

News Release



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IPHC Stock Assessment Charter Opportunities Extended Deadline

This announcement updates and supercedes the announcement dated December 15th, 1999. Changes include: 1) the Area 2B charter design, 2) the deadline for submitting bids in Areas 2B, 3A, and 3B, 3) minor modifications to all survey fishing gear requirements. Please contact the IPHC or consult our web page for design specifications in Area 2B and the survey fishing gear requirements.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is seeking commercial longline vessels to conduct setline surveys for Pacific halibut off British Columbia in Area 2B, the Gulf of Alaska in Areas 3A & 3B, and the Bering Sea in Areas 4A & 4D. Survey operations involve fishing standardized gear at specified stations during the summer months (June-August) and are designed to provide information used for halibut stock assessment. The only exception is the Area 2B charter, which includes an experiment in addition to the stock assessment survey. There are 7 charter regions available, each expected to take approximately 25 to 35 days to complete. Vessels may bid to complete up to 3 regions.

Areas 3A and 3B

One charter region is available in western Area 3A and three in eastern 3B. Vessel owners interested in these charters are asked to submit bids based upon the standard IPHC contract structure, i.e. a lump sum payment for each charter region plus 10% of halibut and 50% of revenues from selected species of bycatch. Vessel owners must request charter specifications and a Vessel Tender Form available from the IPHC office.

Area 2B

One charter region is available in the northern part of Area 2B. This charter will include fishing the standard stock assessment stations plus additional gear for a special bait comparison experiment. This experiment will entail setting a second string of gear berthed approximately 2 to 3 nmi from and parallel to each survey station. The addition of the bait experiment is expected to extend the length of the charter to approximately 40 to 45 days. Vessel owners interested in this charter are asked to submit bids based upon the standard IPHC contract structure, i.e. a lump sum payment for each charter region plus 10% of halibut and 50% of revenues from selected species of bycatch. Vessel owners must request charter specifications and a Vessel Tender Form available from the IPHC office.

Areas 4A and 4D

One charter area is available in the northern part of Area 4A and one in 4D. The Commission cannot independently fund surveys in these areas and is seeking proposals from commercial vessels providing creative, low cost ways of collecting the required data. Revenue from fish caught during the survey will be available as compensation, but vessel owners are cautioned that catch rates in these areas are expected to be relatively low. Vessels will be allowed to fish commercially when not survey fishing if they have IFQ and other valid permits. The Commission will pay for all ice and bait and may consider contributing toward the cost of fuel and gear. Proposals may be submitted following specifications available from the Commission.

Eligibility and Application Process – Applicable to all Charters

Vessels need not be licensed for halibut fishing in Canada or the U.S. to be eligible. The Commission is also not restricted as to the nationality of the vessels it charters for operation in any area as long as customs regulations are followed.

The IPHC will consider only those vessels with captains and crews that have halibut fishing experience. Vessels must have adequate deck space and suitable accommodations for two Commission employees (including women). The vessel must provide all associated equipment normally required for commercial halibut fishing as well as conventional fixed-hook setline gear standardized following the charter specifications.

Bids and proposals will be evaluated based upon 1) the experience of the captain and crew with halibut fishing, 2) the characteristics and safety features of the vessel, and 3) IPHC operating costs. The lowest or any bid will not necessarily be accepted. The Commission will contract according to its best interests.

Charter specifications and forms may be requested from the Commission or downloaded from the IPHC web site. For further information please contact Dan Randolph (ext. 213) or Kelly Van Wormer (ext. 214). Proposals for the 4A and 4D charters must be received at the IPHC office in Seattle no later than February 14th, 2000. Due to a problem with our mailing system, the deadline for the 2B, 3A, and 3B areas has been extended to March 13th, 2000.

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