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A as follows:

Treaty Tribes	532,000 lb	(35%)
Non-Tribal Total	988,000 lb	(65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	303,316 lb	
Incidental to Sablefish	70,000 lb	
Washington Recreational	281,728 lb	
Oregon Recreational	293,436 lb	
California Recreational	39,520 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 preliminary harvest data are described below.

TOTAL TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL FISHERIES

The 2023 estimated catch to date in Area 2A is 716,054 pounds of the non-tribal allocation of 988,000 pounds, and 483,097 pounds¹ of the tribal allocation of 532,000 pounds, totaling 1,199,151 pounds of the 1,520,000-pound catch limit. Allocations and preliminary harvest to date for 2023 are summarized in Table 2.

TRIBAL FISHERIES

The tribal allocation is 532,000 pounds (35% of the Area 2A catch limit). The preseason projected ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) catch was 29,500 pounds and the remaining 502,500 pounds were made available to the commercial fishery.

- The unrestricted fishery was open 55 hours for each tribe between March 10 and June 15. The unrestricted fishery landed 244,934 pounds.
- The restricted fishery was open between March 10 and May 31. The restricted fishery landed 84,964 pounds.
- The late fishery is open June 17 to September 30 and landed 153,199 pounds as of August 3.
- The total reported landings for all tribal fisheries as of August 3 is 483,097 pounds. The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and catch estimates will be reported by the tribes in January 2023.

¹ Does not include tribal ceremonial & subsistence catch to date.

NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

An allocation of 303,316 pounds (30.7% of the non-tribal share) is divided among two commercial fishery components:

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

An incidental catch fishery in the sablefish primary fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA has an allocation of 70,000 pounds. This allowance for the sablefish primary fishery is taken from the Washington recreational allocation.

A minimum size of 32 inches, head on, is required for all commercial fisheries.

Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery

An allocation of 45,497 pounds of halibut (15% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) is available to the non-tribal commercial salmon troll fishery in Area 2A as incidental catch during salmon troll fisheries.

- Halibut retention is permitted in salmon troll fisheries, which started April 1 and was extended on July 1, with the following ratio: 1 halibut per 2 Chinook salmon landed, except that 1 halibut can be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut can be landed per trip.
- Through August 2, this fishery is estimated to have taken 23,509 pounds, leaving 21,988 pounds remaining. This fishery is ongoing and is still accruing catch.

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

An allocation of 257,819 pounds (85% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) is available to the directed longline fishery targeting halibut in Oregon, California, and Washington, south of Point Chehalis, WA (46°53.30' N. lat.).

- The fishery was open for 3 fishing periods: June 27-29, July 11-13, and August 1-3.
- The preliminary catch estimate is 259,226 pounds, 1,407 pounds over the allocation.
- Catch limits based on vessel length are shown in Table 1.
- Vessels permitted in the directed commercial fishery are prohibited from landing halibut as incidental catch in the salmon troll fishery and from participating in the recreational fishery.

Table 1. 2023 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-on with ice and slime, in pounds per vessel) by vessel size class.

Vessel Size (ft) / Class		Jun 27–29	Jul 11–13	Aug 1–3
0–25	A	2,716	2,716	1,000
26–30	B	2,716	2,716	1,000
31–35	C	2,716	2,716	1,000
36–40	D	4,092	4,092	1,000
41–45	E	4,092	4,092	1,000
46–50	F	5,454	5,454	1,000
51–55	G	5,454	5,454	1,000
56+	H	6,136	6,136	1,000

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

An allocation of 70,000 pounds is available 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 a halibut incidental sablefish permit, issued by NMFS.

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.

- Halibut retention is allowed from April 1 until the closure date set by IPHC (December 7), with the following ratio: 150 pounds (dressed weight, head-on with ice and slime) 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 4, this fishery is estimated to have landed 17,185 pounds, leaving 52,815 pounds remaining. This fishery is ongoing and is still accruing catch.

RECREATIONAL FISHERIES (NON-TRIBAL)

The Area 2A recreational allocation is 614,684 pounds, divided among Washington (35.6% of non-tribal allocation, less 70,000 pounds allocated to the incidental catch in the sablefish primary fishery), Oregon (29.7% of the non-tribal allocation), and California (4.0% of the non-tribal allocation). The allocations were further subdivided among geographic subareas as described below. Unless otherwise noted, the daily bag limit in all subareas is one halibut of any size, per person, per day.

Washington Puget Sound Subarea (includes waters of Puget Sound and the U.S. Convention Waters in the Strait of Juan de Fuca)

- The Puget Sound subarea allocation is 79,031 pounds (23.5% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington recreational fishery, and 32% of the Washington recreational allocation over 130,845 pounds).
- The fishery is open April 6-10, 13-17, 20-25, and 27-30; May 1, May 4-9, 11-15, 18-22, and 26-28; June 1-30; **August 17-31**; and **September 1-30**. Dates listed in bold were added through inseason action.
- As of July 31, the estimated catch in this area is 42,301 pounds, leaving 36,730 pounds remaining. This fishery is ongoing and is still accruing catch.

Washington North Coast Subarea

- The Washington North Coast subarea allocation is 129,668 pounds (62.2% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington recreational fishery, and 32% of the Washington recreational allocation over 130,945 pounds).
- The fishery is open May 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 26, and 28; June 1, 3, 8, **9**, 10, **11**, 15, **16**, 17, **18**, 22, **23**, 24, **25**, 29, and **30**; **August 15-31**; and **September 1-30**. Dates listed in bold were added through inseason action.
- The "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA, southwest of Cape Flattery, is closed to recreational halibut fishing.
- As of July 31, the estimated catch for this area is 86,336 pounds, leaving 43,332 pounds remaining. This fishery is ongoing and is still accruing catch.

Washington South Coast Subarea

- The Washington South Coast subarea allocation is 64,376 pounds (12.3% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington recreational fishery and 32% of the Washington recreational allocation over 130,845 pounds). There was no initial allocation for the nearshore fishery.
- The all-depth fishery is open May 4, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, and 30; June 15, 18, 21, and 25; **August 26 and 27**; and **September 8, 9, and 22**.
- As of July 31, the estimated catch is 52,448 pounds, leaving 11,928 pounds remaining. This fishery is ongoing and is still accruing catch.

Columbia River Subarea

- The Columbia River subarea allocation is 18,875 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 over 130,845 pounds, 2.3% of the Oregon recreational allocation, and any allocation 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 is open May 4, 7, 11, 13, 18, 21, and 25; June 1, 4, 8, 11, **13**, 15, 18, **20**, 22, and 25; **August 26 and 27**; and **September 8, 9, and 22**. The nearshore fishery opened May 8, and is open Monday through Wednesday until September 30. Dates listed in bold were added through inseason action.

- As of July 31, the all-depth estimated catch is 15,838 pounds, leaving 2,536 pounds remaining. No catch has been reported for the nearshore fishery. The all-depth and nearshore components of the fishery are ongoing and still accruing catch.

Oregon Central Coast Subarea

- The Oregon Central Coast subarea allocation is 275,214 pounds (93.79 percent of the Oregon recreational allocation). The subarea allocation is further divided into the three fishery components.
- Beginning June 12, the daily bag limit was increased from one to two fish through inseason action.

There are three components to the fishery:

- a restricted depth nearshore (inside 40-fathom) fishery, opened May 1, seven days per week;
- a fixed spring season in all depths that opened May 1, seven days per week, through June 30, then July 10–16 and 24–30;
- a summer season in all depths that is open August 3 through October 31. Inseason action was taken to open the summer all depth season 7 days per week, increased from the final rule which opened the fishery 3 days, every other week.

Harvest is summarized in the bullets below:

- The spring all-depth fishery catch was 172,354 pounds, which is 1,031 pounds under the spring allocation of 173,385 pounds.
- Catch estimates the summer all-depth fishery are not yet available. This fishery is ongoing and is still accruing catch. The summer all-depth allocation is 68,803 pounds, plus any remaining pounds from the spring all-depth fishery.
- The nearshore fishery has an estimated catch of 5,928 pounds, leaving 27,098 pounds remaining of the 33,026-pound allocation. This fishery is ongoing and is still accruing catch.

Southern Oregon Subarea

- The Southern Oregon subarea allocation is 8,000 pounds (3.9% of the Oregon recreational fishery allocation minus the Oregon contribution to the Columbia River subarea). This area is open 7 days per week from May 1 to October 31.
- Beginning June 12, the daily bag limit was increased from one to two fish through inseason action.
- As of July 31, this fishery has estimated catch of 3,500 pounds, leaving 4,500 pounds remaining.

California Coast Subarea

- The California Coast subarea allocation was 39,520 pounds (4.0% of the non-tribal share). The fishery was open 7 days per week from May 1 through August 4.
- As of July 31, the estimated catch was 37,429 pounds, with 2,091 pounds remaining, and an average daily catch of 2,674 pounds per day. The allocation was projected to be reached and was therefore closed on August 4.

Table 2. Summary of Area 2A 2023 allocations and preliminary harvest estimates, updated with fishery information reported to NMFS through August 8, 2023.

		Allocation	Catch	Percent Caught		
Tribal	Ceremonial & Subsistence	29,500	N/A	N/A		
	Commercial	502,500	483,097	96.1%		
	Tribal Total	532,000	483,097	90.8%		
Non-Tribal	Commercial	Directed	257,819	259,226	100.5%	
		Incidental salmon troll	45,497	23,509	51.7%	
		Total	303,316	282,735	93.2%	
	Washington Recreational	Incidental sablefish*	70,000	17,185	24.6%	
		Puget Sound		79,031	42,301	53.5%
			North Coast	129,668	86,336	66.6%
		South Coast	Primary	64,376	52,448	81.5%
			Nearshore	0	0	0.0%
		Total	64,376	52,448	81.5%	
		Total* **	273,076	181,086	66.3%	
		Columbia River	All-depth	18,375	15,838	86.2%
			Nearshore	500	0	0.0%
			Total	18,875	15,838	83.9%
	Oregon Recreational	Central Coast	Spring all-depth	173,385	172,354	99.4%
			Summer all-depth	68,803	0	0.0%
Nearshore			33,026	5,928	17.9%	
Total		275,214	178,281	64.8%		
Southern OR		8,000	3,500	43.7%		
Total**	283,214	181,781	64.2%			
California Recreational		39,520	37,429	94.7%		
Non-Tribal Total		988,000	716,054	72.5%		
Total		1,520,000	1,199,151	78.9%		

*The incidental commercial sablefish allocation is derived from the Washington recreational fishery allocation. In this table, the incidental sablefish allocation is not included in the Washington recreational total and is shown in a separate line under the commercial fisheries.

**The Columbia River subarea allocation is derived from both the Washington and Oregon allocations. Totals for Washington and Oregon do not include the Columbia River in this table.