



# 2017 Regulatory Proposals

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Agenda Item 7

IPHC-2017-AM093-10 Rev\_1

IPHC-2017-AM093-PropA-P

# Regulatory Proposals \*

- **Each Fall** –  
*IPHC solicits regulatory proposals from IPHC staff, agencies, and stakeholders*
- **Interim Meeting** –  
*Commissioners review*
- **Annual Meeting** –  
*Commissioners review and decide which to approve*

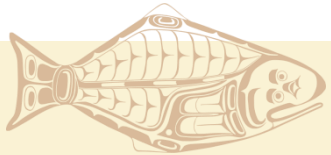
To Whom it May Concern -

Send in your ideas for  
regulatory changes by  
October 31!

Best fishes -




\* Not to be confused with **Catch Limit Proposals** which are accepted between the Interim Meeting and 31 Dec each year.  
(see IPHC-2017-AM093-PropQ)



# Regulatory Proposals

Proposals available on IPHC's Annual Meeting website under documents IPHC-2017-AM093-PropA through PropP.

<http://www.iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting/documents.html>

- 
- ***IPHC Staff (2)***
  - ***Agencies (1)***
  - ***Stakeholders (13)***



# IPHC Staff Proposals

## PropA – Head-on landed weight requirement

- *Commercial fishery*
- *Coastwide*  
(Area 2A already requires head-on)
- ***Purpose: Improve estimate of total removals***
- *Variance in where heads cut among regions and ports*  
(2013 study showed range of 9-18%)
- *Head-off halibut – may cause 2-3% underestimate of total removals*
- *While landings records show ~70% of halibut reported in head-off condition, most fish are actually delivered to the processor with the head attached (head-on)*
- *Conversions applied within the landing record system would remain 10% for heads and 2% for ice and slime (unwashed).*
- *Proposal includes removing 24” head-off minimum size limit*

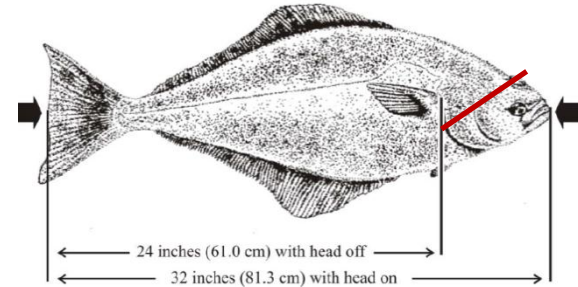
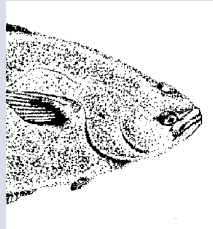
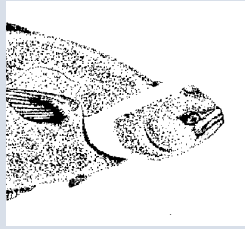
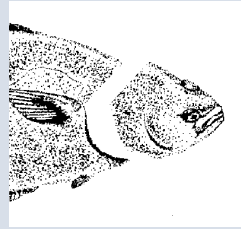
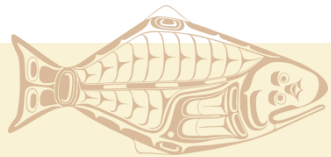


Figure 2. Minimum commercial size.



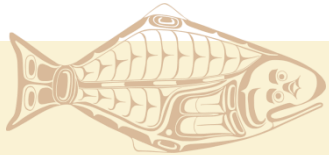
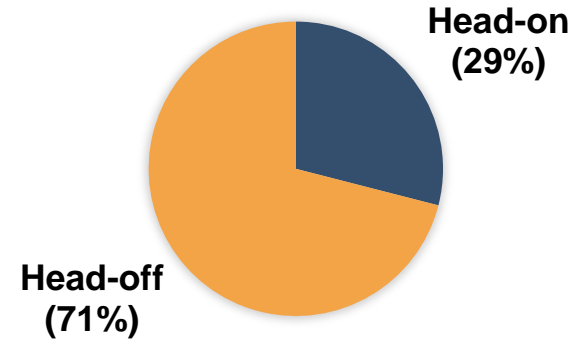
| EXAMPLE   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Landed weight in pounds<br>(dressed, washed)              | 10,000  | 10,000  | 10,000  |
|   | Weighed and reported<br>head-on   | Headed by plant<br>Weighed and reported head-off                                    |   |
|   |  |  |  |
|   | Landing receipt system<br>applies 10% deduction                                   | Head is 9% of weight  | Head is 18% of weight   |
| Reported net weight in<br>pounds<br>(deducted from quota) | <b>9,000</b>  | <b>9,100</b>  | <b>8,200</b>  |



# How widespread is this concern?

- 71% of halibut reported head-off and 29% reported head-on.
- While landings records show 71% of halibut reported in head-off condition, most fishermen actually delivered fish to the processor with the head attached (head-on).
- Processor cuts head and reports head-off weight.
- **May cause 2-3% underestimate of total removals.**

## REPORTED CONDITION



# IPHC Staff Proposals

## PropB – Remove IPHC Closed Area

- *Commercial fishery*
- *Alaska*
- *Purpose: No scientific basis for retaining closed area in its current form, whereby only directed fishery is prohibited from fishing within the area.*
- *No new fish – Area 4CDE catch limits already include Pacific halibut from closed area.*

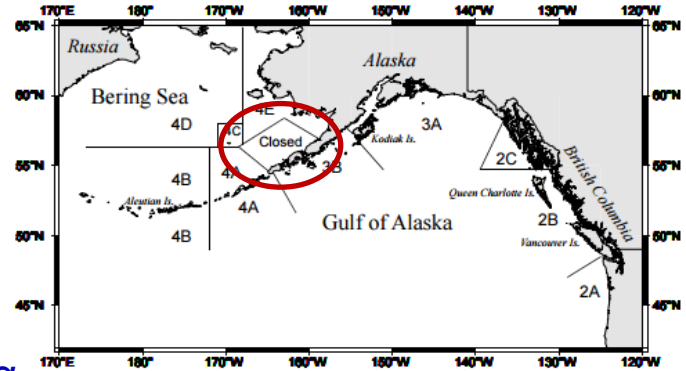


Figure 1. Regulatory areas for the Pacific halibut fishery.



# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## IPHC-2017-AM093-INF03 –

Provides additional background information on PropB to remove the closed area:

- 1) *Past considerations*
- 2) *History of boundaries*
- 3) *Nursery grounds*
- 4) *Other nearby closed areas*
- 5) *Bycatch*
- 6) *Impacts of allowing directed Pacific halibut fishing*

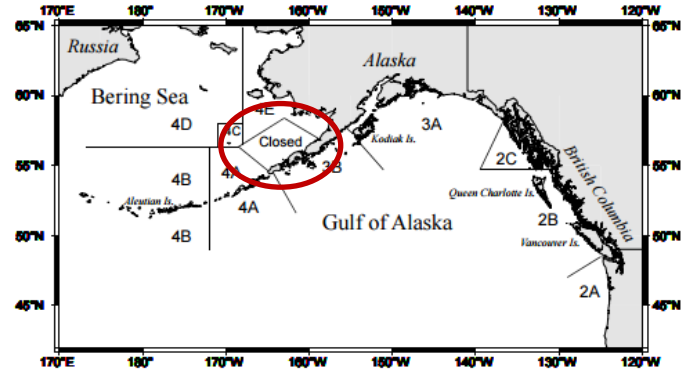
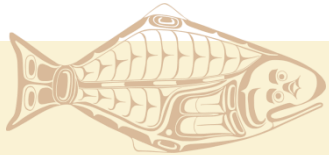


Figure 1. Regulatory areas for the Pacific halibut fishery.





# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## 1) *Past considerations*

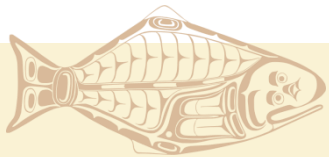
- IPHC has closed areas to protect halibut nursery grounds and subsequently reopened them.
  - *Two areas closed in 1932 (Canadian and SE Alaskan waters)*
  - *Reopened in 1960 after surveys showed older and larger fish in the area.*
- IPHC Closed Area in the Bering Sea
  - *Created in 1967 to protect juvenile halibut from foreign fishing*  
→ *worked in the late 1960s-70s and bycatch reduced*
  - *No longer worked in the 1980s after foreign fishing fleets were excluded and US vessels were again allowed to fish in Closed Area (except directed commercial halibut fishery).*
  - *Reduced in size in 1990 because survey suggested that relatively few juveniles caught with longlines.*



# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## 1) *Past considerations (con't)*

- After the Closed Area was reduced in size in 1990, the Commission requested a review of the Closed Area (Trumble 1998). The paper states the Closed Area:
  - 1) Does not reduce halibut bycatch mortality,
  - 2) Provides little biological benefit to the halibut resource, and
  - 3) Does not protect nursery grounds because fisheries that catch juvenile halibut are fishing in the area.
- In addition, the paper refers to the Closed Area as a possible buffer for uncertainty in the stock assessment and management of halibut; however, uncertainty greatly reduced since 1998.



# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## 1) *Past considerations (con't)*

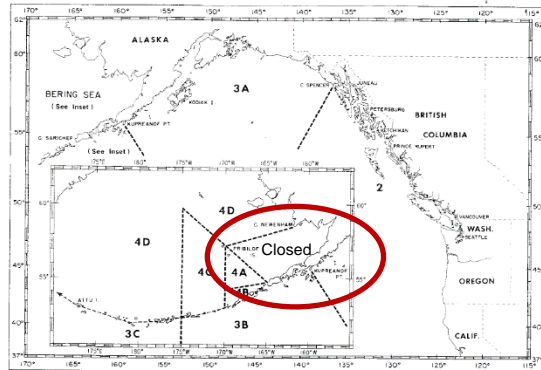
- Between 2011-2013, Commission reviewed the purpose of the Closed Area and considered removing it.
  - Discussed at IPHC's 2011 Interim Meeting and 2012 Annual Meeting
  - Letter sent to North Pacific Fishery Management Council
  - Response to IPHC
  - Discussed at IPHC's 2012 Interim Meeting and 2013 Annual Meeting
  - Commissioners did not approve the proposal, noting  
*“Following some discussion, the Commission decided that although this may be considered in the future, opening this area is not a high priority issue at this time.”*



# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## 2) History of boundaries

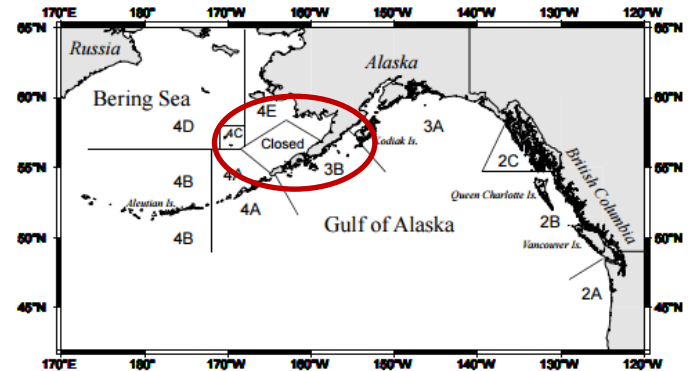
- Before 1967, considered Area 4E
- Closed Area created in 1967
- Reduced in size in 1990



Pacific Coast of North America showing the 1967 regulatory areas as defined by the International Pacific Halibut Commission

1967-  
1989

1990-  
2016



# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## 3) *Nursery ground*

- No scientific basis that the Closed Area is a nursery ground of any significance, relative to any other grounds, for Pacific halibut.
- Concentrations of young Pacific halibut exist throughout much of the range of the population from the Bering Sea to at least as far south as British Columbia.
- IPHC-2017-AM093-INF03 provides more information and citations on nursery grounds



# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## 4) *Other nearby closed areas*

- There are at least 11 closed areas for other non-halibut fisheries located within or near the IPHC's Closed Area.
- IPHC-2017-AM093-INF03 provides maps

## 5) *Bycatch*

- Several fisheries operate in the Closed Area, including groundfish trawl (bottom and pelagic), groundfish hook-and-line, and groundfish pot gear.
- Most of these fisheries catch halibut (adults and juveniles) as bycatch.
- Half of the bycatch in Area 4CDE was from the Closed Area.
- Almost all of the bycatch is under 32 inches (U32) for Area 4CDE including the closed area (97% in 2015).

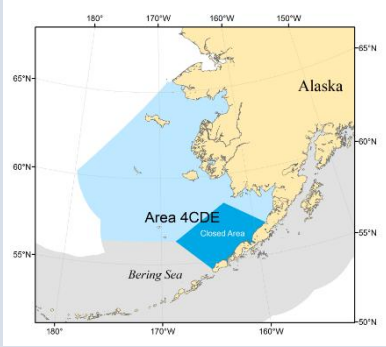
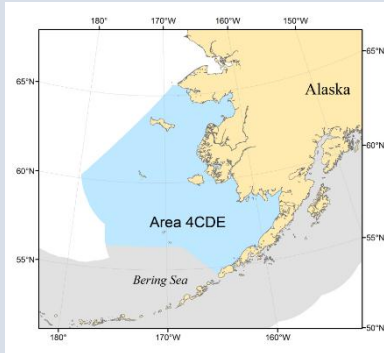


# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## 6) Impacts of allowing directed Pacific halibut fishing

- No “new fish” available to the directed fishery.
- The halibut stock in the Closed Area already included in the stock assessment, which treats Regulatory Areas 4CDE and the Closed Area as a single unit.
- The overall harvest advice for Area 4CDE also includes the Closed Area → no change in total catch available to directed fishery by opening this area.
- Based on survey results, fishing in this area will likely encounter similar numbers and sizes of Pacific halibut as are found in Area 4CDE with comparable ocean and bottom characteristics.
  - *2015 survey in closed area showed ~30% catch was U32 (similar to the rate in 4CDE)*
- The primary impact of this change on the directed fishery revolves around who from Area 4CDE would be permitted to fish in this area if it were opened, a matter for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC).



|   | With Defined Closed Area<br>CURRENT  | Without Defined Closed Area<br>PROPOSED   |
|---|--|---|
| Area 4CDE Bottom Area   | 219,000 square nautical miles  | 219,000 square nautical miles   |
| Area 4CDE 2016 Survey<br>O32 WPUE   | 14.1 lb/skate  | 14.1 lb/skate   |
| Area 4CDE 2017<br>Apportionment Proportion  | 12.6 %   | 12.6 %  |
| Area 4CDE 2017<br>Blue Line<br>Catch Limit  | 1.55 Mlb   | 1.55 Mlb  |
| Area (light blue) available<br>for directed commercial<br>Pacific halibut fishing in<br>Area 4CDE |  |  |





# IPHC Staff Proposals - PropB (con't)

## Summary

- No scientific basis for closed area
- No new fish – closed area fish already in Area 4CDE catch limits
- Data shows minimal bycatch of juvenile halibut expected from directed halibut longline fishery, compared to other fisheries in the closed area.
- No longer needed to buffer against uncertainty.
- NPFMC would need to consider which Area 4CDE commercial halibut fishermen can fish in the area.



# Agency Proposals

## Prop C – Fishing in multiple regulatory areas (NMFS)

- *Commercial*
- *Alaska*
- *Harmonize regulations*  
*Revise IPHC regulations*  
*(Section 18) to refer to*  
*NMFS regulations*  
*(50 CFR 679.7(f)(4))*

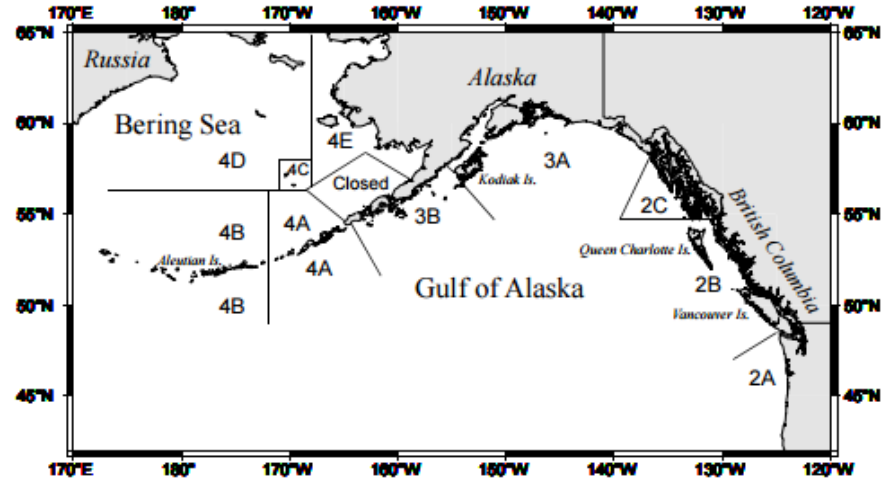


Figure 1. Regulatory areas for the Pacific halibut fishery.



# Stakeholder Proposals

| Paper #      | Organization                          | Sector/Area | Proposal                     | IPHC Secretariat Recommendation  |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|
| <b>PropD</b> | James Whitethorn,<br>West Bros. Group | All         | Upgrade the US-Canada Treaty | Refer to 2 <sup>nd</sup> performance review (Agenda Item 10.7, Paper IPHC-2017-AM093-18) |
| <b>PropE</b> | James Whitethorn,<br>West Bros. Group | All         | Drop the Blue Line           | N/A as regulatory proposal, discussed under Agenda Item 5 on Harvest Decision Table      |
| <b>PropF</b> | James Whitethorn,<br>West Bros. Group | All         | Drop the IPHC setline survey | Consider disapproving  |
| <b>PropG</b> | James Whitethorn,<br>West Bros. Group | All, Area 4 | Closure of the Nursery Area  | Defer to Council   |



# Stakeholder Proposals

| Paper #      | Organization                                  | Sector/Area                          | Proposal   | IPHC Secretariat Recommendation |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>PropH</b> | Paul Ewing,<br>Eagle Charters                 | Sport<br>(Charter,<br>Private)<br>AK | Non-resident, self-guided sport same regulations as charter fishery, other than need for a CHP | Defer to Council                |
| <b>PropI</b> | James S. Kearns,<br>Self                      | Sport<br>(Charter,<br>Private), AK   | Unguided sport same standards as CSP sectors   | Defer to Council                |
| <b>PropJ</b> | James Lee Shirk,<br>Recreational<br>Fisherman | Sport<br>(Charter,<br>Private), AK   | Elimination of law requiring skin to be left on halibut  | Consider disapproving           |
| <b>PropK</b> | Capt. Steven<br>Riehemann,<br>Boat Owner      | Sport<br>(Charter,<br>Private), AK   | Allow filleted halibut in sport fishery  | Consider disapproving           |



# Stakeholder Proposals

| Paper #      | Organization            | Sector/Area            | Proposal                                      | IPHC Secretariat Recommendation                       |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| <b>PropL</b> | Mel Erickson,<br>Self   | Sport<br>(Charter), 3A | Charter Boat Trip Limits<br>3A – trips/season | Defer to Council                                      |
| <b>PropM</b> | Mel Erickson,<br>Self   | Sport<br>(Charter), 3A | Charter Boat Trip Limits<br>3A – trips/week   | Defer to Council                                      |
| <b>PropN</b> | Mel Erickson,<br>Self   | Sport<br>(Charter), 3A | Guided Anglers 3A Daily                       | Defer to Council                                      |
| <b>PropO</b> | Phil Wyman,<br>ALFA     | Commercial             | Clarify pot gear<br>requirements              | Defer Part 1 to NMFS;<br>Consider disapproving Part 2 |
| <b>PropP</b> | Peter Thompson,<br>Self | Commercial             | Size Limit Clarification                      | If PropA not approved,<br>consider approval           |



# Catch Limit Proposals

## **IPHC-2017-AM093-PropQ**

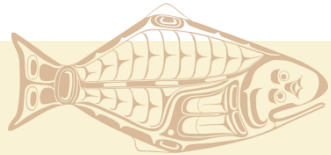
on catch limit proposals from stakeholders will be considered as part of 2017 catch limit deliberations under Agenda Item 7.4 on Thursday.



# Additional Proposals

Other proposals will be presented this week on:

- Fishing season dates from advisory bodies
- Area 2A directed commercial fishery potential opening dates from agency reports
- Domestic government catch sharing plans from agency reports
- Area 2C & 3A charter management measures from agency reports



# Recommendation/s

That the Commission:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IPHC-2017-AM093-10 Rev\_1 which provides the Commission with an opportunity to consider the regulatory proposals received for 2017, detailed in papers IPHC-2017-AM093-PropA through PropQ, and provides IPHC Secretariat recommendations for action on each proposal.
- 2) **DIRECT** the IPHC Secretariat to prepare the draft IPHC Regulations for 2017 based on the decisions of the AM093, for review and final approval by the Commission.





