

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES REPORT  
2026 AREA 2A PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES AND INSEASON UPDATE  
(as of August 20, 2026)

**SUMMARY**

The 2026 Area 2A Pacific halibut (halibut) catch limit of 1,530,000 pounds is divided among sectors according to the 2026 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP, Table 1). The Area 2A preliminary harvest estimate to date is 987,703 pounds. The non-tribal harvest estimate to date is 448,133 pounds and the tribal harvest estimate to date is 539,570 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 2 allocations and inseason preliminary harvest estimates by sector, 2026.

|                      |                                      | Allocation                | Catch            | Remaining      | Percent Caught |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Tribal (1)</b>    | Ceremonial & Subsistence             | 10,800                    |                  | 10,800         | N/A            |
|                      | Commercial                           | 528,200                   | 539,570          | -11,370        | 102.2%         |
|                      | <b>Tribal Total</b>                  | <b>539,000</b>            | <b>539,570</b>   | <b>-570</b>    | <b>-</b>       |
| <b>Non-Tribal</b>    | <b>Commercial</b>                    | Directed                  | 261,211          | 159,890        | 61.2%          |
|                      |                                      | Incidental salmon troll   | 46,096           | 14,326         | 31.1%          |
|                      |                                      | Incidental sablefish (2)  | 70,000           | 53,002         | 24.3%          |
|                      |                                      | <b>Total</b>              | <b>377,307</b>   | <b>191,214</b> | <b>50.7%</b>   |
|                      | <b>Washington Recreational (2,3)</b> | Puget Sound               | 80,512           | 46,791         | 58.1%          |
|                      |                                      | North Coast               | 131,149          | 58,144         | 44.3%          |
|                      |                                      | South Coast               | 65,857           | 27,628         | 58.0%          |
|                      |                                      | <b>Total</b>              | <b>277,519</b>   | <b>143,164</b> | <b>51.6%</b>   |
|                      | <b>Oregon Recreational (3)</b>       | Columbia River            | 19,299           | 11,743         | 60.8%          |
|                      |                                      | Central Coast             | 278,835          | 94,411         | 33.9%          |
|                      |                                      | Southern Oregon           | 8,000            | 827            | 10.3%          |
|                      |                                      | <b>Total</b>              | <b>286,835</b>   | <b>95,238</b>  | <b>33.2%</b>   |
|                      | <b>California Recreational</b>       | Northern California Coast | 39,540           | 6,773          | 17.1%          |
|                      |                                      | South of Point Arena      | 500              | 0              | 0.0%           |
|                      |                                      | <b>Total</b>              | <b>40,040</b>    | <b>6,773</b>   | <b>16.9%</b>   |
|                      | <b>Total</b>                         |                           | <b>623,693</b>   | <b>256,918</b> | <b>41.2%</b>   |
|                      | <b>Non-Tribal Total</b>              |                           | <b>1,001,000</b> | <b>448,133</b> | <b>44.8%</b>   |
| <b>Area 2A Total</b> |                                      | <b>1,540,000</b>          | <b>987,703</b>   | <b>552,297</b> | <b>64.1%</b>   |

- (1) The Ceremonial & Subsistence (C&S) projected harvest, based on the previous year C&S harvest.
- (2) 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 only shown in a with the commercial fisheries.
- (3) 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.

## **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 535,500 pounds. The preseason projected C&S harvest is 14,800 pounds with the remaining 520,700 pounds available to the commercial fishery.

- The unrestricted fishery was open March 26 - May 28 with a 5,000 lb daily limit and landed 255,638 lbs.
- The restricted fishery was open March 26 - May 28 with a 500 lb daily limit and landed 83,946 lbs.
- The late fishery was open May 30 - July 10 with a 5,000 lb daily limit and landed 199,986 lbs.
- The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and the tribes will report catch estimates in January 2027.

## **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 2026*

The permit deadline for all non-Tribal commercial fisheries is now March 15 to allow for permit decisions to be made after the March Council meeting.

## **Fishery statistics**

### *Directed Fishery Targeting Halibut*

- The allocation is 261,211 pounds.
- The preliminary harvest estimate is 159,890 pounds.
- To date, the fishery has been open for four, 58-hour fishing periods: June 23-25, July 7-9, July 21-23, and August 18-20\*.
- Catch limits by fishing period, based on vessel length / size class are in Table 2

**Table 2. 2026 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-on with ice and slime, in pounds per vessel) by vessel size class.**

| Vessel Length (ft) | Size Class | June 23–25 | July 7–9 | July 21–23 | August 18-20* |
|--------------------|------------|------------|----------|------------|---------------|
| 1–25               | A          | 2,000      | 2,000    | 5,000      | 5,000         |
| 26–30              | B          | 2,000      | 2,000    | 5,000      | 5,000         |
| 31–35              | C          | 2,000      | 2,000    | 5,000      | 5,000         |
| 36–40              | D          | 3,400      | 3,400    | 5,000      | 5,000         |
| 41–45              | E          | 3,400      | 3,400    | 5,000      | 5,000         |
| 46–50              | F          | 4,300      | 4,300    | 5,000      | 5,000         |
| 51–55              | G          | 4,300      | 4,300    | 5,000      | 5,000         |
| 56+                | H          | 5,000      | 5,000    | 5,000      | 5,000         |

\*Landings data for the 4th opener was not available at the time of this report.

#### *Incidental Catch during the Salmon Troll Fishery*

- The allocation is set at 46,096 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to date is 14,326 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 70,000 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to date is 16,998 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 75 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.

For the 2026 season, Council recommended the recreational fisheries off California and in Puget Sound, WA to open in early April. To ensure these subareas could open on the recommended dates (California subareas on April 1 and Puget Sound subarea on April 2), NMFS staff submitted a regulatory amendment to the IPHC at their annual meeting in January 2026 to include the early dates into the IPHC regulations for the California and Puget Sound, WA subareas. One the provisions were implemented via IPHC regulations, NMFS staff from the West Coast Region assisted Alaska Region staff in the rulemaking that implemented the Pacific Halibut Fisheries 2026 Annual Management Measures ([91 FR 14464, March 25, 2026](#)) to include the provisions for the California and Puget Sound, WA subareas. NMFS anticipates similar action for the 2027 season.

### *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 277,519 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 143,164 pounds.
- The bag limit is 1 halibut per person per day.
- Season dates vary by subarea. The earliest open date was April 2 and the last open date is scheduled for September 30.

### *Columbia River*

- The allocation is 19,299 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to-date is 11,743 pounds.
- The bag limit is 1 halibut per person per day.
- Season dates vary. The earliest open date was April 30 and the last open date is scheduled for September 30.

### *Oregon*

- The allocation is 286,835 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to-date is 95,238 pounds.
- The bag limit is 2 halibut per person per day.
- Season dates vary. The earliest open date was May 1 and the last open date is scheduled for October 31.

## *California*

- The allocation is 40,040 pounds.
- The estimated harvest to-date is 6,773 pounds.
- The bag limit is 1 halibut per person per day.
- Season dates vary by subarea. The earliest open date was April 1 and the last open day is scheduled for December 31.

## **FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICES**

### **Annual Management Measures Adopting IPHC Regulations**

- [Final Rule: 2026 Annual Management Measures \(91 FR 14464, March 25, 2026\)](#)

### **Catch Sharing Plan and Recreational Fishery**

- [Proposed rule \(91 FR 14511, March 25, 2026\)](#)
- [Final Rule \(91 FR 23369, April 30, 2026\)](#)
- [Inseason adjustment \(91 FR 33659, June 4, 2026\)](#)
- [Inseason Adjustment \(91 FR 46866, July, 27,2026\)](#)
- [Inseason Correction \(91 FR 51104, August 7, 2026\)](#)

### **Non-Tribal Directed Commercial Fishery**

- [Proposed rule \(91 FR 14516, March 25, 2026\)](#)
- [Final rule \(91 FR 36094, June 16, 2026\)](#)
- [Inseason adjustment \(91 FR 45224, July 20, 2026\)](#)
- [Inseason adjustment \(91 FR 50726, August 7, 2026\)](#)

### **Non-Tribal Incidental Commercial Fisheries**

- [Final rule \(91 FR 29092, May 19, 2026\)](#)