



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

February 2009

To 2009 Quota Share (QS) Holders:

The 2009 Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) halibut and sablefish fisheries will open at Noon, Alaska Daylight Time, **March 21, 2009**. To help you prepare for the season, we include the following items in this mailing:

- Your 2009 IFQ Permit(s);
- The 2009 Sablefish Longline Survey Calendar (included with sablefish IFQ permits only). Additional detail on the 2009 sablefish survey is (or soon will be) available on our web site; and
- Current information on protecting and avoiding seabirds.

Also, please note the following:

- *Disputing your IFQ Account:* If you believe that your 2009 IFQ permit amounts are inaccurate (for any reason, including adjustments resulting from over or under fishing on your quota share during the 2007 season), you have until **4:30 p.m., Alaska Local Time on May 20, 2009**, to submit a **written dispute** of the amounts; disputes received after that time and date will most likely be denied. A written request for permit review is **required**; RAM staff cannot resolve IFQ account disputes over the telephone.
- *QS Certificates:* Beginning January 2009, we no longer issue Quota Share (QS) Certificates or require QS certificates be returned with transfer applications. We now provide a single Report of all Quota Share Holdings for a person. When QS is transferred a new report will be issued. QS holders may print off a list of their own QS holdings by logging in to our secure web site as described below.
- *Permits and online services:*
 - Access to all online services, including reporting systems, and account and landings data, is available from the NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Region main web address: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov>
 - All Alaska Regional online services, including account balances, QS holdings, landing ledger reports and other sensitive business data are accessed with the permit holder's NMFS ID and password. **Registered Buyers do NOT need an IFQ holder's or Hired Master's password to complete landing reports, either in eLandings or using RAM's legacy internet reporting system. NMFS will not release passwords except directly to the permit holder.** Sharing your password, even for your own convenience, may compromise your data's confidentiality.
 - IFQ, and CDQ halibut permit holders and Hired Masters are no longer issued plastic cards. Hired Masters are issued paper permits.



- Hired Master Permits: Non-individual QS holders and individuals initially issued QS may apply to NOAA Fisheries to authorize a Master (hire a skipper) provided that the QS is not for halibut area 2C or sablefish area SE, and that the holder owns at least 20 percent of the vessel upon which the IFQ is to be harvested (some exceptions to this ownership percentage apply and this requirement does not apply to those permit holders hiring skippers to fish IFQ derived from category A quota share).

Reminder: Regulatory changes that, for documented vessels, a **copy of a current Abstract of Title** is required to establish ownership of a vessel. For undocumented vessels, a copy of the State of Alaska license or vessel registration is acceptable evidence of ownership. Additional documentation may be required to establish 20% ownership in the vessel if the Abstract of Title or State of Alaska license or registration is not conclusive. **“Current” means the documents must have been issued in the 12 months just prior to submittal of the Hired Master application, even if information you previously submitted has not changed.**

We recommend that you gather the required documentation well in advance of submittal of your “Application for IFQ/CDQ Hired Master Permit” so that there are no delays in processing your application. Furthermore, you should not wait until just before your planned fishing trip to submit the “Application for IFQ/CDQ Hired Master Permit”. Depending upon staff workload it may take up to ten working days to process an application.

- Reporting IFQ Landings: IFQ permit holders and Hired Masters must provide harvest information but no longer need to log in to the reporting system for Buyers to make electronic landing reports. Also, NOAA Fisheries has begun adding bar codes equivalents of the permit number and permit holder’s NMFS ID to IFQ permits, CDQ permits and Hired Master permits. These additional codes will facilitate electronic landings reporting for buyers who have bar code readers.
- IFQ Fees: The IFQ Cost Recovery (Fee) Program requires IFQ Permit Holders to pay an annual fee of no greater than 3% of their ex-vessel receipts for their IFQ halibut and/or sablefish landings. Therefore, we encourage you to set aside 3% of the value you receive for your IFQ fish during the 2009 fishing year so that you will have funds available when your fees are due. Statements and fee liability forms will be sent to you in early December, at which time the actual fee percentage will be announced. Fees related to 2009 fishing activity will be due by January 31, 2010.
- IFQ Loan Program: The NOAA Fisheries Financial Services Division is continuing to accept applications for the North Pacific (Halibut/Sablefish IFQ) Loan Program. For further information, please contact that Division in Seattle (Tel: 206-526-6122; Fax: 206-526-6306).
- The Marine Mammal Protection Act requires that all marine mammals incidentally caught during commercial fishing operations be reported to NMFS within 48 hours after the end of a fishing trip, or for non-vessel fisheries, within 48 hours of an occurrence of incidental mortality or injury. Reporting forms are available at all NMFS field stations and Enforcement offices or on the Internet at: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/observers/mmop.htm>.

Reporting forms may also be requested by calling the Alaska Regional Office at:
907-586-7236.

Changes to Seabird Avoidance Requirements

Changes to seabird avoidance measures for the Alaska hook-and-line groundfish and halibut fisheries went into effect January 17, 2008. The regulations no longer require seabird avoidance measures such as streamerlines or buoy bags in all of Prince William Sound, all State waters of Cook Inlet and in most waters of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area Southeast Inside District. However, pelagic seabirds have been observed more frequently in lower Chatham Strait, Dixon Entrance, and parts of Cross Sound. Hook-and-line fishing vessels must continue to meet seabird avoidance gear requirements and standards in those parts of the nearshore areas. In addition to these area changes for seabird regulation applicability, operators of small vessels (greater than 26 and less than or equal to 55 ft LOA) that are required to use streamer lines must use lines that adhere to specified standards. Also, the Seabird Avoidance Plan is no longer required. Fishermen are strongly advised to read the rule in full detail. It can be found at: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/72fr71601.pdf> Maps of the affected areas can be found at: http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/ea/figure1_2.pdf

In the event that you sight a short-tailed albatross from your vessel, we request your cooperation in completing the enclosed U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) form *Endangered Species Encounter Reporting Form*. We are coordinating efforts with the USFWS and they have asked us to seek your assistance with this important sighting information. Completed forms can be mailed to USFWS at the address provided on the form.

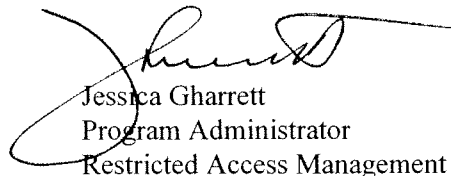
Remember that free streamer lines for longline vessels are still available. See our website at <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/streamers.htm> or contact the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission at 503-595-3100 to place your order. The newer light-weight lines are in stock.

For additional information about the reduction of seabird incidental catch in fisheries, see our website at: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/guide.htm> or contact Kim Rivera, NMFS's Seabird Coordinator at 907-586-7424, email: Kim.Rivera@noaa.gov.

Other Information: The NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional web site contains a wealth of fishery and management information. The RAM area contains descriptions of regional permit programs, printable applications and instructions, and links to on-line services. The Regional web site is: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov>.

If you have any questions about the IFQ program or any other permit requirements, RAM can be reached toll-free at 1-800-304-4846 (select option 2), or by e-mail at RAM.Alaska@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,



Jessica Gharrett
Program Administrator
Restricted Access Management Program

Enclosures

Tb; 1/6/09
Rev: Gharrett 1/8/09

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bcc: IFQ Applicant File
Ram Reading File

□ HYPERLINK "http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/ram/letters/default.htm"
□ <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/ram/letters/default.htm> □ (web posting)