

News Release



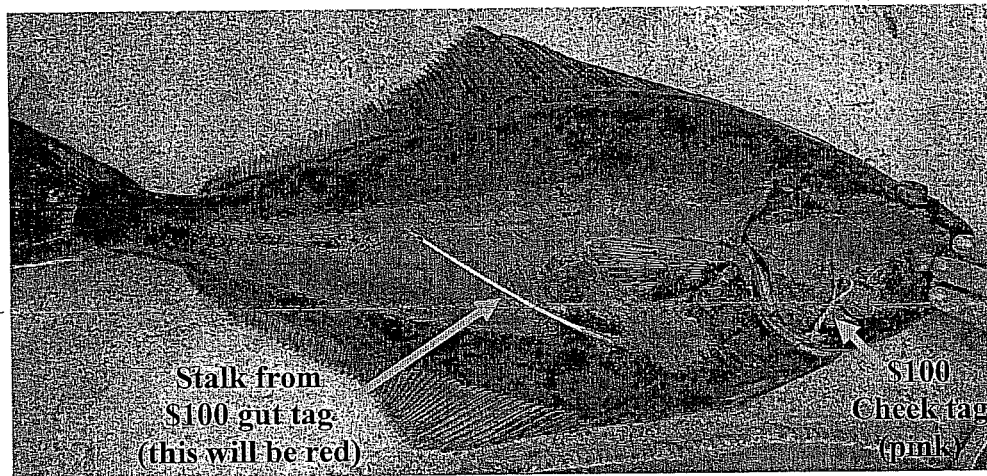
P.O. BOX 95009, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98145-2009

August 14, 2009

IPHC introduces halibut with “money” in their guts!!

\$100 REWARD for tags from double-tagged halibut

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) will be double-tagging halibut in late August (2009) near the Trinity Islands in Regulatory Areas 3A-3B, using bright pink wire cheek tags in combination with external “backpack tags” and internal “gut tags”. IPHC is asking harvesters to look for tagged halibut, bearing in mind that the fish should carry two tags. All fish will bear a cheek tag. Half will also be tagged with a backpack tag and the other half with a gut tag. The backpack tags measure ~1 ½” long, ¾” wide and ½” thick, and will be attached to the dark side of the fish, below the dorsal fin, using wires and a backing plate on the white side of the fish. Gut tags will be surgically implanted in the gut cavity, but **will have a red stalk protruding out of the belly on the fish’s dark side** (see picture below). The stalk is intended to make the tag more visible to harvesters, because the gut tags may be easy to miss when gutting the fish white-side-up. Also, 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 \$100 overboard!**



EACH tag will yield a reward of \$100, so make sure you keep and return both tags. 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.

The purpose of the study is to examine retention and recovery rates associated with the tagging techniques and complements holding experiments being conducted in Oregon. Ultimately, results will aid in designing a coastwide electronic archival tagging program. Data from archival tags will be used to define migration and regional spawning periods, aiding in discussions of appropriate season-opening dates and potential season extensions.

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When you catch a double-tagged halibut:

1. Record the date, capture location, 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: Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Homer, Seward, Saint Paul, 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) 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 IFQ:* Internal 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. Cheek tags can either be clipped to remove them from the head, or the fish can be presented to an IPHC port sampler with the tag still attached.
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**.

For further information, please contact Dr. Tim Loher at (206) 634-1838 (ext. 212), or via email at tim@iphc.washington.edu.

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