



IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) design and sale of Pacific halibut less than 32 inches in length

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PURPOSE

To provide Commissioners with a description of the benefits of selling Pacific halibut less than 32 inches in length that is captured and sampled on the 2020 FISS.

BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

The FISS captures Pacific halibut less than 32 inches in length (U32) and Pacific halibut greater than 32 inches in length (O32). The U32 Pacific halibut are sampled at the same rate as the O32 Pacific halibut in each IPHC Regulatory Area. Prior to 2020, the U32 Pacific halibut that were sampled coastwide were then discarded at sea. These discards represent a loss of potential revenue. To more effectively meet the objectives of the FISS, the IPHC Secretariat intends on retaining and selling all U32 Pacific halibut that are sampled on the FISS. The delivery and sale of these Pacific halibut meet the secondary and tertiary objectives of the FISS of long-term revenue neutrality and minimizing removals.

The 2020 FISS design

A conservative average price of \$9 a kilogram (\$4 USD a pound) will be applied to estimate the revenue that will be seen by the sale of sampled U32 Pacific halibut:

- IPHC Regulatory Area 2A: an estimated 152 U32 Pacific halibut representing 534 kilograms (1,178 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$4,712.
- IPHC Regulatory Areas 2B: an estimated 824 U32 Pacific halibut representing 2,991 kilograms (6,595 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$26,379.
- IPHC Regulatory Area 2C: an estimated 621 U32 Pacific halibut representing 2,136 kilograms (4,708 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$18,833.
- IPHC Regulatory Area 3A: an estimated 1,064 U32 Pacific halibut representing 3,762 kilograms (8,294 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$33,176.
- IPHC Regulatory Area 3B: an estimated 1,475 U32 Pacific halibut representing 4,897 kilograms (10,795 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$43,181.
- IPHC Regulatory Areas 4A: an estimated 725 U32 Pacific halibut representing 2,337 kilograms (5,152 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$20,608.
- IPHC Regulatory Area 4B: an estimated 911 U32 Pacific halibut representing 3,173 kilograms (6,995 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$27,980.
- IPHC Regulatory Area 4CDE/Closed: an estimated 388 U32 Pacific halibut representing 1,354 kilograms (2,985 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$11,940.

Coastwide, an estimated 6,161 U32 Pacific halibut representing 21,184 kilograms (46,702 pounds) will be sampled, landed and sold for an estimated \$186,809 USD.

The IPHC Secretariat has discussed the implementation of these protocols with Contracting Party Enforcement agencies who have expressed no concern given the source of the U32 Pacific halibut and that this size of fish is already seen dockside from other fisheries.

The price of U32 Pacific halibut was identified as a primary source of uncertainty in the most recent evaluation of the IPHC's 32 inch commercial fishery minimum size limit (Stewart I and Hicks A (2018). Evaluation of the IPHC's 32" minimum size limit. IPHC-2018-AM094-14. 44 p.). Given a potential 4% increase in fishery yield, but approximately 25% of that yield comprising Pacific halibut less than 32 inches, the value of the fishery under a reduced size limit or no minimum size limit could either increase or decrease depending on the price for these fish. Landing and selling U32 Pacific halibut during the 2020 FISS would provide the first direct information on the price for these fish and could therefore be of importance to future analyses and decisions regarding the commercial fishery minimum size limit.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission **NOTED** 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.