



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115
www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/index.html



PUBLIC NOTICE

For Information Contact:
206-526-4646
NMFS Hotline: 866-509-1628 (select 7 for halibut)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 5, 2016

2016 COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES IN WASHINGTON, OREGON, AND CALIFORNIA

The final rule regarding the 2016 Pacific halibut fisheries published on April 1, 2016 (81 FR 18789). The full rule, as published in the *Federal Register*, can be found at http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/management/pacific_halibut_management.htm

NMFS maintains several halibut hotlines that contain the most up to date regulations for the commercial (both directed and incidental) and recreational fisheries. Participants should check the NMFS hotlines by calling 866-509-1628. Each West Coast state also maintains up to fishery information and can be found at the following websites:

Washington

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/creel/halibut/>

Oregon

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/mrp/finfish/halibut/>

California

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Pacific-Halibut>

For 2016 the following regulations apply to commercial (both directed and incidental) and recreational halibut fisheries:

Recreational

Please note retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited in the sport fishery coastwide (except in the Oregon Central Coast nearshore fishery, see details below) and the daily bag limit in Washington, Oregon, and California is 1 halibut of any size per person per day.

Washington

Puget Sound subarea sport fishery for halibut is open May 7, 12, 13, 14, 26, 27, 28, and 29.

There are additional area closures in the Puget Sound subarea for 2016, please check state regulations online at wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/creel/halibut

The **north Washington Coast** sport fishery for halibut, north of Queets River and west of the Sekiu River mouth, opens on May 7, and is open 2 days per week (Thursday and Saturday)

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through May 14th or until the sub-quota is taken. If enough quota remains, sport fishing in this area is scheduled for a second opening in June. The NMFS hotline will announce reopenings, if any. Sport fishing for halibut is closed within a “C”-shaped area off Washington called the North Coast Recreational Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area.

The **south Washington Coast** sport fishery for halibut, from Queets River south to Leadbetter Point, opens on May 1, and continues 2 days a week (Sunday and Tuesday) until May 17, or until the subarea quota is taken, whichever is earlier. Beginning Sunday, May 29, the primary fishery will be open 1 or 2 days per week, Sunday and/or Tuesday until the quota for the south coast subarea primary fishery is taken or until September 30, whichever is earlier. The NMFS hotline will announce the dates of any openings.

The fishing season in the nearshore area, in waters between 47°31.70' N. lat. south to 46°58' N. lat. and east of a boundary line approximating the 30 fm depth contour, opens on Sunday, May 1 and is open seven days per week. The daily bag limit is 1 halibut of any size per day per person.

Sport fishing for halibut is closed within the South Coast Recreational Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area and the Westport Offshore Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area. Additionally in the South Coast subarea seaward of the boundary line approximating the 30-fm depth contour and during days open to the primary fishery, lingcod may be taken and retained, possessed and landed, when allowed by groundfish regulations. For the most up to date groundfish regulations please call 206-526-6140 or see our website at <http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish/index.html>, then open the Regulations link under Resources.

The **Columbia River** sport fishery for halibut,

between Leadbetter Point, WA and Cape Falcon, OR, is divided into an all depth and nearshore fishery. The nearshore fishery extends from Leadbetter Point (46°38.17' N. lat., 124°15.88' W. long.) to the Columbia River (46°16.00' N. lat., 124°15.88' W. long.) by connecting the following coordinates in Washington 46°38.17' N. lat., 124°15.88' W. long. to 46°16.00' N. lat., 124°15.88' W. long. and connecting to the boundary line approximating the 40 fm (73 m) depth contour in Oregon.

The nearshore fishery opens May 2, and continues 3 days per week (Monday – Wednesday) until the nearshore allocation is taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier.

The all depth fishing season commences on May 1, and continues 4 days a week (Thursday – Sunday) until the all-depth quota is estimated to have been taken and the season is closed by the Commission, or September 30, whichever is earlier. When halibut are on board the vessel, no Pacific Coast groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except sablefish, Pacific cod, and flatfish species.

In the nearshore area, taking, retaining, possessing, or landing halibut on groundfish trips is only allowed on days when the all-depth fishery is closed, i.e. on days when the nearshore fishery is open. Therefore, incidental halibut retention on groundfish trips is allowed in the nearshore area on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, until the nearshore allocation is taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier.

Oregon

The **Oregon Coast “inside 40-fathom”** sport fishery for halibut, from Cape Falcon south to Humbug Mountain, opens June 1, and continues 7 days a week until the quota is taken, or through October 31, whichever is earlier. This opening is only for the area shoreward of a boundary line approximating the 40-fm depth contour. During days open in the nearshore area

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Pacific Coast groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, when halibut are on board the vessel, in areas open to groundfish retention. Recreational groundfish bag limits apply when retaining groundfish, please see “Regulations” under Resources on the NMFS groundfish website at <http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish/index.html>

The **Oregon Coast all-depth** sport fishery for halibut, from Cape Falcon south to Humbug Mountain, is scheduled to be open Thursday through Saturday, on May 12-14, 19-21, 26-28, and June 2-4. If sufficient quota remains for additional fishing, the season will reopen for additional days in June and/or July and will be announced on the NMFS hotline. During days open to all-depth halibut fishing, no Pacific Coast groundfish may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except sablefish, Pacific cod, and flatfish species, if halibut are on board the vessel. In addition, a yelloweye rockfish conservation area off central Oregon, near Stonewall Bank, is closed to sport fishing for halibut.

The Southern Oregon sport fishery for halibut from Humbug Mountain, to the OR/CA border opens May 1, and continues 7 days per week until the subquota is taken, or October 31, whichever is earlier.

California

The California sport fishery for halibut along the California coast, is open May 1-15, June 1-15, July 1-15, August 1-15, and September 1-October 31, or until the subarea quota is estimated to have been taken and the season is closed, or October 31, whichever is earlier.

Commercial

Directed Commercial Fishery

Note: Participants in the commercial halibut fishery, in Area 2A are required to fish outside of a closed area that extends from the

US/Canada border south to 40°10' N. lat. and follows approximate depth contours. Between the U.S./Canada border and 46°16' N. lat., the eastern boundary is the shoreline. Between 46°16' N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat., the eastern boundary is defined by a line approximating the 30-fm (55-m) depth contour and between the U.S./Canada border and 40°10' N. lat., western boundary is defined by the boundary line approximating the 100-fm (183-m) depth contour. These depth contours are approximated by connecting straight lines between a series of coordinates. The coordinates for these depth contours are available on the NMFS West Coast Region website in the groundfish regulations section at

<http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish/index.html>, under Resources click on “Areas Closures” then under Commercial Non-trawl closed areas click on “Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas” and follow the instruction to download coordinates at the bottom of the page. Coordinates are also available by calling the National Marine Fisheries Service at 206-526-6140.

The directed commercial fishery in Area 2A, which occurs south of Pt. Chehalis, WA, will have its first 10-hour opening on June 22 from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm local time. If sufficient quota remains, additional season opening dates will be announced on the NMFS hotline. An International Pacific Halibut Commission license is required to participate in this fishery. Please contact the IPHC for quota details or further information on the directed commercial halibut fishery at 206-634-1838 or visit their website at www.iphc.int

Incidental halibut in the Sablefish Primary Fishery

Beginning April 1st, during the sablefish primary fishery north of Pt. Chehalis, WA, and continuing until the quota is taken, longliners with limited entry sablefish endorsements to participate in the sablefish primary fishery, and

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with IPHC licenses, may possess or land incidental halibut up to 110 lb (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 lb (dressed weight) of sablefish and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the ratio landing limit. “Dressed” weight of halibut means eviscerated, head-on, and without ice and slime. This opportunity is available only to vessels using longline gear fishing for and retaining sablefish north of Pt. Chehalis, WA. Retention of halibut is prohibited for vessels using any gear other than longline gear. Halibut may not be on board a vessel that has gear other than longline gear on board. Halibut taken and retained in the sablefish primary fishery north of Pt. Chehalis may only be landed north of Pt. Chehalis and may not be possessed or landed south of Pt. Chehalis. Participants in this fishery are prohibited from fishing within the North Coast Commercial Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA). Additionally, the "C shaped" YRCA in the North Coast subarea off Washington is designated as an area to be avoided (a voluntary closure) by commercial longline sablefish fishermen.

Incidental halibut in the salmon troll fishery

The incidental landing limits for halibut in the salmon troll fishery will be finalized by the Pacific Fishery Management Council at its April 2016 meeting and will be effective at the beginning of May. Please check the NMFS hotline at that time.

This Public Notice serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide for the 2016 Pacific halibut fisheries in Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, and California). This public notice was prepared pursuant to section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-121. The statements in this document are intended solely as guidance. This document is intended to provide a plain-language summary of how small businesses can comply with these final regulations.

For more information contact: NMFS West Coast Region at 206-526-6140 or visit our website at <http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov>, click on “Fisheries” then “Groundfish” in the left side banner.

Any discrepancies between this Public Notice and the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.