

## *News Release*



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

February 3, 2003

### **CHARTER ANNOUNCEMENT: IPHC REQUESTS BIDS FOR 2003 PIT TAG DEMONSTRATION CHARTER**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is seeking a commercial longline vessel to conduct a setline research experiment on Pacific halibut in Area 3A during April 2003. The vessel will most likely operate from Kodiak or Seward, Alaska, and will conduct fishing in the nearby waters of Area 3A. Approximately 5/8 of the catch will be sold from this special tagging charter. The vessel will be responsible for gear, fuel and other vessel expenses, and the IPHC will pay for ice, bait, and communications.

This charter will involve one fishing trip, conducted preferably during the second or third week of April. The purpose of the charter is to simulate, and develop on-board protocols for, the addition of PIT tagging to the 2003 IPHC grid survey. Halibut caught on the first three skates of each set will be tagged with Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags and released. Halibut caught on the remaining five skates will be examined, dressed and iced in a manner consistent with our current grid operations. We estimate tagging 1,000 to 2,000 halibut. Although fishing locations will be determined in consultation with the successful bidder, we anticipate fishing a cluster of IPHC standard grid stations that will include areas with historically high catch rates. Since we are interested in the effect of the additional tagging skates on daily schedules and overall grid timing, vessels will be required to follow grid procedures. Grid procedures include setting no earlier than 5:00 AM, allowing a minimum five hours soak for all gear, and fishing actual grid locations, to incorporate running times into our simulation. The charter is expected to involve five full fishing days.

We request that vessel owners submit a bid based on completing five fishing days, fishing three 8-skate sets per day, and clearly indicate times when they are available during April. The IPHC will consider only those vessels with captains and crews that have halibut fishing experience. Vessels must have suitable accommodations for three Commission employees (including women) in addition to an experienced captain and crew, capable of fishing up to 24 skates of gear per day. Vessels will 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. The IPHC will evaluate proposals based on (1) total bid amount, in the form of a lump-sum bid, (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, and/or with recent IPHC grid survey experience.

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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 (Pacific Standard Time) on Monday, March 10, 2003. Interested parties should contact Steve Kaimmer (206) 634-1838 ext. 210, or Kelly Van Wormer (206) 634-1838 ext. 202.

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