



Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Shellfish (SF) Aquaculture Management Advisory Committee (AMAC) DRAFT Meeting Summary	
Meeting Date:	April 30, 2026, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Location:	In Person: Vancouver Island Conference Centre, Nanaimo BC Virtual: Microsoft Teams
Objective:	Advice on shellfish aquaculture management
Attendees:	See attached table.
Materials Distributed:	Distributed via Dropbox: April 2026 Dropbox Link 1) Shellfish AMAC Meeting Agenda 2) Nov 2025, Shellfish AMAC Final Meeting Minutes 3) Shellfish AMAC Response Log- Nov 26, 2025 items ○ Ongoing Shellfish AMAC Response Log 4) Ghost Gear Action Plan Virtual Engagement Sessions Poster 5) Echinoderm Framework Presentation ○ Interim Echinoderm Framework Guidance Document 6) DFO Science Branch Update Presentation 7) FNFC Whole of Aquaculture Action Plan Presentation 8) Human Waste in Marine Environment- Roles & Responsibilities 9) DFO Aquaculture Contact Info 10) SF AMAC Terms of Reference 11) Shellfish Transfer Zones Map 12) BCSGA Aquaculture Economic Development in Canada Presentation 13) BC Agriculture & Food – Seafood Specialist Presentation Links of Interest: • FNFC Whole of Aquaculture Action Plan • News Release - Government of Canada launches negotiations to revitalize funding in support of the Canadian fish and seafood sector • Recent Relevant Fishery Notices: - FN0086-Shellfish Aquaculture - Herring and Herring Spawn Protection Measures - FN0087-Gear Identification Tags - Reminder to only buy DFO approved tags - FN0322-AQUACULTURE - Requirements for Shellfish Aquaculture Facilities with Floating Surface Culture - FN0357-AQUACULTURE - Shellfish - 2026 Access to Resource Fee Information - FN0398-Shellfish Aquaculture - Reminder of New Condition of Licence - Salmonid Stream Channel Buffer



1. Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Agenda (Justin Turple (JT) and Amber Neuman)

- The agenda was reviewed and adopted.
- There was a round of introductions - members, guests, observers and ex-officio participants were welcomed.
- 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. There were no comments on the response log.

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

- National HR updates:
 - The new Deputy Minister is Paul Mackinnon. Aquaculture is an area of interest to him.
 - The new interim Director General of Aquaculture Directorate in National Headquarters is Andrea Cyr. She has plans to visit British Columbia soon.
- Regional HR updates:
 - Introductions and transfers are now managed by Reagan Newcomb in Aquaculture Resource Management.
 - Engagement is now managed by Joanne Liutkus in Aquaculture Policy.
 - All other staffing updates are captured in the contact list at the bottom of the agenda.
- Negotiations have been initiated with Provinces and Territories on funding supports for the Canadian fish and seafood sector. Renewal of the BC Salmon restoration and Innovation Fund (BC SRIF) will be part of these negotiations.
- Information was shared regarding the Ghost Gear Action Plan. National and BC sessions are scheduled, as well as an Indigenous focused session. Individuals can attend multiple sessions.
- Members were notified that AMAC membership renewal will happen this summer.
- Recent Fishery Notices of interest were highlighted, and links were included in the agenda.

4. Sector Check-Ins (AMAC Members)

First Nations:

- Key issues raised include lack of access, illegal shellfish harvesting on the beaches, mislabeled tenures, impacts to sensitive habitats and archaeological sites, and a desire for earlier consultation.¹
- First Nations are encouraged to continue to report these incidents to DFO and BC. Some Nations also have beach guardians in place to monitor the situation.
- One Nation noted invasive oysters on beaches and inquired about commercial opportunities to harvest.
- One Nation provided an update on the detailed inshore mapping work they have completed for their Territory and noted they have very limited areas available for shellfish harvesting.
- One Nation noted that they would like to have the first right of refusal when tenures are up for renewal, so that they may be used for food social and ceremonial (FSC) harvests or for their own

economic development.

- There is a clear interest in building partnerships with industry and government, including becoming operators, and participating in monitoring and oversight in their territories.

Industry:

- Malcolm Cowan is no longer with the BCSGA.
- Industry noted that administrative and regulatory burdens, including the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP), conditions of licence, and harmonized licence application reviews, remain a challenge that creates barriers to innovation and industry growth.
- Industry members noted that labour shortage, seed availability, climate driven changes (e.g. ocean acidification) and market access are also a challenge to industry growth.
- Industry raised poaching and laundering of bivalves through aquaculture facilities as a concern and advocates for C&P poaching patrols, including after-hours enforcement support.
- North and Central Coast noted that they are phasing out of shellfish aquaculture and looking to seaweed production as an alternative.
- Industry is seeking improved coordination across the regulating federal departments.²

ENGOS:

- Island Trust noted that they are having an election in October and their representative at these meetings will change.
- One ENGO noted that they're having conversations with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) about establishing a lab on the North Coast for water quality testing.

5. Conservation & Protection (C&P) Enforcement Update (Mandy Ludlow)

- C&P's compliance program for this year is active, with a focus on traceability and laundering, as well as general inspections.
- C&P reminded industry members to either pay their tickets on time or contest them in court. Non-payment is not an option, though the amounts may be challenged through the court process.
- C&P noted that tickets are commonly issued for; insecure predator netting, rebar that is not curved, debris under unused sites, unused netting that is not bundled and wildlife harassment-specifically chasing sea lions off rafts with boats.
- C&P acknowledged that laundering of wild shellfish from unlicensed areas is a problem, as well as recreational shellfish harvest tourism along the Sunshine Coast.

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

- Nationally there is a need to modernize the delivery of CSSP, as recommended by the 2022 Horizontal Evaluation of the CSSP. CSSP partners maintain the commitment to engage as soon as there is a clear path. Engagement with the SF AMAC and bivalve harvesters is a priority.
- Funding for the FSC bivalve expansion ended in March 2026. However, CFIA has extended the biotoxin monitoring MOUs until the end of September and ECCC continues to review and analyse water quality monitoring data collected under the initiative.
- The Pacific Region Interdepartmental Shellfish Committee (PRISC) public meeting took place of April 23, 2026. It focused on changes in water classification presented by ECCC. These changes will be implemented in a few weeks. Discussion occurred around biotoxin sampling and openings for Varnish Clam. BCSGA shared concerns about CSSP.
- The Government of Canada's response to the recommendations of the European Union (EU) Audit

of CSSP will go back to the EU soon. The final report will be shared on the EU website.

- On April 29, 2026, the Parliamentary standing committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) had some discussion related to CSSP. More details are available online.
- Industry noted ongoing concerns regarding pollution control such as vessel dumping and municipal wastewater impacts, resulting in harvest closures due to contamination risks.

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

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

- Jordan Wagner has been appointed as the aquaculture authorizations section head permanently. This has left her former position as the shellfish aquaculture sector lead vacant – once filled, this will be shared with committee members.
- WLRS is addressing a large backlog of tenure replacement applications.
- Operators with expired tenures can generally continue operating and pay rent month to month.
- WLRS is working to streamline aquaculture tenure reviews by consulting on all amendments and replacements for individual sites at the same time. However, it was noted that replacements still require full consultation and may take an additional ~2 years once removed from the queue.
- Industry noted that expired B.C. tenures and long provincial review timelines significantly restrict licence holders from making changes to their operations, reporting this as a barrier to investment and innovation in the sector.
- WLRS is seeing more questions about culture of aquatic plants but no applications yet.

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

- A presentation was shared on the roles and responsibility of the MAF Seafood Industry Specialist, which has been included with the meeting materials.

8. Performance Based Seafloor Inspection Extensions (Chris Marrie)

- DFO is seeking to remove some of the regulatory responsibility on industry and reward good performers by removing administrative burden, while still meeting the conservation goals.
- The proposal is to extend the seafloor survey and clean up interval from annually to every three years, for verified low risk operators with a history of clean seafloor and good regulatory standing.
- A notice will be shared with industry that includes the eligibility requirements and the process for extension.
- This policy update was well received by industry.
- An industry members questioned how license transfers would affect these extensions.
 - DFO explained that the good standing status would be specific to the license holder, thus if a license was transferred the new licence holder must re-apply, but the site history will still be taken into account as part of the assessment.

9. National Level Involvement in Aquaculture Development³ (Nico Prins)

- A presentation was shared.
- Industry shared concern that the Canadian aquaculture sector has not experienced sustained growth in over 20 years, despite the sector growing globally.
- Industry stated that governance and regulations are part of the problem.
- Industry emphasized the need for a clear definition for the term economic outcomes.
- Industry stated that Canada used to have a program that funded industry to learn about the industry internationally, then bring solutions back to Canada. Australia currently has an



example of this kind of program.

- There was a question if an Aquaculture Act is still being developed.
 - DFO responded that it is on pause in Ottawa until the Open Net-Pen Transition file is complete.

10. Echinoderm Aquaculture Development (Aimee McGowan)

- A presentation on the Policy Framework on the Management of Echinoderm Aquaculture in the Marine Environment (Framework) was shared.
- The Framework was supported; however, some operational and economic questions were raised regarding mesh size limitations, biofouling, seed transfer constraints, and the high-cost of grow-out, which may impact overall feasibility and profitability.
- Concerns were partly addressed through clarification that applications will be assessed on a case-by-case, and the framework does not prescribe fixed technical parameters (e.g., mesh size).
- Industry explained that proposed management measures to protect wild stocks are more relevant for sea cucumbers than for sea urchins. For example, green sea urchins are overpopulating some areas and causing ecosystem damage, so the same restrictions on wild bycatch should not apply to this species.
- DFO will continue exploring options and flexibilities, alongside ongoing engagement with industry and partners. This will also be a topic at the upcoming Shellfish Aquaculture Industry Advisory Panel (SAIAP) meeting in June 2026.
- DFO clarified that proponents will soon be able to apply for licence amendments to add species or apply for a new licence at new sites in alignment with Categories 1 and 3, as outlined in the Guidance Document
- Additional questions can be directed to Aimee McGowan via email.

11. Science Update Presentation (Cher Lacoste)

- A presentation on current research projects was shared with members.
- Members can reach out to Cher if they have ideas for research projects.

12. FNFC Whole of Aquaculture Action Plan (Mike Gray)

- A presentation was shared.
- The Whole of Aquaculture Action Plan is a practical roadmap developed by First Nations across BC.
- FNFC is focused on broad aquaculture priorities and coordinates committees.
- FNFC is working to identify gaps in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- FNFC is finalizing their strategy on infrastructure through further engagement and will share when it is complete.

13. SF AMAC Workplan (Amber Neuman)

- Members have expressed that a formal structured workplan would be helpful to assist the committee.⁴
- Internally, DFO is exploring updating the IMAPs and asked if there is any feedback on this. The goal is to improve transparency, consistency and have all the information in one place.
- Workplan items for the SF AMAC to provide feedback to DFO this year include: Echinoderm Aquaculture Framework, Seafloor Survey Extensions, and Public Reporting.
- Industry continues to express concern that their regulatory issues are not being addressed, and



clarity is needed in identifying appropriate leads amongst regulators, regionally and nationally.

- DFO reiterated that information on jurisdictional authorities has been shared with members in past meetings and in the DFO response log. Roles and responsibilities regarding human waste in marine environment were also shared in meeting materials for this meeting.
- The AMAC is focused on the operational management and regulation of aquaculture in BC. Feedback from the AMAC is shared with regional and national counterparts and it is considered in the context of regional and national priorities. Members are encouraged to reach out to local MPs to advocate for their sectors at a national level.

14. Roundtable (All)

- One member shared that they are concerned about environmental changes and encourage DFO to put resources towards better understanding local impacts from climate change.
- Industry expressed appreciation for DFOs efforts to alleviate some of the administrative burden but feels that more needs to be done.
- Industry emphasized the importance of fostering a regulatory environment that allows them to respond to market changes in a timely manner.

15. Adjourn

- JT stated that he is available for bilateral meetings.
- Members expressed interest in an in-person meeting in October in Nanaimo or Campbell River.
- Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.

16. Summary of Action Items

- DFO will update the drop box to include the outstanding presentation decks.

17. Summary of Key Feedback

¹ First Nations are seeking updated communication regarding tenure status.

² Industry advocates for streamlined processes across the regulating federal departments.

³ Industry is seeking more government support to grow the sector, including funding for international business development. They also want regulatory challenges addressed, such as complex jurisdictional requirements and long approval timelines, which they see as key barriers to innovation, competitiveness, and profitability.

⁴ Members have expressed that a formal, structured workplan would be helpful to assist the committee.



Attendees			
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Laura	Stern	SF AMAC Secretariat	DFO.PACAquacultureEngagement- EngagementdelaquaculturePAC.MPO@dfo- mpo.gc.ca
Invited Guests			
Mike	Gray	First Nations Fisheries Council of BC	mike@fnfisheriescouncil.ca
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Observers			
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Regrets			
J.P.	Hastey	Nova Harvest Ltd	jp@novaharvest.com
Absent			
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