

News Release

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

July 18, 2006

2006 HALIBUT LANDING REPORT NO. 5**Non-treaty Commercial Fishing Period Limits in Area 2A for the July 26th Opening**

The July 12 non-treaty commercial fishing period in Area 2A resulted in a catch of about 113,000 pounds, leaving 43,960 pounds in the catch limit.

Area 2A will reopen on July 26 for 10 hours from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. local time. 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.

Length	Vessel Class		Fishing Period Limit (pounds)	
	Letter		Dressed, head-on	Dressed, head-off*
0-25	A		225	200
26-30	B		275	240
31-35	C		440	385
36-40	D		1,210	1,065
41-45	E		1,300	1,145
46-50	F		1,555	1,370
51-55	G		1,740	1,530
56+	H		2,615	2,300

*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 July 16, 2006 and in the British Columbian IVQ fishery through July 14, 2006.

Area	Catch Limit (000's pounds)	Catch (000's pounds)	Number of Landings
2C	10,630	6,412	1,551
3A	25,200	16,159	1,555
3B	10,860	5,801	378
4A	3,350	1,036	80
4B	1,670	810	52
4C	1,610	169	161
4D	1,610	461	14
4E	330	217	809
Alaska total	55,260	31,065	4,600
2B	11,631	6,597	471
Grand Total	66,891	37,662	5,071

The Alaskan catch represents 56% of the 2006 catch limit. For comparison, from February 27 to July 16, 2005, 32.8 million pounds, or 55% of the 2005 catch limit, were landed in the Alaskan fishery. Comparing the number of days opened, 31.4 million pounds, or 53% of the catch limit, were delivered after 133 days of the 2005 season.

The British Columbian catch represents 57% of the 2006 catch limit. Between February 27 and July 14, 2005, 6.2 million pounds, or 53% of the 2005 catch limit, were landed from Area 2B. Comparing the number of days opened, 6.0 million pounds, or 51% of the catch limit, were delivered after 131 days of the 2005 season.

Area 2A Incidental Commercial Halibut Fishery During the Salmon Troll Season

The total allowable incidental commercial catch of halibut allocated to the Area 2A salmon troll fishery is 41,464 pounds. An estimated 14,461 pounds of halibut were landed in Washington State through June 14. In Oregon, 1,362 pounds of halibut were landed through June 24. The incidental halibut catch fishery during the salmon troll season remains open until further notice.

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 29,074 pounds have been landed through July 14. This incidental halibut catch fishery remains open until further notice. For further incidental fishery retention information call the NMFS hotline (1-800-662-9825).

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Area 2A Sport Halibut Fishery

Puget Sound and Juan de Fuca Strait Sport Halibut Fishery Updates

The Puget Sound and Juan de Fuca Strait sport halibut fishery east of Low Point closed on June 18. Sport halibut fishing west of Low Point to the Sekiu River closes on August 5. The combined projected harvest for the season is 68,607 pounds. Using the results of inseason creel surveys to estimate the catch per angler-trip in combination with a post-season telephone survey of marine anglers to estimate effort, a catch estimate for Puget Sound will be calculated this fall.

North Washington Coast Sport Halibut Fishery Closed for Season

Catch estimates through June 24 for the north Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Sekiu River to the Queets River) indicate that the harvest is 105,805 pounds, or 13,439 pounds short of the 119,244 pound catch limit. Insufficient quota remains for a full day of fishing, so the north Washington coast sport halibut fishery is closed for the remainder of 2006.

South Washington Coast Sport Halibut Season Closed as of May 17

Catch estimates through May 17 for the south Washington coast sport halibut fishery (Queets River to Leadbetter Point) indicate that the catch limit was exceeded by 4,532 pounds and this fishery is therefore closed.

Columbia River Area To Re-open August 4

The preliminary catch estimate for the Columbia River sport halibut fishery (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon) through the spring opening is 14,365 pounds. This leaves a little less than 7,000 pounds available for the summer opening in August.

All-Depth Sport Halibut Fishing from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain Re-opens August 4

The spring all-depth season concluded on July 8 and exceeded the spring fishery catch limit by 8,417 pounds. This overage reduces the summer fishery catch limit to 50,074 pounds. The summer fishery will begin on Friday, August 4. Subsequent openings will be announced pending evaluation of the catch. The daily bag limit is one fish and the possession limit is one fish at sea. There is no minimum size limit.

Halibut sport fishing continues to be open inside the 40-fathom curve from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. Only 3,389 pounds have been harvested from a catch limit of 20,345 pounds. 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://www.dfw.state.or.us/mrp/>

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Southern Oregon – California Open through October 31, 2006

The sport halibut fishery south of Humbug Mountain opened on May 1 and will remain open through October 31, 2006. This fishery is open seven days a week with a one halibut bag and possession limit. There is no minimum size limit. The projected catch at season's end is 8,293 pounds.

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

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