



Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Shellfish (SF) Aquaculture Management Advisory Committee (AMAC) DRAFT Meeting Summary	
Meeting Date:	Nov 26, 2025, 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Location:	In Person: The Westerly Hotel, 1590 Cliffe Ave, Courtenay, BC Virtual: Microsoft Teams
Objective:	Advice on shellfish aquaculture management
Materials Distributed:	Distributed via Dropbox: November 2025 DropBox Link 1) Shellfish AMAC Meeting Agenda 2) May 2025, Shellfish AMAC Final Meeting Minutes 3) May 2025 Shellfish AMAC Response Log Updated 4) Shellfish AMAC TOR 2025 5) Shellfish AMAC TOR Response Log 6) Echinoderm Presentation 7) Bivalve Traceability Presentations Links of Interest: • Fishery Notice: FN1066-Public survey: Causes of Aquaculture Gear Loss in British Columbia • Infographics for 2025 Shellfish Aquaculture Conditions of Licence • FNFC Whole of Aquaculture Action Plan

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Agenda (Saul Milne)

- The agenda was reviewed and adopted.
- There was a round of introductions - members, guests, observers and ex-officio participants were welcomed.
- Justin Turple (jt) was introduced as the new Director of Aquaculture Management Division.
- There was a reminder to all on the code of conduct and invitation for participants to contribute to discussion within the scope of the new Terms of Reference and to respect diverse perspectives.

2. Review Notes and Action Items from the last meeting (Amber Neuman)

- The last meeting's minutes were distributed for member review. No further comments were received. The minutes are now accepted.
- The response log from the last meeting was circulated to members for review prior to the meeting.
- Issue ID 350 was highlighted - DFO has decided that, in the spirit of reconciliation, whenever we terminate an aquaculture licence or do not renew an expiring licence, we will send a notification to the First Nations in whose territories the site is located.
- Other key items from the response log were addressed under other agenda items.

3. Terms of Reference (TOR) Update (Amber Neuman)

- A new TOR has been finalized and approved by the Director of DFO Aquaculture Management Division.
- The TOR reflects feedback from a DFO internal review and feedback from the committee.
- Key updates include:
 - Content has been simplified, streamlined, and shortened to enhance user-friendliness.
 - The purpose and scope are clarified at the outset for improved understanding.
 - Membership criteria have been updated to include geographic representation for industry representatives, along with distinct seats for First Nations and Indigenous Organizations/Associations.
 - DFO supports using a workplan to guide the committee's activities; however, the workplan will be maintained as a separate document.
- Members agreed that ensuring sector diversity is important.
- There is an ongoing challenge engaging small growers, First Nations and other non-industry members; barriers include paperwork burden and all-day meeting format.
- There is a desire for better two-way communication with DFO and clearer demonstration of how AMAC advice is used.
- Industry reiterated interest in DFO supporting economic development, not just regulation.
- Industry requested to involve national-level DFO colleagues on relevant topics.

4. DFO Regional and National Aquaculture Update (Justin Turple)

- Structural changes are underway in DFO National headquarters, but this shouldn't have an impact on regional operations.
- Deputy Minister (DM) Annette Gibbons has retired and an interim DM is in place.
- Details on the Federal Budget and implications to the department are pending.
- DFO is receptive to feedback and open to national participation at the AMAC.
- Open Net-Pen Salmon Aquaculture Transition Plan update - A dedicated interdepartmental task force, coordinated by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) has carried out extensive engagement and is analysing feedback to inform next steps.

5. Conservation & Protection (C&P) Enforcement Update (Trevor Gray)

- C&P Aquaculture Detachment is now fully staffed, with two new Fishery Officers.
- Priorities: repeat offenders, high-harm violations, major COL issues.
- There has been significant work on the investigation of a recent diesel spill and multiple shellfish-related files.
- Joint vessel patrols continue with Transport Canada (TC) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) for sewage related inspections. Sewage enforcement remains outside DFO's authority, however, DFO continues to provide vessel support to regulatory partners on these joint patrols.
- C&P will continue to explore ways to collaborate and coordinate with other enforcement agencies.
- There has been an increase in ticketing since federal Contraventions Act changes; C&P is currently exploring policy tools for non-payment of fines, which may include licence cancellation.

6. Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP) Update (Gabrielle Kosmider)

- European Union (EU) audit has completed with 18 preliminary findings. The final report and

partner responses will be public.

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration audit recommendations are still pending.
- Engagement on CSSP modernization is expected to launch soon with an expected 75-day public engagement period.
- An AMAC member identified that there are export barriers due to other countries thresholds (e.g., cadmium limitations), DFO noted that there may be opportunities for science-based dialogue with Health Canada on this topic.

7. Province of BC Update (Amber MacDonald & Anne Aubin)

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) (Amber MacDonald)

- Job action caused 6–7 week slowdown; now working through backlog.
- Tenure reviews remain chronological; high application volume in Baynes Sound prompting consideration of regionalized approaches.
- Policy refresh underway for land use (Phase 2 with engagement is expected in spring 2026).
- Work on the Aquatic Plants draft policy is underway and it is anticipated that consultation and engagement will begin with the public and First Nations in the spring of 2026.
- The Province is seeking clarity from industry on priority data reporting needs.

Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) (Anne Aubin)

- Focus on sector competitiveness and development.
- Encouraged industry to apply for Knowledge Transfer Program funds.

8. Sector Check-Ins (AMAC Members)

First Nations:

- First Nations business enterprises are scaling up production, but labour shortages are limiting expansion progress.

Industry:

- The BC Shellfish Growers Association (BCSGA) has been engaging with its members to set the following priorities:
 - Source detection and decontamination measures related to norovirus in oysters.
 - Broodstock Enhancement
 - Threat of live-aboards in shellfish growing areas.
- There is an upcoming shellfish industry-led science forum in December.
- Industry members noted that labour shortage is a challenge.

ENGOS:

- Noted concern over sector sustainability.

9. Echinoderm Aquaculture Development (Aimee McGowan)

- A presentation on the framework development was shared, and members were asked to provide feedback on the Department's engagement approach using a virtual poll.
- Industry emphasized the need for:
 - Flexibility for innovation
 - Avoiding precautionary paralysis

- Clear standards allowing industry-driven solutions
- Concerns were raised about transfer limitations (e.g. geoduck seed transfers from east coast to west coast of Vancouver Island).
- DFO emphasized that it seeks to balance management of genetic, disease and ecological risks, with potential barriers to industry development.

ACTION - DFO will analyze the feedback on the echinoderm aquaculture development engagement poll and will follow-up with members on the next steps of engagement.

10. Science Update Presentation (Cher Lacoste)

- A presentation on current research projects was shared with members.
- No new Competitive Science Research Fund (CSRF) intake this year.
- Members can reach out to Cher if they have ideas for research projects.
- Members would like to continue to receive Science updates with the level of detail provided at this meeting.

ACTION - There was a request for an update to the AMAC on the geoduck genetics project.

11. Bivalve Traceability (Gabrielle Kosmider, Kelly Aitken, Malcolm Cowan)

- DFO's Aquaculture Management Division provided a comprehensive update on ongoing traceability initiatives within the CSSP.
- There have been changes to conditions of licence, elimination of multi-party licences and prohibition of sales to third-party buyers.
- These efforts aim to strengthen the traceability chain from farm to processor, reinforce compliance with licence conditions, and reduce risks associated with mislabelled or illegally harvested shellfish.
- There have been improvements in record keeping and reporting, but many growers are still non-compliant.
- C&P shared an overview of enforcement efforts on traceability.
 - Despite progress, several compliance concerns remain: Non-responsive licence holders; incomplete product movement records; and continued reports of laundering wild and/or contaminated product through aquaculture facilities.
 - These non-compliance issues pose major risks to food safety, consumer confidence, international trade, and the wild resource.
- Licence holders are encouraged to protect themselves by maintaining accurate logs, safeguarding their licence credentials, and maintaining clear oversight of who is harvesting or using their site.
- The BCSGA provided an overview of the BC Science and Research Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) - funded work to improve traceability, including traceability technology, education, tagging equipment distribution, workshops, and infographics.
- Remaining challenges include:
 - Low awareness among some licence holders of regulatory requirements.
 - Limited operator capacity, particularly for smaller farms.
 - A stagnant or stressed industry environment making compliance feel burdensome.
 - Perception among some growers that traceability provides no direct business benefit.
- Some industry members question the necessity of full product movement records when Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) manages food safety risk. DFO emphasized its jurisdiction over management of the fishery, the control of harvest, and the importance of harvest site traceability.

- Industry suggested exploring ways to reduce duplication and possibly align DFO and CFIA databases.

12. Roundtable (All)

- Members expressed appreciation for:
 - Progress on echinoderm framework
 - Improved engagement and facilitation
 - Balanced meeting structure
 - More substantive, focused presentations
- Interest in in-person meetings and an earlier spring meeting.

13. Adjourn

- Next meeting proposed for late Spring 2026 (virtual format).
- Potential topics:
 - Workplan development
 - Echinoderm development
 - First Nations engagement and presentation by the BC First Nations Fisheries Council
 - National-level involvement in aquaculture economic development
 - More time for response log review
- Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.

14. Summary of Action Items

- DFO will analyze the feedback on the echinoderm aquaculture development engagement poll and will follow-up with members on the next steps of engagement.
- There was a request for an update to the AMAC on the geoduck genetics project.

15. Summary of Feedback

- Members agreed that ensuring sector diversity is important – recommendation for continued work to review engagement approaches to improve efficiency, transparency, and accessibility.
- There is a desire for better two-way communication with DFO and clearer demonstration of how AMAC advice is used.
- Recommendation to have DFO National representation and that any engagement on national initiatives be brought to the AMAC for the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Work on the echinoderm framework development was well received – there is interest and feedback on ongoing engagement.
- Science update well received – recommendation to continue updates with this level of detail.
- Industry reiterated interest in DFO supporting economic development, not just regulation.
- Industry suggested exploring ways to reduce unnecessary regulation / duplication and to possibly align DFO and CFIA databases.

Attendees			
First Name	Last Name	Organization	Email
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Invited Guests			
Malcolm	Cowan	BC Shellfish Growers Association	malcolm@bcsga.ca
Observers			
Sean	Reid	Odyssey Shellfish	
Absent/Regrets			
Troy	Moth	Metlakatla Dev Corporation	aquacultureoperations@metlakatla.ca

Mary	Williams	Ecotrust Canada	maryw@ecotrust.ca
Travis	Hall	Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) – Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC)	tharealtrav@gmail.com; thall@ccrd.ca
Mike	Gray	First Nations Fisheries Council	mike@fnfisheriescouncil.ca