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# INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY A CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA  
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Agenda Item H.1.a  
IPHC Letters RE IBQ  
March 2017

2 February 2017

Barry Thom  
West Coast Regional Administrator  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1201 Northeast Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97232

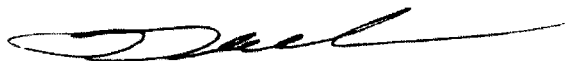
Dear Mr. Thom:

This letter follows up on our letter to you of 7 December 2016, in which we advised you of preliminary information on the 2017 total constant exploitation yield (TCEY) for Pacific halibut in Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, and California). The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) provided this information in order for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to calculate Pacific halibut individual bycatch quota for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery's Trawl Catch Share Program with a season start date of 1 January each year.

The IPHC recently held its Annual Meeting to discuss and adopt fishery catch limits and other regulatory matters for the 2017 directed halibut fisheries, including those for Area 2A. At its Annual Meeting, the IPHC adopted a 2017 TCEY for Area 2A of 1.47 million pounds (net weight). Please note that the Area2A catch limit adopted by the IPHC for 2017 will become effective once approved and implemented by the United States Government. Other information listed in our 7 December letter remains unchanged. This includes the net weight-to- round weight conversion factor, and the conversion of legal-sized to legal+sublegal-sized halibut.

Please contact us if you need further information. The IPHC point of contact is Jamie Goen at [jamie@iphc.int](mailto:jamie@iphc.int) or 206-552-7666.

Sincerely,



David T. Wilson, PhD  
Executive Director

cc: IPHC Commissioners, Gretchen Hanshew (NMFS/WCR), Charles Tracy (PFMC), Maggie Sommer (ODFW)

# INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

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7 December 2016

Barry Thom  
West Coast Regional Administrator  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1201 Northeast Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97232

Dear Mr. Thom:

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) recently held its 2016 Interim Meeting to discuss, in part, updates and proposals for Area 2A (Washington, Oregon, and California), including results of the recent Pacific halibut stock assessment, options for the Area 2A total constant exploitation yield (TCEY), and options for 2017 fishery catch limits.

The IPHC understands that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) needs certain information after the IPHC's Interim Meeting in order to calculate a preliminary 2017 Pacific halibut trawl bycatch mortality limit for the groundfish fishery off Washington, Oregon, California which starts 1 January each year. While the IPHC staff cannot identify the 2017 Area 2A TCEY with certainty before the Commission makes a decision at its Annual Meeting on 27 January 2017, we can provide certain preliminary information.

Based on language in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan at Section 6.3.2.3 under "Allocation of Pacific Halibut" and in the U.S. Codified Federal Regulations (CFR) for groundfish at 50 CFR part 660.55, paragraph (m), this letter provides the following information to support NMFS's calculation of the Pacific halibut trawl bycatch mortality limit:

1. Next year's preliminary Area 2A TCEY;
2. Net weight to round weight conversion factor; and
3. Legal-sized to legal-sized+sublegal-sized conversion factor.

1. Next year's Preliminary Area 2A TCEY

If the Commission adopts the application of the Commission's current harvest policy (the Blue Line) at its Annual Meeting, the result would be a 2017 TCEY for Area 2A of 0.87 million pounds. Please note that the Commission may adopt a value that is higher than or lower than this value.

2. Net weight to round weight conversion factor

The round weight to net weight conversion factor used by the IPHC is 0.75, i.e. net weight is 75% of round weight.

3. Legal-sized to legal-sized+sublegal-sized conversion factor

In the latest report submitted to IPHC by NMFS's Northwest Fisheries Science Center titled "*Pacific Halibut Bycatch in US West Coast Fisheries (2002-2015)*" by Jannot et al. (2016), we note the proportion of legal sized, i.e. O32, Pacific halibut by weight to the total amount of Pacific halibut bycatch mortality for the non-hake IFQ bottom trawl fishery north of 40°10' was 0.677 (Table 15, p. 38). This represents the most recent and best information for converting legal-sized Pacific halibut bycatch to all sizes, i.e. legal-sized plus sublegal-sized, of Pacific halibut caught by the west coast trawl fishery.

Please contact us if you need further information.

Sincerely,



David T. Wilson, PhD  
Executive Director

cc: IPHC Commissioners  
Gretchen Hanshew, NMFS/WCR  
Charles Tracy, PFMC  
Maggie Sommer, ODFW