

Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2016 IPHC Annual Report

Catch Limits

Fisheries and Oceans Canada follows an allocation policy that defines access to the Pacific Halibut Canadian Total Allowable Catch (CTAC) for Canadian commercial, recreational, and food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries. For 2016, the CTAC was 7,705,000 net pounds (fresh, head-off, dressed weight). The CTAC is composed of the catch limit for regulatory area 2B and an allocation for FSC. In addition to the CTAC, a carryover of quota from previous seasons is allocated to some licences.

Priority access is provided to the CTAC for FSC purposes, while commercial and recreational access is divided between the sectors 85% / 15% respectively. The International Pacific Halibut Commission recommended a 2016 catch limit of 7,300,000 net pounds for regulatory area 2B. The net carryover from 2015 to 2016 was -36,622 net pounds between the commercial and Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery pilot program (XRQ fishery). The resulting TAC for commercial and recreational harvest in 2016 was 7,239,944 net pounds¹.

Commercial and Recreational Fishery Summaries

For allocation purposes, the commercial / recreational total allowable catch (TAC) is equal to the Canadian catch limit, plus “O26” wastage mortality. The TAC is then allocated between the commercial and recreational sectors, and the “O26” wastage mortality is removed from the commercial and recreational TACs (Table 1). The combined commercial and recreational TAC, including carryover adjustments, for 2016 was 7,239,944 net pounds. As of January 3, 2017, the combined commercial and recreational halibut catch (including landed catch and mortality associated with all released fish in the commercial groundfish fisheries) was 6,930,268 net pounds.

Commercial Fishery Summary

The 2016 Canadian commercial Halibut TAC, including the catch limit allocation and carryover, was 6,097,271 net pounds. Halibut may be caught and retained by all commercial hook and line, and trap groundfish fisheries in Canada. This includes category L, K, ZN, and Schedule II licences.

¹ Quota totaling 38,988 net pounds have been set aside for treaty mitigation and as part of the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI). See Table 1 for more details.

In 2016 the Canadian commercial Halibut catch totalled 5,912,081 net pounds (Table 2). This catch, reported by all hook and line/trap groundfish fisheries in area 2B, includes both landed and released at-sea mortality. Given that non-halibut groundfish fisheries continue throughout the Halibut winter closure, additional released at-sea mortality will continue to be attributed to the 2016 Halibut catch until February 20, 2017, after which released at-sea mortality will be attributed to the 2017 TAC. As such the 2016 commercial catch is current as of January 3, 2017.

Commercial Integrated Management Plan

First introduced as a pilot program in 2006, the Commercial Groundfish Integration Program (CGIP) was made permanent in January 2010 to manage groundfish fisheries, including Pacific Halibut, in British Columbia. The objectives of the CGIP are to improve and maintain groundfish harvest sustainability and management through improved catch monitoring and catch accountability. The CGIP implemented individual vessel accountability for all catch, both retained and released, via individual transferable quotas which may be reallocated between licences and fisheries to cover non-directed catch. In addition these management tools are supported by 100% at-sea monitoring and 100% dockside monitoring for all groundfish vessels.

Notable management changes for the 2016 season include the ongoing rebuilding measures for Yelloweye Rockfish and Bocaccio in all commercial groundfish fisheries.

The 2017/2018 commercial groundfish fishing season will commence February 21, 2017, at which time the renewed Groundfish Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) will be available. All commercial groundfish management measures are detailed in the IFMP, which can be requested once available at: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/ifmp-eng.html#Groundfish>

Recreational Fishery Summary

There are two opportunities for recreational halibut fishing in area 2B, the recreational fishery, and the Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery pilot program (XRQ fishery). The 2016 recreational Halibut TAC was 1,100,950 net pounds. The XRQ fishery has acquired 9,573 net pounds, resulting in a combined recreational and XRQ fishery TAC of 1,110,523 net pounds as of January 3, 2017 (Table 3). The estimated 2016 Canadian recreational Halibut catch totalled 1,100,804 net pounds, including 5,343 net pounds of catch in the XRQ fishery. The estimation methods of the recreational catch are outlined in *2016 Canadian Recreational Fishery Halibut Catch Report*.

Management measures for the 2016 recreational fishery are summarised in the Area 2B Recreational Fishery Halibut Catch Report. There are also a number of area closures in place:

- In Pacific Fishery Management Area 121, the waters seaward of 12 nautical miles from the shoreline was closed to retention of Halibut, rockfish and Lingcod.
- The waters of Swiftsure Bank, inside a line from 48°34.00'N and 125°06.00'W, thence to 48°34.00'N and 124° 54.20'W, thence to 48°29.62'N and 124°43.40'W, thence following the International Boundary between Canada and the U.S. to 48°29.55'N and 124° 56.20'W, thence in a straight line to the point of commencement, are closed to all finfish, all year.
- Since 2007, 164 Rockfish Conservation Areas have prohibited recreational halibut harvest. Further information may be found at:
<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/restricted-restraint/rca-acs-eng.htm>

Halibut Experimental Recreational Fishery Pilot Program

The Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery pilot program allows individual anglers as well as guides, charters, lodges, marinas and other fishing experience providers to lease Halibut quota and subsequently retain Halibut that is in excess of the regular recreational fisheries daily and possession limits, and maximum size limits. An XRQ licence holder is permitted to fish for and retain Halibut from April 1 – December 31, even if the traditional recreational fishery is closed prior to December 31. Participants in the XRQ fishery must complete logbooks and submit them electronically within seven days of retaining a Halibut.

The XRQ fishery has operated as a pilot program since 2011, and was continued for a sixth season in 2016. A regulatory process is underway to create a category of annual sport fishing licence in s.17 of the *British Columbia Sport Fishing Regulations, 1996*. Public consultations about the regulatory changes were held throughout 2012/2013, and a Regulatory Impact Assessment Statement that summarizes feedback from the public meetings on the experimental licence and regulatory change has been presented to the Minister. A regulatory intent document will be presented for additional public comment prior to the proposed regulatory changes being posted in Canada Gazette 1.

The 2016 XRQ fishery has reallocated 6,762 net pounds of quota (as of January 3, 2017) from the commercial groundfish fisheries, and has carried over 2,811 net pounds of uncaught quota from the 2015 season (Table 3). Reallocations into and out of the XRQ fishery are permitted until January 31, 2017. Any uncaught quota may be reallocated back to the commercial fishery or it may be carried over into the 2017 XRQ fishery (the greater of the 200 net pounds or 10% of the total quota on the licence).

Additional details about the XRQ program are available online: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/commercial/ground-fond/index-eng.html>

Canadian Aquaculture Research

There were no halibut aquaculture research or production activities in area 2B for 2016.

Food, Social and Ceremonial and Treaty Fishery

The estimated Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) halibut catch in area 2B is 405,000 pounds. Since 2009, new conditions have been applied to commercial Halibut licences and many communal halibut permits, to improve catch reporting of FSC caught fish on commercial trips. Of the total FSC halibut caught in 2016, approximately 49,970 net pounds were caught in conjunction with commercial fishing trips and were subject to all commercial monitoring requirements, including 100% at-sea and 100% dockside monitoring. In addition, First Nations engaging in fishing only for FSC used tools such as catch calendars, some dockside monitoring and phone surveys to estimate their catch. Fisheries and Oceans Canada continues to work with First Nations to improve catch reporting within the FSC fisheries.

In April 2011 the Maa-nulth Final Agreement came into effect. The agreement allocates 26,000 pounds of FSC Halibut (part of the 405,000 pounds described above) plus 0.39% of the total CTAC (equivalent to 30,050 pounds in 2016) to the Maa-nulth First Nations for FSC purposes. In 2011 DFO mitigated for the additional treaty allocation through acquisition of 0.47% of the commercial TAC which is set aside for the Maa-nulth First Nation on an annual basis (identified as part of the “net reallocations into/out of the commercial fishery” in Table 1). To date, the 2016 Maa-nulth First Nation’s FSC Halibut catch totaled 16,232² net pounds of a total 56,050 net pounds allocated under the Maa-nulth Final Agreement.

² The Maa-nulth FSC catch estimate is an in-season estimate which will continue to be updated throughout the year. As such the 2016 Maa-nulth catch is current as of November 9, 2016 and is included in the 405,000 pound estimate.

Tables

Table 1. Halibut allocations in 2B as of January 3, 2017. All values in net pounds.

Commercial / recreational TAC for allocation		7,573,000
Commercial allocation	x 85%	
O26 wastage	- 238,000	
2015 Underages ^A	+ 96,053	
2015 Overages ^B	- 135,468	
Net carryover	- 39,433	
Net reallocations into/out of the commercial fishery ^C	- 2,290	
Commercial TAC		6,097,271

Recreational allocation		x 15 %
O26 wastage		- 35,000
Recreational TAC		1,100,950
XRQ allocation		x 0 %
XRQ acquired quota		+ 6,762
2015 XRQ Underages ^A	+ 2,811	
2015 XRQ Overages ^B	+ 0	
Net carryover		+ 2,811
XRQ TAC ^D		9,573
Recreational and XRQ TAC ^D		1,110,523

2B commercial and recreational TAC ^D		7,239,944
2B commercial and recreational catch ^E		6,930,268

A Underage. Unfished quota equaling 10% or less of a commercial licence's individual transferable quota is carried over into the following year.

B Overage. All catch that exceeds the available quota on an individual commercial licence at the end of a given fishing season is deducted from the individual commercial licence the following season.

C Net reallocations include quota reallocated from the commercial halibut sector to Maa-nulth First Nations Treaty, the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI), and Allocation Transfer Program (ATP), as well as the Halibut Experimental Recreational Fishery pilot program. Of the current net reallocations, 38,988 net pounds have been set aside for treaty mitigation and as part PICFI, and are unavailable to either the commercial or recreational fisheries. This value is current as of January 3, 2017.

D There is no initial allocation provided to XRQ fishery, though quota may be transferred into the XRQ fishery from commercial Halibut fisheries. As a result the XRQ TAC changes proportionately with the commercial TAC as quota is transferred between fisheries.

E Catch includes all landed fish, as well as the mortality associated with legal-sized released fish in the commercial fishery.

Table 2. Halibut for 2B commercial groundfish fisheries as of January 3, 2017. All values in net pounds.

Commercial TAC	6,097,271
Commercial Groundfish catch	5,912,081

Table 3. Halibut for 2B recreational and the Halibut Experimental Recreational pilot program (XRQ) fisheries as of January 3, 2017. All values in net pounds.

Recreational TAC	1,100,950
Recreational catch	1,095,461
XRQ TAC	9,573
XRQ catch	5,343 ^F
Recreational and XRQ TAC ^D	1,110,523
Recreational and XRQ catch ^E	1,100,804

D There is no initial allocation provided to XRQ fishery, though quota may be transferred into the XRQ fishery from commercial Halibut fisheries. As a result the XRQ TAC changes proportionately with the commercial TAC as quota is transferred between fisheries.

E Catch includes all landed fish.

F Effective January 3, 2017.