



Update on actions arising from the 26th Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB026)

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PURPOSE

To provide the RAB with an opportunity to consider the progress made during the inter-sessional period, in relation to the recommendations and requests of the 26th Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB026).

BACKGROUND

At the previous RAB meeting, a series of actions were agreed upon for implementation by the IPHC Secretariat. These action items and progress made on their implementation are detailed in Appendix A.

DISCUSSION

Noting that best practice governance requires the prompt delivery of core tasks assigned by the Commission, at each subsequent session of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, attempts will be made to ensure that any recommendations and requests for action are carefully constructed so that each contains the following elements:

- 1) a specific action to be undertaken (deliverable);
- 2) clear responsibility for the action to be undertaken (i.e. a specific Contracting Party, the IPHC Secretariat, a subsidiary body of the Commission or the Commission itself);
- 3) a desired time frame for delivery of the action (i.e. by the next session of an subsidiary body, or other date).

This involves numbering and tracking all action items (see Appendix A) from the RAB, as well as including clear progress updates and document reference numbers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the RAB:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IPHC-2026-RAB027-03, that provided the RAB with an opportunity to consider the progress made during the inter-sessional period, in relation to the recommendations and requests of the 26th Session of the IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB026).
- 2) **AGREE** to consider and revise as necessary the actions, and for these to be combined with any new actions arising from RAB027.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Update on actions arising from the 26th IPHC Research Advisory Board (RAB027)

APPENDIX A

Update on actions arising from the 26th Session of the Research Advisory Board (RAB026)

Action No.	Description	Update
RECOMMENDATIONS		
RAB026-Rec.01 (para. 18)	<i>Reproductive assessment of the female Pacific halibut population</i> The RAB RECOMMENDED prioritising fecundity estimations to determine the relationship between Pacific halibut female weight and total egg production.	In Progress: Update: Special collection of fecundity samples has been completed, and a method for estimating fecundity in female Pacific halibut is being developed
RAB026-Rec.02 (para. 33)	<i>Guidance on, and discussion of, other potential applied research projects</i> NOTING recent issues identified regarding the alleged illegal retention and landing of Pacific halibut by non-target sectors for processing into fishmeal (e.g. the Kodiak trawl fleet; https://www.northernjournal.com/alaska-troopers-seize-kodiak-trawl-groups-electronics-in-bycatch-probe/), the RAB RECOMMENDED that: - the IPHC undertake an information gathering effort to document, explore via communications with enforcement entities engaged on the issue, so that the IPHC has a clear indication of what is being removed, and the likely impacts on the Pacific halibut resource. - as an affected party, the RAB would like the IPHC to be kept in the loop of any penalties that may be applied, so that a portion be requested and used to subsidise the annual FISS. - the gathered information should be summarised and provided as an information paper to the Annual Meeting and appropriate subsidiary bodies.	Completed Update: This issue was raised at the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC). On 5 June the Council passed a motion asking staff to prepare a regulatory amendment to clarify conflicting rules on disposing of prohibited species catch (PSC) that has already been landed. In addition, Jon Kurland, NOAA Alaska Region Administrator, sent a letter to the Council (13 March 2026) clarifying what is permissible under applicable regulations. A PSC disposition discussion paper, originally scheduled for October, has been postponed to the December 2026 Council meeting. Update on actions will

Action No.	Description	Update
		be provided in the Secretariat Report (IPHC-2027-AM103-04). Separately, the Council received an application for Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) from Sea Share, Inc. & Glacier Fish Co. to trial donating Pacific halibut from a trawl catcher/processor.
RAB026-Rec.03 (para. 34)	NOTING the importance of accurate accounting for all sources of mortality from the Pacific halibut stock, and concerns about the accuracy of the estimates for the unguided recreational fisheries in Alaska and Canada, the RAB RECOMMENDED that the Secretariat first summarise the information received from Contracting Parties through the annual reporting process, and that the Commission request additional detail on the methods used to derive estimates of unguided removals, including the potential sources of bias and uncertainty in those estimates.	Completed Update: Details on the estimation methods are available annually in the Contracting Party National Reports. In particular, the issue that unguided harvest in Regulatory Area 2C was not accurately predicted was noted, at the Secretariat's request, in IPHC-2026-AM102-NR02-Rev 1.
REQUESTS		
RAB026-Req.01 (para. 28)	<i>Guidance on, and Discussion of, other Potential Applied Research Projects</i> The RAB REQUESTED that the IPHC Secretariat continue investigations on Pacific halibut female maturity at age in different Biological Regions.	Completed & Ongoing Update: Continuing studies investigating temporal and spatial changes in histology-based maturity from 2022 to 2024, the IPHC Secretariat is conducting analyses of maturity at age from all four Biological Regions in 2025.

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RAB026-Req.02 (para. 29)	The RAB REQUESTED that the IPHC Secretariat set up efforts to increase documentation of sand flea occurrence during commercial fishing activities by encouraging fishing vessels to report such occurrences in logbooks, and to also relay this information to IPHC Fisheries Data Specialists (Field).	Completed & Ongoing Update: Data collection in commercial fishing sector commenced in 2026 as a trial. Update will be provided as IPHC-2026-RAB027-INF01.
RAB026-Req.03 (para. 30)	The RAB REQUESTED that the IPHC Secretariat collate and potentially analyse FISS data on sandflea prevalence.	Completed Update: See paper IPHC-2026-RAB027-INF01 .
RAB026-Req.04 (para. 31)	The RAB REQUESTED that the IPHC Secretariat continue investigations on Pacific halibut juvenile stages, including the mapping of juvenile habitat throughout IPHC Convention Waters.	In Progress: Update: The IPHC Secretariat is continuing to analyze historical data on the presence and absence of juvenile Pacific halibut in shallow waters off Alaska
RAB026-Req.05 (para. 32)	The RAB REQUESTED that the IPHC Secretariat collect information on catch rates during openers of the Pacific halibut directed fishery in IPHC Regulatory Area 2A in relation to previous trawling activities in Pacific halibut fishing grounds.	Pending Update: yet to commence due to competing priorities.
RAB026-Req.06 (para. 35)	The RAB REQUESTED that the IPHC Secretariat continue to collaborate with industry on a range of research projects, noting the recent successful collaborations involving the catch-protection study. This could include facilitating the application and further innovation of catch protection devices by the commercial fishery.	Completed & Ongoing Update: This is an ongoing activity based on Commission priorities and funding, both internal and external.
RAB026-Req.07 (para. 36)	The RAB REQUESTED the consideration of an investigation of a floor coastwide mortality limit (e.g. a minimum Total Constant Exploitation Yield (TCEY)) be conducted as part of the MSE process to understand potential risks to the Pacific halibut stock and fisheries for this type of management procedure.	Pending Update: yet to commence due to competing priorities.