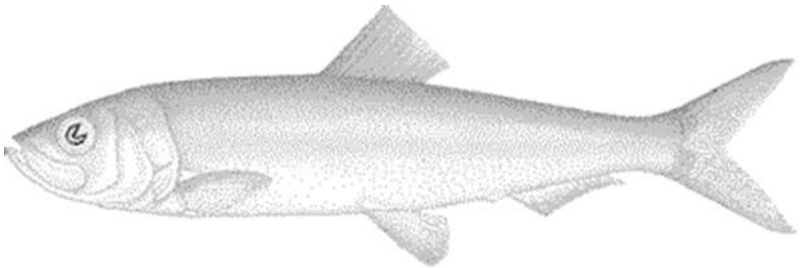
PACIFIC REGION

INTEGRATED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

November 7, 2025 – November 6, 2026

PACIFIC HERRING



Pacific Herring, Clupea pallasii

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Pêches et Océans Canada
Canada

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DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

A more comprehensive list of contacts can be found online at:
http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/contacts-eng.html

Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Pacific Region

Observe, Record, and Report		1-800-465-4336
National On-Line Licensing System (NOLS)		1-877-535-7307

Lead Fisheries Resource Managers

Roe and Food & Bait Herring	Eamon Miyagi	(250) 286-5896
Spawn-on-Kelp	Amanda Beckett	(778) 361-0695
Special Use Herring	Hong Tjhie	(236) 330-3240

Regional Headquarters

Regional Director, Fisheries Management Branch	Neil Davis	(604) 666-0115
A/Director, Resource Management and Sustainability	Melanie McNabb	(604) 353-2731
Regional Pelagics Coordinator	Bryan Rusch	(250) 618-4066
Sustainability Coordinator, Pelagics Fisheries	Marisa Keefe	(604) 354-0352
Regional Herring Officer	Hong Tjhie	(236) 330-3240
Director, Conservation and Protection	Nicole Gallant	(604) 666-0604
Director, Aboriginal Programs Directorate	Karen Leslie	(604) 360-8659
SARP Program Coordinator	Nisha Panchal	(604) 349-8237
Regional Manager, Marine Mammals Unit	Heather Brekke	(236) 330-2062

Science Branch

Regional Director, Science Branch	Andrew Thomson	(250) 756-7177
Section Head, Quantitative Assessment Methods	Chris Rooper	(250) 756-7050
Head, Herring Dynamics Program	Jaclyn Cleary	(250) 756-7321

South Coast Area

A/Area Director	Nadine Pinnell	(604) 360-6648
Fisheries Management Coordinator - SOG/WCVI	Peter Hall	(250) 918-8179
A/Fisheries Management Coordinator - J Straits	Christine Bukta	(250) 286-5880
Fisheries Resource Manager - SOG gillnet	Andrea Haas	(604) 353-8850
Fisheries Resource Manager - SOG seine	Eamon Miyagi	(250) 286-5896
A/Fisheries Resource Manager - WCVI	Samantha Knight	(250) 830-4872

North Coast Area

Area Director	Sandra Davies	(250) 627-3426
Invertebrate Team Lead	Coral Cargill	(250) 627-3021
Herring Manager	Amanda Beckett	(778) 361-0695
Fisheries Resource Manager – PRD gillnet	Corey Martens	(250) 627-3404

Fisheries Resource Manager – PRD seine	Karlena Lord	(250) 922-4266
Fisheries Resource Manager – Bella Coola SOK	Justin Savickas	(250) 799-5345
Fisheries Resource Manager – Bella Coola	Justin Savickas	(250) 799-5345
Fisheries Resource Manager – Haida Gwaii	Patrick Fairweather	(250) 559-0039

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https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/acts-lois/regulations-reglements-eng.htm
Canada Shipping Act, Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Act, Financial Administration Act, Fish Inspection Act, Fisheries Act, Fisheries Development Act, Fishing and Recreational Harbours Act, Freshwater Fish Marketing Act, Navigation Protection Act, Oceans Act

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports-eng.htm
Administration and Enforcement of the Fish Habitat Protection and Pollution Prevention Provisions of the *Fisheries Act*, Audit and Evaluation Reports - Audit and Evaluation Directorate Canadian Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing Operations, Departmental Performance Reports, Fisheries Research Documents, Standing Committee's Reports and Government responses, Sustainable Development Strategy.

LIBRARY CATALOGUE

https://science-libraries.canada.ca/eng/fisheries-oceans/
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ABORIGINAL FISHERIES STRATEGY

https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/aboriginal-autochtones/afs-srapa-eng.html
Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) principles and objectives, AFS agreements, Programs, Treaty Negotiations

AQUACULTURE MANAGEMENT

http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/index-eng.html
The new federal regulatory program for aquaculture in British Columbia, Program overview and administration, public reporting, and aquaculture science

RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/recreational-recreative/index-eng.html

Fishery Regulations and Notices, Fishing Information, Recreational Fishery, Policy and Management, Contacts, Current BC Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide and Freshwater Supplement, Rockfish Conservation Areas, Shellfish Contamination Closures, On-line Licensing

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commerciale/index-eng.html
Links to Groundfish, Herring, Salmon, Shellfish and New and Emerging Fisheries homepages; Selective Fishing, Test Fishing Information, Fishing Areas, Canadian Tide Tables, Summary Fishery Management Plans, Commercial Fishery Notices (openings and closures).
Full Management Plans can be found at the Library website: https://science-libraries.canada.ca/eng/fisheries-oceans/

FISHERIES NOTICES

http://www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm?
Want to receive fishery notices by e-mail? If you are a recreational sport fisher, processor, multiple boat owner or re-distribute fishery notices, register your name and/or company at the web-site address above. Openings and closures, updates, and other relevant information regarding your chosen fishery are sent directly to your registered email. It's quick, it's easy and it's free.

LICENSING

http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/index-eng.html
Contact information; Recreational Licensing Information, Commercial Licence Types, Commercial Licence Areas, Licence Listings, Vessel Information, Vessel Directory, Licence Statistics and Application Forms

NATIONAL ON-LINE LICENSING SYSTEM (NOLS)

https://fishing-peche.dfo-mpo.gc.ca
E-mail: fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
(Please include your name and the DFO Region in which you are located.)
Telephone: 1-877-535-7307
Fax: 613-990-1866
TTY: 1-800-465-7735

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Consultation Calendar, Policies, National, Partnerships, Fisheries Management, Oceans, Science and Habitat and Enhancement Consultations, Current and Concluded Consultations

PUBLICATIONS CATALOGUE

http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/publications/index-eng.html
Information booklets and fact sheets available through Communications branch

SPECIES AT RISK ACT (SARA)

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Science Divisions, Research Facilities, PSARC, International Research Initiatives

GLOSSARY AND LIST OF ACRONYMS

Abundance	Number of individuals in a stock or a population.
AFS	Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy
Age Composition	Proportion of individuals of different ages in a stock or in the catches.
Area and Subarea	Defined in Section 2 of the Pacific Fishery Management Area Regulations. A map of Pacific Fishery Management Areas is available on the Department's Internet site at: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/maps-cartes/areas-secteurs/index-eng.html
Biomass	Total weight of all individuals in a stock or a population.
Bycatch	The unintentional catch of one species when the target is another.
Canadian Science Advice – Pacific (CSAP)	Formerly named PSARC, CSAP is the Pacific Regional body responsible for review and evaluation of scientific information on the status of living aquatic resources, their ecosystems, and on biological aspects of stock management.
Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS)	Coordinates the peer review of scientific issues for DFO.
Catch Validation Program	A program designed to monitor, record, and verify catches.
Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)	Committee of experts that assess and designate which wild species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada.

Communal Licence	A licence issued to Indigenous organizations under Section 4 of the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations, pursuant to the Fisheries Act, to carry out fishing and related activities.
Container	A bag, box, tray, tote, frozen block or anything that contains fish, but not a herring enclosure.
Cut-off	In Major Stock Assessment areas, the Cut-off levels were established at 25% of the unfished biomass, as determined by simulation analyses; these are associated with a harvest control rule that was in place in all major areas from 1986-2018.
Designated service provider	A private sector company authorized by the Department to collect and collate information for the purpose of assisting vessel masters in meeting their conditions of licence with regards to reporting of information.
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada (formerly 'Department of Fisheries and Oceans').
Dockside Monitoring Program (DMP)	A monitoring program that is conducted by a company that has been designated by the Department, which verifies the species composition and landed weight of all fish landed from a commercial fishing vessel.
Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area (EBSA)	An EBSA is an area that has particularly high Ecological or Biological Significance, and should receive a greater-than-usual degree of risk aversion in management of activities in order to protect overall ecosystem structure and function.
Ecosystem-Based Management	Taking into account of species interactions and the interdependencies between species and their habitats when making resource management decisions.
Electronic Monitoring	Electronic-based monitoring system including equipment to digitally record fishing activity on board a licensed vessel while fishing, used in place of a designated at-sea observer.

Entanglement	An entanglement occurs when a marine mammal or sea bird is caught, ensnared in the infrastructure (nets) of a herring enclosure or fishing gear.
Fishing Effort (Effort)	Quantity of effort using a given fishing gear over a given period of time.
Fishing Mortality	Death caused by fishing, often symbolized by the mathematical symbol F.
Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC)	A fishery conducted by Indigenous groups for food, social and ceremonial purposes.
Harvest Control Rule	A rule applied in fisheries management that sets catch limits, and may also include how that catch is taken (e.g. timing). In the current MSE process, the HCR is comprised of variations in control points, catch caps, and harvest rates.
Harvest Quotas	A fixed amount of catch provided as an opportunity for harvest to a licenced party or vessel.
Herring Industry Advisory Board (HIAB)	An advisory body comprised of representatives from the commercial herring sector.
Herring Conservation and Research Society (HCRS)	A non-profit society formed to promote and enhance the conservation of herring stocks on the west coast of Canada.
Indigenous Knowledge	There is no universal definition of Indigenous Knowledge, and the composition of Indigenous Knowledge is for Indigenous Peoples to determine. Indigenous Knowledge is intricately tied to Indigenous worldviews and ways of life, and is a complex and dynamic product

	of the unique histories, cultures, languages, and governance systems of the Indigenous peoples of the specific area. The term Indigenous Knowledge may not be universally used. Other terms such as Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, all convey similar concepts. Indigenous Peoples define Indigenous Knowledge for their communities. The term Indigenous Knowledge is used throughout this document in line with the terminology in the Fisheries Act and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*.
Integrated Herring Harvest Planning Committee (IHHPC)	A representative cross-sectoral advisory process for integrated harvest planning and post-season review.
Interaction	Interactions or encounters with seabirds must be reported. Any interaction between a marine mammal and fishing gear (including herring enclosures) or a vessel must be reported as per s.39 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*. Incidental mortality and serious injury (usually refers to marine mammals). This includes entanglements, accidental drowning, depredation and collisions, and must be reported as soon as an encounter is discovered to the DFO Reporting Hotline (1-800-465-4336).
Intertidal	The area of the ocean shoreline located between the highest high water and lowest low water tidal levels.
Landed Value	Value of the product when landed by the licenced vessel.
Landing	Quantity of a species caught and landed. Harvested animals transferred from a vessel to land.
lb	Imperial pound(s), which is equal to 0.45359237 kg.
Limit Reference Point (LRP)	Point of possible harm to a stock, currently established at $0.3SB_0$ (unfished spawning biomass)

Management Procedure	Repeatable processes for providing fisheries management advice. Comprised of assessment data, a particular assessment model, and harvest control rule.
Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)	The systematic determination of the expected performance of a fishery management system against a set of specified objectives. Allows for longer term decision making with management procedures and objectives that can be tested through simulations.
Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)	Largest average catch that can continuously be taken from a stock.
Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC)	In statistics, Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods comprise a class of algorithms for sampling from a probability distribution. By constructing a Markov chain that has the desired distribution as its equilibrium distribution, one can obtain a sample of the desired distribution by recording states from the chain.
Natural Mortality	Mortality due to natural causes, symbolized by the mathematical symbol M.
National Online Licensing System (NOLS)	The online licensing system that allows harvesters to complete licensing transactions with the Department over the Internet. This includes renewal of licences, payment of fees, and printing of licence and licence conditions.
Observer	An individual who has been designated as an Observer by the Regional Director General for the Pacific Region of DFO pursuant to section 39 of the Fishery (General) Regulations and in the employ of a service provider company that has been certified by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) for Dockside Monitoring.
Observer Coverage	When a licence holder is required to carry an officially recognized observer onboard their vessel for a specific period of time to verify the amount of fish caught, the area in which it was caught and the method by which it was caught.

Operational Control Point	A biomass point that indicates a catch level or harvest rate change.
Pacific Fishery Licensing Unit (PFLU)	DFO unit that processes and issues fishery licence applications through the NOLS. For more information on the PFLU, please visit: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/index-eng.htm
Pelagic	Living in the surface or middle depths of the sea.
Population	Group of individuals of the same species, forming a breeding unit, and sharing a habitat.
Precautionary Approach	In Fisheries Management, the principle of being cautious when scientific knowledge is uncertain, and not using the absence of adequate scientific information as a reason to postpone action or failure to take action to avoid serious harm to fish stocks or their ecosystem.
Recruitment	Amount of individuals becoming part of the exploitable stock e.g. that can be caught in a fishery. The process whereby young animals are added to a fishable stock or population.
Research Survey	Survey at sea, on a research vessel, allowing scientists to obtain information on the abundance and distribution of various species and/or collect oceanographic data. E.g.: bottom trawl survey, plankton survey, hydroacoustic survey.
Sampling Program	A program in which representative samples of animals are collected for the calculation of parameter estimates that describe such things as weight, length or age within the general population.
Spawner	Sexually mature individual.
Spawning Stock/Biomass	Sexually mature individuals in a stock.

Species at Risk Act (SARA)	The Act is a federal government commitment to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct and secure the necessary actions for their recovery. It provides the legal protection of wildlife species and the conservation of their biological diversity.
Stakeholders	Individuals or groups with an interest in a particular fishery or activity.
Stock	Describes a population of individuals of one species found in a particular area, and is used as a unit for fisheries management.
Stock Assessment	Scientific evaluation of the status of a species belonging to a same stock within a particular area in a given time period. Results of analyses of fisheries and research data used to evaluate the effects of fishing on a stock or population and to predict the reactions of populations to alternative management choices.
Stock Assessment Area	Stock assessment groupings used since 1993 by the CSAP to monitor, assess, forecast, and harvest herring.
Substrate	The ground (often the ocean bottom) and its composition, in or on which animals live.
Sub tidal	A portion of the bottom of the ocean that is not exposed at low tide stages. The ocean bottom at elevations below low water or chart datum.
Ton	Short ton, 2000 lb., traditionally used as a unit of measure by fish harvesters in British Columbia.
Tonne	Metric tonne, which is 1000 kg, or 2204.6 lb.
Total Allowable Catch (TAC)	The amount of catch that may be taken from a stock, determined by analytical procedures, to achieve management objectives.

Total Validated Landings	The sum of all landed herring which have been validated by the Validation Program.
Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)	A cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment.
Validation	The verification, by an observer, of the weight of fish landed.
Year-class	Individuals of a same stock born in a particular year. Also called "cohort".

FOREWORD

The purpose of this Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) is to identify the main objectives and requirements for the Pacific Herring fishery in the Pacific Region, as well as the management measures that will be used to achieve these objectives. This document also serves to communicate the basic information on the fishery and its management to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO, the Department) staff, legislated co-management boards and other stakeholders. This IFMP provides a common understanding of the basic “rules” for the sustainable management of the fisheries resource.

This IFMP is not a legally binding instrument which can form the basis of a legal challenge. The IFMP can be modified at any time and does not fetter the Minister's discretionary powers set out in the *Fisheries Act*. The Minister can, for reasons of conservation or for any other valid reasons, modify any provision of the IFMP in accordance with the powers granted pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*.

Where DFO is responsible for implementing obligations under land claims agreements, the IFMP will be implemented in a manner consistent with these obligations. In the event that an IFMP is inconsistent with obligations under land claims agreements, the provisions of the land claims agreements will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

This Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for Pacific Herring covers the period from November 7, 2025, to November 6, 2026.

This IFMP provides a broad context to the management of the Pacific Herring fisheries and the interrelationships of all fishing sectors involved in these fisheries. Section 2 considers herring science and stock assessment, while Sections 3, 4 and 5 consider Indigenous knowledge, the social, cultural, and economic values and performance of the fishery, as well as broader management issues and initiatives. Section 6 and 7 describe allocation and management procedures. Section 8 highlights key shared stewardship arrangements with First Nations and other organizations, and then Sections 9 and 10 describes the Fisheries Management objectives for Pacific Herring and the performance criteria for the Resource Management branch.

The Appendices provided with the IFMP provide the post season review, stock assessment results, expected use table, fishing plans by sector and by fishery, information on vessel safety and compliance, and catch monitoring risk assessments.

1.2 History

The commercial Pacific Herring fishery started in British Columbia in the 19th century for the local food market, and quickly expanded into a dry salt fishery for Asia. In 1937, a reduction fishery was also established to produce fish meal and fish oil (Hourston and Haegele, 1980). After the collapse of Pacific Sardine in the late 1940s, Pacific Herring became the major fishery off Canada's Pacific coast, and catches steadily increased to over 200,000 tons in the early 1960s (Beamish et al. 2004). This fishery was unsustainable and by 1965 most of the older fish had been removed from the spawning population by a combination of over fishing, a sequence of weak year-classes attributed to unfavourable environmental conditions, and a low spawning biomass. As a result, the commercial fishery collapsed in 1967 and was closed to rebuild the stock. Following the fishery closure, a series of above average year-classes in the early 1970s quickly rebuilt the stocks and the fishery was re-opened in 1973 (DFO 2008).

During the closure from 1967-1971, small fisheries continued locally for food and bait (Hourston and Haegele, 1980). At this time there was a growing interest to harvest roe herring for export to Japan. A small experimental roe harvest began in 1971, and limited entry licences were introduced in 1974. This fishery expanded rapidly, and in 1983, a 20% harvest rate for Pacific Herring was introduced, followed by addition of a commercial fishing thresholds or cut-off levels in 1986.Today, most Pacific Herring are fished for roe, which is sold in Japan. The

remainder of the commercial fisheries is divided between spawn on kelp production and the food and bait market.

1.3 Type of Fishery and Participants

1.3.1 Indigenous People of British Columbia

In the 1990 Sparrow decision, the Supreme Court of Canada found that where an Aboriginal group has an Aboriginal right to fish for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes, it takes priority, after conservation, over other uses of the resource. Fisheries are authorized via a Communal Licence issued by the Department under the *Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations*.

In addition to fishing opportunities for FSC purposes and domestic purposes for treaty rights for the Maa-nulth First Nation (as of April 1, 2011) and the Tla'amin First Nation (as of April 5, 2016), Five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island - Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht (the T'aaq-wiihak First Nations) - have aboriginal rights to fish for any species of fish, with the exception of Geoduck, within their Fishing Territories and to sell that fish. The Heiltsuk Nation also has established an Aboriginal right to commercially fish herring spawn-on-kelp.

The Department works collaboratively with Indigenous people on communication regarding herring stocks and spawning locations for FSC fishery planning and information on FSC activities. During the fishing season, there may be requirements to avoid specific locations to support FSC harvest. Indigenous people are encouraged to contact the respective Area Resource Managers to provide information on placement of boughs or locations of other FSC harvests so that the commercial fleets can be directed to avoid these areas.

1.3.2 Recreational

Recreational harvest may occur coast wide, however fishing effort and catch is very minimal.

1.3.3 Commercial

There are four commercial herring fisheries:

Roe: Licence eligibilities are party based and limited; there are 252 seine licences and 1,267 gillnet licences.

Spawn on Kelp: Licence eligibilities are party based and limited; there are 46 licences. Sixteen First Nations organizations operate 26 of the licence eligibilities, while 20 are held by individual eligibility holders.

Food and Bait: Licence eligibilities are party based and access is provided to the 252 roe seine licence holders on an equal share basis.

Special Use: Licence eligibilities are party based and are open access on a first come first serve basis. There are several fishery participants who hold unique quotas for specific purposes.

1.4 Location of Fisheries

1.4.1 Indigenous People of British Columbia

Indigenous people harvest whole herring, spawn on kelp, and spawn on boughs for FSC purposes according to their customs, laws, and/or treaties within their traditional territory, while engaging in protocols with other communities to harvest in other areas outside established boundaries. The harvest by Indigenous communities occurs coast wide, subject to appropriate licensing and area closures. There are also treaty and Indigenous commercial fisheries occurring in some management areas.

1.4.2 Recreational

Recreational harvest of Pacific Herring may also occur coastwide, subject to appropriate licensing and area closures.

1.4.3 Commercial

With the exception of permanent closures for various purposes Pacific Herring commercial fisheries may occur coast wide in units described as Major Stock Assessment Areas, Minor Stock Assessment Areas, and in other management areas and subareas. Areas and subareas, as described in the *Pacific Fishery Management Area Regulations*, are referenced in describing Major and Minor Stock Assessment Areas.

1.5 Fishery Characteristics

1.5.1 Indigenous People of British Columbia

Indigenous people fish for whole herring and herring roe for FSC purposes. Whole herring are fished by seine, gillnet, rake, dip net, and jig, and herring eggs are collected as spawn on kelp or other seaweed, or spawn-on-tree boughs. Treaty and Indigenous commercial fisheries may occur in some specific management areas. The importance of the herring fishery to Indigenous people is detailed in Section 4.2.

1.5.2 Recreational

Whole herring may be fished for recreational purposes with no closed times. The daily maximum limit for herring is 20 kg, with a two day possession limit of 40 kg. Recreational harvesting may occur by means of dip net, herring jig, herring rake, or cast net. The harvest of herring spawn (eggs) is not permitted.

1.5.3 Commercial

The gear type, commercial licence year, and fishing period varies for each of the four commercial herring fisheries. Details on each fishery are provided in Appendices 7-10.

A range of fixed and mobile gear is used, depending on the fishery. Whole herring commercial fisheries use seine nets and gillnets and the Spawn-on-Kelp (SOK) and Special Use fisheries also use enclosures. Rakes, dip nets, gill nets, and hoop nets may be used in the Special Use fishery.

All herring licences are party based, and quota related to Total Allowable Catch (TAC) or specific allocations is distributed across the four commercial fisheries. All commercial fisheries licences are limited entry, with the exception of the Special Use fishery, which is open access.

1.6 Governance

Management of Pacific Herring is directed by the *Fisheries Act* and other acts and regulations including:

- Areas and Subareas, as described in the *Pacific Fishery Management Area Regulations*, are referenced in describing Pacific Herring Management Areas;
- The *Fishery (General) Regulations* (i.e. Conditions of Licence) and the *Pacific Fishery Regulations*, 1993 (i.e. open times);
- The *Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations*;
- The *Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement Act;*
- The *Tla'amin Final Agreement Act;*
- The *British Columbia Sport Fishing Regulations*;
- The *Oceans Act*; and;
- The *Species at Risk Act*.

These documents are available on the Internet at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/acts-lois/index-eng.htm

In addition, the new national Sustainable Fisheries Framework contains policies for adopting an ecosystem based approach to fisheries management including:

- A Fishery Decision-Making Framework Incorporating the Precautionary Approach;
- Managing Impacts of Fishing on Benthic Habitat, Communities and Species;
- Policy on New Fisheries for Forage Species;
- Guidance for the Development of Rebuilding Plans under the Precautionary Approach Framework: Growing Stocks out of the Critical Zone;
- Policy on Managing Bycatch;
- Strategic Framework for Fishery Monitoring and Catch Reporting in the Pacific Fisheries; and

- Ecological Risk Assessment Framework (ERAF) for Coldwater Corals and Sponge Dominated Communities.

Along with existing economic and shared stewardship policies, these help the Department achieve and maintain sustainable fish stocks, protect biodiversity and fisheries habitats, and ensure productive fisheries.

For more information on the Sustainable Fisheries Framework, please visit: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/overview-cadre-eng.htm

Additionally, some modern Treaty Nations, including Maa-nulth, have passed laws and regulations governing certain aspects of their fisheries in accordance with Treaty provisions.

1.7 Consultations

DFO has a broad mandate, with the authority to regulate and enforce activities, develop policy, provide services and manage programs. To help ensure the Department's policies and programs are aligned with its vision and effectively address the interests and preferences of Canadians, DFO supports consultations that are transparent, accessible and accountable. DFO Pacific Region undertakes consultations in order to meet the duty to consult with First Nations, improve departmental decision-making processes, promote understanding of fisheries, oceans, and marine transport issues, and strengthen relationships.

For more information on the consultative process for herring, please visit: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/pelag/index-eng.html

1.7.1 Indigenous People of British Columbia

The Department consults with First Nations on the annual Pacific Herring IFMP and the management of Pacific Herring more broadly in an effort to ensure that the duty to consult is fulfilled and that the proposed plans are informed by the best available information, including traditional knowledge and understanding of fisheries practices. Consultation occurs through a variety of means including through bi-lateral discussions, group advisory processes including a Tier 2 (multi-nation government to government) process, and other processes that may be available or requested. Consultation, as provided for under Final Agreements (currently the Tla'amin Final Agreement, Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement, Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement, and Nisga'a Final Agreement), are also undertaken.

1.7.2 Integrated Herring Harvest Planning Committee

The Integrated Herring Harvest Planning Committee (IHHPC) is the primary multi-stakeholder body providing input and advice to DFO's decision making processes for Pacific Herring fisheries. The IHHPC was established by DFO to promote a more streamlined, representative, cross-sectoral advisory process related to herring harvest planning, management, and post-season review.

The goal of the IHHPC is to support the development of fishing plans that are coordinated and integrated, to identify potential conflicts, and to make recommendations for resolving disputes. The committee operates on a consensus basis where possible. Membership in the IHHPC is comprised of representatives from Indigenous communities coastwide, the Herring Industry Advisory Board (HIAB), the Spawn-on-Kelp fishery, the Special Use fishery, the Marine Conservation Caucus (MCC), the Sport Fishing Advisory Board (SFAB), the Province of BC, and DFO.

For more information on the IHHPC, please visit:
https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/pelag/ihhpc-cciph/index-eng.html

1.8 Approval Process

This plan is approved by the Regional Director General for the Pacific Region.

2 HERRING SCIENCE AND STOCK ASSESSMENT

2.1 Biological Synopsis

Pacific Herring (*Clupea pallasii*) is a pelagic species which occurs in inshore and offshore waters of the North Pacific. In the eastern Pacific waters, Pacific Herring are found from Baja California to the Beaufort Sea in Alaska.

Pacific Herring mature and recruit to the spawning stock primarily between ages three and five, with some as young as age two. Within this range, age-at-recruitment tends to increase with latitude. Adult males and females migrate from the open ocean to sheltered bays around November or December, although in the far north of the range, these dates may be somewhat later.

Conditions that trigger spawning are not altogether clear, but after spending weeks congregating in the deeper channels, both males and females will begin to enter shallower inter-tidal or sub-tidal waters. Preferred spawning locations are sheltered bays and estuaries, commonly on eelgrass or other submerged vegetation. A single female may produce as many as 20,000 eggs in one spawn, however the juvenile survival rate is only about one resultant adult per ten thousand eggs, due to high predation by numerous other species (Hay 1985).

2.2 Ecosystem Interactions

Herring plays a critical, foundational role in the ecosystem, supporting numerous economically, ecologically, and culturally significant species. These species include seabirds, especially diving birds such as cormorants and murres, fish, including salmon, perch, and hake, and several marine mammals. The harvest rates are based on mature spawning biomass forecasts, with the intention of leaving juvenile fish and a significant proportion of the adult population available to support ecosystem processes.

Research indicates that the interplay of food supply and predation impacts on herring survival and production is complex and not readily predictable (Schweigert et al. 2010).

The Pacific Herring assessment models environmental variability implicitly via time varying natural mortality and recruitment (e.g., implied predation and other environmental impacts); however, ecosystem indicators are not directly incorporated into the assessment model. However, examining qualitative and quantitative summaries and analyses can help to fill this knowledge gap. As a step towards improving the understanding of the environmental conditions that affect herring, directed and standardized literature searches were conducted to identify mechanistic hypotheses that link environmental and biological pressures to Pacific Herring outcomes (responses), such as distribution, growth, migration, productivity, reproduction, and survival (Boldt et al. 2022). This is examined in detail for Haida Gwaii Herring where indicators of these mechanistically-linked pressures and responses were assembled from multiple sources (e.g., Boldt et al. 2023), detailed in DFO 2023.

Finally, there are a variety of research initiatives undertaken by DFO and other organizations that may provide relevant and useful ecosystem information to inform management and Science decisions. Ongoing discussions within DFO and with partners and stakeholders aim to improve coordination and communication of information.

2.3 Precautionary Approach

The Sustainable Fisheries Framework policy suite includes a decision-making framework incorporating a precautionary approach to commercial, recreational, and food, social, and ceremonial fishing: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/precaution-eng.htm

The precautionary approach in fisheries management requires caution when scientific knowledge is uncertain. The absence of adequate scientific information should not result in postponed action or failure to take action to avoid the risk of serious harm to the resource.

Applying the precautionary approach to fisheries management decisions entails establishing harvest strategies that:

- identify three stock status zones – Healthy, Cautious, and Critical – delineated by an upper stock reference point and a limit reference point;
- set the removal rate at which fish may be harvested within each stock status zone; and
- adjust the removal rate according to fish stock status (i.e. spawning stock biomass or another index/metric relevant to population productivity), based on pre-agreed decision rules.

The framework requires that a harvest strategy be incorporated into respective fisheries management plans to keep the removal rate moderate when the stock status is in the Healthy Zone, to promote rebuilding when stock status is low, and to ensure a low risk of serious or irreversible harm to the stock.

A key component of the Precautionary Approach Framework requires that when a stock has declined to the Critical Zone, a rebuilding plan must be in place with the aim of having a high probability of the stock growing out of the Critical Zone within a reasonable timeframe: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/precautionary-precaution-eng.htm

In Figure 1, the limit reference point separates the critical and cautious stock zones while the upper stock reference point separates the cautious and healthy stock zones. The removal reference (harvest control rule) defines the maximum acceptable removal rate which is constant in the healthy zone, reduced in the cautious zone and negligible (little or no targeted catch) in the critical zone.

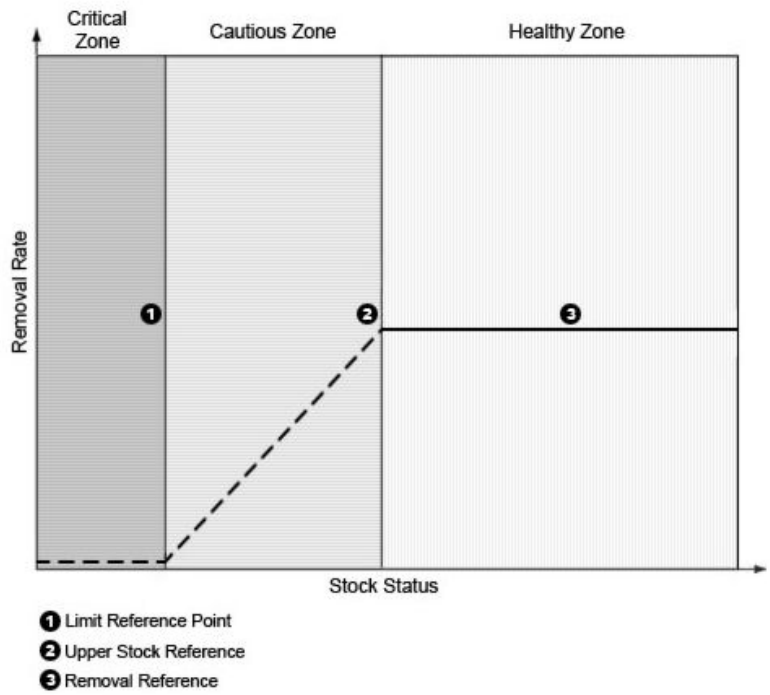

Figure 1. The DFO harvest strategy compliant with the precautionary approach.

2.3.1 Fisheries Act: Fish Stock Provisions

Amendments to the *Fisheries Act* (Bill C-68) were passed into legislation in 2019 and include new authorities to amend the Fishery (General) Regulations and requirements to maintain major fish stocks at sustainable levels, and to develop and implement rebuilding plans for stocks that have declined to their critical zone. Amendments are available at: https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/en/bill/42-1/C-68

The associated regulatory amendment to prescribe major fish stocks and describe requirements for rebuilding plans was registered and came into force on April 3, 2022, and published in Canada Gazette, Part II. Available at: https://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2022/2022-04-13/html/sor-dors73-eng.html

Haida Gwaii Pacific Herring was the first Pacific Herring stock to be listed in regulation, and to which the Fish Stocks Provisions (FSPs) in the Fisheries Act apply. Haida Gwaii Herring is subject to section 6.2 of the FSPs, requiring a rebuilding plan for the stock. More information on this plan can be found in section 2.5.3. The remaining major herring stocks are proposed to be listed in the next regulatory amendment process, and the proposed amendments to the

Fishery (General) Regulations were pre-published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I on Saturday, October 12, 2024, for a comment period ending on Monday, November 11, 2024.

2.4 Science Research and Other Activities

An ongoing survey has examined the fall distribution and relative abundance of juvenile herring in the Strait of Georgia since 1991. Among other things, this survey examines the distribution, abundance, food and feeding of juvenile herring and salmonids to address the role of forage fish in an ecosystem.

DFO is undertaking a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process for Pacific Herring, with engagement of managers and resource-users, focusing on evaluation of reference points and management procedures to fully align the Pacific Herring management framework with the DFO PA Framework (DFO 2009). More details can be found in Section 2.6.1.

Parallel to the MSE process, DFO has discussed objectives and rebuilding plans as part of the broader Pacific Herring Renewal/MSE process with the Council of the Haida Nation. A process was identified to address the development of a rebuilding plan for Haida Gwaii herring, and the development of this rebuilding plan was undertaken by a DFO-Haida Nation-Parks Canada Technical Working Group. The rebuilding plan includes a work plan to evaluate stock status relative to rebuilding objectives, and performance metrics for objectives using data such as survey data and Haida knowledge.

2.5 Stock Assessment

2.5.1 Overview of Stock Assessment and Management Strategy Evaluation Processes

Pacific Herring are currently managed in five major and two minor stock areas. Accordingly, catch and survey information is collected independently for each of these seven areas, and DFO science advice is provided on the same scale.

Since the early 1980s, a statistical catch-age model has been used to provide stock assessment advice for the major stock areas (Haist and Stocker 1984). In 2006, the catch-age model was updated in a Bayesian framework as the Herring Catch Age Model (HCAM, Haist and Schweigert 2006), used for the 2006 through 2010 stock assessments with additional modifications (Christensen et al. 2009, Cleary et al. 2010). A new version of the model was introduced in 2011. This Integrated Statistical Catch Age Model (ISCAM, Martell et al. 2011) was used for stock assessment from 2011-2018. In 2017, the assessment included minor updates to the analytical procedures within ISCAM, bringing the assessment in line with best practices.

In 2018, a biological limit reference (LRP) point of 30% of the long-term average unfished spawning biomass was first implemented for the major Pacific Herring stocks (Kronlund et al. 2018) and in 2022, a provisional upper stock reference (USR) was implemented (DFO 2022; DFO 2022b). Full implementation of the LRP occurs through the management strategy evaluation process where the LRP is represented as a conservation objective (biomass level to be avoided with high probability); additionally biomass targets such as the provisional USR are explored using performance statistics.

To advance work on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE), part of a DFO commitment to a multi-year renewal of the management framework (Pacific Herring Renewal), DFO Science Branch led the development of a peer reviewed paper "Performance of management procedures for British Columbia Pacific Herring *(Clupea pallasii*) in the presence of model uncertainty: closing the gap between precautionary fisheries theory and practice (Benson et al., 2022)". This research uses closed-loop simulations to test the performance of various management procedures (MPs) (specifically different harvest control rules) against conservation, biomass, and yield objectives under three natural mortality scenarios.

The first cycle of Pacific Herring MSE includes, as a starting point, four DFO proposed fisheries management objectives (DFO 2019) which reflect DFO policy, and were applied to each major stock:

1. Avoid the LRP with at least 75% probability over three Pacific Herring generations (i.e., avoid a biomass limit; $P(SBt > 0.3SB0) \geq 0.75$); this is referred to as the 'conservation objective';
2. Maintain spawning biomass at or above the USR with a 50% probability over three Pacific Herring generations (i.e., achieve a target biomass; $P(SBt \geq 0.6SB_0) \geq 0.5$),
3. Maintain average annual variability (AAV) in catch below 25% over three Pacific Herring generations (goal reflecting catch variability; $AAV < 0.25$), and
4. Maximize average annual catch over three Pacific Herring generations (goal reflecting catch biomass).

In addition, some First Nations, the Herring Industry Advisory Board, the Marine Conservation Caucus, and the Sport Fish Advisory Board have proposed additional objectives or expressed support for existing ones.

Since initiation of the Pacific Herring MSE process, MP evaluations have been included in the annual stock assessment as follows:

1. The 2018 stock assessment includes MP recommendations for the SoG and WCVI SARs (DFO 2019).
2. The 2019 stock assessment includes MP recommendations for the HG, PRD, and CC SARs (DFO 2020b), and implements the previous years' MP recommendations for the SoG and WCVI SARs.

3. The 2020 stock assessment includes an update to MP recommendations for the SoG and WCVI SARs (DFO 2021a), and implements the previous years' MP recommendations for the HG, PRD, and CC SARs.
4. The 2021 stock assessment includes an update to MP recommendations for the PRD and CC SARs (DFO 2021b), and implements the previous year's MP recommendations for the SoG and WCVI SARs.
5. The 2022 stock assessment includes an update to MP recommendations for the PRD, CC, SoG, and WCVI SARs (DFO 2022a).
6. The 2023 stock assessment implemented MPs from 2022 for the PRD, CC, SoG, and WCVI SARs (DFO 2024). Note that any MPs for HG are being developed through the HG rebuilding plan process.
7. The 2024 stock assessment implemented MPs from previous years for the PRD, CC, and WCVI SARs (DFO 2025a).
8. The new SISCAH modelling framework (Johnson et al. 2024) was applied to SoG in 2024 (DFO 2025b) and updated for 2025.
9. The new SISCAH modelling framework was applied to PRD in 2025.

A fully specified set of objectives has not yet been developed for each management area. DFO will continue to collaborate with coastal First Nations to develop area-specific objectives specific to Food, Social and Ceremonial fisheries as well as commercial fisheries. In addition, DFO will continue to engage with the herring industry, government, and nongovernment organizations to describe broader objectives related to conservation, economics, and access.

In June 2023, a new modelling framework for Pacific herring was reviewed and approved through the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) process (DFO 2023b; Johnson et al. 2024). The new operating model framework was developed to broaden the set of ecological and fishery processes represented in the herring MSE analytical framework. This work was undertaken to address feedback from previous scientific reviews, as well as feedback from First Nations and fishery stakeholders. The updated model framework, a spatially integrated statistical catch-at-age herring model (SISCAH), includes a number of new features, including: consideration of ecosystem effects (predators) on Pacific herring stocks through addition of density-dependent natural mortality, inclusion of spawn-on-kelp fisheries in areas where this is an important aspect of fishing activity, improved ability to integrate data from the dive and surface spawn surveys, flexibility to include spatial structure in future iterations, and improvements to the technical performance of the model and software. The new modeling framework will replace existing models used in stock assessment and MSE analysis moving forward. Consistent with recommendations resulting from the CSAS review, implementing the new framework using a phased approach has been initiated, beginning with the Strait of Georgia (SoG) in the 2024/25 season followed by Prince Rupert District in 2025/26.

Science Branch assessed the status of Pacific Herring stocks in 2025 and provided projections of potential herring abundance for 2026 to inform the development of the annual IFMP. The 2025

Science Response "Stock Status Update with Application of Management Procedures for Pacific Herring *(Clupea pallasii)* in British Columbia: Status in 2025 and Forecast for 2026" (September 2025) presents current estimates of spawning biomass and projections for 2025 for three major stocks (CC, HG, WCVI). Strait of Georgia stock status for 2025 and forecast for 2026 was provided in the 2025 Science Advisory Report "Strait of Georgia Pacific Herring stock status in 2025." Prince Rupert District stock status for 2025 and forecast for 2026 was provided in the 2025 Science Advisory Report "Prince Rupert District Pacific Herring Management Strategy Evaluation Process for 2025-2027."

2.5.2 Management Procedures for Major Stocks

Since the initiation of Herring MSE, MP evaluations for WCVI, PRD, and CC have been updated every 3-4 years, the last update includes data from 1951-2022 (DFO 2022a). For WCVI, simulation results show MPs with a 5, 10, and 15% harvest rate met the conservation objective of maintaining the spawning stock biomass above the LRP with a relatively high probability (between 80 and 84% probability) under the density-dependent mortality (DDM) OM. The WCVI stock persisted in a low biomass, low productivity state from approximately 2004 to 2014, however an increasing trend has been observed in recent years and biomass in 2025 is projected to be above both the LRP and the provisional USR.

There are also several MPs that meet the conservation objective for CC. In the CC, all MPs with harvest rates up to 10% met the conservation objective, and these included a range of operational control point choices.

A range of harvest options for 2025 are presented for CC and WCVI in Tables 3.5 and 3.6

Following the CSAS process held in June 2023, it was decided to implement the new operating model framework for SoG herring beginning in 2024, and for PRD herring beginning in 2025

For SoG, a quota option is provided using the MP tuned to meeting the conservation objective (Figure 3.1). Similarly for PRD, a quota option is provided using the MP tuned to meeting the conservation objective (Figure 3.2).

Finally, none of the MPs tested for HG herring could meet the conservation objective (DFO 2019). Any future MP updates for HG will be provided through the Rebuilding Plan process.

2.5.3 A Rebuilding Plan for Haida Gwaii (finalized April 2024)

DFO has committed to developing a rebuilding plan for Haida Gwaii Pacific Herring, through the Gina 'Waadluxan KilGuhlGa Land-Sea-People Plan. A draft was released for consultation in fall 2022. The final rebuilding plan was approved in April 2024 and can be requested from Fisheries Management staff.

The rebuilding plan for Haida Gwaii herring was co-developed by a Technical Working Group comprising the Council of Haida Nation, Parks Canada, and DFO. It provides an overview of Pacific herring ecosystem attributes in Haida Gwaii, and meets the requirements under the Fish Stocks provisions in the amended *Fisheries Act.* The plan is in line with DFO's *Guidance for the Development of Rebuilding Plans under the Precautionary Approach Framework: Growing Stocks out of the Critical Zone (DFO, 2013),* which states that the primary objective of any rebuilding plan is to promote stock growth out of the Critical Zone (i.e., to grow the stock above the status-based LRP) by ensuring removals from all fishing sources are kept to the lowest possible level until the stock has cleared this zone with high probability. In addition, it incorporates an ecosystem-based management approach and Haida Traditional Knowledge that supports objectives and targets laid out in the Gwaii Haanas Gina 'Waadluxan KilGuhlGa Land-Sea-People Management Plan.

The plan provides some key changes to the management of herring in Haida Gwaii; these include: managing Haida Gwaii herring at a finer-scale spatial stock structure, establishing rebuilding targets with associated ecosystem considerations, prioritizing low-impact commercial fisheries during the rebuilding phase, recommending monitoring and research priorities, and establishing a foundation for an ecosystem-based management approach.

The HG stock has persisted in a low biomass, low productivity state since 2000. The stock was below the LRP for much of that period and shows little evidence of sustained stock growth despite the absence of commercial fisheries since 2002 (2004 for the SOK fishery).

2.6 Reference Points

As part of the broader renewal of the management framework for Pacific Herring, the Department is currently evaluating the performance of harvest control rules for herring, using closed-loop feedback simulations through a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process.

A fully specified set of objectives that includes LRPs, Upper Stock Reference (USR) points, and Target Reference Points (TRPs) is being developed to meet goals for renewal of the Pacific Herring management system and ensure consistency with the DFO PA Framework.

To ensure consistency with the Sustainable Fisheries Framework and full implementation of the Precautionary Approach (PA) Policy to Pacific Herring, an Upper Stock Reference (USR) point for each major stock is required. Candidate USRs were considered by Cleary et al. (DFO 2019), and have appeared in stock assessments and MSE updates, however consultations around USR selection were incomplete. As a result, in 2022, a Science-Resource Management Working Group was established to evaluate USR options for the major herring stock areas. This evaluation was presented in the Science Response "Management Strategy Evaluation Update and Evaluation of Upper Stock Reference Point Options for Pacific Herring (*Clupea pallasii*) in British Columbia Canada" (DFO 2022), in which the role of the USR for Pacific herring is

described, USR options are documented and evaluated, and considerations for selection of USRs are described. This work was completed for PRD, CC, SOG and WCVI; Haida Gwaii herring reference points are developed in the draft rebuilding plan. The analysis also included simulation-evaluation to examine the probability of meeting USR options under different management procedures.

Consultations about defining a USR occurred throughout Spring and Summer of 2022. After considering the USR options proposed in the science response, as well as all feedback received during consultations , provisional USRs were formalized in the approved IFMP for 2022/2023. Based on feedback received, DFO Resource Management set the provisional USR based on a productive period (B_{MSY} proxy) in each area. This approach is stable and repeatable in application, and year-to-year differences in productive period spawning biomass are unlikely to change with the addition of new survey and fishery data. A 10-year productive period is used for PRD (1983-1992), CC (1990-1999) and WCVI (1990-1999), and a 20-year period for SOG (1987-2007) as there was insufficient variability demonstrated in a 10-year only period.

In the SOG area, the identified productive period contains the highest biomass levels in the time series and represents a period of successful annual fisheries and continued positive production and therefore is identified as a suitable proxy to recent estimates of B_{msy}. As such, the USR for the SOG was set at 80% of the average spawning biomass during the productive period. Productive periods in other areas yield average spawning biomass levels that are lower than historical highs and these areas have incurred recent low productively states and therefore the USR levels were set at the average biomass levels of the productive periods.

3 INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

There is no universal definition of Indigenous Knowledge. It is intricately tied to Indigenous worldviews and ways of life, and its composition is determined by Indigenous Peoples. The term “Indigenous Knowledge” is a generally accepted and is consistent with the United Nation’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as language in federal legislation. Other synonymous terms include Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Traditional Knowledge, Inuit Qauijimajatuqangit, Métis Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.

In 2019, the Fisheries Act was amended to include provisions for where the Minister may or shall consider Indigenous Knowledge that has been provided in making decisions pertaining to fisheries, fish and fish habitat. Section 61 of the Act ensures this knowledge is protected and can only be shared with consent. There are also provisions under the Species At Risk Act (s.10.2, s.15.2, s.16, s.18.1) that support inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge to inform the assessment

and protection of species at risk. Likewise, the Oceans Act (s.42) allows the Minister to consider Indigenous Knowledge in oceans related decisions.

In June of 2023, the Department of Justice released the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's Act Action Plan outlining the Government of Canada's five-year plan to begin implementing the Act. DFO was identified to lead 11 of the measures in the Action Plan, including Measure 40 pertaining specifically to inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in the management of fisheries, fish habitat, conservation, marine safety and protection of the marine environment. DFO is committed to implementing this measure in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

The Government of Canada and the scientific community acknowledge the need to ensure Indigenous Knowledge, worldviews, values, and priorities are considered and holistically integrated into scoping, assessment, and monitoring components of decision-making.

Work is underway at a national level to develop a comprehensive approach to support the respectful consideration, integration, and safeguarding of Indigenous Knowledge within departmental programs, policies and decision-making processes. However, DFO recognizes that meaningful and respectful inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in decision making processes will not follow a one-size-fits-all approach. Given the diversity of knowledge and relationships, regional work will involve an iterative process in collaboration with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, Indigenous organizations, and knowledge holders, to ensure appropriate inclusion and protection of the knowledge provided. Many outstanding questions remain on how to move forward in a way that respects, meaningfully incorporates, and protects the knowledge that may be shared with DFO, to mutual benefit. For example, how to engage knowledge holders, and how to ensure that the knowledge can be shared and considered in a mutually acceptable manner by both knowledge holders and the broader community of First Nations, stakeholders, managers, and policy makers involved in the fisheries. DFO is committed to finding a way forward that respects the knowledge and the knowledge holders, and upholds the Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, which are available online at: https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html.

Some areas where DFO staff are working with knowledge-holders to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, include (but are not limited to):

- Regulatory authorizations for projects that impact fish and fish habitat
- Aquaculture and fisheries management
- Scientific research, monitoring, and assessment
- Marine safety and ecosystems protection
- Marine conservation measures (e.g., marine protected areas)
- Training and professional development

For more information on the updates to the Fisheries Act: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/campaign-campagne/fisheries-act-loi-sur-les-peches/reconciliation-eng.html See Sections 2.5, 34.1, and 61.2 in the Fisheries Act (2019): https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-14/.

Section 61.2 protections for Indigenous Knowledge have also been included in the Access to Information Act, Schedule 2: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/a-1/page-15.html#h-1230

See the full UN Declaration Act Action Plan (2023): United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan (justice.gc.ca)

4 SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

4.1 Overview

Pacific Herring has been an important species for British Columbia's commercial fisheries for over 100 years. They are harvested in the Roe, Spawn-on-Kelp, Food and Bait, and Special Use fisheries, creating employment and contributing significantly to revenue generated from fisheries in BC. Herring fisheries have also been extremely important to BC First Nations since time immemorial (500 generations) and continue to be important, both commercially and as traditional food.

4.2 Value and Importance of Herring to Indigenous People

The Island Marine Aquatic Working Group (IMAWG) is a participant in the Department's Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management program (AAROM). IMAWG, in collaboration with South Coast DFO, described the value and importance of herring to Indigenous people, and submitted the following paragraphs. The following is a summary of conversations IMAWG staff had with their member communities mentioned below. We invite and encourage similar submissions from other Indigenous groups or Nations for this IFMP or in the future. The full text of the IMAWG submissions can be found at their webpage at https://imawg.ca/. We also invite other Indigenous groups or Nations to provide similar links to their webpages in order to access more information about Indigenous views and knowledge of Pacific Herring.

Herring are the foundation of the marine ecosystem which coastal Indigenous people have respected and honoured since time immemorial. This is illustrated by the significant role that herring play in the culture and society of coastal communities. Traditional Ecological

Knowledge (TEK) shared by elders indicates that as children they were taught to have the deepest respect for herring because it was a *"gift from the creator"*. *"Herring is the basis of the food chain. If we kill all of the herring we kill all of the salmon, we kill all of the halibut, and we kill all of the whales and so on."* The value of herring for Indigenous people goes much deeper than an economic or monetary value, instead the value of herring is looked at as a part of a much larger picture in which *"everything is one and connected"*. This is the earliest form of what is referred to today as, Ecosystem Based Management.

Traditional harvest, knowledge and handling methods, passed down through the generations, varied from families and language groups. These methods were performed in a way that ensured there was the least amount of disturbance to the spawning herring, and their habitat, to make sure they returned every year. Today, Indigenous communities, on and around Vancouver Island, practice a multitude of adaptive harvest methods:

- Nuu-chah-nulth (West Coast of Vancouver Island): elders indicate that when the herring arrived to spawn, the entire community was engaged, from harvesting to processing. Tree boughs for the harvest of roe, (Qwikmiss), were placed in the water very quietly and carefully, so as not to disturb the schooling herring. The roe was collected from boughs and dried. Historical observations indicate the spawn used to be ten layers thick. Today, it varies from one to three layers in thickness. Harvesting methods utilized today involve using cedar trees and canoes whereas the tree is left in the water for about a week until the herring spawn. The roe is removed and salted or frozen to preserve it. Local observations on the West Coast indicate that herring are spawning in deeper water and in different locations compared to where they spawned historically.

- Kwakwaka'wakw (North Coast of Vancouver Island): elders indicate that individual groups from the community would harvest herring using nets made out of spruce roots and kelp. The harvested herring would be brought back to the community to share and primarily eaten fresh or preserved using salt. The spawn used to be over six inches thick. Today, northern Vancouver Island communities must rely on Central Coast or Haida to provide herring roe because of the limited spawn in the area and the lack of resources to access the herring.

- Coast Salish (South Coast of Vancouver Island): elders indicate that herring was traditionally harvested by individual families, rather than by the entire community. A herring rake (a long pole with spikes), was used as the primary harvest tool. This method was successful because the herring were so abundant in this area. Captured herring would be smoked or eaten fresh. Herring roe was traditionally, and currently, harvested by using trees or boughs placed in the water allowing the herring eggs to collect on the boughs. Today, some of the Hul'qumi'num can't harvest herring at all because a very small number of herring spawn in this area, and where they do spawn, it is in very low densities.

Community members must travel north to Comox or Deep Bay to harvest herring and roe, and often it is harvested from kelp, which is not the method/source preferred by elders.

Lax Kw'alaams and the Nine Allied Tribes

The traditional economy of Lax Kw'alaams was based on fishing, hunting, trapping and trade, with each of the 9 tribes having its own distinct tribal harvest areas. Each tribe had exclusive use and control of all natural resources within its boundaries.

Herring are an integral part of the diet, livelihood, and identity of the Community and Tribal members. They are a major food source for salmon and other food fish, the bait for crab, shrimp, and prawn, and the beloved eggs utilized for food, medicine, and cultural practices. The people tie themselves to the ocean and its movements and rely on their natural surroundings to ground themselves in the harvest pattern for the year.

The traditional foods, such as the xs'waanx, are considered medicines, for both the general nutrition that they provide and in the medicinal properties the hemlock branches bring to the food, which are expanded by the methods of preparation. These food medicines, and their reduced availability and accessibility, mean that the population as a whole becomes less healthy and resorts to alternative foods. Jokingly, community members will say they are going 'harvesting' at the local grocery store.

Elders report that herring was traditionally harvested from the Nass all the way through Lax Kw'alaams' traditional waters to the top of Porcher Island from March until June. Initially, individual tribes would harvest together. Tribes would harvest herring with dip nets and purse seines, and herring was dried, smoked, and eaten, and used for bait. This method was successful as the herring was very abundant throughout the traditional waters. Herring roe was traditionally and currently harvested by using hemlock trees or boughs to allow herring eggs to collect on the branches. The best boughs were hemlock that had straight needles, which would gather many layers of eggs. Herring eggs were eaten fresh, salted, or stored in food caches for later consumption or trade. Today, combined families go and harvest for community members. However, due to a reduction in stock and other factors like increasing predation and climate change, Lax Kw'alaams has been having to outsource herring eggs for the community from reputable sources, and still is unable to meet its Canadian Constitution. 1982 Section 35(1) rights for food, social, and ceremonial harvest.

Traditional practices for the management of herring centered largely around respect. Respect for the herring, giving them the space and time that they need to conduct spawning. Members highlight the impacts of small sounds and the importance of continuing with the tradition of maintaining peace for the herring. Community members have described how, during spawning events, people would hang out on the outside of spawning areas in their boats and actively

protect the spawning population so that unruly or unknowledgeable people do not cross the spawn with their boats, to prevent them from frightening the spawning populations away.

Herring provide more value than just the individual fish or their roe. When the herring returned to spawn in the winter, they brought with them sea birds, Chinook salmon, lingcod, halibut and other groundfish species, which could then be harvested to feed communities, or to trade with other people. TEK shared by some elders indicate that Vancouver Island Indigenous people bartered and traded smoked herring with interior communities as far as northern Alberta and down into the United States. During other times of the year, many other species were sometimes not accessible to harvest locally, but as the herring returned to spawn, so did the species that fed on them. This meant there was a much easier access for local Indigenous People to harvest these other resources. Various Indigenous people across the Island would use canoes and traditional circle hooks, baited with the available herring, to troll or jig for animals such as halibut and salmon. When European settlers arrived, they learned how to fish from the local Indigenous people. This has formed the basis of modern fishing methods and techniques we use today.

The physical connection to the resource, and the ability to harvest fresh resources brought physical, emotional, spiritual and mental well-being to entire communities. Herring, and the other animals that herring brought, provided a nutrient-rich food source to sustain communities throughout the year. This is what wealth means to Indigenous people. Wealth also means sharing within and outside of the community. West coast of Vancouver Island communities would plan their feasts and ceremonies to coincide with the spawning of the herring. This would showcase their "wealth" to other communities, who were invited to come and share in the festivities. Within the traditional hereditary system, wealth meant giving and sharing. Without being able to share the wealth, communities and leaders would feel de-valued.

Often, today, you hear Indigenous people speak of wanting to "own" the herring in their traditional territory. By this, they mean that they want the ability to manage the herring in their territory as they had since time immemorial, so that they have a voice in how the "wealth" is brought to the community; both to the families and the ecosystem. There is an utmost respect for herring because it feeds the entire marine ecosystem as well as Indigenous people.

Traditional use, harvest and processing methods vary by families and language groups, but the importance and the value of herring is shared by all coastal Indigenous people. Indigenous culture teaches to take only what is needed (need being related to sustainability), and to respect and honour the ecosystem and the resources. In doing so, this will ensure access to the resource for generations to come. Indigenous People culture teaches to be the stewards of the land, to manage in a way that ensures enough for everybody and for generations to come.

The Department has engaged with Indigenous groups and Nations and stakeholders to progress on a renewal of Pacific Herring fisheries management, via a structured decision-

making process. The Department hopes to build on this work with additional interested Indigenous organizations and Nations in the coming years. For Indigenous organizations that would like to explore this work, please contact the Aboriginal Affairs Advisors in your area:

Melanie Anthony, North Coast (Melanie.Anthony@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)
Jorn Meier, South Coast (Jorn.Meier@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)
Sheldon Evers, Fraser and Interior (Sheldon.Evers@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

4.3 Commercial

4.3.1 Commercial Viability and Market Trends

Of the four commercial herring fisheries, roe herring is the most significant (Figure 2), representing 63% of herring landed value over the past 10 years (2015-2024). In 2023 and 2024, the total amount of roe herring landed (a combination of the gillnet and seine landings) was approximately 5,210 and 6,295 short tons. Both years are significantly below the 10 year average (2014-2024) roe herring harvest of 12,675 short tons. The 2017 catch of 22,527 short tons was the highest roe catch volume recorded in the previous 10 years, more than 5 times the size of the 2022 low of 4,227 short tons. Landed value from roe herring licences in 2024 was the second lowest on record, with less than $5 million dollars of landed value per year between the two gear types. The lowest year was 2022, which had very low seine harvests and landed value. After many years of steady spawn-on-kelp production in BC (up to 2004), the volume of landings fell dramatically, hitting a record low of 77 short tons (153,000 lb) in 2013. However, in 2017, the spawn-on-kelp harvest level reached 310 short tons (619,000 lb), almost quadruple the 2013 landings. In 2021, the spawn-on-kelp harvest level increased again and reached 176 short tons (351,000 lb). However, Spawn-on-kelp fisheries were closed in BC in 2022. In 2023 and 2024 there was a small amount of Spawn-on-kelp harvest, but there are not enough harvesters to satisfy privacy requirements to allow publication of landings or revenues. Harvest was significantly below the 10 year average Spawn-on-kelp harvest.

The food and bait herring fishery had relatively low landings of 816 short tons in 2024. Harvest was significantly lower than the 10 year (2015-2024) average landings of 3,789 short tons. Harvest under the special use licence for herring was 537 short tons in 2024. This just slightly less than the 10 year average of 561 short tons. 2024 represents the second lowest landed value for foot and bait, at $0.4 million, a decline from the $0.5 million landed in 2023. Food and bait prices have remained somewhat stable since 2021, ranging from $590/ short ton to $470/ short ton. Special Use landed value is estimated by applying the food and bait price, assuming this is the price that Special Use harvesters would have to pay if they weren't able harvest directly.

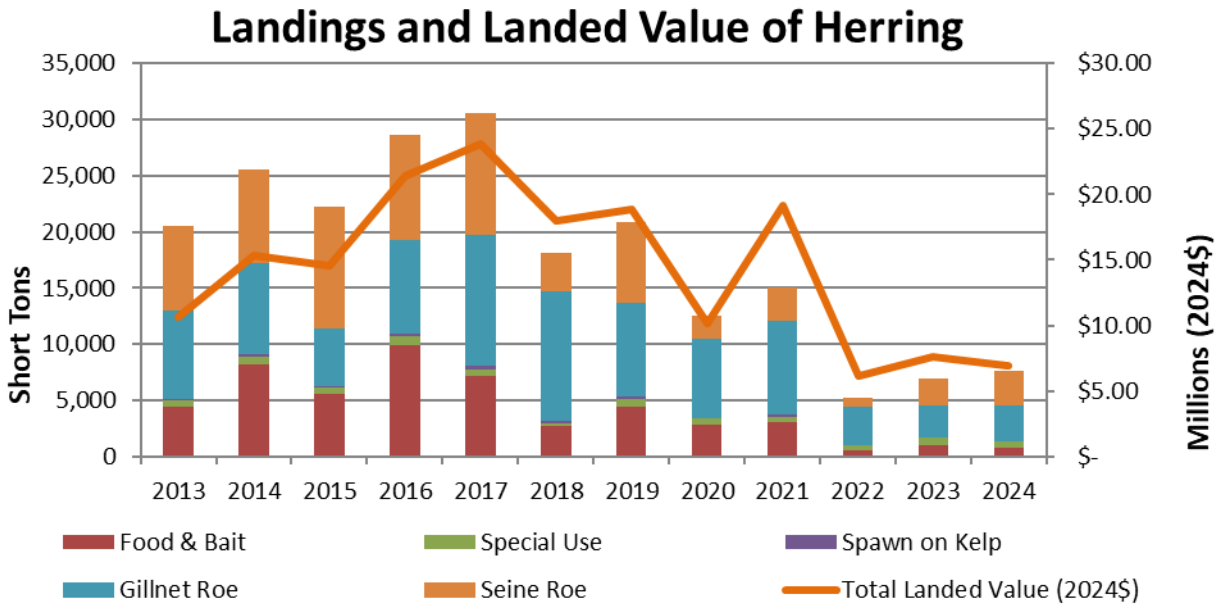

Figure 2. Annual share of herring landed value. To convert from short tons to pounds, multiply by 2000. 2023 and 2024 SOK estimates removed due to privacy concerns.

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada

4.4 Processing and Exporting

Once processed, the value of roe and food & bait herring increases significantly. Roe herring and food & bait herring approximately triple in value after processing, while spawn-on-kelp only increases by ~15%.

Figure 3 shows the value added from processing to the various product types. It is evident that the roe fishery has the largest value added from processing, consistent through time. This is followed by the food & bait and special use fisheries which benefit equally from processing. Finally, the spawn-on-kelp fishery has very little value added through processing, despite commanding very high processing prices (discussed in section 4.4.2).

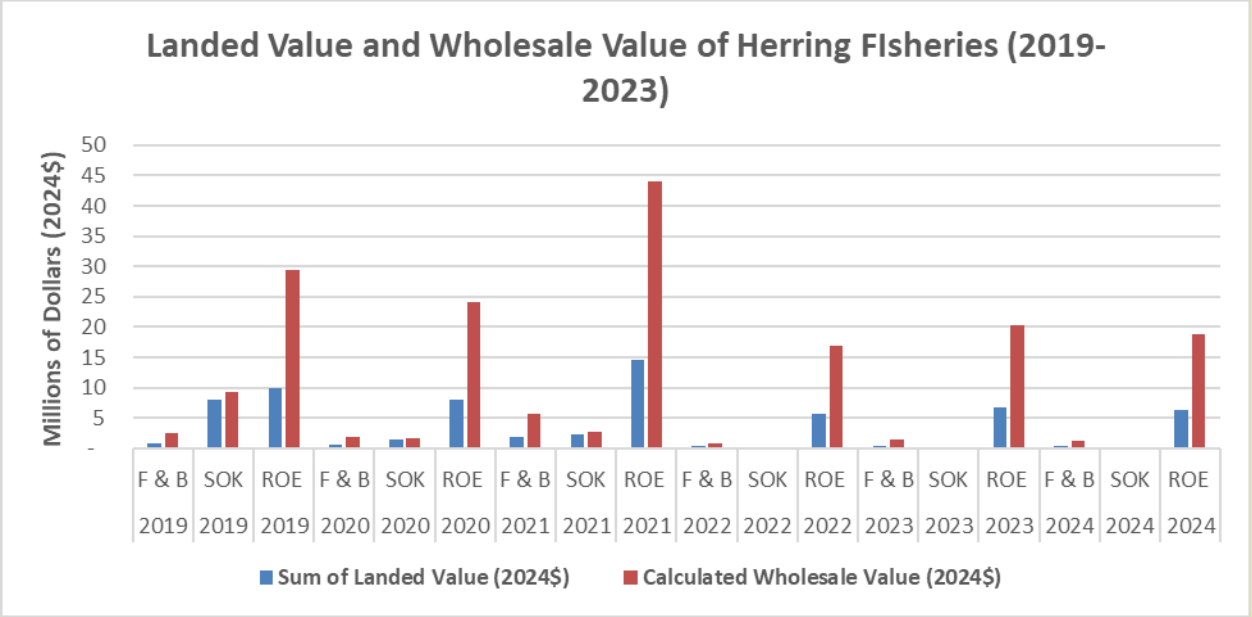

Figure 3. Landed Value and Wholesale Value of Herring Roe fishery, Spawn-on-Kelp fishery, and Food & Bait and other fisheries, 2023$. 2023 and 2024 SOK estimates removed due to privacy concerns.

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Pacific Region Economic Analysis Unit.

Nearly all of BC's herring products are sold to Japan, China and the US. Japan is the dominant market, having imported about 65% of BC's herring products export value, on average, from 2020-2024. Over the same time period, China accounted for approximately 22% and the US held an 7% share. Fiji imported a significant amount of BC herring products in 2014 and 2015, making up 4% and 10% (respectively) of BC herring total export value in those years, but has not imported significant amounts since then. Figure 4 shows BC's export value for herring products by importing country. "Other markets" has accounted for an increasing amount of herring exports since 2012; in 2019 significant markets in this category included Australia and Vietnam. However, since then other markets has remained low.

In 2022, the total export quantity dropped substantially by almost 70% from 2021 due to the decrease in herring landings in BC. However, the total export value only dropped by 22% because there was an increase in prices of various herring products from 2021. In 2023, the total export quantity of herring increased by 36% from 2022 level but the export value dropped by 16% because of lower total export value to Japan comparing to 2022. In 2024 herring export values remained almost the same as 2023, but exported quantity dropped 11%, with increased prices preserving the export value of $4.4 million.

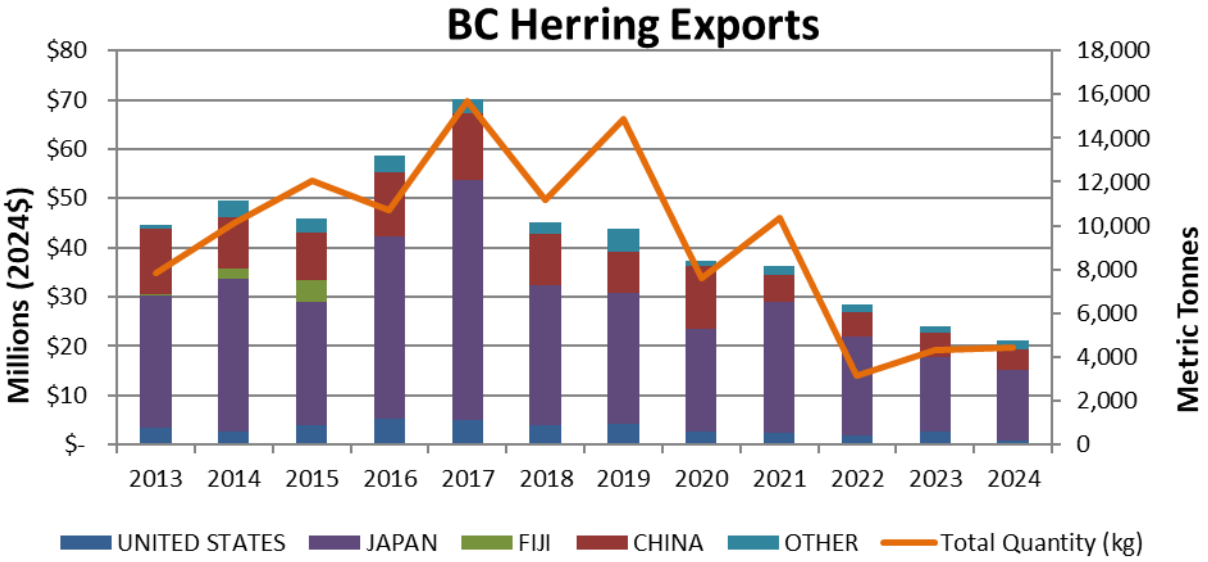

Figure 4. Total herring export value by country adjusted for inflation (2024 dollars) and total export quantity.

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada

2.3.1 Commercial herring licences

In Figure 5, we see that the vast majority of herring licences in BC are in the gillnet fleet, followed by the seine fleet. In recent years, the number of Food & Bait, Spawn-on-kelp, roe gillnet, and roe seine has been fairly stable. From 2014 to 2024, the number of commercial licenses for the herring special issue category ranged from 8 to 62, with 2023 and 2024 seeing the lowest number ever (i.e., 8 commercial licenses).

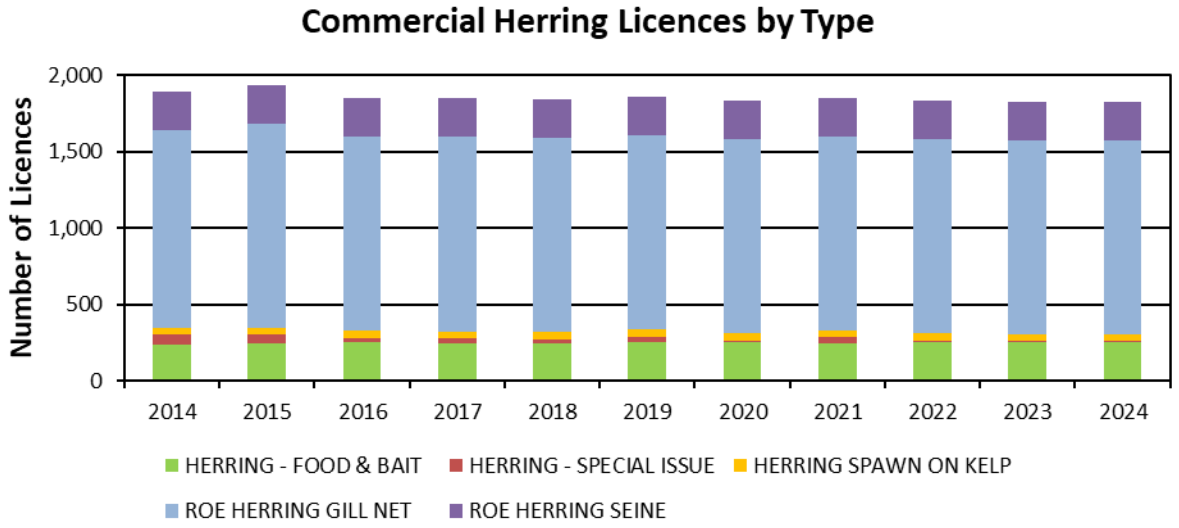

Figure 5. Commercial herring licences by type, 2014-2024.

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

4.4.1 Communal Commercial Fishing Licences

From 2013 to 2024, the number of communal commercial fishing licenses for herring showed a general upward trend across all types. There was no Spawn-on-kelp communal commercial fishing licence in 2013 but maintained at the same level of 12 licences after 2014. The roe herring seine type remained constant at 11 throughout the period. The roe herring gillnet experienced a substantial growth from 167 in 2013 to 288 in 2021, and this figure remained steady through 2023, and nudged down to 286 in 2024. The total number of communal commercial licenses increased from 178 in 2013 to 309 in 2024. The share of communal commercial licences to the total commercial herring licenses also had an increase from 11.9% in 2014 to 16.9% in 2024.

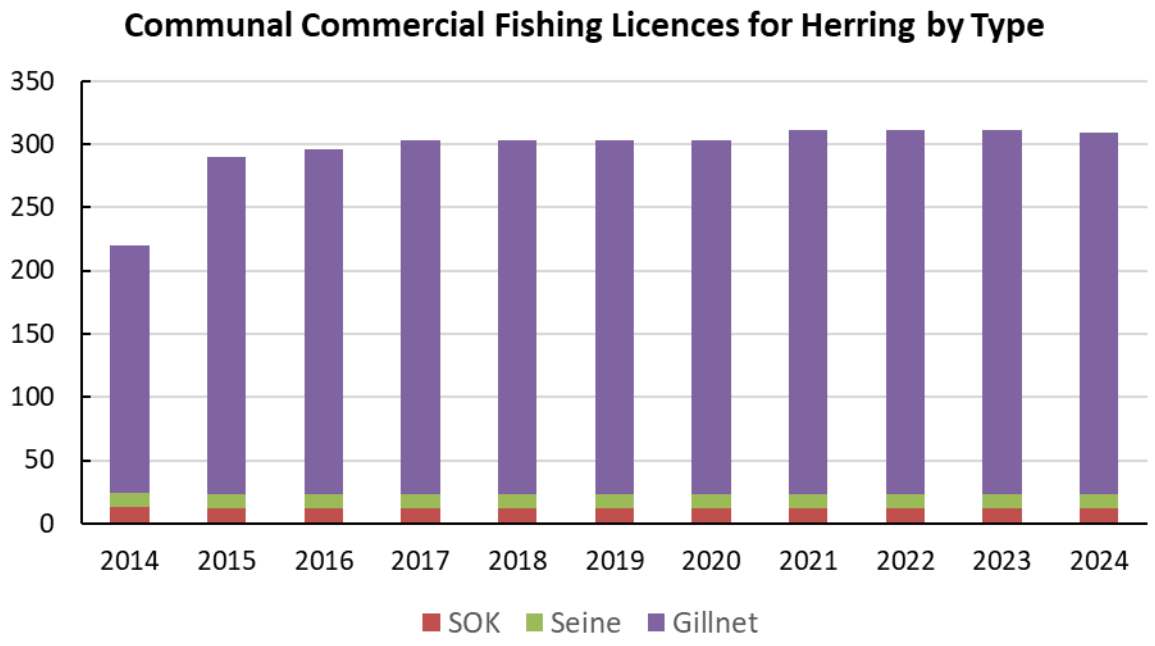

Figure 6. Number of communal commercial licences for herring by type, 2014 – 2024.

** The Special Use herring fishery does not issue communal commercial licenses, hence no data from this fishery is included. The Food & Bait fishery is accessible to all 253 Roe herring seine license holders, who may choose to participate under a different category (ZM).

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

4.4.2 Processing Employment Capacity

According to a survey commissioned by DFO to link seafood landings with processing areas and employment, on average the processing of spawn-on-kelp requires 36 hrs/metric ton at a wage of $32.50/hr, in 2024 adjusted dollars. In contrast, the processing of roe herring requires 22 hrs/metric ton at a wage of $32.50/hr, and the processing of food and bait herring requires 12.5 hrs/metric ton at a wage of $25.99/hr.

Based on the landings data reported above, an average of 81 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs[1] were required annually over the years 20120 to 2024 for herring processing and paid wages (on average) of $4.1 million per year (2024$), combined. This does not include the 2023 and 2024 spawn-on-kelp contribution, which is suppressed due to privacy. According to a report produced by the Province of British Columbia on total processing employment, this accounts for approximately 3% of the total annual average fish processing jobs in BC. Processing operations are primarily focused on the production of roe herring products.

Spawn-on-kelp landings, while comparatively low in volume, are landed and processed almost exclusively on the North Coast, while roe herring is landed and processed almost exclusively in

the Lower Mainland. Food & bait and special use landings are processed both on Vancouver Island and in the Lower Mainland roughly equally.

[1] Does not account for administrative and maintenance jobs required by processing plants.

5 MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The following section highlights a number of ongoing, longer-term issues identified with respect to the management of Pacific Herring. Shorter-term and/or annual management issues are identified in the commercial fishing plans for each fishery (Appendices 7-10).

5.1 First Nations

DFO has received reports that some First Nations have been unable to successfully harvest FSC and treaty allocations in their traditional areas. In addition to pre-season and post-season consultation, catch monitoring and co-management programs are developed in collaboration with some Indigenous communities and organizations to improve DFO's understanding of these fisheries and potential barriers to successful FSC and treaty related fisheries.

Some First Nations have expressed concern regarding the status of herring stocks in some areas. In particular they have indicated that stock abundances may not be able to support FSC access and commercial fisheries while ensuring long-term conservation and sustainability. In that context, continued efforts to consult and collaborate with First Nations (and others) regarding the management approach for Pacific Herring, as well as a broad renewal of the management framework, remain a priority for DFO. For example, the Department has broadened pre-season and post-season consultation with First Nations to share science and other information for planning purposes.

DFO has proposed in-season management measures to address concerns identified by First Nations regarding levels of herring spawn or herring abundance observed in some areas. These measures are outlined in the applicable fishing plans for Roe (Appendix 7), Food and Bait (Appendix 9), and Special Use (Appendix 10).

5.2 Recreational

There is limited catch information available for the recreational herring sector; however, catch is estimated to be very low.

5.3 Commercial

5.3.1 Roe Herring

Commercial fishing licence renewal fees: Commercial roe herring licence eligibility holders and the Herring Industry Advisory Board (HIAB) have identified lowering commercial licence renewal fees for herring as an urgent issue for the fishery. Specifically, licence eligibility holders have recommended licence renewal fees for BC herring fisheries be adjusted to a more equitable fee structure that aligns with fishing revenue.

Annual fluctuations of coast wide TAC: The Roe herring sector requires relatively stable allocation of herring in order to preserve the market from year to year. Global economics and herring catch fluctuations in other countries impact market considerations, and the profitability of the Roe fishery. The Roe herring sector also requires access to as many fishing areas as possible in order to minimize risk of fishery failure due to timing of spawn events or stock distribution.

Fishery timing: Ensuring that fisheries are timed to optimize roe quality and that product arrives at processing facilities in a time frame that the offloading and processing of catch does not impact the roe quality is challenging for both industry and DFO Fisheries Management, requiring on-grounds Roe quality testing.

In-season management: The dynamic nature of the Roe fishery requires extensive in-season management and cooperation from industry to provide opportunity for quotas to be met and not exceeded. Additionally, the Department has no obligation and provides no assurance or guarantee that the maximum or any amount of fish specified in a licence will be harvested and openings will not be maintained for an indefinite time period. Fishery openings may be spatially and temporally separated to avoid gear conflicts or closed to avoid sensitive areas, for navigational purposes, or to provide access to First Nations to harvest fish or spawn.

5.3.2 Spawn-on-Kelp

Licence eligibility nomination: The restriction on licence eligibility nominations (non-transferability) in this fishery has been identified as an issue, as some individual fishery participants are no longer able or do not wish to continue to participate in the fishery.

Herring enclosures: The quantity of herring used in a herring enclosure, number of enclosures, disease impacts, mortality estimates, and general enclosure management practices for this fishery require further examination to improve understanding about stock and ecosystem impacts.

5.3.3 Food and Bait

Weather: The ability to harvest the vessel quotas may be difficult in a given year, due to the timing of this fishery (November to February) to harvest food and bait quality fish.

Management Measures: Based on the scale of the fishery, the Department has implemented enhanced management measures for proper management and control of harvest. The management controls and measures for this fishery will continue to be assessed, and future management adjustments may be made to address emerging fishery developments.

5.3.4 Special Use

Herring enclosures: The quantity of herring used in a herring enclosure, number of enclosures, disease impacts, and mortality estimates, and general enclosure management practices for this fishery require further examination to ensure that stock and ecosystem impacts are better understood.

5.4 Gear Impacts

5.4.1 Habitat

Under responsible operation, there are minimal environmental impacts from gear types used in the Pacific Herring fishery. During the Roe fishery, efforts are made to conduct fisheries in areas which avoid impact to sensitive spawning habitat, such as eelgrass beds. In the Spawn-on-Kelp fishery, participants are encouraged to avoid local impacts. There is potential for impacts to the benthic habitat in this fishery if poor enclosure husbandry is exercised or if there is large mortality of ponded herring.

5.4.2 Marine Mammals and Seabird Encounters

There is some ecological impact with respect to marine mammal and sea bird encounters, specifically with herring enclosures. Mitigation measures, including use of predator netting, weekly enclosure inspections, and post-season release of ponded herring, are in place.

Sea lions and other abundant marine mammals continue to be a significant issue in the Roe, Food and Bait, and Special Use seine fisheries. Sea lions (South Coast) and humpback whales (North Coast) are increasingly abundant in important fishing areas. There may be safety concerns as a result of contact with marine mammals. The presence of sea lions also impacts vessel stability and leads to longer set (when the fishing gear is in the water) times which may result in increased chances of herring dying and increases wear on gear. Some fishing areas experience this issue more than others.

5.4.3 Ghost Gear Program

Abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG, or “ghost gear”) is a leading cause of marine plastic litter and a global issue. A recent study estimated that nearly 2% of all fishing gear becomes ghost gear (Richardson et al, 2022). Since fishing gear is designed to capture fish, this means that when lost it has significant negative impacts on all marine animals and coastal and marine environments. An estimated 5 - 30% decline in some fish stocks is due to damage to important marine habitats from ghost gear (NOAA Marine Debris Program, 2015).

This means ghost fishing, where marine animals are caught in ghost gear, is a threat not just for marine mammals and species at risk, but to the health of commercial fish stocks and aquatic habitats as well. Data from Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Lost Gear Reporting System between July 2020 and December 2023 shows that of the 85,610 animals identified in retrieved ghost gear in Canadian waters, 84% were of commercial value.

Canada has been at the forefront of addressing this issue, signing on the Global Ghost Gear Initiative in 2018, establishing a Ghost Gear Program in 2019, mandating lost gear reporting in 2020, and sharing lost gear reporting data with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative's Data Portal in 2022 and again in 2024.

As part of the Canadian strategy on ghost gear going forward, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will perform a regulatory review and assessment process to address impediments to gear retrieval and to strengthen preventative measures. An area-by-area review of gear types to quantify risks to our ecosystems will also be performed as part of an analysis of fisheries management practices to help modernize, strengthen and implement best practices.

To learn more about the DFO Ghost Gear Program, go to: Canada.ca/ghostgear

5.4.4 Conditions of Licence to Report Lost and Retrieved Gear

All commercial harvesters must report their lost and subsequently retrieved fishing gear. While the Department is taking a stewardship approach to ghost gear, and working with harvesters to reduce the effects of ghost fishing, the inclusion of the reporting requirement in conditions of licence does mean that not reporting lost and/or retrieved gear is now a chargeable offence.

Lost gear can be reported through the online Fishing Gear Reporting System, available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commerciale/reporting-declaration-eng.html

To learn more about the DFO Ghost Gear Fund, go to: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/management-gestion/ghostgear-equipementfantome/program-programme/projects-projets-eng.html

5.5 Annual Science Assessment Program

Larocque-relief funding was utilized from 2006 to 2013 to fund the spawn assessment surveys, test fishing and co-management to provide data from spawn measurements and collection of biological samples for stock assessment and forecasting purposes. Amendments to Section 10 of the *Fisheries Act* grant the Minister the authority to allocate fish for the purpose of funding science and fisheries management activities.

DFO Fisheries Management and Science will continue to work with partners to assess options for a stock assessment program that is affordable. For 2025, a funding strategy has been identified to support stock assessment activities at similar levels to recent years.

5.6 Aquaculture

DFO is the lead federal department for sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture. Under the *Fisheries Act*, *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations*, *Aquaculture Activities Regulations* and *Fishery (General) Regulations*, DFO regulates finfish, shellfish and freshwater/land-based aquaculture operations in BC. Cultivation of fish within the province requires a federal aquaculture licence issued under the *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations*, and, where applicable, a federal *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* permit and a provincial Crown Lands tenure. Other government agency approvals may also be necessary.

Applications currently under review by the Department are available on the DFO website at: Applications and decisions | Pacific Region | Fisheries and Oceans Canada (dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

To view the Pacific Aquaculture Regulations: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2010-270/FullText.html

As part of the aquaculture regulatory framework in British Columbia, DFO has developed Integrated Management of Aquaculture Plans (IMAPs). IMAPs are modelled after Integrated Fisheries Management Plans, which are used to govern wild harvest fisheries. Consultations with First Nations, interested parties, and stakeholders were and continue to be important to the IMAP process, allowing for the integration of advice, as well as environmental and social interests, into the management objectives for each aquaculture sector.

For further information refer to the following web link: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/aquaculture-eng.html.

DFO conducts aquaculture assessments on applications for licensing of new or proposed amendments to aquaculture sites. Stakeholders have requested information on the application process as it relates to development of sites in the Baynes Sound area, which is a primary location for herring fisheries. As part of the aquaculture application assessment process, the implications for other existing fisheries, any potential stock conservation concerns and ecosystem impacts will be carefully considered by the Department. The Integrated Management of Aquaculture Plans (IMAPs) help to guide the management of aquaculture in BC. Consultation information relating to these plans is available at: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/aquaculture/index-eng.html. DFO has also established Aquaculture Management Advisory Committees, which provide feedback related to the use and evolution of IMAPs.

Human Waste Containment Regulations Disposal of human waste into waters where shellfish are harvested or adjacent to shellfish harvest areas creates unnecessary and potentially serious health risks for shellfish consumers. In accordance with the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP) and Regulations administered by Transport Canada, raw sewage (Human wastes, sewage or refuse) shall not be discharged from vessels while in or adjacent to shellfish areas. Vessels operating at a distance which does not allow for timely access to on-shore washroom facilities are expected to have a designated human waste receptacle on board. Receptacles could include a portable toilet, a fixed toilet, or other containment device as appropriate. Such devices must be made of impervious, cleanable materials and have a tight-fitting lid. (Refer to Division 4, Transport Canada's Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations under the *Canada Shipping Act*):

1. Portable toilets or other designated human waste receptacles shall be used only for the purpose intended, and shall be so secured and located as to prevent contamination of the shellfish area or any harvested shellfish on board by spillage or leakage.
2. The contents of toilets or other designated human waste receptacles shall be emptied only into an approved sewage disposal system.
3. Every person onboard a shellfish harvest vessel must wash and sanitize their hands after using or cleaning a waste receptacle, or after using an onshore washroom facility.

Information on Human Waste Containment Receptacle Requirements under the CSSP can be found at the following Canadian Food Inspection Agency internet site: https://www.inspection.gc.ca/preventive-controls/fish/cssp/questions-and-answers/eng/1563470479199/1563470589053

5.7 Other Species Concerns

5.7.1 Species at Risk Act

Encounters with SARA-listed species (e.g. Steller Sea Lion) and other marine mammals and seabirds may occur in herring fisheries. The Department and the fishing industry collect information on these encounters on behalf of the Species at Risk program and Marine Mammal Unit of DFO and Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada.

The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) came into force in 2003 "to prevent wildlife species from being extirpated or becoming extinct, and to provide for the recovery of a wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered or threatened as a result of human activity and to manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened."

SARA contains several prohibitions to protect species listed on Schedule 1 of SARA. Under sections 32 and 33 of SARA, it is an offence to: 1) kill, harm, harass, capture or take an individual of a wildlife species listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened under SARA; 2) possess,

collect, buy, sell or trade an individual (or any part or derivative of such an individual) of a wildlife species listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened under SARA; and 3) damage or destroy the residence of one or more individuals of a wildlife species that is listed as an endangered or threatened species, or that is listed as an extirpated species if a recovery strategy has recommended its reintroduction into the wild in Canada. These prohibitions apply unless a person is authorized, by a permit, licence or other similar document issued in accordance with SARA, to engage in an activity affecting the listed species or the residences of its individuals. Species listed as special concern are not included in these prohibitions. Section 58(1) contains provisions to prohibit the destruction of any part of the critical habitat of listed endangered or threatened species or of any listed extirpated species if a recovery strategy has recommended the reintroduction of the species in the wild in Canada. Critical habitat is the habitat necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species and is identified in the recovery strategy or an action plan for the species.

Please visit the Species at Risk Public Registry for the most up to date list of aquatic species that are currently listed under the Species at Risk Act, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) status reports and associated recovery documents.

In the Pacific Region, the following SARA-listed aquatic species may be encountered in herring fisheries:

1. Basking Shark, Pacific population - Endangered
2. Blue Whale, Pacific population – Endangered
3. Bluntnose Sixgill Shark – Special Concern
4. Fin Whale, Pacific population– Threatened
5. Green Sturgeon – Special Concern
6. Grey Whale, Eastern North Pacific population – Special Concern
7. Harbour Porpoise, Pacific Ocean population – Special Concern
8. Humpback Whale, North Pacific population – Special Concern
9. Killer Whale, Northeast Pacific northern resident population – Threatened
10. Killer Whale, Northeast Pacific offshore population – Threatened
11. Killer Whale, Northeast Pacific southern resident population – Endangered
12. Killer Whale, Northeast Pacific transient population – Threatened
13. Leatherback Sea Turtle – Endangered
14. Longspine Thornyhead – Special Concern
15. North Pacific Right Whale – Endangered
16. Rougheye Rockfish Types I & II – Special Concern
17. Sea Otter – Special Concern
18. Sei Whale, Pacific population – Endangered
19. Steller Sea Lion – Special Concern
20. Tope (Soupfin) Shark – Special Concern

21. Yelloweye Rockfish, Pacific Ocean inside waters and outside waters populations – Special Concern

COSEWIC was formed in 1977 to provide Canadians with a single, scientifically sound classification of wildlife species at risk of extinction. COSEWIC began its assessments in 1978 and has met each year since then to review information collected to assess wildlife species. With the proclamation of SARA, COSEWIC has been established as an independent advisory panel responsible for identifying and assessing wildlife species considered to be in danger of disappearing in Canada. The assessments are carried out in accordance with section 15 of SARA, which, among other provisions, requires COSEWIC to determine the status of species it considers and to identify existing and potential threats. This is the first step towards protecting wildlife species at risk. Subsequent steps include COSEWIC reporting its results to the Canadian government and the public, and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change's official response to the assessment results. Wildlife species that have been designated by COSEWIC may then qualify for legal protection and recovery under SARA.

Additional marine species, including marine or anadromous species of fish designated by COSEWIC that are currently under consideration for listing under SARA include:

- Bocaccio Rockfish – Endangered
- Darkblotched Rockfish – Special Concern
- Quillback Rockfish – Threatened
- Yelloweye Rockfish, Outside Population – Threatened (currently listed as Special Concern)
- Yelloweye Rockfish, Inside Population – Threatened (currently listed as Special Concern)
- North Pacific Spiny Dogfish – Special Concern
- Eulachon, Fraser River Population – Endangered
- Eulachon, Central Pacific Coast Population – Endangered
- Eulachon, Nass/Skeena Population – Special Concern
- Grey Whale, Pacific Coast Feeding Group population – Endangered
- Grey Whale, Western Pacific population - Endangered
- Northern Fur Seal – Threatened
- Steelhead Trout
    - Chilcotin River population – Endangered
    - Thompson River population - Endangered
- Sockeye Salmon – Sakinaw population – Endangered
- Fraser Sockeye Salmon
    - Bowron-ES population – Endangered
    - Cultus-L population – Endangered
    - Francois-Fraser-S population – Special Concern
    - Harrison (D/S)-L population – Special Concern
    - Harrison (U/S)-L population – Endangered

    - Kamloops-ES population – Special Concern
    - Lillooet-Harrison-L poppulation – Special Concern
    - Nahatlatch-ES population – Special Concern
    - North Barriere-ES population – Threatened
    - Quesnel-S population – Endangered
    - Seton-L population – Endangered
    - Takla-Trembleur-EStu population – Endangered
    - Takla-Trembleur-Stuart-S population - Endangered
    - Taseko-ES population – Endangered
    - Widgeon River-Type population – Threatened
    - Alouette-ES population – Special Concern
    - Coquitlam-ES population – Special Concern
    - Fraser-ES population – Endangered
    - Momich-ES population - Endangered
- Coho Salmon – Interior Fraser population – Threatened
- Chinook Salmon – Okanagan population – Endangered
- Southern BC Chinook Salmon
    - East Vancouver Island, Stream, Spring population – Endangered
    - Lower Fraser, Ocean, Fall population – Threatened
    - Lower Fraser Ocean Summer population – Endangered
    - Lower Fraser, Stream, Spring population – Special Concern
    - Lower Fraser, Stream, Summer (Upper Pitt) population – Endangered
    - Lower Fraser, Stream, Summer population – Threatened
    - Middle Fraser, Stream, Fall population – Endangered
    - Middle Fraser, Stream, Summer population - Threatened
    - Middle Fraser, Stream, Spring (MFR+GStr) population – Threatened
    - Middle Fraser, Stream, Spring population – Endangered
    - North Thompson, Stream, Spring population – Endangered
    - North Thompson, Stream, Summer population – Endangered
    - South Thompson, Stream, Summer 1.2 population – Endangered
    - Upper Fraser, Stream, Spring population – Endangered
    - Southern Mainland-Boundary Bay, Ocean, Fall population – Threatened
    - South Thompson, Stream, Summer 1.3 population - Endangered
    - Lower Thompson, Stream, Spring population - Endangered
    - East Vancouver Island, Ocean, Summer population - Endangered
    - East Vancouver Island, Ocean, Fall population – Special Concern
    - West Vancouver Island, Ocean, Fall (South) population - Threatened
    - West Vancouver Island, Ocean, Fall (Nootka & Kyuquot) population - Threatened

A species identification guide for Rockfish can be found here: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/identify-identifier-eng.html

A sturgeon species identification guide can be found here: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/identify-identifier-eng.html

5.7.2 Shark Codes of Conduct

Out of the fourteen shark species in Canadian Pacific waters, three species are listed under SARA. The Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) is listed as Endangered, and the Bluntnose Sixgill Shark (*Hexanchus griseus*) and Tope Shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*) are listed as species of Special Concern. In Canadian waters, the primary threats to shark species have been identified as bycatch and entanglement. In order to address conservation concerns with shark species, it is important that measures are taken to reduce the mortality of sharks resulting from these primary threats. As such, commercial fishing licences have been amended to include a Condition of Licence for Basking Sharks that specify mitigation measures in accordance with SARA permit requirements. Additionally, two 'Code of Conduct for Shark Encounters' documents have been developed to reduce the mortality of Basking Shark, Bluntnose Sixgill, Tope Shark, and other Canadian Pacific shark species resulting from entanglement and bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries, and aquaculture. These guidelines include boat handling procedures during visual encounters with Basking Sharks, and best practices for handling Canadian Pacific shark species during entanglement encounters.

These documents have been posted online and can be found at the following URL links.

Code of conduct for sharks: https://dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/publications/sharks/coc/coc-sharks/index-eng.html

Code of conduct for Basking Sharks: https://dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/publications/sharks/coc/coc-basking/index-eng.html

5.7.3 Marine Mammals

In order to address conservation concerns with marine mammals, it is important that measures are taken to reduce the harm to and mortality of marine mammals resulting from primary threats they face, including those that may be associated with fishing activity, as well as to improve data collection and quality of any interactions. As such, commercial fishing licenses have been amended to include a Condition of License for Marine Mammals that specify mitigation measures and reporting requirements. This includes mandatory reporting of all interactions with marine mammals, prohibition to disturb marine mammals and requirement for minimum approach distances to marine mammals as set out under the *Marine Mammal Regulations* (Section 5.7.12).

5.7.4 Marine Mammal, Turtle and Basking Shark Incident and Sighting Reports

Incident Reporting

DFO is responsible for assisting marine mammals and sea turtles in distress. If your vessel strikes a whale, or if you observe an entangled, sick, injured, distressed, or dead marine mammal in BC waters, please contact the BC Marine Mammal Response Network Incident Reporting Hotline immediately:

1-800-465-4336 OR VHF CHANNEL 16

What to report:

- Your name and contact information
- Date and time of incident
- Location: Latitude/Longitude coordinates, landmarks
- Species
- Animal alive/dead (animal condition)
- Nature of injury and supporting details (if possible)
- Pictures/Video taken

Best practices to reduce entanglement and reporting an incident: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/docs/entanglements-empetrements-pub-eng.html.

Sighting Reporting

Fisheries and Oceans Canada appreciates your assistance in tracking the sightings of live cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises), sea turtles and basking sharks. While there are many whale species found in Pacific Canadian waters, sightings of basking shark and leatherback sea turtles are infrequent. The collection of sighting data is useful to scientists in determining population size and species distribution and aids in recovery efforts under the Species at Risk Act (SARA).

To report whale or turtle sightings, contact the Ocean Wise Sighting Network:
Toll free: 1.866.I.SAW.ONE (1-866-472-9663)
Email: sightings@ocean.org
Website: https://ocean.org/action/send-a-sighting-save-a-whale/
App: WhaleReport

To report basking shark sightings, contact the Basking Shark Sightings Network:
Toll free: 1-877-50-SHARK (1-877-507-4275)
Email: Sharks@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
Website: www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/SharkSightings

A species identification guide for sharks is available at: https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/40757067.pdf

Guides to distinguish between pinnipeds, emphasizing differences between Steller and California Sea Lions can be found here: https://oceanorg.blob.core.windows.net/oceanorg/2023/10/Pinniped_IDGuide-email-2022.pdf, and between Sea and River Otters: https://oceanorg.blob.core.windows.net/oceanorg/2023/10/Otters_IDGuide-ffp-2022.pdf.

5.7.5 Depredation

Depredation (the removal of fish from fishing gear) by killer whales and sperm whales has been reported by groundfish longline, salmon troll, and recreational harvesters in British Columbia, Washington, and Alaska.

Depredation is a learned behaviour that can spread throughout whale social groups. Once established, depredation is nearly impossible to eliminate. It is critical that harvesters do not encourage this learning by allowing whales to associate obtaining fish with fishing activity. Encouraging this behaviour will quickly lead to significant losses for harvesters. Depredation in commercial fisheries can also lead to increased likelihood of entanglement or injury to marine mammals.

The most important approach to prevent this from spreading is by NOT feeding whales directly or indirectly and not hauling gear in the vicinity of killer whales and sperm whales. It is prohibited to feed or disturb marine mammals under Canada's *Marine Mammal Regulations*, including by use of acoustic deterrents. Typically killer whales pass quickly through an area allowing fishing to resume. It is also recommended that you advise other fish harvesters in the area if you encounter depredation. Additional tips on avoiding depredation events can be found in the DFO Marine Mammal Bulletin: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/docs/depredation-whales-baleines-eng.html.

A useful depredation handout can be found at the Ocean Wise website: https://oceanorg.blob.core.windows.net/oceanorg/2024/02/Depredation_Commercial__1-pager-ffp.pdf.

If you experience depredation by whales, please report the incident by email Mammals.Marine@dfo-mpo.gc.ca, **or** by calling 1-800-465-4336 **or** by reporting accidental contact through the marine mammal interaction from: Fish-Harvester-Form-Eng.pdf (dfo-mpo.gc.ca). Reporting all incidents will assist DFO and fish harvesters in understanding this problem and help in developing strategies to avoid it.

5.7.6 Resident Killer Whale

Two distinct populations of Resident Killer Whales, known as the Northern and Southern Residents, occupy the waters off the west coast of British Columbia. Northern Resident Killer Whales are listed as Threatened and Southern Resident Killer Whales are listed as Endangered on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Broad strategies for recovery are identified in the Recovery Strategy for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales (*Orcinus orca*) in Canada (hereafter referred to as the "Recovery Strategy"), which was finalized in March 2008, and amended in 2011 and 2018 to include amendments to the critical habitat section. The Recovery Strategy also identifies key threats to Resident Killer Whales as (1) reduced prey availability, (2) physical and acoustic disturbance, and (3) environmental contaminants along with an additional emerging threat of vessel strikes. It can be viewed at: https://sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/plans/Rs-ResidentKillerWhale-v00-2018dec-Eng.pdf.

Critical habitat and its associated functions, features, and attributes have been identified for both populations in the Recovery Strategy, and are protected from destruction through Critical Habitat Orders made under SARA sections 58(4) and (5). The update to the Recovery Strategy in 2018 resulted in the identification and protection of two additional areas of critical habitat: the waters on the continental shelf off southwestern Vancouver Island, including Swiftsure and La Pérouse Banks (important for both Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales), and the waters of west Dixon Entrance, along the north coast of Graham Island from Langara to Rose Spit (important for Northern Resident Killer Whales). The *Action Plan for Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*) in Canada* (DFO 2017) supports the strategic direction set out in the Recovery Strategy, and outlines measures that provide the best chance of achieving the recovery goal for the species, including the measures to be taken to address the threats and monitor the recovery of the species.

The *Fisheries Act* provides for the protection and conservation of fish and prohibits the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat. The Marine Mammal Regulations, which are made under the *Fisheries Act*, prohibits the disturbance of marine mammals such as Killer Whales. The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) contains prohibitions against the killing, harming, harassing, capturing, taking, possessing, collecting, buying, selling or trading of individuals of endangered, threatened and extirpated species listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, including Killer Whales.

Applications for works, undertakings or activities in fish habitat, including habitats designated as critical habitat under SARA, are reviewed to ensure suitable avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated to protect fish and fish habitat, Species at Risk, their residences and critical habitat.

Monitoring is carried out to confirm compliance with regulatory instruments and conformity with advice. Non-compliance may lead to charges under the *Fisheries Act*, Marine Mammal Regulations, and/or the SARA.

Guidelines for marine mammal viewing have also been developed. To avoid disturbing Killer Whales and other marine mammals, all vessel operators, including fish harvesters, are advised to follow the Be Whale Wise (BWW): Marine Wildlife Guidelines for Boaters, Paddlers and Viewers, which are available from local Fishery Offices or on-line at: https://www.bewhalewise.org/marine-wildlife-guidelines/.

5.7.7 Key Threat: Reduced Prey Availability

Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales feed primarily on salmon. The seasonal distribution and movement patterns of Resident Killer Whales are strongly associated with the availability of their preferred prey, Chinook salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha), and secondarily, Chum salmon (O. keta) during summer and fall. There is less known about the winter and spring diet and winter distribution of Resident Killer Whales, but recent and ongoing research continues to further our understanding and provide more information about the principal threats facing the population.

DFO and other researchers continue to advance new scientific information and analyses regarding the ecology of Resident Killer Whales. Much of this new information focuses on their feeding habits and preference for Chinook salmon, particularly in the Salish Sea with southern BC Chinook stocks experiencing poor returns in recent years.

5.7.8 Key Threat: Environmental Contaminants

There are numerous chemical and biological pollutants that may directly or indirectly impact Resident Killer Whales, ranging from persistent organic pollutants to antibiotic resistant bacteria and exotic species. Recent studies indicate Resident Killer Whales have high levels of some contaminants with males having the highest levels, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and certain fire-retardant persistent organic pollutants which have been banned in Canada. Canadian and US researchers continue to monitor the health of the Resident Killer Whale populations.

5.7.9 Key Threat: Physical and Acoustic Disturbance

All cetaceans, including Resident Killer Whales, have been subjected to increasing amounts of disturbance from vessels, aircraft and other anthropogenic noise in recent years. This includes chronic noise from shipping, and acute noise from industrial activities such as dredging, pile driving, and construction, as well as seismic testing, military sonar, and other vessel use of low and mid-frequency sonars. Physical and/or acoustic disturbance can affect Resident Killer Whales at both the individual and population level, and research is ongoing to further determine the short and longer-term impacts of disturbance to individuals and their populations.

5.7.10 Southern Resident Killer Whales – Management Measures to Address Reduced Prey Availability, and Physical and Acoustic Disturbance

The Government of Canada is taking important steps to protect and recover the Southern Resident Killer Whale population, in keeping with direction provided in *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) recovery documents. In May 2018, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and Minister of Environment and Climate Change determined the Southern Resident Killer Whale population faces imminent threats to its survival and recovery. Given the status of the population and ongoing threats to Southern Resident Killer Whale recovery, DFO implemented a number of measures since 2018, including measures aimed at increasing prey availability and accessibility for Southern Resident Killer Whales - particularly Chinook salmon—and reducing threats related to physical and acoustic disturbance with a focus in key foraging areas within Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat. These measures include fishing closures, Interim Sanctuary Zones (i.e. no go zones), Speed Restricted Zones (vessel slowdown areas), vessel avoidance distances, and a number of voluntary measures in the presence of killer whales.

Since 2018, Indigenous groups, Indigenous Multi-Nation Group, the Indigenous and Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG), Technical Working Groups (TWGs), stakeholders, and the public have provided recommendations and feedback to Ministers and Departments on a range of measures (including measures related to increasing prey availability, sanctuaries, vessel disturbance [both noise and physical disturbance], and contaminants) to support Southern Resident Killer Whale recovery.

The Government of Canada is working with Indigenous groups and stakeholders to inform potential changes to vessel measures for 2026 and 2027. The Government of Canada intends for actions for the 2026 season be implemented to coincide with the return of Southern Resident Killer Whales in typically greater numbers to Canadian Pacific waters. These restrictions do not apply to individuals or vessels being used to fish for food, social or ceremonial purposes, or for domestic purposes pursuant to a treaty, under a license issued under the Aboriginal Communal Fishing License Regulations. For up-to-date information regarding the Southern Resident Killer Whale management measures, please visit: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/srkw-measures-mesures-ers-eng.html

Additionally, the Government of Canada is asking vessel operators to respect the following voluntary measures:

- Stop fishing (do not set or haul gear) within 1,000 metres of killer whales and let them pass;
- Reduce speed to less than 7 knots when within 1000m of the nearest killer whale
- When safe to do so, turn off echo sounders and fish finders
- Place engine in neutral idle and allow animals to pass if your vessel is not in compliance with the approach distance regulations

- For more information on the best ways to help whales while on the water, when on both sides of the border, please visit: bewhalewise.org

For information regarding the Southern Resident Killer Whale management measures to support recovery, please contact the Marine Mammal Team (DFO.SRKW-ERS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) or visit: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/srkw-measures-mesures-ers-eng.html

5.7.11 Marine Mammal Protection Act

U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions
In 2016, the U.S. published new regulations (80 FR 54390) pursuant to the *Marine Mammal Protection Act* (MMPA) which focus on the reduction of marine mammal bycatch in foreign commercial fishing operations. Under these regulations, harvesting nations intending to continue to export fish and fish products to the U.S. after January 1, 2026, had to apply to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for a comparability finding for each of its commercial fisheries listed in the 2020 U.S. List of Foreign Fisheries. Harvesting nations must demonstrate: 1) the prohibition of intentional mortality or serious injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations; and 2) the implementation of a regulatory program comparable in effectiveness to the U.S., including mandatory reporting of marine mammal bycatch, monitoring programs and management/mitigation measures where appropriate.

Depending on information provided, foreign commercial fisheries that export fish and fish products to the United States can be classified as either "export" or "exempt" based on the frequency and likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals. On October 8, 2020, the 2020 U.S. List of Foreign Fisheries was published on the NOAA public registry. For the Pacific Region, all Crab-by-trap and Prawn/Shrimp-by-trap fisheries are classified as *Export.* All other Invertebrate fisheries (hand implement, diving, and trawl) are classified as *Exempt.*

Fisheries that fail to demonstrate such comparability measures to the US by December 31, 2025, will be prohibited from entering the US market starting January 1, 2026. On September 2, 2025, NOAA published in the U.S. Federal Register the results of comparability findings under the U.S. MMPA. All Canadian fisheries were found compliant and can continue to export fish and fish products to the U.S. after the MMPA import provisions come into effect on January 1, 2026.

DFO will continue to share information about the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions and the process for ensuring continued access to US markets. Further information can be found on the NOAA website, or by contacting the Regional Fisheries Coordinator or the DFO Marine Mammal Unit (MMU) (DFO.PacificMarineMammal-PacificMarineMammal.MPO@DFO-MPO.GC.CA).

5.7.12 Marine Mammal Regulations

The *Marine Mammal Regulations* provide direction on conservation and protection of marine mammals, provide guidance for recovery of listed species under the *Species at Risk Act*, and set out provisions related to reducing human disturbance of marine mammals (e.g. viewing of marine mammals) and mandatory reporting requirements in the case there is accidental contact with a marine mammal and a vessel or fishing gear. These regulations were amended in 2018 and specify mandatory requirements to prevent disturbance of marine mammals.

As per section 7(2) of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, disturbance is defined as a number of human actions including:

- Feeding, swimming or interacting with a marine mammal.
- Moving a marine mammal (or enticing/causing it to move).
- Separating a marine mammal from its group or going between it and a calf.
- Trapping a marine mammal or a group either between a vessel and the shore, or between a vessel and other vessels.
- Tagging or marking a marine mammal.

Boats are required to maintain a minimum approach distance of 100 m for whales, dolphins or porpoises, 200m when whales, dolphins or porpoises are in a resting position or with a calf, and 200m from all Killer Whales in Pacific Canadian waters except when in southern BC coastal waters which has an increased approach distance of 400m in support of Southern Resident Killer Whale recovery.

Please visit the Southern Resident Killer Whale management measures website for more information on the management measures and potential amendments to the approach distances to Southern Resident Killer Whales under the Marine Mammal Regulations for 2026/2027: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/srkw-measures-mesures-ers-eng.html

Any operator of a vessel or fishing gear involved in accidental contact with a marine mammal must notify DFO of the incident, as per section 39 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations.* Incident reporting includes:

- Reporting an injured, stranded, entangled or dead marine mammal to the BC Marine Mammal Response Network (Observe, Record, Report) 1-800-465-4336.
- Reporting as bycatch in a log book.
- Reporting accidental contact through the marine mammal interaction form.
- Depredation reporting to DFO by email at Mammals.Marine@dfo-mpo.gc.ca, by calling 1-800-465-4336 or Reporting accidental contact through the marine mammal interaction form.

Please note, incidents involving abuse or harassment of a marine mammal should be reported as a fisheries violation, while injured, stranded, entangled or dead marine mammals should be reported to the BC Marine Mammal Response Network to enable a response if appropriate.

For more information on safe boating behavior around whales please visit: Watching Marine Mammals and Be Whale Wise, or by contacting the DFO Marine Mammal Unit (MMU) (Mammals.Marine@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

5.8 Oceans and Habitat Considerations

For the most up to date information, see website links, advisory board updates, and Fishery Notices.

Canada's Marine and Coastal Areas Conservation Mandate

To protect biodiversity and meet its marine conservation targets, Canada is establishing marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), in consultation with First Nations, other levels of government, industry, non-governmental organizations, and the public.

More information is available online for:
Canada's marine conservation targets:
https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/index-eng.html

Canada's marine protected and conserved areas:
https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/areas-zones/index-eng.html
Marine refuges and fisheries management measures that qualify as OECMs:
https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/index-eng.html

Marine Protected and Conserved Areas

Canada uses a variety of legislative tools for marine conservation, depending on the lead federal department or agency and their coastal mandates. As goals, objectives, and management plans are finalized for these initiatives, DFO's management of fisheries will be adapted as appropriate, in consultation with interested parties through initiative-specific consultations and annual Integrated Fisheries Management processes. The implementation of spatial marine conservation initiatives is informed by considerations under the Oceans Act, Fisheries Act and the Sustainable Fisheries Framework policy suite, and mandate commitments to the Blue Economy Strategy and reconciliation with First Nations.

For more information on Canada's marine conservation tools: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/plan/index-eng.html

For more information on relevant legislation, please see the following:

Marine refuges and other measures under the *Fisheries Act*: https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-14/page-1.html
Marine Protected Areas - *Oceans Act*: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-2.4/
National Wildlife Areas - *Canada Wildlife Act*: https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/w-9/page-1.html
National Marine Conservation Areas (Reserves) - *National Marine Conservation Areas Act*: https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/annualstatutes/2002_18/page-1.html

An overview map of federal marine conservation initiatives in the Pacific Region is provided in Figure 7, followed by a table outlining relevant details by initiative – both established and in progress. Many initiatives are types of marine protected areas (MPAs) or marine refuges (OECMs). See site-specific regulations and management plans for any restrictions on activities, or Fishery Notices where applicable.

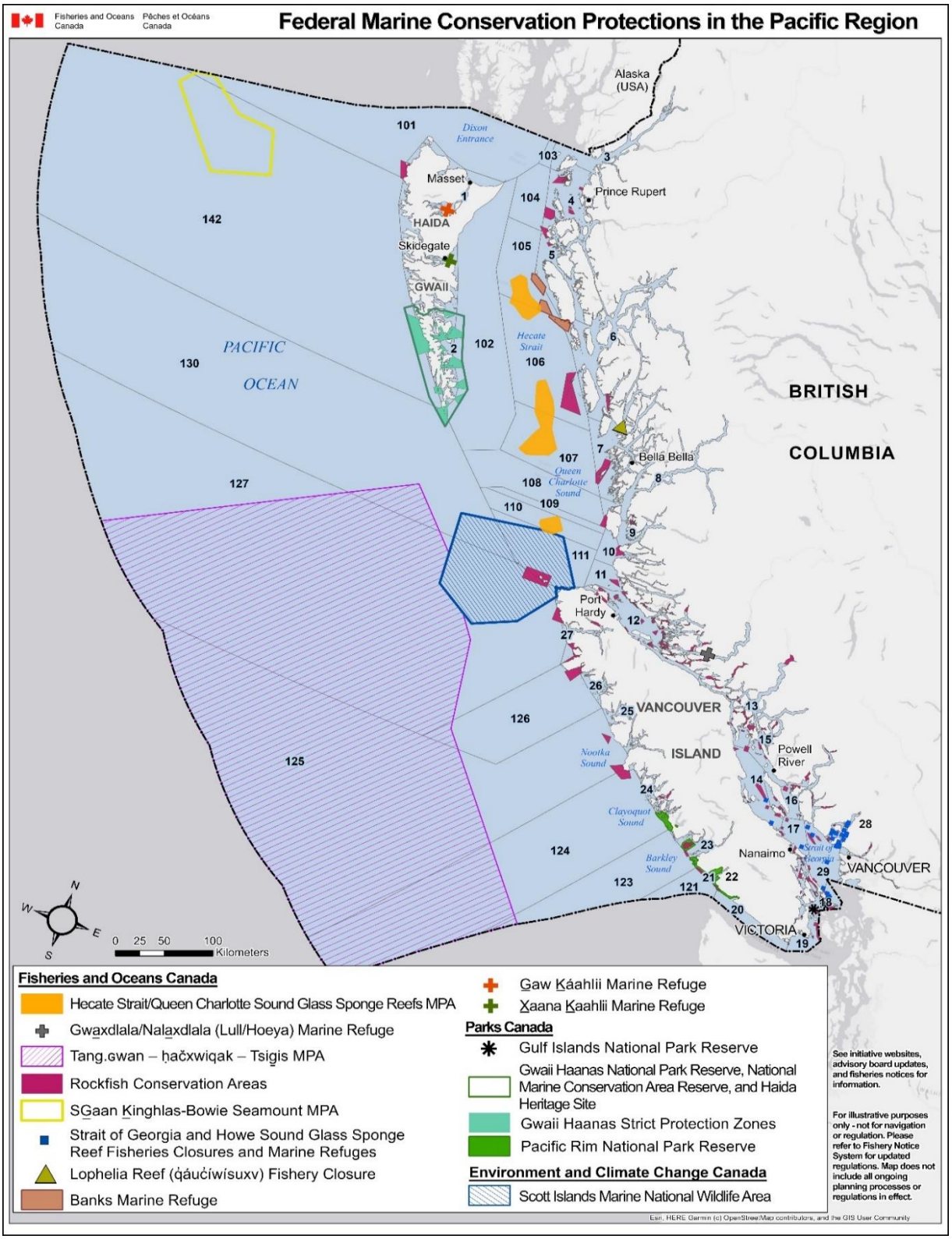

Figure 7. Pacific Fisheries Management Areas and Federal Marine Conservation Initiatives and Closures

Table 1. Overview of Federal Marine Conservation Initiatives in DFO Pacific Region (see Figure 7 map)

Name	Type	Lead	Weblinks	Contact	Fishery Considerations
Fisheries and Oceans Canada, *Oceans Act* and *Fisheries Act*					
Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound Glass Sponge Reefs Marine Protected Area	MPA	DFO	https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/hecate-charlotte/index-eng.html	DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacifique.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	See MPA website and regulations for more details: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2017-15/index.html In the MPA there are 3 different management zone types: Core Protection Zones, Vertical Adaptive Management Zones and Adaptive Management Zones **The entire MPA is closed to commercial bottom-contact fishing activities. Core Protection Zones (CPZ) are closed to anchoring and all fishing activities**. Commercial fishing in a Vertical Adaptive Management Zone (VAMZ) is permitted if the fishing is carried out by means of midwater trawl, midwater hook and line, troll, seine or gillnet and the gear does not enter a CPZ. Recreational fishing in a VAMZ is permitted if the fishing is carried out by means of midwater hook and line and the gear does not enter a CPZ.
SG̱áan K̲ínghlas-Bowie Seamount Marine Protected Area	MPA	DFO & Council of Haida Nation	https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/sgaan-kinghlas-bowie/index-eng.html	DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacifique.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	See MPA website and regulations for more details: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2008-124/ The MPA is closed to all commercial fishing activities. The MPA is also closed to recreational and FSC bottom-contact fishing activities.
Tang.ɢwan – ḥačxwiqak – Tsig̱is Marine Protected Area **Offshore Pacific Seamounts and Vents Closure †**	MPA	DFO	https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/tht/index-eng.html	DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacifique.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	See MPA regulations for more details: Canada Gazette, Part 2, Volume 158, Number 13: Tang.ɢwan {|mdash|} ḥačxwiqak {|mdash|} Tsig̱is Marine Protected Area Regulations. The MPA has 3 different management zones: General zone, Dellwood zone and Union Zone. Bottom-contact gear is prohibited in the entire MPA. Commercial and recreational fishing using pelagic hook and line gear is allowed in all three of the MPA's zones, provided

					the gear does not go below a depth of 100 m from the sea surface in the Union or Dellwood Zones, or 500 m from the sea surface in the General Zone. Midwater trawl is allowed in the General Zone, provided the gear does not go below a depth of 500 m from the sea surface and is prohibited in the Union and Dellwood Zones. Fishery Notices for these closures can be found in FN0096 (2025). † Offshore Pacific Seamounts and Vents Closure Variation Orders have been replaced by the Variation Orders for this MPA.
Banks Marine Refuge	Marine Refuge	DFO & Gitxaała Nation	https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/banks-eng.html	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Specific details of the closures and restrictions can be found in Fishery Notices FN0102 and FN0101 (2025). In addition to all RCA closures remaining in effect, as of February 14, 2025, commercial prawn and crab by trap fisheries are closed around western portions of Banks Island, and as of March 4, 2025, recreational prawn and crab by trap fisheries are closed around western portions of Banks Island.
Ǵaw K̲áahlii Marine Refuge	Marine Refuge	DFO & Council of Haida Nation	https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/masset-inlet-embouchure-eng.html	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Specific details of the closures and restrictions can be found in Fishery Notices FN0100 and FN0099 (2025). As of February 14, 2025, all commercial fisheries are indefinitely closed in portions of Ǵaw K̲áahlii (Masset Inlet). As of March 4, 2025, all recreational fisheries, except shore-based angling, are closed in portions of Ǵaw K̲áahlii (Masset Inlet).
Gwa̲xdlala/Nala̲xdlala (Lull/Hoeya) Marine Refuge	Marine Refuge	DFO & Mamalilikulla First Nation	https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/lull-hoeya-eng.html	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Specific details of the closures and restrictions can be found in Fishery Notices FN0118 (2023). The Gwa̲xdlala/Nala̲xdlala (Lull/Hoeya) marine refuge is closed to all fisheries (commercial, recreational and FSC fishing activities).
Homayno (Heydon/ Loughborough) *	*Proposed* Marine Refuge	DFO & Wei Wai Kum	TBD	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC	DFO has sought input on potential fisheries closures and a proposed marine refuge at sites within Homayno (portions of Heydon and

		First Nation		.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Loughborough Inlet). In the event of establishment of a marine refuge, specific details of the closures and restrictions will be communicated by Fishery Notices. The fisheries proposed for potential closure in portions of the marine refuge at Homayno (Heydon/Loughborough) are: commercial prawn by trap, crab by trap, salmon, and groundfish and recreational salmon, finfish and invertebrate fisheries.
Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound Glass Sponge Reef (GSR) Marine Refuges*	Marine Refuge	DFO	https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/eccsr-cerceef/closures-fermetures-eng.html	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Specific details of the closures and restrictions on a site-by-site basis can be found in Fishery Notices FN0205 (2019), FN0571 (2015), and FN0039* (2022). All commercial, recreational and Indigenous food, social and ceremonial (FSC) bottom-contact fishing activities are prohibited and include: • prawn and crab by trap • shrimp by trawl • groundfish by midwater and bottom trawl • groundfish by hook and line • use of downrigger gear in recreational salmon trolling (in select sites via Condition of Licence). (Restrictions vary by site).
Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs)	RCA	DFO	https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/maps-cartes/rca-acs/index-eng.html	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	There are 162 Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) in British Columbia, covering roughly 4,350km^2 of Canadian Pacific waters. These areas are closed to a range of recreational and commercial fisheries to protect inshore rockfish and their habitat. See website for details on individual RCAs by area.
GSR-RCA Project: Proposed sites in Howe Sound and Jervis Inlet	*Proposed Marine Refuges*	DFO	TBD	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	DFO is proposing six sites as marine refuges. Input is being sought on proposed fisheries closures at these sites. If the proposed marine refuges are established, closures may be in place in early 2026. Details of any closures will be communicated through Fishery Notices and updates to license conditions, where applicable. Proposed

					closures include commercial and recreational fisheries currently restricted in Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs), as well as bottom-contact fisheries. An information package has been shared and meetings established with potentially affected fisheries.
Xaana Kaahlii Marine Refuge	Marine Refuge	DFO & Council of Haida Nation	https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/skidegate-inlet-embouchure-eng.html	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Specific details of the closures and restrictions can be found in Fishery Notices FN0100 and FN0099 (2025). As of February 14, 2025, all commercial fisheries are indefinitely closed in portions of Xaana Kaahlii (Skidegate Inlet). As of March 4, 2025, all recreational fisheries, except shore-based angling, are closed in portions of Xaana Kaahlii (Skidegate Inlet).
Lophelia Reef (ǵáuc̓íwísuxv)	Fishery Closure	DFO, Kitasoo Xai'xais and Heiltsuk First Nations	https://www.canada.ca/en/fisheries-oceans/news/2024/03/fisheries-and-oceans-canada-closes-the-first-and-only-known-live-coral-reef-in-pacific-canada-to-all-commercial-and-recreational-bottom-contact-fis.html	DFO.PACFMMCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Specific details of the closures and restrictions of this site can be found in Fishery Notice FN0085 (2024). The Lophelia Reef is closed to all bottom-contact commercial and recreational fisheries (including midwater trawl).
Parks Canada, *National Marine Conservation Areas Act*					
Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site	NMCAR	Parks Canada	https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas	gwaiihaanas@pc.gc.ca	Refer to Fishery Notice FN0536 (2019), released June 13, 2019 for a detailed description of the Strict Protection Zones. There is "no extraction or harvesting by anyone of the resources of the lands and non-tidal waters of the Archipelago for or in support of commercial enterprise" (s3.3). Contact the Gwaii Haanas administration office: 1-877-559-8818
Proposed Central Coast National Marine Conservation Area Reserve*	*Proposed NMCAR*	Parks Canada	https://parks.canada.ca/amnc-nmca/cnamnc-cnnmca/cotecentrale-centralcoast	nmca-pacific-amnc@pc.gc.ca	Proposed site is currently in the establishment agreement negotiation phase. Successful negotiation of an establishment agreement will include determining an outer boundary for the site within which the Federal Marine Protected Area Protection Standard

					will apply, which includes a prohibition on bottom trawl gear. Associated steps will be taken following establishment agreement completion to advance application of the Standard. Permitted activities are determined during the management planning process which begins after formal establishment. Management planning will also be informed by the expertise of an advisory committee comprised of representatives from a range of marine sectors and interests, including the commercial fishing sector. No fisheries closures associated with the proposed Central Coast NMCAR are anticipated for the 2026 IFMP / fishing season.
Gulf Islands National Park Reserve	National Park marine area	Parks Canada	https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/bc/gulf	gulfinfo@pc.gc.ca	Park regulations can be found at: Canada National Parks Act
Pacific Rim National Park Reserve	National Park marine area	Parks Canada	https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/pacificrim	Pacrim.info@pc.gc.ca	Park regulations can be found at: Canada National Parks Act
Environment and Climate Change Canada, *Canada Wildlife Act*					
Proposed marine National Wildlife Area at Nearshore Haida Gwaii	*Proposed Marine National Wildlife Area*	ECCC & Council of Haida Nation	TBD	RNFMilieuMarinSCFPAC-CWSPACMarineNWA@ec.gc.ca	The marine NWA was identified in the Network Action Plan (2023) as the proposed tool for the Nearshore Haida Gwaii Site. Partners are currently in the feasibility assessment stage and reinitiating stakeholder engagement. In October 2025, Partners will be initiating the Nearshore Haida Gwaii Advisory Committee (NHGAC) and also engaging, as appropriate, through bilateral discussions. The role of the NHGAC is to provide a forum for Partners to receive advice and input on the feasibility assessment phase of the proposed marine NWA. The NHGAC will include representatives from a range of sectors, such as the commercial fisheries sector; and the Haida Gwaii Integrated Advisory

					Committee. The NHGAC is not a decision-making body. Discussion of any protection measures and/or permitted activities will occur during the Regulatory Strategy phase. No fisheries closures associated with the proposed marine NWA at Nearshore Haida Gwaii are anticipated for the 2026 IFMP / fishing season.
Scott Islands Marine National Wildlife Area*	Marine National Wildlife Area	ECCC	https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/national-wildlife-areas/locations/scott-islands-marine.html	Enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca or rnfis-sinwa@ec.gc.ca	The Scott Islands Protected Marine Area regulations can be found at: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2018-119/index.html

** Indicates ongoing planning process. See initiative websites, advisory board updates, and Fishery Notices for information.*

Marine Spatial Planning in Canada

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is an internationally recognized and collaborative process for managing ocean spaces to achieve ecological, economic, cultural, and social objectives. In Canada, MSP does not replace regulatory responsibilities of existing authorities, rather through this collaborative process, MSP develops a shared vision, principles, and knowledge base, as well as decision support tools, to make appropriate and evidence-based decisions about ocean use and management.

Key deliverables for MSP in the Pacific region included the Canada Marine Planning Atlas (Pacific), the Marine Spatial Planning Framework for the Southern BC Planning Area, and the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network Action Plan for the Northern Shelf Bioregion . The Southern BC MSP Framework (the Framework) was developed with collaboration from the Province of British Columbia, other Federal departments, and Indigenous groups. The Northern Shelf Bioregion MPA Network Action Plan was endorsed by a trilateral partnership of First Nations, the Province of British Columbia, and the Government of Canada in February 2023.

For more information on marine spatial planning in Canada: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/management-gestion/msp-psm/index-eng.html

The Canada Marine Planning Atlas for Pacific Region is available online at: Canada Marine Planning Atlas (dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

The Southern BC Marine Spatial Planning framework is available online at: Southern British Columbia Marine Spatial Planning Framework

The MPA Network Action Plan for the Northern Shelf Bioregion is available online at: https://mpanetwork.ca/nap/

5.9 Sustainable Fisheries Framework

The Sustainable Fisheries Framework (SFF) is a toolbox of policies to ensure that Canadian fisheries support conservation and sustainable use of resources.

These policies include:

- *Fishery Decision-Making Framework Incorporating the Precautionary Approach*
    - Guidelines for Implementing the Fish Stocks Provisions in the *Fisheries Act*
    - Guidelines for writing rebuilding plans per the Fish Stocks Provisions and A Fishery-Decision-making Framework Incorporating the Precautionary Approach
- *Fishery Monitoring Policy*
    - Introduction to the procedural steps for implementing the Fishery Monitoring Policy
- *Policy for Managing the Impacts of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas*
    - Ecological Risk Assessment Framework (ERAF) for Coldwater Corals and Sponge Dominated Communities
- *Policy on Managing Bycatch*
- *Policy on New Fisheries for Forage Species*
- *Canada's Policy for Conservation of Pacific Salmon* (Wild Salmon Policy)

For more information on the Sustainable Fisheries Framework and its policies, visit: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/overview-cadre-eng.htm

Sustainability Surveys for Fisheries: DFO annually tracks the performance of key fish stocks that it manages through the Sustainability Survey for Fisheries. Results of previous Sustainability Surveys are available at: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/survey-sondage/index-en.html

***Sustainable Fisheries Framework work plans*:** Each year, DFO develops a work plan and reports on priorities and targets regarding the sustainable management of Canada's marine resources. These work plans are available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/about-notre-sujet/publications/work-plan-travail/index-eng.html

5.9.1 Precautionary Approach Framework

The Sustainable Fisheries Framework policy suite includes a decision-making framework incorporating a precautionary approach to commercial, recreational, and food, social, and ceremonial fishing: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/precaution-eng.htm

The precautionary approach in fisheries management requires caution when scientific knowledge is uncertain. The absence of adequate scientific information should not result in postponed action or failure to take action to avoid the risk of serious harm to the resource.

Applying the precautionary approach to fisheries management decisions entails establishing harvest strategies that:

- identify three stock status zones – Healthy, Cautious, and Critical – delineated by an upper stock reference point and a limit reference point;
- set the removal rate at which fish may be harvested within each stock status zone; and
- adjust the removal rate according to fish stock status (i.e. spawning stock biomass or another index/metric relevant to population productivity), based on pre-agreed decision rules.

The framework requires that a harvest strategy be incorporated into respective fisheries management plans to keep the removal rate moderate when the stock status is in the Healthy Zone, to promote rebuilding when stock status is low, and to ensure a low risk of serious or irreversible harm to the stock.

A key component of the *Precautionary Approach Framework* requires that when a stock has declined to the Critical Zone, a rebuilding plan must be in place with the aim of having a high probability of the stock growing out of the Critical Zone within a reasonable timeframe: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/precautionary-precaution-eng.htm

5.9.2 Fisheries Act: Fish Stock Provisions

Amendments to the *Fisheries Act* (Bill C-68) were passed into legislation in 2019 and include new authorities to amend the Fishery (General) Regulations and requirements to maintain major fish stocks at sustainable levels, and to develop and implement rebuilding plans for stocks that have declined to their critical zone. Amendments are available at: https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/en/bill/42-1/C-68

Associated regulatory amendments to prescribe major fish stocks and describe requirements for rebuilding plans are published in the Canada Gazette. Available at: https://gazette.gc.ca/accueil-home-eng.html. For latest publications, enter the search terms “fish stock” or “rebuilding plan” into the Find a publication box on that website.

Major fish stocks are defined in Schedule IX, and requirements for rebuilding plans are described in Part XIV (Fish Stocks Provisions) of the Fishery (General) Regulations. Available at: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-93-53/index.htm

5.9.3 Ecological Risk Assessment Framework & Cold-Water Coral and Sponge Conservation Strategy

The *Ecological Risk Assessment Framework for Coldwater Corals and Sponge Dominated Communities* (or ERAF) outlines a process for identifying the level of ecological risk of fishing activity and its impacts on sensitive benthic areas in the marine environment. Available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/risk-ecolo-risque-eng.htm.

DFO's *Pacific Region Cold-water Coral and Sponge Conservation Strategy* aims to promote the conservation, health and integrity of Canada's Pacific Ocean cold-water coral and sponge species. For more information, visit: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/ceccsr-cerceef/conservation-eng.html

5.9.4 Fishery Monitoring and Catch Reporting

DFO released the national *Fishery Monitoring Policy* in 2019, which will replace the regional *Strategic Framework for Fisheries Monitoring and Catch Reporting* in the Pacific Fisheries (2012). The national policy seeks to provide dependable, timely and accessible fishery information through application of a common set of steps used to establish fishery monitoring requirements across fisheries. Available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/fishery-monitoring-surveillance-des-peches-eng.htm

From 2023 to 2028, Pacific Region is pursuing a project-based approach to implementation of the national Fishery Monitoring Policy, with a focus on the recreational fishery.

Further guidance on implementation of the national Fishery Monitoring policy is available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/fmp-implementation-psp-mise-en-oeuvre-eng.htm

For more information on the 2012 Pacific *Strategic Framework for Fisheries Monitoring and Catch Reporting*, please visit: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/docs/framework-monitoring-cadre-surveillance-eng.html

5.9.5 Policy for Managing the Impacts of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas

To avoid serious or irreversible harm to sensitive benthic habitat, species and communities and to otherwise address impacts to benthic habitat, communities and species, this policy outlines a

five step process. Available at: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/benthi-eng.htm

5.9.6 Policy on Managing Bycatch

The *Policy on Managing Bycatch* supports sustainable fisheries management by minimizing the risk of fisheries causing serious or irreversible harm to bycatch species, and by accounting for total catch, including retained and non-retained bycatch. Available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/bycatch-policy-prise-access-eng.htm

The *Guidance on Implementation of the Policy on Managing Bycatch* supports policy implementation: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/bycatch-guide-prise-access-eng.htm

5.9.7 Policy on New Fisheries for Forage Species

While other new fisheries may be started under the *New and Emerging Fisheries Policy*, this policy outlines the special considerations for new fisheries on forage species, which must not threaten the conservation of other species that depend on the forage species for food. Available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/forage-eng.htm

5.10 Indigenous Fisheries Programs

5.10.1 Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI)

The Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) was announced in 2007 and is aimed at achieving environmentally sustainable and economically viable commercial fisheries, where conservation is the first priority and Indigenous aspirations are supported. The Government of Canada committed $175 million over five years to implement the initiative. PICFI builds on fisheries reform work begun in response to the 2004 reports of the First Nations Panel on Fisheries and the Joint Task Group on Post-treaty Fisheries, as well as subsequent discussions in a wide variety of forums that have confirmed the need for PICFI.

In 2017, it was announced that the Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative will receive permanent funding to expand Pacific and Atlantic programs. PICFI currently receives an ongoing $22.05M annually. Commercial Fisheries Enterprises (CFE) receive a notional funding of up to $340K under the Business Development Source (BDS) funding envelope and a notional funding of up to $85K under Capacity Building Support (CBS). Additional funding opportunity under Harvester Training Supplement (HTS) was also created to support training and mentorship of Indigenous members to build their capacity and skills development in commercial fisheries, seafood processing, and aquaculture. In 2025, PICFI established additional funding opportunities under the Special Measure Funding to support time-bound special projects based on CFE needs at the time.

Beginning 2018/2019, the Aquaculture Development Source (ADS) funding envelope was launched to support aquaculture projects under PICFI and has an annual budget of $3M for all eligible First Nations. The Indigenous Marine Servicing Initiative (IMSI) is another funding envelope created in 2018/19 with an annual budget of $1M. The IMSI is administered nationally in collaboration with PICFI to support activities including vessel servicing and marina services for all eligible First Nations.

PICFI works with eligible participants, Indigenous organizations, and other stakeholders to develop outcomes that achieves DFO's intended results of improved outcomes for Indigenous peoples. Six key structures are currently in place to support the delivery of these outcomes These six structures use collaborative methods to support the delivery of the program; these include the Business Management Committee (BDMC), the Business Development team (BDT), Capacity Development & Training advisor, Independent Third Party Evaluator (ITPE), Application Review Committee (ARC), and Special Planning Sessions. This collaborative method of delivery contributes to an effective relationship and collaboration with indigenous communities.

The BDMC is co-chaired by a senior DFO official and an executive of a First Nation Organization, and includes other DFO personnel, Indigenous organizations, and program delivery partners, to set the direction, provide guidance to the program, and oversee development of the program. The ARC, the ITPE, and the BDT operate away from the DFO, limiting direct government involvement, which adds an element of independence to provide transparency to Commercial Fisheries Enterprises and First Nations alike.

PICFI currently supports 28 Indigenous owned Commercial Fishing Enterprises comprised of 117 member Nations.

More information on PICFI is available at: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/picfi-ipcip/index-eng.html

5.10.2 Allocation Transfer Program (ATP)

The Allocation Transfer Program (ATP) was created in 1994 under the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy. Its purpose is to support fisheries-based economic development for First Nations groups in coastal communities by providing opportunities to get more involved in the commercial fishing industry. The program can provide commercial fisheries access to eligible Indigenous groups through a voluntary relinquishment process. The equivalent commercial fishing capacity is then re-issued to Indigenous groups, so the ATP does not add to the existing effort on the resource. As of 2011, no further federal funding has been budgeted for ATP in the Pacific Region. With the renewal of the PICFI, DFO is focused on supporting Indigenous Commercial Fishing Enterprises (CFEs). ATP will continue as a source of distribution of communal commercial licences. The ATP is considered fully allocated with the exception of

some licences and quota that are generally low value, low interest, and/or not economically viable. The Department works on plans to allocate available licences on a temporary or ongoing basis. Once a plan has been approved, eligible groups are informed of the opportunities through a call out process.

Through the PICFI and ATP programs, DFO has acquired a total of 288 roe herring gill net licence eligibilities and 11 roe herring seine licence eligibilities.

6 ACCESS AND ALLOCATION

The Minister can, for reasons of conservation or for any other valid reason, modify access, allocations, and sharing arrangements as outlined in this IFMP in accordance with the powers granted pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*.

6.1 Indigenous People of British Columbia

Fish and marine resources (including species like herring) are central to the culture, society, and well-being of First Nations and provide a critical connection to language, traditional knowledge, economies and health of communities. Many Indigenous communities are located adjacent to key fishing sites, oceans and aquatic resources, and consider the management of these resources to be important to their communities. DFO has heard through engagement that Indigenous groups are seeking to pursue a variety of broad interests, such as greater access to economic opportunities from aquatic resources as a potential driver for economic development, more stability in food, social and ceremonial (FSC) and treaty domestic fisheries, a greater role in aquatic resource and oceans management decisions, and a greater role in stewardship, including stock assessment, oceans and habitat management, conservation and protection, and recovery strategy development and implementation. The interests of individuals communities are further sought based on specific, localized needs and interests.

Commitment to Reconciliation

DFO is committed to the recognition and implementation of Indigenous and treaty rights related to fisheries, oceans, aquatic habitat, and marine waterways in a manner consistent with section 35 of the Constitution Act, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDA), the UNDA Action Plan 2023-2028, and the federal Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples. DFO-CCG Reconciliation Strategy provides a guidance document to better understand why and how reconciliation informs the work of the Department.

DFO recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to participate in decision-making in matters that affect their rights through their own representative institutions and the need to consult and cooperate in good faith with the aim of securing their free, prior, and informed consent.
For further information on Canada's reconciliation commitments:

- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/u-2.2/
- Implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*: https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/index.html
- The UNDA Action Plan 2023-2028: https://justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/ap-pa/index.htmlv
- *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous peoples*: https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html
- DFO's Reconciliation strategy: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/aboriginal-autochtones/reconciliation-eng.html
- Reconciliation, partnerships and Indigenous fisheries in British Columbia and Yukon: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reconciliation/reconciliation-pacific-pacifique-eng.html
- Information on the Government of Canada's work to advance reconciliation: https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1400782178444/1529183710887

Fish and marine resources are central to the culture, society, and well-being of First Nations and provide a critical connection to language, traditional knowledge, economies and health of communities.

Indigenous harvest of herring for FSC purposes may occur coast wide where authorized by a communal licence. DFO will ensure Indigenous communities have priority access to the resource for FSC purposes, and FSC allocations for each Major Stock Assessment Area are determined through bilateral discussions.

FSC and Treaty Domestic Fisheries

DFO remains committed to respecting First Nations' Aboriginal right to fish for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes, or domestic purposes under Treaty which has priority – after conservation – over other uses of the resource. Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act* recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. However, it does not specify the nature or content of the rights. In 1990, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a landmark ruling in the Sparrow decision, which found that the Musqueam First Nation has an Aboriginal right to fish for FSC purposes. The Supreme Court found that

where an Aboriginal group has a right to fish for FSC purposes, it takes priority after conservation over other uses of the resource. The Supreme Court has also indicated the duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples when their fishing rights might be affected. The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) was implemented in 1992 to address several objectives related to First Nations and their access to the resource. These include:

- Improving relations with First Nations
- Providing a framework for the management of the First Nations fishery in a manner that was consistent with the Supreme Court of Canada's 1990 *Sparrow* decision
- Greater involvement of First Nations in the management of fisheries
- Increased participation in commercial fisheries (Allocation Transfer Program (ATP))

In addition to consultation, planning and implementation of fisheries, and the development of capacity to undertake fisheries management, stock assessment, enhancement and habitat protection programs, AFS continues to be one of the principal mechanisms, in addition to Treaties and reconciliation agreements, to support the development of relationships with First Nations.

Treaties and Reconciliation Agreements

a) Treaties and Self Government Agreements

There are currently four modern treaties in British Columbia, which all have fisheries chapters: Nisga'a Final Agreement, Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement (TFA), Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement (MNA), and Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation Final Agreement. Through these treaties, Nations work with DFO to manage treaty fisheries on an annual basis. There are also historic treaties in British Columbia (Douglas Treaties and Treaty 8). A detailed list of final agreements relating to Comprehensive Land Claims and Self Government is provided at: https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100030583/1529420498350

Eleven of the Fourteen Yukon First Nations have Final and Self-Government Agreements derived from the Umbrella Final Agreement (Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun, Teslin Tlingit Council, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Kluane First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation). There are also two Transboundary treaties: the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit of the Northwest Territories have land claim agreements that identify their land and rights in Yukon. Many of these treaties have fisheries provisions.

Fisheries chapters in modern treaties articulate a treaty fishing right for domestic purposes that is protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982. In addition, some modern treaties

contain provisions that enable those Treaty First Nations to make laws relating to certain internal aspects of their fisheries. Negotiated through a side agreement, some modern treaty First Nations have commercial access through a Harvest Agreement outside of the constitutionally protected treaty.

b) Reconciliation Agreements

In addition to negotiating treaties, the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples can also negotiate Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD) agreements, to explore new ways of working together to advance the recognition of Indigenous rights and self-determination. These agreements are led by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC). DFO can also negotiate Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreements directly with First Nations to enhance collaborative governance between First Nations and DFO on management of fisheries, marine and aquatic matters.

Reconciliation agreements work within the legislative framework of the *Fisheries Act*. The Act provides the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard with the legislative authority for the proper management and control of the fisheries, the conservation and protection of fish, and regulation of the fishery.

Since 2019, the Government of Canada has entered into several framework agreements with First Nations that lay the foundation for incremental development and implementation of new arrangements for collaborative governance on fisheries and marine matters. A 'framework agreement' sets out the subject matter for negotiation and describes how negotiations will proceed towards a final agreement. A final reconciliation agreement includes substantive commitments the Parties have agreed to implementing and governs the relationship between the Parties for its term of the agreement.

See the BC Treaty Commission at https://www.bctreaty.ca/, and CIRNAC for more information on current treaty tables and RIRSD tables at https://www.cirnac-rcaanc.gc.ca/eng/1100100030285/1529354158736#chp2

Framework Agreements:

- *GayGahlda "Changing Tide" Framework Agreement* between Haida Nation and Canada
- *Reconciliation Framework Agreement for Fisheries Resources* between A-Tlegay Member Nations (We Wai Kai Nation, Wei Wai Kum First Nation, Kwiakah First Nation, Tlowitsis Nation, and K'ómoks First Nation) and Canada

Reconciliation Agreements:

- *Haíłcístut Incremental House Post Agreement* between Heiltsuk and Canada

- *Coastal First Nations Fisheries Resource Reconciliation Agreement* between Canada and Metlakatla, Gitxaala, Gitga'at, Kitasoo/Xai-Xais, Nuxalk, Heiltsuk, Wuikinuxv, and Haida Nations
- *Gwet'sen Nilt'I Pathway Agreement* between Tsʔilhqot'in, Canada and BC
- *Burrard Inlet Environmental Science and Stewardship Agreement* between Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Canada
- *Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement* between the Fraser Salmon Management Council, consisting of 76 First Nations, and Canada
- *Incremental Reconciliation Agreement for Fishery Resources* between Canada and the Five Nu-cha-nulth Nations (Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowchat/Muchalaht, Tla-o-qui-aht Nations)

Indigenous Community Based Fisheries

As outlined in the DFO-Coast Guard Reconciliation Strategy (https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/aboriginal-autochtones/reconciliation-eng.html), the Department is committed to reconciliation with First Nations through strengthened Indigenous-Crown relationships, recognizing self-determination and reducing socio-economic gaps. In support of these objectives, DFO and several First Nations have finalized, or are negotiating, reconciliation agreements that include provisions for Community Based Fisheries.

Community Based Fisheries (CBFs), including Community Based Economic Fisheries (CBEFs), are collaboratively-managed (by DFO and First Nations) sale fisheries that are designed to enable enhanced community participation by supporting First Nations to fish existing commercial fishing access with management flexibilities that are not available in the general commercial fishery. CBFs will have a defined area and will be characterized by fishery management measures that are consistent with community objectives of enhanced participation and self-determination in fisheries, and will be designed and implemented to ensure conservation, sustainable use and orderly fishery management.

As DFO and First Nations develop and implement new fisheries and collaborative governance arrangements, DFO works with these Nations to engage neighbouring First Nations and stakeholders (e.g., commercial and recreational sectors).

Five Nations Community-Based Economic Fishery

Five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations located on the west coast of Vancouver Island - Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht (the five Nations) – have aboriginal rights to fish for any species, with the exception of Geoduck, within their court-defined Fishing Territories and to sell that fish.

The *2023/24 Five Nations Multi-species Fishery Management Plan* (FMP) outlined the fishing opportunities for the five Nations to exercise their rights to harvest and sell salmon, groundfish, crab, prawn, gooseneck barnacles, and sea cucumber. The FMP was extended to March 31, 2025 while the Government of Canada and the five Nations completed negotiations for an *Incremental Reconciliation Agreement for Fishery Resources* (IRAFR).

The IRAFR finalized in 2024 is a two-year agreement providing the framework for an effective and collaborative approach to governance, management and planning of the five Nations' fisheries resources. The agreement recognizes that the five Nations, through their respective ha'wiih (hereditary leadership) and elected leadership, have a role in the management of fisheries in their territories. In response to the Nations' interests, DFO and the five Nations authorized an extension of the Nations' fishing area from 9 nautical miles offshore to 69 nautical miles, effective July 17, 2024.

The IRAFR also provides funding to the five Nations for implementation, capacity building, and to acquire commercial fishing access. It sets out mechanisms for a Community-Based Economic Fishery plan, including shared goals and objectives to support the development of healthy, self-reliant and sustainable fisheries for the five Nations that will contribute to the local and Canadian economy.

The extended 2023/24 FMP is available here: https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/41253413.pdf

Court-defined Rights

The Supreme Court of Canada found in its *Gladstone* decision that the Heiltsuk First Nation had an Aboriginal right to commercially fish herring spawn-on-kelp (SOK). The Heiltsuk currently hold nine SOK licences in the Central Coast area. This SOK is harvested using the preferred means of the Heiltsuk, which is open ponding.

6.2 Recreational

Recreational harvest of herring may occur coast wide, and requires a British Columbia Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licence. Herring may be fished for recreational purposes year-round. The daily maximum sport limit for herring is 20 kg, with a two-day possession limit of 40 kg. The harvest of herring spawn (eggs) is not permitted.

6.3 Commercial

The harvest level for herring in each Major and Minor Stock Assessment Area is based on science advice (provided through the CSAS process) and is derived from estimates of annual stock biomass. Science advice is provided in metric tonnes, which are then converted to short tons for fishery planning purposes. After providing for FSC needs, commercial fishery quotas are set and allocations are distributed across the four commercial herring fisheries by the Department, and proposed allocations are discussed with commercial fishery representatives through consultation. The annual distribution of quotas are presented as an expected use table (Appendix 4).

7 MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE DURATION OF THE PLAN

This year's stock assessment advice, in the form of a Science Response, includes results from Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) simulations for all areas. Catch calculations are informed by the management procedures that met the conservation objective of avoiding the limit reference point of 30% of the unfished herring biomass with a high (>75%) probability over 15 years of application. Details on this work is included in section 2.6 and Appendix 3.

The stock assessment advice also includes the probability that the stocks will be below the LRP. Probabilities are used because there is inherent uncertainty in forecasting what the state of the stock will be for this year's fisheries. The Science Response included analysis using only AM2 formulations of the assessment model because AM2 provides lower absolute stock estimates and therefore is well aligned with the Sustainable Fisheries Framework, as it assumes a 'catchability' factor of 1 for the dive survey (assumes all the spawn has been observed rather than estimating that some has not been observed).

Indigenous groups will continue to have priority access for Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) fisheries in all stock areas.

For several years, HIAB has requested that DFO reduce Roe herring licence fees, especially for roe seine licences, due to the high cost compared to the limited commercial opportunities. An avenue to support this request has not been identified and it is unlikely that fees will be reduced for this season.

All harvest regardless of any transfers is accounted for within the total TAC in the SOG area.

HG: Closed to commercial harvest. No MSE tested management procedures could meet the conservation objective of avoiding the LRP, even in the absence of fishing. Stock biomass and

growth have been low for almost 20 years. Spawning biomass in 2026 is forecast to be 7,930 short tons (range: 3,365-19,703 short tons) and to be below the LRP with a 42.9% probability in the absence of fishing. Management of HG herring is subject to s. 6.2 of the Fish Stocks Provisions, and the rebuilding plan which was approved in April 2024. Consistent with the management approach in the HG herring rebuilding plan, this area will remain closed to commercial harvest for the 2025/26 fishing season.

PRD: FSC, Spawn on Kelp and Roe herring opportunities (8% harvest rate) to a maximum of 3,715 tons**.** Assessment information for the Prince Rupert District is presented using the updated SISCAH modelling framework. Spawning biomass for 2026 is forecast to be 46,396 short tons and above the LRP and USR reference points. Based on a management procedure tuned to meet the conversative objective of maintaining the stock above the LRP with at least 75% probability, harvest rates of up to 8% will achieve this objective over the 15 year simulation period.

CC: FSC and limited commercial Spawn on Kelp fishing opportunities (4% harvest rate) to a maximum of 900 tons. This stock showed an increase in spawning biomass from a low in the late 2000s through to 2019, and has since fluctuated between the LRP and USR in the "Cautious Zone" in recent years. Spawning biomass in 2026 is forecast to be 23,662 short tons (range: 13,009-45,153 short tons) and to be below the LRP with a 16.4% probability in the absence of fishing. In the CC area, harvest rates up to 10% meet the conservation objective in the MSE analysis over the 15 year simulation period. Harvest control rules with higher harvest rates have not been tested in the CC area. The median forecast for the CC stock in 2026 is projected to be below the USR.

SOG: FSC, Food and Bait, Special Use and Roe herring fishing opportunities (14% harvest rate) to a maximum of 14,390 tons. Assessment information for the Strait of Georgia is presented using the updated SISCAH modelling framework. Spawning biomass for 2026 is forecast to be 102,791 short tons and above the LRP and USR reference points. Based on a management procedure tuned to meet the conversative objective of maintaining the stock above the LRP with a high degree (>75%) degree of certainty, harvest rates of up to 14% will achieve this objective over the 15 year simulation period.

WCVI: FSC, Treaty Domestic Harvest and commercial Spawn on Kelop opportunities. Discussions are ongoing regarding rights based fisheres for the five Nations which are expected to occur in 2026. The WCVI stock persisted in a low biomass, low productivity state from approximately 2004 to 2014. In recent years there has been a slow increasing trend, with a large increase in spawning biomass in 2023 and 2024, as well as improved performance in the MSE simulations. The spawning biomass in 2026 is forecast to be 61,103 short tons (range: 33,780-106,996 short tons) and below the LRP with a 0.0% probability in the absence of fishing. MSE results show that harvest control rules with harvest rates up to and including 15% meet the conservation objective over the fifteen year simulation period, with a high degree of certainty.

The median forecast of biomass for this stock in 2026 is projected to be above the USR and above the estimate of unfished biomass (B_0).

Minor Stocks and Special Areas:

Area 2 West: FSC harvest only. The abundance and distribution of spawn surveyed in 2025 does not provide for commercial harvest options in the area in accordance with the Haida Gwaii Herring Rebuilding plan.

Area 27: FSC and commercial Spawn on Kelop opportunities to a maximum of 105 tons. No spawn survey was conducted in Area 27 in 2025 however, reports of spawn deposition were received suggesting a continuation of above average spawn abundance in the area. There are three SOK licences assigned to the area which operate using open pond harvest techniques.

Area 10: FSC harvest only. Spawn survey information is currently being compiled and on-grounds observations indicate little spawn was observed in 2025. There are three SOK licences assigned to the area in total.

Area 12: FSC and commercial Spawn on Kelp opportunities to a maximum of 100 tons. On-grounds observations identified spawn in portions of Area 12 in 2025 but only partial coverage was obtained through surface surveys. There is one SOK licence assigned to the area.

See Appendices 5 to 10 for information regarding the Aboriginal Fishing Plan, Recreational Fishing Plan, and Commercial Fishing Plans for each commercial herring fishery, including:

- Total Allowable Catch (TAC);
- Fishing Seasons/Areas;
- Closed Areas;
- Control and Monitoring of Removals;
- Decision Rules;
- Licensing; and
- Fishery Monitoring Programs.

8 SHARED STEWARDSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Indigenous groups and stakeholders work closely with Fisheries Management staff in pre-season, in-season, and post-season processes, providing expert knowledge and specialized experience to inform management decisions and cooperatively develop solutions to management issues. Some examples include:

The Gina 'Waadluxan KilGuhlGa Land-Sea-People Management Plan was signed and approved in November, 2018. Gwaii Haanas is managed cooperatively by the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada through the Archipelago Management Board (AMB). This one-of-a-kind management plan includes a single integrated vision for Gwaii Haanas, as well as principles to guide the AMB in how they manage this globally renowned protected area. More information on this plan can be found at: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/info/consultations

Additionally, development of a rebuilding plan for Haida Gwaii herring was undertaken by a DFO-Council of Haida Nation-Parks Canada Technical Working Group. The draft rebuilding plan was released for consultation in Fall, 2022. The rebuilding plan was approved and finalized in April 2024 and can be requested from Fisheries Management.

On March 31, 2015, Heiltsuk and DFO signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) committing to the development of a Joint Management Plan (JMP) for each herring fishery season in the Central Coast, which, if agreed to, reflects management decisions for that season. When developed, a 2024-25 JMP may be provided by representatives.

The Maa-nulth Joint Fisheries Committee (JFC) for co-management of the Maa-nulth First Nations domestic fisheries, and coordination with commercial, recreational, and other Aboriginal fishing was established through the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement modern treaty. The JFC includes one member from each Maa-nulth First Nation, Canada, and British Columbia.

9 OBJECTIVES

9.1 National

DFO aims to:

- Meet conservation objectives and ensure healthy and productive fisheries and ecosystems
- Base management decisions on the best available scientific information and Indigenous knowledge
- Manage First Nations fisheries for FSC purposes in a manner consistent with the Sparrow Decision (SCC 1990) and other relevant court decisions (*R v. Gladstone 1996 and Ahousaht*) and treaty obligations
- Work collaboratively with First Nations, commercial and recreational sectors to provide fishing opportunities in a manner that ensures the long term sustainability of the resource
- Provide stability and predictability in fisheries management and improved governance through an open and transparent consultation process
- Foster shared stewardship
- Manage commercial fisheries to improve economic performance, provide certainty for participants and to optimize harvest opportunities

9.2 Pacific Region

The overall goal of Fisheries Management in the Pacific Region is the conservation of Canada's fisheries resources and sustainable resource utilization to ensure priority (after conservation) FSC access for First Nations and generate economic prosperity. This is accomplished through close collaboration with resource users and stakeholders based on shared stewardship consistent with treaty and Indigenous rights. Fisheries Management is responsible for management of the Indigenous, commercial, and recreational fishing in the Pacific Ocean and creating the conditions for a vibrant and innovative aquaculture industry.

Fisheries Management will continue to develop and implement the Sustainable Fisheries Framework by integrating the precautionary and ecosystem approach frameworks into IFMPs with the goal of protecting vulnerable marine and freshwater ecosystems and vulnerable stocks from significant adverse impacts, and to help ensure long term sustainable management and support economic prosperity.

9.3 Pacific Herring Resource Management

Objectives for Pacific Herring Resource Management include stock conservation, First Nations access to FSC fish, monitoring and research of ecosystem processes, sustainable harvest and economic considerations, renewal of the management framework, and transparent and open consultation processes. More detail is outlined below.

9.3.1 Stock Conservation

The biological objective is to conserve and protect Pacific Herring stocks.

9.3.2 Access for Indigenous People

DFO will continue to work collaboratively with Indigenous communities to provide priority opportunities to harvest fish for food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) purposes, in a manner consistent with the *Sparrow* Decision (SCC 1990) and for treaty and Indigenous commercial fisheries.

For more information see Appendix 5 or visit: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/abor-autoc/index-eng.html

9.3.3 Ecosystem Processes

The ecosystem objective is to manage ecosystem impacts to Pacific Herring using the best available science, Indigenous traditional knowledge/traditional ecological knowledge (ITK/TEK), and through application of the precautionary approach and comprehensive monitoring of Pacific Herring fisheries.

9.3.4 Sustainable Harvest and Economic Opportunities

DFO will work collaboratively with commercial fishery participants to:

- Provide reasonable fishing opportunities in a manner that ensures long-term sustainability of the resource, through the application of decision rules and management measures.
- Monitor fish stocks and fish harvest to allow for sustainable management decisions and improve knowledge of the stock.

DFO will continue to provide opportunities for a recreational fishery for Pacific Herring. For more information, see Appendix 6.

9.3.5 Renewal of the Management Framework for Pacific Herring

In 2015, DFO initiated the Pacific Herring Renewal (PHR) initiative in order to renew the current management framework for Pacific Herring and better align with the Sustainable Fisheries Framework. The PHR is comprised of three main elements: (1) Renewal of the Management Framework, (2) Fisheries Management Reforms, and (3) Survey Program Review.

The Department's objectives undertaking this process are to provide transparent decision making, and choose the best performing management procedures for Pacific Herring. Additionally, the Department aims to facilitate collaboration, as well as fulfill many of the other objectives listed in section 8.3, including sustainable harvest, Indigenous FSC access, and economic opportunities.

More detail on this initiative and progress to date is provided in Sections 2.6 and 2.7.

9.3.6 Consultation

An open and transparent consultation process will be maintained for management issues related to Pacific Herring, including the annual development of an IFMP and long-term planning of the fishery with Indigenous groups and stakeholders.

9.3.7 Compliance

Key priorities for the Pacific Herring fishery for DFO Conservation and Protection are:

- Ensure fisheries are carried out in an orderly manner and in compliance with legislation and licence conditions.
- Ensure compliance with the herring fishery monitoring programs.
- Provide regular reports on enforcement and compliance for this fishery through the Record of Management Strategies report (RMS), the Fisheries Enforcement Activity Tracking System (FEATS), and through the Departmental Violation System (DVS).

For more information, see Appendix 11.

10 PERFORMANCE/EVALUATION CRITERIA

10.1 National

- Pacific Herring conservation objectives are met such that fisheries and ecosystems are healthy and productive.
- Ensure harvest opportunities in a manner consistent with the *Sparrow* Decision (SCC 1990) and other relevant court decisions and treaty obligations.
- Reasonable effort has been made to provide opportunities for economic prosperity while meeting conservation objectives.
- Consultation and management processes are stable, transparent, and predictable.

10.2 Pacific Region

- Execution of the Pacific Herring fisheries in accordance with the requirements outlined in the IFMP.
- Monitoring programs provide accurate information on catch and effort and is designed to provide information necessary for effective management of the herring resource. This includes ensuring the required level of fisheries monitoring to support the fishery and conservation objectives.
- Proper controls in place for management and control of the fisheries and the conservation and protection of fish.
- Engagement with First Nations and stakeholders for informed management decisions and cooperatively developed solutions to issues related to management of Pacific Herring fisheries.

- Review of progress on renewal of the herring management framework through a collaborative process.

10.3 Pacific Herring Resource Management

10.3.1 Stock Conservation

- Application of a precautionary approach to inform harvest decisions.
- Development and implementation of a rebuilding plan for herring stocks that fall into the critical zone, as defined by the Sustainable Fisheries Framework

10.3.2 Access for Indigenous Peoples

- Work collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples to provide priority access, after conservation, for FSC purposes.

10.3.3 Ecosystem Processes

- Consider impacts to the ecosystem from management decisions using best available Science, Indigenous traditional knowledge/traditional ecological knowledge and application of the precautionary approach and monitoring of the herring fisheries.
- Coordinate and communicate with Science to understand on-going research, information gaps, and plan future work.

10.3.4 Sustainable Harvest and Economic Opportunities

- When available, provide reasonable fishing opportunities in a manner that ensures long-term sustainability of the resource, through the application of decision rules and management measures.
- Enact and enforce regulations through licences and licence conditions.
- Develop standards and monitor compliance of the various herring monitoring programs funded by individual licence eligibility holders.
- Collect accurate and timely catch, effort, landings, and other relevant information (e.g. marine mammal and seabird interactions and encounters) by geographic location and time period.
- Collect data to assist in management decisions and monitor size and age distribution of herring caught.
- Through post-season reviews and data analysis, assess catch monitoring, management measures, fishery implementation processes and emerging issues.

10.3.5 Renewal of the Management Framework for Pacific Herring

- Use decision rules which consider the stock status relative biological and operational control points, such as the risk of stocks breaching the limit reference point of $0.3SB_0$,
- Provide transparent decision making in regards to harvest levels and area closures.
- Facilitate Indigenous and multi-stakeholder collaboration on management procedures.
- Use an MSE approach to achieve resource management and other objectives.

10.3.6 Consultation

- Hold pre-season planning meetings and seek stakeholder and First Nations advice on development of the IFMP allowing up to 30 days for review and feedback on IFMP draft content.
- Engage in bilateral consultations supported by Tier Two engagement processes with Indigenous communities, and participate in collaborative engagement meetings with First nations from watershed groups and industry to discuss fishing plans and priorities for the management of the fishery.
- Hold post-season meetings to review issues encountered and to develop options for addressing and resolving them.

10.3.7 Compliance

Performance criteria for DFO Conservation and Protection can be found in Appendix 11.

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APPENDIX 1. 2024/2025 POST-SEASON REVIEW

Table 1.1. 2024/2025 Resource Management Performance Evaluation

Objective Category	Performance Measure	DFO Activity
Stock conservation	Application of a precautionary approach to inform harvest decisions.	• In 2024/2025, one of the five major management areas (HG) remained closed to commercial fisheries to support stock rebuilding. • HG herring is subject to s. 6.2 of the Fish Stocks Provisions and a rebuilding plan has been developed for the HG major stock area. To support this work, and in accordance with 70(5) of the *Fishery (General) Regulations*, this area remained closed for the 2024/2025 fishing season. • An LRP has been established and applied to all stock areas, and form the basis of management decisions annually. • A provisional Upper Stock Reference has been established and applied to all stock areas, and is used to inform management decisions annually.
Access for Indigenous Peoples	Work collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples to provide priority access, after conservation, for FSC purposes.	• In the SOG, subareas (Area 15, 17S for the Roe fishery and portions of Area 17, all of Area 18, and Subarea 29-5 for the Food & Bait and Special Use fisheries) remained closed on advice from First Nations due to low spawn

		in those areas and reports of First Nations inability to access herring for FSC purposes. • Commercial industry participants were asked to avoid areas where there could be potential for gear conflict with FSC gear. • Ongoing concern from PRD and Area 10 First Nations about inability to obtain herring for FSC purposes.
Ecosystem Processes	• Consider impacts to the ecosystem from management decisions using best available Science, Indigenous traditional knowledge/traditional ecological knowledge and application of the precautionary approach and monitoring of the herring fisheries • Coordinate and communicate with Science to understand on-going research, information gaps, and plan future work.	• A maximum of 20% of the spawning stock biomass can be harvested annually from each stock area, leaving 80% of the biomass and all juveniles remaining to support ecosystem processes. • Through the MSE work, it was identified that in some areas, such as CC, a lower harvest rate is more appropriate (e.g. 5 or 10%). • More work is needed to coordinate with Science to understand on-going Science research and information gaps.
Sustainable harvest and economic opportunities	• Provide reasonable fishing opportunities in a manner that ensures long-term sustainability of the resource, through the application of decision rules and management measures. • Enact and enforce regulations through licences and licence conditions, to ensure proper management and control of fisheries. • Develop standards and monitor compliance of the various herring	• Management and control of fisheries was achieved with measures such as at sea observers, dockside monitoring, hail requirements, on-grounds management, and enforcement of licence conditions. • The SOG was opened at a 14% harvest rate to allow for Food & Bait, Special Use, and Roe fisheries. Simulations showed that a 14% harvest could maintain the stock above the LRP

monitoring programs funded by individual licence eligibility holders.

- Collection of accurate and timely catch, effort, landings, and other relevant information (e.g. marine mammal and seabird encounters or interactions) by geographic location and time period.
- Collect data to assist in management decisions and monitor size and age distribution of herring caught.
- Through post-season reviews and data analysis, assess catch monitoring, management measures, fishery implementation processes and emerging issues.

with a high probability over 15 years.

- The CC management area shows steady increases in spawning biomass since a low in the late 2000s, with a recent decline over the past three years. The area was opened at a 4.7% harvest rate to FSC and limited commercial SOK fisheries to continue to allow the stock to rebuild.
- The PRD management area was open for FSC, SOK and roe herring at a 5% harvest rate. In this area, stock biomass and growth has remained low but steady, and has recently increased in abundance. In 2024, there was a 99% probability of the stock being above the LRP.
- The HG management area was open for FSC harvest only due to the stock being below the LRP for a prolonged period of time, and consistent with the Haida Gwaii herring rebuilding plan.
- All minor stock areas were closed to commercial harvest.
- Each of the herring fisheries were monitored by an industry-funded monitoring program which collects information on each of the listed metrics and provides regular updates to DFO throughout the fishing season.
- Fisheries Management coordinated with Science, First Nations and industry to collect biological samples (to monitor size and age) through the test-fishing program and other opportunities to augment

		samples collected through scientific surveys.
Renewal of the Management Framework	• Use decision rules which consider the stock status relative to biological and operational control points, such as the risk of stocks breaching the limit reference point of $0.3SB_0$, • Provide transparent decision making in regards to harvest levels and area closures. • Facilitate Indigenous and multi-stakeholder collaboration on management procedures. • Use an MSE approach to achieve resource management and other objectives.	• MSE simulations assessed the ability of management procedures to maintain the stock above the LRP with a high probability over a 15 year timeframe (the "conservation objective"), and these results were used to guide decision making for all areas (including WCVI and SOG, which underwent the first cycle of MSE in 2018).
Consultation	• Hold pre-season planning meetings and seek stakeholder and First Nations advice on development of the IFMP, allowing up to 30 days for review and feedback on IFMP draft content. • Engage in bilateral consultations supported by Tier Two engagement processes with Indigenous communities, and participate in collaborative engagement meetings with First nations from watershed groups and industry to discuss fishing plans and priorities for the management of the fishery. • Hold post-season meetings to review issues encountered and to develop options for addressing and resolving them.	• The pre-season Integrated Herring Harvest Planning Committee (IHHPC) planning meeting was held on October 10, 2024, seeking First Nation and stakeholder advice on development of the IFMP (meeting minutes available on request) • DFO and First Nations met for a coastwide Pacific Herring Tier 2 process on October 9, 2024 to discuss 2024/2025 advice and priorities • DFO met with the Herring Industry Advisory Board (HIAB) on October 11, 2024 to discuss pre-season planning • Draft IFMP released for consultation from October 28-November 27, 2024 (30 days); draft Food & Bait and Special Use plans distributed for consultation

		from October 18-November 17, 2024 (30 days) • DFO engaged in bilateral and area or group based Tier Two meetings with Indigenous communities to discuss fishing plans and priorities for the 2024/2025 season, during or prior to the IFMP consultation period. • The coastwide DFO-First Nations Tier 2 post-season meeting was held on April 30, 2025 to review the season and issues encountered. • The post-season IHHPC meeting was held on May 1, 2025 to review the season and issues encountered (meeting minutes available on request) • DFO and HIAB met on May 2, 2025 to review the season and issues encountered.
Compliance	Monitor compliance of the herring fisheries with monitoring programs funded by individual licence eligibility holders.	Lead resource managers and C&P staff worked closely with the service provider and industry. Monitoring requirements were tailored to address fishery specific compliance issues and few occurrences were reported. More detail on compliance performance detailed in Appendix 11.

Table 1.2. Management decisions for 2024/2025 harvest opportunities in major and minor stock assessment areas (short tons)

Area	Forecast (in brackets: 95% confidence interval)	Limit Reference Point	Harvest Option	Management Decision
2W	959	N/A	0	Area was open for FSC and closed for commercial Spawn on Kelp herring opportunities. Forecast in minor areas is the previous year's spawn index.
HG	8,329 (3,677-20,355)	7,112	150	FSC only; area was closed to commercial fishing to support continued stock rebuilding and consistent with the rebuilding plan in place.
PRD	52,782 (28,264–92,387)	19,122	2,624	Area was open to commercial fishing with a 5% harvest rate, based on application of an MSE-tested management procedure that meets the conservation objective of being above the LRP with a high probability over 15 years. This harvest rate provided for FSC, commercial SOK, and a roe herring fishery.
CC	19,249 (9,888-38,583)	16,162	900	Area was open to commercial fishing with a 4.7% harvest rate, based on application of an MSE-tested management procedure. This harvest rate provided for FSC, and some commercial SOK fisheries.

Area	Forecast (in brackets: 95% confidence interval)	Limit Reference Point	Harvest Option	Management Decision
SOG	91,051	45,798	12,787	Area was open to commercial fishing with a 14% harvest rate, based on application of an MSE-tested management procedure that meets the conservation objective of being above the LRP with a high probability over 15 years. This harvest rate provided for FSC, and commercial Food & Bait, Special Use, and Roe fisheries; commercial SOK fisheries do not occur in this area.
WCVI	65,894 (36,824-118,078)	15,359	550	This area was open to commercial fishing for SOK and five Nations commercial SOK fisheries..
Area 10	N/A	N/A	0	This area was closed to commercial harvest.
Area 12	N/A	N/A	100	This area was open for FSC and Spawn on Kelp herring opportunities to a maximum of 100 tons.
Area 27	9,671	N/A	105	This area was open for FSC and Spawn on Kelp herring opportunities to a maximum of 105 tons. Forecast in minor areas is the previous year's spawn index.

Season Summaries

Roe Herring

Table 1.3. Roe Herring Seine Fishery 2024/2025 Summary

	Strait of Georgia
Expected Use	4,913 tons
Quota Issued*	4,899 tons
Landings	3,003tons
# Pools	7
# Licences	215 HS/77 ZM
Tons per licence	roe (HS) - 19.945 tons/food & bait (ZM) - 7.9365 tons
Open	Mar. 9, 2025, 18:00
Closed	Mar. 14, 2025 14:00
Areas Fished	14-1 to 14-13, and 14-15 (excluding Comox Harbour)

*(Includes 159 Food & Bait licence eligibility transfers to Roe Seine).

	Prince Rupert District
Expected Use	563 tons
Quota Issued*	0 tons
Landings	0 tons
# Pools	
# Licences	4
Tons per licence	140.75 tons
Open	N/A
Closed	N/A
Areas Fished	Fishery did not open

Table 1.4. Roe Herring Gillnet Fishery 2024/2025 Summary

	Strait of Georgia
Expected Use	4,837 tons
Quota Issued*	4,837 tons
Landings	4,795 tons
# Pools	14
# Licences	1,185
Tons per licence	4.082 tons/GN licence
Open	Mar 5, 2025 14:00
Closed	Mar 13, 2025 18:00
Areas Fished	Subareas: 14-1, 14-7, 14-8, 14-10, 14-11, 14-12, and 14-13

	Prince Rupert District
Expected Use	302 tons
Quota Issued	0 tons
Landings	0 tons
# Pools	1
# Licences	4
Tons per licence	75.5 tons/GN licence
Open	N/A
Closed	N/A
Areas Fished	Fishery did not open

Spawn on Kelp

Table 1.5. SOK Herring Fishery 2024/2025 Summary

	2W	Prince Rupert District	Central Coast	Area 10/12	West Coast Vancouver Island
Quota Issued	0 lb	0 lb	47,647 lb	0 lb	48,000 lb
Landings	N/A	N/A	N/A*	N/A	N/A*
# Licences	0	0	3	0	1
# of closed ponds	0	0	8	0	0
Open ponding	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Location(s)	-	-	Kitasu Bay	-	

***Landings cannot be released due to privacy rules**

Food and Bait

Table 1.6. Food & Bait Herring Fishery 2024/2025 Summary

	Strait of Georgia
Expected Use	2,100 tons
Quota	2,025 tons
Landings	2,017 tons
# Licences	164*
Quota towards Charity ZM Licence	100 tons
Quota per licence	7.9365 tons
Release occurrences	1 (3 tons)
Fishing Location(s)	Northumberland Ch.
Areas Fished	17-15, 17-16

*1 ZM licence was allocated an additional 100 tons for charity sale.

Special Use

Table 1.7. Special Use Herring Fishery 2024/2025 Quota and Catch Summary. Quota and landings occurred in Strait of Georgia only.

Licence	Category	Expected Use (tons)	Quota Issued (tons)	Landings (tons)
ZX	Personal Use	25	1	*N/A
ZY1	Sport Bait	617	439	319
ZY2	Commercial Bait	0	0	0
ZY3	Human Food & Bait	150	150	*N/A
ZY4	Zoo & Aquarium	110	110	*N/A
Total		902	700	319

* Cannot be displayed due to privacy reasons

Table 1.8. Special Use Herring Fishery 2024/2025 Ponding Summary.

	Fresh/Frozen	Live	Total
# of ponding operations	1	1	*N/A
Pond locations	Area 13-7 (Deepwater Bay)	Area 16 (Secret Cove)	
# of ponds	3	1	4
# of ponds per operator	3	1	4
Size of Ponds	Large (100x100x50 feet = 500,000 cubic feet)	Small (24x16x12 feet = 4,608 cubic feet)	

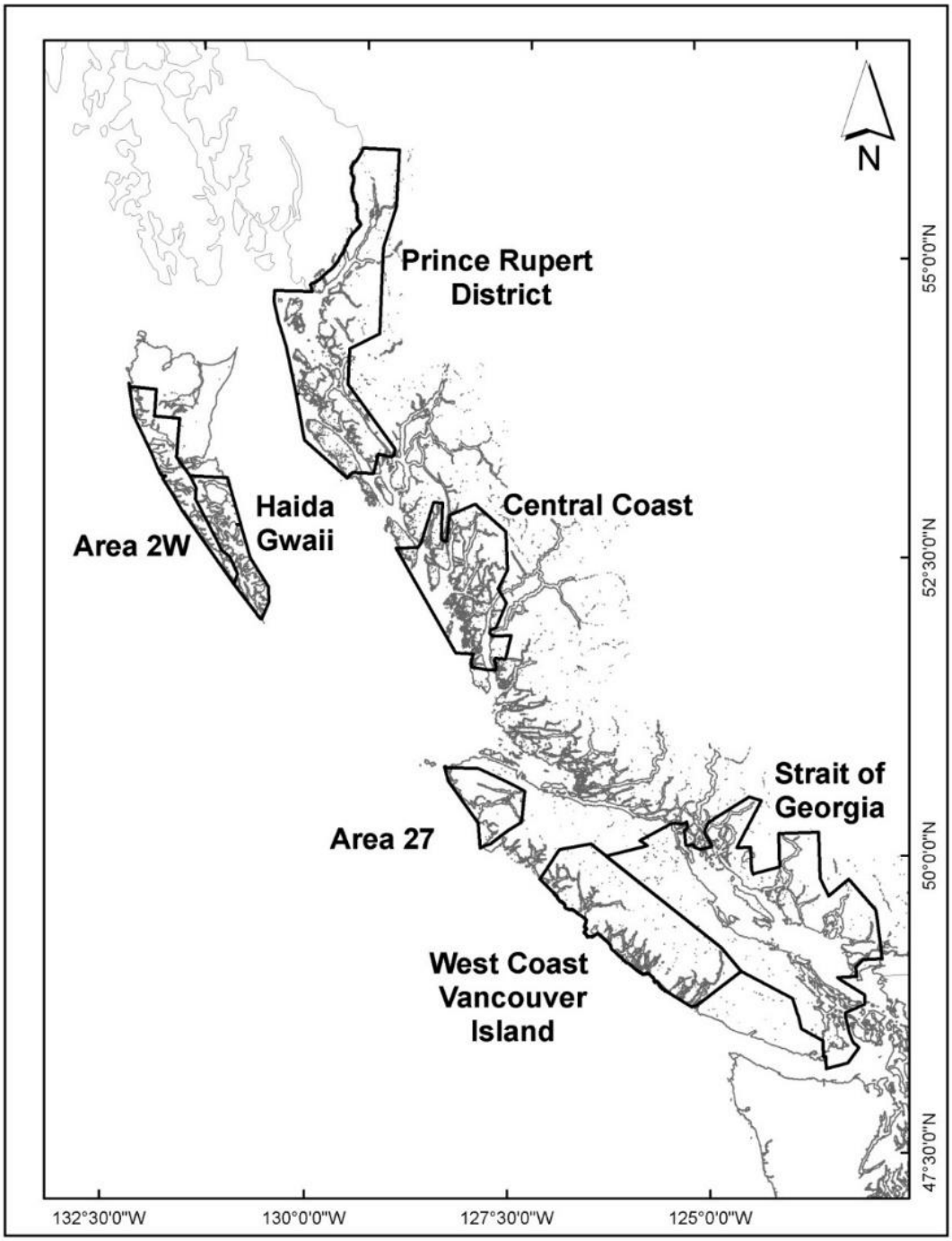
* Cannot be displayed due to privacy reasons

Table 1.9. Special Use Herring Fishery 2024/2025 Licensing Summary.

Number of vessels, licences issued, and licence eligibility holders

Licence	Number of Vessels	Number of Licences	Number of Licence Eligibility Holders
ZX	1	1	1
ZY1	2	4	3
ZY3	1	3	1
ZY4	1	1	1

APPENDIX 2. MAP OF MAJOR STOCK ASSESSMENT AREAS



APPENDIX 3. STOCK ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Forecasting Pacific Herring spawning biomass requires an assessment of current abundance and an understanding of the factors affecting their dynamics. Pacific Herring are strongly affected by annual variations in environmental conditions, which produce large fluctuations in recruitment and stock abundance.

For the major stock areas, Pacific Herring models are driven by four sources of data from 1951 to 2025: commercial catch landings, a spawn survey index, as well as age composition and weight-at-age data. DFO Pacific Science assesses current abundance for the five BC Pacific Herring major stock areas: Haida Gwaii (HG), Prince Rupert District (PRD), Central Coast (CC), Strait of Georgia (SOG), and West Coast of Vancouver Island (WCVI).

An assessment of current abundance for HG, CC and WCVI stock areas is obtained using a statistical catch-age model (SCA, Cleary et al. 2019). Assessment of the PRD and SoG areas is completed using the new spatially integrated statistical catch at age Herring (SISCAH) modelling framework, reviewed through CSAS in June 2023 (DFO 2023b). In all cases, forecast estimates of spawning biomass for 2026 are projected based on recent estimates of survival, growth and recruitment.

Summary of Stock Assessment Information for HG, CC, and WCVI

Projected median spawning biomasses assuming zero catch in 2026, as well as the projected relative contribution of age-3 and ages 4-10 fish are presented in Table 3.1. Stock status is assessed against the Limit Reference Point (LRP) of $0.3SB_0$ (unfished spawning biomass), estimated for 2025 and projected for 2026 (under an assumption of zero catch). For example, for the HG stock in 2026, there is a 42.9% probability that the estimated pre-fishery spawning biomass (SB_{2026}) will be below the LRP given zero catch (i.e., row $P(SB_{2025} < 0.3SB_0)$; Table 3.2).

Table 3.1. Estimates of projected spawning biomass in thousands of metric tonnes (t x 10^3) in 2026 given zero catch, as well as predicted proportion aged 3 and aged 4-10 fish for all BC Pacific Herring major stocks. Legend: Haida Gwaii (HG), Central Coast (CC), and West Coast of Vancouver Island (WCVI).

	Projected spawning biomass in 2026 given zero catch (t x 10^3)			Projected proportion aged 3 fish in 2026			Projected proportion aged 4-10 fish in 2026		
Stock	5th %ile	Median	95th %ile	5th %ile	Median	95th %ile	5th %ile	Median	95th %ile
HG	3.053	7.194	17.874	0.11	0.37	0.72	0.18	0.42	0.71
CC	11.802	21.466	40.962	0.08	0.26	0.57	0.35	0.62	0.83
WCVI	30.645	55.432	97.065	0.08	0.23	0.50	0.44	0.69	0.86

Table 3.2. Posterior (5th percentile, Median, and 95th percentile) estimates of proposed reference points for the Haida Gwaii model. Legend: spawning stock biomass, *SB*; pre-fishery spawning biomass, SB_{2026}; estimated unfished spawning biomass, SB_0. All biomass numbers are in thousands of metric tonnes (t x 10^3). Note: probabilities of $SB_{2026} < 0.3SB_0$ and $SB_{2026} < 0.6SB_0$ are based on zero catch.

Reference point	5%	50%	95%
SB_0	17.355	21.725	28.014
$0.3SB_0$	5.206	6.518	8.404
$0.75\overline{SB}_{Prod}$	17.424	24.095	33.733
SB_{2025}	3.612	7.219	13.579
SB_{2025}/SB_0	0.165	0.329	0.624
$P\ (SB_{2025} < 0.3SB_0)$	–	0.414	–
$P\ (SB_{2025} < 0.75\overline{SB}_{Prod})$	–	0.999	–
SB_{2026}	3.053	7.194	17.874
SB_{2026}/SB_0	0.140	0.331	0.811
$P\ (SB_{2026} < 0.3SB_0)$	–	0.429	–
$P\ (SB_{2026} < 0.75\overline{SB}_{Prod})$	–	0.980	–
Proportion aged 3	0.11	0.37	0.72
Proportion aged 4 to 10	0.18	0.42	0.71

Table 3.3. Posterior (5th percentile, Median, and 95th percentile) estimates of proposed reference points for the Central Coast model. See Table 3.2 for description.

Reference point	5%	50%	95%
SB_0	40.464	49.733	62.435
$0.3SB_0$	12.139	14.920	18.730
$\overline{SB}_{Prod}$	27.190	32.140	38.450
SB_{2025}	15.151	25.025	40.132
SB_{2025}/SB_0	0.295	0.496	0.812
$P\ (SB_{2025} < 0.3SB_0)$	–	0.054	–
$P\ (SB_{2025} < \overline{SB}_{Prod})$	–	0.805	–
SB_{2026}	11.802	21.466	40.962
SB_{2026}/SB_0	0.234	0.431	0.809
$P\ (SB_{2026} < 0.3SB_0)$	–	0.164	–
$P\ (SB_{2026} < \overline{SB}_{Prod})$	–	0.854	–
Proportion aged 3	0.08	0.26	0.57
Proportion aged 4 to 10	0.35	0.62	0.83

Table 3.4. Posterior (5th percentile, Median, and 95th percentile) estimates of proposed reference points for the West Coast of Vancouver Island model. See Table 3.2 for description.

Reference point	5%	50%	95%
SB_0	38.501	46.720	59.700
$0.3SB_0$	11.550	14.016	17.910
$\overline{SB}_{Prod}$	27.921	34.392	42.432
SB_{2025}	37.507	62.160	95.986
SB_{2025}/SB_0	0.783	1.310	2.111
$P\ (SB_{2025} < 0.3SB_0)$	–	0.000	–
$P\ (SB_{2025} < \overline{SB}_{Prod})$	–	0.036	–
SB_{2026}	30.645	55.432	97.065
SB_{2026}/SB_0	0.650	1.169	2.085
$P\ (SB_{2026} < 0.3SB_0)$	–	0.000	–
$P\ (SB_{2026} < \overline{SB}_{Prod})$	–	0.104	–
Proportion aged 3	0.08	0.23	0.50
Proportion aged 4 to 10	0.44	0.69	0.86

Summary of Stock Assessment Information for SoG

For the SoG area in 2025, the estimation model estimates spawning biomass, SB2025 = 92.06 kt (maximum likelihood estimate), with stock status SB2025/SB0 = 0.90. In the absence of fishing, spawning biomass in 2026 is estimated to be SB2026= 93.25 kt (maximum likelihood estimate), with stock status SB2026/SB0 = 0.91.

Summary of Stock Assessment Information for PRD

For the PRD area in 2025, the estimation model estimates spawning biomass SB_{2025} = 42.13 kt (maximum likelihood estimate), with stock status SB_{2025}/SB_0 = 0.88. In the absence of fishing, spawning biomass in 2026 is estimated to be SB_{2026} = 42.09 kt (maximum likelihood estimate), with stock status SB_{2026}/SB_0 = 0.88.

Harvest Advice for 2026 – All areas

Provision of harvest options to managers for 2026 is presented for each major stock based on the application of simulation-tested management procedures (MPs) evaluated through the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process. For the Strait of Georgia and Prince Rupert District, MSE simulations have been updated through a new modeling framework approved by CSAS in June 2023 and provide an MP that is tuned to meet the conservation objective. For the other three assessment areas, MPs that perform the best at achieving the conservation objective under three different operating model scenarios (which include three different hypotheses about natural mortality) are used to provide catch level options. Management procedure performance is summarized below.

In the first MSE cycle for HG, none of the MPs tested could meet the conservation objective with a minimum of 75% probability (DFO 2019), thus harvest options are not provided for this stock. The HG stock has been in a low biomass, low productivity state since 2000. A rebuilding plan for Haida Gwaii herring was approved in April 2024 which now guides the management of Haida Gwaii herring through the rebuilding phase. Based on MP evaluations, and as per the recommended Haida Gwaii Rebuilding Plan management actions, the harvest recommendation for the HG SAR is 0 t.

In the summer of 2022, conditioning of the MSE operating model for CC was updated to include 2021 spawn, catch, and biological data. MSE simulations were re-run to generate new probability values for the same MPs as presented in September 2019. The updated simulations show that MPs with harvest rates at 5% and 10% maintain spawning biomass above the LRP with 81 to 92% probability over both OM scenarios (Table 3.8). Similar to PRD, the simulation results for CC indicate there are multiple MPs that meet the conservation objective of maintaining the spawning biomass above the LRP with high probability (at least 75%) and further ranking of the remaining objectives is needed in order to provide decision-makers with a set of trade-off choices.

Management strategies for SoG and PRD Pacific Herring are evaluated with a MSE process which implements the new spatially integrated statistical catch at age Herring (SISCAH) modelling framework (DFO 2023b; Johnson et al. 2024). The modelling framework is fitted to historical time series of spawn survey indices, biological and fishery age composition data, and commercial fishery catches. The SISCAH operating model estimates SoG Herring historical biomass time series from 1951-2023 with these features: density dependent mortality (DDM), an integrated surface and dive survey index, gear-specific commercial fishery timing, and a likelihood function with correlated age-compositions. For PRD, the historical biomass time series is from 1951 to 2024, and includes the same features listed above for SoG.

Sustainable harvest advice for SoG Herring for 2025/26 is presented using the MP tuned to meeting the conservation objective which has lower and upper control points at 30% and 60% of unfished spawning biomass, respectively, and a target harvest rate (THR) of 14% (Figure 3.1).

Similarly for PRD Herring, sustainable harvest advice for 2025/26 is presented using the MP tuned to meeting the conservation objective which has lower and upper control points at 30% and 60% of unfished spawning biomass, respectively, and a target harvest rate (THR) of 8% (Figure 3.2).

Conditioning of the MSE operating model for WCVI was updated in the summer of 2022 to include 2021 spawn, catch, and biological data. Updated evaluations showed that all tested MPs could maintain the spawning biomass above the LRP with between 61 and 84% probability over both OM scenarios (Table 3.6).

Table 3.5. Management procedure performance for Pacific Herring in the Central Coast major stock assessment region under two operating model (OM) scenarios: density-dependent natural mortality (DDM), and density-independent natural mortality (DIM); the constant natural mortality (conM) scenario has been removed from the evaluation. Performance criteria are calculated over three Pacific Herring generations (i.e., 15 years) from the start of the projection period for all objectives. MPs are ordered within each scenario by performance of achieving Objective 1. The recommended total allowable catch (TAC) in thousands of tonnes (t) and associated harvest rate (HR) are reported for each MP. Legend: limit reference point (LRP); SBt is spawning biomass in year t; SB_0 is estimated unfished spawning biomass; average annual variability (AAV); Ct is catch in year t; and C is average catch. MPs are defined in DFO (2019a) and DFO (2020c). Note: dashes indicate that TAC and HR do not apply, either because the MP specifies no fishing, or because the MP fails to meet Objective 1.

		Conservation	Biomass	Yield			
		Obj 1 (LRP)	Obj 2 (USR)	Obj 3	Obj 4		
	Scenario	$P \geq 75\%$	P	$< 25\%$	Max	2026	
OM	MP	$SB_t \geq 0.3SB_0$	$SB_t \geq \overline{SB}_{Prod}$	AAV	$\overline{C}$	TAC	HR
DDM	NoFish_FSC	92%	69%	0.00	0.14	–	–
DDM	HS30-60_HR05	91%	64%	40.76	1.74	0.47	0.02
DDM	HS30-60_HR10_Cap5	90%	58%	38.83	2.92	0.93	0.04
DDM	MinE50_HR10	90%	58%	53.22	2.92	0.00	0.00
DIM	NoFish_FSC	85%	54%	0.00	0.14	–	–
DIM	HS30-60_HR05	83%	48%	50.38	1.38	0.47	0.02
DIM	MinE50_HR10	82%	43%	70.82	2.21	0.00	0.00
DIM	HS30-60_HR10_Cap5	81%	43%	52.19	2.45	0.93	0.04

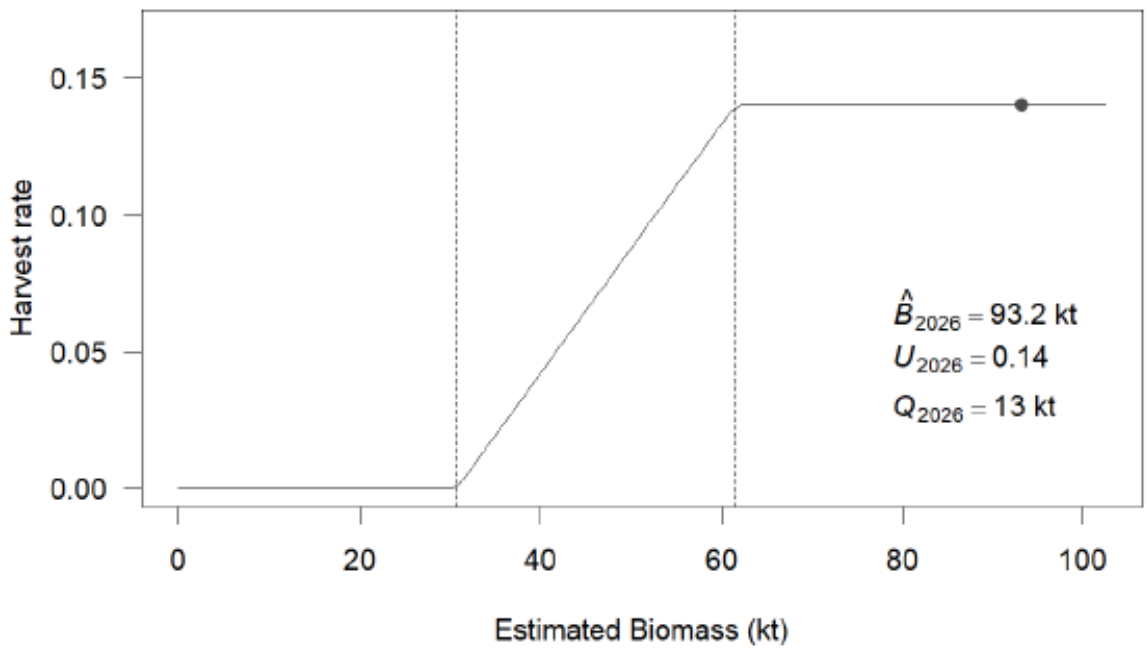


Figure 3.1: Strait of Georgia (SoG) Pacific Herring Management Procedure harvest control rule (HCR) showing forecast spawning biomass (kt) in 2026 (B_{2026}, point) and associated harvest rate U_{2026} and total allowable catch (TAC (kt); Q_{2026}).

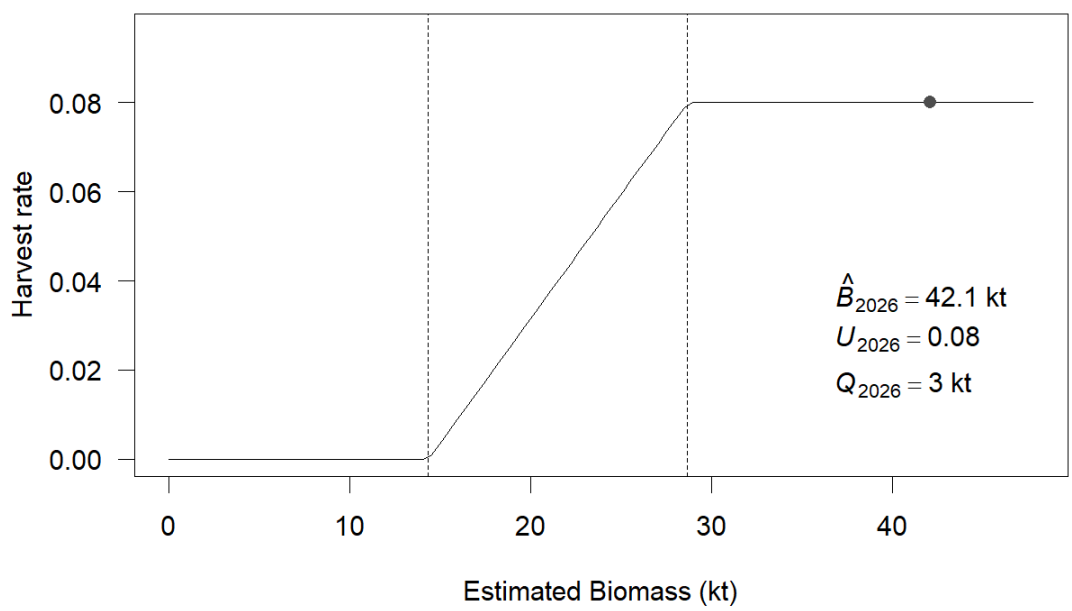


Figure 3.2: Prince Rupert District (PRD) Pacific Herring Management Procedure harvest control rule (HCR) showing forecast spawning biomass (kt) in 2026 (B_{2026}, point) and associated harvest rate U_{2026} and total allowable catch (TAC (kt); Q_{2026}).

Table 3.6. Management procedure performance for Pacific Herring in the West Coast Vancouver Island major stock assessment region. See Table 3.7 for description. Note that SBprod reflects a previously stated objective from the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations, calculated as the average spawning biomass from 1990 to 1999.

Scenario		Conservation Obj 1 (LRP) $P \geq 75\%$	Biomass Obj 2 (USR) P	Yield Obj 3 $< 25\%$	Yield Obj 4 Max	2026	
OM	MP	$SB_t \geq 0.3SB_0$	$SB_t \geq \overline{SB}_{Prod}$	AAV	$\overline{C}$	TAC	HR
DDM	NoFish_FSC	84%	33%	0.00	0.14	–	–
DDM	HS30-60_HR10_Cap2	82%	27%	60.72	1.15	2.00	0.04
DDM	MinE30_HR05	82%	27%	59.45	1.01	2.77	0.05
DDM	HS50-60_HR10	82%	25%	89.73	1.28	5.54	0.10
DDM	HS30-60_HR15_Cap2	81%	27%	57.13	1.30	2.00	0.04
DDM	HS50-60_HR15	81%	23%	82.56	2.08	8.31	0.15
DDM	MinE30_HR10	80%	24%	75.21	1.87	5.54	0.10
DIM	NoFish_FSC	65%	17%	0.00	0.14	–	–
DIM	HS30-60_HR10_Cap2	63%	15%	71.81	0.79	2.00	0.04
DIM	MinE30_HR05	63%	15%	70.09	0.76	2.77	0.05
DIM	HS30-60_HR15_Cap2	62%	15%	80.94	0.83	2.00	0.04
DIM	HS50-60_HR10	62%	14%	96.54	0.72	5.54	0.10
DIM	MinE30_HR10	61%	13%	83.98	1.26	5.54	0.10
DIM	HS50-60_HR15	61%	12%	107.55	1.00	8.31	0.15

Minor stock areas and Special areas

Formal stock assessments are not conducted for the two Pacific Herring minor stock areas (Area 27 and Area 2 West), nor for Area 10 (special area).

A commercial spawn-on-kelp fishery last occurred in Area 27 in 2014, and the last commercial roe fishery occurred in 1994. The spawn index in 2024 was 8,773 tonnes.

A commercial spawn-on-kelp fishery last occurred in Area 2 West in 2020, and the last commercial roe fishery occurred in 1998. The spawn index in 2025 was 1,612 tonnes.

The survey index for Area 10 was deemed incomplete at the time of publishing the 2025 Science Response.

APPENDIX 4. EXPECTED USE TABLE

The expected use of herring for 2025/2026 in short tons is as follows for each of the stock assessment areas and fisheries. Fishery specific TAC's in the SOG area may change as the result of transfers.

2025/2026 EXPECTED HERRING USE BY FISHERY AND AREA
Values In Short Tons

			SOK		ROE-HERRING			SPECIAL USE					
AREA	Harvest Option	FSC	ABORIG COMML	J - LICENCE	SEINE	GILLNET	WINTER FOOD & BAIT (ZM)	PERS'L USE BAIT (ZX)	SPORT BAIT (ZY1)	COMML BAIT (ZY2)	HUMAN FOOD (ZY3)	ZOO & AQUAR (ZY4)	TOTAL
Area 2W	0												
HG	0	150											150
PRD	3,715	600		1,000	1,163	952							3,715
Area 10	0												
CC	900	600		300									900
Area 12	100			100									
SOG	14,390	35			5,794	5,559	2,100	25	617		150	110	14,390
Area 27	105			105									
WCVI	TBD	150	TBD	400									550
TOTAL	**19,760**	**1,535**		**1,700**	**13,468**		**2,100**	**25**	**617**		**150**	**110**	

Areas shaded in grey are minor or outside stock assessment areas

1.10231131 short tons = 1 metric tonne

APPENDIX 5. ABORIGINAL FISHING PLAN

DFO is committed to improving its relationship with Indigenous people. Indigenous fisheries play an important role in this relationship and, therefore, are an integral part of fisheries resource management in the Pacific Region.

Through the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, DFO seeks to negotiate with Indigenous organizations access for Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) purposes. Subject to conservation, FSC has priority over access for commercial and recreational purposes. FSC fisheries are managed through communal licences that are issued to Indigenous organizations. The Department consults with Indigenous organizations to determine appropriate levels of access. In some cases, a portion of a PFMA may be closed to fishing except for FSC fishing by a First Nation organization. These closures may be for the season or for specified times. Whenever possible, the appropriate annual fishing plan will identify such closures. It is possible that situations may arise in the implementation of the plan where in season closure adjustments will be required to ensure access to the fishery by Indigenous organizations for FSC purposes.

For additional information on DFO's Treaty and Aboriginal Fisheries programs, please visit: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/abor-autoc/index-eng.html

Nisga'a Domestic Fishing
The Harvest agreement for domestic (FSC) purposes under the Nisga'a Final Agreement (Treaty) came into effect on May 11, 2000. The Nisga'a territory is located within the Nass River valley on the northwest coast of British Columbia. More information on the Treaty and the Nisga'a annual fishing plan can be found at: https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100031747/1543410863980

Tsawwassen Domestic Fishing
The Tsawwassen fishery for domestic (FSC) purposes under the Tsawwassen Final Agreement (Treaty) came into effect on April 3, 2009. The Tsawwassen First Nation is located in the lower mainland near the city of Vancouver, and their territory spans portions the Strait of Georgia near the mouth of the Fraser River as well as portions of the lower Fraser River and Boundary Bay. More information on the Treaty can be found at: https://www.canada.ca/en/crown-indigenous-relations-northern-affairs.html

Maa-nulth First Nations Domestic Fishery
The Maa-nulth First Nations fishery for domestic (FSC) purposes under the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement (Treaty) came into effect on April 1, 2011. The Maa-nulth First Nations comprise five individual First Nations; Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h'

First Nations, Toquaht Nation, Uchucklesaht Tribe and the Yuułu?ił?ath̓ First Nation on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The Domestic Allocation for herring under the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement:
Each year the Maa-nulth Fish Allocation for whole herring is 90 short tons or a corresponding amount of herring spawn on kelp or herring spawn on boughs in accordance with the conversion rates for whole herring to herring spawn on kelp or herring spawn on bough as described in the Maa-nulth Fisheries Operational Guidelines.

More information on the MFA can be found at:
http://www.maanulth.ca/downloads/treaty/2010_maa-nulth_final_agreement_english.pdf

Tla'amin Nation Domestic Fishing
The Tla'amin fishery for domestic (FSC) purposes under the Tla'amin Final Agreement (Treaty) came into effect on April 5, 2016. The Tla'amin Nation is located near the City of Powell River, 130 km northwest of Vancouver.

The Domestic Allocation for herring under the Tla'amin Nation Final Agreement:
In any year, the Tla'amin Fish Allocation for herring is a maximum of 62,600 lb of whole herring or a corresponding amount of herring spawn on kelp or of herring spawn on boughs, in accordance with the conversion rates for whole herring to herring spawn on kelp or herring spawn on boughs as described in the Tla'amin Fisheries Operational Guidelines.

More information on the Treaty can be found at:
https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1397152724601/1542999321074

Five Nations Right-Based Sale Fishery
Five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations located on the west coast of Vancouver Island - Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht (the Five Nations) – have aboriginal rights to fish for any species, with the exception of Geoduck, within their court-defined Fishing Territories and to sell that fish.

Since 2019, DFO has released an annual Five Nations Multi-Species Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The FMP provides for a right-based multi-species sale fishery that DFO considers to accommodate the Five Nations' Aboriginal commercial fishing rights. The FMP outlines the Five Nations' fishing opportunities for salmon, groundfish, crab, prawn, Sea Cucumber and Gooseneck Barnacle and the fishery management regime.

The 2023/24 FMP is the fifth Multi-Species FMP developed by DFO since the 2018 BC Supreme Court Order and integrates changes following the 2021 BC Court of Appeal decision. DFO may make further changes in-season and amend the FMP as needed. The 2023/24 FMP has been extended to March 31, 2025 while the Government of Canada and the Five Nations complete

negotiations for an Incremental Reconciliation Agreement for Fishery Resources. In response to the Nations' interests, DFO and the Five Nations (Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations) have authorized an extension of the Nations' fishing area from 9 nautical miles offshore to 69 nautical miles, effective July 17, 2024 and for the rest of the 2024/25 season.

DFO and the Five Nations will continue to work together to identify opportunities to harvest additional species and expand the multi-species sale fishery in future years. These opportunities will be developed, where possible, based on other access that DFO provides the Five Nations outside the FMP.

A PDF version of the 2023/24 FMP is available here: https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/41096605.pdf. The extended 2023/24 FMP is now available on the Federal Science Library at: https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/41253413.pdf.

Heiltsuk Communal Commercial Spawn On Kelp Fishery

In 1996, the Supreme Court of Canada found in its *Gladstone* decision that the Heiltsuk First Nation had an Aboriginal right to commercially fish herring spawn-on-kelp (SOK). The Heiltsuk currently hold nine SOK licences in the Central Coast area, with an annual quota of 304,000 pounds. This SOK is harvested using the preferred means of the Heiltsuk, which is open ponding.

As in previous seasons, DFO is committed to working with Heiltsuk First Nation, as well as Kitasoo / Xia'xais First Nation and the commercial harvest sector on a management plan for the Central Coast area. DFO will also be working directly with Heiltsuk First Nation on a plan for the Heiltsuk communal commercial spawn on kelp (SOK) fishery.

APPENDIX 6. RECREATIONAL FISHING PLAN

Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licence

The recreational harvest of various fish and invertebrate species in BC is regulated via the *British Columbia Sport Fishing Regulations*, 1996 made under the *Fisheries Act*. A DFO Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licence is required for the recreational harvest of all species of fish and marine invertebrates.

Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licences may be purchased for a 1 day, 3 day, or 5 day period, or as an annual licence, covering the period April 1 (or date of purchase, whichever is later) to March 31 the following year. The annual licence fee is not pro-rated for annual licences purchased mid-season. Fees depend on licence duration, age (senior, adult, juvenile) and residency status. Licences for juveniles (under 16 years old) are free. Concessionary fees are not otherwise available. There were over 349,000 adult fishers participating in BC's tidal waters recreational fishery in 2024/25.

Licences may be purchased online via the National Recreational Licensing System: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/licence-permis/application-eng.html.

Alternatively, licences may be purchased over the counter at Independent Access Providers (IAPs) in many areas (note that the IAP may charge an additional service fee).

A list of IAPs is available at: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/licence-permis/iap-fai-eng.html.

Online Regulations

The regulations for recreational fishing are provided online in the British Columbia Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide, which lists open and closed times, catch limits, admissible gear types, size limits (where applicable), and open and closed areas. In addition, please check your Conditions of Licence (printed on your fishing licence) for other regulatory requirements.

Changes to regulations are issued in Fishery Notices which are posted online and sent to subscribers by email; these changes are also updated to the Sport Fishing Guide.

The printed Sport Fishing Guide booklet is no longer being produced or distributed to reduce costs and environmental impacts. The online Sport Fishing Guide allows for in-season regulations to be accurately provided and ensures all the regulations are current. Staff at local DFO offices can also provide regulatory information.

The British Columbia Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide is available at:
http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/index-eng.html

Viewing Fishery Notices and application to receive Fishery Notices by email is available at:
http://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm

Contact information for DFO offices is available at:
https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/contact/regions/pacific-pacifique-eng.html

For questions or comments of a general nature regarding DFO in the Pacific Region, call 604-666-0384 or email info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Using Mobile Devices and the FishingBC App

The FishingBC App, developed by the Sport Fishing Institute of BC, can be downloaded to a mobile device to assist with access to regulatory information for species, areas, fishing gear while on the water (along with other functionalities). The FishingBC App may be linked (using the internet) with your National Recreational Licensing System (NRLS) account to download a copy of your tidal water sports fishing licence to your mobile device and record catch (chinook salmon, halibut and lingcod) using the app Catch Log for real-time display to your licence on your mobile device. Note that catch records will then be automatically shared between your NRLS account and your app account. In the event of any technical issues with these new features of the app a paper licence must be used for regulatory catch recording purposes (or NRLS).

Please note: the DFO Sport Fishing Guide website is the official site for regulatory information in the event of a discrepancy with the FishingBC App. The FishingBC App may be downloaded from the App Store (Apple devices) and from the Google Play Store (Android devices). Learn more about these app features at https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/licence-permis/fishingbc-pechecb-app-faq-eng.html and at http://www.fishingbcapp.ca/

E-licences and Paper licences

At this time most fishers continue to use the traditional paper copy of their licence; however, an e-licence, which is an electronic/pdf copy of the licence, may be used on a mobile device but there are restrictions on its use.

Please consider these licensing requirements before fishing in tidal waters:

- For all recreational tidal waters fishers that do not have an electronic copy of their licence on their mobile device, fishers must have a paper copy of their licence to show to a fishery officer.
- For users of the FishingBC App or on any electronic device, an electronic copy of their licence on the device is acceptable and must be immediately presented to a fishery officer upon request.
- Currently the FishingBC App is the only app authorized to download a licence for catch

recording purposes on the electronic licence (using the app Catch Log).

- Catch recording requirement: Immediately upon retention of Chinook and Halibut in any Management Area and Lingcod in Management Areas 12 to 19 (excluding Subarea 12-14), Subareas 20-5 to 20-7 and 29-5, fishers must record these catches on
    - either their paper licence, or
    - their National Recreational Licensing System account (NRLS) which requires internet access, or
    - in the FishingBC App Catch Log when their app account is linked to their NRLS account (which does not require internet access, if the app account link is currently maintained to NRLS).
- The catch recording requirement above applies to all fishers (whether with a paper or e-licence).
- Fishers who record their Chinook, Halibut, and Lingcod catch records in their NRLS account may find it helpful to immediately take a screenshot of their catch records when they have internet access should they subsequently move out of range of a mobile network. Note that a FishingBC app account will continue to allow you to record catch to the app Catch Log even while out of range of a mobile network.

Supporting Sustainable Fisheries - Catch Reporting

The Sport Fishing Advisory Board (SFAB) is the primary consultative body for the recreational fishing community and includes individual representatives from all geographic regions in BC as well as delegates from a number of fishing and service provider organizations. The SFAB and the recreational fishing sector strongly support effective fishery monitoring and catch reporting programs in recreational fisheries. The SFAB continues to work with DFO on initiatives to strengthen fishing monitoring and catch reporting in the recreational fishery.

Mandatory Reporting of Fishing Activity and Catch

Recreational fishers are required as a condition of the Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licence to report accurate information on their recreational fishing activity and catch upon request of designated authorities including creel surveyors, fishery officers and fishery guardians and if assigned to the online iREC reporting program (see below).

internet Recreational Effort and Catch (iREC) Reporting program

The internet Recreational Effort and Catch (iREC) reporting program is an online program that has been collecting effort and catch information from Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licence holders since July 2012. All 2025/26 standard adult Tidal Water Recreational Fishing licences will be assigned to the iREC reporting program. Annual licence holders are required to report for only one month to limit their reporting burden. Information regarding the iREC reporting requirement is printed on each licence including the reporting period, the website at which to report, a unique iREC Access ID and reporting deadline. Further, licence holders with a valid email address in the National Recreational Licencing system will receive emails reminding them to complete their

iREC reports. Providing complete and accurate information to the iREC program when assigned is a condition of licence (i.e., mandatory requirement).

The iREC reporting program is one of the sources used in developing DFO official catch and effort estimates. The iREC reporting program methodology was peer reviewed and published by the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) in 2015. This program provides monthly estimates of effort for six fishing methods and catch for over 80 species of sport caught finfish and invertebrates in all Pacific Fishery Management Areas based on responses by Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licence holders. The recreational fishing methods covered by the iREC reporting program include boat-based angling, angling from shore, shellfish trapping from boat and shore, beach collecting, and diving. iREC estimates are developed for methods and species not covered by the marine creel surveys, which cover only boat-based angling, and for months and areas not covered by marine creel surveys.

More information about the iREC reporting program is available at:
https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/report-declarez-eng.html

APPENDIX 7. COMMERCIAL FISHING PLAN FOR ROE HERRING

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1 PURPOSE

This document is a Commercial Fishing Plan for roe herring in British Columbia, for the period from February 13, 2026 to April 30, 2026.

2 OVERVIEW

Pacific Herring are fished for the roe (eggs), which is valued in Japan. The fisheries take place as the herring move into the shallow inland waters to spawn from late February to mid-April. Herring spawn earliest in southern BC, and progressively later at higher latitudes. Opening dates and times for the commercial roe herring fisheries are typically announced on the fishing grounds once the roe has matured to optimum quality. The commercial roe herring fisheries may occur in five areas which correspond to the major stock assessment regions: Haida Gwaii (HG), Prince Rupert (PRD), Central Coast (CC) Strait of Georgia (SOG) and the west coast of Vancouver Island (WCVI). Commercial roe herring fisheries are only planned in areas where the stock assessment advice has forecast available abundance. The stock assessment advice includes a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) approach and stock forecasts are provided on an annual basis by the Centre for Scientific Advice – Pacific (CSAP). Specific fishery timing and locations are determined by a number of variables including concentrations of fish and roe yield.

A roe herring seine licence (category HS or FHS) or gill net licence (category HG or FH) is required to participate in the commercial roe herring fishery. Roe herring licence eligibilities are party-based and limited entry; there are currently 252 seine and 1,267 gill net licence eligibilities. For each area where a fishery could occur, the licences are grouped into pools by gear type on an annual basis. This pool fishery structure was established in 1998 to address fishery management concerns and improve fishery quota compliance.

This plan recognizes the priority access for Indigenous harvesting of herring for Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) purposes. There are also fishing opportunities described in Treaty Agreements for a number of First Nations in British Columbia. Additionally, Five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations located on the west coast of Vancouver Island - Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht (the Five Nations) – have an Aboriginal right within their territories to fish for any species, and to sell that fish, with the exception of Geoduck.

3 HERRING FISHERY REPRESENTATION

The Herring Industry Advisory Board (HIAB) provides advice regarding commercial Roe and Food and Bait herring fisheries. This role includes submitting recommendations for Roe herring harvesting plans for all areas with a Roe herring TAC. The HIAB's advice on harvest levels is reviewed with the Integrated Herring Harvest Planning Committee (IHHPC). The HIAB has ten seats on the IHHPC (see section 1.7.2). The ten participants are selected by the Roe herring sector from a pool of: (a) 10 individuals elected by Roe herring Licence holders (5 seine and 5 gill net); (b) 4 appointed processors; and (c) 5 appointed individuals representing: the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union; the Native Brotherhood of BC; the Aboriginal Fishing Vessel Owners Association; the Fishing Vessel Owners Association, and the Herring Conservation and Research Society (HCRS).

4 FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Fishery Monitoring Program

Commercial Roe herring licence eligibility holders fund the fishery monitoring program which consists of vessel hails and 100% dockside weight validation of all roe herring landings. This program is administered by the HCRS. In recent years this service has been provided by J.O. Thomas and Associates. At-sea observers may be required in some areas or time periods in order to monitor commercial roe herring seine fisheries.

4.2 Roe Quality Testing Program

Since 2008, the Roe herring sector, through the HCRS, has planned and delivered an on-grounds Roe herring quality assessment program, and it is anticipated that this program will continue.

5 MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE DURATION OF THE PLAN

5.1 Changes from Previous Seasons

5.1.1 Implementation of Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) approach in Stock Assessment Advice

The commercial fishery management approach for the 2026 roe herring season includes a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) approach to inform quota levels for all major stock

areas. The MSE simulations to inform the management approach were updated in 2022 for CC and WCVI, in 2024 for the SOG, and in 2025 for PRD.

5.1.2 Strait of Georgia Roe Herring Areas

Since 2018, Areas 15, 18 and 17 South of Nanaimo (which includes Sub areas 17-1 to 17 -10, and portions of 17-16) have been closed to Roe herring commercial fisheries and this will continue in the 2026 season. This management measure is due to lack of observed spawn in these areas over the past several years, and concerns expressed by First Nations with respect to the inability to access herring for FSC in these areas adjacent to their communities.

5.1.3 Updates to Licence Conditions

There are no significant updates to licence conditions proposed for 2026.

5.1.4 Licensing Changes

For several years, HIAB has requested that DFO reduce Roe herring licence renewal fees, especially for Roe seine licences, due to the high cost relative to the limited commercial opportunities. Support to advance this request has not been identified and licence renewal fees will not be reduced for this season.

5.2 Allocation, Harvest Levels, and Fishing Areas

The Department will attempt to provide reasonable fishing opportunities for seine and gillnet fisheries in each management area where fishing opportunities may be identified.

Fishery openings will be focused on the major bodies of fish or significant spawn events in the areas. Fishery openings will not be maintained for an indefinite time period, or occur in sensitive areas. Once an area is open, closures may be implemented if fish of unacceptable quality are prevalent. The Department has no obligation and provides no assurance or guarantee to participants that the maximum or any amount of fish specified in a licence will be harvested.

Commercial fleets should avoid locations where local Indigenous people are gathering fish, or fishing for herring spawn-on-boughs or spawn-on-kelp. DFO managers will coordinate with First Nations to identify areas where boughs have been placed or locations of other FSC harvests so that the commercial fleets can be directed to avoid these areas. Additionally, the Department works collaboratively with Indigenous nations on communication regarding herring stocks and spawning locations for FSC fishery planning and information regarding FSC activities. During the fishing season, requirements to avoid specific locations to support FSC harvest may be implemented.

The quotas in open areas are allocated between seine and gillnet gear types based on recommendations from HIAB on a 55:45 coast wide basis.

5.2.1 Haida Gwaii

The Haida Gwaii major stock assessment area is closed to commercial fishing.

5.2.2 Prince Rupert District

The Prince Rupert District major stock assessment area is open to FSC and commercial fishing (for Spawn on Kelp and Roe) in 2026, to a maximum of 3,715 short tons, including a commercial roe herring of up to 2,115 tons which will be distributed as 1,163 tons for the seine fishery and 952 tons for the gillnet fishery.

5.2.3 Central Coast

The Central Coast major stock assessment are is closed to commercial roe herring fishing.

5.2.4 Strait of Georgia

The Strait of Georgia major stock assessment area is open for FSC and commercial fishing (Special Use, Food and Bait, and Roe) to a maximum of 14,390 short tons, including a commercial roe herring fishery for up to 11,353 tons distributed as 5,794 tons for the seine fishery and 5,559 tons for the gillnet fishery.

5.2.5 West Coast Vancouver Island

The West Coast Vancouver Island major stock assessment area is closed to commercial roe herring fishing.

5.3 Catch Target, Licence Distribution, and Quota

The expected use of herring for commercial Roe herring fisheries for each of the stock assessment areas is described in Table 7.1. The distribution of roe herring TAC between gear types will be provided via fishery notice which will outline the licensing process for this season. The actual licence quota will be based on the number of licences that select to fish in a specific area. The quota may be adjusted based on the actual numbers of commercial seine and gillnet licences that will be available for issuance, and may not include all licences held by DFO in PICFI or ATP inventories. The SOG Roe seine catch targets will be adjusted by the inclusion of Food and Bait licence allocation. The quota amount per gear allocation, the final number of licences, and quotas by gear type will be provided by way of Fishery Notice.

Table 7.1. Roe herring catch targets (short tons) and proportional licence distribution by gear type/area

Licence Area	Total Roe Quota (tons)	Seine			Gill Net		
		Catch Target (tons)	Fishing Area	Ideal # Licences	Catch Target (tons)	Fishing Area	Ideal # Licences
HG	closed						
PRD	2,115	1,163	Area 5	42	952	Areas 3/4	185
CC	closed						
SOG	11,353	5,794	Area 14, 17N	210	5,559	Area 14, 17N	1,082
WCVI	closed						
TOTAL	**13,468**	**6,957**			**6,511**		
# of Licences		252		252	1,267		1,267
Tons/Licence		27.607			5.139		

5.4 Open Times

The commercial fishing plan for Roe herring is in effect from February 13, 2026 to April 30, 2026. Fisheries will be timed and will target concentrations of fish that are acceptable to industry in terms of roe maturity and fish size. Areas will be opened to seine or gillnet gear in specific areas and at specific times by way of Variation Order made under the authority of the Fishery (General) Regulations. Historically, fishing begins in late February and finishes by early April. DFO will continue to provide the commercial sector opportunity to achieve optimum Roe quality while maintaining management control, coordination with other fisheries and sound conservation principles. It is the intention of DFO to open Roe herring fisheries in consultation with the on-grounds industry advisors to provide reasonable fishing opportunities. Safety of the fleet, roe quality, gear compatibility, FSC access, and weather conditions will be taken into consideration in the conduct of fisheries, including the determination of a fishery opening.

5.5 Fishery Openings

5.5.1 Areas

The following areas are identified as fishing areas when fishing occurs in each area:

Haida Gwaii: Closed
Prince Rupert: PFMAs 3, 4 (gillnets) and 5 (seines)
Central Coast: Closed
Strait of Georgia: PFMA 14 and portions of Area 17
West Coast Vancouver Island: Closed

Actual open areas for each fishery will be subject to in season decisions and opened by Variation Order. Potential fishing areas will be subject to the permanent area closures detailed in the proceeding section.

Fishery managers will endeavor to ensure that sensitive herring spawning areas are protected from gear damage by establishing shallow water net boundaries inside which no fishing shall take place. Herring spawning grounds may be designated under Section 41(1) of the Pacific Fishery Regulations, 1993. Vessels shall not anchor or transfer herring within a designated herring spawning ground.

The fleet is requested to avoid excessive disturbance of herring caused by vessels running back and forth over schools prior to openings.

Commercial fleets are also requested to avoid locations where local First Nations are gathering fish, or fishing for herring spawn on boughs or spawn on kelp. Additionally, the Department works collaboratively with First Nations on communication regarding herring stocks and spawning locations for FSC fishery planning and information on FSC activities. As the fishery season progresses, if necessary, specific requirements to remain out of particular locations to support FSC harvest will be broadcast for adherence by fish harvesters.

5.5.2 Areas 15 & 17 South

Spawn information and local observations indicate recent low levels of spawn in PFMAs 15 and 17S, with a marked decrease in spawn beginning during the mid-1990s. Migratory patterns for herring shift and it is unclear what impact fisheries may have on the distribution of spawn in these areas. Low spawning biomass has been observed in these areas in recent years. For 2026, the areas will remain closed.

5.5.3 Areas 3 & 4

The following closure may be implemented to provide for increased access for FSC harvest in the Prince Rupert Area, if required:

Subarea 4-6, specifically: those waters of Pearl Harbour and adjacent waters inside a line that begins at 54⁰30.670’N 130⁰27.702W (Flat Top Islands) then to 54⁰30.828’N 130⁰27.255”W (Green Mound) then to 54⁰30.738’N 130⁰26.924’W (Tsimpsean Peninsula), then southerly following the shoreline to 54⁰29.981’N 130⁰26.805’W (Pearl Point), then to 54⁰29.876’N 130⁰27.909’W (Cultivation Point), then westerly following the shoreline to 54⁰29.958’N 130⁰27.909’W (Burnt Cliff Island), then to 54⁰30.293’N 130⁰28.176’W (Mist Island) then following the easterly shoreline of Mist Island 54⁰30.381’N 130⁰28.096’W and then back to the initial coordinates.

These measures are intended to ensure that commercial fisheries target larger concentrations of fish, and opportunities for Indigenous FSC fisheries can be provided on a priority basis. Fishing

areas, and any areas closed to the commercial fishery will be described in fishery notices and in on-ground announcements prior to the commencement of the fishery.

5.5.4 Decision Rules for Opening Seine Fisheries

Strait of Georgia: The opening time and location for seines will be decided by the DFO fishery managers in consultation with pool captains. If necessary, an opening will be determined by polling each pool captain. In this situation, each pool carries the weight of the number of licences in the pool.

5.5.5 Decision Rules for Opening and Closing Gill Net Fisheries

Strait of Georgia: The designated representative of HIAB will contact the gill net advisors identified by the roe herring sector. The opening of the fishery will be based on the advice received from the advisors through the designated representative of HIAB to the gill net fishery manager. Notice of closures will be announced promptly, as required for conservation and quota management. Notice will be sufficient to provide a reasonable opportunity for fish harvesters to remove their fishing gear from the water and is dependent on catch reporting from harvesters.

Prince Rupert District: The gill net fishery manager will attempt to contact the gill net advisors identified by HIAB, and will open the area based on the advice received from the advisors that were contacted. If a gill net fishing opportunity presents itself at a time when the majority of the fleet is not in the area, the Department will, if practical, seek the advice of as many of the gill net representatives they are able to contact before deciding whether to open the area. Notice of closures will be announced promptly, as required for conservation purposes. Notice will be sufficient to provide a reasonable opportunity for fish harvesters to remove their fishing gear from the water.

5.6 Closed Areas

5.6.1 Haida Gwaii – Area Closed

5.6.2 Prince Rupert

Prince Rupert 2025/2026 Closed Areas

Area 4:

For the 2025/2026 season, the following closure may be implemented to provide for increased access for FSC harvest in the Prince Rupert Area, if required:

Subarea 4-6: Those waters of Pearl Harbour and adjacent waters inside a line that begins at 54⁰30.670'N 130⁰27.702W (Flat Top Islands) then to 54⁰30.828'N 130⁰27.255''W (Green Mound) then to 54⁰30.738'N 130⁰26.924'W (Tsimpsean Peninsula), then southerly following the shoreline to 54⁰29.981'N 130⁰26.805'W (Pearl Point), then to 54⁰29.876'N 130⁰27.909'W (Cultivation Point), then westerly following the shoreline to 54⁰29.958'N 130⁰27.909'W (Burnt Cliff Island), then to 54⁰30.293'N 130⁰28.176'W (Mist Island) then following the easterly shoreline of Mist Island 54⁰30.381'N 130⁰28.096'W and then back to the initial coordinates.

5.6.3 Central Coast – Area Closed

5.6.4 Strait of Georgia

Strait of Georgia 2025/2026 Closed Areas
Area closures are detailed below. There may be additional closures in season by Variation Order and fishery notice depending on the circumstances. Other area closures may be identified to address specific management concerns such as providing access to First Nations to harvest fish or spawn for food, social, and ceremonial purposes (FSC) or vessel navigation.

Area 15:
All Subareas

Area 17:
South of Dodd Narrows (17S): Subareas 17-1 to 17 -10 and portions of 17-16, that portion south of a line at Dodd Narrows, drawn from Joan Point at 49°08.150'N 123°49.145'W on Vancouver Island northeasterly to a point on Gabriola Island at 49°08.538'N 123°48.312'W.

Area 18:
All subareas

Strait of Georgia Permanently Closed Areas
Area closures are detailed below. These areas are closed due to navigation concerns, sensitive fish habitat, or concerns regarding bycatch of other species.

Area 14:
Comox Harbour: Subarea 14-14

Area 17:
Porlier Pass: A portion of Subarea 17-3 north-easterly of a line from Cayetano Point at 49°00.767'N 123°36.014'W on Valdes Island to Alcala Point at 49°00.099'N 123°35.3730'W on Galiano Island.

Ladysmith Harbour: Subarea 17-7.

Nanaimo Harbour: Subarea 17-14.
Nanoose Harbour: Subarea 17-20.

Kulleet Bay: A portion of Subarea 17-5 westerly of a line from Coffin Point at 48°59.250′N 123°45.474 W on Vancouver Island to Yellow Point at 49°02.395′N 123°44.810′W on Vancouver Island.

Gabriola Pass: The waters of Gabriola Pass described as portions of Subareas 17-10 and 17-17 bounded by a line from Dibuxante Point at 49°07.625′N 123°42.913′W on Valdesz Island, thence following the northerly shore of Valdesz Island to Cordero Point at 49°07.700′N 123°42.126′W on Valdesz Island, thence to the most southerly tip of Breakwater Island at 49°07.546′N 123°40.897′W, thence following the westerly shore of Breakwater Island to the most northerly point on Breakwater Island at 49°08.360′N 123°40.872′W, thence due west to Gabriola Island at 49°08.355′N 123°41.4770′W, thence following the southerly shore of Gabriola Island to the point of land located at 49° 07.777′ N 123° 43.045′ W, thence in a straight line southerly to the point of commencement at Dibuxante Point.

Area 18:
Maple Bay: Subarea 18-7.
Cowichan Bay: Subarea 18-8.
Fulford Harbour: Subarea 18-10.
Active Pass: That portion of Subarea 18-2 north-easterly of a line from Collinson Point at 48°51.583′N 123°21.172′W on Galiano Island to Enterprise Reef Buoy at 48°50.694′N 123°20.882′W to Crane Point at 48°50.497′N 123°20.040′W on Mayne Island.

5.6.5 West Coast Vancouver Island – Area Closed

5.7 Gear

This section is a general description of gear used in fishing for roe herring. Please refer to the licence conditions for specific details regarding eligible gear for each licence. In the case of a discrepancy between this document and the licence condition, the licence conditions prevail.

The licence condition restricting the number of gillnets that may be used under authority of a gillnet licence to one (1) net was removed in 2015. This change allowed for fishing vessel efficiencies. All fishing gear must be marked in compliance with the Licence Conditions.

The restriction of a maximum of two seine (category HS or FHS) licences which may be placed on a single seine vessel was removed in 2013, and there is no maximum number of licences that may be placed on a vessel.

5.7.1 Seine

A herring purse seine shall not be greater than 411.48 metres (225 fathoms) in length, and a minimum mesh size of 25 millimetres (one inch) extension measure.

Designated vessels should have a full sized herring seine, along with all the associated gear (i.e. pumps, winches, power skiffs), to fish and haul the gear, as well as adequate electronic equipment for locating and estimating herring schools.

A properly functioning chilled seawater (C.S.W.), or refrigerated seawater (R.S.W.), system is required for all vessels participating in the fishery.

5.7.2 Gillnet

The effort restriction of fishing a single gillnet per licence was removed in 2015. The gear that is permitted to be used (as per the Licence Conditions) is:
(1) Herring gill nets with:
(a) a maximum length of 135 m;
(b) a maximum depth of 100 meshes; and
(c) a maximum mesh size of 64 mm.

The maximum mesh size of 64 mm does not apply in respect of a gill net that contains a single portion of netting that is not more than 2 m in depth and that has a mesh size of at least 150 mm.

Each herring gillnet shall be marked with the unique gillnet pool number and licence year on a small marker float that is affixed to one end of the gill net, adjacent to one of the large marker buoys. A 2005 study of the use of "Sharpie" brand markers on fishing floats indicates that this can provide a low cost and minimal failure rate net marking methodology. Nets tagged with buoys marked in this manner were tested over a 23 day period and showed no degradation in the marking readability. These floats can be replaced at low cost each year to accommodate annual gillnet licence number changes. The following is detailed in the licence conditions:

1. A buoy floating on the surface of the water shall be attached to each end of every gill net that is not attached to the vessel.
2. The buoys shall be at least 125 cm in circumference.
3. All buoys attached to the gill net shall be of the same colour.
4. A net float marked with the licence year and gillnet pool number shall be attached to a buoy that is attached to one end of the gill net.
5. The net float referred to in 4 shall be marked in solid block Arabic numerals and letters
(a) without ornamentation;
(b) not less than 25 mm in height; and 7mm in width
(c) in a colour that contrasts with their background.

In addition, no person shall use or carry on board a gill net that is more than 100 meshes in depth in a hung position or is of a greater length than 135 metres. The gill net mesh size shall not be greater than 64 mm (2.5 inches). Shaker panels shall not exceed a depth of 2 m with a mesh size no less than 150 mm (6 inches). Gill nets must be marked on both ends with buoys of similar colour, no less than 125 cm in circumference. No person shall leave any anchors, buoys or lines in the water during any closed time.

5.7.3 Vessel Master Responsibility

The maximum quantity of Roe herring authorized to be taken under a Roe herring licence by the licence holder shall not exceed the landed weight set out under "Quota" in the licence. The landed weight shall be determined at the port of landing by independent third-party verification.

The Pool captain has been identified as the person who may communicate with the fishery manager for the licenced pool and is responsible for documenting fishing locations, the number of nets fishing, estimated catch, and the list of packing vessels for the pool; however the vessel master who is conducting the fishing activity is responsible for not exceeding the weight of fish set out in the quota for the licence.

5.8 Herring Licence Pools

DFO supports the licence pooling structure established in 1998, to ensure the proper management and control of the roe herring fishery. To this end, DFO will support the integrity of the pooling system while managing to the overall fishery quota of an area. Catch in excess of pool quotas are not permitted and therefore the DFO's on-grounds precautionary strategy is to estimate catch during the fishery opening based on hails and validated landings, and to close the fishery based on estimates of when the allocation for a gear type will be achieved. All Roe Herring licence eligibility holders are advised that they must ensure catch does not exceed the amount they are licenced to harvest.

5.8.1 Guidelines for Herring Licence Pools

1. When more than one stock assessment area is open, licence selection for the fishing areas will be on an open basis. The individual licence share for that area will depend on the total number of licences choosing the area.

2. All Roe herring licences, including Food and Bait licence eligibilities transferred to the roe fishery, must be associated with a pool. Licences not associated with a pool will be identified as inactive for the season.

3. In areas that there is an identified Roe fishing opportunity, individual seine and gillnet licence quotas are determined by the number of licences that select an area. The quota for each pool is determined by the number of licences in that pool. The individual licence quotas are added together, to calculate the pool quota.

4. Each pool designates a pool captain to act as a liaison between the pool and the Department.

5. Within each area, each gear type will be managed to an overall quota. Each pool may fish until they have reached their quota, the overall fishery quota is achieved, or until the fishery is closed.

6. There will be no quota carry over from one year to the next.

7. If there are fish from seine and gillnet gear placed on the same packing vessel, fish from each gear type must be kept in separate holds.

5.8.2 Seine Licence Pool Fishery Guidelines

1. The minimum number of seine licences required to form a pool in the Strait of Georgia seine fishery is eight. There is no maximum number per pool.

2. When open, seine fisheries in Prince Rupert and Central Coast will be managed as a single pool in each area.

3. Each pool will designate one representative (pool captain) to work and liaise with the on-grounds fishery manager.

4. Once DFO, in conjunction with the pool representatives, has agreed that the fish in an area are harvestable, final details of the fishing plan will be discussed with industry participants. This will include fishing boundaries, setting order, hail-in procedures, etc. Ideally target size of sets should be 200 tons maximum to facilitate capture and reduce the possibility of exceeding target catch.

5. Vessels designated with a roe herring seine licence must have set approval from an on-grounds fishery manager prior to setting, unless the At Sea Observer (ASO) program is in place and the vessel has an at sea observer on board the vessel.

6. Fish captured by seine net may be released if the roe maturity of the set is not representative of the fish in the area. Once the fish have been dried up all fish must be pumped, and fish may not be released once pumping of the set has commenced. The sorting of fish captured in the seine is not allowed. Approval from a DFO representative must be received before any fish are released.

7. The fishery manager will evaluate the catch on an ongoing basis so that new sets can be approved in order to complete the fishery.

8. If a pool exceeds their quota, arrangements should be made to have another pool take the excess on the grounds.

9. All transporting and fishing vessels leaving the grounds must hail to the on-grounds fishery manager prior to leaving the fishing grounds, regardless of whether they have fish on board or not.

10. Daylight openings are preferred but if required the decision to fish at night will be made on grounds.

5.8.3 Gill Net Licence Pool Fishery Guidelines

1. The minimum number of gill net licences required to form a pool in the Strait of Georgia gill net fishery is four. There is no maximum number per pool.

2. Only a licenced vessel may be used for all catching, carrying and offloading of catch on the fishing grounds.

3. Each fishing pool must designate one person (pool captain) to act as a representative for that pool to co-ordinate with DFO prior to and during the season. The pool coordinator will be the liaison between the pool and the fishery manager. They will be responsible for keeping a running tally of the catch, documenting fishing locations, number of nets fishing, and a list of packing vessels for the pool.

4. Timing of gill net openings will be determined by a process for each fishing area.

5. A successful fishery requires that harvesters are present in the area with the appropriate gear, crews, vessel support, and packing capacity when the opening occurs.

6. The Department, in consultation with the pool representatives, will agree to the fishing areas.

7. Each pool will be required to weigh their catch on the grounds, using current government inspected scales. Validated weights at point of landing will be used to calculate the final weight against the individual pool quota.

8. All fish caught must be retained and validated.

9. In the Strait of Georgia, there will be a maximum number of 20 reporting relationships (gillnet pool captains), as managers will not be in a position to receive information from each of the pool coordinators.

10. Vessels leaving the fishing grounds, regardless of whether they have fish on board or not, must hail into the on-grounds fishery manager prior to leaving the fishing grounds.

6 FISHERY MONITORING PROGRAM

6.1 Fishery Monitoring

An industry funded Fishery Monitoring Program will be used to ensure accurate and timely catch reporting.

1. To ensure full accounting of catch, a Dockside Monitoring Program funded by the licence holders will be required to validate the weight of all catch from the fishery. The monitoring program will record all landings and provide a final report documenting all catch. All costs incurred for plant validation of the catch is the responsibility of the licence holder.

2. Confirmation of the service provider shall be provided to the Department each year.

3. The vessel master is required to make oral reports (hails) regarding weight of catch prior to leaving the fishing grounds, as specified in the Conditions of the roe herring seine or roe herring gillnet licence.

4. To ensure the timely deployment of a port monitor to the landing stations, each vessel leaving the grounds with fish onboard must notify the designated service provider prior to leaving the fishing grounds in order to receive a validation number. There will be a unique number assigned for each hail in. This number must be written on the plant validation slip and provided upon request to a fishery officer or designate.

5. Weights validated at the point of landing will be used to calculate the final validated weight against the individual pool quota. There will be no allowances made for ice and/or water in the tote at time of weighing. It is the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure that fish are being weighed accurately.

6. Approved landing stations for Roe herring dockside validation will be provided by fishery notice prior to the season.

6.2 At-Sea Observer Coverage Option

The use of at-sea observers (ASO's) to supplement the on grounds management may be used. The purpose of the program to is to provide fishing opportunities at times when staff for on grounds management and oversight are not available, and to test the utility for ASOs in the Roe herring fishery. The parameters of the program are as follows:

- Specific areas will be opened, and only for vessels with an ASO on board.
- The program is bounded by the availability of ASO staff.
- There must be sufficient packing capacity to ensure all catch is retained, and vessels should fish in a minimum of pairs.
- ASO must be on board the vessel until all fishing activity ceased (all pumping completed and gear is out of the water).
- Set releases will be photographed by ASO, and approval from fishery manager provided prior to release.
- ASO will collect data in the form of an At Sea Observer record.
- Hail requirements and all other requirements of Licence Conditions must be adhered to.

7 LICENSING

7.1 Fisher Identification Number

A Fisher Identification Number (FIN) allows for identification of fish harvesters for data collection, fisheries management and enforcement purposes. Once a FIN is assigned to a fish harvester, that individual will reference the FIN when identifying him or herself in subsequent business dealings with both the department and service contractors; for example filling in the FIN field on logbooks, noting the FIN when hailing, landing catch, etc. More information on FIN may be obtained from your DFO fisheries manager, or the Pacific Fishery Licensing Unit (PFLU).

7.2 Licence Categories

A Roe herring seine (category HS or FHS) or gill net (category HG or FH) licence is required to commercially fish for roe herring. Roe herring licence eligibilities are limited entry and party based.

7.3 Licence Renewal Fees

In accordance with the Service Fees Act, annual licence renewal fees will be adjusted by the annual rate of inflation determined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by Statistics Canada.

The roe herring licence renewal fees may be found under the header, **Licence renewal fees** on the following link: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/index-eng.html#commercial

There is no annual licence renewal fee for communal commercial category FHS and FH licences.

All payments must be made through the National Online Licensing System (NOLS).

7.4 Licence Issuance

A commercial Roe herring gill net or seine licence must be renewed annually, and the licence renewal fees paid annually, to retain the privilege to be issued the licence in the future. This means that the roe herring licence eligibility holders must renew the licence whether they intend to fish or not. If the licence is not renewed annually, the licence eligibility will cease and DFO will not be able to consider a request to issue that licence in the future.

The licence process and deadlines outlined below may be adjusted as required to accommodate fishery planning deadlines. If adjustments are made, the revised process will be provided by way of fishery notice.

The steps to the issuance of the commercial licence and quotas are detailed below.

a) Log into the National Online Licensing System (NOLS) and pay the 2026 roe herring licence renewal fee prior to the fees payment deadline. A renewal application will be uploaded to each roe herring licence eligibility holders NOLS account.
b) The licence documents will not become available until such time that all licenses have been pooled and the licence renewal fees paid; which is anticipated to be provided in late February.
c) Once a copy of the application form has been obtained, where applicable, the Area Selection or vessel details should be indicated. The completed copy should then be

submitted to DFO or provided to the identified Pool Captain for submission with the rest of the pool.

All deadlines are for 4 pm on the deadline date. The key dates will be provided in the approved final IFMP.

7.4.1 Area Selection/Re-Selection

Area Selection deadline - Return of Renewal Application forms (when more than one area opened)
Area selection for the 2025/26 season may occur. Details will be provided via a fishery notice.

Area Re-selection Option (When more than one Major Stock Area opened)
Area re-selection may occur, if required. Details will be provided in January via a fishery notice.

7.4.2 Pool Designation Lists

a) Gill net: Submission deadline – TBD. Submission deadlines will be announced though the Fishery Notice System.
   (i) A pool list shall be submitted for each pool.
   (ii) There is a minimum of four (4) gillnet licences per pool.
b) Seine: Submission deadline – TBD. Submission deadlines will be announced through the Fishery Notice System.
   (i) A pool list shall be submitted for each seine pool.
   (ii) There is a minimum of eight (8) seine licences per pool and no more than ten pools permitted for the Strait of Georgia area.
c) All licences - Submit Pool Designation Lists and Roe Herring Licence Renewal Application forms by the submission deadlines via email: DFO.LicensingPelagics-Permispelagiques.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

To ensure proper management and control of the fishery, any Roe herring licences that have selected an area, but who have not been identified on a pool list as required, will not be eligible to participate in the fishery (see section 5.8 of this Appendix) and will be marked as inactive. The individual gear and area share quota that would have been allocated to licences that have paid the annual licence renewal fee and selected an area but that have not identified on a pool list as "pooled" by the dead line date will remain out of the overall total allowable catch for that gear type and area.

7.4.3 Licence, Conditions of Licence, and Quota Addendum in NOLS

Licence conditions and quotas are expected to be available for printing in NOLS in late-February with further information provided through the DFO Fishery Notice System.

a) Once pools are finalised, a fishery notice will be released when the documents are available for printing.
b) Roe herring licence eligibility holders or their representatives will then be able to print the conditions of licence from their NOLS account under the 'Print Documents' tab.
c) The licence does not authorize fishing for roe herring until the conditions of licence are printed and attached to the licence.

Vessel masters are reminded that under the *Canada Shipping Act*, all vessels fishing herring or capelin are required to have a valid stability certificate/booklet on board the vessel. Skiffs used in the Gill Net Fishery: Skiffs must be registered with Transport Canada and display a Transport Canada registration number and meet all fish hold inspection standards.

7.5 Licence Documents

7.5.1 Valid Period

Roe herring licence documents are valid from the date of issue to December 31, 2026.

7.5.2 Replacements

Replacement for lost or destroyed licence documents may be obtained by re-printing from the licence holder's National Online Licensing System (NOLS) account.

7.5.3 Seine Vessel Redesignation

Roe herring seine licences may be redesignated to another vessel upon receipt of a written request prior to issuance of licences for that pool has commenced. The application and pool sheet must be amended.

On grounds redesignation requests will not be considered where a designated vessel is licensed in another area and unable to arrive in time for a fishery in a second area.

After licence issuance, vessel redesignation may occur on grounds on the approval of a fishery officer. On grounds requests are considered only if the vessel is disabled (lost, damaged or mechanical breakdown), within the same pool or prior to the fishery openings in the area (changes in area are not permitted).

7.6 Transporting herring

Transporting vessels are used in the herring fishery to transport herring harvested during commercial fishing to landing locations. Transporting fish is not permitted unless the vessel is registered and licensed to be used in commercial fishing or a transporting (category D) licence has been issued in respect of the vessel. The following valid commercial fishing licence categories allow the holder to transport roe herring caught by other vessels:

- Roe herring seine licence;
- any limited entry vessel based licence or communal commercial licence for the following species: salmon, schedule II species, geoduck, sablefish, halibut, crab, shrimp trawl, groundfish trawl or prawn and shrimp by trap;
- a valid Salmon category NAG licence.

7.7 Licence Eligibility Nomination

Roe herring licence eligibilities for categories HG or HS, may be nominated from one party to another. Communal commercial roe herring licences may not be nominated.

A Nomination for Roe Herring Licence Eligibility form can be obtained from the Pacific Fishery Licence Unit (PFLU) or from the PFLU webpage at: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/forms/nom-roeherr-harrogue-eng.pdf

Nomination applications are accepted annually from April 1st to October 31st. Forms must be received by the PFLU by close of business on October 31st. Postmarks will not be accepted.

Nomination forms can be submitted to the PFLU via Email (fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) or by submitting a request through the National Online Licensing System (NOLS).

There are no restrictions as to who can be nominated for a full fee Roe herring licence eligibility, however only an Indigenous individual, who has status under the *Indian Act* may be nominated for a reduced fee roe herring licence eligibility.

The nomination form must be signed by the roe herring licence eligibility holder on record; if the licence eligibility holder on record is a company or Indigenous group, the PFLU must have on record a current (i.e. within 30 days) BC Company Summary or a Confirmation of Band Signing Authorities form, advising who the signing authorities are.

Only one nominee (i.e. an individual, Indigenous group or company) may be nominated. Multiple nominees will not be accepted.

8 PUBLIC HEALTH

Human Waste Containment Regulations

Disposal of human waste into waters where shellfish are harvested or adjacent to shellfish harvest areas creates unnecessary and potentially serious health risks for shellfish consumers. In accordance with the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP) and Regulations

administered by Transport Canada, raw sewage (Human wastes, sewage or refuse) shall not be discharged from vessels while in or adjacent to shellfish areas. Vessels operating at a distance which does not allow for timely access to on-shore washroom facilities are expected to have a designated human waste receptacle on board. Receptacles could include a portable toilet, a fixed toilet, or other containment device as appropriate. Such devices must be made of impervious, cleanable materials and have a tight-fitting lid. (Refer to Division 4, Transport Canada's *Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations under the Canada Shipping Act*):

1. Portable toilets or other designated human waste receptacles shall be used only for the purpose intended, and shall be so secured and located as to prevent contamination of the shellfish area or any harvested shellfish on board by spillage or leakage.
2. The contents of toilets or other designated human waste receptacles shall be emptied only into an approved sewage disposal system.
3. Every person onboard a shellfish harvest vessel must wash and sanitize their hands after using or cleaning a waste receptacle, or after using an onshore washroom facility.

Information on Human Waste Containment Receptacle Requirements under the CSSP can be found at the following Canadian Food Inspection Agency internet site: https://www.inspection.gc.ca/preventive-controls/fish/cssp/questions-and-answers/eng/1563470479199/1563470589053

9 COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

Fish harvesters are responsible for compliance with all federal and provincial laws and regulations pertaining to fishing operations.

10 HISTORIC FISHERY DATES AND CATCH TARGETS

Table 7.2. Roe Herring Expected Use (Short tons) by Area, 2009 to 2025

	HG	PRD	CC	SOG	WCVI	Coast Wide
2009	closed	2,000	closed	9,750	closed	11,750
2010	closed	1,537	closed	8,500	closed	10,037
2011	closed	2,346	closed	13,500	closed	15,846
2012	closed	1,500	closed	11,500	closed	13,000
2013	closed	2,100	closed	13,805	closed	15,905
2014	1,200	2,000	750	13,633	2,117	19,700

2015	800	2,000	1,400	29,415	3,000	37,200
2016	closed	2,500	215	19,945	closed	22,660
2017	closed	2,500	215	28,185	closed	30,900
2018	closed	2,258	closed	20,990	closed	23,248
2019	closed	closed	closed	21,493	closed	28,430
2020	closed	closed	closed	10,423	closed	10,423
2021	closed	closed	closed	12,963	closed	12,963
2022	closed	closed	closed	8,117	closed	8,117
2023	closed	186	closed	5,802	closed	5,988
2024	closed	671	closed	5,020	closed	5,691
2025	closed	1,024	closed	9,749	closed	10,973

Table 7.3. Roe Catches (Short tons) by Gear and Roe Herring Area - 2025

Roe Herring Area	Seine	Number of Licences	Gill Net	Number of Licences	Total Catch
HG	0	0	0	0	0
PRD	0	4	0		0
CC	0	0	0	0	**0**
SOG	3,003	215+69ZM	4,795	1,185	**7,798**
WCVI	0	0	0	0	0
Inactive		1		70	
Total	3,003	220	4,795	1,267	7,798

*** Food and bait licence quota was transferable to the roe fishery in 2024/2025.**

Table 7.4. Dates, Locations and Catch of Roe Herring Fisheries - 1980 to 2025

Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) (Areas 1, 2E and 2W)

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch
1980	Mar 23	Skincuttle Inlet	2,321	Feb. 12-14, 17-20	Naden Harbour	1,334
	Mar 19-21	Louscoone Inlet		Mar 19-21	Louscoone Inlet	
1981	Mar 17	Skincuttle Inlet	4,281	Mar 18-20	Skincuttle Inlet	1,879
	Mar 21	Inskip Inlet		Mar 24-30	Atli Inlet	
	Mar 24	Atli Inlet				
	Mar 25	Rennell Sound				
1982	Mar 14	Lower Juan Perez	2,594	Mar 20-22	Inner Skincuttle Inlet	1,551
	Mar 20	Inskip Channel				
	Mar 22	Atli Inlet				

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch
1983	Mar 09	Lower Juan Perez	5,071	Mar 15	Outside Poole Inlet	1,024
	Mar 21	Inskip Channel				
1984	Mar 2	Lower Juan Perez	4,427	Mar 14	Poole Inlet	589
1985	Mar 11	Skincuttle Inlet	4,832	Mar 25-26	Inner Skincuttle Inlet	1,644
1986	Mar 23	Skincuttle Inlet	2,720	Apr 7	Juan Perez Sd.	981
1987	Mar 20	Juan Perez Sound	1,896	No fishery		
1988	No fishery			No fishery		
1989	Mar 28	Louscoone Inlet	1,211	No fishery		
1990	Mar 18	Port Louis	5,787	Apr 8	Burnaby Strait	1,290
	Mar 26	Louscoone Inlet				
1991	Mar 23	Rennell Sound	6,367	Apr 8	Section Cove	598
	Mar 31	Burnaby Strait				
1992	Mar 16	Louscoone Inlet	3,650	No fishery		
	Mar 18	Rennell Sound		No fishery		
1993	Mar 25	Skincuttle Inlet	3,470	No fishery		
	Mar 28	Port Louis				
	Mar 29-30	Rennell Sound				
	Mar31-Apr 1	Inskip Inlet				
1994	No fishery			No fishery		
1995	No fishery			No fishery		
1996	No fishery			No fishery		
1997	No fishery			No fishery		
1998	Mar 14 -	Huston Inlet	1,512	No fishery		
	Mar 15-16	Huston Inlet				
	Mar 15-17	Lower Juan Perez				
	Mar 25	Skincuttle Inlet				

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch
1999	Mar 10	Skaat Harbour	2,484	Mar 25-27	Lower Juan Perez / Skincuttle Inlet	521
2000	Mar 15	Island Bay / Skaat Harbour	1,640	No fishery		
	Mar 16	Skaat Harbour / Skincuttle Inlet				
2001	No Fishery			No Fishery		
2002	Mar 22	Juan Perez	502	No Fishery		
2003 to 2025	No Fishery			No Fishery		

Prince Rupert District (Areas 3, 4 and 5)

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
1980	Mar 29-31	Kitkatla Inlet	1,809	Mar 29-31	Kitkatla Inlet	1,153
1981	Mar 27	Kitkatla Inlet	1,159	Apr 3	Kitkatla Inlet	392
1982	No fishery			No fishery		
1983	No fishery			No fishery		
1984	Mar 21	Kitkatla Inlet	1,822	Mar 26	Big Bay	2,072
1985	Mar 28	Kitkatla Inlet	3,086	Mar 26-28	Big Bay	3,831
1986	Apr 2	Kitkatla Inlet	3,796	Apr 12-13	Big Bay	5,039
1987	Mar 31	Kitkatla Inlet	1,918	Mar 24,25,29	Big Bay	4,485
	Apr 1			Apr 2		
1988	Apr 4	Kitkatla Inlet	3,585	Apr 2,3,4,6	Big Bay	4,781
1989	Apr 2, 3	Kitkatla Inlet	3,805	Apr 2, 3, 4	Big Bay	5,231
1990	Apr 3, 4	Kitkatla Inlet	2,224	Mar 28	Big Bay	2,603
1991	Apr 6	Kitkatla Inlet		Mar 25, 27	Big Bay	
1992	Mar 30	Kitkatla Inlet	1,230	Mar 26	Big Bay	3,912
1993	Apr 1	Kitkatla Inlet	2,000	Mar 31	Big Bay	4,155
1994	Apr 2, 3	Kitkatla Inlet	2,017	Apr 2, 3	Big Bay	2,530
1995	Apr 4, 5	Kitkatla Inlet	797	Mar 27	Big Bay	1,522
1996	No fishery			Mar 27	Big Bay	3,075
1997	No fishery			Apr 5	Big Bay	6,007
1998	No fishery			Mar 21-23	Big Bay	3,501
1999	No Fishery			Mar 20-25	Big Bay	2,028
2000	Mar 27-28	Kitkatla Inlet	1,366	Mar 29-Apr 1	Big Bay	3,308

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
2001	Mar 23	Kitkatla Inlet	839	Apr 1 – 4	Big Bay, Venn	2,100
2002	Apr 3-6	Kitkatla Inlet	2,059	Mar 25-29	Big Bay	2,681
2003	Mar 23	Kitkatla Inlet	1,383	Mar 28-30	Big Bay	2,706
2004	Mar 27; 29	Kitkatla Inlet	1,646 *	Mar 19 – 25	Big Bay	2,330
2005	Mar 18 – 20	Kitkatla Inlet	1,567 *	Mar 19 – 21	Big Bay	2,142 *
2006	Mar 23, 24	Kitkatla Inlet	820*	Mar 26-29	Big Bay	1,697*
2007		No Fishery		Apr 3 to 4	Big Bay	1,067
2008	Mar 15-18	Kitkatla Inlet	566	Apr 2 to 4	Slippery Rock Big Bay	1,266
2009	Apr 7,8	Kitkatla Inlet	786	Apr 7,8	Big Bay	1,418
2010	Mar 25-26	Kitkatla Inlet	523	Mar 29- Mar 31	Big Bay	1,113
2011	Mar 25-27	Kitkatla Inlet	973	Mar 26-29	Big Bay	1,346
2012	Mar 30	Kitkatla Inlet	514	Mar 24-27	Big Bay	1,010
2013	Mar 19 and 22	Kitkatla Inlet	818	Mar 20-22	Big Bay	1,415
2014	Mar 22-24	Kitkatla Inlet	791	Mar 30-Apr 1	Big Bay	1,223
2015	Mar 21-23	Kitkatla Inlet	812	Mar 22-27	Big Bay	1,092
2016	Mar 20-24, Apr1	Kitkatla Inlet	803	Mar 18-22	Big Bay	1,521
2017	Mar 23	Kitkatla	1,124	Mar 17 to 21	Big Bay	1,541
2018	No Opening			Mar 25 to 27	Big Bay	459
2019 to 2022	No Opening					
2023	No Opening			Mar 28 to 30	Big Bay	186
2024	No Opening			No Opening		
2025	No Opening			No Opening		

Central Coast (Areas 6, 7, 8)

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
1982	Mar 15	Stryker Bay	2,489	Mar 18-19	Cape Mark-Thompson Bay	4,488
				Mar 21-22	Kitasu Bay-Higgins Pass	
1983	Mar 15	East Houghton	2,272	Mar 21	West Coast Price Island	3,945

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
		Islands		Mar 23	Houghton Islands, Thompson Stryker, Cecilia Island	
1984	Mar 16-17	East Higgins Pass	3,955	Mar 27-29	Kitasu Bay, Powell Anchorage S.E. Princess Alice Island	3,949
1985	Mar 11	Spiller Channel	2,993	Mar 31-Apr 1	Weeteeam Bay, Kitasu Bay, Powell Anchorage, Spiller Dundivan, Thompson Waskesiu Houghton Islands, Kwakshua Channel	2,529
1986	Mar 29	E. Higgins Pass	2,224	Apr 5	Kitasu Bay, Powell Anchorage, Spiller Channel, Thompson	1,296
1987	Mar 29	Seaforth Channel	2,583	Mar 30	Powell Anchorage, Stryker Kitasu Bay	1,014
		Spiller Channel				
1988	Mar 19	Stryker Bay	3,490	Mar 28-30	Kitasu Bay, Thompson Bay Raymond Pass	1,069
		Thompson Bay				
1989	Mar 24	Kitasu Bay	6,796	Mar 30, 31	E. Higgins Pass	3,209
	Mar 25	E. Higgins		Apr 1, 3, 4	Kitasu, Thompson & Stryker Boddy/Joassa	

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
					Channel Norman Morrison Bay	
1990	Mar 19	Spiller Channel	5,336	Mar 28	Kitasu Bay & Stryker Bay	3,357
	Mar 24	Spiller Channel		Mar 29	Kitasu Bay, Stryker Bay, Thompson Bay	
1991	Mar 23	Spiller Channel	7,300	Mar 31	Thompson Bay, Powell Anchorage	1,915
1992	Mar 19	Seaforth / Spiller	6,913	Mar 24	Seaforth/ Powell Anchorage/ Thompson Bay	1,085
1993	Mar 24	Seaforth / Spiller	8,655	Mar 28-29	Seaforth, Thompson Bay, Boddy Pass	2,007
1994	Mar 26, 27	Seaforth / Spiller	10,036	Mar 28	Kitasu, Thompson Bay, Powell Anchorage	2,406
1995	Mar 18	Kitasu Bay	8,406	Mar 22	Kitasu Bay Moss Pass	1,581
	Mar 22, 23	Spiller Channel		Mar 29	Cecilia Island, Spiller Ch, Thompson Seaforth Channel	
1996	Mar 20	Seaforth / Spiller	3,900	Mar 23	Powell Anchorage, Berry Inlet, Seaforth Channel	369
1997	Mar 25	Spiller Channel	2,805	Mar 29	Powell Anchorage	33
1998	Mar 16-18	Spiller Channel	7,919	Mar 20-23	Seaforth Ch, Mathieson Ch Powell Anch,	498

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
					E Higgins Pass	
1999	Mar 16-17	Spiller Channel	5,967	Mar 19-24	West Price Is.	1,558
2000	Mar 17-19	Spiller Channel	6,513	Mar 28-30	East Higgins Pass	1,021
2001	Mar 18-21	Spiller Channel	5,665	Mar 26	East Higgins Pass	509
2002	Mar 27-29	Spiller Channel East Higgins Pass	2,636	Apr 2-5	Laredo Snd, E Higgins Pass Matheson Ch	440
2003	Mar 23-24	East Higgins Pass	2,054	Apr 2-3	Laredo Snd, E Higgins Pass	319
2004	Mar 24-25	Seaforth / Spiller	2,559 *	No Fishery		
2005	Mar 22- 24	Seaforth / Spiller	3,618 *	No Fishery		
2006	Mar 21 -25	Lambard Inlet, Neekas Inlet	2,710*	No Fishery		
	Mar 26-28	E. Higgins Pass				
	Mar 27-28	Seaforth/Spiller				
2007	Mar 15 –Apr 3	Clifford Bay, Waskesui Pass/East Higgins Pass/Kitasu Bay	439	No Fishery		
2008-2013	No Fishery			No Fishery		
2014	No Fishery			Apr 1-4	Clifford Bay and Weeteeam Bay	757
2015	Mar 22,23	Spiller Channel	690	No catch		
2016	Mar 26	E. Higgins	234	No fishery		
2017 to 2025	No Fishery			No Fishery		

Strait of Georgia (SOG) (Areas 12 to 18)

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
1980	Mar 6	Lambert Channel		Mar 5-6	Hornby - Denman	3,502
	Mar 6			Mar 9-12	Northwest Bay	
1981	Mar 7-8	Hornby - Denman	2,294	Mar 5-7	Hornby - Denman	5,584
1982	Mar 7-8	Pylades Channel	3,651	Mar 5-7	Hornby - Denman	6,154
1983	February 27	Cape Lazo	8,576	Feb. 27-Mar 1	Hornby - Denman	9,495
	Mar 4-5	Powell River				
	Mar 2	Nanoose Bay				
1984	Mar 2, 4	Powell River	4,548	Mar 9-11	Cape Lazo, Nanoose Bay	6,657
1985	Mar 6	Hornby - Denman.	2,915	Mar 8-9	Hornby - Denman	3,852
1986	No Fishery			No Fishery		
1987	Mar 6, 7	Powell River	3,429	Mar 7, 8	Lambert Channel	6,612
				Mar 17, 18	Yellow Point	
1988	Mar 3	Baynes Sound	1,621	Mar 12	Hornby - Denman	6,601
1989	Mar 11, 12	Pylades & Stuart Channel	1,562	Mar 15	Cape Lazo - French Creek	6,525
1990	No Fishery			Mar 14	Cape Lazo Hornby - Denman	8,693
				Mar 22-24	Hornby - Denman French Creek Stuart Channel	
1991	Mar 2	Baynes Sound	1,020	Mar 17	Hornby - Denman	9,844
				Mar 18-19	Hornby - Denman	
1992	Mar 4	Baynes Sound	3,430	Mar 14-15	Cape Lazo - Lambert Channel	9,393
1993	Mar 2	Baynes Sound	4,383	Mar 6	Upper Denman - Hornby Baynes Sound - Lambert Channel	9,948

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
1994	Mar 10	Baynes Sound	4,902	Mar 14, 15	Shelter Point to Dorcus Point	12,249
1995	Mar 4, 5	Baynes Sound	4,209	Mar 12	Upper Baynes Sd-Hornby Is. Lambert Channel	9,112
1996	Mar 7, 8	Baynes Sound	6,995	Mar 15	Baynes Sd-Hornby Is. Lambert Channel Qualicum	6,528
1997	Mar 4	Baynes Sound	9,410	Mar 19	Baynes Sd-Hornby Is. Lambert Channel	6,294
1998	Mar 8,9	Baynes Sound	6,259	Mar 12, 13 Mar 18	Baynes Sound - French Creek Nanaimo	7,343
1999	Mar 5	Baynes Sound	5,104	Mar 4-7	Baynes Sound-Lambert Channel French Creek	7,296
2000	Mar 2-4	Lower Baynes Sound	6,689	Mar 4-7	Lower Baynes, East Coast Denman Island, Qualicum	8,155
2001	Mar 4	Baynes Sound	7,358	Mar 6-9	Cape Lazo to Thames Creek	8,281
2002	Mar 7-8	Baynes Sound	9,685	Mar 17-20	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	8,640
2003	Mar 14	Baynes Sound	10,897	Mar 16-23	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	8,707
2004	Mar 10-13	Nanoose Bay & Northumberland	7,737	Mar 10-15 Mar 20-29	Cape Lazo - Valdes Island	5,637
2005	Feb 28 – Mar 2	Baynes Sound	7,710 *	Feb 28 – Mar 4	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	9,657 *
2006	Mar 6-10	Baynes Sound	9,060*	Mar 4 Mar 13-15	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo Stuart Channel, Valdes Island	7,698*

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
2007	Mar 12-14	French Creek/Chrome Island/Baynes Sound	4,260	Mar 4-14	Hornby Island/Denman Island to Parksville	5,826
2008	Mar 1,2, 4, 5	French Creek/Qualicum Beach	6,664	February 26 – Mar 24	Cape Lazo – Nanaimo, Dodd Narrows	3,033
2009	Mar 4	Baynes Sound	6,265	Mar 6-8	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	4,340
2010	Feb 28	Neck Point/Blunden	5,004	Feb 26-Mar 3	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	3,576
2011	No fishery			Mar 13 – 22	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	4,686
2012	Mar 4,6,7,17	Henry Bay, Comox Bar, Yellow Pt	3,494	Mar 4 to Apr 2	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	4,496
2013	Mar 3 to 10	Baynes, Qualicum,	6,723	Mar 2-6	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	6,509
2014	March 3 to 8, Mar 10	Baynes	7,583	Mar 5-11	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	6,167
2015	Feb 24 and 28; Mar 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 18, 26, 30; April 2 and 6	Baynes, FCreek, NW Bay, Nanaimo	9,278	Feb 28 – Apr 8	Cape Lazo to Nanaimo	4,107
2016	Mar 3-6	Baynes	8,407	Mar 6-Apr 6 Mar 27-29	Lazo-Nanaimo Yellow Pt area	6,761
2017	Mar 6, 8 to12	Horseshoe, Baynes Sound	9,695	Mar 4 to Apr 4	Lazo-Nanaimo	10,166
2018	Mar 5 to 13	Lower Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel	3,429	Mar 2 to 7 Mar 29 to 29	Parksville to Bowser Nanaimo area	11,077
2019	Mar 9, 10, 13	Northwest Bay/Brant Pt. and French Creek/Qualicum Beach	7,178	Mar 15 to 21, April 1	Denman Island, Mapleguard Pt. to Qualicum	8,374
2020	Mar 6-7	Upper Baynes Sound	2,019	Mar 6 to Mar 17	EC Denman Island, Parksville Bay,	7,071

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
2021	Mar 9 to 11	French Creek, Northwest Bay/Brant Pt., and Blunden to Icarus.	2,995	Mar 10 to Mar 17	French Creek, Qualicum N. of Cape Lazo, to Flora Island, then south to Qualicum and Icarus.	8,296
2022	Mar 3-4	Lambert Channel, Chrome Island and Scallop Farm	820	Mar 5 to Mar 8	Kitty Coleman, Cape Lazo, Bowser to Qualicum, East Denman Island and Gartley Point	3,407
2023	Mar 8-13	Lambert Channel, Komas Bluff	2,321	Mar 14-16	Bowser to French Creek	2,704
2024	Mar 6-12	Komas Bluff, Lambert Channel, Baynes Sound	3,144	Mar 13 to Mar 15	Bowser to French Creek, East Denman Island	3,151
2025	Mar 9-14	Lambert Channel, Mapleguard Point	3,003	Mar 5-13	East Denman Island, Cape Lazo, Mapleguard Point, French Creek to Northwest Bay	4,795

WCVI (Areas 23 to 27)

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
1980	March 7-8	Clayoquot Sound	1,854	March 8	Clayoquot Sound	2,536

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
				March 2-5	Esperanza Nuchatlitz Pt. Langford	
				March 3-9	Winter Harbour	
1981	March 11	Barkley Sound	5,521	March 15-16	Barkley Sound	3,395
				March 2-5	Esperanza / Nuchatlitz, P. Langford	
				March 6-13	Winter Harbour	
1982	March 17, 18	Barkley Sound	2,613	March 8-9	Clayquot Sound	3,433
	March 8	Clayoquot Sound		March 7-12	Esperanza / Nuchatlitz, Pt. Langford	
	March 7, 8	Winter Harbour		March 8-14	Winter Harbour	
1983	March 1	Barkley Sound	6,769	March 3	Esperanza, Nuchatlitz	2,684
				Feb. 28-March 4	Winter Harbour	
1984	March 8	Barkley Sound	6,303	March 5	Esperanza / Nuchatlitz	946
				March 3-6	Winter Harbour	
1985	No Fishery			No Fishery		
1986	No Fishery			No Fishery		
1987	Area 23 March 12	Barkley Sound	14,438	Area 25 March 12	Esperanza / Port Langford Nuchatlitz	2,724
1988	Area 23	Barkley Sound	8,375			1,596
	March 11					
	Area 24	Clayoquot Sound		Area 24	Clayoquot Sound	
	March 11	Cypress Bay		March 23		

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
1989	March 13, 17	Barkley Sound	9,825	March 23	Hand / Pinkerton / Turtle Island	3,874
1990	March 11, 12	Barkley Sound	7,819	March 21	Yellow / Elbow Banks	2,160
1991	March 10 March 12	Cook Channel Barkley Sound	6,145	March 21	Macoah / Toquart	2,062
1992	March 6-8	Stopper Island / Toquart Bay	3,123	March 8	Maggie River/ Macoah Pass	618
1993	March 11	Barkley Sound	5,775	March 10	Winter Harbour	369
1994	March 7	Barkley Sound	6,022	March 9	Winter Harbour Esperanza Inlet	1,020
1995	March 3	Barkley Sound	1,629	No Fishery		
1996	March 14-16 March 16	Barkley Sound Tofino	793	No Fishery		
1997	March 4	Barkley Sound	6,893	No Fishery		
1998	March 9	Barkley Sound	5,377	March 17 March 7,8 March 18	Barkley Sound Esperanza Inlet Sydney Inlet	1,640
1999	March 10	Barkley Sound	3,210	March 4-7 April 1	Esperanza Inlet Sydney Inlet	1,062
2000	March 8-9	Barkley Sound	547	March 21-24	Esperanza Inlet	772
2001	No Fishery			No Fishery		
2002	No Fishery			March 26-28	Esperanza Inlet	428

Year	Seine	Location	Total Seine Catch (tons)	Gill Net	Location	Total Gill Net Catch (tons)
2003	March 10-14	Barkley Sound	2,285	March 24-27	Esperanza Inlet	1,042
2004	March 14-15	Rosa Harbour	3,689 *	March 14-19	Inner and Outer Nuchatlitz; Rosa Harbour	654
2005	March 7 – 8	Esperanza Inlet	3,257 *	March 7 – 12	Esperanza Inlet	988
2006-2013	No fishery			No fishery		
2014	Remained closed – due to interlocutory injunction			Remained closed – due to interlocutory injunction		
2015		No catch			No catch	
2016 to 2025	No fishery			No fishery		

*Includes portion of HCRS allocation.

APPENDIX 8. COMMERCIAL FISHING PLAN FOR SPAWN ON KELP

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1 PURPOSE

This document is a Commercial Fishing Plan for Spawn-on-Kelp in British Columbia, for the period from February 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026.

2 COMMERCIAL FISHERY OVERVIEW

The Spawn-on-Kelp (SOK) fishery traditionally occurs in four of the five Pacific Herring major stock assessment areas: Haida Gwaii (HG), Prince Rupert District (PRD), Central Coast (CC), and the west coast of Vancouver Island (WCVI). It does not occur in the Strait of Georgia (SOG) because of the lack of suitable kelp. The fishery also has activity in the minor stock assessment areas Area 2W and 27, and in Areas 10 and 12 which are outside the stock assessment areas.

Spawn-on-kelp is a traditional food of Indigenous people in British Columbia. Indigenous communities harvest herring spawn-on-kelp for food, social and ceremonial purposes (FSC) under the authority of communal licences. Indigenous coastal communities traditionally harvest herring spawn naturally on several different types of kelp, eel grass and tree branches.

The SOK fishery provides the opportunity to harvest herring eggs which have adhered to blades of kelp after herring have spawned. Commercial production of spawn on kelp was initiated in 1975 with the issuance of permits to 13 individuals, and developed in a gradual fashion. Selection of permit holders was based on remoteness of operation site and experience in catching, holding and handling live herring. Permits were issued only if adequate supplies of herring and kelp were available in the area being considered.

Between 1975 and 1983, additional permits were granted, increasing the number of permit holders to 29. In 1983, the permits formally became limited entry category J licences. In 1989, ten new licences were granted to Indigenous individuals or nations subject to retirement or rendering temporarily inactive a set number of Roe herring seine or gillnet licences from the herring Roe fishery**.** In 1996, the Supreme Court of Canada found in the *Gladstone* decision that the Heiltsuk First Nation had an Aboriginal right to commercially fish herring spawn-on-kelp (SOK). As a result, seven new communal commercial licence eligibilities were negotiated with the Heiltsuk First Nation and the Heiltsuk held nine SOK licences in Central Coast area, with an annual quota of 240,000 lb until 2017. In 2018, this was permanently increased by four SOK

equivalent licences or 64,000 lb to an overall quota of 304,000 lb. This SOK is harvested using the preferred means of the Heiltsuk, which is open ponding.

In total, there are 46 Spawn-on-Kelp licence eligibilities. Twelve of these are communal commercial, category FJ licence eligibilities held by First Nations (three as a result of relinquishment through the Allocation Transfer Program (ATP) and re-issuance as communal commercial, and nine are unique Heiltsuk communal commercial licences), while the remainder are category J commercial licence eligibilities issued to individual parties, which include First Nations individuals and bands.

3 MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE DURATION OF THIS PLAN

3.1 Changes from Previous Seasons

3.1.1 Proposed Closures for 2025/2026

For the duration of this plan, Haida Gwaii (Area 2E), will be closed for the commercial harvest of Spawn on Kelp.

For the 2025/2026 season, the following closure may be implemented to provide for increased access for FSC harvest in the Prince Rupert Area, if required:

Subarea 4-6: Those waters of Pearl Harbour and adjacent waters inside a line that begins at 54⁰30.670’N 130⁰27.702W (Flat Top Islands) then to 54⁰30.828’N 130⁰27.255’’W (Green Mound) then to 54⁰30.738’N 130⁰26.924’W (Tsimpsean Peninsula), then southerly following the shoreline to 54⁰29.981’N 130⁰26.805’W (Pearl Point), then to 54⁰29.876’N 130⁰27.909’W (Cultivation Point), then westerly following the shoreline to 54⁰29.958’N 130⁰27.909’W (Burnt Cliff Island), then to 54⁰30.293’N 130⁰28.176’W (Mist Island) then following the easterly shoreline of Mist Island 54⁰30.381’N 130⁰28.096’W and then back to the initial coordinates.

3.1.3 Updates to Licence Conditions

There are no changes to conditions of licence for commercial SOK operators proposed for 2026.

3.2 Events Calendar

Table 8.1. SOK Events Calendar.

MONTH	DAY	EVENT
		2025
October	1	Provincial Marine Plant Harvest Permit Application Deadline
		2026
January	31	If required - Deadline to designate 2026 roe herring licences as inactive for 2026.
	31	If required - Deadline for SOK licenses to express interest in harvesting in areas where full allocations are not available in 2026.
	31	If required – lottery process to select licenses for any area where more licences wish to harvest than there is quota available.
February	1	Deadline to enroll with spawn on kelp monitoring program
March	1	Spawn on kelp fishing season anticipated to open
April	15	Closure of Island Point to seining operations for spawn on kelp purposes (if open)
May	31	Spawn on kelp fishing closes
June	30	All spawn on kelp fishing gear removed from water
August	1	SOK licence eligibility holders that opted out of the 2026 fishery may renew their licence for zero fee
December	31	Licence Eligibility must be completed with Licensing

3.3 Open Times

The Spawn-on-Kelp commercial fishing plan is in effect from 00:01h February 1, 2026, to 23:59h June 30, 2026. The actual opening of the fishery will be through a Variation Order and fishery notice. Application to extend the open time for late season harvest must be made to the Regional SOK Coordinator before May 24, 2026, in order to allow for consultation and discussions with all participants. Extensions to the season are not automatically approved; a precautionary plan may be required for herring conservation.

3.4 Open Areas

The following areas are identified as fishing areas, subject to in-season decisions and consultations:.

Table 8.2 Areas with Available Commercial TAC for the 2026 season.

Major Stock Areas:	Prince Rupert Area (PRD) – Areas 3, 4, 5 Central Coast (CC) – Area 6, portion of Area 7 (Higgins Pass) West Coast Vancouver Island (WCVI) – Areas 23, 24, 25
Minor Stock Areas:	Area 27 (Subareas 27-1 through 27-10)
Other Areas:	Area 12

Where commercial harvest opportunities are available, commercial fleets are requested to avoid locations where local Indigenous people are gathering fish, or fishing for herring spawn on boughs or spawn on kelp. Additionally, the Department works collaboratively with Indigenous people on communication regarding herring stocks and spawning locations for FSC fishery planning and information on FSC activities. As the fishery season progresses, in some cases, specific requirements to remain out of particular locations to support FSC harvest will be implemented as required.

3.5 Closures

No commercial harvest will be permitted in the following areas shown in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3. SOK Closures for the 2026 season.

Major Stock Areas:	Haida Gwaii (HG) - Area 2E
Minor Stock Areas:	Area 2W
Other Areas:	Area 10

Note that any in season changes will be completed by Variation Order and Fishery Notice. Refer to Fishery Notices before fishing in an area.

3.6 Allocation and Harvest Levels

A guideline for determining Spawn-on-Kelp harvest allocations has been implemented by the Department to avoid the issuance of partial quotas based on recent science advice and Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) simulations. Where the provided harvest option is not

evenly divisible by 100 short tons for a closed pond operation or 35 tons for an open pond operation, the harvest option will be rounded up or down to the nearest evenly divisible yield.

3.6.1 Haida Gwaii (Area 2E)

Haida Gwaii major stock assessment area will be closed for commercial SOK fishing in 2026. Natural mortality has been determined to be a dominant factor in Pacific Herring stock dynamics, and HG has not shown evidence of recovery, even in the absence of fishing. Future decisions about harvest opportunities in Haida Gwaii will be guided by the Haida Gwaii herring rebuilding plan.

3.6.2 Area 2W

Based on the Haida Gwaii Herring rebuilding plan, this abundance level and distribution of spawn does not support SOK access for the 2026 SOK season.

3.6.3 Prince Rupert (PRD)

The Prince Rupert District has ten SOK licences assigned to the area. An 8% harvest rate allows for full FSC allocation as well as full allocation for a commercial SOK fishery. In order to provide access for the full FSC allocation, area closures may be identified to address fisheries conflicts. As well, First Nations and the commercial operators will be encouraged to work with DFO to achieve a precautionary management plan in the event of commercial harvest occurring.

3.6.4 Central Coast (CC)

There are fifteen Central Coast SOK licenses in total which includes the Heiltsuk commercial fishery. The CC harvest approach for 2026 utilizes a 4% harvest rate and a TAC of 900 short tons to support FSC and limited commercial SOK. After FSC, 3 commercial SOK licences will have the opportunity to harvest in the Kitasu Bay/Higgins Pass area by the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Nation.

3.6.5 Area 10

This area is outside both major and minor stock assessment areas, and a formal DFO stock assessment is not conducted and limited spawn has occurred in recent years. There are three SOK licences assigned to the area. Area 10 will remain closed for commercial SOK fishing in 2026.

3.6.6 Area 12

This area is outside both major and minor stock assessment areas and limited assessment has occurred in the area although consistent and increasing spawning has been reported in recent years. There is one commercial SOK licence assigned to this area that will have the opportunity to harvest in 2026 representing at TAC of 100 tons.

3.6.7 West Coast Vancouver Island (WCVI)

The WCVI area has four SOK licenses which will have the opportunity to harvest in 2026 with a total TAC of 400 tons. Discussions are ongoing regarding rights-based fishing access for the 2026 season.

3.6.8 Area 27

Area 27 (located on the North West coast of Vancouver Island) has three open pond SOK licenses which will have the opportunity to harvest in 2026 with that total TAC representing 105 tons.

3.7 Quota Allocations

The majority of category J and FJ licences have an individual quota of 16,000 lb of drained product, adjusted annually based on the previous year for overages and underages. The Heiltsuk First Nation holds nine SOK licence eligibilities with varying quota amounts, totaling 19 equivalent SOK licence eligibilities with a total quota of 304,000 lb.

3.8 Catch in Excess of Quota (Overage)

Operators must operate in a manner that ensures that over-harvest does not occur. Any licence holder landing spawn on kelp product in excess of the licenced amount may be subject to prosecution and seizure of the overage as a violation of their conditions of licence.

No person who is fishing under the authority of a licence issued for the purpose of commercial fishing shall dump from a vessel any fish that has been caught in accordance with the *Fisheries Act* and the *Regulations* made thereunder.

3.8.1 Carry Over of Quota Overage and Underage

First introduced in 1996, this program allows the spawn on kelp licence eligibility holder to carry over quota overages or quota underages from one year to the next based on the following rules:

The Rules for Carry-Over of Individual Quota Underages
Licence eligibility holders whose product weight is under their quota by 2,000 pounds or less, at the end of the season, will have the equivalent weight of the underage added to their individual quota in the next year the licence is active.

Licence eligibility holders whose product weight is under the quota by more than 2,000 pounds, at the end of the season, will have only 2,000 pounds added to their individual quota in the following season and will forego the remainder. For the Heiltsuk licenses, the maximum underage carry-over is 38,000 pounds.

The Rules for Carry-Over of Individual Quota Overages

Licence eligibility holders, whose product weight is over their quota by as much as 1,000 lb at the end of the season, may retain the overage. Any product landed in excess of 1,000 lb will be seized and charges may result. The equivalent weight of any overage will be subtracted from the quota for that licence in the next year it is active. For the Heiltsuk licenses, the maximum overage carry-over is 19,000 lb.

3.9 Compliance with Federal and Provincial Legislation and Regulations

3.9.1 Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area and Haida Heritage Site

The Gwaii Haanas Agreement (1993) specifies "no extraction or harvesting by anyone of the resources of the lands and non-tidal waters of the Archipelago for or in support of commercial enterprise" (s3.3). Log harvesting for SOK pond frames is not permitted within the boundaries of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve.

3.9.2 Province of BC Kelp Harvest Requirements

The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development licence and enforce the harvesting of Marine Plants. The harvest of *Macrocystis integrifolia* kelp used in spawn on kelp operations is carried out under the authority of a Wild Aquatic Plant Harvester Licenceissued by the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development. Conditions of licence include area of harvest, quantity of kelp that may be harvested, harvesting equipment, harvesting techniques, and harvest log and royalty submission.

The Province of BC is obliged to consult with First Nations prior to the issuance of the Wild Aquatic Plant Harvester Licence. Licences can assist the Ministry in this process in a number of ways, including:

- participating directly with the First Nations in the consultation process;
- providing direct support to the First Nations in the consultation process; and
- building new or maintaining any existing relationships with First Nations;
- providing the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development with any further information that you think could assist in our consultation process.

The following application requirements apply:

- Application deadline is October 1 for harvest proposed for the following year;
- Each application must include the relevant category J licence eligibility holder information;
- The applicable licence fee payable to the provincial Minister of Finance is $110;
- As per the Fish and Seafood Licensing Regulation, the person harvesting the kelp must have a valid licence. It is the responsibility of the category J licence eligibility holder to ensure the product received was legally harvested.

For information regarding kelp harvesting, licensing and First Nation consultation contact:

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development:
AquaticPlants.Courtenay@gov.bc.ca
Front Counter BC: : http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/contact/index.html
Office Locator: https://portal.nrs.gov.bc.ca/web/client/locations

Website: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/fisheries-and-aquaculture/commercial-fisheries/aquatic-plant-harvesting

Fish Inspectors may conduct checks for proof of a valid Wild Aquatic Plant Harvester Licenceand may conduct audits at processing facilities to ensure compliance with the Fish and Seafood Licensing Regulation

To apply for a Wild Aquatic Plant Harvester Licence, visit:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/fisheries-and-aquaculture/aquatic-plants/wild_aquatic_plant_harvester_licence_application.pdf

3.9.3 Canadian Food Inspection Agency Requirements

Spawn on Kelp Sanitary Guidelines
Potential contamination of fish products may occur if adequate controls over sanitation and hygiene are not followed during the fishing and handling, both on board the vessel, and during holding and transporting to the processing plant.

For information on the sanitary requirements and preventive controls that apply to fishers, please see the CFIA website at https://inspection.gc.ca/food/requirements-and-guidance/preventive-controls/fish/information-on-the-requirements-that-apply-to-fish/eng/1564699982413/1564699982647

and https://inspection.gc.ca/food/requirements-and-guidance/preventive-controls/fish/maintenance-and-operation-of-a-vessel/eng/1564717053871/1564717054137

Licensing Requirements for Food

1) Licensing

Under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* (SFCA) and *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* (SFCR), many food businesses require a licence to carry out activities with respect to food.

Fishers **need** a licence to:

- manufacture, process, treat, preserve or grade fish

- package and label fish unless the fish is **not** consumer prepackaged, **and** will be subsequently manufactured, processed, treated, preserved, graded, packaged or labelled by a licence holder in another province.

Fishers **do not need** a licence to conduct activities that are necessary to protect the fish you catch or harvest from contamination, damage and spoilage. These are handling practices associated with catching, harvesting, unloading, holding and moving fish. The steps taken by the fishing vessel at the time of harvest serves to prevent further deterioration of the spawn-on-kelp prior to delivery to a licence holder.

For more information, please see section 5.11 of "*Food business activities that require a licence under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations"*

For a list of licence holders, please see the Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Safe Food for Canadians Licence Registry.

2) Export Requirements for Food

Food exports, including their preparation and packaging, are subject to Canadian acts and regulations. Exporters must meet basic requirements to be eligible to export food products from Canada.

To be eligible for export, the spawn on kelp must meet Canadian requirements, and must be produced by a person who holds a licence under the Safe Food for Canadians Act and Regulations.

Besides meeting Canadian standards, most food, food commodities and food-related products exported from Canada must comply with additional requirements set by destination countries or markets. The particular requirements you need to comply with differ depending on the product you export and the destination country. The known requirements for various countries are located in the Export requirements library. Depending on the country to which the spawn on kelp is exported, a Health Certificate from the CFIA may be required.

More information on exporting can be found on the CFIA website at https://inspection.gc.ca/food/exporting-food/eng/1323723342834/1323723662195

If you have any questions, please contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at:

CFIA - Burnaby	CFIA - Victoria	CFIA - Parksville
150-3001 Wayburne Dr.	103 – 4475 Viewmont Ave.	457 E. Stanford Ave.
Burnaby, BC	Victoria, BC	Parksville, BC

V5G 4W3	V8Z 6L8	V6P 1V7
(604) 666 9904	(250) 363 3618	(250) 248-4772

3.10 Best Practices

Operators are encouraged to conserve and minimize herring handling and usage during the fishery. DFO would like to improve estimates of herring mortality associated with spawn on kelp ponding operations. Please note that the Conditions of License also stipulate many conservation, herring handling and usage requirements. But in order to minimize impact, a number of additional measures are recommended:

3.10.1 Herring Capture

During the seining of herring for closed pond operations there are a number of measures that may be taken to minimize impacts:

a. Sets should be as close to the intended ponding amount as possible
b. Jigging herring prior to making a set may provide an indication of maturity.
c. Drying up of sets to the point of causing fish to boil may result in undue stress and mortality.
d. Nets should be drummed slowly to reduce fish stress.

3.10.2 Towing

Slow towing speeds are better for fish health. The maximum towing speed recommended is 0.3knots. This rate maintains the shape of the net, and reduces the occurrence of folding or "bagging" of the net, which tends to trap fish against the web causing increased scale loss, bruising and other injuries. The maximum towing distance is recommended to be 3nm.

3.10.3 Density

Density is an important aspect to herring mortality. Gillis et al. (1982) found that herring should not be impounded at loading densities exceeding 1.0 lb./ft^3 for 4 or 5 days. So for a 50x50x50 ft. pond, the maximum loading density is 60 tons. Retaining herring to the maximum of 7 days means operators should reduce the herring in the pond proportionally. The behavior of the fish in the higher density ponds includes undefined schooling and continual boiling over the entire surface and in the pond web. In addition, stress of impoundment and overloading in SOK fisheries is sufficient to precipitate an outbreak of disease resulting in subsequent mortality.

3.10.4 Predator Deterrence

Herring enclosures should deploy a predator deterrence system that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Attended continually by the operator.
- A 1 metre or higher fence attached vertically to the frame to deter seals and sea lions.

- Contiguous webbing pulled tight across the impoundment above the surface of the water to deter bird predation.
- A predator net consisting of contiguous netting with a maximum mesh size of 35 mm (1 5/16 inches). The predator net must surround the webbing of the impoundment completely, maintain a space of at least 30 cm (12 inches) between the predator net and the webbing, and not exceed the requirements set out in section 4.2.1.

4 GEAR

This section is a general description of gear used in both closed and open pond operations. Please refer to the licence conditions for specifics on eligible gear for each licence.

4.1 Seine

- A herring purse seine shall not be greater than 410 m (225 fathoms) in length, and mesh size not less than 25 mm (1 inch) extension measure.
- The bunt of the seine net must be knotless web and a minimum of 40 metres (20 fathoms) in length.

4.2 Closed Ponds (Herring Enclosures)

- Note that a valid category J or FJ licence is required before putting any webbing in the water for use as a herring enclosure. All captured or impounded herring must be released following harvest of the spawn on kelp product, except where specific arrangements have been made with the Department.
- A maximum of two (2) enclosures may contain herring at one time for the production of spawn-on-kelp unless each enclosure is attended continually. If attended continually, a maximum of three (3) ponds with herring can be maintained.
- Herring are to be released following the harvest of the spawn-on-kelp or after a maximum of 7 impoundment days beginning when the first herring is added to the enclosure.

4.2.1 Enclosure Construction

- Enclosures must be constructed so that the floating frame can support the weight of an impoundment net and enclosed herring without collapsing.
- The maximum area of a closed pond enclosure frame is 3600 ft^2 (334 m^2) or approximately 60ft x 60ft (18.3m).
- The bottom of the herring enclosure net must be maintained so that the bottom of the net is a minimum of 3 m (9 feet) above the substrate under the enclosure at all times.

4.2.2 Enclosure Marking

- Every individual herring enclosure (i.e. floating frame with impoundment net) must be marked with the Category J licence number under the authority of which it is operated, in accordance with the licence conditions. Enclosures must also be numbered in a sequential fashion (i.e. Pond 1, Pond 2, etc.) This numbering requirement also applies to single enclosures (i.e. Pond 1).

4.2.3 Webbing

- Any net used in a herring enclosure must be made of knotless web with a mesh size not greater than 25 mm (1 inch).
- Any net used to impound herring for spawn on kelp production must remain suspended and stationary (not towed or moved) in the water column for a minimum of 21 days following the release of the impounded herring. The 21 days may need to be extended until all of the eggs have hatched.

4.3 Open Ponds (No Herring Enclosures or Seine Nets)

- Note that a valid category J or FJ licence is required before putting any webbing or other device in the water for use to direct herring towards suspended kelp. Herring may not be enclosed or otherwise impounded in any manner.
- Nets may be suspended in the water to direct herring towards the suspended kelp, but may not impound or trap herring. Suspended nets must meet the following specifications:
- Any net used must be of a knotless web with a mesh size not greater than 25 mm (1 inch).
- Floating frames, used to suspend the nets, must be capable of supporting the weight of the net without collapsing.
- The bottom of any nets must be a minimum of 3 m (9 feet) above the substrate at all times.
- The net must remain in the water a minimum of 21 days following the most recent herring spawn deposition
- Each net must be marked with the Category J licence number under the authority of which it is operated, in accordance with the licence conditions.

5 MONITORING PROGRAM

Timely and accurate information on harvest and harvesting practices is essential to assess the status of fish stocks and to ensure the conservation and the long term sustainability of fish resources. Effective monitoring and accurate catch reporting in the spawn on kelp herring fishery is integral to the effective management of the fishery and herring resource.

The spawn on kelp Fishery Monitoring Program is industry funded and has been in place since 1996. This program receives hails from on-grounds operators and provides dockside validation of landed and processed spawn on kelp by port monitors. In season, all monitoring activities are directed by an independent program coordinator or by a DFO representative.

The Heiltsuk First Nation has a monitoring program that provides dockside validation of landed and processed spawn on kelp by port monitors.

Additional information on the monitoring program will be provided at the time of licence issuance. Please note that compliance with the monitoring program is a condition of licence. Proof of monitoring via a letter from the service provider will be required prior to licence issuance.

5.1 Service Provider

J.O. Thomas and Associates Ltd. is the selected service provider for the Monitoring Program and port monitors. Contact information may be found in the Contacts section.

5.2 Letter of Agreement

Prior to licence issuance, proof of monitoring will be required via a letter of agreement from the service provider verifying their agreement with the delivery of a fishery monitoring program. Upon receipt of payment for services, the service provider will provide the PFLU with the required letter of agreement.

The intention to participate in the spawn on kelp fishery must be made to the service provider before February 1, 2026, in order for monitoring fees to be calculated. Failure to meet this deadline may result in increased monitoring fees or an inability for the service provider to arrange an approved monitoring program.

5.3 Hail Reports

In 2006, a program of hailing information from the grounds was initiated. This program involves regular and frequent communications with the service provider at each stage of the spawn on kelp operations.

All operators will require a method of reliable communication to ensure their hail requirements are met. Operators may use whatever communication device that they have available (e.g. landline, cell-phone, sat. phone or email). Though it is acceptable for operators in the same area to use a common communication device (such as a sat phone or email etc.) or a 3rd party that relays hails to the service provider, each operator ultimately is required to ensure their hails are current and meet their licence conditions.

Each stage of the spawn on kelp operation will need to be hailed to the service provider during weekday office hours (08:00 to 16:00). Confirmation numbers will be provided with each hail (coded for activity type), as proof of hail and for review at point of landing. If an operator is open ponding some of the hail-in points may not apply. Operators are requested to refer to their Conditions of Licence for their specific hailing requirements.

An enhanced protocol for identifying and reporting occurrences of non-compliance with licence conditions was implemented in 2015 and will continue. Failure to meet conditions of licence may result in enforcement action.

5.4 Reporting and Notification Requirements

5.4.1 General

When harvesting under a category J or FJ licence, the vessel master shall report all required information to the designated service provider as detailed in the spawn on kelp operator's logbook and conditions of licence.

5.4.2 Importing Product from Alaska

In the past, spawn-on-kelp product from outside Canada, mainly Alaska, was imported without notification or validation requirements for transport vessels. As of 2006, the conditions for importing spawn on kelp include notification to the spawn on kelp Coordinator in the North Coast office, and validation of the offload weight by a qualified third party service provider. An information package has been developed for importers and can be obtained from the Spawn on Kelp Coordinator (see Contacts).

5.4.3 Marine Mammal and Seabird Incidence Reports

See main IFMP Section 5.4.2 - Marine Mammals and Seabird Encounters

5.4.4 Ghost Gear Program

See main IFMP Section 5.4.3 - Ghost Gear Program

5.4.5 Conditions of Licence to Report Lost and Retrieved Gear

See main IFMP Section 5.4.4 - Conditions of Licence to Report Lost and Retrieved Gear

5.4.6 Logbooks

Logbooks are available from the service provider. The vessel master is responsible for the provision and maintenance of an accurate record of daily harvest operations. Catch information

must be recorded in the harvest log by midnight of the day in which the activity occurred. The logbook must be kept aboard the licenced vessel, and must be produced for examination on demand of a fishery officer, fishery guardian, or port monitor.

These books must be submitted to the service provider within one week of final validation for the season. The logbooks will have double copies, so that a copy of the pages can be distributed to the licence holder, the service provider and the Department.

5.5 Catch Validation and Fishery Validation Form

To ensure the continuity of catch information from the time of spawn on kelp harvest to delivery and processing, a Herring Spawn on Kelp Fishery Validation Form must be completed for each harvest operation. The operator will be responsible for documenting spawn on kelp harvest on the Validation Form and in the Logbook.

The original copy of the Herring Spawn on Kelp Fishery Validation Form must accompany the spawn on kelp product to the landing port and to the processing plant, where the port monitor will record the landed weight and processed weight on the Validation form.

A port monitor will monitor all spawn on kelp harvested and landed. The total drained weight of spawn on kelp product validated at the landing port will be applied against an individual quota. A salt allowance, equal to five percent of the total drained weight, shall be subtracted to compensate for salt and entrained water (i.e. the total validated weight will equal the drained weight minus five percent of the drained weight).

5.6 Transfer of Product

On-grounds and in-plant transfers of product may occur between operating spawn on kelp licence holders licenced for the same management and stock assessment area. Operators licenced for the same fishery management area may consolidate fishing operations; however, they must identify their pooling relationship to the service provider prior to initiating fishing activities.

In-plant transfers of product between licence holders from different management areas, but the same stock assessment area are subject to the prior approval of a Fisheries and Oceans Canada representative. In such cases, a completed Herring Spawn on Kelp Product Transfer Document will be required.

In-plant transfers will only be allowed to a licence that has made a significant fishing effort to achieve their quota but has been unsuccessful. Priority of spawn on kelp product transfers will

be to the operators licenced within the same Fishery Management Area(s) and secondly to other operators located within the same stock assessment area.

Transfer of product between licence holders is permitted to allow the flexibility of licence holders to harvest their quota and to facilitate other licences to achieve their licenced quota with minimal herring usage. This allowance does not authorize a licence holder to exceed their licenced quota.

5.7 Containers Used for Export of Product

To facilitate control of spawn on kelp product processed for transport to the Japanese market, a plastic container has been developed for use in the industry. The dimensions of the container are approximately 50cm x 35cm x 20cm, and product capacity is approximately 14 kg (30 pounds). A limited number of containers (600) are available for issuance to each licence holder. The service provider will maintain an inventory of containers from year to year and control the release and recovery of buckets.

In season, the port monitors will monitor containers used in processing plants and ensure their appropriate disposition utilizing the Herring Spawn on Kelp Pail Transfer Document. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will audit the quantities utilized by each licence holder.

5.8 Sales Report

It is the responsibility of the licence holder to complete an accurate sales report after the spawn on kelp product has been sold. Licence holders are required to submit the form to Fisheries and Oceans Canada Regional Data Unit no later than September 15, 2026 at the following address:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Regional Data Unit
#200 - 401 Burrard St
Vancouver, BC V6C 3S4
Fax: (604) 666-9008

6 LICENSING

6.1 Fisher Identification Number

A Fisher Identification Number (FIN) allows for fast, easy, and reliable on-grounds identification of fish harvesters for data collection, fisheries management and enforcement purposes. Once a FIN is assigned to a fish harvester, that individual will reference the FIN

when identifying him or herself in subsequent business dealings with both the department and service contractors; for example filling in the FIN field on logbooks, noting the FIN when hailing, landing catch, etc. As the FIN is now used during normal business interactions with DFO and contractors, fish harvesters will no longer need to provide detailed personal information identifying such items as gender or date of birth. Once the FIN is issued to a fisher, it will not change from year to year. More information on FIN may be obtained from the Pacific Fishery Licensing Unit (PFLU).

6.2 Licence Categories

A spawn on kelp category J or a communal commercial category FJ licence is required to participate in this fishery. Spawn on kelp category J or FJ licence eligibilities are limited entry and party-based.

Number of Licences by Area

Table 8.4. Number of Licences Assigned by Area

Stock Assessment Area	Area	Number of Licences	
		All Licences	Licences in Open Areas
HG	Area 2 East - closed	10	0
PRD	Area 3/4	7	7
	Area 5	3	3
CC	Area 6	3	3
	Area 7	9	0
	Area 8	3	0
WCVI	Area 23/24/25	4	4
Minor Areas	Area 27	3	3
	Area 2 West[1] - closed	(10)[2]	0
Other	Area 12	1	1
	Area 10	3	0
Total		46	21

[1] The number of opportunities may change each year and are available to Haida Gwaii Area licence eligibility holders only. See Sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 for more detail.
[2] The eligibilities are the same licences as Area 2 East.

6.3 Licence Renewal Fee

In accordance with the Service Fees Act, annual licence renewal fees will be adjusted by the annual rate of inflation determined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by Statistics Canada.

The commercial spawn-on-kelp herring license (Category J) renewal fee may be found on the following link: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/fees-frais-23-24-eng.html

There is no annual licence renewal fee for communal commercial category FJ licences.

The annual spawn on kelp licence fee for a category J licence is not affected by overages and underages from the previous year.

All payments must be made through the National Online Licensing System (NOLS).

6.3.1 Zero Quota – Zero Fee Option

Spawn on kelp licence eligibility holders have the option of electing a zero quota option for the 2026 season. The licence renewal fee associated with this option is zero.

Spawn on kelp licence eligibility holders electing a zero quota are still required to pay the zero dollar licence renewal fee and issue the licence in order to maintain the licence eligibility. Licence eligibility holders selecting this option are requested to renew their licence after August 1, but before December 31, 2026.

Selecting the zero quota – zero fee option may be obtained by navigating to the 'Submit a Request' menu selection within the National Online Licensing System (NOLS). Full instructions are available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/licence-permis-eng.html.

6.4 Licence Issuance

Renewal of a Category J licence and payment of the licence renewal fee must be done on an annual basis to retain the privilege to be issued the licence in the future, regardless of whether or not fishing is carried out. Those category J licences not renewed by December 31st will cease and licence issuance requests will be unable to be considered in future.

Issuance of a Spawn on Kelp (category J or FJ) licence requires the licence eligibility holder to annually designate the operating vessel(s) to be issued the licence. This must be done by navigating to the 'Submit a Request' menu selection within the National Online Licensing

System (NOLS). Full instructions are available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/licence-permis-eng.html;

a. Where appropriate, select the account that holds the licence you are wishing to 'Submit a Request' for, and mouse click on 'Select';
b. Choose the 'Request Type' 'Commercial Designations or Commercial Communal Designations (vessels and operators)' and mouse click on 'Select';
c. Select the licence to be designated to the vessel(s) by mouse clicking the check box (above or to the left of the licence description) and mouse click on 'Select';
d. In the 'Comment' box please enter the following information, for each of the operating vessel being identified:
    i. Vessel Registration Number (VRN)
    ii. Vessel Name(s)
    iii. Vessel Master name;
    iv. Other information as required for the fishery;
e. Clients are advised to please check the 'Request Status' during the next 2 working days as this is how they will be advised of any problems or additional requirements.

For Spawn-on-Kelp licences introduced for Indigenous groups in 1991 and 1992, where all Roe herring gill net retirement obligations have not yet been met, the annual requirement to designate roe herring licences as inactive must be met by January 20, 2025. This deadline must be adhered to for both inactive and/or any roe herring gill net retirements as they may have an impact on quota allocations for the remainder of the Roe herring gill net fleet.

6.5 Licence Requirements

Prior to licence issue, the SOK licence eligibility holder must ensure that:

- A registered commercial fishing vessel is designated as the operating vessel (a maximum of three operating vessels may be designated). Designated vessels must be registered as a commercial vessel with the PFLU although the designated vessels do not have to hold a vessel based licence eligibility.
- Proof of participation in a DFO approved spawn on kelp port monitoring program.
- If an operating vessel is not currently a registered Canadian commercial fishing vessel, details on registration can be obtained by contacting the PFLU or online at: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/commercial/forms-formulaires/comm-vess-bat-en-reg-eng.html

Note that pond set up or harvesting is not permitted prior to licence issue.

6.6 Sales Reports

It is the responsibility of the Spawn on Kelp licence eligibility holder to complete an accurate sales report after the spawn on kelp product has been sold. Licence holders are required to submit the form to Fisheries and Oceans Canada Regional Data Unit no later than September 15, 2026, at the following address:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Regional Data Unit
#200 - 401 Burrard St
Vancouver, BC V6C 3S4
Fax: 604-666-9008

6.7 Licence Documents

6.7.1 Valid Period

Spawn on kelp licence documents are valid from the date of issue to December 31, 2026.

6.7.2 Replacements

Replacement for lost or destroyed licence documents may be obtained by re-printing from your National Online Licensing System (NOLS) account.

6.7.3 Vessel Redesignation

Vessel redesignation after licence issuance is permitted, when required, by submitting a request through the National Online Licensing System. Instructions are available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/products-produits/user-manual-utilisateurs-sec2-eng.html#toc2.5.1.

APPENDIX 9. COMMERCIAL FISHING PLAN FOR FOOD & BAIT HERRING

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1 PURPOSE

This document is a Commercial Food and Bait herring Fishing Plan in British Columbia, for the period from November 28, 2025, to February 12, 2026. The Commercial Food & Bait fishery has occurred primarily in the Strait of Georgia and the Prince Rupert District in recent years. However, no fishing activity has occurred in the Prince Rupert District since the 2016/2017 season.

This plan recognizes the priority access for Indigenous harvesting of herring for Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) purposes. There are also fishing opportunities described in Treaty Agreements for a number of First Nations in British Columbia. Additionally, Five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations located on the west coast of Vancouver Island - Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht (the Five Nations) – have an Aboriginal right within their territories to fish for any species, and to sell that fish, with the exception of Geoduck.

2 COMMERCIAL FISHERY OVERVIEW

The Pacific commercial herring fishery in British Columbia began in 1877, with the first commercial harvests taken by beach seine. Between 1877 and 1906 the annual harvest increased to 500 tons, with the majority of fishing occurring near Vancouver and on the east coast of Vancouver Island. In 1906 the dry salt market in China developed and demand for herring increased dramatically. By 1909 the annual harvest rose to 30,000 tons and from 1909 to 1919 ranged between 15,000 and 35,000 tons. During World War I the dry salt market decreased while the demand for canned herring increased, and between 1919 and 1927, approximately 85,000 tons were harvested annually. The dry salt market continued to decline through the mid-1930s, while the reduction fishery developed. Between 1968 and 1971 the reduction fishery was closed due to a collapse of British Columbia herring stocks. During this period the Food and Bait fishery continued with harvests in the range of 5,000 tons, primarily for use as halibut bait.

In the mid-1970s, European herring stocks collapsed and a European market for British Columbia herring developed. As a result, harvest increased to a peak of 20,000 tons in 1977. In 1988, a 50 ton individual vessel quota was implemented with a coast-wide quota limited to 1,500 tons due to concerns that large catches in this fishery were impacting development of the higher value roe fishery. Since that time, quotas for Food and Bait herring have fluctuated between 500 to 9,585 tons annually.

A Food and Bait herring (Category ZM) licence is required to participate in this fishery. Prior to 2014 there was a lottery to establish which applicants would be eligible for category ZM licences; where the applicants had to be the owner of a vessel that was designated for a Roe Herring seine (category HS or FHS) licence or identified as a licensed catcher vessel for a Spawn on Kelp (category J or FJ) licence, within the previous five years. In 2014/2015 the Food and Bait Herring fishery changed to an equal share based eligibility, where category ZM licenses were available for application by each of the parties who hold a Roe Herring seine licence eligibility. The total quota for the fishery is allocated on an equal share basis to each valid Roe Herring seine licence holder.

3 FOOD AND BAIT HERRING FISHERY REPRESENTATION

The Integrated Herring Harvest Planning Committee (IHHPC) is the primary multi-stakeholder body providing input and advice to DFO's decision making process for Pacific Herring fisheries. The IHHPC was established by DFO to promote a more streamlined and representative cross-sectoral advisory process for herring harvest planning, management, and post-season review. The Herring Industry Advisory Board (HIAB) provides advice to the

Department on issues affecting commercial Roe Herring and Food and Bait fisheries; this includes providing recommendations for Food and Bait Herring and Roe Herring harvesting plans for all areas with available commercial quota.

4 MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE DURATION OF THIS PLAN

The quota associated with each category ZM licence will be a share equal to the available quota for the area divided by the number of Roe Herring seine licence eligibilities for the area.

The Food and Bait quota also includes an allocation associated with a designated ZM licence for the "Fishermen Helping Kids with Cancer" and "Autism Community Training" charities at the request of licence holders. The overall initial allocation may be adjusted in-season based on a request from the Herring Industry.

All allocations will be accounted for within the final TAC established for the Strait of Georgia.

4.1 Management Considerations for 2025/2026

4.1.1 Prince Rupert District

The Food and Bait fishery has not been opened since the 2016/2017 season and no fishery was proposed for the 2025/2026 season.

4.1.2 Strait of Georgia

The maximum likelihood estimate of the 2025 spawning biomass in the Strait of Georgia was 101,479 tons, an increase from the projected pre-fishery biomass. The forecasted maximum likelihood estimate of spawning biomass in 2026 is 102,791 tons. Science advice in the Science Response *Strait of Georgia Pacific Herring Stock Status in 2025* (September 2025) is used to inform management approaches such as harvest levels.

The Food and Bait fishery is planned to open as early as November 28, 2025 (delayed from the normal historical opening date of November 7).

Since the 2016/2017 season, a number of closures and catch limits have been implemented to address concerns regarding observations of low herring spawn abundance and potential impacts to First Nations food, social, and ceremonial opportunities in Area 15, and the areas south of Dodd Narrows (PFMA Subareas 17-1 to 17-9, portions of 17-16, 17-17, PFMA 18) and the adjacent PFMA Subarea 29-5.

For the 2025/2026 season, Areas 15, 17S, 18 and Subarea 29-5 will remain closed.

4.2 Highlights and changes from the previous season

The 2025/2026 fishing season will continue to include the use of video and electronic monitoring systems on board vessels, an alternative to at sea observers that was implemented in 2020/2021 in response to the Covid- 19 pandemic.

4.2.1 Updates to Licence Conditions

Electronic monitoring procedures were added to the licence conditions in 2020/2021, and will be included for the 2025/2026 season.

4.3 Current Management Issues

Catch monitoring and safe fishing practices continue to be important to all fisheries in the Pacific Region. In order to monitor and address potential issues in the Food and Bait fishery, 100% at sea observer coverage or 100% electronic monitoring is a requirement. Additionally, fishing hails, vessel logbooks, and 100% dockside catch validation are required. The Food and Bait fishery is conducted with seine gear only. To reduce the impacts of fish loss from compression in the net during the pumping process, there is a licence condition requiring all herring from a set to be retained, unless the set has to be released due to vessel safety concerns. The monitoring program is provided by an independent third party service provider. The management controls and measures for this fishery will be assessed and future management adjustments may be made to address emerging fishery developments.

In order to address challenges with achieving the precise catch amounts with seine gear, a process to allow reallocation of unfished quota assigned to another category ZM licensed designated vessel will be continued. Multiple licences may be designated to a single vessel, including category ZY3 and ZY4 Special Use Herring licences. There are no restrictions on the number of category ZM licences that may be designated to a vessel.

Fish harvesters are requested to operate cooperatively in this fishery both to increase safety for all vessels, and to work within licence allocations while minimizing impact to the herring resource. The HIAB in conjunction with Fish Safe BC, DFO, and the industry selected service provider have developed a Food and Bait Best Practices booklet to highlight fishing practices to address safety considerations for this fishery. Pre and in season meetings will be conducted as required to address management and safety issues.

4.4 Financial Responsibilities

All eligible parties are responsible for ensuring they are compliant with all DFO monitoring requirements for this fishery, including all associated monitoring costs.

4.5 Allocation and Harvest Levels

Preliminary quota allocation to the Food and Bait fishery are set at the opening of the fishery, which considers advice from the Herring Industry Advisory Board (HIAB). Quota adjustments may occur, with all catch accounted for in the overall Strait of Georgia herring TAC. Each eligible seine licence applicant will have an equal share of the food and bait quota. In season quota adjustments will be provided by way of Fishery Notice and will be in effect at the times, areas, and quantities specified in the fishery notice.

The initial TAC recommended by the Herring Industry Advisory Board for the Food and Bait fishery is 2,100 tons in the Strait of Georgia (SOG), which includes a designated 100 ton ZM licence for the "Fishermen Helping Kids with Cancer" and "Autism Community Training" charities at the request of licence holders. The overall initial allocation may be adjusted in-season based upon request from the Herring Industry and approval by DFO.

Herring seine licence eligibility holders will have the option to fish quota associated with their licence in either the Roe herring fishery or the Food and Bait fishery. Each licence eligibility will be allocated an equal share of the Food and Bait TAC and the Roe herring TAC as determined in the final IFMP. Eligibility holders will have the ability to choose in which fishery these shares are fished.

Further details regarding the process for selecting how licence shares will be fished will be provided by DFO Fishery Notice.

4.6 Open Times

The fishery is planned to open on request between November 28, 2025, and February 12, 2026.

When open, the Prince Rupert District fishing season ends on February 25, to accommodate fish distribution and timing in that area.

4.7 Fishing Areas

The area open to the fishery will be subject to in season decisions and will be opened by Variation Order and Fishery Notice. Permanent area closures are detailed in the following section.

Areas or sub areas may be closed on short notice in season in the event that;

- small or unsuitable fish are being released,
- substantial incidental bycatch occurs
- stock concerns are identified.

Vessel masters are advised to check the DFO fishery notice internet site, prior to commencing fishing, at: http://www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/xnet/content/fns/index.cfm?pg=search_options&lang=en&id=commercial

Fishing may be permitted by eligible vessels in the following Areas and Subareas, with the exception of the closures noted in the Permanent Area Closures, and subject to Conditions of Licence, and fishery notices.

Commercial fleets are requested to avoid locations where local First Nations are gathering fish, or fishing for herring spawn on boughs or spawn on kelp. Additionally, the Department works collaboratively with First Nations on communication regarding herring stocks and spawning locations for FSC fishery planning and information on FSC activities. As the fishery season progresses, in some cases, specific requirements to remain out of particular locations to support FSC harvest will be broadcast for adherence by fish harvesters.

4.7.1 Prince Rupert District – When Open

Area 3: Subareas 3-1 to 3-3, and portions of Subarea 3-4 inside a line commencing at Sarah Point northward to a red can buoy located at Inskip Passage, thence easterly to the northernmost point of the estuary of Neaxtoalk Lake, thence northward along shore to the markers in Dudevoir Pass, thence along the shore of Maskelyne Island to a marker approximately one half mile southerly of Maskelyne Point, thence to Pointer Rocks light thence southward to Gordon Point on Finlayson Island, thence southward along the shore to Sarah Point. Subarea 3-4 will also be open south of a line from Sarah Point to Hook Point, Subarea 3-7.

Area 4: All Subareas will be open. The Harbour Authority of Prince Rupert and Port Edward must be notified prior to any fishing activity within harbour limits as shown on chart No. 3957 published by the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

Area 5: Subareas 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, and 5-10.

4.7.2 Strait of Georgia

Area 13:
Subareas 13-8 to 13-10; and

Subarea 13-7 ***excluding:***

Deepwater Bay, east of a line drawn from a boundary sign at 50°11.434′N 125°20.268′W on Quadra Island to a boundary sign at 50°10.861′N 125°20.885′W near Separation Head on Quadra Island.

Area 14:
Subareas 14-1 to 14-13, and 14-15.

Area 17:
Subareas 17-11 to 17-13, 17-15, 17-18, 17-19 and 17-21; and

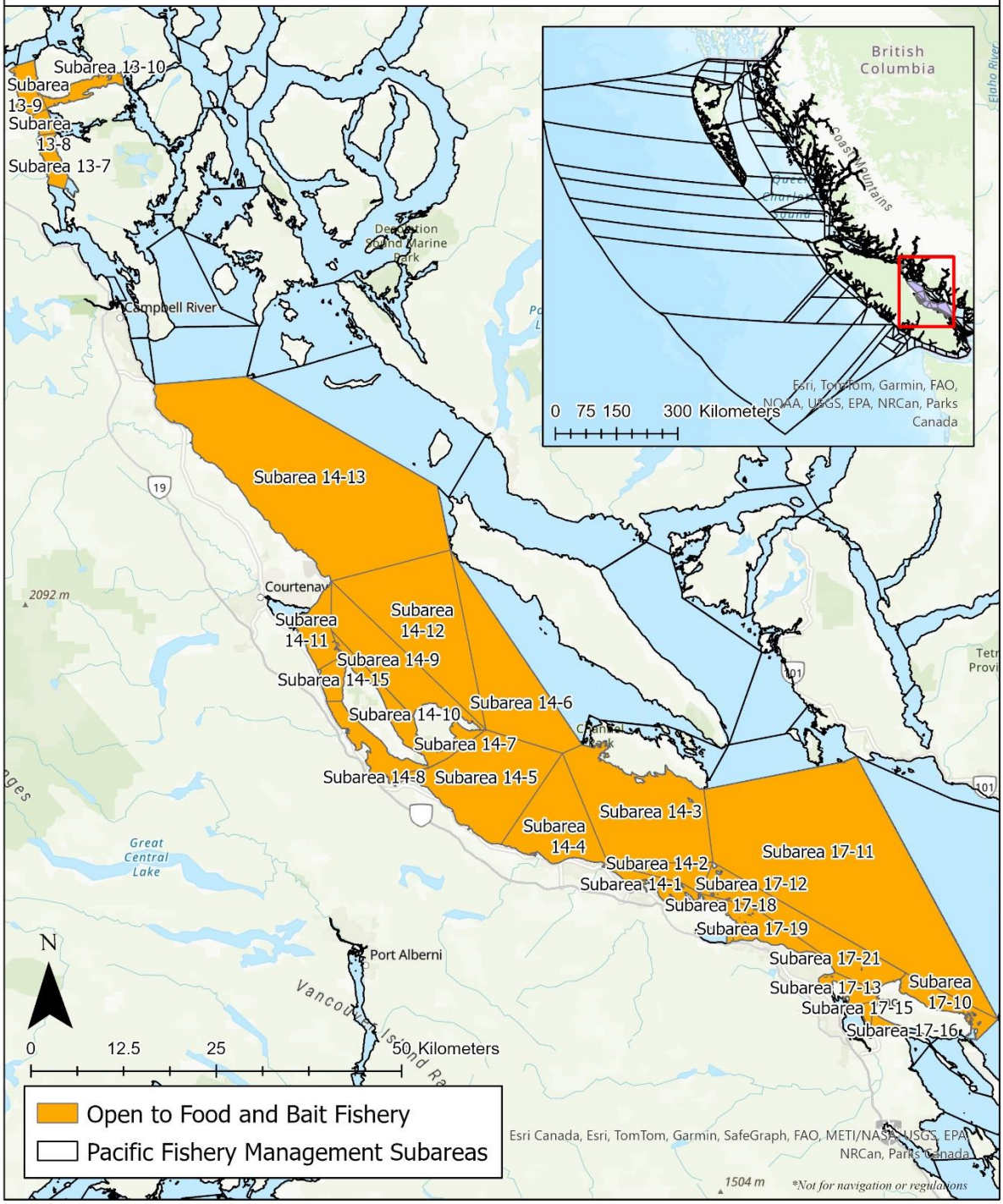
Subareas 17-10 ***excluding:***
the waters of Gabriola Pass bounded by a line from Dibuxante Point at 49°07.625′N and 123°42.913′W on Valdes Island, thence following the northerly shore of Valdes Island to Cordero Point at 49°07.700′N and 123°42.126′W on Valdes Island, thence to the most southerly tip of Breakwater Island at 49°07.546′N and 123°40.897′W, thence following the westerly shore of Breakwater Island to the most northerly point on Breakwater Island at 49°08.360′N and 123°40.872′W, thence due west to Gabriola Island at 49°08.355′N and 123°41.4770′W, thence following the southerly shore of Gabriola Island to the point of land located at 49°07.777′N and 123°43.045′W, thence in a straight line southerly to the point of commencement at Dibuxante Point; and

Subarea 17-16 ***excluding:***
that portion southeast of a line at Mudge Island drawn from Joan Point at 49°08.150′N 123°49.145′W on Vancouver Island northeasterly to a point on Gabriola Island at 49°08.538′N 123°48.312′W.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada Pêches et Océans Canada

Canada

Herring Commercial Food and Bait Fishery



PEL013 V5

Figure 9.1. Map of DFO management areas open to the Food and Bait fishery in the Strait of Georgia.

4.8 Permanent Area Closures

4.8.1 Strait of Georgia

Area closures are detailed below. These areas are closed due to navigation concerns, sensitive fish habitat, or concerns regarding bycatch of other species or other management considerations. There may be additional closures in season by Variation Order and fishery notice.

Area 13:
Deepwater Bay: That portion of Subarea 13-7, east of a line drawn from a boundary sign at 50°11.434'N 125°20.268'W to a boundary sign at 50°10.861' N 125°20.885' W near Separation Head on Quadra Island.

Area 14:
14-14 (Comox Harbour)

Area 17:
Porlier Pass: A portion of Subarea 17-3 north-easterly of a line from Cayetano Point at 49°00.767'N 123°36.014'W on Valdes Island to Alcala Point at 49°00.099'N 123°35.3730'W on Galiano Island.

Ladysmith Harbour: Subarea 17-7.

Nanaimo Harbour: Subarea 17-14.

Nanoose Harbour: Subarea 17-20.

Kulleet Bay: A portion of Subarea 17-5 westerly of a line from Coffin Point at 48°59.250'N 123°45.474 W on Vancouver Island to Yellow Point at 49°02.395'N 123°44.810'W on Vancouver Island.

Gabriola Pass: The waters of Gabriola Pass described as portions of Subareas 17-10 and 17-17 bounded by a line from Dibuxante Point at 49°07.625'N 123°42.913'W on Valdes Island, thence following the northerly shore of Valdes Island to Cordero Point at 49°07.700'N 123°42.126'W on Valdes Island, thence to the most southerly tip of Breakwater Island at 49°07.546'N 123°40.897'W, thence following the westerly shore of Breakwater Island to the most northerly point on Breakwater Island at 49°08.360'N 123°40.872'W, thence due west to Gabriola Island at 49°08.355'N 123°41.4770'W, thence following the southerly shore of Gabriola Island to the point of land located at 49°07.777'N 123°43.045'W, thence in a straight line southerly to the point of commencement at Dibuxante Point.

Area 29 (when open):
Fraser River: All Subareas with the exception of 29-5 are closed permanently.

4.8.2 Prince Rupert

No closed areas identified.

4.9 Participation Requirements - Gear

A herring purse seine must not exceed 410m (225 fathoms) in length, and the mesh size shall not be less than 25mm (1 inch) extension measure.

Designated vessels should have a full sized herring seine, along with all the associated gear (i.e. pumps, winches, power skiffs), to fish and haul the gear, as well as adequate electronic equipment for locating and estimating herring schools.

A properly functioning chilled seawater (C.S.W.), or refrigerated seawater (R.S.W.), system is required for all vessels participating in the fishery.

To maintain manageability and safety in this fishery, designated vessels will be requested to operate in a minimum of pairs during fishing operations.

Under the Canada Shipping Act, all vessels fishing or packing herring or capelin are required to have a valid stability certificate/booklet on board the vessel.

4.10 Harvest Practices

Once the pumping of herring from the seine net has commenced, all herring from that set shall be retained, unless the set must be released due to vessel safety concerns.

4.11 Catch in Excess of Quota

Vessel masters must operate in a manner that ensures that over harvest does not occur. The licensed vessel is permitted to catch and retain a maximum tonnage of herring per license based on the share. The program to allow for reallocation of unfished quota assigned to another vessel will be continued.

4.12 National Online Licensing System (NOLS) Client Support:

Training materials, including step-by-step guides and a detailed user training manual, are available online (http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/FM-GP/SDC-CPS/licence-permis-eng.htm) to guide users of the system in completing their licensing transactions. The Department also provides client support and assistance on how to use the system via e-mail at fishing-peche@dfo-

mpo.gc.ca or by calling toll-free at 1-877-535-7307 (7:00 AM to 8:00 PM Eastern, Monday to Friday).

4.13 Fisher Identification Number (FIN)

The FIN allows for fast, easy, and reliable on-grounds identification of fish harvesters for data collection, fisheries management and enforcement purposes. A unique Fisher Identification Number (FIN) has been assigned to all Pacific commercial fish harvesters. Once a FIN has been assigned to a fish harvester, that individual will reference the FIN when identifying him or herself in subsequent business dealings with both the department and service contractors; for example filling in the FIN field on logbooks, noting the FIN when hailing, landing catch, etc. Fish harvesters will no longer need to provide detailed personal information identifying such items as gender or date of birth.

Once the FIN is issued to a fish harvester, it will not change from year to year. More information on FIN may be obtained from the Pacific Fishery Licensing Unit (PFLU).

4.14 Licence Category

A Food and Bait herring, category ZM licence is required to participate in this fishery. Food and Bait herring licences are party based.

The total number of category ZM licence is continues to be set at 252, established on a one-to-one basis for each Roe Herring Seine (category HS or FHS) licence eligibility.

Although a limited number of Food and Bait Herring licenses are issued each year, this is not a limited entry fishery.

4.15 Licence Renewal Fee

In accordance with the Service Fees Act, annual licence fees will be adjusted by the annual rate of inflation determined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by Statistics Canada.

The Food and Bait Herring (categories ZM) licence fee may be found under the header, Licence renewal fees on the following link: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/index-eng.html#commercial

All payments must be made through the National Online Licensing System (NOLS).

4.16 Licence Issuance

There is no limit on the number of category ZM licenses that may be designated to a vessel. It is the responsibility of the vessel owner/master to consider the carrying capacity of the vessel, when designating multiple licences to a vessel.

Prior to licence issuance, the licence holder must ensure that the designated vessel:

- is a registered Canadian commercial fishing vessel with functioning refrigerated seawater (RSW) or chilled seawater (CSW) capability.

Issuance of a Food and Bait Herring (category ZM) licence requires the licence holder to designate the fishing vessel to be issued the licence. This must be done by navigating to the 'Submit a Request' menu selection within the National Online Licensing System (NOLS). Full instructions on how to submit a request are available at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/licence-permis-eng.html;

a) Where appropriate, select the account that holds the licence you are wishing to 'Submit a Request' for, and mouse click on 'Select';
b) Choose the 'Request Type' 'Commercial Designations' and mouse click on 'Select';
c) Select the licence(s) to be designated to the vessel by mouse clicking the check box (above or to the left of the licence description) and mouse click on 'Select';
d) In the 'Comment' box please enter the following information:
e) Vessel Registration Number (VRN);
f) Vessel Name
g) Vessel Master name;
h) Other information as required for the fishery;
i) The designated vessel identified must be a registered commercial fishing vessel that has been designated with a Roe Herring seine (category HS or FHS) licence eligibility for the given fishing season.
j) Clients are advised to please check the 'Request Status' during the next 2 working days as this is how they will be advised of any problems or additional requirements.

Payment of the category ZM licence fee and the submission of the accompanying designation request must be received prior to licence issuance.

The available quota for the Strait of Georgia (SOG) will be shared equally on a percentage basis by the 252 Roe Herring seine licence eligibility holders.

Food and Bait licence holders will have the option to fish their SOG Food and Bait herring quota in the Food and Bait fishery or have the quota share transferred to the Roe Seine fishery, as well as to transfer their Roe Seine quota into the Food and Bait fishery. The SOG Roe and food and bait fishery allocations will be adjusted to reflect the allocation transfers. All allocations are accounted for within the final TAC established for the Strait of Georgia.

Further details regarding the process for selecting how licence shares will be fished will be provided through the DFO Fishery Notice System.

Under the Canada Shipping Act, all vessels fishing Herring or Capelin are required to have a valid stability certificate/booklet on board the vessel.

4.17 Licence Documents

Food and Bait herring licences are valid from the date of issuance to February 12, 2026, in the SOG, and February 25, 2026, in PRD.

Replacements for lost or destroyed licence documents may be obtained by logging into the National Online Licensing System and reprinting the licence documents.

4.18 Vessel Redesignation

Redesignation of Food and Bait Herring licences are permitted at any time during the fishing season if Conditions of Licence have been met, such as the completion, submission and acceptance of logbooks.

Licence holders may redesignate the category ZM licence to another fishing vessel by submitting a request through their NOLS account by navigating to the 'Submit a Request' menu selection within the National Online Licensing System (NOLS).

Prior to redesignation, licence holders must:
• Confirm that the conditions of licence have been met (i.e. logbook clearance); and
• Designate a registered Canadian commercial fishing vessel; ensuring that the designated vessel has been designated with a Roe Herring seine (category HS or FHS) licence.

5 FISHERY MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

The fishery monitoring requirements for this fishery include fishing hails, at sea observers or functioning electronic monitoring equipment, harvest logs and dockside validation of landed weight. These requirements integral to the sustainable management of this fishery and is consistent with the DFO monitoring policy.

5.1 Harvest log

Harvest set logs are available from the service provider. The vessel master is responsible for the provision and maintenance of an accurate record of daily harvest operations. Catch information must be recorded in the harvest log by midnight of the day in which the activity occurred, or prior to the at sea observer disembarking the vessel, whichever occurs first. The log must be kept aboard the licensed vessel, and must be produced for examination on demand of a fishery officer or fishery guardian.

The original white page copy of the log must be received by the designated service provider no later than 14 days following the last active fishing day by the licensed vessel for the season.

5.2 Hails

Telephone hails to the Service Provider must be made between the hours of 0800 to 1600 hours, Monday to Friday, but not on statutory holidays. Upon failure to arrive at the fishing location within 48 hours of the hail out time, the vessel master shall hail the vessel name, Vessel Registration Number (VRN), and details of the change in fishing plans.

The vessel master is responsible for making an oral report (hail) to the service provider to report events and information required by the licence conditions.

Each hail shall be documented with a unique Hail Confirmation Number in the appropriate location in the Harvest Log as described in the licence conditions and information sheets provided with the logbooks from the service provider.

5.2.1 Notification of Fishing (Hail Out)

The master of a vessel participating in the Food and Bait fishery will be required to notify the monitoring program service provider, a minimum of 24 hours prior to the intended fishing date. The information that shall be provided is detailed in the Licence Conditions issued with the ZM licence, and includes:

- Vessel Master name
- Vessel Master FIN
- Vessel name
- Vessel registration number (VRN)
- Onboard Observer name, or confirmation of functioning electronic monitoring system
- The subarea (s) to be fished
- The anticipated date and time fishing will begin

5.2.2 Notification of Fishing (Hail In)

The master of a vessel participating in the Food and Bait fishery will be required to notify the monitoring program service provider, a minimum of 12 hours prior to the intended landing time. The information that shall be provided is detailed in the Licence Conditions issued with the ZM licence, and includes:

- Vessel master name
- Vessel Master FIN
- Vessel name
- Vessel registration number (VRN)
- Onboard Observer name (if applicable)
- Catch Location
- Catch estimate

- Anticipated landing time
- Landing Location

5.3 At-Sea Observers

Fishing vessels will be required to have on board a DFO designated at-sea observer or an approved alternative while carrying out fishing operations. An observer, or an approved alternative monitoring system must be on board prior to the vessel making a seine set. An observer may transfer to another vessel at sea, once the observer duties for the first vessel have been completed, and at the discretion of the observer.

The electronic monitoring program will continue to be offered during the 2025/2026 fishing season, and will include the use of video and electronic monitoring systems on board vessels. An electronic monitoring program was implemented in 2020/2021, as an alternative to at-sea observers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4 Landing

All herring shall be delivered to a British Columbia port and must be offloaded within 18 hours of capture. A certified observer must validate the weight of all herring offloaded. Vessel masters are required to make offloading arrangements with the designated service provider. The following landing locations may be used:

- Metro Vancouver
- Prince Rupert
- Quadra Island

To land at another location other than those listed above, contact the Service Provider. It is possible that a surcharge will be charged and additional costs for port monitoring. **Please contact the service provider well ahead of fishing if there is an intention to land at another port.**

Schedule B (Part I Section 11.1) of the BC Fish Inspection Regulations states: "Where fresh herring is for human consumption, its processing, except icing or chilling, must commence within 24 hours of delivery at the processing establishment and must not be discontinued until the herring is preserved to a degree that assures maximum quality of the product."

5.5 Dockside Validation

All landed fish must be verified by a dockside observer provided by the service provider. All herring harvested under the authority of this licence must be validated at the point and time of landing. The landing of any fish is not permitted unless an observer is present to authorize the commencement of weight verification. All weights must be determined using a scale approved by Measurement Canada.

The observer may inspect fish holds, freezers and other areas where fish may be stored. It is the responsibility of the vessel owner or master to provide safe access to the vessel holds for inspection and to ensure that the vessel does not leave the offloading site prior to completion of the fish hold inspection by the observer.

5.6 Fish Slip Requirements

It is a condition of licence that an accurate written report shall be provided on a fish slip of all herring caught and retained under the authority of this licence. The report shall be mailed within seven days of off-loading to:
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Regional Data Unit
200 - 401 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 3S4

Fish slips can be downloaded from the Fisheries and Oceans Canada website at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/fishslips-carnets/index-eng.html. For more information on fish slips, please contact the Data Unit at 604-666-2716.

5.7 Marine Mammal and Seabird Reporting

See main IFMP Section 5.4.2 - Marine Mammals and Seabird Encounters

5.8 Lost Gear Reporting

Ghost Gear Program

See main IFMP Section 5.4.3 - Ghost Gear Program

Conditions of Licence to Report Lost and Retrieved Gear

See main IFMP Section 5.4.4 - Conditions of Licence to Report Lost and Retrieved Gear

5.9 Compliance with other Federal and Provincial Legislation and Regulations

Fish harvesters are responsible for compliance with all federal and provincial laws and regulations pertaining to fishing operations.

6 HISTORIC FISHERY CATCH

Table 9.1. Food and Bait (ZM catch (short tons), 2011/2012 to 2024/2025.

Year	Strait of Georgia	Prince Rupert District
2011/2012	3,950	no fishing
2012/2013	4,401	no fishing
2013/2014	8,000	N/A*
2014/2015	7,932	N/A*
2015/2016	7,639	N/A*
2016/2017	7,383	N/A*
2017/2018	6,004	closed
2018/2019	7,503	closed
2019/2020	1,789	closed
2020/2021	4,082	closed
2021/2022	541	closed
2022/2023	933	closed
2023/2024	816	closed
2024/2025	2,017	closed

* N/A indicates catch data that cannot be released due to 3 party rule and privacy concerns.

APPENDIX 10. COMMERCIAL FISHING PLAN FOR SPECIAL USE HERRING

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1 PURPOSE

This document is a Commercial Fishing Plan for Special Use herring in British Columbia. The Special Use fishery provides opportunities to harvest Pacific Herring for a variety of different uses, such as bait, food, and feed for aquarium animals.

This plan recognizes priority access of Indigenous harvest of herring for Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) purposes as determined by the 1990 Sparrow decision. In addition, there are fishing opportunities under Treaty rights for a number of First Nations in British Columbia.

2 COMMERCIAL FISHERY OVERVIEW

While small, the Special Use herring fishery has a complicated and varied history, due to the evolution of its complex licensing structure, which was originally developed to track the end use of herring.

In 1995, DFO replaced the use of locally issued permits with centrally issued licences. The specific end uses of the permits were retained as licence purposes, which directed how the harvested fish was to be used. While there have been as many as seven licence categories in this fishery, there are currently five categories remaining; the Sport Bait (ZY1), Commercial Bait (ZY2), Human Food and Bait (ZY3), Zoo and Aquarium (ZY4), and Personal Bait (ZX) categories. These fisheries take place only in the Strait of Georgia management area currently. There was originally some quota allocated to the Prince Rupert District; however, that quota was removed in 2017/2018 as it had not been accessed in over ten years, and therefore no quota is allocated. The specific histories of the active category ZY licence categories follow.

2.1 Sport Bait Herring (ZY1)

In the late 1970s and through the 1980s there were strong recreational fisheries. To supply bait to these fisheries, 3-ton impoundment permits were issued to the small live bait operations that had become prolific throughout the Strait of Georgia, with scattered operations into the North Coast area. These permits were to be used in conjunction with fishing permits which permitted harvest of herring for personal use or for the delivery of herring to a processor or operator possessing a valid impoundment permit.

As the recreational fisheries declined, the number of live bait operators also declined. While some interest remained in small live bait operations, other parties became interested in increasing the scale of their operations and producing fresh and frozen bait. In the majority of cases, this increase was, and is, accomplished by using the ability to stack multiple licences on

one vessel to harvest herring for one individual or company's operations, as opposed to the original intent of harvesting for multiple operations worked by multiple licence holders. In 2007, the number of licences that could be designated to a vessel was increased from one to five at one time (licence stacking). There are also unique quotas in this category (See Section. 7.3.1).

2.2 Commercial Bait Herring (ZY2)

The category ZY2 licence was developed in 1995 as a means of providing quota for the purpose of producing bait to be used in commercial fisheries such as halibut. Prior to this date, fishing activity for commercial bait had been underway for many years, especially in the Prince Rupert District, and was managed through the issuance of permits. The category ZY2 licence is operationally the same as the category ZY1 licence, permitting the ponding of herring using 3-ton licences. Since 2017/2018 there has been no allocation for category ZY2 licenses, since the removal of the quota allocated in Prince Rupert District.

2.3 Human Food and Bait (ZY3)

In the early 1980s, opportunity to harvest herring for human food was provided through the issuance of 3-ton permits for fresh, local sales only, although four 50 ton permits were made available to Fjord Pacific Marine Industries Ltd. (Fjord) for more industrialized food processing as a unique quota.

When the category ZY3 licence was introduced in 1995, the 3-ton and four 50-ton quotas continued to be issued through licences. The 3-ton licences were made available until 2006/2007; although they were not accounted for in the category ZY3 expected use allocation. In 2007/2008, these 3-ton licences were discontinued, and in 2009 the allocation for category ZY3 was reduced to 150 tons, distributed across three 50-ton licences as a unique quota to one applicant.

2.4 Zoo and Aquarium (ZY4)

Historically, the quota in this licence category was available to any zoo or aquarium operating in Canada or the United States, upon request to DFO Fisheries Management. Successive management decisions were made that first restricted the eligibility to Canadian operations only, and then to BC operations only. Currently the category ZY4 quota is available only to the Vancouver Aquarium, as a unique quota. Should a future request be made by a zoo or aquarium other than the current participant it would not be granted, as there is no additional allocation for the category ZY4 licence.

2.5 Personal Bait (ZX)

This licence category provides commercial fishers with the opportunity to harvest up to 1 ton of herring for personal (non-sale) use.

3 MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE DURATION OF THIS PLAN

3.1 Management Considerations For 2025/2026

Estimated median spawning biomass in 2025 in the Strait of Georgia was 91,051 tonnes, up from the projected pre-fishery biomass last year. The spawning biomass in 2026 is estimated to be 93,250 tonnes (maximum likelihood estimate).

The Special Use fishery is anticipated to open as early as November 28, 2025 (delayed from the normal opening date of November 7). Science advice provided in the *Strait of Georgia Pacific Herring Stock Status in 2025* (September 2025) is used to inform management approaches such as harvest levels, therefore the opening date has been adjusted to consult on these results.

Since 2016/17, concerns and observations have been noted regarding recent levels of herring spawn and potential impacts on First Nations food, social, and ceremonial opportunities in the areas south of Dodd Narrows (PFMAs 17-1 to 17-9, portions of 17-16, 17-17, PFMA 18) and the adjacent PFMA, Subarea 29-5. These areas have been closed to Special Use fishing since 2019/2020, and they will remain closed for the 2025/2026 season. In 2020/2021, there was a request from First Nations to officially close all of Area 19 given recent levels of herring spawn. There has not been any Special Use fishing in Area 19 since 2001 and will remain closed.

Additionally, there have been ongoing concerns and observations regarding levels of herring spawn and potential impacts to First Nations food, social and ceremonial opportunities in Area 15, and this area will remain closed to Special Use fishing for the 2025/2026 season.

The electronic monitoring program will continue to be offered during the 2025/2026 fishing season, and will include the use of video and electronic monitoring systems on board vessels. An electronic monitoring program was implemented in 2020/2021, as an alternative to at-sea observers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 Allocation and Harvest Levels

The quota for the Special Use fishery is a portion of the overall TAC for the Strait of Georgia. The total TAC in the Special Use fishery has been up to 902 tons in recent years which is distributed within the license types listed in the table below. It is expected that the overall TAC and distribution between license types will remain similar for the 2025/2026 IFMP.

Table 10.1. Special Use allocation by licence category.

Licence Type	Area	Available Licences	Quota Available (short tons)
ZX – Personal Use	SOG	25	25
	PRD	0	0
ZY1 – Sport Bait	SOG	67 *	617
	PRD	0	0
ZY2 – Commercial Bait	PRD	0	0
ZY3 – Human Food and Bait	SOG	3 *	150
ZY4 – Zoo and Aquarium	SOG	1 *	110
Grand Total		96	902

*Includes unique quotas. See section 7.3.1

Vessel masters must operate in a manner that ensures that over harvest does not occur. The harvest of fish in excess of the licensed amount is unlawful.

Small amounts of catch in excess of licensed quota amounts for categories ZY3 and ZY4 licenses against categories ZY3, ZY4 and ZM licenses may be designated to other vessels. This will be assessed post-season for continuation or modification in subsequent years.

No person who is fishing under the authority of a licence issued for the purpose of commercial fishing shall dump from a vessel any fish that has been caught in accordance with the Fisheries Act and the Regulations made thereunder.

3.3 License Condition Changes

Conditions of licence for Special Use license holders will remain the same as last year, which includes electronic monitoring procedures added in 2020/2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.4 Participation Requirements

The Special Use herring fishery is an unlimited entry fishery in that the total number of licences within the fishery may not be restricted. Licences issued under these categories do not imply or confer a right or privilege to be issued a similar licence in future seasons. Licences for participation in the Special Use herring fishery are open to any interested party provided that the specific licence requirements and eligibility criteria described in Section 7.2 have been met. Unique quotas for specific parties for specific purposes are described in Section 7.3.

A valid Special Use herring licence is required prior to any special use fishing activity, including the set-up of any herring enclosure (i.e. floating frame with web).

3.5 Open Times

Fishing for Special Use herring is permitted from 16:00 hours November 28, 2025 (anticipated opening) until 23:59 hours February 15, 2026, and 00:01 hours May 1, 2026 to 23:59 hours November 6, 2026.

3.6 Open and Closed Areas for 2025/2026

The following areas are identified as fishing areas, subject to in season decisions on specific areas that will be opened by Variation Order following the process as described by gear type and area, and subject to the permanent area closures detailed in Section 3.7.

As noted above, PFMAs 15, 17-1 to 17-9, portions of 17-16, 17-17, 18, 19, and PFMA 29 will not be opened in the 2025/2026 season.

Table 10.2: Open areas in the Strait of Georgia for 2025/2026.

Area	Exceptions
Area 13	Area 13 is open except that portion of Subarea 13-7, east of a line drawn from a boundary sign at 50°11.434′N 125°20.268′W to a boundary sign at 50°10.861′ N 125°20.885′ W near Separation Head on Quadra Island [Deepwater Bay]
Area 14	Area 14 is open except Subarea 14-14 [Comox Harbour]
Area 16	Area 16 is open except: Subarea 16-3 [Bargain Bay]

	Subarea 16-4 [Pender Harbour] Subarea 16-5 [portion of Sechelt Inlet] That portion of Subarea 16-10 within a radius of 0.3 nautical miles from the mouth of Sakinaw River
Area 17	Area 17 is open except: Subarea 17-1 to 17-9 The waters of Gabriola Pass described as portions of Subareas 17-10 and 17-17 bounded by a line from Dibuxante Point at 49°07.625'N 123°42.913'W on Valdes Island, thence following the northerly shore of Valdes Island to Cordero Point at 49°07.700'N and 123°42.126'W on Valdes Island, thence to the most southerly tip of Breakwater Island at 49°07.546'N 123°40.897'W, thence following the westerly shore of Breakwater Island to the most northerly point on Breakwater Island at 49°08.360'N 123°40.872'W, thence due west to Gabriola Island at 49°08.355'N 123°41.4770'W, thence following the southerly shore of Gabriola Island to the point of land located at 49°07.777'N 123°43.045'W , thence in a straight line southerly to the point of commencement at Dibuxante Point [Gabriola Pass] Subarea 17-14 [Nanaimo Harbour] That portion of Subarea 17-16 south of a line at Dodd Narrows, drawn from Joan Point at 49°08.150'N 123°49.145'W on Vancouver Island easterly to Purvis Point at 49°08.174N 123°49.016'W on Mudge Island. Subarea 17-17 Subarea 17-20 [Nanoose Harbour]

Note that these areas may be closed in season in the event that small or unsuitable fish are being released, or if substantial incidental bycatch occurs. If stock concerns are identified, some Areas or Subareas may close on short notice.

Note that requests to harvest in regions outside the major stock assessment areas or areas with limited assessment information will require additional consideration and may not be approved.

Vessel masters are advised to check the DFO fishery notice internet site, prior to commencing fishing, at: http://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm

Commercial fleets are requested to avoid locations where local First Nations are gathering fish, or fishing for herring spawn on boughs or spawn on kelp. Additionally, the Department works collaboratively with First Nations on communication regarding herring stocks and spawning locations for FSC fishery planning and information on FSC activities. As the fishery season

progresses, in some cases, specific requirements to remain out of particular locations to support FSC harvest will be broadcast for adherence by fish harvesters.

3.7 Permanent Area Closures

The following areas are permanently closed to the Special Use fishery. Note that there may be additional closures in-season by Variation Order and Fishery Notice. Consult with the local fisheries office before fishing in an area.

Where a major stock assessment area is closed for conservation concerns, the permanent closures of specific Subareas are not listed. To obtain a detailed list of all permanent Subarea closures, contact your local Area Resource Manager (see Contacts).

3.7.1 Strait of Georgia

Table 10.3: Permanent subarea closures in the Strait of Georgia.

Area 13	That portion of Subarea 13-7, east of a line drawn from a boundary sign at 50°11.434′N 125°20.268′W to a boundary sign at 50°10.861′ N 125°20.885′ W near Separation Head on Quadra Island [Deepwater Bay]
Area 14	Subarea 14-14 [Comox Harbour]
Area 16	Subarea 16-3 [Bargain Bay] Subarea 16-4 [Pender Harbour] Subarea 16-5 [portion of Sechelt Inlet] That portion of Subarea 16-10 within a radius of 0.3 nautical miles from the mouth of Sakinaw River
Area 17	A portion of Subarea 17-3 northeasterly of a line from Cayetano Point at 49°00.767′N 123°36.014′W on Valdes Island to Alcala Point at 49°00.099′N 123°35.3730′W on Galiano Island [Porlier Pass]. A portion of Subarea 17-5 westerly of a line from Coffin Point at 48°59.250′N and 123°45.474′W on Vancouver Island to Yellow Point at 49°02.395′N and 123°44.810′W on Vancouver Island [Kulleet Bay]. The waters of Gabriola Pass described as portions of Subareas 17-10 and 17-17 bounded by a line from Dibuxante Point at 49°07.625′N 123°42.913′W on Valdes Island, thence following the northerly shore of Valdes Island to Cordero Point at 49°07.700′N and 123°42.126′W on Valdes Island, thence to the most southerly tip

	of Breakwater Island at 49°07.546′N 123°40.897′W, thence following the westerly shore of Breakwater Island to the most northerly point on Breakwater Island at 49°08.360′N 123°40.872′W, thence due west to Gabriola Island at 49°08.355′N 123°41.4770′W, thence following the southerly shore of Gabriola Island to the point of land located at 49°07.777′N 123°43.045′W , thence in a straight line southerly to the point of commencement at Dibuxante Point [Gabriola Pass]. Subarea 17-7 [Ladysmith Harbour] Subarea 17-14 [Nanaimo Harbour] Subarea 17-20 [Nanoose Harbour]
Area 18	That portion of Subarea 18-2 northeasterly of a line from Collinson Point at 48°51.583′N 123°21.172′W on Galiano Island to Enterprise Reef Buoy at 48°50.694′N 123°20.882′W to Crane Point at 48°50.497′N 123°20.040′W on Mayne Island [Active Pass] Subarea 18-7 [Maple Bay] Subarea 18-8 [Cowichan Bay] Subarea 18-10 [Fulford Harbour]
Area 19	Subarea 19-1 [Victoria Harbour] Subarea 19-2 [Esquimalt Harbour] Subarea 19-6 [Sidney Spit Marine Park] Subareas 19-7 to 19-12 [Saanich Inlet]
Area 28	All Subareas
Area 29	29-7 to 29-17 [Fraser River]

3.7.2 Prince Rupert District

No Subarea closures identified.

3.7.3 Other Areas

Table 10.4: Other subarea closures.

Area 12	That portion of Subarea 12-4 inside a line running from Lewis Point to Ella Point [Beaver Cove] Subarea 12-20 [Parsons Bay] Subarea 12-3 (portion). From a point on shore due north to a point at 50°30.33′ N 126°37.47′ W then east to a point at 50°29.65′ N 126°30.23′ W then due south to the shoreline [Robson Bight - Michael Bigg Ecological Reserve]

3.8 Compliance with other Federal and Provincial Legislation and Regulations

Fish harvesters are responsible for compliance with all federal and provincial laws and regulations pertaining to fishing operations. This includes compliance with the Navigable Waters Protection Act for any structures related to fishing operations.

4 GEAR

This section is a general description of gear used in fishing for Special Use herring. Please refer to the license conditions for specifics on eligible gear for each license.

4.1 Gill Net

- Gill nets are permitted for use by category ZX licence holders only.
- No person shall use more than one section of herring gill net. No person shall use a herring gill net that exceeds 135 m in length.
- No person shall have a gill net that is more than 100 meshes in depth. The gill net mesh size shall not be greater than 64 mm (2.5 inches).
- Shaker panels shall not exceed a depth of 2 m with a mesh size no less than 150 mm (6 inches).
- Gill nets must be marked on both ends with buoys of similar colour, no less than 125 cm in circumference.

4.2 Seine

- Seine nets are permitted for use by category ZY licence holders only.
- A herring purse seine shall not be greater than 410 m (225 fathoms) in length, and mesh size not less than 25 mm (1 inch) extension measure.

- When herring are caught for holding in a herring enclosure, the bunt of the seine net must be knotless web. Web used in the construction of impoundments must also be knotless.

4.3 Hoop Nets and Dip Nets

- A bag-shaped net that is hung on a frame to which a line (hoop net) or a handle (dip net) is attached.

4.4 Herring Enclosures (ponds)

Note that a valid category ZY1 or ZY2 licence is required before putting any webbing in the water for use as a herring enclosure.

4.4.1 Enclosure Construction

- Enclosures must be constructed so that the floating frame can support the weight of an impoundment net and enclosed herring without collapsing.
- The bottom of the herring enclosure net must be maintained so that the bottom of the net is a minimum of 3 m (10 feet) above the substrate under the enclosure at all times.

4.4.2 Enclosure Marking

- Every individual herring enclosure (i.e. floating frame with web) must be marked with the vessel registration number (VRN) and vessel name in accordance with the licence conditions. Enclosures must also be numbered in a sequential fashion (i.e. Pond 1, Pond 2, etc.). This numbering requirement also applies to single enclosures (i.e. Pond 1).

4.4.3 Webbing

- Any net used in a herring enclosure must be made of knotless web.
- When impounding herring, the mesh size of the enclosure shall not be greater than 25 mm.
- Herring impoundments which will not be used within 14 days of cessation of fishing activities (indicated by date of hail) must have all web pulled up or removed.

4.4.4 Predator Deterrence

- Impoundments that employ a predator deterrence system must meet the following conditions:
    - A bird net consisting of contiguous netting with a maximum mesh size of 50 mm by 50 mm (2 inches by 2 inches). The bird net must be pulled tight across the frame of the impoundment.
    - A predator net consisting of contiguous netting with a maximum mesh size of 25 mm (1 inch). The predator net must surround the webbing of the impoundment completely, maintain a space of at least 30 cm (12 inches) between the predator

net and the webbing, and maintain a minimum distance of 3 m (9 feet) above the substrate under the enclosure at all times.

5 MONITORING PROGRAM

Timely and accurate information on harvest and harvesting practices is essential to assess the status of fish stocks and to ensure the conservation and the long-term sustainability of fish resources. Effective monitoring and accurate catch reporting in the Special Use herring fishery is integral to the effective management of the fishery and herring resource.

The category ZY Special Use Herring Fishery Monitoring Program is industry-funded and has been in place since 2007. The program is comprised of a telephone hail-in system, vessel harvest logbooks, and dockside weight validation. Category ZX licences do not participate in the commercial fishery monitoring program, but do submit a landing report at the end of the season.

Additional information on the monitoring program will be provided at the time of licence issuance. Please note that compliance with the monitoring program is a condition of licence. Proof of monitoring via a letter from the service provider will be required prior to licence issuance.

5.1 Service Provider

J.O. Thomas and Associates Ltd. is the industry selected service provider for the Special Use fishery. Contact information is as follows:

http://jothomas.com/vancouver-office

J.O. Thomas and Associates
1370 Kootenay Street
Vancouver, BC Tel: (604) 291-6340
V5K 4R1 Fax: (604) 291-6496

The vessel master shall report all required information to the designated service provider as detailed in the logbooks and conditions of licence. No notification is required for fishing under a category ZX licence.

5.2 Letter of Agreement

Prior to category ZY licence issuance, proof of monitoring is required via a Letter of Agreement from the service provider verifying their agreement with the delivery of a fishery monitoring program.

5.3 Hail Reports

Each vessel master shall be responsible for making an oral report (hail) to the service provider to report events and information required by the licence conditions. The vessel master may designate a person to make hails on his/her behalf, but retains accountability for hails to be performed.

Each hail will be documented with a unique Hail Confirmation Number in the appropriate location in the Special Use Herring Fishery Log Book as detailed in the licence conditions and information sheets provided with the logbooks from the service provider.

Hail Reports provide DFO Resource Management with key information required for timely in-season management and are therefore a priority requirement of the Special Use Fishery Monitoring Program.

5.4 Logbooks

Logbooks are available from the service provider. The vessel master is responsible for the provision and maintenance of an accurate record of daily harvest operations. Catch information must be recorded in the harvest log by midnight of the day in which the activity occurred. The logbook must be kept aboard the licensed vessel, and must be produced for examination on demand of a fishery officer or fishery guardian.

The original white page copy of the log must be received by the designated service provider by December 15th each year for the previous season.

5.5 Dockside Monitoring

All landed fish must be verified by a dockside observer and coordinated through the service provider.

Live herring in a quantity less than 500 pieces that are not landed but are removed from the enclosure and sold directly to the public do not require weight verification. However, on the last day of each month, DFO requires the provision of a report via email or fax to the service provider that provides the quantity of individual herring removed from the enclosure. In addition, the number of pieces removed must be recorded in the vessel logbook.

5.6 At-Sea Observers

For category ZY3 and ZY4 licenses, and for category ZY1 licences with deliveries of non-ponded herring, designated fishing vessels will be required to have at-sea observer coverage by a DFO-designated observer while carrying out fishing operations. An observer must be on board prior to the vessel making a seine set. An observer may transfer to another vessel at sea, once the observer duties for the first vessel have been completed, and at the discretion of the observer.

The electronic monitoring program will continue to be offered during the 2025/2026 fishing season, and will include the use of video and electronic monitoring systems on board vessels. An electronic monitoring program was implemented in 2020/2021, as an alternative to at-sea observers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.7 Marine Mammal and Seabird Reporting

See main IFMP Section 5.4.2 - Marine Mammals and Seabird Encounters

5.8 Lost Gear Reporting

Ghost Gear Program

See main IFMP Section 5.4.3 - Ghost Gear Program

Conditions of Licence to Report Lost and Retrieved Gear

See main IFMP Section 5.4.4 - Conditions of Licence to Report Lost and Retrieved Gear

6 LANDING

6.1 Landing and Herring Release Times

All herring caught and retained under the authority of these licenses from November 28, 2025 (anticipated) to February 15, 2026, shall be ponded no later than 23:59 hours February 15, 2026. Release or validation of all ponded herring must be completed by 23:59 hours March 1, 2026, except for herring that are ponded in Areas 14 or 17 where release or validation of all ponded herring must be completed by 23:59 hours February 15, 2026 to minimize coincident timing with the Roe season in these areas.

All herring caught and retained under the authority of these licenses from May 1, 2026 to November 6, 2026, shall be ponded no later than 23:59 hours November 6, 2026. Release or validation of all ponded herring must be completed by 23:59 hours December 1, 2026.

Ponding activity is permitted for this short period as defined above after the February 15 or the November 6 end date of the Special Use herring fishery harvesting periods. An end of season ponding completion date is required to ensure catch validation occurs within a reasonable time frame after the close of the fishery.

Operations with a maximum annual quota of 3 tons do not need to release herring on the above dates, provided the conditions of licence are met.

Regulations for the transport and processing of fish, including food safety and sanitation requirements, can be found in the *BC Fish and Seafood Licensing Regulations*: (https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/261_2016#section11).

6.2 Designated Landing Ports

Special Use herring may be landed at ports that meet the following requirements:

- Is a Designated Landing Station as per Section 17 of the *Pacific Fisheries Regulations*;
- Has an Industry Canada Approved weigh scale (valid for duration of fishing season); and,
- Is provincially licensed with a Fish Receiver Licence and Seafood Processor Licence for Roe Herring or for Finfish other than Salmon (valid for duration of fishing season)

OR

Is a Federal Government dock registered with the Harbour Authority Association of BC.

The following landing ports may be used:

- Metro Vancouver
- Prince Rupert
- Quadra Island
- Campbell River

To land at another port other than those listed above, contact the Service Provider. It is possible that a surcharge will be charged to the operator for travel costs of the port monitor. Alternative landing ports must meet the criteria for a designated landing port.

7 LICENCING

National Online Licensing System (NOLS) Client Support:
Training materials, including step-by-step guides and a detailed user training manual, are available online (http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/FM-GP/SDC-CPS/licence-permis-eng.htm) to guide users of the system in completing their licensing transactions. The Department also provides client support and assistance on how to use the system via e-mail at fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca or by calling toll-free at 1-877-535-7307 (7:00 AM to 8:00 PM Eastern, Monday to Friday).

7.1 Fisher Identification Number (FIN)

The FIN allows for fast, easy, and reliable on-grounds identification of fish harvesters for data collection, fisheries management and enforcement purposes. A unique Fisher Identification Number (FIN) has been assigned to all Pacific commercial fish harvesters. Once a FIN is assigned to a fish harvester, that individual will reference the FIN when identifying him or herself in subsequent business dealings with both the department and service contractors. As the FIN is now used during normal business interactions with DFO and contractors; for example, filling in the FIN field on logbooks, noting the FIN when hailing, landing catch, etc. Fish harvesters will no longer need to provide detailed personal information identifying such items as gender or date of birth.

Once the FIN is issued to a fish harvester, it will not change from year to year. More information on the FIN may be obtained from the Pacific Fishery Licensing Unit (PFLU).

7.2 Licence Categories

A Special Use Herring (category ZX or ZY) licence is required to commercially harvest special use herring. Special Use Herring licenses are unlimited entry party-based licenses that are issued in the name of an individual or company; where each licence issued must be designated to a registered Canadian commercial fishing vessel that is eligible for a limited entry vessel-based commercial licence, a valid corresponding communal commercial licence, or a valid Salmon category NAG licence.

When licences were introduced to the Special Use fishery in 1995, they were developed with specific licence purposes that dictated the end use of the fish for that licence. The Special Use fishery is organized into five licence types, to accommodate for specific needs of the products of this fishery. These licence purposes/types are described for each licence category below.

7.2.1 ZX – Personal Use Herring

- Licence purpose: Fish caught under the authority of this licence cannot be sold and are for the sole use of the licence holder.
- 1 ton licences issued to anyone that owns or operates a licensed commercial vessel.
- Licences issued on a first come, first served basis, until the allocation for category ZX licences has been reached.

7.2.2 ZY1 – Sport Bait

- Licence purpose: Fish caught under the authority of this licence may only be sold as live bait to sport fishers or frozen for domestic or export sport bait.
- 3 ton licences issued to anyone that owns or operates a licensed commercial vessel.
- Three unique quotas exist for this licence type. These licences are for larger tonnages and as such are restricted to fishing between the dates of November 28, 2025 (18:00h) (anticipated opening date) to February 15, 2026 (23:59h); and October 1, 2026 (00:01h) to November 6, 2026 (23:59h).
- Multiple 3 ton category ZY1 licences (up to five per vessel) will only be issued between November 28, 2025 (anticipated opening date) to February 15, 2026, and October 1, 2026 to November 6, 2026. Vessels designated with category ZY1 licences may not also be designated with other herring category licenses, at the same time. Licences will be issued on a first come, first serve basis, until the allocation for category ZY1 licenses has been reached.

7.2.3 ZY2 – Commercial Bait

- Licence purpose: Fish caught under authority of this licence may be sold only as fresh or frozen bait for commercial use to commercial fishers.
- There is currently no quota assigned to this licence category.
- If quota were to be assigned, licenses would be in the form of 3 ton licences issued to anyone that owns or operates a licensed commercial vessel.
- Licences would be issued on a first come, first served basis, until the allocation for category ZY2 licenses had been reached.
- Vessels designated with a category ZY2 licence may not also be designated with other herring category licenses at the same time.

7.2.4 ZY3 – Domestic Food and Bait Herring

- Licence purpose: Fish caught under authority of this licence may only be sold fresh for non-commercial or non-sport use.
- In full quota years, three 50 ton licences are available as a 150 ton unique quota. These licences are for larger tonnages and as such are restricted to fishing between the dates of November 28, 2025 (18:00h) (anticipated opening date) to February 15, 2026 (23:59h); and October 1, 2026 (00:01h) and November 6, 2026 (23:59h).

- Up to three category ZY3 licences may be designated to a vessel, at one time. Vessels may also be designated with category ZY4 and ZM (Food & Bait) licence at the same time. The designated vessel must be a licensed commercial fishing vessel that meets the criteria for licence issuance.

7.2.5 ZY4 – Zoo and Aquarium Animal Food

- Fish caught under authority of this licence may only be used to feed animals resident at the zoo or aquarium of the named licence holder.
- In full quota years, one 110 ton licence is issued as a unique quota to the Vancouver Aquarium to a licensed commercial fishing vessel that meets the criteria for licence issuance. The vessel may also be designated with category ZY3 and ZM licence at the same time.
- This unique quota is for a larger tonnage and as such is restricted to fishing between the dates of November 28, 2025 (18:00h) (anticipated opening date) to February 15, 2026 (23:59h) and October 1, 2026 (00:01h) to November 6, 2026 (23:59h).

Licences issued under these categories do not imply or confer a future right or privilege to be issued a similar licence in future seasons or beyond.

7.3 Unique Quotas

As the Special Use fishery was developed, there arose a practice of providing unique quotas (previously referred to as "grandfathered licences") to specific parties for specific purposes within different licence categories. While DFO will no longer provide for the development of new unique quotas, based on historical participation, the existing unique quotas will continue to be made available to the past participants subject to the conditions described in this section. There are currently five unique quotas within the Special Use fishery.

Minister's Discretion under the *Fisheries Act*

Previously called "grandfathered" or "historical" licences, these allocations are more accurately called "unique quotas". In the context of the development of the Special Use fishery, the technical definition of "grandfathering"[3] does not apply as it implies that there is an eligibility for access to these allocations and implies there is a statutory or regulatory clause that describes how allocations must be made (or that "grandfathers" certain licence holders). On the contrary, the Minister has absolute discretion regarding the issuance of fishing licences as per the *Fisheries Act* S7.

[3] To be "grandfathered" means that one benefits from a grandfather clause, which is a statutory or regulatory clause that exempts a class of persons or transactions because of circumstances existing before the new rule or regulation takes effect.

7.3.1 Expected Use of Fish

The initial overall quota for the Special Use fishery will be a portion of the overall TAC for the Strait of Georgia (SOG), and the quota decision will be implemented once the coastwide management approach has been determined. The total TAC in the Special Use fishery has been up to 902 tons in recent years. The unique quotas are issued to specific parties for specific purposes, as described below:

- ZY1 Sport Bait:
  - Walcan Seafood Ltd (300 tons, SOG)
  - Charlie's Live Bait (15 tons, SOG)
  - Martin Lowe (9 tons, SOG)
  - A-Tlegay Fisheries Society (100 tons, SOG)

- ZY3 Human Food and Bait
  - Seven Seas Fish Co. Ltd. (150 tons, SOG)

- ZY4 Zoo and Aquarium Food
  - Vancouver Aquarium (110 tons, SOG)

7.4 Licence Renewal Fee

In accordance with the Service Fees Act, annual licence fees will be adjusted by the annual rate of inflation determined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by Statistics Canada.

The commercial Special Use Herring Species (Categories ZX & ZY) licence fee may be found under the header, Licence renewal fees on the following link: https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/index-eng.html#commercial

Once the Application for Special Use Bait Herring Licence Category ZX & ZY form has been reviewed and approved by the Herring Resource Manager, the licence renewal fee will be made available in the applicants National Online Licensing System (NOLS) account.

All payments must be made through the NOLS.

7.5 Licence Application and Issuance Information

Special Use herring licence application form are available on the licensing webpage under https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/licence-commercial-permis-eng.html or may be obtained from the Pacific Fishery Licence Unit via email at fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Eligible applicants must submit a completed Application for Special Use Bait Herring Licence Category ZX & ZY form through the NOLS. A separate application must be submitted for each special use herring licence being issued.

The applicant must sign the application form. Where the applicant is a company, the Pacific Fishery Licence Unit must have on record a copy of a current BC Company Summary, indicating the officers associated with the company.

The applicant must designate a registered Canadian commercial fishing vessel that is eligible for a limited entry vessel-based licence (i.e. Salmon, Schedule II Species, Geoduck, Sablefish, Halibut, Crab, Shrimp by trawl, Groundfish trawl, and Prawn and Shrimp by trap), a valid corresponding communal commercial licence, or a valid salmon category NAG licence.

The application must list the name of the vessel master; however, the applicant is not required to be the owner of the designated vessel. Licences may be issued to the applicant who is intending to use or receive the herring. If the herring is to be impounded, then the applicant can be the impoundment operator.

No party may hold more than one Special Use Herring licence at a time (with the exception of category ZY3 licenses). Where a Special Use Herring licence has been landed and validated and all conditions have been met, the licence holder may apply for another special use herring licence.

No fishing may commence until the licence documents have been received and are on board the designated vessel.

7.6 Licence Documents

Special Use herring (category ZX or ZY) licences are valid from the date of issue to November 6th of the next calendar year, unless otherwise specified on the licence conditions.

The Special Use fishery is closed from 00:01 hours February 16, 2026 to 23:59 hours April 30, 2026 for the Roe herring season.

Licences that have been obtained prior to the February 15 closure but have remaining quota may be used after the fishery re-opens on May 1.

Replacements for lost or destroyed licence documents may be obtained by contacting the Pacific Fishery Licence Unit by email at fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

7.7 Vessel Redesignation

Vessel re-designation requests may be submitted via the licence holder's National Online Licensing System (NOLS) account by logging onto the NOLS and navigating to 'Submit a Request' Type: Vessel Transaction, Sub-Type: Attach/detach Vessel to/from Vessel. Full instructions on how to submit a request are available at:

https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/products-produits/request-demande-eng.html

Vessel re-designation after licence issuance is permitted for category ZY3 and ZY4 licenses only, or at the discretion of the lead resource manager.

All vessel designation requirements must be met by the replacing designated vessel.

8 SPECIAL USE CALENDAR

Month	Date	Event
		2025
October	1	Special Use fishery re-opens at 00:01h to quota ≥ 3 tons
	8, 9, 10	IHHPC, HIAB, Tier 2 Pre-Season Planning meetings
November	6	Special Use 2024/2025 fishery closes at 23:59h (extension available for those harvesters that operate year round with remaining quota)
	7	2025/2026 Special Use applications available online (on the Pacific Fishery Licence Unit webpage)
	15	Category ZX Landing Report for 2024/2025 deadline to be submitted to DFO
	28	Special Use 2025/2026 anticipated fishery opening at 16:00h
December	1	Release or validation of ponded herring from 2024/2025 by 23:59 hours as required by conditions of licence
	15	Original white page copy of logbook from 2024/2025 to service provider (category ZY only)
		2026
February	15	Special Use fishery closes at 23:59h. All herring must be ponded or landed by this time.
March	1	Release or validation of ponded herring by 23:59h as required by conditions of licence
May	1	Special Use fishery re-opens at 00:01h to quota ≤ 3 tons
	TBD	IHHPC, HIAB, Tier 2 Post-Season Review meeting

APPENDIX 11. COMMERCIAL HERRING FISHERIES COMPLIANCE PLAN

Conservation and Protection Program Description
Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO's) Conservation and Protection (C&P) program is responsible for enforcing the *Fisheries Act* and pursuant regulations and related legislation. Enforcement activities are carried out by Fishery Officers across Canada who conduct patrols on land, at sea and in the air.

The Department promotes compliance with the law through a range of activities from education and awareness activities that encourage Canadians to protect fishery resources and habitats, patrol activities to detect violations, and major case management. These activities are further outlined in the C&P National Compliance Framework.

There are approximately 173 fishery officers stationed in the Pacific Region, which encompasses British Columbia and Yukon. They are designated as "Fishery Officers" under Section 5 of the *Fisheries Act*. The *Fisheries Act* and the *Criminal Code of Canad*a are the primary pieces of legislation outlining the powers and responsibilities of Fishery Officers. Officers are designated under other Acts as well, such as the *Coastal Fisheries Protection Act* and *Species at Risk Act*.

Users can report fisheries or habitat related violations using the toll free observe, record and report hotline. This toll free number is available 24 hours a day.

OBSERVE, RECORD AND REPORT 1-800-465-4DFO (1-800-465-4336)

Regional Compliance Program Delivery
Fishery Officers conduct a range of activities to promote compliance during herring fisheries. These activities include attending industry and herring working group meetings, defining key enforcement concerns with Fisheries Management prior to the commercial fishery, conducting patrols, at sea boardings and plant inspections during the fishery and detailed post season reporting.

C&P staff will monitor and enforce issues and problems related to the herring fishery in conjunction with the monitoring and enforcement activities dedicated to the identified priority fisheries in the Pacific Region.

Fishery Officer's authority to inspect and the duty of owners or persons in charge to assist with the inspections come from *Section 49 of the Fisheries Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. F-14)* which states:

- **49 (1)** Subject to subsection (2), for the purpose of ensuring compliance with this Act and the regulations, a fishery officer or fishery guardian may enter and inspect any place, including any premises, vessel or vehicle, in which the officer or guardian believes on reasonable grounds there is any work or undertaking or any fish or other thing in respect of which this Act or the regulations apply and may

  (a) open any container that the officer or guardian believes on reasonable grounds contains any fish or other thing in respect of which this Act or the regulations apply;

  (b) examine any fish or other thing that the officer or guardian finds and take samples of it;

  (c) conduct any tests or analyses and take any measurements; and

  (d) require any person to produce for examination or copying any records, books of account or other documents that the officer or guardian believes on reasonable grounds contain information that is relevant to the administration of this Act or the regulations.

(1.1) In carrying out an inspection of a place under subsection (1), a fishery officer or fishery guardian may,

(a) use or cause to be used any data processing system at the place to examine any data contained in or available to the data processing system;

(b) reproduce any record or cause it to be reproduced from the data in the form of a print-out or other intelligible output and remove the print-out or other output for examination or copying; and

(c) use or cause to be used any copying equipment at the place to make copies of any record, book of account or other document.

Duty to assist

(1.2) The owner or person in charge of a place that is inspected by a fishery officer or fishery guardian under subsection (1) and every person found in the place shall

(a) give the officer or guardian all reasonable assistance to enable the officer or guardian to carry out the inspection and exercise any power conferred by this section; and

(b) provide the officer or guardian with any information relevant to the administration of this Act or the regulations that the officer or guardian may reasonably require.

Dockside validation is a key component of the management of the herring fishery. C&P supports dockside validation by checking in with validators, attending offloads and monitoring offloading practices.

Air surveillance resources may be utilized to patrol boundaries and conduct gear and vessel counts. Charter aircraft as well as DFO aircraft may be utilized for these activities.

Consultation

C&P strives to meet with First Nations groups to build relationships. C&P seeks to conduct joint patrols with First Nations fisheries representatives and strives to complete enforcement protocols to better define our working relationship.

C&P attends industry meetings with Fisheries Management. These meetings occur in several geographic areas and are important to exchange information and share concerns.

Compliance Performance

Roe Herring

Officers attend openings and conduct regulatory monitoring activities throughout the fishery. Compliance monitoring activities will be conducted during offloads and after the fishery is closed. Fishery Officers work closely with Resource Managers and partners where possible.

Fishery Officers conducted patrols of the fishery, inspected plants and monitored validations.

Spawn on Kelp

There is continued concern with non-compliance of fishery monitoring components, including hail requirements, as hails do not always reflect up to date activities on the grounds.

Food and Bait and Special Use

Response and investigations regarding occurrence reports was provided as required.

Current Compliance Issues

Key priorities are to ensure fisheries are promulgated in an orderly manner and in compliance with legislation and licence conditions.

APPENDIX 12. FISHING VESSEL SAFETY

1 OVERVIEW – FISHING VESSEL SAFETY

Vessel owners and masters have a duty to ensure the safety of their crew and vessel. Adherence to safety regulations and good practices by owners, masters and crew of fishing vessels will help save lives, prevent vessel damage and protect the environment. All fishing vessels must be in a seaworthy condition, registered, and maintained as required by Transport Canada (TC), WorkSafeBC, and other applicable agencies. Vessels subject to inspection should ensure that the certificate of inspection is valid for the area of intended operation.

In the federal government, responsibility for shipping, navigation, and vessel safety regulations and inspections lies with TC; emergency response with the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) and DFO has responsibility for management of the fisheries resources. The Transportation Safety Board is an independent agency that advances transportation safety by investigating selected occurrences in the air, marine, pipeline and rail modes of transportation including fishing vessel occurrences. In BC, WorkSafeBC exercises jurisdiction over workplace health and safety and conducts inspections on commercial fishing vessels in order to ascertain compliance with the Workers Compensation Act (WCA) and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR).

Before departing on a voyage the authorized representative (normally the owner), must ensure that the fishing vessel is capable of and safe for the intended voyage and fishing operations. Critical factors for a safe voyage include the seaworthiness of the vessel, having the required personal protective and life-saving equipment in good working order, adequate number of properly trained crew, and knowledge of current and forecasted weather conditions. As safety requirements and guidelines may change, the vessel's authorized representative, crew, and other workers must be aware of the latest legislation, policies and guidelines prior to each trip.

There are many useful tools available for ensuring a safe voyage. These include:

- Education and training programs
- Marine emergency duties training
- Fish Safe – Stability Education Program & 1 Day Stability Workshop
- Fish Safe – SVOP (Subsidized rate for BC commercial fishers provided)
- Fish Safe – *Safest Catch* program – **FREE** for BC commercial fishers
- Fish Safe *Safe At Sea* DVD Series – Fish Safe
- Fish Safe Stability Handbook – *Safe at Sea* and *Safest Catch* – DVD Series
- Fish Safe *Safest Catch* Log Book
- Fish Safe *Safety Quiz*

- First Aid training
- Radio Operators Course (Subsidized rate for BC commercial fishers provided)
- Fishing Masters Certificate training
- Small Vessel Operators Certificate training

Publications:

- *Gearing Up for Safety* - WorkSafeBC
- https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation/marine-safety/tp-15393e-adequate-stability-safety-guidelines-fishing-vessels TP 15393E - Adequate stability and safety guidelines for fishing vessels
- TP 15392E - Guidelines for fishing vessel major modification or a change in activity. https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation/marine-safety/tp-15392e-guidelines-fishing-vessel-major-modification-change-activity
- Transport Canada Publication TP 10038 Small Fishing Vessel Safety Manual (can be obtained at Transport Canada Offices from their website at: http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/tp-tp10038-menu-548.htm
- Amendments to the Small Fishing Vessel Inspection Regulations (can be obtained from: http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2016/2016-07-13/html/sor-dors163-eng.php)
- Safety Issues Investigation into Fishing Safety in Canada report can be accessed: https://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/rapports-reports/marine/etudes-studies/M09Z0001/M09Z0001.html

For further information see: https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation
www.fishsafebc.com
www.worksafebc.com
www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/rapports-reports/marine/index.html

2 IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR VESSEL SAFETY

There are three areas of fishing vessel safety that should be considered a priority. These are: vessel stability, emergency preparedness, and cold water immersion.

2.1 Fishing Vessel Stability

Vessel stability is paramount for safety. Care must be given to the stowage and securing of all cargo, skiffs, equipment, fuel containers and supplies, and to correct ballasting. Fish harvesters must be familiar with their vessel's centre of gravity, the effect of liquid free surfaces on stability (e.g. loose water or fish on deck), loading and unloading operations, watertight integrity and the vessel's freeboard. Know the limitations of your vessel; if you are unsure contact aa naval architect, marine surveyor or the local Transport Canada Marine Safety Office.

Fishing vessel authorized representatives/owners are required to develop detailed instructions addressing the limits of stability for each of their vessels. These instructions must include detailed safe operation documentation kept on board the vessel.

In 2017, Transport Canada Marine Safety (TC) issued Ship Safety Bulletin (SSB) No. 03/2017 announcing the coming into force of the New Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations. The initial regulations were published in the Canada Gazette Part II on July 13, 2016 and came into force on July 13, 2017. The bulletin includes important information on changes to requirements for Written Safety Procedures, Safety Equipment and Vessel Stability.

As of July 13, 2017, new regulations pertaining to stability assessments to be performed by a competent person came into effect, as follows:

- A new fishing vessel that has a hull length of more than 9 m where the vessel construction was started or that a contract was signed for the construction after July 13, 2018;
- A fishing vessel more than 9 m and that has undergone a major modification or a change in activity that is likely to adversely affect its stability;
- A fishing vessel that is fitted with an anti-roll tank at any time;
- A fishing vessel more than 15 gross tonnage and used for catching herring or capelin during the period beginning on July 6, 1977 and ending on July 13, 2017
- For an existing fishing vessel that is not required to undergo a stability assessment, the owner shall be capable of demonstrating that their vessel has adequate stability to safely carry out the vessel's intended operations. Guidelines have been developed and are available online to help small fishing vessel owners and operators meet their regulatory requirements
- Two good resources can be found here: TP 15393 - Adequate stability and safety guidelines for fishing vessels (2018) and TP 15392 – Guidelines for fishing vessel major modification or a change in activity (2018)

Further, the new Regulation requires a "Stability Notice" to be developed after a stability assessment. This notice includes a simple diagrammatic of the vessel, its tanks and fish holds, or deck storage as the case may be. It is intended to assist fishing vessel crews in quickly determining the safe carriage limits of the vessel without having to reference a complicated Trim and Stability Book.

Additionally, Transport Canada published a Stability Questionnaire (SSB No. 04/2006) and Fishing Vessel Modifications Form (SSB No. 01/2008) which enable operators to identify the criteria which will trigger a stability assessment. Please contact the nearest Transport Canada office if you need to determine whether your vessel requires a stability assessment, or to receive guidance on obtaining competent assessor.

In 2019, TC provided an updated SSB 03/2019, which sets out a voluntary record of modifications for the benefit of owners/masters of any fishing vessels. For vessels of more than 15 gross tons, the record of modifications was to be reviewed by TC inspectors during regular inspections and entered on the vessel's inspection record. However, information gathered

during the Transportation Safety Board's (TSB) Safety Issues Investigation into the fishing industry showed minimal recording of vessel modifications prior to this date.

The TSB has investigated several fishing vessel accidents since 2008 and found a variety of factors that effected the vessel's stability were identified as contributing factors in vessels capsizing, such as with: M08W0189 - *Love and Anarchy*, M09L0074 – *Le Marsouin I*, M10M0014 - *Craig and Justin*, M12W0054 – *Jessie G*, M12W0062 - *Pacific Siren*, M14P0121 – *Five Star*, M15P0286 – *Caledonian*, M16A0140 – *C19496NB*, M17C0061 – *Emma Joan*, M17P0052 – *Miss Cory*, M18P0073 – *Western Commander*,M18A0425 – *Charlene A*, M18A0454 – *Atlantic Sapphire*, M20P0229 – *Arctic Fox II*, M20A0434 – *Chief William Saulis and* M20A0160 – *Sarah Anne* and the *Tyhawk* – M21A0065.

Vessel masters are advised to carefully consider stability when transporting gear. Care must be given to the stowage and securing of all traps, cargo, skiffs, equipment, fuel containers and supplies and also to correct ballasting. Know the limitations of your vessel; if you are unsure contact a reputable marine surveyor, naval architect or the local Transport Canada Marine Safety office.

WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (OHSR) require owners of fishing vessels to provide documentation on board, readily accessible to crew members, which describes vessel characteristics, including stability.

Fish Safe has developed a code of best practices for the food and bait/roe herring fisheries, dive fisheries and the prawn fishery: These Best Practices are available on Fish Safe's website for convenient download here: https://www.fishsafebc.com/best-practices Please contact John Krgovich at Fish Safe for a copy of the program materials they developed to address safety and vessel stability in these fisheries. John Krgovich – office: (604) 261-9700 - Email: john@fishsafebc.com.

2.2 Emergency Drill Requirements

The *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* requires that the Authorized Representative of a Canadian Vessel shall develop procedures for the safe operation of the vessel and for dealing with emergencies. The Act also requires that crew and passengers receive safety training. The Marine Personnel Regulations require that all personnel on board required to meet the minimum safe manning levels have received MED (Marine Emergency Duties) training to an A1 or A3 level, depending on the vessel's voyage limits, within 6 months of serving aboard. MED A3 training is 8 hours in duration and is applicable to seafarers on fishing vessels less than 150 GRT that are within 25 miles from shore (NC2). MED A1 training is 19.5 hours duration and is applicable to all other fishing vessels.

To assist fishers in meeting their crew training requirements, Fish Safe has created a downloadable '*New Crew Orientation Form and How To Guide'* available on Fish Safe's website here: https://www.fishsafebc.com/downloadable-tools

MED provides a basic understanding of the hazards associated with the marine environment; the prevention of shipboard incidents; raising and reacting to alarms; fire and abandonment situations; and the skills necessary for survival and rescue.

WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) requires written rescue and evacuation procedures for work on or over water. Additionally, fishing vessel masters must establish procedures and assign responsibilities to each crew member to cover all emergencies, including the following: crew member overboard, fire on board, flooding of the vessel, abandoning ship, and calling for help. Fishing vessel masters are also required to conduct emergency drills at the start of each fishing season, when there is a change of crew, and at periodic intervals to ensure that crewmembers are familiar with emergency procedures.

Between 2015 and 2021, 15 fishing vessel accidents were reported to the TSB which resulted in 34 fatalities. In all 15 occurrences, distress alerting devices (EPIRBs, PLBs) were not used. The report's findings highlighted the lack of safety drills and safety procedures and practices. The *Safest Catch* program, delivered by Fish Safe and free to BC commercial fishers, includes comprehensive practice of drills such as abandon ship, man overboard, and firefighting drills.

2.3 Cold Water Immersion

Drowning is the number one cause of death in BC's fishing industry. Cold water is defined as water below 25 degrees Celsius, but the greatest effects occur below 15 degrees C. BC waters are usually below 15 degrees C. Normal body temperature is around 37 degrees Celsius; cold water rapidly draws heat away from the body. The effects of cold water on the body occur in four stages: cold shock, swimming failure, hypothermia and post-rescue collapse. Know what to do to prevent you or your crew from falling into the water and what to do if that occurs. More information is available in the WorkSafeBC Bulletin Cold Water Immersion (available from the WorkSafeBC website at www.worksafebc.com).

Under the recently amended (June 2019) OHS Regulation, section 24.96.1, a crewmember must wear a PFD or lifejacket when on board a fishing vessel that has no deck or deck structure or when on the deck of a fishing vessel that has a deck or deck structure. The use of a PFD will prepare a crewmember to remain afloat, to survive the effects of cold shock, reduce the need to swim and give rescuers time to respond.

Section 8.26, which requires workers to wear a PFD or lifejacket when working "under conditions which involve a risk of drowning", would continue to apply to fishing crewmembers and other workers (e.g. when they are working on shore, docks and other vessels). The specific

requirements can be found on WorkSafeBC's PFD Primer provided on Fish Safe's website here: https://www.fishsafebc.com/cold-water-survival.

It has been demonstrated time and again that, when worn, PFD's save lives - and the chance of surviving a mishap increases significantly when these devices are worn while working on deck.

Resulting from the TSB investigations into the *Diane Louise* - M14P0110, *Caledonian* – M15P0286 and the *C19496NB* - M16A0140 fishing vessel accidents the Board recommended that both TC, WorkSafeBC and WorkSafeNB require that persons wear a suitable personal flotation devices (PFDs) at all times when: on the deck of a commercial fishing vessel; or, when on board a commercial fishing vessel without a deck or deck structure, and ensure that programs are developed to confirm compliance. Between 2015 and 2021, 15 occurrences were reported to the TSB, resulting in the loss of life of 34 fish harvesters. In 11 of the 15 occurrences, personal flotation devices (PFDs) were not used.

2.4 Other Issues

2.4.1 Weather

Vessel owners and masters are reminded of the importance of paying close attention to current weather trends and forecasts during the voyage. Marine weather information and forecasts can be obtained on VHF channels 21B, Wx1, Wx2, Wx3, or Wx4. Weather information is also available from Environment Canada website at:
https://weather.gc.ca/mainmenu/marine_menu_e.html

2.4.2 Emergency Radio Procedures, EPIRBs, PLBs and AIS

Vessel owners and masters should ensure that all crew are able to activate the Search and Rescue (SAR) system early rather than later by contacting the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG). All fishing vessels greater than 20m in length must carry a Class A AIS, as well as a float free 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB). These beacons must be registered with the Canadian Beacon Registry. When activated, an EPIRB transmits a distress call that is picked up or relayed by satellites and transmitted via land earth stations to the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre (JRCC), which will task and co-ordinate rescue resources. The TSB notes in the *Island Lady* – M21A0315 that there have been 15 similar occurrences reported to the TSB, resulting in the loss of life of 34 fish harvesters. In all 15 occurrences, distress alerting devices (e.g., emergency position-indicating radio beacons [EPIRBs] and personal locator beacons [PLBs] were not used. (M15A0189, M16A0140, M16A0327, M18A0076, M18A0303, M18A0078, M18P0184, M18P0394, M19A0082, M19A0090, M19P0242, M20A0258, M20A0160, M21A0412, and M21A0161). The carriage of both AIS, PLB and EPIRB is strongly encouraged for all fishing vessels who do not fall under the mandatory threshold. PLBs require manual activation, so fish harvesters are encouraged to carry them while working on deck. You may not have time to go locate your PLB in an emergency.

Fish harvesters should monitor VHF channel 16 or MF 2182 KHz and make themselves and their crews familiar with other radio frequencies. All crew should know how to make a distress call and should obtain their restricted operator certificate from Industry Canada. However, whenever possible, masters should contact the nearest Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) station (on VHF channel 16 or MF 2182 kHz) prior to a distress situation developing. Correct radio procedures are important for communications in an emergency. Incorrect or misunderstood communications may hinder a rescue response. Further information is available at Radio Aids to Marine Navigation General

Since August 1, 2003, all commercial vessels greater than 8 metres in length are required to carry a Class D VHF Digital Selective Calling (DSC) radio. A registered DSC VHF radio has the capability to alert other DSC equipped vessels in your immediate area and MCTS that your vessel is in distress. Masters should be aware that they should register their DSC radios with Industry Canada to obtain a Marine Mobile Services Identity (MMSI) number or the automatic distress calling feature of the radio may not work. For further information see the Coast Guard website at: https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/index-eng.html or go directly to the Industry Canada web page:
www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/smt-gst.nsf/eng/sf01032.html

A DSC radio that is connected to a GPS unit will also automatically include your vessel's current position in the distress message. More detailed information on DSC can be found here: TC DSC Safety Bulletin. Questions regarding Coast Guard DSC capabilities can be obtained by contacting your local MCTS centre (Prince Rupert MCTS (250)627-3070 or Victoria MCTS (250)363-6333).

2.4.3 Collision Regulations

Fish harvesters must be knowledgeable of the Collision Regulations and the responsibilities between vessels where risk of collision exists. Navigation lights must be kept in good working order and must be displayed from sunset to sunrise and during all times of restricted visibility. To help reduce the potential for collision or close quarters situations which may also result in the loss of fishing gear, fish harvesters are encouraged to monitor the appropriate local Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) VHF channel when travelling or fishing near shipping lanes or other areas frequented by large commercial vessels. Vessels required to participate in VTS include:

a) every ship twenty metres or more in length,
b) every ship engaged in towing or pushing any vessel or object, other than fishing gear,
c) where the combined length of the ship and any vessel or object towed or pushed by the ship is forty five metres or more in length; or

d) where the length of the vessel or object being towed or pushed by the ship is twenty metres or more in length.

Exceptions include:

a) a ship towing or pushing inside a log booming ground,
b) a pleasure yacht *less than* 30 metres in length, and
c) a fishing vessel that is *less than* 24 metres in length and not *more than* 150 tons gross.

More detailed information on VTS can be obtained by calling either Prince Rupert MCTS (250)627-3070 or Victoria MCTS (250)363-6333 or from the Coast Guard website: https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/publications/mcts-sctm/ramn-arnm/part3-eng.html

2.4.4 Buddy System

Fish harvesters are encouraged to use the buddy system when transiting and fishing as this allows for the ability to provide mutual aid. An important trip consideration is the use of a sail/voyage plan which includes the particulars of the vessel, crew and voyage. The sail plan should be left with a responsible person on shore or filed with the local MCTS. After leaving port the fish harvester should contact the holder of the sail plan daily or as per another schedule. The sail plan should ensure notification to JRCC when communication is not maintained which might indicate your vessel is in distress. Be sure to cancel the sail plan upon completion of the voyage.

3 WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC exercises jurisdiction over workplace health and safety, including the activities of crews of fishing vessels. Commercial fishing, diving and other marine operations are subject to the provisions of the *Workers Compensation Act (WCA)* and requirements in Part 24 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR). Examples of Part 24 regulatory requirements related to fishing include, but are not limited to, the requirement to establish emergency procedures, to conduct emergency drills, to provide immersion suits for the crew, to provide stability documentation for the vessel, safe work procedures, injury reporting, correction of unsafe working conditions, the requirement to wear personal floatation devices (PFDs), etc.

Other sections of the OHSR also apply to commercial fishing operations. For example, Part 3 addresses training of young and new workers, first aid, and employer incident/accident investigations. Part 4 addresses general conditions such as maintenance of equipment, workplace conduct and impairment. Part 8 addresses issues related to safety headgear, safety footwear, eye and face protection, limb and body protection and

personal flotation devices (PFDs) when working on the dock. Part 12 addresses issues related to tools, machinery and equipment, including safeguarding. Part 15 addresses issues related to rigging.

Both owners and masters of fishing vessels are considered to be employers. Under the *Workers Compensation Act* and the OHS Regulation (OHSR) they have varying and overlapping duties and responsibilities. Masters, because they have the most control during fishing and related activities, are considered to be the employer with primary responsibility for the health and safety of the crew.

The OHSR and the *WCA* are available from the Provincial Crown Printers or by visiting the WorkSafeBC website: www.worksafebc.com

NOTE: Regarding the OHSR requirement to wear PFD's, WorkSafeBC has produced a video entitled "Turning the Tide – PFD's in the Fishing Industry". For more information on PFD use, including a link to the video, please access the following site:

https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/news-releases/2018/November/new-fishing-industry-safety-video?origin=s&returnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worksafebc.com%2Fen%2Fsearch%23q%3DTurning%2520the%2520Tide%26sort%3Drelevancy%26f%3Alanguage-facet%3D%5BEnglish%5D

For further information, contact an Occupational Safety Officer:

Bruce Logan	Field Services	Vancouver/ Richmond/Delta	(604) 244-6477
Cody King	Field Services	Courtenay	(250) 334-8733
Paul Matthews	Field Services	Courtenay	(250) 334-8741
Wayne Tracey	Field Services	Central	(604) 232-1939

or the Manager of Interest for Marine and Fishing, Pat Olsen (250) 334-8777

For information on projects and initiatives related to commercial fishing health and safety please contact Tom Pawlowski, Manager, OHS Consultation and Education Services, at (604) 233-4062 or by email: tom.pawlowski@worksafebc.com or Helen Chandler, OHS Consultant at (604) 276-3174 or by email: helen.chandler@worksafebc.com.

4 Fish Safe BC

Fish Safe encourages Vessel masters and crew to take ownership of fishing vessel safety. Through this industry driven and funded program Fish Safe provides fishing relevant tools and programs to assist fishers in this goal. The Fish Safe Stability Education Program and 1 Day Stability Workshop are available to all fishers who want to improve their understanding of stability and find practical application to their vessel's operation. The SVOP (Small Vessel Operator Proficiency) Course is designed to equip crew with the skills they need to safely navigate during their wheel watch. The Safest Catch Program, along with fisher-trained Safety Advisors, is designed to give fishers the tools they need to create a vessel specific safety management system.

As referenced throughout the above documentation, Fish Safe provides a broad range of courses, programs and services that are either free for BC commercial fishers or highly subsidized.

Fish Safe is managed by John Krgovich, Program Manager and support staff including John Krgovich, Program Coordinator, Stephanie Nguyen, Program Assistant, Rhoda Huey, Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant, and an experienced team of fisher Safety Advisors. All activities and program development is directed by the Fish Safe Advisory Committee (membership is open to all interested in improving safety on board fishing vessels). The Advisory Committee meets two to three times annually to discuss safety issues and give direction to Fish Safe in the development of education and tools for fish harvesters.

Fish Safe also works closely with WorkSafeBC to improve the fishing injury claims process. For further information contact:

John Krgovich	
Program Coordinator	Cell: (604) 729-8407
Fish Safe	Office: (604) 261-9700
#100, 12051 Horseshoe Way	Email: john@fishsafebc.com
Richmond, BC V7A 4V4	www.fishsafebc.com

5 Transportation Safety Board

The Transportation Safety Board (TSB) is not a regulatory board. The TSB is an independent agency that investigates marine, pipeline, railway and aviation transportation occurrences to determine the underlying risks and contributing factors. Its sole aim is the advancement of transportation safety by reporting publicly through Accident Investigation Reports or Marine Safety Information Letters or Advisories. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability.

In 2014 the TSB pacific region released three fishing vessel investigation reports:

- the collision between trawl fishing vessel *Viking Storm* and US long line fishing vessel *Maverick* and the subsequent fatality,

- the person over board off the prawn fishing vessel *Diane Louise* and the subsequent fatality, and
- the capsizing of the crab fishing vessel *Five Star* and subsequent fatality.

In 2016 the TSB pacific region released one investigation report:

- the capsizing of the trawl *Caledonian* and subsequent fatalities.

In 2018 the TSB pacific region released two investigation reports:

- the capsizing and sinking of the *Miss Cory* and subsequent fatality
- the sinking of the *Western Commander* and loss of life

In 2022 the TSB pacific region released one investigation report:

- the sinking of the *Arctic Fox II* and subsequent fatalities.

In 2023, the TSB pacific region released one investigation report:

- the sinking of the Tug Ingenika and barge Miller 204 and subsequent fatalities.

The TSB issued five recommendations following the *Caledonian* report. Three recommendations issued are aimed at ensuring all crews have access to adequate stability information that meets their needs. That means:

- All commercial fishing vessels should have a stability assessment appropriate for their size and operation.
- The information from that assessment must then be kept current, and it must be used to determine safe operating limits.

Moreover, these operating limits must be easily measurable, and relevant to the vessel's operation. For example, that could mean marking the sides of a vessel's hull to indicate the maximum operating waterline, or maximum permitted loads can be specified in the most relevant unit of measure—total catch weight for instance, or the safe number of traps. Regardless, for it to be of real, practical use, the information must be presented in a format that is clearly understood and easily accessible to crew.

The other two recommendations address the most basic step that harvesters can take: wearing a personal flotation device. Here in British Columbia, roughly 70 percent of all fishing-related fatalities in the past decade came while not wearing a PFD. Yet many harvesters still do not wear them. TC regulations currently require that PFDs be worn only if harvesters identify a risk, however; you never know when you could end up in the water. So the TSB is recommending to TC to require persons to wear suitable personal flotation devices at all times when on the deck of a commercial fishing vessel or when on board a commercial fishing vessel without a deck or deck structure and that programs are developed to confirm compliance. In June 2019, WorksafeBC amended its fishing regulation related to the use of PFDs. Under the amendments, crewmembers must wear a PFD or lifejacket when on board a fishing vessel that

has no deck or deck structure, or when on the deck of a fishing vessel that has a deck or deck structure. Crewmembers are not required to wear lifejackets or PFDs below deck or when inside a deck structure where there is risk of entrapment. This amendment removes the need for a risk of drowning to be present before a PFD must be worn.

For more information about the TSB, visit the website at www.tsb.gc.ca
For information about the TSB's safety issues investigation into fishing safety, visit:
https://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/rapports-reports/marine/etudes-studies/m09z0001/m09z0001.html

To view information on the TSB's recent safety Watchlist, visit:
https://www.bst-tsb.gc.ca/eng/surveillance-watchlist/marine/2022/marine-01.html

The TSB has also produced a Safe at Sea: Activity book on fishing safety intended for the next generation of fish harvesters (ages 4-7). Download a copy.
https://www.tsb.gc.ca/sites/default/files/eng/medias-media/prudence-safe/safe-at-sea.pdf

Reporting an Occurrence

https://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/incidents-occurrence/index.html
After a reportable occurrence happens you can fill out the reporting form or contact the TSB using the contact information below.

Transportation Safety Board of Canada
4 - 3071 No. 5 Road
Richmond, BC V6X 2T4

Email: marinenotifications.pacific@bst-tsb.gc.ca
Phone: 604-219-2414

APPENDIX 13. FISHERY MONITORING RISK ASSESSMENTS

A risk assessment tool has been used to assess monitoring levels required for the Food and Bait, Roe (seine and gillnet) and Spawn-on-Kelp commercial fisheries. The risk assessments were drafted by the Department and reviewed with commercial harvesters in 2018, followed by a public comment period for the draft risk assessments as part of the draft IFMP consultation period, from December 7, 2018, to January 9, 2019. A summary of the completed risk assessments for these fisheries are highlighted here.

The national Fishery Monitoring Policy has been finalized and is now available at: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/fishery-monitoring-surveillance-des-peches-eng.htm. This policy aims to bring consistency in the development, delivery and evaluation of monitoring programs for all federally-managed wild capture fisheries in Canada, and will supersede the existing Pacific Region Strategic Framework.

FOOD AND BAIT HERRING (SEINE)

Fishery Overview

The commercial Food and Bait fishery is fished by seine gear only and has the potential to occur coastwide; however, has only occurred in two of the five major stock assessment areas in recent years. The Food and Bait fishery takes place from early November to mid-February and operates on party-based, equal share criteria where licences are available for application by each of the parties who hold a valid roe herring seine licence. The 2015/16 and 2016/17 fisheries had a total allowable catch of approximately 8000 short tons, and 6000 short tons for the 2017/18 season. The Food and Bait fishery represents approximately 15-20% of the total allowable catch for Pacific Herring.

Ecosystem Risks

Due to variability in stock status across and within stock assessment areas, the stock status of Pacific Herring is considered to be of moderate concern with a moderate likelihood herring fisheries are driving the status of the stocks. However, the Food and Bait fishery is considered to have a low impact on the life history and behavior of the species. In terms of bycatch, the Food and Bait fishery targets Pacific Herring only, and observed bycatch of other species is so minimal that it is generally not observed by the dockside monitors (100% dockside monitoring); therefore, this fishery has a low risk to retained bycatch. Interception of marine mammals does occur in the Food and Bait fishery, especially sea lions including SARA-listed Stellar Sea lions, however mortalities rarely occur. There is a very low likelihood of impacting that species of

special concern, and therefore a low risk to "released" by-catch. Finally, the fishery has a low impact on herring as a key prey species. Even though herring are a forage fish species for many marine mammals, sea birds and other fish, the fishery is managed using a conservative approach and therefore was identified as having a low impact on ecosystem processes. There are very few direct or indirect habitat impacts in this fishery.

From this assessment, the preliminary fishery risk (comprised of risk to main species, bycatch, and community and habitat) was identified as moderate. Further analysis of additional resource management issues not incorporated into the preliminary risk calculations indicate there is a moderate to high potential to over-harvest in this fishery, which may pose a risk to the stocks. To account for this additional issue, the overall risk that the fishery poses to the stocks was changed to high.

Monitoring Level

An overall risk score of high requires an "enhanced" monitoring level. The Risk Assessment for the Food and Bait fishery also identifies that the fishery currently has enhanced monitoring, which includes a 100% dockside monitoring program, weight validation of fish landings and provision of validated data to DFO Science, requirements to hail-in, hail at-sea, and hail-out of the fishery, maintenance of paper logbooks, and submission of fish slips. The Food and Bait fishery also has 100% at-sea observer coverage, where the primary objective is to monitor compliance (e.g. with release after pumping restrictions), estimate the quantity of releases, review logbook entries, and notify DFO of any occurrences. In recent years, the requirement for onboard observers has been replaced by the requirements for electronic monitoring systems.

Next Steps

As the fishery currently meets the enhanced target monitoring level prescribed by the risk assessment, no changes to the monitoring program are expected in this risk assessment cycle. Information gaps that may be used for future assessment of the risks of this fishery include the uncertain impact of the fishery on smaller spatial stock areas, and an unknown amount of herring mortality from releases — especially those after pumping has commenced—that are not included in catch estimates (however on-grounds estimates are low). There has also been recent discussion about herring stock structure; the current body of work that includes tagging, DNA assessments, and spawn surveys, support the current stock structure employed in the management of Pacific Herring.

ROE HERRING (SEINE)

Fishery Overview

The commercial Roe seine fishery may occur in any of the five major stock assessment areas: Haida Gwaii, Prince Rupert District, Central Coast, West Coast Vancouver Island, and Strait of Georgia. The Roe seine fishery takes place between late February to early April and licences are party-based and limited to 252 licences. The 2018 fishery had a quota of 10,543 tons and a total

catch of 3429 tons; the 2017 fishery had a quota of 14,228 tons and a total catch of 10,819 tons. The Roe seine quota is approximately 30% of the total allowable catch for Pacific Herring.

Ecosystem Risks

Due to variability in stock status across and within stock assessment areas, the stock status of Pacific herring is considered to be of moderate concern, with a moderate likelihood herring fisheries are driving the status of the stocks. However, the Roe seine fishery is considered to have a low impact on the life history and behavior of the species. In terms of bycatch, the Roe seine fishery is highly targeted and observed bycatch of other species is so minimal that it is generally not observed by the dockside monitors (100% dockside monitoring); therefore, this fishery has a low risk to retained bycatch. Interception of marine mammals does occur in the Food and Bait fishery, especially sea lions including SARA-listed Stellar Sea lions, however mortalities occur. There is a very low likelihood of impacting that species of special concern, and therefore a low risk to "released" by-catch. Finally, the fishery has a low impact on herring as a key prey species. Even though herring are a forage fish species for many marine mammals, sea birds and other fish, the fishery is managed using a conservative approach and therefore was identified as having a low impact on ecosystem processes. There are very few direct or indirect habitat impacts in this fishery.

From this assessment, the preliminary fishery risk (comprised of risk to main species, bycatch, and community and habitat) was identified as moderate. Further analysis of additional resource management issues not incorporated into the preliminary risk calculations indicate there is a moderate to high potential to over-harvest in this fishery, which may pose a risk to the stocks. It should be noted, however, that all herring fisheries quotas are allocated from a single TAC and the risk to overharvesting that total TAC is low. Additionally, because the Roe herring seine fishery operates under a pool structure, compliance is difficult to enforce effectively, and there are negative public perceptions of this fishery. To account for these potential additional issues, the overall risk that the fishery could pose to the stocks was changed to high.

Monitoring Level

An overall risk score of high requires an "enhanced" monitoring level. The Risk Assessment for the Roe seine fishery also identifies that the fishery currently has enhanced monitoring, which includes: a 100% dockside monitoring program, validation of quota landings and provision of validated data to DFO Science, hail requirements, and intensive on-grounds management and oversight by DFO staff. Further, in the 2018 Roe seine fishing season, a mobile at-sea observer program was piloted to assist with on-grounds management.

Next Steps

As the fishery currently meets the enhanced target monitoring level prescribed by the risk assessment, no changes to the monitoring program are expected in this risk assessment cycle. Information gaps and potential issues that may be used for future assessment of the risks of this fishery include the lack of inclusion of herring release mortality during the fishery in catch

estimates (although on-grounds estimates are low), the extensive financial and staffing burden of on-grounds management and lack of an adequate management platform in some areas, and a lack of logbooks. There has also been recent discussions about herring stock structure; the current body of work that includes tagging, DNA assessments, and spawn surveys, support the current stock structure employed in the management of Pacific Herring.

ROE HERRING (GILLNET)

Fishery Overview

The commercial Roe gillnet fishery may occur in any of the five major stock assessment areas: Haida Gwaii, Prince Rupert District, Central Coast, West Coast Vancouver Island, and Strait of Georgia. The Roe gillnet fishery takes place between late February to early April and licences are party-based and limited to 1267 licences. The 2018 fishery had a quota of 12,705 tons and a total catch of 11,536 tons; the 2017 fishery had a quota of 16,672 tons and a total catch of 11,707 tons. The Roe gillnet quota is approximately 35% of the total allowable catch for Pacific Herring.

Ecosystem Risks

Due to variability in stock status across and within stock assessment areas, the stock status of Pacific herring is considered to be of moderate concern, with a moderate likelihood that the set of herring fisheries are driving the status of the stocks. However, the Roe gillnet fishery is considered to have a low impact on the life history and behavior of the species. In terms of bycatch, the Roe gillnet fishery is highly targeted and observed bycatch of other species is so minimal that it is generally not observed by the dockside monitors (100% dockside monitoring); therefore, this fishery has a low risk to retained bycatch. Interception of marine mammals does occur in the Roe gillnet fishery, especially with sea lions, which can include SARA-listed Stellar Sea lions, but is rare. There is a very low likelihood of impacting that species of special concern, and therefore a low risk to “released” by-catch. Finally, the fishery has a low impact on herring as a key prey species. Even though herring are a forage fish species for many marine mammals, sea birds and other fish, the fishery is managed using a conservative approach and therefore was identified as having a low impact on ecosystem processes. There are very few direct or indirect habitat impacts in this fishery.

From this assessment, the preliminary fishery risk (comprised of risk to main species, bycatch, and community and habitat) was identified as moderate. Further analysis of additional resource management issues not incorporated into the preliminary risk calculations indicate there is a moderate to high potential to over-harvest in this fishery, which may pose a risk to the stocks. It should be noted, however, that all herring fisheries quotas are allocated from a single TAC and the risk to overharvesting that total TAC is low. Additionally, because the Roe herring gillnet fishery operates under a pool structure, compliance is difficult to enforce effectively, and there are negative public perceptions of this fishery. To account for these potential additional issues, the overall risk that the fishery could pose to the stocks was changed to high.

Monitoring Level
An overall risk score of high requires an "enhanced" monitoring level. The Risk Assessment for the Roe gillnet fishery also identifies that the fishery currently has enhanced monitoring, which includes: a 100% dockside monitoring program, validation of quota landings and provision of validated data to DFO Science, and hail requirements. Additionally, DFO on-grounds management is used as necessary on the active fishing grounds.

Next Steps
As the fishery currently meets the enhanced target monitoring level prescribed by the risk assessment, no changes to the monitoring program are expected in this risk assessment cycle. Information gaps that may be used for future assessment of the risks of this fishery include the uncertain impact of the fishery on smaller spatial areas, and an unknown amount of herring mortality from fish dropping out of the gillnet. There has also been recent discussion about herring stock structure; the current body of work that includes tagging, DNA assessments, and spawn surveys, support the current stock structure employed in the management of Pacific Herring.

SPAWN-ON-KELP (OPEN AND CLOSED POND)

Fishery Overview
The SOK fishery provides the opportunity to harvest herring eggs which have adhered to blades of kelp after herring have spawned. The open pond fishery allows fish to spawn and swim freely, whereas the closed pond fishery uses seine gear to catch herring and retain them in enclosures (or "ponds") for a specific amount of time to allow them to spawn on the hanging kelp, and are then released. The commercial Spawn-on-Kelp (SOK) fishery traditionally occurs in four of the five major stock assessment areas: Haida Gwaii, Prince Rupert District, Central Coast, and the West Coast of Vancouver Island. It does not occur in the Strait of Georgia because of the lack of suitable kelp. The fishery also has activity in the minor stock assessment areas: Area 2W, 27 and outside areas 10, and 12. The SOK fishery takes place from early February to late June.

There are 46 current SOK licence eligibilities, and 12 of these are communal commercial, held by Indigenous groups. Licences are currently non-transferable. The average catch in the total SOK fishery from 2014-2017 was 401,134 lb, with an average of 21 operating licences per year. The SOK fishery accounts for approximately 6% of the total allowable catch for Pacific Herring.

Ecosystem Risks
Due to variability in stock status across and within stock assessment areas, the stock status of Pacific Herring is considered to be of moderate concern, with a moderate likelihood that the set of herring fisheries are driving the status of the stocks. However, the SOK fishery is considered to have a low impact on the life history and behavior of the species. In terms of bycatch, the SOK fishery is highly targeted and observed bycatch of other species is negligible. There have

been recorded instances of humpback whales, sea lions (which can include SARA-listed Stellar Sea lions), and seabirds becoming entangled in enclosure (pond) webbing, in the closed pond fishery. There is, however, a very low likelihood of the fishery driving the status of these animals due to the limited frequency of encounters. Open ponding does not demonstrate these impacts. Finally, the open pond fishery has very few direct or indirect habitat impacts. The closed pond fishery has a moderate impact to benthic habitat in the event of gear contact and/or biofouling of substrate from mortalities and fish waste, as well as a moderate impact to surrounding habitat due to the potential for disease transmission from ponded to non-ponded fish.

From this assessment, the fishery risk (comprised of risk to main species, bycatch, and community and habitat) for open pond SOK fisheries was identified as low, and for closed pond SOK fisheries was identified as moderate.

Monitoring Level

An overall risk score of low requires a low level of monitoring level, whereas a moderate risk score requires a "generic" monitoring level. The Risk Assessment for the open and closed pond SOK fisheries identifies that these fisheries currently meet (and exceed, for open pond) their target monitoring level, which is considered generic. Monitoring of these fisheries includes a 100% dockside monitoring program, requirements to hail-in, hail at-sea, and hail-out of the fishery, maintenance of paper logbooks, and submission of fish slips.

Next Steps

As the fishery currently meets or exceeds the target monitoring level prescribed by the risk assessment, no changes to the monitoring program are expected in this risk assessment cycle. Information gaps that may be used for future assessment of the risks of these fisheries include the unknown mortality from the ponding technique (e.g. the effect of towing herring to enclosure), the potential for disease spread to non-ponded herring and other species, and the unknown impact of kelp harvest. There has also been ongoing concerns regarding herring stock structure; the current body of work that includes tagging, DNA assessments, and spawn surveys, support the current stock structure employed in the management of Pacific Herring.