Prawn Sectoral Committee Meeting Draft Minutes
(The following are DRAFT MINUTES subject to review)

Nanaimo November 8, 2005

Advisors:	Joey Laukkanen (Alternate)	North Island Prawn Association
	Tom Orr	North Island Prawn Association
	Chris Sporer	Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association
	Gene Pearl (Alternate)	Pacific Prawn Group
	Doug Bequin (Alternate)	Pacific Prawn Group
	Greg Best	PAR
	Ivan Askgaard (Alternate)	Powell River Prawn Group
	Dan Vincent	Prawn Operators and Deckhands
	Paul Bevandick	Steveston Prawn Group
	Laurie Chambers	Buyer
	Chuck Ashcroft	Sport Fish Advisory Board
	Wayne Harling	Sport Fish Advisory Board
	Paul Rickard	Sport Fish Advisory Board
DFO:	Jim Morrison	
	Mike Kattilakoski	
	Dennis Rutherford	
	Bridget Ennevor	
	Beth Pechter	
	Russell Mylchreest	
	Byron Koke	
	Todd Johansson	
	Guy Parker	
	Dan Clark	
	Bill Shaw	
	Lieneke Marshall	
B.C.Ministry of Environment:		Dennis Chalmers
Observers:	Gail Erickson	Fisher
	Steve Erickson	Fisher
	Deane Larson	Fisher
	F. J. Williams	Fisher
	Kim Mikkelsen	Fisher
	Guy Johnson	Fisher
	Blair Stewart	Nisga'a Lisim Gov't Fisheries
	William Beynon	Metlakatla Fish Management
	Penny White	Metlakatla Fish Management

Observers:	Doug Tallman	J. O. Thomas and Ass.
	Cathy Ball	J. O. Thomas and Ass.
	Kevin Van Cleemput	J. O. Thomas and Ass.
	Debbie Arhweiler	J. O. Thomas and Ass.
	Kirstin Eidsvik	J. O. Thomas and Ass.
	Shawn Stebbins	Archipelago
	Hank Buitendyk	PCFS

These Draft Minutes, prepared by J.O. Thomas and Associates Ltd., do not constitute a transcript of statements, rather are a summary of discussions that occurred.

For any questions relating to these minutes please contact either Doug Tallman or Cathy Ball at 604-291-6340.

November 8, 2005 Prawn Sectoral Committee Meeting DRAFT MINUTES

Introductory Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

Jim Morrison had all participants introduce themselves and indicated those who would be late or not able to attend.

Draft minutes prepared by DFO for the September 15, 2005 Prawn Sectoral Meeting would not be reviewed at this meeting, rather comments or revisions could be provided to Jim Morrison up until November 30.

No additions to the agenda were made during this introduction.

Fall Spawner Index Program

Dennis Rutherford reviewed the basic objectives and structure of the Fall Spawner Index Program for 2005. Samples were taken from commercial vessels by onboard observers primarily in areas where significant sport fishing occurs. The program is nearly complete with samples taken in Saanich Inlet, Stuart Channel, Nanaimo, Howe Sound, Sechelt Inlet, Madeira Park, Salmon Inlet, Campbell River, Barkley Sound, and Alberni Inlet.

Except for the Sechelt and Campbell River areas, all of the data collected from the survey have been rolled up and will be reviewed by the DFO prawn management team on November 10. General observations to date are:

- Saanich Inlet is slightly below the base index (at 100%).
- Howe Sound looks ok.
- Stuart Channel and Nanaimo generally look good with perhaps a little weakness running in a band from the Gabriola ferry terminal down to Northumberland Channel, False Narrows and to the top of Pylades Channel.
- No general observations for Madeira Park to Sechelt in Georgia Strait, rather some concern about the distribution of samples taken there. These data will need some further review and interpretation.
- Alberni Inlet (subs 23-1,2, and 3) looks ok.
- Barkley Sound (Trevor Channel) is showing some weakness.

Wayne Harling asked if the survey replicates the commercial fishery or is more synoptic in nature. Dennis Rutherford indicated that it is closer to replicating the sampling done during the commercial fishery but in some areas such as Saanich Inlet this could be the same as a synoptic survey because of the large number of locations that are sampled there during both the commercial fishery and fall survey.

Wayne Harling suggested that the Saanich Inlet fall survey may reflect a true indication of what is there (abundance) because of the way in which the gear is

set, but Stuart Channel sampling is directed to commercial locations, so a bias view of abundance in the total area may come out of the survey. Dennis Rutherford explained that the objective of the sampling was to look for changes in what was measured in the commercial fishery earlier in the season with fall survey results.

Kevin Van Cleemput (the observer onboard the survey vessel in Stuart Channel) reported that, where possible, sets were made at variable depths during the survey of Stuart Channel in an effort to locate prawns. Parts of some sets were beyond normal commercial set locations and were more recreational than commercial in nature. The result was that a combination of commercial ground, non-commercial ground, and recreational ground was sampled.

Wayne Harling asked if all of these samples would be used to compile an index. Dennis Rutherford explained that fall survey set locations would be super-imposed onto commercial fishery logbook set locations for comparison and assessment. Jim Morrison indicated that DFO was very pleased with the overall distribution of the fall survey samples in places like Saanich Inlet, Stuart Channel, and Alberni Inlet but less satisfied with the distribution of samples from the Sunshine Coast (Pender Harbour area).

Tom Orr asked if changing the way in which allowable harvest was taken in fall survey this year, where it could be taken over any combination of days rather than according to a daily limit as in past years, lead to a better sampling distribution. Dennis Rutherford was not sure if this lead to any changes in sampling distribution but indicated that new rules were put into effect for this year's survey specifying a minimum number of sets per sub-area in order to spread samples out more than in past years.

Management in Recreational Fishing Areas

Saanich Inlet

Jim Morrison pointed out that this year looks like the fifth year of having a winter closure in Saanich Inlet and asked if there are changes needed in management of the fishery in this area to avoid this situation in the future. It was noted that Saanich Inlet closed to commercial fishing on June 10.

Wayne Harling indicated that changes are necessary and it is only a matter of when and how.

In order to recommend changes for Saanich Inlet Tom Orr said it is important to understand the history of the area in terms of fishing effort over the past five years, including the number of traps, number of strings, number of boats and

season lengths to see if these are changing over time. Mike Kattilakoski volunteered to put this information together.

Guy Johnston, who was doing the fall survey work in Saanich Inlet this year, commented that there was noticeable weakness in areas that were intensively fished by sport gear. He thought the traditional commercial areas were better and indicated that there was more sport gear than commercial gear in the area.

Jim Morrison observed that while Saanich Inlet is managed to a target to leave an abundance of prawns at the end of the commercial fishery in June, there are often fewer prawns than anticipated found in the fall survey and said that more sample information over time would be useful in determining what indices are doing between these times.

To get a true picture of abundance (for any area), Doug Beguin suggests that spawner index sampling should be carried out for 12 months of the year by one fisher on a specified grid, perhaps in conjunction with a video record to observe prawns that are present but not entering the traps. He went on to suggest that this work should not be compensated for through allowable harvest to avoid potential bias in the survey. Greg Best suggested that it might be valuable to try this in at least some areas to understand how much variation (in sampling results) there is. Dennis Rutherford commented that there are two sources of variation in spawner indices; one is sampling variability and the other is process variability, such as prawn movement, over which there is no control. Monthly sampling may address these sources of variation but at some cost.

Wayne Harling said that even with monthly sampling, information about the poached catch, recreational catch, and commercial catch over time is needed to determine if some biological factor is involved (in greater than expected changes in spawner indices between periods). As an example, the average commercial catches in area 19 (all sub areas combined) over blocks of years between 1989 and 2004 are:

- 1989 to 1992 average catch 16,000 lbs.
- 1993 to 1996 average catch 31,000 lbs.
- 1997 to 2000 average catch 52,000 lbs.
- 2001 to 2004 average catch 215,000 lbs.

Action: Mike Kattilakoski to compile catch and effort data for Sannich Inlet by subarea where possible (where privacy policies allow) from the past five years.

Stuart Channel and Alberni Inlet

Jim Morrison pointed out that there have been annual closures in Stuart Channel and Alberni Inlet for four years. These areas appear to have improved over the last couple of winters to the point it may not be necessary to have closures there

this year. So he asked if there is any changes are needed in those areas where aggressive management during the commercial fishery has been apparently successful at reducing the need for winter closures.

Notwithstanding fall survey results, Wayne Harling expressed some concern about these areas, with intensive sport fishing pressure and perhaps poaching as well, and recommended some further sampling in January (2006).

Tom Orr questioned if six days of sampling in these areas can really indicate the true index given the sources of variability explained by Dennis Rutherford above and said that a decision not to close these areas may be premature, particularly where poaching activities could be occurring, and in the absence of catch data from both this activity and recreational fishing. Dennis Rutherford responded that he was happy with the level of sampling pointing out that there were multiple sets sampled each day that well distributed over the areas providing a good snapshot in time.

Nootka Sound

Wayne Harling reported that the local (Nootka) sport fishing community is saying that their catch has been decreasing over past years and recommends holding the commercial fishery to 125% of baseline. It was noted that the commercial catch in Nootka Sound has increased between 1989 and 2004:

- 1989 to 1992 58,000 lbs.
- 1993 to 1996 80,000 lbs.
- 1997 to 2000 78,000 lbs.
- 2001 to 2004 177,000 lbs.

Mike Kattilakoski pointed out that there has generally been very good recruitment in all of the south coast over the past few years. Byron Koke added that landings have increased in many areas recently and that it isn't valid to look at Nootka in isolation of this. He also said that there needs to be better quantitative information about the sport fishery pressure.

Wayne Harling suggested that it may be more efficient gear and bait used in the commercial fishery that could account for the increase in the catch. Also the potential problem in these areas could be that, while this bait has been in use for several years (in 1996-97 more efficient bait use increased from 50% to 80%, and is now about 90%), it was not accounted for in the spawner index until this year so, in effect, fishing may have been conducted at a real spawner index that was 27% less than what was being indicated. Dennis Rutherford responded that in some areas the fishery may have closed above index. Tom Orr noted that while commercial catches in Nootka Sound have increased over recent years, it is presumed that the fishery was closed on index.

Ivan Askgaard asked if there has been an increase in sport fishing activity in Nootka Sound. Wayne Harling doesn't think so given is relative isolation, at least not compared to the increase in some other areas of concern such as Stuart Channel.

Joey Laukkanen, a West Coast Vancouver Island commercial fisher, indicated that the amount of commercial fishing effort has increased in Nootka Sound and Esperanza recently. Byron Koke said that there were probably 8 or 9 operators in this area this year and that the fishery was monitored very closely this year.

Action: DFO to provide information about catch in Nootka Sound by subarea to entire committee.

Spawner Index Sampling

Doug Beguin provided his observations that fishing success is correlated with the lunar phase and suggested that this may affect spawner index sampling results. He proposed that this should be investigated by looking at commercial catch and lunar phase over time.

Tom Orr asked how samples are interpreted as good or otherwise. Dennis Rutherford explained that the spawner index baseline is a natural mortality line and closure decisions are made when the baseline, that leads to an expected end point (a specified number of females at spawning time), is reached. Jim Morrison commented that 1) fewer female prawns are found in the fall than at the end of the commercial fishery, and that when areas of particular concern were looked at in the past, such as Stuart Channel, Alberni Inlet, and Saanich Inlet, where the mortality model indicated a loss of 17% of females per month, it was actually closer to 25% loss per month, and 2) the mortality model describes a decreasing linear function and this is known not to be true; in fact there is a lot of mortality around the final molt on the breeding grounds so the line actually drops faster at that point.

Tom Orr asked how the index is related to abundance. Dennis Rutherford responded that this question could only be answered by measuring total removal and sampling every month.

Gene Pearl asked if there is not a correlation between spawner index with later recreational and commercial catch over the past five years (of fall surveys). Dennis Rutherford replied that the fall program began five years ago in response to increased sport fishing and that any connection between fall spawner index and subsequent fishing success, or vice versa, hasn't been looked at; he also pointed out that there would be a lag in this correlation due to the time period over which (immature prawns) recruit to the fishery.

Jim Morrison asked Dennis Rutherford if studies could be done in places like Saanich Inlet, Stuart Channel, or Alberni Inlet where something could actually be learned, or are there too many confounding factors with reference to a variety of fisheries that go on in those places. Dennis Rutherford replied that something could be done but that the objectives for such a study should be clear and that one study would probably not answer all of the questions.

Options for Change

Wayne Harling offered his thoughts regarding the following possible options for management actions in these areas of concern:

- Do nothing.
- Close at some lower level of abundance (than currently used) to both sport and commercial fishing that will provide only for subsequent FSC harvest.
- Designate these areas as non-commercial harvest reserves.
- Close the areas completely for several years until stocks have a chance to rebuild before re-opening under the current management approach.
- Experiment with different multiples of the baseline spawner index. For example these may be set at 200% of (baseline) in Stuart Channel, 175% in Saanich Inlet, and 150% in Alberni Inlet. Initially both the sport and commercial sectors might have to reduce harvest levels in order to rebuild certain stocks and still provide for a FSC harvest. It would have to be ensured that the differential the recreational and commercial sectors currently fish to was maintained. As the stocks rebuild, longer openings should be possible before the index is reached. Eventually each index threshold may be lowered, although this may be different for each area depending on its physical size, the level of harvest by both the recreational and commercial sectors, for FSC, and poaching activity.

Wayne Harling went on to outline some of options to limit recreational fishing pressure during non-commercial harvest times such as:

- Fishing the first two weeks of each month only.
- Releasing all berried females between January and March.
- Total closures for a certain number of months depending on the index level.
- Seasonal bag limits (but this might require a regulation change so could be more difficult to do).

As a final point Wayne Harling doesn't support any further trap restrictions when fishing to a number.

Chuck Ashcroft indicated that they are prepared to go back to their (SFAB) board to promote something along the lines presented by Wayne above. Chris Sporer indicated they would like to meet with them to explore any options.

Action: Chris Sporer to arrange a date on which Industry Caucus and the SFAB can meet to discuss joint recreational and commercial issues in Saanich Inlet and other areas of concern.

Greg Best expressed a need for committee members for a chance to see and evaluate the fall (and other) fishery data in order to provide sound advice. Dennis Rutherford agreed, but it was not available for this particular meeting due to timing. Chris Sporer suggested that Industry and SFAB meet to determine what data is needed at each (Sectoral) meeting and bring this to DFO. Jim Morrison will provide current fall survey data to the next sectoral meeting in April.

Ivan Askgaard contacted Ladner Traps who indicated that 90% of the traps sold (made to order) to recreational fishers are small mesh at 1 1/8 inches. He felt that the larger mesh size adopted by the commercial sector had a stabilizing effect on the fishery and noted that both Puget Sound and Alaska have gone to larger mesh this year. He asked if the recreational sector uses mostly small mesh traps and if there is any resistance to adopting a larger mesh size.

Wayne Harling indicated that he thinks mesh size is highly variable in the recreational fishery depending on what each fisher wants where those wanting more poundage using larger mesh. He also questioned what effect adopting a larger mesh size would have, and given that they are fishing to a finite number, and that there is a higher natural mortality in smaller prawns, he feels it is better to take non-berried females than berried females (on average).

Jim Morrison reviewed the suggestions above and indicated that contemplated changes would also be brought to First Nations in those areas under discussion.

Jim offered his view that requiring the release of female prawns would slow the rate of harvest by poachers in areas of concern. Mike Kattilakoski offered another view that if there is an abundance of prawns there is no reason for this measure and that poaching should be controlled through enforcement, not management.

Tom Orr suggested that berried prawns would be obvious in the market place so the prohibition of berried females should be easy to enforce. However, Kevin Van Cleemput pointed out that berried prawns are being legally kept in fall surveys in order to make up needed poundage for payment. These could appear in the market place, so using the presence of berried prawns as indicative of poached prawns wouldn’t be valid during that period.

Byron Koke indicated that he doesn’t support the idea of non-retention of berried prawns in the recreational fishery to control poaching. He said that it should be recognized that some areas with good access will be intensively fished and cannot be expected to remain open year-round. Wayne Harling re-iterated that

his suggested options above relate to rebuilding stocks to a sustainable level and not actions that would necessarily be permanent.

ROV Observations

Todd Johansson described his recent observations an ROV onboard the CCGS Vector off Ajax and Exeter Banks being used to observe deep coral and rockfish populations. They encountered one prawn trap during the day he was onboard (they had encountered four or five prawn traps over the course of one day in the Texada Island area previously on the trip). ROV pictures indicated that there were fish present in some of these traps and it was noted that nothing had rotted on the trap and that rot cords are not required for prawn traps: this could be a concern relating to rockfish conservation. Chris Sporer asked what the specifications are for rot cords the crab fishery. Beth Pechter indicated that they must be three strands of #120 cotton that will break down within 6 months. Greg Best pointed out that there has been some inconsistency with the manufacture of this material and that some were needing to be replaced every two weeks, so perhaps something better than #120 cotton might be needed.

Rockfish Conservation

Jim Morrison started by saying that it is important to carry on work addressing rockfish catch in the prawn trap fishery. Currently there is no work lined up for this winter so he asked what can be done.

Dennis Rutherford reported on the current state of the rockfish bycatch program and indicated that the catch rate in 2006 is basically the same as that calculated for 2005 fishery. Work on 2005 is still in progress.

Chris Sporer indicated that Malaspina College is interested in participating in tank studies of rockfish behavior in prawn traps.

Jim Morrison has received a proposal to test another tunnel modification that he will distribute to the committee for consideration. Study would look at the modification in two ways; how the tunnel modification might affect catch, and how rockfish move in and out of the trap. January and February were identified as ideal months in which to conduct this work.

Tom Orr asked how much notice industry might expect on rockfish conservation measures affecting the prawn fishery and how much time it might be given by DFO to react. Todd Johansson said he couldn't provide a specific answer but that the work that the commercial prawn industry has been undertaking is highly regarded and through this work lines of communication are very good. Russell Mylchreest indicated the industry will probably get reasonable warning on issues that are coming from Pacific Region (DFO) Rockfish Conservation Team, however for SAR timelines, which are to an extent outside of DFO control, may

be much shorter. He indicated that there are currently eight rockfish papers prepared for Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) which will give an initial indication. He also indicated that the industry would probably get a chance to comment on any changes and come back with a response. It was pointed out that there is a place on the RCA website where the public can comment on RCA areas with a deadline of December 31, 2005 for the first round of comments.

Fall Consultations

Jim Morrison reported on some topics discussed during Fall Consultation Meetings that DFO held in various coastal locations this year.

- Comment from Masset was that the pilot chinook quota fishery there helped to re-establish connections between the community and the fleet given the more controlled pace of the fishery.
- Comment from Port Alice was concern about level of commercial prawning effort in Neroutsis Inlet. This is a place where perhaps the connection between the commercial fleet isn't well developed.
- An underlying theme at the Port Hardy meeting was that fisheries in general should go to quota so that people in these communities can engage in various fisheries thereby broadening their resource base.
- There was also interest in Fisheries Act renewal to provide for greater flexibility in co-management, allocation, licence sanctions, fines etc.

2006 Management Plans

Future Management Options Proposals

Chris Sporer reported that Caucus has decided to shelve the future management options proposals that have been investigated over the past year (ITQ and string haul quotas) and to instead concentrate on the status quo fishery for 2006. The Caucus wants to pursue the application of electronic monitoring (EM) for the prawn fishery and a sub-committee has been struck to investigate EM and report back to Caucus at its next meeting.

Electronic Monitoring

Jim Morrison reviewed the main components of the future management options proposals. He also reported on comments, opinions, and questions from a recent meeting with fishery managers relating to EM as follows:

- Electronic monitoring is to help discourage multiple hauling of gear. It is an issue of fairness and enforcement.

- DFO C&P must indicate that regulations to prevent multiple hauling are reasonable and enforceable. Support of DFO Regional Headquarters is also needed.
- At present the only the cost estimate (supplied by Jim Morrison), which may stand to be corrected, is in the order of $600,000 for the first year to implement the program, followed by $170,000 to $200,000 annually to run the program. Given this substantial cost these is a need to ensure that any program is done right, not fast.
- A legal opinion is still needed about some aspects of the EM system.
- Consideration would have to be given to the form and function of a system that may have to perform onboard a vessel without a wheelhouse.
- Currently no software to capture, assemble, and review images has been identified.
- What hardware components would be required (eg. Notebook computers).
- How data will be handled, stored and reviewed.
- Access to data for review as an enforcement activity.
- Single vs. multiple service providers
- Standards for service providers.

They recommend a pilot program for 2006 to test EM equipment to show that it can be used effectively to the satisfaction of C&P and DFO managers, and that the equipment can stand up to the environment it is expected to operate in. The initial cost estimate for this pilot program is in the order of $40,000. How this would be paid for will need to be determined. The intention would be to fully implement the EM program in 2007.

Action: DFO to provide notes on their recommendations relating to a 2006 pilot EM program and subsequent full EM implementation for 2007.

Greg Best, when asked what Caucus thought about the EM system outlined by DFO, said that such as EM system was not the solution for the prawn fishery. Without a GPS dataline, they feel it will not stop double haul, rather it will only count the number of strings pulled in a day (could pull the same string twice as long as the total number of strings didn't exceed the string haul limit). He indicated industry is more interested in working with a service provider to fully develop a program. Chris Sporer indicated that industry will draft an expression of interest to service providers relating to electronic monitoring.

Tom Orr asked why current EM system designs can't be used for the prawn fishery. Byron Koke indicates that an EM system should accommodate as many fishery sectors as possible. Jim Morrison indicated that C&P are unwilling to do certain things with the kinds of monitoring equipment that will be deployed in the crab fishery other that in Crab Fishery Management Area A. What needs to be done is to identify and integrate the right components that work for the prawn fishery. Mike Kattilakoski notes that the crab and prawn fisheries are quite different: for example, the crab fishery (in some areas) operates year round, the

prawn fishery operates for only a few months each year; traps are pulled every day in the prawn fishery and less frequently in the crab fishery.

Greg Best thinks that a basic system with potential for additional inputs (eg. electronic logbooks) to address the needs of different fisheries is a good approach, and that there is a great potential benefit to both the fisher and DFO. He re-iterated any management system must be well developed, cost effective, supported by industry and useful to C&P. He reviewed the benefits of this kind of program in the Area A crab fishery and said that many of the EM tools do exist. The fishery needs more management tools than just the spawner index an EM could be one of these tools. Beth Pechter indicated that EM has worked very well for the Area A crab fishery in the provision of better catch and stock assessment data among other benefits. Doug Beguin said that the industry considers the commercial prawn fishery as their fishery and will develop EM requirements that meets their needs while trying to tailor it to C&P requirements.

Trap Types and Efficiencies

Jim Morrison has heard reports of bait and trap combinations that may be more efficient and speculated that if this is true then even shorter seasons may follow (as short as 48 days). He went on to say that such a short and intensive season would require more intensive, and therefore possibly more expensive, monitoring activity. As well, DFO management would be hard pressed to reach the level of intensity needed to manage this type of season.

Doug Beguin said that 1) Caucus is looking at enhancing the offshore fishery and diversifying the fleet (to provide additional opportunity and relieve pressure on the inside areas), and 2) Caucus is also considering trap number reductions if it thinks there is a problem instead of trap standardization.

With this newly emerging trap type as a case in point, Guy Johnson suggests trap standardization and other measures may be needed in order to stabilize the fishery but that these measures must clearly defined. He suggested that trap standardization may help in the measure of a more accurate spawner index (not having to correct for different trap efficiencies) where fewer, thoroughly tested trap types would be used. Dennis Rutherford indicated that fewer trap types would make the interpretation of spawner index easier.

Ivan Askgaard indicated that Ladner Traps has been receiving a lot of calls about building these traps. He pointed to the trap volume (large) and number of tunnels (six on the new trap type) as being important to its efficiency. He also feels that there will be a poorer chance of prawns being able to escape from these traps because the mesh is laying down almost horizontally. Also, at 25 lbs each, these traps are relatively heavy and may lead to vessel stability concerns when transporting the traps on deck. He said that the measures must taken now to stop these traps from going into the water next season otherwise the season may

be very short. He also pointed out that the costs of changing gear over is not high because the old gear can be written off and sold to the recreational sector. Guy Johnson had concerns over what these traps (with their heavy weight and large bottom rings) might do to sensitive sponge beds.

Byron Koke concurred with the opinions that these traps should be restricted with perhaps some opportunity to use on the offshore areas and in general proceed cautiously with the introduction of any new kind of trap that could be considerably more efficient than existing traps.

Jim Morrison said that there isn't enough information available to determine whether these (new) traps and bait combinations are actually more efficient than existing traps. Dan Vincent asked if it was possible to look at 2005 fishery data from those vessels using these traps as an indicator of their efficiency. Jim Morrison has reviewed the spawner index information for these traps and didn't see anything unusual, however catches were not compared to others in the area and time (Doug Beguin offered that he when he fished beside these traps he didn't notice any significant difference in catches). Logbook data for these traps will also be looked at when it becomes available. The bottom line is that traps really must be compared in a systematic way (testing in pairs).

Action: DFO to review logbook information for vessels using new traps, compared to other vessels fishing in the same areas.

Jim Morrison indicated that DFO would appreciate receiving opinions from the Industry Caucus about trap design limits and/or trap standardization. DFO needs to discuss these issues specifically also. Jim Morrison asked about the possibility of testing these traps. Given the amount of work involved, Dennis Rutherford indicated that before a testing program is started that there should be a good indication that these traps will actually be used in the fishery over the long term. Todd Johansson indicated that rockfish bycatch in these traps would also be of interest in testing. Dennis Rutherford went on to clarify testing protocol in response to questions about trap sequencing and possible bias from competition between traps indicating that a specific experimental design would be needed to measure this factor.

Action: Industry Caucus to provide opinion on this new trap design and trap standardization.

Action: DFO managers to discuss issues and obligations around a new and potentially more efficient prawn trap design that was introduced in the 2005 season. DFO will send back any questions to industry representatives.

North Coast Humpback Shrimp Fishery

Beth Pechter passed on a request from operators fishing in the Prince Rupert and Masset Humpback Shrimp fisheries for a minimum mesh size allowance that is smaller than that in place for the prawn fishery (maybe down to ¾ "). In response to a question about prawn catch in these fishery, Doug Tallman indicated that recent spawner index testing in this fishery did not indicate a prawn bycatch. Laurie Chambers thought that a smaller mesh may result in smaller shrimp, however it was indicated that these shrimp are generally small in any event and it is not really a factor in the marketplace.

Action: Industry Caucus to provide an opinion on a request by some northern-based fishers to use smaller mesh traps for the fall humpback shrimp fishery near Prince Rupert.

Notice Time for Closures

Todd Johansson asked if the time lag between a decision to close an area (during the commercial fishery) and the effective date for that closure might be shortened from what it is now (7 days) in order to respond to indications of stock weakness more quickly; he noted this is mainly a north coast issue and that short notice would be used only when necessary. He noted this may work to provide a better comfort level for management which currently operates very cautiously. Jim Morrison indicated that DFO seeks advice from industry on this issue.

Action: Industry Caucus to provide an opinion on a DFO question of accelerating area closures once spawner index target is reached.

Offshore Fishing

Jim Morrison asked industry for information on their current position on offshore fishing. Chris Sporer responded that this issued was still under discussion by the the Industry caucus and they will provide advice to DFO.

<u>Adjournment</u>

Jim Morrison adjourned the meeting at 15:20. The next sectoral committee meeting will be in April 2006, date and location to be announced.

Summary of Action Items

Management in Recreational Fishing Areas

Saanich Inlet, Stuart Channel and Nootka Sound

- Mike Kattilakoski to compile catch and effort data for Sannich Inlet and Nootka Sound by subarea where possible (where privacy policies allow) from the past five years and provide to entire committee.

- Chris Sporer to arrange a date on which Industry Caucus and the SFAB can meet to discuss joint recreational and commercial issues in Saanich Inlet and other areas of concern.

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Electronic Monitoring

- DFO to provide notes on their recommendations relating to a 2006 pilot EM program and subsequent full EM implementation for 2007.

Trap Types and Efficiencies

- DFO to review logbook information for vessels using new traps, compared to other vessels fishing in the same areas.

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