

News Release



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Charter Announcement: IPHC Requests Vessel Bids for Juvenile Halibut Collection Charters

The International Pacific Halibut Commission is seeking vessels to conduct sampling using small-scale trawls during the summer of 2007 in two charter regions: 1) northern Hecate Strait in British Columbia, and 2) the Copper River Delta in south-central Alaska. The vessels chartered need not be trawlers, as it has been demonstrated that the nets can be fished from a variety of other types of fishing vessels, such as small drum seiners. However, the captain and crew should have some experience fishing trawl gear. Each charter is expected to last 10-14 days. While the specific charter dates are flexible, the charter must be conducted between June 17 and September 8.

The purpose of the charters is to identify nursery grounds and collect early juvenile halibut (age-0 and -1) for studies of habitat use and migration. Juvenile halibut will be retained, sacrificed, and shipped to Seattle for analysis. Non-target bycatch will be returned to the water as quickly as possible. Sampling will involve fishing an otter trawl in 40-120 ft. of water over relatively smooth bottom. The trawls will be shrimp "try-nets": 25 foot headrope and body length, with tickler chain, and wooden otter doors of about 30 lbs. Bridle length is 60 feet, with bridles attached to a single towing warp; try nets do not need to be deployed with separate port and starboard lines. Nets will be provided by IPHC. Fishing will be conducted only during daylight hours. Some exploratory camera-sled work is anticipated. IPHC staff will contact the winning bidder to discuss the feasibility of such work aboard the vessel.

Vessel owners are asked to submit a bid based upon fixed daily rates, including crew and fuel expenses. Vessels must have appropriate winch systems for deployment and retrieval of small trawl gear, and one crewmember must always be available to assist Commission employees in their work. Vessel description and brief statement regarding the master's experience fishing trawl gear is required, along with a photo showing the layout of the deck and mechanical equipment. Vessels need not be licensed for halibut fishing to be eligible. The Commission is not restricted as to nationality of the vessels, but the vessel is responsible for compliance with all customs regulations. 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) experience of captain and crew with trawl fishing, (2) characteristics and safety features of the vessel, (3) dates on which the vessel is available for charter, and (4) IPHC operating costs.

For a copy of the charter specifications and bid forms, contact the IPHC offices or download from the IPHC web site. For additional information, please contact Tim Loher (ext. 212). Bids must be received at the IPHC office **in Seattle by 6:00 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time) on Monday, May 21, 2007.**

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