



The SVIAC Board of Directors truly appreciate the confidence, loyalty and generosity of our membership. We extend to all of you our sincere thanks for your support.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS NEWS BULLETIN INCLUDE:

- NOTABLE CALENDAR EVENTS
- SALISH SEA SALMON CHALLENGE FISHING DERBY REPORT AND RESULTS
- DFO MINISTER JORDAN ON MARKED SELECTIVE FISHERIES
- SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND FISHERIES NEWS

NOTABLE CALENDAR EVENTS

DECEMBER 16, 2020	Southern IFMP Post Season Review (public)
DECEMBER 17, 2020	Southern IFMP Salmon Outlook 2021 (public)
DECEMBER 31, 2020	Public Halibut Fishery Closes in BC
JANUARY 25 – 29, 2021	International Pacific Halibut Commission AGM in Victoria, Canada – Venue TBD or On-Line
FEBRUARY 5 – 6, 2021	Mainboard SFAB Meeting – On-Line



THE SALISH SEA SALMON CHALLENGE FISHING DERBY – REPORT AND RESULTS

In short, Saturday 5th September was a great day! An excellent fishing derby, good weather, super people, and fun times ... plus SVIAC successfully raised money for a worthy local cause. And what a great cause it is too ... Sooke Chinook (Sea Pen) Enhancement Initiative. Feedback from many participants suggested they really appreciated the event and had a good time in the bargain.

When originally planning our one-day Salish Sea Salmon Challenge Fishing Derby (SSSC) the SVIAC

Board of Directors felt the middle of August was the best time to hold the event. That time of year was considered optimum as no stocks of concern were present in Juan de Fuca Strait and fishing limits were normal, allowing anglers the opportunity to retain large Chinook and enter them in the derby. The original SVIAC Juan de Fuca Fishing Tournament used to be held on Father's Day



weekend in June, but DFO imposed restrictive Chinook fishing regulations that took away the retention of large fish, spoiling any salmon angling events at that time of year. And now the department has moved the goal posts yet again, extending the restrictions of non-retention of all large Chinook (> 80 cm), hatchery and wild, in Fisheries Management Areas 19-1 to 19-4 and 20-5 during August too.

Sadly, DFO has failed dreadfully in restoring the Fraser River Chinook stocks of concern over the



past 20 years. These are the stocks that have caused the implementation of the current draconian fishing regulations. While knowing fully there was a serious emerging conservation concern, the department simply opted to cut back fisheries as their singular recovery plan. This strategy is historically a failure. Had they commenced with a well-funded comprehensive recovery plan, we most likely would not be in the situation we find ourselves in today. But now they have opted to wreck our salmon fishery

in the height of the summer by limiting the size of fish we can keep in August. For that reason



and not wanting to hold a fishing derby at a time that would compete with other local derby events, SVIAC opted to run the SSSC on September 5th. Although the fishing for Chinook in September can be a bit sporadic, our gracious hosts at Cheanuh Marina, where the derby was headquartered, wholeheartedly supported our choice of Saturday on the Labour Day weekend. So, we have a new and hopefully regular date and time for this popular event.

Thrown into the mix this year, we also had to contend with the Corona Virus COVID-19 pandemic too. That alone has caused the cancellation of multiple public events and fishing derbies on the South Island in the summer of 2020. It was imperative to keep everyone safe: the derby entrants, the staff at Cheanuh Marina and, of course, the SVIAC derby crew. Building on the existing safety protocols already in force at the marina, the SSSC executive team focused on physical distancing,

mask wearing, hand sanitizing and crowd management. Free masks and hand sanitizer were provided to anyone who needed them. While the fishing component of the event was low risk due to the contestants being in small boats, the SVIAC derby team and Cheanuh Marina management were rightly uneasy about a large gathering at the prize awards after the weigh scale closed. Changed from 2019, draw prizes were awarded to contestants as



usual, but contestants did NOT have to be present to claim their prize at the close of the derby. This change in prize eligibility resulted in fewer people being at Cheanuh Marina when the weigh scale closed. In total approximately 30 people attended the prize awards in person, which was 25% of the contestants and they all remained outside in the parking lot. Those who did attend understood our COVID-19 protocols and were considerate to keep themselves distanced. On a couple occasions we had to remind folks to keep two meters apart. But generally, all present acted safely; we are very grateful to everyone for that. Despite the requirement for Corona Virus COVID-19 protocols, the event went well, everyone was considerate and understanding, plus no one became ill.

SSSC Fishing Derby Statistics

From a statistical standpoint, there were one hundred and eighteen contestants fishing the SSSC Derby this year, which is an increase from the approximately fifty rod tickets sold in 2019. On the day, the word was that salmon fishing was a bit tougher than usual, with many anglers fishing hard and having little to show for it. There was a total of 27 fish weighed in, which is not a



reflection of the total fish caught that day as derby participants did not need to weigh in a fish to be part of any draw prizes. Several reported catching or weighed in Coho, as some nice sized hatchery marked Coho were around and legal to retain. All told, derby contestants weighed-in 17 Chinook and 10 Coho.

Derby Prize Board Results

Biggest Salmon - **Connor Warford** took the Biggest Salmon prize (\$2,360 cash) with a twenty-three-and-a-half-pound Chinook. Connor was also in the Skippers Challenge and pocketed an

additional \$1,050 to sweeten the victory. Great job Connor!

Biggest Hatchery Chinook - Hailey Walsh took the Biggest Hatchery Chinook prize (HP Scotty Downrigger \$800 value) with a nearly 18 pounder. Hailey wasn't done there either, because she also entered her Chinook for free into the Anglers Atlas MyCatch App prize contest and won the longest salmon prize and bagged the \$250 cash prize as well. How fantastic is that; good for you Hailey!!

The SSSC Random Derby Entry Draw was won by **Tony Betker** and he took home the \$2,360 cash prize. Nice going Tony!!

The Swag Draw Prize Winners were:

Scotty Model 2106 HP Downrigger (value \$800) – Tom Cole

An interesting note about that prize: The first drawing for the Swag Draw Top Prize was won by Christopher Miller (SVIAC Treasurer and derby crew member), however he generously offered to gift it back for a re-draw and the second drawing went to Tom Cole. Nice gesture Christopher!!



10' 6" Mooching Rod and Reel Combo (value \$500 – courtesy Scotty) – Craig Allen

Crab Fishing Starter Kit (Trap, Rope, etc.) (value \$100 – courtesy Cheanuh) – Grant Sawyer

Launch and Coffee Card (4 launches and 4 coffees - value \$50 each — courtesy Cheanuh) winners are: 1 — Geoff Bodman; 2 — David Davenport; 3 — Greg Parsons; 4 — Chuck Groot; 5 — Al Motiuk; and 6 — Brian Lindsay.

<u>IMPORTANT NOTE ON THE CHEANUH CARD PRIZE WINNERS:</u> We have been unable to contact winners **Chuck Groot and David Davenport**, either because the information on their ticket stub



was incorrect or they have not responded to our emails. If anyone knows Chuck or David please have them email SVIAC president Christopher Bos at chris@anglerscoalition.com as soon as possible, so we can forward them their prizes. If they do not respond by December 31st 2020, we will re-draw two alternate winners from the SSSC Fishing Derby contestants list and give them the Cheanuh Marina Coffee and Launch cards instead.

Anglers Atlas MyCatch App Prizes:

New this year was the addition of two \$250 cash prizes relating to MyCatch added to the SSSC Fishing Derby prize board. These were generously donated and supported by Sean Simmons of the popular Anglers Atlas.

https://www.anglersatlas.com

Although separate to the SSSC Derby prize board, all derby contestants could enter to win these two prizes without any additional cost. To



participate in the MyCatch App portion of the derby, contestants registered online with the MyCatch App on the Anglers Atlas website for free. The eligible fish catch information is logged in through the entrant's smartphone when a fish is caught.

The MyCatch App is a new way to log your fishing trips and share the data confidentially for science purposes. MyCatch makes tracking your catch simple & assists fisheries biologists in



getting real time data from anglers about catch rates, species distribution and other research topics. Protecting your own catch data is important to the folks at Anglers Atlas and MyCatch App. The details of each trip and catch logs will be confidentially shared with biologists and researchers for their fisheries work only. Therefore, everyone's secret fishing spots stay secret. There is an urgent need to collect data from the coastal marine waters as well as lakes and rivers across Canada. Traditional survey

methods are expensive and as a result, thousands of waterbodies are left unmonitored. MyCatch is designed to help solve this problem.

SVIAC were honoured to work with Sean and Anglers Atlas to try out the MyCatch App at the SSSC Fishing Derby and hope we can continue to build on this year's launch. This year's prize winners are listed below:

MyCatch App Prize Winners

Longest Salmon – Hailey Walsh - \$250 cash

Hidden Length Salmon – Graham Rice - \$250 cash (Graham fished with his son Dylan)



Did We Make Any Money on the Day, You Ask? The Salish Sea Salmon Challenge Fishing Derby raised a handsome \$3,265.00 net after expenses, which is a big, *no a huge*, increase over the same 2019 event, where the proceeds were \$960.00 gross before expenses.

So, a great big thank you to all who made this event a success for SVIAC and our important enhancement initiatives.

First and foremost, sincere thanks to all those who entered the derby, you are champions of the



fishing community, dedicated and kind too. Thank you so much, without your support we couldn't run this event.

Secondly, we must thank our good friends at Cheanuh Marina for their gracious hospitality, their generosity, especially Cheryl, Grant, Tyhia and Katelynn. You are great people, thank you so much!!

A huge thank you to Scotty for their generous donation of not one, but two HP 2106

downriggers. That in itself is amazing, but everyone out there needs to know that **Scotty is also donating \$5,000 toward the Sooke Chinook (Sea Pen) Enhancement Initiative.** Brilliant!! That's just amazing, you guys are fantastic!!

Finally, it is important to remember that this event is organized and run by SVIAC volunteers. Special thanks to the entire SVIAC Board of Directors, especially Christopher Miller and Glen

Varney, for their efforts that resulted in another successful event. Opportunities to organize fun, family friendly fishing-focused events for our membership and the South Island angling community are important and part of what SVIAC embodies. These events provide an



excellent opportunity for families and fishing buddies to come together, enjoy some quality time in the great outdoors while fishing and raising some money for causes that will improve fish abundance for everyone in the future.

SVIAC Board of Directors have been asked to consider running a similar derby in the spring of 2021 before the Fraser River Chinook fishing regulations come into force – keep a watchful eye open for a notice about our plans in the near future.



This side story to the SSSC Fishing Derby is worth sharing: The background is ... funds raised at our event all go towards the Sooke Chinook (Sea Pen) Enhancement Initiative, a worthy project whose success will benefit the Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) and the entire local fishing community. And 2020 is the first year that large 4-year-old Chinook from the sea pen project are returning to Sooke to spawn, which are prime food for our endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales too.

Well, irony of ironies, one of our SSSC contestants, Alex Smith, only had to contend with a pod of hungry Orcas feeding in the same area as he was fishing during the derby.

Apparently, without warning multiple Orcas surfaced right near his boat, so Alex needed to up his gear and move away. There must have been large Chinook right there in the water if the whales went into feeding mode. Al was there trying to snag the big fish to win the derby at the

Picture by Al Smith - video still of fishing in JDF during the SSSC Fishing Derby

exact same time, so he was in the sweet spot too. As he was following SRKW avoidance protocol by moving away, Al managed to catch some video on his phone before he left the area. (see still shot from video on the left)

Retired Dr John Ford, DFO's Marine Mammal expert for many years, advised us when we were originally planning the SVIAC sea pen project back in 2016, our project if successful was of value to the SRKW. He said, if there are lots of large Chinook in Juan de Fuca Strait during the late summer as a result of our enhancement work, the Southern Resident Killer Whales would find them. It was on that basis that we opted to name our broader enhancement efforts the Orca Food Security Program.

So, the irony and story takeaway from Al's amazing close encounter is the presence of large Chinook in abundance is a good thing. Those enhanced salmon are there as prey fish for predators to maintain the food chain intact and equally to benefit humans through the salmon fishery based on the abundance too. And on September 5th, when Al saw the Orcas feeding

around his boat, SVIAC was raising money at SSSC Fishing Derby to help fund the project that will put many more large Chinook in the Juan de Fuca Strait each summer for years to come. It is a



win-win-win situation, where everyone benefits! This great story is yet more empirical evidence of the successful concept behind SVIAC Sooke Chinook (Sea Pen) Enhancement Project and the Orca Food Security Program.

HOW TO SUPPORT SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND ANGLERS COALITION

Membership fees are \$40 dollars annually and can be purchased online at https://www.anglerscoalition.com or by phone at (778) 426-4141 or in person at SVIAC, Unit 3-774 Bay Street, Victoria V8T 5E4 or by snail mail to the same address – cash, debit and credit cards accepted.

Donations can be made in the same manner as above.

Please give serious consideration to making a donation to our amazing and successful Chinook sea pen project.

DFO MINISTER JORDAN ON MARKED SELECTIVE FISHERIES

At the end of September, response letters from DFO (Fisheries Minister Jordan and Pacific RDG Rebecca Reid) emerged that, in our opinion, are a clear indication of just how little our current federal government in Ottawa feels about the Public Salmon Fishery in British Columbia. The Sport Fishing Advisory Board and SVIAC both received responses, as we are sure others from the

West Coast angling community did too.

Firstly, it is astonishing to us that a SVIAC letter written in good faith and sent to the Fisheries Minister on March 12th requesting *urgent action* by the federal government, would get a reply on September 28th. That is an insulting 202-day delay in sending a response. With the amount of support staff in the



minister's office and regardless of the Corona Virus, any Canadian individual writing to the federal



government needs to receive a reply sooner on any matter, let alone one addressing an urgent matter from a stakeholder organization.

The full SVIAC March 12, 2020 letter and DFO Minister Jordan's reply September 28, 2020 can be found in the Skinny News Section on the SVIAC website ... https://www.anglerscoalition.com

Regarding Marked Selective Fisheries (MSF) for salmon, the topic raised in the letters from the SFAB and SVIAC, our government is not saying to us an outright no, but it certainly isn't an enthusiastic yes let's do it immediately either! The term "slow walking" seems more apt under the circumstance. (Dictionary: to slow walk is to perform a task slowly on purpose so as to drag out the time taken, usually in order to delay what the subject believes will occur next).

The prospect of retaining abundant USA-origin hatchery fin-clipped Chinook in the spring of 2020 around the South Island, when there were no stocks of concern present, was a viable opportunity lost without due cause. Ottawa's decision to implement catch-and-release starting in 2019 unfairly hurt the Public Fishery, in the opinion of many knowledgeable salmon anglers, and was unjustifiable. This is yet more evidence that the department are not honouring their commitment



to the Recreational Fishery Vision, a document co-signed by a former fisheries minister. Fostering our Public Fisheries and considering the needs of our sector when making fisheries management decisions are requisite.

The viability of the Public Chinook Fishery around South Vancouver Island as well as the waters off Vancouver and in Howe Sound are clearly at a perilous stage; a stage

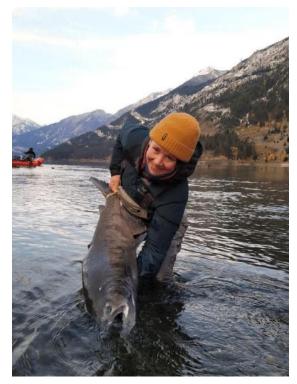
that is only exacerbated by the current COVID-19 pandemic. The need to implement Marked Selective Chinook Fishing is very urgent and, in the opinion of the SVIAC Board of Directors, critical for the future. At minimum, DFO should immediately adipose fin clip all of the existing Canadian hatchery raised Chinook, as there will be a three to four year delay until those marked juvenile salmon return as adults to the marine area waters of their natal stream release points.

The latest political speak as heard from Terri Beech, the current Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Fisheries Minister, at the recent Sport Fishing Institute fisheries web forum, was ... the federal government has heard you ... we are now talking about Marked Selective Salmon Fisheries in Ottawa ... but its complicated or words to that effect. And yes, guess what, we are waiting for more studies and science reports before a decision can be taken.



As usual, you can hear the mournful violin music playing in your head as you read each explanation why the MSF issue is so supposedly "complicated". Beginning with ... we can't compromise Canada's Coded Wire Tag stock assessment system; heaven forbid we embrace a new technology like DNA sampling to allow the Public Fishery to survive, instead of stubbornly clinging to an antiquated method. And then there is ... DFO haven't got money to pay for all the

extra costs; yeh right, we all believe that! The Canadian Federal Government hasn't got two brass farthings spare to support Canadians in something important, yet we can send millions and millions tax payers hard earned dollars to who knows who for who knows what all around the globe to look like super heroes at the United Nations. Or how about ... allowing fisheries to take place and only retaining hatchery marked fish has an implication to exploitation rates due to a release mortality factor, we need to study this closely; guess what, there are three factors that make this reasoning look like a joke (i) if we are now reduced to fishing catch-and-release for Chinook and can't keep a hatchery fish, anglers will still encounter wild Chinook and have to release them while fishing, so there is existing mortality of wild fish. And retaining a hatchery



Chinook is more likely to get the anglers off the water sooner, (ii) a comprehensive salmon release mortality study was undertaken in BC 25 years ago by reputable DFO science staff that currently guides the PSC and Washington State, USA have studies on catch-and-release mortality from their successful MSF Chinook fishery too, ergo we don't need more studies; and (iii) any of the wild fish passing the South Island in a mix of Chinook stocks, then have to run a substantial illegal Fraser River net gauntlet with death by being gilled as their only option (FYI - in 2020 over 300 nets were impounded by DFO enforcement), so one can only imagine the damage to the dwindling wild stocks wrought by the many poachers who didn't get caught.

Finally, there is this ... flooding the ocean with millions and millions of hatchery fish has consequences like straying and negative hatchery/wild spawning interactions; (i) will this cause starvation of the last few remaining wild salmon due to food shortage? Washington State release 80,000,000 marked juvenile Chinook each year and have done for over 20 years and Canada currently releases 35,000,000, and so far, there isn't any sign of starvation; (ii) what about the approximately 31,500,000 DFO produced hatchery Chinook that each year are released into the



wild without an adipose fin clip? These are *quasi* wild fish from that point on. If DFO were to mark ALL the hatchery Chinook, at least they could be identified, and where necessary removed from the mix before they interact on the spawning beds with the wild fish; and (iii) The horses have already escaped the barn, so closing the doors now seems useless. DFO has been enhancing the wild Chinook stocks since the late 1970s, so suggesting the hatchery wild interaction is detrimental to the remaining wild stocks seems spurious as most of the systems where hatcheries, whether production facilities or CEPD, those interactions have happened for over 40 years. Therefore, one must assume that hatchery genetics are pervasive in the vast majority spawning populations in Southern BC.



So, should we all be heartened that this latest proclamation from Parliamentary Secretary Beech means we are barreling down the pathway to an imminent MSF fishing plan for Southern BC Chinook in just days from now? Is this the positive, glass half full news we want to believe it is? Or is this the glass half empty of yet more weasel words, delays and studies that kick the issue down the road even further. Perhaps it behooves us all to remain skeptical, rather than have our hopes dashed yet again. Perhaps we should expect more drawn out bureaucracy, rather immediate action being afoot.

Quite frankly, the time for talk and studies is over. Immediate action is required. We, as an angling community, desperately need to come together and as one united front, show the government



how upset we all really are. This slow, but steady destruction of BC's unique and irreplaceable Chinook fishery over the past 15 years is unacceptable. Who needs to step up? Not just willing individuals, but angling clubs, associations and organizations from the angling service sector, the tackle industry and representation from the tin boaters too. It is high time we unite.

We must reclaim our fishery and hold the government's feet to the fire; its time for government to hear of voices all at once.

SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND FISHERIES NEWS



HALIBUT – The season will stay open until the end of the year and there will be approximately 350,000 LBS of uncaught Public Fishery Total Allowable Catch (TAC) left in the water. This is mainly due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and the closing of all access to Haida Gwaii last summer. SFAB and DFO are working

with International Pacific Halibut Commission to get a one-time COVID-19 roll over provision approved for the Public Fishery. The idea is to have 10% of this year's uncaught Public Fishery TAC added on to the 2021 season TAC. If nothing else, this would provide the SFAB Halibut Committee with a buffer for designing the 2021 harvest plan. What is the 2021 TAC? That won't be determined until January 29 at the IPHC AGM. While preliminarily, it appears we can expect a slightly larger TAC for Canada, possibly some improved fishing and the opportunity to keep bigger fish. But this is all conjecture, as until the IPHC Commissioners make a decision, no one really knows what to expect.



PRAWNS – The SFAB has just submitted a proposal document to DFO for serious consideration related to the coming winter fishery (January 1 – March 31, 2021). Unfortunately, DFO has cancelled the spawner index surveys this fall in high use areas due to COVID-19 concerns, therefore there is no hard data available to manage the

fishery. DFO provided the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat risk document to guide our proposals. How will this affect the Saanich Inlet fishery? Last winter the whole of the inlet was closed for three months and there was a significant "rush" to fish on April 1, 2020. Two of the last three years there was some winter pulse fishing. As the CSAS paper implies high risk in much of the inlet, the proposal requests a winter "weekend" pulse fishery in area 19-7 only, but closed in other areas. There is a bright spot though, the proposal also suggests the season open on March 16, 2021, two weeks earlier to provide more opportunity. SVIAC recognizes how important access to prawns is to our local residents. We will watch the department's response closely as the Public Prawn Fishery has now reduced their bag limit to 125 prawns per day and it



is mandatory to release all berried females. These changes represent a significant contribution by our sector to conservation of the species, so we should be able to benefit from those conservation results.



CHINOOK — A small ray of hope has been alluded to by DFO for the Area 19 and 20 spring 2021 Public Chinook Fishery. In two separate forums, the department has implied there is some appetite to look at opportunities for our sector in the spring of 2021 (March through May). Last year, there was an SFAB request for hatchery retention of Chinook in Area 19-1

to 19-4 and 20-5 between April 1 and May 31, 2020. It was not approved last spring, but it may be an option this spring. SVIAC is watching this like a hawk and will lobby hard for this to become regulation. If approved, it would be a big step forward to getting some of our lost Chinook opportunities back.

PRIØRITY ACCESS

PRIORITY ACCESS TO CHINOOK AND COHO – The existing salmon access agreement between the commercial and public fisheries sectors is a 25 + year old agreement that needs to be modernized, but not necessarily dramatically changed. Current

agreement gives priority of Sockeye, Pink and Chum salmon to the commercial sector and Chinook and Coho to the Public Fishery. When originally drafted the First Nations of BC did not see merit in being involved in the agreement. Recent BC court rulings have asserted the First Nations have experienced material loss of rights under the existing agreement and hence the revisiting and re-drafting of the document has merit. We, as the Public Fishery, must stand firm in our position that our access to Chinook and Coho is critical to us and needs to be maintained. Chinook far out ways the importance of all other Pacific fish species to the public who fish. This is a monumental issue that must get our full attention and see us be at the table every step of the way. In addition, it is our position at SVIAC, that the public fishery must be supported by the services of senior government-paid legal representation throughout the process. Our sector can not possibly afford to cover costs of this nature and it would be wholly unfair expecting us to represent our own interests in court or at negotiation meetings concerning such an important matter.



RCAs AND SPONGE REEFS — DFO is currently reviewing the efficacy of the current suite of Rockfish Conservation Areas and developing Sponge Reef protection in certain areas of the Pacific Ocean off the BC coast. It was recently suggested on a DFO webinar that the inside RCAs (Georgia, Haro and Juan de Fuca Straits) have a



footprint of 19% of the identified rockfish habitat. The department plan to potentially increase that by an additional 11% (156 square kilometers). If that is the plan, our local fisheries representatives and angling clubs need to be on guard and at each table where the discussions take place. In addition, the DFO rep suggested that certain existing RCAs need to be redesigned to better assist rockfish recovery. That would include closing of entire reefs and even looking for bigger areas in some of the smaller RCAs. The original RCA design was rightly undertaken with direct meaningful input from the local angling communities and should be done in the same fashion during this review. Sponge Reefs are another hot topic of the marine protection movement. Amy Mar, the DFO lead on the Howe Sound Sponge Reef initiative, commented at the recent webinar that scientist have advised 100% of sponge reef habitat should be protected areas and that means closed to "downrigger fishing". What was shocking is that might even include areas designated today as "dead" sponge reefs, because they would be "good" candidates for a Sponge recovery initiative.

With RCAs expanding, Sponge Reef Protected Areas emerging, Southern Resident Killer Whale refuges and Chinook fishing catch-and-release our entire fishery is under increasing attack.

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Donations can be made in the same manner as above.

Please give serious consideration to making a donation to our amazing and successful Chinook sea pen project.

Sincere thanks to our most recent sponsors:

- Fred Welter -
- Scott Plastics -
- The Amalgamated Conservation Society for their exceptionally generous support!