

PACIFIC REGION

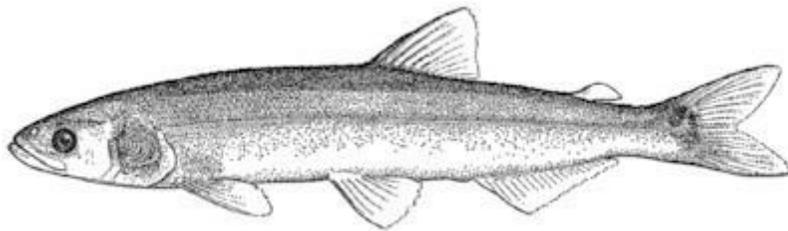
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# INTEGRATED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

## JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2026

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EULACHON  
FRASER RIVER



*Thaleichthys pacificus*

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# DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

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A more comprehensive list of contacts can be found online at:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/contacts-eng.html>

## **Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Pacific Region**

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# **INDEX OF WEB-BASED INFORMATION**

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## **FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **MAIN PAGE**

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca>

Our Vision, Latest News, Current Topics

Twitter:

DFO Pacific: [@DFO\\_Pacific](#)

En Français: [@MPO\\_Pacifique](#)

### **ACTS, ORDERS, AND REGULATIONS**

<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/acts-lois/index-eng.htm>

Canada Shipping Act, Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Act, Financial Administration Act, Fish Inspection Act, Fisheries Act, Fisheries Development Act, Fishing and Recreational Harbours Act, Freshwater Fish Marketing Act, Navigation Protection Act, Oceans Act

### **REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS**

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports-eng.htm>

Administration and Enforcement of the Fish Habitat Protection and Pollution Prevention Provisions of the *Fisheries Act*, Audit and Evaluation Reports - Audit and Evaluation Directorate Canadian Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing Operations, Departmental Performance Reports, Fisheries Research Documents, Standing Committee's Reports and Government responses, Sustainable Development Strategy.

### **FEDERAL SCIENCE LIBRARY**

<http://science-libraries.canada.ca/eng/fisheries-oceans/>

Fisheries and Oceans Canada online library catalogue

## **PACIFIC REGION GENERAL**

### **MAIN PAGE**

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/index-eng.html>

General information, Area information, Latest news, Current topics

## **POLICIES, REPORTS AND PROGRAMS**

<https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/act-reg-eng.html>

Reports and Discussion Papers, New Directions Policy Series, Agreements

## **OCEANS PROGRAM**

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/index-eng.html>

Integrated Coastal Management, Marine Protected Areas, Marine Environmental Quality; Oceans Outreach, Oceans Act

## **PACIFIC REGION FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

### **MAIN PAGE**

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/index-eng.htm>

Commercial Fisheries, New and Emerging Fisheries, Recreational Fisheries, Maps, Notices and Plans

### **ABORIGINAL FISHERIES STRATEGY**

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/abor-autoc/index-eng.html>

or <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/aboriginal-autochtones/index-eng.htm>

Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) principles and objectives, AFS agreements, Programs, Treaty Negotiations

### **AQUACULTURE MANAGEMENT**

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/index-eng.html>

The new federal regulatory program for aquaculture in British Columbia, Program overview and administration, public reporting, and aquaculture science

### **RECREATIONAL FISHERIES**

<https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/index-eng.html>

Fishery Regulations and Notices, Fishing Information, Recreational Fishery, Policy and Management, Contacts, Current BC Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide and Freshwater Supplement, Rockfish Conservation Areas, Shellfish Contamination Closures, On-line Licencing

### **COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**

<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commerciale/pac-yukon-eng.html>

Links to Groundfish, Herring, Salmon, Shellfish and New and Emerging Fisheries homepages; Selective Fishing, Test Fishing Information, Fishing Areas, Canadian Tide Tables, Fishery Management Plans, Commercial Fishery Notices (openings and closures)

## **FISHERIES NOTICES**

<http://www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm?>

Want to receive fishery notices by e-mail? If you are a recreational sport fisher, processor, multiple boat owner or re-distribute fishery notices, register your name and/or company at the web-site address above. Openings and closures, updates, and other relevant information regarding your chosen fishery are sent directly to your registered email. It's quick, it's easy and it's free.

## **INTEGRATED FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS**

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/peches-fisheries/ifmp-gmp/index-eng.htm>

Current Management Plans for Groundfish, Pelagics, Shellfish (Invertebrates), Minor Finfish, Salmon, sample Licence Conditions; Archived Management Plans

## **LICENCING**

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/index-eng.html>

Contact information; Recreational Licence Information, Commercial Licence Types, Commercial Licence Areas, Licence Listings, Vessel Information, Vessel Directory, Licence Statistics and Application Forms

## **NATIONAL ON-LINE LICENSING SYSTEM (NOLS)**

<https://fishing-peche.dfo-mpo.gc.ca>

E-mail: [fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

(Please include your name and the DFO Region in which you are located.)

Telephone: 1-877-535-7307

Fax: 613-990-1866

TTY: 1-800-465-7735

## **PACIFIC REGION POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **MAIN PAGE**

<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/about-notre-sujet/media-eng.htm>

Media Releases; Salmon Updates, Backgrounders, Ministers Statements, Publications; Contacts

## **CONSULTATION SECRETARIAT**

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/index-eng.html>

Consultation Calendar, Policies, National, Partnerships, Fisheries Management, Oceans, Science and Habitat and Enhancement Consultations, Current and Concluded Consultations

## **PUBLICATIONS CATALOGUE**

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/publications/index-eng.html>

Information booklets and fact sheets available through Communications branch

## **SPECIES AT RISK ACT (SARA)**

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especies/index-eng.htm>

SARA species, SARA permits, Public Registry, Enforcement, Stewardship Projects, Consultation, Past Consultation, Indigenous people, Related Sites, For Kids, News Releases

## **PACIFIC REGION SCIENCE**

### **MAIN PAGE**

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/index-eng.html>

Science Divisions, Research Facilities, PSARC, International Research Initiatives

## GLOSSARY AND LIST OF ACRONYMS

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Abundance	A measure of quantity, such as for a fish stock or population, describing the number of individuals or a biomass level.
AFS	Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy
Area and Subarea	Defined in Section 2 of the Pacific Fishery Management Area Regulations. A map of Pacific Fishery Management Areas is available on the Department's Internet site at: <a href="http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/maps-cartes/areas-secteurs/index-eng.htm">http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/maps-cartes/areas-secteurs/index-eng.htm</a>
Biomass	Total weight of all individuals in a stock or a population.
Bycatch	The unintentional catch of one species when the target is another.
Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)	Committee of experts that assess and designate which wild species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada.
Communal Licence	A licence issued to Indigenous organizations under Section 4 of the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations, pursuant to the Fisheries Act, to carry on fishing and related activities.
CSAS	Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat chaired by DFO and including other federal and provincial government agency representatives and external participants (formerly PSARC).
Ecosystem-Based Management	Taking into account of species interactions and the interdependencies between species and their habitats when making resource management decisions.
Fishing Effort (Effort)	Quantity of effort using a given fishing gear over a given period of time.
Fishing Mortality	Death caused by fishing, often symbolized by the mathematical symbol $F$ .
Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC)	A fishery conducted by Indigenous groups for food, social and ceremonial purposes.

Indigenous Knowledge	<p>There is no universal definition of Indigenous Knowledge, and the composition of Indigenous Knowledge is for Indigenous Peoples to determine. Indigenous Knowledge is intricately tied to Indigenous worldviews and ways of life, and is a complex and dynamic product of the unique histories, cultures, languages, and governance systems of the Indigenous peoples of the specific area.</p> <p>The term Indigenous Knowledge may not be universally used. Other terms such as Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, all convey similar concepts. Indigenous Peoples define Indigenous Knowledge for their communities. The term Indigenous Knowledge is used throughout this document in line with the terminology in the <i>Fisheries Act</i> and the <i>UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)</i>.</p>
Intertidal	The area of the ocean shoreline located between the highest high water and lowest low water tidal levels.
Landing	Quantity of a species caught and landed. Harvested animals transferred from a vessel to land.
Lb	Imperial pound(s), which is equal to 0.45359237 kg.
Natural Mortality	Mortality due to natural causes, symbolized by the mathematical symbol <i>M</i> .
Pelagic	Living in the surface or middle depths of the sea.
Population	Group of individuals of the same species, forming a breeding unit, and sharing a habitat.
Precautionary Approach	Set of agreed cost-effective measures and actions, including future courses of action, which ensures prudent foresight, reduces or avoids risk to the resource, the environment, and the people, to the extent possible, taking explicitly into account existing uncertainties and the potential consequences of being wrong.
Quota	Portion of the total allowable catch that a unit, such as vessel class, country, etc. is permitted to take from a stock in a given period of time.

Research Survey	Survey at sea, on a research vessel, allowing scientists to obtain information on the abundance and distribution of various species and/or collect oceanographic data. E.g.: bottom trawl survey, plankton survey, hydroacoustic survey, etc.
Spawner	Sexually mature individual.
Spawning Stock	Sexually mature individuals in a stock.
Species at Risk Act (SARA)	The Act is a federal government commitment to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct and secure the necessary actions for their recovery. It provides the legal protection of wildlife species and the conservation of their biological diversity.
Stakeholders	Individuals or groups with an interest in a particular fishery or activity.
Stock	Describes a population of individuals of one species found in a particular area, and is used as a unit for fisheries management.
Stock Assessment	Scientific evaluation of the status of a species belonging to a same stock within a particular area in a given time period. A stock assessment is the process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting demographic information to determine changes in the abundance of a fishery stock. In some cases, it includes evaluating the effects of fishing on a stock or population to predict the reactions of a stock to alternative management choices.
Substrate	The surface (often the ocean bottom) and its composition, in or on which animals live.
Sub tidal	A portion of the bottom of the ocean that is not exposed at low tide stages. The ocean bottom at elevations below low water or chart datum.
Ton	Short ton, 2000 lb., traditionally used as a unit of measure by fish harvesters in British Columbia.
Tonne	Metric tonne, which is 1000kg or 2204.6 lb.
Total Allowable Catch (TAC)	The amount of catch that may be taken from a stock, often determined by analytical procedures, to achieve management objectives.

# FOREWORD

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The purpose of this Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) is to identify the main objectives and requirements for the Eulachon fishery in the Fraser River, as well as the management measures that will be used to achieve these objectives. This document also serves to communicate the basic information on the fishery and its management to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO, the Department) staff, legislated co-management boards, Indigenous peoples, harvesters, and other interested parties. This IFMP provides a common understanding of the basic “rules” for the sustainable management of the fisheries resource.

This IFMP is not a legally binding instrument which can form the basis of a legal challenge. The IFMP can be modified at any time and does not fetter the Minister's discretionary powers set out in the *Fisheries Act*. The Minister can, for reasons of conservation or for any other valid reasons, modify any provision of the IFMP in accordance with the powers granted pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*.

Where DFO is responsible for implementing obligations under land claims agreements, the IFMP will be implemented in a manner consistent with these obligations. In the event that an IFMP is inconsistent with obligations under land claims agreements, the provisions of the land claims agreements will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

# 1. OVERVIEW

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## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

This Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for Eulachon covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 2026 for the Fraser River area.

The IFMP provides a history and a broad context to the management of the Fraser River Eulachon stock, including issues related to conservation. Given the short life cycle of this species, and consecutive poor returns, there are conservation concerns with Fraser River Eulachon stocks, resulting in commercial and recreational fishery closures and minimal harvest for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes. Long-term closures are required to allow for stock rebuilding.

## 1.2. HISTORY

Eulachon have historically been, and continue to be, important to Indigenous groups who harvest them for FSC purposes. The significance of the Indigenous fishery transcends the collection of fish biomass for consumption. Rather, the collection, rendering and subsequent distribution of Eulachon grease are an integral part of coastal Indigenous cultures. Eulachon are eaten fresh, or often smoked, dried, salted or made into grease. Eulachon grease is an important food source for Indigenous groups. It is widely bartered among Indigenous communities and is given as gifts in potlatch ceremonies. The harvest of Eulachon and trade of the rendered oil led to the “grease trails” trade routes. It is used in many traditional foods, to preserve fruit, as medicine and even to lubricate tools (Hay and McCarter, 2000). Central and North Coast Indigenous groups in British Columbia, as well as some Indigenous groups in Alaska, produce grease. However Indigenous groups south of Knight Inlet, including groups on the Fraser River, do not produce grease and instead focus on smoked and fresh Eulachon (Moody, 2008).

There was a minor recreational fishery for Eulachon in the Fraser River in the past; however, it has been closed since 2005.

Commercial harvest of Eulachon on the Fraser River began in the 1870s. The only other large commercial fishery of Eulachon in BC was on the Nass River and it ended in the 1940s. From 1903 to 1912, the Fraser River Eulachon fishery was the fifth largest commercial fishery in BC (Stacey, 1995). More recently, annual catches of Eulachon in the Fraser River from the 1980s to the mid-1990s averaged approximately 20 tonnes per year and peaked in 1996 with an estimated catch of at least 63 tonnes. Due to increasing catch and effort and low levels of abundance, the commercial fishery was closed in 1997. Limited entry licensing was introduced in 1998 with the introduction of the ZU Eulachon licence category. Since closing in 1997, the commercial Eulachon fishery on the Fraser River was only opened twice: in 2002 and 2004, and it has been closed ever since.

### 1.3. TYPE OF FISHERY AND PARTICIPANTS

#### **Indigenous**

Indigenous harvest for FSC purposes is authorized in the lower Fraser River through communal licences. Indigenous groups apply for separate communal licences for Eulachon that are issued on a case-by-case basis. Fishing is primarily by drift net (e.g. gillnet). The use of other gear types may be authorized in traditional fishing areas upon request. Any Indigenous groups interested in developing new harvest methods or restarting historic harvest methods will work with DFO staff to licence and monitor appropriately.

#### **Recreational**

The recreational fishery for Eulachon remains closed in all tidal waters and freshwater, including the Fraser River.

#### **Commercial**

The commercial Eulachon fishery remains closed in all tidal waters and freshwater, including the Fraser River.

### 1.4. LOCATION OF FISHERY

#### **Indigenous**

Indigenous harvest may occur in portions of the lower Fraser River.

### 1.5. FISHERY CHARACTERISTICS

Indigenous communal fishing times are collaboratively planned and conditions of licence may include: effort of gear, fishing times, number of fishing days in a week, and/or harvest target balances. For each communal licence, participants must report catches through their respective monitoring programs and report to DFO. A strict monitoring regime is in place: DFO monitors, Fishery Officers, or Indigenous monitors may observe all sets directly or have harvesters pick their nets in the presence of the monitors.

### 1.6. GOVERNANCE

Management of Fraser River Eulachon is directed by:

- The *Fisheries Act* and the regulations made thereunder.
  - Areas and Subareas, as described in the *Pacific Fishery Management Area Regulations (2007)*, are referenced in describing Eulachon Management Areas.
  - *Fishery (General) Regulations* (i.e. Conditions of Licence) and the *Pacific Fishery Regulations, 1993* (i.e. open times).
  - The *British Columbia Sport Fishing Regulations (1996)*.
  - The *Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations*.
- The *Oceans Act*.

These documents are available at: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/>

## 1.7. SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES FRAMEWORK

The Sustainable Fisheries Framework (SFF) is a toolbox of policies to ensure that Canadian fisheries support conservation and sustainable use of resources.

These policies include:

- *Fishery Decision-Making Framework Incorporating the Precautionary Approach*
  - Guidelines for Implementing the Fish Stocks Provisions in the *Fisheries Act*
  - Guidelines for writing rebuilding plans per the Fish Stocks Provisions and A Fishery-Decision-making Framework Incorporating the Precautionary Approach
- *Fishery Monitoring Policy*
  - Introduction to the procedural steps for implementing the Fishery Monitoring Policy
- *Policy for Managing the Impacts of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas*
  - Ecological Risk Assessment Framework (ERAF) for Coldwater Corals and Sponge Dominated Communities
- *Policy on Managing Bycatch*
- *Policy on New Fisheries for Forage Species*
- *Canada's Policy for Conservation of Pacific Salmon (Wild Salmon Policy)*

For more information on the Sustainable Fisheries Framework and its policies, visit:

<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/overview-cadre-eng.htm>

***Sustainability Surveys for Fisheries:*** DFO annually tracks the performance of key fish stocks that it manages through the Sustainability Survey for Fisheries. Results of previous Sustainability Surveys are available at: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/survey-sondage/index-en.html>

***Sustainable Fisheries Framework work plans:*** Each year, DFO develops a work plan and reports on priorities and targets regarding the sustainable management of Canada's marine resources. These work plans are available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/about-notre-sujet/publications/work-plan-travail/index-eng.html>

### **Precautionary Approach Framework**

The Sustainable Fisheries Framework policy suite includes a decision-making framework incorporating a precautionary approach to commercial, recreational, and food, social, and ceremonial fishing: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/precaution-eng.htm>

The precautionary approach in fisheries management requires caution when scientific knowledge is uncertain. The absence of adequate scientific information should not result in postponed action or failure to take action to avoid the risk of serious harm to the resource.

Applying the precautionary approach to fisheries management decisions entails establishing harvest strategies that:

- identify three stock status zones – Healthy, Cautious, and Critical – delineated by an upper stock reference point and a limit reference point;
- set the removal rate at which fish may be harvested within each stock status zone; and

- adjust the removal rate according to fish stock status (i.e. spawning stock biomass or another index/metric relevant to population productivity), based on pre-agreed decision rules.

The framework requires that a harvest strategy be incorporated into respective fisheries management plans to keep the removal rate moderate when the stock status is in the Healthy Zone, to promote rebuilding when stock status is low, and to ensure a low risk of serious or irreversible harm to the stock.

A key component of the *Precautionary Approach Framework* requires that when a stock has declined to the Critical Zone, a rebuilding plan must be in place with the aim of having a high probability of the stock growing out of the Critical Zone within a reasonable timeframe:

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/precautionary-precaution-eng.htm>

### **Fisheries Act: Fish Stock Provisions**

Amendments to the *Fisheries Act* (Bill C-68) were passed into legislation in 2019 and include new authorities to amend the *Fishery (General) Regulations* and requirements to maintain major fish stocks at sustainable levels, and to develop and implement rebuilding plans for stocks that have declined to their critical zone. Amendments are available at:

<https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/en/bill/42-1/C-68>

Associated regulatory amendments to prescribe major fish stocks and describe requirements for rebuilding plans are published in the Canada Gazette. Available at: <https://gazette.gc.ca/accueil-home-eng.html>. For latest publications, enter the search terms “fish stock” or “rebuilding plan” into the *Find a publication* box on that website.

Major fish stocks are defined in Schedule IX, and requirements for rebuilding plans are described in Part XIV (Fish Stocks Provisions) of the *Fishery (General) Regulations*. Available at: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-93-53/index.html>

### **Fishery Monitoring and Catch Reporting**

DFO released the national *Fishery Monitoring Policy* in 2019, which replaces the regional *Strategic Framework for Fisheries Monitoring and Catch Reporting* in the Pacific Fisheries (2012). The national policy seeks to provide dependable, timely and accessible fishery information through application of a common set of steps used to establish fishery monitoring requirements across fisheries. Available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/fishery-monitoring-surveillance-des-peches-eng.htm>

From 2023 to 2028, Pacific Region is pursuing a project-based approach to implementation of the national Fishery Monitoring Policy, with a focus on the recreational fishery.

Further guidance on implementation of the national Fishery Monitoring policy is available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/fmp-implementation-ppsp-mise-en-oeuvre-eng.htm>

For more information on the 2012 Pacific *Strategic Framework for Fisheries Monitoring and Catch Reporting*, please visit: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/docs/framework-monitoring-cadre->

[surveillance-eng.html](#)

### **Policy for Managing the Impacts of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas**

To avoid serious or irreversible harm to sensitive benthic habitat, species and communities and to otherwise address impacts to benthic habitat, communities and species, this policy outlines a five step process. Available at: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/benthi-eng.htm>

### **Ecological Risk Assessment Framework & Cold-Water Coral and Sponge Conservation Strategy**

The *Ecological Risk Assessment Framework for Coldwater Corals and Sponge Dominated Communities* (or ERAF) outlines a process for identifying the level of ecological risk of fishing activity and its impacts on sensitive benthic areas in the marine environment. Available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/risk-ecolo-risque-eng.htm>

DFO's *Pacific Region Cold-water Coral and Sponge Conservation Strategy* aims to promote the conservation, health and integrity of Canada's Pacific Ocean cold-water coral and sponge species. For more information, visit: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/ceccsr-cerceef/conservation-eng.html>

### **Policy on Managing Bycatch**

The *Policy on Managing Bycatch* supports sustainable fisheries management by minimizing the risk of fisheries causing serious or irreversible harm to bycatch species, and by accounting for total catch, including retained and non-retained bycatch. Available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/bycatch-policy-prise-access-eng.htm>

The *Guidance on Implementation of the Policy on Managing Bycatch* supports policy implementation: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/bycatch-guide-prise-access-eng.htm>

### **Policy on New Fisheries for Forage Species**

While other new fisheries may be started under the *New and Emerging Fisheries Policy*, this policy outlines the special considerations for new fisheries on forage species, which must not threaten the conservation of other species that depend on the forage species for food. Available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/forage-eng.htm>

### **Ghost Gear Program**

Abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG, or “ghost gear”) is a leading cause of marine plastic litter and a global issue. A recent study estimated that nearly 2% of all fishing gear becomes ghost gear (Richardson et al, 2022). Since fishing gear is designed to capture fish, this means that when gear is lost it has significant negative impacts on all marine animals and coastal and marine environments. An estimated 5 - 30% decline in some fish stocks is due to damage to important marine habitats from ghost gear (NOAA Marine Debris Program, 2015). This means that when marine animals are caught in ghost gear, it is a threat not just to marine mammals and species at risk, but also to the health of commercial fish stocks and aquatic habitats. Data from Fisheries and

Oceans Canada's Lost Gear Reporting System between July 2020 and December 2023 shows that of the 85,610 animals identified in retrieved ghost gear in Canadian waters, 84% were of commercial value.

Canada has been at the forefront of addressing this issue, signing on to the Global Ghost Gear Initiative in 2018, establishing a Ghost Gear Program in 2019, mandating lost gear reporting in 2020, and sharing lost gear reporting data with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative's Data Portal in 2022 and again in 2024.

As part of the Canadian strategy on ghost gear going forward, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will perform a regulatory review and assessment process to address impediments to gear retrieval and to strengthen preventative measures. An area-by-area review of gear types to quantify risks to our ecosystems will also be performed as part of an analysis of fisheries management practices to help modernize, strengthen and implement best practices.

To learn more about the DFO Ghost Gear Program, go to: [Canada.ca/ghostgear](https://Canada.ca/ghostgear)

### **Conditions of Licence to Report Lost and Retrieved Gear**

All commercial harvesters must report their lost and subsequently retrieved fishing gear. While the Department is taking a stewardship approach to ghost gear, and working with harvesters to reduce the effects of ghost fishing, the inclusion of the reporting requirement in conditions of licence means that not reporting lost and/or retrieved gear is now a chargeable offence.

Lost gear can be reported through the online Fishing Gear Reporting System, available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commerciale/reporting-declaration-eng.html>

To learn more about the DFO Ghost Gear Fund, go to: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/management-gestion/ghostgear-equipementfantome/program-programme/projects-projets-eng.html>

## **1.8. NATIONAL FISHERY MONITORING POLICY**

Robust fishery monitoring information is essential for stock assessment and to effectively implement management measures such as target and bycatch limits, quotas and closed areas. Fishery monitoring information is also needed to support the long-term sustainable use of fish resources for Food, Social, and Ceremonial and other Indigenous fisheries, commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries, and to support market access for Canadian fish products.

Following multi-sectoral consultations, DFO released the national Fishery Monitoring Policy in 2019, replacing the regional "Strategic Framework for Fisheries Monitoring and Catch Reporting in the Pacific Fisheries" (2012). The Fishery Monitoring Policy seeks to provide dependable, timely and accessible fishery information through application of a common set of procedural steps

used to establish fishery monitoring requirements across fisheries. Policy principles include respecting Indigenous and Treaty rights, linkage of monitoring requirements to the degree of risk and complexity of fisheries, linkage of monitoring programs to fishery and policy objectives while accounting for cost-effectiveness and practicality of implementation, and shared accountability and responsibility between DFO, Indigenous groups and stakeholders.

To ensure consistent national application of the Fishery Monitoring Policy, further guidance is provided through the “Introduction to the Procedural Steps of Implementing the Fishery Monitoring Policy”. Fisheries are first prioritized for assessment through collaboration with Indigenous groups and Stakeholders. Risk and data quality assessments are then conducted on priority stocks and associated fisheries and monitoring programs. Next, monitoring objectives are set in alignment with the Fishery Monitoring Policy, followed by specifying monitoring requirements and then monitoring programs are operationalized. Finally, a review and evaluation of the fishery monitoring programs against the monitoring objectives will be conducted and reported on.

The Fishery Monitoring Policy is part of DFO’s Sustainable Fisheries Framework and is available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/fishery-monitoring-surveillance-des-peches-eng.htm>

The “Introduction to the Procedural Steps of Implementing the Fishery Monitoring Policy” is available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/fmp-implementation-ppsp-mise-en-oeuvre-eng.htm>

In cases where assessment of monitoring programs identifies a gap between the current and target level of monitoring, discussions will be held between DFO Indigenous groups and stakeholders to identify options to address the monitoring gap, and the feasibility of these options (e.g. cost, technical considerations, etc.). To support Fishery Monitoring Policy principles, a collaborative approach is required.

Where monitoring options are determined to be feasible, the monitoring and reporting regime will be revised to incorporate these options, providing resource managers with sufficient information to meet Fishery Monitoring Policy objectives. Where monitoring options are not feasible, alternative management approaches are required to reduce the risk posed by the fishery. If there is no gap between the current and target level of monitoring, the management approach will not require any change.

## 1.9. CONSULTATION

DFO has a broad mandate, with the authority to regulate and enforce activities, develop policy, provide services and manage programs. To help ensure that the Department's policies and programs are aligned with its vision and effectively address the interests and preferences of Canadians, DFO supports consultations that are transparent, accessible and accountable.

DFO Pacific Region undertakes consultations in order to improve departmental decision-making processes, promote understanding of fisheries, oceans and marine transport issues, and strengthen relationships.

The Fraser River population of Eulachon was assessed as Endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in May, 2011 (see section 3.5). Since 2011, the Department has sought the input of Indigenous peoples and stakeholders into the development of documents that support the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) process to consider whether or not the Government should list this Designatable Unit (DU) as Endangered under SARA. Consultations on this SARA process occurred between August 30 and November 30, 2016. In fall 2020, the Department undertook a “check-in” period to ensure that viewpoints and information shared during 2016 consultations remain accurate and current. The Department will include any new information received during this period in its listing advice.

## **1.10. APPROVAL PROCESS**

This plan is approved by the Regional Director General for the Pacific Region.

## 2. STOCK ASSESSMENT, SCIENCE AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

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### 2.1. BIOLOGICAL SYNOPSIS

Eulachon (also known as candlefish, or oolichan, and Swi:we (Halq'eméylem), or Swiw ə (Hən q'əmin əm) belong to the family Osmeridae (smelts). The scientific name for Eulachon is *Thaleichthys pacificus*, a name derived from the Greek roots thaleia (rich), ichthys (fish), which refers to the high oil content found in these little fish, and pacificus (Pacific [Ocean]), which refers to where these fish live.

Within BC, Eulachon spawning has been confirmed in 25 rivers with a possible additional 15 rivers that have been identified as potentially supporting Eulachon spawning based on anecdotal information (McCarter and Hay 1999, Hay and McCarter, 2000, Moody 2008). All known spawning rivers experience increased spring runoffs known as freshets and most drain snow packs or glaciers. The major river systems where Eulachon return to spawn are the Fraser, Skeena, Nass, and Klinaklini.

Eulachon spawning is limited to the lower reaches of rivers, meaning they do not ascend upstream over sections of river with considerable slope and changes in elevation. In the Fraser River, the spawning season ranges from February to May (and possibly January to early June), with peaks typically occurring in April and May (i.e. LFFA 2017, LFFA 2021, Casselman and Bettles 2020). During spawning, adhesive eggs, about 20,000 to 40,000 per female, attach to river bed substrate, such as sand or pebbles, and may hatch in three to five weeks at ambient temperatures ranging between 3° and 10° Celsius. Hatching time is temperature dependent and can take up to 8 weeks under sustained cooler temperatures, which is more common in northern rivers. There is considerable uncertainty associated with how climate change may impact Eulachon life history and survival before, during and after spawning seasons.

There is evidence that Eulachon will hold and stage in low velocity areas of the river to conserve energy while migrating upstream or awaiting spawning opportunities. It has been reported that spawning substrates typically consist of silt, sand, gravel, and/or cobble and spawning depths can vary considerably (Plate 2009, Gustafson et al 2010, Casselman and Bettles 2020). Within the lower Fraser River, examples of mapped habitat and substrate type to link to staging and spawning areas near the Port Mann Bridge and Pattullo Bridge have been described by Plate (2009) and Casselman and Bettles (2020).

Eulachon are anadromous. Once hatched, larvae are rapidly flushed to estuarine or marine waters. It is believed that most live at sea for at least three years before returning to rivers to spawn. Based on interpreting growth rings in otoliths, age estimates of spawning Eulachon have ranged from two to seven years, with most adult fish reaching a length of 15 to 20 cm and weight of 40 to 60 grams. There are large size overlaps between adult fish of different ages, which is common with many species of forage fish. Large post-spawning mortalities have been observed and most, if not all, Eulachon are expected to die after spawning.

In BC, Eulachon may be found in waters of the offshore shelf around Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, Queen Charlotte Sound, and the West Coast of Vancouver Island (WCVI), and are commonly caught in bottom trawl gear at depths of 80 to 200 m. They have also been caught off the WCVI in near surface waters (e.g. depths of 0 to 30m) using mid water trawl gear, mainly with euphausiids in their stomachs (DFO unpublished data, 2006-2019, 2023).

Long-term declines of spawning Eulachon have been observed in many rivers throughout their distribution from California to Alaska in the past 2 to 4 decades. The Fraser River population has been at low levels most years since 2004 with relatively stronger runs observed during the 2015, 2018 and 2020 seasons.

## 2.2. ECOSYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS

Eulachon could potentially be affected by both human activities (fisheries and habitat pressures) and ecosystem pressures in both freshwater and the marine environments (Schweigert et al. 2012). In a 2012 Recovery Potential Assessment (Schweigert et al. 2012), “no single threat could be identified as most probable for the observed decline in abundances among DUs [designatable units] or in limiting recovery.

Eulachon are prey for many species of fish, marine mammals and birds (see summaries by Gustafson et al. 2010 and Schweigert et al. 2012). In-river predators include White Sturgeon, Steller Sea Lions, Harbour Seals, and eagles. Spawning Eulachon and their eggs are known to be important diet components for adult and juvenile lower Fraser White Sturgeon (Echols and FRAP 1995), which has a COSEWIC assessment status of Threatened (COSEWIC 2012), and which like Eulachon, is a highly valued resource to First Nations. Salmon and Dolly Varden trout also have been reported to feed on Eulachon eggs or larvae (Marston et al. 2002, Gustafson et al. 2010). Marine predators include Spiny Dogfish, Pacific Cod, Pacific Hake, Walleye Pollock, Pacific Halibut, Sablefish, Arrowtooth Flounder, Pacific salmon, rockfish and many other species of fish, marine mammals and birds. Pacific Hake in particular have been identified as important predators of Eulachon due to their spatial overlap and the common occurrence of Eulachon in their gut contents (McFarlane and Beamish 1985, Buckley and Livingston 1997, Pickard and Marmorek 2007). Pacific Hake biomass has been declining since 2017 (Johnson et al. 2021), which may have had a positive impact on Eulachon abundance. However, other marine predators such as some piscivorous rockfish have increased in recent years (DFO 2020a, DFO2020b), potentially offsetting a reduction in Pacific Hake predation.

Stomach contents of juvenile and maturing Eulachon have included euphausiids, phytoplankton; copepod eggs; copepods; mysids; shrimp, ostracods and barnacle larvae as well as juvenile fish such as Pacific Sand Lance (Hay 2002, Yang et al. 2006, Pearsall and Fargo 2007, Dealy and Hodes, 2019). Samples from nearshore and offshore caught eulachon suggest that the euphausiid *Thysanoessa spinifera* is their main prey along with other euphausiids, fish and invertebrates (e.g. Dealy and Hodes, 2019). Euphausiid biomass anomalies off the west coast of British

Columbia have been positive since the mid-2000s (Galbraith and Young 2021) indicating potentially good feeding conditions for eulachon and other pelagic species.

Similar to other species of forage fishes, Eulachon can exhibit highly variable interannual abundance and this variability has been observed in research surveys throughout their range (Anderson and Piatt 1999, Mueter and Norcross 2002, Emmett and Brodeur 2000, Schweigert et al. 2012). There is considerable uncertainty associated with the ecology and stock dynamics of Eulachon and the reasons for the interannual variability and low levels of Fraser Eulachon in recent years, as observed by egg and larval and catch observations, are not understood. Furthermore, the relationships between in-river spawner abundance and marine trawl survey catch trends (comprised of Eulachon from mixed stocks), show poor correlations and are not understood, making the marine observations unreliable indicators for predicting future Fraser River Eulachon stock strength.

It is likely that climate change effects on freshwater and marine ecosystems and other effects on habitat contribute to the variability in population abundance. For example, negative correlations have been found between Fraser River Eulachon catches and warmer ocean temperatures off Vancouver Island (Hay et al. 1997). Similarly, the marine heat wave in 2014–2016 in the Gulf of Alaska was related to a drop in Eulachon biomass in Alaskan bottom trawl surveys (Ferriss and Zador 2021). The impacts of climate change and ocean warming in the southern parts of their range have been implicated in changes in Eulachon distribution and abundance as well (Emmett and Brodeur 2000). Ocean deoxygenation and acidification, associated with climate change, may also negatively impact Eulachon abundance and distribution (Schweigert et al. 2012). In general, the mechanisms for the impacts are not fully understood, however, the existing evidence indicates that warmer ocean conditions have a negative impact on eulachon abundance, thus it might be expected that future warming might further reduce Eulachon abundance in British Columbia, but this topic needs further study.

At this time there is no information available on the appropriate conservation limits for Eulachon based on ecosystem considerations. Research is ongoing to better understand ecosystem processes and the role Eulachon play in maintaining the integrity and functioning of the ecosystem.

## 2.3. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

There is no universal definition of Indigenous Knowledge. It is intricately tied to Indigenous worldviews and ways of life, and its composition is determined by Indigenous Peoples. The term “Indigenous Knowledge” is a generally accepted and is consistent with the United Nation’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as language in federal legislation. Other synonymous terms include Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.

In 2019, the *Fisheries Act* was amended to include provisions for where the Minister may or shall consider Indigenous Knowledge that has been provided in making decisions pertaining to fisheries, fish and fish habitat. Section 61 of the Act ensures this knowledge is protected and can only be shared with consent. There are also provisions under the *Species At Risk Act* (s.10.2,

s.15.2, s.16, s.18.1) that support inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge to inform the assessment and protection of species at risk. Likewise, the *Oceans Act* (s.42) allows the Minister to consider Indigenous Knowledge in oceans related decisions.

In June of 2023, the Department of Justice released the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's Act Action Plan outlining the Government of Canada's five-year plan to begin implementing the Act. DFO was identified to lead 11 of the measures in the Action Plan, including Measure 40 pertaining specifically to inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in the management of fisheries, fish habitat, conservation, marine safety and protection of the marine environment. DFO is committed to implementing this measure in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

The Government of Canada and the scientific community acknowledge the need to ensure Indigenous Knowledge, worldviews, values, and priorities are considered and holistically integrated into scoping, assessment, and monitoring components of decision-making.

Work is underway at a national level to develop a comprehensive approach to support the respectful consideration, integration, and safeguarding of Indigenous Knowledge within departmental programs, policies and decision-making processes. However, DFO recognizes that meaningful and respectful inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in decision making processes will not follow a one-size-fits-all approach. Given the diversity of knowledge and relationships, regional work will involve an iterative process in collaboration with First Nations, Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous knowledge holders, to ensure appropriate inclusion and protection of the knowledge provided. Many outstanding questions remain on how to move forward in a way that respects, meaningfully incorporates, and protects the knowledge that may be shared with DFO, to mutual benefit. For example, how to engage knowledge holders, and how to ensure that the knowledge can be shared and considered in a mutually acceptable manner by both knowledge holders and the broader community of First Nations, stakeholders, managers, and policy makers involved in the fisheries. DFO is committed to finding a way forward that respects the knowledge and the knowledge holders, and upholds the Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, which are available online at: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html>.

Some areas where DFO staff are working with knowledge-holders to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, include (but are not limited to):

- Regulatory authorizations for projects that impact fish and fish habitat
- Aquaculture and fisheries management
- Scientific research, monitoring, and assessment
- Marine safety and ecosystems protection
- Marine conservation measures (e.g., marine protected areas)
- Training and professional development

For more information on the updates to the *Fisheries Act*: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/campaign-campagne/fisheries-act-loi-sur-les-peches/reconciliation-eng.html>

See Sections 2.5, 34.1, and 61.2 in the *Fisheries Act* (2019): <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-14/>.

Section 61.2 protections for Indigenous Knowledge have also been included in the *Access to Information Act*, Schedule 2: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/a-1/page-15.html#h-1230>

See the full UN Declaration Act Action Plan (2023): [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan \(justice.gc.ca\)](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/a-1/page-15.html#h-1230)

## 2.4. STOCK ASSESSMENT

### Data Sources

There is limited biological information available pre-season to reliably forecast Fraser River Eulachon spawner run size and guide management decisions regarding in river harvest level. A 2003 Canadian Scientific Advice Secretariat (CSAS) research document (Hay et al., 2003) identified four potential indicators of population abundance and ‘response’ points that could collectively guide management decisions for Fraser River Eulachon: the spawning stock biomass (SSB), offshore biomass index, same year Columbia River catches, and New Westminster test fishery. However, this approach is no longer used due to: recurring low population levels; discontinuation of the New Westminster test fishery; the lack of correlation between Fraser River and Columbia River Eulachon spawning trends, and closures of the commercial and recreational Eulachon fisheries. The main data source used to determine FSC harvest levels is the Fraser River Egg and Larval Survey, but other information can also be considered, such as examples described below but other information that is also considered is listed below. The methodology for setting the FSC harvest level is described in Appendix 3.

### Fraser River Egg and Larval Survey

Annually since 1995, a survey that deploys paired weighted plankton nets towed from a boat at standard sampling index sites in waters of the lower Fraser River has collected observations aimed at estimating relative trends in seasonal abundance of Eulachon eggs and larvae (also referred to as progeny) and corresponding indices of spawner abundance. For over two decades, funding to support the survey fieldwork has largely been associated with DFO *Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy* initiatives. And for over a decade, the *Musqueam Indian Band* has partnered with DFO to arrange and deploy a boat and crew (consisting of a Captain and at least one Deckhand/ Technician), to oversee the running of the boat and collection of sample information. In 2024, and to a greater extent in 2025, the *Vancouver Fraser Port Authority* (VFPA) has also contributed funds to support winter field sampling and subsequent laboratory analyses. The involvement of the VFPA stems from interests in the potential habitat impacts from winter dredging of the river bottom in lower tidal sections near Steveston to facilitate boat navigation.

Historically (1995-2016), the survey was conducted over a 7- week core period over approximately mid-April to early June in order to sample the main outmigration of Eulachon progeny which typically co-occur with large increases in river discharge from spring freshets. These observations have been used to generate a relative abundance estimate (e.g., in biomass) to characterize successful Eulachon spawning by season (Table ,1 Figure 1). Since 2017, additional early sampling has been conducted prior to the historical 7-week core period to try to get a better understanding of Fraser Eulachon spawning ecology, relative abundance and habitat use. During 2017-2019 and 2021-2023, there were 2 or 3 weeks of early sampling and in 2024 and 2025 there were 14 and 18 weeks of early

sampling, respectively (see Table 2 for details by year). Observations in 2025, from both the 7-week core survey and extended sampling periods, result in extremely low biomass estimates that are similar to those for the 2022-2024 seasons (Table 1 and 2, Figure 1). For the 2026 season, under collaborations with the *Musqueam Indian Band* and *Vancouver Fraser Port Authority*, the DFO is interested in continuing to support the survey coordination, sample and data management, and reporting efforts for an extended seasonal survey period.

In brief, the steps to generate such estimates are described below. The numbers of eggs and larvae collected in each plankton net sampling event (also referred to as a “tow” or “cast”) are divided by flow meter estimates of the volume of river water filtered from each corresponding tow to calculate density estimates. The density estimates are mathematically integrated with daily mean river discharge water flow rates (i.e. in m<sup>3</sup>/sec) to estimate total egg and larvae discharged per time period (i.e. rolled up by minute, hour, day, week, etc). The sums of outflow estimates of eggs and larvae combined over given time periods are then related to a sex ratio and Eulachon fecundity estimate (number of eggs produced per female) to back calculate estimates of spawning stock biomass for the corresponding time period. Please refer to Hay et al. (2002) and McCarter and Hay (2003) for additional background on the survey methods and calculations.

### **Smelt species verification**

In addition to extending the seasonal sampling coverage of the survey in recent years, molecular testing to verify species compositions was recently conducted on smelt eggs and larvae collected from a subset of the 2023-2025 Fraser survey samples. This was implemented in response to molecular investigations conducted by sampling programs in other regions of the coast which had detected the presence of additional smelt species to Eulachon in egg and larval samples. Longfin Smelt (*Spirinchus thaleichthys*) larvae were identified as co-occurring with Eulachon larvae in Columbia River egg and larval samples (WDFW, 2018; S. Engster, U.S. Northwest Fisheries Science Center, September, pers comm., 2025), and Pacific Capelin (*Mallotus catervarius*) larvae were identified as co-occurring with Eulachon larvae in outflow waters of the Kemano River (Central Coast, British Columbia, C. Babey pers. comm., December 2024; Roger et al., 2025). Visual taxonomic analysis, which had been the only method to identify and count eggs and larvae from water samples prior to the use of molecular methods, cannot reliably distinguish eggs and/or larvae between these different smelt species. Based on the use of visual assessments and the lack of knowledge about other smelt species co-occurring in the lower Fraser River over winter and spring periods, until recently, all smelt progeny observed from the Fraser sampling were assumed to be Eulachon.

Stemming from initial findings of these other studies, collaborations and molecular testing arrangements were made with DFO Science to have a subset of 2023-2025 Fraser River samples collected and analyzed for smelt species verification. From the 2023 Fraser River survey, through a collaboration with scientists from the U.S. Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), smelt specimens from a batch of 33 plankton samples collected from the South Arm channel over April 10-June 6<sup>th</sup> (and preserved in ethanol) were subjected to metabarcoding to determine their species. Molecular testing rendered successful results for approximately 130 smelt specimens (mostly larvae) with species compositions of approximately 60% Eulachon and 40% Longfin Smelt (with no information by collection date available at the time reporting). From the 2024 Fraser River survey, 15 plankton samples collected from the South Arm channel over April 9- May 28<sup>th</sup> (and preserved in

ethanol) caught approximately 450 smelt specimens (mostly larvae) and these were sent to UNBC (care of Cale Babey) for molecular identification. The majority of those specimens have not been tested at the time of reporting but a random subsample of 70 representing all collection dates has, with preliminary results showing that the majority of specimens were Eulachon with a declining trend in Longfin Smelt by late April.

From the 2025 Fraser River survey, 111 plankton samples from the main and South Arm channels were collected (and preserved in ethanol) over February 11- June 6<sup>th</sup>. These samples caught 1714 smelt specimens (mostly larvae) which were sent to UNBC (care of Cale Babey) for PCR amplification and gel electrophoresis testing. The vast majority of specimens were collected from three daily sampling events in the main river channel between the shores of New Westminster and Surrey (called the New Westminster stations). Smelt progeny were in these samples on 32 different days. A smaller number of specimens were collected from a single daily South Arm sampling event where smelt progeny were collected in 10 of the 14 sampling days. Through molecular analyses, there were 1691 specimens in total that were successfully resolved to species, with summary compositions of 54% Eulachon and 46% Longfin Smelt. However, trends in species composition changed notably over the sampling season, from early sampling consisting of predominantly Longfin Smelt until mid March, to approximately equal proportions Longfin Smelt and Eulachon until early April, to predominantly Eulachon by the third week of April until the end of the survey in early June (Figure 2). Trends over time were consistent between the New Westminster and South Arm stations.

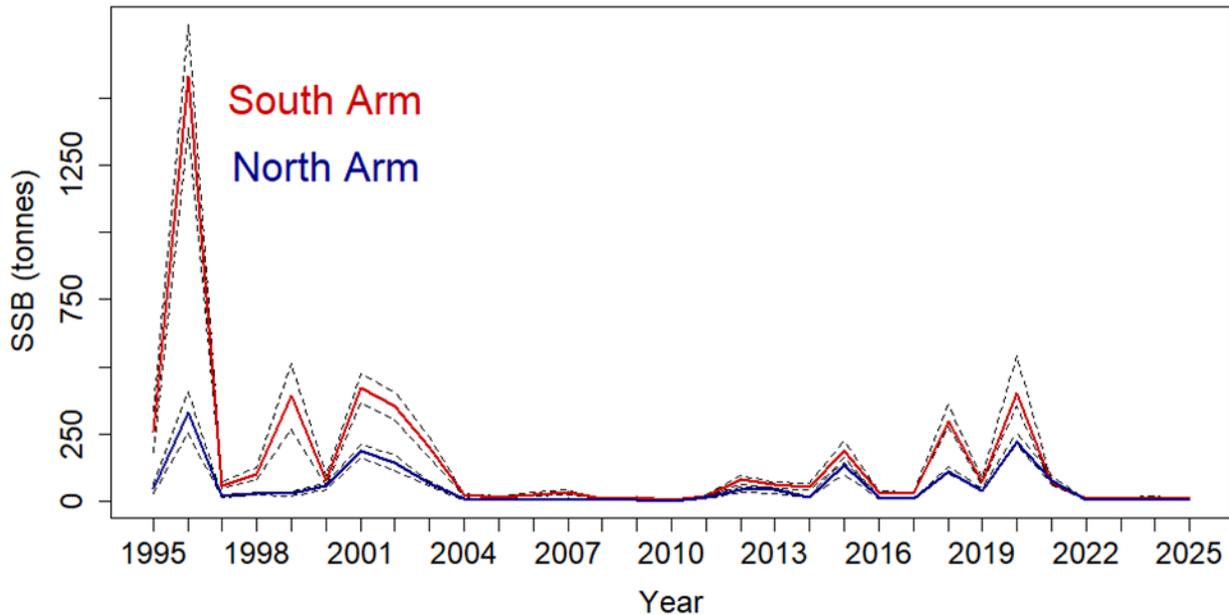
Findings of the varying degrees of Longfin Smelt progeny identified in the 2023-2025 Fraser River surveys highlight a previously unaccounted for mixed species uncertainty in the survey's time series. However, available information from 2025 survey suggests that the 7-week core sampling period from mid-April to early June had the highest compositions of Eulachon, which is encouraging given that the majority of the annual time series since 1995 is based on observations from this sampling period. But the available information does not address the confounding nature and uncertainty that interannual variability in each species' abundance and seasonality may pose. Future work is recommended to address these uncertainties by undertaking more smelt progeny isolation and molecular testing from future survey years to verify species compositions over different sampling dates, sampling depths and collection sites, especially during the 7-week core survey period.

**Table 1:** The Fraser River Eulachon Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) Index estimates for the 1995-2025 historical 7-week core survey period. The 7-week core survey period in 2025 was from April 21 to June 6. Estimation assumes that the egg and larval species compositions of Longfin Smelt (or any other non-Eulachon smelt species) over the 7-week core survey sampling period are negligible and/or constant throughout all survey years.

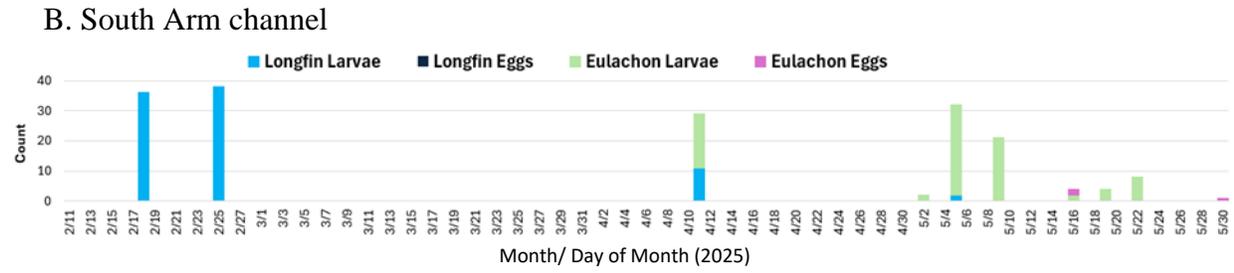
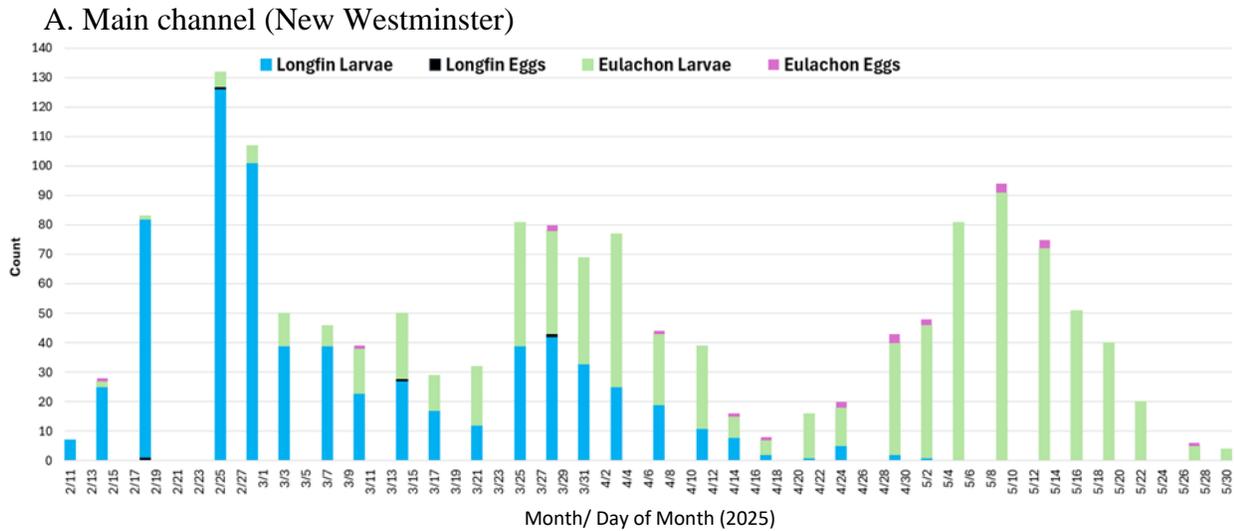
<b>Year</b>	<b>South Arm (tonnes)</b>	<b>North Arm (tonnes)</b>	<b>Total (tonnes)</b>
1995	257	45	302
1996	1,582	329	1911
1997	57	17	74
1998	107	29	136
1999	392	26	418
2000	76	54	130
2001	422	187	609
2002	354	141	494
2003	200	66	266
2004	24	9	33
2005	14	2	16
2006	24	5	29
2007	34	7	41
2008	8	2	10
2009	12	2	14
2010	4	<1	4
2011	19	12	31
2012	78	42	120
2013	59	41	100
2014	53	13	66
2015	185	132	317
2016	32	12	44
2017	29	6	35
2018	298	110	408
2019	70	38	108
2020	404	220	624
2021	64	77	141
2022	7.9	2.2	10.1
2023	8.1	2.3	10.4
2024	12.1	3.3	15.4
<b>2025</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>8.4</b>

**Table 2:** Fraser River smelt spawning stock biomass (SSB) index estimates for years with additional (earlier) exploratory sampling, 2017 to 2025. Estimates cannot be attributed to solely Eulachon because the smelt species composition is unknown over most of these seasons given recent evidence to suggest that biomass contributions may be largely confounded by Longfin Smelt progeny, especially from over earlier sampling dates. Years with \*(3) and \*(2) and \*(7) and \*(11) denote the number of weeks being represented in addition to the historical 7-week core survey period in the estimation of SSB indices

Year	South Arm (tonnes)	North Arm (tonnes)	Total (tonnes)
*(3) 2017	32	7	39
*(3) 2018	303	111	414
*(3) 2019	75	39	114
*(2) 2020	408	220	628
*(3) 2021	77	79	156
*(3) 2022	10.7	2.7	13.4
*(3) 2023	10.2	2.9	13.1
*(3) 2024	14.6	3.8	18.4
*(7) 2024	18.9	4.9	23.8
*(3) 2025	<b>11.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>
*(11) 2025	<b>16.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>20.2</b>



**Figure 1:** Biomass index estimates of Eulachon spawning stock biomass (SSB) in tonnes for the South and North Arms of the Fraser River, calculated from 7-week core egg and larval survey data (1995-2025). Dashed lines are 95% credibility intervals.



**Figure 2:** Summary of 2025 Fraser River egg and larval smelt species compositions by section of river and sampling day.

**A.** Main channel (New Westminster) results combined over 3 sampling events daily, collected over 31 sampling days from Feb 11- May 30.

**B.** South Arm channel results from 1 sampling event daily, collected over 10 samplings days from Feb 18- May 30. Note that the difference in count scale of the vertical axis between locations is due to the differing number of daily sampling events.

**Fraser River (New Westminster) Test Fishery**

The Fraser River test fishery was designed to provide an in-season index of Eulachon returns to the Fraser River. The test fishery was based on the cumulative catch of Eulachon fished daily at a fixed site (New Westminster), with specific gillnet gear, at a specific tide level and for a fixed time period. The test fishery was focused on informing the commercial fishery and operated from 1995 to 2005 (with the exception of 1999) and was discontinued due to conservation concerns.

**Table 3:** Fraser River test fishery final catches for 1995 to 2005.

Year	Final Catch (pieces)
1995	11,651
1996	42,071
1997	3,116
1998	2,052

1999	No Test Fishery
2000	12,991
2001	14,578
2002	14,754
2003	7,758
2004	12,433
2005	886
2006 -2025	No Test Fishery

### **Lower Fraser Fishery Alliance Gillnet Eulachon Assessment Survey**

Since 2017, the Lower Fraser Fishery Alliance (LFFA) has been annually conducting Eulachon gillnet survey efforts in the Fraser River. The survey methodology and location have been similar to those used in the 1995-2005 Fraser River (New Westminster) test fishery, with sampling approximately every second day. The LFFA methods were adjusted from the earlier test fishery methods to minimize mortality impacts by reducing fishing time and using a shorter gillnet panel. The gillnet survey (referred to as the LFFA Eulachon Assessment Survey) has been aimed at collecting information on Eulachon seasonal relative abundance and run timing, and biology (e.g. fish length, weight, sex, spawn condition). Samples from this survey have also been retained for collaborative efforts with DFO, such as for Eulachon studies pertaining to baseline spawner genetics; otolith ageing and isotope analyses; and eDNA trials. LFFA intends to continue the survey as an annual time series.

### **Offshore Small Mesh Multi-Species Bottom Trawl Survey**

The offshore small mesh multi-species bottom trawl survey was designed to provide an index of offshore shrimp abundance but the survey also captures Eulachon and a wide range of other species. The survey has been conducted by DFO off the west coast of Vancouver Island most years since 1973 over spring periods starting in late April or early May. Up until 2016, survey efforts included parts of the Queen Charlotte Sound.

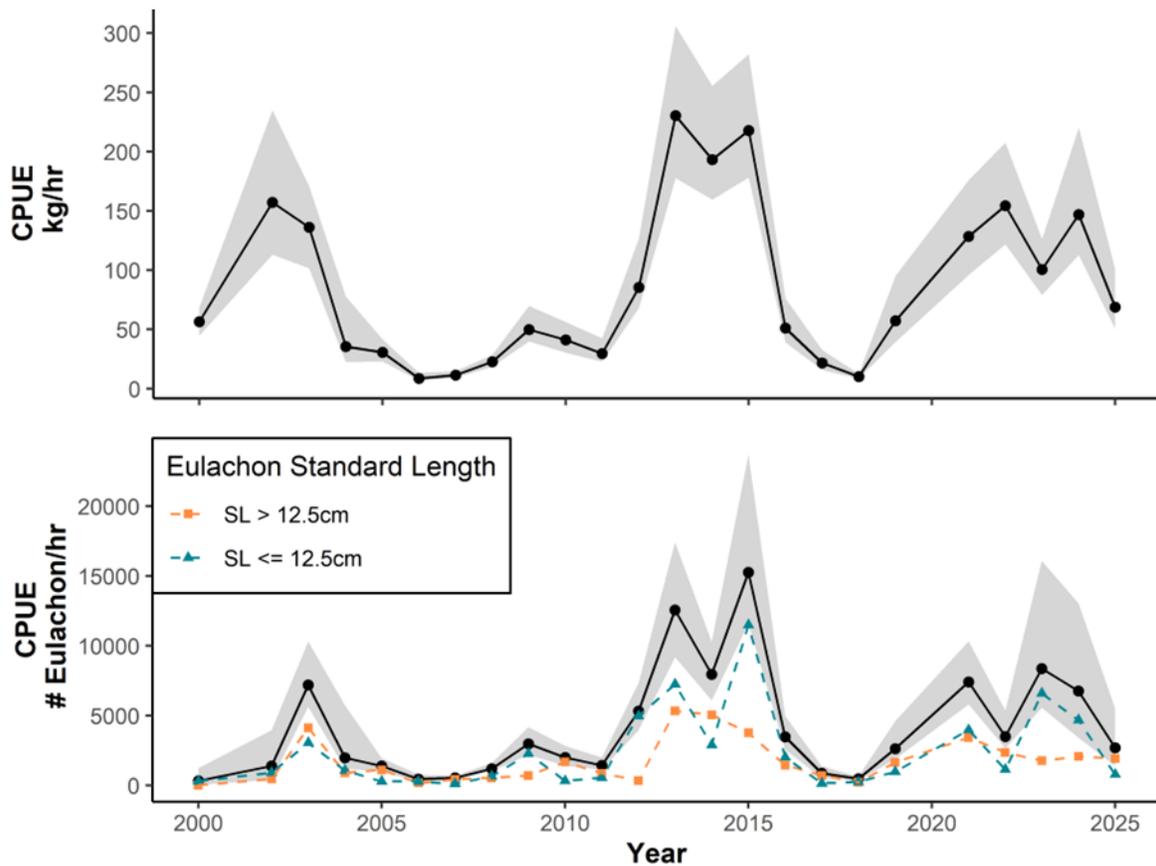
Eulachon caught in the small mesh bottom trawl survey (and other marine catch sources) represent variable ranges in size and age with considerable uncertainty in their ages and association with spawning stocks, such as in the Fraser River, the Columbia River, and other watersheds. With regards to the small mesh bottom trawl survey as an information source to estimate regional biomass, non-standard analytical methods are required because the survey's methodology and coverage have changed throughout the time series. Recent efforts have been taken to explore and compare findings from non-standard analytical methods to estimate regional Eulachon abundance, and for two size classes of Eulachon captured in the survey for years when sufficient data were collected.

Although not defined as one of the four indicators that could be used for managing Eulachon in Hay et al.'s 2003 work, Eulachon CPUE trends from marine surveys may provide insight into the growth or productivity of year class strength related to past or future Columbia River and/or Fraser River spawners. Trends in Eulachon catch per unit effort (CPUE) and fish length sample information collected from the WCVI offshore small mesh multi-species bottom trawl survey are monitored to consider possible ecological associations (see Figures 3 and 4). However, observations should be

considered cautiously due to ecological uncertainty and variability associated with Eulachon stock structure and linkages to river spawning, size at age, and age at maturity; therefore, further investigation is warranted (Schweigert et al., 2012; see section 3.5).

Offshore Eulachon biomass index: Up until 2012, Eulachon catch information from the offshore small mesh multi-species survey was used to calculate an annual index of relative Eulachon biomass for the lower region of the WCVI (Areas 121, 23, 123, 124 and 125). Data on the offshore biomass index prior to 2013 can be found in the 2021 Fraser River Eulachon IFMP. The index estimates were used to inform the Eulachon Action Level (EAL), as a bycatch management tool for the shrimp trawl fishery (see section 3.3) however this was discontinued in 2013.

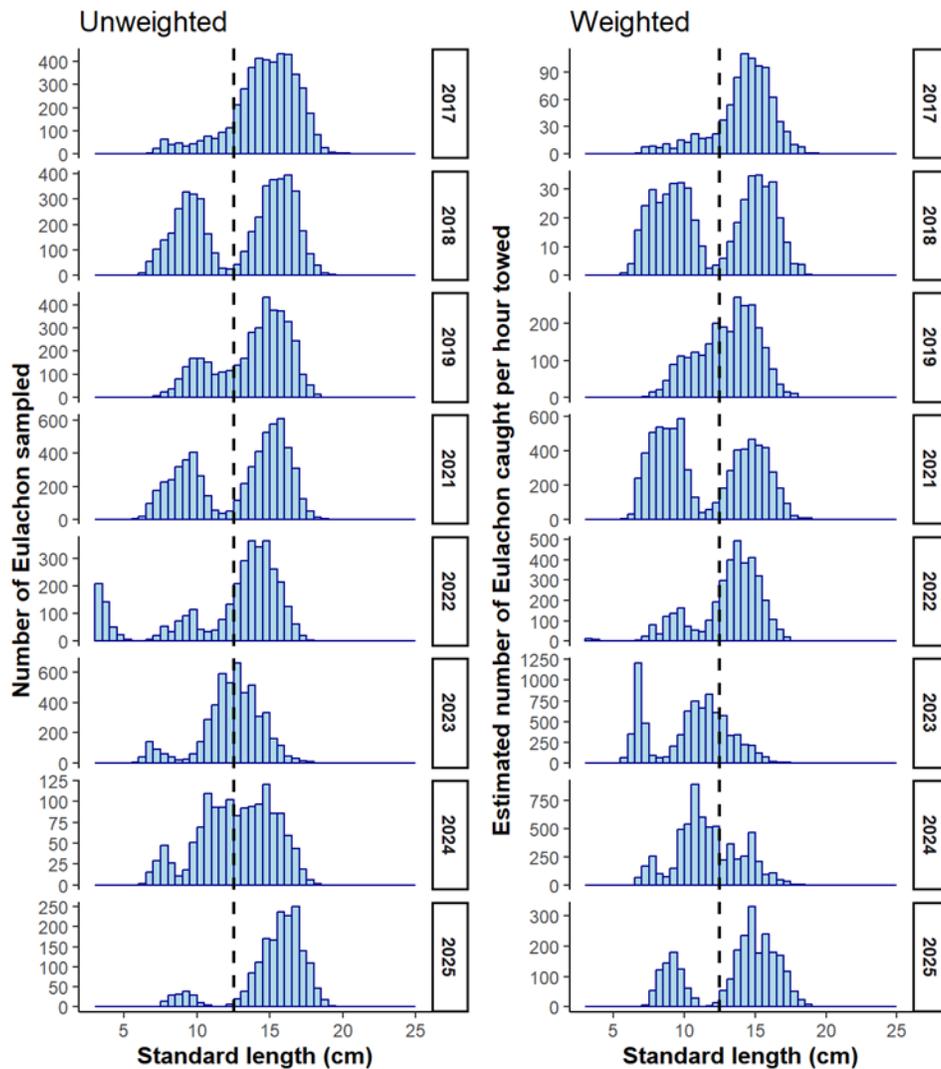
Eulachon catch per unit effort (CPUE) trends: In 2025, mean Eulachon CPUE estimates (in both catch weight and number of fish units) decreased from 2024 estimates, although the average catch rates for the number of fish greater than 12.5 cm appear to be similar over the 2022-2024 seasons (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Eulachon mean catch per unit effort (CPUE) and 95% bootstrap confidence intervals (gray envelopes) from 2000-2025 west coast of Vancouver Island small mesh multi-species bottom trawl surveys. **Top panel:** catch weight per trawl tow duration (kg/hour) and **Bottom panel:** number of fish per tow duration. Dashed lines represent mean catch number per unit effort of Eulachon greater than 12.5 cm standard length (orange squares) or less than or equal to 12.5 cm standard length (blue triangles). There are no 2020 observations because the 2020 survey was cancelled due to COVID-19 operating restrictions.

Eulachon length data: Eulachon standard length-frequency trends from this survey tend to reveal multi-modal distributions with different age classes distinguished by different length ranges (generally younger fish are shorter and older fish are longer). Fish that are less than 5 cm are generally estimated to be less than one year old and are not expected to be well represented due to the survey's offshore and bottom depth coverage. Fish that are between 5cm and 12 cm are generally estimated to be approximately one year old. However, there can be considerable variability in size ranges due to factors such as: varying hatch dates within and between rivers, varying growth rates within and between seasons and between fish rearing from different coastal areas. Therefore, trends in length frequencies of fish from one-year and older can vary considerably between years and considerable overlap in length ranges can occur between age groups.

In Figure 4, annual Eulachon standard length frequency distributions are represented in two ways. One way shows statistically unweighted standard length frequency histograms (Figure 3, left panel) where fish length observations were pooled across all fishing events (each fish observation has equal statistical weight). The other way shows standard length frequency histograms where samples of fish length observations were statistically weighted by the estimated total number of Eulachon caught in each fishing event and standardized by the fishing duration (in hours) of each fishing event (Figure 4, right panel). Length trends for 2025 indicate a relatively large proportion of fish greater than 12.5 cm (representing older ages) with a moderate proportion of fish less than 12.5 cm, composed mostly of fish from 7.5-11 cm standard length (and likely representing fish of approximately 1-year old).



**Figure 4:** Eulachon standard length-frequency histograms (proportions by size bin) from 2017- 2025 (Spring) west coast of Vancouver Island offshore small mesh bottom trawl surveys. There 2020 survey was cancelled due to COVID-19 operating restrictions.

**Left panel:** Pooled length frequencies by each survey year (statistically unweighted).

**Right panel** Statistically weighted length frequencies by the estimated total number of Eulachon caught in each fishing event and standardized by the fishing duration of each tow.

#### Genetic Information:

Genetic information from river-caught Eulachon has been analyzed to develop spawner baseline profiles to compare genetic information between spawning Eulachon from different rivers (e.g. Beacham et al., 2005; Candy et al., 2014; Sutherland et al., 2020). These previous studies concordantly identified weak population structure across the Eulachon range in geographic distribution, and recognized only three genetically differentiated large-scale regional population groupings, which included individuals spawning from California to Fraser River included, north of the Fraser River to Alaska, and Gulf of Alaska, respectively.

There is strong interest by DFO Science and its collaborators to increase and improve Eulachon

baseline genetic sample collection in association with the development and testing of new molecular analyses using genomic sequencing. Research is being planned by a team at the DFO *Molecular Genetics Laboratory* at the Pacific Biological Station to: 1) initiate complete genomic sequencing and analysis of Eulachon DNA from a wide range of spawning rivers and then, from a subset of these river sources, 2) further acquire genomic sequencing information from additional specimens representing different spawning seasons to investigate interannual variability. Collectively these planned efforts are to enable several hypothesis to be tested about the degree of philopatry (i.e. the tendency to return to the same spawning area generation after generation), within and across spawning grounds (E. Rondeau and A. Tigano, DFO, pers comm., June 2025).

### **Other DFO Eulachon Science Initiatives**

Scientific information compiled on the biology, distribution and fishery data of Fraser River Eulachon is documented in material related to: *Recovery Potential Assessment of Eulachon (Thaleichthys pacificus) in Canada* (Schweigert et al., 2012); the *Recovery Potential Assessment for Eulachon – Fraser River Designatable Unit* (DFO, 2015). Since these recovery potential assessments, DFO Science has been involved in several research projects to address knowledge gaps related to Eulachon ecology. Example projects listed below:

1. The deployment of periodic bottom trawl surveys to determine Eulachon biological condition, distribution, migration patterns and timing between offshore rearing areas and inshore waters adjacent to Eulachon spawning rivers.
  - a. South Coast (Fraser River pathway) Strait of Georgia, south of Nanaimo to the mouth of Juan de Fuca Strait, monthly from October 2017 to June 2018. Initial study findings are published and available online (Dealy and Hodes, 2019).
  - b. North Coast, Chatham Sound (Skeena and Nass River pathways) monthly from late July/August to November 2018, and January to March 2019. Initial study findings are expected to be published in late 2019 or 2020.
2. A 2018 pilot project in collaboration with the LFFA in the Fraser River to assess whether acoustic technologies are an effective, non-lethal way to assess Eulachon returns.
3. Otolith (i.e. fish inner ear bone) studies for estimating age through interpreting otolith growth patterns and for seeking methods to validate putative age information through micro chemistry (isotope analysis). Currently there is no validated aging technique for Eulachon.
4. Lower Fraser River Eulachon environmental DNA (eDNA) feasibility study to see if the relative abundance of Eulachon DNA collected from river water samples can be correlated with gillnet CPUE information from the LFFA Eulachon Assessment Survey, and/or estimates from the Fraser Eulachon egg and larval survey. In partnership with LFFA, water samples for the study were collected on 16 gillnet survey dates from March 21- May 15, 2022.
5. Exploration of modeling methods for assessing and comparing abundance of Eulachon caught in offshore small mesh multi-species bottom trawl surveys, with a focus on the west coast of Vancouver Island survey areas and time series.
6. Exploration of molecular techniques for the detection of co-occurring smelt species and to address uncertainties in visual methods of identification of smelt specimens collected from Fraser River Eulachon egg and larval surveys.

## United States Eulachon – Status and observations

In the United States (U.S.), the Southern Distinct Population of Eulachon was federally listed as Threatened under the U.S. *Endangered Species Act* in March 18, 2010, and the *Recovery Plan for the Southern Distinct Population Segment of Eulachon (Thaleichthys pacificus)* was published in 2017 followed by a five-year review in 2022 (NMFS, 2017; NMFS, 2022; Gustafson et al. 2022).

### Columbia River Eulachon Catch Observations

There is a long time series of Eulachon catch landings for the Columbia River and its tributaries, stemming from the late 1890s to recent years, which show that landings generally exceeded 500 tonnes most years from 1915 to 1990 and exceeded 1,000 tonnes about a third of those years (Gustafson et al., 2022). Catch levels then declined drastically in the early 1990s from earlier levels in association with fishery regulations (WDFW and ODFW, 2023).

### Columbia River Egg and Larval Survey

Efforts to track and estimate annual relative abundance of Eulachon in the Columbia River watershed via egg and larval surveys have been conducted and supported by Washington and Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service most years from 2000 to 2025. Uncertainties associated with mixed smelt species, especially Longfin Smelt, co-occurring as progeny in Columbia River water samples with Eulachon is under investigation.

Trends of seasonal abundance between the Columbia River and Fraser River Eulachon egg and larval survey observations are often divergent, especially in recent years (i.e. 2018- 2025). For example, the 2022 and 2023 Columbia River survey biomass indices represent some of the highest levels in recent history (L. Heironimus and M. Sturza pers comm 2024); whereas the 2022 and 2023 Fraser River survey biomass indices represent some of the lowest Fraser River levels. The reasons for the contrast between Columbia River and Fraser River Eulachon observations are unclear. In general, Eulachon spawner abundance in the Columbia River watershed is at a much higher magnitude than levels seen in other Eulachon spawning rivers on the Pacific Coast. Furthermore, the Columbia River Eulachon abundance trends align fairly closely (by year and year lags) to CPUE relative abundance trends from the DFO west coast of Vancouver Island small mesh bottom trawl survey.

For more information on Columbia River Eulachon, please visit:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/eulachon#conservation-management>

## 2.5. RESEARCH

Information compiled on the biology, habitat distribution and fishery catches of Fraser Eulachon is reported in: *The Recovery Potential Assessment of Eulachon (Thaleichthys pacificus) in Canada* (Schweigert et al. 2012); *The Recovery Potential Assessment for Eulachon – Fraser River Designatable Unit* (DFO, 2015); the *Recovery Plan for the Southern Distinct Population Segment of Eulachon (Thaleichthys pacificus) and its 5-year review* (NMFS, 2022). In addition, ecological information associated with timing and magnitude of catch trends and biological sampling efforts are reported in *Monthly distribution and catch trends of Eulachon (Thaleichthys pacificus) from Juan de Fuca Strait to the Fraser River, British Columbia, October 2017 to June 2018* (Dealy and Hodes,

2019). Listed below in chronological order are the titles and online sources for the reports.

The 2011 DFO research document (CSAS 2011/101) provides background information on Eulachon in support of a Recovery Potential Assessment (RPA) (see section 3.5). To view the CSAS paper, please visit the following site:

[http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/ResDocs-DocRech/2011/2011\\_101-eng.html](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/ResDocs-DocRech/2011/2011_101-eng.html)

To view the Recovery Potential Assessment (RPA) for Canada (Schweigert et al. 2012), please visit the following site:

[http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/ResDocs-DocRech/2012/2012\\_098-eng.html](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/ResDocs-DocRech/2012/2012_098-eng.html)

To view the Recovery Potential Assessment (RPA) for the Fraser River Designatable Unit (DFO, 2015), please visit the following site:

[http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/SAR-AS/2015/2015\\_002-eng.html](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/SAR-AS/2015/2015_002-eng.html)

To view the U.S. 2017 Recovery Plan for the Southern Distinct Population Segment of Eulachon (NMFS, 2017) please visit the following site: <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/15989>

To view the report on Monthly Distribution and Catch Trends of Eulachon from Juan de Fuca Strait to the Fraser River, British Columbia, October 2017 to June 2018 (Dealy and Hodes, 2019), please visit the following site: <https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/40811724.pdf>

To view the report on Monthly Distribution and Catch Trends of Eulachon in Chatham Sound, British Columbia, July 2018 to March 2019 (Dealy and Hodes, 2021), please visit the following site: [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2021/mpo-dfo/Fs97-4-3187-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2021/mpo-dfo/Fs97-4-3187-eng.pdf)

### **3. MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

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The following sections highlight the on-going or longer-term management issues that are being addressed in this fishery.

#### **3.1. LIMITED BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION**

At present, there is limited biological information available for pre-season forecasting of spawner run size for Fraser River Eulachon.

The RPA (Schweigert et al. 2012) identifies several gaps in our knowledge of Eulachon biology and ecology, including limited information on ages, growth rates and mortality. The ability to identify genetic differences between populations, including the ability to identify the origins of fish in offshore mixed stock samples, would be useful for understanding the ecological roles of Eulachon and their responses to management actions, as well as the potential impacts from harvesting and habitat changes. Additional spawner samples and genetic analyses to better characterize genetic variability of spawning fish within and between rivers is greatly desired. There is also uncertainty around the age of spawning, variability in annual growth rates, and degree to which Eulachon return to natal rivers. Based mostly on trends in fish length observations, it has been assumed that most fish live at sea for approximately three years or longer before returning to rivers to spawn. Effects of climate change on Eulachon ecology are also uncertain but improved understanding of habitat requirements for all life history stages and adult and juvenile prey requirements would help to inform integrated management in keeping with the principles of the DFO Sustainable Fisheries Framework.

Updated time series information of the biological indicators described in Hay et al. (2003) in relation to forecasting spawning stock strength to qualify fishery management decisions of Fraser River Eulachon collectively and individually appear to provide poor forecasting power for Fraser River Eulachon. DFO is seeking to better understand ecological information gaps and evaluate available data in order to move towards abundance-based methods for setting annual harvest levels.

#### **3.2. FOOD, SOCIAL AND CEREMONIAL ACCESS**

Indigenous peoples in the Lower Fraser Area have expressed the concern that their needs are not being met by their current level of access to Eulachon for FSC purposes. A review of the current FSC harvest level and the development of an abundance-based approach to determine harvest levels for future years have been requested by Indigenous peoples.

#### **3.3. BYCATCH IN OTHER FISHERIES**

Fraser River Eulachon are incidentally caught throughout BC in both shrimp trawl and groundfish trawl fisheries.

##### **Shrimp Trawl Fishery**

Eulachon are not permitted to be retained in the shrimp trawl fishery; however, there may be incidental mortality from bycatch. Eulachon bycatch in the WCVI shrimp trawl fishery from 2006 to 2014, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022, and 2024 was estimated to be 0.5 t or less annually. Higher shrimp landings resulted in Eulachon bycatch in 2015, 2016, 2019, 2020, and 2023 of 3.3, 14.6, 1.3, 1.7, and 1.1 tonnes, respectively.

The Department has been working with the shrimp trawl industry to minimize Eulachon bycatch. The following management measures have been implemented in the WCVI shrimp trawl fishery to monitor and mitigate impacts of incidental catch of Eulachon:

1. In 2017/18 DFO implemented several new pilot initiatives to enhance Eulachon monitoring and support in-season management of the shrimp trawl fishery. For WCVI Pacific Fishery Management Areas (PFMAs) 124 and 125 the new initiatives included: (i) mandatory 100% at-sea observer coverage for all shrimp trawl fishing, (ii) a new non-transferable individual vessel Eulachon bycatch limit, (iii) a new individual vessel Eulachon bycatch coverage adjustment, and (iv) mandatory dockside validation. At-sea observer requirements were also increased in WCVI PFMA 21, 23, 121, and 123 to a minimum of 25% coverage rate. Eulachon bycatch monitoring will continue in the shrimp trawl fishery in 2026/27. Mandatory dockside validation of shrimp landings within PFMA 124 and 125 was removed for the 2023 season.
2. Mandatory bycatch reduction devices in shrimp trawl nets. A grid designed to reduce non-target fish species from entering the shrimp trawl net is mandatory for all shrimp trawlers. Specific details on grid spacing and deployment requirements are available in the Shrimp Trawl IFMP.
3. Commercial closure in Queen Charlotte Sound shrimp management area. No fishing has occurred within this area since 2000 because of concerns for Eulachon stocks in central coast rivers. Eulachon populations in BC are being considered for listing under the Species at Risk Act. Given the current SARA process and consultations, DFO is not considering any commercial harvest opportunities in QCSND during the 2026/27 season.
4. Eulachon Action Levels (EAL): An annual Eulachon bycatch action level is set for WCVI Shrimp Management Areas to encourage active shrimp trawl harvesters to adjust their gear to minimize Eulachon bycatch. In the event the estimate of Eulachon bycatch in a given WCVI area reaches the Eulachon Action Level, the commercial fishery will likely close. A precautionary approach has been taken to deal with Eulachon bycatch and the EAL has been reduced since 2011. The offshore Eulachon biomass index is no longer used to set the EAL. Since 2016/17, the EAL has been set at 4 t (reduced from 6 t in 2015/16). The 4 t EAL is established for SMAs 121OFF, 23IN, 23OFF, 124OFF, and 125OFF combined. The EAL is further divided into two areas groups. If one of these two area groups does not open for commercial shrimp harvest, then that portion of the EAL may be allocated to the other area group.

**Table 4:** Eulachon Action Levels for West Coast Vancouver Island

<b>Shrimp Management Area Group</b>	<b>Annual Eulachon Action Levels (EAL) (t)</b>
124OFF and 125OFF	2.0
123OFF+121OFF and 23IN	2.0

The total EAL for the WCVI is 4 t. In-season Eulachon bycatch estimates for WCVI Shrimp Management Area (SMA) groups are based on data collected by at-sea observers, following the Pooled In-season (PI) method, defined by Hay (1999). The Eulachon to shrimp ratio from at-sea observations are applied to total estimated shrimp catch (hails) to generate an estimate of in-season Eulachon bycatch for WCVI. If estimated Eulachon bycatch meets or exceeds the EAL for the defined area, the area will be closed. The fishery has been closed due to the EAL being reached in 2000, 2016 and 2019. In 2016 the shrimp trawl fishery in shrimp management areas (SMA) 124OFF and 125OFF reached the EAL, resulting in a closure of the major offshore areas.

For further information on the shrimp trawl fishery, or for a copy of the current Shrimp Trawl Integrated Fisheries Management Plan, please contact Guy Parker, Resource Management Biologist (250-714-8379 / [guy.parker@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:guy.parker@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)) or Abigail Mitchell, Resource Manager (778-361-0271 / [abigail.mitchell@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:abigail.mitchell@dfo-mpo.gc.ca))

In April 2018 the Department conducted consultations with First Nations and stakeholders on a proposed amendment to the Pacific Fisheries Regulations section 8(1) that would allow commercial shrimp trawl ‘S’ licenced vessels to use artificial lights (LEDs) on their fishing gear. Recent scientific research in the United States has indicated that the proper placement of LED lights on the trawl gear drastically reduces the amount of bycatch of several species, including Eulachon. In a 2015 study by Hannah et al., bycatch of Eulachon was reduced by approximately 90% by using the LED lights. In May 2019 a regulation amendment was approved for the Pacific Fisheries Regulations to allow the use of LED lights in the shrimp trawl fishery. Licence rules for the use and placement of the LEDs has been developed in the U.S. fisheries, and LED lights are required in the Oregon, Washington, and California shrimp trawl fisheries (ODFW, 2018) as part of their Eulachon Recovery Plan (NMFS, 2017). Following a recommendation by industry, the use of LED lights was made mandatory in the shrimp trawl fishery in 2021/2022.

### 3.4. OCEANS AND HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS

*For the most up-to-date information, see website links, advisory board updates, and Fishery Notices.*

#### **Canada’s Marine and Coastal Areas Conservation Mandate**

To protect biodiversity and meet its marine conservation targets, Canada is establishing marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), in consultation with First Nations, other levels of government, industry, non-governmental organizations, and the public.

More information is available online for:

Canada’s marine conservation targets: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/index-eng.html>

Canada’s marine protected and conserved areas:

<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/areas-zones/index-eng.html>

Marine refuges and fisheries management measures that qualify as OECMs: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/index-eng.html>

### **Marine Protected and Conserved Areas**

Canada uses a variety of legislative tools for marine conservation, depending on the lead federal department or agency and their coastal mandates. As goals, objectives, and management plans are finalized for these initiatives, DFO's management of fisheries will be adapted as appropriate, in consultation with interested parties through initiative-specific consultations and annual Integrated Fisheries Management processes. The implementation of spatial marine conservation initiatives is informed by considerations under the *Oceans Act*, *Fisheries Act* and the *Sustainable Fisheries Framework* policy suite, and mandate commitments to the Blue Economy Strategy and reconciliation with First Nations.

For more information on Canada's marine conservation tools: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/plan/index-eng.html>

For more information on relevant legislation, please see the following:

Marine refuges and other measures under the *Fisheries Act*: <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-14/page-1.html>

Marine Protected Areas - *Oceans Act*: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-2.4/>

National Wildlife Areas - *Canada Wildlife Act*: <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/w-9/page-1.html>

National Marine Conservation Areas (Reserves) - *National Marine Conservation Areas Act*: [https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/annualstatutes/2002\\_18/page-1.html](https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/annualstatutes/2002_18/page-1.html)

An overview map of federal marine conservation initiatives in the Pacific Region is provided in Figure 1, followed by a table outlining relevant details by initiative – both established and in progress. Many initiatives are types of marine protected areas (MPAs) or marine refuges (OECMs). See site-specific regulations and management plans for any restrictions on activities, or Fishery Notices where applicable.

Figure 1. Pacific Fisheries Management Areas and Federal Marine Conservation Initiatives and Closure

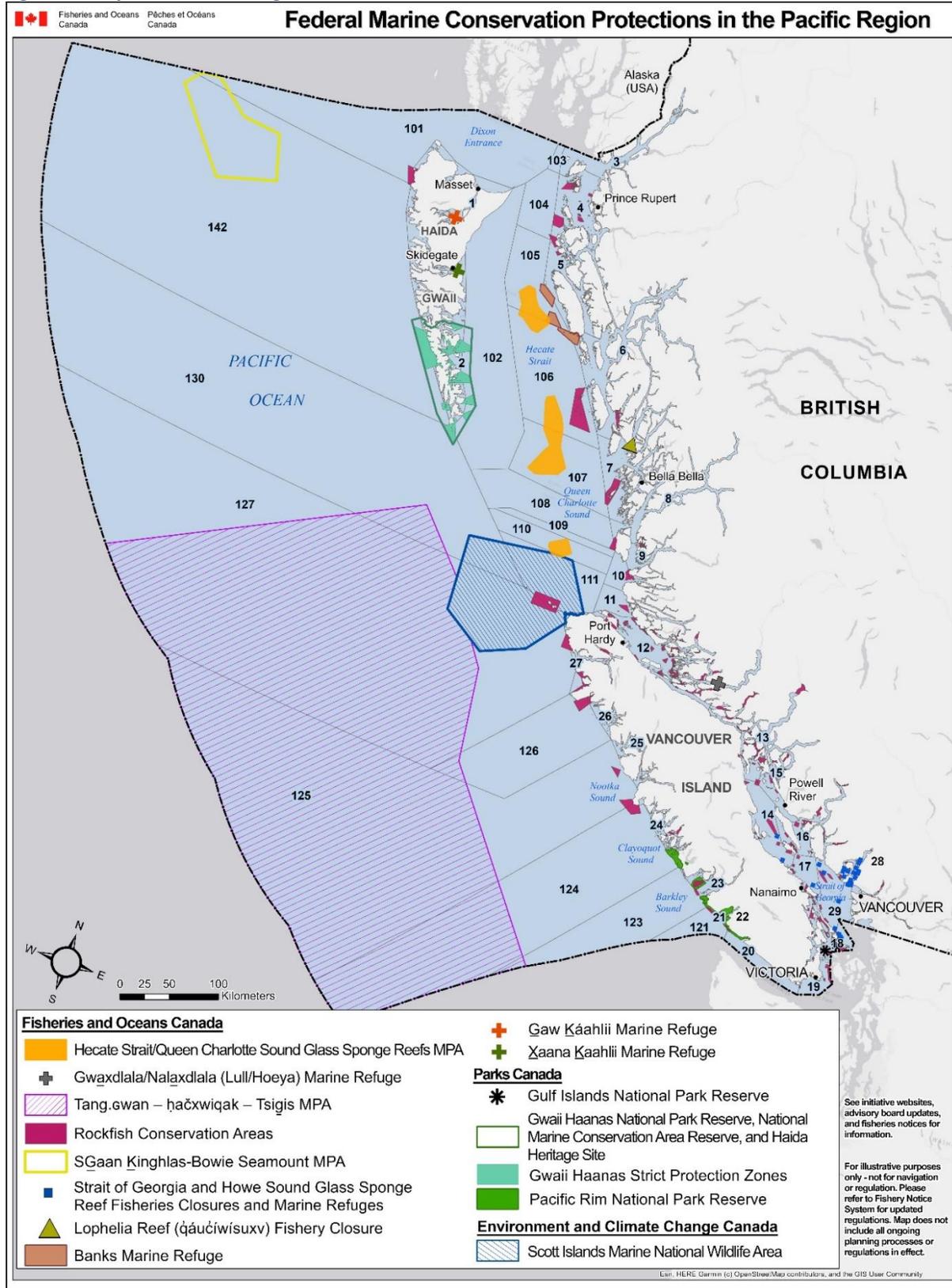


Table 1. Overview of Federal Marine Conservation Initiatives in DFO Pacific Region (see Figure 1 map)

Name	Type	Lead	Weblinks	Contact	Fishery Considerations
<b>Fisheries and Oceans Canada, <i>Oceans Act</i> and <i>Fisheries Act</i></b>					
<b>Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound Glass Sponge Reefs Marine Protected Area</b>	MPA	DFO	<a href="https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/hecate-charlotte/index-eng.html">https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/hecate-charlotte/index-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacific.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacific.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	See MPA website and regulations for more details: <a href="https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2017-15/index.html">https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2017-15/index.html</a> In the MPA there are 3 different management zone types: Core Protection Zones, Vertical Adaptive Management Zones and Adaptive Management Zones <b>The entire MPA is closed to commercial bottom-contact fishing activities. Core Protection Zones (CPZ) are closed to anchoring and all fishing activities.</b> Commercial fishing in a Vertical Adaptive Management Zone (VAMZ) is permitted if the fishing is carried out by means of midwater trawl, midwater hook and line, troll, seine or gillnet and the gear does not enter a CPZ. Recreational fishing in a VAMZ is permitted if the fishing is carried out by means of midwater hook and line and the gear does not enter a CPZ.
<b>SGáan Kínghlas-Bowie Seamount Marine Protected Area</b>	MPA	DFO & Council of Haida Nation	<a href="https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/sgaan-kinghlas-bowie/index-eng.html">https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/sgaan-kinghlas-bowie/index-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacific.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacific.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	See MPA website and regulations for more details: <a href="https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2008-124/">https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2008-124/</a> The MPA is closed to all commercial fishing activities. The MPA is also closed to recreational and FSC bottom-contact fishing activities.
<b>Tang.gwan – Һаҭхwiqak – Tsigis Marine Protected Area</b>  <b>Offshore Pacific Seamounts and Vents Closure †</b>	MPA	DFO	<a href="https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/tht/index-eng.html">https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/tht/index-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacific.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.OceansPacific-OceansPacific.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	See MPA regulations for more details: <a href="#">Canada Gazette, Part 2, Volume 158, Number 13: Tang.gwan {mdash} Һаҭхwiqak {mdash} Tsigis Marine Protected Area Regulations.</a> The MPA has 3 different management zones: General zone, Dellwood zone and Union Zone. Bottom-contact gear is prohibited in the entire MPA. Commercial and recreational fishing using pelagic hook and line gear is allowed in all three of the MPA’s zones, provided the gear does not go below a depth of 100 m from the sea surface in the Union or Dellwood Zones, or

					<p>500 m from the sea surface in the General Zone. Midwater trawl is allowed in the General Zone, provided the gear does not go below a depth of 500 m from the sea surface and is prohibited in the Union and Dellwood Zones. Fishery Notices for these closures can be found in <a href="#">FN0096</a> (2025).</p> <p>† Offshore Pacific Seamounts and Vents Closure Variation Orders have been replaced by the Variation Orders for this MPA.</p>
<b>Banks Marine Refuge</b>	Marine Refuge	DFO & Gitxaala Nation	<a href="https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/banks-eng.html">https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/banks-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	<p>Specific details of the closures and restrictions can be found in Fishery Notices <a href="#">FN0102</a> and <a href="#">FN0101</a> (2025).</p> <p>In addition to all RCA closures remaining in effect, as of February 14, 2025, commercial prawn and crab by trap fisheries are closed around western portions of Banks Island, and as of March 4, 2025, recreational prawn and crab by trap fisheries are closed around western portions of Banks Island.</p>
<b>Gaw Káahlíi Marine Refuge</b>	Marine Refuge	DFO & Council of Haida Nation	<a href="https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/masset-inlet-embouchure-eng.html">https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/masset-inlet-embouchure-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	<p>Specific details of the closures and restrictions can be found in Fishery Notices <a href="#">FN0100</a> and <a href="#">FN0099</a> (2025).</p> <p>As of February 14, 2025, all commercial fisheries are indefinitely closed in portions of Gaw Káahlíi (Masset Inlet). As of March 4, 2025, all recreational fisheries, except shore-based angling, are closed in portions of Gaw Káahlíi (Masset Inlet).</p>
<b>Gwaxdlala/Nalaxdlala (Lull/Hoeya) Marine Refuge</b>	Marine Refuge	DFO & Mamalili kulla First Nation	<a href="https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/lull-hoeya-eng.html">https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/lull-hoeya-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	<p>Specific details of the closures and restrictions can be found in Fishery Notices <a href="#">FN0118</a> (2023).</p> <p>The Gwaxdlala/Nalaxdlala (Lull/Hoeya) marine refuge is closed to all fisheries (commercial, recreational and FSC fishing activities).</p>
<b>Homayno (Heydon/Loughborough) *</b>	<i>Proposed</i> Marine Refuge	DFO & Wei Wai Kum First Nation	TBD	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	<p>DFO has sought input on potential fisheries closures and a proposed marine refuge at sites within Homayno (portions of Heydon and Loughborough Inlet). In the event of establishment of a marine refuge, specific details of the closures and restrictions will be communicated by Fishery Notices.</p>

					The fisheries proposed for potential closure in portions of the marine refuge at Homayno (Heydon/Loughborough) are: commercial prawn by trap, crab by trap, salmon, and groundfish and recreational salmon, finfish and invertebrate fisheries.
<b>Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound Glass Sponge Reef (GSR) Marine Refuges*</b>	Marine Refuge	DFO	<a href="https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/c-eccsr-cerceef/closures-fermetures-eng.html">https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/c-eccsr-cerceef/closures-fermetures-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM MCT-OCMGPPAC .MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	Specific details of the closures and restrictions on a site-by-site basis can be found in Fishery Notices <a href="#">FN0205</a> (2019), <a href="#">FN0571</a> (2015), and <a href="#">FN0039*</a> (2022). All commercial, recreational and Indigenous food, social and ceremonial (FSC) bottom-contact fishing activities are prohibited and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prawn and crab by trap</li> <li>• shrimp by trawl</li> <li>• groundfish by midwater and bottom trawl</li> <li>• groundfish by hook and line</li> <li>• use of downrigger gear in recreational salmon trolling (in select sites via Condition of Licence).</li> </ul> Restrictions vary by site).
<b>Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs)</b>	RCA	DFO	<a href="https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/maps-cartes/rca-acs/index-eng.html">https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/maps-cartes/rca-acs/index-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM MCT-OCMGPPAC .MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	There are 162 Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) in British Columbia, covering roughly 4,350km <sup>2</sup> of Canadian Pacific waters. These areas are closed to a range of recreational and commercial fisheries to protect inshore rockfish and their habitat. See website for details on individual RCAs by area.
<b>GSR-RCA Project: Proposed sites in Howe Sound and Jervis Inlet</b>	<i>Proposed Marine Refuges</i>	DFO	TBD	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM MCT-OCMGPPAC .MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	DFO is proposing six sites as marine refuges. Input is being sought on proposed fisheries closures at these sites. If the proposed marine refuges are established, closures may be in place in early 2026. Details of any closures will be communicated through Fishery Notices and updates to license conditions, where applicable. Proposed closures include commercial and recreational fisheries currently restricted in Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs), as well as bottom-contact fisheries. An information package has been shared and

					meetings established with potentially affected fisheries.
<b>Xaana Kaahlii Marine Refuge</b>	Marine Refuge	DFO & Council of Haida Nation	<a href="https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/ski-degate-inlet-embouchure-eng.html">https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/ski-degate-inlet-embouchure-eng.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	Specific details of the closures and restrictions can be found in Fishery Notices <a href="#">FN0100</a> and <a href="#">FN0099</a> (2025). As of February 14, 2025, all commercial fisheries are indefinitely closed in portions of Xaana Kaahlii (Skidegate Inlet). As of March 4, 2025, all recreational fisheries, except shore-based angling, are closed in portions of Xaana Kaahlii (Skidegate Inlet).
<b>Lophelia Reef (q'au'wísuxv)</b>	Fishery Closure	DFO, Kitasoo Xai'xais and Heiltsuk First Nations	<a href="https://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm?pg=view_notice&amp;DOC_ID=296056&amp;ID=allhttps://www.canada.ca/en/fisheries-oceans/news/2024/03/fisheries-and-oceans-canada-closes-the-first-and-only-known-live-coral-reef-in-pacific-canada-to-all-commercial-and-recreational-bottom-contact-fis.html">https://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm?pg=view_notice&amp;DOC_ID=296056&amp;ID=allhttps://www.canada.ca/en/fisheries-oceans/news/2024/03/fisheries-and-oceans-canada-closes-the-first-and-only-known-live-coral-reef-in-pacific-canada-to-all-commercial-and-recreational-bottom-contact-fis.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.PACFM.MCT-OCMGPPAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>	Specific details of the closures and restrictions of this site can be found in Fishery Notice <a href="#">FN0085</a> (2024). The Lophelia Reef is closed to all bottom-contact commercial and recreational fisheries (including midwater trawl).
<b>Parks Canada, National Marine Conservation Areas Act</b>					
<b>Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site</b>	NMCAR	Parks Canada	<a href="https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas">https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas</a>	<a href="mailto:gwaiihaanas@pc.gc.ca">gwaiihaanas@pc.gc.ca</a>	Refer to Fishery Notice <a href="#">FN0536</a> (2019), released June 13, 2019 for a detailed description of the Strict Protection Zones. There is "no extraction or harvesting by anyone of the resources of the lands and non-tidal waters of the Archipelago for or in support of commercial enterprise" (s3.3). Contact the Gwaii Haanas administration office: 1-877-559-8818
<b>Proposed Central Coast National Marine Conservation Area Reserve*</b>	<i>Proposed NMCAR</i>	Parks Canada	<a href="https://parks.canada.ca/amnc-nmca/cnamnc-cnmca/cotecentrale-centralcoast">https://parks.canada.ca/amnc-nmca/cnamnc-cnmca/cotecentrale-centralcoast</a>	<a href="mailto:nmca-pacific-amnc@pc.gc.ca">nmca-pacific-amnc@pc.gc.ca</a>	Proposed site is currently in the establishment agreement negotiation phase. Successful negotiation of an establishment agreement will include determining an outer boundary for the site within which the <a href="#">Federal Marine Protected Area Protection Standard</a>

					<p>will apply, which includes a prohibition on bottom trawl gear. Associated steps will be taken following establishment agreement completion to advance application of the Standard. Permitted activities are determined during the management planning process which begins after formal establishment. Management planning will also be informed by the expertise of an advisory committee comprised of representatives from a range of marine sectors and interests, including the commercial fishing sector.</p> <p>No fisheries closures associated with the proposed Central Coast NMCAR are anticipated for the 2026 IFMP / fishing season.</p>
<b>Gulf Islands National Park Reserve</b>	National Park marine area	Parks Canada	<a href="https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/bc/gulf">https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/bc/gulf</a>	<a href="mailto:gulfinfo@pc.gc.ca">gulfinfo@pc.gc.ca</a>	Park regulations can be found at: <a href="#">Canada National Parks Act</a>
<b>Pacific Rim National Park Reserve</b>	National Park marine area	Parks Canada	<a href="https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/pacificrim">https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/pacificrim</a>	<a href="mailto:Pacrim.info@pc.gc.ca">Pacrim.info@pc.gc.ca</a>	Park regulations can be found at: <a href="#">Canada National Parks Act</a>

**Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canada Wildlife Act**

<b>Proposed marine National Wildlife Area at Nearshore Haida Gwaii</b>	<i>Proposed Marine National Wildlife Area</i>	ECCC & Council of Haida Nation	TBD	<a href="mailto:RNFMilieuMarinSCFPAC-CWSPACMarineNWA@ec.gc.ca">RNFMilieuMarinSCFPAC-CWSPACMarineNWA@ec.gc.ca</a>	<p>The marine NWA was identified in the Network Action Plan (2023) as the proposed tool for the Nearshore Haida Gwaii Site. Partners are currently in the feasibility assessment stage and reinitiating stakeholder engagement. In October 2025, Partners will be initiating the Nearshore Haida Gwaii Advisory Committee (NHGAC) and also engaging, as appropriate, through bilateral discussions. The role of the NHGAC is to provide a forum for Partners to receive advice and input on the feasibility assessment phase of the proposed marine NWA. The NHGAC will include representatives from a range of sectors, such as the commercial fisheries sector; and the Haida Gwaii Integrated Advisory Committee. The NHGAC is not a decision-making body.</p>
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					Discussion of any protection measures and/or permitted activities will occur during the Regulatory Strategy phase. No fisheries closures associated with the proposed marine NWA at Nearshore Haida Gwaii are anticipated for the 2026 IFMP / fishing season.
<b>Scott Islands Marine National Wildlife Area*</b>	Marine National Wildlife Area	ECCE	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/national-wildlife-areas/locations/scott-islands-marine.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/national-wildlife-areas/locations/scott-islands-marine.html</a>	<a href="mailto:DFO.PACFMMC-T-OCMGPPA.C.MPO@dfpo-mpo.gc.ca">mailto:DFO.PACFMMC-T-OCMGPPA.C.MPO@dfpo-mpo.gc.ca</a> or <a href="mailto:Enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca">Enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca</a> or <a href="mailto:rnfis-sinwa@ec.gc.ca">rnfis-sinwa@ec.gc.ca</a>	The Scott Islands Protected Marine Area regulations can be found at: <a href="https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2018-119/index.html">https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2018-119/index.html</a>

\* Indicates ongoing planning process. See initiative websites, advisory board updates, and Fishery Notices for information.

## Marine Spatial Planning in Canada

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is an internationally recognized and collaborative process for managing ocean spaces to achieve ecological, economic, cultural, and social objectives. In Canada, MSP does not replace regulatory responsibilities of existing authorities, rather through this collaborative process, MSP develops a shared vision, principles, and knowledge base, as well as decision support tools, to make appropriate and evidence-based decisions about ocean use and management.

Key deliverables for MSP in the Pacific region included the Canada Marine Planning Atlas (Pacific), the Marine Spatial Planning Framework for the Southern B.C. Planning Area, and the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network Action Plan for the Northern Shelf Bioregion. The Southern BC MSP Framework (the Framework) was developed with collaboration from the Province of British Columbia, other Federal departments, and Indigenous groups. The Northern Shelf Bioregion MPA Network Action Plan was endorsed by a trilateral partnership of First Nations, the Province of British Columbia, and the Government of Canada in February 2023.

For more information on marine spatial planning in Canada: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/management-gestion/msp-psm/index-eng.html>

The Canada Marine Planning Atlas for Pacific Region is available online at: [Canada Marine Planning Atlas \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/management-gestion/msp-psm/index-eng.html)

The Southern B.C. Marine Spatial Planning framework is available online at: [Southern British Columbia Marine Spatial Planning Framework](https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/management-gestion/msp-psm/index-eng.html)

The MPA Network Action Plan for the Northern Shelf Bioregion is available online at: <https://mpanetwork.ca/nap/>

### **3.5. SPECIES AT RISK ACT (SARA)**

The purposes of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) are “to prevent wildlife species from being extirpated or becoming extinct, to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered or threatened as a result of human activity and to manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened”.

SARA makes it an offence to kill, harm, harass, capture, take, possess, collect, buy, sell, or trade an individual or part of a wildlife species listed as extirpated, endangered, or threatened. It also prohibits the damage or destruction of the residences of these species. SARA also prohibits the destruction of any part of the critical habitat of listed endangered or threatened species or of any listed extirpated species if a recovery strategy has recommended the reintroduction of the species in the wild in Canada. Critical habitat is the habitat necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species and is identified in the recovery strategy or an action plan for the species.

Activities affecting a listed species, any part of its critical habitat, or the residences of its individuals may require permitting (subject to meeting specific purposes and pre-conditions set out in SARA) or exception/exemption. SARA prohibitions do not apply to species listed as special concern and there is no requirement to identify or protect critical habitat for special concern species.

For information on aquatic species listed under SARA or assessed as at risk by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, please visit the Species at Risk Public Registry at <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry.html>.

A species identification guide can be found here: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/identify-identifie-eng.html>.

#### **SARA Listing Process for Fraser River (and Central Pacific Coast and Nass/Skeena) Eulachon**

##### **COSEWIC Assessments 2011 and 2013**

COSEWIC is an independent advisory panel that assesses the status of wildlife species at risk of extinction in accordance with section 15 of SARA. COSEWIC assessed Eulachon in BC as three populations or designatable units (DUs), as follows: the Fraser River DU and Central Pacific Coast

DU as endangered (2011) and the Nass/Skeena Rivers DU as threatened (2011), subsequently reassessed as special concern (2013).

### **SARA Listing Process**

The COSEWIC assessment triggered the Government of Canada to consider listing these populations under SARA. A process to determine whether or not to list all three populations under SARA is underway, and a decision has not yet been made.

The regional listing process has included the development of science advice, via a Recovery Potential Assessment (RPA) for Eulachon ([http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/ResDocs-DocRech/2012/2012\\_098-eng.html](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/ResDocs-DocRech/2012/2012_098-eng.html)) and for Fraser River Eulachon ([https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2015/mpo-dfo/Fs70-6-2015-002-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/mpo-dfo/Fs70-6-2015-002-eng.pdf)); management scenarios that outline actions the Department can take in the event of, and of not, listing under SARA (completed in 2014, currently being updated); a socio-economic analysis (SEA) weighing the costs and benefits of each scenario (completed in 2016, currently being updated); as well as consultations with Indigenous Peoples and Wildlife Management Boards, and engagement with affected stakeholders and the public to seek input into whether or not to list these populations (completed 2011-2016, 2020).

DFO considers all of this information and provides advice to inform Governor in Council listing decisions.

### **Listing Consultation and Engagement**

The Department has sought input since 2011 into the development of the RPAs, management scenarios, and Socio-Economic Analysis for the Fraser River and Central Pacific Coast populations. An Indigenous technical review of the SEA was conducted in 2015. Initial consultations with Indigenous Peoples started in 2012 to clarify the SARA process and create an opportunity for discussion on the topic. Consultation with Indigenous Peoples and Wildlife Management Boards, and engagement with stakeholders and interested members of the public on whether or not to list the Fraser River and/or Central Pacific Coast population as endangered under SARA occurred from August 30 to November 30, 2016. Input was sought online via a web-based survey, by phone, letter, email, webinars, and meetings. The RPAs, management scenarios, and Socio-Economic Analysis for the Fraser River and Central Pacific Coast populations of Eulachon were made available during this consultation period. A consultation process for the Nass/Skeena population also occurred between 2013 and 2016. In fall 2020, the Department undertook a “check-in” engagement to ensure that viewpoints and information shared during 2016 consultations remain accurate and current. The listing process for all three populations of Eulachon is ongoing and no decision has yet been made regarding the addition of these populations to SARA Schedule 1.

## **3.6. MARINE MAMMAL, TURTLE AND BASKING SHARK INCIDENT AND SIGHTING REPORTS**

### **Marine Mammals**

In order to address conservation concerns with marine mammals, it is important that measures are taken to reduce the harm to and mortality of marine mammals resulting from primary threats they

face, including those that may be associated with fishing activity, as well as to improve data collection and quality of any interactions. As such, commercial fishing licenses have been amended to include a Condition of License for Marine Mammals that specify mitigation measures and reporting requirements. This includes mandatory reporting of all interactions with marine mammals, prohibition to disturb marine mammals and requirement for minimum approach distances to marine mammals as set out under the Marine Mammal Regulations.

### Marine Mammal Incident Reporting Hotline

DFO is responsible for assisting marine mammals and sea turtles in distress. If your vessel strikes a whale, or if you observe an entangled, sick, injured, distressed, or dead marine mammal in B.C. waters, please contact the B.C. Marine Mammal Response Network Incident Reporting Hotline immediately:

1-800-465-4336 OR VHF CHANNEL 16

What to report:

- Your name and contact information
- Date and time of incident
- Location: Latitude/Longitude coordinates, landmarks
- Species
- Animal alive/dead (animal condition)
- Nature of injury and supporting details (if possible)
- Pictures/Video taken



Best practices to reduce entanglement and reporting an incident: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/docs/entanglements-empetrements-pub-eng.html>

### Sighting Reporting

Fisheries and Oceans Canada appreciates your assistance in tracking the sightings of live cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises), sea turtles and basking sharks. While there are many whale species found in Pacific Canadian waters, sightings of basking shark and leatherback sea turtles are infrequent. The collection of sighting data is useful to scientists in determining population size and species distribution and aids in recovery efforts under the Species at Risk Act (SARA).

#### To report whale or turtle sightings contact the Ocean Wise Sighting Network:

Toll free: 1.866.I.SAW.ONE (1-866-472-9663)

Email: [sightings@ocean.org](mailto:sightings@ocean.org)

Website: <https://ocean.org/action/send-a-sighting-save-a-whale/>

App: WhaleReport

#### To report basking shark sightings, contact the Basking Shark Sightings Network:

Toll free: 1-877-50-SHARK (1-877-507-4275)

Email: [Sharks@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Sharks@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Website: [www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/SharkSightings](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/SharkSightings)

A species identification guide for sharks is available at <https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/40757067.pdf>

Guides to distinguish between pinnipeds, emphasizing differences between Steller and California Sea Lions can be found here:

[https://oceanorg.blob.core.windows.net/oceanorg/2023/10/Pinniped\\_IDGuide-email-2022.pdf](https://oceanorg.blob.core.windows.net/oceanorg/2023/10/Pinniped_IDGuide-email-2022.pdf)

and between Sea and River Otters:

[https://oceanorg.blob.core.windows.net/oceanorg/2023/10/Otters\\_IDGuide-ffp-2022.pdf](https://oceanorg.blob.core.windows.net/oceanorg/2023/10/Otters_IDGuide-ffp-2022.pdf)

### **Southern Resident Killer Whales – Management Measures to Address Reduced Prey Availability, and Physical and Acoustic Disturbance**

The Government of Canada is taking important steps to protect and recover the Southern Resident Killer Whale population, in keeping with direction provided in *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) recovery documents. In May 2018, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and Minister of Environment and Climate Change determined the Southern Resident Killer Whale population faces imminent threats to its survival and recovery. Given the status of the population and ongoing threats to Southern Resident Killer Whale recovery, DFO implemented a number of measures since 2018, including measures aimed at increasing prey availability and accessibility for Southern Resident Killer Whales - particularly Chinook salmon—and reducing threats related to physical and acoustic disturbance with a focus in key foraging areas within Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat. These measures include fishing closures, Interim Sanctuary Zones (i.e. no go zones), Speed Restricted Zones (vessel slowdown areas), vessel avoidance distances, and a number of voluntary measures in the presence of killer whales.

Since 2018, Indigenous groups, Indigenous Multi-Nation Group, the Indigenous and Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG), Technical Working Groups (TWGs), stakeholders, and the public have provided recommendations and feedback to Ministers and Departments on a range of measures (including measures related to increasing prey availability, sanctuaries, vessel disturbance [both noise and physical disturbance], and contaminants) to support Southern Resident Killer Whale recovery.

The Government of Canada is working with Indigenous groups and stakeholders to inform potential changes to vessel measures for 2026 and 2027. The Government of Canada intends for actions for the 2026 season be implemented to coincide with the return of Southern Resident Killer Whales in typically greater numbers to Canadian Pacific waters. These restrictions do not apply to individuals or vessels being used to fish for food, social or ceremonial purposes, or for domestic purposes pursuant to a treaty, under a license issued under the Aboriginal Communal Fishing License Regulations. For up-to-date information regarding the Southern Resident Killer Whale management measures, please visit: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/srkw-measures-mesures-ers-eng.html>

Additionally, the Government of Canada is asking vessel operators to respect the following voluntary measures:

- Stop fishing (do not set or haul gear) within 1,000 metres of killer whales and let them pass;
- Reduce speed to less than 7 knots when within 1000m of the nearest killer whale

- When safe to do so, turn off echo sounders and fish finders
- Place engine in neutral idle and allow animals to pass if your vessel is not in compliance with the approach distance regulations
- For more information on the best ways to help whales while on the water, when on both sides of the border, please visit: [bewhalewise.org](http://bewhalewise.org)

For information regarding the Southern Resident Killer Whale management measures to support recovery, please contact the Marine Mammal Team ([DFO.SRKW-ERS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.SRKW-ERS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)) or visit <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/srkw-measures-mesures-ers-eng.html>

### **U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions**

In 2016, the U.S. published new regulations (80 FR 54390) pursuant to the *Marine Mammal Protection Act* (MMPA) which focus on the reduction of marine mammal bycatch in foreign commercial fishing operations. Under these regulations, harvesting nations intending to continue to export fish and fish products to the U.S. after January 1, 2026, had to apply to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for a comparability finding for each of its commercial fisheries listed in the 2020 U.S. List of Foreign Fisheries. Harvesting nations must demonstrate: 1) the prohibition of intentional mortality or serious injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations; and 2) the implementation of a regulatory program comparable in effectiveness to the U.S., including mandatory reporting of marine mammal bycatch, monitoring programs and management/mitigation measures where appropriate.

Depending on information provided, foreign commercial fisheries that export fish and fish products to the United States can be classified as either “export” or “exempt” based on the frequency and likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals. On October 8, 2020, the 2020 U.S. List of Foreign Fisheries was published on the [NOAA public registry](#). For the Pacific Region, all Crab-by-trap and Prawn/Shrimp-by-trap fisheries are classified as *Export*. All other Invertebrate fisheries (hand implement, diving, and trawl) are classified as *Exempt*.

Fisheries that fail to demonstrate such comparability measures to the US by December 31, 2025, will be prohibited from entering the US market starting January 1, 2026. On September 2, 2025, NOAA published in the U.S. Federal Register the results of comparability findings under the U.S. MMPA. All Canadian fisheries were found compliant and can continue to export fish and fish products to the U.S. after the MMPA import provisions come into effect on January 1, 2026.

DFO will continue to share information about the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions and the process for ensuring continued access to US markets. Further information can be found on the [NOAA website](#), or by contacting the Regional Fisheries Coordinator or the DFO Marine Mammal Unit (MMU) ([DFO.PacificMarineMammal-PacificMarineMammal.MPO@DFO-MPO.GC.CA](mailto:DFO.PacificMarineMammal-PacificMarineMammal.MPO@DFO-MPO.GC.CA))<mailto:>.

### **Marine Mammal Regulations**

The [Marine Mammal Regulations](#) provide direction on conservation and protection of marine mammals, provide guidance for recovery of listed species under the *Species at Risk Act*, and set out provisions related to reducing human disturbance of marine mammals (e.g. viewing of marine mammals) and mandatory reporting requirements in the case there is accidental contact with a

marine mammal and a vessel or fishing gear. These regulations were amended in 2018 and specify mandatory requirements to prevent disturbance of marine mammals.

As per section 7(2) of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, disturbance is defined as a number of human actions including:

- Feeding, swimming or interacting with a marine mammal.
- Moving a marine mammal (or enticing/causing it to move).
- Separating a marine mammal from its group or going between it and a calf.
- Trapping a marine mammal or a group either between a vessel and the shore, or between a vessel and other vessels.
- Tagging or marking a marine mammal.

Boats are required to maintain a minimum approach distance of 100 m for whales, dolphins or porpoises, 200m when whales, dolphins or porpoises are in a resting position or with a calf, and 200m from all Killer Whales in Pacific Canadian waters except when in southern BC coastal waters which has an increased approach distance of 400m in support of Southern Resident Killer Whale recovery.

Please visit the Southern Resident Killer Whale management measures website for more information on the management measures and potential amendments to the approach distances to Southern Resident Killer Whales under the Marine Mammal Regulations for 2026/2027: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/srkw-measures-mesures-ers-eng.html>

Any operator of a vessel or fishing gear involved in accidental contact with a marine mammal must notify DFO of the incident, as per section 39 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*. Incident reporting includes:

- Reporting an injured, stranded, entangled or dead marine mammal to the [BC Marine Mammal Response Network \(Observe, Record, Report\)](#) 1-800-465-4336.
- Reporting as bycatch in a log book.
- [Reporting accidental contact through the marine mammal interaction form.](#)
- Depredation reporting to DFO by email at [Mammals.Marine@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Mammals.Marine@dfo-mpo.gc.ca), by calling 1-800-465-4336 or [Reporting accidental contact through the marine mammal interaction form.](#)

Please note, incidents involving abuse or harassment of a marine mammal should be reported as a [fisheries violation](#), while injured, stranded, entangled or dead marine mammals should be reported to the [BC Marine Mammal Response Network](#) to enable a response if appropriate.

For more information on safe boating behavior around whales please visit: [Watching Marine Mammals and Be Whale Wise, or by contacting the](#) DFO Marine Mammal Unit (MMU) ([Mammals.Marine@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Mammals.Marine@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)).

### 3.7. GEAR IMPACTS

Under normal operating circumstances, there is minimal to no environmental impact from gear types used in the Eulachon fishery.

### 3.8. AQUACULTURE

On December 19, 2010, DFO assumed the role of lead federal department for sustainable management of aquaculture. Under the *Fisheries Act*, the *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations* and the *Aquaculture Activity Regulations* govern finfish, shellfish and freshwater aquaculture operations in BC. Cultivation of fish within the province requires a federal aquaculture licence issued by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Approvals from other agencies may be required, depending upon the location and type of aquaculture activity proposed.

Pacific Aquaculture Regulations:

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2010-270/FullText.html>

Aquaculture Activity Regulations:

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2015-177/page-1.html>

Integrated Management of Aquaculture Plans (IMAPs) consistent with IFMPs, which are used to govern wild harvest fisheries, have been developed to provide an overview of the management framework for aquaculture. For further information refer to:  
<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/aquaculture-eng.htm>.

## 4. OBJECTIVES

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### 4.1. NATIONAL

Fisheries and Oceans Canada aims to:

- Meet conservation objectives and ensure healthy and productive fisheries and ecosystems;
- Base management decisions on the best available scientific information;
- Manage Indigenous fisheries for FSC purposes in a manner consistent with the Sparrow Decision (SCC 1990) and other relevant court decisions (*R v. Gladstone 1996 and Ahousah*) and treaty obligations;
- Provide stability, transparency, and predictability in fisheries management and improved governance; and
- Foster shared stewardship.

### 4.2. PACIFIC REGION

The overall goal of Fisheries Management in the Pacific Region is the conservation of Canada's fisheries resources to ensure sustainable resource utilization and generate economic prosperity, accomplished through close collaboration with resource users and stakeholders based on shared stewardship consistent with treaty and Indigenous rights. Fisheries Management is responsible for management of the Indigenous, commercial and recreational fishing in the Pacific Ocean and creating the conditions for a vibrant and innovative aquaculture industry.

Fisheries Management will continue to develop and implement the Sustainable Fisheries Framework by integrating the precautionary and ecosystem approach frameworks into IFMPs with the goal of protecting vulnerable marine and freshwater ecosystems and vulnerable stocks from significant adverse impacts, and to help ensure long term sustainability and support economic prosperity.

In 1994, the Biological Objective Working Group of the Pacific Scientific Advice Review Committee (PSARC) identified three biological objectives for management of Pacific Region fish and invertebrate stocks (Rice et al, 1995):

- Ensure that subpopulations over as broad a geographical and ecological range as possible do not become biologically threatened (in the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) sense of "Threatened").
- Operationally, Objective 1 requires at least that management allow enough spawners to survive, after accounting for all sources of mortality (including all fisheries and natural mortality), to ensure production of enough progeny that they will, themselves, be able to replace themselves when mature.
- Fisheries may have collateral effects on other species, mediated by the ecological relationships of the target species. Fisheries should be managed in ways that do not violate the above objectives for ecologically related species, as well as target species.

The objectives remain relevant today, particularly in light of development of the national objectives around sustainable fisheries.

### **4.3. EULACHON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

The objective of the current Eulachon fishery is to respond to conservation concerns with Fraser River Eulachon stocks and introduce measures to allow for stock rebuilding. Specific objectives are detailed below, and respective performance measures are further described in the management measures for the Indigenous, recreational and commercial fishing plans (Appendices 3, 4, and 5):

#### **Recovery Target**

A coast-wide recovery target for Eulachon is, at a minimum, to “promote the populations’ recovery such that it can qualify as special concern within the COSEWIC assessment criteria”, with an interim goal of observing “positive growth in Eulachon spawning in river systems throughout” the Designatable Unit ranges, and a long term goal of seeing the populations reach historic levels (Schweigert et al. 2012).

For the Fraser River population, COSEWIC assessed this population as endangered based on an observed population decline of greater than 50% over three generations (approximately 10 years for Eulachon). Recovery for Fraser River Eulachon “should be reflected in an increase in this index to historical levels.” The first goal “would be a population increase that would exceed COSEWIC’s criteria for endangered status, and bring the assessment down to a species of special concern,” and “additional rebuilding would be required to bring the Fraser River [Designatable Unit] to a point where it was not at risk based on COSEWIC criteria” (Schweigert et al. 2012). In addition, “distribution targets for the population would include an expansion of sustained spawning ranging to the historical extent” (Schweigert et al. 2012).

#### **Environmental and Ecological Conservation**

To ensure conservation and protection of Eulachon stocks and their habitat, and manage for ecosystem impacts through the application of scientific management principles applied in a risk averse and precautionary manner based on the best scientific advice available.

#### **Consultation Process**

Conduct an open and transparent consultation process for discussions of harvest management issues related to Eulachon harvest. DFO currently does not have a consultative body related to harvest planning for this fishery, but is conducting extensive consultation with Indigenous peoples and stakeholders.

#### **Indigenous Peoples**

Subject to conservation needs, ensure that first priority is accorded to Indigenous peoples for opportunities to harvest Eulachon for FSC purposes. Feedback from consultations sessions is relied on to measure the performance of providing priority to Indigenous peoples for opportunities to catch fish for FSC purposes.

Limited harvest opportunities will provide access to Indigenous peoples for FSC purposes while meeting conservation objectives. Maintaining harvest at low levels will increase the probability of rebuilding Fraser River Eulachon stocks. The Department will manage the Fraser Eulachon fisheries conservatively in 2026.

#### 4.4. COMPLIANCE

Conservation and Protection (C&P) staff promote, monitor and enforce compliance with legislation, regulation and management measures to ensure conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources, including Eulachon.

For more information see the Compliance Plan, Section 7.

#### 4.5. COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

DFO is committed to the recognition and implementation of Indigenous and treaty rights related to fisheries, oceans, aquatic habitat, and marine waterways in a manner consistent with section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDA), the UNDA Action Plan 2023-2028, and the federal Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples. DFO-CCG Reconciliation Strategy provides a guidance document to better understand why and how reconciliation informs the work of the Department.

DFO recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to participate in decision-making in matters that affect their rights through their own representative institutions and the need to consult and cooperate in good faith with the aim of securing their free, prior, and informed consent.

For further information on Canada's reconciliation commitments:

- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/u-2.2/>
- Implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/index.html>
- The UNDA Action Plan 2023-2028: <https://justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/ap-pa/index.html>
- *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html>
- DFO's Reconciliation strategy: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/aboriginal-autochtones/reconciliation-eng.html>
- Reconciliation, partnerships and Indigenous fisheries in British Columbia and Yukon: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reconciliation/reconciliation-pacific-pacifique-eng.html>
- Information on the Government of Canada's work to advance reconciliation: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1400782178444/1529183710887>
- Canada's Collaborative Modern Treaty Implementation Policy: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1672771319009/1672771475448>

## **Treaties and Reconciliation Agreements**

### **a) Treaties and Self Government Agreements**

There are currently four modern treaties with eight First Nations in British Columbia, which all have fisheries chapters: Nisga'a Final Agreement, Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement (TFA), Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement (MNA), and Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation Final Agreement. Through these treaties, Nations work with DFO to manage treaty fisheries on an annual basis. There are also historic treaties in British Columbia (Douglas Treaties and Treaty 8). A detailed list of final agreements relating to Comprehensive Land Claims and Self Government is provided at: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100030583/1529420498350>

Eleven of the Fourteen Yukon First Nations have Final and Self-Government Agreements derived from the Umbrella Final Agreement (Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun, Teslin Tlingit Council, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Kluane First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation). There are also two Transboundary treaties: the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit of the Northwest Territories have land claim agreements that identify their land and rights in Yukon. Many of these treaties have fisheries provisions.

Fisheries chapters in modern treaties articulate a treaty fishing right for domestic purposes that is protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982. In addition, some modern treaties contain provisions that enable those Treaty First Nations to make laws relating to certain internal aspects of their fisheries. Negotiated through a side agreement, some modern treaty First Nations have commercial access through a Harvest Agreement outside of the constitutionally protected treaty.

### **b) Reconciliation Agreements**

In addition to negotiating treaties, the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples can also negotiate Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination agreements, to explore new ways of working together to advance the recognition of Indigenous rights and self-determination. These agreements are led by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC). DFO can also negotiate Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreements directly with First Nations to enhance collaborative governance between First Nations and DFO on management of fisheries, marine and aquatic matters.

Reconciliation agreements work within the legislative framework of the *Fisheries Act*. The Act provides the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard with the legislative authority for the proper management and control of the fisheries, the conservation and protection of fish, and regulation of the fishery.

Since 2019, the Government of Canada has entered into reconciliation agreements that includes substantive commitments the Parties have agreed to implementing and that govern the relationship between the Parties for its term of the agreement.

As DFO and First Nations develop and implement new fisheries and collaborative governance arrangements, DFO works with these Nations to engage neighbouring First Nations and stakeholders (e.g. commercial and recreational sectors).

See the BC Treaty Commission at <https://www.bctreaty.ca/>, and CIRNAC for more information on current treaty tables and RIRSD tables at <https://www.cirnac-rcaanc.gc.ca/eng/1100100030285/1529354158736#chp2>

For more information on fisheries reconciliation agreements, see: [Long-term fisheries arrangements in British Columbia and Yukon | Pacific Region | Fisheries and Oceans Canada](#)

## 5. ACCESS AND ALLOCATION

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The Minister can, for reasons of conservation or for any other valid reasons, modify access, allocations, and sharing arrangements as outlined in this IFMP in accordance with the powers granted pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*.

### 5.1. INDIGENOUS

DFO remains committed to respecting First Nations' Aboriginal right to fish for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes, or domestic purposes under Treaty which has priority – after conservation – over other uses of the resource. Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act* recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. However, it does not specify the nature or content of the rights. In 1990, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a landmark ruling in the Sparrow decision, which found that the Musqueam First Nation has an Aboriginal right to fish for FSC purposes. The Supreme Court found that where an Aboriginal group has a right to fish for FSC purposes, it takes priority after conservation over other uses of the resource. The Supreme Court has also indicated the duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples when their fishing rights might be affected. The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) was implemented in 1992 to address several objectives related to First Nations and their access to the resource. These include:

- Improving relations with First Nations
- Providing a framework for the management of the First Nations fishery in a manner that was consistent with the Supreme Court of Canada's 1990 *Sparrow* decision
- Greater involvement of First Nations in the management of fisheries
- Increased participation in commercial fisheries (Allocation Transfer Program (ATP))

In addition to consultation, planning and implementation of fisheries, and the development of capacity to undertake fisheries management, stock assessment, enhancement and habitat protection programs, AFS continues to be one of the principal mechanisms, in addition to Treaties and reconciliation agreements, to support the development of relationships with First Nations.

Indigenous harvest of Eulachon for FSC purposes may occur where authorized by a communal licence. The Department will provide Indigenous peoples with priority access to the resource for FSC purposes. FSC quotas may be determined through bilateral discussions between Indigenous peoples and the Department.

### 5.2. RECREATIONAL

Recreational harvest of Eulachon is closed coast wide in tidal waters and freshwater.

### 5.3. COMMERCIAL

The commercial harvest of Eulachon is a limited entry fishery. There are currently 16 party-

based ZU licence eligibilities; however the fishery has been closed since 2004.

## 6. SHARED STEWARDSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

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In the past, some co-operative work has been done coast-wide, including donations of time, money, vessels, gear, samples, and offshore surveys. These measures have contributed to our knowledge about Eulachon in the Pacific Region. Indigenous peoples and stakeholders have provided assistance in obtaining information on spawner distribution, in-season test fishery data, and survey data. Also, the commercial shrimp trawl industry provided survey assistance for the offshore index (WCVI and Queen Charlotte Sound).

The Department's Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) (<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/aboriginal-autochtones/afs-srapa-eng.html>) has provided funds for Indigenous peoples to assist in the spawner distribution work and the egg and larval surveys including the egg and larval survey that provides the annual SSB estimate for the Fraser River area.

## 7. COMPLIANCE PLAN

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DFO's Conservation and Protection (C&P) program is responsible for enforcing the *Fisheries Act*, pursuant regulations and related legislation. Enforcement activities are carried out by Fishery Officers across Canada who conduct patrols on land, at sea and in the air.

The Department promotes compliance with the law through a range of activities from education and awareness activities that encourage Canadians to protect fishery resources and habitats, patrol activities to detect violations, and major case management. These activities are further outlined in the C&P National Compliance Framework.

C&P Fishery Officers in the Pacific Region encompass British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. They are designated as "Fishery Officers" under Section 5 of the *Fisheries Act*. Accordingly, the *Fisheries Act* and the *Criminal Code of Canada* are the primary pieces of legislation outlining the powers and responsibilities of Fishery Officers. However, Fishery Officers are designated under other Acts as well, such as the *Coastal Fisheries Protection Act* and *Species at Risk Act*.

C&P Fishery Officers are supported by the National Fisheries Intelligence Service, whose staff provide intelligence analysis services and assist in identifying targets for enforcement action. A process to incorporate information of value to the intelligence cycle has been developed. This process allows Fishery Officers, Resource Managers and Stock Assessment staff to collect and submit this information on a timely basis.

Users of the resource have a responsibility to report violations. Any suspected or actual fisheries, wildlife or pollution violations can be quickly and discretely reported to the appropriate enforcement officer by using the toll free observe, record and report hotline. This toll free number is available 24 hours a day.

OBSERVE, RECORD AND REPORT 1-800-465-4DFO (1-800-465-4336) or [DFO.ORR-ONS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.ORR-ONS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Enforcement enquiries can also be directed to the local field offices during regular office hours.

### 7.1. MAIN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### **Priorities for 2026**

Enforcement priorities and strategies for the 2026 Eulachon fisheries will be developed and coordinated with local C&P and Fisheries Management staff.

In-season and post-season reviews will be conducted to ensure the best approach and strategies are used in the management of this fishery.

C&P endeavors to work with First Nations to build relationships. Fishery guardians are integral to this process and are very important to the enforcement program. C&P conducts joint

patrols of First Nations fisheries and strives to complete enforcement protocols to better define the working relationship.

**In-season**

Fishery Officers will conduct directed and opportunistic patrols of the fishing area. Patrols during open and closed times will be conducted taking into consideration competing priorities and resources. Fishery Officers may also conduct general compliance inspections at various locations such as border crossings, air cargo locations, fish processing facilities or fishing supply and tackle stores where baitfish are sold.

Illegal fishing activity may be reported through the Observe, Report, and Record line at 1-800-465-4336 or [DFO.ORR-ONS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.ORR-ONS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca). Fishery Officers attempt to follow through on the reports as often as priorities, time and resources allow.

**Table 6:** Enforcement Issues and Strategies

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
Gear and effort compliance during open time/area	Enforcement patrols will be conducted when opportunities exist.
Fishing during closed time/area	Enforcement patrols will be conducted when opportunities exist.
Purchase, sell, or possess any fish without a licence	Investigations will occur when violations are encountered or reported.

## **8. PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

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### **8.1. MANAGEMENT PLAN EVALUATION CRITERIA**

#### **National**

Eulachon conservation objectives are met.

Reasonable effort has been made to provide harvest opportunities and still maintain conservation objectives.

Consultation and management processes are stable, transparent, and predictable.

#### **Pacific Region**

Both the commercial and recreational fisheries remain closed and Indigenous peoples may apply for harvest of small amounts of Fraser River Eulachon for FSC purposes that are considered on a case by case basis.

#### **Conservation**

- Conservation and protection of Eulachon stocks will be carried out by applying a conservative management regime in light of the limited biological information available for Fraser River Eulachon.
- Collect relevant information by geographic location and time period when possible.

#### **Consultation**

- Where possible, facilitate consensus building among stakeholders on issues related to the management of the fishery.

#### **Indigenous Peoples**

- DFO will consult with Indigenous peoples in order to determine their FSC requirements. Indigenous peoples will be authorized to fish for FSC purposes on a priority basis for small amounts for Fraser River Eulachon through use of a communal licence.

#### **Commercial**

- Maintain a precautionary closure of the fishery for population rebuilding in tidal waters and freshwater.

#### **Recreational**

- Maintain a precautionary closure of the fishery for population rebuilding in tidal waters and freshwater.

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## APPENDIX 1: 2025 POST-SEASON REVIEW

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**Indigenous Fisheries:** In 2025, Indigenous peoples' access to Eulachon for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes was managed through communal Aboriginal fishing licences on the Fraser River. Harvest opportunities were provided on a case-by-case basis per Band up to the maximum harvest level target of 11,971 lb (5.43 t) total. The total Eulachon harvest in 2025 was 696 lb (0.32 t).

**Recreational Fisheries:** There were no recreational fisheries for Eulachon on the Fraser River in 2025.

**Commercial Fisheries:** There were no commercial fisheries for Eulachon on the Fraser River in 2025.

**New Westminster Test Fishery:** The New Westminster test fishery was not conducted in 2025.

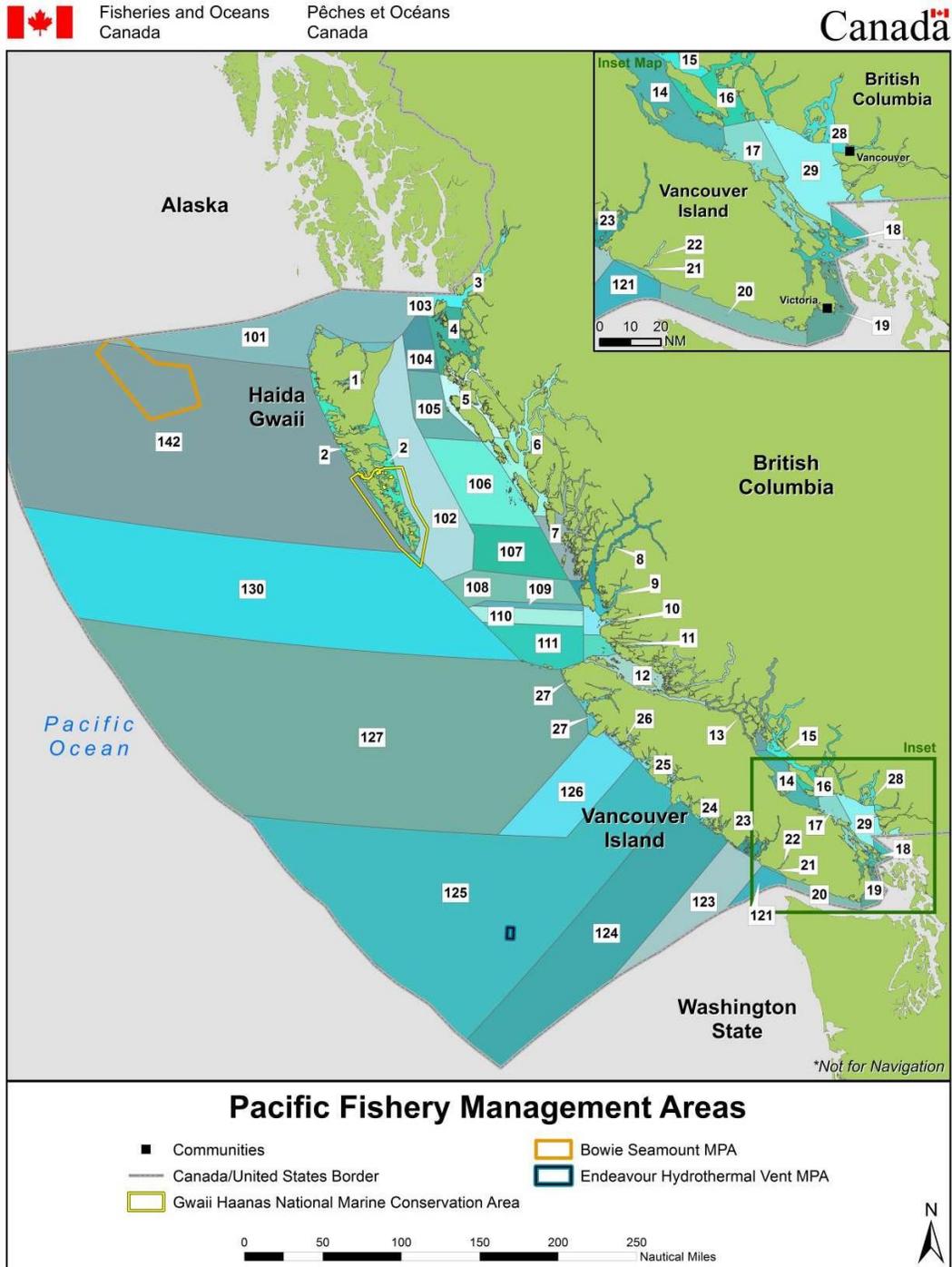
**LFFA Gillnet Survey Project:** The LFFA gillnet catch per unit effort survey was conducted in 2025. This project has been conducted since 2017.

**Egg and Eulachon Larval Survey:** The survey was conducted again in 2025, over the standard 7-week period preceded by eleven additional weeks of sampling for a 18-week total period. The standard 7-week period in 2025 consisted of sampling from April 21 to June 6, 2025.

<b>Number of Survey Weeks</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>South Arm SSB Index (tonnes)</b>	<b>North Arm SSB Index (tonnes)</b>	<b>Total SSB Index (tonnes)</b>
7	April 21– June 6	7.1	1.3	8.4

In 2025, densities and outflow estimates of Eulachon progeny from all sampling sites were low and highly variable over the 18-week sampling period.

# APPENDIX 2: MAP OF FISHING AREAS



## **APPENDIX 3: 2026 INDIGENOUS FISHING PLAN**

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Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) remains committed to respecting First Nations' Aboriginal right to fish for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes, or domestic purposes under Treaty, which has priority after conservation, over other uses of the resource. DFO seeks to engage with First Nations on an ongoing basis to understand FSC needs and gather the information and data that DFO needs to support implementation of FSC fishing. Pre-season, DFO engages in bilateral harvest planning discussions with First Nations. Fisheries are then authorized via a Communal Licence issued by the Department under the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations. These licences describe the details of authorized fisheries including dates, times, methods, and locations of fishing. For modern treaty Nations, a Harvest Document is issued, which authorizes domestic harvest in accordance with their Final Agreement.

Fraser River Eulachon are managed in a highly precautionary manner to allow as many fish to spawn as possible. In 2026, management actions are planned to limit FSC harvest to 13,316 pounds (lb) (6.04) tonnes (t). In response to low abundance, directed commercial and recreational fisheries have not been permitted for many years.

To accommodate requests for FSC access, the maximum harvest level has increased from 2% to 4% of the average of the previous 9 year SSB index over the past decade (Table 7). This harvest level provides access for FSC purposes while supporting conservation and rebuilding objectives. Advice is being sought from DFO Science to inform coastwide abundance.

Any Indigenous group interested in developing new harvest methods or restarting historic harvest methods will work with DFO staff to licence and monitor appropriately.

The Department will consider further management actions following the completion of the SARA listing process.

For additional information on DFO's Treaty and Aboriginal Fisheries programs, please visit: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/abor-autoc/index-eng.html>

**Table 7:** Recent Fraser River Eulachon Indigenous food, social and ceremonial fishery harvest level setting methodologies and maximum harvest levels.

Year	Harvest Rate	SSB index timespan used to calculate harvest level	Maximum harvest level (tonnes)	Maximum harvest level (pounds)
2016	2%	Average of previous 9 years	1.56	3,445
2017	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	2.75	6,059
2018	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	2.85	6,275
2019	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	4.38	9,652
2020	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	4.78	10,538
2021	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	7.02	15,486
2022	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	7.17	15,807
2023	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	6.82	15,035
2024	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	6.60	14,554
2025	3.5%	Average of previous 9 years	5.43	11,971
2026	4.0%	Average of previous 9 years	6.04	13,316

DFO will continue to use management measures for communal licences, such as: gear restrictions, shorter opening times, and increased monitoring. These licence conditions are designed to ensure the total harvest target is not exceeded and to facilitate achievement of shared objectives between Indigenous people by allowing all Indigenous groups an opportunity to catch their harvest targets. Licence conditions may include some or all of the following conditions of licence:

- Gillnet length: Maximum of 100 m;
- Fishing time: To be determined in-season through respective Indigenous consultations;
- Soak time: To be determined in-season through respective Indigenous consultations;
- Consideration of selective gear types in traditional fishing areas, and;
- Enhanced monitoring program. Going forward, this will be informed by monitoring objectives set in alignment with the national Fishery Monitoring Policy (2019; replaced the Regional Strategic Framework for Fishery Monitoring and Catch Reporting in Pacific Fisheries). More information is available in section 1.8.
- Beginning in 2021, a pilot licence for cast nets was also issued as an alternative gear type to provide further opportunities in the FSC fishery.

## **APPENDIX 4: 2026 RECREATIONAL FISHING PLAN**

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**DUE TO CONSERVATION CONCERNS, THE RECREATIONAL FISHERY IS CLOSED IN 2026.**

### **Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licence**

The recreational harvest of various fish and invertebrate species in BC is regulated via the *British Columbia Sport Fishing Regulations*, 1996 made under the *Fisheries Act*. A DFO Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licence is required for the recreational harvest of all species of fish and marine invertebrates.

Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licences may be purchased for a 1 day, 3 day, or 5 day period, or as an annual licence, covering the period April 1 (or date of purchase, whichever is later) to March 31 the following year. The annual licence fee is not pro-rated for annual licences purchased mid-season. Fees depend on licence duration, age (senior, adult, juvenile) and residency status. Licences for juveniles (under 16 years old) are free. Concessionary fees are not otherwise available. There were over 349,000 adult fishers participating in BC's tidal waters recreational fishery in 2024/25.

Licences may be purchased online via the National Recreational Licensing System:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/licence-permis/application-eng.html>.

Alternatively, licences may be purchased over the counter at Independent Access Providers (IAPs) in many areas (note that the IAP may charge an additional service fee).

A list of IAPs is available at:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/licence-permis/iap-fai-eng.html>.

### **Online Regulations**

The regulations for recreational fishing are provided online in the British Columbia Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide, which lists open and closed times, catch limits, admissible gear types, size limits (where applicable), and open and closed areas. In addition, please check your Conditions of Licence (printed on your fishing licence) for other regulatory requirements.

Changes to regulations are issued in Fishery Notices which are posted online and sent to subscribers by email; these changes are also updated to the Sport Fishing Guide.

The printed Sport Fishing Guide booklet is no longer being produced or distributed to reduce costs and environmental impacts. The online Sport Fishing Guide allows for in-season regulations to be accurately provided and ensures all the regulations are current. Staff at local DFO offices can also provide regulatory information.

The British Columbia Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide is available at:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/index-eng.html>

Viewing Fishery Notices and application to receive Fishery Notices by email is available at:

<http://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm>

Contact information for DFO offices is available at:

<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/contact/regions/pacific-pacifique-eng.html>

For questions or comments of a general nature regarding DFO in the Pacific Region, call 604-666-0384 or email [info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

### **Using Mobile Devices and the FishingBC App**

The FishingBC App, developed by the Sport Fishing Institute of BC, can be downloaded to a mobile device to assist with access to regulatory information for species, areas, fishing gear while on the water (along with other functionalities). The FishingBC App may be linked (using the internet) with your National Recreational Licensing System (NRLS) account to download a copy of your tidal water sports fishing licence to your mobile device and record catch (chinook salmon, halibut and lingcod) using the app Catch Log for real-time display to your licence on your mobile device. Note that catch records will then be automatically shared between your NRLS account and your app account. In the event of any technical issues with these new features of the app a paper licence must be used for regulatory catch recording purposes (or NRLS).

Please note: the DFO Sport Fishing Guide website is the official site for regulatory information in the event of a discrepancy with the FishingBC App. The FishingBC App may be downloaded from the App Store (Apple devices) and from the Google Play Store (Android devices). Learn more about these app features at <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/licence-permis/fishingbc-pechebc-app-faq-eng.html> and at <http://www.fishingbcapp.ca/>

### **E-licences and Paper licences**

At this time most fishers continue to use the traditional paper copy of their licence; however, an e--licence, which is an electronic/pdf copy of the licence, may be used on a mobile device but there are restrictions on its use.

Please consider these licensing requirements before fishing in tidal waters:

- For all recreational tidal waters fishers that do not have an electronic copy of their licence on their mobile device, fishers must have a paper copy of their licence to show to a fishery officer.
- For users of the FishingBC App or on any electronic device, an electronic copy of their licence on the device is acceptable and must be immediately presented to a fishery officer upon request.
- Currently the FishingBC App is the only app authorized to download a licence for catch recording purposes on the electronic licence (using the app Catch Log).
- Catch recording requirement: Immediately upon retention of Chinook and Halibut in any Management Area and Lingcod in Management Areas 12 to 19 (excluding Subarea 12-14), Subareas 20-5 to 20-7 and 29-5, fishers must record these catches on
  - either their paper licence, or
  - their National Recreational Licensing System account (NRLS) which requires internet access, or
  - in the FishingBC App Catch Log when their app account is linked to their NRLS account (which does not require internet access, if the app account link is currently maintained to NRLS).
- The catch recording requirement above applies to all fishers (whether with a paper or e-licence).
- Fishers who record their Chinook, Halibut, and Lingcod catch records in their NRLS account may find it helpful to immediately take a screenshot of their catch records when they have

internet access should they subsequently move out of range of a mobile network. Note that a FishingBC app account will continue to allow you to record catch to the app Catch Log even while out of range of a mobile network.

## **Sustainable Fisheries**

The Sport Fishing Advisory Board (SFAB) is the primary consultative body for the recreational fishing community and includes individual representatives from all geographic regions in BC as well as delegates from a number of fishing and service provider organizations. The SFAB and the recreational fishing sector strongly support effective fishery monitoring and catch reporting programs in recreational fisheries. The SFAB continues to work with DFO on initiatives to strengthen fishing monitoring and catch reporting in the recreational fishery.

## **Mandatory Reporting of Fishing Activity and Catch**

Recreational fishers are required as a condition of the Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licence to report accurate information on their recreational fishing activity and catch upon request of designated authorities including creel surveyors, fishery officers and fishery guardians and if assigned to the online iREC reporting program (see below).

## **Internet Recreational Effort and Catch (iREC) Reporting program**

The internet Recreational Effort and Catch (iREC) reporting program is an online program that has been collecting effort and catch information from Tidal Waters Sport Fishing licence holders since July 2012. All 2025/26 standard adult Tidal Water Recreational Fishing licences will be assigned to the iREC reporting program. Annual licence holders are required to report for only one month to limit their reporting burden. Information regarding the iREC reporting requirement is printed on each licence including the reporting period, the website at which to report, a unique iREC Access ID and reporting deadline. Further, licence holders with a valid email address in the National Recreational Licencing system will receive emails reminding them to complete their iREC reports. Providing complete and accurate information to the iREC program when assigned is a condition of licence (i.e., mandatory requirement).

The iREC reporting program is one of the sources used in developing DFO official catch and effort estimates. The iREC reporting program methodology was peer reviewed and published by the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) in 2015. This program provides monthly estimates of effort for six fishing methods and catch for over 80 species of sport caught finfish and invertebrates in all Pacific Fishery Management Areas based on responses by Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licence holders. The recreational fishing methods covered by the iREC reporting program include boat-based angling, angling from shore, shellfish trapping from boat and shore, beach collecting, and diving. iREC estimates are developed for methods and species not covered by the marine creel surveys, which cover only boat-based angling, and for months and areas not covered by marine creel surveys.

More information about the iREC reporting program is available at:

<https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/report-declarez-eng.html>

## **APPENDIX 5: 2026 COMMERCIAL FISHING PLAN**

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### **DUE TO CONSERVATION CONCERNS, THE COMMERCIAL FISHERY IS CLOSED IN 2026.**

The commercial Fraser River Eulachon fishery has limited entry licensing with sixteen licence eligibilities in ZU licence category, however for 2026 the fishery is closed. Since the fishery is closed, licence eligibility holders will not be required to designate a vessel or pay licence renewal fees. No action is required at this time to maintain 2026 licence eligibility.

### **General Information on Licensing Service Changes – Effective since 2013**

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) introduced the web-based National Online Licensing System (NOLS) in the spring of 2013. This web-based system replaces in-person counter service at Pacific Fishery Licensing Units. Fish harvesters/licence holders/vessel owners will now use the new online system to view, pay for and print their commercial fishing licences, licence conditions and/or receipts. Fish harvesters must log into the NOLS to register and activate their accounts using the DFO Passcode that has been mailed to them in order to pay the fees and request issuance of a licence.

With exception due to the Fraser Eulachon commercial fishery closure mentioned in the first paragraph above, licence renewal is mandatory on an annual basis prior to the expiry date of each fishery in order to maintain eligibility in the future, and licence eligibility will cease if not renewed annually.

Telephone: 1-877-535-7307 (ask for “Pacific Region”)  
Fax: 604-666-5855  
Email: [fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) (specify “Pacific Region” in subject line)

Please be sure to visit the Pacific Region Licensing website and subscribe to fishery notices for updates on the National Online Licensing System and licensing services at:  
<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/index-eng.html>.

Information on the new system may be found on the DFO internet site at:  
<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/sdc-cps/licence-permis-eng.htm>.

# APPENDIX 6: FISHING VESSEL SAFETY

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## 1. OVERVIEW – FISHING VESSEL SAFETY

Vessel owners and masters have a duty to ensure the safety of their crew and vessel. Adherence to safety regulations and good practices by owners, masters and crew of fishing vessels will help save lives, prevent vessel damage and protect the environment. All fishing vessels must be in a seaworthy condition, registered and maintained as required by Transport Canada (TC), WorkSafeBC, and other applicable agencies. Vessels subject to inspection should ensure that the certificate of inspection is valid for the area of intended operation.

In the federal government, responsibility for shipping, navigation, and vessel safety regulations and inspections lies with TC; emergency response with the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) and DFO has responsibility for management of the fisheries resources. The Transportation Safety Board is an independent agency that advances transportation safety by investigating selected occurrences in the air, marine, pipeline and rail modes of transportation including fishing vessel occurrences. In BC, WorkSafeBC exercises jurisdiction over workplace health and safety and conducts inspections on commercial fishing vessels in order to ascertain compliance with the Workers Compensation Act (WCA) and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR).

Before departing on a voyage the authorized representative (normally the owner), must ensure that the fishing vessel is capable of and safe for the intended voyage and fishing operations. Critical factors for a safe voyage include the seaworthiness of the vessel, having the required personal protective and life-saving equipment in good working order, adequate number of properly trained crew, and knowledge of current and forecasted weather conditions. As safety requirements and guidelines may change, the vessel's authorized representative, crew, and other workers must be aware of the latest legislation, policies and guidelines prior to each trip.

There are many useful tools available for ensuring a safe voyage. These include:

- Education and training programs
- Marine emergency duties training
- Fish Safe – Stability Education Program & 1 Day Stability Workshop
- Fish Safe – SVOP (Subsidized rate for BC commercial fishers provided)
- Fish Safe – *Safest Catch* program – **FREE** for BC commercial fishers
- Fish Safe *Safe At Sea* DVD Series – Fish Safe
- Fish Safe Stability Handbook – *Safe at Sea* and *Safest Catch* – DVD Series
- Fish Safe *Safest Catch* Log Book
- Fish Safe *Safety Quiz*
- First Aid training
- Radio Operators Course (Subsidized rate for BC commercial fishers provided)
- Fishing Masters Certificate training
- Small Vessel Operators Certificate training

## Publications:

- *Gearing Up for Safety* - WorkSafeBC
- <https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation/marine-safety/tp-15393e-adequate-stability-safety-guidelines-fishing-vessels> TP 15393E - Adequate stability and safety guidelines for fishing vessels
- TP 15392E - Guidelines for fishing vessel major modification or a change in activity. <https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation/marine-safety/tp-15392e-guidelines-fishing-vessel-major-modification-change-activity>
- Transport Canada Publication TP 10038 Small Fishing Vessel Safety Manual (can be obtained at Transport Canada Offices from their website at: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/tp-tp10038-menu-548.htm>)
- Amendments to the Small Fishing Vessel Inspection Regulations (can be obtained from: <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2016/2016-07-13/html/sor-dors163-eng.php>)
- Safety Issues Investigation into Fishing Safety in Canada report can be accessed: <https://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/rapports-reports/marine/etudes-studies/M09Z0001/M09Z0001.html>

For further information see: <https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation>  
[www.fishsafebc.com](http://www.fishsafebc.com)  
[www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)  
[www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/rapports-reports/marine/index.html](http://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/rapports-reports/marine/index.html)

## 2. IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR VESSEL SAFETY

There are three areas of fishing vessel safety that should be considered a priority. These are: vessel stability, emergency preparedness, and cold water immersion

### 2.1. Fishing Vessel Stability

Vessel stability is paramount for safety. Care must be given to the stowage and securing of all cargo, skiffs, equipment, fuel containers and supplies, and to correct ballasting. Fish harvesters must be familiar with their vessel's centre of gravity, the effect of liquid free surfaces on stability (e.g. loose water or fish on deck), loading and unloading operations, watertight integrity and the vessel's freeboard. Know the limitations of your vessel; if you are unsure contact a naval architect, marine surveyor or the local Transport Canada Marine Safety Office.

Fishing vessel authorized representatives/owners are required to develop detailed instructions addressing the limits of stability for each of their vessels. These instructions must include detailed safe operation documentation kept on board the vessel.

In 2017, Transport Canada Marine Safety (TC) issued Ship Safety Bulletin (SSB) [No. 03/2017](#) announcing the coming into force of the New Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations. The initial regulations were published in the Canada Gazette Part II on July 13, 2016 and came into force on July 13, 2017. The bulletin includes important information on changes to requirements for Written Safety Procedures, Safety Equipment and Vessel Stability.

As of July 13, 2017, new regulations pertaining to stability assessments to be performed by a competent person came into effect, as follows:

- A new fishing vessel that has a hull length of more than 9 m where the vessel construction was started or that a contract was signed for the construction after July 13, 2018;
- A fishing vessel more than 9 m and that has undergone a major modification or a change in activity that is likely to adversely affect its stability;
- A fishing vessel that is fitted with an anti-roll tank at any time;
- A fishing vessel more than 15 gross tonnage and used for catching herring or capelin during the period beginning on July 6, 1977 and ending on July 13, 2017
- For an existing fishing vessel that is not required to undergo a stability assessment, the owner shall be capable of demonstrating that their vessel has adequate stability to safely carry out the vessel's intended operations. Guidelines have been developed and are available online to help small fishing vessel owners and operators meet their regulatory requirements
- Two good resources can be found here: [TP 15393 - Adequate stability and safety guidelines for fishing vessels \(2018\)](#) and [TP 15392 – Guidelines for fishing vessel major modification or a change in activity \(2018\)](#)

Further, the new Regulation requires a “Stability Notice” to be developed after a stability assessment. This notice includes a simple diagrammatic of the vessel, its tanks and fish holds, or deck storage as the case may be. It is intended to assist fishing vessel crews in quickly determining the safe carriage limits of the vessel without having to reference a complicated Trim and Stability Book.

Additionally, Transport Canada published a Stability Questionnaire ([SSB No. 04/2006](#)) and Fishing Vessel Modifications Form ([SSB No. 01/2008](#)) which enable operators to identify the criteria which will trigger a stability assessment. Please contact the nearest Transport Canada office if you need to determine whether your vessel requires a stability assessment, or to receive guidance on obtaining competent assessor.

In 2019, TC provided an updated [SSB 03/2019](#), which sets out a voluntary record of modifications for the benefit of owners/masters of any fishing vessels. For vessels of more than 15 gross tons, the record of modifications was to be reviewed by TC inspectors during regular inspections and entered on the vessel's inspection record. However, information gathered during the Transportation Safety Board's (TSB) Safety Issues Investigation into the fishing industry showed minimal recording of vessel modifications prior to this date.

The TSB has investigated several fishing vessel accidents since 2008 and found a variety of factors that effected the vessel's stability were identified as contributing factors in vessels capsizing, such as with: [M08W0189](#) - *Love and Anarchy*, [M09L0074](#) – *Le Marsouin I*, [M10M0014](#) - *Craig and Justin*, [M12W0054](#) – *Jessie G*, [M12W0062](#) - *Pacific Siren*, [M14P0121](#) – *Five Star*, [M15P0286](#) – *Caledonian*, [M16A0140](#) – *C19496NB*, [M17C0061](#) – *Emma Joan*, [M17P0052](#) – *Miss Cory*, [M18P0073](#) – *Western Commander*, [M18A0425](#) – *Charlene A*, [M18A0454](#) – *Atlantic Sapphire*, [M20P0229](#) – *Arctic Fox II*, [M20A0434](#) – *Chief William Saulis*, [M20A0160](#) – *Sarah Anne* and the *Tyhawk* – [M21A0065](#).

Vessel masters are advised to carefully consider stability when transporting gear. Care must be given to the stowage and securing of all traps, cargo, skiffs, equipment, fuel containers and supplies and also to correct ballasting. Know the limitations of your vessel; if you are unsure contact a reputable marine surveyor, naval architect or the local Transport Canada Marine Safety office.

WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (OHSR) require owners of fishing vessels to provide documentation on board, readily accessible to crew members, which describes vessel characteristics, including stability.

Fish Safe has developed a code of best practices for the food and bait/roe herring fisheries, dive fisheries and the prawn fishery: These Best Practices are available on Fish Safe's website for convenient download here: <https://www.fishsafebc.com/best-practices> Please contact John Krgovich at Fish Safe for a copy of the program materials they developed to address safety and vessel stability in these fisheries. John Krgovich – office: (604) 261-9700 - Email: [john@fishsafebc.com](mailto:john@fishsafebc.com).

## 2.2. Emergency Drill Requirements

The *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* requires that the Authorized Representative of a Canadian Vessel shall develop procedures for the safe operation of the vessel and for dealing with emergencies. The Act also requires that crew and passengers receive safety training. The Marine Personnel Regulations require that all personnel on board required to meet the minimum safe manning levels have received MED (Marine Emergency Duties) training to an A1 or A3 level, depending on the vessel's voyage limits, within 6 months of serving aboard. MED A3 training is 8 hours in duration and is applicable to seafarers on fishing vessels less than 150 GRT that are within 25 miles from shore (NC2). MED A1 training is 19.5 hours duration and is applicable to all other fishing vessels.

To assist fishers in meeting their crew training requirements, Fish Safe has created a downloadable 'New Crew Orientation Form and How To Guide' available on Fish Safe's website here: <https://www.fishsafebc.com/downloadable-tools>

MED provides a basic understanding of the hazards associated with the marine environment; the prevention of shipboard incidents; raising and reacting to alarms; fire and abandonment situations; and the skills necessary for survival and rescue.

WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) requires written rescue and evacuation procedures for work on or over water. Additionally, fishing vessel masters must establish procedures and assign responsibilities to each crew member to cover all emergencies, including the following: crew member overboard, fire on board, flooding of the vessel, abandoning ship, and calling for help. Fishing vessel masters are also required to conduct emergency drills at the start of each fishing season, when there is a change of crew, and at periodic intervals to ensure that crewmembers are familiar with emergency procedures.

Between 2015 and 2021, 15 fishing vessel accidents were reported to the TSB which resulted in 34 fatalities. In all 15 occurrences, distress alerting devices (EPIRBs, PLBs) were not used. The report's findings highlighted the lack of safety drills and safety procedures and practices. The *Safest Catch* program, delivered by Fish Safe and free to BC commercial fishers, includes comprehensive practice of drills such as abandon ship, man overboard and firefighting drills.

## 2.3. Cold Water Immersion

Drowning is the number one cause of death in BC's fishing industry. Cold water is defined as water below 25 degrees Celsius, but the greatest effects occur below 15 degrees C. BC waters

are usually below 15 degrees C. Normal body temperature is around 37 degrees Celsius; cold water rapidly draws heat away from the body. The effects of cold water on the body occur in four stages: cold shock, swimming failure, hypothermia and post-rescue collapse. Know what to do to prevent you or your crew from falling into the water and what to do if that occurs. More information is available in the WorkSafeBC Bulletin Cold Water Immersion (available from the WorkSafeBC website at [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)).

Under the recently amended (June 2019) OHS Regulation, section 24.96.1, a crewmember must wear a PFD or lifejacket when on board a fishing vessel that has no deck or deck structure or when on the deck of a fishing vessel that has a deck or deck structure. The use of a PFD will prepare a crewmember to remain afloat, to survive the effects of cold shock, reduce the need to swim and give rescuers time to respond.

Section 8.26, which requires workers to wear a PFD or lifejacket when working “under conditions which involve a risk of drowning”, would continue to apply to fishing crewmembers and other workers (e.g. when they are working on shore, docks and other vessels). The specific requirements can be found on WorkSafeBC’s PFD Primer provided on Fish Safe’s website here: <https://www.fishsafebc.com/cold-water-survival>.

It has been demonstrated time and again that, when worn, PFD's save lives - and the chance of surviving a mishap increases significantly when these devices are worn while working on deck.

Resulting from the TSB investigations into the *Diane Louise* - [M14P0110](#), *Caledonian* – [M15P0286](#) and the *C19496NB* - [M16A0140](#) fishing vessel accidents the Board recommended that both TC, WorkSafeBC and WorkSafeNB require that persons wear a suitable personal flotation devices (PFDs) at all times when: on the deck of a commercial fishing vessel; or, when on board a commercial fishing vessel without a deck or deck structure, and ensure that programs are developed to confirm compliance. Between 2015 and 2021, 15 occurrences were reported to the TSB, resulting in the loss of life of 34 fish harvesters. In 11 of the 15 occurrences, personal flotation devices (PFDs) were not used.

## **2.4. Other Issues**

### **2.4.1. Weather**

Vessel owners and masters are reminded of the importance of paying close attention to current weather trends and forecasts during the voyage. Marine weather information and forecasts can be obtained on VHF channels 21B, Wx1, Wx2, Wx3, or Wx4. Weather information is also available from Environment Canada website at: [https://weather.gc.ca/marine/index\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/marine/index_e.html)

### **2.4.2. Emergency Radio Procedures**

Vessel owners and masters should ensure that all crew are able to activate the Search and Rescue (SAR) system early rather than later by contacting the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG). All fishing vessels greater than 20m in length must carry a Class A AIS, as well as a float free 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB). These beacons must be registered with the Canadian Beacon Registry. When activated, an EPIRB transmits a distress call that is picked up or relayed by satellites and transmitted via land earth stations to the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre (JRCC), which will task and co-ordinate rescue resources. The TSB notes in

the *Island Lady* – [M21A0315](#) that there have been 15 similar occurrences reported to the TSB, resulting in the loss of life of 34 fish harvesters. In all 15 occurrences, distress alerting devices (e.g., emergency position-indicating radio beacons [EPIRBs] and personal locator beacons [PLBs]) were not used. ([M15A0189](#), [M16A0140](#), [M16A0327](#), [M18A0076](#), [M18A0303](#), [M18A0078](#), M18P0184, M18P0394, M19A0082, [M19A0090](#), M19P0242, [M20A0258](#), [M20A0160](#), [M21A0412](#), and [M21A0161](#)). The carriage of both AIS, PLB and EPIRB is strongly encouraged for all fishing vessels who do not fall under the mandatory threshold. PLBs require manual activation, so fish harvesters are encouraged to carry them while working on deck. You may not have time to go locate your PLB in an emergency.

Fish harvesters should monitor VHF channel 16 or MF 2182 KHz and make themselves and their crews familiar with other radio frequencies. All crew should know how to make a distress call and should obtain their restricted operator certificate from Industry Canada. However, whenever possible, masters should contact the nearest Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) station (on VHF channel 16 or MF 2182 kHz) prior to a distress situation developing. Correct radio procedures are important for communications in an emergency. Incorrect or misunderstood communications may hinder a rescue response. Further information is available at [Radio Aids to Marine Navigation General](#)

Since August 1, 2003 all commercial vessels greater than 8 metres in length are required to carry a Class D VHF Digital Selective Calling (DSC) radio. A registered DSC VHF radio has the capability to alert other DSC equipped vessels in your immediate area and MCTS that your vessel is in distress. Masters should be aware that they should register their DSC radios with Industry Canada to obtain a Marine Mobile Services Identity (MMSI) number or the automatic distress calling feature of the radio may not work. For further information see the Coast Guard website at: <http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/eng/CCG/Home> or go directly to the Industry Canada web page: [www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/smt-gst.nsf/eng/sf01032.html](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/smt-gst.nsf/eng/sf01032.html)

A DSC radio that is connected to a GPS unit will also automatically include your vessel's current position in the distress message. More detailed information on DSC can be found here: [TC DSC Safety Bulletin](#). Questions regarding Coast Guard DSC capabilities can be obtained by contacting your local MCTS centre (Prince Rupert MCTS (250)627-3070 or Victoria MCTS (250)363-6333).

#### 2.4.3. Collision Regulations

Fish harvesters must be knowledgeable of the *Collision Regulations* and the responsibilities between vessels where risk of collision exists. Navigation lights must be kept in good working order and must be displayed from sunset to sunrise and during all times of restricted visibility. To help reduce the potential for collision or close quarters situations which may also result in the loss of fishing gear, fish harvesters are encouraged to monitor the appropriate local Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) VHF channel when travelling or fishing near shipping lanes or other areas frequented by large commercial vessels. Vessels required to participate in VTS include:

- a) every ship twenty metres or more in length,
- b) every ship engaged in towing or pushing any vessel or object, other than fishing gear,
- c) where the combined length of the ship and any vessel or object towed or pushed by the ship is forty five metres or more in length; or
- d) where the length of the vessel or object being towed or pushed by the ship is twenty

metres or more in length.

Exceptions include:

- a) a ship towing or pushing inside a log booming ground,
- b) a pleasure yacht **less than** 30 metres in length, and
- c) a fishing vessel that is **less than** 24 metres in length and not **more than** 150 tons gross.

More detailed information on VTS can be obtained by calling either Prince Rupert MCTS (250)627-3070 or Victoria MCTS (250)363-6333 or from the Coast Guard website:

<https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/publications/mcts-sctm/ramn-armm/part3-eng.html>

#### 2.4.4. Buddy System

Fish harvesters are encouraged to use the buddy system when transiting and fishing as this allows for the ability to provide mutual aid. An important trip consideration is the use of a sail/voyage plan which includes the particulars of the vessel, crew and voyage. The sail plan should be left with a responsible person on shore or filed with the local MCTS. After leaving port the fish harvester should contact the holder of the sail plan daily or as per another schedule. The sail plan should ensure notification to JRCC when communication is not maintained which might indicate your vessel is in distress. Be sure to cancel the sail plan upon completion of the voyage.

### 3. WORKSAFEBC

WorkSafeBC exercises jurisdiction over workplace health and safety, including the activities of crews of fishing vessels. Commercial fishing, diving and other marine operations are subject to the provisions of the *Workers Compensation Act (WCA)* and requirements in Part 24 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR). Examples of Part 24 regulatory requirements related to fishing include, but are not limited to, the requirement to establish emergency procedures, to conduct emergency drills, to provide immersion suits for the crew, to provide stability documentation for the vessel, safe work procedures, injury reporting, correction of unsafe working conditions, the requirement to wear personal floatation devices (PFDs), etc.

Other sections of the OHSR also apply to commercial fishing operations. For example, Part 3 addresses training of young and new workers, first aid, and employer incident/accident investigations. Part 4 addresses general conditions such as maintenance of equipment, workplace conduct and impairment. Part 8 addresses issues related to safety headgear, safety footwear, eye and face protection, limb and body protection and personal flotation devices (PFDs) when working on the dock. Part 12 addresses issues related to tools, machinery and equipment, including safeguarding. Part 15 addresses issues related to rigging.

Both owners and masters of fishing vessels are considered to be employers. Under the *Workers Compensation Act* and the OHS Regulation (OHSR) they have varying and overlapping duties and responsibilities. Masters, because they have the most control during fishing and related activities, are considered to be the employer with primary responsibility for the health and safety of the crew.

The OHSR and the WCA are available from the Provincial Crown Printers or by visiting the WorkSafeBC website: [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)

NOTE: Regarding the OHSR requirement to wear PFD's, WorkSafeBC has produced a video entitled "Turning the Tide – PFD's in the Fishing Industry". For more information on PFD use, including a link to the video, please access the following site:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/news-releases/2018/November/new-fishing-industry-safety-video?origin=s&returnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worksafebc.com%2Fen%2Fsearch%23q%3DTurning%2520the%2520Tide%26sort%3Drelevancy%26f%3Alanguage-facet%3D%5BEnglish%5D>

For further information, contact an Occupational Safety Officer:

Bruce Logan	Field Services	Vancouver/ Richmond/Delta	(604) 244-6477
Cody King	Field Services	Courtenay	(250) 334-8733
Paul Matthews	Field Services	Courtenay	(250) 334-8741
Wayne Tracey	Field Services	Central	(604) 232-1939

or the Manager of Interest for Marine and Fishing, Pat Olsen (250) 334-8777.

For information on projects and initiatives related to commercial fishing health and safety please contact Tom Pawlowski, Manager, OHS Consultation and Education Services, at (604) 233-4062 or by email: [tom.pawlowski@worksafebc.com](mailto:tom.pawlowski@worksafebc.com) or Helen Chandler, OHS Consultant at (604) 276-3174 or by email: [helen.chandler@worksafebc.com](mailto:helen.chandler@worksafebc.com).

#### 4. FISH SAFE BC

Fish Safe encourages Vessel masters and crew to take ownership of fishing vessel safety. Through this industry driven and funded program Fish Safe provides fishing relevant tools and programs to assist fishers in this goal. The Fish Safe Stability Education Program and 1 Day Stability Workshop are available to all fishers who want to improve their understanding of stability and find practical application to their vessel's operation. The SVOP (Small Vessel Operator Proficiency) Course is designed to equip crew with the skills they need to safely navigate during their wheel watch. The Safest Catch Program, along with fisher-trained Safety Advisors, is designed to give fishers the tools they need to create a vessel specific safety management system.

As referenced throughout the above documentation, Fish Safe provides a broad range of courses, programs and services that are either free for BC commercial fishers or highly subsidized.

Fish Safe is managed by John Krgovich, Program Manager and support staff including John Krgovich, Program Coordinator, Stephanie Nguyen, Program Assistant, Rhoda Huey, Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant, and an experienced team of fisher Safety Advisors. All activities and program development is directed by the Fish Safe Advisory Committee (membership is open to all interested in improving safety on board fishing vessels). The Advisory Committee meets two to three times annually to discuss safety issues and give direction to Fish Safe in the

development of education and tools for fish harvesters.

Fish Safe also works closely with WorkSafeBC to improve the fishing injury claims process. For further information contact:

John Krgovich  
Program Coordinator  
Fish Safe  
#100, 12051 Horseshoe Way  
Richmond, BC V7A 4V4

Cell: (604) 729-8407  
Office: (604) 261-9700  
Email: john@fishsafebc.com  
www.fishsafebc.com

## 5. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

The Transportation Safety Board (TSB) is not a regulatory board. The TSB is an independent agency that investigates marine, pipeline, railway and aviation transportation occurrences to determine the underlying risks and contributing factors. Its sole aim is the advancement of transportation safety by reporting publicly through Accident Investigation Reports or Marine Safety Information Letters or Advisors. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability.

In 2014 the TSB pacific region released three investigation reports:

- the collision between trawl fishing vessel [Viking Storm](#) and US long line fishing vessel *Maverick* and the subsequent fatality,
- the person over board off the prawn fishing vessel [Diane Louise](#) and the subsequent fatality, and
- the capsizing of the crab fishing vessel [Five Star](#) and subsequent fatality.

In 2016 the TSB pacific region released one investigation report:

- the capsizing of the trawl [Caledonian](#) and subsequent fatalities.

In 2018 the TSB pacific region released two investigation reports:

- the capsizing and sinking of the [Miss Cory](#) and subsequent fatality
- the sinking of the [Western Commander](#) and loss of life

In 2022 the TSB pacific region released one investigation report:

- the sinking of the [Arctic Fox II](#) and subsequent fatalities.

In 2023, the TSB pacific region released one investigation report:

- the sinking of the Tug Ingenika and barge Miller 204 and subsequent fatalities.

The TSB issued five recommendations following the *Caledonian* report. Three recommendations issued are aimed at ensuring all crews have access to adequate stability information that meets their needs. That means:

- All commercial fishing vessels should have a stability assessment appropriate for their size and operation.
- The information from that assessment must then be kept current, and it must be used to determine safe operating limits.

Moreover, these operating limits must be easily measurable, and relevant to the vessel's operation. For example, that could mean marking the sides of a vessel's hull to indicate the maximum operating waterline, or maximum permitted loads can be specified in the most relevant unit of measure—total catch weight for instance, or the safe number of traps. Regardless, for it to be of real, practical use, the information must be presented in a format that is clearly understood and easily accessible to crew.

The other two recommendations address the most basic step that harvesters can take: wearing a personal flotation device. Here in British Columbia, roughly 70 percent of all fishing-related fatalities in the past decade came while not wearing a PFD. Yet many harvesters still do not wear them. TC regulations currently require that PFDs be worn only if harvesters identify a risk, however; you never know when you could end up in the water. So the TSB is recommending to TC to require persons to wear suitable personal flotation devices at all times when on the deck of a commercial fishing vessel or when on board a commercial fishing vessel without a deck or deck structure and that programs are developed to confirm compliance. In June 2019, WorksafeBC amended its fishing regulation related to the use of PFDs. Under the amendments, crewmembers must wear a PFD or lifejacket when on board a fishing vessel that has no deck or deck structure, or when on the deck of a fishing vessel that has a deck or deck structure. Crewmembers are not required to wear lifejackets or PFDs below deck or when inside a deck structure where there is risk of entrapment. This amendment removes the need for a risk of drowning to be present before a PFD must be worn.

For more information about the TSB, visit the website at [www.tsb.gc.ca](http://www.tsb.gc.ca)  
For information about the TSB's safety issues investigation into fishing safety, or to view a brief video, visit: <http://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/medias-media/videos/marine/m09z0001/index.asp>

To view information on the TSB's recent safety Watchlist, visit:  
<http://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/surveillance-watchlist/marine/2020/marine-01.html>

The TSB has also produced a Safe at Sea: Activity book on fishing safety intended for the next generation of fish harvesters (ages 4-7). Download a copy.  
[www.tsb.gc.ca > eng > medias-media > prudence-safe > safe-at-sea](http://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/medias-media/prudence-safe/safe-at-sea)

## **Reporting an Occurrence**

<https://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/incidents-occurrence/index.html>

After a reportable occurrence happens you can fill out the reporting form or contact the TSB using the contact information below.

Transportation Safety Board of Canada  
4 - 3071 No. 5 Road  
Richmond, BC, V6X 2T4

Email: [marinenotifications.pacific@bst-tsb.gc.ca](mailto:marinenotifications.pacific@bst-tsb.gc.ca)  
Phone: 604-219-2414