

# **HERRING INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD (HIAB)**

## **Meeting Record – May 10, 2012**

**Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel, 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond, BC**

Purpose of the meeting: Post season review with DFO managers.

### **Opening Remarks (Lorena Hamer)**

This is the second post season HIAB meeting in 2012. At the last meeting there was considerable discussion about different ways for the industry to proceed. Some people feel that all the available TAC should be allocated – herring is the only fishery that “leaves fish in the water”. Some felt that all the TAC available to the industry should be split on a 55 / 45 basis – and this lead further down the path of being allowed to harvest that fish in any fishery (roe or food & bait); still others felt that the traditional way of allocation should continue – that is, satisfy roe quota first (on a 55 / 45 basis), and then continue to allocate food & bait the way it’s been done in the past. These are still all proposals at this time.

There was a commitment from HIAB members at the last meeting that the roe fishery would continue to be prioritized in future planning, and that the roe quota would be developed to the fullest extent possible.

### **Economic Review of the Food & Bait Fishery**

The HCRS contracted Nelson Bros to conduct a brief economic review of the 2011-2012 food & bait fishery to help inform deliberations on the future design and scope of the fishery. The study was driven by interest by both government and industry about the success of 2011\_12 market initiatives, and growth and diversification prospects.

The report commented on the use of BC herring for uses other than roe: in today’s global marketplace, there is a strong demand for protein, and all pelagic fish are good sources of protein. There is no rationale for available fish stocks to go un-utilized in this market environment.

Report findings: an expanded food & bait allocation could be harvested efficiently, sustainably, and profitably; the allocation could be processed into saleable product forms at a reasonable cost; and sold to customers worldwide. The report found that while F&B herring are perhaps not an incredibly high value fishery at this time, the fishery did generate substantial economic activity from a previously un-utilized resource. It was an incremental activity to the fishing industry, and provided employment at a time when the bulk of the harvesting and processing sectors, and the crews that man them, are idle. Product quality was excellent.

Firms involved with the purchasing, processing and selling this year’s F&B production developed new markets, and seemed satisfied with the results. They were optimistic that market development could continue to grow and expand.

Measures to increase Viability: 1) Improving revenues by lengthening the season, and by confirming an allocation of fish to the fishery with sufficient notice to confirm customers; 2) reducing costs – primarily of the monitoring program; 3) improving efficiency and flexibility.

During the discussion HIAB said that the board would make a formal request to extend the fishing time at the end of the season – i.e. extend the Feb 9<sup>th</sup> closure date of the fishery.

### **1. Jo Thomas DMP Report (Doug Tallman)**

- 2012 Landings were approximately 9,500 tons, down from average annual landings of 28,800 tons from 1998 to 2006. From 2007 to 2012, landings averaged 10,480 tons per year.
- There were 15 “pump shifts” in place this year, compared to 18 last year, and 20 the year before.
- There were 186 physical offloads completed, requiring 466 offload hours for the DMP program
- Monitoring program office activity totaled twenty-five 24 hour days in 2012, compared to 19 days in 2011.
- HIAB policy and rules related to the distribution of overage to pools that were not fished should be clarified.
- Allowable charges and costs related to herring transfers for pool balancing and overages should be updated according to industry advice. (The last update was in 2007.)
- For the second year in a row, the large number of registered pools in the St of Georgia gillnet fishery resulted in substantial attention to determine pool assignment during the validation process. Accounting, allocating, and redistributing catch and overage becomes challenging with larger number of pools.

### **2. Summary of 2012 DFO and Industry Funded Test Programs (Lorena Hamer)**

- DFO funds in 2012 were \$1,380,000, a \$25,000 reduction from 2011 funding. The cost of the 2012 stock assessment program was \$1,413,770. (HCRS subsidized the shortage.)
- Total of 308 test fishing days in 2012. DFO days = 292 (20 less DFO days in 2012); Industry funded days = 16 (34 less industry days.)
- Changes in 2012 Program:
  - Haida Gwaii: reduced biological sampling coverage by 10 days. There was no 2W charter, but 4 days were added to the 2E charter
  - St of Georgia: Removed the 8 day post fishery biological sampling charter, and added 4 days to the main St. of Georgia charter
  - WCVI: reduced coverage by 9 days. (60 days in 2011; 51 in 2012.)
- There will be approximately a 10% reduction in Larocque funding in 2013. Funding beyond that time is uncertain.

### **3. Overview of DFO Stock Assessment Activities (Jaclyn Cleary)**

- A comparison of length and weight from St of Georgia test fisheries and food & bait fisheries was presented. Fish lengths from both fisheries have very similar patterns, and also compare to patterns from samples in the last 5 years. If growth rates (i.e. weight and length at age) between the two fisheries is the same it is an indication that the fish were feeding in the same area. Growth rates will be a better comparison, but that information is not available at this time.
- An alternative “hybrid surface – dive” survey was conducted for 3 days in the Denman Island area to determine what the data impacts of not doing dive surveys would be in a post-Larocque era. Data analysis and comparisons with diver-collected data are not complete yet.

- Core science activities for 2012/13: WCVI herring / multispecies survey used for recruitment forecasting for St of Georgia and WCVI; St of Georgia juvenile herring survey used for ecosystem research; test fishing program, which collects biological sample and spawn survey information; updates to stock assessment framework, to be presented at a June CSAP meeting. The Central Coast juvenile survey normally conducted in the summer is cancelled.
- A Food & Bait fishery Special Science Request (SSR) will bring together information collected from past studies with the goal of answering the question “what is the biological impact of a significant harvest” in the food and bait fishery during the winter period (November to February). This advice will be provided to DFO Fish Management at the end of August.
- Also included in core science activities is an evaluation of reductions to stock assessment programs as a result of anticipated severe cuts to Larocque funding in 2014. A DFO / Industry joint working group will be formed to generate ideas for mitigating funding losses.

#### **4. Management Update (Lisa Mijacika)**

- Update on Fisheries Modernization: the department is still collating feedback on the discussion document “The Future of Canada’s Commercial Fisheries”. Current policy agenda includes initiatives around stability, sustainability, economic prosperity and transparency to help fisheries on a long term, self-sustaining footing with clearer rules and guidance for fisheries management. Continued implementation and possible expansion with new policies under the sustainable fisheries framework.
- The license fee review for Roe and SOK is still on the books, as is transferability for SOK licenses
- Dept of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) removed the export control restriction of unprocessed roe herring for this season. Approximately 900 tons of roe herring were exported.
- DFO plans to implement on line web based licensing by January 2013 for commercial fishing license services. DFO is still working on identifying activities to be included and what is outside of the scope. There will be a request put in to exempt herring for 2013. The first phase in the process is licensing; second phase is quota management, and the third phase is national catch and effort data management.
- There will be a multi-year herring IFMP this year, but the fishing plan appendixes will continue to be updated every year. The IFMP still has to be done in October.

#### **5. Review of Roe Herring Fisheries by Area**

##### **5 (a) St. of Georgia Seine – Brenda Spence**

- Roe quotas in PRD and St of Georgia were supported by HIAB in the fall of 2011
- The forecast for St of Georgia was 152,613 tons, which would allow a potential harvest from all fisheries of 30,523 tons. The quota from all fisheries combined (i.e. roe, food & bait, special use, FSC) was 18,337 tons. The combined roe quota in St of Georgia was 11,500 tons
- Allocation by gear is split between seine and gillnets on a 55%\_45% basis, resulting in a 6,650 ton seine quota, and a 4,850 ton gillnet quota.
- Maximum soundings were 110,000 tons on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, but the estimate does not represent all stocks in the area. Reduced vessel resources affected sounding coverage.
- On grounds procedure to open the fishery: pool captains make a request to open an area; all other pool captains are notified of the request and given an opportunity to participate;

backup pools identified to take extra fish; fishing after the primary fisheries would require an at sea observer. The at-sea observer option was utilized for the March 17 fishing date.

- The seine fishery was open from March 4 to 8 in 14-8, 14-11, and 14.15, and then re-opened on March 17 in 17-4 for one day.

### Strait of Georgia Seine Fishing Dates and Catch

DATE (March)	4	5	6	7	8	17	
PFMA	14-8	14-11	14-11 14-15	14-11	14-8	17-4	<b>TOTALS</b>
# SETS WITH FISH	5	1	15	6	1	1	<b>29</b>
# SETS KEPT	3	0	10	3	0	1	<b>17</b>
CATCH	<b>411</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,012</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>3,494</b>
AVE SET size	137		201	247		329	205

#### 5 (b) St. of Georgia Gillnet – Alistair Thomson

- The 2012 St. of Georgia gillnet quota was 4,850 tons, and 4,496 tons were caught (354 tons under quota).
- There were 13 licensed pools with a total of 1,054 licenses, (a per license share of 4.602 tons)
- The fishery opened on March 4, and closed on April 2.
- The fishery was quite spread out, with primary harvest areas being E Coast of Denman Island, Bowser, Little / Big Qualicum River shoreline. Minor harvest occurred at Icarus Pt to Hammond Bay, Gabriola Island, Hornby Island, and Cape Lazo areas
- The majority of fish was harvested between March 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Peak spawning occurred from March 4 to March 9.
- The highest catch – 1,500 tons – occurred on March 7.
- The peak fishing period was impacted by very poor weather conditions.
- There was discussion of whether it would be possible to set up guidelines of when it's time to close the fishery. HIAB members felt that it would be best not to make too many rules and get boxed in.
- Fisheries below Dodd Narrows were an issue for both seines and gillnets. There were inseason industry / DFO consultations with First Nations, but some wondered if pre-season consultation was sufficient.

#### 5 (c) Prince Rupert Seine – Peter Katinic

- The quota for Kitkatla was 500 tons, and 514 tons were caught. The 11 licenses that chose the area formed a single industry pool.
- The area opened on March 30 in subarea 5-4, and portions of subareas 5-8. There was a small catcher fleet of 4 vessels. A total of 8 sets were made, and 2 sets were released.
- Fleet cooperation and communication was excellent.

#### 5 (d) Prince Rupert Gillnet – Corey Martens

- The gillnet quota was 1,000 tons, and 1,010 tons were caught. The fishery opened on March 24 and closed on March 27 - open for a total of four days.
- Open area was 4-6 to 4-9 and 4-14

- The peak punt count was 14.

## **6. Other Area Summaries**

### **6 (a) Haida Gwaii – Peter Katinic**

- Test fishing coverage was from one seine test fishing charter, and one dive survey charter.
- There is no longer an aircraft company available to conduct spawn flights. A spawn reconnaissance charter vessel was hired (from DFO flying budget) to locate spawns. The charter worked quite well.
- 2W had 5,750 tons sounded, with 20 km of spawn surveyed.
- 2E had 10,000 tons sounded, with 46 km of spawn surveyed.
- There was 2,000 lbs of wild sok FSC harvest from Burnaby St, and further harvest anticipated from Skidegate later in the season.

### **6 (b) West Coast Vancouver Island – Brenda Spence**

- In 2012, there was one seine test charter, a combination seine test & dive charter, and 3 First Nations charter patrol vessels. Test fish coverage was down by 9 days in 2012. Weather once again hampered coverage, especially dive survey coverage. There were only 3 spawn flights conducted in 2012.
- Maximum soundings in 2012: Barkley Sound – 10,500 tons; Clayquot Snd – 6,000 tons; Nootka 12,000 tons; Esperanza 5,000 tons, for a total of 33,500 tons sounded
- HIAB and IHHPC both advised not to allow any commercial harvest on WCVI. However, after additional consultation on the draft IFMP DFO authorized three spawn on kelp licenses to fish. The licenses were not activated because the operators faced logistic challenges and could not get organized.

### **6 (c) Central Coast – Dan Wagner**

- Test fish coverage remained the same in 2012 as in 2011: there was one 26 day seine test charter, as well as a 14 day charter. Spawn surveys were conducted by a full 21 day charter, as well as a 12 day charter (split with St. of Georgia). There were also three Heiltsuk charter patrol charters paid for by DFO. Dive spawn survey vessels were staggered to provide optimum extended coverage.
- Peak Central Coast soundings were 21,500 tons this year, up from 18,000 tons in 2011. This was the second year that stocks showed some improvement this
- There were 70+ nautical miles of spawn were observed this year, roughly similar to 2011. compared to 50 miles in 2011.
- Kitasu harvested 12,000 lbs of FSC spawn on boughs and kelp. Bella Bella harvested 1,000 lbs of spawn on kelp and boughs from Spiller / Seaforth area.

## **7. Spawn on Kelp Fishery**

- There were a total of 12 active licenses: 2 in Area 2W; 7 in Prince Rupert, 1 in Area 12, 2 in Area 27. DFO had given permission for 4 licenses to operate in WCVI, but they ended up not fishing. At the time of the meeting, operators are still active in Kitkatla, Hunts Inlet, and Tugwell Island.
- HIAB members noted that compliance with the hail program and other conditions of license continues to deteriorate, and DFO concurred that this is the case, and that improved communication with SOK license holders is required.
- DFO committed to setting up a formal occurrence reporting process for notifying C&P of occurrences. Levels of priority for occurrences will be established, similar to the process used in the Food & Bait fishery. This process will be in place for the 2013 fishery.

## 8. Special Use Fishery

- A total of 6 vessels participated in the 2011\_12 Special Use fishery to date: 1 in the ZX category; 3 in the ZY1 category; 1 in the ZY3 category; and 1 in the ZY4 category.
- There are 551 tons landed in the Special Use category to date. This includes Walcan, Fjord / Seven Seas, and the aquarium license. (The season won't be complete until Oct 31<sup>st</sup> 2012.) Because of DFO privacy rules (i.e. can't release landing data unless there are 3 or more participants), landings can't be broken down into the different license categories.

### ATTENDANCE – MAY 10, 2012

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