



National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region
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www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/index.html



PUBLIC NOTICE

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2018 Commercial and Recreational Pacific Halibut Fisheries in Washington, Oregon, and California

NOAA Fisheries announces publication of the 2018 Pacific halibut Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, and California) catch limit [interim final rule](#) and the [final rule](#) for the Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan and annual management measures. Both rules are effective on March 24, 2018. NOAA Fisheries is accepting comments on the Area 2A catch limit rule until April 25, 2018. You can access Pacific halibut information on the NOAA Fisheries website [here](#).

You can submit comments on the rule through the online portal. You may also submit comments through regulations.gov, or by regular mail to: Barry Thom, Regional Administrator, West Coast Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115-0070

2A TAC	1,190,000 lb
<i>Tribal Allocation:</i>	416,500 lb
Tribal Ceremonial and Subsistence	27,000 lb
Tribal Commercial	389,500 lb
<i>Non-Tribal</i>	773,500 lb
Commercial	237,465 lb
Directed	201,845 lb
Incidental Salmon Troll	35,620 lb
Incidental Sablefish Primary	50,000 lb
Recreational	
Washington Sport	225,366 lb
Puget Sound	60,995 lb
North Coast	111,632 lb
South Coast	46,341 lb
Columbia River	11,682 lb
Oregon Sport	229,730 lb
Central OR	215,463 lb
Southern Oregon	8,982 lb
California Sport	30,940 lb

The NOAA Fisheries halibut hotline at (800) 662-9825 has the most up-to-date information for both the commercial (directed and incidental) and recreational Area 2A fisheries. State-specific Pacific halibut fishery information is available at the following websites:

Washington: <https://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 2018, the following regulations apply to commercial (directed and incidental) and recreational halibut fisheries:

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Recreational

- The halibut daily bag limit in Washington, Oregon, and California is 1 halibut of any size per person per day.
- Check state regulations for information on rockfish retention allowances.
- For information on retaining groundfish, please see “Regulations” under Resources on the NMFS groundfish [website](#).
- **Season dates are subject to quota availability, and areas will close if there is not sufficient quota for another full day of fishing.**

Washington

Subarea	Location	Season Dates
Puget Sound	Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca	May 11, 13, 25, 27, June 7, 9, 16, 21, 23, 28, and 30.
North Washington Coast	North of Queets River and west of the Sekiu River mouth	
South Washington Coast	Queets River south to Leadbetter Point	
Washington Coast nearshore	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	Scheduled to open the Saturday after the primary fishery closure, 7 days per week.
Columbia River all-depth	Between Leadbetter Point, WA and Cape Falcon, OR	May 3, 3 days a week (Thursday, Friday, Sunday) until the all-depth quota is taken or September 30.
Columbia River nearshore		May 7, 3 days per week (Monday – Wednesday) until the nearshore allocation is taken, or September 30.

Sport fishing for halibut is closed within Recreational Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas off the north and south Washington coast subareas. There are additional area closures in the Puget Sound subarea for 2018. Please check state regulations [online](#).

Oregon

Subarea	Location	Season Dates	Additional Season Dates (quota permitting)
Central Coast “inside 40-fathom”	Cape Falcon south to Humbug Mountain, shoreward of a boundary line approximating the 40-fm depth contour	June 1, 7 days a week until the quota is taken, or through October 31.	
Central Coast all-depth	Cape Falcon south to Humbug Mountain	Spring: May 10, 11, 12; 24, 25, 26; June 7, 8, 9; and 21, 22, 23. Summer: August 3, 4; 17, 18; 31; September 1; 14, 15; 28, 29; October 12, 13; and 26, 27.	July 5, 6, 7; and 19, 20, 21.
Southern Oregon	Humbug Mountain, to the OR/CA border	May 1, 7 days per week until the quota is taken, or October 31.	

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A yelloweye rockfish conservation area off central Oregon, near Stonewall Bank, is closed to sport fishing for halibut.

California

Subarea	Location	Season Dates
California	California coast	May 1-June 15, July 1-July 15, August 1-August 15, and September 1-October 31, or until the subarea quota is taken.

Commercial

Directed Commercial Fishery

Area	Time	Date	Additional Season Dates (quota permitting)
South of Pt. Chehalis, WA	0800-1800	June 27	July 11 and 25, August 8 and 22, September 5 and 19.

- NOAA Fisheries implemented directed commercial opening and closing dates on March 9, 2018 (83 FR 10390). These opening dates are described in a final rule published on March 9, 2018 (83 FR 10390).
- The deadline to [apply](#) for a directed commercial fishing license is April 30, 2018. Please contact the IPHC for quota details or further information on the directed commercial halibut fishery at (206) 634-1838 or visit their [website](#).

Incidental halibut in the Sablefish Primary Fishery

Vessels with an IPHC permit fishing in the limited entry fixed gear primary sablefish fishery, north of Point Chehalis, Washington, may retain Pacific halibut, subject to a landing ratio. The ratio of 140 lb dressed halibut per 1,000 lb dressed sablefish, plus two additional halibut will remain in effect until superseded. At its March 2018 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council recommended increasing the landing ratio to 160 lb of Pacific halibut to fully attain the 2018 allocation. We will announce changes to the landing ratio in the *Federal Register* and via a separate public notice.

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 Council will finalize incidental landing limits for halibut in the salmon troll fishery at its April 2018 meeting. These landing limits will be effective at the beginning of May. Please check the NMFS hotline at that time.

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