

# News Release



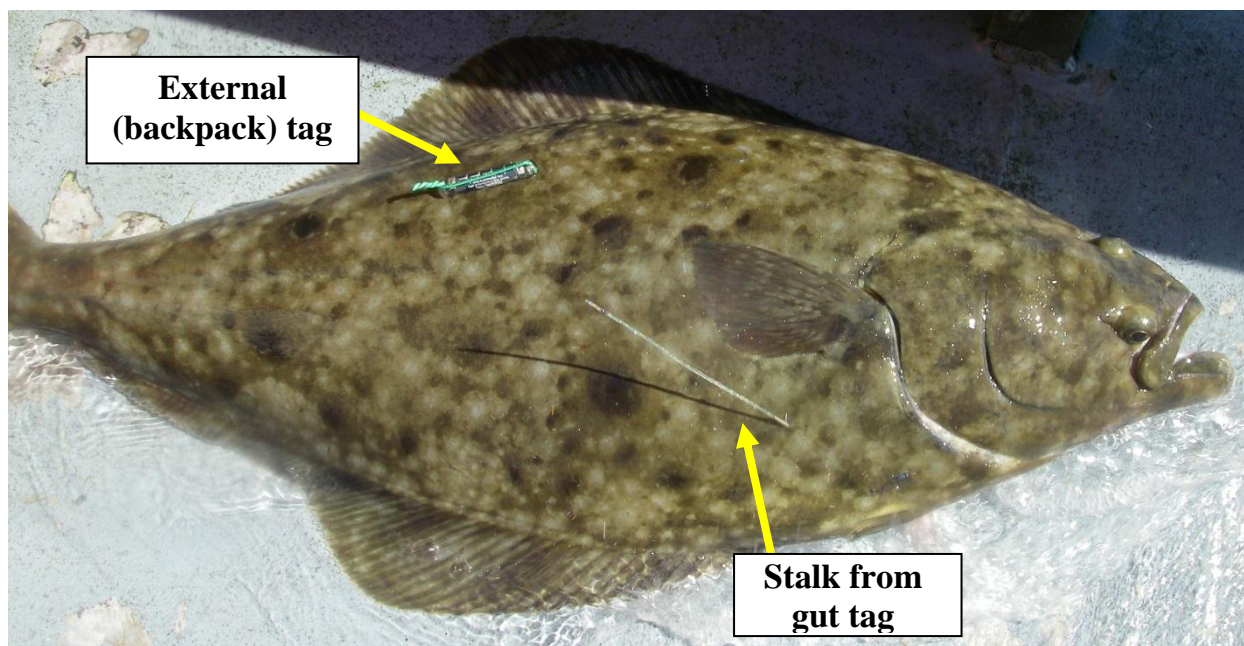
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## **IPHC releases halibut with “money” inside!!**

### **\$500 REWARD for tags from double-tagged halibut**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) has double-tagged halibut in Regulatory Areas 3A and 2C with a combination of external electronic “backpack tags” and electronic internal “gut tags”. The IPHC is asking harvesters to look for tagged halibut, bearing in mind that each fish should carry two tags. The backpack is a black plastic cylinder that measures ~3” (7.6 cm) long by ½” (1.2 cm) in diameter, and is **attached to the dark side of the fish**, below the dorsal fin, using a green-coated tagging wire, with a white backing plate that rests on the underside of the fish. Gut tags are surgically implanted in the gut cavity, but **have a translucent green stalk that protrudes from the belly on the fish’s dark side** (see picture below). The stalk is made of Teflon, and contains sensors that record ambient light levels. Note that, over time, gut tags can become “encapsulated” by the intestines, making them difficult to find without the stalk. **Please inform your crew to look for stalks** on the dark side of the fish before gutting, to avoid the possibility of throwing \$500 overboard!



A total of 30 fish, ranging from 43-60 in. (110-152 cm) forklength, have been tagged. **EACH tag will yield a reward of \$500, so keep and return both tags.** Note that four of the fish tagged on the Ommaney Ground bear only the external tag. In addition, fishers who hold IFQ/IVQ should be aware that **the weight of these tagged fish should NOT be deducted from the fisher’s halibut IFQ/IVQ.** Fishers possessing halibut IFQ/IVQ may sell these fish without quota penalty, if captured during commercial halibut fishing and in compliance with all other

commercial fishing regulations. **Fishers that do not possess halibut IFQ/IVQ are encouraged to retain these fish and return them to the IPHC for the tag reward (see procedure below).**

The purpose of the study is to examine whether geomagnetism can be used as a means of tracking halibut migrations. The tags are capable of recording the local magnetic field in ways that can be converted into location estimates, based on total field strength and magnetic declination angle, in combination with depth and light data.

When you catch a tagged halibut:

1. Record the date, capture location, sex, and the fork-length of the fish.
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: Saint Paul, Dutch Harbor, Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Juneau, Sitka, and Petersburg, AK; Prince Rupert, Port Hardy, and Vancouver, BC; Bellingham, WA; Newport, OR.
3. *If you do not possess halibut IFQ:* Do not remove the tag(s) from the fish until after it has been landed and reported to IPHC. Leave the tag(s) implanted/attached to the fish and report the capture at time of landing to IPHC at **(206) 634-1838** or to an **IPHC port sampler** (staffed ports: Saint Paul, Dutch Harbor, Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg, Prince Rupert, Port Hardy, Vancouver, Bellingham, Newport).
4. *If you possess halibut IFQ:* Gut tags can be removed when gutting the fish. Backpack tags can be removed by cutting the attachment wires and removing the tag and its backing plate.
5. Retain the tag(s) and contact the IPHC at **(206) 634-1838**. Or, turn in the tag(s) and information (and fish, if possible) to an **IPHC Port Sampler** (staffed ports: Saint Paul, Dutch Harbor, Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg, Prince Rupert, Port Hardy, Vancouver, Bellingham, Newport).

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