



Commercial Fishing Periods (Sect. 8)

PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (26 OCTOBER 2017)

PURPOSE

To establish fixed fishing periods for the commercial Pacific halibut fisheries.

BACKGROUND

Each year the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) selects fishing period dates for the commercial Pacific halibut fisheries in each of the IPHC Regulatory Areas. The IPHC's practice is to use the same overall fishing period dates for all IPHC Regulatory Areas. These dates vary from year to year, but in recent years have allowed commercial fishing to begin sometime in March and end sometime in November for the British Columbia and Alaska IPHC Regulatory Areas (2B through 4E). More restricted fishing periods are established for IPHC Regulatory Area 2A, and all commercial fishing in that Regulatory Area is required to take place within the same overall fishing period defined for the other Regulatory Areas.

DISCUSSION

The Commission typically receives advice at the IPHC Annual Meeting from the Conference Board (CB) and the Processor Advisory Board (PAB) regarding commercial fishing period dates. Historically, biological factors relevant to setting the dates included protection of Pacific halibut spawning, which primarily takes place from September through early May ([IPHC Sci Rpt 70](#) (p.32) and Loher (2011)), maintaining correspondence between observed distribution in the summer and actual encounter rates in the fishery relative to spawning and migrating fish; typical weather patterns and predicted tides in fishing areas and business considerations for both fishers and processors have also been historically important.

The IPHC Secretariat proposes that fixed fishing periods be established in order to reduce the planning uncertainty for future fishing effort. With fixed dates, fishers and processors would not need to wait until after the Annual Meeting to completed planning for the coming fishing season.

The IPHC Secretariat proposes that the fishing period be fixed to run from 15 March to 1 November each year. Fixed starting dates later than 15 March could also be considered.

Sectors Affected: Commercial Pacific halibut fisheries in all IPHC Regulatory Areas.

SUGGESTED REGULATORY LANGUAGE**8. Commercial Fishing Periods**

- (1) ...
- (2) ...
- (3) Notwithstanding paragraph (7) of section 11, an incidental catch fishery is authorized during the sablefish seasons in Area 2A in accordance with regulations promulgated by NMFS. This fishery will occur between 1200 hours local time on **15 March** and 1200 hours local time on **1 November**.
- (4) Notwithstanding paragraph (2), and paragraph (7) of section 11, an incidental catch fishery is authorized during salmon troll seasons in Area 2A in accordance with regulations promulgated by NMFS. This fishery will occur between 1200 hours local time on **15 March** and 1200 hours local time on **1 November**.
- (5) The fishing period in Areas 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E shall begin at 1200 hours local time on **15 March** and terminate at 1200 hours local time on **1 November**, unless the Commission specifies otherwise.
- (6) All commercial fishing for halibut in Areas 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E shall cease at 1200 hours local time on **1 November**.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION / REFERENCES

[IPHC Sci Rpt 70](#). Spawning Locations and Season for Pacific Halibut. St-Pierre. 1984.

Loher, T. 2011. Analysis of match-mismatch between commercial fishing periods and spawning ecology of Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*), based on winter surveys and behavioural data from electronic archival tags. ICES J. of Mar. Sci. 68(10): 2240-2251.

APPENDICES

None.