



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Subject: Recommendations for 2022 Open Dates for the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain Subarea Sport Pacific Halibut All-Depth Fisheries

Recommendations for 2022 Open Dates for the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain (Central Oregon Coast) Subarea Sport Pacific Halibut All-Depth Fisheries

Summary

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends the following:

- Spring fishery fixed open dates: May 12 through June 30, 7-days per week.
- Spring fishery backup dates: July 7, 8, 9 and July 21, 22, 23.
- Summer fishery dates: August 4, 5, 6; August 18, 19, 20; September 1, 2, 3; September 15, 16, 17; September 29, 30, October 1; October 13, 14, 15; and October 27, 28, 29; or until the total 2022 all-depth catch limit for the subarea is taken.

Background

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) annually solicits public input on open dates for the sport Pacific halibut all-depth fishery between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain (Central Oregon Coast subarea).

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (PFMC) Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A specifies both the opening day and open days per week for the Oregon all-depth sport fisheries from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. In addition, the plan specifies the proportions of the annual all-depth catch limit shared between the spring (May-July) and summer (August-October) fisheries. In previous years, a number of fixed open days were set annually for each fishery by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Beginning with 2004, fixed dates have only been set for the spring all-depth fishery.

Fixed days are open fishing dates established pre-season. They are set with the intent that the angler can plan fishing trips without concern of closure due to attainment of the catch limit.

However, the fixed dates established for the spring fishery are not guaranteed days and could be cancelled if it is projected that the fishery will exceed the Central Oregon Coast Subarea (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain) annual all-depth catch limit (spring and summer all-depth fisheries combined). Fixed days in the spring fishery can start the second Thursday in May, with the open days to occur on consecutive weeks. Weeks may be skipped due to potentially adverse conditions during large negative tide periods early in the morning. If the quota is 100,000 pounds or less, days open each week are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Beginning in 2022, if the quota is greater than 100,000 pounds, the season may be open for up to seven days per week through June 30.

Possible additional open dates (back-up dates) are established in case sufficient quota remains after completion of the fixed days in the spring fishery. Establishing the dates of possible additional days preseason assists the angler in planning fishing trips. Back-up days occur every other Thursday, Friday and Saturday (regardless of quota) continuing until the spring catch limit is obtained or July 31, whichever occurs first. In contrast to the fixed dates (up to 7 open days), backup days can be open one or two days if not enough quota remains for three backup days.

Starting in 2010, the summer all-depth fishery has been managed as an every other Friday and Saturday fishery starting the first Friday in August and continuing through October or attainment of the allocated catch limit, whichever occurs first, with options to skip weeks due to adverse tidal conditions. Starting in 2020, if the initial summer quota is greater than 60,000 pounds, Thursdays will also be open. Further, starting in 2022, if after the initial summer all-depth opening it is estimated that there will be 60,000 pounds or more remaining on the Central Oregon Coast Subarea all-depth and nearshore quotas, the all-depth fishery may be open for up to seven days per week beginning September 1.

Also beginning in 2022, a new provision in the CSP allows the daily bag limit to increase from one fish per angler per day to two fish earlier than post-Labor Day. At the conclusion of the spring all-depth season, the co-managers will consult to determine whether increasing the daily bag limit to two fish is warranted with the intent of taking the subarea quota by September 30.

Public Input

ODFW received feedback from anglers via e-mail, phone, an online public meeting (8 February), and an online survey on the number and dates of fixed and back-up days to be adopted for the spring all-depth fishery. Approximately 240 individuals provided feedback: 30 via the online public meeting, three via email, and 206 responded to the online survey. The respondents included a mix of private boat owners and passengers, and charter boat operators/crew and passengers, including both coastal and inland residents, as well as residents of five other states.

The anticipated effort, weather impacts, other fishing opportunities (i.e., coho salmon) risks of exceeding the spring all-depth quota and eating into the summer quota, and dates for the 2022 spring all-depth fixed days were the intended focus of the input. The catch per 3-day opening (fixed and back-up combined) in recent years has been variable, with catches ranging from less than 1,000 pounds to a high of approximately 50,000 pounds. In 2018, the first opening had just over 6,000 pounds landed, the next three opening had between 20,000 and 45,000 pounds landed. In 2019, the first opening had just under 30,000 pounds landed. Then the weather set in for the next two openings, producing 2,500 and 1,100 pounds. Even with the five sets of fixed dates, plus three sets of back-up dates, approximately 50 percent of the spring all-depth allocation was harvested. In 2020, the first opening had approximately 18,000 pounds landed,

the second less than 900 pounds. In addition to the five sets of fixed dates, three additional weekends were open for a total of 24 days. The 2020 average landings increased to 14,000 pounds, up from the low of 11,000 pounds in 2019, but still lower than the 5 years prior of approximately 25,000 pounds (Figure 1). Catches in 2021 were lower than in previous years with an average of approximately 9,000 pounds per 3-day opening, with a high near 20,000 pounds and low of 1,200 pounds. A combination of uncooperative weather and a large influx of small fish contributed to the low harvest rate.

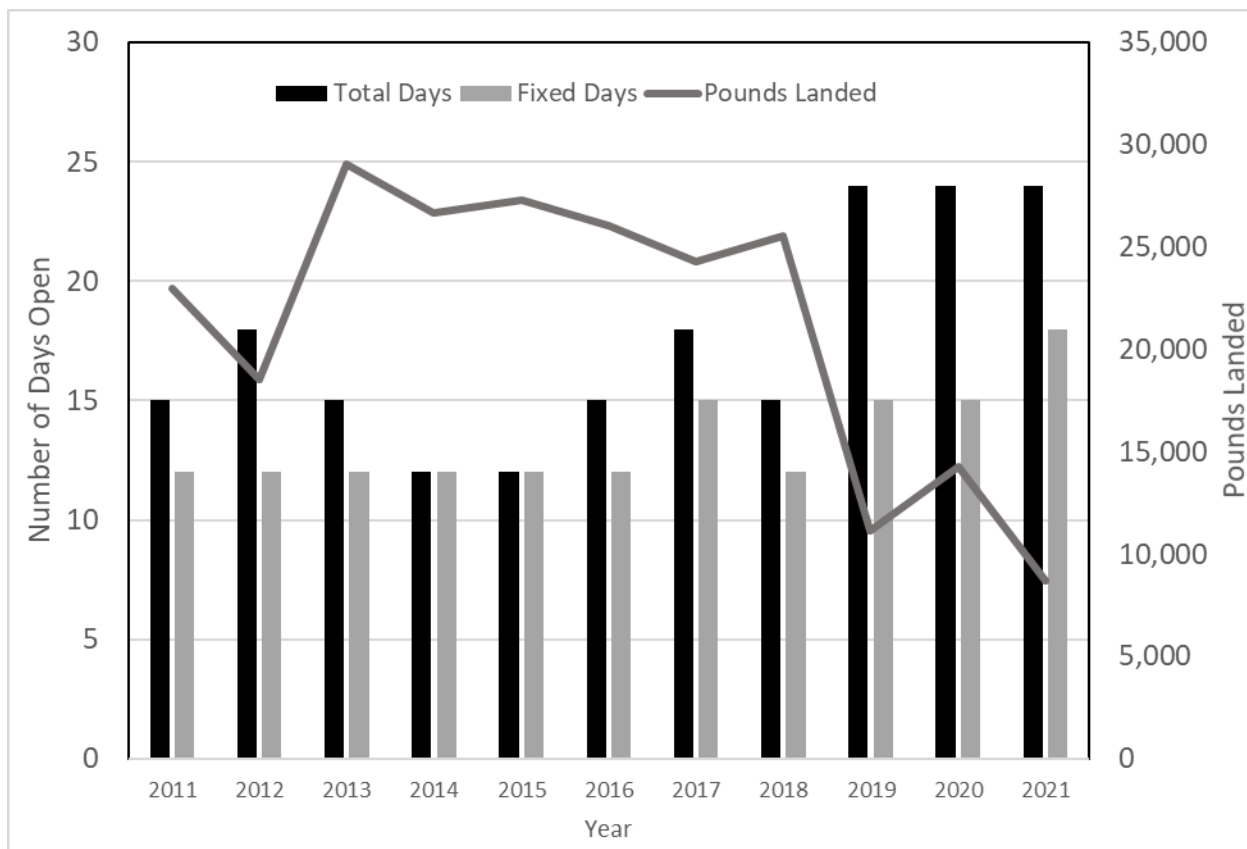


Figure 1. Number of fixed and total days open and average catch per day (in pounds) in the spring all-depth fishery, 2012-2021.

The Area 2A fishery allocation for 2022 is almost the same as 2020 and 2021; therefore the spring all-depth quota is well over 100,000 pounds. A new provision was put into the CSP that if the allocation was over 100,000 pounds, the fishery could be open up to seven days per week starting the second Thursday in May through June, then Thursdays through Saturdays in July. Weeks could be skipped to avoid adverse tides (morning low tides lower than -1.0 feet). ODFW provided five scenarios to the public, three with three days open per week (24 and 27 fixed dates) and two with seven days open (32 and 50 fixed dates). Two scenarios, one with three days per week open and one with seven days per week open, also skipped adverse tides. All scenarios preserve the traditional 2nd Thursday in May opening that many anglers and fishing-related business have come to rely on.

The majority of anglers who provided input were in favor of being open seven days per week, for as many weeks as possible. The last two years, due to a combination of weather and small fish, much of the Central Oregon Coast all-depth allocation has been unharvested. With the 2022

allocation being similarly high, anglers expressed the desire to have as much opportunity as possible to harvest the allocation. ODFW staff did point out that there is a chance that if weather and fishing are really good in May and June, the spring allocation could be exceeded, eating into some or all of the summer all-depth quota. Most of the anglers in attendance believed that risk to be low, and even if it did, there is anticipation of good coho salmon fishing off much of the Oregon coast in July, August, and into September. Therefore there would be other fishing opportunities for anglers. A further consideration was that the fishery has not been open seven days per week for over 15 years. With the high quota this year, it would be a good time to get information on what effort might look like with the additional days of the week open, which could help inform season recommendations in the future.

The discussion about skipping weeks with adverse tides was less than in previous years. By being open seven days per week providing more opportunities, anglers indicated that dealing with the tides would not be as big of an issue as it is when the fishery was only open three days per week for only five weekends (15 days).

In regards to back-up dates, previously anglers expressed a preference that recreational days not be scheduled the day following a commercial opening. With the commercial fishery being three days long, Tuesday through Thursday, in 2022 and the uncertainty with how that might impact recreational fisheries, there was support for avoiding the days immediately following a commercial opening. Recent feedback suggests recreational anglers have less concern when it comes to any recreational and commercial halibut overlap.

Recommendation for 2022 Central Oregon Subarea All-Depth Fisheries

After careful review of the CSP, recent harvest rates, recent angler effort trends, recent fish sizes, risk of exceeding the spring and combined spring and summer quotas, the commercial fishery timing, and feedback from the public, ODFW staff are recommending a 50-day fixed season without skipping any weeks due to adverse morning tides. This seemed to be the best option to balance all of the considerations listed above.

ODFW recommends the fixed days occur Thursday, May 12 through Thursday, June 30, 2022 (Attachment 1). The potential back-up dates recommended, if available catch limit remains, are: July 7, 8, 9 and July 21, 22, 23.

ODFW recommends the summer all-depth fishery occur August 4, 5, 6; August 18, 19, 20; September 1, 2, 3; September 15, 16, 17; September 29, 30, October 1; October 13, 14, 15; and October 27, 28, 29; or until the total 2022 all-depth catch limit for the subarea is taken. The CSP also has provisions to increase open days each week, open weeks, and bag limits inseason during the fishery if it appears the subarea catch limit will not be taken and fishery management goals will not be met

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) will meet on April 22, 2022, to discuss and adopt the recreational Pacific halibut fishery dates into state rules.

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Attachment 1. ODFW's recommendation for the spring halibut openings for 2022 under a 50-day fixed season.

May				June				July						
Date	Day	Tide	Time	Date	Day	Tide	Time	Date	Day	Tide	Time			
1	Sun	-0.8	7:32 AM	OPEN	1	Wed	-1.0	8:26 AM	CLOSED	1	Fri	-0.9	8:44 AM	
2	Mon	-0.9	8:08 AM		2	Thu	-0.8	9:04 AM		2	Sat	-0.7	9:19 AM	
3	Tue	-0.8	8:45 AM		3	Fri	-0.6	9:44 AM	3	Sun	-0.4	9:54 AM		
4	Wed	-0.6	9:25 AM		4	Sat	-0.4	10:26 AM	4	Mon	-0.1	10:30 AM		
5	Thu	-0.3	10:08 AM		5	Sun	-0.1	11:10 AM	5	Tue	0.5	11:07 AM		
6	Fri	0.0	10:57 AM		6	Mon	0.2	11:55 AM	6	Wed	2.9	12:01 AM		
7	Sat	0.3	11:51 AM		7	Tue	3.5	12:40 AM	back-up	7	Thu	2.3	1:08 AM	
8	Sun	--	--		8	Wed	2.8	1:50 AM		8	Fri	1.5	2:14 AM	
9	Mon	3.8	1:18 AM		9	Thu	2.0	2:52 AM	9	Sat	0.5	3:15 AM		
10	Tue	3.3	2:31 AM		10	Fri	0.9	3:45 AM	10	Sun	-0.4	4:11 AM		
11	Wed	2.5	3:28 AM		11	Sat	-0.1	4:34 AM	11	Mon	-1.3	5:04 AM		
12	Thu	1.6	4:16 AM		12	Sun	-1.1	5:22 AM	Commercial Opening	12	Tue	-1.9	5:55 AM	
13	Fri	0.5	5:00 AM		13	Mon	-1.9	6:09 AM		13	Wed	-2.3	6:45 AM	
14	Sat	-0.5	5:43 AM		14	Tue	-2.4	6:57 AM	14	Thu	-2.5	7:33 AM		
15	Sun	-1.3	6:27 AM		15	Wed	-2.7	7:46 AM	CLOSED	15	Fri	-2.3	8:20 AM	
16	Mon	-2.0	7:11 AM		16	Thu	-2.6	8:26 AM		16	Sat	-1.9	9:06 AM	
17	Tue	-2.3	7:59 AM		17	Fri	-2.3	9:27 AM	17	Sun	-1.2	9:51 AM		
18	Wed	-2.4	8:48 AM		18	Sat	-1.7	10:18 AM	18	Mon	-0.4	10:35 AM		
19	Thu	-2.1	9:41 AM		19	Sun	-1.0	11:10 AM	19	Tue	0.6	11:19 AM		
20	Fri	-1.7	10:38 AM		20	Mon	--	--	20	Wed	1.8	12:28 AM		
21	Sat	-1.2	11:37 AM		21	Tue	2.3	1:01 AM	back-up	21	Thu	1.4	1:39 AM	
22	Sun	--	--		22	Wed	1.7	2:15 AM		22	Fri	1.0	2:47 AM	
23	Mon	2.9	1:21 AM		23	Thu	1.0	3:20 AM	23	Sat	0.6	3:46 AM		
24	Tue	2.2	2:38 AM		24	Fri	0.4	4:15 AM	24	Sun	0.2	4:37 AM		
25	Wed	1.4	3:43 AM		25	Sat	-0.1	5:02 AM	25	Mon	-0.1	5:22 AM		
26	Thu	0.6	4:36 AM		26	Sun	-0.5	5:43 AM	Commercial Opening	26	Tue	-0.4	6:02 AM	
27	Fri	-0.1	5:21 AM		27	Mon	-0.7	6:21 AM		27	Wed	-0.6	6:38 AM	
28	Sat	-0.6	6:01 AM		28	Tue	-0.9	6:57 AM	28	Thu	-0.7	7:13 AM		
29	Sun	-0.9	6:38 AM		Commercial Opening	29	Wed	-1.0	7:33 AM	CLOSED	29	Fri	-0.7	7:45 AM
30	Mon	-1.1	7:14 AM			30	Thu	-0.9	8:08 AM		30	Sat	-0.7	8:17 AM
31	Tue	-1.1	7:49 AM						31	Sun	-0.5	8:48 AM		