

## ***Area 14 Fall Local SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes***

**Location of Meeting:** Genoa Building, Marina Park (127 Port Augusta St, Comox Bc V9m 3n8, Canada)

\*An online option was also available for meeting participants.

**Date of Meeting:** October 26, 2023

(Draft) Minutes

Recreational Attendees:

| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Affiliation</b>                             |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Jean Rowe     | Area 14 SFAC Chair                             |
| George Bates  | Area 14 SFAC Secretary                         |
| James Fisher  | Guide/Recreational Fisher                      |
| Jim Harris    | Lodge Owner                                    |
| George Bowron | ORES                                           |
| Dan Jarman    | Recreational Fisher                            |
| Tim McKinnon  | Recreational Fisher                            |
| Steve Veloso  | Area 14 Alternate Chair/ Guide                 |
| Kyle Milburn  | Consultant, NR Training Group                  |
| Pete Mathews  | Comox Fishing Guide                            |
| Brenton Rsky  | Recreational Fisher                            |
| Bryan Allen   | Recreational Fisher                            |
| Nick Strussi  | Comox Valley Fish and Game/Recreational Fisher |

Government Attendees:

| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Affiliation</b>                      |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Mark Frisson  | ECVI Recreational Fisheries Coordinator |
| Michael Black | Conservation and Protection             |
| Jim Amos      | Puntledge River Hatchery                |

**Call to order:** 6:31 pm

### **Introductions**

- Circulation of a sign-in sheet, which requires participants to indicate their name, current email address, and voting status.
- The DFO co-chair gave an overview of some of the changes to the SFAB ToR which would directly impact local SFAC meetings.
- New membership standards and requirements were discussed. Past and present voting members currently established on the distribution list will be grandfathered into the new membership and not have to meet the new requirements.
- The new SFAB ToR requires participants to attend 2 consecutive meetings and register their interest to be a voting member with the SFAC chair and DFO co-chair.

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- The DFO co-chair described the importance of ensuring you properly sign into meetings on the official sign-in sheet as the sign-in sheet will be how the Department tracks attendance and determines when attendees are eligible for voting privileges.
- The new standardized sign-in sheet was shared with all attendees and instructions were given on what columns must be filled in, in order to remain on the distribution list and gain or maintain voting status.
- Members must establish which committee they will be a voting member at, as you can only maintain voting privileges at one local SFAC. Participants can attend as many different meetings as they want.
- A brief run down was given on how the election process at the end of the meeting will proceed. Both in-person attendees and online voting members will be voting by secret ballot if more than one individual stands for chair or alternate chair.

### **Adoption and Agenda Approval**

- Additions to agenda: review previous motions, review previous action items.
- Agenda approved with additions. Moved George Bates, second Nick Strussi

### **Adoption of meeting minutes from Spring 2023**

- Spring 2023 meeting minutes were distributed before the meeting date for review and edit suggestions.
- The minutes were adopted as written. Moved Tim McKinnon, Second Steve Veloso

### **Review of Spring 2023 Motions**

- MB-21-01-2023 concerning hatchery chinook retention in Area 14 during April and May. DFO response: Further to wording in the draft 2023/24 southern salmon IFMP, the Department will not be considering any new MSF in times/areas that are currently non-retention using the interim evaluation criteria. If work on the longer-term use of MSF has been completed and an approved decision-making framework is in place to evaluate new MSF proposals, additional proposals may be considered.
- MB-SC-BCLCA #1-1-2023 concerning coho retention. DFO response: There is no plan to change the pre-season management plan for marine recreational Coho fisheries in 2023/24. FSC fisheries in this area also do not have unrestricted access to wild Coho and until that priority access is granted, recreational fisheries allowing wild Coho retention will not be considered. Further, more work will be needed to develop a domestic Coho model to fish for unmarked Coho after interior FR Coho are thought to have left the area. Area 14 members questioned why FSC was closed as well as recreational fisheries after Oct 1 when the Fraser River and other Areas closer to the Fraser River are open.

### **Chinook Fisheries**

- Discussion on further measures that are in place to protect Fraser River stocks of concern. It was explained that there was a ministerial decision made in the summer of 2023 to decrease the ER on Fraser summer 5(2) Chinook from 15% down to 14% which resulted in some additional

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fisheries measures taken in the recreational and commercial fisheries. No impacts occurred to Area 14.

- Question: does the department currently have funds to mark all hatchery Chinook production? DFO Answer: The Department currently does not have the capacity to mark all hatchery Chinook production on Vancouver Island. The MM/MSF decision framework will help guide where MM and MSF will occur.
- SFAC member Steve Veloso reviewed collected Avid Angler from 2019 - 2022. ~5700 DNA samples taken from Chinook Two Fraser River Stocks of concerns were encountered out of ~5,700 samples taken inside Area 14. Zero samples of stocks of concern taken in April and May of those years. Which is why Area 14 is advocating for opportunity in April and May.

**Action Item:** DFO To report back 2023 escapement for Spring 4(2), Spring 5(2), Summer 5(2) and Harrison River escapement and the target ER caps are for each stock.

### **Coho Fisheries**

- It was noted by members that Coho fisheries in the summer of 2023 were one of the most productive seasons in recent years.
- Coho Fisheries are constrained by Interior Fraser River Coho ER caps. Currently managed to a 3-5% ER recently Canada has come in around 6.8% ER. While interior Fraser River Coho are not thought to be part of the catch after October 1<sup>st</sup>, more work will have to be done to inform whether domestic Coho fisheries can take place in the SOG.
- The Coho assessment fishery in September is helping to inform stock status in the Northern Strait of Georgia basin.
- Area 14 members questioned why a motion would have to be brought forward to open the river for increased hatchery Coho retention on the Puntledge River. DFO explained a motion would formalize advice to the Department. Discussion on increasing hatchery marked Coho retention in the Puntledge River from 1 per day to 2 per day. Question: how quickly could a limit increase be implemented for this fall? DFO Answer: With consultations needing to be completed and approval process timing, it would be a minimum of two weeks to potentially gain the limit increase. This is likely a better change that could be explored starting in 2024.
- Concern expressed that a limit increase would only come one week before the fishery is scheduled to close at the end of November. Action SFAC to develop a motion requesting the Puntledge River coho limits be increased.

**Action Item:** DFO Report back who would lead the development of a domestic Coho fishery model.

### **Groundfish**

- The DFO Co-chair gave a brief update on how the halibut quota is managed for the recreational sector. Halibut retention closed on September 30<sup>th</sup> as a precaution to not go over TAC which would result in impacts on the 2024 fishery.
- Question: Yellow Eye rockfish seem to be much more abundant in the past few years does the Department have plans to allow recreational retention? DFO Answer: While Yellow Eye abundance does seem to be improving there are currently no plans to allow recreational retention.

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**Action item DFO:** Provide what credit was given in 2022 for the use of the descending devices.

### **C&P Updates**

- Fairly high occurrence of infractions in Area 14 this summer. Failure to record chinook, and barbed hooks were common.

### **Hatchery Updates**

- Returns of Coho and Chinook have been strong in the Puntledge River. Chum returns continue to track poorly with about 1200 fish in the river well below escapement targets. Concern egg target for the hatchery will not be met.
- Question: What percentage of chinook production is marked? Answer: a low percentage, around 3 percent.
- Qualicum hatchery returns have been strong. Big Qualicum hatchery has had ~17,000 Chinook, ~8,000 Coho return to date. Also, there was a high abundance of Pinks in the early fall, ~100,000K. Chum returns to the Qualicum Rivers continues to be extremely poor.
- Oyster River update:
- Pink 38,000
- Coho 7,000 Returns ~54% marked rate
- Eggs
- Pink 528,000
- Coho 76,000
- Chinook 6,000
- Chum 4,000

### **Area 14 Election Process (chair election).**

- Steve Veloso was nominated as chair, Nick Strussi, second Tim McKinnon.
- Steve Veloso was elected chair by acclamation.
- Steve Veloso nominates Jean Rowe as Alternate Chair, second Nick Strussi
- Jean Rowe was elected as alternate chair by acclamation.

### **Roundtable**

- Round Table – Question Steve asked if DFO has done any studies on pinniped sterilization. DFO does not know of any study. Jean will look into work Steve has already done and will get back to Chair on any study from US or Canada

**Meeting Adjourned: 9:00 pm**

### **Handouts**

- The following handouts were available for attendees:
  - Spring 2023 Area 14 SFAC meeting minutes.
  - Fall 2023 Regional Recreational Updates.

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**Minutes prepared by:** Jean Rowe, Steve Veloso, Mark Frisson

### **Motion Summary:**

| <b>Motion Number</b><br>(Committee/Yr/Mo/Da/Motion #; Motion Subject Title)           | <b>Motion</b><br>(Motion title, Description, Motion)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area 14<br>SFAC/23/10/26/<br>Motion #1; Puntledge<br>River Hatchery Coho<br>Retention | <b>Puntledge River Hatchery Coho</b><br><br>Whereas In Area 14 the Puntledge River has significant returns of Coho above broodstock requirements. A significant number of the returns are marked.<br><br>Therefore Area 14 requests that sub-area 14-11 be open to 4 Coho per day one of which can be unmarked Aug 15 <sup>th</sup> to Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> and that the Puntledge River be open to 4 marked Coho per day.<br><br>Further be it resolved that DFO review the returns and adjust annually, as required.<br><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Moved Nick Strussi, Second Tim McKinnon</li><li>- Approved unanimously</li></ul> |

### **Action Item Summary:**

| <b>Action Item Number</b><br>(Committee/Yr/Mo/Da/Action #: Action Subject Title) | <b>Action Item Description</b><br>(Action Item Description, Person Accountable, Delivery Date)                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A14/23/10/26/Action 1:<br>Fraser River Chinook<br>Espacement Data                | To report back 2023 escapement for Spring 4(2), Spring 5(2), Summer 5(2) and Harrison River escapement and the ER caps for each stock. -Mark Frisson |
| A14/23/10/26/Action 2:<br>Domestic Coho Fisheries                                | Report back who would lead the development of a domestic Coho fishery model.-Mark Frisson                                                            |
| A14/23/10/26/Action 3:<br>Rockfish credit                                        | Provide what credit was given in 2022 for the use of the descending devices.- Mark Frisson                                                           |