

HERRING INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD (HIAB)

MEETING RECORD – APRIL 20, 2012

SHERATON VANCOUVER AIRPORT HOTEL, “RICHMOND A” ROOM

Purpose of the meeting: Review of 2011_12 Food & Bait (ZM) fishery.

Opening Remarks: The Food & Bait (F&B) fishery is not a new fishery – it predates the 1970’s, and was even active during the coast wide closure between 1968 - 1970. Allocations to the F&B fishery have fluctuated based on market requirements over time. In 1977 for example, the quota was 20,000 tons. As a result of increased interest in the fishery and development of global markets, the quota for 2011_12 was increased to 6,000 tons. While the quota for the 2011_12 fishery was somewhat larger than it has been recently, many management aspects of this fishery remained the same as previous years: access via lottery draw, hail in / hail out procedures, log books, dockside validation, and collection of biological samples. At sea observer coverage was increased to 100%, and a post season review of the fishery is taking place.

1. 2011_12 Food & Bait Fishery Season Report (Brenda Spence)

- DFO provided and reviewed a report which describes the science, management measures, fishing activities in this fishery for this season. The report also provides an evaluation of the season.
- The fishery monitoring requirements for this fishery include fishing hails, harvest logs, 100% at sea observer coverage, 100% dockside weight validation, and a comprehensive biological sampling program.
- Other management measures included extensive number of closed areas: Porlier Pass, Ladysmith Harbour, Nanoose Harbour, Kulleet Bay, Gabriola Pass, Maple Bay, Cowichan Bay, Fulford Harbour, Active Pass, all of Areas 15, 16, 19, and 29
- There was a vessel limit of seven active vessels established in order to control effort.
- Fishing commenced November 18 off Qualicum Beach. Stock abundance in the area was good, but there was also a large abundance of sea lions which hampered fishing activity. By December 15 fishing activity had moved to the area south of Nanaimo to avoid sea lion interactions. Fishing continued until the closing date of Feb 9 2012. Total catch for the fishery was 3,950 tons (1,530 tons from area 14, and 2,420 from Area 17)
- In total there were 79 fishing trips, and 137 sets (of which 86 sets kept fish). There were eight occurrence reports generated, including one written warning issued for releasing fish after pumping.
- Performance / evaluation criteria include: keeping harvest rate at or below 20%, implementation of sample monitoring program, implementation of at sea observer and dockside validation programs, accurate recording of fishing catch and fishing activities..

- DFO reported that they had received numerous letters, calls, and emails from the public in response to the larger allocation to this fishery. Concerns from the public mainly centered on stock structure (“resident stocks”), and fishing a forage species.
- DFO Science stated that fifty-five biological samples were taken from the fishery, spread out temporally and spatially. In an effort to address some of the public concerns expressed this year, forty-six of these samples will be analyzed and compared to 2012 roe samples, as well as compared to historical F&B samples. DFO also noted that genetic research and tagging programs have been undertaken in the past to examine herring stock structure. These studies do not support the existence of genetically distinct resident stocks within the Strait of Georgia major stock area.
- Looking Forward: DFO will continue to manage using a 20% harvest rate and fishery “cutoff” level; biological samples will be analyzed for size and age distribution; the monitoring program will continue; information on markets and product development will inform longer term direction for this fishery. HCRS has funded Nelson Bros to conduct an economic review of the Food and Bait fishery. This report should help to inform the group on markets, returns, and parameters for the fishery. (The report was not available in time for this meeting, but will be ready for the next meeting.)

2. Review of Food & Bait Monitoring Program (Doug Tallman, JO Thomas)

- Program objectives were to provide 100% at sea and dockside monitoring coverage; administering vessel logs and hails; providing written and verbal reports to DFO; and collecting biological samples
- Preliminary planning and development for this program in October included: development of vessel logs; observer requirements; observer records form; quality sampling requirements; reporting requirements; dockside validation documents and forms; and observer manuals for training and reference
- A pool of ten trained at sea observers were available to provide coverage to a maximum of seven active vessels on the grounds. At sea observers could also provide dockside validations.
- There were 49 at sea observer days spent for the November 18 to Dec 19 fishing period, and 53 at sea observer days for the January 8 to Feb 9 fishing period. Over these periods a total of 81 offloads were monitored at one of three landing locations used throughout the fishery.
- Program charge out to the industry was \$65,000; Program cost to JOT was \$75,000

3. Discussion

3 (a) 55 % seine_45 % gillnet split; Allocating the entire available TAC; 2013 roe quotas

- Historically only the roe quota only was split on a 55 / 45 basis. The F&B fishery was always fished with seine gear only (with exception of a short period when trawl gear was allowed).
- Some gillnetters feel shorted by the large 2011_12 food & bait quota. The process for recommending quotas in 2011_12 was reviewed: “expected use” or allocation for Special Use,

FSC, and spawn on kelp fisheries was endorsed; then the quota for roe fisheries were recommended; and then some of the remaining TAC was recommended for the F&B fishery. The point was made that the larger F&B fishery did not affect the gillnetters, as the roe quota was set first. Some gillnet reps and observers would have liked to have seen a higher 2012 roe quota – especially in hindsight.

- There was much discussion about taking the entire available TAC, and splitting it on a 55 / 45 basis, same as the roe fishery quota is split now, and being allowed to fish in whatever way license holders wanted – food & bait, or roe. Members expressed concern that if there is an open ended Food & Bait quota, it could result in an allocation battle every year, and noted that when allocation is on the table, not much else gets accomplished. Questions were posed about how that process would actually work – how would DFO licensing and time lines work? That type of scenario could result in a 28,000 ton roe quota (for example), which could have unforeseen market implications. Putting the entire TAC into a 55 / 45 mix would result in a difficult process to figure out, and would certainly complicate the fishing plan. Some members also noted that allocating the entire TAC could result in a lot of opposition from outside observers
- The question was asked of DFO as to what would be involved with changing the management structure to address a different way of allocating quota (i.e. IQ per license). The response from DFO was that DFO would work with the advisory board if there was a proposal and some thought put into recommended changes by the HIAB reps within an early enough time frame for DFO to consider for the IFMP.
- The comment was made that not issuing the PICFI licenses affected (i.e. increased) leasing arrangements for licenses participating in the fishery.
- Some (many?) participants felt the current system and existing way of recommending quotas has been working. There was a commitment from HIAB members that the roe fishery will continue to be prioritized in future planning, and there is no desire to get away from that. The priority is to develop the roe quota to the fullest extent possible. In the fall of 2012, quota recommendations will be made over two meetings, to allow representatives time to consult their constituents before making final recommendations. Several gillnet reps still expressed concern about whether the process would enable a large enough roe quota to be set to satisfy them. However, until we actually know what the TAC is going to be in the fall, it's difficult to go much beyond that.

3 (b) Released sets

- There was discussion about mortality associated with taking samples, and with released sets. Food & Bait fishermen who participated in the fishery noted that in this fishery the fish stay up in the net, and the net doesn't have to be really dried up to get a sample, which would result in less mortality.

3 (c) Comparison of reporting standards to other fisheries

- The F&B fishery was held to a high level of accountability, with 100% at sea observers, log books, hail in and out, etc. The number and nature of "occurrence reports" in this fishery will be publically distributed. It was noted that some other herring fisheries rely only on submission of log books; hail in and out requirements and other conditions of license are not enforced, etc. A similar level of accountability and reporting should be required.

4. Other Business

- The next HIAB meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2012, at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel.

ATTENDANCE – MAY 4, 2011

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