



14 February 2019

**DETAILED OUTCOMES OF THE 95TH SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING (AM095)**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its 95th Annual Meeting (AM095) in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada on 1 February 2019. A total of 198 Pacific halibut stakeholders attended the meeting, with over 142 more participating in web broadcasts of the meeting. Meeting information, documents, and presentations are available on the meeting page at the IPHC website (<https://iphc.int/venues/details/95th-session-of-the-iphc-annual-meeting-am095>).

A complete summary of the meeting can be found in the **Report of the 95th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting**, posted on the IPHC website at <https://iphc.int/uploads/pdf/am/2019am/iphc-2019-am095-r.pdf>. Selected elements of the report are highlighted below:

The 2018 Stock Assessment and 2019 Harvest Advice

The 2018 stock assessment produced the following scientific advice regarding the Pacific halibut stock:

1. **Fishing intensity:** The IPHC does not have an explicit coastwide fishing intensity target or limit reference point, making it difficult to determine if current levels of fishing intensity are consistent with the interim harvest strategy policy objectives. However, given the healthy female spawning biomass and the TAC set for 2018 only being marginally higher than the levels estimated to maintain biomass at or near current levels of 43%, on the weight-of-evidence, the stock is classified as **not subject to overfishing**.
2. **Spawning biomass:** Female spawning stock biomass of Pacific halibut at the beginning of 2018 was estimated to be 43% (27–63%) of the SB₀ (unfished levels) defined by the interim harvest strategy policy. The probability that the stock is below the SB₃₀ level (IPHC trigger) is estimated to be 11%, with less than a 1% chance that the stock is below SB₂₀ (IPHC limit reference point). Thus, on the weight of evidence available, the Pacific halibut stock is determined to be **not overfished** (SB₂₀₁₉ > SB_{20%}).
3. **Outlook:** The stock is projected to decrease over the period from 2019-22 for all TCEYs greater than 20 million pounds (~9,070 t), corresponding to a Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) of 64%. At the reference level (SPR of 46% and a TCEY of 40 Milbs or 18,140 t) the probability of at least a 5% decrease in stock size increases over time from 37% (2020) to 86% (2022). There is a one third chance (<34/100) that the stock will decline below the threshold reference point (SB_{30%}) in projections for all the levels of fishing intensity up to an SPR of 40% evaluated over three years.

For more information on the 2018 stock assessment and the fishery status, as well as the harvest decision table indicating levels of risk associated with various levels of removals, please refer to papers IPHC-2019-AM095-09 and IPHC-2019-AM095-10 (<https://iphc.int/uploads/pdf/am/2019am/iphc-2019-am095-09.pdf> and <https://iphc.int/uploads/pdf/am/2019am/iphc-2019-am095-10.pdf>), which can be found on the meeting page at the IPHC website.

Regulatory Changes: Fishery Limits and Fishing Periods

The fishery regulations approved by the IPHC, including fishery limits and fishing periods, will be recommended to the Contracting Parties for implementation according to their domestic law and regulation, in accordance with the Convention¹.

Fishery Limits

The Commission adopted distributed mortality (TCEY) values for each IPHC Regulatory Area as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Distributed mortality (TCEY) by IPHC Regulatory Area

IPHC Regulatory Area	<i>Distributed mortality limits (TCEY) (net weight*)</i>	
	Metric tons (t)	Pounds (lb)
Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington)	748.43	1.65M
Area 2B (British Columbia)	3,098.04	6.83M
Area 2C (southeastern Alaska)	2,875.78	6.34M
Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska)	6,123.50	13.50M
Area 3B (western Gulf of Alaska)	1,315.42	2.90M
Area 4A (eastern Aleutians)	879.97	1.94M
Area 4B (central/western Aleutians)	657.71	1.45M
Areas 4CDE (Bering Sea)	1,814.37	4.00M
Total	17,513.20	38.61M

*“net weight” of a Pacific halibut means the weight of Pacific halibut that is without gills and entrails, head-off, washed (without ice and slime). If a Pacific halibut is weighed with the head on or with ice and slime, the required conversion factors for calculating net weight are a 2 percent deduction for ice and slime and a 10 percent deduction for the head.

¹ *The Convention between Canada and the United States of America for the Preservation of the [Pacific] Halibut Fishery of the Northern Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea.*

The Commission adopted the mortality limits for each Contracting Party, by IPHC Regulatory Area and sector, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Mortality table projected for the 2019 mortality limits by IPHC Regulatory Area, in millions of pounds

Sector	IPHC Regulatory Area								
	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	4B	4CDE	Total
Commercial discard mortality	0.02	0.13	NA	NA	0.19	0.09	0.02	0.04	0.50
O26 Bycatch	0.13	0.27	0.03	1.28	0.36	0.18	0.22	1.87	4.33
Non-CSP Recreational (+ discards)	NA	0.08	1.38	1.74	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	3.21
Subsistence	NA	0.41	0.44	0.22	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.06	1.14
Total Non-FCEY	0.15	0.88	1.85	3.24	0.57	0.29	0.24	1.96	9.18
Commercial discard mortality	NA	NA	0.06	0.31	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.37
CSP Recreational (+ discards)	0.60	0.84	0.82	1.89	NA	NA	NA	NA	4.16
Subsistence	0.03	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.03
Commercial Landings	0.86	5.10	3.61	8.06	2.33	1.65	1.21	2.04	24.88
Total FCEY	1.50	5.95	4.49	10.26	2.33	1.65	1.21	2.04	29.43
TCEY	1.65	6.83	6.34	13.50	2.90	1.94	1.45	4.00	38.61
U26 Bycatch	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.37	0.11	0.10	0.01	1.12	1.73
Total Mortality	1.65	6.85	6.34	13.87	3.01	2.04	1.46	5.12	40.34

Fishing Periods (season dates)

The Commission adopted an overall fishing period (season) of 15 March – 14 November 2019 for all commercial Pacific fisheries in Canada and the USA. In IPHC Regulatory Area 2A, the tribal commercial fisheries and the incidental Pacific halibut fisheries will occur within these dates, and the non-tribal directed commercial fishery will consist of 10-hour derby fishing periods, including 26 June, 10 July, 24 July, 7 August, 21 August, 4 September, and 18 September, with other possible dates to be determined by the IPHC Secretariat.

Other Actions

Harvest Strategy Policy

The Commission provided direction to the IPHC Secretariat and the Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB) for further work on harvest strategy policy development, noting that scale and distribution components will be evaluated and presented no later than at the 97th Annual Meeting (AM097) in 2021, for potential adoption and subsequent implementation as a harvest strategy.

Expanded fishery-independent setline survey (FISS)

The IPHC approved the last in a series of expansions to its annual fishery-independent setline survey (FISS). The purpose of the expansion series is to provide more accurate and precise estimates among regulatory areas and to encompass all depths over which the stock is distributed. In 2019, the FISS in IPHC Regulatory Areas 3A and 3B will be expanded beyond the standard grid of setline survey stations fished each year.

Upcoming Meetings

The IPHC's 95th Interim Meeting will be held 25-26 November 2019, in Seattle, Washington. The IPHC's 96th Annual Meeting (AM096) is planned for 27-31 January 2020 in Anchorage, Alaska, and the 97th Annual Meeting (AM097) is planned for 25-29 January 2021 in Victoria, British Columbia.

Commission Membership

United States Government Commissioner Mr. Chris Oliver was elected Chairperson for the coming year. Canadian Government Commissioner Mr. Paul Ryall was elected Vice-Chairperson. The other Canadian Commissioners are Mr. Neil Davis and Mr. Peter DeGreef. The other US Commissioners are Mr. Robert Alverson and Mr. Richard Yamada.

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