

NMFS Report

REPORT ON THE 2017 PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN AREA 2A

The 2017 Area 2A Pacific halibut (halibut) total allowable catch (TAC) of 1,330,000 pounds (lbs.), set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), was allocated according to the 2017 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A as follows:

Treaty Tribes	465,500 (35%)
Non-Tribal Total	864,500 (65%)
Non-Tribal Commercial	265,402
Washington Sport	307,762
Oregon Sport	256,757
California Sport	34,580

Weights in this report are net weight (gutted, head-off, and without ice and slime), except IPHC fishing period limits. The structure of each fishery and the resulting harvests are described below. Refer to Table 2 at the end of this report for a summary of catches by the tribal, commercial, and recreational fisheries.

TOTAL TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL FISHERIES

Best estimates of halibut catch for Area 2A indicate harvest of 818,976 pounds of the non-tribal total quota and 432,483 pounds of the tribal quota, with a total preliminary harvest estimate of 1,251,459 pounds, or 94.09%, of the 1,330,000 lbs. TAC. A summary of all Area 2A quotas and best-available harvest estimates for 2017 is attached in Table 2 on the last page of this document.

NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

A quota of 265,402 pounds (30.7% of the non-tribal share) was allocated to two fishery components:

- 1) a directed longline fishery targeting on halibut south of Point Chehalis, WA; and
- 2) an incidental catch fishery during the salmon troll fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California.

An additional 70,000 pounds were allocated to an incidental catch fishery in the sablefish primary fishery for vessels using longline gear north of Point Chehalis, WA. This allowance for the sablefish primary fishery is taken from the Washington sport allocation and is only available in years when the Washington TAC is above 214,110 pounds, as long as the amount is at least 10,000 pounds.

Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery

A quota of 39,810 pounds of Pacific halibut (15% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the non-tribal commercial salmon troll fishery in Area 2A as incidental catch during salmon troll fisheries.

- Halibut retention was permitted in the salmon troll fisheries beginning May 1, with the following ratio: one halibut (minimum 32 inches) per two Chinook salmon landed by a salmon troller, except that one halibut could be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut could be landed per trip.
- On July 1, the ratio changed to one halibut per four Chinook, except that one halibut could be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 10 halibut could be landed per trip.
- The allocation of halibut in the salmon troll fishery was estimated to have been taken and the fishery closed August 3, with an estimated catch of 38,621 pounds.

Fishing with salmon troll gear is prohibited within the Salmon Troll Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) off the northern Washington Coast. Additionally, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by salmon trollers.

Directed fishery targeting halibut

A quota of 225,591 pounds (85% of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation) was allocated to the directed longline fishery targeting on halibut in southern Washington, Oregon, and California. The fishery was confined to the area south of Subarea 2A-1 (south of Point Chehalis, WA; 46°53.30' N. lat.). In addition, there are closed areas along the coast defined by depth contours. Between the U.S./Canada border and 40°10' N. lat. the western boundary is defined by a line approximating the 100 fm depth contour. The eastern boundary is defined as follows: Between the U.S./Canada border and 46°16' N. lat., the boundary is the shoreline. Between 46°16' N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. the boundary is the 30 fm depth contour. One-day fishing periods of 10 hours in duration were scheduled every other week by the IPHC starting June 28, 2017. In 2017, the fishery was open for 3 fishing periods on June 28, July 12, and July 26. A 32 inch minimum size limit with the head on was in effect for all openings. Vessel landing limits per fishing period based on vessel length were imposed by IPHC during all openings as shown in Table 1. Vessels choosing to operate in this fishery could not land halibut as incidental catch in the salmon troll fishery, nor operate in the recreational fishery.

Table 1. 2017 fishing period limits (dressed weight, head-on with ice and slime, in pounds per vessel) by vessel size.

Vessel Class/Size (ft)		June 28 and July 12	July 26
0-25	A	860	670
26-30	B	1,075	835
31-35	C	1,715	1,335
36-40	D	4,735	3,680
41-45	E	5,090	3,960
46-50	F	6,095	4,740
51-55	G	6,800	5,290
56+	h	10,225	7,955

- The June 28, July 12 and July 26 directed commercial open periods resulted in a catch of approximately 229,707 pounds. IPHC announced closure of the directed fishery on August 4, 2017.

Incidental halibut catch in the sablefish primary longline fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA

A quota of 70,000 pounds was allocated to the primary sablefish fishery in Area 2A as incidental catch north of Point Chehalis, WA. This incidental fishery is only available to vessels with a groundfish limited entry permit endorsed for longline gear with a sablefish tier limit and with an IPHC license. Beginning April 1, the incidental landing limit was 110 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the landing limit ratio. Effective May 11, the landing limit was changed to 140 pounds (64 kg) dressed weight of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (454 kg) dressed weight of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the 140 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio per landing. The fishery was confined to an area seaward of a boundary line approximating the 100-fm depth contour. Fishing was also prohibited in the North Coast Commercial YRCA, an area off the northern Washington coast. In addition, the "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by commercial longline sablefish fishermen.

- This fishery is projected to have landed 35,866 pounds.

SPORT FISHERIES (NON-TRIBAL)

529,098 pounds were allocated between sport fisheries in Washington (35.6% of non-tribal share, minus 70,000 pounds allocated to the incidental catch in the sablefish primary fishery), Oregon (29.7% of the non-tribal share), and California (4.0% of the non-tribal share). The allocations were further subdivided as quotas among six geographic subareas as described below. Unless otherwise noted the daily bag limit in all subareas was one halibut of any size, per person, per day.

Washington Inside Waters Subarea (Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca)

This area was allocated 64,962 pounds (23.5% of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 pounds). The fishing season in Puget Sound was open May 4, 6, 11, 21, 25, and June 1, 4, 10, and 17.

- The estimated total catch in this area is 60,123 pounds, which is 4,839 pounds under the quota.

Northern Washington Coastal Waters Subarea (landings in Neah Bay and La Push)

The coastal area off Cape Flattery to Queets River was allocated 115,599 pounds (62.2% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,945 and 224,110 pounds). The fishery was open for nine days (May 4, 6, 11, 21, 25, June 1, 4, 10, and 17), and closed on June 17 without enough quota remaining to reopen the fishery. The "C-shaped" North Coast Recreational YRCA, southwest of Cape Flattery, was closed to sport halibut fishing.

- The estimated total catch for this area is 100,410 pounds, which is 15,189 pounds under the quota.

Washington South Coast Subarea (landings in Westport)

The area from the Queets River to Leadbetter Point was allocated 50,307 pounds (12.3% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington sport fishery and 32% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 pounds). This subarea operates with an all-depth fishery and a nearshore fishery. When open, the nearshore fishery occurs in waters between the Queets River and 47°25.00' N. lat. south to 46°58.00' N. lat., and east of 124°30.00' W. long. The south coast subarea quota was allocated as follows: 2,000 pounds to the nearshore fishery and the remaining 48,307 pounds to the primary fishery. The all-depth fishery was open five days on May 4, 6, 11, 21, and June 17. The nearshore fishery remained closed due to overages from the all-depth fishery.

- The all-depth fishery estimated catch is 61,061 pounds which is 10,754 pounds over the quota.

Columbia River Subarea (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon)

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 12,799 pounds, consisting of 2.0% of the first 130,845 pounds allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 4.0% of the Washington sport allocation between 130,845 and 224,110 pounds, and 2.3% of the Oregon sport allocation. The fishery operates with an all-depth and nearshore fishery. The nearshore fishery is allocated 500 pounds to accommodate incidental halibut retention during groundfish fishing when the all-depth halibut fishery in this area is closed.

- The all-depth fishery was open May 4-7, 11-14, 18-21, and 25. It reopened on June 17 for one day. The nearshore fishery opened May 8.
- The all-depth fishery estimated catch is 13,830 pounds which is 1,531 pounds over the subarea quota.
- The nearshore fishery estimated catch was 184 pounds, through June 23. The overage from the all-depth fishery was greater than what remained on the total Columbia River Subarea allocation, therefore the nearshore fishery closed to prevent further overage of the subarea allocation.

Oregon Central Coast Subarea (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain)

This sport fishery subarea was allocated 240,812 pounds (93.79% of the Oregon sport allocation).

Three seasons occurred in this subarea:

1. a restricted depth nearshore (inside 40-fathom) fishery, open June 1-July 30, reopened September 3-October 31, 7 days a week;
2. a fixed Spring season in all depths that was open on May 11-13, 18-20, June 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, June 29- July 1;
3. a Summer season in all depths that was open August 4-5, August 18-19, September 1-2, and September 15-16.

Harvest in this subarea in these seasons is summarized in the bullets below.

- The inside 40-fathom fishery has an estimated catch of 34,865 pounds, which is 766 pounds under the quota of revised quota of 35,631 pounds.
- The Spring all-depth fishery resulted in an estimated catch of 145,635 pounds, which is 6,077 pounds under the spring allocation.
- Quota left from the Spring all-depth fishery (6,077 pounds) was transferred to the Summer all-depth fishery.
- The Summer all-depth fishery resulted in an estimated catch of 63,546 pounds, which is 2,735 pounds under the revised allocation of 66,280 pounds.
- The remaining 2,735 pounds was transferred to the Central Coast nearshore fishery.

Southern Oregon (Humbug Mountain to the OR/CA Border)

This sport fishery was allocated 10,039 pounds (3.9% of the Oregon sport fishery allocation minus the Oregon contribution to the Columbia River subarea). This area has a pre-set season of 7 days per week from May 1 to October 31.

- On August 28, 4,000 pounds from this subarea was transferred to the Central Coast nearshore subarea, resulting in an adjusted allocation of 6,039 pounds.
- This fishery has an estimated catch of 2,811 pounds, which is 3,228 pounds under the adjusted quota.

California (Off the California Coast)

This sport fishery was allocated 34,580 pounds (4.0% of the non-tribal share). The fishery was open May 1- June 15, July 1- 15, August 1-15 and September 1-10. The fishery was closed on September 10 at 11:59 pm because catch projections estimated the quota had been taken and there was not sufficient quota for the fishery to remain open. An error was found in California catch estimation programming language that had resulted in the over-reporting of catch, causing the fishery to close earlier than was necessary.

- This fishery resulted in an estimated catch of 30,541 pounds, which is 4,039 pounds under the quota.

TRIBAL FISHERIES

465,500 pounds (35% of the Area 2A TAC) was allocated to tribal fisheries. The tribes estimated that 29,600 pounds would be used for ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) fisheries and the remaining 435,900 pounds were allocated to the commercial fishery.

- The unrestricted fishery was open March 20 (11 hours) and April 15-16 (39 hours). The unrestricted fishery landed 264,005 pounds in 306 landings.
- The restricted fishery was open May 1-2 (35 hours), with a 500 pound/vessel/day limit. The restricted fishery landed 41,607 pounds in 172 landings.
- The late fishery was open May 19-20 and 22-23 (34 hr.) with a 2,500 pound/vessel/day limit, and June 18-19 and July 21-22 (34 hrs.) with a 1,000 pound/vessel/day limit. The late fisheries totaled 126,870 pounds in 186 landings.
- The total landings for all tribal fisheries is 432,482 pounds, which is 3,418 pounds under the tribal commercial allocation. The C&S fishery will continue through December 31 and estimates of catch will be reported by the tribes in January 2018.

Table 2. Summary of all Area 2A quotas and 2017 harvest estimates.

2017 Area 2A TAC and Catch (in pounds)			2017 Quota	Inseason Revised Quota	Catch to Date	% Quota taken
Tribal			465,500		432,482	92.91
Tribal	C&S		29,600			
Tribal	Commercial		435,900		432,482 *	99.22
Non-Tribal			864,500		818,976	94.73
Commercial			265,402			
Commercial	Directed		225,591		229,707 *	101.82
Commercial	Incid. Salmon Troll		39,810		38,621 *	97.01
WA Sport			307,762		257,460	83.66
WA Sport	Incid. Sable		70,000		35,866 *	51.24
WA Sport	Puget Sound		64,962		60,123 *	92.55
WA Sport	North Coast		115,599		100,410 *	86.86
WA Sport	South Coast	Primary	50,307		61,061 *	121.40
WA Sport	South Coast	Nearshore	-		- *	-
WA/OR	Columbia River	All-Depth	12,299		13,830 *	112.45
WA/OR	Columbia River	Nearshore	500		184 *	36.80
OR Sport			256,757		246,857	96.14
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Spring all-depth	151,712		145,635 *	95.99
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Summer all-depth	60,203	66,280	63,546 *	95.88
OR Sport	Central OR Coast	Nearshore	28,897	35,631	34,865 *	97.85
OR Sport	Southern OR		10,039	6,039	2,811 *	46.55
CA Sport			34,580		30,541 *	88.32
Total			1,330,000		1,249,682	93.96
* Fishery closed for the season						