

with the Plan. According to the Plan, the management objective for this subarea is to provide a quality recreational fishing opportunity during May and the latter part of June. The fishery opens on May 1, and continues 5 days per week (Tuesday through Saturday) until 72 percent of the quota for the subarea has been taken, 82,019 lb (37 mt). The fishery will re-open on the third Wednesday in June, which is June 18th, until the remaining quota for the subarea is taken, 31,896 lb (14 mt). The daily bag limit would be one halibut of any size per day per person. A portion of this subarea would be closed to sport fishing for halibut as a yelloweye rockfish conservation area bounded by the following coordinates:

48°18' N. lat.; 125°18' W. long.;
 48°18' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;
 48°11' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;
 48°11' N. lat.; 125°11' W. long.;
 48°04' N. lat.; 125°11' W. long.;
 48°04' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;
 48°00' N. lat.; 124°59' W. long.;
 48°00' N. lat.; 125°18' W. long.;
 and connecting back to 48°18' N. lat.;
 125°18' W. long.

Washington South Coast Subarea

This subarea would be allocated 48,623 lb (22 mt) at an Area 2A TAC of 1,310,000 lb (594 mt) in accordance with the Plan. The fishery would open on May 1 and continue 5 days per week (Sunday through Thursday) until September 30, or until the quota is achieved, whichever occurs first. According to the Plan, the structuring objective for this subarea is to maximize the season length, while maintaining a quality fishing experience. The fishery would be open Sunday through Thursday in all areas, except where prohibited, and the fishery will be open 7 days per week in the area from the Queets River south to 47°00'00" N lat. and east of 124°40'00" W long. Subsequent to the closure of the Washington South Coast subarea, if any remaining quota is sufficient for a nearshore fishery, the area from the Queets River south to 47°00'00" N lat. and east of 124°40'00" W long. would be allowed 7 days per week until either the remaining subarea quota is estimated to have been taken and the season is closed by the IPHC, or until September 30, whichever occurs first. The daily bag limit would be one halibut of any size per day, per person.

Columbia River Subarea

This subarea would be allocated 11,923 lb (5.4 mt) at an Area 2A TAC of 1,310,000 lb (594 mt) in accordance with the Plan. The fishery would open on May 1 and continue 7 days per week

until the quota is reached or September 30, whichever occurs first. The daily bag limit would be the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length.

Oregon North Central Coast Subarea

This subarea would be allocated 230,639 lb (104.6 mt) at an Area 2A TAC of 1,310,000 lb (594 mt) in accordance with the Plan. The structuring objectives for this subarea are to provide two periods of fishing opportunity in spring (May-June) and in summer (August-October) in productive deeper water areas along the coast, principally for charterboat and larger private boat anglers, and to provide a period of fishing opportunity during the summer in nearshore waters for small boat anglers. The May all-depth season would be allocated 156,835 lb (71 mt). Based on an observed catch per day trend in this fishery, an estimated 24,000 - 29,000 lb (10.9-13.1 mt) would be caught per day in 2003, resulting in a 5 to 6 day fixed season. In accordance with the Plan, the season dates could be May 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, and 17. An appropriate number of additional fishing days will be scheduled for late May or early June and fishing will be allowed on those days if the quota has not already been taken. The restricted depth fishery inside 30 fathoms for the North Central and South Central coast subareas combined would be allocated 19,797 lb (9 mt), starting May 1 through October 31 or until the TAC is attained, whichever occurs first. The August coastwide all-depth fishery (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain) would be allocated 57,660 lb (26 mt), which may be sufficient for a 3-day or 2-day opening, starting August 1, based on the expected catch per day. If sufficient quota remains after this season for additional days of fishing, the dates for an all-depth fishery would be in mid-August. The final determination of the season dates will be based on the allowable harvest level, projected catch rates, and recommendations developed in a public workshop sponsored by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife after the 2003 TAC is set by the IPHC. The daily bag limit would be the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length.

Oregon South Central Coast Subarea

This subarea would be allocated 18,261 lb (8.3 mt) at an Area 2A TAC of 1,310,000 lb (594 mt) in accordance with the Plan. The May all-depth season would be allocated 14,609 lb (6.6 mt) and, based on the observed catch per day trend in this fishery, an estimated 2,400 - 2,900 lb (1.1-1.3 mt) would be

caught per day in 2003, resulting in a 5 to 6 day fixed season. In accordance with the Plan, the season dates could be May 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17. An appropriate number of additional fishing days will be scheduled for late May or early June and fishing will be allowed on those days if the quota has not already been taken. The restricted depth fishery inside 30 fathoms is combined for the North Central and South Central coast subareas and would be allocated 19,797 lb (9 mt), starting May 1 through October 31 or until the TAC is attained, whichever occurs first. The August coastwide all-depth fishery (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain) would be allocated 57,660 lb (26 mt), which may be sufficient for a 3-day opening, starting August 1, based on the expected catch per day. If sufficient quota remains for additional fishing days after this season, the dates for an all-depth fishery would be in mid-August. The final determination of the season dates would be based on the allowable harvest level, projected catch rates, and recommendations developed in an ODFW-sponsored public workshop after the IPHC sets the 2003 TAC. The daily bag limit would be the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length.

Humbug Mountain, OR, through California Subarea

This subarea would be allocated 7,860 lb (3.6 mt) at an Area 2A TAC of 1,310,000 lb (594 mt) in accordance with the Plan. The proposed 2003 sport season for this subarea would be the same as last year, with a May 1 opening and continuing 7 days per week until September 30. The daily bag limit would be the first halibut taken, per person, of 32 inches (81.3 cm) or greater in length.

NMFS requests public comments on the Pacific Council's recommended modifications to the Plan and the proposed sport fishing regulations. The Area 2A TAC were set by the IPHC at its annual meeting on January 21-24, 2003, in Victoria, British Columbia. NMFS requests comments on the proposed changes to the Plan and sport fishing regulations by February 18, 2003, after the annual meeting, so that the public will have the opportunity to consider the final Area 2A TAC before submitting comments on the proposed changes. The States of Washington and Oregon will conduct public workshops shortly after the IPHC meeting to obtain input on the sport season dates. After the Area 2A TAC is known and after NMFS reviews public comments and comments from the States, NMFS will issue final rules for the Area 2A Pacific