



2025 IPHC Fecundity Study

Tender Specifications

PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (12 June 2025)

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PURPOSE

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is seeking to charter a longline vessel to conduct a fecundity study starting as early as July 2025 in IPHC Charter Region: Charlotte, BC, Canada.

The primary purpose of the study is to collect fecundity samples from female Pacific halibut greater than 90 centimeters prior to spawning.

Vessels need not be licensed for Pacific halibut fishing in Canada or the USA to be eligible. The IPHC is not restricted as to the nationality of the vessels it charters for operation in any region provided customs and immigration regulations are followed. Fish caught and retained for sale during this study will be sold in Canada.

One to two IPHC Secretariat staff will be deployed aboard the vessel along with two motion compensated platform scales, one larger scale with a cradle and a second smaller scale to weigh fecundity samples. Biological sampling will include the collection of length, weight, genetic samples (fin clips), age data (otoliths) and whole gonad and liver weights. Sublegal fish will not be retained.

Both snap gear & fixed gear longline vessels are encouraged to bid on this study.

Vessels are encouraged to submit bids based on a study comprising of 300 total skates..

The vessel participating in this study will need to complete work with guidelines as follows:

- 1) This vessel may use fixed gear or snap gear.
- 2) Station locations do not have to align with FISS grid stations.
- 3) The vessel owner is responsible for any costs and fees associated with sending and receiving electronic communications (Starlink, satellite phone, email) pertaining to IPHC business. Any anticipated costs are to be included in the tender amount.
- 4) Hook strippers or crucifiers are prohibited on all IPHC chartered vessels and cannot be present while conducting charter work.
- 5) Vessels licensed in Canada must possess a current Ministry of Transportation certificate (Canada Steamship Inspection Certificate) for the purposes for which the vessel is to be used. The vessel shall be mechanically sound in all respects, completely seaworthy, and comply with all federal Transport Canada regulations.
- 6) Vessels licensed in the U.S.A. must possess a current U.S. Coast Guard inspection sticker. The vessel shall be mechanically sound in all respects, completely seaworthy, and comply with all applicable safety regulations.
- 7) The IPHC will procure and coordinate all ice and bait necessary to complete the study. Prior approval from IPHC HQ is required before purchasing ice.

Vessels are reminded to carefully consider all costs associated with performing the work over the time frame of the tender, and to budget these costs into their proposal(s).

The IPHC will not be obligated to accept the tender with the lowest bid, or any tender received, and will contract according to its best interests.

Vessels will be rated using the following criteria:

- 1) seaworthiness and general condition of the vessel and its equipment;
- 2) the vessel's availability within the schedule determined solely by the IPhC Secretariat;
- 3) the vessel captain's experience and fishing record;
- 4) the qualifications of the selected crew;
- 5) IPhC operating costs (tender \$ amounts);
- 6) previous interactions with the IPhC and its Secretariat, experience with the IPhC FISS, scheduling flexibility, and ability to take Secretariat are other factors to be potentially considered in the decision-making process.

Initial review of bid submissions will take place on 7 July 2025 and the request for tender will remain open until filled. In order to be considered in the initial review, submissions must be completed no later than **23:59 (Pacific) on 6 July 2025**.

A. General Operations

1. Vessels will receive 10% of **ALL** Pacific halibut sales.
2. The vessel owner is responsible for any costs and fees associated with sending and receiving electronic communications (Starlink, satellite phone, email) pertaining to IPHC business. Any anticipated costs are to be included in the tender amount.
3. Hook strippers or crucifiers are **prohibited** on all IPHC chartered vessels and cannot be present while conducting charter work.
4. A total of 300 skates of gear should be set for this study. Planning for this study was based on 6 skates/station, totaling 50 stations. However, there is flexibility in the number of skates fished at each station as long as 300 skates are fished by study completion.
5. Codified procedures regarding protected species interaction avoidance and mitigation (see Appendix II).
6. Both fixed gear and snap gear vessels are encouraged to bid on this study

A penalty equal to 10% of the charter area lump sum will be applied if a vessel is unable to complete their assigned work by the end of the study operations. In addition, the vessel will not be paid for skates left incomplete and will be responsible for reimbursing IPHC for the cost of bait allocated for incomplete work. The IPHC will actively schedule vessels to meet work and personnel needs, and the vessel's availability may affect tender acceptance. It is therefore essential to indicate what times the vessel is available to perform the work, and preference may be given to vessels with the greatest flexibility in their schedule.

B. Vessel requirements

Prior to acceptance, the IPHC Secretariat may need to inspect the vessel and determine the adequacy of deck space and accommodations, and to confirm that the vessel meets all minimum requirements.

1. The vessel must be mechanically sound in all respects, seaworthy for fishing in the designated charter region(s), and suitably equipped for fishing Pacific halibut with conventional longline gear.
2. The vessel must have a well-insulated fish hold capable of packing all retained species in ice. Vessels will not be permitted to use RSW or slush ice.
3. The vessel must have adequate deck space to allow the IPHC Secretariat to carry out their duties. With one to two IPHC Secretariat assigned to a chartered vessel, this requires space to mount a recording shack (approximately 0.91 m by 0.97 m by 1.9 m high (36" by 38" by 74" high) with an attached measuring scale and cradle 1.2 m x 0.6 m x 0.2 m (48" x 24" x 8"). The location of the shack must not obstruct fishing or processing operations and must be close to the dressing table. The ideal setup is to have the scale and cradle attached to the shack directly below one (1) of the shack windows. This allows for optimal communication among IPHC Secretariat. Please provide a deck diagram with proposed shack and scale/cradle position indicated with your application.
4. Accommodations shall be clean and sanitary. The vessel shall have adequate accommodations for the vessel crew and two IPHC Secretariat, including women. The vessel must be equipped with clean, sanitary, dry, and comfortable mattresses, but no bedding, for IPHC Secretariat-assigned personnel.

5. The vessel must have a functioning marine head, which can be used in privacy.
6. The vessel must have a galley reasonably equipped with a cook stove, refrigerator for food storage, and a sink.
7. The vessel must have appropriate facilities for personal hygiene.

C. Electronic equipment minimum requirements

1. Two (2) VHF radios and one (1) single side-band unit.
2. A satellite communication system capable of reliably communicating with the IPHC Secretariat's Headquarters office.
3. Reliable email system with the following capabilities:
4. Accept files (.txt and .csv) up to 200KB as attachments
5. The computer with the email must have a USB port that can be used for transferring files from an IPHC-supplied removable USB storage device to the email system computer so the files can be attached to the email. Note that any security settings preventing transfer of these files must be deactivated during IPHC work.
6. If email is supported on the VMS system, it must allow for transfer of small data files for emailing the IPHC Secretariat's HQ office hail/trip information. Some VMS systems need to be updated to allow this. FISS data (small files <100 kilobytes) stored on a USB device must be sent to the IPHC Secretariat's HQ office from the vessel's computer.
7. Two (2) GPS (Global Positioning Systems) units.
8. GPS integrated into computer.
9. Two (2) radar units. One (1) must have a range of at least 44 kilometres (24 nm).
10. An intercom from the fishing deck to the bridge is desirable.
11. Reliable 110V AC power to the sampling shack for powering a light, tablet, and a small computer. The ability to provide 110V AC during hauling operations is required (power draw of 5 amps). For those vessels without a constant AC supply during hauling, the power supply requirements can likely be met with a simple inverter.

D. Gear requirements

The owner shall provide and replace, as needed, all gear and associated equipment necessary for commercial longline fishing. At least 24 skates of gear must be prepared before the charter begins. FISS gear specifications do not need to be met for this study. However, each skate must contain 100 hooks uniformly spaced along the groundline. All vessels must use an approved seabird deterrent device (e.g., tori line) while setting the gear, as required by state and/or federal agencies. See Appendix II for seabird deterrent requirements. Automated hook strippers, or 'crucifiers', are prohibited and must NOT be on the vessel while conducting FISS work.

E. Bait

Most of the bait required to complete the study has been purchased and stored at certain ports where offloads are anticipated. Some freshly frozen bait may need to be purchased by the IPHC Secretariat during the study period.

1. The IPHC will bear the cost of all ice and bait purchased for this study. The IPHC will also arrange for bait to be available in the intended ports.
2. Bait shall be frozen chum salmon, number 2 semi-bright or better.

3. The crew will be responsible for cutting the salmon into individual pieces weighing approximately 0.1 to 0.15 kg (1/4 to 1/3 pound). The IPHC requires that the bait not be salted, but rather kept on ice or frozen until used. The IPHC Secretariat will monitor and verify bait size to ensure compliance to IPHC standards.
4. The vessel captain will certify that the bait is satisfactory prior to its use.
5. **Auto-baiting machines are not permitted for use on this study.**

F. Crew requirements

The crew number required to maintain and bait the hooks of longline gear, as well as to process the Pacific halibut as it is caught, depends on the skill and professionalism of the crew as a whole. It is of the utmost importance that all crew working on this study adhere strictly to the gear maintenance and fish quality standards expected by the IPHC. Vessel owners submitting tender(s) are cautioned to consider the ability of crew assigned to gear maintenance, baiting, fish cleaning, and icing duties, and to select crewmembers with the best possible skill and motivation levels.

1. The owner will be solely responsible for providing at all times during the study a fully qualified and experienced crew. The normal daily workload for fishing, icing the catch and the strict gear maintenance required by the IPHC have shown that the necessary crew must consist of at least a vessel captain plus three (3) to five (5) additional crew members. Submitting a tender with less than this complement of crew will result in your operation being excluded from consideration.
2. The vessel captain must possess any required Canadian/U.S.A. Coast Guard or maritime licenses or certifications applicable to the vessel and charter region of operation.
3. The vessel captain shall have a minimum of three (3) years of longline fishing experience as a master of a comparable-sized vessel and be competent in the use of modern navigational equipment.
4. The vessel captain is responsible for being knowledgeable and adhering to all state, provincial, federal and international laws pertaining to commercial fishing. This includes fishing regulations, area closures (rockfish, sea lion rookeries, etc.), state or federal No Discharge Zones (sewage/blackwater), MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) and the COLREGs (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea).
5. At least two (2) crew shall have a minimum of three (3) years of Pacific halibut longline fishing experience and be competent in longline construction and repair, hand-baiting methods, and Pacific halibut dressing and icing techniques. The remaining crew must be capable in longline repair, hand-baiting methods, and Pacific halibut dressing and icing.
6. The vessel captain and crew will be responsible for all phases of gear maintenance and the daily setting and hauling of the fishing gear.
7. The crew will be responsible for loading and unloading all vessel supplies prior to, during and after the charter.
8. The crew will be responsible for offloading any fish sold during the study.
9. During the study, the vessel captain will ensure that the vessel remains in port for a 24-hour period after the offload is complete to ensure the exchange of all necessary data with the IPHC Secretariat's HQ office, to maintain consistent communications, and provide troubleshooting support. If there is a legitimate need for a quick turn-around (e.g. weather window, offload window between salmon

openings, mechanical breakdown, etc.), clearance from the IPHC Setline Survey Coordinator needs to be obtained on the day that the fish sale is conducted. Deficiencies in the vessel or problems with the crew's performance must be resolved prior to departing, which could result in port stays in excess of the 24-hour window.

10. At the completion of the study, the vessel captain will ensure that the vessel remains in port at least 12 hours after the offload finishes or until the IPHC Secretariat are safely able to complete their end of charter tasks and remove all gear and equipment.
11. All catch not retained must be carefully released from the hook. This includes all shark and skate species. Vessels encountering tail-wrapped shark specimens shall make every effort to release the animal unharmed.
12. The vessel captain and crew will be responsible for the dressing and icing of all fish. Crewmember(s) must be available (as required) for dressing Pacific halibut while the gear is being hauled.
13. All vessel personnel are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Physical relationships with IPHC Secretariat are prohibited during the study and vessel personnel must disclose any past or present activities or relationships that are in conflict with this policy. If a conflict arises, the IPHC Setline Survey Coordinator will reevaluate staffing options and work with the vessel owner, vessel captain, and crew to resolve.
14. Fishing plans must be mutually agreeable to the lead IPHC setline survey specialist and the vessel captain. The vessel captain will communicate to the lead setline survey specialist on a daily basis all changes to fishing plans and contingencies as they develop.
15. The vessel captain and crew shall create a working environment that is free from intimidation and harassment (verbal, physical, or sexual). Please refer to Appendix V for further information regarding harassment and professional work environments.
16. All vessel captains and crewmembers must be found acceptable to the IPHC Secretariat. The IPHC may require the replacement of any crewmember during the study if found unacceptable in skill, experience, or behaviour.

G. Safety

The vessel captain is responsible for all matters relating to safety of personnel, the vessel, and equipment operation. The vessel captain will adhere at all times to navigational rules whether it be during fishing operations, running, drifting, or when at anchor. He/she (or vessel captain's representative) shall review safety procedures and equipment with the IPHC Secretariat at the beginning of each charter and after any crew change.

1. Vessels licensed in Canada must possess a current Ministry of Transportation certificate (Canada Steamship Inspection Certificate) for the purposes for which the vessel is to be used. The vessel shall be mechanically sound in all respects, completely seaworthy, and comply with all federal Transport Canada regulations.
2. Vessels licensed in the U.S.A. must possess a current U.S. Coast Guard inspection sticker. The vessel shall be mechanically sound in all respects, completely seaworthy, and comply with all applicable safety regulations.
3. All vessels shall adhere to the regulations for power driven vessels underway in International Waters. In relation to the practice of drifting at night, the operator must maintain a proper lookout and ensure that his/her vessel is properly lighted as per

the regulations (specifically 1972 International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea (72 COLREGS): Rule 2, 5 and 23. These regulations are available online at: [CG NRHB 20151231.pdf \(uscg.gov\)](#)

4. All safety equipment (such as life rafts) must have passed inspection requirements and be of sufficient capacity for the vessel captain, crew, and all IPHC Secretariat aboard.
5. The IPHC will provide immersion suits, personal EPIRBs, and personal floatation devices for its employees.
6. No alcohol consumption or illegal drug use is allowed aboard IPHC chartered vessels, including days at sea, anchor days, or when the vessel is at the dock.

The IPHC has a zero tolerance policy for alcohol or illegal drug use which is in effect at all times. Violation of this policy is sufficient cause for immediate contract termination, and shall result in a five (5) year exclusion from future contract eligibility for the vessel and the vessel captain.

7. While shore excursions are not prohibited while under IPHC contract, vessel captains and crew are reminded that such activities fall outside of the mandates of the study work, and that the vessel captain and owner are responsible for the safety of all concerned during such activities and may not be fully protected by insurance policies during non-contracted activities. It is required that 'float plans' be completed before making shore excursions, that all participants wear approved floatation devices, skiffs be fully stocked with a boat kit (emergency oars, bailer, sea anchor, rope etc.), and that the group carry a fully stocked shore kit, hand-held radio, and first aid kit.

H. Vessel owner's responsibilities

1. The vessel owner will be responsible at his/her own expense to maintain the vessel, its engine(s), machinery, equipment, and fishing gear in good and seaworthy condition.
2. The vessel owner will be responsible to provide lube oil, grease, filters, other engine-room supplies, and all other vessel operating supplies normally required for commercial fishing operations.
3. The vessel owner will be responsible for the purchase of all fuel required for operating the vessel for the duration of the study.
4. The vessel owner will be responsible for providing a working environment that is free from intimidation and harassment (verbal, physical, or sexual). Please refer to Appendix V for further information regarding harassment and professional work environments.
5. The vessel owner agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the IPHC from any and all claims by whosoever brought for loss, damage or personal injury from any cause arising out of the charter of the vessel, including but not limited to, claims arising out of the negligence of the IPHC or its agents or employees.
6. As part of the tender, the vessel owner shall submit a disclosure statement specifying any conviction for the violation of any fishing regulations pertaining to the Pacific halibut fishery within the past five (5) years by the vessel's owner, vessel captain, or crew.
7. The vessel owner will provide adequate and wholesome meals for the crew and all IPHC representatives. This includes days when the vessel is in port between trips, weather days and any time the IPHC Secretariat is sleeping on board the vessel.

8. The vessel owner shall be responsible for the payment of all crew salaries, including any bonuses, and for the payment of all payroll taxes on salaries, such as income tax, unemployment, workers' compensation, and other taxes as applicable. With respect to vessels operating in the waters of foreign countries, the owner is responsible for ensuring that all crew have adequate health insurance coverage.
9. The vessel owner shall be responsible for all fees incurred arising out of the operation of the vessel including, but not limited to, harbour dues, moorage, watchman costs and environmental fees.
10. The vessel owner will be responsible for all vessel- and crew-related customs and immigration requirements and fees. A summary of requirements and fees for vessels licensed in Canada and conducting IPHC work in the U.S.A. can be found in Appendix I. The vessel owner will be responsible for all delay expenses incurred by the IPHC arising out of the owner's failure to fulfill conditions necessary to permit entry of the vessel and/or crew into the U.S.A. for prompt fulfillment of the owner's obligations.
11. The vessel owner will be responsible for all customs requirements and fees related to fish sales in a foreign port. The IPHC will organize the customs brokering for any foreign offloaded fish and the associated fees will be paid by IPHC and the vessel will be invoiced directly by IPHC. See Appendix I for a summary of the requirements and estimate of fees for vessels licensed in Canada landing in the U.S.A. and for any vessel landing fish caught in U.S.A. waters in Canadian ports.
12. Prior to commencement of the study, owners of vessels shall provide the IPHC validation of coverage, including but not limited to, a copy of the insurance policy verifying that all IPHC Secretariat are included on the vessel's P&I insurance policy as either a crewman or business invitee, and that the IPHC is listed as an additional insured or co-insured on the P&I policy for the term of the charter agreement. The policy must provide protection with minimum limits of \$1,000,000 USD or equivalent if vessel is licensed in Canada. The IPHC will not reimburse the owner for any premiums incurred to meet their obligations under this paragraph. Owners should incorporate these costs into their Tender.
13. The vessel owner agrees to maintain at its sole cost and expense throughout the period of the study hull and machinery insurance to the full market value of the vessel with trading warranties appropriate to the study, said policy to include a waiver of subrogation against the IPHC. The vessel owner will provide proof that the above coverage and subrogation is in place prior to the commencement of the study.
14. The vessel owner agrees to maintain at its sole cost and expense throughout the period of this study pollution/environmental hazard insurance with minimum limits of \$5,000,000 USD, said insurance to name the IPHC as an additional insured. The vessel owner will provide proof that the above coverage is in place prior to the commencement of the study.
15. IPHC's policy is to release data to the public only after all data checks have been made. Provision of this information to the public in an equitable manner requires that no advance release occur and is based on the personal integrity of the vessel captain, vessel crew, and the IPHC Secretariat. The owner agrees that the catch information collected during the study is confidential until released by the IPHC Secretariat to the public. The vessel owner will take steps to ensure the vessel captain and crew understand and abide by this policy and do not discuss the catch information until the release of that information by the IPHC Secretariat to the

public. Violation of this policy is sufficient cause for contract termination and shall result in a five (5) year exclusion from future contract eligibility for the vessel and the vessel captain.

16. The vessel owner is responsible for any costs and fees associated with sending and receiving electronic communications (satellite phone, email) pertaining to IPHC business. Any anticipated costs are to be included in the tender amount.
17. Vessel owners will be responsible for any fees associated with Brokerage and Tracking Fees for International Operations and Landings and should budget this into their tender costs.
18. In Canada, where offload validation fees are billed to the vessel, the vessel owner should consider these fees in their tender as the vessel owner is responsible for 100% of those fees.

I. IPHC responsibilities

1. The IPHC will replace all fishing gear lost in the course of the gear being put into the sea for fishing. This includes lost buoys, flags, buoy line, anchors, and physical components of skates including lost hooks and gangions. These losses will and must be documented by the IPHC Secretariat in the database. As well, the IPHC will bear the cost of purchasing the physical components (i.e., labour is not included) of one (1) new skate based upon every 100 skates of gear fished as compensation for wear and tear. Replacement groundline, hooks, snaps (where applicable) and gangions will be the equivalent to gear lost or condemned. To this end, the vessel captain must provide a vendor contact and invoice for the processing of gear claims. Both the vessel captain and lead IPHS Secretariat must sign the gear loss form prior to submission.
2. The IPHC will procure and coordinate all ice and bait necessary to complete the study. Prior approval from IPHC HQ is required before purchasing ice and bait.
3. The IPHC Secretariat will determine that the study operation is ready to leave the port after the offload and commence the next fishing trip.
4. The IPHC may terminate the study at the nearest port if for any reason the owner fails to render the required services, or the vessel or crew do not meet the specifications as stated on the Vessel Tender Form.

J. Fish caught during the FISS

Pacific halibut and some other species (rockfish (*Sebastes* spp.) and Pacific cod) are retained and sold to offset the costs of the study operations. All fish caught become the property of the IPHC and are sold through an auction by the IPHC Secretariat. The IPHC makes no guarantee as to the amount of fish caught or to the prices received. The lead IPHC Secretariat member will work with the vessel captain to maintain contact with the IPHC Secretariat HQ office and arrange offloads as well as ice and bait for successive trips.

1. When delivering to ports where the fish may go to the fresh market (typically in Homer, Seward, Southeast Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon ports) fish must be no more than five (5) to six (6) days old. Trips resulting in fish more than six (6) days old when they reach the dock must receive prior approval from the Setline Survey Coordinator.
2. The crew is responsible for the dressing, icing, and unloading of all retained fish and maintaining a quality product throughout the process.
3. IPHC contracted vessels are only allowed to retain Pacific cod and rockfish. In no

instance will the retention of species other than Pacific halibut be allowed to restrict or otherwise interfere with achieving the scientific objectives of the study. These fish become the property of the IPHC.

4. The IPHC is committed to selling only fish of the highest possible quality. To this end, all fish caught that are intended for sale must be handled in a manner that meets or exceeds the industry standards. Prior to the study and after any offload, the hold must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. Fish retained for sale must not be gaffed in any area other than the head and should be stunned and bled immediately after landing and prior to dressing. All traces of blood, gills, viscera, gonads, kidney, and sweetmeats must be completely removed. Pacific halibut must be **wet-scraped** or the **body cavities rinsed** before icing. All fish must be layer iced and the pokes and gill cavities of all retained Pacific halibut, large and small, must be filled with ice. It shall be the vessel captain's responsibility to see that the aforementioned procedures are carried out. Following each sale, the offloader will be required to complete the Fish Quality Form which will note fish appearance and temperature for all Pacific halibut and catch offloaded. The vessel captain will be required to initial the Fish Quality Form to acknowledge that the contents have been read.

K. Tender procedures

1. The IPHC will consider tenders based upon a lump sum for the completion the study regardless of the number of days within the allowable period that are required. In addition to this lump sum, the vessel will receive 10% of the net sales of all Pacific halibut. The IPHC cannot guarantee the amount of fish caught or prices received from the sale of the fish. The IPHC will pay 50% of the tender price once a charter agreement is signed by all parties and work has commenced. The remaining 50% of the tender price will be paid upon the completion of the study. The tender amount will be prorated if fewer than 50 sets are completed. The vessel's share of Pacific halibut (10%) be paid within 20 days after the offload payment monies are received by the IPHC Secretariat.
2. All tenders must be submitted on the appropriate [Vessel Tender Form](#) provided by the IPHC.
3. The IPHC is not restricted as to the nationality of the vessels it contracts for operation in any charter region and will contract according to its own best interests. Also, vessels need not be licensed for Pacific halibut fishing in Canada or the U.S.A. to be eligible.
4. **The IPHC will not be obligated to accept the tender with the lowest bid or any tender received and will contract according to its best interests.** Vessels will be rated using the following criteria:
 - 1) seaworthiness and general condition of the vessel and its equipment,
 - 2) the vessel's availability within the schedule determined solely by the IPHC Secretariat,
 - 3) the vessel captain's experience and fishing record,
 - 4) the qualifications of the selected crew,
 - 5) IPHC operating costs (tender amounts)
 - 6) previous interactions with the IPHC and its Secretariat, experience with the IPHC FISS, scheduling flexibility, and ability to take Secretariat are other factors to be potentially considered in the decision-making process.
5. Both fixed and snap gear vessels are welcome to bid.

6. Tenders must be electronically submitted no later than 23:59 hours Pacific on **6 July 2025** in order to be included in the initial review. However, this request for tender will remain open until filled.
7. If we can be of assistance in filling out the [Vessel Tender Form](#) or answer any questions, please contact the IPHC Secretariat.

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Appendix I: Protected Species information

A. Marine Mammal Interactions

As part of receiving a Letter of Acknowledgment from NOAA Fisheries for IPHC FISS operations, the vessel requirements, and procedures for avoiding marine mammals and reducing interactions are detailed in the vessel contract and summarized in part below.

Monitoring Measures

The vessel captain or any crew on watch, or the IPHC Secretariat onboard will be required to visually monitor the area of operation for marine mammals and other protected species during all longline operations. The objective is to avoid transecting or operating in areas with significant concentrations of animals.

Operational Procedures

The “move-on” protocol will be implemented if protected species are present near the vessel and appear to be at risk of interactions with the longline gear; longline sets are not initiated if marine mammals are detected and represent a potential interaction with the longline gear, as determined by the professional judgment of the lead setline survey specialist and vessel captain. The location of the sampling station may not be altered to avoid potentially adverse interactions; however, the fishing plan can be adjusted to return to the area at a later time or date.

To reduce depredation and habituation of whales, if whales begin to depredate, IPHC FISS vessels are instructed to sink the line back down and travel to and haul gear on a different station set, returning to the station where the whales were later the same day (within 24 hours). IPHC FISS protocols specifically prohibit chumming before or during the longline setting operations (i.e. releasing any bait or entrails from previous catch).

Reporting

The vessel captain and crew should work with the IPHC Secretariat to record any marine mammal sightings and depredation events. Incidentally captured marine mammals that are still alive should be released from longline gear to the water as soon as possible with no gear or as little gear remaining on the animal as possible. Animals are released without removing them from the water, if possible. Any data collection should not delay the animal's release.

In the event that the animal can safely be brought aboard or near enough for closer inspection, the setline survey specialist will collect as much data as possible from captured animals considering the disposition of the animal; i.e., if it is in imminent danger of drowning, it is released as quickly as possible. If the safety of the crew and captured animal will not be compromised, the scientific party will attempt to collect biological information from captured marine mammals before they are released, including species identification, sex identification, estimated length, and photographs. Photos of dead marine mammals (and live if possible), should include a picture of the nature of gear entanglement, and for cetaceans an image of the left and right side of the dorsal fin to help determine stock ID. Information should also describe whether the animal was seen prior to the entanglement, a description of its behavior, and any mitigation measures used and discretionary decisions made by the IPHC Secretariat, including a rationale for those decisions. This information will be recorded in the FISS cruise logbook, and the Protection Species Mitigation and Handling Forms and conveyed to NOAA Fisheries within 24 hours of capture or as soon as ship-to-shore communication allows.

In the event of any incidental capture or entanglement of marine mammals in any gear or any collisions of marine mammals with the vessel, the scientific personnel will contact the IPHC Secretariat with the encounter and condition information as soon as possible and within 24 hours.

B. Seabird Regulations

The current regulations are as follows but may change prior to the FISS season. All IPHC FISS vessels must comply with seabird deterrent measures as required by federal management authorities. Check current regulations prior to the FISS.

Canada: Vessels fishing in Canadian waters will be required to meet Fisheries and Oceans Canada requirements as set out for the Pacific halibut (L tab) fleet.

- (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), vessel masters fishing:
 - a. Vessels more than 16.8 m in overall length fishing shall deploy paired streamer lines when setting longline gear.
- (2) Vessel masters fishing vessels that have no masts, poles or rigging shall deploy at least one (1) towed buoy when setting longline gear.
- (3) Vessels masters shall deploy gear described in subsection (1) at all times when setting longline gear except:
 - a. during the period between 30 minutes after sunset and 30 minutes before sunrise; or
 - b. when the current wind speeds, at the nearest marine weather station, are reported as greater than 64 kilometres per hour (35 knots); and
 - c. when current wind speeds, at the nearest marine weather station, are reported as between 46 and 64 kilometres per hour (25 and 35 knots) the vessel master shall deploy only a single streamer line or for vessels less than 9 m, either a single streamer line or a single towed buoy.
- (4) Vessel masters shall ensure that streamer lines are deployed so that:
 - a. the streamers are in the air at least 30 m beyond the point at which the groundline enters the water; and
 - b. towed as close to the groundline as is practical under the prevailing conditions of wind and sea.
- (5) Vessel masters shall ensure that towed buoys are deployed so that the buoy is towed further astern than the point at which the groundline enters the water.
- (6) When setting longline gear, vessel masters shall:
 - a. use baited hooks that sink to the bottom as soon as they are put in the water, e.g. use sinking groundlines, thawed bait, additional weight on the groundline;
 - b. discharge old bait and offal so as not to attract seabirds to the longline gear; and
 - c. use bait fish that do not retain air in their swim bladders or puncture the swim bladder.
- (7) All birds caught shall be recorded by species in Integrated Groundfish Fishing Log.
- (8) Birds shall be released in the least harmful manner.

Appendix II: Careful Release of Pacific Halibut – Best Practices

A portion of the U32 Pacific halibut that are caught on the FISS are tagged and released. A small percentage of released Pacific halibut succumb to injury or stress. To reduce the potential mortality of the released fish the IPhC Secretariat and the vessel captain and crew must follow the practices listed below:

- Treat Pacific halibut (and any other fish) gently.
- Minimize handling and release carefully.
- When possible, unhook the fish in the water.
- If the Pacific halibut must be brought aboard, cradle it to protect the spine and internal organs, and slip it head-first back into the sea.
 - Handle the fish in a designated area and protect it from injury if it is flailing.
- If the fish is hooked firmly such that the hook cannot be removed without further injury, cut the hook from the gangion as close to the hook as possible.

These steps must be taken to ensure the survival of released Pacific halibut.

Appendix III: Harassment in the Workplace

A. What is harassment?

Federal regulations (U.S.A. Civil Rights Act, U.S.A. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and Canadian Human Rights Commission) protect employees from harassment in the workplace based on race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age and criminal convictions. The IPHC and vessels contracted to the IPHC adhere to these laws. Harassment is any behavior that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions (e.g., touching, pushing), comments (e.g., jokes, name-calling), or displays (e.g. magazines, posters, cartoons). Speech (including swearing and offensive jokes) can also be considered workplace harassment if someone feels that the language used is severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile or abusive work environment.

Some examples of harassment include:

- unwelcome remarks, slurs, jokes, taunts, or suggestions about a person's body, clothing, race, colour, place of origin, religion, age, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, political belief, or criminal or summary conviction offence unrelated to employment;
- unwelcome sexual remarks, invitations, or requests (including persistent, unwanted contact after the end of a sexual relationship);
- displays of sexually explicit, sexist, racist, or other offensive or derogatory material;
- written or verbal abuse or threats;
- practical jokes that embarrass or insult someone;
- leering (suggestive staring) or other offensive gestures;
- unwelcome physical contact, such as patting, touching, pinching, hitting;
- patronizing or condescending behavior;
- humiliating an employee in front of co-workers;
- vandalism of personal property;
- and/or physical or sexual assault.

Whether or not behavior is harassment depends on the individual's tolerance or sensitivity to it. The law supports this interpretation.

Consensual Banter

Two (2) or more employees bantering back and forth is not harassment if everyone involved is in agreement. However, such banter is harassment if any employee feels uncomfortable with this behavior, and the behavior continues even after that person has expressed their discomfort, or if the others involved should have known the person was uncomfortable. This type of harassment can create what is known as a "poisoned work environment," where employees do not feel safe and feel consistently humiliated.

- B. IPHC Secretariat and the FISS vessel captain and crew must abide by the following:

i. Respect others

Each employee has the right to be treated fairly and respectfully in the workplace. Each employee also has the responsibility to treat others in a way that respects individual differences. No matter what your opinion, or that of the people with whom you interact at work, showing mutual respect and consideration will make everyone's work and life aboard the boat easier. If you have doubts about whether a joke, comment, coarse language, or other behavior will embarrass, humiliate, degrade, or otherwise bother someone, then don't say or do it.

ii. Speak up and report harassment

If someone behaves in a manner that offends, harms, humiliates, or degrades you, do not put up with it. First, if you feel that you can speak to that person, do so. Let them know how you feel. Tell them the behavior is inappropriate. If they continue the behavior, or if you do not feel you can speak directly to the person, you have several options, from speaking to the vessel captain, the IPHC lead setline survey specialist, or the setline survey coordinator.

- C. FISS vessel captain and IPHC Secretariat responsibilities

i. Put a stop to harassment

The vessel (owner/captain) and the IPHC have full responsibility for making sure the work environment is free from harassment. If you become aware of harassment in your work environment, you must do everything you can to stop it, whether or not a complaint has been made. Not knowing that one's actions are perceived as harassing is not an excuse. It is important for you to be aware of the behavior of those around you and how it affects a professional working environment. If a reasonable person should have known that harassment was going on, you will still be held responsible if you let the situation continue. Harassment will not be tolerated, and necessary actions will be taken to stop it.