

Victoria and Area SFAB Committee Meeting

Esquimalt Anglers Clubhouse

1101 Munro Street,

Victoria, BC

Wednesday October 17th, 2018

Attendees:

Brad Beaith – DFO – South Coast Recreational Fishing Coordinator

Roy Osseltine – DFO Victoria Conservation and Protection

Christopher Bos – SFAB – Victoria Committee Chair + SVIAC President

Tom Cole – SFAB – Victoria ACS 2nd Seat – ACS + RCNAA President

Jim Stephen – Independent Angler

Rollie Rose – VIC SFAB Alt

Tom Davis – Independent Angler

Mike Thompson – Independent Angler

Gerry Kristianson – SFAB Main Board Chair

Tom Vaida – Clover Point Anglers

Jim Dowd – James Bay Anglers

Grant MacPherson – Sidney Anglers

Wayne Zaccarelli – VFGPA – ACS

Doug Ferrier – D and D Charters

Warren Tipper – Independent Angler

Dennis Reid – Independent Angler + Media

Rick Preston – Individual Angler

Brian Alexander – VP ACS + Past Pres WCFFA

Regrets:

Glen Varney – Vic SFAB Alt

Martin Paish – SFAB Exec + Hali Committee Chair

Accepted Agenda

(The chair suggested that as many items on the agenda be covered at this meeting as the second meeting in early November needs to have time to cover the remaining important items)

Welcome and introductions

Remembering Gary West

2018 and 2019 Halibut Seasons + TAC Expectation and Committee Guidance on 2019 Season *(partial)*

Commercial Crabbing Concerns

2 x Shellfish Farming Tenure Proposals:

Salt Spring Island
Possession Point, Sooke
Post-Season Chinook Salmon Fishing (Angler Observations - catch and effort)
Elections

Deferred Items:

2018 Consultation Timing regarding Salmon Measures (SFAB, IHPC, 25-35% Redux, SRKW)

Southern Resident Killer Whale Measures and JDF and Gulf Islands Closures

2019 Halibut TAC Expectation and Committee Guidance on Season

Creel Verification Project - Trailer Counting 2018 + Camera Info + angler DNA Collection

SC Regional Updates

Enhancement Updates

(Agenda items shown in italics will be deferred to the next meeting on 6th November due to insufficient time to cover the entire agenda during today's meeting)

Meeting Notes:

Welcome and Introductions – Chris Bos (CB) welcomed all to the meeting and commented on the surprisingly good turn out for a daytime SFAB meeting, congratulating those present. This was followed by a round of introductions.

Remembering Gary West – We were all very sad to learn of the passing of an esteemed member of the local South Island fishing community. Gary West, who had retired a few years ago from his fishing bait supply business, was a strong supporter of the angling community. Tom Davis, Tom Vaida and Tom Cole, plus a number of attendees shared experiences and knowledge of this kind and generous man who passed away unexpectedly. Gary will be missed.

Adopting the Agenda - CB asked if there was any additions to or changes needed on the agenda, hearing none the agenda was adopted as described above. CB expressed the need to cover as much of the agenda topics as possible today to attempt to keep the second meeting in November manageable. Two separate meetings were scheduled because of the amount of important business needing full consultation before the South Coast meeting in December; one normal meeting would not have provided sufficient time.

2018 and 2019 Halibut Seasons + TAC Expectation and Committee Guidance on 2019 Season –

CB explained that the SFAB Halibut Committee is currently preparing an options document to be shared with all local committees, so they can discuss and provide guidance about their committee's preferences for a 2019 Halibut fishing season. The document will cover various scenarios of different levels of rec sector TAC, so not knowing the actual TAC for 2019 won't be an issue when seeking committee recommendations. Indications are that the 2019 season may be facing another reduction in total TAC

for Canada. The options document will be ready for discussion by the second Victoria and Area local SFAB Committee meeting in early November, so the committee will discuss the 2019 season and various options at that time.

(Committee deferred discussions of 2019 TAC recommendations until Nov 6th Vic SFAC mtg)

Continuing with halibut, Gerry Kristianson gave an update on the 26th January 2018 IPHC Annual General Meeting in Portland, USA. The meeting was more contentious than usual. Against a background of declining fishable abundance in recent years, for one of the very few times in the long history of the treaty at the annual meeting Canada and the US were unable to agree on each country's TAC levels. With the IPHC Commissioners unable to agree on fishing plans, the catch limits adopted by the IPHC in 2017 remained in place. Both Canada and the United States indicated their intention to implement lower catch limits for 2018 via their own domestic regulatory processes. Using the precautionary principle Canada unilaterally made the decision to fish to a 7.1 million pound total TAC this year, down from 7.45 million pounds in 2017. Because of the current allocation policy between the commercial and recreational sectors being based on an 85/15 percent split, the recreational allocation fell from 1,118,000 pounds last year to 927,990 pounds for 2018.

Once the Canadian rec catch was confirmed the SFAB Halibut Committee went about developing fishery options for the coming season. CB, a member of the Halibut Committee, described to the meeting attendees the challenges around reaching the 2018 fishing plan for halibut coast wide. The lower TAC created much discussion of what was the correct fishing plan for the whole coast. At the fall 2017 meeting, the Victoria and Area SFAB Committee had voted unanimously to have their rep vote to support the existing guiding principles in the development of a halibut season. CB explained how he was placed in an awkward position of being lobbied by others to change his vote in contrast to the direction received from his local committee. At the GFSFWG meeting in Richmond five Victoria area fishermen attended as observers to plead their case that shortening the halibut season would be damaging to the Victoria and area fishery and likely hurt their businesses.

The SFAB majority decision was to recommend a continuation of the one halibut per day, two in possession and six per year retention limit. After extensive discussion reviewing a number of options, the SFAB recommended a maximum length of 115cm for the larger halibut, with a continuation of the 83 cm maximum size for the second fish in possession. The season opened on March 1st and due to the fishing plan adopted, the more restrictive fishing plan appears to have reduced catch sufficiently to hold the season open through the end of the year. The next SFAB Halibut Committee conference call meeting will take place on October 31st.

One piece of news from the Halibut Committee is the department are currently considering the concept of allowing a roll over of overage or underage in TAC in years where the sport TAC is exceeded or not completely caught by seasons end. This is similar to the 10% carry over arrangement the commercial sector enjoy. While no final decision has been made, if approved, this might assist the sport fishery in the future.

SFAB is still against the DFO Experimental XRQ Halibut fishery. A growing number of anglers believe that the reporting system for XRQ fishery allows for easy breaking of the rules by participants, implying some

fish caught under that license are purposely not reported at all due to a low likelihood of being checked. Plus the XRQ fishery has a continual uncaught poundage roll over to those who have purchased halibut quota from commercial halibut quota holders. The SFAB at all levels continues to press DFO to end this fishery.

Grant MacPherson suggested TAC purchased by certain fishing resorts in the north under the experimental fishing license had been applied against Rec catch creel data (previous years). The point was the poundage landed under the experimental fishery was being added to creel or log book entries as rec caught fish and being accounted for as part of the 15% rec TAC. If so, this is wrong and a problem needing attention. Grant had heard this through discussions with other anglers but suggested it may have been in prior years.

Commercial Crabbing Concerns *(see attached sheet)*

In October 2017 Victoria SFAC Chairs Chris Bos and Tom Cole attended the DFO Crab Multi-Sectoral Mtg. They presented official SFAB approved requests (in time for the IFMP process) for special rec and FN crab fishing only areas (i.e. no commercial crabbing). Sooke and Beecher Bay were presented. While there has been less of an issue this year at Sooke, the problems related to negative recreational and commercial crab gear interactions, hazard to navigation and boating safety are springing up elsewhere. The Victoria waterfront has now become one of those new challenges. Tom Cole indicated he had received information that there has been illegal commercial crab activity in Beecher Bay in the new closed area, which has angered the Sci'aneu First Nation.

Jim Stephen, a Victoria independent angler and member of the local SFAB committee, reported on a number of negative incidents where rec anglers either lost salmon fishing gear or were placed in danger due to the gear interactions with commercial crabbing gear. The area where this has been occurring is the Victoria waterfront, a fishing area popular with many anglers who have small (10' to 14') open boats. The commercial crabbing activity in the area has been intense and constant throughout the summer. Several others in attendance at the meeting echoed Jim's comments on the same issue and mentioned additional areas too (Clover Point and Graham's Beach). Jim stated crabbing success was terrible due to lack of legal sized crabs for the public. He added that many anglers who liked to fish crab had completely given up, because the area had been overfished by the commercial operators; this sentiment was echoed by others.

In summary ... excessive commercial crab gear in an area accessible to small boat anglers was causing difficulty to safely navigate, had become a genuine boating safety issue and was causing anglers who were salmon fishing to lose too much downrigging gear. In addition, the intense commercial fishery destroys the fishing opportunity (no legal crabs) for those small boat anglers who cannot travel to other areas to fish for crabs or salmon. This is a long-standing recurring theme around the South of Vancouver Island that DFO needs to address. Testimonials were provided through Jim to the chair prior to the meeting and are attached to these minutes.

Gerry Kristianson, CB and Tom Cole will be attending the upcoming DFO Crab Multi-Sectoral Meeting on October 19th in Nanaimo and will bring these issues forward. Tom will also ask what is happening about the spring 2018 request by Sci'aneu FN for a closure in Beecher Bay.

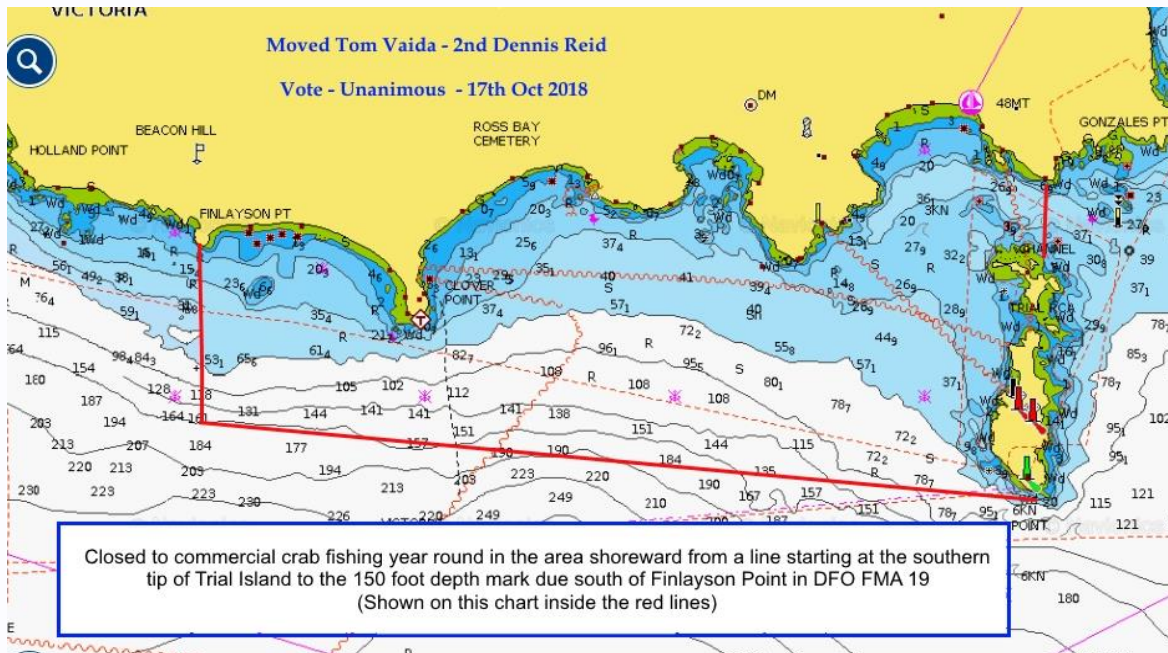
Four motions were adopted by the committee:

Motion – 1 - DFO move urgently to discuss with Transport Canada the issues of safety and navigation due to increased relocation of commercial crab fishing gear to the area off Victoria.

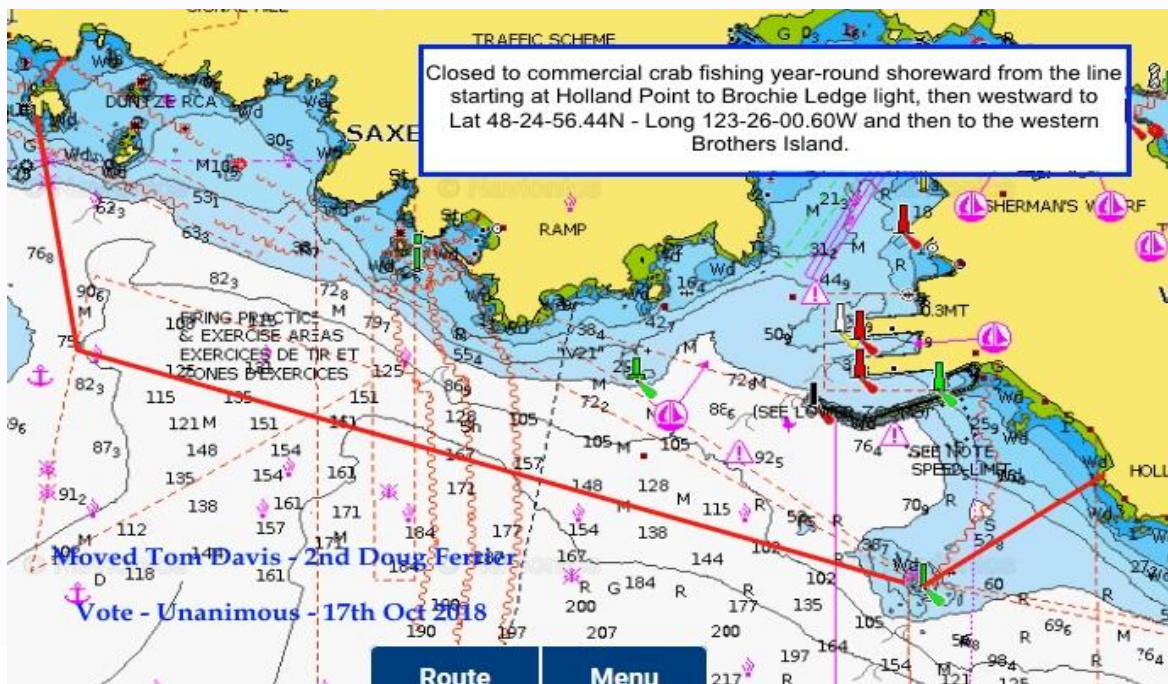
Moved – Gerry Kristianson – 2nd Tom Cole – Vote – Unanimous

Motion – 2 - The SFAB continue to press for size differential to allow for access to legal crab for the recreational fishery - Moved by Tom Davis - 2nd by Rick Preston - Vote Unanimous

Motion – 3 – See map below



Motion – 4 – See map below



Two Shellfish Farming Tenure Proposals

Salt Spring Island - This application is for a shellfish tenure outside the Victoria and Area SFAB Committee jurisdiction, therefore the proposal should be forwarded to GFSFWG and the Renfrew/Nitinat/Cowichan local SFAB Committee.

Possession Point, Sooke – an aquaculture application has been made by the T’Sou-ke First Nations to set up a purifying area at Possession Point (Sooke) for shellfish grown at their existing farm in the Sooke Basin. Apparently, the existing farm location does not permit shellfish to be marketed directly after harvest, causing the band to ship the harvested bi-valves to a location on the mid-island, where they are purified before sale to the public. This is a major expense for the band and setting up a purifying location at Possession Point would be advantageous. We are advised that the area under consideration would have minimal impact to sport fishing. CB has asked Blake Burton, who is coordinating the application for the Sooke FN, to come to the November local SFAB Committee meeting to show us what is proposed.

Post-Season Chinook Salmon Fishing (Angler Observations - catch and effort)

CB asked those present to share their on-the-water experiences of the 2018 spring and summer Chinook salmon fishing conditions. This observed information is valuable, allowing for comparison to DFO creel data and helpful when validating the DFO Creel Bulletin. Those who had fished for Chinook throughout the spring and summer discussed their observations and success.

The early part of the spring fishery saw reasonable Chinook fishing with the usual high levels of marked fish (likely from Washington State) in the mix – BUT the angler effort level was noticeably low. In general, there were fewer people on the water this year. The low angler effort off Oak Bay, Victoria and Sooke remained later than normal too. It wasn’t until August, when the slot regulations came off and the Sockeye opening, before the normal summer levels of boats were on the water. Observations at two marinas (Cheanuh and Sunny Shores) indicated that their moorages were still approximately half-empty in mid-June, verifying the reduced effort level observed.

Fishing for Chinook was generally good with reports of higher than normal catches of salmon through the year. One guide mentioned it was his best catch year in the past eight years. This implies there were a lot of local stocks and migrating fish about.

The other common thread from the attendees at the meeting was the small size of the fish being caught this year. While there were a few fish caught of around 30 lbs, the majority were much smaller. 15 – 20 lbs seemed to be the common size. Tom Cole indicated he had caught several mature spawn-capable fish in the summer that were in the low to mid teens lbs.

The Juan de Fuca Fishing Tournament was cancelled because of a lack of ticket sales (caused by the rumours of closures and no Chinook fishing due to DFO’s early spring announcements about SRKW recovery efforts). Sadly, numbers of Chinook caught, the weight of fish and potential DNA collection data were all lost due to this cancellation.

Local Committee Elections

At the end of the business portion of the meeting, CB indicated that Brad Beath (DFO) had recently advised that this year was an election cycle for the SFAB process. Asking the attendees if it was expedient to run the election now with representative attendance of 16 constituents, particularly as there is a large amount of business still remaining on the agenda that need sufficient time at the next meeting in November, CB secured their approval. In addition, a show of hands was sought to see how many would attend the next Victoria SFAB Committee meeting anyway and most indicated they would be there.

The elections were held. CB reminded everyone there are four positions to be filled:

Victoria Chair – Victoria 2nd Seat – Alternate 1 and Alternate 2 and the current positions are held by:

Current Victoria Chair – Chris Bos

Current Victoria 2nd Seat – Tom Cole

Current Alternate 1 – Rollie Rose

Current Alternate 2 – Glen Varney

Nominations for the positions were sought from the floor on three separate occasions. None were forthcoming. Chris Bos, Tom Cole and Rollie Rose indicated they were prepared to run again. CB stated that although Glen Varney was not present at that meeting, he had agreed for his name to stand again as an alternate. As there were no new nominations to the four positions at all, and the election went without any challenges, the positions were filled by the same representatives. CB asked for a vote from the floor confirming the election – Moved Tom Cole - 2nd Rollie Rose – Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Next meeting Tuesday November 6th 2018 (7:00 pm – 9:30 pm) location to be determined