

Greater Victoria Area Fall 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes**Greater Victoria Fall 2025 Sport Fishing Advisory Committee Meeting**

Location of Meeting: MS Teams (virtual attendance only) [Join the meeting now](#)

Date of Meeting: November 4, 2025

(Draft) Minutes

Recreational Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Chris Bos	Victoria SFAC Chair
Jerrod Pinder	Observer
Tom Celuszak	Recreational Angler
Doug Ferrier	Recreational Angler
Tom Davis	Public Fishery Alliance Director
Jacque Burdon	Take a Kid Fishing
Martin Paish	SFAB Chair
Bill Campbell	SVIAC
Montagu Lee	SVIAC
Tom Cole	ACS
Christopher Miller	Recreational Angler
Ihab Rizk	Recreational Angler
David Evans	Recreational Angler
Megan MacDonald	Recreational Angler
Ryan Chamberland	Lodge owner

Government Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Mark Frisson	ECVI Recreational Fisheries Coordinator
Roy Osselton	Conservation and Protection
Mya Cormie	Fishery Officer
John Kodama	Conservation and Protection
Adam Polgar	Whale Protection Unit
Ryan Cyr	Community Advisor
Shannon Ellemo	South Coast Area Resource Manager

Call to order:

Introductions

Introductions and establishment of voting members

- Introductions completed.

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Additions and approval of the agenda

- DFO noted that Agenda Item #6 : C&P will move to the start of the agenda.
- Agenda approved as written. Moved Tom Davis, second Martin Paish, passed.

C&P – updates

- DFO – violations between Apr 1 to Nov 4, 2025.
- **Rec salmon:**
 - Area 19 violations for barb hooks, improper packaging, failure to record chinook on licence.
 - Area 20 a lot more violations, common violation improper packaging (cutting tail and pectoral fins off).
- **Rec lingcod:**
 - Area 19 – not as many violations. Undersize size violations still occurring.
 - Area 20 – majority of violation related to undersize retention.
- **RCA violations:**
 - A couple RCA violations in Area 19 (fishing in closed areas), fishers didn't know or drifted into the RCA accidentally.
 - Area 20 didn't observe RCA violations.
- **Crab**
 - Area 19 – all undersize crab violations
 - Area 20 couple of violations – majority for over limits of crab.
- **CSSP or rec shellfish bivalve** violations, only a couple individuals, harvesting in a closed area.
- DFO - Area 19 & 20 focus monitoring the whale watching fleet, Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2025.
- Area 19 – approximately 100 occurrences reported/observed, half were prawn or crab related. Resulted in 84 violations.
- Area 20 – approximately 130 occurrence reported/observed. 58 % salmon, 22% other fin fish, 11% prawn, and crab, 9% clams/bivalve. 104 violations.
- Q: on water trips related since April, over how long i.e. 45 trips? Higher than before? Interested the number of 100 over the different species, seem to be minor things like hooks/identification.
- A: Stats are for occurrences from the whale protection patrols, general duty patrol, and marine patrol program. Unfortunately do not have the amount of time spent on the water.
- Q: how many angling people were given tickets related to SRKW?
- A: don't have that information. In Area 19/20 there is disturbance of whales (anglers and whales). Most fishers are well aware of the approach distance laws. Those aren't ticketable offences, they are court appearances. Likely that those files are still under investigation, so can't share stats on that.
- Q: curious if the SRKW recovery team accesses C&P to confirm identification of sightings of killer whales and where they were seen?
- A: we don't provide stats on the amount of sightings, there is the whale report app that we use to report sightings. With every occurrence that comes in we investigate each and every single one of them, in turn there is a lot of information we provide on disturbances into the violation system. Also required to pinpoint locations lat/long as best as we can.
- Q: it's important for view compliance rate rather than non-compliance. Do you know what the compliance rate was and if higher than previous higher, why do you think that is?
- A: We don't have compliance rate information in front of us. At every marina, there is non-compliance with packaging, it would be beneficial to educate on the proper way to package fish.

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If there were less packaging violations C&P could focus on more major violations. DFO is working towards compiling stats of non-compliance.

- Comment: noted that education at Marina's and via social media would be helpful.
- A lot of the information about compliance inspections, more information on that to come.
- Area 20 for rec salmon – 39 violations – all various, majority at least half in proper packaging or failing to record. Maybe SFAB put out published noticed on packaging, so DFO can focus on more serious violations.
- Comment: Suggested to have bags printed on the top with the a diagram showing the way your fish is supposed to be packaged.
- Comment: fish being portioned improperly, there is the potential for DFO creel surveyors to help educate fishers to help transport their fish correctly.

Unfinished Business

Review and approval of previous meeting minutes

- Spring 2025 meeting minutes approved as written. Moved Christopher Miller, second Jacquie Burdon passed.

Review of previous motions

- DFO: Will distribute the excel motion tracker group with the meeting minutes.
- Motion #1 – DFO decision to cease operation of Sooke Seapen. DFO advised the net pen program has been suspended as of now.
- Motion #2 – Otolith data from Jack Brooks hatchery. 2023 results were provided to Jack Brooks hatchery staff; 2024 will be provided (or may have already been provided).
- Motion #3 – Goldstream - COSEWIC. DFO Science doesn't have the authority to change/remove COSEWIC status from the IFMP.
- Motion #4 – MSF Expansion. Department doesn't have a long term decision on MSF as a tool to manage recreational fisheries, until that decision is made, DFO is not considering any expansions of MSF.

New Business

Fishery Notices – process review (October 11, 2025 Letter from the Esquimalt Anglers Association)

- DFO mentioned concerns noted regarding how fishery notices are posted, and why they aren't posted when there was a change in quota in the recreational fishery. DFO advised that fishery notice is only issued when there has been a change in regulation, a change within the Fisheries Act or a variation order (control quota).
- DFO reviewed recreational coho as an example: June 1st DFO provides a summary of the rec fishery coho plan which lists out retention opportunities for the coming year, will define quota before and after October 1st. We don't release fishery notices every time for individual quota change.
- DFO advised of a nuance where the Department does provide a fishery notice, prior to June 1st for Coho and prior to July for Chinook to lay out the general seasons plan.
- Comment: recalled that there was a large map showing the different fisheries, what they were and timeframes for species, was a helpful tool.

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- Reply: There is a link on the salmon page to maps with a color coded legend that outlines the do/don'ts and quota for the time period.
- Requested for the Department to provide the link.
- **Action:** DFO (MF) to share with the Greater Victoria SFAC, the salmon website link with fishery maps, timeframes, quotas etc.

IFMP timelines

- **Salmon**
 - First deadline is January 23, 2026 – first proposals due to be provided into the draft IFMP.
 - February 20, 2026 draft released to the public for review and comment.
 - April 10, 2026 final deadline to comment and provide input to the IFMP.
 - Approval of Salmon IFMP by June 30, 2026.
 - First deadline important and the Department encourage SFACs and the SFAB to have key priorities and principles submitted by the January 2026 deadline so that it is considered in the draft IFMP for consultation. If submitted later, it is harder to consult on.
 - Comment: noted that the date is slightly out of line with meeting schedules for SFAB, as a result SFAB may adjust accordingly.
- **Halibut**
 - Groundfish IFMP – out for comment between November 17, 2025 and December 17, 2025. For Halibut rec fisheries, depends on IPHC meetings on TAC available to rec fishers which is worked through the SFAB halibut Working Group.
- **Shellfish**
 - Prawn – IFMP anticipated to be released in late December 2025 and open for comment through January 2026, the Department does not have specific deadlines as of yet.
 - Crab – draft IMFP out for consultation November 20, 2025. Final approval of IFMP March 1, 2025.
 - Was noted that the prawn/crab IFMP is mainly driven by commercial fisheries.

Review of 2025 salmon fisheries

- **Chinook**
 - DFO no updates moving into 2026/27 as of right now. Recreational Chinook management measures in 2025 in Southern BC did not see any changes compared to 2024, and moved forward with the same plan, no action was taken for further reduction of summer 5 (2) Chinook exploitation.
 - Q: noted we were provided with a document from the Fraser River First Nations Management Board with a proposal of five options put forward for Fraser Summer 5 (2) Chinook. What is DFO's position on where that stands at that moment?
 - A: can't comment on what it looks like moving into the spring. Just as the SFAC and SFAB will be providing feedback/suggestions the FSMB will be as well.
 - Comment: noted concerns in that FSMB will likely come back with the same options again this year, and the proposal was not about conservation and that the stock is not in bad shape except for one area in the lower Fraser. The additional restrictions are likely allocation based. The need for appropriate notice and consultation was expressed.

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- Reply: proposal options came into the IFMP process later, and noted that the Department is working to bringing all feedback in line with IFMP planning timelines.
- Comment: raised concerns, that reallocation can't also be a conservation narrative on upper Fraser stocks. Believes the data is accurate and the exploitation rates are very low depending on stock. Is there a number on reallocation for First Nations and how success is measured, is there rationale and data to support this.
- Reply: there is no specific target on pieces. The proposals from other groups go into the IFMP consultation process and are no proposals from the Department. Typically exploitation rates are what is considered not piece counts.
- Coho
 - Doing particularly well in Georgia Strait.
 - Fishing strong fishing began June 1st and continued through duration of summer.
 - Qualicum river touching on 30k Coho returning to the system. Seeing this trend of strong escapement in other ECVI systems as well.
- Pinks
 - Fraser River Pink dominant cycle on odd years, forecasted 27 million return, however we didn't quite get there, pink return was still strong at 17 million back into the Fraser.
- Sockeye
 - Initially there were no fisheries anticipated for recreational and commercial as the pre-season forecast was low, however each stock group out performed pre-season forecast.
 - Commercial TAC identified through the Fraser Panel process. As a result, commercial fisheries permitted in Johnstone Straits (gill net, seine fishery) and recreational fisheries opened throughout most south coast marine waters for sockeye retention.
 - Late run sockeye did not achieve an abundance that would allow target fisheries , fisheries were constrained through the back end.
 - Aug 16, 2025 recreational fisheries open to full limits and occurred for 9 days, most catch out of Area 13. Was a short duration fishery closed August 24th.
 - Into 2026 Fraser dominant year, hopefully there are more harvest opportunities.
 - Comment: that it wasn't expected to have such a large return of sockeye and didn't expect that fisheries would happen. IFMP process was blocking this year, not for marine opportunities but potentially on the river. Perhaps something needs to be looked at in the IFMP process to adjust the fisheries when there is an opportunity.
- Chum
 - Abundance through the Johnstone Straits is monitored through test fishery in Area 12, test catches were low up to thanksgiving weekend. It was anticipated at that point that commercial fisheries would be unlikely. However there was a spike in test catches on Thanksgiving weekend. As a result, there were some commercial opportunities in Johnstone Strait. Not materializing in the Fraser River (below escapement goal of 800K), and many ECVI systems likely to fall short of escapement goals.

Local escapement and enhancement activity

- DFO Community Advisor provided a written update.
 - Goldstream not seeing chum show up.
 - 4 Mile Hatchery has collected its Chinook egg target.
 - Mill Bay Conservation Society moving coho into Shawnigan creek, 4,500 moved up over the falls into the creek.

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- DFO reviewed the latest SG Escapement Bulletin.
- Sooke River:
 - Comment: noted the 192 Chinook number for the Sooke River. Doesn't include the ~60 that were taken by the hatchery for broodstock. Noted concerns of the block net on the river which helps the hatchery catch the fish. Block net stops fish from getting through the river, stopped by predator (seals) and water is low. Swims are done when there are no fish in the river, but fish can't get in the river.
 - Comment meaning to connect with industry stakeholders and local organizations. If people can reach out to him to connect, there will be a meeting set up in third week in November including Will Atlas from Portland (Wild Salmon Centre). Will walk the Sooke River looking at installing a counting fence and cameras. Working on a plan to help mitigate seals going up river.

Halibut – 2025 review and planning for 2026

- Reviewed data up until the end of August 2025. The recreational halibut fishery has used up approximately 75% of halibut TAC. Fishery remains open and likely will not close until the end of the calendar year. Effort isn't low coastwide after mid-September. Recreational sector will likely be in an underage situation, as opposed to overage in the past few seasons. Change this year is the max size reduced to 102 cm, daily limit of 1 and possession limit of 1.
- Observation: a change in fishing behavior on the coast due to restriction in max size. Fishers more interested in fishing salmon and lingcod. 2026 will likely bring little change to the TAC. IPHC meetings key to determine recreational fishery quota.
- Comment: IPHC meeting in Washington in 3rd week in January 2026.
- Noted SFAB halibut working group will be distributing a survey regarding locals priorities for halibut.
- Comment: that it a consistent challenge to try to manage halibut on a coastwide basis with fixed TAC, divergent preferences amongst angler groups, how you fish and where you fish. Encourage everyone on this call to complete the survey and send to everyone you know. Helps the committee to understand what the anglers priorities and values are, and choose things to work on.
- Q: asked the group if a special small committee from our SFAC is needed to make recommendations, or if we are okay if individuals in this group submit the survey. No comments from the group, therefore, individuals will submit the survey.
- Q: what has our quota currently been in the TAC for the angling license year. Closures and notifications?
- A: noted that when we get the creel surveyors and lodge information we then schedule a meeting. This year we haven't come up against a need for a closure. If we are meeting in September and reviewing in August we are already going over the TAC. That's why sometimes you there is a sudden closure.
- The decision sometimes made quickly, nature of the fishery.
- 2025 Total rec TAC = 652, 000 lbs., likely won't change much for 2026. Estimated remaining balance ~25% as of August 2025.
- Q: over achievement of TAC is taken off of following year, based on low fishing catch. Why will the Department not increase the length of halibut for this year?
- A: Halibut length is defined in the conditions of license in-season. 102cm is on the license and can't be changed. Department is working to put this in regulation s it could be varied in season.

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- Comment: commercial has a 10% carryover provision, recreation cannot carryover.
- Comment: noted that we've been discussing this for years, utilizing fishing BC app could assist with the overall numbers. Fair for the general public to understand what the bycatch amounts are of commercial fisheries abroad within Canadian waters that have an impact to our access to halibut.
- Q: asked if it is the same for the US (Alaska and Washington)? Is it only Canada that is not allowed to carry underage?
- A: the overage/underage provisions are strictly a domestic management regime imposed by DFO. It is not part of the Treaty itself. Canada decides what it does with its fishery. To date we have been unsuccessful in changing, rec fishery can't carryover anything for underage, but we do get charged for overage. Whereas, commercial can carryover 10%. Still no reasonable rationale.
- Comment: we are at a point now, we should be looking for a larger split of Canada's commercial/recreational TAC.

SRKW 2026 consultation process

- Comment: no proposed changes, no salmon fishing areas in Area 20. Changes are not spatial, they are time changes.
- Yellow map highlights proposal for areas of chinook non-retention to move to no fishing for Chinook (Area 19 from April 1st – July 31st) with the exception of MSFs.
- No impact on any other chinook retention opportunities.
- Comment: expressed there has been a lot of confusion. Consultation period has now ended, and the opportunity to respond ended at the end of October, however you can still advocate for change. Meeting scheduled for November 13th at 7pm, townhall at the Langford Legion.
- Comment: we are seeing a large increase in abundance of Chinook, argument we hear from DFO is that SRKW need to have as much prey as possible, still an issue from the Emergency Order, and now adding additional restrictions. Noted that non-retention has already decreased amount of activity.
- Martin P: doesn't affect current retention opportunities we have. Incremental benefit of non-retention and no chinook fishery is immeasurable, virtually unenforceable. There is no deadline on advocacy (such as writing to your MP's etc.)
- Q: have things changed between DFO consultation, and the technical working groups? Have we lost the in-person meetings?
- A: Chair advised there are no in-person meetings anymore, online virtual meeting format now. Noted that the SFAB response to the proposal, was really well written, with full proper data.
- Comment: discussion with Department on SRKW, our attention the Department may need to update their abundance basis of Chinook as some of their data doesn't reflect current data, where there is clear abundance of Chinook. DFO stating Chinook population is low, but SRKW there is a need Chinook for prey availability.

Committee chair election process

- Chris Bos is willing to accept the position and elected by acclamation.
- Ryan Chamberland - alternate position and elected by acclamation.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:38 PM

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Handouts

The following handouts were available for attendees:

1. Recreational Fisheries Newsletter – fall 2025
2. Spring 2025 Meeting Minutes
3. Fishery Notice Letter

Minutes prepared by: Chris Bos and Mark Frisson

Table 1: Motion Summary:

Motion Number <small>Committee – Motion # : mm/yy – Motion subject line</small>	Motion <small>(Motion title, Description, Motion)</small>
Greater Victoria SFAC : Motion 1 – (11/25) – Predicting Fraser River Chinook Abundance	<p>Whereas DFO does not currently have a means to predict Chinook abundance returning to the Fraser River and;</p> <p>Whereas the ability to predict abundance leads to more effective and sustainable management of Chinook fisheries;</p> <p>Be it resolved that the SFAB strongly encourages DFO to work towards identifying a means to reestablish predicting Chinook abundance for the Fraser River both in season and preseason.</p> <p>Moved Ryan Chamberland, seconded by Tom Davis, motioned passed.</p>

Table 2: Action Item Summary:

Action Item Number	Action Item Description <small>(Action Item Description, Person Accountable, Delivery Date)</small>
1	DFO to share with the Greater Victoria SFAC, the salmon website link with fishery maps, timeframes, quotas etc.