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Chair

Mr. Ken McDonald

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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• (1545)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are studying the adequacy of enforcement and penalties for infractions of the Fisheries Act.

For the first hour, by video conference, we have Bernie Berry from the Coldwater Lobster Association.

From the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association, we have Robert Jenkins, President, and Ian MacPherson, Executive Director.

As an individual, we have Alexandra Morton, Independent Biologist with the Pacific Coast Wild Salmon Society.

We'll start with Bernie Berry from the Coldwater Lobster Association. For your opening statement, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Bernie Berry (President, Coldwater Lobster Association): Thank you.

Good day, everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans about the enforcement and penalties for infractions under the Fisheries Act.

It is our opinion that the regional capacity to carry out enforcement and protection provisions of the Fisheries Act lacks the tools to carry out such a task. We believe there is a serious problem with the lack of funding for assets on the water and for personnel in the field.

While technology certainly plays an important part in enhancing the capabilities of DFO, nothing can replace the physical presence of boats on the water, either DFO or Coast Guard, or having more officers in the field. It will take more government departments, such as CRA, Canada Border Services Agency, CFIA, RCMP, etc., along with DFO, to properly enforce the regulations and penalties for the protection of our fisheries under the Fisheries Act.

This type of collaboration is a necessity because of the emerging problems our fisheries face and the sophistication of some of the illegal activities taking place. The department must work coherently and share information and concerns; operating in departmental silos will simply not work going forward.

On the penalties side of enforcement, there must be a more robust response to convictions. The fines attached to convictions, in most cases, amount to nothing more than the cost of doing business for the

perpetrator. These penalties should reflect the serious impacts that certain violations have on the species in question and the fishery in question, and we must not lose sight of the fact that the violation has been carried out against a Canadian resource. The fines should be large enough to act as a deterrent, although it could cause hardship to the guilty party.

The same holds true for suspension of licences. Usually a penalty like this is either applied during the slowest part of a fishery or is applied for a period of several days to a couple of weeks, which does not have the intended penalizing effect. The penalties must be a deterrent to illegal activity.

The U.S. treats fishery violations in a manner similar to criminal activity. They impose much harsher penalties, including the permanent loss of a licence for repeat offenders.

I will describe some of the issues pertaining to enforcement that we'd like to bring to light.

The first is the enforcement of licence conditions. Without this, DFO has no legitimacy in the eyes of many fishermen. When considering the inshore lobster fishery licence conditions, DFO must address pot limits, lobster fishing area boundaries, legal size of retained lobster, non-retention of berried females, etc. These are all areas within the licence conditions that must see greater enforcement and much more vigorous prosecution.

An example of fishermen losing respect for licence conditions occurred this past season here at LFA 33, 34 and 35. A new DFO regulation for mandatory bycatch data collection was implemented in the licence conditions for the 2018-2019 lobster season. Fishermen who were not registered with the recognized fishermen's associations that were overseeing a bycatch monitoring pilot—approved by DFO to address the department's need to capture bycatch data in the lobster industry—required a hail out for fishing. Fishermen not joining the fishermen's associations' pilot, according to the licence conditions, had to hail out at a 100% level, which means that every day they went fishing, they had to hail out. DFO did not enforce this licence condition at all, for the entire season. This created an atmosphere of confusion and mistrust and a general loss of respect for the department. The associations became caught up in the unnecessary confusion resulting from the lack of enforcement. Such a lack of response has created an atmosphere in which fishermen have begun to question the validity of all licence conditions.

Second, there is a growing problem in the industry with cash sales, along with the very real possibility of money laundering. Although cash sales have been around for a significant amount of time, they seem to be getting more and more prevalent. That could be a result of the influx of illegal money accumulated elsewhere and then made somewhat legitimate by buying our product for cash. This leads to significant misreporting of catches and misleading reports of the values of landings.

Undercutting prices on the shore or in the marketplace affected numerous individuals in the fishery. In this example, if multiple federal agencies were working together, they could potentially curtail these activities. The need for more fishery officers conducting checks and/or investigations on the ground is also highlighted in this instance.

There must be better enforcement of all licence conditions, including increased surveillance of the LFA 34 50-mile line, along with the Brown's Bank lobster closure area, LFA 40; stricter enforcement of compliance with the pot limit of 375; and stricter prohibition of the landings of undersized lobsters and berried females.

Another thing DFO could do is target known violators rather than an entire fleet.

All the restrictions I mentioned must carry substantial monetary penalties and possible suspension if compliance is to be maintained.

In addition, as previously mentioned, DFO needs more assets, such as boats and personnel, and needs to expand its technological tools to help in the orderly running of the fishery and to maintain the sustainability of the fishery. This would also benefit our product in the marketplace.

The Fisheries Act also addresses the importance of rebuilding stocks and maintaining healthy stocks. Enforcement plays a critical role in this initiative, along with science and working with industry to increase the knowledge base for the species in question.

Moving forward with the updated Fisheries Act, it is going to take a concerted effort by all stakeholders and rights holders in government and industry to help improve enforcement and protection of the fishery so that all participants are contributing and playing by the same set of rules and are regulated by a much more aggressive penalty phase.

Thank you for the opportunity to present on this very important topic.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Berry.

We'll now go to the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association for seven minutes.

Gentlemen, I don't know if you're sharing your time.

Mr. Ian MacPherson (Executive Director, Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association): Thanks very much.

It's just Ian MacPherson here this afternoon. Captain Jenkins had to leave when our plans changed on the video conference. He sends his apologies.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

My name is Ian MacPherson, and I am the Executive Director of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association. We are here today to discuss the very important topic of the adequacy of enforcement and penalties for infractions of the Fisheries Act.

The Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association represents approximately 1,300 core fishers from six local island-based organizations. Our members fish tuna, lobster, herring, raw crab, scallops, mackerel and groundfish in addition to estuarial species such as eel, silversides and smelt.

We contribute 30% of the overall Canadian lobster harvest, with a direct financial contribution of \$250 million. Our sector provides close to 9,000 industry-related jobs. The fishing contribution to the provincial GDP is the highest percentage in Canada.

Needless to say, the fishery is not only a significant economic driver but its sustainability is also vital to the future of Prince Edward Island. The PEIFA prides itself in effecting rationalization projects for various species in both the past and present. These initiatives retire licences permanently and reduce traps and gear in the water.

For example, rationalization of lobster licences that began in 2010 and continued until 2013 in LFAs 25 and 26A took over 44,000 traps out of the water on Prince Edward Island. We do not want to see these significant efforts backslide due to illegal activity.

In our submission to Fisheries and Oceans Canada dated July 31, 2018, the PEIFA cited violations such as fishing in closed waters, fishing during a closed time, fishing with prohibited gear and recreational fishing for groundfish during a closed time. Input was requested on the suggested fine amount of \$500 per infraction. The association's position is that these fines are insufficient to deter this type of infraction.

It is also the association's position that commercial and recreational fishers should be fined the same amounts for a violation, as illegal activities impact the resource as a whole.

We also suggest an increase of fines for repeat offenders. In the past five years, there have been steady price increases in most species. Operating costs have escalated, but a portion of these price increases have been related to expanding marketing efforts that have assisted in increasing demand. Canadian seafood enjoys a strong positive image in the worldwide marketplace. Unfortunately, these increases in value can also lead to more illegal activity. As some of these illegal activities are market-driven, it is important that enforcement priorities and deterrents be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Illegal fishing is a worldwide problem, and many efforts are being put in place to plug the gaps in international export channels that allow illegal product to be bought and sold. At the local level, we must ensure that our stocks are preserved for future generations.

In addition, certain international certifications, such as Marine Stewardship Council, or MSC, may be impacted if stocks of primary or bycatch species decline. One area of current concern is the declining availability of certain lobster baits, the lack of commercial alternatives and the pressure to reduce bait costs through additional bait harvesting. In addition, it is important that only approved baits be available, as many bait alternatives are being sought both locally and internationally.

A significant concern revolves around rock crab, as this is the primary diet of our Atlantic lobster. Any serious depletion of the rock crab stocks could result in significant damage to the lobster industry. The PEIFA has been, and continues to be, an advocate for more enforcement resources to be devoted to the field. Any new processes put in place should have a primary focus of allowing conservation and protection officers to spend more time on the water for investigative work.

Over the past three years, the PEIFA has submitted numerous victim impact statements when requested by conservation and protection officers.

● (1555)

These impact statements are used in court proceedings. These letters address the concerns surrounding the impact on the overall resource or other potential negative impacts to the species.

The PEIFA has recently noticed an increase in fines for some local infractions, and in some cases a suspension of eligible fishing days. The suspensions have been applied to upcoming seasons if the current season has concluded. We feel these types of penalties are steps in the right direction.

It is the association's position to identify the areas of concern, but we do not feel it is our mandate to suggest specific fine amounts or remedies. We want to underscore our concern that fines or other remedies for committing an illegal activity not be viewed as a cost of doing business.

In conclusion, our recommendations are as follows.

Number one, \$500 fines are insufficient for fishing in closed waters, fishing in closed times, fishing with prohibited gear, and recreational fishing during a closed time.

Number two, we advocate that the fines to the commercial and recreational fishers should be the same.

Number three, we suggest that fines escalate for repeat offenders.

Number four, we request that additional resources be supplied to DFO conservation and protection units.

Number five, rock crab violations should be a priority for enforcement, and attention should be paid to other bait fisheries.

Number six, we suggest that priorities of enforcement be reviewed as market conditions change.

Number seven, penalties should be reviewed along with a five-year review of the act.

Protection of our valuable marine resources is the responsibility of harvesters, regulators, the criminal justice system and parliamentar-

ians. By working together, we can stem the tide on illegal fishing activity and the damage it does to our valuable seafood resources in Canada.

Added to our presentation today is our response letter, dated January 31, 2018.

When appropriate, I would be pleased to address any questions you may have.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacPherson.

We'll now go to Alexandra Morton for seven minutes or less, please.

Ms. Alexandra Morton (Independent Biologist, Pacific Coast Wild Salmon Society, As an Individual): Thank you for allowing me to participate.

While Fisheries and Oceans Canada characterizes its regulation of salmon farms as rigorous and tells Canadians that these regulations support the health of wild fish, this is not entirely accurate, on three substantive issues: bycatch in the farms, sea lice proliferation on farmed salmon and the spread of piscine orthoreovirus.

With regard to bycatch, in January of 2012, I charged Marine Harvest under the Fisheries Act for illegal possession of juvenile wild salmon and herring. The Department of Justice assumed these charges and prosecuted Marine Harvest. The case number is 14891-1. Marine Harvest pleaded guilty and was fined \$4,000. With each grow-out, Marine Harvest is making approximately \$24 million per farm. I don't think the fine of \$4,000 was enough to solve this problem.

Beginning in 2017, first nations and others began boarding salmon farms in British Columbia and putting underwater cameras into the pens. These cameras captured the images of thousands of herring in each of the 10 or more pens in all the farms between Campbell River and Alert Bay and in Clayoquot Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The farmers and DFO refused to say whether these fish were released or not. People filmed large schools of herring in farms long after the Atlantic salmon had been harvested. There was no explanation as to why these fish were being held and what their fate was. The salmon farming industry is an unregulated herring fishery. We don't know if DFO is allowed to release these fish, because they have now been exposed to the sea lice and pathogens in the farms.

Now, to focus on sea lice for a moment, 19 years ago I reported sea louse outbreaks in wild salmon near salmon farms, as has happened everywhere else in the world where this industry operates among wild salmon, yet this year, we experienced the worst sea louse outbreak on young salmon in the history of this industry. In 19 years, there really has not been enough progress.

I did a freedom of information request on DFO communications regarding the sea louse outbreaks in the last few years, and in document A-2018-00799, the reason for the outbreaks becomes clear: DFO veterinarians report that the drugs they've been using in the farms no longer work. Everybody knew this was going to happen, because drug resistance development in sea lice has happened everywhere farms are operating in the world.

Importantly, internal emails chronicle DFO veterinarians struggling to make the companies comply, because they could see that wild salmon conservation units of concern were being killed by the lice coming out of the farms. Cermaq, in this case, promised to borrow equipment from Marine Harvest to wash off the lice, but then that equipment wasn't available. They said they would harvest the fish, but that took so long that the entire outmigration period of March to June passed, and they still had not harvested all their fish.

Senior conservation and protection staff were contacted because people wanted to charge the farms. DFO wanted to charge the farms for not complying, but this senior conservation and protection staff member said that because of the way the conditions of licence are written, the rules were unenforceable. Basically, the company just has to have a plan and then execute the plan, but it doesn't matter if the plan was carried out at the right time or if it worked. He recommended to senior staff that this regulation be tightened up and gave them specific instructions, but it was not done in 2018. We had another outbreak this last year, so it didn't happen in 2019 either.

I don't consider this to be just a mistake when senior staff have ignored their own staff's recommendation that these regulations be changed.

The final point is on this piscine orthoreovirus. It's a disease agent. Under Canadian law, paragraph 56(b) of the Fishery (General) Regulations, transfer of fish infected with a disease agent is not permitted in Canada, but the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans refuses to acknowledge this law. I have won two lawsuits now against the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

• (1600)

The 'Namgis First Nation also has won a lawsuit against the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, saying that it is unlawful to not be screening farmed salmon for PRV.

On February 4, the Federal Court gave Minister Wilkinson, our current minister, a four-month extension to comply with the most recent court win. However, on June 4 the minister announced that they had made a decision and asked us to review the new regulations that he would like to insert under section 56. This new regulation would weaken the current regulation. It would allow infected fish to go into the water through a complicated assessment process that is so difficult for them to understand that the document actually suggests that DFO might have to go to the Department of Justice to determine on specific transfers if it is thought that there might be a medium risk to wild fish. It's a change in the regulation that seems to make it very difficult for them to consider how they would go forward.

DFO research reports that PRV appears to cause acute disease in chinook salmon. We know that chinook salmon stocks are collapsing on the southern B.C. coast, where all the farms are. We know that the

southern resident orcas are going extinct because of a lack of chinook, so it's a looming problem for British Columbia.

In summary, I just want to say that these three regulatory failures—sea lice, bycatch and control of disease going into these farms—are resulting in the overfishing of herring populations that are currently under protection from other forms of fishing. These failures are causing the death of the majority of outmigrating juvenile wild salmon wherever the salmon farms lose control of their lice, as well as the steady leakage of a disease agent known to impact wild salmon species, which is pushing them towards the endangered and threatened status that they increasingly have.

My recommendation is that this industry finally be mandated to move into closed containment, because I suspect that the reason for non-compliance and the softness of the regulations is that the industry cannot be run in a profitable manner under Canadian laws. For example, the law says that there are to be no diseased fish going into the farms and that you have to kill your fish if you can't control the lice. This is what the law basically is saying, but nobody will enforce it because I don't think the companies can then actually make a profit under Canadian law. That's why we have this regulatory problem.

Thank you so much.

• (1605)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Morton, for that.

We'll now go into our question round.

I know the time, but in looking at it, we only have one witness in the second hour. Probably what we'll do is a full round of seven minutes in this part of the session, and at the end of the second hour, we'll take a few minutes just to catch up on committee business.

On the government side, we have Mr. Fraser. You have seven minutes or less, please.

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us today.

I heard a number of excellent points made, and I'd like to start with you, Mr. Berry. I wanted to bring this study forward and I know we're at the end of the parliamentary session, so we're unlikely to be able to provide a report, but having this evidence on the record is important.

I want to go through a couple of the things that you mentioned. First is the adequacy of the number of fisheries officers.

I've learned in my time as member of Parliament for West Nova the amount of work that we're asking the fisheries officers to do, the ground that they have to cover and the number of fishing enterprises that they are responsible for monitoring. I know that our government has put in \$50 million and will be hiring an additional 100 DFO officers for all of Canada. That's a good start, but we're obviously not going to see the impact for a little while on the ground, and there needs to be more done.

What can you say, Mr. Berry, about the adequacy of the number of officers and of the equipment they have? I know that you mentioned that they need more boats and all of that for patrolling LFAs 33, 34 and 35 all around southwestern Nova Scotia.

Mr. Bernie Berry: Thank you for the question, Mr. Fraser.

You mentioned 100 new officers for the country. Actually, I think that even the region alone could have another 100-plus officers. They are needed.

They're simply understaffed. Every office is understaffed, so they have to pick and choose what violation they are going after. Some violations, we believe, are simply being ignored because they don't have the manpower to take on that kind of stuff.

One thing I'd like to add about the boats themselves, the working platforms, is that a lot of these are...I hate to use the word "antiquated", but they are old, especially in the case of the smaller coastal vessels and stuff like that. They're really old. They don't have the capacity. Our fishery has moved into something like an offshore fishery, especially in our fall section. Really, the level is actually disheartening.

Listen, the fishery officers are doing what they can, but they really are handcuffed in what they can accomplish.

I mentioned technology. As an example, the use of drones on some of the boats for monitoring and stuff like this, Mr. Fraser, would help, but the maritime region needs a big boost. As you said, it's better than it was, but I don't think we're anywhere near the level that it has to be to get some true enforcement here.

• (1610)

Mr. Colin Fraser: Thank you for that.

I want to move to another thing you mentioned in your presentation and that I had jotted down before today's meeting. It is that the penalties have to be not just the cost of doing business. I think you're spot-on there.

In the lobster industry in particular, we see that the growth of that industry in southwestern Nova Scotia and across Atlantic Canada has been a boon to the local economy. It's been doing extremely well. We have to make sure that conservation is top of mind when we're talking about enforcement, but I wonder, since the lobster industry has been doing so well in southwestern Nova Scotia, if the fines and penalties imposed for breaching the Fisheries Act have not commensurately gone up and that it is becoming just the cost of doing business. Would you agree with that?

Mr. Bernie Berry: Absolutely. This fishery alone, in LFA 34, is worth approximately \$400 million on the shore. LFA 34 will land somewhere in the range of 50 million pounds a year. The average price fluctuates somewhat, but it's worth \$400 million, and that's on the shore.

I tend to think that the average boat now in LFA 34—it's a good thing—is probably stocking \$350,000 to \$400,000 per season. To impose a fine of a few hundred or a few thousand dollars is almost bordering on laughable. There's no penalty there.

Mr. Colin Fraser: Right.

Mr. Bernie Berry: It really has to be firmed up. The penalty has to cause somewhat of a hardship to the individual in stuff like this. I mean—

Mr. Colin Fraser: I know that repeat offenders—

Mr. Bernie Berry: I don't know how high to go, Mr. Fraser—

Mr. Colin Fraser: Yes. For repeat offenders, that is factored in when a judge is imposing a sentence. Repeat offenders are supposed to be getting higher fines, but you're saying that it's still not enough.

Mr. Bernie Berry: No. Even the repeat offenders, Mr. Fraser, are nowhere near to getting what they should be. Again, I use the model of the Americans, especially in the Maine lobster fishery. More or less, if you have three substantial strikes, three substantial convictions, they simply take the licence, and you're no longer part of that fishery. You don't have that privilege. We're just tapping these individuals very lightly on the hand, and they're...I won't say "destroying", but they are inhibiting a Canadian resource. This looks bad on the whole industry. Again, if it looks like we're not enforcing rules in our fishery, this can even have a negative impact on the marketplace.

Mr. Colin Fraser: Because my time is limited, I want to turn to the issue of illegal product and the black market, which is a real problem, particularly in the lobster industry. I know you touched on this issue. A black market obviously suppresses the value of the legally and responsibly caught product. It operates in an unregulated market.

I think you raised a really important point, which is that we don't know what those landings are because it's an untracked and unregulated market. We can't even judge its impact on conservation, which has to be the paramount consideration for government. Ensuring this fishery is sustainable for the long term is paramount.

Would you agree that all of those factors mean that it's super-important that we actually get our hands around the black market issue?

Mr. Bernie Berry: Oh, it is. It's absolutely important.

We can only anecdotally put a number on what we think the black market is worth. We tend to think it's worth roughly 10% of what's landed. You're looking at potentially \$40 to \$45 million in the black market, just in one LFA. It translates back into x number of pounds being unrecorded and things like that.

Again, we need to know specific numbers of our landings, especially moving forward, with all the environmental changes. We really need to know what is coming out of the water, where it's going, and all these variables.

Mr. Colin Fraser: Great. Thanks a lot, Mr. Berry.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fraser.

We'll now go to the Conservative side and to Mr. Arnold, for seven minutes or less.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for being available today, as we get close to winding down our parliamentary session.

I first want to state that it's disappointing that I don't recognize any of the witnesses from the Conservative list of requests that we sent in. We certainly had some very pointed questions we were going to ask of DFO staff and former staff. Unfortunately, I don't see any witnesses here today who can probably speak to the amount of unreported, unregulated, illegal fisheries that are taking place offshore on the high seas.

We have seen millions spent—and I mean millions spent—year after year, supposedly to combat unreported, unregulated, illegal fisheries offshore, yet in any inquiries that I've ever taken a look at, there have never been charges laid.

There have been investigations. There have been allegations, reports going to the home countries and home ports of the vessels in the infractions, but no reports ever come back. Millions of dollars have been spent in this area that could have been spent within Canada, possibly making a difference here.

I also want to touch on balance. How do we find a balance in enforcing the Fisheries Act and fisheries violations?

When I talked to fisheries officers in my riding back home about some of the 2012 changes that were made to the Fisheries Act, they said that some of those changes were actually very beneficial. The changes gave them the ability to assess the situation. Instead of going through months and possibly years of investigative work to gather evidence in order to take the case to court, and then laying charges against communities, against contractors, even against the province for work that was done, and then spending months and possibly years as the case worked its way through the courts, the DFO enforcement staff were simply able to assess the situation, state that the work was done without permit, and immediately order the work to be repaired or mitigated.

These kinds of changes were taking place. These were big issues on the ground that could have tied up fisheries officers for days, weeks, months and possibly years on a case that was simply cleaned up with a few days of work. Issues were solved that way.

Getting back to some of the questions here, how big an issue is the illegal, unreported and unregulated fishery in each of your areas?

Ms. Morton, I know you are on the west coast. The other witnesses are from the east coast.

Ms. Morton, are you available to answer first?

• (1615)

Ms. Alexandra Morton: I really don't have any information on the illegal fishery, other than the current herring fishery that is going on in the salmon farming industry, which I see as an illegal fishery. I don't know anything about commercial fishermen fishing illegally.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Would anybody from the east coast care to chime in?

Mr. Bernie Berry: It's so hard, as I indicated to Mr. Fraser, to put a number on it. There seems to be an uptick in all the fisheries, mainly because of the value of the product, whether it be a finfish like halibut, or crab or lobster. The value of them is going up, which is good for the industry as a whole, but it brings in a lot of unsavoury characters. There has been an uptick in a lot of the species along our shoreline, not just lobster. Again, it's hard to put a number on it. It

will only be anecdotal evidence, but there has certainly been an uptick in cash sales, meaning illegal activity.

Unfortunately, I still believe that more boots on the ground and more officers and stuff like this would be a deterrent. It wouldn't be the total answer, but it would be a deterrent.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Okay. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. MacPherson.

Mr. Ian MacPherson: I was just going to mention, Mr. Arnold, that this was why I highlighted bait earlier. We tend to focus on the human consumption products, but bait is one that floats out there. It doesn't always come under the purview of CFIA because it's not for human consumption. This is maybe going to be the new problem area, not just the primary product. It's something that we all need to be diligent about.

In terms of estimating the illegal trade, I really don't have a handle on that, but as we know, anything is too much.

• (1620)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

It sounds like all of you spend a lot of time on the water, or in the field at least. Can you give me any indication if there are certain individuals, groups, or countries that are a larger segment of the illegal, unreported, unregulated fisheries?

Mr. MacPherson, do you want to comment?

Mr. Ian MacPherson: I can't name a country specifically. I would frame it more as a situation of countries that are getting into dead zones and fishing out certain species. That's a great concern when you have perhaps millions of people to feed. As many of us know, seafood tends to be the primary diet of a lot of countries in the world, although that isn't the case in North America, so it's a cause for great concern, for sure.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Arnold. Mr. Johns, you have seven minutes or less, please.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Thank you all for being here and testifying. I'll start with Mr. MacPherson.

Have you seen an increase or decrease in officers' boots on the ground since the election in 2015?

Mr. Ian MacPherson: I don't have an exact tally. I do know we had an issue of understaffing in a number of positions that weren't filled. The last report was that they were fully staffed and I think looking to add some people to the enforcement core over here.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Berry, can you speak to that as well?

Mr. Bernie Berry: I can only relate some of the conversations we had with the local staff of DFO at the local area level, and there it's the same thing: They want more officers. They don't have enough to go around to carry out all their duties, so there is a concern. It's getting better—

Mr. Gord Johns: Yes.

Mr. Bernie Berry: —but I think we're still not to that point where we can say—

Mr. Gord Johns: Were we ever at a point where we had enough, or were close to it? Can you cite a time in history?

Mr. Bernie Berry: I can't.

The only thing I want to point out is that we're not there right now. Whether we were there 10 years or 20 years ago I can't say, but we're not there now.

Mr. Gord Johns: Thank you.

Both the EU and the United States have really strong seafood traceability regulations. Would a fully traceable, honestly labelled, safely consumed, legally caught program help with mislabelling and seafood fraud? Would it help having a program like that in place?

Mr. Bernie Berry: I think it would.

Actually, especially concerning the U.S., I think we're building towards that for the winter of 2022. There are some traceability components we're going to have to meet, and stuff like that. Again, that will be a work in progress. We might have to do a lot more, but there is a traceability component coming, working with the U.S. It's part of the MMPA and this kind of stuff.

Mr. Gord Johns: Yes.

Mr. Bernie Berry: It's being looked at, but it could be years before it's fully implemented.

Mr. Gord Johns: It just gives it another layer, right?

Mr. Bernie Berry: Yes.

Mr. Gord Johns: Great.

Ms. Morton, in the Cohen commission there was recommendation number 3: "The Government of Canada should remove from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' mandate the promotion of salmon farming as an industry and farmed salmon as a product."

Do you think it's really important that the government follow through on this recommendation to build confidence with coastal British Columbians around the effects of salmon farming?

Ms. Alexandra Morton: Yes, I think it's very important. I think the problem that I described is due to the divided loyalty. People within DFO don't know whether they're promoting the industry or regulating it. The industry, of course, is very forceful in how it approaches government. Of course, it's a business, so the wild fish are losing. Yes, I think it's very important.

Mr. Gord Johns: You talked about regulations and the gaps in the regulations. You cited the impact of PRV and the minister's commitment to testing for PRV, but you don't have any answers about what will happen if the fish test positive or whether the company is going to be allowed to move those diseased fish into open-net farms.

Could you speak to the regulations and what needs to happen?

• (1625)

Ms. Alexandra Morton: Yes. The minister's announcement, frankly, was quite confusing, because it sounded as though there would be a two-month interim testing period and that he would test only for two strains of piscine reovirus, which suggests that we have a local endemic British Columbia strain. However, DFO has not published that strain. Nobody has seen it. I have not found it in my research.

I think this virus needs to be shut down immediately because, as he notes, the Norwegian and Icelandic strains are in our waters, and of course our wild salmon did not evolve with these. I hope he will prohibit the transfer of infected fish as per paragraph 56(b) of the law.

Mr. Gord Johns: What do you think needs to happen? You talked a little bit about the lack of fines, the bycatch that happened, and a \$4,000 penalty. What kinds of penalties need to be in place to deter this kind of activity and the bycatch of wild fish in those open-net pens?

Ms. Alexandra Morton: I think it has to be in the order of millions, frankly. It has to be a deterrent that they would weigh against the profitability of each grow-out and decide whether or not they want to take the risk.

The problem is that they cannot stop the herring from going into the pens, they can't stop the lice from breeding on their fish, and they can't stop the virus from leaking out.

What we have is an agonizing, long process of difficulty and conflict and loss of wild salmon and impacts to the industry, all of which would be resolved if the industry were legislated into tanks with the support of the government. There would be enormous support from British Columbians for such an action. Then we could really get down to what we know about preserving the wild salmon, because we are drastically running out of time.

I know the fish have been in collapse for a long time and people have gotten used to the thought that they are declining, but when you have runs that are down into the tens rather than tens of thousands, you know you are very close to the end. That's where we are right now.

I think we should just get it over with and get them into tanks and support the companies in doing that.

Mr. Gord Johns: We talked about sea lice. You definitely know that in my riding there are record amounts of sea lice, historic amounts.

Can you speak about the gap between the regulations, with Health Canada approving an insecticide that can be used on smolts? Those smolts are allowed to be in open-net pens, but they cannot be harvested for 365 days. Is there maybe some rationale around it, or is there any?

Ms. Alexandra Morton: The chemical you're referring to is lufenuron, which has not been approved in Norway. In fact, the company withdrew its application to have it approved in Norway, so we are experimenting with it here. The fish are dangerous for human consumption for 350 days. That suggests that the chemical is being purged from the fish over that period of time. Therefore, you'd have to test the mucus, the urine and the feces coming out of these fish to know what it's doing to the waters outside.

This industry is in a constantly escalating drug war with sea lice, which turn out to be pretty remarkable little creatures. They are resistant to every drug that is applied to them, so we're just going to keep going with more and more drugs. We can only assume that they will become resistant to this drug as well because IntraFish, the global media outlet for the industry, calls sea lice a \$1-billion problem for the salmon farming industry right now. Nobody is saying they have solved it.

Lufenuron is not going to solve it. We're experimenting with it in a UNESCO biosphere reserve, Clayoquot Sound, in first nations territory, in a place where wilderness tourism is a booming industry that relies on salmon.

I think that regulating salmon farms in the open ocean is mission impossible. Nobody has done it successfully worldwide.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Johns. Your time is well past. We'll now go back to the government side.

Mr. Morrissey, go ahead for seven minutes or less, please.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

There could be some confusion on DFO. We on the government side have put forward witnesses. We were expecting to have officials from DFO as well as from the Department of Justice for today's meeting—

• (1630)

The Chair: If I may respond, they were invited, but they're at a conference. They were unavailable today.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Okay. It's not—

The Chair: It's not that they refused to come. They are actually at a conference and couldn't attend.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Okay. It would have been valuable to have them here.

Mr. Berry, I want to compliment you on your opening statement. Everything you identified is accurate. I hear about similar issues related to the lack of adequate enforcement in the fishery in my part of Prince Edward Island and the lack of a deterrent exceeding the reward that comes to those participating in illegal activity.

My question is to Mr. MacPherson. You referred to the July 31, 2018, submission to DFO. Has there been a response from the department on that submission?

Mr. Ian MacPherson: We have annual round tables with DFO where these types of issues are discussed, as well as more localized issues. I would have to go back in our files to see if we received a formal response.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Has the PEIFA ever forwarded to Fisheries and Oceans Canada specific requests or specific fine levels

that would be, in the fishers' opinion, adequate to deter illegal activity?

Mr. Ian MacPherson: To date, we haven't done that. We haven't named specific amounts. I did want to mention that we are seeing some of the judicial fines increase quite a bit on the island. We're viewing that as a positive trend.

Fines used to be probably a few hundred dollars. A high fine would maybe be \$2,500 for a certain infraction. We're now seeing in the neighbourhood of \$10,000 fines, plus three or four days of suspension in the next season, which can be some of the high-revenue days of a fishery. We're encouraged by that development, but we haven't made specific financial recommendations to DFO.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Again to Mr. MacPherson, it's unlikely that there would ever be enough personnel to deter every illegal activity. There are simply not enough eyes or resources to do that. In this age of technology, has your association put forward to DFO any other supports that could assist the department in deterring illegal fishing?

I'll give a couple of examples. Recently fishers in LFA 25, both in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, voted to restrict the time that boats could engage in fishing on the water. I don't believe the other LFAs have done that.

For instance, I believe you can only be active from five o'clock in the morning until seven or eight o'clock in the afternoon, which is a great deterrent and of great assistance to the department to monitor.

Have the PEIFA or other groups made any overtures on that issue? Some fishers are out late at night, and some people will tell me that if they're out during those hours, they're not engaged in legal activities.

Mr. Ian MacPherson: As some of these situations surface—and I alluded to bait earlier—I think that we will look into those things. We've had an area where they've been using black boxes, as they're called. They are GPS units that trace the movement of the boats in some areas where we're having abuses of some of the rules and regulations because they had to sail through a closed area. To my knowledge, they've been very effective.

As an association, we're certainly onside with developing technology that will not only enhance the abilities of the DFO personnel but keep the playing field level. I think that's one of the biggest things here. Everyone wants a fair chance to make a good living, but they don't want other people having an unfair advantage. The flip side of that, of course, is damage to our fishery and our resource.

•(1635)

Mr. Robert Morrissey: A comment was made by one of the other presenters, I believe—and it may have been Mr. Berry—that the U.S. treats convictions much differently from the way Canada does. The deterrent is significantly greater. Would you care to comment on that? The U.S., I believe, treats convictions as criminal, so the implications are a lot more severe.

Mr. Ian MacPherson: Certainly we are seeing more severe fines. I'm not a lawyer, so I'm not an expert on what other remedies might be out there, but I think the values are going up. Given the severity of some of the infractions, I think we want to see that. Definitely some infractions are more severe than others and can have a devastating effect on a species.

One of the things I'd like to offer to the committee is that if someone's charged and receives a very stiff penalty, you'll find that it trickles down pretty quickly in the fishing community and hopefully brings other people into line. This is what we're advocating, and we will continue to advocate it because we have a whole new generation of fishers who want to make fishing their number one career and be able to feed their families and provide an income, and we need to preserve that resource for them.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. MacPherson, an issue that concerns me a lot—and I'm disappointed there's nobody from DFO here—is that I often hear from fishers that if they become aggressive in lobbying against DFO or critical of DFO on these protection activities, they will face repercussions from those very DFO enforcement personnel. DFO personnel will harass them. They're saying that if they lobby politicians or anybody else that DFO is not doing its job of protection adequately, they face repercussions.

Have you heard of that?

Mr. Ian MacPherson: It could be a situation that's out there. That's counterproductive, if it is. One of the things we try to do is work with everyone. Sometimes there are personalities that don't seem to connect with the fishing community the way some of the other officers do, but at the end of the day, we want to protect the fishery.

I hope that's not the scenario. One area that I've had identified to me as a source of frustration is not knowing where a charge goes once it is laid, and how long it takes. Any streamlining of that process, I think, would send out an effective message too.

Certainly there are always challenges.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Thank you, Mr. Morrissey.

Thank you to our witnesses, both by teleconference and by video conference, for your participation here this afternoon. We greatly appreciate it.

Committee members, I know the bells are ringing. I believe it's a 30-minute bell. We probably could disconnect or suspend for a minute and disconnect the video conference that we've got hooked up now and get ready for Mr. McIsaac. We could get his testimony and then look the time we have left in relation to the vote. Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: All right. We'll suspend for a moment and allow the technicians to connect the new witness.

•(1635)

(Pause)

•(1640)

The Chair: Apparently we're having some technical difficulties in hooking up Mr. McIsaac from B.C.

I know this is our last meeting until probably well into the fall, or it may be the winter before any Fisheries and Oceans committee meets again. I wanted to take the opportunity to thank all our staff for being so supportive, including our translators.

I also want to thank the committee members for being so patient. I think as a committee we operated pretty well, and for the most part in a non-partisan way, on the studies we have done. I know at times there might have been a scattered little jab here and there, but it wouldn't be any fun if that didn't take place.

I want to thank even those who sub in the odd time, such as Vance, and of course our friend Robert Sopuck, who was a regular member of the committee prior to this time. It's always good to see you back.

Again, thank you to everyone for making this an enjoyable committee to work on and to chair and to have any involvement with whatsoever.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

•(1645)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Chair, can I bring up a point of order?

The Chair: Yes. I wouldn't say no to you.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Thanks. Again, it's been an honour for me to be on the fisheries committee since 2010.

One thing was said earlier, though, that quite disturbed me. I wasn't part of the study here, but I don't think committee members should be the least bit reticent about demanding the presence of staff here. I hear that the staff kind of just blew the committee off and said they were in a conference. I think that is absolutely, completely unacceptable. This committee is too important for staff not to be here, and a conference is simply not an excuse.

Again, this is not a partisan comment, but colleagues, no department official has the right to refuse to appear before this committee.

Thank you for allowing me to say that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I know I did say some of them were at a conference. Others were also meeting with their U.S. counterparts, and unfortunately this was left to the last minute, I think. If we had more time, I think we would have postponed the meeting if the officials weren't available, but we couldn't do that today because we agreed we wouldn't have a meeting on Wednesday.

It is unfortunate, because it's always good to have the officials here and put them in the line of fire, for the lack of a better word, and we've done well with them in the past.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: We did.

The Chair: Mr. McIsaac, we finally have you online. We have the bells ringing for a vote, but we'd certainly like to have the opportunity to hear your opening statement. We'll see how much time we have left for some questioning after that.

When you're ready, Mr. McIsaac, you go right ahead for seven minutes or less.

Mr. Jim McIsaac (Managing Director, BC Commercial Fishing Caucus): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for inviting me today and giving me the opportunity to speak. I'm really grateful.

I've been involved in commercial, sport and first nations food fisheries since I was a teenager, so I've been around a few years—at least 10. I've fished from the top of our coast to the bottom, from Portland Canal to Juan de Fuca, and from inside to outside, from Knight Inlet to Rennell Sound. I've seen a good chunk of our coast and have seen a good chunk of fisheries on it.

I want to talk to you today about two sides of this topic. On the one hand, we have an IUU—illegal, unreported and unregulated—problem. On the other hand, we have rampant criminalization of legitimate fishermen.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is a growing concern in Canadian waters, both domestic and foreign, especially in the Pacific. We are not doing enough to monitor and enforce our exclusive economic zones, our EEZs. I fully support increased monitoring enforcement to stop IUU fishing. Unfortunately, our enforcement officers make no distinction between IUU and relatively minor infractions of the Fisheries Act by legitimate fishermen. They are both treated as master criminals. It is much easier to criminalize legitimate fishermen than to catch the illegal ones who drive the IUU fishing in our country.

For me, a few core components of a legitimate fisherman include a person with a licence and a quota to fish, fishing in a sanctioned opening or at least trying to, and delivering to a legitimate, licensed processor. For any fishermen, things can go wrong on the ocean. Tide, wind, waves, weather, unexpected encounters and broken equipment can change your priorities in a heartbeat. Understanding this complexity must come into play for enforcement officers when dealing with legitimate fishermen.

I want to discuss two instances to highlight the issue. The first is regarding the salmon fleet fishing out of Prince Rupert in 2016. The second is regarding a fishing vessel fishing over the AB line with Alaska in 2015.

I will read part of a letter that was sent to you by 15 first nations fishermen in 2016, as follows:

Re: Grave concern for fisheries on our Pacific coast

Dear Minister LeBlanc and Standing Committee Members,

We are writing you as independent commercial fishermen from the Pacific coast gravely concerned for the future of our fisheries on [our] coast. Together we represent over 400 years of fishing experience. With our crews we directly represent 50 fishermen, and we know there are many more fishermen that feel as we do. We are First Nations fishermen, we fish with our families and from our communities. Some of us have 4 generations on board our boats. An incident in Prince Rupert this summer...highlights our concern and is an indicator of a much bigger problem.

On July 29th [2016] some 17 armed DFO compliance and enforcement officers descend[ed] into Prince Rupert to bring the commercial salmon fleet into compliance. We are not certain who ordered this action; in our combine[d] recollection this is unprecedented. Part of this enforcement incident was captured on video and [has been] posted on Facebook....During this altercation 10 officers lined the outside of this fishing [boat], most officers with hands ready on guns, others inside screamed orders at the fishermen on board, while others search through the personal belongings. These fishermen have never been subjected to such intimidation tactics.

The public watching this incident must think us fishermen hardened criminals, deserving of such treatment. This public image is hard to reverse.

We had just returned from a commercial salmon fishery designated by DFO: we were not fishing in a closed area, not fishing at a closed time, not using illegal gear, not poaching fish, nor selling poached fish. We were trying to earn a living under some very hostile conditions.

The intimidation tactics were carried to the fishing grounds the following week causing some of us to leave rather than subject our families and crews to harassment and humiliation, a tough decision given we get very few days a year to earn our living fishing.

The salmon fishing fleet has been drastically reduced over the last [25] years.... Fishermen are now being asked to catch and release salmon in mixed stock fisheries. This might sound sensible and easy, and on paper it is.

In practice under adverse weather conditions, with jellyfish blowing into your eyes and [boats] rolling, it is anything but. One fisherman alone estimates releasing \$60,000 worth of chum [salmon] in the two weeks leading up to this incident, and was charged for retaining chum as they slipped into the hatch. These specific restrictions have no conservation value: in Area 3 it was hard to set a net without catching 1-2 thousand chum [salmon] (they were in abundance). There was a targeted fishery on the released fish just up the inlet the next week....

As we mentioned [at the] start, this incident is only one example of a much bigger problem.

● (1650)

Our fisheries are filled with conflicts on the water, on the docks and in your courts. We are fully aware of how fisheries are conducted in Alaska, and on Canada's Atlantic coast. Somehow the interests of commercial fishermen here have no value for the DFO. They are managing fisheries for those that do not fish. This must change.

The letter is signed by 14 first nations fishermen.

Why the heavy-handed enforcement? Fifty-one fishermen were charged this day, and so far, 49 charges have been dropped. Every one of these harvesters was licensed and fishing in a legitimate salmon opening. It was a mixed-stock fishery, with the department enforcing zero retention of chinook and sockeye salmon. Both were in abundance, and so were jellyfish.

Of the two remaining charges, since both were non-first nations fishermen, one may think that there's a racial angle to this, and there may be. One is being charged because 0.068% of his catch was non-retention sockeye. The green crew had missed 55 sockeye out of 35,000 pink salmon. They returned over 700 sockeye to the water during the two-day opening, \$25,000 worth of fish. They were not trying to sell these fish, only trying to stop them from going to reduction—which is illegal under other aspects of our Fisheries Act—rather than going to food.

In the second instance, one of the pioneers of electronic monitoring—I'll call it EM going forward—in the B.C. fleet was fishing the Alaska border from Haida Gwaii to Alaska. They made 214 sets. Two sets were near the border. No gear was set over the border, and the electronic monitoring can prove this, but the vessel was blown over the border when hauling the gear. It was a quota fishery that was being fished here, so there was no benefit from fishing over the border. In fact, fewer fish were caught in the related sets.

The boat has AIS on it, which is totally voluntary for that size of vessel, allowing it to be tracked by satellite. DFO tracked it when it received a call from the U.S. Coast Guard saying there was a fishing vessel along the AB line. DFO tracked it from the fishing grounds all the way to the wharf. Without any warning, seven DFO officers descended on that vessel at the wharf, 10 days after the incident, to arrest the fishermen, guns ready if needed.

The total value of the fish harvested in the related sets was \$6,900. The skipper was fined \$30,000. The owner was fined \$300,000, and the processor was fined \$69,000. Legal fees are over \$100,000. We do not know the court costs. We do not know DFO costs.

In the 20-plus years that the vessel has been fishing this area, they were never warned once about that issue.

Why the heavy-handed enforcement?

Maybe the enforcement officers don't have the right equipment to be on the water and stop IUU fishing. Maybe they're overzealous. Maybe they're trigger-happy. We do not know.

With the various electronic monitoring schemes used for catch accountability, enforcement officers don't even have to leave their offices to lay charges. Fishermen send in their electronic monitoring data, which in turn is used to lay charges, sometimes years after the data has been provided.

Over the last 15 years, electronic monitoring has been put in place to ensure accountability in the region. Now it is being used to charge fishers after the fact.

Thank you.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you for that, Mr. McIsaac.

We can probably do a round of three minutes. That will give us three minutes to get to the House, if everybody is in agreement and can get up all the stairs quickly enough.

We'll go to Mr. Hardie for three minutes or less, and I'll be very strict on the time. I might even cut you a little bit short.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): All right. Thank you.

Mr. McIsaac, what do we know anecdotally about organized crime in certain fisheries?

Mr. Jim McIsaac: Anecdotally, we know that there is organized crime operating inside of the fisheries in the Pacific region. That's for certain. There have been links to a couple of different fisheries. I'm not going to out the fisheries and I don't think I should do that, but links have definitely been made.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Do you think we should have an investigation of price fixing on quota lease rates?

Mr. Jim McIsaac: Wow. That's a....

Mr. Ken Hardie: I know. That's a really loaded question.

Mr. Jim McIsaac: It's very loaded, yes.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Do you want to put a bag over your head now?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jim McIsaac: I'm going to tell you a very short story that one fisherman told me. He held his own quota and was fishing his own quota. He would ask a variety of different processors what they would pay for his fish. Each year the processors would compete for the fish, and after about five years of doing this, they decided they would all get together, set a price and tell him how much they were going to pay. That's what I would call price fixing, and that happens.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I'll quit there and turn my time over to Mr. Sopuck.

The Chair: Mr. Sopuck, you have a question or two.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: What is the effect of the lack of enforcement or the enforcement regime that's in place right now? What is your view of the state of fish stocks off the coast of B.C.?

Mr. Jim McIsaac: I think most fish stocks in British Columbia are pretty healthy. We have a relatively pristine ecosystem here. We have the Pacific decadal oscillation that happens. We have El Niño and La Niña that happen, which drive some stocks up and some stocks down. We have a very productive north Pacific Ocean that supports most of our fish.

We have healthy fish stocks. I don't think, for the most part, that we're overfishing here. There is IUU fishing going on, though. There is an abundance of fish in certain areas that are being harvested without any kind of legal access to those fish.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I read somewhere that China has something like 26,000 subsidized commercial fishing boats that scour the oceans. I've seen some of that myself.

Let's be quite honest and blunt here. Given China's insatiable demand for food and fish resources, are they a country to watch in terms of the power of their fishing technology and potential effects on fish stocks, not just off B.C. but around the world?

Mr. Jim McIsaac: I think they're very powerful.

If you've seen the images of their fleet leaving port, it's incredible. When the B.C. fishing fleet is leaving port, you can see it's a fleet of small vessels under 65 feet, and for the most part between 35 and 45 feet. When you see the fishing fleet leaving a port in China, you see it's a fleet of 90- to 150-foot trawlers. You can Google it and see images of the Chinese fishing fleet leaving port. It's a huge fleet moving en masse out into the ocean.

Their fishing power is huge. There's no doubt about it. We have nothing compared to it.

• (1700)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sopuck.

I'm going to give Mr. Johns the chance for a question, or maybe two.

Mr. Gord Johns: It's great to see you, Mr. McIsaac.

I have a quick question. Have you seen an increase in monitoring, or a decrease, in terms of boots on the ground since 2015?

Mr. Jim McIsaac: At the incident I talked about in 2016, there were 17 fisheries officers who were brought in to Prince Rupert for that incident. Boots on the ground for chasing legitimate fishermen

seem to be all over the place, but for those who are out there fishing clandestinely, who are fishing without AIS and without electronic monitoring or anything like that, it doesn't seem to be happening at all.

Mr. Gord Johns: Right.

You talked about fairness. I'm going to look to get some recommendations on what you'd like to see happen, because you talked about some of the problems you had.

In terms of the gillnetters, the trawlers, the seiners, how do they stack up in terms of fairness with the super trawlers? Is it pretty even across the board? Do you think that the treatment is equal?

What would you like to see happen?

Mr. Jim McIsaac: The treatment is different across different fleets. Some of it comes down to the specific IFMP, the integrated fisheries management plan that is agreed to in each one of those fisheries.

For instance, the issue I just talked about, the zero tolerance in the retention of sockeye and chum salmon, was agreed to in part at the IFMP process, which is controlled in large part by a corporation. However, the trawl sector doesn't have that kind of restriction. They don't have a zero retention kind of restriction. They're allowed to have and responsible for whatever they bring over the side of their boat, and they're getting quota for that. They have different rules.

There are a whole bunch of other nuances. You were talking about super trawlers, so I'm guessing you're talking about the ones that target on hake. This year, I believe, they're moving to cameras on board. Most of the groundfish vessels, the small vessels, have cameras on board, and have had to have cameras on board for over a decade. These super vessels are now moving to having cameras on board, and some have up to 11 cameras on one vessel. They will come under much more scrutiny going forward.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McIsaac. I'm sorry we have to rush off. It's just getting interesting, but we have a vote in four minutes, so we have to adjourn here.

I want to thank everyone and wish everyone a great summer after we rise, hopefully this week.

The meeting is adjourned.

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