

Commercial Guides Barred From Fishing With Clients

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Erik Wander/KMXT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced that salt water charter guides and crew members will be prohibited from retaining any fish species while paying clients are on board their vessel. In addition, Fish and Game announced that the maximum number of lines that may be fished from a vessel engaged in guided sport fishing may not exceed the number of paying clients on board.

KMXT's
Erik Wander has more.

Regional management biologist Matt Miller of the Sport Fish Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game said the regulations are not necessarily new. He said they were put in place largely because the Pacific halibut Guideline Harvest Level, or GHL, for charter boat anglers in Southcentral Alaska was exceeded from 2004 to 2007. Miller said the state has several methods at its disposal for meeting the federally managed halibut guidelines. He said Fish and Game isn't putting the regulations in place because of violations and that such prohibitions have been successful thus far.

-- (Miller 1 45 sec. "The same emergency order ... harvest in the GHL limit.")

Miller
said the regulations are an attempt to reduce the halibut harvest and keep the levels below the GHL. He said the emergency order putting the prohibitions in place is actually a compromise with charter operators.

-- (Miller 2 40 sec. "The emergency order ... we put shoulder seasons on it.")

Chris
Fiala, owner of Kodiak Island Charters, which operates the vessels U-Rascal and

Moonshadow, offered a different perspective. He likened charter operators' feelings about the regulations to a knee-jerk reaction on the part of the state.

-- (Fiala 1 30 sec. "I think we're all for ... unfounded from our point of view.")

Fiala said the charter fleet is at the mercy of the interests of the commercial industry when it comes to regulation.

-- (Fiala 2 32 sec. "The problem honestly with ... owners, who are the public.")

The restrictions, prohibiting salt water guides and crew from retaining fish, take effect May 23rd, and will remain in effect through September 1st. For more information, visit Fish and Game's web site.

I'm
Erik Wander.

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