

PUBLIC TESTIMONY SIGN-UP SHEET

Agenda Item: D3 UNGUIDED HALIBUT RENTAL

		Check the boxes below if you will have a PowerPoint or Handout	
NAME (Please Print)	TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF:	Handout	PPT
1	Judy Brakel	Alaska Halibut Forever	✓
2	Linda Behrman / Tom Gemmell	Alaska Halibut Center	
3	George Hutchins	Myself	
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NOTE to persons providing oral or written testimony to the Council: Section 307(1)(I) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act prohibits any person "to knowingly and willfully submit to a Council, the Secretary, or the Governor of a State false information (including, but not limited to, false information regarding the capacity and extent to which a United State fish processor, on an annual basis, will process a portion of the optimum yield of a fishery that will be harvested by fishing vessels of the United States) regarding any matter that the Council, Secretary, or Governor is considering in the course of carrying out this Act.

Comment received late

Dear Council members,

I write regarding the discussion paper **D3, Unguided Halibut Rental Boats**. The long term sustainability of the halibut resource greatly depends on the ability of fishery managers to account for and control halibut harvest. The increased regulatory constraints placed upon the guided charter industry has undoubtedly lead to an increase in the number of businesses that offer "outfitting" or boat, fishing, gear, and a GPS with halibut fishing locations. These "outfitted" anglers avoid the bag limit constraints of guided anglers while maintaining many of the advantages. The harvest and effort from this growing sector needs to be accounted for. Please take steps toward accurately accounting the harvest and effort from these "outfitted" recreational anglers as they likely have higher catch rates than unguided anglers.

Alternatively and perhaps more importantly, please consider allowing all Alaskan anglers to participate in halibut conservation by adjusting bag limits equally in the recreational sector. The notion that Alaskan recreational anglers need to be able harvest 2 halibut per day is outdated, has led to overly complicated charter regulations and needs to change. All anglers should share in conserving the halibut stock.

Additionally, please consider an annual halibut limit and punch card for all recreational anglers. This could greatly improve harvest accountability in the recreational sector while increasing conservation measures, particularly in times of low abundance. The annual Alaska mail survey may have considerable recall bias, which likely leads to underestimates of true recreational harvest. Though annual limits may be unpopular in Alaska, many Alaskan's that depend on halibut as a subsistence food source will be able to harvest under the federal subsistence program.

Thank you for your hard work on conserving halibut for the future,

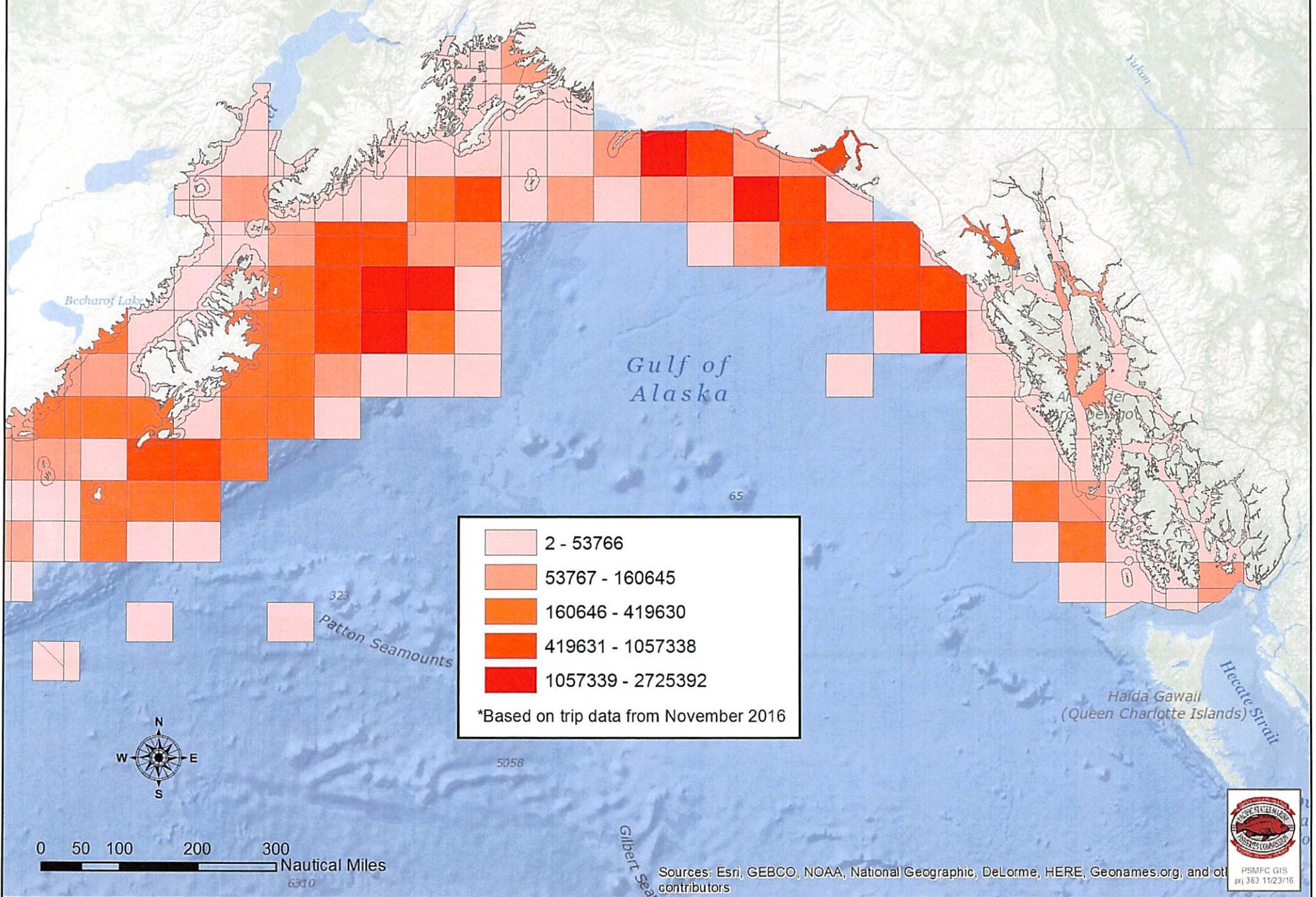
Craig Murdoch

ccmurdoch@gmail.com

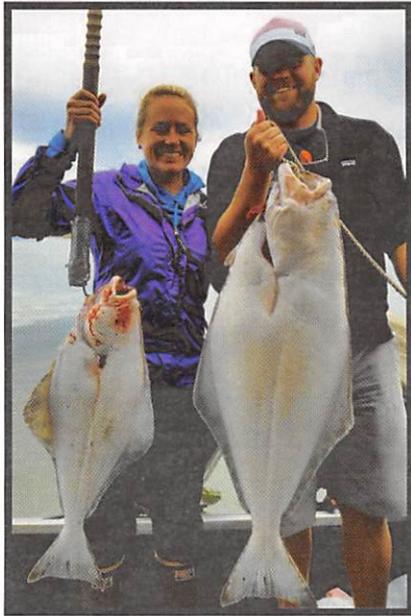
PO Box 121

Gustavus, Alaska 99826

Halibut Commercial Fishing Intensity*

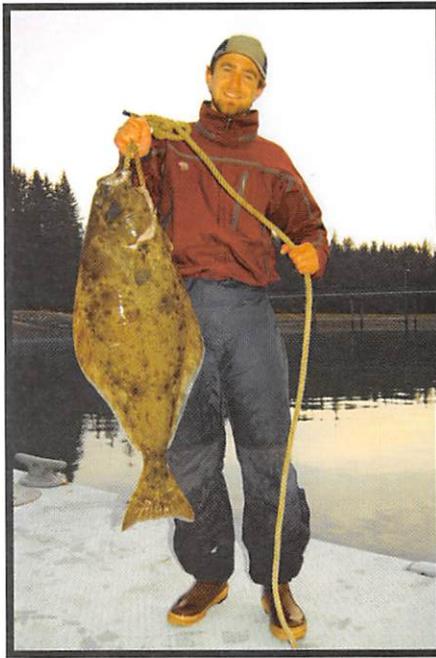


Fishing today...



Many sport fishermen choose to keep younger fish. Halibut larger than 50" (60 lbs live weight) are also all females – the producers of generations to come. A female halibut releases an increasing number of eggs as she grows older and larger. When a female halibut begins to reproduce (47", 50 lbs) she has about 500,000 eggs, but a 77" fish (250 lbs) might have 4 million eggs. Trophy-sized females are the most prolific breeders and can be up to 55 years old.

Younger halibut carry fewer toxins, like mercury, making them preferred for eating. For more information on safe consumption of Alaska halibut, visit epi.hss.state.ak.us/eh/fish.



...planning for tomorrow

Help prevent localized halibut depletions. Adult halibut tend to return to the same area from year to year after their migration to deep-water spawning grounds. Most fishing occurs within a 2-hour boat ride from towns, putting Alaska's coastal communities at risk of local-area halibut depletions.

Do your part to prevent local depletions by releasing large halibut and taking only what you can use. Together we can continue to enjoy Alaska's rich halibut resource for centuries to come.

Fishing Alaska's HALIBUT



Alaska and abundance go hand in hand...

If you have come to Alaska for the beautiful scenery, wildlife, and spectacular fishing, you won't be disappointed. But before you head out in search of "The Big One," there are a few things you should know.



Share the catch - take only what you can use.

How you can help. If you're headed out on a sport fishing trip, there are a few important things you can do to promote halibut sustainability:

- **Immediate, safe release.** For a fish's best chance of survival, release a halibut as soon as possible, preferably without removing it from the water. It is unlawful to keep a fish aboard a vessel and release it if a larger fish is caught. Avoid handling a halibut only by the tail, as you can damage its spine. For more information on how to release halibut safely, visit everyhalibutcounts.org.
- **Use circle hooks.** J-hooks and treble hooks are difficult to remove without injuring a fish. Circle hooks give released fish their best chance for survival.
- **Ensure the quality of your fish.** Bleed and ice your fish aboard the vessel.

- **Take only what you can use.** Fifty pounds of filleted fish is enough for 100 one-half pound servings. After one year in the freezer, halibut can be freezer-burned and go to waste. To extend freezer life, consider having your fish professionally packed.
- **Know the rules.** Please comply with the intent of federal fishing regulations. These exist to protect the future of halibut fishing. For current regulations, visit:
alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/halibut/sport.htm



Why the concern?

Halibut fishing in Alaska – be it sport, subsistence or commercial – is regulated by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) in partnership with the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC).

Commercial and guided sport fishing are managed under a system of Total Allowable Catch (TAC), in pounds (lbs), for a given year. The TAC fluctuates with the amount of halibut available as determined by fishery surveys. Since 2006 the TAC in Southeast Alaska has gone down by almost 70%.

As of 2015, commercial fishing in Southeast Alaska received 81.7% of the TAC and guided sport fishing received 18.3%. But in the combined area of Icy Strait, Glacier Bay and Cross Sound, the quantity (lbs) of sport-caught halibut (guided plus non-guided) approximately equals the quantity of commercially caught halibut. All fishermen are accountable for the vitality of Alaska's halibut fisheries.