INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

News Release

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INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION (IPHC) 92nd INTERIM MEETING (IM092) AND DRAFT HARVEST DECISION TABLE

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) conducted the 92nd Session of its Interim Meeting at the Grand Hyatt Seattle in Seattle, Washington on 29 and 30 November 2016. The IM092 documents, presentations and recordings of the webcasts are posted on the Commission's website at http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/interim-meeting.html.

Fishery-Independent Setline Survey

This was the third year of the IPHC's six-year fishery-independent setline survey expansion program, with 84 additional stations fished along the Area 4CDE continental shelf edge during the 2016 survey. For 2017, the IPHC plans to expand the survey in Area 4B, adding between 75 and 100 new stations.

A new space-time modeling approach was introduced in 2016 for the analysis of IPHC fishery-independent setline survey data. This modeling approach is a clear improvement over the previous empirical method, as it makes greater use of the information within the data, and better accounts for uncertainty in the estimation.

The 2016 Stock Assessment

This year's stock assessment is based on an ensemble of four models used since 2014. The results of the 2016 stock assessment indicate that the Pacific halibut stock declined continuously from the late 1990s to around 2010 as a result of decreasing size at age, as well as weaker recruitment strengths than those observed during the 1980s. Since the estimated female spawning biomass stabilized near 200 million pounds in 2010, the stock is estimated to have been increasing gradually. An executive summary of the 2016 stock assessment is posted on the IPHC website at http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/interim-meeting/im2016-documents.html.

Draft Harvest Decision Table for 2017

The IPHC staff harvest advice is prepared in the form of a decision table for the Commission's consideration as it sets the annual catch limits. This decision table (**Table 1**, next page) presents estimates of risk over a range of potential harvest choices for 2017 (the rows) as measured by different stock and fishery metrics (the columns), and will be presented again at the Annual Meeting (AM093) in January. Alternative metrics of performance, as well as different increments of total removals, may be considered in the Commission's decision-making process.

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Table 1. Draft harvest decision table of yield alternatives (rows) and risk metrics (columns). Values represent the probability, in "times out of 100" of a particular risk.

				Stock Trend				Stock Status				Fishery Trend				Fishery Status
				Spawning biomass				Spawning biomass				Fishery CEY from the harvest policy				Harvest rate
				In 2018		In 2020		In 2018		In 2020		In 2018		In 2020		In 2017
2017 Alternative	**Total removals (M lb)**	**Fishery CEY (M lb)**	**Fishing intensity**	**Is less than 2017**	**Is 5% less than 2017**	**Is less than 2017**	**Is 5% less than 2017**	**Is less than 30%**	**Is less than 20%**	**Is less than 30%**	**Is less than 20%**	**Is less than 2017**	**Is 10% less than 2017**	**Is less than 2017**	**Is 10% less than 2017**	**Is above target**
No removals	0.0	0.0	$F_{100\%}$	<1	<1	<1	<1	3	<1	1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	0
FCEY = 0	11.2	0.0	$F_{77\%}$ 61%-84%	1	<1	3	<1	3	<1	1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
	20.0	8.6	$F_{66\%}$ 49%-75%	5	<1	20	4	4	<1	3	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
	30.0	18.4	$F_{55\%}$ 39%-67%	32	<1	53	31	5	<1	6	<1	6	3	8	4	8
Blue Line	37.9	26.1	$F_{48\%}$ 33%-62%	56	3	77	53	6	<1	12	<1	47	33	48	39	50
***status quo* SPR**	41.6	29.7	$F_{46\%}$ 32%-60%	68	6	87	64	6	<1	15	<1	57	45	57	49	61
	50.0	37.9	$F_{40\%}$ 27%-55%	92	29	98	88	7	<1	25	1	94	83	95	86	95
	60.0	47.7	$F_{35\%}$ 23%-51%	>99	52	>99	99	9	<1	37	3	>99	>99	>99	>99	>99
				a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m

Values in the table represent the probability, in "times out of 100," of a particular risk. Total removals include all halibut mortality caused by humans, i.e. all removals except natural mortality. The Blue Line (shown as the darker shaded area in middle of this table) represents the application of the current harvest policy to the stock assessment results. The status quo SPR line corresponds to the average Spawning Potential Ratio for the catch levels approved for 2014-2016.

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Harvest Policy Results for 2017

The most recent apportionment estimates and the current harvest policy produce the "Blue Line" harvest option of **Table 1** (shown as the darker shaded row in the table), with a coastwide Fishery Constant Exploitation Yield (FCEY) of 26,100,000 lbs (~11,839 metric tons). It should also be noted that the current harvest policy is under review through the Management Strategy Evaluation process with the Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB).

For comparison, an alternative based on Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) is also presented. SPR is a commonly used metric of fishing intensity, which can be thought of as the proportion of lifetime spawning potential per recruit with fishing compared to that without fishing. The "*status quo* SPR" line is based on the average of the realized coastwide fishing intensity (i.e. based on adopted catches) over the last three years. This is an empirical harvest level option, with recent performance that has resulted in a stable or slowly increasing coastwide stock. For 2017, it produces an FCEY of 29,700,000 lbs (~12,292 metric tons).

The apportionment results and the Blue Line and *status quo* SPR harvest levels by regulatory area – as examples only – are presented in **Table 2** (next page). Catch tables for other choices of removals will be provided in the Report of Assessment and Research Activities for 2016.

Regulation Proposals for 2017

A total of sixteen (16) Regulatory Proposals were considered at the IM092 (two from the IPHC Staff, one from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-Fisheries), and thirteen from stakeholders. All proposals can be seen at the IPHC website (http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/interim-meeting/im2016-documents.html). All will be forwarded to the Commission following further revision, for consideration at the 93rd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM093) to be held in January 2017.

Call for Catch Limit Proposals for the 2017 Fishing Season

The Commission invites public comment or proposals regarding the 2017 catch limits or harvest advice. Proposals or comments should be submitted to the Commission by **31 December 2016**. The submission form can be obtained from the Annual Meeting page of the IPHC website (http://www.iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.html) or by calling the IPHC office at (206) 634-1838. A running summary of all submitted proposals will be posted on the IPHC website.

Report of the 2016 Interim Meeting (IM092)

The report of the 92nd Session of the IPHC Interim Meeting will published on the IPHC website (http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/interim-meeting.html) in the coming weeks.

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Table 2. DRAFT: Apportionment and summary catch table results* for the 2017 Blue Line and the *status quo* Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR), with the Blue Line values for 2014, 2015, and 2016 for comparison. Values in the first two sections of the table are reported in percentages; values below that are reported in millions of net pounds.

	2A*	2B*	2C*	3A*	3B	4A	4B	4CDE	Sum
Apportionment results for 2017									
Apportionment	**2.2%**	**14.1%**	**15.0%**	**32.2%**	**13.6%**	**5.7%**	**4.5%**	**12.6%**	**100.0%**
Harvest policy calculations									
Target harvest rate	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	16.1%	16.1%	16.1%	16.1%	19.6%
Target TCEY Distribution	2.5%	15.6%	16.6%	35.4%	11.2%	4.7%	3.7%	10.4%	100.0%
Summary of the 2017 Blue Line catch table									
Total O26 non-FCEY	**0.12**	**0.79**	**1.79**	**3.13**	**0.90**	**0.38**	**0.20**	**1.99**	**9.29**
Total FCEY	**0.75**	**4.72**	**4.08**	**9.41**	**3.08**	**1.28**	**1.12**	**1.69**	**26.12**
TCEY - Total O26	**0.87**	**5.51**	**5.86**	**12.53**	**3.98**	**1.66**	**1.32**	**3.68**	**35.41**
Total U26	**0.00**	**0.02**	**0.00**	**0.72**	**0.36**	**0.22**	**0.01**	**1.18**	**2.52**
Total mortality	**0.87**	**5.53**	**5.86**	**13.25**	**4.34**	**1.89**	**1.33**	**4.86**	**37.93**
Summary of the 2017 *status quo* SPR catch table									
Total O26 non-FCEY	**0.12**	**0.81**	**1.79**	**3.13**	**0.93**	**0.38**	**0.21**	**2.01**	**9.37**
Total FCEY	**0.84**	**5.28**	**4.69**	**10.72**	**3.46**	**1.45**	**1.25**	**2.05**	**29.73**
TCEY - Total O26	**0.96**	**6.08**	**6.47**	**13.84**	**4.39**	**1.84**	**1.46**	**4.06**	**39.10**
Total U26	**0.00**	**0.02**	**0.00**	**0.72**	**0.37**	**0.22**	**0.01**	**1.18**	**2.52**
Total mortality	**0.96**	**6.11**	**6.48**	**14.56**	**4.76**	**2.06**	**1.47**	**5.24**	**41.63**
FCEY comparison table									
2014 Blue Line	0.72	4.98	4.16	9.43	2.84	0.85	0.82	0.64	24.45
2015 Blue Line	0.75	4.96	4.30	10.10	2.46	1.39	0.73	0.52	25.22
2016 Blue Line	1.02	5.22	4.62	9.27	2.71	1.30	0.92	1.64	26.70
2016 Adopted	1.14	7.30	4.95	9.60	2.71	1.39	1.14	1.66	29.89
2017 Blue Line	**0.75**	**4.72**	**4.08**	**9.41**	**3.08**	**1.28**	**1.12**	**1.69**	**26.12**
2017 *status quo* SPR	**0.84**	**5.28**	**4.69**	**10.72**	**3.46**	**1.45**	**1.25**	**2.05**	**29.73**
TCEY comparison table									
2014 Blue Line	0.86	5.72	5.47	12.06	3.74	1.56	1.16	2.91	33.48
2015 Blue Line	0.84	5.75	5.85	13.00	3.51	1.95	1.10	3.48	35.48
2016 Blue Line	1.13	6.10	6.21	12.43	3.41	1.85	1.14	4.05	36.31
2017 Blue Line	**0.87**	**5.51**	**5.86**	**12.53**	**3.98**	**1.66**	**1.32**	**3.68**	**35.41**
2017 *status quo* SPR	**0.96**	**6.08**	**6.47**	**13.84**	**4.39**	**1.84**	**1.46**	**4.06**	**39.10**

* In accordance with the current Catch Share Plans, the Area 2A FCEY includes the sport, commercial, and Tribal fisheries, the Area 2B FCEY includes the sport and commercial fisheries, and the Areas 2C and 3A FCEYs include the commercial and the guided recreational fisheries, as well as incidental mortality for both.

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Looking Ahead to the 2017 Annual Meeting (AM093)

The 93rd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM093) will be held from Monday, 23 January through Friday, 27 January, 2017 in Victoria, BC, at the Delta Hotels Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort. This year's meeting is scheduled to open on Monday with presentations on the fishery, the 2016 stock assessment, and the harvest decision table, and will conclude on Friday with Commission approval of catch limits and regulations.

This reservation link can be used to make online reservations at the Delta Ocean Pointe at the special group rate of $135 CAD per night: Book your group rate for IPHC 2017 Annual Meeting. The special group rate is valid for reservations made through 22 December 2016.

The IPHC has negotiated a 7% discount on Alaska Airlines for travel to and from the Annual Meeting in Victoria between the 20 January and 3 February, 2017. To use the discount, enter the code "ECMX490" in the "Discount Code" box.

The most up-to-date information regarding the Annual Meeting can be found on the Annual Meeting page of the Commission's website (http://www.iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.html) or by calling the IPHC office at (206) 634-1838. The Commission's website will be updated regularly with new information as the meeting date approaches, including the agenda and schedule, meeting documents, webcast information, and presentations.

IPHC Website Survey

The Commission has begun a project to redesign and improve the IPHC website, and seeks input from the community. All IPHC website users are invited to take part in a short online survey at via http://iphc.int/website-survey. The survey will be open through the 2017 Annual Meeting, and its results will be used directly in the website redesign project.

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