

RECREATIONAL FISHERIES NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

RESOURCES

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DFO REGIONAL CONTACTS

Greg Hornby – Regional Manager Recreational
Fisheries / SFAB Conference Board Co-chair

Meghan Quon – Regional Recreational
Fisheries Officer

OVERVIEW

Frequently used SFAB resources are conveniently located in the left-hand box. We recommend bookmarking these links for easy access. Be sure to check there for guides, forms, and other materials to help support your work.

This newsletter highlights updates only. Sections included in this Winter/Spring edition reflect new or revised information. If a section does not appear, there have been no changes since the previous issue. Please refer to the [Fall 2025 newsletter](#) for the most recent details.

WINTER/SPRING 2026 SFAB TIMELINE

The Spring 2026 SFAB Conference Board will be held on April 1-2, 2026, to coincide with the April 10, 2026, deadline for final Salmon IFMP feedback. Any changes to the timeline will be communicated to the Local SFAC chairs and Conference Board SFAB members.

Spring 2026 SFAB Conference Board: April 1–2, 2026

SFAB Committee meetings: March 9–24, 2026

Local SFAC meetings: Must be completed by March 4, 2026

Motions for consideration at the April SFAB Conference Board meeting must be submitted to Meghan Quon no later than March 5, 2026.

MEET THE NEW SFAB EXECUTIVE TEAM

The SFAB recently conducted elections to appoint its Executive Committee, which also serves as the SFAB Policy and Management Committee.

Name	Position
Martin Paish	SFAB Chair
Gerry Kristianson	Immediate Past SFAB Chair
Ken Franzen	North Coast Regional Lead
Mike Kelly	South Coast Regional Lead
Rod Clapton	Inland Regional Lead
Marilyn Murphy Scanlan	Member at Large
Jeremy Maynard	Member at Large
John McCulloch	Member at Large
Jason Harris	Member at Large
Owen Bird	Member at Large

SFAB SPECIES COMMITTEES: LEADERS AND MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

We're excited to introduce the newly elected SFAB Committee Chairs and members. These dedicated leaders will guide their committees, support SFAC initiatives, and help ensure strong collaboration across the organization. Their expertise and commitment will be key in advancing SFAB's goals and representing the interests of their regions and communities.

SFAB SALMON COMMITTEE	
Name	Position
Jeremy Maynard	SFAB Salmon Committee Chair
Jason Tonelli	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Larry Proteau	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Bob Gallagher	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Haley Green	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Marvin Rosenau	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Dean Werk	Salmon Committee Voting Member
George Bates	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Steve Veloso	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Chris Bos	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Harley Elias	Salmon Committee Voting Member
Dave Brown	Salmon Committee Voting Member

SFAB GROUND FISH COMMITTEE	
Name	Position
Owen Bird	SFAB Groundfish Committee Chair
Bob Gallagher	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
Lance Weber	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
Marilyn Murphy Scanlan	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
John Willis	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
Deryk Krefting	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
Chris Bos	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
Lawrie Garrett	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
David Summers	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
Larry Proteau	Groundfish Committee Voting Member
Mike Fowler	Groundfish Committee Voting Member

SFAB PELAGIC AND INVERTEBRATES COMMITTEE	
Name	Position
Deryk Krefting	SFAB Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Chair
Bryan Shier	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
David Summers	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
Lance Weber	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
Mike Fowler	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
John Willis	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
Owen Bird	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
Marilyn Murphy Scanlan	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
Larry Proteau	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
Richard Lake	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member
George Bates	Pelagic and Invertebrates Committee Voting Member

SFAB WELCOMES BOTH NEW AND RETURNING LOCAL SFAC CHAIRS

Following the recent Fall 2025 Local SFAC elections, SFAB is proud to announce the Local SFAC Chairs for the upcoming two-year term. Many chairs are returning, providing valuable experience and continuity, and a few areas will now be led by co-chairs to further strengthen local leadership.

We would like to remind Local SFAC Chairs that they are responsible for distributing emails and information received from DFO, SFAB Committees, Working Groups, and the SFAB Executive to SFAC members in a timely manner.

POSITION	NAME
North Coast - Central Coast	Sid Keay
North Coast - Bella Coola	John Willis
North Coast - Kitimat	Al Hummel
North Coast - Prince Rupert	Dave Lewis
North Coast - Haida Gwaii	Mandy Wesley
North Coast - Lower Skeena	Larry Proteau
North Coast - Upper Skeena	Haley Green
South Coast - North Vancouver Island	Lawrie Garrett
South Coast - Campbell River	Harley Elias
South Coast - Comox	Steve Veloso
South Coast - Nanaimo	Deryk Krefting
South Coast - Renfrew	Bob Gallagher
South Coast - Victoria to Sooke	Chris Bos
South Coast - Port Alberni	Pat Ahern & Curtis Leyenaar
South Coast - Tofino	Kelly Aspinall
South Coast - Nootka	Gibran White
South Coast - Powell River	VACANT
South Coast - Cowichan to South Gulf Islands	Richard Lake
South Coast - Sechart	VACANT
Inland - Upper Fraser Valley	Dean Werk
Inland - Lower Fraser Valley	Jason Tonelli
Inland - Upper Fraser/Prince George	Dan Pollard
Inland - Squamish to Lillooet	Dave Brown & Clint Goyette
Inland - Mid-Fraser/Thompson/Okanagan	Elmer Fast

SFAB extends its sincere thanks to the individuals who served as their local SFAC Chair over the past two years and have completed their terms: Sam Cooper, Paul Dore, Cam Forbes, Chuck Metzner, and Bryan Kemper. Their dedication, insight, and collaboration have strengthened the Local SFAC community and supported SFAB's continued growth.



MESSAGE FROM THE SFAB CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE

The SFAB executive thanks and welcomes new members to the process, and welcomes back those that have chosen to continue to provide their time and expertise toward a better future for our fishery. Thank you!!

1. SFAB Process

- Ensuring we continue to develop an effective and efficient process is important for us to ensure we make the best possible use of the time provided by our volunteers and DFO staff. We acknowledge that the implementation of our new operating model and TOR involves a learning curve, and are really encouraged by the efforts of our tireless local chairs and committee members to learn and improve as we go along.
- Membership, both present and future, is a critical priority for the SFAB. Without membership we have nothing. We'd like to ask all of you to remember this, and to actively encourage your angling friends to participate and spread the word about how the process works, and why it is a critical part of how anglers maintain what we have, and seek better opportunity for the future.
- The ability to work with DFO staff in all relevant divisions is incredibly important to the SFAB. We are a co-chaired, collaborative process that develops advice on fishery management and other issues by working together. The ability to access the relevant staff and data resources is critical to our ability to provide advice in an informed and responsible manner.

2. SAP

- The SAP review remains a high priority for the SFAB executive as its outcome will have a profound impact on the future of our salmon fishery.
- The SAP review team will remain actively engaged in the MPWG process and will provide an update on the completion of that process at the April 1st & 2nd CB meeting.
- The executive extends its thanks to those member organizations that have contributed to the excellent and successful outreach campaign to raise awareness and encourage input to the SAP review consultation process, and offers its thanks to the many thousands of members and anglers who have made their voices heard.

3. Salmon

- The SFAB salmon committee and its WG's are actively engaged in ensuring that our priorities are clearly articulated in the 2026\2027 IFMP.
- We place a high priority on our ability to effectively collaborate with DFO staff as part of our process, and therefore will continue to work hard to ensure that our advice is informed by the best available science and data, combined with listening carefully to advice offered by our DFO colleagues.
- Pre season planning, but also in season adaptive management meetings are important to our inland and non tidal salmon fisheries. The SFAB will strive to ensure that we are able to engage with DFO in a timely and effective manner to provide timely opportunity for all species in a responsible and data informed environment.



MESSAGE FROM DFO CO-CHAIR - RECREATIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

I would like to welcome both returning and new participants to the SFAB process, including new chairs of local SFACs and new committee members. Please take the time to review the SFAB Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct, and Guidebook materials, which are available in the SFAB Dropbox.

DFO Recreational Fisheries Management would like to highlight several key items and reminders:

Motion Process Reminder

DFO has invested considerable time and effort in maintaining the Motion Tracker to ensure accurate tracking of Local SFAC motions and their progress. Local SFAC communities are encouraged to review the Motion Tracker each cycle before submitting new motions.

If you have questions about previously submitted motions, are considering resubmitting a motion, or believe that circumstances have changed, please consult with your DFO Area Manager. When circumstances have changed, submissions should be treated as new motions with updated wording, rather than resubmissions of earlier motions. Submitting duplicate motions can create unnecessary delays and may reduce the overall efficiency of SFAB Committee meetings. Your cooperation helps ensure a smoother and more effective process for everyone.

SFAB Terms of Reference

The SFAB process is intended to be an “evergreen” framework that supports adaptation and flexibility. The Department will work collaboratively with the SFAB to update the Terms of Reference (ToR) as needed to ensure meetings are efficient and effective.

The SFAB ToR Working Group plans to meet in Spring 2026 to review the December/January and April SFAB Conference Board meetings and to identify opportunities to improve the SFAB process. This review may lead to recommendations for minor updates to the SFAB ToR, which would be shared at the Fall 2026 Conference Board.

Local SFAC Co-Chairs

Some local SFACs have chosen to appoint two co-chairs to help manage workload and support mentorship of new chairs. The Department is supportive of this approach and will monitor its effectiveness.

Please note that in a co-chair arrangement, only one co-chair may hold voting privileges at Conference Board. The co-chairs must clearly communicate in advance to the Regional Recreational Officer (Meghan Quon) which individual will serve as the voting member at Conference Board.

Conference Board Presenters

Please remember to submit any materials you would like shared at Conference Board, and/or reviewed in advance, by the established deadline communicated via email. This ensures sufficient time for materials to be prepared and uploaded to Dropbox. Materials received the day before or the day of the Conference Board meeting can be difficult to accommodate.



SALMON UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please note that dates are tentative and are subject to change

Salmon Cttee ----- March 9

CONTACTS

- Jeremy Maynard – SFAB Salmon Committee Chair
- Mike Hawkshaw – DFO Regional Salmon Manager
- Erika Watkins – DFO A/Regional Senior Salmon Officer
- Darren Chow – DFO North Coast Rec Fish Manager
- Brad Beaith – DFO West Coast Vancouver Island Rec Fish Manager
- Mark Frisson – DFO East Coast Vancouver Island Rec Fish Manager
- Lita Gomez – DFO A/FIA Section Head FM
- Pam Pook – DFO A/Lower Fraser Rec Fish Manager
- Kory Ryde – DFO Mid Fraser, Thompson, Okanagan Rec Fish Manager
- Robert Martin – DFO Upper Fraser Rec Fish Manager

RESOURCES

2025/26 Northern BC IFMP: <https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/41293836.pdf>

2025/26 Southern BC IFMP: <https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/41293824.pdf>

Southern BC/Fraser Chinook

Since 2019, DFO has implemented fisheries management measures to support the recovery of at risk Fraser River and Southern B.C. Chinook populations. Measures are intended to provide a high degree of protection to at-risk Fraser Spring 4₂, Spring 5₂, and Summer 5₂ Chinook. The management objective is to allow as many fish to pass through to the spawning grounds as possible, and to reduce overall Canadian fishery mortalities on these populations to low levels. Additional restrictions on recreational and commercial fisheries were put in place in 2023 to protect the Fraser River Summer 5₂ stock management unit and have remained in effect since.

For 2026 and beyond, ongoing precautionary fishery management actions to support conservation and promote the rebuilding will be needed. Fraser Summer 5₂ Chinook continue to constrain fisheries for all harvest sectors including FSC fisheries in the Fraser River. Additional discussions and potential management actions to lower recreational impacts on Summer 5₂ Chinook will be required. The Department will also need to discuss other Chinook stocks of conservation concern and Pacific Salmon Treaty obligations for specified Chinook stocks should they arise, including ISBM obligations for Snohomish Chinook. Further details on specific considerations for planning the 2026/27 season will be provided once they are available.

While current Chinook openings are in effect, a reminder that large times/areas of Chinook non-retention will go into effect April 1, 2026, in Southern BC per the approved 2025/2026 fishing plan. Approved MSFs in the current IFMP will reopen subject to review of post-season information. When the Chinook MSFs reopen this year the Department will prohibit the use of treble hooks. Please review the Fisheries Notices before fishing to confirm exact times/areas. However, it is anticipated this hook change will start with the MSF opening on March 1, 2026, in Juan de Fuca Strait. Additionally, the Department continues to explore the use of MSFs in place of Chinook non-selective fisheries and in times of non-retention, and will update the SFAB on next steps when they become available.

Northern BC/Skeena Chinook

Most Skeena and Nass River Chinook conservation units experienced significant declines in abundance since 2016, this trend of lower productivity has continued through 2024. Despite

management measures implemented since 2018 to reduce harvest of Nass and Skeena Chinook, the ongoing trend of extremely low overall abundance of these Chinook stocks has continued. For 2025, the Department implemented additional measures to further reduce directed harvest of Nass and Skeena Chinook. While these additional measures



are primarily directed at the recreational sector, the Department has consulted with all Indigenous groups and stakeholders on all fisheries, on management options to reduce directed harvest of Skeena and Nass Chinook. Measures to further reduce directed Chinook harvest may include gear restrictions, extended periods of non-retention, or full closure of Chinook fisheries as deemed necessary.

In addition to reduced directed harvest for Skeena and Nass Chinook, Subareas 9-3 to 9-9 went to Chinook non-retention from May 21 to August 10, 2025, to help address on-going concerns with Central Coast Chinook. This was a new measure for the 2025/26 fishing season.

The Department intends to engage with First Nations and stakeholders both bilaterally and as part of the 2026/27 IFMP planning process to develop fishing plans, which will be informed by the management actions implemented in recent seasons.

Sockeye

Recreational Sockeye salmon fishing in the Skeena River watershed opened on July 16, 2025, with a daily limit of one (1) fish. The daily limit increased to two (2) fish on August 1, 2025. In north coast marine waters, the daily limit for Sockeye salmon is four (4) fish, effective July 31, 2025, to March 31, 2026. In Babine Lake, the recreational daily limit was increased to four (4) fish from August 29 to September 15, 2025.

This summer is a dominant cycle year for Late Run Fraser River Sockeye. It is anticipated there will be recreational and commercial opportunities. More information will be shared as it becomes available. The Department also intends to have a pre-season meeting of the Sockeye and Pink Work Group.

Pink

Pink fisheries in Southern BC remain stable. It is anticipated that similar management measures for 2025 will continue in 2026. The typical daily limit for Pinks is (4) per day. Reduced limits or non-retention may be in effect in terminal waters as well as the West Coast Vancouver Island Inlets.

Non-tidal retention opportunities for Pinks are listed on the Sport Fishing Guide. Additional opportunities identified in-season will be announced by Fishery Notice and also list on the Sport Fishing Guide.

Coho

In Fall 2025, east coast Vancouver island tributaries saw strong Coho returns, allowing for in-season increases to daily catch limits on several Southern BC hatchery systems.

For 2026, it is anticipated Southern BC marine Coho fisheries will open for retention on June 1. Typically the daily limit will be two (2) hatchery-marked Coho per day where Fraser River Coho are present. Increased retention opportunities may be permitted in times and areas where interior Fraser River Coho are not thought to be part of the catch and in terminal areas close to large hatchery production.

Non-tidal retention opportunities for Coho are listed on the Sport Fishing Guide. Additional opportunities identified in-season will be announced by Fishery Notice and list on the Sport Fishing Guide.

Southern BC Chum

Effective July 15, 2025, South Coast recreational marine Chum fisheries opened with a daily limit of two (2) per day, excluding west coast Vancouver Island inlets. In mid-October, the Johnstone Straits Chum test fishery indicated the 1 million critical threshold was likely to be met, and the daily limit was increased to four (4) fish per day, effective



October 17, 2025 to March 31, 2026, in all South Coast marine waters (including Boundary Bay 29-8), excluding west coast Vancouver Island inlets. East coast Vancouver island tributaries saw variable Chum returns in 2025. Retention was permitted in the Nanaimo River at two (2) per day from November 1-4, increasing to four (4) per day from November 5-December 31. In Region 2 Lower Mainland tributary systems, sufficient returns were estimated to allow for recreational non-retention fishing opportunities in seven tributaries, effective October 31 to November 30, 2025.

For 2026 , the Department will continue to use the Salmon Outlook to inform Southern BC marine mixed stock recreational Chum fisheries. It is anticipated that the season will begin with daily limits set at two (2) Chum per day. Changes to marine recreational Chum fishery management measures will be informed by in-season information collected through the Johnstone Strait test fishery and local stock assessment programs.

Non-tidal retention opportunities for Chum are listed on the Sport Fishing Guide. Additional opportunities identified in-season will be announced by Fishery Notice and list on the Sport Fishing Guide.



GROUNDFISH UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS

Groundfish Committee ----- March 12

CONTACTS

Owen Bird – SFAB Groundfish Committee Chair

Maureen Finn – DFO Regional Groundfish Manager

Halibut

Harvest advice for the 2026 Halibut season was reviewed during the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Annual Meetings in January. The recreational halibut fishery was allocated a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 633,750 net pounds, the lowest TAC on record.

The most recent catch estimate from the 2025 recreational halibut season is 504,537 net pounds. The TAC for 2025 was 651,491 net pounds, leaving 146,954 pounds uncaught. These catch estimates are still draft figures as iREC and creel calibrations still need to occur before a final catch estimate is provided.

The SFAB Halibut Working Group will be meeting in late January and early February 2026 to develop management recommendations for the 2026/27 Conditions of Licence. Halibut fishing opportunities will be announced by Fishery Notice and communicated to the SFAB. Fishers are reminded that the existing

2025/26 Conditions of Licence for halibut would apply until March 31, 2026 should the fishery open before this time. The current licence conditions is a daily and possession limit of one (1) halibut, with a maximum length of 102 cm.

New 2026/27 Conditions of Licence Language: Application of Canadian Halibut Regulations

For the 2026/27 Conditions of Licence, new clarification text will be added stating that *'All Canadian halibut regulations apply to any halibut in a fisher's possession, regardless of where they were caught, including size, quota, and possession limits.'* This clarification addresses a recurring compliance issue and aligns Canadian requirements with the reciprocal approach already applied under Alaska and Washington State fishing regulations.

There have been repeated instances of fishers in possession of both British Columbia and Alaska halibut (and other finfish species), resulting in them exceeding the possession limits permitted under the British Columbia Sport Fishing Regulations. In addition, observations and information received by fishery officers indicate that some fishers are not actually obtaining their catch in U.S. waters, but are instead catching over their limits in Canadian waters and then claiming the fish came from the U.S. This compromises catch data, conservation and protection of the species, and has treaty implications with the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

Yelloweye Rockfish

Yelloweye Rockfish will continue to be managed using a precautionary approach, with limited allowable impacts to support long-term sustainability.

- Inside Yelloweye will remain under an active rebuilding plan.
- Outside Yelloweye (OYE) has transitioned out of its rebuilding plan; however, no changes are being considered for the current management approach in the 2026–27 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP).

OYE is currently managed under a Management Procedure (MP), which was developed through a consultative process and approved by the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) in Fall 2023. This MP will remain in effect until the next OYE stock assessment, anticipated in Spring 2026, for implementation in the 2027–28 groundfish season.



The recreational sector will be invited to participate in the 2026 regional peer review, providing input on recreational management considerations and reviewing stock assessment results. The Groundfish Management Unit will also engage the recreational sector through the annual IFMP consultation process, to discuss assessment outcomes and potential management implications.

Pacific Spiny Dogfish

New science advice for outside Pacific Spiny Dogfish was published in July 2025 through the peer-reviewed Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) process: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/SAR-AS/2025/2025_032-eng.html. To support stock rebuilding, the following management measures are being implemented in the 2026/27 fishing season within the recreational fishery:

- Introduce coastwide non-retention in recreational fisheries and;
- Improve education and awareness about the status of Dogfish to encourage improved catch handling practices and post-release survival.



INVERTEBRATES AND PELAGIC UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS

Invert and Pelagic Cmte ----- March 10

CONTACTS

Deryk Krefting – SFAB Pelagic & Inverts Cmte Chair

Lisa Mijacika – DFO Regional Invertebrates Manager

Bryan Rusch – DFO Regional Pelagic Manager

Prawn

Recreational fishing in the three high-use areas were closed for two weeks each month during September, October, November, and December as part of a pulse fishing approach. If survey results indicate that a full closure is not required, pulse fishing will continue from January to March. The daily limit remains at 125 prawns per day, and all berried prawns must be released. Fishery Notices can be found at: <https://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm>.

As in recent years, the Pacific Prawn Fishermen’s Association (PPFA) conducted surveys in three high-use areas, voluntarily funded by its members: Saanich Inlet (Areas 19-7 to 19-12), Stuart Channel (Areas 17-5, 17-6, 17-9), and Alberni Inlet and Barkley Sound (Areas 23-1 to 23-4). DFO also expects to continue its long-term research survey in Howe Sound. These surveys were conducted in October or November 2025, and the data collected supports the management of the recreational prawn fishery in these areas.

Closure decisions based on survey results, as well as closures in non-surveyed areas, will be posted on the DFO Recreational Fishing Guide website and announced through a Fishery Notice. These closures are in effect from January 1 to March 31, 2026. Closures in non-surveyed areas will remain consistent with those from previous years (i.e. High use areas that are not surveyed in the fall will close to recreational fishing from January 1 through March 31 of the following year). The PPFA has indicated they will not be funding fall surveys in high-use areas in 2026.

The draft 2026/27 Prawn and Shrimp by Trap Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) was released for public consultation from January 7 to February 6, 2026. No major changes to the management framework for the recreational fishery were proposed in the draft. Following further review and approvals, the final IFMP will come into effect on April 1, 2026.

Area 23/123 – Recreational Prawn Fishing Motion

At the Fall 2025 Area 23/123 SFAC meeting, a motion was passed regarding prawn fishing, suggesting the recreational sector voluntarily refrain from fishing for prawns during the commercial season in exchange for keeping the rest of the season open. Local SFACs are asked to add this motion as an agenda item at their upcoming meetings. Please discuss the potential impacts in your area and forward your feedback and outcomes to Meghan Quon so that the SFAB Pelagic & Invertebrates Committee can better understand the coastwide effects before proceeding.

The population of the spawning female year-class is at the lowest-abundance point of its life history in winter spawning months (January through March). DFO has concerns about adjusting the management framework for recreational prawn in high use and special management areas in a way that compromises protections for spawning female prawns. DFO is not supportive of changes that would increase risk to spawning prawns and would need to know how this change would mitigate those risks.



POLICY AND MANAGEMENT UPDATES

UPCOMING DATES

**Please note that dates are tentative
and are subject to change**

Policy & Mgmt Cmte ----- March 20

CONTACTS

Martin Paish – SFAB Policy & Mgmt Committee

Greg Hornby – DFO SFAB Policy & Mgmt Committee

Owen Bird – SFAB Catch Monitoring WG

Rob Tadey – DFO Catch Monitoring WG

Ted Brookman – SFAB Regulations WG

Lindsay Klopp – DFO Regulations WG

Rod Clapton – SFAB Reconciliation WG

Freya Kristensen – DFO Reconciliation WG

Owen Bird – SFAB Marine Conservation Initiatives WG

Dan Leus – DFO Marine Conservation Initiatives WG

PACIFIC SALMON STRATEGY INITIATIVE

Launched by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on June 8, 2021, the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) aims to stem historic declines in key Pacific salmon stocks and rebuild these species to a sustainable level. Work is being led by the Regional Recreational Fisheries Team under the Harvest Transformation Pillar to modernize the framework for recreational fisheries management.

For more information related to catch monitoring, please contact the Recreational Catch Monitoring Coordinator for PSSI; Robert Tadey at Robert.Tadey@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

For more information related to the regulatory and licensing reform, please contact the Regional Recreational Fisheries Coordinator; Lindsay Klopp at Lindsay.Klopp@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Regulatory and Licensing Reform

The SFAB-DFO Regulations Working Group met twice in Spring/Summer 2025 to discuss regulatory and licensing modernization work. Amendment proposals for the *BC Sport Fishing Regulations (BCSFRs), 1996* have been refined with substantial input from the SFAB Regulations Working Group.

Three phases of regulatory amendments are underway:

Phase	Current Status
Phase I - Transfer some existing BCTWSFL COL to BCSFR and administrative updates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal regulation drafting process underway. Further feedback opportunities will be provided during Canada Gazette publication.
Phase II - Development of New Schedules for Gears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refinement of regulatory proposal. Undergoing Department of Justice review of proposed approach.
Phase III - Regulatory framework for guides to mandate catch report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborating with Department of Justice to develop a regulatory framework for guides within DFO jurisdiction.



Phase I – COL & Administrative Updates Summary:

- Move halibut requirements to BCSFR. Annual quota, daily quota, daily aggregate quota, recording requirement and length categories.
- Add pectoral (head-off) lengths for Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and halibut. Update lingcod section for pectoral length in BCSFR.
- Move clam size limits to BCSFR.
- Move the requirement for a descending device to be on board a vessel when engaged in angling from a vessel to BCSFR
- Add species to the BCSFR schedules. Some species are currently listed at the family level (e.g., opal squid, varnish clams) or with other species (e.g., tuna, rockfish). This includes associated daily quotas, aggregate daily quotas and method/gear types for these species.
- Amend Schedule III (Section 12) Item 8 waters description.
- Update or add definitions: artificial lure, artificial fly, fly fishing, descending device.

Item of Note: Terminology change: The term “head-off” will be replaced with “pectoral” length (Pectoral length is described and measured the same as the previous head-off length terminology). A change in the language will appear in the 2026/2027 Conditions of License.

Phase II - Gear Schedule Summary:

Proposed approach to the development of a gear schedule (under legal review):

- DFO envisions creating a new gear-specific schedule that would operate in conjunction with gears/methods listed in the existing schedules.
- The proposed approach would allow the department to manage gear by time, species and subarea as needed.

Proposed gear list	
Scent *	Distance between hooks(10 in/254mm or less)*
Plug (10 in/254mm or less)*	Hook other than circle hook
Spoon (10 in/254mm or less)*	Landing Net*
Cannon ball*	Leader (5m or less)*
Downrigger	Bait
Flasher*	Number of fishing lines per person (4 or less)*
Hook gap (56 mm or less)	Weighted fly line*
A hook having more than one point	Weight sizes (1kg or less)

Proposed Gear List Notes:

Items with an asterisk beside them will have definitions developed to provide clarity on the gear types.

The proposal includes sizes to provide flexibility. The intent is to have a specified (or set) size in the gear schedule that is not restrictive, encompasses the typical activity in the fishery and is open unless the gear is varied closed. Once a size is specified, the size could also be varied based on a management need.

Complementary regulatory amendments will also occur where there is interaction between the new gear schedule and existing regulations.

Phase III – Exploration of a Regulatory Framework to Mandate Catch Monitoring and Reporting Requirements for Fishing Guides

Fisheries Management is collaborating with the Regulations Unit and the Department of Justice to develop a regulatory framework for guides within DFO jurisdiction. Challenges have been encountered from a jurisdictional perspective as the Province of BC has authority of the business & professional activities and DFO/Minister has



authority of fishing activities. Implementation will require further consultation with recreational sector and significant resources to implement. The *Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative* (PSSI) is a 5-year funding program, with PSSI ending in March 2026, there is uncertainty around capacity for ongoing work.

DFO & SFAB RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

The DFO and SFAB Reconciliation Working Group was initiated in 2021 to further develop understanding and increase transparency of DFO's reconciliation processes with the SFAB community. Originally formed as the SFAB Reconciliation Committee in 2021, the Committee was renamed in 2025 to align with the SFAB's modernized structure. The Working Group is formed in acknowledgement of the role the recreational community plays in reconciliation efforts with Indigenous communities and as integral to the reconciliation process. The Working Group's role is to continue supporting SFAB members in understanding DFO and the Government of Canada's reconciliation commitments, the impact of past decisions on Indigenous communities, and the importance of moving on a new path towards reconciliation. The Working Group is a forum for SFAB members' concerns and input toward meaningful reconciliation for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishers.

Members of the Working Group include representatives of the SFAB and DFO, with participation from the Province of BC as of September 2023. The Working Group meets on a quarterly basis. Recent topics include information on DFO's approach to consultation with the recreational community in fisheries reconciliation negotiations, information from the Province of BC on its approach to integrating fisheries reconciliation into fisheries, aquaculture and wild salmon, and treaty negotiation updates from DFO. The Working Group is working towards renewed Terms of Reference in 2025.

SALMON ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW

On December 1, 2025, DFO released the SAP Consultation Package, including the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Discussion Paper: Perspectives and Recommendations from the Review of the 1999 Allocation Policy for Pacific Salmon in British Columbia, for public feedback. The discussion paper summarized key themes and perspectives from the review and noted that these may be refined based on the feedback received. It also provided a link to the BC SAP Review Terms of Reference for additional context. The feedback period closed on January 23, 2026.

DFO is now incorporating the feedback received into a draft set of recommendations. This draft will be shared with the Multi-Party Working Group and the First Nations–DFO Committee in February 2026 for further discussion. A final package will then be provided to the Minister for decision, including a summary of the consultation feedback. Where consensus has not been reached, the package will outline the available options and provide recommendations supported by information that accurately reflects the perspectives of all participants. The SAP review process is scheduled to conclude on March 31, 2026. Questions about the SAP review can be directed to DFO.SAPReviewBC-PASRevueBC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

CANADA'S MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS CONSERVATION MANDATE

Marine protected and conserved areas (e.g., Marine Refuges, Marine Protected Areas, etc.) are shared and discussed primarily through the DFO–SFAB Marine Conservation Initiatives Working Group (MCIWG). The MCIWG reports to the SFAB Policy & Management Committee, which in turn reports to the SFAB Main Conference Board. The working group meets twice a year, in the fall and winter. The most recent meeting took place in October 2025, with the next scheduled for February 2, 2026.

To protect biodiversity and achieve its marine conservation goals, Canada is designating marine protected areas and implementing other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). This work is being carried out in



collaboration with First Nations, other levels of government, industry, non-governmental organizations, and the public. For more information, please visit:

- Canada's Marine Conservation Targets:
<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/index-eng.html>
- Marine Protected and Conserved Areas in Canada:
<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/areas-zones/index-eng.html>
- Marine Refuges and Fisheries Management Measures that Qualify as OECMs:
<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/index-eng.html>

Northern Shelf Bioregion Marine Protected Area Network

Please refer to the Fall 2025 newsletter for background information on the Northern Shelf Marine Protected Area Network and details on recognized sites. *Fisheries Act* protections are currently being considered for additional sites within the Network.

Glass Sponge Reef – Rockfish Conservation Area (GSR-RCA) Project

For background information on Glass Sponge Reefs (GSRs) and Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs), please refer to the Fall 2025 newsletter. Engagement on the *GSR-RCA project* began in 2022 and is specific to Howe Sound and Jervis Inlet. Input received to date has helped shape the current proposal, which includes six sites that are proposed as marine refuges. The *GSR-RCA project* focuses on strengthening protections for inshore rockfish, lingcod, and their habitats, including newly identified GSRs. Proposed closures include commercial and recreational fisheries currently restricted in RCAs, as well as bottom-contact fisheries in these six sites. These proposed marine refuges align with [DFO's Policy for Managing the Impacts of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas](#) and may contribute to Canada's marine conservation targets.

Consultations occurred through advisory boards and bilateral meetings in fall 2025, and have now concluded. Thank you for your feedback during the consultation and early engagement process. The project timeline has been extended, and closures may be implemented between fall and winter 2026. Any changes will be communicated through Fishery Notices and updates to license conditions, where applicable. Questions can be directed to the DFO Marine Conservation Targets Team at: dfo.pacfmmt-ocmgppac.mpo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

SOUTHERN RESIDENT KILLER WHALE MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Southern Resident Killer Whale 2026 prey management measures consultation period occurred from September 17 to October 31, 2025. Ministerial decisions for the full suite of Southern Resident Killer Whale management measures for 2026 are pending, and we will provide an update once they are announced.

For more information regarding the Southern Resident Killer Whale management measures, please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/southern-resident-killer-whales>. Questions can be directed to the DFO Marine Mammal Team at: DFO.SRKW-ERS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.