



**Contracting Party National Report:
Canada**

SUBMITTED BY: CANADA (FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA) (23 DECEMBER 2022)

CONTRACTING PARTY: CANADA

AGENCY:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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FISHERY SECTOR/S

All

IPHC REGULATORY AREA/S

IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Canada: British Columbia)

DISCUSSION

Each year Fisheries and Oceans Canada provides harvest opportunities to First Nations for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes (or domestic purposes for First Nations with modern treaties), and the commercial and recreational fisheries. First Nations, recreational, and commercial fisheries on the Pacific coast of Canada have long harvested groundfish. Groundfish serve as a source of food, they provide jobs, income, and enjoyment for individuals, businesses, and coastal communities and they play key roles in natural ecosystems.

The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for collection and reporting of data and statistics for the agri-food sector. An important part of that mandate is to analyze the impact of various sectors, including fisheries and seafood to the broader provincial economy. B.C. commercially harvests and reports on over 25 wild fisheries including Pacific halibut which is within B.C.'s top most valuable wild fishery commodities.

Indigenous fisheries

In the 1990 Sparrow decision, the Supreme Court of Canada found that where an Indigenous group has an Indigenous right to fish for food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) purposes, it takes priority, after conservation, over other uses of the resource. Fisheries are authorized via a Communal Licence issued by the Department under the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations.

Commercial fisheries

There are seven distinct commercial groundfish sectors: Groundfish trawl, Halibut, Sablefish, Inside Rockfish, Outside Rockfish, Lingcod, and Dogfish fisheries that are managed according to the measures set out in the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP). The management of these sector groups is integrated, with all groups subject to 100% at-sea monitoring and 100% dockside monitoring, individual vessel accountability for all catch (both retained and released), individual transferable quotas (ITQ), and

reallocation of these quotas between vessels and fisheries to cover catch of non-directed species. There are approximately 308 active commercial groundfish vessels. Information on licensed vessels is available online at the DFO website: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/index-eng.htm>.

The 2022 commercial fishery is described in appendix 1 of this report, “Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2022 IPHC Annual Report,” and appendix 3 of this report, “Halibut Compliance and Enforcement.”

Recreational fisheries

A recreational fishery may occur where authorized by a valid Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licence, which is required for the recreational harvest of all species of fish. Approximately 300,000 Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licences are sold each year. Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licences can be purchased online by using the DFO website:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/licence-permis/application-eng.html>

The 2022 recreational fishery is described in appendix 2 of this report, “2022 Canadian Recreational Fishery Halibut Catch Report,” and appendix 3 of this report, “Halibut Compliance and Enforcement.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Commission:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IPHC-2023-AM099-NR01 which provides the Commission with a summary from Fisheries and Oceans Canada of halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B.

REFERENCES

Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Groundfish, effective February 21, 2022.
<https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/41034971.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2022 Fishery Overview Report
Appendix 2: Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2022 Recreational Fishery Report
Appendix 3: Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2022 Enforcement Report
Appendix 4: Province of British Columbia 2022 Annual Report

APPENDIX 1

Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2022 Fishery Overview Report**PREPARED BY: FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA (23 DECEMBER 2022)**

CONTRACTING PARTY: CANADA**AGENCY:**

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

CONTACT:Gwyn Mason, Halibut Coordinator, Gwynhyfar.Mason@dfo-mpo.gc.ca**FISHERY SECTOR/S:**

All

IPHC REGULATORY AREA:

IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Canada: British Columbia)

Discussion**Catch Limits**

Fisheries and Oceans Canada follows an allocation policy that defines access to the Pacific Halibut Canadian Total Allowable Catch (CTAC) for Canadian commercial, recreational, and food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries. For 2022, the CTAC was 7,110,000 net pounds (fresh, head-off, dressed weight). The CTAC is composed of the catch limit for regulatory area 2B and an allocation for FSC. In addition to the CTAC, a carryover of quota from previous seasons is allocated to some licences.

Priority access is provided to the CTAC for FSC purposes, while commercial and recreational access is divided between the sectors 85% / 15% respectively. The 2022 Commercial and Recreational catch limit for allocation purposes was 6,945,000 net pounds. After accounting for O26 wastage, domestic research, commercial carryover from 2021 to 2022 and net reallocations into and out of the 2022 fishery, the resulting TAC for commercial and recreational harvest in 2022 was 6,337,437 net pounds.



Commercial and Recreational Fishery Summaries

For allocation purposes, the commercial / recreational total allowable catch (TAC) is equal to the Canadian catch limit, plus “O26” wastage mortality. The TAC is then allocated between the commercial and recreational sectors, and the respective “O26” wastage mortality is removed from the commercial and recreational TACs (Table 1). The domestic research allocation (use of fish) is also removed from the commercial sector’s allocation prior to establishing the 2022 commercial TAC. The combined commercial and recreational TAC, including carryover adjustments, for 2022 was 6,337,437 net pounds. As of December 20, 2022, the combined commercial and recreational halibut catch (including XRQ landed catch, commercial landed catch and mortality associated with all released fish in the commercial groundfish fisheries) was 6,304,730 net pounds.

Commercial Fishery Summary

The 2022 Canadian commercial Halibut TAC, including the catch limit allocation and carryover, was 5,758,264 net pounds. Halibut may be caught and retained by all commercial hook and line, and trap groundfish fisheries in Canada. This includes category L, K, ZN, and Schedule II licences.

In 2022, the Canadian commercial Halibut catch totalled 5,375,537 net pounds (Table 2). This catch, reported by all hook and line/trap groundfish fisheries in area 2B, includes both landed and released at-sea mortality. Given that non-halibut groundfish fisheries continue throughout the Halibut winter closure, additional released at-sea mortality will continue to be attributed to the 2022 Halibut catch until February 20, 2023, after which released at-sea mortality will be attributed to the 2023 TAC. As such the 2022 commercial catch is current as of December 20, 2022.

Commercial Integrated Management Plan

First introduced as a pilot program in 2006, the Commercial Groundfish Integration Program (CGIP) was made permanent in January 2010 to manage groundfish fisheries, including Pacific Halibut, in British Columbia. The objectives of the CGIP are to improve and maintain groundfish harvest sustainability and management through improved catch monitoring and catch accountability. The CGIP implemented individual vessel accountability for all catch, both retained and released, via individual transferable quotas which may be reallocated between licences and fisheries to cover non-directed catch. In addition these management tools are supported by 100% at-sea monitoring and 100% dockside monitoring for all groundfish vessels.

Notable management changes for the 2022 season include:

- The ongoing rebuilding measures for Yelloweye Rockfish and Bocaccio Rockfish in all commercial groundfish fisheries.
- A rollover of the seasonal expansion (Nov 1st, 2022 – April 30th, 2023) to the existing 800-line pilot bottom trawl closure was first implemented in 2020. The existing and expanded seasonal closures are at a fishing location in the Queen Charlotte Sound known as the Circle Tow by the groundfish trawl fleet and the 800-line by the Halibut fleet. This expanded seasonal closure is an interim management measure that is intended to limit harvest of spawning aggregations of Arrowtooth Flounder and Halibut. The year-round pilot bottom trawl closure that was implemented in March 2019 continues to be in effect. This expanded seasonal closure is



intended for the short term and will be re-evaluated during the 2023/2024 fishing season. More information can be found at: https://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm?pg=view_notice&DOC_ID=267945&ID=all.

The 2023/2024 commercial groundfish fishing season will commence February 21, 2023, at which time the renewed Groundfish Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) will be available. All commercial groundfish management measures are detailed in the IFMP, which can be requested once available at: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/ifmp-eng.html#Groundfish>

Recreational Fishery Summary

There are two opportunities for recreational halibut fishing in area 2B, the recreational fishery, and the Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery pilot program (XRQ fishery). The 2022 recreational Halibut TAC was 1,011,750 net pounds. The 2022 XRQ fishery acquired 20,423 net pounds, resulting in a combined recreational and XRQ fishery TAC of 1,032,173 net pounds as of December 20, 2022 (Table 3). The estimated 2022 Canadian recreational Halibut catch totalled 938,369 net pounds, including 9,176 net pounds of catch in the XRQ fishery. The estimation methods of the recreational catch are outlined in *2022 Canadian Recreational Fishery Halibut Catch Report*. Management measures for the 2022 recreational fishery are summarised in the Area 2B Recreational Fishery Halibut Catch Report.

Halibut Experimental Recreational Fishery Program

The Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery pilot program allows individual anglers as well as guides, charters, lodges, marinas and other fishing experience providers to lease Halibut quota from the commercial fishery and subsequently retain Halibut that is in excess of the regular recreational fisheries daily and possession limits, and maximum size limits. An XRQ licence holder is permitted to fish for and retain Halibut from April 1 – December 31, even if the traditional recreational fishery is closed prior to December 31. Participants in the XRQ fishery must complete logbooks and submit them electronically within seven days of retaining a Halibut.

The XRQ fishery has operated as a pilot program since 2011. A regulatory process is underway to create a category of annual sport fishing licence in s.17 of the *British Columbia Sport Fishing Regulations, 1996*. Public consultations about the regulatory changes were held throughout 2012/2013, and a Regulatory Impact Assessment Statement that summarizes feedback from the public meetings on the experimental licence and regulatory change has been presented to the Minister. A regulatory intent document will be presented for additional public comment prior to the proposed regulatory changes being posted in Canada Gazette 1.

As part of the XRQ program, licence holders are permitted to carry forward uncaught quota (up to 10% or 200 net pounds, whichever is greater) to the subsequent season upon licence issuance. Licence holders carried forward 8,100 net pounds of uncaught quota from the 2021 season to the 2022 season. For the 2022 season, 12,323 net pounds of quota has been reallocated from commercial groundfish fisheries, resulting in a total available quota of 20,686 net pounds and a total YTD catch of 9,176 net pounds (as of December 20, 2022).

Additional details about the XRQ program are available online: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/groundfish-poissons-fond/halibut-fletan/index-eng.html>.



Canadian Aquaculture Research

There were no halibut aquaculture research or production activities in area 2B for 2022.

Food, Social and Ceremonial and Treaty Fishery

The estimated Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) halibut catch in area 2B is 405,000 net pounds. Since 2009, new conditions have been applied to commercial Halibut licences and many communal halibut permits, to improve catch reporting of FSC caught fish on commercial trips. Of the total FSC halibut caught in 2022, approximately 37,063 net pounds were caught in conjunction with commercial fishing trips and were subject to all commercial monitoring requirements, including 100% at-sea and 100% dockside monitoring. In addition, First Nations engaging in fishing only for FSC used tools such as catch calendars, some dockside monitoring and phone surveys to estimate their catch. Fisheries and Oceans Canada continues to work with First Nations to improve catch reporting within the FSC fisheries.

In April 2011 the Maa-nulth Final Agreement came into effect. The agreement allocates 26,000 net pounds of FSC Halibut (part of the 405,000 net pounds described above) plus 0.39% of the total CTAC to the Maa-nulth First Nations for FSC purposes (equivalent to 53,729 net pounds in 2022). In 2011 DFO mitigated for the additional treaty allocation through acquisition of 0.47% of the commercial TAC which is set aside for the Maa-nulth First Nation on an annual basis (identified as part of the “net reallocations into/out of the commercial fishery” in Table 1).

RECOMMENDATIONS: NA

REFERENCES: See hyperlinks above



Appendices

Tables

Table 1. Halibut allocations in 2B as of December 20, 2022. All values in net pounds.

Commercial / recreational TAC for allocation	6,945,000	
Commercial allocation	x 85%	
O26 wastage	- 210,000	
Research (use of fish)	- 60,000	
Commercial TAC for allocation purposes	5,633,250	
Net carryover and net reallocations into/out of the commercial fishery ^A	+ 125,014	
Commercial TAC (Total Available Quota)	5,758,264	
Recreational allocation	x 15 %	
O26 wastage	- 30,000	
Recreational TAC	1,011,750	
XRQ allocation	X 0%	
XRQ acquired quota	+12,323	
Net carryover	+8,100	
XRQ TAC ^B	20,686	
Recreational and XRQ TAC ^B	1,032,173	
2B commercial and recreational TAC ^B	6,337,437	
2B commercial and recreational catch ^C	6,304,730	

A Net reallocations include quota reallocated from the commercial halibut sector to Maa-nulth First Nations Treaty, the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI), and Allocation Transfer Program (ATP), as well as the Halibut Experimental Recreational Fishery (XRQ) pilot program.

B There is no initial allocation provided to XRQ fishery, though quota may be transferred into the XRQ fishery from commercial Halibut fisheries. As a result the XRQ TAC changes proportionately with the commercial TAC as quota is transferred between fisheries.

C Catch includes all landed fish, as well as the mortality associated with legal-sized released fish in the commercial fishery

Table 2. Halibut for 2B commercial groundfish fisheries as of December 20, 2022. All values in net pounds.

Commercial TAC	5,758,264
Total Commercial Catch	5,375,537



Table 3. Halibut for 2B recreational and the Halibut Experimental Recreational pilot program (XRQ) fisheries as of as of December 20, 2022. All values in net pounds.

Recreational TAC	1,011,750
Recreational catch ^C	929,193
XRQ TAC	20,686
XRQ catch	9,176 ^D
Recreational and XRQ TAC ^B	1,032,173
Recreational and XRQ catch ^C	938,369

B There is no initial allocation provided to XRQ fishery, though quota may be transferred into the XRQ fishery from commercial Halibut fisheries. As a result the XRQ TAC changes proportionately with the commercial TAC as quota is transferred between fisheries.

C Catch includes all landed fish.

D Effective December 20, 2022.



APPENDIX 2

Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2022 Recreational Fishery Report

PREPARED BY: FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA (23 DECEMBER 2022)

CONTRACTING PARTY: CANADA

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FISHERY SECTOR/S: Recreational

IPHC REGULATORY AREA: IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Canada: British Columbia)

DISCUSSION



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1. Overview

This report summarizes the 2022 harvest and biological data from the Canadian recreational Halibut fishery in the tidal waters of British Columbia (BC). The recreational total allowable catch for 2022 was 1,011,750 net pounds¹, with an estimated harvest of 929,193 net pounds (82,557 net pound underage). The estimated harvest by pieces is 68,597 pieces.

The 2022 season opened on February 15 and closed on December 31. Traditional monitoring and reporting programs, such as logbooks, lodge manifests and recreational creel surveys, collected catch, effort and biological data during peak months and areas of the fishery. Estimates of catch in months and areas not monitored by traditional programs were generated from data collected during DFO’s internet-based recreational survey (iREC). Initiated in 2012, the iREC survey collects catch and effort information from recreational licence holders on a monthly basis throughout the recreational fishing year².

Final estimates are anticipated to be available by the spring of 2023. Estimated harvest in pieces and net weight by regional areas are noted below.

1.1. Harvest

Table 1. Estimated Harvest in Pieces and Net Pounds by Regional Area

Area	Pieces	Net Pounds
North Coast	38,142	457,942
Central Coast	2,481	26,671
South Coast	27,974	444,580
Totals	68,597	929,193

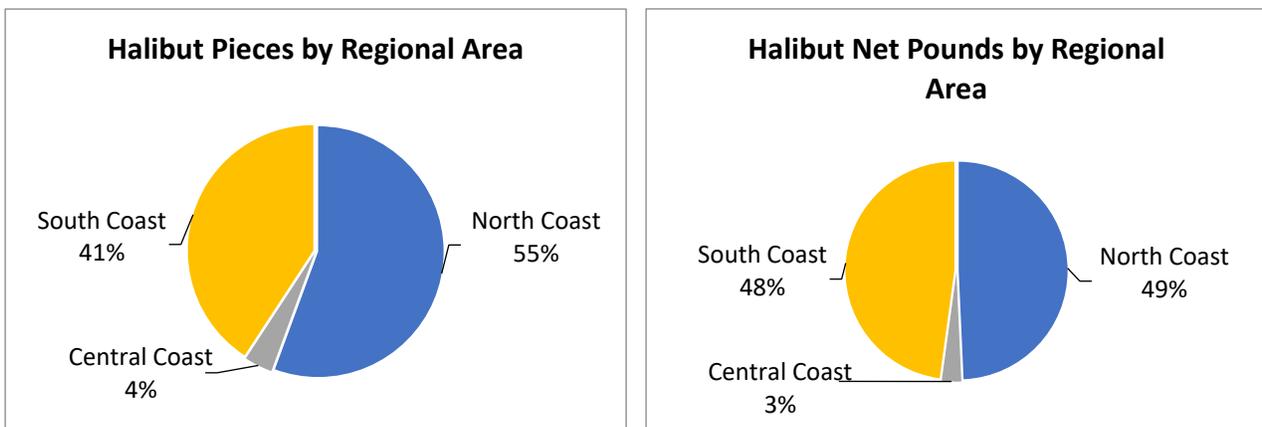


Figure 1. Percentage of Halibut harvested by piece and weight by Regional Area

¹ Pounds in this document refer to net weight (head off, dressed) pounds. See Biological Sampling section for the equations used to convert round weight (head on, undressed) and fork length to net weight.



1.2. Biological Samples

A coast wide total of 14,373 halibut were biologically sampled for either length or weight in 2022, representing 21% of the estimated harvest. The number of biological samples collected by regional areas is noted below.

Samples were collected from lodges, guides and independent anglers interviewed at access points and converted to net weight, head off and dressed, using the following formulas developed by the IPHC:

$$\text{Round Weight} = \text{Fork Length (cm)}^{3.24} \times (6.921 \times 10^{-6})$$

$$\text{Net Weight} = \text{Round Weight} \times 0.75$$

Average net weights were calculated for each Area on a monthly basis to generate estimates of total net weight by month and area caught in the fishery.

Table 2. Number of Halibut Biologically Sampled by Regional Area

Area	Samples
North Coast	10,876
Central Coast	1,492
South Coast	2,005
Totals	14,373

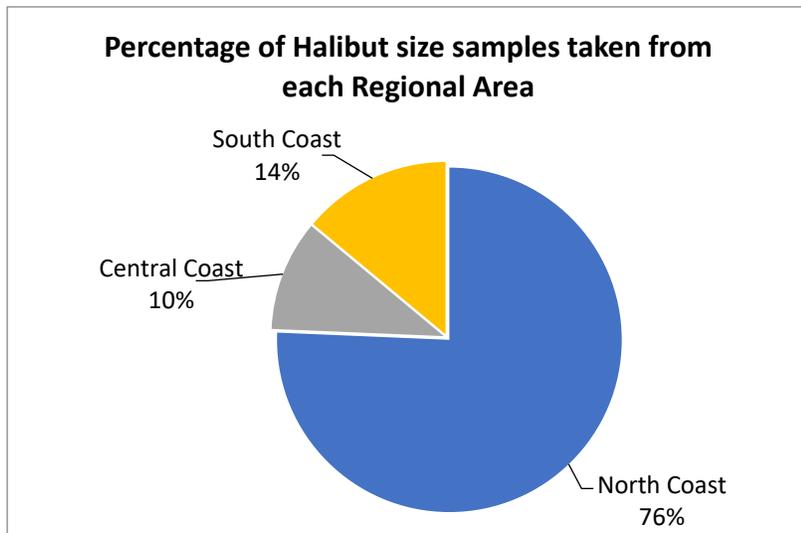


Figure 2. Percentage of Halibut size samples taken from each regional area.



1.3. Fishery Logistics

Catch monitoring of the recreational fishery in BC is extremely challenging given the large geographic area (numerous remote areas), the diversity of fishing opportunities and the diversity of participants.

Starting in 2015, Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licences (TWSFL) included Conditions of Licence that make catch reporting mandatory. Specifically, the conditions state that “*The licence holder shall provide accurate information regarding their catch and fishing activities upon request of a Creel Surveyor or an on-line surveyor, authorities designated under s.61(5) of the Fisheries Act*”. Conditions of Licence also included regulations related to possession limits, size limits and an annual limit.

In response to the IPHC’s 2012 request for data collection programs on recreational discards, Fisheries and Oceans Canada reviewed its existing recreational halibut catch and release information and examined options for the estimation of release mortalities. DFO obtains information from anglers on the number of halibut releases through creel surveys, logbooks and internet surveys. In BC, anglers are not required to keep any records of released Halibut. Fishers are not required to record sizes of released Halibut in part because such a practice may increase release mortality and present challenges in terms of angler safety, and provide data of variable quality. Size limits and angler preference are some reasons why released halibut may be a different average size compared to the average size of retained fish. Given these various limitations of the information available, DFO does not currently use recreational release data for the purposes of recreational halibut management or allocation decisions.

In 2020, DFO began using IPHC’s estimate of Area 2B recreational release mortality. This resulted in an estimate of 30,000 lbs of release mortality for the 2022 season. This discard mortality is accounted for before the 2B recreational catch limit is established and thus is not included in the calculation of catch relative to the recreational catch limit described elsewhere in this report.

DFO continues to work with the recreational fishery sector in BC to improve recreational fishery monitoring and catch reporting. While the focus remains on strengthening data collection and monitoring for retained catch in recreational fisheries, new reporting tools such as the iREC survey of recreational harvesters include questions about anglers’ releases. As the survey continues to be refined and improved, DFO will be exploring how the data gathered on releases may be used to inform management.

2. MANAGEMENT, MONITORING and POLICY DEVELOPMENT

2.1. 2022 Recreational Fishery Management Plan

The current domestic sharing arrangement between commercial and recreational fisheries is 85% of the resource allocated to the commercial sector and 15% to the recreational sector, after accounting for First Nations’ Food, Social, and Ceremonial requirements. The 15% recreational share in 2022 equates to a total allowable catch of 1,011,750 net pounds.

The recreational halibut fishery opened on February 1, 2022, with a daily limit of 2 fish per day. The fishery operated under the 2021 recreational licence until March 31. On April 1, the 2022 licence and management measures entered into effect. Current regulations – including daily catch and possession limits, open and closed areas, size limits and gear restrictions – are available online in the BC Sport Fishing Guide: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/index-eng.html>. The 2022 measures included:

- A maximum length of 133cm head-on length
- A daily limit that is set in regulation, is defined in the conditions of licence and can be varied in-season as required. The possession limit is contingent on the daily limit as defined by the *BC Sports Fishing Regulations*, up to maximum of three per day:
 - If the Daily Limit is one (1) or two (2):



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- the Possession Limit is EITHER of: one (1) halibut measuring from 90 cm to 133 cm head-on length - OR - two (2) halibut measuring under 90 cm head-on length.
 - If the Daily Limit is three (3):
 - the Possession Limit is EITHER of: one (1) halibut measuring from 90 cm to 133 cm head-on length – OR - three (3) halibut measuring under 90 cm head-on length.
 - NOTE: If in possession of one (1) Halibut 90cm head-on length or longer, you shall not possess any other Halibut
- An annual limit of ten (10) in aggregate, from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023
- All halibut retained must be recorded on the Tidal Waters Licence plus the date and area from which each halibut is caught and its length
- A mandatory Condition of Licence to report catch when surveyed.

The opening was for all Pacific Fishery Management Areas (PFMAs) with the exception of portions of San Juan River Mouth (portion of Area 20-2). Anglers were not permitted to fish for nor retain halibut in this area.

The DFO and Sport Fishing Advisory Board (SFAB) Halibut Committee meets monthly throughout the fishing season to review estimated catches. By mid-summer of 2022, it was determined that the recreational sector would be unlikely to reach their TAC under the existing management conditions. Resultantly, DFO, in consultation with SFAB, proceeded with a change to the daily limit of Halibut measuring under 90cm in length – varying the daily limit from two (2) daily to three (3) daily. By the end of August, it was determined that the estimated harvest to date plus the forecasted catch to December 31 would not exceed the 1,011,750 pound Total Allowable Catch. Resultantly, the fishery will remain open until December 31, 2022.

For 2023, the SFAB is considering various management options they may recommend to DFO in light of existing and/or continuing impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic. These options may include considering changes to:

- Minimum and Maximum size limits
- Individual annual limits
- Daily and total possession limits
- Season length
- Time and area closures

2.2. Halibut Experimental Recreational Fishery Program

In 2011, the Department piloted an experimental fishery program where interested recreational stakeholders, such as individual recreational harvesters, lodges, charters, guides or marinas, could request an experimental licence that would allow them to lease quota from commercial harvesters through a market based transfer mechanism. The experimental licence permits licence holders to fish halibut beyond the limits and times of the regular recreational licence.

In 2012, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada confirmed that the experimental licence would continue to be available and announced the Department was moving forward with a regulatory proposal to continue the experimental fishery for the long term.

3. RECREATIONAL CATCH MONITORING and REPORTING PROGRAMS

3.1. Background

Marine creel surveys in BC began in 1980. Originally developed to estimate the catch of Chinook and Coho salmon in the Strait of Georgia, the geographical scope expanded to include Barkley Sound and Alberni Inlet in 1984, the entire West Coast of Vancouver Island (WCVI) in 1991, Haida Gwaii and the rest of the North



Coast in 1995, and most recently Johnstone Strait in 1998. The objectives of the creel survey have been expanded to include estimates for most recreationally caught finfish, including halibut. Lodges operating along the coast provide census data to the Department through the logbook program, manifest data or the electronic log (E-log) pilot program. The Department also receives data from some independent guides and avid anglers via logbook programs. These data are combined with the creel survey data to produce estimates of catch for each PFMA by month where traditional monitoring and reporting programs exist.

To address monitoring gaps in the recreational fishery the Department has been using and enhancing an online survey since 2012. The Internet Recreational Effort and Catch (iREC) survey was peer reviewed by the Canadian Scientific Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) in 2015. The iREC survey was developed to provide catch and effort estimates for all areas, months, fishing methods, and species harvested by the recreational sector. To minimize the effect of potential biases in iREC survey estimates, a calibration procedure was developed to relate iREC survey estimates and creel survey estimates in areas and times not covered by a creel survey.

3.2. 2022 Recreational Fishery Catch Monitoring

DFO has been working with the Sport Fishing Advisory Board on an implementation plan to strengthen recreational fishery monitoring and catch reporting in the Pacific Region. For the 2022 recreational halibut fishery, DFO used estimates from three sources; the iREC survey, logbook and lodge manifest program, and creel surveys.

DFO uses data from traditional catch monitoring (e.g. creel, lodge logbooks and manifests) where available, in priority of iREC survey data. As in previous years, traditional monitoring and catch reporting programs such as logbook, lodge manifest and the creel survey were used during peak months and areas of the recreational fishery. In areas and months where traditional programs were not implemented in 2022, DFO used in-season iREC survey catch estimates. In 2022, approximately 85.6% of the catch estimate was derived from traditional catch monitoring sources, and 14.4% from iRec survey estimates.

3.3. Haida Gwaii

Haida Gwaii recreational monitoring and reporting programs include a lodge logbook program and a creel survey. Lodge logbook data accounts for approximately 85% of the estimated halibut catch in Areas 1 and 2.

The Haida Gwaii Creel Survey (HGCS) typically estimates recreational catch from Areas 1 and 2 surrounding Haida Gwaii. Since 1995, the program has conducted creel surveys to estimate catch from recreational anglers in Masset Inlet, Naden Harbour, Langara Island, Skidegate Channel, Cartwright Sound and Rennell Sound. Fish caught in Haida Gwaii by recreational harvesters are also subject to random audits by the Haida Watchmen (Guardians) through the HGCS, which operates in the main fishing months in Area 1 and parts of Area 2.

Information collected from the creel survey is combined with data submitted through the lodge logbook program to generate total catch estimates for Areas 1 and 2. In 2022, 9,886 halibut were sampled for either length or weight.

3.4. North Coast Creel Survey

The North Coast Creel Survey program collects catch information from the recreational fishery surrounding Prince Rupert and Port Edward on the North Coast of B.C. It is focused in Areas 3 and 4, comprising the waters of Chatham Sound between the mouths of the Nass and Skeena Rivers. Chatham Sound is bordered by the Alaska/BC border to the north, Dundas and Stephens Island groups to the west and Porcher Island to the south, covering an area of approximately 4,200 km².



The North Coast Creel Survey program has a hybrid design with four components: an access point angler interview survey, an aerial effort count survey, a trailer census and a fishing lodge logbook program. The study design is similar to the one used in the South Coast Creel Survey.

Access point angler interview surveys collect catch information, angling activity times and biological samples of selected species from anglers at the completion of the fishing trip. The data is used to calculate species specific Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) values and create angler activity profiles. Aerial surveys are conducted to capture the ‘instantaneous’ counts of the number of boats fishing at the time of the flight and are expanded using the angler effort profiles generated from the ground surveys to produce an estimate of total daily effort. Lodges in the area submit logbooks to DFO post-season. Lodge data is treated as a complete census of catch, is summed and added to the creel estimates to get an estimate of total catch. To prevent bias in the effort estimates from lodge boats counted during the aerial surveys, a temporal-spatial analysis is conducted of lodge logbook data for days when the overflight occurs and any boats that were fishing in the survey area during the time of the flight are removed from the final count of boats fishing in the area.

In 2022, 990 halibut were sampled for either length or weight.

3.5. Central Coast

Catch information in Areas 7, 8 and 9 on the Central Coast is primarily collected from lodges and some charter operators operating in these areas, primarily through the logbook program. Most lodges participated in the logbook program and collected catch, effort and biological data that were submitted to the Department on a monthly basis. There is no creel program to estimate the number of halibut caught by independent anglers or guides in these areas due to challenges with implementing a survey in this remote and geographically dispersed fishery.

In 2022, 1,492 biological samples were reported.

3.6. South Coast Creel Survey

Creel surveys continue to be the main tool to estimate catch of halibut in this area. Surveys are conducted in select fishery strata based on: the highest catch of halibut and chinook, the highest effort, in-season management requirements, and potential impact on stocks of concern. Creel surveys consist of effort surveys and estimation of catch per boat trip based on fishery observers at selected ramps and marinas.

Data collected during angler interviews are recorded in the South Coast Marine Creel Survey form and provide average catch per unit effort by species and fishing times, while aerial counts from chartered aircraft capture ‘instantaneous’ counts of the number of recreational boats fishing on randomly selected dates. Fishing times obtained from angler interviews are used to generate daily fishing activity profiles which are used to expand the ‘instantaneous’ aerial counts to estimate the number of boats fishing each day. The estimate of boats fishing is multiplied by the average catch to estimate the total number of halibut caught each day. Estimates are generated monthly, or occasionally for two week periods where samples rates are high. The estimates are stratified by weekend and holidays vs. weekday dates. In addition, logbook catch data submitted by remote fishing lodges, independent guides and expert anglers are incorporated into creel estimates post season. The survey in Kyuquot Sound (PFMA's 26, 126) is entirely logbook-based, as fishing from lodges represents essentially all recreational effort in this remote area; in 2018 estimates were improved through use of iREC survey information on the proportion of guided to unguided trips.

Catch and effort is estimated by creel sub-area and rolled up to DFO PFMA's by month. South Coast waters include PFMA's 11 through 29. The Port Hardy survey also collects information from recreational fishing trips in Area 10. Creel surveys are active during the peak season of recreational angling and vary in duration depending on location. The spatial and temporal coverage of the survey program can vary year to year in response to budget and fishery priorities.



For further details on the methodology and results of the South Coast Creel survey, including catch and effort estimates with level of uncertainty, please visit:

<https://science-catalogue.canada.ca/record=4107744~S6>

In 2022, 2,005 halibut were sampled for length or weights during the South Coast Creel survey interviews.



4. APPENDICES

The following tables provide detailed catch and biological information collected during the 2022 recreational halibut fishery in BC. Note: these figures are preliminary and subject to change.

Table 5. Summary of the 2022 Recreational Halibut Catch by Pacific Fishery Management Area (PFMA)

Regional Area	PFMA	Piece Count	Total Net Wt. (net lbs.)
North Coast	1	15,795	161,106
	2	2,567	35,719
	3	6,736	87,617
	4	9,697	126,985
	5/6	3,346	46,515
Central Coast	7/8/9	2,481	26,671
South Coast	10/11/111	1,747	20,519
	12	835	19,430
	13/14	177	5,966
	15-18/28/29	1,078	14,132
	19	1,156	26,280
	20	509	13,028
	21/121	6,040	61,692
	23/123	6,856	94,498
	24/124	1,925	36,324
	25/125	1,462	24,556
	26/126	3,128	77,027
27/127	2,917	51,129	
Total Landed in Canada		68,454	929,193
Recreational TAC			1,011,750
Estimated Balance - END OF OCTOBER -			82,557
			8.16%



Table 6. Recreational Halibut Monthly Catch Estimates (net wt. lbs) for 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022

	Net Weight (net lbs)				Cumulative Net Weight (net lbs)			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Feb	0	0	954	1,884	0	0	954	1,884
March	8,172	3,814	8,778	6,079	8,172	3,814	9,732	7,964
April	10,259	7,111	12,017	11,285	18,432	10,926	21,749	19,249
May	40,988	26,356	56,775	76,948	59,420	37,282	78,524	96,196
June	152,282	74,348	158,756	201,725	211,702	111,630	237,280	297,921
July	336,520	182,655	287,249	305,539	548,221	294,284	524,529	603,460
Aug	207,866	148,422	224,348	261,459	756,088	442,707	748,877	864,919
Sept	53,956	69,419	49,388	53,225	810,044	512,125	798,265	918,144
Oct	834	4,236	1,317	4,804	810,878	516,361	799,581	922,947
Nov	0	398	2,633	3,327	810,878	516,758	802,214	926,275
Dec	5,761	2,216	52	2,919	816,639	518,974	802,266	929,193
Total	816,639	518,974	802,266	929,193	816,639	518,974	802,266	929,193
					2022 Recreational TAC			1,011,750
					Estimated Total Catch			929,193
					Estimated Remaining Balance (end of Dec)			82,557
								8.16%

Table 7. Estimated 2022 Halibut Catch in Pieces, by Area and Month

PFMA	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Estimated Total Pieces by PFMA	% of Total Pieces by PFMA	
1	-	-	-	393	4,091	4,457	5,297	1,557	-	-	-	15,795	23%	
2	-	-	29	84	746	816	853	39	-	-	-	2,567	4%	
3	-	131	9	421	2,224	2,039	1,847	63	2	-	-	6,736	10%	
4	2	21	177	1,037	2,739	3,594	1,669	450	7	-	4	9,702	14%	
5/6	-	-	32	141	763	1,273	1,019	103	15	3	-	3,349	5%	
7	-	-	-	55	26	32	28	15	3	-	-	159	0%	
8	-	-	-	67	47	235	92	26	-	-	-	467	1%	
9	-	-	-	841	110	359	408	137	-	4	-	1,859	3%	
10/11	-	-	-	99	524	771	246	68	38	-	-	1,747	3%	
12	-	-	36	91	300	236	110	60	2	-	-	835	1%	
13/14	66	-	-	6	14	27	20	2	42	-	-	177	0%	
15-18/28/29	-	3	37	183	141	292	266	144	14	-	-	1,078	2%	
19	32	147	140	318	111	71	196	92	49	7	-	1,162	2%	
20	-	33	70	51	141	112	6	38	58	58	-	567	1%	
21/121	2	-	70	219	1,686	2,486	1,543	13	22	-	-	6,040	9%	
23/123	-	6	25	298	416	1,931	3,508	669	3	-	-	6,856	10%	
24/124	-	15	26	131	555	571	512	115	-	-	-	1,925	3%	
25/125	-	5	17	196	422	314	478	30	-	68	-	1,531	2%	
26/126	-	5	2	300	437	1,440	867	78	-	-	-	3,128	5%	
27/127	-	-	18	228	606	1,111	639	315	-	-	-	2,917	4%	
2022 Totals	Monthly	102	366	687	5,158	16,099	22,167	19,603	4,016	256	139	4	68,598	
	Cumulative	102	468	1,155	6,313	22,412	44,579	64,182	68,198	68,454	68,593	68,597		

Table 8: Average 2022 Net Weight Estimates of Retained Halibut by Area and Month

PFMA	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.7	10.4	9.9	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3
2	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.7	14.1	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9
3	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	12.9	11.8	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4
4	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	12.9	11.8	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4
5/6	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9
7	17.1	17.1	17.1	19.6	14.7	10.4	9.4	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9
8	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.3	9.3	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8
9	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	10.4	11.8	11.3	9.6	10.5	10.5	10.5
10/11	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	19.2	16.9	9.0	12.9	12.9	12.9	12.9
12	23.4	23.4	23.4	23.4	22.9	24.0	16.1	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
13/14	18.3	18.3	14.7	18.5	10.9	16.4	13.6	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
15-18/28/29	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0	14.8	11.9	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2
19	19.0	19.6	18.5	18.2	16.4	23.3	23.2	23.6	26.5	23.4	23.4
20	15.6	13.3	17.9	18.3	21.9	19.0	20.5	18.4	25.5	18.7	18.7
21/121	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	20.4	13.1	13.5	13.3	13.3	13.3	13.3
23/123	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	18.1	13.9	13.1	13.4	13.3	13.3	13.3
24/124	19.9	19.9	19.9	19.9	19.5	20.2	20.7	23.1	21.9	21.9	21.9
25/125	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	18.5	14.8	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7
26/126	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.0	29.9	22.1	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.0
27/127	15.8	15.8	15.8	15.8	15.0	16.5	21.6	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.1

Table 9. Estimated 2022 Halibut Catch in Net Weight (lbs) by Area and Month

PFMA	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Estimated Total Catch by PFMA	% of Catch by PFMA	
1	-	-	-	3,797	42,623	44,147	54,434	16,106	-	-	-	161,106	17%	
2	-	-	398	1,170	10,232	11,510	11,866	543	-	-	-	35,719	4%	
3	-	1,822	128	5,852	30,914	26,303	21,795	780	23	-	-	87,617	9%	
4	31	298	2,462	14,414	38,072	46,363	19,694	5,563	88	-	-	126,954	14%	
5/6	-	-	446	1,961	10,606	17,697	14,160	1,432	211	-	-	46,515	5%	
7	-	-	-	1,075	382	332	262	149	33	-	-	2,234	0%	
8	-	-	-	548	211	1,941	859	229	-	-	-	3,788	0%	
9	-	-	-	9,328	1,139	4,252	4,612	1,319	-	-	-	20,649	2%	
10/11	-	-	-	1,786	2,109	13,042	2,202	883	496	-	-	20,519	2%	
12	-	-	834	2,132	6,876	5,657	1,774	1,213	38	-	906	19,430	2%	
13/14	1,207	-	-	111	3,270	435	273	33	637	-	-	4,759	1%	
15-18/28/29	-	34	478	2,382	1,837	4,321	3,161	1,752	166	-	-	14,132	2%	
19	609	2,882	2,587	5,779	2,312	1,651	4,538	2,167	1,300	1,985	470	25,671	3%	
20	-	439	1,254	934	3,088	2,130	123	699	1,477	1,342	1,543	13,028	1%	
21/121	38	-	1,169	3,665	2,872	32,591	20,902	167	288	-	-	61,654	7%	
23/123	-	96	392	4,755	7,513	26,810	45,890	8,998	45	-	-	94,498	10%	
24/124	-	296	519	2,603	8,132	11,516	10,605	2,653	-	-	-	36,324	4%	
25/125	-	88	278	3,265	7,807	4,650	7,961	507	-	-	-	24,556	3%	
26/126	-	124	47	7,802	12,636	31,830	22,562	2,027	-	-	-	77,027	8%	
27/127	-	-	291	3,589	9,094	18,361	13,786	6,008	-	-	-	51,129	6%	
2022 Totals	Monthly	1884	6,079	11,285	76,948	201,725	305,539	261,459	53,225	4,804	3,327	2,919	929,193	
	Cumulative	1,884	7,964	19,249	96,196	297,921	603,460	864,919	918,144	922,947	926,275	929,193		



INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC
HALIBUT COMMISSION

Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2022 IPHC Annual Report

PREPARED BY: FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA (23 DECEMBER 2022)

Canadian Enforcement Report for IPHC Regulatory Area 2B

(Canada: British Columbia)

2022

CONTACT

Trevor Ruelle

Fishery Officer

Area 2B Groundfish Enforcement Coordinator

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COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES

Groundfish, including commercial Halibut, enforcement priorities for 2022 were identified in the Groundfish Integrated Fisheries Management Plan and by the Groundfish Enforcement Coordinator as follows:

- *Closed area fishing in rockfish conservation areas, sponge reef marine protection areas, marine conservation areas, interim sanctuary zones and other permanent and in-season fishing closures.*
- *Retention of groundfish caught, retained or possessed without licence authority. Priority will be placed on occurrences where retention for the purpose of sale is indicated;*
- *Unauthorized commercial/FSC (dual) fishing;*
- *Non-compliance with 100% at-sea and dockside monitoring programs including hails, electronic monitoring systems, incomplete and inaccurate fishing logs, offloading catch without a dockside observer, removing some catch before dockside observer arrives and preventing dockside observer from checking hold, freezers and any other fish storage areas on vessel.*
- *False and misleading statements to DFO designated observers.*
- *Vessel Masters not providing all reasonable assistance to DFO designated observers.*
- *Owner or person in charge or in control of a fishing landing station not providing the dockside observer with such assistance as is reasonably necessary to enable observer to perform their duties. This includes safe access to vessel, fish holds/freezers/other fish storage areas and adequate lighting.*

Link to Pacific Region Groundfish Integrated Fisheries Management Plan – 2022/2023: [Groundfish 2022 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan summary | Pacific Region | Fisheries and Oceans Canada \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](#)

SUMMARY OF THE HALIBUT FISHERY BY USER GROUPS

Commercial

The 2022 commercial halibut fishery opened at 12:00 hours local time on March 6, 2022 and closed at 12:00 hours local time on December 7, 2022. A total of **149** vessels and **604** fishing trips were recorded during the 2022 commercial halibut fishing season.

Table 1. Commercial Halibut Fishing Trips – Trip Type, Number of Fishing Trips, Number of Vessels and Licence Type – March 6, 2022 to December 7, 2022 [Source: DFO Fishery Operations System (FOS)].

Fishing Trip Type	Number of Fishing Trips	Number of Licences	Licence Type
Commercial	290	113	L
Communal Commercial	147	36	FL
Combo (Halibut/Sablefish)	119	16	K/L
Combo (Halibut/Sablefish)	48	4	FK/FL & L/FK
IPHC	10	2	XL
Experimental	7	2	XL

Table 2: Commercial Halibut Fishery Occurrences – March 6, 2022 to December 16, 2022¹

Occurrence Type (not all are found to be violations)	Number of Occurrences
Fishing in Closed Area	14
Dual Fishing Issues	143 (<i>not included in total</i>)
Time Gaps	3
Scale Related Incidents	2
Regulatory Issues	10
Catch Related Issues	8
Monitoring Equipment Issues	18
Documentation Related Issues	10
Piece Count Issues	3
Processed Fish On Board	3
Reported Overages	1
Offload Related Incidents	3
Hold Check Not Completed	5
Undersize Fish	2
Prohibited Species	1
No Seabird Avoidance Gear	7
Vessel/Personal Licences issues	4
Total	94

¹Source: DFO National Enforcement Tracking System (NETS) and Archipelago Marine Research Ltd.(AMR)

Portal for Clients

Recreational

The 2022 recreational halibut fishery opened coast-wide at 00:01 hours February 1, 2022 and closed at 23:59 hours December 31, 2022. Recreational Licences are issued for a fiscal year (April 1 – March 31). A total of **333,473** recreational licences have been issued to date.

Table 3: Recreational Halibut Fishery Occurrences - February 1, 2022 to December 16, 2022²

Number of Occurrences	Action Taken	
30	Investigation Initiated	28
	No Action Warranted	1
	Unable to respond	1

²Source: DFO National Enforcement Tracking System (NETS). Occurrence type unavailable.

Experimental

For halibut, in addition to the regular tidal water sport fishing licence, recreational harvesters may obtain an experimental licence, on a voluntary basis, that will allow the licence holder to lease halibut quota from the commercial sector for use in the recreational fishery. For more information: [Pacific Region Halibut Experimental Recreational Fishery Program Details](#).

The halibut experimental recreational fishery (XRQ) is open from April 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022. There were **218 XRQ** licences issued with 199 of the licences purchasing the minimum 20 pounds of quota. There were 19 XRQ licences issued where fishers did not purchase the minimum required 20 pounds of quota, therefore their licences were not valid.

Commercial, Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) and Treaty Fisheries

For all dual fishing (commercial and FSC) halibut trips the vessel master is responsible for following the halibut commercial and/or communal commercial conditions of licence including those specific to dual fishing. All of the fish require 100% monitoring at-sea and 100% monitoring at the dock. In 2022, **53** commercial or communal commercial halibut vessels hailed out for **141** dual fishing trips.

FSC halibut fishing does not have the same monitoring requirements as commercial and dual halibut fishing.

Table 4: Aboriginal Halibut Fishery Occurrences - January 1, 2022 to December 7, 2022³

Number Of Occurrences	Action Taken	
7	Investigation Initiated	7

³Source: DFO National Enforcement Tracking System (NETS) Occurrence type unavailable.

FISHERY OFFICER ENFORCEMENT EFFORT SUMMARY

Commercial Halibut

103 vessels checked
 50 people checked
 228 hours patrolled by ASP
 13 hours patrolled by MPP
 21 hours patrolled by vehicle

Recreational Halibut

144 vessels checked
 467 people checked
 68 hours patrolled by program vessel (local detachment RHIBS)
 56 hours patrolled by vehicle
 2 hours patrolled by MPP

Aboriginal Halibut

5 vessels checked
 13 persons checked
 4 hours patrolled by program vessel
 0.5 hours patrolled by MPP

AERIAL SURVEILLANCE PATROL SUMMARY

The Fishery Aerial Surveillance Enforcement (FASE) Detachment patrols Canada's EEZ with a Dash 8 Aircraft. Flight reports, photographs, videos and other data collected from the surveillance flights are readily available to departmental managers and fishery officers through an internet-based flight information system. All vessels encountered via radar are visually identified and documented.

Table 5: 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, C&P Aerial Surveillance Patrols – number of missions, total hours spent flying, and number of halibut vessels viewed during missions⁵

AERIAL SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM (ASP) ACTIVITY			
<u>Air Patrols</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Total Halibut Vessels Recorded Per Year</u>
January 1, 2022 – December 15, 2022	128	833.7	168 (126 L, 42 FL)
January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021	136	806.7	225 (214 L, 11 FL)
January 1, 2020 – November 30, 2020	184	1107.3	259 (245 L, 14 FL)
January 1, 2019 – November 30, 2019	185	1036.59	146 (130 L, 16 FL)

⁵Source: Provincial Aerospace Limited - Surveillance Information System (SIS)
 L = commercial halibut licence; FL= communal commercial halibut licence

VIOLATION SUMMARIES

Table 6: 2019, 2020, 2021 & 2022 Violations for Aboriginal, Commercial, Recreational Halibut and Experimental Halibut – Charges Laid, Charges Pending/Under Review, and Tickets/Warnings Issue⁷. **Note:** Not all information is in yet.

VIOLATIONS	2019	2020	2021	2022
ABORIGINAL GROUND FISH – HALIBUT	14	4	4	7
CHARGES LAID				
CHARGES PENDING/UNDER REVIEW	12	2	4	
TICKET ISSUED	1			
WARNING ISSUED		1		
DIVERTED (ALTERNATIVE MEASURES)	1	1		
OPTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION				7
COMMERCIAL GROUND FISH - HALIBUT	4	13	Information not available	23
CHARGES LAID	2			0
CHARGES PENDING/UNDER REVIEW	2	9		15
TICKET ISSUED		1		3
WARNING ISSUED		3		5
RECREATIONAL GROUND FISH - HALIBUT	85	55	52	42
CHARGES LAID	6			
CHARGES PENDING/UNDER REVIEW	38	8	8	
TICKET ISSUED	25	22	21	11
WARNING ISSUED	16	25	23	31
EXPERIMENTAL GROUND FISH - HALIBUT				14
CHARGES LAID				
CHARGES PENDING/UNDER REVIEW				1
TICKETS ISSUED				
WARNING ISSUED				13
TOTAL FOR ALL HALIBUT FISHERIES	103	72	56	86

⁷Source: DFO Departmental Violations System (DVS) and National Enforcement Tracking System (NETS).

COURT RESULTS

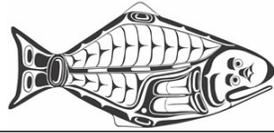
On October 19, 2021, a commercial halibut fisher was charge with five counts for failing to comply with halibut COL. This incident occurred June 23, 2020 and the charges are summarized as follows;

1. Fail to deploy SBAG
2. Fail to provide signature/FIN number on validation summary
3. File a late hail out
4. Submit late fish slips (40 days late)
5. Fail to complete accurate and complete record of all fishing activity carried out in logbook

On June 9, 2022, the fisher plead guilty for failing to deploy SBAG and was sentenced to a fine of \$7,500.00 with time to pay by July 1, 2023. The remaining counts were stayed as part of the resolution.

LINKS OF INTEREST

DFO Conviction Tables: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/media/charges-inculpations/pac-eng.htm>



Province of British Columbia 2022 Annual Report

PREPARED BY: BRITISH COLUMBIA MINISTRY WATER, LAND, AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP (23 DECEMBER 2023)

CONTRACTING PARTY: CANADA

AGENCY:

The Province of British Columbia represented by the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship.

CONTACT:

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Kevin Romanin, Senior Policy Analyst, Kevin.Romanin@gov.bc.ca

FISHERY SECTORS:

All sectors within British Columbia.

IPHC REGULATORY AREA

IPHC Regulatory Area 2B (Canada: British Columbia)

DISCUSSION

The Province of British Columbia (BC) has a long history of involvement with the Pacific halibut fishery and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). BC recognizes the importance of Canada working bilaterally with the United States through the Pacific Halibut Treaty as well as the work done by the IPHC to develop and conserve Pacific halibut stocks. The significant history of this Treaty, as one of the first Canadian international agreements and the near century of mutual benefit to both countries, serves as a tremendous example in global fisheries management. BC commends the efforts made by the Commission to reach agreement again during the 98th session of the IPHC Annual Meetings in 2022. Thousands of jobs rely on this continued cooperation, and it is critical that this history of collaboration continues.

The BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food is responsible for collection and reporting of data and statistics for the agri-food sector. An important part of that mandate is to analyze the impact of various sectors, including fisheries and seafood, to the broader provincial economy. BC commercially harvests and reports on over 25 wild fisheries including Pacific halibut which is among BC's top three most valuable wild fishery commodities¹. The Pacific halibut fishery supports significant commercial harvests in Canada's waters while providing many fishing and processing jobs and is significantly important to small coastal communities and First Nations across Canada's west coast. The Province licences seafood processors and annually collects data on the volumes and values of the various seafood products. In 2021, the survey showed the processing of 3,210 tonnes (7.08M lbs) of Pacific halibut, which includes some imported halibut processed in BC. The survey also showed landed and wholesale values of \$43.54M and \$89.88M, respectively. In 2021 Pacific halibut accounted for 9.1% of the wholesale value of all BC's wild fisheries including all groundfish, salmon, and shellfish. In 2021, BC exported 1.7M kilograms (3.75M lbs) of halibut products worth \$42M². The Province historically conducts a seafood sector employment survey every three years which provides data on jobs, wages, and seafood processing activities. The most recent available data from 2020 show 65 processing facilities that reported processing halibut and generated 210 jobs with an estimated \$11.9M paid in wages³.

In addition, the recreational halibut fishery supports the hundreds of fishing lodges, charter companies, and individuals that contribute tremendously to the economies of coastal communities. Beginning in 2019 and through 2022, there were severe restrictions on salmon fishing in BC which will continue in future years. Recent restrictions on salmon fisheries amplifies the importance of the recreational halibut fishery to the recreational sector. BC will continue to provide available data to the IPHC from provincially licensed seafood processors to advance the IPHC economic report which will help highlight the benefits that Pacific halibut provide. As BC's lead agency responsible for fisheries policy, the Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources recognizes the importance of understanding the broader socioeconomic impacts and downstream effects of the Pacific halibut fishery and looks forward to continuing to work together.

First Nations are entitled to a Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) allocation of the total allowable catch (TAC), and many jobs within the halibut fishery and halibut processing facilities are held by members of First Nations across BC. In the commercial halibut fishery, approximately 23% of licenses are held by BC First Nations. In 2019, BC became the first province in Canada to introduce legislation aimed at adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). *The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (known as 'DRIPA') mandates that government bring its laws and policies into harmony with the aims of the declaration. The BC government has set Indigenous reconciliation as a top priority and is actively working to ensure that First Nations are meaningfully included in management of all BC fisheries.

The decisions made annually by the IPHC commissioners greatly impact the livelihood of many coastal BC residents and local economies. With the extensive and costly efforts of fisheries monitoring in place to account for all halibut bycatch, BC expects that all fishers who share access to the Pacific halibut stocks should be held to similar standards of catch accounting. BC fishers need to be assured that the decisions made by IPHC commissioners are based on the best data and science possible by ensuring that all contributing data sources are as thorough and reliable as what they contribute.

BC's halibut fishery is part of the Integrated Groundfish Fishery which effectively manages all groundfish species by coordinating the quotas and bycatch allocations between the various groundfish fisheries including trawl, halibut, sablefish, and rockfish. The Integrated Groundfish Fishery operates with 100 percent monitoring and 100 percent bycatch accountability. This includes 100 percent monitoring while on the fishing grounds, and 100 percent dockside monitoring, with auditing programs in place to compare validated landed catch with at-sea catch records. BC's groundfish fisheries monitoring programs are well established with components of at-sea observers and electronic monitoring and is regarded as one of the most well-monitored fisheries in the world. These extensive fisheries monitoring programs come at a direct cost to fishermen and license holders as they are entirely funded by industry. BC fishers respect that monitoring programs level the playing field by keeping all fishery participants compliant with the rules which help to ensure sustainable stocks and the future of their industry. The BC Pacific halibut fishery has held Marine Stewardship Council certification since 2009 for being a sustainable, well-managed fishery.

BC's monitoring programs have also adapted quickly in response to obstacles encountered by the COVID-19 global pandemic to maintain data integrity. In 2020, with the interruption of groundfish observer programs, fisheries were able to implement an Emergency Electronic Monitoring (EEM) program in place of at-sea observers and begin working on alternate methods of estimating halibut bycatch mortality like area-based halibut mortality estimations. Efforts on the EEM program continued through 2022 for improved data accuracy. The long running electronic monitoring programs in BC and the data sets available from these robust programs provided the ability to adapt quickly to the unprecedented changes brought on by the pandemic. As BC's trawl fishery adapts to moving from at-sea observers to electronic monitoring systems, the changes and developments are continuously communicated to the other fisheries within the Integrated Groundfish Fishery, including halibut, to provide opportunity for feedback and to allow for better transparency.

The large trawl fisheries in Alaska experience high volumes of bycatch that impact many species that move between Canadian and US waters. This includes over 571,900 salmon caught as bycatch in Alaskan fleets in 2021, of which 33,000 were vulnerable chinook salmon⁴. Incomplete monitoring and Alaskan bycatch of halibut in trawl fisheries impact recruitment of juvenile halibut to the fishery as many halibut caught in industrial trawl nets do not survive release. These trawl fisheries pose significant threat to mortality of juvenile halibut that might otherwise grow and become available to the fishery and other regulatory areas.

BC remains concerned that bycatch of halibut in Alaska Area 3 remains poorly understood and unaccounted for. The IPHC relies on information supplied by observer programs run by Contracting Party agencies for non-directed commercial discard mortality estimates in most fisheries. In BC, these estimates are reliably provided by the well-established data systems as part of monitoring programs. The Fisheries Data Overview provided by the IPHC for the past several years repeatedly stated that Regulatory Area 3 remains the area where non-directed commercial discard mortality is estimated most poorly, and again for 2022 states that non-directed commercial discard mortality remains challenging. The report outlines several factors contributing to the poor estimation including low coverage, loopholes in trip cancelling, and safety considerations likely result in observed trips not being representative of all trips (observed and unobserved) in many regards (e.g., duration, species composition, etc.)⁵. Low observer coverage in IPHC Regulatory Area 3 leads to increased uncertainty in these non-directed commercial discard mortality estimates and to potential for bias. This section of the IPHC Fisheries Data Overview report has remained consistent despite that as part of the interim agreement, the Commission agreed to continue the development of a workplan to explore methods for improvement of monitoring requirements in directed and non-directed fisheries, and to examine options in each IPHC Regulatory Area for mitigating the impact of bycatch in one IPHC Regulatory Area on available harvest in other IPHC Regulatory Areas. The lack of confidence in the total number of halibut removals in some regulatory areas continues to create issues in the management of this shared resource.

The Province of BC supports the development of monitoring standards to ensure accountability of halibut bycatch, and the development of a robust method of accountability for all halibut mortality within each regulatory area including non-directed commercial discard. BC regulatory area 2B maintains an excellent understanding of total halibut removals across its integrated commercial fishery structure through robust monitoring programs that come at a direct cost to fishers.

RECOMMENDATION

The Government of British Columbia's position is that the IPHC must exercise its authority to regulate the incidental catch of Pacific Halibut in all regulatory areas by:

- 1. recommitting to the development of a workplan for addressing the needed improvements of monitoring requirements and developing a monitoring standard to which all regulatory areas must follow; and**
- 2. establishing a robust method of accountability for all halibut mortality within each regulatory area including non-directed commercial discard mortality.**

REFERENCES

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3. *2019-2020 British Columbia Seafood Processing Employment Survey Report. British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Food.*
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5. *Fisheries data overview (2022): Preliminary statistics (J. Jannot, H. Tran, T. Kong, K. Magrane & K. Sawyer van Vleck); IPHC-2022-IM098-07 Rev_1)*