



23 March 2018

REVISED PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH LIMITS FOR 2018

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its 94th Annual Meeting (AM094) in Portland, OR, U.S.A. on 26 January 2018. As noted in previous IPHC News Releases 2018-01 and 2018-03 (available at the IPHC website [<https://iphc.int>]), the Commission did not reach agreement on new Pacific halibut catch limits for the 2018 fishing period. Thus, by default, the catch limits set for the 2017 fishing period remain in place, unless more restrictive regulations are put in place by the Contracting Parties, in accordance with *The Convention between Canada and the United States of America for the preservation of the [Pacific] halibut fishery of the Northern Pacific ocean and Bering sea* (Article I, paragraph 2).

Canada

On 13 February 2018, Canada, via Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), announced the adoption and implementation of the following ‘*more restrictive*’ 2018 catch limits for Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B:

	Catch limit (pounds)	Catch limit (metric tons)
IPHC Regulatory Area 2B	6,223,985	2,823.18
Commercial Total Allowable Catch	5,295,995	2402.25
Recreational Total Allowable Catch	927,990	420.93

Note that these catch limits are more restrictive than the catch limits published by the IPHC in the *Pacific Halibut Fishery Regulations (2018)* (<https://iphc.int/uploads/pdf/regs/iphc-2018-regs.pdf>).

These catch limits have been incorporated into Canada’s *Pacific Fishery Regulations* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-93-54/index.html>) and are described in the conditions of licence for the directed fishery.

Canadian Pacific halibut fishing periods and catch limits are also noted in the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan, Groundfish published at: <http://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/40657814.pdf>.

United States of America

On 23 March 2018, the United States of America, via NOAA-Fisheries, announced the adoption and implementation of the following ‘*more restrictive*’ 2018 catch limits for the commercial Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A, to be effective as of 24 March 2018:

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	Catch limit (pounds)	Catch limit (metric tons)
IPHC Regulatory Area 2A	1,190,000	539.78
Treaty Indian commercial	389,500	176.68
Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Pt. Chehalis)	201,845	91.56
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	35,620	16.16
Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish fishery (north of Pt. Chehalis)	50,000	22.68

More restrictive 2018 catch limits for non-commercial fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A – the Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence and recreational (sport) fisheries in Washington, Oregon, and California – were not specified in the 23 March 2018 announcement of this interim final rule. Revised catch limits for these sectors are expected to be included in the final promulgation of the Pacific Fishery Management Council’s Catch Sharing Plan for 2018.

On 19 March 2018, NOAA-Fisheries announced the adoption and implementation of the following ‘*more restrictive*’ 2018 catch limits for the Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B and 4CDE:

	Catch limit (pounds)	Catch limit (metric tons)
IPHC Regulatory Area 2C	4,450,000¹	2,018.51¹
Commercial (IFQ)	3,570,000	1,619.32
Charter sport	810,000	367.41
IPHC Regulatory Area 3A	9,450,000¹	4,286.49¹
Commercial (IFQ)	7,350,000	3,333.91
Charter sport	1,790,000	811.94
IPHC Regulatory Area 3B	2,620,000	1,188.41
IPHC Regulatory Area 4A	1,370,000	621.42
IPHC Regulatory Area 4B	1,050,000	476.27
IPHC Regulatory Area 4CDE	1,580,000	716.68
IPHC Regulatory Area 4C	733,500	332.71
IPHC Regulatory Area 4D	733,500	332.71
IPHC Regulatory Area 4E	113,000	51.26

¹ In accordance with the catch sharing plan in place for this IPHC Regulatory Area, this overall total includes estimates for discard mortality.

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NOAA-Fisheries also announced the following ‘*more restrictive*’ 2018 management measures for the charter recreational fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A, based on the revised 2018 catch limits:

In IPHC Regulatory Area 2C: a one-fish daily bag limit, with a reverse slot limit that allows retention of Pacific halibut less than 38 inches or greater than 80 inches, and no annual limit.

In IPHC Regulatory Area 3A: a two-fish daily bag limit, a maximum size limit of less than or equal to 28 inches on one of those Pacific halibut, and a four-fish annual limit. In addition, Wednesdays will be closed to charter fishing in IPHC Regulatory Area 3A all season, along with six Tuesday (July 10, July 17, July 24, July 31, August 7, and August 14) closures in the summer. Vessels and charter permit holders will continue to be limited to one trip per day.

Note that these catch limits and charter management measures are more restrictive than the catch limits and charter management measures published by the IPHC in the *Pacific Halibut Fishery Regulations (2018)* (<https://iphc.int/uploads/pdf/regs/iphc-2018-regs.pdf>).

The complete texts of the interim final rules published by NOAA-Fisheries are available at the Federal Register website: <https://www.federalregister.gov>. The NOAA-Fisheries interim final rule for IPHC Regulatory Area 2A is available on file as of 23 March 2018 at <https://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection/current> and is scheduled to appear in the Federal Register on 26 March 2018.

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