Washington Inside Waters Sport Fishery Subarea (Puget Sound Including Strait of Juan de Fuca).

The Council considered an allocation for this area that ranged between 17 and 32.5 percent of the Washington sport fishery subquota. In 1994, this area was allocated 32.4 percent of the sport fishery subquota, which equaled 6.42 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The Council recommends an allocation of 28.0 percent of the Washington sport allocation, which equals 6.66 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The Council made no changes to the season structuring approach, bag limits, or the geographic limits of this subarea. Due to inability to monitor the catch in this area inseason, the Council adopted a fixed season management approach, rather than a quota. The season would be established preseason based on projected catch per day and number of days to achievement of the subquota. No inseason adjustments would be made; estimates of actual catch would be made post

Washington North Coast Sport Fishery Subarea.

The Council considered an allocation for this area that ranged between 51 and 62.3 percent of the Washington sport fishery subquota. In 1994, this area was allocated 62.4 percent of the sport fishery subquota, which equaled 12.37 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The Council recommends an allocation of 57.7 percent of the Washington sport allocation, which equals 13.73 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The Council made no changes to the geographic limits of this subarea. The Council recommends a two-tier approach to the season structuring, which would maintain the traditional early May fishery intended to extend through the month; if sufficient quota remained after May 31, an early July fishery would be scheduled for the Fourth of July holiday when sport fishers have requested access to halibut. The Council made no changes to the one-fish with no minimum size bag limit in this area. Also, the Council maintained the closure in the area that is approximately 19.5 nm (36.1 km) southwest of Cape Flattery. High catches of large fish from this area in the past caused the fishery to close early, due to quota attainment. The Council adopted a closure of this area to provide for longer seasons and fishing opportunity in other parts of the sport fishery subarea.

Washington South Coast Sport Fishery Subarea.

The Council considered an allocation for this area that ranged between 10 and 25 percent of the Washington sport fishery subquota. In 1994, this area was allocated 5.2 percent of the sport fishery subquota, which equaled 1.03 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The Council recommends an allocation of 12.3 percent of the Washington sport allocation, which equals 2.93 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The southern limit of this geographic area was changed from Cape Falcon to Leadbetter Point to establish a separate Columbia River area. This area has changed from having a continuous 153-day opening prior to 1993, to a limit of a few days of fishing, due to a shift in fishing strategy to a fishery targeting on halibut as a result of fishers finding productive sport fishing areas. In order to provide longer seasons that start on May 1 as in years prior to 1993, the Council recommends a greater allocation to this subarea and established an area closure in the northern offshore portion of this subarea where high catches have occurred in the last 2 years. However, to allow access to this more productive area without reducing season length, the Council did adopt a provision for an opening in this closed area after September 1, if the fishery is still open as described in the proposed Plan. To maintain a longer season, the bag limit was set by the Council at one fish, with no minimum size limit.

Columbia River Sport Fishery Subarea.

This is a new sport fish subarea for which the Council considered a maximum allocation of 2.5 percent of the Washington sport fishery subquota, plus a maximum of 2.5 percent of the Oregon/California sport fishery subquota. The Council recommends an allocation of 2.0 percent of the Washington sport allocation plus 2.0 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation, which equals 0.89 percent of the Area 2A TAC. In 1994, this area was included with the Washington south coast area and did not have a separate allocation. Because of high landings of sport catch in the Westport area, the south coast area has been limited to only a few days of fishing in the last 2 years. Sport fishers in the Columbia River area, who have caught halibut incidental to sport fishing for other bottomfish species, requested separation from the Westport area so that longer fixed-season incidental catch fisheries could be maintained for the Columbia River ports. The Council agreed with this need in establishing this new

subarea that extends from Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon. As described in the proposed Plan, this area would open on May 1 and continue 7 days per week until the subquota is estimated to have been taken, or September 30, whichever is earlier. To maintain a longer season, the bag limit was set by the Council at one fish with a minimum size limit of 32 in (81.3 cm). However, the Council acknowledged that, based on the experience at other ports such as Westport, it is probable that the fishery in this area could shortly evolve into a directed halibut fishery. If so, the season length would need to be shortened considerably or the quota increased.

Central Oregon Coast Sport Fishery Subarea.

The Council considered an allocation for this area that ranged between 55 and 97.4 percent of the Oregon/California sport fishery subquota. In 1994, this area was allocated 97.4 percent of the Oregon/California sport fishery subquota, which equaled 12.35 percent of the Area 2A TAC. The Council recommends an allocation of 88.4 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation (which is 18.21 percent of the Area 2A TAC) if the Area 2A TAC is 388,350 lb (176.2 mt) and above. At TACs above 388,350 lb (176.2 mt) the Council set the southern geographic limit of this subarea at the Siuslaw River, rather than the California border, so that a south coast subarea can be established. If the Area 2A TAC is below 388,350 lb (176.2 mt), the Council determined that there would be no south coast subarea and the allocation for this subarea, which would extend from Cape Falcon to the California border, would be 95.4 percent of the Oregon/California sport allocation. The Council recommends three seasons for this area: (1) Two periods of fishing opportunity in productive deeper water areas along the coast, principally for charter and larger private boat anglers in May and in August, and (2) a period of fishing opportunity in less productive nearshore waters (inside 30 fathoms (55 m)) in June and July, designed for incidental catches by small boat anglers as described in the proposed Plan. The Council maintained the past daily bag limits for all seasons of two halibut per person, one with a minimum 32-in (81.3 cm) size limit and the second with a minimum 50-in (127.0 cm) size limit.

Southern Oregon Coast Sport Fishery Subarea.

This is a new sport fishery subarea for which the Council considered an allocation that ranged between 5 and 40 percent of the Oregon/California sport