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## IPHC Fishery Regulations: Mortality and Fishery Limits (Sect. 5) – definition of reaction to overfishing

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Directed Commercial  Recreational  Subsistence  Non-directed commercial  All   
All Regulatory Areas  All Alaska Regulatory Areas  All U.S. Regulatory Areas   
2A  2B  2C  3A  3B  4A  4B  4C  4D  4E

### PURPOSE

To propose a reaction to the Pacific halibut stock overfishing.

### EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The North Pacific Fisheries Association has grave concerns that the current trigger points of SB20 and SB30 are a percentage of Unfished Biomass estimates that are re-estimated annually, do not represent estimates of long-term potential yield, and can be expected to respond very slowly, if at all, to continued stock declines.

We are proposing that the IPHC establish a measurable objective related to absolute spawning biomass as an additional trigger to invoke a rebuilding strategy.

*"Mortality from all sources decreased by 5% to an estimated 32.7 million pounds (~14,800 t) in 2024, the lowest value in 100 years, based on preliminary information available for this assessment."* (Page 3,4 [IPHC-2025-AM101-11](#)).

We are building on the following Scientific Review Board recommendation:

[SRB025–Rec.08](#) (para. 31) The SRB **RECOMMENDED** adding a measurable objective related to absolute spawning biomass under the general objective 2.1 “maintain spawning biomass at or above a level that optimises fishing activities” to be included in the priority Commission objectives after, or in place of, the current relative biomass threshold objective.

Para. 32: **NOTING** that the definitions of “overfished” and “overfishing” are consistent with the use of these terms in the USA federal fishery management systems under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, but differ from the terms and definitions elsewhere, the SRB **REQUESTED** a broader investigating of terms and definitions related to B and F reference points used by fishery managements organisations throughout the world.

[Appendix A](#) provides details on the suggested regulatory language.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Commission:

- 1) **NOTE** regulatory proposal IPHC-2025-AM101-PropC5, which proposes a reaction to the Pacific halibut stock overfishing.

## APPENDICES

[Appendix A](#): Suggested regulatory language.

### APPENDIX A SUGGESTED REGULATORY LANGUAGE

#### 3. Definitions

(1) In these Regulations,

[...]

(w) "overfished" means the probability that the female spawning biomass is below the limit reference point ( $SB_{LIM}$ ) is greater than 50%.  $SB_{LIM}$  is the lowest absolute SB the stock is known to have recovered from or 20% of the unfished female spawning biomass ( $SB_{20\%}$ );

(x) "overfishing" means the probability that the stock will move into an "overfished" state within 3 years is greater than 50%.

#### 5. Mortality and Fishery Limits

[...]

(3) If the stock is in a state of "overfishing", the mortality and fishery limits defined in this Section, paragraph (1) and (2), would be reduced to achieve a 'not overfished' state within 5 years.