







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 \(89 FR 44553, May 21, 2024\)](#)



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**Commercial discard mortality estimates for IPHC Regulatory Area 2A****PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (15 MARCH 2024)**

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**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](#)).

	<b>Landings (L)</b>	<b>Discard mortality (D)</b>	<b>D/L</b>
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.

