

News Release

ACTION	ROUTE TO	RECEIVED FEB 05 1985
1 February 1985		

P.O. BOX 5009, UNIVERSITY STATION, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98105

HALIBUT COMMISSION INCREASES QUOTA TO 55.7 MILLION POUNDS IN 1985

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), which manages the Pacific halibut fishery on behalf of Canada and the United States, completed its 61st Annual Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, with Mr. Robert Morley of Vancouver presiding as chairman. The Commission will recommend to the governments of Canada and the United States catch limits for 1985 totalling 55.7 million pounds, 12.7 million pounds more than in 1984. For the foreseeable future the Commission expects catches at similar levels.

The Commission's scientific staff reported that the halibut resource is rebuilt throughout much of its range, particularly in the Gulf of Alaska. The incidental catch of halibut in fisheries targeting other species has decreased, contributing to the stock improvement. The Commission again urged that further steps be taken to reduce these losses.

The Commission received regulatory proposals from the scientific staff, from Canadian and United States fishermen and processors, and from other fishery agencies. The Commission will recommend to the governments the following catch limits for 1985: Area 2A (all waters south of British Columbia) - 0.5 million pounds; Area 2B (the waters off British Columbia) - 10.0 million pounds; Area 2C (the waters off southeastern Alaska) - 9.0 million pounds; Area 3A (Cape Spencer to Cape Trinity) - 23.0 million pounds; Area 3B (Cape Trinity to Unimak Island) - 9.0 million pounds; Area 4A (Unimak Island to 172°W and south of 56°20'N, exclusive of the Bering Sea closed area) - 1.7 million pounds; Area 4B (Aleutian Chain west of 172°W and south of 56°20'N) - 1.3 million pounds; Area 4C (the Bering Sea flats north and west of the closed area) - 0.6 million pounds; Area 4D (Bering Sea edge north of 56°20'N) - 0.6 million pounds, and Area 4E (Bering Sea flats east of 168° exclusive of the closed area) - 50,000 pounds.

The Commission is recommending commercial fishing seasons consisting of the following succession of open and closed periods, until the respective catch limits are taken:

AREA	OPENINGS
2A	5/9-21; 6/8-20; 7/24-8/5; 8/23-9/4; 9/19-10/1
2A-1	4/20-10/1
2B	4/20-29; 6/7-16; 8/9-18; 9/20-29; 10/11-20
2C	4/27-29; 5/27-29; 6/24-26; 9/9-11; 9/20-**
3A, 3B*	4/27-29; 5/27-29; 6/24-26; 9/9-11; 9/20-**
4A, 4B	4/27-29; 5/27-29; 6/24-26; 7/9-13; 8/7-14; 9/20-**
4C	6/1-8/6 (one-day open, one-day closed); 8/7-**
4D	4/27-29; 5/27-29; 6/24-26; 7/9-19; 8/7-14; 9/20-**
4E	5/21-10/31 (two-days open; one-day closed)

(continued)

*Area 3B will close with Area 3A when the 3A quota is taken and reopen on the next scheduled opening.

**Areas to close on 10/31 or on a date to be announced by the Commission

The Commission agreed to establish within Area 2A a small area in the vicinity of Cape Flattery, subarea 2A-1, within which commercial handline fishing will be allowed during periods which would be closed to commercial longline halibut fishing under Commission regulations. Participants in this fishery will be required to have a special federal permit.

The Commission is recommending that halibut vessels have their holds inspected when clearing into and out of Area 4 at Dutch Harbor.

All vessels that land halibut, including sport charter boats, must have 1985 licenses issued by IPHC. Those 1984 license holders that fished for halibut will receive license renewal forms shortly. All others intending to fish in 1985 must submit a license application to the Commission in Seattle. Application forms are available at all local fisheries offices. Application forms not completely filled out will be returned for the missing information.

In the twelve-month period beginning March 1, 1985, the Commission recommends that the sport fishery for halibut open March 1, 1985 to December 31, 1985 and February 1, 1986 to February 28, 1986. This is an increase of three months over the 1984 season. The daily sport catch limit and possession limit will be two halibut of any size, the same as last year.

The recommended regulations for the 1985 halibut fishery will become official as soon as they are approved by the Canadian and United States governments. The Commission will publish and distribute regulation pamphlets after the regulations are approved.

The Commission recognized the long service and contributions to the halibut resource by Mr. Richard Myhre, assistant director of the Commission. Mr. Myhre will be retiring June 1985 after 36 years with the Commission.

The next annual meeting of the Commission will be held in Seattle, Washington, on January 27-30, 1986. Mr. Robert McVey was elected chairman, and Mr. Robert Morley was elected vice-chairman for the coming year. Other Commissioners are Sigurd Brynjolfson, Richard Eliason, Donald McLeod, and George Wade. Donald A. McCaughran is director of the Commission, and Richard J. Myhre is assistant director.

-END-

Dr. Donald A. McCaughran, Director
Phone: (206) 634-1838