

HELIT TFE SŁON,ET (Let the Herring Live) NOTES

November 7, 2019

9:00 - 4:00 pm

Gathering Strength Community Facility
7728 Tetayut Rd, Saanichton, B.C.

9:15 – 9:45

WSÁNEĆ Welcome

Scott Sam drummer, opening prayer

Toby Joseph drummer, singer and MC for the day

9:45 – 11:00

- **Opening the Floor:** First Nations Invited to Share
 - ● Importance of Herring
 - ● Concerns about Current Management
 - ● Current Visioning and Initiatives

Welcome from Tsawout Chief Nick Claxton

- There is no separation from the natural world
- How we can be better on our homelands and together
- We recognize the work that has been done by other nations and are thankful to the ones that we have learned from
- Moving forward together that is what it is about now
- Thank the family for holding this event
- Herring are our relatives and we are responsible for looking after them and all the life within the sea and we must acknowledge that

John Elliot, Elder, Tsartlip Nation

- The herring came in every year in March in great abundance. The whole bay would come to life, lots of herring balls in the bay, and we heard the Elders talk about it. People were out there with their racks and all depended on them for life. The marbled murrelet has become very scarce now and they are very important with a job to do, those ducks because they will tell you where to fish. Herring rarely come into the Saanich Inlet or Brentwood Bay anymore and we rarely see the ducks anymore. There was a feast for everyone in the past. I am happy today that we are here to talk about it and how can we help each other. How can we help our relatives and the creator's sacred work. We can't let it pass by and have money be the God of everyone. All the life within the sea depends on that.

Eric Pelkey, Hereditary Chief, Tsawout Nation

- I am the great grandson of Chief Louis Pelkey, a great fighter for our rights and herring. Our territory is far reaching and this is the core of that territory here at Saanich. We have a treaty that was

brought about in 1852 in conflict with the people that came to our land. Without the food of the sea we could not live and we spent our time back and forth in the waters of our territory. When we were forced to start residing on reserves, Chief Louis Pelkey went to the Indian Commission and he addressed them about our village at Ganges Harbour and in those papers he is imploring the Indian Reserve Commission to recognize and protect our village and fishing area. Our people needed the herring fishery in order to live and survive and trade. There is a lack of fish in our diet and that brings disease. There is a liver disease that only strikes women in ur area - doctors say it is because we are missing fish in our diet. We have a dependence on fish like no other people. We have been living off fish for so many thousands of years our bodies require fish in order to live. Why is this such a secret and not known by all our people. How many other FN people are suffering and don't even know why. This shows us why we are the Salt Water People and why we need fish to live. That is why we became involved in that discussion. Our winter ceremonies are starting and the first thing on the table used to be herring baked or fried and all our people look forward to that and now when we come together our people say "Where is the herring?" We see herring coming back once in a while to the Gulf Islands, and as soon as they become noticeable a commercial fishery opens and the herring is gone again. Our Douglas Treaty right to hunt and fish it is not protected and this is an action we need to take. I am really happy that we will be taking action and I am happy that we are all here to help each other find possible avenues and to feed us and bring back our health.

Richard Thomas, Chief, Lyackson First Nation

- We have been trying to deal with herring issues for many years and we complain to DFO that herring skiffs are by our reserve each year. When I think about our Salish Sea we try to deal with so many issues, the pollution, the tanker traffic, and I always voice my concern. We speak so much about our issues especially when our island is right across from the Fraser River, the current is so hard that everything washes up on our beaches and it is always an issue, and we join with our other relatives and work to have the herring come back in the way it used to be and we haven't received any herring for many years. We want to make sure it is available for our future generations. This issue is so important to us and future generations.

Jacques Sirois, Friends of Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary

- Lack of herring has had serious impact on number of seabirds; need help reining in fishery; Victoria Harbour, Gorge Waterway just a remnant of what they used to be

Tim Kulchyski, Biologist, Cowichan Tribes

- For some, herring was dominant food source – archeological records Sliammon 100%, Quw'utsun showing 80%
- Like water, herring sustains us and also unifies us
- Boat trip – elder described how there used to be so many birds
- Research at Washington U, herring populations along Japanese coast not recovering
- When ignoring smaller localized populations and fishing according to idea of one large population, can deplete the smaller populations
- Children now don't have the experience of having grown up with herring, don't have the memory or necessarily the desire for it, don't know what they've lost
- We don't have a choice but to work together

Bill Recalma, Elder, Qualicum First Nation

- Back in the 70s we didn't get our quota up in Baynes Sound so DFO sent us to a spot where we took the whole resident stock in 15 minutes. And then from that it takes 15 years to come back. We got our quota at the expense of everyone, and it is regulated by DFO. We should leave the herring alone for 8-10 years so they will come back
- DFO is calling the shots

Terry Sampson, Councillor, Stz'uminus First Nation

- DFO says there is no resident herring. At Ladysmith we have 11 miles of foreshore and it was once herring residence for 1000s of years. In 1990 DFO opened it up and after the opening there has been no herring in the area. Now we don't get the cod or the rock fish like we used to. In the past just 100 metres offshore you could catch a salmon, but now you don't see any children out on the water or on the beaches. We don't gather like we used to, to share food and herring roe. In the past we all gathered to share this food. It brought all the sea life together, with the ducks, and whales, and salmon, and everything would be eating. There were so many black ducks they would blacken the air. Industry has decimated the herring. All these foods brought us together and we don't have these foods anymore and the family strength is not what it used to be. There is no kelp or seaweed anymore. DFO

should step up and admit they were wrong - it should be part of reconciliation. Listen to those who have been here and seen what has happened - help us.

Toby Joseph, Councillor, Tsawout First Nation

- Grew up crabbing and it was a time for sharing, but it's hard to find much now
- Thousands of years of knowledge are being ignored
- Much loss of life has happened in my lifetime - it is time to take notice.

Nancy Wigen, Salt Spring Island

- I was born on Salt Spring Island in 1934.
- There was a plan to put in a marina in the Saanichton Bay estuary and dredge out 5 or 6 acres of clam beds and eel grass with support of the BC government. Desecration of heritage, clams, prawns. Herring is a bridge to the plankton and everything and every part of the lifestyle of the herring is important. It is all connected and feeds everything, and I want everyone to know about the support. It is an exploitation of a resource and heritage for profit. The government fought and appealed each time. We need to stand together to preserve our incredible natural heritage that has been here since creation.

Gord Johns – MP Courtenay-Alberni

- Lack of whole ecosystem approach
- Nuu-chah-nulth word - *Hishook-ish Tsawalk*- 'everything is connected'
- Not seeing that approach by DFO they manage species by species
- All coastal local governments voted almost unanimously to suspend fishery
- DFO say they are for local and indigenous knowledge – yet didn't demonstrate that
- DFO says they have management practices correct and then we find out that they overfished. Together we can be heard when we stand united as coastal people. If DFO was about local Indigenous knowledge they should be here, hosting these meetings and talking to everyone. We are here to stand up for all the species in the ocean.

Iain McKechnie – Herring & Archaeology – UVic/Hakai

- Deep human history of people's relationship with herring
- Ancestral places – 6000 recorded
- Information about fishery from only a fragment
- 40 years' worth of collection

- Fish species and frequency of occurrence, herring right at top (even more than salmon)
- 1st or 2nd most numerous in sites in this larger region
- SE part of VI is centre for former abundance – southern Gulf Islands, SE coast
- Present in both small and big slices of time
- Need to connect observations to contemporary issues – where are spawning locations?
- Ancient sites with lots of herring are based on historic spawning areas
- Archaeological record provides evidence... [data paper]
- SFU Herring School 2012
- Human experience on this coast deeply linked to fishery

11:15 – 12:00 Herring Management: The Current Approach Vanessa Minke-Martin – Pacific Wild

- Current approach...Mathematical model by biomass – treat herring stocks as single migratory population
- Every year compared back to 1951 – if large enough, up to 20% harvest rate
- Not just how many fish, but where they are
- Importance of places such as Ganges, Chemainus, Crofton
- Justice to restoring those areas
- Ocean modelling forum – oceanmodellingforum.org
- Last 5 years – using science to get at questions around behaviour & management
- Young herring follow their elders – if older caught, spawning area can be lost – takes a long time for them to rediscover (longer than expected)
- Dr. Dan Okamoto – “People have said that herring are exceptionally well-managed... but that depends on the spatial scale.”
- Even if stable on bioregional scale, can experience local extinction
- Local herring populations matter – local ecosystems evolved with herring
- Align management with herring biology
- Fishing boats can move to harvest moving population but local communities don't necessarily not have this same mobility

- Benefits to making models more complex and mimicking local environment
- Consider ecosystem needs for herring
- Current management approach doesn't account for biological needs
- Management solutions exist
- Not news to us or DFO
- Pressure to apply most recent science
- FN right to manage herring

12:00 - 1:00

Lunch

April White, artist, Haida Nation

- Combination of Science and art
- Project with UBC students (Tony Pitcher and Mimi Lam's research groups) on the commercial herring fishery
- Haida injunction to stop the fishery
- Experts from fisheries around the world came to talk about herring. April was the representative for Haida Gwaii. In Canada, we are way behind the rest of the world, in terms of herring management
- Asked to create art that would integrate science related to herring
- Research project finished but continues to speak through artwork

1:00 – 1:45

Recent Efforts: Update from Conservation Organizations

Conservancy Hornby Island - Grant Scott

- 2016 mapped marine ecological values around Hornby
- Informed public about importance of these values
- Integration of citizen science
- Herring as a focal issue
- Highest abundance in channel between Hornby and Denman
- 2017 Researched herring fishery ecological impact
- 1stannual HerringFest to celebrate herring spawn
- Published Hornby Marine Conservation Atlas
- Outreach to K'omoks First Nation
- 2018 - 2ndannual HerringFest; Film Pacific Herring: Small Fish-Big Problem
- Met MP Gord Johns, MLA's Lana Popham, Scott Fraser
- Petition to shut herring fishery - 98,000 signatures
- Reviewed herring science lit from DFO –

- 3rd annual HerringFest – seabirds theme; took 350 people on boat trips to see herring spawn
- NDP MP for Courtenay-Alberni Gord Johns brought motion for moratorium on fishery
- Wilkinson response – decisions are based on science (**need to refute this)
- Future work: report, herring recovery program, collaborations, HerringFest 2020 (Mar 5-10th)

Deirdre Leowinata – Pacific Wild

- Work on central coast – involvement in herring leading to work in Salish Sea
- Heiltsuk initiative to end commercial herring roe fishery on their territory
- ‘abundability’ rather than ‘sustainability’ as standard/goal
- Published Top ten arguments against herring fishery
- 21,000 tons of herring would feed 100 humpback whales (for summer) – 900,000 chinook salmon (for year)
- News
- Open letter

Locky McLean - Sea Shepherd

- Support off northern VI fish farms – filmed herring in pens showing signs of sea lice etc.
- Created several short videos re #herringiscaring, #saynotoroe

ACTION PLANS

We propose the common vision of collaboration between First Nations and environmental organizations to restore the Salish Sea’s distinct herring populations and develop a strategy to bring vitality back to communities for whom herring was a foundational species.

1. HERRING RESTORATION: (Adam Huggins, Galiano Conservancy; Nancy Wiggin, Fernwood, Sidney; E. Rankin, Qualicum First Nation; Bill Recalma, Qualicum First Nation; Ann Erickson, Seachange; Jaqueline Barrs WWF; Thomas Cinnamon, World Fishery Trust; Nikki Wright, Seachange Eelgrass Restoration; Pauline Finn, Shaw Center for the Salish Sea; Ray

Zimmerman, Fisherman, Qualicum First Nations; Susan Hannen, Saltspring Conservancy; Brett Soberg, Eaglewing Tours)

- a. Stop commercial fisheries of herring and plankton
- b. Restoration of kelp and eelgrass
- c. Reseeding herring spawn, moving eggs
- d. Control and filter runoff from upland agriculture and roadways
- e. Clean up old logging sites
- f. Locate and research historical first nations fish traps
- g. Collaborate with USA interest groups: Puget Sound Herring Restoration; People for Puget Sound
- h. Salmon farm closures (to intercept disease transfer to herring from farms)
- i. Research and identify restoration sites w.r.t sea level rise and storm surge probability
- j. Urban habitat restoration despite more advanced deterioration
- k. Education programs for youth and boaters
- l. Increase Marine Protected Areas
- m. SUMMARY
 - First Nations Research– identify traditional knowledge
 - Climate modelling to guide selection of restoration sites; plankton surveys, collaboration with Puget Sound groups
 - Education and Outreach for youth, boaters, municipalities and industry.
 - Fishery Closures- salmon farms, krill harvest, herring fishery

- Restoration of urban habitat; -engineering solutions, protecting water quality, environmentally intelligent design
- Marine Protected Areas(\$1.5 billion has been pledged for MPAs)

2. **LEGAL AVENUES** (Margot Bushnell, Calvin Sandborn, Andrew Denhoff, Arielle Maler, Vanessa Minke-Martin, John Rich)

- a. We think there are technical legal arguments for challenging the Roe, Herring and Food and Bait Fisheries, which could be taken to Court or otherwise used to influence the government.
- b. First Nations have rights protected by Section 35 of the Constitution, which include the right to be consulted about government actions, which may affect the exercise of those rights. Further, First Nations who have established rights may bring court action for infringement of those rights.
- c. Anyone can bring a complaint to the Commission of Environment and Sustainable Development with a broad critique of DFO's management of herring.
- d. Prefer to keep further details confidential

3. **RESEARCH STRATEGY AND INDIGENOUS RESEARCH**

(Tiffany Joseph, Justin Fritz, Christianne Wilhelmson)

- a. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples(UNDRIP)
- b. Important to connect to all the different homelands
- c. Herring are people's relatives, in family-managed sites
- d. Need establish baselines by collecting oral histories
- e. Research on diseases, addictions caused by loss of herring
 - Indigenous research needs to include bringing people from different generations within Nations out into ancestral waters and village sites (family ties to specific places – tracing lineage) – for ‘opening of knowledge’
 - Baselines are important! and need to not be species by species but instead look at many different aspects, recognizing the larger picture of interconnectedness (including ecological and community health) – looking back through oral history, or journals for settler research

- effective research and respectful decision-making needs to include representation at decision-making tables and the integration of indigenous laws and protocol
- herring sites are also sites where families unite and develop/practice management of herring and other marine relatives – connecting to the knowledge for (re)establishing proper management needs to support these family connections and practices

4. **DIRECT ACTION** (Locky McLean)

- prefer not to share strategy and names widely for same reason as legal avenues group. If interested speak to Locky McLean

5. **ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT** (Grant Scott)

- a. Emphasize FN Stewardship for herring, respect FN governance, true community consultation
- b. Priority to protect resident stocks, not based on one SoG biomass
- c. True EBM management of herring based on all marine values; independent research to understand elements of EBM
- d. Close fisheries until above 3 are done

6. **MEDIA STRATEGY/LETTER WRITING/PETITION** (Deirdre Leowinata, Pacific Wild; Cath Gray CHI; Lorne Underwood West Saanich; Cathy Armstrong, The Land Conservancy of BC)

- a. Create key messages the forum attendees agree on
- b. Press release about the forum, IFMP, winter fishery
- c. Real stories from coastal people - Soc media campaign - where?
- d. Pacific Wild update their "Top 10 arguments " fact sheet for consistent messaging to media - create unified voice
- e. Get young people engaged - how?
- f. Try to focus on messages of hope rather than fear/crisis management
- g. Good example: Short animation about salmon from Billy Frank Junior
(<https://salmondefense.org/projects/educate/bfj-salmon-video/>)

7. **THE "RESERVED" GROUP** (Selilye Claxton, Lou Underwood, Angela McIntyre)

- a. Need to start communication network among all forum participants to support each other
- b. Preserve and record traditional knowledge holders in specific communities to educate about marine environment and ecosystems; bring together with western scientists
- c. Bring influence to bear on DFO
- d. Speak with one voice

COMMON THREADS

- Educate
- Inform
- Raise awareness/spread message
- Speaking with one voice
- Communicate
- Utilize indigenous traditional knowledge and stewardship
- Press release – one voice
- All life, people's ways of life, health, diet, family ties

NEXT STEPS

- Open letter: WLC, Hornby, Pacific Wild, Sea Shepherd
- Input into document – for winter fishery
- Key dates