

# 2007 Valdez Halibut Derby Gets Underway

VALDEZ – With beautiful spring weather, the halibut grounds easily accessible in calm water and an increasing run of king salmon, anglers are already dropping their lines in Valdez. Several charter boats are operating and the fishing fleet is ready for the Halibut Derby. In 2005, David Bruno set a Valdez Fish Derbies record when he reeled in a 325.4 pounder, but Kevin Lincoln of North Pole beat the record last year with his 343.6 pound catch. A total of 16 halibut weighing more than 200 pounds were entered in the 2006 fish derbies so hopes are high for another season of big fish. Laura Saxe, a Valdez Fish Derbies committee member, said she predicts the derby winner will tip the scales at 345 pounds this year. “Of course no one can know what size the winning fish will be”, quipped Saxe. “but we can make predictions and hope we’re the one to catch it”.

The Valdez Halibut Derby runs May 26<sup>th</sup> through September 2<sup>nd</sup> and features weekly 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place prizes. The Silver Salmon Derby begins July 28<sup>th</sup> and will run through September 2<sup>nd</sup> with daily 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place prizes as well as Big Prize Fridays the first and last Friday of the derby. On Big Prize Fridays, the daily first place winner will receive an Inflatable Raft from Marita Sea & Ski worth \$1,399 in addition to the daily prizes. During the 2006 Silver Salmon Derby, Paula Groundwater of Valdez took home \$15,000 cash for catching the largest silver salmon of the season. Her salmon weighed in at 18.42 pounds.

There will be a \$500 prize for the vendor and operator selling the winning derby ticket in both derbies. Every derby ticket purchased for either the halibut or silver salmon derbies is entered for a chance to win a truck from Seekins Ford that will be on display throughout Valdez.

The biggest changes for the 2007 derbies are the weigh-in hours. The Valdez Fish Derbies weigh-in station, just up from the Harbor Masters office, is open 3 to 9pm during the halibut derby and will have extended hours from noon until 9pm when the Silver Salmon Derby begins July 28<sup>th</sup>. Derby tickets are available at the weigh-in station and at many sponsoring charters and businesses. Derby tickets for both the salmon and halibut derbies are \$10 each and are good for one day of fishing. A season ticket for either species is \$50. Derby tickets are good for free admission to the “Spawn ‘til Dawn” Derby Awards Party Sunday, September 2nd.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Valdez Women’s Derby is slated for Saturday, August 11<sup>th</sup> with an opening ceremony Friday, August 10<sup>th</sup> and the closing ceremony Saturday night. Paula Noel of Circle, Alaska was crowned Queen of the Silver Salmon Sisterhood at last year’s event when she caught a 17.50 pound silver salmon.

The Valdez Fish Derbies has a wealth of knowledge on their website [www.valdezfishderbies.com](http://www.valdezfishderbies.com).

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