



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

draft minutes

PRAWN SECTORAL COMMITTEE
SEPT. 21, 2001

<p>1. INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>All persons introduced themselves.</p> <p>The main goal of the meeting was described as: a post-commercial season review of the fishery; concerns for Saanich Inlet; updates on the WCVI prawn survey, research committee reactivation, industry rep. elections and possible Sliammon pilot program in 2002; and information presentation and discussion of the bacteria issue in the afternoon.</p>	
<p>2. REVIEW OF 2001 COMMERCIAL FISHING SEASON</p>	
<p>This was a roundtable review, with the purpose described as to identify what worked, what didn't work, and what needs to be fixed for the next fishing season.</p>	
<p>The PPFA was pleased with service company JOT. Inquiries were made of the status of enforcement money provided under the collaborative agreement.</p>	<p>Finance & B. Adkins to provide summary in October.</p>
<p>The PPG indicated that double hauling may have occurred more frequently than DFO was aware, and questioned if the limit is working. They consider the stacked vessel time limit to be unfair. Concern was expressed for closures in the Pender Harbour area.</p>	
<p>The PQG indicated general satisfaction, that there had been 2 complaints about individual at-sea observers, but noted that the competitive type of fishery does not meet the objectives of their group that favours quota-based management. Information was requested about what triggers closures, reference was made to Pender Harbour and Area 7 closures, and a comment was made that Fishery Officers were not highly visible during the season.</p>	<p>JM to provide closure trigger information to PSC.</p>
<p>Buyers' representatives referred to lower prices of \$3 to \$4/kg reflecting market uncertainty about where to establish the price, and that competing species from Russia and Argentina showed up in Japan in good volumes this year.</p>	
<p>The BCPFCS commented on a lack of visible DFO enforcement, that some members had expressed concerns about service company observers, that there was too much index testing early and not enough at the end of the season, and that there were instances of double hauling in the Gulf.</p>	
<p>NIPA asked for an update about proposed changes to recreational fishing</p>	<p>Provide update</p>

<p>regs. Double hauling occurred in the Gulf. Northern fishers want double hauling and express concern about not being heard as the Committee is composed of southern fleet reps. There was an inconsistency in fishery information tape recordings that led to uncertainty about closures. Testing was considered excessive at the beginning and insufficient towards the end of the season. The observer was not seen as frequently as previous years. Too much gear in the south, some members suggest reduction. Some members suggest this year did not work as well as previous years. The 7 to 7 time limit was a problem for moving gear.</p>	<p>about recreational fishing reg. change requests to PSC.</p>
<p>UFAWU expressed concerns about the 7 to 7 time limit affecting travelling. Although enforcement money had been provided, there was a lack of DFO enforcement presence in northern areas. Some vessels alleged they never saw the at-sea observers. It was asked if electronic monitoring may be feasible. Some commercial vessels are also fishing recreational gear in-season. DFO advised that this was not illegal. There was too much sampling at the beginning of the season, and concern for reduced levels at the end of season. There was general satisfaction with single haul.</p>	
<p>Ahousaht Fisheries Corporation representative indicated that no specific problems were noted with this season, and that AFC had greater success with this fishery than the previous year.</p>	
<p>DFO C&P noted there are 183 Fishery Officers in the Region, some located in interior locations. 39 occurrence reports were filed this season. There are 27 charges and warnings this year, to date including 3 for early setting, 1 for late setting, 1 licence violation, 3 logbook charges, and 3 warnings for set time or licence infractions. There was 1 seizure of gear. There were 6 reported incidents of double hauling in the Victoria area, staff had investigated but no charges resulted. Fishing outside of hours is far easier to enforce than multiple hauling. To put it into context, there are 53 fisheries which receive enforcement attention, and 1100 violations in the Region, in total, last year.</p>	
<p>DFO Licensing reported that the industry service provider did a good job, the letters to licensing worked, stacking information was difficult and improved computer networking on this aspect was recommended. Service company distribution of trap tags was a welcome change (reduced workload and time for fishers for licence renewal).</p>	
<p>DFO Fraser River noted that the haul time was not consistently showing up in the remarks column this season, indicated some activity had occurred in Indian Arm without monitoring, and perhaps without hails, and comments were provided for the Howe Sound fishery.</p>	
<p>DFO North/Central Coast noted fishers' difficulties with setting and hauling time limits and moving to new areas. Reduced time for closure notification in northern areas should be considered. Some northern boats are not sorting undersized prawns immediately but are dumping traps into totes for later sorting. Hailing into full areas makes it difficult for management and observers – a maximum of 3 to 5 subareas at a time was suggested.</p>	

<p>DFO South Coast indicated that the industry service company was receptive to DFO advice and the season proceeded satisfactorily. Reference was made to observer training and testing prior to the season. Logbook problems with haul time recording were recognized. Fishers' telephone calls at the end of the season helped with decision-making. More index testing was required at the end of season. An overlength vessel was apprehended immediately prior to the season opening.</p>	
<p>DFO Stock Assessment indicated a need to look at the logbook, possible re-activation of the subcommittee. Increased observer training may be considered. Data delivery in-season was good, but direct communication with observers would be beneficial when there are index data questions. Shorter closure notices in the north/central are recommended. There is insufficient compliance with octopus logbook requirements. Logbooks are not being turned in during the season – 25% of logbooks have not been received yet. Fish slip compliance is worse. This will be brought to C&P enforcement attention.</p>	
<p>JOT reported 95,000 trap tags provided by DFO had been distributed at season opening. 35,000 replacement tags were purchased for in-season use. 178x300 tag sets and 36x500 tag sets were distributed. 1250 calls to the hail line had been received to date, and this is continuing with the ongoing Masset and Prince Rupert humpback fisheries and the upcoming Sooke coonstripe trap fishery. There were 11 monitors coast-wide, 4 north/central and 7 in southern waters. There were 492 monitoring days in the 79 day fishery, compared to 503 in 2000 which was an 85 day fishery, and 506 in 1998 for a 78 day fishery. There were 1358 spawner index samples representing 23,000 traps, compared to approximately 1200 in 2000 and 1999. 209 of 214, which are 97% of vessels active in the fishery, had spawner index samples collected on-board. 204 of 214, which are 95% of vessels, were inspected. Of the \$340,000 total season budget, \$329,000 was used. The remainder and the contingency funds will be returned to the PPFA.</p>	
<p>The PPFA reiterated their commitment to provide a refund to licence holders.</p>	

<p>3. SAANICH INLET</p>	
<p>The chair provided comments from Committee member Simon Smith, for Saanich Tribal Fisheries (STF). The STF recommends closure of the Saanich Inlet recreational prawn fishery immediately for the winter as there is no information being gathered about the ongoing status and strength of prawn stocks in that area, in order to protect the spawners carrying eggs. The STF noted with concern that in the past the salmon stocks had been depleted in the inlet, and then the groundfish stocks, and that they do not want this to occur with the prawn stocks.</p> <p>The chair indicated that STF might be willing to discuss this further. The chair asked the SFAB representative to consult with recreational fishing</p>	<p>W. Harling to consult with recreational prawn fishing interests regarding Saanich Inlet closure recommendation from STF, and advise the chair.</p>

representatives in south Island, and to seek their input on a possible winter closure.	
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4. UPDATES	
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<p style="text-align: center;">WCVI Offshore Prawn Survey</p> <p>Only 3 vessels had indicated an interest in offshore survey work, and these had gone into 123. They made \$8,000 available by collaborative agreement to DFO Stock Assessment, and were also responsible for providing an on-board observer to collect samples and spawner index information. The boats fished 9 days, and stopped surveying as they had difficulties in finding any prawn stock strength. It is intended that future offshore surveys, if they occur, will be guided by a research subcommittee. Data from the survey will be made available to the Committee, all licence holders and other interested stakeholders.</p>	
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<p style="text-align: center;">Research Subcommittee</p> <p>The research subcommittee will be re-established, and will be open to participation by any interested member of the Sectoral Committee. 3 topics will be pursued. 1) Fall and winter assessment of spawner index in areas with recreational fishing effort. 2) Stock assessment protocols and surveys for humpback shrimp in conjunction with the shrimp trawl industry, and 3) establishing a long term index study area in north/central coast, comparable to Howe Sound. The research subcommittee will assist with selection criteria. An invitation for proposals to collect index information in recreational fishing areas will be mailed out to all licence holders, in October.</p>	<p>Invitation for proposals for spawner index testing in recreational fishing areas to be developed with JB and mailed out.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Industry Representative Elections</p> <p>Ballots have been distributed, 11 persons or organizations have put themselves forward for election, election will close October 12 (fax or postmark date), ballot counts the following week, and then parties notified for PSC expected in early November to work on commercial harvest plan. As in the past, buyers representation and other parties will be appointed by the chair.</p>	
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<p style="text-align: center;">Sliammon First Nation</p> <p>Sliammon has received an FW licence. There may be an interest in pilot testing a trap block splitting program with this licence in 2002. This is only a possibility and not definite. Intent would be to increase participation/employment. If treaty negotiations progress, then Sectoral Committee will want to be prepared to provide input.</p>	<p>JM to advise Committee if this was a buyback licence, or one received through appeal. JM to provide further information about possible pilot.</p>
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5. PRAWN & COLIFORM BACTERIA, AFTERNOON SESSION	
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<p>R. Schaff and L. Reid of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) described the commencement of this issue. A routine audit found a problem with coliform bacteria in product, plants were asked to investigate, audits were conducted at other plants. Product standards were described. E. coli bacteria are naturally occurring, are present in faeces from warm-blooded animals, only. MPN is most probable number, a standard accepted test procedure. There is no real difference between a test reading of 80 and 120 MPN, but a difference between 20 and 400 is significant. The standard is based on 5 x 1 kg random samples of a particular product lot. If 3 of 5 samples exceed 400 (little M), then product can be rehabilitated. If 1 of 5 samples exceeds 4000 (big M), then product is rejected and cannot be rehabilitated. This standard is for fish products only, fresh frozen. <20 MPN is below detection limit. >16,000 results indicated the sample results were above the detection limits typically used in the analytical procedure. Freezing has no effect on the bacteria, only heat can destroy. When reconditioned by heat, the expected bacteria level is 0. Exposure to UV light is not sufficient for reconditioning once product has been found to exceed little M.</p> <p>When tested, bacteria were found in both head and tails. The standard refers to whole product, as that is the form that is sold/exported. Coliform was initially found in fresh/frozen product, but also found later in frozen at sea product. Coliform sampling of prawns has not been done in recent years. It was tested years ago and no problems were detected.</p> <p>The variability of results was discussed. Testing procedures are reliable. Methodology has been standardized for many years. The variability is explained by the animals themselves. It takes very little exposure to result in very high counts. Bacteria exposure is not persistent or bio accumulative – animals will cleanse themselves.</p>	
<p>J. Toole, provided an overview of DFO sampling activities:</p>	
<p>Fisheries and Oceans personnel undertook 2 rounds of sampling from June 19 to July 18, 2001 to assess the presence of faecal coliform bacteria in prawns. The first round of sampling of hold water and prawns confirmed that prawns contained coliform bacteria before coming onboard the fishing vessels. The second round of samples of bait and prawns assessed if coliform bacteria were from bait or environmental sources.</p>	
<p>June 19&20. Fishermen and buyers in the Powell River area assisted DFO in collecting prawn and hold water samples for analysis. Five vessels and three buyers participated in sampling Pacific Fishing Management areas 13, 14 & 15. A hold water sample was collected before the first haul and after 2-4 strings had been hauled. Water samples were transported to North Island Lab within 6 hours of the time of sampling. In total 4 pairs of hold</p>	

<p>water samples were collected.</p> <p>Samples of 8 – 10 prawns were taken by fishers from one trap off each string. Prawns were taken directly out of the trap before contact with any vessel surfaces. Samples were delivered to the lab within 24 hours as required by the sampling protocol. Hold water bacteria levels before hauling were not detectable or not significant. Hold water showed higher coliform levels after product was kept in holding tanks, than before hauling. The samples established that prawns contained coliform bacteria before arriving on board the vessels.</p>							
<p>Sampling continued June 21 to season close July 19 by DFO on board fishing vessels in Areas 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, & 19. Samples of prawns and bait were collected from the same trap and analysed to assess correlations. Samples were gathered directly from the trap before contact with any vessel surfaces. Bait residue samples were collected out of the bait cup from the same trap as the prawn samples. Samples were transported within 24 hours for analysis.</p> <p>A total of 121 samples were obtained between June 19 and July 19, 2001.</p> <table data-bbox="186 961 1039 1071"> <tr> <td>8 hold water samples</td> <td><i>38% showed coliform counts</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>70 prawn tissue samples</td> <td><i>30% showed coliform counts</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>43 bait samples</td> <td><i>21% showed coliform counts</i></td> </tr> </table> <p>All bait samples which consisted of fish offal or waste, or which included fish offal or waste, had bacteria present.</p> <p>Prawns with coliform present were found in all Pacific Fishery Management areas sampled except PFMA 12. However the number of samples collected in 12 was low and is inconclusive.</p> <p>Prawns showed coliform counts even when bait showed no coliform counts, suggesting an environmental component.</p> <p>There were 3 prawn tissue samples and 1 bait sample that showed coliform counts >4000 MPN/100g.</p> <p>All prawn tissue samples from the Victoria area showed coliform counts. However, in other coastal areas high counts were not always associated with any significant municipal wastewater outfalls.</p>	8 hold water samples	<i>38% showed coliform counts</i>	70 prawn tissue samples	<i>30% showed coliform counts</i>	43 bait samples	<i>21% showed coliform counts</i>	<p>J. Toole to provide a copy of analytical results to J. Pynn.</p>
8 hold water samples	<i>38% showed coliform counts</i>						
70 prawn tissue samples	<i>30% showed coliform counts</i>						
43 bait samples	<i>21% showed coliform counts</i>						
<p>A question and answer period followed. Regarding the contaminated lots which are still in detention, processors have been invited to put forward a plan for reconditioning for any lots which exceeded little M, but not big M. No one has been reported to have been ill in the past from prawn</p>							

consumption. The purpose of the testing and standards is to provide consumer protection. Coliform and E. coli is only an indicator organism, an indicator of the potential for presence of pathogenic bacteria.

Other discussion points included the bacteria occurring in fish when used separately as bait or mixed into pellet bait, bivalve accumulation of bacteria as filter feeders, that coliform bacteria don't grow but die off in marine water with rates dependant on salinity and temperature, that the bacteria don't grow in the prawns, bacteria can be attached to particulate matter, that it is an indicator of some form of sewage but that could be birds, marine mammals, cows, dogs as well as human. Bacteria die off in marine waters is expected to start within 6 hours. Although E. coli can survive high salinity levels, they stop reproducing at salinities of 5 to 8 ppt. Water in the Gulf is usually 92 ppt. at surface. August testing of surface waters in the Powell River area for sanitary growing water quality had coliform bacteria levels less than 2 MPN.

There was a discussion of the possible presence of bacteria in other shrimp species. DFO is presently collecting "samples of opportunity" from the west coast of Vancouver Island, in the Gulf, and is considering sampling humpback shrimp from Rupert harbour. Samples are being held. Funding or co-operative arrangements for analysis are being sought. Crabs are not being tested as all crabs are cooked before consumption.

Purging and the use of the chemical dip was discussed. Fishers talked of their experience seeing prawns releasing solids into dip solutions. Buyers recommend that dip solutions should be changed daily. More frequent changes may deserve consideration, given the value of the product. CFIA noted that there was a reduction in bacteria levels in product after clean up procedure, transport and handling advice had been distributed. There are two types of contamination – Direct and Cross Contamination. An example of direct contamination is prawns encountering bacteria in their environment. Cross contamination includes handling, on-board sanitation, transport, plant operations, and can be eliminated or controlled.

There was a discussion of Japan, questions about their standards, testing programs. No parties present had information on these items.

One fisher suggested based on sampling, that prawns delivered without detectable bacteria presence subsequently were exposed to increased bacteria levels when held in common storage tanks at plants.

10,000 kg of product are detained at this time. There was considerable concern expressed for the potential impacts of lot testing on freezer boat loads. The risk is that a single set of samples could result in an entire load under detention, unless there was ways and means of differentiating the

<p>catches from individual locations and/or fishing days. CFIA indicated their willingness to consider protocols put forward by industry to manage and limit this type of risk. Canned salmon lot coding was provided as an example of being able to identify individual canning lines to within 2 hour periods.</p> <p>Plant audits are a part of the HACCP program. Usually 2 compliance samples are taken. If acceptable, no further testing is required. All but one plant in the Parksville district was audited this season. It was not clear what work on this issue had been done by Vancouver and North Coast. Fishers and buyers expressed concern for an even playing field with respect to testing, and concern for fishers switching from plant to plant if testing at one plant shows they have contaminated product. One buyer noted \$18,000 in sampling fees this season while other companies had no costs at all.</p> <p>Development of on-board protocols prior to next season was discussed. A buyer noted that product continued to arrive contaminated from vessels even when all recommended sanitation procedures had been adopted. It was noted that cross contamination could be eliminated, but not necessarily direct contamination. The present lack of fish hold inspections was discussed</p> <p>A question was raised about use of bleach for vessel sanitation procedures while vessels are at sea and away from potable fresh water sources. Protein and organics in seawater can bind up chlorine making it ineffective. FAS vessels are unable to carry sufficient fresh water on board to provide for long trip sanitation procedures. Use of a swimming pool test kit to check chlorine levels in wash down water was recommended.</p>	
<p>Establishment of a working group to develop advice for fishers and buyers was recommended by an industry rep. DFO offered to work in a facilitation role and CFIA offered to participate. G. Johnston should be contacted by any fisher who wants to work on development of an advisory document.</p>	<p>JM and GJ to plan next steps for this working group.</p>

FLIP CHART / WHITE BOARD NOTES

Plants

- common holding tanks
- definition of lot size
- lot identification and control procedures

Vessels

- dipping solution replacement
- on-board purging procedures
- rinse water sources
- sanitizing procedures
- fish hold maintenance
- bait containers
- chlorine test kits

Direct Contamination

- prawns from sea bed, not readily controlled

Attendees:

Jim Morrison, DFO Nanaimo, Chair
Larry Paike, DFO, C&P, Victoria
Kim West, DFO Fraser River Area
Beth Bornhold, DFO Prince Rupert Area
Jim Boutillier, DFO Science, Nanaimo
Rick Harbo, DFO Nanaimo
Todd Johansson, DFO Central Coast, Pt.Hardy
Mike Kattilakoski, DFO Nanaimo
Byron Koke, DFO South Coast, Comox

Rhonda Mair, DFO Licensing, Nanaimo
Dennis Rutherford, DFO Science, Nanaimo
Jason Dunham, DFO Science, Nanaimo
Hai Nguyen, DFO Science, Nanaimo
Randy Webb, DFO Parksville
Jennifer Toole, DFO Nanaimo
John Pynn, CFIA Victoria
Lyle Reid, CFIA Parksville
Ray Schaff, CFIA Parksville
Roseanna J. Locke, CFIA Parksville

Indirect Contamination

- can be reduced or eliminated

Mike Cullen, PPFA
Nate Pearl, PPG
Kevin Erikson, PQG
Brian Van Dorp, PQG
Lauritz Chambers, Sunshine Seafood
Kim Mikkelsen, BCPFCS
Tom Orr, NIPA
Bob Martin, NIPA
Guy Johnston, UFAWU
Sidney Sam Sr., Ahousat Fisheries Comm.
Wayne Harling, BCWF/SFAB

John Jenkins, Coldfish, Sooke
Al Richards, Alaina J.
John Davis, Marjan III
Mike Davis, Marjan III
Tom Thompson, Derand H
Gary Wagner, Jalun River
Hank Buitendyk, Pac. Coast Fishery Services
Coreen Van Dorp, Ruth
Jim Williams, Ladysmith
Rod Wilson, Vicki C, Oyster Bay
Pat Cullen, Keythera
Brad Bradley, Coastal Warrior
John Mauriks, Sun Dog
Bill Stefiuk, Joy-C-Lynn
Ron Douglas, Pac. Coast Fishery Services
Randy Watson, Capital Gain
Akira Matsunaga, Campbell River Fishing Co
John Marshall, Sloup du Jour
Randy Happach, WCPA, PPFA
Ray Leitch, Sea Plus Marketing
Russ Lloyd, Rollerskate
Jim Thomas, J.O. Thomas & Assoc.
Doug Tallman, J.O. Thomas & Assoc.
Roger Skidmore, Tinkerbell
Claire Guest, Tinkerbell
Kelly Loxton, NIPA