Report of the IPHC Secretariat (2026): draft

PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (D. WILSON & B. HUTNICZAK, 27 & 29 OCTOBER 2026)

1 PURPOSE

To provide the Commission with a preliminary report on IPHC Secretariat activities in 2026 not already contained in other papers before the Commission.

2 IPHC SECRETARIAT 2026

The IPHC is a public international organization so designated via Presidential Executive Order 11059 and established by a Convention between Canada and the United States of America. The IPHC Convention was signed on 2 March 1923, ratified on 21 July 1924, and came into effect on **21 October 1924** upon exchange.

The basic texts of the Commission are available on the IPHC website, and prescribe the mission of the organization as:

*"….. **to develop the stocks of [Pacific] halibut in the Convention waters to those levels which will permit the optimum yield from the fishery and to maintain the stocks at those levels**. ….." IPHC Convention* (Article I, sub-article 1, para. 2).

The IPHC Secretariat, formed in support of the Commission's activities, is based in Seattle, WA, U.S.A. (Fig. 1) and currently consists of 29 full-time positions (FTEs) and ~19–45 temporary/seasonal positions to staff our ports and research vessels (Appendix I). As our shared vision, ***the IPHC Secretariat aims to deliver positive economic, environmental, and social outcomes for the Pacific halibut resource for Canada and the U.S.A. through the application of rigorous science, innovation, and the implementation of international best practice.***

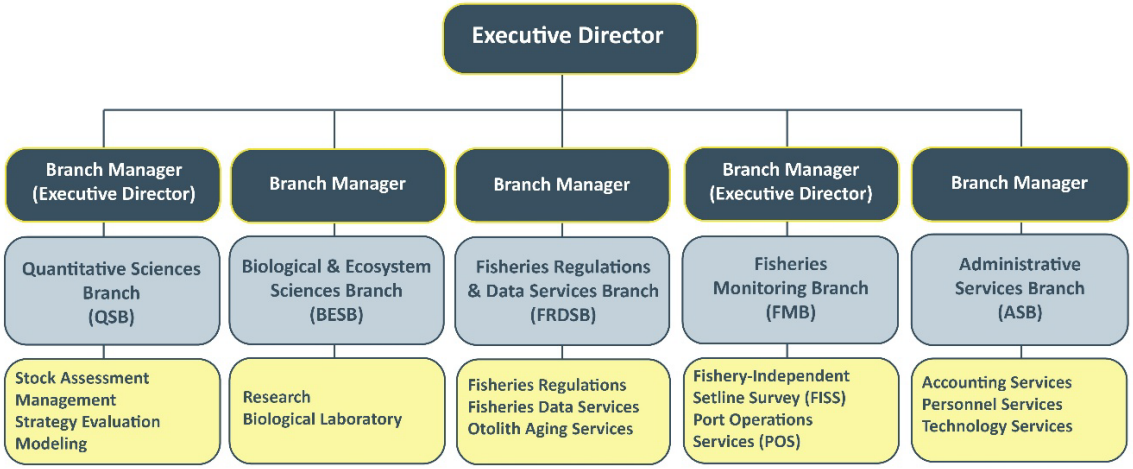


Figure 1. IPHC Secretariat organisation chart (2026).

3 ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

3.1 Implementation of the Recommendations from the 2nd IPHC Performance Review

The Report of the 2nd Performance Review of the IPHC (PRIPHC02), IPHC-2019-PRIPHC02-R was adopted on 11 October 2019. Since then, the IPHC Secretariat has provided twice-yearly updates on the implementation of the 26 Recommendations to the Commission. The most recent update is available in paper IPHC-2025-AM101-05.

Only one (1) recommendation remains 'In progress', with all others either fully "Completed", or completed and "annually ongoing".

At AM101, the Commission reached the following agreement:

IPHC-2025-AM101-R, para. 13. "*The Commission AGREED to continue to monitor progress on the implementation of the PRIPHC02 recommendations and determine at a later date when to initiate the next performance review. At this point in time the Commission does not see a need to initiate a third performance review.*"

The one (1) Recommendation that remains in progress is as follows:

REF#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	UPDATE/STATUS
PRIPHC02–Rec.09 (para. 73)	***Conservation and Management: Data collection and sharing*** The PRIPHC02 **RECOMMENDED** that observer coverage be adjusted to be commensurate with the level of fishing intensity in each IPHC Regulatory Area.	N/A	N/A	**N/A**
	Commission directive: The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC Secretariat, in consultation with the Commission, develop minimum data collection standards for Pacific halibut by scientific observer programs. The intention would be for the Commission to review and approve the minimum standards, and recommend them for implementation by domestic agencies.	High	Contracting Parties	**In progress**: The Contracting Parties have yet to engage on this recommendation. See paper: **IPHC-2023-AM099-16**. At IM099 (Dec. 2023) the Commission provided the following update: (IM099, para. 7) The Commission **RECALLED** recommendation 09 from the PRIPHC02 (shown below) and **NOTED** that while there was no current agreement between the Contracting Parties to collectively move this recommendation forward, the Commission would continue discussions to seek common ground. PRIPHC02-Rec.09: *"The Commission RECOMMENDED that the IPHC Secretariat, in consultation with the Commission, develop minimum data collection standards for Pacific halibut by scientific*

REF#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	UPDATE/STATUS
				observer programs. The intention would be for the Commission to review and approve the minimum standards, and recommend them for implementation by domestic agencies."

3.2 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy

The Secretariat has developed an artificial intelligence (AI) Adoption Strategy to strengthen our support for the Commission's objectives using AI.

> *AI Adoption Strategy: Our AI Adoption Strategy will be designed to integrate AI into our core operations by focusing on six core areas: Strategic Alignment, Data Infrastructure, People & Culture, Governance & Ethics, Technology, and Execution & Scaling. Successful transformation relies predominantly on giving agency to Secretariat staff, and fostering an adaptive culture, supported by technology and necessary algorithms. We will aim to prioritise ethical governance, continuous employee upskilling, and secure data infrastructure. We will aim to ensure that AI serves as a responsible, transparent tool to augment staff potential, drive measurable operational value, and foster sustainable innovation.*

By embedding AI into our tactical and strategic operational frameworks, we aim to cultivate an AI-enhanced data-driven (and reproducible) operational environment that further supports the optimum utilisation of Pacific halibut and the long-term viability of target fisheries and the communities that depend on the resource.

Working closely with our partners at DFO and NOAA, we also aim to draw upon their AI expertise and experiences, and where feasible, integrate our own strategy with theirs to achieve mutual advancement and success.

Key components included in our AI Strategy:

1) Problem Definition:

We will initiate our AI journey by identifying specific challenges in Pacific halibut management, including:

- Fluctuating stock levels
- Climate change impacts
- Complex relationship with the environment and ecosystem
- Fishing practices
- Cost-efficient data collection

Engaging stakeholders via a range of formats will be essential in clarifying these challenges and prioritising the most impactful and sustainable AI applications.

2) Strategic Timing and Planning:

Implementing AI solutions requires careful timing. We will adopt a phased approach that aligns with the Commission's operational calendar to ensure AI tools are identified for potential use as they become available, tested to ensure accuracy and precision are understood, and then deployed in support of Commission objectives and key performance indicators. This will be supported by detailed project timelines that will outline key milestones, designate responsible teams, and allocate resources effectively to ensure seamless execution.

3) Benefit Measurement:

Defining success metrics will be vital for our AI initiatives to be successful. We will establish a framework to evaluate the impact of AI using key performance indicators to be developed on:

- Data collection efficiency (time and cost)
- Advances in the understanding of Pacific halibut biology and ecology (ecosystem relationships)
- Stock assessments
- Fishing yields
- Operational efficacy (governance)

Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure our AI strategy remains aligned with the IPHC's objectives and is adaptable to changing challenges in the field.

4) Data, Algorithms, and Infrastructure Considerations:

A robust data infrastructure is crucial for the success of our AI initiatives. We will:

- Conduct an inventory of existing data sources, emphasizing data quality and accessibility.
- Identify data collection and processing needs that could be addressed with AI.
- Invest in scalable cloud-based infrastructure to support our secure data collection, storage, and processing needs, ensuring our AI systems are sustainable and future-proof.
- Collaborate with data scientists (both internal and external) to identify suitable algorithms for data analysis, predictive modeling, and scenario analysis.

By strategically implementing these components, we are committed to realising our AI ambitions, thereby enhancing our capacity to support the optimum utilisation of Pacific halibut.

3.3 Deployment of Claude (AI) across IPHC work streams

During 2026 the Secretariat began the controlled introduction of Claude, a generative artificial intelligence assistant developed by Anthropic, into its daily work streams. Whereas the AI Strategy set out above addresses the medium-term ambition to apply AI to the scientific and data challenges of Pacific halibut management, this deployment addresses a more immediate constraint: the volume of drafting, reviewing, summarising and cross-checking that a Secretariat must carry in support of a Commission cycle comprising an Annual Meeting, an Interim Meeting, a Work Meeting and the sessions of the Commission's subsidiary bodies each year. The tool is used as an assistant to staff, not as a substitute for them. Every output is reviewed and owned by the staff member responsible, and no scientific conclusion, management advice or regulatory recommendation is generated by AI without expert verification.

The benefits realised to date have fallen into four areas. First, **document preparation and quality assurance**: meeting papers, agendas, correspondence and reports can be drafted and restructured considerably more quickly, and — importantly for a Commission that works from a numbered document series — checked for internal consistency, arithmetic accuracy, and consistency with previously published Commission decisions, at a level of thoroughness that is difficult to sustain manually under deadline. Second, **institutional memory**: the Commission's published record now extends across a century, and an assistant able to search, reconcile and cite that record reduces the Secretariat's dependence on individual recall. Third, **released capacity**: time recovered from routine drafting and checking is redirected to analysis, stakeholder engagement, and delivery against the Commission's Programme of Work. Fourth, **consistency of communication**: technical material can be summarised for different audiences — Commissioners, Contracting Party officials, stakeholders and the public — without re-working the underlying analysis. Together these gains advance the Secretariat's stated aim of delivering outcomes for the Pacific halibut resource "through the application of rigorous science,

innovation, and the implementation of international best practice", at modest cost and with no addition to establishment.

Security and data confidentiality

This deployment is not informal. AI use across the Secretariat is governed by **Section 702 (Artificial Intelligence Usage Policy)** of the IPHC Employee Manual (2026) (IPHC-2026-EM26, last updated 1 July 2026), which sits within the Commission's wider digital governance framework at Section 700 and is read together with Section 701 (electronic resources), 703 (password security and protection of confidential information), 704 (data confidentiality and data sharing), 705 (protecting and preserving IOIA rights) and 706 (records management). Section 702 applies to all employees, contractors and consultants, to any AI tool whether IPHC-provided or externally accessed, and irrespective of whether the tool is used on IPHC or personal devices. It is built on six binding principles — human oversight, accuracy and integrity, confidentiality, impartiality, transparency, and compliance. Materially for the Commission: IPHC confidential information, including commercial fisheries data, personnel information, legal advice and internal correspondence, must not be entered into any external or non-IPHC-approved AI platform; AI tools must not be used to make or materially influence employment decisions without full human review and approval; and AI must not be used to generate, modify or present scientific data or findings without full disclosure of the method and independent expert validation. Claude is an approved tool under Section 702, appearing on the list of approved AI tools maintained by the Administrative Services Branch; use of any tool not on that list requires the prior written approval of the relevant Branch Manager, and additions to the list are approved by the Executive Director. Completion of *AI Usage and Digital Governance* training is mandatory for all employees with system access within 90 days of appointment, and annually thereafter or on any material policy update.

Section 702 also establishes a disclosure regime that bears directly on documents placed before the Commission. It distinguishes *routine* use — drafting, editing, summarising or reformatting that the employee then substantially reviews and takes ownership of, requiring no disclosure in the output — from *substantive* use, where AI has materially shaped the analysis, conclusions, recommendations or scientific content. For scientific outputs, technical reports and Commission submissions, including submissions to subsidiary bodies, substantive use requires a standard disclosure note in the output, a brief indication of the nature of the AI contribution, and disclosure to the relevant Branch Manager. In addition, any use of AI in work intended for publication or submission to the Commission or its subsidiary bodies must be disclosed to the relevant Branch Manager and noted in the work itself (Appendix II, para. 19). Employees must also retain an auditable record of AI-assisted outputs under the record-keeping provisions of Section 702 and the Records Management policy at Section 706. Separately, and consistent with the Commission's direction to reduce the carbon footprint of IPHC activities, Section 504 Part 6 (*Responsible and Sustainable AI Usage*) requires mindful and proportionate use of AI tools, makes environmental performance a criterion in tool approval, and will report AI usage volume in the Secretariat's annual sustainability summary.

Current application across the Secretariat

AI is presently applied, or under development, in the following areas:

Area	Application	Status
General	• IPHC governance review and improvement • Quality assurance • Legal research • Website review and development • Professional development • Stakeholder engagement planning • Budget trend analysis • Document research	Operational
Biological and Ecosystem Sciences	• Assist with data processing, scientific literature searches, and code quality checks and documentation. • Optimization of software integration. • Review and update website content. • Development of training materials.	Operational
Fisheries Regulations & Data Services	• AI-assisted: - data quality and consistency checks across fisheries databases - development of applications supporting data collection and centralization - development of public-facing dashboards to inform stakeholders - review of documents and meeting papers • Automated otolith ageing based on otolith images and CNN training	Operational In development
Fisheries Monitoring (Port operations & FISS)	• Reviewing Commission meeting papers • Development and review of data quality assurance code for biological data • Drafting and review of budget narratives to ensure alignment with Commission and Federal financial regulations.	Operational
Quantitative Sciences (Stock assessment, MSE, and Modelling)	• Support for enhanced data processing and statistical analyses as well as assessment and MSE programming • Model and code development for the analysis and projection of weight-at-age • Code optimization to reduce simulation time • Documentation of code • Assistance summarizing and developing graphics of results • Development of public-facing tools such as MSE Explorer and summary dashboard	Operational
Administrative Services	• Support IT systems administration and cybersecurity hardening — including drafting technical proposals and documentation • Troubleshooting infrastructure and network authentication issues • Use of AI coding tools to support application development and scripting tasks • Drafting, review and troubleshooting of internal HR • Administrative and operational communications and workflows • Data/system issue resolution	Operational

The Secretariat will report more fully on adoption, measured benefits and any issues arising in the Report of the IPHC Secretariat to AM103, alongside the finalised AI Adoption Strategy.

IPHC Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy: Recognising the operational and scientific value that artificial intelligence (AI) tools can provide to the work of the Secretariat, while also

acknowledging the need to safeguard data confidentiality, scientific integrity, and the IPHC's privileges and immunities under the International Organizations Immunities Act (IOIA), the Commission is invited to NOTE the draft public-facing Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy (IPHC-2027-PP-06). The draft will be reviewed at FAC103 for recommendation to the Commission, with a view to adoption at AM103 in January 2027. It would be adopted under a new paragraph 12 of Regulation 12 (Internal Controls), proposed in the Financial Regulations amendments at FAC103 (IPHC-2027-FAC103-08). Section 702 of the IPHC Employee Manual will be aligned with the policy once adopted. The draft policy is provided at Appendix II.

4 IPHC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: 2026

The IPHC funds full-time internships each summer. In 2026, the IPHC hosted two (2) undergraduate interns, Ms Justine Vuong and Mr William Mixon, recent graduates of the University of California, San Diego, and University of Washington, respectively. The two interns have actively participated in IPHC's efforts to genotype the sex of commercial landings and to develop an automated method for the ageing of otoliths using artificial intelligence, among other activities. The internship period ran from 15 June through 18 September 2026.



William Mixon
(University of Washington)
2026



Justine Vuong
(University of California, San Diego)
2026

5 IPHC MERIT SCHOLARSHIP FOR 2026-29

The IPHC funds several Merit Scholarships to support university, technical college, and other post-secondary education for students from Canada and the United States of America who are connected to the Pacific halibut fishery. Generally, a single new scholarship valued at US$4,000 per year is awarded every two years. The scholarships are renewable annually for the normal four-year period of undergraduate education, subject to maintenance of satisfactory academic performance.

Since the scholarship's inception in 2002, the IPHC has awarded over US$160,000 in scholarship funds to 21 recipients.

In 2026, the IPHC Merit Scholarship Selection Panel reviewed applications and selected an outstanding candidate from a strong application pool, based on academic qualifications, career goals, and relationship to the Pacific halibut industry.

The Selection Panel consists of the following three (3) panellists:

- Robert Alverson (USA Commissioner)

- Peter DeGreef (Canadian Commissioner)
- Christa Rusel (Industry representative)

The Selection Panel unanimously awarded Ms Ava Young (Madeira Park, BC, Canada) the 2026 IPHC Merit Scholarship. The current recipients and their expected years of receipt are provided below.

Name	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Shea Davis (Cordova, AK, USA)	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	-
Ava Young (Madeira Park, BC, Canada)	-	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000



Ava Young
2026



Shea Davis
2024

6 MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES DURING 2026

Meeting	No.	Date	Location	Secretariat material
Finance and Administration Committee (FAC)	102nd	14 Jan	Bellevue, WA, USA	5 working papers
Annual Meeting (AM)	**102nd**	**19-22 Jan**		14 working papers, 8 regulatory proposals
Conference Board (CB)	96th	20-21 Jan		Commission papers
Processor Advisory Board (PAB)	31st	20-21 Jan		Commission papers
Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB)	22nd	12-14 May	Electronic	5 working papers
Scientific Review Board (SRB)	28th	19-21 May	Seattle, USA & Electronic	7 working papers
Work Meeting (WM)	2026	16 Sept	Seattle, USA & Electronic	9 working papers
Scientific Review Board (SRB)	29th	22-24 Sept	Seattle, USA & Electronic	6 working papers
Research Advisory Board (RAB)	27th	17-18 Nov	Seattle, USA & Electronic	Pending
Interim Meeting (IM)	**102nd**	**1 Dec**	Electronic	Pending

7 IPHC FISHERY REGULATIONS ADOPTED IN 2026

In 2026, the Commission adopted **six (6)** fishery regulations proposals (IPHC-2026-AM102-R) in accordance with Article III of the Convention, as follows:

7.1 IPHC Secretariat fishery regulation proposals

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

(par. 81) The Commission **ADOPTED** fishery regulation proposal IPHC-2026-AM102-PropA1, which provided the framework for the mortality and fishery limits populated at AM102 (Appendix VIII). *[Canada/USA: In favour=2; against=0; abstain=0; absent=1; USA: In favour=3; against=0; abstain=0; absent=0]*

(par. 82) The Commission **ADOPTED** the distributed mortality limits for each Contracting Party, by IPHC Regulatory Area, (Table 5) and sector, as provided in Appendix VIII. *[Canada/USA: In favour=2; against=0; abstain=0; absent=1; USA: In favour=3; against=0; abstain=0; absent=0]*

Table 5. Adopted TCEY mortality limits for 2026

Contracting Party IPHC Regulatory Area	Mortality limit (TCEY) (Mlb)	Mortality limit (TCEY) (metric tonnes)	% change from 2025
Canada Total: 2B	**5.06**	**2,295**	**-7.2%**
USA: 2A	1.65	748	0.0%
USA: 2C	5.22	2,368	0.0%
USA: 3A	9.08	4,119	0.0%
USA: 3B	2.86	1,297	0.0%
USA: 4A	1.34	608	0.0%
USA: 4B	1.04	472	0.0%
USA: 4CDE	3.08	1,397	0.0%
United States of America Total	**24.27**	**11,009**	**0.0%**
Total (IPHC Convention Area)	**29.33**	**13,304**	**-1.3%**

IPHC Fishery Regulations: Commercial fishing periods (Sect. 9)

(par. 87) The Commission **ADOPTED** fishery regulation proposal IPHC-2026-AM102-PropA2, that provided the framework for setting fishing periods for the commercial Pacific halibut fisheries. *[Canada/USA: In favour=2; against=0; abstain=0; absent=1; USA: In favour=3; against=0; abstain=0; absent=0]*

(par. 88) The Commission **ADOPTED** fishing periods for 2026 as provided below, thereby superseding the relevant portions of Section 9 of the IPHC Fishery Regulations (Appendix IX) by specifying that commercial fishing for Pacific halibut in all IPHC Regulatory Areas may begin no earlier than 06:00 hrs local time on **26 March 2026** and must cease at 23:59 hrs local time on **7 December 2026**. *[Canada/USA: In favour=2; against=0; abstain=0; absent=1; USA: In favour=3; against=0; abstain=0; absent=0]*

7.2 *Contracting Party fishery regulation proposals*

IPHC Fishery Regulations: Recreational (Sport) Fishing for Pacific Halibut—IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E (Sect. 28) - Charter Management Measures in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A (USA)

(par. 89) The Commission **ADOPTED** fishery regulation proposal IPHC-2026-AM102-PropB1, that included charter management measures in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A reflective of

mortality limits adopted by the IPHC and resulting allocations under the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council's (NPFMC) Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan (Appendix X). *[Canada/USA: In favour=2; against=0; abstain=0; absent=1; USA: In favour=3; against=0; abstain=0; absent=0]*

IPHC Fishery Regulations: Recreational (Sport) Fishing for Pacific Halibut - IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Sect. 27) - Daily bag limit in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Canada)

(par. 90) The Commission **ADOPTED** fishery regulation proposal IPHC-2026-AM102-PropB2, with an amendment to limit the application to one (1) year. PropB2 proposed a daily bag limit of up to three fish per day per person in the recreational fishery in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B beginning on or after 1 August of each year. This provision shall remain in effect through 2026, unless extended by a vote of the Commission (Appendix XI). *[Canada/USA: In favour=2; against=0; abstain=0; absent=1; USA: In favour=3; against=0; abstain=0; absent=0]*

IPHC Fishery Regulations: Recreational (Sport) Fishing for Pacific Halibut - IPHC Regulatory Area 2A – Season opening dates for recreational fishery subareas within IPHC Regulatory Area 2A (USA)

(par. 91) The Commission **ADOPTED** fishery regulation proposal IPHC-2026-AM102-PropB3, that proposed opening the 2026 Regulatory Area 2A recreational fishery in the Convention waters of the Washington Puget Sound and the U.S.A. Convention waters in the Strait of Juan de Fuca subarea and in the Convention Waters off the California subareas on 2 April and on 1 April (Appendix XII). *[Canada/USA: In favour=2; against=0; abstain=0; absent=1; USA: In favour=3; against=0; abstain=0; absent=0]*

7.3 Stakeholder fishery regulation proposals

IPHC Fishery Regulations: Commercial Fishing Periods (Sect. 9) – limited retention outside the commercial fishing period in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (R. Hauknes)

(par. 94) The Commission **ADOPTED** fishery regulation proposal IPHC-2026-AM102-PropC2, with an amendment to limit the application to one (1) year. PropC2 proposed a three-year pilot program authorising limited retention of legal-sized Pacific halibut caught incidentally as bycatch outside the Pacific halibut commercial fishing period in year-round hook & line and trap groundfish fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Canada). As explicit regulatory language was not provided with the proposal, the Secretariat and Fisheries and Oceans Canada developed specific regulatory language before the IPHC Fishery Regulations were finalised for implementation and enforcement. This measure will be applicable for a period of one (1) year, unless extended by a vote of the Commission. *[Canada/USA: In favour=2; against=0; abstain=0; absent=1; USA: In favour=3; against=0; abstain=0; absent=0]*

*The final r*egulatory language implementing PropC2 can be found in IPHC Fishery Regulations 2026 published on 4 February 2026.

8 INTERACTIONS WITH CONTRACTING PARTIES [PRELIMINARY]

8.1 Contracting Party reports

The IPHC Secretariat engages annually with agency representatives from both Contracting Parties to ensure comprehensive reporting of all forms of Pacific halibut removals. Efforts are ongoing to identify and address data gaps, as well as to improve data collection processes. Additionally, the Secretariat collaborates with both Contracting Parties to streamline the development of the National Report and enhance consistency across submissions.

8.2 Data audit and reporting review

During 2026, the Secretariat also audited a number of database tables, compared these against domestic data sources maintained by the Contracting Parties, and reviewed processing approaches to improve the reporting of time series datasets available to stakeholders.

8.3 Canada

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

Collaboration with DFO and AMR to complete IPHC Regulatory Area 2B logbook coverage

In 2026, IPHC continued its collaboration with DFO and Archipelago Marine Research (AMR) to obtain Canadian logbook data that had not previously been included in IPHC's standard data collection. Through this collaboration, IPHC obtained missing Regulatory Area 2B logbooks for the years 2009–2025, ensuring comprehensive coverage of fishing activity for incorporation into the Pacific halibut stock assessment. This initiative strengthens data completeness and improves the accuracy and consistency of catch information used in scientific analyses and management decisions. This amounts to approximately 1,700 logbooks not previously included. Processing of these logbooks is in progress.

Areas of conservation concern

The IPHC Secretariat continues to work with the DFO representatives to address gaps in coverage for the IPHC FISS in the IPHC Regulatory Area 2B. Currently, the FISS license excludes Marine Protected Areas as described by Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound Glass Sponge Reefs Marine Protected Areas Regulations, and Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs).

Memorandum of Understanding/Collective Agreement – Rockfish

This agreement has been put on hold for 2026 by DFO.

Central Coast of BC: Mia-yaltwa Ha'lidzogm hoon National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area

An establishment agreement for the Mia-yaltwa Ha'lidzogm hoon National Marine Conservation Area (NMCAR) on the Central Coast of British Columbia was completed in May 2026. Mia-yaltwa Ha'lidzogm hoon has also been declared as an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) by the six partnering Nations. The area has an overlap with 19 IPHC FISS standard grid stations (Fig. 2).

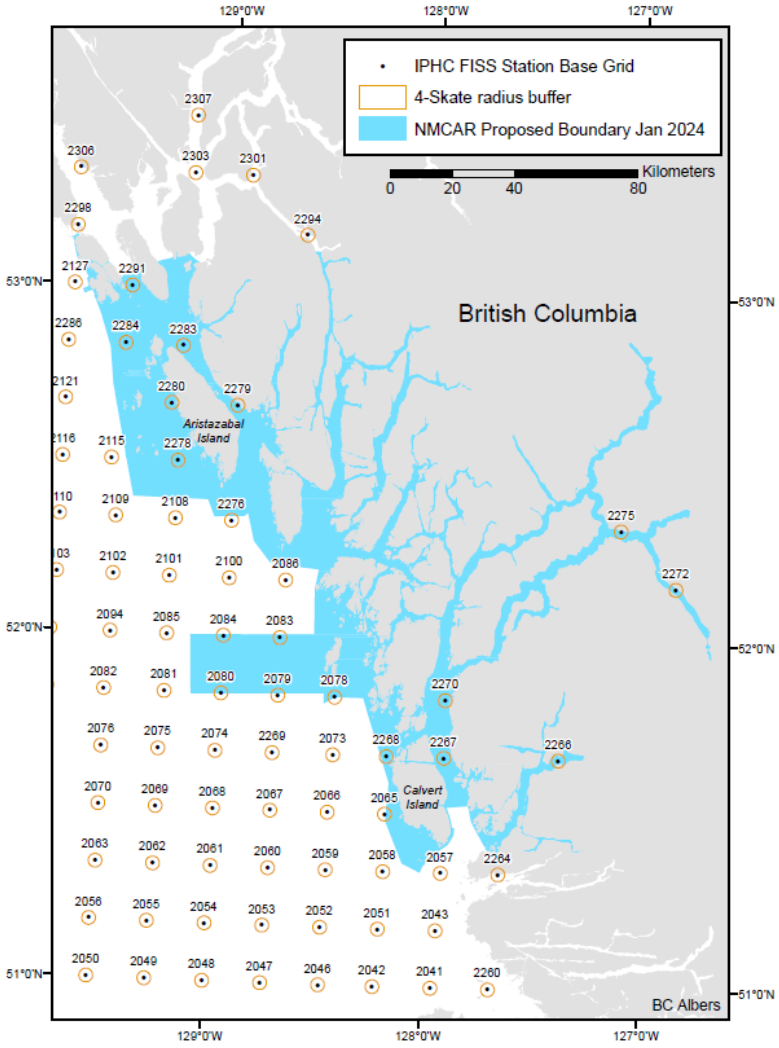


Figure 2: Central Coast National Marine Conservation Area with IPHC FISS standard grid stations.

Halibut Advisory Board (HAB)

The Executive Director (Dr. Wilson) participates as a HAB member, with the Fisheries Regulations and Data Services Branch manager (Dr. Hutniczak) as the IPHC alternate. This relationship is expected to continue into the future given the HAB's contributions to the Canadian decision-making process.

8.4 United States of America

The 2026 Annual Management Measures were published in the Federal Register on 25 March 2026 and are available here.

NOAA Fisheries

Electronic logbooks in Alaska

In 2026, the IPHC continues to support the implementation of electronic logbooks in Alaska. Building on the successful 2024 trial, the Secretariat is working with the vendor and NOAA Fisheries to expand adoption and integration of the system, which enables digital recording and verification of fishing activity without the need for paper records.

NOAA Fisheries is also finalizing the development of its application programming interface (API), which should allow the IPHC to access electronically submitted Daily Fishing Logbooks (DFLs) through the eLandings platform, further enhancing data sharing and coordination between agencies.

Management in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A

The Secretariat has a data sharing agreement with NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region to access confidential data, including:

- All non-trawl logbook data submissions that include landings or discards of Pacific halibut, either sourced from the electronic application (FishVue Float) or paper logbooks, which are currently located in a data system maintained by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PacStates); and
- All permit data for directed commercial fishery, recreational charter fishery, incidental salmon troll, and incidental longline sablefish fishery permits for Pacific halibut, which are currently located in a data system maintained by NOAA Fisheries.

These data are essential for the efficient fulfillment of tasks related to biological sampling collection and log data compilation for IPHC Regulatory Area 2A. IPHC is also actively working with 2A partners to ensure the quality of these data. The agreement was signed on 16 October 2023 and is valid through 15 October 2028.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC)

The IPHC provided the Council with the outcomes of the 102nd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM102) during its February 2026 meeting (B8 report).

At its October meeting, the NPFMC discussed Charter Halibut Permits, Transfer Eligibility Certificate (TEC) requirements, Community Quota Entity (CQE) transfer changes, and changes to landing/unloading requirements. Of particular interest for the IPHC are potential changes to the prior notice of landing (PNOL) requirements.

The IPHC Secretariat's port sampling program relies on PNOLs to know when and where landings will occur, and to decide whether a landing must be sampled and how much to sample. Waiving prior notice for small landings would leave port staff unable to reliably sample those landings. That could bias the biological data. Expanding designated unloading areas could likewise spread landings across more locations. Maintaining sampling coverage might then require staffing additional ports. The Secretariat will continue to monitor these proposals and expects to provide input should the NPFMC move forward with regulatory changes related to PNOLs.

Under agenda item Charter Halibut Permits Data Request, the Council requested evaluation of decoupling the cumulative limit on the transfer of IFQ to Guided Angler Fish (GAF) and the pounds of Recreational Fishing Quota (RFQ) issued to the RQE in IPHC Regulatory Area 2C, and impacts of raising the annual transfer limit of the commercial Pacific halibut QS pool to RQE.

The Council also supported NMFS approval of an exempted fishing permit (EFP) application from SeaShare, Inc. and Glacier Fish Company. The applicants propose to test an alternative processing workflow on a single trawl catcher/processor. A limited amount of Pacific halibut remaining in the catch after deck sorting and observer sampling would be retained and donated through the Prohibited Species Donation Program, rather than discarded at sea as currently required.

Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC)

2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and the structure of the non-Tribal directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery

At the meeting in December 2025, the Council adopted the 2026 Area 2A Pacific halibut fisheries season structure for the 2026 non-Tribal directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery and Washington, Oregon, and California sport fisheries. Details are available in the Decision Summary Document.

The management measures for the Area 2A Pacific halibut directed commercial fishery are published in the Federal Register (91 FR 36094, 16 June 2026). In-season action added additional fishing periods (91 FR 45224, 20 July 2026; 91 FR 50726, 6 August 2026, 91 FR 55497, 28 August 2026).

Incidental Catch Limits for Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries

Adopted in March 2026, the Council's final recommendation for the 2026 incidental Pacific halibut catch limits in the fixed gear fishery north of Point Chehalis beginning 1 April was 75 pounds of dressed weight Pacific halibut for every 1,000 pounds dressed weight of sablefish, plus 2 additional Pacific halibut in excess of the ratio, which was consistent with the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel recommendations.

Incidental Catch Limits for Salmon Troll Fishery

Under the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan, the salmon troll fishery is provided a portion of the non-tribal commercial Pacific halibut allocation for incidental retention of Pacific halibut. In April 2026, the Council adopted catch ratio and vessel limits for incidental Pacific halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery which are effective from 16 May 2026 through the end of the 2026 salmon troll fishery, and beginning 1 April 2027, until modified through in-season action or the 2027 management measures. License holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per two Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 Pacific halibut landed per trip.

2027 Commercial and Recreational Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulations

In September 2026, the Council adopted, for public review, proposed changes to the 2027 Pacific Halibut Commercial and Recreational Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and annual regulations. Status quo was proposed for the directed commercial fishery. The Council will adopt final changes to the 2027 Pacific halibut CSP and annual fishery regulations at their November 2026 meeting.

Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC)

Pacific cod and Pacific spiny dogfish sampling agreement

NOAA Fisheries, through the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), requested sex and length data from Pacific spiny dogfish and length data from Pacific cod from all FISS stations surveyed in 2026. The IPHC has been collecting these data from Pacific spiny dogfish since 2011, from Pacific cod in the Bering Sea since 2007 and from Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) since 2017. During the 2026 FISS, the IPHC FISS team collected 1,211 lengths of Pacific cod and 1,365 lengths/sex of Pacific spiny dogfish as a part of this agreement.

Data sharing agreement with the AFSC Fisheries Monitoring Division

The Secretariat has a standing data sharing agreement with the NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) Fisheries Monitoring Division to obtain confidential information from commercial fisheries observers and electronic monitoring systems, including haul information: fishing gear, location, date and time, lengths of specimens and species composition. The current agreement is valid through 28 August 2028.

Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC)

The Secretariat has a standing data sharing agreement with the Northwest Fisheries Science Center to obtain confidential data from commercial fishing vessels observed by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) or the At-Sea Hake Observer Program (A-SHOP). This includes haul-level observer data: fishing vessel information, gear used, Pacific halibut catch, catch of other species, species biological data (e.g. length, weight, sex), mortality assessments, haul locations, tow or soak time duration, depth, date, and time. The current agreement is valid through 19 July 2027.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Memorandum of Understanding – Rockfish (2026-2030)

The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding with the WDFW is to 1) collect and utilize catch and biological sample data from species caught during the IPHC's FISS; 2) agree on how proceeds from the sale of Pacific halibut, rockfish and Pacific cod will be disbursed; and 3) lay forth the financial obligations associated with undertaking additional FISS stations, as requested by the WDFW, to survey rockfish populations off the Washington coastline.

Surveying rockfish index stations in Washington was put on hold in 2026.

Data sharing agreement with California Department of Fish and Wildlife

The IPHC and the CDFW entered into a data sharing agreement for the purpose of tracking all Pacific halibut removals from within Convention waters. The agreement provides the Secretariat with access to commercial landing receipt data from California. The agreement was extended in 2025 and is now valid through 31 March 2027.

9 IPHC PUBLICATIONS AND OUTREACH

9.1 IPHC Website

The IPHC Secretariat continues to enhance the accessibility of data and statistics for stakeholders and other interested parties, with a particular focus on providing timely and informative visual displays such as those listed below. In 2026, the IPHC website underwent ongoing improvements in design and simplified content management, including the introduction of five (5) interactive dashboards:



1) Stock Status
2) Fishery-Independent Setline Survey
3) Commercial Fisheries
4) Biology & Ecology
5) Socio-Economics

9.2 Annual Report

The 2025 Annual Report (1 January to 31 December 2025) was published on 13 March 2026 and is available for download from the IPHC website at the following link:

https://www.iphc.int/uploads/2026/03/IPHC-2026-AR2025-R-IPHC-Annual-Report.pdf

The 2026 Annual Report is expected to be published in March 2027.

9.3 IPHC Circulars and Media Releases

2026 IPHC Circulars continue to serve as the formal inter-sessional communication mechanism for the Commission. Circulars are used to announce meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, as well as inter-sessional decisions made by the Commission. The following are those published in 2026, and a full list may be accessed via the following weblink: https://www.iphc.int/category/circulars/

Circular	Title	Date published
IPHC-2026-CR-001	Report of the 102nd Session of the IPHC Finance and Administration Committee (FAC102)	14 Jan 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-002	Report of the 31st Session of the IPHC Processor Advisory Board (PAB031)	21 Jan 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-003	Report of the 96th Session of the IPHC Conference Board (CB096)	21 Jan 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-004	Report of the 102nd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM102)	22 Jan 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-005	Invitation to the 22nd Session of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB022)	11 Feb 2026

IPHC-2026-CR-006	Invitation to the 28th Session of the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB028)	17 Feb 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-007	Publication of IPHC Annual Report 2025 (IPHC-2026-AR2025-R)	13 Mar 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-008	Report of the 22nd Session of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB022)	15 May 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-009	Report of the 28th Session of the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB028)	21 May 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-010	Invitation to the 29th Session of the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB029)	26 Jun 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-011	Invitation to the 27th Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB027)	18 Aug 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-012	Invitation to the 102nd Session of the IPHC Interim Meeting (IM102)	3 Sep 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-013	Report of the 29th Session of the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB029)	24 Sep 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-014	Invitation to the 103rd Session of the IPHC Finance and Administration Committee (FAC103)	22 Oct 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-015	Invitation to the 103rd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM103)	26 Oct 2026
IPHC-2026-CR-016	Invitation to the 97th Session of the IPHC Conference Board (CB097) and the 32nd Session of the IPHC Processor Advisory Board (PAB032)	27 Oct 2026

2026 IPHC Media Releases are the primary informal communication with all stakeholders. https://www.iphc.int/category/media-releases/

Media Release	Title	Date published
IPHC-2026-MR-001	Outcomes of the 102nd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM102)	22 Jan 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-002	IPHC 2026 Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) Request for Tender – Adak	11 Feb 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-003	Notification of Potential Pacific Halibut Sales in 2026: Seeking Buyers Interested in Fish Sales from the IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS)	5 Mar 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-004	Notification of IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) 2026 Contract Awards	20 Mar 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-005	2026 Commercial Fishing Period Opens 26 March 2026	25 Mar 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-006	2026 IPHC Merit Scholarship 2026	6 Apr 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-007	Application Deadline for the 2026 IPHC Merit Scholarship: 12 June 2026	20 May 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-008	Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS): 2026	21 May 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-009	Attention Salmon Processors – Chum Salmon Needed for the 2027 IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS)	2 Jun 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-010	Request for Proposal (RFP): Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) Field Data Collection Application	11 Jun 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-011	2026 Fecundity Study Request for Tender	7 Jul 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-012	Attention Salmon Processors – Chum Salmon Needed for the 2027 IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS)	30 Jul 2026
IPHC-2026-MR-013	IPHC Merit Scholarship (2026) AWARDED	10 Aug 2026

All interested persons are encouraged to request that their email addresses be added to IPHC distribution lists at the following link: https://www.iphc.int/media-news-subscription/.

9.4 IPHC external engagement

There is a considerable amount of effort put into public outreach, attending conferences and meetings that enhance knowledge, contributing expertise to the broader scientific community through participation on boards and committees, and seeking further education and training.

Committees and external organisation appointments

North America:

1) *Canada – U.S. Groundfish Technical Committee* - Dr. Josep Planas

Canada:

1) *Halibut Advisory Board* (Canada) - Dr. David Wilson (Dr. Basia Hutniczak – Alternate)

United States of America:

1) *Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Plan Team* - Dr. Allan Hicks
2) *NPFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee* - Dr. Ian Stewart
3) *North Pacific Research Board Science Panel* - Dr. Allan Hicks
4) *Marine Resource Education Program, North Pacific* – Dr. Allan Hicks
5) *Fisheries Monitoring Science Committee (NOAA-Alaska)* – Dr. Ray Webster
6) *Interagency electronic reporting system for commercial fishery landings in Alaska (eLandings) Steering Committee* – Dr. Basia Hutniczak

Academic affiliations 2026

Affiliate Faculty:

1) Dr. Allan Hicks - University of Washington School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, Seattle, WA, USA
2) Dr. Ian Stewart - University of Washington School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, Seattle, WA, USA
3) Dr. Josep Planas - Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage, AK, USA

Graduate student committee member:

1) Dr. Allan Hicks - University of Washington School of Marine and Environmental Affairs, Seattle, WA, USA
2) Dr. Allan Hicks - University of Washington School of Aquatic & Fishery Sciences, Seattle, WA, USA
3) Dr. Ian Stewart - University of Washington School of Aquatic & Fishery Sciences, Seattle, WA, USA
4) Dr. Josep Planas - Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage, AK, USA

Cooperation with other organisations

Since its inception, the IPHC has entered into a number of arrangements with other institutions, almost invariably of a technical nature, either to conduct activities in cooperation or to facilitate exchange of information that would enhance the output of both organisations. Some of these are outlined in Section 8 (Interactions with Contracting Parties).

The arrangements take a variety of forms, including Memorandum of Understanding, agreements to share data, and permits to undertake research on Pacific halibut. Current and closed arrangements are publicly available on the IPHC website: https://www.iphc.int/about/cooperation-with-other-organizations/.

Of particular note is our engagement with the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) facilitating collaboration between IPHC and PICES. The current Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 6 July 2024 and remains in effect through 5 July 2029.

10 IPHC PUBLICATIONS IN 2026

10.1 Published peer-reviewed journal papers

Heppell, D.S., Lomeli, M.J.M., Wakefield, W.W., Herrmann, B., **Dykstra, C.L.**, and **Stewart, I.J.** 2026. Hook modification to reduce rockfish and Pacific spiny dogfish bycatch in the U.S. West Coast Pacific halibut longline fishery. Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries 36(1). doi:10.1007/s11160-026-10042-7.

Larson, S., Lowry, D., Andrews, K., **Dykstra, C.L.**, Juanes, F., Timmer, B., and May, S. (2026). Molecular relatedness-based analyses reveal breeding site philopatry in female bluntnose sixgill sharks (*Hexanchus griseus*). Frontiers in Marine Science 13:1759346. https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2026.1759346

10.2 In press peer-reviewed journal papers

Lomeli, M.J.M., McVeigh, J., Wakefield, W.W., Herrmann, B., **Dykstra, C.L**., **Stewart, I.J**., Eibner, J. 2026 The effect of hook appendage length on species' catch probability in a Pacific halibut longline fishery. Aquaculture and Fisheries. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aaf.2026.07.002.

Trochta, J., Bartolino, V., Berger, A., Bitetto, I., Chiarini, M., Garcia, D., Haltuch, M., Hernvann, P.-Y., **Hicks, A.**, Ibaibarriaga, L., Jacobsen, N.S., Kapur, M., Kell, L., Kühn, B., MacKenzie, B.R., Peterson, C., Rindorf, A., Sanchez-Maroño, S., Taylor, M., Tengvall, J., Savina-Rolland, M., and Carpi, P. 2026. Incorporating environmental drivers and productivity changes into Management Strategy Evaluation. ICES Journal **of** Marine Science.

10.3 Submitted peer-review journal papers – In review

Heppell, D., Lomeli, M., Mcveigh, J., Wakefield, W. Herrmann, B., **Dykstra, C., and Stewart, I.J.** Examining the effect of headrope height and use of artificial illumination on bycatch of Pacific halibut in a U.S. groundfish bottom trawl fishery. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences.

Jasonowicz, A.J. and Planas, J.V. 2026. fst-gl: Efficient and performance-oriented estimation of F_{ST} from genotype likelihoods. Bioinformatics.

Jasonowicz, A.C., Planas, J.V. Generation of multi-tissue transcriptomic resources uncovers the molecular architecture underlying tissue functional specialization in a highly migratory flatfish species. BMC Genomic Data.

Jones, C.L., Webster, R.A., Stewart, I.J., Hicks, A.C., Planas, J.V. Spatial and temporal characterization of histology-based maturity-at-age for female Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*). Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences.

Lomeli, M.J.M., McVeigh, J., Wakefield, W.W., Herrmann, B., Eibner, J., **Coll, K., Dykstra, C.L., and Stewart, I.J.** Testing of a semi-demersal longline to reduce yelloweye rockfish bycatch in a Pacific halibut longline hook fishery. Regional Studies in Marine Science.

McGilliard, C.R., Ianelli, J., Cunningham, C., **Hicks, A**., Hanselman, D., Stram, D., Henry, A. Evaluating Bering Sea Pacific halibut bycatch management options using closed-loop simulations in a dynamic, multi-agency setting. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences.

Tessnow-von Wysocki, I., Barclay, K.M., Schrempf, S., Haas, B., Andriamahefazafy, M., Robertson, K., Villasante, S., Le Manach, F., Muawanah, U., Ortuño Crespo, G., Sinan, H., Green, S., Alfiado Munwane, A., Schatz, V., **Wilson, D.**, Bailey, M., Singh, G.G. Cumulative Inequity: Tracing equity concerns in tuna regional fisheries management organisations. NPJ Ocean Sustainability.

11 RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission:

a) **NOTE** paper IPHC-2026-IM102-04 Rev_1, that provides a preliminary update on IPHC Secretariat activities in 2026 not detailed in other papers before the Commission, and NOTE that the final Report of the IPHC Secretariat for 2026 is provided to the 103rd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM103).

b) **NOTE** the draft IPHC Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy, as provided at Appendix II, that will be considered for recommendation to the Commission at FAC103.

12 APPENDICES

Appendix I: IPHC Secretariat positions

Appendix II: Draft: IPHC Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy (IPHC-2027-PP-06)

Appendix I
IPHC Secretariat positions

(https://www.iphc.int/locations/map)

Branch	Sub-Section	Position	Current Employee
-	-	Executive Director	Dr Wilson, David
Quantitative Sciences	-	Quantitative Scientist (Stock Assessment)	Dr Stewart, Ian
Quantitative Sciences	-	Quantitative Scientist (Management Strategy Evaluation)	Dr Hicks, Allan
Quantitative Sciences	-	Quantitative Scientist (Biometrician)	Dr Webster, Raymond
Biological and Ecosystem Sciences	-	Branch Manager (Biological and Ecosystem Sciences)	Dr Planas, Josep
Biological and Ecosystem Sciences	-	Research Biologist (Mortality and Survivorship)	Dykstra, Claude
Biological and Ecosystem Sciences	-	Research Biologist Genetics	Jasonowicz, Andrew
Biological and Ecosystem Sciences	-	Research Biologist (Life History)	Jones, Colin
Biological and Ecosystem Sciences	-	Biological Science Laboratory Technician	May, Darran
Fisheries Monitoring	Port Operations Services	Port Operations Coordinator	Thom, Monica
Fisheries Monitoring	Port Operations Services	Fisheries Data Specialist (Field)	Multiple Employees (9-10)
Fisheries Monitoring	Fishery-Independent Setline Survey	Setline Survey Coordinator	Ualesi, Kayla
Fisheries Monitoring	Fishery-Independent Setline Survey	Setline Survey Specialist (Snr)	Jack, Tyler
Fisheries Monitoring	Fishery-Independent Setline Survey	Setline Survey Specialist	Coll, Kevin
Fisheries Monitoring	Fishery-Independent Setline Survey	Setline Survey Specialist	Skalley, Courtney
Fisheries Monitoring	Fishery-Independent Setline Survey	Setline Survey Specialist (Field)	Multiple Employees (10-35)
Fisheries Regulations and Data Services	-	Branch Manager (FRDS)	Dr Hutniczak, Barbara

Fisheries Regulations and Data Services	Fisheries Data Services	Fisheries Data Coordinator	Tran, Huyen
Fisheries Regulations and Data Services	Fisheries Data Services	Fisheries Data Specialist (HQ-GIS)	Kong, Thomas
Fisheries Regulations and Data Services	Fisheries Data Services	Fisheries Data Specialist (HQ) & Otolith Technician	Sawyer Van Vleck, Kim
Fisheries Regulations and Data Services	Fisheries Data Services	Fisheries Data Specialist (HQ) & Otolith Technician	Magrane, Kelsey
Fisheries Regulations and Data Services	Otolith Aging Services	Otolith Laboratory Technician (Snr)	Forsberg, Joan
Fisheries Regulations and Data Services	Otolith Aging Services	Otolith Laboratory Technician	Gallaher, Kiah
Administrative Services	-	Branch Manager (Administrative Services Branch)	Dr White, Brad
Administrative Services	Personnel Services	Administrative Coordinator	Chapman, Kelly
Administrative Services	Personnel Services	Administrative Specialist (Snr)	Wietecha, Ola
Administrative Services	Personnel Services	Administrative Specialist	Wickham, Kenneth
Administrative Services	Personnel Services	Administrative Specialist	Sherk, Sydney
Administrative Services	Accounting Services	Accountants	Sommerville & Associates
Administrative Services	Accounting Services	Administrative Services (Accounting)	Arian, Mohammad
Administrative Services	Technology Services	Systems Administrator	Tynes, Robert
Administrative Services	Technology Services	Information Technology Specialist (Application Developer)	Taheri, Afshin
Administrative Services	Technology Services	Information Technology Specialist (Application Developer)	Outsourced

Appendix II
DRAFT: IPHC ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USAGE POLICY (IPHC-2027-PP-06)

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC),

RECOGNISING the operational and scientific value that artificial intelligence (AI) tools can provide to the work of the Secretariat, while acknowledging the need to safeguard data confidentiality, scientific integrity, and the IPHC's privileges and immunities under the International Organizations Immunities Act (IOIA);

RECOGNISING the need for comprehensive details regarding the IPHC's governance of artificial intelligence tools to be provided on the IPHC website for public inspection;

ADOPTS in accordance with Regulation 12 (Internal Controls), paragraph 12 of the IPHC Financial Regulations (2027), that:

Purpose:

1. This policy establishes the IPHC's governance framework for the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in connection with IPHC business. The IPHC recognises the operational and scientific value that AI tools provide and supports their responsible use, subject to safeguards that protect data confidentiality, the integrity of IPHC science, and the IPHC's obligations as a public international organisation.

Scope:

2. This policy applies to all employees of the IPHC, and to all contractors and consultants working on its behalf, regardless of employment category. It applies to the use of any AI tool, platform, or system — whether provided by the IPHC or externally accessed, and whether used on IPHC or personal devices — to undertake work for the IPHC, including generative AI tools, large language models, AI-assisted data analysis platforms, and automated decision-support systems. The section on meetings, recordings, and meeting summaries below additionally sets out the IPHC's expectations of participants in IPHC meetings who are not otherwise subject to this policy.

Definitions:

3. **Artificial intelligence** or "AI" refers, for the purposes of this policy, to any software system that uses machine learning, natural language processing, or similar methods to generate content, analyse data, make predictions, or support decision-making, including generative tools that produce text, images, code, or data outputs in response to user prompts.

Guiding Principles:

4. AI outputs must be reviewed and verified by the employee, contractor, or consultant before being relied upon or distributed. AI tools support, but do not replace, professional judgement.

5. Employees, contractors, and consultants are responsible for verifying the accuracy of all AI-generated content. AI tools can produce incorrect or fabricated information, and reliance on unverified outputs is not an acceptable standard of work.

6. IPHC confidential information — including commercial fisheries data, personnel information, legal advice, and internal correspondence — must not be entered into any AI tool or platform not provided or approved by the IPHC, including AI models installed locally on personal devices.

7. AI tools must not be used in a manner that introduces bias into hiring, performance evaluation, or any other employment decision. All employment decisions remain the sole responsibility of qualified IPHC personnel.

8. Employees, contractors, and consultants must be transparent about the use of AI where it is material to the output produced, in accordance with the disclosure requirements set out in this policy.

Approved and Prohibited Uses:

9. The following uses of AI tools are generally permitted, subject to the guiding principles above: drafting, editing, summarising, or reformatting documents for subsequent employee review and approval; assisting with research, literature review, or the synthesis of publicly available information; writing, reviewing, or debugging code where the output is verified by a qualified IPHC employee; and supporting data analysis where the methodology and outputs are validated by the relevant Branch Manager or quantitative scientist.

10. The following uses are prohibited: entering IPHC confidential data, personnel information, commercial fisheries data, legal advice, or internal correspondence into any AI tool or platform not provided or approved by the IPHC; using AI tools to materially influence employment decisions without review and approval by the Executive Director; presenting AI-generated content as original research, scientific analysis, or professional advice without disclosure and independent verification; and using AI tools to circumvent IPHC security, access controls, or data governance requirements.

11. The IPHC Secretariat maintains a list of AI tools approved for IPHC use, which is available for public inspection on the IPHC website. Use of a tool not on the approved list requires the prior written approval of the employee's Branch Manager.

Data Confidentiality and Security:

12. Any AI tool used in connection with IPHC work must be accessed and operated in accordance with the IPHC's Data Confidentiality Policy and Data Sharing Procedures (IPHC-2023-PP-01) and the IPHC's password security and electronic resources policies. Where an AI tool requires account registration or data sharing with a third-party provider, this must be approved via internal protocols before use.

Meetings, Recordings, and Meeting Summaries:

13. The IPHC may record its meetings and may use AI tools to produce transcripts, summaries, or draft reports of them. Where AI tools are used for this purpose, participants will be notified in advance, in the notice of meeting or at the opening of the session. Such recordings and outputs are working material only. All such outputs must be reviewed and verified by the

Secretariat before use, and are retained and disposed of in accordance with the IPHC Records Management Policy (IPHC-2024-PP-04).

14. The official record of a meeting of the Commission or of a subsidiary body is the written report of that meeting as approved by the Commission or by the subsidiary body concerned. No recording, transcript, summary, or report generated by an AI tool — whether produced by the IPHC or by any other person — is an official record or official document of the IPHC, and no such output may be issued, circulated, cited, or relied upon as the official record of proceedings. Where the IPHC publishes or circulates an AI-assisted transcript or summary, it will be labelled to that effect.

15. AI tools must not be used to record, transcribe, or summarise any closed, executive, or in-camera session, or any part of a meeting at which confidential data, personnel matters, or legally privileged information is considered, unless the Executive Director has given prior written approval and the tool operates wholly within IPHC-controlled systems. Meeting audio and video are IPHC information: their transmission to a third-party AI service places that information beyond the IPHC's control and may engage both the IPHC's data confidentiality obligations and its privileges and immunities under the IOIA.

16. AI meeting agents — applications that join a meeting as a participant in order to listen to, record, transcribe, or summarise it, commonly described as "bots" — are not permitted at meetings of the Commission or of its subsidiary bodies. Participants, including Commissioners, delegations of the Contracting Parties, members of subsidiary bodies, observers, and members of the public, must not admit or invite such an application to a meeting and must not enable any recording, transcription, or AI note-taking function of the meeting platform. The Secretariat will apply the controls available in the IPHC's meeting platform to detect and exclude such applications, and will state this requirement in the notice of meeting and at the opening of each session.

17. The Chairperson may permit an exception in a particular case, on a request made to the Secretariat in advance and recorded in the report of the meeting; where the meeting or any part of it is closed, the prior written approval of the Executive Director is additionally required. Nothing in this section prevents the Secretariat from arranging captioning, transcription, or other assistance required as a reasonable accommodation for a participant, on terms that satisfy the IPHC's data confidentiality requirements.

18. The IPHC recognises that it cannot detect every AI tool that may be present at a meeting, and this policy does not purport to do so. The expectation is one of disclosure and good faith. Participants remain bound by any confidentiality undertaking applicable to the meeting irrespective of the means by which a record is made, and the use of an undisclosed AI tool does not diminish that obligation.

Scientific and Research Integrity:

19. Given the IPHC's mandate as a science-based organisation, the use of AI in research, data analysis, and scientific reporting carries particular responsibility. AI tools must not be used to generate, modify, or present scientific data or findings without full disclosure of the method and independent expert validation. Any use of AI in work intended for publication or submission to the Commission or its subsidiary bodies must be disclosed to the relevant Branch Manager and noted in the work itself.

Governance and Review:

20. The Executive Director is responsible for approving the use of any new AI tools for inclusion on the approved list, ensuring the consistent application of this policy, and making final determinations on matters engaging the IPHC's scientific integrity, IOIA obligations, or reputational interests.

21. The Executive Director will review this policy at least annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with any regulatory changes, and earlier where a significant AI capability development, a new approved tool, a regulatory change, or a material shift in organisational practice may warrant earlier updating. The Administrative Services Branch is responsible for monitoring such triggers and notifying the Executive Director and Branch Managers without delay. The outcome of each review shall be reported to the Commission, and any recommended amendments to this policy shall be submitted to the Commission for approval. Any revisions and updates will be communicated to all employees, contractors, consultants, and stakeholders, via the IPHC website.