

# IPHC Regulations Proposal Submission Form

**Proposal Title:** Require Circle Hooks In Area 2C For Fishermen Using Natural Bait.

**Year Proposed For:** 2007

**Submission Information (Please print or type)**

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**1. What is the definition and objective of the proposal?**

This proposal would require commercial and sport fishermen in AREA 2C to use circle hooks when they are using natural bait or natural bait and artificial lure combinations for halibut. The modified circle hooks used on some commercial auto-line systems would be acceptable.

Studies have shown that fish caught on circle hooks are more likely to survive being caught and released than those caught on J-hooks, because fish are less likely to swallow them and become "gut-hooked." While most commercial fishermen have switched to circle hooks, some sport fishermen "mooch" for halibut and salmon using "J" hooks. When these fishermen mooch over flat or sandy bottoms, an unacceptable amount of waste occurs as small halibut are caught and released. Some local estimates are as high as 10 small halibut/angler/day released before bag limits on salmon and halibut are met. This results in more than 2,000 small halibut swallowing a J hooks/day during the busy summer charter months off Sitka alone.

Many sport fisheries nationwide have implemented circle hook requirements to reduce release mortality. This proposal requires both commercial and sport fishermen to use circle hooks. With the high abundance of small fish in area 2C, insuring survival of released halibut is responsible stewardship which benefits the resource.

**2. Impacts: Describe who you think this proposed change might affect (include fishers, processors, agencies, and the public).**

**2a. Who might benefit from the proposed change?**

The resource through better survival of released fish. All user groups such as commercial, sport and subsistence fishermen will benefit through increased abundance in future years.

**2b. Who might suffer hardships or be worse off?**

Most Commercial fishermen already use circle hook in area 2C. Many sport fishermen troll for their salmon using artificial lures and already use circle hooks for halibut so angler success rates should not be impacted.

**3. Are there other solutions to the problem described above? If so, why were they rejected?**

No

**Please attach any other supporting materials. All items submitted by October 31, 2006 will be considered at the IPHC Annual Meeting. *Remember to include contact information and signature.***

The IPHC has information on circle hook vs. "J" hook mortality. There are numerous other studies on increased survival rates for fish released from circle hooks.

The IPHC stock assessment assumes that selectivity and mortality for commercial and sport fisheries is similar. This assumption rests on the fact that there is not a significant amount of mortality associated with catch and release sport fisheries. The current use of J hooks while mooching may invalidate this assumption. Requiring circle hooks would ensure that there is minimal mortality due to catch and release practices while sport fishing.

See other regions which have implemented circle hook requirements such as [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/docs/HMS\\_Release\\_Final.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/docs/HMS_Release_Final.pdf) for regulatory wording.