

News Release



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

May 1, 2003

PIT TAG SHORESIDE SAMPLING INFORMATION:

IPHC NOTIFIES HALIBUT PROCESSORS AND ASKS FOR ASSISTANCE WITH SAMPLING PROGRAM

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is notifying halibut processors that it will be placing a new corps of samplers in selected ports beginning in May 2003 to scan for halibut that have been tagged with Passive Integrated Transponder, or PIT, tags. The selected ports include Vancouver, Port Hardy, Tofino, Ucluelet, and Prince Rupert/Port Edward (British Columbia); and Sitka, Petersburg, Juneau, Seward, Kodiak, Homer, Dutch Harbor, Adak and St. Paul in Alaska. Samplers will be using handheld electronic scanning devices to locate PIT tags in the heads of landed halibut. In most cases, the heads will be scanned after the fish have been headed and washed. The samplers will be asking that halibut heads be kept separate by vessel trip until scanning has been completed. At processing locations where fish are not headed, samplers will attempt to scan whole fish. Special sampling conditions may be requested and equipment built to aid the sampler in efficiently searching for tags. IPHC will pay for construction of any special sampling tables or aids. The goal is to search for tags in a manner that meets our scientific standards, yet ensures safe and efficient plant processing, and to be as unobtrusive as possible.

Scan samplers will be working independently from our port sampling program. The port sampling program has enjoyed success primarily because of the good will and cooperation between the IPHC and halibut processing industry. IPHC looks forward to continuing this same relationship as we learn more about the fishing exploitation rate in several regions of the halibut fishery. If you have any questions or concerns about our scan sampling program, please call (206) 634-1838 and contact Joan Forsberg (ext. 224) or Gregg Williams (ext. 209) for further details.

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