



THE SVIAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONTINUES TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR FRESHWATER AND MARINE FISHERY OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS ADMINISTER THE SUCCESSFUL SOOKE CHINOOK ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

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SOOKE CHINOOK ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

This is a Good News Story!

At the time of writing of this newsletter, the second batch of our 630,000 Chinook smolts are acclimatizing in our sea pen at the Sooke Harbour Resort and Marina. Project year six is already under way. The result of all of our efforts will continue to be an increase in the abundance of large adult Chinook in Juan de Fuca Strait during July, August and September, the critical

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pre-winter feeding time for our local Southern Resident Killer Whales. In addition, these large hatchery Chinook offer great fishing opportunities in our local waters.

Let's not forget that a landmark year has just come and gone, as 2021 marked our fifth straight year of the successful operation of the Chinook sea pen. To date, this SVIAC coordinated initiative has raised and released over 2,500,000 healthy juvenile Chinook. After this year is

The 2022 Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative marks our sixth year of operation. When complete, 3,150,000 smolts will have been reared and released successfully

complete that total will be approximately 3,150,000. This is because SVIAC has raised more than \$350,000 to make it all happen, and that's all private money! That's correct, this program has received no government cash funding.

PLEASE NOTE: At SVIAC, we believe this is the quintessential community project – none of this would have happened without your remarkable support –all of our members, all of the volunteers and all of the generous donors and sponsors. You know who you are, so give yourselves a great big pat on the back. The SVIAC Board of Directors truly appreciates all of the support.



There is more good news too ... Coded Wire Tags from our marked fish are now showing up in the stock assessment's data, so we know survival in the ocean of our fish has been good. And, for the past two years, the salmon fishing off Sooke in Juan de Fuca Strait has been lights out fantastic during the end of July and August, indicating lots of our Chinook are present and adding to the existing migrating wild

stocks. In addition, during the fall of 2020, there was a marked increase in adult spawning Chinook back to the Sooke River, with approximately 1,800 being counted. So, it's all positive!!

Recent science findings show that our Southern Resident Killer Whales are in better shape now health-wise (*well fed*), better than a few years ago and have been seen opportunistically feeding in JDF during the late summer. These outcomes are why the project was launched in the first place, so once again, kudos to everyone involved. It's all about community and private money doing much-needed work to improve our marine environment.

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After five straight years of providing exceptional management and expertise, our program’s managing aquaculturist, Glen Varney, has stepped back this year. We are exceedingly grateful

A Great Big Thank You to Glen Varney for His 5 Years of Managing the Sooke Sea Pen Logistics and Providing Expert Care of All of the Juvenile Chinook

for Glen’s commitment to our very worthwhile initiative, as we know it would never have got off the ground without him stepping up to help. SVIAC is also very pleased to announce, Peter McCully of Goldstream Hatchery and Ben Eardley, who came recommended by Peter, have taken on the interim management of the fish culture and testing requirements. This will definitely help us get through 2022 to make sure our program continues to meet the high standards of fish culture Glen did such a great job of helping us achieve. It will also provide us time to find a more permanent replacement for the position.

The SVIAC Board of Directors are exceedingly grateful to Glen for his commitment to the Sooke Enhancement Initiative. This project has been a success from day one and that is in part because of Glen’s involvement. “Please never forget, Glen, you are big part of the legacy of this project and its ongoing success.”



Right now, our 2022 program is half way completed. The first batch of Chinook smolts spent two weeks in the pen acclimatizing before release and our second batch should be released around Thursday May 19.

Our core group of volunteer helpers has done yeoman’s work since day one back in 2017, but we needed some new helpers to share the work load this year. Thankfully, we have had some great support this year and we really appreciate all the new folks who have

The 2022 Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative Costs are ~\$75,000 and Those Costs Need to be Paid by 30th September

stepped up to help out. A special shout out to Brian Wallace for helping out again this year, overseeing the volunteer work as well as sharing his knowledge of the various jobs. This year’s smolt rearing and transplanting program should be finished by the third week in May and the

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sea pen structure will be moved back to the pylon mooring at Jenkins Marina at the end of the month.

With the physical component of the program nearly in the books, we now have to turn our attention to raising the money needed to pay for this year's project. The anticipated cost is approximately \$75,000 to cover everything. Our pen nets have now had six years of use and we expect some significant repairs will be needed, plus we need to relocate our small shipping container to a new location, both of which will add extraordinary expenses this year. So, our focus must now shift to fundraising and having the money to settle up with all the suppliers by the end of September 2022.



We are facing an additional fundraising hurdle this year, as mentioned previously, the Pacific Salmon Foundation has advised us we can no longer rely on their support of our program as they do not assist groups or projects with on-going funding. In addition, with the two years of uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacting the numerous businesses that support us, this news adds another level of concern.

We are extremely grateful to the PSF for the grants we have received to date and look forward to working with them in the future on new enhancement projects. We also hope that some of our traditional sponsors will be better able to support us this year too.

So, we are looking to raise \$75,000 by September 2022. Any help would be very gratefully received. Please seriously consider making a donation to the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative and/or suggest to others you know who may be able to support us; we welcome all donations large or small.

Looking into the future, we see DFO potentially moving toward marking all of BC's hatchery Chinook by clipping their adipose fins in the not-too-distant future. While it is not certain when

Please seriously consider making a donation to the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative, we welcome all donations large or small.

this will occur, SVIAC believes that our Sooke Chinook sea pen would be a really suitable candidate right away for 100% fin clipping of our Chinook smolts and continuing to coded wire tag 20%. This would represent a huge advantage for stock assessment purposes of our Sooke

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project. From day one, SVIAC has also been pressing DFO to allow us to transplant 1,000,000 smolts or more, annually, which would be up from our current 650,000.

The SVIAC Enhancement Team have their eyes on two other initiatives in Sooke. One would be to create a removable but very sturdy counting fence with camera and trap options, allowing for fish to be enumerated and/or harvested for brood stock, FSC or economic opportunity purposes. The other concept is for the spawning fish to gain access to the pristine upper



reaches of the Sooke River above the Potholes. The returning adults could be caught at the counting fence trap, then trucked upstream passed the falls and released into the mainly unused upper river. According to expert analysis, this could provide an addition 1500 adults returning each year if undertaken correctly.

Finally, it has been our stated goal to establish other Chinook sea pen sites around the South Island. The obvious location, which DFO seems to have a challenge with, is Cheanuh Marina in

The Future Could See 1,000,000 Chinook smolts annually transplanted to Sooke and 100% of those would be coded wire tagged

Beecher Bay. The Sc’lanew Nation are as eager to have a sea pen program there as we are.

While sharing our aspirations for the future, we must not lose sight of our requirement to maintain excellence with our Sooke Chinook pen project, but also ensure we can raise the money necessary to keep this amazing program going. Any help achieving that goal would be much appreciated.



2022 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND DONATING TO OUR CAUSE

Buy a Membership and Help SVIAC Deliver on Advocacy and Enhancement

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South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition is first and foremost an angling advocacy not-for-profit society that works hard to promote our important local fisheries. We maintain active membership in the Sport Fishing Advisory Board from the local level right up to the Main Board, as well as being part of many of its committees. In addition, we have a voting seat on International Pacific Halibut Commission. Participation is important, but travel costs can be expensive, so our coalition needs revenue to maintain its seats at the many different tables.

HAVE YOU PURCHASED YOUR 2022 SVIAC MEMBERSHIP YET?

We also spend time and effort promoting our fisheries to key politicians, so as to seek help in improving our fishery or getting support for new opportunities. Add to that, as you well know, our Chinook fishery is in trouble and over the years we have been persistent in applying pressure on DFO and the Fisheries Minister to keep as much of our fishery as viable as possible.

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.

SVIAC MEMBERSHIP – by purchasing a membership, you are supporting all that SVIAC does and providing much needed revenue for us to continue to achieve success with our Chinook sea pen and advocacy work. The cost per year is \$40.00 per adult or \$500 corporate.

DONATING TO SVIAC – large or small, we would be most grateful for any and all monetary support we can get. We have a big hill to climb between now and the end of September 2022, as we need to raise \$75,000 to pay for this year's sea pen project on top of the society's operational costs. Our Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative is the SVIAC project that requires the most funding and is of utmost importance to us, so we want to maintain our successful record.

Donations can be made online through the SVIAC website (<https://www.anglerscoalition.com>) or by mail to SVIAC, Unit 3 – 774 Bay Street, Victoria, BC V8T 5E4 or by phone to (778) 426-4141

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We do genuinely hope you will join us and become a part of the South Island community that helps protect your fisheries and enhances Chinook that are necessary to SRKW and essential to our Public Fishery.



2022 SALMON OUTLOOK

Some Good News Here, but Disappointment Regarding Chinook

For more than fifteen years, the Public Chinook Fishery around South Vancouver Island has been deeply impacted by the steady decline of Mid and Upper Fraser River Stream-Type Chinook. Chinook are still, without doubt, the most important of the salmon species



to the Public Fishery, making any restrictions placed on the fishery hurt the angling community greatly. Beyond regular anglers not being able to catch and keep a Chinook between April and August, the effects are felt economically, as businesses that support the fishery watch their sales drop. In the last few years, anglers have faced

severe restrictions, notably Chinook non-retention for four and five crucial months during prime fishing season, so it is no wonder there are some very disappointed anglers in our local area.

Although DFO announced the Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative (PSSI) last year with its \$649,000,000 budget, which may well provide the necessary recovery tools and funding for these Chinook stocks of concern, full recovery, if that is even possible at this late stage, will be many years in the making.

There are too many different challenges facing the stream-type Chinook of the Fraser for any easy quick fix to see them bounce back. With climate conditions changing more and more, traditional Chinook spawning and rearing habitat is no longer viable, even though some appears pristine to the naked eye. Major weather events can and do undermine spawning success, by impacting the juvenile fish when still in their natal streams. This is especially true for Mid and Upper Fraser Chinook stocks.

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The PSSI documents also indicate a move towards marked selective salmon fisheries (MSF) of adipose fin-clipped Chinook and Coho, which is another possible positive in the future for the Public Fishery, but also likely many years away. Recently, Fisheries Minister Joyce Murray confirmed that department is considering marked selective fishing. She indicated there is currently an MSF *pilot project* and the department is studying the consequences of moving to selective fisheries. There are several miniscule open to MSF areas are in the mainland inlets and fjords across from the middle of Vancouver Island. There are no opportunities for Chinook anglers around Vancouver or the South Island. Study it, study it again and yes, why don't we have some more studies, is all Canada can boast so far.



Of interest, the SFAB has been asking for action on this particular issue for many years; as many as ten years, I believe! To date, there still hasn't even been a commitment to immediately adipose fin clip all of our existing BC hatchery produced Chinook or Coho. The maxim "Nero fiddled while Rome burned" comes to mind. Ottawa really must get on with implementing MSF where appropriate as soon as possible. Even if all Chinook and Coho from British Columbia hatcheries were adipose fin clipped tomorrow, it would still take at least three years for those marked fish to show up in the salmon fishery. And yet, we have a magnificent example of a



thriving marked selective salmon fishery in Washington State, just south of us in the USA. They did the heavy lifting and ground work, plus have all the experience to prove it works and yes, the people love it! In addition, from 2008 until the Chinook non retention regulation came into force in 2019, and with Pacific Salmon Treaty USA approval, Sidney, Victoria and Sooke marine

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areas were all shining examples of a successful hybrid selective fisheries in Canada. And that was thanks to our American neighbors.

The March, April and May Chinook fin-clip mark rates of salmon present each year are as high as 70% to 80% USA hatchery origin Chinook around the south of Vancouver Island. But, for some reason, Canada needs to study this some more. Even in the new Salmon Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Jun 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023, DFO have stated they are producing an MSF paper. Yes, that's right ... another paper? What we are witnessing is all so needlessly frustrating ... this slow walking of a viable low risk or no risk alternative to draconian restrictions currently placed on our salmon fishery, while Fraser stocks of concern recover.



“How much longer can all those businesses that support the fishery last?” one might ask. Frankly, it is a

looming catastrophe if DFO doesn't act fast.

Add to all of the above, our endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) will also impact our Chinook fishery this year. The DFO SRKW Team have just released this year's additional fisheries management measures. *For more detail read the article titled **2022 Southern Resident Killer Whales Fisheries Management** on page 11 in this newsletter.*

So as an outlook for the coming season's salmon fishing opportunities, SVIAC can offer this as potential look ahead:

- On April 1, DFO again implemented the Chinook non-retention regulation to extend through until end of July for most of our local waters (*portions of Beecher Bay excepted*);
- Depending on where you fish, you should be able to **retain one Chinook per day that does not exceed 80cm after July 15 or July 31 through until the end of August**;
- **As of September 1, the Chinook daily catch limits will likely return to their normal two per day and a possession limit of four, greater than the minimum size in your area (45 cm or 62 cm)**;
- The recent announcement from DFO relating to additional Southern Resident Killer Whale measures starting on June 1 have made some minor changes to last year, but please look at the regulations and page 11 in this news bulletin, especially if you plan to fish out of Port Renfrew;

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- Although Interior Fraser River Coho seem to be improving in their abundance in the past few years, DFO has adopted a very precautionary approach, so we won't likely see too much loosening of the regs there either. On the bright side, more recently we have seen some excellent local Coho returns (*example – 2021 Shawnigan Creek highest every return of more than 8,000*). So, late summer, look for some nice sized hatchery origin marked fish and when October 1st rolls around, be ready for some great Coho action when the unmarked opportunities start in Juan de Fuca Strait.
- 2022 is NOT a dominant Fraser River Pink salmon year, so do not expect fishing for Pinks in July and August this season;
- 2022, however, is a dominant Fraser Sockeye (Adams River) return year, so there could be retention opportunities for the Public Fishery in the marine waters and in-river on the Fraser too. Be aware that due to ocean survival uncertainty, it is a wait and see situation. The Pacific Salmon Commission, Fraser Panel, will watch the real-time data and gauge whether there are sufficient fish returning to meet all conservation objectives and then fisheries will be considered. The anticipation is for a strong Adams River Sockeye cycle year and if they did well in the ocean in the past three years, we may get to fish for them as they pass around the South Island. So, let's keep our fingers crossed that this year's Sockeye return is a good one.



DON'T FORGET TO BUY YOUR 2022 SVIAC MEMBERSHIP

In 2021 DFO rejected a suite of SFAB Chinook retention proposals. Again in 2022 the department rejected amended versions of those very modest proposals that would have offered small areas off South East Vancouver Island and Howe Sound open for Chinook retention in April and May. DFO suggested the proposals did not meet their fisheries management framework criteria. These proposals were deemed very low risk and had virtually no impact, if any at all, on Fraser stocks of concern. They were also approved by the Sport Fishing Advisory Board.

It should be noted that DFO's Salmon Team stated the department would not be considering any April/May 2022 hatchery marked Chinook retention proposals. Department staff reviewed the 2021 SFAB's very modest Chinook retention proposals and declined the requested openings. Even though two viable amended proposals were submitted to Minister Murray this

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year, senior Pacific Region managers advised the fisheries minister they were not prepared to open the existing IFMP, so sadly, Chinook non retention is with us again around South Vancouver Island. Except, of course, the area at the back of Beecher Bay.

The rejection of our proposals in 2020, 2021 and again in 2022 has been bitterly disappointing to the SFAB family and all the groups that represent your fishing interests. A large amount of work and effort was spent looking for solutions. The purpose was to get salmon anglers some small crumbs of opportunity to keep a Chinook in a few very specific places and at times where

Enjoy Some Fantastic Fishing Around South Vancouver Island in the Late Winter and Early Spring for the Plentiful Hatchery Marked Chinook of USA Origin

there is absolutely minimal risk to stocks of concern, plus, of course, abundant hatchery marked fish are present. It would seem that the department’s senior management are dead set on keeping the Canadian public from retaining any Chinook in the spring. This blanket non retention policy makes no sense, especially when proposals that pose no conservation risk are rejected.

So, as some advice going forward, in future, get your boat ready and in the water really early next year, before April 1, to enjoy some fantastic fishing around South Vancouver Island for the plentiful hatchery marked Chinook of USA origin. The fish are in prime table fare condition at that time with beautiful translucent orange meat. And when you get one over the gunwales and into the fish box, look toward Port Angeles and the Olympic Mountains and say a quick thank you to our neighbors to the south.



2022 SOUTHERN RESIDENT KILLER WHALE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

More Restrictions, But Salmon Anglers Generally Dodged a Bullet

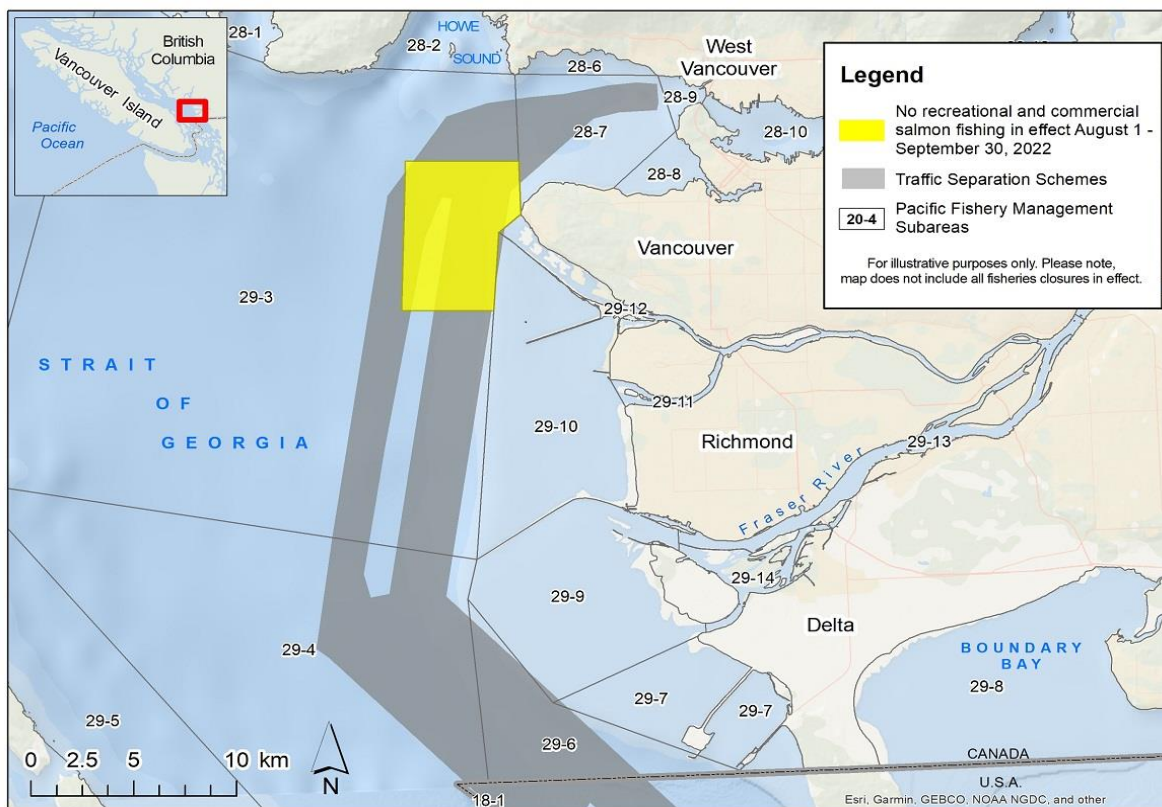
There are a number of new *closed to salmon fishing areas* from the Fraser River mouth to Port Renfrew that will be in effect from June 1 to October 31 (some potentially even earlier). It is worthwhile making sure you know these new areas and the protocols for fishing around endangered Orcas. You also need to know that your local SFAB representatives worked diligently with DFO’s SRKW Team to make sure our Chinook fisheries experienced the least additional damage possible. And that the impacted local SFAB Committees were provided DFO SRKW Recovery Team presentations about potential closures.

Early in the new year, the department released a series of maps that were marked with large “areas of interest” listed on the them. Much of the area around South Vancouver Island,

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especially Swiftsure Bank and the shore area near Port Renfrew, were considered “areas of interest”. Needless to say, the SFAB was very concerned that these identified areas would automatically become part of new closed to salmon fishing regulations this summer, thereby seriously limiting summer time access to salmon. To their credit, after the SFAB raised significant concern, the department listened closely to our advice and accepted alternate suggestions for potential new SRKW closed to salmon fishing areas.

First of all, the area of the mouth of the Fraser River has a small new area closure added to the existing no salmon fishing measures. Our salmon angling friends in Vancouver have been



2022 Mouth of the Fraser management measures

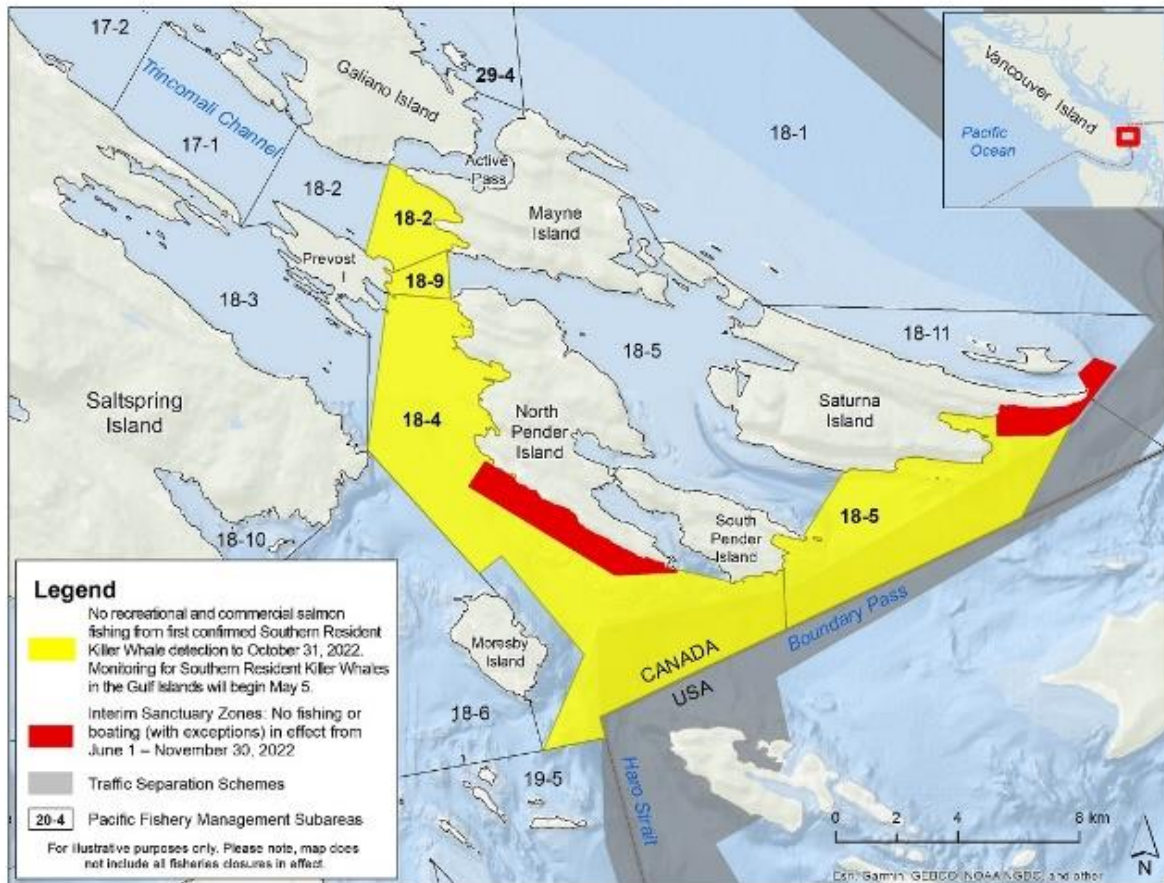
Canada

terribly hard hit by fishing regulations in the past few years and despite the pleas of the SFAB and other advocacy groups to hold things status quo, the department have added yet more closed area. The area shown in YELLOW on the map below represents the new closed to salmon fishing area. It comes into effect on August 1 and runs through until September 30.

The Southern Gulf Islands had closures and sanctuary areas in place in 2021. Those closed areas will be expanded slightly in 2022. The SFAB position was for status quo in 2022, keeping similar 2021 regulations in place. Unfortunately, there is a new area being closed, which is the

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area south of the Pender Islands to the USA border. There was one bright spot, there is a carve out keeping the back side of Moresby Island open to salmon fishing, but sadly the south end of South Pender Island will now be closed. Details can be found on the map below. Closed to salmon fishing is in YELLOW and sanctuaries are in RED



2022 Gulf Islands management measures

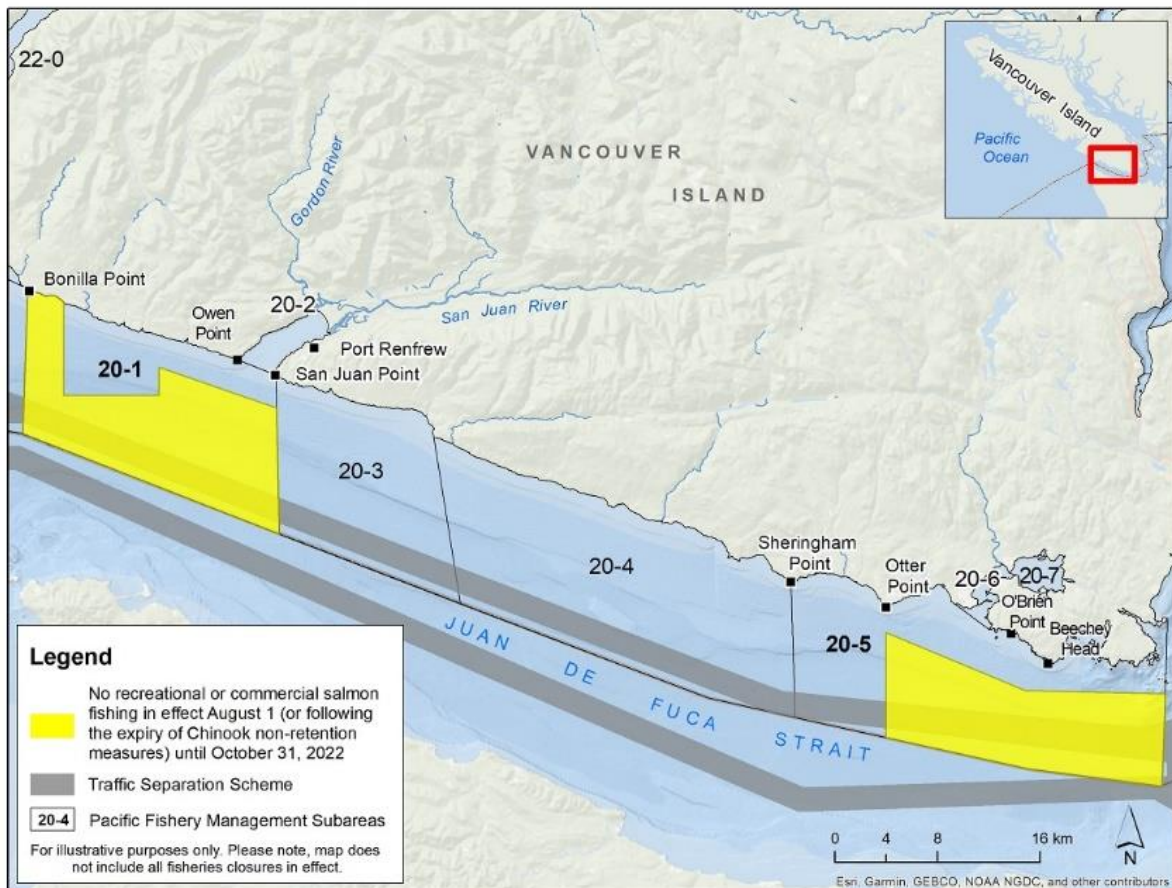
Canada

Juan de Fuca Strait will see some changes this year. Some good and some not so bad. If the original “areas of interest” had been chosen, there would have been closure of salmon fishing in the waters outside Beecher Bay. Fortunately, the Victoria SFAB Committee worked with the Sc’lanew Nation and put forward a proposal to avoid losing salmon fishing opportunity along the shoreline from Aldridge Head to Secretary Island. We were all glad that DFO listened to the SFAB’s proposal and agreed to keep closures offshore and more in the shipping lanes in PFMA 20-5 off Beecher Bay. The map below shows in YELLOW the upcoming closed area,

One positive for the Juan de Fuca Strait fishing community is the re-opening of PFMA 20-3 and 20-4. Several years ago, environmentalists and certain science folks pressed DFO to close PFMA 20-3 and 20-4, the areas from Sheringham Point to San Juan Point. Their claim was this

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was critical SRKW habitat and we must close it to salmon fishing to save Orcas from extinction. Well, it turns out the value of all of that part of Juan de Fuca Strait is poor for foraging by SRKWs. So, the new DFO science data shows clearly that the area is important for transiting and not foraging. The result is that whole area, PFMA's 20-3 and 20-4, will be unaffected by the SRKW fisheries management measures this year.



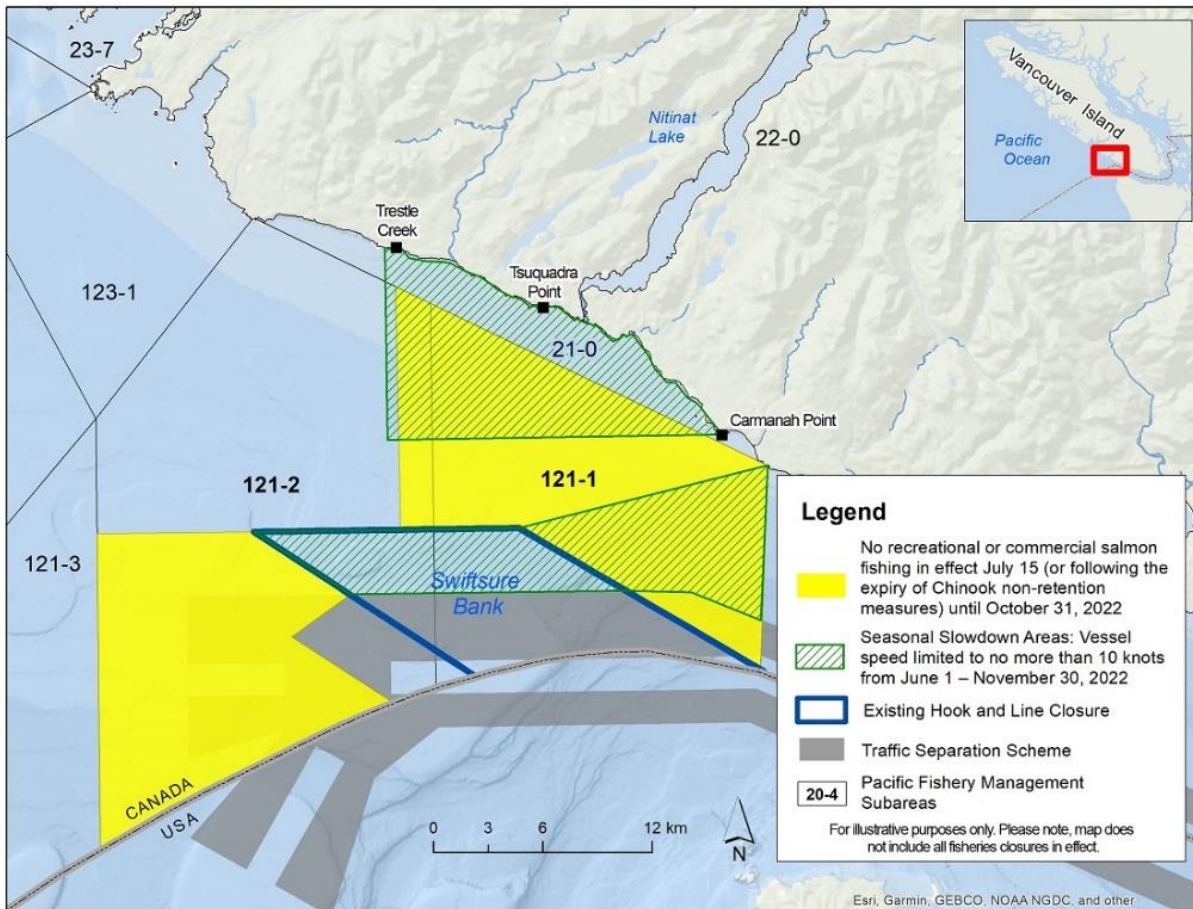
2022 Juan de Fuca management measures

Canada

Port Renfrew (included in the map above) As you can see from the YELLOW area shown on the map off San Juan Bay, there is a significant portion closed to salmon fishing, but the waters along the shoreline remain open. Kudos to the Renfrew, Nitnat Cowichan local SFAB committee for their diligence in providing important advice to DFO and for all the advocacy efforts of the local community who rely on the fishery for income. Essentially, the traditional near shore fisheries (off Camper, Logan, Cullite and Walbran Creeks), are untouched, so anglers can still fish for Chinook, Coho and Sockeye. It may be a little challenging to know exactly where the new boundaries are, requiring some careful watching of the GPS chartplotter while fishing

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further out for Sockeye this summer, however this is a win for the angling community, compared to the possible DFO closure that was being contemplated originally.



2022 Swiftsure Bank management measures



Swiftsure Bank and Nitnat this is the area where the most change occurred. When the consultation on potential new measures began, it seemed like Swiftsure as a fishing location for salmon was about to be lost during the times when SRKW are in the area. Clearly, new science data showed that the SRKW were foraging on the bank and offshore from Nitnat River. The question remained, would the department listen to the concerns of the angling community or not. Fortunately, the recommendations of the community were heard and a compromise was agreed to. Similar to the nearshore fishery by Port Renfrew, an area near Boy Juliet and the existing sanctuary, were carved off and remain open to fishing this summer. In addition, an area off the mouth of Nitnat River (PFMA 21-0). The areas shown in YELLOW indicate the large area now under the SRKW fisheries management and consider the Port Renfrew closure from the Juan de Fuca map is also right in the neighborhood too.

One new component of the SRKW management this year comes from Transport Canada. They have implemented vessel speed restrictions in a large portion of the offshore area too. This is

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shown by the GREEN CROSS HATCHED area on the map above. From June 1 to November 30 boaters are only allowed to do a maximum of 10 knots in these zones.

As in the past year, please be aware, the 400 metre SRKW avoidance bubble is still in place and so is the voluntary 1 kilometre stop fishing recommendation.

For the full DFO description of the 2022 SRKW fisheries management measures, please check the DFO website to make sure you understand the new regulations ... <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/srkw-measures-mesures-ers-eng.html>

Finally, on a sober note, the angling community and those groups who represent our sector must remain vigilant going forward. It seems the department is eager to placate the environmental community and often without proven science, implement closures or restrictive measures that diminish our fishing opportunities. In addition, closing fishing opportunities has become an overused and unwarranted ploy of DFO, as it validates the governments posturing and provides a visible “look at all the area we have closed to save ... [*whatever species on that particular day*]”- it is all about optics, not wise fisheries management. As anglers, we are by nature conservation minded, but we must fight to avoid this apparent “whack-a-mole” process of closing fishing when truly there is not valid reason.

THIS YEAR’S HALIBUT FISHERY

This is Another Good News Story!

For this year, halibut is one of the few bright spots in our marine fisheries around South Vancouver Island. This is a good fishery, if you can access it and there are halibut out there to be caught. If you personally don’t have a boat and all the necessary halibut gear, there are some excellent knowledgeable halibut charter operators locally. Why is this a good fishery?



Careful management of the resource, both internationally at the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and also through productive collaboration between the SFAB and DFO’s Groundfish Management staff, are the reason for this.

Earlier this year, the 98th

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session and AGM of the IPHC took place from January 24th to 28th, where the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) was negotiated between Canada and the USA for each North Pacific management area. Although the AGM was originally scheduled as an in-person meeting in Bellvue, Washington State, USA, the Omicron COVID variant challenges forced the hosts to revert to it being an online meeting instead. Kudos again must go to our brilliant Canadian delegation for representing Canada’s interests remarkably well. Canada’s TAC for 2022 was set under an interim agreement and has now been approved at 7.56 million pounds. This year the public fishery had a TAC of 1,011,750 pounds at the start of the season; this means the available catch has increased by 96,900 pounds over 2021.



One might ask, if there is a greater TAC for the Public Fishery by an increase of 97,000 lbs this year, then why isn’t there relaxed regs of either a bigger fish or increased size of the two smaller fish? Why are the regulations the same this year compared to 2021? The primary objective of the SFAB Halibut Committee when crafting each halibut season’s regime is to create a fishery that remains open until December 31st. With the apparent opening up of the world as COVID winds down and people start travelling again, the fishing lodges are looking like they will have a really good season. Reports of many fishing trips being booked, shows the appetite for BC’s world class fishing opportunities hasn’t been lost due to COVID. To that end, there is still great uncertainty about the coming season’s halibut fishing effort and catch rate and actually what lies ahead. The SFAB Halibut Committee had this front of mind when selecting this season’s fishing plan back in February. Even though there is more Canadian TAC and the Public Halibut fishery will have almost 97,000 more pounds of Halibut to

In the past few years, the COVID pandemic has really made predicting catch and effort on a coast-wide basis almost impossible.

catch, the Committee voted by a majority to not offer anglers larger fish. The fear of going over our quota and having that overage taken from next year’s TAC is the main concern.

In the past few years, COVID has really made predicting catch and effort on a coast-wide basis almost impossible. To try and avert a mid-season closure or having an overage, due to exceeding our TAC this year, reducing next year’s catch, the SFAB Halibut Committee will be meeting monthly throughout the season. Catch and effort data will be watched closely, so if precautionary measures are needed, they can be taken in advance of a problem. Although not

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guaranteed, anglers trying to land a halibut should be able to fish right through until December 2022 before the season closes.

From the start back on February 1st when the season opened early, the 2022 public halibut fishery is a positive story, which does help us out as our important Chinook fisheries are experiencing major challenges. Go out and enjoy some halibut fishing, if you can, and bring home some of the best table fare that God ever created, but first and foremost ALWAYS be safe on the water.



TRADE SHOW INVOLVEMENT

A Disappointing Situation

February is traditionally the time when the SVIAC Team purchase a booth at the Victoria Boat and Fishing Show in Pearkes Recreation Centre. In February 2020, the show ran just before the major COVID pandemic first wave of lock downs came into force. Last year, 2021, the pandemic forced cancellation of the show, so we weren't able to meet our members and show attendees face-to-face, as we normally enjoy doing.

Back in January this year, seeing a possible cessation in the spread of the COVID virus, the SVIAC



Board of Directors decided to expand our show involvement in 2022 and exhibit at the BC Sportsmen's Show in the Abbotsford Tradex. We expected, as usual, to be at the Victoria Boat and Fishing Show as well. Our attendance at the Abbotsford show was to be shared with our good friends from the Public Fishery Alliance in a larger booth.

Sadly, the same happened again this year as in 2021, government restrictions stifled public events. This time, Omicron variant has caused the Victoria Show to be put on hold. The Abbotsford BC Sportsmen's Show was originally scheduled to run March 4 to 6, but ended up being cancelled too.

The COVID pandemic has certainly wreaked havoc with many things that just two years ago we all enjoyed without giving it a second thought. Seems SVIAC won't be attending any shows this

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year as we had hoped to do, which is most disappointing. The Victoria show has been great for SVIAC to commune with the boating and angling community, plus sell our memberships and bring in important revenue for supporting the Sooke Chinook sea pen program. Let's all keep our fingers crossed we can get back to normal show attendance in 2023!

THE SVIAC SALISH SEA SPRING FISHING DERBY - SAT MARCH 26TH

A Second Year of Success

In 2021, the inaugural Salish Sea Spring Fishing Derby was a welcome addition to the SVIAC angling calendar and provided those with their boats already in the water a way to enjoy a one-day fishing event. With the looming fourth year of April 1 Chinook non retention regulation, it was mutually agreed between Cheanuh Marina and the SVIAC Board of Directors that we would run the event for the second time.

In late winter and early spring, it is always uncertain as to how the weather, particularly the wind speed, will turn out on the day. With a week to go until the scheduled Saturday March 26 derby day, the forecast seemed rather unpleasant. Fortunately, the Salish Sea Spring Fishing Derby had the favor of the weather gods with light winds and satisfactory conditions making it fishable.



Greg Barks biggest spring 11.9lb

When the scale closed on Saturday March 26 at 4:00PM, a total of 14 Chinook and 5 halibut had been entered. The winning Chinook salmon was caught by Greg Barks weighing in at 11.9 lbs and the winning halibut was caught by Kelly Nellysten weighing in at 48.4 lbs. For his winning fish Greg took home the cash prize of \$1,345 and also won the Skippers Challenge \$800 too, while Kelly took home the \$1,345 biggest halibut cash prize. Congratulations to Greg and Kelly and all the other winners of our many draw prizes.



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After all the expenses were accounted for, the event brought in \$1,850 to support the SVIAC Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative efforts. Another successful event!

It is important to remember these events do not happen without the support of the local community. Cheanuh Marina were again our event hosts and second year derby sponsor, plus sponsored prizes from Island Outfitters, Scotty Manufacturing and Kustom Craft Tackle. Thank you to all our sponsors and thank you to all the anglers who purchased a derby ticket and made this event a success again.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED SPONSOR



**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS FOR SUPPORTING
THE SOOKE CHINOOK ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE**

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.