

*News Release*

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

May 30, 2005

**2005 Halibut Landing Report No. 2****Non-treaty Commercial Fishing Period Limits in Area 2A**

The Commission has determined that fishing period limits will be required during the 10-hour, June 29 non-treaty directed commercial fishing period in Area 2A to avoid exceeding the 226,203 pound catch limit. The June 29 fishing period will begin at 8:00 AM and end at 6:00 PM. The fishery is restricted to waters that are south of Point Chehalis, Washington (46°53'18" N. latitude) under regulations promulgated by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Fishing period limits as indicated in the following table will be in effect for this opening.

| Vessel Class |        | Fishing Period Limit (pounds) |                    |
|--------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Length       | Letter | Dressed, head-on              | Dressed, head-off* |
| 0-25         | A      | 860                           | 755                |
| 26-30        | B      | 1,075                         | 945                |
| 31-35        | C      | 1,715                         | 1,510              |
| 36-40        | D      | 4,735                         | 4,165              |
| 41-45        | E      | 5,090                         | 4,480              |
| 46-50        | F      | 6,095                         | 5,365              |
| 51-55        | G      | 6,800                         | 5,985              |
| 56+          | H      | 10,225                        | 9,000              |

\*Weights are after 2% has been deducted for ice and slime if fish are not washed prior to weighing.

The appropriate vessel length class and letter are printed on each vessel license.

**The fishing period limit is shown in terms of dressed, head-off weight as well as dressed, head-on weight, although fishers are reminded that regulations require that all halibut from Area 2A be landed with the head on.**

The fishing period limit applies to the vessel, not the individual fisher, and any landings over the vessel limit will be subject to forfeiture and fine.

In 2005, NMFS implemented mandatory depth-based area closures that are in effect for the directed halibut fishery to protect specific rockfish species. NMFS has mailed information on the closures to license holders. For further information, call the NMFS hotline at 1-800-662-9825, then press "5" for the halibut fisheries.

**South Washington Coast Sport Halibut Fishery to Close on May 30**

Preliminary estimates of the harvest through May 22 for the south Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Queets River to Leadbetter Point) indicate that the harvest will approach the 50,146 pound catch limit by May 30. Therefore, both the all-depth and nearshore portions of the south Washington coast sport halibut fishery will close at 11:59 PM on Monday, May 30, 2005. Halibut managers will meet again to assess the catch and determine how much additional fishing time may be granted

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North Washington Coast Sport Halibut Fishery Open on June 16 and June 18 Only

The north Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Sekiu River to Queets River) will be **open on Thursday, June 16, closed on Friday, June 17 and will reopen for one more day on Saturday, June 18**. Approximately 38,000 pounds remain to be caught in this area.

Quota Share Commercial Fisheries Update

The quota share halibut fisheries opened on February 27, 2005. It is estimated that the following catches and numbers of landings were made in the Alaskan IFQ fishery through May 18, 2005 and in the British Columbian IVQ fishery through May 17, 2005.

| Area         | Catch Limit<br>(000's pounds) | Catch<br>(000's pounds) | Number of<br>Landings |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2C           | 10,930                        | 3,741                   | 760                   |
| 3A           | 25,470                        | 9,734                   | 854                   |
| 3B           | 13,150                        | 2,922                   | 169                   |
| 4            | 9,689                         | 391                     | 34                    |
| Alaska total | 59,239                        | 16,788                  | 1,814                 |
| 2B           | 11,658                        | 3,862                   | 266                   |
| Grand Total  | 70,897                        | 20,650                  | 2,080                 |

The Alaskan catch represents 28% of the 2005 catch limit. For comparison, from February 29 to May 17, 2004, 17.1 million pounds, or 28% of the 2004 catch limit, were landed in the Alaskan fishery. The British Columbian catch represents 33% of the 2005 catch limit. Between February 29 and May 17, 2004, 4.3 million pounds, or 35% of the catch limit, were landed from Area 2B. No Alaskan Community Development Quota (CDQ) landings have been made in 2005.

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 Islands Reserve. The first 48-hour fishing period occurred between April 30 and May 1, with a total catch of 1,250 pounds. A second opening occurred between May 14 and May 16, resulting in a total catch of 3,472 pounds. After two openings, a grand total of 4,722 pounds have been landed in 2005. The Metlakatla Indian Community and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will announce future halibut openings.

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