

# Victoria and Area SFAB Committee

## MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday March 8, 2023

### Esquimalt Anglers Lounge

1101 Munro Avenue, Victoria, BC

#### ATTENDANCE:

##### DFO

Mark Frisson – (meeting co-chair) East Vancouver Island Recreational Fisheries Coordinator (present)  
Mia Cormier – Conservation and Protection (online)  
Greg Hornby – BC Recreational Fisheries – Resource Management (online)

##### ANGLERS

Christopher Bos – (meeting co-chair) Victoria Committee Chair + SVIAC president + PFA exec (present)  
Jim Stephen – angler - Victoria Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> Seat (online)  
Gerry Kristianson – angler - Past SFAB Main Board Chair (online)  
Tom Davis – angler – Ret'd tackle manufacturer – PFA exec  
Warren Tippet – angler (present)  
Christopher Miller – angler – SVIAC exec (present)  
Wayne Zaccarelli – angler – Victoria Fish and Game + BCWF (present)  
Gerry Morrison – fishing guide – SVIAC exec (present)  
Louie Messoli – angler – Esquimalt Anglers exec (present)  
Tom Cole., CPO R'td – angler – Royal Canadian Navy Anglers + ACS exec (present)  
Gord Martin – fishing guide (present)  
Bill Campbell – angler – SVIAC exec (present)  
Jerrod Pinder – angler – Area 17 Committee – observer (online)

##### REGRETS

Martin Paish – SFAB Main Board Chair

**Attendance Breakdown: 3 DFO + 11 Primary + 2 Secondary**

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#### AGENDA

2022 Preliminary Southern BC Chinook and Coho Escapement Report  
2023 MM and MSF and proposed new pilot opportunities – status update  
2023 SRKW Proposed Measures (Active Pass, 20-1 Juan de Fuca Strait and oversized area 20-5 closures)  
Halibut update – what measures for April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023

SFAB Modernization – TOR status - update

SFAC Business (realignment – membership – who can vote – code of conduct)

Discussion - Seeking anglers help getting heads turned in on hatchery fish and SRKW avoidance compliance

DFO regional update

Victoria Harbour Water Airport – Crab Trap Issues (*late addition to agenda*)

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### **Meeting called to Order 7:15 PM**

- Due to minor technical issues with the online portion of the meeting, proceedings got under way 15 minutes late, but we were glad to have Mark Frisson (MF) able to link the virtual attendees into the meeting.
- All present introduced themselves and the agenda was adopted as presented with the request that SFAB Committee re-alignment topic be brought to the beginning of the meeting to facilitate an attendee's availability.

### **2022 Preliminary Southern BC Chinook and Coho Escapement Report**

- The DFO 2022 Post Season Southern BC was projected on the screen for attendees to see
- Christopher Bos (CB) gave a brief overview of the Fraser Chinook returns from 2022 to confirm that last year was actually a piece of good news as 5-2s and 4-1s had reasonably good returns in general. Summer 5-2s exceeded MSYs

### **2023 MM and MSF and proposed new pilot opportunities – status update**

- The DFO 2023 extended MSF Chinook pilot proposal presentation was projected on the screen for attendees to see
- CB went through the three proposals that were pertinent to the Victoria and Area SFAB Committee, where anglers could retain one hatchery (adipose-fin-clipped) Chinook per day, they were:
  - Portions of Area 17, 18 and 19 Southern Gulf Islands inside waters -April to July 14 or 31
  - Area 19-3 to 19-5 South Vancouver Island – April and May
  - Area 20-1, 20-3 to 20-5 Juan de Fuca – April and May
- CB expressed his disappointment to the group that the department had altered the original motion-supported request of the SFAB to not include all of May in the Area 19 and 20 proposals, but only a possible portion of the month, if at all. CB indicated his understanding was that the SFAB/DFO technical work had shown this was very low risk to Fraser Stocks of Concern and there was a very high marked fish rate during May. He also indicated that extra stock assessment/creel and a push for the area avid angler DNA as well as increased head recovery should be sufficient monitoring and if necessary, the opportunity could be dialed back if the results showed too greater occurrence of stocks of concern.
- Mark Frisson (MF) confirmed that CB had described the proposals and the decision process accurately.

## **2023 SRKW Proposed Measures (Active Pass, 20-1 Juan de Fuca Strait and oversized area 20-5 closures)**

- The Proposed DFO 2023 SRKW Fisheries Management Measures, relevant to Areas 18, 19 and 20 were projected on the screen for attendees to see
- CB also showed the local SFAB committee response already submitted to DFO by the consultation deadline (*attached to this doc as an appendix*)
- Committee position ... Opposed to closure in Active Pass ... Interim Sanctuary Zones not working and should be terminated .... Did not comment on proposed changes in Port renfrew area as that was for another committee .... Using dynamic avoidance protocols is a far better all-round solution.

## **Halibut update – what measures for April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023**

- As halibut were part of the DFO Regional Update Report, CB projected the update on the screen for the attendees to see
- CB shared the details of the 2023 halibut TAC for Canada and that 2023 TAC is lower than last year. This results in a reduced TAC for the Recreational sector. SFAB Halibut Committee have voted on and approved an April 1 to start with one Halibut per day and a possession of two under 90 cms or one between 90 cms and 126 cms.
- The in season Halibut Committee monthly meetings give the SFAB and DFO fisheries managers the option of increasing opportunity or dialing it back, dependant on the speed at which the recreational TAC is being used. There are several tools available including moving up to three small halibut per day no sooner than August 1.
- CB explained the committee again made a conservative decision to avoid an early closure – the objective is to have longest season possible and a fishery that provides a fair coast-wide opportunity. The option chosen has a sizable 50,000 lbs buffer built in.
- CB explained he had made a motion during the halibut committee meeting for an option to fish with the same sizes as 2022 but go with one halibut per day instead of last years two per day. That motion did not pass.
- Gord Martin expressed his strong displeasure with the decision, as did others. He explained that a 126 cms or smaller fish are not readily available to Victoria area halibut anglers. The majority are greater in size. Victoria waters also do not have a small halibut producing areas like Chicken ranch on Swiftsure, so moving to three 90cms per day as of August 1 in an attempt to increase the draw down on uncaught halibut TAC is more of a re-allocation to other areas of the coast than a benefit to Victoria.
- A motion was brought to the floor that the Victoria SFAB Committee do not support the proposed 2023 halibut sizes and limits.

## **Victoria Motion One - Halibut**

Whereas the proposed halibut regulations in 2023 will have a maximum length of 126 cm, down from 133 cm in 2022,

And whereas, the 2023 daily limit will be one halibut per day,

And whereas, the recreational halibut fishery did not fill its allocated TAC in 2022, Be it resolved, that the halibut regulations starting on April 1, 2023 maintain the same sizes of fish as at the start of the 2022 license year, but allow 1 per day under 90 cm, or 1 per day maximum 133 cm).

**Moved Gord Martin - 2<sup>nd</sup> Christopher Miller – 12 in favour and 1 opposed**

#### **SFAB Modernization – TOR status – update**

- CB gave a brief run through the SFAB Modernization and Terms of Reference process. And the new system would be species focused, differing from the current regional organization. All local committees would have a seat at the Main SFAB Board table. The process is close to being voted on by the Main SFAB.

#### **SFAC Business (realignment – membership – who can vote – code of conduct)**

- **Realignment** (*this was handled at the start of the meeting allowing the topic be discussed before Greg Hornby had to leave the meeting*)
  - There was a description of the realignment in our area that would see the Southern Gulf Islands carved off was from the Victoria and Area Committee. And the Cowichan portion of the Nitnat, Renfrew, Cowichan committee moved into the new committee as well.
  - This realignment issue was originally raised by Sidney Anglers Association writing a letter to the RDG and SFAB Chair, not brought through the SFAB process.
  - The concept of forming a new SFAB committee area for the Crofton/Cowichan/Saanich Inlet waters was essentially seen as a good idea. The negative issue for the Victoria Committee was DFO usurping one of the two voting seats from Victoria to chair the new committee, instead of creating a new voting seat for the new committee.
  - DFO indicated that money for travel expenses was the issue and they do not support voting seats by population – Victoria is only committee with two voting seats.
  - CB expressed strong disappointment that DFO had apparently gone ahead and made a decision already, without proper and complete consultation. He pointed out that in early 2022 there were two online meetings with affected local chairs, Martin Paish from SFAB and Erica Watkins and Greg Hornby from DFO in attendance. It was clear at that time there was no rush to implement this realignment. DFO committed to reconvene the meeting in fall of 2022, which never happened.
  - November 2022 Victoria local meeting DFO MF advised the meeting attendees the decision to proceed had been made – local committee members present expressed their concern.
  - CB reminded DFO that Chair Martin Paish said at the fall SC SFAB meeting that DFO should at least hold another meeting on this issue before proceeding.
  - CB expressed the founding group of the original SFAB was the Amalgamated Conservation Society, who were promised a voting seat in perpetuity and the ACS has held the second voting seat in Victoria for a long time. By taking the second voting seat

- from Victoria, DFO is essentially removing the ACS standing from the entire SFAB process, when groups like BCWF have multiple seats at all levels of the SFAB process.
- CB suggested this issue is very divisive – could play out in public
  - Gerry Kristianson suggested the realignment issue should be put on hold for the time being.

### **Victoria Motion Two – Realignment - Voting Seats**

Whereas the Department has planned to reorganize the South Vancouver Island local SFAC committees starting in the fall of 2023,

And whereas, the Cowichan-Renfrew-Nitinat Committee will be divided into two separate SFACs (Cowichan-Gulf Islands and Renfrew-Nitinat),

And whereas, the Department has communicated that the second seat held by the Victoria SFAC will be reallocated to provide a seat to one of the newly formed committees,

And whereas, the local committee expressed concern that adequate, transparent consultation had not taken place,

Be it resolved, that the Victoria SFAC maintains its two seats and a new seat is developed and allocated to the newly formed SFAC.

### **Moved Wayne Zaccarelli - 2<sup>nd</sup> Warren Tipper - Passed Unanimously**

#### **▪ Membership and who can vote**

- CB indicated that the SFAB modernization process will as currently suggested impact the membership and who can vote as it will have a terms of reference for local committees.
- Victoria SFAB Committee has always been open to the public and encourages all anglers to participate and when they attend can vote on issues,
- Voting on issues at the Victoria committee has historically been loosely controlled promoting participation and giving attendees a chance to be involved in the process, not limited to a select few.
- Other committees have used controls on who can vote and who is eligible to vote at their meetings.
- The attendees present on March 8 at the Victoria SFAB Committee meeting were asked what they felt was the best way for the voting in the future.
- The consensus response was that people attending meetings who are anglers or represent angling businesses should have the opportunity to vote on local issues as this will foster engagement and participation

#### **▪ Code of Conduct**

- Signing a separate code of conduct form every time as people entering the meeting was considered not practical and too authoritarian – the concept was generally rejected

- It was proposed that a special sign in sheet containing a code of conduct agreement could be used to get a register of who is at the meeting and a sign in that they have agreed to abide by the conduct rules.
- This was considered a solution but it had challenges as not all people sign in and online attendees can not sign a piece of paper.

### **DFO regional update**

- MF provided a brief summary of some of the important regional fisheries issues, referring to the package sent out by the department. This update will be circulated with the approved SFAB minutes.

### **Victoria Water Airport – Crab Trap Issues (*late addition to agenda*)**

- Before the meeting concluded, MF indicated there had been some complaints about crab and/or prawn gear set in the water aerodrome in Victoria harbour. Was it appropriate to close the whole harbour to trap fishing? The committee message to DFO was please do not close the fishery. It was recommended a meeting be held with the appropriate parties present to discuss the problem and find an amicable solution where the fishery can continue.

NOTE: DFO MF had asked CB on several occasion to provide a list of Victoria and Area SFAB *members* with their contact information. CB waited until the local meeting to ask if meeting attendees were agreeable to have their private contact information shared by their local committee chair to DFO.

Meeting adjourned

CB thanked the Esquimalt Anglers Association for allowing the Victoria and Area SFAB Committee use their facility for the meeting.

### **Motions:**

#### **Victoria Motion One - Halibut**

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**Moved Wayne Zaccarelli - 2<sup>nd</sup> Warren Tipper - Passed Unanimously**

## **APPENDIX:**

### **SRKW Consultation Response**

**From:** Christopher Bos <[chris@anglerscoalition.com](mailto:chris@anglerscoalition.com)>

**To:** Moore, Kendra <[Kendra.Moore@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Kendra.Moore@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)>

**Cc:** SRKW / ERS (DFO/MPO) <[DFO.SRKW-ERS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.SRKW-ERS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)>

**Subject:** Victoria and Area SFAB Committee input to 2023 SRKW Management

Please accept this email relating to SRKW recovery. It specifically addresses your department's proposed 2023 salmon fishing closures and boating restrictions in the Southern Gulf Islands area. As chair of the Victoria and Area Sport Fishing Advisory Board Committee, I handle angling related issues in PFMA 18 in the Southern Gulf Islands. The information provided relating to the Active Pass proposed closure and the two Interim Sanctuary Zones (Pender and Saturna) echoes what you heard from Jason Asonitis, Tom Davis and myself on the February 16<sup>th</sup> MS Teams call about the same issue.

Our committee members are conservation minded anglers who want healthy marine ecosystems and the long-term recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW). However, we do not want our historic and important salmon fishery unnecessarily decimated. SRKW recovery measures must also be considerate of the socio-economic wellbeing of the salmon angling community.

(1) Proposed Closure of Active Pass and identified waters North East of the entrance to the pass:

- Our committee does not support this additional proposed closure;
- This proposed area is not a foraging area for SRKW;
- Closing this to salmon fishing, in our opinion, will not measurably reduce overall salmon catch;
- The area identified North East of the pass is already closed year-round as an existing Rockfish Conservation Area. Making this portion a seasonal salmon fishing closure is redundant;
- The historic and important salmon fishery in Active Pass proper is extremely limited and is not fished by many anglers. Due to the extreme current in the pass at certain times, it is only

feasible to fish it during slack tide, which occurs two or three hours per day. Approximately three to six small boats will fish for salmon when slack water permits for three weeks or so in August;

- We do not anticipate any surge in salmon angling activity in the pass by those “displaced” from other areas;
- The SFAB’s general position is not to implement annual seasonal closures to salmon fishing for many months each year, but preferably to have dynamic avoidance measures of 400 metres when the SRKW are physically present; and,
- You’re existing SRKW management measures in PFMA 18 have already closed a huge portion of the waters around the Southern Gulf Islands to salmon fishing for months at a time. This area is already subject to salmon closures and restrictions due to specific salmon stocks of concern and rockfish, so removing the few small places that Gulf Islanders and South Vancouver Island anglers have left to catch a salmon is perceived as unnecessarily cruel and, in our opinion, will have virtually zero benefit to SRKW recovery.

(2) Pender and Saturna ISZs:

- Our committee does not support the closed to fishing and boating areas (ISZs) off Pender and Saturna Islands;
- Pender Bluffs is a historic and important salmon fishing location for sockeye, pink and coho for local Gulf Island residents;
- We understand from Transport Canada that there has been poor adherence to the rules in these ISZs closures, particularly by American vessels during summer months when boating increases;
- The exiting suite of regulations related to salmon fishing in the area are very complex and the layering of these ISZs on top of already complex spatial and temporal salmon management measures adds even greater complexity;
- The areas are not significant foraging areas for SRKW;
- The recent work by Monica Shields et al. of Orca Behaviour Institute indicates the two Gulf Islands ISZs are apparently not working as designed as the SRKW are rarely using them and when they do it is infrequently and only to pass through. The white paper report recommends dynamic avoidance protocols for boaters, suggesting static closures of areas of ocean are not the most advantageous.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input to the management of SRKW and we hope you follow our advice when finalizing the 2023 management measures.

Respectfully submitted,

**Chris**

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Christopher Bos  
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Victoria and Area SFAB Committee  
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