

Pacific halibut season opens May 1

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

NEWPORT, Ore. — Fishing for Pacific halibut with two friends last spring Kelly Corbett was the last on in the boat to hook up, but you know the saying, “last the best”.

“It took me 15 minutes to reel him in,” said Corbett, who lives in Seal Rock. Her fish was 54 inches long and weighed around 77 pounds, more than three times what the average Pacific halibut caught off the Oregon Coast weighs. And, more importantly, it was bigger than her two fishing companions’ halibut.

Corbett and other fishers are eagerly anticipating May 1 when the Pacific halibut season opens on the Oregon coast.

The central coast fishery, from Cape Falcon just north of Manzanita to Humbug Mountain near Port Orford, is a very popular fishery among Oregonians. Anglers may fish inside the 40-fathom line (defined by waypoints) seven days per week, through Oct. 31 or until the 14,407-pound quota is met. The all-depth dates for the spring season are May 14-16, 21-23, 28-30; and June 4-6. Backup dates (if sufficient quota remains) are June 18-20, and July 2-4, 16-18 and 30-31. The catch limit is 124,261 pounds. The summer season opens Aug. 7 with scheduled open days every other Friday through Sunday until the total area all-depth catch limit of 165,681 pounds is taken or October 31, whichever occurs first.

The halibut fishery for anglers out of Columbia River ports, fishing the area from Leadbetter Point in Washington to Cape Falcon, is also becoming very popular. The spring season for that area opens May 1, Thursdays through Saturdays, until the 11,014-pound quota is met or July 18, whichever occurs first. The summer fishery opens Aug. 7 with scheduled open days every Friday through Sunday, until the total area quota of 15,735 pounds is taken or September 30, whichever occurs first.

South of Humbug Mountain the season also opens May 1 and is open seven days a week through Oct. 31.

Open dates are announced on the NMFS hotline (1-800-662-9825; #5; #1) and posted on the MRP Web Site.

Statewide daily bag limit is one Pacific halibut, no length limit, with an annual limit of six fish. The possession limit is one daily limit at sea and three daily limits on land. Anglers are advised to check the regulations and waypoints for the Stonewall Bank Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area.

During days open to all-depth halibut fishing, most species may not be taken and retained, possessed or landed when Pacific halibut are onboard the vessel except salmon (using authorized methods during authorized seasons), sablefish, Pacific cod, tuna and most other offshore pelagic species are allowed. For more information on halibut regulations. Waypoints for the inside 40-fathom fishery. General regulations can be found in the 2009 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations booklet.

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