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**NOAA Reduces Charter Halibut Catch**  
*Long-term solution is catch share program*

In a new rule released today, NOAA's Fisheries Service reduced the number of halibut that charter vessel anglers in southeast Alaska can keep each day from two to one to protect the halibut stock.

"While today's rule addresses an immediate need to better manage the charter halibut fishery, we believe the long-term solution to sustainably managing the fishery is for the charter halibut fishery to join with the commercial halibut fishery in a catch share program," said Doug Mecum, acting regional administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service in Alaska. "Catch share programs that allocate the total allowable catch to participants in the fishery give a strong incentive to fishermen to conserve fish stocks."

Halibut fishing along the Pacific Coast is managed under overall limits set for each fishing area. Sport charter halibut fishermen in Southeast Alaska have exceeded their assigned harvest levels for several years.

"Sport charter fishing has grown in southeast Alaska while halibut abundance has decreased," said Mecum. "With this rule, we are trying to reduce the charter halibut catch to ensure that we continue to fish sustainably. We want to work with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council on a long-term solution for sustainable fishing by both commercial and recreational fishing sectors."

As part of the new rule, effective June 5, a halibut sport charter vessel angler in southeast Alaska may use only one fishing line, and no more than a total of six lines are allowed on a charter vessel fishing for halibut. Further, charter operators, guides and crew are prohibited from catching and retaining halibut during a charter fishing trip.

Details of the new rule can be found at: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov>

Managers put a similar rule in place last spring, but sport charter halibut operators challenged it on procedural grounds and the agency withdrew the rule.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

To learn more about NOAA Fisheries in Alaska, visit <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov> or: [www.afsc.noaa.gov](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov)