

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Alaska Halibut CHP Survey



Actual Issue Date: June 26, 2014

Deadline for submission: August 1, 2014

Proposal Schedule

June 26, 2014	Request for proposals issued and distributed
July 11, 2014	Deadline for written questions Direct written questions to contracting@psmfc.org
July 18, 2014	Responses to written questions will be provided
August 1, 2014	Deadline for submission of proposals Proposals submitted by e-mail to contracting@psmfc.org
August 8, 2014	Project finalists selected

Request for Proposals

The Alaska Halibut CHP Holder Survey

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) and Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) are requesting proposals for a survey research project that collects information on Alaska charter halibut permit (CHP) holders' attitudes and preferences toward aspects of the recently-implemented Alaska Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) (see <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/halibut/sport.htm>). CHP holders are typically saltwater sport fishing charter business owners who conduct business in one of two International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) management areas, Area 2C (Southeast Alaska) and Area 3A (Southcentral Alaska). While CHP holders operate within the State of Alaska, many travel or have residences outside of Alaska during the off-season.

The survey is expected to be a sequential mixed-mode survey with both mail questionnaire and a telephone component. AFSC will develop the mail questionnaire. The contractor will be responsible for (a) administering the full implementation to the **population** of CHP holders (between 600-700); (b) entering and cleaning the data; and (c) writing a summary report. The project will be managed by an economist at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (hereafter AFSC).

The contractor's responsibility with regard to survey implementation will include printing mail questionnaires, envelopes, cover letters, and all other supporting materials associated with survey administration; providing phone support with trained operators to answer questions regarding the survey; administering the mail-telephone survey; entering survey data; ensuring data quality; delivering data; and writing a report.

The project is subject to NMFS successfully receiving U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval to conduct the data collection subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. OMB approval is currently being pursued.

Task 1

Administering the Full Survey Implementation (January 2015 – June 2015)

The contractor is responsible for administering the full survey implementation. Pending OMB approval, the full survey implementation is expected to occur between January and June 2015. This window of time encompasses the Alaska charter fishing off-season. Previous NMFS surveys of this population suggest that surveys conducted in the off-season stand the best chance of optimizing response rates, and generally cooperation of charter business operators. The start and end dates for this task may be postponed due to delays in getting OMB approval to conduct the data collection.

Survey administration steps. The survey implementation is expected to follow a modified Dillman Tailored Design Method¹ approach. Implementation will include an advance letter, an initial mailing, a postcard reminder, a full follow-up mailing, and a follow-up phone interview, which will follow a sequential mixed-mode approach.

- The **advance letter** will be sent a few days prior to sending out the initial mailing.
- The **initial mailing** will be sent a few days to a week after the advance letter is sent. Each mailing contains a personalized cover letter, a questionnaire, and a pre-addressed and postage-paid return envelope. This *first* mailing will be sent by first-class mail.
- The **postcard reminder** will be sent a few days after the initial mailing.
- The **second full mailing** will be sent following the postcard reminder to all individuals who have yet to respond. The mailing will be sent by certified mail or other special delivery method (e.g., Priority Mail, UPS, FedEx).
- The **telephone contact and follow-up interview** will be initiated about 1-2 weeks following the second full mailing. All individuals who have not returned the survey to date will be contacted, provided a valid phone number can be procured via reverse telephone lookup or other means (e.g., internet search). Contacted respondents will be encouraged to fill out and return the questionnaire, but also given the option to complete the survey over the telephone either on the same phone call or at another scheduled time and date. During this phone contact, all respondents, regardless of their desire to complete the mail survey, take the survey via telephone, or unwillingness to participate, will be asked several attitudinal, behavioral, and socio-demographic questions that will assist in understanding non-response behavior. These phone interviews are expected to last up to 10 minutes for those agreeing to complete and return the mail survey, for those who decline participation, and for those who agree to a follow-up telephone interview at a different time and date. For those agreeing to the telephone interview to be taken immediately, we expect the phone call to last about 30-40 minutes. Note that the

¹ Dillman, DA, J.D. Smyth, and L.M. Christian. *Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. 3rd Edition, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2009.

contractor will supply another copy of the survey to those who have lost or misplaced the ones sent to them.

Sampling frame. A complete census of the population of CHP holders will be conducted. The list of CHP holders (names and addresses) will be provided to the contractor by AFSC. Some CHP holders may have multiple addresses.

Sample size. The mail survey will be sent to all CHP holders according to the NMFS Alaska Regional Office's database of CHP holders that held a CHP during 2014. It is anticipated that up to 1,100 mailings will be sent out to unique addresses since there are numerous CHP holders with both a within-state address and an out-of-state U.S. address. As of May 2014, the list of CHP holders contains 602 individuals. It is expected that up to 5% of the addresses in the database can be expected to be bad or unusable which means the number of addresses receiving the survey (the valid sample) will be at least 1,045 ($1,100 \times 0.95$) (though a significantly smaller number of individuals will receive those surveys (approximately 572, or 602×0.95).

Expected response rates. The survey will target a 40% response rate (229 completed and returned surveys in the final survey from the 572 in the "valid" sample size). The contractor shall make every effort to meet or exceed this response rate.

Survey material specifications.² Printing of all survey materials is the responsibility of the contractor. Choice of paper types, colors, and quality are subject to AFSC approval.

Questionnaire basics. The questionnaire will be a 12-page booklet style survey, made from three 11"×17" pages double-sided, folded, and stapled on the spine (resulting in a booklet with twelve 8.5"×11" pages). The paper used for the questionnaire will be high-quality book paper. Each questionnaire will have an individual identification number printed on it that uniquely identifies each respondent (and survey version).

Questionnaire versions. There will be up to **24** different versions of the survey used in the full survey. Each version will have a unique set of stated preference choice questions that the respondent will be asked to choose from (see Figure 1 below). The choice alternatives in these choice questions are distinguished by the differing attribute levels contained in tables describing each alternative. AFSC will provide the contractor with a table (Excel file) that defines the attribute levels associated with each survey version. The contractor will randomly assign each respondent to one of the versions. **In all** follow-up mailings, the respondent will receive the same survey version (note that this must also be consistent across addresses for individuals with multiple addresses). Thus, the contractor will need to track which version each respondent receives.³ AFSC will provide the contractor with an electronic copy of the base survey (not every version) in Microsoft Word. The contractor is responsible for survey formatting. Note that there is

² Note we are open to any suggestions regarding the survey format, size, etc. that the contractor may have. Some of these protocols could change at the suggestion of the contractor.

³ When the surveys are printed, a mail-merge type program may be used to create the different versions and place an indicator on the questionnaire that identifies which version it is. Because of the complexity of this set-up, it is vital that the contractor establish robust protocols for printing and tracking respondents and survey versions.

an additional question in the survey that will have a value (in the text) that differs across the survey versions as well (a referendum contingent valuation survey question).

D1 Consider options A and B below. Which one do you prefer? *Please indicate your response below the table.*

	Option A Current leasing program	Option B
Length of lease period.....	1 season only	1 season only
Ability to transfer to other CHP holders in-season.....	None	Yes
Price per GAF.....	\$75	\$100
	<u>Option A</u>	<u>Option B</u>

Which option do you prefer?
Check one box----->

Figure 1. Example of a stated preference choice experiment question from the survey

Letters. The advance letter and survey cover letters will have the contractor’s address displayed. These letters will be individualized by using the respondent’s name, dated for the date it will be sent, and printed on letterhead using high-quality bond paper. The advance letter will be printed on NOAA letterhead provided to the contractor by AFSC in electronic form (MS Word document). All correspondence should include a toll-free number for the contractor that the respondent can use for questions or comments. Letters will include a signature in contrasting ink (e.g., blue ink signature, black letter print).

Envelopes. Envelopes should be printed with “Address Correction Requested”. The return envelopes will be 9”×12” Business Reply Mail envelopes. All envelopes will be designed by the contractor and subject to AFSC approval. Envelopes should have the NOAA seal on them to indicate that the survey is being conducted on behalf of the Agency.

Name and address verification. The contractor will verify for accuracy the names and addresses in the sample (census) using a national address database. Other name and address validation approaches may also be used and are encouraged.

Follow-up telephone contact. If no response is received after the initial mailing, postcard reminder, and second full mailing, respondents will be contacted by telephone and encouraged to complete and return the survey. Respondent will be asked some classification questions that can be used to analyze non-response bias (e.g., income, age, gender, etc.). Each respondent should be called up to 10 times before phone attempts are discontinued. The contractor will obtain the

respondent's phone number using a phone lookup service or via internet searches. In addition, in this phone contact, individuals will be given the option of completing the survey over the telephone (a) **immediately** if they have the survey available (so as to facilitate completing the phone interview) or (b) **at a later date and time** if they do not wish to complete the survey at that time or do not have the paper survey available to aid in the completion of the survey on-line. In the latter case, the contractor will call the respondent back at the agreed upon time to complete the phone interview. AFSC will provide the contractor with a preliminary telephone script for use in the follow-up phone contact that identifies the set of questions to be asked of all respondents. From this script, the contractor will develop the final script for actual use.

Telephone survey interview. A second survey mode, a telephone interview, will occur concurrently or subsequent to the follow-up telephone contact as described above. The contractor will develop a script for collecting information from the mail survey in the telephone interview, which will be subject to AFSC approval. Interviews will be scheduled to accommodate the respondent, with up to 5 rescheduled interviews before phone interview efforts are discontinued.

Handling of undelivered questionnaires. Efforts will be made to correct mailing addresses of undelivered surveys. Address corrections will be allowed up to the date of the second mailing. On the date of the second mailing, all corrected addresses that have been received will be mailed a new advance letter, and then all of the aforementioned survey protocols will be followed.

Handling respondent inquiries. The contractor shall supply a toll-free number on each of the mailings. The contractor is responsible for handling respondent inquiries and questions. The AFSC project manager will work with the contractor to develop answers to inquiries or questions. The contractor shall inform the AFSC project manager about the nature and number of inquiries each week during the survey process.

Data entry. Data entry of the returned questionnaires will follow a two-tiered approach to ensure accuracy of results. Once received, a completed questionnaire will be logged in using the ID number, and run through a scanner to create a pdf of the questionnaire. Data will then be keypunched and verified. Each data element must be checked for data errors, reasonableness in falling within an acceptable range, and logic in relation to other data elements. AFSC will work with the contractor to develop these data checks. A logical system of data entry should be used that will also be used for the identification of non-responses to questions and questions that the respondent is asked to skip because they are not applicable.

Examination of early returns and in-field adjustments. The contractor will examine early returns from the first mailing for issues that can be addressed in the second mailing (e.g., add a clarification to the cover letter of the second mailing).

Progress reports during implementation. The contractor will provide a weekly progress report to PSMFC and AFSC by e-mail on a specified day of the week (as mutually agreed upon) while the full survey is in progress. The report shall contain the status of the survey, response rates, and discuss any problems or issues associated with the survey. The contractor will also

send a list of the respondent questions or comments, organized by respondent identification number.

Final data sets. The contractor shall supply the data to PSMFC and AFSC in a mutually agreed upon format no later than 6 weeks after the survey close date, which will be mutually agreed upon by the contractor and AFSC. The data file will include all coded responses to the questionnaire questions, plus respondent-specific data related to which mailings were sent, when the completed survey was received, whether attempts were made to contact the individual by phone, the date and disposition of each phone attempt (busy, no answer, voice mail or answering machine, answered but not home, answered but refused, etc.), and responses to the phone contact questions and the phone interview, if applicable. The data files will also include the attribute levels associated with the stated preference choice experiments in the survey seen by each individual in the sample.

Codebook. Documentation of the transferred file shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a. variable name
- b. position
- c. description
- d. length
- e. alpha-numeric description

Scanning completed mail questionnaires. The contractor shall deliver all of the completed questionnaires to AFSC from the full implementation. The questionnaires should be sorted by the respondents' identification number. The questionnaires will be delivered electronically as individual indexed (sorted by sample identification number) pdfs. Hardcopies of the survey will be kept by the contractor in storage for a period of at least one year from the conclusion of the study. During that time, the contractor will send any and all hard copies to AFSC upon request. At the end of the period, the contractor will properly dispose of the hardcopies of the surveys.

Report. The contractor shall also supply a final report to PSMFC and AFSC no later than 8 weeks after the mailing of the final survey to the group of respondents for whom a change or forwarding address was received. The final report should contain the following:

- a. List and describe the survey procedures that were implemented.
- b. Attempted number of mail surveys, total, by IPHC region, and by survey version. Undeliverables by survey version.
- c. A full description of any sampling or post-stratification weights that are calculated (if applicable).
- d. An analysis of response rates by survey version and in total.
- e. Response rate to each mailing and by week received (by survey version and in total).
- f. A full enumeration of the telephone protocols and implementation.
- g. Number of attempted and successful phone contacts and average number of attempts per successful contact. Full final dispositions of telephone contacts.

- h. Number of additional mailings (and completes) resulting from the phone contact.
- i. Other analysis or descriptive statistics that the contractor believes to be useful to easily identify problems with the data or that will assist in identifying the success of the survey.
- j. Suggestions for improving future data collection efforts involving the target population.

AFSC will be responsible for the statistical/econometric analysis of the survey responses.

Proposal Details

Requested information. Those wishing to submit a proposal should include the following information as part of their proposals.

1. A brief description of the survey administration services the contractor will provide. Information should be provided about how the surveys will be printed, what survey design or formatting assistance can be offered, the type of telephone survey system that will be used (i.e., CATI or other), what steps will be taken in the telephone interview to maximize response rates and minimize mode effects, and the estimated timeframe for completing the telephone contacts and telephone interviews.

Specify how addresses will be verified and phone numbers procured for the samples.

2. A list of qualifications of key personnel involved in the project.
3. A brief statement of previous experience the firm has in conducting mail, telephone, and mixed mode surveys. List relevant work experience regarding surveys of fishery participants, if any, and surveys that have been conducted specifically in Alaska.
4. A breakdown of costs by major category: personnel, printing, mailing, telephone expenses, other operating expenses, administrative overhead (if any), and total cost.
5. Specify any additional services the contractor will provide (e.g., additions to the final report, survey procedures and development, etc.).

Selection criteria. Proposal selection will be based on the following criteria:

1. Cost (50%)
2. Experience, expertise, and methods as discussed above in “Requested information” (50%)

Information requests or questions. Questions must be submitted in writing to PSMFC at contracting@psmfc.org by July 11, 2014. Responses to all written questions will be published in a Q&A on PSMFC’s website by July 18, 2014.

Submission deadline. The deadline for submitting proposals to PSMFC is 5 p.m. Pacific on **August 1, 2014**. Selection results will be announced on or before **August 8, 2014**. All proposals should be submitted to PSMFC by e-mail to contracting@psmfc.org.