

News Release



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

October 23, 2002

WINTER CHARTER PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) will be seeking commercial longline vessels to conduct setline research in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea between mid-January and late February of 2003. Charter specifications and bid tender forms will be available from IPHC on or about November 15th, 2002. A second IPHC news release will be issued as soon as those forms are available. Research will be conducted in three charter areas. One vessel will operate from either Ketchikan, Alaska or from Port Hardy or Prince Rupert, British Columbia and fish on the halibut spawning grounds around the Queen Charlotte Islands. A second vessel will operate from Kodiak, Seward, or Homer Alaska and fish the Portlock Bank region. A third vessel will operate from Dutch Harbor and fish the Misty Moon Ground, in the the Pribilof Canyon area. IPHC will bear all bait and ice costs; fuel costs will be borne by the vessel. Some halibut will be retained and sold by IPHC, and limited retention of Pacific cod and rockfish bycatch may be allowed. Revenue from fish sales will be shared in the following manner: the vessel will receive 10% of halibut revenues and 50% of bycatch revenues. Total landings of halibut are expected to be ~6,000-8,000 pounds per region.

The IPHC winter research will focus on stock identification issues. Tissue samples will be collected for genetic analysis and otoliths collected for aging the fish and for elemental fingerprinting. At least 60 sexually mature fish of each sex from each region will be captured. The charter will be considered completed when the requisite number of fish have been caught and sampled by the IPHC staff. Complete charters may last as long as 2-3 weeks depending upon the region, the initial difficulty in locating fish, and the frequency of individual trips dependent upon weather. Flat rate bids will be accepted for completion of the sampling requirements. Bids based on daily rates will not be entertained.

IPHC will consider only those vessels and captains who have a history of commercial halibut fishing. Vessels must have suitable accommodations for two Commission employees (including women) in addition to an experienced captain and crew, capable of fishing 30 or more skates of gear per day and handling potentially large quantities of halibut in adverse weather conditions. The IPHC will evaluate vessels primarily upon the experience of the captain and crew with longline fishing, winter fishing experience, the safety features of the vessel, and charter costs. Vessels must have a bait shed to protect personnel from weather; a shelter deck is desirable but not required. The vessels will provide setline gear as well as all associated equipment normally required for commercial halibut fishing. The Commission will replace all fishing gear lost in the course of the gear being put into the sea for fishing.

The Commission is not restricted as to the nationality of the vessels it charters for operation in any area and will contract according to its own best interests. Owners may contact IPHC prior to November 15th to express interest in the charters, and be placed on a mailing list for the specifications and tender forms as soon as they become available. Interested parties should contact Timothy Loher (ext. 212) or Gregg Williams (ext. 209) at (206) 634-1838 for further information.

Bruce M. Leaman
Executive Director
Phone: (206) 634-1838
Fax: (206) 632-2983
Web: www.iphc.washington.edu