

Bulletin

January 2023

Charity Sales A Success

Charity herring sales in Steveston and James Bay this month saw huge success with 31 tons sold and approximately \$65,000 raised for charity.

The annual sale, which is organized by members of the fishing indus-

try, has raised over \$1 million for the Fishermen Helping Kids with Cancer initiative and Autism Community Training. This year marks the initiative's 12th consecutive sale.

The event's costs are covered by fishermen and supporting fish companies, ensuring that all funds raised from the sale go directly to the charities.

UFAWU organized some of the first for-charity

fish sales as early as the 1970s. The Union continued to run the annual charity herring sales event for several decades in partnership with CKNW radio, with proceeds donated to the Orphans Fund and the Bill Rigby Memorial Society. The Bill Rigby Memorial Society is a Union-created charity which built low-income housing for retired fishing industry workers.

Licence Retirement Program Deadline

Applications for the Pacific Salmon Commercial Licence Retirement Program are being accepted by DFO. Applications for the program must be submitted by **February 28, 2023.**

Prawn Labelling Program Implemented

The Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association, in partnership with DFO, has created a traceability program for prawn tubs, to be implemented during the 2023 season.

Harvesters must attach a small label to all containers of prawn tails once they are packaged.

These labels must be ordered through the industry's service provider, J.O. Thomas and Associates, before the season and any unused labels will be returned to the service provider at the end of the season.

The labels will have a

unique identifier to trace the product back to the point of harvest and must have the date of harvest written on them in water-resistant ink. This program only applies to tubs of prawn tails packed in liquid and frozen, not frozen-at-sea whole finger-packed prawns or live/fresh prawns.

The new labelling program will also only apply to tubs of prawn

tails, not to coonstripes, humpbacks, or other shrimp species. As these other shrimp species are not subject to minimum size limit, and as C&P advises that the majority of laundering concerns pertain to prawn tails, labelling efforts will be directed only at tubbed prawn tails for the time being. More information will be sent to all license holders via Canada Post.

Licence Retirement Program Recap

On Dec 14, 2022, DFO provided an update and details about the start of the PSSI Pacific Salmon Commercial Licence Retirement Program (PSSI buy-back). The PSSI salmon licence buy-back was first announced as part of the \$647 million budget in June of 2021, following DFO's long-term closures of most of BC's commercial salmon fisheries.

Despite the PSSI licence buy-back applying to salmon licence owners only, DFO said in 2021 that its purpose was to help salmon harvesters who wanted to retire and to reduce the size of the commercial salmon fleet for a "more financially viable and sustainable fishery for remaining harvesters." In the information package sent out by DFO, it was noted "this is not guaranteed."

Commercial Harvest Assoc. representatives had made repeated requests to DFO for more information about the Licence Buy-back from Spring 2022 on. Recommendations were also provided that would help to address PSSI's stated goals, as well as the commercial sector's concerns. During the year and a half between the initial buy-back announcement and the delivery of its details, DFO made policy and management decisions that denied and/or seriously limited access to the majority of BC's 2022 commercial salmon TAC — leaving most salmon fishermen in desperate financial situations with no answers.

Meanwhile more than half of the \$647 million PSSI budget has gone towards DFO staffing and in-house structuring for the PSSI program, with a comparatively small section of the funding, \$123 million (19% of the total budget) earmarked to buy out the multi-generational investments and livelihoods that have been decimated in the process. A week after the multi-day-

long 2022 IHPC post-season salmon review process, Minister Murray announced the PSSI buy-back to the media. A Fishery Notice announcement with brief information about the buy-back was then sent out. This was followed up by a one-hour meeting with commercial salmon reps.

DFO staff started the meeting with a presentation about the long-awaited buy-back details, after which commercial reps at the meeting were given 20-30 minutes to ask questions. Consistent with previous PSSI meetings, harvest sector reps pointed to a lack of transparency and many inconsistencies between the initial presentation, the information in the Fishery Notice, and DFO's answers to commercial sector questions.

The Federal Govt. has repeatedly refused requests to compensate commercial salmon harvesters, whose investments — ranging from \$100,000 to \$1 million-plus in vessels, licences, and gear — have been grossly devalued since the last time the Fisheries Minister made

"sweeping changes to save Pacific Salmon and transform the commercial salmon fleet". The assurances made by DFO to those who stayed and invested through that previous restructuring were more allocations/access and increased viability as smaller fleets.

During the December 2022 meeting, DFO staff told attendees that the Department's PSSI is funding the Derelict Vessel Mitigation and Disposal Program — a program that offers fishers who have sold their licences through the program a way to "dispose" of their fishing vessels and gear. Fishermen who participate in the program will be offered \$2,000 each to cover their expenses (including meals and return travel) to surrender their vessels. Early applicants are offered an additional \$1,000 as an incentive to participate in the program.

A further breakdown and analysis of the Department's PSSI Pacific Salmon Commercial Licence Retirement Program will be included in a more detailed, future write-up at UFAWU-Unifor.

DFO Whale MGMT Survey

DFO has released an online survey seeking feedback on potential management measures for

the recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales. Since 2019, the Government of Canada has implemented measures that have included area-based fishing closures, increased

vessel approach distance, no-go zones, vessel slow down zones, voluntary fishing avoidance zones, and voluntary vessel measures. According to DFO, these measures are determined,

in part, by stakeholder input.

Take the public survey on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada website before Feb. 19, 2023, and let your voice be heard.



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