

News Release

 P.O. Box 95009, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98145-2009

August 18, 2003

2003 Halibut Landing Report No. 11**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 August 15, 2003 and in the Alaskan IFQ and CDQ fisheries through August 18, 2003.

Area	Catch Limit (000's pounds)	Catch (000's pounds)	Number of Landings
2C	8,500	6,337	1,926
3A	22,630	17,576	1,822
3B	17,130	12,000	630
4A	4,970	3,189	228
4B	4,180	2,453	150
4C	2,030	688	411
4D/4E	2,420	1,311	1,260
Alaska total	61,860	43,554	6,427
2B	11,750	7,467	662
Grand Total	73,610	51,021	7,089

The Alaskan catch represents 70% of the 2003 catch limit. From March 18 to August 15, 2002, 45.4 million pounds, or 73% of the 2002 catch limit, were landed in the Alaskan fishery. When comparing the length of the fishing period, 49.5 million pounds, or 80% of the 2002 catch limit, were landed after twenty-two weeks (August 31) in 2002.

The British Columbia catch represents 64% of the 2003 catch limit. From March 18 to August 14, 2002, 8.1 million pounds, or 69% of the 2002 catch limit, were landed from Area 2B (British Columbia). Comparing the length of the fishing period, 8.9 million pounds, or 76% of the area allocation, were landed from Area 2B after twenty-two weeks (August 31) in 2002.

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Annette Islands 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 Islands Reserve. The fifth 48-hour fishing period this year occurred between July 18 and July 20, with a total catch of 13,639 pounds. A sixth opening occurred between August 1 and August 3 resulting in a total catch of 15,211 pounds. After six openings, a grand total of 48,421 pounds have been landed. The Metlakatla Indian Community and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will announce future halibut openings.

Incidental Commercial Halibut Catch in the Area 2A Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery

The total allowable incidental commercial catch of halibut allocated to the limited entry, fixed gear sablefish fishery which operates in Area 2A north of Point Chehalis, Washington is 70,000 pounds. It is estimated that 40,949 pounds have been landed through August 8. This incidental halibut catch fishery remains open until further notice.

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

The Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca sport halibut fishery east of Low Point closed on July 18. Sport halibut fishing west of Low Point to the Sekiu River closed on August 1. The combined projected harvest for the season is 63,278 pounds. The harvest will be determined by a post-season phone survey of anglers.

North Washington Coast Sport Halibut Fishery Closes Following One-Day Opening

On Saturday, August 9, a one-day opening resulted in a harvest of 7,477 pounds. Preliminary estimates through that date for the north Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Sekiu River to the Queets River) indicate that the harvest is 109,738 pounds, or 4,177 pounds short of the 113,915 pound catch limit. The poundage is not enough for a complete day of fishing so this area is closed for the remainder of 2003.

South Washington Coast Sport Halibut Season Open Seven Days a Week

Preliminary estimates through August 10 for the south Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Queets River to Leadbetter Point) indicate that 6,928 pounds remain to be harvested from the quota of 48,623 pounds. As of June 27, the open fishing days were increased to seven days a week for all depths. This was done in response to declining effort on halibut and a corresponding increase in effort on salmon. The daily bag and possession limit is one fish, with no size limit.

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Columbia River Remains Open

The preliminary catch estimate for the Columbia River sport halibut fishery (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon) through August 10 is 9,967 pounds, leaving 1,956 pounds to be caught. Fishing effort on halibut in this area has also dropped off in deference to salmon. The bag limit is the first halibut landed at 32 inches or longer.

All-Depth Sport Halibut Fishing from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain Opens August 22-23

The August-September all-depth season in the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain area will be open Fridays and Saturdays, beginning August 22-23. After each opening, the harvest will be evaluated and subsequent openings announced on the NMFS hotline. Angler interest in coho and chinook salmon has taken pressure from the halibut fishery and extended the season. If this trend continues, several more openings may occur for halibut. However, if angler interest returns to halibut this fishery may close with short notice. The revised quota for the fishery is 125,814 pounds and includes poundage remaining from the spring fishery. Through August 9, a total of 38,928 pounds have been harvested, therefore 86,887 pounds remain to be harvested. 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 <http://hmsc.oregonstate.edu/odfw/finfish/halibut>.

Southern Oregon – California Open through September 30, 2003

The sport halibut fishery south of Humbug Mountain opened on May 1 and will remain open through September 30, 2003. 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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