

Request for Bids

Evaluation of the Potential to Use West Coast Recreational For-Hire Sector Data to Produce a Catch per Unit Effort Index of Abundance for North Pacific Albacore Tuna

1. SCOPE

1.1 This project focuses on sampling of the recreational for-hire fleet targeting North Pacific albacore and other highly migratory species (HMS) from ports on the U.S. west coast. The objective of the project is to design a data collection pilot program that would employ onboard observers, enhanced dockside sampling, or a combination of both to determine what long-term modifications to current sampling programs would be necessary to produce more reliable estimates of catch and effort from the fleet.

Analysts with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center have identified the west coast HMS for-hire fleet (also called the Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) fleet) as a potential data source to develop a consistent and reliable index of relative abundance for North Pacific albacore tuna, which could represent a valuable addition to data for stock assessment.

The first phase of the project will involve a review of existing programs to determine the utility of the current database and to identify what additional data might be needed along with developing alternative strategies for collecting it. Since HMS for-hire trips tend to depart and return from port outside of regular sampling hours, they are not sampled by state marine recreational survey programs at the same coverage levels as other recreational trips on the coast. Because of this coverage issue, current catch and effort estimates produced by the state marine recreational survey programs in Washington, Oregon, and California may not provide a sufficiently complete sample for developing an index of abundance.

In addition to the state survey programs, there is a logbook data collection program that has been mandatory since 2005. The logbooks collect catch and effort data from the for hire fleet, but there are questions about the completeness and accuracy of the data which is obtained. To date, the information from the logbooks has not been used in any manner by the stock assessment scientists.

The results of the analysis of existing programs will be used to develop a pilot sampling program to collect the data needed to test hypotheses about alternative potential enhancements to current sampling programs. The pilot program would help identify what enhancements to current data collection would be needed to develop the abundance index, and whether there is a cost-effective way to collect this additional data.

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) has received funding for this project from the National Marine Fisheries Service Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). PSMFC integrates state and federal marine recreational fishery sampling efforts on the U.S. west coast through the Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN). The data collection pilot program design produced by this project will be submitted for the next round of MRIP funding in fiscal year 2010.

The project will involve working with a regional design team consisting of stock assessment and marine recreational survey experts from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), National Marine Fisheries Service. The project may also involve advisors from the for-hire fleet to provide the regional design team with information on fishing operations.

2. WORK REQUIREMENTS

PSMFC is seeking a qualified consulting statistician that can perform the following work:

- 2.1 Review and analyze current recreational sampling methodologies and coverage of the west coast HMS for-hire fleet, with a focus on identifying any data gaps which would need to be filled in order to develop a CPUE index of abundance. Component surveys include the WDFW Ocean Sampling Program (OSP), ODFW Ocean Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS), CDFG California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS), and the mandatory logbook program.
- 2.2 Work with experts at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center to understand North Pacific albacore biology and data needs for developing an index of abundance.
- 2.3 Communicate and coordinate with members of the Regional Design Team, including through one or two workshops.
- 2.4 Identify and analyze alternative, and ideally, scalable designs for the data collection pilot program including evaluation of the costs and benefits of different levels of onboard observer and enhanced dockside sampling coverage and geographic scope of data collection.
- 2.5 Together with Regional Design Team, recommend a final data collection pilot program design to be submitted as a FY 2010 MRIP project proposal.
- 2.6 Write-up recommendations and analysis in a report to be submitted to PSMFC and the RecFIN.

3. TRAVEL

3.1 The project will involve travel to workshops with the Regional Design Team in the following two locations:

3.1.1 Portland, OR

3.1.2 San Diego, CA

4. DELIVERABLES

4.1 Written report that identifies a recommended data collection pilot program design and includes evaluation of alternative designs with cost estimates.

5. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

5.1 The period of performance will be from initiation of the contract to December 1, 2009. The contract provides for payment of \$20,000 for analysis, report preparation, and related expenses. The Regional Design Team workshops will be funded separately.

6. Submission of Bids

6.1. Deadline for bids is: **30 September 2009**.

6.2 Include your qualifications to perform the work described in Section 2, Work Requirements.

6.3. Bids must be submitted to:

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

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