

News Release



P.O. Box 95009, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98145-2009

February 4, 2002

CHARTER ANNOUNCEMENT:

IPHC REQUESTS BIDS FOR 2002 SPECIAL EXPERIMENT CHARTERS

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is seeking commercial longline vessels to conduct setline research experiments on Pacific halibut in the Gulf of Alaska during April-August 2002. These operations will be in addition to the Commission's stock assessment surveys, which also occur during this period. Vessels will operate from Seward, AK, and will conduct fishing in the nearby waters of Area 3A. No fish will be sold from these special experiment charters. The vessel will be responsible for gear, fuel and other vessel expenses, and the IPHC will pay for ice, bait, and communications.

The 2002 IPHC special research will involve at least two charters. The first, to be conducted in early April, will initially catch and hold overnight approximately 100 tagged halibut for evaluation of immediate tag shedding rates. This procedure will be repeated for two to six days, with new fish caught for each overnight holding. Upon developing a satisfactory tag protocol, the vessel will catch and deliver approximately 80 live halibut to a shoreside holding facility in Seward, AK, for a longer-term tag-shedding study. We have a delivery window of April 9-17 for the first live fish delivery, and would like to schedule the first charter to begin on or around April 6.

The successful bidder must have a hold that can be flooded with seawater, and have the capability to circulate fresh seawater into the hold while the vessel is running.

The second charter will take place during May, 2002, and will be similar to the first charter. Further charters will be conducted later in the summer and fall as necessary to achieve project goals. Further charters will be conducted throughout the summer and fall to confirm results and address project specific goals and concerns

Each of the charters is expected to involve from 3 to 7 total fishing days.

Due to fishing schedules, and the uncertain timing of our later charters, we may award charters to more than one vessel during 2002. Our intention is to award the first two charters based on responses to this bid request but the results of the tagging experiments will determine how and when the subsequent charters will be awarded. We will encourage vessels to submit a bid based on a daily rate, clearly indicating times when they might be available, even if they do not anticipate being available for the first or second charter period.

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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) in addition to an experienced captain and crew, capable of fishing up to 40 skates of gear per day. Vessels will supply setline gear with 16/0 circle hooks, and all associated equipment normally required for commercial halibut fishing. The IPHC will evaluate proposals based on (1) total bid amount, in the form of either a lump sum payment, or daily-rate bids, (2) the experience and production of captain and crew with halibut fishing, (3) the characteristics and safety features of the vessel, and (4) IPHC operating costs. Preference may be given to vessels with local knowledge of fishing grounds, with previous live delivery experience, and/or with flexible schedules.

The Commission is not restricted as to nationality of the vessels it charters for operation in any area. Vessels need not be licensed for halibut fishing in Canada or the U. S. to be eligible. The lowest or any bid will not necessarily be accepted and the Commission will contract according to its own best interests.

Interested owners can contact IPHC for further information on charter specifications and to obtain tender forms. Sealed tenders must be received at the IPHC office in Seattle no later than noon on March 11, 2002. Interested parties should contact Steve Kaimmer (ext. 210), or Kelly Van Wormer (ext. 202).

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