



**Informal meeting summary of the 4th Ad Hoc
Meeting of the Management Strategy Advisory
Board (MSAB-AdHoc-04)**

Meeting held electronically, 18 July 2024



ACRONYMS

FISS	Fishery-Independent Setline Survey	MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation
IPHC	International Pacific Halibut Commission	SRB	Scientific Review Board
MP	Management Procedure	TCEY	Total Constant Exploitation Yield
MSAB	Management Strategy Advisory Board	WPUE	Weight-Per-Unit-Effort

DEFINITIONS

A set of working definitions are provided in the IPHC Glossary of Terms and abbreviations: <https://iphc.int/the-commission/glossary-of-terms-and-abbreviations>

INFORMAL MEETING SUMMARY

1. The 4th ad hoc meeting of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB) was held electronically on 18 July 2024. The session was opened by Allan Hicks, welcoming the invited MSAB members.
2. There are four priority coastwide objectives currently adopted by the Commission.
 - a) *Maintain the long-term coastwide female spawning stock biomass above a biomass limit reference point (B20%) at least 95% of the time.*
 - b) *Maintain the long-term coastwide female spawning stock biomass at or above a biomass reference point (B36%) 50% or more of the time.*
 - c) *Optimise average coastwide TCEY.*
 - d) *Limit annual changes in the coastwide TCEY.*
3. The descriptions of priority objectives a) and b) could be improved to clearly indicate that they are relative spawning biomass (RSB).
4. The Scientific Review Board (SRB) has recommended modifying objectives b) and c).
5. The focus of the ad hoc working group is to explore potential new objectives to replace priority objective b) and c) that are consistent with recent decisions by the Commission to depart from the current interim harvest strategy using SPR=43%.
6. In recent years, the Fishery Independent Setline Survey (FISS) and commercial catch-rates have been low, with 2023 having the lowest values observed since 1993, but stock status has been good at 42%, which is above the RSB_{36%} threshold in objective b).
7. Dynamic reference points such as SPR and RSB may remain the same in different productivity regimes, but yield and absolute spawning biomass will change. These reference points measure the effects of fishing rather than the effects of fishing and the environment.
8. The decision-making process uses tactical short-term predictions from the stock assessment while the MSE process is focused on longer term metrics.
9. The Commission has flexibility to depart from the harvest strategy and may do so because of uncertainty and risk. The lowest spawning biomass in 35 years, short-term trends when biomass is low, and consideration of age-structure and reliance on a single year class are important to decision-making in recent years.



10. A management procedure defined as a reference fishing intensity or more conservative would provide flexibility to the Commission to reduce fishing intensity when short-term trends are of concern.
11. A variable fishing intensity could be based on short-term predictions from the stock assessment decision table.
12. The objective “optimize yield” may include reducing interannual variability in yield.
13. A new objective may be defined using absolute biomass, commercial catch-rates, or TCEY. However, commercial catch-rates may not be the best option because they are dependent on other factors. TCEY and/or a reference absolute spawning biomass based on what has been observed may be more meaningful, but all have downsides in being a holistic metric. The MSAB should explore these metrics (and possibly FISS WPUE) for use in updating the objectives.
14. Evaluating MPs based on performance of the worst conditions (e.g. low productivity regime) may result in avoiding low stock sizes under any conditions.
15. Objectives, such as avoiding low stock sizes or low catch-rates, may be met by adding elements to the MP, such as reducing fishing intensity when the SB is below a threshold.
16. A target reference point is important to Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification and an appropriate target reference point for Pacific halibut may be higher than B36%.
17. There is likely a desire to remain above the absolute spawning biomass in 2023 and the tolerance could be 80 or 90%.
18. There are some potential challenges using an absolute spawning biomass in a changing ocean when the future is uncertain.
19. An item brought up, but not discussed, was the possibility of using age structure in the definition of an objective.



APPENDIX I
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FOR THE 4TH AD HOC MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
ADVISORY BOARD (MSAB-AdHOC-04)

MSAB Members

Canada	United States of America
Ms Gwyn Mason: Gwynhyfar.Mason@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Dr Pete Hulson : pete.hulson@noaa.gov
Ms Ann-Marie Huang : Ann-Marie.Huang@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Mr Kurt Iverson : kurt.iverson@noaa.gov
Mr Jim Lane : jim.lane@nuuchahnulth.org	Mr Scott Mazzone : smazzone@quinault.org
Mr Chris Sporer : chris.sporer@phma.ca	Ms Linda Behnken : alfafishak@gmail.com
Mr Michael Fowler : midon@protonmail.ch	

Absentees

Canada	United States of America
	Forrest Braden : forrest@seagoalaska.org

IPHC Secretariat

Name	Position	Email
Dr Allan Hicks	Quantitative Scientist (Management Strategy Evaluation)	allan.hicks@iphc.int
Dr Ian Stewart	Quantitative Scientist (Stock Assessment)	ian.stewart@iphc.int



Appendix II

AGENDA FOR AN AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF THE IPHC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ADVISORY BOARD (MSAB-ADHOC04)

Date: 18 July 2024

Location: Electronic

Time (PDT): 9:30am to 3:30pm

Notes:

- [IPHC Rules of Procedure, Appendix V, para. 10](#): The MSAB may set up ad-hoc working groups to consider particular issues and report back to the MSAB.

1. OPENING OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND GOALS FOR THE SESSION

- *IPHC-2024-MSAB0-AdHoc04-01: Agenda & Schedule for the 2024 Ad Hoc Working Group of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB-AdHoc04)*

2.1. Request from MSAB019 (A. Hicks)

- See *Report of the 19th Session of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board* ([IPHC-2024-MSAB019-R](#), para 56)

2.2. Commission recommendation (A. Hicks)

- See [IPHC-2024-ID003](#)

3. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF COASTWIDE OBJECTIVES

3.1. Four priority coastwide objectives (A. Hicks)

- See *Section 4 of IPHC-2024-MSAB019-07: Considerations for the Management Strategy Evaluation Program of Work for 2023-2025*

4. CONSIDERATION OF A NEW COASTWIDE OBJECTIVE

4.1. Background on development of a new coastwide objective (A. Hicks)

- See *Section 4 of IPHC-2024-MSAB019-07: Considerations for the Management Strategy Evaluation Program of Work for 2023-2025*

4.2. Discussion of a new coastwide objective (A. Hicks)

5. REVIEW OF THE INFORMAL MEETING SUMMARY OF THE 4th AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF THE IPHC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ADVISORY BOARD (MSAB-ADHOC04)