INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) Design & Implementation in 2026: Preliminary Summary

Agenda item: 4.2
IPHC-2026-RAB027-07
K. Ualesi



Purpose

To provide Commissioners with a preliminary summary of the IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) design and implementation in 2026.



Primary Objective

- Standardised, fishery-independent data collection for the Pacific halibut stock (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) assessment and stock distribution estimation
  - Pacific halibut distribution and abundance trends
  - Collection of biological data (sex, maturity, and age)





Standardisation

GEAR

- Fixed & Snap Gear
- Each skate meets the following specifications:
  - 1800 ft (548.6 metres) with 100 hooks spaced 18 ft (5.5 metres) apart
  - No. 3 (16/0) circle hooks threaded through the front on 24-48 inch (61-122 cm) gangions
  - 7-10 lb (3-5 kg) weights on each non-anchored skate end



BAIT

- Frozen chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*) #2 semi-brite or better
- Cut 1/4 to 1/3 lb (1/10 to 1/6 kg)
- Captains sign off on bait quality



Secondary Objective





- Cost effectiveness without compromising scientific integrity of the FISS design
  - Fish Sale Process
    - RFT for each sale
    - Rated against specified criteria provided to all interested buyers on sales notice
    - Established controls for review and approval for each sale
    - Multi-port bidding when feasible
  - Charter Agreements
    - RFTs
    - All submissions rated against specified criteria published in tender specifications

Secondary Objective

- Sale of *sampled* U32 Pacific halibut
- Price is 23% less than O32 Pacific halibut average price
  - U32 Pacific halibut catch makes up 8.5% of the overall landed P halibut (30,202 lb) and 6.8% of the total revenue ($242,682 USD)





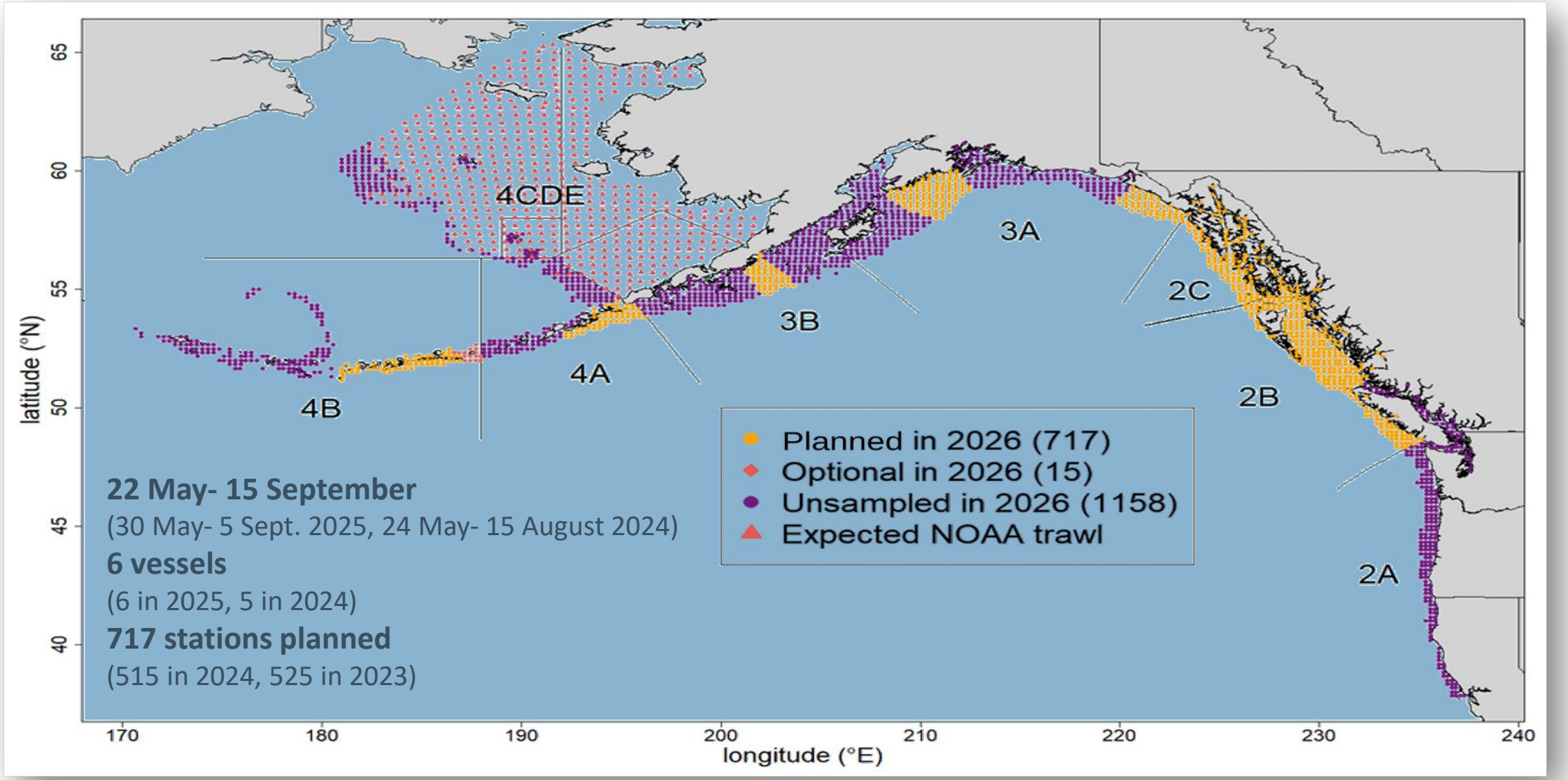
Tertiary Objective

- Collaboration
  - NOAA Fisheries: Pacific Cod & Spiny dogfish sampling
  - ADFG: Dockside Rockfish Sampling in some Alaska ports
  - 2B: Dockside Rockfish sampling (DFO, Archipelago, PHMA) on hold for 2026



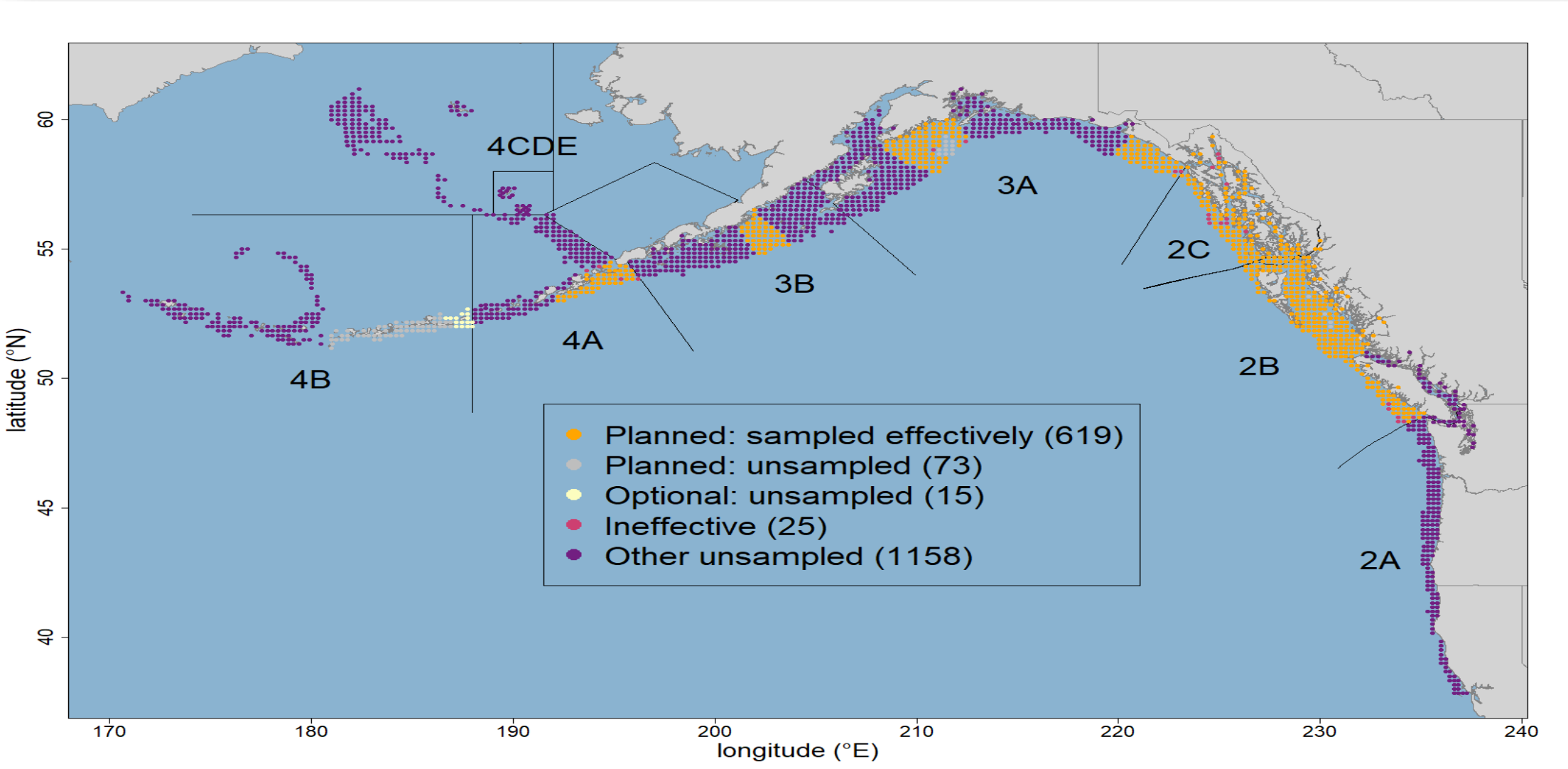


2026 Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS)

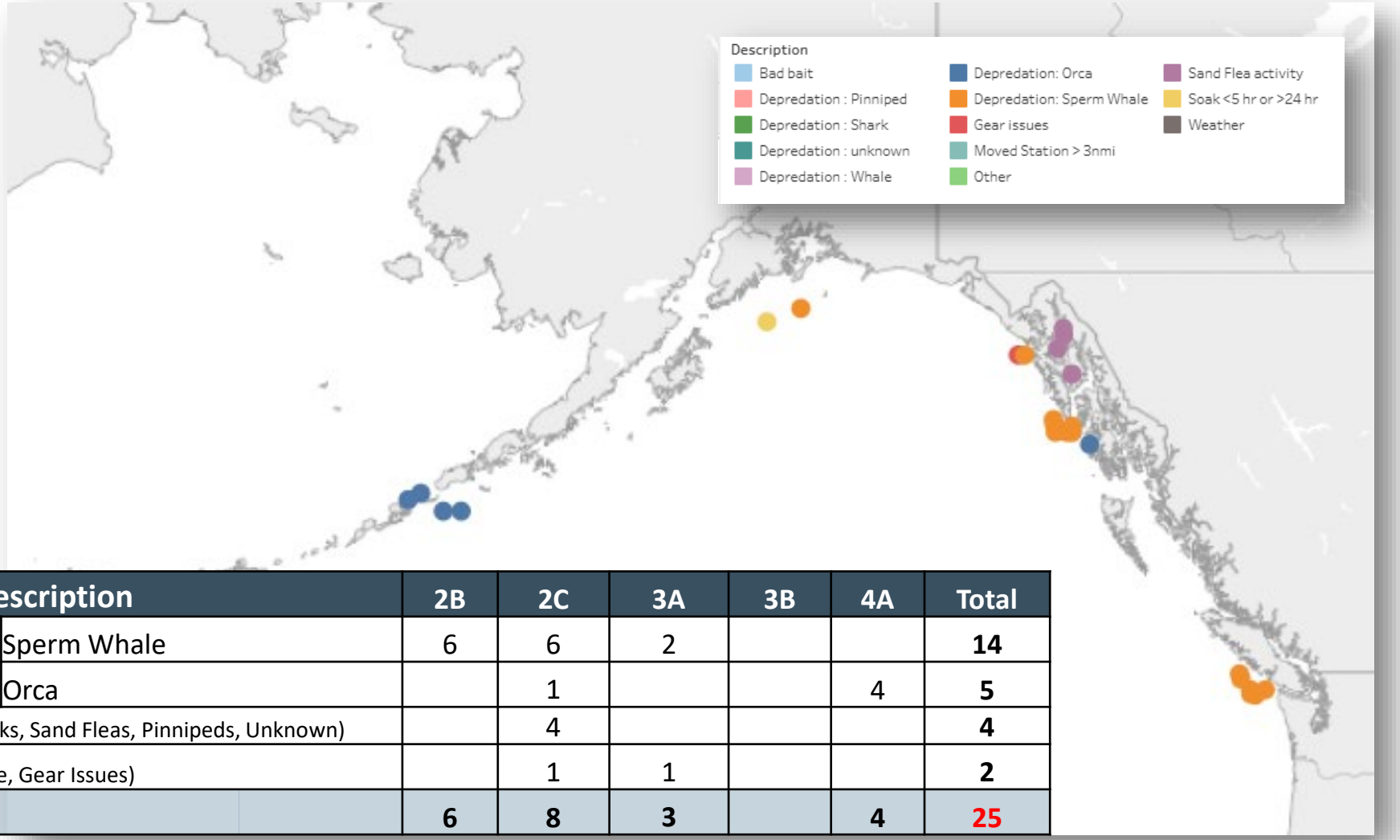


22 May- 15 September
(30 May- 5 Sept. 2025, 24 May- 15 August 2024)
6 vessels
(6 in 2025, 5 in 2024)
717 stations planned
(515 in 2024, 525 in 2023)

2026 Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS)



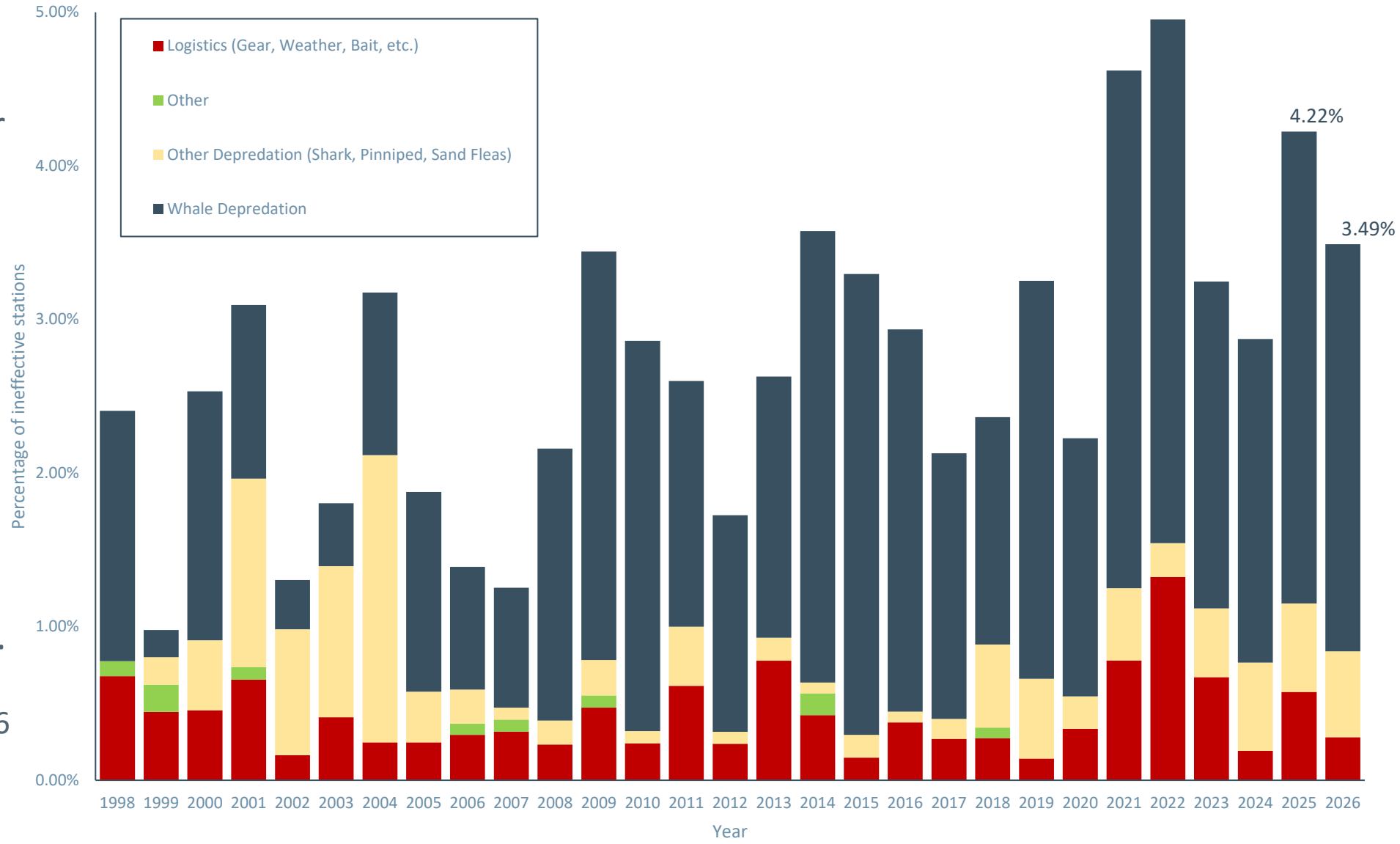
Ineffective Stations in 2026



Description		2B	2C	3A	3B	4A	Total
Depredation: Whale	Sperm Whale	6	6	2			**14**
	Orca		1			4	**5**
Depredation: Other (Sharks, Sand Fleas, Pinnipeds, Unknown)			4				**4**
Logistical Issues (Soak Time, Gear Issues)			1	1			**2**
Total		**6**	**8**	**3**		**4**	**25**

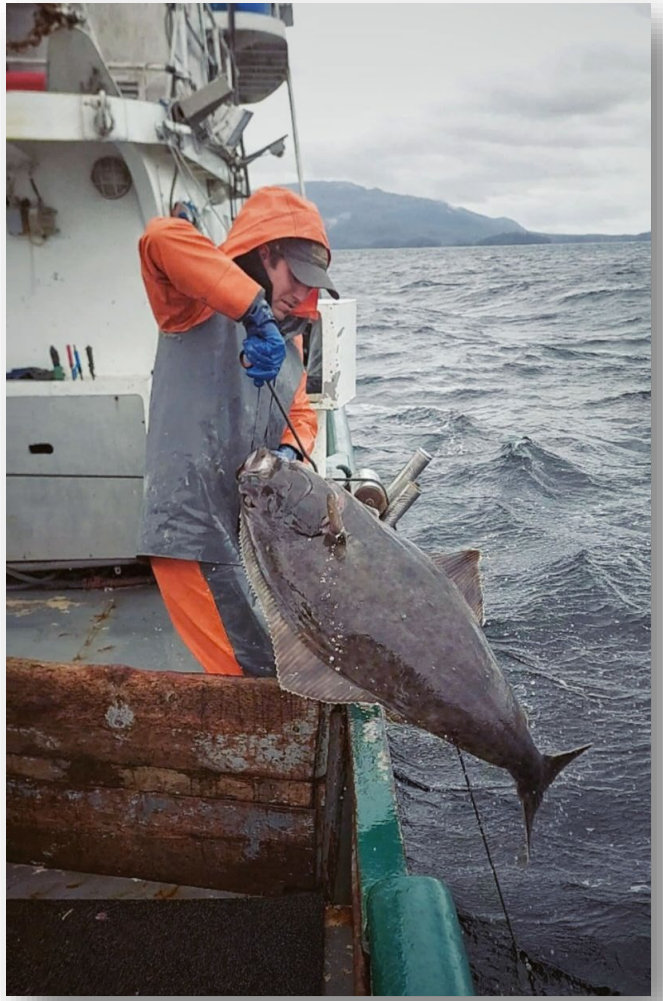
Percentage of Ineffective Stations

- Changes in the FISS design from year to year will influence the number of ineffective stations
- Regulatory Area 4A has historically had the highest proportion of ineffective stations, with whale depredation contributing to an increase in ineffective stations when the area is included in FISS sampling.
  - 2C had the most ineffective stations in 2026 due to sperm whale depredation & sand fleas



2026 FISS Results

- *FISS Catch-Per-Unit-Effort (CPUE) data maps and plots*
- *FISS Performance*
- *FISS Biologicals*
- *Data set downloads*



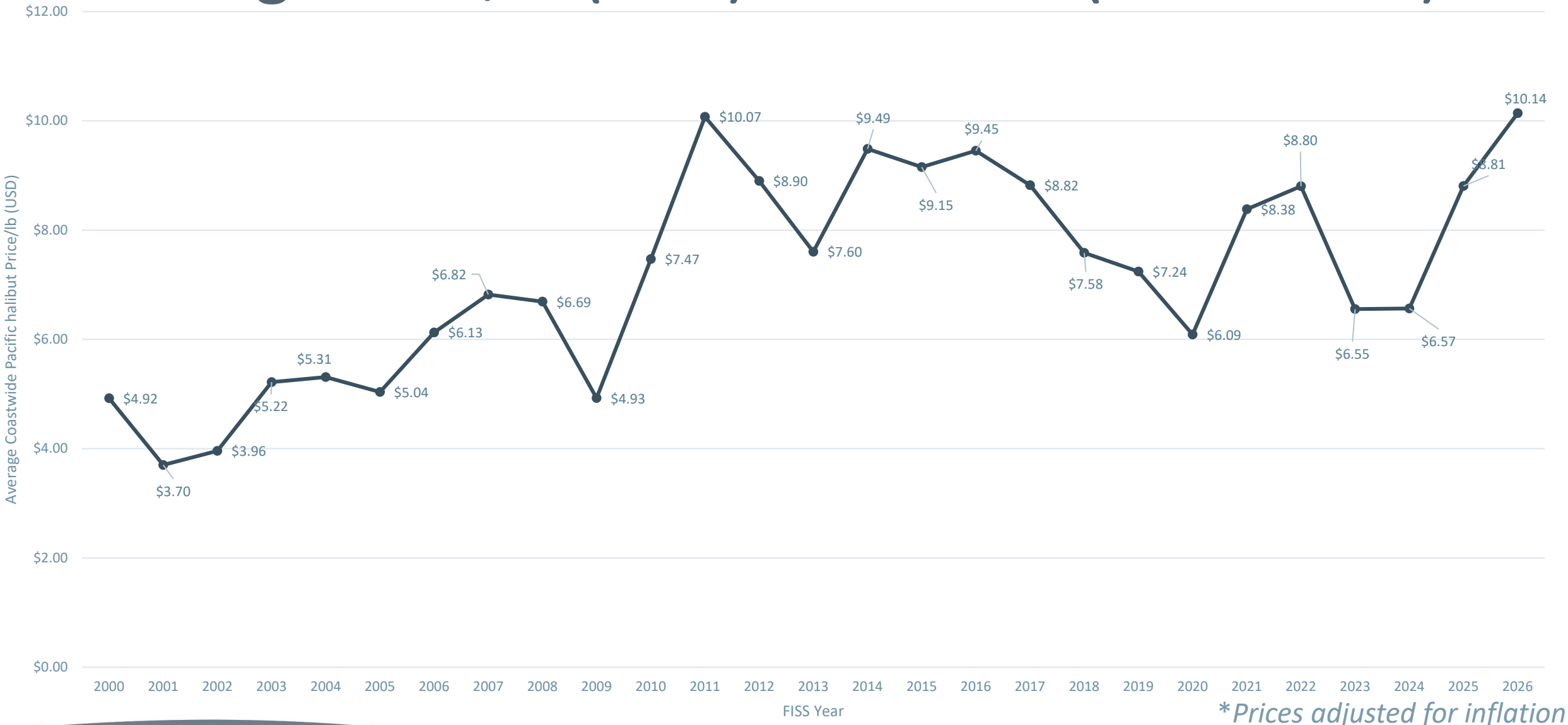


Average Price/lb (USD) by IPHC Reg Area

IPHC Regulatory Area	FISS 2026 Average price/lb (USD)	FISS 2025 Average price/lb (USD)
2A	-	$7.33
2B	$10.83	$9.66
2C	$10.34	$9.99
3A	$9.51	$7.63
3B	$7.34	$6.22
4A	$7.60	$6.21
4B	-	$6.20
4CDE	-	-
Coastwide	$10.14	$8.18

**Prices are not adjusted for inflation*

Average Price/lb (USD) Over Time (2000-2026)



*Prices adjusted for inflation

Pacific halibut sales (USD) by IPHC Reg. Area

IPHC Regulatory Area	FISS 2026 Pacific halibut sales value (USD)	FISS 2025 Pacific halibut sales value (USD)
2A	-	$80,763
2B	$1,385,914	$429,342
2C	$1,542,525	$683,662
3A	$399,394	$507,736
3B	$84,115	$305,806
4A	$172,841	-
4B	-	$56,062
4CDE	-	-
TOTAL	$3,584,789	$2,063,371

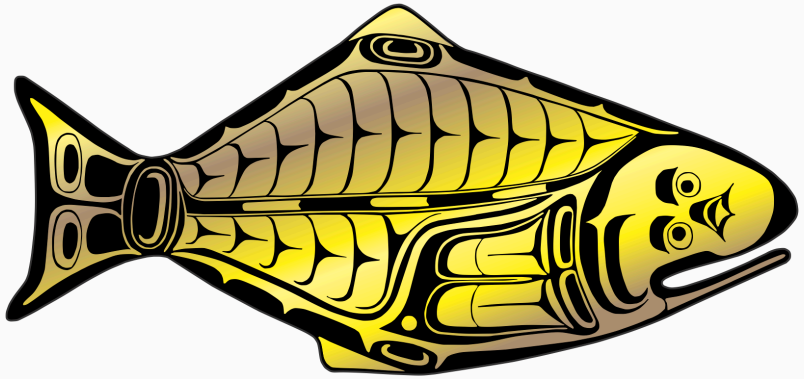
**Prices are not adjusted for inflation*

Recommendations

That the RAB:

- **NOTE** paper IPHC-2026-RAB027-07 that provides a summary of the design and implementation of the IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey (FISS) in 2026.

INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC



HALIBUT COMMISSION

https://www.iphc.int/