

Sent: 1-February-2019 21:44:10  
From: Church, Ashley  
To: 'gwitzky@nicolatribal.org'  
Cc: 'FNFC Info'; Bate, Angela; Grout, Jeff; Nener, Jennifer; Maxwell, Marla; Murdoch, Sarah  
Bcc:  
Subject: January 14, 2019 - Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning - Malloway  
Attachments: 4167\_001.pdf

Mr. Ken Malloway  
Chairperson  
Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat  
c/o Nicola Tribal Association  
PO Box 188  
Merritt, BC V1K 1B8  
c/o Greg Witzky < >  
gwitzky@nicolatribal.org

Dear Mr. Malloway:

Thank you for your January 14, 2019 correspondence regarding your organization's feedback on the Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning recently held in Richmond, British Columbia. 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. I expect there will be additional discussion on these issues at upcoming Forum meetings.

#### Chinook Management

As you are aware, DFO implemented fishery management actions in 2018 designed to reduce fishery mortality rates by 25 to 35 percent to address conservation concerns for Fraser River chinook stocks. These management actions were focused on the recreational and commercial harvesters and did not include any new fishery management measures for First Nations food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries.

Unfortunately, spawner abundances of Fraser Chinook salmon continued to decline in 2018 with extremely low returns and unprecedented levels of poor productivity for many stocks. The poor returns in these systems are consistent with observations of broad coast-wide declines in chinook survival, size at age, and fecundity that have been documented for many populations.

For 2019, the outlook is for continued unfavorable marine and freshwater survival conditions and low productivity for these chinook stocks. This will require a continuation of fishery management actions to support conservation and promote rebuilding of these stocks.

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The Department is planning additional management actions to conserve these important chinook populations, and this requires consideration of additional fishery reductions for recreational and commercial fisheries as well as First Nations. Substantial reductions in fisheries impacts in times and areas where these stocks are encountered will need to be considered. The Department will be providing additional information to support development of these fishery management actions shortly. Departmental staff also provided an initial presentation on this topic at the January Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning, to inform discussion of potential management responses. Past recommendations from First Nations Forum participants have been reviewed and will inform the development of potential management approaches for the

2019 fishery.

#### Sockeye Management

To date 2018 sockeye escapement information is only available for Early Stuart and Early Summer stocks.

The Early Stuart preliminary escapement totals 48,489 adult spawners. While this is less than the in-season spawning escapement target, it is important to note that the estimated fisheries exploitation on this stock was 6.8 percent. The marine recreational fishery opened August 1, 2018 based on information provided to the Fraser Panel that indicated Early Stuart sockeye had passed through the marine fishing areas. The in-river recreational fishery was delayed to August 7, to provide further protection to Early Stuart and the earliest portion of the Early Summer sockeye.

The Early Summer preliminary escapement totals 787,091 adult spawners. This is greater than the final in-season escapement target of 720,000. While some of these fish were harvested in recreational and commercial fisheries, these fisheries were not opened until Canadian commercial total allowable catch (TAC) had been identified. All fisheries are planned based on estimates of catch so that they do not exceed the TAC identified for planning purposes. In 2018, the allowable exploitation rate for Early Summer sockeye was 50.8 percent. The final in-season exploitation rate estimate was 44.4 percent.

The 2019 sockeye forecast will not be released until mid-February but it is anticipated to be low based on recent marine survival rates and based on the number of spawners in 2015.

#### Scope of the Salmon Allocation Policy Review

Respecting the direction of the BC Supreme Court, and in a manner that respects the nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, the Department intends to review the Salmon Allocation Policy (1999). We will be looking to engage all key interests in a way that helps to advance reconciliation and a sustainable, integrated fishery in British Columbia. Over the coming months, with the support of an independent facilitator, we will be seeking input and views from First Nations, as well as from the recreational and commercial fishing sectors, on the scope and process for this review. DFO wants to build on best practices and lessons learned from other collaborative processes that are working well. Sarah Murdoch, Regional Director, Policy and Economic Analysis, will follow up with the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat (FRAFS) executive in the coming weeks on opportunities for initial discussions.

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#### Steelhead

DFO has committed to providing steelhead encounter data to the Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG). This data and some other requested steelhead data will likely be available for the as yet unscheduled JTWG meeting to take place in February 2019. Discussions with the Province on steelhead are ongoing. It is my understanding that the FRAFS Executive Committee was going to invite the Province to an upcoming Forum meeting, and I am fully supportive of this suggestion.

#### Interior Fraser Coho

Through a Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) reviewed methodology and consultation process, new reference points to determine status of the Interior Fraser River coho management unit have been established under Chapter 5 of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST). You may wish to refer to the letter sent by Laura Brown, the Canadian Southern Panel co-chair, on November 21, 2018 that outlined Canada's approach for Southern coho salmon under the PST (attached). Work has now shifted toward implementation of the new status methodology as well as other aspects of the new Chapter 5 obligations.

By the first week of March, a near-final 2018 Interior Fraser Coho (IFC) escapement, marine survival estimate, and 2019 IFC forecast will be provided at the PST manager-to-

manager meeting to establish the PST status for managing Canadian and US fisheries in the coming year. Given ongoing low productivity of southern BC coho, it is anticipated the status will be low.

The final IFC exploitation rate (ER) is established after a 1.5-year time lag, so the 2017 ER will be calculated through the Coho Technical Committee in February 2019 and the 2018 ER in February 2020.

First Nations and DFO will continue with escapement assessments of approximately 100 rivers in the five IFC conservation units (CUs). Indicator programs will continue to operate and provide IFC marine survival rates.

PST Chapter 4

Thank you for providing a list of your concerns. As you are aware, a meeting took place on January 25, 2019 and I made sure that your feedback was provided to the DFO participants attending that meeting.

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

I appreciate the discussion at the recent Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning and thank you for forwarding your feedback and input from your December 2018 meeting. I have forwarded a copy of your correspondence to relevant staff for action and/or further discussion as appropriate.

Again, thank you for your continued participation in fisheries conservation and planning processes.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Reid  
Regional Director General  
Pacific Region

Attachment (November 21, 2018 letter)

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  
Sarah Murdoch, DFO