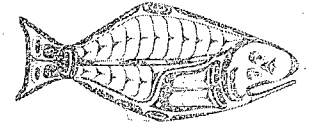


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P.O. BOX 5009, UNIVERSITY STATION, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98105

POSSESSION OF HALIBUT DURING CLOSED PERIODS

The purpose of this bulletin is to answer questions regarding the retention of halibut during periods closed to halibut fishing. As provided in the 1977 halibut regulations, the fishing season in Areas 2 and 3 will be divided into four periods: May 10 to May 29; June 16 to July 4; July 20 to August 7; and August 23 to September 10. However, the season will close whenever the catch limit (quota) is reached, whether or not the four periods have been completed. There are special open seasons in Areas 3B and 3C and Area 4 (the Bering Sea) that are not limited by the quota.

Fishing for halibut during a closed period is prohibited. A vessel may have halibut aboard during a closed period only if the vessel is in transit, for example, to unload the catch. No vessel can have halibut aboard when fishing for other species during a period closed to halibut fishing. After an area is closed, all halibut must be landed before fishing for other species. Halibut taken incidentally during a closed period must be released.

These restrictions apply to all vessels fishing commercially for halibut, whether licensed by the Commission or not. All vessels 5 net tons or over that use longline gear must be licensed by the Commission. Other restrictions pertaining to gear, size limit, etc. are described in the Commission's 1977 regulations. Although the Commission's regulations do not restrict fishing for other species during the periods closed to halibut fishing, fishermen must conform to state and federal regulations for species other than halibut.