

News Release



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IPHC Experimental Charter Opportunities Bait and Gear Experiments

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is accepting bids from longline vessels to conduct three experiments under two setline charters in Area 3A. These operations will occur during May and July 2000. The May charter will consist of one experiment and the July charter will consist of two experiments. The operations will be in addition to the Commission's stock assessment surveys, which also occur during this period.

The experimental design requires a total of 20-25 sets of gear for each of the three experiments. The daily operating procedures for both charters include setting four to five sets of gear between 7 am and 10 am and hauling after a minimum five-hour soak time. Efforts will be made to keep the catches at less than 2,000 pounds per set. In the interest of retaining the highest quality fish, all trips will be five to six days in length. Trips are not to exceed six days. The vessel(s) will operate from Homer or Seward.

May Charter

The May charter will investigate the possible effects of hook orientation and gangion length on halibut CPUE. The vessel will fish four 1,800' skates per set. The sets will consist of four alternating skate configurations: a 12" gangion through front of hook eye, a 12" gangion through back of hook eye, a 36" gangion through front of hook eye, and a 36" gangion through back of hook eye. The charter may be completed in one fishing trip, but fishing success or weather may require a second trip. The experiment will be limited to a total of 35,000 to 40,000 pounds of halibut. Bids will be evaluated based upon a percentage of halibut and bycatch revenues.

July Charter

This charter will conduct two experiments, preferably during July 2000. The first experiment will investigate the impact of salmon bait quality on halibut CPUE. The second experiment will investigate how varying hook and bait sizes effect halibut CPUE. In both experiments, the vessel will fish five 1,800' skates per set. The charter is expected to require two or three fishing trips of five to six days in duration. Each experiment is expected to catch between 35,000 and 40,000 pounds of halibut up to a maximum of 80,000 pounds. Revenue from halibut sales will be shared equally between the vessel and IPHC. If the total sales exceed 80,000 pounds, the vessel will receive 10% of the proceeds from these additional halibut.

Application Process - Applicable to Both Charters

Vessels need not be licensed for halibut fishing in Canada or the U.S. to be eligible. The Commission is not restricted as to the nationality of the vessels as long as customs regulations are followed. Vessels must apply separately for each charter.

The IPHC will consider only those vessels with captains and crews that have halibut fishing experience. Vessels must have suitable accommodations for two Commission employees (including women). Vessels will supply conventional fixed-hook setline gear built to Commission specifications, and all associated equipment normally required for commercial halibut fishing.

The IPHC will evaluate proposals based on (1) the proposed share of the revenue required by the vessel to conduct the experiment (for the May charter), (2) the experience of the captain and crew with halibut fishing, (3) the characteristics and safety features of the vessel, and (4) IPHC operating costs. The lowest bid or any application will not necessarily be accepted. One vessel may be awarded both charter areas. 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 Steve Kaimmer (ext. 210), Dan Randolph (ext. 213) or Kelly Van Wormer (ext. 214). Bids and proposals must be received at the IPHC office in Seattle no later than March 13th, 2000.

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