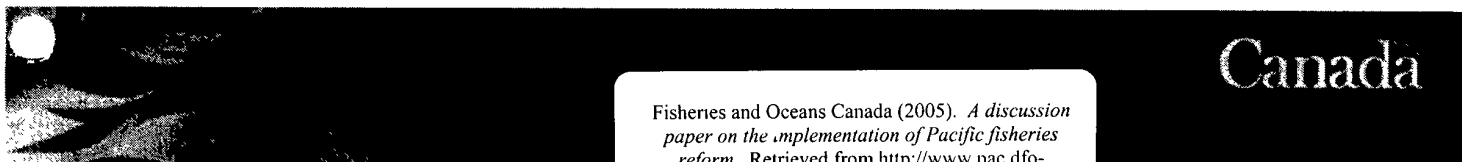




# **A Discussion Paper on the Implementation of PACIFIC FISHERIES REFORM**

**Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

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## Introduction:

On April 14th 2005, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a blueprint for change in the management of Pacific fisheries. This management reform initiative, called Pacific Fisheries Reform, is intended to address a number of continuing problems in the sustainable management of fisheries resources, such as poor economic performance, particularly in the commercial salmon fishery, and meeting the aspirations of First Nations for increased economic access to fisheries resources.

A major impetus and basis for the reform announcement were reports from the Joint (Federal and Provincial) Task Group on Post-Treaty Fisheries (JTG) entitled “Treaties and Transition: Towards a Sustainable Fishery on Canada’s Pacific Coast” and the First Nations Panel on Fisheries (FNP) entitled “Our Place at the Table: First Nations in the BC Fishery”. These reports identified a need for change in the way that fisheries are organized and managed and made recommendations on a way forward. The following vision for Pacific Fishery Reform as articulated by the Minister, on behalf of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), builds on the goals for change proposed in these two reports and the advice received in subsequent consultations.

- Full economic and social potential of the resource is achieved.
- First Nations’ fishing interests are defined and reconciled with the interests of all Canadians.
- There is public, market and participant confidence that the fishery is sustainable.
- Participants are self-reliant and able to self-adjust.
- Participants are treated fairly and equitably and are involved in decision-making and share accountability for the conduct of the fishery.
- Costs of management are shared by those who benefit from the harvest.
- All fishery participants enjoy certainty and stability necessary for business planning.
- Equitable treaty-based fisheries are achieved.

This vision will guide reform initiatives and serve as the standard against which alternative approaches will be evaluated. In addition, the Minister announced a set of principles and themes that would support the planning and implementation of Pacific Fisheries Reform (Appendix 1).

While there was consensus on the need and general direction for change, significant differences of view were evident among First Nations, stakeholders and other interested parties and between the two reports over a number of key reform elements.

For this reason, DFO’s April 14th action plan reflected a phased and measured approach to fisheries reform. For 2005, a transition phase was initiated where different options would be tested to determine which might work and which might not. This included demonstration projects in the commercial salmon fishery on more controlled fisheries management approaches such as fleet pooling arrangements, individual quotas and small “pocket” fisheries. In addition, a number of steps were initiated to build a foundation for future reform. Also included in the transition phase was the release of the Wild Salmon Policy that better defines conservation

objectives in these fisheries and more fully describes how these objectives will be achieved in the future. Further, approaches to accelerating economic fishery access for First Nations are under development with some new opportunities, albeit limited, being pursued in 2005. Also, work has begun on proposed legislative changes that may help to support the Pacific Fisheries Reform agenda.

A final need during this transition phase is to fully consult with all interested parties on different alternatives for fisheries reform before moving forward with implementation. In particular, DFO recognizes the Crown's duty to consult with First Nations and in some circumstances accommodate their interests where DFO is making decisions or taking actions that could impact on claimed aboriginal or treaty rights. DFO is also aware of the need to fully engage commercial and recreational fishers, communities, the Province of British Columbia and other parties with a significant interest in Pacific fisheries.

The purpose of this paper, used together with the Pacific Fisheries Reform Discussion Guide, is to inform these consultations by confirming direction, sharing perspectives, promoting discussion and seeking consensus where this is possible on both the form and substance of change to the management of Pacific fisheries. To the extent that differences of opinion remain, the various views expressed will provide important input to the next steps in reforming Pacific fisheries. The paper is most specific on commercial fishery management options involving the general commercial fishery, with a focus on salmon, as well as co-management approaches, since these topics have received the most attention to date in reports and discussions. First Nations fishery issues are also discussed and recreational fishery considerations are presented, but further consultations are planned with First Nations and recreational fishery representatives before more specific options are presented for consideration. Of course, this does not preclude receiving constructive input on these fisheries at this time.

## **The Key Elements of Pacific Fisheries Reform**

Ensuring resource conservation and supporting healthy, viable fisheries have been ongoing challenges for fisheries management in the Pacific region of Canada for more than a century. Recently, the Species at Risk Act has strengthened and more clearly defined conservation obligations and this will significantly influence fisheries management in the years to come. In addition, the economic viability in some commercial fisheries has declined for a variety of reasons. Further, sharing of the limited available catch of some fish species like Pacific salmon among First Nations, recreational and commercial fishers has become extremely contentious leading to conflict over access to the fishery. Some First Nations are becoming increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of treaty negotiations to fully and permanently address what they perceive to be their rightful place in the fishery. In some cases, this frustration has led to litigation. Finally, the role of government in fisheries management, which has remained largely unchanged for decades, is in need of review and change. Change is already well underway in some fisheries but other fisheries have remained stagnant in this regard.

The following key elements of Pacific Fisheries Reform are designed to build a solid foundation on which to address the challenges identified above.

### **Improved Resource Conservation**

First and foremost, Pacific Fisheries Reform needs to provide for improved resource conservation. The urgency of this has never been greater. In recent years, the conservation bar has been substantially raised as a result of improved scientific understanding of the nature of biological resources and the evolution of public attitudes towards their protection. In 1992, Canada became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. This commits Canada to manage its biological resources in order to conserve their full range of variety and variability and the implementation of a precautionary approach to management. Under this new international conservation ethic, it is no longer acceptable to focus on the abundance of a species alone without consideration of the mixture of biological components within the species aggregates and their interactions with other species. This ethic is fully reflected in Canada's new Species at Risk Act that mandates the protection of "geographically or genetically distinct populations" of marine and terrestrial species. Similarly, the Oceans Act calls for integrated resource management and an ecosystem perspective to be applied to marine resources.

In practical terms, the implication for fisheries management is a need for improved fishery monitoring and catch reporting systems in many fisheries. Knowing catch levels without being able to assess the mixture of geographically and genetically distinct components within the catch is no longer adequate. In addition, knowledge of the catch of species that are caught incidentally to the targeted species and the number of fish that are discarded because they are not permitted to be retained will be increasingly essential, particularly where fisheries may impact species of conservation concern. To be effective, these new monitoring and reporting systems will require

the full cooperation of harvesters and appropriate cost sharing arrangements between harvesters and DFO. Finally, harvesting methods and the location of harvest may need to be re-examined in some fisheries in light of these new conservation needs. For example, recently some salmon fisheries have been curtailed to conserve weak stocks in ocean areas where stocks are mixed resulting in surpluses of some healthier stocks becoming more available closer to their streams of origin.

### **Improved Certainty and Stability**

Second, to the extent possible fisheries reform needs to provide for more certainty and stability to fisheries participants. In fisheries there will always be significant but unavoidable uncertainty associated with natural fluctuations in the abundance and availability for harvest of fisheries resources. However, additional uncertainty associated with the current rules of fishing and arrangements for harvest sharing creates conflict and even confrontation among different harvesting groups in the fisheries and with DFO. The issues surrounding management of the Fraser sockeye salmon fishery provide a particularly high profile example of this conflict and confrontation. In addition, this uncertainty reduces the ability of First Nations and other commercial harvesters and others reliant on recreational fishing to organize and plan their businesses appropriately. This undermines the achievement of sustainable, economically viable fisheries in the long term.

Certainty and stability in fisheries can be improved by establishing clear rules for harvesting and associated monitoring and by better defining the shares of the available catch for each participant or group of participants in the fisheries. The Principles of Pacific Fisheries Reform provide some guidance in this regard; for example, there is a commitment to provide certainty to all harvest sectors, all commercial fisheries will have the same priority of access and fish under similar rules, and the allocation policy as it pertains to chinook and coho salmon will be retained. In addition, clear rules and procedures for changing catch sharing arrangements over time are required. Finally, longer term licences that more appropriately reflect the life of the investment assets needed to participate in the various fisheries should be considered. Implementing changes that improve certainty and stability will be challenging but essential, if Pacific Fisheries Reform is to succeed.

### **First Nations' Place in the Fishery**

Third, reform must, in the immediate future, enhance the place of First Nations in the fishery. First Nations have expressed dissatisfaction with their declining involvement in certain commercial fisheries, their lack of economic fishing opportunities more generally, as well as their difficulties in accessing fish for food, social and ceremonial (purposes in some cases. Further, many First Nations are unhappy with their role in the management of the fisheries resources that are important to them.

The federal government believes that comprehensive treaties negotiated in the BC Treaty Commission process will ultimately secure the place of First Nations in the fishery but given the slow pace of treaty negotiations, interim arrangements will be necessary to foster relationships between First Nations and other harvesters that are conducive to the collaborative problem solving and decision-making necessary in well-managed fisheries. A commitment to increasing First Nations' access to economic fisheries is a key component of these interim arrangements and an important building block for Pacific Fisheries Reform. In fully allocated fisheries, this will require the transfer of licence eligibilities, or allocations, from existing commercial fisheries to First Nations in a fair and transparent manner.

### **Shared Management Responsibility and Accountability**

Fourth, reform needs to re-define the role of First Nations, stakeholders and government in the management of fisheries. Although management practice in recent years has shifted towards more sharing of management responsibility and accountability with harvesters and others, progress across fisheries has been uneven and less than fully adequate, resulting, in some cases, in frustration in one or more parties. Current practice in many fisheries still relies heavily on government, where the DFO is responsible for defining conservation goals, developing fishing plans, opening and closing fisheries, monitoring and collecting data on fish stocks and fisheries and the enforcement of all rules and regulations. This type of approach is out of synch with the direction of modern governance and the demand of citizens for greater engagement in decisions that directly affect them and where those who benefit directly from an activity bear a greater responsibility for funding that activity than other Canadians. Increased accountability and responsibility for management by harvesters, including shared funding of management costs, would enhance the ability of DFO to deliver on its conservation mandate and control the cost to the public of fisheries management over time.

### **Realizing Potential**

Finally, fisheries reform needs to contribute to realizing the social and economic potential of the fisheries resources in the Pacific region. The region encompasses valuable fisheries resources that are capable of yielding great social and economic benefits. At the same time, it must be recognized that fisheries resources are by their nature limited and that they cannot provide unlimited employment and economic opportunities and other benefits.

It is essential that practical social and economic goals be established for fisheries and that management be reformed in order to achieve these goals. Further, biological availability, markets and other factors will inevitably change over time. Where these changes are adverse, participants in the fisheries and others dependent on the fisheries must be able to adapt while reducing the need for special government intervention. The fisheries need to become self-reliant and better able to self-adjust to these inevitable changes without undue social and economic disruption.

## **The Evolution of Pacific Fishery Licensing – A Backdrop to Pacific Fisheries Reform**

The management of fisheries in the Pacific region of Canada has evolved significantly over the last several decades. Most of these changes have been driven by the need to control fishery impacts within sustainable levels but international agreements, periodic economic crises, social objectives and court decisions have all played a significant role in shaping change. We cannot go back in time and undo these changes and they must be taken into account in moving forward into the future.

### **Early Licensing Arrangements**

For most of the period prior to the 1970's, any Canadian citizen, upon payment of a nominal licence fee, was free to seek a livelihood in commercial fishing. The implications of this unrestricted access policy were most evident in the Pacific salmon fishery. As the price and value of salmon trended upwards over time, the size of the fishing fleet and the number of participants in the fishery escalated dramatically. With the expanding fleet, it was becoming increasingly difficult to conserve the resource using traditional fishing area, fishing time and fishing gear restrictions. In addition, average incomes in the fishery were generally low relative to alternative employment opportunities. Bumper harvests during cyclical upswings in salmon abundance typically led to increased participation that generally depressed long run earnings in the fishery.

Discussion of limited entry licensing as an option to address these problems was initiated in the 1950's. After more than a decade of intensive debate among stakeholders in the fishery, limited entry licensing was instituted for the commercial salmon fishery in 1969.

### **1970's to 1990's**

Over the next two decades and for similar reasons, limited entry licensing was extended to every commercial fishery on the Pacific coast. In addition, because of growth in recreational fishing, beginning in the mid-1970's for the first time recreational fishing licences were required in the tidal fishery in the Pacific region. Although recreational licences have remained freely available to all residents and visitors upon payment of the established licence fee, fishing impact has been controlled through the imposition of daily and seasonal bag limits on individual fishers, and time and area closures for the different species harvested.

Later limited entry programs in commercial fisheries were not blanket copies of the salmon program. In response to perceived problems and ongoing criticisms of the salmon program, a number of different approaches were taken at different times. For example, when limited entry was introduced in the roe herring fishery in the mid 1970's, licences were attached to a person and non-transferable between individual participants in the fishery rather than attached to a

vessel and transferable upon sale of the licensed vessel. A restriction where only the licence holder could fish was also implemented in this fishery for those who entered the fishery after 1974. This was intended to address concerns about “excessive speculation” bidding up licence and fishing vessel prices and the potential for corporate or individual concentration of licence holdings.

In addition, licensing programs evolved over time to respond to a variety of new problems that became evident. For example, in response to intensive investment in the now limited number of salmon vessels and growing fishing capacity of the salmon fleet, vessel replacement restrictions were introduced throughout the 1970’s. Further, in the mid 1990’s existing salmon licences were restricted to one salmon gear type and new area-based licensing provisions were introduced. Under these new area-based fishing provisions, licence holders were required to elect one of several areas of the coast for fishing (in contrast to the prior coast-wide fishing privilege), in an attempt to split the fleet up into more manageable units. Overall fleet reduction was also encouraged through provisions that permitted “stacking” of multiple area licences on single vessels. Similar area based licensing provisions were also introduced in the roe herring fishery.

### **The Shift towards Individual Quotas in certain Fisheries**

Throughout the 1980’s and into the 1990’s, the problems of relying on limited entry alone to resolve the conservation and financial problems in commercial fisheries became increasingly evident. Although under limited entry the number of licences and vessels participating in the fisheries were effectively restricted, fishing capacity continued to grow in spite of increasingly stringent vessel replacement restrictions. This placed continuing pressure on management costs and the ability of Departmental staff to deliver on conservation goals. And in spite of limited entry, there were recurring financial crises particularly in the commercial salmon fishery. Financial problems during the early 1980’s, led to a Royal Commission on Pacific Fisheries Policy. Further financial problems in the commercial salmon fishery since 1995 have resulted in two major licence retirement programs. These have involved a very substantial investment of public funds that has reduced the number of commercial salmon licences by 50 percent.

Over time it became increasingly evident that limited licensing in commercial fisheries was addressing the symptoms rather than the causes of the fisheries management problems that it was intended to address. The causes of the conservation and recurring financial problems in the commercial fisheries lay in the unrestricted competition among fishers to maximize their share of the limited available catch. In open entry situations this had led to too many fishermen and too many vessels in the fisheries chasing too few fish. Under limited entry and in spite of vessel replacement controls, the continuing competition to maximize harvest share was leading to substantial capital investment in the limited number of vessels. The resulting increased fishing capacity of the limited fleets not only continued but arguably intensified conservation related management problems and poor economic performance.

In response to these concerns, beginning in the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's a number of limited entry fisheries evolved on a voluntary basis towards "individual quota" (IQ) management systems; halibut, sablefish, geoduck, herring spawn-on-kelp. Under these quota systems, licence conditions specify a maximum quantity of fish based on a defined share of the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) that may be harvested by the individual licence holder; in the case of herring spawn-on-kelp this was a production limit. The objective of this new approach was to change the incentive structure in the fisheries from one of maximizing a share of the limited available catch to one of maximizing the value and minimizing the cost of achieving the limited catch. With catch limits identified, fishers could no longer gain an advantage over other fishers by investing heavily in improved vessels, gear and equipment. In fact, the competitive advantage lay with fishers who could reduce their investment in vessels, gear and equipment while still achieving their identified catch level.

### **Some Comparative Impacts of Quota Management**

Although IQ systems have come under considerable criticism and scrutiny for their potential social and distributional impacts, the overall experience with IQ fisheries has been positive from a fisheries manageability and economic performance perspective. In conjunction with the improved fishery monitoring and catch reporting programs required by IQ management systems, the accuracy and completeness of information on harvest levels has dramatically improved. The trend towards increased investment in fishing fleet capacity has not only stopped but reversed. Present fleets under IQ systems are generally smaller and more manageable than previously. As a result, conservation limits are better and more easily achieved. In addition, financial performance in these fisheries has generally improved. Product quality and prices have often trended upwards while the costs of fishing in terms of vessels, equipment and labor have generally trended downwards.

Finally, there is growing partnership and co-operation between DFO and fishers in the management of these fisheries. Co-management arrangements are now common with substantial cost sharing of management activities through negotiated Joint Project Agreements with well organized and representative industry associations. Typically, IQ fisheries pay for the improved fishery monitoring and reporting systems required, contribute to enforcement costs and incremental scientific research that is of general benefit to all resource harvesters and the broader public interest.

This situation is in distinct contrast to commercial fisheries that continue to be managed under limited entry "competitive" systems. For example, in spite of the imposition of vessel replacement rules and area licensing restrictions, and substantial reductions in the numbers of commercial salmon vessels through directed licence retirement programs over the last ten years, salmon fleet fishing capacity remains too large to open the fishery in some areas of the coast because of conservation concerns. There are ongoing issues over the adequacy and completeness of catch reporting from the fisheries. There is also unending controversy between fishers, between fleets and between different user groups over harvest sharing arrangements in

the fisheries. Finally, financial performance remains problematic. In spite of a 50 percent reduction in fleet size over the last ten years, the average value of commercial landings in the salmon fishery has fallen by 60 percent over the same period. The financial situation in the commercial salmon fishery has again been described as a crisis.

### **The Implications for the Future**

The evolution of fisheries management over the years has substantially influenced the behavior of participants. Commercial licensing changes have encouraged individual fishers to act in particular ways. New entrants to commercial fisheries over the past 35 years have often invested heavily to acquire licence and quota privileges. First Nations have also invested heavily in some cases and have developed significant economic and financial interests under the current commercial licensing system. Similarly, recreational fishing businesses have developed and evolved in response to present licensing and management arrangements. All of this must be accounted for in moving forward into the future. Care must be taken that future changes are made in a fair and transparent manner respecting all who have acted in good faith within the existing rules.

## Reform Issues and Alternatives

As noted in the introduction to this paper, two reports are relevant to reform of Pacific Fisheries. The first, "Treaties and Transition: Towards a Sustainable Fishery on Canada's Pacific Coast", was the work of the Joint Task Group on Post-Treaty Fisheries (JTG) that included Dr. Donald M. McRae and Dr. Peter H. Pearce who were jointly appointed by the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the British Columbia Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The second, "Our Place at the Table: First Nations in the BC Fishery", was the work of the First Nations Panel on Fisheries (FNP) that included Russ Jones, Marcel Shepert and Neil J. Sterritt who were appointed by leaders of the First Nations Summit and the British Columbia Aboriginal Fisheries Commission. Both reports provide an analysis of current problems, a vision for an improved future and substantive recommendations for reform of the fisheries management system.

Extensive comments on appropriate directions for fisheries reform have subsequently been received from various committees, private organizations and individuals. Across the different perspectives on reform and throughout the various reports and submissions received there is clear agreement on the need for reform. There is general consensus that many aspects of the status quo in fisheries management are unacceptable. Further, there is general support for improved resource conservation, more involvement of interested parties in decision-making on fisheries and more certainty and stability for those dependent on fisheries resources as goals for reform. In addition, there is surprising consensus on the need to better define harvest sharing arrangements in fisheries, or at least in describing a process to do this, as a means for achieving these ends. Disagreements that arise are largely in relation to how harvest shares should be distributed and who should control and ultimately benefit from them over the long term. There is a need to identify practical alternatives in relation to these matters, facilitate discussion of their pros and cons and determine where there is broad support on certain approaches.

To date, little in the way of detailed discussion has taken place with First Nations on approaches to providing more certainty around First Nations' food, social and ceremonial fisheries or on delivering greater economic fishery access. As described in the Principles for Pacific Fisheries Reform transfers of economic access will be accomplished through voluntary retirement of existing licence privileges. Similarly, discussion with recreational fishery representatives through the Sport Fishing Advisory Board on approaches to enhance the performance and viability of the recreational fishery are only just getting underway in earnest. As a consequence, it is premature to provide specific alternatives for consideration in these fisheries. However, the nature of the issues and the various constraints that need to be addressed in both of these fisheries are described in at least a cursory manner below.

With respect to general commercial fisheries, particularly the salmon fishery, extensive discussion has already taken place. Virtually all of the analysis and recommendations provided by the Joint Task Group, many of the recommendations from the First Nations Panel and subsequent reports received have centered on the commercial sector. A number of alternatives are presented in the General Commercial Fishery section below that reflect some possible

approaches to the establishment of more security and certainty around sharing arrangements in the general commercial fisheries. The alternatives are neither intended to be complete nor mutually exclusive but to stimulate comment, feedback and further discussion.

### **First Nations' Food, Social and Ceremonial Fisheries**

Fisheries have significant social and cultural importance to many BC First Nations. First Nations in BC view aboriginal fishing for food, social and ceremonial purposes as central to their identity. Many reserves are located adjacent to key fishing sites and fishing continues to be an important expression of aboriginal culture in British Columbia. Many First Nations also hold that these fishing rights extend to and include commercial fishing.

Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada. In light of section 35, and the decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Sparrow* and other cases involving section 35, DFO is committed to providing First Nations with reasonable opportunities to fish for food, social and ceremonial fishing purposes and to providing such fishing with priority over commercial and recreational fishing.

Under the present management system, DFO attempts, through consultation with First Nations, to provide reasonable opportunities for First Nations to fish to meet their food, social and ceremonial requirements. Anticipated harvests are deducted from total allowable catches in each fishery prior to establishing commercial and recreational allocations. Nevertheless, there is considerable dissatisfaction on the part of First Nations, reflected in the First Nations Panel report, with the extent to which these needs are being met. Although an established priority, the specific quantity of fish that will be made available from year to year is unclear and a number of First Nations complain that they do not, or cannot, get access to sufficient fish to meet their needs.

To address this concern, DFO needs a better framework and better procedures to guide the establishment of appropriate FSC harvest levels. This can only be developed in close consultation with First Nations. Clarity around food, social and ceremonial harvest levels can help to address First Nations concerns while ensuring that over-all harvest rates are sustainable.

At the same time, the place of First Nations in the fishery is not defined solely by the magnitude of their share of the harvest for food, social and ceremonial purposes and their participation in commercial fisheries. Other considerations of importance to First Nations include a role in stewardship, fisheries management and decision-making. Involvement in stewardship and management is important to First Nations in terms of employment and, more importantly, it provides a recognition and affirmation of their cultural ties to the resource and links their efforts to sustain and increase production of the resource, and the benefits associated with harvest. An improved role for First Nations in stewardship, fisheries management and decision-making around the fisheries resources of importance to them needs to be an element of fisheries reform.

## **Recreational Fisheries**

Although under the present management system, the number of tidal recreational fishing licences that will be issued in any year is unlimited, the actual number of saltwater recreational licenses sold in British Columbia has been relatively stable at about 300,000 since the mid 1990's. Any resident or visitor can obtain a recreational fishing licence upon payment of the established licence fee. Conservation needs in the recreational fishery are generally addressed through the establishment of daily and seasonal bag limits on the various species harvested, size restrictions as well as time and area closures. This broadly available opportunity to fish as a recreational pursuit is an important contributor to our life style in the Pacific region of Canada and many businesses are dependent on the resulting recreational fishing activity.

Under the present management system, the allocation of fish for recreational fishing purposes is not quantitatively defined in many fishery management plans. One of the principles of Pacific Fisheries Reform calls for the allocation policy as it pertains to recreational access to chinook and coho salmon to be maintained. This policy recognizes the importance of maintaining recreational fishing opportunities for these two species once conservation and the First Nations priority for food, social and ceremonial access are met.

The recreational fishery is more dependent upon access to predictable, high quality fishing opportunities rather than a specific quantity of fish. A challenge for Pacific Fisheries Reform will be to provide the necessary certainty and stability for all harvesting interests while recognizing this special need of the recreational fishery. Attempts have been made to address this issue in some fisheries but there is clearly more to be done to address the concerns of all parties. Further discussions are clearly essential to see if alternative approaches can be developed that can address outstanding concerns.

## **First Nations Economic Fisheries Access**

Historically salmon was the predominant commercial fishery in British Columbia. It was one of the main drivers of the provincial economy and BC First Nations individuals played a central role in harvesting and processing in that fishery. Over time, harvesting technology and markets developed for other species (e.g. herring, sablefish, prawns, crab, geoduck). Economic access to the general commercial fishery, and through communally based fishing opportunities, are important to many First Nations individuals and communities.

Under the umbrella of the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS), since 1993 an Allocation Transfer Program (ATP) has funded the voluntary retirement of commercial fishing licence eligibilities, from the full range of commercial fisheries, and the issuance of equivalent licences to First Nations. To date, approximately \$55 million worth of commercial licences have been transferred under this program. In addition, as part of negotiation of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, a "Harvest Agreement" was negotiated under which a share of Nass River sockeye and pink salmon may be harvested by the Nisga'a Nation. The Nisga'a Final Agreement also

provides the Nisga'a Nation with funding to acquire increased access to the general commercial fishery. Similar provisions are under negotiation with other First Nations at several other treaty tables. It is important to note that although "Harvest Agreement" fisheries may occur in different locations using different gear than general commercial fisheries, they will operate under similar rules and standards to general commercial fisheries.

With respect to aboriginal participation in the general commercial fishery there has been a declining trend over the past two decades, both in terms of total employment and income. A number of steps have been taken over the years to address these problems. Because of hardship to First Nations fishers, a special low fee (A-I) salmon licence was introduced for First Nations fishers in 1971. In addition, throughout the 1970's an Indian Fisherman's Assistance Program (IFAP) and a subsequent Emergency Assistance Program was implemented to maintain First Nations participation in the salmon fishery in the new and changing management environment. In the late 1970's, when BC Packers, the major salmon canner in the province, decided to divest itself of its northern rental gillnet fleet, the Northern Native Fishing Corporation was established by certain aboriginal groups, with funding from the federal government, and these licence were issued to the NNFC. Special fees were also introduced in the roe herring fishery and most significantly, open entry to this fishery was maintained for First Nations fishers for an additional three years after its closure to non-First Nations fishers.

Levels of aboriginal commercial fishery participation, both on an individual basis and a communal basis, are described in the Joint Task Group and First Nations Panel reports. Aboriginal participation in the salmon and herring fisheries is at roughly 30 percent while participation in the herring spawn-on-kelp and clam fisheries is higher. Participation is lower in groundfish and other shellfish fisheries. Note that these figures do not include full-fee licences held by aboriginal fishers.

There is now a clear trend towards increased First Nations economic access to fisheries over time through treaty negotiations and the federal government's aboriginal programs. This direction was supported in both the Joint Task Group and the First Nations Panel reports and was generally supported in follow-up consultations. It has subsequently become a key underpinning of Pacific Fisheries Reform. Government will continue to address the impacts of this direction on existing commercial fishing interests through voluntary licence retirement and allocation transfer programs like the ATP. Given future increases in First Nations' economic fishery allocations, there is a need for allocation transfer methods that are easily understood and fair to both First Nations and commercial fishers. Voluntary licence retirement has already been confirmed as an important element of any method for transferring allocations in fully subscribed fisheries. However, in fisheries where catch shares have not yet been defined a method of attaching a catch share to a licence may be required prior to transfer.

### **General Commercial Fisheries**

There is general agreement that more certainty or confidence is needed around commercial sharing arrangements in the various fisheries. Where disagreement arises is usually in relation to

who should receive and benefit from these shares in the long term. Many of the comments received by DFO from different interest groups have focused almost exclusively on the specific recommendations from the Joint Task Group to move to long term (i.e. twenty five year), personal, fully transferable, individual quota entitlements in all commercial fisheries. While this is certainly one approach that is consistent with DFO's vision for future fisheries, there may also be other approaches that meet the test. To facilitate discussion and consideration of alternatives, various elements of potential change are described below.

### **Duration of Licences**

Under the current management system, commercial licences are annual privileges granted at the Minister's absolute discretion. At the same time, participation in commercial fisheries requires a substantial investment in long lived vessels, gear and equipment. Although licences are generally issued on a continuing basis, the present annual licence term is out of synch with the financial planning horizons necessary for the level and complexity of the investments required to participate in commercial fisheries. The uncertainty associated with annual licence issuance undermines the security of the fishing privilege as an asset on which to borrow money and organize business activities. In addition, it can encourage fishers to focus on short term rather than long term considerations. This can be detrimental to the achievement of conservation and sustainable use objectives.

The JTG recommended that commercial licence privileges be issued for twenty five year terms with provision for renewal on an evergreen basis after fifteen years. No specific comments or alternative recommendations have been received from the FNP or other commentators on this potential element of change.

The specific terms recommended by the JTG were suggested in order to parallel the terms of the Harvest Agreement negotiated in the Nisga'a Final Agreement and other similar agreements under negotiation with other First Nations. These suggested terms are certainly more consistent with business planning horizons in commercial fisheries. In addition, they would provide parity between emerging First Nations commercial fisheries being established under treaty and the general commercial fishery. Longer term commercial tenures are in keeping with the Pacific Fisheries Reform Vision.

### **Personal versus Vessel Based Licensing**

Under the present management system, some fishing licences are issued to persons or corporations while most are issued to vessels. Vessel based licensing was initiated in the salmon fishery at the beginning of limited entry as a means to control the capacity of the individual vessels in the fleet. The extension of limited entry licensing to other fisheries has made the vessel based licensing system extremely complex. Many vessels have several licences for

different fisheries and the objectives served by current vessel replacement regulations are often unclear and even appear to be inappropriate in some instances.

The JTG recommended that all licences be issued to persons, corporations or associations (not vessels). No specific comments have been received from the FNP or other commentators on this potential element of change.

Personal licensing makes sense in the context of fisheries where individual quotas are established. Under an individual quota system since individual catch is already limited, there is no longer a need to constrain or limit the size or catching capacity of individual vessels. This would increase the flexibility of fishers to adapt to changing circumstances in the fisheries. It may also improve vessel safety in the fishery by eliminating vessel size restrictions and inadvertent incentives that may be encouraging poor vessel design.

In fisheries where individual quotas are not established, a shift towards personal licensing could also be considered. However, whether this is an appropriate approach would depend upon satisfactory provisions for controlling competition among participants in the fishery. Personal licensing may cause conservation problems if incentives remain for individual licence holders to increase the size and fishing capacity of their individual vessels to gain an advantage over others.

### **Defining Catch Shares**

Under the present management system, the commercial harvest is generally assigned to the established commercial licence holders in the various fisheries. The distribution of the available commercial harvest and the related fishing opportunities between different commercial fishing groups, fleet sectors and among individual fishers within these fleet sectors varies between fisheries. In some instances, (e.g. salmon and herring) explicit coast-wide “target” shares for the balance of the available harvest have been assigned by policy to different fleet sectors. In some instances, the fleet shares are further sub-divided among individual participants in the fishery (e.g. through individual quota or fleet pooling arrangements).

The JTG recommended that the individual quota approach be extended to all commercial fisheries. Under this recommendation each fishing licence in every commercial fishery would have an established quota share of the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) associated with it. The FNP opposed the further extension of individual quotas in fisheries until First Nations interests have been addressed. The FNP expressed a specific concern that IQ’s will have a potential negative effect on treaty negotiations by increasing the costs of settlement.

One possible alternative to an individual quota approach is the distribution of long term quota entitlements to fleets or groups of fishers collectively. Whether this approach would meet the Pacific Fisheries Reform vision would largely depend on the proper organization of the fishers receiving the entitlement and the effectiveness of the collective decision-making that they

achieved. Under an individual quota approach, basic decisions on how to exercise the fishing opportunity are largely made by individual fishers subject to any necessary conservation constraints. In contrast, a fleet allocation approach would require many decisions to be made collectively. For example, decisions on the distribution of the catch or fishing opportunity among the group, the transfer of shares to other fleets or groups of fishers and so on would all need to be made by all of the participants together. This would require the establishment of well organized and accountable fisheries associations to represent the groups, act on their joint behalf in negotiation with government and others and facilitate the necessary collective decision-making using democratic processes. In the absence of such organizations, little progress could be made towards cooperative as opposed to competitive fishing or shared management in the fisheries.

Establishing allocations of quota for fisheries dependent communities has also been proposed as an option by some commentators in order to provide fisheries dependent communities with a direct stake in the fisheries. This approach is already being pursued through the vehicle of treaty and other negotiations with First Nations. For example, the negotiation of Harvest Agreements with First Nations will effectively create new commercial fishing opportunities for First Nation communities. This will continue into the future and as noted above these agreements will undoubtedly represent a significant element of the fisheries of the future. The creation of broader community based allocations that include non-First Nations communities could certainly be pursued under either an individual or collective approach to quota distribution. However, a source of funding would be needed in order to purchase and transfer quota to communities from established fishing interests and appropriate mechanisms need to be established to ensure accountability with respect to the requirements of the licence.

In commercial fisheries where individual quotas have already been established, there is no justification for dismantling the system. The disruption to existing interests in these fisheries would be severe and the positive gains in the management of these fisheries that have been made in recent years would be seriously undermined.

## **Transferability**

Under the present management system, the degree of transferability of fishing opportunities varies dramatically. Licence eligibilities in some fisheries, including spawn on kelp and intertidal clam, are not transferable at all. In the case of the salmon fishery, licence eligibilities are only transferable upon sale of the licensed vessel and only in conjunction with other licences associated with the vessel. In the roe herring fishery, transfer of the personal fishing licence eligibilities is permitted. Where IQs have been established, transferability is subject to a wide range of restrictions. Some quotas are not divisible and others have minimum and maximum quotas that can be associated with any individual licence eligibility. All of these differences have evolved independently over time and are not aligned with a clear set of common objectives.

The JTG recommended that these present restrictions and inconsistencies be eliminated in favor of full transferability of quota licences. While the FNP does not specifically comment on transferability provisions, they and other commentators have raised a number of concerns about potential negative effects on employment, increased cost to individuals wishing to enter fisheries and concentration of fishing privileges. All of these concerns are directly linked to the provisions for licence or quota transfers.

The issues associated with commercial transferability are many and varied. Some observers see the transferability of commercial fishing licence eligibilities as permitting established licence eligibility holders to make windfall gain and profit from public resources at the direct expense of new entrants. Others see transferability as facilitating the entry of a new generation of fishers and permitting the dignified retirement of older fishers with reasonable compensation for their time, effort and investment in the fishery. Some observers see transferability as encouraging the loss of employment in fishery dependent communities. Others see transferability as a means to improve efficiency in the fisheries and create more stable and rewarding long term employment for all communities. Finally, some see transferability as creating undesirable corporate or individual concentration of fishing rights. All of these views need to be considered when considering the issue of transferability of licence eligibilities or IQ's.

First and foremost, the option of prohibiting the transfer and sale of commercial licence eligibilities, or IQs where they are established is unrealistic. Older fishers would be unable to sell their fishing assets and retire while younger fishers would be unable to gain access to the fisheries. Further, in IQ fisheries, fishers would be unable to rationalize their operations by scaling back or increasing their fishing activities to reflect their personal circumstances or changes in prices, costs and markets. The inevitable result would be a group of aging fishers forced to continue fishing in an increasingly inefficient and inappropriate way. While the level of employment in the fisheries may be maintained, the quality of the employment will likely deteriorate over time. Further, experience with the herring roe fishery indicates that new and increasingly creative means would be found to circumvent prohibitions to what is a natural market transaction. For example, long term leasing arrangements for licences and quota would likely substitute for sale as they have in a number of instances where these types of prohibition have been attempted in the past.

Some restrictions on transfer and sale of commercial fishing privileges may be appropriate for social reasons and could be considered as an element of fisheries reform. However, such restrictions should be carefully selected with specific objectives in mind. In addition, any restrictions that are imposed need to be somewhat flexible over time. Restriction that may be appropriate now may not be appropriate in the future.

### **Co-management**

Co-management can be defined as the meaningful involvement of First Nations, fisheries stakeholders and others in the cooperative development and implementation of fisheries management and stewardship regimes. Co-management can apply at many different levels. In

recent years, DFO has moved towards co-management of fisheries with First Nations through initiatives such as the Aboriginal Fishing Strategy, the Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management Program, treaties like the Nisga'a Final Agreement, treaty related interim measures and other non-treaty related initiatives. In addition, co-management has been promoted with other fisheries stakeholders through formal advisory processes and the establishment of formal Joint Project Agreements with a number of commercial fishing organizations. These latter arrangements have involved cost-sharing and financial contributions towards fisheries research and/or other fisheries management activities within specific fisheries. First Nations, other fishing interests and DFO all wish to see more rapid progress towards co-management of fisheries. Effective co-management is a fundamental element of the DFO's vision of a reformed fishery.

The First Nations Panel report largely focuses on a broad concept of co-management that encompasses participation at all levels of management, including the development of policies and overall objectives for fisheries management, direct involvement in conservation and rehabilitation programs and detailed decisions on the regulatory controls and management programs that should be applied in individual First Nations fisheries. In contrast, the Joint Task Group focuses on a narrower concept of co-management largely restricted to operational decision-making and program implementation at the level of individual commercial fisheries.

The JTG recommended a number of measures to promote commercial co-management through the formation of fisheries associations that can represent and act on behalf of the quota holders in each fishery. The FNP recommended a three tier structure for co-management that includes discussion and organizational relationships at tier one among First Nations only, at tier two between First Nations and the federal government and at tier three between First Nations and federal and provincial government and third parties.

It can be argued that these two views of co-management are not incompatible. Discussion and organizational relationships among First Nations and among fishers at the level of individual fisheries is an essential foundation for broader co-management in fisheries. Participation by harvesters in the development, implementation and shared funding of management programs within their own fisheries is a starting point for higher level co-management agreements that necessarily involve a wider range of interests. Organizations that are both broadly representative and accountable to the participants in the individual fisheries are a pre-condition for the successful development of co-management agreements within individual fisheries. The establishment of such organizations can then substantively contribute to broader based co-management discussions and further agreements at higher levels.

Two issues have been raised with respect to participation in commercial co-management as proposed by the JTG. First, concerns have been expressed that the interests of crews, shore based workers and fisheries dependent communities may be left unconsidered in management decisions if participation in commercial co-management is restricted to licence or IQ holders. Second, concerns have been expressed that industry funding and responsibility for key management activities may hamper access to data and independent scrutiny of management

decisions thereby undermining the long term sustainability of fisheries. Co-management processes and arrangements will need to keep these factors and others in mind as they are developed.

With the aim of improving co-management at the multi-stakeholder level, DFO has recently implemented a number of processes designed to bring representatives of First Nations, commercial licence holders, recreational fishery participants and environmental interests together for fishery planning purposes. While these processes for the herring and salmon fisheries are in their formative stages, they are showing promise with respect to achieving the vision guiding Pacific Fisheries Reform.

## **Reform and the Pacific Salmon Fishery**

It is generally recognized that the need for fisheries reform is most pronounced in Pacific salmon fisheries. It is here that conservation concerns are the greatest, financial performance in the commercial sector is the least acceptable and the most intense disputes over resource sharing are centered. In addition, the cost of salmon fisheries management represents by far the heaviest financial commitment by the public of all fisheries in the Pacific region of Canada. Pacific Fisheries Reform must be able to address the challenges represented by the salmon fisheries. In many ways this will be the acid test for reform.

### **Addressing Conservation**

As a result of the recent passage of the Species at Risk Act, a number of sub-populations of some salmon species (Cultus Lake sockeye, Sakinaw Lake sockeye and interior Fraser River coho salmon) have been identified as endangered and recommended for legal listing under the Act. In response, DFO has developed and is in the process of implementing recovery strategies for these specific sub-populations. Among a broad suite of measures in these recovery plans are harvest restrictions that are already restricting the availability of harvests in fisheries where these stocks occur. First Nations, commercial and recreational fisheries have all been affected by these restrictions.

Of equal significance for the future, DFO has developed a new Policy for the Conservation of Wild Pacific Salmon (Wild Salmon Policy) that is designed to better address the need for preservation of biological diversity within salmon species. The implementation of this new Wild Salmon Policy together with potential additional legal listings under SARA will have substantial implications for the future management of salmon fisheries. Increased attention to the biological status of all of the sub-populations within salmon runs will inevitably reduce the available harvests in mixed stock fisheries unless means can be found to harvest the stronger and more abundant components of the runs selectively. There will likely be a need for transition towards more terminal fisheries that can better target harvesting efforts to avoid the weaker sub-populations within the salmon runs. Over time, the improved conservation resulting from these changes has the potential to increase the available harvests from present levels as currently depleted sub-populations recover. However, adjusting to these changes is a key challenge that will face the salmon fisheries into the future. These changes have the potential to intensify the already significant conflict within the salmon fisheries unless Pacific Fisheries Reform is implemented on an urgent basis.

### **Defining Catch Shares**

Once the priority for First Nations food, social and ceremonial access is achieved and concurrent with increasing First Nations economic access, a key activity for addressing these conservation realities is to further refine the current coast-wide commercial allocation for each fishing gear

type by establishing sharing arrangements in each commercial salmon fishery by species. The Commercial Salmon Advisory Board has already recognized this need and is working towards agreement on these species based allocations between fleet sectors. Disaggregating the current coast-wide allocations by fishery and by species will provide more certainty to fishers in each commercial licence area so that they can better plan and organize their fishing activities. To provide certainty and stability to fishing fleets, once gear shares are established on this basis, it will be important that these shares are protected in some manner. The current practice of re-distributing shares between fleets when a gear type cannot achieve its target creates conflict among the different fleets and undermines the potential for developing mutually acceptable sharing agreements between fleets and with other groups of fishers.

Once commercial catch shares are defined and secured, and once First Nations economic fisheries access is increased and similarly defined and secured, fisheries management plans developed through effective co-management processes can focus on the most sensible approaches to meeting collective objectives. In some cases, this could mean greater collaboration between commercial and First Nations fishers in harvesting surplus stocks in locations closer to spawning grounds to avoid weak stocks, or alternatively in more traditional marine areas if weak stock constraints are absent.

Better defined and more stable shares of the harvest could form the basis for the establishment of IQs as proposed by the JTG. Commercial fishery demonstration projects in 2005 are aimed at testing this approach to inform future implementation decisions, with results to date appearing promising in the Area F troll fishery. Alternatively, a collective approach to quota distribution could be followed. For example, more long term certainty respecting the fleet shares in each licence area could be provided upon the establishment of representative and accountable fisheries associations as legal entities.

## **Transferability**

As noted previously, a complete prohibition on the transfer and sale of fishing licences or any individual quota privileges that are established is inadvisable. Transferability of fishing privileges is essential to permit retirement of older fishers and the entry of younger fishers to the fishery. Further, in the case of the commercial salmon fishery transferability to support improved economic access for First Nations is a major Pacific Fisheries Reform objective that needs to be addressed. Finally, given the present financial situation in the commercial salmon fishery, there is a need for further substantial reduction in the fishing fleet even in the absence of these other pressures. Present harvest levels and fish prices simply cannot support the present number of participants in the fishery with adequate livelihoods. Pacific Fisheries Reform recognizes that there will be those who will be impacted by change, and commits to the coordination of government transition and adjustment programs to provide assistance. All of this underlines the need in the short term for a high degree of transferability of commercial licence eligibilities or any IQs that were established. This is essential to rationalizing and re-ordering the fishery in order to address its present challenges.

## Recreational Fisheries

As indicated previously, recreational fisheries depend more on maintaining predictable, quality fishing opportunities rather than needing a pre-defined share of the catch. Under Pacific Fisheries Reform, priority access for the recreational fishery over the commercial fishery for chinook and coho salmon will be maintained. Recreational fishery advisors have suggested that this priority be defined by the Minister on an annual basis after conservation and First Nations food, social and ceremonial requirements are determined but before commercial allocations are set. Commercial interests, particularly in the troll fleets, have expressed concern with this approach, especially where recreational harvests have increased in recent years. It remains to be seen whether an alternative approach can be found that meets both interests and is consistent with the direction of Pacific Fisheries Reform. Other aspects of achieving the vision for Pacific Fisheries Reform in the recreational fishery will be the subject of discussions this fall with recreational fishery representatives and the Sport Fishing Advisory Board.

## Co-Management

Effective co-management processes are essential for fisheries management planning, program implementation and coordination. In the salmon fishery, the Salmon Integrated Harvest Planning Committee (IHPC) is the forum where First Nations, recreational fishery, commercial fishery and environmental organization representatives come together to develop coastwide, integrated salmon management plans. Plans are developed based on scientific stock information, the current salmon allocation policy, fishery specific objectives and management considerations that reflect uncertainty and potential interactions between fisheries. Supporting the Salmon IHPC are representatives from the Sport Fishing Advisory Board and the Commercial Salmon Advisory Board where fishery specific planning occurs, and the Marine Conservation Caucus as well as a number of First Nations representatives. Bi-lateral consultations between First Nations and DFO occur for fishery specific planning purposes.

Unlike some other fisheries, co-management at the fleet or fishery level is not well developed in most salmon fisheries. DFO plays a significant role in the implementation of fisheries and pays a significant portion of catch and fishery monitoring costs in addition to the cost of other programs supporting the fishery. As conservation and sustainable fishery objectives become more refined, the cost of managing the Pacific salmon fishery is increasing beyond the means of government alone. Pacific Fisheries Reform will have to address cost-sharing in the salmon fishery in a significant way if a sustainable management system is to emerge.

## **The Outcome**

As mentioned earlier, the Pacific salmon fishery will be the acid test for Pacific Fisheries Reform. Much work needs to be done and First Nations, commercial and recreational fishery stakeholders, environmental organizations, government and others must all make their contributions for the outcome to be successful. Therefore, to complement the multi-stakeholder, community based consultation processes that will be carried out this fall, it will be essential that First Nations and organizations representing the recreational and commercial fisheries and non-fishing interests consider the specific issues that affect them and work on more detailed implementation approaches in conjunction with DFO. If successful, we will have met the challenge of biological sustainability, addressed First Nations aspirations for a greater role in the fishery, reformed commercial fisheries so that they are more self sufficient and viable, supported the recreational fishery in providing predictable, quality fishing opportunities and created a more collaborative management approach where participants take on greater responsibility for funding and decision making.

## Conclusion:

On April 14th 2005 the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a blueprint for change in Pacific Fisheries. This paper has elaborated on the Minister's vision of a reformed management system by identifying and discussing the various aspects of fisheries management that require change. Further, as context for these future changes the evolution and current status of fisheries management in the Pacific region of Canada has been reviewed together with the range of specific change recommendations that have been received to date.

Although there are many different perspectives on reform, there is a clear consensus on the need for change in the way that fisheries are organized and managed. Further, there is clear support for improved conservation, more involvement of all interested parties in decision-making on fisheries and more certainty and stability for those dependent on fisheries resources as goals for reform initiatives. In addition, there appears to be a strong consensus on the need to better address harvest sharing arrangements in fisheries as a means for achieving these goals. Disagreements around reform arise in relation to how harvest shares will be distributed, who will control them and who will ultimately benefit from them in the long term.

To stimulate discussion and dialogue between First Nations and stakeholders and among different stakeholder groups, the issues with respect to First Nations food, social and ceremonial fisheries and recreational fisheries have been described, but not elaborated on, given the need for more focused discussion with First Nations and recreational fishing interests, respectively. In the area of commercial fisheries, a number of alternatives are identified that reflect different potential approaches to contentious issues of initial quota distribution, the term and form of licences, their transferability over time and participation in co-management. It is recognized that the alternatives provided may be provocative to some and First Nations and stakeholders are encouraged to table additional suggestions and proposals for discussion that are consistent with the Pacific Fishery Reform vision.

At the end of the day, Pacific Fisheries Reform must provide for improved resource conservation, encourage co-operation within and between different groups of harvesters and facilitate shared management approaches. To the extent that consensus cannot be achieved on specific details of implementation, the various views and opinions expressed by all parties will be invaluable input to final decisions on Pacific Fisheries Reform.

## Principles for Pacific Fisheries Reform

The introduction of changes to the management of Pacific fisheries will be consistent with the following principles:

- Conservation is paramount (e.g. consistency with the Wild Salmon Policy)
- Consistent legal framework
  - o Pacific fisheries resources are a common property resource managed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
  - o Fisheries must be conducted under an integrated management plan authorized by the Minister, and
  - o Commercial participants fish under the same priority of access and similar rules
- Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations
  - o First Nations access to food, social and ceremonial fisheries will be respected, and
  - o First Nations interests in increased economic access will be addressed in a manner consistent with Canada's treaty process
- Fair transfer of fishing opportunity
  - o Transfer of economic fishing opportunity to First Nations will be accomplished through voluntary licence retirement from willing sellers, and within existing programs, to mitigate impacts on established fishers
- Stable resource access and allocation
  - o Certainty will be provided for allocations between harvest sectors (First Nations, recreational and commercial)
  - o Allocation policy as it pertains to Chinook and Coho salmon will be maintained
  - o Certainty of harvest shares will be provided to commercial participants, and
  - o Commercial harvesters will enjoy a similar level of certainty regarding fisheries access
- Responsibility and accountability
  - o First Nations and stakeholders will assume a greater role in operational decision-making and program delivery through effective co-management processes
- Management regimes for commercial fisheries
  - o Fleets will be enabled to self-adjust
  - o Resource management practices will be designed to optimize economic performance while meeting conservation objectives
  - o Fleets will have the capacity to assume a larger share of the cost of management of their fishery
  - o Catch monitoring and independent validation will be implemented, and

- o Measures will be adopted to provide confidence that adequate compliance is achieved
- Transition and adjustment
  - o Existing government programs will be coordinated to best meet the needs of those impacted by change

### **Themes for Pacific Fisheries Reform**

(excerpted from Minister's speech, April 14th, 2005)

"..... I'd like to highlight the four main themes of our new blueprint — a blueprint that will guide Pacific fisheries for years to come.

First — we need to define conservation objectives through the Wild Salmon Policy. The Wild Salmon Policy, which is now being finalized, will put forward a comprehensive, flexible and co-operative approach to conserving Pacific salmon in the years to come.

Second — we need to strengthen our programs to protect habitat, assess stocks, monitor catches, and enforce the rules of the fishery. We need to find new and innovative ways to deliver these programs with all of our partners.

Third — we need to increase First Nations access to economic fisheries. We want to do this by increasing commercial access for First Nations through voluntary licence-retirement programs. I'm also committed to working with my colleagues, including the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, to respond to First Nations' access to fisheries.

And fourth — we need to improve the fishery's economic performance, and give all users the certainty and stability they need. We need to work together with First Nations and other resource users to develop a flexible management regime that makes co-management a top priority, with more shared decision-making than ever before.

These four themes will guide our work over the next year."