



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Date: 18 February 2021

To: Frank Lockhart
National Marine Fisheries Service
West Coast Regional Office
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115

From: Lynn Mattes
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Resources Program
2040 SE Marine Science Dr.
Newport, OR 97365

Subject: Recommendations for 2021 Open Dates for the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain Subarea Sport Pacific Halibut All-Depth Fisheries

Recommendations for 2021 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 13, 14, 15; May 20, 21, 22; June 3, 4, 5; June 10, 11, 12; June 17, 18, 19; and July 1, 2, 3.
- Spring fishery backup dates: July 15, 16, 17 and July 29, 30, 31.
- Summer fishery dates: August 5, 6, 7; August 19, 20, 21; September 2, 3, 4; September 16, 17, 18; September 30, October 1, 2; October 14, 15, 16; and October 28, 29, 30; or until the total 2021 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 large negative tide periods early in the morning.

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.

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. Starting in 2020, if the initial summer quota is greater than 60,000 pounds, Thursdays will also be open. The CSP contains additional 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, an online public meeting (8 February), 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 120 individuals provided feedback: 26 via the online public meeting, two via email, and 91 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 and eating into the summer quota, and dates for the 2021 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 variable, with catches ranging from less than 1,000 pounds to a high of approximately 50,000 pounds. In 2018, the first opening had just over 6,000 pounds landed, the next three opening had between 20,000 and 45,000 pounds landed. In 2019, the first opening had just under 30,000 pounds landed. Then the weather set in for the next two openings, producing 2,500 and 1,100 pounds. Even with the five sets of fixed dates, plus three sets of back-up dates, only approximately 50 percent of the spring all-depth allocation was harvested. In 2020, the first opening had approximately 18,000 pounds landed, the second less than 900 pounds. In addition to the five sets of fixed dates, three additional weekends were open for a total of 24 days. The 2020 average landings increased to 14,000 pounds, up from the low of 11,000 pounds in 2019, but still lower than the 5 years prior of approximately 25,000 pounds (Figure 1).

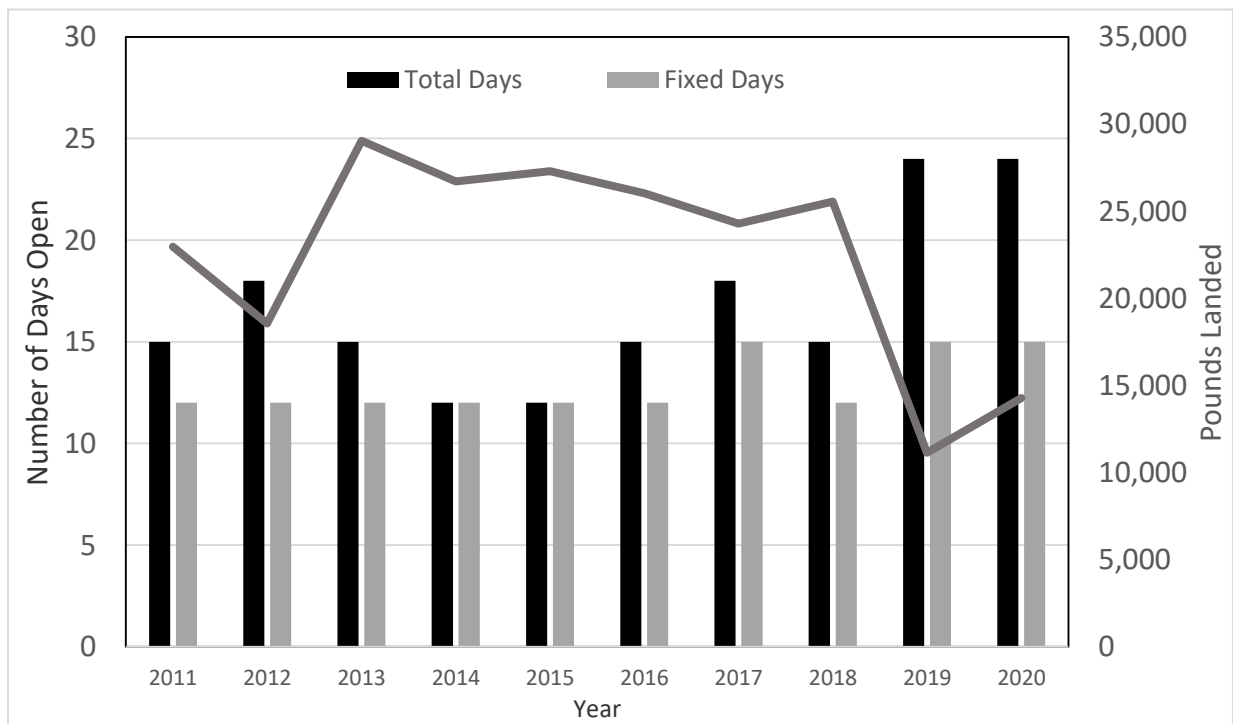


Figure 1. Number of fixed and total days open and average catch per day (in pounds) in the Spring all-depth fishery, 2011-2020.

The Area 2A fishery allocation for 2021 is almost the same as 2020; therefore scenarios with fifteen and eighteen fixed dates were presented to the public. 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.

The majority of discussion focused on fifteen and eighteen fixed dates, with additional discussion on skipping weekends with adverse tides. Some anglers wanted as many fixed dates as possible, however others wanted to be somewhat precautionary, to ensure the summer quota was not impacted. Also, based on what happened in 2019 and 2020, there were concerns by some that skipping weeks due to tides may not provide enough open dates to harvest the entire spring allocation. By not skipping tides, there would be the most potential opportunity to harvest the spring allocation. A final consideration was the timing of back-up dates. Previously, most anglers expressed a preference that recreational days not be scheduled the day following a commercial opening. With the commercial fishery being three days long, Tuesday through Thursday, in 2021 and the uncertainty with how that might impact recreational fisheries, there was support for avoiding the days immediately following a commercial opening.

Recommendation for 2021 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, tides and safety, changes to the commercial fishery, and feedback from the public, ODFW staff are recommending an 18-day fixed season of six (6) Thursday-Saturday periods in the spring, skipping the last weekend in

both May and June due to large (greater than -2.0 feet) negative morning low tides. Staff also recommend maintaining the traditional 2nd Thursday in May opening. This seemed to be the best option based to balance all of the considerations listed above.

ODFW recommends the fixed days occur on the following dates: May 13, 14, 15; May 20, 21, 22; June 3, 4, 5; June 10, 11, 12; June 17, 18, 19; and July 1, 2, 3 (Attachment 1). The potential back-up dates recommended, if available catch limit remains, are July 15, 16, 17 and July 29, 30, 31. ODFW recommends the summer all-depth fishery occur August 5, 6, 7; August 19, 20, 21; September 2, 3, 4; September 16, 17, 18; September 30, October 1, 2; October 14, 15, 16; and October 28, 29, 30, or until the total 2021 all-depth catch limit for the subarea is taken. The CSP also has provisions to increase open days and bag limits inseason during the fishery if it appears the subarea catch limit will not be taken.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) will meet on April 23, 2021, to discuss and adopt the recreational Pacific halibut fishery dates into state rules.

CC: Chris Kern, ODFW
Caren Braby, ODFW
Maggie Sommer, ODFW
Christian Heath, ODFW
Josh Lindsay, NMFS
Kathryn Blair, NMFS
Lara Erickson, IPHC
Huyen Tran, IPHC
Robin Ehlke, PFMC

Attachment 1. ODFW's recommendation for the spring halibut openings for 2021 under a 18-day fixed season.

May				June				July						
Date	Day	Tide	Time	Date	Day	Tide	Time	Date	Day	Tide	Time			
	1	Sat	-1.5	10:37 AM		1	Tue	-0.4	12:10 PM		1	Thu	0.8	12:14 PM
	2	Sun	-1.0	11:39 AM		2	Wed	0.2	1:06 PM		2	Fri	1.6	1:02 PM
	3	Mon	-0.5	12:45 PM		3	Thu	2.5	2:12 AM		3	Sat	1.7	2:39 AM
	4	Tues	3.4	1:14 AM		4	Fri	1.9	3:17 AM		4	Sun	1.2	3:36 AM
	5	Wed	2.9	2:36 AM		5	Sat	1.2	4:11 AM		5	Mon	0.6	4:25 AM
	6	Thu	2.3	3:42 AM		6	Sun	0.5	4:55 AM		6	Tue	0.1	5:07 AM
	7	Fri	1.5	4:35 AM		7	Mon	0.0	5:34 AM		7	Wed	-0.3	5:46 AM
	8	Sat	0.9	5:18 AM		8	Tue	-0.4	6:09 AM		8	Thu	-0.6	6:23 AM
	9	Sun	0.3	5:56 AM		9	Wed	-0.7	6:44 AM		9	Fri	-0.9	7:00 AM
	10	Mon	-0.1	6:31 AM		10	Thu	-0.9	7:18 AM		10	Sat	-1.0	7:35 AM
	11	Tue	-0.5	7:04 AM		11	Fri	-1.0	7:54 AM		11	Sun	-1.1	8:11 AM
	12	Wed	-0.7	7:37 AM		12	Sat	-1.0	8:31 AM		12	Mon	-1.1	8:47 AM
	13	Thu	-0.8	8:11 AM		13	Sun	-1.0	9:09 AM		13	Tue	-0.9	9:24 AM
1	14	Fri	-0.7	8:48 AM		14	Mon	-0.9	9:49 AM		14	Wed	-0.5	10:01 AM
	15	Sat	-0.6	9:27 AM		15	Tue	-0.6	10:31 AM		15	Thu	0.0	10:40 AM
	16	Sun	-0.4	10:11 AM		16	Wed	-0.3	11:16 AM		16	Fri	0.7	11:23 AM
	17	Mon	-0.3	10:59 AM		17	Thu	0.2	12:03 PM		17	Sat	1.5	12:10 PM
	18	Tue	-0.1	11:52 AM		18	Fri	0.7	12:53 PM		18	Sun	1.2	1:45 AM
	19	Wed	0.1	12:48 PM		19	Sat	1.9	2:12 AM		19	Mon	0.4	2:53 AM
	20	Thu	3.4	1:27 AM		20	Sun	0.9	3:14 AM		20	Tue	-0.4	3:54 AM
2	21	Fri	2.6	2:38 AM		21	Mon	-0.2	4:11 AM		21	Wed	-1.1	4:51 AM
	22	Sat	1.5	3:37 AM		22	Tue	-1.2	5:03 AM		22	Thu	-1.7	5:43 AM
	23	Sun	0.4	4:29 AM		23	Wed	-1.9	5:54 AM		23	Fri	-1.9	6:32 AM
	24	Mon	-0.7	5:19 AM		24	Thu	-2.4	6:43 AM		24	Sat	-2.0	7:18 AM
	25	Tue	-1.7	6:07 AM		25	Fri	-2.5	7:32 AM		25	Sun	-1.8	8:02 AM
	26	Wed	-2.3	6:55 AM		26	Sat	-2.4	8:20 AM		26	Mon	-1.4	8:44 AM
	27	Thu	-2.6	7:44 AM		27	Sun	-2.0	9:08 AM		27	Tue	-0.8	9:24 AM
CLOSED	28	Fri	-2.6	8:34 AM		28	Mon	-1.5	9:55 AM		28	Wed	0.0	10:03 AM
	29	Sat	-2.3	9:25 AM		29	Tue	-0.8	10:41 AM		29	Thu	0.8	10:42 AM
	30	Sun	-1.7	10:19 AM		30	Wed	0.0	11:28 AM		30	Fri	1.7	11:21 AM
	31	Mon	-1.1	11:14 AM							31	Sat	2.5	12:03 PM