

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
REPORT ON THE 2023 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A (9/29/2023)

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 828,286 pounds of the non-tribal allocation of 988,000 pounds, and 485,331 pounds<sup>1</sup> of the tribal allocation of 532,000 pounds, totaling 1,313,617 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 858,844 pounds.
- The late fishery is open June 17 to September 30 and landed 154,553 pounds as of September 23.
- The total reported landings for all tribal fisheries as of September 23 is 485,331 pounds, which is 97 percent of the tribal commercial allocation. The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and catch estimates will be reported by the tribes in January 2023.

NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

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

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<sup>1</sup> Does not include tribal ceremonial & subsistence catch to date.

- 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 September 29, this fishery is estimated to have taken 24,255 pounds, leaving 21,242 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 commercial 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 September 17, this fishery is estimated to have landed 28,672 pounds, leaving 41,328 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.
- Through September 24, the estimated catch in this area is 51,609 pounds, leaving 27,422 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.
- Through September 24, the estimated catch for this area is 122,524 pounds, leaving 10,007 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**.
- Through September 22, the estimated catch is 70,152 pounds, 5,776 pounds over the allocation. 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.

- Through September 22, the all-depth estimated catch is 19,212 pounds, 838 pounds over the allocation. 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: Nearshore, Spring all-depth, and Summer all-depth.
- 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 nearshore fishery has an estimated catch of 6,008 pounds, leaving 27,018 pounds remaining of the 33,026-pound allocation. This fishery closed August 13.
- The spring all-depth fishery catch was 172,354 pounds, which is 1,031 pounds under the spring allocation of 173,385 pounds.
- Through September 24, the summer all-depth fishery catch is 35,224 pounds. After combining the remaining 1,031 pounds from the spring all-depth fishery and 27,018 pounds from the nearshore fishery, the adjusted summer all-depth allocation is 96,852 pounds, leaving 61,629 pounds remaining. 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.
- Through September 24, this fishery has estimated catch of 8,010 pounds, 10 pounds over the allocation. This fishery is ongoing and is still accruing catch.

#### *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.
- The estimated catch was 38,337 pounds, leaving 1,183 pounds remaining of the allocation.

Table 2. Summary of Area 2A 2023 allocations and preliminary harvest estimates, updated with fishery information reported to NMFS through September 29, 2023.

		Allocation	Catch	Percent Caught	
<b>Tribal</b>	Ceremonial & Subsistence	29,500	N/A	N/A	
	Commercial	502,500	485,331	96.60%	
	<b>Tribal Total</b>	<b>532,000</b>	<b>485,331</b>	<b>91.20%</b>	
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<b>Commercial</b>	Directed	257,819	259,226	100.50%	
	Incidental salmon troll	45,497	24,255	53.30%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>303,316</b>	<b>283,481</b>	<b>93.50%</b>	
	Incidental sablefish*	70,000	28,672	41.00%	
	<b>Total (including incid. sablefish)</b>	<b>373,316</b>	<b>312,153</b>	<b>83.60%</b>	
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<b>Washington Recreational</b>	Puget Sound	79,031	51,461	65.10%	
	North Coast	129,668	119,661	92.30%	
	Primary	64,376	68,399	106.20%	
	South Coast	Nearshore	0	0	0.00%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64,376</b>	<b>68,399</b>	<b>106.20%</b>	
<b>Total* **</b>	<b>273,076</b>	<b>239,521</b>	<b>87.70%</b>		
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<b>Non-Tribal</b>	<b>Columbia River</b>	All-depth	18,375	19,212	104.60%
		Nearshore	500	0	0.00%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>18,875</b>	<b>19,212</b>	<b>101.80%</b>
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<b>Oregon Recreational</b>	Central Coast	Spring all-depth	173,385	172,354	99.40%
		Summer all-depth	68,803	35,224	51.20%
		Nearshore	33,026	6,008	18.20%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>275,214</b>	<b>213,585</b>	<b>77.60%</b>
	Southern OR	8,000	8,010	100.10%	
<b>Total**</b>	<b>283,214</b>	<b>221,596</b>	<b>78.20%</b>		
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<b>California Recreational</b>		<b>39,520</b>	<b>38,337</b>	<b>97.00%</b>	
<b>Non-Tribal Total</b>		<b>988,000</b>	<b>830,818</b>	<b>84.10%</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,520,000</b>	<b>1,316,149</b>	<b>86.60%</b>	

\*The incidental commercial sablefish allocation is derived from the WA 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 for the commercial fisheries.

\*\*The Columbia River subarea allocation is derived from both the WA and OR allocations. Totals for WA and OR do not include the Columbia River.