Data overview and stock assessment for Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) at the end of 2026

This document is a placeholder: a Rev 1 will be published prior to IM102.

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PURPOSE

To provide the Commission with a summary of the data and stock assessment at the end of 2026.

INTRODUCTION

In 2026 the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) undertook its annual coastwide stock assessment of Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*). The most recent full assessment was completed in 2025 (IPHC-2026-SA01, IPHC-2026-SA02, and detailed model evaluation was presented during SRB026: IPHC-2025-SRB026-07). That analysis followed updates in 2023 (IPHC-2024-SA01) and 2024 (IPHC-2025-SA01). This stock assessment represents an update to the 2025 analysis.

Starting with the final 2025 stock assessment data, models and results (Stewart and Webster 2026; Stewart and Hicks 2026), data from 2026 including updates of previous years will be sequentially added to provide 'bridging analysis' of the changes made through the final 2026 stock assessment. At the time this document was produced complete data were not available for 2026. Standard data sources that will be included in the final 2026 stock assessment include:

1) New modelled trend information from the 2026 FISS for all IPHC Regulatory Areas.
2) Age, length, individual weight, and average weight-at-age estimates from the 2026 FISS.
3) Directed commercial fishery logbook trend information from 2026 (and earlier logs that were not available for the 2025 assessment) for all IPHC Regulatory Areas.
4) Directed commercial fishery biological sampling from 2026 (age, length, individual weight, and average weight-at-age) and sex-ratio-at-age information from the 2025 biological samples from all IPHC Regulatory Areas.
5) Biological information (lengths and/or ages) from non-directed discards (all IPHC Regulatory Areas) and the recreational fishery (IPHC Regulatory Area 3A only) from 2025. The availability of these data routinely lags one year.
6) Updated mortality estimates from all sources for 2025 (where preliminary values were used) and estimates for all sources in 2026.

STOCK AND MANAGEMENT

The stock assessment reports the status of the Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) resource in the IPHC Convention Area. As in recent stock assessments, the resource is modelled as a single stock extending from northern California to the Aleutian Islands and Bering

Sea, including all inside waters of the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound, but excludes known extremities in the western Bering Sea within the Russian Exclusive Economic Zone (Figure 1).

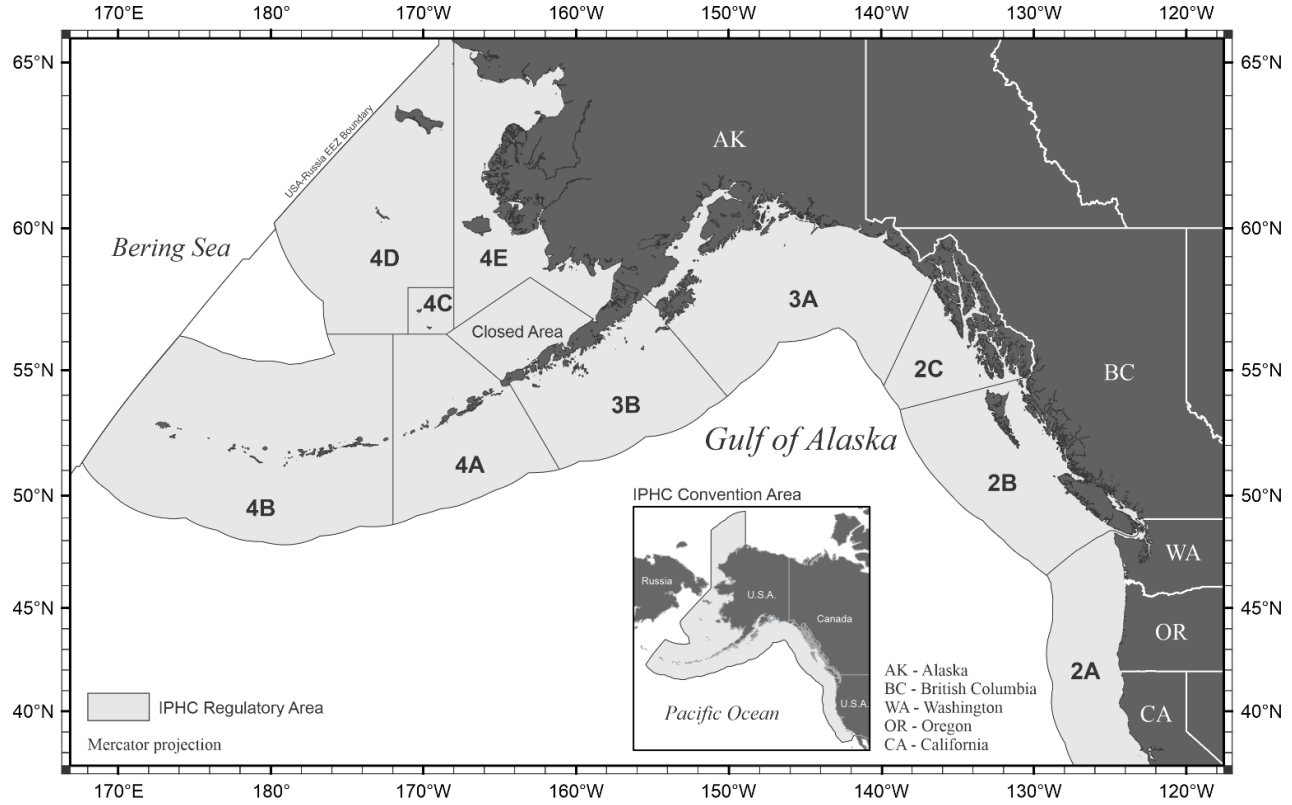


Figure 1. IPHC Convention Area (insert) and IPHC Regulatory Areas.

The Pacific halibut fishery has been managed by the IPHC since 1923. Catch limits for each of eight IPHC Regulatory Areas[1] are set each year by the Commission. The stock assessment provides a summary of recently collected data, and model estimates of stock size and trend. Specific management information is summarized via a decision table reporting the estimated risks associated with alternative management actions and catch tables projecting the level of mortality for fisheries in each IPHC Regulatory Area indicated by the IPHC's interim management procedure, as well as other alternatives.

SUMMARY OF PENDING CONTENT

This document will contain a summary of the data relevant to Pacific halibut management and contributing to the 2026 stock assessment. These data include:

- Recent and historical mortality,
- The results of the 2026 (and earlier) Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) analyzed via the IPHC's space-time model:
    - Trends by Biological Region and IPHC Regulatory Area
    - Age-compositions
    - Stock distribution estimates by Biological Region

This document will also include a summary of the 2026 stock assessment results. Primary results include:

- Coastwide biomass and recruitment trends

[1] The IPHC recognizes sub-Areas 4C, 4D, 4E and the Closed Area for use in domestic catch agreements but manages the combined Area 4CDE.

- A comparison to 2025 and earlier stock assessment results (estimated biomass and fishing intensity scale and trends)
- Reference points
- Major sources of uncertainty

Short-term projections and the harvest decision table for 2027 will be reported in a separate document (*IPHC-2026-IM102-11*).

TIMELINE FOR REVISION

The complete document (IPHC-2026-IM102-09 Rev_1) is anticipated to be available no later than **23 November 2026**.

Detailed material for AM103 will include any further revisions to this summary document. More detailed stock assessment (IPHC-2027-SA-01) and data overview (IPHC-2027-SA-02) documents will be published directly to the stock assessment page on the IPHC's website.

REFERENCES

Stewart, I., and Hicks, A. 2024. Assessment of the Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) stock at the end of 2023. IPHC-2024-SA-01. 37 p.

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Stewart, I., and Webster, R. 2026. Overview of data sources for the Pacific halibut stock assessment, harvest policy, and related analyses. IPHC-2026-SA-02. 59 p.

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Stewart, I., Hicks, A., Webster, R., and Wilson, D. 2026. Data overview and stock assessment for Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) at the end of 2025. IPHC-2026-AM102-10. 17 p.