

News Release

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April 24, 2013

2013 HALIBUT LANDING REPORT NO. 1**Quota Share Commercial Fisheries Update**

The 2013 quota share halibut fisheries opened on March 23. It is estimated that the following catches and numbers of landings were made in the Alaskan IFQ fishery through April 20, 2013 and in the British Columbian IVQ fishery through April 18, 2013. No Alaskan Community Development Quota (CDQ) landings have occurred thus far in 2013.

Area	Catch Limit (000's pounds)	Catch (000's pounds)	Number of Landings
2C	2,970.00	574	163
3A	11,030.00	1,689	199
3B	4,290.00	136	14
4	4,710.00	84	6
Alaska total	23,000.00	2,483	382
2B	5,957.55	859	70
Grand Total	28,957.55	3,342	452

The catch off Alaska represents 10.8% of the 2013 commercial fishery catch limit. For comparison, 2.4 million pounds, or 9.3% of the 2012 catch limit, were landed in the Alaskan fishery by this same date in 2012; however, the opening date of the 2012 fishery occurred six days earlier in the year than that of the 2013 fishery. Thus, during the first 28 days of the 2012 Alaskan commercial halibut fishery, 2.0 million pounds, or 7.9% of the catch limit, were landed.

The catch from British Columbian (Area 2B) waters represents 14.4% of the 2013 commercial fishery catch limit. For comparison, 1.3 million pounds, or 21.3% of the 2012 catch limit, had been landed from Area 2B by this same date in 2012. Also, during the first 26 days of the 2012 IVQ fishery, 1.1 million pounds, or 18.7% of the catch limit, had been landed.

Area 2A Commercial Treaty Indian Fisheries

In 2013, the Pacific Fishery Management Council allocated 314,300 pounds of halibut for commercial use to the Treaty Indian tribes of Area 2A-1. Preliminary catch estimates indicate that during a 48-hour unrestricted fishery from March 23 to March 25, the Treaty tribes landed 221,259 pounds of halibut. An additional 66,189 pounds of halibut were landed during two restricted fishing periods from April 3-4 and April 15-16. There are 26,852 pounds remaining in the Area 2A Treaty Indian commercial halibut fishery catch limit.

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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. 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 and to be non-infectious. There are no known human health concerns with Mushy Halibut Syndrome. Information assembled by the State of Alaska can be found at:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/species/disease/pdfs/fishdiseases/mushy_halibut_syndrome.pdf

The IPHC has an ongoing interest in learning about the geographical and seasonal occurrence of the mushy condition in Pacific halibut. To accomplish this, halibut stakeholders were invited to submit information on captured mushy halibut through the Mushy Halibut Syndrome web page: <http://www.iphc.int/research/biology/mushy-halibut.html>. We encourage stakeholders to continue these reports through the 2013 season.

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