



As you are likely already aware, it has come to our attention that DFO is planning on implementing a closure for Southern Resident Killer whales that will extend from East Point to Otter Point. This will be a full finfish closure that will be in effect from May 1<sup>st</sup> to Sept 31<sup>st</sup> each year. It is our expectation that this closure would be in effect for many years if implemented. We are deeply concerned about the impact this will have on our fishery, your businesses and the community of Sooke.

The only chance we have to change this is to make sure that DFO, especially the ministers office, is aware of the impact this will have to you and the community at large.

**You need to do this now. The time window is very short – Wednesday will be too late.**

What we are asking you to do is to send an email or make a phone call to the minister of fisheries and oceans as well as the Regional Director general for the Pacific region. They can be reached at:

**Regional Director General – Rebecca Reid:**

[Rebecca.Reid@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Rebecca.Reid@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

(604) 666-6098

**Minister Dominic LeBlanc:**

[min@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:min@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

(613)-992-1020

Following is some background and key points to make when writing in to the RDG and ministers office or when speaking to them on the phone. Please note that its important that these don't look like form letters but reflect your personal opinion about the proposed management measures. Its really important that DFO hears your story in your words. We need them to understand how this will impact you and your business as well as the community and the fishery in general. The letter can be very sort – just a couple of paragraphs explaining that you feel betrayed by DFO, that the measures as put in place weren't what we consulted on, and that the measures as currently planned won't solve the problem for the whales so we're being set up to have to do even more in the future.

- The community of Sooke was provided a proposal to protect SRKW's in February of 2018. The community responded to that proposal through two meetings, one for the general public and one with the Sooke Charter assoc. Over 100 people attended those meetings.
- That proposal indicated that either a finfish closure or a salmon only closure from East Point to Sherringham Point would meet DFO's requirements **for the recreational fishery** to offer a refuge from competition for prey as well as from acoustic and physical disturbance.
- The recreational community provided its advice based on some small adjustment to the boundaries as originally proposed and indicated its willingness to accept measures that could be proven to provide benefit to the whales **with the clear understanding that all other sectors who produce the potential for physical and acoustic disturbance would be required to adopt similar measures at the same time.**
- The proposal as it stands now, to implement a full finfish closure from June 1<sup>st</sup> to Sept 31<sup>st</sup> from East Point to Otter Point **was never part of DFO's original proposal.** Had it been, the public outcry would have been substantially greater.
- SRKW's have been in a depressed state for several decades, therefore measures put in place to rebuild the population will be in place for a long time. It is therefore critical for DFO to fully understand both the benefit to the whales and the socio-economic impact to the community of these measures before implementing such long-term measures.
- To our knowledge no socio-economic impact assessment of these measures has been attempted.
- The proposal to include the area from Sherringham Pt to Otter Pt will produce profound negative social and economic impact to me and to the community. ***(Each letter writer to provide his or her details here – DFO needs to hear your story)***
- The original proposal to implement salmon only or finfish closure starting at Sherringham Point, while still producing some negative impact, would be something the community could live with assuming it is set up to provide protection to whales from all acoustic and physical disturbance.
- The proposal as indicated will provide little to no positive benefit to the whales in terms of protection from physical and acoustic disturbance since no measures to reduce either commercial fishing other than salmon, or whale watching pressure have been suggested. There hasn't been a commercial salmon fishery in the area for decades.
- There is a large scale commercial crab fishery that takes place in the area, and it is also a popular spot for the whale watching fleet to interact with the whales, often at close range.
- There is no scientific, empirical evidence that proves that the presence of recreational fishing vessels in any way impacts the ability for whales to acquire prey.
- It is impossible for the community to understand how DFO considers it acceptable to allow business as usual for every stakeholder that impacts the whales ability to acquire prey except the unproven perception of an impact produced by the recreational fishery.
- Does DFO really believe this is providing meaningful, measurable benefit to the whales, or is this proposal which will produce significant harm to the community of Sooke just a

cynical political attempt to provide the perception of doing something in order to placate the demands of the ENGO community?

- The community of Sooke is deeply concerned that the measures as indicated will provide no measurable benefit to the whales, and therefore there is no hope that these closed areas will ever go away, or that the whales will demonstrate any recovery as a result of their implementation which will result in even more measures being demanded by the ENGO community.
- Bottom line – The community of Sooke will accept the original proposal from DFO to implement interim measures starting at Sheringham Pt with the understanding that similar measures will be implemented to other stakeholders who may impact whales. We urge DFO to undertake the necessary research to fully understand what the impacts of recreational fishing, whale watching, commercial fishing activity, and boating traffic have on the whales ability to effectively forage and then implement measurable, science based measures to actually protect the whales rather than placate the ENGO community.

**Write your letter NOW! It only takes a few minutes to help make a difference.**

If you could please cc us in your emails it'll help us track and the report on comments.

Thank you!

Martin Paish – SFI – [mpaish@sportfishing.bc.ca](mailto:mpaish@sportfishing.bc.ca)

Chris Bos – SVIAC – [chris@anglerscoalition.com](mailto:chris@anglerscoalition.com)