

issuing carriers must submit the original of the application letter (without attachments), FCC Form 159, and the appropriate fee to the Mellon Bank, Pittsburgh, PA, at the address set forth in § 1.1105 of this chapter. Issuing carriers submitting tariffing fees electronically should submit a copy of the Form 159 and the original application letter to the Secretary of the Commission in lieu of the Mellon Bank. The Form 159 should display the Electronic Audit Code in the box in the upper left hand corner marked "reserved". Issuing carriers should submit these fee materials on the same day as the transmission in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) In addition, the requirements of § 61.153(c) are applicable, except the additional copy addressed to the Chief, Tariff and Pricing Analysis Branch is not required.

3. Section 61.52 is amended by revising paragraph (c) to read as follows:

§ 61.52 Form, size, type, legibility, etc.

* * * * *

(c) Incumbent local exchange carriers shall file all tariff publications and associated documents, such as transmittal letters, requests for special permission, and supporting information, electronically in accordance with the requirements set forth in § 61.13 through § 61.17.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 300

[Docket No. 980225048-8059-02; I.D. 062398A]

Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Washington Sport Fishery

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Inseason action.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces changes to the regulations for the Area 2A sport fishery off the south coast of Washington. A subsection of the south coast of Washington area, from the Queets River south to 47°00'00" N. lat., and east of 124°40'00" W. long. will be open 7 days per week, beginning June 26, 1998, until 36,648 lb (16.6 mt) are estimated to have been taken, after which time all sport fishing for halibut

in the south coast of Washington area between the Queets River and Leadbetter Point will be closed. The purpose of this action is to allow halibut taken as bycatch in shallow-depth sport fishing trips to be retained, rather than discarded.

DATES: Effective June 25, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be mailed to William Stelle, Jr., Regional Administrator, Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way, Seattle, WA 98115. Information relevant to this action is available for public review during business hours at this address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Yvonne deReynier, 206-526-6120.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan for Pacific halibut off Washington, Oregon, and California is implemented in the annual management measures for the Pacific halibut fisheries published on March 17, 1998 (63 FR 13000). In accordance with those regulations, the sport fishery in the area from Queets River, Washington, to Leadbetter Point, Washington opened on May 1 and has continued for 5 days per week (Sunday through Thursday) since that opening. The 1998 subarea quota for this fishery is 36,648 lb (16.1 mt). This all-depth sport fishery in this area is scheduled to close when 1,000 lb (0.45 mt) are projected to remain in the subarea quota. Immediately following that closure, the season would reopen in the shallow-depth area from the Queets River (47°31'42" N. lat.) south to 47°00'00" N. lat. and east of 124°40'00" W. long., and continue every day until the full 36,648 lb (16.1 mt) subarea quota is estimated to have been taken.

The best available data on June 16, 1998, indicates that as of June 14, 1998, 31,327 lb (14.2 mt) of halibut have been taken in the area from the Queets River south to Leadbetter Point, Washington. Catch rate attainment for this subarea is significantly slower than it has been in past years, lengthening the directed sport season over past season durations. While a longer than usual halibut season has been beneficial to area sport fishery operations, the lengthened 5 day per week fishery has had an unanticipated impact on sport fishing trips directed at species other than halibut. Because the halibut fishery is restricted to 5 days per week, halibut must be discarded when caught incidentally on fishing trips directed at other species on days when halibut may not be landed (Friday and Saturday). A small number of halibut are taken from the shallow depth area, where a significant rockfish sport fishery occurs. Allowing halibut landings for 7 days per week from this area will eliminate

unnecessary discard of incidentally-caught halibut. Any halibut landed from the shallow-depth fishery on a Friday or a Saturday will count against the all-depth fishing quota of 35,648 lb (16.1 mt). NMFS has determined, in consultation with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), that the directed halibut fishery for this area has been proceeding at a sufficiently slow rate to justify allowing Friday and Saturday halibut landings from the shallow depth fishing trips that are generally directed at species other than halibut, but which may catch halibut incidentally.

Section 24 of the 1998 Pacific halibut regulations provides NMFS with the flexibility to make certain inseason management changes including, among other things, modification of sport fishing periods, and modification of sport fishery days per calendar week. In consultation with WDFW, the Pacific Fishery Management Council, and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), NMFS has determined that the remaining quota for this area is sufficient to open the shallow depth fishery for 7 days per week, beginning June 26, 1998. The all-depth fishery will continue as originally specified in the annual management measures, until 35,648 lb (16.6 mt) are estimated to have been taken from the south coast of Washington area. Once 35,648 lb (16.1 mt) are estimated to have been taken, the shallow depth subarea within the south coast of Washington area (from the Queets River south to 47°00'00" N. lat. and east of 124°40'00" W. long.) will remain open every day until 36,648 lb (16.6 mt) are estimated to have been taken, or until September 30, whichever occurs first.

NMFS Action

For the reasons stated above, NMFS announces the following change to the 1998 annual management measures (63 FR 13000, March 17, 1998, as amended). For the Washington south coast subarea, section 23(4)(C)(iii)(A) is amended as follows:

(iii) In the area between the Queets River, WA and Leadbetter Point, WA (46°38'10" N. lat.), the quota for landings into ports in this area is 36,648 lb (16.6 mt).

(A) The fishing season that began on May 3 continues 5 days a week (Sunday through Thursday) until 35,648 lb (16.1) are estimated to have been taken and the season is closed by the Commission. Within the area described in this section, above, the area from the Queets River south to 47°00'00" N. lat. and east of 124°40'00" W. long. is open 7 days per week, and continues every day until

36,648 lb (16.6 mt) are estimated to have been taken and the area is closed by the Commission, or until September 30, whichever occurs first.

Classification

These actions are authorized by the regulations implementing the Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan. The determination to take these actions is based on the most recent data available. Because of the need for immediate action to implement these changes to limit

unnecessary halibut discard, and because the public had an opportunity to comment on NMFS' authority to make inseason changes to certain management measures when those measures would further the objectives of the Catch Sharing Plan, NMFS has determined that good cause exists for this document to be published without affording a prior opportunity for public comment or a 30-day delayed effectiveness period. Public comments will be received for a period of 15 days

after the effectiveness of this action. This action is authorized by Section 24 of the annual management measures for Pacific halibut fisheries published on March 17, 1998 (63 FR 13000, 13008) and has been determined to be not significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

Dated: June 24, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries National Marine Fisheries Service.
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