

DFO tells the new Minister: “Everything is okay in BC” Do you agree?

Fishermen speak out

Is everything really okay in your fishery? This is the first in a series of papers to get fishermen from many different fisheries talking about problems and solutions for our industry. We are looking to get fishermen to write these papers (1 pager) from the point of view of their particular fishery. We will have a website up and running (BCFisherman.ca). On it, we will post all Issues Papers and will have a comments section for each Paper. We want comments, problems, and solutions for our fisheries. In this way we hope to take the ideas from all fishermen to our fisheries minister and governments and try and create solutions for our fishing industry.

We will print, distribute and post all Issues Papers that we receive, no matter what the writer’s viewpoint, as long as the Papers are not defamatory.

Herring: Where is the fishery going?

Where is our iconic herring fishery headed? This is a question I have asked myself time and again. I fished roe herring for 28 years and about 9-10 years ago I found that the fishery was no longer appealing to me. Not only was I not making any real money at it any more, the excitement for the fishery was gone. So I decided to stay home and remember the good old days instead of grinding away trying to get the quota of 30 to 50 ton? or so per licenses to basically make wages.

Oh the glory of the open fishery. You had to be on the top of your game then. Every morning before the fishery, punts everywhere sounding and trying to find the schools. Guys anchored already trying to hold their favorite spots. As you sounded by them seeing no fish on the sounder giggling to yourself knowing they would be setting in green water, while you sounded till the last possible moment

and frantically set your gear when the announcement came on it was now open. Perhaps you only had hours in the fishery if everyone was doing well, or it could go on for days if it was scratchy fishing, you never knew and that was half the fun.

Good times, good times.

Now the fishery is open for weeks, with way fewer punts because you’re fishing so many licenses to try and make it pay. Still you can have great fishing and be done quickly but with so many licenses to fish its more likely you’re out there for many days or even weeks all to make less than when it was an open fishery. (SIGH!)

So I’ll pose a few questions to you and try and get some discussion going in the fleets and at the docks.

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1. Why is there no money in roe herring anymore? Is it all going to pay lease fees to those that sit on the beach?
2. If there are no markets why is there still such interest from the big companies for this fishery?
3. Should all herring be caught for food and bait in the future?

Cheers,

Kim Olsen