

**NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement
Alaska Enforcement Division
Report to the
International Pacific Halibut Commission**



January 1, 2017 to December 1, 2017

**NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement
Alaska Enforcement Division
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**TO REPORT VIOLATIONS:
Call 1-800-853-1964**

The Alaska Enforcement Division utilizes Enforcement Officers, Special Agents and partnerships with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers and the U.S. Coast Guard to enforce federal fishing regulations over 842,000 square miles of ocean, 6,600 miles of coastline and 2,690 islands off of Alaska. Compliance is achieved by providing outreach and education, conducting patrols, monitoring offloads, and by investigating violations of civil and criminal marine resource laws.

Compliance Assistance

During 2017, Alaska Enforcement Division personnel spent over 1983 hours providing compliance assistance by way of outreach and education with marine resource users. This is an increase from 1711 hours in 2016, and 1687 hours in 2015. Outreach efforts occurred at a number of organized events as well as contacts in communities, ports, and at-sea to ensure that the most current and accurate regulatory information is widely distributed and understood.

Halibut Related Violations

	2015 Violations Documented	2016* Violations Documented	2017 Violations Documented
Subsistence Halibut	18	33	26
Commercial Halibut	178	211	121
Charter Halibut	186	309	203
Sport Halibut	36	64	15
TOTAL	418	602	365

* In July 2016 OLE implemented a new records management system (RMS) that contains data migrated from the old RMS to the new RMS. Not all data fields were exact matches between the two RMS systems and some data transfer error may have occurred.

Halibut Related Violations documented by NOAA in Alaska in 2017:

26 Subsistence halibut fishing violations, most common violations included:

- Unqualified person applied for SHARC
- Improperly or unmarked subsistence halibut fishing gear
- Subsistence halibut fishing without SHARC
- Exceeding bag and/or possession limits
- Mutilating Halibut

121 Commercial IFQ or CDQ halibut, most common violations included:

- 34 IFQ halibut overages in 2017
 - 33 IFQ halibut overages in 2016
 - 40 IFQ halibut overages in 2015
- Record keeping or reporting violations (PNOL, Landing Report, Logbook)
- Gear marking violations
- Retain undersized halibut, or discarding legal sized halibut
- Hired Skipper and Permit Holder violations

- Vessel Cap Overages
- Misreporting IFQ area fished or fishing in an area with no IFQ available
- Crab pots onboard
- Fishing without an FFP

203 plus Charter halibut fishing violations were documented, most common violations included:

- Logbook violations-
 - Fail to ensure charter halibut anglers sign the logbook
 - Fail to record CHP on front of ADFG logbook, invalid CHP
 - Report inaccurate information
- GAF reporting violations- Failure to report GAF in the required time, submitting inaccurate information
- Illegal guiding - No CHP
- Filleting, mutilating or skinning halibut onboard a vessel
- Exceeding bag limit; possession limit; size limits or annual limits
 - Over annual limit
 - Crew retaining Charter halibut
- Fishing on closed days
- Charter fish without a CHP

15 Sport halibut fishing violations were documented, most common violations included:

- Sale or attempted sale of sport caught halibut
- Exceeding bag and/or possession limits
- Filleting, mutilating or skinning halibut onboard a vessel-10 cases
- Fishing without a permit
- Using illegal gear
- Sport caught halibut onboard with commercial caught salmon

19 Commercial groundfish violations involving halibut, most common violations included:

- Fail to carefully release halibut or allow halibut to contact a crucifier or hook stripper.
- Retain halibut caught with fixed gear without a valid IFQ permit in the name of an individual aboard.
- Making an IFQ landing without an IFQ permit in the name of the individual making the landing.
- Failure to have an IFQ hired master permit, as appropriate, in the name of the individual making the landing.

Patrol and Boardings

During 2017, Alaska Enforcement Division personnel spent over 4,972 hours conducting patrols to provide a visible deterrence to potential violators, to monitor fishing and other marine activities, to detect violations, to provide compliance assistance, and to provide outreach and education. This is compared to 4,476 patrol hours in 2016, and 3,363 patrol hours in 2015. Alaska Enforcement Division personnel boarded 1216 fishing vessels during 2017; 698 were halibut related boardings.

	2015			2016*			2017		
	Vessel Boardings	Violations Discovered During Boarding	Observed Compliance	Vessel Boardings	Violations Discovered During Boarding	Observed Compliance	Vessel Boardings	Violations Discovered During Boarding	Observed Compliance
Subsistence Halibut	4	2	50%	18	9	50%	34	4	88%
Commercial Halibut	195	5	97%	550	65	88%	231	27	88%
Charter Halibut	70	18	75%	197	56	72%	185	24	87%
Sport Halibut	229	8	97%	368	59	84%	248	12	95%
Total	498	33	93%	1133	189	83%	698	67	90%

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Incidents

During 2017, NOAA's Alaska Enforcement Division opened 986 halibut related incidents including outreach, vessel boardings, dockside monitoring, and compliance assistance. Of the 986 incidents, officers identified 523 halibut related violations which were handled by Compliance Assistance, Summary Settlement or a Written Warning.

Alaska Enforcement Division Investigations

	2015	2016*	2017
Total Cases Opened	623	2873	3151
Total Violations Documented	1,393	1741	1621
Halibut Related Violations	475	602	523
Percentage of Violations Halibut Related	34%	35%	32%

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Partnerships

NOAA OLE works closely with the U.S. Coast Guard and the Alaska Wildlife Troopers to accomplish common goals and priorities by working together on a daily basis to maximize compliance with marine resource laws and regulations.

An Enforcement Officer completed a 14-day joint patrol with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers onboard the P/V Enforcer. 1,251 nautical miles were patrolled, 140 vessels were boarded, and 404 individuals were contacted. Additionally, 112 individual pieces of gear were inspected. These actions resulted in the issuance of 29 citations and 40 warnings/compliance assistance (state/federal). Common violations encountered were over limit of halibut, possession of sport caught halibut with commercial fish, failure to log as required (sportfish), and possession of undersized king salmon. Additionally, during the patrol, the P/V Enforcer rescued two occupants of a sport fishing vessel stranded by gale force winds on eastern Prince of Wales Island.

An Enforcement Officer completed an 11-day joint patrol with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers onboard the P/V Enforcer. 566 nautical miles were patrolled, 27 vessels were boarded, and 120 individuals were contacted. Additionally, 123 pieces of gear were checked, of which 50 were seized, including two derelict longlines. These actions resulted in three citations being issued along with 8 incidents of compliance assistance/verbal warnings. Common violations observed were, inaccurate charter halibut logbook entries, failure to properly mark subsistence longline, non-resident fail to log King Salmon, unmarked personal use/sportfish gear, failure to maintain proper escapement device, and using sport caught fish as bait.

An Enforcement Officer completed a nine-day joint patrol with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers onboard the P/V Stimson. Areas patrolled included the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI), with port / processor visits in Sand Point, King Cove, and Akutan. Eleven vessels were boarded.

An Enforcement Officer completed a 12-day joint patrol onboard the USCGC Sherman. Areas patrolled included BSAI, Pribilof Islands, St. Matthew Island, and the U.S./Russian Maritime Boundary Line; Six vessels were boarded.

Adjudicated Significant Halibut Investigations

An AKD Special Agent completed an investigation into the sale of subsistence halibut from a subsistence fisherman to a restaurant in Ketchikan, Alaska. The subsistence fisherman was approached by the management of the restaurant who requested that he harvest halibut for the restaurant. This occurred on two separate occasions. The subsistence fisherman was paid \$1,870 for the halibut he provided to the restaurant. A settlement agreement was signed and a \$6,870 penalty was assessed.

An individual was charged under the Halibut Act for unlawfully retaining halibut caught with fixed gear without a valid IFQ permit in the name of that individual aboard. This individual was a member of the Annette Island Reserve (AIR) who was fishing for halibut in IPHC Area 2C, which is outside of AIR waters, without an IFQ permit or a State of Alaska CFEC license. An \$8,000 NOVA was issued.

Subsistence fisherman from Craig, Alaska was issued and paid an \$800 summary settlement for retaining 24 halibut when the limit was 20.



Photos documenting illegal commercial halibut fishing without IFQ permits



