

# PROCEEDINGS REPORT

February 10-11  
2020  
Nanaimo, BC



**FISHERIES**  
FOR COMMUNITIES  
**GATHERING**  
**2.0**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE CHALLENGE

Thriving, sustainable fishing communities are critical to the health and well-being of Canada, but they face complex and growing threats. This is especially true in BC, where policies have allowed corporate interests and investors to gain increasing control of fishing access rights on our coast. As a result, there has been an erosion of the many social, cultural, and economic benefits derived by working fish harvesters and coastal communities. Current BC fisheries policies are also undermining the ability of fish harvesters and fishing communities to engage meaningfully in the management and stewardship of adjacent marine resources. This is diminishing the health and well-being of our coast and of Canada as a nation.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Despite the challenges facing BC's fisheries, we have an opportunity to make positive change. In the two years since the first [Fisheries for Communities Gathering](#) (February 2018) a number of significant political changes have occurred.

- In June 2019, the Federal Government enacted major changes to Canada's Fisheries Act (Bill C-68) that, among other things, empowered the Fisheries Minister to take socio-economic benefits for fish harvesters, coastal communities, and Indigenous peoples into consideration in fisheries management decision making.
- In February 2019, the Province of BC appointed a Wild Salmon Advisory Council (WSAC) and the Council's report, "Recommendations for a Made-in-B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy", called on the provincial government to actively support policy reform for BC fisheries.
- The House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) conducted an in-depth review of West Coast fisheries, and their report, "West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits," published May 2019, made 20 recommendations on action steps to improve BC fisheries policies and regulations and their social and economic outcomes.

These new developments are evidence of a growing understanding at various levels of government that fisheries policies and the industry structure in BC are failing fish harvesters, and coastal communities. There is a greater awareness today of the need



to revive and sustain the social, economic, and cultural benefits derived from commercial fisheries.

## THE FISHERIES FOR COMMUNITIES GATHERING 2.0

The two-day Fisheries for Communities Gathering 2.0 brought together over 120 individuals from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous fish harvesters, academics, NGOs, industry associations, First Nations leaders, provincial and federal government officials, and policy experts to discuss the issues, share experiences, and explore change needed to revitalize our coast, now and in the future.

The Gathering included expert panels and round-table discussions allowing participants to review new research findings and express concerns and desired outcomes. Attendees agreed that government action and follow-through on fisheries issues are desperately needed. The major panelist themes from the Gathering were:

**Navigating rough waters: on-the-ground experience with fisheries management challenges and opportunities.** Panelists explored major challenges and possible paths forward, including collaborative marine planning, rebuilding First Nations fisheries access, and how the fishing industry can use social media as a tool for change.

**Understanding and measuring the impacts.** Panelists shared evidence and insights derived from their research on the BC fisheries access regime and its social and economic impacts on harvesters and communities.

**Learning from other regions, finding a common ground, and ways forward.** Panelists from Atlantic Canada, Alaska, and New England described the challenges they face in their regions and identified models successful in realizing better fisheries outcomes.

**Tools for change – insights on the FOPO and WSAC reports.** Panelists reviewed the findings and recommendations of FOPO’s “West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits” report, and BC WSAC’s, “Recommendations for a Made-in-B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy.”

In addition, roundtables, guest speakers, and Q&A sessions allowed attendees to respond to panelists, learn from one another, and build shared perspectives on issues. These discussions led to improved understanding of commonly held values and the challenges inherent in BC fisheries. Despite the diversity of backgrounds in the room, the attendees collectively felt:

A frustration with how the current system is failing them,

**“We are tired of talk, we need action.”**

A pressing need for reform,

**“We have a small window for change.”**

A commitment to setting aside differences to achieve positive change collectively



sought,

**“We need to work together and build unity and a common voice.”**

The Gathering culminated in a powerful moment of unity around a consensus statement.

## **FFC 2.0 CONSENSUS**

Despite decades of divisive policies that have fractured the industry and the region and undermined the viability of independent fishing enterprises and coastal communities, participants with diverse interests came to a consensus at the Gathering on the need to move forward with real and immediate action.

There was consensus in the room that the Federal Government needs to formally respond to and act on the recommendations of the May 2019 FOPO Report: “West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits”.

Further, the Province of BC must become a real partner with the Federal Government to achieve needed changes in BC fisheries, starting with establishing a Provincial Ministry for Fisheries.

The Gathering participants agreed that all 20 FOPO recommendations are relevant and need to be considered, but certain recommendations are especially critical and should receive special priority.

**Recommendations 2, 4, 8, & 19 were identified as urgent and should be acted on immediately to move toward better fisheries outcomes.**

#2: Stopping future sales of quotas and licences to non-Canadians.

#8: Financially incentivize independent fish harvester ownership of licences and quotas.

#19: Regulation of leasing costs during transition.

#4: Transparency of beneficial ownership of quotas and licences.

Through a voting process, participants prioritized these four FOPO recommendations as a starting point for recapturing a fairer share of the wealth of our marine environment to benefit coastal communities, First Nations, and working harvesters.

**Participants identified FOPO recommendations 14 & 15 as critically important for ensuring an effective and principled process for achieving major reform of fisheries licensing policies.**

#14: New policy framework developed through authentic and transparent engagement with active harvesters from each fishery/fleet, First Nations, non-fishing licence/quota holders and processors.



#15: Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada establish an independent commission, to look at options including a fair-share system and licensing transition options.

**Participants agreed that FOPO recommendations 18 & 20 set out foundational principles to guide all Fisheries and Oceans Canada's work and policies.**

#18: Take account of needs, rights, capacities, and framework for reconciliation.

#20: DFO needs to work to achieve its five objectives – conservation, legal obligations, stability and economic viability, and fair distribution of benefit.

Concerted DFO action on FOPO recommendations 14, 15, 18, and 20 will ensure a fair, principled, and structured path forward in this process for all parties involved. Acting on them will help achieve the changes needed to ensure a better future for fisheries in BC, as well as for those individuals and communities reliant on them.

**FOPO Recommendations 3 & 9 are priorities for enabling attraction and retention of much needed young new entrants to the commercial fishery.**

#3: Unmarrying licences.

#9: Loan and mentorship programs for new entrants.

These two recommendations were seen as important for easing the path to greater local access to, and independent ownership of, fisheries access.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

At the conclusion of the Gathering, participants moved to form a Fisheries for Communities Action Committee to ensure that the knowledge, passion, and consensus generated during the conference continues to be heard and acted upon. Their goal is to press the Federal Government into action in a timely, inclusive, and effective manner.

Concerted DFO action on the FOPO recommendations will benefit British Columbia and Canada by ensuring that greater shares of the benefits from commercial fisheries stay local and flow to active BC fish harvesters, First Nations, and coastal communities.





FFC Gathering participants in a standing vote in support of a consensus statement



Former Provincial Fisheries Minister Corky Evans in a rousing speech calling the room to action, to not make the mistakes of the past, and to work together to make change.







Chris Cook, 'Namgis elder and multigenerational fisherman, describing the change he says is needed.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE BC COMMERCIAL FISHERY PROVIDES MANY VALUES

The commercial fishery is a key part of a coastal economy and generates many tangible and intangible benefits. The industry in BC has traditionally provided employment for harvesters, processing workers, boat builders, and many related jobs. It also supports community viability, local food security and health benefits, cultural resilience, intergenerational sharing of knowledge, and local stewardship and marine management. As the value of the seafood harvested is taken away from local fish harvesters, this interconnected web of benefits erodes. With shrinking access to the value of their catch, fish harvesters have less and less capacity to invest in their crews, families, and home communities. The increasing separation of harvesters and coastal communities from the wealth fishing produces from adjacent marine resources threatens not just fishing enterprises but local economies and the way of life for Indigenous and non-Indigenous coastal communities.

### THE CURRENT SYSTEM IS BROKEN

Seafood from the West Coast should contribute to the food security, health, and well-



being of BC coastal communities and First Nations, but current policies make this a struggle. Licensing and quota allocation policies currently favour corporate ownership and put small boat fishing enterprises under significant financial duress. BC's fisheries are managed through an unregulated market for licences and individual transferrable quotas (ITQs). These policies enable speculative investors and multinational companies to purchase, and lease local fishing rights. The control and benefits from BC's fisheries are being progressively transferred from fish harvesters and coastal communities into the hands of remote business interests.

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

A new policy framework for BC fisheries is needed – one that ensures that a much greater share of the value of BC's seafood flows to working harvesters, and to Indigenous and non-Indigenous coastal communities instead of lining the pockets of investors or remote corporate interests. Policies should be redesigned to allow for effective regional engagement in management and stewardship of adjacent resources in line with scientific, local, and traditional knowledge, and to ensure that the revenues generated by commercial fisheries flow to adjacent communities to increase resilience and social and cultural well-being. Policy goals should be to support healthy ecosystems, revive small boat fleets, develop new fisheries, reinvigorate fishing communities, ensure local food access, provide shore jobs, and rebuild longstanding connections to the sea. We can only achieve these goals if we redefine how West Coast fisheries are controlled and managed, and who benefits from them.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

### POLITICAL ACTION IS NEEDED

It is not too late to change the policy foundations that continue to rob the West Coast of the social, economic, and cultural values of adjacent fisheries. The strength of our voices has made politicians aware of how the current BC fisheries system is failing fish harvesters and coastal communities. The federal government is re-engaging with socio-economic fisheries issues with the passage of Bill-68 and through the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) doing a deeper investigation of West Coast fisheries policies. Last year, the BC provincial government initiated its own consultative planning process to develop a made-in-BC Wild Salmon Strategy. These events have created new possibilities for major policy change. The situation calls for definitive action by both the federal and provincial government to commit to and act on much needed policy changes.

### BILL C-68

In June 2019, the Federal Government passed Bill C-68 putting into legislation the



authority of the DFO Minister to address socio-economic policy objectives. With the new Fisheries Act the Minister has expanded its authority to consider the social, economic, and cultural outcomes and the preservation and promotion of the independence of fish harvesters in making fisheries management decisions. This leaves the door open to review and reform the West Coast fisheries system. West Coast harvesters and communities now have greater leverage to push for the implementation of protections against corporate consolidation and speculative investment in access rights in line with current policies for Atlantic fisheries. The amended Fisheries Act gives the Minister authority to keep more of the benefits of fishing in the hands of independent fish harvesters and their adjacent communities. Implementing such policies in BC will be key to sustaining our coastal communities' resilience.

## FOPO

In 2018, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans implemented a study of the West Coast fisheries. In May 2019 they submitted their report to the Federal Government entitled "West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits". The FOPO report lists 20 recommendations calling for a number of major action steps to improve the management of commercial fisheries in BC. They offer a road map to the areas that need the most attention and how to address them. However, on behalf of the Federal Government the Federal DFO minister, Bernadette Jordan, has recently responded to the report in a letter to FOPO that promises only to further consult on the 20 recommendations. This is a disappointing response. While the FOPO report is still current, the time has come for specific action to create real change.

## WSAC

In June of 2018, the Province of BC appointed a Wild Salmon Advisory Council (WSAC) to advise on the development of a made-in-BC wild salmon strategy that would help set the stage for improved marine and freshwater ecosystems in B.C., and for greater social and economic benefits for fishing enterprises and coastal communities. In February 2019, "Recommendations for a Made-in-B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy" was published. This report makes 13 recommendations centered around three major goals;

1. Increase the abundance of wild salmon in BC,
2. Protect and enhance the economic, social, and cultural benefits that accrue to BC communities from wild salmon and other fisheries, placing emphasis on adjacency,
3. Develop mechanisms, processes, practices, and structures to engage citizens and governments in the effective stewardship and management of BC's wild salmon.



The report urges the province of BC to act as a champion, leader, and strategic investigator in defense of wild salmon and sustainable fisheries that benefit adjacent communities.

## SEIZING THE MOMENT

Fisheries issues are time sensitive and the window to get action on the recommendations from these reports will not be open indefinitely. Capitalizing on this unique moment requires continued pressure. Enacting the recommendations and realizing the objectives of these political initiatives would benefit fish harvesters, First Nations, British Columbians, and the country as a whole. Specifically:

- Ensuring benefits derived from fish harvesting flow to working harvesters, First Nations, and coastal communities in British Columbia.
- Supporting fair distribution of benefits throughout the seafood value chain.
- More effectively meeting the overarching principles of conservation and reconciliation with First Nations.
- Making fisheries more accessible to new entrants, especially younger individuals.

The Fisheries for Communities Gathering 2.0 provided a space for those concerned about the health of our fisheries and fishing communities to share thoughts, concerns, and desired outcomes around the FOPO and WSAC reports and recommendations.

## A GATHERING OF PEOPLE

The Fisheries for Communities Gathering 2.0 built upon the success of the first Fisheries for Communities Gathering in 2018. The first Gathering was a one-day event, the largest of its kind since the 1990s, and contributed to the FOPO committee's review of West Coast fisheries and its final FOPO report, "West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits".

This year's gathering was hosted on the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw Nation, in Nanaimo, BC. Over 120 participants attended, including fish harvesters from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, academics, NGOs, and industry association representatives, First Nations leaders, local, provincial, and federal officials and independent policy experts. Over the two-day Gathering these diverse participants shared their ideas and aspirations for the changes needed to revitalize the BC coast, now and for the future.

As well, visiting experts and industry leaders from Eastern Canada, Alaska, Rhode



Island, and Italy described alternative policies and fisheries management strategies that have been successful in meeting similar challenges in their fisheries and coastal communities. Their presentations provided models for positive changes here in BC.

Politicians are becoming aware of how the current fisheries system is broken and must be reformed to ensure the future health, sustainability, and resilience of BC fisheries and the First Nations and coastal communities that rely on them. In the Provincial Government, the Honourable Lana Popham, BC Minister of Agriculture, has provided continued financial support to Fisheries for Communities efforts, and attended both Gatherings to express BC's support for fisheries and the role the Province can play in making the necessary legislative, policy, and programmatic changes. The Gathering was also attended by Ken Hardie, federal Member of Parliament for Fleetwood-Port Kells and a leading member of the FOPO Committee, and by Gord Johns, MP for Courtenay-Alberni and the NDP fisheries critic. Both these MPs spoke at the Gathering in support of the FOPO recommendations and were present to hear from those in attendance.

**Facilitation and reporting of the Gathering were made possible by Ecotrust Canada, with the support of T Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation, on behalf of the Fisheries for Communities Network. Many others supported this event (see Acknowledgements).**



# DAY ONE

## OPENING



## FACILITATION

Facilitation was provided by a team including lead facilitators and event organizers, an MC, rapporteurs, and a facilitator for each round table and break out group many of whom were volunteers. For a full list see Acknowledgements.

## WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER: Shxuysulwut - Lolly Good

Lolly, a Snuneymuxw Nation Elder, welcomed participants to the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation for the Fisheries for Communities Gathering 2.0. She introduced herself and spoke of her own family's connection to fisheries and the marine environment. She opened the event with a prayer. Then, attendees were invited to select a percussion instrument and join her in singing an upbeat traditional song.



## OPENING REMARKS

In her opening remarks, Sonia Strobel provided an overview of the outcomes of the first Gathering and identified key outcomes and milestones since then. She outlined the objectives of this Gathering, orienting attendees to what to expect and contribute over the two days. The goals of the Gathering were to review the FOPO and WSAC reports, prioritize recommendations and identify the actions participants most want to see from governments. Sonia explained that, as at the first Gathering, the facilitating team will generate a proceedings report to share with policy makers and others to communicate the major points of consensus on future action.

**Outcomes from Gathering One:** The key outcome of the first Gathering was a consensus agreement on a set of principles for reform of BC fisheries (which can be found in the Gathering I Proceedings Report [here](#)) and a request to the then Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada to perform an independent review of BC commercial fisheries licensing policy through a transparent and inclusive process to:

- a) Ensure fisheries licensing policy in the Pacific Region supports independent fish harvesters, First Nations, and the revival of rural fishing communities, and
- b) Determine how “social, economic, and cultural” objectives are to be achieved in Pacific Region fisheries.

**“The people who are able to impact change are in this room and they are listening.”**

– Sonia Strobel



**Milestones:** Key Milestones since the first Gathering included:

- The passage of Bill C-68 into law to strengthen habitat protections and the rights of Indigenous peoples and to give the DFO minister clear authority to protect the interests of independent fish harvesters and pursue greater social, cultural and economic benefits of fisheries for coastal communities;
- The report of the Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO), “West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits, and its 20 recommendations for fisheries policy reform on the West Coast; and
- The BC Wild Salmon Advisory Council report setting out action priorities to protect and enhance the economic social, and cultural benefits that accrue to BC communities from wild salmon and other commercial fisheries.



**Objectives for Gathering 2.0:** the second Gathering brings fish harvesters together with seafood business operators, community leaders, Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishing organizations, community-based NGOs, government representatives, academics and policy experts to support the development of fair, prosperous, and sustainable coastal fisheries. The specific goal is to:

- Create space to further build a supportive community and networks to pursue common goals, and meet shared challenges;
- Expand and clarify the “ask” to government developed in Gathering I, taking account of developments since then;
- Set priorities for the recommendations of the FOPO and WSAC reports and build a unified voice and community support in calling on the federal and provincial governments to act on them, and;
- Develop consensus on a fair process to achieve these changes through the full and effective participation of fish harvesters, First Nations, community interest groups, and local governments.

“Reports alone do nothing to move forward our vision for BC fisheries unless those recommendations become policies and laws. Unless Provincial and Federal representatives take action, nothing will happen. We need to come together as a unified community with a shared vision for an industry where the value flows into the hands of Indigenous and coastal fishing communities.”

– Sonia Strobel, Co-founder, CEO, Skipper Otto





## KEYNOTE ADDRESS



### Honourable Lana Popham - Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, BC

The Minister conveyed greetings from Premier John Horgan and expressed her appreciation for the relationships that have been built between fishing communities and the Province. She said there has been progress in meetings with the federal government and explained that employment insurance enhancements for commercial fish harvesters and shore workers in BC was a focus to ensure that the West Coast can benefit from fair policies similar to those in place in the Atlantic fishery.

Although the Federal Government is mostly responsible for the jurisdiction of marine fisheries, the impacts of federal policies are experienced in BC communities. As the backbone of employment in rural and remote coastal communities, the Minister has worked to convey to DFO Minister Bernadette Jordan the absolute need for both the federal and provincial governments to support people who make a living from the sea.

In response to the public concerns, Minister Popham has asked for an extension on consultations regarding the Northern Shelf Bioregion Marine Protected Area (MPA) proposed by the Federal Government. She understands the need for increased environmental protections but wants to ensure that there is adequate time to understand the economic impacts of this new MPA.

The Minister spoke about efforts to restore salmon habitat through the government's work to ensure fish farms are moved out of wild salmon migration routes in Broughton Archipelago. She highlighted another recent success with the Federal Government through the \$143 million Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, an investment focused on actionable projects. So far, 23 diverse projects and \$50 million have been awarded.

Minister Popham expressed her support for the implementation of the FOPO recommendations to better support BC fish harvesters, First Nations, and coastal



communities. She said the success in building the recommendations was due to the incredible teamwork and focus on shared values that emerged from the first Gathering. If the recommendation on sharing information about buyers and sellers and the prices of quota online is implemented, it will offer a lot of the transparency that people were calling for.

In the near future, Minister Popham said she will be discussing the recommendations with DFO, First Nations, and the BC seafood industry. The Minister understood the need to push for change now. She closed her address reiterating her personal commitment to improving BC fisheries policy and expressing the need to work together.

**“We can only make moves forward that are positive if we hear feedback from you – you are the eyes and ears on the water.”**

-Hon. Lana Popham



## PANEL ONE: NAVIGATING ROUGH WATERS ON THE GROUND EXPERIENCE IN VARIOUS FISHERIES MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Moderated by: [Jim McIsaac](#) – T.Buck Suzuki, Executive Director



[Paula Barbeito](#) – Slow Fish, Italy, International Coordinator

### “Planning successful marine protected areas in high value fishing areas”

Paula joined us to share insights from a marine protected area (MPA) in Northwest Spain. This MPA is unique in that its management body is comprised equally of fish harvesters and government authorities. She highlighted the approaches in this example that resulted in inclusive and accountable MPA strategies and positive outcomes for the resource, for fish harvesters and for communities.

Like many regions around the world, fish harvesters in this region of Spain feel the pressures of diminishing resources, market competition and privatization of fishing rights, among other stressors. These elements led to fragmentation in the sector and left many fish harvesters feeling disempowered, which only exacerbated individualistic behaviour, unfair competition, and mistrust of local government.

Fish harvesters began working with a local NGO to create tools to give fisheries greater visibility through marketing schemes, shorter value chains and presentations in schools. This led to increased self-esteem and agency in fish harvesters and they began to visualize a new MPA with their involvement.

“We are in a time and place where we have to rethink the role of the state.”

– Paula Barbeito



This new marine reserve plan prioritized participation of the fishing sector in both its design and management and incorporated local ecological knowledge into its core values.

To move from a scenario of no obvious solution to a future with a shared vision required openness and transparency between stakeholders within the fishing industry. Through dialogue, the sentiment shifted from fishing resources belonging to no one, to belonging to all, and in this new situation a violation of the rules is seen to affect everyone. Those involved chose a path that recognized shared responsibility and they created a management plan that could increase future prospects for all.

Establishing an MPA required a socio-ecological change and the establishment of shared values. When fish harvesters combined their local ecological knowledge with research from scientists there was more holistic knowledge of the ecological system. When this knowledge was integrated into a management plan, the result was powerful, sustainable, and holistic. The co-management body included four members from different levels of government and four from fishing communities across the region.

This MPA was approved in 2003 and its results were amazing. Conflicts decreased, trust increased, and the biological outlook was positive. Other regions saw the success and were interested in a similar program. This has led to recent discussions about extending the MPA from 2,000 ha to 100,000 ha, which would extend its participation from approximately 61 vessels and 190 fish harvesters to about 780 vessels and 1,600 fish harvesters. The interest in moving forward with an even larger area for this MPA is a testament to the success of its co-management scheme, and the benefit of incorporating fish harvesters' values and local ecological knowledge into planning and managing marine spaces.

**Eric Angel** – Uu-a-thluk Fisheries Manager, Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council

### **“Rebuilding First Nations fisheries access, management, fleet capacity, and infrastructure”**

Eric discussed challenges and opportunities around rebuilding First Nations fisheries access, management, fleet capacity, and infrastructure. Uu-a-thluk gets its mandate from a council of Ha'wiih (hereditary chiefs) from the 14 Nuuchahnulth nations. They have three main goals: to increase fisheries access on behalf of the Nations; to increase their management authority and involvement in fisheries; and to work to increase both human and infrastructure capacity.

Nuuchahnulth fishing communities have existed for thousands of years and fishing is an important aspect of people's lives and culture. The Nuuchahnulth participated heavily in commercial fishing when it began over 100 years ago on the coast.



However, starting with limited entry in the early 1960s, a series of policies increasingly pushed Nuu-chah-nulth fish harvesters out of fisheries – to the extent that by the early 2000s only a few of them were able to make a living off of local fisheries.

The Nuu-chah-nulth have taken on several strategies to rebuild fishing access in their communities. They have worked through multiple avenues to assert their rights: on the water, through direct action and protest (even at the risk of jail time); in court, fighting to get their rights recognized; and by negotiating treaties (such as the Maa-nulth treaty). They have also sought opportunities to participate in co-management initiatives, lobbied for and applied to government programs for support, and pursued entrepreneurial opportunities such as building the Nuu-chah-nulth Seafood Development Corporation. Each of these strategies has pros and cons, but generally they are time consuming, expensive, and complex. Timeliness is an issue, as fish harvesters continue to be forced out of the industry while such initiatives can take decades to get results. Hiring outside expertise to help work on complex issues usually does not build local capacity, so it can be an expensive investment that doesn't stay in the community. Building back community capacity is important.

Eric wrapped up by sharing seven suggestions for moving forward to rebuild the community fisheries that support so many aspects of community well-being.

- 1) For everyone, a good starting point is to recognize the authority of First Nations to manage fisheries in their territories and use that as a basis to establish regional co-management regimes along the BC coast. Eric believes [that it is time to move seriously toward regional co-management of fisheries](#), which has been talked about for almost 30 years now.
- 2) Stop forcing First Nations to go to court to establish their rights to participate in commercial fisheries. [It's unjust, it's counterproductive, and it's a waste of public resources](#). Every Nation in BC fished before colonization. Use the First Nation's right to fish as a starting point to overhaul the licencing and allocation systems for access.
- 3) Explore creative ways to raise revenues that will stay in the region and work with those who can make it happen. Rebuilding fisheries requires revenues, and without taxation powers you have to find other options (e.g. ecosystem services fees).
- 4) Recognize the ecological crisis that we are in. Every single conversation should start with the question: [What can we do for fisheries and ecosystems](#) – not just what fisheries can do for me? We may be the generation that presides over the extinction of quite a few of our fish stocks and that's a terrible thing. Even if its long-term work, we must [start now](#).
- 5) Bring back small-scale multi-species fisheries. This can allow fish harvesters to fish locally all year round, can lower risk due to shifting environmental conditions, and can diversify and increase income and employment opportunities.



- 6) Diversify harvest impacts and be more **careful about mixed stock fisheries**. We do a lot of science about the impacts of ocean fishing on small local stocks, but we need better science for stock ID, we need better data on post-release mortality, and we need to use enhancement really carefully as it can have negative impacts on stocks if done poorly.
- 7) We need to involve youth. **To visualize a shared future, people need to see themselves in that future**, and youth should be part of defining what that looks like.

**Christina Adams** – Director of Online Marketing, Antenna Social Media & Design

### **“How to have fair representation of issues and tell your story in a time of savvy social media campaigns”**

Christina discussed the impact of social media campaigns and how unequal representation can lead to a misinformed public. She highlighted tips to help tell fishing and fish harvester’s stories on social media.

She spoke about four Pillars of Shareable Content:

- 1) Appealing to human emotion
  - Fishing family stories, pushing out positive messages, identify like-minded people to connect with, and having a pod of people sharing these positive messages - working together.
- 2) Creating community
  - Using inclusive language
- 3) Being helpful - providing tips and tricks
  - Share recipes or how-to advice
- 4) Inspiring awe.

Other ways to reach followers:

- Identify key messages
- Take over competitor keywords
- Tag influencers/people you want to spread your message
- Use hashtags
- Partner up and share other people's content
- Post frequently
- Authentic and transparent posts

Interacting on your own content:

- How you react is more important than getting a negative comment
- Defuse heated debate by addressing problems and providing alternate solutions
- Try to find common ground



- Ignore is sometimes best
- Remember that there is a human on the other end
- Focus on the key messages you want to get across
- Avoid insulting/offending
- Keep message short, direct and clear. Direct to more details on your own feed
- Provide fact checking opportunities - encourage others to do their own fact checking

**Joy Thorkelson** – President, UFAWU-Unifor

### **Part 1: “Overview of challenges facing the industry, impacts on harvesters and communities, and paths forward”**

Joy led with: “The industry – it doesn’t matter what part of the fishery you’re in – is dying a death of a thousand cuts.” In her presentation she explored some of the issues of concern in the fishing industry, including: pinniped over-population and salmon farm impacts on wild salmon stocks, the pervasive issue of management being swayed by public opinion instead of by science, the degradation of fresh water and estuary habitat, the huge impacts of climate change, the licensing system and its detriments for harvesters and fishing communities. This is not an exhaustive list, but it highlights the idea that fisheries are facing a situation where there are many compounding harming factors. She went on to state that there are solutions and that many have been proposed by fish harvesters.

She emphasized however, that the overriding issue is that if you don’t have access to a licence the value of our local fish goes to somebody else. If you’re leasing your quota – it doesn’t matter how many other problems you can solve – you are still putting the money earned into someone else’s pockets.

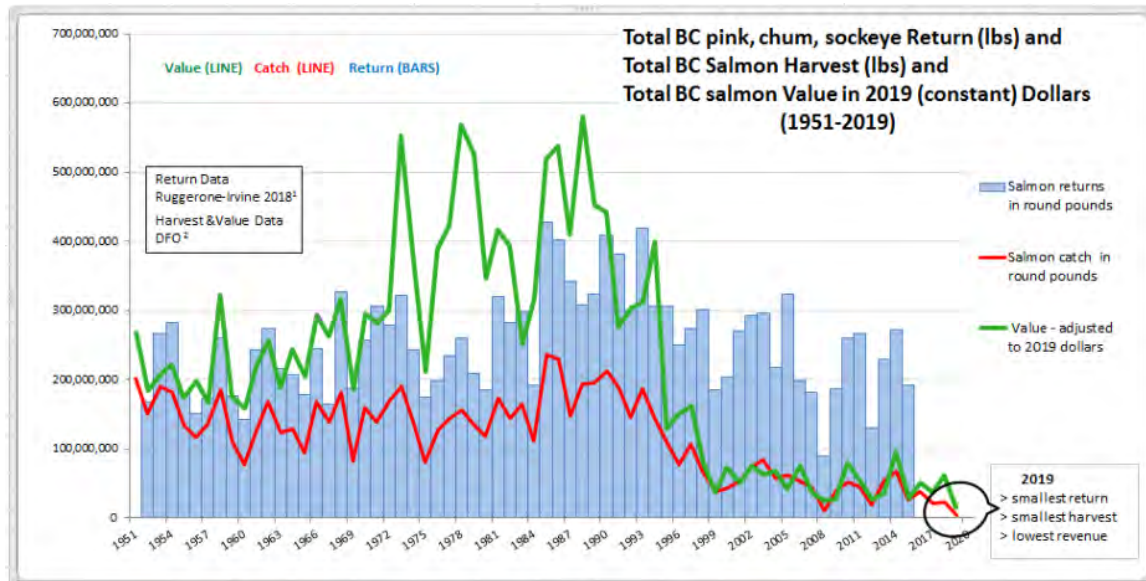
Joy briefly summarized the 70-year history of the commercial salmon fishing industry and how bad science, poor policy, and ill-informed public opinion have influenced the value of catch and decimated the small boat fleet. In the first slide she showed DFO’s graph on the commercial salmon fishery that tracks a plummeting trend for salmon pounds and value from 1951-2019. In the next graph, Joy shows how research demonstrates a trend line going up from 1952-2015 for total return of three salmon species, sockeye, chum, pink, in Canada.

For 30 years, from 1950 to 1980, Joy explains how the salmon fishery was at a stable level. Then from 1980 onward more and more fish were put on spawning grounds, and from 1994-1999 salmon took a real dive and have been held at those lower levels for 20 years.

She demonstrated how the fleet was bankrupted. When fish harvesters didn’t have to fight hard for access, the value of salmon was high because they could afford to go on strike to get the companies to pay better prices. But, as soon as access to fish fell and catches dropped, value fell because if fish harvesters are struggling to fish they’re not



able to strike for fair value.



“How the value of the catch is shared is going to make you wealthy or it is going to make you poor. Licensing is so important. We can work toward solving these other problems but if we don’t resolve our licensing issues, our fisheries industry and fish harvesters, will continue to suffer.”

– Joy Thorkelson

**James Lawson** – Independent fish harvester

**Part 2: “Overview of challenges facing the industry, impacts on harvesters and communities, and paths forward”**





James was able to share his perspectives as a Haítzaqv commercial fisherman and member of the harvest committee for salmon seine, the Wild Salmon Advisory Council and the steering committee for the BC Young Fishermen’s Network. He described a plethora issues that harvesters face within West Coast fisheries and that it is overwhelming to think of them all at once, but he finds it easier to address these problems in terms of different access issues.

He explored eight different access levels in his presentation:

- 1) The first level of access is having a healthy fish stock. There can be no access without baseline data and precautionary measure frameworks. However, this baseline is difficult to achieve with inequitable monitoring across fishing sectors and with the dynamic impacts of habitat degradation and climate change. The coast is no longer a pristine environment and James felt it was painfully obvious that salmon enhancement is of paramount importance, not just as a socio-economic driver but for conservation.
- 2) The next access level is a sound science-based management plan. This includes many complex actions for sustainability such as effectively designing and managing marine protected areas and making high-level decisions that strengthen the commercial fishing industry along with the economy and communities that it supports. James also raised concern about groups that lobby to influence fisheries management decisions by misleading the public with misinformation.
- 3) Then you have to be part of the user group that is allowed to access the fish. Allocation is complex, as it crosses borders and user groups.
- 4) To fish you must have access to a licence but an increasing number of people who own licences and quota don’t actually fish. As domestic licence holders have left the industry, licences have been purchased by speculative investors, reducing fish harvester access by inflating the costs of licences for sale. The marrying of licences and the way Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) licences go to the free market only worsen the issues of access for harvesters at this level. It is difficult for new entrants to get licences when costs are so high, or when you can’t get one specific licence to start because it’s married to another. All of these barriers mean that licence sharing is increasingly common and there often isn’t much option other than to lease from investors. The way the lease system is set up, the boat owner is more likely to lose their small business than the lease holder because they take on the bulk of the personal safety and financial risk involved in fishing.

**“Too often, the financial benefit from our fishing industry is funneled into the hands of those who don’t fish.”**

– James Lawson

- 5) In addition to a licence you need to have access to a skilled crew and equipment.



Intergenerational knowledge is also key, but it's getting harder and harder to find somebody to pass that knowledge along to because there are few new entrants. It is hard to convince someone to take on a fishing career with so much uncertainty surrounding the occupation.

- 6) Once you have fish, you have to find an appropriate market. As a largely export fishery, we are currently experiencing market problems with the Chinese market being largely shut down which is shutting down fisheries along with it. Without a backup in other countries or a domestic market that's just the way it is.
- 7) Then you have to share the wealth appropriately. The mark-up has to be distributed, and the first payments typically go straight to the lease of quota, and other expenses like fuel, upkeep, and monitoring. James cycles most of the money from his fishing operations back into other local businesses. This is not necessarily the case with someone who sees quota and licence as an investment opportunity and walks away with profit as soon as the product is sold, without supporting the local economy.
- 8) Lastly, James explained that you need to have a contingency plan. Fish harvesters need to find self-sufficient ways to make ends meet. Diversification is key for fish harvesters these days so they can get by when one fishery doesn't go as planned.

Fish harvesters run into barriers at every level, which makes it a tough business. No one ever said fishing was an easy occupation, but, if there's one thing fish harvesters have going for them, it's that they're resilient. Lately, fisheries workers have been focusing their voices and demanding change. The FOPO report and the provincial wild salmon plan need to be put into action.

When we stand together as a group of diverse individuals, as demonstrated by everyone's presence here today, the future becomes a little bit brighter.

**“The solutions for some of our fisheries problems are right in front of us. When we speak as a community instead of as individuals, we have power.”**

– James Lawson





## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS: FACING THE HEADWINDS

As identified by the earlier panelists, there are many complex issues in BC's commercial fisheries that are impacting fish harvesters and communities. On the first morning of the Gathering, participants had an opportunity to discuss some of these issues and how they were being affected. Four table discussions followed the panel presentations from Paula Barbieto (Slow Fish, Italy), Eric Angel (Uu-a-thluck Fisheries Manager), Joy Thorkelson (UFAWU-Unifor), and James Lawson (BC fisherman). Gathering participants were invited to join the discussion group they felt was most relevant to their interests. At each table participants had an opportunity to discuss the issues affecting them and explored models of engagement and intervention to promote better outcomes.

**Group 1:** Positive approaches and tools for MPA development that is inclusive and accountable to intended outcomes – with Paula Barbeito

**Group 2:** Approaches to rebuilding First Nations commercial fisheries and the values that this can bring back to communities – with Eric Angel

**Group 3:** Public relations including social media and other tools for positive change – with Christina Adams and Ken Hardie

**Group 4:** Facing the thousand cuts and a pathway forward – with James Lawson and Joy Thorkelson.

## ROUNDTABLE ONE: POSITIVE APPROACHES TO MPA DEVELOPMENT

Resource Person: [Paula Barbieto](#), Slow Fish Italy, International Coordinator

Paula asked participants to describe how marine protected areas are being designed in BC and the challenges the current planning approach has created for some interests including those in the commercial fishing industry. She offered examples from MPA planning/development in Europe to demonstrate that when all interests have been actively engaged and effectively consulted in a planning process, MPAs have resulted in positive outcomes for fishing communities and the environment. Key points raised and discussed:

- Not all First Nations have participated in MPA planning, more have in land use planning.
- The interest for First Nations is in rights and title. It is not clear what the concept of MPA's means in that context.



- It is not clear where and how final decisions will be made. What is the process for reaching an agreement?
- There are many 'drivers' for MPAs at this time including federal government mandates to get to 30% of total ocean area protected by 2030, and the many environmental organizations interests.
- It is difficult for the fishing industry to effectively represent itself when the process is not well articulated, and their capacity is very limited.
- MPAs have caused direct losses to fish harvesters, especially the small boat fleet.
- MPAs seek compromises across too many interests. It is not clear where the balance of power rests or who has the final say. The small boat fleet feels very marginalized.
- It is difficult to know how to meaningfully share management and decision-making for MPAs going forward. Nobody is planning for long term management of these areas.

Paula shared the example of the Spanish MPA, which used a unique bottom up approach that sought to balance public, social, economic, and natural values throughout the process. She also stated that it is crucial at the outset of the process to agree to the goals for the MPA – subsistence, conservation, socio-economic, so that each decision is measured against something tangible. She suggested that mediators could help to support the social justice aspect of MPA development. She reminded the group that MPAs are just a tool to get to the end result that everyone agrees they want.

## **ROUNDTABLE TWO: REBUILDING FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES ACCESS, MANAGEMENT, FLEET CAPACITY AND APPROACHES**

Resource Person: [Eric Angel](#), Uu-a-thluck Fisheries Manager, Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council

Eric led this table discussion by exploring how the Nuuchahnulth experience with rebuilding their fisheries through mobilizing elders, engaging DFO programs, establishing a seafood company, purchasing and leasing licences and quota, and introducing new management tools might have relevance for other First Nations communities and/or mirror their experiences.

Key points of discussion:

- The communal licensing system has many challenges. The benefits do not currently reach individuals or families in the ways that they should, and it is harder for fish harvesters fishing communal licences to compete with



entrepreneurial fisheries.

- First Nations need to work together to make sure each boat is sustainable and consider ways to ensure that the whole fleet remains viable. Cooperative management approaches are needed. A more coordinated approach across the Nations is needed. Everyone's opportunity is diminished when First Nations fight among themselves.
- Building relationships at the local level – First Nations and non-Indigenous people can help to ensure the fisheries are managed with local benefits in mind.
- Licences should be issued to harvest seals and these licences should be managed according to traditional ecological knowledge. There are lessons to be learned from the Atlantic seal harvest system.
- The current quota system is hurting First Nations fisheries as well as non-Indigenous fisheries. A new, more equitable approach to quota allocation is needed.
- Fisheries must be managed in ways that keep benefits in the local economy. The current trajectory is toward privatization and offshore ownership of the resource. Industry consolidation has had a serious negative impact on the benefits accruing to families and communities.
- Buy-backs were not done in a coordinated way with an eye to achieving the kind of results necessary to support local fisheries and local benefits. Licences were allocated from marine to inland fisheries which negatively impacted many coastal communities. These impacts have not been calculated or documented.
- First Nations fishing must be recognized by all as a right. Indigenous communities have lost considerable access to fishing. This ground needs to be re-gained as part of balancing the benefits of commercial fisheries. All management and policy decisions need to look through the lens of increasing local economic benefits and opportunities.
- Things are moving too slowly. Governments must be forced to engage in the resolution of the issues facing the commercial industry.

### **ROUNDTABLE THREE: USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHARE YOUR STORY AND CREATING A POSITIVE IMPACT**

Resource People: [Christina Adams](#), Antenna Social, and [Ken Hardie](#), Member of Parliament

Advice for effective communication:



When communicating you want to achieve one of three things

- You want someone to do something
- You want someone to not do something
- You want someone to let you do something

Identify who the audience is that you are trying to influence and figure out what they are most interested in. Example: fairness, cost effectiveness, environment etc. Then, be clear on what you want, put yourself in the person's shoes who you are trying to reach and relate to them.

Public Relations main points for Fisheries:

- We need to change the story to change negative public perceptions
- Need to connect consumers to the story
- More education is needed on what the commercial fishery is and what it isn't. There are a lot of misconceptions

Christina and Ken gave advice on using social media to tell your story. In a time of savvy social media campaigns and new, at times questionable, tactics for swaying public opinion, how can you have more fair and balanced representation of issues. Key points raised and discussed:

- We need to tell our story to combat the public's negative perceptions.
- We need to connect consumers to the story of their seafood.
- More education is needed on what the commercial fishery is and what it isn't. There are a lot of misconceptions.

Advice from Christina and Ken:

- Have your social media posts focused on the four pillars of shareable content: appeal to human emotion, create community, be helpful, and inspire awe.
- Identify your key messages
- Partner up with like-minded groups and share each other's content.
- Diffuse debates and heated conversations by addressing problems and alternate solutions.
- Put yourself in the person's shoes who you are trying to reach and relate to them.

## **ROUNDTABLE FOUR: CHALLENGES FACING THE COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY, IMPACTS ON HARVESTERS AND COMMUNITIES, AND POSSIBLE PATHS FORWARD**

Resource People: [Joy Thorkelson](#), UFAWU-Unifor, and [James Lawson](#), BC Fisherman

While the primary focus of this Gathering was to develop a shared strategy for encouraging action on the FOPO and BC Wild Salmon Strategy recommendations, organizers felt it was important to provide space for participants to talk about the



myriad of issues confronting their day-to-day efforts to earn a living from fishing in BC. This breakout discussed possible ways to address some of the key concerns identified. Key points of discussion:

- Pinnipeds – there is a growing problem with predation that is well documented. A harvest program should be established for pinnipeds. Licensing should be required.
- Logging has destroyed key habitats. There is a key role for hatcheries to rebuild critical stocks.
- Non-target species are being wasted. Licensing and fishing practices have to return to a system of landing what we catch. The fishery of the future needs to return to a multi-species approach.
- Fisheries management and the erosion of trust in the relationship with authorities. It is important to return to a monitoring/management system where people feel responsible to self-report and not fearful.
- MPA's – the fishing industry should not be shouldering the brunt of the marine protected areas targets. The industry must be actively engaged in establishing how and where these targets are met.
- Sports fishery – the competition with recreational activities continues. Monitoring is unequal/unfair at the present time. Recreational fishing is not the same as the big lodge tourism industry. The rules should recognize the difference. There needs to be a fair application of policies to all users including policing, monitoring, and licensing.
- Need to be putting value back into the fishery. At this time licensing and quota systems make it very difficult to remain economically viable.
- There should be an assessment of the commercial fishery not only in terms of outcomes for individuals, but also for communities and the environment. We only measure landed values. This single measurement tool misses a lot of the important values associated with the industry activity such as local socio-economic values.
- It is important to work effectively with First Nations to co-manage the fisheries.
- Access is key.
- There are many examples of innovative management solutions. Alaska valuing ecosystem services is one example.
- Need to prioritize thinking about ecosystem-based management. Everything is connected, such as pinnipeds affecting fisheries, and salmon fisheries affecting oolichans.



- There is both great pessimism and great optimism within the industry, and there are as many solutions as there are threats. It is important to focus on getting organized, being clear about what is needed, and insisting that things need to be done differently.

### **LUNCH PRESENTATION AND Q&A: DFO's response to the Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters Association on socio-economic concerns in Pacific commercial fisheries**



**Dan Edwards** – BC Fish Harvester; Director, Area A Crab Association  
Dan's presentation of DFO slide deck

The presentation was presented previously as an update to the Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters' Federation. It provided a summary of the main points of the FOPO report "West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits", emphasizing the inequitable distribution of risks and benefits, difficulty of access for new entrants, and the lack of availability and transparency regarding quota licence ownership and socioeconomic data. DFO acknowledged that while it is meeting its ecological objectives, it is missing its objectives related to equitable distribution of benefits; economic viability of fishing operations; and data collection and analysis.

Over the past several years there have been a number of initiatives proposed to review Pacific region licencing and management policies by organizations such as Commercial Salmon Advisory Board, Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters Federation, FOPO, and the Wild Salmon Advisory Council; out of this has come the following themes and objectives:





- Making the fishery more accessible to new entrants, especially younger individuals
- Ensuring a fair distribution of benefits among those involved in the fishery
- Ensuring that the benefits derived from fish harvesting flow to active fishers and communities in B.C.
- Improving flexibilities for harvesters to respond to changes

In response to these issues, the Pacific Region has proposed a workshop to discuss the available information and support conversations between harvesters and DFO. DFO has also undertaken several initiatives to serve as inputs for the workshop, including a socioeconomic summary report for Pacific Region commercial fisheries and a comparative analysis of Atlantic and Pacific commercial fishing policies and regulations.

The socioeconomic summary will compile information on fisheries management and licensing regulations, policies, and practices that may affect the distribution of benefits derived from the fisheries as well as DFO's available socioeconomic data relevant to the issues that have been raised<sup>1</sup>. The comparative analysis of Atlantic and Pacific commercial fishing policies and regulations could include a summary of the relevant Atlantic and Pacific fisheries policies and regulations, Atlantic fisheries covered and not covered by PIIFCAF, operational implications and expected impacts of implementing Atlantic-type fisheries policies and regulations in BC, lessons learned from experience in Atlantic fisheries, and factors that contributed to different landed value trends in Atlantic and Pacific coast fisheries.

## PLENARY DISCUSSION – KEY POINTS

The audience's response to this presentation raised a few key concerns/questions, including:

- a serious criticism of DFO's absence at the gathering and lack of engagement and willingness to address these issues,
- how aligned Indigenous and non-Indigenous small scale/independent harvesters' visions are for the future and how best to work together, and
- the need to support the activism of youth.

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<sup>1</sup> This report is now available from DFO and is titled *Overview of Socio-Economic Concerns in Pacific Region Fisheries and Related Regulations, Policies & Practices*.



## PANEL TWO: UNDERSTANDING AND MEASURING THE IMPACTS

Moderated By: [Fraser MacDonald](#), BC Fish Harvester



[Danielle Edwards](#) - University of British Columbia, Institute for Oceans and Fisheries

### “The Social and Economic Outcomes of an Individual Transferable Quota Fishery: The BC Halibut Fishery”

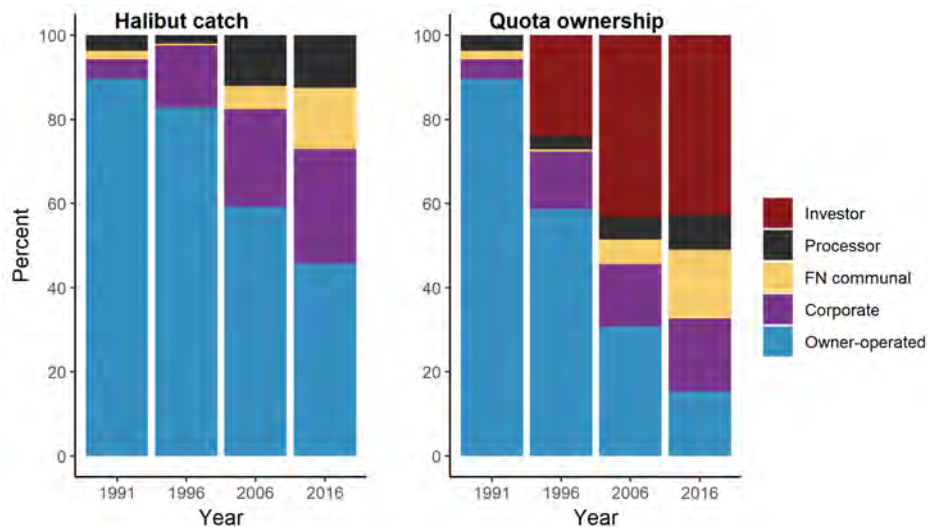
Danielle Edwards is originally from Ucluelet and belongs to a large multi-generational fishing family. She recently completed her PhD through the Institute for Oceans and Fisheries at the University of British Columbia. Her thesis assessed the impact of individual transferable quotas (ITQ) on the social and economic outcomes for small boat fleets, using the British Columbia halibut fishery as a case study. During the panel she presented her findings.

The British Columbia Pacific halibut fishery has long been held up as an example of successful fisheries management. However, Danielle’s in-depth investigation has revealed significant failings. The ownership profile of the fishery has changed dramatically since the introduction of individual transferable quotas. The fishery has transitioned from predominantly owner-operated (about 90% in 1991) to absentee investor owners and lessee fish harvesters. Owner-operators that have entered the fishery since 2001 catch 15% but own less than 1% of the halibut quota.



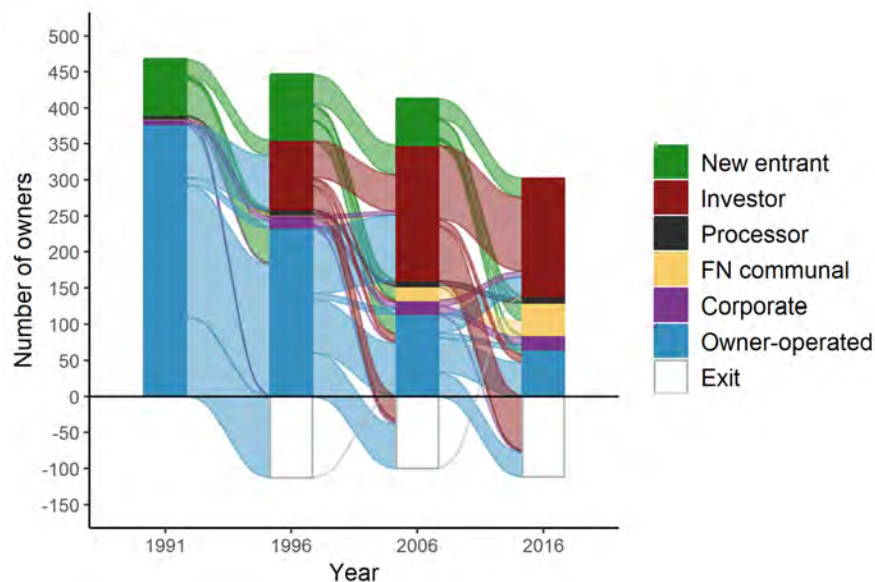
### RISE OF THE INVESTOR CLASS (Graph)

Displacing owner-operators whose share of catch and ownership fell from 90% in 1991 to 45% of catch and 15% of ownership by 2016



### WHO ARE THESE INVESTORS? (Graph)

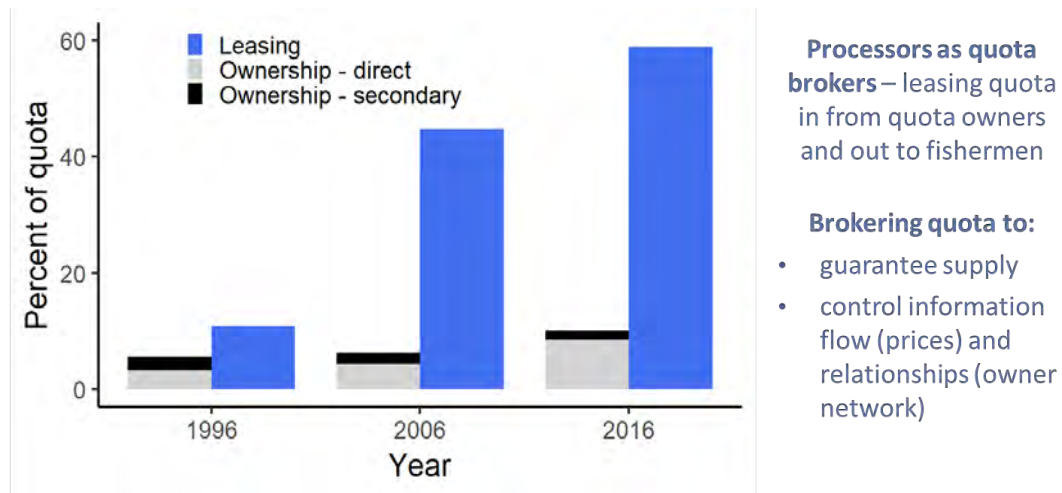
While an increasing share are outside investors, most are still original grantees that stopped fishing but kept their quota to lease out.



But she pointed out it isn't just about investors – the role of processors has also changed under ITQs. Processor ownership has more than doubled in the 25 years



since the introduction of individual quota, but remains below 10%; however, processors are exerting a hidden role, through control of leasing – more than half of quota lease transfers go through processor-controlled holding licences.



Lease fees for halibut have regularly exceeded 80% of the landed price, reducing lessee fishing enterprises to minimal earnings that do not support reinvestment or renewal of the fleet. New owner-operator entrants cannot earn enough from the fishery to re-invest, including vessel maintenance and replacement. The fishery, under current conditions, is not self-sustaining as an owner-operator fishery. Socio-economic objectives are not being met, raising important questions about the design and implementation of ITQ management systems and their use in Canada's fisheries.

In summary, Danielle shared her key findings including that:

- Owner-operators and crew are increasingly marginalized in the fishery
- Investors are the single largest ownership group
- Processors are exerting control primarily through leasing
- New entrant owner-operators not earning enough from the fishery to support reinvestment or be viable as a business over the long-term
- Under current leasing and ownership trends, the halibut fishery is not self-sustaining as an owner-operator fishery
- Objectives related to fleet viability and distribution of benefits are not being met
- The situation in the BC halibut fishery raises questions about how ITQ management is impacting other government priorities, such as resilience, capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship, business competitiveness, and the social and economic equity issues inherent in a 'Sustainable Blue Economy'

And she recommended the following:

Options for action within the so-called "scrambled and fully cooked" licencing system

- a) Build the evidence-base to ground decision-making
- b) Implement targeted measures to achieve socio-economic objectives

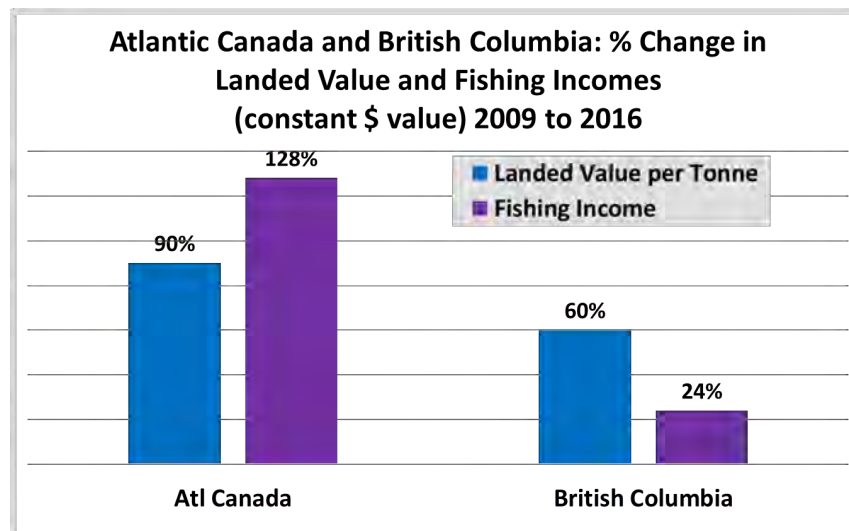


- a. Ownership measures – policy, regulations, programs (e.g., licence banks)
- b. Fair-share leasing arrangements (regulatory, collective bargaining)
- c. Approaches to provide equitable exit (phased roll-out, exit pathways)
- c) Committing to best practices for a process to implement transformation
  - a. Clear and agreed upon objectives
- d) An inclusive and appropriate decision-making process
  - a. Principled (fair and just)
  - b. Multi-stakeholder and collaborative
  - c. Evidence-based (robust data collection and analysis)
  - d. Transparent (in data, in analysis, in decision-making)
- e) Focused implementation with regular and ongoing evaluation
- f) Ensure a nationally coherent approach to achieving stated objectives for fisheries across Canada (e.g., regulations to implement recent amendments to the Fisheries Act, on all coasts; recent federal government commitment to establish a ‘Blue Economy’ Strategy)

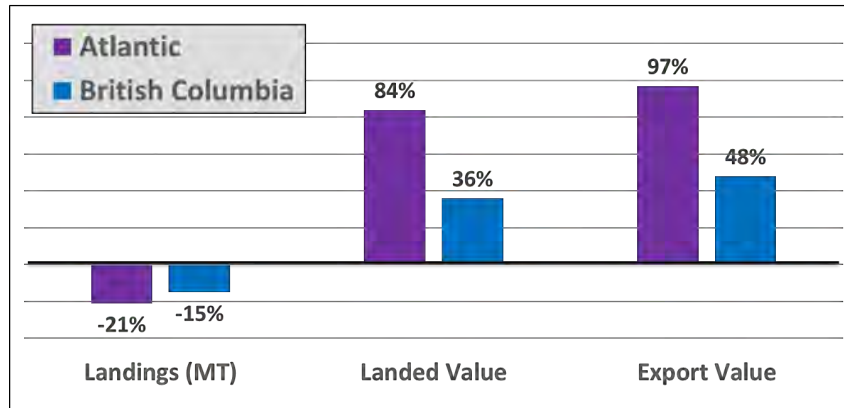
**Rick Williams** - Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters (CCPFH)

### “Current growth surge in the global fishing economy, demographic challenges and fishermen’s incomes in BC in comparison with other regions”

Rick discussed findings from a recent three-year CCPFH study on the Canadian fishing industry. The evidence showed that fisheries across Canada and internationally are seeing strong growth in landed values and harvester incomes, but this is not the case in British Columbia.



### Economic Performance, Atlantic and British Columbia Fisheries 2010 to 2018 – landings (MT), landed and Export Value in constant dollars (2016)



The research findings linked this poor economic performance to the unique industry structure and dysfunctional licensing policies in Pacific Region. Mainly the absence of a boots on the deck policy and an unregulated licensing and leasing market.

### Industry structure, not license policies

- Atlantic
  - Only qualified harvesters allowed to own fishing licences or quota in “inshore” fisheries
    - 90% of landed value
  - Fish harvester owner must be on vessel fishing license or quota, no leasing
  - One harvester – one license or quota
  - Adjacency rules – ownership of licenses & quotas tied to regions/ communities
- British Columbia
  - Companies and speculative investors can own licenses and quotas, lease them to harvesters
  - “Rich fishermen” can accumulate license and quota and lease them
  - Many harvesters must lease licenses or quota to sustain enterprises
    - Share cropping
    - Off-loading risk
  - Limited adjacency rules

Finally, Rick shared the following conclusions:

- Insanity: maintain the same economic model, expect it to produce better economic, social and eco-system outcomes
- Current structure drains wealth of fishery away from BC enterprise owners and workers who produce that wealth
- Drains wealth away from coastal communities that attract, retain, and sustain the workforce
- Wealth accrues to non-harvesters with limited stake in socio-economic development and resource sustainability
- Classic colonial exploitation model: the more wealth the industry produces, the more stress for producers, their communities and the resource base

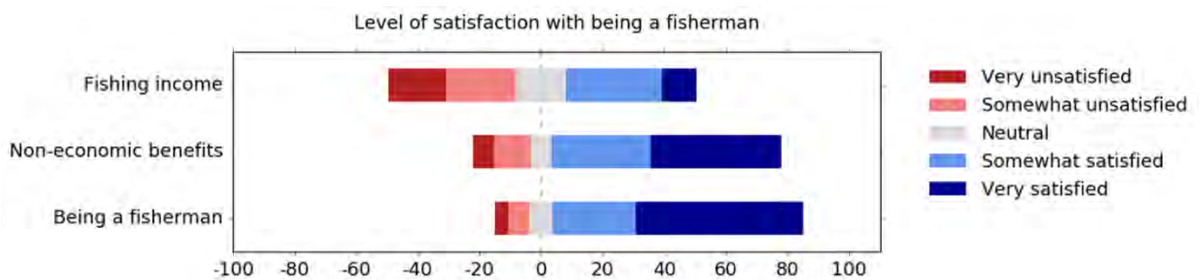


Dr. Nathan Bennett – UBC, British Columbia

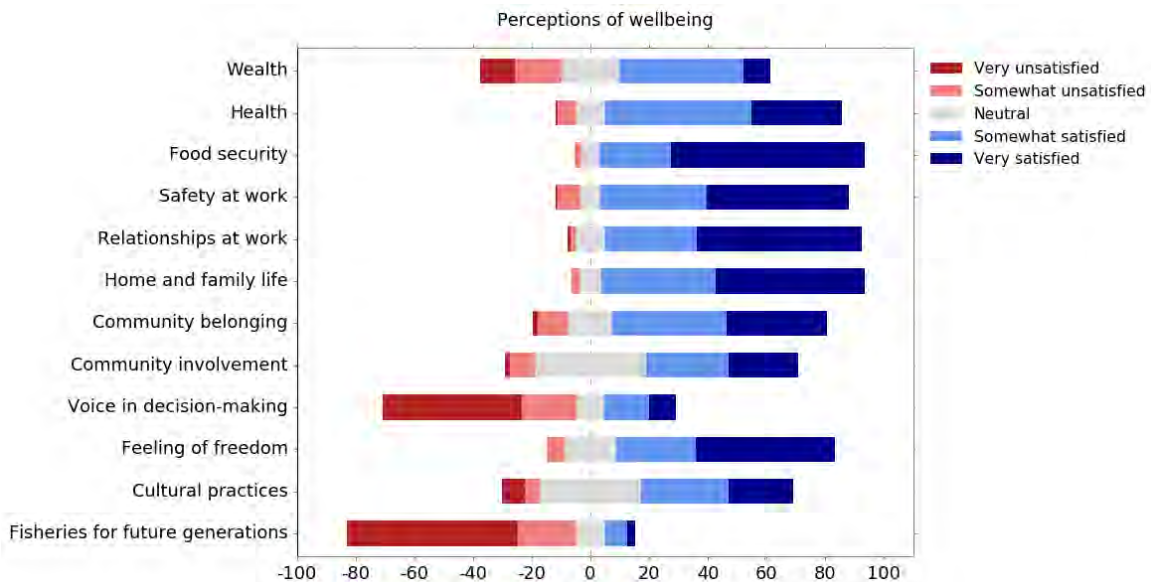
### “Findings from a survey on well-being and access in BC fisheries”

Nathan provided an overview of results of a survey of 118 independent fish harvesters in coastal communities along the coast of British Columbia during the spring, summer, and fall of 2019. The survey focused on understanding well-being and access issues being experienced by independent fish harvesters.

As in previous studies, on the topic of wellbeing fish harvesters feel more satisfied with the non-economic benefits and being a fisherman in general, than with the economic returns.

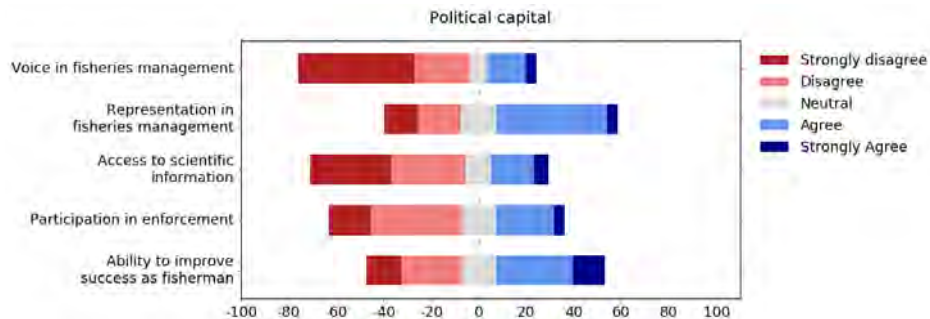
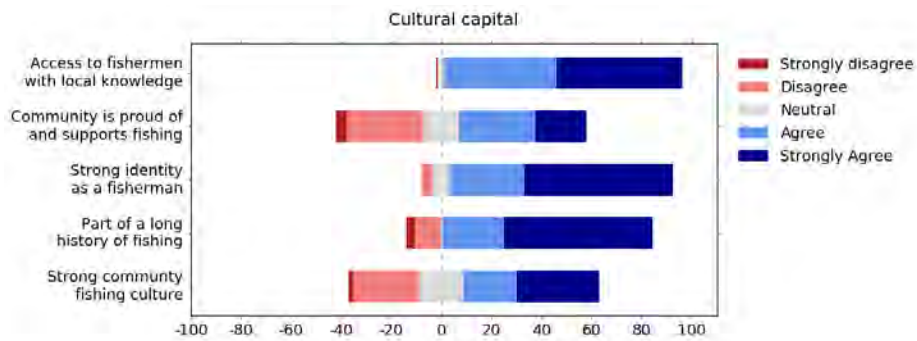
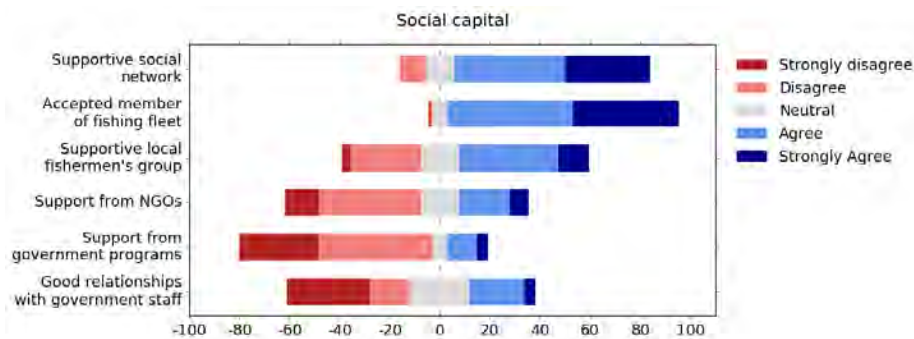
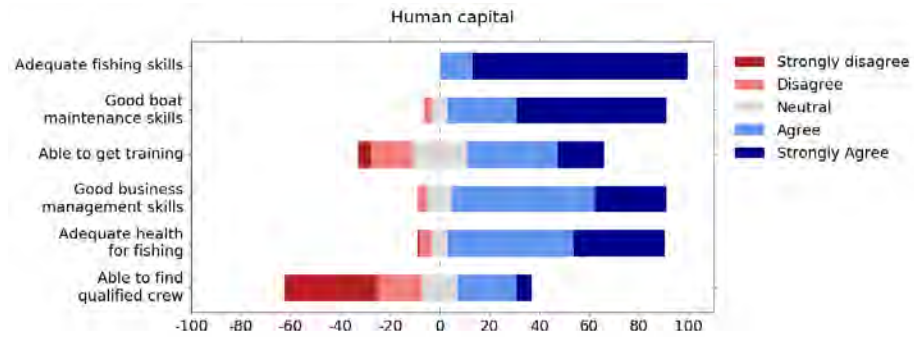
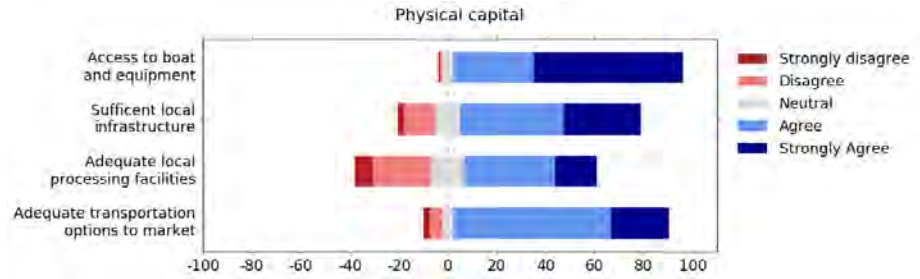


There was an overwhelmingly positive response to all categories in well-being except for wealth, voice in decision making, and fisheries for future generations.

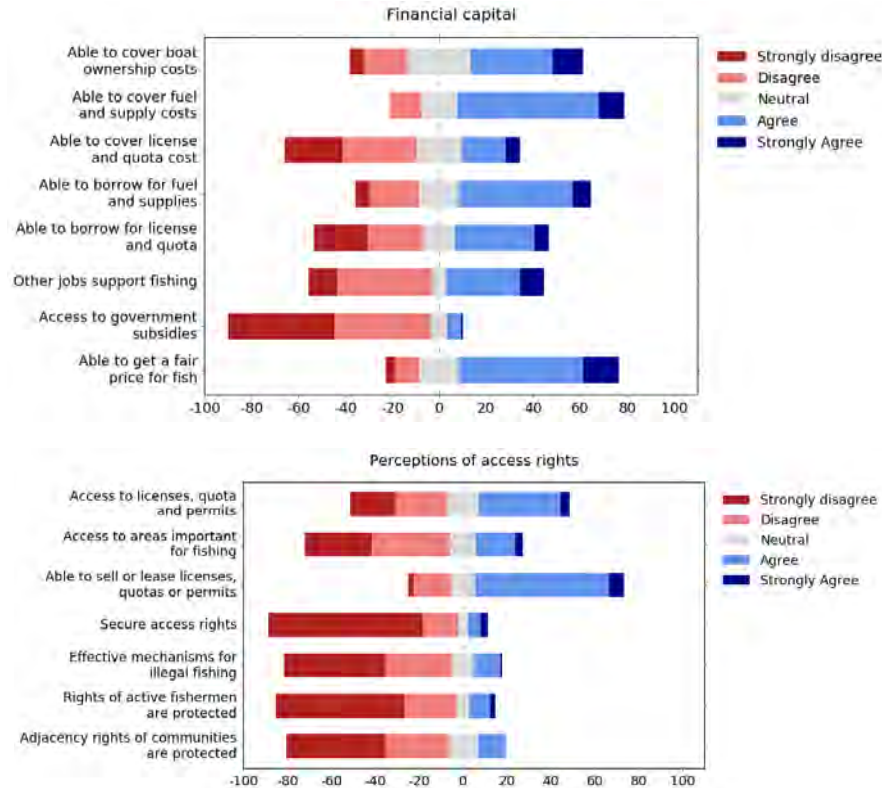


The survey focused on six categories of assets – physical, human, social, cultural, political, and financial – as well as access rights. Physical, human, and cultural assets resulted in largely positive responses as compared to social, political, financial and access rights which had largely negative responses.









A key point Nathan raised coming out of his research was the notable absence of young harvesters and fisherwomen. Further, he concluded that the main assets that fish harvesters felt were strengths included: boats and infrastructure, personal skills, financial capital for boat and supplies, supportive social networks, culture and history and the ability to get a fair price. The main concerns for fish harvesters were related to: exclusion from decision making and management, lack of support from the government, insecurity of rights, finding qualified crew, and competition with other sectors and conservation. There were mixed results on: access to harvesting rights (licence, quota, permits), financial capital for licence and quota, adequate processing facilities, ability to get training, support from fish harvester organizations and NGO's and support from their communities.

Alexander Kotlarov - University of Alaska - Fairbanks, Alaska USA

### “A Review of some of the Community Support Measures in Alaska Fisheries”

Alexander gave an overview of how Alaska's commercial fisheries have evolved over time to where they are today, more specifically, around the introduction of quota shares in the halibut and sablefish fisheries. Quota shares were brought in around the same time as they were in BC and were a solution posed to help combat “the race for fish,” which was said to have reduced the value of landed catch, and increased risk of overharvest and risk-taking by fish harvesters. When Alaska was developing this new




fisheries model, they drew upon information from other regions that had implemented quota shares (Canada and New Zealand). The other regions listed problems with fleet consolidation of ownership, the tendency for a small number of entities to own the majority of the quotas and how quota shares tended to favour larger boats over smaller boats. To help combat some of these social issues, Alaska added in features to help protect and preserve the small boat, independent owner-operator fleet.

To address some of the social issues features WERE ADDED TO PRESERVE THE SMALL BOAT independent OPERATOR

The program elements intended to contribute to these goals included

- owner-onboard requirements,
- caps on the amount of quota that could be held by a person or fished from a vessel,
- Transfer restrictions,
- and a fixed distribution of quota to particular vessel size classes.

The intent was to keep this fishery a fishermen fishery and preclude large corporations from dominating the fishery.



With these measures in place the introduction of quota shares led to improved safety at sea, improved fish quality, higher profits, and an extended fishing season. However, there were a few unforeseen problems which included the grandfathered use of hired masters, allowing armchair fishermen to benefit from active harvesters fishing their quota. This was changed in 2014 and all catch quota bought since 2014 must be fished by the quota shareholder, closing the loophole.

Alexander explained how the drop in quota share holdings of individual fishing quota (IFQ) halibut and sablefish in Southeast and the Gulf of Alaska has hurt rural communities. There are a number of programs that have been introduced to allow communities to try to rebuild their fleet. One program is called the community quota entities program (CQE), which allows the communities to purchase the IFQ quota and lease it to their community members. This program has had some success, but it has not been as successful as they have hoped.

On the positive side there are some new developments with a fisheries trust program that allows affordable loans to fish harvesters, and there seems to be an uptake on youth interested in fishing with the popularity of fisheries apprenticeship programs.

Alexander concluded by sharing a roadmap for rebuilding which includes outreach in the community, researching what quota the community has had in the past, developing a strategic plan to identify the specific programs that best address community goals, purchasing quota, and identifying options for allocating fishing



opportunities to communities members. He also provided a list of community support measures:

- Highlight community organizations that work to promote local fish harvesters
- Encourage youth to enter the fisheries – offer programs
- Help community develop goals- united voice is important to change policy.
- Research other areas that have successful programs and try to incorporate these.
- Support local groups that are working directly with small communities of fish harvesters

**Future - of the fisheries**

In Alaska the Federal and state have education quotas that can be used to encourage youth.

**Programs to help youth (apprenticeship)**

Maine – has complete an apprenticeship program – which allows them to be able to fish 150 lobster traps

Norway- has one program that recruits young boat owners that fish on vessel 20-45 feet.

Another Norway program – called the “youth recreation quota” that allows youth to offer recreation charters during the summer (June 21-August 32)

The Alaska longline fishermen's Association of Sitka apprenticeship program – In which local fishermen take the time to train young fishermen



## PLENARY DISCUSSION – KEY POINTS

- In general, we only take one or two types of information into consideration when making decisions about ocean management, and this panel shows that a wider range of information and objectives create a more complete picture of what we might consider 'sustainable'.
- There are a lot of problems, but what are the solutions? We need Federal government to act to do things like establish a commission, loan board, etc. The government needs to follow through on the recommendation to establish the commission to identify made in BC solutions.
- The socioecological problems are greater than just money. Suicide rates, depressions, etc.
- The biggest rival we have is the BC Seafood Alliance; they tell Ottawa that things are great on the West Coast. Many of our boats are gone and we see them in Alaska.
- Let's talk about the positives and opportunities – let's go out and do it.
- A lot of us are held accountable to companies that we lease from or we are in economic relationships with – this makes it impossible to strike, protest, etc.
- In the past year we've had to destroy several boats because they just sit on the wharf and can't go anywhere. We used to have 1400 gillnets tied up in Alert Bay; it was a vibrant community. Now boats are going to the junk pile because of lack of access. My kids won't be able to stay in fishing; so many different types of tickets to operate my boat and we are over-policed.



## PANEL 3: LEARNING FROM OTHER REGIONS, COMMON GROUND AND WAYS FORWARD



Moderated By: [Dan Edwards](#) - BC Fish Harvester; Director, Area A Crab Association

[Robert Keenan](#) – Food Fish and Allied Workers (FFAW-UNIFOR), Newfoundland

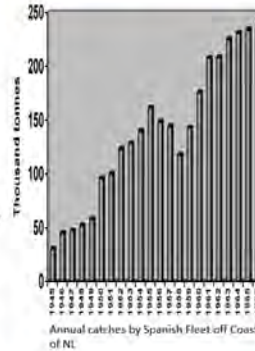
### “The Newfoundland and Labrador Inshore Fishery and the Owner-Operator/Fleet Separation Policies”

Robert began with a brief overview of the merchant control system that used to be in place in Newfoundland and Labrador. A system that kept fish harvesters in poverty due to the debt they would incur from borrowing money upfront from the buyer that they sold their fish too. In 1970, the organization for a fish harvester’s union began and eventually became the FFAW. The union was able to negotiate better prices and conditions for harvesters, as well as provided a unified voice for harvesters that helped them bring about positive change in the fishery. Some of these positive changes were adjacency, fleet separation, and owner-operator policies. Robert outlined the critical role adjacency plays in protecting benefits of the fishery for fish harvesters and fishing communities.



## The Importance of Adjacency

- In 1977, Canada established its 200-mile limit, giving it more control over its fisheries.
- Adjacency: those who live closest to the resource should be the primary beneficiaries of the harvesting of that resource.
- Adjacency focuses on the individual/community and its relationship with the value of the common fishing resource.



He also provided some of the many benefits that fleet separation brought about including:

- Improved collective bargaining. The fishing component of the fishery is run by harvesters and not by processing companies – separate but need each other.
- Provided a competitive marketplace. Companies compete to secure fish landed by harvesters. Helps increase prices to harvesters.
- Increased overall revenue to harvesters.
- Revenue from the fishery flow first through the community.
- Harvesters placed in control of how they fish and to whom they sell.
- Participation and leadership by harvesters in resource sustainability/conservation.
- Established harvesters as a distinct stakeholder when considering harvesting opportunities for new and emerging fisheries.

He described how the add-on of the owner/operator policy came about in 1989 and that it was established to address some concerns that fleet separation didn't address, particularly the issue of resource rent in the fishery.



### **Owner-Operator Policy: Further Empowering Inshore Harvesters and the Community**

- Owner-operator defines who a fish harvester is. Not just a fisher person, owner-operator denotes permanence, professionalism, a realized, earned interest in the fishery.
- All inshore licenses in NL can only be issued to those harvesters who are declared as being owner-operator.
- Thus, inshore fishing licenses stay in the inshore, which keeps the wealth of the fishery in the communities over generations.



www.fawc.nl.ca

Robert then described examples of how these policies have resulted in direct increase in fishing opportunity and value for the inshore communities of Atlantic Canada, and how they have enabled fish harvesters to reinvest in their enterprises. In conclusion, Robert emphasized that fleet separation and owner operator policies make up the economic and social pillars of the inshore fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. He noted that gaining owner-operator and fleet separation is just one part of the struggle, fighting to maintain its purpose, integrity and application is a large part of the process.

**“Both policies have allowed for harvesters to emerge as the new middle class in rural NL. We are ever vigilant against any attempt to undermine either policy.”**

– Robert Keenan

**Linda Behnken** – Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association (ALFA), Alaska US

### **“Protecting the well-being and independence of fishermen and tying the wealth of the fishery to community”**

Linda has fished commercially off Alaska since 1982 as both a deckhand and owner-operator. Linda is executive director of ALFA, served nine years on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and two years as IPHC Commissioner. Her presentation focused on the history of the halibut/sablefish quota share (QS) program in Alaska, and the continued work being done to ensure that benefits from the fishery flow through harvesters to coastal communities. Similar to Alexander’s earlier presentation, Linda touched on how quota consolidation and the grandfathered use of hired skippers was something that was still a problem to overcome in Alaska’s quota share program.

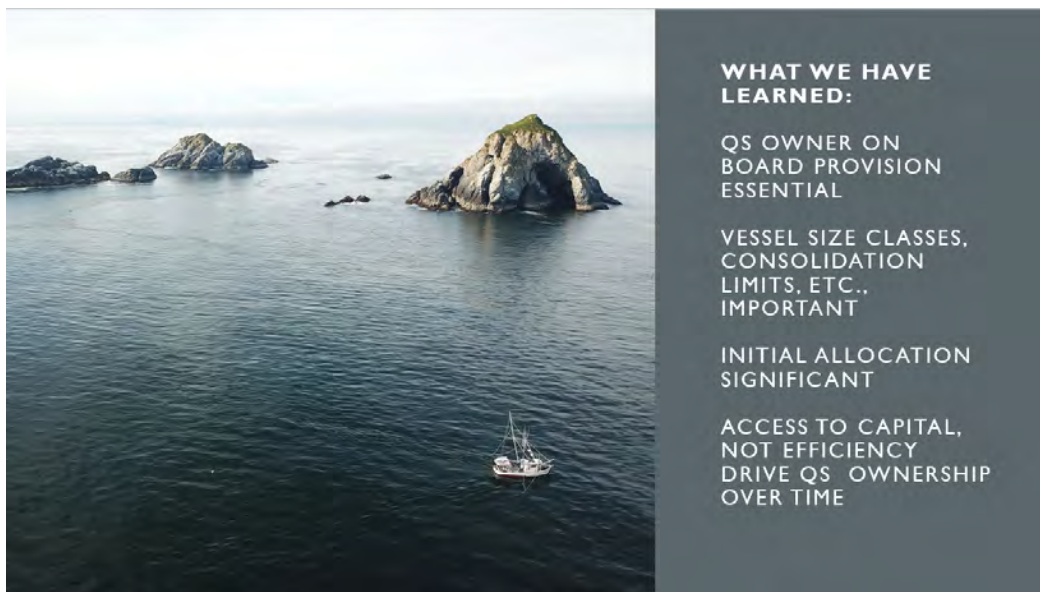
As a proposed solution to quota shares leaving the coast, small rural communities in



Alaska were encouraged to form community entities to buy quota shares. Only four communities have purchased quota shares so far. The obstacles for both individuals and community entities to enter into the quota share program include high cost, high risk (market fluctuations, abundance fluctuations, and political reallocation) and challenges accessing capital. These obstacles have contributed to quota shares leaving small rural communities and a “greying of the fleet.” State and federal entry level loan programs were implemented along with the QS program, but the required down payment and fixed annual payments in a dynamic resource create high risks and upfront costs.

To help provide entry-level opportunity for Alaskan fish harvesters, ALFA, the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust, and other program partners launched the Local Fish Fund, which provides low down payment loans with a “revenue participation” approach in which loan repayment is based on fish landings rather than a fixed loan repayment structure. ALFA is also helping young people enter the fisheries through leadership and skill building workshops, a crew apprentice program, and mentoring opportunities. ALFA is working with other stakeholders to design an entry level QS pool “funded” by a one-time dilution of the total commercial quota and open only to owner-operators and deckhands who own little or no quota. Participation in the pool would be of limited duration with fishing quota available to qualified participants and below market lease rates.

Some of the big takeaways that Alaska has learned from introducing the quota share system are that QS owner onboard provisions are essential, there needs to be a cap on individual QS ownership and vessel size class restrictions are important to limit consolidation, and access to capital, rather than efficiency, drives ownership over time.



For the BC fisheries that have lost these essential elements, Behnken suggested a





“drop through” approach to transition back to healthy community-based fisheries; for example, annually reducing the amount of individual fishing quota issued to operations that do not meet respecified program goals while rewarding those that do. This approach would not reduce the QS asset but would annually issue less pounds to that asset for entities that did not operate in accordance with program goals. (More on the drop through approach in Sharing the Fish, the NRC study on Individual Fishing Quotas). Entities that did not wish to return to owner-operator, for example, could sell that asset at any point in the transition.

“Owner on board, limits on consolidation, initial allocation – these are all essential. We did a lot right in Alaska, learning from NZ – but still not enough to prevent significant impacts on fishing communities, crew positions and erosion of the ‘owner operator’ fleet. We are trying to address this with support for new entrants etc., but it requires uphill fight. That said, we are committed to independent fishermen, fishing communities, sustainable fisheries.”

– Linda Behnken

**Jason Jarvis** – fish harvester and NAMA board member, Rhode Island, USA

**“Who fishes matters to the health of our food system, biodiversity, economies and communities and the struggle to support community based, family fishermen and their communities”**

Jason Jarvis is a commercial fish harvester out of Rhode Island and is on the board of directors for the North West Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA) as well as the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council. Noticing that there are very similar issues in New England fisheries to British Columbia, he shared some of his experience and insights from home.

Jason discussed how the consolidation of quota, vessels, and permits, combined with the commercial take-over of the fisheries, and the difficulty younger, new entrants face when entering fisheries. On the East Coast of the U.S., he shares, it’s not just corporate takeover, but other ways that local fish harvesters are edged out of the industry. Jason shared a recent example of a hedge fund company that bought out a bunch of permits from a fish harvester, Carlos Rafeal, known as “The Godfather” who was essentially laundering the permits and boats. Carlos acquired a lot of wealth through illegal means went to jail for it, but now the hedge fund company owns those permits and boats. Instead, those permits should have been prioritized and released back to local fish harvesters, the system is backwards. The priority should be owner-operator, and no foreign entity should own our fishery.

There is concern about the longevity of the fishery with the lack of new entrants. At 53 years old, Jason is the young guy in his fishery. The state fishery is currently focusing on getting more young people to fish, and Rhode Island is starting to get more young



entrants into the fishery. Aging fish harvesters, combined with antiquated regulatory systems, is leading to dysfunction in the state fishery system. New England is still trying to revamp counting fish and measuring quotas. Throwing away more fish than is harvested, is another piece of the puzzle that Jason sees as shameful.

New England has a high suicide rate among fish harvesters and drug addiction is all too common. Jason's son was a fish harvester who should have taken over his business, but he dealt with depression and addiction and eventually took his own life. Jason shares that this story of lost livelihoods, decreasing mental health, and hurting communities, is rampant up and down the coast and throughout the industry. In the days at the Gathering he's heard that these tragedies are happening in BC.

**“It’s frightening the similarities between BC and the US ... we’ve turned our fisheries into a commodity market so that if you want to go ground fishing, you have to pay somebody else – some ‘armchair fisherman’ – for your quota to go fishing.”**

– Jason Jarvis

At the Gathering, many have shared their halibut quota prices with Jason, in Rhode Island it's haddock or cod fish – people will pay to fish and realize that they can't even pay their crew, because somebody else owns the quota. You can't make any money. That has to change – the quota needs to be owner-operator. Despite the deep issues Jason's region experiences, he was amazed at the problems allowed to occur in BC – as he stated, the regulations might be twice as challenging here as they are in the US. But, he also believes in the power of collective action. He recounted stories of success, such as the take down of the “Codfather” and the Who Fishes Matters Campaign, when his fishing community and groups like NAMA come together and fight for what is right and the change they need for fishing to support their fishermen and communities again.

**John Couture** – Commercial Fisheries Liaison Coordinator, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources – Atlantic Canada

### **“Rebuilding First Nations community-based fisheries in Atlantic Canada”**

John Couture's presentation described the significant differences between Atlantic and Pacific fisheries. John explained how the Unama'ki of Eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, one of the Mi'kmaq Nations, have made great achievements in establishing commercial and rights-based fishing in Nova Scotia under the leadership of their lead Chief, Terry Paul.

John spoke about the importance of the 1990 landmark Supreme Court of Canada ruling in the R. v. Sparrow case, which affirmed First Nations' rights to fisheries for food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) purposes. The FSC and AFS (Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy) are tied, but John believes that they are uniquely defined and shouldn't be combined. John



expressed that the Mi'kmaq have been fortunate enough to never be completely forced out of the fishery, but points to the 1999 R. v. Marshall court case as a decision that established true rebuilding of the commercial fisheries access for the Mi'kmaq community. In 1999, the 32 Nation communities held around 300 licences, just 10 years later they held over 1,100. Now, that number is likely closer to 2,500 licences.

It was the economic return from the initial fishing licences that they held that helped grow fisheries capacity and helped increase community employment rates to greater than 90 per cent. Different funding arrangements, such as the loans and structures that Mi'kmaq have set up with government and academia, have also been an important avenue for investment and improving access to the fisheries. The economic growth has been amazing since those holdings started around 2004. The expertise held with the Mi'kmaq has also grown; now, most skippers are from the communities and fishing their own licences.

The development of a new Moderate Livelihood licence is under discussion on the East Coast, which would add another avenue to fish in addition to the three existing fishing licence types: commercial licences, commercial-communal, and FSC/rights-based licences. Moderate livelihood hasn't been fully defined yet, and there have been some protests. The Unama'ki Chiefs have declined the licence so far and are looking for more engagement. When introducing a new licence type, it is important to thoughtfully understand how this might affect livelihoods, fishing employment, historic values, debt loads, and other dynamics. For example, if someone had just purchased a lobster licence for \$2-3 million in southwest Nova Scotia, and all of a sudden there's new access being given for free, in their mind, to Indigenous groups – there might be frustration. Without proper communication, that person is going home every night with confusion and concern for their livelihood. There are really important questions that have to be discussed. Mi'kmaq Treaty negotiators need to continue meeting with the fleets and have wholesome discussions throughout these negotiations to ensure there's knowledge of what's happening.

John finished by emphasizing that correcting the BC licensing model requires that discussions with DFO needs to be done working with Indigenous participation, non-Indigenous fish harvesters, academia, and even some corporate entities, so that everyone is on the same page. You can't have everyone at odds with one another – you can't win four wars. If you're going to have a war it's with the corporate fleet, and that's really Jim Pattison. You could lop 25 per cent off the top of his shares and that could become the new access that is needed. If you gave 15 per cent of that to First Nations here, they could have a chance to start rebuilding their fisheries. If you gave 10 per cent to the young BC fish harvesters, they could start building capacity so that the communities they live in can thrive. Rural coastal communities need to keep their property values at a reasonable state, so they are not being forced to move from the rural coastline to the Lower Mainland. Allow us to live where we were born and bred, where our hearts and our backyards are. The owner operator and fleet separation policies have been key pieces in supporting this for coastal communities in Atlantic Canada – indigenous and non-indigenous communities.



BC should be thought of as a whole, with the biggest fishing industry coast to coast. Let's respect that and work together to create the change that is needed.

- John Couture

## PLENARY DISCUSSION - KEY POINTS

- In Alaska, a crew member needs to have 160 days of fishing in order to be eligible for a certificate of quota ownership.
- In Alaska, if you started paying 10 per cent down, the goal is building 20 per cent equity of ownership over that quota in 5-6 years. You also get a fishing/owning history so that you can take that to a bank and strengthen your case for a loan. This allows young harvesters to be in a position or a traditional loan which may improve feeling of certainty for longer term and ability to make payments.
- In BC, getting to 10 per cent equity of ownership in five years seems like a lot; may be less likely in the economic context of our fisheries.
- Do the crews on a boat in Alaska get any of the initial allocation of quota? No, they did not. The one concession is that crew time can accrue toward earning your own certificate of ownership.
- On the Atlantic Coast, there are differences in the ways DFO implements the integrated fisheries management plans. On the Atlantic, all fish harvesters in a community fish through one communal commercial licence. On the Pacific Coast, if a community has 30 fish harvesters then they have to find 30 licences through PICFI. The East Coast has made a great effort to secure livelihoods for coastal communities. Many Indigenous communities have quota, but they have to lease it to non-Indigenous boats because they don't have enough fishers/workers to catch it.
- We struggle with leasing of quota to the sports fishing sector. Does that happen in Alaska? Yes, we are fighting the same battle in Alaska. We started in the 1990s fighting back; they were taking 5-7 per cent of the halibut resources. Now it is approximately 18 per cent.
- Is the lobster fishery owner-operator on the East Coast? Yes, every fishery has owner-operator provisions.



## RAPORTEURS' CLOSING REMARKS AND DAY ONE ADJOURNMENT

**Sonia Strobel**, Skipper Otto's; **Jon Crofts**, Codfather's Seafood

Sonia and Jon gave a summary of the day's presentations, panels, breakout groups and an overview of the sentiments in the room. The day began with presentations about the challenges in BC's fisheries, such as concerns about the MPA process, challenges with co-management and solutions to those challenges, how to represent BC fisheries fairly on social media, and an overview of how difficult it is for fish harvesters to make their way in the industry while facing so many different kinds of challenges. We heard from academics and fish harvesters locally and internationally about the many shared challenges across regions for fish harvesters and fishing communities including destructive certain unregulated quota systems have been, what solutions can work to address the issues, what doesn't work, and how we can find a way to work together for a more equitable fishery for all in BC.



## DINNER BANQUET – featuring locally harvested seafood

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER – CORKY EVANS, FORMER BC MINISTER OF FISHERIES



Twenty years ago, bumper stickers were Corky Evans' barometer. The former BC Minister of Agriculture and Food tried to show up to fisheries meetings late so he could scan the parked cars and read the messages plastered between their taillights. When he heard who would be attending this gathering in Nanaimo, the contrasts overwhelmed him with joy.

"Tourism, fishermen, First Nations, commercial fishermen, non-First Nations, environmental groups and NGOs, academics, mayors and city councillors - they were coming together and that warmed the cockles of my heart," said Evans in his address to those attending the gathering.

He described his time as fisheries Minister for the Province and that then, as now, fisheries policy was volatile. Stocks were declining, the sport fishing industry was growing rapidly, and First Nations were pushing for full recognition of their title and rights on land and at sea. And amidst the turmoil, DFO was privatising BC fish.

It was an archaic policy response explained Evans. In 1833 William Forster Lloyd, a British economist, argued that people couldn't be trusted to manage the resources near where they lived. Individuals, acting out of pure self-interest, would compete for the resource until it was degraded beyond repair. Lloyd called this process the tragedy of the commons. His solution: selling the resources to a corporation or investor, trusting that their investment would guarantee sustainable management. Lloyd's theory was taught as fact in universities and resource management, and invigorated in 1966 by American ecologist (and white nationalist) Garrett Hardin. Hardin argued the planet was



a rapidly depleting common and that living within its limits could only be achieved by privatising resources and selling them to the highest bidder.

But it's a model that doesn't reflect reality. People care for their home. "There's a visceral thing about place," said Evans. "The sense of place in a human being – maybe its love, it's certainly responsibility." The strength of that loving responsibility was recognized in Elinor Ostrom, an American economist and Nobel Prize winner, in the early 1990s. She found that resources managed by local communities and through personal relationships were far more ecologically and socially sustainable. People whose livelihoods and identities tied to a common resource cooperate to ensure its well-being – when they were allowed to do so.

That knowledge is a call to arms, Evans said. The FOPO report forced the government to listen, opening a rare window of opportunity for change. "There is no longer an academic or political excuse for taking control away from people who actually live next to a resource and giving it to people who live thousands of kilometers away."

Still, challenges remain. DFO doesn't want to reform the system and didn't even attend the gathering, while corporations and investors lobby to maintain the status quo. In 2017, less than one percent of West Coast commercial licence-holders controlled two-thirds of the 6, 563 available licences. The situation hasn't improved – corporations and investors still control most access to most of BC fish – and each year the system is likely to push even more independent licence-holders out of the industry.

He warned the room not to make the mistakes of the past. The window for political action is narrow. Politicians and bureaucrats responsible for implementing necessary policy changes probably don't understand the issue's complexity, said Evans. For the gathering to be successful, participants need to craft a clear, concise message anyone over 13 can understand: Fish harvesters are renting the right to work from people who never set foot in a boat. That costs them more than what they can earn, degrading coastal communities and ecosystems. The FOPO report is a solution, one that many people who call the B.C.'s coastline home want to see implemented. The federal and provincial governments need to act.

Cooperation is the key to success. Sustainable resource management depends on people linked by a shared love of place coming together, talking face-to-face, and developing a socially and ecologically sustainable management system. People must overcome their differences (temporarily) to achieve the communal goal – in this case, reforming B.C.'s quota and licensing system. That's why Evans found joy in the bumper sticker smorgasbord here tonight. It meant people were coming together and reclaiming power to take care of the place they love.



## DAY TWO – FEBRUARY 11

### OBJECTIVES FOR DAY TWO

Brenda Kuecks opened the day followed by the rapporteurs Sonia Strobel and Jon Crofts who gave an overview of the events and outcomes of the previous day. Brenda then presented the objectives for Day Two.

- To take a deeper dive into the two reports by the Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) and the Wild Salmon Advisory Council (WSAC) through panel presentations from policy experts and Members of Parliament.
- To work in groups to find key opportunities among the 20 recommendations in the FOPO report and the WSAC Made-in-BC Wild Salmon Strategy, and set priorities.

To share reflections with each other and build consensus on next steps and what government action is needed on the FOPO and WSAC reports.





## PANEL FOUR: TOOLS FOR CHANGE – INSIGHTS ON THE FOPO AND WSAC REPORTS

Moderated By: [Racheal Weymer](#), Community Fisheries Director, Ecotrust Canada



[Tasha Sutcliffe](#), BC Wild Salmon Advisory Council (WSAC) member

### “Overview of WSAC report and its most relevant recommendations, and reflections on ways forward”

Tasha opened by providing a brief background on the WSAC. It was launched on June 15, 2018 with a 14-member Council appointed by Premier John Horgan. The council was comprised of representatives of Indigenous, commercial, and recreational fishermen, processing companies, and NGOs and community organizations. The WSAC mandate was to develop recommendations for the development of a made-in-BC wild salmon strategy, focusing on:

- Restoration and enhancement of wild salmon populations.
- Sustainable fisheries management and stewardship opportunities for communities.
- New economic development opportunities to assist viable and sustainable community-based fisheries.



Council members agreed that a made-in-B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy should improve marine and freshwater ecosystems and generate greater economic, social, and cultural benefits for communities. To achieve these two objectives, it was agreed that the strategy should:

- Support and enable the return of abundant wild salmon stocks,
- Promote economic renewal and reconciliation with B.C.'s Indigenous peoples,
- Rebuild a local fishery economy with sustainable jobs and prosperous businesses across the seafood spectrum, including active fishers, seafood processing, and ancillary businesses,
- Champion community access to, and benefit from, adjacent fisheries resources to support local employment, food security, and economic development, and
- Support responsible, sustainable, and safe fishing.

After completing its research and stakeholder engagement work, the Council produced a report titled "*B.C. Wild Salmon Advisory Council: Recommendations for a Made-in-B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy*" which included detailed recommendations on immediate, mid-term, and longer-term action items. The report set out the following strategic goals:

- Increase the abundance of wild salmon in BC,
- Protect and enhance the economic, social, and cultural benefits that accrue to BC communities from wild salmon and other fisheries, placing emphasis on adjacent communities, and
- Develop mechanisms, processes, practices, and structures to engage citizens and governments in the effective stewardship and management of BC's wild salmon.

Tasha highlighted action recommendations under Goal 2 of the WSAC report that were most relevant to the objectives of the gathering:

- Look at strategic enhancement opportunities to stabilize commercial and recreational fishing in BC
- Develop and implement a strategic employment plan, focused on new opportunities for communities dependent on wild salmon and fisheries resources
- Enhance local social, cultural, and economic benefits for adjacent communities and fishermen
- Encourage economic activity adjacent to fishing grounds to benefit coastal and rural fishing communities, Indigenous peoples, shore workers and ancillary businesses. Relevant areas of provincial jurisdiction include labour force; fish processing, licensing and regulation; community and rural economic development; innovation; and governance.



Gord Johns – MP Courtney-Alberni, Member of FOPO

**“FOPO report findings, recommendations, and reflections on ways forward”**



In terms of fisheries, Gord Johns began by saying we live in two countries with radically different policies on the East and West Coasts. This is a social, economic, and environmental justice issue. Unlike in the Atlantic, in BC the wealth that is produced in coastal and rural communities leaves. We have got to stop that economic leakage from rural communities. Until we rise-up and fight for better models, it will continue to happen.

Gord said he is adamant about keeping the FOPO report front and centre. He spoke with the new Fisheries Minister, Bernadette Jordan, about the report very early in her appointment and he is reaching out to West Coast ministers and the Parliamentary Secretary, asking them to use their voices to stand up for commercial and independent fish harvesters in BC. His priorities have been the FOPO report and calling on the government to come up with salmon and EI relief emergency packages for British Columbians. Last year’s \$142 million B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund announcement is appreciated, but it’s not enough. Salmon is the lifeline in coastal communities for food security, culture, and economy. Unfortunately, a lot of community groups that are doing the work on restoration aren’t seeing the money from the Innovation Fund. At best, it is trickling into communities.



Gord has called on the Prime Minister to take action and suggested using petitions to press the Federal Government to respond to the FOPO report. If supporters collect 500 signatures on a petition the government is required to respond within 45 days. An e-petition (e-2404) has been put together requesting the Government of Canada to commit to a timeline and a plan that respects and addresses the 20 recommendations laid out in the FOPO report.

**“We want to show them that there's pressure and we want to see what their plan is to implement the FOPO report.”**

– Gord Johns

All levels of government need to be heeding this call to action. Gord has met with the Parliamentary Budget Officer to see if they will do an economic analysis on how the decline of the West Coast commercial fishery has impacted coastal communities. This issue should have all of British Columbia's MP's, from all parties, standing in solidarity to make sure that the Federal Government is hearing concerns and requests for relief. He suggested that the Indigenous leaders at the Gathering might consider what bodies they can use to pressure the government to make this a priority. These issues cross political boundaries.

Gord acknowledged that the media drives politics. People don't know the challenges the fishing industry is facing. Much like the plastics campaign his team ran four years ago, it was only when the subject became dinner conversation that the Federal Government made commitments. The goal is to ensure that even someone living in Regina cares about fish harvesters and salmon. He recommends talking to media in your own communities, share your stories, what's happening to you, and how it's impacting your lives. If the people in our neighborhood, or our communities don't know what's wrong, then it's going to be pretty hard to catch Ottawa's attention.

Gord is committed to getting the Fisheries Committee to support renewing the FOPO report and getting this government, the 43rd Parliament, to ensure it's a priority. He finished by stating that he is looking forward to hearing everyone's ideas about how he can best advocate for us in Ottawa.

**Ken Hardie** – MP Fleetwood Port Kells, Member of FOPO

### **“FOPO report findings, recommendations, and reflections on ways forward”**

Ken Hardie has been part of the push for fisheries reform since shortly after he was elected in 2015. After a meeting with Dan Edwards and Jim McIsaac in 2016, Ken became aware of the issues of gouging lease payments in the halibut fishery and he agreed it was not fair.

He pointed out how the seeds for change have been planted continuously, by many people, for a number of years. For example, when the BC young fish harvesters came to Ottawa to talk about the new Fisheries Act, and they blew the room away with every member from every party agreeing that the status quo is not good enough. Evelyn



Pinkerton presented work that she has done that demonstrated how free-market systems aren't working for fisheries. Tasha Sutcliffe produced work about who actually owns the quota and Rick Williams painted the picture of what was actually going on with fish harvester's earnings and with the aging of the of the workforce. Rick's presentation in Ottawa in May 2017 was attended by Bernadette Jordan, who is now the Fisheries Minister.

Ken made the motion for the West Coast Fisheries study in early 2019. While the study faded when the government ended in June, he believes it can be brought back to life under the new government. It requires help from the opposition to get it back on the table. We all own this responsibility, he said.

**“If things stay as they are there is no clear way forward, so something has to change.”**

– Ken Hardie

The status quo of inequitable sharing of wealth, degradation of community benefits and significant barriers to entry for younger people wanting to get into the business needs to change. The FOPO report proposed what we need to do and how to do it. Ken said listening to the speakers at the Gathering, “we're learning there may also be other ways to achieve more equitable fisheries”.

Finally, Ken advised the Gathering not to settle for small offerings that won't fix the bigger problem such as more government attention to fair sharing agreements. Don't let little band-aids make you lose sight of the other damages caused by the system. Don't let this conversation for license policy reform die.

## **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ONE: FOPO RECOMMENDATIONS**

Brenda Kuecks opened this roundtable by providing the room with the objective of the discussion – to seek consensus on which recommendations are needed and request immediate action by the federal government. She provided the questions being posed to help guide the discussion:

- What are the priorities coming out of the FOPO West Coast study and its recommendations? Of these, which are immediate, which are necessary but may take longer to realize?
- What are your hopes for change?
- What are the risks/concerns?

The facilitators at each table were given an exercise to go through with their group following the general discussion. For this they were asked to get their groups to address the following questions:

1. Do you support the FOPO recommendations and want to see them move forward?
2. Do you support recommendations #18 and #20 that call for a licence policy review?
3. Do you agree recommendation #14 & #15 should be pursued?



4. Of the remaining recommendations, which for you are most urgent and should be acted on immediately?
5. And which resonate as the most important overall even if they take longer to realize?

## ROUND TABLE KEY POINTS AND OUTCOMES

The following points were repeated by many groups throughout the roundtable discussion periods.

### Hopes for change/priority recommendations

- Transparency is critical in all aspects of the recommendations moving forward – licence ownership, management and interest group consultation processes, program delivery, etc.
- There must be a clear commitment to delivering on these recommendations and a set timeline – time is of the essence.
- A made in BC for BC owner/operator policy needs to account for the diverse needs of different fisheries, First Nations community fisheries, harvester bycatch trading, and other key aspects of BC fisheries management. This can be resolved and developed through an engagement process that utilizes the knowledge of harvesters.
- We need to revive the multispecies permit – enable multispecies fisheries again for both fish harvester and ecosystem resilience and sustainability.
- The Province has to step up in fisheries – there needs to be a Ministry or Department that is separate from the Ministry of Agriculture, so fisheries gets the focus it needs. We need the Province to play a leadership role as they do in other maritime provinces.
- The process being independent, transparent, and inclusive would go a long way to rebuilding trust – there is currently no trust in the institutions and regulatory bodies
- Conservation of the resource and equitable application of conservation measures needs to be a guiding principle.

### Risks/concerns

- The rich will get richer and local fishermen will continue to be disenfranchised if tools like a licence exchange board or loan boards are introduced without new regulations and policy, and that there must be a mechanism to ensure fair distribution of benefit which



there isn't now.

- Incentivizing active harvester ownership is not enough, it must be a requirement and we must create a supportive environment for new buyers including new and young entrants to the fishery.
- Many felt that some recommendations appear to assume the continuation of the current licence and quota system which needs to change for issues to be addressed.
- Too many references to planning versus action.

**“We’ve been a part of too many meetings and processes that have not resulted in the change we need. We need action.”**

- Foreign ownership is increasing and further impacting already over inflated prices of licences, and is also decreasing ex vessel prices for fish. This is hurting our local small boat fleet and our coast.
- Decisions are being made at the top and are influenced by pressure from the 1% rather than the community base.
- Process so far has divided people, possibly by design, need to bring people and communities of interest together to build solutions that will work.

### **Outcomes: responses to questions 1-5**

1. Do you support the FOPO recommendations and want to see them move forward?
  - All tables agreed this was desired and necessary.
2. Do you support recommendations #18 and #20?
  - There was broad support for both of these recommendations.
    - i. That transition strategies should take account of the recommendations, needs, rights, and capacities of First Nations and the framework for reconciliation (Rec #18).
    - ii. That Fisheries and Oceans Canada develop a plan to achieve its five-objective fisheries management regime, which includes conservation outcomes: compliance with legal obligations; promoting the stability and economic viability of fishing operations; encouraging the equitable distribution of benefits; and facilitating data collection for administration, enforcement and planning purposes (Rec #20).
  - Recommendation 18 was seen by many as fundamental and a base for developing equity if done well.



- On recommendation 20 many felt that DFO is badly failing on equitable distribution.
  - Generally, tables felt that these two recommendations were principles that along with recommendation #14 and #15, would provide for a fair and effective process for change.
3. Do you agree recommendation #14 & #15 should be pursued?

- There was broad support for these recommendations:
  - i. New policy framework developed through authentic and transparent engagement with active harvesters from each fishery or fleet, First Nations, non-fishing licence/quota holders and processors (Rec #14).
  - ii. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada establish an independent commission, to look at options including a fair-share system, licence and quota caps, licensing transition options to young harvesters, and a made in BC owner/operator policy (Rec #15).
- It was felt that following these two recommendations would ensure a fair, principled, and structured path forward for all parties involved, and that acting on them will help achieve the change needed to ensure a better future for fisheries.
- The caveat was that these could not be used to slow down change. People repeatedly said that this can't take too much time and process can't defer action.

“Every year we are losing more and more of our resource – we do not have the luxury of time”

- In addition, it was made clear that any framework developed must include all active fish harvester voices, not just those who are licence owners – engagement must include youth.
  - It was also stated that #15 **must** be truly independent of DFO if it is to have credibility and be done right.
  - Many felt that owner/operator was the key part of this as fair sharing and quota/licence caps could help, but wouldn't resolve the larger industry issues around ownership, control, and community benefit.
4. Of the remaining recommendations, which for you are most urgent and should be acted on immediately?
- See #5 below
5. And which resonate as the most important overall even if they take longer to realize?
- For both question 4 and 5 the results were extremely close and landed on the following recommendations as both needing urgent action, and being of the utmost priority: These were:





- i. Stopping future sales of quotas and licences to non-Canadians (Rec #2),
- ii. Transparency of ownership of quotas and licences (Rec #4),
- iii. Financially incentivize independent ownership of licences and quotas (Rec #8), and
- iv. Regulation of leasing costs during transition (Rec #19).

Overall, there was consistent emphasis on the same points and people above all else wanted their issues not only recognized but address with real change, not just more planning. There was a strong sense of needing to find common ground and work together with a unified voice. There was also recognition that everyone is working hard and time and needed resources are not easy to come by. The Federal and Provincial Governments need to act now in support of active fish harvesters and fishing communities.

## FISH HARVESTER REACTION PANEL: IDENTIFYING COMMON CONCERNS AND POINTS OF CONSENSUS



Moderated by **Jim McIssac**, T.Buck Suzuki Executive Director



## “Fish harvesters’ reflections on outcomes following the roundtable discussions”

### Chris Cook – Fish harvester, ‘Namgis Nation

Chris Cook said he wanted to share with people at this gathering what he’s seen, what it was like to fish in the past, and what it’s like today, and what he hopes it can be like tomorrow for the next generation.

As an Indigenous fish harvester, Chris said they used to have the ability to catch all species.

When the Federal Government introduced the quota system in the 1990s, he said the majority of First Nations lost their ability to go out and fish halibut.

“But who owns all of the quota today? Not the brothers and the sisters in this room. The companies, they have all the same licences.”

– Chris Cook

Chris recalled being told that he would have a better livelihood if he sold his licence in a DFO buyback program. However, he said the buyback program cannibalized all the different licences. The seine boats bought all the gillnetters and doubled their licences for bigger boats.

He said that coastal fish harvesters and First Nations got the worst deal.

All of the licences that were bought in the buyback program from the coast were moved up the river. There used to be an opening on the coast for all First Nations and non-Indigenous people who fished and competed together. But now, Chris said, it’s not like that.

Before passing the mic, Chris offered an example on how quota has shifted from one million for the commercial fish harvesters, 200,000 for the food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries up in the Fraser River, now it’s one million for the FSC in the river and 250,000 for those who pay big money for their licences.

### Paul Edwards – President of Area A Crab Association, fish harvester

Paul Edwards has been involved in fish politics since 1994. He stated that Area A only consists of 38 boats and they’ve been fighting since 1994 on all different fronts.

“The Area A Crab Association is here to give support to all other fish harvesters on the coast so they can work together to get the FOPO recommendations enacted, because if they don’t they’re not going to have any crews, and the fishery is going to close.”

– Paul Edwards



Paul's presentation ended briefly with a statement to support proper process, where all user groups, and all communities can sit down together and go through the recommendations to get them in place.

### Fraser MacDonald – Fish harvester

Fraser MacDonald shared his initial enthusiasm when the “West Coast Fisheries: Sharing the Risks and Benefits” report and recommendations came out in May 2019, and how the Federal Government's lack of response was disappointing. But he finds hope that a couple of federal MPs have committed to keep pushing for these recommendations to be heard by the government.

“If we don't change something in the very near future there's going to be an extremely small shadow of what commercial fisheries once was.”

– Fraser MacDonald

In the current fisheries system, people with boats that need qualified crew can't find them, and that's because there is a mass exodus of qualified, experienced people from the commercial fishery. Too much money is being pulled out by people in the middle who aren't involved directly with fisheries. Fraser said there's enough in the world to invest in, to make money off of, there's an entire capitalist system that is involved in people investing their money and getting returns, but food shouldn't be it – especially not food that is a common resource of Canada. If we can remove the middle group of people extracting all the wealth from fish harvesters, we would have an extremely profitable commercial fisheries industry on the West Coast for processors, for fish harvesters, for all the different coastal communities and local businesses.

Fraser said the coastal economy needs change, and the FOPO recommendations are the window to find that change, but everyone needs to be on the same page. We all want a commercial fishery this is profitable for everyone, and we all want to make sure the people who need to retire have someone to sell their boat and their licences to, and we need to make sure that the people who want to get into fishing have the opportunity, and that they make enough money to make it a lasting career.

Fraser said DFO Pacific isn't showing enough interest to make change, which is why people who have responsibility for their various fishing associations, the Seafood Alliance, buyers, representatives for different fisheries, need to come together as a group. He said if they don't do it now, the commercial fishery is going to be become extinct along with our coastal economy, and our coastal communities, and all the various people who love living on the coast of this province. He closed with:

“We do have a political window, let's take advantage of that and let's actually do something, because it has to happen very soon or else there's no point.”

-Fraser MacDonald



## Josh Duncan – Fish harvester

Josh reviewed some of the fisheries policy work he'd done from 2005-2007 to establish his priorities. One of his concerns was that we are not discussing the Cohen Commission and its 75 recommendations. One of the FOPO recommendations was for DFO to develop a plan to achieve its five objectives in fisheries management including conservation, compliance, legal obligations, promoting stability and economic viability of fishing operations, encouraging the equitable distribution of benefits, and facilitating data collection for administration, enforcement, and compliance purposes.

Josh said we should further our discussion around science and data collection to avoid getting lost and remember what we are actually fighting for. He highlighted how science and data collection improved as a result of fish harvester partnership agreements in Newfoundland in 2003, which in turn bolstered the viability, management, and economic stature of the fisheries. He gave an example from the lobster fishery, when DFO said there was insufficient data and it was impossible to assess the status of a resource, but then the lobster fish harvesters developed a monitoring program creating 140 enterprises, and likely more since then.

Moving forward, Josh suggested that West Coast fish harvesters meet with harvesters in the Maritime region and work on a national young fish harvester's conference to learn from professionals on the East Coast. He also believes that we need to have a Pacific Fishery Panel, and that the Province of BC needs to be the co-chair. There is funding available to develop a one-fits-all strategy, especially when it comes to wild salmon, ecosystems, and habitats.

Another priority is moving forward on sustainable action and pressuring the Province of BC to establish a Ministry of Fisheries separate from agriculture and lands to co-manage and co-chair a Pacific fishery panel. In that push we could look to establish some kind of ecosystem recovery strategy.

**“I have a hard time as an Indigenous fish harvester, as a commercial fish harvester, and as someone who lives in the ecosystem back home, the fact that our own province doesn't have a Ministry of Fisheries.”**

– Josh Duncan

Josh raised his concerns that as one of the few boat operators who has to have a Fishing Master Class 3, he has trouble finding a full crew.

Another concern he raised was how difficult it is to buy and acquire quota. Two years ago, Josh's Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) group bought 10,000 pounds of halibut quota and now that poundage is worth 6,000 pounds. “So how do you service a debt where you lose one-third of the allocation that you bought? It is risky. It's something you need to understand how to evaluate what to pay for and what we get back.



This year, a priority for him is working on a made-in-BC squid fishery that he's hoping will start in the fall. There hasn't been a squid fishery since 2007. Josh said he was one of the last squid licence holders on the coast, and the government closed the fishery down because they said there was a lack of interest. He's also working on the seal and sea lion harvest, and that is coming closer to fruition with more groups involved.

## PLENARY DISCUSSION

As moderator, Jim Mclsaac wound down the fish harvester reaction panel by reflecting on some of the common concerns, priorities, questions, and comments made. He gave his views on why the Province of BC isn't more involved like the provinces in Atlantic Canada. An observation he's had working on both coasts is there are five provinces in Atlantic Canada that recognize if they don't support owner-operator and fleet separation all of the licences would go to one area and one central place, and the benefits of the fishery wouldn't be distributed between the provinces. There is only one province on the Pacific coast, so BC has taken the position that it doesn't need to worry about distributing the benefits because it's all in the province, but as we know that's not actually the case, there is a lot to lose.

**“We've seen what happens with the concentration along the coast and where licences and ownership end up, away from coastal communities and harvesters.”**

– Jim Mclsaac

Jim drew out one of the main themes he heard in the reaction panel. Culture is our shared responsibility for the next generation. We have a responsibility to work together to protect the future for our children and what that looks like. This is an opportunity to deliver how we want to see our coast, our fisheries, our economies, and our culture.

**We need to work together for our future, for our children, so that we can have a healthy economy on our coast, and a healthy future on our coastline for our communities.**

### Plenary discussion: key points

- Most of the people who benefitted from PICFI were non-Indigenous. Some experienced Indigenous fish harvesters take a loss so young people can go fishing.
- There is a need to encourage fish harvesters to come together to find solutions. We need to find common ground and speak with one voice
- We have a succession problem. There are not enough new, young fish harvesters in the industry to lease or sell licences to, for example, the Northern Native Fishing Corporation has to pay DFO \$70,000 in annual fees for licences that they cannot lease



## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION TWO: WSAC RECOMMENDATIONS

These discussions focused on the WSAC Report and BC's Wild Salmon Strategy, and its possible links to the objectives and recommendations of FOPO. In particular, participants were asked to focus their attention on the WSAC recommendations related to Goal 2 of the strategy – **“To protect and enhance the economic, social and cultural benefits that accrue to BC communities from wild salmon and other fisheries, placing emphasis on adjacent communities”**, and strategy 2.3 – **“Enhance local social, cultural and economic benefits from BC fisheries for adjacent communities.”**

Participants were asked to address two key questions during their table discussions:

1. How can the Province support the federal government and FOPO recommendations, especially in light of the Made-in-BC Wild Salmon Strategy?
2. What actions do you want to see on Goal 2 and strategy 2.3 (stated above) of the Wild Salmon Strategy?

### KEY DISCUSSION POINTS ON QUESTION #1

Across eight break-out groups, consensus was reached on five general points:

- **The Province of BC has an important, indeed critical, role to play in effective fisheries management going forward.** Participants expressed concern, confusion, and dismay that BC has been taking a ‘back seat’ to fisheries issues for the past number of years. There were many comments about the need for urgent action and about the apparent reluctance of BC to engage on behalf of fishermen and community economies. There was strong consensus that the Province of BC must ‘step-in’ or ‘step-up’ or ‘offer leadership,’ and become much more proactive in ensuring a greater degree of benefit accrues from BC’s fisheries resource to BC fishermen and communities adjacent to harvests. Some participants went as far as describing the current state of affairs at the provincial level as ‘a serious breach of responsibility’. **BC must develop a vision for commercial fisheries in BC, informed by indigenous and non-indigenous harvesters and fishing communities, and must work to achieve this.**
- **Corporatization of BC fisheries, including the vertical integration of the processing sector, is having sweeping negative impacts for the BC economy.** There was considerable concern expressed that these issues have never been adequately studied or understood by governments. There was a sense in the room that the Province was prepared to allow the commercial fishing industry to be ‘an economic pawn’. There was some cynicism that governments are not taking a closer look because they know that there will be a significant cost associated with righting the policy wrongs of the past decade.
- **BC must re-establish a BC Ministry of Fisheries** – not only to consolidate the multiple attributes of this issue under one policy and practice ‘roof’, but also to create a voice for BC in the federal landscape of fisheries management. Participants pointed out that BC is one of very few provinces with major fisheries that does not have this office.



- **Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishermen must come together to develop a common strategy.** The interests of both must be respected in this process. A united front is required to address the multitude of issues facing the industry at this time. The current 'divide and conquer' strategy of governments is only going to exacerbate an already untenable situation for people in the industry and for the communities that rely on this industry.
- **There was a consistent call for BC to learn lessons from other jurisdictions when it comes to effective fisheries management that is directly linked to advancing economic benefits.** There were several examples from Alaska and from the East Coast provinces to demonstrate how the commercial industry and the community economies go hand in hand when the right policies and programs are put into place. On this point, regional or area-based fisheries management solutions were considered by most to be useful tools for community engagement and informed management decision-making.

In addition to these points of consensus, participants made the following comments about the need for BC's participation and leadership in fisheries:

- The general public does not have a good understanding of BC's fisheries unlike in other jurisdictions, and the perception of fishermen is often negative. The government of BC could help to support the industry by introducing a strong public awareness campaign, including the need to buy local fish products and actively protect fish habitats.
- BC needs to invest in research to understand the extent to which current policies (federal and provincial) are negatively impacting not only fishermen but the economy as a whole.
- BC could support bringing different sectors of the industry together to forge a common voice for federal action.
- A Harvester's Advisory Panel could be created (akin to WSAC) to support and advise BC's engagement in the sector.
- BC should negotiate a more significant role in marine management based on the demonstrated impacts of poor federal policy direction on the provincial economy.
- BC needs to stop looking at fish only as a commodity and start understanding its importance as a community resource including its social and cultural values that must be protected.
- BC is responsible for managing the recreational fishery. There are many ways this sector could be improved from stocking programs to fishing plans to monitoring/reporting.
- BC could introduce key programs and funds to address economic development at the community level including training programs for young harvesters, rebuilding local processing, diversifying markets and branding and buy-local campaigns.



## KEY DISCUSSION POINTS ON QUESTION #2

In response to this question, participants across all table discussions agreed that the **Province has jurisdiction in a number of areas that directly and indirectly impact the commercial fishing industry. In most of these areas, they are not doing enough to coordinate efforts, or to advance important and timely initiatives.** This includes habitat renewal, recreational fishing, forestry, agriculture, mining, transportation management, job creation, labour, new markets development and processing.

Some additional ideas were put forward including:

- Consistently incorporate traditional ecological knowledge in all decisions that affect the fisheries resource. This would not only support the Province's reconciliation strategy but also help to ensure that decisions were based on the widest possible perspective,
- Re-establish strong connections to the classroom science community to bring their capacity into re-building fish stocks,
- Establish a Province-wide seal harvest plan,
- Strategic enhancement efforts (both stock and habitat) need to be introduced and supported where they are directly connected to at-risk stocks that are economically important to communities.
- BC could argue that some portion of quota revenue be returned to communities to support their economic diversification efforts,
- Regional salmon development. Look to Alaska as a model for developing regional salmon fisheries,
- Invest in infrastructure to support the commercial sector,
- Focus education and training efforts on advancing the potential for young harvesters to get engaged. This strategy would need to include a loan fund to support access for new entrants alongside policy change,
- Current bureaucratic and regulatory limitations in the processing sector need to be reviewed/revise to support more local/regional processing initiatives,
- The time is now. The province has to invest in the future of fisheries before they disappear.

This question also encouraged participants to suggest some actionable steps. The following four ideas emerged from the discussion.

1. There should be a small leadership group selected by the Gathering to present the results of the workshop to key BC government officials.
2. BC should invest in a more directed outreach and marketing strategy like the Tourism BC campaign to draw attention to coastal pride in our wild resources and importance of fishermen in the economy
3. From the Gathering we should strike a group to advocate for the creation of a provincial fisheries ministry and a Minister of Fisheries able to represent the industry is critically important.





4. BC used to have policies to ensure that resources from BC were processed in BC in forestry and fisheries. Can we organize ourselves to make the case for a return to this kind of adjacency policy for the fishing industry?

## FISH HARVESTER REFLECTION PANEL: IDENTIFYING COMMON CONCERNS AND POINTS OF CONCENSUS

Moderated by [Joy Thorkelson](#), President, United Fishermen & Allied Workers Union – Unifor



### [Brian Wadhams](#) – Fish harvester, ‘Namgis First Nation

The main point of concern for Brian Wadhams is to find a way for the younger generations to have the same benefits that his generation had in the fisheries.

Brian gives two examples on how fish harvesters and stakeholders in the industry can build relationships among themselves around a common interest. Two different companies who wanted to develop a business and build a project on ‘Namgis territory worked directly with the First Nation. Together, they found common priorities, such as ensuring salmon protection in the area. The ‘Namgis First Nation purchased shares in both companies, and they have formed a great working relationship with the companies.

First, he suggests fish harvesters and stakeholders need to put their differences aside to manage the resource it in order to protect it. He wants to see an action plan on moving forward.



“Access is becoming way more difficult. Today we can’t put food on the table for our people because the boats are gone. It’s not that there’s no fish, it’s that we have no more fishermen.”

– Brian Wadhams

Another concern for Brian is that his First Nation has likely trained 150 youths in the past three years and they’re still waiting on the shore waiting for a job that we can’t provide them. Brian said he hears that people say they have no crew, and he said that they have trained crew members.

The way the government is doing things right now is managing the fisheries to extinction. Brian said, as a group, they first need to figure out how to manage the fisheries resources to show the government that they’re responsible people.

He detailed how the First Nation revitalized the salmon stocks in the Nimpkish River. They struggled for 30 years to build the Nimpkish back up from 200-300 fish that were left, now there are up to 80,000-160,000 salmon. This is the commitment that the ‘Namgis First Nation put into the Nimpkish Valley. Brian say they did this with very little funding, they contributed their own money into that valley to protect what fish was left.

#### **Duncan Cameron – Fish harvester, fourth generation, Pender Harbour**

Duncan Cameron grew up gillnetting salmon, longlining halibut, fishing roe-on-kelp, and these days he mainly harvests for crab and prawn. He sees a big opportunity to move forward with more positive outcomes. We can take stock of all the pieces that are in line – the now Fisheries Minister was chair of the FOPO committee when the FOPO study of BC licensing policy was put forward, all the political parties in FOPO agreed to the FOPO recommendations, the province of BC is in support of this work, as well as the fish harvesters groups on the East Coast.

“I don’t think the iron is getting any hotter than it is right now, and we’ve identified some of these key recommendations, and we’ve heard a lot of voices, and it’s time to just act on these things and get them done.”

– Duncan Cameron

There are a few issues to watch out for that need urgent focus, such as foreign ownership and fair sharing of benefits. Duncan suggested that DFO needs to give the hammer to enforce those fair share agreements instead of just talking about it. He also wants to see incentives given to young fish harvesters coming into the industry. In closing, Duncan acknowledged the current and building momentum, and encouraged everyone to stay sharp as DFO is going to try to drag its feet and



we need to stay on this if we are going to succeed.

### Chelsey Ellis – Fish harvester, third generation, PEI, West Coast

Chelsey started lobster fishing on the East Coast, and since moving to the West Coast she has switched to crab fishing. She reflected on how her experience has shown her the similarities and differences that both coasts have, and how we can learn from each other.

For Chelsey, having a unified voice is essential to create change on the West Coast. Last year, she went to Ottawa and sat in with the Federation of Independent Fish Harvesters whose members all have their different interests and wants, but they work together on their common goals and put aside all their disagreements and work on what they want. She said it was inspiring to see how they worked together and she wants to see that here on this Coast.

The BC Seafood Alliance also testified for the FOPO report, and Chelsey reviewed their response to the recommendations. Although, the BCSFA was not at the Gathering, Chelsey said we can try to work with them where they agree. The BCSFA is a big voice in the industry, made up of fisheries associations and fishing companies. She was excited to see what they agreed with because some of them are important to her as a fish harvester. The BC Seafood Alliance agreed with the FOPO recommendations on:

- The quota registry to increase transparency on licence & quota beneficial ownership,
- The creation of a loan and mentorship program to help independent fish harvesters enter to the industry,
- Comparative analysis of East and West Coast fisheries in regard to regulations,
- Financial incentives to independent harvesters, such as the fair share agreement and tax incentives, and
- Prioritizing the collection of socioeconomic data.

They also agree that together they need a process to find a common ground between industry participants to find out what kind of industry we want in 10 years.

**“We do have some common goals and it’s my hope that we can start to work together on those.”**

– Chelsey Ellis

### Guy Johnston – Fish harvester, United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union (UFAWU-Unifor)

Guy introduced himself and his over 40 years of fishing experience. He said there is an opportunity right now to improve public perception. He doesn’t see the public



wanting to support the people leasing halibut quota or prawn licences, they don't want to be defending themselves because they know the public isn't going to defend 80 per cent lease fees. They're not going to support people leasing out prawn licences when its 50-60 per cent of the gross stock of the value.

**“There's real power in our story of bringing benefits back to active fish harvesters.”**

– Guy Johnston

When the young fish harvesters spoke to the federal committee in Ottawa, they boosted publicity through the media coverage. Guy thinks they're at a time again where they can push for policy change with a much larger unified voice.

The FOPO report is the best road map he's seen to bring benefits back to active fish harvesters, and coastal communities. While they may not solve all 20 problems, he thinks they can solve a number of them, and he thinks they need to seize that opportunity.

## PLENARY DISCUSSION

Joy as moderator began by affirming that we need to work together, and make sure that the things that drive us apart don't stop us from achieving our goal of licensing reform. Reform is going to be very difficult; it's may hurt some fish harvesters but will benefit more; it's also going to keep the fishing industry going.

What licences look like five years from now will determine who is in and who is out. If we want to make sure First Nations are in and that rural coastal communities are in and that individual fish harvesters are in, as independent harvesters and not as share croppers, then we must drive licensing change in a direction that is fair to people who want to get out, and want to retire, yet has hope of the kind of access that we enjoyed when we were young. Climate change is another challenge – we just came out of a season where every salmon stock along the coast, except for in the Nimpkish River failed.

Joy said she doesn't know what is going to happen to the salmon fishery, but what she does see is that in the future fishermen are likely going to need a basket of fisheries in order to keep themselves afloat. “Right now, we're dying a death of 1,000 cuts exacerbated by licensing and all of the other problems we have with seals, MPAs, etc., and no forward-looking things to give us hope like regional salmon development. We all know what all the issues are. If we don't speak with one united voice, even though we come from different perspectives, we're not going to move things forward. The BC Seafood Alliance even now has to agree that there is a need for change.”

In following up to Joy's comments. Brian Wadhams detailed revitalizing the salmon stocks in the Nimpkish River. We struggled for 30 years to build the Nimpkish



salmon. This is the commitment that we as a First Nation has put into the Nimpkish Valley. We did this with very little funding. We contributed our own money into that valley to protect what fish we have left.

## FINAL OUTCOMES

### FFC 2.0 CONSENSUS

Despite decades of divisive policies that have fractured the industry and the region and undermined the viability of independent fishing enterprises and coastal communities, participants with diverse interests came to a consensus at the Gathering on the need to move forward with real and immediate action.

There was consensus in the room that the **Federal Government needs to formally respond to and act on** the recommendations of the May 2019 FOPO Report: “*West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits*”.

Further, the Province of BC must become a real partner with the Federal Government to achieve needed changes in BC fisheries, starting with **establishing a Provincial Ministry for Fisheries**.

The Gathering participants agreed that **all 20 FOPO recommendations are relevant** and need to be considered, but certain recommendations are especially critical and should receive special priority.

**Recommendations 2, 4, 8, & 19 were identified as urgent and should be acted on immediately to move toward better fisheries outcomes.**

***#2: Stopping future sales of quotas and licences to non-Canadians.***

***#8: Financially incentivize independent fish harvester ownership of licences &quotas.***

***#19: Regulation of leasing costs during transition.***

***#4: Transparency of beneficial ownership of quotas and licences.***

Through a voting process, participants prioritized these four FOPO recommendations as a starting point for recapturing a fairer share of the wealth of our marine environment to benefit coastal communities, First Nations, and working harvesters.

Participants identified FOPO recommendations 14 & 15 as **critically important** for ensuring an effective and principled process for achieving major reform of fisheries licensing policies.



**#14: New policy framework developed through authentic and transparent engagement with active harvesters from each fishery/fleet, First Nations, non-fishing licence/quota holders and processors.**

**#15: Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada establish an independent commission, to look at options including a fair-share system and licensing transition options.**

Participants agreed that FOPO recommendations 18 & 20 set out foundational principles to guide all Fisheries and Oceans Canada's work and policies.

**#18: Take account of needs, rights, capacities, and framework for reconciliation.**

**#20: DFO needs to work to achieve its five objectives – conservation, legal obligations, stability and economic viability, and fair distribution of benefit.**

Concerted DFO action on FOPO recommendations 14, 15, 18, and 20 will ensure a fair, principled, and structured path forward in this process for all parties involved. Acting on them will help achieve the changes needed to ensure a better future for fisheries in BC, as well as for those individuals and communities reliant on them.

**FOPO Recommendations 3 & 9 are priorities for enabling attraction and retention of much needed young new entrants to the commercial fishery.**

**#3: Unmarrying licences.**

**#9: Loan and mentorship programs for new entrants.**

These two recommendations were seen as important for easing the path to greater local access to, and independent ownership of, fisheries access.

## MOVING FORWARD

At the conclusion of the Gathering, participants moved to form a [Fisheries for Communities Action Committee](#) to ensure that the knowledge, passion, and consensus generated during the conference continues to be heard and acted upon. Their goal is to press the Federal Government and the Provincial Government into action in a timely, inclusive, and effective manner. Ten individuals volunteered to form this committee including 8 active fishermen, 1 small processor, and 1 NGO.

Concerted DFO action on the FOPO recommendations, supported by an actively engaged provincial government, will benefit British Columbia and Canada by ensuring that greater shares of the benefits from commercial fisheries stay local and flow to active BC fish harvesters, First Nations, and coastal communities.



## ATTENDEES

Ali Witter	B.C Government, Victoria, BC
Alexander Kotlerov	NOAA, Alaska, USA
Aline Carrier	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Ucluelet, BC
Amanda Swimmer	Dakini Tidal Wilds, Sooke, BC
Analisa Blake	Vancouver Island Health Authority, Victoria, BC
Andrew Webster	Ahousaht, West Coast of Vancouver Island, BC
Andy Olson	Executive Director, Native Fishing Association, Vancouver BC
Angus Grout	Commercial Fisherman
Archie Little	Nuu-chah-nulth, BC
Barry Crow	Area D Salmon Gillnet Fisherman, Duncan, BC
Barry Marcotte	Salmon fisherman/UFAWU-Unifor, Ladysmith, BC
Bill Stefiuk	Prawn Fisherman, Qualicum Beach BC
Bill Wareham	David Suzuki Foundation, Vancouver BC
Bob Burkosky	Salmon Fish Harvester/UFAWU-Unifor, Qualicum Beach BC
Bob Grant	Community Fisheries Development Centre, Qualicum Beach, BC
Brenda Kuecks	Community Development Practitioner, Duncan, BC
Brian Wadhams	Salmon Fisherman, 'Namgis Nation, Alert Bay, BC
Cailyn Siider	Prawn/salmon/halibut Fish Harvester, Sointula BC
Calvin Siider	Prawn/salmon/halibut/shrimp Fish Harvester, Sointula BC
Chelsey Ellis	Multispecies Fisherman/Ecotrust Canada, Prince Rupert, BC
Chris Cook	Salmon Seine/herring Fisherman, 'Namgis Nation, Alert Bay BC
Christina Adams	Antenna Social, Vancouver BC
Christy Whitmore	PICFI Business Development Team, Nanaimo, BC
Chuck Rumsey	CEO, Ecotrust Canada, Vancouver, BC
Corky Evans	Retired Provincial Minister of Fisheries
Cynthia Bendickson	Greenways Land Trust, Campbell River, BC
Dameon Cox	Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k:tlas7et'h' First Nation, Kyuquot, BC



Dan Edwards	Groundfish Longline Fisherman/Area A Crab Assoc., Ucluelet, BC
Danial Smith	Atlegay Fisheries, Campbell River, BC
Danielle Burrows	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Port Alberni, BC
Danielle Edwards	University of British Columbia, Ucluelet, BC
Darah Gibson	BC Ministry of Agriculture, Vancouver, BC
Doug Davidson	West Coast Reduction, Vancouver, BC
Duncan Cameron	Crab/Prawn Commercial Fisherman, Vancouver, BC
Dyhia Belhabib	Ecotrust Canada, Vancouver, BC
Ed Johnson Sr	HUU-AY-AHT, Bamfield, BC
Eric Angel	Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries, West Coast Vancouver Island, BC
Evelyn Pinkerton	Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC
Fraser MacDonald	Groundfish longline/Prawn Fisherman, Vancouver, BC
Garth Mirau	UFAWU - Unifor, Nanaimo, BC
Gerry Davis	Area F Salmon Troll Fisherman, Campbell River, BC
Gord Johns	Member of Parliament, Port Alberni, BC
Graham Anderson	Ecotrust Canada, Vancouver, BC
Greg Gower	Area G Salmon Troll Fisherman, Victoria, BC
Guy Johnston	Salmon and Prawn fisherman/UFAWU, Cowichan Bay, BC
Helen Beans	Multispecies Fish Harvester, 'Namgis Nation, Alert Bay, BC
Irine Polyzogopoulos	Uu-a-thulk Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council, Port Alberni, BC
James Lawson	Multispecies Fisherman/UFAWU, Haultsuk Nation,
Jason Jarvis	North Atlantic Marine Alliance, Rhode Island, USA
Jeff Scott	Skipper Otto Community Supported Fishery, Vancouver, BC
Jenn Burt	Nature United, North Vancouver, BC
Jennifer Silver	University of Guelph, Guelph, ON
Jessica Taylor	Commercial Fisherman, Nanaimo, BC
Jim Mclassac	T.Buck Suzuki Foundation, Victoria, BC
Joe David	TFN Seafoods Commercial Fishing Enterprise, Tofino, BC
John Couture	UINR-Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, Sydney, NS





John Macke	Nimpkish, Alert Bay, BC
John Mauriks	Commercial Prawn Fisherman, Nanaimo, BC
John Sutcliffe	Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters, Ottawa, ON
Jon Crofts	Slow Fish Canada / Codfathers Seafood Market, Kelowna, BC
Josh Duncan	Commercial Fisherman, Campbell River, BC
Joy Thorkelson	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union, Prince Rupert, BC
Katelyn Cooper	North Coast Skeena First Nation Stewardship Soc., Prince Rupert, BC
Keith Cox	Commercial Salmon Fisherman / Area F Troll, Kyuquot, BC
Kelly Masson	PICFI Business Development Team, Castlemain Group, Nanaimo, BC
Ken Hardie	Member of Parliament, Vancouver, BC
Kiera Vandeborne	T.Buck Suzuki Foundation, Vancouver, BC
Kilian Stehfest	David Suzuki Foundation, Vancouver, BC
Kim Olsen	United Fishermen And Allied Workers' Union, Victoria, BC
Kyle Fawkes	Future Earth Coasts, Campbell River, BC
Les McElwain	Commercial Salmon Fisherman/Troller, Comox, BC
Linda Behnken	Alaska Longline Fisherman's Association, Sitka, Alaska
Luanne Roth	Commercial Fisherman, Prince Rupert, BC
Lyle Pierce	Commercial Fisherman, Courtenay, BC
Lynette Hornung	Greenways Land Trust, Campbell River, BC
Mabel Mazureck	Northern Native Fishing Corporation, Prince Rupert, BC
Marc Fawcett-Atkinson	T.Buck Suzuki Foundation, Vancouver, BC
Mark Pletz	West Coast Reduction, Nanaimo, BC
Mayco Noel	District of Ucluelet (Mayor), Ucluelet, BC
Melissa Collier	West Coast Wild Scallops, Campbell River, BC
Midori Nicolson	Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw Fisheries Group, Campbell River
Moses Martin	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Tofino, BC
Nathan Bennett	Institute for Oceans and Fisheries, UBC, Vancouver BC
P D Moseley	Nanaimo, BC
Pat Taylor	Nimpkish, Alert Bay, BC



Paul Edwards	Commercial Crab Fisherman, Ucluelet, BC
Paula Barbeito	Slow Food International, Italy
Peggy Burkosky	Qualicum Beach, BC
Phil Climie	Ecotrust Canada, Vancouver, BC
Racheal Weymer	Ecotrust Canada, Vancouver, BC
Randy Bell	'Namgis First Nation, Alert Bay, BC
Ravi Maharat	Skipper Otto Community Supported Fishery / UBC, Vancouver, BC
Rick Williams	Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters, Ottawa, ON
Robert Keenan	Food, Food and Allied Workers Union, St. Johns, NFLD
Roger Paquette	Hub City Fisheries, Nanaimo, BC
Roy Alexander	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Tofino, BC
Ryan Ford	Fish Safe, Richmond, BC
Sahir Advani	Skipper Otto Community Supported Fishery, Vancouver, BC
Seth Fayerman	Commercial Fisherman, BC
Shannon Lough	Ecotrust Canada, Prince Rupert, BC
Shaun Strobel	Skipper Otto's Community Supported Fishery, Vancouver, BC
Sonia Strobel	Skipper Otto's Community Supported Fishery, Vancouver, BC
Stanley Hunt	Commercial Fisherman, Alert Bay, BC
Tasha Sutcliffe	Ecotrust Canada, Vancouver, BC
Taylor Reidlinger	Royal Roads University, Victoria,
Terry Amos	Commercial Fisherman, Vancouver Island, BC
Theo Assu	Commercial Halibut and Salmon Fisherman, Campbell River, BC
Thomas Sewid	Pacific Balance Pinnepeds, Victoria, BC
Tom Gray	Commercial Salmon Fisherman / Area F Troll, Fanny Bay, BC
Victor Amos	Commercial Salmon and Longline Fisherman, Parksville, BC



## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**The Honourable Lana Popham - Minister of Agriculture BC** - Lana was raised on Quadra Island in a do-it-yourself community, where growing food, raising animals and harvesting from the sea was a way of life.

Her interest in urban planning led her to UBC where she graduated with a degree in geography.

In 1996, Lana made her home in Saanich South. She co-founded and operated Barking Dog Vineyard, the first certified organic vineyard on Vancouver Island. She also managed a crew of vineyard workers who took care of many vineyards on the Saanich Peninsula, and has been a strong advocate for food producers in Saanich for many years.

Lana served on Saanich's Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Committee and on the Peninsula Agricultural Commission. She was also president of the Vancouver Island Grape Growers Association, chair of the Certification Committee for the Islands Organic Producers Association, and a member of the Investment Agriculture Board.

After being elected in 2009, Lana served as Opposition critic for agriculture for eight years.

**Alexander Kotlarov** - holds a master's degree in Sea Use Law and Policy from the London School of Economics. Recently, he completed his PhD in Natural Resources and Sustainability through the University of Alaska Fairbanks, in Natural Resources and Environmental Economics. Alexander's final chapter of his thesis is "A review of Community Support Measures Included I Alaska Fisheries and a roadmap for their use in sustaining and rebuilding small fishing communities." This research was intended to help small Alaskan rural communities understand the benefit from community support measures that have been put in place.

**Brian Wadhams - commercial gillnet fisherman** - Brian has fished salmon and herring for the past 50 plus years and has been a traditional food gatherer his whole life. Brian has been a counsellor for the 'Namgis for close to twenty years. The majority of his portfolio involved fisheries at the political and grassroots level. He was also one of the first guardians when the guardian program was first introduced in the late 70s and early 80s. A 'Namgis hatchery employee for seven years working on restoration and management of salmon within the Nimpkish Valley on Vancouver Island.

**Corky Evans, former Provincial Fisheries Minister** - Corky spent 20 years as a logger, 5 years as a Regional Director, 14 years as an MLA, 4 years as a Cabinet Minister, and has spent the last 10 years growing food in Winlaw where he has lived for the last 50 years.

**Dan Edwards - Third generation fishermen from Ucluelet** - Dan has fished on trollers and longliners for over fifty years. He is presently in partnership with his son Ryan, with the



longliner Helen 11- fishing halibut, blackcod, rockfish, lingcod, skate and more. Dan is a member of the Commercial Industry Caucus, Commercial fishing caucus, E.D. of the Area A Crab Association and the B.C. Crab Fishermen's Association. Dan lives and fishes out of Ucluelet B.C.

**Danielle Edwards** - recently completed her PhD through the Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries at the University of British Columbia where she assessed the impact of individual transferable quotas on social and economic outcomes for small boat fleets, using the British Columbia halibut fishery as a case study.

In Canada, fisheries are expected to contribute to prosperous coastal communities and the maintenance of stable and viable fishing fleets. The British Columbia Pacific halibut fishery has long been held up as an example of successful fisheries management. However, an in-depth investigation has revealed significant failings. The ownership profile of the fishery has changed dramatically since the introduction of individual transferable quotas. The fishery has transitioned from predominantly owner-operated (about 90% in 1991) to absentee investor owners and lessee fishermen. Owner-operators that have entered the fishery since 2001 catch 15% but own less than 1% of the halibut quota. Lease fees for halibut have regularly exceeded 80% of the landed price, reducing lessee fishing enterprises to minimal earnings that do not support reinvestment or renewal of the fleet. New owner-operator entrants cannot earn enough from the fishery to re-invest, including vessel maintenance and replacement. The fishery, under current conditions, is not self-sustaining as an owner-operator fishery. Socio-economic objectives are not being met, raising important questions about the design and implementation of ITQ management systems and their use in Canada's fisheries.

Danielle is originally from Ucluelet, and part of a large multi-generational fishing family.

She has an extensive background working with community groups, small boat industry organizations, and non-governmental organizations in the pursuit of sustainable fisheries management, with a strong focus on community-based management systems.

**Duncan Cameron - 4th generation fish harvester from Pender Harbour** - Duncan fishes Crab, Salmon, Spot Prawns, Halibut and Herring Spawn on Kelp. Duncan is a director for the BC Crab Fishermen's Association, part of the False Creek Harbour Authority and the Canadian SlowFish movement.

**Fraser MacDonald - Commercial Fisherman** - lives in Vancouver and operates a small commercial fishing business on the BC coast. Fraser got involved in the fishing industry as a deckhand while attending university and has been fishing for 15 years now. In 2011 Fraser started working as a hired fishing vessel captain and in 2013 he bought and started running his own vessel. While based out of Vancouver in the winter, during the fishing season he operates on the coast anywhere from Prince Rupert to Southern Oregon, participating in the albacore tuna, spot prawn and long line ground fish fisheries.

**Gord Johns MP** - Since 2015, he has served as the New Democrat Member of Parliament for the federal electoral riding of Courtenay—Alberni in the House of Commons of



Canada. House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) member.

**Guy Johnston - Commercial Fisherman** - has been fishing the BC coast for 40 plus years, from crab fishing to salmon and Herring Seining. These days he fishes prawns and trolls for salmon in the north and inside waters. Guy has been running a Community Supported Fishery (CSF) for the past 10 or so years. The CSF has been helpful in letting him get more value for his catch, retain crew and make a connection between the fishing industry and his community. He sits on the General Executive of the Fishermen's Union, the Prawn Industry Caucus as well as the Area H harvest committee.

**James Lawson, Commercial Fisherman, Tsimshian and Heiltsuk First Nation** - James Lawson is a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation from his father's side, and his mother is Tsimshian. After obtaining his Bachelor of Science degree, he decided to become a career fisherman to carry on his family legacy. He aims to help in the development of sustainable fisheries management in BC through comprehensive ecosystem stewardship. James has recently served as a member of the Wild Salmon Advisory Council.

**Jason Jarvis, Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance** - Jason hails from Westerly, RI. His family history in the maritime/fishing industry began in Mystic, Connecticut where his father, Henry B. Jarvis, was the master shipwright at the Mystic seaport for 30+ years. Jason has 20+ years of experience as a commercial dragger, gill netter, rod and reeler, and shellfisherman, and as a crew member in the for-hire sector. He has also fished recreationally for his entire life. He currently owns and operates his own small commercial fishing vessel, based in Westerly.

He has participated in the Marine Resource Education Program administered by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute – completing the MREP 200 Program with other members of the commercial fishing industry -- and he serves on the Board of Trustees for the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance. Also a member of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council representing the commercial fishing sector. He has spent countless hours researching information on fisheries science and management. Jason has great respect for the ocean resources of Rhode Island and the U.S. and prides himself in his ability to facilitate dialogue among the various and often competing interests in the fishing industry.

**Jim McIsaac – T.Buck Suzuki Executive Director** - Jim worked in the commercial fishery for over 20 years before coming to work for the T. Buck Suzuki Foundation in 2004. He is driven by his passion for the B.C. coast and has been involved in pollution prevention, habitat protection and sustainability of fisheries in his work with the foundation. He led the development of our OceanSmart program, works within regional and national pollution prevention processes, and is involved in fisheries research and marine planning, management and governance.

**John Couture - Commercial Fisheries Liaison Coordinator at UINR** - This role has him attending industry, science and advisory committee meetings all over the Maritimes. If it's about commercial fishing and involves the interests of the five Cape Breton Mi'kmaq



communities that UINR represents, John will be there!

Afterwards he reports back to the communities to discuss options, outcomes, changes, and updates on commercially fished species, invasive species, species- at-risk, pollution and changes in government.

A graduate of Sydney Academy, John studied at Cape Breton University and continues to learn new skills and ways to approach issues, people and projects.

John comes to UINR after a stint at Fisheries and Oceans Canada as their Aboriginal Program Coordinator, assisting communities fulfill their Aboriginal Fishing Strategy agreements. As a Licensing officer he provided advice to clients, managed license fees, issuance and tags. While Administrative Officer he managed accounts and projects, dealt with security, occupational health and safety issues.

**Jon Crofts - Owner of Codfather's Seafood and president of Slow Food Thompson Okanagan** - Jon is currently a Fishmonger operating a retail and wholesale business in Kelowna BC. Having started his career in the UK at age 18, after a management career with fresh food specialist retailer Waitrose, specialising in fish, he moved to Canada in 2002 and took over the local retail fish store, turning it into a full service Fishmongers. He is heavily involved in the local culinary tourism scene, supplying most of the local winery restaurants as well as supporting culinary events such as the Devour food and film festival, Gold Medal Plates (Canadian Culinary Championships), Feast of the fields (Farm folk city folk), Chefs in the Classroom and the Osoyoos Oyster festival .

He is very active with Slow Food Canada, in particular Slow Fish where he has concentrated on promoting diversity in our fisheries, mitigating waste and promoting the value chain to increase landed values of the catch of small-scale fish harvesters. Also for Slow Fish Canada he has taken part in panel debates in Turin, Italy, Denver, New Orleans and San Francisco, as well as participating in the Slow Fish manifesto group at Slow Fish international in Genoa.

He is currently also president of Slow Food Thompson Okanagan, and has been active in helping to support the local Okanagan Nations Alliance with marketing and technical help to support their efforts to restore the local salmon runs in our valley."

**Joy Thorkelson, United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union, President** - Joy Thorkelson has spent 40 years representing and working for people who rely on fishing for a living. She has worked for healthy fish stocks, policies that support active fish harvesters and policies, to retain and expand processing work in BC – especially in B.C.'s rural coastal communities. As a Northern Panel member of the Pacific Salmon Commission, she has given advice regarding U.S. salmon interceptions and negotiations with Alaska. Thorkelson was chair of Fisheries Renewal BC, which funded and devolved project decision-making to regional groups with representatives from local governments, First Nations, resource users, environmentalists and other salmon habitat natural resource users. Joy has recently served as a member of the Wild Salmon Advisory Council.



**Ken Hardie MP – Elected Member of Parliament in the House of Commons of Canada** representing the riding of Fleetwood – Port Kells since 2015. House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) member.

**Linda Behnken - Executive Director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA).** Linda has fished commercially off Alaska since 1982 both as a deckhand and owner/operator. She has helped launch the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust, which invests in fishing access opportunities for community-based fish harvesters committed to sustainable fishing practices, and Alaskan's Own, the first Community Supported Fisheries program in Alaska.

**Dr. Nathan Bennett** - is a Research Associate at the University of British Columbia, an Independent Consultant working for various national and international organizations, and the Chair of the People and the Oceans Specialist Group for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

He is trained as an environmental social scientist and human-environment geographer and conducts research focusing on the human dimensions of marine conservation, fisheries livelihoods, coastal community development, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, the blue economy, and ocean governance. He has published more than 50 academic articles related to research in Canada, Southeast Asia, Latin America, Europe and the global oceans. He is currently engaged in several research projects focused on access issues in fisheries and food security in coastal communities in British Columbia.

**Paula Barbeito - Slow Fish International Coordinator** - Paula was born on a small promontory in Galicia (NW Spain) and understood very early that her life, even at work, could not be separated from the sea. Its currents brought her to Latin America and Germany, where she perfected her oceanography and sustainability studies, to finally land in 2017 in the port of Genoa (Italy), where a Slow Fish event was taking place. Small-scale fisherfolks and their communities are her network. She works constantly alongside them to keep the access and exploitation rights in their hands and so, their right to fish.

**Racheal Weymer - Director of Fisheries at Ecotrust Canada** - Racheal has more than a decade of experience launching and implementing fisheries programs locally and globally in the Indigenous, public, private, and non-profit sectors. She worked with Ecotrust Canada for over seven years where she managed a wide variety of projects, before she left for two years to take on the role of Senior Advisor for the PICFI Business Development Team. She recently returned to Ecotrust Canada where she now leads the organization's fisheries policy, planning, and monitoring work. Before that, she served as a Project Manager for the BC First Nations Fisheries Council. Racheal started her career in fisheries as a biologist and wharfinger in her hometown of Port Hardy, BC.

**Rick Williams** – is currently Research Director for the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters (CCPFH) and a board member and former Board Chair of Ecotrust Canada. He has over 40 years of experience in research and policy development in Canadian and international fisheries.



**Robert Keenan - Lead price negotiator and market analyst for the Fish Food and Allied Workers Union** - The FFAW represents inshore harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador. Joining the Union in 2014, Robert leads price negotiations on 11 different fish species that have a combined landed value of approximately \$450 million. In addition to negotiations, Robert works on a variety of fishery policy issues, such as owner-operator and seafood traceability. Prior to joining the Union, he worked for five years with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador where he focused on issues of rural economic development and regional cooperation, as well as municipal reform and advocacy.

Until 2008, Robert worked as a criminal and family law lawyer in Saint John, New Brunswick and Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Robert has an honours and masters' degree from Memorial University and a law degree from the University of New Brunswick.

**Sonia Strobel - Skipper Otto's Community Supported Fishery** - Sonia co-founded Skipper Otto Community Supported Fishery in 2008 with her husband and fisherman, Shaun Strobel, to connect fishing families like theirs directly to conscientious consumers. This unique partnership between fishing families and end consumers guarantees fishing families a fair price for their catch, protects a traditional way of life in BC's coastal communities, and disrupts a seafood system fraught with social and environmental injustice. Sonia married into the multi-generational gillnetting Strobel family in 2001. For 12 years, Sonia was a high school teacher, who spent 5 years teaching at a maritime-themed inner-city public school in Brooklyn, New York. An activist for social and environmental justice, Sonia has been a life-long supporter of the local agricultural food movement. Applying her knowledge of Community Supported Agriculture programs to fishing, Sonia conceived the idea for a Community Supported Fishery in 2008 and Skipper Otto's became one of the first CSFs in the world. Skipper Otto's now supports 30 independent fishing families and delivers sustainable local seafood to over 2,800 families across Canada as well as a small, select group of restaurants and retailers. Sonia has been the recipient of many awards acknowledging her vision and leadership including: winner of the SheEO Radical Generosity Award in 2015; 2018 Canadian finalist in the Veuve Cliquot Business Woman Award; winner of the 2019 Forum for Women Entrepreneurs' Pitch for the Purse; and Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

**Tasha Sutcliffe - Independent Consultant and Senior Policy Advisor at Ecotrust Canada** - Tasha was formally Ecotrust Canada's vice-president, and was also Director for the Fisheries and Marine Program, a position she had held since 2007. She has recently shifted to working as an independent consultant. She brings extensive experience in fisheries, policy analysis, community economic development, business planning, and facilitation. Prior to joining Ecotrust Canada, Sutcliffe spent nine years as the Regional Director for the Community Fisheries Development Centre in Prince Rupert, where she worked to create community economic alternatives in the face of reduced commercial fishing opportunities. She has recently served as a member of the Wild Salmon Advisory Council.





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*This report is in the process of being reviewed by speakers and attendees before final copy and publishing.*



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Keira Vandeborne

Meghan Eadie

Dylan Heerema

Phil Climie



Fisheries for Communities is a network of Indigenous and non-Indigenous fish harvesters, small businesses, fishmongers, chefs, restaurateurs, fishing families, community organizations, and citizens who have grown tired and frustrated watching the many social, cultural, and economic benefits of our fisheries increasingly flowing to outside investors and large scale global corporations at the cost of local fishing families and communities. As this trend continues, we are also losing our capacity for local management and stewardship of our marine environment and our long-standing connections to the sea.

## **CONTACT**

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