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[Joe Radic](mailto:Joe.Radic@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca); [Murray Chatwin](mailto:Murray.Chatwin@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)
Subject: 2004 Selective Fishing Projects

The Area B Salmon Area Harvest Committee Directors met on Friday, May 7 and discussed the two Selective Fishing proposals that have been submitted for 2004.

1. **Selectivity Grids in Knotless Seine Bunts** - Paul Brajcich
2. **Selective Salmon Harvesting System** - Wilfred Hunt, Alfred Hunt

The Directors cannot endorse or support either of these Selective projects for the following reasons:

1. The overall TAC in 2004 is far too low.
2. The **Selectivity Grids in Knotless Bunts** study has produced inconclusive results after several years years of comprehensive testing and modifications.
3. The **Selective Salmon Harvesting System** utilizes a new elaborate piece of equipment which does meet the criteria of being a modification to a Seine net. It is also assumed that the un-named table seine vessel proposed to be used in this project does not have an Area B license yet the proponents are asking to be compensated from Area B's sockeye allocation.

It should be noted that the several of the Directors were involved in reviewing the Selective Grid/Knotless Bunt proposal in 2003 and expressed concern that even though this project was not endorsed last year for much the reasons as stated above it was allowed to proceed.

Area B Harvest Committee

**Mr. Gordon Curry
Resource Management, South Coast
Fisheries & Oceans Canada**

June 30, 2004

RE: 2004 Selectivity Grids in Knotless Seine Bunts – South Coast; Proponent, Paul A. Brajeich

The Area B Harvest Committee has conducted an extensive review of the information supplied by the Project proponents, J.O Thomas and DFO regarding this Selectivity study. It is this committee's conclusion that ample information has already been gathered to present to a PSARC review and that assessing how well a few vessels can use this new equipment is unnecessary. Because this technology is relatively simple in application it seems obvious to us that the successful utilization of Escape Grids by the Area B fleet would be directly related to the desire of fishermen to make them work rather than any formalized 'training program'. Therefore this Committee does not endorse or support this Selectivity Project in 2004.

The Area B Harvest Committee recommends that either before or after a PSARC review that a meeting be scheduled with representatives of both Area A and Area B, DFO and the project proponents to discuss the application in 2005 of knowledge gained from this and other selective fishing experiments. We foresee this discussion happening in the context of fishery organization and enforcement compliance. The Area B Harvest Committee strongly believes that it is time to move into implementing knowledge gained from experiments of the past years in order that we may more effectively harvest target surpluses while protecting less productive stocks. This program has been very expensive to both government and industry. We do not believe that further expensive experiments are necessary.

Yours truly,

Chris Ashton

Chair, Area B Harvest Committee

Fisheries
and Oceans

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et Océans

Pacific Region
Gordon Curry
Resource Management
South Coast Area
Fisheries, and Oceans Canada



3225 Stephenson Point Road

July 5, 2004

Mr. Chris Ashton
Chair
Area B Harvest Committee
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mr. Ashton:

Subject: 2004 Selectivity Grids in Knotless Bunts – South Coast

In response to your letter dated June 30, 2004, the Department is interested in advancing the use of grids and knotless bunts if it is shown that sufficient conservation benefits can result. I agree that a key to the success of this or any other gear is the desire of harvesters to make them work. I would also like to see the Area B fleet gain greater access to target stocks as a result of implementing this gear combination.

I have witnessed a significant amount of acrimony towards Mr. Paul Brajcich and DFO staff supporting this project over the past few years. This attitude and the statement from your e-mail sent May 30th (“Selectivity Grids and Knotless Bunts study has produced inconclusive results”) has led to the belief that industry representatives require more proof that the gear works.

The proposed work in Area 20 in 2004 is primarily aimed at determining if there are any unforeseen conservation concerns from using a small mesh knotless bunt (limited results to date) before broader implementation. The Department has approved the grids and knotless bunt proposal for 2004 with further experimentation in the North Coast and initial implementation in the South Coast. It is believed that halting work now could limit implementation and access to anticipated abundances in 2005 and 2006.

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CURRY July 5 pg 2

- 2 -

I know the overall cost is a concern and will be happy to consult with you on ways to minimize the cost of the Area 20 portion of this project.

I also agree that a meeting between Area A, B, DFO and the project proponents is required to review past results and discuss how this knowledge may be used in 2005.

Sincerely yours,

Gordon Curry
Resource Management

Cc P. Ryall
 B. Ionson
 E. Lochbaum
 G. Thomas
 D. Einarson
 J. Steward
 G. McEachen
 R. Brahniuk
 B. Hargreaves

AREA B HARVEST COMMITTEE

July 11, 2004

Mr. Gordon Curry
Resource Management
South Coast Area
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Dear Mr. Curry:

RE: 2004 Selectivity Grids in Knotless Bunts – DFO decision letter, July 5, 2004.

In your July 5th letter your statement "*the belief that industry representatives require more proof that the gear works*" implies that the Harvest Committee's decision to not endorse this Selectivity project in 2004 was based on our skepticism of the viability of this type of equipment. I can assure you that not only is this Committee well aware of the successful application of Selectivity Grids in many other fisheries but some of our Directors actually participated in previous Grid and Bunt studies.

Our decision was based on a review of this Selectivity project's past successes and the fact that other than using the same grid openings in a larger panel and testing whether a new pre-shrunk 65 mm knotless Bunt will shrink to 60 mm it was our assessment that the scope of the 2004 proposal did not suggest that any significant new information would be gained.

It is well known that the size of both targeted and non-targeted species of salmon can vary enough from year to year and area to area that the application of this equipment will never be 100% effective in the release of all the non-target species. What has been achieved to date in Area 20 is a 'best case scenario' of a 66% release of the non-targeted coho and the retention of 92% of the sockeye. The results from testing this equipment in other areas with different species have produced varied but similar results. While the use of knotless web may result in less abrasion and scaling to fish it was in fact the gilling of the small Coho, of mostly Puget Sound origin, that produced the highest rate of non-target mortalities (75% - 2002 mortality study).

Our May 30th comment regarding "inconclusive results" was and is in reference to our belief that there is no 'magic bullet' to be found by further testing. The main concern Industry has expressed is whether DFO will have enough confidence in the use and effectiveness of this equipment to allow a significantly greater degree of access to our targeted species. (The current 2004 Sakinaw sockeye restrictions are dictating a 10%-12% by-catch (approx. 30-36 fish) of this stock of concern by all commercial gear types, sport fisheries and First Nations harvests.)

As stated in our previous letter we look forward to a comprehensive review of this project at a post season meeting to assess whether the implementation of this equipment will afford the benefit of increased fishing access to the Area B fleet.

Yours truly,

Chris Ashton
Chair, Area B harvest Committee

Cc P. Ryall
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Area B Harvest Committee

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Category(s): COMMERCIAL - Salmon: Seine
Subject: FN0450-Salmon: Seine - Area A & B - Selective Fishing Project - Grids and Knotless Bunts

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The Department has approved a project to initiate the implementation of grids and knotless bunts, on a small scale, into the Area 20 seine fishery and allow for further experimentation in Areas 3, 4 and 6.

Grids are plastic panels with holes to allow the escape of small non-target salmon from the bunt. A small mesh knotless bunt results in reduced scaling and gilling of target and non-target catch potentially increasing the quality of the catch while increasing the survival of released by-catch.

Results from experimentation with grids and knotless bunts have shown compelling results to date with increasing the survival of released salmon. Small coho and chinook escape from the bunt through the grids at a very high rate. This reduces the number requiring sorting and release on deck while likely increasing the survival of those that swim through the grids.

Three vessels (Franciscan No.1, Ahnuhati and Western Freedom) in the North Coast will experiment with different sizes and shapes of grid openings. They will experiment on the release of immature chinook and coho salmon caught incidentally during sockeye fishing, in Areas 3 and 4. These vessels will also test the use of grids to sort pinks from the target hatchery chums in Area 6 (Douglas Channel).

Three vessels will participate in Area 20 in the initial implementation of a specific size of grid and knotless bunt to confirm there are no conservation concerns resulting from their use. These three vessels will compare the new gear against the current gear used in Area 20 that has a high coho mortality rate associated with its use.

After this year's selective fishing tests a further review of all data will provide seine harvesters and DFO the opportunity to discuss the results. If the results continue to be positive a plan can be jointly developed regarding how and where this gear could be implemented to decrease by-catch impacts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Fisheries & Oceans Operations Center - FN0450
 Sent July 12, 2004 at 1104

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