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# Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 015**

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

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Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald





## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

• (1720)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)):** I will now call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 15 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of Monday, January 25, 2021. Members can attend in person in the room or remotely, using the Zoom application.

The committee is considering committee business and future business. With respect to the routine motion adopted by the committee, the meeting is in public. The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website. The webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entirety of the committee.

Given the ongoing pandemic situation and in light of the recommendations from health authorities, to remain healthy and safe, all those attending the meeting in person, if any, are to maintain two-metre physical distancing and must wear a non-medical mask when circulating in the room. It is highly recommended that the mask be worn at all times, including when seated. Of course, they must maintain proper hand hygiene by using hand sanitizer provided at the room entrance.

As the chair, I will be enforcing these measures for the duration of the meeting. I thank members in advance for their co-operation.

Today's meeting is also taking place in a new webinar format. Webinars are for public committee meetings and are available only to members, their staff and witnesses. Members have remarked that the entry to the meeting was much quicker and that they immediately entered as an active participant. All functionalities for active participants remain the same. Staff will be non-active participants only—attendees—and can therefore only view the meeting in gallery view, but not participate.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all participants and attendees at this meeting that screenshots or taking photos of your screen is not permitted by the House.

For those participating virtually, I'd like to now outline a few rules to follow. Members and witnesses may speak in the official language.... I don't think we need to go through that today because we don't have witnesses. There are only members.

I think we all know the rules when it comes to the “raise hand” function and keeping track of it. Raise the hand if you want to be

recognized or if you have a point of order. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on the video conference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself. For those in the room, your microphone will be controlled, as it normally is, by the proceedings and verification officer. A reminder that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair.

When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute. With regard to a speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether they are participating virtually or in person. Please try to make every effort to use the “raise hand” function.

We can now discuss committee business. I have a few points to cover.

We have a letter from the Board of Internal Economy. We need members to use the proper headset provided by the House. We did have some problems with that prior to the Christmas break. When somebody didn't have the proper headset, there was trouble and it made translation very difficult and impossible in some cases.

With the added requirements with our new Zoom webinar system, and considering the letter sent to us from the Board of Internal Economy and the Liaison Committee, there is a need for witnesses to be contacted at least a week ahead of time to permit the delivery of a proper headset whenever possible—72 hours—and to permit proper testing to be done before the meeting.

We need to be courteous of our committee staff and the work they need to do to allow us to hear witnesses, so it is imperative that we respect these timelines as we go forward and schedule our meetings in this session. As the chair, I will be making every effort to schedule committee meetings two weeks in advance. This means the committee should have an idea of future plans and it should not be done meeting to meeting.

When starting a new study, it is important that we set a deadline for submitting witnesses, stick to the list of witnesses and avoid suggesting last-minute additions to a study's witness list, as they won't have the proper equipment, as required.

I would like to suggest to members that we set a precedent going forward. In the event we find ourselves wanting to hear from a witness and we don't have one week to schedule them—and the committee doesn't have any further time allocated to hear witnesses on that study—we request that the witness send the committee their testimony in writing, and that it then be distributed to the members of the committee to be considered for the drafting of the report.

Next week, February 1 and 3, we said we were allocating a certain number of meetings—I think it was four, when we amended the motion—for the Pacific salmon study. Witnesses were invited, so we have two more meetings to do. One meeting is on indigenous knowledge, and one meeting is with other witnesses left on the list plus 30 minutes of drafting instructions.

The week of February 8 is constituency week, and the House is not sitting.

February 10—suggested by the analysts for optimal work—is the proposed deadline for members to send to analysts the supplementary drafting instructions and recommendations to DFO for the draft report on the Pacific salmon study.

That brings us to Monday, February 15. The House is not sitting. It is Family Day in several provinces, so it is not a meeting day.

On Wednesday, February 17, we propose to do version one of “moderate livelihood”. The document should be distributed in early February so that you will have time to read it.

On Monday, February 22, it is the continuation of version one if needed, or a new study to be determined today.

On Wednesday, February 24, we will have the continuation of version one if needed, or a new study to be determined today.

Now, of course, we have to hear from the committee on what to do next in regard to a study. I know we have several that have been passed as studies.

Mr. Bragdon.

• (1725)

**Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Happy new year to everyone.

I know we've already had discussions on potential studies for us to tackle, and I think there's been quite a bit of agreement around those studies moving forward.

One would be the IUU study in regard to fisheries. I think we would like to have that established as the next study we take on, followed shortly thereafter by Mr. Morrissey's and Madam Gill's proposed study regarding the pinniped issue. I think another priority we would like to have laid out is the recreational fishery study that was proposed as well.

Those three we would certainly like to have put on the table as the next studies that we take on. I'm wondering if there would be agreement with moving in that order.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Johns.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Chair, how many meetings did you say there were left for the Pacific salmon study?

**The Chair:** Two.

**Mr. Gord Johns:** I think we need a couple more than that. I think we would need four meetings to complete the study. There are still a lot of witnesses we haven't heard from around that study, and I thought we had agreed to do a set amount....

**The Chair:** I think, and the clerk can correct me if I'm wrong, when the motion was amended, it was amended to do four more meetings.

Two of those meetings we have already done.

One of them is for indigenous knowledge and the other is for witnesses. Two have taken place, and there are two more. One is for the indigenous knowledge part, and one is for witnesses and drafting instructions.

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Okay.

What Mr. Bragdon put forward, and I think we all agreed, is that the Conservatives were going to be putting forward a motion. We support the IUU, and Madam Gill was going to be putting forward either pinnipeds or the sport fishing. I think that would be right.

We're also going to be bringing something forward. We're hoping that the NDP would be considered in a motion after that, because we haven't had a study on something from the NDP. We have a few ideas that I think everyone will support. We're just working on that right now.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Johns.

We will now go to Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to support what Mr. Bragdon put forward about the illegal, unauthorized and unregulated fisheries, the IUU fisheries. That study motion was actually put forward in the first session of the 43rd Parliament. It has certainly been on the books for quite a while. I hope there is full support to move ahead with that study, as it would have an impact on all coasts in Canada, as well as across the world. The seal predation issue seems to be a common study on all coasts as well, maybe not so much in the north but certainly on the east and west coasts.

We want to make sure we are doing, as a committee, what is best for the fish and the fishermen out there. Those two studies I think will have an important impact on Canada's fisheries.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Hardie.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am a little concerned about the Pacific salmon study. It has been broken up quite substantially by the things that have been going on. We have not yet heard from the scientists or the department on that study. Now, we accepted an additional meeting for Gord to cover off the indigenous knowledge, which is very valuable under the circumstances, but if we have only two meetings left, that's not very much time to cover a lot of ground.

I'm wondering if Nancy could give us a sense of the witnesses who would be available to us for the remaining meetings on Pacific salmon. If we're not going to cover off the science and the department, we will need an extra meeting at least.

• (1730)

**The Chair:** I don't know, Nancy, if you want to comment on this. I don't know if anybody submitted the departmental officials as potential witnesses for either one of the meetings that are left.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Nancy Vohl):** To be honest with you, very few witnesses were actually submitted before Christmas. We had a first meeting. The witnesses were from the Conservatives: BC Salmon Farmers Association, Canfisco and the Sport Fishing Institute. Then we had a second meeting on the indigenous knowledge.

If we go back to the list, not many witnesses are left. We actually have two from the Conservatives, and one is the same for the Liberals. Then you have witnesses who were invited and agreed, with very few left. DFO officials were not invited again; it was not submitted, at least. I would remind the members, however, that when you adopted the motion, you adopted all the testimony heard in the past session; that was also readopted as part of this session.

Does that answer your question?

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Well, I don't know; it should go without saying that we hear from the department. Normally we hear from the department first off. We thought that the better strategy was to hear from all of the other witnesses so that we would have better questions to ask of the department when it came in.

I know that I put forward Kristi Miller as a witness, again for the science. Are we expecting to hear from her in the meetings that are available now?

**The Clerk:** The plan is for this witness to be invited for the second meeting, not the next one but the one after.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** We have gone fairly far in this study, but it would not do us well to stop short of the people we need to hear from. If it was not assumed that the department would be on the witness list, that is an assumption that we made and that was a mistake on our part. It's not a mistake that should get in the way of a good study and a good report.

**The Chair:** On that point, Mr. Hardie, didn't we hear from the officials earlier on the salmon study?

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** No, I don't think so, Mr. Chair. I think we made a deliberate decision to leave them to the end so that we would hear from the other witnesses and then be better informed on the questions we would take forward to the department.

I'm going back through my notes.

**The Chair:** Nancy, can you clarify if the department officials appeared on the salmon study that we readopted or brought forward information that we already had?

**The Clerk:** DFO officials were not on your list of suggested witnesses this time around in 43-2, but they were in 43-1. When the committee adopted the motion to readopt the study and continue the study, it was specified in the motion that all testimony heard—and the DFO were heard on March 10 and they were heard later on Big Bar—would be considered as part of having been heard, as part of the study in 43-2.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** I think the problem here is that we've conflated the Big Bar study with the salmon study, but if we heard from the DFO, it was all about Big Bar. It was not about the real substance of the salmon study—

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** I'm so sorry, Mr. Chair and Mr. Hardie. There has been no interpretation for a few minutes.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We'll suspend for a moment to get that straightened out.

Thank you, Madam Gill.

• (1735)

(Pause)

• (1735)

**The Chair:** Mr. Hardie, if it's the will of the committee to add more meetings or another meeting or whatever, it's up to the committee to decide that.

Go ahead, Mr. Morrissey.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Hardie is right. On the salmon, whatever we need to do to get it finished.... It has been on and off again, and in order to do it justice, we could come up with a common approach on how we're going to proceed with it.

I support Mr. Bragdon's list where he identified the three at first. Then we'll go on to hear from Mr. Johns what study he would like to do as well. The list that Mr. Bragdon introduced at the beginning of the meeting is a list that I certainly support. Before we get to that, we should decide on how we're going to bring the salmon study to a conclusion.

**The Chair:** Yes, agreed.

Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** I think it's been an interesting year for science on the Pacific salmon front, and on that it would be good to bring in someone like Kristi Miller-Saunders, preferably. She has been involved with the strategic salmon health initiative and I think could provide some valuable information for the committee on this study. I would support what we need to do to have her in to testify.

**The Chair:** In listening to Nancy, I think she is one of the potential witnesses who will be contacted to appear.

Mr. Johns, do you want to speak on the same issue?

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Yes. I'm sorry. I don't want to belabour everything here on salmon, but I think there's been some confusion, because we submitted a list in July and some people haven't been called. I'm wondering if we were supposed to be resubmitting them in December.

I know that the committee has been flexible. We were flexible. We allowed the Conservatives to bring forward witnesses on the Mi'kmaq study on very short notice, and it was good. They were important witnesses to hear from.

I'm just thinking that there might be some gaps, that we have some people who haven't actually been called yet.

The other thing is that we haven't even looked at enhancement. We haven't heard much on the hatchery front, which is really important. I know that Mel has talked a lot about hatcheries and the importance of hatcheries. I know that Owen in the Sport Fishing Institute of B.C. had Washington state testify before their group and they were excellent. I think we should be hearing from them as well.

On the other studies, on the IUU, I really want to make sure we're expanding that internationally as well, Mel, to look at the illegal fishing there.

• (1740)

**The Chair:** Mr. Johns, I know that earlier you mentioned adding witnesses. We were on the old Zoom then, and we could get away with it more easily, but as I read out in my earlier statement, we now need witnesses submitted at least two weeks prior to the start of any study so that we can make sure they have the right equipment and everything to take part in the actual debate or have them submit written submissions.

I'd like to get the salmon thing put to bed, if we can, and decide from there where we're going.

Jaime.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** I would like to support Gord and Ken's thoughts around expanding the salmon study. I think that we haven't heard from the department and we haven't heard a lot of solutions. I'd like to get to some of that. I think it's important that we do a thorough study on the salmon, and if it requires another meeting or two, then I'm willing to support that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bragdon.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon:** I would just echo that we certainly are in support of getting the additional meetings that are required, if it's one or two meetings, to bring proper resolution to the salmon study for sure and to get the remaining witnesses that we need to get before the committee.

**The Chair:** Are you suggesting one meeting more to do the salmon, or are you suggesting two? Let's put it to bed one way or the other because we can't schedule anything else until we know where we're going with that.

Mr. Hardie.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** For sure, we need to hear from the science, and Kristi Miller is on everybody's list, I think, for that. We need to hear from the DFO, and I would propose that they be the last ones we bring in for all of the reasons that we met before. That might be one and a half meetings total.

Gord, you had some others that you were hoping to hear from, so two more?

If we ask for two more, is that pushing our luck?

**The Chair:** No, we're in charge of our own domain, so if the consensus is to add two more meetings to the salmon study and that's what the committee members want, that's what the committee members will get. I'm not hearing any objections.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** I apologize, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes, Madame Gill.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** I'm not opposed to that, it's that I can't get the floor with my hand up. It doesn't work in my case either. That's why I had to interrupt you. I apologize for that.

I think you said earlier that it would be possible to have a study day during the recess week when we won't be on the Hill. You talked about March 10. Is that possible?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** No, my understanding is that the 10th wouldn't be the proposed deadline for members to send to the analysts supplementary drafting instructions. It's actually a constituency week, a break week, and I don't think it's possible to do it. Monday the 15th is not a sitting day. It's a holiday, and to get staff to come in on that particular day would probably be next to impossible as well.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I know that this is a very serious matter, and I apologize if I interrupted Madame Gill, but if you're looking for more time, I've been signed up against my will for husband improvement courses on Sunday afternoons, so I'm more than happy to have an opportunity to meet as a committee and work on Sunday afternoons, if that helps the cause.

**The Chair:** That's very kind of you.

Can I just put forward that we look at adding one and a half or two meetings if need be? We'll let the clerk look at the witness list that she has to see who she can line up when, adding the DFO officials in there as well.

• (1745)

**Mr. Gord Johns:** That sounds good.

Is there any chance that we can still add some witnesses if they were submitted in July and somehow didn't end up on the list after prorogation and the resetting?

**The Chair:** Nancy.

**The Clerk:** I was about to suggest, Mr. Chair, that, if you would like, I could send the past list of witnesses and the new list of witnesses that I received in December so that members can have a look at the two lists and come back to identify some witnesses they really want to hear from in the next couple of meetings.

**The Chair:** Can we set a hard deadline on that, Nancy? Shall we say 5 p.m. this Friday?

**The Clerk:** It's up to you. Definitely.

**The Chair:** Okay, 5 p.m. on Friday. The clerk is going to send around a list of people who are still on the list and we haven't heard from. With regard to any new witnesses that you want to appear, I suggest that you have them in then and no later. That would include the DFO officials, of course. Is everybody in agreement with that?

Perfect. Finally, consensus.

I'd like to thank Mr. Simms for all his input on that topic as we were moving through. You were very co-operative.

Everyone is kind of agreeing with the IUU study and the seal and the recreational fishery, I think.

Gord, you're going to have a look at something that you might want to put forward. I don't know if you're doing that today in committee business or...

**Mr. Gord Johns:** One thing we're not opposed to, and if it's short, is the seafood fraud study, the motion that was put forward. I think Mel outlined that, or Mr. Bragdon did, at the beginning. It's Mr. Mazier's motion. I don't think it's a long study. It's a one- or two-day study. That's a really good study and we very much support it. I don't think it's going to take long, but it's important.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you. As Mr. Johns brought up, that might fit into the IUU study to some extent. I believe the minister's mandate letter was to include bringing in a food-to-plate traceability system. IUU fisheries certainly impact that ability, so if we pro-

vide some extra time into that IUU study, maybe we can incorporate it into that.

**The Chair:** Okay, Mr. Arnold, on that idea, how many meetings are you suggesting for the IUU study? Then we can start planning.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** I'd have to look at the motion, but I believe we asked for a minimum of eight meetings on that.

**The Chair:** Yes, "no fewer than eight two-hour meetings" is what was in the motion.

I would suggest, coming up, in our next couple of meetings, we do the salmon study, to get that done, if we can get the witnesses and the drafting instructions for the report as well. For the moderate livelihood one, we'll tag that in there as we go. Then the next thing we'll tackle is the IUU, and the motion did say "eight two-hour meetings".

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** On the IUU study, can we see a compiled list of suggested witnesses? From that, we should be able to determine how many meetings we might require for that study. Once we get our witness list requests in, perhaps the clerk could provide the total list so we might be able to determine how many meetings we're going to need to fit in those witnesses before we set a fixed number of meetings for that study.

• (1750)

**The Chair:** Okay. Mel, do you want to suggest a date for a deadline for the submission of witnesses? How about a deadline of February 5?

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** That would suit me. Does anyone else have any suggestions?

**The Chair:** It would be a deadline of 5 p.m., on February 5, for prospective witnesses for the IUU study.

Hearing no complaints, we'll go with that.

Nancy, once we know that list, we will be able to determine whether we need five, six, seven or eight meetings. The motion did say eight two-hour meetings. We might need to use the full eight. We might only need five. I don't know, but as Mel said, we'll determine that from the list of witnesses.

**The Clerk:** That's perfect. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Now do we want to deal with anything going forward after the IUU?

Mr. Bragdon.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon:** If we can, I believe we should put on the docket as well Mr. Morrissey's and Madam Gill's study on the piniped or seal predation.

**The Chair:** Okay. I think we have lots of time to discuss how many meetings for that and the deadline for witness submission. I don't think that's something we have to determine here today. We can do that as we go. That will certainly bring us up to the next couple of months at least, so I think we're in good shape now to get down to work.

Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** I hope we can get these other two studies wrapped up that are in process right now. We don't know for sure if we're going to see potential legislation on an aquaculture act as well. That's something that has been talked about by your party for quite a while now, and we never know when our committee schedule is going to get disrupted by government business as well. Therefore, it would be good if we could wrap up the studies we've started before we get disrupted by anything else.

**The Chair:** If we do, we'll just fit it in between whatever we're doing anyway. As you know, if there's legislation coming through the committee, that takes priority over anything we're doing.

I think we might want to leave it at that for now until we see what the schedule is going to look like now going forward. The salmon study will have two, and maybe an additional two meetings, so that's four meetings for that. Then we're saying maybe up to eight meetings for the IUU. That puts us well ahead. We'll keep in mind that one would follow the pinniped seal predation, or we'll mix it in if we have to.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** Would it be possible to discuss the time frame for the next study?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes. Which one do you mean as the next one, for the salmon?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** I'm thinking of the recreational fishing study, for example, which was mentioned earlier.

You mentioned the Board of Internal Economy, the Liaison Committee and the new headphone and testing guidelines. If I were to call witnesses from my riding, I would have to prepare them. In my riding, the territories are big and people don't have access to video-conferencing at all. There have been times when a witness has not been able to testify. I know that for this particular study, I will need it.

You have to prepare this well in advance to be able to welcome them and listen to them. That would make my job a lot easier, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes, I think going forward, Madam Gill, if you look at the calendar, it would probably be May before we get to do the sport fishery one. As I said earlier, we have lots of time to plan what's coming next after the salmon study and the IUU, when you look at the number of meetings.

If those take all of the meetings we talked about, that could mean 12 of the next meetings. That includes doing version one and ver-

sion two of the moderate livelihood one, to get that actually tabled and put to bed. I understand what you're saying about needing a good heads-up for that particular study and to get your witnesses lined up. We'll make sure you get that consideration in every aspect that we can.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** Mr. Chair, the idea was raised that perhaps fewer meetings would be needed to do the study on illicit fishing. Would it be possible to slip in a meeting at some point to discuss the work of the committee, re-evaluate the schedule and see if we would have time before the end of this session to start at least one more study?

It's very difficult, because these people have to fly, if not boat, to get the opportunity to testify in committee. So it takes a lot of preparation and a lot of resources.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I understand. What I did say to Mr. Arnold was that once we get the witness list for the IUU, we'll be able to determine the number of meetings needed. As I said, it may not require the full eight. It might be four. It might be five. Then we will be able to plan a little bit better and we will do either a portion or a full meeting on committee business going forward, so we can give plenty of time and planning for witnesses, especially because under the new system that we're using, we have to have that extra time regardless to notify witnesses.

Is everybody okay with all of that?

I'll say goodbye and adjourn the meeting.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I just want to say that you should see a better version of me starting next week.

**The Chair:** I didn't see anything wrong with the original version, Blaine.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** No, I'm just kidding, of course.

In all seriousness, we've got a lot of good work to do here, and I'm glad we've got consensus on so many things. I thought I'd throw some levity in there, because this is a very collegial committee, and I hope it stays that way.

**The Chair:** Thanks, everyone, and you're right, Blaine, this is a very co-operative meeting and a co-operative group. I know we have our moments, and everybody is sometimes a little bit hot under the collar, but for the most part, we get things done as a group.



**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Absolutely. The state of the fishery is so bad that we're all united in our support to help it. It's a unifying thing.

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.

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