

News Release

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July 17, 2002

2002 Halibut Landing Report No. 7

Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca (east of the Sekiu River) Sport Halibut Fishery to Close as Scheduled

The Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca sport halibut fishery east of Low Point closed on July 12. Sport halibut fishing west of Low Point to the Sekiu River closes on July 26. The combined projected harvest for the season is 57,393 pounds.

North Washington Coast Sport Halibut Fishery to Re-Open August 3 for One Day

Preliminary estimates through July 4 for the north Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Sekiu River to the Queets River) indicate that the harvest is 97,550 pounds, or 10,480 pounds short of the 108,030 pound catch limit. Therefore, the north Washington coast sport halibut sport fishery will re-open for one day on Saturday, August 3, 2002. The daily bag and possession limit is one fish. There is no size limit for this area.

South Washington Coast Sport Halibut Season Changes Open Days and Restricts Areas

Preliminary estimates through July 7 for the south Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Queets River to Leadbetter Point) indicate that 7,190 pounds remain to be harvested from the quota of 42,739 pounds. A shift in emphasis to salmon fishing has resulted in an extended sport halibut fishery. As a result, some modifications to the season will occur so that a quality fishing experience can be maintained. The nearshore fishery will continue to be open seven days a week in the area south of the Queets River to 47° 00' N. latitude and east of 124° 40' W. longitude. On July 12, the all-depth fishing season was shifted to Fridays and Saturdays for two areas. The first area, known as the Westport halibut hot spot, is restricted to a 3 mile by 3 mile square. The coordinates are: 47° 19' N. and 124° 53' W. on the northwest boundary, 47° 19' N. and 124° 48' W. on the northeast boundary, 47° 16' N. and 124° 53' W. on the southwest boundary, 47° 16' N. and 124° 48' W. on the southeast boundary. The second area is from Grays Harbor to Leadbetter Point, Washington. This area is bounded by the coordinates 47° 00' N. latitude south to 46° 38' 10" N. latitude (Leadbetter Point, WA), and east of 124° 27' W. longitude. The structuring of these areas allows equal halibut opportunity to large and small private vessels, as well as charter vessels. The daily bag and possession limit is one fish, with no size limit.

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Columbia River Area Closed May 25 for Remainder of 2002

The preliminary catch estimate for the Columbia River sport halibut fishery (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon) through May 25 is 9,764 pounds and 1,424 pounds short of the quota. The remaining poundage is insufficient to re-open this area without risking going over the quota of 11,188 pounds. Therefore, the Columbia River sport halibut fishery will remain closed for the remainder of 2002.

All-Depth Sport Halibut Fishing from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain Open for August 2 and 3

The August-September all-depth season will be open on Friday and Saturday, August 2 and 3. The revised quota for the fishery is 102,900 pounds and includes poundage remaining from the spring fishery. If sufficient poundage remains after August 3, additional fishing may occur on one or more of the following dates: August 23, 24, September 20 and September 21. The first halibut taken with a length of 32 inches or greater must be kept. The daily bag limit is one fish and the possession limit is one fish at sea and two fish on land. Halibut sport fishing continues to be open inside the 30-fathom curve from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. This fishery is open seven days a week and the same length, bag and possession limits as in the all-depth fishery apply. Details on catch and regulations for all Oregon sub-areas can be found at www.hmsc.orst.edu/odfw/regs/halibut.html.

Southern Oregon – California Open through September 30, 2002

The sport halibut fishery south of Humbug Mountain opened on May 1 and will remain open through September 30, 2002. This fishery is open seven days a week with a one halibut bag and possession limit. The first halibut taken with a length of 32 inches or greater must be kept. The projected catch at season's end is 7,860 pounds.

For further information on Area 2A halibut fishing call the NMFS hotline (1-800-662-9825).

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