



Chief Petty Officer (2nd class) Thomas G. Cole, CD (Retired)
President
Royal Canadian Navy Anglers Association
< ttbc@shaw.ca >

DEC 12 2017

Dear Chief Petty Officer Cole:

Thank you for your correspondence of October 18, 2017, regarding Chinook salmon net pen projects.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) shares your concern for marine mammals and takes their conservation and protection very seriously. Whales are protected by the *Marine Mammal Regulations* under the *Fisheries Act*. Killer whales are also protected under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), with Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) listed as Endangered and Northern Resident Killer Whales listed as Threatened. Listed species are a high priority for the Government of Canada.

As required under SARA, a Recovery Strategy (*Recovery Strategy for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales*) and an Action Plan (*Action Plan for Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whale (Orcinus orca) in Canada*) have been completed.

The Recovery Strategy identifies key threats (reduced prey availability, disturbance, and contaminants) and the strategic approach to mitigating these threats to the population and known critical habitat. It also includes further studies to identify additional areas of critical habitat.

The Action Plan identifies the specific recovery measures required to implement the strategic direction identified in the Recovery Strategy. A total of 98 recovery measures are identified in the Action Plan, and 34 of these address the threat of reduced prey availability. The Department is currently working on an implementation plan for some recovery measures, while numerous activities are currently proposed and underway for others. Actions to abate the identified threats include research, management, education, and outreach-based activities. Activities by the Department and other groups (e.g. the Port of Vancouver's ECHO program) to recover SRKW have been, and will continue to be, undertaken in alignment with the recovery approach outlined in these documents.

In addition, as part of the Oceans Protection Plan, DFO is committed to additional actions to address threats to marine mammals, including SRKW. Specifically, five new recovery actions were identified in the 2017 Science Based Whale Review. One of these new measures is specifically related to abating the threat of reduced prey availability.

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DFO recognizes that SRKW feed primarily on Chinook salmon and that the abundance of Chinook salmon can be increased through the use of hatcheries and net pen release sites. DFO's Salmonid Enhancement Program currently employs net pen release strategies in several locations in Southern British Columbia, including in West Vancouver, Sooke, Port Renfrew, and Port Alberni, to increase the terminal abundance of Chinook salmon. The Department is working with volunteer groups on southern Vancouver Island net pen and hatchery projects that produce Chinook salmon.

DFO is considering various options to increase prey availability for SRKW in addition to current work. Hatchery and net pen fish production is one of the options being contemplated. Any work must be considered in the context of Chinook salmon fishery and conservation objectives, as hatchery production can potentially have an effect on nearby wild salmon populations and fisheries. Hatchery production planning, including net pen projects, is conducted through the annual Integrated Fishery Management Planning process, which is soon to begin. Specific project enquiries should be directed through the local DFO Community Advisor in your area.

Thank you for taking the time to write about this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. LeBlanc', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

c.c.: Mr. Terry Beech, M.P.
Burnaby North-Seymour

18 OCTOBER 2017

Honorable Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Minister Fisheries and oceans Canada)

HONOURABLE MINISTER;

I was at the Orca symposium in Vancouver on the 10 -12 of OCT 2017 and heard you and your ministry commit to a plan to try and rescue and help the recovery of the Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) I was pleased that the present Liberal Government is going to commit many federal dollars to this plan and the money that was committed will be used over the LONG TERM to mitigate many problems associated with underwater acoustics and also a commitment to restore habitat and help science to understand some of the recovery problems involved, however there is a more pressing problem that has to be addressed immediately!

The main problem for the SRKW is the availability of the ocean and surrounding water courses to **produce enough food for these animals** ; the problem is now and not 5 years from now so the only question that has to be answered is : **how does this happen?**

Minister; I believe you were not briefed as to all of the options that exist today;; especially the projects in place now and those that could be restarted at your direction to help these animals lower their death rate and further enhance their survival and those of their offspring' The answer to the feed problem is to champion the **Chinook net pen projects** that have proven to create CHINOOK BETTER THAN MOST HATCHERIES CAN!! This was explained and driven home at the symposium by the recreational; commercial and whale watching component attending!!

At the present time there are three Chinook net pen projects active in the Juan de Fuca strait area and these projects produce CHINOOK SALMON. They are all run and staffed by Volunteers from the communities involved, however they need help in some critical areas; there is a lack of funding for feed ; clipping and marking. There is also the potential to reinvigorate three other net pen projects at short notice as they have the nets; the pens, 'and the volunteers with the expertise to put them into production immediately; what they lack is funding and DFO Ottawa approval to restart their projects.

GIVE US THE FUNDING AND WE WILL CREATE CHINOOK SALMON FOR THE ORCAS, FIRST NATIONS AND RECREATIONAL ANGLERS!!!

CONTACTS TO CONTINUE AND ALSO RESTART THESE VITAL PROJECTS ARE:

Christopher Bos South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition c.bos@shaw.ca

Thomas Cole CD Amalgamated Conservation Society ttbc@shaw.ca

Sidney Anglers Association Dave Stephens stephenscouts@shaw.ca

Bob Gallagher Port Renfrew Salmonid Group gallaughers1@shaw.ca

Minister; we can help towards this recovery faster than any other group; give us the funding; give us the okay; give us the resources we ask for and we will go into action... I guarantee the volunteers await your okay and eagerly want the CHANCE TO HELP IN THIS RECOVERY PROCESS. We are the not seen volunteers who clean streams;;do habitat reconstruction; run counting fences; do creel work; and also run salmonids in the classroom to educate our young people about stream stewardship and the importance of the environment as it affects our lives and the creatures we share with it! We appreciate the importance of this work and are available for consultation at your discretion.

Yours sincerely;



Thomas G. Cole CD (chief petty officer ret'd RCN) (still serving thru community involvement)

President Royal Canadian Navy Anglers Association (RCNAA)

President Amalgamated Conservation Society (ACS)

Sport Fish Advisory Board

WE; THE VOLUNTEERS CAN AND WILL CREATE CHINOOK FOR THE ORCA'S we eagerly **await positive direction** and **funding** from government.

MP Terry Beech
as discussed at your
constituent office 14 Oct 2017.
Please present to the Minister
tbc@shaw.ca
250 478 1306
Thank you
Thomas Cole CD
VICTORIA BC