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Your file *Votre référence*
Our file *Notre référence*
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MAY 13 2019

Ken Malloway
FRAFS Chairperson
Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat
c/o < gwitzky@nicolatribal.org >

Dear Mr. Malloway:

Thank you for your January 21, 2019 correspondence regarding your organization's feedback on the Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning recently held in Nanaimo, BC. I sincerely regret the delay in responding. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) staff has worked to provide responses to the key themes and requests identified in your letter, and these are noted below using the same headings as in your letter.

Chinook Management

The recommendations provided in your letter following the previous Forum were included in the package of feedback received by DFO and carefully considered in the decision-making process. In addition, Jeff Grout attended the March Forum in order to continue this important conversation. At that Forum, Mr. Grout was able to interact directly with Forum participants to hear their thoughts, recommendations, advice, and direction on this topic. As you are aware, the Minister announced new fisheries management measures to conserve at-risk Fraser River Chinook salmon in 2019. These measures build on the actions taken last year, introducing new constraints across all fisheries. The 2019 goal is designed to allow as many endangered and threatened Fraser River Chinook stocks (i.e., Fraser Spring 4₂, Spring 5₂, and Summer 5₂) to reach the spawning grounds as possible, and management actions seek to significantly reduce fishery mortalities in commercial, recreational, and First Nations fisheries where these Chinook are encountered.

The Department sought input from and carefully considered advice and recommendations provided by Indigenous peoples and all stakeholders, including commercial and recreational harvesters, environmental organizations, and the public. Advice gathered from consultations led DFO to modify the original fishery proposals.

[Fishery Notice 0377](#) contains details on 2019 Commercial, Recreational and Aboriginal Fraser River Chinook Conservation Measures and coast-wide recreational annual limits for Chinook salmon in tidal waters.

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Fishery management measures alone will not restore salmon, of course. The Department continues to work on a number of fronts to protect wild salmon, including rebuilding measures and habitat restoration. DFO's [Protecting Canada's wild salmon](#) website provides information about the Government's work on *Canada's Policy for Conservation of Wild Pacific Salmon* (Wild Salmon Policy) and its Implementation Plan; the International Year of the Salmon, the *Species at Risk Act*, and Pacific salmon; and the Salmonid Enhancement Program. The website also provides links to information on habitat restoration and the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund. In addition, to support salmon recovery, the Department is undertaking more science work, including research regarding climate change, as detailed on the [Scientific research and Pacific salmon](#) website.

Understanding what is happening to our stocks and to our freshwater and marine environments is the key to ensuring that DFO is managing salmon sustainably, and the Department's work includes documenting assessment methods, improving databases, and identifying actions for habitat threats. In addition to the Wild Salmon Policy, DFO is guided by the Sustainable Fisheries Framework (SFF) and the Precautionary Approach Framework. These important frameworks support the conservation and sustainable use of Canadian fisheries through monitoring and assessment, and they ensure that management relies on evidence-based and precautionary decision making.

The Department understands the importance of Pacific salmon and salmon habitats from multiple perspectives—environmental, economic, and sociocultural. Given the complex life cycles of wild salmon, combined with the multiple jurisdictions and regulatory frameworks implicated, it is critically important that all affected sectors and governments continue to work together on a holistic approach to salmon conservation. I am confident that by working together, we will secure a brighter future for wild Pacific salmon in British Columbia.

The road to recovery requires a long-term view and collaboration of all interested parties. To this end, DFO will be engaging with First Nations, the Province of British Columbia, and stakeholders to explore the establishment of a process to address a broad range of issues impacting Chinook stocks. We expect this process to address issues including conservation, land and water use, fish habitat, role of hatcheries to support rebuilding and potential for mark selective fisheries, impacts of seals and sea lions on Chinook salmon, and others. I sincerely hope this process will play a vital role in determining how best to steward the resource moving forward.

IFR Steelhead

Marla Maxwell attended and presented on the two management scenarios for Interior Fraser (IFR) steelhead at the March Forum. The two management scenarios discussed included a “do not list” and a “list” scenario:

- Do Not List – If a decision is made in 2019 to NOT list steelhead under the *Species at Risk Act*, or if no decision is made prior to the commencement of affected fisheries, then the Department proposes that 2019 steelhead management measures will be very similar to those implemented in 2018 (i.e., 27-day period of window closures and/or management measures dependent on area and fishery). The final 2019 management measures will be informed by feedback received during the consultation period.
- List – If a decision is made to list either steelhead species (Thompson or Chilcotin) prior to the initiation of fisheries in June 2019, then moving window closures will be in effect along steelhead migration routes. The length of the window closure will be at minimum 60 days starting August 22 for North Island and September 11 for Fraser River Mouth.

Appendix 9 of the draft 2019/2020 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for Southern BC salmon contains additional details.

A follow-up action item from the March Forum meeting was for Ms. Maxwell to provide some additional information to the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat (FRAFS) for distribution. This includes documentation of the final 2018 steelhead management measures and a summary of 2018 steelhead encounters by fishery. A summary of biological information such as historical steelhead catch and stock composition data is also being developed.

Interior Fraser Coho

For 2019 planning, the Department received a recommendation from the Integrated Harvest Planning Committee to consider allowing the Canadian Exploitation Rate for IFR coho to increase above the current 3 to 5 percent objective up to a maximum of 10 percent that is permitted for Canada under Low status in the Pacific Salmon Treaty. It is my understanding that this was not discussed in detail during the Forum; however, DFO subsequently received considerable correspondence on the draft IFMP from First Nations recommending that DFO not consider increasing the exploitation rate on IFR coho in 2019.

PST Chapter 4

DFO appreciates the Forum participants' understanding of the sensitivities around confidentiality and the challenging dynamics related to the Pacific Salmon Treaty negotiations. The Department is also grateful for the assistance of FRAFS in working with DFO to jointly design and implement the consultations for this Chapter. The issues and recommendations provided by First Nations and FRAFS through Tier 2 and Tier 1 sessions were received directly by the Fraser panel chair and panel members to inform the development of Canada's position. This included developing a tool to help analyze options for the Aboriginal Fisheries Exemption (AFE) undertaken with a smaller technical group of FRAFS. A WebEx session was held on February 22, 2019 to outline the outcomes of the negotiations and invited further feedback and dialogue. A letter with

this information was also sent to Chiefs and Councils of Fraser River and approach-area First Nations on March 28, 2019. A draft consultation summary and response report has also been shared with the First Nations Caucus for review. DFO would welcome

feedback from FRAFS on specific lessons learned from the consultation and negotiation process that could be shared with future negotiating teams. Further engagement on the development of a test fishing policy and domestic implementation of Chapter 4 will continue through the annual Pacific Salmon Commission process and other salmon management forums.

I understand that further discussion is planned with DFO and the First Nations Panel members to follow up on recommendations received from First Nations that were not within the realm of treaty language, but are important domestic issues. I look forward to hearing about the outcomes of these discussions and how we may further strengthen our salmon management processes and approaches within Canada.

The Department understands the importance of fisheries to First Nations and appreciates the FRAFS's ongoing involvement in and input to DFO's planning and advisory processes.

Thank you for your continued participation in fisheries conservation and planning processes.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Reid
Regional Director General
Pacific Region

cc Fraser River and Approach First Nations
First Nation Fisheries Council
Angela Bate, Area Director, DFO
Jeff Grout, DFO
Jennifer Nener, DFO
Marla Maxwell, DFO