

## OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN FOR THE 2026 FISHERY

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) solicited public input via e-mail, phone, and a public meeting in Oregon<sup>1</sup>, of which was webcast, to discuss proposed changes to the Pacific halibut (halibut in remainder of report) Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for fisheries off Oregon in 2026. Six members of the public attended the meeting in person, with another three who participated in the webinar, and others contacted ODFW staff via phone, email and office visits throughout the year to provide feedback regarding sport halibut fisheries. ODFW considered the public input and how recent fisheries have progressed and provide the following proposals for consideration by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) in determining which alternatives to adopt for further public review for the 2026 fishery.

### **Proposed Changes for the 2026 Catch Sharing Plan**

#### **Columbia River Subarea**

For the last several years the recreational halibut nearshore fishery quota in the Columbia River Subarea has gone untouched. There was an estimated 43 pounds (net weight) landed in Washington in 2022, and an estimated 299 pounds of halibut landed in Oregon in 2021. Initially, the nearshore season was set up in a way to provide anglers the opportunity to retain halibut when fishing nearshore for other bottomfish species (mainly black rockfish or lingcod) during days that are closed to all-depth fishing in the subarea. The language used in the CSP stated that the nearshore fishery would be open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, as the all-depth fishery at the time was open Thursdays through Sunday.

Since then, the Columbia River subarea all-depth fishery has been altered to extend the season or mirror other halibut seasons in Washington over the years, with no change to the nearshore fishery. In 2025, during a two-week stretch, the all-depth fishery was open for five days per week, open to the nearshore one day per week (Wednesday) and closed to all halibut the remaining day of the week (Saturday). This caused some confusion for anglers as well as data processing limitations for ODFW staff per the sampling design and the availability of dockside samplers.

ODFW offers the following two proposals for Council consideration regarding the season structure of the Columbia River subarea nearshore fishery. Either,

1. open the nearshore fishery seven days per week (beginning May 1), superseded by the all-depth fishery when both are open, or
2. remove the nearshore fishery and allocate the 500 pounds assigned to the nearshore fishery to the Columbia River subarea all-depth fishery.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2025/07\\_Jul/071725.asp](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2025/07_Jul/071725.asp)

## Rationale

As stated above, the rationale for the two proposals for the Columbia River subarea are to (1) reduce regulatory complexity for anglers, (2) reduce the burden and logistical issues on staff, and (3) better utilize the resource.

## Central Oregon Coast Subarea

The Central Oregon Coast subarea all-depth fishery has evolved into a seven day per week fishery over the past few years. The season structure during the spring all-depth fishery has gone from a total of five three-day openers (Thursdays through Saturdays) in 2018, a total of 15 days open at all depths, to an opening date of May 1, seven days per week, through July 31 in both 2024 and 2025. Per the CSP, the spring all-depth season ends on July 31, as the summer all-depth fishery begins Aug 1. During the 2024 CSP process, ODFW provided rationale to allocate more of the Central Oregon Coast subarea to the spring all-depth fishery to maximize utilization of the quota<sup>2</sup>.

For 2025, ODFW offers the following proposal for Council consideration:

1. allocate 75% of the subarea sub-quota to the spring all-depth fishery, regardless of the Area 2A Fishery Constant Exploitable Yield (FCEY), and
2. if the Area 2A FCEY is 700,000 pounds or greater, allocate 10,000 pounds to the nearshore fishery with the remaining subarea sub-quota allocated to the summer all-depth fishery, or
3. if the Area 2A FCEY is less than 700,000 pounds, allocate the remaining 25% of the sub-quota to the nearshore fishery.

Additionally, as the all-depth seasons have extended to cover the duration of the recreational halibut fishing season in the Central Oregon Coast subarea, the nearshore fishery could benefit with some flexibility built into the start date of the fishery. ODFW offers the following proposal for Council consideration:

1. The nearshore season opens May 1, seven days per week, only in waters shoreward of the 40-fathom (73 m) regulatory line, unless the Area 2A FCEY is less than 1.2M lbs, then it **may be** postponed and open on June 1.

## Rationale

During the 2024 CSP iteration, the language used for the Central Coast subarea provided many nuances depending on different quota allocation schemes based on the overall Area 2A FCEY. The proposals above aim to clean up the language in the CSP to reduce the complexity of the CSP while also frontloading the subarea sub-quota to the spring all-depth fishery to maximize opportunity and utilization of the subarea sub-quota. For the nearshore fishery, the proposal provides flexibility regarding the start date allowing fishing communities a chance to respond if quotas are reduced well below current quotas following the IPHC annual meeting.

## No Proposed Changes to Other Subareas or Seasons

ODFW is not proposing any changes to the Southern Oregon subarea.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pcouncil.org/documents/2024/08/f-1-a-odfw-report-1-odfw-report-on-proposed-changes-to-the-pacific-halibut-catch-sharing-plan-for-the-2025-fishery.pdf/>