

**Conference Board Report
81th IPHC Annual Meeting
January 18 – 21, 2005
Victoria, BC**

United States	Canada
Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association Area 3B/4A False Pass Atka Fishermen's Association Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp Bristol Bay Drift Net Association Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association Cordova District Fishermen United Deep Sea Fishermen's Union of the Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners Association Gulf of Alaska Coastal Comm. Dev. Assoc Kake Tribal Association Kay Bay Fish Association Kodiak Vessel Owners Association Makah Fisheries Management North Pacific Fisheries Association Petersburg Vessel Owners Association Quinault Indian Nation George Fishermen's Association St Paul Fishermen's Association Seafood Producers Coop Seal Rock Ind. Hal. Fish Sitka Halibut & Blackcod Marketing Association Tribal Government of St. Paul United Fishermen's Marketing Association Washington Trollers Association Westport Charter Association Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association	Ahousat First Nation Annieville Halibut Association BC Halibut Longliners Association Canadian Sablefish Association Gulf Troller's Association Halibut Advisory Board North Pacific Halibut Fisherman's Association Northern Halibut Producers Association Northern Trollers Association Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council Pacific Coast Fishing Vessel Owners Guild Pacific Longline Halibut Fisherman's Assoc. Pacific Trollers Association Pacific Halibut Management Association Sports Fish Advisory Board Stevenston Halibut Association Ucluelet First Nation UFAWU/CAW

REVIEW CONFERENCE BOARD VOTING ROSTER

The United States section accredited 26 organizations for participation in the 2005 Conference Board proceedings.

The Canada section accredited 18 organizations for participation in the 2005 Conference Board proceedings. On the Canadian side the Ahousat First Nation was accredited to the Conference Board as a new participant.

SELECT CHAIRPERSONS FROM CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

On the Canadian side, Chris Sporer was selected as Chair.

On the United States side, Robert Alverson was selected as Co-Chair.

CONFERENCE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS TO IPHC

A. REVIEW AREAS

The Conference Board has no recommendations for new or altered IPHC areas.

B. SEASON DATE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL AREAS

The conference board took a vote in the US and Canadian sections and the results are as follows:

There were 23 organizations from the United States that supported a February 28, 2005 opening date with the Quinault Indian Nation and Makah Fisheries Management objecting. An extended season is strongly supported by a majority of the US section for marketing reasons.

There were 10 organizations from Canada that supported a February 28, 2005 opening date, seven organizations were opposed and the Sports Fish Advisory Board abstained.

The Conference Board recognizes the need to resolve the winter migration issue so that any potential concerns associated with an extended season are better understood. The Conference Board unanimously agreed to direct the staff to work with a subcommittee of the Conference Board to design a program that provides the best opportunity to answer the question around winter and summer migrations in all regulatory areas. Specifically, the Conference Board would like interceptions between areas, migration rates and timing analyzed. The Conference Board recognizes there may be a need to prioritize areas due to time and budget restraints. Potential options discussed by the Conference Board include an experimental winter fishery, a winter PIT tagging program, a pop up tagging program or a winter wire tagging program in Areas 3A and 2C. The Conference Board also unanimously agreed the program should be implemented as quickly as possible, no later than 2006.

The following represents the view of the seven Canadian organizations who are opposed to a February 28, 2005 opening date;

“There are a number of Canadian representatives that do not agree with a late February halibut opening for 2005. We desire to go on record that a date of March 15th at the earliest be strongly considered. This date falls in line with the IPHC staff recommendations for the 2005 season. A later date in March would likely enhance a more natural dispersion and migration of the resource to Area 2C, 2B and 2A from the western regions. Interception of the stock before it reaches Area 2 is a concern. Opening later in March would be a cautionary step toward better dispersion. This approach would be a prudent practice until such time better scientific data is available. Forming an international task force in a timely manner to discuss methods and funding is paramount. We suggest an experimental winter fishing and/or tagging programs be initiated to provide this information for the 2006 and 2007 IPHC Annual meetings. We will rely on the IPHC staff’s expertise to design the research criteria and the geographical range needed to get a proper analysis to this ongoing question of halibut migration patterns.”

There were no changes recommended to the recreational halibut fishing season dates.

C. CATCH LIMIT RECOMMENDATIONS - ALL AREAS

The Conference Board unanimously agreed to support the staff recommended catch limits:

2A	1.33 million pounds <Includes recreational catch>
2B	13.25 million pounds <Includes recreational catch>
2C	10.93 million pounds
3A	25.47 million pounds
3B	13.15 million pounds
4A	3.44 million pounds
4B	2.26 million pounds
4CDE	3.99 million pounds

Total **73.82 million pounds**

D. STAFF AND INDUSTRY PROPOSALS FOR CHANGES TO IPHC REGULATIONS

Allow Area 4C fishing in Area 4D

The Conference Board supported the staff recommendation; however, the US delegation was split on a vote of 14 in favor, 5 opposed, and 6 abstaining. The principal area of debate centered on whether qualified vessels should be allowed to fish in 4C and 4D or only fish 4C quota in 4D. The Canadian section voted 2 in favor with 16 abstaining. The North Pacific Council is to review this issue in three years.

Recognition in IPHC regulations of the First Nation's Food Fishery in Area 2B

The Conference Board unanimously endorsed the staff's proposal.

Prohibition of fillets on board a commercial vessel

The Conference Board unanimously endorsed the staff's proposal.

Alaska Seafood Coalition Proposal

The Conference Board heard a presentation from Trevor Jones of the Alaska Seafood Coalition. The Conference Board members spent considerable time discussing many aspects of the proposed program. While members agreed the program was well intentioned, the Conference Board did not accept the proposal on a vote from the US section of 8 in favor, 10 opposed, and 8 abstentions while the Canadian section voted 17 opposed and 1 abstention. Issues of concern focused around enforceability, the availability of other species for utilization, the lack of a finished rationalized Gulf of Alaska management program that addresses halibut caps to the different trawl sectors and the reluctance of the observer program to use its personnel to verify halibut mortality for this program. Those in favor of the proposal felt the program had low risk attached to it and that it was a worthwhile program that should be supported.

E. OTHER CONFERENCE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Conference Board unanimously passed a motion requesting the Commission prepare a report looking at the changes to fishing patterns due to whale predation and the resulting effects on CPUE. The Conference Board also requested as part of this report the Commission research legal methods of deterrence.
2. The Conference Board requests that a letter be sent to the NPFMC to encourage their rationalization process which would hopefully result in a reduction of halibut by-catch.
3. The Conference Board unanimously passed a motion requesting the Commissioners not allow the use of genetic material for brood stock in fish farms and prohibit the introduction of Atlantic halibut into Pacific waters for aquaculture purposes.

The Conference Board would like to thank the IPHC staff for their assistance throughout the year and at this Annual meeting. Additionally we would like to acknowledge and thank the National Marine Fisheries Service and Fisheries and Oceans Canada for their assistance. It is the understanding of the Conference Board that Dr. Beamish and Mr. Secord may be finishing their terms as Commissioners to the IPHC. If this is indeed the case we would like to thank them for their efforts over the years.