

Overfishing by the charter industry has made it harder for subsistence and unguided sport fishermen to find fish.

FACT: Because charter boats fish close to port, their geographically-concentrated fishing causes localized depletion. Testimony at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's October 2008 meeting documented localized depletion in areas where the charter fleet concentrates, such as the waters near Sitka and Craig.

Localized depletion means subsistence fishermen, who are limited by weather conditions to protected inshore waters, cannot meet their subsistence needs. Testimony at the Council's October 2008 meeting documented the problems and hardships subsistence fishermen face because of charter overfishing. Subsistence harvest is a priority in Alaska.

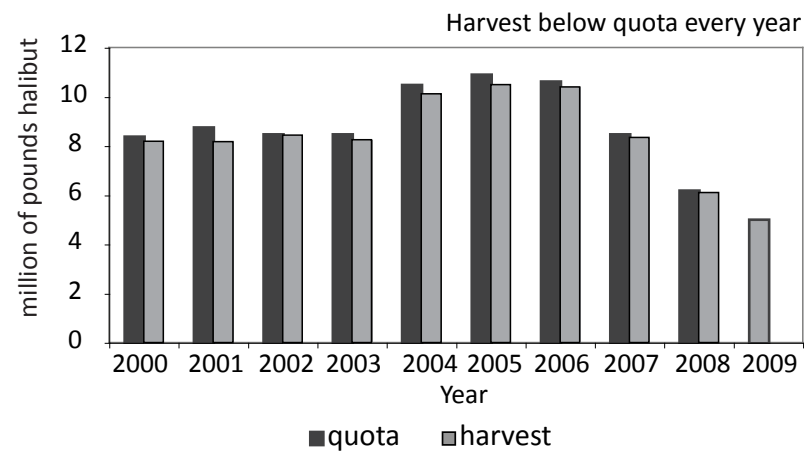
The charter halibut catch is just a "drop in the bucket" in comparison to the commercial longline catch.

FICTION: The 2009 commercial catch limit for Area 2C is 5.02 million pounds. If the charter fleet is allowed to fish at 2008 levels, the charter industry will take about 2 million pounds of halibut, more than one million pounds above their allotted catch. In the past, overfishing by the charter fleet has resulted in a direct reduction in the commercial quota. If the charter fleet is allowed to exceed its 2009 Guideline Harvest Level (GHL), the IPHC will likely deduct the overage from the 2009 or 2010 commercial longline quota, or both.

The commercial fleet has never exceeded its allotted quota.

FACT: The commercial fleet operates under a strictly-regulated Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system and has not exceeded its quota since the system was implemented in 1995. During the past 12 years, halibut biomass in Area 2C has declined 58 percent. During the past four years, the commercial halibut quota has been reduced 54 percent for conservation reasons. The commercial fleet has accepted this dramatic cut, and stayed within its quota. In stark contrast, the charter allocation was not reduced until last year (per the stair-step formula), and the charter fleet has exceeded its allocation every year since 2004. Last year, the charter fleet caught almost one million pounds more halibut than it was allotted.

2C Commercial Halibut Quota and Harvest



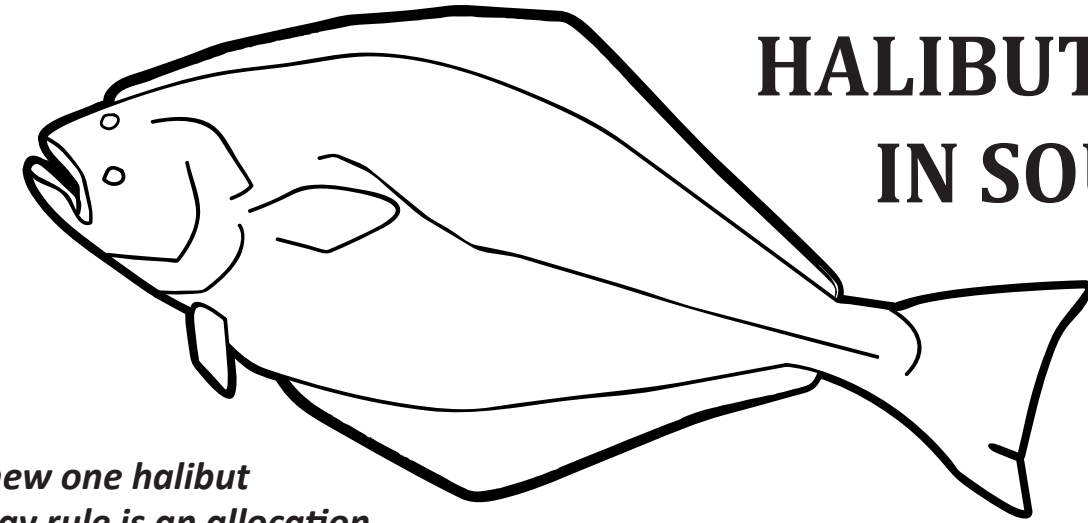
Trawlers catch more halibut as bycatch every year than the entire quota for the charter fleet.

FICTION: Trawling is illegal in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska. The commercial fleet worked hard to outlaw trawling and to address halibut bycatch in other fisheries. This year hook and line fishermen launched a conservation network to minimize bycatch when halibut fishing in Southeast. The IPHC is holding a bycatch workshop in September to bring all members of the industry together to discuss the future of our fishery. We hope you will be there.

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FACT OR FICTION?

HALIBUT FISHING IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA



The new one halibut per day rule is an allocation issue, not a conservation issue.

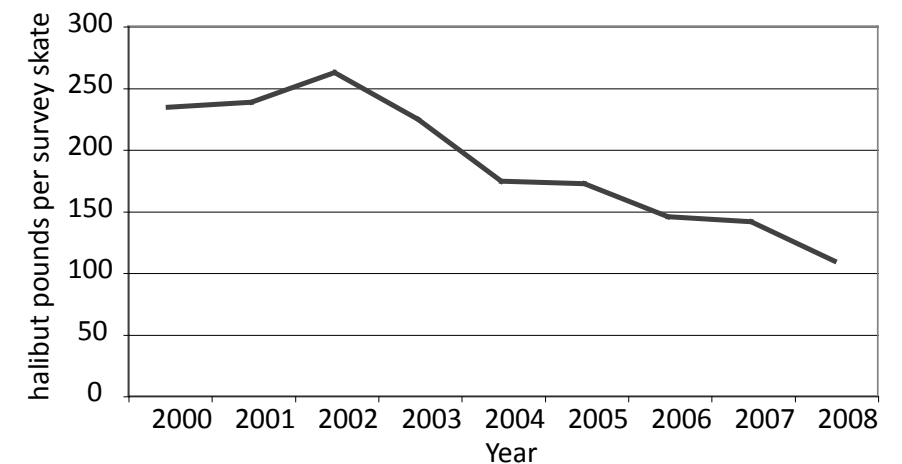
FICTION: The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) agree that "overharvesting by the charter sector poses a conservation risk, with the potential to undermine the IPHC's conservation and management goals for the overall halibut stock" (Federal Register, Vol. 74, No. 86, p. 21195). Overfishing by the charter sector threatens the sustainability of the halibut resource for all users, including subsistence, unguided sport, and commercial fishermen.

In the halibut fishery, conservation issues are inherently linked to allocation issues. If one sector exceeds its allocation, the halibut resource suffers. Therefore, it is critical that both the commercial and charter fleets stay within their quotas. The one halibut per day rule will help keep the charter fleet within its Guideline Harvest Level (GHL).

The halibut resource in Southeast Alaska has suffered significant declines in recent years.

FACT: The survey catch rate of halibut is a key indicator of stock status. The IPHC estimates that the survey catch rate has declined coast-wide by more than 50% during the past decade. The decline is greater in management Area 2C where the charter boat industry has a high concentration of vessels. In Area 2C, the IPHC estimates that the exploitable biomass of halibut has declined 58% over the past decade.

2C IPHC Survey



Our Mission: To protect the sustainability of the Pacific halibut resource, ensure fair and equitable allocation of the halibut resource among all sectors, and promote rational management of the halibut fishery.

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The charter fleet in Southeast Alaska has overfished its quota for five consecutive years.

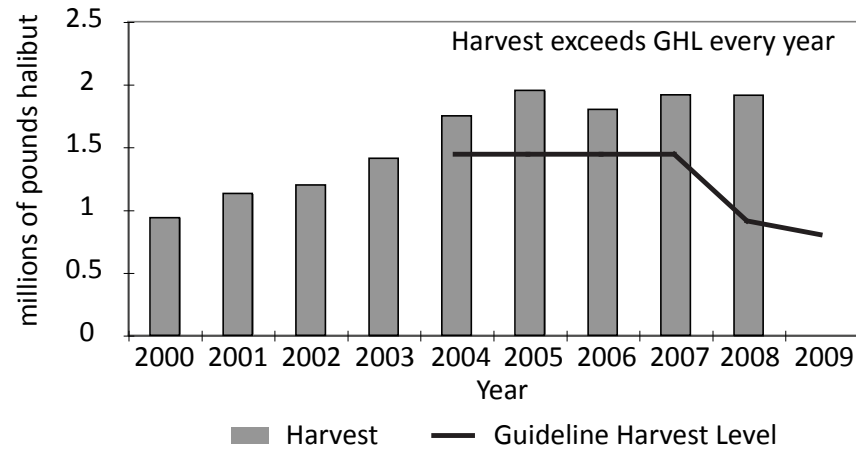
FACT: The Area 2C charter fleet has exceeded the Guideline Harvest Level (GHL) for the halibut fishery every year since 2004 – by 22 percent in 2004, 36 percent in 2005, 26 percent in 2006, 34 percent in 2007, and a whopping 106 percent in 2008. In stark contrast, during the last four years, the commercial fleet took a 54 percent cut in its annual quota.

If the charter fleet catches less halibut the resource will not benefit, the commercial fishermen will. The halibut will not be left in the water; they will be reallocated to the commercial fishermen.

FICTION: During the past three years, the commercial catch limits have been created with the assumption that the charter fleet would be managed to stay within its GHL, a reasonable assumption in a state recognized world-wide for effectively managing fisheries. In the past, the commercial catch limits have been reduced to compensate for charter overharvest, but never increased. The commercial catch limit will not increase in 2009 if the charter fleet stays within its GHL--the unharvested fish will stay in the water to contribute to rebuilding stocks for the future.

NMFS responded to a similar comment this way: "As the halibut resource has declined in abundance in Area 2C in recent years, the commercial longline fishery's catch limits have been substantially reduced....a 54 percent reduction over four years. During part of this period (2005 through 2007) charter vessel anglers in Area 2C have had record high levels of harvest. If there is a policy to benefit the commercial longline fishery at the expense of the charter vessel fishery, it is not apparent under the facts described above" (Federal Register, Vol. 74, No. 86, p. 21207).

2C Charter Industry Halibut GHL and Harvest



It is vital that charter clients be allowed to catch two halibut per day, or they will cancel their trips.

FICTION: For the past two years, charter clients have been allowed to keep one halibut per day of any size and one halibut per day that is less than 32 inches long. The new rule eliminates the smaller halibut in an effort to keep the charter fleet within its Guideline Harvest Level (GHL) and allow the declining halibut resource to rebound.

Kingfisher Charters and Lodge owner Seth Bone recently conceded the new rule would have little effect on anglers' experience in Southeast this summer. "If we lose that second fish under 32 inches, you know, anything's a loss, I guess, but it's really the one any size where it's our bread and butter," Bone said on the ESPN radio show Outdoor Line. He went on to say that charter clients generally don't spend "extra time and energy" to catch the smaller fish anyway. By the time the smaller fish is skinned and filleted, it only amounts to "3 or 4 pounds," Bone said. The radio host agreed, saying, "It's not a huge loss."

Southeast charter clients are accustomed to restrictions on how many fish they can keep. The limit for king salmon is one per day, with a maximum of three per year. Anglers can keep one yelloweye rockfish per day, with a limit of two per year. The new halibut rule allows anglers to keep one halibut of any size every day, for as many days as they want to fish.

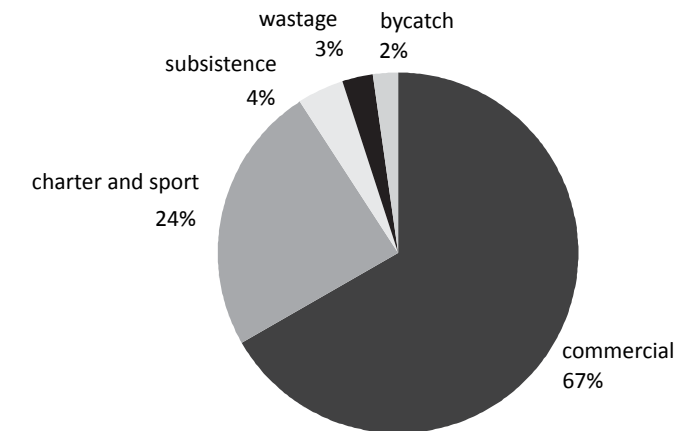
Any loss of charter clients this season is likely due to the downturn in the economy, not the new halibut rule. To hear the full interview with Seth Bone, go to:

www.theoutdoorline.com/Podcasts/8.aspx

Did you know?

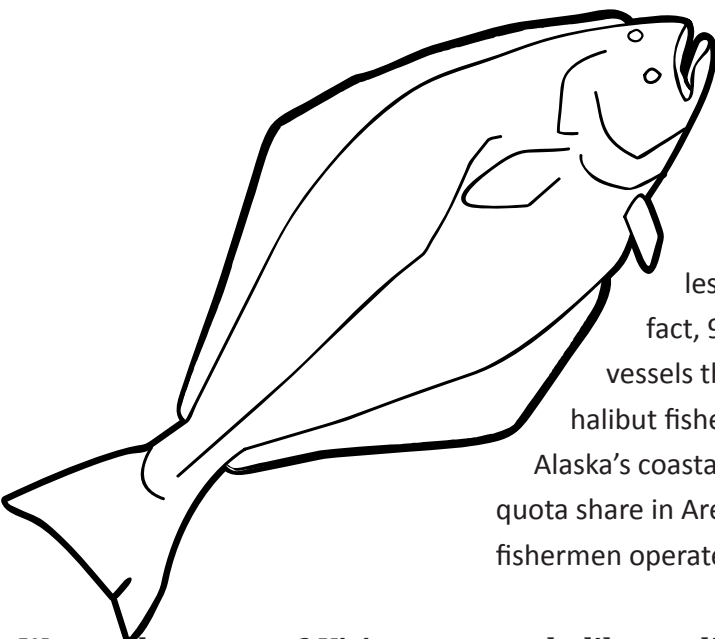
- Alaska's commercial fisheries provide 54,000 jobs in the harvesting and processing sectors. Many other jobs are dependent on commercial fisheries, including government management and community-based support services.
- Alaska's commercial fisheries are a world-wide model for sustainability. Unlike other resource such as oil, when managed correctly, fish are infinitely sustainable.
- Commercial halibut fishermen in Area 2C (Southeast Alaska) will provide Americans with approximately 10 million meals this year.
- Alaska has been the No. 1 fishing state in the nation since 1975.
- Halibut is a low-fat protein source and is prized for its mild flavor and firm, flaky meat.
- Since 1923, both the sport and commercial halibut fisheries have been managed under a treaty between the United States and Canada.

2C Halibut Harvest by Sector 2007



The commercial longline fleet takes 90 percent of the halibut and everyone else is left with only 10 percent. Therefore, the one halibut per day limit being imposed on the charter fleet is not fair.

FICTION: In Area 2C, where the one halibut per day rule is in effect, total removals of halibut for 2007 were estimated at 12.21 million pounds. Commercial longliners harvested 68.3 percent and the sport fishing sector harvested 24.7 percent. The remaining seven percent was taken by subsistence fishermen, or attributed to industry-wide wastage or bycatch (Federal Register, Vol. 74, No. 86, p. 21203).



Commercial longliners are big boats owned by rich people in the Lower 48, not by Alaskans.

FICTION: The vast majority of Southeast longliners are vessels less than 60 feet in length that are owned and operated by locals. In fact, 93 percent of the Area 2C halibut quota can only be harvested from vessels that are less than 60 feet long. Seventy-four percent of commercial halibut fishermen owning quota share in Area 2C are residents of Southeast Alaska's coastal communities. Eighty-three percent of the commercial halibut quota share in Area 2C is held by residents of the state of Alaska. Many of these fishermen operate their boats as a family business.

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