

# News Release



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

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## **WANTED: LONGLINERS INTERESTED IN CHARTER WORK WITH THE IPHC!**

### **Charter Announcement:**

### **IPHC Requests Bids for 2005 Stock Assessment and Experimental Fishing Charters**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission is seeking commercial longline vessels to conduct survey and experimental fishing between May 30<sup>th</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> 2005.

#### **Setline Stock Assessment Survey:**

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. The 2005 stock assessment survey will cover 27 regions, from the southern Oregon border to the northern Bering Sea including the Aleutian Islands. Survey vessels will fish seven (7) skates of standardized gear at each station following standard survey protocol. The survey has been designed so that the average vessel can fish approximately 3 stations per day. A maximum of 4 stations will be permitted per day. 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 20 to 32 days. Vessels are encouraged to bid for multiple areas. The Commission requests bids for multi-year contracts (mutually renewable for 3 years) for charter regions falling in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2B, 2C, 3A, and 3B.

#### **Gear Experiment Charter:**

The purpose of the gear experiment is to estimate the relative fishing power of gear with different hook sizes and spacings compared with the standard IPHC survey gear skates of 100 16/0 hooks, with 18-foot spacing. The increased use of combination gear for sablefish and halibut fishing within the commercial fishery requires the IPHC to determine the relationship of catching power by these different gear types. The 2005 experimental fishing will take place in IPHC regulatory Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska). The vessel will fish 2 strings of 12 skates per day. The strings will be comprised of randomized skates with different hook sizes and spacings. The experimental design requires the successful hauling of 44 strings of gear. If two strings are successfully completed each day, the charter could be completed in 22 fishing days. Total number of skates to be successfully hauled will be approximately 528 skates. Experimental trips will each include approximately 5 days of fishing. It is expected that approximately 40 charter days will be required to complete the work.

For both types of charters, information such as age, sex, maturity, length, location, and CPUE will be collected from all halibut captured. Legal-sized halibut from all skates and some bycatch will be retained and sold by the IPHC to cover charter expenses.

Vessel owners interested in surveys or the experimental charter 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 at [www.iphc.washington.edu](http://www.iphc.washington.edu).**

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 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.

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 Ames (ext. 202) for information concerning surveys, or Steve Kaimmer (ext. 210) for information concerning experimental fishing. Bids must be received at the IPHC office **in Seattle by 12:00 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time) on Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005.**

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