

AREA 2A

2026 PACIFIC HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN

For tribal, commercial, and recreational Pacific halibut fisheries of Washington, Oregon, and California

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEY	Constant Exploitable Yield
Council	Pacific Fishery Management Council
CSP	Catch Sharing Plan
FCEY	Fishery Constant Exploitation Yield
IPHC	International Pacific Halibut Commission
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
ODFW	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
PFMC	Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council)
RCA	Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA)
TAC	Total Allowable Catch, see FCEY
TCEY	Total Constant Exploitable Yield
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
YRCA	Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area

1.0 FRAMEWORK

This document is the *Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan*, a catch sharing plan (CSP, or Plan) of the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council, or PFMC) revised and updated for implementation in 2026. It guides tribal, non-tribal commercial, and recreational (or sport) Pacific halibut (halibut) fisheries off the coasts of Washington (WA), Oregon (OR), and California (CA) (IPHC Regulatory Area 2A (Area 2A, 2A)) by prescribing an allocation formula for the allowable catch, and by describing the general season structure of the fisheries, especially in the sport sector.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) annually determines the amount of halibut (in pounds [lbs] of fish, net weight¹) available for harvest in Area 2A through a process that is based on a stock assessment and harvest policy. Once the total constant exploitable yield (TCEY) is determined, projected bycatch and wastage mortality is subtracted to produce the fishery constant exploitable yield (FCEY). FCEY is synonymous with total allowable catch (TAC), which was terminology used in this document prior to 2021.

This Plan describes a framework that allocates the annual Area 2A FCEY to subareas. The annual FCEY is approved by the IPHC at their annual meeting which typically occurs in late January. The framework is then implemented in both IPHC regulations and domestic regulations (via the National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS) as published in the *Federal Register*.

2.0 ALLOCATION

This Plan allocates 35 percent of the Area 2A FCEY to U.S. treaty Indian tribes in the State of Washington in subarea 2A-1, and 65 percent to non-tribal fisheries in Area 2A. The allocation to non-tribal fisheries is divided into four shares, with the Washington sport fishery (north of the Columbia River) receiving 35.6 percent, the Oregon sport fishery receiving 29.7 percent, the California sport fishery receiving 4.0 percent, and the commercial fishery receiving 30.7 percent. Allocations within the non-tribal commercial and sport fisheries are described in sections 5 and 6 of this Plan.

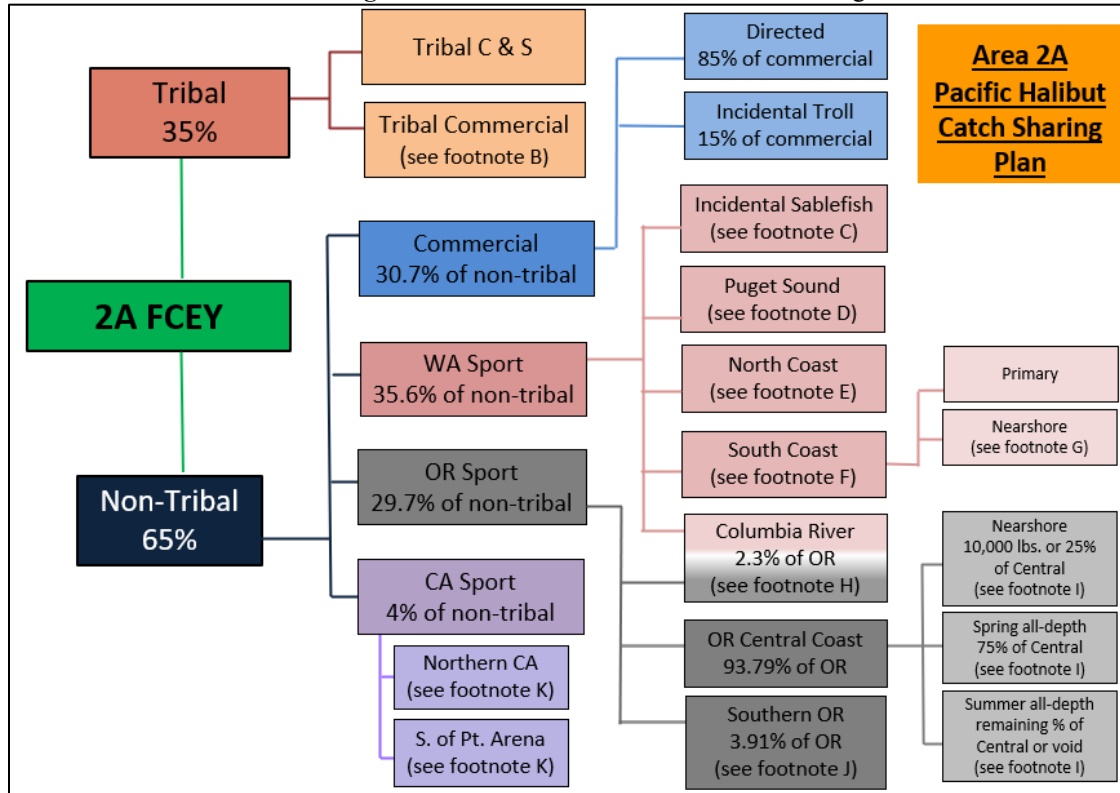
These allocations may be changed if new information becomes available that indicates a change is necessary and/or the Council takes action to reconsider its allocation recommendations. Such changes will be made after appropriate rulemaking is completed and published in the *Federal Register*. All allocations and subquotas are described in net weight, consistent with the IPHC's description of the FCEY.

2.1 Subquotas

The allocations in this Plan are distributed as subquotas to ensure that any overage or underage by any one group will not affect achievement of an allocation set aside for another group. The specific allocative measures in the tribal, non-tribal commercial, and non-tribal sport fisheries in Area 2A are described in sections 4 through 6.

¹ The weight of a fish with head and internal organs removed.

Figure 1. Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan



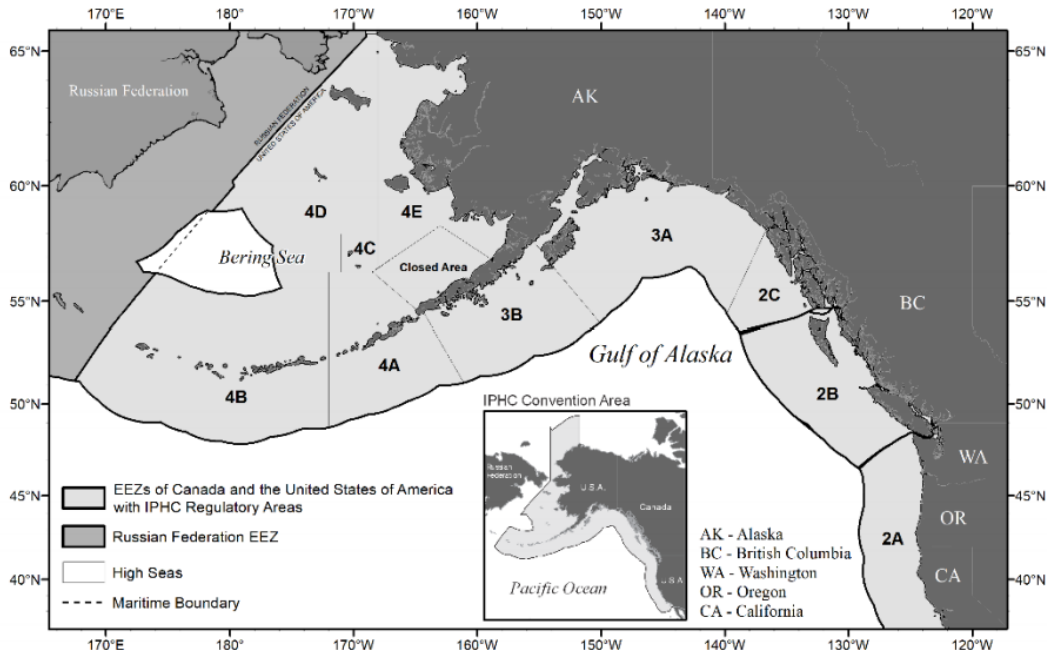
Footnotes

- A. Previous year’s catch estimate, when reported.
- B. Tribal allocation minus the Ceremonial and Subsistence (C & S) estimate.
- C. Incidental halibut in the sablefish fishery: The primary sablefish fishery N. of Pt. Chehalis will be allocated the WA sport allocation that is in excess of 214,110 lbs up to 50,000 lbs, provided a min. of 10,000 lbs is available. If the 2A FCEY is 1.5 million lbs or more, the maximum allocation will increase to 70,000 lbs. If the amount above 214,110 is <10,000 or greater than 50,000 (or 70,000 lbs), the excess will be allocated back to the WA sport areas.
- D. **WA-Puget Sound:** 23.5% of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to WA sport, plus 32% of the WA sport allocation above 130,845.
- E. **WA-North Coast:** 62.2% of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to WA sport, plus 32% of the WA sport allocation above 130,845.
- F. **WA-South Coast:** 12.3% of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to WA sport, plus 32% of the WA sport allocation above 130,845.
- G. Open after the primary (all-depth) fishery closes, if sufficient quota remains.
- H. **Columbia River:** 2% of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to WA sport, plus 4% of the WA sport allocation above 130,845 lbs plus anything over 8,000 lbs from the Southern Oregon subarea.
- I. **Oregon Central Coast:** (1) If the 2A FCEY is 700,000 lbs or greater, the nearshore is allocated 10,000 lbs, the spring all-depth season is allocated 75% of the Oregon Central Coast subarea quota, and the summer all-depth season is allocated the remaining subarea quota. (2) If the FCEY is less than 700,000 lbs, the nearshore is allocated 25% and the spring all-depth season is allocated 75% of the Oregon Central Coast subarea quota.
- J. **Southern Oregon:** 3.91% of the Oregon sport allocation up to 8,000 lbs. Any poundage over 8,000 lbs gets transferred to the Columbia River subarea.
- K. **California subareas:** 500 lbs is reserved for the South of Pt Arena subarea, the remainder to the Northern California subarea.

3.0 AREA OF APPLICATION

This Plan applies only to IPHC Regulatory Area 2A, which includes all waters of the states of Washington, Oregon, and California.

Figure 2. IPHC regulatory areas for the Pacific halibut fishery.



4.0 TRIBAL FISHERIES

4.1 Allocation

Thirty-five percent of the Area 2A FCEY is allocated to 13 treaty tribes in subarea 2A-1.

4.2 Geographic area

Subarea 2A-1 includes the usual and accustomed fishing areas for Pacific Coast treaty tribes off the coast of Washington and all inland marine waters of Washington north of Point Chehalis (46° 53.30' N lat.), including Puget Sound. Boundaries of a tribe's fishing area may be revised as ordered by a Federal court.

4.3 Participants

U.S. treaty tribes in the State of Washington, with treaty-reserved rights to harvest halibut.

4.4 General fishery description

The treaty allocation is to provide for a tribal commercial fishery and a ceremonial and subsistence fishery. These two fisheries are managed separately; any overages in the commercial fishery do not affect the ceremonial and subsistence fishery. The commercial fishery is managed to achieve an established subquota, while the ceremonial and subsistence fishery is managed for a year-round season. The tribes will estimate the ceremonial and subsistence harvest expectations in January of each year, and the remainder of the allocation will be for the tribal commercial fishery.

4.5 Ceremonial and Subsistence

Ceremonial fisheries shall be managed by tribal regulations promulgated in season to meet the needs of specific ceremonial events. Halibut taken for ceremonial and subsistence purposes may not be offered for sale or sold.

4.5.1 Sub allocation

Estimated by the tribes in January of each year.

4.5.2 Season structure

Begins on January 1 and continues through December 31.

4.5.3 Landing restrictions

No size or bag limits, except that when the tribal commercial fishery is closed, tribal members may take and retain not more than two halibut per day per person for subsistence purposes.

4.6 Tribal Commercial

4.6.1 Sub allocation

Balance of quota after ceremonial and subsistence subquota is determined, which is estimated by the tribes in January of each year.

4.6.2 Season structure

Tribal commercial fishery season dates will be set within the season dates determined by the IPHC and implemented in IPHC regulations. The tribal commercial fishery will close when the subquota is taken.

4.6.3 Landing restrictions

Size limit: Consistent with IPHC regulations on size limits for the non-tribal fishery.

Landing limit: None unless specified.

5.0 NON-TRIBAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

5.1 Allocation

The non-tribal commercial fishery is allocated 30.7 percent of the non-tribal share of the Area 2A FCEY, which is approximately 19.9 percent of the total Area 2A FCEY. In addition, a portion of the Washington sport allocation may be used for the incidental catch of halibut in the commercial sablefish primary fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA, if the Washington sport allocation exceeds a specific level as described in section 5.8.

5.2 Area description

Within the waters of Area 2A but may be restricted due to fishery boundaries and conservation areas.

5.3 General fishery description

Halibut may be retained from three commercial fishery structures: (1) directed halibut fishery, (2) incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery, and (3) incidental halibut catch in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA.

5.4 Participants

Commercial fishers must choose either (1) to operate in the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A and/or retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA; or (2) to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery.

Commercial fishers wishing to operate in both the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A and/or retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA, may not obtain a vessel permit to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll season.

A salmon troller may retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery or participate in the directed commercial fishery targeting halibut but not in both.

5.5 Commercial permit restrictions/declarations.

Commercial fishers must obtain an individual vessel permit online: (1) to operate in the directed commercial fishery in Area 2A; or (2) to retain halibut caught incidentally in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA; or (3) to retain halibut caught incidentally during the salmon troll fishery.

The deadline to submit a permit application to NMFS for any of the three aforementioned non-tribal commercial fisheries is March 15, or on the following business day if March 15 falls on a weekend or Federal holiday (see [NMFS website](#)).

Fishing vessels permitted to fish commercially in Area 2A are prohibited from operating in the sport fisheries in Area 2A.

5.6 Directed Halibut Fishery

5.6.1 Sub allocation

Eighty-five percent of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation is allocated to the directed fishery targeting halibut (e.g., longline fishery). The sub-allocation for this directed fishery is approximately 17.0 percent of the Area 2A FCEY.

5.6.2 Geographic area

Confined to the area south of subarea 2A-1 (south of Point Chehalis, WA; 46° 53.30' N. lat.), to include southern Washington, Oregon, and California.

5.6.3 Management objective

Opening date(s), duration, and vessel trip limits will be determined by NMFS and published in the Federal Register as necessary to ensure that the quota for the non-tribal commercial fisheries is not exceeded.

5.6.4 *Season structure*

This fishery typically opens in June with vessel trip limits based on vessel size to moderate catch. In recent years, the season structure has been a series of 3-day openings (58-hours), beginning at 8 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday in June and ending at 6 p.m. on the Thursday of that week. NMFS will announce in the *Federal Register* the dates for the first three open periods, and additional openings may be set through inseason action if enough of the subquota remains. Intervals between open periods are anticipated to be two to three weeks. The second opener would be two weeks after the first opener and the third opening would aim to be two weeks after the second opener but no later than three weeks after the second opener.

5.6.5 *Landing restrictions*

Determined annually by NMFS; typically expressed as a vessel trip limit.

5.6.6 *Inseason adjustments*

If NMFS determines that after the conclusion of the initial fishing period(s) a sufficient amount of the subquota remains, then NMFS may set additional 3-day (58-hour) fishing periods. Any subsequent fishing periods would occur as soon as possible, Tuesday through Thursday, until the subquota is attained.

If NMFS determines that the remaining subquota for the directed fishery is insufficient to allow for an additional 58-hour fishing period, then the remaining halibut will be made available for incidental catch of halibut to the salmon troll fishery (independent of the incidental harvest allocation) as needed to conduct the incidental fishery through the planned season end date.

5.6.7 *Groundfish regulations*

None specified in this document.

5.6.8 *Closed areas*

This fishery may also be managed with closed areas designed to protect overfished groundfish species. Any such closed areas will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register* and the coordinates will be specifically defined at 50 CFR 660.71 through 660.74.

5.7 Incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery

5.7.1 *Sub allocation*

Fifteen percent of the non-tribal commercial fishery allocation is allocated to the salmon troll fishery in Area 2A as an incidental catch during salmon fisheries. The quota for this incidental catch fishery is approximately 2.9 percent of the Area 2A FCEY.

5.7.2 *Management objectives*

The primary management objective for this fishery is to harvest the subquota as an incidental catch during the April-June salmon troll fishery. The secondary management objective is to harvest the remaining troll quota as an incidental catch during the remainder of the salmon troll fishery. These management objectives will be achieved through landing restrictions (see section 5.7.4).

The landing restrictions are meant to assure that the incidental harvest rate is appropriate for salmon and halibut availability, does not encourage target fishing on halibut, ensures an equitable sharing of the halibut landings among the fishers, and does not increase the likelihood of exceeding the quota for this fishery.

5.7.3 Season structure

The Council will recommend landing restrictions at its spring public meetings each year to control the amount of halibut caught incidentally in the troll fishery, so that it remains within its subquota. The commercial ocean salmon fisheries typically begin in April and continue into September, and sometimes October.

5.7.4 Landing restrictions

Determined preseason, typically on a “per-trip” basis. The landing restrictions will be based on the number of incidental harvest permit applications submitted, halibut catch rates, the amount of allocation, and other pertinent factors, and may include catch or landing ratios, landing limits, or other means to control the rate of halibut harvest. NMFS will publish the landing restrictions annually in the *Federal Register*, along with the salmon management measures. This fishery may be subject to inseason adjustment.

5.7.5 Inseason adjustments

- a. NMFS may make inseason adjustments to the landing restrictions, if requested by the Council Chair, as necessary to assure that the incidental harvest rate is appropriate for salmon and halibut availability, does not encourage target fishing on halibut, and does not increase the likelihood of exceeding the quota for this fishery. In determining whether to make such inseason adjustments, NMFS will consult with the applicable state representative(s), a representative of the Council’s Salmon Advisory Subpanel, and Council staff.
- b. Extension of fishery: If the subquota for this fishery has not been harvested during the April-June portion of the salmon troll fishery, then incidental halibut harvest will be allowed in July and continue until the amount of halibut that was initially available as quota for the troll fishery is taken or until the end of the season date for commercial halibut fishing is determined by NMFS and implemented in the Federal Register (typically early October).

5.7.6 Groundfish regulations

Under the Pacific Coast groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.330, fishing with salmon troll gear is prohibited within the Salmon Troll Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA).

5.7.7 Closed conservation areas

The Salmon Troll YRCA is an area off the northern Washington coast and is defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for the Salmon Troll YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70(c) and in salmon regulations at 50 CFR 660.405(c).

5.8 Incidental halibut catch in the primary directed sablefish fishery

5.8.1 Sub allocation

Dependent on the Area 2A FCEY, the primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis will be allocated the Washington sport allocation that is in excess of 214,110 lbs provided a minimum of 10,000 lbs is available (i.e., the Washington sport allocation is 224,110 lbs or greater). If the amount above 214,110 lbs is less than 10,000 lbs, then the excess will be allocated to the Washington sport subareas according to section 6.9. The halibut allocated to the sablefish fishery will be shared as follows: up to 50,000 lbs of halibut to the primary sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis, unless the Area 2A FCEY is 1,500,000 lbs or more, then the maximum allocation is 70,000 lbs. Any remaining allocation will be distributed to the Washington sport fishery among the four subareas according to the sharing described in section 6.9.

5.8.2 Management Objectives

The management objective is to accommodate incidental halibut harvest through the duration of the primary directed sablefish fishery season consistent with IPHC halibut fishery season provisions. This objective will be achieved through landing restrictions (see section 5.8.3).

The landing restrictions are meant to assure that the incidental harvest rate is appropriate for sablefish and halibut availability, does not encourage target fishing on halibut, ensures an equitable sharing of the halibut landings among the fishers, and does not increase the likelihood of exceeding the quota for this fishery.

5.8.3 Season Structure

The primary sablefish fishery typically occurs annually during April 1 – December 31. The IPHC commercial fishery season dates are determined at the annual IPHC meeting.

5.8.4 Landing restrictions

The Council will recommend landing restrictions at its spring public meetings each year to control the amount of halibut caught incidentally in this fishery. The landing restrictions will be based on the amount of the allocation and other pertinent factors, and may include catch or landing ratios, landing limits, or other means to control the rate of halibut landings. NMFS will publish the landing restrictions annually in the *Federal Register*.

The objectives for the annual landing restrictions are to attain the halibut allocation at about the same time the IPHC ceases commercial retention for the year, and to ensure an equitable sharing of the halibut landings among the fishers. In past years, the Council has successfully used landing restrictions to maintain the harvest within the allocation.

5.8.5 Inseason adjustments

None specified in this document.

5.8.6 Groundfish regulations

Under Pacific Coast groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.230, fishing with limited entry fixed gear is prohibited within the North Coast Commercial Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) and the Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA).

5.8.7 Closed conservation areas

The North Coast Commercial YRCA and the non-trawl RCA occur off the Washington coast. These closed areas are defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70(b) and 50 CFR 660.73, respectively.

6.0 SPORT FISHERIES

6.1 Allocation

Sport fisheries (including incidental sablefish) are allocated approximately 69 percent of the non-tribal share, which is approximately 45 percent of the Area 2A FCEY. The allocation is further divided as subquotas among eight geographic subareas.

6.2 Area description

Within the waters of Area 2A but may be restricted due to fishery boundaries and conservation areas.

6.3 General fishery description

Sport fisheries generally occur May through October annually, but seasons vary by geographic subarea.

6.4 Port of landing management

All sport fishing in Area 2A will be managed on a "port of landing" basis, whereby any halibut landed into a port will count toward the quota for the subarea in which that port is located, and the regulations governing the subarea of landing apply, regardless of the specific area of catch.

6.5 Vessel participation

Vessels operating in the sport fishery for halibut in Area 2A are prohibited from operating in the commercial halibut fishery in Area 2A during the same calendar year. Sport fishers and charter boat operators must determine, prior to March 15 of each year, whether they will operate in the commercial halibut fisheries in Area 2A which requires a commercial fishing permit from NMFS. Sport fishing for halibut in Area 2A is prohibited from a vessel permitted to fish commercially for halibut in Area 2A. Charter vessels (or for-hire vessels) retaining halibut must be permitted by NMFS.

6.6 Sport fishery closure provisions

NMFS will determine and announce closing dates to the public for any subarea in which a subquota is estimated to have been taken. Closures are determined after consultation with Regional Administrator, NMFS West Coast Region, Chair of the Council, the IPHC Executive Director, and the Fisheries Director(s) of the affected state(s), or their designees. Once NMFS has announced a date on which the season will close, no person shall sport fish for halibut in that area after that date for the rest of the year, unless a reopening of that area for sport halibut fishing is scheduled by NMFS as an inseason action or announced by the IPHC.

6.7 Possession limits

Sport possession limits:

- Washington has a 2-fish daily bag limit, regardless of condition on land, but only a 1-fish daily bag limit may be possessed on the vessel.
- Oregon has a 3-fish daily bag limit on land, regardless of condition, but only a 1-fish daily bag limit may be possessed on the vessel.
- California on land and on the vessel is one daily bag limit, regardless of condition.

6.8 Flexible inseason management provisions

6.8.1 Protocol for inseason modifications

The Regional Administrator, NMFS West Coast Region, after consultation with the Chair of the Council, the IPHC Executive Director, and the Fisheries Director(s) of the affected state(s), or their designees, is authorized to modify regulations during the season after making the following determinations:

- a. The action is necessary to allow access to the allocation objectives and/or allow the management objectives to be met.
- b. The action will not result in exceeding the Area 2A non-tribal allocation.
- c. If any of the sport fishery subareas north of Cape Falcon, OR are not projected to utilize their respective quotas, NMFS may take inseason action to transfer any projected unused quota to another Washington sport subarea.
- d. If any of the sport fishery subareas between Leadbetter Point, WA and the OR/CA border (42° N. lat.) are projected to not utilize their respective quotas by their season ending dates, NMFS may take inseason action to transfer any projected unused quota to another Oregon sport subarea.
- e. Notwithstanding 6.8.1.a, if the total estimated yelloweye rockfish bycatch mortality from sport halibut trips in all Oregon subareas is projected to exceed 22 percent of the annual Oregon recreational yelloweye rockfish harvest guideline, NMFS may take inseason action to reduce yelloweye rockfish bycatch mortality in the halibut fishery while allowing halibut allocation objectives to be met to the extent possible.
- f. If the Northern California recreational (sport) subarea is not projected to utilize its respective allocation prior to or by the season ending date, NMFS may take inseason action to transfer any projected unused allocation to the South of Point Arena subarea.
- g. At the earliest time possible a state can notify NMFS of the amount of halibut (in pounds [lbs] of halibut, net weight¹) of their sport allocation that is projected to be unused after accounting for state management objectives. This projected amount could be made available to the other state(s) for the remainder of the calendar year. NMFS would reapportion the amount of net pounds available equally to each of the two states receiving the additional pounds. If a state eligible to receive the additional pounds declines all or part of the additional pounds, the remainder would go to the other state. NMFS will announce any such reapportionment as soon as possible in the *Federal Register* and concurrent publication on the hotline, consistent with language described in this section (Section 6.8).

On or around August 15, Council staff will facilitate a discussion between the three states and NMFS to share catch updates and inseason fishery information which could provide insight to any excess that could potentially be available for the remainder of current season.

6.8.2 *Notice procedures*

Inseason actions taken by NMFS will be published in the *Federal Register*. Notice of inseason management actions will be provided by a telephone hotline (206-526-6667 or 800-662-9825) and emailed fishery bulletins administered by the West Coast Region, NMFS. Since provisions of these regulations may be altered by inseason actions, sport fishermen should monitor the telephone hotline and subscribe to receive fishery bulletin emails (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/west-coast>) for current information for the area in which they are fishing.

6.8.3 *Effective dates*

- a. Inseason actions will be effective on the date specified in the *Federal Register* notice or at the time that the action is filed for public inspection with the Office of the Federal Register, whichever is later.
- b. If time allows, NMFS will invite public comment prior to the effective date of any inseason action filed with the *Federal Register*. If the West Coast Regional Administrator determines, for good cause, that an inseason action must be filed without affording a prior opportunity for public comment, public comments will be received for a period of 15 days after of the action in the *Federal Register*.
- c. Inseason actions will remain in effect until the stated expiration date or until rescinded, modified, or superseded. However, no inseason action has any effect beyond the end of the calendar year in which it is issued.

6.8.4 *Availability of data*

The West Coast Administrator will compile, in aggregate form, all data and other information relevant to the action being taken and will make them available for public review during normal office hours at the West Coast Regional Office, NMFS, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA.

6.8.5 *Flexible inseason management provisions*

Includes, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Modification of sport fishing periods,
- b. Modification of sport fishing daily bag limits,
- c. Modification of sport fishing size limits,
- d. Modification of sport fishing days per calendar week,
- e. Modification of state sport allocations;
- f. Modification of subarea quotas; and
- g. Modification of Stonewall Bank YRCA restrictions off Oregon.

6.9 Washington Coast subareas

Washington sport fisheries are allocated 35.6 percent of the total non-tribal FCEY. This allocation is divided among three subareas within the State—Puget Sound, North Coast, and South Coast—and also to the Columbia River subarea, which is shared with the Oregon sport fishery.

Management objectives for the Washington sport fisheries are to establish season structures for each subarea that maximize fishing opportunity and achieve but not exceed subarea quotas. Flexibility through timely inseason action(s), such as opening additional fishing days or shifting quotas between subareas, may be necessary to achieve the overall Washington sport allocation and fishery objectives.

In addition, if certain conditions are met (as described in section 5.8.1) a portion of the Washington sport fishery allocation will be distributed to the commercial primary directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, WA. The formula for distributing the Washington sport fishery allocation to the four subareas remains unchanged regardless of any distribution to the sablefish fishery.

6.9.1 Puget Sound subarea

a. Subarea allocation

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 23.5 percent of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation above 130,845 lbs, except as provided in section 5.8.1.

b. Geographic location

This subarea is defined as all U.S. waters east of the mouth of the Sekiu River, as defined by a line extending north from 48° 17.30' N. lat., 124° 23.70' W. long. to 48° 24.10' N. lat., 124° 23.70' W. long., including Puget Sound.

c. Management objectives

None identified in this document.

d. Season structure

Season dates will be developed by the end of November each year for the following year. Seasons will open in early May. Flexibility to open in April is allowed. During April, May, and June, season structure may include periodic closures to assess the remaining quota for the subarea. The seasons may be open up to seven days per week in April, May, and June if the Area 2A FCEY is at least 1.3 million pounds, and if the Area 2A FCEY is less than 1.3 million pounds, then seasons may be open up to five days per week in April, May, and June.

If sufficient quota remains after the final open day in June, additional openings may be implemented in August and September up to seven days per week. The fishery will continue until the quota is projected to be taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier.

e. Landing restrictions

The daily bag limit is one fish per person, with no size limit.

f. Inseason adjustments

Consistent with section 6.8.

If the Puget Sound subarea season is closed prior to September 30, and there is insufficient quota for an additional fishing day, then any remaining Puget Sound subarea quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington coastal subarea by NMFS. See section 6.8.2 for Notice Procedures. The daily bag limit in all fisheries is one halibut per person with no size limit.

- g. Groundfish regulations
None specified in this document.
- h. Closed Conservation Areas
None specified in this document.

6.9.2 *North Coast subarea*

- a. Subarea allocation
This sport fishery subarea is allocated 62.2 percent of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation above 130,845 lbs, except as provided in section 5.8.1.
- b. Geographic location
This subarea is defined as all U.S. waters west of the mouth of the Sekiu River, as defined above in section 6.9.1.b, and north of the Queets River (47° 31.70' N. lat.).
- c. Management objectives
None specified in this document.

- d. Season structure
Season dates will be developed by the end of November each year for the following year. Seasons will open in early May, with the flexibility to open on April 30 in years when April 30 falls on a Thursday. The season may be open up to three days per week (Thursday through Saturday) in May if the Area 2A FCEY is at least 1.3 million pounds and, if the Area 2A FCEY is less than 1.3 million pounds, then the season may be open in May up to two days per week (Thursday and Saturday) except Memorial Day weekend, which may be open Friday and Sunday. The season in June may be open up to four days per week (Thursday through Sunday).

Season structure may include periodic closures to assess the remaining quota for the subarea. If sufficient quota remains after the final open day in June, additional openings may be implemented in August and September up to seven days per week. The fishery will continue until the quota is projected to be taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier.

- e. Landing restrictions
The daily bag limit is one fish per person, with no size limit.
- f. Inseason adjustments
Consistent with section 6.8.

If the fishery is closed prior to September 30, and there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington coastal subarea by NMFS. See section 6.8.2 for Notice Procedures. The daily bag limit in all fisheries is one halibut per person with no size limit.

- g. Groundfish regulations
Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within the North Coast Recreational Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA).
- h. Closed conservation areas

Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within the North Coast Recreational Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA). The North Coast Recreational YRCA is a C-shaped area off the northern Washington coast and is defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for the North Coast Recreational YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70(b) and will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

6.9.3 *South Coast subarea.*

a. Subarea allocation

This sport fishery is allocated 12.3 percent of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 32 percent of the Washington sport allocation above 130,845 lbs, except as provided in section 5.8.

b. Geographic location

This subarea is defined as waters south of the Queets River (47° 31.70' N. lat.) and north of Leadbetter Point (46° 38.17' N. lat.).

The nearshore fishery takes place in the area from 47°31.70' N. lat. south to 46°58.00' N. lat. and east of a boundary line approximating the 30-fathom depth contour as defined by the following coordinates:

47° 31.70' N. lat., 124° 37.03' W. long.;
47° 25.67' N. lat., 124° 34.79' W. long.;
47° 12.82' N. lat., 124° 29.12' W. long.; and
46° 58.00' N. lat., 124° 24.24' W. long.

c. Management objectives

The season will be structured with the primary goal of utilizing the subarea quota during the months of May and June and to use any remaining quota in August and September if that goal is not achieved. The south coast subarea quota will be allocated to the all-depth (primary) fishery; a nearshore fishery may be opened based on the considerations described below.

d. Season structure

Season dates for the primary fishery will be developed by the end of November each year for the following year. The primary fishery season will open in early May, with the flexibility to open on April 30 in years when April 30 falls on a Thursday. During May the season may be open up to four days per week (Thursday, Friday, Sunday, and Tuesday), and three days per week (Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday) in June if sufficient quota remains.

Season structure may include periodic closures to assess the remaining quota for the subarea. If sufficient quota remains after the final open day in June, additional openings may be implemented in August and September up to seven days per week.

If there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen the primary fishery for another fishing day, the remaining primary fishery quota will be used to open a nearshore fishery.

e. Landing restrictions

The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit.

- f. Inseason adjustments
Consistent with section 6.8.

If quota remains but is insufficient to open the primary fishery for one day, then the nearshore fishery may open the first Saturday subsequent to the closure of the primary fishery and will be open seven days per week until the remaining quota is projected to be taken.

If the fishery is closed prior to September 30, and there is insufficient quota remaining to reopen the nearshore area for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington coastal subarea by NMFS. See section 6.8.2 for Notice Procedures

- g. Groundfish regulations
During days open to the primary fishery and seaward of the 30-fathom line, and seaward of the deepwater lingcod closure area, lingcod may be taken, retained, and possessed when allowed by groundfish regulations.
- h. Closed conservation areas
None identified in this document.

6.10 Columbia River subarea

- a. Subarea allocation
This sport fishery subarea is allocated 2.0 percent of the first 130,845 lbs allocated to the Washington sport fishery, and 4.0 percent of the Washington sport allocation above 130,845 lbs, except as provided in section 5.8. This subarea is also allocated 2.3 percent of the Oregon sport allocation, and any quota over 8,000 lbs from the Southern Oregon Subarea.
- b. Geographic location
This subarea is defined as waters south of Leadbetter Point, WA (46° 38.17' N. lat.) and north of Cape Falcon, OR (45° 46.00' N. lat.).
- c. Management objectives
This subarea includes a primary all-depth fishery and a secondary all-depth fishery, depending on projected attainment of quota through June 30 (see 6.10.d). The overall management objective is to maximize fishing opportunity while achieving but not exceeding the subarea quota.
- d. Season structure
The all-depth fishery will begin in May, with the flexibility to open on April 30 in years when April 30 falls on a Thursday. Open dates will be determined after consultation between Oregon and Washington Departments of Fish and Wildlife, and in time for Council final action at the November meeting.

If the Area 2A FCEY is at least 1.3 million pounds, during May, the all-depth fishery may be open up to three days per week, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday, and during June up to three days per week, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday as fixed dates, with two days per week, Monday and Tuesday, as back-up dates to be opened if sufficient quota remains, except the fishery would not open the last Monday or Tuesday in June to reduce interactions with the

commercial directed halibut fishery. This determination of whether quota is sufficient to open the back-up dates will be based on catch and effort in May and projections for June.

If the Area 2A FCEY is less than 1.3 million pounds, the all-depth fishery may be open up to three days per week, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday, during the months of May and June.

If sufficient quota remains after the final open day in June, then additional openings may be implemented in August and September up to seven days per week until September 30.

- e. Landing restrictions
The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit.
- f. Inseason adjustments
Consistent with section 6.8.

Subsequent to the primary fishery closure, if there is insufficient quota remaining in the Columbia River subarea for another fishing day, then any remaining quota may be transferred inseason to another Washington and/or Oregon subarea by NMFS. See section 6.8.2 for Notice Procedures.

Any remaining quota would be transferred to each state in proportion to its contribution.

- g. Groundfish regulations
When fishing **north** of the Washington-Oregon border (46° 16.00' N. lat.)
During the recreational all-depth halibut fishery, when allowed by groundfish regulations and halibut are onboard the vessel, only sablefish, Pacific cod, flatfish species, lingcod, yellowtail rockfish, widow rockfish, canary rockfish, redstriped rockfish, greenstriped rockfish, silvergray rockfish, chilipepper, bocaccio, and blue/deacon rockfish may be retained, possessed, or landed.

When fishing **south** of the Washington-Oregon border (46° 16.00' N. lat.)
During the recreational halibut all-depth fishery, when the groundfish fishery is restricted by depth and halibut are onboard the vessel, only sablefish, Pacific cod and flatfish species may be taken and retained, possessed, or landed. During days open to all-depth halibut fishing when the groundfish fishery is restricted by depth and when halibut are onboard the vessel, yellowtail rockfish, widow rockfish, canary rockfish, redstriped rockfish, greenstriped rockfish, silvergray rockfish, chilipepper, bocaccio, and blue/deacon rockfish may be retained possessed or landed when caught with longleader gear (as defined at § 660.351). During days open to all-depth halibut fishing, when the groundfish fishery is open to all depths, any groundfish species permitted under the groundfish regulations may be retained, possessed, or landed if halibut are on aboard the vessel.

- h. Closed conservation areas
None identified in this document.

6.11 Oregon Coast subarea

Oregon sport fisheries are allocated 29.7 percent of the total non-tribal FCEY. This allocation is distributed to two subareas within the state, plus the Columbia River subarea (section 6.10 above).

Management objectives for the Oregon sport fisheries are to establish season structures for each subarea that maximize fishing opportunity and achieve but not exceed subarea allocations. Flexibility through timely inseason action, such as opening additional fishing days or shifting allocation between subareas, may be necessary to achieve the overall Oregon sport allocation and fishery objectives.

6.11.1 Oregon Central Coast subarea

a. Subarea allocation

This sport fishery subarea is allocated 93.79 percent of the Oregon sport allocation. Portions (subquotas) of this subarea allocation are distributed to certain fisheries within this subarea based on the amount of the overall Area 2A FCEY as described in sections 6.11.1.c and 6.11.1.d.

b. Geographic location

This subarea extends from Cape Falcon (45° 46.00' N. lat.) to Humbug Mountain, Oregon (42° 40.50' N. lat.).

The nearshore area is described as the area shoreward of the regulatory line approximating the 40-fathom (73 m) depth contour in Oregon. Coordinates will be specifically defined at 50 CFR 660.71 through 660.74.

c. Management objectives

If the overall 2A FCEY is 700,000 lbs or greater, the structuring objectives for this subarea are to provide two seasons of all-depth halibut fishing; one in the spring and another in the summer, along with nearshore fishing opportunities during days closed to all-depth halibut.

If the overall 2A FCEY is less than 700,000 lbs, the structuring objectives for this subarea are to provide a period of all-depth halibut fishing beginning in spring, along with nearshore fishing opportunities to extend halibut fishing into summer months.

The overall management objective is to maximize fishing opportunity while achieving but not exceeding the subarea quota. Any amount of sub-quota that is not needed to extend the nearshore season through October 31 will be added to either the spring or summer all-depth season sub-quota if it can be used, and any amount remaining unharvested from the summer all-depth season subquota will be added to the nearshore season subquota, if it can be used.

If the Oregon Central Coast subarea allocation (all-depth and nearshore combined) is 200,000 pounds or greater, the daily bag limit may be increased to two fish per day, based on consultation between ODFW, NMFS, IPHC, and PFMC with the intent of taking the entire subarea allocation by October 31. Following the IPHC Annual Meeting, ODFW will arrange a public input process to develop recommendations to NMFS on the daily bag limit.

d. Season structure

There are three general seasons for this subarea - nearshore, spring all-depth and summer all-depth.

i. Nearshore

The nearshore fishery is allocated 10,000 lbs of the Oregon Central Coast subarea quota if the Area 2A FCEY is 700,000 lbs or greater, or 25 percent if the Area 2A FCEY is less than 700,000 lbs.

The nearshore season opens May 1, seven days per week, only in waters shoreward of the 40-fathom (73 m) regulatory line unless the Area 2A FCEY is less than 1.2M lbs, then it may be postponed and open on June 1. The fishery continues until the sub-quota is taken, or until October 31, whichever is earlier. This fishery is superseded by the all-depth fisheries when both are open.

ii. Spring all-depth

The spring season sub-quota is 75 percent of the Oregon Central Coast subarea quota.

The spring season is an all-depth fishery that may begin as early as May 1, up to seven days per week, with two distinct opening types (“Fixed” and “Back-up”).

Fixed dates will be established preseason prior to the first spring opener and will not be modified inseason except if the combined Oregon all-depth spring and summer season total quotas are estimated to be achieved, then any remaining Fixed dates will be closed. The number of Fixed dates will be based on the projected harvest per day with the intent of not exceeding the subarea sub-quota for the season. Recent year catch rates and harvest weights will be used as a guideline for setting up the spring season each year. Additionally, ODFW will arrange a public input process shortly after the IPHC annual meeting to develop recommendations to NMFS on the open dates for the Fixed and Back-up dates each year.

If current year trends and projections indicate that the sub-quota for the spring all-depth season will remain unharvested following the Fixed dates, additional openings may occur. ODFW will consult with IPHC, NMFS, and PFMC to determine if any (and how many) Back-up dates will open. Available Back-up dates will be identified preseason, though announced inseason.

If the Area 2A FCEY is 700,000 lbs. or greater, then the fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota available for an additional day of fishing or July 31, whichever is earlier. The summer all-depth season will then open in August (6.11.1.d.iii). If the Area 2A FCEY is less than 700,000 lbs, then the fishery will continue until there is insufficient quota available for an additional day of fishing or October 31, whichever is earlier.

iii. Summer all-depth

The summer season sub-quota is 25 percent of the Oregon Central Coast subarea quota minus the 10,000 lbs allocated to the nearshore fishery if the Area 2A FCEY is 700,000 lbs or greater. If the Area 2A FCEY is less than 700,000 lbs, the summer all-depth season is void. If a sub-quota is allocated to this season, the season will begin on August 1 and continue until there is insufficient quota available for an additional day of fishing or October 31, whichever is earlier.

If the entire Oregon Central Coast subarea remaining allocation is greater than (or projected to be greater than) 50,000 lbs upon the completion of the spring all-depth season (July 31), the summer all-depth season will be open seven days per week, every week, beginning August 1. If the remaining subarea quota is less than (or projected to be less than) 50,000 lbs, the summer all-depth season will open every other week, with the first opener beginning on August 1 through the first Sunday of August and closed for the following full week in August (Monday through Sunday). The season will continue (either every week or every other week) until there is insufficient quota available for an additional day of fishing or October 31, whichever is earlier.

If after the Labor Day weekend the entire remaining quota for the Oregon Central Coast subarea (combined all-depth and nearshore sub-quotas) is 30,000 lbs or more and the fishery is not already open every week, the fishery will then be opened every week if determined to be appropriate through joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, PFMC, and ODFW.

All inseason actions will be announced by NMFS. See section 6.8.2 for Notice Procedures.

e. Landing restrictions

The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, unless otherwise specified, with no size limit. During years of higher quotas, the daily bag limit may be increased to two halibut per person, see management objectives section 6.11.1.c.

f. Inseason adjustments

Consistent with sections 6.8, 6.11.1.c, and 6.11.1.d.

If inseason it is determined via joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, PFMC, and ODFW, that the combined all-depth and nearshore seasons will not harvest the entire quota allocated to the Oregon Central Coast subarea, quota may be transferred inseason to another subarea between Leadbetter Point, WA and the OR/CA border by NMFS. See section 6.8.2 for Notice Procedures.

g. Groundfish regulations

During the recreational halibut all-depth fishery, when the groundfish fishery is restricted by depth and halibut are onboard the vessel, sablefish, Pacific cod, and flatfish species may be taken and retained, possessed, or landed, and yellowtail rockfish, widow rockfish, canary rockfish, redstriped rockfish, greenstriped rockfish, silvergray rockfish, chilipepper, bocaccio, blue rockfish, and deacon rockfish may be retained, possessed, or landed when caught with long-leader gear (as defined at § 660.351).

During days open to all-depth halibut fishing when the groundfish fishery is open to all depths, any groundfish species permitted under the groundfish regulations may be retained, possessed, or landed regardless of whether halibut are onboard the vessel.

During days only open to nearshore halibut fishing (all-depth halibut fishing is closed), flatfish species may NOT be taken and retained seaward of the 40-fathom regulatory line if halibut are onboard the vessel.

h. Closed conservation areas

Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within the Stonewall Bank YRCA. The Stonewall Bank YRCA is an area off central Oregon, near Stonewall Bank, and is defined by straight lines connecting latitude and longitude coordinates. Coordinates for the Stonewall Bank YRCA are specified in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70 (h) and will be described annually in federal halibut regulations published in the *Federal Register*.

6.11.2 Southern Oregon subarea

a. Subarea allocation

This sport fishery is allocated 3.91 percent of the Oregon sport allocation, up to a maximum of 8,000 lbs. Any allocation over that amount will be re-allocated to the Columbia River subarea.

b. Geographic location

This area is defined as the area south of Humberg Mountain, OR (42° 40.50' N. lat.) to the OR/CA Border (42° 00.00' N. lat.).

c. Management objectives

Provide the opportunity to maximize fishing opportunity and achieve but not exceed the subarea quota.

d. Season structure

This fishery will open May 1, seven days per week until the Southern Oregon subarea quota is taken or October 31, whichever is earlier.

e. Landing restrictions

The daily bag limit is one halibut per person with no size limit, unless the Oregon Central Coast subarea bag limit is increased to two halibut, then the Southern Oregon subarea will increase to two halibut at the same time.

f. Inseason adjustments

Consistent with section 6.8.

g. Groundfish regulations

When the groundfish fishery is restricted by depth and halibut are onboard the vessel, sablefish, Pacific cod, and flatfish species may be taken and retained, possessed, or landed, and yellowtail rockfish, widow rockfish, canary rockfish, redstriped rockfish, greenstriped rockfish, silvergray rockfish, chilipepper, bocaccio, blue rockfish, and deacon rockfish may be retained, possessed, or landed when caught with long-leader gear (as defined at § 660.351).

When the groundfish fishery is open to all depths, any groundfish species permitted under the groundfish regulations may be retained, possessed, or landed regardless of whether halibut are onboard the vessel.

h. Closed conservation areas

None identified in this document.

6.12 California Coast subareas

California sport fisheries are allocated 4.0 percent of the total non-tribal FCEY. This allocation is shared between two subareas within the State divided at Pt. Arena (38°57.5' N. lat.),

6.12.1 Northern California subarea

- a. Subarea allocation
This sport fishery subarea is allocated 4.0 percent of the non-tribal allocation, except 500 pounds will be subtracted and assigned to the South of Pt. Arena subarea.
- b. Geographic location
This area is defined as the area south of the OR/CA Border (42° 00.00' N. lat.) to Point Arena (38°57.5' N. lat.).
- c. Management objectives
Maximize fishing opportunity and achieve but not exceed the subquota. Flexibility through timely inseason action may be necessary to achieve but not exceed the Area 2A FCEY.
- d. Season structure
The fishery will be structured to provide recreational fishing opportunity seven days per week, from May 1 until November 15 or until the quota is projected to be taken, whichever is earlier. Flexibility to open in April is allowed. Additional closed periods during this season, such as closed weeks or months and including a later opening date, may be established preseason by NMFS based on the subarea quota and projected catch.
- e. Landing restrictions
The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit.
- f. Inseason adjustments
Consistent with section 6.8.

If inseason it is determined via joint consultation between IPHC, NMFS, PFMC, and CDFW that the Northern California subarea will not harvest the entire quota allocated to that area, quota may be transferred inseason to the South of Point Arena subarea by NMFS.

Closure of the fishery or other inseason adjustments will be made by NMFS. See section 6.8.2 for Notice Procedures.

- g. Groundfish regulations
None identified in this document.
- h. Closed conservation areas
None identified in this document.

6.12.2 South of Point Arena subarea

- a. Subarea allocation
This sport fishery subarea is assigned 500 pounds of the California sport allocation.
- b. Geographic location

This area is defined as Pt Arena (38°57.5' N. lat.) south to the US/Mexico border.

- c. Management objectives
Maximize fishing opportunity and achieve but not exceed the subquota. Flexibility through timely inseason action may be necessary to achieve but not exceed the Area 2A FCEY.
- d. Season structure
Season may be open May 1 through December 31, or until subarea limit is met. Flexibility to open in April is allowed.
- e. Landing restrictions
The daily bag limit is one halibut per person, with no size limit.
- f. Inseason adjustments
Consistent with section 6.8.
Closure of the fishery or other inseason adjustments will be made by NMFS. See section 6.8.2 for Notice Procedures.
- g. Groundfish regulations
None identified in this document.
- h. Closed conservation areas
None identified in this document.

7.0 PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Each year, NMFS will publish a proposed rule with any regulatory modifications necessary to implement the Plan for the following year, with a request for public comments. The comment period will extend until after the IPHC annual meeting, so that the public will have the opportunity to consider the final Area 2A FCEY before submitting comments. After the Area 2A FCEY is known, and after NMFS reviews public comments, NMFS will implement final rules governing the Area 2A sport fisheries and the non-tribal directed commercial fishery. The final ratio of halibut to Chinook to be allowed as incidental catch in the salmon troll fishery will be published with the annual salmon management measures.

Sources:

<u>90 FR 14422</u> (April 2, 2025)	<u>74 FR 11681</u> (March 19, 2009)
<u>90 FR 13293</u> (March 21, 2025)	<u>73 FR 12280</u> (March 7, 2008)
<u>89 FR 46824</u> (May 30, 2024)	<u>72 FR 11792</u> (March 14, 2007)
<u>89 FR 22966</u> (April 3, 2024)	<u>71 FR 10850</u> (March 3, 2006)
<u>88 FR 21503</u> (April 11, 2023)	<u>70 FR 20304</u> (April 19, 2005)
<u>87 FR 19007</u> (March 31, 2022)	<u>69 FR 24524</u> (May 4, 2004)
<u>86 FR 20638</u> (April 20, 2021)	<u>68 FR 10989</u> (March 7, 2003)
<u>85 FR 25317</u> (May 1, 2020)	<u>67 FR 12885</u> (March 20, 2002)
<u>84 FR 17960</u> (April 29, 2019)	<u>66 FR 15801</u> (March 21, 2001)
<u>83 FR 13090</u> (March 26, 2018)	<u>65 FR 14909</u> (March 20, 2000)
<u>82 FR 18581</u> (April 20, 2017)	<u>64 FR 13519</u> (March 19, 1999)
<u>81 FR 18789</u> (April 1, 2016)	<u>63 FR 13000</u> (March 17, 1998)

80 FR 17344 (April 1, 2015)
79 FR 18827 (April 4, 2014)
78 FR 16423 (March 15, 2013)
77 FR 16740 (March 22, 2012)
76 FR 14300 (March 16, 2011)
75 FR 13024 (March 18, 2010)

62 FR 12759 (March 18, 1997)
61 FR 11337 (March 20, 1996)
60 FR 14651 (March 20, 1995)
59 FR 22522 (May 2, 1994)
58 FR 17791 (April 6, 1993)