



IPHC Pacific Halibut Fishery Regulations:

Recreational (Sport) Fishing for Pacific Halibut—IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Sect. 28)

PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (2 SEPTEMBER 2020)

PURPOSE

To outline considerations relating to a future (2021) regulatory proposal from Canada to allow 10% of the Canadian (IPHC Regulatory Area 2B) recreational fishery limit, if uncaught, to be added to the recreational fishery limit in 2021.

“Recreational Pacific halibut fishery changes in response to COVID-19 for Area 2B: Recreational fisheries for Pacific halibut have experienced disruptions to fishing opportunities and markets, and are proposing sector-specific management responses for consideration by DFO and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). The recreational fishery is seeking an underage carryover provision that would allow 10% of this year’s recreational TAC, if uncaught, to be added to the recreational TAC in 2021.”

TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION – 2021 RECREATIONAL MORTALITY LIMITS

Biological and stock assessment

Currently, harvests that are projected but not completely taken are factored into the following year’s mortality or fishery limits through the annual stock assessment and population dynamics themselves. In that manner, leaving Pacific halibut “in the water” in 2020 would have an impact on the yield available for 2021. A planned increase in quota carried over from the previous year would therefore be **double-counting** the rollover. Mortality that is projected for 2020 and not caught is not a simple 1:1 addition to the assessment, due to natural mortality, Pacific halibut movement, and updating of the stock trend.

Additionally, the biological benefits from one sector leaving allocation unfished would not necessarily flow to just that sector in 2021. Beyond the impact of the unfished Pacific halibut as incorporated into the stock assessment, a more explicit ‘carryover’ of Pacific halibut from the recreational allocation in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B in 2020 into the recreational allocation in 2021 could be expressed by either harvesting at a greater intensity in 2021 (but leaving the catch sharing allocation intact) or through an allocation shift among sectors.

If the carryover constitutes a change in catch sharing allocations, this would be addressed domestically by the Contracting Party. IPHC mortality projections associated with adopted limits would be adjusted accordingly. If the rollover is to be addressed by an increase in overall fishing intensity in 2021, the IPHC would need to consider this during our Annual Meeting. Regardless of the methods used to achieve a carryover, it is presumed that this issue would be addressed after the recreational charter season ends and during the normal process for setting annual Pacific halibut mortality or fishery limits, which would provide a better understanding of the full extent of any unharvested Pacific halibut.

Conclusion: Any recreational fishery carryover approach would not increase the overall yield in 2021 relative to the reference level of fishing intensity; all potential yield will already be included in the assessment and management procedure results. To accommodate any carryover, impacts on sharing agreements would need to be carefully considered by the Contracting Party.

IPHC Regulations

The IPHC has the ability to modify its Fishery Regulations to allow for changes in domestic catch agreements and allocation of the TCEY for an IPHC Regulatory Area. In such a case, the IPHC is able to revise and publish its Fishery Regulations within 24 hours.

Conclusion: To accommodate a change in domestic catch agreements, the IPHC would take less than 24 hours.

SUMMARY

Any fishery yield not harvested in 2020 will be included in 2021 stock assessment projections regardless of a carryover. Changes to recreational management measures in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B are a Contracting Party concern, with the IPHC Regulations currently providing a responsive vehicle for application and adherence to domestic catch sharing arrangements. Mortality limits would remain unchanged and still apply. Any changes to domestic catch sharing arrangements may be considered including carryover options recognizing mortality limits and the resulting level of fishing intensity will be set by the IPHC at the 97th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM097) in January 2021. The IPHC Secretariat is generally not in favour of rolling over unused quota from one fishing period to the next for the reasons detailed above.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Commission:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IPHC-2020-SS08-PropA2 which outlines considerations relating to a proposal from Canada to allow 10% of the Canadian (IPHC Regulatory Area 2B) recreational fishery limit, if uncaught, to be added to the recreational fishery limit in 2021.

APPENDICES

Nil.