

2.3 2016 Pacific halibut sport fishery review

Claude Dykstra

Abstract

The 2016 sport harvest of Pacific halibut was estimated at 7.381 Mlb (3,348 t), similar to the sport harvest in 2015 (7.464 Mlb, 3,386 t). Changes in harvests varied across areas; in some cases, in response to changes in size restrictions. Area 2B operated under a 133 cm (52.4 inch) maximum size limit, and one halibut had to be less than 83 cm (32.7 inch) when attaining the two fish possession limit. A reverse slot limit allowing for the retention of halibut, if ≤ 43 inches (109.2 cm) or ≥ 80 inches (203 cm) (compared to ≤ 42 inches (106.7 cm) and ≥ 80 inches (203 cm) in 2015) in total length, was continued by the International Pacific Halibut Commission for the charter fishery in Area 2C. In Area 3A, charter anglers were allowed to retain two fish, but only one could exceed 28 inches in length, with no charter retention of Pacific halibut on Wednesdays throughout the season. Major sport fishery restrictions, such as daily bag and possession limits, for other areas and sectors remained unchanged from 2015.

Introduction

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) depends on state and federal agencies for estimates of Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) sport fishery harvests. Management and data collection methods vary by area. For the sport fishery in IPHC Area 2A, dockside sampling by state agencies (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)) supplies information for catch estimation needed for in-season management and post-season harvest estimation. Harvest estimates for the Canadian sport fishery are based on a combination of self-reporting by some lodges, overflights conducted by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), lodge logbooks, creel monitoring programs conducted by DFO or First Nations, and a DFO online survey system known as iRec. For the Alaska sport fishery, different methodologies are used for estimating harvests between the charter (guided) and non-charter (unguided) fisheries. Charter vessel operators are required to record client catches in a daily logbook to assist in providing timely catch estimates. For non-charter activity, a sample of licensed anglers receives a post-season mail survey, administered by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), for estimating sport fishery harvests of all species, including Pacific halibut. Data on the size of halibut caught are collected through an ADF&G dockside creel sampling program in major ports. However, this program excludes many lodges in Area 2C due to the remoteness of their locations.

The preliminary coastwide sport harvest estimate for 2016 was 7.38 Mlb (3,348 t) net weight, similar to 2015 ([Table 1](#)). Coastwide harvest remains below the historic high levels seen during 2004-2008. Harvests in Areas 2A, 2B, 2C, and 4 increased, whereas decreases were observed in Area 3A. Harvests in Area 2B and by the charter fisheries in Areas 2C and 3A were managed with size limit restrictions in 2016, which will be described in subsequent sections. Daily bag and possession limit regulations were unchanged from 2015 for all other areas. Initial season length extended through December 31 for the Alaskan and Canadian sport fisheries. Sport season length within Area 2A varied by sport fishery management subarea ([Table 2](#)).

Area 2A – U.S. West Coast

The 2016 Area 2A sport allocation was 463,826 lbs (210.4 t) net weight and based on the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) formula (http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Final_2016_PACIFIC_HALIBUT_CATCH_SHARING_PLAN_FOR_AREA_2A.pdf), which divides the overall fishery catch limit among all sectors. The sport allocation was further subdivided to seven subareas, resulting in 208,162 lb (94.4 t) to Washington subareas, 215,015 lbs (97.5 t) to Oregon subareas, and 11,009 lbs (5.0 t) shared in the Columbia River region. In addition, California received an allocation of 29,640 lbs (13.4 t). The Area 2A harvest totaled 502,202 lbs (227.8 t), or 38,376 lbs (8.3%) over the sport allocation, with the harvest in the Puget Sound and Washington South Coast subareas above their allocations (Table 2, 5).

The period of 2010-16 has marked a time of persistent overages in adherence to Area 2A Catch Limits as set by the CSP (Table 2). The main areas driving these overages have been the Washington inside waters (Puget Sound) in recent years, and the southern Oregon/California waters in earlier years. Overages in southern Oregon and California appear to have been rectified after PFMC moved to allocate catch to California directly, and they began in-season management of their allocation. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has recognized the issue of allocation adherence in communications to both the PFMC and IPHC; however, despite increasingly more restrictive pre-season measures in the form of season restrictions (Table 3), the adherence to the allocation has not notably improved. In 2017, WDFW plans to move the Puget Sound waters into active in-season management.

Fishery harvest seasons by Area and subareas for 2016 and catch estimates can be found in Tables 4 and 5. The Washington Inside Waters (i.e., Puget Sound) fishery operated on a fixed season, with the season length based on catch rates from previous years. The 2016 season was open for 8 days, compared to 11 in 2015 (Table 3, 4). The estimated harvest for those days came in at 102,699 lbs (46.58 t), equal to 178.9 % of the allocation. The Washington North Coast fishery was open for 6 days (twice as long as 2015), with 99.4% of the subarea's allocation caught. In the Washington South Coast subarea, the primary fishery lasted just four days during May. The nearshore fishery was allowed only in waters east of a line approximating the 30-fathom depth contour, and was only open for 21 days (compared to 77 in 2015), with the final catch just exceeding the allocation by 2.4%. In the Columbia River subarea fishery, 108 % (887 lbs (402.3 kg) over) of the subarea allocation was caught, the majority (82%) of which was landed in Washington. The Central Oregon subarea had fishery openings in May, June, August, September, and October totaling 28 days in the all-depth fishery and 145 days in the <40-fathom fishery. The total subarea harvest was 1.8% under the allocation of 206,410 lbs (93.6 t). Harvest for the South of Humbug subarea was only 48.5% (Table 5) of the allocation even though it was open for the full season of May 1 – October 1. California was allocated 4% or 29,640 lbs (13.4 t) of the non-tribal harvest in the 2016 catch sharing plan. In their second year of in-season management efforts the fishery was closed after September 3rd, with estimated landings of 29,581 lbs (13.4 t) net weight. As in past years, effort for Pacific halibut in all Area 2A subareas appeared heavily dependent upon the availability of other fishing opportunities, especially for salmon (*Oncorhynchus* sp.) and albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*).

Area 2B – British Columbia

DFO estimates harvest from a mix of data sources which differ by area and year. Monthly online surveys of licensed aircraft overflights, on-water vessel counts, creel sampling, and lodge logbooks provide effort data. Piece counts are estimated from lodge logbooks, and creel sampling by DFO and the Haida Fisheries Program. Pacific halibut weight data, when collected, come from the creel programs or from the self-reported lodge logbooks. Most of the lodge data are not validated.

The Area 2B sport fishery had an allocation of 1.101 Mlb (499.4 t) in 2016, which was 15% of the total catch limit for the area adopted by IPHC, after adjustments for commercial wastage. DFO implemented several restrictions in 2016 to pace the harvest and lengthen the season within the constraints of the allocation. A maximum length restriction of 133 cm was in place, with a daily bag limit of one fish, and a possession limit of two fish, of which one fish had to be smaller than 83 cm (90 cm in 2015). DFO also continued an annual limit of six fish per angler. Lastly, there was a prohibition on Pacific halibut retention in DFO Area 121 seaward from 12 nmi. At the end of September, DFO reported data through the end of August that projected a preliminary harvest estimate of 1,012,844 lbs (459.4 t) ([Table 1, 8](#)) which will be used until final data from DFO become available.

Sport fishing was also allowed under conditions of an experimental recreational halibut (XRQ) program which allowed commercial quota to be leased to sport fishers (April 1 – December 31). As of September 18, 2016 a total of 8,851 lbs (4.01 t) (comprising 2,829 lbs (1.28 t) carried over from 2015 and 6,022 lbs (2.73 t) transferred in 2016) were available in this program, and 5,217 lbs (2.37 t) of it had been utilized ([Table 8, 10](#)).

Areas 2C, 3A, and 4 – Alaska

Management of the charter fishery in 2016 was conducted with a North Pacific Management Council (NPFMC) CSP for the charter sport and commercial fisheries for Pacific halibut in waters of IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A.

IPHC implemented a reverse slot limit (RSL) for managing the 2016 charter fishery in Area 2C, based on a recommendation by the NPFMC, which restricted harvest to Pacific halibut less than or equal to 43 inches or greater than or equal to 80 inches in fork length. In Area 3A, charter anglers had a two fish daily bag limit, but only one fish could be greater than 28 inches.

A Guided Angler Fish (GAF) program initiated in 2014 was continued. The Pacific halibut CSP authorized annual transfers of commercial halibut Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) as GAF fish to charter halibut permit holders in IPHC Areas 2C or 3A for harvest in the charter halibut fishery so that charter vessel operators who chose to participate in the GAF program could offer their clients the opportunity to harvest up to two Pacific halibut of any size per day. Charter anglers using GAF were subject to the harvest limits in place for unguided sport anglers in that area. In 2016, there was a two-fish of any size daily bag limit for unguided sport anglers in Areas 2C and 3A. A summary of the major sport fishery regulations is shown in [Table 6](#).

ADF&G provides harvest estimates for the Alaska sport fishery to the IPHC. Preliminary estimates of the current year's harvest by the charter and non-charter sectors were made using sector-specific approaches because projections are influenced by management restrictions, which differ between sectors. Changes in charter fishery bag limit regulations in recent years led ADF&G to project the 2016 Area 2C and 3A harvest (numbers of fish) using a regression of final Statewide

Harvest Survey (SWHS) estimates on logbook data through July 31 for the years 2006-2015. Projections for the non-charter fishery are made from several time series methods. For both sectors, ADF&G projects the number of fish landed through the aforementioned methods and applies an average weight estimate based on the IPHC length-weight relationship applied to lengths from the current year's dockside sampling. A breakdown of charter and non-charter sector harvests since 2003, along with the estimates for 2016, is shown in [Table 5](#).

For Area 2C, the sport harvest is estimated to have increased slightly this year, to 2.100 Mlb (953 t) from 2.095 Mlb (950 t) in 2015, with harvest by the charter fishery increasing slightly, whereas the harvest by the non-charter sector dropped slightly. Charter anglers caught more fish in 2016 (66,286) vs. 2015 (65,656), at a larger average weight of 11.95 lbs, compared to 11.69 lbs in 2015. In contrast, non-charter anglers caught fewer Pacific halibut in 2016 (68,622) vs. 2015 (73,816) at a higher average net weight of 19.05 lbs vs. 17.97 lbs, respectively. The average weight of fish caught in the non-charter sector fishery has been fairly stable since 2009, ranging from 16.20 lbs to 17.97 lbs. In the charter fishery, the reverse slot restriction has resulted in a significant drop in the average weight, from 26 lbs in 2010 (final year of no restrictions on size) to the 11.95 lbs previously noted. The 2C charter sector is estimated to have harvested 13% under their quota of 0.906 Mlb in 2016.

The Area 3A sport fishery harvest estimate of 3.492 Mlb (1,584 t) is a slight decrease compared to the prior year with both charter and non-charter removals dropping slightly ([Table 7](#)). Charter anglers caught less fish in 2016 (155,032) vs. 2015 (163,632), at a slightly higher average net weight of 12.67 lbs vs 12.63 lbs, respectively, compared to 2015. The decrease in numbers may have been due in part to the regulation prohibiting charter Pacific halibut retention (except for GAF) on Wednesdays. Non-charter anglers caught a slightly lower number of halibut in 2016 (129,507) vs. 2015 (136,225) at a slightly lower average net weight of 11.80 lbs vs. 11.86 lbs, respectively. The daily bag limit remained unchanged at two fish per day for both sectors but charter anglers could only keep one fish over 28 inches fork length. The 1.964 Mlb (891 t) harvest by the charter sector was 8% over the quota of 1.814 Mlb (823 t) ([Table 7](#)).

Sport harvests in Areas 3B and 4 were projected from existing SWHS time series estimates. The ADF&G has no dockside creel sampling in those areas, so IPHC has traditionally estimated the weight of the harvest in those areas by applying the average weight of Pacific halibut caught in Kodiak. The estimated 2016 harvests for these areas remained relatively low at 5,000 lbs (2.27 t) in Area 3B and 12,000 lbs (5.44 t) in Area 4. Pacific halibut sport fishing is much less common in the western Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea due to the relative remoteness of the ports. Since 2005, annual harvests have ranged from 5,000 lbs to 30,000 lbs in Area 3B, and 9,000 to 50,000 lbs in Area 4.

Other sport fishery management issues

Sport fishery discards

Pacific halibut discarded for any reason suffer some degree of discard mortality. The increasing use of size restrictions, such as reverse slot limits, prompted the IPHC in March 2012 to request the development of data collection programs from all agencies involved with management of recreational fisheries for halibut in order to permit the estimation of discard mortality by these fisheries. Current year estimates ([Table 8](#)) of sport discard mortality have been received from Alaska and Oregon, through 2015 for California and Washington (with the exception of updates for Puget Sound, where estimates only go through 2011).

Washington, Oregon, and California did not all have estimates available for 2016. Therefore, a conservative estimate of 3,000 lbs (1.36 t) was used (5-yr average), which is in line with previous year's levels.

IPHC did not receive an estimate for Area 2B, so an estimate of 68,000 lbs (30.84 t) discard mortality was applied based on Area 2B sport fish number estimates and the discard mortality rates estimated for Area 2C charter fishing, which has similar size restrictions in place ([Table 8](#)).

Alaska provided estimates of release mortality ([Table 8, 9](#)) in the sport fishery by combining SWHS derived estimates of the numbers of released fish, assumed mortality rates based on hook type data, and modeling of length distributions to derive estimates of the average weight of released fish. Assumed mortality rates were 5% for Area 3A charter-caught Pacific halibut, 6% for Area 2C charter and Area 3A non-charter, and 7% for Area 2C non-charter. They were derived by assuming a 3.5% mortality rate for halibut released from circle hooks and a 10% mortality rate for halibut released from all other hook types. A rate of 6% was assumed for Areas 3B and 4, in which no data on hook type were collected. Preliminary estimates of release mortality for 2016 were similar in magnitude to 2015. For 2016, total sport removals including discards were 2.213 Mlb (1.00 t) in Area 2C and 3.560 Mlb (1.61 t) in Area 3A. Release mortality accounted for 3.3% of Area 2C removals and 1.7% of Area 3A removals in 2016.

Sport fishery landings against leased commercial quota

There were several programs in place in 2016 to allow the landing of sport caught Pacific halibut that were exempt from the local size limit restrictions. In Canada a pilot program is in place known as the Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery (XRQ) which allows for a market based transfer mechanism to move quota from the directed halibut fishery to the recreational. In Alaska, NMFS implemented the Guided Angler Fish (GAF) Program as part of the Catch Sharing Plan for Areas 2C and 3A in 2014. Summaries of landings in these programs can be found in [Tables 8](#) and [10](#).

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Table 1. Harvest of Pacific halibut by sport fishers (Mlbs, net weight) by IPHC regulatory area, 2001-2016 (includes bycatch mortality). Estimates for 2016 are preliminary.

Year	Area 2A	Area 2B^b	Area 2C^c	Area 3A^c	Area 3B	Area 4	Total
2001	0.446	1.015	1.923	4.675	0.016	0.029	8.104
2002	0.399	1.260	2.090	4.202	0.013	0.048	8.012
2003	0.404	1.218	2.258	5.427	0.009	0.031	9.347
2004	0.491	1.613	2.937	5.606	0.007	0.053	10.707
2005	0.488	1.841	2.798	5.672	0.014	0.050	10.863
2006	0.521	1.752	2.526	5.337	0.014	0.046	10.196
2007	0.508	1.556	3.049	6.283	0.025	0.044	11.465
2008	0.492	1.536	3.264	5.320	0.026	0.040	10.678
2009	0.497	1.098	2.382	4.758	0.030	0.024	8.790
2010	0.400	1.156	1.971	4.285	0.024	0.016	7.852
2011	0.404	1.220	1.029	4.408	0.014	0.017	7.104
2012	0.468	1.056	1.583	3.626	0.022	0.028	6.783
2013	0.505	0.867	2.193	4.045	0.015	0.009	7.634
2014	0.480	0.973	2.070	3.646	0.007	0.009	7.185
2015	0.447	1.056	2.188	3.761	0.005	0.007	7.464
2016 ^a	0.505	1.086	2.213	3.560	0.005	0.012	7.381
2015-2016 Change							
Pounds	0.058	0.003	0.025	-0.201	0.000	0.005	-0.083
Percent	12.98%	2.84%	1.14%	-5.34%	0.00%	71.43%	-1.11%

^a Preliminary.^b Includes landings of fish leased from the commercial fishery (XRQ).^c Includes landings of fish leased from the commercial fishery (GAF).

Table 2. Area 2A sport allocations, harvests and percent of allocation taken (lbs, net weight) by subarea, 2010-2016.

Year		2010			2011			2012			2013		
State	Subarea	Allocation	Catch	% TAC	Allocation	Catch	% TAC	Allocation	Catch	% TAC	Allocation	Catch	% TAC
WA	Puget Sound	50,542	71,801	142%	58,155	45,856	79%	57,393	85,249	149%	57,393	93,950	164%
	North Coast	101,179	95,014	94%	108,792	103,741	95%	108,030	105,479	98%	108,030	107,856	100%
	South Coast	35,887	34,554	96%	43,500	45,100	104%	42,739	42,467	99%	42,740	42,085	98%
WA/OR	Columbia R.	13,436	10,811	80%	15,418	11,278	73%	11,895	7,959	67%	11,895	6,468	54%
OR	Central OR	153,548	155,567	101%	172,505	170,010	99%	191,780	191,535	100%	191,979	194,485	101%
	Southern OR			n/a			n/a			n/a			n/a
OR/CA	South of Humbug	5,007	28,867	577%	5,625	25,500	453%	6,056	32,572	538%	6,063	56,209	927%
CA	California			n/a			n/a			n/a			n/a
Catch Total		359,599	396,614	110%	403,995	401,485	99%	417,893	465,261	111%	418,100	501,053	120%
Year		2014			2015			2016					
State	Subarea	Allocation	Catch	% TAC	Allocation	Catch	% TAC	Allocation	Catch	% TAC	Allocation	Catch	% TAC
WA	Puget Sound	57,393	106,552	186%	57,393	95,591	167%	57,393	102,699	179%	57,393	102,699	179%
	North Coast	108,030	112,002	104%	108,030	94,698	88%	108,030	107,417	99%	108,030	107,417	99%
	South Coast	42,739	45,903	107%	42,739	42,733	100%	42,739	43,785	102%	42,739	43,785	102%
WA/OR	Columbia River	11,895	9,239	78%	10,254	9,340	91%	11,009	11,896	108%	11,009	11,896	108%
OR	Central OR	185,621	165,450	89%	175,633	174,956	100%	206,410	202,651	98%	206,410	202,651	98%
	Southern OR	2,339	6,105	261%	7,318	2,581	35%	8,605	4,173	48%	8,605	4,173	48%
OR/CA	South of Humbug			n/a			n/a			n/a			n/a
CA	California	6,240	31,226	500%	25,220	22,740	90%	29,640	29,581	100%	29,640	29,581	100%
Catch Total		414,257	476,477	115%	426,587	442,639	104%	463,826	502,202	108%	463,826	502,202	108%

Table 3. Number of days open for Pacific halibut fishing in Area 2A by subarea, 2010-2016.

State	Subarea	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
WA	Puget Sound East	30	24	15	12	11	11	8
	Puget Sound West	22	23	30	8	8	8	8
	North Coast	7	8	7	4	4	3	6
	South Coast	7	7	5	5	5	4	4
WA/OR	Columbia River (all-depth)	49	48	60	66	87	19	19
OR	Central OR (all-depth)	16	17	21	17	16	26	28
	Southern OR					184	184	184
OR/CA	South of Humbug	184	184	184	184			
CA	California					184	57	83

Table 4. Summary of the 2016 Pacific halibut sport fishery seasons. No size limits were in effect unless otherwise noted.

Regulatory Area & Region	Fishing Dates	Fishing Days per Week	No. of Fishing Days	Daily Bag Limit
Area 2A – Washington, Oregon, California				
WA Inside Waters				
East of Sekiu River	May 7	1 (1Sat)	1	1
	May 12-14	3 (Thu-Sat)	3	1
	May 26-29	4 (Thu-Sun)	4	1
WA North Coast (Sekiu R. to Queets R.)				
	May 7	1 (Sat)	1	1
	May 12, 14	2 (Thu, Sat)	2	1
	May 28	1 (Sat)	1	1
	June 11	1 (Sat)	1	1
	June 23	1 (Sat)	1	1
WA South Coast (Queets R. to Leadbetter Pt.)				
All depths	May 1,3,8,10	4 (Sun, Tues)	4	1
Northern nearshore	May 1 – May 21	7 (Sun-Sat)	21	1
Columbia R. (Leadbetter Pt. to Cape Falcon)				
All depths	May 1-June 3	4 (Thu-Sun)	20	1
Nearshore	May 2– June 8	3 (Mon-Wed)	18	1
OR Central Coast (Cape Falcon - Humbug Mtn.)				
All depths – Spring	May 12 – June 18	3 (Thu-Sat) ^a	14	1
All depths – Summer	Aug 5 – Oct 29 Bi-weekly	2 (Fri-Sat) ^b	14	1
Less than 40 fathoms	June 1 – Oct 31	7 (Sun-Sat)	145	1
Southern OR	May 1 – Oct 31	7 (Sun-Sat)	184	1
California	May 1–Sept 3 ^c (First ½ of month)	7 (Sun-Sat)	83	1
Area 2B – British Columbia	Feb 1 – Dec 31	7 (Sun-Sat)	335	1 ^e
Area 2C – Alaska				
Guided anglers	Feb 1 – Dec 31	7 (Sun-Sat)	335	1 ^e
Unguided anglers	Feb 1 – Dec 31	7 (Sun-Sat)	335	2
Area 3A – Alaska				
Guided anglers	Feb 1 – Dec 31	7 (Sun-Sat) ^f	335	2 ^g
Unguided anglers	Feb 1 – Dec 31	7 (Sun-Sat)	335	2
Area 3B and 4 – Alaska	Feb 1 – Dec 31	7 (Sun-Sat)	335	2

^a Fishing was prohibited June 9-11, 16.^b Fishing was prohibited August 12-13, 26-27, September 9-10, 23-24, October 7-8, 21-22.^c Fishing was permitted the first half of each month (1st – 15th) until closed.^d The daily limit was one fish with a maximum length of 133 cm and a possession limit of two fish, but only one fish could be greater than 83 cm. An annual limit of six fish was also in effect.^e A reverse slot limit defining retained halibut as ≤43 inches or ≥80 inches in total length was in effect.^f No halibut retention (except GAF) on Wednesdays.^g Charter anglers could only keep two fish per day, and only one could be greater than 28 inches total length.

Table 5. 2016 IPHC Area 2A sport harvest allocations and preliminary catch estimates (lbs, net weight) by subarea.

Subarea	Allocation	Harvest Estimate	Percent Taken	Pounds Over/(Under)
WA Inside Waters	57,393	102,699	178.9	45,306
WA North Coast	108,030	107,417	99.4	(613)
WA South Coast	42,739	43,785	102.4	1,046
WA/OR Columbia River	11,009	11,896	108.0	887
OR Central Coast	206,410	202,651	98.2	(3,759)
OR South of Humbug	8,605	4,173	48.5	(4,432)
CA ^a	29,640	29,581	99.8	(59)
Total	463,826	502,202 ^b		

^a Preliminary in-season harvest estimate.

^b Does not include 2,858 pounds of discard mortality.

Table 6. Summary of major U.S. federal and state regulations for the charter (guided) sport Pacific halibut fishery in IPHC Areas 2C and 3A.

Area 2C	
Year(s)	Regulations
1995-2005	Two-fish bag limit (no size restrictions); no prohibition on crew retention
2006	Two-fish bag limit (no size limit); State of AK Emergency Order (EO) prohibiting crew harvest May 26-Dec 31.
2007	Two-fish bag limit (one under 32" eff. June 1). No crew retention May 31-Dec 31 (State EO and Federal Rule).
2008	Two-fish bag limit (one under 32"), except one-fish bag limit June 1-10 (halted by injunction).
2009	One fish (no size limit), no harvest by skipper & crew; line limit (effective June 5).
2010	One fish (no size limit), no harvest by skipper & crew; line limit.
2011	One fish bag limit, under 37" fork length. No harvest by skipper & crew; line limit
2012-2013	One fish bag limit, retainable if length $\leq 45"$ or $\geq 68"$. No harvest by skipper & crew; line limit.
2014	One fish bag limit, retainable if length $\leq 44"$ or $\geq 76"$. No harvest by skipper & crew; line limit.
2015	One fish bag limit, retainable if length $\leq 42"$ or $\geq 80"$. No harvest by skipper & crew; line limit.
2016	One fish bag limit, retainable if length $\leq 43"$ or $\geq 80"$. No harvest by skipper & crew; line limit.
Area 3A	
Year(s)	Regulations
1995-2006	Two-fish bag limit (no size restrictions); no prohibition on crew harvest.
2007	Two-fish bag limit (no size restrictions); State EO prohibiting crew harvest May 1-Dec 31.
2008	Two-fish bag limit (no size restrictions); State EO prohibiting crew harvest May 24-Sept. 1.
2009	Two-fish bag limit (no size restrictions); State EO prohibiting crew harvest May 23-Sept. 1.
2010-2013	Two-fish bag limit (no size restrictions); no prohibition on crew harvest.
2014	Two-fish bag limit, 29" maximum size limit on one fish. Charter vessels may only take one trip during which charter vessel anglers retain halibut per day.
2015	Two-fish bag limit, 29" maximum size limit on one fish. Charter vessels may only take one trip during which charter vessel anglers retain halibut per day. Five fish annual limit. Charter anglers not to retain halibut (except GAF) on Thursdays between June 15 and August 31.
2016	Two-fish bag limit, 28" maximum size limit on one fish. Charter vessels may only take one trip during which charter vessel anglers retain halibut per day. Four fish annual limit. Charter anglers not to retain halibut (except GAF) on Wednesdays.

Table 7. Estimated harvest by the non-charter (unguided) and charter (guided) sport halibut fisheries (Mlb, net weight) in IPHC Areas 2C and 3A. Also shown are the Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) applicable to the guided fishery through 2013. In 2014 these were replaced by quotas for the guided harvests. Harvest estimates for 2016 are preliminary.

Year	Area 2C				Area 3A			
	Non-charter	Charter	Total	GHL ^a	Non-charter	Charter	Total	GHL ^a
2003	0.846	1.412	2.258	1.432	2.046	3.382	5.427	3.650
2004	1.187	1.750	2.937	1.432	1.937	3.668	5.606	3.650
2005	0.845	1.952	2.798	1.432	1.984	3.689	5.672	3.650
2006	0.723	1.804	2.526	1.432	1.674	3.664	5.337	3.650
2007	1.131	1.918	3.049	1.432	2.281	4.002	6.283	3.650
2008	1.265	1.999	3.264	0.931	1.942	3.378	5.320	3.650
2009	1.133	1.249	2.383	0.788	2.023	2.734	4.758	3.650
2010	0.885	1.086	1.971	0.788	1.587	2.698	4.285	3.650
2011	0.685	0.344	1.029	0.788	1.615	2.793	4.408	3.650
2012	0.977	0.605	1.583	0.931	1.341	2.284	3.626	3.103
2013	1.361	0.762	2.123	0.788	1.452	2.514	3.966	2.734
	Non-charter	Charter	Total	Quota ^a	Non-charter	Charter	Total	Quota ^a
2014	1.171	0.783	1.954	0.761	1.533	2.034	3.567	1.782
2015	1.327	0.768	2.095	0.851	1.616	2.067	3.683	1.890
2016	1.308	0.792	2.100	0.906	1.528	1.964	3.492	1.814

^a Beginning in 2014, the guideline harvest levels for Areas 2C and 3A were replaced by sector quotas for the guided sport harvests.

Table 8. Total preliminary 2016 Pacific halibut sports removal estimates (Mlb, net weight) by IPHC regulatory area. Includes catch of fish landed against lease transfers from commercial quota fisheries (Experimental Recreational Halibut Fishery (XRQ) in Area 2B and Guided Angler Fish (GAF) in Areas 2C and 3A).

Removal	Area 2A	Area 2B	Area 2C	Area 3A	Area 3B	Area 4	Total
All sport fisheries	0.502	1.013	2.100	3.492	0.005	0.012	7.124
Release mortality	0.003	0.068 ^a	0.074	0.059	-	-	0.204
Leased commercial	-	0.005 ^b	0.039	0.009	-	-	0.053
Total	0.505	1.086	2.213	3.560	0.005	0.012	7.381

^a Based on ratio of discards seen in 2C charter fishery applied to 2B catch.

^b Preliminary XRQ as reported through 9/18/2016.

Table 9. Total preliminary Pacific halibut sports removal estimates (Mlb, net pounds) by the charter (guided) and non-charter (unguided) sectors in Alaska for 2016. Includes catch of guided angler fish (GAF).

Sector	Area 2C	Area 3A	Area 3B	Area 4	Total
Charter	0.792	1.964	-	-	2.756
Release mortality	0.053	0.028	-	-	0.081
GAF	0.039	0.009	-	-	0.048
Non-charter	1.308	1.528	0.005	0.012	2.853
Release mortality	0.021	0.031	0.000	0.001	0.052
Total	2.213	3.560	0.005	0.012	5.790

Table 10. Total Pacific halibut sports landings against leased commercial fish (XRQ in 2B, GAF in 2C,3A) in net pounds from 2013-2016.

Year	Area 2B	Area 2C	Area 3A	Total
2013	7,751	-	-	7,751
2014	5,148	53,864	10,336	69,348
2015	6,116	27,849	5,158	39,123
2016 ^a	5,217	38,968	9,332	53,517

^aPreliminary XRQ as reported through 9/18/2016.