



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

AHOUSAHT
DITIDAHT
ʔIIHATIS / ČIINAXINT
HESQUIAHT
HUPACASATH

HUU-AY-AHT
KA:YU:K'T'H'/CHE:K:TLES7ET'H'
MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT
NUCHATLAHT
TLA-O-QUI-AHT

TOQUAHT
TSESHAHT
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An Open Letter to B.C. Commercial Herring Fishermen:

In mid-December the Minister of Fisheries made the decision to open the west coast of Vancouver Island (WCVI) to commercial roe and spawn-on-kelp herring fisheries in 2015. **Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations oppose this decision and recommend that B.C. commercial herring fishermen do not select the WCVI as their seine or gillnet fishing area for 2015.**

Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations were successful in 2014 in obtaining an injunction prohibiting DFO from opening the WCVI commercial herring fisheries. The 2014 Federal Court decision contemplates that Nuuchahnulth Nations might have to reapply for an injunction if similar concerns persist in 2015. Unfortunately, the Minister's decision to open the WCVI in 2015 is leading Nuuchahnulth Nations back to seeking an injunction against the 2015 commercial fishery; legal counsel has been instructed to prepare an application to the Federal Court. In 2014, commercial herring fishermen that chose the WCVI area were not allowed to fish.

Nuu-chah-nulth fishermen and community members remain concerned that WCVI herring stocks are not sufficiently rebuilt to allow commercial fishing. The DFO contracted WCVI spawn assessment observed less than 15,000 tons of adult herring spawn in 2014. In contrast, the DFO herring assessment model indicates that the 2014 spawn was twice that observed by the assessment divers. Nuuchahnulth fishermen and community members set trees and boughs in all known spawning locations in 2014 to collect spawn on bough for home use. All WCVI areas reported either no spawn on trees or very few layers of eggs, indicating very low herring abundance in 2014, corresponding with the dive spawn assessment of about 15,000 tons.

All four WCVI Nuuchahnulth commercial "J" spawn-on-kelp licences will not be operating in 2015 due to these on-going WCVI abundance concerns. Nuuchahnulth Nations request that B.C. commercial seine and gillnet herring fishermen choose to fish abundant herring stocks in the Strait of Georgia or Prince Rupert, where stocks remain strong. Again, **Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations recommend that B.C. commercial herring fishermen do not select the WCVI as their seine or gillnet fishing area for 2015.**

On behalf of the 14 Nuuchahnulth First Nations,

Debra Foxcroft, OBC
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Vice-President

copy: Herring Industry Advisory Board
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