

## News Release



P.O. Box 95009, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98145-2009

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### IPHC Releases Electronic Archival Tags in British Columbia – Reward Offered

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) will be tagging halibut in Regulatory Area 2B using externally-mounted electronic archival tags. A total of 162 halibut will be tagged in three general regions: near Langara Island in the Queen Charlottes, south of Cape St. James, and west-central Vancouver Island. The tags are unique in appearance (see below). The body of the tag is a cylinder approximately 7.5 centimeters long and 1.5 centimeters in diameter and attaches near the dorsal fin on the eyed-side of the fish via a plastic “cradle”, piercing wires, and a plastic backing plate on the blind-side.



Electronic archival tags record depth and temperature experienced by the fish; the tags must be recaptured and the tag returned to IPHC in order to download the data. The data will be used to help define seasonal migration periods and active spawning season, aiding in discussions of appropriate season-opening dates and potential season extension.

**Fishermen should retain all tagged halibut regardless of gear type used, time of year caught, or size of halibut.**

A **\$500** reward will be given for the return of tag body. In addition, fishers who hold fishing quota should be aware that **the weight of archivally-tagged fish should NOT be deducted from the fisher’s allotted halibut quota** because the tag-mount may prompt the buyer to “#2” the fish. Thus, the fisher may sell it without quota penalty, provided that the fisher possesses halibut IFQ/IQ and that the fish is of legal size (fork length greater than or equal to 82 cm or 32 inches). Approximately one third of the released fish will be less than 32 inches in length, or commercially sublegal. If a tagged sublegal fish is recovered by a commercial fisher, it is legal to retain these fish as long as the tag

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remains in place for inspection by an IPHC port sampler, or an authorized officer. All other fishers may retain all sizes of fish and are asked to follow the reporting procedures outlined below.

When you catch a halibut with an archival tag:

1. Record the date, capture location (lat/long preferred), sex, and the fork length of the halibut.
2. Ideally, otoliths (earbones) from the fish should be removed in order to determine its age. If the fish is being landed at a port staffed by an IPHC port sampler, please present the fish to the port sampler during offload so that the otoliths can be removed. The IPHC has port samplers at the following ports during the commercial halibut fishing season: Newport, OR; Bellingham, WA; Vancouver, Port Hardy, and Prince Rupert, BC; Petersburg, Sitka, Juneau, Seward, Homer, Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Adak, and Saint Paul, AK.
3. *If you do not possess halibut quota(IFQ/IVQ):* Do not remove the tag from the fish until after it has been landed and reported. Leave the tag attached to the fish and report the capture at time of landing to IPHC at **(206) 634-1838** or to an **IPHC port sampler**.
4. *If you possess halibut quota( IFQ/IVQ):* Remove the tag by cutting the attachment wires and removing the tag with its cradle, as well as the backing plate. Leave the tag attached to the cradle; the backing plate and wires may be discarded. Retain the tag-cradle assembly and contact the IPHC at **(206) 634-1838**. Or, turn in the tag-cradle assembly and information (and fish, if possible) to an **IPHC port sampler**.

For further information, please call (206)634-1838 and contact Dr. Tim Loher (ext. 212; tim@iphc.washington.edu), Gregg Williams (ext. 209; gregg@iphc.washington.edu) or Joan Forsberg (ext. 224; joan@iphc.washington.edu).

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