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**2021 IPHC Recreational Discard Mortality Study (RDMS)**

**Vessel Tender Specifications**

PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (26 FEBRUARY 2021)

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**PURPOSE**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is requesting tenders from charter fishing operations to conduct a study in May and/or early June 2021 to investigate Pacific halibut release practices and associated mortality. The purpose of the charter is to (1) evaluate the effects of fish handling practices on injury levels and their association with the physiological condition of captured Pacific halibut, and (2) investigate the effects of fish handling methods and associated injury level and physiological condition on post-release survival of Pacific halibut in the guided recreational fishery. This project will help refine current estimates of discard mortality rates (DMRs) in the guided recreational Pacific halibut fishery by investigating the relationship between hook release methods, injury levels, physiological condition, and survival post-release.

The 2021 IPHC Recreational Discard Mortality Study will require 5-7 days of guided recreational fishing in each of IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, and 3A. For IPHC Regulatory

Area 2C, operations are expected to occur out of Juneau, Sitka, or Ketchikan, and for IPHC Regulatory Area 3A, operations are expected to occur out of Homer or Seward. Vessels must be capable of carrying up to six (6) anglers. Crew will assist anglers (1 IPHC Secretariat, and up to 5 volunteer anglers) with gear setup and fish management aboard the vessel. Gear specifications and fish handling methods are described in Section B. All Pacific halibut captured during this project will be assessed for injuries, sampled for length, weight, blood, fat, and then will be tagged and released. A minimum sample size of 240 Pacific halibut from each site is being targeted, which is expected to take five to seven days of fishing. All other species that are caught will be required to be released with minimal injury. No fish will be retained for consumption or otherwise. The vessel must have adequate deck space for accommodating a motion compensating scale (approximately 0.54 m long x 0.40 m wide x 0.16 m tall (22" x 20" x 6.5") and fish measuring cradle (approximately 0.61 m x 1.22 m (24" x 48") that is positioned on top of the scale. Preference may be given to vessels capable of providing electrical power for a small centrifuge and an electronic tablet.

Vessel must be available to conduct the five to seven days of fishing during May, or early June, 2021, unless otherwise agreed by the IPHC and the vessel. It is essential that the vessel clearly indicates its availability.

Vessels are reminded to carefully consider all costs associated with performing the work and to budget these into their proposal(s).

**The IPHC will not be obligated to accept the tender with the lowest bid or any tender received and will contract according to its best interests.** Vessels will be rated using the following criteria:

1. Seaworthiness and general condition of the vessel and its equipment,
2. Vessel's availability within the schedule determined solely by the IPHC Secretariat,
3. Vessel captain's experience and fishing record,
4. Qualifications of the selected crew,
5. IPHC operating costs (tender amounts),
6. Previous interactions with the IPHC and its Secretariat, experience operating as a charter vessel, scheduling flexibility, and ability to take additional Secretariat are other factors to be potentially considered in the decision-making process.

Tenders must be submitted to the IPHC Secretariat no later than **16:59 Pacific on 19 March 2021**.

## **A. General Operations**

1. The IPHC is requesting vessels to complete five to seven days of guided recreational fishing, targeting a minimum of 240 fish, in each of IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A between May and June of 2021. Operations may submit a tender for one or both IPHC Regulatory Areas.
2. Vessel must supply traditional recreational fishing gear, with size 16/0 circle hooks and crew must be experienced in releasing Pacific halibut from the gear by reversing the hook or twisting it out with a gaff.

## **B. Project description**

The 2021 Pacific halibut discard mortality study is comprised of guided recreational fishing for Pacific halibut employing gear and practices (hook release, fish handling) commonly used by the guided sector participants. The project will occur at two sites, one in IPHC Regulatory Area 2C (southeast Alaska) and one in IPHC Regulatory Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska). At each site, a minimum of 240 fish will be captured, preferably crossing a large range of sizes targeting each of four quartiles from recent catch statistics. For instance, in IPHC Regulatory Area 2C, 60 fish must be targeted in each of the following size classes:  $\leq 68$  cm, 69 cm – 77 cm, 78 cm – 93 cm,  $\geq 94$  cm (or  $\leq 26.67$ ", 27" – 30.5", 31" – 36.5",  $\geq 37$ "). In IPHC Regulatory Area 3A, 60 fish must be targeted in each of the following size classes:  $\leq 61$  cm, 62 cm – 69 cm, 70 cm – 83 cm,  $\geq 84$  cm (or  $\leq 24$ ", 24.25" – 27", 27.25" – 32.75",  $\geq 33$ "). Fishing is expected to take five (5) fishing days, with seven (7) days booked, which will allow for possible weather days. If 240 fish have not been captured by the end of the fifth day, an additional 2 days of fishing will be completed, if available within the seven days booking window. If 240 fish are captured before the end of five days, fishing will continue until the end of the fifth day to increase the overall sample size. Vessels should be capable of carrying six (6) volunteer fishers, including one IPHC Secretariat. All Pacific halibut will be measured, weighed, evaluated for injuries, sampled for blood and fat content, scored a survival viability (as per the standards used by the NOAA Fisheries observer program), and subsequently tagged and released. All released Pacific halibut will be tagged with a conventional wire cheek tag and 80 of the wire-tagged Pacific halibut will also be tagged with an archival pop-up satellite reporting tag at one of the sites.

Hooks shall be restricted to #3 (16/0) circle hooks from a common manufacturer. Pacific halibut shall be brought aboard the vessel by pulling up with the line/hook or by hand net. Fish shall be released by reversing the hook or twisting it out with a gaff. After sampling and being tagged, Pacific halibut shall be returned to the ocean by supporting them by the head and tail.

## **C. Vessel requirements**

Prior to tender acceptance, the IPHC Secretariat may need to inspect the vessel and determine the adequacy of deck space, accommodations, and confirm that the vessel meets all minimum requirements.

1. The vessel must be mechanically sound in all respects, seaworthy for fishing in the designated areas, and suitably equipped for fishing Pacific halibut with recreational gear.
2. The vessel must supply recreational fishing gear (poles, reels, line, rigging) for up to six (6) active fishers (including IPHC Secretariat).
3. The vessel must have adequate deck space to allow the IPHC Secretariat to carry out their duties. Space is needed to accommodate a motion compensated scale (54 cm (22") length, 40 cm (20") width, 16 cm (6.5") high) and accompanying fish measuring cradle (121.5 cm (48") length and 52 cm (21") width) that is placed on top of the scale. The location of the cradle and scale sampling area must not obstruct safe fishing operations and must be close to the live fish landing area. With the application, please provide a deck diagram indicating proposed scale/cradle position and location for data recording.

4. The vessel must have a functioning marine head that can be used in privacy.
5. Preference may be given to a vessel with capability of freezing samples (~-20C; -5F).

#### **D. Electronic equipment minimum requirements**

1. VHF radio/ single side-band unit for reliable communications at sea.
2. Navigation equipment for reliable position reporting (radar, GPS).
3. Two depth sounders for reliable depth records.
4. Inverter or other 110 AC to provide power to the sampling station for powering a tablet computer, and a small centrifuge.

#### **E. Gear requirements**

The vessel owner shall provide and replace, as needed, all gear and associated equipment necessary for recreational hook and line fishing for Pacific halibut in the location proposed.

1. Rods and reels shall be of the type and style capable of fishing for Pacific halibut in the area of interest.
2. All rigs shall be uniformly fitted with #3(16/0) circle hooks (Mustad or equivalent).
3. Fishing gear shall be maintained such that the gear being fished shall be consistent over the course of the experiment and be comparable to common gear used in the guided recreational fishery. The IPHC shall provide small temperature/data logger (s) for attachment to the anchor, by the vessel crew.
4. Electric reels may be used but are not required. Usage will be tracked by fish.

#### **F. Bait**

The vessel owner will bear the cost of all bait purchased before or during each charter and shall also arrange for bait to be shipped to or to be available in the intended ports of embarkation.

#### **G. Crew requirements**

The number of persons required to maintain and bait recreational gear, as well as to assist with the landing of Pacific halibut as it is caught, depends on the skill and professionalism of the crew as a whole. Vessel owners are cautioned to consider the ability of individuals assigned to gear maintenance, baiting, and fish handling, and to select crewmembers with the best possible skill and motivation levels. Vessels and guides shall be certified and outfitted for fishing in the guided recreational Pacific halibut fishery.

1. The vessel owner will be solely responsible for providing at all times during the charter a fully qualified and experienced crew. The necessary crew must consist of at least a vessel captain plus one additional crew member. Less than that complement of crew may result in your operation being excluded from consideration.
2. The vessel captain must possess any required U.S.A. Coast Guard or maritime licenses or certifications applicable to the vessel and area of operation.
3. The vessel captain shall possess any required federal or state permits required for operating a charter Pacific halibut recreational service.

4. The vessel captain shall have a minimum of three years of guided recreational fishing experience as a master of a comparable-sized vessel and be competent in the use of modern navigational and fish-detecting equipment.
5. The vessel captain is responsible for being knowledgeable in and adhering to all state, federal and international laws pertaining to recreational fishing. This includes fishing regulations, area closures (rockfish, sea lion rookeries, etc.), state or federal No Discharge Zones (sewage/blackwater), MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) and the COLREGs (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea).
6. At least one crew shall have a minimum of two years of guided recreational fishing experience, and be currently registered as a sport fishing guide with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG).
7. The vessel captain and crew will be responsible for all phases of gear maintenance, baiting, and assistance as necessary with the fishing operations.
8. The crew will be responsible for loading all vessel supplies prior to, during, and after the charter.
9. All catch must be carefully released from the hook. This includes shark and skate species as well. Rockfish must be returned to depth with a descender device to minimize mortality due to barotrauma.
10. Fishing plans must be mutually agreeable to the IPHC Secretariat and the vessel captain. The vessel captain will communicate to the IPHC Secretariat on a daily basis all changes to fishing plans and contingencies as they develop.
11. All vessel personnel are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. If a conflict arises, the IPHC will reevaluate staffing options and work with the vessel owner, vessel captain, and crew to resolve the conflict.
12. The vessel captain and crew shall create a working environment that is free from intimidation and harassment (verbal, physical, or sexual). Please refer to [Appendix I](#) for further information regarding harassment and professional work environments.
13. All vessel captains and crewmembers must be acceptable to the IPHC. The IPHC may require the replacement of any crewmember during the charter if found unacceptable in skill, experience, or behaviour.

## H. Safety

The vessel captain is responsible for all matters relating to safety of personnel, the vessel, and equipment operation. The vessel captain will adhere at all times to navigational rules whether it be during fishing operations, running, drifting, or when at anchor. He/she (or vessel captain's representative) shall review safety procedures and equipment with the scientific party at the beginning of the charter and after any crew change.

1. Vessels licensed in the U.S.A. must possess a current U.S. Coast Guard inspection sticker. The vessel shall be mechanically sound in all respects, completely seaworthy, and comply with all applicable safety regulations.
2. All safety equipment (such as life rafts) must have passed inspection requirements and be of sufficient capacity for the vessel captain, crew, and all personnel aboard, including IPHC Secretariat.
3. Vessel shall ensure sufficient capacity of personal survival equipment (personal floatation devices, immersion suits, etc.) for all personnel aboard the vessel.

4. The IPHC will provide immersion suits, personal EPIRB's, and personal floatation devices for its employees.
5. A Category I 406 MMHZ EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) must be affixed to the exterior of the vessel in a manner approved by the U.S. Coast Guard.
6. No alcohol consumption or illegal drug use is allowed aboard IPHC chartered vessels, including days at sea and anchor days, as well as port days or when the vessel is at the dock. This is a no tolerance policy which will be in effect at all times the vessel is on charter, and violation of this policy is sufficient cause for contract termination, and shall result in a five (5) year exclusion from future IPHC contract eligibility for the vessel and vessel captain.
7. While shore excursions are not prohibited under IPHC contract, vessels are reminded that such activities fall outside of the mandates of the contracted work, and that the vessel is responsible for the safety of all concerned during such activities and may not be fully protected by insurance policies during non-contracted activities. It is required that float plans be completed before making shore excursions, that all participants wear approved floatation devices, skiffs be fully stocked with a boat kit (emergency oars, bailer, sea anchor, rope etc.), and that the group carry a fully stocked shore kit, hand held radio, and first aid kit.

## **I. Owner's responsibilities**

1. The owner will be responsible at their own expense to maintain the vessel, its engine(s), machinery, equipment, and fishing gear in good and seaworthy condition.
2. The owner will be responsible to provide lube oil, grease, filters, other engine-room supplies, and all other vessel operating supplies normally required for guided recreational fishing operations.
3. The owner will be responsible for the purchase of all fuel required to operate the vessel for the duration of the charter period.
4. The owner shall ensure that the operation is in possession of a current Charter Halibut Permit (CHP) registration with NOAA Fisheries.
5. The owner will be responsible for providing a working environment that is free from intimidation and harassment (verbal, physical, or sexual). Please refer to [Appendix I](#) for further information regarding harassment and professional work environments.
6. The owner agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the IPHC from any and all claims by whomsoever brought for loss, damage or personal injury from any cause arising out of the charter of the vessel, including but not limited to, claims arising out of the negligence of the IPHC, its agents or employees.
7. As part of the bid, the owner shall submit a disclosure statement specifying any conviction for the violation of any fishing regulations pertaining to the Pacific halibut fishery within the past five (5) years by the vessel's owner, vessel captain or crew.
8. The owner shall be responsible for the payment of all crew salaries, including any bonuses, and for the payment of all payroll taxes on salaries, such as income tax, unemployment, workers compensation, and other taxes as applicable.

9. The owner shall be responsible for all fees incurred arising out of the operation of the vessel including, but not limited to, harbour dues, moorage, watchman costs and environmental fees.
10. Prior to commencement of the charter, vessel owners shall provide to the IPHC a copy of the insurance policy verifying that all IPHC Secretariat and volunteer fishers aboard the vessel for the purposes of this chartered activity are included on the vessel's P&I insurance policy. The policy must provide protection with minimum limits of \$1,000,000 USD. The IPHC will not reimburse the owner for any premiums incurred to meet their obligations under this paragraph. Owners should incorporate these costs into their Tender.
11. The vessel owner agrees to maintain at its sole cost and expense throughout the period of the charter hull and machinery insurance to the full market value of the vessel with trading warranties appropriate to the charter, said policy to include a waiver of subrogation against the IPHC. The vessel owner will provide proof that the above coverage and subrogation is in place prior to the commencement of the charter.
12. The vessel owner agrees to maintain at its sole cost and expense throughout the period of this charter pollution/environmental hazard insurance with minimum limits commensurate to the size of the vessel, but with minimal coverage of \$1,000,000 USD (\$5,000,000 USD preferred). Prior to commencement of the charter, vessel owners shall provide to the IPHC a copy of the operations' pollution/environmental hazard insurance policy that is effective through the period of this charter.

## **J. IPHC responsibilities**

1. The IPHC will provide all scientific sampling supplies and equipment.
2. The IPHC will ensure all scientific permits for this work are in place.
3. The IPHC will pay the owner the specified amount, 50% upfront and the remaining 50% upon successful completion of the contracted work.
4. The IPHC may terminate the charter at the nearest port if for any reason the owner fails to render the required services or the vessel and/or crew do not meet the specifications as stated on the Vessel Tender Form.

## **K. Fish caught during the charter**

1. All catch, including shark and skate species, will be required to be carefully released from the hook with minimal injury.
2. Rockfish must be returned to depth with a descender device to minimize mortality due to barotrauma.
3. **No fish will be kept** during the course of this charter.

## **L. Post-award and post-charter meetings**

1. Upon the award of a contract and prior to the start of the charter, a post-award meeting will be held at a mutually agreeable time to discuss logistics and issues relating to the charter.
2. After completion of the charter, a post-charter debriefing will be held. The purpose of the debriefing is to provide the vessel operator with a vessel performance evaluation and provide feedback for future charters. The vessel operator will also

have the opportunity to assess and evaluate the IPHC Secretariat and/or charter methods.

## M. Tender procedures

1. The IPHC will consider tender submissions based upon a lump sum for the successful completion of a minimum of five fishing days (up to a maximum of 7 days) targeting a minimum of 240 fish. Submissions should identify if they do or not include accommodations.
2. All submissions should specify the dates they are available for charter.
3. All submissions must be electronic: [RDMS VESSEL TENDER FORM](#).
4. The IPHC will not be obligated to accept the lowest submission or any submission received and will contract according to its best interests. Vessels will be rated using the following criteria: seaworthiness and general condition of the vessel and its equipment, the vessel's availability, the vessel captain's experience and fishing record, the qualifications of the selected crew, and IPHC operating costs. Scheduling flexibility may be a possible factor in the decision-making process.
5. Submissions must be electronically submitted no later than 16:59 (Pacific Daylight Time) on 19 March 2021.
6. If you have any questions, please contact the IPHC Secretariat.

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## **Appendix I: Anti-Discrimination and Harassment**

The IPHC is committed to providing a work environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation. To that end, the IPHC has adopted this Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy, which is intended to go beyond what is required by law. In other words, the Policy prohibits workplace conduct that may not necessarily rise to the level of conduct that is prohibited by law. The IPHC values and respects the rights and dignity of each person and will not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on sex (including pregnancy, child birth and related medical conditions), race, color, national origin, citizenship status, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law. The IPHC also will not tolerate unlawful retaliation.

### **Zero Tolerance**

Any employee (or Vessel Owner, Captain or crewmember while a vessel is under contract with the IPHC) who is determined by the IPHC to have engaged in a violation of this policy will receive the appropriate level of discipline, up to and including termination, even for the first offense, depending on the circumstances.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, child birth and related medical conditions), national origin, age, disability, citizenship status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or any other characteristic protected by law is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to the following: hiring, placement, upgrading, transfer, demotion or promotion, treatment during employment, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, benefits, layoff or discharge, recruitment or solicitation of employment and all other terms and conditions of employment.

### **Harassment**

Harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment is also strictly prohibited. Harassment based on sex, or other characteristic protected by law, may take the form of verbal, visual, and/or physical conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to: speaking to or treating an employee or any other individual in a demeaning or degrading manner that exhibits a dislike for, or hostility, or hatred toward, an individual (or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates) because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, child birth and related medical conditions), national origin, age, disability, citizenship status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or any other characteristic protected by law.

### **Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:**

- Slurs, jokes, epithets, or similar comments, whether oral or written (e.g. graffiti) that are based on a particular protected characteristic;
- Comments that evidence a stereotype applicable to a particular protected characteristic;
- Criticism or stricter scrutiny directed at an individual that is motivated by the individual's protected characteristic;

- Offering or implying an employment-related reward (such as promotion or raise) in exchange for sexual favors or submission to sexual conduct or romantic advances;
- Threatening or taking of a negative employment action (such as termination, demotion, or denial of a leave of absence) if sexual conduct or romantic advances are rejected;
- Unwelcome sexual advances or repeated flirtations, or continuing to express sexual or inappropriate interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome;
- Unwelcome intentional touching of another person or other unwanted intentional physical contact (including patting, pinching, or brushing against another person's body);
- Unwelcome whistling, staring, or leering at another person;
- Asking unwelcome questions or making unwelcome comments about another person's sexual activities, dating, personal or intimate relationships, or appearance;
- Unwelcome sexually suggestive or flirtatious gifts, notes, e-mail, texts, voicemail, posts or other communication on social media sites;
- Conduct or remarks that are sexually suggestive or that demean or show dislike for a person or class of persons because of a protected class (including jokes, pranks, teasing, obscenities, obscene or rude gestures or noises, slurs, epithets, taunts, negative stereotyping, threats, or blocking of physical movement);
- Displaying or circulating pictures, objects, or written materials (including graffiti, cartoons, photographs, calendars, magazines, figurines or novelty items) that are sexually suggestive or that demean or show hostility to a person because of a protected characteristic;
- Using sexual behavior to control, influence, or directly affect another employee or job applicant;
- Any conduct based on sex, or other characteristic protected by law, that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

## **Reporting Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation**

Any employee (or Vessel Owner, Captain or crewmember while a vessel is under contract with the IPhc) who believes that he/she has been the subject of any form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation by anyone at the IPhc or by any person who does business with the IPhc, or who has witnessed harassment, discrimination or retaliation, should immediately report the matter to his or her supervisor, Human Resources, or the Assistant or Executive Director.

All allegations of discrimination, harassment or retaliation will be investigated. The investigation will be conducted on a confidential basis and sensitive information will be disclosed on a need-to-know basis. There will be no retaliation against any employee (or Vessel Owner, Captain or crewmember while a vessel is under contract with the IPhc) who reports such conduct or participates in the investigation in good faith. Any attempt to interfere with an investigation or retaliate against an employee (or Vessel Owner, Captain or crewmember while a vessel is under contract with the IPhc) for reporting conduct or participation in an investigation may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination, even for the first offense.

Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of possible discrimination or harassment must immediately advise the Assistant Director and/or Executive Director so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner.

**Retaliation**

The IPHC prohibits retaliation against an employee (or Vessel Owner, Captain or crewmember while a vessel is under contract with the IPHC) who has made a report of alleged discrimination or harassment or who has participated in certain investigations or administrative proceedings relating to allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.