

SRKW Committee – July 25 Meeting

Attendance:

Jennifer Yakimishyn – Pacific Rim National Park Reserve;
Greg Taylor – MCC;
Chris Ashton – Area B, CSAB, Fraser Panel;
Chris Cue – Area B
Martin Paish – SFAB;
Helen Jones – Pacheedaht First Nation (Area 20);
Ernie Victor – FRAFS
Jeff Grout – DFO Salmon Team;
Ge Li – DFO Salmon Team;
Lee Harber – DFO Program Delivery;
Sean MacConnachie – DFO Science;

Action items are identified in yellow

Meeting Summary

1. Monitoring activities and plan

- DFO Science:
 - Number of initiatives being coordinated under Aquatic Ecosystem and Marine Mammal Science section (handout provided with summary).
 - Range of activities including SRKW census, seal and sea lion diet, impact monitoring, direct observation and foraging, whale tracking network
 - Q: Is Pender Bluff included in the OPP-Marine Environmental Quality initiative lead by Dr. Sheila Thornton?
 - Action: DFO to confirm but expectation from previous conversation with Dr. Thornton is that field work was focused on Strait of Juan de Fuca.
- A range of potential performance indicators may be useful for helping to assess effectiveness of management actions including:
 - 1) presence/absence of SRKW
 - 2) information on vessel activity/type within/outside foraging area closures
 - 3) Information on acoustic environment (including SRKW vocalizations/locations; vessel noise)
 - 4) Chinook abundance/fishery removals (data from creel surveys on removals; indirect estimates of abundance from chinook run reconstruction?)
 - 5) approach distance regulation of 200m – distribution of vessels when whales are present
- Program activities that could assist with collecting information include:
 - DFO has met internally to discuss activities and improve coordination

- Creel survey overflights will include closed areas (2-3 times/week)
- coordination with Science researchers (e.g. whale location information)
- creel survey interviews include a field to capture qualitative information on marine mammal interaction
- C&P enforcement overflights
- Q: Recreational fishers concerned that within forage areas, commercial fishing activity is still largely allowed (e.g. groundfish and crab) – progress report needed
- A: monitoring and vessel information should be collected by various programs. Fishery coordinators having discussions and collating information on what additional actions may need to be considered. Consultations on specific measures have not occurred to date; DFO to follow up on timelines.
- Action: DFO asked to provide information on additional measures under consideration when available.
- Opportunities to collaborate internally and externally (ex. whale watching).

2. Initial draft Terms of Reference (attachment provided by DFO):

- DFO reviewed draft ToR and provided an opportunity for initial comments.
- Scope of committee:
 - Focus on management measures regarding chinook prey availability for SRKW
 - There is a separate multi-stakeholder advisory group chaired by DFO RDG involving various levels of government, First Nations, multi-stakeholders, whale watching, etc.... Purpose is for collaboration, information sharing.
 - Action: Terms of Reference is being developed for this group; DFO will circulate or send link when finalized.
- Background:
 - Came out of department's Feb. 2018 discussion paper and members identified in the spring for committee
- Purpose:
 - Not a decision making body – for discussion on considerations
- Objectives:
 - Frame or discuss changes for future years
 - Sharing information
 - Coordinate activities
- Governance and Membership:
 - Add Parks Canada – member to be confirmed. Jennifer Y. sat in on call today.
- Action: DFO to circulate updated version of ToR for review and comment by all committee members. Plan to review at next meeting.

3. Roundtable:

- Parks – no updates. Q: Is there a Parks Canada rep on the separate multi-stakeholder advisory board? A: Helen Davies.
SFAB – concern about consultation process in 2018. SFAB offered advice; result is lack of trust with DFO’s consultative process, specifically concerns around expansion of foraging area closure in Strait of Juan de Fuca to Otter Point. Pender Bluffs is of significant importance to Rec fishers for Sockeye and is not viewed as a key SRKW foraging area for SRKW after late July.
 - Q: what information did the Minister use to make the decision?
 - A: Summary of feedback on discussion paper was circulated. Broad summary of suggested options for each area were reviewed with committee and others. , what we heard summary was developed. Decision making documents to the Minister are confidential; however, DFO represented scope of options identified for each area and analyzed options from range of perspectives including: conservation, manageability, socio-economic concerns, etc. DFO interested in discussing options to improve the consultation process for future.
- DFO Science – SRKW J35’s calf was stillborn. 75 SRKW remain. J50 condition appears to be poor.
- Commercial –
 - Q: will closures on West Coast be extended coincident with consideration of additional critical habitat?
 - A: amendment to include additional Critical Habitat area is under consultation. This prompted some to make associations with immediate closures. However, there are no closures planned at this time and DFO intends to consult on any future actions that may be considered.
- MCC –
 - Request for DFO to provide a summary of monitoring activities
 - Action: DFO to provide a summary of possible performance metrics and activities.
- Pacheedaht – supports need for additional consultations if additional management measures are considered in amended critical habitat area (Swiftsure/La Perouse banks)
- FRAFS – Fraser First Nations interest for additional engagement in in consultation process. A number of nations have traditional knowledge/stories on KW that may be helpful. Follow-up with DFO.

4. Next Steps:

- DFO to circulate meeting summary.
- DFO to follow up on action items
- DFO to send out terms of reference for comment.
- Next meeting later in September (date to be confirmed by DFO)