



# Frequently Asked Questions Pacific Halibut Directed Commercial (DC) Fishery

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Marine Resources Program  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
2040 SE Marine Science Drive  
Newport, OR 97365  
[www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP)

## Is there a depth restriction for the Pacific halibut DC fishery in Regulatory Area 2A?

- Yes, vessels must stay outside of the Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) regardless of whether or not they retain groundfish on board due to [50 CFR 300.63\(f\)\(1\)](#). The groundfish regulations for the Non-Trawl RCA can be found here: [50 CFR 660.11 "Conservation area\(s\)"](#).

## Where is the length to weight conversion chart for Pacific halibut?

- For a table with length to "net" weight (head-off, gutted, no ice and slime), visit [IPHC Pacific halibut length weight relationships](#), expand "IPHC Regulatory Area 2A", and download the "Imperial" pdf.

## Do vessels fishing in the Pacific halibut DC fishery need a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) if they do not retain groundfish?

- No, if vessels do not retain groundfish, they do not need VMS, as it is not required for Pacific halibut per regulation ([www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/subpart-E](http://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/subpart-E)).
  - Vessels that need VMS are specified here: [www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/section-660.14](http://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/section-660.14).
- The lack of a VMS requirement may change as regulations continue to be discussed at the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council). Click [here](#) for further information on Council discussion.

## What should my VMS declaration be if I am fishing for both Pacific halibut and Open Access (OA) groundfish?

- As a non-trawl fixed gear vessel, two gear types (or sectors) can be declared on one trip. Since this would be the same gear type, but separate "sectors" (i.e., "fishery"), the vessel operator should declare both codes:
  - 62 - Open access Pacific Halibut longline gear and
  - 33 - Open access bottom contact hook-and-line gear for groundfish (e.g., bottom longline, commercial vertical hook-and-line, dinglebar).
- The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has multiple helpful links that can be found here: [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/resources-fishing/vessel-monitoring-system-west-coast](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/resources-fishing/vessel-monitoring-system-west-coast)

## What are the regulations for seabird avoidance with longline gear?

- Federal seabird avoidance regulations: [50 CFR 660.21](#)
- The requirements specified in [paragraph \(c\)](#) of this section apply to the following fishing vessels when operating within the EEZ north of 36° N latitude:
  - Vessels greater than or equal to 26 ft (7.9 m) LOA engaged in commercial fishing for groundfish with bottom longline gear, including snap gear, as defined under "Fishing gear" in [§ 660.11](#), including those operating under the gear switching provisions of the Limited Entry Trawl Fishery, Shorebased IFQ Program as specified in [§ 660.140\(k\)](#), or those operating under the Limited Entry Fixed Gear Fishery in [subpart E](#) or under the Open Access Fishery in [subpart F](#), except as provided in [paragraphs \(b\)\(2\)](#) of this section.
- Click [here](#) for the seabird avoidance gear compliance guide from NMFS.

## What gear markers must I have on my bottom longline gear?

- "Groundfish Fixed Gear (longline, trap or pot, set net and stationary hook-and-line gear, including commercial vertical hook-and-line gear) must be marked at the surface and at each terminal end, with a pole, flag, light, radar reflector, and a buoy." This regulation also applies to halibut gear.
  - The above federal regulation for the gear identification of bottom longline fixed gear can be found in the following:
    - CFRs: [50 CFR 660.20\(b\)](#)
    - Limited Entry Fixed Gear: [50 CFR 660.219](#)
    - Open Access Fixed Gear: [50 CFR 660.319](#)
- This requirement is also in the state regulations:
  - "Longline and pot gear shall be marked at the surface at each terminal end with a pole, flag, light, radar reflector, and a buoy showing clear identification of the owner or vessel operator."  
[OAR 635-004-0235-4\(b\)](#)

## What are the OA groundfish bycatch harvest limits?

- West Coast groundfish trip limits can be found here: [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/sustainable-fisheries/compliance-guides-west-coast-groundfish](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/sustainable-fisheries/compliance-guides-west-coast-groundfish). (See the "Current Trip Limit Tables" halfway down the page.)

## Is there a compliance guide for someone new to the Federal OA fishery?

- Yes, NMFS compliance guide for OA groundfish can be found under the Non-Trawl section on: [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/sustainable-fisheries/compliance-guides-west-coast-groundfish](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/sustainable-fisheries/compliance-guides-west-coast-groundfish).

## What logbook do I need to use and where do I send it?

- You can use the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) logbook, an IPHC-approved electronic equivalent, the ODFW Fixed Gear logbook or the Pacific Coast Groundfish Non-Trawl logbook provided by NMFS.
- The logbook shall be submitted to IPHC within 30 days of the season closing date if not previously collected by an authorized representative of IPHC or otherwise made available to IPHC.
- You can mail a copy of the logbook to IPHC and retain the other copy on your vessel for 2 years.
  - **IPHC logbook address:**  
INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION  
2320 WEST COMMODORE WAY  
SUITE 300  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98199-1287  
USA

### For more information, please contact:

Christian Heath | Halibut Project Leader  
541-857-2531  
[christian.t.heath@odfw.oregon.gov](mailto:christian.t.heath@odfw.oregon.gov)

Melanie Bukovec | Halibut Assistant Project Leader  
541-857-2530  
[melanie.a.bukovec@odfw.oregon.gov](mailto:melanie.a.bukovec@odfw.oregon.gov)