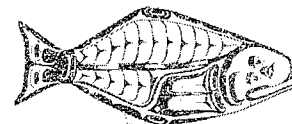


# Information Bulletin



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## HALIBUT MIGRATES FROM SOVIET UNION TO ALASKA

On May 19, 1977, the Seattle halibut schooner M/V POLARIS, Captain Jacob Bassi, was fishing south of the Alaska Peninsula near the Shumagin Islands and caught a 58-inch (71 pound) halibut that had a tag attached to its cheek. When the fish was landed in Kodiak, Alaska, the POLARIS crew showed the specimen to an employee of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). The Commission's tagging records indicated that the fish was tagged and released on July 5, 1975, about 40 miles off the coast of Kamchatka in the U.S.S.R. (61° 18' N; 175° 21' E) during a cooperative tagging experiment conducted by Soviet and Commission scientists. William Hardman of the Halibut Commission staff and Art Hansen, a fishing captain from Delta, B.C., were aboard the Soviet research vessel RAKITNIY to supervise the tagging and longline fishing. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of intermingling between halibut of the eastern and western Bering Sea.

The halibut was 14 years old when tagged. During the 2 years between release and recovery, the fish grew 5 inches and gained 16 pounds. Assuming that the fish migrated along the 100 fathom line, it travelled about 1,000 miles. A few other tagged halibut have migrated between Soviet and Alaska waters, but none from as far west in the Bering Sea. In 1967, a fish tagged 50 miles southwest of Cape Navarin, U.S.S.R. was recovered 2 years later off Cape St. Elias in the Gulf of Alaska. Another fish tagged near Unimak Pass, Alaska in 1959 was recovered by a Japanese trawler near Cape Navarin in 1961. The longest migration of a tagged halibut was from the Aleutian Islands to northern California, a distance of 2,300 miles; the fish was tagged in 1930 and recovered in 1936.

These examples of migration between Soviet and North American waters are significant because only a fraction of the halibut population are tagged and relatively few are recovered. The migrations of halibut have important implications for management and this unusual recovery demonstrates the need for continued cooperation of fishermen in returning all halibut tags and recovery information to the Commission.