



# NOAA FISHERIES

## Halibut Careful Release

All vessels participating in Alaska commercial fisheries **MUST CAREFULLY RELEASE ALL DISCARDED HALIBUT IMMEDIATELY AND WITH A MINIMUM OF INJURY.**

NOAA Fisheries issues this reminder to help reduce halibut discard mortality rates.

### Careful Release Methods for Hook-and-Line Gear

- Cut the gangion.
- Position the gaff on the hook and twist the hook from the halibut.
- Straighten the hook by using the gaff to catch the bend of the hook and brace the gaff against the vessel or any gear attached to the vessel.

### Prohibited When Releasing Halibut

- Gaff or puncture a halibut.
- Crucify or otherwise strip a halibut from the hook by contact with the vessel.

### Best Practices to Minimize Injury

- Release off/outboard as soon as possible: i.e. *immediately*, or after providing to observer upon request.
- Use both hands to cradle the fish, do not lift solely by the caudal peduncle (pictured, right).



**Careful release regulations** are available at [50 CFR 679.7\(a\)\(13\)](#) for directed fishing for groundfish, and at [50 CFR 300.62](#) and [IPHC](#) for directed fishing for halibut.

**Failure to comply with these requirements may result in penalties.**

For compliance questions, contact a local Enforcement field office:

Juneau, AK	907-586-7225	Kodiak, AK	907-486-3298
Anchorage, AK	907-271-1823	Dutch Harbor, AK	907-581-2061
Homer, AK	907-235-2337	Seward, AK	907-224-5348
Sitka, AK	907-747-6940	Petersburg, AK	907-772-2285
Ketchikan, AK	907-247-5804		

**Report Violations to NOAA Enforcement: 800-853-1964**