OUTCOMES OF THE 97TH SESSION OF THE IPHC ANNUAL MEETING (AM097)

PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (21 OCTOBER 2021)

PURPOSE

To provide the RAB with the outcomes of the 97th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM097) relevant to the mandate of the RAB.

BACKGROUND

The agenda of the Commission's Annual Meeting (AM097) included an agenda items dedicated to the IPHC's 5-year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Program, and the Report of the RAB021.

The Report of the 97th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting was adopted on 11 February 2021 and is available for download from the IPHC website: https://www.iphc.int/venues/details/97th-session-of-the-iphc-annual-meeting-am097

DISCUSSION

During the course of the Annual Meeting (AM097) the Commission made a number of specific requests and recommendations regarding the IPHC research programs. Relevant sections from the report of the meeting are provided in Appendix A for the RAB's consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

That the RAB:

1) **NOTE** paper IPHC-2021-RAB022-04 which provides the outcomes of the 97th Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM097) relevant to the mandate of the RAB.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Outcomes of the AM097 relevant to the mandate of the RAB

APPENDIX A
Outcomes of AM097 relevant to the mandate of the RAB

(paragraph numbering reflects the AM097 report)

6. IPHC SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

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

52. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2021-AM097-10 which provided a description of progress on the IPHC 5-year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan (2017-21).

53. The Commission **NOTED** the main objectives of the Biological and Ecosystem Science Research at the IPHC are to:

    1) identify and assess critical knowledge gaps in the biology of the Pacific halibut;

    2) understand the influence of environmental conditions; and

    3) apply the resulting knowledge to reduce uncertainty in current stock assessment models.

54. The Commission **NOTED** that the primary biological research activities at the IPHC that follow Commission objectives are identified in the IPHC Five-Year Biological and Ecosystem Science Research Plan (2017-21). The various activities under within the plan are proposed, reviewed and approval internally at the IPHC Secretariat. 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.

55. 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 related to stock structure and distribution, migration, and the genetic basis of key life-history traits (e.g. weight-at-age, maturity- and fecundity-at-age).

7. REPORT OF THE 21ST SESSION OF THE IPHC RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD (RAB021)

56. The Commission **NOTED** the Report of the 21st Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB021) (IPHC-2020-RAB021-R) which was presented by the Co-Chairperson, Dr Josep Planas.

57. The Commission **CONSIDERED** the recommendations made by the RAB021 and **AGREED** to take them into consideration when deliberating on relevant agenda items throughout the meeting.

8. REPORTS OF THE IPHC SCIENTIFIC REVIEW BOARD

58. 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 the Dr. David Wilson, Executive Director) on behalf of the Chairperson, Dr Sean Cox (Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada).

59. The Commission **CONSIDERED** the recommendations made by the SRB in 2020 and **AGREED** to take them into consideration when deliberating on relevant agenda items throughout the meeting.

60. The Commission **RECALLED** the request from the SRB016 (SRB016-Req. 19, shown below) for the Commission to hire a life-history modeller, and the associated response from the IPHC Secretariat. The Commission had previously considered this request at AM096 via paper IPHC-2020-AM096-INF04, and decided not to proceed at this time.

> SRB016–Req.19 (para. 52) "*NOTING that a common theme in programmatic studies is a need to understand growth, the maturation process and size and age at sexual maturity, and to incorporate this understanding into the assessment and MSE programs, the SRB reiterated its previous REQUEST that the IPHC Secretariat hire a PhD-level life history modeller with expertise in the areas that include life history and quantitative genetics. The SRB was advised that at this point in time, the hiring of a life-history modeller is not financially feasible unless either 1) additional contributions were appropriated by the Contracting Parties, or 2) a current FTE was replaced with a life-history modeller.*"