



## NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



For more information on the  
Halibut and Sablefish IFQ  
Program:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/ifq/reports.htm>

### Catch Share Spotlight No. 1

## Alaska IFQ Halibut and Sablefish Program

### Vital Stats

First year: 1995

Type of Catch Share Program: IFQ and CDQ for halibut and sablefish.

Management units: Multiple area and vessel categories for sablefish and halibut.

Vessels / Gear types: Longline catcher and catcher/processor vessels. Also pots for sablefish.

### Available Trend Data

Season length:

*Before Program:* Less than a week

*After Program:* More than 8 months

Ex-vessel value:

*Before Program (1994):* ~ \$150 M

*After Program (2008):* ~ \$245 M (worth \$168 M in 1994 dollars)

Consolidation of vessels in fleet:

*Halibut (1994):* 3,450 distinct vessels landing halibut

*Halibut (2008):* 1,156 vessels (66% reduction)

*Sablefish (1994):* 1,404 distinct vessels landing sablefish

*Sablefish (2008):* 362 vessels (70% reduction)

Stock Status:

*Before Program:* Overfishing: NO; Overfished: NO

*After Program (2008):* Overfishing: NO; Overfished: NO

### Nature of Harvest Privilege

Eligibility: U.S. citizens (individuals and non-individuals) who were given initial quota share; for catcher vessel quota share, U.S. Citizens (individuals) who can document at least 150 days experience harvesting fish in any U.S. fishery; and for freezer boat quota shares any entity defined as a U.S. citizen for purposes of the IFQ Program (in 50 CFR part 679). Eligible community quota entities also may purchase IFQ.

Duration: Open ended. Council can end the program through the normal Council process.

Transferability: Quota share is transferable subject to eligibility and excessive share limits designed to maintain the character of the fishery. Leasing is very restricted.

Accumulation: Unless grandfathered in based on original landings history, no one can hold or control more than 0.5%-1.5% of the halibut or sablefish shares in various combinations of areas (Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Aleutians). There are similar restrictions on the amounts that can be used on any single vessel.

Initial Allocation: Quota issued to owners or leaseholders of vessels that had landings at any time in 1988-1990. Best five years of catches from 1985-1990 for sablefish and 1984-1990 for halibut were used to calculate quota shares.

## Performance Reviews

Identified Costs: In 2008, ~\$1.1 million for administration, ~\$2.3 million for enforcement.

Cost recovery in 2008 was 1.4% of the ex-vessel value of the fishery (25% of collected fees were reserved for loan programs, 75% of fees went to program reimbursement).

Other years: 1.2% (2007); 1.0% (2006); 1.3% (2004); 1.4% (2003); 2% (2002); 2% (2001); 1.8% (2000).



For additional Catch Share Spotlights in this series go to:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/catchshares>

Questions, comments or need more information? Contact us via email at:

[catchshares@noaa.gov](mailto:catchshares@noaa.gov)

## Safety: Search and Rescue (SAR) cases

*Before Program:* 26 (1993); 33 (1994)

*After Program:* 5 (2007); 3 (2008)

## Summary

The individual fishing quota (IFQ) program for the halibut and sablefish longline fisheries off Alaska was implemented in 1995. Development of the program occurred during a period of great change in fisheries off Alaska. By the late 1980s, the halibut and sablefish fleets had become significantly stressed by overcapitalization. This growth in the fishery necessitated shorter and shorter seasons, and resulted in gear conflicts, safety concerns, poor product quality, low ex-vessel prices and a host of other issues. The IFQ program started in Council discussions as a sablefish-only program; halibut was added on later even though problems were generally more severe in the halibut fishery. Participants and managers could see similar trends developing with sablefish and chose to deal with these two fisheries simultaneously.

The IFQ program was developed to address these problems. The Council's concern for the viability of fishing-dependent communities in Alaska caused them to take steps to protect these communities and the owner-operators in the catcher vessel fleet within the design of the IFQ program. IFQ and Quota Shares were assigned within the boundaries of several existing International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) regulatory areas, ensuring that the shares be distributed geographically. The Council designed a number of constraints to transferability to ensure that the characteristics of the fleet prior to the IFQ program (an essentially "owner-operated" fleet of catcher vessels) would not be fundamentally changed. Excessive share caps and vessel categories help maintain the size stratification of the fleet, and a community purchase program allows shares to be leased by community members.

While consolidation of fishing fleets within zones has occurred as a result of Quota Share transfers since inception, leasing of IFQ has not played a major role in this fishery except for catcher/processor vessels. The restrictions on the sale and leasing of IFQ shares may have impacted economic efficiency, but have retained the economic financial viability of Alaskan fishing dependent communities. In general, the fishing season has been extended and the sale of fresh halibut for a premium price has increased with new supplies of halibut to the fresh fish market.