



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Subject: Recommendations for 2018 Open Dates for the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain Subarea Sport Pacific Halibut All-Depth Fisheries

Recommendations for 2018 Open Dates for the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain (Central Oregon Coast) Subarea Sport Pacific Halibut All-Depth Fisheries

Summary

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends the following:

- Spring fishery fixed open dates: May 10, 11, 12; 24, 25, 26; June 7, 8, 9; and 21, 22, 23.
- Spring fishery backup dates: July 5, 6, 7; and 19, 20, 21.
- Summery fishery dates: August 3, 4; 17, 18; 31, September 1; 14, 15; 28, 29; October 12, 13; and 26 27; or until the total 2018 all-depth catch limit for the subarea is taken.

Background

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) annually solicits public input on open dates for the sport Pacific halibut all-depth fishery between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain (Central Oregon Coast subarea).

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (PFMC) Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A specifies both the opening day and open days per week for the Oregon all-depth sport fisheries from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. In addition, the plan specifies the proportions of the annual all-depth catch limit shared between the spring (May-July) and summer (August-October) fisheries. In previous years, a number of fixed open days were set annually for each fishery by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Beginning with 2004, fixed dates have only been set for the Spring all-depth fishery.

Fixed days are open fishing dates established pre-season. They are set with the intent that the angler can plan fishing trips without concern of closure due to attainment of the catch limit. However, the fixed dates established for the spring fishery are not guaranteed days and could be cancelled if it is projected that the fishery will exceed the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain annual all-depth catch limit (spring and summer all-depth fisheries combined). Fixed days in the spring fishery start the second Thursday in May, with the open days to occur on consecutive weeks on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Weeks may be skipped due to potentially adverse conditions during negative tide periods.

Possible additional open dates (back-up dates) are established in case sufficient quota remains after completion of the fixed days in the spring fishery. Establishing the dates of possible additional days preseason assists the angler in planning fishing trips. Back-up days occur every other Thursday, Friday and Saturday continuing until the spring catch limit is obtained or July 31, whichever occurs first. In contrast to the fixed dates (3 open days), backup days can be open one or two days if not enough quota remains for three backup days. Weeks may be skipped due to potentially adverse conditions during negative tide periods.

Starting in 2010, the summer fishery has been managed as an every other Friday and Saturday fishery starting the first Friday in August and continuing through October or attainment of the allocated catch limit, whichever occurs first, with options to skip weeks due to adverse tidal conditions. The CSP also contains inseason provisions to add days and/or additional fish to the daily bag limit in the Summer fishery if it appears inseason that the entire annual catch limit (total for the subarea) will not be harvested over the dates set for the fishery.

Public Input

Public input was received via e-mail, phone, a public meeting in Newport (29 January) which was also webcast, and an online survey on the number and dates of fixed and back-up days to be adopted for the spring sport all-depth fishery. Approximately 200 individuals provided feedback: 13 in person at the public meeting, four on the webcast, three via phone/e-mail, and 186 responded to the online survey. The respondents included a mix of private boat owners and passengers, and charter boat operators/crew and passengers, including both coastal and inland residents.

The expected catch per day, weather impacts, risks of exceeding the spring all-depth quota, risk of exceeding the spring and summer all-depth quotas, and dates for the 2018 Spring all-depth fixed days were the intended focus of the input. The catch per 3-day opening (fixed and back-up combined) in recent years has been relatively variable, with some catches ranging from less than 1,000 pounds to a high of approximately 50,000 pounds. The catches for the first two fixed openings in 2015 were the highest observed since 2006; this was driven by good weather and ocean conditions which increased effort. The first opening in 2016 was slightly higher than the first two in 2015. However, the second set of fixed dates in 2016 had low effort and catches due to weather and ocean conditions. In 2017, the first opening had less than 1,000 pounds landed, while the second and third openings were around 40,000 pounds each. The end result was an average catch per day similar to the last several years (Figure 1). At the conclusion of the fixed dates in 2017, there was sufficient quota for three back-up dates to be used. The catch for that three-day opening was very similar to the last fixed opening. After the back-up opening, approximately 6,000 pounds remained on the spring all-depth allocation, which was not enough

for any additional back-up dates. The remaining pounds were transferred to the summer all-depth fishery.

The assumed Area 2A fishery allocation for 2018 decreased from 2017 by 10.5 percent; therefore scenarios with nine, twelve, and fifteen fixed dates were presented to the public. In 2017, there were fifteen fixed dates, while the previous six years had each had twelve fixed dates (Figure 1). For all fixed-day season options, scenarios were presented that did not skip any weekends, as well as scenarios that skipped large negative tides (greater than -1.0). All scenarios preserve the traditional 2nd Thursday in May opening that many anglers and fishing-related business have come to count on.

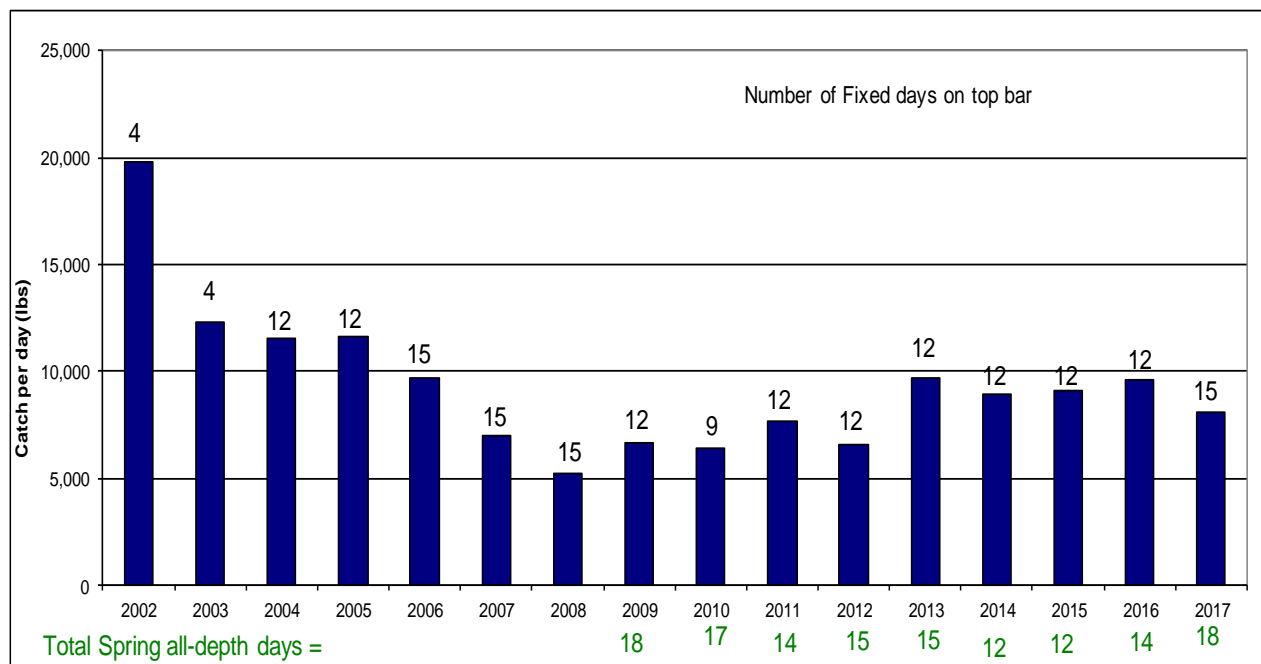


Figure 1. Catch per day in the Spring Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. all-depth Pacific halibut sport fishery since 2002 on Fixed Days. Total Fixed Days and Year Total All-depth Days are also shown.

The majority of discussion focused on twelve and fifteen fixed dates, with most in agreement about skipping the adverse tide weekends. The main discussion concerned the fifth opening, if fifteen fixed days were chosen. That opening would be July 5, 6, and 7. With the Fourth of July holiday occurring the day immediately prior to the opening, there were concerns about the potential for very high effort for that opening. However, if twelve fixed days were chosen, that weekend would be the first set of possible back-up dates. This would allow catches after the fourth fixed opening to be estimated, and determine how much quota remained, if any, and adjust the number of days open accordingly.

Recommendation for 2018 Central Oregon Subarea All-Depth Fisheries

After careful review of the CSP, recent harvest rates, recent angler effort trends, risk of exceeding the spring and combined spring and summer quotas, and feedback from the public, ODFW staff are recommending a 12-day fixed season of four Thursday-Saturday periods in the spring, with skipping weekends with negative tides larger than -1.0 feet on one or more days.

Staff also recommend maintaining the traditional 2nd Thursday in May opening. This seemed to be the best option based on the feedback received from the public.

ODFW recommends the fixed days occur on the following dates: May 10, 11, 12; 24, 25, 26; June 7, 8, 9; and 21, 22, 23. The potential back-up dates recommended if available catch limit remains are July 5, 6, 7; and 19, 20, 21. ODFW recommends the summer all-depth fishery occur on August 3, 4; 17, 18; August 31, September 1; 14, 15; 28, 29; October 12, 13; and 26, 27; or until the total 2018 all-depth catch limit for the subarea is taken. The CSP also has provisions to increase open days and bag limits inseason during the summer fishery if it appears the subarea catch limit will not be taken.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) will meet on April 20, 2018, to discuss and adopt the recreational Pacific halibut fishery dates into state rules.

Table 1. ODFW’s recommendation for the spring halibut openings for 2018 under a 12-day fixed season.

| May | | | | June | | | | July | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|------|------|----------|------------|------|------|------|----------|------------|------|-----|------|----------|
| Date | Day | Tide | Time | Date | Day | Tide | Time | Date | Day | Tide | Time | | | |
| | 1 | Tue | -0.9 | 7:54 PM | Closed | 1 | Fri | -0.9 | 8:57 AM | | 1 | Sun | -0.6 | 9:10 AM |
| | 2 | Wed | -0.8 | 8:41 AM | | 2 | Sat | -0.6 | 9:36 AM | | 2 | Mon | -0.3 | 9:46 AM |
| | 3 | Thu | -0.6 | 9:11 PM | | 3 | Sun | -0.3 | 10:23 PM | | 3 | Tue | 0.1 | 10:22 AM |
| | 4 | Fri | -0.3 | 10:04 AM | | 4 | Mon | 0.1 | 11:00 AM | | 4 | Wed | 0.5 | 11:01 AM |
| | 5 | Sat | 0.1 | 10:50 PM | | 5 | Tue | 0.4 | 11:46 AM | back-up | 5 | Thu | 1.0 | 11:42 AM |
| | 6 | Sun | 0.4 | 11:42 AM | | 6 | Wed | 0.8 | 12:33 AM | | 6 | Fri | 1.5 | 12:55 AM |
| | 7 | Mon | 0.7 | 12:38 PM | 3 | 7 | Thu | 1.1 | 1:25 PM | | 7 | Sat | 2.0 | 2:01 AM |
| | 8 | Tue | 0.8 | 1:15 AM | | 8 | Fri | 1.5 | 2:44 AM | | 8 | Sun | 1.1 | 2:18 PM |
| | 9 | Wed | 0.9 | 2:26 AM | | 9 | Sat | 1.4 | 3:07 PM | | 9 | Mon | 0.3 | 3:57 AM |
| 1 | 10 | Thu | 1.0 | 3:24 AM | | 10 | Sun | 0.5 | 4:25 AM | | 10 | Tue | -0.6 | 4:15 PM |
| | 11 | Fri | 1.1 | 4:12 AM | | 11 | Mon | -0.5 | 5:11 AM | Commercial | 11 | Wed | -1.4 | 5:12 PM |
| | 12 | Sat | 0.9 | 4:44 PM | | 12 | Tue | -1.3 | 5:56 AM | Closed | 12 | Thu | -2.0 | 6:25 AM |
| | 13 | Sun | 0.1 | 5:25 PM | | 13 | Wed | -1.9 | 6:42 AM | | 13 | Fri | -2.3 | 7:13 AM |
| | 14 | Mon | -0.7 | 6:06 PM | Closed | 14 | Thu | -2.3 | 7:14 PM | | 14 | Sat | -2.3 | 8:00 AM |
| | 15 | Tue | -1.3 | 6:59 AM | | 15 | Fri | -2.4 | 8:16 AM | | 15 | Sun | -2.0 | 8:46 AM |
| | 16 | Wed | -1.8 | 7:43 AM | | 16 | Sat | -2.3 | 9:05 AM | | 16 | Mon | -1.5 | 9:33 AM |
| Closed | 17 | Thu | -2.0 | 8:20 PM | | 17 | Sun | -1.9 | 9:55 AM | | 17 | Tue | -0.8 | 10:20 AM |
| | 18 | Fri | -1.9 | 9:20 AM | | 18 | Mon | -1.3 | 11:17 PM | back-up | 18 | Wed | 0.1 | 11:09 AM |
| | 19 | Sat | -1.7 | 10:14 PM | | 19 | Tue | -0.6 | 11:41 AM | | 19 | Thu | 1.0 | 12:06 AM |
| | 20 | Sun | -1.3 | 11:09 AM | 4 | 20 | Wed | 0.2 | 12:36 PM | | 20 | Fri | 1.5 | 12:54 PM |
| | 21 | Mon | -0.8 | 12:09 PM | | 21 | Thu | 1.0 | 1:48 AM | | 21 | Sat | 1.1 | 2:29 AM |
| | 22 | Tue | -0.2 | 12:47 AM | | 22 | Fri | 1.2 | 2:57 AM | | 22 | Sun | 0.7 | 2:54 PM |
| | 23 | Wed | 0.3 | 2:06 AM | | 23 | Sat | 0.6 | 3:57 AM | | 23 | Mon | 0.3 | 3:52 PM |
| 2 | 24 | Thu | 0.7 | 3:07 PM | | 24 | Sun | 0.0 | 4:15 PM | | 24 | Tue | 0.0 | 4:44 PM |
| | 25 | Fri | 0.8 | 3:59 PM | Commercial | 25 | Mon | -0.4 | 5:33 AM | Commercial | 25 | Wed | -0.3 | 5:29 PM |
| | 26 | Sat | 0.1 | 5:04 AM | | 26 | Tue | -0.7 | 5:46 PM | Closed | 26 | Thu | -0.5 | 6:10 PM |
| | 27 | Sun | -0.5 | 5:29 PM | | 27 | Wed | -0.9 | 6:50 AM | | 27 | Fri | -0.6 | 6:48 PM |
| | 28 | Mon | -0.8 | 6:10 PM | Closed | 28 | Thu | -0.9 | 7:25 AM | | 28 | Sat | -0.6 | 7:37 AM |
| | 29 | Tue | -1.0 | 7:07 AM | | 29 | Fri | -0.9 | 8:00 AM | | 29 | Sun | -0.5 | 8:04 PM |
| | 30 | Wed | -1.1 | 7:44 AM | | 30 | Sat | -0.8 | 8:35 AM | | 30 | Mon | -0.3 | 8:41 AM |
| Closed | 31 | Thu | -1.0 | 8:06 PM | | | | | | | 31 | Tue | 0.0 | 9:13 AM |

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