

News Release



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

January 16, 2003

CHARTER ANNOUNCEMENT

IPHC Requests Bids for 2003 Stock Assessment Charters

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is seeking commercial longline vessels to conduct setline surveys throughout the range of Pacific halibut, from the southern Oregon border to the northern Bering Sea including the Aleutian Islands. These areas have been divided into 27 separate regions encompassing IPHC Areas 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, and 4D. Each region will require between 14 and 23 fishing days plus additional days for running, loading and offloading gear and fish, foul weather days, etc. Depending on the region, total charter duration can be expected to be 20 to 35 days. Vessels are encouraged to bid for multiple areas. All survey operations must be completed between May 26 and August 31 of 2003.

Survey operations in 2003 will involve fishing eight skates of standardized gear at all stations. The purpose of the setline survey is to collect standardized data used for halibut stock assessment. On the first three skates, all halibut will be measured, tagged with a passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag, and released. The purpose of the tagging study is to determine and confirm exploitation rates on halibut throughout their range. On the remaining five skates (the survey-dedicated skates), information such as age, sex, maturity, length, location, and CPUE will be collected from all halibut. Legal-sized halibut from survey-dedicated skates and some bycatch will be retained and sold by the IPHC to cover charter expenses.

Vessel owners interested in surveys are invited to submit bids based upon standard IPHC contract structure. Bids will be accepted based upon a lump sum payment for the completion of a region, plus 10 percent of the net halibut sales and 50 percent of selected bycatch sales. As the Commission does not have funds to survey the areas off Oregon and Washington (Area 2A), the western Aleutians (Area 4B) and portions of the Bering Sea (4A and 4D Edges), vessels are encouraged to submit alternate proposals to complete the work in these areas (see Charter Specifications). Vessels may bid up to three regions. Charter Specifications and Vessel Tender Forms may be requested from the Commission or downloaded from the IPHC web site.

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It is possible that upon review of the bid packages, total vessel costs may require us to cancel or postpone the passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging portion of the project. As a contingency for this scenario, we request that you provide us with two separate tender statements. The first based on the full description of the work (8 skates, 3 stations per day), and the second based on only the stock assessment component (5 skates, up to 4 stations per day). This will allow the selection process and program timelines to move forward should a change be necessary, without having to re-bid the whole project.

The IPHC will consider only those vessels with captains and crews that have halibut fishing experience. Vessels bidding for charter must have adequate deck space and suitable accommodations for two Commission employees (including women). The vessels must supply conventional fixed-hook setline gear built to Commission Standards (see Charter Specifications) as well as all associated equipment normally required for commercial halibut fishing.

Vessels need not be licensed for halibut fishing in Canada or the U.S. to be eligible. The Commission is not restricted as to nationality of the vessels it charters for operation in any area as long as customs regulations are followed. The lowest or any bid will not necessarily be accepted and the Commission will contract according to its own best interests. The IPHC will evaluate bids based on (1) the experience of captain and crew with halibut fishing, (2) the characteristics and safety features of the vessel, (3) vessel's availability, and (4) IPHC operating costs. Some weight is given to previous experience with IPHC charter work.

For further information please contact Claude Dykstra (ext. 213), Kelly Van Wormer (ext. 202) or Heather Gilroy (ext. 206). Bids must be received at the IPHC office **in Seattle by 12:00 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time) on Monday, March 3, 2003.**

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