



OUTCOMES OF THE 93RD SESSION OF THE IPHC ANNUAL MEETING (AM093)

PREPARED BY: IPHC SECRETARIAT (S. KEITH; 22 MARCH 2017)

PURPOSE

To provide the Board with the results of the 93rd Session of the IPHC Annual Meeting (AM093) relevant to its consideration during the 9th Session of the Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB09).

BACKGROUND

The agenda of the Commission's Annual Meeting (AM093) included an agenda item dedicated to Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE).

DISCUSSION

During the course of the Annual Meeting (AM093) the Commission made a number of specific requests and recommendations regarding the IPHC MSE process. Relevant sections from the report of the meeting are provided in [Appendix A](#) for the MSAB's consideration.

The Commission also approved a three-year calendar of IPHC meetings, which includes the following planned dates for MSAB meetings:

MSAB09	9-11 May 2017
MSAB10	25-26 Oct 2017
MSAB11	9-10 May 2018
MSAB12	24-25 Oct 2018
MSAB13	8-9 May 2019
MSAB14	23-24 Oct 2019

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IPHC-2017-MSAB09-04 which lists the outcomes of the Annual Meeting (AM093) and the Commission's direction relevant to its deliberations.

APPENDICES

[Appendix A](#): Excerpt from Annual Meeting (AM093) Report ([IPHC-2017-AM093-R Rev 1](#)) for MSAB09

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Excerpt from Annual Meeting (AM093) Report ([IPHC-2017-AM093-R Rev 1](#)) for MSAB09

5. STOCK STATUS OF PACIFIC HALIBUT (2016) AND HARVEST DECISION TABLE (2017)

5.4 *Draft Pacific halibut apportionment and catch tables (2017)*

29. **NOTING** that the IPHC Secretariat and the IPHC Scientific Review Board (SRB) have demonstrated that Ebio is outdated and inconsistent with current assessment results, and that numerous elements of the current harvest policy are reliant on Ebio, and that the Commission has agreed that the current harvest policy is considered to be outdated (IPHC-2016-IM092-R, items 21, 22), the Commission **RECOMMENDED** that reference to all elements of the current harvest policy reliant on Ebio, as well as the use of the Blue line, be eliminated subsequent to the close of the 93rd Session of the Commission. The “*status quo* SPR” (F_{46%}) may serve as an interim “hand rail” that allows all participants to gauge this and future years’ catch limit discussions in comparison to previous years.
30. **NOTING** that the Commission has indicated its interest in clearer accounting for all mortality, and that Canada has put forward catch limit allocation principles proposing that catch limits include all sources of mortality for each regulatory area, the Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the presentation of harvest advice be changed to be based on the TCEY, which includes all O26 commercial, sport, personal use/subsistence, bycatch and wastage removals, for the 2018 Annual Meeting cycle, as a step towards more comprehensive and responsible management of the resource that will result in the negotiation of Regulatory Area-specific catch limits based on TCEYs.

6. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION

6.1 *IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation update*

31. The Commission **NOTED** paper IPHC-2017-AM093-09, which provides an update on the task assigned to IPHC Secretariat and the Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB) at the 2016 Annual Meeting to review and provide recommendations for updating the IPHC harvest policy and harvest control rules.
32. The Commission **AGREED** that the current harvest policy is outdated and that there is a need to remove the current blue line reference, which reflects the current interpretation of the IPHC harvest policy in the harvest decision table.
33. The Commission **NOTED** that the IPHC Secretariat will use Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to evaluate options for a modified harvest policy that separates the decisions regarding scale of the coastwide fishing intensity, and distribution of the removals consistent with that level of fishing among Regulatory Areas, and accounts for all sources of Pacific halibut mortality.
34. The Commission **NOTED** that a harvest policy and associated implementation guidelines should aim to ensure that Pacific halibut is managed for long-term biological and fishery sustainability (Commission objectives), and should be a point of reference for Commissioners when making short-term decisions. The harvest policy should also seek to provide the fishing industry with a more certain operating environment.
35. The Commission **NOTED** that a harvest policy should also provide a framework that allows a strategic, science-based approach to setting catch levels in the Pacific halibut fishery.

36. The Commission **NOTED** that the Pacific halibut stock has been stable or slightly increasing in light of recent decisions, thus an alternative row in the decision table has been provided that is consistent with the harvest decisions made over the previous three years (labelled “*status quo* SPR” – see Table 1). A harvest policy will always provide a point of reference for catch levels that meet long-term objectives.
37. The Commission **NOTED** the presentation of an SPR-based harvest policy to update the current harvest policy, and that MSE will be used to evaluate alternative SPR values that are robust to possible bycatch scenarios.

Recommendations/Requests:

38. **NOTING** that the term “apportionment” has connotations broader than stock distribution that are not reflective of its meaning in the IPHC context, the Commission **RECOMMENDED** that it be replaced with the terms “stock distribution” or “stock distribution model(ing)”.
39. The Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IPHC Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process be accelerated so that more of the elements contained within the current Program of Work are delivered at the 94th Annual Meeting of the Commission in 2018. The IPHC Secretariat is directed to mobilise carryover funds from “core operations” to ensure the accelerated delivery schedule.
40. The Commission **REQUESTED** that the IPHC Secretariat initiate a process to develop alternative, biologically based stock distribution strategies for consideration by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. This should also be incorporated into the MSE Program of Work.

6.2 Reports of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB)

41. The Commission **NOTED** the Reports of the 7th (IPHC-2016-MSAB07-R) and 8th (IPHC-2016-MSAB08-R) Sessions of the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB) held in 2016, which were presented by the Co-Chairpersons of the MSAB, Mr Adam Keizer (Canada) and Ms Michele Culver (United States of America).
42. The Commission **RECALLED** the mandate of the MSAB as stated in the IPHC Rules of Procedure (2014) as follows:
- 42.1.1 Rule 10.5 (d) *A Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB), on which individuals representing harvesters (commercial, sport, and subsistence), fisheries managers, processors, Staff, science advisors, Commissioners, and other experts as required may be represented. The primary role of the MSAB is to oversee and advise the IPHC Secretariat on the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process, which shall propose fishery objectives, articulate and evaluate management procedures, and propose performance measures in order to recommend fishery management strategies for Commission consideration.*
43. The Commission **CONSIDERED** the recommendations made by the MSAB from its 2016 reports (IPHC-2016-MSAB07-R and IPHC-2016-MSAB08-R) and provided comment or endorsement as specified below.
44. **NOTING** that the previous IPHC harvest policy was unresponsive to under-26” (U26) mortality, and that selectivity curves used to define exploitable biomass (EBio) are outdated, the Commission **AGREED** that alternative approaches that address these shortcomings and take into account mortality for all sizes and all sources be evaluated by the IPHC Secretariat and subsequently the MSAB. One approach that has the potential to account for mortality for all sizes and all sources which should be evaluated is a Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR)-based harvest policy.

45. The Commission **AGREED** that clear goals and objectives need to be approved by the Commission regarding target stock abundance levels to provide guidance for the IPHC Secretariat and MSAB to assess the long-term health of the stock. As a first step, the IPHC Secretariat, in consultation with the SRB and MSAB, should provide a range of suitable options. The intention would be for a range of objectives (e.g. through coast-wide or area-specific adjustments, setting harvest targets, examining the effects of bycatch levels) to be examined.
46. The Commission **AGREED** that the MSAB membership should be reviewed and subsequently approved by the Commission.