Fisheries Data Overview (2024): preliminary

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PURPOSE

To provide a preliminary overview of the 2024 Pacific halibut removals, including the status of mortality reported against fishery limits adopted by the Commission and outlined in the IPHC Fishery Regulations (2024). Data provided in this paper include end-of-year projections as of 1 November 2024.

BACKGROUND

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) estimates all Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) removals taken in the IPHC Convention Area and uses this information in its yearly stock assessment (see IPHC-2024-IM100-11) and other analyses. The data are compiled by the IPHC Secretariat and include data from federal and state agencies of each Contracting Party. All 2024 data are in net weight (head-off, dressed, ice and slime deducted) and considered preliminary at this time. The IPHC Regulatory Areas are provided in Figure 1.

The report provides a preliminary summary of removals in Tables 1 and 2. Table 2 provides estimates of mortality reported against the fishery limits (FCEY) resulting from the IPHC-adopted distributed mortality (TCEY) limits and the existing Contracting Party catch sharing arrangements, as well as non-FCEY mortality projections, by IPHC Regulatory Area. Figure 2 provides cumulative percentage of directed commercial Pacific halibut limit landed by week.

DEFINITIONS

Directed commercial fisheries include commercial landings and discard mortality. Directed commercial discard mortality includes estimates of sub-legal Pacific halibut (under 81.3 cm or 32 inches, also called U32), fish that die on lost or abandoned fishing gear, and fish discarded for regulatory compliance reasons.

Recreational fisheries include recreational landings (including landings from commercial leasing) and discard mortality.

Subsistence fisheries are non-commercial, customary, and traditional use of Pacific halibut for direct personal, family, or community consumption or sharing as food, or customary trade. Subsistence fisheries include:

i) ceremonial and subsistence (C&S) removals in the IPHC Regulatory Area 2A treaty Indian fishery,
ii) the sanctioned First Nations Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) fishery conducted in British Columbia,
iii) federal subsistence fishery in Alaska that uses Alaska Subsistence [Pacific] Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC), and
iv) U32 Pacific halibut retained for personal use by the Community Development Quota (CDQ) fishery in IPHC Regulatory Areas 4D and 4E.

Non-directed commercial discard mortality includes incidentally caught Pacific halibut by fisheries targeting other species and that cannot legally be retained, e.g. by the trawl fleet. This category refers only to those Pacific halibut that subsequently die due to capture.

IPHC FISS and Research includes Pacific halibut landings and removals as a result of the IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) and other research.

Table 1. 2024 mortality reported against mortality limits (TCEYs) by IPHC Regulatory Area and U26 non-directed discards (end-of-year projections as of 1 November 2024).

IPHC Regulatory Area	Mortality limits (net weight)		Mortality (net weight)		Percent
	Tonnes (t)	Pounds (lb)	Tonnes (t)	Pounds (lb)	(%)
IPHC Regulatory Area 2A	748	1,650,000	658	1,451,137	88
IPHC Regulatory Area 2B	2,935	6,470,000	2,921	6,438,907	100
IPHC Regulatory Area 2C	2,626	5,790,000	2,600	5,732,409	99
IPHC Regulatory Area 3A	5,153	11,360,000	4,808	10,600,188	93
IPHC Regulatory Area 3B	1,565	3,450,000	1,419	3,129,022	91
IPHC Regulatory Area 4A	730	1,610,000	515	1,135,072	71
IPHC Regulatory Area 4B	567	1,250,000	198	436,079	35
IPHC Regulatory Area 4CDE and Closed Area	1,678	3,700,000	980	2,160,278	58
Subtotal (TCEY)	**16,003**	**35,280,000**	**14,099**	**31,083,092**	**88**
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	708	1,560,000	811	1,788,000	115
Total	**16,710**	**36,840,000**	**14,910**	**32,871,092**	**89**

Table 2. 2024 estimates of mortality reported against fishery limits (FCEY) and mortality projections by IPHC Regulatory Area (end-of-year projections as of 1 November 2024).

IPHC Regulatory Area	Fishery limit / projection[1] (net weight)		Mortality to date[1] (net weight)		Pct (%) attained
	Tonnes (t)	Pounds (lb)	Tonnes (t)	Pounds (lb)	(%)
Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington)	**748.43**	**1,650,000**	**658.22**	**1,451,137**	**88**
Domestic mortality limits (FCEY)					
Non-treaty directed commercial fishery	113.10	249,338	107.58	237,164	95
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	19.96	44,001	15.66	34,523	79
Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish fishery[2]	22.68	50,000	17.96	39,598	79
Treaty Indian commercial fishery	224.20	494,280	220.24	485,554	98
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	9.17	20,220	9.17	20,220	100
Recreational – Washington	131.61	290,158	132.83	292,850	101
Recreational – Oregon	128.72	283,784	91.98	202,775	72
Recreational – California	17.34	38,220	10.66	23,500	62
Projections (non-FCEY)[3]					
Directed commercial discard mortality	49.90	110,000	26.31	58,000	53
Recreational discard mortality	--	--	1.34	2,953	--
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	36.29	80,000	24.49	54,000	68
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	0.00	0	--
Non-TCEY mortality					
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	0.00	0	3.18	7,000	--
Area 2B (British Columbia)	**2,934.74**	**6,470,000**	**2,920.64**	**6,438,907**	**100**
Domestic mortality limits (FCEY)					
Directed commercial fishery landings	2,145.49	4,730,000	2,045.72	4,510,044	95
Recreational fishery	376.48	830,000	365.45	805,679	97
Recreational fishery (XRQ - Experimental Quota)[5]	--	--	8.62	19,000	--
Projections (non-FCEY)[3]					
Directed commercial discard mortality	81.65	180,000	97.98	216,000	120
Recreational discard mortality	13.61	30,000	14.63	32,252	108
Subsistence	185.97	410,000	183.70	405,000	99
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	131.54	290,000	146.96	324,000	112
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	57.58	126,932	--
Non-TCEY mortality					
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	18.14	40,000	20.87	46,000	115

IPHC Regulatory Area	Fishery limit / projection[1] (net weight)		Mortality to date[1] (net weight)		Pct (%) attained
	Tonnes (t)	Pounds (lb)	Tonnes (t)	Pounds (lb)	(%)
Area 2C (southeastern Alaska)	**2,626.30**	**5,790,000**	**2,600.18**	**5,732,409**	**99**
Domestic mortality limits (FCEY)					
Directed commercial fishery landings	1,587.57	3,500,000	1,399.75	3,085,916	88
Directed commercial discard mortality	49.90	110,000	70.76	156,000	142
Metlakatla (Annette Island Reserve)	--	--	17.36	38,274	--
Guided recreational fishery	367.41	810,000	382.11	842,402	104
Guided recreational fishery (GAF)[5]	--	--	67.01	147,739	--
Projections (non-FCEY)[3]					
Unguided recreational fishery	485.34	1,070,000	457.94	1,009,578	94
Subsistence	113.40	250,000	114.53	252,492	101
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	27.22	60,000	18.60	41,000	68
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	72.12	159,008	--
Non-TCEY mortality					
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	--	--	0.00	0	--
Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska)	**5,152.81**	**11,360,000**	**4,808.16**	**10,600,188**	**93**
Domestic mortality limits (FCEY)					
Directed commercial fishery landings	3,429.16	7,560,000	3,167.66	6,983,487	92
Directed commercial discard mortality	244.94	540,000	311.16	686,000	127
Guided recreational fishery	857.29	1,890,000	729.26	1,607,735	85
Guided recreational fishery (GAF)[5]	--	--	2.50	5,509	--
Projections (non-FCEY)[3]					
Unguided recreational fishery	449.06	990,000	397.89	877,191	89
Subsistence	54.43	120,000	55.18	121,642	101
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	113.40	250,000	123.38	272,000	109
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	21.15	46,624	--
Non-TCEY mortality					
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	81.65	180,000	137.44	303,000	168
Area 3B (western Gulf of Alaska)	**1,564.89**	**3,450,000**	**1,419.30**	**3,129,022**	**91**
Domestic mortality limits (FCEY)					
Directed commercial fishery landings	1,351.71	2,980,000	1,196.08	2,636,897	89
Projections (non-FCEY)[3]					
Directed commercial discard mortality	108.86	240,000	124.74	275,000	115
Recreational fishery	4.54	10,000	2.15	4,729	47
Subsistence	4.54	10,000	4.75	10,475	105
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	99.79	220,000	82.10	181,000	82
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	9.49	20,921	--
Non-TCEY mortality					
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	40.82	90,000	63.50	140,000	156
Area 4A (eastern Aleutians)	**730.28**	**1,610,000**	**514.86**	**1,135,072**	**71**
Domestic mortality limits (FCEY)					
Directed commercial fishery landings	580.60	1,280,000	356.23	785,352	61
Projections (non-FCEY)[3]					
Directed commercial discard mortality	18.14	40,000	23.13	51,000	128
Recreational fishery	4.54	10,000	2.97	6,556	66
Subsistence	0.00	0	1.89	4,164	--
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	122.47	270,000	130.63	288,000	107
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	0.00	0	--
Non-TCEY mortality					
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	58.97	130,000	56.25	124,000	95

IPHC Regulatory Area	Fishery limit / projection[1] (net weight)		Mortality to date[1] (net weight)		Pct (%) attained
	Tonnes (t)	Pounds (lb)	Tonnes (t)	Pounds (lb)	(%)
Area 4B (central and western Aleutians)	**566.99**	**1,250,000**	**197.80**	**436,079**	**35**
Domestic mortality limits (FCEY)					
Directed commercial fishery landings	494.42	1,090,000	149.17	328,861	30
Projections (non-FCEY)[3]					
Directed commercial discard mortality	4.54	10,000	2.27	5,000	50
Recreational fishery	--	--	0.00	0	--
Subsistence	--	--	0.10	218	--
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	63.50	140,000	46.27	102,000	73
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	0.00	0	--
Non-TCEY mortality					
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	4.54	10,000	4.99	11,000	110
Areas 4CDE and Closed Area	**1,678.29**	**3,700,000**	**979.89**	**2,160,278**	**58**
Domestic mortality limits (FCEY)					
Directed commercial fishery landings	934.40	2,060,000	465.73	1,026,761	50
Projections (non-FCEY)[3]					
Directed commercial discard mortality	36.29	80,000	22.68	50,000	63
Recreational fishery	--	--	0.00	0	--
Subsistence[6]	4.54	10,000	5.82	12,828	--
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	703.07	1,550,000	482.62	1,064,000	69
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	3.03	6,689	--
Non-TCEY mortality					
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	503.49	1,110,000	524.81	1,157,000	104
Total	**16,002.74**	**35,280,000**	**14,099.05**	**31,083,092**	**88**
Directed commercial fishery landings	11,498.56	25,350,000	9,838.16	21,689,431	86
Recreational fishery	2,825.88	6,230,000	2,667.33	5,880,448	94
Subsistence	376.48	830,000	375.14	827,039	100
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (O26)	1,297.27	2,860,000	1,055.06	2,326,000	81
IPHC fishery-independent setline survey and research[4]	--	--	163.37	360,174	--
Non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26)	707.60	1,560,000	811.02	1,788,000	115

[1] Totals by IPHC Regulatory area include all TCEY components, i.e. exclude non-directed commercial discard mortality (U26).

[2] North of Pt. Chehalis; non-treaty incidental to sablefish fishery limit allocated from Washington sport allocation in accordance with the Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan for IPHC Regulatory Area 2A.

[3] Fishery projection is value used in setting the TCEY for each IPHC Regulatory Area (i.e., non-FCEY components of TCEY).

[4] Includes U32 Pacific halibut landed during FISS.

[5] XRQ and GAF leased from commercial quota.

[6] Includes U32 CDQ landings retained for personal consumption and not accounted as commercial CDQ landings in IPHC Regulartory Areas 4D and 4E.

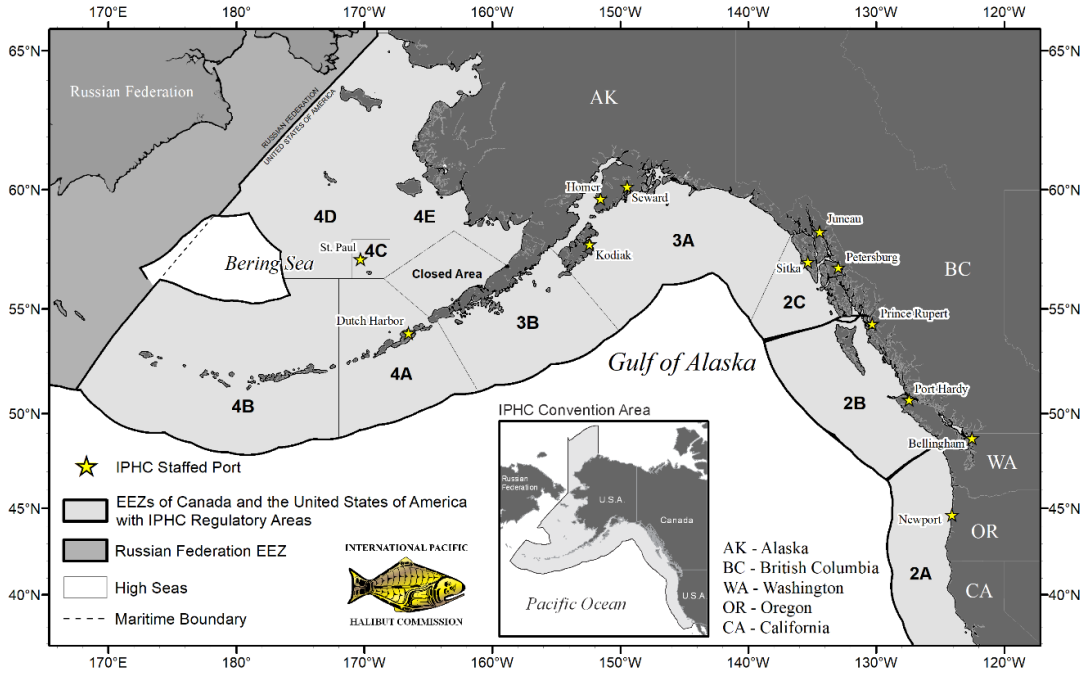


Figure 1. IPHC Convention Area and associated IPHC Regulatory Areas.

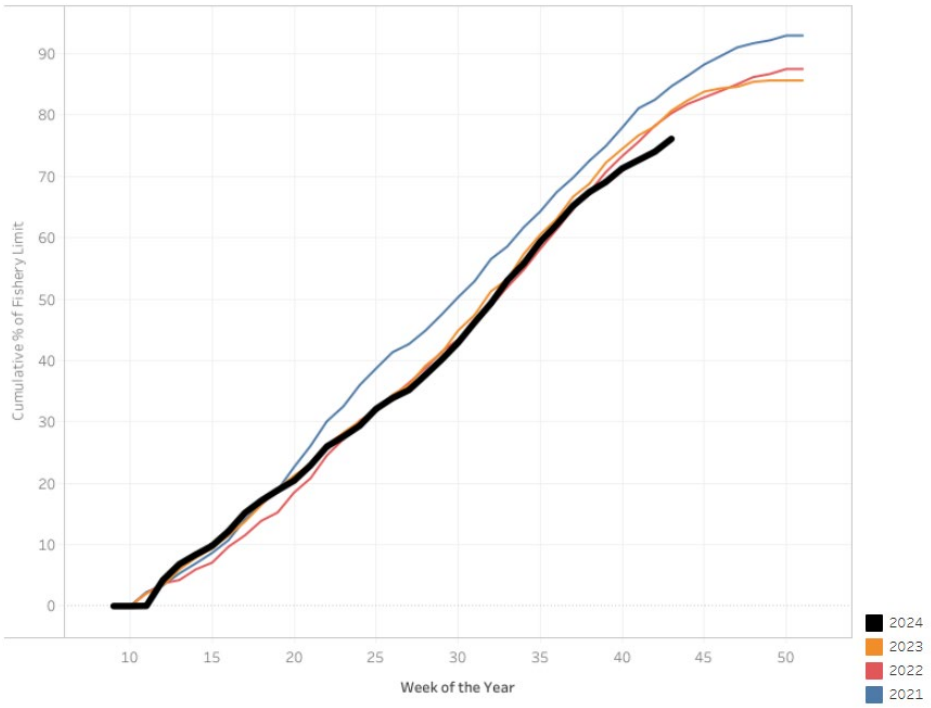


Figure 2. Cumulative percentage of directed commercial Pacific halibut limit landed by week.

DIRECTED COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

The IPHC's directed commercial fisheries span from northern California through to northern and western Alaska in USA and Canadian waters of the northeastern Pacific Ocean. The IPHC sets annual limits for the retention of Pacific halibut in each IPHC Regulatory Area. Participants in these commercial fisheries use longline and pot gear to catch Pacific halibut for sale. The directed commercial Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A consisted of the directed commercial fishery with fishing period limits, the incidental Pacific halibut catch during the salmon troll and limited-entry sablefish fisheries, and the treaty Indian fisheries. Farther north, the directed commercial fisheries consisted of the Individual Vessel Quota

(IVQ) fishery in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B in British Columbia, Canada; the Metlakatla fishery in IPHC Regulatory Area 2C; the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system in Alaska, USA; and the CDQ fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Areas 4B and 4CDE.

Directed Commercial Fishing Periods

The Canadian IVQ fishery in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B and the USA IFQ and CDQ fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E commenced at 6:00 local time on 15 March and closed at 23:59 local time on 7 December (Table 3). The IPHC Regulatory Area 2A directed commercial fisheries, including the treaty Indian commercial fisheries, occurred during the same calendar period (15 March to 7 December 2024). In IPHC Regulatory Area 2A, the non-treaty directed commercial fishery operated under 58-hour fishing periods beginning on the fourth Tuesday in June. Each fishing period began on the Tuesday at 08:00 and ended on the following Thursday at 18:00 local time and was further restricted by fishing period limits. The fishery closed for the remainder of the year after the fifth opening that commenced on 24 September, when the IPHC Regulatory Area 2A directed commercial non-treaty fishery allocation was estimated to have been reached.

Table 3. Fishing periods for directed commercial Pacific halibut fisheries by IPHC Regulatory Area, 2019-2024 (d = days; h = hours).

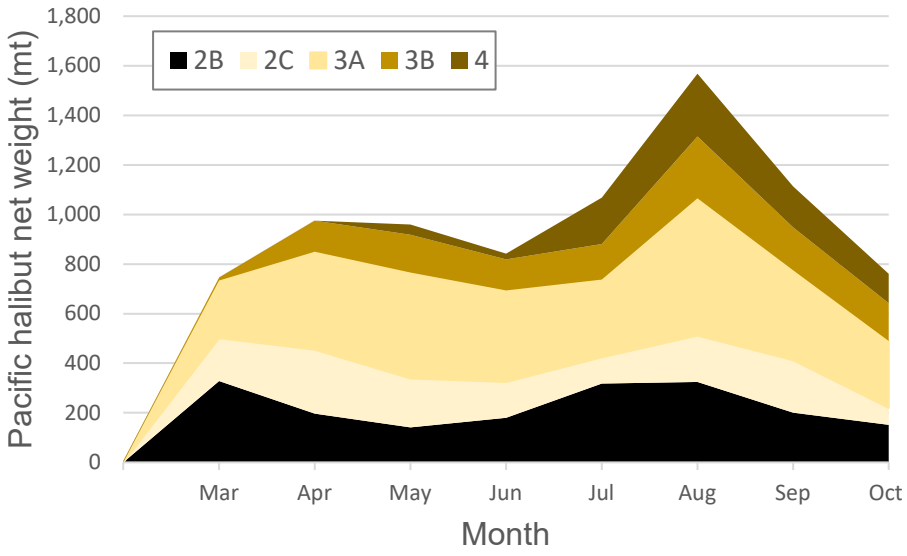
IPHC Regulatory Area	Year					
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Canada: 2B	15 Mar-7 Dec (277 d)	10 Ma-7 Dec (272 d)	6 Mar-7 Dec (276 d)	6 Mar-7 Dec (276 d)	14 Mar-7 Dec (268 d)	15 Mar-14 Nov (244 d)
USA: 2A Treaty Indian	15 Mar-19 Jun (24 h) (Unrestricted) 15 Mar-19 Jun (93.5 h) (Restricted) 24 Jun-31 Jul (2x 41 h) (Restricted) 24 Jun-31 Jul (24 h) (Unrestricted) 9 Aug-30 Sep (6x24 h) (Restricted)	10 Mar-10 Jun (55 h) (Unrestricted) 10 Mar-31 May (122 h) (Restricted) 1 Jun-31 Jul (2x 24 h) (Restricted) 17 Jun-31 Jul (20 h) (Unrestricted) 1 Sep-15 Oct (2x24 h) (Restricted)	6 Mar-31 May (55 h) (Unrestricted) 6 Mar-31 May (122 h) (Restricted) 3 Jun-30 Sep (48 h and 72 h) (Restricted)	6 Mar-16 May (55 h) (Unrestricted) 6 Mar-16 May (102 h) (Restricted) 16 May-20 Jun (24 h)	14 Mar-30 Sep (55 h) (Unrestricted) 14 Mar-30 Sep (222 h) (Restricted) 5 Oct-18 Oct (13 d)	15 Mar-15 May (55 h) (Unrestricted) 15 Mar-15 May (84 h) 20 May-15 Jun (72 h) (Restricted) 11 Jun-24 Jul (35 d)
USA: 2A Commercial Directed	25-27 Jun 9-11 Jul 6-8 Aug 27-29 Aug 24-26 Sep (58 h each)	27-29 Jun 11-13 Jul 1-3 Aug (58 h each)	28-30 Jun 12-14 Jul 26-28 Jul (58 h each)	22-24 Jun 6-8 Jul 20-22 Jul (58 h each)	22-24 Jun 6-8 Jul 20-22 Jul 3-5 Aug 17-19 Aug (58 h each)	26 Jun 10 Jul 24 Jul (10 h each)

USA: 2A Commercial Incidental	Salmon 1 Apr- 31 Oct (213 d) Sablefish 1 Apr-7 Dec (250 d)	Salmon 1 Apr-31 Oct (213 d) Sablefish 1 Apr-7 Dec (250 d)	Salmon 1 Apr-31 Oct (213 d) Sablefish 1 Apr-31 Oct (213 d)	Salmon 1 Apr-7 Dec (250 d) Sablefish 1 Apr-7 Dec (250 d)	Salmon WA: 15 Apr-30 Sep (168 d) OR: 15 Apr-31 Oct (199 d) CA: 1 Aug-30 Sep (60 d) Sablefish 1 Apr- 15 Nov (228 d)	Salmon WA, CA: 20 Apr- 30 Sep (163 d) OR: 20 Apr- 31 Oct (194 d) Sablefish 1 Apr-31 Oct (213 d)
USA: Alaska (2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4CDE)	15 Mar-7 Dec (267 d)	10 Mar-7 Dec (272 d)	6 Mar-7 Dec (276 d)	6 Mar-7 Dec (276 d)	14 Mar-15 Nov (246 d)	15 Mar-14 Nov (244 d)

Directed Commercial Landings

Directed commercial fishery limits and landings by IPHC Regulatory Area for the 2024 fishing season are shown in Table 2. The directed commercial fishery limit, as referred to here, is the IPHC commercial fishery limit set by the Contracting Parties following the IPHC Annual Meeting and is equivalent to the Fishery Constant Exploitation Yield (FCEY). The fishery limits with adjustments from the underage and overage programs from the previous year's quota share programs are not shown. The *Use of Fish* allocation in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B, as defined in the Pacific Region Integrated Fisheries Management Plan – Groundfish are also not presented. Historical landings and fishery limits are available on the IPHC website (https://www.iphc.int/data).

The 2024 directed commercial fishery landings were spread over ten months (March – December) of the year in Canada and the USA (Figure 2). On a month-to-month comparison, March took the lead as the busiest month for total poundage (18%) landed from IPHC Regulatory Area 2B. On a month-to-month comparison, August was also the busiest month for total poundage (20%) from Alaska, USA. A year-to-date visualization is also available on the IPHC website.



Regulatory Area 2B landings from DFO Fishery Operations System (FOS).
Regulatory Areas 2C, 3, and 4 landings from NOAA Fisheries Restricted Access Management (RAM) Program. Regulatory Area 4: April landings combined with and shown above in May to preserve confidentiality.

Figure 3. 2024 directed commercial landings (tonnes, net weight, preliminary) of Pacific halibut for individual quota fisheries by IPHC Regulatory Area and month.

USA – IPHC Regulatory Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, California)

The 2024 IPHC Regulatory Area 2A fisheries and respective fishery limits are listed in Table 2. The total IPHC Regulatory Area 2A commercial landings (directed and incidental to salmon troll sablefish, and Treaty Indian) of 361 tonnes (796,839 pounds) was 5% below the fishery limit. The total non-treaty directed commercial landings of 108 tonnes (237,2164 pounds) was 5% under of the fishery limit of 113 tonnes (249,338 pounds) after five 58-hour openers. The fishing period limits by vessel size class for each opening in 2024 are listed in Table 4.

The salmon troll fishery season was open from 1 April to 31 October in Oregon and Washington (CA closed) with an allowable incidental landing ratio of one Pacific halibut per two Chinook, plus an additional Pacific halibut per landing, and a vessel trip limit of 35 fish. Total landings of 16 tonnes (34,523 pounds) were 21% under the fishery limit of 20 tonnes (44,001 pounds).

Incidental Pacific halibut retention during the limited-entry sablefish fishery was open from 1 April and is expected to remain open to 7 December. The initial allowable landing ratio was 0.06 tonnes (130 pounds) of Pacific halibut to 0.45 tonnes (1,000 pounds) of sablefish, with an allowance for up to two additional Pacific halibut in excess of the ratio limit. On 22 October, an in-season action increased the allowable ratio to 0.07 tonnes (150 pounds) of Pacific halibut to 0.45 tonnes (1,000 pounds) of sablefish, still permitting up to two additional Pacific halibut in excess of the ratio limit. The total landings of 18 tonnes (39,598 pounds) were 21% under the fishery limit 23 tonnes (50,000 pounds).

In IPHC Regulatory Area 2A, north of Point Chehalis (46°53.30´ N. latitude), the treaty Indian tribes manage the directed commercial landings for three fisheries under a Memorandum of Understanding among the 13 tribes. These consist of an unrestricted fishery, a restricted fishery with trip limits, and a late season fishery.

These fisheries are subject to in-season management:

- The unrestricted fishery occurred between 15 March and 19 June. A total of 101 tonnes (222,216 pounds) were landed.

- The restricted fishery occurred between 15 March to 19 June. A total of 44 tonnes (96,414 pounds) were landed.
- There were two late-season openers: one from 24 June to 31 July and another from 9 August to 30 September. A total of 76 tonnes (166,924 pounds) were landed.

Estimated overall total landings of 220 tonnes (485,554 pounds) were 2% under the fishery limit 224 tonnes (494,280 pounds).

Table 4. The fishing periods and limits (tonnes, dressed, head-on with ice/slime) by vessel class used in the 2024 directed commercial fishery in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A.

Vessel Class		Commercial fishing periods (dates) & limits (t)				
Letter	**Feet**	**25-27 Jun**	**9-11 Jul**	**6-8 Aug**	**27-29 Aug**	**24-26 Sep**
A, B and C	1-35	0.8	0.8	0.45	0.64	0.82
D and E	36-45	1.4	1.4	0.45	0.64	0.82
F and G	46-55	1.7	1.7	0.45	0.64	0.82
H	56+	2.0	2.0	0.45	0.64	0.82

Canada – IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (British Columbia)

Under the IVQ fishery in British Columbia, Canada, the number of active Pacific halibut licences (L licences) and First Nations communal commercial licences (FL licences) was 133 in 2024. In addition, Pacific halibut can be landed as incidental catch in other licensed groundfish fisheries. In 2024, this occurred from a total of 58 licences from other fisheries. The 2024 directed commercial landings represented 2,046 tonnes (4,510,044 pounds) of Pacific halibut. Additionally, 9 tonnes (19,000 pounds) were leased from commercial quota to the recreational sector.

Directed commercial trips from IPHC Regulatory Area 2B were delivered into 12 different ports in 2024. The ports of Port Hardy (including Coal Harbour and Port McNeill) and Prince Rupert/Port Edward were the major landing locations, receiving 95% of the commercial landings. Port Hardy received and Prince Rupert both received 47.5% of the directed commercial landings. All IVQ landings were landed in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B. In 2024, a total of 18 Canadian vessels landed frozen, head-off Pacific halibut for a total of 16 tonnes (34,286 pounds) over 27 landings. Live landings resulted in a total landed weight of <1 tonne (641 pounds).

USA – IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3, and 4 (Alaska)

In Alaska, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (NOAA Fisheries) Restricted Access Management (RAM) Program allocated Pacific halibut quota share (QS) to recipients by IPHC Regulatory Area. Quota share transfers were permitted with restrictions on the amount of QS a person could hold and the amount that could be fished per vessel. In 2024, RAM reported that 2,219 persons/entities held QS.

The total 2024 landings from the IFQ/CDQ Pacific halibut fishery for the waters off Alaska projected through 7 December 2024 were 6,735 tonnes (14,847,274 pounds), 20% under the directed commercial fishery landings limit. By IPHC Regulatory Area, the directed commercial landings were under the fishery limit by 12% for Area 2C, 8% for Area 3A, 11% for Area 3B, 39% for Area 4A, 70% for Area 4B (IFQ/CDQ), and 50% for 4CDE/Closed (IFQ/CDQ).

Homer received approximately 25% (1,554 tonnes or 3,426,164 pounds) of the Alaskan directed commercial landings, making it the port that received the greatest landed volume in 2024. Kodiak received the second largest landing volume at 11% (696 tonnes or 1,533,911 pounds) of the Alaskan commercial landings. In Southeast Alaska, the two largest landing volumes were received in Petersburg and Sitka, with

their combined landings representing 15% of the directed commercial Alaskan landings (911 tonnes or 2,009,420 pounds). The Alaskan QS catch that was landed in Bellingham, WA was less than 2%.

Directed commercial sector mortality was 17% under the commercial sector limit (includes directed commercial discard mortality in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A).

In Alaska, 7 tonnes (16,000 pounds) of Pacific halibut were caught with pot gear and landed within the directed commercial fishery, representing 0.8% of the total Alaska landings.

The Metlakatla Indian Community (within IPHC Regulatory Area 2C) was authorized by the United States government to conduct a commercial Pacific halibut fishery within the Annette Islands Reserve. There were 14 two-day openings between 5 April and 4 October for total landings of 17 tonnes (38,274 pounds). The fishery closed on 6 October.

Directed Commercial Discard Mortality

Incidental mortality of Pacific halibut in the directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery is the mortality of all Pacific halibut that do not become part of the landed catch. The three main sources of discard mortality estimate include: 1) fish that are captured and discarded because they are below the legal-size limit of 81.3 cm (32 inches); 2) fish that are estimated to die on lost or abandoned fishing gear; and 3) fish that are discarded for regulatory reasons (e.g., the vessels trip limit has been exceeded). The methods that are applied to produce each of these estimates differ due to the amount and quality of information available. Information on lost gear and regulatory discards is collected through logbook interviews and fishing logs received by mail. The ratio of U32 to O32 Pacific halibut (>81.3 cm or 32 inches in length) is determined from the IPHC FISS in most areas and by direct observation in the IPHC Regulatory Area 2B fishery. Different mortality rates are applied to each category: released Pacific halibut have an estimated 16% mortality rate and Pacific halibut mortality from lost gear is assumed 100%.

Pacific halibut discard mortality estimates from the commercial Pacific halibut fishery are summarized by IPHC Regulatory Area in Table 2.

RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

The 2024 recreational removals of Pacific halibut, including discard mortality, was estimated at 2,667 tonnes (5,880,448 pounds). Changes in harvests varied across areas, in some cases, in response to changes in size restrictions. Recreational fishery limits and landings are detailed by IPHC Regulatory Area in Table 2. Historical recreational removals are also available at the IPHC website.

Recreational Landings

USA – IPHC Regulatory Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, California)

The 2024 IPHC Regulatory Area 2A recreational allocation was 278 tonnes (612,162 pounds) net weight and based on the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Catch Sharing Plan formula, which divides the overall fishery limit among all sectors. The recreational allocation was further subdivided to seven subareas, after 23 tonnes (50,000 pounds) were allocated to the incidental Pacific halibut catch in the commercial sablefish fishery in Washington. This subdivision resulted in 132 tonnes (290,158 pounds) being allocated to Washington subareas, 129 tonnes (283,784 pounds) to Oregon subareas and 17 tonnes (38,220 pounds) to California. The IPHC Regulatory Area 2A recreational harvest totaled 235 tonnes (WA, OR and CA; 519,125 pounds), 15% under the recreational fishery limit. Recreational fishery harvest seasons by subareas varied and were managed in season with fisheries open in Washington from 4 April to 30 September, in Oregon from 1 May to 31 October, and in California from 1 May.

Canada – IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (British Columbia)

IPHC Regulatory Area 2B operated under a 126 cm (49.6 inch) maximum size limit and one Pacific halibut had to be between 90 and 126 cm (35.4 - 49.6 inches) or two under 90 cm (35.4 inch) when attaining the two fish possession limit, with an annual limit of ten per licence holder (FN0084). Effective 1 April, the maximum size limit remained unchanged; however, the daily possession limit was updated to allow either one fish between 85 and 126 cm (33.5 - 49.6 inch) or two fish under 85 cm (33.5 inch) (FN0238). The fishery closed on 9 October (FN1042). The IPHC Regulatory Area 2B recreational harvest was at 97% of the recreational fishery limit at 376 tonnes (830,000 pounds).

Recreational landings in British Columbia are also allowed under Pacific Region Experimental Recreational [Pacific] Halibut Program.

USA - IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3, and 4 (Alaska)

In IPHC Regulatory Area 2C, charter anglers were permitted to retain one Pacific halibut per day. From February 1 to July 14, retained halibut had to be either 40 inches or smaller, or 80 inches or larger. From July 15 to December 31, retained halibut had to be 36 inches or smaller, or 80 inches or larger. Halibut retention was not allowed on Fridays from July 19 to September 13.

In IPHC Regulatory Area 3A, charter anglers were allowed to retain two Pacific halibut per day, with only one fish exceeding 28 inches. If only one halibut was retained, it could be any size. Charter vessels were limited to one fishing trip per day when retaining halibut, and halibut retention was prohibited on Wednesdays.

In addition, a Guided Angler Fish (GAF) program allows recreational harvesters to land fish that is leased from commercial fishery quota shareholders for the current season.

Recreational Discard Mortality

Pacific halibut discarded for any reason experience some level of discard mortality and impacts more of the stock with the increasing use of size restrictions, such as reverse slot limits. Current year estimates from USA agencies of recreational discard mortality have been received and are provided in Table 2. Canada has not provided recreational discard mortality estimates; therefore, the discard mortality rate from IPHC Regulatory Area 2C is applied to the estimated landings from IPHC Regulatory Area 2B.

SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES

Pacific halibut is taken throughout its range as subsistence harvest by several fisheries. Subsistence fisheries are non-commercial, customary, and traditional use of Pacific halibut for direct personal, family, or community consumption or sharing as food, or customary trade. The primary subsistence fisheries are the treaty Indian Ceremonial and Subsistence fishery in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A off northwest Washington State, the First Nations Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) fishery in British Columbia, and the subsistence fishery by rural residents and federally recognized native tribes in Alaska documented via Subsistence [Pacific] Halibut Registration Certificates (SHARC).

The coastwide subsistence estimate for 2024 was 375 tonnes (827,039 pounds) (Table 2). This includes U32 fish retained for personal consumption in CDQ fishery (excluded from commercial CDQ landings statistics), reported directly to the IPHC in accordance with Section 14 of the IPHC Fishery Regulations (2024). Historical subsistence removals are also available at the IPHC website.

Estimated subsistence harvests by area

In the commercial Pacific halibut fisheries coastwide, the state and federal regulations require that take-home Pacific halibut caught during commercial fishing be recorded as part of the commercial fishery on the landing records (i.e., State fish tickets or Canadian validation records). This is consistent across areas, including the quota share fisheries in Canada and USA, and as part of fishing period limits and Pacific

halibut ratios in the incidental fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A. Therefore, personal use fish or take-home fish within the commercial fisheries, with exception of U32 fish retained by CDQ groups, are accounted for as commercial catch and are not included here.

USA - IPHC Regulatory Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, California)

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's Catch Sharing Plan allocates the Pacific halibut fishery limit to commercial, recreational, and treaty Indian users in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A. The treaty tribal fishery limit is further sub-divided into commercial and C&S fisheries. It is estimated that 9 tonnes (20,220 pounds) were retained as C&S.

Canada - IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (British Columbia)

The source of Pacific halibut subsistence harvest in British Columbia is the First Nations FSC fishery. The IPHC receives some logbook and landing data for this harvest from the DFO, but those data have not been adequate for the IPHC to make an independent estimate of the FSC fishery harvest. DFO estimated the First Nations FSC harvest to be 136 tonnes (300,000 pounds) annually until 2006, and since 2007, the yearly estimate has been provided as 184 tonnes (405,000 pounds).

USA - IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3, and 4 (Alaska)

In 2003, the subsistence Pacific halibut fishery off Alaska was formally recognized by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and implemented by IPHC and NOAA Fisheries regulations. The fishery allows the customary and traditional use of Pacific halibut by rural residents and members of federally recognized Alaska, USA native tribes who can retain Pacific halibut for non-commercial use, food, or customary trade. The NOAA Fisheries regulations define legal gear, number of hooks, and daily bag limits, and IPHC regulations set the fishing season. Prior to subsistence fishing, eligible applicants must obtain a SHARC license. The Division of Subsistence at Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) was contracted by NOAA Fisheries to estimate the subsistence harvest in Alaska through a data collection program. A voluntary survey of fishers is conducted by mail or phone, with some onsite visits. Since 2018, this survey has been conducted on a biannual schedule rather than annually. The 2023 estimates have been carried forward for 2024, except for Regulatory Area 4CDE, which has been updated. Estimates for all Regulatory Areas are provided in Table 2.

In addition to the SHARC harvest, IPHC regulations allow Pacific halibut less than 81.3 cm or 32 inches in fork length (also called U32) to be retained in the IPHC Regulatory Area 4D and 4E commercial Pacific halibut CDQ fishery, under an exemption requested by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, if the fish are not sold or bartered. The exemption originally applied only to CDQ fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 4E in 1998 but was expanded in 2002 to also include IPHC Regulatory Area 4D. The CDQ organizations are required to report to the IPHC the amounts retained during their commercial fishing operations. This harvest is not included in the SHARC program estimate and is reported separately.

Reports for 2024 removals were received from three CDQ management organizations: Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC), Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), and Coastal Villages Regional Fund (CVRF).

CDQ – Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC)

BBEDC requires their fishers to record the lengths of retained U32 Pacific halibut in a separate log, which are then tabulated by BBEDC at the conclusion of the season. The lengths were converted to weights using the IPHC length/weight relationship and summed to estimate the total retained U32 weight. Pacific halibut were landed by BBEDC vessels in Naknek. BBEDC reported 3 harvesters landed 1 U32 Pacific halibut <1 tonne (12 pounds).

CDQ – Coastal Villages Regional Fund (CVRF)

CVRF reported that no Pacific halibut were landed by their fishers or received by their facilities.

CDQ – Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC)

NSEDC required their fishers to offload the U32 Pacific halibut for weighing. The fish were not washed nor were the heads removed. The U32 Pacific halibut were then returned to the harvester. NSEDC reported 24 U32 Pacific halibut weighing <1 tonne (203 pounds), weighted head-on, were caught in the local CDQ fishery and landed at the Nome plant.

NON-DIRECTED COMMERCIAL DISCARD MORTALITY

The IPHC accounts for non-directed commercial discard mortality by IPHC Regulatory Area and sector. All removals for 2024 are provided in Table 2. Historical data are also available on the IPHC website.

Estimating Non-Directed Commercial Discard Mortality

Non-directed commercial discard mortality (CDM)

Estimates of non-directed CDM of Pacific halibut are provided by Contracting Party agencies. The amounts are estimated because not all fisheries have 100% monitoring, and not all Pacific halibut that are discarded are assumed not to survive. The IPHC relies upon information supplied by observer programs run by Contracting Party agencies for non-directed CDM estimates in most fisheries. Non-IPHC research survey information is used to generate estimates of non-directed CDM in the few cases where fishery observations are unavailable.

Non-directed Commercial Discard Mortality by Area

USA – IPHC Regulatory Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, California)

Groundfish fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California are managed by NOAA Fisheries, following advice and recommendations developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Non-directed commercial discard mortality projected estimates are provided by NOAA Fisheries, which operates observer programs off the USA West Coast.

Canada – IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (British Columbia)

In Canada, Pacific halibut non-directed commercial discard mortality in trawl fisheries are monitored and capped at 454 tonnes round weight by DFO. Non-trawl non-directed CDM is handled under the IVQ system within the directed Pacific halibut fishery cap. Non-directed CDM information is provided to IPHC by DFO.

USA – IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3, and 4 (Alaska)

Groundfish fisheries in Alaska are managed by NOAA Fisheries, following advice and recommendations developed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Non-directed commercial discard mortality projected estimates for Alaskan areas are provided by NOAA Fisheries and ADF&G.

IPHC Regulatory Area 2C (Southeast Alaska)

For the federal waters of IPHC Regulatory Area 2C, only non-directed commercial discard mortality by hook-and-line vessels fishing in the outside waters were reported by NOAA Fisheries. These vessels are primarily targeting Pacific cod and rockfish (*Sebastes* spp.) in open access fisheries, and sablefish in the IFQ fishery. In 1998, a no trawl zone was established in the Gulf of Alaska eliminating trawl fishing in this area.

Fisheries occurring within state waters and resulting in Pacific halibut non-directed CDM include pot fisheries for red and golden king crab, and tanner crab. Information is provided periodically by ADF&G, and the estimate was rolled forward from 2022 to 2024.

IPHC Regulatory Area 3 (Eastern, Central and Western Gulf of Alaska)

IPHC Regulatory Area 3 is comprised of Areas 3A and 3B. For the purposes of stock assessment and management, IPHC tracks non-directed commercial discard mortality in both IPHC Regulatory Areas. Federal groundfish fisheries operate throughout both areas and a subset of these vessels are monitored for discarded Pacific halibut. Trawl fisheries are responsible for most of the non-directed CDM in Regulatory Area 3, with hook-and-line fisheries a distant second. State-managed crab and scallop fisheries are also known to take Pacific halibut as non-directed CDM, but data from these state-managed fisheries are currently unavailable.

Estimates of non-directed CDM in IPHC Regulatory Area 3 reflect different levels of observer coverage by gear and type of fishing trip. 2021 coverage rates vary from 100% to 15% of the estimated discarded groundfish pounds by gear and fishery (Table 3-4 in AFSC 2021). The lowest coverage rates are realized for the non-pelagic trawl fishery, which also has the highest likelihood of encountering Pacific halibut. Analyses of observed and unobserved trip properties (magnitude of the landings, trip duration, species composition of the landed catch, etc.) have shown that observed trips are not representative of all trips in some of these metrics (observed and unobserved) (Appendix A in AFSC 2019). Therefore, non-directed CDM estimates for IPHC Regulatory Area 3 have both a greater uncertainty and potential for bias then those from areas with higher coverage rates and/or where there is no evidence of different behavior when observed.

IPHC Regulatory Area 4 (Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands)

In IPHC Regulatory Area 4CDE non-directed commercial discard mortality estimates have typically been the highest (Table 2) due to groundfish fisheries which target flatfish in the Bering Sea.

IPHC FISHERY-INDEPENDENT SETLINE SURVEY (FISS) AND OTHER IPHC RESEARCH

In 2024, 163 tonnes (360,174 pounds) of Pacific halibut were landed from the FISS and other IPHC research, including projected volume from the fecundity study. Totals landed from each IPHC Regulatory Area documented in Table 2.

NON-IPHC RESEARCH REMOVALS

In 2024, four IPHC research permits were issued to NOAA to allow the harvest of Pacific halibut while conducting their Aleutian Islands and Eastern Bering Sea standardised bottom trawl surveys. A fifth research permit was issued to the Makah Tribe (Makah Fisheries Management) for tag research. A total reported of 10 Pacific halibut were captured and released.

REMOVALS OUTSIDE THE IPHC CONVENTION AREA

The latest Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistics for Pacific halibut capture production outside the IPHC Convention Area (2022) indicate catches by Russia amounting to 3,105 tonnes, or 19% of the global total.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission:

1) **NOTE** paper IPHC-2024-IM100-08 Rev_2 that provides the Commission with a preliminary overview of the 2024 Pacific halibut removals, including the status of mortality reported against fishery limits adopted by the Commission and outlined in the IPHC Fishery Regulations (2024).