

News Release



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

September 5, 2003

WINTER CHARTER ANNOUNCEMENT

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is seeking commercial longline vessels to conduct setline research in British Columbia, central Gulf of Alaska, and Bering Sea between early January and late February of 2004. Research will be conducted in four charter regions. One vessel will operate from either Ketchikan, AK, or Port Hardy or Prince Rupert, BC, and fish the halibut spawning grounds off the Queen Charlotte Islands. A second vessel will operate from Kodiak, Seward, or Homer and fish Portlock Bank. A third vessel will operate from Dutch Harbor and fish the Misty Moon Ground in the southeast Bering Sea. A fourth vessel will operate from Dutch Harbor or Adak and fish near Petrel Bank. IPHC will bear 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 as follows: 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 or less per region.

The research will focus on stock identification. Tissue samples will be collected for genetic analysis and otoliths collected for aging and elemental fingerprinting. At least 60 sexually mature fish of each sex will be captured from each region. Maturity will be determined by IPHC staff and based on each specimen's gonad development. Charters will be completed when the requisite number of fish have been caught and sampled by IPHC staff, the time period specified in the bid specifications expires, or the IPHC biologist deems the likelihood of obtaining catches to be negligible. Flat rate bids will be accepted for completion of sampling requirements; bids based on daily rates will be considered for the two Bering Sea charters ONLY.

Charter specifications and bid tender forms are available from IPHC via mail, and on our website (www.iphc.washington.edu). The IPHC will consider only those vessels and captains having a history of commercial longline fishing. Vessels must have accommodations for two Commission employees (including women) in addition to an experienced captain and crew, capable of fishing 25 or more skates per day and handling potentially large quantities of halibut in adverse weather conditions. The IPHC will evaluate vessels based 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. In addition, vessels must have adequate deck space for mounting an IPHC sampling shack (approximately 32 by 38 inches, by 74 inches tall). The vessels will provide setline gear and all associated equipment normally required for commercial halibut fishing. The Commission will replace all fishing gear lost in the course of being put into the sea for fishing.

The Commission is not restricted as to the nationality of vessels it charters in any region, and will contract according to its own best interests. The lowest or any bid will not necessarily be accepted. Interested owners can contact IPHC for more information on charter specifications and to obtain tender forms. Sealed tenders must be received at the IPHC office in Seattle no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, October 17, 2003. Interested parties should contact Timothy Loher (ext. 212) or Gregg Williams (ext. 209) at (206) 634-1838 for further information.

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