



June 10, 2022

Mr. Peter Ballin
Acting President
BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists)
c/o Ms. Betty Davison
< manager@bcnature.ca >

Dear Mr. Ballin:

Thank you for your correspondence of April 19, 2022, regarding Pacific herring in the Salish Sea.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is firmly committed to the conservation, protection, and regeneration of our marine environment and the lifeforms it sustains. Pacific herring is an important species. It is vital that we manage it cautiously, with the objective of promoting stock growth, while supporting fishing opportunities where possible.

The Department's management approach of limiting herring harvests this year is designed to not only conserve herring stocks in British Columbia (BC), but also to support growth of those stocks to higher levels of abundance. Pacific herring are an important food source for salmon, sea birds, marine mammals, and other fish species. Maintaining a healthy herring stock is vital to the health of the ecosystem of coastal BC. This year's harvest plan will continue to conserve, protect, and regenerate herring stocks for the future. In a number of areas, herring stocks have experienced significant declines or persistently low levels of abundance within the past 10 to 20 years.

The annual Pacific Herring Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) describes the scientific assessments and forecasts, harvest levels, areas open for fisheries, management measures, gear allocation, and fishery monitoring requirements.

To protect future stock health, DFO has closed most commercial fisheries for Pacific herring for the 2021–22 fishing season. As outlined in the IFMP, the Strait of Georgia was open with a 10 per cent harvest rate to support fisheries for food and bait, special use, and roe herring. This decision was made with the goal to provide renewable fishing opportunities and increase stock abundance, to benefit the entire ecosystem. This is in line with the cautious approaches taken in recent years, with additional limits on harvest.

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On December 21, 2021, the Department released the draft IFMP for a 30-day public consultation period. The consultation process provides opportunities to share information and discuss perspectives with Indigenous communities, harvesters, environmental organizations, and the public. It ensures that fishery management decisions are informed by the best available peer-reviewed science. All comments and recommendations received during the consultation period were considered in the development of the final [IFMP](#), which was released February 15, 2022.

The Department's priority in fisheries management is conservation, based on the best available scientific information. DFO is committed to effectively managing the Pacific herring fisheries coastwide to ensure the sustainability of the stocks into the future.

Thank you again for providing me with your thoughts on this important matter. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'JM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Joyce Murray, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: Mr. Gord Johns, M.P.
Courtenay–Alberni
The Honourable Josie Osborne, M.L.A.
British Columbia's Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship