NOAA FISHERIES
Alaska Region

March 24, 2026

2026 Regulations for Charter Halibut Anglers

Summary of regulations for the charter halibut fishery in Southeast (Area 2C) and Southcentral (Area 3A) Alaska.

Regulations Applicable to Both Areas

- *Sport fishery season dates*: February 1 through December 31, 2026.
- *Filleting halibut*: No person shall possess on board a vessel, including charter vessels and pleasure craft used for fishing, halibut that have been filleted, mutilated, or otherwise disfigured in any manner, except that each halibut may be cut into no more than 2 ventral pieces, 2 dorsal pieces, and 2 cheek pieces, with enough skin on each piece to identify whether the piece is from the light side or the dark side of the fish.
- *Onboard consumption of halibut*: As noted above, halibut may be filleted into no more than 2 ventral pieces, 2 dorsal pieces, and 2 cheek pieces. Under a regulation adopted in 2023, one dorsal fillet or one ventral fillet from one halibut may be consumed on the vessel. The remaining pieces from that halibut must remain on the vessel until they are permanently offloaded.
- *Skipper and crew prohibition*: Skipper and crew may not harvest halibut during a charter vessel fishing trip.
- *Logbook signature requirement*: Charter vessel anglers must sign the logbook at the end of the charter vessel fishing trip to verify the numbers of halibut caught and kept.
- *Allowable gear*: Charter vessel anglers may use a single line with no more than 2 hooks attached or a spear to fish for halibut. No other gear types are allowed.
- *Possession limit*: The possession limit is two daily bag limits.
- *Transporting halibut in excess of possession limit*: Halibut in excess of the possession limit may be transported on a vessel that does not contain sport fishing gear, fishing rods, hand lines, or gaffs.
- *Carcass retention requirement*: If a size-restricted halibut is filleted on board the charter vessel, the entire carcass, with head and tail connected as a single piece, must be retained on board the charter vessel on which it was caught until all fillets are offloaded.
- *Tagged halibut exemption:* Halibut with an external IPHC tag will not count against sport daily bag limits or possession limits, can be retained outside of sport fishing seasons, and are not limited to size restrictions.
- *Mixed guided and unguided fishing:* If a fishing vessel retains a mix of halibut that came from both guided and unguided fishing, then the daily bag limits, possession limits, size restrictions, and carcass retention requirements for guided anglers will apply to all the halibut that are retained on board the vessel.
- NEW *Charter halibut stamp:* A charter halibut stamp is required for charter vessel anglers, 18 years of age or older, for each charter vessel fishing trip in a given calendar day that the angler intends to catch and retain halibut on a charter vessel in IPHC regulatory area 2C or 3A, unless that angler retains halibut as GAF on days that are otherwise closed to halibut retention by the annual management measures. Each stamp is $20. (FAQ)

Area 2C (Southeast Alaska)

- *One fish daily bag limit:* Charter vessel anglers may catch and retain one halibut per day.
- NEW *Reverse slot limit:* Retained halibut must be less than or equal to 34 inches or greater than or equal to 80 inches in length.
- *Thursday closures.* Charter vessel anglers in Area 2C may not catch and retain halibut (except GAF) on all Thursdays beginning June 18 and continuing through September 10.

(continued)

This guide summarizes regulations for charter halibut fisheries in Alaska. If you are required to comply with the regulations, you should consult and rely on the actual regulatory text. Please refer to the regulations under 50 CFR 300 or contact NMFS at 907-586-7228 or 907-586-7225. Other information is available on the NMFS Alaska Region website at http://fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/resources-fishing/sport-fishing-alaska.

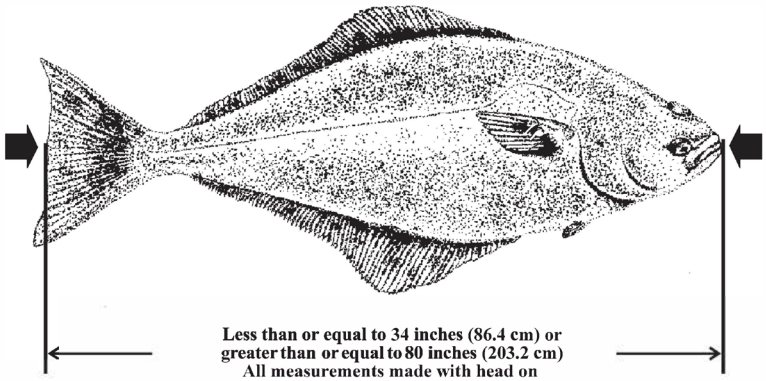
Area 3A (Southcentral Alaska)

- *Two fish daily bag limit:* Charter vessel anglers may catch and retain two halibut per day.
- *27-inch maximum size limit on one fish:* Charter vessel anglers may keep one fish of any size per day and one fish that is no more than 27 inches in length. The 27-inch maximum size limit allows anglers to keep a second fish that weighs approximately 9 pounds, round weight
- NEW *Tuesday and Wednesday closures:* Charter vessel anglers may not catch and retain halibut (except GAF) on all Wednesdays and on Tuesdays from June 2 through August 25.
- *Trip limit:* Charter vessels may only take one trip during which charter vessel anglers retain halibut per day. Charter halibut permits may only be used for one charter halibut fishing trip per day during which charter vessel anglers retain halibut.

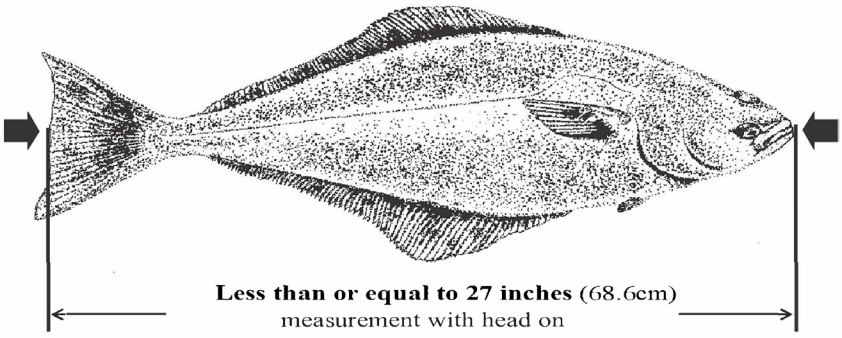
Guided Angler Fish (GAF)

Charter vessel operators who choose to participate in the GAF program may offer their clients the opportunity to harvest up to two halibut of any size per day. GAF may also be used to retain charter halibut on closed Tuesdays in Area 2C and closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Area 3A. Note that special regulations apply for GAF halibut.

Measurement of Halibut Under the Charter Halibut Regulations



NEW **Figure 1. Recreational reverse slot limit for halibut retained on board a charter vessel in Regulatory Area 2C**



NEW **Figure 1. Recreational maximum size limit for one fish of the two-fish bag limit for halibut retained on board a charter vessel in Regulatory Area 3A. If only one halibut is retained, it may be of any size**