



25 May 2017

### **IPHC NEWS RELEASE 2017-10**

#### **REPRODUCTIVE ASSESSMENT COLLECTION CHARTER ANNOUNCEMENT**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is seeking commercial longline and research vessels to conduct monthly Pacific halibut collection charters from July 2017 through May 2018. Collections will be confined to the greater Portlock Bank region, bounded between the following points (58°03'N, 152°44'W), (58°55'N, 151°58'W), (57°45'N, 148°41'W), and (56°59'N, 150°04'W) in the Gulf of Alaska. Fishing is to occur between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. The objective of the monthly charters will be to obtain reproductive samples (ovaries, testes, blood, ultrasound imagery, weights) from a total target number of 100 Pacific halibut (up to 50 males (>70cm), up to 50 females (>90 cm). The vessel must be capable of taking up to two (2) IPHC field biologists for the data and sample collections. Vessel crew may set as much gear as they feel is necessary to achieve the sampling targets; however, once the targets are met, all remaining gear must be hauled and all fish released with minimal injury. It is expected that during most months the targets likely can be obtained in 2-3 fishing days. IPHC will bear bait and ice costs; fuel costs will be borne by the vessel. Unless combined with quota fishing, some Pacific halibut will be retained and sold by IPHC, and limited retention of Pacific cod and rockfish bycatch may be allowed.

The main purpose of this study is to document and describe temporal changes (changes over time) in gonadal (sex organs) morphological characteristics as well as the levels of reproductive hormones and physiological condition throughout an entire annual reproductive cycle in order to improve and update our estimation of maturity in this species. Understanding the reproductive biology of Pacific halibut is important for estimating the reproductive potential and spawning biomass of the stock and, consequently, for optimizing the management of the species.

Charter specifications and bid tender forms are available from IPHC via mail and on our website ([www.iphc.int](http://www.iphc.int)). The IPHC will consider only those vessels and captains having a history of commercial longline fishing. Vessels must have accommodations for two IPHC employees (including women) in addition to an experienced captain and crew, capable of fishing 25 or more skates per day and handling 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 or a sheltered space for sample collection and data recording and to protect personnel from weather. The vessels will provide setline gear and all associated equipment normally required for commercial halibut fishing. The IPHC will replace all fishing gear lost in the course of being put into the sea for fishing.

The IPHC 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 (Pacific Daylight Time) on Monday, 12 June 2017. Interested parties should contact Josep Planas (ext. 7687), Timothy Loher (ext. 7674), or Claude Dykstra (ext. 7662) at (206) 634-1838 for further information.

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