



Marine Resources

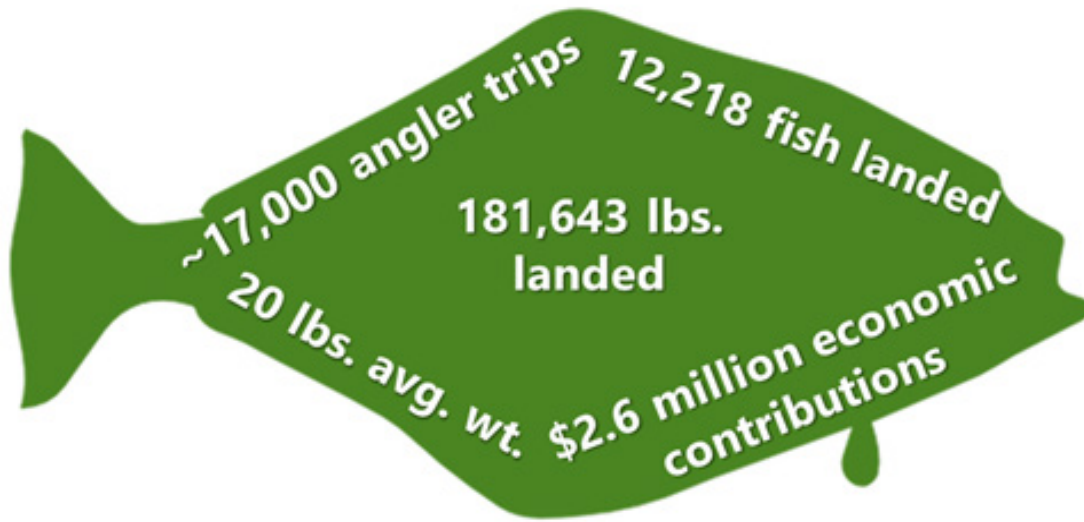
# 4th Annual Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Marine Resources Program 2022 Sport Pacific Halibut Review



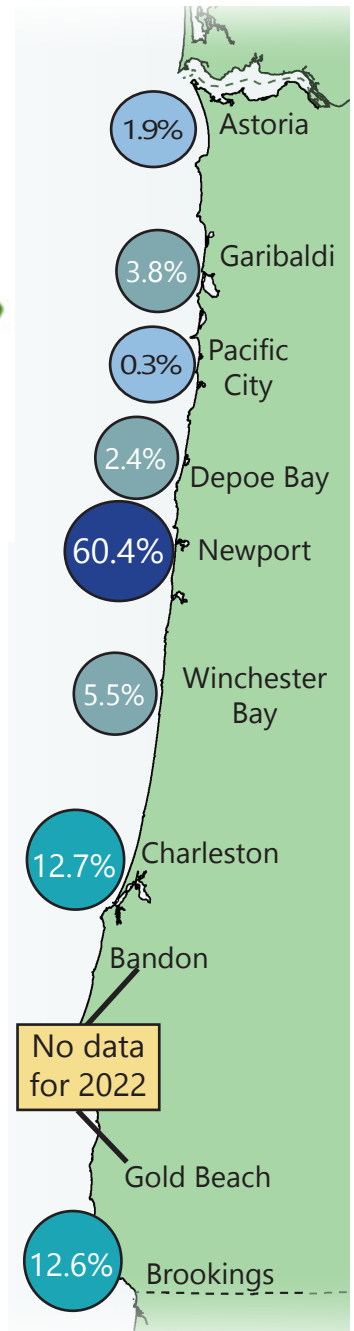
published December 2022

This newsletter provides a summary of Oregon's 2022 recreational Pacific halibut fishery.

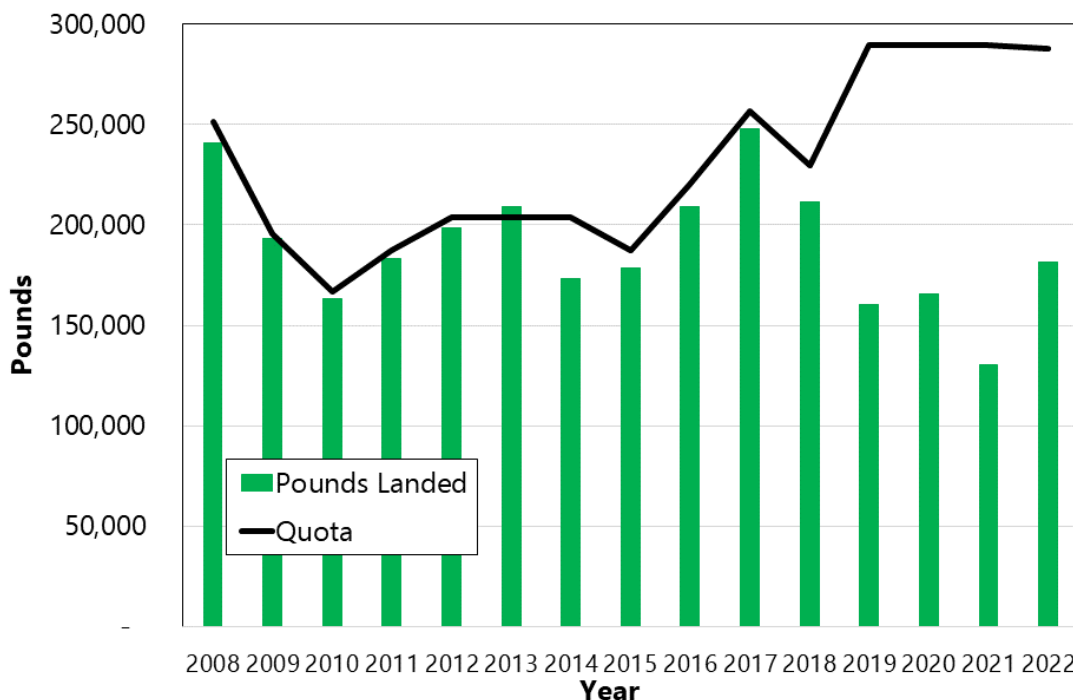
## 2022 Year in Review



### Oregon recreational halibut effort by port in 2022.



Annual Oregon Recreational Pacific Halibut Quota and Catch, 2008-2022



<b>Table of Contents</b>		<b>Have a Question?</b>
Oregon Subareas & Allocations	2	Contact:
2022 Recreational Summary	3	Lynn Mattes <a href="mailto:lynn.mattes@odfw.oregon.gov">lynn.mattes@odfw.oregon.gov</a>
2022 Average size	5	Christian Heath <a href="mailto:christian.t.heath@odfw.oregon.gov">christian.t.heath@odfw.oregon.gov</a>
Economics and Enforcement	6	Visit our website:
International Pacific Halibut Commission	7	<a href="http://myodfw.com/pacific-halibut-sport-regulations">myodfw.com/pacific-halibut-sport-regulations</a>
Pacific Fishery Management Council	7	
How to Get Involved	8	

## Oregon Subareas and Allocations

Fisheries for Pacific halibut in Oregon, Washington, and California are managed as Halibut Management Area 2A. This area accounts for about four percent of the volume of Pacific halibut in their entire range. These fish range from northern California through British Columbia and Alaska to Russia.

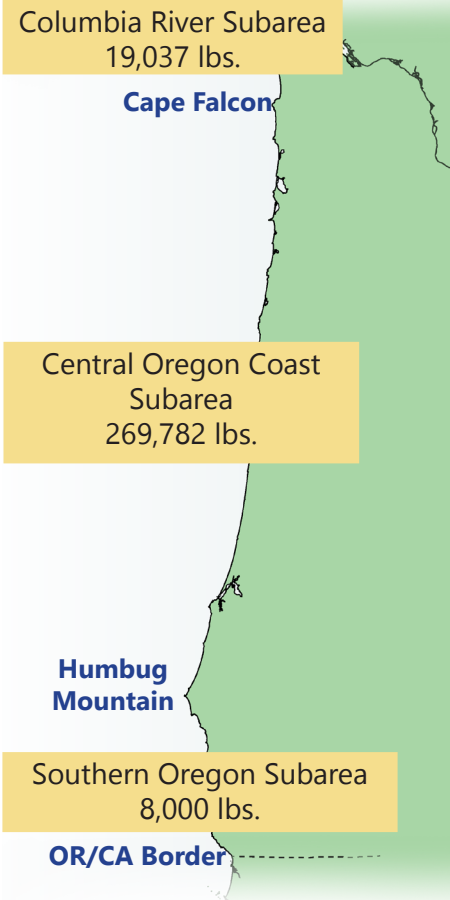
Oregon’s recreational fisheries get 29.7 percent of Management Area 2A’s non-tribal allocation. In 2022, this was 287,645 pounds of halibut.

In Oregon, this fishery is managed in three subareas:

- Columbia River
- Central Oregon Coast
- Southern Oregon

Each subarea gets a certain amount of quota (right). In two of the subareas, the quota is divided based on depth and season (see table below).

**Oregon recreational halibut subareas and allocations.**  
**Leadbetter Point, WA**



**Summary of 2022 Oregon Recreational Halibut Effort and Landings by Subarea and Season.**

Subarea	Season	Number of Angler Trips	Number of Halibut Harvested	Average Weight (pounds, net weight)*	Approximate Average Weight (pounds, round weight)	Total Pounds (net weight)*
Columbia River Subarea (Oregon only)	Nearshore	0	0	N/A	N/A	0
	All-Depth	318	236	12	16	2,778
Central Oregon Coast Subarea	Nearshore	615	294	16	21	4,846
	Spring All-Depth	9,964	8,129	15	20	123,359
	Summer All-Depth	3,875	3,126	13	18	41,947
Southern Oregon Subarea		2,136	433	20	27	8,713
<b>Oregon Total</b>		<b>16,908</b>	<b>12,218</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>181,643</b>

\* Net weight is dressed, head-on. It is the "currency" of halibut, how the quota is allocated and tracked. 2

# 2022 Oregon Recreational Summary

While there were still some lingering impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, the recreational halibut fishery was mostly back to “normal.”

Weather in the early part of the season was not cooperative. Even when anglers were able to get out, they had some trouble finding fish in some of the regular spots and had to do some exploring. When fish were located, they tended to be relatively small, in the 20–pound range, round weight. More on the size of fish is discussed later.

Another good coho salmon fishing season along the Central Oregon Coast drew some effort away from Pacific halibut beginning in late July. The high price of gas and diesel fuel was also likely a factor in low halibut effort and catches, as some anglers may not have been willing to venture too far from shore or do much exploring looking for new spots.



## Columbia River Subarea

The Columbia River Subarea is jointly managed by the Oregon and Washington Departments of Fish and Wildlife. This subarea’s quota is split between the nearshore and all-depth fisheries.

### Nearshore

The nearshore fishery was allocated five hundred pounds of the quota. This lets anglers fishing for other species keep incidentally caught halibut when the all-depth halibut fishery is not open. As in the previous four years, there were no landings into Oregon ports and less than 50 pounds into Washington ports.

The most landed in this fishery in any year is about 250 pounds. If effort and landings increase, the quota can be adjusted through the annual Catch Sharing Plan process, discussed later.



Example of summer 2022 Oregon gas prices

### All-Depth

This fishery initially received 18,537 pounds of quota. This included over 3,000 pounds moved from the Southern Oregon Subarea. The fishery opened in early May and all ports were open to anglers, unlike in 2020 and 2021 when several ports had COVID restrictions in place.

Fishing started slow due to winds and ocean conditions, then picked up and remained relatively steady during openings from mid-May through late June.

Fishing continued on all scheduled open dates to the end of June, at which point just under 16,000 pounds had been landed.

Enough of the quota remained in the Columbia River and other subareas to re-open this fishery for extra days in Aug. and Sept. During those extra days 4,494 pounds were landed.

Through the end of the season, the all-depth fishery landed 20,211 pounds, just over 1,600 pounds more than the subarea’s initial quota. The overage was covered by quotas not used in other Oregon and Washington subareas.

## Central Oregon Coast Subarea

This subarea's quota is split between the nearshore, spring all-depth and summer all-depth fisheries.

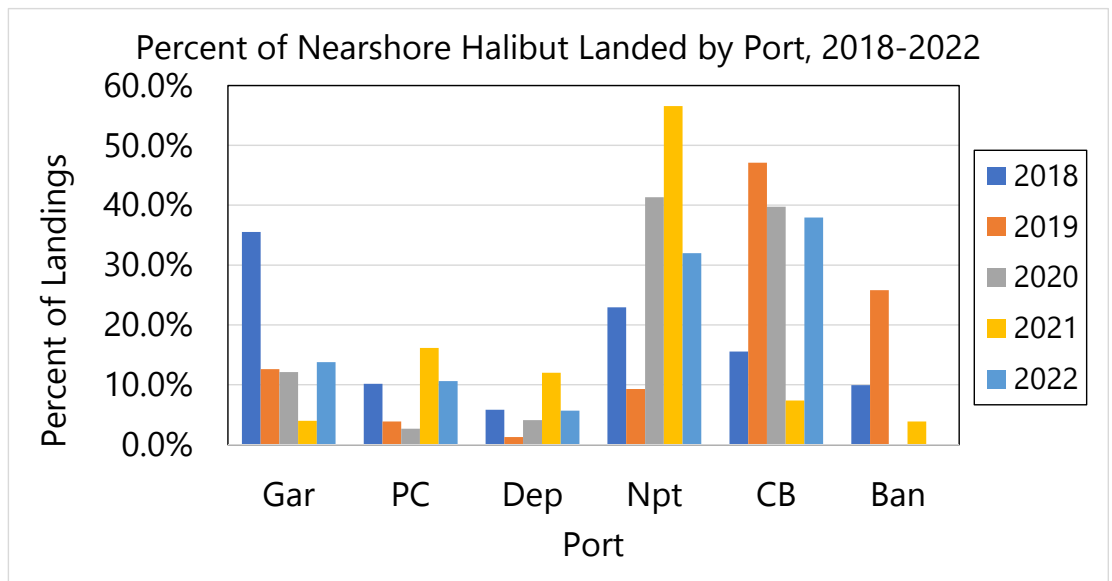
### Nearshore

This fishery opened May 1 with a 32,374-pound quota. Decent fishing happened as weather and ocean conditions allowed through early July.

In mid-July, effort and landings dropped off as many anglers turned to another good coho salmon fishing season, along with albacore tuna in August and September.

Due to the amount of quota remaining in the nearshore and all-depth seasons, the subarea was opened to all-depths daily beginning Sept. 5. All landings after that date counted against the summer all-depth quota rather than the nearshore quota.

Historically, most of the landings occur in Newport with Charleston a close second. However, in 2022 Charleston was the high port with approximately 38% of total landings, and Newport with 32% of the landings. No other port had more than 15% of the total landings in 2022.



### Spring All-Depth

This fishery was open May 12 through June 30, seven days per week with an initial quota of 169,963 pounds. The bottomfish fishery was also open at all depths in May and June, therefore anglers could retain both bottomfish, including lingcod, and all-depth halibut on the same trip. With the high price of gas, many anglers liked being able to combine bottomfish and halibut all-depth halibut days.



Beginning July 7-9, the fishery was open every Thursday through Saturday. However, because the bottomfish fishery was no longer open at all depths, anglers were limited to what they could combine with a halibut trip in July and August; other flatfish species, sablefish, Pacific cod, or longleader gear fishing were allowed.

Total landings were 123,359 pounds, almost twice what was landed in 2021. The average weekly landings were approximately 10,300 pounds.

**ODFW sampler recording halibut length.**  
Photo courtesy of ODFW ORBS program

## Summer All-Depth

The fishery was scheduled pre-season to open every other Thursday through Saturday beginning Aug. 4-6. However, based on the large amount of quota remaining from the spring all-depth season, the summer season was open every Thursday through Saturday. Effort and catches were low through Aug. due to coho salmon opportunities and the high price of fuel. Effort also shifted to albacore tuna. Labor Day weekend was the high weekend for the summer season with 16,500 pounds landed.

Due to the large amount of quota remaining, the all-depth fishery was open daily beginning September 5 and the daily bag limit was also increased to 2 fish to provide anglers with additional opportunities to catch halibut.

Even though the weather was very good through mid-October, a good coho salmon season and the high price of gas drew many anglers away from all-depth halibut. Halibut fishing closed by regulation Oct. 31 with 41,947 pounds landed.



Angler fighting a halibut. Photo courtesy of Lynn Mattes

## Southern Oregon Subarea

This fishery opened May 1 with a quota of 8,000 pounds. Landings in this area averaged less than 100 pounds per week through June. In early July, with limited salmon opportunities in this area, halibut effort and landings increased, averaging just over 700 pounds per week through Labor Day weekend.

The quota was reached in late September, however due to remaining quota in other Oregon areas, the Southern Oregon Subarea was able to remain open through the regulatory closure date of Oct. 31.

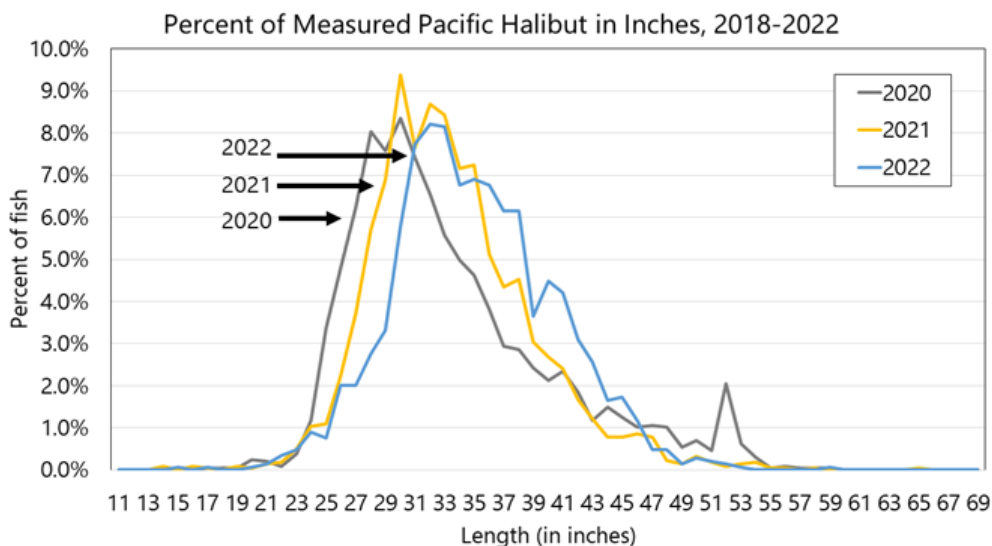
Total landings were 8,713 pounds, the highest landings in this subarea since 2013 when just under 13,000 pounds were landed.

## 2022 Average Fish Size

Back in 2020, anglers and biologists throughout Oregon, California, Washington, and Alaska reported encountering many "small" 24- 30-inch fish. In 2021, anglers reported a lot of slightly larger 28- to 32-inch fish. And in 2022 anglers reported a lot of 30-35-inch fish. This trend tracks with growth of a

large year class growing into the fishery.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission's (IPHC) annual survey shows the 2012 year-class is the largest since 2006. Halibut hatched in 2012 would be in the average size range of landed fish in 2020 through 2022, as shown in the figure to the left.



Percent of lengths of ODFW sampled halibut, 2020-2022.

# Halibut Fishing is Good for the Oregon Economy

The recreational Pacific halibut fishery contributed approximately \$2.6 million to Oregon's economy in 2022 (up from \$2.1 million in 2021) through fishing-related costs such as gas, bait, gear, moorage, food, and hotels. This translates to about 35 full-time jobs.

Anglers fishing out of Newport contributed about \$1.69 million. Anglers fishing out of Garibaldi, Charleston, and Brookings added between \$0.14 and \$0.27 million in each port. For all of these ports, this was a slight increase from 2020 and 2021.

Even in ports with less halibut effort, halibut fishing can have an important role in local economies, especially in the spring and early summer before other fisheries, like salmon begin.

## Enforcement

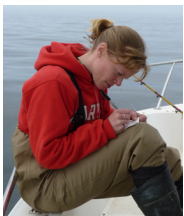
Three agencies patrol on land and at sea to enforce marine fishing regulations: the Marine Fisheries Team from the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement.

Rules keep fisheries sustainable, and enforcement is a key piece of the overall fisheries management.

Common issues seen are:

- fishing without a license.
- not immediately tagging halibut.
- exceeding the bag limit.
- keeping prohibited species, such as yelloweye rockfish.
- fishing in closed areas, such as Marine Reserves or the Stonewall Bank Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area.

**Reminder:** **IMMEDIATELY** upon landing and keeping a halibut, you need to record the fish on your Combined Angling Tag



### Immediately means:

- Prior to rebaiting and putting the rod back out to fish
- Before taking a snack or drink break
- Not 5, 10, or 15 minutes later
- Do not wait until you are on the way back to the dock



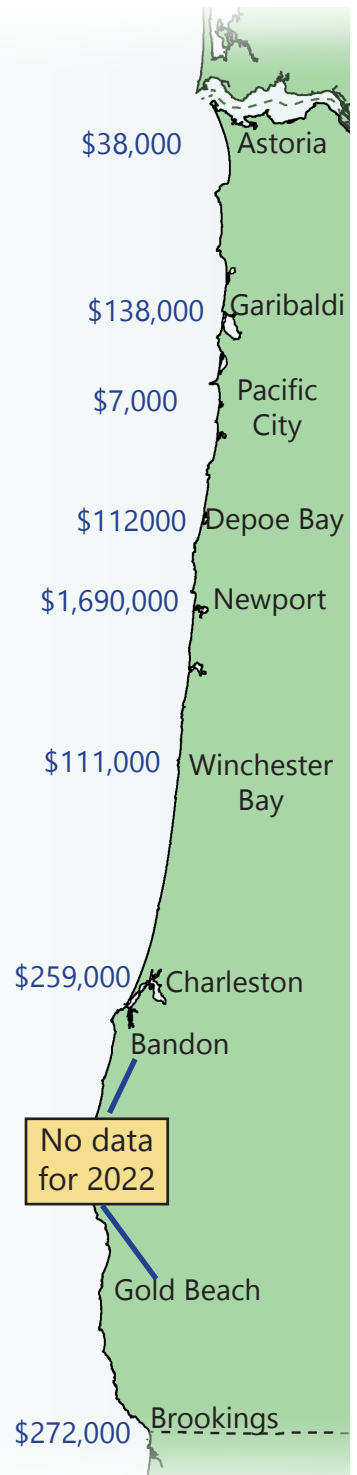
If using electronic tagging, make sure to download the app and log in before you leave the dock: [myodfw.com/ELS](https://myodfw.com/ELS)

- If having trouble getting the app to open while offshore, try putting the phone in "airplane" mode
- Once the app is open, you can record your fish
- When you get back into cell service take off "airplane" mode, and it will upload tagged fish to the system

For more info on tagging halibut, see:

[myodfw.com/articles/9-tips-tagging-fish-and-game-using-e-tagging-or-paper-tags](https://myodfw.com/articles/9-tips-tagging-fish-and-game-using-e-tagging-or-paper-tags)

### Approximate economic contribution by halibut anglers, by port in 2022.



## Longleader Gear Fishing with All-Depth Halibut

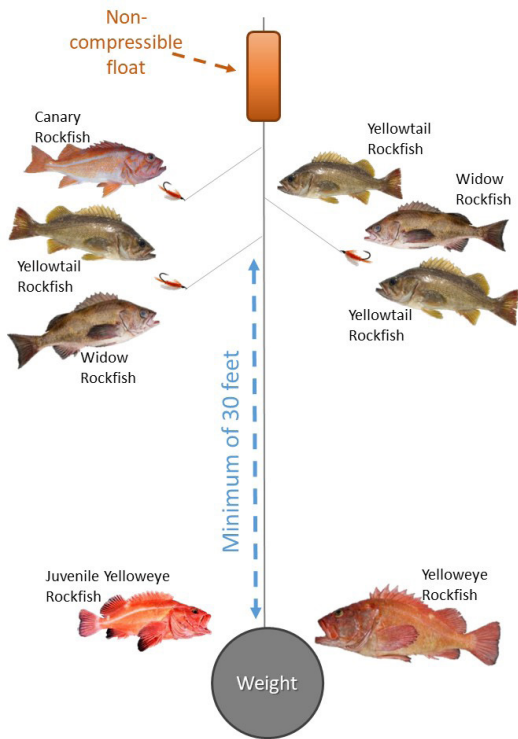


Diagram of longleader gear.

2021 was the first year anglers could fish using longleader gear on the same trip as all-depth halibut fishing and with this change there were some growing pains. 2022 went a little smoother as anglers became more familiar with what could be combined on trips.

A different rule allowed all-depth halibut anglers to keep sablefish, Pacific cod, and flatfish species. By federal regulation, all-depth halibut anglers could keep these latter species OR fish with longleader gear, but they were not allowed to do both.

ODFW, along with our advisors, worked through the Pacific Fishery Management Council process to let anglers have both options of groundfish species with all-depth halibut beginning in 2023.

For current information & inseason changes, use your smart phone to scan this QR code or type in <https://tinyurl.com/ORHalibut> to be taken to the Sport Halibut Webpage.



## International Pacific Halibut Commission



The [International Pacific Halibut Commission](#) (IPHC) oversees all things Pacific halibut in the Eastern North Pacific Ocean. This includes Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California.

IPHC conducts research and stock assessments and sets halibut harvest levels (allocations/quotas) for these areas including Area 2A (which is Washington, Oregon, and California).

IPHC set Area 2A's harvest level at 1.5 million pounds in 2019 through 2022, unless a conservation concern arose.

IPHC will set the quota for 2023, and possibly for several additional years, at its January 2023 annual meeting.

## Pacific Fishery Management Council



The [Pacific Fishery Management Council](#) (PFMC) divides Area 2A's quota (set by the IPHC) between Tribal, commercial, and recreational halibut fisheries. This information is outlined in the [2022 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan](#).

The PFMC considers changes to the Catch Sharing Plan annually at its September and November meetings. Anglers can propose changes through that process.

ODFW holds public meetings each year to get angler input on how the fishery has gone so far that year and to discuss any proposed changes for the following year. These meetings are held in late July or early August and tend to have lively discussions with participation from charter captains, individual anglers, fishing-related businesses, and sometimes even port officials. These meetings help form the recommendations for the following year's halibut fishery.

# How & When to Get Involved

With several agencies involved in managing Pacific halibut, knowing how, when, and where to provide input or suggest changes can be confusing.

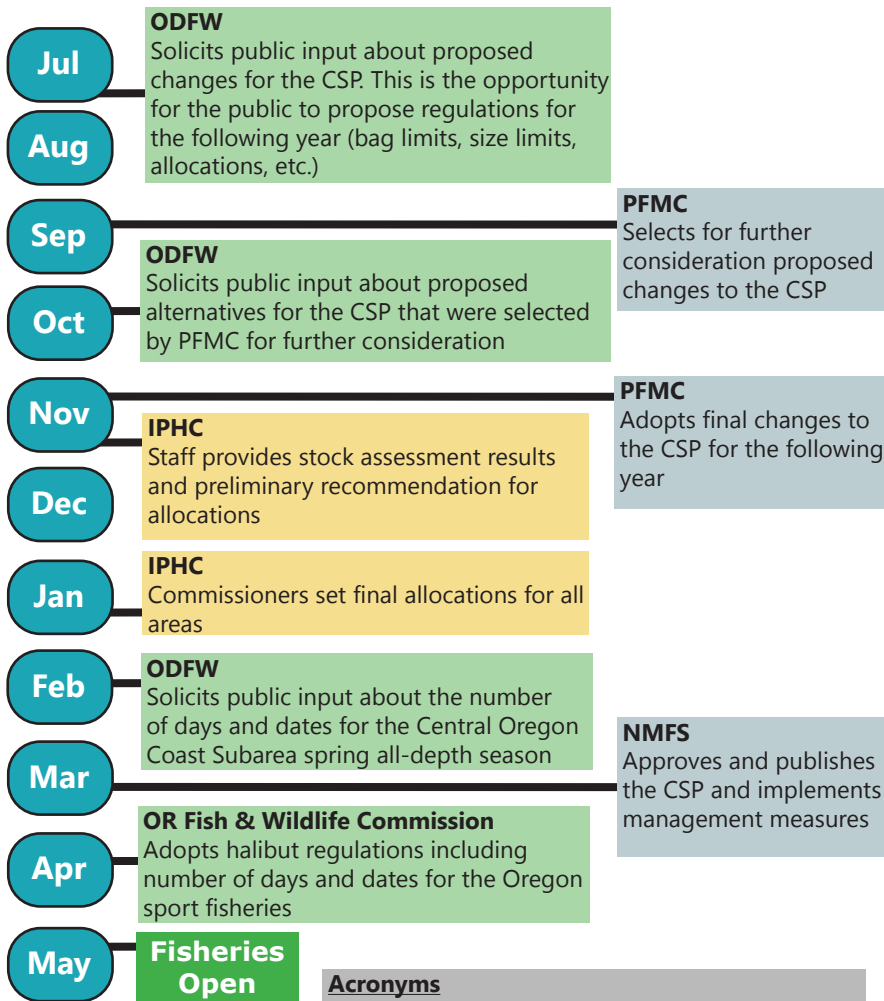
PFMC, IPHC, and Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings are all open to the public and provide time and opportunity for public comments. More information can be found on each agency's website.

IPHC: [iphc.int/](http://iphc.int/)

PFMC: [www.pcouncil.org/](http://www.pcouncil.org/)

OFWC: [www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/commission/](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/commission/)

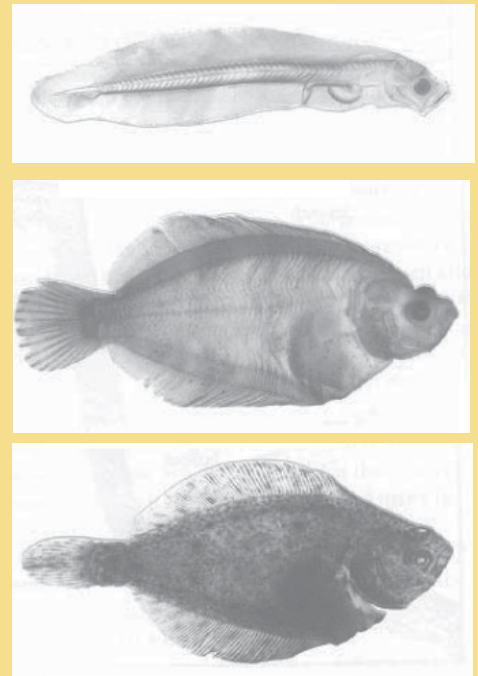
## Timeline, with agencies involved, during the annual Pacific halibut regulatory process.



## Flatastic!!

When Pacific halibut hatch, the tiny fish look like regular fish with one eye on each side of the head. By the time they are 6 months old, the left eye has migrated to the right side of the head and the fish has flattened out.

For more information see: [www.iphc.int/uploads/pdf/tech0059.pdf](http://www.iphc.int/uploads/pdf/tech0059.pdf)



Growth and early development of Pacific halibut (from IPHC)

For information on Oregon Marine Reserves



see: [oregonmarinereserves.com/](http://oregonmarinereserves.com/)

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife,  
Marine Resources Program  
2040 SE Marine Science Dr., Newport, OR 97365  
541-867-4741  
[myodfw.com/pacific-halibut-sport-regulations](http://myodfw.com/pacific-halibut-sport-regulations)