

EL2024602
 19 November 2024

Jonathan M. Kurland
 Regional Administrator
 NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Region
 PO Box 21668
 Juneau, AK 99802-1668

Dear Mr Kurland

In December 2021 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) took final action supporting abundance-based management (ABM) of the Pacific halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limit as a method to be used to set the Pacific halibut PSC for the Amendment 80 trawl sector in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI FMP). The Council action identifies a two-dimensional look-up table, dependent on the Eastern Bering Sea (EBS) trawl survey index and the IPHC index, developed from [IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey \(FISS\)](#)¹ observations and EBS trawl survey observations. Breakpoints for these two survey indices define categories from which the PSC limit is determined ([Figure 1](#)). The EBS trawl survey index is categorized as low or high, and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) fishery-independent setline survey (FISS) index for ABM is categorized into very low, low, medium, and high categories. NOAA Fisheries has published a final rule to implement this action as Amendment 123 to the BSAI FMP ([88 FR 82740](#))².

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,745 mt (current limit)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,571 mt (10% below current)
	Low 6,000-7,999	1,309 mt (25% below current)	1,396 mt (20% below current)
	Very Low < 6,000	1,134 mt (35% below current)	1,134 mt (35% below current)

Fig. 1. Two-dimension lookup table for the determination of Pacific halibut PSC limits for the Amendment 80 fleet in the BSAI FMP (adapted from Table 58 to part 679 in [88 FR 82740](#)).

¹ <https://iphc.int/management/science-and-research/fishery-independent-setline-survey-fiss>

² [Federal Register: Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands \[Pacific\] Halibut Abundance-Based Management of Amendment 80 Prohibited Species Catch Limit](#)

Methods used by the IPHC to estimate IPHC FISS indices remain unchanged in 2024. A description can be found in [IPHC-2021-IM097-INF05](#)³. It is important to note that FISS indices are estimated using a Space-Time model and all years of the index are updated with the addition of a single year of data. Therefore, past IPHC FISS indices for ABM will be updated with the addition of data each year. This letter provides instructions on how to calculate the IPHC FISS index from publicly available IPHC data products, and presents the updated IPHC FISS index, comparing it to values from previous years.

CALCULATING THE IPHC FISS INDEX

The IPHC FISS indices (numbers-per-unit-effort and weight-per-unit-effort) are available on the [IPHC Space-Time Explorer](#)⁴ website, and are updated in November before the IPHC Interim Meeting (IM) each year. The IPHC FISS index can be calculated following these steps.

- Use the “Official Output” page of the [IPHC Space-Time Explorer](#). Occasionally it is slow to load and the web browser may need to be refreshed.
- Select IPHC Regulatory Areas 4A, 4CDE, and 4B, which are shown geographically in [Figure 2](#).
- Select “All Sizes WPUE” from the “Select variable” drop-down menu on the left. This will provide a time-series on the right.
- From the Table, take the “mean” value and multiply that by 258.55, which is the total bottom area between 0 and 400 fathoms for these three IPHC Regulatory Areas in units of thousand square nautical miles.
- For measures of uncertainty, use the CV value or multiply 'sd' or 'p2.5' and 'p97.5' (95% posterior credible interval) by 258.55.

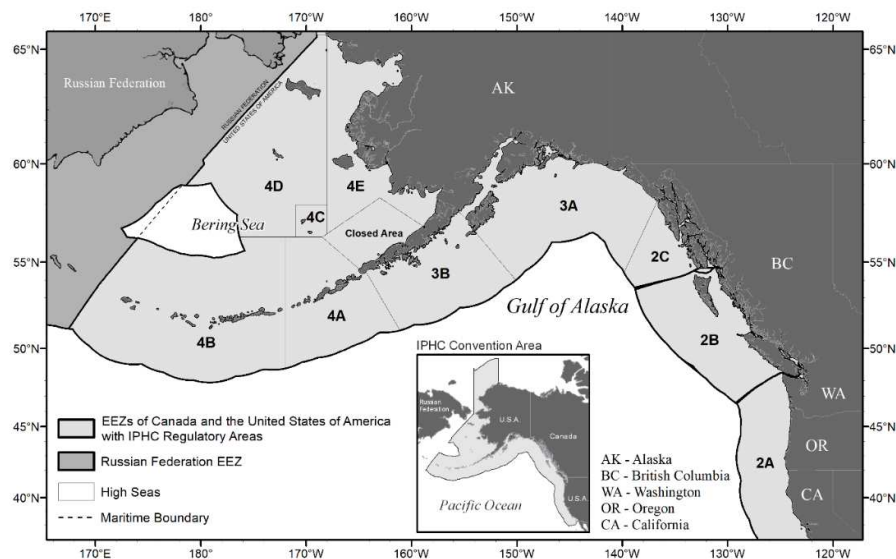


Fig. 2. The IPHC Convention Area (inset) and IPHC Regulatory Areas.

³ <https://www.iphc.int/uploads/pdf/im/im097/iphc-2021-im097-inf05.pdf>

⁴ http://iphc-shiny2.westus.cloudapp.azure.com:3838/IPHC_ShinyApps/SpaceTimeExplorer/

2024 IPHC setline survey index for ABM

The IPHC FISS all-sizes WPUE is 24.30 lbs/skate for 2024. This translates to an IPHC FISS index for 2024 of **6,282** which is in the “low” category of the lookup table ([Figure 1](#)). The IPHC FISS index for 2023 is also updated to 6,443, which was previously 6,462 using results up to and including 2023. The 95% credible interval for the 2024 IPHC FISS index ranges from 5,283 to 7,632, with a small chance that the index is in the “Very Low” category ([Figure 3](#)).

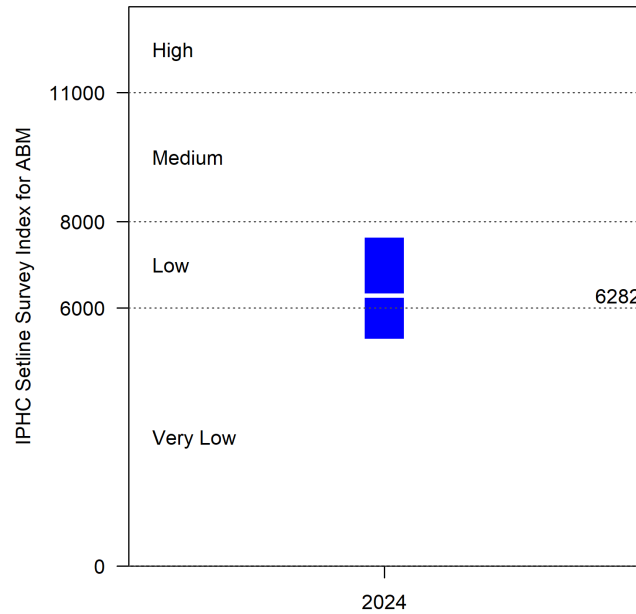


Fig. 3. The IPHC FISS index for 2024, with a 95% credible interval, in relation to the four categories.

If you or your team require any assistance, we are available to assist.

Yours Sincerely,

David T. Wilson

David T. Wilson, Ph.D.
IPHC Executive Director

CC:
IPHC Chairperson, Mr Paul Ryall
IPHC Vice-Chairperson, Mr Jonathan Kurland
NPFMC Executive Director, Mr David Witherell
AFSC Science and Research Director, Dr Robert Foy

SIGNATURE CERTIFICATE



REFERENCE NUMBER

8F8B9551-6921-4F40-8999-048EB09DF7E8

TRANSACTION DETAILS

Reference Number

8F8B9551-6921-4F40-8999-048EB09DF7E8

Transaction Type

Signature Request

Sent At

11/19/2024 12:33 EST

Executed At

11/19/2024 12:54 EST

Identity Method

email

Distribution Method

email

Signed Checksum

048903adf67e5c7e5d9e153e8faf6e9f83b7659de95eb576091c376d2f51ed7e

Signer Sequencing

Disabled

Document Passcode

Disabled

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Document Name

EL2024602 IPHC letter to NOAA Fisheries re 2024 ABM index

Filename

EL2024602_IPHC_letter_to_NOAA_Fisheries_re_2024_ABM_index.pdf

Pages

3 pages

Content Type

application/pdf


File Size

520 KB

Original Checksum

67f33ede436dda0fe82e090970ba22c6a98db5ae3504c395f1169e82dd4f0673

SIGNERS

SIGNER	E-SIGNATURE	EVENTS
Name David Wilson	Status signed	Viewed At 11/19/2024 12:54 EST
Email david.wilson@iphc.int	Multi-factor Digital Fingerprint Checksum 9b83b8dd944265909487f655c6a9d43daaddedab7787b59ec7f4ac4ce073ea44	Identity Authenticated At 11/19/2024 12:54 EST
Components 1	IP Address 8.53.59.11	Signed At 11/19/2024 12:54 EST
	Device Microsoft Edge via Windows	
	Typed Signature 	
	Signature Reference ID 33A94815	

AUDITS

TIMESTAMP	AUDIT
11/19/2024 12:33 EST	IPHC Personnel Services (iphc_personnelservices@iphc.int) created document 'EL2024602_IPHC_letter_to_NOAA_Fisheries_re_2024_ABM_index.pdf' on Microsoft Edge via Windows from 8.53.59.11.
11/19/2024 12:33 EST	David Wilson (david.wilson@iphc.int) was emailed a link to sign.
11/19/2024 12:54 EST	David Wilson (david.wilson@iphc.int) viewed the document on Microsoft Edge via Windows from 8.53.59.11.
11/19/2024 12:54 EST	David Wilson (david.wilson@iphc.int) authenticated via email on Microsoft Edge via Windows from 8.53.59.11.
11/19/2024 12:54 EST	David Wilson (david.wilson@iphc.int) signed the document on Microsoft Edge via Windows from 8.53.59.11.