



Minutes of a Meeting of the:

**POWELL RIVER SPORT FISHING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

June 14, 2006 @ 7255 Duncan Street, Powell River, B.C.

**PRESENT:**

Skip Willson	Jim Hildebrand
Hugh Kingwell	Rusty Kemp
Herb Daum	Andrew Shostak
Bob McCartney	Rob Bombardir

Hugh Kingwell acted as Chair

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

Hugh Kingwell reported:

**ROCKFISH:**

- The new Rockfish Conservation Areas are to come into effect February 2007
- The changes recommended by PRSFAB were virtually all accepted noting Lasqueti Island has recommendations still outstanding. Without some changes, it will have been designated basically a “dead zone” as a result of being divided up between three different zones.

**SARA: THOMPSON COHO**

- The new Minister of Fisheries appears to have rejected the recommendation to list this species although the issue remains under study and a final decision to be made in the future.

**COWICHAN CHINOOK**

- The non-retention will be same as last year:  
June 15 to August 15 within:  
*Those waters of Algerine and Shearwater Passages bounded by a line from the southern most point of Harwood Island southerly to the navigational light on Rebecca Rocks hence northwest to the easterly most point to Vivian Island then northerly to the navigational marker at Mystery Reef hence west to the navigational marker on Atrevida Reef then southerly to the northern most point of Harwood Island then hence along the western shore of Harwood Island back to the point of commencement at the most southerly tip of Harwood Island;*
- There has been discussion re implementing a system to control early season Chinook in the basin with concern to impact to early runs. While DFO has not taken steps this year, it definitely has its sights on taking steps to protect early run Chinook next year. If closed, we are likely looking at a blanket closure to include commercial & recreational fishers excepting Aboriginal harvest for food and ceremonial purposes;
- We request copies of the statistical information DFO is working from/with in making these decisions.

## HALIBUT

- A review of last year is indicating that the recreational sector may have reached the harvest threshold of 12% of the commercial allocation. There is a lot of uncertainty regarding what to do should we reach or exceed this 12% number this year. Would the recreational sector be shut down? How would we “buy” additional quota from the commercial sector? Would there be a willing seller? There will be a lot of dialogue with DFO over this year to try to sort this potential problem out;
- Approximately \$2,000,000 remains on deposit as a result of under harvest of our allocation over the last few years. This money was paid to an account in reserve for the recreational sector by the commercial fleet. A motion was passed at the last SFAB meeting to access approximately \$70,000 of this money to conduct a halibut study to include addressing recreational data and calculating the recreational sector’s 12% share;
- Noted: Up to 200,000 pounds of fish leave with American charters fishing in Canadian waters and this catch is marked against the Canadian 12%. Anything taken by sport fisherman, guided or not, is marked against the Canadian 12%;
- Noted: Creel counts are inaccurate as the weights are based on average sizes from the Alaska fishery. The study referred to earlier is intended to determine a more accurate number;
- Currently, halibut is the only groundfish fish being managed this way.

## GROUND FISH

- In a new pilot program, all groundfish are taken and assigned to the commercial sector under *Individual Transferable Quotas* (ITQ’s) and while this was apparently not intended to affect recreational fishing, without further clarification it effectively cuts us out. The Minister advises no limitations are intended on recreational fishing.
- Noted: If a full recreational take is given under the changed program, DFO will have, in effect, increased the overall allowable take of groundfish;
- Vessels can trade quota within their fleet and in other fleets to address bycatch etc;
  - A lot of issues need to be dealt with - the Minister is an ex-commercial fisherman so the knowledge is there.

## CRAB

- Savary & Harwood Islands: Intent is to identify ‘recreational only’ areas and a size differential between recreational & commercial. We have forwarded recommendations to DFO to look at, but the process to deal with these applications is not well defined;

Motions adopted at South Coast & Provincial Board meetings:

- (i) That DFO close all crab fishing in the waters on the north side of Savary Island out to the 200 foot depth contour, during the period when Dungeness crab are moulting to ensure that a quality sustainable fishery for all stakeholders is maintained (dates to be determined through consultation with DFO biologists and local stakeholders)
  
- (ii) That DFO close commercial crab fishing year-round in the waters on the southeast side of Harwood Island between the landmarks locally referred to as the Sand Banks; then north as far as the Spit. This is to provide local recreational and First Nations fishers an area of safely accessible crab habitat for sustainable crab fishing, absent of the swings in productivity historically associated with periodic commercial harvesting in this pressure sensitive area
  - Amended: To encompass Areas 12 - 20, 28 & 29
  - Amended: That DFO establish a larger crab minimum size limit for Dungeness crab commercially fished in Areas 12 - 20, 28 & 29;
  
- A portion of Harwood shoreline is being sought to dedicate to recreational crab fishing only. Hugh is working on the submission but needs field information from fisherman:
  - how many people are fishing - report when in area, how many floats/boats are observed;
  - success rate including circumstances after a commercial fisher has been in the area;
  
- Closure requested for Savary when crabs at risk ie during moult. DFO advises except in a very few areas, the moult is all over the map time wise and so not a feasible option. Noted while Savary is a good crab area, it is showing signs of stress
  - input of information from recreational fishers requested (for Hugh's report).

## PRAWNS

Motions adopted at South Coast & Provincial Board meetings:

- (i) *That the GFSF WG recommend to the SFAB the adoption of the proposal developed by the 2 sectors for improved management of prawns in Saanich Inlet - Stuart Channel designed to increase abundance over the next 3 - 5 years and thus improve catches for all harvesters. This proposal to include the following:*
  1. *Doubling of the March spawner index from 1.7 to 3.4 over two years (i.e. 2.6 in March 2007; 3.4 by March 2008)*
  2. *Continuing to manage the recreational and commercial fisheries to a 15% differential during the next two years*
  3. *Regular sampling, as determined and designed by DFO Science Branch, of both areas after the commercial fishery closes at the new index levels to comply with #1 above.*
  4. *Assessing results at the end of Year 1 and adjusting the index as required to comply with #1 above*
  5. *Manipulating the recreational fishery over the next 2 years to comply with #1 including: (A) "pulsing" of the recreational fishery (i.e. fish the first two weeks of every month and then out of the water for the last two weeks) after September 15 to extend opportunity as long as possible, (B) closure of the recreational fishery in these two areas*

*if spawner abundance is determined by DFO to be below index at any time after the commercial fishery closes.*

6. *Recreational fishery to be open for all of April but closed for the first week in May to facilitate optimum placement of commercial gear to allow accurate in-season index sampling immediately after the commercial opening.*

*Alberni Canal is to be managed in similar fashion but was excluded this year for logistical reasons. It is intended to be included in 2007 and beyond;*

- (ii) *That, notwithstanding the proposal for improved management of prawns in high use areas, the GFSF WG recommend to the SFAB that an annual limit of 4,000 prawns per tidal water fishing licence be implemented coast-wide for the recreational prawn fishery*

*Rationale: Under the present management regime, the annual legal catch of prawns by recreational harvesters could be as high as 73,000 prawns. There are, in some areas, licence holders who are attempting to harvest this number for sale or barter in contravention of the Fisheries Act and to the detriment of other recreational harvesters (e.g. earlier conservation closures). C&P have advised that it is virtually impossible to curtail this activity under the present regulations. An annual limit would enable FO's to monitor these meat hogs to ensure compliance;*

*Hugh Kingwell urged a distinction between "meat hogs" taking their full allocation and those who violate the regulations. "Meat hogs" impact other recreational anglers, causing earlier closures;*

- DFO is looking for heavily hit areas (determined from catch harvest) to target;
- This means they may need to get twice as good a spawner index to maintain the recreational fishery we have now;
- "Manipulating the recreational fishery" by example can mean "pulsing", which is closing an area for two weeks per month;
- When the commercial fleet starts its season, there is such a flurry that a week long recreational closure may be considered;
- Three areas are currently identified as problem areas and there are probably more to come;
- A Motion put forward and may be adopted. It will place an annual limit of 4,000 prawns per year per recreational fisher
  - not a rule that can be effectively policed but what it does provide is better optics as we negotiate with the commercial harvesters. It reflects our intent to manage in a responsible manner;
  - daily quota of 200 prawns per license, now in effect, will remain;
- There is a possibility of closures for spawning season as has been done in the past;

- Identification of recreational only prawning areas is becoming a topic of discussion
  - There has been discussion and if recreational only areas are identified, a suggestion is the area be closed to commercial traffic but DFO doesn't monitor ocean traffic so would involve bringing in another government agency;
  - Suggestion from the floor that prawning be closed in RCA areas as an option for management strategy;
- Lost prawn gear
  - DFO does not manage  
(Is a theft issue and should be reported to the RCMP).

### **SHELLFISH: Oysters**

- Amendment to limits coming - will be a piece count only (volume will be removed as an alternative).

#### **Olympia v Pacific Oysters**

- Discussions underway that the Pacific Oyster requires some conservation.

#### **Varnish Clams**

- There is a recommendation to increase the limit to 75 per day, not to be included in the aggregate.

#### **Squid**

- There is a proposal to change current the current 5 kg limit to a piece count.

#### **Opal Squid**

- There is a proposal to change the daily limit from 5 kg to 200.

The default limits for shellfish is 20/day and if not otherwise specified this would apply to other squid species.

### **DOGFISH**

- daily limit is 20.

### **LING COD**

- the opening is now in effect (June 1 to September 30) by hook and line gear only
  - one lingcod per day (minimum size limit 65 cm)
  - ten lingcod per year

If the monitoring program indicates the allowable catch (5,000) may be reached before September 30, 2006, the fishery will be closed;

- the downside is that now rockfish are managed effectively under the same regime so included in the same time frame and closed otherwise;
- Creel forms distributed: please complete and return as indicated on the form or to the local DFO office (additional forms available at DFO office)
  - information to be completed is on everything caught, not just cod;

- Discussion with respect to the 5,000 ceiling and that this could change if rockfish bycatch is low, in which case the ceiling may increase. We need to be optimistic we're helping the fishery not the opposite by completing the Creel forms.

## SEALS

- Discussion re DFO's procedure in determining numbers: While the biology people in Nanaimo feel the data is fairly accurate, there is a general consensus by recreational fishers that the numbers indicated by DFO are unrealistically low;
- A motion was put forward to initiate a more thorough count - still waiting for an answer as to whether they will do so but noted it's not been denied so there is still a possibility;
- Discussion re possibility of a cull @ Puntledge - no details received;
- Autopsies of stomach contents are identifying food largely as hake but they've been seen eating everything including rock cod and ling;
- Mortality rate in pups appears to be rising;
- Local fishers are noting seal encounters with hooked rockfish which seems to indicate that their fee source may be stressed. This is an unusual development.

## HERRING

- Herring in many other areas in trouble but here in the Strait DFO continues to tell us that the biomass looks good. They are just not going where they used to go;
- This past season, about 15 fish caught in Klahanie Drive & Coho Point had herring in stomach contents so we may be looking at an improvement around here;
- Discussion that perhaps there won't be a market for herring in 10 years as the traditional market for the roe is decreasing.

## THEODOSIA

- The diversion has been removed, allowing more water through and will continue. Even on low flows, all water will go down to Theodosia;
- The gate appears to be in good shape.

## SALMON SOCIETY

- Release from each of the Texada & Willingdon pens is 40,000 chinook;
- Texada fish were raised at the mill but hopefully imprinted to Texada;
- Return rate historically is 50 - 100 fish.

MEETING ADJOURNED @ 8:05