

News Release



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

February 4, 2004

CHARTER ANNOUNCEMENT

WANTED: LONGLINERS INTERESTED IN CHARTER WORK WITH THE IPHC!

IPHC Requests Bids for 2004 Stock Assessment Charters

The International Pacific Halibut Commission 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. The survey is divided into 27 separate regions encompassing IPHC Areas 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, and 4D. Each region will require between 11 and 18 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 16 to 32 days. Vessels are encouraged to bid for multiple areas. All survey operations must be completed between May 30th and August 31st of 2004.

The purpose of the setline survey is to collect standardized data used for halibut stock assessment. This information is used to study aspects of the halibut resource such as growth, distribution, area wide biomass, age composition, sexual maturity, and relative abundance of other species. In 2004 vessels fishing in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2B and 3A will fish eight (8) skates of gear per station, tagging and releasing all halibut caught on the first three (3) skates. On the remaining five (5) skates (the survey-dedicated skates), information such as age, sex, maturity, length, location, and CPUE will be collected from all halibut. Vessels in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2A, 2C, 3B, 4A, 4B and 4D will fish six (6) skates of gear at each station with standard survey protocol. Information such as age, sex, maturity, length, location, and CPUE will be collected from all halibut captured on these skates. 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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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 at least 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.

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 8th, 2004.**

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Bruce M. Leaman, Executive Director
Phone: (206) 634-1838
Fax: (206) 632-2983
Web: www.iphc.washington.edu