



**West Coast Enforcement Division**  
**Report to the International Pacific Halibut Commission**

**DATE:** 21 DECEMBER 2018

**CONTRACTING PARTY:** UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**AGENCY:**

*NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement*

*West Coast Division*

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**FISHERY SECTOR/S**

*ALL*

**IPHC REGULATORY AREA/S**

*IPHC Regulatory Areas 2A (USA: West Coast)*

**DISCUSSION**

The West Coast Enforcement Division (WCD) of the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement provides marine resource enforcement and compliance assistance for the West Coast, primarily California, Oregon and Washington, but to also include Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. WCD staff includes special agents and enforcement officers stationed in California, Oregon and Washington. Appendix I provides a report of WCD activities relevant to the IPHC for calendar year 2018.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That the Commission **NOTE** paper IPHC-2019-AM095-AR04, which provided an overview of the activities of the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement West Coast Region relevant to the IPHC for 2018.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix I:** West Coast Enforcement Division Report to the International Pacific Halibut Commission

**National Marine Fisheries Service  
Office of Law Enforcement**

***West Coast Enforcement Division Report to  
The International Pacific Halibut Commission***



**January 2018 ~ December 2018**

**NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement  
West Coast Division  
7600 Sand Point Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98115**

**To Report Fisheries Violations:  
Call our National Hotline at 1-800-853-1964**



Office of Law Enforcement

*West Coast Division Report to International Pacific Halibut Commission*

Calendar Year 2018

January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018

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## **West Coast Enforcement Division Overview**

The West Coast Enforcement Division (WCD) provides marine resource enforcement and compliance assistance for the West Coast, primarily California, Oregon and Washington, but to also include Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. Our staff includes special agents and enforcement officers stationed in California, Oregon and Washington. Our territory includes 1,500 miles of Canadian Border; 1,293 miles of rigorous Pacific Ocean coastline and 7,863 miles of tidal shoreline; five National Marine Sanctuaries, to include 290 Marine Conservation Areas; Puget Sound; 21 major international seaports; 18 international airports; 222,471 square nautical miles of Pacific Ocean; and 339,375 square miles of land encompassing numerous rivers and tributaries feeding into the Pacific Ocean. Our primary missions include compliance assistance and enforcing domestic fishing regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; protecting federally-listed marine species and critical habitats under the Endangered Species Act; ensuring species protection and preservation under the Marine Mammal Protection Act; monitoring imports and exports of marine products at international ports (air and sea), border crossings, and during commercial inspections under the Lacey Act; and protecting essential fish habitats.

Our responsibilities are carried out by a sworn staff comprised of special agents and enforcement officers, and an operations support staff compromised of program managers, investigative support technicians, systems administrators, and administration specialists. Additionally, we work closely and conduct joint operations with other federal partners; the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the United States Attorney's (USA) offices, and others, and our state partners; Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division (OSP), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Enforcement Program (WDFW), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Our state partners work under a Cooperative Enforcement Program. OLE's Enforcement Officer is the bedrock for our uniformed presence and the frontline in the enforcement and management of Pacific halibut for Washington, Oregon and California.

For CY 2018, the Office of Law Enforcement in the West Coast Division had numerous personnel changes. A vacant position for Assistant Director was filled in February 2018 and one special agent transferred from OLE Headquarters to Seattle, WA in September 2018. A hiring announcement advertised for six special agent positions to be filled in Long Beach, CA (x2); Monterey, CA; Santa Rosa, CA (x2) and Seattle, WA closed, with new hires expected to report in early 2019. One new enforcement officer was hired for Monterey, CA.

The Office of Law Enforcement continues to build the administrative program staff to better facilitate agency needs by utilizing two support groups. The Administrative Officer leads a team

of Mission Support personnel, to include two administrative assistants (Portland, OR and Long Beach, CA), two information technology analysts, a program analyst and two contract support staff. A Program Manager for the Investigative Support (IS) team has been hired following a vacancy due to retirement. The IS team consists of three Investigative Support Technicians (IST's) in Seattle, WA and one in Long Beach, CA. An Investigative Analyst position, new to NOAA OLE, was announced and is in the process to be hired for Seattle, WA. One vacant Investigative Support Technician position in Seattle, WA was announced and the selectee has a start date in January 2019.

### **Office of Law Enforcement - Cooperative Enforcement Program (CEP)**

Under the Federally funded NOAA Cooperative Enforcement Program, OLE has ongoing formal Cooperative Enforcement Agreements (CEA) and Joint Enforcement Agreements (JEA) with all three West Coast States—our marine enforcement partners: California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) – Law Enforcement Division, Oregon State Police (OSP) – Fish and Wildlife Division, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) – Police. These agreements extend federal authority for state agencies to enforce specific federal laws and regulations as defined in specific agreed upon federal priorities within each agreement, including the enforcement of the Northern Pacific Halibut Act.

In addition to providing reimbursement for direct federal fisheries enforcement work performed by state officers, wardens, and troopers in support of federal fisheries enforcement priorities, the agreements also provide funding for state administrative overhead and program-related direct purchases of large marine enforcement assets (e.g., boats, vehicles, etc.) as well as small or portable assets (e.g., drysuits, thermal imaging, cameras, etc.), in addition to targeted program meetings or specific training needs and services (maintenance of equipment and vessels). The West Coast Cooperative Enforcement Program received \$2.545M for the 2017 agreements – the last of these agreements concluded 31 August, 2018; and \$2.587M towards the new 2018 agreements – this first of which commenced 11 July 2018.

Within the framework of each agreement, there are defined marine law enforcement, compliance assistance, and living resource management responsibilities under (mutually agreed upon) federal priorities; these typically include land-based services and at-sea services, and may include air services if available within a state partner agency and if determined to be of added value in support of one or more federal priorities. The 2017 agreements had a minimum of 50% performance threshold for execution priorities with the remaining performance balance being attributed to general enforcement priorities. With the 2018 agreement, the performance threshold is now a minimum of 75% for execution priorities, and again, the balance being dedicated to general enforcement priorities. Execution priorities are defined and specific in funding, performance, and reporting. General enforcement priorities continue to operate where each agency has federal priorities sharing a pool of defined hours for each of the services (sea,

land, and air). All West Coast states have Northern Pacific Halibut obligations built into their new Sustainable Fisheries Execution Priority, as one of the priority targeted species.

These agreements foster a cooperative environment; producing a viable collaborative approach to federal and state living marine resources enforcement and management. There is consistent ongoing cooperative efforts between Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) – Police, Oregon State Police – Fish and Wildlife Division (OSP), California Department of Fish and Game – Law Enforcement Division (CDFW), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) for the enforcement, preservation, and management of living marine resources. The USCG is an excellent federal partner, providing premier at-sea and air resources, and willingly supporting state partner and federal operations. WDFW Officers, CDFW Wardens, and OSP Troopers ensure comprehensive protection and compliance through the monitoring of directed and incidental commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries. This is accomplished by conducting vessel boardings, monitoring off-loads, inspections of processors, wholesalers, dealers, markets, buyers, restaurants, air and sea ports, and cold storage facilities, and through follow-up, surveillance, investigations, and collaborative operations inclusive of Halibut catch limits, quotas, size limits, and documentation inspection. The significant contributions of our West Coast Cooperative Enforcement Program Partners (CDFW, OSP, WDFW), and the USCG, formulate the foundation of our coastal living marine resource protection and compliance.



### **California Department of Fish & Wildlife – Law Enforcement Division**

CDFW responsibilities for Halibut enforcement for land-based activities includes conducting dockside patrols, off-load monitoring, licenses, incidental catch, compliance, verification checks, and collaborative enforcement efforts. CDFW at-sea responsibilities include patrolling the Pacific Ocean, conducting operations, collaborative enforcement, and inspecting at-sea vessels and personnel for licenses, federal permits, logbooks, marine permits and registration, and fish on board, with emphasis in the Exclusive Economic Zone. Most of their agency activities towards Halibut is regionalized to the North Pacific Ocean Coast.

Their agency is developing a centralized records management system, which is scheduled to be deployed in early 2019. Currently the agency gathers field data manually, which is challenging. CDFW Program Analyst John Clithero utilized field data to provide a summary of their agency's involvement in Pacific Halibut enforcement and management:

#### ***CDFW Enforcement:***

For CY2018, CDFW committed eleven commissioned staff towards Halibut enforcement activities, for a total of 251 operational hours. Their at-sea activities encompassed: 64 at-sea hours (25 at-sea near-shore vessel personnel hours and 25 at-sea near-shore vessel hours,). Their

dockside activities encompassed 110 hours. CDFW approximate funding applied towards Halibut enforcement and management was \$11,998.33 (\$4,609.63 at-sea operations and \$7,388.70 for land-based operations).

<b>CDFW Law Enforcement Division</b>	
<b>Participating CDFW Wardens</b>	11
<b>Dockside Personnel Hours</b>	110
<b>At-Sea Personnel Hours</b>	39
<b>Near-Shore Vessel Hours</b>	25
<b>Contacts Made</b>	
Commercial	56
Recreational	380
<b>Enforcement Actions</b>	
Warnings	25
Citations	3

***CDFW Enforcement Highlights:***

During 2018, CDFW Halibut patrols covered the major ports in Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, and approximately 15 sport boat launch ramps. CDFW patrolled, contacted, and regularly checked 8 party boats targeting Halibut between Shelter Cove and Crescent City. Numerous dockside and at-sea contacts were made where Halibut were present. Offshore Halibut patrols were made in combination with Salmon and Rockfish patrols. The three citations issued this year during Halibut patrols were for taking undersize California Halibut, no fishing license and unlawful take of Moon Snails.



**Oregon State Police – Fish & Wildlife Division**

OSP responsibilities for Halibut enforcement for land-based activities includes conducting dockside patrols, off-load monitoring, licenses, incidental catch, compliance, verification checks, and collaborative enforcement efforts. OSP at-sea responsibilities include patrolling the Pacific Ocean, conducting operations, collaborative enforcement, and inspecting at-sea vessels and personnel for licenses, federal permits, logbooks, marine permits and registration, and fish on board, with emphasis in the Exclusive Economic Zone.

**OSP Enforcement:**

For CY2018 OSP committed twenty-three commissioned staff towards Halibut enforcement activities, for a total of 440 operational hours. Their at-sea activities encompassed: 274.75 at-sea hours (154.25 at-sea near-shore vessel personnel hours, 77.00 at-sea near-shore vessel hours, 29 at-sea long-range vessel personnel hours, and 14.50 at-sea long-range vessel hours). Their dockside activities encompassed 165.25 hours. OSP approximate funding applied towards Halibut enforcement and management was approximately \$34,166.33 (\$19,649.11 at-sea operations and \$14,517.21 for land-based operations).

Number of Troopers Involved in Season	Number of NS Personnel Hours Worked	Number of NS Vessel Hours Worked	Number of LR Personnel Hours Worked	Number of LR Vessel Hours Worked	Total At Sea Personnel and Vessel Hours	Number of Dockside Hours Worked	Total OSP Hours Worked Towards Halibut
23	154.25	77	29	14.5	274.75	165.25	440

**OSP Enforcement Activity:**

	Contacts	Total Persons Not in Compliance	Percentage of Contacts in Compliance	Illegal Harvest	Federal Referrals
Recreational:	859	93	89.20%	32	0
Commercial:	53	6	88.70%	8	0

**OSP Enforcement Narratives:**

The Newport/Tillamook Office and the Marine Fisheries Team worked together for a saturation patrol over the Memorial Day Weekend for the All Depth Recreational Halibut and Commercial Salmon Troll Fishery. Troopers utilized both small boat assets as well as the P/V Guardian. The Troopers made lots of contacts as the weather and ocean conditions were optimal:



- Senior Trooper Herman, Trooper Adkins, and Recruit Butler manned the small boat offshore of Depoe Bay. Multiple anglers were contacted, but Halibut catch rate was slow. One citation was issued for *Fail to Immediately Validate Harvest Card – Halibut*. The troopers also checked multiple commercial Salmon and recreational ground fish boats. A boat was contacted with one angler onboard north of Newport. The angler said that he had only caught four Rockfish. Upon inspection of his catch, he was found to be in possession of four Rockfish and three lingcod. The angler was from Newport, and told the troopers that he fishes for Rockfish every evening by himself. The subject was cited for *Exceed the Daily Limit of Lingcod*.
- Senior Trooper Van Meter and Farrar and Trooper Ross manned the P/V Guardian offshore of Newport. Four citations were issued for Fail to Immediately Validate Harvest Card – Halibut. One warning was issued for Unlawful Possession of Skate outside 30 Fathoms and the Skate was seized. A commercial troll Salmon boat was contacted and was found to be in possession of Rockfish fillets and one Halibut over the allowable limit. Both the captain and deckhand on that commercial vessel were cited criminally for *Exceeding Trip Limit for Halibut* and *Unlawful Possession of Commercial Caught Fish; Fillets*. The Halibut and fillets were seized.
- Senior Trooper Van Meter and Recruit Butler conducted angler checks at South Beach Marina. Multiple warnings were issued for minor offenses. Recruit Butler contacted three fishermen who were walking off of a dock with fishing poles in hand. When the three males looked at Recruit Butler their expressions changed dramatically. The subjects mentioned they had two Halibut in the bed of their pickup and were heading home to clean them. All three admitted to fishing for Halibut, but only one had a combined angling tag. One subject was cited for *Take/Possession of Marine Fish – No Tag* and his Halibut was seized and donated to Food Share. The second subject was cited for *Failure to Validate Combined Harvest Tag*. The third subject was cited for *No Combined Harvest Tag*.
- Senior Trooper Herman and Trooper Likens conducted an ocean patrol from the Columbia River to Manzanita on the opening weekend of the nearshore Halibut season south of Cape Falcon. Multiple Groundfish and Halibut anglers were contacted but no violations were found. Only one Halibut was checked.
- Senior Trooper Herman and Trooper Likens conducted a boat patrol on the ocean off of Manzanita. Multiple Salmon and Halibut anglers were contacted where two citations

were issued for *Angling Prohibited Method – Barbed Hooks for Salmon*, one citation was issued for *Fail To Immediately Validate Harvest Card – Halibut*, and four citations were issued for *Fail To Properly Validate Harvest Card – Halibut*.

- Senior Trooper Herman and Senior Trooper Farrar conducted a Guardian patrol at Astoria Canyon on the opening day of the Columbia sub area Halibut season. The troopers were only able to check one boat before having mechanical issues, but that boat had four people and three Halibut on board. One of the subjects had tagged his Halibut in the Salmon section of the harvest card, and had used the species code for Chinook. The subject was cited for *Fail to Properly Validate Harvest Card*.
- Senior Trooper Van Meter conducted joint patrols with USCG Yaquina Bay and NOAA Law Enforcement for the first 2018 Commercial Halibut opener. Due to ocean conditions, no boats were deployed and boats were contact dockside upon return to Port. One commercial fishing vessel from California was found with Halibut on board but neither the crew nor boat had Oregon Commercial fishing licenses that would allow them to fish in Oregon. The captain was cited for *No Individual Commercial Fishing License* and *No Commercial Boat License*. Both crew members were cited for *No Individual Commercial Fishing License*. The Halibut were seized and sold to a wholesale dealer who paid ODFW for the market value for the fish.
- Troopers Van Meter and Trooper Adkins partnered with United States Coast Guard Yaquina Bay on an ocean patrol for the all depth Halibut season. Two citations were issued for *Fail to Validate Harvest Card* and two commercial crab pots were seized inside Otter Crest Marine Reserve. The pots were initially found by Trooper Butler and Farrar a few days prior. Charges are pending on the captain of the fishing vessel upon further investigation.
- The Tillamook Office and members of the Marine Fishery Team had been working the Cape Kiwanda area for several weeks in regards to a complaint of illegal fishing activity that had been occurring on a regular basis. Finally, Trooper Reeder was able to locate a pickup truck and boat trailer on the beach at Cape Kiwanda that was associated with a dory boat that had been allegedly poaching Halibut. Trooper Reeder waited a lengthy period of time as the vessel was one of the last dory's to leave the beach that evening. The boat was finally contacted with three male subjects on board and a routine check of catch, license, and tags was done. All three subjects were asked about the catch and all

revealed the same story about catching the one Halibut and one ling cod this trip and how fishing was a little slow that day. The captain was informed by the Trooper that OSP had received a tip there were occasionally extra fish hidden in this boat. A consent search was requested and the captain stated very casually that he had nothing to hide and that fishing had been slow and to go ahead and search the boat. The Trooper checked the obvious coolers and compartments on the boat and then started searching the gas tank area in the stern of the boat. The Trooper noticed one of the three red marine gas tanks was not plumbed with fuel lines to the outboard motor. The whole top of the red steel tank slid off revealing a big stack of 8 fresh Halibut fillets on ice sitting in a handmade plastic container with a plywood bottom. The captain was ultimately criminally cited for *Exceeding the Bag Limit Halibut, Possession of Mutilated Fish, and Fail to Validate Harvest Card*. The two crew members were each cited criminally for *Aiding/Counseling in a Wildlife Offense*. The gas tank and Halibut fillets were seized. The Halibut fillets were donated to the Tillamook County Justice Facility.



*Hidden Halibut Fillets. Photo Credit: Oregon State Police*



### **Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife – Police**

WDFW responsibilities for Halibut enforcement for land-based activities includes commercial off-load monitoring, compliance, and verification checks, and recreational emphasis and inspections of key coastal ports, to ensure compliance of limits, size, and gear restrictions. WDFW at-sea

enforcement includes patrolling, conducting operations, and vessel inspections, illegal trafficking in sport caught Halibut, unreported/undocumented catch, and selective gear restrictions, with emphasis in the Exclusive Economic Zone.

**WDFW Enforcement:**

For CY2018 WDFW committed eighteen commissioned staff towards Halibut enforcement, for a total of 577 hours. Their at-sea activities encompassed: 468 at-sea hours (351 at-sea personnel hours and 117 medium-range vessel hours). Their dockside activities encompassed 109.50 hours. WDFW approximate funding applied towards Halibut enforcement and management was \$31,898.57 (\$25,949.43 at-sea operations and \$5,949.14 for land-based operations).

<b>WDFW Police</b>			
<b>Participating WDFW Officers</b>		<b>18</b>	
<b>2018 Halibut Patrol</b>	<b>JEA Funded</b>	<b>State Funded</b>	<b>Total Commitment</b>
<b>Dockside Personnel Hours</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>109.5</b>
<b>At-Sea Personnel Hours</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>351</b>
Mid-Range Vessel Hours	72	45	117
<b>Contacts Made</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>1,444</b>
Recreational	911	452	1,363
Commercial	12	69	81
<b>Enforcement Actions</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>128</b>
Warnings	64	19	83
Citations	39	6	45

**WDFW Overview:**

Halibut is shared among four user groups in Washington State: recreational, directed non-Indian commercial, non-Indian incidental, and Tribal fishermen. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) police developed a patrol plan for 2018 that provides comprehensive protection throughout the entire year.

As Halibut seasons and habitats overlap with other fisheries, directed Halibut patrols often revealed federal and state violations related to other species. Common Halibut violations included mutilation of fish so that size or species could not be determined, failure to account for catch, fishing for and possession of Rockfish or Halibut in closed areas, closed-season fishing, exceeding limits, failing to submit catch for inspection and fishing with no license.

## **WDFW Enforcement Highlights:**

### **Lacey Act Compliance:**

- Sub-Categories: Northern Pacific Halibut Act & Collaborative Operations, Fisheries Resources in Commerce with a Border Nexus Inclusive of False Labeling, Misbranding, and Seafood Safety, Including Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) International Seafood Products
- National Priority: Strengthen & Maintain Sustainable Fisheries
- Division Priority: Protection of Halibut stocks through maintaining compliance with the regulations established by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).



### **Description of Activity:**

- WDFW will emphasize compliance with federal Halibut regulations, including size restrictions and season dates/times, monitor, and detect smuggling and trans-shipments of IUU international seafood products crossing the United States-Canadian border.
- Land-based patrols will monitor non-tribal commercial Halibut offloads at the dock to enforce catch limits, size, and catch accounting regulations, including logbook verification checks to ensure regulatory compliance. Officers will inspect recreational landings of Halibut at coastal ports, to include, but not limited to Westport, Ilwaco, La Push, and Neah

Bay. Frazier River Sockeye Fishery will also be monitored to enforce possession regulations (Chinook possession prohibited in non-tribal fishery).

- Officers will monitor complete vessel offloads for overages and prohibited overfished species and enforce regulations pertaining to catch limits, size, species, and gear restrictions with a special emphasis on Halibut.
- Officers will conduct inspections on fisheries products by checking the contents and ensuring that the product is properly labeled. There is a focused concentration on IUU International Seafood Products with the primary mission to detect undocumented foreign marine products.
- Officers will inspect trans-border shipments of marine products at the United States-Canadian Border, and the Washington-Oregon State Border. WDFW will work directly with NOAA, ICE, USFWS, OSP, CDFW, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to coordinate efforts to detect both inbound and outbound fisheries products taken contrary to law.

**Halibut Season:** WDFW Officers continue to focus their efforts on the highly participated in Northern Olympic Peninsula recreational Halibut fishery. Officers provided an increased presence performing “off peak” patrol hours and provided increased public safety on the water. WDFW Officers teamed up with County deputies, USCG personnel, and Border Patrol to conduct patrols increasing our programs relevance within the local law enforcement community.

**Public Safety Response:** During the Halibut focused patrols, WDFW officers performed vessel safety checks at several ramps. Officers in the Neah Bay area responded to assist two vessel incidents that reported they were taking on water. One of the distressed vessels had caught fire and required assistance back to port. The other vessel discovered that they were taking on water after arriving on their fishing grounds ~9 miles off the coast and began heading to shore. The WDFW vessel located them about half-way back and escorted them until the Coast Guard arrived and assumed the escort. Once back in port it was discovered that they had failed to install the plug in their 26’ boat when launching that morning.



**'Incidental Halibut Fishery:** Patrol efforts covered a variety of simultaneous fisheries being worked and numerous cases generated. In addition to coastal Halibut and Groundfish, officers worked rivers in the Forks to address snagging complaints of Spring Chinook, as well as marine fisheries including commercial Salmon trollers, coastal commercial crab, wholesale fish dealer offload checks at boat ramps, and recreational shellfish. Violations addressed ranged from barbed hooks and fail to record, no descending device gear violations, possessing fish in unlawful condition, fishing closed area, possession of prohibited species, over limit Rockfish, unlawful purchase of resident license, no fishing license, recreational shellfish violations, and commercial crabbing without a license.

**Commercial Crab Violation:** Officers conducted a boat patrol out of La Push to monitor the Halibut fishery on a busy three day weekend. The patrol was interrupted when they did a quick check of a commercial crabber on the fishing grounds. The vessel was found to have no licensed commercial fishermen aboard. The vessel was escorted back to port where the catch of Dungeness crab was seized and sold by the state. Charges will be referred for the violation. In addition, the licensed operator of this commercial crab vessel was absent because he decided to schedule and run a (legal) Halibut trip in a different vessel at the same time for his outdoor recreational business.



**Pacific Salmon Charters Halibut Case:** In May 2017, WDFW Officers learned that a charter vessel operating out of Pacific Salmon Charters and based out of Ilwaco was suspected of high grading Halibut. The skipper was reportedly keeping fish in a “live Box” and, at the end of the trip, would sort through the fish and trade out the smaller fish for bigger ones. Three Halibut reportedly had their gills cut but were still thrown over so they could retain larger Halibut for their limit on the original complaint.



WDFW officers had arranged an undercover trip and observed similar fishing practices on a different vessel than originally reported but fishing with the same company. In July

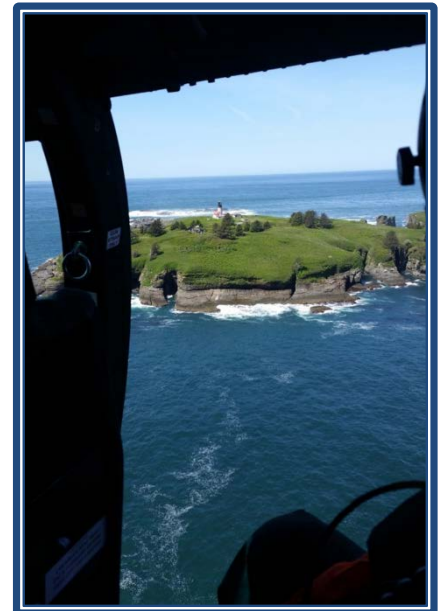


2017 a search warrant was served on Pacific Salmon Charters. Passenger manifests, schedules, financial information, and client contact lists were obtained and a month's long investigation ensued. Over 100 customers were contacted and interviewed by telephone. A subsequent written statement form was mailed to 125 potential witnesses who reportedly fished on the suspect vessels. As a result of the interviews with these customers and other evidence gathered, probable cause was developed on 28 misdemeanors and 1 gross misdemeanor for violations of exceeding the daily possession limit, failing to immediately return Halibut and wasting food fish. It was further determined that the crews of all the vessels used livewells in order to high-grade their Halibut. Some days, passengers reported up to 12 fish were possessed on the vessel over the daily limit.

The case was filed with the Pacific County Prosecutor who subsequently charged it in early spring of 2018. The case is set for trial later this year.

**Commercial Halibut Fishery:** Officers once again monitored the directed commercial Halibut fishery South of Point Chehalis in area 2A. The fishery was patrolled multiple days both on land and offshore. Officers worked with Oregon State Police and NOAA uniformed officers for these patrols. Numerous contacts were made with no violations found.

Officer Davidson flew with the USCG to monitor Halibut fishermen, ensuring no anglers were fishing in the closure off of Lapush and Neah Bay. No boats were observed actively fishing inside the closure. Commercial Salmon trollers were observed actively fishing west of the closure and many recreational boats were fishing just outside the closure borders. Compliance with the closed fishing area was good.



## **Office of Law Enforcement – West Coast Division Investigations & Patrols**

Enforcement officers patrolled commercial boat docks in Washington and Oregon, boarding 20 commercial fishing vessels participating in the Area 2A International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) halibut fishery. State agencies and US Coast Guard also conducted vessel boardings as part of the halibut enforcement team led by OLE. Vessels were inspected to ensure compliance with IPHC regulations including complete offload, catch shares, size limits, and proper logbook and permits. Patrols were coordinated with U.S. Coast Guard, Oregon State Fish and Wildlife officers, and Washington State Fish and Wildlife officers to conduct air, sea, and dockside surveillance and boardings to monitor for early/late fishing, careful release of undersized halibut, and compliance with landing requirements. The team found two commercial fishing vessels inappropriately obtained waivers for federal observers prior to the date of the fishery. Compliance assistance was rendered to several vessel operators regarding gear marking requirements. One commercial vessel was possibly fishing inside a closed area, but investigation showed the subject's long line gear was cut and had drifted into the closed area. Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife officers seized a load of halibut from a commercial fishing vessel due to the crew not having Oregon commercial fishing licenses. A Coast Guard boarding team seized approximately two ounces of marijuana from an operator of a commercial fishing vessel after being found during an EO's boarding.

- Enforcement officers monitored an offload of Pacific halibut subsequent to the IPHC Area 2A halibut opener. A commercial fishing vessel was found to be 224 pounds over quota limits. The owner/operator agreed to forfeit the halibut. He was offered a summary settlement in the amount of \$1,176.00. The offer was accepted.
- Enforcement officers monitored an offload of Pacific halibut subsequent to the IPHC Area 2A halibut opener. A commercial fishing vessel was found to be 317 pounds over quota limits. The owner/operator agreed to forfeit the halibut. He was offered a summary settlement in the amount of \$1,664.25. The offer was accepted.
- An enforcement officer monitored two offloads of commercial halibut boats in Ilwaco, WA. The vessels were participating in the IPHC Area 2A August halibut derby. The officer inspected the vessels to determine size limits of fish, logbooks properly completed, and the appropriate IPHC permit was on board the vessel. One vessel operator caught and retained halibut in excess of the established quota for their vessel size. The other operator exceeded both halibut and rockfish quotas. The officer issued summary settlements in the amounts of \$294.00 and \$858.00 respectively.
- Three WCD Enforcement Officers flew with Coast Guard helicopters offshore of Washington and Oregon coastlines to monitor commercial fishing vessels to ensure compliance with IPHC regulations regarding start and stop times, gear markings and proper vessel markings and to ensure no vessels were fishing in closed areas. Each officer flew two missions, one at the start of the day and one at the end of the derby. This was

done to ensure no fishing vessels deployed gear before the start of the derby and to ensure all gear was out of the water at the stop time.



**Vessel Monitoring Staff:**

VMS enforcement technicians monitored vessel positions before and during the halibut openings and no incidents were found.