

Charter Halibut Stamps

Why charter halibut stamps?



In 2018, NMFS created the Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) to provide a way for the charter fleet to buy Area 2C and 3A commercial halibut quota to loosen day/size/bag limits under the Catch Sharing Plan. But quota costs money and the RQE needed a way to pay for it. Enter: **charter halibut stamps**.

What exactly are they?



Not actual stamps, that's for sure. Charter halibut stamps are similar to king salmon stamps, except: they aren't for salmon, there's no physical version (only digital), they're administered by NMFS/RAM instead of ADF&G, the cost and exemptions don't differ with Alaska residency status, there's no annual stamp option, anglers aren't responsible for purchasing them on their own, and the revenue goes towards purchasing quota for the charter fleet. So... maybe they aren't so similar after all.

Limitations



Stamp purchases are **nonrefundable** and **nontransferable** (NMFS will not issue refunds for unused stamps). Unused stamps do not transfer with a CHP sale and cannot be transferred to another eFish account. Once a stamp is validated, it cannot be transferred to any other CHP, even if that CHP is on the same account.

Stamp basics



Cost: \$20 per stamp (can be collected from clients separately, baked into the cost of a trip, covered by the charter operation, etc.).

Who needs them: Every angler 18+, one stamp per day they intend to catch and retain halibut on a charter trip, **except** when fishing GAF halibut **on days otherwise closed** to charter halibut fishing.

Who buys them: The CHP holder, or the charter operator/lessee, from the CHP holder's account. Anglers do not purchase their own stamps.

Where to buy them: Within the CHP holder's eFish account (more on that later).

When to buy them: Buy as many or as few as you want, as many times as you want, anytime during the season.

Unused stamps



Once purchased, unused charter halibut stamps:

- Live in the CHP holder's eFish account until validated by a charter operator
- Can be validated for use on any CHP associated with that eFish account
- Do not expire and will roll over year to year

Validating stamps



Stamps must be validated by charter operators in their ADF&G eLogbook before any gear goes in the water. Tip: waiting to validate until just before deploying gear avoids burning stamps on trips derailed due to weather, mechanical issues, or the ever-alluring sirens of the sea.

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Responsibility and Reconciliation



The legal CHP holder is ultimately responsible for making sure enough stamps were purchased to cover the number of stamps validated across all CHPs in their eFish account, regardless of who operated the boat(s).

NMFS will notify CHP holders by December 31 if more stamps were validated in ADF&G eLogbooks than were purchased in their account. CHP holders will have 30 days to reconcile their account. If it's not fixed, NMFS may deny annual CHP registrations and block transfers of CHPs, GAF, IFQ, or QS to or from the account until it is made current.

Accounting note: eFish will show how many stamps were validated by each individual CHP associated with the account, but it will not show who purchased how many stamps. CHP holders and charter operators should keep clear records of stamp purchases.

More info, contacts



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for NMFS' compliance guide & FAQs.

Contact NMFS Sustainable Fisheries for more info on the RQE, stamps, or charter management : 907-586-7228.

Contact NMFS Restricted Access Management Division (RAM) for help with eFish or stamp purchases: 907-586-7474.

Changes for CHP leasing: Lessors and lessees



Purchasing stamps: For leased CHPs, the legal CHP holder will need to either handle stamp purchases for their lessee(s) and/or give lessees eFish access by adding them as authorized users on the eFish account (NMFS has an eFish authorization form available on their website).

Risk: Because all unused stamps live in the CHP holder's eFish account, leasing CHPs now comes with new risks on both sides.

For lessors (CHP holders): If a lessee doesn't pay for enough stamps, the bill still lands on you. If your eFish account is in arrears, NMFS won't issue or transfer CHPs, GAF, IFQ, or QS until it's reconciled.

For lessees (operators): Until validated, stamps are not tied to a specific CHP or operator. If there are multiple CHPs associated with a single eFish account (the ownership limit is five), stamps bought by one operator could be used by someone else. Translation: you might pay for stamps only later to discover they've already been validated on a different CHP.

Leasing a CHP? We can help!



New regs mean more tracking, more money, more risk, more liability. It's never been more important to have a crystal-clear CHP lease agreement: who buys the stamps? who pays for them? when and how often should account reconciliation happen? what if there are discrepancies?

We're happy to help. Give us a call or shoot us an email if you have questions or you're ready to get started.