



INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC
HALIBUT COMMISSION

Who is the IPHC?

Commissioners

The Privy Council of Canada and the President of the United States each appoint three commissioners who serve without remuneration. The commissioners appoint the Executive Director, who supervises the scientific staff in collecting and analyzing statistical and biological data needed to manage the halibut fishery. The commissioners annually review the regulatory proposals made by the scientific staff and consider proposals from the industry, the Conference Board, and the Processor Advisory Group.

The average tenure of the commissioners since 1924 has been eight years, and the longest serving member thus far served for 24 years. The length of service and the overlapping terms of the members have had a stabilizing influence on the Commission and the management of the resource.

In recent years, one commissioner from each country has been an employee of the federal fisheries agency, one a fisher, and one either a buyer or processor. The chairmanship of the Commission alternates annually between the two countries.

Scientific Advisors

Each country appoints one scientific advisor to its commissioners who becomes involved in the more technical aspects of Commission research. This advisor has a scientific background and offers guidance to the commissioners and advice to the staff. These appointees generally work for the governmental fishery science and management agency in their respective country, becoming involved with Commission issues on a part-time basis. They receive no monetary compensation from the Commission for their services.

Staff

The Commission staff of Canadian and U.S. employees in 1925 consisted of four biologists and four supporting personnel. At present (2016), the permanent staff consists of the Executive Director, an Assistant Director, 21 scientific and 8 administrative staff. Staff member citizenship includes U.S., Canada, New Zealand, and Spain. The staff is supervised by the Executive Director, who is responsible to the Commission for its research, regulatory, and administrative functions.

Seasonal temporary employees are engaged each year to collect data on the landings and the fishery, and to participate in vessel research. The ports of Bellingham/Vancouver, Port Hardy, Prince Rupert, Petersburg, Sitka, Juneau, Seward, Homer, Kodiak, and Dutch Harbor are staffed approximately eight months out of the year to sample the commercial catch as it is landed. In addition, St. Paul and Sand Point have recently been staffed for abridged periods during the summer months.

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Administration

The Commission, as an intergovernmental organization established by treaty, has a separate international legal personality from its member countries. The Commission was afforded the rights and privileges of the International Organizations Immunities Act (22 U.S.C. Sec. 288) in 1962 (E.O. 11059) by the U.S. government. In 1987, the Commission was also granted 501(c)(3) (non-profit) status by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

The Commission has formal Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations which are adopted and amended by the Commission as required. These rules govern operating procedures related to authorities, roles, and responsibilities of officers, voting procedures, reporting and communication to governments, scheduling of meetings, financial authorities, and maintenance of financial records and audits. The Rules of Procedure authorize the appointment of an Executive Director and Assistant Director for the Commission staff. Appointment of the Commission staff is delegated to the Executive Director.

Financing of the Commission is authorized through the Convention and specifies that expenses of the Commission are to be shared equally by the two governments. The first budget of the Commission in 1924/1925 was \$20,000 (USD). The Convention also specifies that the two governments could vary the proportion of joint expenses after March 31, 1981. Unequal funding of the Commission first occurred in 2001. The funding levels in FY2015 (October 2014 to September 2015) from the United States and Canada were \$4,150,000 and \$944,228 respectively.

Each year, the Executive Director submits a detailed budget and research plan for approval to the Commissioners, reports on the expenses, and provides an audit report to the governments. Funding in the U.S. is through the International Fisheries Commissions line item in the Department of State appropriations. Funding from Canada occurs through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Historically, the majority of appropriated funds have been used to cover staff salaries, fisheries data collection, and research. Funding for annual stock assessment surveys is provided through a cost recovery program of selling fish which are caught and sampled, only to the level necessary to make the program cost-neutral over the long term.

Headquarters

The Commission headquarters were located at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington from 1925-2010, except for five years (1931-1936) when the staff was housed in a laboratory of the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries. In 2010, the office was moved to its current Salmon Bay location near Fishermen's Terminal in Seattle.

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