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January 12th, 2016

To First Nations and Stakeholders,

Re: Salmon 2016/2017 Integrated Fisheries Management Plans (IFMPs) for Northern and Southern British Columbia (BC)

Further to our December 4th, 2015 letter on Fisheries and Ocean Canada's (DFO) plans for developing the 2015/16 Northern and Southern BC Salmon IFMPs, this letter provides a DFO summary of key areas where potential changes from previous years IFMPs are under consideration (see attachment). The Department is seeking written feedback on your perspectives on these areas as well as any other key areas of interest that you wish to identify to inform the process to develop the IFMPs.

The Department has provided a DFO summary as a way to focus discussions and feedback during the development of the 2016/2017 Salmon IFMPs. Further, the DFO summary is based on our assessment of priority issues emerging from preliminary science information for 2016; operational and management issues encountered in previous years; and, a range of perspectives from First Nations and stakeholders related to IFMP implementation. In developing this summary, we acknowledge that not every issue can be tackled through the annual IFMP process and that for a number of salmon management issues, alternative and/or complimentary processes may be required.


This is a new step in the Salmon IFMP development process for the 2016/2017 Northern and Southern BC Salmon IFMPs. This summary is intended to facilitate focussed discussion on key IFMP issues in the respective areas. This summary is preliminary and is not intended to preclude First Nations, stakeholders or the Department from raising additional issues during the IFMP development process. We hope this summary will nonetheless guide initial input to guide further consultative and advisory processes and to help inform the drafts of the Northern and Southern IFMPs, which will be released for review and comment in early March 2016.

We are requesting that submissions on the attached DFO summary or additional issues you wish to identify on the 2016/2017 Salmon IFMPs be submitted to the Department in writing by **January 28, 2016**. Please send your submission to your local Area Resource Manager(s), with a copy to Kelly Binning, Regional Salmon Officer, at Kelly.Binning@dfo-mpo.gc.ca. Kelly can also be reached at 604-666-3935, if you have any questions regarding this process.

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The Department plans to share all received submissions in their entirety with established advisory processes, to facilitate review and discussion among First Nations and stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Grout". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the word "Grout".

Jeff Grout
Regional Resource Manager, Salmon

Attachments (1): DFO Considerations for 2016/2017 BC Salmon IFMPs

DFO Considerations for 2016/2017 BC Salmon Integrated Fisheries Management Plans (IFMPs):

1. **Use of Fish Arrangements:** The Department will be consulting on test fishing plans for the upcoming season. We expect the regional test fishing plans for 2016 will be similar to recent years. Specific details will be included in the draft IFMPs.
2. **Commercial Salmon Allocation Framework:** In 2015, the Department updated the commercial salmon allocation framework to reflect proposed changes received from the Commercial salmon Advisory Board and the First Nations Salmon Coordinating Committee; these changes are described in Appendix 8 of the 2015/16 salmon IFMPs. In 2016, the Department will consider an incremental approach to testing implementation of harvesting flexibilities in commercial demonstration fisheries. Proposed demonstrations will be included in draft IFMPs.
3. **Changes to IFMP layout:** The Department is re-organizing the layout of the IFMP to better describe the management approach and decision guidelines for major fishery areas using a consistent structure and format. In the draft 2016/17 IFMP that will be circulated in March, you will notice that the existing information has been re-organized and clarified to describe current practices; no substantive changes to management approaches have been made as part of this work. Where substantive changes to management approaches are being considered, these will be identified in the draft IFMP.
4. **Yelloweye Rockfish:** Based on new CSAS information regarding stock assessment of Yelloweye Rockfish, the Department is considering plans to further reduce impacts in a number of fisheries (e.g. non-salmon and salmon) on this species. Further discussions are planned for potential measures, including improved information on potential by-catch in the commercial salmon troll fishery.
5. **Fishery Monitoring and Catch Reporting:** The Department will continue to work on operational implementation of the *Framework for Fishery Monitoring and Catch Reporting in Pacific Region Fisheries* in Pacific salmon fisheries.
6. **State of the Pacific Ocean and Freshwater Environmental Conditions:** Extremely warm water temperatures were observed in the central NE Pacific ocean throughout 2014 and continued in 2015. In addition, El Nino conditions are also expected to influence the Pacific in 2016. Environmental conditions and associated uncertainties may require discussion of potential additional adjustments to the fisheries management approaches that are outlined in IFMPs to achieve conservation and management objectives.

7. Salmonid Enhancement Program (SEP):

- i. A proposal is under discussion for a seapen project in the Sooke Basin (southern Vancouver Island) to increase chinook abundance; further details will be provided in February.
- ii. A proposal is under consideration to reallocate a significant portion of the hatchery capacity used to enhance Upper Pitt sockeye stock toward other sockeye conservation enhancement priorities in the Fraser.
- iii. In addition, a draft of DFO's annual production plan is being developed and any other proposed changes under consideration in the salmon production plan will be identified in February for further discussion.

8. Northern BC IFMP Considerations:

i. Chinook

- No substantive changes to propose at this time.

ii. Coho

- No substantive changes to propose at this time.

iii. Sockeye

- Nass sockeye – Discussion of window closure dates for Kwinageese sockeye. The length of the closure is anticipated to be similar to 2015 (one week, third week of July). There may be flexibility with the actual dates to reflect run timing that doesn't follow the historical norm.

iv. Pink

- No substantive changes to propose at this time.

v. Chum

- Chum stocks in the Skeena River, Nass River and parts of the Central Coast continue to be stocks of concern and actions will continue to be required to limit impacts on these stocks in fisheries for other species.

vi. Steelhead

- The Department has received requests to further describe the approaches and guidelines for managing steelhead by-catch in salmon fisheries, particularly in the Skeena and Central Coast areas. Further discussion is required.

9. Southern BC IFMP Considerations:

i. Chinook

- Fraser River - Continued need for management actions to conserve and rebuild *Spring 4₂*, *Spring 5₂* and *Summer 5₂* chinook. Proposed change to potential chinook retention in the Fraser River

recreational fishery to the beginning of August (from July 15) to reduce impacts on these populations. *Fraser Summer 4₁* – Lower returns of South Thompson chinook expected due to low 2012 escapement; fishery planning should focus on avoiding increasing impacts. Fraser Fall (Harrison) chinook – consideration of additional terminal area management actions when forecast returns are below the escapement goal range.

- WCVI – A review of conservation corridor management measures is planned based on forecast returns and other relevant information; corresponding adjustments may be made. The Department is exploring how to gather information on chinook stock composition along the Brooks peninsula as one component of a PSC proposal to improve the precision and accuracy of annual WCVI chinook return estimates; further information will be provided in February.

ii. **Coho**

- Interior Fraser River coho - The Department plans to continue a cautious management approach given on-going poor returns and continuing low productivity. For 2016, feedback will be sought on options for management of Interior Fraser coho impacts in 2016 fisheries. An updated discussion paper will be circulated in early March outlining current information.
- WCVI coho recreational fishery in the inside areas - review of daily catch limits to be consistent with the Salmon Outlook status and forecast which may result in reductions for 2016.

iii. **Sockeye**

- The Department plans to provide 2 escapement plan options for 2016 Fraser River sockeye fisheries, similar to recent years. Discussion of window closure period and other management constraints will be required to address conservation concerns and/or low forecast returns.

iv. **Pink**

- No substantive changes to propose at this time.

v. **Chum**

- Provincial officials have indicated an interest in exploring additional management actions to avoid/reduce steelhead by-catch in salmon fisheries.