

2017 2A Treaty Tribal Halibut Season Summary

The 2017 treaty halibut allocation was 465,500 pounds of which 435,900 pounds was the treaty commercial Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and 29,600 pounds was set aside for the Ceremonial and Subsistence (C&S) fishery based off the actual C&S harvest from the 2016 fishing season. There are thirteen federally recognized treaty tribes that exercise treaty fishing rights within International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) marine area 2A are: **Coastal Tribes:** the Hoh Indian Tribe, Makah Tribe, Quileute Indian Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation; **Puget Sound Tribes:** the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe, Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, Skokomish Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, Swinomish Tribe, and Tulalip Tribes.

For the 2017 halibut season the tribes managed the fishery using the same management plan as they had used in previous years. The tribal halibut season structure consists of three sub-fishery components: an “unrestricted fishery”, “restricted fishery” and a “late season” or “mop-up” fishery.

Season Structure and Outcomes

In the unrestricted fishery, a tribe could harvest halibut starting at noon on March 11 for 39 hours. This fishery does not have landing limits. The weather did not meet the Treaty Management Measures criteria for the unrestricted fishery to open on March 11. Weather calls were then set up for every 24 hours, to check if weather was meeting the set criteria. The weather looked good in the Puget Sound area; on March 20 the Puget Sound Tribes opened their unrestricted fishery. The fishery was open for 11 hours and temporally suspended. The landed catch during the initial 11 hour opener was 32,820 pounds of halibut from 106 landings. The Treaty weather criteria was met on April 15th for all the halibut tribes to open the unrestricted fishery. The Coastal Tribes fished for 39 hours and the tribes that opened on March 20 fished for 28 hours. The Unrestricted fishery landed a total of 264,005 pounds of halibut or 61.0 percent of the overall TAC in 306 landings (Figure 1).

The restricted fishery opened on May 1 for 35 hours with a 500-pound per vessel per day limit. The expected harvest of the restricted fishery is 19.0 percent of the treaty commercial TAC or 82,821 pounds. The total poundage harvested during the restricted fishery was 41,608 pounds or 10.4 percent of the overall treaty TAC with 172 landings.

After the first two treaty commercial sub-fishery components, 130,053 lbs. remained to be harvested during the late season/mop-up fishery. The late season fishery opened on May 19 for 34-hours for the Coastal Tribes, and opened on May 22 with a 34-hour opening period for the Puget Sound Tribes. Both fisheries were operated with a 2,500 pound per vessel landing limit for the entire opening period. The total harvest of halibut in that fishery was 92,401 lbs. with 133 landings. A second mop-up fishery was scheduled with a 1,000 pounds per vessel landing limit for the entire opening period. This fishery opened on June 18 for the Coastal Tribes and July 21 for the Puget Sound Tribes. During the second mop-up fishery treaty commercial fishermen landed 34,469 lbs. of halibut with 54 landings. The total treaty harvest of halibut during the mop-up fishery was 126,870 pounds with 187 landings.

The 2017 tribal halibut commercial season closed on July 23, 2017. The total tribal commercial halibut catch in 2017 was 432,483 dressed pounds, leaving 3,417 pounds of halibut in the Tribal commercial TAC (Table 1). The C&S halibut fishery continued through December 31, 2017.

Table 1. Summary of the three commercial fishery components in dressed pounds, landings, and dates (hours) of the fishery season.

Fishery Component	lbs (dressed)	Landings	Dates
Unrestricted	264,005	306	March 20 (Puget Sound Tribes - 11 hrs); April 15-16 (Coastal Tribes - 39 hrs; Puget Sound Tribes - 28 hours)
Restricted	41,608	172	May 1-2 (35 hrs)
Late Season #1	92,401	133	May 19-20/22-23 (34 hrs)
Late Season #2	34,469	54	June 18-19/July 21-22 (34 hrs)
Total	432,483	665	

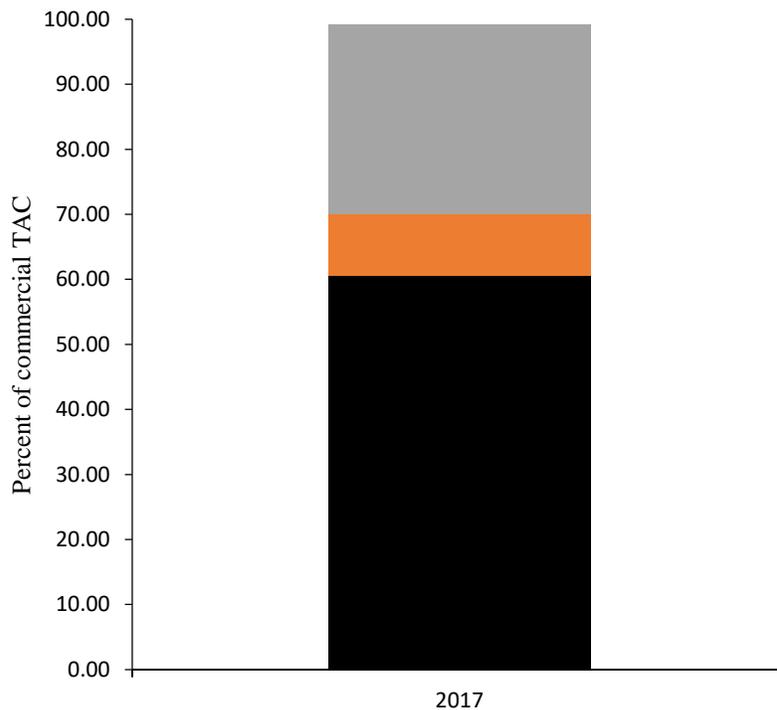


Figure 1. Percent composition of tribal TAC by unrestricted (black), restricted (orange) and late season (gray) during the 2017 commercial season; the unharvested 3,417 fish were 0.78% of the commercial TAC and are not visible on this graph.

Fishery Performance over Time

The performance of the commercial fishery is measured using weight-per-unit-effort (WPUE) from the unrestricted component of the fishery – it comprises the majority of the commercial fishery catch, has the greatest, most widespread participation among the three sub-fisheries, and is considered optimal for measuring fishery performance. For the Coastal Tribes, WPUE is modeled using the number of dressed lbs. (reduced by 10% for head off, and 2% for ice and slime), divided by the number of landings divided by the number of hours fished – The Coastal Tribes do not tend to make multiple landings per day (Eq. 1). For the Puget Sound Tribes, multiple landings may be made on each day, so dressed lbs. are divided by the number of vessels participating and divided by the number of hours (Eq. 2).

Equation 1.
$$WPUE_{Coastal} = \frac{lbs/landings}{hours}$$

Equation 2.
$$WPUE_{PS} = \frac{lbs/vessels}{hours}$$

Total WPUE was approximately 23 lbs. per unit of effort per hour during the 2013 – 2015 commercial seasons, and rose to 30 lbs./effort/hr during the 2016 – 2017 seasons. Coastal Tribes’ WPUE has risen each year during 2014 - 2017. Puget Sound Tribes’ WPUE has generally fluctuated about the mean WPUE of 12 lbs./effort/hr but increased to 17.16 lbs./effort/hr during the 2017 season (Table 2, Figure 2).

Table 2. WPUE for the unrestricted component of the commercial fishery during 2013 – 2017 commercial seasons.

Year	Total WPUE	Ocean WPUE	Puget Sound WPUE
2013	23.08	66.70	11.34
2014	23.66	54.08	13.52
2015	23.08	70.98	11.11
2016	30.28	96.84	12.39
2017	30.63	100.30	17.16

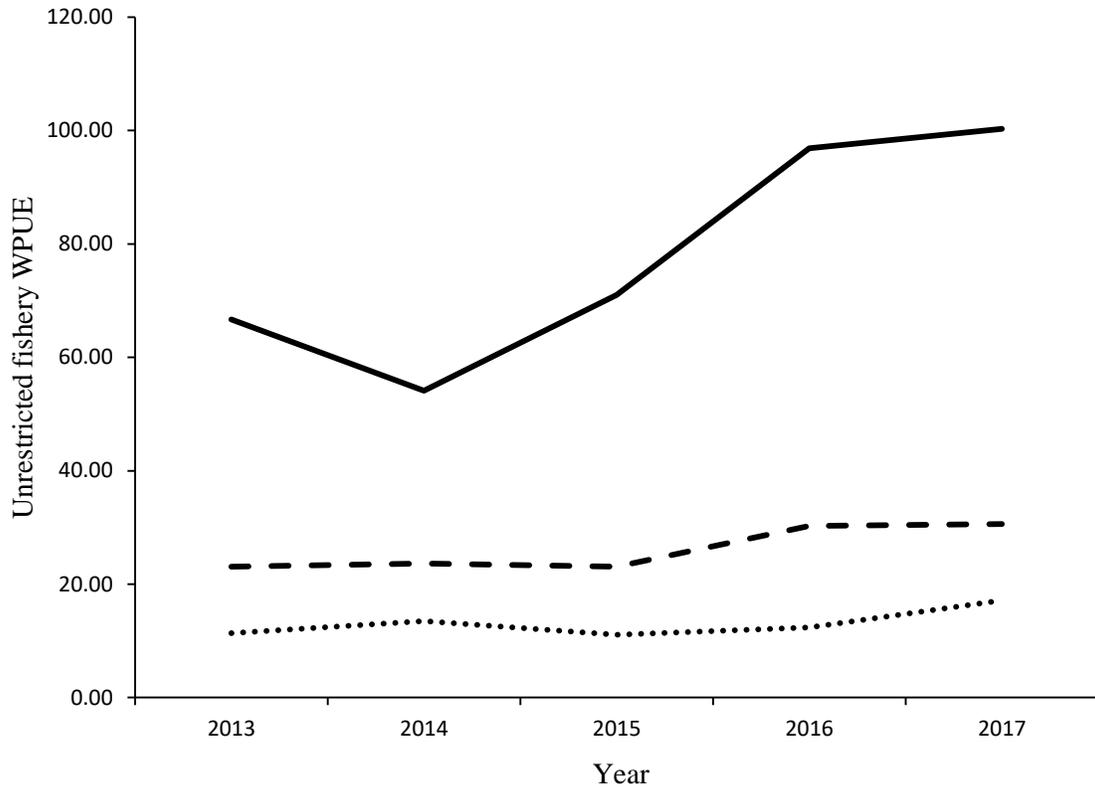


Figure 2. Total weight-per-unit-effort (WPUE) for the unrestricted component of the tribal commercial fishery (solid line), Coastal Tribes WPUE (dashed line), and Puget Sound Tribes WPUE (dotted line) achieved during 2013 – 2017 commercial seasons.