

# Area 17 SFAC Meeting Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>. 2012

## Nanaimo Fish & Game Club

### Recreational Sector Representation:

Clyde Wicks	-Independent Angler, Nanaimo SFAC Chairman
Wayne Harling	-Nanaimo Fish & Game
Jim McKinney	-Independent Angler
Tony Arkwright	-Independent Angler
Michael Bob	-Independent Angler BCFDF / Guide
Gerald Rupp	-Independent Angler / guide
Brian Hermann	-Independent Angler / Nanaimo Fish Hatchery
Ted Brookman	-BCWF Region One
Paul Rickard	-Independent angler
Lloyd Erickson	-Independent Angler
Bob Tritschler	-Independent Angler
David Parenteau	-Nanaimo Fish and Game
John Loehr	-Independent Angler
Ron Doumont	-Professional Angler/Guide
Deryk Krefting	-SFI, Independent Angler
Graeme Estey	-Independent Angler
Bob Meyer	-Professional Angler
Al Brown	-Independent Angler/Nanaimo Fish and Game
Kevin Perkins	-Independent Angler
Steve Reid	-Independent Angler
John Schwarze	-Independent Angler

### DFO Representation:

Brad Beath	Recreational Fisheries Coordinator – SC Area
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### Introductions:

The agenda, as supplied, was approved with several additions.

PSF Dinner

Prawns

Head recovery program

### Previous meeting:

Our motion to allow the retention of hatchery (marked) chinook over 45c. in the SOG was passed by the South Coast committee and then sent to the main board which referred it to the Chinook/Coho working group. Unfortunately, that group has not met but intends to in the near future. Brad said there have been several requests for hatchery retention in chinook fisheries but there are some concerns that DFO Science needs to address such as issues surrounding impacts on wild fish and data collection. This is currently under review. (*Motion attached for information purposes. Addendum B*)

Nothing new on the PDF request for an increase in the cost of licenses and stamps. This will be discussed at the South Coast meetings in early December.

The chairman reported that the proposal to substantially increase the size of the proposed local National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) was a non-starter according to the consultant who had worked on it.

### **2012 Catch Stats:**

Brad distributed the 2012 catch stats and then responded to questions from the group. He was asked about the total catch of rockfish and lingcod and how close we came to our allowable catch. This cumulative information was not included on the sheets. Brad to supply it to the chairman when it is available.

Ted said he was asked about 'seal contacts' by a creel surveyer in area 12. Brad will look into whether this is being captured as part of the normal creel survey or if it was a special request.

### **Quillback SARA listing:**

The committee was made aware of quillback rockfish being considered as a "threatened" SARA listing. The committee was told this will likely have a greater impact on commercial fishing than on recreational harvest activities, however, the full ramifications are not known yet. Those interested were directed to a website where feedback and comments can be submitted. There was discussion on ways to release rockfish safely but it was agreed these have little science to support them.

### **Halibut Update:**

Paul outlined the status of the "Malcolm" court case. This involves a challenge by the commercial halibut fishing lobby of DFO's granting an additional 3% of the Canadian halibut TAC to the recreational sector without compensation. SFI and the BCWF have hired Chris Harvey to represent us. Costs will amount to approximately \$60,000. Fund raising efforts are now underway and donations can be made through the BCWF. Contact Wayne Harling or Ted Brookman for details. Ted went on to explain the history of the court case and said the outcome could have a tremendous impact on all other fisheries.

Gerry Rupp, Invictus Charters, said he would donate a charter to be used as a fund raiser.

A review of the 2012 halibut season showed we probably exceeded our TAC by 70,000 to 100,000 lbs. About 85% was caught in the months of July and August.

There was discussion on where the majority were harvested. Average weight and effort were both up.

Breakdown for 2012 was not available at the meeting but Brad distributed the 2011 document with catch by area and month and average weight.

There was considerable discussion about the difficulty in catching the “under’ fish this past season.

The Recreational Halibut Management Considerations for 2013 document had been distributed prior to the meeting and the chairman asked for any and all comments on how we would like the halibut season managed in 2013. (The “Reporting Discussion Results” summary page and our recommendation is attached. Addendum A)

It quickly became evident that, without additional TAC, keeping everyone happy was virtually impossible. Getting a fair allocation should continue to be our number one objective.

A combination of management measurement will probably be required to achieve the goal of a longer season. However, several members voiced strong support for a shorter season if it meant better limits.

The committee was reminded by several speakers of the need to keep the rec sector united.

### **Nanaimo River / Hatchery:**

Brian gave a hatchery report, that for the most part, was very positive. Lots of pinks returned to both Departure Bay and the Nanaimo Harbour. This provided excellent shore fishing. Approximately 35,000 returned to the river. This is an all-time high for an even year run. We now have good runs built up for both even and odd years. Brian thanked all the volunteers who showed up for both the brood stock capture and the egg take.

Average size of pinks was down and the fecundity was 1,210 vs over 1,700 last year.

Swim counts of the river showed the water release in early October had the desired effect on the fish holding in the vulnerable areas at the mouth of the river.

Chinook egg targets have been achieved. Chum will not be a problem as there are good numbers in the river. Still early for the coho. (See attached addendum C)

Open house/spawning day and garage sale fundraiser will take place at the hatchery on Sunday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Lingcod / rockfish**

Paul gave a report on the recent Lingcod Sustainability Committee. He said that the only assessment being done is through modeling and a review of the creel data. This approach concerns him. May not give an accurate picture of how the lingcod numbers are expanding. The committee will meet again in June.

Several members commented on how this past season was one of the best in memory. Lots of legal size ling throughout area 17.

**Herring / Krill:**

The information on the proposed expansion of the commercial herring fishery in 2013 was given to the group. Brad explained the rationale behind the TAC calculations, and although they are within the allowable harvest plan, appear more aggressive at a lower stock estimate when compared to 2012. The committee was unanimous in their opinion that this is headed in the wrong direction especially considering DFO's estimate showing a decreasing biomass and the fact the biomass estimate was 50% higher than the actual return in 2012.

Concern was expressed about the fishery constantly occurring on the same beaches as well as allowing the fishery to take place in shallow water in RCA's.

Wayne pointed out that recreational anglers have been under constant pressure to help conserve dwindling stocks of salmon and other fish in the SOG while at the same time DFO is proposing a more aggressive commercial herring and krill fishery. The strategy makes no sense to him. The rest of the committee agreed.

DFO considers the krill fishery to be a low risk fishery. Wayne challenged this based on the lack of recent stock assessment.

**Prawn:**

Wayne gave a brief report on prawn fishing. Based on the commercial fishing pressure and the catch numbers from the past few years, he believes we may be at the top end of a sustainable fishery. He will have more information after the prawn meetings, which will be held in early November.

**Cowichan River:**

Extremely low water conditions have concentrated all the fish into a few shallow pools and made them vulnerable to seals and poachers. He estimated they lost over 1,500 fish. They do not have the same ability to control the water level as we do on the Nanaimo River. Inability to store water relates mainly to Lake Cowichan land owners wanting to preserve their beaches.

**Head Recovery Program:**

The chairman presented a report showing the decrease in heads received from Area 17 anglers. It went from 190 in 2010, 160 in 2011 and to 146 in 2012. Brad and Clyde led a

discussion on the importance of providing DFO with the correct data. Both assured the group that the data can be used to provide additional fishing opportunities as well as protect fish. Brad said, without the data, DFO will always take the conservative approach. Clyde challenged the committee to promote the program with fellow anglers and get the number up over 200 for 2013.

### **Elections:**

Clyde Wicks, Chairman and Mike Bob, Vice-chair were both acclaimed for another term.

### **Announcements:**

- . Nanaimo River Spawning Day / Garage Sale will be held Sunday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. 10 am till 3
- . PSF Dinner Dance and Auction will be held Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>. Tickets available from Gone Fishing, Wholesale Sports and Outdoor Outfitters.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30.

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### **Addendum A:**

#### **Halibut Discussion:**

Maximum size limit (*no support*)

- Will not contribute a lot of savings. Maximum size would probably be in the 30 to 40 pound range to have an impact. Not acceptable.
- Anglers should be encouraged to release large fish based on any halibut over 70 pounds is normally female.
- Can't safely measure large halibut.

Individual annual limit (*mixed support*)

- Would deter gifting
- Would deter illegal sales
- Bad optics if 10 is selected. (10 M pounds total allowable)
- Will have minor impact on savings. Needs to be packaged
- Difficult to enforce

Daily and total possession limit (*mixed support*)

- Local fish and game members want a return to full limits even if it means substantially shorter season.
- Going to 1 and 1 could add two months to season
- Combination of 1 and 2 and 1 and 1 might achieve goal of longer season
- 1 under fish difficult to catch in areas outside Victoria
- 1 and 2 (any size) outside the peak season of July and August could benefit guides by allowing them to promote shoulder season. Could also help tourism in costal communities by moving some demand to May/June.

Season length (*mixed support*)

- Mixed feeling on need for full season
- Most local 'regular Joe' anglers can adjust their schedules to travel to the west coast several times per year whenever the season is open.
- Local anglers who do not travel to the west coast would like the opportunity to keep halibut caught off Nanaimo thus a full season is important to them.

Time and Area Closures (*very little support*)

- Would simply direct effort to other times and areas.

Area allocations (*no support*)

- Little interest in discussing options that pitted one rec sector against another

Restriction on "Gifting" by service providers (*majority support*)

- Guides in attendance say this is not a problem with legit guides.
- Few objections to rule similar to Alaska where guides can't keep fish while working.
- Annual limit would solve this.

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Summary:

The two hour halibut discussion at our SFAC meeting, and emails and phone calls since then, has resulted in the following suggestion for 2013. (Note: No actual calculations were available thus recommendation is based on the assumption the numbers will show the proposal would achieve goal of more liberal off-peak limits and a longer season.)

Halibut opens Feb. 1 with a 1/day 2/possession (any size) July 1st. we go to 1/day 1/possession. Sept. 4th. we go back to 1/day 2/possession and remain there until Dec. 31 or when the rec sector reaches their TAC.

Benefits:

Based on the numbers available at this time, this could give us a full season for local 'tin' boat anglers. (Brad will confirm the actual numbers and potential savings when they are available)

Proposal will appeal to guides because it will allow them to market the shoulder season and take some of the pressure off July and August.

Should be no reason for anyone to buy into the experimental license because the season will remain open.

Will reduce the 'on-line' criticism of both DFO and the SFAB by local anglers who thought the current regs were designed to help lodge operators.

Should not have a major impact on lodges. Hard to believe that the prospect of bringing home 8 or 10 pounds less of halibut would deter guests from booking.

## Addendum B:

### **New Minimum Size Limit Proposed for Hatchery Chinook in Strait of Georgia**

#### Whereas:

Historically, the minimum size limit of 18 inches (45 cm.) was increased to the present 62 cm (24 ½ inch) to “dampen” the recreational catch at a time when that catch exceeded 275,000 fish (about 250,000 more fish than the present annual catch in Strait of Georgia) and,

#### Whereas:

The present reason for retaining the minimum size limit of 62 cm. in Strait of Georgia is to conserve Cowichan chinook that have declined dramatically from historic levels, in part because their ocean distribution makes them susceptible to excessive marine harvest and,

#### Whereas:

Cowichan chinook (and other Strait of Georgia Chinook stocks currently at low abundance levels) are not mass marked (adipose fin removed):

#### Therefore:

Be it resolved that the present minimum size limit of 62 cm. for Chinook in the Strait of Georgia be reduced to 45 cm. **for adipose-fin-clipped Chinook only.**

#### Rationale

There are several reasons why reverting to 45 cm. minimum size would be beneficial.

1. The ability to keep “marked” Chinook under 62 cm would reduce the catch of unmarked fish in that anglers would catch a legal size fish more quickly and be off the water
2. The more hatchery Chinook are removed, the more prey species will be available to “wild” fish.
3. It would reduce the number of currently sub-legal Chinook that have to be released, particularly if they are “bleeders” and will die anyway; always a frustration for anglers.
4. Marked Chinook are raised to be harvested. What is the purpose of releasing them?
5. Promote recreational angling by increasing the expectation of being able to catch and take home a legal fish for the table.
6. Will provide much needed additional head recovery data.

Addendum C

**Nanaimo River Hatchery Update 2012**

Date	Chinook	Jack	Coho	Jack	Pink	Chum	Sockeye	Location
27-Aug	39	43	0	0	11,500	0	0	Spot Checks
4-Sep	200	57	0	0	22,064	0	0	Highway bridge to Raines rd
10-Sep	232	66	0	0	21,643	5	0	Highway bridge to Raines rd
17-Sep	189	63	8	3	29,098	10	0	Highway bridge to Raines rd
24-Sep	70	68	6	3	22,006	17	1	Highway bridge to Raines rd
1-Oct	144	192	29	45	11,727	403	0	Highway bridge to Raines rd
9-Oct	511	204	86	184	2,425	12,839	0	Highway bridge to Raines rd
15-Oct	91	11	65	3	0	9261	0	Highway bridge to firehall pool
22-Oct	101	34	356	68	0	17,497	0	Highway bridge to firehall pool

Nanaimo River Eggtakes 2012						
Species	Total Eggs	Target	Females	Males	Jacks	Fecundity
Autumn Chinook	428,895	450,000	94	84	16	4,563
Summer Chinook	252,069	250,000	56	53	5	4,501
Chemainus Chinook	58,401	75,000	14	16	0	4,172
Coho	0	250,000	0	0	0	0
Chum	45,599	500,000	16	16	-	2,850
NR Pinks	1,029,710	1,200,000	851	760	-	1,210
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,814,674</b>					