

News Release

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May 20, 2003

2003 HALIBUT LANDING REPORT NO. 2**Quota Share Commercial Fishery Update**

It is estimated that the following catches and numbers of landings were made in the British Columbia IVQ fishery through May 14, 2003 and in the Alaskan IFQ and CDQ fisheries through May 15, 2003.

Area	Catch Limit (000's pounds)	Catch (000's pounds)	Number of Landings
2C	8,500	3,481	769
3A	22,630	10,200	784
3B	17,130	3,739	190
4A	4,970	236	33
4B	4,180	461	14
4C	2,030	0	0
4D/4E	2,420	82	6
Alaska total	61,860	18,199	1,796
2B	11,750	4,132	292
Grand Total	73,610	22,331	2,088

The Alaskan catch represents 29% of the catch limit. From March 15 to May 17, 2002, 16.5 million pounds, or 27% of the 2002 catch limit, were landed in the Alaskan fishery. When comparing the actual length of the fishing period, 22.4 million pounds, or 36% of the 2002 catch limit, were landed after ten weeks (May 31) in 2002.

The British Columbia catch represents 35% of the 2003 catch limit. From March 15 to May 15, 2002, 4.3 million pounds, or 37% of the catch limit, were landed from Area 2B (British Columbia). Comparing the length of the fishing period, 4.9 million pounds, or 42% of the Area 2B allocation, were landed in Area 2B after ten weeks (May 31) in 2002.

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Annette Island Reserve Fishery in Area 2C

The Metlakatla Indian community has been authorized by the United States Government to conduct a commercial halibut fishery within the Annette Island Reserve. One 48-hour fishing period occurred between May 2 and May 4, with a total catch of 2,177 pounds. The Metlakatla Indian Community and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will announce future halibut openings.

North Washington Coast Sport Halibut Fishery to Close on May 17

Preliminary estimates through May 11 for the north Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Sekiu River to the Queets River) indicate that the harvest will approach the 82,019 pound early-season quota by May 17. Catch rates have been good, resulting in an earlier closure than in recent years. Therefore, the north Washington coast sport halibut fishery will close at 11:59 PM on Saturday, May 17, 2003. On Wednesday, May 21, halibut managers will meet to assess the previous week's catch and determine if additional fishing time could be granted. Otherwise, the next scheduled opening for the north Washington coast will begin on June 18, 2003.

VMS and Vessel Clearance in Area 4

Contact information for NOAA Office of Enforcement was misprinted on IPHC Information Bulletin No. 46. Corrected text should read:

As referenced in Section 15 of the 2003 IPHC regulations, vessels fishing for halibut in Area 4 are required to clear before fishing and before unloading for each trip, with the exception of local Bering Sea fishers or vessels with an operating Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). Full details on the VMS requirements are available on the NOAA Office for Law Enforcement website (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/Alaska/>) or by phone at (907) 586-7225.

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