

Area 19/20 (Victoria) SFAC

Microsoft Teams - Virtual

November 9, 2021

(Draft) Minutes

Recreational Representatives:

Name	Affiliation
Ryan Chamberland	Chair
Chris Bos	Second Seat
Matt Osse	Biologist
Cam Brown	Independent Angler
Wayne Zaccarelli	ACS and VFGPA
Christopher Miller	SVIAC Director
Grant MacPherson	Sidney Anglers Association - President
Glen Varney	SVIAC Director and Sooke Chinook Project
Christopher Close	Independent Angler
Terry Russell	Sidney Anglers
Tom Cole	RCNAA and ACS
Tom Davis	Public Fishery Alliance
Tom Celuszak	Clover Point Anglers Association
Jim Stephen	Independent Angler
Bill Campbell	SVIAC Director and BCWF
Gerry Kristianson	Past SFAB Chair and SFAB Executive
Rollie Rose	Fishing Guide - Sooke Salmon Charter Ltd
Peter Bey	Sidney Anglers Association
Louis Meszoly	Esquimalt Anglers Association

Government Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Erika Watkins	ECVI Recreational Coordinator/Co-chair
Madeline Wanless	ECVI Fishery Manager

Introductions

- Completed

Adoption of Minutes from (date of last meeting)

- The minutes were adopted as written.
 - Motion to adopt by Tom Davis, seconded by Grant MacPherson, passed unanimously.

Agenda

- SRKW
 - Post Season Review
 - Hatchery Updates
 - Conservation and Protection Report
 - Elections
- The agenda was adopted as written.
 - Motion to adopt by Gerry Kristianson, seconded by Tom Davis, passed unanimously.

Old Business

Motion 3: SRKW

- See details of Motion 3 in Appendix
- Motion to adopt by Gerry Kristianson, seconded by Rollie Rose.
- Friendly amendment to change working from “Salish Sea” to “Juan de Fuca”.
- Ryan, as the author of the motion approves the friendly amendment, Gerry and Rollie both approve the friendly amendment.
- Vote called and motion passed unanimously.

Post – Season Review

Crab

- There have been a number of issues associated with crab fishing in Area 19 and 20 over the years and there is frustration around how DFO progress and response to the issues.
 - A request has been made to close commercial crab access off the Esquimalt and Victoria waterfront to allow small boats to fish for salmon without fear of entanglement and to provide recreational anglers a better chance of trapping crab. The issue has been ongoing for several years.
 - A second issue involves a seasonal commercial closure in Beecher Bay, which has not been effective and motions that have been put through to address this have been ignored. This is the third year of the request.
- There was support for a suggestion made to collate past motions concerning crab that did not go anywhere and reinvigorate them.
- Green crabs are an invasive species impacting shorelines coastwide and is being a serious issue. Ryan is part of setting up the Coastal Restoration Society’s community dock program that provides traps and gear for local anglers and dock owners in the Sooke Basin and Harbour to participate in trapping EGC to thwart the spread and impact of green crabs. You can reach out to Ryan if you would like to participate; via email Ryan@coastrestore.ca

Prawns

- Prawn advisory board meeting has not occurred yet.
- Last season the prawning situation in high use areas was not great. The recreational sector was closed down until April 1, which is common in high use areas after the commercial fishery is finished. Find that the prawns are small and sparse following commercial access.
- The commercial sector has received funding from BCSRIF to develop a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process to maximize profit for prawn landings. The MSE doesn't involve or consider the recreational sector. Recommend that SFAB addresses this. First Nations have also increased fishing efforts for prawns in FSC fisheries.
- Representatives need to understand the situation in their area and speak on behalf of their area to prevent losing opportunities.

Salmon

- Still non retention April 1 to July 31, but once open to retention Chinook fishing in the Sooke area was very good in August. Returns on the east coast of Vancouver Island and in the Strait of Georgia have been good. Coho fishing in October was very good as well.

Motion 1: Chinook

- This motion (attached in Appendix) is to re-advise DFO that the SFAC would like an MSF opportunity.
- Suggestion was made to apply pressure on new Minister outside of the SFAB process as well as working with the Province of BC to address the socioeconomic impacts of two additional months of a fishery closure.
- Motion to adopt by Tom Davis, seconded by Gerry Kristianson.
- Friendly amendment to include Subarea 20-4.
- Gerry and Tom both approve the friendly amendment.
- Vote called and motion passed unanimously.
- A suggestion was made following the adoption of the motion that the work of Avid Anglers and the commitment of the community to the head recovery program should be considered in this motion. Acknowledgement made to those who participate. Suggest including something in the motion before it is brought to the South Coast meeting about how the data collected by recreational fishers is done to provide DFO with good data.

Motion 2: Chinook

- Motion attached in Appendix
- Friendly amendment to include Subarea 20-4.
- Motion to adopt by Rollie Rose, seconded by Glen Varney.

- Motion passed unanimously.

Area 18

- Discussion about a question around allocation of Chinook in Area 18.
- The Harvest Committee provided approval to find out what happened to the approval of allocation of Chinook to the recreational fleet. Recreational Chinook access is still restricted in Area 18 and Cowichan Chinook recovery has been good. Will there be an opportunity for a Chinook opening?
- With agreement from the co-chair, DFO provided comments despite this not being the SFAC that represents Area 18. Currently Chinook is non-retention in waters around Cowichan Bay. DFO acknowledges that Cowichan stocks are doing better and seeing improvement. However, before there is increased recreational access, there needs to be increased FSC access.
- SFAC: Thought that the First Nations Chinook allocation piece had been addressed and thought that if they received their approval that the recreational sector would receive theirs. Did First Nations get an increase in Chinook allocation?
- DFO: The Department acknowledges that the Cowichan Round Table wrote a letter supporting an increase in Chinook allocation for Cowichan Tribes. DFO cannot respond to the question about whether they received an increase, this is business between DFO and the Nation, and would not be shared publicly without the Nation's permission.

Post-Season Review Meetings

- DFO doesn't have final data yet, there may be some preliminary data for the South Coast SFAC meeting and DFO meetings including the Post Season Review and the 2022 Salmon Outlook. The DFO meetings provide the main salmon updates and are set to occur in mid-December. Harvest Committee members and SFAB executives are permitted to attend these meetings

Hatchery Updates

- Goldstream:
 - Coho returns have been good and there has been a transfer of Chinook from Shawnigan/Mill Bay. Chum numbers are looking good and they believe they will get their target.
- Shawnigan returns have been very good. A log jam was cleared up last year allowing fish into the lake, which has paid dividends as many fish are showing up.
- Chum have been doing very poorly all along the coast in general while Coho numbers have been consistently good along the coast.
- Sooke Hatchery:

- 19 Chinook in house at the Jack Brooks Hatchery
- Hatchery employees have reported some of the worst Coho numbers they've counted at the weir in a long time. However, there is good citizen information of above average Coho numbers in surrounding pools and streams.
- Concerns about the fence being put in late and left in for a month, which may be the reason the counts have been low. Many local residents observed pinnipeds hunting and killing chinook below the fence,
- As on November 5, Chinook escapement was 382 (unexpectedly low and below 12 year average of 560) and Coho escapement was 297 (also well below 12 year average of 630). There are genuine questions about the accuracy of these escapement numbers and DFO should be aware of this.
- Excellent Chinook fishing in JDF during August and excellent Coho fishing during September and October imply that the adult returns were very good, but DFO reported count numbers do not reflect that. Also having 25 seals and a Sea Lion actively hunting salmon for weeks at the counting fence indicates abundance of salmon at the fence. There may well have been heavy loss of both the runs of Chinook and Coho due to the fence blocking the fish from escaping the predators.
- CB from SVIAC indicated they would like to see a proper counting fence installed, with pass through and camera set up as well as a trap to remove hatchery fin clipped salmon for the benefit of Sooke FN. Should be allowing natural spawners to spawn. Suggest trapping a portion of fish and trucking them over the falls that provides them with several additional kilometers of natural spawning area to help yield more recruits.
- Suggest marking 100% of the fish that are going in the Sooke Chinook sea pen. Both SFAC and DFO would like to see the Nation participate in this program.

Conservation & Protection Report

- No DFO fishery officers were able to make this call today.
- Ryan Chamberland is working with government agencies to remove derelict vessels. Three have been removed over the last 6 months.
- There has been information in the news about SRKW and reports of vessels being within 400m of them. Need to recognize that encounters can be out of boaters control. There are some groups actively trying to make the recreational fishery look bad, so it's important for vessel operators to know the protocols. Suggest improve communication with boaters on this including communication via VHF radios to let other vessels know if a SRKW has been spotted and is moving in their direction. Gives them an opportunity to pull their gear.
- In the media there has been some misleading information put forward about poor compliance by whale watchers and recreational fishers. Calls have been made by environmental groups to close the Chinook fishery in areas where fish are swimming. A data report was put out by Strait Watch that indicated 90% compliance of regulations by the whale watching community and 71% compliance by the boating

community. This is good compliance for sweeping new regulations and considering that in some cases boaters may not be aware they are in the vicinity of a pod. Note that the 1 km distance is a voluntary request and not a legal regulation. The majority of reported infractions in the Strait Watch report were in USA waters and not by Canadian boaters.

- Frustration around lack of noted correlation between SRKW fishing activity and deep water in some of the work being done by DFO. Sanctuaries push people out to the deep water where whales are more likely to be. This is being brought up in the working groups associated with SRKW.

Other issues

- None

Handouts

- Motion 1: SFAC Area 19/20- 2021-11-09-1
- Motion 2: SFAC Area 19/20- 2021-11-09-2
- Motion 2: SFAC Area 19/20- 2021-11-09-3

Motion to adjourn meeting. Moved by Bill Campbell and seconded by Tom Celuszak. Unanimous acceptance to adjourn meeting.

Minutes Prepared by: Madeline Wanless

Meeting Adjourned 20:48

Elections

- DFO's understanding of this committee is that there is two chairs with equivalent roles. The duties are divided at the chairs' discretion.
- SFAC is in agreeance that their understanding of the system is that it consists of a chair position and a second seat. Historically, a seat was designated for the Amalgamated Conservation Society, who would put forth a representative along with a chair. Those two seats would go to the Regional South Coast meeting. Victoria has two seats and two votes since it has the largest committee in terms of angler participation as well as angler population. The second seat isn't designated as a chair position. The chair of the committee works with the DFO chair and the second seat attends the South Coast meeting to represent the community.
- It is decided that the process for this election will include nominations and a vote for the position of chair followed by a second nomination and vote for the second seat. Persons nominated must agree that they are prepared to stand. If there is more than one nominee, then there will be a vote.
- Chris Bos elected chair by acclamation. Tom Cole elected to Victoria second seat.

- Jim Stephen accepted a position as alternate. Ryan was nominated a position as alternate but declined via email.

Motions

Motion 1 - SFAC Area 19/20- 2021-11-09-1

Subject: Chinook

Whereas there are a large number of Washington State origin hatchery adipose fin clipped Chinook present in Canada's Areas 19-3 to 19-5 and Areas 20-4 and 20-5 during the winter and spring each year.

And whereas the high percentage (60% - 80%) of those fish present in those areas during April and May meets the DFO acceptable risk threshold to allow for a Public Chinook fishery where one hatchery adipose fin clipped can be retained per day.

Therefore, be it resolved the SFAB request DFO amend the current non-retention of Chinook regulation in Areas 19-3 to 19-5 and Areas 20-4 and 20-5 during April and May to permit anglers to retain one hatchery adipose fin clipped Chinook greater than 45 cm per day.

- Motion to adopt by Tom Davis, seconded by Gerry Kristianson.
- Friendly amendment to include Subarea 20-4.
- Gerry and Tom both approve the friendly amendment.
- Vote called and motion passed unanimously.

Motion 2 - SFAC Area 19/20- 2021-11-09-2

Subject: Chinook

Whereas there is an enhancement project based in Sooke that has raised and released 2,500,000 Chinook salmon smolts in the past five years, of which 20% are adipose fin clipped and coded wire tagged

And whereas those Chinook, of which many are greater than 80 cm, returning as adults to the Sooke River are present in Juan de Fuca Strait during August prior to entering the Sooke Basin.

And whereas the collection of heads from hatchery marked Chinook caught in Juan de Fuca Strait by the Public Fishery during August would be of great value to DFO stock assessment and equally assist the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative with their program success assessment requirements.

And whereas the current DFO regulation for Chinook in Areas 20-4 and 20-5 during August allows anglers to only retain 1 Chinook per day greater than 45 cm and less than 80 cm

Therefore, be it resolved that SFAB request DFO amend the current regulations in Areas 20-4 and 20-5 during August to 1 unmarked Chinook per day greater than 45 cm and less than 80 cm; or 1 marked (adipose fin clipped) Chinook greater than 45 cm.

- Friendly amendment to include Subarea 20-4.
- Motion to adopt by Rollie Rose, seconded by Glen Varney.
- Motion passed unanimously.

Motion SFAC Area 19/20- 2021-11-09-3

Subject: SRKW

Whereas a recent study published by DFO's Sheila Thornton on SRKW in the area's 20-5, 20-4, and 20-3 shows that this area is not an important foraging area, mainly travelling down the middle of the Juan De Fuca Strait, which is not where recreational fisherman fish for salmon in this area, especially not Chinook salmon.

Whereas a recent study by Dr. Andrew Trites finds that there is four to six times more abundance of Chinook Salmon in the Salish Sea than what the healthy, thriving Northern Resident population has access to.

And whereas the paths travelled throughout these areas is mainly in the shipping lanes, and not in areas of high abundance of Public Fishery vessels and that areas 20-3 and 20-4 are low use areas due to distance from marina's and launches.

Therefore be it resolved that the salmon fishing closure between Sheringham Point in area 20-4 and East Point 20-3 not be imposed in the 2022 season.

- Motion to adopt by Gerry Kristianson, seconded by Rollie Rose.
- Friendly amendment to change working from "Salish Sea" to "Juan de Fuca".
- Ryan, as the author of the motion approves the friendly amendment, Gerry and Rollie both approve the friendly amendment.
- Vote called and motion passed unanimously.