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23 March 2020

**IPHC CIRCULAR 2020-007**

**SUBJECT: INTERSESSIONAL DECISIONS (1 January – 17 March 2020)**

Dear Commissioners,

In accordance with Rule 11, paragraphs 4-10 ‘*Intersessional decision-making*’ of the [IPHC Rules of Procedure \(2020\)](#), I am pleased to provide you with the following intersessional Commission decisions for your information. All decisions were adopted by consensus (*In favour=6; Against=0; No response=0*). No further action is required by Commissioners at this time:

**I. Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)**

**IPHC-2020-ID001:** The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the primary coastwide and area-specific objectives outlined in Table 1 of [Appendix A](#) be used for evaluating MSE results conditional on future consideration of the objectives after preliminary MSE results are presented at MSAB015 in May 2020.

**IPHC-2020-ID002:** The Commission **RECOMMENDED** a reference SPR fishing intensity of 43% with a 30:20 control rule be used as an updated interim harvest policy consistent with MSE results pending delivery of the final MSE results at AM097, noting the additional components intended to apply for a period of 2020 to 2022 as defined in [IPHC-2020-AM096-R](#) paragraphs 97 b, c, d, and e. Specifically, these additional components are allocations to 2A and 2B, accounting for some impacts of U26 non-directed discard mortality, and the use of a rolling three-year average for projecting non-directed fishery discard mortality.

**II. IPHC Performance Review: 2<sup>nd</sup> IPHC Performance Review (PRIPHC02)**

**IPHC-2020-ID003:** The Commission **ENDORSED** the recommendations, priorities, responsibilities, timelines and updates provided at [Appendix B](#), and **AGREED** that these would be reported on at each IPHC meeting.

**III. IPHC Financial Regulations (2020)**

**IPHC-2020-ID004:** The Commission **ADOPTED** by consensus, the IPHC Financial Regulations (2020), and directed the IPHC Secretariat to finalise and publish accordingly.

**IV. Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS)**

**IPHC-2020-ID005:** **NOTING** paper IPHC-2020-SS06-INF01 which provided a description of the benefits of selling Pacific halibut less than 32 inches in length that is captured and sampled on the 2020 FISS, the Commission **ENDORSED** the sale of this portion of the FISS catch.

**IPHC-2020-ID006:** **NOTING** paper IPHC-2020-SS06-INF02 which provided details of the 2020 FISS design, including the number of skates to be deployed at each FISS station by IPHC Regulatory Area, the Commission **ENDORSED** the design ([Appendix C](#)).

Please consider the date of this IPHC Circular to be the official ‘*date of notification*’ of the decisions detailed above, in accordance with Rule 11, paragraph 10 of the [IPHC Rules of Procedure \(2020\)](#).

Yours sincerely



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## **APPENDICES**

[Appendix A](#): Table of primary measurable objectives for the MSE

[Appendix B](#): Table of recommendations arising from the PRIPHC02, including the Commission requested proposed/draft 1) responsibilities, 2) timeline, 3) priorities; and 4) any initial comments of relevance

[Appendix C](#): Table of the FISS priorities as recommended by the Commission at AM096 and the map of the 2020 FISS design.

APPENDIX A

**Table 1.** Primary measurable objectives, evaluated over a simulated ten-year period. Objective 1.1 is a biological sustainability (conservation) objective and objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 are fishery objectives. Reproduced from [IPHC-2020-AM096-12](#).

GENERAL OBJECTIVE	MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE	MEASURABLE OUTCOME	TIME-FRAME	TOLERANCE	PERFORMANCE METRIC
1.1. KEEP FEMALE SPAWNING BIOMASS ABOVE A LIMIT TO AVOID CRITICAL STOCK SIZES AND CONSERVE SPATIAL POPULATION STRUCTURE	Maintain a female spawning stock biomass above a biomass limit reference point at least 95% of the time	$SB < \text{Spawning Biomass Limit } (SB_{Lim})$  $SB_{Lim}=20\%$ unfished spawning biomass	Long-term	0.05	$P(SB < SB_{Lim})$
	Maintain a defined minimum proportion of female spawning biomass in each Biological Region	$p_{SB,2} > 5\%$ $p_{SB,3} > 33\%$ $p_{SB,2} > 10\%$ $p_{SB,2} > 2\%$	Long-term	0.05	$P(p_{SB,R} < p_{SB,R,min})$
2.1 MAINTAIN SPAWNING BIOMASS AROUND A LEVEL THAT OPTIMIZES FISHING ACTIVITIES	Maintain the coastwide female spawning biomass above a biomass target reference point at least 50% of the time	$SB < \text{Spawning Biomass Target } (SB_{Targ})$  $SB_{Targ}=SB_{36\%}$ unfished spawning biomass	Long-term	0.50	$P(SB < SB_{Targ})$
2.2. LIMIT CATCH VARIABILITY	Limit annual changes in the coastwide TCEY	Annual Change (AC) > 15% in any 3 years	Short-term		$P(AC_3 > 15\%)$
		Median coastwide Average Annual Variability (AAV)	Short-term		Median AAV
	Limit annual changes in the Regulatory Area TCEY	Annual Change (AC) > 15% in any 3 years	Short-term		$P(AC_3 > 15\%)$
		Average AAV by Regulatory Area (AAV <sub>A</sub> )	Short-term		Median AAV <sub>A</sub>
2.3. PROVIDE DIRECTED FISHING YIELD	Optimize average coastwide TCEY	Median coastwide TCEY	Short-term		Median $\overline{TCEY}$
	Optimize TCEY among Regulatory Areas	Median TCEY <sub>A</sub>	Short-term		Median $\overline{TCEY}_A$
	Optimize the percentage of the coastwide TCEY among Regulatory Areas	Median %TCEY <sub>A</sub>	Short-term		Median $\left(\frac{TCEY_A}{TCEY}\right)$
	Maintain a minimum TCEY for each Regulatory Area	Minimum TCEY <sub>A</sub>	Short-term		Median Min(TCEY)
	Maintain a percentage of the coastwide TCEY for each Regulatory Area	Minimum %TCEY <sub>A</sub>	Short-term		Median Min(%TCEY)

## APPENDIX B

**Table of recommendations arising from the PRIPHC02, including the Commission requested proposed/draft 1) responsibilities, 2) timeline, 3) priorities; and 4) any initial comments of relevance**

REF#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	UPDATE/STATUS
PRIPHC02– Rec.01 ( <a href="#">para. 32</a> )	<b>Legal analysis of the IPHC Convention</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that consideration be given to updating the Convention at the next opportunity, to become consistent with newer international legal instruments, and specifically consider including the following elements: a) – z)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A: At this time, the Contracting Parties do not wish to commence the process of updating the IPHC Convention.
PRIPHC02– Rec.02 ( <a href="#">para. 33</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> to update the Convention, while in the interim period seek alternate mechanisms to implement international best practices and* legal principles.  <u>Commission directive:</u> The Commission <b>RECOMMENDED</b> the exploration and implementation of alternate mechanisms to implement international best practices, such as revisions to the IPHC Rules of Procedure, IPHC Financial Regulations and IPHC Fishery Regulations.	N/A  High	N/A  Commission	N/A  2020-24	N/A  <b>In progress:</b> The IPHC Rules of Procedure and the IPHC Financial Regulations will be periodically updated and where possible, should accommodate applicable improvements as recommended in the legal review.
PRIPHC02– Rec.03 ( <a href="#">para. 44</a> )	<b>Science: Status of living marine resources</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that opportunities to engage with western Pacific halibut science and management agencies be sought, to strengthen science links and data exchange. Specifically, consider options to investigate pan-Pacific stock structure and migration of Pacific halibut.	High	IPHC Secretariat	2020-24	<b>In progress:</b> There are three non-Contracting Parties who exploit Pacific halibut: Russia, Rep. of Korea and Japan. Most recently we have engaged Russian scientists working on Pacific halibut through PICES ( <a href="https://meetings.pices.int/">https://meetings.pices.int/</a> ).
PRIPHC02– Rec.04 ( <a href="#">para. 45</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that: a) further efforts be made to lead and collaborate on research to assess the ecosystem impacts of Pacific halibut fisheries on incidentally caught species (retained and/or discarded); b) where feasible, this research be incorporated within the IPHC’s 5-Year Research Plan ( <a href="https://www.iphc.int/uploads/pdf/besrp/2019/iphc-2019-besrp-5yp.pdf">https://www.iphc.int/uploads/pdf/besrp/2019/iphc-2019-besrp-5yp.pdf</a> ); c) findings from the IPHC Secretariat research and that of the Contracting Parties be readily accessible via the IPHC website.	Medium	IPHC Secretariat	2020-24	<b>In progress:</b> The IPHC’s work in this area has been limited to date. However, some efforts to incorporate ecosystem considerations into the MSE work has commenced.

REF#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	UPDATE/STATUS
PRIPHC02– Rec.05 ( <a href="#">para. 63</a> )	<i>Science: Quality and provision of scientific advice</i> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that simplified materials be developed for RAB and especially MSAB use, including training/induction materials.	High	IPHC Secretariat	2020-24	<b>In progress:</b> The IPHC Secretariat continues to seek ways to ensure broad stakeholder understanding of our work. For the MSAB and associated MSE work, a webpage is in development to provide a user friendly means to explore and understand the utility of MSE and the simulation results arising.
PRIPHC02– Rec.06 ( <a href="#">para. 64</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that consideration be given to amending the Rules of Procedure to include appropriate fixed terms of service to ensure SRB peer review remains independent and fresh; a fixed term of three years seems appropriate, with no more than one renewal.	Medium	Commission; IPHC Secretariat	2020	<b>In progress:</b> The IPHC Secretariat will provide with Commission with revised Rules of Procedure for consideration at AM096.
PRIPHC02– Rec.07 ( <a href="#">para. 65</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the peer review process be strengthened through expanded subject specific independent reviews including data quality and standards, the FISS, MSE, and biological/ecological research; as well as conversion of “grey literature” to primary literature publications. The latter considered important to ongoing information outreach efforts given the cutting-edge nature of the Commission’s scientific work.	High	Commission; IPHC Secretariat	2020-24	<b>In progress:</b> The Commission has approved peer review of the IPHC stock assessment which was concluded in 2019, the IPHC MSE which is due to be undertaken in 2020, and has indicated its strong support topic based peer review moving forward.
PRIPHC02– Rec.08 ( <a href="#">para. 66</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the IPHC Secretariat develop options for simple graphical summaries (i.e. phase plot equivalents) of fishing intensity and spawning stock biomass for provision to the Commission.	High	IPHC Secretariat	2020	<b>In progress:</b> The IPHC Secretariat has provided a number of examples of phase plots over the past years, with the most recent examples being presented at IM095 ( <a href="#">IPHC-2019-IM096-09 Rev 1</a> ). Additional options will be provided at <a href="#">AM096</a> .
PRIPHC02– Rec.09 ( <a href="#">para. 73</a> )	<i>Conservation and Management: Data collection and sharing</i> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that observer coverage be adjusted to be commensurate with the level of fishing intensity in each IPHC Regulatory Area.  <u>Commission directive:</u> The Commission <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the IPHC Secretariat, in consultation with the Commission, develop minimum data collection standards for Pacific halibut by scientific observer programs. The intention would be for the Commission to review and approve the minimum standards, and recommend them for implementation by domestic agencies.	N/A  High	N/A  Contracting Parties	N/A  2020-24	N/A  <b>Pending:</b>

REF#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	UPDATE/STATUS
PRIPHC02– Rec.10 ( <a href="#">para. 82</a> )	<b>Conservation and Management: Consistency between scientific advice and fishery Regulations adopted</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the development of MSE to underpin multi-year (strategic) decision-making be continued, and as multi-year decision making is implemented, current Secretariat capacity usage for annual stock assessments should be refocused on research to investigate MSE operating model development (including consideration of biological and fishery uncertainties) for future MSE iterations and regularised multi-year stock assessments.	High	IPHC Secretariat	2021-24	<b>Pending:</b> To be considered once the initial MSE products are delivered at AM097 in January 2021.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.11 ( <a href="#">para. 83</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that ongoing work on the MSE process be prioritised to ensure there is a management framework/procedure with minimal room for ambiguous interpretation, and robust pre-agreed mortality limit setting frameworks.	High	IPHC Secretariat	2020-21	<b>In progress:</b> See current status <a href="#">IPHC-2020-AM096-12</a> .
PRIPHC02 –Rec.12 ( <a href="#">para. 88</a> )	<b>Fishing allocations and opportunities</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>STRONGLY URGED</b> the Commission to conclude its MSE process and <b>RECOMMENDED</b> it meet its 2021 deadline to adopt a harvest strategy.	High	IPHC Secretariat	2020-21	<b>In progress:</b> See current status <a href="#">IPHC-2020-AM096-12</a> .
PRIPHC02 –Rec.13 ( <a href="#">para. 96</a> )	<b>Compliance and enforcement: Port State measures</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that Contracting Party enforcement agencies adopt common standards for assessment of implementation of the principles of port State measures.	Medium	Contracting Parties	2020-24	<b>Pending:</b> Potentially to be incorporated into the Contracting Party National Reports at each Annual Meeting. The Secretariat will work with each Contracting Party.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.14 ( <a href="#">para. 105</a> )	<b>Compliance and enforcement: Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> enhancement of coordination of MCS activities to result in a common, integrated enforcement report for each Contracting Party to facilitate assessment of compliance efforts, trends and input into management decisions.	Medium	Contracting Parties	2021-24	<b>Pending:</b> Potentially to be incorporated into the Contracting Party National Reports at each Annual Meeting.

REF#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	UPDATE/STATUS
PRIPHC02 –Rec.15 ( <a href="#">para. 106</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission reassess the ‘derby-style’ fisheries management concept in operation in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A in terms of available resources, impact on validity of monitoring results, and safety of fishers, and amend the management processes, if and as necessary.	High	IPHC Secretariat; Commission	2020	<b>In progress:</b> The IPHC Secretariat is coordinating with relevant Contracting Party domestic agencies regarding shifting management of all Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A from the IPHC to the relevant domestic agencies. At IM095, the Commission requested:  <i>IM095 (para. 89) The Commission <b>WELCOMED</b> the PFMC’s commitment to transition management of Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A from the IPHC to domestic agencies and <b>REQUESTED</b> that the IPHC Secretariat continue to support this process in the short-term, with the aim of transitioning management of the fishery to the domestic agencies at the earliest opportunity.</i>
PRIPHC02 –Rec.16 ( <a href="#">para. 108</a> )	<b>Compliance and enforcement: Follow-up on infringements</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the IPHC request information regarding Contracting Party follow-up of infringements, to assist in determining the overall efficacy of MCS and enforcement activities. This would support best practices with respect to transparency.	High	IPHC Secretariat; Commission	2020	<b>In progress:</b> The IPHC Secretariat has requested this information be provided by domestic agencies via the Contracting Party National Reports to the Commission.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.17 ( <a href="#">para. 109</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission improve the process of Contracting Party reporting to the Commission by aggregating individual agency reports into a consolidated, standardised, Contracting Party report to the Commission.	Medium	IPHC Secretariat; Contracting Parties	2020	<b>In progress:</b> The IPHC Secretariat has requested this information be provided by domestic agencies via a consolidated Contracting Party National Report to the Commission. This will likely take several years to become an efficient process of reporting.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.18 ( <a href="#">para. 124</a> )	<b>Governance: Decision-making</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the IPHC Rules of Procedure be modified to include a clear category and recognition for observer organisations, which would be in addition to the general public.	Low	IPHC Secretariat	2020-21	<b>Completed:</b> IPHC Rules of Procedure (2020) published on 7 February 2020.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.19 ( <a href="#">para. 128</a> )	<b>Governance: Dispute settlement</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> updating the rules of procedure to reflect intersessional decision making approaches.	Medium	IPHC Secretariat	2020-21	<b>Completed:</b> IPHC Rules of Procedure (2020) published on 7 February 2020.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.20 ( <a href="#">para. 137</a> )	<b>Governance: Transparency</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the significant level of transparency achieved across Commission business continue to be improved.	High	Commission; IPHC Secretariat;	2020-24	<b>In progress:</b>

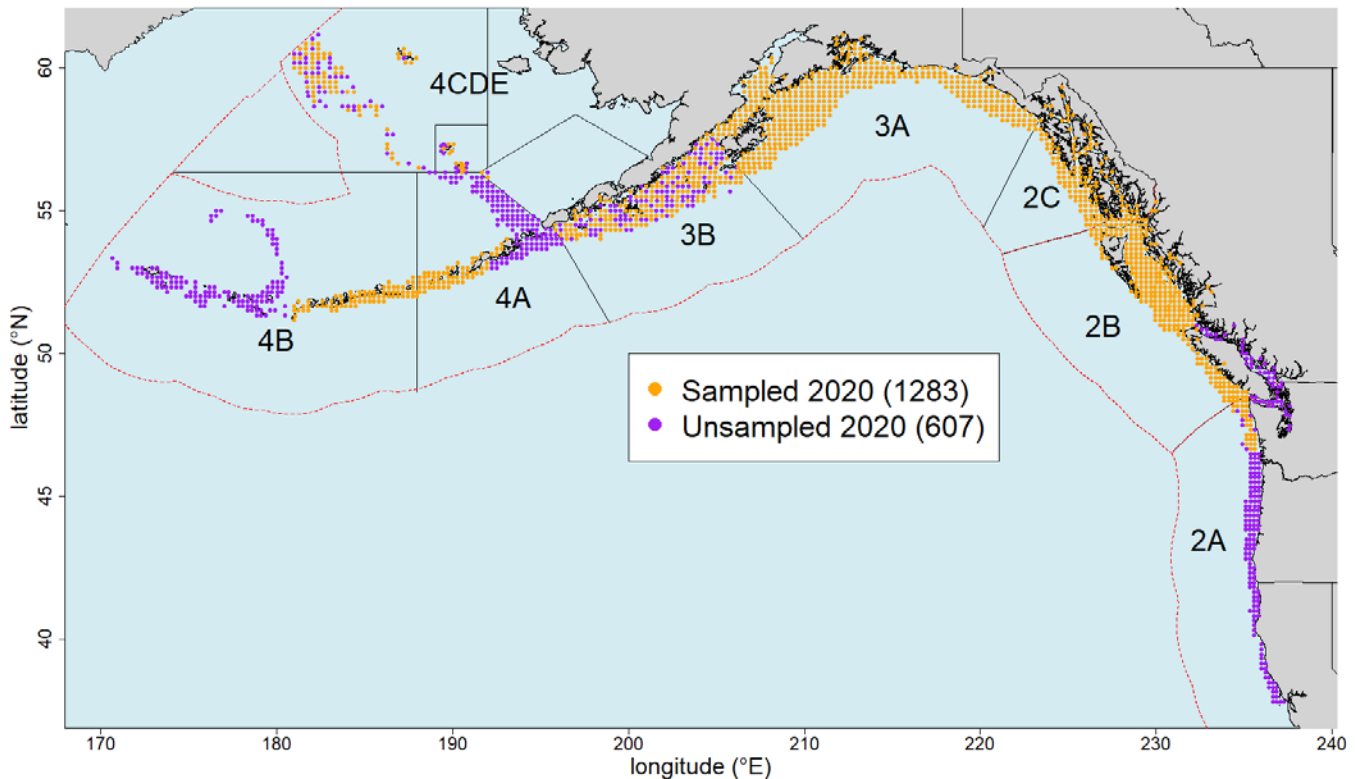
REF#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	UPDATE/STATUS
PRIPHC02 –Rec.21 ( <a href="#">para. 146</a> )	<b>International cooperation: Relationship to non-Contracting Parties</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission prioritise scientific work to confirm the full range of the Pacific halibut stock.	High	IPHC Secretariat;	2020-24	<b>In progress:</b> There are three non-Contracting Parties who exploit Pacific halibut: Russia, Rep. of Korea and Japan. Most recently we have engaged Russian scientists working on Pacific halibut through PICES ( <a href="https://meetings.pices.int/">https://meetings.pices.int/</a> ).
PRIPHC02 –Rec.22 ( <a href="#">para. 147</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that if the full range of the Pacific halibut stock extends outside the Convention Area, the Contracting Parties invite collaboration with all parties involved in the harvest of this stock, to ensure science and management includes accurate data regarding all removals from the stock.	Low/ Medium	IPHC Secretariat	2020-24	<b>Pending:</b>
PRIPHC02 –Rec.23 ( <a href="#">para. 156</a> )	<b>Efficiency and transparency of financial and administrative management: Availability of resources for IPHC activities</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> the continued establishment of a Business Continuity Plan (BCP), which will serve to strengthen the long-term viability of IPHC Secretariat functioning and accountability, in line with best practices of an organisation of its size and breadth. Prioritising a financial and administrative BCP, with the ultimate goal of establishing a comprehensive BCP for the IPHC Secretariat as a whole.	High	IPHC Secretariat; FAC	2020	<b>In progress:</b> The IPHC Secretariat has been developing a BCP for the Administrative Services Branch (financial and administrative BCP) over the past months, and will move to consolidate with other Branches of the organization throughout 2020.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.24 ( <a href="#">para. 162</a> )	<b>Efficiency and transparency of financial and administrative management: Efficiency and cost-effectiveness</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> the FAC produce a report detailing the actual FAC meeting and that the presentation of the report be incorporated into the Annual Meeting agenda and report, along with the final decisions of the Commission.	High	FAC; IPHC Secretariat	2020-24	<b>Completed:</b> The first report of the IPHC <a href="#">Finance and Administration Committee (FAC)</a> was adopted on 4 February 2020, and presented to the Commission at its 96 <sup>th</sup> Session for consideration.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.25 ( <a href="#">para. 165</a> )	<b>Efficiency and transparency of financial and administrative management: Advisory structure</b> The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that when revisiting PRIPHC01 Recommendation 3.1 on unifying subsidiary bodies, treat the CB and PAB as non-science process and maintain separated RAB and MSAB at least until the 2021 adoption and implementation of a new management strategy.	N/A	Commission	N/A	<b>Completed:</b> The Commission agreed to keep the two subsidiary bodies separate moving forward.
PRIPHC02 –Rec.26 ( <a href="#">para. 166</a> )	The PRIPHC02 <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that continued support for high quality stakeholder engagement through the science-focused subsidiary bodies (RAB and MSAB) or any future subsidiary bodies be maintained.	High	Commission; IPHC Secretariat	2020-24	<b>Completed:</b> The Commission agreed to keep the two subsidiary bodies separate moving forward, and for them to be enhanced wherever feasible.



## APPENDIX C

Paragraph 31 from IPHC–2020–AM096–R: “The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that for the 2020 FISS season, the IPHC Secretariat shall employ the proposed subarea design for Regulatory Areas 2A, 4A, 4B, 4CDE, and an enhanced randomised subsampling FISS design in Regulatory Areas 2B, 2C, 3A, and 3B to meet the primary design objective, while also considering secondary and tertiary objectives ([Table 2](#)). The IPHC Secretariat shall determine the number of skates at each FISS station with the secondary objective in mind ([Table 2](#)).”

The 2020 FISS design meeting this recommendation and the objectives ([Table 2](#)) is depicted below at [Fig. 2](#).



**Fig. 1.** Map of the 2020 FISS design. Each orange circle represents a FISS station targeted for sampling, while purple circles are stations that will be unsampled in 2020, based on a compromise of meeting Primary, Secondary and Tertiary objectives ([Table 2](#)).

Paragraph 26 from IPHC–2020–AM096–R: “The Commission **AGREED** that the priority of a rationalised FISS sampling design is therefore to maintain or enhance data quality (precision and bias) by establishing minimum sampling requirements in terms of station count, station distribution and skates per station. Potential considerations that could add to or modify the design are logistics and cost (secondary design layer), and FISS removals (impact on the stock), data collection assistance for other agencies, and IPHC policies (tertiary design layer). These priorities are outlined in [Table 2](#).”

**Table 2.** Prioritization of FISS objectives and corresponding design layers.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Design Layer</b>
Primary	Sample Pacific halibut for stock assessment and stock distribution estimation.	Minimum sampling requirements in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Station distribution;</li> <li>• Station count;</li> <li>• Skates per station.</li> </ul>
Secondary	Long-term revenue neutrality.	Logistics and cost: operational feasibility and cost/revenue neutrality.
Tertiary	Minimize removals, and assist others where feasible on a cost-recovery basis.	Removals: minimize impact on the stock while meeting primary priority; Assist: assist others to collect data on a cost-recovery basis; IPHC policies: ad-hoc decisions of the Commission regarding the FISS design.