

## *News Release*



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August 16, 2012

### **2012 HALIBUT LANDING REPORT NO. 6**

#### **Commission Seeks Information on Mushy Halibut Syndrome**

A condition of halibut flesh, which has been variously described as mushy or jelly-like, has become more frequently reported by recreational halibut fishers in certain parts of southcentral Alaska, especially in 2011 and 2012. This is not a new phenomenon, with observations being noted as early as 1989. Recent analyses of flesh samples by the State of Alaska's Fish Pathology Lab noted that fish with the condition have large areas of body tissue which are flaccid or jelly-like. The fillets may ooze water and are mushy when cooked. While the cause of the condition is unknown, it is thought to be the result of nutritional deficiencies.

The IPHC is interested in learning about the geographical and seasonal occurrence of the mushy condition in Pacific halibut. To accomplish this, halibut stakeholders are invited to submit information on captured mushy halibut through a new Mushy Halibut Syndrome web page: <http://www.iphc.int/research/biology/mushy-halibut.html>.

#### **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. Two 48-hour fishing periods, with opening dates of June 29 and July 13, had halibut catches, by opening, of 4,874 and 4,407 pounds, respectively. After seven openings, a grand total of 24,558 pounds of halibut have been landed in 2012. The Metlakatla Indian Community and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will announce future halibut openings.

#### **Area 2A Incidental Commercial Halibut Fishery During the Limited Entry, 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 21,173 pounds. Incidental catch of halibut in the sablefish fishery was allowed beginning May 1. It is estimated that 3,366 pounds of halibut, or 16% of the catch limit, have been landed through August 1. This fishery remains open until further notice.

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## Quota Share Commercial Fisheries Update

The 2012 quota share halibut fisheries opened on March 17. It is estimated that the following catches and numbers of landings were made in the Alaskan IFQ and CDQ fisheries through August 14, 2012 and in the British Columbian IVQ fishery through August 13, 2012.

Area	Catch Limit (000's pounds)	Catch (000's pounds)	Number of Landings
2C	2,624.00	1,925	809
3A	11,918.00	7,801	1,194
3B	5,070.00	3,131	347
4A	1,567.00	962	122
4B	1,869.00	937	96
4C/4D/4E	2,465.00	1,466	1,302
Alaska total	25,513.00	16,222	3,870
2B	5,953.35	3,721	465
Grand Total	31,466.35	19,943	4,335

The catch off Alaska represents 64% of the 2012 commercial fishery catch limit. For comparison, 22.4 million pounds, or 69% of the 2011 catch limit, were landed in the Alaskan fishery by this same date in 2011; however, the opening date of the 2011 fishery occurred five days earlier in the year than that of the 2012 fishery. Thus, during the first 150 days of the 2011 Alaskan commercial halibut fishery, 21.2 million pounds, or 65% of the catch limit, were landed.

The catch from British Columbian waters represents 63% of the 2012 commercial fishery catch limit. For comparison, 4.04 million pounds, or 60% of the 2011 catch limit, had been landed from Area 2B by this same date in 2011. During the first 149 days of the 2011 IVQ fishery, 3.79 million pounds, or 57% of the catch limit, had been landed.

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