# Report of the 96th Session of the IPHC Interim Meeting (IM096)

Meeting held electronically, 18-19 November 2020

**Commissioners**

| Canada | United States of America |
|---|---|
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| Neil Davis | Robert Alverson |
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**BIBLIOGRAPHIC ENTRY**
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INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION



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## ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| CB | Conference Board |
| DFO | Department of Fisheries and Ocean (Canada) |
| DMR | Discard Mortality Rate |
| FISS | Fishery-Independent Setline Survey |
| IPHC | International Pacific Halibut Commission |
| NMFS | National Marine Fisheries Services, of NOAA |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| NPFMC | North Pacific Fishery Management Council |
| PFMC | Pacific Fisheries Management Council |
| RAB | Research Advisory Board |
| SB | Spawning Biomass |
| SRB | Scientific Review Board |
| SPR | Spawning Potential Ratio |
| TCEY | Total Constant Exploitation Yield |
| WPUE | Weight Per Unit Effort |

## DEFINITIONS

A set of working definitions are provided in the IPHC Glossary of Terms and abbreviations: https://www.iphc.int/the-commission/glossary-of-terms-and-abbreviations

## HOW TO INTERPRET TERMINOLOGY CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT

This report has been written using the following terms and associated definitions so as to remove ambiguity surrounding how particular paragraphs should be interpreted.

***Level 1:*** **RECOMMENDED**; **RECOMMENDATION; ADOPTED** (formal); **REQUESTED; ENDORSED** (informal): A conclusion for an action to be undertaken, by a Contracting Party, a subsidiary (advisory) body of the Commission and/or the IPHC Secretariat.

***Level 2:*** **AGREED**: Any point of discussion from a meeting which the Commission considers to be an agreed course of action covered by its mandate, which has not already been dealt with under Level 1 above; a general point of agreement among delegations/participants of a meeting which does not need to be elevated in the Commission's reporting structure.

***Level 3:*** **NOTED/NOTING**; **CONSIDERED**; **URGED**; **ACKNOWLEDGED**: General terms to be used for consistency. Any point of discussion from a meeting which the Commission considers to be important enough to record in a meeting report for future reference. Any other term may be used to highlight to the reader of an IPHC report, the importance of the relevant paragraph. Other terms may be used but will be considered for explanatory/informational purposes only and shall have no higher rating within the reporting terminology hierarchy than Level 3.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 96th Session of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Interim Meeting (IM096) was held electronically from 18-19 November 2020. A total of 30 members (6 Commissioners; 24 advisors/experts) attended the Session from the two (2) Contracting Parties, as well as 115 observers. The meeting was opened by the Chairperson, Mr Paul Ryall (Canada), who welcomed participants.

The following are a subset of the complete recommendations and requests for action from the IM096, which are provided at Appendix VII.

***FISS redesign discussion***

IM096-Rec.01 (para. 35) The Commission **NOTED** some existing opportunities for stakeholder engagement in the FISS design review process and **RECOMMENDED** that additional formalised opportunities should be added to the review timeline for future presentations. An option is to hold the annual RAB meeting in November or December of each year.

***FISS design endorsement (2021-23)***

IM096-Rec.02 (para. 46) The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC 2021 FISS design be considered for decision at the 9th Special Session of the Commission (SS09), at a date and format to be agreed upon intersessionally. The IPHC Secretariat will develop necessary material to support the decision making process.

IM096-Rec.03 (para. 47) The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC Secretariat provide the Commission, at AM097, an expanded schematic of the rationalisation of the FISS following the 2014-19 expansion series. The intent is to show all the steps from design to implementation of a FISS.

***IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation***

IM096-Rec.04 (para. 74) The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that a Special Session of the Commission be held prior to the AM097 meeting in January, to look at potential modifications to existing MPs as part of the IPHC Secretariat's MSE program of work. The IPHC Secretariat will seek to establish agreeable dates, and publish the meeting invitation accordingly, noting that all meetings of the Commission are public unless otherwise decided by the Commission.

***IPHC Fishery regulations: Proposals for the 2020-21 process***

IM096-Rec.05 (para. 90) The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that interested stakeholders note the deadline for submission of IPHC Fishery Regulation proposals, for consideration at the 97th Session of the Annual Meeting (AM097), of **26 December 2020**. Late proposals will not be considered at AM097.

## 1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The 96th Session of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Interim Meeting (IM096) was held electronically from 18-19 November 2020. A total of 30 members (6 Commissioners; 24 advisors/experts) attended the Session from the two (2) Contracting Parties, as well as 115 observers. The list of participants is provided at Appendix I. The meeting was opened by the Chairperson, Mr Paul Ryall (Canada), who welcomed participants.

## 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

2. The Commission **ADOPTED** the Agenda as provided at Appendix II. The documents provided to the IM096 are listed in Appendix III.

## 3. UPDATE ON ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE 96TH SESSION OF THE IPHC ANNUAL MEETING (AM096) AND 2020 INTERSESSIONAL DECISIONS

3. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-03 which provided an opportunity to consider the progress made during the intersessional period in relation to the direct requests for action by the Commission during the 96th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM096, February 2020), and 2020 intersessional decisions of the Commission.

4. The Commission **AGREED** to consider and revise as necessary, the actions arising, and for these to be combined with any new actions arising from the IM096.

## 4. REPORT OF THE IPHC SECRETARIAT (2020): DRAFT

5. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-04 which provided the Commission with a draft update on the activities of the IPHC Secretariat in 2020, not already contained within other papers before the Commission.

***IPHC Merit Scholarship***

6. The Commission **NOTED** that the IPHC funds several Merit Scholarships to support university, technical college, and other post-secondary education for students from Canada and the USA who are connected to the Pacific halibut fishery, with a single new four-year scholarship valued at US$4,000 per year awarded every two years. In 2020, the IPHC Merit Scholarship was awarded to Mr Hahlen Behnken-Barkhau (Whitman College).

***Areas of conservation concern***

7. The Commission **NOTED** the continued efforts of the IPHC Secretariat to address gaps in coverage for the IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) within Canadian waters of the IPHC Convention Area, due to conservation exclusion zones with objectives that include, but are not limited to "*protecting vulnerable rockfish species and sensitive benthic glass sponge reef habitat.*"

***North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC)***

8. The Commission **NOTED** that the NPFMC's Abundance-Based Management Working Group (ABMWG) continued its work in 2020, with participation of the IPHC Secretariat. The Commission has supported the development of ABM due to its potential effect on the directed Pacific halibut fisheries.

9. The Commission **NOTED** that ABM was a priority agenda at the NPFMC October 2020 meeting. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed the operating model and results from the simulation analysis.

> *"In reviewing the ABM DEIS, the SSC identified several inconsistencies in the analyses and asked for clarification from authors in preparation for the SSC meeting. On further investigation, errors were found in the estimation of 2019 and 2020 directed halibut fishery catch in the operating model, which affects all outputs from the simulation model. Authors worked diligently to correct these and updated versions of the documents and associated errata were posted before and during the SSC meeting, the most recent and significant of which was made available the afternoon of Wednesday, September 30.*

*The SSC recognizes previous support for moving amendment packages to final action with recommendations for minor modifications before release. However, in this case, the nature of the changes impact the baseline from which the alternatives and performance metrics relative to Council objectives are assessed.The SSC was not afforded sufficient time to review the revised model results and their impacts on all aspects of the DEIS, and as such, was not able to comment on the analyses nor determine if the DEIS is acceptable to move forward for final action at this time. In addition, the SSC notes that the public comment period closed before these issues were identified and revised documents were posted. As such, the SSC agreed to focus its discussion on the simulation modeling recommendations provided to the ABM workgroup in October 2019 and the revenue impacts assessment and the DSIA, with the other aspects of the presentation taken as information only. As a result, the SSC did not discuss public comments associated with model outputs, alternatives, or performance metrics."*

10. The Commission **NOTED** that the NPFMC discussed the advice and agreed to an initial review of Pacific halibut ABM analysis in April 2021.

***Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC)***

11. The Commission **RECALLED** its expressed intention to shift responsibility for management of Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A from the IPHC to domestic agencies, as is the case in all other IPHC Regulatory Areas. At its June 2019 and March 2020 meetings, the PFMC affirmed its commitment to pursue domestic management of the Pacific halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A.

12. The Commission **NOTED** that at its September 2020 meeting, the Council further considered the transition of IPHC Regulatory Area 2A Pacific halibut fishery management, and adopted the following final motion:

"*Transition of Area 2A Fishery Management The Council adopted for public review the following as preliminary preferred alternatives:*

*1) 4.1.2 - Alternative 2: Consider the directed fishery framework during the CSP process in September and November, including any guidance for vessel limits and inseason changes for NMFS implementation.*

*2) 4.2.1 Alternative 2: Issue permits for all Area 2A halibut non-Indian fisheries (commercial directed, incidental salmon troll, incidental sablefish, and recreational charter).*

*3) 4.2.2 Alternative 2: Allow NMFS to determine the appropriate application deadlines for all commercial halibut applications, set to coincide with Council meetings and NMFS processing time.*

*4) 4.2.5 Alternative 1: Status quo (revised). Require proof of permit to be onboard fishing vessel and made readily available upon request, regardless of the type of permit (e.g., paper or electronic). NMFS to provide access to permit in a printable format or send paper copy directly to the participant."*

13. The Commission **NOTED** that the PFMC will further consider the above alternatives during its November Council meeting (13 and 16 November 2020) and that the IPHC Secretariat will provide a summary of those discussions to the Commission intersessionally.

***Communications, outreach, and education activities***

14. The Commission **CONGRATULATED** the IPHC Secretariat for the extensive communications, outreach, and education activities carried out in 2020, despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which ranged from public outreach events, attending conferences and symposia, contributing expertise to the broader scientific community through participation on boards and committees, and seeking further education and training.

## 5. STATE OF THE FISHERY (2020): PRELIMINARY STATISTICS

15. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-05 Rev_1 which provided an overview of the key fishery statistics from fisheries catching Pacific halibut during 2020, including the status of landings compared to fishery limits implemented by the Contracting Parties of the Commission.

16. The Commission **NOTED** the validation tags used in Canada are applied by the independent dockside monitoring program service provider (Archipelago Marine Research Ltd.) to uniquely identify every individual Pacific halibut landed in the directed commercial fishery. This longstanding program is designed to provide a 'chain-of-custody' for these fish and indicate that they were legally harvested, and to assist in marketing Canadian caught Pacific halibut as a distinct and high quality product.

17. The Commission **NOTED** the additional precautions and protocols put in place by the IPHC Secretariat for the 2020 directed commercial fishery and FISS season including such measures as remote skipper interviews and 14-day quarantining to keep both the IPHC Secretariat and stakeholders safe from infection.

## 6. STOCK STATUS OF PACIFIC HALIBUT (2020) AND HARVEST DECISION TABLE (2021)

### 6.1 *IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) design, implementation, and implications*

18. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-06 Rev_1 which provided an overview of the IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) design and implementation in 2020.

19. The Commission **RECALLED** that the annual IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) of the Pacific halibut stock was augmented from 2014-2019 with expansion stations that filled in gaps in coverage in the annual FISS. Prior to 2020, the standard grid of stations comprised 1,200 stations. Following the completion in 2019, expansion stations were added to the standard grid in all IPHC Regulatory Areas, now totalling 1,890 stations for the full FISS design (Figure 1).

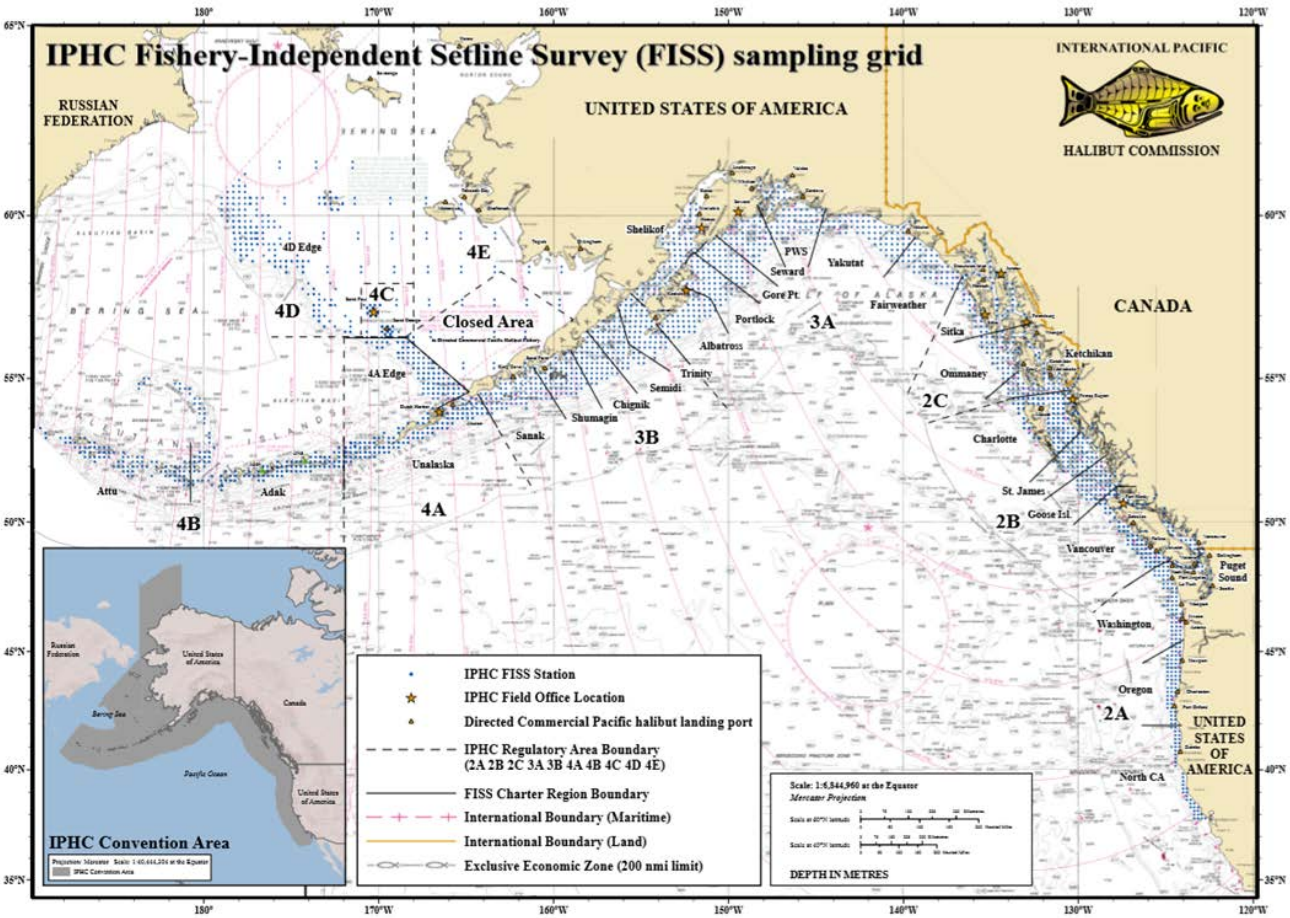


**Figure 1**. IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) with full sampling grid shown.

20. The Commission **RECALLED** that at the 96th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM096), the Commission recommended an annual FISS design for 2020 that included 1,232 stations coastwide. At the 6th Special Session of the IPHC (SS06), the Commission endorsed a revised annual FISS design for 2020 that included 1,283 stations coastwide. The changes from the previous design included random subsampling of stations in IPHC Regulatory Area 4CDE, 100% sampling in IPHC Regulatory Areas 3A, 2C, and 2B (except waters east of Vancouver island), reduced random sampling in IPHC Regulatory Area 3B, a reduced subarea in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A and a relocation of the snap-fixed gear comparison to 2B.

21. The Commission **RECALLED** that in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, on 29 May 2020, the Commission endorsed a further and final modification to the 2020 FISS design that included 100% sampling in IPHC Regulatory Areas 3A, 2C, and 2B (except waters east and west of Vancouver Island), and random subsampling from the eastern half of IPHC Regulatory Area 3B:

> "***ENDORSED*** *the 2020 FISS design provided in Appendix I (of paper IPHC-2020-ID011-01 - 2020 FISS Decision Paper), which includes 898 stations in a reduced footprint within IPHC Regulatory Areas 2B, 2C, 3A and 3B*" (Figure 2).

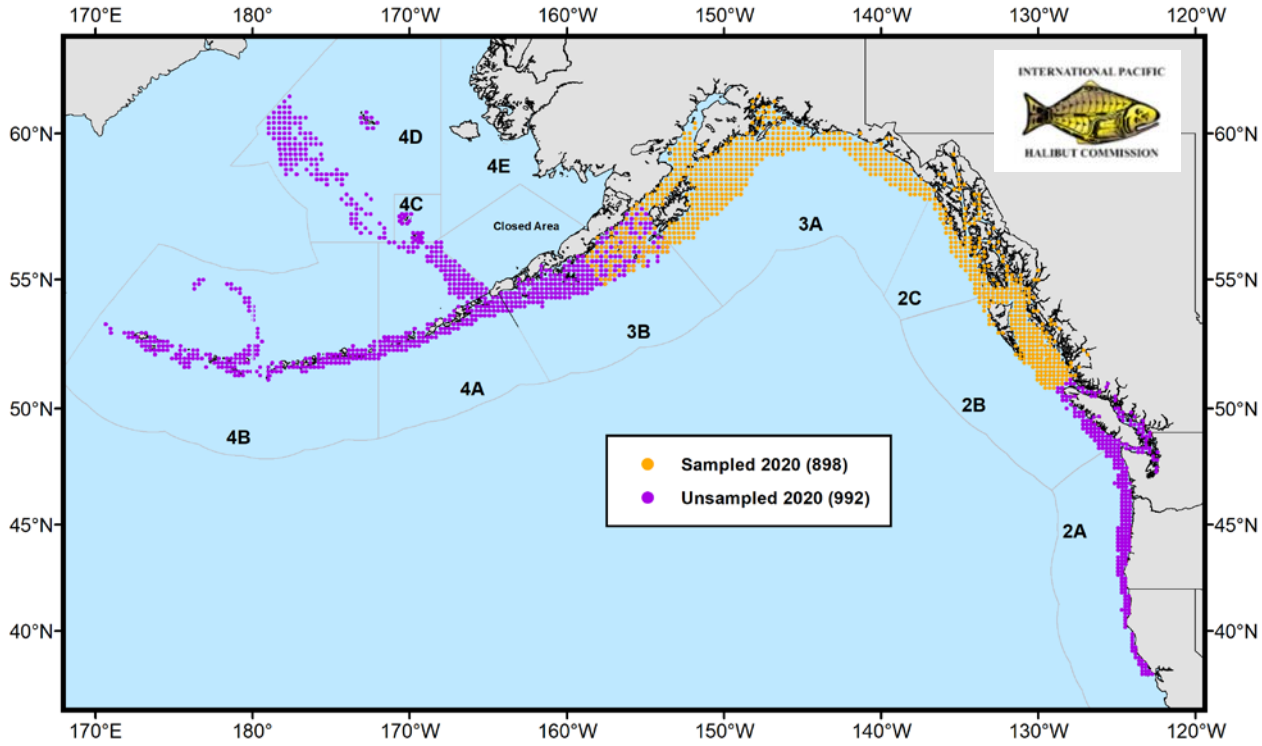


**Figure 2.** Map of the revised and final 2020 FISS design endorsed by the Commission on 29 May 2020.

22. The Commission **NOTED** that in 2020, a comparison of the use of snap-gear to the use of fixed-gear on the FISS was conducted in the St. James charter region (IPHC Regulatory Area 2B) to expand on data collected in 2019 in IPHC Regulatory Area 2C. The design featured each station being fished twice, once with fixed-gear and once with snap-gear, with randomisation of the order of the two gear types for each station. The comparison will provide additional data to help clarify differences between catch (e.g. Pacific halibut catch rates, age and size distribution, bycatch species) on the two gears. A third and final comparison of the use of snap-gear in the FISS will take place in IPHC Regulatory Area 3A during 2021.

23. The Commission **NOTED** that in 2020, individual Pacific halibut were again weighed at sea throughout the FISS (project commenced in 2019) in order to improve the quality of estimates based on Pacific halibut weight. The use of direct weight measurements will lead to more accurate estimates of WPUE and other quantities based on weights, allow estimation of length-weight curves based on all sizes available to longline gear (whereas collections from directed commercial landings only measure fish greater than or equal to 81.3 cm in length) and provide additional information on biases in the standard curve and spatial differences in the length-weight relationship.

24. The Commission **NOTED** that for the first time in 2020, sub-legal (U32) Pacific halibut that were caught and randomly selected for otolith sampling were also retained and sold to offset costs of the FISS and to

prevent discarding of dead fish. The average coastwide price received for U32 fish in 2020 was US$4.16, which the average coastwide price for O32 fish was US$4.77.

25. The Commission **NOTED** that an estimated 70% of the standing stock biomass of Pacific halibut in the Convention Area was sampled, which places the 2020 FISS on a similar level or better than many previous years. Over the core of the stock distribution, sampling in 2020 produced the most data-rich fishery-independent setline-survey in the IPHC's history. Despite planned gaps in coverage at the northern and southern ends of the distribution, the 2020 FISS has produced a precise and reliable index of the Pacific halibut stock, providing the primary source of trend information for the 2020 stock assessment and the basis for the 2021 management decision making process.

26. The Commission **NOTED** that the interactive views of the 2020 FISS results (including all prior years) were made publically available via the IPHC website on 27 October 2020: https://www.iphc.int/data/setline-survey-catch-per-unit-effort.

27. The Commission **CONGRATULATED** the IPHC Secretariat for delivering the 2020 FISS safely under very difficult circumstances, and that it was a great success, meeting both the Commission's scientific requirements and maintaining our economic goal of long-term revenue neutrality.

### 6.2 *Space-time modelling of survey data (WPUE; FISS expansion results, etc.)*

28. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-06 Rev_1 also provided the results of the 2020 space-time modelling of Pacific halibut survey data (which includes data from several fishery-independent surveys), and modelling results from fixed- and snap-gear comparison in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B.

29. The Commission **NOTED** Figure 3 which shows the time series estimates of O32 WPUE (most comparable to directed fishery catch-rates) over the 1993-2020 period included in the 2020 space-time modelling. Overall there was an estimated increase of 6% in the coastwide O32 WPUE index, due largely to a 16% increase in Region 3, offset by a 7% decrease in Region 2.

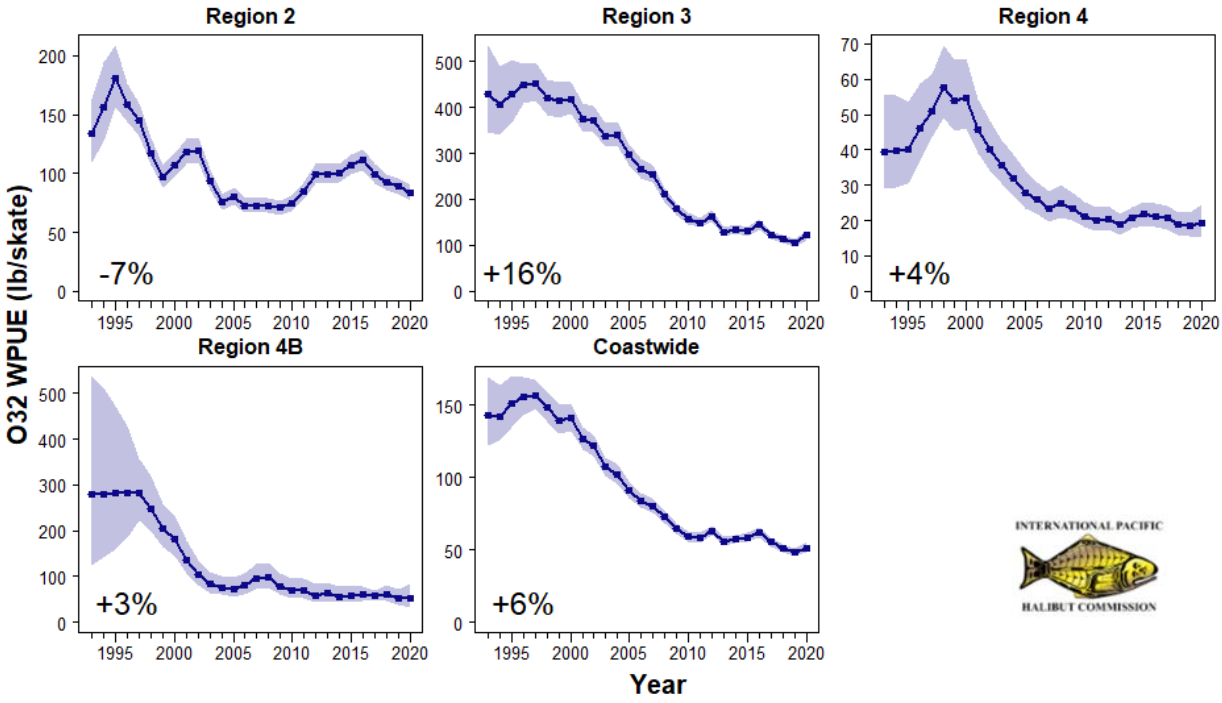


**Figure 3**. Space-time model output for O32 WPUE for 1993-2020 for Biological Regions. Filled circles denote the posterior means of O32 WPUE for each year. Shaded regions show posterior 95% credible intervals, which provide a measure of uncertainty: the wider the shaded interval, the greater the uncertainty in the estimate. Numeric values in the lower left-hand corners are estimates of the change in mean O32 WPUE from 2019 to 2020.

30. The Commission **NOTED** that the snap to fixed gear comparison in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B produced imprecise estimates of the difference between the catch rates of the two gear types, but that will be

addressed through additional planned comparisons in other IPHC Regulatory Areas and modelling which combines data across all components of this study.

### 6.3 *FISS rationalization (2021-23)*

31. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-07 which provided background on, and reviews the methods for the FISS rationalisation following the 2014-19 expansion series, and proposes FISS designs for 2021-23 for endorsement.

#### *6.3.1 FISS redesign discussion*

32. The Commission **NOTED** that a full grid design (1,890 stations) is one end of the spectrum, representing a greater source of removals from the stock and infrastructure needs, but providing the maximum scientific return in the form of minimum bias and maximum precision. The full post-expansion design would be costly and logistically difficult to undertake.

33. The Commission **NOTED** that the proposed design for 2021 represents a re-allocation of resources rather than a reduction, compared to the pre-expansion FISS design.

34. The Commission **NOTED** that in its considerations of FISS rationalisation:

    a) that proposed designs beyond the following year (i.e. the 2022-23 proposals for this IPHC meeting cycle) may be subsequently revised due to changes in the understanding of Pacific halibut density and distribution;

    b) the intention is to rotate stations in unfished regions into the design in subsequent years, thereby sampling all stations over time.

35. The Commission **NOTED** some existing opportunities for stakeholder engagement in the FISS design review process and **RECOMMENDED** that additional formalised opportunities should be added to the review timeline for future presentations. An option is to hold the annual RAB meeting in November or December of each year.

36. The Commission **RECALLED** that the priority of a rationalised FISS sampling design is 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 Contracting Party agencies, and IPHC policies (tertiary design layer). These priorities are outlined in Table 1.

37. The Commission **NOTED** that the addition of stations beyond those required to meet minimum bias and maximum variance targets, whether for logistical or cost purposes, also provide a scientific benefit in that year and in subsequent years in the form of increased precision, reduced potential for bias and increased biological sampling.

**Table 1.** Prioritisation of FISS objectives and corresponding design layers.

| Priority | Objective | Design Layer |
|---|---|---|
| Primary | Sample Pacific halibut for stock assessment and stock distribution estimation. | Minimum sampling requirements in terms of:<br>• Station distribution;<br>• Station count;<br>• Skates per station. |
| 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;<br>Assist: assist others to collect data on a cost-recovery basis;<br>IPHC policies: ad-hoc decisions of the Commission regarding the FISS design. |

### *6.3.2 FISS cost, revenue, and tender considerations*

***Cost and revenue***

38. The Commission **RECALLED** that the Pacific halibut stock is projected to decline by ~5% from 2020 to 2021 (see paper IPHC-2020-IM096-08 Rev_1), and that the IPHC Secretariat estimates that fish prices are expected to be approximately equal to the levels received in 2020, ~US$4.77/lb coastwide, due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food-supply chain.

39. The Commission **RECALLED** the '*minimum 2021 FISS design*' endorsed by the SRB at its 17th Session in 2020, and proposed by the IPHC Secretariat (prior to cost-revenue optimisation) as follows:

*SRB017–Rec.01 (para. 14) The SRB **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission endorse the final 2021 FISS design as proposed by IPHC Secretariat, and provided at Appendix IVa.*

*APPENDIX IVa*

*IPHC FISHERY-INDEPENDENT SETLINE SURVEY (FISS) DESIGN PROPOSED FOR 2021, AND TENTATIVELY PROPOSED FOR 2022-23*

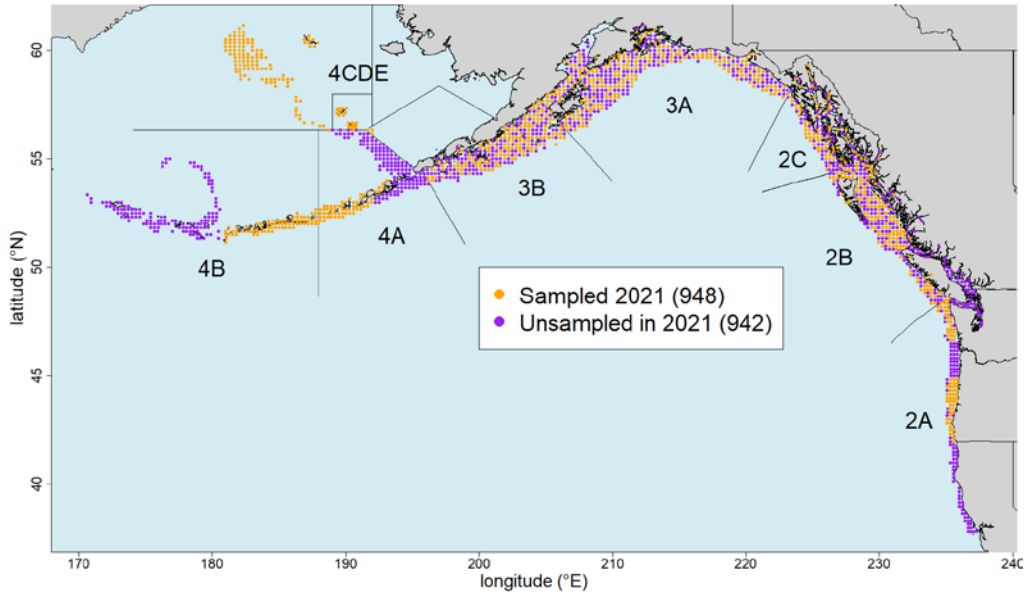


***Figure a.*** *Proposed minimum FISS design in 2021 (orange circles) based on randomized sampling in 2B-3B, and a subarea design elsewhere. Purple circles are optional for meeting data quality criteria.*

40. The Commission **NOTED** the projections of FISS cost and revenue for the '*minimum 2021 FISS design*' (prior to cost-revenue optimisation, i.e. based solely on the primary objective shown in Table 1), would result in a negative revenue of ~US$1,686,384, taking into consideration the ~5% stock decline and fish price assumptions referenced in paragraph 38.

41. The Commission **NOTED** the projections of FISS cost and revenue for the '*optimised 2021 FISS design*' (i.e. the *minimum 2021 FISS design* plus added skates and stations to take into consideration the secondary objective shown in Table 1) would result in a revised revenue figure of negative ~US$226,651.

42. The Commission **NOTED** that the estimated revenue figures should be considered with a +/- of ~$500,000 given stock abundance and price uncertainty.

***2021 FISS bid specifications and tenders***

43. The Commission **NOTED** that the IPHC Secretariat was intending on soliciting tenders for the 2021 FISS in ~mid-December 2020 (with tenders due by late-January 2021), and that the tender specifications would incorporate the standard wording around amendments that the Commission may make at any time prior to the FISS season commencing. The tender process follows standard U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) guidelines, and is available on the IPHC website for transparency and accountability purposes.

#### *6.3.3 FISS design endorsement (2021-23)*

44. The Commission **NOTED** the request by the IPHC Secretariat to approve the '*minimum 2021 FISS design'* as proposed by the IPHC Secretariat, for implementation in 2021 (provided at Appendix IV), and for it to be '*optimised'* to target long-term revenue neutrality.

45. The Commission **NOTED** the '*minimum 2022* and *2023 FISS design'* proposals provided at Appendix Va and b respectively.

46. The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC 2021 FISS design be considered for decision at the 9th Special Session of the Commission (SS09), at a date and format to be agreed upon intersessionally. The IPHC Secretariat will develop necessary material to support the decision making process.

47. The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC Secretariat provide the Commission, at AM097, an expanded schematic of the rationalisation of the FISS following the 2014-19 expansion series. The intent is to show all the steps from design to implementation of a FISS.

### 6.4 *Data overview and preliminary stock assessment (2020), and draft harvest decision table (2021)*

48. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-08_Rev_1 which provided an opportunity to consider the results of the 2020 IPHC stock assessment for Pacific halibut within the Convention Area, including a summary of data sources used, as well as stock projections and the draft harvest decision table for 2021.

49. The Commission **NOTED** that biological data levels were similar to previous years' levels in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, commending the IPHC Secretariat on their efforts to adapt to the changing environment, for quickly implementing and updating protocols and effectively meeting these targets.

50. The Commission **NOTED** that the 2020 stock assessment represented an update of the 2019 analysis, and produced results that were consistent with recent stock assessments, indicating a declining spawning biomass since 2016. This stock trend is estimated to be a result of low recruitment over the period 2006-2010.

51. The Commission **NOTED** that both modelled FISS trends and commercial logbook records indicated little change at the coastwide level from 2019 to 2020; however, there were increased modelled FISS catch rates in IPHC Regulatory Area 3A and decreased rates in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 2B, which had strong effect on stock distribution and therefore the distribution of the coastwide TCEY within the IPHC's Interim Management Procedure. The 2011 and 2012 year classes were observed to be more important in the 2020 FISS and fishery catches than in previous years.

52. The Commission **NOTED** that due to reduced mortality limits set for 2020, as well as several fishery sectors that did not use the full mortality limits or projections, the fishing intensity in 2020 was estimated to be lower than during the period from 2014-19.

53. The Commission **NOTED** that the reference level of fishing intensity (F43%) adopted in 2020 is estimated to result in a coastwide TCEY of 39.0 million pounds for 2021, slightly above the status quo coastwide TCEY set for 2020 (36.6 million pounds), and also above the TCEY estimated to correspond to the reference level of fishing intensity (F46%) used during the period 2016-20 (35.5 million pounds). All of these harvest levels are projected to result in further spawning biomass declines over the next three years.

54. The Commission **NOTED** that the preliminary detailed mortality projections for 2021 will be updated in January 2021, and included in a revised mortality projection tool for use during AM097. This tool will include all existing agreements and specifications describing the IPHC's current interim management procedure.

### 6.5 *Size limit review*

55. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-09 which provided the Commission with a summary of available data and an analysis of: 1) the effects of the current directed commercial fishery minimum

size limit, and 2) the potential effects of a maximum size limit in this fishery. This paper was prepared to meet the Commission request from AM096:

AM096 (para. 157):

*"The Commission NOTED the stakeholder questions regarding the current minimum size limit applied to the directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery. In light of the newly available sex-ratio information from the directed commercial fishery, the Commission identified the need for a better understanding of the effects of the minimum size limit on available fishery yield and potential changes from previous analyses. Further, investigation of the use of a maximum size limit has also been a topic on ongoing discussion."*

AM096–Req.08 (para. 158):

*"The Commission REQUESTED that the IPHC Secretariat prepare an updated discussion of the costs and benefits of removing or adjusting the current minimum size limit and/or adding a maximum size limit. This analysis would be presented during the 2020 Work Meeting and IM096."*

56. The Commission **NOTED** that the evaluation provided tactical decision-making information for consideration of removing the current MinSL and/or implementing a MaxSL. The focus is on short-term yield, fishery and stock performance while retaining all other aspects of the IPHC's Interim Management Procedure. It is not intended to provide a comparison of long-term performance of size limits as one part of a comprehensive management procedure. Such a comprehensive analysis may be done via the MSE process. Questions regarding long-term change in spatial distribution and scale of recruitment and spawning biomass require the full 'closed-loop' approach used in the MSE. As such, size limits provide a potential avenue for future MSE analysis.

57. The Commission **NOTED** that the current minimum size limit (32 inches) resulted in an estimated 7% yield loss in 2020, and a fishery value loss for all U32 prices less than 63% of those for O32 Pacific halibut at the coastwide level. The evaluated maximum size limit was estimated to be neutral with regard to fishery yield and value.

58. **NOTING** the indication from some Commissioners that there may be regulatory compliance concerns to be considered, the Commission **REQUESTED** that relevant Contracting Party agencies, led by NOAA and DFO, consider and present those concerns (if applicable) at AM097.

59. The Commission **NOTED** that an evaluation of the impacts of removing the minimum size limit on fishery yield may also be well placed through the Commission's Management Strategy Evaluation process.

## 7. IPHC SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

### 7.1 *Report of the 21st Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB021)*

60. The Commission **NOTED** the Report of the 21st Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB021) (IPHC-2020-RAB021-R).

61. The Commission **NOTED** that the RAB021 did not make any recommendations to the Commission in 2020, but rather, eight (8) requests of the IPHC Secretariat for consideration (Appendix IV of IPHC-2020-RAB021-R).

### 7.2 *Reports of the IPHC Scientific Review Board*

62. The Commission **NOTED** the Reports of the 16th and 17th Sessions of the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB016: IPHC-2020-SRB016-R; SRB017: IPHC-2020-SRB017-R) which were presented by Dr Sean Cox (Chairperson) on behalf of the SRB.

63. The Commission **NOTED** that the SRB017 made eight (8) recommendations to the Commission in 2020 as follows:

***IPHC Fishery-independent setline survey (FISS)***

*SRB017–Rec.01 (para. 14) The SRB **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission endorse the final 2021 FISS design as proposed by IPHC Secretariat, and provided at Appendix IVa.*

***Biological and ecosystem science program research updates***

*SRB017–Rec.02 (para. 31) **NOTING** the improved presentation of the research integration plan, the SRB **RECOMMENDED** that the research planning table shown in the meeting presentation for paper IPHC-2020-SRB017-08, be improved by adding clear prioritization of biological research needs for addressing uncertainties in the stock assessment and MSE programs. Ideally, this would be in the form of ranked biological uncertainties/parameters for the stock assessment and MSE operating model along with an explanation for deviations from this ranked list.*

***Genetics and Genomics***

*SRB017–Rec.03 (para. 49) **NOTING** IPHC Secretariat responses to SRB016-Req. 15 that requested additional methodological detail pertaining to ongoing genomics research, the SRB **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC Secretariat work with collaborators to develop a series of benchmark summary statistics that characterize the quality of the Pacific halibut genome developed.*

***Research integration***

*SRB017–Rec.04 (para. 53) The SRB **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC Secretariat incorporate prioritization of research activities, as well as the timeline of available research outputs as inputs into the stock assessment and MSE processes.*

*SRB017–Rec.05 (para. 54) The SRB **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC Secretariat identify those research areas with uncertainty and indicate research questions that would require the SRB to provide input and/or decision in future documentation and presentations provided to the SRB.*

***Management Strategy Evaluation***

*SRB017–Rec.06 (para. 57) The SRB **NOTED** three options for estimation error are available and currently the option of simulating estimation is the most appropriate option to evaluate results in 2020, but **RECOMMENDED** continuing work to incorporate actual estimation models, as in the third option, because that method would best mimic the current assessment process.*

*SRB017–Rec.07 (para. 59) The SRB **RECOMMENDED** using the current MSE results to compare and contrast management procedures incorporating scale and distribution elements, but **NOTED** that, current results are conditional on some parameters and processes that remain uncertain. The uncertainty in applying the untested current approach potentially creates greater risk than adopting a repeatable management procedure that has been simulation tested under a wide range of uncertainties.*

*SRB017–Rec.08 (para. 60) The SRB **RECOMMENDED** that Exceptional Circumstances be defined to determine whether monitoring information has potentially departed from their expected distributions generated by the MSE. Declaration of Exceptional Circumstances may warrant re-opening and revising the operating models and testing procedures used to justify a particular management procedure.*

64. The Commission **NOTED** the preliminary work from the IPHC Secretariat to address the SRB recommendation to increase integration between current and planned biological research activities, as reflected in the IPHC 5-Year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan, and the research priorities for Stock Assessment and the MSE process.

### 7.3 *IPHC 5-year Biological & Ecosystem Science Research Plan (2017-21): update*

65. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-10 which provided a description of progress on the IPHC's Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan.

66. The Commission **NOTED** the primary biological research activities at the IPHC that follow Commission objectives are identified and described in the IPHC 5-Year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan (2017-21). These activities are summarized in five broad research areas designed to provide inputs into stock assessment and the management strategy evaluation processes, as follows:

    1) **Migration**. Studies are aimed at further understanding reproductive migration and identification of spawning times and locations as well as larval and juvenile dispersal.

    2) **Reproduction**. Studies are aimed at providing information on the sex ratio of the commercial catch and to improve current estimates of maturity.

    3) **Growth and Physiological Condition**. Studies are aimed at describing the role of some of the factors responsible for the observed changes in size-at-age and to provide tools for measuring growth and physiological condition in Pacific halibut.

    4) **Discard Mortality Rates (DMRs) and Survival**. Studies are aimed at providing updated estimates of DMRs in both the longline and the trawl fisheries.

    5) **Genetics and Genomics**. Studies are aimed at describing the genetic structure of the Pacific halibut population and at providing the means to investigate rapid adaptive changes in response to fishery-dependent and fishery-independent influences.

67. The Commission **NOTED** the progress that the IPHC Secretariat has made in the five key research areas contemplated in the IPHC 5-Year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan (2017-21) and, in particular, in the promising use of genomic approaches to address important questions from stock structure and distribution to the genetic basis of key life-history traits.

68. The Commission **NOTED** the efforts of the IPHC Secretariat to publish important scientific results derived from the research areas contemplated in the IPHC 5-Year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan (2017-21) in the peer-reviewed literature.

## 8. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION

### 8.1 *IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation: update*

69. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-11_Rev_1 which provided a description of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) framework and simulations of management procedures for distributing the TCEY.

70. The Commission **NOTED** that the MSE framework to evaluate management procedures incorporating scale and distribution elements can be used to evaluate additional management procedures and hypotheses in the future.

71. The Commission **NOTED** that with a considerable amount of MSE work having been completed and a lot of information presented, it may be prudent to continue to consider and further evaluate the types of management procedures that were identified to perform best given the current primary objectives.

72. The Commission **NOTED** that the current simulations represent a range of assumptions about migration and that the evaluation of management procedures to alternative assumptions would be useful to determine the robustness of the management procedures to migration hypotheses.

73. The Commission **RECALLED** the current reference SPR of 43%, and **NOTED** that increasing fishing intensity to SPR values between 40% and 43% may improve the performance of some management procedures relative to others while still meeting conservation and biomass target objectives.

74. The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that a Special Session of the Commission be held prior to the AM097 meeting in January, to look at potential modifications to existing MPs as part of the IPHC Secretariat's MSE program of work. The IPHC Secretariat will seek to establish agreeable dates, and publish the meeting invitation accordingly, noting that all meetings of the Commission are public unless otherwise decided by the Commission.

### 8.2 *Independent peer review of the IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation process*

75. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-17 which provided the Commission with an opportunity to further consider the report of the independent peer review of the IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation process.

76. The Commission **NOTED** the reviewer's key conclusion that the MSE model framework was implemented according to international guidelines and standards for the evaluation of harvest control rules, and comprises a simulated model of truth (the operating model), a simulation of the stock assessment process (estimation model) and a simulation of the catch setting and catch allocation process (the harvest control rule).

77. The Commission **NOTED** the independent peer-reviewer made the following recommendations to ensure the continued success and accuracy of MSE simulations:

    a) decide soon on the future of the MSE process beyond January 2021 and allocate necessary funding;

    b) treat the MSE framework as an ongoing process that will be used over many years alongside the stock assessment, to test the effectiveness of data gathering, stock assessment assumptions, and catch-setting;

    c) require the Commission to codify the rules they used to adjust catch levels within each Regulatory Area after the harvest control rule is applied, so that the MSE framework accurately evaluates risk to the stock and catches within each such Area;

    d) MSAB membership could be expanded to include representatives for crew members, fishing communities, and environmental organizations; and

    e) Complete the documentation of technical details of the IPHC MSE framework (Hicks et al. 2019), which is currently an incomplete working document.

### 8.3 *Reports of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board*

78. The Commission **NOTED** the Reports of the 15th and 16th Sessions of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB015: IPHC-2020-MSAB015-R; MSAB016: IPHC-2020-MSAB016-R) which was presented by Mr Adam Keizer (Canada) and Ms Rachel Baker (U.S.A).

79. The Commission **NOTED** that the MSAB endorsed five management procedures that ranked highest among the eleven when evaluated using the Commission's current primary objectives:

> (MSAB016-R, para. 47) *The MSAB **ENDORSED** Tier 1 MPs, that were ranked highest in the MSE results using the tools available, for consideration. These MPs are MP-D, MP-H, MP-I, MP-J, MP-K as specified in Appendix V.*

80. The Commission **NOTED** that the MSAB016 made two (2) recommendations to the Commission as follows:

> ***Results investigating fishing intensity and distributing the total constant exploitation yield (TCEY) for Pacific halibut fisheries***
>
> *MSAB016-Rec.1 (para. 35) The MSAB **RECOMMENDED** that the performance metrics related to the current primary objectives (Appendix VI) be considered when evaluating MPs.*
>
> ***MSAB Program of work***
>
> *MSAB016-Rec.2 (para. 53) The MSAB **RECOMMENDED** the following MPs for analysis and consideration in 2021:*
>
> *a) MP-J in combination with a fixed TCEY of 1.65 Mlbs in Regulatory Area 2A, as in paragraph 97 b) of IPHC-2020-AM096-R, with total mortality rebalanced among remaining U.S.A. IPHC Regulatory Areas to maintain a constant SPR;*

*b) MP-J in combination with a minimum TCEY of 1.65 Mlbs in Regulatory Area 2A which allows the TCEY to exceed 1.65 in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A with total mortality rebalanced among remaining U.S.A. IPHC Regulatory Areas to maintain a constant SPR.*

81. The Commission **NOTED** that:

(MSAB016-R, para. 57) *"The MSAB AGREED that proposed topics of work beyond the 2021 deliverables include revisiting objectives, MPs, specifications of the MSE framework and operating model, improving estimation models and data generation (e.g. uncertainty), outreach and communication tools, as well as recommendations from the 2020 peer review of the MSE. Some examples include those items described in paragraphs 30 and 31. 58.*

(MSAB016-R, para. 58) *"The MSAB REQUESTED that an MSAB meeting be scheduled to discuss a Program of Work for 2021 and beyond."*

## 9. CONTRACTING PARTY NATIONAL REPORTS

### 9.1 *Canada*

82. The Commission **NOTED** that no national report was provided by Canada for consideration at the IM096.

#### *9.1.1 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)*

83. The Commission **NOTED** that no update on Pacific halibut matters was received from Fisheries and Oceans Canada for consideration at the IM096.

### 9.2 *United States of America*

84. The Commission **NOTED** that no national report was provided by the United States of America for consideration at the IM096.

#### *9.2.1 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – Fisheries*

##### *a) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-Fisheries)*

85. The Commission **NOTED** that no update on Pacific halibut matters was received from NOAA-Fisheries for consideration at the IM096.

##### *b) North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC)*

86. The Commission **NOTED** that no update on Pacific halibut matters was received from the NPFMC at IM096.

##### *c) Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC)*

87. The Commission **NOTED** that no update on Pacific halibut matters was received from the PFMC at IM096.

## 10. IPHC FISHERY REGULATIONS: PROPOSALS FOR THE 2020-21 PROCESS

88. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-12, which aimed to provide the Commission with an initial indication of the IPHC Fishery Regulation proposals, which the IPHC Secretariat, Contracting Parties, and other stakeholders have indicated they anticipate submitting, for consideration by the Commission in the 2020-21 regulatory process.

89. The Commission **RECALLED** the IPHC Fishery Regulation proposal submission and review process instituted in 2017, whereby a preliminary indication of the fishery regulation proposals being submitted by the IPHC Secretariat to the Commission are provided at the Interim Meeting. Fishery regulation proposals from the Contracting Parties and other stakeholders are typically received later in the process.

90. The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that interested stakeholders note the deadline for submission of IPHC Fishery Regulation proposals, for consideration at the 97th Session of the Annual Meeting (AM097), of **26 December 2020**. Late proposals will not be considered at AM097.

91. The Commission **NOTED** that the IPHC Secretariat and the relevant Contracting Party agencies intend to coordinate a joint review of regulatory proposals, with the aim of identifying and resolving issues and clarifying draft regulatory language in advance of AM097.

### 10.1 *IPHC Secretariat fishery regulation proposals*

#### *10.1.1 IPHC Fishery Regulations: Mortality and Fishery Limits (Sect. 5)*

92. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-PropA1, which aimed to improve clarity and transparency of fishery limits within the IPHC Fishery Regulations.

#### *10.1.2 IPHC Fishery Regulations: Commercial Fishing Periods (Sect. 9)*

93. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-PropA2, which proposed fishing periods for the directed commercial Pacific halibut fisheries within the IPHC Fishery Regulations.

#### *10.1.3 IPHC Fishery Regulations: minor amendments*

94. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-PropA3, which proposed amendments to ensure clarity and consistency in the IPHC Fishery Regulations.

### 10.2 *Contracting Party fishery regulation proposals*

95. The Commission **NOTED** that no Contracting Party regulatory proposals were received for consideration at the IM096.

### 10.3 *Stakeholder fishery regulation proposals*

96. The Commission **NOTED** that no Stakeholder regulatory proposals were received for consideration at the IM096.

### 10.4 *Stakeholder statements*

97. The Commission **NOTED** that no Stakeholder statements were received for consideration at the IM096, as part of paper IPHC-2020-IM096-INF01.

## 11. 2ND IPHC PERFORMANCE REVIEW (PRIPHC02): IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

98. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-13, which provided the Commission with an update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the 2nd Performance Review of the IPHC (PRIPHC02).

## 12. PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERY ECONOMICS UPDATE

99. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-14, which provided the Commission with an update on the IPHC economic study, including progress on developing the economic impact assessment model, state of the collection of primary economic data from Pacific halibut dependent sectors, and plan for the year ahead.

100. The Commission **NOTED** that the accuracy of economic impact assessment of the Pacific halibut resource depends on broader stakeholders' active participation in developing the necessary data for analysis.

101. The Commission **NOTED** that adding the subsistence/aboriginal fishing to the economic model would be an interesting extension, but acknowledged the difficulty of this endeavour considering the lack of necessary data.

102. The Commission **NOTED** that increasing the resolution of the assessed economic impacts is conditional on cooperation between Contracting Parties and the IPHC on economic data exchange.

## 13. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

### 13.1 *FY2021 Budget modifications*

103. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-15 Rev_2, which provided the Commission with the new Chart of Accounts and reallocated FY2021 budget.

104. The Commission **NOTED** that the new accounting software, Aplos, went live on 15 June 2020 after several months of evaluating options to best meet organizational needs. The IPHC Secretariat immediately began the development and population with FY2020 budgets, expenses and income received for FY2020. The subscription based software allows for organizations to perform fund accounting. Fund accounting provides transparency while separating the accounting of financial transactions by fund. It also allows for the management of grant or fund restrictions and for each fund to have a self-balanced set of accounts. This is especially important when managing and keeping IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) accounting separate from our general operations funded through Contracting Party contributions.

105. The Commission **NOTED** that throughout FY2020, the IPHC Secretariat has undertaken an extensive review and reformation of the IPHC accounting system. In doing so, we have also revised the IPHC Chart of Accounts. This has subsequently required a reallocation of the approved budget line items, to newly named or allocated budget lines.

106. The Commission **NOTED** that the prior approved budget from AM096 included a correction to reduce Personnel Related Expenses by $7,700 in the 40-FISS fund previously referred to as the Supplemental Fund, and a correction to reduce Supplies Expense by $150,000 from 20-Research represented as the General Fund.

107. The Commission **NOTED** that an increase of $78,569 in the approved FY2021 budget for fund accounting for income and associated expenses for grant funding for 20-Research, and a $76,000 increase in 40-FISS for heavying shipping as a cost recovery line item in support of our survey assessment program.

108. The Commission **ADOPTED** the revised FY2021 budget (financial period: 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021) as provided at Appendix VI, noting that there is no change in the Contracting Party contributions due for FY2021.

### 13.2 *IPHC Rules of Procedure (2021)*

109. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-16, which proposed amendments to the IPHC Rules of Procedure (2020). The proposed revisions incorporate process and functional amendments intended to further modernise the IPHC's governance procedures for public intersessional meetings of the Commission.

### 13.3 *Contracting Party contributions – Historical review*

110. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2020-IM096-18, which provide a response to Commission requests for background information on Contracting Party contributions.

111. The Commission **AGREED** to conduct further discussions regarding rebalancing the Party contributions in support of the annual IPHC budget. Further discussion may be scheduled to take place through intersessional meetings and/or at the 97th Sessions of the Finance and Administration Commission (FAC097), and Commission (AM097) in January 2021 and may also include intergovernmental discussions between the Parties.

## 14. OTHER BUSINESS

### 14.1 *Preparation for 97th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM097) and associated subsidiary bodies*

112. The Commission **NOTED** that the 97th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM097) will be held via electronic means from 25 to 29 January 2021.

113. The Commission **NOTED** that information concerning the meeting, including electronic versions of documents to be considered, will be published on the meeting webpages as they become available, but no later than 30 days prior to the commencement of each meeting, in accordance with Rule 8.4 of the IPHC Rules of Procedure (2020), as follows:

- 97th Session of the IPHC Finance and Administration Committee (FAC097): Deadline 26 December 2020
- 97th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM097): Deadline 26 December 2020
- 91st Session of the IPHC Conference Board (CB091): Deadline 27 December 2020
- 26th Session of the IPHC Processor Advisory Board (PAB026): Deadline 27 December 2020

## 15. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 96TH SESSION OF THE IPHC INTERIM MEETING (IM096)

114. The report of the 96th Session of the IPHC Interim Meeting (IPHC-2020-IM096-R) was **ADOPTED** via correspondence on 2 December 2020, including the consolidated set of recommendations and requests arising from IM096, provided at Appendix VII.

# APPENDIX I
# LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FOR THE 96TH SESSION OF THE IPHC INTERIM MEETING (IM096)

**Commission Officer**

| Chairperson | Vice-Chairperson |
|---|---|
| Mr Paul **Ryall** (Canada) | Mr Chris **Oliver** (United States of America) |

**Commissioners**

| Canada | United States of America |
|---|---|
| Mr Paul **Ryall** | Mr Chris **Oliver** |
| Mr Neil **Davis** | Mr Robert **Alverson** |
| Mr Peter **DeGreef** | Mr Richard **Yamada** |

**Advisors/experts**

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# APPENDIX II
# AGENDA FOR THE 96TH SESSION OF THE IPHC INTERIM MEETING (IM096)

**Date**: 18-19 November 2020
**Location**: Electronic
**Venue**: Electronic (Go-To-Meeting)
**Time**: 09:00-17:00 daily
**Chairperson**: Mr Paul Ryall (Canada)
**Vice-Chairperson**: Mr Chris Oliver (USA)

1. **OPENING OF THE SESSION** (Chairperson)
2. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION** (Chairperson)
3. **UPDATE ON ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE 96th SESSION OF THE IPHC ANNUAL MEETING (AM096) AND 2020 INTERSESSIONAL DECISIONS** (D. Wilson)
4. **REPORT OF THE IPHC SECRETARIAT (2020): Draft** (D. Wilson)
5. **STATE OF THE FISHERY (2020): Preliminary statistics** (L. Erikson)
6. **STOCK STATUS OF PACIFIC HALIBUT (2020) AND HARVEST DECISION TABLE 2021**
   - 6.1 IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) design, implementation, and implications (L. Erikson)
   - 6.2 Space-time modelling of survey data (WPUE; FISS expansion results, etc.) (R. Webster)
   - 6.3 FISS Rationalisation (2021-23)
   - 6.4 Data overview and preliminary stock assessment (2020), and draft harvest decision table (2021) (I. Stewart)
   - 6.5 Size limit review (I. Stewart)
7. **IPHC SCIENCE AND RESEARCH**
   - 7.1 Report of the 21st Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB021) (J. Planas)
   - 7.2 Reports of the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB Chairperson)
   - 7.3 IPHC 5-year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan (2017-21): update (J. Planas)
8. **MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION**
   - 8.1 IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation: update (A. Hicks)
   - 8.2 Independent peer review of the IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation process (T. Branch)
   - 8.3 Reports of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB Co-Chairpersons)
9. **CONTRACTING PARTY NATIONAL REPORTS** (Contracting Parties)
   - 9.1 Canada
     - 9.1.1 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)
   - 9.2 United States of America
     - 9.2.1 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – Fisheries
       - 9.2.1.1 National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-Fisheries)
       - 9.2.1.2 North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC)
       - 9.2.1.3 Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC)
10. **IPHC FISHERY REGULATIONS: PROPOSALS FOR THE 2020-21 PROCESS** (D. Wilson)
    - 10.1 IPHC Secretariat fishery regulation proposals
    - 10.2 Contracting Party fishery regulation proposals
    - 10.3 Stakeholder fishery regulation proposals
    - 10.4 Stakeholder statements

**11. 2ND IPHC PERFORMANCE REVIEW (PRIPHC02): IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS** (D. Wilson)

**12. PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERY ECONOMICS UPDATE** (B. Hutncizak)

**13. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

13.1 FY2021 Budget modifications (D. Wilson)

13.2 IPHC Rules of Procedure (2021): Draft (D. Wilson)

13.3 Contracting Party contributions – Historical review (D. Wilson)

**14. OTHER BUSINESS**

14.1 Preparation for the 97th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM097) and associated subsidiary bodies (D. Wilson)

**15. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 96th SESSION OF THE IPHC INTERIM MEETING (IM096)** (Chairperson & Executive Director)

# APPENDIX III
# LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE 96TH SESSION OF THE IPHC INTERIM MEETING (IM096)

| Document | Title | Availability |
|---|---|---|
| IPHC-2020-IM096-01 | Agenda & Schedule for the 96th Session of the IPHC Interim Meeting (IM096) | ✓ 20 Aug 2020<br>✓ 15 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-02 | List of Documents for the 96th Session of the IPHC Interim Meeting (IM096) | ✓ 20 Aug 2020<br>✓ 18 Nov 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-03 | Update on actions arising from the 96th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM096) and 2020 Intersessional decisions (D. Wilson) | ✓ 13 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-04 | Report of the IPHC Secretariat (2020): Draft (D. Wilson) | ✓ 16 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-05 Rev_1 | State of the Fishery (2020): Preliminary fishery statistics (L. Erikson & H. Tran) | ✓ 15 Oct 2020<br>✓ 8 Nov 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-06 Rev_1 | IPHC Fishery-independent setline survey (FISS) design and implementation in 2020 (L. Erikson & R. Webster) | ✓ 16 Oct 2020<br>✓ 6 Nov 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-07 | Review: Rationalisation of the FISS following the 2014-19 expansion series (R. Webster) | ✓ 16 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-08 Rev_1 | Summary of the data, stock assessment, and harvest decision table for Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) at the end of 2020 (I. Stewart, A. Hicks, R. Webster & D. Wilson) | ✓ 13 Oct 2020<br>✓ 12 Nov 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-09 | Evaluation of directed commercial fishery size limits in 2020 (I. Stewart, A. Hicks & B. Hutniczak) | ✓ 25 Sept 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-10 | IPHC 5-year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan (2017-21): Update (J. Planas) | ✓ 6 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-11 Rev_1 | Management Strategy Evaluation results for distribution management procedures (A. Hicks, P. Carpi, S. Berukoff & I. Stewart) | ✓ 17 Oct 2020<br>✓ 2 Nov 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-12 | IPHC Fishery Regulations: Proposals for the 2020-21 process (D. Wilson & L. Erikson) | ✓ 16 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-13 | Implementation of the recommendations from the 2nd IPHC Performance Review (PRIPHC02) (D. Wilson) | ✓ 6 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-14 | Pacific Halibut Multiregional Economic Impact Assessment (PHMEIA): summary of progress (B. Hutniczak) | ✓ 16 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-15 Rev_2 | FY2021 Budget modifications (D. Wilson & K. Jernigan) | ✓ 19 Oct 2020<br>✓ 21 Oct 2020<br>✓ 6 Nov 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-16 | Draft: IPHC Rules of Procedure (2021) (D. Wilson) | ✓ 13 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-17 | Independent peer review of the IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation process (D. Wilson; T. Branch) | ✓ 13 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-18 | Contracting Party contributions – Historical review (D. Wilson) | ✓ 14 Oct 2020 |

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|---|---|---|
| ***Contracting Party updates*** | | |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-NR01 | **Canada**: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) | No submission |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-NR02 | **United States of America**: NOAA – National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC); Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) | No submission |
| ***IPHC Fishery Regulation proposals for 2021*** | | |
| ***IPHC Secretariat Fishery Regulation proposals for 2021*** | | |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-PropA1 | Mortality and Fishery Limits (Sect. 5) (IPHC Secretariat) | ✓ 13 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-PropA2 | Commercial Fishing Periods (Sect. 9) (IPHC Secretariat) | ✓ 16 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-PropA3 | IPHC Fishery Regulations: minor amendments (IPHC Secretariat) | ✓ 13 Oct 2020 |
| ***Contracting Party Fishery Regulation proposals for 2021*** | | |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-PropB1 | Recreational (Sport) Fishing for Pacific Halibut—IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Sect. 28) (Canada: DFO) | Withdrawn |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-PropB2 | Charter Management Measures in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A (Sect. 29) (USA: NOAA-Fisheries) | Deferred to AM097 |
| ***Other Stakeholder Fishery Regulation proposals for 2021*** | | |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-PropC1 | - | No submissions |
| ***Reports from IPHC subsidiary bodies*** | | |
| IPHC-2020-RAB021-R | Report of the 21st Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB021) | ✓ 27 Feb 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-SRB016-R | Report of the 16th Session of the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB016) | ✓ 26 Jun 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-SRB017-R | Report of the 17th Session of the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB017) | ✓ 25 Sept 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-MSAB015-R | Report of the 15th Session of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB015) | ✓ 15 May 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-MSAB016-R | Report of the 16th Session of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB016) | ✓ 23 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-FAC096-R | Report of the 96th Session of the IPHC Finance and Administration Committee (FAC096) | ✓ 4 Feb 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-PAB025-R | Report of the 25th Session of the IPHC Processor Advisory Board (PAB025) | ✓ 6 Feb 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-CB090-R | Report of the 90th Session of the IPHC Conference Board (CB090) | ✓ 6 Feb 2020 |
| ***Information papers*** | | |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-INF01 | Stakeholder Statements on IPHC Fishery Regulation proposals | ✓ 18 Nov 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-INF02 | Updated Range of Alternatives for the Proposed Transfer of Management Responsibilities for Area 2A Pacific Halibut Fisheries with Focus on the Non-Indian Directed Commercial Fishery (PFMC Secretariat) | ✓ 13 Oct 2020 |

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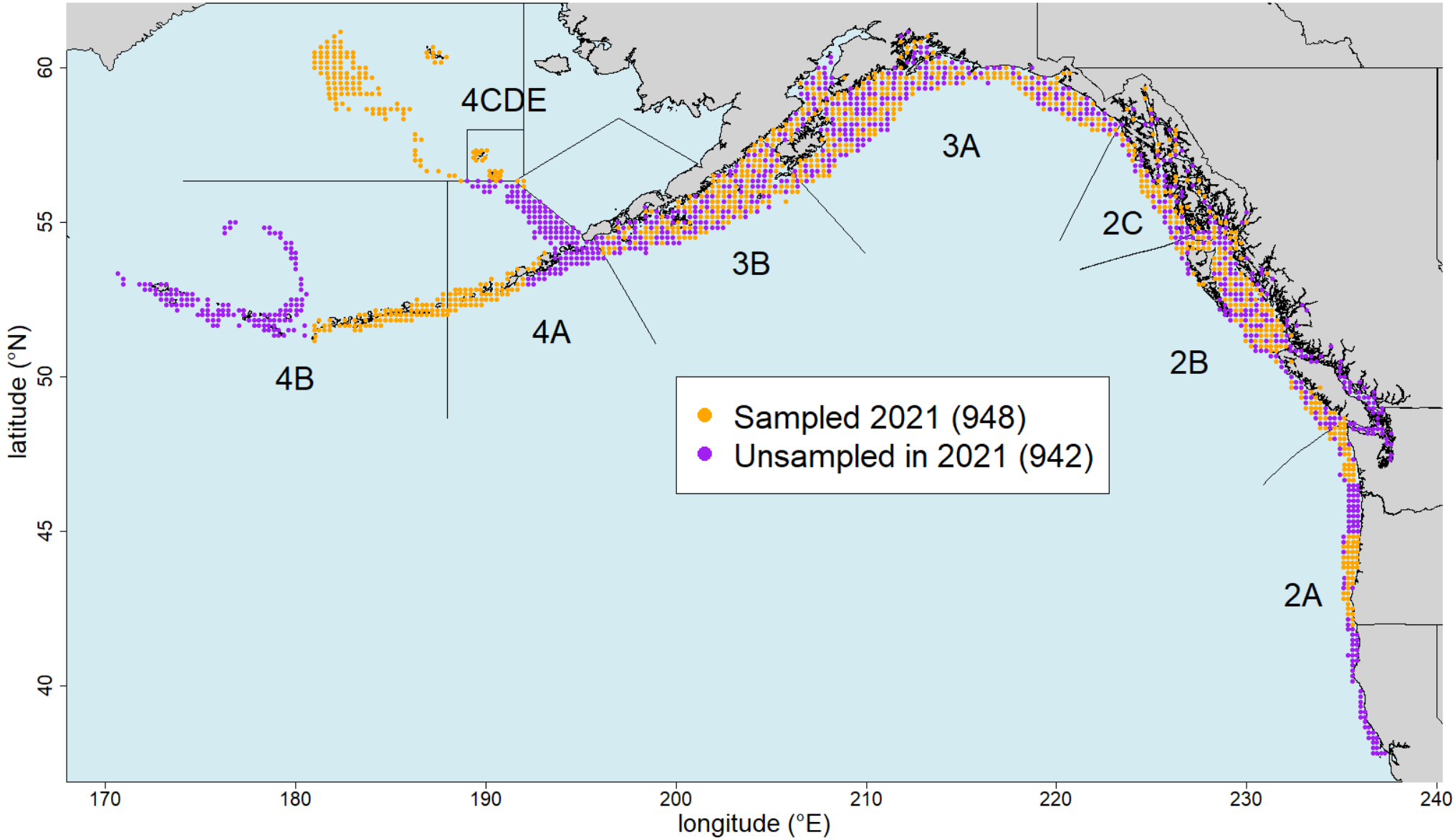
|---|---|---|
| IPHC-2020-IM096-INF03 | The IPHC mortality projection tool for 2021 (and 2022) mortality limits (I. Stewart) | ✓ 13 Oct 2020 |
| IPHC-2020-IM096-INF04 | The IPHC MSE Explorer tool (A. Hicks & P. Carpi) | ✓ 10 Nov 2020 |

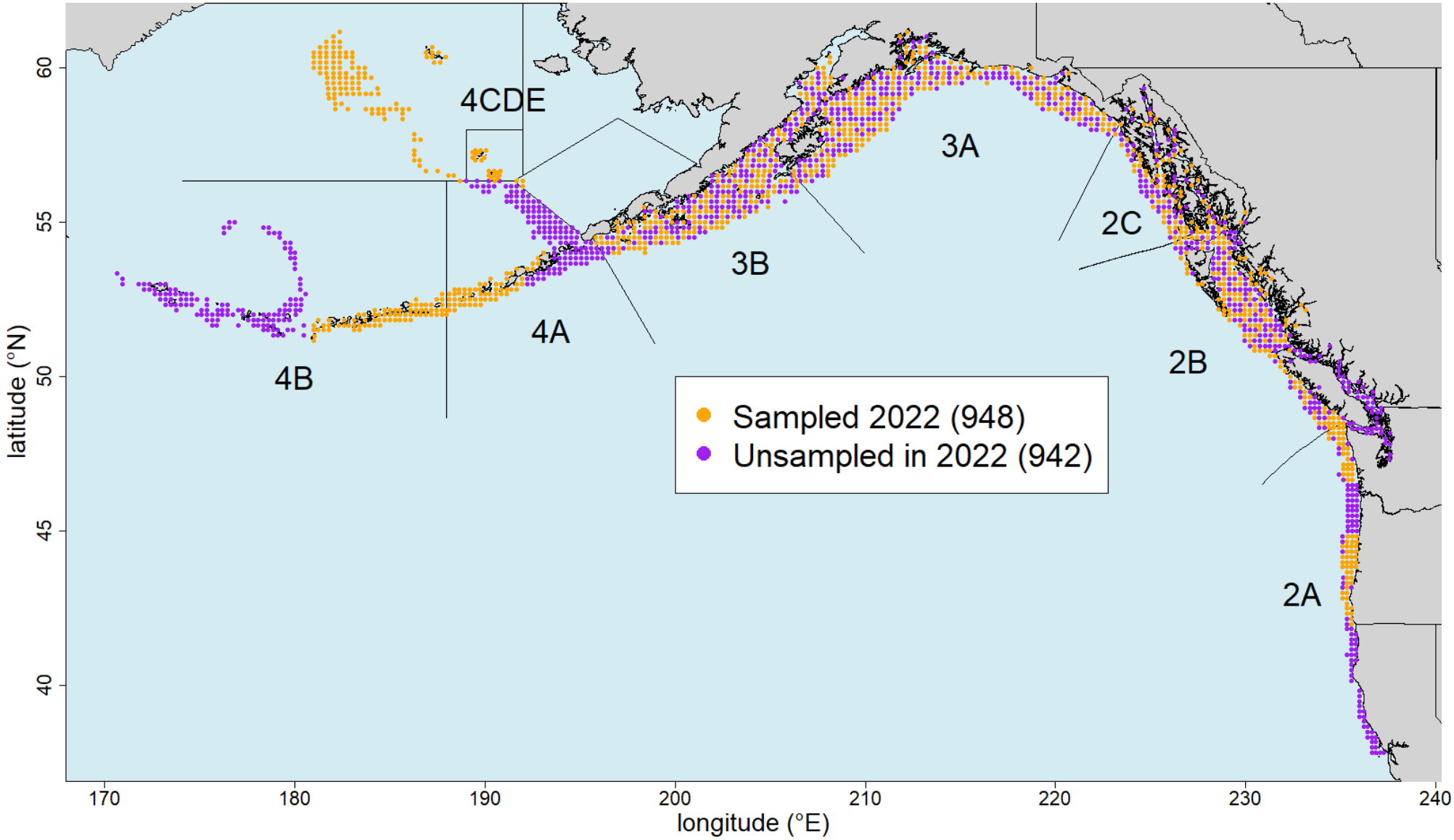
## APPENDIX IV

**MINIMUM FISS DESIGN IN 2021 (ORANGE CIRCLES) BASED ON RANDOMIZED SAMPLING IN 2B-3B, AND A SUBAREA DESIGN ELSEWHERE. PURPLE CIRCLES ARE OPTIONAL FOR MEETING DATA QUALITY CRITERIA**



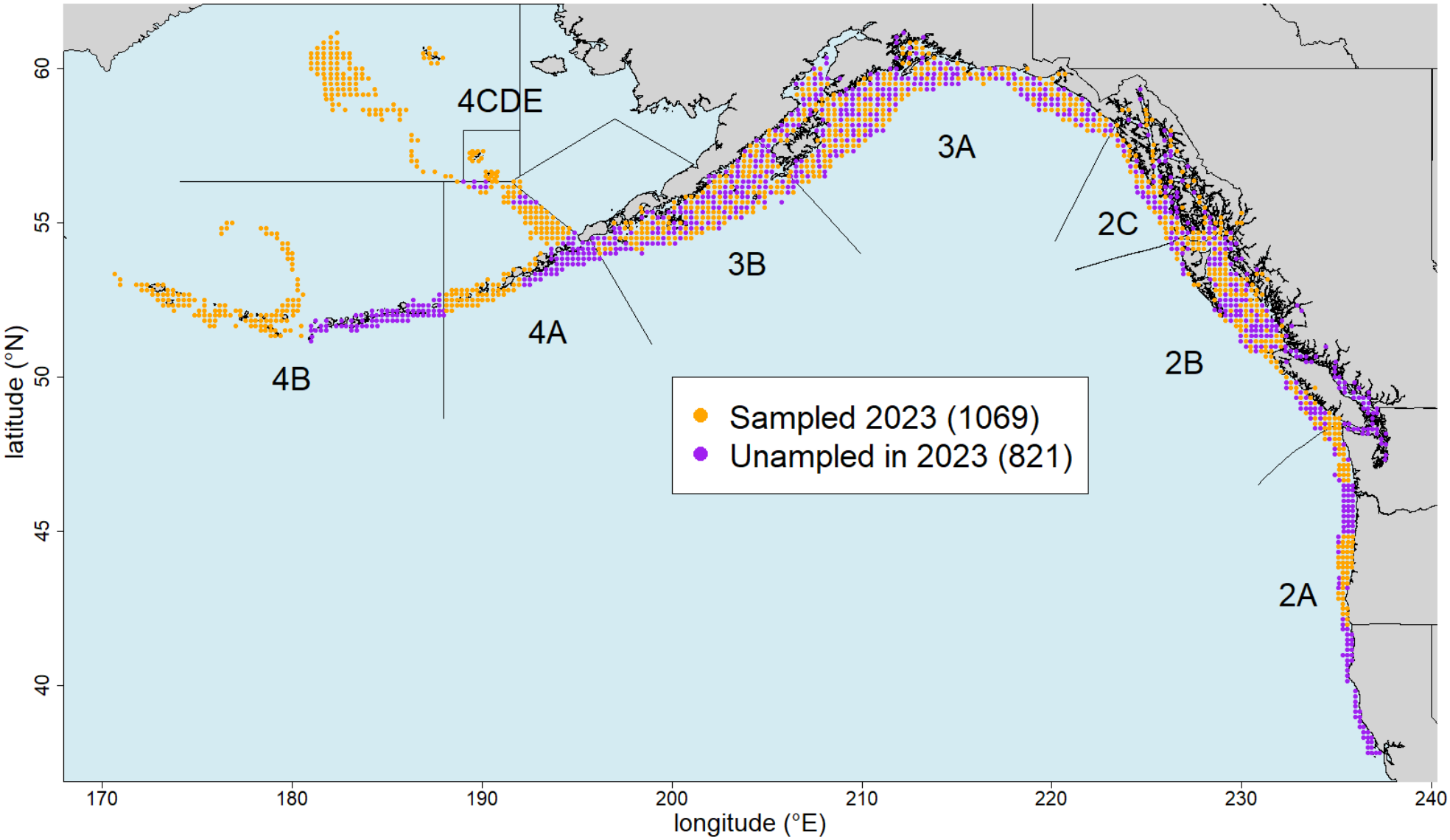
## APPENDIX VA

**TENTATIVE MINIMUM FISS DESIGN IN 2022 (ORANGE CIRCLES) BASED ON RANDOMIZED SAMPLING IN 2B-3B, AND A SUBAREA DESIGN ELSEWHERE. PURPLE CIRCLES ARE OPTIONAL FOR MEETING DATA QUALITY CRITERIA**



## APPENDIX VB

## TENTATIVE MINIMUM FISS DESIGN IN 2023 (ORANGE CIRCLES) BASED ON RANDOMIZED SAMPLING IN 2B-3B, AND A SUBAREA DESIGN ELSEWHERE. PURPLE CIRCLES ARE OPTIONAL FOR MEETING DATA QUALITY CRITERIA



# APPENDIX VI
# FY2021 IPHC CHART OF ACCOUNTS AND REALLOCATED FY2021 BUDGET

| Account Number | Account Name | FY2021 modified budget (Fund Accounting) | FY2021 modified budget (FISS) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Income** | | | |
| **Income** | | | |
| **40000** | **Contracting Party Contributions** | | |
| 40000.01 | Canada | 900,407 | |
| 40000.02 | United States of America | 4,157,760 | |
| **40050** | **IFC Pension** | | |
| 40050.01 | IFC Pension - Canada | 111,250 | |
| 40050.02 | IFC Pension - United States of America | 139,424 | |
| **40055** | **Headquarters** (Lease & Maintenance) | 470,717 | |
| 40060 | Other Income | | 0 |
| 40100 | Grants, Contracts & Agreements | 562,227* | 46,400 |
| 40200 | Interest Income | 0 | 11,000 |
| 40350 | Fish Sales | | |
| 40350.01 | Fish Sales - Pacific Halibut | | 5,210,500 |
| 40350.02 | Fish Sales - Byproduct | | 56,000 |
| | **Total Income** | **6,341,785** | **5,323,900** |
| **Expense** | | | |
| **Personnel Expenses** | | | |
| 50000 | Salaries & Wages | 3,587,417 | 455,795 |
| 50100 | Benefits | 1,538,178 | 14,131 |
| 50100.09 | Medical Reimbursement - Retiree | 97,350 | |
| 50200 | Training & Education | 25,000 | 52,000 |
| 50300 | Personnel Related Expenses | 10,000 | 34,644 |
| 50300.01 | Scholarship Awards | 8,000 | |
| | **Total Personnel Expenses** | 5,265,945 | 556,570 |
| **Operational Expenses** | | | |
| 51000 | Publications | 15,000 | |
| 51100 | Mailing and Shipping | 15,000 | 76,000 |
| 51200 | Travel | 100,000 | 111,920 |
| 51300 | Meeting and Conference Expenses | 104,000 | |
| 51400 | Technology | 150,000 | |
| | **Total Operational Expenses** | 384,000 | 187,920 |
| **Fees and Contract Expenses** | | | |
| 52000 | Professional Fees | 134,750 | |
| 52100 | Vessel Expenses | | |
| 52200 | Other Fees and Charges | | 562,824 |
| 52300 | Leases and Contracts | 374,773 | 2,312,754 |
| 54000 | Communications | 17,000 | 82,650 |
| | **Total Fees and Contract Expenses** | 526,523 | 2,958,228 |
| **Facilities and Equipment Expenses** | | | |
| 53000 | Equipment Expense | 51,010 | 32,400 |
| 53100 | Supplies Expense | 146,583 | 889,505 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 53200 | Maintenance and Utilities | 161,421 | 40,000 |
| 53300 | Facility Rentals | 395,580 | 20,000 |
| | **Total Facilities and Equipment Expenses** | 754,594 | 981,905 |
| **Other Expenses** | | | |
| 55000 | Budget Contingency | 50,000 | |
| 55100 | Other Expenses | | |
| 55200 | Fund Cost Recovery | -639,277 | 639,277 |
| | **Total Other Expenses** | -589,277 | 639,277 |
| | **Total Expense** | **6,341,785** | **5,323,900** |
| | **Net Income (Loss)** | **0** | **0** |

* USA - IFQ/CDQ cost recovery for 2021 – Alaska = $478,599.

# APPENDIX VII
# CONSOLIDATED SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS OF THE 96TH SESSION OF THE IPHC INTERIM MEETING (IM096) (18-19 NOVEMBER 2020)

## *RECOMMENDATIONS*

### *FISS redesign discussion*

IM096-Rec.01 (para. 35) The Commission **NOTED** some existing opportunities for stakeholder engagement in the FISS design review process and **RECOMMENDED** that additional formalised opportunities should be added to the review timeline for future presentations. An option is to hold the annual RAB meeting in November or December of each year.

### *FISS design endorsement (2021-23)*

IM096-Rec.02 (para. 46) The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC 2021 FISS design be considered for decision at the 9th Special Session of the Commission (SS09), at a date and format to be agreed upon intersessionally. The IPHC Secretariat will develop necessary material to support the decision making process.

IM096-Rec.03 (para. 47) The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC Secretariat provide the Commission, at AM097, an expanded schematic of the rationalisation of the FISS following the 2014-19 expansion series. The intent is to show all the steps from design to implementation of a FISS.

### *IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation*

IM096-Rec.04 (para. 74) The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that a Special Session of the Commission be held prior to the AM097 meeting in January, to look at potential modifications to existing MPs as part of the IPHC Secretariat's MSE program of work. The IPHC Secretariat will seek to establish agreeable dates, and publish the meeting invitation accordingly, noting that all meetings of the Commission are public unless otherwise decided by the Commission.

### *IPHC Fishery regulations: Proposals for the 2020-21 process*

IM096-Rec.05 (para. 90) The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that interested stakeholders note the deadline for submission of IPHC Fishery Regulation proposals, for consideration at the 97th Session of the Annual Meeting (AM097), of **26 December 2020**. Late proposals will not be considered at AM097.

## *REQUESTS*

### *Size limit review*

IM096-Req.01 (para. 58) **NOTING** the indication from some Commissioners that there may be regulatory compliance concerns to be considered, the Commission **REQUESTED** that relevant Contracting Party agencies, led by NOAA and DFO, consider and present those concerns (if applicable) at AM097.