

News Release



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

June 16, 2003

CHARTER ANNOUNCEMENT: **IPHC REQUESTS BIDS FOR 2003 DOUBLE TAGGING CHARTER**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is seeking a commercial longline vessel to conduct a setline research experiment on Pacific halibut in Area 2B during September, 2003. The vessel will most likely operate from Prince Rupert or Port Hardy, British Columbia. Little 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. Bycatch species that are retained will be sold. All proceeds from the sale of bycatch will go to local fisheries management programs. None of the bycatch proceeds will go to the vessel.

This charter will involve one or more fishing trips, conducted during the early part of September 2003. The purpose of the charter is to tag and release 2,500 Pacific halibut. Halibut will be tagged with both an external spaghetti tag and an internal Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag. Eventual tag recoveries will be used to estimate shedding and failure rates for the PIT tags. Fishing locations will be determined in consultation with the successful bidder. Fishing schedules may follow the dictates of the weather and practicality. Gear may be left soaking during night hours if predation is not a factor (ie; sand fleas, dogfish). The intent is to tag fish in good condition, and soak times may need to be held to shorter durations to ensure high fish survival.

We encourage vessels to submit a bid based on tagging 2,500 fish, clearly indicating times when they are available. 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 40 skates of gear per day. Vessels will supply setline gear with 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 a lump sum payment, (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 or currently on IPHC grid charters.

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 August 11, 2003. Interested parties should contact Steve Kaimmer ((206) 634-1838 ext. 210), or Kelly Van Wormer ((206) 634-1838 ext. 202).

- END -

Bruce M. Leaman
Executive Director
Phone: (206) 634-1838
Fax: (206) 632-2983