

SFAB GFSF WG Meeting – January 22, 2010 – FINAL Summary Report

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Participants

Chuck Ashcroft (Chair)	Barry Wilbee	Devona Adams, DFO
Wayne Harling	Martin Paish	Joe Knight, DFO
Gerry Kristianson	Doug Daugert	Bill Shaw, DFO
Urs Thomas	Jeremy Maynard	Bonnie Antcliffe, DFO
Tracey Hittel	John McCulloch	Tamee Mawani, DFO
Hugh Kingwell	Richard Taggart	Mark Regan, DFO
Graeme Bull		Sue Rocque, DFO
Ted Brookman	Polly Fischer, WA State	Julia Barrow, DFO
Bob Gallaughan	Charlie Twaddle, MoE	Deb Sneddon
Paul Rickard	Bob Williams, MoE	
Chris Bos	Jake van der Heide, PHMA	
Bill Otway	Gord Martin, charter co.	Dawn Steele, notes

Welcome, introductions, review of agenda

GFSF WG Chair thanked outgoing DFO SC Recreational Coordinator Bill Shaw and welcomed Joe Knight as the new acting coordinator. Agenda was approved with amendments.

Shellfish Updates

Prawn update: SFAB reps reported progress on two strategies to address access: special management pilots for high-use areas; and a proposed higher abundance cut-off for commercial fishing for areas with winter closures. Issues include validity of fall abundance testing. DFO proposes a 15% differential in any sub-area with winter closures to promote more sustainable management

Discussion: Staff and members discussed the proposed change, with a motion proposed to endorse it.

Crab reform update: Members and staff reported on the crab reform process. A staff proposal for regulation changes, new non-commercial reserves and a new standardized process to handle further closure requests is in Ottawa awaiting approval. The commercial sector objects to the proposal.

Discussion: Issues included the need to clarify whether this was or was not an allocation issue, the use of closures as a valid management tool, concerns about further delays in resolving recreational concerns and selection and approval of proposed closures.

Shellfish regulatory proposals: DFO is working internally on several proposed regulation changes. Members agreed to table further discussion until more details are available. Staff will report on the status of all regulatory proposals at the next meeting.

NC Bivalve Motion

Staff noted that with respect to this motion, no testing is being done in Area 6 at this time.

Rockfish/lingcod

Area 12/13 serial rockfish depletion concerns: Area 12 rep outlined the concerns, voiced previously via the SFAB and requested a DFO response.

Discussion: Staff said DFO Science sees no need for concern. Studies are planned to assess effectiveness of RCAs and extent of rebuilding. Members remained skeptical that management is consistent with a precautionary approach and invited Science staff to the next meeting to discuss the concerns and the RCA strategy. DFO was also asked for a breakdown of commercial rockfish catch by PFMA.

Decrease lingcod minimum size limit: Members approved motion **GFSF-01-01-10** calling for reduced lingcod size limits for all of the South Coast

Discussion: DFO Science is developing a lingcod stock assessment model for outside waters and wants to avoid changes until the model is approved through PSARC. Members felt this should not delay a measure that seems to work well. Members proposed that the accuracy of the recreational creel with respect to lingcod be reviewed.

Lingcod Assessment plans: Staff reported on Science plans to focus on outside lingcod assessment for 2010 and subsequently on inside lingcod assessment starting in 2011.

Discussion: Members expressed concern about insufficient assessment, given closures and conservation concerns. Staff noted that activities are limited by budget constraints.

Rockfish & Lingcod Recreational Post-season review: Staff reviewed lingcod management measures for 2009, noting preliminary estimates of total mortality totaling 4,524 (below the 7,000 mortality cap). Total estimated rockfish mortality was 23,000 (management cap is 20,000).

Discussion: Members challenged DFO's estimate of 4% handling mortality for lingcod released and 100% mortality for rockfish, arguing that there were ways to reduce mortality of released rockfish. Motion **GFSF-02-01-10** was passed, calling for a review of the creel survey for estimating lingcod catch.

Update on potential SARA listings: Staff reported that SFAB advice on proposed SARA listings are included in advice to the minister. A decision on Bocaccio is expected in March 2011. Designation of Quillback would require permitting of all licence holders.

Discussion: Questions addressed the basis for assessments and the need to plan for how DFO will deal with a future listing that could impact fisheries.

Prawn motion

Members approved motion **GFSF-03-01-10** endorsing DFO's proposal to raise the abundance cutoff for commercial prawn fishing in areas with winter closures

Halibut

Upcoming IPHC meeting: SFAB reps reported on plans for the upcoming International Pacific Halibut Commission meeting and Canadian delegation efforts to improve internal coordination to address an erosion of Canada's relative allocation. SFAB proposes that the U.S. be held accountable for large halibut by-catch in other U.S. fisheries.

DFO's halibut allocation policy: A new process has been proposed to resolve challenges under the current policy. He has begun exploratory talks with the commercial and recreational sectors but this is not expected to resolve the problem for 2010.

Discussion: Issues included halibut fishing in international waters, IPHC assessment, early openings and whether sub-legal fish should be counted in catch. Members approved motion **GFSF-04-01-10** supporting the inclusion of sublegal fish in reporting for all sectors, or failing this, that Canada not count sublegal fish in reporting Canadian recreational catch.

Overview of 2009 recreational halibut fishery: Staff reviewed 2009 management and proposals for 2010, including February 1 opening date, with a daily limit of 1, possession limit of 2. Recreational catch for 2009 was down 29% over 2008, and acquired quota covered the rest to keep recreational catch within limits. Estimated recreational catch for 2010 under different scenarios was also presented.

Discussion: Topics included sampling requirements, standards and questions about the data.

Powell River halibut motions: Questions about lack of clarity and redundancy led to a defeat of Powell River halibut motion #1. Motions #2 and #3 were referred to the Halibut WG for advice on how best to address the concerns.

Sardine report

SFAB rep provided a report. Draft minutes are also available.

Representation

Halibut Committees: Following discussion about how to streamline the committee structure, members agreed that the Halibut Committee and the Halibut Allocation Subcommittee should report via the GFSF WG. Volunteers were encouraged to provide leadership for these groups.

Central Coast Committee request for a seat on the Halibut WG: Staff noted that reduced budgets will require limiting and clarifying participation in working groups and committees to ensure that regional representation is fair.

GFSF membership: Staff reiterated the need to clarify members whose expenses will be covered. A draft list will be circulated, after which lists will be finalized.

Discussion: Members asked DFO to clarify parameters for the GFSF WG and its membership and proposed that existing election processes be used to select appointees and alternates. DFO urged to improve communication by funding telephone link-ups or expanding email distribution lists?

Adjourned: 5:01 pm

Summary of motions & action items

Action items

- Staff (Devona Adams) to arrange for an update at the next meeting on the status of all shellfish regulatory proposals.
- Tamee Mawani to ask Lynne Yamanaka to speak to the questions about serial depletion in Area 12 and on the RCA strategy at the next meeting. DFO to provide a breakdown of commercial rockfish catch by PFMA.
- Agreed that Murphy continue as Halibut Committee chair until its next meeting in February, at which time the chairmanship will be resolved.
- Adams to provide a draft list of committee members for comment at the Main Board, after which the lists will be subsequently finalized.
- Volunteers to advise SFAB Executive/DFO if they are interested in representing SFAB as member and alternate to the new Integrated Groundfish process. Paish volunteered to serve as an alternate.
- DFO (Adams) to advise on membership limits for the Halibut Committee, following which current membership will be reviewed if necessary.
- DFO to advise on the Musqueam/Tsawwassen First Nations crab fishery and how many under-sized crabs are harvested in this fishery

Motions passed

MOTION: To table discussion of shellfish regulatory proposals until the next meeting when more information may be available; passed with 2 opposed.

GFSF-01-01-10: Whereas a) the concern about rockfish by-catch in the directed recreational lingcod fishery exists in all SC areas and; b) the reduction of the recreational lingcod minimum size limit in the SOG appears, on the basis of 2 seasons, to be successful in resulting in a reduction of rockfish by-catch there and c) because there has been no significant increase in the SOG lingcod harvest as a result of the size limit reduction there and d) because the lingcod stock on WCVI is thought to be at a healthy level of abundance and supports a commercial fishery for them; therefore be it resolved

that the recreational minimum size limit for lingcod be harmonized at 60 cm for all SC areas (i.e. 11 – 29, 121-127) starting April 1, 2010.

Moved: Jeremy Maynard; Seconded: Gerry Kristianson; passed

MOTION: That Powell River halibut motions 2 & 3 be referred to the Halibut WG to discuss how best to address the local committee concerns.

Moved; Gerry Kristianson; Seconded: Wayne Harling; passed

GFSF-02-01-10: Whereas the recreational fishery for lingcod in Georgia Strait is managed to a catch ceiling; and whereas the Georgia Strait creel survey is the assessment mechanism for estimated lingcod catch; and whereas the Georgia Strait creel survey was developed as a mechanism for estimating the catch of salmonids, be it resolved that the DFO/SFAB Catch Monitoring WG be tasked with assessing the validity of the Georgia Strait creel survey as a mechanism for estimating lingcod catch and further that appropriate confidence levels be developed for the estimates of catch so determined.

Moved: Barry Wilbee; Seconded: Chris Bos; passed

GFSF-03-01-10: Notwithstanding concern that the measure may prove to be insufficient in some areas, that the GFSF WG recommend that the MB endorse the Department's proposal in the draft IFMP to move to 125% of the spawner index the point at which the commercial fishery will be closed in areas where a winter closure of the public fishery took place the previous year.

Moved: Gerry Kristianson; Seconded: Wayne Harling; passed

GFSF-04-01-10: That the GFSF WG recommend the SFAB MB support the position of the acting Halibut WG Chair regarding "small fish" under 81.5 cm, which is: Canada insist on the reporting of all removals in both countries and require that these removals be accounted for in determining each country's TAC, until Jan 29, when the TAC for each are will be determined.

If it turns out that that the US does not have to account for small fish in all fisheries, then Canada will change its position and insist that a major portion of our small fish recreational catch not be reported and not be counted as part of our harvest.

Moved: Wayne Harling; Seconded: Bill Otway; passed

GFSF-05-01-10: That the SFAB review membership of the GFSF WG and its committees in a timely manner.

Moved: Wayne Harling; Seconded: Jeremy Maynard; passed

Motions defeated

MOTION: Powell River halibut motion #1

Moved: Martin Paish; Seconded: Hugh Kingwell; defeated

Motions referred to other committees

Powell River halibut motions 2 & 3 referred to the Halibut Committee to discuss how best to address the local committee concerns.