

News Release

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

May 24, 2006

2006 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 28 non-treaty directed commercial fishing period in Area 2A to avoid exceeding the 234,960 pound catch limit. The June 28 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	760	670
26-30	B	955	840
31-35	C	1,530	1,345
36-40	D	4,210	3,705
41-45	E	4,530	3,985
46-50	F	5,420	4,770
51-55	G	6,045	5,320
56+	H	9,090	8,000

*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 2006, 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.

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Quota Share Commercial Fisheries Update

The 2006 quota share halibut fisheries opened on March 5, one week later than the 2005 opening date. It is estimated that the following catches and numbers of landings were made in the Alaskan IFQ and CDQ fisheries through May 18, 2006 and in the British Columbian IVQ fishery through May 17, 2006.

Area	Catch Limit (000's pounds)	Catch (000's pounds)	Number of Landings
2C	10,630	3,542	737
3A	25,200	9,189	790
3B	10,860	2,255	139
4A	3,350	108	7
4B	1,670	138	8
4C/4D/4E	3,550	0	0
Alaska total	55,260	15,232	1,681
2B	11,631	4,542	149
Grand Total	66,891	19,774	1,830

The Alaskan catch represents 28% of the 2006 catch limit. For comparison, from February 27 to May 18, 2005, 16.8 million pounds, or 28% of the 2005 catch limit, were landed in the Alaskan fishery. Comparing the number of days opened, 15.1 million pounds, or 25% of the catch limit, were delivered after 74 days of the 2005 season.

The British Columbian catch represents 39% of the 2006 catch limit. Between February 27 and May 17, 2005, 3.9 million pounds, or 33% of the 2005 catch limit, were landed from Area 2B. Comparing the number of days opened, 3.7 million pounds, or 32% of the catch limit, were delivered after 73 days of the 2005 season.

North Washington Coast Sport Halibut Fishery Open on June 22 and 24 Only

The north Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Sekiu River, WA to Queets River, WA) is closed for the remainder of May, but will be **open on Thursday, June 22, closed on Friday, June 23 and will reopen for one more day on Saturday, June 24**. Approximately 56,000 pounds remain to be caught in this area.

South Washington Coast Sport Halibut Fishery Closed for Remainder of 2006

The south Washington coast sport halibut fishery is closed for the remainder of 2006. The catch estimate for the south Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Queets River, WA to Leadbetter Point, WA) through May 17 is 58,484 pounds, which exceeds the quota for this area. Halibut of higher than expected average weight and good fishing contributed to the early closure for this fishery.

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Columbia River Area Update

The preliminary catch estimate for the Columbia River sport halibut fishery (Leadbetter Point, WA to Cape Falcon, OR) through May 21 is about 14,100 pounds. About 700 pounds remain to be caught in this opening. The early season quota of 14,819 pounds is expected to be reached by Saturday, May 27. Therefore, the fishery will close as of 11:59 PM on May 27. After an evaluation of the spring catch, managers will meet to determine subsequent fishing days for the August opening.

Central Oregon All-Depth Sport Halibut Fishing from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain Update

The spring all-depth season remains open. A total of 91,500 pounds has been harvested through May 21 from a quota of 175,474 pounds. The next scheduled opening will occur on May 25, 26, and 27. Halibut sport fishing also remains open inside the 40-fathom curve from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. Only a few hundred pounds have been landed out of the 20,345 pound quota. This fishery is open seven days a week. Details on catch and regulations for all Oregon sub-areas can be found at <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/mrp/>

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