

# Charter Log

A Quarterly Newsletter for Sport Fishing Guides & Charterboat Operators

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## Subsistence Halibut and Community Set Asides

Anglers and existing charter boat operators may soon have additional competitors for available stocks of halibut. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, at its October meeting authorized subsistence halibut fishing and included for analysis a proposal to create a Gulf of Alaska communities set-aside.

### Subsistence

Council members say authorizing subsistence halibut fishing does not create a new fishery but simply acknowledges existing practice. But sport fish advocates say it will exacerbate tensions over subsistence. One provision of the new plan authorizes urban Native people to exercise subsistence rights, provided they go to a rural community to do so.

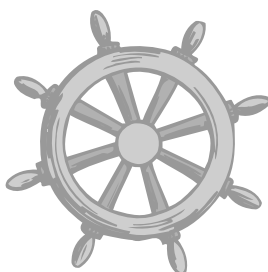
The plan allows a daily subsistence bag limit of 20 halibut, and authorizes use of up to 30 hooks to catch them. It also allows sale of up to \$400 worth of halibut a year, although not to commercial seafood processors. Aside from the provision for urban Natives, the subsistence fishery is limited to residents of areas defined as "rural" under state subsistence regulations. Specifics of subsistence halibut management will be determined by the Board of Fisheries, which is expected to hold hearings on the matter before spring.

### Community Set-Asides

The community set-aside concept was proposed by a group known as the Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition, and is intended to "remove an economic barrier for residents of underdeveloped communities to participate in the halibut charter industry." The set-asides would not constitute community development quotas, in the model of the Bering Sea program, but would instead be small amounts of halibut quota available to residents of specified villages to use on a (presumably) temporary basis until they are able to buy into the halibut charter IFQ program.

Some 35 to 37 communities in areas 2C and 3A would likely meet the criteria for participation. The Coalition's position is that residents of those communities, due to geographic isolation and limited financial resources, have been unable to get started in halibut charter fishing and will be shut out of the charter IFQ program. The set-asides would be a small percentage (one to two and a half per cent of the combined commercial and charter allocation is suggested) reserved for use by those residents who want to get started. The quotas would be essentially loans, not permanent quota with property rights for leasing and sale.

At its meetings in February and April this year the Council will have to decide  
*continued...*



## Subsistence Halibut...continued...

a number of technical questions surrounding the proposal, falling into three categories: Will there be a set-aside for Gulf communities? If so, how big (how many pounds of quota)? And possibly most contentious, the source of the set-aside quota. In other words, would the set aside come solely from the charter quota, equally from the charter and commercial quotas, or proportionally from each.

The Council's staff is currently developing an analysis on the options. A 20-page discussion paper is available on the NPFMC website, [www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc).

## PFDs for <13

There is no exemption for uninspected (six-pack) charterboats to the state law requiring that all children under the age of 13 to wear a Coast Guard-approved PFD while on deck in state waters. Some charter operators were under the impression that an agreement had been made with the Coast Guard to exclude passengers of charter boats. However, it is not a federal law and the Coast Guard is not in a position to make such an agreement.

The regulation does not apply to children that are inside the cabin or below decks, nor does it apply in federal waters (outside three miles.) The law also does not specify Type I approved PFDs, which means that as long as a sufficient number of Type I devices are on board, children can meet the state requirement by wearing the less bulky Type II or Type III PFDs. Passengers aboard inspected passenger vessels are exempted from compliance.

An administrator with the state's boating safety program has stated that his agency has no plans to allow a charterboat exemption to the law.

## Health Insurance Plan Dropped

The long-awaited West Coast Commercial Fishing Community Group Health Insurance Plan isn't going to happen.

The Oregon-based Women's Coalition for Pacific Fisheries, which represents fishing families from Alaska to California, worked for several years to establish a group health insurance plan for fishing family members, and the program that was designed included families of charterboat operators and crews as well as fisheries-related support industries.

On Dec. 22 the board of the prospective coverage provider,

Regents Blue Cross Blue Shield notified WCPF that the company was pulling out of the deal. The reason given was that an insufficient number of applications had been received. WCPF had until the end of November to sign up 800 subscribers, and apparently fewer than half that number of applications was received.

WCPF remains an active organization providing assistance, support, and information to members of West Coast fishing industry families. However, the group has made no announcements concerning any plans to attempt to construct another health insurance program.

## Board of Fish Meeting Now

The marathon Board of Fisheries meeting underway through most of the month of January in Anchorage is addressing a number of proposals for regulation changes that could affect sport fishing guides.

The meeting opened January 9 and is expected to conclude on February 1. Public testimony is scheduled for Jan. 17 through 21. But since committees continue to meet and deliberations are held through the end of the month, the public continues to have the opportunity to lobby board members.

Among proposals of potential interest to sport fishing guides are included:

- Approval of the Nushagak-Mulchatna chinook management plan and 21 other specific Bristol sport salmon proposals

- Some 44 proposals pertaining to salmon, trout and other freshwater fish sport fishing management, including northern pike, whitefish, sheefish and grayling in the interior, northwest and western Alaska
  - Two proposals (#119 and #273) to require daily reporting by freshwater sport fishing guides
- Proposals can be viewed at the ADFG Boards website at [www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH.GAME/boards/fishinfo/proposal/proposal.htm](http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH.GAME/boards/fishinfo/proposal/proposal.htm)



# Five Star Update

Despite low initial participation, the Coast Guard's 17<sup>th</sup> District is proceeding with second year implementation of the 5 Star Safety Program. No major changes are planned for 2001 but the agency has issued clarification to some of the provisions in the program brochure, which is distributed to charterboat operators and the public.

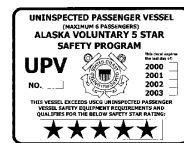
The program is directed at raising the level of safety among uninspected (six-pack) vessels by offering operators a chance to qualify for one to five stars, depending on the safety equipment they carry, and other standards met. The Coast Guard keeps a registry of star rated vessels which consumers can use when selecting a boat to charter. Of some 2200 charter vessels in Alaska, only about 40 participated in the program its first year.

LCDR Spencer Wood, who administers the 5 Star Program, says that the District office did review it after the season and decided not to make any changes. However, he adds that at least one change made to the original concept was not incorporated in the brochure. For a fifth star the requirement is to carry a life raft or inflatable buoyant apparatus with capacity for the number of *passengers* on board, not the total number of persons including captain and crew.

Also clarified is what constitutes an *equivalent* substitute. In the case of a hand-held VHF radio, a satellite bag phone (portable satellite phone) is acceptable; a cell or permanently-installed satellite phone is not. To qualify for the bilge pump and alarm (two stars) and liferaft (five stars) exemptions, the vessel must meet level flotation standards, as ascertained by a Coast Guard inspector.

What remains open to further consideration is exactly what kinds of life rafts and buoyant IBAs meet the standard. The brochure specifies "properly installed and serviced, Coast Guard approved" but LCDR Wood says that an inflatable boat of the correct rated capacity, kept fully inflated, also is considered acceptable. He adds that the Coast Guard would consider proposals to include other classes of life raft, such as ORC or SOLAS approved rafts in place of USCG approval. It would be up to vessel operators to make the case that these other rafts, which in some cases are less expensive and lighter in weight, would provide an equivalent level of safety.

You can reach LCDR Spencer Wood at 463-2809.



## Access Board Announces Standards

The Passenger Vessel Access Committee has issued its latest recommendations for new standards to ensure handicap access to and while aboard small passenger vessels. The recommendations, if adopted by the Access Board to become Dept. of Transportation or Dept. of Justice regulation, will serve as the standard for vessel design and construction, and will also be required of existing vessels that are "altered", meaning converted or modified. Because the Americans with Disabilities Act went into effect in 1992, final regulations when adopted will be retroactive to that year.

Three factors would influence the requirement to comply: alterations to the vessel, public accommodation where readily achievable, or employment of 15 or more persons.

The recommendations issued by the Committee in December affect small passenger vessels (Subchapter T inspected and Subchapter C uninspected passenger vessels or "six-packs") less than larger than larger ships. However they do contain provisions in four areas that may trip up charter boat owners in some circumstances: "toilet rooms" (heads), clear deck spaces in major program areas, embarkation/debarkation point, and accessible routes.

For example, there is a general requirement for an embarkation/debarkation point with a minimum clear width of 32 inches through bulwarks, railings, lifelines and toe rails. On boats 30' or less a transfer platform a minimum of 22 inches wide can substitute for the opening. Clear deck spaces at least 30"x48" must be dispersed through the

program areas (spaces where activities occur, such as the fishing deck). Each clear deck space requires a (wheelchair) tie-down.

Heads must have an entry door with a clear width of 32 inches, capable of being opened and closed by the occupant. A maneuvering space at least 48"x80" must be outside the door. A horizontal grab bar 24 inches long must be located between 33 and 36 inches off the floor of the head. Accessible routes of at least 32 inches in width and meeting specifications for surfacing, slope and lack of obstructions must connect heads, entry points and clear deck spaces.

Numerous exceptions and exemptions exist to the above general provisions. For example the requirement for

*continued ...*

## Access Board *continued* ...

accessible routes does not apply to boats less than 30 feet in length. The requirements for heads does not apply to vessels 48 feet or less in length, or on vessels where the head can be reached only by a vertical or inclined ladder.

Further relief from future requirements resulting from these recommendations may exist through the provision that an exception exists where meeting the standard is "technically infeasible" on a particular boat. "The more difficult it is to modify (the boat) off the shelf, the less the obligation to modify it," says Access Board staffer Paul Beatty.

The full report by the Committee is about 115 pages and is available on the Access Board web site at [www.access-board.gov/pvaac/commrept/](http://www.access-board.gov/pvaac/commrept/). The section pertinent to small vessels is Chapter 12. Beatty points out that the ADA "is not a building code, it's a civil rights law." He says that while full compliance with technical standards may not be feasible for all vessels, the requirement remains to make them accessible, and ultimately courts will decide whether adequate effort was made by vessel owners if handicapped people complain. Even where full technical compliance is not feasible, vessel owners will be expected to do what they can to make their boats accessible.

"How can I accommodate you, how can I make you my customer?" is the questions boat owners will have to answer with respect to disabled people. A wide range of disabilities must be considered. Operators have to provide for people who may be vision impaired, hearing impaired and partially-mobility

impaired as well as those who are wheel chair bound. Beatty points out that as the American population ages the demand for accessible recreational facilities will continue to increase. The Access Board will publish a proposed rule for public comment this year, followed by a final probably some time in 2002.

## GHL Update

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ADFG's revised Statewide Harvest Survey halibut charter estimates for the years that would be used to calculate the charter halibut Guideline Harvest Level are in, and they change the outcome of the process very little.

Late in 1999, new statistical specialist replacing retirees in the department's Research and Technical Services section in Anchorage discovered that estimates of sport fish landings for the years 1995-98 based on the Statewide Harvest Survey probably contained errors because they did not account for "non-response bias" in the data. An improved statistical program was applied in the spring to correct sport salmon catch data, which resulted in changes in the sport king salmon quota in Southeast.

In October the Department presented the revised halibut data to the North

Pacific Fishery Management Council. Changes are as follows:

For Area 2C the harvest estimates (in pounds) for charter catches increased over original estimates by 27% and 21% for 1996 and 1997 and decreased by 10% for 1998. This means that the revised GHL for 2C increases from 12.68% to 13.05%.

For Area 3A the revised estimates decreased for all three years, 2% in '96, 3% in '97 and 8% in '98. The result is that the corrected 3A GHL decreases from 14.94% to 14.11%.

If the charter halibut GHL is implemented, the revised figures will likely be used to calculate the charter industry's share, and the revised numbers are incorporated in the overall analysis for possible inclusion of the charter industry into the halibut IFQ program for areas 2C and 3A.

## Causes of Sinkings Identified in Study

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Law transoms and inadequate freeboard are the single biggest cause of open water boat sinkings, according to a study conducted recently by BOAT/US Marine Insurance. The trend to big outboards and sleek low profiles is resulting in boats with only inches of freeboard at the engine cut-out, and these boats are particularly vulnerable to flooding from improper weight distribution. Nearly a third of all

(presumably recreational boat) sinking resulted from water coming over the stern or sides.

The second biggest cause of open water sinking is leaks through openings in the hull, such as stuffing boxes, intakes and discharges for bait wells, through-hull fittings for electronics, etc. They accounted for 18 per cent of sinkings. Twelve per

cent resulted in leaks associated with sea water cooling and exhaust systems, and another 12 per cent from missing drain plugs. Damage from groundings accounted for ten per cent of sinkings, and hulls splitting open from waves or boat wakes, six per cent. BOAT/US says that for every boat that sinks in open water, four sink at the dock.

# Medred Column Predicts \$250 Charter

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“Ready for the \$250 halibut charter?” So reads the lead in a recent column by Anchorage Daily News outdoor guru Craig Medred.

He goes on to say that the NPFMC is proceeding with a plan to “stick it to the little guy” (meaning the charter client) by developing a IFQ plan for managing the halibut charter fleet, with the result that “there’s no telling how high day-fishing charges might rise.”

Medred’s point, apparently, is that if the supply of charter services is fixed and the demand continues to increase, the price will rise. However, he bases

his assertions on the unsubstantiated assumption that demand is increasing. IPHC 1999 sport catch figures (the most recent year published) for combined areas 2C and 3A were almost identical to 1993, and the only two years of reliable charter data, resulting from the logbook program, actually show a declining catch.

The outdoor opinion writer goes on to raise the specter of quotas issued to charterboats in units of pounds rather than fish, giving captains an incentive to limit clients to keeping only small fish, or charging them special “trophy fee” of so much per pound for any fish retained

over 20 or 30 pounds. The likely result of this, he opines, is that fed-up anglers will buy their own skiffs for halibut fishing, adding to congestion at launching sites and raising the accident rate.

Medred doesn’t blame the charter industry for concocting this IFQ plan but rather characterizes charter captains as dupes of the longliners. His solution is an interesting one: limit the catch of non-guided sport fishermen and free the charter boat fleet.

You can reach Craig Medred at [cmredred@and.com](mailto:cmredred@and.com).

## Weather Buoys to be Deployed

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Boaters in lower Cook Inlet and at several other locations around the coast of Alaska will have access to improved weather and sea condition information starting this summer as the result of the National Weather Service’s plan to install seven weather buoys.

The Cook Inlet buoy will be in Kennedy Entrance about six miles north of the Barren Islands. Others will be located just south of the Fairweather Grounds, in the middle of Shelikof Strait, off Cape Yakataga, near the entrance to Glacier Bay, off the south side of Akutan in the Aleutians, and southeast of Cold Bay on the Alaska Peninsula. The Cook Inlet and Fairweather buoys will be installed this year and the others in 2002 or 2003.

Greg Matzen of the National Weather Service says that Bob Ward with the Homer Charter Association and other boat operators lobbied for the buoys to improve sea condition predictions for small boat operators. Senator Ted Stevens sponsored an appropriation and the project was authorized earlier this month. The \$1.7 million appropriation is for this fiscal year, Matzen says.

The buoy information will include sea state, sea surface temperature, air temperature, barometric pressure and wind speed and direction. Two weather buoys have been operating for several years in Prince William Sound, two in the Gulf of Alaska, and one in the Bering Sea. Once the new buoys are operational mariners will be able to get

the data, which are updated hourly, by calling the Alaska Weatherline at 1-800-472-0391, from the National Buoy Data Center web page, or from the Alaska Region National Weather Service web page, at [www.alaska.net/~nwsar/](http://www.alaska.net/~nwsar/). There is no provision for direct marine radio access.

## Moby Back?

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As if boat operators didn’t already have enough to worry about, it looks like Moby Dick might be making a comeback.

Two Australian anglers recently escaped serious injury when their boat was rammed by a whale twice, about a mile off the coast of New South Wales. The two were thrown clear of their 15-foot boat on the first impact. While they were in the water the whale came back and rammed the boat a second time. They were rescued by a nearby boater who also towed their damaged vessel to shore. They were unable to identify the species of whale or the reason for the

attack, but Australian officials have collected DNA material from the damaged hull for species identification.

Speaking of rammings, the ramming and sinking of the Nantucket whaleship *Essex* is chronicled in a new book *In the Heart of the Sea*. The fast-paced account belies the fact that it was written by a professional historian, and details the struggles of the crew to survive 90 days in open rowboats during the ordeal that occurred in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The book is available in hardcover at book stores and over the internet.

# Sport Fishing Violations and the Guiding Industry

*Letter submitted by Dennis Randa*

*At first it was with sadness that I read about recent sport fishing violations by Alaska fishing guides. Now I am angry with these guides whose behavior is demonstrated to be less than some standard. But what makes me most angry is that it appears to me that these people regard these resources (that they have been found guilty of violating) with disdain.*

*While it may seem be a bit unfair (to many guides), the law supports holding guides to a higher standard. This is not to say that I hold myself or anyone else above making a mistake. We all make them and for whatever reason often don't learn of them in such a harsh manner. But we still are responsible for them and there are some who would use them against our industry. Somehow the industry owns these transgressions.*

*How do we treat these non-target fishes? Do we treat them like the commercial fishing industry treats non-target catch? Do we waste it sending it back to the sea from whence it came: DEAD! Treating our oceans teaming resource like trash seems ill advised to me.*

*Disregarding the waste issue what about the attitude? How can we be expected to be held in any sort of esteem by our sport fishing community (not to mention the entirety) when we appear to treat the resource with disdain?*

*What difference does it make if a fish is a sport fish or not? Just about every fish out there is an edible fish. A sand shark or dogfish has been designated a sport fish and as such has a bag limit. Or if it is not a sport fish we can use it for bait. Besides, the processor makes some money if the client wants to take them home.*

*If we do not intend to use them for food or as bait why do some people feel the need to destroy them and discard them? They are good to eat and who knows with the way of the world catching up to us here in Alaska we might someday find any or all of them to be our target species? The point here is we have a healthy ecosystem supporting these and many other creatures. As such it deserves respect from everybody and especially those who extract a living from it.*

*I don't mean to condemn these people as individuals. But I do take exception when their actions affect how the rest of my community might view my industry and me. I would have it that we are respected as individuals and judged by our own actions but the fact is that does not always happen. Just being a guide is sometimes enough to fail to meet muster for too many in our community. I for one cannot accept this behavior. I find myself apologizing for these persons. They don't represent me or my industry. OR DO THEY?*

*Sincerely yours,*

*Dennis Randa,  
d.b.a.: Randa's Guide Service for 18 seasons.*

## Captain Fined

A Seward charterboat captain has pled no contest on a single charge of wasting sport-caught dogfish sharks and received a \$1900 fine and a suspended ten-day jail sentence. He also has to reimburse the state the \$178.50 that the undercover enforcement officer paid to go on the fishing trip, and also has more than \$2000 in attorney fees.

George Hiller, 60, president of the Seward Charter Association was nabbed after the investigator observed him cutting through the jaws and bellies of several dogfish and then throwing them back into the water. The agent investigated after complaints from previous charter clients. He was originally charged with nine counts. Hiller said that he is sorry he did it and won't do it again. He has promised to inform members of his association that such actions are illegal. Dogfish are considered trash fish by many captains, and are commonly killed and discarded by commercial fishermen. However, all fish caught on sport gear are sport-caught fish and cannot be wasted. Furthermore, there is a bag limit on all kinds of sharks in Alaska of one per day and two per year.

Another Seward skipper caught up in a sting operation last summer is still awaiting trial. Bob Candopoulos, owner of Saltwater Safari, was ticketed for allegedly exceeding his daily bag limit of salmon sharks after an undercover agent observed him setting the hooks on several sharks before handing the rods to the clients. The enforcement officer claims that the fish is the possession of the individual who first hooks it, while Candopoulos says that setting the hook for the client when fishing for large and potentially dangerous game like salmon sharks is common industry practice and a safety precaution. Candopoulos has retained two attorneys and will contest the charge when he goes to court in early March.

# From the Fly Bridge

## Letter from the Editor

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Alaska's saltwater charter industry has made it through another year without a fatality (although a client did perish on a guided freshwater fishing trip; see Charter Log, Fall 2000). Our record remains good, but this is no time to get complacent about safety.

A Fish Expo safety seminar featured the Coast Guard's Ready for Sea program. Although the Coast Guard still places a heavy emphasis on safety equipment, it is encouraging to see that the agency is paying more attention to total vessel and crew fitness. Safety equipment only helps to make an emergency situation less serious but Ready for Sea is designed to prevent problems from happening in the first place.

Few marine casualties are caused by the overpowering fury of the sea. (See the story elsewhere in this issue on the causes of recreational boat sinkings.) Most result from inherent flaws in the vessel, improper outfitting, poor maintenance, operator and/or crew error, or a combination of the above. These are preventable, but it takes a sharp eye and thorough technical understanding to foresee problems and take corrective measures. Alan Dujenski, a marine safety consultant, stated that the problem largely could be solved if vessels were required to get annual marine surveys.

I disagree, and here's why: most marine surveyors are not especially knowledgeable about vessel safety. Many got their experience on large ships and have limited understanding of small boats. They do condition or evaluation surveys that only peripherally address safety. The typical surveyor can thoroughly critique a vessel's gelcoat, paint and trim, but wouldn't recognize an improperly installed through-hull if he found it, and probably wouldn't point it out if he did. There's a good reason—his job is to

satisfy a lender or insurer, whose main concern is the vessel's value.

What's needed is a new occupational specialty—safety surveyor. This specialist would make a confidential report to the vessel owner or operator that would detail issues concerning watertight integrity, stability, fire prevention and suppression, bodily injury risks to passengers and crew and so on. Discretion to act on recommendations would rest with the owner/operator; the lender and insurer would be out of the loop.

The safety surveyor would have to be exceptionally knowledgeable, familiar with ABYC guidelines and USCG regulations, and also with vessel design principles, metals and alloys, electrical systems and wiring, fire systems, and a lot more. To do the job well he would need considerable small-boat sea time. He would need the courage to say "This isn't right—take it out and install it correctly." Owners of cheaply-built



boats probably wouldn't hire one because they don't want to know everything that is wrong, but conscientious operators would welcome the guidance. Eventually the presence of safety surveyors would elevate the knowledge of boat operators and force higher quality standards on builders.

Both charterboat sinkings in 1999 apparently resulted from flaws that a good safety surveyor would have noticed. Compared to automobiles and aircraft, vessel construction (especially uninspected passenger vessels) is almost totally unregulated. We vessel operators have to protect ourselves and our passengers by ensuring that our boats are safe, and we need competent, well trained specialists to help us do so.

## State Registration Begins

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Beginning this month registration of boats in Alaska has transferred from the Coast Guard to the state's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Until passage of the Boating Safety Act last year, Alaska was the only state in the union that did not administer its own watercraft registration program. Along with transferring registration to the state, the Act also implements various safety and training measures which are bring millions of dollars in federal boating safety funds to Alaska.

State registration is required of all power boats and all non-powered

vessels ten feet or greater in length, including sailboats, canoes, kayaks, tenders and dinghies, with a few exceptions. Documented vessels are not state registered, nor are ship's lifeboats, seaplanes, boats owned by federal, state or local governments, and boats that are registered in another state and not used more than 90 consecutive days in Alaska. Boats that are principally used outside Alaska must be registered in the state where they are used.

Curiously, the definition of "boat" for registration purposes excludes "an inspected passenger vessel" *continued...*

## State Registration *continued*

so, technically, undocumented subchapter T inspected vessels don't have to be registered. Display of registration number is required on powered boats, and optional on non-powered vessels.

Previously, the Coast Guard registered only powered vessels used on navigable waters, but state registration is required for vessels that operate on any waters of the state, including lakes, streams, and the sea within three miles of land. Registration fee is \$24 for powered

vessels and \$10 for non-powered. Registration is valid for three years and expires at the end of the month in which the boat is first registered. Fee for a duplicate certificate of number or validation sticker is \$5. To apply you must provide the appropriate fee, a completed application, and proof of ownership, including a manufacture statement of ownership, bill of sale, or registration from a previous state.

Current Coast Guard registration remains valid until expiration date, and

the Coast Guard is transferring its registration records to DMV.

The state plans to send renewal notices, as is done for automobiles. Re-registration can be done at DMV offices, through the mail, over the internet ([www.state.ak.us/dmv](http://www.state.ak.us/dmv)) or over the telephone with a registration renewal number.

In Anchorage the number is 269-5590 and elsewhere in the state it is 1-888-368-5945. DMV does not record lienholders for boats.

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## NACO Meeting Meets in Virginia

The annual conference of the National Association of Charterboat Operators (NACO) is set for Jan. 25-27 in Alexandria, Virginia.

Most of the program will occur on Friday, Jan. 26, including the keynote address by Rear Admiral Robert C. North, Assistant Commandant of the Coast Guard for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection. Adm. North is expected to talk about charterboat safety and a possible partnership between the Coast Guard and the

industry to improve safety and environmental protection through dialog rather than regulation.

Also of interest to Alaska operators include sessions on: recent changes to maritime law that affect the charterboat industry; what charter operators need to know about OSHA regulations; and independent contractor definition review and update. Additional sessions are scheduled on national fisheries issues and an update of the Charter Lakes insurance program. Welcoming

reception is on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> and the board of directors meeting is on the morning of Saturday, Jan. 27.

NACO's 20-member board of directors includes Bill Foster of Sitka, Andy Mezirow of Seward and Bob Ward of Anchor Point.

For more details on the annual meeting contact NACO at (800) 745-6094 or see their page at [www.charterboat.org](http://www.charterboat.org).

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## Angler Survey Results Published

Alaska anglers, and in particular Kenai Peninsula-Cook Inlet anglers, have come under scrutiny by economists with ADFG, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, National Marine Fisheries Service, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Utah State University and Virginia Tech University in recent years. Results of those studies were published last year and provide an interesting snapshot of the region's sport fishermen, guided and unguided.

Six papers given in December at the annual meeting of the Alaska Chapter, American Fisheries Society addressed economic evaluation, angler preferences, angler demographics, and potential economic impacts resulting from changes to fisheries characteristics of Alaskan sport fisheries, all based on statistical modeling and on mail surveys of as many as 15,000 anglers. Earlier in the year an Alaska Sea Grant-sponsored study of the 1997 season was published

that was based on a mail survey of 4,000 anglers.

Among the results:

- During the 1997 season 151,590 anglers fished 259,615 angler days for saltwater salmon and halibut. Non-residents fished 43% of the angler days but 64% of the charter days.

*continued...*

## Angler Surveys *continued...*

- Kenai Peninsula Borough residents and other Alaskans accounted for 25% and 32% of the angler days but only 10% and 26% of the charter client days.
- Trips that used charter services accounted for 52% of the reported total.
- Of the Alaskans who fished Cook Inlet, 88% considered saltwater sport fishing the primary reason for their trip to the peninsula, compared to only 43% of the non-residents.
- Alaskans took more and longer fishing trips than non-residents, but their average daily halibut catch of 1.69 was lower than the non-residents' average of 2.14.
- Most popular ports were Homer (45%), Seward (32%), Deep Creek/Ninilchik (30%) and Kenai (13%).
- Non-residents reported daily traveling and living expenditures of \$101 and daily fishing expenses of \$138. Alaskans reported daily traveling and living expenditures of \$44 and fishing expenses of \$47.
- In 1997 the Kenai Peninsula expenditures attributable directly to saltwater sport fishing totaled \$37.4 million, of which \$32 million was from outside the region.
- A 10% decrease in expected salmon and halibut catch would result in a \$3.3 million decrease in direct and indirect expenditures, a \$1.4 million reduction in personal incomes, and a loss of 94 jobs.
- More than half the sport-caught halibut were released.
- Average size of resident caught halibut - 34 lbs. and non-resident caught - 43 lbs.
- Average size of resident caught king salmon – 28 lbs., non-resident – 31 lbs.
- Average size of resident caught silver salmon – 10.6 lbs., non-resident – 9.6 lbs.

Although the survey instruments and sampled groups were different, the UAF Sea Grant results were very close to those of a similar ADFG survey.

## Deep Creek Survey Indicates IFQ Preferences

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If the results of recent surveys of the Homer and Deep Creek charterboat associations are any indication, operators are starting to focus on the specifics of planning an IFQ program for the industry. The Deep Creek Charterboat Association sent its members a questionnaire in the fall asking how members would like to see any IFQ program structured. Questions addressed the key issues that will have to be decided by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. The survey was drafted by DCCA president Tim Evers and tabulated by member Perry Flotre. Bob Ward, of nearby Anchor Point, is a member of the Council's advisory panel and requested the survey, which was similar to one distributed earlier in Homer.

Results include the following:

- They support 75% U.S. ownership and owner/operator status as criteria for initial quota share allocation

- They want four of five years (95-99) participation, and logbooks for 98 and 99 to be the basis for shares.
- Quotas should be issued in fish rather than pounds
- Logbooks to be used as basis for reporting.

They support a quota share distribution plan that would give operators 70% of their 98 and 99 logbook average plus 10% for each year of operation during the period of 95-97 (called a "longevity reward"). They oppose a proposal from Kodiak that would allocate QS based on a more complex formula also derived from logbook reported harvests and years of participation.

Response was mixed on issues such as caps on transferability, qualifications for receiving quota by transfer, a 12-line

limit for Area 3A, rollover provisions and overage deduction provisions. Respondents also wrote in comments on the proposals and added a few of their own. Included were suggestions to include "size bracketing" or combined minimum and maximum sizes of halibut to be retained in order to allow big spawners to go free.

Ward is encouraging other charter groups to poll their members on the elements of the IFQ plan analysis and inform him of results so that he can more accurately represent industry views on the advisory panel. You can contact him at (907) 235-2282 or [ward@xyz.net](mailto:ward@xyz.net). Another meeting is scheduled for Feb. 2.

# New Outboard Motor Selection

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*Following is the first in a series of vessel outfitting and maintenance articles offered to readers of Charter Log. They are derived from a series called Boatkeeper, published initially in Pacific Fishing magazine and re-published by Alaska Sea Grant. While I wrote them originally for commercial fishermen, I will be selecting individual articles that I think may be of interest to charterboat operators and sport fishing guides. Please provide feedback: let me know if you want more in the series, and suggest topics you'd like to see developed in this newsletter.- Editor*

Operators who use medium- or high-powered outboard motors in commercial applications face a rapidly changing set of choices, the result of EPA emissions regulations and developing technology designed to improve performance and fuel economy.

As you're probably aware, federal law requires an overall reduction in the amount of pollutants each manufacturer's line of motors releases into the environment so that by the year 2006 total hydrocarbons must have declined by 75 per cent and nitrogen oxides by 33 per cent. The source of most of these pollutants? The good, old carbureted two-stroke engine.

If you review your high school auto shop notes you'll recall that the beauty of the two-stroke is that it is cheap, lightweight, and simple. It has no valves; the intake and exhaust ports open at the same time so that each cylinder is exhaling and sucking in a fresh fuel/air charge simultaneously. The bad part is that a goodly portion of the fresh charge goes straight out the exhaust port without burning, pumping vaporized raw gasoline directly into the environment. Contrary to popular belief, most of the "smoke" produced by a two-stroke isn't burned lube oil, it's unburned fuel.

Honda's engines are "2006 compliant" because they are all four-stroke design which, as you recall, uses valves to admit the fuel/air charge after blocking the exhaust outlet. In part because of the EPA rules, and in part because of the phenomenal success Honda has enjoyed with its clean, quiet, smooth-running four-strokes, most of the other manufacturers have come out with four-stroke models in the smaller horsepower ranges. A few years back Honda introduced 90, 115 and 130 h.p. engines, and Yamaha countered with 80, 100, and 115 h.p. four-stroke models. The Yamaha 115 and Honda 115 and 130 are electronically fuel-injected; the others have carburetors. All are smooth, clean, and reliable.

Claims of four-stroke efficiency are not exaggerated. Independent tests show that a four-stroke outboard consistently burns only 40-50 per cent of the fuel of a comparable power two stroke at cruising speeds, and only a fifth as much at idle.

However, the four-stroke weighs 15 per cent more and costs 50 per cent more. Because each cylinder fires only on every second revolution, four-strokes tend to be a bit less peppy than their two-stroke competitors, and tend to operate 500-700 r.p.m. faster to achieve similar performance.

Industry talk for some time has been that both Honda and Yamaha are developing four-strokes in the 200-225 h.p. range, and Yamaha recently announced the debut of its 225 h.p. model. Considering that a Honda 130 weighs in at around 500 lbs., and lists at over \$11,000, these are likely to be big, expensive motors, although Yamaha's entry in the class is not a great deal heavier than its two-stroke version.

Other makers are taking a different approach to meet EPA pollution standards and consumer demand for im-

proved economy. They have developed variants on a type of two-stroke known as "direct fuel injection" or DFI. A DFI two-stroke doesn't have a carburetor and the incoming fuel/air charge is not pumped through the crankcase and sucked into the cylinder while the intake and exhaust ports are open. Instead, it has an injector—somewhat like that of a diesel or a multi-port fuel injection car engine—that meters and forces fuel under pressure directly into the combustion chamber after the exhaust ports are closed. The result is nearly complete burning of the fuel and smoother operation, even at low r.p.m.s.

OMC, Mercury and Yamaha are building V-4 and V-6 DFI engines in ratings from 130 to 225 h.p. The difference is more than merely technical. Testing by manufacturers and independent technical organizations shows that across the board DFI engines use half the fuel of comparable carbureted two-strokes, or less, at idling and trolling speeds, and at least 20 per cent less at cruising and top speeds. And the erratic stutter of a two stroke at low speed is eliminated; DFI engines are smooth at idle or trolling speed since each cylinder fires on every revolution. While still not quite as clean or fuel-efficient as a four-stroke, they are relatively lightweight and powerful.

DFI is not the same as electronic fuel injection (EFI), which employs an electronic metering device in place of a carburetor. Two stroke EFI engines, such as those made by Suzuki, show some efficiency advantage over carbureted engines, but generally have the same characteristics of carbureted two-strokes. Each of the three big players in two-stroke outboards has taken a different approach to DFI. OMC's Evinrude engines use a system developed by a German firm, called Ficht Ram Injection (OMC's other brand, Johnson, retains the carbureted two-

stroke technology, at least for now); Mercury/Mariner licenses an Australian technology called OptiMax. Yamaha is a latecomer in the field, having introduced its system, called High Pressure Direct Injection (HPDI), for the first time in the 2000 model year.

Performance of the three systems is remarkably similar, but technically they differ. The Ficht system employs an electronic solenoid injector on each cylinder, controlled by an electronic control unit (ECU) that synthesizes information from 11 different sensors on the engine to determine the correct amount and timing of fuel injected, and ignition timing. An engine-driven pump moves fuel from the tank to the engine, an electric pump sends it to the injectors at 25 p.s.i. and the injectors force it into the combustion chamber at 250 p.s.i.. A throttle body controls the air flow to the cylinder and an oil injector behind the throttle body mixes lube oil with the air being sucked into the crankcase.

The OptiMax system is similar but uses two sequential injectors per cylinder, one to pre-mix gas and pressurized air and the other to inject the mixture into the cylinder at 90 p.s.i.. A belt-driven pump pressurizes the air. An oil pump sprays oil directly onto the connecting rods. The ECU and injection system are standard automotive units.

Yamaha's HPDI employs two fuel pumps to bring fuel to the high pressure pump, which sends it to the injectors at 700 p.s.i.. The ECU makes adjustments based on input from eight engine sensors. Yamaha's ignition system uses conventional spark plugs, as opposed to specialized plugs developed specifically for the other two engines. Ficht and Optimax plugs are pricey, \$12-25 each.

All these pumps, control units, sensors and injectors make DFI engines somewhat more complex and expensive than carbureted engines. Are they also more troublesome? OMC had a lot of problems with the early Ficht engines,

so many that the company distributed retrofit upgrade units to owners of '98 and '99 model year engines, and redesigned some elements of the engines in subsequent years. Some, though fewer, problems have been reported by owners of OptiMax engines, and Yamaha's HPDI still so new that it's too early to tell whether problems will emerge.

(The independent, subscription-supported publication *Powerboat Reports* among other things tracks complaints directed at motor manufacturers. The magazine has done numerous performance and efficiency tests of new-generation motors and has chronicled the Ficht odyssey. The journal's editors say that despite those problems already documented, they expect that in the long run DFI engines will prove more reliable than their carbureted predecessors, in part because many outboard ills result from carbon build-up, which is minimized by use of engine sensors and ECUs.)

Clearly, DFI engines require clean fuel, which is a problem in some locations, and a good fine-pore water separator filter between tank and engine is essential. While it often seems that the outboard industry is more interested in futuristic styling and "hole shot" speed, commercial users require durability and longevity. So, how long can you expect a new outboard to last? It's too soon to tell about the DFI units, but in general industry people say that well maintained outboards have been good for an average of about 1,500 engine hours, with some individual units going 2,500 or more. Unlike diesel builders, outboard motor companies don't test their engines for longevity, or if they do they don't release the results to the public.

Note the proviso "well-maintained." Most outboards don't last even that long because of overheating, lack of lubrication, or collision with hard objects, all the result of operator inattentiveness.

Honda does test its motors to ensure that they last at least 2,000 hours, but the company claims to have testimonials from commercial and military users who have put 9,000, 10,000 and even 15,000 hours on their motors. Honda acknowledges that such longevity is possible only with "ritualistic maintenance." Indications are that four-stroke engines are likely to outlast modern two-strokes, in part because of the better cooling of the four-stroke design, and superior lubrication of the closed crankcase. The builder's faith in the durability of its engines is reflected in part by the length of the standard warranty:

Honda's is three years on their biggest models, while OMC and Mercury cover the first two years. Yamaha covers their HPDI engines for two years and their four-strokes for three years. Suzuki and Tohatsu/Nissan warranties are three years and two years, respectively; both companies make carbureted and electronic fuel injection engines but don't currently make a DFI model. (These warranties do not apply to commercial users.) A nifty thing about outboards is that if you ever should actually wear one out, you can simply replace the powerhead. A rebuilt powerhead, which is something like an automotive short block, costs about a third of the price of a new engine. The powerhead is only half the story in outboards, however, and some makes are known for the strength and durability of their lower units. Many fishermen base their engine selections more on their experience with the overall durability of a company's motors than on specific technical details of a particular engine. Dealers report that, for example, despite all the good news concerning the clean and fuel efficient new models on the market, Alaska commercial fishermen are still picking Yamaha carbureted two-strokes over other motors by a wide margin. This may be the last model year those units (and many other carbureted two-strokes) will be available, since they don't meet the EPA emission standard for 2002.

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## **New Outboard Motor Selection**

*continued...*

Some users no doubt are buying up the last motors on the market to ensure that they can continue to use what they know and trust.

*(Editor's Note: Outboard Marine Corp. (OMC), maker of Johnson and Evinrude outboards, OMC sterndrives, and several brands of recreational boats, has filed for bankruptcy and laid off its plant workers. It's not clear whether the company will be sold and whether any buyer will resume production, but at this writing word in the industry is that OMC may not be honoring warranties or providing full parts support.)*

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## **Oregon Boater Educated**

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Is it an indicator of things to come? The Oregon State Marine Board has imposed mandatory boater education on nearly all classes of boaters in the state. The law requires operators of power-boats of greater than 10 h.p. and youths of ages 12 to 15 operating any kind of powerboat to obtain a card that shows they have completed a boating education course or passed an equivalency exam. The cards are being issued starting this month but won't be mandatory until 2003, when all boaters age 30 and younger will be required to have one. By 2009 all boaters will need them. The implication of the education requirement also establishes a minimum age of 12 for operating a motorboat in the state.

Boater education will be available through classroom courses offered by organizations such as the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadron, the American Red Cross and community colleges. Education will also be available as an internet course offered by the Marine Board. Experienced boaters can qualify for the card by passing a proctored equivalency exam. A few exemptions to the boater education requirement are allowed, including current holders of Coast Guard licenses, and commercial fishermen while commercial fishing, although commercial fishermen will need them when recreational boating.



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