

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES REPORT
2024 AREA 2A PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES AND INSEASON UPDATE
(as of August 18, 2024)

SUMMARY

The 2024 Area 2A Pacific halibut (halibut) catch limit of 1,470,000 pounds is divided among sectors according to the 2024 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP, Table 1). The Area 2A preliminary harvest estimate to date is 1,072,245 pounds. The non-tribal harvest estimate to date is 644,556 pounds and the tribal harvest estimate to date is 427,689 pounds (not including the tribal customary and subsistence (C&S) fishery). All weights in this report are net weight (gutted, head-off, and without ice and slime), unless otherwise noted.

Table 1. Area 2A allocations and inseason preliminary harvest estimates by sector, 2024.

			Allocation	Catch	Percent Caught
Tribal*	Ceremonial & Subsistence		20,220	N/A	N/A
	Commercial		494,280	427,689	86.5%
	Tribal Total		514,500	427,689	83.1%
Non-Tribal	Commercial	Directed	249,338	209,205	83.9%
		Incidental salmon troll	44,001	28,560	64.9%
		Total	293,339	237,765	81.1%
		Incidental sablefish**	50,000	11,055	22.1%
		Puget Sound	81,729	54,497	66.7%
		North Coast	132,366	101,852	76.9%
	Washington Recreational	Primary	65,074	51,085	78.5%
		South Coast	2,000	0	0.0%
		Total	67,074	51,085	76.2%
	Total** ***		281,169	207,433	73.8%
	Columbia River	All-depth	18,112	13,605	75.1%
		Nearshore	500	0	0.0%
		Total	18,612	13,605	73.1%
	Oregon Recreational	Spring all-depth	167,681	151,116	90.1%
		Summer all-depth	66,540	7,657	11.5%
		Nearshore	31,939	0	0.0%
		Total	266,161	158,773	59.7%
		Southern OR	8,000	4,058	50.7%
	Total***		274,161	162,831	59.4%

		Allocation	Catch	Percent Caught
California Recreational	Northern California Coast	37,720	11,867	31.5%
	South of Point Arena	500	0	0.0%
	Total	38,220	11,867	31.0%
Non-Tribal Total		955,500	644,556	67.5%
Total		1,470,000	1,072,245	72.9%

*The C&S projected harvest, based on the 2023 C&S harvest, was adjusted after allocations were adopted by the IPHC. The adjusted C&S projection is 21,305 pounds, leaving 493,196 pounds for the tribal commercial fishery.

**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.

TRIBAL FISHERIES

Regulatory framework

The tribal allocation is set at 35% of the Area 2A FCEY. There are two components of the tribal fishery:

- 1) a commercial fishery managed as: an unrestricted fishery, a restricted fishery, and a late season fishery; and
- 2) a ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fishery

The tribal commercial fishery allocation was set by subtracting the projected C&S fishery projection, which was based on the prior year C&S harvest, from the total tribal allocation.

Fishery statistics

The tribal allocation is 514,500 pounds. The preseason projected C&S harvest is 20,220¹ pounds with the remaining 494,280 pounds available to the commercial fishery.

- The unrestricted fishery was open 55 hours for all tribes between March 15 and June 19. Inside tribes could choose to convert some or all of their hours to restricted fishing (24 hours unrestricted and 52.7 hours with a 500-pound daily limit, or 93.5 hours with a 500-pound daily limit). The unrestricted fishery landed 222,216 pounds.
- The restricted fishery was open between March 15 and June 19 for 122 hours (not to exceed 6 days), with a 500-pound daily limit. The restricted fishery landed 96,414 pounds.
- The first late fishery was open between June 24 and July 31, and tribes could choose to fish 24 hours unrestricted or 41 hours (not to exceed 2 days) with a 500-pound daily limit. The first late fishery landed 109,060 pounds.

¹ The C&S projected harvest, based on the 2023 C&S harvest, was adjusted after allocations were adopted by the IPHC. The adjusted C&S projection is 21,305 pounds, leaving 493,196 pounds for the tribal commercial fishery.

- The second late fishery will be open between August 9 and September 30, where tribes can choose between three options:
 - One 24 hour opener with a 2,000-pound limit
 - Three 24 hour openers with a 1,000-pound daily limit
 - Six 24 hour openers with a 5,00-pound daily limit
- The total landings for all tribal fisheries to date is 427,689 pounds, which is 87 percent of the tribal commercial allocation.
- The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and the tribes will report catch estimates in January 2023.

NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

Regulatory framework

There are three components of the non-tribal commercial fishery:

- 1) a directed fishery targeting halibut south of Point Chehalis, WA (46°53.30' N. lat.); and
- 2) an incidental catch fishery during the salmon troll fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California; and
- 3) an incidental catch fishery during the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA.

The allocations for the directed commercial fishery and the incidental catch fishery during salmon troll fisheries are set at 85 percent and 15 percent, respectively, of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation (30.7% of the non-tribal share). The allocation for the incidental catch fishery during the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA comes from the portion of the Washington recreational allocation over 214,110 pounds, with a 10,000-pound minimum and 70,000-pound maximum allocation.

Vessels permitted in the directed commercial fishery were prohibited from landing halibut as incidental catch in the salmon troll fishery and from participating as a charter vessel in the recreational fishery.

Closed Areas

Vessels in the directed fishery are prohibited from fishing within closed areas as defined in [50 CFR 300.63\(f\)](#), including the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs). RCAs are depth-based areas closed to fishing with certain gear types. The RCA boundaries are lines that connect a series of latitude and longitude coordinates and are intended to approximate particular depth contours. Coordinates that define the RCA boundary lines are listed at [50 CFR 660.71\(e\)](#), [50 CFR 660.73\(a\)](#), and [50 CFR 660.72\(j\)](#). All vessels must comply with Pacific halibut RCA regulations regardless of groundfish retention. Vessels retaining groundfish in state waters of California are also subject to [California RCA regulations](#).

Vessels that incidentally catch halibut while fishing in the salmon troll fishery are prohibited from fishing within a closed area known as the Salmon Troll YRCA, defined in the groundfish regulations at [50 CFR 660.70](#) and in the salmon regulations at [50 CFR 660.405\(c\)](#). Vessels that

incidentally catch halibut while fishing in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA must comply with groundfish closed area regulations.

See [Pacific halibut regulations](#) and the [NOAA Fisheries West Coast Groundfish Closed Areas](#) page for more information on closed areas, including Essential Fish Habitat Conservation areas and Yelloweye RCAs.

Changes for 2024

Recognizing that announcing additional fishing periods can take NMFS longer than it took under IPHC management, the Council recommended that the third fishing period occur no sooner than three weeks after the second fishing period in order to provide sufficient advance notice.

Fishery statistics

Directed Fishery Targeting Halibut

- The allocation is 249,338 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to date, not including the fourth fishing period, is 209,204 pounds.
- To date, the fishery has been open for four, 58-hour fishing periods: June 25-27, July 9-11, August 6-8, and August 27-29.
- Catch limits by fishing period, based on vessel length / size class are in Table 2.

Table 2. 2024 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-on with ice and slime, in pounds per vessel) by vessel size class.

Vessel Length	Size Class	Jun 25–27	Jul 9–11	Aug 6–8	Aug 27–29
0–25	A	1,800	1,800	1,000	1,400
26–30	B	1,800	1,800	1,000	1,400
31–35	C	1,800	1,800	1,000	1,400
36–40	D	3,000	3,000	1,000	1,400
41–45	E	3,000	3,000	1,000	1,400
46–50	F	3,800	3,800	1,000	1,400
51–55	G	3,800	3,800	1,000	1,400
56+	H	4,500	4,500	1,000	1,400

Incidental Catch during the Salmon Troll Fishery

- The allocation is set at 44,001 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to date is 28,560 pounds.
- Halibut retention during salmon troll fisheries began on April 1. Incidental halibut will be allowed until the end of the salmon season on September 30.
- The landing limit is one halibut per two Chinook salmon, except that one halibut can be possessed or landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut can be possessed or landed per trip.

Incidental Catch during the Primary Sablefish Fishery

- The allocation is set at 40,000 pounds.

- The estimated harvest to date is 11,055 pounds.
- Halibut retention is allowed during the primary sablefish fishery, from the primary sablefish season opening date of April 1 and until the commercial halibut season closure on December 7, or until the allocation is reached, whichever occurs first.
- The landing limit is 130 pounds of halibut (in dressed weight, meaning eviscerated, head on) for every 1,000 pounds of sablefish (dressed weight), plus up to 2 additional halibut.

RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

Regulatory framework

The recreational fishery allocation was divided among the three states, Washington, Oregon, and California.

- 1) Washington receives 35.6 percent of the non-tribal allocation, minus the allocation made available for incidental harvest in the primary sablefish fishery;
- 2) Oregon receives 29.7 percent of the non-tribal allocation;
- 3) and California receives 4 percent of the non-tribal allocation.

State allocations were further divided into subareas and season dates were established preseason for each subarea, with additional dates added inseason for some subareas. Oregon and Washington allocations both contributed to the Columbia River subarea allocation.

Closed Areas

The "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA, southwest of Cape Flattery, is closed to recreational halibut fishing.

Fishery statistics

Washington

- The allocation is 281,169 pounds (not including the allocation for the commercial fishery incidental to the primary sablefish fishery or Columbia River recreational fishery).
- The estimated harvest to-date is 207,433 pounds.
- The bag limit is 1 halibut per person per day.
- Season dates vary by subarea. The earliest open date was April 4 and the last open date is scheduled for September 30.

Columbia River

- The allocation is 18,612 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to-date is 13,605 pounds.
- The bag limit is 1 halibut per person per day.
- Season dates vary by subarea fishery: Nearshore and All-depth. The earliest open date was May 2 and the last open date is scheduled for September 30.

Oregon

- The allocation is 274,161 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to-date is 162,831 pounds.
- The bag limit is 2 halibut per person per day, except that the Columbia River subarea bag limit is 1 halibut.
- Season dates vary by subarea. The earliest open date was May 1 and the last open date is scheduled for October 31.

California

- The allocation is 38,220 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to-date is 11,867 pounds.
- The bag limit is 1 halibut per person per day.
- Season dates vary by subarea. The earliest open date was May 1 and the last open day is scheduled for December 31.

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICES

Annual Management Measures Adopting IPHC Regulations

- [Final Rule: 2024 Annual Management Measures \(89 FR 19275, March 18, 2024\)](#)

Catch Sharing Plan and Recreational Fishery

- [Proposed Rule \(89 FR 9105, February 9, 2024\)](#)
- [Final Rule \(89 FR 22966, April 3, 2024\)](#)
- [Final rule; correction \(89 FR 46824, May 30, 2024\)](#)
- [Inseason adjustment: request for comments \(89 FR 53361, June 26, 2024\)](#)
- [Inseason adjustment; request for comments \(89 FR 59673, July 23, 2024\)](#)

Non-Tribal Directed Commercial Fishery

- [Proposed rule; request for comments \(89 FR 18368, March 13, 2024\)](#)
- [Final rule \(89 FR 40417, May 10, 2024\)](#)
- [Inseason adjustment \(89 FR 60833, July 29, 2024\)](#)
- [Inseason adjustment \(citation not yet available, August 22, 2024\)](#)

Non-Tribal Incidental Commercial Fisheries

- [Final rule \(89 FR 22342, April 1, 2024\)](#)
- [Final rule \(89 FR 44553, May 21, 2024\)](#)



Commercial discard mortality estimates for IPHC Regulatory Area 2A

PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (15 MARCH 2024)

PURPOSE

To provide a clarification on the methods used to estimate commercial discard mortality for IPHC Regulatory Area 2A.

INTRODUCTION

Incidental mortality of Pacific halibut in the directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery is the mortality of all Pacific halibut that do not become part of the landed catch. The three main sources of discard mortality estimate include:

- 1) fish that are captured and discarded because they are below the legal-size limit of 81.3 cm (32 inches);
- 2) fish that are estimated to have been captured by lost or abandoned fishing gear; and
- 3) fish that are discarded for regulatory reasons (e.g., the vessels trip limit has been exceeded).

The methods that are applied to produce each of these estimates differ due to the amount and quality of information available. Mortality due to lost gear is assumed to occur at the same overall rate per unit of gear as observed catch rates in the fishery and sublegal encounter rates in the FISS, and lost gear estimates from commercial logbooks are scaled to represent the entire fishery in each year. A mortality rate of 100% is assumed for fish estimated to have been captured on lost gear. Regulatory discards are based on the logbook-reported discards of legal (O32) Pacific halibut. These occur due to damaged fish, or on the last trip of the season when catch may exceed remaining quota on a particular vessel. The ratio of U32 to O32 Pacific halibut (>81.3 cm or 32 inches in length) is determined from the IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) in most areas and from logbooks in the IPHC Regulatory Area 2B fishery.

Discard mortality in the coastwide commercial fishery is estimated to have been highest in the late 1980s and to have subsequently declined, particularly in Regulatory Area 3A in 1995 when the derby fishery was converted to a quota system. Coastwide increases from 1995 to 2010 correspond to the decline in size-at-age and more fish at older ages remaining below the minimum size limit. Declining discard mortality from 2010 to 2020 appears to be driven primarily by decreased mortality limits reducing the total quantity of gear fished each year. Increases in 2021 and 2022 are attributable to the shifts toward younger fish (i.e., from the 2005 to 2012 year-class) of which many are still below the current minimum size limit. Discards remained high relative to the recent time-series in 2023.

COMMERCIAL DISCARD MORTALITY IN IPHC REGULATORY AREA 2A

Table 1 summarizes Pacific halibut directed commercial landings and estimates of discard mortality in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A for 2010-2023.

The estimates of the discard mortality for Regulatory Area 2A were derived as follows (Figure 1):

- Regulatory discards that are based on observer estimates are assigned a discard mortality rate based on viability estimates. All other discards are assigned a rate of 25%.
- The non-treaty commercial discard mortality estimates (legal and sublegal) from 2017 to the present are estimated by the West Coast Observer Program. As these values are unavailable in-season, the previous year's estimates are used. The reported value also includes estimates of mortality due to lost gear derived using the method described above.
- Treaty Indian commercial discard mortality estimates are generated by the IPHC based on FISS sublegal encounter rates scaled to the entire fishery as there is no observer coverage in that fishery. The reported value includes also estimates of mortality of legal sized fish from logbooks and due to lost gear derived using the methods described above.

The increase in discard mortality in Regulatory Area 2A in 2023 was primarily driven by substantial increase in FISS sublegal encounter rates in the area.

Table 1. Pacific halibut directed commercial landings and estimates of discard mortality in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A, 2010-2023 ([IPHC-2024-TSD-018](#)).

	Landings (L)	Discard mortality (D)	D/L
2010	407,596	28,000	6.9%
2011	523,743	28,000	5.3%
2012	555,978	33,000	5.9%
2013	526,033	39,000	7.4%
2014	510,028	21,000	4.1%
2015	551,365	34,000	6.2%
2016	641,826	40,000	6.2%
2017	723,174	19,000	2.6%
2018	658,302	23,000	3.5%
2019	822,601	25,000	3.0%
2020	749,704	37,000	4.9%
2021	824,779	66,000	8.0%
2022	826,819	35,000	4.2%
2023	822,271	100,000	12.2%

Figure 1. Relationship between data sources and estimated quantities generating the aggregate commercial fishery discard mortality.

