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# Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 106**

Thursday, April 18, 2024

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Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald





## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Thursday, April 18, 2024

• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 106 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. This meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders.

Before we proceed, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. Those participating by video conference can click on the microphone icon to activate their mic. Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

For interpretation, for those on Zoom, you have the choice at the bottom of your screen of floor, English or French. Those in the room can use the earpiece and select the desired channel, but we don't have any witnesses in the room.

Please address all comments through the chair.

I have a quick reminder. Before we proceed, I simply want to remind members to be very careful when handling the earpieces, especially when your microphone or your neighbour's microphone is turned on. An earpiece placed too close to a microphone is one of the most common causes of sound feedback, which is extremely harmful to the interpreters and causes serious injury.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted on June 16, 2022, the committee is resuming its study of the population sustainability of Yukon salmon stocks.

On our first panel today, we welcome, from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Steve Gotch, senior director, operations, Pacific region; and Wes Shoemaker, executive head, Pacific salmon strategy initiative.

Thank you both for taking the time to appear today. You will have five minutes or less for your opening statement.

Mr. Gotch, you have the floor for five minutes or less, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Steve Gotch (Senior Director, Operations, Pacific Region, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Good afternoon.

[English]

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and committee members. As introduced, my name is Steve Gotch. I am the Pacific region senior director of operations with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. I am accompanied here today by my colleague Mr. Wes Shoemaker, head of the Pacific salmon strategy transformation initiative.

We appreciate the opportunity to appear before this committee on behalf of the department this afternoon. Following my opening remarks, we look forward to answering any questions regarding Pacific salmon stocks in the Yukon and associated departmental policies, strategies, programs and services.

As committee members likely recognize, the presence of Pacific salmon stocks in the Yukon has been integral to the environment and sustenance of people for thousands of years. Many populations of Pacific salmon in Yukon represent the northernmost range for their species. Unlike other Pacific salmon stocks, which inhabit more southern and temperate regions of western North America, over millennia salmon stocks in the Yukon have adapted to survive in often harsh subarctic conditions. As a result, many of these stocks represent the longest-lived and largest body size of their species, in many cases enabling them to migrate several thousand kilometres inland from the ocean to access spawning areas in freshwater habitats.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is responsible for monitoring the abundance of anadromous stocks of salmon in the Yukon and works closely with self-governing Yukon first nations to coordinate the administration of first nation subsistence, recreational and commercial fisheries for Pacific salmon. Given the reality that all of the watershed inhabited by Pacific salmon in the Yukon, including the Yukon, Porcupine and Alsek watersheds, are situated, or the lower portions are situated, in the United States, Fisheries and Oceans Canada engages directly with state and federal fishery management agencies in Alaska to coordinate the assessment and management of these stocks. This engagement also involves working together to implement formal processes and requirements established within the international U.S.-Canada Pacific salmon treaty.

Over the most recent 25-year period, Pacific salmon stocks have exhibited significant change in both abundance and condition across British Columbia and Yukon. In the case of the Alsek River watershed in southwestern Yukon, certain seasons have experienced some of the highest returning abundance of adult sockeye and coho salmon to Canada, while in the Yukon River watershed, chinook and chum salmon stocks continue to decline to levels not recorded in living memory.

For Yukon River chinook salmon, this decline has been particularly profound, with the recent annual abundance representing only 10% of what was typically observed prior to 1995. This sustained decline over multiple life cycles of this species has not only resulted in profound effects on the Yukon River ecosystem; it has also created significant hardship for the people who rely on Pacific salmon as a consistent source of food, for ceremony and as an integral part of culture.

In response to the declines observed, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, in collaboration with Yukon first nation governments and U.S. state and federal agencies, has undertaken numerous initiatives to improve our understanding of the abundance and health of Pacific salmon stocks in Yukon. These monitoring and research efforts, in parallel with restriction and ultimately closure of Canadian fisheries, are intended to conserve and protect adult salmon returning to their spawning grounds. Concurrently, measures undertaken to preserve and protect Pacific salmon habitats from anthropogenic development serve to ensure that the ecological integrity of areas that Pacific salmon rely on the most remain intact.

The continued decline of Yukon River chinook salmon has recently led to collaborative efforts undertaken by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and self-governing first nations to explore measures of last resort, in the most extreme examples faced with only a handful of adult salmon returning to spawning areas [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Mr. Chair, I apologize. I have a bit of a connection issue.

On April 1 of this year, following months of intensive negotiations, Fisheries and Oceans Canada reached a historical agreement with the State of Alaska that commits the governments to implement measures to protect and recover Canadian-origin salmon stocks. The agreement involves the immediate suspension of all fisheries that target Canadian-origin chinook salmon stocks in the Yukon; confirms the parties' intent to support scientific, technical and traditional knowledge research into the causes for decline; and commits the parties to development of an international stock rebuilding plan through the Yukon River Panel.

This agreement will remain in effect for a seven-year period, which is representative of one life cycle of Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon. At its foundation, it reflects the necessary actions identified by Yukon first nations people who have experienced first-hand the effects of the decline of Yukon River chinook salmon for over two decades.

We acknowledge and thank the committee for undertaking this study. We look forward to responding to any questions you may have regarding Pacific salmon stocks in Yukon.

• (1540)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Shoemaker for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Wes Shoemaker (Executive Head, Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I do not have any opening remarks.

**The Chair:** That's not a problem. I just heard that from the clerk.

We'll go right to our rounds of questioning.

We'll go to Mr. Arnold for six minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the department officials for being here today for this.

I'm not sure which one of you is best placed to answer this question.

What measures have been taken to protect the salmon from the Yukon River and Alsek River in the marine environment? We understand that there's been a moratorium on the non-tidal salmon in the river, but what measures have been taken by DFO in the marine environment?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, the marine areas that are primarily inhabited by Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon stocks are in fact U.S. exclusive economic zone waters. The vast majority of marine habitats inhabited by Yukon River salmon, and arguably Alsek River salmon stocks as well, are directly regulated and controlled by the State of Alaska or U.S. federal agencies.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** I think we understand that.

What measures has DFO taken to protect those stocks in the marine environment? What negotiations have taken place with the U.S.?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** I see.

Mr. Chair, one of the specific measures that Fisheries and Oceans Canada has been involved in is undertaking negotiations with state and federal agencies around minimizing and, where possible, avoiding bycatch of Canadian-origin salmon stocks in U.S. ground-fish fisheries in the north Pacific, as well as the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands fishery areas.

As for Pacific salmon directed fisheries in the marine environment, state or federal agencies do not currently permit directed harvest of chinook salmon in offshore—we'll call it—marine high seas areas.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** How much biomass of chinook salmon would be caught as bycatch? Even though they're not permitted, there must be bycatch. How much is caught?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, on an annual basis, the percentage of total abundance, in particular of Canadian-origin Yukon River chinook salmon, that are caught in biomass in U.S. marine fisheries is between approximately 1% and 3%. That is representative, in a rough number, of approximately 500 to 750 individual salmon.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** How much of a difference would those 500 to 750 fish make on the spawning grounds? How many eggs would those fish produce per fish?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Currently, the chinook salmon stocks in the Yukon are representative of approximately 50% males and 50% females, roughly speaking, on an average basis. Out of 500 fish, approximately 250 of those fish are females. What we do know from the most recent spawner-recruit analysis is that we're seeing approximately one or less than one adult fish returning as spawners. An additional 250 female fish on the spawning grounds would represent approximately 250 returning adults.

• (1545)

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Can you tell the committee what results have been achieved on the ground through the resources of the Pacific salmon strategy initiative?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** There have been several investments over the past three years in the areas of monitoring, research and restoration, focusing on Canadian-origin salmon stocks in the Yukon River watershed. A better part of a million dollars has been directed specifically towards first nation government organizations that have undertaken enhanced monitoring by observing the number of adult fish returning to spawning grounds and undertaking some habitat assessment studies to identify potential areas for restoration works in the near future. Most prominently, investments have been made through partnerships with one particular first nation that is exploring the development of a stewardship and restoration centre in the upper Yukon River watershed.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you.

I'll turn my questioning now to Mr. Shoemaker.

I believe you've been around. You've certainly appeared at this committee previously.

Members of this committee take seriously our work and the hearing from and questioning of department officials, and especially appreciate that you're here. We also honour the time all witnesses take out of their lives to provide testimony as we develop and present comprehensive reports to government out of this committee based on the evidence we hear from people like you and the other witnesses. Yet time and again the recommendations in those reports are given little more than lip service by the fisheries minister and the department, recommendations that could make lives better for harvesters, recommendations that would rebuild and protect the biodiversity of Canada's marine environment.

Can you explain to the committee members why we should believe this minister or her department will respond any differently to any recommendations coming out of this study on Pacific salmon?

**Mr. Wes Shoemaker:** What I can say is that with the number of activities and investments that are undertaken towards addressing not only the sustainability of Yukon salmon stocks but also Pacific salmon stocks more generally, and given the significant investment

and commitment towards the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, I am very, very optimistic that our efforts and the investments thereof and/or the involvement of our other partners and recommendations that come from either different reports or our partners are going to make a difference with regard to the conservation and protection of both Yukon and Pacific salmon.

Again, I—

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** If I could interject here—

**The Chair:** Thank you. You've gone a little over time, Mr. Arnold.

We'll now go to Mr. Hanley for six minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.):** Thank you very much to both of you for appearing today and contributing to this really important study. It's obviously an incredibly important study to me as the member of Parliament for Yukon, but also it's a very important study, I would say, for the entire continent. We're talking about an ecosystem that is at risk and a species that is at risk.

I want to start by following up on a couple of Mr. Arnold's questions.

Mr. Gotch, you talk about the scale of the bycatch. I hear a lot about bycatch being a significant contribution to the decline of the salmon. Can you talk about how confident you are in those numbers and the source of those numbers that you relate as amounting to 500 to 750 individual salmon?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, I'll begin by responding that bycatch in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands commercial fisheries is identified through a highly regulated monitoring program that's administered through state and federal agencies in Alaska. The specific requirements of all vessels fishing groundfish, which are also described as pollock or cod in the Bering Sea, is that each vessel must have at least one independent observer who documents catch that's brought on board vessels that are actively participating in fishing activities. The non-target species are enumerated and identified by species, and genetic tissue samples are taken for further analysis to determine the stock of origin in the case of Pacific salmon.

With respect to our degree of confidence in the bycatch reporting in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries by the United States, I would classify it as extremely high on the basis of the rigour and the specific requirements of those monitoring programs. The analyses and the results presented on bycatch information are provided by U.S. state representatives from Alaska through the international Yukon River Panel process and are published as a component of an annual publication produced by the Yukon River Panel's joint technical committee.

• (1550)

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Thank you very much for that.

I wonder whether you could elaborate briefly on other marine factors that may be contributing to the decline.

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, as far as other factors beyond groundfish fisheries and bycatch in groundfish fisheries are concerned, as I mentioned previously, there are no directed fisheries for Pacific salmon in the Bering Sea beyond nearshore fisheries that occur, in the case of the Yukon River salmon stocks, at the mouth of the Yukon River; and they are documented and enumerated as part of what we'll call broader U.S. or Alaskan catch.

From our best available information currently, the largest and most prominent influencing factor on the survival and abundance of Canadian-origin Yukon River chinook salmon stocks has been changing marine conditions. Specifically, the conditions are earlier and later ice breakup on the Bering Sea and a reduced period of ice cover that affects water temperature as well as salinity.

Effectively, these changing conditions are creating an environment that is more conducive to supporting different types of species that serve as food for fish, in particular, salmon, but then also attract different species of predators.

To the best of our understanding, these primary shifts as far as chinook salmon survival and production go are related to food availability—so different types and frankly different qualities of food that are available for chinook salmon that are in the marine environment in the Bering Sea—and then also an indication of increased predation rates.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Thank you. That's very helpful.

I'm obviously pleased, as many are in the territory, and I believe in Alaska as well, to see the arrival of the seven-year moratorium. Obviously, there's a lot to unpack within that seven-year agreement.

Mr. Shoemaker, perhaps you could comment on the funding, additional to PSSSI funding, that I believe is referred to within this agreement. Is there funding that will help to support the restoration activities that are described in the seven-year agreement?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, I'll begin, and perhaps Mr. Shoemaker can add to my response.

I'll answer it twofold.

The seven-year agreement recently signed by Canada and the State of Alaska refers to two potential sources of funding. The first is U.S. funding leveraged through the State of Alaska, which is very relevant to Canada, because the intent of that funding is to be directed towards the conservation and rebuilding of Canadian-origin salmon stocks. Although it would occur through a U.S. appropriation and be made available, so to speak, in U.S. funds, the specific intention and direction of those funds would be for Canadian stocks and for projects, frankly speaking, in the Canadian portion of the Yukon River watershed.

As far as additional efforts being undertaken by Canada to seek increased federal funding or secure new funding to assist with Yukon River habitat and stock restoration activities are concerned, those efforts are currently under way. We will hopefully be reporting in the near future on progress achieved in that regard, but at this point in time, as far as perhaps budget 2024 announcements go, there is no specific funding earmarked beyond PSSSI, the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, funds for this particular initiative.

Mr. Shoemaker.

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hanley.

We'll now go to Madam Desbiens for six minutes or less, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to thank the witnesses. It's as valuable and important as ever to have you with us.

Since Quebec is a long way from the Pacific coast, I want to thank our colleague, Mr. Hanley, for proposing this study. It will also help us understand the behaviour of Atlantic salmon. Do you have any data on Atlantic salmon, or are you more specialized in Pacific salmon?

Depending on your answers, I can adapt my next questions.

[*English*]

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, I'll attempt to respond, and perhaps my colleague, Mr. Shoemaker, may be able to add something.

With respect to specialization or any information I can provide on Atlantic salmon, I can confirm that at no time in recorded history have Atlantic salmon been documented either in the north Pacific, to the extent where Yukon or Alsek River origin Pacific salmon stocks would occur, or, likewise, in the Yukon River watershed or adjacent marine areas.

To the best of any information on hand or available to us, at least in the context of the north Pacific and Bering Sea, we have not identified any occurrences of Atlantic salmon in these regions, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Wes Shoemaker:** Mr. Chair, what I might add to my colleague's answer is that we are very much in conversation with our colleagues to “compare notes” on the comprehensive approach that we are taking with respect to Pacific salmon. This has historically only been focusing on harvest-related decisions, but instead we are taking a broader and more comprehensive approach around habitat, hatcheries and harvest-related things and how we integrate and collaborate with others.

Certainly, we have made investments and we are learning a lot about the new scientific measures required to try and understand what some of the impacts of climate change are, along with perhaps a more conservation-oriented approach to how we are using salmon enhancement on the west coast.

No one thing is going to help us turn the corner with respect to the increased health and abundance of Pacific salmon; it's going to take a lot of different actions. To that end, we are learning as we go in building this very comprehensive strategy and working with partners, and I think there are lessons to be learned and shared with our colleagues on the east coast with respect to Atlantic salmon.

Again, I think there is good and close collaboration. Although we're talking about different species, I think many of the actions that are necessary will be similar.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Thank you. That makes things clearer and gives me something to work with.

Climate change is often referred to as a problem. However, it isn't the only problem, of course. I was telling the minister the other day that climate change gets blamed for a great deal, but it didn't start yesterday. We have been talking about it for at least 30 years.

Did you anticipate the speed of climate change and how quickly it would affect our resources, or did things go a bit faster than your predecessors originally predicted? Do you have any documents to show that climate change has been studied for a long time, but that it has affected resources surprisingly quickly?

• (1600)

[*English*]

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, as far as the rate and pace of climate change goes and whether there was awareness that climate was changing through, say, large-scale global influencing factors over the past 30 years, I would answer yes. The rate and pace at which change is being observed in northern environments, in particular the Canadian Arctic, is perhaps far more accelerated than anticipated.

As for the resulting influence on fish and wildlife species, and in particular salmon, it's a complicated question and perhaps an even more complicated response. Our observation certainly over the last decade or more is that certain species of Pacific salmon are in fact finding that changes to environmental conditions, particularly in freshwater environments, are becoming more favourable. What we're seeing is the abundance of sockeye salmon increasing in southwest Yukon, as well as in central and northwestern Alaska.

On the contrary, other species of Pacific salmon seem to be faring much more poorly, for example, chinook and chum salmon.

The final point I will make with regard to influencing factors with respect to climate change and responses from Pacific salmon is that we are observing a far further eastern migration of Pacific salmon stocks through Arctic waters, to the extent that it's becoming relatively common to observe Pacific salmon showing up in the eastern Arctic and, I understand, even the northernmost reaches of the Atlantic.

If we were to predict over the coming years what might happen, new and different habitats will likely become available to Pacific salmon in the far north subarctic, and we do expect that some Pacific salmon distribution will likely change over the coming years and decades, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Desbiens.

We'll now go to Ms. Barron for six minutes or less, please.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses, Mr. Gotch and Mr. Shoemaker.

As we know, there are 14 Yukon nations, and 11 of them that have signed modern treaties.

I believe it was Chief Nicole Tom who was here from the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, who brought to us her concerns on behalf of the nation about the Yukon salmon populations of Canadian origin being at a historic all-time low. She brought to the committee some strong recommendations and steps forward.

With the news we have had since this witness, I want to go through to see if some of these factors were addressed in the steps that have been taken to date.

First, can you share what the involvement has been of first nations in these negotiations for this new agreement?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** As far as negotiations between Canada and Alaska are concerned in regard to the establishment of the seven-year agreement, the Canadian delegation, led by me, received advice and guidance from representatives from each of the respective 11 Yukon self-governing nations, inclusive of, in particular, engagements with Chief Tom directly.

As far as some of the recommendations and advice coming forward from Yukon first nations and how those are, or perhaps are not, captured in the seven-year agreement are concerned, in my view the fundamental elements that Yukon first nations have been bringing forward to the governments of Canada and the United States form the basis of the agreement. They, namely, are about acknowledging the historic low abundance of chinook salmon in recent years through a very rigorous and, frankly, strongly committing closure of fisheries for a seven-year period. These are commercial, recreational and domestic, as well as personal use fisheries.

The significance of a seven-year closure is going to have profound effects on people throughout the Yukon River watershed, many of whom, obviously, reside in rural communities such as the community of Carmacks, Yukon, which is Chief Tom's home community.

In terms of other elements that Yukon first nations government representatives sought, one was to adopt or embrace a much more conservative approach to managing fisheries, i.e., the abundance levels at which fish stocks are considered to be self-sustaining and can provide opportunities for harvest. This seven-year agreement arguably almost doubles the conservation threshold where any fishery opportunities would be provided.

Third, and probably very importantly, the agreement acknowledges the absolute essential cultural and traditional connections between indigenous people and salmon. In any such arrangement there needs to be consideration for maintaining connections between the people and the salmon over the course of this seven-year period.

There are perhaps two final points I'd like to highlight. First is the incorporation of traditional knowledge in decision-making. A specific element of the seven-year agreement is for the parties to provide a space and a platform to receive traditional knowledge to inform future management regimes. Finally, there is the commitment to a long-term rebuilding strategy to help recover Pacific salmon stocks in the upper Yukon River watershed.

• (1605)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you very much, Mr. Gotch.

One of the specific items that Chief Tom discussed is right in line with what you're talking about right now around traditional knowledge. Specifically, there was a point made around requiring the inclusion of traditional knowledge in guiding decisions when it comes to establishing, discussing and reviewing spawning escapement goals.

I am wondering if you could speak to that a little bit more.

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, yes, perhaps without getting into too many nuanced details, the seven-year agreement recently announced was the culmination of a multi-year process undertaken by the Governments of Canada and the United States to establish new conservation objectives, new spawning escapement objectives, for Canadian-origin chinook salmon stocks.

Canada's approach over the past decade has been to comprise its delegation involved with that work through, arguably, a majority of Yukon first nation government advisers, as well as representatives from the territorial government and the federal government in Yukon.

In doing so, that is one mechanism where we're creating a place and a space for, if you will, a conduit for traditional and local ecological knowledge to be brought forward as part of Canadian delegation submissions.

Second, through the international Yukon River Panel process, Canada has spearheaded the initiation of a traditional knowledge advisory committee, to be comprised of both Canadian and U.S. representatives, to put forward recommendations to the international Yukon River Panel on not only spawning escapement objectives, but also future management of the species.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Small for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Gotch, according to the Canadian Wildlife Federation, the eight biggest threats to Yukon River chinook are harvesting, climate change, barriers to upstream migration, juvenile turbine mortality, hatchery operations, disease and parasites, spawning habitat conditions and predation. This was released in 2016.

Do you agree?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, I'm not familiar with the specific report, but those factors do seem to capture all of the elements to consider.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Mr. Gotch, that information has been publicly available for eight years.

Why has it taken eight years for this government to start rebuilding measures on the Yukon River for chinook?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, the decline of Yukon River chinook salmon has arguably occurred over a 25-year period. As early as 1999, we saw a very significant decline in abundance returning to the upper Yukon River watershed.

That was followed by a period, albeit brief, of an improvement in abundance. We saw a very rapid decline through 1999 and 2000 and then a sudden increase in abundance through perhaps 2003 up until about 2008, to the point where the perceptions at the time were that the decline was short-lived in nature and emblematic of changes in abundance of Pacific salmon over time. Post 2010, however, there has been a much more sustained continuation of declining abundance.

In 2013, on the advice of Yukon first nation governments, Fisheries and Oceans Canada began implementing temporary suspensions, followed by long-term closures of Canadian fisheries on the Yukon River. Arguably, by 2016 and 2017, U.S. federal and state management agencies followed suit because by this time, we saw that the decline was not short-lived.

• (1610)

**Mr. Clifford Small:** With these runs of Yukon River chinook being so critically low, how important is it to protect every fish?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, with the abundance observed over the past two years, where we saw fewer than 15,000 adult fish returning to their spawning grounds in Canada—understanding that our minimum spawning threshold is 42,500, at least at the time, or 30% of minimum spawning requirements—yes, in years like that, every last fish does make a difference.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Will there be any fishing for chinook on the Yukon River, in any part of that river, this summer?

**Mr. Steve Gotch:** Mr. Chair, a determination around any opportunities for fisheries will be contingent on actual abundance that we observe in season.

As far as the forecast for the 2024 season goes, it is extremely poor. We're expecting that perhaps fewer than 20,000 fish may return.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Thank you, Mr. Gotch.

I'm going to turn the remainder of my time over to MP Arnold, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to take a quick moment to introduce the motion that was put on notice on April 12, 2024:

Whereas the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard has declined five requests from the committee since February 6, 2024, to appear and answer questions on important matters related to her portfolio, I move:



That the committee request that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard provide the committee with dates on which she is available to appear three times at the committee to answer questions regarding: (1) the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development's 2023 report on monitoring marine fisheries; (2) main estimates 2024-25; and (3) the criteria used by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to set redfish fishing quotas.

**The Chair:** The motion has been moved.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Kelloway.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** I would like to put forward an amendment to the motion.

We're looking at removing "declined five requests from the committee" and replacing it with, "appeared before the committee as often as two previous Conservative fishery ministers while holding the office for less than a year".

After the word "portfolio", we would add "and given that the committee agreed to the subcommittee's schedule, which includes one additional meeting with the minister, and given that Conservative members chose not to ask a single question on supplementary estimates to the minister when she attended committee on the supplementary estimates, and given that the committee underscored the importance of completing important studies".

We would remove "provide the committee with dates on which she is available to appear three times at the committee to answer questions regarding: (1) the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development's 2023 report on monitoring marine fisheries; (2) main estimates 2024-25; and (3) the criteria used by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to set redfish fishing quotas."

Finally, insert "work with the chair of the committee to find a suitable time to appear before the committee, in alignment with the adopted subcommittee scheduling report, to meet explicitly on the subject agreed upon in the subcommittee report, so she can surpass the previous two Conservative fishery ministers from the Harper era in attendance before the committee."

We have this in both English and French.

**The Chair:** Madam Desbiens has her hand up.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Sorry, Mr. Chair. The interpreter is telling us that, since he didn't have the text, he was translating as he went along. The pace was fast and it was a bit tricky.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Was it supplied in both languages?

• (1615)

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** The amendment is in both languages.

**The Chair:** Okay. The amendment is in both official languages.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Yes. Just flip the page over.

**The Chair:** Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Mr. Chair, I think if you look at this closely, as chair, you will see that the amendment significantly changes the intent of the original motion and should be declared out of order.

**The Chair:** Do you want to respond, Mr. Kelloway?

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** This is your decision, Chair.

**The Chair:** Yes, but it's part of the debate, Mr. Arnold. I just thought the mover of the amendment might respond to it.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** I think the intent is implicit in the amendment. I have nothing more to add at this time.

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Small.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Mr. Chair, I move a motion to end debate and to vote on the main motion.

**The Chair:** I think we have to vote on the amendment first.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** On the amendment first.... Sorry.

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, could you take the...?

Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Just so we're clear, did you make a ruling on the amendment?

**The Chair:** Yes. I think the amendment is satisfactory to the original motion.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Okay.

**The Chair:** We'll now vote on the amendment, and then, depending on whether it passes or not, we will vote on the main motion.

**A voice:** We have a motion to end debate.

**The Chair:** Oh, we have a motion to end debate.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** On the amendment.

**The Chair:** Do we want a recorded vote on the motion to end debate?

**Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I'd like some clarification, please.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** There was an amendment put on the table by Mr. Kelloway. Isn't it the case that we should vote on the amendment? Why are we voting to adjourn debate?

**The Chair:** It's a dilatory motion. We will vote on ending debate first, I guess.

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Can we suspend for two minutes, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes. I will give you two minutes tops.

• (1615)

(Pause)

• (1615)

**The Chair:** We're back.

Now we have to vote on the motion to adjourn debate, moved by Mr. Small.

**An hon. member:** On the amendment.

**The Chair:** No, on the main motion.

I will ask the clerk for a recorded division.

• (1620)

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** We're voting to adjourn debate on the amendment.

**The Chair:** No, we're voting on the motion.

**A voice:** It's on the main motion.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** It's on the amendment.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** He moved an amendment to the motion.

**The Chair:** It's on the motion, not on the amendment.

He said he wanted to adjourn debate.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Mr. Chair, this is a dilatory motion. Is that correct?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** We go right to a vote. There's no debate.

**The Chair:** Yes.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** I would like to point out to my colleagues on the committee that the interpreters are extremely patient and hard-working. However, when two or three microphones are switched on, the interpreters and I get completely lost. This will lead to wasted time. I'll be asking questions again because I won't have understood anything.

I just ask that you remember to turn your microphones on and off.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We're going to vote on the motion to end debate moved by Mr. Small. Then, depending on whether it passes or not, we'll go to the amendment by Mr. Kelloway. Then we'll go to the main motion, either as amended or as it was originally presented.

Mr. Arnold moved a motion. Mr. Kelloway made an amendment to that motion. Mr. Small moved a motion to end debate on the original motion.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** No, it would be on the amendment.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** No, it's both actually. He said both. I heard him.

**The Chair:** Anyway, we'll vote on Mr. Small's motion first.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

**The Chair:** Now we move back to the amendment as presented by Mr. Kelloway.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** No, it's suspended.

**The Chair:** Okay, we'll go back to the witnesses.

Actually, we have to go to our next panel of witnesses now, because we've gone almost an hour. If you recall, it's 45 minutes, 45

minutes and 30 minutes of business. We've had business up to this point.

I want to say thank you to Mr. Gotch and Mr. Shoemaker for providing their knowledge to the committee today as we start this study.

Hopefully we'll see you again sometime in the future.

We'll suspend for a few moments to change the panels.

• (1620)

(Pause)

• (1625)

**The Chair:** We're back.

I'd like to welcome, from the Yukon Fish and Game Association, Mr. Bryce Bekar, president, for his opening statement.

You have five minutes or less, sir.

**Mr. Bryce Bekar (President, Yukon Fish and Game Association):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hello. My name is Bryce Bekar. I'm the president of the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the YFGA. It's a not-for-profit organization founded in 1945. I'm also the co-chair of the Carcross Tagish Renewable Resources Council, founded under the umbrella final agreements, and the affiliate director for the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

I've been an avid outdoorsman for as long as I can remember and have spent countless hours in the wilderness. As a child, I was taught by my parents and grandparents about the importance of respecting wildlife and the wild places they live in.

Since 1945, the YFGA has been an integral part of conservation-related items in partnership with so many stakeholders in their work. The Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon and first nations are only a few.

Successful reintroduction of wildlife into the Yukon would not have been possible without the help of the YFGA. Elk and bison have become a staple for many Yukon families. The stocked lakes program has removed pressure from overfished lakes. Also, the YFGA was part of the initial inception of the requirement for a fishing licence that was originally two dollars.

Unfortunately, salmon are facing great challenges and an uncertain future in many parts of the world. The Yukon is not the only place, we have heard, where challenges and changes to the rivers and the streams have resulted in declining fish stocks. B.C. has had its fair share of issues, as have our friends out east in Newfoundland. This is clearly a problem from coast to coast.

In all these cases, we can look at what might have happened to get us to the current situation and can work on a plan to make things better going forward together.

We have heard testimony of what the Yukon River was like in the past, and it is clear that the Yukon River chinook salmon is the salmon species in the most danger in the territory. A continuation on the current path will possibly lead to an extinction-level circumstance in the upper Yukon River.

Long-term population trends show that there are highs and lows, but annually they continue to trend downward according to the records we've seen. The recent moratorium placed on the Yukon River chinook salmon fishery on April 1 is a good start.

While other watersheds, like the Alsek, show more promise in maintaining a sustainable chinook population than the Yukon River does currently, there are many years documented that show the runs are cyclic there as well. The salmon are an intricate part of the bigger picture, which has also been noted to the committee by many people. The nutrients placed back into the water system are beneficial to so many plants and animals along the shorelines.

It is our responsibility to do what we can to ensure safe passage for the salmon travelling to and returning from the ocean. Man-made structures have been designed to an old standard that could possibly use a facelift.

The studies have shown that many of the tagged chinook salmon came to the ladder and turned around. Those same studies have shown that once the fish pass the viewing chamber, they have a very high success rate to keep going upstream. This also does not mean they will spawn, as females were found, from some carcass studies, to have most, if not all, of their eggs left. While all this information is great, we are still not able to come to a conclusion as to why they turn around or do not place their eggs.

We would like to see the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon work with all Yukoners to do what we can to help these fish make their journey and, where necessary and possible, to increase the number of fish returning to spawn.

The YFGA has been advocating for wildlife since its inception, with a holistic approach to wild places. We would like to work with all organizations to learn more about the current situation and to help inform and motivate Yukoners on the importance of salmon in the ecosystem. Our youth will not care about the salmon if they do not know of their importance to the ecosystem. The Yukon Fish and Game Association will continue to be at the forefront of conservation, walking the walk, like we have for almost 80 years.

We believe that the seven-year moratorium will provide an opportunity to study and to implement modern techniques to deal with the current problem. Habitat restoration and the correction of fish passage issues could be a few of the items that the YFGA could effectively partner on.

I would like to thank you for giving the Yukon Fish and Game Association and me a chance to speak to you on this very important matter that resonates with most Yukoners. I also look forward to the day when we can all look back and say that we did that, that we did everything we could to help bring a struggling population back from possible extinction.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1630)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now go to our round of questions.

I'll first go to Mr. Arnold for six minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you, Mr. Chair

Thank you, Mr. Bekar, for appearing today.

That's an impressive history of the Yukon Fish and Game Association with the rehab and restoration projects.

Can you tell us how important fish and wildlife harvest is to all Yukoners? I'll give you some time to elaborate on that a little more.

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Many Yukoners rely on the harvest from the land for their main staples for the table. I moved here about 20 years ago, and I very quickly became involved with the Yukon Fish and Game Association. Many people, like me, rely on hunting and fishing as their main sources of food with the cost of living in the Yukon.

What we've seen more recently is there has been a shift to more store-bought food, including salmon, without the ability to fish salmon. In my time in the Yukon, I don't remember when we could fish for salmon on the Yukon River. I've heard stories that they had them when I first got here, but unfortunately, I was unable to take part in that.

Again, many Yukoners, like me, don't have the ability to go back to the same historical fish levels so that we could go down and catch them. We saw demonstrations by the Canadian Wildlife Federation at its AGM last year in Whitehorse. We have also had the same types of presentations from the DFO at the Fish and Game Association. The fish that were in those presentations were larger than I could have imagined during my time.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Can you tell me how important it is for you and members like you to be able to put something back into the resource, so it's there for future use?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** As I mentioned before, I was taught by my family that being part of taking from the land comes with a requirement to give back to the land. In the time we have spent in partnership with groups like Yukon Energy and the salmon fry release, up until recently we were putting 10,000 fish back into the Wolf Lake campground creek. We have recently started putting about 2,500 into that same creek and have moved 7,500 of those to a different location where they are more likely to make the return.

This event gives us the ability to get children and families out to see the importance of fish. They get to release tiny little fish back into the river that will hopefully eventually make it to the ocean. We can't even put into words how beneficial an event it is. Like I mentioned earlier, if the kids don't know how important the salmon are, I don't think they are going to have respect for the salmon tomorrow.

• (1635)

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Based on your knowledge, or on the organization's history, has it become easier to participate in habitat restoration and habitat projects over the years, or has it become more difficult for organizations like the one to which you belong to participate in those fish and wildlife projects?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** The Fish and Game Association hasn't been involved in as many of the projects. We do have our annual fry release at Wolf Creek, as I mentioned. In the past, we had programs like Friends of McIntyre Creek, where we would go and clean up the creek. That will be coming back. Since 2020, we have had some real difficulties in the way that we operate. We are really looking at bringing back things like that.

It has gone both ways. It has been easier and more difficult in both instances. While working with the federal government in my recent history, I don't remember being invited to participate in these. Through our partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Federation, we do have the benefit of working with some very specialized people, like Mr. Lapointe, who was part of the study up here that worked with the first nations to look at how the fish move through the ladder and up the Yukon River.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Would you be able to get back to the committee, after consulting with your membership or with some of the previous executives, to let us know whether there have been changes in the members' ability to participate in conservation projects over the years?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** I can definitely do that. I will meet with our past executive director, who is a retiree from DFO, and our current executive director, who unfortunately couldn't be here today.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you.

I only have about 45 seconds left. Is there anything further you would like to add that I haven't asked about?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** I would add that the Fish and Game Association has the ability to work with all user groups in the Yukon. We would love to be a part of the restoration of the salmon so we can all look back and say that we did our best to try and bring these salmon back. Hopefully, it will be a good news story in the end.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

We'll now go to Mr. Hanley for six minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It's very good to see you, Bryce, on the screen. Thanks for appearing today.

First of all, I want to thank you for all the work that you and your colleagues do as an association. As Mr. Arnold said, there's a long

and rich history to your organization, and you've done some great work.

I want to start with this because I didn't get a chance to ask about it in the previous panel. It may or may not be your area of expertise, but you mentioned the size of the salmon, historically, in previous decades. We now know that one of the factors is not just the number, but the size and, therefore, the spawning and survival potential of the fish.

Can you comment on how important that decline in size is as a contribution to the decline of the salmon?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** As you mentioned, Mr. Hanley, it's not my area of expertise, but I have spent 16 years with the Yukon Fish and Game Association, first in a board member role and then as vice-president and president.

From working with the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee and some of our other partners directly with salmon, it's my understanding that the largest fish, historically, were the ones that made it up the river. I believe the committee has heard that from some of the past witnesses.

The nets that were used, which were quite large, were reduced over time to try to let the bigger ones go by. On the 3,200-kilometre stretch, it was always historically known that the biggest fish made it.

With them having the most energy by the time they got to the end, more of these biggest fish had the ability to spawn than they do today, as I understand it and as we heard in a study that was done from 2017 to 2020. I can't remember the names of the authors right now. I'm sorry. They noted that some of the fish made it to the ladder and turned around. They may have spawned right by the dam or they may not have. Other carcass studies showed that some of the fish looked like they did not spawn at all, while others looked like they only spawned a bit and didn't finish spawning.

• (1640)

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Thank you.

You mentioned that the Yukon River Panel's new seven-year agreement is a good start. What else would you like to see, as an association?

Now that we have the starting point, what else should be there, whether it's within the panel agreement in terms of restoration, or there are other things not considered within this agreement that we should be addressing?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Mr. Chair, in the Yukon Fish and Game Association's history, we have always been out front as much as we can be in education. In the time that we can't fish today, we would still like to look at tomorrow.

On the education side of that, the Fish and Game Association plays a vital role in that it can continue to educate and work with all of the partners across the entire country to improve, whether it's rounding up volunteers to do physical work or getting educational pieces like chinook salmon life cycles to work into the schools and into general conversations with members or the public.

I think the Fish and Game Association would really like to be part of the solution and not sit on the sidelines on this very important issue.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Thank you.

You mentioned the fish ladder. This may be something we can come back to, recognizing that the dam is very far upstream. In fact, it is not that far from the headwaters in the Teslin area.

What do you perceive to be ways that we can mitigate the salmon passage in both directions at the dam?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Mr. Chair, again, it's not my area of expertise, but we have partners we can rely on to gather some of this information.

We understand, from some of the recent reports that have been put in for the new water licence, that the fish coming to the ocean are just as important as the fish returning from the ocean. Personally, I can't speak to the numbers that are making it through there, but they're equally important either way.

Seeing the fish make it to the ocean...they already have a lot of obstacles, as we've heard, with climate change, predation, dams and passage issues. The bidirectional travelling of these fish, whether it's when they're going down as fry or coming back as adult spawning fish, is quite important.

Again, we'd like to help in any way we can.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** I have 15 seconds left, right?

**The Chair:** You have 12.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Could you talk briefly about the location, apart from Wolf Creek, where you're doing some of the new hatchery work?

Perhaps you could submit that in writing. I think the chair is strongly hinting at that.

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** I can do that, yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that, Mr. Hanley.

We'll now go to Madam Desbiens for six minutes or less, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** I can give Mr. Hanley a few minutes to finish his question and receive an answer without any issues.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Bryce, actually, if I have a bit more time—*merci beaucoup*—I would ask you to elaborate a little bit on the Wolf Creek project and the recent steps that you've been taking. I guess you're kind of moving away from Wolf Creek to a more successful area.

Maybe you could talk about that more successful area.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Mr. Chair, the Yukon Fish and Game Association has partnered with Yukon Energy and the hatchery for as long as I can remember. I'm sure it predates my time.

From my understanding, the Wolf Creek release has not shown, through tagged fish, the same return that we have seen in the Michie Creek area, where the spawning fish return in a lot more abundance.

Through the Wolf Creek area, in bringing in families and children, we'd bring out 10,000 in the past, as I said, and about 2,500 more recently. We put on a barbecue and we talk about fish, about the importance of salmon in the ecosystem and about the importance of salmon culturally and because of the biodiversity that they create.

Moving to Michie Creek was the recommendation of the former hatchery manager, Lawrence Vano, who has recently retired.

We look forward to working with YEC going forward. They've really done a good job of looking at where it's most likely the fish would come back. That was the reason for moving, from my understanding.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** You have four minutes, Madam Desbiens.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Bekar, thank you for your response. This will give me the chance to move on to my next topic.

It's good to hear you talk about families and your interest in passing on knowledge and traditions, as well as your approach to the resource and its protection.

In this case, is climate change a major factor altering the resource, or are you concerned about something else? For example, is there any pinniped predation in your area? In Quebec, we have heard that pinnipeds even swim up rivers behind salmon. Does this type of phenomenon also occur in your area?

[English]

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** My understanding is that the waters have changed over time. The changing water temperatures can affect the travel of the fish. Again, it's not my area of expertise; we're just going by what we've read and seen through various studies. The change in water temperatures could be making the fish look at different spawning areas. It could also be bringing in disease that is not natural to the colder water.

On the predation side, for the tiny fish that are running up and down the Yukon River to try to make it to the ocean so that they can survive for five, seven or eight years and come back, there are many factors there, from otters to bigger fish, such as northern pike, and various things like that.

As I mentioned earlier, the larger, older fish used to be the ones that made it back up. In those cases, I would have to assume that an 80-pound or 90-pound salmon would have fewer predators than a 10-pound or a 20-pound salmon.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Yes. I understand.

What solutions would you suggest to the committee to help it make strong recommendations that will both maintain and increase the resource?

[English]

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Again, I can't offer scientific recommendations, but from the recommendations of us with boots on the ground, we are very much willing to work with all of our partners along the Yukon River to try to remove any of the obstacles. Fish passage is one of the large ones that I've been reading about lately. If a fish is unable to get over the dam, then obviously, we don't see the fish make it back to where they're supposed to spawn and vice versa. If they can't come back the other way, then they are not going to be able to return to the ocean. By dams, I mean beaver dams and even changes in rivers that have happened due to the way the river flows. Maybe there's a washout or some permafrost heaves or something that have let go and changed the flow of the river.

For any physical work, the Fish and Game Association has the ability to round up people who love to get out and work towards improving the environment and work towards the generations of tomorrow to make sure that they have all of the great things that we have today. We want them to enjoy the same resources, hopefully in abundance, in the future.

• (1650)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Desbiens.

We'll now go to Ms. Barron for six minutes or less, please.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Bekar, for being here.

Thank you for all the responses that you've provided. I particularly appreciated your point talking about the importance of educa-

tion and about how, if you can't fish today, you need to look to tomorrow. Also, talking about wanting to go into schools and being part of the solution are all such important points to be made at this time with this agreement for us to be able to move forward.

One of the things I was thinking about was some of the work that we've done as a committee. We did one study on seafood labelling and knowing how it was fished, where it's from, what's in the actual package and so on. As you said, many people are relying on grocery stores to purchase seafood now.

Is that something that comes to mind for you with what you're seeing in the grocery stores? Is it clear when you're at the grocery store what people are buying? Whether it's local, farmed or wild, are these factors being taken into consideration or even available to those who are purchasing seafood at the grocery store?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Personally, I don't typically buy fish at the grocery store, but when I walk by, my understanding is that you'll see wild Atlantic salmon or wild Pacific salmon. I have not seen it specifically say whether they're farmed or not farmed or how they were caught.

In the Yukon, we have a real benefit of being so close to Alaska. Yukon and Alaska have what's called a reciprocal fishing licence. In Alaska, you can come to the Yukon, and you can purchase a fishing licence for the same price as if you were a Yukon resident. In Alaska, we can do the same and go over and purchase a fishing licence as if we were an Alaskan resident.

From my experience, a lot of people who are looking for salmon in the Yukon will go down to either Haines, Alaska, or Skagway, Alaska, which is between one hour and a half to four hours, depending where you go, and try to harvest fish on their own. As for knowing where it came from and how they caught it, I find that a lot of Yukoners find it important how they got their food and whether it's wild game or fish. The ethics behind it is important, as well as the harvesting of it in the most humane way.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** I can't agree more.

Can you elaborate more on that education piece and whether you feel it's an important piece of the work in making sure that it's talked about in schools. It's important to have that knowledge and the generational learning that is being passed on to youth in the Yukon.

Can you share more information around the education piece?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Yes. As I mentioned, from the education perspective, being able to fish and actually take your child out and sit on the side of a riverbank, whether it's for fly-fishing or traditional baitcasting fishing or, from the first nations perspective, netting fish, is something that's really hard to replace. My kids are both grown-ups now, but they both grew up out on the land with us. They took these values with them.

With education, we can continue to bring that importance, especially in this case of the chinook moratorium. While we can't fish for chinook, we still do have the ability to fish in other places. It may not be for chinook salmon, but it may be for sockeye if there's a good run somewhere. The Yukon Fish and Game Association will work toward building with other partners—first nations and other NGOs and government—on what is the best way.

As we've just heard from Mr. Gotch, there is a first nation—it's still early days, so I haven't heard everything on it—that's really trying to build something that focuses on the importance of fish in culture, fish in the ecosystem, and fish in general. Through various seminars and little classrooms and stuff like that—I'm sorry, but I can't think of the word right now—we promote education on all species in the Yukon currently.

• (1655)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you.

I have only a minute left, so perhaps I'll ask you this. One of the components of this agreement is that Alaska will continue to minimize the incidental harvest of chinook salmon in the fisheries in the main stem of the Yukon River and maintain efforts to reduce marine catches and bycatches of Yukon River—origin chinook salmon. I'm asking this because you were talking about how there's that reciprocal agreement in place.

How realistic is it, or what do you foresee as some of the challenges, in terms of specifically reducing Yukon River-origin chinook salmon as bycatch when people are out fishing?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Personally, I believe it's difficult to reduce some of the bycatch, as nets aren't selective. They're a lot like "whatever comes in may not go out". I can't really speak to the bycatch or the commercial fishery side. We've done a lot of research on the first nations fishery, and really support the way the subsistence fishing goes, but I'm sorry, I honestly can't speak much to the commercial side.

We've heard the bycatch thing. It's one of these buzzwords out there. I'm sorry, but I can't speak to how detrimental that is or not.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Barron.

That concludes that stretch. What I would like to do, with the permission of the committee, is to give one question to either Mr. Small or Mr. Arnold and then one question to Mr. Hardie to finish off.

Time is ticking.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** I will give my time to Mr. Perkins, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Well, it's not time; it's a question.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Since I have the floor, I'm going to move my motion that was put on notice with regard to the elver fishery.

As we know, there's been an issue in that the department claimed that they were closing the fishery so that they could arrest the supply chain of exporters and buyers. None of those have been made, so I'd like to move the following motion—

**The Chair:** Before you go on, Mr. Perkins, I'll let the witness go.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Sure. If Mr. Kelloway wants to ask his question first before I do this, I'm fine with that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kelloway doesn't have a question. Mr. Hardie does.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** I'm okay with that before I move the motion.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Go ahead, Mr. Hardie. Please be quick.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Thank you.

Mr. Bekar, the hydroelectric dam seems to be one pinch point, I suppose, in both the travel and the survival of salmon heading further east. In the absence of better fish ladders and better protection from putting fish through the turbine, we had the Big Bar slide in British Columbia a couple of years ago now, and we used literally a water cannon to get fish past that barrier. Has that sort of thing been discussed?

Second, with respect to the hatcheries, there has been great success in survivability and the size of recruits coming back when the fish are kept in the hatchery for an extra year before they're released.

Have either of those two things been under discussion through your group or through the network that you have?

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** I'm sorry, but I can't speak to the B.C. situation. However, I have heard of the salmon cannon, and I have done a little research personally on some alternative solutions.

I can't speak to or make recommendations on the hydro dam currently. I think that would be better left to the experts.

I have heard the same, and maybe keeping a fish for an extra year could be very beneficial. I don't believe there are talks about that currently, but it is definitely something that we would be willing to work on with Yukon Energy and all of its partners to try to ensure the fish have the best chance of survival.

We're not professionals in that, so we can't really make a recommendation on how you operate a hydro dam either way.

• (1700)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

I want to say a big thank you to Mr. Bekar for sharing his knowledge with the committee today as we start this Yukon salmon study.

We're going to suspend for a moment now to go into committee—

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** No, I'm not going into committee.

My motion was—

**The Chair:** You can wait, then, because the last half-hour is dedicated to committee business in camera.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** No, the agreement was—

**The Chair:** No, the email was sent out. You got an email.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Let me finish a sentence. Don't be rude, Mr. Chair.

I politely gave Mr. Hardie my slot when I had the floor so that he could ask a question and I could get back to this. I think you owe me the courtesy and respect to allow us to come back to this while the committee is still in public.

**The Chair:** Okay, you have three minutes.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** I have three minutes.

As we know, the government closed the elver fishery, claiming that by doing so they could arrest and charge people who were exporting illegally, as well as the buyers. None of that has happened.

There is poaching going on in every river in Nova Scotia every night. There have been some token arrests, but nowhere near enough. The minister owes it to the elver harvesters—the 1,100 people she has deprived while others continue to steal that resource out of the river—to allow them to earn a living.

I'm going to move the following motion, which is on notice:

That, regarding Minister Diane LeBouthillier's decision to close the legal elver harvest of 2024, the committee finds that:

(a) banning legal fishing does not stop poaching;

(b) closing the elver fishery has not decreased criminal activity and violence in Nova Scotia as evidenced by the witnesses who have come forward to the committee to detail continued violence and lawlessness in their communities, including arson, assault, and attempted murder;

(c) closing the elver fishery has resulted in 1,100 job losses, harming rural Nova Scotian communities and the fishing industry as a whole, when Canadians are struggling with a cost of living crisis created by this government;

(d) current DFO and RCMP enforcement efforts allocated by the minister remain insufficient and have not put a halt to the violence or the poaching; and given these findings, the committee therefore agrees to report these findings to the House, and call on the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to immediately reopen the elver fishery.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kelloway, please go ahead.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I would like to put forward an amendment, if possible. I'll do something different this time. I will speak to the changes, or relay the changes to everyone here, and then read the motion out with the changes so that it's a bit clearer for everyone.

I'd like to amend the motion in the following way: one, delete (a) and replace it with “That the elver fishery is a unique public safety and law enforcement environment with considerations including Indigenous treaty rights to fish that complicate attempts to stop unauthorized fishing”; two, delete (b); three, delete “created by this government” in paragraph (c); four, delete paragraph (d) and replace it with “the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the provincial ministers of public safety, justice, and fisheries and aquaculture are working hard and in collaboration across jurisdictions to ensure that public safety is maintained in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick this elver season”; five, delete “and call on the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard to immediately reopen the

elver fishery” and replace it with “That this committee call on the government to accelerate the adoption of new regulations for the elver fishery so that the 2025 season can open as scheduled.”

I'll read the motion with the changes, and then I'll circulate it in both official languages, if that has not already been done. It reads: “That, regarding Minister Diane LeBouthillier's decision to close the legal elver harvest of 2024, the committee finds that: (a) the elver fishery is a unique public safety and law enforcement environment with considerations including indigenous treaty rights to fish that complicate attempts to stop unauthorized fishing; (b) closing the elver fishery has resulted in 1,100 job losses, harming rural Nova Scotian communities and the fishing industry as a whole, when Canadians are struggling with a cost of living crisis; (d) the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and the provincial ministers of public safety, justice, and fisheries and aquaculture are working hard and in collaboration across jurisdictions to ensure that public safety is maintained in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick this elver season; given these findings, the committee therefore agrees to report these findings to the House; and that this committee call on the government to accelerate the adoption of new regulations for the elver fishery so that the 2025 season can open as scheduled.”

● (1705)

**The Chair:** Is there any debate?

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** I would ask the chair to rule this out of order because it actually goes diametrically in the opposite direction of the intent of the original motion.

The original motion calls for the season to open, not for the season to remain closed. Those are complete opposites; therefore, it is out of order.

It's also out of order because the motion clearly identifies that the government has done an inadequate job of enforcing the law, and the amendment claims to do the exact opposite.

In both cases, what the government is doing is out of order and is against the spirit and the intent of the original motion. It is a completely opposite motion of this and, therefore, it is out of order.

You need to rule, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. I'll rule that it's not out of—

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** No, I think you should discuss it with the clerk before doing that.

**The Chair:** It can be in order.



The other option is that members who don't think it's in order could vote against it and could vote it down.

Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I challenge the chair's position on this.

The amendment is definitely contrary, in an exact opposite direction, to the original motion. This proposed amendment should not be allowed to proceed. It should be declared out of order.

**The Chair:** That is duly noted.

Mr. Small.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** We should proceed to a vote.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** To challenge the chair, you have to go to a vote.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Do we go to a vote?

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Yes, we proceed to a vote on the challenge to the chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. We'll proceed to a vote on the challenge to the chair.

Madam Clerk, go ahead.

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 6; nays 5 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

• (1710)

**The Chair:** We'll resume debate on the amendment.

Go ahead, Mr. Kelloway.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** I saw some hands go up, but I think I'm good to speak to the amendment.

The committee had already decided to send a letter to the minister at the conclusion of the study, Mr. Chair. The motion in question goes against what the subcommittee agreed was the direction to take.

There is nothing in this motion that could not be included in the letter to the minister. I think our amendments introduce some important context back into the motion. It absolutely requires an acknowledgement of the interplay of an unauthorized fishery and the exercise of indigenous rights.

I also want to point out that—

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Hanley.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** With all due respect to my colleague Mr. Kelloway, I wonder if we could let our poor witness leave.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bekar, you're free to leave whenever you like, please. Sign off whenever you like. Thank you for appearing.

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Anything that you want to send us in writing in relation to the questions you were asked, please submit it so we can include it in this study.

**Mr. Bryce Bekar:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, everybody.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** The motion, to a large degree, I believe, ignores what makes the fishery so hard to manage. It's like night-time fishing and the sheer number of rivers in Nova Scotia that have to be patrolled on a daily basis by law enforcement and the danger for law enforcement and what they have to go through on a daily basis.

Regarding the subcommittee's direction, I think we had a pretty good meeting. We have an excellent go-forward in terms of the letter. My understanding is that the letter doesn't have to be your standardized one-page letter. It can be detailed with recommendations, thoughts, observations.

We need to give some thought to the role of the subcommittee, what it puts forward, knowing that we have to pivot sometimes, but this seems to be already covered in the original motion.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Point of order, Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Mr. Kelloway keeps referring to the subcommittee. The subcommittee had no discussions on this motion whatsoever.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** I'm talking about our general direction on how we want to handle meetings, MP Arnold, through you, Chair. That's what we discussed, quite a lot in fact. We didn't talk specifically, but we certainly talked about the generalities of how we want to work together to make things happen, like studies, more studies for all folks who have a special stake in things that are important to them—MP Desbiens, MP Barron and you folks on the Conservative side. We certainly talked about the general paths forward, and I think that's important to highlight.

With that in mind, I think again we have the mechanism by which to address what we heard, which was powerful testimony. What we heard was an incredible ordeal that happened last year. We also should acknowledge that this year there have been a considerable number of arrests and a considerable number of vehicles taken away from owners.

I think we need to be very thoughtful here in terms of providing the full picture to get the results that we want. The original path forward is absolutely the way to go. It's the most prudent way to go, and perhaps it is even the most efficient way to go.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kelloway.

Mr. Small.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Mr. Chair, with all due respect to Mr. Kelloway, he spoke about the vast geographies, the number of rivers, the amount of darkness. It's the same as it was 30, 40, 50, 60 years ago, before that fishery even began. Nothing has changed with respect to the number of rivers and the hours of daylight.

I understand Mr. Kelloway's point of view. He's here to protect his minister. On this side, we're here—

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** —to stand up for the elver harvesters.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kelloway.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** It is really interesting how committees like this one, which was to a large degree non-partisan, quickly become partisan when you say that I'm trying to protect the minister. When you defame the person, your argument is toast.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** That's not a point of order. That's debate.

You're supposed to rule things out of order, Mr. Chair, if it's not a point of order.

**The Chair:** I'll rule them out of order when I think they're out of order, Mr. Perkins.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Well, then sitting there grinning at him, while he's not making a point of order—

**The Chair:** Nobody even recognized you to speak, and you're speaking.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Yes, I am because you're not enforcing the rules, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Oh, you're going to see the rules enforced going forward, let me tell you.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Go ahead.

**The Chair:** Mr. Small.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Mr. Chair, we had the harvesters here about a month or so ago, and I asked the elver harvesters themselves whether it would be possible to salvage some kind of a season around mid-April or even towards the end of April, because often-times the elver fishery continues up towards the end of June.

Mr. Kelloway said earlier that a considerable number of arrests have been made. With such success in arresting poachers on those rivers, maybe it's a good time to evaluate the success of the enforcement that's happened so far and to give the fishery a shot. Those 1,100 jobs could be partially saved this year.

There's another thing. When you pull seafood out of a market, someone else comes in with their seafood and takes your market and you may not get it back. This is very serious, so if there's any way to have a partial season going forward to make a decision quickly...

I've heard a lot of positive things coming out of the minister's office, quite optimistic about the number of arrests that were made, so I'm thinking they must have a lot of the poaching cleaned up based on what we're hearing. Why not give these harvesters a chance to go and make some kind of a living?

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** I think too—

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Chair—

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** I'm sorry. My apologies.

**The Chair:** Kelloway and Small were on the list.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** I've waved at you about three times and you acknowledged it.

**The Chair:** You said what you had to say—

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** No.

**The Chair:** Oh.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** That wasn't it. Otherwise—

**The Chair:** Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Thank you. It's good to see the enforcement of rules so clearly, Mr. Chair.

On the issue of the actual motion, which is a complete reversal of the motion that I originally proposed in spite of the vote of this committee, the fact is that the original motion and this motion do the opposite. This motion claims that they are actually doing the job, and as we've heard from elver harvesters—apparently you were listening, but you didn't hear it—the enforcement isn't happening to the level that is needed to stop the poaching, at any level of the supply chain.

This motion I will not support, because it actually says that for the government, the Liberal government, Liberal fisheries minister number six is doing as good a job on this as Liberal fisheries ministers numbers four and five. This has been going on for 10 years and number four, number five and number six have screwed up this fishery for 10 years, increasing poaching.

They keep trying the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. They keep closing the fishery, thinking that will take poachers off the river, when all it does is allow for free rein. There is no enforcement after 1 a.m. on the rivers in Nova Scotia. DFO has no enforcement officers on the river. They're pulled off at 1 to 1:30 a.m. every bloody night, and that's when the lawlessness happens. That's when the shots are fired into people's houses. That's when people are terrorized by the criminal organizations doing this, yet all the government wants to do is say that the legal harvesters should stay off the river to some mythical regulations because the criminals doing this—the criminals—will be afraid of regulations.

There's a Fisheries Act now, and licensed harvesters now, that the department can enforce the law on. All they have to do is enforce the law, which for years we've been asking for and the government and the officers remain under-resourced and unable to enforce. Then we wouldn't have the massive crime happening in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia right now because of the incompetence of Liberal fisheries ministers number four, five and six.

This committee is going to try to reinforce the fact that they think, with all this lawlessness going on, with all this crime going on, with all this poaching going on and with not one single exporter and not one single buyer having been arrested to date, that somehow we should throw flowers at the minister—

• (1720)

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** —for trying hard. It's ridiculous.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** On a point of order, the social media clip is unfolding as it should, but to say that—

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** I'm sorry you're embarrassed by your performance.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** —and talking about flowers and taking the high ground, to say that they're the only people who care about elver fishers and the elver industry is absolutely atrocious. It speaks to the classic right-wing pivot points that only they could care about fishers and that only they could care about the fishery. It is absolutely ridiculous, and it's quite offensive.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** If you care about it, enforce the law for a change. That's what's offensive, and that's a point of debate, which the chair has let go on again.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** I have a point of order.

Excuse me, colleagues.

**The Chair:** Ms. Barron has the floor.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** My point of order is that we have members who are both yelling into their microphones at the same time, which is impacting translators, and I would ask my colleagues to please be aware of the important work happening by the translators and to please take turns and wait to be addressed by the chair.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Barron.

Mr. Morrissey.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Thank you, Chair.

Obviously, as we're seeing here, this is a very emotional situation, which triggers a very emotional debate.

I support the amendment. My concern is that there has not been presented any evidence to this committee that would ensure a re-opening of the fishery can be adequately, properly and safely enforced. The reason this decision was taken was in line with a parallel situation in Maine, where they had to completely shut down the elver fishery for a period of time to regain control. Control is a broad term, because you must have the regulations and the methodology in place to actually enforce a very difficult fishery.

Elvers do not come with bar codes on them, so once somebody has one, you need to have the ability and the proper regulations to charge somebody for an illegal one. We heard extensively from department officials about the necessity to have the proper regulations in place to enforce the fishery. What's being done today is to ensure there is a future for this fishery for the people involved, which includes first nation people in Nova Scotia and, to a lesser extent, in New Brunswick.

At this stage, I'd support the action taken by the minister to gain control of a very dangerous situation, a lot of which, let's be clear, is outside the scope. The alleged criminal activity is outside the scope of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Simple items like trespassing are not enforceable by DFO. It's by the provincial police. The provincial police in Nova Scotia, by contract, are the RCMP, who should be enforcing more visibly a lot in those areas.

I cannot support a motion that would direct the minister to re-open a fishery that I am still not convinced or assured can be conducted in a safe manner for those involved, as well as ensure the

long-term stability of this fishery, which is what all the regulations that are being considered have been known to put in place.

Mr. Chair, I do welcome the amendment by my colleague, which still brings a degree of urgency to the situation that this committee is studying. It reinforces it strongly. That's why, Mr. Chair, I thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of the amendment.

• (1725)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Small.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Mr. Chair, I'm going to be pretty brief here.

The main difference between Mr. Perkins' motion and Mr. Kelloway's amendment to the motion is that Mr. Perkins is asking for an opening of the fishery here in 2024 to give the harvesters and all of the folks who take advantage of the spinoffs from the industry the ability to salvage something of this season. Mr. Kelloway's motion is to keep the season closed this year.

I support my colleague Mr. Perkins' motion to open the season this year and to not have it closed for the full season, because we may not even get it opened in 2025.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hardie.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** We're running out of time.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Okay. I'm sorry.

My inner Rick Perkins is really just as anxious about the whole issue, the lawlessness that's keeping honest people away from the living they want to pursue, so I share your frustration. I just hold it in here. I don't let it out as much as some others might.

At the same time, if we open the fishery.... We don't know what the current level of illegal fishing is actually doing to the stock. I don't know the elver fishery at all, but I'm wondering what a legal fishery on top of the illegal one would do to the health of the stock. I think we all agree that whatever improvements have been made in enforcement, they still won't be enough to deal with the sheer mass volume of illegality that's taking place.

The other thing is that we've gone through the IUU study and we've studied the elver fishery. In both cases we've identified that the enforcement efforts, the contribution by the province through the RCMP, has been almost non-existent. We understand that's because the local RCMP members are just as bloody afraid of what's going on on the river as everybody else is. If we're going to really get serious about the whole issue of enforcement, we have to have a discussion on the actual enforcement strategy and where the resources will come from. I don't think they can come from the community itself.

What's the state of the stock? What kind of enforcement strategy is really going to be necessary to get a handle on this? We need to get that done before we even consider opening it up so even more elvers are taken from those rivers in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

We'll go to Ms. Barron for the last 30 seconds or a minute. I can't see if the clock is actually on.

Go ahead, Ms. Barron.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** I do have some points to make, but we have 30 seconds or a minute left, so what happens now? At this point, when this minute is up, what happens with this? Does this carry over to the next meeting?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** In that case, I'll wait until the next meeting, and then we can continue the debate.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** If I may, I want to apologize on my behalf, anyway. I think my inner Mike Kelloway met the inner Rick Perkins today. I apologize to MP Desbiens and the translators for speaking over other individuals. That's not becoming, and I apologize for that.

• (1730)

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Same here, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Our time is up. I want to ask the committee if we want to suspend debate and pick this up or adjourn.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Our meeting started at 3:34, so we should be going until 5:34. I have only 5:30 and 20 seconds.

I move that we adjourn debate on the amendment and vote on the amendment.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** It's on his amendment first.

**The Chair:** You can't do that.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Chair, I had made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Why can't I do that?

**The Chair:** Ask the clerk. The clerk said you can't do it.

Can you explain to Mr. Arnold why he can't do that?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Geneviève Dubois-Richard):** You cannot move to force a vote, but you can move to adjourn if you don't include anything else in the motion.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** I'll withdraw.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Let's go to 5:34, everyone.

Madam Desbiens, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** I just want to make sure that I can speak at some point if the discussion continues. I haven't spoken yet and I would like to be able to do so.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Morrissey, do you have a point of order?

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** I moved to adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** Oh, okay. I apologize for that.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Yes, because I said it was 5:30. That was my prerogative.

**The Chair:** Yes, and that's what was sent out in the notice, but somebody pointed out that we were four minutes late in starting.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** However, my motion was in order. Is that right?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. The meeting is adjourned.







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