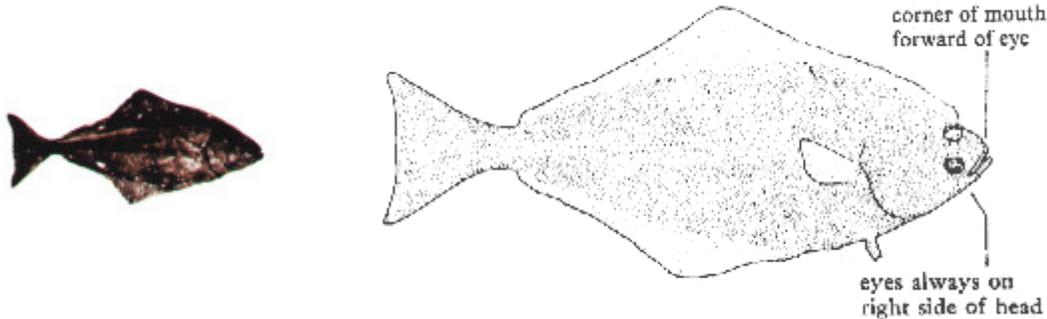


Halibut Comparison

Pacific Halibut



Family: Pleuronectidae (Right-eyed flounders)

Genus and Species: *Hippoglossus stenolepis*

Description: The body of the Pacific halibut is elongate, rather slender, diamond shaped and compressed. The head is elongate and the mouth is large. Both eyes are on the right side of the body. The color of the body is dark brown to black with fine mottling on the eyed side and white on blind side. The Pacific halibut can be distinguished from the California halibut by looking at the end of the jaw. In the Pacific halibut, it extends to the front edge of the eye, while in the California halibut it extends beyond the eye.

Range: Pacific halibut occur from Santa Rosa Island, California, to the Bering Sea and the Sea of Japan, at depths from 20 to 3,600 feet. In California, however, most are in nearshore areas from Fort Bragg northward, with the largest numbers being taken by anglers offshore north of California.

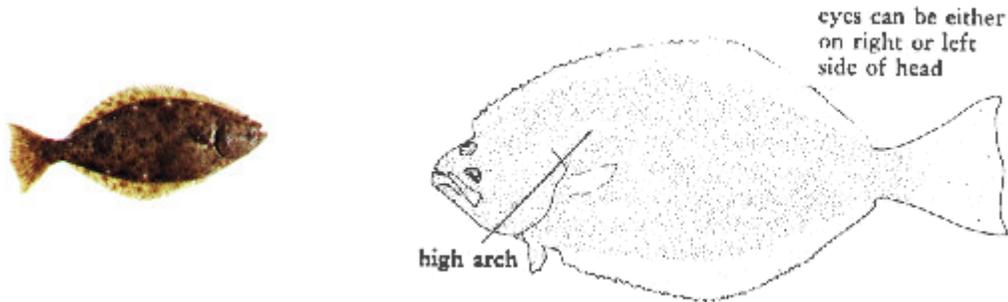
Natural History: The diet of the Pacific halibut includes fishes, crabs, clams, squid and other invertebrates. Females become mature at 8 to 16 years of age (average 12); however, males mature earlier. Spawning takes place from November to January. A large female of 140 pounds may produce as many as 2,700,000 eggs. The eggs and young drift casually with the currents gradually rising toward the surface as development proceeds. When first hatched, the young swim upright; however, they soon start to turn to their left side and the left eye migrates to the right side. By early spring, the transformation is complete and the young settle to the bottom in shallow waters.

Fishing Information: Recreational anglers have caught Pacific halibut up to 346 pounds, but California anglers would be hard pressed to find a Pacific halibut that large. The fish are typically caught on crab, shrimp, squid, and other invertebrates. Other Common Names: alabato, northern halibut, right halibut, genuine halibut, real halibut.

Largest Recorded: 8.75 feet; 507 pounds.

Habitat: Deep Sandy Environment

California Halibut



Family: Bothidae (Left-eyed flounders)

Genus and Species: *Paralichthys californicus*

Description: The body of the California halibut is oblong and compressed. The head is small and the mouth large. Although a member of the left-eyed flounder family, about 40 percent of California halibut have their eyes on the right side. The color is dark brown to black on the eyed side and white on the blind side. Their numerous teeth, very large mouth and a high arch in the middle of the "top" side above the pectoral fin make them easily distinguishable from other flatfish.

Range: California halibut occur from Magdalena Bay, Baja California, to the Quillayute River, British Columbia. A separate population occurs in the upper Gulf of California.

Natural History: California halibut feed almost exclusively upon anchovies and similar small fishes. At times they are observed jumping clear of the water as they make passes at anchovy schools near the surface. Males first mature when 2 or 3 years of age, but females do not mature until 4 or 5. A 5 year old fish may be anywhere from 11 to 17 inches long. Spawning takes place in relatively shallow water during the months of April through July.

Fishing Information: California halibut are pursued by anglers throughout the year, but the best landings usually occur in the spring. In central and northern California fishing is best in summer and early fall. At that time California halibut move into shallow water to spawn. Drifting for halibut is the most successful fishing method with anglers using live anchovies, queenfish, white croakers, shiner perch or Pacific mackerel as bait. Artificial lures work well at times although they are not always effective. California halibut are found over sandy bottoms. Other Common Names: flatty, fly swatter (small), barn door (large), alabato, Monterey halibut, chicken halibut, southern halibut.

Largest Recorded: 5 feet; 72 pounds.

Habitat: Shallow Sandy Environment